Role of women highlighted in study focused on the benefits of good farmer seed production

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Quality seed is key to increasing crop production, nutrition and wellbeing but smallholder farmers in Tanzania have limited access to affordable quality seeds—over 90% of seed sown is saved by farmers from previous harvests, though its quality is often poor.

The Good Seed Initiative, which ran between 2013 and 2016, sought to enhance access to quality AIV seed through the promotion of farmer seed production using two models—contract farming and Quality Declared Seed (QDS).

The program reached over a million consumers and growers through radio programs, seed rallies, nutritional outreaches, cook shows, and agricultural shows and events. A policy brief was also developed and circulated to stakeholders in Tanzania on the production and sales of quality assured AIV seed.

Dr. Kansiime’s latest study—conducted in Arusha and Dodoma—assessed post-GSI project sustainability factors and explored the prospects of replicating the approach elsewhere and also discovered significant differences in the roles men and women play in the production of the AIVs.

Dr. Kansiime said, "While farmer seed production under both models continued to thrive—creating avenues for income diversification and contributing over 50% to household incomes—we found a disparity between the roles men and women play in the production of AIVs.

"QDS seed production is challenged by a lack of access to foundation seed, inspections, and seed testing services—which are key to quality seed production—but another challenge is the apparent 'crowding out' of women in seed production. And it's not just in Tanzania, in Kenya, for example, less
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The study revealed that the new farmers entering into seed production were mainly men especially in the north, with the fear that women would be excluded along the AIV value chain as the AIV enterprises become profitable.

Dr. Dannie Romney, co-author of the paper, said, "The adoption of gender-inclusive approaches in contract farming arrangements is paramount and can have multiple benefits, including decision-making and benefit of both men and women from such arrangements."


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