

## Helpdesk Research Report

# Women's and girls' benefits from market-oriented agriculture in Uganda

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### Question

*What approaches have been successful in ensuring that women and girls benefit from market-oriented agriculture and agribusiness projects? Draw on evidence from Uganda and, failing that, from Kenya and Tanzania. Where possible, examine: key challenges facing women's increased productivity and successful responses to them; women's access to higher return and non-farm activities and its impact on income and poverty; the benefits of and approaches to non-farm activities related to the agricultural value chain; key channels and interventions for transmission of identified benefits; intervention components or complementary interventions critical to success; interventions that have not worked, failed to include or negatively impacted women.*

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## 1. Overview

### Summary of the report

**The Ugandan economy is dominated by agriculture**, which accounted for 80 per cent of employment in 2008 and 22 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2005 (figures cited in Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.335). In rural areas, over 85 per cent of the population depend on agriculture as their main livelihood

(FOWODE 2012, p.3). Production is predominantly for national consumption, and 66 per cent of agricultural GDP came from food crops in 2005 (figures cited in Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.335).

Government action centres on 'eradicating poverty by **transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture**' (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.335; FOWODE 2012, p.3). Yet despite the modernisation plan and the growth in commercial agriculture, rural poverty is still high, particularly in the north and east – poverty declined until 2003 but increased thereafter (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.335; Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.19). The **majority of subsistence farmers are poor men and women** who struggle with lack of knowledge and skills, lack of credit, lack of information about what to produce and how to produce to earn more money, disease (e.g. HIV/AIDS, malaria), insecurity and poor yields (FOWODE 2012, p.3).

**Women and girls make a very large contribution to Ugandan agriculture** – 72 per cent of all employed women and 90 per cent of all rural women work in agriculture, when only 53 per cent of rural men do (FOWODE 2012, p.3). However, women are at a disadvantaged position. For instance, they owned only 7 per cent of productive land in 2005 (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.340). In this context, which approaches to market-oriented agriculture and agribusiness have benefited women and girls? A rapid literature review found:

- **Internal obstacles** include: ownership, tenure and access in relation to land; a gendered division of labour and time; unequal domestic decision-making power; interactions between poverty, the harvest cycle and the food market; and changing household profiles and gender dynamics.
- **Problems with national and international approaches** are manifested by their limited success and some shortcomings to date. Persistent problems include: *de facto* gender and middle class biases; the creation of local dependency; problematic assumptions (e.g. promoting legal changes as a key means to change ownership of land); and a lack of gender mainstreaming.
- **Promising approaches for national and international action** are:
  - **Making interventions work for women and girls.** Approaches include mainstreaming gender in strategies and funding, strong practices such as evaluation and adaptation to context, and managing tradeoffs and unintended consequences regarding gender equality.
  - **Making commercial food markets work for women's income and assets.** This means ensuring market availability and access for women, addressing disadvantageous gender norms (e.g. through capacity-building for women farmers). This also entails connecting value chains, asset development and choices of commodities with gender equality.
  - **Securing land tenure and legal awareness** for women.
  - **Strengthening cooperative action and participation**, amongst others through farmer groups.
  - **Equipping women and girls better**, through improved extension services and farmer field schools, agricultural inputs, appropriate technologies and dissemination of information.
  - **Making markets work for household food security**, by promoting women's crops, supporting crop diversity and security women's rights to the cereal harvest.

## Evidence base

There are large bodies of well-established knowledge available on women, girls and gender in agriculture<sup>1</sup>, on market-oriented agriculture and agribusiness, and on rural development. At their intersection, the body of knowledge that explicitly addresses women and girls in market-oriented agriculture and agribusiness is large on low- and middle-income countries, medium-sized on East Africa, and **limited but significant enough on Uganda**<sup>2</sup>. The report focuses on recent evidence about Uganda.

There is no systematic review or meta-review. Rather, the evidence **combines general studies and case studies** about specific sectors, aspects of the issue, projects, interventions or locations. A significant part of the literature focuses on describing and analysing the situation, suggesting correlations more than causalities. Most of the literature examines direct and indirect links between various factors – only a minor part of it directly assesses the impact of interventions.

The **majority of the evidence comes from academic studies**, including assessments of interventions. The report uses academic case studies and a mix of evaluation from donors, NGOs and policy institutions (the most rigorous ones were selected for inclusion, leaving aside self-reporting or documents focused on inputs, processes and outcomes rather than impact). **Areas of intervention are covered unevenly** in the evidence base: whereas interventions to improve women's health, education and nutrition are well documented, evidence about interventions on poor female farmers' productive needs 'is relatively limited, is typically confined to one resource (such as land), does not consider the interactions among other resources, and tends to be in the unpublished literature' (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010, p.581).

