



Promoting Equal Chances for Men and Women to Use and Benefit from ICT-Enabled Agricultural Value Chain Development

ADS Western and ADS North Rift | Kenya

“Before, the husbands would order their wives to plant and weed. When it reaches harvesting time, he is the one who would do that work and you won’t even see the money he gets from selling the onions. He would perhaps just buy for you half a kilogram of meat and you won’t see the rest of the money. Through the ICT and gender discussions, we are all involved right from planting up to harvesting, I also keep my records and through this we have seen progress because during harvest we go together and I am the one who keeps the money as we budget.” *(Female focus group participant)*

I INTRODUCTION

This case study presents the work of two Kenyan organisations and their experiences with promoting equal participation and benefits for men and women in ICT-enabled agricultural value chain development.

This case begins with a description of context followed by the learning and takeaways gained by the organisations in their work to enhance equitable participation and benefits for male and female farmers. Building upon these lessons, a number of good practices are presented together with sets of conditions that are required for effective implementation.



I.I The Context

The case study research presented here has generated insight into how ICT-enabled services and tools can contribute to equitable benefits from agricultural value chain development for women and men of all ages. The qualitative research with a total of 59 respondents (32 men and 27 women), yielded sufficient material from which shared experiences, views, and trends could be extracted and analysed.¹

The organisations that were involved in this study were ADS Western and ADS North Rift which are both development arms of the Anglican Church of Kenya in Kenya's former Western and Rift Valley Provinces. Both organisations partnered with the Connect4Change (C4C) alliance to integrate ICT into their agricultural value chain development work. The broad aim of both organisations was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness along the value chains and strengthen the capacity of farmer-led producer and marketing organisations which in turn would improve access to markets. ADS Western chose to make ICT-enabled information services and tools available to support the economic and social advancement of small-scale tomato and onion producers in Bungoma County in Western Region, whereas ADS North Rift chose to do the same but mainly focused on Irish potato farmers in Chepkorio, Kaptarakwa and Kabiemit wards (Elgeyo Marakwet County).

The main technologies used by both organisations include:

- **Farmer ICT Centres:** ICT centres through which participating farmers can access current information on good agricultural practices, production technology, quality input providers, meteorological information, and financial information. The centres also provide ICT training to members to enhance farm administration, production planning, and marketing at both the individual farmer and organisational levels.
- **Video-based instruction:** Videos are used to support extension services and group discussions amongst farmers. The videos are sourced from agricultural research and extension agencies, and local TV stations. They also include videos created in collaboration with farmers and by farmers themselves.
- **Market Price Information Service:** a service produced by Kenya based organisation M-Farm² was introduced and recommended for the members of the Kenyan farmer groups. The service allows them to obtain information on the real-time retail price of their products, buy farm input directly from manufacturers, and find buyers for their produce using their mobile phones. The programme also provides support to farmers so that they can subscribe and productively use the information provided.
- **Mobile-based messaging:** Using the TTC mobile messaging platform, SMS messages are sent to farmers multiple times per week. These messages provide technical production information, good agronomic practices, availability of inputs, pest and disease control information, and reminders about scheduled trainings and meetings. Farmers use the same platform to advertise their produce to buyers and young farmers, who often have more advanced phones, additionally use existing messaging services such as WhatsApp and Facebook to communicate with each other and other farmers in the region.
- **Radio:** The programmes also collaborate with local radio stations so that content about farming and marketing (such as prices and trends, advice on planting, and weather) can be aired. Early on, radio listening was discovered to be an effective way to get information across because farmers, especially in groups, could collectively listen, discuss, and collaborate.

1: Interviews and focus group discussions (16) were held with farmers and leaders of farmer-led organisations and volunteers in ICT centres, both men and women, revealing the dynamics at play, as well as the obstacles and successes as experienced by the farmers themselves. Reflections by the organisations' project teams on their experiences since starting the initiatives in 2011 added valuable insights into the approaches they had taken, what they have learnt and what constitutes good organisational practices to be able to design and implement gender-responsive ICT-enabled value chain development programmes. Both organisations' data and experiences have been combined to provide a thorough overview of experiences and insights generated.

2: for more information on M-Farm, see <http://www.mfarm.co.ke>

1.2 ADS Western and ADS North Rift's Track Record in Balancing Gender in their Projects

Before beginning to integrate ICT into their work, both ADS North Rift and ADS Western had been implementing partners in previous Fair Economic Development programmes.³ During these programmes, they conducted foundational work with farmer group members and leaders to raise awareness on gender roles in agriculture and facilitate gender balance in the membership and leadership of farmer organisations. Early on, ADS Western and ADS North Rift recognised that in most of the communities where they worked, women disproportionately lacked access to information, organisations, and resources important for them to enhance their farming work. Although women were highly involved in production, when it came to selling produce, men would keep any income and would decide what to do with it. In general, the daily schedules of women working on the farms and tending to household duties did not allow them sufficient time to attend trainings, seminars, and farmer association meetings. This often resulted in male dominated attendance and decision-making informed mainly by their views. Further, skills building programmes mostly benefitted men and women usually depended on information relayed to them by their male counterparts after village meetings which they often were not allowed to attend. This was especially prominent in the cultural context of ADS North Rift's catchment area⁴.

