

Women and Gender Roles in Food Systems

“Something I want to see change is engagement of youth and women, we have decisions being made by men.”

Global Dialogue Participant

The role of women and gender in relation to food systems emerged across conversations.

Similarly, in Molow a participant described how she works with women, in an area where they tend to be the primary household workers, yet because they have no ownership over the land and men dominate decision-making spaces they have little influence. Yet, “the introduction of biogas is allowing women more free time to socialise and work with other women in their community and provide a reliable fuel source to feed their families.”

In Coastal Kenya, participants shared how outside pressures were influencing gender dynamics.

“Yields are going down, farming is getting harder and men are having to look for additional sources of income, which places an additional burden [on top of already existing farm work and food preparation which is mainly done by women] on the women to produce food.”

For the participants from México City and Milpa Alta women play a critical role in food production. This is a result of a strong relationship with the land for some of them, yet this relationship is threatened by structural violence.

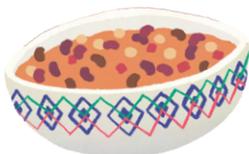
“Women are producing 50 percent of the food but only have one percent of the land. They need the land to survive and take care of life. In México they are killing women.”

Similarly, participants from Molow shared that women are given four objects as symbols that they are moving away from their family life to get married.

“A bag with all the bedding, cooking stick and cooking pot, because you are a woman you are to feed the nation, there is the basket that we carry on the back. We use the bag so you do not pollute the environment.”

For many participants gender roles are embedded within food systems. At the same time, within these gender roles, farming is still an activity which continues to provide opportunities for empowerment by taking care of people and land

Githeri **Molow, Kenya**



The maize and beans githeri is the most commonly consumed food in Kenya being served as one of the meals in schools every day. Cowpeas are mainly cooked for special occasions such as weddings, while black beans are believed to be very strong foods for newly delivered mothers and during the groom home visitation. Mix at a ratio of 2 parts of maize to 1 part of beans 2:1.

Object brought by participants to represent something that they are proud of in their food systems.