



**MARKET  
DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NIGER DELTA**

**DFID** Department for  
International  
Development

Funding for this programme  
is provided by the United Kingdom's  
Department for International  
Development (DFID)

■ Monograph Series Vol. 3

# POVERTY AND GENDER ASSESSMENT

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# **POVERTY AND GENDER ASSESSMENT**



February 2014

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## BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

MARKET Development for the Niger Delta (MADE) is a development programme that will use a 'making markets work for the poor' (M4P) approach to generate pro-poor and inclusive economic growth in the non-oil sectors of the Niger Delta Region (ND), including Agricultural and non-Agricultural value chains.

The programme aims to improve market access for poor producers, increase economic activity and trade and raise incomes of poor men and women. Its main goal is: increased market led inclusive economic growth for poor female and male farmers and entrepreneurs. The ultimate goal being to increase the incomes of at least 150,000 poor people, 50% of whom women, by at least 40% over a period of 4.5 years (2013-2018). This is a very lofty and challenging goal given the extent of poverty and persisting social (including gender) inequalities in Nigeria that have been further compounded in the ND region by youth militancy and the tenuous security situation, an unfortunate outcome of Nigeria's oil boom.

This assessment seeks to learn more about poverty, the poor targeted by MADE and the socio-cultural context within which their livelihood activities are embedded; as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities that need to be taken into consideration to promote pro-poor inclusive development and enhance sustainability and effectiveness. The focus of the next two sections of the analysis is on poverty and the poor and gender inequalities. Each section includes a brief discussion of MADE's approach to reducing the incidence of poverty and/or promoting gender inclusive growth.

## POVERTY AND THE POOR in NIGERIA AND THE NIGER DELTA

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of almost 170M (2012)<sup>1</sup>. Nigeria also has one of the world's highest economic growth rates (averaging 7.4% over the last decade)<sup>2</sup>, a well-developed economy, and plenty of natural resources such as oil. However, poverty remains significant in the country. The Nigerian economy is going but poverty is either stagnating or increasing. The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated that the number of people living in extreme poverty (i.e. below \$0.76/day) had risen from 6% in 1980 to 38.7% in 2010<sup>3</sup>. The World Bank (2012) put the national poverty rates based on USD\$1.25/day and USD\$2/day, at 68.5% and 64.4%, and 86.4% and 83.9% in 1996-97 and 2003-04 respectively<sup>4</sup>. A more recent World Bank report (2013) confirmed NBS statistics showing that about 112 million (66%) Nigerians live on less than \$1.25/day<sup>5</sup>; an improvement from 69% in 2012

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.google.com/#q=Nigeria+Population>

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty\\_in\\_Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_Nigeria)

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, S. Nov. 2013: Niger Delta Conflict Analysis

<sup>4</sup> Gender Equality and Development, World Development Report 2012

<sup>5</sup> <http://nigeriapoliticsonline.com/poverty-has-increased-considerably-in-nigeria-world-bank-as-bureau-of-statistics-confirms-112-million-nigerians-living-below-poverty-line/>

(Table 1). Other sources put Nigeria's poverty at up to 70%<sup>6</sup>. A recent Gender Statistics Newsletter, an NBS quarterly publication, indicates that women make up 65% of all Nigerians living below the poverty line<sup>7</sup>.

The incidence of poverty in Nigeria varies across geo-political zones, across and within states and among urban and rural populations. It has strong regional concentrations, resulting in significant levels of regional disparities. But besides attempts at gender disaggregation, understanding the social composition of Nigeria's poor is not easy; made difficult on the one hand by the use of more than one threshold (\$2 per capita per day; \$1.25 per capita per day) to measure poverty. And on the other and perhaps more important, by the fact (common knowledge) that data and statistics for Nigeria are often unavailable or flawed (not reliable or not in comparable timeframes)<sup>8</sup>. These difficulties are well illustrated by Table 1 which provides an approximate breakdown of the proportion of Nigerian households classified as extremely poor, moderately poor and non-poor nationwide, based on both the \$2/capita/day and the \$1.25/capita/day. Two different measures and two different timeframes – different results - thus besides the fact that this data provides an idea on the situation of poverty in the two timeframes, it is not very helpful in understanding either poverty trends or the composition of the poor.

Table 1: Proportions of 'the poor' and non-poor based on per capita daily incomes of \$1.25 and \$2.00

Nigeria National-level Statistics

NBS (Nigeria) (2012)		World Bank (2009)	
<i>Household poverty classification</i>	<i>Households (%)</i>	<i>Household poverty classification</i>	<i>Households (%)</i>
Extremely poor (<USD0.76/day)	38.7		
Moderately poor (>USD0.76 <USD1.25/day)	30.3	Moderately poor (>USD0.76 <USD2/day)	45.7
Non-poor (>USD1.25/day)	31.0	Non-poor (>USD2/day)	15.6

Sources: Adapted from PropCom Mai-Karfi Poverty and Gender Assessment, November 2012 (p. 6); Based on Estimates from NBS (2012) Poverty Profile 2010, and World Bank 2009

### TRENDS ACROSS THE NIGER DELTA – Poverty Amidst Plenty

The Niger Delta region is the area covered by the natural delta of the Niger River and the areas to the east and west. The broader Niger Delta region consists of nine states<sup>9</sup>. The region is critical for Nigeria's social and economic development. It has a population of over 30 million people, almost a fifth of the country's population; and is also the exclusive source of Nigeria's oil wealth. This region's oil sector has provided the country

<sup>6</sup> IFAD - <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/nigeria;>  
[http://carbonweb.org/showitem.asp?article=72&parent=7&link=Y&qp=3,](http://carbonweb.org/showitem.asp?article=72&parent=7&link=Y&qp=3)

<sup>7</sup> Gender Statistics Newsletter - Quarterly Publication of NBS, Vol.2, Issue 4, July-December 2011.

<sup>8</sup> PropCom Mai-Karfi Poverty and Gender Assessment, Oct. 2012 (p.5).

<sup>9</sup> Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers.

with earnings of a third to half a trillion dollars (US) since 1960<sup>10</sup>. Yet the vast majority of the region's population, like that of the rest of the country, remains poor.

*"...the oil boom has become, to the people of the Niger Delta region, a doom, and years of official neglect has resulted in the Niger Delta Region of today being the epitome of hunger, poverty and injustice"*<sup>11</sup>

'Neglect' is a term used over and over in documentation on the Niger Delta region. The region has been somewhat marginalised from Nigeria's national development, despite being the region that generates Nigeria's oil wealth<sup>12</sup>. Its people are among the country's poorest and least well-served people. Recent studies<sup>13</sup> have suggested that: i) a majority of local inhabitants are living in abject poverty as a result of neglect in terms of sustainable development by both the government and multinational oil firms operating in the region; ii) Little more than a third of households have access to electricity; iii) The number of doctors per head of population is between a half and a third of the national average, and access to healthcare in remote areas falls as low as 2-5%; iv) 30-40% of children are enrolled in primary school, compared with a national average of 76%; v) An estimated half to three-quarters of households do not have access to safe drinking water; vi) The Niger Delta has 2% of federal roads; vii) Unemployment and underemployment rates are very high, particularly among able-bodied men and women ages 20-45 years<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore, the concentration of oil industries in the ND has damaged the environment (water, air and land pollution due to oil spillage and perpetual gas flaring), thus disrupting the mainstay of the traditional economy. The oil industry has also created wage and commodities inflation, raising the cost of living and further intensifying the experience of poverty among the poor – the paradox of abject poverty in the midst of plenty<sup>15</sup>. Overall, the levels and intensity of poverty and inequality are glaring (Snapps 2011), leading to intense feelings of injustice among the lower segments of society, and this has fuelled the militancy and eruptions of violence and insecurity common in the region - further aggravating and perpetuating the incidence of poverty.

