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## **Chapter 16 Gendered Sphere of Traditional Knowledge in Morocco**

### **Bernadette Montanari**

#### **Introduction**

Indigenous knowledge (IK) and its various definitions -Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK), Traditional Knowledge (TK), Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK), Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) is an adaptive, cumulative body of knowledge, practice and beliefs, culturally transmitted through generations and constantly evolving (Davis and Wagner 2003; Ellen and Harris 2000; Ellen 2011). In many places it is vital for the maintenance of the land, water and biological resources upon which people depend, and enters into decision-making chains at every stage of production, management, distribution and consumption (Grenier 1998; Berkes et al. 2000; Turner and Garibaldi 2004; Folkes 2004). Traditional knowledge and traditional skills have also permitted rural communities in many parts of the world to manage and sustain livelihoods, to buffer for extreme climatic conditions and secure food. For all its virtues, Traditional knowledge has attracted attention and has been recognized as a key component in climate change adaptation strategies, sustainable resource management, food security and conservation strategies and ecosystem services (Armitage 2005; Berkes et al. 2000; Gómez-Baggethun et al. 2013; IFAD 2016; WIPO 2018). Moreover, the focus of the international agenda and particularly policies related to the SDG (SDG 2018) increasingly focuses on the socio-economic development of the poor for which the current global trend is the enrolment of poor communities in development schemes based on natural resources. Overall, the policies advocate that including the most vulnerable into market economies creates employment and socio-economic development and supports the general issues of gender equality, empowerment and the improvement and the well being of communities. Many women in rural areas, however, are not able to enroll in these opportunities.

What the policies so far have not explored is the added value of women's traditional knowledge in community based educational programs to gain confidence towards product development. Because the natural resources to be developed in the initiatives are an integral part of the communities' activities and landscapes, and which mostly contribute to the communities' daily food production, ethno-medicinal treatment, or any other subsistence needs, they are inevitably associated with some form of traditional knowledge skills. The resources which used to be banal, ordinary and without interest have now become central to the economic development of communities since it is believed that conditioning these resources into products will create a commercial added value. Therefore, the women's traditional knowledge and skills are increasingly incorporated in the development of natural products, hosted under structures like cooperatives, cottage industries or small scale enterprise; in many cases, however, the traditional knowledge and the skills that contributed to the product development has not yet been acknowledged or recognized. This chapter positions the women's traditional knowledge in the context of social enterprise to show the added value of traditional knowledge that can transform the agenda with the support of educational programs. It aims to fill the gap by showing the women's traditional knowledge in the domains of agricultural, culinary, and ethnobotanical knowledge and for which value can be added at the heart of communities.

#### **Women's Employment in Developing Countries**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the latest Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in particular seek to achieve inclusion for all, focusing on the balance of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (SDG 2017). They emphasise that the reduction of poverty ultimately transits through sustainable and inclusive economic growth whereby all social needs including education, health, gender equality, reduction of inequalities, and job opportunities are met, resolving the issues of climate change and environmental protection as the same time. For the achievement of the goals, the World Bank for instance foresees that the “smart economics” of the future cannot do without the women’s labor and participation; women’s contribution will not only foster economic development but will further contribute to the prosperity of future generations (World Bank 2010).

