



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



# **GENDER OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS IN LAND-RELATED AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS**

**Synthesis Report**



# **GENDER OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS IN LAND-RELATED AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS**

## **SYNTHESIS REPORT**

Martha Osorio and Ambra Gallina

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# CONTENTS

vi ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  
vii ACRONYMS

## 01

### 01 INTRODUCTION

- 01 1.1 Background and rationale
- 03 1.2 Purpose and scope

## 02

### 07 METHODOLOGY AND INVESTMENTS REVIEWED

- 07 2.1 Methodology
- 11 2.2 Investments reviewed

## 03

### 19 GENDER AND THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

- 19 3.1 Country commitments towards gender equality
- 22 3.2 Agriculture and investment promotion policies
- 23 Key messages



## 04

### 25 **TENURE RIGHTS IMPACT ON GENDER ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS**

- 25 4.1 Gender dimensions in land consultation and acquisition
- 27 4.2 Positive experiences in promoting gender-sensitive consultation
- 29 4.3 How different business models can affect gendered patterns of access to, use of and control over land
- 31 4.4 Practices that have contributed to securing and promoting women's access to land
- 33 Key messages

## 05

### 35 **CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER-EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN OUTGROWER SCHEMES**

- 35 5.1 Constraints to women's participation in outgrower schemes
- 39 5.2 Gender-sensitive measures and practices to unlock women's participation in outgrower schemes
- 40 5.3 Women's contribution to productivity, quality and sustainability
- 41 5.4 Gender implications of outgrower schemes in access to income, decision-making and workload distribution
- 43 Key messages

## 06

### 45 **GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WAGE EMPLOYMENT**

- 46 6.1 Employment generation potential of agricultural investments
- 48 6.2 Gendered patterns of employment
- 51 6.3 Labour Conditions
- 55 6.4 Successful approaches to promoting women's and men's labour rights and conditions
- 58 6.5 Does wage employment contribute to women's empowerment?
- 59 Key messages

## 07

### 61 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 62 Key lessons for policy and regulatory frameworks
- 63 Key lessons on land
- 64 Key lessons on outgrower schemes
- 65 Key lessons on wage employment

### 67 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## TABLES AND BOXES

### TABLES

- 08 **Table 1.** Summary of investments analysed
- 10 **Table 2.** Stakeholders consulted in different countries
- 36 **Table 3.** Female participation in outgrower schemes
- 46 **Table 4.** Direct employment (wage work) across case studies
- 49 **Table 5.** Number of wage workers in farming disaggregated by gender
- 50 **Table 6.** Number of wage workers in processing/packing disaggregated by gender
- 52 **Table 7.** Permanent versus non-permanent workers

### BOXES

- 20 **Box 1.** Gender in the VGGT and CFS–RAI Principles
- 21 **Box 2.** Progressive gender policy-making in the Philippines
- 28 **Box 3.** Conducting a gender-sensitive consultation process in Sierra Leone
- 28 **Box 4.** Addressing gender issues in a multistakeholder forum in Sierra Leone
- 32 **Box 5.** Subleasing land to female outgrowers in KASKOL
- 33 **Box 6.** The block farming model of Balmed
- 38 **Box 7.** Impact of agrarian reform on women's land rights in the Philippines
- 55 **Box 8.** Promoting workers' rights in the Philippines
- 56 **Box 9.** Tanzanian Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU)
- 57 **Box 10.** Strengthening women's voice in workers' forums





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## Acronyms

**ARB** Agrarian reform beneficiary  
(Philippines)

**CAADP** Comprehensive Africa  
Agriculture Development Programme

**CBA** Collective bargaining agreement

**CDA** Cooperative Development Authority  
(Philippines)

**CDC** Commonwealth Development  
Corporation

**CEDAW** Convention on the Elimination of  
All Forms of Discrimination against Women

**CF** Contract farming

**CFS** Committee on World Food Security

**CSO** Civil society organization

**CSR** Corporate social responsibility

**EIA** Environmental impact assessment

**EPA** Environmental Protection Agency

**ES** Economic and Social Department  
(FAO)

**ETC** ETC Bioenergy (Zambia)

**FAO** Food and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations

**FASDEP** Food and Agriculture Sector  
Development Policy

**FG** Focus group

**FGD** Focus group discussion

**GASIP** Ghana Agricultural Sector  
Investment Programme

**GCAP** Ghana Commercial Agriculture  
Project

**GLRD** Gender and Land Rights Database

**ITG** Imperial Tobacco Group

**ITFC** Integrated Tamale Fruit Company  
(Ghana)

**KASCOL** Kaleya Smallholders Company  
Limited (Zambia)

**KASFA** Kaleya Smallholder Farmers  
Association (Zambia)

**LAP** Land Administration Project (Ghana)

**LTL** Lao Tobacco Limited

**MCW** Magna Carta of Women  
(Philippines)

**MDC** Mpongwe Development Company  
(Zambia)

**METASIP** Medium Term Agriculture  
Sector Investment Plan (Ghana)

**MKAVI** Mount Kitanglad Agri-Ventures  
Inc. (Philippines)

**NAP** National Agriculture Policy (Zambia)

**NCRFW** National Commission on the  
Role of Filipino Women (now PCW)

**NGO** Non-governmental organization

**NSADP** National Sustainable Agriculture  
Development Plan

**NTFP** Non-timber forest product

**PADCC** Philippine Agricultural  
Development and Commercial  
Corporation

**PCW** Philippine Commission on Women  
(formerly NCRFW)

**PO** Producer organization

**PPP** Public-private partnership

**RAI** Principles for Responsible  
Agricultural Investment

**SDG** Sustainable Development Goal

**TPAWU** Tanzanian Plantation and  
Agricultural Workers Union

**VGGT** Voluntary Guidelines on the  
Responsible Governance of Tenure of  
Land, Fisheries and Forests

**WB** World Bank

**ZDA** Zambia Development Agency



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and rationale

The global food and financial crises of recent years have led development policy-makers and international organizations to reprioritize the role of agriculture within both international and national policy agendas. Many developing countries are making vigorous efforts to attract foreign and domestic investment in primary agriculture, with the expectation that this will contribute to growth, poverty reduction and food security through technology transfer, employment creation, access to markets and infrastructure development.

Positive outcomes for rural communities depend on many factors, including: the prevailing agriculture and rural development model; the institutional, policy and regulatory framework in place; the type and degree of inclusiveness of the business models and contractual arrangements implemented; and the extent to which social and gender equity issues are considered (Hall & Osorio, 2014).

Certain types of investment, in particular those based on large land acquisitions, may have negative social effects, for example, displacement of small farmers, undermining or negating of existing rights, increased corruption, reduced food security, heightened gender and social inequalities, and environmental degradation (Daley, 2011; Behrman *et al.*, 2012). Several studies (Daley, 2011; Behrman *et al.*, 2012) report that since women usually hold far less agricultural land than men and their tenure rights tend to be more insecure, land acquisition by private companies has in some cases contributed to further undermine women's access to land with negative spillover effects for household food security.

Conversely, investments adopting more inclusive business models can provide greater livelihood benefits for smallholders and workers, and improve overall long-term development (Arias *et al.*, 2013; Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010; Cotula and Leonard, 2010). A key finding from a survey of 39 large-scale, mature agribusiness investments in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia (WB and UNCTAD, 2014) is that there is positive correlation – and a potential win-win situation – between investment performance and the wider positive economic, social and environmental impacts of the investments. In the survey, investors that were financially and operationally successful tended to have the most positive impact on their host economies and surrounding communities as a result of their sophisticated approach to social and environmental responsibility.

According to Vermeulen and Cotula (2010), “Businesses are more inclusive if they involve close working partnerships with local landholders and operators, and if they share value among partners.” The notion of collaborative business models links partnerships between investors and local producers “to the very core of a business activity, rather than to corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes that are peripheral to that activity.”

The concept of “collaborative business models” (Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010) has recently moved to the mainstream of development discourse and practice. Initiatives to promote more inclusive and pro-poor agricultural investment are increasingly popular in developing countries. However, few studies and initiatives focusing on collaborative business models have systematically tackled gender.

Detailed examination of the impact of investments on the rural poor shows that collaborative business models can generate both “winners” and “losers”, just as do business models based on large-scale acquisition. Agricultural investments, even when resulting from genuine partnerships with rural producers, may actually contribute to perpetuate or even accentuate certain types of inequalities within communities. For instance, businesses might prefer to engage with better-off, male farmers, with a more solid asset base, because they can ensure higher productivity and greater efficiency.

Since investments do not operate in a vacuum, the pre-existing social and cultural context, including prevailing gender inequalities, greatly influences the outcomes of investments. A critical assessment of the notion of inclusiveness requires the examination of gender roles at different levels; it is necessary to understand how these dynamics affect the way in which schemes and contractual arrangements are planned and implemented.

A large body of literature on gender and value chains shows that **entrenched gender disparities influence the way value chains are designed, developed and implemented** (Mayoux & Mackie, 2007; Farnworth, 2011; Tallontire *et al.*, 2005). Women tend to be concentrated in primary production activities as unpaid family labourers with limited

participation in more lucrative activities in the value chain. Women's enterprises are often small-scale, household-based and/or in low-profit sectors. This can trap women in a circle of low productivity and low return, making it hard for them to obtain sufficient working and investment capital for reinvestment and business growth. This situation is aggravated by women's disadvantaged position compared with their male counterparts in terms of access to and control of productive resources and assets, including land. For these reasons, women are rarely seen as potential business partners.

At the level of the global economy, it is broadly recognized that gender inequality hinders economic growth (World Bank, 2012). The *State of Food and Agriculture 2010–11* makes the business case for addressing gender issues in agriculture. It presents empirical estimates of the potential productivity gains that could be achieved by closing the gender gap with regard to access to resources, services, assets and employment opportunities. These productivity gains are also expected to contribute to additional income for women and enhanced decision-making power (FAO, 2011), which translates into better prospects and greater well-being for families and children, (FAO, 2011; World Bank, 2012).

According to Oxfam (Vorley *et al.*, 2013), an efficiency approach is being adopted by businesses in relation to gender equality by recognizing that short-term, gender-inequitable practices harm business sustainability and productivity, and that long-term business interests hinge on maximizing the productive contribution that women can make. Along the same lines, some authors (Behrman *et al.*, 2012; Chan, 2010) point out that investors will fail to benefit in any plan that ignores the labour and productive potential of half of the population. Increasing women's participation in companies' smallholder sourcing can deliver multiple business benefits by contributing to enhanced quality and productivity while expanding the supply base (Chan, 2010).

Policy-making processes and business practices and initiatives need to be informed by sound and well-grounded research on the gender dimensions of agricultural investments. This will contribute to the development of a more comprehensive framework, which addresses gender as a core component of agricultural investments and inclusive business models.

## 1.2 Purpose and scope

The Economic and Social Department (ES) of FAO has developed a programme of work entitled "Promoting gender-equitable and inclusive agricultural investments that contribute to enhance food security, reduce poverty and strengthen the livelihoods of poor rural women and men". This aims to:

- generate knowledge, raise awareness and inform policy-making processes about the gender-differentiated implications of land-related investments;

- › highlight good practices in terms of gender-sensitive business models and strategies that have positive implications for rural employment and income-generating activities for both women and men; and
- › foster constructive dialogue among policy-makers, local government authorities, rural organizations and the private sector so that more gender-equitable investments can be secured.

This report presents a synthesis of the main findings from case studies carried out in six countries in Africa (Ghana, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) and Asia (Laos and Philippines). The findings were disseminated and discussed in multistakeholder initiatives at regional and country level. The report illustrates how poor rural women and men are affected differently by agricultural investments, and demonstrates that they may not benefit equally from emerging opportunities. It also explains approaches and practices adopted by private enterprises and other stakeholders (governments, civil society and producers' organizations), and conducive to developing more gender-equitable agricultural investments.









## 2. METHODOLOGY AND INVESTMENTS REVIEWED

### 2.1 Methodology

This report is based on the analysis of eleven investment schemes in six countries in which foreign investments are taking place. They represent a range of crops, business models and periods of operation, among other factors. Companies were selected on the basis of two main criteria:

#### 1. Diversity in terms of business models and types of agricultural production.

In order to broaden the scope of the study, an effort was made to include examples representing a variety of types of agricultural business models falling under two broad categories: collaborative and plantation business schemes.

#### 2. Establishment date.

Priority was given to newer investments – those with a starting date within the last 10 years (in particular 5 years, in order to focus on the “new wave” of investments). Older “successful” investments were also considered relevant to provide a comparison.

**Table 1****Summary of investments analysed**

INVESTMENT NAME	LOCATION	CROP	YEAR ESTABLISHED	BUSINESS MODEL
Kaleya Smallholders Company Limited (KASCOL)	Zambia Mazabuka District	Sugar cane	1983	Nucleus estate and contract farming
ETC Bioenergy	Zambia Mpongwe District	Soybean, wheat, barley, maize, jatropha	2007	Plantation
Diligent Tanzania Ltd	Tanzania Northern, Central and Lake Zones	Jatropha	2005	Informal (not fixed contracts) outgrower model
Multiflower Ltd	Tanzania Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara	Flowers and vegetable seeds	1995	Outgrower model and waged employment in greenhouse facility
Integrated Tamale Fruit Company (ITFC)	Ghana Northern Region	Mango	1999	Nucleus estate and outgrower model
Addax Bioenergy Sierra Leone Ltd	Sierra Leone Makeni	Sugar cane	2008	Plantation
Balmed Holdings Ltd	Sierra Leone Kenema	Cocoa	2002	Plantation and block farming
Lao Banana Co.	Laos	Banana	2008	Plantation
Lao Tobacco Limited (LTL)	Laos	Tobacco		Outgrower
Unifrutti Philippines Inc.	Philippines Davao del Norte	Pineapple and banana	1992	Outgrower cooperatives
Mount Kitanglad Agri-Ventures Inc. (MKAVI)	Philippines Alanib barangay, Lantapan, Bukidnon	Banana	1998	Plantation

Each investment was reviewed in-depth – in some cases, two investments in one country. Two types of model were explored and compared in the case studies: plantation (estate) and outgrower (contract farming with varying degrees of contractual obligation). Some companies adopted a combined estate–outgrower model. Research was carried out in each of the selected investment sites to shed light on the following guiding questions:

- Do the investments/businesses have **gender-differentiated implications with respect to labour and income-generating opportunities** for small farmers and wage workers directly involved in and/or affected by these initiatives?

