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Unleashing potential: gender and youth inclusive agri-food chains

“Nine billion by 2050” is a commonly cited prediction on global population growth¹ that frames arguments about access to natural resources, as well as the future supply of sufficient and nutritious food. Solutions for meeting food needs and for mitigating environmental constraints include: sustainable agricultural practices; innovative technologies to increase productivity and improve food chain efficiency; and, improved market access for farmers. But these solutions tend to be technologically biased, focusing on agricultural and value chain technologies – without enough attention given to gender and social disparities (Beuchelt & Badshue 2013; Pyburn 2014). People (farmers) are at the centre of agro-technology story, thus gender and social disparities related to age, ethnicity, income, education and race, amongst others, are important for understanding the uptake (or not) of technological solutions. So, in addition to the question of *how* to feed growing world populations, the urgent question for the agricultural sector is: *Who will be the farmers of tomorrow? Who will produce food to feed this growing world population?*

Globally, the face of the farmer has been changing over the past 30 years to reflect rural demographics, as well as evolving gender and generational dynamics. Women in developing countries produce 80% of household food (World Bank, 2014) and play a key role in household food security (Meinzen-Dick *et al.*, 2011). Yet women – as well as youth – have less access to productive resources, capital, and fewer opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge (FAO, IFAD & ILO 2010; World Bank & IFPRI, 2010). Women’s increased access to productive resources would raise agricultural production by 2.5-4%, and could reduce the number of hungry people by 100-150

¹ In fact, just typing these words in a Google search provides over 29 million hits in less than one second. See: <https://goo.gl/KKiWAa>



Women in workshop on maize production, Chipata Zambia. Photo: Geneviève Audet-Bélanger

million worldwide (FAO, 2011) as well as significantly increasing gross domestic product (Woetzel *et al.*, 2015). Beyond just food chains and subsistence agriculture, women are often excluded from market opportunities and the benefits of cash crop production.

FAO estimates that around 55% of youth worldwide reside in rural areas, however, this figure is as high as 70% in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Bennell, 2007). Often it is assumed that these young women and men will be the ‘farmers of tomorrow’, but evidence suggests otherwise (Bennell, 2007; Bezu & Holden, 2014; White, 2012). A significant proportion of rural youth in particular are underemployed or unemployed, have marginal income, or limited career prospects (AGRA, 2015; Bennel, 2007). Food Tank captured part of challenge succinctly: ‘*Agriculture has an image problem. Simply put, for the majority of the world’s youth, agriculture simply isn’t seen as being “cool” or attractive. Most think of it only as back-breaking labour, without an economic pay-off – and little room for career advancement*’². Agricultural activities – be they related to food or cash crops – take place within these social dynamics with age and gender as core issues. Opportunities and constraints for youth and women in agricultural value chains are framed by the socio-economic and political contexts in which they live, including prevalent gender and social norms (Meinzen-Dick *et al* 2011; Meridian Institute 2013). Forging solutions to the challenge of food and

² July 9 2014 post by Food Tank: <http://foodtank.com/news/2014/07/making-agriculture-cool-for-youth>

nutrition security in the decades ahead thus demands a social analysis alongside an economic and technological lens. Given current demographics, solutions must also focus on women and youth as the farmers of tomorrow and on balancing the benefits of participation in agricultural value chains, amongst those involved.

With the above context in mind, SNV³ Netherlands Development Organisation and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT⁴) have partnered to address youth- and gender-inclusive value chain development. SNV's strength lies in its many years of experience implementing large, multi-year programs across multiple sectors in developing countries. KIT's strength lies in knowledge management, problematizing critical issues in agricultural development and in working with development and research organisations to draw out learning to support ongoing development initiatives. Together the SNV-KIT partnership offers insightful solutions to development challenges that are both knowledge-rich and pragmatic. The SNV-KIT partnership addresses youth's challenges in agriculture from the perspective of the sector (*we need future farmers*), young people (*we need lucrative and meaningful livelihoods*), and broader society (*we need food for the growing world population*).

