



“Very often, efforts to improve value chains miss out half of the population – the female half. It is men who sell the products and who keep the money from those sales. The women, who do much of the work but are not recognized for it, often have to work even harder to meet ever-increasing quality requirements. But they see few of the benefits.”

Anna Laven, co-editor of [Challenging Chains to Change](#)¹

Farmers in Burkina Faso pick the seeds from freshly harvested cotton. Olivier Girard, © CIFOR, Flickr

8 Value Chains

There is a growing interest in value chain approaches in the agricultural sector. From governments' and donors' perspective, they are instrumental in helping smallholders shift from subsistence farming, to earning cash from their crops, thus becoming more secure. Value chain approaches are also seen as more holistic and effective than many previous interventions, which have tended to focus on improving the capacity of one set of actors, such as producers, whilst not considering how to strengthen the whole value chain – from “field to fork” and beyond. This lack of a holistic focus has meant that in some cases farmers have been encouraged to produce for a weak or non-existent market. As one development worker commented, “There is only so much guava jam Kenya can take!”¹

This chapter discusses gender issues in value chains and presents a typology for interventions. The discussion is illustrated by two case studies looking at the work of the Kenya Horticultural Crops Authority (KHCA), and the Zimbabwe Organic Producers and Promoters Association (ZOPPA), which has supported organic women farmers under very difficult economic circumstances.

Gender issues in value chains

Although agricultural commercialization is continually creating new market opportunities, much of this market is very difficult for poorer women and men producers, processors and traders to access because of their inability to meet stringent product and delivery requirements.² As supermarkets extend their geographical range and virtually extinguish local markets in some countries, and as buyers structure horticultural value chains ever more minutely, smallholders are losing out. Effective and hygienic post-harvest processing, packing (including in some cases cold storage) and transport to markets is essential, yet very costly and difficult in areas with poor roads. Numerous intermediaries step in, each taking a small slice of the profit along the way, which often results in needlessly expensive and uncompetitive goods. Since capacity among smallholders is often so low, supermarkets frequently prefer to source from large producers, or import goods from abroad, rather than support local smallholders. In response, development actors need to work with small farmers and other actors to significantly develop their capacity to engage in “just in time” delivery schedules, and to produce the kind of uniform product that is often demanded by consumers.³ Encouraging policy support to the smallholder sector is vital, since capacity support alone will not enable smallholders and associated small and medium-scale entrepreneurs to compete effectively.⁴

1 Chapter 8 title page quotation: See <http://www.kit.nl/kit/Publication?item=3289>.

2 Farnworth, C. R. (2009). Module 5: Gender and Agricultural Markets. In *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*. The World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and International Fund for Agricultural Development, Washington, DC. <http://go.worldbank.org/5Z9QPCC7L0>.

Also, see Berdegue, J. A. and Reardon, T. (2008). The retail-led transformation of agrifood systems. In *Creating Food Futures: Trade, Ethics and the Environment*. C.R. Farnworth, J. Jiggins, and E.V. Thomas (eds.). Gower Publishing Ltd., Aldershot, UK. 11–26. <http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=637&calcTitle=1&isbn=9780754649076&lang=cy-GB>.

3 Boselie, D., Henson, S. and Weatherspoon, D. (2003). Supermarket Procurement Practices in Developing Countries: Redefining the Roles of the Public and Private Sectors. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 85(5). 1155–61. DOI:10.1111/j.0092-5853.2003.00522.x.

4 Berdegue and Reardon (2008), op.cit.

Many value chain programmes target “youth”, but for several reasons, including that many women marry and have children while quite young, often the programmes reach mostly (or only) young men. This is particularly unfortunate because in many places, young women have more limited asset bases (current and expected) and fewer livelihood options than men, and thus need more support. Some women eke out a living by selling raw and processed products with very low profit margins.