In light of these gender gaps, both organisations aimed for equal participation of women and men

in their programmes geared towards to enhancing agricultural production and sales. Their aim was to ensure that their various activities would relieve both men and women of their hardships and would contribute to them being able to enjoy the fruits of their labour. A number of project approaches and tools were mentioned as having been implemented prior to the start-up and integration of ICT-supported services including:

- The '24-hour activity calendar', a method whereby men and women jointly reflect on how people of both genders and of all ages allocate their time between different activities over a 24-hour period. Through joint analysis of the calendar, the organisations anticipated that men and women would have a better appreciation of the unequal distribution of tasks, time, and benefits and take action to change the observed inequities.
- The promotion of women's participation in farmer groups and farmer organisations through affirmative action and purposeful messaging on women's right to leadership, decision-making, and active participation in community meetings and community affairs. This was amongst others triggered by government campaigns (at least 1/3 of the members and leaders should be men or women).
- Dialogues on men and women's roles in agriculture-related activities and household responsibilities during regular value-chain related meetings.



3: supported by the Interchurch Cooperative for Development Cooperation (ICCO), see www.icco-international.com

4: ADS North Rift's catchment area covers 6 counties of Kenya's North Rift, namely Elgeyo Marakwet, Nandi, Trans-Nzoia, Turkana, Uasin Gishu and West Pokot

2. KEY LESSONS LEARNT DURING THE INTRODUCTION AND USE OF ICT SOLUTIONS AND ICT CAPACITY BUILDING

Having recognised the prevalence of unequal access to information and learning opportunities, ADS North Rift and ADS Western took to purposefully communicating messages at the start-up of the initiatives about women's rights to participation in the new ICT-related programmes. These messages emphasised that women have the right to participate in community and ICT related meetings, should be able to obtain first hand information, make decisions, have equal opportunities to access ICT centres, and use technology for personal and professional development. In addition, the focus

from the onset was on realising access to and the effective use of ICTs by both men and women rather than employing strategies with a specific focus on women alone. During the process of implementing various tools and solutions, both organisations learnt valuable lessons in how responsive their approaches and solutions were to the needs of different groups and different types of farmers within the groups. These lessons informed adaptations to their approaches along the way. Some key lessons related to experiences with specific ICT-related approaches and services are discussed in more detail below.

2a. Farmer ICT Centres

The farmer ICT centres were an important element of both ADS North Rift and ADS Western's projects from the start. The centres provided free ICT skills training to farmer group members and leaders and helped them to use the tools to search for information, create and keep records related to their farming enterprises, and communicate with input suppliers and potential buyers. Three key lessons related to these ICT centres and their implications on gender relations stood out and are discussed below.

The first lesson came after ADS North Rift reviewed the attendance records during the course of implementation. What it saw was that the general presence at the centres was significantly lower than anticipated. Further, the majority of attendants were male and young whilst women participated infrequently. What ADS North Rift quickly realised was that the majority of farmers targeted for participation were older than 40 and perceived the centres as something for young people. Some of the farmers, particularly women, were illiterate. In addition, women did not see the relevance of the ICT training for their daily concerns and preferred to attend to other tasks.

From a logistical standpoint, many farms/households were located in remote areas which meant that farmers had to walk long distances to visit the centres and attend sessions. What was more, these impediments were found to be especially prominent for women. These challenges proved to be inhibitors to the success of the programmes and both organisations adjusted their interventions in order to improve

participation in light of these gender-related constraints. Key adjustments included:

- Moving centres closer to the farms

Additional ICT centres were established closer to the location of farms and at times, were co-located on the premises of farmer organisations or collection centres. This change appeared to be successful especially in regard to the participation of women who began to attend as they did not have to worry about leaving their tasks for long periods of time or travelling long distances.

- Scheduling suitable timetables and activities

ADS North Rift and ADS Western asked female group members when they would prefer to visit the centres. Women across regions responded differently which meant that no uniform schedule could be set. However, changing timetables to suit the preferences of particular groups did result in higher participation of women.

