

POLICY BRIEF

CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING EXTENSION SERVICES FOR WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN TANZANIA

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Introduction

According to the 2012 population census, Mbozi district had a population of 446,339 people of which 213,217 were males and 233,122 females. The overall sex ratio is 91 and the average household size 4.3. The district is divided into 4 Divisions, 29 Wards 121 villages and 665 hamlets. Agriculture is the main economic activity in the district. 88% of its inhabitants depend on agriculture and livestock production that accounts for over 80% of the district earnings. Agricultural production is mainly done by smallholder farmers (Peasants) majority of them being women of whom 50% use hand hoes, 40% use animal draught power and 10% using motorised equipment such as tractors. Crops produced in the district are coffee, maize, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, sunflower, paddy, banana fruits, avocado, and vegetables.

One of the government roles is to ensure availability of extension services to the farmers where in Tanzania conventional agricultural extension services are mainly provided by the Extension officers who visit farmers to provide agricultural advisory service. This system of extension service provision faces a number of challenges including few numbers of extension officers; limited resources and awareness among smallholder farmers accessing the services hence affect sector development and smallholder farmers economically and socially. Again, the system has been leaving women behind contributing to challenges on women access to extension services.

Challenges

Low participation of women in planning and budget processes: Based on budget analysis findings (2020) conducted by women smallholder farmers in Mbozi District it was revealed that there is inadequate participation of small producers particularly women in planning and budget processes. This has been observed from the priorities and planned activities for the FYs 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. The planned activities and expected outcome have no direct link to women smallholder producers' priorities. For example, in the FY 2018/19 priority activities for agricultural sector included Agricultural show (NaneNane) and coffee tree nursery (59,164

coffee seedlings) where the Council allocated a budget of TZS 4.8 million for agricultural shows and TZS 15.8 million was approved for coffee nursery though the proposed total budget by the department of agriculture was TZS 14 million.

Again, priority for the FY 2019/2020 was to produce 397,547 coffee seedlings where the budget was TZS 119.2 million but the approved amount was TZS 89.1 million only. The implications on this include limited participation of women due to various factors that hinder women participation including cultural and traditional practices. For example, coffee is male dominated crop thus narrows women engagement in this crop. As they are limited to land ownership as well as decision making and control over income earned from coffee. The District Council has been contributing money to assist purchasing of improved coffee seedling supplied to farmers, where very few women were able to benefit from this scheme as indicated below:

Year	# seedlings supplied	# of farmers received seedlings		Total
		Women	Men	
2018/2019	52,867	20(18.7%)	86(81.3%)	106
2019/2020	297,066	28(10.4%)	241(89.6%)	269
2020/2021	320,000	39(14.6%)	228(85.4%)	267

The consequences of giving more priority on cash crops is a threat to food security as more attention is on cash crop production such as extension advisory, financial services whereby to greater extent leave women behind.

Again, women attendance in agricultural shows is very low compared to men as most of them cannot travel leaving the family and other domestic chores where as this practice is contributed by cultural and traditional beliefs. This situation limit women participation in such kind of activities including other exposure opportunities.

Key sources of revenue for the District Council Budget

The district has identified own sources of revenue contributing to council development projects. However, the District Council

revenue is highly contributed by agricultural produce compared to other sources. Also, for the period of 2018/19 to 2019/20 there were no any funds received from other sources (external) to contribute on the agricultural department as it was for Health, Education and HIV/AIDS sectors. This has implication to women accessing extension services hence narrow the budget for agricultural activities including women priority needs.

Budget allocation by sector

The district reports reveal that agriculture is among the ten (10) sectors allocated with least resources while, Administration (salaries & other expenditures), Health, Education (Primary, Secondary schools) and Community Development have been receiving more funds as indicated below:

SN	Sector	Approved budget		
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1	Administration - salaries	4,972,3136,000	53,289,960,000	36,107,331,215
2	Health	3,674,392,660	4,725,825,676.447	2,807,801,795.96
3	Agriculture	1,576,394,280	88,018,000	190,470,445.15
4	Community Development	2,745,876,126	2,489,245,241.003	286,527,428

From the findings, it is obvious that agricultural sector has been allocated less compared to other sectors ignoring its role on development of agricultural producers who contributes highly on District revenues. Such budget cannot meet smallholder producers in particular women hence, affect sector development and producers at large.

Budget approval

The budget trends for the three years 2017 - 2020 has been decreasing where for the same period the budget allocated for development projects involving investment in agricultural sector development is very minimum. According to Mbozi District Planning Office reports, it was noted that for the FYs 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20

a total of TZS 11.919 billion 11,919,647,902.00; TZS7.320 billion 7,320,803,428.73; and TZS 4.046 billion 4,046,396,160.00 respectively was allocated for development projects indicating a decrease from one year to another hence incriminating agricultural sector specifically smallholder producers particularly women who comprise large section of smallholder farmers.

The approved and received project development funds for the three (3) FYs have been very low compared to requested amount i.e. projections vs. Approved budgets and for some years decreasing; thus, affect the performance of service delivery including extension service provision as indicated below:

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Approved (TZS)	1,576,394,280.00	88,018,000.00	190,470,445.15
Received (TZS)	19,076,290.00	73,623,500.00	121,311,100.63

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Council need to establish other more own sources which are none agriculture by involving other stakeholders within the district.

Affirmative action required with regard to extension workers, there is a need to employ more extension workers as well as working together with other actors providing extension services to fill the gap. However, the process of employing more extension workers is advised to budget allocation of budget for working gears for them to enable them work effectively. Also, the available Extension workers should concentrate

on the roles of extension service delivery and not other roles as used to be including extra duties such as serving as Acting in other positions like Village or Ward Executive Officers.

Improve Extension Services to Women: The Council through Agricultural Department is advised to improve extension service delivery to by allocating budget for building capacities (refresher and orientation training) of Village & Ward Extension workers to cope with technological changes and climatical hurdles that affects agriculture sector.

To allocate budget for improving production of women produce including agro- processing, storage and value addition for quality and safe food. The budget needs to be gender responsive to address community needs including women as key players in production activities in the sector.

The Council should take into consideration the need for capacitating women smallholder producers by facilitating them through individual women and women groups on production Quality Declared seeds (QDS) of their choices and environmental suit including vegetables, beans and other food crops.

The Council is advised to allocate budget for Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) enabling women to have farming alternatives especially on food crops which are environmentally friendly including agro ecology practices.

Smallholder farmers including women have been applying agro-inputs (chemical) without proper knowledge on the uses and application of those chemicals therefore destruct soil fertility. The Council is recommended to allocate substantial budget for soil test.

The District Council should adhere to the LGAs guideline by re-investing the 20% of internal revenue to agriculture sector.



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