

# Understanding gender dynamics and their contribution to designing 'winning' sweetpotato postharvest interventions

Mayanja, S.<sup>1</sup>; Kyalo G.<sup>1</sup>; Babirye, G.<sup>2</sup>; Namanda, S.<sup>1</sup> and Ssekya, H.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> International Potato Center (CIP), Uganda; <sup>2</sup> Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), Uganda

## Introduction

Understanding gender dynamics in value chains is critical to identifying and designing strategies that address the needs of male and female value chain actors. This enables faster technology adoption and increases utility and benefits for both women and men. A scoping study was done in eastern Uganda to assess gender specific constraints and opportunities which male and female farmers and traders could harness to enhance postharvest management practices in the sweetpotato value chain.

## Materials and Methods

Data were collected from 65 respondents in single sex Focus Groups and from 17 key informants. The gender sensitive mapping tool was used to discern nodes where male and female actors were concentrated, roles and responsibilities, constraints faced, technology preferences and potential market opportunities.

## Conclusion

The study enabled a better understanding of gender differentiated needs and challenges that the chain actors face. Proposed storage and other post-harvest interventions were customized; thus likely to have higher chances of adoption and utilization.

## Results

- Female actors were highly concentrated in subsistence production and retailing nodes.
- Men dominated commercial sweetpotato production as well as wholesale, brokerage and transportation (Fig. 1).
- Male farmers reported up to 60% higher productivity (6.7 MT/Ha) and 33% more acreage than female farmers.
- Men perceived minimal contribution of women and youth to labour for commercial sweetpotato production (Fig 2)
- All farmers acknowledged men's high participation in marketing (Fig 2)
- Farmers preferred Kampala, Boy, Socadido, Soroti and Tanzania varieties; while the last two which were highly demanded in the market because of longer shelf-life.
- Female farmers cited limited access to market information, markets and postharvest technologies as major challenges.
- Men cited inability to meet buyers demands in low seasons as a major challenge.
- Female farmers preferred pit stores while men preferred clamp stores with higher storage capacity.
- Traders preferred varieties with longer shelf-life and are not willing to invest in storage.