Inyang et al (2012) have described the people of the Niger Delta region as unemployed, impoverished, underdeveloped and blighted by environmental and health hazards. Per the UNDP human development report (2006), self-reported poverty for the region in

<sup>10</sup> von Feigenblatt, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> <http://carbonweb.org/showitem.asp?article=72&parent=7&link=Y&gp=3>

<sup>12</sup> Kate Higgins, 2009

<sup>13</sup> Inyang B. and Simon E.D., 2012; Oguduvwe Jonathan I. Pius, 2013; Taylor, S. Nov. 2013: Niger Delta Conflict Analysis

<sup>14</sup> Inyang et al, (2012) report unemployment rates of 32.2 % and 26.4% for Nigeria men and women respectively in the year 2000

<sup>15</sup> Huge expensively constructed fenced mansions, including the high security compounds of the foreign oil workers, in the midst of shacks, is a common feature in many parts of the Niger Delta region – the paradox of abject poverty amidst plenty.

2006 was almost 75%. Unfortunately, more recent and/or reliable figures on poverty trends across the region are not easy to come by<sup>16</sup>.

The situation of women, particularly those living in rural areas is worse, as, gender inequalities are still very prevalent in Nigeria. There is widespread poverty amongst women in the Niger Delta - poverty among indigenous women is so high that some have resorted to miniature jobs such as picking palm kernel shell for selling as a means of gas for cooking (Snapps 2011). While the gender dimensions are further discussed in the next section, suffice it to mention here that across the ND region, women are still very much considered men's subordinates/dependants, and in some cases, married women are considered as part of their husband's property. And this has been further compounded by the upsurge of Pentecostalism that preaches women's submission to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24) as God's ultimate Will for men and women.

The rest of this section looks at what 'poor' as used for MADE means and also provides definitions of MADE key terms, concepts and beneficiaries.

#### **KEY DEFINITIONS: THE MADE POOR AND RELATED CONCEPTS**

Many of the concepts and terms used by MADE are those also used by other M4P programmes in Nigeria, such as PropCom and GEMS. The definitions provided in this section are equality drawn from/inspired by these two M4P programmes.

##### **The Poor**

The MADE programme understands that 'the poor' is not a homogenous group with identical realities, constraints and opportunities. There are the extremely poor, the moderately poor and the non-poor, some of whom fall just above the moderately poor threshold (Table 1). The programme recognizes that these categories are fluid and dynamic with people occasionally drifting into and out of adjacent levels of poverty during good and bad times, depending on factors such as rainfall (for farmers), health, and other changing household needs and/or endowments. For instance, in a good year (good rains, good harvest), an extremely poor farmer may drift into moderate poverty status; and similarly, in a bad year, a moderately poor farmer may find themselves unable to meet usual daily income needs – they have drifted into a status of extreme poverty.

The MADE programme's key target beneficiaries are the moderately poor and the non-poor who fall just below or just above, the poor/non-poor income threshold<sup>17</sup>. These are the economically active poor who the programme believes have the potential to benefit from market driven opportunities to pull themselves out of poverty and in so doing, also trigger positive change among the less privileged through occasional

<sup>16</sup> Available data is not always consistent with the poverty narrative and there is inconsistency in figures for the same timeframe from different sources. For instance, poverty figures for 1996 and 2004 presented by the Federal office of statistics (2004) and the data presented by *Kate Higgins (2009) for same period, do not match.*

<sup>17</sup> The extremely poor's condition is so dire that they scarcely have enough to eat let alone to invest in a business. But they are likely to also benefit from the programme through wage labour in the farms/firms of the direct beneficiaries.

employment opportunities. Because the programme also recognises that there needs to be a mix of poor and not so poor people in market driven development initiatives so that the latter can easily forge the linkages that will benefit the former, some beneficiaries will fall above the moderately poor threshold of \$2/capita/day. With this choice of target beneficiaries, MADE aligns its poverty measurement with that of the World Bank (Table 1) but adopts a slightly higher poverty threshold  $\leq$  USD3 (GBP 1.88, NGN 480) per capita per day. This means that in the ND with household size of 5.4<sup>18</sup>, the net daily income per household would be about USD 16 (GBP 10, NGN 2592) or an annual household net income of about USD 3,840.00 (GBP 2,400 NGN 622,080)<sup>19</sup>. If we assume that a household has at least two income earners, the net annual income per worker to keep the household above the poverty line would be about USD 1,920 (GBP 1,200; NGN 311,040). These would be the estimated income indicators for MADE.

Actors within the VCs<sup>20</sup> considered for the MADE programme include: farmers and other direct producers, leasers, processors, traders and interconnected services (input suppliers, technical assistance and advisory services providers, financial service providers, etc.). For the purposes of the MADE programme these different actors are grouped into three broad categories – farmers (direct producers), entrepreneurs and supporting services. Depending on the scale of activities, the actors are either small scale, medium scale or large scale. MADE beneficiaries who fall within the moderately poor/non-poor income thresholds, are the small and medium scale farmers and entrepreneurs. Many of the other larger market actors, who are necessary to drive the process that will effect much of the real change, are not included in the direct target beneficiaries. The measure of scale varies across the VCs and across one segment of a value chain to another, but in general, small-scale is closer to the moderately poor upper threshold and the medium scale is closer to/or within, the non-poor threshold.

Below are some definitions of MADE's beneficiaries – the small and medium scale farmers and entrepreneurs. The oil palm and poultry value chains, whose analysis and strategy briefs were more advanced at the time of this draft, are used as examples.

#### **Farmers: Small and Medium Scale.**

**A farmer** is any agriculture sector (including fisheries) value chain actor whose primary function is that of direct production or closely related activity<sup>21</sup>. Oil palm leasers who lease plantations or wild groves, care for them and harvest and sell the fresh fruits (FFB)<sup>22</sup> are considered farmers. Whether a farmer is small or medium scale depends on the surface area under production/lease, number of birds owned/reared, etc. For instance, within the:

<sup>18</sup> GEMS Results Measurement Handbook, Version 1.0, GEMS/ITAD 2012. P.38.

<sup>19</sup> Based on a 240-day working year.

<sup>20</sup> Ag inputs, cassava, Fisheries, oil palm, poultry, and recycling

<sup>21</sup> Marketing of own products is an activity considered to be closely related to direct production.

<sup>22</sup> FFB stands for fresh fruit bunch – the main unit of analysis used to calculate both quantities produced and oil extracted.

- **Oil Palm VC: A small scale** oil palm farmer is one who has 0.5ha -4 ha under cultivation or lease. This includes own land, leased land, or land on which the farmer has only use rights (as in the case of female farmers cultivating family land that they do not own). A **medium scale** oil palm farmer is one who has >4ha-10 ha under cultivation or lease.
- **Traditional Poultry VC: A small scale poultry** farmer owns 5-20 birds, and a **medium scale poultry** farmer owns 21 -50 birds.

### Entrepreneurs: Small and Medium Scale

**Entrepreneur** is a broad MADE beneficiary category encompassing any value chain actor who does not have farming/direct production as their sole business and who does not work as a labourer/employee. Collectors within the recycle VC, processors, fabricators, traders, and feed and vaccine suppliers and village based vaccinators (VBV) who are direct beneficiaries (not support service providers) will fall under this category. The definition and/or measure of a small/medium-scale Entrepreneur would vary from one sector to another. For instance, within the:

- **Oil Palm VC**, all processors who own semi-traditional oil mills and oil retailers are considered **small-scale** entrepreneurs. All processors who own semi-mechanised oil mills and all wholesalers are considered **medium-scale** entrepreneurs. Retailers usually buy about 40-80litres per week from wholesalers. The latter buy up to 600litres of oil from processors per week and sell to retailers and larger consumers.
- **Traditional Poultry VC**, a VBV would be considered a **small-scale** entrepreneur and a vaccine distributor considered a **medium-scale** entrepreneur. Any bird farmer who specializes as a commercial producer with substantial investments in production (>50 birds) and marketing also falls under the category of entrepreneurs.

