



Do direct payments to women incentivize participation in low emissions dairy development interventions? Evidence from Kenya

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Key messages

- The dairy sector in Kenya could significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity through low emissions dairy development (LEDD) interventions.
- Women face substantial barriers in participating in the dairy value chain and benefiting from LEDD interventions.
- Bundling direct payment options with other non-financial incentives could directly increase the benefits accrued to women from participation in LEDD interventions.
- Pro-active engagements with smallholders regarding gender roles and equity could inform decisions regarding incentives for women participating in LEDD interventions.
- 'Gender safeguards' should be used in combination with direct payment options to counter-balance potentially detrimental impacts of LEDD interventions on women.

Background

Smallholder farmers account for approximately 70–80% of farmers active in the Kenyan dairy sector, with the concentration in the central region. The dairy sector has been targeted as a potential industry to implement climate-smart mitigation initiatives which can significantly reduce lower GHG emissions intensity.

Participation in the dairy sector has been hailed as a means of improving rural livelihoods and lifting people out of poverty due to the availability of significant commercial opportunities. Yet, due to social contexts and structural conditions, the opportunities afforded to men and women for entering the dairy sector are often different. Women frequently face substantial barriers to participation in the dairy value chain and in their capacity to accrue benefits from such participation. Thus, mitigation interventions must consider the household- and community-level gender norms that influence women's adoption of LEDD technologies and practices.

Research was conducted on the gender norms and intra-household dynamics that influence women's participation in LEDD interventions, with a focus on direct payments to women as incentives.

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The policy challenge

LEDD interventions have the potential to disenfranchise women by marginalizing their contribution and participation in the dairy sector. As such, the policy

challenge is how to develop socially-inclusive incentives and safeguards. Inclusive incentives need to be culturally sensitive, context-specific and responsive to local gender roles. 'Gender safeguards' need to ensure that women can meaningfully benefit from LEDD interventions. Taken together, incentives and safeguards can be customized through the recognition of existing and potential gender power imbalances in dairy production, intensification technologies and on-farm practices.

Participation in agricultural and livestock intensification practices commonly associated with LEDD interventions tends to be skewed in men's favour in terms of financial benefit, while women bear the brunt of additional labour burdens. This may lead to LEDD interventions being perceived by smallholder women farmers as 'more trouble than they're worth'. To circumnavigate their potentially detrimental effects, LEDD interventions in the Kenyan dairy sector are seeking new ways to incentivize women's participation and ensure their direct benefit. To achieve these goals, direct payments to women through formal market sales and bank accounts have been implemented in dairy interventions. A thorough understanding of intra-household and cultural gender dynamics is necessary to assess whether direct payments to women incentivize their participation in LEDD interventions. This policy brief outlines potential points of conflict that may disrupt the effectiveness of these incentives and offers policy recommendations for LEDD interventions beyond direct payments.

Gender dynamics in Kenyan dairy production

There is a clear gender division of labour in Kenyan dairy production. Women are predominately responsible for the daily and time-consuming tasks related to the management of cows. They secure fodder for the animals, remove their manure, provide them with water, assess and take care of their health needs, determine whether they are in heat and require mating or artificial insemination, and of course milk them. These tasks can easily take six hours a day. Men's tasks tend to be more 'seasonally needs-based' or sporadic. They include purchasing and selling cows, spraying them against ticks and planting fodder crops.

Despite women's labour-intensive contributions to dairy production, they are often less privileged in terms of cattle ownership, decision-making associated with the animals (buying/selling) and the sharing of the income from the sale of milk. These household gender dynamics are further reinforced by cultural norms that privilege men's legitimacy in accessing the benefits of dairy farming through formal participation in milk markets.

To contest these dynamics, work is being undertaken across Kenya to integrate women into LEDD interventions. Strategies frequently seek to facilitate the registration of women as members of milk cooperatives and help them to open bank accounts (either individually or jointly with their spouse) whereby women can receive monthly payments based on the volume of milk they and their families supplied.

Kenyan case-study summary

In many cultural contexts in Kenya, cows, milk marketing and commercial production practices in formal market spheres are culturally considered masculine domains. This generates significant gender-related conflicts that greatly influence women's ability and incentives to participate in LEDD interventions.

As interventions using direct payments rely on monthly, formally bulked bank deposits, income derived from the formal sale of milk is viewed as culturally the legitimate property for men, who have been traditionally responsible for large household expenditures.