ADS Western acknowledged at the start of the project that **'the constraints [on women's access, usage and capacity vis-à-vis ICT] are not just limited to the issue of an equal number of women and men using ICTs. They include issues that 'interfere' with not only family matters, but cultural matters as well'**⁵. A good example of this happened during the early stages of implementation when project staff found that women and men refrained from visiting the centres because their in-laws were present at the same time. Traditional customs and rules do not allow such mingling to occur. Relatives such as mothers-in-law and their sons-in-law are not

allowed to be in the same room at the same time or sit on the same chairs. Since such customs would not be easily changed by the project team, different slots were provided for group members to sign themselves up, allowing for (extended) family members to schedule their attendance such that they would not attend at the same time as their in-laws. Such flexible scheduling also allowed older farmers to participate more often since they had felt uncomfortable asking questions when attending with their younger counterparts who made fun of the questions they would ask. In addition, youth were reported to enjoy the separate scheduling since before, they feared sharing the classes with their elders.

Therefore, scheduling separate activities that accommodate cultural customs and the needs of particular group members during the early phases of such initiatives allows for more equitable participation and learning for everyone.

In addition, both organisations felt that it was important to reach both husbands and wives in the trainings for joint discussion, despite this being culturally unusual. Trainers at the ICT centres actively asked male leaders to bring their spouses, calling on their representative positions to model this behaviour. They also asked farmers to attend as couples. Similarly, after recognising that young men dominated attendance at early training sessions, trainers encouraged boys to bring their sisters and conversely, encouraged girls to bring their brothers. Such joint attendance and learning also contributed to the idea within the household that ICT learning opportunities should be the domain of both boys and girls.

- Training facilitation

Training is generally done in the native language spoken in the places where centres are located. This benefits women farmers in particular. Both ADS North Rift and ADS Western work with male and female volunteer trainers. ADS Western has started to train male and female members of farmer groups to become trainers themselves. What was more, when more youth attended the training, many began to work as volunteers (especially those with prior IT education). Interestingly, ADS Western observed that where young women taught, a higher percentage of young men and older women attended. In classes where young men taught, young women and older men attended and participated more.

The second lesson concerns digital record keeping. Of the ICT training offered at the centres, those on digital record keeping were highlighted as especially useful. This was the case because these skills allow individual farmers and group

leaders to keep track of the capital they use in their production and the profit make from their individual and collective enterprises. However, from responses in focus groups, it appears that men came to the centres more frequently to update their farm records than women. Apart from better insight into production costs and profits, the availability of dependable records was reported to contribute to increased transparency and accountability of finances amongst husbands and wives. Leaders of producer groups could keep group records on a regular basis and track the profit of collective sales on computers on a daily basis, allowing them to have a better overview of collective revenue over time. **“Earlier on we had challenges with manual record keeping, you could find some of our records being destroyed for example mistakenly used to light the jikos (charcoal stoves) by our children. However, ever since ICT was introduced, you can save these records in the computers and you can easily retrieve these records. You can also update these records and then you can know how much profit you have made from these systematic records.”** (Female leader, focus group).



The third lesson relates to the use of the internet and social networking sites. Both ADS North Rift and ADS Western actively encouraged youth to use such sites for agriculture or agribusiness related purposes. Social networking sites such as Facebook appeared to be an important initial attractor for youth to come to the ICT centres. This ICT use garnered interest in farming amongst a number of youth who subsequently used income generated elsewhere to lease land, buy inputs, and start farming⁶. The younger farmers were able to look quickly for relevant information as and when they needed it, as well as act on the tips received via the SMS services.

In response to this interest, ADS North Rift started a mentorship programme for young men and women in which they were provided more training and support to use social media tools

6: see IICD's "ICT4D Effects: Youth, ICTs and Agriculture" (2013) publication for more information on the role of ICTs in young farmers' empowerment

for agriculture-related purposes. During this 3-month mentorship period, the youth jointly formed a Facebook group⁷ in which they could exchange farming content. Fewer female youth attended the mentorship programmes than male, a difference in participation that was also reflected in the dominance of activities within the Facebook group.

However, actually turning the information into a profitable farming enterprise has mainly applied to young men since traditionally, women do not inherit land from their parents and social norms prohibit women from buying land and prescribe girls to look for paid work off the farm. From the outset, young women had less social opportunity to apply new skills on farms, apply ICT to selected value chain crops, and accrue financial benefits in the same way as their male counterparts. Beyond the young women participating in the

mentorship programme, female participants in the focus group discussions raised a concern that social networking sites were generally seen as being immoral and that if they were to use them in the ICT centres, they would be seen as being 'loose women'. When the centres were first established, older men and women farmers were worried that young people would be accessing pornographic content and that they would not feel comfortable visiting the centres. In response, the centres were set up in such a way that the screens could always be seen by centre staff and by other visitors which helped to maintain the focus on searching and using agriculture-related sites. During training sessions, the instructors focus on imparting sites that are useful whilst also raising awareness of the dangers inherent in visiting sites of a sexual nature or other malware-infected websites.

