



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & FOOD SECURITY

VAM GENDER AND MARKETS BRIEFING #3

AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS AND GENDER IN NORTHERN CAMEROON

KEY MESSAGES:

- Women's domestic and commercial functions within markets make women's financial autonomy more difficult. In the rural area, only 3% of women benefit from a fixed salary.
- The higher the level of education is for men, the more often spending decisions are taken jointly. From 17% when men have a low level of education to 45% when they have reached the secondary level or more.
- Empowerment is determined according to multiple characteristics such as involvement in economic and productive activities, schooling and access to training, relationship to tradition, "openness", public speaking and participation in associative activities.

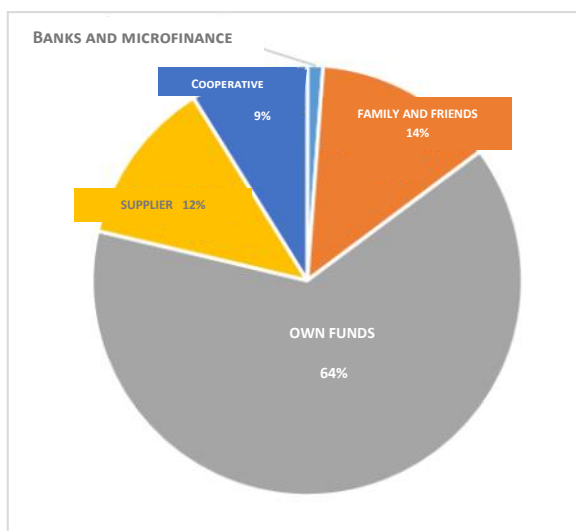
Domestic work and sanitary challenges make women less competitive on markets

Women's financial autonomy is limited. In fact, women have less decision-making power over their economic activities. 59% of women say that it is the spouse who decides on health spending, and 49% when it comes to major purchases for the household. Men tend to make decisions alone without involving women.

Self financing is the main source of resources for men and women in Cameroon, 64% of both (FIG 1). There are significant disparities between men and women having assets that could be used as collateral for a loan, respectively 46% and 15%.

Domestic work and sanitary concerns are major issues. Women see household management as a priority and as an instrument of social rise. Maternity-related challenges, such as childcare, are prominent. Difficulties in accessing drinking water, sanitation and garbage are concerning as they are not conducive to an appropriate management of menstrual hygiene.

FIGURE 1 : SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN CAMEROON



15% of women have property which may be a guarantee to obtain a credit compared to 46% of men

73% of women work without domestic help or employees

The higher the men education level is the more often the decision for spending is taken jointly with the wife

TAKING ACTION

Capacity building within the WFP teams is essential for building gender responsiveness. At the same time, training, and support for professional growth, entrepreneurship and women's leadership are good practices to be implemented among the beneficiaries. The creation of a practical guide for women entrepreneurs in the food chain is an interesting initiative, reinforcing the entrepreneurial capacities of women (negotiation, creation of business plan etc.). The awareness of men in the management of family planning is also important. It is also suggested that WFP integrate a functional literacy component into all its market initiatives.

Cooperatives have proven to promote transparency and accountability in trade. They have also made it possible to encourage women to perform functions traditionally reserved for men, reversing the existing status quo.

Partnerships should be developed, especially with UN WOMEN to promote the creation of gender-sensitive markets and infrastructure, taking into account women's domestic work and health challenges they face.

SOME CHALLENGES	SOME RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Low level of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in education and training for women and girls is an example of good practice. Advocating for more investment in education and training for women and girls in partnership with MINEDUB, MINPROFF, MINEFOP, CTD (Local and Regional) and UNESCO. It is suggested that WFP include in its ongoing initiatives based on markets and food chains, such as CBT or community granaries, a component on functional literacy.
2. Maternity and custody challenges for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness among economic operators and their spouses about better family planning and gender-sensitive management of their household / household; Advocating with relevant actors for setting up childcare facilities within existing markets.
3. Sanitation issues within markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocating with the relevant administrations for the construction of gender sensitive markets in the Northern and Far North regions; Advocating with the CTD (Local and Regional) Authorities to reinforce the conditions of sanitation and hygiene in the existing markets; Developing a partnership with UN WOMEN to promote the concept of "gender sensitive markets"; Develop and implement an awareness program on water, sanitation and menstrual hygiene management in local development.

TO GO FURTHER :

Gender and Market Initiative: Empowering West African Women through Market-based Food Assistance : <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/node/106>

FOR THE LATEST INFO ON CAMEROON:

<http://www1.wfp.org/countries/cameroon>

SOURCE(S) :

WFP, 2016. Gender and Market Case Study #3 : Gender, market analysis and food chain in North and Extreme North of Cameroon.

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Photo page 1: WFP/Sylvain Cherkaoui