



## Modern agri-food systems, horticultural employment and women's empowerment

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# Characteristics of changes in global agri-food systems

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Shift from traditional export crops to high-value crops incl. fruits, vegetables, flowers: In Africa: from ca. 4 billion USD in 1995 to 16 billion USD in 2014, horticultural exports constitute 32.8% of total agri-food exports in Africa



Large-scale export-oriented plantations: 12.000 workers in the French bean sector in Senegal (Maertens and Swinnen 2008), 85.000 workers in the flower sector in Ethiopia (Getu 2013), 200.000 workers in the deciduous fruit sector in South Africa (Commonwealth Secretariat 2004)



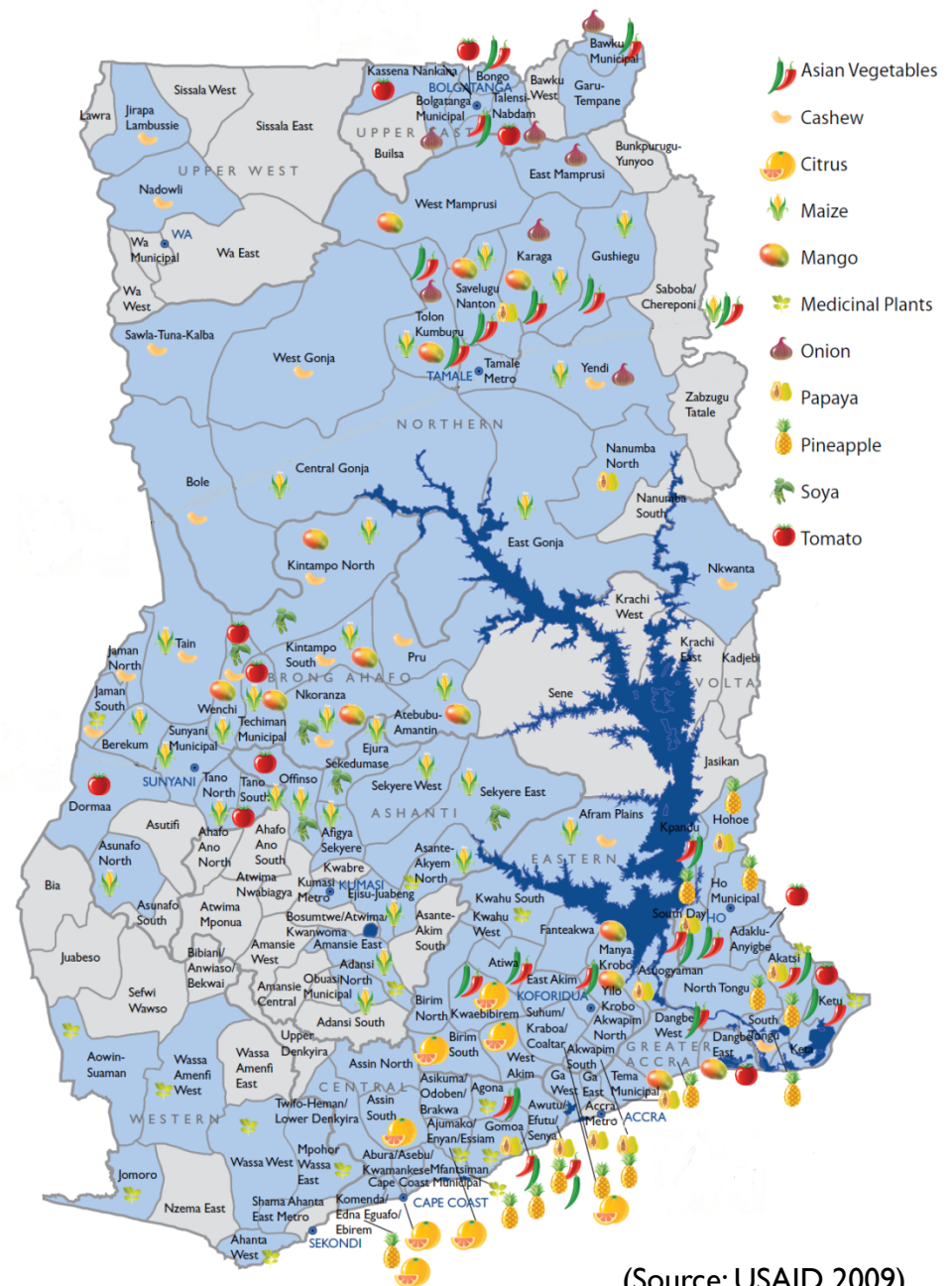
Feminized employment patterns: Share of female workers in the Zambian fresh vegetable sector: 65%, Kenyan flower industry: 75%, Zimbabwe's horticultural industry: 91% (FAO 2009)