2b. Mobile Video-Based Trainings

There are three key lessons that can be drawn from mobile video based training and how it relates to gender – (a) in regards to accessibility, (b) in regards to the involvement of farmers in video production, and (c) in regards to the content of videos and the combination of general and gender specific topics. Through video shows and discussions about good agricultural practices and new agricultural technologies, and by attending sessions together, men and women are able to discuss how to apply the new information on their farms and how the roles and responsibilities could be distributed to ease everyone's burden, maximise collaboration, and equitably share profits. Women reported that the sessions with video-based instruction were some of the most appreciated aspects of the ICT-enabled interventions. Further, women reported that these sessions contributed to positive change in their farming and households, triggered changes in the distribution of roles and responsibilities amongst husbands and wives, and enabled more positive relationships within marriage.

Upon recognising that the use of ICT tools at the ICT centres did not reach both men and women farmers to the extent the project teams had expected, video trainings on good agricultural practices were organised at locations closer to farms and households (in church or community buildings). These sessions were open to all group members (both adults and youth) and were very popular with men and women of all ages. In addition, they were often attended by agricultural experts who could respond to questions and participate in discussions on issues raised in the videos. The challenge of scheduling

to accommodate the cultural taboo of in-laws mingling together (see above, ICT training) was not an issue in such larger video screenings since in-laws were able to find space to sit away from each other.

Male and female youth who were still attending school were found to be especially interested in the video-based sessions and often encouraged their parents to attend subsequent ones. Parents approved of the community's youth attending the video sessions instead of being idle after school or during periods of waiting for exam results.

Most of the video content was sourced from agricultural research institutes or other specialised agencies on agriculture. The videos also showed men and women from other regions working together in farming which led to an appreciation amongst locals that traditional roles can be different from what they are accustomed to. Some of the screenings included specific videos discussing gender-related issues during or after the agricultural extension videos. This used the opportunity of large numbers of participants to raise awareness on issues relevant to gender relations in the community and expose them to alternatives.

The research also revealed that videos produced by farmers themselves led to increased gender-related benefits. Some women interviewees, who were instructed to film demonstration videos on their own plots, expressed their appreciation of learning how to use a camera to shoot short videos and photos which would later be screened.

2c. Market Price Information Service

A major component of the programmes was to link farmers working in the selected value chains to the Kenyan market price information service M-Farm⁸. Mobile phone ownership is widespread in the areas where ADS Western and ADS North Rift operate. Both men and women often own a simple feature phone, and youth (mainly men) are increasingly investing in buying cheap smart phones.

One key learning in regards to this ICT service was its usefulness in combination with video-based instruction. The use of the M-Farm service, especially when combined with the video-supported lessons on good agricultural practices and marketing, was repeatedly mentioned as one of the solutions that created the most value for the farmer group members. Using the market price information service also allowed farmers to know the prices of their produce on key markets before harvesting and eliminated their need to travel long distances to the markets to find out the prices. This, of course, allowed farmers to have more time for on-farm work and to prepare for marketing their produce.

A second key lesson was that this service indeed addressed a critical constraint of women farmers:

their limited access to information. **“I have used the phone to benefit from M-Farm. Before I used to plant onions and the brokers would come and exploit me with low prices. But now when they come I ask them where they come from and I simply send an SMS and confirm the price of the onions in the area where they come from. For example, if in Kisumu one kilogramme of onion is kshs 50 and the broker wants to give you kshs 20, I will tell him or her the right price and we will bargain based on that”** (female participant in focus group). Through being better informed and having access to various information channels, women were able to generate income, pay school fees, and improve food security in the household, as reflected in the statement by a female participant of a focus group discussion: **“I just used to eat sukuma wiki (Kale). I used to plant onion in small scale only for subsistence but now I plant them in large scale for sale (Agribusiness) through ICT. So when I get the money, I use some to pay school fees, some for preparing the farm and the rest I use to buy good food in the house. I also used to plant onions only but through the videos I watched in Cheptais I learnt about intercropping and now in the same farm I try to mix planting coffee, bananas, vegetables and beans”** (female participant, focus group).