Having gone through these definitions we can now revisit what 'poor' as in *poor men and women in the Niger Delta*, means for the MADE programme.

### IN SUM, 'POOR' for MADE means:

- A farmer having between 0.5ha -10ha of land under crop cultivation or lease (own land, leased land, etc.), who could be able to benefit from MADE facilitated market driven interventions to upgrade production practices and increase performance and income.
- A food processor who owns a semi-traditional or semi-mechanized processing technology who could benefit from MADE facilitated market driven interventions to upgrade to the next level of oil extraction technology and increase performance and income.
- A person in the ND earning a net annual income of  $\leq$  NGN 311040 (GBP 1200, \$1920)<sup>23</sup>; or,
- A person living on  $\leq$  NGN 480 (GBP1.88, \$3) per day (including food, rent, etc.)<sup>24</sup>.

In this categorization of poverty the programme draws on access to productive resources (land, tools, technology) and the levels of income (annual net income per

<sup>23</sup> Figures for the ND based on a 2012 average household size of 5.4 and a per capita income of \$3/day adopted by the MADE programme.

<sup>24</sup> Based on poverty threshold of \$3/capita/day adopted by the MADE programme – exchange rate of ₦ 160 to the US \$.

working person) or equivalent<sup>25</sup>. Income is defined as the amount of money (or monetary value of non-cash income) received for labour, for services, from sales of goods or property, or from investment. MADE recognises that some people, including smallholders, use non-cash subsistence resources and therefore have a low cash income but without a correspondingly low standard of living. The programme also acknowledges that the poor are typically not only poor in terms of income or consumption but may also be socially excluded, marginalized, exploited, insecure, and deprived (eg. in terms of access to resources, basic services, education, employment, nutrition, etc.).

Armed with the understanding that ‘the poor’ is not a homogenous group with identical realities, constraints and opportunities, the programme’s goal is to facilitate market driven interventions that would fill knowledge and access gaps and trigger an upgrade in the business practices of its various target beneficiaries, leading to increased performance (productivity, yields, sales; reduced losses) and increased net income.

**Results Measurement:** The programme will measure its impact on both the small and medium scale beneficiaries to ensure that its impact is not skewed towards the upper income earning quintile. Positive spill overs are expected for the moderately poor at the lower end of the income threshold and the extremely poor; MADE will also strive to monitor the impact of its interventions in this regard via labourers/employees and other indirect outcomes and beneficiaries.

### **GENDER INEQUALITY: PERSISTING TRENDS IN NIGERIA**

Gender inequalities are still very prevalent in Nigeria. Recent reports have used words like ‘huge gender gaps; significant gender disparities, etc.’<sup>26</sup> to describe the current situation of gender inequality in Nigeria. The country was ranked 79 out of 86 in the OECD’s 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index, and 106 out of 136 countries in the World Economic Forum’s 2013 Global Gender Gap Index. Gender gaps are substantial in political representation, in literacy rates and in earned incomes, with female to male ratios of 0.39, 0.58 and 0.68 respectively<sup>27</sup>.

While no comparable data exists for the specific situation of the Niger Delta Region, secondary data and field interviews conducted during the due diligence process of MADE design, suggested that despite being peopled by various ethnic groups with various and varying socio-cultural norms and practices, gender inequalities are a crosscutting reality. Across the region the lives and livelihoods of men and women are shaped by gender norms and ideologies. “What men and women do, how they are

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<sup>25</sup> Annual income is derived from a daily income needed to keep a household above the poverty line of \$3/capita/day by assuming that each household has two members engaged in productive work, who together earn a yearly income required to keep the household above the poverty line. It does not necessarily depend on a working year of 240 days but rather, on the total net annual earnings of household income earners.

<sup>26</sup> <http://newsdiaryonline.com/huge-gender-gapworsening-poverty-still-troubling-nigeria-ADB-report/>. Posted on August 11, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> The Global Gender Gap Report, World Economic Forum 2013.

expected to behave, what jobs they undertake and how they interact within the larger community are prescribed by traditional gender norms. Many of these gender norms severely restrict the ability of women to meaningfully participate in and benefit from development efforts and interventions” (CEDPA 2011:11). These gender norms which also govern access and control of productive resources and products thereof, tend to shape men and women’s type and scale of activities, level of effort and investments and the extent to which they may respond to change and thus benefit or fail to benefit from improved performance and growth of the sectors in which they are involved. Women generally end up crowded at the lower micro and least efficient sectors, sub-sectors or segments of a value chain.

### **GENDER DYNAMICS WITHIN the SIX PRELIMINARY VALUE CHAINS CONSIDERED FOR MADE**

MADE has an extremely challenging task of sustainably increasing poor women’s incomes in an uneven playing field. The more challenging as the M4P approach leverages market actors’ incentives to change behaviour rather than advocacy or appealing to their good will, as is often the case with traditional approaches to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. There has to be an attractive enough incentive to get lead market actors on board to meet the 50/50 gender inclusive target of MADE. Documented evidence has suggested that it is much easier to make such a “business case” for a sector with existing roles for men and women or one in which gender roles are not yet set, than for a sector in which integrating gender considerations may involve creating new gender roles, with no obvious added economic benefits to market actors.

To this effect, looking for ‘women’ and their constraints and opportunities were primordial in the market analysis that led to the selection of value chains under consideration for the MADE programme, referred to in the rest of the analysis simply as MADE VCs<sup>28</sup>. A rapid gender appraisal was conducted alongside the market analysis. This consisted of both literature reviews and field interviews/discussions with key actors within the VCs, particularly potential MADE beneficiaries (small and medium scale male and female farmers and entrepreneurs) in various parts of the Niger Delta Region. The ultimate goal being to identify women’s presence and roles and challenges and opportunities that needed to be taken into consideration in program design to promote gender inclusiveness and enhance sustainability and effectiveness of MADE interventions.

The descriptive gender analysis that follows is based on literature reviews, field discussions/observations and key informant discussions with knowledgeable PIND<sup>29</sup> staff and with other local informants. Because the views of some informants seemed to reflect more the normative ideals than what actually is the current practice, the gender

<sup>28</sup> Palm oil, Cassava, poultry, Agricultural Inputs (fertilizers, crop protection chemicals -CPC), fisheries and recycle.

<sup>29</sup> Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND)

dynamics discussed below likely fall short of capturing the whole picture. But the hope is that gaps will be filled in due process as we develop a clearer understanding of the socio-cultural context and its implications on program design and implementation.

This analysis starts with a look at crosscutting gender perspectives and then narrows down to the specific value chains considered for the MADE programme.

### **CROSS-CUTTING GENDER DYNAMICS AND TRENDS**

Secondary data and field interviews have indicated that access to productive resources, particularly land and the prevailing intra-household gender dynamics that also govern men and women's relations within the economic sphere, are issues to watch out for in the design of development interventions. These tend to influence men and women's type and scale of activities, level of effort and investments and the extent to which they may respond to change and thus benefit or fail to benefit from improved performance and growth of the sectors in which they are involved.