Member of a women's group in Benin processes cassava. Anne Hoel, © World Bank, Flickr



Overlooking gender dynamics hampers the effectiveness of many value chains. Both women and men are constrained by local gender norms that can prevent them from acting as rational economic actors and maximizing market opportunities. For example, rigid gender roles and responsibilities along a value chain can prevent it from working well. If either the man or the woman is absent during a critical phase, from production to processing it may not be possible for them to take on a “male” or a “female” task (such as fertilizing, spraying, harvesting, husking, storing and pounding etc.).

As discussed in Chapter 5, household inequalities may also result in men and women failing to collaborate well to ensure maximum product quality. The Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) case study notes that in the Rwenzori Mountains of Uganda men typically control monies from the sale of Arabica coffee. Since women are responsible for putting food on the table yet have almost no money with which to buy key ingredients, they often sell unripened coffee at a low price “on the side”. Men also sell unripened coffee to meet their immediate personal needs. This behaviour results in poor-quality coffee entering the chain, low market interest, and low profit margins for all. More generally, since women often do not receive a “fair share” of the benefits from their work on cash crops, they may lack motivation, which can lead directly to poor product quality. Women’s heavy domestic workloads can also have an impact. In Senegal, women often harvest tomatoes in the heat of the day, with significant knock-on effects for product quality.⁵

Smallholder farmers and the managers of small associated value chain enterprises face many difficulties to effectively financing their participation. Banks are cautious about agricultural lending in any case due to the inherent risks involved. For women, it can be even harder than for poor men to obtain working and investment capital. But as noted in previous chapters, women’s relative lack of collateral, compared to men, and their relative lack of social standing and connections can make it very difficult for them to secure loans or find guarantors. As a consequence, women find it harder than men to develop thriving

5 Kitinoja, L. (2002). Identifying Scale-Appropriate Postharvest Technology. In *Postharvest Technology of Horticultural Crops*. A.A. Kader (ed.). Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and University of California, Oakland, CA, US. 481–90.

Ghanaian small-scale women traders face chronic lack of capital

Women aggregator/traders in the Techiman and Tamale maize markets in Ghana generally lack reliable value chain relationships which endure over the long term, whether to suppliers or to buyers. This can primarily be ascribed to their weak capital base – which, in turn, is partly due to their lead responsibility for financing their children’s education and for household necessities. Women traders are trapped in a vicious circle, whereby they never build up sufficient working capital to buy maize in order to meet the needs of large buyers, nor are they able to build up investment capital. Due to the perceived financial weaknesses of women actors, both suppliers and buyers tend to prefer male aggregator/traders as value chain partners. Below are some comments from women aggregator/traders in Tamale:

- We face competition from men maize traders. When the villagers bring their maize to sell, men traders pay in cash. They buy everything. The producers tell the women traders to make way for the men traders since we can only pay them when we have sold on the maize.
- Sometimes we want to buy maize in large quantities to meet an order, but we don’t have enough money. We have no one to act as guarantor and we have no collateral. If you do not save in the bank you cannot get a loan. The income we get is used to support our family, and whenever we sell maize we use the money pay school fees and domestic things like food. We don’t have enough left over to save in the bank. There are instances whereby farmers come to

supply the market but we cannot benefit from the low price they sell for.

- Even as we speak I have a customer who called from Ashanti region. He wants to buy 100 bags of maize, but I don’t have enough money to pay the producers. They will not wait until I get paid by the buyer – and he will not pay until I supply the maize.
- In many cases producers stop working with women aggregator/traders because we find it hard to pay in cash.

This said, some women aggregator/traders in the Techiman market stated that they have long-standing relationships with some bulk traders. These are either family members, or men that they trust to pay them the going rate for maize minus their commission. A few have become “maize queens”, but such women are the exception rather than the rule. Some maize queens take on female apprentices. In this way some younger, ambitious women obtain an entry point into this otherwise male-dominated, capital-intensive chain.

Freshly harvested maize in Ghana’s Northern Region. Neil Palmer, © OMA, Flickr



businesses and to shift from production into more lucrative parts of the chain. Whilst micro-credit can be an important starting point, in many larger amounts of working and investment capital are needed if women are to build competitive businesses, as farmers, processors, traders and sellers along agricultural value chains. The experience to date is that women often lose existing niches in value chains when they are “improved” simply because they cannot finance the additional costs required to be competitive.