This SNV-KIT working paper is a knowledge product developed as part of the partnership. It provides a basis for SNV-KIT collaboration on gender and youth inclusive value chain development as well as offering inspiration and food for thought to others engaging on these issues. The paper looks at the changing '**who**' in agriculture and challenges related to inclusive agricultural value chain development. We use a gender lens to specifically focus on women and young people's challenges and potential opportunities in the agricultural sector. We argue that inclusion is an active process and that harnessing excluded group's potential using a market-savvy approach, can produce better results in agricultural value chains to meet current and future food and nutrition needs as well as provide livelihoods for the people involved.

Part 1 addresses gender aspects to the question of 'who' is the farmer of tomorrow and provides background on gender dynamics in agriculture. Part 2 conceptualises youth in this sector. Part 3 looks at the intersection of youth and gender and how a gender lens sheds light on inclusion. Part 4 lays out the SNV-KIT partnership's approach to inclusive value chain development for unleashing potential of young women and men. It looks at how value chain inclusion efforts can be more robust and nuanced. The paper's concluding remarks focus on how value chain development can be more effective and equitable by engaging with gender, generational and power dynamics.

1 Gender dynamics in agriculture

Feminisation of agriculture. Since the 1960s in many developing countries, men have migrated from rural to urban areas in search of better income and opportunities; thus women take up agricultural activities as wage labourers or on family-run smallholdings (KIT, Agri-ProFocus & IIRR, 2012; World Bank, 2008; Muza, 2009; Deere, 2005; Vargas *et al.*, 2014). A striking 62% of economically active women in Africa work in agriculture (AfDB 2015). However, this well-documented 'feminisation of agriculture' (World Bank, 2008) does not mean that women are better off from engaging in agricultural activities: women do not necessarily enjoy the benefits of their labour or have control over income earned (AfDB, 2015). The rural wage gap in Africa between men and women ranges from 15-60% (ILO cited in AfDB, 2015) and women are not equally remunerated for their efforts in comparison to men. There is a long way to go to balance the benefits in agriculture.

³ <http://www.snv.org/>

⁴ <http://www.kit.nl/>



Young polio survivor trained as blacksmith, Sierra Leone. Photo: Genevieve Audet-Bélanger

Inequality and food security. Deep-rooted social and structural inequalities prevent female farmers from gaining equal rights to access land and resources to gain economic independence and farm productively (World Bank, 2014). Furthermore, women often have less access to services and agricultural inputs (Carter & Weigel 2011; Ragasa *et al.*, 2013; World Bank & IFPRI 2010). This means women produce 13-25% less per hectare than men (FAO gender handbook cited in AfDB 2015; World Bank, 2014); the difference increases to 17-66% when region and land size are considered (World Bank, 2014). Women are the predominant group of agricultural labourers. Therefore gender differences in productivity are significant and limit not only how lucrative farming is for women, but also the amount of food produced, which has implications for food and nutrition security (Udry, 1995; Meinzen-Dick *et al.*, 2011). As feminist Naila Kabeer (1999) noted, women's exclusion equates to constrained economic growth at a national level. The McKinsey Global Institute recently quantified this publishing that advancing gender equality would add US\$12 trillion to global annual GDP by 2025 (Woetzel *et al.*, 2015). Gender inequality is an obstacle to economic growth and global food security.

