Agriculture accounts for more than 20% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Zambia (World Bank, Poverty Overview Report 2020).

Despite its significant contribution to the economy, this vital sector continues to face a decline in productivity due to erratic weather patterns, pests and diseases, soil fertility issues, inadequate farm inputs, post-harvest losses, and poor access to lucrative markets.

Smallholder farmers produce over 70% of the food consumed in Zambia. The main cash and food crop is maize, accounting for over 65% of the country's total crop land. Access to knowledge and information to diversify crop production is critically lacking, in addition to lack of access to finance and credit facilities to expand production.

Youth and women smallholder farmers (WSHFs) play a critical role in land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting and marketing. However, they face major challenges in accessing local and regional markets for their commodities, with over 80% indicating that they sell their products only at local markets.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened smallholder farmers' access to markets, exposing critical gaps that already existed in the market systems. Lockdowns, social distancing measures and restrictions on movement have further limited their access to inputs like seed varieties, fertilizers and extension services.

Oxfam in Southern Africa (Oxfam SAF) in partnership with the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) implemented a project that focused on how smallholder agricultural producers, especially women and youth, in the four Oxfam focus countries - Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, were interacting with markets.
MARKET GAPS IN ZAMBIA

The following were some of the market constraints experienced by women smallholder farmers in Zambia.

1. **Physical access to markets**

   Markets in Zambia are sparsely located across the various districts with unreliable road networks. WSHFs reported challenges accessing markets other than those in their locality due to the distances and poor roads; some of which are inaccessible during the rainy season. The markets also lack inclusive physical structures like safe stalls and private bathrooms to accommodate the needs of women.

2. **Access to credit and finance**

   Many smallholder farms operate on a bare minimum of cash reserves and depend on their farm proceeds for food and economic growth. Access to bank loans and other credit facilities to expand their businesses is highly limited due to the high risk often associated with small-scale farming.

   In Zambia less than 20% of the WSHFs reported to have accessed some form of financing support for their enterprises (Zambia Financial Scoping Survey Report 2015).

3. **Access to ICT**

   Zambia has made strides in ICT by developing the Zambia Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (ZIAMIS). This platform integrates access to e-vouchers and other forms of support, such as e-extension and insurance, however, with limited access by WSHFs in rural areas, as a result of low ICT penetration.

   In 2019, 14,3% of the population in Zambia reported to have access to the internet (Statista 2019). The use of ICT can increase access to information, strengthen regional and national trade practices for inclusive markets systems, as well as creating an enabling environment for efficient agriculture market systems.

   Zambia’s food and agriculture systems are therefore not providing food security for all, with almost half of all Zambians hungry at certain times of the year.

THE MARKETS CAMPAIGN INTERVENTION

FANRPAN in partnership with Oxfam SAF and the Southern Africa People’s Solidarity Network (SAPSN) are implementing a Markets Campaign to increase the awareness of market access constraints faced by smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, and provide evidence-based solutions to create an enabling and fair environment for farmers to access profitable markets. The focus is on collective action at regional and national levels, building on ongoing work (programmatic) and campaigns in Southern Africa. For more details and on how to participate in this campaign, please visit the FANRPAN website: https://fanrpan.org/oxfam/.

About FANRPAN

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is an autonomous regional stakeholder driven policy research, analysis and implementation network that was formally established by Ministers of Agriculture from Eastern and Southern Africa in 1997. FANRPAN was borne out of the need for comprehensive policies and strategies required to resuscitate agriculture. FANRPAN is mandated to work in all African countries and currently has activities in 17 countries namely Angola, Benin, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Copyright FANRPAN Regional Secretariat

141 Cresswell Road, Weavind Park 0184, Private Bag X2087, Silverton 014, Pretoria, South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 804 2966. Facsimile: +27 12 804 0600. Email: policy@fanrpan.org. Website: www.fanrpan.org

FANRPAN, Oxfam SAF and SAPSN would like to express their gratitude for the contributions of numerous stakeholders, without whom this project would not have been possible.