- › Do the land-related investments analysed affect poor rural women and men differently in terms of their **access to, and use and control of land and employment opportunities**?
- › Do the land-related investment schemes (business models) analysed provide examples of **good practices in relation to employment and land**, which can be used as models for regulatory frameworks for investments and policy-making?
- › Do the investment and agricultural policies and strategies in place in the country support the establishment of land-related investments that are **inclusive of local populations and conducive to rural development while being sensitive to gender** and equity concerns?

Following a desk-based background literature review, including an appraisal of relevant in-country policies and investment-related documents (assessments, feasibility studies, academic research etc.), and 3 weeks of fieldwork in each country, the following issues were analysed:

- › types of investment schemes adopted and types of crops cultivated (before and after the investment) in the areas selected;
- › pre-investment conditions with regard to gender division of labour (including time allocation) and land-use patterns (including quality of land and access to water);
- › pre-investment conditions with regard to gendered livelihoods, food production and access to food;
- › gender inequalities as a factor influencing access to new employment opportunities arising from the investment – whether regular employment on plantations or “employment” as an outgrower;
- › gender inequalities in “employment” conditions for workers and outgrowers;
- › gendered implications for labour and household/community dynamics – in particular, impact on time, household reproduction and food security; overall impact on tenure security and women’s land rights (if relevant); and links between land and labour; and
- › gender differences in access to collateral benefits from the investment, such as access to farming inputs (fertilizers etc.) and to infrastructure and/or social services provided as part of the investment.

Each of the above issues was broken down and reflected in the question guides for focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews with investors and other stakeholders, including NGOs, farmers’ organizations, and other formal and informal institutions in the research areas (see Annex 1 for question guides). Fieldwork research constitutes the core of the analysis. Given the lack of specific gender analysis in research on land-related investments in the existing literature, the case studies are based mostly on primary research.

The fieldwork involved both **focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews** in the investment locations, in addition to a **review of primary sources of information**, such as policy documents and company reports. As shown in Table 2, a total of 211 people were interviewed as part of the research and about 723 people (381 female and 342 male) were consulted through the organization of FGDs (84 in total).

Specific methods and tools for local-level fieldwork:

- ▶ Key informant interviews with district government staff and representatives of farmers' organizations for general local background related to the issues.
- ▶ Key informant interviews with company management for corporate/investment relevant background and information.
- ▶ Focus group discussions with workers and/or outgrowers – differentiated to ensure that gender and age groups were adequately covered.
- ▶ Requests to company staff for relevant documents (contracts, leases, staff codes of conduct etc.).
- ▶ Interviews with workers engaged in different stages of the value chain (when applicable).

Table 2 summarizes the number of stakeholders consulted and/or interviewed in focus groups (FGs) during field research.

**Table 2**

**Stakeholders consulted in different countries**

COUNTRY	SCHEME	NO. OF FGS	TOTAL FG PARTICIPANTS	NO. OF WOMEN	NO. OF MEN	NO. OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS*
<b>Ghana</b>	ITFC	23	192	86	106	16
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Addax	13	141	89	52	38
	Balmed	12	77	41	58	
<b>Tanzania</b>	Multiflower	10	82	50	32	28
	Diligent	2	25	10	15	
<b>Zambia</b>	Kaskol	4	32	16	16	25
	ETC	4	26	24	2	
<b>Laos</b>	Lao Banana	4	23	10	13	68
	Lao Tobacco	4	29	12	17	
<b>Philippines</b>	Unifrutti	6	72	42	30	36
	Mkavi	2	24	13	11	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>211</b>

\*This include mostly government representatives and company staff

Sources: Daley and Park 2012; Daley *et al.*, 2013; King and Bugri, J. 2013; Leonard *et al.*, 2015; Wisborg *et al.*, 2014; Wonani *et al.*, 2013



## 2.2 Investments reviewed

This section provides a short overview of each of the investment schemes analysed in the six countries.

### GHANA

#### Integrated Tamale Fruit Company (ITFC)

**Company:** Dutch–Ghanaian joint venture producing and exporting organic mangoes. Located in Diare (Savelegu Nanton District) in the Northern Region.

**Land-related arrangements:** Nucleus estate based on a small company-owned plantation (150 ha). Land was acquired through a leasing agreement signed in 1999 and negotiated directly with traditional authorities.

**Key features of the model:** Hybrid model including a small nucleus estate and an outgrower scheme for the production of organic mangoes. The latter was set up in 2001 with 1 200 participants (approximately 12% are women) collectively cultivating around 480 ha – no more than 0.4 ha each on individual farms. Farmers receive start-up loans in the form of inputs (seeds, fertilizer etc.) that have to be fully repaid within 14 years, during which outgrowers can only sell to ITFC. The venture also includes a packing and processing unit, a seedling nursery, and a bee-keeping project. A total of 458 workers are employed by the company (42.5% are women).

### SIERRA LEONE

#### Addax Bioenergy Sierra Leone Ltd

**The company:** Foreign-owned company with Swiss, Swedish and Dutch shareholders. In late 2016, the company (75%) was sold to Sunbird Bioenergy Africa. Addax produces sugar cane, mostly for ethanol production. Initiated in 2008, the venture became fully operational in 2014. Located in the Northern Province (15 km west of Makeni town in the chiefdoms of Makari-Gbanti and Bombali Shebora).

**Land-related arrangements:** The company originally leased 57 000 ha, exceeding the requirements for cultivation (for 50 years, renewable for 21 years and another 21 years after that, up to a total of 99 years), and subsequently returned about 12 000 ha to communities after determining which land areas the compound needed for production. Consultations were carried out according to a legal and procedural framework. Of the total annual rent, 50% is destined to landowners, 10% to the national government, 20% to the chiefdom administrators and 20% to the district council. At the time of the research, only 14 300 ha of land were under cultivation.

**Key features of the model:** Corporate-owned and managed land-based agricultural investment, providing employment to 1 400 people (20% women). At the time of the research, the employment generation potential of the investments had not been fully realized.

### **Balmed Holdings Ltd**

**The company:** Privately owned (100%) British company operating in the Kenema District, Eastern Province. Established in 2002, it started operating as a cocoa and coffee trading company in 2005.

**Land-related arrangements:** Block farm model, based on a participatory land development strategy. Interested landowners relinquished land to the company, which acquired legal rights for 20 years as well as a purchasing guarantee for the period of the agreement. A total of 760 ha are currently used for cocoa production, distributed in 19 blocks.

**Key features of the model:** Management contract, whereby community members organized in youth farming groups (comprising 30–40 youth, of whom 30% are women) supply labour while serving as shareholders in future production profits. An estimated 700–800 local residents are involved across 19 plantation sites. In the investment phase, Balmed covers all financial costs and is responsible for equipment and food supplies during production activities. The company manages the plantations for a period and trains youth so that management may be handed over to local committees. Balmed has also established plantation stations and cocoa and coffee processing plants at Mobai, Kailahun (Eastern Province) and Potoru, Pujehun (Southern Province), where it employs managers and seasonal labourers in cocoa and coffee processing.

## **PHILIPPINES**

### **Unifrutti Philippines Inc.**

**The company:** Foreign equity private sector corporation based in Mindanao. Established in 1992 under the name OriBanEx (Oriental Banana Export Company), with investment principally coming from Chiquita Bananas (Japan), De Nadai (Italy) and Abdullah Abbar & Ahmed Zainy Co. (Saudi Arabia). As of 2005, the main owner is the Italian De Nadai Group, engaged in production, processing and export trading of pineapple and banana.

**Land-related arrangements:** Under the growership scheme, contracts are signed with cooperatives made up of smallholders who obtain their land under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme.

**Key features of the model:** Cooperatives manage the farms, based on either collective or individual farming systems, and make supply arrangements with the company. Growership

arrangements last 5–40 years. The company buys the fresh fruits already sorted and packaged by the cooperatives in branded boxes, according to weekly orders with pre-agreed specification of size and number, and priced according to the price periodically set by Unifrutti. The company provides farmers with free technical assistance and financial assistance repayable at a per box rate.

### **Mount Kitanglad Agri-Ventures Inc. (MKAVI)**

**Company:** Owned and managed by Unifrutti. MKAVI produces banana for export. Located in the Alanib barangay in Lantapan (Bukidnon Province), it commenced operations in 1998.

**Land-related arrangements:** Following a 6-month negotiation process with local communities, landowners “entrusted” their lands to the developer, MKAVI, for a 25-year period. Landowners are entitled to an annual land income per hectare according to a fixed schedule plus a one-time crop disturbance compensation fee, based on the age and potential of the existing crop. In addition, landowners are given a modest share of the harvest from the plantation as an annual bonus from year 3 onwards.

**Business model:** Corporate-managed plantation on leased land, covering an area of approximately 1 100 ha. A total of 400 landowners, men and women, have signed a “Farm Development and Marketing Agreement” with MKAVI which contains the conditions governing the rights of the two parties. MKAVI employs 1 137 regular full-time workers, of which approximately 20% are women.

## **UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

### **Diligent Tanzania Ltd**

**The company:** Privately owned (100%) by Africa Holdings, whose sole shareholder is the Dutch Foundation Doen. The Dutch Foundation Doen receives funding from the Dutch lottery and has a mandate to ensure that farmers benefit from investment opportunities. It began operations in 2005.

**Land-related arrangements:** The model was based on a system of collecting jatropha seeds from farmers who already have jatropha planted as hedges around their fields. The company discourages farmers from planting jatropha in their fields, in order to avoid endangering food security.

**Key features of the business models:** Informal partnership and contract farming, benefitting about 50 000 households. The company does not operate any kind of formal outgrower model directly with farmers, in order to keep production costs down until it becomes more profitable. Two systems are operated:

- › **Local collectors system.** Lead farmers act as middlemen in jatropha collection. They receive cash payments in advance from the company to buy seeds from local farmers in their areas. Within Arusha and its surrounding area, Diligent had around 70 collectors (middlemen) at the time of the fieldwork (80% men) and some 5 000 farmers (65% women).
- › **Group-based model.** Started in 2010, it involves 35 000 farmers who sell their jatropha seeds through local partner organizations, including church groups, local NGOs and non-profit companies. These organizations provide support to strengthen farmers' capacity in negotiation skills, record-keeping and organizational development. The farmer groups (50 farmers each) comprise both men and women. The group model enables farmers to share risks and gain a slightly higher income from the sale of jatropha seeds, as compared with the local collectors system.

## Multiflower Ltd

**The company:** Privately owned (100%) by a mixture of Dutch and Tanzanian investors. Established in 1995, it produces flower and vegetable seeds for export.

**Land-related arrangements:** Farmers cultivate flowers on their own farm. Some outgrowers have just 0,1-0.2 acres of flowers, some much more, but contracts are also signed with outgrowers with even smaller pieces of land.

**Key features of the business model:** The flower seed business is structured around formal outgrower contracts signed each season with individual farmers, including 5 000 flower seed farmers (22% women) and 150 vegetable seed farmers (5% women). The company field officers supervise the fields, visiting farmers every 2 weeks. Additionally, selected farmer representatives in each location are paid to attend training at the factory site in Arusha. They play an important role in conveying information to outgrowers.

## ZAMBIA

### Kaleya Smallholders Company Limited (KASCOL)

**The company:** Domestically owned Zambian company producing sugar cane for both domestic and export markets. Operating in the Mazabuka District (Southern Province), it began in 1983 as a joint venture smallholder sugar settlement scheme between the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) and the Government of Zambia. Kaleya Smallholder Farmers Association (KASFA) currently holds 13.26% of KASKOL. The other shareholders are the Development Bank of Zambia (25% equity share), the Mazabuka Cane Growers Trust – a district-level sugar-cane grower association (25% equity share) – and other private shareholders (jointly owning 36.74%).

**Land-related arrangements:** KASCOL secured its 99-year lease of 4 314.9 ha from the Government of Zambia, following a compulsory acquisition by the Government of land belonging to Zambezi Ranching and two other commercial farmers. At the time of acquisition, the land belonged to individual commercial farmers and there is no evidence to suggest that there was a negative impact on the livelihoods and land rights of local communities.

**Key features of the business model:** Combination of own-production and contract farming on leased land. The 2 197-ha plantation provides employment to 170–299 seasonal workers for 9–11 months each year. Of the 4 314.9 ha of land leased by the company from the Government on a 99-year lease, a quarter is subleased to outgrowers for free. Outgrowers currently number 160 (26.8% are women). The main mechanism of smallholder representation within KASCOL, as well as with the Government and other stakeholders, is through membership of KASFA.

## ETC Bioenergy

**The company:** Located in the Mpongwe District and established in 2007 with the acquisition of the assets of the Mpongwe Development Company (MDC). MDC was a large-scale plantation agriculture project co-owned by the Government of Zambia and the CDC, in operation since the 1970s. MDC focused on the production and processing of a range of agricultural products for sale in local and international markets, including soybean, wheat, barley and maize. ETC Bioenergy (ETC) then introduced a jatropha plantation on 500 ha of land and set up a biofuel refinery. In 2011, ETC sold the jatropha farms to a Zambian multinational agribusiness. This is due in part to the fact that since 2010, investments in biofuel crops, especially jatropha, have almost ground to a halt.

