



The effects of sweetpotato commercialization on men and women producers and traders in Homa bay and Bungoma Kenya

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Outline

- **Background/introduction**
- **Methods**
- **Results**

Background/Objectives

- Sweetpotato regarded as a woman's crop because it has historically not been cultivated for cash
- To discuss how
 - the development and commercialization OFSP value chains affects the framework of opportunities and constraints for smallholder sweetpotato farmers including women
 - How commercialisation of SP value chains affect livelihoods of small holder farmers

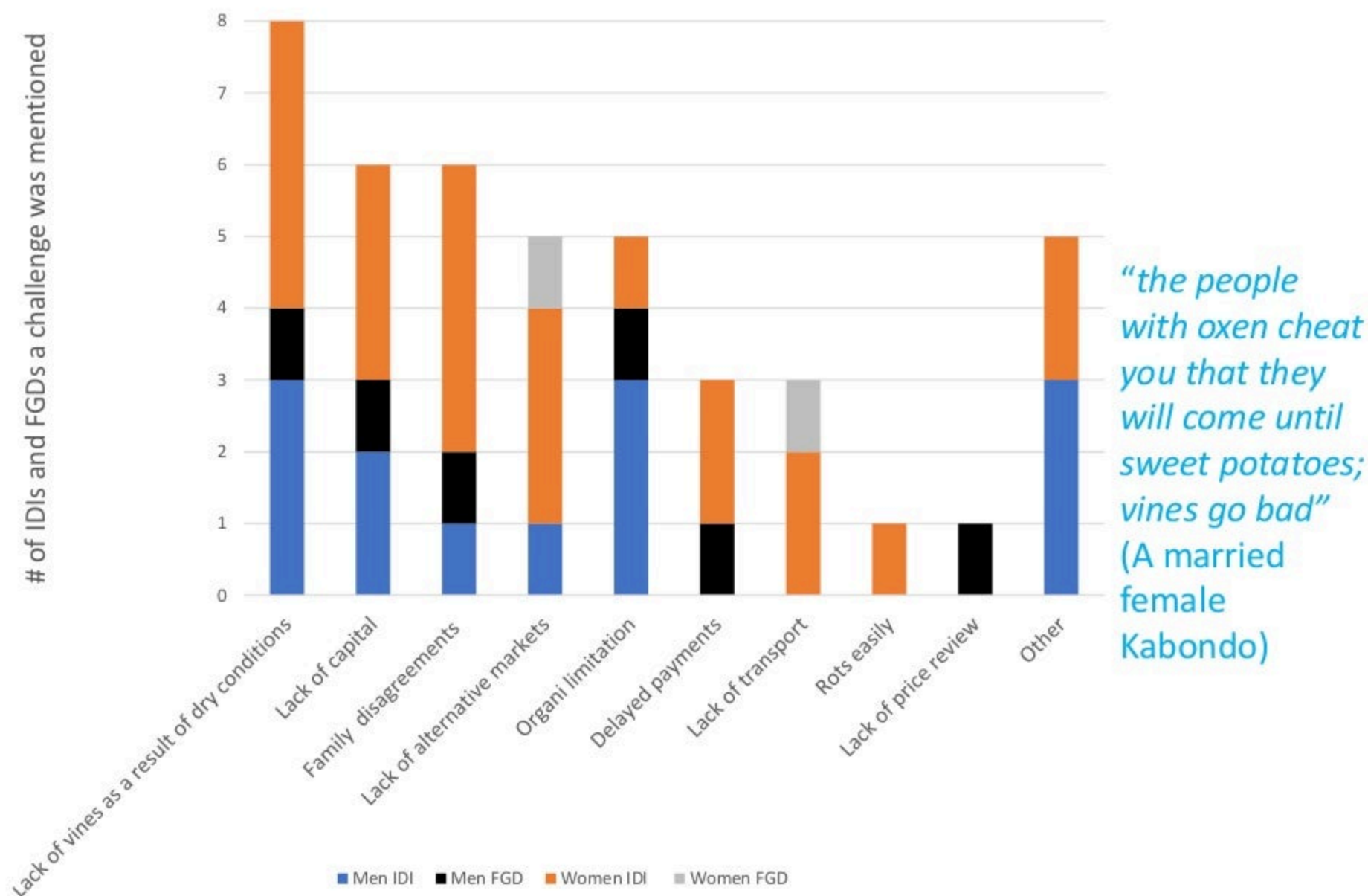
Methodology

- **Social relations approach**
- **Gender relations are part of social relations of power, which ultimately determine roles, responsibilities as well as distribution of resources and benefits' (Mudege et al., 2017)**
- **Gender relations can worsen or improve as a result of commercialization**
- **Commercialization provides opportunity for conflict, cooperation and bargaining between men and women which has the potential of improving gender relations as well as increasing the income that accrue to both**