In most cases, direct payments alone do not appear to incentivize married women to participate in LEDD interventions. However, when bundled together with other non-financial incentives (e.g. agro-veterinary services, access to credit and loans, additional training in dairy and in other livestock/agricultural value chains), women may be more likely to participate in LEDD interventions.

As they are more likely to control the revenue from formal milk sales, single women (never married, divorcees and widows) are incentivized to participate in LEDD interventions involving direct payments. However, they face considerable cultural barriers, such as lack of financial capital, land and cattle that act as disincentives to their participation.

In sum, incentivizing participation in LEDD interventions is complex and culturally conditioned. It requires an understanding of household gender dynamics to recognize the cultural incentives and disincentives women have for participating. In the Kenyan case study, a combination of cultural gender norms and household dynamics around male management responsibilities and marketplaces shape women's ability to participate in and benefit from LEDD interventions. Moreover, the case study highlighted that while women may face common challenges in participating in LEDD interventions, they are not a homogenous group. Other types of social differences (e.g. age, marital status and ethnicity) also shaped why, how and to what extent women choose to participate. Inclusive incentives and gender safeguards must consider these intersectional differences in designing appropriate interventions.



Policy gaps and opportunities for action

The 2015 Paris agreement stipulates that climate change mitigation should be pursued in alignment with broader Sustainable Development Goals. While the agreement calls for the introduction of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) assessments for LEDD interventions, a major policy gap exists in that there are currently no specifications for reporting on social outcomes that emerge from the pursuit of those biophysical targets. For example, how will the promotion and uptake of LEDD interventions affect women's socio-economic position and access to opportunities? A sole focus on technology and technical practice in MRV glosses over the socio-economic changes implied in the implementation of new climate-smart technologies and on-farm practices. Therefore, the analysis of gender power dynamics at the intra-household and community levels are necessary to assess the gender impacts and social implications of the adoption of LEDD interventions.

As Kenya presses forward with LEDD aspirations and interventions—largely based around the creation and implementation of the Dairy Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) strategy for Kenya—attention should be paid to the mechanisms to ensure gender equitable outcomes so that LEDD interventions do not become a cause of women's marginalization and disenfranchisement. The current draft of the Kenyan Dairy NAMA pays little attention to the likely social outcomes of intensification and pays superficial attention to gender issues in LEDD interventions. Concrete commitments to gender equity should be provisioned in the draft by using the three emergent policy recommendations from this brief with guaranteed funding mechanisms to ensure inclusive incentives and gender safeguards in LEDD implementation and planning processes.

National-level and constitutional protections of ensuring gender parity in Kenyan governing bodies should be enforced. The Constitution of Kenya provides a clear framework for institutionalizing gender equality. It sets out a two-thirds rule, meaning that a single gender cannot form more than two-thirds of a public decision-making body. This gender quota addresses the historic and contemporary underrepresentation of women in political and governance institutions and could be used as a framework for ensuring women's representation in LEDD decision-making bodies.

Policy recommendations

1. Explore the possibility of bundling direct payment options with other non-financial incentives (e.g. agro-veterinary services, access to credit and loans) as a way of increasing the direct benefits accrued to women from participation in LEDD interventions.
2. Actively engage with smallholders regarding gender roles and equity as a way of customizing incentives for women's participation in LEDD interventions. This would help ensure that these incentives are culturally sensitive, context specific and firmly based on women's needs, priorities and day-to-day realities.

3. Ensure 'gender safeguards' are adopted in combination with direct payment options to counter-balance potentially detrimental impacts of LEDD interventions on women. This could be done by identifying locally relevant livestock/agricultural activities outside of dairy farming where women would be able to access economic benefits more directly and provide training, services or resources in these areas. Alongside this, adopt a 'do no harm' approach to the design of LEDD technologies with women's capacities and current workload in mind.

Incentives for participation in LEDD interventions, including direct payments, should anticipate and account for intra-household and cultural gender dynamics. The fundamental conflicts around barriers to women's entry and control of profits commensurate with workload need to be addressed to ensure inclusive policies and interventions. The household-level complexities of resource ownership, the gender division of labour and intra-household decision-making ought to be considered in dairy intensification interventions. Recognizing that direct payment structures are more likely to benefit single or widowed women than married women, alternatives and add-ons could be integrated into interventions aimed at eliciting women's participation, such as additional workshops resources and services.

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