

# Empowering women in agribusiness through social and behaviour change



Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises

Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

**SNV**





Emmah Momanyi and her husband selling maize at the market in Narok County, Kenya.



The '**Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises' (EOWE) programme** is being implemented by SNV and local partners between 2016 and 2020 in 8 counties in Kenya and 4 provinces in Vietnam. The programme aims to boost the start-up and development of women's businesses in agriculture in rural areas through a combination of enterprise development, social transformation and policy advocacy interventions. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands under the '**Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women' (FLOW) framework**.

This publication presents experiences and the initial impact at household level of the first round of gender-transformative Household Dialogues that were conducted in 2017 under the EOWE programme in Kenya. It documents the stories of men and women from different counties on their process of rethinking gender norms that limit women's economic empowerment and gender equality in agricultural value chains and presents the programme's key findings on the patterns of change.

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## Introduction

In Kenya, women face difficulties to start and develop their own agricultural businesses as their capacity for entrepreneurship is limited by a series of structural barriers. Women working in agribusinesses often have limited access to resources and business assets and face barriers due to gendered differences in behaviour and roles. For example, in most agricultural communities, gendered division of labour determines women's role in and outside the household, which subsequently affects their opportunities in and benefits from productive activities in agricultural value chains.

The success of women in agribusiness is not only determined by the level of access to resources and business assets, but also by gendered-specific behaviour and roles, which influences women's decision-making power and control around these resources and business assets. Tackling the inequalities that exist between men and women in many rural agricultural societies therefore also requires a change in the deeply entrenched gender norms that are at the root of these inequalities. As an entry point to reflect on and transform restrictive gender norms and power relations, the EOWE programme developed a contextualised Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy in order to create more equal income and business opportunities and a socially enabling environment for women entrepreneurship in agricultural value chains.

The SBCC strategy consists of interventions at household and community level. At household level, the programme organises facilitated Household Dialogues among targeted family and/or community members to critically reflect and discuss on norms that prevent women from fully participating in and benefitting from economic activities. To ensure sustainability and scale of the positive behaviour change in the communities, influencers and opinion shapers, like elders, religious leaders and community leaders, are invited to participate in community dialogues, that inform the community about the activities and progress the programme is making. In addition, the programme organises SBCC interventions at the community level like radio shows, and encourages participants of the household dialogues to share their experiences with other members in the community.

This publication presents the initial impact at household level of the first round of gender-transformative Household Dialogues in 2017 in Kenya.

### Balancing Benefits

In line with SNV's Balancing Benefits approach, the Household Dialogues and community level SBCC interventions, are matched with efforts to increase women's business skills, connect women to markets, boost capacities and opportunities for women's leadership and build the capacity of government and civil society actors to advocate for, develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and plans.

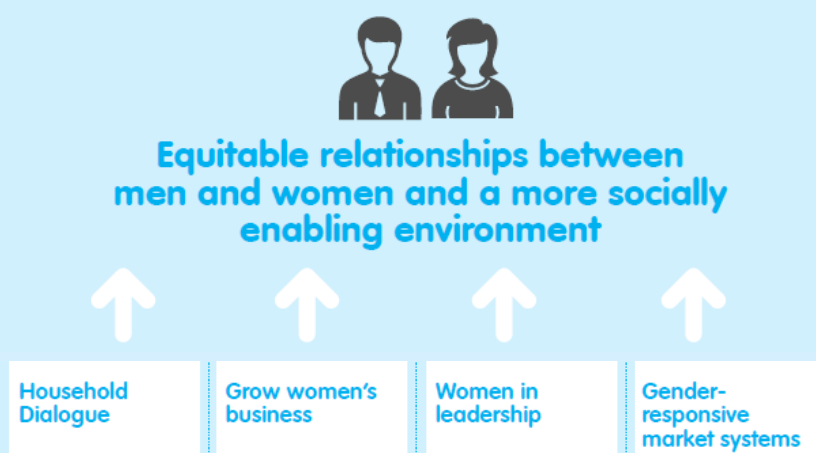


Figure 1: Overview of the four components in SNV's Balancing Benefits

## ① Key gender norms affecting women in agribusiness

To get a better understanding of the barriers that female farmers and entrepreneurs face and to ensure that the EOWE programme, including the SBCC strategy, responds to the needs of the women to run a successful business and to the context of the challenge(s), the programme conducted three in-depth studies:

- ❖ Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Gender Analysis
- ❖ Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) study

These studies show that women farmers and entrepreneurs in agriculture in Kenya indeed lack access to resources and business assets, but the studies also show that gender norms and intra-household power relations influence women's control over resources and decision-making power in their households and the community. Figure 2 below provides an overview of the key gender norms that affect women's economic empowerment in Kenya.

