

# Contributions and Competitiveness of Young Female Grain Farmers in Cameroon

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## Background

- Half a million young women and a quarter million young men ready and willing to grow food, make goods, and provide services to others. It is a huge resource. How to mobilize them?
- The challenges are rural un- and underemployment and poverty.
- Cameroon's agribusiness practice operates in a market economy way. Young entrepreneurs who see opportunities to compete and thrive must save and invest on their own -- or in others' -- farms or businesses with target to sell their output to earn income and pay employees. It is also important to remember that paid employment is both a business cost and the foundation of business revenue. They invest in farm business with expectation to get return or to breakeven. In case of no gain, there is a high tendency to move from farming to rural and

urban migration. So it is important to document the actual outcomes and opportunities for women as agribusiness entrepreneurs..

## Contributions of Young Female Grain Farmers in Cameroon

- Young female maize producer-marketers pay more for farm labour.
- Those who pay for farm labour contribute more to their local rural economy than those who do not, all else equal.
- Women cultivate similar plot sizes and sell for the same – or higher - prices as their male counterparts.
- Female rice farmers, however, pay less than their male counterparts for labour, and a larger share of the women market their rice for higher prices than their male counterparts.



## The Research

- The research was conducted in three out of Cameroon's ten regions, these three regions are among the highest producing areas of maize and rice.
- The Far North Region
- North Region
- The West Region
- There were 1019 respondents, including;
- 428 rice producer-marketers (288 male and 140 female).
- 591 maize producer-marketers (434 male and 157 female).

## Conclusion

The challenge of rural un- and underemployment, especially among young women, can be solved in part if more young Cameroonians choose agribusiness entrepreneurship. Our research shows that young women can be as productive and successful as young men, especially at producing and marketing rice. Also, women who pay more for hired labour in maize farming deserve the appreciation and respect of their local community and

the country because they provide income opportunities to others even though it lowers their personal returns.

By these measures, maize and rice production and marketing in Northern and Western Cameroon appear to be good ways to earn a living, raise local food security and/or promote development in rural communities, where nearly half the population lives.

## Recommendations

- Young female rice and maize producer-marketers should be encouraged to set up a labour sharing arrangement for mutual help in farm labour.
- Price control policy should be set up throughout the year to enable young women to earn as much as their men counterparts.
- Land tenure system policy should give more consideration to young women to acquire more land, given that they are as productive as the young men.
- Incentives such as single digit interest rates, and no collateral security should be directed to young women to receive more credit to purchase fertilizer, pesticides, and improved seed varieties for maize, and rice production and marketing.

