

GENDER AND VALUE CHAINS: AN OVERVIEW

This document is designed to help KHCP actors reflect on:

- How social differences between men and women relate to value chain operations.
- Why addressing restrictions to men's or women's access to resources and opportunities is important for value chain efficiency, program objectives and women's empowerment.
- What KHCP can hope to gain by integrating men's and women's needs into value chain activities.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Anjeline Akello Ouma, a member of Arena Chilli Farmers Group in Homa Bay County monitors the on-farm solar-drying process of African Birds' Eye Chilli to supply Mace Foods Ltd in Eldoret.

WHAT IS GENDER?

- Socially defined and culturally learned differences between **men** or **women**. All societies have beliefs about "appropriate" roles for men and women and boys and girls.
- Defines "men" and "women" with reference to the socio-cultural relationships. Men's and women's roles and relations change over time and vary from place to place.
- The social relations between men and women may be unequal. An example of inequalities in social relations is women's lack of access to services.
 - While women operate 38 percent of agriculture enterprises in Kenya, they receive less than 10 percent of all agriculture extension services.
- The social relations between men and women are shaped and reinforced by social and economic institutions, legal and governance structures, and households.
 - Women in Kenya own less than 10 percent of agriculture land. Inequalities between men's and women's access to information and services may be exacerbated by producer associations who require landownership for membership.

HOW DOES GENDER RELATE TO VALUE CHAINS?

Gender issues shape value chain operations:

- **Who does what (men's and women's jobs and tasks).** Men and women are often responsible for different farm-related tasks, hired for different tasks within agribusiness firms and segregated into different agribusiness activities.
- **Who has what (men's and women's access to and control over resources).** Men's and women's access to assets - land, capital, credit, knowledge, information, association membership, social networks – shape their employment opportunities and where they are likely to participate in the value chain. Lack of access to one asset may affect access to other assets. For example, lack of access and control over land may restrict association membership and access to extensions services, information and credit.
- **Who benefits from value chain activities.** Where men and women are located in the chain and their relative access to assets impacts the benefits they receive from value chain activities.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- **Gender-based constraints to productivity and employment can impact competitiveness.** Gender-based constraints refer to restrictions on men's or women's access to resources opportunities that are based on their gender roles or responsibilities. For example, women are often prevented from improving the overall quality and quantity of horticulture crops because they lack access to services provided by producer associations as a result of a membership requirement of landownership. Women's lack of access to support services and information that can improve the quality and quantity of crops reduces efforts to upgrade production. If production of quality crops to buyers is reduced then vertical linkages along the value chain are also weakened.
- **Gender-based constraints may hinder the achievement of program objectives.** If a program has an objective to increase productivity of targeted horticulture and women are not receiving appropriate guidance, the program will miss opportunities to increase productivity.
- **Gender-based constraints may limit women's role as value chain actors.** In the example of women's lack of access to support services, the constraint maintains women's status quo as resource-poor producers. Women miss important opportunities to benefit from efforts to pool resources and to share information, services and inputs.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF INTEGRATING GENDER ISSUES INTO VALUE CHAIN ACTIVITIES?

- Overcome gender-based barriers that constrain agricultural competitiveness, program objectives and women's economic advancement.
- Promote equality of opportunity according to differences and needs of men and women.
- Increase the participation of both men and women in program activities.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF IMPROVING GENDER INTEGRATION IN VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT?

- **Economic and social gains.** Gender equality is good for economic growth. Developing value chains and supporting gender equality – equal opportunities for men and women – are mutually supportive goals. By understanding and addressing gender issues in value chain development, economic and social gains can be achieved.
- **Improved overall program performance.** By addressing gender-based constraints and identifying opportunities to support women as value chain actors, programs are more easily able to reach their targets and objectives.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Members of St. Cecilia women's group solar drying mango as part of USAID-KHCP's value addition activities.