

**Value Chain Analysis for Development: providing evidence for better policies  
and operations in agricultural value chains**  
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# **Women's role in agricultural value chains - Lessons learnt from VCA4D Gender Equality analysis**

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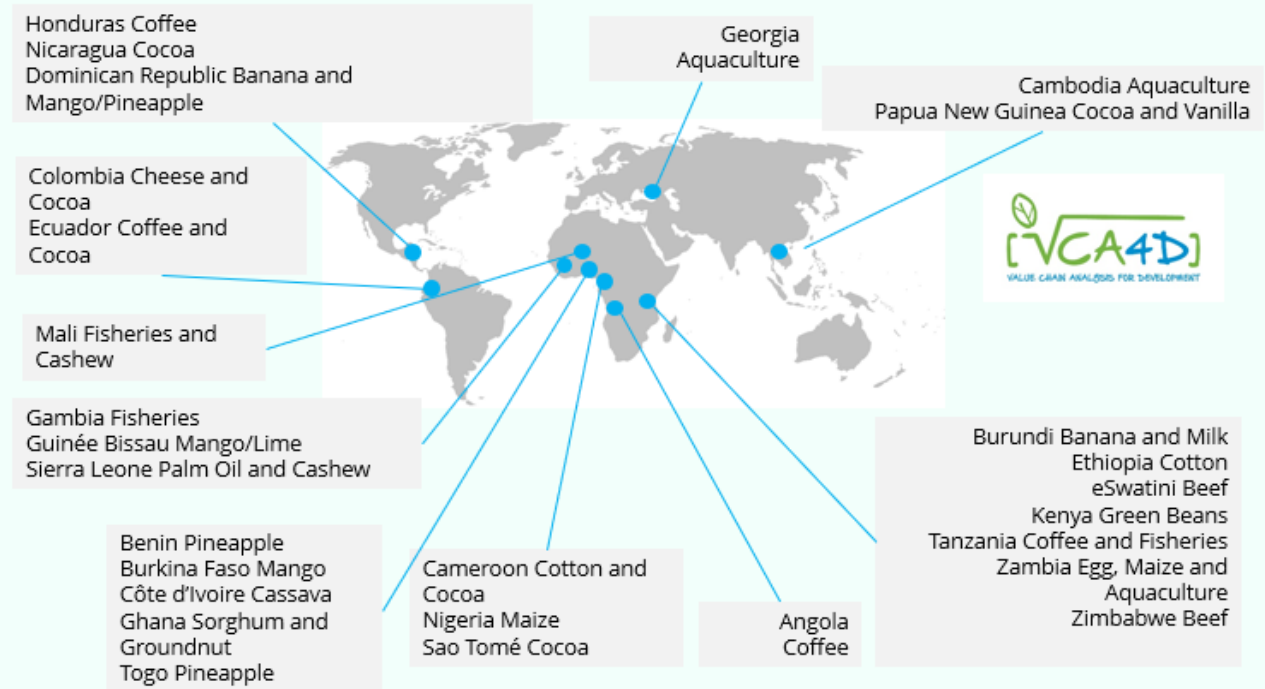


# Question and issues



Learning lessons from a cross-cutting analysis on gender equality in 36 studies → **Central Question: Throughout the VC do actors foster and put into practice gender equality?**

- **What is the overall picture of gender equality through the Social Profile scoring?**
- **Are there some special features related to specific sub-domains or specific value chains?**
- **Trying to go beyond the VCA4D methodology: what are the key points highlighted by the VCA4D findings and how are they reflected in the literature on gender?**



# VCA4D materials



## *Social analysis*

Six domains in the VCA4D method: working conditions, land and water rights, **gender equality**, food & nutrition security, social capital, living conditions

Five **gender equality** sub-domains: economic activities, access to resources and services, decision making, leadership and empowerment, hardship and division of labour subdivided in seventeen questions (17 questions)