#### **Access to Land**

Access and control over land is one of the focal points of gender inequalities in production across much of West and Central Africa<sup>30</sup>. Women farmers generally have only use rights to land as opposed to ownership and control rights enjoyed by men. These gender inequalities in land issues which are hinged on traditional socio-cultural norms and practices seem to have a very strong staying power. Efforts by modern land legislators to redress these inequalities have generally had very little traction as documented evidence tends to suggest that modern land regulations generally anchored on the traditional customary tenure systems, and did not completely replace them, but either co-existed or co-opted them. Within this background, women's access to land is largely mediated through male kin - husbands, parents, siblings, sons, etc.. Such land use rights are generally shaky and limiting to women's economic enterprise. The Niger Delta Region epitomises this gender differentiated land tenure system that generally marginalizes women, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Land matters in the Niger Delta Region are governed by both gender and seniority. Land is generally owned by families and managed by men and the older a man is, the easier his ability to access/control land and land related decisions. Women have little or no say in land matters and are not allowed to inherit land<sup>31</sup>. Within the family (parental or marital), women are generally given only small pieces of family land for crop cultivation purposes. They have only use rights over such land and these rights are automatically lost on marriage (family land) or on divorce (husband's land). In some cultures a single woman eventually owns the piece of land when she attains menopause and is considered past the marriage age and thus is a more permanent member of her parental

<sup>30</sup> DTS/USAID WA Regional Gender Assessment, 2013; Cultural Practice, LLC USAID/Ghana Gender Assessment, 2006; Fisiy F.G., 2004.

<sup>31</sup> The exception here is the case of Cross Rivers where the first daughter is said to have significant status within the household, including in decision making and inheritance issues (CEDPA 2011: Gender Assessment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria).

family, more akin to her male kin, but only with lower status, as, males are always given priority over females in land issues. If family land becomes scarce, an older woman may not be able to have inalienable rights over her piece of family land. A divorced woman, who goes back to her parental family, is generally given some family land (if available) for cultivation purposes and she may continue farming on it for as long as there continuous to be enough land for her male siblings and their sons.

Discussions with some informants from the Delta State pointed to a growing tendency for families to give land to daughters for construction purposes. Usually such pieces of land are just enough for one house. This trend seems to be promoted by the fact that these families want their successful daughters to invest back home. They are motivated by the growing realization that daughters tend to take better care of their parents. A daughter who receives land from her family is likely to feel more obliged to take better care of them in their later years. The land given daughters is however, generally too small for agricultural development purposes.

Because women generally have just use rights to farmland, they are unlikely to invest in planting longer duration crops like palms. Society does not expect them to do so either. Such longer duration crops (tree crops) are considered men's crops, not necessarily only because of their income generation potentials, but perhaps also because they validate male land ownership.

### **Intra-household Gender Relations**

Socio-cultural norms and practices that govern intra-household gender relations tend to influence and are also influenced by men and women's choices and growth of economic enterprises. In the Niger delta Region, women are generally considered as belonging to their husbands and so do all of their assets, entrepreneurial endeavours and results therefrom (including incomes). They are expected to seek their husbands' permission before embarking on any economic activities and some husbands do actually decide which businesses their wives can get involved in and assist provide start-up capital<sup>32</sup>. But a husband is free to engage in any business he pleases and may or may not discuss it with his wife/wives. A man's farm is usually considered the family farm on which all family members provide labour (unpaid), but control of the main crop<sup>33</sup> and any income from sales is by the man.

Women's earnings are considered their husbands' and in the rural areas some women actually pass their earnings to their husbands. In more modern households (women more informed or educated) a woman is expected to at least seek the approval of her husband regarding the use of her income and in most cases her income is also used towards household needs (food, fees for children...). A woman's submissiveness to her husband is very important. A good woman is one who maintains a position of deference

<sup>32</sup> See the case of female fish farmers discussed later and a 2011 study of Niger Delta women by Snapps, American Review of Political Economy.

<sup>33</sup> Women usually plant subsidiary crops (ex. vegetables) within a family crop of yams or cassava managed by their husbands.

to her husband at all times and this includes maintaining a low profile vis-à-vis her economic achievements and passing the credit for such personal achievements to her husband<sup>34</sup>.

For instance, a woman who saves enough money to purchase a piece of land in her name, or establish a successful business, needs first to secure her husband's approval, and next to not make it public knowledge that these are her achievements but rather, to give the impression that they all belong to her husband. Such strategies, which in some cases may just be appearances, do however, empower a woman socially (good wife) as well as in economic terms as she is able to pursue economic enterprise without social scrutiny. Unfortunately, they also obscure women's successes making them difficult to capture/document or to serve as motivation to other women.

Women who become strong headed because they have money generally end up divorced. And this is not a good thing for any woman – marriage gives women respect and those who get divorced lose respect. Remarriage is not easy for a Delta woman but extremely easy for his male counterpart because field discussions indicated that there are many more women in the Niger Delta region than men<sup>35</sup>.

#### **Sticking to the Norms -Agency?**

Men and women's roles and their spheres of activities within the preselected MADE value chains described below, tend to largely reflect these societal gender norms and practices, which tend to give more economic opportunities to men than to women. Generally, it takes subtle and covert bargaining strategies, which women seem to master, for them to be able to also tap into the opportunities, despite, and within, the limitations of their socially ascribed roles. This is agency – portrayed in women's roles and segments across the value chains described below. They do not [overtly] challenge the social order but strive as much as possible to focus their economic activities within the limits of acceptable gender norms. And this pays off despite the trade-offs mentioned earlier.

## **THE PALM OIL VALUE CHAIN**

### **Palm Production**

Per discussions with informants in the different palm oil locations visited, as well as random discussions with informants in other areas visited, palm producers are in majority male. Field data obtained this far suggests that over 78% of all small/medium

<sup>34</sup> In a new twist, affluent men (particularly those in high public office positions) tend to register some of their businesses in their wives' names. This is meant to hide the fraudulent sources of invested capital, or to obscure activities that have a conflict of interest with their high public office positions. Palm plantations and big fish ponds are among such shady activities that men tend to register in their wives' names.

<sup>35</sup> Asked whether the violence perpetuated by young men was responsible for this male/female ratio, the answer was not clear. But what stood out is attribution of this to the demographic patterns in which more females than males are born in the region.

scale palm plantation farms are owned by men and 22% by women<sup>36</sup>, but this varies significantly by state. One informant with in-depth local knowledge suggested that some of the female palm farmers are likely care takers on behalf of their husbands, because the production of palms is typically a man's activity.

The tall wild palm groves communally owned by families/communities are controlled by men. Field data suggested that women account for about 20% of people to whom these wild groves are leased for harvesting and selling (fresh fruits) and/or processing into oil and selling. Some informants indicated that women tend to be preferred leasers, as men feel less threatened by them<sup>37</sup>.

### Processing

There are many more men in palm oil processing than women. Of the over 5000 primary oil palm processors identified this far through the market studies, only about 10% are women. However, the concentration of male and female oil processors varies from one state to another. In Akwa Ibom, for instance, the vast majority of people who control the oil processing process are women. Besides the 20% reported as producers who might also be processors, most women involved in oil processing usually buy the fresh palm fruits from local markets and from male producers and owners of the natural palms (including from their husbands). In some cases (e.g. Akwa Ibom), women are responsible for processing all their husbands' FF into oil and in so doing they also exert quite some control over the product. Some also lease whole farms/groves and gradually harvest (using male labour) and process/sell.

There are over 5000 oil mills in the Niger Delta, ranging from traditional, through local fabricated semi-traditional mills, semi-mechanized mills, to automated technology. Only about 10% of these mills are owned by women who typically use local fabricated machines (used by 80% of all primary processors). A majority of other small processors (men and women) who do not own processing machines either process in mills for a fee; rent what they need (masher) or use palm fruit mashing services provided by men whose business is mainly mashing of fresh fruits for others at a fee. Their extraction of oil from the mashed palm fruits is usually through a traditional boat method by which the mixture is put in a boat full of water and the oil is scooped out as it floats. Needless to say that this is a very inefficient way of extracting the oil – much of the oil remains in the chaff.

