



Integrating gender into Kenya's evolving seed policies

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Outline

- **Background**
- **Research questions & methods**
- **Team**

Background

- **Following Seed Act Amendment of 2013, Kenya is revising seed regulations, standards and guidelines**
 - However, the Act and drafting of subsidiary legislation have historically been influenced by the requirements, experience and perspectives from the seed of grain crops; and,
 - While, “stakeholder consultation” is used during the process of drafting and revision of seed regulations; exactly which stakeholders are involved, and how is unclear



Seed Act Amendment (2013) published in Government Gazette

Background

- **Unlike the seed of grain crops, VPC seed is**
 - easier to maintain for genetic purity; but disease accumulates, leading to seed degeneration & yield decline; and is often
 - **bulky, perishable; with low multiplication rates,**
 - **private seed companies perceive limited profitability in VPC seed so,**
 - **decentralized, informal seed systems predominate which are dominated by women**



Sweetpotato planting material: bulky, perishable, and expensive to transport long distances, Lake Zone, Tanzania. Credit: M.McEwan



Background

- As VPC ware products (esp. potato) are commercialized, VPC seed producers are being “drawn” into regulation as part of the formal seed sector; however,
- Do current seed regulatory frameworks recognize the different characteristics of seed of grain vs. VPC seed?
- Does current seed legislation recognize the informal seed sector from where more than 90% of VPC seed is sourced; and the roles of different actors as seed producers and seed users?



Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS) is the regulatory body (NPPO) for Kenya providing seed inspection. Credit: M.McEwan

Effects of not including gender considerations in seed legislation and policies

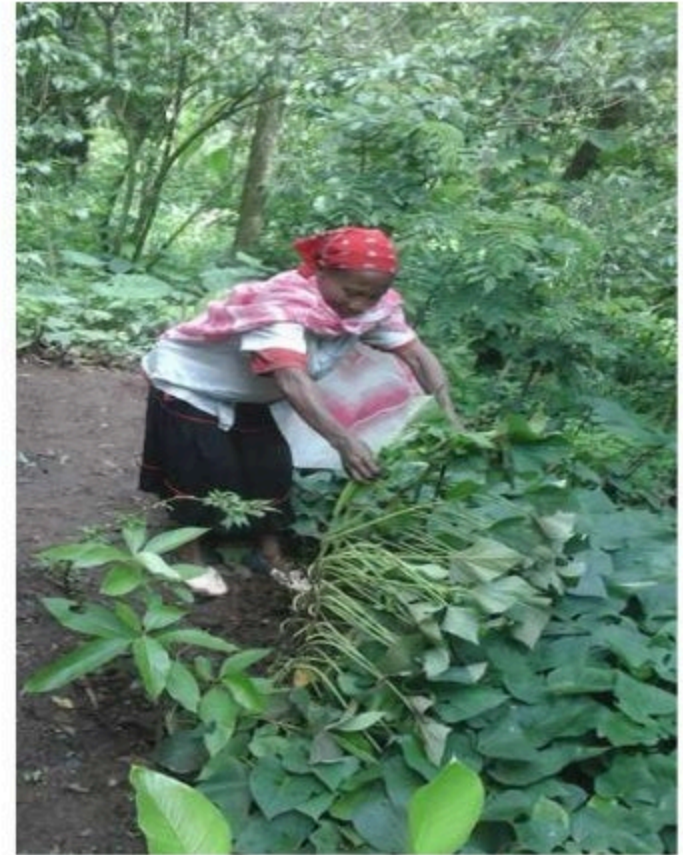
- **Women are highly involved in informal seed exchange, as producers and users; but**
 - Men and women's separate knowledge on seed is often marginalized with negative implications for seed quality and availability;
 - Sale of seed which has not been certified is prohibited
- **Women may not have the ability to access seed from formal seed sources; which, may be more costly, and poorer quality**
- **Exclusion of a large segment of rural population (including men, women and young people depending on informal seed sector)**
- ***Thus, need to understand gender dynamics of local seed production options to inform the broader, evidence-based discourse on seed regulatory frameworks & reforms***



Potato at flowering stage, Meru County, Kenya. Credit: M.McEwan

Main research question

- **What opportunities and barriers are being created for men, women, and youth to participate in the VPC seed systems as producers and users, as there is a move towards formal regulation in Kenya?**
- **Study based in two areas in Kenya: Eldoret (Potato) and Bungoma (Sweetpotato)...**



Sweetpotato vines produced by intercropping with coffee in Ethiopia, Gedeo, Ethiopia. Credit: Temesgen Birhanu

Sub question 1:

- **What are the policy-related barriers and opportunities for men, women, and youth to participate in the VPC seed system?**

METHODS

- **Review of existing policy documents and organization's responsibilities in Kenya from a gender perspective**
- **Sex & age disaggregated FGDs with adults and youth to identify key barriers and opportunities that influence potato and sweetpotato farmers and farmers' groups ability to engage as seed producers and users**



Male and female farmers showing how they select seed potato, Malawi. Credit: N. Mudege

Sub question 2

- **What are the existing seed production and exchange models (e.g., individual and cooperative seed enterprises) and how do these influence the participation of men, women and youth in the seed sector?**
 - this will inform recommendations for appropriate seed guidelines and policies.

METHODS

- **Gender based SWOT analysis of County potato and sweetpotato action plans ...to identify alternative gender responsive seed production models and enterprise strategies**
- **Individual interviews and FGDs with men and women producers to understand what drives success and failure of women and men owned seed enterprises**



Members (male!) of Ntiirimiti Farmers Self Help Group showing their potato seed store, Meru County. Credit: M. McEwan

Sub question 3

- **How are women and young people's interests represented in policy discussions and debates on seed standards and regulatory frameworks at devolved and national levels?**

METHODS

- **Outcome mapping and influence network mapping to capture interaction between actors**
 - Who is involved in “stakeholder consultations” & how; what issues are put on the table – and how are they addressed in the regulations:
 - Minimum land requirements to be a seed producer; requirements for isolation distance, rotation practices, tolerance levels for pests & diseases; number of generations allowed; registration & inspection fees, timing and timeliness of inspections
 - To identify what opportunities and interest exists to leverage more appropriate gender and youth responsive seed regulations and related programmes at both national and county level

Research Team

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The International Potato Center (known by its Spanish acronym CIP) is a research-for-development organization with a focus on potato, sweetpotato, and Andean roots and tubers. CIP is dedicated to delivering sustainable science-based solutions to the pressing world issues of hunger, poverty, gender equity, climate change and the preservation of our Earth's fragile biodiversity and natural resources.

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