Gender on the agricultural agenda. Gender equity and women's empowerment have become entrenched in the agricultural agenda in recent years. There is growing recognition of the critical – but often invisible or under-valued – roles that women play in agricultural development. For example, this is evident in the prioritisation of gender within the CGIAR system of international agricultural research institutes⁵, and in publications of international development organisations like the World Bank, FAO and IFAD (2009), World Bank & IFPRI (2010), FAO, IFAD & ILO (2010), FAO (2011), UNCTAD (2011), UNICEF (2011). Another example from the private sector is increasing efforts to develop gender-inclusive agribusinesses (Laven & Pyburn, 2015). Literature is becoming more nuanced and context and sector specific⁶; evidence is growing about the importance and relevance of gender-aware programmes, projects, agri-businesses, and research agendas. Addressing gender is one of the most effective, efficient and empowering ways to improve poverty alleviation and boost development (Meinzen-Dick *et al.*, 2011). Using a gender lens allows understanding of the needs, priorities and aspirations of women in agriculture as well as those of young women and men, and of more vulnerable groups residing in and seeking out livelihoods in rural areas. There is still a lot of work needed to integrate gender into agricultural development practice. That said, experiences addressing gender disparities in agriculture provide useful learning for how to include and understand the needs and priorities of youth⁷ and vulnerable people: they are the next social frontiers in agriculture.

2 Young men and women's engagement in agriculture

Scientific literature around youth in agriculture is limited. However, youth are now considered to be important stakeholders in the CGIAR research programmes' second phase⁸ of international cross-sector agricultural research, as well as in international climate change negotiations⁹. The SNV-KIT partnership makes the case for further understanding the needs, priorities and concerns of young people and recognising their diversity. The partnership aims to address knowledge gaps for reaching this group of people and engaging them in agri-food chains. This section looks at competing definitions of youth, and heterogeneity and diversity found within this social category. It recognises the growing proportion of the population who are young people, and looks at youth in relation to agricultural employment.

⁵ See <http://www.cgiar.org/our-strategy/research-on-gender-and-agriculture/>

⁶ See the CGIAR Gender Network site: <http://www.cgiar.org/our-strategy/research-on-gender-and-agriculture/gender-network/>

⁷ Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE) CRP youth in agriculture flyer: <https://wle.cgiar.org/thrive/2015/12/01/how-should-we-engage-youth-agriculture>

⁸ Examples include the CRP WLE youth flyer in the previous footnote as well as the youth strategy for CRP Dryland Systems: <http://drylandsystems.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/YouthStrategy.pdf>

⁹ See: https://unfccc.int/cc_inet/cc_inet/youth_portal/items/6795.php

Defining youth. A first challenge in engaging youth in agriculture is defining 'youth'. Definitions vary (Leavy & Smith, 2010) from 12 to 35 years in some countries and, in others, as young as 8 years old to beyond 35 years old (FAO, 2002). The UN considers youth to encompass people between 15 and 24 years of age and the African Union extends those parameters from 15-35 years of age¹⁰. However, in addition to age, defining factors of youth include: capacity to engage in labour markets; marital status; gender; legal status; education; and, independence from senior household members. 'Youth' generally refers to the transitional period from childhood to adulthood where new roles and responsibilities are taken up (Fussell, 2006; Vargas-Lundius & Suttie, 2014). While capacity to engage in labour markets is often taken as an indicator of adulthood, changing patterns of education mean that entry into labour markets may happen later than 24 years old; only using this as an indicator for adulthood can be misleading (Proctor & Luchessi, 2012). The transition from child to youth to adult is non-linear and multi-dimensional; some aspects of adulthood are linked to age, others with status, education, independence and work situation. Collectively, this illustrates the complexity of the 'youth' as a social category.

A growing young population. Irrespective of the defining parameters of youth, it is clear that youth are a growing proportion of the world's population. Currently, Africans aged between 15 and 24 years old account for more than 20% of its total population. These numbers are growing: over 40% of the continent's population is under 15 years old (Zuehlke, 2009). But this phenomenon is not unique to Africa. In 2007, the global population of young people aged 12-24 was already at 1.3 billion, projected to peak in 2035 (Bennell, 2007). While the most rapid increase is foreseen in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia's youth population is also booming. Worldwide, people between 15 and 24 years of age will account for 14% of the population in 2050 (FAO, CTA, IFAD, 2014). Initiatives need to understand and respond to the needs, priorities and aspirations of young people, as they are key stakeholders in agricultural development.

