

8. Gender and Youth

The questions in this section of the focus group aim at exploring gender relations in coffee production and perceived benefits of involving women in coffee production. The CPT project aims at sensitizing farmers for gender-related issues and strengthening the role of women in the coffee business and beyond, e.g. through an approach called “Gender Action Learning System” (GALS) which is rolled out to farmers supported by CMS and TKL. Another area of interest is the declining role of youth in coffee production and possible measures which could incentivize youth to engage in coffee growing.

In six of the focus groups (Linda, Ukuli, Umoja, Ukimwi, Ngima, Nyakayanja), the male participants were dismissed near the end of the session, and these questions were asked with only the women in attendance. This procedure aimed to encourage women to speak more forthrightly about their experiences. The focus group in Tujitume was entirely male. In Ilela, Nyakayanja, and Idugumbi, both men and women were asked together about the experiences of women in growing coffee. While we don’t know what the women would have said in these groups if asked alone, the responses given in these three places are not obviously more guarded than those in the women-only groups: for example, a male respondent in Ilela said that women should make financial decisions “because if I’m given 10,000 I will spend it on drinking, but the woman will spend it in the house.” Respondents in Idugumbi also said that women should make financial decisions, even though the current situation is that men usually do so.

8.1: Are women in this village involved in coffee growing, training and marketing? If yes, what do you see as the benefits and/or disadvantages of involving women in coffee production and training? What limits, if any, are placed on women in this community on growing and marketing coffee? Is the workload in coffee evenly shared between women and men in this community? Who in the household makes decisions on how to spend income from coffee? In your view, who in the household should decide on how to spend income from coffee?

The responses to this question varied heavily from village to village, but in general, women were involved in growing coffee, and were often present during training, but only in some cases were they allowed to participate in marketing and financial decision-making. Respondents in Rwenkorongo, Ngima, and Idugumbi drew a distinction between women within their group and those in the village that were unaffiliated: the women within the group are allowed to sell coffee and keep the proceeds, but this is much less common among the other villagers. This might have been expected in Ngima, which received the GALS training, but seeing this reported in two other villages is an encouraging surprise. Respondents in Rwenkorongo and Idugumbi offered no explanation for why women within their group had more involvement than those outside of it.

Men do all of the coffee marketing in Ukimwi, Ukuli, Malonji, Linda, and Nyakayanja, which means that they control the money obtained from selling the crop. In Ukuli, Tujitume, Malonji, and Linda, women didn't attend the training sessions. In nine of the ten villages (all except Ngima, which had GALS training), men always have the final decision on how money is spent in the household, although respondents in several of the groups said that women should make these decisions, citing the fact that women are more aware of the affairs of the household, and that men often spend their money on alcohol. The Ilela group also received the GALS training, but reported that men generally make final decisions, even though they argued that women should be making these decisions.

In Malonji, one respondent likened the man's role to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, while women are the Minister of Internal Affairs – the husband goes out and sells coffee, while his wife manages the household. “A respectable house is one in which the man goes out.” In Tujitume, one farmer said “my thoughts would be to go and have a good time with friends, but my wife would be thinking of buying a cow.” In Nyakayanja, a respondent told the story of a family in the village in which a man killed his wife because she refused him the 20,000 Tsh he wanted to go out drinking. Respondents in several villages said the main benefit of involving women would be to continue the farm in the event of her husband's illness or death. In Ukuli, Linda, Ngima, and Rwenkorongo, farmers said that some women secretly sell coffee on their own in order to have some money that they control, and that they could be beaten by their husband if found out.

“Before the training I had no plans at all, it was all about the spur of the moment, however currently I have to plan. I have to sit down and come up with an itinerary of my activities and with that I have seen quite a number of changes with the trainings. Yes, we have improved our farm, our kids are going to school because of my cooperation with her [his wife]” – a farmer in Mbinga

8.1.1: Did you receive any training on the role of women and men in this community and in coffee growing? Have you heard of the GALS? If yes, what have you learned in these training? How did you like these trainings? What else would you like to learn in these trainings? Do you feel that the training has changed the way you live and women and men treat each other in this community? If yes, in which way?

The GALS training was only done in two villages (Ilela and Ngima), and was a major success in both places. In Ilela, as a result of the training, men started doing household chores, and women were involved in financial decision making. Respondents said that even strangers had told them that “their farms have really changed”: “men can go buy fish, which wasn't possible before”; “drinking has reduced”; and “some of us even own cows now.” The training has had a spillover effect on families not even involved: “they see me as a man carrying firewood and this is so surprising, they wish to join and learn.” Women and men divide coffee-related tasks: women fetch water and kill flies, men spray chemicals and do pruning, and both men and women do

weeding together. One farmer said: “The man was the final decision maker...after the training this has changed, and when we look at our farms, they’ve changed compared to others nearby.”

In Ngima, results were similarly encouraging. Farmers said that cooperation between men and women is now seen as very important, especially with decisions about money. “Before the training I had no plans, it was all spur of the moment, but now I sit down and come up with an itinerary of my activities,” reported one man; another said “before I was a drunkard, but now I’ve realized my mistake and brought my wife on board.” As in Ilela, men and women divide agricultural tasks: men carry equipment and women water, and both work together to create a plan for the upcoming season.

8.2: Are youth (age between 15 to 35 years) in this village involved and interested in growing coffee? If not, why not? And if yes, why? How do you rate current and future perspectives of youth in agriculture and coffee in particular? And what can be done to get or sustain youth’s interest and involvement in coffee?

Responses to this question were highly divided by village. In four villages (Ukimwi, Ukuli, Malonji, and Nyakayanja) respondents said that youth are uninterested in growing coffee, either because of low prices, lack of capital or available land, or the amount of time it takes for coffee to be profitable. In Ukuli, the youth prefer to work at the local gold mine. In these places, farmers said that better coffee prices and more available land might encourage youth to start farming.

In Tujitume, Ilela, Idugumbi, and Ngima, youth are interested in growing coffee, but have trouble getting started. In all three cases, this is because land is not readily available. In Tujitume, a large part of the land is controlled by a foreign owner and sits idle, which reduces the amount available.

Finally, in Rwenkorongo and Linda, respondents said that youth are interested in farming and have no trouble getting started.