Agnes Forkuo, once a maize aggregator, got into farming when she saw the potential profits. Elisa Walton, © USAID Ghana

Women entrepreneurs face other gender-specific constraints, too. In many countries, women simply lack the time to take products to market due to their many responsibilities, and in some areas cultural restrictions such as *purdah*⁶ may make it hard for women to sell their products themselves for the best price, and to secure inputs themselves. Even in less culturally restrictive environments, women may be far less likely than men to have their own means of transport, and they often don't have the physical strength needed to load, much less carry, heavy boxes and bags.⁷ To the extent that they have to pay for loading and transport that men can provide for themselves, they are placed at a disadvantage.

The quantities in which agricultural inputs are sold have been a concern in Rwanda, for example, where it was noted that not only can women not carry the standard 50kg fertilizer bags, but such large quantities far exceed many smallholders' needs.⁸ In Malawi and Cameroon, a study found that when suppliers sold fertilizer in smaller, easily transportable bags, women bought and used more.⁹ Similarly, interviews in Kenya and Tanzania found men bought agricultural inputs in bulk, whereas women bought smaller quantities more frequently.¹⁰ However, while buying smaller bags may suit women's logistical constraints, they may also increase their costs, as they forgo the savings from buying in bulk.



Farmers in Nigeria redeem fertilizer vouchers. © IFDC Photography, Flickr

- 6 The seclusion of women from public observation among Muslims and among some Hindus.
- 7 See, for example, Rubin, D., Manfre, C. and Barrett, K. N. (2009). *Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities: Why It Matters for Agricultural Value Chains*. U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC. <http://egateg.usaid.gov/resources/1082>.
- 8 Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (2009). *Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture in Rwanda – Phase II (PSTA II) Final Report*. Kigali. http://www.rab.gov.rw/IMG/pdf/PSTA_II-php.pdf.
- 9 Gladwin, C. H. (1992). Gendered impacts of fertilizer subsidy removal programs in Malawi and Cameroon. *Agricultural Economics*, 7(2). 141–53. DOI:10.1016/0169-5150(92)90004-1.
- 10 Rubin, D., Manfre, C. and Barrett, K. N. (2009). *Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities in Agricultural Value Chains: Handbook*. Prepared by the GATE Project, Development & Training Services Inc. (dTS), for the U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Women in Development, Washington, DC. <http://www.culturalpractice.com/resources/promoting-gender-equitable-opportunities-in-agricultural-value-chains-a-handbook/>.



More widely, women often lack the social networks critical to developing relationships with actors in value chains. They may also find it hard to participate in producer and trader cooperatives, and in value chain platforms. This may be due to membership criteria which women may find hard to meet – such as a land holding in their name, and they may face difficulties in getting men to take their gender-specific issues seriously and to take action to resolve them.

When women and young men and women are overlooked as partners, or when their businesses are simply too small to create meaningful demand, associated industries such as fertilizer suppliers and seed businesses lose opportunities to make money and expand. Wider development goals can also be hampered. Numerous studies show that resources and incomes controlled by women are more likely to be used to improve child health, nutrition and education. Measures to increase women's influence within the household, such as education, are associated with better outcomes for children, thus contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹¹

Working to support value chain development amongst the poorest segments of rural society is vitally important. In so doing, it is important to recognize that balancing social goals whilst meeting commercial objectives will always be a challenge due to the high levels

11 OECD Development Centre (2010). *Gender Inequality and the MDGs: What Are the Missing Dimensions?* 'At Issue' brief. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris. <http://www.oecd.org/development/poverty/49016646.pdf>. Zinazofanana:

of support that farmers and their organizations may need before they can stand alone. Yet this can be done with careful planning. Small opportunities can be found in local markets, for example, by providing a snack alongside a milky drink, working to develop a loyal clientele for lunches, and supplying institutions such as schools, colleges, prisons, etc. – all of which can help to generate viable local food hubs.