While there is **largely agreement in analyses of internal obstacles**, there are **some divisions about the benefits of existing approaches and about recommendations**. Most references promoting market-oriented agriculture focus on identifying and solving difficulties in the shift towards commercialisation, whereas some authors focused on food security offer different insights and suggestions that can conflict with market-oriented perspectives. As Hill & Vigneri (2009, p.29) indicate, further work is still needed to better identify the most appropriate interventions.

## 2. Internal obstacles

There is a consensus in the literature that **gendered factors restrict or prevent women's and girls' benefits** from market-oriented agriculture and agribusiness. Women 'are just as productive as men and receive just as high prices as men when they farm with *equal* resources and sell their crops in the *same way*'; the problem lies with women rarely having an access to assets and markets that is similar to men, which shapes how they produce and market crops (Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.28). Gender inequality is a direct, structural root cause of poverty and food insecurity (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, pp.340-341).

### Ownership, tenure and access in relation to land

There are **significant gender gaps** in ownership of assets, especially with regard to land, its control and decision-making about its use (FOWODE 2012, p.17). Women farmers cannot easily access land because of the costs involved, cultural norms and overlapping land rights (*idem*, p.6).

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<sup>1</sup> For general references that discuss Uganda, see: FAO (2011); Hill and Vigneri (2009, pp.3-11); Rubin & Manfre (2009).

<sup>2</sup> This possibility to focus on Uganda is helpful because the agro-ecological conditions there set it apart from other countries in East Africa (Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.19; Peterman et al. 2011, p.1504).

Women-headed households (WHHs) have **low levels of cultivatable land** compared to men-headed households (MHHs) (FOWODE 2012, pp.4-5; Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.22, Peterman et al. 2011, p.1499). MHHs hold more than twice the size of WHHs' land. The smaller land sizes of most WHHs impede commercialization and prevent the use of land as collateral in credit (FOWODE 2012, pp.4-5). Even when WHHs have land, their level of asset depletion through sales is much higher than MHHs', because WHHs lack viable income to meet their basic needs and resort to selling land (FOWODE 2012, pp.4-5). Land tenure insecurity is widespread for women, as men tend to own the land and to exclude widows from ownership (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, pp.340-341; FOWODE 2012, p.6).

The asymmetry around land 'has **direct implications** for the productivity of women's labour', their willingness to invest in land and in long-term strategies for soils or perennial crops, their capacity to influence land use priorities and their poverty (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, p.341; FOWODE 2012, pp.4-5, p.14). Further, a project evaluation found that a very low fraction of all household assets (not just land) are owned exclusively by the wife, with considerable variation by district (Quisumbing et al., forthcoming).

## Gendered division of labour and time

**Women 'are overloaded with household and farming work'** in rural areas, with workloads that 'considerably exceed those of men' (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.340; FOWODE 2012, p.8). Women bear the main 'responsibility for domestic duties and food production while men spend time on productive activities or at leisure' (FOWODE 2012, p.11). Women contribute the bulk of hours and do most of the work in agriculture (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, pp.340-341; FOWODE 2012, p.11).

There is consensus that **farming and selling of crops and livestock are distinct by gender**<sup>3</sup>. Men and MHHs commonly concentrate on business opportunities. Women and WHHs generally focus on items most relevant to home consumption and food security – they have control of subsistence crops. Many WHHs allocate less land to cash crops (FOWODE 2012, p.8). Men and women also generally fulfil different types of tasks in farming (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, 340, FOWODE 2012, pp.7-8; Njuki et al. 2011). Even WHHs involved in cash crops do not adopt the same agricultural practices as MHHs. In the coffee sector, women plant proportionately fewer trees, plant younger trees, and sell much smaller quantities due to the small scale of their farming – though they obtain comparable yields (Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.22).

In most districts, MHHs act as employers within the agriculture sector while **WHHs are largely employees** (FOWODE 2012, p.8). Poor women often work in farming jobs for income (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, pp.340-341). At the same time, WHHs in the coffee sector have less labour available than MHHs, due to the constraints on their time and income (Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.29).

These inequalities are compounded by the characteristics of WHHs. For instance, in the coffee sector, WHHs tend to have **lower levels of wealth and education**, and to be headed by older persons (68% of heads in WHHs in the sector are widows) (Hill & Vigneri 2009, pp.21-22).