**Land-related arrangements:** The land acquisition can be traced back to a government-owned wheat production scheme in the 1970s. When MDC was incorporated in 1984, the Government had acquired significantly more land than it subsequently leased to MDC, bringing MDC's total landholding to 46 764 ha. When ETC acquired the company, it also acquired a 99-year land lease (with water rights included) granted by the Ministry of Land and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to which the company paid ground rent and water fees. At the time of the acquisition, the land rights were ceded to the Government by the local chiefs and their constituencies.

**Key features of the business model:** Plantation model totalling over 46 874 ha. The business is run as a set of large plantations with high degrees of mechanization. The main development contribution is seen in employment generation, although most of the labour generated is not on a fixed term. Most seasonal workers have previously engaged in jatropha farming – the most labour-intensive sector of the scheme.

## LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

### Lao Banana Co.

**The company:** A 100% foreign direct investment (British).

**Land-related arrangements:** Lao Banana Co. started operating in Laos in 2008 with a 30-year land concession of 100 ha; in 2009, it obtained a second 100-ha land concession for a second plantation. No processes of consultation with local communities were documented.

**Key features of the business model:** Conventional banana plantation including 60–70 regular agricultural workers (the majority women). Most of the employees were hired around the time of the study. However, initially 150 workers were hired on the plantations to clear all the land and plant banana trees. Once this preliminary work was complete, labour requirements dropped to 30–35 permanent workers per site. This low figure was also due to the fact that the company was not exporting at the time of research as a result of technical problems with the crops that had obliged it to temporarily halt exports and sell on the local market only.

### Lao Tobacco Limited (LTL)

**The company:** International joint venture between the Government of Laos and Imperial Tobacco Group (ITG), established in 2001 to revive the failing state-owned Lao Tobacco Company.

**Land-related arrangements:** farmers farm their own land under contract farming arrangements.

**Key features of the business model:** Conventional contract farming model with approximately 3 200 contract farming families growing flue-cured tobacco along the Mekong River. Tobacco farmers are organized into 88 groups. The heads of the groups are responsible for enforcing adherence to contracts among producers. A total of 700 employees (of whom at least 350 are women) are also hired in processing and packaging at the factory site. The company establishes its tobacco-growing policy at the start of each season in consultation with farmers, local governments and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, with the aim of improving quality, productivity and thus income.









# 3. GENDER AND THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Creating a gender-sensitive policy and institutional environment means that gender needs have to be adequately integrated in each relevant area in a coherent and coordinated manner. As part of this research, policy documents related to agriculture and investment promotion were reviewed, and interviews with representatives from key line ministries were conducted to gain a sense of the prevailing policy environment in each context. This shows that the policy and legal context associated with land-related investments is very complex, comprising many policies and institutions.

This chapter provides examples illustrating how gender concerns are marginal in major policy documents. It also highlights where efforts have been made to create more gender-sensitive policies.

## 3.1 Country commitments towards gender equality

In the six countries where case studies were conducted for this report, gender equality is considered essential for achieving development objectives, such as economic growth, poverty reduction and food security. Accordingly, most countries have captured this relationship in the overarching policy documents, such as development plans or poverty-reduction strategies. In addition, many governments have signed international and regional agreements related to women's rights and gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Likewise, all of the countries have endorsed voluntary international global instruments relevant to agricultural investments, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) (CFS, 2012) and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) (CFS, 2014), in which gender equality and women's empowerment are recognized as key principles (see Box 1).

All countries have also adopted gender policies or strategies and have established an “institutional machinery” focused on gender (gender ministries, commissions, committees etc.) to pursue gender equality and women’s empowerment goals. The Philippines has developed the most progressive policy and institutional framework for promoting gender equality (see Box 2). While some policies are broader in scope and better articulated than others, all aim to mainstream gender concerns into the national development processes. To a greater or lesser extent, the policies define policy objectives and strategies, as well as the institutional framework for the operationalization of the Government’s commitment to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. However, there is **little mention of agriculture within gender-mainstreaming strategies** and **almost no explicit reference to women in agriculture**.

### Box 1.

#### Gender in the VGGT and CFS–RAI Principles

The VGGT highlight the centrality of gender equality to the responsible governance of natural resources by adopting it as one of the ten principles of implementation and by fully mainstreaming it throughout the guidelines. Thus, gender equality is at the core of all processes and aspects of tenure governance, including policy formulation, institutional set-up for administration, service provisioning, land administration programmes, access to justice and information.

The VGGT make specific provisions to improve gender equality in both formal and customary systems, for instance through amending discriminatory inheritance and property laws. Moreover, not only do the VGGT recognize women’s land rights, but they encourage states to have a proactive role in promoting gender equity.

“Foster gender equality and women’s empowerment” is Principle 3 of the CFS–RAI framework. It states that all types of investments in agriculture and food systems should:

- ensure that all people are treated fairly, recognizing the vital role played by women;
- eliminate all measures and practices that discriminate or violate rights on the basis of gender;
- advance women’s equal tenure rights, and their equal access to and control over productive land, natural resources, inputs and productive tools;
- promote access to extension, services, markets and information; and
- adopt innovative and/or proactive approaches, measures and processes to enhance women’s meaningful participation in partnerships, decision-making, leadership roles and the equitable sharing of benefits.

## Box 2

### Progressive gender policy-making in the Philippines

The most **progressive example in terms of gender-sensitive policies** is the Philippines. The country has taken many exemplary steps to promote gender equality over the last decade, in particular the enactment of the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) in 2010 (PCW, 2010), which is the national interpretation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Chapter V of the MCW sets out the rights of marginalized rural women, with an emphasis on rights to resources for food production, such as land and land titles. It also directs the state to progressively realize and ensure decent work standards for women that involve the creation of jobs of acceptable quality in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

In addition to the MCW, the Government of the Philippines has adopted the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995–2025 (NCRFW, 1995), a 30-year strategic plan that translates the Beijing Platform for Action into policies, strategies, programmes and projects for Filipino women. The Philippines also has an Interagency Committee on Rural Women, co-chaired by the Philippine Commission on Women and the National Rural Women Congress and involving the gender and development focal points of 12 relevant government agencies. It should be noted that the Philippines is one of the few countries in the world to adopt a Gender and Development Budget Policy (1995) requiring all government agencies (including local government units) to utilize at least 5 percent of their respective total budgets for programmes, activities and projects that address the needs and uphold the rights of women.

Source: Leonard et al., 2015.

Significant changes are still needed to ensure that these policies are put into practice. **Gender machineries leading on gender-equality objectives need to be given increasing recognition and power, coupled with sufficient financial resources and qualified human resources.** In addition, specific attention should be given to the agriculture sector, including setting up an effective coordination mechanism with the Ministry of Agriculture to enable the gender institutional machinery to fulfil its **responsibilities**:

- promote policy and legal review to ensure that the enabling environment is gender-sensitive;
- support the mainstreaming of gender in all government agencies from various sectors; and
- monitor progress towards gender targets and carry out awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns.

## 3.2 Agriculture and investment promotion policies

The governments of the countries in the research programme have identified the agriculture sector as a pillar for promoting poverty reduction, food security and environmental sustainability while ensuring pro-poor and inclusive growth. Within this context, ministries of agriculture have designed policies, programmes and specific interventions to stimulate agricultural investments and assist private investors and agribusiness companies in scaling up inclusive business models that improve farmers' and businesses' commercial potential. In Laos, the *Strategy for Agricultural Development 2011–2020* (MAF, 2010a) envisages a gradual transition from subsistence farming to more commercial smallholder production, through the development of farmers' organizations and cooperatives, and the promotion of contract farming arrangements between smallholders and private investors. In Zambia, the Government is promoting private sector investment and public–private partnerships (PPPs) in all sectors, including agriculture, by strengthening the capacity of smallholder farmers to engage in agribusiness (GRZ, 2011).

Many policy documents acknowledge the role performed by women as both producers and entrepreneurs in the agriculture sector, and recognize the need to address the gender gaps in access to resources, services, markets, producer organizations and employment. However, the research conducted herein indicates that **gender-related concerns are often superficially mentioned in key policy documents regulating agricultural investments and barely considered across the different stages of land transactions.**

An Oxfam report (Vorley *et al.*, 2012) illustrates that even when policy frameworks promote more and fairer connections between commercial investors and small-scale producers, these value-chain linkages are more likely to benefit a particular segment of rural societies, often involving the top 2–10 percent of smallholders, primarily men, who have the assets and the access to capital, organization, information and infrastructure required to engage with formal and coordinated markets.

In the countries reviewed, specialized government agencies to promote and monitor private investments in agriculture have been created. For example, the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) was established in 2005 as a one-stop shop for investors, bringing several specialist government agencies<sup>1</sup> under one roof. The ZDA assists investors in identifying suitable land for investment; applying to the responsible authorities (GRZ, 2006) for the necessary authorization and permits; and obtaining access to core infrastructure and services (ZDA, 2011). Similarly, the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation (PADCC) presents itself as the first point of contact for private investors looking to invest in land. Institutionally, PADCC was set up in 2008 as a corporate arm of the Department of Agriculture to promote large-scale investment in the Philippine agrosector.

In many cases, these specialist agencies have established a set of criteria to assess potential investments. Private investors requesting a permit to invest are expected to carry out social and environmental impact assessments and to consult local communities. The reality is

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<sup>1</sup> The Zambia Investment Centre (ZIC), the Zambia Export Processing Zones Authority (ZEPZA), the Export Board of Zambia (EBZ), the Zambia Privatisation Agency (ZPA) and the Small Enterprise Development Board (SEDB).



that the assessment criteria are either unclear or not strictly considered when conducting environmental and social impact assessments. Gender-focused criteria are never explicitly addressed. For example, in Ghana, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has the mandate to require an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for screening investments (German *et al.*, 2011), but the social and gender dimension is completely overlooked in the guidance on EIAs. Several shortcomings in the implementation of the EIA legislation have also been documented. Schoneveld *et al.* (2010) report that only three foreign companies involved in biofuel production had an approved EIA permit at the time of their research. This is partly because the EPA is under-resourced and in need of capacity development.

The level of assessment, regulation and monitoring of agricultural investments remains, in general, poor. In the Philippines, as well as in other countries, the institutional responsibilities for agricultural investments are spread across the various government agencies and thus poorly defined. This means that no agency has overall responsibility to ensure that the modes of operation of investments adhere to standards of equitable and responsible practice.

The lack of a solid policy and institutional environment for the regulation of agricultural investments was particularly evident in Laos, where none of the investments analysed have involved farmers, communities or workers in consultation and decision-making activities with investors. Failure to promote multistakeholder engagement along the different stages of the investment cycle has led in some cases to unsustainable outcomes. Conversely, the KASCOL model in Zambia offers a good example of an investment in which the active participation of the Government has played a fundamental role in creating the right conditions for mutually beneficial relationships between small-scale producers and private companies. Positive outcomes in terms of gender have been documented and analysed in this study.

## Key messages

- Governments can play an important role in creating an enabling environment for inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural investments to flourish and act as important contributors to poverty reduction and the achievement of food security.
- Key government policies relevant to agricultural investments are gender-blind, despite the existence of gender policies and associated institutional machinery.
- Gender machineries leading on gender-equality objectives are poorly recognized, under-resourced and under-staffed. Poor coordination mechanisms with the ministry of agriculture limit their capacity to influence the agriculture sector.
- Social and gender-related criteria are not considered in the screening process of potential investments. Overall, institutional processes and responsibilities for screening and monitoring agricultural investments are poorly defined.



## 4. TENURE RIGHTS IMPACT ON GENDER ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS

Land tenure regimes influence the way in which women can participate in and benefit from primary agricultural investments. In most African and Asian countries, women's access to and use of land depends on their relations to their male relatives as wives, mothers or daughters. The most critical factors which continue to perpetuate gender inequalities in ownership or control of land include discriminatory customary laws and practices and inconsistencies, as well as poor implementation of existing laws and policies. This condition makes women's land tenure rights weak and insecure, and all the more so in contexts in which land acquisitions take place (Daley, 2011; Daley & Pallas, 2014; Behrman *et al.*, 2012).

This chapter focuses on the gendered outcomes of different business models in terms of changing existing patterns of access to, use of and control over land. In most cases, land-related investments have contributed to further undermine women's access to land. However, some positive examples in terms of promoting and securing women's access to land have also been identified and are illustrated.

### **4.1. Gender dimensions in land consultation and acquisition**

In many of the business models reviewed, there is a component of land acquisition by private investors. This is found not only in conventional large-scale plantations (MKAVI, MDC/ETC, Addax and Lao Banana Co.), but also in nucleus estate or hybrid models (ITFC and KASCOL) and in management contracts (Balmed). When land acquisition is viewed from a gender perspective, it emerges that there are commonalities across the different business models (i.e. plantation and hybrid models) in the way in which gender issues have been systematically neglected throughout the different stages of the land acquisition transactions. When investors seek to acquire communal land used by local communities, national legal and policy frameworks often require that consultation processes with local land users/owners

take place to shape the terms of the land agreements. However, in the cases analysed, not all the companies engaged local communities in the consultation processes. In the case of KASKOL in Zambia, this was because the land acquired was privately owned and thus only minimally affected community land. The evidence available reveals that only Addax and Balmed in Sierra Leone and MKAVI in the Philippines consulted with local communities. The depth and degree of inclusiveness of these processes was mixed. However, a common finding across the case studies is that, even when consultation processes are underpinned by a legal and procedural framework, **women are virtually excluded from consultation and negotiation activities with investors.** This means that the promotion of the participation of local communities is not automatically conducive to greater inclusion of women.

