

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 and Vietnam. It documents the stories of men and women from different regions 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 Vietnam and 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 agri-businesses 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 commune festivals and 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 Kenya and Vietnam.

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.

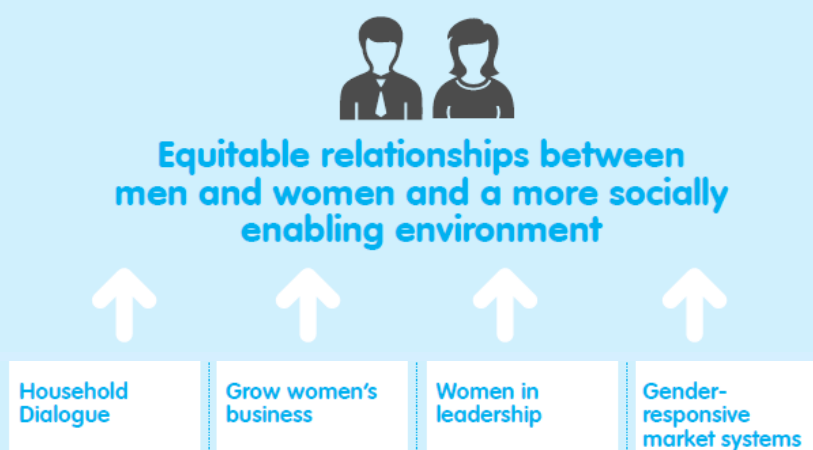


Figure 1: Overview of the four components in SNV's Balancing Benefits approach

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 in Kenya and Vietnam:

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

These studies show that women farmers and entrepreneurs in agriculture 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 and Vietnam.

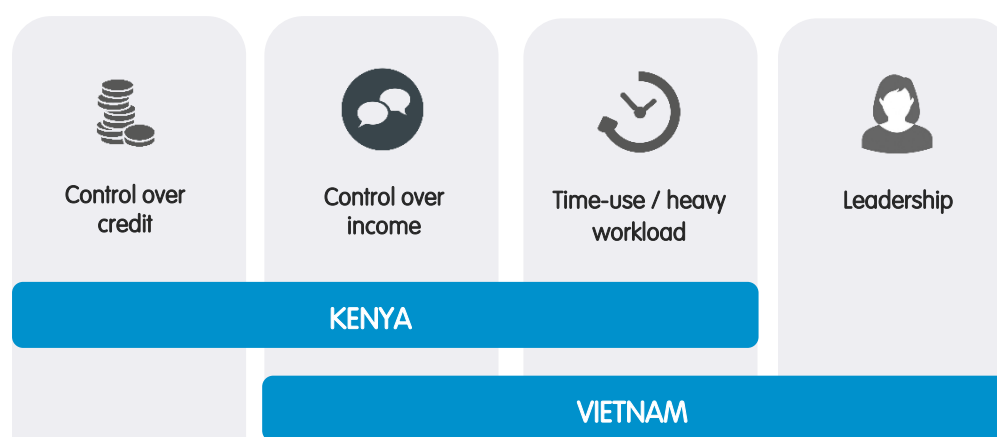


Figure 2: Key gender norms that hinder women's economic empowerment in Kenya and Vietnam

Control over income and time-use / heavy workload turned out to be major barriers for women to run a successful agri-business in both Kenya and Vietnam. Lack of decision-making power over credit turned out to be another barrier for women's empowerment in Kenya. In Vietnam, on the other hand, gender norms around women's leadership turned out to be a critical barrier for women's opportunities in and benefits from economic activities in Vietnam.

Balancing time between productive and reproductive work

Both in Kenya and Vietnam, rural women working in agriculture especially struggle with balancing their time between work in the household (reproductive work) and income generating activities (productive work). Both countries are patriarchal societies, 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.

In both countries, 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.

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



 Household Dialogue session in Kitiu County, Kenya.

In Vietnam, women spend on average over 6.2 hours a day on productive and another 4.1 hours a day on reproductive tasks, resulting in a total of 10.3 hours per day. 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 both countries is control over income. In Vietnam, 42% of women indicate to earn less than their spouse and that the husbands are the main breadwinners. Whereas women in both Kenya and Vietnam hold 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 control the wife's income, especially when buying expensive items like land and furniture, and that they concede control to prevent domestic violence.

Though women in both countries 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

In Kenya, lack of control over credit is also affecting women's empowerment. 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.

Challenging gender norms around control over credit is currently not a primary focus in Vietnam, as the analysis of the baseline studies informed the programme to focus on control over income first, as women are household purse string holders but only control small amounts.

Leadership

In Vietnam, women are involved in different kinds of groups in their communities, with 75% of women being members of civic groups and 26% of women being part of agriculture groups. However, only 2.5% of women are members of trade or business associations, which could support women in creating and developing sustainable and viable enterprises. SNV's studies also show that women in Vietnam have little influence in the groups and are often not perceived as leaders in their communities. When women were being asked to rate the extent of their influence in their community, 35.5% of women indicated to have very little or no influence. In addition, 43% of women indicated to never voice their opinion in public.

