

# Gender Considerations for Crop Value Chain Upgrading Strategies

## Policy Brief

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Courtesy: Mnimbo, T.S.

### Executive Summary

**A**gricultural growth is important for both poverty reduction and food security. Food insecurity is one of the Tanzanian government's focal development issues. Tanzania's agriculture is mostly driven by smallholder farmers most of whom are women.

Over three quarters of the active women in Tanzania are engaged in agricultural related activities and they produce over 70 percent of the country's food requirements (URT, 2013). However, women are excluded from ownership of land and other resources, the means of production and even the products of their own labour despite a constitutional right proclaiming for gender equality.

Gender exclusion can potentially affect food security both at the household and national levels. Hence, the need for a gendered impact assessment on food securing upgrading strategies.

Furthermore, when it comes to agriculture, men and women carry out different types of work, have different preferences and are unequally rewarded for their contributions.

The policy brief aims to show the importance of considering participation of men, women and the youth along the food crop value chains (FVC) for enhanced food security at both the household and national levels. Therefore, food value chain experts need to bear in mind gender differentials as they introduce different innovations along the food value chains.

### Introduction

Agriculture can be the engine of growth and is necessary for reducing poverty and food insecurity, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2007). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of change is crucial to better position the sector for

sustainable faster growth and equitable, development. Generally, many of the development inequalities emerge from gender differences. These differences in particular affect the distribution of resources between men and women, and are caused by ideological, economic, ethnic, social and religious factors. Hence, it is imperative to consider gender equity as a determinant that influences development results, particularly in relation to poverty reduction and food security (Frison et al., 2011).

In Tanzania, food insecurity is one of the focal national issues (URT, 2016). The country's bid to improve productivity of the agricultural sector for enhanced food security goes way back to the 1970s, whereby different policies and declarations were made. These include '*Kilimo cha kufa na kupona*' (*Agriculture as a matter of life and death*) in 1971, '*Kilimo ni Uhai*' (*Agriculture is life*) in 1972, '*Kilimo cha umwagiliaji*' (*Irrigated agriculture*) in 1974, and '*Mvua za kwanza ni za kupanda*' (*First rains are for planting*) in 1974. In addition, to these we have had the National Agricultural and Livestock Policy of 1997 and the 2006 Livestock and the Agriculture Policy of 2013. Other efforts have included the Agricultural Sector Development Programme Phase One (ASDP I) of 2006, the '*Kilimo Kwanza*' (*Agriculture first*) initiative of 2009 and currently the Agricultural Sector Development Programme Phase Two (ASDP II) of 2016.

Tanzania's constitution proclaims gender equality and despite many laws promoting equal opportunities for both men and women, it remains that for both smallholder farms and large plantations, men and women carry out different types of work, have different preferences and are unequally rewarded for their contributions to the agricultural system (Rubin et al., 2010). The above can potentially affect food security both at the household and national levels hence, the need for a gender consideration in food securing upgrading strategies.

## Gender in the Context of Food Securing Upgrading Strategies

The relationship between gender and food security is undeniable and of utmost importance (Gaanderse, 2010). The concept of food security includes both physical and economic access to address people's needs and preferences. Therefore,

the need for considering all household members at all times. According to FAO (2013) there are three main pillars towards ensuring food security i.e. food availability, food access, and food utilization. Furthermore, improving food security requires behaviour change of individuals within the household members that are responsible for food selection, preparation, and storage and allocation tasks.

While women play a major role in food decisions in many African cultures, it is increasingly recognized that research needs to target both women and men with gender specific messages. However, women need to be empowered given the role that men often play in influencing women's decision-making (Tsikata and Yaro; 2014 and Farnworth et al., 2016). Therefore, any upgrading strategies and interventions to improve food security will mostly succeed if gender considerations are factored in.

## Empirical findings

### Intra-household decision making in the crop value chains

- Gender differences do exist with regards to crop production preferences between various gender groups (Mnimbo et al., 2017). For example, it was found that the youth and women in Chamwino district preferred growing maize to sorghum as a second food crop compared to men.
- Men are the major decision makers when it comes to what crops to be produced, what and how much to sell, and how much to invest in the production process (Mnimbo, 2018).
- Women's decision making power increases when they earn more than the men or just as much as men do (Bullock et al. 2017; Mnimbo, 2018).

### Time-use in the crop value chains' activities

- Female use more time (more than 6 hours) in planting, harvesting and post-harvesting activities compared to males (Mnimbo, 2018).
- Men spend more time on crop marketing.
- But, differences on amount of time spent do also vary by crop, activity and age: for cash crops, men tend to use more time compared to women, and women do most of the plating and weeding. Generally, weeding involves a lot of bending which men desist and therefore leaving women to perform this activity (Mnimbo, 2018).

### Value chain node and women's participation

- Women participate in most of the nodes in the value chains, i.e. the production node where they plant, prepare the seeds and weed; and in the processing node where they process the harvested crop by winnowing, drying and storing (Mnimbo, 2018).
- However, the challenge comes at the marketing node where fewer women are involved relative to men.

### Constraints to women's participation in the more profitable value chains

- Women's lower levels of education and literacy
- Lack of wages (i.e. not being able to earn off-farm income from casual or even formal employment)
- Gender norms which restrict women's mobility (e.g. moving outside the village to sell crops).
- Lack and limited ownership of assets (Mnimbo, 2018), according to Palacios-Lopez et al. (2017) women and the youth lack control over assets (land, oxen and other productive assets) relative to men, as a consequence limiting their engagement in remunerative activities.
- Lack of ownership to land makes it difficult for women to make important decisions such as which crops to grow, or the possibility of using the land to obtain credit. According to Grabe (2010) land is highly gendered, it remains an important livelihood resource in many societies and it is emblematic of social belonging.

### Addressing Gender inequalities in food crop value chains

- There is a need for policies and regulations with effective enforcement to address the exploitative gender relations that exist in most communities where women are equitably rewarded according to their efforts.
- There is also need for gender accommodating strategies that deal with constraints that hinder women's active involvement in important household and community decision making processes emanating from stereotypes and customs and traditions which discriminate against women (Bullock et al. 2017).
- There is need for gender transformative strategies which focus on achieving mutual supportive goals in achieving the 'win-win' situation by finding synergies between gender relations and equitable participation in crop

value chains (Mnimbo et al. 2017). For example, labour saving technologies that reduce women's workload while at the same time increasing men's involvement need to be introduced (Johnson et al. 2016) for example millet threshing and maize shelling machines.

### Conclusion

Gender wise, it is critical that agricultural policies, programmes and projects that aim at improving productivity and efficiency along the crop value chains need to be gender sensitive. While aiming at increasing incomes and food security they should also aim at reducing women's workload. Therefore, it is recommended that food securing upgrading strategies need to apply a gender lens in their planning and implementation so as to ensure their acceptance and sustainability.

### Recommendations

- The Government, NGO's, and Projects need to conduct a gendered assessment of the innovations and technologies brought to farmers for better achievement of intended outcomes. This is crucial as some technologies are gender-biased for example, some production technologies (rainwater harvesting and shelling/threshing machines), are too physical for women's participation hence, hindering their adoption.
- Women need to have access and control over land and other key productive resources in order to participate in the profitable food value chains and be rewarded equitably for their labour input. This will enable women to choose the types and quantities of crops to produce based on the available land.

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