In Sierra Leone, Addax carried out a massive negotiation process involving 160 communities. According to the company, all government requirements – legal and procedural – were followed, including disclosure of information, legal representation of communities and recording of local land rights. Among the broad range of stakeholders interviewed there was a consensus that women had been heavily marginalized in village consultations. Women from the Magbansaw village reported that their husbands had not allowed them to participate in the meetings taking place in a neighbouring village. In Manewa, some men reported that consultations and committees were not supposed to include women at all. In the few cases in which women did participate, it was found that their involvement was marginal and passive.

*“They came for about seven meetings with the village. They bought food for the meetings, for everyone in the village.... Women did the cooking, so some of us missed the first parts of the meetings. Landowners took the decision. We only listened. We did not express our opinions because we are not supposed to do so. “We do not own the land, we just come through marriage,” we are told. (Women’s focus group, Manewa, Addax case study, Sierra Leone)*

Women’s exclusion meant that their land rights were not made visible and thus not recognized in the payment system. As a result, Addax’s lease payments were made to the signatories of the contracts, mostly male heads of household. The general expectation of the company was that “the benefits should be spilling over to the families”. In reality, it was found that only a small number of powerful individuals in the communities were controlling the distribution of benefits, with women particularly disadvantaged. Research also revealed that when women did receive payments, they were substantially lower than those received by men. An evaluation carried out by the company highlighted the low levels of women’s participation in the consultation and their exclusion from the compensation scheme. As a result, the company adopted measures to redress gender imbalances, described in detail in Box 4.

In the Philippines, MKAVI leased about 1 100 ha from 400 small farmers (168 women) for the implementation of a banana plantation scheme. The company engaged the

communities affected in a 6-month consultation process. Initial discussions were held with representatives of local councils and tribal authorities prior to consulting directly with individual farmers holding land patents/titles. Since the information gathered by the company differed from the official cadastral survey, the local councils established a mediation process to hear from different claimants and resolve existing disputes over land before agreements with the company could be signed. Although the process was clear and transparent, it was heavily male-dominated.

The majority of women did not take part in the consultation and mediation process. Nevertheless, through a careful analysis of the tenure system, women who possessed land titles could be recognized and thus join the scheme. Women and men with certified land titles could then sign a “Farm Development and Marketing Agreement” with MKAVI leasing land to the company for 25 years. This agreement establishes that landowners are entitled to an annual income per ha, a one-time crop disturbance compensation fee based on the age and potential of the existing crop, and a modest share of the harvest from the plantation as an annual bonus.

It is clear that pre-existing gender norms, whereby women are not expected to participate in land-related institutions, have shaped the process and outcomes of the consultation. On the other hand, the **companies did not envisage any measure to counterbalance discriminatory gender norms and promote women’s representation in consultation committees**, thereby leaving unchallenged existing gender inequalities in access to land-related decision-making. However, the MKAVI experience shows that **more gender-equitable outcomes can be achieved, despite lack of participation in consultation, when women’s land rights are clearly defined and recognized, in this case through the holding of land titles.**

## 4.2. Positive experiences in promoting gender-sensitive consultation

Boxes 3 and 4 illustrate two cases – Balmed and Addax, both in Sierra Leone – in which specific measures were adopted to ensure that women and men were consulted and participated in decision-making processes around land deals.

Balmed is an interesting example of an inclusive land consultation process. Meaningful participation by families, in the identification of plots and contract negotiation helped to minimize risks in terms of social exclusion, reduced access to land and internal conflicts. Box 3 provides a more detailed description of the process.



**Box 3****Conducting a gender-sensitive consultation process in Sierra Leone**

Balmed's consultation process in Sierra Leone was **considered adequate by community participants**. The company leased about 760 ha divided into 19 blocks of 40 ha each to produce cocoa through a co-management scheme with local dwellers. More specifically, the company acquired legal rights to the land for 25 years in exchange for labour, inputs and a purchasing guarantee for the period of the agreement, in addition to a revenue-sharing arrangement with local landowners.

Consultation processes for each of the blocks were held with landowners, local communities and local chiefs. Formal meetings were followed by awareness-raising and information campaigns at village level to foster understanding and interest in the intervention. Farmers interested in joining the scheme were registered, with priority given to those with limited access to capital (e.g. youth and women). The agreement was signed by all interested actors, including landowning families, community chiefs and youth groups, and was generally clear and well understood by farmers, including women. Community members participated actively in the identification of plots of land for development. While male heads of households from landowning families had the main say in conceding the land, participants reported that they had control over which land was selected and that women were fully involved in decision-making. Villagers selected forest or fallow land not currently used (or only marginally used) by the community as the land to be developed for the project.

Source: Wisborg *et al.*, 2014

Addax – following a recommendation of an external evaluation – attempted to correct the initial gender blindness of the land agreements executed by addressing gender issues in a multistakeholder forum (see Box 4). The increased recognition of the importance of women was also linked to evidence that their exclusion from consultation activities was actually contributing to weakening community support for the investment.

**Box 4****Addressing gender issues in a multi-stakeholder forum in Sierra Leone**

Regular external assessments carried out by the company as part of its due diligence policy revealed important shortcomings regarding the lack of inclusion of women and other marginalized groups in consultation and compensation. In order to redress existing social imbalances, the company established and funded a multistakeholder forum, where government representatives, village institutions and civil society organizations could raise their concerns, access information and influence decisions on investment operations. Addax made specific efforts to involve women in the forum and asked traditional leaders to reduce the gender gap in investment-related activities. A social coordinator was hired to work on gender issues, such as intra-village distribution of lease payments and other compensation measures, and to advocate for women's participation in the multistakeholder forum established.

Source: Wisborg *et al.*, 2014



### 4.3 How different business models can affect gendered patterns of access to, use of and control over land

When consultations and negotiations fail to take into account the interests of various groups of land users, the land rights of marginalized groups tend to be the most negatively affected. The impact of land acquisition on the livelihoods and land rights of women and men depends considerably on the dimensions of the land acquired, whether customarily or privately owned, and the type of business model implemented, with large-scale acquisition for plantation agriculture often leading to more controversial gendered and social outcomes (compared with other business models). From a gender perspective, the cases analysed reveal that, **compared with men, women's land rights were more adversely affected both when land was acquired by a private enterprise and when collaborative business models were established.**

Two case studies show that women were hardest hit by the reduced availability of land for both farming and collection of non-timber forest products (NTFP). In Sierra Leone and Zambia, women lost access to the plots in which they produced food for both home consumption and local markets.

In the case of Addax, it was reported that women lost access to lands that were valuable for their production, livelihoods and domestic needs. It was decided to support local farmers in intensifying and expanding agricultural production through farmer field and life schools and farm development support. Addax reported, and communities confirmed, that training activities were failing to meet farmers' needs for greater diversification and focused on a single crop: rice. This was because the programme was planned without the participation of farmers and little attention was paid to assessing the differentiated needs of the affected women and men producers. Protecting and securing land for women and including a diversity of crops are among those measures identified as more responsive to women's needs.

In the case of Zambia, when MDC started operations after leasing 46 764 ha, the company granted permission to wage workers to cultivate maize in the company's leased marginal lands. However, in 2004, MDC banned maize cultivation on the small plots allocated to workers because the harvest obtained by some exceeded the quota set by the company. Producers participating in the focus group discussions reported that restrictions on maize cultivation contributed to endangering household food security. This created a major burden for women who are traditionally responsible for food crop production. In order to satisfy the household's food requirements, women were forced to walk longer distances ( $\leq 3$  hours) to access available agricultural land.

A similar experience was documented in the KASKOL case in Zambia. The company intervention was initially implemented in a way to ensure that farmers had sufficient land for food production. KASKOL was very flexible with the utilization of the company's marginal lands that were yet to be brought under cane cultivation. Most of this land (in 1-ha blocks) was allocated to outgrowers and staff members to temporarily grow staple food crops.

Considerable gender differences were documented concerning the use of this “additional” land. While a general tendency among men was to use all the land area for both sugar cane and other cash crops, the majority of women preferred to grow food crops such as vegetables and maize. Therefore, **households headed by female outgrowers fared better in terms of food security and nutrition**. Subsequently, KASCOL decided to convert some of the land under food production to sugar-cane cultivation to expand the company plantation.

When communal land – often improperly categorized as “uncultivated” or “unused” – is acquired by a company, the land rights of different users can be overlooked resulting in no compensation mechanism. This is because compensation systems generally target only those with ownership rights. In reality, **communal land is essential for the livelihoods of poor farmers, particularly those with less secure tenure. Women’s poorer access to land means that they depend much more heavily on this land both for growing subsistence crops and for income-generating activities** (mainly collection of NTFPs for sale). In Ghana, loss of communal land has altered the local farming systems, with negative consequences for female farmers. Before the ITFC project started, fallowing of land after 3–4 years of cultivation was an integral part of the traditional rotation system (Tsikata and Yaro, 2014). Following the land acquisition by ITFC, fallow land was converted into permanently cultivated land, which jeopardized not only agricultural productivity but also the land rights of women who had lost access to their husband’s fallow lands. Some of these women now only have access to smaller plots, while others have given up farming (Tsikata and Yaro, 2014).

Participants in the FGDs and stakeholder interviews held in Zambia, Laos and Ghana reported that their access to NTFPs on public or communal land was disrupted by the land-use agreements made with the investors. They mentioned that this represented a major challenge for poor rural families, as NTFPs constitute an additional income source and are important for household food security. Women reportedly suffer disproportionately from loss of access to these products, as they bear the brunt of the increased labour burden from having to travel further (3–4 km) to collect fuelwood, wild fruits, nuts and other products.

With regard to collaborative business models, the cases illustrate that outgrower schemes can affect household land-use patterns, even though the land remains under the control of the household. In Tanzania, most of Multiflower’s outgrowers cultivate seeds on land previously used for maize production. Better-off farmers, mostly men, rent out additional plots to enable them to continue farming the same quantity of maize as before. Some women FGD participants reported, however, that cultivating flowers resulted in reduced maize production, although they did not feel that their situation with respect to food security had worsened since entering the business.

To avoid the risks of undermining food security due to the development of cocoa production and to promote income diversification, Balmed encourages intercropping. In Tanzania, Diligent actively discourages farmers from planting *jatropha* on their land as a main crop; its cultivation is only permitted at the edges of fields as hedges and fences to mark boundaries and keep livestock off

the food crops. The aim is to maintain profitability for farmers without altering land-use patterns or becoming embroiled in land acquisition.

The cases analysed give no clear indication of gendered conflicts over land as a result of the introduction or expansion of commercial crops. Nevertheless, there is some evidence indicating that there could be an impact. Dolan (2001) describes how the development of outgrower models in the horticulture sector in Kenya has led to an erosion of women's control over their land and produce, as male farmers have increasingly engaged in vegetable production, a sector traditionally dominated by women. A similar trend was documented in Swaziland (FAO, 2008). As a result of the introduction of commercial sugar-cane production, male farmers have claimed back the land they had allocated to their wives; at the same time, backyard gardens have been turned into farmland. As a consequence, many women can no longer decide independently what to grow on any piece of land. Conflicts between contract requirements and women's subsistence farming priorities are key challenges to contract farming (Eaton and Sheperd, 2001) and more research in this area is urgently needed.

#### **4.4 Practices that have contributed to securing and promoting women's access to land**

None of the business models analysed have developed and implemented strategies to address gender and land rights issues in their business models. However, in the cases of KASKOL (Box 5) and Balmed (Box 6), their approaches to land issues have unwittingly contributed to securing and promoting women's access to land, thus enabling them to participate in the investment scheme. In the case of KASKOL, subleasing land to outgrowers without any strict eligibility criteria created opportunities for women to join the scheme. The introduction of a succession clause in the contractual arrangement further contributed to a significant increase in the number of women outgrowers. Balmed not only involved women in consultation activities, but encouraged their participation in block farming by applying a gender-sensitive quota.

In both cases, the long-term outcomes in terms of women's economic empowerment – including their capacity to effectively control land – are still unclear. This applies especially to young women. For instance, it is unclear whether young single women are able to retain control over the plot when they get married.

Overall, it is uncertain how the impact of both models on the local economy and land tenure system will evolve over time. In the case of KASKOL, the capacity to make decisions and retain control over land depends on the company's policy. Concerning Balmed, whether gender-balanced youth farming groups will be able to effectively act as land managers and shareholders is an issue requiring further investigation.

**Box 5****Subleasing land to female outgrowers in KASKOL**

One of the most salient features of the KASKOL business model is that the land acquired by the company, which was previously privately owned, was redistributed to outgrowers through 14-year renewable free-of-charge sublease contracts, without any explicit barriers to women's participation. Years later, the company introduced a succession clause in the Cane Farmer Agreement in order to counteract the high rates of male mortality due to the HIV–AIDS pandemic. The clause allows outgrowers to nominate a family member who will inherit the land and contract in the event of death or infirmity. This measure contributed to a **substantive increase over time in women's participation in the scheme**. At the time of the study, 45 of the 160 KASKOL outgrowers were women. The vast majority of female outgrowers (70%) comprised widows (entering the scheme through inheritance) and single young women.

The women entering the scheme gained access to several hectares of land for dwelling space and subsistence crops, in addition to sugar cane cultivation. This constitutes a significant increase in empowerment for these women, particularly in the Southern Province, where they generally face severe constraints in terms of access to land and other key agricultural resources.

However, land acquisition by both female and male outgrowers is not fully secure: it could be lost if the company changes its policies or goes bankrupt.

