

# Gender dynamics in the cassava leaf value chain in Tanzania

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Marketing of cassava leaves at a fresh market in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Karolin Andersson.

## INTRODUCTION

Cassava leaves are an important part of the Tanzanian diet. They are rich in minerals, antioxidants and protein.

Yet, most value chain analyses of cassava focus exclusively on the tubers, while little is known about market structure and benefitting actors in the cassava leaves value chain.

Exploring this is relevant in view of the wider political-economic context of increasing commercialization of cassava, which may alter gender relations and affect households' wellbeing and food and nutrition security adversely.

## OBJECTIVES

- Explore and map the value chain of cassava leaves in Mkuranga District, Tanzania.
- Identify the benefitting actors and the mechanisms for control over benefits and resources, with special focus on gender relations.
- Identify opportunities and constraints and suggest interventions for development.

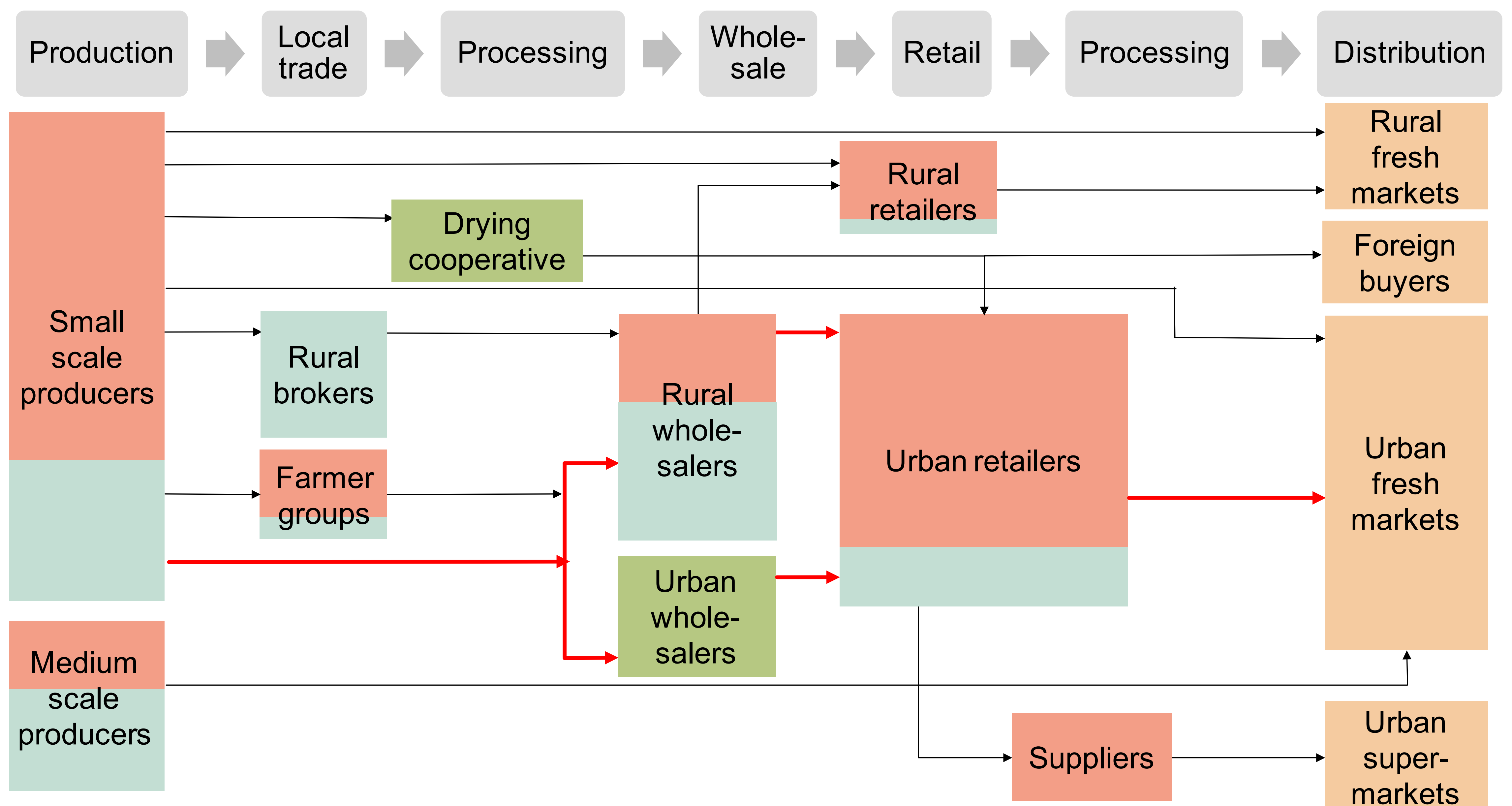
## METHODS

A mixed methods approach was employed by using the following research methods.

- A household survey with 50 farmers, both men and women
- 52 Semi-structured interviews with various value chain actors
- Two focus group discussions with women and men farmers
- Participant and direct observations of infrastructure, markets and production

The data was qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed and descriptively presented.

## THE CASSAVA LEAF VALUE CHAIN



### LEGEND

- Red arrows indicate the major product flow
- Box colours indicate the gendered distribution within each node
  - Pink = Share of women
  - Blue = Share of men
  - Green = Not established

## GENDER RELATIONS

The value chain is dominated by women, particularly within production, marketing at farm level and retail. Men are primarily involved in wholesale and as rural brokers.

Women's participation in marketing activities is limited by low level of education, low confidence and marketing skills and time poverty due to societal gender roles and norms.

Pounding of cassava leaves is performed exclusively by women, as the technique is traditionally seen as a work for women. Men who pound are considered weak and feminine.

## CONCLUSION

The value chain is in a formative stage and is underappreciated by external actors.

Women are the main stakeholders in the chain.

Wholesalers and retailers receive the highest benefits from participation, and farmers have limited market information.

Suggested upgrading strategies:

- Increase and improve technology for processing activities.
- Establish and strengthen farmer groups for increased bargaining power among producers.

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