In Kenya, women are integral parts of their communities, and actively participate in a variety of groups, such as credit savings groups, agricultural groups and trade or business groups. Therefore, challenging gender norms around leadership is not a primary focus in Kenya.

2 Gender-transformative household dialogues

As an entry point to reflect on and transform the key restrictive gender norms and power relations in Kenya and Vietnam, 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, 152 households in Vietnam and 153 households in Kenya participated in the facilitated household dialogues. In Vietnam, a total of six gender-transformative household dialogues focused on time-use / heavy workload of women, as this turned out to be the biggest barrier. In 2018, two new modules that focus on women's lack of control over the use of income and women's leadership will be introduced. In Kenya, the couples reflected on and discussed all three selected gender norms in a total of 12 household dialogue sessions in 2017.

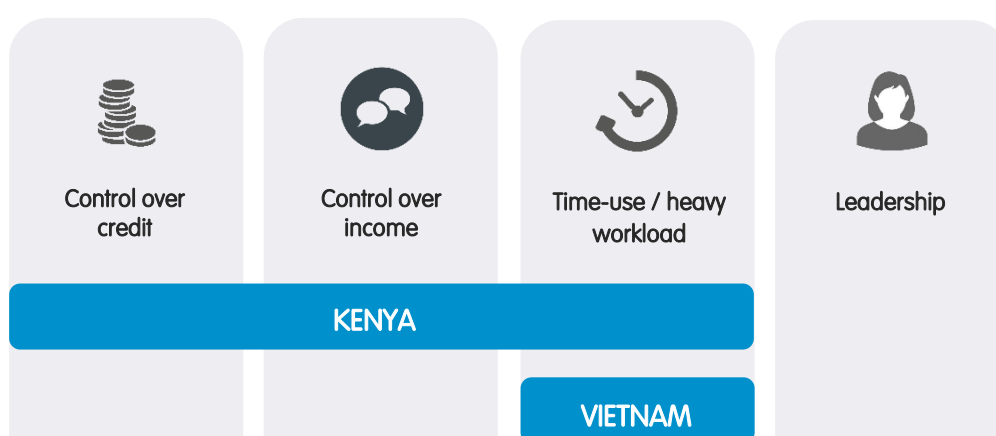


Figure 3: Key gender norms addressed during Household Dialogues in 2017 in Kenya and Vietnam

3 Initial impact of the household dialogues

The gender-transformative household dialogue sessions under the EOWE programme in Kenya and Vietnam 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 regions in Kenya and Vietnam 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

Both in Kenya and Vietnam, the 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. In Kenya, 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.



Rice farmer sharing his vision for change within his household during household dialogue session in Ninh Thuan, Vietnam.



“ My name is Nguyen Thi Tham and I am a rice farmer. In the beginning when I heard about the household dialogues in my village, my husband was not confident to participate in such a group activity. Luckily, I could eventually persuade him to join.

I am very happy that we experienced this together. My husband still goes to work during the day, but he comes home earlier to share the tasks of cooking, teaching our children and to make products out of bamboo for additional income. I now have more time to participate in social events in the village and to relax. We learned a lot from the programme, from technical knowledge on rice production and economic development to how to look at our life style and live a happy life.”

Nguyen Thi Tham from Quang Binh, Vietnam

“ 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





“ I am Nguyen Viet Can and I grew up in a poor village. I go out every day to go fishing and to repair fishing nets, while my wife is selling the fish. I always expected that there would be food for me when I came home from work. And I used to be very angry when my wife would come home late.

During the household dialogues I started to understand my wife better and I realised that I treated my wife badly. Recently I surprised my wife by cooking a meal and we ate together when she came home from the field. When we were eating I realised the food was too salty, but my wife said ‘it’s ok, we will just drink some more water.’ The meal we had was very cosy and happy and I will encourage other men to try to understand their wives and share household tasks.”

Nguyen Viet Can from Quang Binh, Vietnam

Joint decision-making and collaboration

Another topic in the gender-transformative household dialogues, which was addressed in Kenya in 2017 and will be added in Vietnam in 2018, 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.

In Kenya, 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 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 Nguyen Van Duan and I used to strongly believe in the traditional saying ‘men build houses, women build homes’. That’s why I only used to focus on income generating activities and I never cared about household tasks as this was the responsibility of my wife. After work, I used to read the newspaper, watch television or drink tea.

The discussions on gender equality and the experience of being pregnant and doing household tasks during the commune theatre changed how I look at my wife and household tasks. I appreciate the work that my wife is doing and when I come home from work I wash the clothes, clean the house and feed the poultry while she is cooking. One time, I broke the dishes when washing and my wife happily asked me if my hands were hurt.”

Nguyen Van Duan from Quang Binh, Vietnam



“ 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

Sustainable change

The gender-transformative household dialogue sessions impacted on rural women and men in both Kenya and Vietnam 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 theatre, photo exhibitions and radio shows. 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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