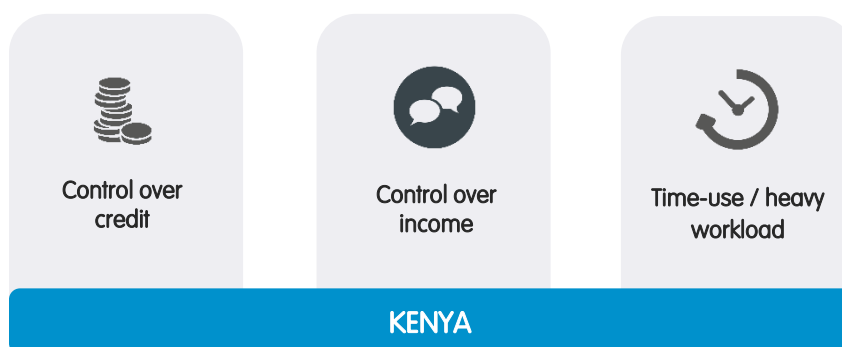


Figure 2: Key gender norms that hinder women's economic empowerment in Kenya

### Balancing time between productive and reproductive work

In Kenya, rural women working in agriculture especially struggle with balancing their time between work in the household (reproductive work) and income generating activities (productive work). Kenya is a patriarchal society, meaning men are considered to be superior to women and the head of the household. This also means that women are expected to take care of the household and its members. In Kenya, men only help occasionally, because when a man performs household tasks too often, the society would consider such a man as one who has lost authority and hence is being controlled by his wife.

Women are supposed to take care of their family and the household, while also substantially contributing to the income of the household. Our baseline studies show that in Kenya, women spend on average 3.9 hours each day on reproductive tasks and 7.4 hours on productive activities, which results in an average working day of 11.3 hours.

The high workload and expected responsibility of women when it comes to taking care of their households, and the lack of decision-making power around time-use hinder women from creating viable or more profitable businesses.

### Control over income

Another gender norm that is affecting women's economic empowerment in Kenya is control over income. Even though in Kenya women hold the decision-making power over minor household expenses, like groceries, it is the men that predominately decide over major household expenses. In Kenya, although the study revealed a shift in gender norms with more women taking over the role as bread winners, 40% of women shared that men partially

<sup>1</sup> Alkire et al., The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, *IFPRI Discussion Paper*, 01240, 2012.





 Household Dialogue session in Kitui County, Kenya.

Though women in Kenya are respected by men for their ability to effectively manage minor household finances, most women from male-headed households are not able to make large household financial decisions without consent from their husbands. For women owning businesses, being able to at the very least co-decide over major expenses, such as those that could benefit their business, could have a large positive effect on women's economic empowerment and overall management of women's businesses.

#### **Control over credit**

Lack of control over credit is also affecting women's empowerment in Kenya. Only 59% of women borrowed from a credit source and could also jointly or alone decide how that credit would be used. Women usually receive credit from informal sources, such as friends, relatives and merry-go-rounds. There is a hesitance to borrow from formal lenders, such as banks, because of a fear of repossession of property in case of a default. This is reinforced in some counties where large groups of women have to surrender part of the credit to their husbands for their own personal use. This affects women's ability to repay loans. Being able to get the actual credit is actually easier for women as compared to their husbands, but the power to decide over its use lays for a large part with the men. Access to and control over credit can open up opportunities for women to invest in and grow their enterprises.



## ② Gender-transformative household dialogues

As an entry point to reflect on and transform the key restrictive gender norms and power relations in Kenya, the EOWE programme organised gender-transformative Household Dialogues among targeted family and/or community members. Through intensive facilitated dialogue sessions, the programme aims to translate these reflections into positive behaviour change to give women as well as men more control over their lives and agribusinesses. The behaviour change is built up in different stages from awareness and self-analysis on gendered differences within the household to getting commitment for specific actions. Both women and men in households are included in the dialogues to concertedly shift attitudes and practices among various members of the society.

### **Participatory sessions with women entrepreneurs and their husbands**

The primary audience of the household dialogues are women who run small-scale agribusinesses and their husbands. The focus is on households, as households are the most important institution and basic unit of society where values, societal norms, and gender roles are formed and practiced. Households are also the place where power dynamics and relationships between men and women are formed.

The households come together in groups of 10-15 households with two trained facilitators, one female and one male. Most of the sessions start with an exercise in which men and women are separated to reflect on gender norms and discuss barriers and opportunities with participants of the same sex. After the men and women only exercises, the couples come back together to share their insights and jointly develop a vision and plan for change. Through a variety of participatory tools and methods which are designed to address specific gender norms, the couples develop skills to analyse their own reality and develop their own plan for change. In follow-up sessions the couples reflect on progress and discuss any challenges that they encountered in the implementation of their plan for change, which enables the households to act, reflect and learn.