Source: Wonani *et al.*, 2013





## Box 6

### The block farming model of Balmed

The main strength of the Balmed model is its **participatory land development strategy that seeks not to undermine community and family land rights and sharing of revenues**. For example, the company engaged in 25-year land leases (compared with 99 years in other cases in Sierra Leone) in order to reduce the long-term impact on the property rights of local communities, including women's traditional land rights. This is one reason why this model is regarded as a potential sustainable alternative to outright land acquisition or long-term land leasing. Women are actively involved in the land development process and are included in block farming through the implementation of a quota system which mandates that at least 15 women should be part of each group of 40–50 block farming members. The very fact that women's land rights are recognized and that the company promotes women's access to the revenue-sharing mechanism are all promising features.

However, the viability of the Balmed scheme is probably more related to the extensive availability of land in the country combined with the relatively small scale of the intervention (760 ha), rather than the model per se. Pre-existing gender roles and gender relations also favour women's inclusion, as the Southern Region, where the investment is located, is known to have better treatment of women than the Northern Province.

Source: Wisborg *et al.*, 2014

## Key messages

- Women's land rights are more adversely affected than men's – both when land is acquired by a private enterprise and when collaborative business models are established.
- Women are generally excluded from consultation processes between investors and local communities. As a result, they tend to have little capacity to defend and claim their land rights, including gaining compensation when they lose access to and use of land.
- Companies are generally unaware of the gender dimensions of the local tenure system. None of the investments reviewed envisaged any measure to counterbalance discriminatory gender norms and promote women's representation in consultation committees.
- Major challenges to women's livelihoods and household food security as a result of land acquisition include: reduced availability of communal land for collecting firewood and NTFP, which often represents an important income stream for poor families; and loss of access to agricultural land for food crop production.
- More gender-equitable outcomes can be achieved, despite lack of participation in consultation, when women's land rights are clearly defined and recognized, for example through the holding of land titles.





## 5. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER-EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN OUTGROWER SCHEMES

Outgrower schemes are often regarded as inclusive business models that have the potential to empower smallholder farmers by enabling them to retain control over land and act as investment partners (Da Silva, 2005). However, there is such a variety of forms of contract farming models that a simple definition does not necessarily apply. Depending on how these schemes are designed and operated, they might generate exclusion and social/gender differentiations as well as exploitative, risky contractual relations that impede wealth accumulation among smallholders (Hall *et al.*, 2017).

Broader evidence from the literature highlights that **women are under-represented in contracting with agro-industrial firms in their own right and are disadvantaged in contract schemes** (Schneider and Gugerty, 2010; Smalley, 2013). This section analyses some of the most important constraints hindering women's engagement in collaborative business models. These include limited access to land, labour and other productive resources, and poor representation in producers' organizations. Measures and practices which facilitate women's participation are highlighted.

### 5.1. Constraints to women's participation in outgrower schemes

In all of the outgrower schemes analysed (see Table 3), women's involvement as partners in their own right is substantially lower than that of men.

**Table 3**  
**Female participation in outgrower schemes**

ENTERPRISE	COUNTRY	CROP	FEMALE CONTRACT HOLDERS
Multiflower-vegetables	Tanzania	Vegetable seeds	12%
Multiflower - flowers	Tanzania	Flower seeds	28%
Unifrutti	Philippines	Banana	15%
ITFC	Ghana	Mango	12.5%
LTL	Laos	Tobacco	3 200 families
KASKOL	Zambia	Sugar	27%

Sources: Daley and Park 2012; Daley *et al.*, 2013; King and Bugri, J. 2013; Leonard *et al.*, 2015; Wonani *et al.*, 2013

The case studies demonstrate that **the barriers women face are the result of mutually reinforcing factors, such as lack of conducive policies or of gender-sensitive rules of entrance to associations, which may originate in and be compounded by pre-existing gender inequalities rooted in patriarchal attitudes and practices in local contexts.**

According to Behrman *et al.* (2012), the notion of contract farming is heavily gender-biased as it is predicated on a unitary model of the household controlled by the male household head, who is usually the one signing the contract with the investor. Private companies often prefer to contract men on the assumption that they have more secure access to land and labour (Dolan, 2001). Targeting male household heads means that women's roles, including their labour contribution to outgrower male-managed plots, can be overlooked. This in turn can negatively influence women's workloads because they may be drafted in to provide labour to men, yet not receive adequate financial compensation for their work. They may also have less say in the selection and management of other crops and livestock on the family's landholdings.

In all of the case studies, with the exception of KASKOL in Zambia, **land ownership is a basic condition for joining any outgrower scheme, with far-reaching consequences for women, since they generally own less land and/or have less secure ownership.**

In the case of ITFC in Ghana, having secure access to land is a prerequisite for entering the mango scheme, which creates an obstacle for women's participation. It is estimated that only 12.5 percent of the total number of outgrowers are women. According to local norms, an individual who cultivates the same piece of land for more than two crop seasons in succession gains certain rights over that land, making it potentially difficult for the landowner to repossess the land. Therefore, husbands are particularly reluctant to allow women to grow perennial (as opposed to annual) crops; this in turn limits women's potential for rights over the land.

The case of KASKOL in Zambia is different, as land ownership is not a requirement for participation in the scheme. Even so, the majority of the outgrowers are men, with women accounting for just 27 percent of contracted farmers. Findings from the research conducted in Zambia indicate that the high labour requirements involved in sugar-cane production limit women's involvement as outgrowers. Unpaid family labour contributes 20 percent of the required labour input on KASKOL's female outgrower plots, compared with 50 percent on male outgrower plots. This indicates that women participating in the scheme have less *control over family labour* than men. Moreover, sugar cane is considered a "male" domain, meaning that many people think it is inappropriate for women to become sugar-cane outgrowers. These findings highlight that **non-land factors are also critical in limiting women's participation in outgrower schemes.**

Overall, **many contract farming schemes target capital-intensive crops and are designed such that they are only accessible to better-off farmers, usually men, who possess a more solid asset base.** The fact that women tend to have reduced access to and control of assets limits their participation in the most rewarding business opportunities. The case studies in Tanzania (Multiflower and Diligent) and in Laos (LTL) illustrate this issue:

- In the Multiflower case, women comprised 20 percent of outgrowers in the flower seed scheme, but only 5 percent in the vegetable seed scheme. This is because vegetable seed production requires substantially more investment than flower seed production. Vegetable seeds are high-input crops requiring irrigation as well as considerable investment in fertilizers and pesticides. Furthermore, different varieties have to be grown far apart – not intercropped or next to each other – requiring a greater land area, and most outgrowers in the focus groups needed to rent additional land in order to participate in the scheme. The vegetable outgrowers comprised mostly male farmers from the wealthier segments of rural societies.
- Similarly, in the FGD with tobacco producers involved in the LTL outgrower scheme analysed in Laos, participants reported that tobacco farming requires cash outlay up front to cover the costs of the casual work required to start production. They also mentioned that often only farmers with savings or access to bank loans could engage in the scheme, thus excluding poorer households.
- The only scheme in which women constituted the majority of the producers engaged with the company (> 65% at the time of the fieldwork) was Diligent's investment in jatropha in Tanzania. Male farmers describe jatropha as a "woman's crop", because the income is low. Women reported that, although the proceeds are indeed low, they are a welcome addition as supplementary income over which they have control. While participation in the scheme provides an opportunity for diversification, it does not allow women to obtain sufficient capital for reinvestment and business growth.

The Diligent case demonstrates that **outgrower schemes with a higher participation by women are generally characterized by lower-value crops which require no land, or by smaller plots where fewer inputs are used.**

A further barrier to women's involvement in outgrower schemes is related to their **limited participation in producer organizations, especially when these are associated with high-value export crops**. These organizations often have deeply embedded gender discriminatory norms, such as restrictive entrance or membership requirements (Kaaria *et al.*, 2016). In the Philippines, women are excluded from the cooperatives involved with Unifrutti because of the gender-biased agrarian reform, which benefitted mostly men (see Box 7). The company established contractual arrangements with cooperatives formed as a result of the agrarian reform; being an agrarian reform beneficiary (ARB) is a critical requirement for full membership of the cooperative. Women's participation in the three cooperatives included in the case study ranged from 5 to 20 percent.

### Box 7

#### Impact of agrarian reform on women's land rights in the Philippines

In the Philippines, where the agrarian reform programme is promoted by the Government, land tenure insecurity remains a critical issue for rural women. The country is a clear example of how **an extensive land reform process benefitted mostly male heads of household** who were much more likely than women to satisfy the criteria for becoming beneficiaries of the land redistribution process. One of the main criteria for qualifying as a beneficiary was to be a permanent worker in the plantation – a position mainly occupied by men. This meant that most women, who are generally hired as casual workers, were not able to participate. Prior to an administrative order in 2002 entitled “Removal of Gender Bias in the Acceptance and Processing of Homestead Patent Applications and other Public Land Applications”, land titles were issued mostly in the names of the heads of households – mainly men<sup>2</sup> – with spouses listed as “married to” the title-holder. This practice was changed under the second phase of the Land Administration and Management Project, and titles are now systematically issued in the names of both spouses<sup>3</sup>. However, titles previously issued to husbands alone remain unchanged, representing a key obstacle to women's participation in partnership schemes as producers in their own rights.

Source: Leonard *et al.*, 2015

In the case of ITFC, the existence of a registration “fee” of one bag of maize (or cash equivalent) required from all farmers wishing to join the scheme, *de facto* excludes women, as maize is generally controlled by men. Moreover, even when women can obtain a bag of maize, they are often more reluctant to relinquish it if they are in need of food or are food insecure.

A certain degree of women's representation was found in the Kaleya Smallholder Farmers Association (KAFSA), under KASKOL, with women accounting for almost 28 percent of total membership. The organization is directed by an executive committee elected by the members every 2 years. However, at the time of this study, only one committee

member out of nine was a female farmer, meaning that women's representation in decision-making was inadequate.

## 5.2. Gender-sensitive measures and practices to unlock women's participation in outgrower schemes

**Deliberate targeting and specific measures are needed to ensure women's participation in collaborative business arrangements.** Although none of the schemes analysed have developed a comprehensive and conscious strategy to close the gender gap, some have implemented partial measures:

### Issuing a contract to more than one household member

In two of the companies analysed, namely Multiflower and ITFC, more than one member from the same family was allowed to join the scheme and sign separate contracts. This enhanced women's participation and increased subsequent benefits.

Multiflower in Tanzania does not issue one contract in the name of both spouses and only makes payments to the person who has signed the contract. This avoids problems or misunderstandings over who should receive payment. Even in polygamous marriages, where each wife farms her separate plot, it is more likely that women are contracted as independent outgrowers. The women interviewed expressed a clear preference for having their own contracts, because they can easily access loans and thus feel more secure. Company managers and technical staff expressed a clear preference for contracting women farmers, "because they are doing the job of farming". Women currently represent about 30 percent of the total number of outgrowers. Men are supportive of separate contracts for their wives, as they are perceived to maximize not only the family income, but also social security by expanding opportunities to access resources and other benefits, such as emergency loans or cash advances.

Under ITFC in Ghana, 149 (12%) of the 1 200 registered outgrowers are women. Although an apparently small proportion, it is nevertheless higher than in other mango producer groups in the country, where women account for 2–10 percent of producers. An important factor contributing to the slightly higher number of women is the fact that women can join the scheme on their own account, even if their husband is already involved. Given that mango production provides high financial returns, some families are keen to expand mango cultivation and allow other family members to register.

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2 Female-headed households accounted for 21.2 percent of all households in 2009 according to PCW factsheet 2013, having risen steadily from 10 percent in 1970.

3 Spouses excluded from the title in the past are entitled to have their land rights recognized, but must petition a court, which discourages most from doing so. Furthermore, according to key informants, spouses do not inherit the status of "ARB" automatically, even if their names are on the title listed as spouses. In order to inherit the ARB title, spouses need to petition to the special agrarian courts, who can cancel the old title and issue a new title.

## Promoting women's access to land

In Ghana, under ITFC, the traditional authorities from two localities made communal land available for mango cultivation, involving female farmers, who account for over 50 percent of the outgrowers in the scheme. The ITFC experience illustrates **the critical role that traditional authorities can play in creating more gender-sensitive land governance systems** that enable both women and men to benefit from investment opportunities.

The KASKOL approach of subleasing land to both male and female outgrowers without distinction, as well as the succession clause (see Box 5), was discussed in Chapter 4.

## Engaging the wives of outgrowers in training and sensitization programmes

In the Philippines, cooperatives engaged with Unifrutti adopted measures to involve the wives of outgrowers in the growership scheme. This is the result of efforts by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) to promote the mainstreaming of gender issues in cooperative activities. Key to the successful implementation of CDA gender mainstreaming guidelines is the provision of training for spouses of outgrowers in order to raise awareness of the conditions and advantages of the growership contracts between cooperatives and private enterprises. Training has strengthened women's capacity to influence decision-making around growership contracts.

## 5.3 Women's contribution to productivity, quality and sustainability

Private investors' willingness to include more women is driven by the recognition of women's contribution to farming, quality and productivity and thus, to the overall sustainability of the venture. In the cases analysed, this recognition usually emerged after a few years of implementation – as illustrated in the cases of KASKOL, with the introduction of the succession clause, and Multiflower, where the company expressed its preference for women outgrowers.

An important lesson emerging is that **when women and men are provided equal access to land, technical assistance and financial resources, no significant productivity differences emerge. Indeed, in some cases women outperform men in agricultural output.** In the KASKOL case, female smallholder yields in 2010 were slightly higher than those of their male counterparts (101 tonnes vs 96 tonnes). This difference in productivity has been attributed to gender differences in farm management and approaches to hired labour. Women adopt a more hands-on approach to supervision, working alongside the workers, both casual and family workers. In this way, women are able to enforce efficiency and quality control. Conversely, male outgrowers tend to rely more on labourers and have a more hands-off approach to supervision. Furthermore, there is a widespread perception that female smallholders are more inclined to adhere strictly to technical guidance on



farming and to manage loans more diligently. This can contribute not only to a more gender-equitable sharing of work and benefits but also to enhanced quality and productivity.