Current figures, however, suggest differently and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2018) highlights that the gap in labor participation between men and women worldwide is still significant; 71.3 percent of men compared to 45.8 percent of women. Particularly in Africa, the production gap is wide: 68.5 percent of men working compared to 50.4 percent of women, especially when compared to the economy of Northern Europe for instance, which stands at 64 percent for men and 54.4 percent for women. Figures in North Africa are even more unequal when comparing men’s labor to women’s (71.9 percent) and (21.9 percent); however, women seem to be more actively working on Sub Saharan Africa at 64.7 percent compared to men 74 percent (ILO 2018). Mostly, the women’s contribution to activities is primarily witnessed in informal forms of labor like agriculture, domestic duties, and in the textile industry and agro-food sectors and other services. For many African countries, agriculture seems to be an important sector for informal employment. In Burkina Faso for instance, the highest employment in agriculture for women is 83 percent compared to 87.6 percent for men. Similarly, in Chad, 82.1 percent of women work in agriculture, a close gap to the employment of men, 82.3 percent. Regarding employment in other sectors, 72.6 percent of women work in services whereas only 58.1 percent of men in Angola and in Burkina Faso, and only 14 percent of women work in services compared to 10.3 percent of men (World Bank 2018). The employment of rural women in developing countries and the lack of recognition for the work they provide remain an important obstacle for securing sustainable socio-economic development and long term prosperity for the wellbeing of their families.

### **Traditional Knowledge and Social Enterprise**

In the last few decades, indigenous-traditional knowledge has gained worldwide recognition as a key component in development strategies that seek to respond to the issues of climate change, food security, natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, and conservation endeavors and ecosystem maintenance. More recently, traditional knowledge has become vital for the transformation of raw resource material into natural products, as witnessed in the current trend of product development issued from natural resources increasingly at the heart of economic development strategies. The policies advocate that these strategies will contribute to poverty alleviation, ensure socio-economic development and gender equality. However, policy makers have barely looked into the integration of Indigenous-traditional knowledge in social enterprise and how it could contribute to prosperity.

The subject of indigenous-traditional knowledge in the development paradigm is not new and has been largely covered (Orozco-Quintero and Davidson-Hunt 2010; Peredo et al. 2004; Ahmed

and Mc Quaid 2005; Uphoff and Buck 2006; Schwartzman and Zimmerman 2005). Grenier (1998) and Peredo et al (2004) for instance recommended the integration of traditional knowledge into enterprise schemes as early as the 1990's. The authors emphasised that integrating indigenous-traditional knowledge into social enterprise not only revolves around a common goal for the common good of the people but enables the community to pursue a new kind of enterprise, one that focuses on the community's existing social structure. The authors assert that restoring self determination and heritage preservation are central to re-affirming identity; local entrepreneurship has the potential to achieve this (Peredo et al. 2004; Hindle and Lansdowne 2005; Lindsay 2005; Peredo and Anderson 2006). Communities however are seldom able to lever these attributes within their direct environment due to illiteracy, isolation and marginalization. Community's education based on the recognition of traditional knowledge can raise the confidence of women towards social entrepreneurship and ultimately reverse this process. This chapter aims to fill this gap by showing the role and value of Traditional Knowledge for educating women towards social enterprise in Morocco.

### **Traditional Knowledge in Africa**

The continent of Africa abounds in cultural diversity and folklore. Most African countries hold some form of official legislation for the safeguard and protection of cultural expression but to a lesser extent of traditional knowledge. Overall, what tends to be primarily considered under the banner of cultural, folkloric and traditional knowledge are products destined to the souvenir markets, local clothing industry, food products, toys, musical production and performances, and the occasional use of indigenous names or phrases as trademarks often used without authorization (WIPO 2017). Beside UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) who work actively to enforce the protection of TK worldwide, African countries have limited forms of legislative protection for folklore and traditional knowledge for their respective culture. With the exception of Namibia who has granted indigenous communities the indefinite rights to control the adaptation, the transformation and translations of expressions of folklore; Rwanda, which under Art. 3 of the Copyright Law (1983) provides generous protection to folklore traditions and literary productions (tales, legends, myths, proverbs, accounts, and poems), artistic works (dances and spectacles of any kind, musical works of any kind, styles and works of decorative art, and architectural styles), religious works (ritual rites, objects, clothing, and places of worships), scientific and technological knowledge (practices and products of medicine and pharmacology, theoretical and practical fields of the natural science and anthropology); and Uganda who benefits from some form of legislation in the field of literature, traditional folklore and knowledge, science and art under a "Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act", passed in 2006, and conducts capacity building workshops on Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge for empowering local communities and supporting their economic development, African countries have a limited legislation that protect the traditional knowledge. Overall, other countries have some form of legislation that has been implemented to protect what is considered "*traditional knowledge*": in Cameroon for instance, this legislation relates to works derived from folklore, and request for permission for public performance and reproduction; in Congo, permission is required to adapt folklore for commercial values; Ghana on the other hand provide legislation only to protect literature, artistic and musical works, and sound recording, cinematographic and choreographic works. In Mali, any use or reproduction of works derived from folklore requires authorization from the Ministry of Arts and Culture; in Nigeria, a copyright law protects against adaptations, translations, and other transformations of such

