

Bulletin 376

Resource-poor farmers tend to have more limited access to research, training and advisory services than do resource-rich farmers. And while access to agricultural services is not the only factor that can enhance rural people's livelihoods, it is a very important one.

What role do farmers' organizations play in improving access to these services for the poor? Do poor farmers participate in farmers' organizations? Or do farmers' organizations have other strategies to improve the livelihoods of poor farmers?

Questions like these are key to identifying new approaches for strengthening the capacity of farmers' organizations to enhance the pro-poor aspects and accessibility of agricultural services. Using case studies in Benin, Rwanda and Tanzania, researchers from the Royal Tropical Institute and partner organizations in those countries have developed and applied a framework for analysing the functioning of farmers' organizations and their role in service provision.

The results show that different types of farmers' organizations have different ways of dealing with the question of social inclusion, depending on the organization's background and membership profile, as well as its purpose and organizational structure, and these differences can have important consequences for the provision of services to both members and non-members.

Of interest to both policy makers and practitioners, this bulletin presents guidelines for improving the inclusiveness of agricultural services and ultimately reducing rural poverty.



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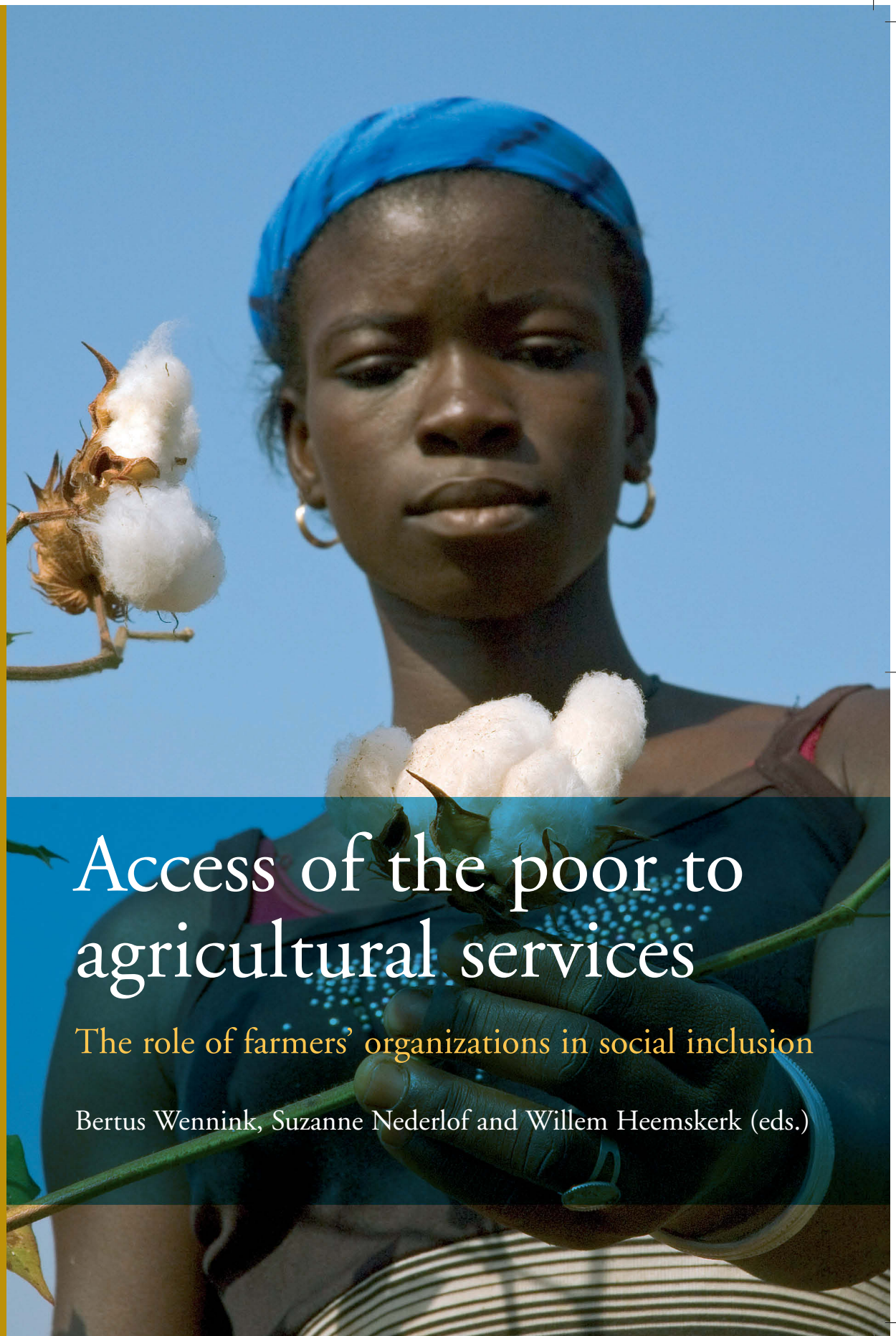
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The role of farmers' organizations in social inclusion

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