The traditional foot-mashing processing system used in the past by the majority of women oil processors is virtually extinct. While a few of these women are still in the business using mostly the traditional boat method of oil extraction, many have become

<sup>36</sup> Many of the female palm farmers are identified as single older women (widows, never married) or more educated or retired women with enough money to invest in palm production.

<sup>37</sup> Fisiy, F.G. (2004)'s work in rural Cameroon brought out similar trends. Growing income potentials from food crops, led to men's massive entry into food crop production. But the threat this posed on women's access to farmland was mitigated by absentee land owners' preference to give their farmland to female relatives over giving it to males, as the latter could eventually try to claim ownership over such land.

labourers within this and other commodity chains. In the palm oil sector, they collect and transport loose palm nuts and bunches to a collection point during harvest and also carry out female type jobs (sorting, packing, etc.) at the processing mills.

### Marketing: A Female Niche?

Marketing of both fresh fruit and palm oil seems to be one of those activities perceived in some parts of the region as typically female. The sale of fresh palm fruits (retail or wholesale) in open and rural markets is largely controlled by women.

Women are very prominent in the palm oil wholesale and retail business. Field data has suggested that across the locations visited 60% of all wholesalers and 90% of all retailers are women. Entry into the retail business seems easier and conducive to many women. Start-up volume depends on a retailer's capital, clientele and supply by wholesalers in her area of operation. Retailers usually start with less than a 20 litre jug of oil (< N5000). They sell to consumers in small sizes of 1, 2, 4 litres in open markets, neighbourhood stores and kiosks and in front of family houses. Hence, many women, even those with very little capital and those who have to juggle between several production and reproduction activities within the day are able to enter this business.

The wholesale business requires more capital at start up than retail but it is also said to have a faster turnover. Wholesalers usually start with 4-5 20l kegs (N2000-25000) and gradually grow to buying in 200 litre drums. The high turnover is attractive to men who also tend to have the type of capital (loans, cash advances from big oil merchants or income from other businesses) required to grow in the business. Growth also entails creation of business relations between processors, wholesalers and oil merchants (men in majority). Capital counts a lot because some wholesalers provide advance payment to their suppliers and some oil merchants provide cash advance to their wholesaler buying agents, which differentiates between big and small actors and also between men and women.

Another women run segment of this value chain on which more information is needed is **soap making**, using ashes of burnt fruit bunch fibre and palm oil (traditional soap), or palm oil and soap making chemicals ('modern' type soap, called 'Soda'). Both types are said to have a good market within the soap making communities.

### Main Challenges

Besides the issues related to access to appropriate and efficient processing machinery experienced by over 80% of the processors, other challenges within the sector include: limited business capital, high production and marketing costs, and market instability due to seasonal variations in supply and prices. These problems seem to be more acute among the female than male actors across the value chain.

Harvesting of fruit bunches from the tall wild groves is very difficult. The number of men with the climbing skills needed to reach/harvest the high fruits seems to be on the decline and cost of harvesting is on the rise. People who lease the grooves, particularly

women, are spending more and more money on harvesting, which increases their production costs and reduces their profits<sup>38</sup>.

Some female wholesalers, like those in Warri who go to neighbouring oil processing communities to buy oil, often incur additional transportation costs which could be substantial during the rains because of bad roads. Most of those visited also complained about limited access to capital.

### MADE Interventions

Facilitating the introduction of more efficient harvesting and processing machines to facilitate harvesting and improve oil processing, would contribute in stabilizing supply and prices; and likely also open up the market to new actors on the supply and demand side.

As far as capital is concerned, facilitation of access to appropriate financial services would be beneficial. The type of financial support services would depend on the level of investment needed by the different value chain actors, as well as the capacity of such financial services (providers) to meet such needs<sup>39</sup>. The smaller scale actors (producers, processors and retailers) who deal with much smaller acreage, quantities and smaller capital investments and who fit well in the lower category of the poor targeted by MADE, may benefit from a VLSA type approach to access to capital.

## THE CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN

### Production

A sector in which women have been for a long time the primary producers, processors and sellers, cassava gained prominence as a cash crop in the early 2000s and attracted many men into its production. The growth of the sector has also led to the growth of farmer associations and co-operatives, usually with male and female members<sup>40</sup>. While the entry of more actors into cassava production is good for the sector, the playing ground is not level. Access to productive resources, particularly land and capital are gender differentiated.

**Access to Land:** In Edo (visited), cassava farmers like other farmers, access land through rental or from their own family lands. Men have privileged access to family land as owners. And while land rental rates are the same for men and women, men are said to generally have the capital (raised from other businesses) required to rent larger pieces of land. They are also more likely to access loans than women because they usually have the required collateral - land. In addition to lack of collateral, women in Edo are also said to hate debts - they do not like to owe anyone<sup>41</sup>. Women cassava

<sup>38</sup> Tree climbing is done by men, but they are supported by women on the ground who then transport the bunches to the collection site. In some cases, the cost of harvesting one bunch is comparable to the price of selling it.

<sup>39</sup> The women wholesalers seem to be well above the poverty line and could benefit from more commercial type loans.

<sup>40</sup> 980 farmer co-ops identified in Edo alone – all members of the Edo state Farmers' Co-op Agency (ESCA).

<sup>41</sup> Verbal communication from agro-chemical dealer

farmers thus end up with smaller (and likely more marginal?) pieces of lands given that men have priority access to family land. Similar trends are reported across the ND region and as a result, women farmers who actually do make up about 70% of all cassava producers, are mainly very small subsistence farmers who would fall more within the micro than the small-scale farmers targeted by MADE.

The main differentiating factor between men and women in access to farmland through rental seems to be capital. Capital also seems to be a gender differentiating factor in access to **labour**. Women farmers usually do much of their work by themselves but male cassava producers usually have access to family labour (wives and children) alongside hired labour. Capital is also a constraint to women's access to new/improved technologies such as improved cassava varieties, agricultural inputs and mechanized machinery (tractors).

### Cassava Processing

There are two types of cassava processors – primary processors and industrial processors.

**Primary processing** of cassava into garri, tapioca and Eba for local consumption is perceived as a woman's sphere. All the processing is done by women. Some women are specialized in processing and selling. These usually do not do commercial production but buy the cassava they process from other producers. The few men who decide to have their cassava processed into garri usually hire women to do the processing for them. They sell the end product to women wholesalers or retailers. Data on types of processing equipment used by this group of processors is not yet available, but it is highly likely that mostly inefficient traditional or semi-traditional equipment are used. Fear is that the female actors could be displaced and/or outcompeted with the advent of modern machinery and by the more powerful industrial processors.

**Industrial processors** use modern machinery to process cassava into flour (high quality cassava flour – HQCF) for use in baked goods; into starch, into cassava chips and more recently, there is also processing into ethanol. Some of the processors at this level are: Thai Farms, Nigeria starch mills (NSM), MATNA, and a new Chinese firm that processes cassava into ethanol. These firms together have a potential to drive the cassava business to the next level of growth. Many cassava farmers' associations and co-ops have been formed in response to the demand from these firms, particularly Thai farms that has partnered with PIND in the latter's work in the cassava value chain. They are also part of what has triggered the growth that has attracted many men into the sector. They are a potential serious competition for raw cassava to the primarily female, primary processors.

### Main Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations

Some of the challenges within the sector affect women and men differently. This is particularly the case with land and capital as discussed above and appropriate primary processing tools, which are more specific to women. Cost of harvesting, production tools, access to improved cassava varieties seem to be crosscutting.

The sector has enormous potential for growth thanks to the capacity of the industrial processors who would be excellent lead firms to drive the growth. But this could pose a threat to both primary processors (women) and household food security.