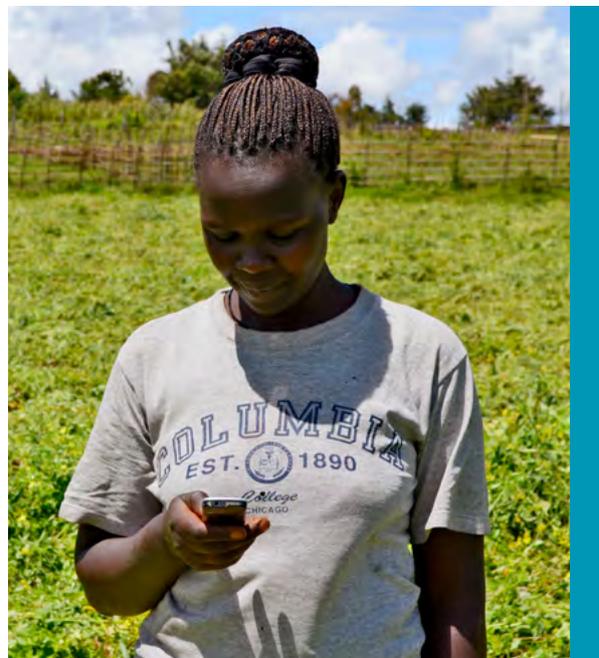
8: Where dependable and proven services exist locally, Connect4Change established linkages and capacity building support to both the NGOs as well as their farmer groups to be able to understand the service's potential and the develop the skills required to make informed use of the available services. For more information on M-Farm, see <http://www.mfarm.co.ke>

2d. Mobile-Based Messaging

Next to the SMS-based market price information service introduced to farmers, both ADS North Rift and ADS Western integrated the use of a more generic messaging platform so that interactions between members of farmer groups on important content could be enabled.⁹ The SMS messages are used for follow-up guidance on how to apply knowledge and skills acquired during video sessions and trainings at the ICT centres. Tips on reliable input providers intended for farmers to establish direct linkages with them and invitations and reminders for training events was critical content provided through the service. Focus group participants (both male and female) mentioned many benefits of the messages. For example, some discussed how the messages allowed them to become aware of the existence of good seeds which helped them engage their county government and pressure it to provide such seeds to their remote locations.

The messages also help them articulate their needs to supporting stakeholders from a more informed position. Both ADS North Rift and ADS Western's farmers clearly stated that receiving messages brought great value to them. Women farmers especially valued the ability to have messages with critical information sent directly to their phones as opposed to having to go to

the ICT centres for it. Staff at both organisations also mentioned their ability to use the SMSs to continue encouraging women to come to the centres as the initial geographic and cultural inhibitors gradually began to change and more room for intermingling with in-laws and enhanced access for women became possible.



2e. Radio

Both ADS Western and ADS North Rift used radio as ICT tools for the transfer of knowledge. ADS North aired instructional radio programmes¹⁰ between 18:00 and 19:00 hours when both women and men would be at home. This timeslot was chosen as it had the potential to create a shared experience of listening to the issues discussed on air and a joint foundation for further discussion of the issues in the groups.

ADS Western first used pre-recorded radio sessions with the voices of farmers at a group training. Also present at such training events was an official of the Ministry of Agriculture who responded to questions and guided discussions. The recordings were also replayed at the ICT centres.

However, when the video sessions were introduced, it appeared that they appealed

much more to farmers of both sexes who quickly abandoned attending the radio sessions. Upon questioning, farmers expressed that with videos, they could easily see and relate to what they were taught as opposed to the abstract radio lessons. Staff also observed that more men attended the radio sessions whilst there was equal attendance of men and women at the video sessions. Therefore, ADS Western changed its approach and did not continue with the radio sessions. They will, however, look for mechanisms to capture and use information on what farmers listen to at home and will include information on what radio stations to listen to during the well-attended video sessions. ADS Western also wants to investigate further to see whether women listen to the radio at home and which programme timetables are favourable to both men and women.

⁹: The two organisations implemented different systems, with ADS Western working with the Frontline SMS messaging platform and ADS North Rift making use of TTC Mobile's platform offered through the Connect4Change consortium. The interviews did not yield any information on differences between the two platforms in terms of value offered or relevance for particular user groups.

¹⁰: A station known as Sayare radio was used as it reaches the whole of North Rift and was the most affordable option for the project.

3. GOOD PRACTICES TO ENHANCE EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN AND BENEFITS FROM ICT-ENABLED SOLUTIONS

The lessons ADS North Rift and ADS Western learnt through tweaking their approaches to be more gender responsive inform this case study. Two of these overarching lessons are described below with evidence underlying such good practices.

Good Practice: purposefully involving men and women in ICT-related training opportunities and information services

Based on previous experience, ADS North Rift and ADS Western knew that from the start of the C4C programme, that they had to take active measures to enable both men and women to access and benefit from ICT tools and services.

Both organisations were already used to sensitising farmers on gender equality and women's participation and leadership in farmer groups, activities which they continued in the Connect4Change programme. Reflecting on what happened during implementation of the ICT-enabled programmes, they took corrective actions to improve the level of participation (especially amongst women) and increase the benefits for women. The lessons learnt described above showed how both organisations tried to address participation issues mostly rooted in the socio-cultural context. Some of these included time availability due to culturally ascribed responsibilities, norms of in-laws not being allowed to be in the same space at the same time, attitudes towards technology, interests in certain content based on the tasks farmers perform, and the like. This purposeful involvement of both men and women farmers, whilst also addressing participation issues, proved to be successful as evidenced by the following examples provided by focus group participants and by ADS North Rift and ADS Western staff members.