17 questions x 36 studies = 612 answers and scores given

The synthesis follows a stepwise approach:

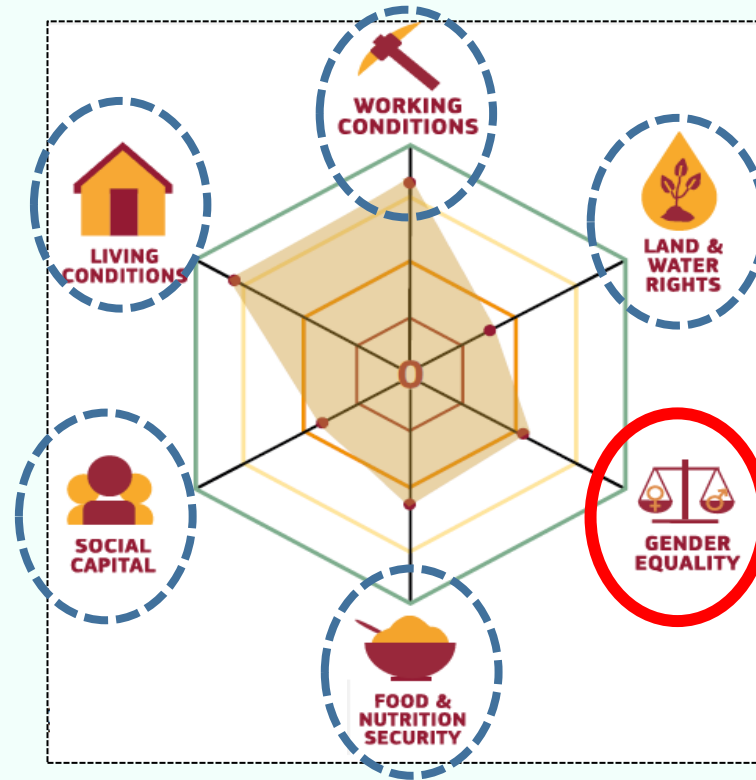
- Step1 - Statistical analysis of the experts' scores – the Social Profile tool
- Step 2 - Experts' scores combined with experts extensive answers to the 17 Gender Equality questions
- Step 3 - Lessons learnt consolidated with the literature review



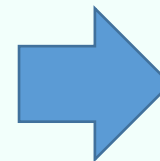
# Finding Step 1 – Statistical analysis of social experts scores

Gender equality:  
a specific  
domain of the  
social analysis...

... that can be  
combined with  
others domains



- **High** = 7% (40/612 scores given for gender equality)
- **Substantial** = 26% (163)
- **Moderate/low** = 53% (324)
- **Not at all** = 12% (74)
- **Not applicable (n.a.)** = 2% (11)



- Extensive use of the range of scores
- High negative assessment of gender equality (moderate and not at all = 65% scores)
- Intermediate scores most frequently used
- Gender bias in the assessment
- Expert bias: extreme scores / intermediate scores

# Findings Step 1



- **Best situation**
  - Benin pineapple, Togo pineapple, Burundi banana...
  - Participation of women in the VC, management of incomes...
- **Worse situation**
  - Ghana sorghum, Cameroon cocoa, Nicaragua cocoa...
  - Inequality of workloads, inequality of land rights, hardship of women' work, women's access to other resources (credit)
- **Gender equality outcomes**
  - Partially linked to specific types of commodities or crops
  - Strongly related to the gender equality themes assessed
- **Low country-effect but more important than the VC/commodity-effect**
  - Importance of the national context (cultural aspects, level of development of the country, public policies, etc.)
  - Gender equality scores cannot be taken independently
  - For example, high women autonomy in managing their income combined with low access to credit and land and high workloads

# Findings Step 2 – Extensive analysis

- Using descriptive analysis in the reports disaggregating the gender thematic into domains and sub-domains that covers specific aspects
- Ten VC (commodities) selected to facilitate the comparison: *aquaculture, cocoa, coffee, cotton, fisheries, staple food crops, fruits, livestock, horticulture, cashew / palm*
- 5 sub-domains and 17 questions