Such constraints lead to women **adopting less favourable practices and missing out on opportunities**. Men dominate community projects and trainings in farming skills (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.340). Another example is that women have found it especially difficult to accessing affordable credit (FOWODE 2012,

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<sup>3</sup> See, among others: Alinyo & Leahy 2012, p.341, p.343; FOWODE 2012, pp.11-12, 14; Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.2; Njuki et al. 2011; Quisumbing et al., forthcoming; Peterman et al. 2011, pp.1491-1492.

p.12). This is due to: lack of collateral; very limited access to relevant information; and access to credit from the Bank of Uganda *de facto* favouring large-scale farmers, who are mostly male (*ibidem*).

## Unequal domestic decision-making power

Men and women 'have complex and shifting roles', and decision-making on agricultural production and marketing is complex (Quisumbing et al., forthcoming). Overall, women are disadvantaged in domestic decision-making power (Hill & Vigneri 2009, p.3). There is consensus that **women have little authority over marketing, sales, income and spending** (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, pp.340-341, p.344; FOWODE 2012, p.7, pp.11-12; Njuki et al. 2011). Intra-household bargaining matters between men and women, and across generations, with adolescents and children possibly influencing productivity outcomes (Peterman et al. 2011, p.1503).

**Decisions to market** are mainly made by men (70 per cent) or jointly (15 per cent) (FOWODE 2012, p.8). Women cannot decide 'when and how much farm produce should be sold, let alone what the income should be used for' (Alinyo & Leahy 2012, pp.340-341). In many cases, men sell all the produce shortly after harvesting season, and then spend the income on non-essential items. Women trying to be involved in such marketing and spending might be faced with domestic violence or divorce (*ibidem*).

Under these conditions, the government's strategy of moving poor families from subsistence to **commercial farming 'is by no means guaranteed to relieve food insecurity'**, Alinyo and Leahy (2012, p.340) explain. On the contrary, food that would have been stored for household use before marketisation is now more likely to be sold, leaving families without food and without the cash to pay for food (*ibidem*).

## Interactions between poverty, the harvest cycle and the food market

References dealing with food security in agriculture draw attention to distinct findings on obstacles to women's and girls' benefits. Alinyo and Leahy (2012, p.341) thus note that, for poor farmers, 'the commercialisation of agriculture takes place **in relation to their condition of poverty**'. Poor smallholder farmers are very likely to sell all their harvest immediately to get cash, when prices for the produce are very low, and to spend cash on goods and services that they urgently need (*idem*, pp.340-341). Later in the year, they are often forced to buy food at higher prices. While farmers with a government salary can smooth out variations, others commonly resort to loans at exorbitant interest rates in the hungry period, becoming trapped in a vicious cycle. Such patterns in producing, selling and buying are embedded in unequal gender relations (*ibidem*).

**Limited markets and market access** is a problem for both men and women: long distances to village markets, low prices paid for food crops, high market dues demanded by local government councils are key constraints (FOWODE 2012, p.14).

There are **gendered differences in market access and marketing patterns**. Examining coffee farmers, Hill and Vigneri (2009, pp.23-24, p.28) find that gender differences in marketing are largely explained by women marketing smaller quantities and not owning bicycles. MHHs' and WHHs' access to markets differs in relation to bicycle ownership. In addition, WHHs have less access to trader networks and the market information these can provide. WHHs also 'engage in less value addition (transporting to market, milling)' (*idem*, p.24). Women find themselves limited to marketing channels with 'very low transaction costs, but also lower prices' (*idem*, p.28). The main challenge for women is **accessing marketing channels that allow value addition**, rather than any discrimination in marketing channels (*idem*, p.27).

## Changing household profiles and gender dynamics

In recent years, **agriculture has become increasingly dependent on women** (FOWODE 2012, p.4). This is due to: changes in attitudes towards agriculture (low earnings have led to the migration of men and youth to urban areas); insecurity, especially in the North; illness and death due to HIV/AIDs and other diseases. Close to 26.3 per cent of rural households are headed by women, most of whom are 26-49 years old. Most have lower education and less capital than men (e.g. 39 per cent lack formal education) (*ibidem*).

Bergman Lodin (2012, p.273), writing about NERICA rice, emphasises that '**gender roles and responsibilities are dynamic** and evolve in response to changing economic circumstances'. Changes in gender roles have also happened in urban areas, with women doing more income-generating work outside agriculture (FOWODE 2012, p.12). Yet men have not taken on more responsibilities. As a result, women's roles and responsibilities have increased, creating issues with time constraints (*ibidem*).