folklore, either for commercial purposes or outside their traditional customary context, and any expressions of reproduction, communication to the public by performance, broadcasting even distributed by cable (Copyright Decree 1999); in Senegal, folklore is covered and protected by Article 1 of the Senegalese Copyright for any "direct or indirect" fixation of material intended for "profit-making purposes" and is subject to prior authorization by the Copyright Office of Senegal under article 9. As we are primarily concerned with Morocco in this chapter; the country has several law texts that intend to protect Copyrights and related rights under the Law No. 2-00 (promulgated by Dahir No. 1-00-20 of 9 Kaada 1420-February 15, 2000). These include several legislations related to Copyright and Related Rights (Neighboring Rights), Enforcement of IP and Related Laws, and traditional cultural expressions. In addition, the government has ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the protection of cultural expression (<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/texts>); cultural expressions refer to cultural diversity, cultural content, cultural expressions, cultural activities, goods and services, cultural industries, cultural policies and measures, protection, and inter-culturality. However, a clear definition of what exactly constitutes traditional knowledge does not exist nor does a mention on how Traditional Knowledge should be protected. The country does not have any provision for the protection of its folklore and traditional knowledge. As natural resources are increasingly developed into natural products, the issue of protection and of access to benefit sharing (ABS) of the Nagoya Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are inevitably raised; equally the issue of whose knowledge should be protected.

### **Overview of the Social Context in Morocco**

As stipulated by the World Bank (2010), women are increasingly seen as the actors of the smart economies for the benefits of future generations. However, the integration in Moroccan society of rural women and the rural communities more generally has been a central issue for the authorities for decades. Illiteracy, embedded social cultural norms, lack of financial opportunities, poor infrastructures and the geographical isolation where many communities live (mountains, oasis and desert location) away from the urban centers largely contribute to the socio-economic exclusion.

Illiteracy, in particular, is a major obstacle for the national authorities and for supporting sustainable development. Although levels of education have considerably improved for girls to attend primary school, 81.20 percent in 2000 to 98.30 percent in 2015, enrolment in secondary school remains low (53.10 percent). Illiteracy remains high for young women aged between 15-24 (93.50 percent) (World Bank 2018), particularly in the rural areas (60.1 percent) (Haut Commissariat au Plan 2018). Women and young girls are mostly responsible for the daily subsistence of the household; more often than not, the young girls are called back into the village to participate in the household chores and labor in the fields and gardens rather than attending secondary schools (Montanari 2012).

Past politico-historical account has reinforced the economic isolation as the government has mostly privileged the Atlantic coasts, open to trade with external partners and former colonies (Gellner 1961). While the government has made several attempts to address these issues in the past, it has not succeeded. Therefore, to address the persistent impediment of sustainable economic growth, food security, sustainable natural resource development, poverty alleviation, gender equality and climate change in the rural areas, the most recent endeavour is the Green

Morocco Plan (GMP) (2008-2020). The two pillars of the GMP have been designed to overcome these obstacles and to promote the socio-economic development of the poor and to support gender equality, autonomy and decision-making. While the main goal of Pillar I is to intensify agriculture towards international markets through technical means, Pillar II addresses small scale projects to transit from small traditional family farming towards a more lucrative development of natural resources (see Montanari and Bergh 2018 forthcoming). Pillar II, in particular emphasizes the creation of income generating activities (IGA) derived from natural resources hosted under cooperatives for the commoditization of natural resources and for which commercial value can be added. The creation of IGA derived from natural resources is therefore portrayed as a major economic opportunity for women to enroll in the initiatives. However, many women remain excluded from the opportunities.

