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Gender Commitment of the Small Ruminant Value Chain

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Gender aspects in Sierra Leone

Gender-based discrimination in Sierra Leone (SL) is considered as one of the causes for food insecurity, low agricultural productivity and rural poverty. While the general female labour force participation rate is comparable to that of men, women's economic opportunities in SL are still very limited. As in many other African countries, they predominantly pursue jobs in **subsistence agriculture** or the **informal sector**, which is accessible to them despite their lower education and lack of assets and recognised skills. In communities where traditional views prevail,

*"Fos tem, man use fo fid d omen,
now omen dem fid d man,"
(In the past the man used to
feed the women, now women
feed the man.)*



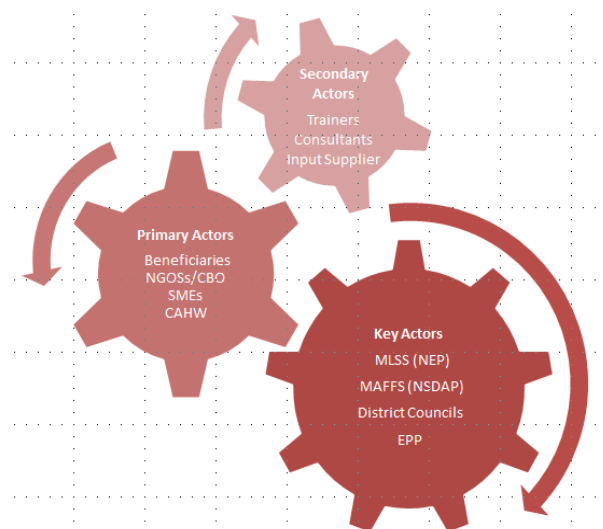
women and children are still considered as "human capital" for farming by their male heads of household. Polygamy and many children can increase this human capital. Despite the 2007 Gender Act, custom and traditional relations still prevent women from owning land.

The government of Sierra Leone has institutionalized Gender in order to better address Gender issues and to improve Gender Mainstreaming in government policies. **A National Employment Policy (NEP)** has been developed by the **Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS)** jointly with GIZ EPP.

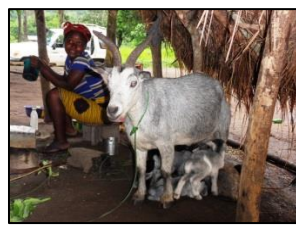
MLSS as the **political partner** of GIZ EPP is the main key actor in steering the intervention. The NEP recognises that gender disparities exist in different types of employment, due mainly to unequal access to education and socio-economic opportunities.

The Agenda for Prosperity (AfP), Sierra Leone's third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2013-2018 and framework for EPP, considers Gender equality as priority in SL.

Agriculture accounts for 70% of employment in Sierra Leone. Men traditionally focus on "high-risk and fast-money" cash crops while women tend to grow vegetables and crops mainly for the consumption on household level. Increased expenditures associated with the "hungry season" (July and August) largely fall upon women, such as school fees and medical costs linked to this peak time for illnesses.



Success Factor Cooperation



In relation to Gender Mainstreaming and agriculture, most important is the **National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP) 2010-2030** launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)**, the main implementing partner of EPP. The document stresses the contribution of women to the sector and contains policies which are of particular importance if gender equality is to be addressed: Access to extension services, access to post-harvest technologies (e.g. processing and storage), access to land (property) and access to finance. Within NSADP, women are targeted under "vulnerable groups" along with youth and disabled, with a special focus on their role in food security and economic and social benefits are expected from the programme.

The outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Sierra Leone since March 2014 marks an additional challenge for women's livelihoods. "By far, women's socially ascribed gender roles of care-giving within their families including preparing dead bodies for burial as well as traditional healer role were the biggest source of their susceptibility to EVD infection."¹

What we do

EPP's intervention is built on a multi-level approach and has the objective to improve the employment and income situation of young people in the eastern districts Koinadugu, Kono and Kailahun through the promotion of agricultural value chains. Jointly with partners on national, district and local level, EPP integrates **gender aspects** in the selection of the value chains. The **Small Ruminant Value Chains** as one of three promoted value chains has a specially promising potential for the integration and empowerment of women. The opportunities for women lay in the steps of production, trading of meat, processing of meat and catering. Goat rearing requires less access to large scale land and is less labour intensive compared to fruit or vegetable farming. Women's choice of food rather than cash crops, and the perception that they are mostly subsistence farmers, **excludes them from extension** services that could increase their productivity. EPP addresses this short coming through the provision of inputs and **capacity building in order to upscale production and income.**

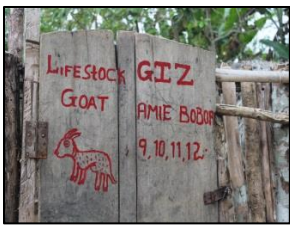
Dusu K. Samura, 35 years old, lives in Limbaya community, Sulima Chiefdom, Koinadugu District. She has been selected by GIZ EPP as beneficiary for the Small Ruminant Programme in April 2014. Today she is the chair lady of the goat farmer group in Limbaya and says in interview:

"Shortly after the programme of GIZ had taken off in our community, the Ebola Outbreak interrupted all activities. Our expectations went down.