## 3. Problems with national and international approaches

### Limited successes and shortcomings

At **national level**, from 2002-2003 to 2009-2010, the proportion of persons engaged in agriculture increased from 6.5 per cent to over 7.3 per cent (FOWODE 2012, p.16). However, real growth in agricultural output declined from 7.9 per cent in 2005-2006 to 2.4 per cent in 2009-2010. This has contributed to low earnings for rural farmers, exacerbating **poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and loss of interest in agriculture** (*ibidem*).

At **district level**, Alinyo and Leahy (2012) explore interventions by the government and NGOs in five counties of the districts of Kapchorwa and Bukwo. They show that numerous projects have achieved **only minor success** against poverty and food insecurity: interventions have in fact contributed to food insecurity (*idem*, p.342). 'Female- and orphan-headed households, the poor and those without any land ownership were the worst affected' (*id.*, p.337). This failure **results in gendered problems**. For example, prostitution is a common response, and HIV/AIDS a likely outcome. Enrolment for girls in primary schools is lower than for boys, with the highest disparity in the peak of food insecurity (*ibidem*).

### Persistent problems in existing approaches

#### *De facto gender bias*

Alinyo and Leahy (2012) observe that the **methods of recruitment and participation in projects** are often dominated by those who are already leading members – generally leading men – of the community.

The **formation of groups in response to outside projects** 'is hasty, causes suspicion, and relies on existing power structures' (*idem*, p.337). With the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), farmers selected for leadership are wealthier and are given further inputs. Recruitment criteria (such as membership fees, residency, or land ownership) disqualify or discourage those in need, including women (*id.*, 337-338). Interventions largely provide trainings to men and do not strive to accommodate women's constraints. Thus, trainings do not reach the ones most involved in production (*id.*, p.340).

NAADS **processes and decision-making remain controlled by men**, despite the overwhelming participation of women in farmer groups – even in supposedly women-only groups (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2011, pp.74-76). Factors undermining women include their low literacy rates, their time burden, and their weak ownership and control of resources, especially land. Although there are many elderly women in groups, they have not been able to influence decisions, and very few are in leadership (*ibidem*).

### ***De facto middle class bias***

Similarly, **project participants and the government exclude the poor**. The middle class, who dominate projects, prefer excluding the poor, whom they dismiss as uninterested or responsible for their poverty (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, p.338). Likewise, the government focuses on the 'economically active poor', i.e. farmers with access to productive assets and some skills and knowledge (*ibidem*). All this excludes poorer subsistence farmers – including many women (*idem*, 337-338). Moreover, **participation in projects tends to be passive**, with people 'being told what is to happen' (*idem*, p.342). Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011, p.70) note that the gap between farmers' priorities and the priorities of NAADS (often imposed on farmers) led to dissatisfaction among many farmers. Similarly, the information conveyed through NAADS extension services was of limited use to poorer farmers, in particular to women, because of the lack of resources (especially land and cash) with which to take advantage of the information provided (*ibidem*).

**Approaches thus tend to target the middle class** (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, p.335, pp.338-339). Alinyo and Leahy argue that: 'Successful farming for the middle class will not solve the cash problems of the poor' (*idem*, p.339). In addition, export-oriented maize production from wealthier farmers drove up the local price of maize (*ibidem*). Thus, funding for commercial enterprise has helped a minority benefit, while the vast majority has not experienced any improvement. Meanwhile, funds are unavailable for more effective strategies (*ibid.*).

### ***Creating dependency***

One study warns that **approaches encourage farmers' dependency on external resources** (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, p.339). External projects 'are very likely to fail when outside funding ceases' (*ibidem*). Useful traditional farming systems and indigenous knowledge are fast disappearing (*ibid.*). For example, harvests used to be stored into two granaries, with one controlled by the wife for household use; by contrast, current donor strategies promote mass unified storage (*idem*, pp.343-344). Projects should not depend upon the continued supply or purchase of agricultural inputs in advance (*idem*, p.345).

### ***Problematic assumptions***

Alinyo and Leahy (2012, pp.340-341), criticising majority perspectives on agriculture in Uganda, note that many approaches assume 'that **agricultural commercialisation** will solve problems of poverty'. Instead, the authors argue that effective action must take into account poverty and its practical dynamics, such as post-harvest sales cycles and a gendered power imbalance in households (*idem*, p.343). For example, a study on the commercialization of dairy and the formalization of milk markets (cited in Meinzen-Dick et al. 2011, p.35) shows that women were less likely to receive money through cooperatives. In households selling milk to private traders, the money was received by females in 34.5 per cent of households; with the start of a cooperative-owned plant, this proportion dropped to 16.7 per cent.