In focus group discussions, participants of both genders explained how they applied the knowledge, for instance, about text messaging, about improved agricultural practices (videos), and record keeping. A young woman said: **“We have been linked to experts who have various pesticides. We just call them through the phone and explain to him the signs the crop is having, they advise us on the right pesticide to use. We also listen to them on the radio when they are teaching.”** A Female leader: **“Since I am now knowledgeable in recordkeeping, I keep track of the returns and save. This is contrary to the past when I could not know where the money was.”**

Farmers of both genders shared that their family income increased due to profit made from the sale of farm produce and credit the use of ICT (such as video and mobile-based messages) as a key to the success. Further, farmers shared that they used the income to purchase assets (some women bought a cow for milk production) and to buy better quality food for their family members. In some cases, farmers were able to hire labourers with their increased income which often reduced the physical burden women face on and off the farm. With the increased income, some of the farmers (both men and women) were even able to start income-generating activities in parallel to their farms. Many women in both areas formed table-banking groups (merry-go-rounds) as a more secure way of saving.

Increased income, which translated into improved family welfare, also positively influenced gender relations themselves. According to both women and men participating in the focus groups, women now have more control and self-determination over their activities and their time, and are also more involved in decision making over the use of income from produce. **“For instance, a willing buyer may come to buy the tomatoes from the farm and I am not around. I give my wife authority to sell but in the past the wife had no authority to sell. Through the ICT we have enabled them to do that because we can even communicate through the phone. We involve our wives in decision making now – both of us determine how the money is going to be used”** (male participant, focus group). This appears to apply more to women interviewed in the Western region than in the more traditional North Rift region.

In both the areas where ADS Western and ADS North Rift operate, women stated that now their husbands allow them to go to meetings and attend seminars, trainings, and field days. This, they say, greatly increases their exposure and expands their network. **“Before the ICT project, our husbands never allowed us to go for meetings. When we left the house, it could bring problems**

especially when we came back late. But when he saw that I was practically applying what we were being taught he became very happy and allowed me to go to the meetings anytime. There are occasions when he will even remind me of meetings to attend” (female respondent, focus group). Various focus group participants shared that quarrels and even domestic violence had been reduced. **“You know when there is no peace, it’s actually poverty. Poverty really contributes to domestic quarrels where the wife takes off or the husband disappears. If there is food, if there is a good place to sleep, if the children are doing well, then relationships improve. If you have livestock that are well fed, then there will be peace. My husband had left but now he has come back”** (female respondent, focus group).

Interactions between men and women in ICT-related activities have had some influence on the culturally determined relations between genders, especially between in-laws, as put by female group member: **“For example before, a father-in-law could not touch his daughter-in-law’s phone or sit next to her. Through ICT and gender trainings and discussions we were taught that you can communicate with anybody and nowadays my father-in-law can use my phone to call or send text messages on farming or general issues. But when I cook tea in my house and call my father-in-law he cannot come since it is culturally unacceptable”** (female participant, focus group).

In summary, the use of ICT tools and services has contributed to increased income and profit

which men and women farmers and their children have benefited from. Moreover, the access to and participation in ICT-enabled solutions for both male and female farmers has been instrumental in improving relationships within the family. Some improvements include: there being more peace at home, women getting more space, the work and views of women being respected more, men tending to share domestic tasks, men involving their wives more in decision making, women being more involved in the sale of produce, women using land that was provided to them by their husband or through leases, and men starting to take women’s views seriously in meetings. One female participant in the focus group said: **“It has made the men and the women to walk together, before then he would go alone but because we are both doing farming, we are both members of the association and attend some ICT lessons together, it has brought us together.”**



Good Practice: considering the right ICT tool with which to teach and discuss agricultural practices and marketing to involve farmers of both genders

The experience generated by ADS Western and ADS North Rift in using ICT to reinforce value chain development activities is especially useful since it did not focus single-mindedly on one particular tool or technology. Experimenting with and combining the use of various technologies whilst paying attention to their relevance or effectiveness to men and women both young and old, allows for a multidimensional appreciation of what works for particular groups and for different purposes. ADS North Rift staff emphasised the importance of engaging farmers in discussions when choosing the ICT tools and services to get an idea of what would work or not work for them. The examples of radio-based listening groups and video-based learning sessions are illustrative

of the approach as well as the combination of listening to radio programmes at home and discussions in smaller group meetings, and providing market information, such as prices of produces in regional markets, through both radio programmes and the M-Farm SMS service. Taking a broad approach to capacity building in the use of ICTs enables participating female and male farmers to experience which combination of solutions and services suits them best and allows them to harness the opportunities provided by each.