Interventions that facilitate access to appropriate farming techniques, inputs and services to women producers and appropriate processing machinery for primary processors may enhance their survival in the VC. Exploring linkages with potential finance support services for the smaller producers, particularly women may be worthwhile. The emergence of farmers' associations also provides a structure and an entry point for interventions targeting these potential beneficiaries.

### **AGRICULTURAL INPUTS: Fertilizers and Crop Protection Products (CPP).**

Many farmers seem to understand the importance of agro-chemical inputs on their production activities, thanks to the extensive training and outreach provided by agro-chemical companies, spurred by competition and the need to reach as many farmers and new markets as possible. Their training targeted agro-dealers and farmers and this has been passed down from farmer to farmer, reaching far into the rural production areas.

The training and outreach efforts usually targeted farmers – just the numbers. A former trainer for one of the agro-chemical companies attested to the very limited numbers of women attending their trainings. This was likely due to lack of gender sensitivity in outreach planning and implementation or to gender biased targeting/information flow to farmers<sup>42</sup>.

Very few women received the training 1<sup>st</sup> hand. But despite this, informants suggested that women tend to apply extension information more rigorously than men and thus tend to achieve comparatively higher yields. This is corroborated by that fact that women currently account for 50% of all fertilizer buyers, likely thanks to copying and farmer to farmer learning. They are said to be more interested in smaller packages of fertilizers; which is in line with their farm sizes and small scale of production.

#### **Key Constraints**

The main gender related **constraints**: i) Packaging sizes (fertilizers – usually 50kgs) are not tailored to the needs and purchasing power of most women and other small farmers. ii) The application of some of the chemicals is considered more suitable for men than women. This is for instance, the case with chemicals that need to be sprayed using the rather heavy knapsack sprayers. Women working on individual farms must hire men at a cost of N500/chemical bottle to spraying, thus incurring additional costs that most men don't.

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<sup>42</sup> Failure to take into consideration women's mobility and other constraints when deciding the time and location of training; or training activities and related communications targeted at heads of farming households (primarily men) rather than all farmers.

On the distribution side, there are very few women. The agro-chemical companies and their distributors usually work with middlepersons - agro-dealers (traders). The latter are men for the most part. Agro-chemical distribution seems to be regarded more as men's work, perhaps because of the capital involved, or perhaps because agro-chemicals are considered too technical for women. It is also likely that without role models, women have no understanding of, and interest in this sector; or as one agro-chemical distributor in Kwale indicated, they do not have the capital, are not comfortable with debts, and so can't benefit from the in-kind trader credits extended by some of the big distributors.<sup>43</sup>

### Recommendations

The type of interventions that may have more impact on women and smaller farmers would be those that facilitate pro-small farmer input packaging and adapted agro-chemical application equipment or use of service providers.

### POULTRY: TRADITIONAL BIRDS

Traditional bird keeping is widespread in rural Nigerian villages and at least 54% of all rural households (3,032,167 households) own a few chickens and their chicks (3-10 on average) running around the yard fending for themselves. The general impression is that this is a poultry segment in which rural women are highly engaged. This is true but there is more to women's involvement than catches the eye. Field data has indicated that while household birds are generally managed by women (and children), ownership is at times not theirs. In one village of 5000 inhabitants (60% female) where 70% of the households owned some birds, the question of ownership had mixed responses.

One set of respondents indicated that it is mainly women who keep/own birds in the home. Another indicated that household birds and incomes thereof are jointly owned by husband and wife. A third indicated that within a household, men and women's birds are separately owned but managed and sold by women, who must seek their husbands' permission before selling their own birds. And all the income from the husband's birds is given to him. Some women also give the money from their own birds to their husbands but others use the money themselves for household and personal needs. A husband could catch his wife's bird to give as gift to a guest but the wife does not have such a prerogative vis-à-vis her husband's birds. Similar trends are reported for other areas visited across the region.

These mixed responses may point to a juxtaposition of modern and traditional practices - on the one hand, independent ownership of birds by men and women; and on the other, men's control of women's bird (and other) incomes. The latter can be understood from the background of cultural norms that perceive wives as their husbands' property; which though dying out within some families (with more informed or educated women), are slower to die among others, particularly among the rural poor.

<sup>43</sup> Getting women involved in the agro-chemical might take a lot of motivation, but the question is, would this make economic sense? What is the opportunity cost?

Yet, one may also assume that because women do the actual selling of all household birds, it is more likely that parts of the incomes managed by husbands would enter into common household use – it is more difficult for a husband to refuse to attend to a household financial need after his wife just sold birds and gave him the money. Thus any improvement of this poultry segment by reducing high bird mortality rates resulting from yearly disease epidemics<sup>44</sup> - the **primary challenge** faced by all traditional bird owners - is very likely to improve overall household (men, women and children) welfare.

## THE FISHERIES VALUE CHAIN

The fisheries sector considered for MADE is made up of fishing or wild fish capture on the open seas and creeks, fish farming – aquaculture, and fish smoking. Fishing is a traditional occupation of a majority of the Niger Delta Riverine inhabitants. Given what traditional wild capture fishing entails – canoe paddling out on the high rough seas, equipped with nets as the main fishing tool – one is likely to conclude that this must be a man’s domain par excellence. On the contrary, in the Niger Delta region women have always been involved in fishing; including wild capture on the high seas using same tools as fishermen, but focusing more on shell fish as against their male folk whose main target is fin fish. In Warri today, women can be found on the seas and creeks paddling their canoes just as their male counterparts as they fish for crabs, periwinkles and other types of fish. Women also excel in fish smoking and fish trading, accounting for almost 99% of all actors within this segment. . Fishing and related activities thus seems to be one of those professions in the ND where women are perceived as equally savvy as men.

### AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture, fish farming, was introduced in the region over 15 years ago. Anchored on this fertile traditional fishing culture, aquaculture - mainly catfish - is carried out by men and women. The extent of men and women’s involvement in aquaculture varies from one state to another. No particular gender differences were discernible from two fish farming associations – the United Ufuoma Fish Farmers Association (UUFFA) and the Progressive Fish Farmers Association (PFFA), visited (Dec. 2013) in the Epkan fishing community of Warri, Delta State. The associations had a total of 700 registered pond farmers, over 40% of them women. Women also held leadership positions – 29% of UUFFA’s Boards of Directors and Trustees were women. Across the region, the number of fish pond farmers is estimated at over 12,000, 30% of them females; that of fisher folk (wild capture) is estimated at 1,100 (gender disaggregated data not available)<sup>45</sup>.

#### *Production Resources: Land and Ponds.*

The ideal land used for aquaculture is that closer to a water source, where ponds would have easy supply of water. The fish farming communities visited in Warri used land in

<sup>44</sup> The main challenge with traditional poultry is diseases – new castle and Coccidiosis and predators. Many people lose between 30% -50% of their birds each year to these diseases.

<sup>45</sup> Estimates computed from field visits to various parts of the region.

close proximity to the creeks where the flow of water in and out of the ponds was easily regulated by the tides. In both areas the land belonged to individual community members. Fish farmers either bought land from owners or rented ponds from other farmers. The early birds who were privileged to buy land from the owners were mostly men. It is from these early birds that other fish farmers (men and women) rent or buy land and/or ponds. The main differentiating factor between those who have/own land and those who rent is the time of entry into the fish farming business.