Likewise, a few authors, challenging majority views on the benefits of integrating Ugandan agriculture into world markets more, document that household gains from the 1980s **agricultural liberalisation** may

have been less than expected. In one rural district, Kanyamurwa et al. (2013, pp.837-838) found that female producers of food and of coffee (a cash crop mainly geared towards export) were similarly poor, involved in small-scale production, 'largely in the informal economy for inputs and capital needs', of a similar age and education level, and with similar health outcomes (*idem*, p.837). The coffee producers had greater ownership of land and livestock, higher incomes and greater access to inputs; they also used a wider variety of markets for their sales. However, they had to work longer hours to obtain these returns, and they had poorer dietary outcomes and greater stress over food security (*id.*, pp.837-838).

Interventions tend to promote **women's legal ownership of land** (Alinyo and Leahy 2012, p.340, pp.341-342; FOWODE 2012, p.6). However, Alinyo and Leahy (2012, pp.341-342) point out that the inheritance law 'has not stopped seizures of widow's lands', and argue that men's control of income is 'unlikely to be overturned by legal co-ownership'.

### ***Lack of gender mainstreaming***

There is a **lack of gender analysis to inform policy** formulation, planning and budgeting in the agricultural sector, resulting in limited gender responsiveness (FOWODE 2012, p.13, p.15). Women and youth have expressed concern about the limited enterprises NAADS made available (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2011, pp.74-76). Crops prioritised by NAADS require 'large scales of land and financial capital, are labour intensive and purely male dominated' (FOWODE 2012, pp.15-16). As a result, 80 per cent of women in agriculture have not received this funding. Likewise, **credit facilities from the Bank of Uganda are not gender-sensitive** and do not address men' and women's different needs in agriculture (*idem*, p.17).

## **4. Promising approaches**

On specific approaches, there are large areas of agreement amongst authors, for example on the importance of gender mainstreaming in programming. However, differences in fundamental assumptions separate the majority of recommendations, which support an increase in market-oriented agriculture as beneficial to women and girls, and the minority of recommendations that prioritise the benefits of preserving non-commercial agriculture for these populations. Both strands are based on methodologically rigorous studies.

As a cross-cutting recommendation, Alinyo and Leahy argue that approaches must **depend on resources that the poor can access and maintain**, and combine a range of interventions, to be chosen and adapted locally (2012, p.339, pp.344-345).

### **Making interventions work for women and girls**

Reflecting a consensus in the literature, FOWODE (2012, pp.16-17) and Hill and Vigneri (2009, p.29) argue that gender disparity must be reduced for agriculture to contribute to development and poverty reduction. According to FOWODE (2012, p.16), the agriculture sector 'needs to **design and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy**'. It would cut across the value chains in agricultural production and ensure the gender responsiveness of all sectoral action and budgets in central and local government (*ibidem*). Moreover, Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011, p.75) advocate more capacity building of NAADS service providers in gender analysis.

Likewise, FOWODE points to the need to design and implement **gender-sensitive agriculture credit facilities** (2012, pp.16-17). Hill and Vigneri (2009, p.29) recommend 'contract farming targeted at female

farmers, improved access to microfinance for women, or female savings schemes and credit associations'. However, FOWODE (2012, p.12) warns that Savings And Credit Co-operatives have proven expensive and exploitative, which has discouraged farmers from applying for credit.

Quisumbing and Pandolfelli (2010, p.589) articulate recommendations about interventions:

- Ensuring rigorous and holistic **evaluations** (a point also made by Kaaria et al. 2008, p.63).
- Exploring alternative **design and delivery**, informed by evaluations.
- Meeting **women's diverse needs**, by being sensitive to the tradeoffs 'entailed in challenging or respecting local gender norms', and by taking into account women's heterogeneity.
- Adjusting to the socio-cultural **culture and context**.

In addition, Peterman et al. (2011, pp.1504-1505) call for **continued and more robust treatment of gender**. This requires more nuanced and specific data collection efforts.

Njuki et al. (2011, p.16) also address **unintended consequences**: farmer-market linkages can weaken women's control over low-income commodities as they start to attract higher prices. Skill-building and gender transformative approaches can help against that (*ibidem*). Monitoring and evaluation also need to gender indicators and to look at production systems, income distribution and income use (*ibid.*).