(Maertens and Swinnen 2012, Subervie and Vagneron 2013, Barrientos et al. 2003)

# Ghanaian pineapple sector

- Work in export-oriented plantation agriculture is often linked to **job insecurity, poor working conditions and insufficient wages**.
- Ability to generate social benefits such as women's empowerment?
- It is one of the most developed horticultural sector dominated by large-scale plantations
- **14 large-scale plantations** (300 – 700 ha) with approx. 150 – 500 workers
- Large-scale plantations have been established **over 20 years ago**
- **Survey data: 422 married households**
- We differentiate between 2 groups: (1) 153 HH with employed female spouses and (2) 269 HH with self-employed female spouses

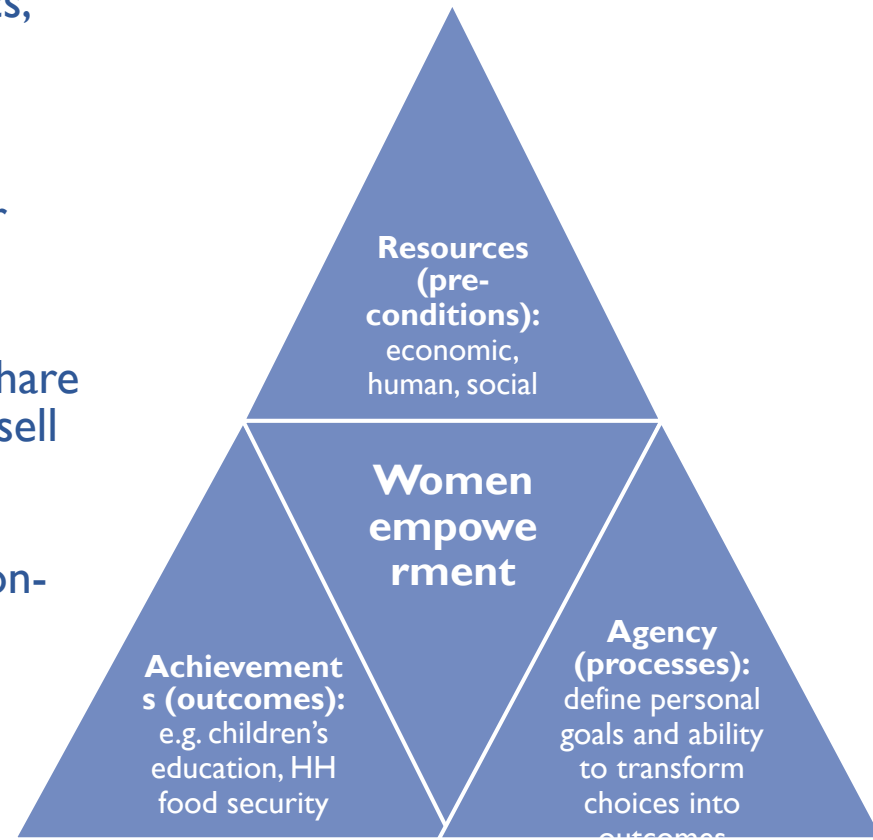


(Source: USAID 2009)