The number of ponds owned by a farmer depends on both purchasing power and on the time of entry into the business. In Warri men had an edge over women in business entry. And while the statistics were not forthcoming, field discussions suggested that men also have an edge over women in the number of ponds owned. Women are among those who buy fish ponds when these are put on the market by owners. A third of the women interviewed in Epkan, Warri indicated that their start-up capital was provided by their husbands, whose decision it was that they go into the business<sup>46</sup>. Many of these husband-funded farmers indicated that they have full autonomy in managing the aquaculture business. Some talked of keeping their husbands informed on the business, more as a courtesy than an obligation. A majority of the women indicated that their husbands had nothing to do with the business but were not antagonistic towards it. One or two indicated that they work jointly with their husbands – family type business<sup>47</sup>.

Field findings across the region suggest 3 categories of fish farmers based mainly fish density per pond, and to an extent also on the quantity of fish farmed during one production cycle. i) Small-scale or homestead farmers usually have own 1-2 ponds with a fish (seed/fingerlings) density of 500-10,000 and commercial small scale farmers have 3,000-10,000 fish under their management. These smaller scale farmers make up 80% of all fish farmers in the region. ii) Medium-scale farmers have 10000-20000 fish under their management. iii) Large-scale farmers who own large fish farms and have over 20000 fish under their management<sup>48</sup>. While gender disaggregated figures are not available, it is likely that a majority of female fish farmers fall within the small-scale homestead/commercial farmer category – many entered the business later than men and even those who have enough capital may not be able to obtain all the land and ponds they need as the bulk of these are owned mainly by the majority male early bird fish farmers.

#### *Inputs: Fingerlings, Feed and Feeding.*

**Fingerlings:** From the data obtained this far, it seems that fingerlings producers are mainly men. The source of their parent stock is not clear, but field observations in Warri

<sup>46</sup> . Husbands in question were mainly salaried workers who had learnt about the lucrative fish farming business from colleagues and decided to give it a try

<sup>47</sup> This is the case of the pastor/Vice president of the UUFFA – to be expected given his position in society – man of God. Difficult to say whether or not this position also gives him the control over the business as God ordained head of the family – question not posed.

<sup>48</sup> What needs further clarity about these categories and the different fish density numbers is the standard size of a pond as well as the standard fingerlings density.

suggested that they are gradually involving fish farmers in growing the parent stock – case of UUFFA where one pond was dedicated to producing large fish for parent stock. Fish farmers buy fingerlings from these suppliers. There is however a general outcry amongst fish farmers (men and women) about the quality of fingerlings. They are usually too small and of doubtful quality - making it difficult to assure that quantity delivered matches the quantity purchased; and also many do not survive – leading to substantial losses.

**Feed and Feeding:** There are two broad types of feed – floating feed (imported and locally produced) which is considered of higher quality; and locally fabricated sinking feed that is of lower quality. The former is much more effective in growing fish to the right size rapidly than the latter, but is also more expensive. The type of feed adopted by farmers seems to depend on both cost and access to appropriate information. Information obtained this far, particularly from the fishing communities in Warri, Delta State, suggests that a majority of fish farmers use both types of feed at one stage or another of the production cycle. Many fish farmers start with the modern feed and then bring in the traditional feed when they feel that their fingerlings have picked up well. Only the few large fish farmers (more men than women) use only the high quality floating feed.

Local men and women are involved in small-scale production of the sinking fish feed. In the Ekpan fishing communities visited, women feed producers could be seen mixing and boiling feed, assisted by their sons; and many young male feed producers could be seen drying and bagging theirs.

### **FISH SMOKING and Marketing: A Woman's Niche**

Smoking is a fish processing method very common in many fishing communities. It is the dominant form in which fresh fish is preserved, particularly in communities with limited or no access to electricity and cold chain storage facilities. It is common knowledge in Nigeria and much of West Africa, that fish processing and the fish trade as a whole, are dominated by woman. Women are the main buyers of fresh fish which they resell whole or retail, or smoke or dry and sell to other fish mammies who then do the retail in open markets or along the streets. Key participants in the fish smoking value chain include fishermen, pond farmers, fish smokers, distributors and marketers.

#### ***Fish Smoking***

It is estimated that there almost 17,000 fish smokers, comprised of rural (80%) and urban fish smokers. Rural smokers buy fresh fish mainly from wild capture fisher folk, but their urban counterparts buy from both pond farmers and wild capture fisher folk. 95% of the fish used for smoking is wild captured. The vast majority (99%) of smokers are women – the 'smoking mammies' and small-scale smokers.

**Smoking mammies** control the sale of fish from specific boats; thereby securing a steady supply of fresh fish which they then go on to smoke at scale. Smoking mammies are often employers, hiring women to prepare and smoke fish. They are generally, dedicated smokers who sell only to wholesalers/aggregators. Fish mammies have been noted for shrewd and calculative business tactics. Fisher folk and fish farmers complain

about their price imposing tactics, which sellers are obliged to accept given the perishability of fish.

**Small-scale smokers** are relegated to either buy smoking mummies' excess fresh fish (fish that they do not have the capacity to smoke) or buy directly from fisher-folk at beach markets and smaller size fish from pond farmers<sup>49</sup>. Small scale smokers, particularly those smoking pond fish, often also sell the fish themselves to end users.

**Smoking Technology:** There are primarily two methods of smoking: traditional and modern. And within each method there are different technologies which can be used – the traditional smoking platform and drum technology and the improved/modern smoking ovens, all dependent on wood or charcoal for fuel. The smoking technologies used differ by geographic location and the financial capability of the smoker. The smoking platform is usually used in poorer rural/riverine communities by small-scale smokers and the drum technology is typically used by the smoking mummies and in urban areas. The modern oven technologies, particularly the NIOMR and Azemor kilns developed by local institutions with offices in Niger Delta region, are the next generation of technology that would promote the sector's performance and growth. They are efficient but quite expensive; but could be introduced via the smoking mummies, who are better placed to purchase given their larger scale and potential to provide fee based smoking services to the network of small scale fish smokers.

### *Smoked Fish Trade*

The smoked fish trade like that of fresh fish is made up of wholesalers and retailers. Conservative estimates number wholesalers and retailers of smoked fish products at 18,000<sup>50</sup>, 98% of them women. Smokers typically sell smoked fish to wholesale traders who aggregate, transport and sale whole to retailers in local markets within and outside the ND. Some wholesalers also sell directly to household consumers and informal eateries in urban markets. Retailers sell fish directly to consumers at urban and local markets. Some retailers often also smoke the fish themselves.

### **Key Constraints and Recommendations**

The fisheries sector seems to be a sector where there is some gender parity in both opportunities and challenges. Yet a few of the constraints within this VC do affect women more than men. While this is due much more to where women are found within the VC, it is also due to societal gender norms and perceptions that tend to circumscribe men and women's roles and activities with certain market segments.

Key constraints within this sector include: a) inappropriate feed, feeding and poor pond management; b) poor quality and size of fingerlings; c) marketing difficulties, d) high perishability resulting in losses of up to 20% of wild captured fish in the time between capture and sell to fish mummies due to poor storage (no cold chain storage equipment); and e) spoilage during smoking due to inefficient smoking techniques.

Solving the issue of feed, fingerlings and storage would involve training/capacity building of farmers and support service providers, and introduction of appropriate cold

<sup>49</sup> Mostly smaller fish which is not appreciated within the fresh fish consumer market is sold off to fish smokers.

<sup>50</sup> Based on fieldwork by MADE analyst

storage facilities. This would improve the sector performance for all actors – fishers, farmers and traders, men and women. Facilitating changes in the postharvest handling and processing areas by introducing better quality smoking kilns would improve the performance and benefits of the smoking mummies and small scale smokers.

## RECYCLE

Through recycling, waste materials are transformed into new useful products. This helps to prevent wastage of potentially useful materials, reduces the consumption of fresh raw materials, energy usage, and air and water pollution. Materials recycled include items made from PET pellets, aluminium, bottles and hard metal. The recycle value chain is made up of primary and secondary collectors, primary recycling companies and transformers of the collected materials into reusable products.