In many countries, demand for “traditional products” such as leafy vegetables, which are typical “women’s crops”, is strong in urban centres. At the higher ends of the market, opportunities exist for high-value and often labour-intensive crops such as coffee and spices. These can be developed and then branded as fair trade and organic or “women-produced”. In terms of the enabling environment, hygienic spaces for women to store, prepare and market their goods in marketplaces is vital, along with safe sanitary facilities. Action at the policy level may be needed to break cartels in wholesale markets to permit small women and men traders to sell their goods without harassment and for a reasonable profit. Unionization may be important to help producers ensure a fair price.

Balancing food security and nutrition objectives with value chain objectives is another real challenge. Research over many decades into household decision-making shows that there are no grounds for assuming that increased incomes will result in more and better food for all. This is because women and men often manage separate income streams, and have different household responsibilities. If women are responsible for ensuring that everyone in the home eats, yet are unable to determine how money from the family’s participation in a value chain is spent, nutrition may be compromised. The Agricultural Support Programme (ASP) in Zambia (discussed in Chapter 5) balanced value chain development and food security goals by training all participating farmers, men as well as women, to calculate their annual food security needs using International Labour Organization guidelines, and to set aside sufficient maize before being permitted to sell maize and other agricultural products.

Selecting a value chain intervention strategy

An effective value chain strategy will have different entry points tailored both to the nature of the society within which a development programme is working, and to the ultimate gender goals of the intervention. As a starting point, every gender-responsive intervention must be based on a detailed understanding of gender roles, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints in a project location, as well as any specific issues facing youth and discriminated-against groups. A “targeting checklist” can help in this regard, supported by a gender- and youth-responsive value chain analysis. The analysis should include an assessment of potential opportunities for the poorest populations, for women and for young people, and identify barriers that must be overcome.

Table 8.1 builds on work by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and outlines an array of gender-responsive strategies.¹² The selection of a particular strategy depends partly on the development partners’ analysis of the potential for change in a given society, and on their ambition.

12 KIT, Agri-ProFocus and International Institute of Agricultural Reconstruction (2012). *Challenging Chains to Change*. A. Laven and R. Pyburn (eds.). KIT Publishers, Amsterdam. <http://www.kit.nl/krit/Publication?item=3289>.

TABLE 8.1 Selecting a value chain strategy

Strategy	Components	Type of intervention	Where/ Why/ How	Indicative projects
Mitigating resistance by building on tradition	<p>Professionalize women's traditional, informal activities</p> <p>Create new roles for women in traditional activities</p> <p>Remove barriers to transform traditional responsibilities into new opportunities</p>	<p>Gender-specific intervention</p> <p>Starting point – existing gender division of resources, labour and responsibilities</p> <p>First steps to improving women's position</p> <p>Livelihood focus</p>	<p>Conservative communities with rigid gender roles</p> <p>Post-conflict settings</p>	<p>Promotion of 'women's crops', 'women's chains' and 'women's tasks' in value chains.</p> <p>SHEP case study in this chapter</p>
Creating spaces for women, youth and other disadvantaged groups	<p>Open up new positions in value chains for women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups</p> <p>Support target groups in male-dominated chains</p> <p>Promote access to new technologies and new markets</p> <p>Develop female/youth entrepreneurs and associated organizations, e.g. cooperatives</p> <p>Change bylaws to allow women to take up membership of farmer organizations and new roles in value chain</p>	<p>Gender-redistributive intervention</p> <p>Supports women, youth, discriminated against groups in male-dominated chains by making their existing contributions explicit</p> <p>Works to change perceptions of women's/ men's roles in households, communities, government, companies</p>	<p>In value chains where small, low-cost technological innovations can make a big difference</p> <p>Where it will be difficult to challenge land ownership and access to other key productive assets</p>	<p>Promoting women's participation in traditionally male-led chains, e.g. honey, dairy, cashew</p>