In light of this evidence, targeting only male farmers, who are generally the ones registered as outgrowers, can represent a missed opportunity for achieving higher production. Moving from a unitary to a more complex model of the household in contract farming, for example, by issuing joint or separate contracts to more than one household member or involving women in training and other services, can contribute not only to a more gender-equitable sharing of work and benefits but also to enhanced quality and productivity. The findings illustrate that private companies can become critical drivers of gender equality, once they become aware of the comparative advantage women have as productive, reliable and effective commercial partners.

## 5.4 Gender implications of outgrower schemes in access to income, decision-making and workload distribution

This section provides insights into the outcomes of contract farming schemes in terms of **women's empowerment**, in terms of access to income, participation in decision-making and intra-household workload distribution. Although further and more in-depth analysis is required, some general trends can be identified in the case studies.

There is some evidence that **wives of outgrowers experienced little or no improvement in their capacity to access and manage income independently, despite the increase in their workload**. Under ITFC, outgrowers manage their mango orchards together with women and other family members. Women bear a substantial share of the workload on both male-owned and female-owned plots. It is estimated that women contribute up to 70 percent of labour in mango cultivation. However, wives of male outgrowers receive little income for their hard work.

Under Multiflower in Tanzania, wives of outgrowers who participated in the FGD lamented the increased workload in farming and the lack of control over income from crop sales.

*“My husband gets all the money so I have to ask him for money...the company cannot give me anything, neither seeds nor money, because I am not the contractor, although I am the one farming flowers in the family.” (FGD in Tanzania, Multiflower)*

Female flower seed producers reported that tending flowers can take up to 12 hours a day during the growing season, leaving almost no time for other activities and sometimes causing them to miss meals. Women also reported that they received few benefits from investments with their husbands, particularly in the case of higher-return vegetable seeds. Findings from Zambia confirm this assumption: while KASKOL smallholder families experienced a substantive increase in their income from the sale

of sugar cane, the wives of outgrowers had little – if any – access to the money from sugar-cane production.

A slightly different scenario is found in Laos and the Philippines, where pre-existing, more collaborative decision-making patterns characterize intra-household dynamics. In these countries, the wives of outgrowers are able to exert greater influence in intra-household negotiations on a number of decisions including how to invest the income. Under Unifrutti, some women mentioned that they indirectly influenced cooperative decisions and farming practices by discussing relevant issues within the household. They also reported that they could exercise a certain degree of control over household expenditures. Interestingly, some FGD participants stated that although household chores were still carried out principally by women, certain tasks were sometimes shared with other members of the household, including their spouses.

**Women operating as independent outgrowers experience greater benefits than the wives of male outgrowers in terms of access to and control over income and overall participation in decision-making in different institutional domains.** In Zambia, FGDs with KASKOL outgrowers revealed that in male-headed households, women who had acquired legal membership to the scheme (rather than the men) had a greater say



over how the income was spent. Participation in the scheme led to clear empowerment gains for women: they exert greater influence in decision-making within the household and in the wider community. Some of the women interviewed reported being able to challenge negative attitudes and biases towards their capabilities and rights. They also felt they were more able to articulate their problems and identify solutions in both intra-household and group dynamics. Some women engaged in collective action, forming savings groups and addressing practical needs. The main concern related to the increased work burden of women managing sugar-cane production independently. Indeed, to avoid a further increase in their work burden, some female outgrowers had opted to diversify their risk by buying residential plots to construct houses for rental rather than expanding sugar-cane production.

## Key messages



- › Women are generally excluded from contracting with agro-industrial firms and are disadvantaged in contract schemes.
- › Land ownership is often a basic condition for joining any outgrower scheme, with far-reaching consequences for women, since they generally own less land and have more insecure tenure rights.
- › Contract farming schemes often target capital-intensive crops and are designed in a way that can only be accessible to better-off farmers – mostly men – who possess a more solid asset base.
- › Greater participation by women in outgrower schemes is generally characterized by planting of lower-value crops that require no land, or the use of smaller plots where fewer inputs are used. The income from higher-return activities tends to be controlled by men.





## 6. GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WAGE EMPLOYMENT

**Increased private investment in rural areas changes rural labour markets by creating opportunities for on- and off-farm wage work.** This is especially important in rural areas where poverty is concentrated and where most of the poor, especially women, do not have a sufficient asset base to invest in farming as a business. The provision of equal job opportunities to women and men can contribute to greater social and economic development (FAO, IFAD, ILO, 2010). However, the contribution of employment to sustainable development depends not only on the number of jobs created, but also on the quality of these jobs and on how opportunities are distributed among the affected population.

The potential of an investment to generate decent and sustainable employment for both women and men varies depending on the type of crop, the business model adopted, the value-chain stage in which the company is involved and the way in which the overall intervention is designed. Most importantly, the cases analysed reveal that the investments have clear differentiated implications for women and men in terms of access to employment.

This chapter looks specifically at gendered patterns of employment, analysing the types of jobs accessible to both women and men and the existing gender-specific barriers in rural labour markets.



## 6.1 Employment generation potential of agricultural investments

A study on the impact of large-scale agricultural investments (World Bank and UNCTAD, 2014) shows that job creation was the most frequently cited benefit arising from investments, especially in remote areas where formal employment did not previously exist. The investment analyses confirm that populations from local rural communities affected by the investments largely benefitted from the wage employment opportunities.

Table 4 shows the number of jobs created by the investments operated under the plantation and hybrid schemes examined. Plantation and estate schemes have a greater potential to generate wage work. Other key factors affecting the potential of land-based investments to generate wage employment include the type of model implemented, whether processing facilities are included, the crop selected and the mechanization level.

**Table 4**

### Direct employment (wage work) across case studies

COMPANY	COUNTRY	INVESTMENT COMPONENT WITH WAGE WORKERS	NO. OF WAGE WORKERS
Multiflower	Tanzania	Flower cuttings for export in greenhouses on factory site	644
ITFC	Ghana	Plantation, nursery, packing house, technical/management	408
KASCOL	Zambia	Estate plantation, outgrower farms, management	364
ETC	Zambia	Jatropha plantation, technical/management	1 700
Unifrutti	Philippines	Packing house, coop staff, hired labourers on outgrower farms	363
MKAVI	Philippines	Plantation, packing house, technical/management	1 137
Addax	Sierra Leone	Professional field staff, wage workers	1 400
Balmed	Sierra Leone	Block farming workers, outgrowers, labourers in cocoa processing plant, technical/management	
LTL	Laos	Tobacco factory, contract farming	700
Lao Banana Co.	Laos	Banana plantation	70

Sources: Daley and Park 2012; Daley *et al.*, 2013; King and Bugri, J. 2013; Leonard *et al.*, 2015; Wisborg *et al.*, 2014; Wonani *et al.*, 2013

Research findings show that **not all the jobs created are sustainable and the expectations of local communities frequently remain unfulfilled**. Many FGD participants from Zambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone expressed their frustration regarding the low number of jobs generated.

In Laos, many people interviewed expressed their preference for investments in labour-generating crops, such as rubber, which require continuous labour and increase forest cover in the long term. In some cases, the jobs created later vanished due to technical problems or a slowdown in business operations. In Laos, Lao Banana Co. faced technical difficulties because the selected banana variety was only recently introduced in the country and the technical capacities to deal with disease and adaptation were limited. This led to a significant reduction in the number of workers over time.

In Zambia, the widespread frustration among those interviewed was related to the fact that ETC did not pursue an employment strategy oriented towards maximizing the benefits for local communities where the investment was based. Both women and men complained that many of the jobs created in jatropa plantations were given to workers from outside. It is estimated that had ETC recruited workers locally, they could have doubled the impact in terms of employment creation. This is of great concern to local communities, considering that they leased the land to the investor with the expectation that employment opportunities would compensate for loss of land.

In other cases, community disappointment was due to **ineffective and unclear communication campaigns**, which failed to adequately inform local people about the expected benefits of the investment in terms of employment generation. In the case of Addax in Sierra Leone, focus group participants and civil society organization (CSO) representatives interviewed voiced their discontent with regard to the number of jobs created, which was substantially lower than the figure originally announced by the company. The company maintained that only few jobs had been created because the investment operations were still in their initial stage; the forecast figures would materialize once the investment was fully operational. Unfortunately, for technical reasons, Addax's projected employment has to date not been realized.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, MKAVI in the Philippines implemented measures to maximize impact on the communities affected. Almost all the contracted workers were from the local area where the plantation is based, and family members of landowners who submitted their land to the investor were also given priority in recruitment.

In Zambia, KASKOL intentionally reduced the level of mechanized harvesting to maximize the impact on employment generation. This company strategy (part of the original project design) was designed to establish an investment that would promote a large number of jobs in rural areas. KASKOL provides employment for 9–11 months each year for sugar-cane harvesting for approximately 365 people – in contrast with mechanized harvesting, where one harvester replaces approximately 100 workers (ELLA Network, 2012). While there is

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<sup>1</sup> Among the reasons that appear to have played a role in the difficulties faced by Addax were serious financial constraints resulting from various events (including the Ebola outbreak) that had a significant impact on the time frame, costs and revenues initially planned.

widespread criticism of the conditions during manual harvesting of sugar cane, particularly with regard to environmental and health concerns, the concerted attempt to increase rural employment potential must be noted.

## 6.2 Gendered patterns of employment

While the specific employment patterns and implications for the affected population vary according to the commodity and the business model, common trends emerge from the analysis of the gender dimension of waged employment.

Women tend to experience specific disadvantages in rural labour markets: horizontal segregation (i.e. they are clustered in a narrow range of occupations); and vertical segregation (they tend to be employed in lower-skilled, lower-paid and more insecure jobs).

Promoting gender-equitable employment policies and measures is vitally important to address the critical disadvantages women face in rural labour markets. However, none of the companies analysed implement policies and practices aimed at promoting greater gender equality in employment. The lack of gender-sensitive employment policies and strategies leads to female workers being marginalized in terms of access to different jobs and, on average, being more disadvantaged than their male counterparts in terms of the quality of the jobs accessible to them. This is also the result of women's poor access to on-the-job training, limiting their chances for skills upgrading and promotion.

### 6.2.1. Job opportunities for women and men along the different components of the investments

Job opportunities created by the various schemes are not equally accessible to women and men. Clear patterns of gender segregation characterize employment in different components of the investments, including on-farm (i.e. wage work in plantation, nucleus estate and outgrowers' fields), processing and packaging, and managerial and technical work.

**On-farm wage work.** In most of the investments studied, wage work in agricultural production – the most employment-generating component of the investments – tends to be largely male-dominated. This is the case in MKAVI and ETC plantations, as well as ITFC and KASKOL nucleus estates (see Table 5).

**Table 5****Number of wage workers in farming disaggregated by gender**

COMPANY	COUNTRY	NO. OF WAGE WORKERS	NO. OF WOMEN	% WOMEN
MKAVI	Philippines	596	49	8
KASKOL	Zambia	170–299	0–51	0–17
ETC	Zambia	1 000	324	30
ITFC	Ghana	201	40	20
Multiflower	Tanzania	644	392	61
Lao Banana Co.	Laos	70	Majority <sup>a</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> Exact figure not available.

Sources: Daley and Park 2012; Daley *et al.*, 2013; King and Bugri, J. 2013; Leonard *et al.*, 2015; Wonani *et al.*, 2013

Socially determined roles in agriculture, including separate “male” and “female” activities, play an important role in influencing employment patterns. **Women plantation workers are typically concentrated in highly specific, seasonal activities, such as planting, or in procedures requiring precision and care.** In banana farming in the Philippines, as evidenced by the MKAVI case, women are concentrated in tasks that require greater care and which involve handling the banana fruit directly, such as the bagging of fruit or the removal of fruit obstacles. Conversely, men tend to be allocated “heavier” tasks and unsafe jobs related to the application or mixing of chemicals. A similar pattern is seen in sugar-cane cultivation: men dominate the heavy jobs in the production cycle, while women are concentrated in seasonal and specific activities, such as weeding.

In only two cases, namely the banana plantation in Laos and the floriculture industry in Tanzania, are more women than men employed in on-farm work. Most of the wage workers hired by Lao Banana Co. are young women migrants from the minority Lao Soung ethnic group, because there is limited labour availability in the area. Female migrants are willing to engage in wage labour, because they lack access to sufficient or high-quality land at home. Multiflower in Tanzania employs mostly women in flower cuttings for export, because they are considered to perform better than men in this activity. Sowing, weeding, cutting and pinching are tasks considered more female than male. The large number of women working at Multiflower reflects a global trend whereby women represent an estimated 75–80 percent of the workforce in the floriculture industry (Christian *et al.*, 2013).

The fact that wage work in primary agriculture often requires physical strength tends to be seen as the principale reason for hiring more men than women. However, the definition of “heavy work” is also cultural. For instance, women are often involved in weeding and land clearing; although time-consuming and strenuous, such tasks are not always culturally associated with difficulty and masculinity.

Nevertheless, while recognizing the difficulties involved in certain jobs, such as cane harvesting, it is clear that the adoption of labour-saving and female-friendly technologies

could help to facilitate women’s involvement in male-dominated activities. There is evidence that when gender-sensitive technologies are introduced, women can efficiently perform most of the activities connected with agricultural production (FAO, IFPRI, 2014). None of the cases analysed adopted technological innovations of this kind.