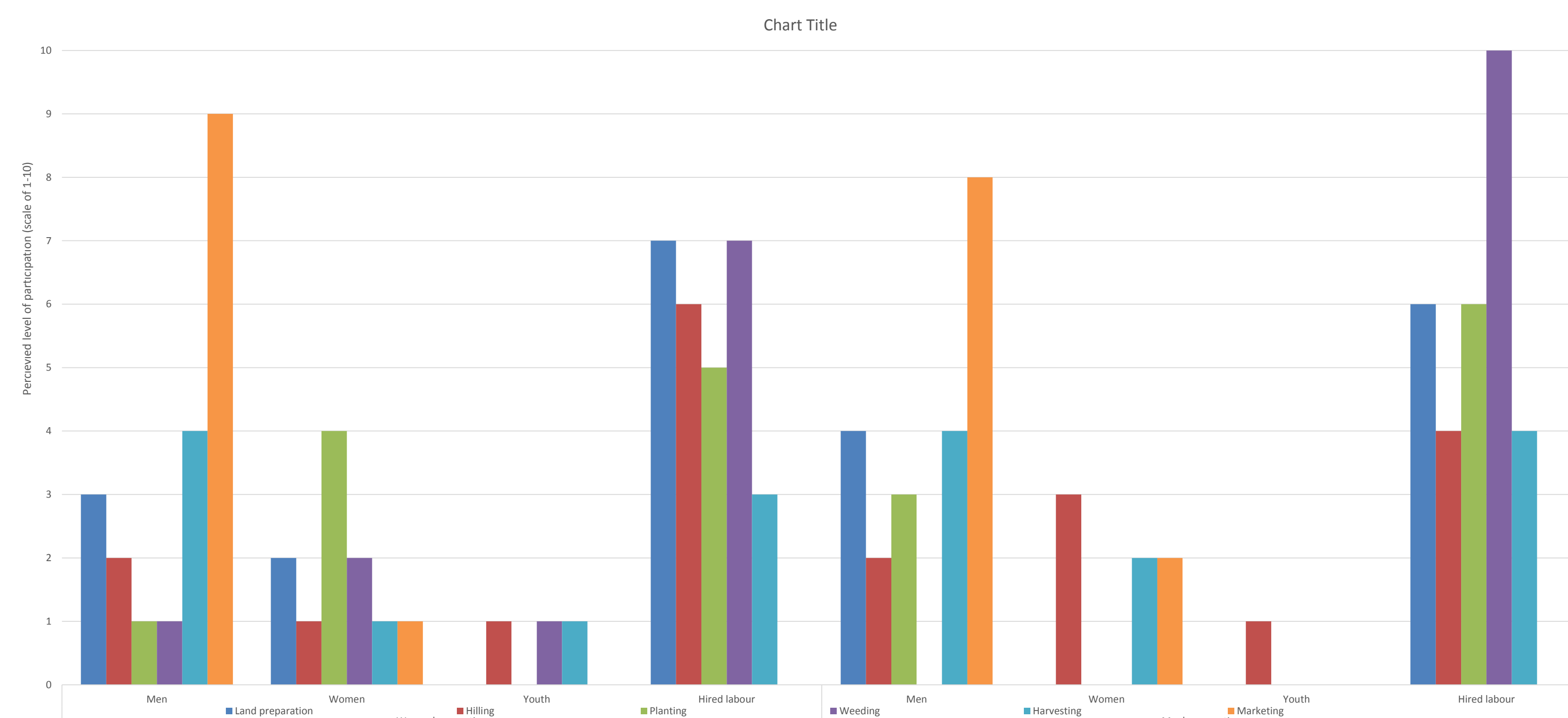


Figure 2: Division of labour for commercial sweetpotato production

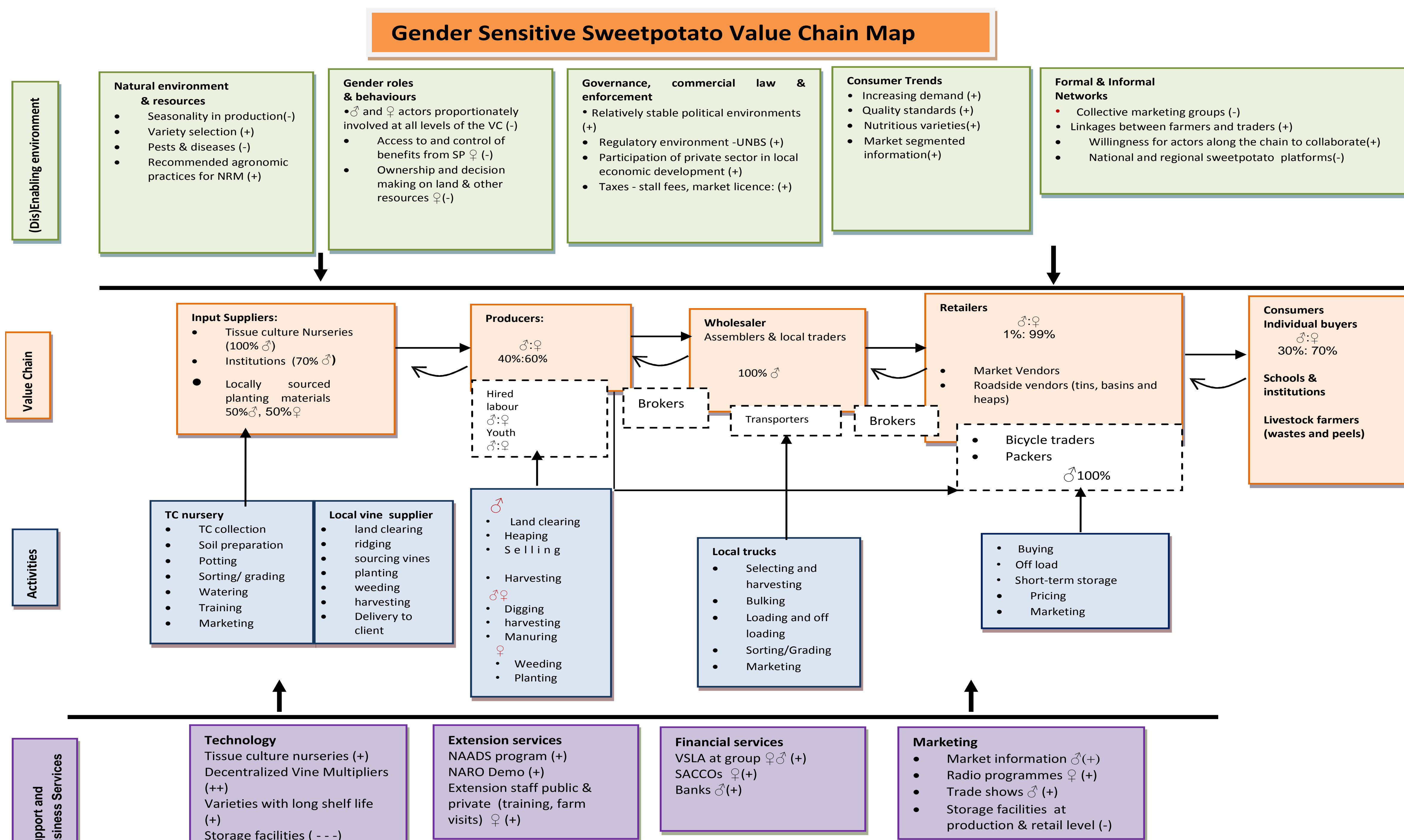


Figure 1: Gender sensitive sweetpotato value chain map



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