# Analysis

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- ▶ To estimate the effect of female employment on empowerment, we:
  1. Estimate the likelihood of women choosing to become employed on a pineapple plantation (based on HH characteristics, village characteristics etc.)
  2. Estimating the effect of women's employment on the plantation on their level of empowerment:
    - ▶ Resources: contribution to HH income, share of assets owned by spouse and ability to sell assets, mobility, time allocated to reproductive HH tasks
    - ▶ Agency: female spouse's input into decision-making regarding HH expenditures, agricultural decisions, non-farm activities



# Results

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## Resources

- ▶ Our analysis **confirms that women employed in the horticultural export sector are more empowered than those that are not**
- ▶ Female horticultural employment increases household income by 61%
- ▶ Women employees contribute 32% more income to the household income than self-employed women
- ▶ Women employees' share of household asset ownership increases by 19%, share of household assets they can decide to sell increases by 13%
- ▶ The mobility indicators suggest that women employees are 32% more likely to be able to travel independently
- ▶ Overall, employed women travel 30 km farther to the market, health centers or their relatives.
- ▶ They spend 1.26 hours less time on chores and care activities

## Agency

- ▶ Positive effect on input into decision-making in the majority of categories (particularly food and cash crop production, but also major and minor expenditures and wage labor activities)
- ▶ Female employment does not increase input into decision-making regarding non-farm activities and kid's education and health
- ▶ The full regression results indicate that cultural (religion, regional differentiation) and demographic (age gap) patterns play an important role for determining indicators of agency for empowerment as well

# Potential drivers of women's empowerment

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Women generate a higher income in comparison to other income-generating activities. Remuneration is above minimum wage (11.19 GHS vs. 8.80 GHS in 2017). 73% of women have a permanent employment contract and are employed on average 4 years.



Ability to generate substantial financial resources and provide a significant contribution to the household income

Training, e.g. first aid, management skills, product hygiene and handling.



May be applied in agricultural production of the household and therefore contribute to more female input into agricultural decision-making.

Approx. 40% of women are members of labor unions.



The involvement in worker representation may also lead to more engagement outside the company.

Women are engaged outside the confinements of their home and community.



Exposure to a greater variety of perspectives and way of thinking

## Excursion: workload

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- ▶ Women pineapple workers work almost 8 hours per day
- ▶ Self-employed women work 5.28 hours per day
- ▶ Including own farm production, horticultural employment, agricultural work off the own farm, and off-farm non-agricultural work
- ▶ Female employees spend less hours per day on indoor and outdoor chores as well as care activities
- ▶ However, they also spend less time on personal activities, such as eating and personal hygiene, social activities with friends and neighbors and sleep

# Excursion: food security

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- ▶ Other research documents (Malapit and Quisumbing, 2015; Duflo and Udry, 2004; Doss, 2006; Fischer and Qaim, 2012): Higher income of women > higher bargaining power > better food security and nutrition outcomes
- ▶ Study in the tomato export sector in Senegal shows (van den Broeck et al., 2017):
  - ▶ Income earned by men in the export sector does not have a significant effect on any of the food security indicators
  - ▶ Income earned by women, on the other hand, reduces insecurity in food access, improves quality of food consumption and shortens the hunger season



# Discussion and conclusion

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Our findings are also in line with those of other studies:

- ▶ Kenyan cut-flower and tea as well as the Senegalese tomato industry find that female workers perceive their decision-making power to be greater (Maertens and Swinnen 2012, Said-Allsopp and Tallontire 2015)

Does the kind of employment matter?

- ▶ Income generated from other sources (small business, trading) are not always neither large nor stable enough to bring long-term change to HH gender relations
- ▶ Other pathways (besides income) matter to:
- ▶ Kantor (2003) finds that the home-based work of women working in the Indian garment industry did not empower them much
- ▶ Anderson and Eswaran (2009) find that in Bangladesh only employment outside the husband's farm and not employment in general leads to women's greater autonomy
- ▶ Working conditions are important (contract situation, human resource development, company engagement etc.)

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Thank you for your attention!