Youth employment in agriculture. The CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (CRP WLE) recently asked: Why do we need research on youth in agriculture and natural resource management? And stated: "There is too little knowledge about youth in agriculture to support an answer with evidence. We can stress youth agility, sustainability and numbers on youth.... but further analysis is difficult because we don't have enough data on the complex relationship between youth and agriculture in particular contexts."¹¹ The thematic area of 'youth' is unexplored terrain with little evidence or best practice to draw from, despite many arguments highlighting the root causes of the apparent disinterest of youth in the sector (Bennell, 2007; 2010). To exacerbate this, efforts to accelerate agricultural growth and improve food security have often been separated conceptually from efforts to create jobs and opportunities for young people (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Limited attention is given to shaping young men and women's futures in the agricultural sector and few development projects and programmes successfully reach them, despite efforts by multilateral organisations (Hivos, 2014). This means that rural areas are deprived of potentially productive, dynamic and innovative community members and agripreneurs.

Heterogeneity and diversity. The social category of youth suffers from assumptions and knowledge gaps. Heterogeneity amongst youth lies in age differences, young women and men's backgrounds and the norms defining their abilities and opportunities. This means that in some contexts 'youth' can include ex-child soldiers, refugees, mothers, orphans, physically and mentally disabled men and women; a multi-faceted category of people. The next part of the paper (3) explores these social 'intersections' in more depth.

¹⁰ African Union's African Youth Charter: [http://africa-youth.org/sites/default/files/African%20Youth%20Charter%20\(English\).pdf](http://africa-youth.org/sites/default/files/African%20Youth%20Charter%20(English).pdf)

¹¹ CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)
<https://wle.cgiar.org/thrive/2015/12/01/how-should-we-engage-youth-agriculture>

3 Where gender and youth intersect

Gender analysis is a valuable tool for understanding inclusion and/or exclusion, social categories, power dynamics and the many identities one person can inhabit. While inclusion is an umbrella term, different categories of people have different and even conflicting needs and interests. Gender is a determining factor in “who does what, who has what, who decides what and who has power” (UNICEF 2011). This section looks at what a gender lens can bring to the inclusion discussion as well as in tackling common issues facing women and youth in agricultural value chains.

Intersectionality. Intersectionality refers to overlapping and intersecting social identities that a person inhabits in relation to oppression and domination. A person can be a young man who is from a poor household where he is the eldest male but has a disability; or a divorced older woman, mother of three children with plenty of money. These different social identities have different intersecting and sometimes conflicting power dynamics at play. While gender, race and class are arguably the most influential social categories other identities intersect with these to enhance or diminish a person’s power in society. This is further exacerbated when other intersectionalities are explored: age, vulnerability linked to refugee status, living in post-conflict or conflict zones, poverty, disability and (sub-optimal) health. Intersectionality is a useful analytical lens for understanding gender dynamics and subtle distinctions amongst youth. Age is one intersection of gender, but young people also have overlapping identities. Intersectionality allows for analysis of power dynamics and multi-layered identities: in this case, the interface between youth and other social axes.



Sorting coffee, Rwanda. Photo: Peter Wiggers



A relational approach. A relational approach reflects that gender specialists have shifted from a focus on women to considering the power dynamics between men and women: that is to say, the gender dynamics at play at multiple levels in the agricultural sector¹². This approach is a key driver in the increasing inclusion of gender dimensions and analysis in agricultural research and development. A relational approach explores intra-household relationships across generations and age-related behavior, interests, power relations, and related opportunities and risks for farming. SNV and KIT build on the 'relational approach' used in gender in agriculture to conceptualise how to design programmes and approach youth in agriculture. This also encourages a better understanding of issues facing youth in the agricultural sector. Another lesson from the gender debate in agriculture is the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data (which applies to youth and age disaggregation).