Based on interviews and visits to waste dump sites, both men and women are involved in the recycle business. Poor women make up about 20% (9,000) of the population working in this sector. It was observed that the number of participants within the VC especially women, decreases as one ascends the value chain because women work mostly as collectors and sorters. They recover aluminium cans and bottles from dump sites and sell to secondary collectors, in majority men; and also sort recovered material into different categories, colours and useable parts before crushing and/or bailing. Their male counterparts recover mainly aluminium cans and heavy metals (iron and still).

With few exceptions<sup>51</sup>, informants indicated that the choice of the items recovered is related more to the ability to handle (recover, carry, transport, etc.) than any other criteria. Income differences between men and women involved within the value chain are determined by the quantity and types of the recyclable materials that are recovered. Men earn more because the prices of the items they recover are higher than those recovered by women.

There are still a number of unanswered questions that would throw more light on the gender dynamics, challenges and opportunities within this value chain. For instance: i) To what extent is gender and price divorced from the decision of what is collected by men and women? ii) What are women and men's roles within existing recycle associations? Are there women in leadership positions? What type of roles do they occupy?

## GENDER REALITIES AND MADE

### Summary

This analysis has tried to identify men and women's roles and map out women's segments across the six preliminary value chains (agricultural inputs, fisheries, cassava, oil palm, traditional poultry and recycling) under consideration for the MADE

<sup>51</sup> Case of Asaba where women were restricted to plastics and men allowed to collect all they wanted including the heavy metals (iron, steel, etc.), which is usually sold for higher price.

programme; as well as highlight the key gender related constraints to female actors that need to be taken into consideration in the design and implementation to boost the program's success in achieving its goal of inclusive growth.

There are well established gender roles and women's clusters and/or segments within the six VCs.

- a. In the Agricultural inputs VC, the vast majority of agrochemical dealers are men, but women make up 50% of all end users of fertilizers, though they fall far short of men in quantities of both fertilizers and crop protection products (CPP) used because the majority of women are small scale farmers. However, the main beneficiaries of the programmes who will increase sales of the fertilizers and CPP will be small farmers. The differentiation of the beneficiaries will depend on the types of crops that are being serviced in their given geographic area.
- b. In the fisheries sector, there seems to be a degree of gender parity in both opportunities and challenges – men excel in wild capture of fin fish and women in that of shell fish. Women's involvement in aquaculture is significant at 30% of all fish pond farmers. Fish smoking and the fish trade, are women's segments par excellence – they make up 99% of all fish smokers and 98% of all fish traders.
- c. Cassava, a hitherto women dominated VC, has recently gained prominence as a cash crop and attracted many men into its production, leading to gender differentiated growth. Women who make up almost 100% of all primary processors and about 70% of all producers are mainly small scale farmers who produce for both household subsistence and the market. The main differentiating factor is access to productive resources particularly land and capital, which for the most part are gender differentiated (more details below).
- d. In palm oil, field data suggested that over 78/% of all small/medium scale palm plantation farms are owned by men and 22% by women<sup>52</sup>. However, women make up about 60% of all oil palm wholesalers and 90% of all retailers. While women make up about 10% of all oil palm processors, the concentration of male and female oil processors varies from one state to another. In Akwa Ibom, for instance, the vast majority of people who control the oil processing process are women. Women account for about 20% of people to whom the wild groves are leased for harvesting and selling (fresh fruits) and/or processing into oil and selling. Women are also wage workers on oil palm plantations and within oil processing mills.
- e. The traditional poultry sector engages women in over 3,032,167 households across the ND. Traditional poultry keeping is primarily a women's activity on own and/or husband's account. It has been established that in the majority of rural households, women are in charge of, and take part in managing the income from, local chickens.
- f. In recycling, poor women play an important role in the collection of cans and plastic bottles, with about 9,000 women employed at the primary and secondary levels.

Women actors' key gender based constraints within the above sectors include limited access and control over production resources - land, capital, new/improved technologies and related technical information. In the Niger Delta region, land is generally owned by families and managed by men. Women have little or no say in land matters and generally have just use rights, mediated through male kin. Men have privileged access to family land as owners. They are also more likely to raise capital

<sup>52</sup> Many of these female palm farmers are single older women (widows, never married) or more educated or retired women with enough money to invest in palm production. A few of them are said to manage the plantations on behalf of a male kin (husband, absent son, etc).

through loans than women because they usually have the required collateral – land. Training and outreach to disseminate new/improved technologies and related technical information usually suffer from gender biased targeting and information flow to farmers.

From what we know this far, most of these challenges seem to harbour embedded practices that could anchor and/or accommodate the type of change proposed through MADE without necessarily further aggravating the plight of those most adversely affected by prevailing gender inequalities; or creating new social barriers to economic growth. For instance, in the case of access to land, there is evidence that rental is an accepted means to access farmland for both men and women. All that is needed is capital. As far as economic enterprise is concerned, the impression one gets from field data is that society and men are content with enterprising women as long as they recognize/preserve the socially ascribed place of the men in their lives, even if just publicly. And many ND women seem to understand what it takes - subtle bargaining strategies<sup>53</sup>, which include striving as much as possible to stay within the comfort zones of normative gender roles. And this pays off despite the evident trade-offs of likely invisibility and difficulties to capture and properly document women's successes.

#### **Some Risks: Likely Displacement?**

It seems that if growth and upgrading within the palm oil sector leads to substantial increases in automated machinery, machines may replace human labour – sending many main wage labourers, 50% of whom are women, out of their processing mill jobs.

But if the growth of the value chain also revitalizes production by bringing back many farmers (old and new) into palm production, this is likely to create many more jobs in the longer term for women wage labourers who collect fruit bunches and loose fruit and transport to collecting points (which may have become tractors waiting to transport the harvest home). Such additional job openings could eventually also absorb some of the redundant mill workers.

One other area to watch out for is that of primary cassava processors in which women are still the primary actors and which may get threatened by growth of the value chain driven by mechanized implements and by stronger actors – the industrial processors. Useful interventions will be those that seek to enhance actors' ability to survive the unequal competition with the modern industrial actors for raw materials (cassava). These could include upgrading the segment by facilitating access to appropriate processing and packaging machinery, carving out a competitive niche for its actors.

#### **MADE APPROACH: Facilitating Change, Improved Performance and Inclusive Growth**

The identified key gender and other underlying systemic constraints and embedded opportunities are central to the proposed MADE interventions that aim to facilitate

<sup>53</sup> The fish mummies, oil palm traders –small and big, cassava processors, female dirt collectors (recycle), etc. are the evidence of understanding and making the best of challenging societal gender inequalities.

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change, improved performance and growth among target beneficiaries within the selected markets through: a) selecting and working in markets where women are already engaged, building on their own choices, opportunities, and comfort zones, to address key practical constraints that are preventing these markets and women's segments therein from working more effectively and more inclusively for poor women; b) motivating market actors to change their behaviour in a sustainable and catalytic way; and c) facilitating access to new knowledge, information, services and/or technologies to small/medium-scale poor farmers and entrepreneurs, men and women.

These interventions are meant to trigger the type of change that will make poor women and men more effective and productive in their existing roles. Experience suggests that working in markets where women are not already engaged and trying to insert them into the market systems will reap reduced and slower impact because success will require a degree of social transformation, a strategy, which not only takes too long to succeed, but is scarcely recommended given adverse repercussions that this may trigger in the ND region, a gender powered and tenuous security setting. The assumption is that through this approach women would reap better and unchallenged benefits, promoting their economic empowerment and enhancing overall sustainability and effectiveness of the program. This could pave the way for a more transformative agenda in the longer term if and when needed.



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