<b>3. GENDER EQUALITY</b>
3.1 Economic activities
3.2 Access to resources and services
3.3 Decision making
3.4 Leadership and empowerment
3.5 Hardship and division of labour

<b>3. GENDER EQUALITY</b>
<b>3.1 Economic activities</b>
3.1.1 Are risks of women being excluded from certain segments of the value chain minimised?
3.1.2 To what extent are women active in the value chain (as producers, processors, workers, traders...)?
<b>3.2 Access to resources and services</b>
3.2.1 Do women have ownership of assets (other than land)?
3.2.2 Do women have equal land rights as men?
3.2.3 Do women have access to credit?
3.2.4 Do women have access to other services (extension services, inputs...)?
<b>3.3 Decision making</b>
3.3.1 To what extent do women take part in the decisions related to production?
3.3.2 To what extent are women autonomous in the organisation of their work?
3.3.3 Do women have control over income?
3.3.4 Do women earn independent income?
3.2.5 Do women take part in decisions on the purchase, sale or transfer of assets?
<b>3.4 Leadership and empowerment</b>
3.4.1 Are women members of groups, trade unions, farmers' organisations?
3.4.2 Do women have leadership positions within the organisations they are part of?
3.4.3 Do women have the power to influence services, territorial power and policy decision making?
3.4.4 Do women speak in public?
<b>3.5 Hardship and division of labour</b>
3.5.1 To what extent are the overall work loads of men and women equal (including domestic work and child care)?
3.5.2 Are risks of women being subject to strenuous work minimised (e.g. using labour saving technologies...)?



## Throughout the VC, do actors foster and put into practice gender equality?

**Main themes:** Inclusion/Exclusion of women/vulnerable groups in certain activities; Access to resources, goods and services (land, credit, extension services, inputs...); Participation in decision-making (on activities, organisation, income...); Responsibility and empowerment in collective processes; Arduous working conditions...

# Findings step 2



## 1. Women economic activities

- Active role of women in the VCs (1/3 of the studies), but risk of women being excluded or being denied access to the VC
- For example, manual activities are reserved to women; when mechanized, there is risk that men take control of that activity  
**(Ghana sorghum)**

## 2. Women access to resources

- Women's access to important resources - particularly land and credit are the greatest constraints to their involvement in the VCs
- Extension services seem to create more opportunities for women than access to credit

## 3. Women decision making

- Highest scores refer to women earning independent income; also good scores for women having control in organization of their work; and also control over their income
- Women have more or less autonomy depending on their level of specialization.

**Cameroon cotton.** On their own fields (provided by their husbands), women are free to decide on production methods. They can be rather autonomous, except when their husbands need their labour power. The cotton VC increases women's chances of becoming self-reliant and self-confident at least as long as their husbands do not need their labour for long periods. Control over income will depend therefore on their husbands' attitudes.

**Ghana sorghum.** Women have less decision-making power on production decisions. They are consulted and may also be members of the farmers' group, but the final say and decision is taken by men. Even in cases where been allowed to cultivate a plot of sorghum, they have to give the income from the sale of the sorghum to their husbands.

# Findings step 2



## 4. Leadership and empowerment

- Women moderately or lowly involved in groups, trade unions and farmers organizations and so is their leadership within organizations. Higher participation in fisheries, fruits and cashew/palm
- Territorial power and political decision-making generally low or not influential (higher in cotton, lower in horticultural and food crops)
- Moderate or low women speaking in public (“substantial” in cotton and livestock)

## 5. Hardship of domestic work

- Very bad for women when compared to men, with 42% *not at all* equal (placing women at a high risk). Worst situations in fisheries, cocoa and fruits

**Mali and the Gambia Fisheries.** *In fishing production, women work more than men and low risk of reducing their drudgery, due to the precariousness of the situation, and little investment in technological innovations*