### **Content of the sessions**

In 2017, 153 households in Kenya participated in the facilitated household dialogues. In a total of twelve gender-transformative household dialogue sessions the couples focused on time-use / heavy workload, control over income and access to and control over credit.



Couple from Kitui County sharing their experiences from participation in the household Dialogue sessions.



### 3 Initial impact of the household dialogues

The gender-transformative household dialogue sessions under the EOWE programme in Kenya have helped women entrepreneurs and their husbands to initiate and implement effective reflection and communication, especially on matters that traditional culture has created demarcations on between spouses, like time-use / heavy workload and control over income. To measure the initial impact of the household dialogue sessions that were implemented in 2017, the EOWE programme collected most significant change stories from both male and female participants of the household dialogues. Men and women were asked to reflect on the question: what is the most significant change that you have noticed in your household around the gender norms discussed since the start of the household dialogues?

The household dialogues facilitated positive shifts towards gender equitable attitudes, relations and behaviour in the households that participated in the sessions. This chapter presents the key findings of the EOWE programme on the patterns of change and selected stories of men and women from different counties in Kenya on their process of rethinking gender norms that limit women's economic empowerment and gender equality in their household and the community.

#### Balancing time between productive and reproductive tasks

In Kenya, a total of three gender-transformative household dialogue sessions focused on understanding the importance of time in starting, running and developing agribusinesses. The sessions also focused on exploring changes in contemporary society and the technologies that have been invented to realise time efficiency in relation to reproductive and productive work. The couples reflected on and discussed how they use and divide their time between productive and reproductive work. Through this exercise more than half of the participants came to the realisation that women spend most of their time on reproductive work, being unaware of the impact this has on women's businesses.

The household dialogue sessions increased participant's understanding that sharing household work does not only benefit the wife, but also has substantial advantages for husbands. Men indicated that reflection and discussion around household work increased their understanding and appreciation of the workload that comes with household and caretaking tasks. Moreover, participants became aware of the impact of unequal division of tasks on the success of women's businesses and the overall economic situation of the household.

The most significant change stories of participants show that the gender-transformative household dialogues increased awareness around the economic benefit of sharing household tasks and decision-making between men and women. After participating in the household dialogue sessions most of the men felt encouraged to share the responsibility for gender-neutral tasks, like fodder harvesting and livestock feeding. A few of the participating men even shared the responsibility for tasks that are commonly seen as a 'woman's job', like preparing meals, washing clothes and warming water for bathing. Some male participants also decided to invest in technologies that would reduce the time spend on reproductive tasks within their households, like solar lanterns, water tanks and energy efficient cook stoves.

Both men and women expressed that sharing household tasks made them a happier family and many female participants of the household dialogues indicate they noticed an economic improvement of their business since their participation.



Household Dialogue session on time-use in Samburu, Kenya.



“ My name is John Ongaga Momanyi. My wife, Emmah, works with me in the production of maize and beans and runs a grocery shop in the centre. Before I participated in the household dialogues, I used to complain a lot when my wife came slightly late from work, because she also needed to fetch water, collect firewood, wash and cook.

The dialogues changed my perceptions and influenced me to buy a gas stove, which I now use to cook for the kids when my wife is still in the grocery shop. I have also connected piped water, so that Emmah doesn't have to walk long distances to fetch water. In the future, I will continue to cooperate and encourage dialogue with my wife to reduce unnecessary conflicts and misunderstanding. I am very grateful to SNV and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, because their funds and efforts have changed our lives."

*John Ongaga Momanyi from Narok County, Kenya*







“ My name is Grace Wangu. In the past I used to look after our family’s cows and pigs, walk long distances to get firewood at the market and take care of the children and household tasks. I also run a shoe business, but I could never open my shop before 11 am due to the heavy workload. My husband is a government worker and used to say that I am just a wife and responsible for household chores and that running my small business doesn’t require a lot of attention.

Through the household dialogues we learnt that I can also perfectly run a business and increase our family income. We now work on household chores together and my husband uses his motorbike to get the firewood and also cuts them into pieces. The reduction of workload has enabled me to spend more time on productive activities. I now employ some workers and I am able to open my shop at 8 am, which is increasing sales. And plans to make poultry farming a family business are underway.”