Strategy	Components	Type of intervention	Where/ Why/ How	Indicative projects
Organizing for change	Collective action Capacity-building Working with men Financing value chains for women	Gender-redistributive intervention Women’s individual and community level empowerment achieved in multiple ways Strengthening women’s agency (decision-making power) accompanied by work to change attitudes at community and higher levels	Working with men: to create supportive environment for women to take up new activities, support women as required, and encourage women’s participation and leadership	All household methodologies (see Chapter 5)
			Capacity-building to overcome knowledge gaps and promote leadership capacity	
			Collective action to access credit, to bulk produce to obtain larger share of product value and improve interest of buyers, and improve access to services and training	
			Financing to enable women to access working and investment capital	
Standards, certification and labels	Develop women-only labels, seals and standards Piggy-back on existing standards and certification infrastructure	Gender-redistributive intervention Impact across the chain, from producer to consumer Work on chain context (standard setters, auditors, etc.) critical	When market differentiation can be a selling point Adjust standards and indicators in organic and fair trade systems to improve gender equity	Niche products, e.g. women-produced coffee Add value to existing fair trade, organic, etc. ZOPPA case study in this chapter

Strategy	Components	Type of intervention	Where/ Why/ How	Indicative projects
Gender-responsible business	Develop public-private shared understanding of values, and complementary expertise, to create gender-responsive corporate social responsibility strategy	Gender-redistributive intervention. Improve value chain performance and marketing through social justice approach Improve positioning of women in value chain Needs senior private company management commitment	Partnership between public and private actors Integrating gender into core business principles	

Source: Adapted from KIT et al. (2012); see footnote 9.

A Zambian farmer tests a groundnut sheller. © Swathi Sridharan, ICRI/SAI, Flickr



CASE STUDY

Kenya Horticultural Crops Development Authority

The Japanese government supports the horticultural industry in Kenya through various projects. An interesting bilateral technical cooperation project entitled the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP) was implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture, the Horticultural Crops Development Authority and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2006–2009.¹³ SHEP's work specifically aimed to empower women farmers. To do this, it worked with existing farmer groups which had been established by the National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Program (NALEP). These were known as Common Interest Groups (CIGs). Whilst some CIGs were successful, with around one quarter forming federations, many CIGs remained producer- and production-focused, with a weak understanding of the roles and requirements of other market actors. This seriously hampered their market effectiveness; it is here that SHEP stepped in.

SHEP conducted gender-disaggregated baseline studies which revealed that women performed around 80% of the labour on food crops and around 50–60% of the labour on commercial crops, yet did not benefit commensurately with their input. About 2,500 farmers from 122 groups from four provinces (Central, Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western) were examined in the baseline study. Based on the gender inequalities revealed by the survey, SHEP undertook a number of staged activities to mainstream gender across the project. These included:

1. Reaching a consensus on “what, why and how” to mainstream gender among SHEP team members. Detailed strategies based on the actual gender situation in each project area were developed.
2. Setting gender-sensitive indicators for the project design matrix, with disaggregated data for men and women. For instance, the lead indicator for verifying the project purpose, “Developed capacity of smallholder farmer groups supported by the project”, was that by the end of the project, the net income of individual men and women should increase by 14.7–20.2%.
3. Group empowerment indicators reflected the qualitative and quantitative aspects of empowerment. For instance, the group empowerment indicators for Level 3 were: “Both men and women are comfortable in expressing him/herself freely in the meeting” and “Women are actively involved in group management”.
4. At the community level, a variety of activities were designed to link women as well as men smallholder farmers from the target model groups to other stakeholders and to deepen awareness of gender issues among stakeholders:

13 For another short overview of SHEP, see the JICA website, http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/agricultural/study.html. For a more in-depth review, see JICA (2009). *Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP)*. Programme evaluation. Japan International Cooperation Agency. http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/tech_and_grant/project/term/africa/c8h0vm000001rp75-att/kenya_2009_02.pdf.

