Gender considerations in gari processing in West Africa

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Session outline

1. Context: Gender and livelihoods vs efficiency?
2. Gari value chain actors
3. Gender-based constraints and opportunities in gari value chains in south-west Nigeria
   - Raw material supply
   - Processing activities
   - Opportunities in gari processing
4. Conclusions
   - Trade-offs among value chains interventions
   - Ideas on how to scale benefits for women
Context: Efficiency vs gender & livelihoods?

- In theory, gari value chain development can benefit women and contribute to development goals.
- Starting point is often about efficiency and quality without considering the context of actors.
- Can result in tradeoffs with livelihood impacts, particularly for women.
- Women can take advantage of opportunities - need to strengthen where women are participating and open spaces where they are not.
Gari value chain actors

• Even with similar end products, value chains vary by scale, ownership, quality, technology, gender and socio-economic implications

• *Who is involved* and *who benefits* is important

Example: HQCF

• Nigeria - industrial focus and flash drying

• Malawi – local markets and sun-drying with women’s community processing groups
Gender–based constraints & opportunities in gari value chains in south-west Nigeria

Processing (women’s) groups

SME/large-scale?

Identifying GBC/GBOs at the level of the value chain can help the orientation and actions of research and interventions
Sources of raw material for local processors (1)

- Processors (mainly women) source fresh roots from their own plots or purchase from others, including from their husband.

However, women’s access to affordable raw material is not guaranteed and can change:

- Depends on bargaining with husband over the use of roots for food/sale at planting/harvest.
- Alternative markets for fresh roots (SMEs) could impact on price and root availability, depending on local dynamics.

How can supply of raw materials be more reliable for gari processors?
Women experience constraints in ownership and access to assets/inputs for increasing cassava production

• Land rental market is enabling for women and minority groups, however constraints with security as they are not “the sons of the soil”

• Extension bias – particularly with distribution of new varieties. Women reported less use of improved varieties and few type of improved varieties

• Varieties may not be what women prefer / or her customers – end users have different preferences than women (e.g. easy peel)

How can access to assets/inputs be improved?
Sources of raw material for SMEs/large scale enterprises

Research indicates that:

• SMEs prefer to source roots from their own farms or from a small number of farmers with large quantities of roots
• Men prefer to sell roots to SMEs (despite lower prices!) to earn a larger sum of money immediately compared to local processors often purchase on credit and may be unreliable
• Women process cassava both because their opportunities to sell to factories are limited but also to capture value addition from processing

Growing SME demand for fresh roots may not benefit a large number of smallholders, and if so, it tends to be indigenous men

What are the implications of parallel value chain development – would this have impact on demand and prices on different cassava products?
Women’s roles in gari processing include labourers, traders, and women working in groups.

The effective operation and governance (including gender equity) of processing groups and processing centres is vital to processors.

- A source of social capital that, in turn, assist women in accessing finance, labour and other assets.
- Groups can be exclusive (fees, barriers for some ethnic groups).
- Some processing facilities are owned and operated by men and few by women and women rent space.

How can the capacity of processing groups be strengthened?
Women’s practical needs are still not being addressed despite advances in technology

• Little reasons for equipment owners to invest
• Tendency for mechanisation to be appropriated and/or by men and/or more powerful (e.g. dependency on men to operate the equipment causing problems)
• Need for affordable and appropriate processing equipment (smoke reducing) for women and the poor to own or operate e.g. Nigeria and mechanised graters
• Highlights problems of dissemination and take-up of technology

How can dissemination and adoption be improved?
Why haven’t we been successful so far?
There are minimal employment opportunities for women to benefit from SMEs

• The number of people SMEs benefit through employment depends on the size of the plant and quantities they are processing
• Men dominate full-time, skilled labour, which is often permanent work
• Women benefit from through employment often as casual and unskilled workers peeling cassava – therefore value addition for this group is difficult
• Gains in efficiency and profitability may not be passed to labourers
• Factory work and conditions tend to be poor, no children allowed on premises and lack of toilet facilities, which provide a further barrier for women
Processing activities in SMEs/large scale enterprises

There are opportunities for small-scale, local businesses for women

• Very few female SME owners in Nigeria
• However there are some locations where women have thrived e.g. Dar es Salaam and Eastern Uganda (requires follow up)
  • Had access to financial capital, technology, education
  • Women are more risk averse which means they are less likely to invest - investment packages are “too big”
Opportunities in gari processing

• Increase volume of production

• Reduce waste/use of peels

• Increase the quality of production

• Reduce labour inputs

➢ Increase income and livelihood benefits
In the context of these opportunities, constraints should be recognised, for example:

**Responsibilities and social obligations:** women need flexible activities, where they can harvest/process in quantities suitable to their income and food security needs

**Labour intensive nature of gari processing:** activities depends on women’s time, so there is a risk of increasing burdens as men do not often break gender taboos

“Even if there is a good price for gari I will uproot gradually for food security. Because of this, my husband doesn’t do this method. He sells cassava roots to companies”

- female processor, Ogun State, Nigeria
Conclusions

• Due to gender norms, men tend to profit more from activities relating to SMEs through root purchases. More women can benefit through value addition to local gari value chains.

• There may be an argument for parallel development to meet consumer demand – but is gari market demand and prices understood well enough? Could there be negative impacts for women on focusing on SMEs/large scale enterprises?

• Potential tension between commercialisation and food security – farmers (mainly men) selling larger quantities in fewer transactions
Conclusions

• Working with processing groups is key to benefiting women. Strengthening their social networks, capacity strengthening, Practical needs must be addressed:
  
  • extension support for accessibility
  
  • participatory assessments/on-farm trials for appropriate varieties
  
  • focus on labour efficiency not labour replacement
  
  • equipment (smoke reduced fryers!) – supporting champions to create synergies between organisations for improved dissemination
  
  • Providing explicit incentives for investments in facilities is crucial
  
  • Identify strategies that involve broadening opportunities where women’s participation exists and opening space where women are excluded
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THANK YOU