Gender, generational and household power dynamics. A variety of overlapping power dynamics are at play when it comes to the different challenges and opportunities for young women and men's inclusion in agricultural value chains. Understanding the diversity of young women and men will help to address their needs and priorities. For example, a married female farmer of 24 years old with two children and an educated young man of 19 years old are likely to have different aspirations requiring different interventions (Bennell, 2010). Age and gender are key social factors defining a young person's life opportunities. While young people tend to have limited economic independence, this is more acute for young women and girls. Young men can grow out of this dependency through education, economic opportunities and inheritance of land, however, women are often more constrained by social norms and gender relations (Bennell, 2007; 2010). For example, early marriage and pregnancies affect women and girls' mobility and ability to defy established norms and gain access to knowledge, training or engage in commercial activities.

Though agriculture is often assumed to be a joint family venture, control over productive processes and assets is almost impossible for young household members, particularly women and girls. Within the household, power dynamics are at play. Subordination to male and older household members in large, extended family households is recurrent with young members relying on their parents to fulfil basic food, shelter and clothing needs. Once women reach adulthood, besides domestic responsibilities, they undertake important agricultural production roles for the household and in the value chain. But, they are rarely in a position to make decisions over resources, earnings and expenditures. This impacts on motivation to engage in value chain activities as well as balancing of the benefits of value chain participation between women and men within the household.

¹² CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE) <https://wle.cgiar.org/thrive/2015/12/01/how-should-we-engage-youth-agriculture>

Agricultural education. Education is important for agriculture and helps shape a young person's ability to enjoy opportunities. While access to education is widely promoted as a tool for development with school enrolment rising worldwide, there is little inclusion of meaningful agricultural knowledge in curriculum. Form and style of agricultural education are critical for new generations of agricultural professionals (Pyburn & Woodhill, 2014). From primary education to vocational training and rural training, there is often a lack of quality knowledge targeted at tomorrow's farmers. Curriculum lacks a focus on markets and soft skills alongside technical know-how (Pyburn & Woodhill, 2014). So youth develop neither the interest nor the necessary skills to effectively engage in agricultural activities (Dalla Vale, no date; Bennell, 2007; Pyburn & Woodhill, 2014). This applies to both men and women, exacerbated by the well-documented gender gap in education (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009; World Bank, 2014).

Access to capital (land, assets) and credit. One of the major constraints to youth participation in agriculture is lack of access to land. In many countries, the oldest household members manage land. With little 'free land', younger members rely on inheritance or less commonly, land purchases. Before inheriting land, most youth work on senior household member's land. Land inheritance remains gendered with women often prevented from inheriting land under customary law. In most cases, land passes to husbands and brothers. This leaves women with marginal access to land, often granted by male relatives (Bezu & Holden, 2014; Durand, 2014). The option of buying land is difficult because of unclear land rights and lack of access to capital. This is exacerbated by lower educational levels amongst women. Many youth are therefore landless or have no immediate access and control over important productive resources – prompting the search for alternative livelihoods (Bezu & Holden, 2014; Vargas-Lundius & Suttie, 2014). In addition, financial products are poorly suited to agriculture, particularly for small-scale producers with limited resources. Where credit is available to farmers, land is often used as collateral. Credit is a particular challenge for youth and for women as they often lack collateral due to the reasons discussed above. Youth and women struggle to access capital to invest in production (Dalla Vale, no date).

Decision-making power. Land owners remain decision-makers despite minimal involvement in field activities. This gives little freedom to those working the land, such as women and young people. While women contribute to production, harvesting and processing, they have limited opportunities to claim the benefits of their labour, or to access training or services to improve production. Traditional social and gender norms limit women's participation in decision-making over basic production choices. This includes: which crops to grow; when; what kind; how many inputs to purchase; who and how many labourers to employ; and, quantities to sell or keep for household consumption. Moreover, youth, women and vulnerable groups (such as handicapped people or refugees) lack power to influence public policy and public investments, thus are unlikely to benefit from such investments.

Other factors. Approaches that focus on production and economic growth alone tend to exclude young people, women and vulnerable groups in income-generating activities. Young women and men tend to be less involved in market-related activities, resulting in limited possibilities to capture economic benefits. These factors overlap with challenges facing women (World Bank, 2014). In addition, there are high risks associated with and as a result, low capacity amongst youth and farm women, to make private investments to support economic growth, further exacerbating non-inclusive growth (Vargas-Lundius & Suttie, 2014). These factors also fuel migration to urban areas for more 'tangible' profit-making opportunities, particularly for men who are more mobile.