- The Farm Business Linkage Stakeholders (FABLST) Forum linked farmers to input suppliers, produce buyers including middlemen, agro-processors, transporters, etc.
- The Joint Extension Staff and Farmers Dual Gender Training (JEF2G) brought together equal numbers of women and men farmers (50:50 participation) for a week's residential training. Gender awareness raising, democratic crop selection and ranking for group members, market surveys, Donou technology (soil in a canny bag) and agro-processing were covered.
- Facilitators' Training for Farmer Demand Driven Extension and in-field training (FT-FaDDE). Group facilitators were trained to be equipped with the relevant information according to the demands made by the farmers. Simple technologies such as Bokashi (a high-speed, low-odour composting system developed in Japan), making tomato jam, preparing banana planting materials, solarization, and demonstration of weed control by using appropriate weeding tools were demonstrated.
- In-field training; the group facilitators trained farmers on specific crops which they selected after conducting market surveys.

SHEP's final evaluation report noted a number of benefits over the project period.¹⁴ These include significant overall increases in farmer income (doubling between May 2007 and October 2009 compared with the baseline) and improved income parity between women and men (baseline discrepancy 31.1% in favour of men, 14.9% in favour of men two years later). Both women and men farmers attributed their increases in income to their gender awareness training, with 39% of respondents noting this as significant. One woman said, "Previously we lost tomatoes because my husband did not spray on time. Now I don't wait for my husband to spray. I do it myself." One man said, "Many women can approach their husbands. Now the workload is more balanced." This said, training in market surveys (57%) and in crop planting/rotation (42%) were placed higher in terms of contributing to net increase in income. This shows that paying attention to improving gender relations is not enough – such training must be accompanied by technical training too.

The SHEP model is now being scaled up through a five-year (2010–2015) bilateral initiative by the Governments of Kenya and Japan, called the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion Unit Project (SHEP UP).¹⁵ Collaboration between SHEP and JICA experts, the government's extension services, and private-sector players has been enabled and strengthened through the innovative group learning and sharing methodologies created by SHEP. Produce buyers, farm input suppliers, and financial institutions still work with groups which established linkages during SHEP activities. The SHEP story shows that it is not necessary to create new structures when setting up a new programme. Rather, SHEP built upon structures already in place through working with famers who already had a track record of working together in the CIGs. The key innovation was to strengthen the remaining parts of the value chain.

¹⁴ See JICA (2009), *op.cit.*

¹⁵ See http://www.kilimo.go.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=40&layout=blog&Itemid=133 or, for a feature on some recent activities, http://www.jica.go.jp/kenya/english/office/topics/top-ics110927_02.html.

Further, SHEP prioritized working on changing gender relations on the ground. It did this by first agreeing within the team that this was a critical step, and establishing consensus on what to do. It did not lose sight of this vision, since progress was continually monitored by setting, collecting and analyzing gender-sensitive quantitative and qualitative indicators at all levels of the project design, implementation and monitoring.

CASE STUDY

ZOPPA – organic value chains in Zimbabwe

ZOPPA, the Zimbabwe Organic Producers and Promoters Association, is a national movement working towards the development of the Zimbabwe organic sector. The development of the organic sector has been propelled by the fact that over 70% of Zimbabweans are farmers whose livelihoods have been affected by dwindling returns due to the spiralling costs of synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides. Apart from affecting livelihoods, the inaccessibility of inputs is having knock-on effects on food and nutrition security. When household resources are scarce, women find it difficult to meet their household responsibilities because available resources are first allocated to the man's fields and crops, with insufficient inputs are deployed on the women's fields. This affects the food situation for the whole family. Men contribute importantly to household food security by providing sufficient maize – the staple crop. However, women are responsible for producing the additional foods important to a healthy and tasty food basket. Typically, women plant orphan crops – meaning crops ignored by mainstream researchers and extension workers – such as cowpeas, rapoko, groundnuts, beans and other indigenous crops. ZOPPA's experience is that the more men develop an interest in cash-cropping, the less land is available for household food crops. Conventional farming discourages mixed and inter-cropping, and thus "women's crops" are squeezed onto ever-smaller land parcels. As the economic situation worsens men are dedicating more and more land to commercial crops such as maize, tobacco and cotton.