### **Diversity of Women's Traditional Knowledge**

Worldwide, rural women possess a lot of traditional knowledge when it comes to natural resources; as such, they are considered as the gatekeepers of TK linked to natural resource management (Howard 2003). Because the responsibilities of rural women mainly lie in the provision to meet the daily subsistence for their families, they possess a strong traditional ecological knowledge, and interest in environmental protection and management. The relationship that they nurture with the environment is special, as they tend to be more concerned about the availability and access to natural resources (Gutierrez-Montes 2012; Howard 2003). Their knowledge extends to wild plant gathering, home gardens, plant domestication, herbalism and seed storing. For instance, women's medicinal plant knowledge tends to be more extensive than men's because they are responsible for maintaining the healthcare of their families (Howard 2003; Teixidor-Toneu et al. 2017; Montanari and Teixidor-Toneu 2018; Voeks 2007; Wayland 2001). In Africa, women possess a lot of traditional knowledge when it comes to home gardens (Zobolo and Mkabela 2006); in agrobiodiversity for securing food and the exchange of seeds (Idohou et al. 2014; Mømsen 2007; Osemeobo 2005); culinary traditions (Misihairabgwi and Cheikhoussef 2017; Ormanci and Colakoglu 2015); for health and child care (De Boer and Lamxay 2009; Malan and Neuba 2011) and traditional use of natural resources as cosmetics (Elias and Carney 2007; Goreja 2004; Hosam et al. 2015).

In Morocco, throughout the regions of the country, women's culinary, ethno-medicinal, agricultural and animal husbandry traditional knowledge is widespread both within the household and in external surroundings. It is within these settings that the vital transmission to the younger generations occur (Montanari 2013; 2014). In the domain of agriculture in the High Atlas for instance, agricultural activities are a major contribution to the provision of food security. Although the terrain difficult and space is limited, people have managed to shape the landscape in terraces from which they grow sufficient food to feed their families. The land is ploughed traditionally with a mule and wooden plough and it is usually the men who proceed with this activity. As there are no chemical pesticides, cow and chicken manure provide nourishment to the land. Women proceed to the sowing and collection of vegetables and weeding, often working in groups. Because of the limited space in the terraces, crops are usually companion planted in groups of two or three cultigens, for example tomatoes with maize and peas to increase the yield. This is usually supported by a structure made with reeds and the land is furrowed to retain irrigation. The main crops that are grown in the gardens closer to the river

are wheat and barley, harvested once a year during the summer. Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), is also planted and collected mainly for cow fodder.

Women's traditional knowledge then irrefutably contributes to the daily subsistence and maintenance of the household. It is vital for ensuring food availability and for managing natural resources sustainably. Moreover, the women contribute indirectly to the household budget, as they do not need to buy many foodstuffs which would otherwise inflict a cost on the household budget. Their contributions, however, have been largely undermined and the traditional knowledge associated with these practices undervalued and not recognized. In addition, the rural women do not see the value of their traditional skills; rather they have a poor image of the work they do, lack confidence and perceive their activities as backward practices (Sengupta 2015). Overall, they envy women who have moved to urban areas and who do not need to pursue tedious chores like attending gardens, fodder, water and wood collection, and all other activities that contribute to maintaining the household. The question therefore is: can education alter these perceptions so that social enterprise can be triggered at community level?