*Grace Wangu from Laikipia County, Kenya*



### Joint decision-making and collaboration

Another topic in the gender-transformative household dialogues, which was addressed in Kenya, is control over the use of income. Through participatory tools, the couples discussed around inequalities in decision-making and control over the use of income and reflected on who spends income and on what and who benefits from household income. The couples also analysed together how income is or can be invested in their business. After reflection and analysis, the couples developed a household budget and identified and agreed upon immediate and longer term action commitments to improve the balance towards a more equal distribution of decision-making around the use of income.

The couples also reflected on inequalities in control over credit and how this is affecting women's empowerment and success in business. During a two-hour session husbands and wives analysed the root causes for women's lack of control over credit and the gendered challenges that women face. Based on these reflections, the couples developed an action plan for shared decision-making around credit between husbands and wives.

The household dialogue sessions on control over the use of income and credit in Kenya helped participants understand the importance of sharing responsibilities and decision-making power related to the use of income and credit. The most significant change stories of participants of the household dialogues show a significant shift in the way husband and wife make decisions together. Both men and women express that previously activities were conducted and decisions were taken individually, whereas following the household dialogues men and women indicate an increase in joint activities and decision-making. Women mention that, with support from their husbands, they have been empowered to diversify their income from the resources. Male partners have as well been involved in holding discussions aimed at improving business and couples are jointly planning how to utilise income from business.



“ My name is Juliana Mbevi. I'm rearing chicken in Kitui. Before the household dialogues my husband could never perform tasks that were meant for women, as he would be afraid that he wouldn't be seen as a real man. Now, he is fighting the negative cultural beliefs and supports with cooking and cleaning the compound. This has made it possible to dedicate more time to my enterprise and I have managed to diversify my business into other products like ropes, soaps and cakes.

My husband's support really improved my success in business. For my rope business, I initially made around two ropes per day, but nowadays I make an average of five ropes per day. I also started two other new small businesses. I am making liquid detergent soap to sell to nearby shops and I am baking cakes to sell to designated buyers.”

*Juliana Mbevi from Kitui County, Kenya*





“ My name is Lilian Ntokoiwuan. Since participating in the household dialogues, my husband appreciates my workload challenges and is now taking up household chores, like sweeping the compound and making tea. He also bought a solar lantern to reduce fuel costs and improve household lighting.

My husband feels enlightened and empowered by the gender trainings. We are constantly holding open and productive discussions on household budgets and future plans. With the support of my husband, I am optimistic about my plan to start an indigenous poultry business. As a clan elder, my husband is committed to share his positive experience with more households.”

*Lilian Ntokoiwuan from Narok County, Kenya*





“ My name is Felisters Kitonyi Mutuiye. Before we participated in the household dialogues, I used to take loans from my women group for small business projects, but I couldn't tell my husband, as the norms of the community dictate that it is the husband's responsibility to have full control over any huge monetary transactions in the family. I never got any financial benefit from my loans as I was afraid that my husband would ask where I got the money from.

The household dialogues have really enlightened us as now my husband and I have an open discussion forum to discuss about access to credit. Together we have been putting down ideas and we have decided to take a loan to buy plastic chairs to rent out in the community and to invest in a poultry project and it is really working. I have been sharing with my fellow women on how important it is for people to make decisions together.”

*Felisters Kitonyi Mutuiye from Kitui County, Kenya*

### **Sustainable change**

The gender-transformative household dialogue sessions impacted on rural women and men in Kenya that they are now open to reflecting on and rethinking gender norms. The household dialogue sessions also facilitated positive shifts towards gender equitable attitudes, relations and behaviour in the households that participated in the sessions. The couples indicated that the changes in behaviour led to substantial benefits on a social and economic level for both men and women, which offers motivations to keep implementing gender equitable behaviour. However, there is a risk that the women and men who participated in the household dialogues fall back in old behaviours if the gender norms in their communities, which affect the way people act, feel, and think, remain unchanged.

To reduce this risk and to facilitate sustainable behaviour change towards women's economic empowerment and gender equality, the Social and Behaviour Change Communication strategy under the EOWE programme also targets a wider audience in the community through interventions like radio shows. The programme also involves influencers from both genders in the change process who have the power or authority to influence decisions of others due to their real or perceived authority, knowledge or relationships in the community, including religious leaders, elders, chiefs and their assistants, leaders of women groups and in the devolved government or the MCAs (Members of the County Assembly). In addition, couples that participated in the household dialogue sessions are encouraged and supported to share their experiences to inspire neighbours and community members. The changes in perceptions and behaviour of the couples that participated in the household dialogues are being closely monitored throughout the programme.

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For more information about the EOWE programme, please visit:

<http://www.snv.org/project/enhancing-opportunities-womens-enterprises-eowe>

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