Tools

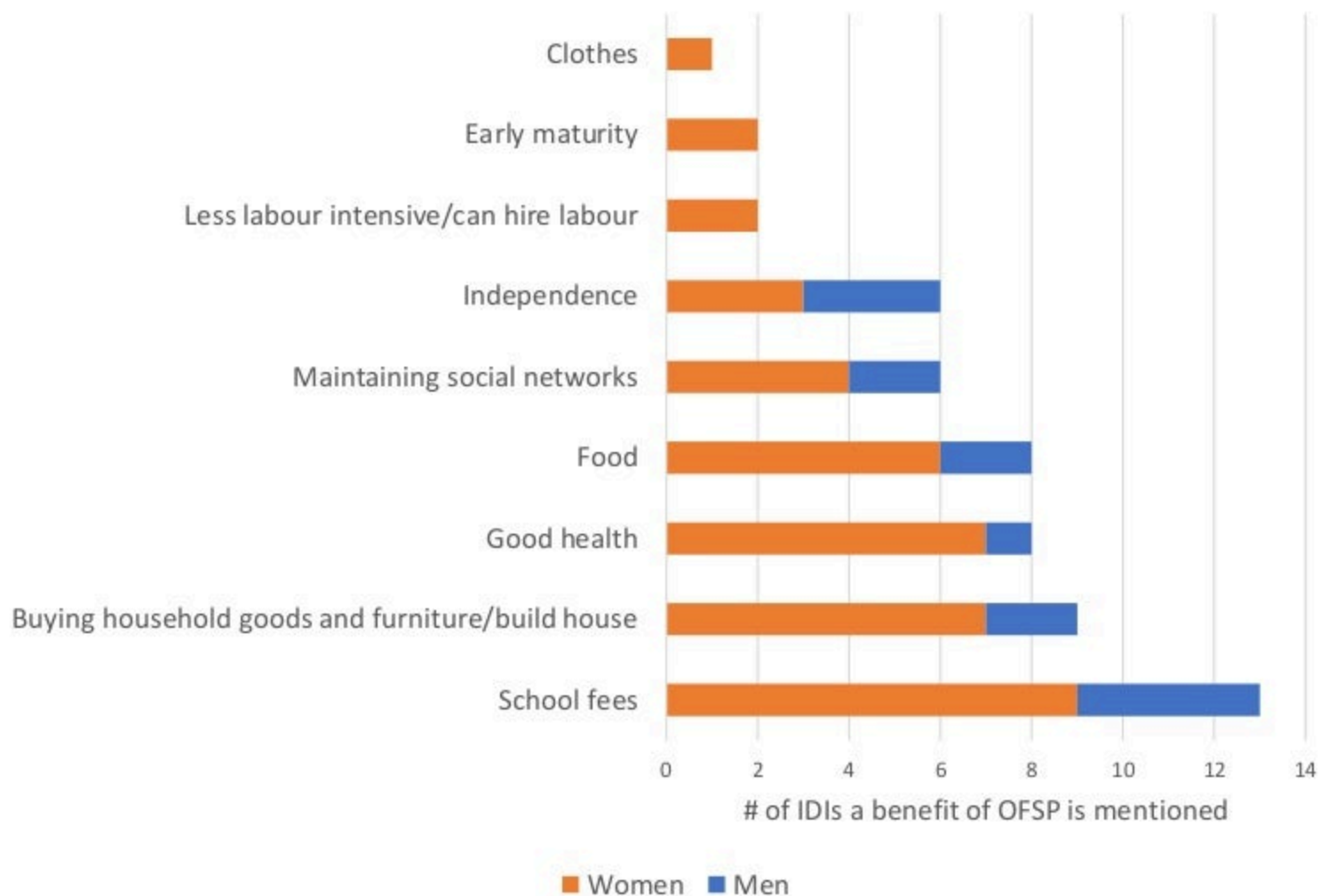
- 16 FGDs (8men/8women) (Total # 60 men and 80 women)
- 41 female and 1 male retailer
- IDI 10 men 10 women