## Making markets work for women's income and assets

FOWODE, in line with the majority of references, argues that women should also be encouraged to **engage more in the production of cash crops or high value commodities** to increase their income (2012, pp.16-17). To this end, WHHs and women need to have greater access to extension services, improved inputs and implements, markets and market information, and labour saving technologies (*ibidem*).

### *Market availability and access*

FOWODE (2012, p.14) argues that the shift to commercial agriculture will only be possible when interventions pay attention to the critical constraints on **market availability and access** for women. Hill and Vigneri (2009, pp.28-29) make specific recommendations on this issue:

- Where food markets are characterised by poor integration and high price volatility, a **better integration of markets** through improved roads and 'increased mobile networks (to reduce trader search costs)' will enable women to engage in cash crop production (*idem*, pp.28-29).
- In marketing channels with high fixed costs of transacting (such as 'transporting produce to the nearby market'), **scale in marketing** is required (*idem*, p.29). Useful interventions for female farmers include: increasing their scale of production; enabling them 'to market at scale by combining their harvest with that of other farmers'; strengthening female farmers groups, or marketing groups that include female farmers; directly 'reducing transaction costs specifically faced by women' (e.g. by 'encouraging female use of bicycles to be more socially acceptable') (*ibidem*).
- When purchasing agricultural inputs is difficult and compensation with labour is not possible, **access to credit and extension** become even more important (*idem*, p.29).

Interventions need to **address gender norms that disadvantage women who seek new market opportunities** (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010, p.587). A successful example is 'Enabling Rural

Innovations’, a participatory research approach by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (Kaaria et al., 2008). The goal was to develop the capacity of rural women and the poor to analyse and access market opportunities for competitive products that would increase farm income and employment (*idem*, pp.54-55). Enterprises were selected based on the extent to which both women and men could benefit, and women had to account for between 30-50 per cent of group members (*id.*, p.54). Participants were trained in group leadership, conflict management, gender issues and HIV/AIDS awareness (*id.*, p.57). As a result of the project, women increased their incomes and assets (*id.*, pp.59-61). This in turn led to an increase in household and community decisions made jointly by men and women. In addition, women improved their skills (leadership, negotiation, marketing) and trained other farmers in experimentation and bargaining with traders – men improved significantly more than women in these areas though (*ibidem*).

### ***Gender-equitable value chains and asset development***

There are well-documented projects that generated some **positive results in terms of both income and household gender equality**. Bergman Lodin (2012, p.273) shows how successful commercial farming of NERICA upland rice created **socioeconomic leverage for women** vis-à-vis men farmers, within and between households, by expanding the space for women farmers to earn money through commercial agriculture in a way that tobacco never did. Households as a unit earned more money on NERICA sales, with women contributing the most and men earning the most (*idem*, p.272). However, in some households, women’s bargaining positions were strengthened, and spouses shared proceeds through more democratic dialogue. One reason was that NERICA is a high-value food crop, which challenges ‘the dichotomy between (men’s) high-value cash crops and (women’s) low-value food crops’ (*ibidem*). The rice also performs well without expensive chemical inputs, avoiding bias against women. As a result of these factors, women cultivating NERICA are not perceived – and do not perceive themselves – as adjuncts to their husbands, but as farming in their own right (*ibid.*). The majority of farmers, both women and men, refer to NERICA plots as ‘joint’ (*ibid.*). Female-headed households also increased their income (*idem*, p.273). Social acceptance of women cultivating NERICA, together with the low capital requirements for its production, has created new opportunities for them (*ibidem*). Still, stopping discrimination in property rights remains the key to furthering women’s bargaining power (*ibid.*).

Bolwig (2012, pp.23-24), looking at **smallholder contract farming** of certified organic pineapple and coffee, lays out how the schemes improved household food security and decreased poverty. The income was on average strong enough against resource diversion from food production. There were also some positive spill-over effects from technology and investment on food production. Yields did not decline for either cash or food crops. Gender relations were a critical factor in achieving these outcomes. The benefits and costs of participation were less favourable to women in both schemes, but ‘much more skewed’ against them in relation to coffee than to pineapple (*idem*, p.24). In the area of the pineapple scheme, ‘gender relations were generally more equal’, giving women better access to revenues and men less command over their labour (*ibidem*). In addition, higher revenues from pineapples than from coffee allowed pineapple farmers to hire more labour, ‘relaxing the demand on women’s time, and to acquire new land rather than converting land with food crops’ (*idem*, p.24).