### **Women's Traditional Skills with Added Value**

With the income generating activities (IGA) of the GMP, cooperatives are proliferating at an exponential rate throughout the country. Many cooperatives currently proceed with the transformation of natural resources into natural products destined for the internal and international markets. These cooperatives are usually run by educated people; the high illiteracy in the villages prevents the women from fulfilling the administrative tasks. In addition, due to the high level of activities to maintaining the household, women do not have the time. Hence, many women remain excluded from the initiatives; those who are involved however represent a labor force, often working without remuneration or merit (Montanari and Bergh 2018). An outstanding example of resource widely commercialized in the last few decades and that stand as a success and model for economic development on the international scene is Argan from which oil is extracted for cosmetic and culinary purposes. The nuts are collected from the endemic Argan tree, widely found in the Souss Massa Draa region in the southern part of the country. Within the scope of this study however, I will describe the traditional knowledge associated with several natural resources, which involve culinary and ethnobotanical skills.

### **Culinary Ingredients and Traditional Skills**

Unlike the limited space found in the High Atlas, the flat terrain in the Province of Rhamna allows for a more spacious and extensive cultivation, and, in particular of *coriander*, *cumin*, *fenugreek*, *nigella* and *poppy seeds*, *colza*, *coriander* and *millet* seeds. These are the natural culinary ingredients widely used in Moroccan cuisine. All the seeds are grown locally and women harvest them once they are ripe in season. Collecting the seeds in the field is a non-mechanized process and is done manually and collectively. Because the collected seeds contain a lot of small wooden debris and small dust particles, women used their traditional skills for cleaning the seeds. Traditionally, women proceed to the cleaning of seeds by hand using hand woven baskets or trays when baskets are not available. As the debris needs to be shifted to the bottom or side of the baskets, the seeds are tossed in the basket up and down, rolled forward and backward and from side to side to separate the seeds from the dust and other small particles. The result is a clean separation of the seeds with the odd dust that is then removed by hand. This

whole process requires agility and dexterity and a keen eye for details, a process that a machine cannot achieve (Montanari and Bergh 2018).

Packaged ready to use seeds have become widely popular and available in local shops and supermarkets and several cooperatives now proceed to the conditioning of these products. In these cooperatives, the cleaning of seeds is done mechanically. The first cleansing is done mechanically to rid the seeds of the main dust; this is followed by a second sieving performed by a machine to refine the first one; the third one is to dry the seeds in a ventilating apparatus, the fourth process is to refine the seeds' caliber using a grading machine. However, women are recruited to proceed with the last aspect of cleaning the seeds by hand which refines the last two processes. This is done traditionally with baskets just as it is done at home. It does not however mean that the women are recruited for this particular knowledge; rather they need the work because of different family circumstances (divorced, widowed or a sick husband).

Similarly, to the seeds mentioned above, *Quinoa* is widespread in the region of Rhamna. Quinoa is an herbaceous annual flowering plant from the amaranth family originally from Bolivia and Peru and grown for its edible seeds. It has become popular for its high nutritive value worldwide and also in Morocco. The quinoa is grown traditionally and does not involve any mechanized processes. Once it has been harvested manually, it is left to dry in the sun, stirred occasionally by hand. Once dried, a similar process to the one described above for the seeds take place, using the same traditional techniques with baskets. The cleaning process of the grain is time consuming and painstaking; however, it is the only way to ensure a thorough cleaning so that the quinoa is free from debris, dust and other particles; this traditional method gives the best result. Under Pillar II on the GMP, many people are keen to grow Quinoa, and the Institut Agronomique et Veterinaire Hassan II in Rabat can provide the seeds.

