



Empowering women through access to markets



Empowering women through access to credit

Outcomes of empowering women

Empowering women in the tomato value chain yields numerous positive outcomes. These include: increased participation of women in the value chain from production, processing, marketing, and consumption which enhances household incomes and food security. For instance, increased women access to production resources and training enhances their adoption of sustainable farming practices leading to improved crop yields and quality. Their involvement in value addition and processing results in enhancing the value of their products with fetches higher profit margins. Furthermore, women's empowerment fosters gender equality, social cohesion, and community development. Recognizing and supporting women as actors in the value chain can lead to inclusive growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.



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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TOMATO VALUE CHAIN IN KENYA





Introduction

Tomato is a major horticultural commodity in Kenya for commercial purposes. Men have an upper hand in tomato growing by virtue of controlling access to land, decision making where they head households, access to information due to their availability for meetings and training sessions among others. Women are heavily involved in various roles in the tomato value chain especially in production activities such as weeding, picking, sorting and grading. Furthermore, customary women are assigned the responsibility of cultivating food crops to ensure food is on the table and that the whole family gets a healthy diet while men are supposed to provide financial resources to the family. Consequently, men assert their role to gain control of the income from cash crops, while women remain as suppliers of labour. Though women perform some activities in the tomato value chain, they have various challenges such as less access to agricultural resources and unequal decision-making power compared with men. Consequently, efforts should be made to empower women in the value chain. This can be done by analyzing the challenges and designing gender responsive strategies for improved productivity and improved livelihoods.

Challenges experienced by women in the tomato value chain

Women face numerous challenges that hamper their full participation in the value chain.

Women have less access to production resources such as land, credit and inputs. Women also have less access to land. Customary laws often limit women's land ownership and control, relegating them to secondary roles in decision-making and resource allocation within households. Besides women have less access to extension services, agricultural training, markets and market information, which affects their productivity and competitiveness. Moreover, women have limited access to appropriate technologies, innovations and management practices including post-harvest handling facilities which aggravates their issues leading to high post-harvest losses and reduced incomes. Moreover, women have less access to markets and market information. Consequently, they are often consigned to informal local markets while men dominate the more competitive lucrative premium regional and international markets.

Strategies of empowering women in the tomato value chain

Concerted efforts are required to address these challenges. These includes:

- Ensuring women have access to production resources such as land, credit, water, quality seeds, fertilizers, and other resources necessary for tomato cultivation. This may involve legal reforms, lobbying campaigns, and support for women's land rights.
- Designing gender responsive training and extension services tailored to women's needs covering topics such as modern farming techniques, pest and disease management, post-harvest handling, quality control, and entrepreneurship.
- Facilitating gender-inclusive financial opportunities for women to enable them access credit, savings, and

other financial services.

- Facilitating market access for women in local, regional, and international markets for tomato products through market information systems, networking platforms, and linkages with buyers and retailers.
- Formation and strengthening of women's collection action initiatives such as self-help groups, and producer associations in the tomato value chain to provide a platform for collective bargaining, advocacy, and mutual support among women farmers and entrepreneurs.
- Designing gender-sensitive policies and programs that recognize and address the specific needs and challenges faced by women in the tomato sector. This may include measures to address gender-based discrimination, promote women's leadership, and ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the value chain.
- Encourage women to engage in value addition and processing activities such as tomato drying, canning, sauce making, and packaging.



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