Both ADS Western and ADS North Rift took gender differences into consideration when developing and implementing their ICT-enabled

solutions. This is a fundamental good practice for gender responsive ICT-for-Agriculture programming. The above section on lessons includes examples such as suitable timing of radio programmes to allow women to listen and discuss topics with their husbands, producing extension videos with women and men farmers that show their own activities and crops, and dealing with the positive and negative sides of internet during ICT training activities, answering to the concerns of both young men and women. When ADS North Rift added the video-based training sessions on agricultural practices to the portfolio of services offered at the ICT centres, there was a huge spike in attendance at the centres by both men and women as compared to attendance levels at sessions that solely focused on basic ICT skills training.

Additionally, both organisations combined information seeking and technology skills with information on gender issues in learning sessions, which enhanced the recognition of women's rights, increased self-confidence, and encouraged women to seek leadership positions. A good illustration is the screening of agriculture-related videos followed by specific videos discussing gender-related issues. A young woman in one of the focus group discussions recounted a video screening on female genital mutilation: **"Before the ICT came, we did not have an interest in watching television and movies, but now that we are involved in the ICT we saw the importance. Through the news and the cinemas we saw that there are effects, we witness how they are dying and the urge of sex also disappears from the woman because it is very painful. These days this act has completely disappeared. [...] We are seeing change through the ICT".**

This practice of combining ICT-based instruction with content on gender not only lead to higher levels of involvement by women and provided new means of access to sources knowledge, but also contributed to changing the attitudes and behaviour of women in exercising their right to information. Women learnt that they could obtain information on agriculture, family matters, and other social issues: **"Personally at first I knew that it is only men who listen to radio but through the ICT project, I came to learn that radios are not only meant for men. Nowadays when they start talking about market prices in the radios my husband always calls me to come and listen."** (Female participant, focus group)

Focus group participants also gave examples of how their involvement contributed to greater self-confidence and won the esteem of their husbands. One example that illustrates this comes from a woman who participated in video making. Being able to use tools such as video cameras increased her confidence in her own abilities and garnered her husband's respect for her technical skill. **"For me, at some point we had no idea on how a camera is operated, only men operated them. We now operate the camera, we take pictures, and we take pictures from our farms like for the tomatoes and upload them on the computer. My husband is impressed with my prowess in handling the gadget (camera)."** (Female group leader, focus group)

In conclusion, choosing the right ICT (as stand-alone tools and services or in combination with each other) to attract and reach both women and men has contributed to more equal participation of both genders. It has also created opportunities specifically for women to access information and learn skills that were out of their reach before.



4. CONDITIONS THAT FACILITATE GOOD PRACTICES

Evidently, good practices are context specific. In this case study, two critical factors were found that positively influenced the results. One factor was internal to the implementing organisations, the other, external.

Critical factor: gender responsiveness in programming

Both ADS North Rift and ADS Western give high importance to promoting gender equality in their work. For them, gender equality is seen in terms of participation and the sharing of benefits, an ambition shared by the Connect4Change programme. In terms of age, both organisations encourage youth¹¹ to participate. ADS Western and ADS North Rift have several key tools to help ensure that projects respond to the needs, interests, and opportunities of both male and female farmers. Some of these tools include: gender sensitisation, participatory discussion on gender needs and gaps with farmers of both sexes, affirmative action on representation in group or organisational membership and leadership, and leadership training for women.

Their previous work in these areas paved the way for a smoother application of equal participation of men and women in the Connect4Change programme. Over the years, women formed groups related to agriculture and increasingly subscribed as members of farmer associations. The number of women in committees has also increased although cultural inhibitions still form bottlenecks in more conservative areas. **“With sincerity, from my observation in the Kalenjini community, the women don’t really want to come out in the presence of the men. In women only groups, women can really talk and you see the women participate a lot and fight for leadership positions, but when they are with the men there is some kind of fear, I think it has to do with the culture of women submitting to men.”** (ADS North Rift staff member). The statements made in the focus group discussions provide evidence that men have started to recognise the importance of including women in decision making within the communities: **“Actually we used to sideline women, we never used to recognise them, but after going through some sessions, we did discovered that women are important in the community. We started to now work with them; we discovered they were important, even in the farms, just from 2008. We now work together and are seeing the benefits. We share.”** (Male farmer association leader, focus group)

The organisations included in this study are not the only actors promoting women’s development and empowerment or creating gender awareness in the sampled geographic areas. An increase in the confidence, self-esteem, and participation of

women in public forums can also be attributed to increases in access to education, specific government programmes, progressive church discussions, and radio stations that air women-focused programmes in local languages on issues related to improving family life, how to raise children, the duties of women and men in the family, and the need for supporting each other.