### **Traditional Couscous**

*Traditional couscous* comes from a long culinary tradition in Morocco. *Couscous* or “*kuskusu*” is a traditional popular dish found widely in Morocco and throughout the Maghreb region; it is now recognized a healthy food, easy to prepare especially when bought prepacked. Couscous is the produced grain and not the whole dish. Typically, in the Maghreb and in other Arab countries, it is served on the Fridays after prayer at the mosque both in rural and urban settings. In the Province of Rhamna as in the High Atlas, women in villages gather at someone's house and work together. This is an occasion for gossip and catching up on the news and a major opportunity for traditional culinary knowledge transmission to the children. While a group of women peel and prepare the vegetables, others prepare the couscous grain. The traditional home made couscous involve the mixing of flour and water in large bowls, and women move their hands in a circular motion so that the small couscous lumps can shape up. The process is repeated until the couscous grain is formed and until it becomes more refined. It is then passed through a sieve to ensure that the right caliber of the couscous grain is obtained. Nowadays various flavors are added to couscous and the addition of cactus flour and quinoa seem to be popular. In cooperatives that process couscous, the couscous mixtures are put through a dryer before packaging. The finished products are either sold locally and occasionally on the international market.

### **Honey Production**

Traditional activities like bee keeping and the production of honey are common in the High Atlas and in the Province of Rhamna. In the past, the hives were made of hand-woven baskets shaped as a cylinder where the bees gather to produce honey. The bees usually feed on cactus, orange and pomegranate flowers and other flowering plants that are available within a given location. However, in both locations, bee owners have to move their hives to other places because the increasing lack of rain affects the availability of flowers. The gathering in the hives, the quality control of the product is done in a traditional way. In a particular case, an elderly woman controls this process. She holds in-depth knowledge of bee-keeping since she has done the collection and production of honey from the hives all her life, a traditional knowledge that her father transmitted. As an experienced elder, she knows exactly when the time to collect is right, and if the honey is a good or poor quality. As the gatekeeper of this valuable traditional knowledge, she is also transmitting it as she advises other people throughout all the stages of production. Nowadays, she processes the honey using a mechanized centrifuge provided by the local authorities. As it is quite lumpy, the honey needs to be further refined. The ancient practice associated with this activity; however, has evolved from traditional to technical with the provided equipment.

### **Ethnobotanical Knowledge in the High Atlas and in Rhamna**

Medicinal plants are found profusely throughout the country. The High Atlas, in particular is a region that abounds in aromatic and medicinal plants. Moreover, traditional herbal medicine is the only source of treatment in these isolated locations as close proximity dispensaries or other medical facilities do not always exist. With the IGA, many medicinal plants that are normally used in traditional medicine are conditioned and packaged as dried herbal mixtures. In some cases, the aromatic plants are further exploited for essential oil distillation. Although the list of medicinal plants is extensive, the most common plants used in this part of the High Atlas are thyme (*Thymus satureioides*, L.) and a lavender species *Lavandula dentata*, L. These two plants in particular have a high added value especially as essential oils that are used in the pharmaceutical and sanitary industries. In the High Atlas, women have extensive knowledge of the plants' therapeutic properties, and the dosage and the combinations of plants for the ailments to be relieved. After collecting and drying the plants, they are usually stored in dry, dust free cupboards or jars. Most women have plants in the house readily available to use. Women use thyme regularly as a fresh herbal tea-infusion during the harvest season or in the dried herbal form to relieve gastric disorders (stomach ache, bile complaints, indigestion, and intestinal problems), respiratory disorders such as colds, coughs, chills and headache and menstrual problems and painful menses for women. Similar to their use with thyme, women use lavender flowers extensively along with other herbs in tea, coffee and in infusion. Its main applications are for headaches, stomach ache, including painful menses and gynaecological problems, stomach acidity, bile problems, vomiting, loss of appetite, colds, chills, coughs, rheumatism, dampness in the body, high blood pressure. Women also add lavender flowers to henna colouring mixtures for fragrance or for tattooing. It tends to be extensively collected for cow fodder. This herbal knowledge is passed on to the younger generations, in various settings both within the household and in traditional external activities (gardens, mountains, and river).

*Cactus* is widespread throughout the country. Although it also grows naturally in the High Atlas, it is found on a much smaller scale. However, it is widespread in the Province of Rhamna.