Women in a workshop on maize value chains in the Gambia. Photo: Geneviève Audet-Bélanger

4 SNV-KIT partnership's approach to inclusive value chains

Value chain development is a widely promoted market-based approach for agricultural development. It focuses on the value added at each node of the value chain, 'from field to fork': from production, processing, and marketing, right to bulking, wholesale, retail and consumers. A value chain approach includes looking at services supporting the value chain (e.g. certification, extension, input supply etc), and the context in which they operate from the laws and regulatory environment to the education system, commodity prices and so on. Interventions tend to target specific constraints and opportunities encountered by chain actors (USAID Microlinks, no date) like access to markets or regulatory constraints.

Despite its effectiveness, there remain many gaps in current approaches to value chain development: the dynamics of inclusion is one critical example. In value chain discourse and practice, inclusion has tended to be limited to smallholder farmers without much 'unpacking' as to the diversity within that social category. 'Smallholder farmers' are a diverse group with differences related to gender, age, income, ethnicity, size of landholding, amongst others. These differences need to be understood in order to tailor interventions and to avoid missing whole categories of a population – including women and young people. Without such analysis, the poor may be left out of value chain interventions or included under deteriorating conditions, thus contributing to growing inequalities between richer and poorer groups of people (KIT, Agri-ProFocus & IIRR, 2012). Women and youth do not automatically benefit from agricultural projects targeting men. Rethinking design and implementation is imperative for gender- and youth-inclusive value chain development.

So how can value chain development interventions and projects be more effective at engaging youth and women? This is a critical question recognising that inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable groups can contribute to agricultural development, to economic and social empowerment, and increased food and nutrition security. The SNV-KIT partnership reframes inclusion from a passive to an active process. For SNV-KIT, value chain inclusion must involve the establishment of: **market relations** – connecting youth and women to markets and increasing their value addition; more equitable gender and generational **power relations**; and, **agency** – building up the capacity to act independently. This requires addressing structural and institutional constraints to inclusion – e.g. norms, behaviours, laws, regulations, value chain relationships – while building skills, capacities, and confidence. This inclusive value chain development approach puts people first: giving them space to be active, engaged, empowered and creative. Youth are encouraged to innovate and play new roles as agents of change: unleashing their potential, motivation and power, to actively transform agricultural markets.

Box 1

Guiding principles for gender and youth inclusive value chains

- 1 Inclusion is an active process driven by those currently excluded or those participating, but in marginal or exploited positions. Inclusion may be championed by other actors but is led by the people most affected.
- 2 Excluded 'categories' of people are heterogeneous. It is important to be explicit about that diversity.
- 3 Addressing local, gender, household and generational power relations is integral to transformative value chain development.
- 4 Confidence, self-determination, leadership, life skills and competency-building are key ingredients to being able to respond to market opportunities.
- 5 Inclusion of youth and women can transform business models and markets.
- 6 Gender transformative processes lead to institutional change and shifts in gender and household dynamics.

How can youth and women benefit from participation in value chain development? Robust inclusion requires looking at household and generational power relations, as well as gender dynamics. However there are challenges involved: how can meaningful employment opportunities be generated?; How can sharing benefits within the household based on contributions made be assured? The SNV-KIT partnership on gender and youth inclusive agricultural value chain development has four core components:

1 Analysis of gender, generational, household and power dynamics is a critical first step in implementing a project. It is important to understand who is included and who is excluded, to understand conditions for inclusion and exclusion, why people may opt-out, and to analyse how this impacts the realisation of project objectives.

2 Design with women and youth's active participation to explore opportunities for reaching excluded groups or marginally included groups along with the implications for the project. Pragmatism is essential when it comes to addressing gender dynamics and youth inclusion in value chain development and in navigating potential trade-offs. This means making explicit choices as to who to include when and where for a particular intervention. It requires balancing economic, social and technical dimensions.

