

African Union: Transforming agriculture through skills development for women

Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) for women, with a focus on labour market-oriented and income-enhancing value chains, is successfully implemented in pilot countries.

The challenge

Agriculture is one of the main pillars of development in Africa. The sector contributes about 32% to the continent's gross domestic product (GDP). Women are a driving force in agricultural production, processing and trade. They produce about 80% of the food and account for nearly 50% of the workforce in the sector.

However, women often lack access to essential knowledge and training opportunities due to existing socio-cultural barriers. As a result, women's potential to increase agricultural productivity and profitability on the continent remains untapped.

Our approach

The African Union (AU) established the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a strategy which aims to achieve agriculture-based growth and food security on the continent. The technical body of the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), has been mandated to coordinate the implementation of CAADP. GIZ on behalf of the German government supports the AUC and NPCA in mainstreaming CAADP in 55 AU member states.

Our area of work focuses on promoting Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) for women to ensure that training delivery is inclusive, labour market-oriented and income-enhancing. The ATVET Women intervention strives to increase women's access to formal and non-formal training in the agri-food sector.



Project name	Promoting Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) for Women through NEPAD/ CAADP
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implementing organisation	NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and GIZ
Project region	Africa (based in South Africa)
Lead executing agency	African Union Commission (AUC)
Duration	01.01.2017 – 31.12.2019
Financial volume	14.000.000 EUR

In six partner countries, our work targets i) women already in formal vocational training, ii) female smallholder farmers without access to formal or non-formal training and iii) female small and micro entrepreneurs. The six partner countries are Kenya, Malawi, Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo.

The ATVET Women approach takes into account women's diverse roles and needs in society by focusing on non-formal training courses that are flexible in design – for example, evening or weekend courses that are tied to local formal training institutions. In addition, the ATVET Women intervention supports mentorship programmes and emphasises a variety of didactic learning approaches that are geared to the needs of women with little prior educational experience.



Photos (left): Women processing shea butter in Burkina Faso © GIZ/ Ursula Meissner

Photo (middle): ATVET training session in Benin © GIZ

Photo (right): ATVET student at the Latia Resource Center Ltd. in Kenya © GIZ



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Photo (left): Women threshing rice in Banankoro village, Mali © GIZ/ Joerg Boethling

Photo (center): ATVET student Linda at the Asuansi Farm Institute in Ghana © GIZ

Photo (right): ATVET student Caroline at the Dairy Training Institute (DTI) in Kenya © GIZ

Results in figures ...

- Since the start of the preceding phase of the ATVET project (2012-2016), almost **2,000 women** have received Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET).
- Nearly **30% of all students trained** in the six partner countries were women. Previously, women made up on average less than 15% of trainees in formal agricultural training institutions.
- Acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of Africa's agricultural sector, the ATVET Women intervention uses training curricula that are both tailored to countries' skills needs and based on the following high-priority value chains:
 - **Kenya:** dairy, horticulture and aquaculture
 - **Malawi:** mango, pineapple and aquaculture
 - **Ghana:** pineapple and citrus
 - **Benin:** rice and meat (chicken, pork, sheep)
 - **Burkina Faso:** rice, sesame and cashew
 - **Togo:** rice and aquaculture
- As a result, a total of **250 training modules** have been developed for **10 agricultural value chains**.
- Based on an assessment of women's roles and contributions in agriculture, additional training modules are being developed. These will focus on other value chains with the aim of increasing women's economic empowerment. Once developed, the modules will be taught at selected vocational training institutions in the six pilot countries, where the teachers and management have been **sensitised to gender aspects**.

... and in stories

The ATVET Women intervention develops curricula and learning materials that incorporate gender perspectives. Local women's organisations and networks, private sector representatives and partnerships are included in the process. Taking into account socio-economic and cultural contexts, the specific needs of women will be considered in the planning of course venues and timings. Caroline and Linda were beneficiaries of these gender-specific courses and gained crucial additional skills for their professional careers:

Caroline

ATVET student at the Dairy Training Institute (DTI)

Based in Kenya, Caroline is a final year ATVET student. She has always believed that young women should be given the same opportunities as young men, including the opportunity to handle animals. Traditionally, the handling of larger animals, like cattle, is left to the men. However, Caroline believes it's important to know what to do when the men in the family aren't around. Through her training, she was able to enhance her skills in this regard. She was able to work along agricultural value chains and identify the right career path for her.

Linda

ATVET student at Asuansi Farm Institute

Linda is a competency-based training (CBT) student at the Asuansi Farm Institute in Ghana. Before starting her training, she knew very little about the use of fertilisers. The CBT approach taught Linda how much fertiliser is needed for one acre of land. Now she can mix the right quantities of water and fertiliser by herself to enhance the growth of crops and plants.

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