



Tropentag, September 14-16, 2022, hybrid conference

“Can agroecological farming feed the world?
Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Smallholder women farmers impediments in agriculture a risk to agro ecological farming success: a case of Makueni county, Kenya

MELLYNE ONGANGO¹, CHRISTINE BOSCH¹, JOHN MBURU², REGINA BIRNER¹

¹*University of Hohenheim, Hans-Ruthenberg-Institute, Germany*

²*University of Nairobi, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Kenya*

Abstract

The agriculture sector is underperforming in many developing countries, and one of the reasons given is that it is because women do not have equal access to the resources and opportunities that they need to become more productive and face a lot more constraints than men in accessing productive resources. Women are also affected by cultural and social status. In rural areas, not only are women responsible for maintaining their households, but they also play a big role in agricultural production and increasing resilience to climate change. Yet, there are still knowledge gaps on whether existing solutions to climate change do work for women.

In a study seeking to understand gendered levels of adoption of Regenerative agriculture in Makueni County, Kenya, a mixed methods approach was adopted in which quantitative data (number of practices adopted) and qualitative data (semi-structured interviews) were collected from 96 farmers. Regenerative agriculture refers to the regeneration of soils through practices such as mixed cropping, minimum or zero tillage, cover cropping, crop diversification (use of legumes), crop rotation, composting, use of organic mulch, recycling of farm waste and integrated grazing resulting in sustainable and consistent crop yields. These practices are based on the principles of agroecology.

The results show that women faced systemic barriers in their ability to adopt these methods. Although the women are the ones who attended the trainings, patriarchal norms limited their decision-making ability to practices these methods, as they had to get permission from their husbands. For those who could adopt, they had little access to labour which is very critical in regenerative agriculture. For agroecological systems to work, women in agriculture need to be empowered to have greater control over decisions on resources, food production and time allocation.

Keywords: Agro ecology, regenerative agriculture, women