ZOPPA is meeting these challenges by working with both men and women in Mashonaland East Province to produce organic food. In its current project, 1,747 members (65%) are women and 941 (35%) are men. ZOPPA is working closely with Fambidzanai, another indigenous organization, to realize its objectives. Fambidzani trains farmers on organic production techniques whilst ZOPPA trains farmers on organic production standards. It works to increase their understanding and ability to comply with international organic standards, as well as helping them to set up their local compliance systems. Zimbabwe's own organic standards, which are awaiting international accreditation, meet International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Codex Alimentarius guidelines, and comply with European Union and U.S. National Organic Program standards. The accreditation process will take a long time because ZOPPA lacks funds with which to push the process.

Achieving compliance with Zimbabwe's organic standards means that the farmers are entitled to use the Zim Organic label. They apply the label to their packaged products and sell them to fruit and vegetable wholesalers who then distribute them to shops. The Zim Organic label helps farmers benefit from a truly organic niche market, though this market



Zim Organic brand produce for sale. © ZOPPA

is currently limited in the country. So far, ZOPPA does not have a market for Zim Organic beyond Zimbabwe. However, the label permits expansion because it is registered in eight African countries: Botswana, Tanzania, Lesotho, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Swaziland.

The Zim Organic label was introduced in 2011, and 32 organic producer groups received standards training; by the year's end, four groups were certified and selling produce under the label.¹⁶ Most of the other groups were close on their heels, delayed mostly by the fact that their land was still under conversion, having been treated with chemicals and fertilizers within the past three years. Still, despite the progress being made, there remain some important constraints. For example, reading and understanding organic standards is a challenge for many women due to their low literacy rates. Also, organic produce must be transported separately to the market in order to avoid any mixing with conventional produce. This can be tricky because large quantities of organic produce are needed to justify the cost.

As discussed throughout this book, women often find it particularly hard to produce large quantities due to their low capital base, and they can find it harder than men to meet upfront transport costs as well. ZOPPA also finds that since women often do not directly control the land but rather access it through customary systems, the land is at risk of being converted back to conventional farming by husbands or male relatives. This may diminish women's incentives to invest in the high learning demands of organic farming.

¹⁶ See the ZOPPA 2011 Annual Report, <http://www.zoppa.org.zw/index.php/organic-farming/downloads?download=6:Documentation>.

More generally, women are often disadvantaged when it comes to trading at the market. They are required to provide documentation, including tax numbers. Men are more likely to have their paperwork in order due to their dominance in the selling of crops at wholesale markets. This gives them an added advantage in the market compared with women (and other men) who are new to such markets. Furthermore, women can suffer more than men due to the fact that wholesalers and retailers do not pay on delivery – at the earliest they pay a week after receiving the goods. This makes it tough for women who have to come back to the market to get their payments. Women often find it harder to leave their homes due to their household responsibilities, and they often feel concerned about theft and harassment on the road.

Ways forward

This chapter shows that developing pro-poor value chains means addressing the constraints that both poor women and men face, as well as addressing the special additional constraints that women face due to their gender. It is critical that commodity-specific gender analyses be carried out at the very beginning of any intervention since each commodity brings with it specific challenges and opportunities. Maize, for example, is very different from tomatoes due to its less perishable nature, bulkiness, and its relative importance in local diets in many parts of Africa.

In terms of our empowerment framework, work on value chains involves developing “relations” between actors. Women need to be well represented in value chain organizations and platforms, and to participate effectively. “Structure” also needs to be addressed at all levels. Cultural norms often mean that livestock and crops are considered “men’s” or



Women in Morogoro, Tanzania, go to the market. ©Monira Gali Bessa.

“women’s” crops, depending on the location. Value chain interventions, however, often turn women’s crops/livestock into men’s crops/livestock, allowing men to benefit. The entire policy framework, not discussed in this chapter, is also critical. It must be supportive of smallholders and provide the necessary incentives.