The gender responsiveness of both ADS’ projects has, however, been instrumental in promoting equal participation and benefits in ICT-enabled solutions. The link is clearly illustrated by the statements of a number of focus group participants such as: **“The women have gained courage and boldness to take up leadership positions. I was in a group and I did not have any say. My work was to go to a group and keep quiet. But when I came for the ICT and I saw the way they were teaching, they gave me a heart to continue and become a leader and I was appointed as a leader in the association. We used to sit back and say that it is the work of men to be leaders. In our cultures it was said that a woman cannot stand where a man is. But when we were taught that everybody is equal and both men and women can be leaders, we developed the interest and were given the opportunity to lead in the association.”** (Female leader, focus group).

Some effects of the organisations’ efforts which may have accelerated due to the ICT-focused project, came to the forefront in the focus group discussions. An example of this is the changes in the division of labour and group action on gender-related issues. **“We can come from the farm together then I tell her she prepares the vegetables as I light the fire or go to the Posho mill. Also, we now milk the cow - We used to believe it is the work of the wife to milk. Here, if a man milks the cow people used to say that the wife is controlling him”** (Male participant, focus group). **“Because of this project, we women of Cheptais have formed a gender-based violence group. This group advocates for the rights of the child, women and men, since most women were abused, and any abused woman hardly gets involved with farming. After the formation of this group, domestic violence has reduced. We even educate on issues around rape, disadvantages of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and encourage other women to advocate for gender equality in their groups.”** (Female respondent, focus group)

11: Youth in this context refers to boys and girls between the ages of 20-35 years.
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Critical factor: well-functioning and gender sensitive farmer groups/associations

Both ADS North Rift and ADS Western promote the establishment of farmer organisations. Participants in focus groups shared that before the ADS Western ICT project, people used to fight a lot because men were idle and drinking alcohol. Respondents also shared that there was little to no socio-economic development in their communities. Since joining the programme, respondents report on positive changes and people in the farmer group are able to give advice to families in conflict and encourage them to join the groups and benefit from the lessons they have learnt. Through the discussions on gender equality initiated by ADS and complemented by access to other information sources (see above), the leaders of the group are very aware of the importance of ensuring equal participation and opportunities for farmers of both genders. Some male leaders see themselves as role models for other farmers. **“We encourage people to join the association as a family, both the husband and the wife. This is an approach we are now keen on executing after receiving advice from ADS Western. It was not previously in our by-laws. In the association’s by-laws, we need a balanced gender; people get to know their rights and when they get to the grassroots, they encourage other women to join. Also as a leader, when I invite people to my home**

and my wife is not a member, what picture would that portray? So I included her in the group. I encourage other members to do the same. They have seen increase in numbers in the association as other groups are joining. We have taught them and they can now stand on their own through us. These groups are balanced in terms of gender and age” (Male leader, focus group).

Such strong farmer-based organisations are important as vehicles for integrating ICT-related activities and services. They are also important for the role they play in enhancing the participation of women as members and leaders. Male and female leaders explained that they use both computers for saving information and keeping records. **“Group records are also saved in the computers. Once we record them in the minute book (hard copy), we normally transfer them into the computer. We all participate in typing these records in the computer and have been taught how to do so through excel.”** (Female leader, focus group) The representatives of the farmer-based organisations frequently use SMS and mobile-based messaging services for scheduling and calling for group meetings and discussions and to pass information to another group or community.



Critical factor: ensuring gender responsive systems and structures at the organisational level

In order to design and implement gender responsive projects, organisations need gender aware staff, monitoring and evaluation systems that capture what is happening on the ground, cooperation amongst staff with different tasks, and learning mechanisms to be able to respond to gender equality gaps as they surface. This requires gender sensitive leadership in the organisation that makes the right decisions on strategies, approaches, and budgets. In both ADS organisations, an ICT expert was hired (a man in one, a woman in the other) who was open to the social considerations implied in introducing and adapting ICT tools and services. This sensitivity, in combination with the ICT experts being part of the actual implementation team, contributed to

teams' ability to make the adjustments in project approaches as described above.

In regards to monitoring and evaluation, both organisations collect sex-disaggregated data. However, staff explained during interviews that the analysis of this data is not done in a way that is adequately structured or systematic. In addition, staff made it clear that better analysis should be done to gain insight into two areas: gender dynamics amongst communities and what the impact of their work is on women relative to men. This insight, they maintain, would help them to make corrective measures when and where necessary.

This case study forms part of an IICD publication on gender equality in ICT4D titled '*Promoting Equal Chances for Women and Men to Use and Benefit from ICT-enabled Solutions*' (2015)

ABOUT IICD

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) was a non-profit foundation that specialised in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool for development. IICD was mainly active in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where we brought about technical and social innovations that created and enhanced development opportunities in economic development, agriculture, education, governance, and health.

ABOUT GRF

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