Furthermore, in Zambia, the multiple work burden faced by women puts competing pressures on their time and ability to take up wage work outside of domestic care work and subsistence food production. **An inflexible gender division of labour, whereby women bear primary responsibility for domestic chores can represent a critical barrier for women to access employment opportunities in the upstream part of the value chain.**

**Processing and packaging.** Differently from primary production, **labour in processing plants and factories tends to be dominated by women** (see Table 6). In the ITFC case in Ghana, women comprise the vast majority of both permanent and temporary positions in the processing unit, largely involving the drying of mangos. Women workers also outnumber men in Unifrutti’s banana packing house.

**Table 6**  
**Number of wage workers in processing/packing disaggregated by gender**

COMPANY	COUNTRY	NO. OF WAGE WORKERS	NO. OF WOMEN	% WOMEN
MKAVI	Philippines	228	119	51
Unifrutti	Philippines	253	164	65
ITFC	Ghana	171	155	90
LTL	Laos	700	350	50
Balmed	Sierra Leone	12	12	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>2 008</b>	<b>1 192</b>	<b>60</b>

Sources: Daley and Park 2012; Daley *et al.*, 2013; King and Bugri, J. 2013; Leonard *et al.*, 2015; Wisborg *et al.*, 2014.

The preference for hiring more women than men in this stage of the value chain is related to the fact that certain activities in factories and processing plants can be regarded as an extension of household-based activities, such as cleaning, cooking and washing, as well as small-scale food processing. As with farm work in plantations, there are stereotyped assumptions regarding perceived female characteristics and these assumptions drive companies’ preferences for women in processing. **It is commonly assumed that women’s predisposition towards attention to detail, patience and care makes them particularly suited to certain phases and activities of the value chain, including those involving processing and value addition.**

In the Philippines, a clear gender division of labour characterizes packing-house work in both cooperatives and MKAVI. Men tend to receive the bananas and load the packed boxes, as heavy lifting is involved. Along the rest of the production line, any job involving direct handling of the banana fruit tends to be given to women. At the Multiflower facility, women



work mainly in harvesting and planting, while men spray the pesticides in order to protect women's health. This division of labour characterizes the horticultural sector in Tanzania, based mainly on the idea that women are more patient and careful – characteristics considered important for jobs that also tend to be time-consuming and strenuous and which involve bending and standing for long periods, and are usually the lower-paid positions.

**Technical and managerial work.** Plantations and nucleus estates tend to have a small cadre of permanent workers, including key technical, managerial and administrative staff. Women are usually minimally represented in these highly qualified and secure positions (with the exception of administration, which may comprise also female workers). In ITFC, there are no women at senior management level and they are under-represented in managerial or supervisory roles. This gender imbalance is slightly better in MKAVI, where women occupy 10–12 percent of all senior management and technical positions, but 30 percent of administrative roles. In the cooperatives associated with Unifrutti, only 29 percent of the 110 permanent and fixed-term management and administrative staff positions are held by women. Of the 63 technical and managerial staff positions in KASKOL, only 7 are held by women. ETC has 8 senior managers, 15 middle managers and 37 junior managers or supervisory staff. Women represent, respectively, only 12, 33 and 11 percent in each of these categories. In all investment sites, the majority of supervisory roles in factories and processing plants (where mostly women are employed) are given to men.

Given the gender disparities in better paid jobs, on average, women earn less per month than men, and fewer women succeed in moving up the career ladder. One reason for this gender gap in higher level and qualified jobs is the perceived lack of women's qualifications (in addition to cultural norms concerning women's work). None of the companies provided women with substantive training opportunities for skills upgrading; rather, they clustered them into lower level positions.

### 6.3 Labour conditions

The case studies show that female workers tend to have less security than their male counterparts in their employment contracts (see Table 7). Women's worse labour conditions are often related to the short-term nature of the jobs they typically do; they lack stability in their income stream and are not usually entitled to health and social benefits.

Wage work on plantations and estates takes the form of permanent, seasonal or casual employment. Many of the companies analyzed rely heavily on casual and seasonal workers. Existing labour laws in several countries provide some level of protection for both male and female wage workers; however, these laws are generally not enforced in rural areas. Companies, such as KASKOL in Zambia, MKAVI in the Philippines and Multiflower in Tanzania, have aimed to improve overall job conditions through the adoption of employment policies and social certification schemes, which guarantee that labour standards are higher than in conventional production schemes.

However, a common trend across most of the investments reviewed is that the **benefits in terms of higher labour standards are frequently reaped by men, who occupy the vast majority of more stable positions and particularly those which are permanent.** This gender pattern emerges clearly in Table 7, with women under-represented in permanent job positions. There are just two exceptions: Unifrutti – most of the full-time positions generated by the investment are in the packing house, where many more women are employed; and the Lao Banana Co. plantation – although the number of workers contracted is limited.

A similar pattern of under-representation of women is documented in investments complying with several social certification schemes. For instance, Blowfield and Gallet (2000) found that under Volta River Estates Ltd (Ghana), which complies with the social and labour standard of fair trade, only 16 percent of the 900 full-time workers were women, despite the fact that men and women were treated equally and salaries were above the minimum wage.

The fact that women are often clustered in non-permanent job positions increases the likelihood that they will face a number of unfavourable conditions in the workplace. Some of these conditions, such as lack of maternity leave, have a clearly different impact depending on gender; other conditions are not gender-specific, but may nevertheless impact women differently. The poor representation of women in workers' forums and organizations also contributes to keeping them trapped in poor working conditions. The main problems raised by women wage workers interviewed during the research are presented in detail below.

**Table 7**  
**Permanent versus non-permanent workers**

SCHEME	COUNTRY	NO. OF PERMANENT WORKERS	% WOMEN	NO. OF NON-PERMANENT WORKERS	% WOMEN
ITFC <sup>a</sup>	Ghana	252	16	216	71
MKAVI	Philippines	1 137	20	120–180	0
Unifrutti <sup>b</sup>	Philippines	363	54	n.a.	n.a.
Addax	Sierra Leone	400	n.a.	1 000	n.a.
Balmed	Sierra Leone	9	11	12	100
ETC	Zambia	692	10	1 082	30
KASKOL	Zambia	63	12	299	17
Multiflower	Tanzania	317	48	327 <sup>c</sup>	75
Lao Banana Co.	Laos	70	80		

a Data differ from those provided by Tsikata and Yaro (2014).

b Based on data from three cooperatives.

c Includes both specific workers on a rolling 1-year contract and transient workers on a casual labour basis.

Sources: Daley and Park 2012; Daley *et al.*, 2013; King and Bugri, J. 2013; Leonard *et al.*, 2015; Wisborg *et al.*, 2014; Wonani *et al.*, 2013

**Equal pay but not equal access to higher wage opportunities.** In all investment schemes reviewed, there are **no clear differences between women's and men's wages**. In the Philippines, wages for packing-house workers are not based on individual labour but on team results – men and women are paid the same based on the number of boxes packed and dispatched each day by their “line” or conveyor belt team. At the Multiflower facility, women receive the same salary as men for the same kind of job; specific workers are paid according to the quantity of flowers they cut, but never below the national minimum wage.

Low wages and insecurity are major concerns for women workers in several investment sites. In Sierra Leone for example, where contracts with Addax are usually 4–6 months, women ranked short-term contracts and poor pay as the most important problem they faced. Under Balmed, the duration of employment in processing plants is approximately 4 months per year. The salaries and the lack of predictable, long-term employment were noted as highly unsatisfactory by women workers. The same situation exists in Laos, where one of the most recurrent complaints by local communities was the uncertainty of the jobs in banana plantations.

Despite the seasonal nature of agricultural work, measures exist that companies can adopt to grant workers minimum wages and social benefits, thereby reducing the typically harsh conditions of seasonal jobs. Some of these measures are illustrated in section 6.5.

**Occupational safety, health and maternity policy.** Some companies have adopted specific health policies to minimize health risks among workers, with special attention to women. In the Philippines, both the cooperatives and MKAVI ensure that all workers (women and men) wear personal protective equipment. Attention is paid to avoiding women's involvement in tasks manipulating fungicides and chemicals, as there may be risks to unborn foetuses in the case of pregnancy. Pregnant women are also given lighter tasks within the packing plants. A similar measure is also adopted by ITFC, which allows pregnant and lactating women to switch to lighter activities and take more frequent breaks.

Female and male employees on permanent contracts enjoy more secure access to health-related services and benefits. However, in some cases, casual and seasonal workers are also granted access to basic health facilities and sick leave. In Sierra Leone, at Addax, female short-term employees expressed appreciation of the health benefits linked to employment, such as the right to absence on sick leave with pay and free access to the local clinic. Similarly, at KASCOL, seasonal wage workers enjoy the same types of health benefits. Occupational health and safety audits, as dictated by the Fairtrade Standards, apply to all categories of employees – including seasonal labourers.

However, when it comes to maternity, only women holding permanent or fixed-term positions are entitled to paid maternity leave in addition to other types of maternity-related benefits, such as access to childcare facilities. Under Addax, where the majority of workers are on short-term contracts, women focus groups participants complained

that they had no rights to maternity leave and pregnant workers were explicitly expected to leave. A notable exception is found under ITFC, where women workers reported that both permanent and non-permanent workers had maternity leave entitlements.

**Weak representation in workers' forums and organizations.** In the majority of the cases analysed, there are no unions or other workers' forums in place. Where there are workers' forums (Unifrutti) or unions (KASKOL, ETC, Multiflower), women are barely included or are unable to make their voice heard. This is a reflection of the fact that the majority of workers are male and that traditionally trade unions form their policies with male workers in mind (Smith and Dolan, 2006). This points to the importance of supporting collective bargaining and gender-inclusive producers' and workers' organizations.

Under the KASKOL and ETC schemes in Zambia, a considerable number of workers are unionized, including casual labourers. The National Union of Plantation Agriculture and Allied Workers Union (NUPAAW) has a branch at KASKOL. The union played a fundamental role in negotiating a minimum daily rate (USD 2.5) with the company, benefitting both female and male seasonal workers. However, women's membership in the union is much lower than men's – a reflection of the existing gender imbalance in the company's labour force. Of the 299 seasonal unionized workers, only 50 (17 percent) are women.

Women's lack of legal representation in these organizations is also a direct reflection of their weaker bargaining power, not only in the workplace, by virtue of occupying more precarious job positions, but also in society as a whole. This means that female workers find it more difficult to voice their needs and exert their agency in public negotiation processes that often involve more powerful male actors. In the Philippines, where Unifrutti has established an innovative mechanism for workers' representation – the Value Reconciliation Board (see Box 10) – the FGD revealed that some women were afraid to participate and raise their grievances with management staff. Other women stated that they would not join a union if there were one, because they feared being penalized by their supervisors (mostly men).

**Limited awareness of labour rights among both male and female workers is a common feature in case studies.** Even in cases where sensitization work to promote workers' rights is more advanced (as in the horticultural sector in Tanzania – Multiflower), some female workers expressed reluctance to join unions. They were sceptical as to whether these organizations could effectively help workers in private companies, although Article 22 of Multiflower's collective bargaining agreement (CBA) does “strongly recommend” that workers join the union. Women's reluctance to become union members was also due to the membership cost, which entails a monthly deduction from their salary.

## 6.4 Successful approaches to promoting women's and men's labour rights and conditions

The MKAVI plantation in the Philippines provides a good example of improving labour conditions of wage workers, although it does not explicitly address women's labour issues. The MKAVI experience shows how government pressure on large-scale banana companies to improve labour conditions, combined with collective action from organized labourers, led to a recognition of workers' rights. MKAVI represents exceptional good practice in a context of widespread violations of labour rights in the banana sector (see Box 8).

### Box 8.

#### Promoting workers' rights in the Philippines

Employment practices in many banana companies have been the subject of harsh criticism over the last two decades, because of several documented cases of violations of labour rights and harassment, as well as the practice of hiring workers on short-term contracts, without employment benefits such as pension and healthcare contributions.

In the Philippines, the Department of Labour and Employment and several arms of regional government worked with the major banana corporations in Mindanao and with labour unions to develop a "Voluntary Code of Good Practices on Decent Work" for the banana industry. In 2007, MKAVI changed its labour policy towards the **regularization of the labour force**, following workers' protests requesting better working conditions. A total of 328 female and 1 200 male workers were employed in the plantation in 2013, the vast majority of whom are now permanent and therefore afforded the benefits mandated by the labour law, which include salaries above the minimum wage. Almost all workers are from the local area, and family members of landowners who leased their land to the plantation are given priority in recruitment.

Source: Leonard et al., 2015



Important progress in terms of promoting women's and men's labour rights in the horticultural sector has been made by the Tanzanian Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU). Most importantly, women's specific labour conditions and rights were addressed by the organization through the implementation of two projects carried out between 2005 and 2010 (see Box 9).

### Box 9.

#### Tanzanian Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU)

TPAWU carried out action research to **identify existing labour and gender issues in horticultural plantations**, including gender segregation and division of labour, sexual harassment and lack of maternity protection (TPAWU, 2011). TPAWU conducted trainings targeted at managers and workers, especially on fresh flower farms, along with advocacy campaigns to sensitize staff in relevant government ministries, the public and horticultural wage workers. By the end of the project in 2010, 100 percent of these farms had adopted collective bargaining agreements and 80 percent of workers had been unionized by TPAWU. As a consequence of the increased awareness of labour regulations, 90 percent of formal wage workers in Tanzania's horticultural plantations now have legal contracts. Another important achievement is that some companies, including Multiflower, have adopted measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, by employing solely female supervisors for female workers, and solely male supervisors for male workers.

Source: Daley, E. & Park, C. 2012

With regard to the voice of female workers, existing social and cultural norms represent a key obstacle to the participation of women labourers in forms of collective action. The MKAVI case in the Philippines is a potentially interesting initiative aimed at empowering women in workers' forums through the creation of an ad hoc female-dominated workers' committee. At the time of this study, the initiative was in its early stages and it was not possible to assess the results and outcomes.