By that time, I had already built my goat shed with the support of our extension worker Francis of the NGO Future in our Hands. I had also been given four female goats and one man goat. The Ebola restrictions did not allow GIZ to visit our community. I tried my best to keep my goats fine and maintain the shed during this difficult time. Francis stayed with us. Today the programme is fully operating again. We can continue to hold weekly group meetings to discuss and plan our activities and GIZ staff visits us regularly. My goats are growing healthy and have all given birth. After I pay back my loan I will start selling some of my goats. They are a great income source for me to pay the school fees for my children, to maintain my house, to cover medical and household costs. Last week I joined the CEFE training and learned how to keep financial records and plan my expenses."



¹ EPP Sierra Leone, Gender Analysis, 2nd Version, August 2015



By now 300 beneficiaries (240 women) have been provided with four female goats and one male goat each in form of a **living loan** (the same number of animals is passed on to other community members). The farmers are organized in groups and receive intensive day-by-day training on improved goat production. The training is delivered through livestock extension workers of either **CBOs** (Community-Based-Organisations) or local **NGOs** which are contracted by EPP as Service Providers. The extension workers are resident in the respective communities. Their close interaction with the target group strengthens trust and cohesion which are fundamental in a post-conflict scenario like in Sierra Leone.



1 goat produces ca. 4 kids per year; after 6 months the kids reach the weight to enter the market at a price of 200,000 Leones; with four goats, the farmer can realize an additional income of 3,2 Mio Leones or 580 Euro per year.

EPP also integrates **gender equality aspects** in the selection of the **Service Provider** for the Small Ruminant Value Chain. Women represent 20% of the staffs of EPP partners. Livestock Officers of MAFFS take the lead in the training of Service Provider on goat production. The Manual about Goat Production in Sierra Leone that was developed by EPP is used as a training and reference tool. It is built upon **Farmer Field School** principles. Group activities and learning exercises are an integral part of the trainings to strengthen participation, ownership and understanding of group dynamics. Additionally, EPP has built up the first pool of certified **CEFE trainers (Competency Based Economies Formation of Enterprises)** in Sierra Leone. They act as Service Provider for the Small Ruminant Programme and develop the entrepreneurial spirit of the goat beneficiaries in order to establish market linkages for their goat business. Out of the 17 CEFE trainers, six are female.



Success Factor Learning and Innovation: Multipliers for Business Skills and Personal Development certified by CEFE International

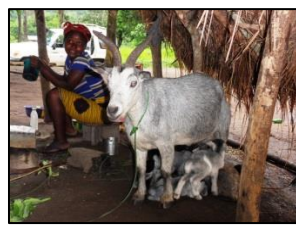
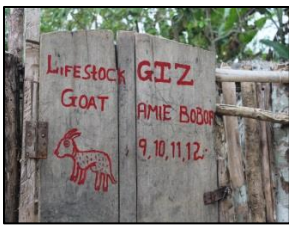


Fatmata experiences the importance of planning and material for quality in construction

The CEFE methodology is also used to promote a business orientated mind set of **Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW)** in order to encourage them to offer their services to livestock farmers on a paid basis. EPP has trained 240 CAHW (**10% women**) in basic animal health care services and business skills. They operate as registered groups and support the veterinary surveillance of the programme goats. With this intervention EPP addresses the acute shortage of veterinary services in Sierra Leone (only 4 retired veterinaries countrywide) and creates additional income possibilities in rural areas.



Community Animal Health Workers are an Innovation in SL with Scaling-up Potential



Self-employment is an attractive area for women, but **access to finance** to found and expand an enterprise, acquire assets or save money for future investments is a problem. While women are legally in the position to access bank loans, in practice they lack collateral as well as the financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.

EPP has designed the **Business Loop** which is an entrepreneurial training and coaching package for **SMEs**. In the selection of participants, EPP encourages particularly eligible **female entrepreneurs** who are operating along the value chain of small ruminants to apply. So far 35% of the trainees that underwent the Business Loop are women.

Magdalain Lebbie, 31 years, runs Mbawa Relaxation Center, a restaurant in Koidu Town, Kono District. She offers goat soup, a popular traditional dish in Sierra Leone. She cannot read and write, but understands numbers and is enthusiastic and visionary about business growth. She has joined the **Business Loop**. In an interview she says:

“The EPP business training helped me to build my entrepreneurial skill. I have started to keep records about my expenses and incomes and can now make better decisions to develop my business. I also understand now that the setting of the restaurant is important. I have built a bamboo fence around the dining area and paved the floor to make the place cleaner. Before, I slaughtered the goats right next to the restaurant. This is not hygienic. Now the goats are slaughtered at the cow yard and I take only the carcass to the kitchen of my restaurant for further processing.”



Magdalain processes at the moment between 3 and 5 goats per day. Her daily turnover is gradually increasing. She realizes total sales up to 700,000 Leones (127 Euro) and her daily net profit exceeds 140,000 Leone Euro). In the future she wants to improve the condition of the restaurant and rear her own goats for her business.



Conclusion

There is a positive recognition of the gender orientated approach of the Small Ruminant Value Chain integrating producers, processors, consumers and Community Animal Health Workers among the various stakeholders. For effectiveness and sustainability as well as economic development, emphasis shall be put on further strengthening the market linkages and the value addition along the value chain. The experiences with gender can be applied for the promotion of other value chains which have a promising potential for the integration of women in the economy.

Employment Promotion Programme

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