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## Introduction

Women contribute significantly to agriculture and food security around the world, and gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to ensure sustainable development. Yet, women have continued to face unequal access to training, resources ownership, and opportunity to practice and adopt new agricultural technologies, grow their business and use their cash income to improve their livelihoods (Esha et al., 2014). We describe the role of women in accelerating seedlings multiplication of improved coffee varieties and the approaches used to attract women to participate in the coffee value chain in Tanzania.

## Methods

The Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI) has released hybrid coffee varieties that are high yields and good beverage quality with resistance to the devastating diseases – coffee leaf rust (CLR) and coffee berry disease (CBD) for Arabica and coffee wilt disease (CWD) for Robusta. The challenge has been how to meet the demand of the improved seedlings of the new varieties with the current demand far exceeding the supply. The new coffee varieties are hybrids that require more specialized multiplication and distribution system. The major focus has been on capacity building of community-based groups with 25 to 30 members most of who are women to multiply hybrid seedlings by clonal, grafting and seed propagation methods for gradual replacement of the traditional coffee varieties with improved varieties but also producing seedlings for selling thus making it additional source of income to the community based groups. We have been sensitizing women during agricultural/open days/coffee forums, during backstopping visits, conducting exchange/study visits, conducting structured visits, village based training, use of women lead farmers to actively participate in hybrid seedlings multiplication across the coffee growing zones thus improving access to hybrid seedlings for replanting programme.



Fig.1 A One of the women coffee groups collecting seedlings from their nursery for replanting programme

## Results/Discussion

Since the release of improved coffee varieties in 2003, notable achievements have been realized whereby 300 farmers' owned nurseries have been established producing up to 10 million seedlings annually thus improving access to planting materials of the improved coffee varieties. As reported by Gianatti & Llewellyn (2003), working in groups is one way of reducing costs of technology dissemination. The results show that some women are getting additional income from selling coffee seedlings and for coffee farms rehabilitation. We have farms that are managed by women from seedlings to coffee harvesting. Further, recent research has revealed that their participation has increased to 65%.

## Conclusion/Perspectives

It was found that women play a big role in coffee hybrid seedlings multiplication, hence there urgent need to women representation in seedlings multiplication that will contribute to increased seedlings access to coffee growers. Further, research is needed to identify more opportunities along coffee value chain to widen women participation that will contribute to increased income and livelihood improvement of women.

## References:

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