It is clear that a pre-requisite to all this activity is strong agency for the poorest farmers, and for women in particular, regardless of their level in the selected value chain. Work on strengthening the decision-making power of poor people, and women, is critical. Money too is vital – innovative credit solutions are much needed, particularly to enable women to obtain important amounts of credit without collateral. Figure 8.1 summarizes the key features of this discussion.

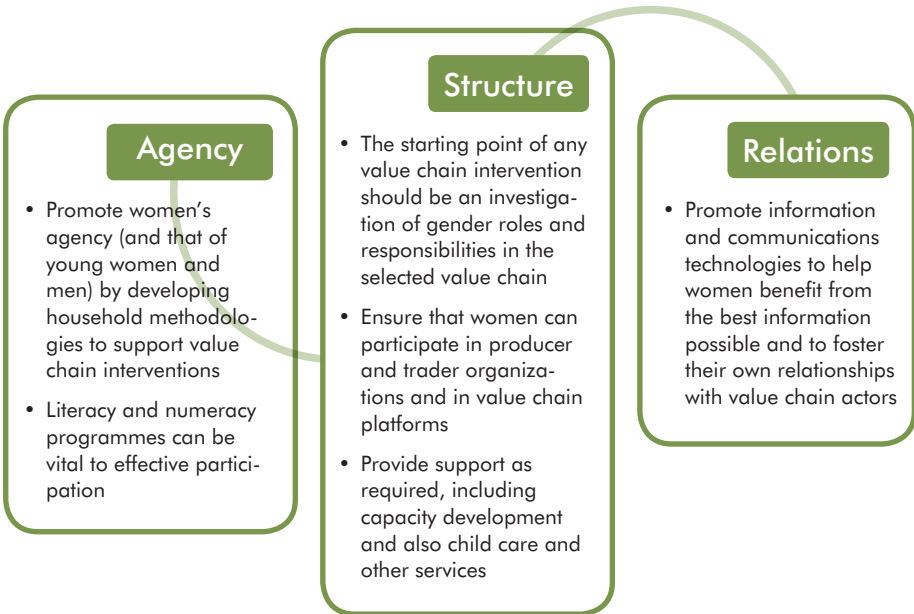


FIGURE 8.1 Gender-responsive value chain interventions

TABLE 8.2 Checklist for gender-sensitive design for value chain projects

PREREQUISITES OF GENDER-SENSITIVE DESIGN FOR VALUE CHAIN PROJECTS	Yes	No	Partial	Issues and Recommendations
1. Project document contains poverty and gender analysis data				
Marketing studies analyze gender issues with respect to marketing channels including mobility issues/transport, wholesale and retail markets, and consumer requirements, etc.				
Commodity-specific analyses identify and address gender-based constraints to participation of women at all levels.				

PREREQUISITES OF GENDER-SENSITIVE DESIGN FOR VALUE CHAIN PROJECTS	Yes	No	Partial	Issues and Recommendations
2. Project gender strategy				
Expand women’s access to and control over key productive assets required for value chain development: large-scale capital (working and investment), land, information, and technologies.				
Strengthen women’s agency in value chain governance: participation/leadership roles in farmer groups, marketing boards, women-only groups and value chain platforms.				
Facilitate women’s full participation in value chain activities through easing domestic and caring workload: access to child care services, provision of labour-saving devices, encouraging men’s participation, etc.				
Measures to improve women’s role in decision-making over productive assets and expenditure at household level: household approaches, measures to support men in behavioural change, etc.				
3. Operational measures to ensure gender-equitable participation in, and benefit from, planned activities				
Sets specific targets regarding proportion of women participants involved in all value chain activities. If this is not appropriate, then provide a clear rationale and compensating measures.				
Ensures that selected value chains include women-led chains.				
Ensures that actions – such as childcare/ safe transport - in the value chain strategy necessary to enable women’s participation in training activities and decision-making bodies are planned and reflected in the cost tables.				
4. Monitoring and evaluation				
Gender-sensitive value-chain indicators for all activities are included in log-frames and tracked regularly.				
5. The project provides opportunities for dialogue with private sector on how to include women				
Gender strategies and indicators are included in corporate social responsibility policy, codes of conduct, etc.				