Challenges related to the sweetpotato enterprise



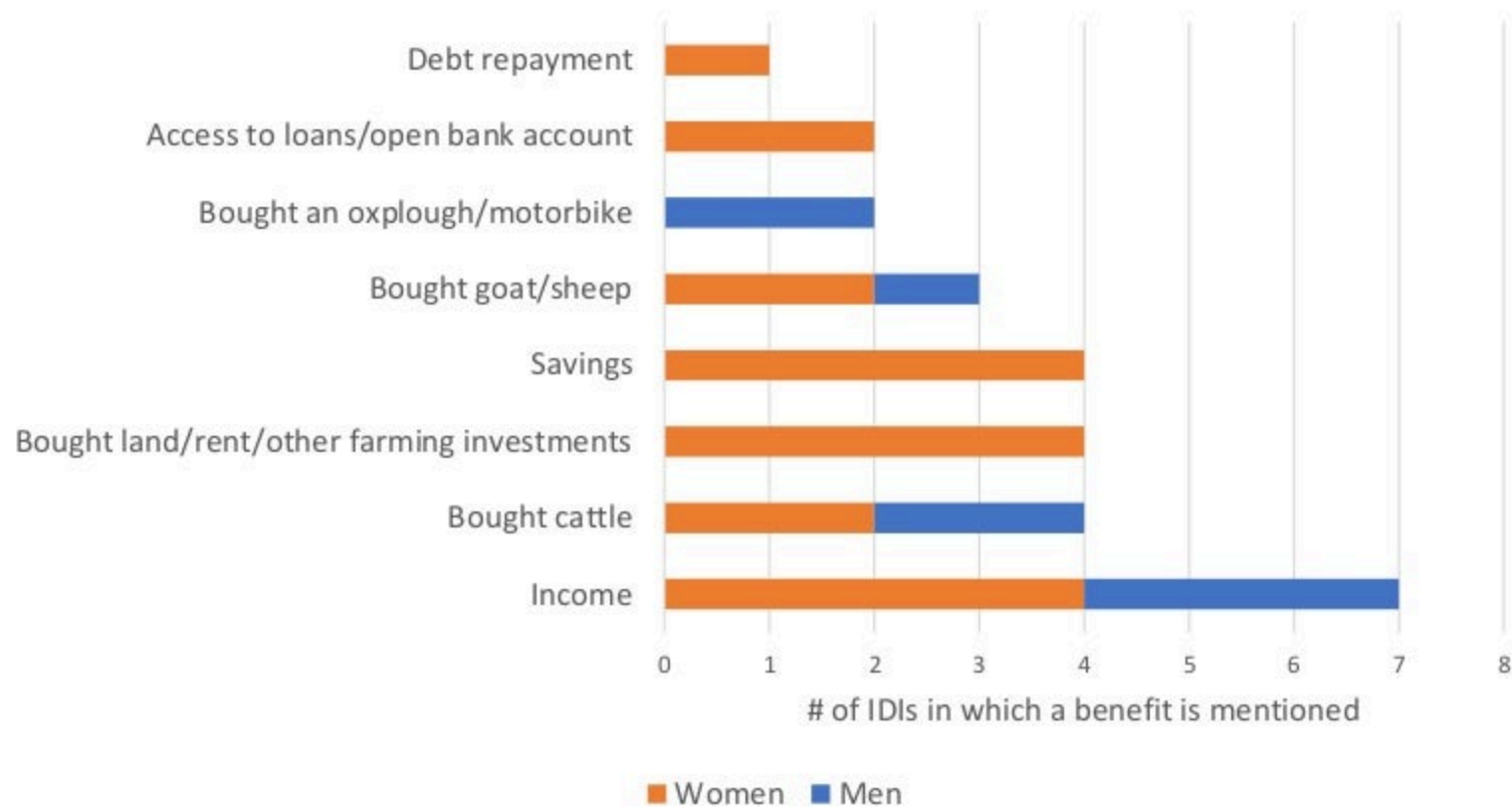
- *R: If you find a man who does not like it all the problems will be heaped on you. You are the one who is going to plant it, weed it. All that will be upon you. When it comes to the day of harvesting he is the one who sits there because he wants to be the one to remove it. At the time of work he is far away and when the time for money comes he draws nearerwomen have problems. You don't even know how many kilos of sweet potatoes you have harvested. He does not want you to know. He will tell you that you did not come with land and that the land is his... so you will just keep quiet and do your own things (widowed female, Kabondo)*