**Box 10.****Strengthening women's voice in workers' forums**

MKAVI recently established an innovative mechanism for **internal accountability**: the Values Reconciliation Board (VRB). As of 2012, the VRB meets once a month in each company-managed plantation or Unifrutti office and comprises representatives of employees at all levels (except intermediate-level managers). All employees are entitled to bring any issues relating to employment conditions or internal company relations to the VRB. The purpose of the Board is to allow workers to bring to light areas where the company's actions are not in line with Unifrutti's expressed values. The Chairman of Unifrutti attends some of the meetings, which are considered a valid means for putting into practice the stated values of the company. These values are also regularly discussed in weekly, 1-hour "values formation sessions" (established company practice since 1999). All employees are strictly expected to attend, and attendance is counted as paid working hours. VRB representatives are elected by the workers, and have included women, although the VRB has to date mainly been led by men.

Some of the female workers in the FGD were reluctant to raise complaints for fear of being victimized or not listened to. Hence, it is clear that promoting the inclusion of more marginalized groups, such as indigenous people and women, is vital if the VRB is to become the "levelling mechanism within a hierarchical structure" that the company chairperson envisions. However, following the recommendation of the study on the gender implications of the Unifrutti business model, the company plans to set up a new mechanism called the Family Reconciliation Board, to comprise women members elected by women workers. It is expected that this mechanism will be more female-dominated, providing a space for women to be heard and to express the concerns that affect their lives and that of their families.

## 6.5 Does wage employment contribute to women's empowerment?

Whether wage employment in agriculture represents an empowering experience for women is a controversial issue and the focus of several studies and debates. Some authors (Tsikata and Yaro, 2014) consider the casual and poorly paid employment associated with commercialization to be negative for women and see this trend as a result of women's poor access to formal, decent employment. According to Fraser (2011), work is empowering only if it delivers recognition, respect and the capacity for active citizenship. Conversely, others believe that even if women are paid less, casual employment may provide them with a level of economic independence (Cotula, 2013 in Rocca, 2016; Kabeer, 2012).

Although the issue is very complex and requires further in-depth analysis, useful insights can be obtained from the case studies. There is evidence that **access to an independent income has enabled many women to have a greater say in intra-household decision-making**. For female workers at Multiflower, decisions on how to spend their salaries are reportedly made jointly with men. Generally, all the women in the FGDs agreed that they were better off than before. Some women pointed out that having a formal job allows them to send their children to school and “have more pride in what we do”. Similarly, female workers in ITFC expressed pride in their job and said they were now able to influence family decisions, even in relation to longer-term/larger investments, such as the purchase of assets or construction of new houses. Nevertheless, it remains **common practice for female workers to give half their earnings to a male family member, either the father or the husband**.



With regard to women's workload, there is ample evidence of the **difficulty of balancing wage work with household responsibilities**. Women working in packing houses in the Philippines reported that their work could be exhausting as it involves long hours of standing. The amount of time worked in the factory each day depends on the volume of bananas to be packed and it is not unusual for them to stay until 21.00 hours in the busiest periods. Their heavy workload affects family life and causes absenteeism from work. Similarly, women working in the Multiflower facility reported that they found it difficult to carry out all the household chores when they got home and they received very little support from their husbands. This finding shows that women's participation in wage work does not necessarily lead to a renegotiation of the household roles and responsibilities.

Good practices aimed at alleviating women's workload include the change in overtime policy in the Philippines and the provision of basic infrastructure and services under ETC in Zambia. At ETC, on-site employees and their families receive free or subsidized housing, piped water, electricity, maize meal (a local staple food), primary school education and healthcare (access to clinics). The majority of these services are only for permanent and fixed-term workers; some are particularly important for women in terms of reducing the time spent on daily domestic chores.

## Key messages

- Not all the jobs created are sustainable and the expectations of local communities frequently remain unfulfilled.
- Community disappointment is often the result of ineffective and unclear communication campaigns that fail to adequately inform local people about the expected benefits of the investment in terms of employment generation.
- Gender equality issues in employment tend to be overlooked, even when companies make specific efforts to maximize impact and sustainability of jobs. The investments reviewed have adopted neither gender-sensitive employment policies, nor appropriate labour-saving technologies to facilitate women's participation in certain phases of the production cycle.









## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This report illustrates that gender issues are critical for understanding the implications and outcomes of agricultural investments. It finds that **agricultural investments implemented under different business models and contractual arrangements do have differentiated impacts on rural women and men, with women often experiencing greater marginalization from the emerging opportunities whether as producers or workers.**

The research attempted to respond to the need for empirical evidence to better understand how agricultural and land-based investments are actually changing gendered patterns of access to and use of land, resources and income, as well as women's work burden. This is particularly important considering the key contribution women make to food and cash crop production. Women suffer disproportionately the impact of poverty, which still characterizes many rural communities. As individuals, they face critical barriers to realizing their economic potential. Their limited participation and reduced access to higher-value markets and rural labour opportunities in turn limit their families' access to income, nutrition and healthcare, perpetuating a cycle of under-development and poverty.

Different institutions, including the household, the community, the state and the market, embed discriminatory gendered norms and practices, which shape the investment process, thereby leading to differentiated gender outcomes. The degree of gender inclusiveness of a particular investment depends on the extent to which gender-specific roles, constraints and priorities are explicitly recognized and addressed in land acquisition, producer-based organizations, partnership-building processes and the overall design of the business scheme, as well as during the definition and tailoring of contractual arrangements. A gender-sensitive policy environment is necessary to ensure that agricultural business opportunities benefit equally rural women and men.

The cases presented show that none of the investments reviewed adopted and implemented comprehensive gender strategies and that the potential negative impact on women's access to land and resources exists regardless of the business model implemented. However, there is also evidence that when pro-active measures and approaches taking into account women's specific needs and constraints are adopted, benefits tend to be more equitably distributed between women and men. Hence, **investors and their business partners should adopt conscious strategies to ensure that agribusiness schemes help to overcome rather than reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities.**

There is some evidence that when gender equality is pursued through the implementation of inclusive and gender-sensitive investment models, it translates into greater development impacts for all, especially in terms of improved livelihoods, food security and nutrition. In addition, female investment partners have proved as reliable and efficient as men, in some cases even outperforming men in agricultural production.

From an examination of the various components of agricultural investments in terms of policy framework, land, contract farming and wage employment, several gender-related lessons can be extrapolated (presented below).

## **Key lessons for policy and regulatory frameworks**

Governments can play an important role in creating an enabling environment for inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural investments to flourish and contribute to poverty reduction and food security. An important consideration is that in order **to increase women's access to the benefits emerging from agricultural investments, gender should be effectively mainstreamed in the broader policy framework regulating the agricultural sector in general and agricultural investments more specifically.** In most of the countries analysed, gender equality and women's empowerment are present in key agricultural policy instruments, but the integration of gender considerations in investment-related policies and programmes is typically absent.

**Relevant policies need to integrate explicit objectives and targets that address women's needs and constraints, including specific strategies and measures for implementation, as well as accountability and monitoring systems that fully integrate gender.** This also requires better coordination and harmonization of regulatory functions of governments concerning agricultural investments in order to develop a stronger and more effective policy and regulatory framework. Lack of a solid enabling environment sustaining multistakeholder engagement can lead to unsustainable and sometimes damaging outcomes. **Farmers and workers are still poorly represented in investment processes, thereby limiting their capacity to influence key decision-making processes along the investment cycle, let alone considerations for women.**

Governments are central to the regulation of investments, and thus have a key role in creating the right conditions for mutually beneficial relationships between small-scale producers and private companies, and in improving the working conditions of both women and men labourers. However, **without awareness-raising and capacity development programmes within institutions, the implementation of gender-sensitive strategies will fall short of the stated objectives**

## Key lessons on land

In the case of land-based investments, it is evident that **acquisition processes are still poorly regulated and monitored**. Involvement of local communities is more the exception than the norm; even when legal and procedural frameworks are adopted, **women are often excluded from consultation and negotiation initiatives with investors**. This is partly due to the poor understanding by the actors involved of the local land tenure system, based on the interplay of statutory and customary laws. Traditional user rights, which are generally acquired through family and kinship relations, tend to be systematically overlooked, with far-reaching consequences for women. At the same time, customary institutions are traditionally male-dominated and thus do not foresee the involvement of women in consultation and decision-making concerning land issues. In line with most of the analysis of large-scale land acquisition in agriculture, the research reveals that land deals produce negative outcomes for women, including loss of access to common natural resources and agricultural land, and an increase in their work burden because they have to travel longer distances to collect non-timber forest products or to find agricultural land. Examples of **land-based investment models that seek to minimize negative impacts on community rights to land do exist, but their social, gender and generational outcomes are still unclear and require further assessment**. With regard to more collaborative business models that do not encroach upon the land owned by communities and farmers, local land-holding practices coupled with companies' pro-active policies can influence gendered patterns of access to and use of land (Dancer and Tsikata, 2015).

A critical gender issue that has emerged from the review is the extent to which male-biased outgrower schemes and the resulting increased commercial production can actually erode women's control over their land and produce. Potential conflicts between contract requirements and women's subsistence farming priorities are key challenges to outgrower models. This is very important considering that it might reduce women's sources of income and thus negatively affect overall household economy and food security. Conversely, anecdotal evidence shows that when women's access to and control over land for food crop production is protected and promoted, the household food situation improves. Nevertheless, **more research is required to explore the linkage between outgrower schemes, gendered and generational patterns of access to land and household food security and nutrition**.

## Key lessons on outgrower schemes

In general, women tend to be excluded from contract farming or outgrower schemes, because they do not own or control land and other productive resources. Weak capacity to command family labour is also a major constraint. In general there is widespread concern that contract farming programmes tend to be targeted at better-off farmers with a more solid asset base. Women are found to participate mostly in those schemes requiring limited land and assets and which are not as profitable, thus less attractive to male producers. Hence **participation in outgrower schemes provides women with opportunities for income diversification without leading to patterns of accumulation.**

Some of the private companies reviewed in this study experimented with approaches that promote allocation of land (either through subleasing or allocation of communal land) and resources to women, and engage more than one household member in contractual arrangements and technical services. However, most of these measures were unintended rather than consciously promoted. Traditional authorities can play a critical role in promoting women's access to outgrower schemes by promoting gender-sensitive allocation of communal land for commercial crop farming. Hence, **understanding the local customary system and engaging with traditional authorities to sensitize them about the benefits of involving both women and men in the scheme should be a fundamental part of any outgrower scheme.**

There is some evidence that wives of outgrowers have experienced little or no improvement in their capacity to access and manage income independently, despite the substantive increase in their workload. However, this gender outcome can vary depending on the characteristics of intra-household dynamics, with women from more collaborative households gaining greater benefits. **Women operating as independent outgrowers experience greater benefits in terms of access to and control over income and overall participation in decision-making compared with the wives of male outgrowers.** However, there is concern that the gains in terms of income might not outweigh the increased burden of managing the business independently. This is likely to vary according to the marital status, wealth and age of the woman joining the scheme.

It is evident that organized farmers are better able to negotiate fairer contractual arrangements with more powerful business actors, leading to a more equitable redistribution of value. However, **adequate measures should be adopted to promote women's participation and voice in producer organizations**, and avoid benefits from investment opportunities being captured by men and not extended to women and other members of the family. In this case the desired impact on family well-being and social development might be dissipated. This points to the **importance of supporting collective bargaining and inclusive producer organizations.**

## Key lessons on wage employment

**Wage employment is a fundamental result of agricultural investments**, especially in rural areas where poverty is concentrated. However, it is clear that investment schemes are often not designed to maximize employment-generation benefits. This can lead to frustration among communities. Key factors affecting the potential of land-based investments to generate wage employment include the type of model implemented, the eventual inclusion of processing facilities, the crop selected, and the mechanization level.

It emerged from the study that the bulk of the **employment generated through the various schemes still benefits mostly men**. Even when companies make specific efforts to maximize impact and sustainability of jobs, gender disparities in employment tend to be largely overlooked. This situation is also a reflection of poor and ineffective policy and legal frameworks, which fail to sustain gender-sensitive employment creation in rural areas. Plantation work – the most employment-generating component of the investment – is often perceived to be heavy and thus unsuitable for women, and none of the companies reviewed adopted specific technologies to promote women's participation in jobs traditionally considered for men. Conversely, women are particularly valued for tasks related to quality and value addition, although they are not entitled to the same positions as male workers in the labour market. The fact that **women's work tends to be largely concentrated in more insecure and lower paid jobs** increases the likelihood that they will face a number of unfavourable conditions in the workplace. Some of these conditions, such as lack of maternity leave or childcare facilities, have a clear gender-differentiated impact.

**Wage employment may offer important opportunities for poverty reduction, especially for those with limited land and assets, such as women, but the conditions of employment are often hazardous**. This clearly raises the question of whether access to wage work in poor employment conditions has the potential to translate into concrete empowerment outcomes. This is likely to vary according to pre-existing household dynamics: in certain contexts, married women are required to give part of their salary to the husband; in other contexts, women's traditional responsibility for household reproduction may hinder the possibility to take up wage work, especially secure and long-term opportunities.

Overall, women's labour rights remain largely unrecognized and their voice unheard in working forums and organizations. Indeed, female workers find it more difficult to voice their needs and exert their agency in public negotiation processes often involving more powerful male actors. A recent study (Cramer *et al.*, 2014) suggests that empirical research should focus on **casual, seasonal female employment – one of the poorest segments of the rural population and deserving of attention and adequate support through policies and other enabling development interventions**.





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