Cactus, also commonly known as *Barbary Fig*, originates from Mexico and has been introduced in Africa in the sixteenth century by the Spanish. While several species are available, the cactus described in this chapter is *Opuntia ficus-indica*. Cactus can be used for its culinary aspects and also for its medicinal properties. The fruit are widely consumed and well known for their fiber, and vitamin C content and their laxative properties (Shetty et al. 2012; Fernandez et al 2010). The women proceed to the collection of the Barbary fruit by hand, because the delicate fruit and young cactus leaves are prickly. They prepare the young rackets in a traditional manner as a pickled condiment that can be eaten either a side dish or on its own. More recently, Cactus jam made from the flowers has become popular in certain regions of the country. The use of the cactus also extends to animals and has been widely planted in arid zones to provide animal fodder. From an ethnobotanical perspective, the women use the dried cactus flowers to prepare a traditional tea for the relief of gastrointestinal and sleeping disorders, for its anti-inflammatory properties, and as a diuretic. The young cactus leaves (rackets) can also be applied as a cataplasm for sores, bruises and eczema. A traditional home remedy to decrease cholesterol and diabetes is the preparation of the dried young tender leaves rendered into a power like flour (Bellakdar 1997; Sijelmassi 2003). With the increasing interest in cactus products and oil extraction which has gained a lucrative place on the market due to its pharmacological properties, particularly for the cosmetic industry, cactus has been planted extensively throughout the region. Many women therefore clean the seeds and supply them for oil extraction. In addition, several cooperatives have developed a range of cosmetic products (shampoo and shower gel with the addition of cactus oil) using mechanized processes; in these places, women are employed for the collection and cleaning of the fruit and the young leaves. A cooperative now processes the anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic powder formula that women typically prepare for home treatment. This traditional ethnobotanical knowledge therefore is undergoing a transfer of technology, replicating the traditional home use to a commercial product. However, the ethnobotanical knowledge associated with the product does not receive any recognition.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I show that many women's traditional practices are available in Morocco and in other countries of Africa. I have also shown that throughout the continent of Africa, women are not recognized for their contribution, whether in agricultural activities or other services. In Morocco, although the model of cooperatives has been widely developed and is expanding rapidly throughout the country, women are not always able to benefit from these opportunities; and those who do are merely a labor force. In addition, several traditional knowledge practices are replicated in the cooperatives for the commercialization of products; yet women do not receive any acknowledgement or recognition; it is the most educated people who manage the cooperatives who are granted the merit.

Traditional knowledge is vital for the maintenance of the land, water and biological resources upon which people depend; its survival depends on its transmission to the younger generations. Women are increasingly drawn to economic incentives in the pursuit of financial gain. Whether they are or not able to join and earn income, there is more at stake here than just receiving monetary incentives; a greater threat is looming over the communities; that is the erosion of traditional knowledge for which women are essential gatekeepers. Should not the traditional knowledge that women hold within communities be cherished to trigger incentives?

As development strategies often do not benefit the local level, the policies related to the integration of rural women in economic development remain questionable and need to be closely scrutinized. There is a need to rethink the approach to develop economic incentives in communities. Traditional Knowledge is not only central to this but auspicious. Developing educational programs that foster awareness of Traditional Knowledge and its valuable contribution to product development is timely to resolve the issues of isolation, poverty and social exclusion. Rethinking development that fosters a new approach focusing on the value of women's traditional knowledge offers huge possibilities; it holds the promise to boost the women's confidence, shift the perception and trigger incentives at community level. With increasing pressure from International organizations to comply with access to benefit sharing (ABS) of the Nagoya Protocol for the equitable share of genetic resources, the need to recognize the traditional knowledge gatekeepers that contribute to the economic prosperity of cooperatives is overdue. Only then, the ABS can be aligned with traditional values and true social enterprise can be achieved.

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