Social and health benefits



'Sweet potato business is a good husband who gives me money without abuses' (A married women respondent aged 38, Homabay)

Economic benefits



Economic benefits

- **The nature of commercialization has evolved with new modes of commercialization such as involvement of the private sector increasingly becoming dominant**
- **Adv of SP commercialisation**
 - 1) bulk sales which reduced the drudgery related to small sales which people have to carry on their heads or bicycles for long distances
 - 2) pricing system is standardized through payment per kilogram which both men and women farmers regarded as fair compared to the traditional way of selling by volume such as bags or heaps;
 - 3) additionally the major private sector player Organi limited was regarded as an honest broker who always paid for sweetpotato delivered compared to informal market traders who farmers regarded as not to be completely trusted as they could sometimes refuse to pay for goods delivered.

Decisions on income

	FGD men Commercial kamiola1	FGD men Commercial kamiola2	FGD commercial Bungoma 1	FGD commercial Bungoma 2	Fgd commercial Kabondo men1	Fgd commercial Kabondo men2	FGD Men commercial Rodi1	FGD Men commercial Rodi2
Own clothes		3000		2,000				600
Taxi home		3000						
Food home	1500	2000	1000	1,500	1,000		1500	
For wife		500		500		1000		500
Phone		2500						
Drink alcohol				5,000				
farming	2000		3000	1,000	8,500	3000	2000	
Entertainment						2000		5000
School fees	3000		4500			4000	3500	
School Uniform	1000						1000	1000
Pocket money					500			900
Side chibk								2000
family emergency	1500						1500	
debt	1000						500	
saving			1500					