Further insights into **gender-equitable value chains and asset development for women** emerge from an evaluation by randomized control trial of a HarvestPlus project to expand sweet potato production (cited in Quisumbing et al. forthcoming). Quisumbing et al. (forthcoming) observe there is a complex, mutually conditioning relationship between value chains and different types of assets. Gender norms influence access to, control over, and ownership of assets, and define appropriate occupational positions in the

chain. Human and social capital plays a critical role: trainings and different types of farmer associations determine the pathway and extent of asset accumulation (*ibidem*). Interventions must adjust to the local social and cultural constraints on women's participation in these value chains. For example, disseminating extension messages through farmers' groups and women's networks appears to work well (*ibid.*).

A quantitative analysis by Njuki et al. (2011, p.15) offers complementary insights: How much control women have over agricultural income depends on the **choice of commodity**, the type of market (greater control for women in sales on local markets), the amount of income from a particular commodity, the age of the head of household and the age of the woman. Specifically, women generally control income from commodities with lower revenues (e.g. beans and groundnuts) and control 'a lower share of income from high revenue commodities' such as soybeans (*idem*, p.12, p.15). Women 'control more income from crops traditionally used for food' than from commercial crops such as potatoes, with women on their own controlling only 18.5 per cent of the income from potatoes (*id.*, p.8, p.15). Across commodities, women control 'a higher income share from crops than from livestock' (*id.*, p.15). For example, in East Africa, where and when milk is sold matters. Women control the evening milk more than the morning one, mainly because the evening milk is sold by women to neighbours and local traders, whereas the morning production is sold to cooperatives and plants where the registered members and payees are men (*id.*, p.10).

## Securing land tenure and legal awareness

Hill and Vigneri (2009, p.28) recommend improving **women's access to land** to address the issue of scale as a determinant of the production of cash crops – a point widely made in the literature reviewed. FOWODE (2012, p.17) recommends passing and implementing national policies and laws in this direction. Alinyo and Leahy (2012, p.344) add that land shortage and ownership insecurity can 'only be relieved by **strong government action**'. Their recommendations include: funding to enable widows to claim their legal right to ownership of their farm; government-funded land redistribution for the landless poor; the resolution of land disputes (*idem*, p.342).

**Legal awareness is important** too (Deininger, Ayalew Ali & Yamano 2008, cited in Quisumbing & Pandolfelli 2010, p.582). Households' awareness of their legal land rights increased their propensity to undertake soil conservation, which would be equivalent of 'increasing the length of possession by more than 15 years or the head's level of education by more than 7 years' (*ibidem*). Moreover, because legal awareness is limited, legal literacy campaigns could have a large impact on agricultural productivity (*ibid.*).

## Strengthening cooperative action and participation

Quisumbing et al. (forthcoming, 2013), echoing a number of authors, stress that targeted support to farmers' groups may be needed, in addition to trainings and to channelling the value chain benefits to individual women (increasing women's financial, human and social capital). To support women's control of the physical and financial assets generated from value chains, projects need to turn women's gains 'into avenues for the acquisition of other physical assets required to expand agribusinesses and to enter the non-production nodes of the value chain' (*ibidem*). One strategy may be to **strengthen horizontal linkages** between producer associations, cooperatives or business associations, 'particularly those at the same stage of the value chain' (*ibid.*). The groups and their links help overcome individual farmers' constraints and often let members access more services in the value chain, 'including inputs, credit, and

education or training' (*ibid.*). The groups can increase incentives for buyers and producers to engage in a market relationship (*ibid.*).

Indeed, several authors and organisations recommend encouraging cooperative action among women and girls through **farmer groups, particularly women farmer groups**. Benefits can be facilitating the 'access to agricultural extension services, demonstrations and learning' (FOWODE 2012, p.13); lowering costs by purchasing inputs in bulk (*idem*, p.17); and allowing women to access profitable marketing channels (Hill and Vigneri 2009, p.29). Interventions to this end 'could include group leadership training, financial management training, training group leaders on how to find buyers, or introducing local buyers to female marketing groups' (Hill and Vigneri 2009, p.29). Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011, p.35) stress that interventions then need to ensure that women producers are members of the cooperatives and receive payment for their produce.

In addition, Alinyo and Leahy (2012, p.342) argue that national and international interventions would be more successful if **all the people in a neighbourhood were actively involved** in analysis and implementation on agriculture and food security. Many agricultural problems require a holistic, community-wide approach and 'can best be addressed through collective action' (*ibidem*). An approach based on catchment areas has the potential to involve whole communities (*ibid.*). The **participation of women and the poor is essential** (*idem*, p.344). Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011, p.75) calls for women's participation in needs assessments and solutions, fostered by decision-making power and functional literacy.