3 Coaching can support organisations and enterprises already active in specific value chains to become more inclusive. A coach or mentor works with an organisation to shed light on gender and age dynamics in initiatives they are undertaking. They build capacity and develop women and youth's technical competencies and soft skills. The coach encourages organizations to build women and youth innovation potential in order to transform value chains. Through such analysis and support, organisations are exposed to different ways of operating and can choose to embrace more inclusive approaches.

4 Systematising knowledge. By this we mean facilitating processes wherein an organisation's implicit or tacit knowledge gained from everyday work on projects, is drawn out and made explicit. Working with value chain actors and value chain supporters to make sense of and reflect on their practical experiences can inform future interventions. SNV-KIT stimulate reflection and deeper insights into how organisations can do what they do better. Monitoring and evaluation and action research can be useful tools to make sense of, shape and enhance practice and develop business models and results assessment frameworks that are driven by, and accountable to, women and young people.

These four components make up the SNV-KIT approach to bringing vulnerable and excluded groups into value chain development. *Building knowledge* on gender dynamics and how working with youth and vulnerable people, can impact value chain development by opening a door to new opportunities that may also require different kinds of interventions. The SNV-KIT partnership develops such knowledge to benefit agricultural sector development and support good practice. The partnership develops *models for inclusion* that illustrate best practices for inclusive value chain development. Finally, in order to be accountable not only to business objectives or donors, but also to youth and women involved, new *models for impact assessment* that focus on learning, equity and empowerment are required. The aim of the SNV-KIT partnership is to support value chain development practitioners to analyse and understand social dynamics at play, and ultimately, for agricultural value chains to become more socially diverse, as well as more just.

The SNV-KIT partnership endeavours to unleash the potential of young women and men to contribute to agricultural value chain development as well as unleashing the potential of agricultural value chains to provide meaningful and lucrative livelihood opportunities for young people and for women. The partnership works with international and national development organisations, as well as private sector companies to support gender and youth inclusive value chain development through analysis, design, coaching and 'systematising knowledge' that informs the implementation of gender and youth responsive projects.

Concluding remarks

The 'who' in agriculture in developing countries has been shifting from men to women, particularly at the production level. Women, as the predominant farmers in developing countries, and a growing youth demographic, are key to feeding future populations. That said, women and youth must not be thoughtlessly grouped together. While gender is also a differentiating factor amongst youth, young people face unique age-specific household and workplace challenges. Likewise, women face sex and gender specific challenges for participation in agricultural value chains. Projects must navigate common ground and differences with care.

There are exciting opportunities for a new era in agricultural value chain development and rural-urban, production-market linkages. This demands a more robust understanding of inclusion in value chain development and interventions that distinguish the many dynamic gender, generational and power relations at play in the social context. Gender analysis has a lot to offer conceptually beyond just underlining the inclusion of women in agricultural value chain activities. In particular, a focus on intersectionalities nuances broader social categories and the related power dynamics. This is a significant departure from "inclusive" value chain development to-date, which has focused primarily on the inclusion of smallholder farmers without differentiating age, gender and other intersectionalities referred to in this paper.

Women and young people are active agents in value chain development and can contribute to setting funding and programme priorities. Creating space to allow the aspirations and leadership of women and young people to emerge, is critical. The SNV-KIT partnership builds capacity to create more inclusive enterprises and development programmes from farmer to consumer, including fairer investment and meaningful employment for youth. Combining market forces with equity and fairness principles reframes inclusion in value chain development as: a people-driven process in a market context that benefits both the market and the people involved, potentially transforming gender and generational dynamics. This paper unravels some key concepts to generate better understanding of gender and youth inclusive value chain development, outlining guiding principles as a basis for future activities.



Learning to build a biogas digester, Rwanda. Photo: SNV

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Young women cleaning sesame in Mali. Photo: Geneviève Audet-Bélanger

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