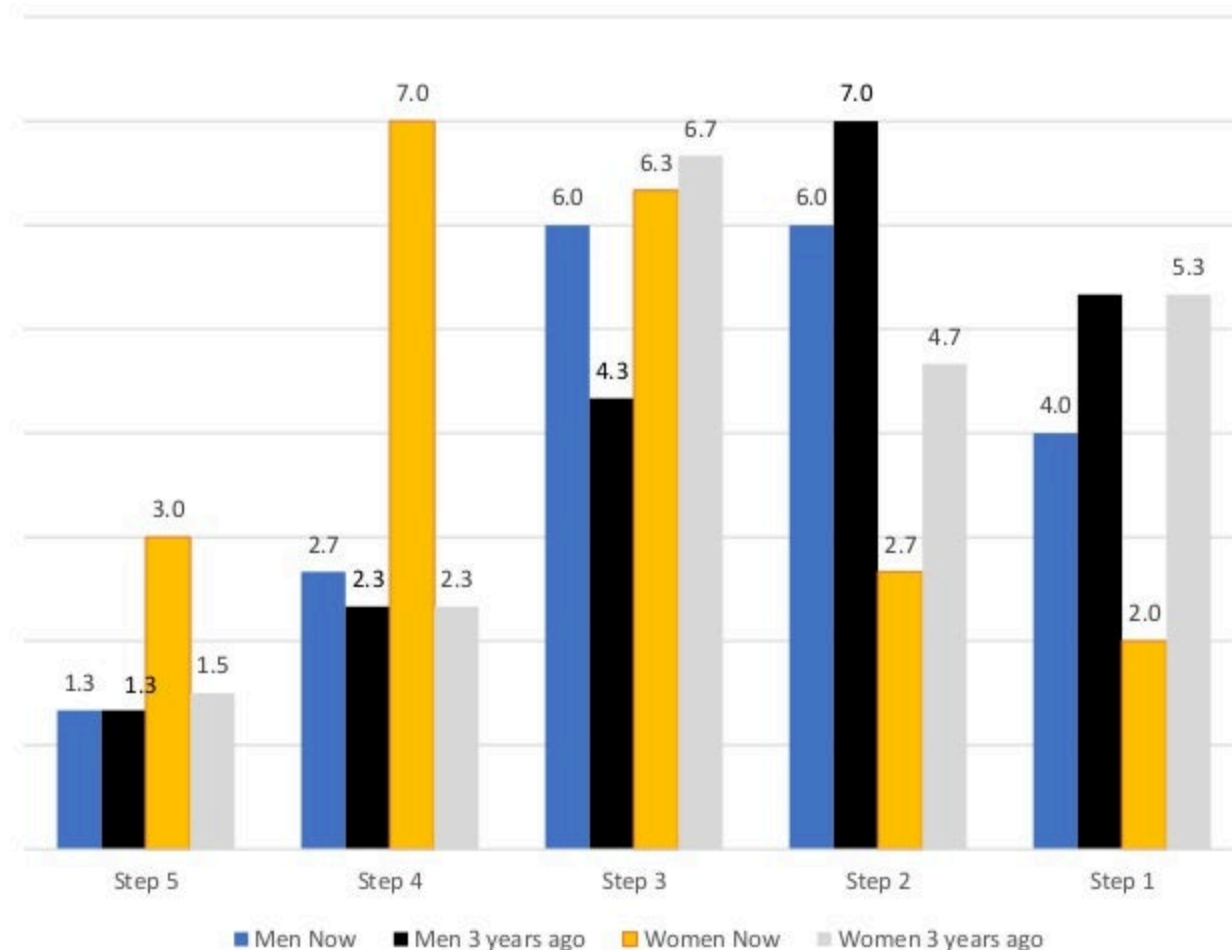
Men's mock budgets

Decisions on income

	Susan & Rodi	Everline & Rod	Consolata & C	Freda & Kabon	GRACE & Wido	Susan & Kabon	Irene & Kabon	Budget 1 Bur	Budget 2 Bur	Budget 3 Bungoma	Budget 4 Bur	Brenda & Sum
School fees	6000	3000	4500	5000	6350	5000	1000	5000			6000	5000
Farming	4000		2000			4100			5000	2000	2000	1000
Household shopping		7000	1000	1000	1000		2000	3000	3000	2000	1000	1000
Medical			500									
Transport			1000									
Emergency			1000	1000		400	500					2000
veterinary services				1000								
PERSONAL SHOPPING				1000								1000
fertiliser					1650		2500					
seed purchase					1000							
food						500						
saving							1500	2000	2000	2000	1000	
Goat							2500					
tithe										1000		
other needs										3000		
spouse												1000

Women's mock budgets

Impact of commercialization on livelihoods



Perceived changes in people's livelihoods up and down the community ladder over a period of 3 years

- **Men blamed SP commercialization for making it harder to get land to rent due to increased competition and rental fees**
- **Women mentioned that availability of money from OFSP has made their lives better since they can rent small pieces of land and stop depending on their men**
- **Increased availability of low level jobs such as sweetpotato washing but blamed for high dropout rates among young men and women**

- **The person at the bottom of ladder rarely benefits significantly...just provides underpaid labour to sweetpotato (OFSP) farmers**
 - *“Unlike the highest ranked person in the community, the person at the lowest level of the ladder of life leads a hopeless life because he is lazy and has not embraced any type of farming to improve his life because he even does not have a piece of land to practice farming. He actually leads the hand to mouth type of life”. (A woman mixed FGD participant, Kabondo).*
- **Women more positive about general livelihood improvement in the community due to agricultural commercialization**
- **Better private markets (e.g. Organi) has led to higher incomes**
- **Freer and more availability of information was also regarded as a reason why the poorest group of farmers was shrinking coupled with increase of people in step3 and Step4.**

Discussion

- **Commercialization allowed women to challenge hierarchical male domination**
 - *Women are contributing more to households and are being consulted more by men on household decisions*
 - *Women are able to buy livestock, or land and other assets which has improved their economic and social standing relative to their husbands*
Women are able to fund the life style they want
- **However some men take over sweetpotato farming and marketing after commercialisation**
- **Gendered access to resources such as land in some instances determined whether and how men and women were able to benefit from commercialization.**
- **in some cases the process of commercialization concentrated power in men's hands since they were able to make independent decisions on crop cultivation and could also easily control the income which most women could not challenge in deference to the notion of men as heads of households..**

- The study validates the importance of joint decision making in ensuring men and women equally benefit
- When promoting commercialization, practitioners need to understand how social differentiation within the community may affect the ability of men and women benefitting from commercialization processes.
- Other social differences such as marital status and age also impacted on the ability of women to benefit from commercialization. (e.g. widowed vs married; polygamous vs monogamous marriages; older married women vs newly married women)



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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