## Equipping women and girls better

Like many other references, FOWODE (2012, .15) advocates scaling up and improving **extension services**. Overall, evidence about the impact of NAADS is mixed: the programme has improved crop productivity (the value of gross crop output per acre for participants has increased by up to 29 per cent), but contributed to a decline (about 27–45 per cent) in participants' livestock productivity (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2011, pp.63-64)<sup>4</sup>. A qualitative impact evaluation (Davis et al. 2012) suggests that **farmer field schools** could be a key strategy for providing agricultural extension services to poor female farmers in Uganda. Female membership stood at 50 per cent (*idem*, p.411). Crop productivity and livestock production increased more for participating WHHs than for MHHs (*id.*, pp.407-408). However, another study mentions limitations (Isubikalu 2007, cited in Meinzen-Dick et al. 2011, p.66): in such schools, men dominated most discussions and activities, and implementation had failed to make extension systems responsive to local problems.

FOWODE also argues that increased use of **agricultural inputs** is key – this implies providing access, availability, knowledge and help with costs (2012, p.15). The organisation advocates 'providing free or subsidised farm inputs to poor households', particularly to WHHs who have low incomes and cannot afford to purchase inputs (*idem*, p.17). Likewise, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has developed **appropriate technologies**, including animal traction and mechanisation, which would save labour and time for women farmers and allow them to do other productive work. However, these technologies have only been promoted on a small scale so far, benefiting a few farmers (*id.*, p.13).

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<sup>4</sup> Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011) use the following source on NAADS impact: Benin, S., Thurlow, J., Diao, X., Kebba, A., & Ofwono, N. (2008). Agricultural Growth and Investment Options for Poverty Reduction in Uganda. *IFPRI Discussion Paper No. 790*. IFPRI. <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp00790.pdf>

Any **dissemination of information or inputs** needs to take into account 'the gendered nature of social networks', e.g. in interactions with other households as a key channel (Quisumbing et al., forthcoming).

## Making markets work for household food security

Given the negative impact commercial agriculture has sometimes had on food security, Alinyo and Leahy (2012) offer distinct recommendations grounded in the prioritisation of a more secure route to everyday food security for poorer families – this represents a minority approach in the literature. Their study identifies a **set of strategies** to make food markets work for women (*idem*, pp.342-344). In addition to 'securing land tenure for the poor' (*idem*, p.342) and strengthening participation (*id.*, p.342), they suggest:

- **Growing crops that farmers are unlikely to sell for cash and that they can harvest throughout the year or stored** (*id.*, pp.342-344). This entails maximising the spread of crop harvests and storage so food is available year-round, through crop diversity (*ibidem*). Interventions can help develop these crops, assist with storage technologies, promote women-controlled crops and livestock, construct water tanks for domestic use, and support kitchen gardens – one of the rare projects the authors found to be effective (*ibidem*).
- **Prioritising crops and livestock women control** – sweet potatoes, sorghum, millet, vegetables and poultry – distinct from men-controlled maize, coffee, barley, wheat, cattle and goats. The authors paradoxically consider such gender segregation 'as an asset' (p.343). They argue that a good starting point is kitchen gardening activities, with emphasis on women-controlled root and cereal crops, poultry and 'tree crops for fuel wood, fodder, fruit, and nuts' (p.343).
- **Securing 'women's ownership of part of the cereal harvest for storage'** (p.344). Historically, the local community had addressed hunger by dividing and storing the harvest into one granary for household use (controlled by the wife) and another for other purposes (p.343). The 'collapse of this arrangement has increased conflicts between men and women and led to food shortages' (p.344). Some women interviewees recommended returning to this practice, using the enactment of by-laws (pp.343-344). Projects could mobilise communities and local leaders to realise this (p.344).

## 5. Other relevant references

### Cross-sectoral studies

#### Country-wide studies

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## Key websites

- Agri-Hub Uganda - Gender in value chains: <http://apf-uganda.ning.com/group/gender-in-value-chains>  
A forum about this helpdesk query was created here: <http://apf-uganda.ning.com/forum/topics/3516955:Topic:60319>
- FAO – Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division: <http://www.fao.org/economic/esw/about-us/en/>
- IFAD in Uganda: <http://www.ifad.org/english/operations/pf/uga/index.htm>
- IFPRI – Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project – Harvest plus (Uganda): <http://gaap.ifpri.info/harvest-plus-uganda/>
- IFPRI - Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) Pilot for Uganda: <http://www.ifpri.org/dataset/women-s-empowerment-agriculture-index-weai-pilot-uganda>

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