**Cameroon Cocoa.** *The involvement in the husband's cocoa field is extra work for the wife*

**Zambia Maize.** *Number of labour-saving technologies in smallholder maize production that reduce the risk of women being subjected to heavy labour, including soil preparation (oxen and tools), weeding (herbicides and weed killers) and shelling (mechanical shelling machines). However, they are not accessible to a large proportion of maize-growing households for reasons of affordability or availability*



# Lessons learnt 1



## 1. Unequal division of labor: women daily burden, reduced access to education, meaning lack of autonomy

- The higher the educational level of women, the greater their ability to influence the decision-making process (*São Tomé and Príncipe cocoa, Ecuador cocoa, Cambodia aquaculture, Zambia egg*).

## 2. Gendered occupations in agriculture and agricultural related activities: women limited access to labor-saving technologies

- Men have greater access to technologies that alleviate their work burden than women

## 3. Women access to land mediated by men, generally women own small lands and of poor quality

- Women rights to land are usually mediated through a man relative (*Angola coffee, Nicaragua cocoa, Guinea-Bissau lime and mango, Ghana sorghum, Ethiopia cotton, Mali cashew*).
- Smaller plots and poor-quality land for women (*Tanzania coffee*). “Women never own their fields, especially when they are profitable” (*Cameroon cocoa*).
- Women agricultural holders are not present at consultations with investors; and when they are present, they have no voice (*Sierra Leone cashew and palm oil, Guinea-Bissau lime mango*).

# Lessons learnt 2



## 4. Limited access to land means women's limited access to credit and training

- The lack of land decreases women's eligibility for formal credit ([Dominican Republic banana](#), [Zambia maize](#), [Zimbabwe beef](#), [Ghana sorghum](#), [Ethiopia cotton](#)) and their access to knowledge, agricultural inputs and hired labor ([Angola coffee](#)).

## 5. Women's higher engagement in food production

- Women's engagement in food productions (usually food crops gardens) rather than in cash crops due to their responsibility of ensuring the food security for the household

## 6. Women's "time poverty" as a result of their participation in commercial crops

- Women in agricultural commercial (export driven) productions, such as *coffee*, *cocoa* and *banana* have lower participation in training, decision making, schooling and income generating activities due to lack of time between farm work and paid jobs (described as 'time poverty' ([Tanzania coffee](#), [Benin pineapple](#))).

## 7. Women marital status: single women, polygamy and widowhood

- Single women as heads of households ([Angola coffee](#), [São Tomé and Príncipe cocoa](#), [Nicaragua cocoa](#)) as a result of male national and international migration flows
- Women totally or partially abandoned by their husbands, or widows carry the full burdens of agricultural production, without equal protection or rights to property ownership

# Implications for decision making process 1



- National legislation on women's rights (including national policies targeted specifically to women and in some cases through dedicated government bodies) in place
- Despite laws, women not protected because of sociocultural norms impeding law enforcement, combined with their lack of knowledge of their entitlement to these rights
- Necessity to engage political commitment in broadening the legislation to cover more spheres of women's and girls' lives, and to assure that these legal instruments' application is guaranteed
- Need for the identification of the empowerment and disempowerment drivers in complex and dynamic situations: i.e. gender-specific climate change risks
- Examples from specific sub-VC chains controlled by women and their networks reducing women unequal situation: *specialized coffee sub-chain in Ecuador; women's network on lime production in Guinea-Bissau*

# Implications for decision making process 2



- Need for gender disaggregated national statistic data and general information to inform gender analysis and influence policy decisions



  
[VCA4D]  
VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS FOR DEVELOPMENT

**Value Chain Analysis for Development:  
providing evidence for better policies and  
operations in agricultural value chains**

**CONFERENCE  
18 and 19 January 2023  
Brussels & Online**



**Thank you  
for your  
attention!**

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