



Banana Seed Systems and the role of gender

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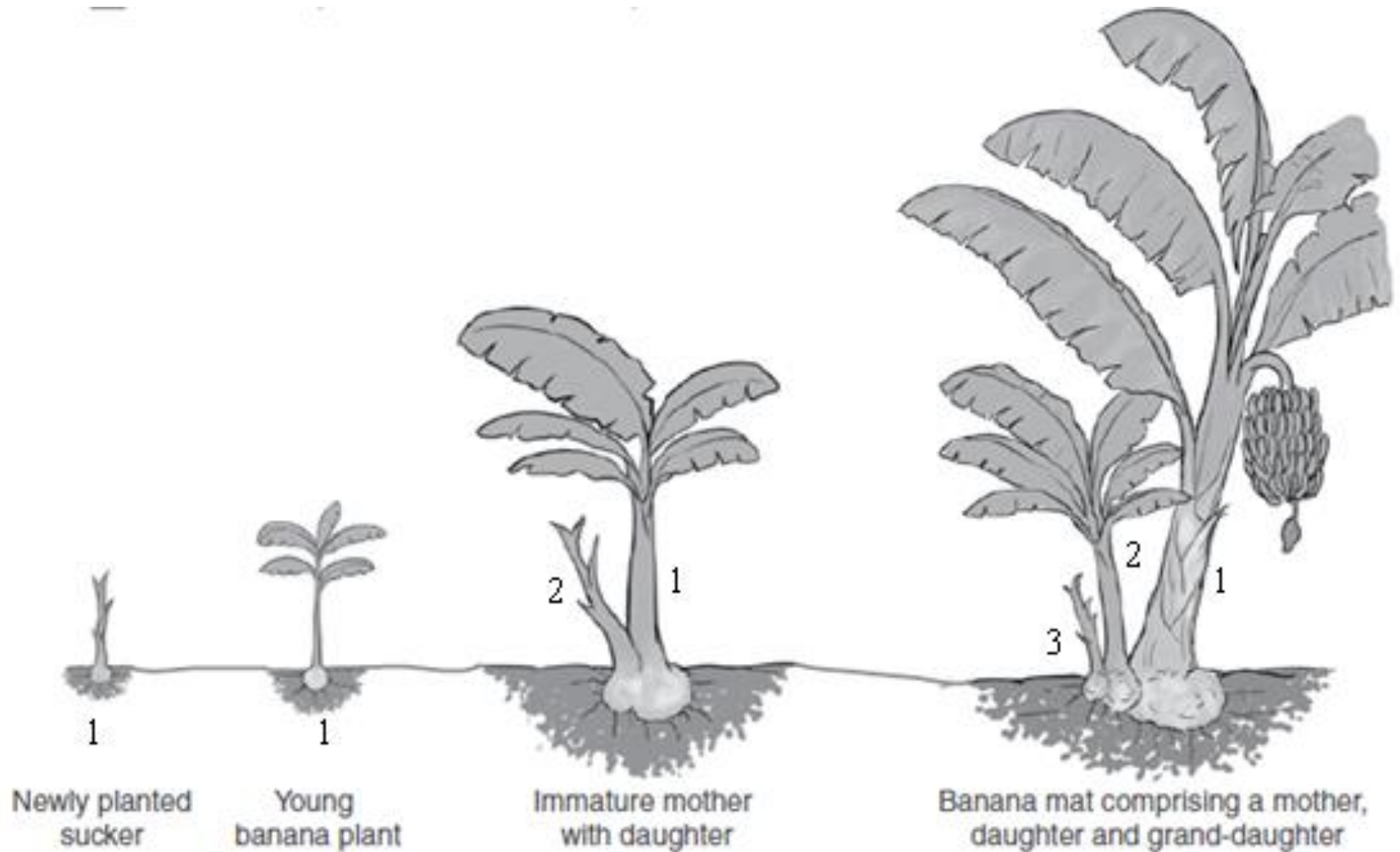
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Objectives Session

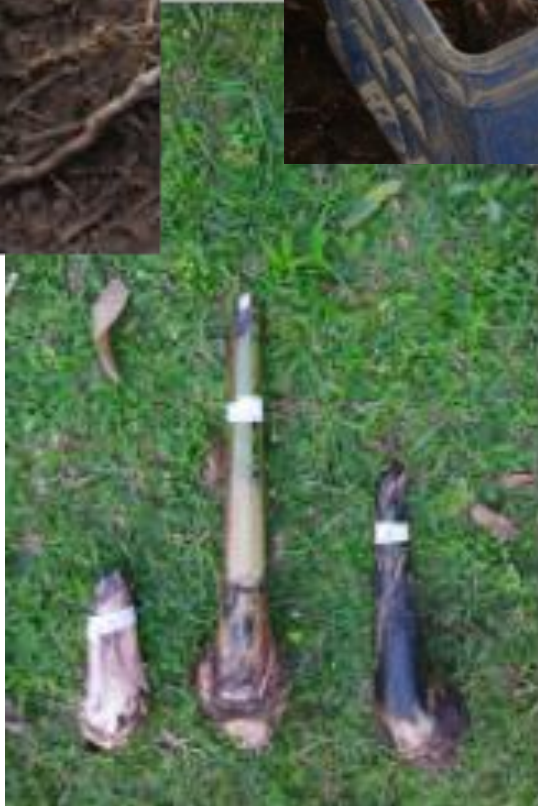
- To familiarize you with the basic elements of banana seed systems and of banana cultivation in East-Africa
- To provide insights into the role of gender in banana seed systems and how to address this
- To discuss similarities and differences between Banana and Sweet potato seed systems, and the role of gender within these, for cross-crop learning



Banana growth and reproduction



Banana 'seed'



Banana seed production

- Sucker transplanting
- Macro-propagation
- Micro-propagation (TC)

➔ Nursery



Banana in East-Africa (East-African highlands)

- Banana has strong cultural and symbolic value and is associated with male status
- Banana is key for income generation in many parts of EA
- Banana is often the 'preferred food' and conceived as essential for food security (year-round production)
- Secondary diversity hotspot for banana (EAHB-AAA genome group)



Banana cropping systems in East-Africa

- Commercial mono-culture cooking varieties (Western Uganda)
- Low-input mono-culture beer varieties (Eastern Congo / Burundi)
- Intercropping systems (whole region)



Gender analysis banana systems EA

- Men are usually in control of banana plantations
- Men and women have specific tasks in banana management:
- Women: weeding / mulching
- Men: Uprooting corms / de-suckering / harvesting/ planting / marketing / **sales**

Exception:
Widows!!

These are subject to normative ideas about how women and men should behave



Gender norms in East Africa

The man is 'the head of the household'

- Land belongs to men → Men own banana plantations
- Cash is for men: Women have no need for money → limited options to invest in farming
- The husband controls (to some extent) work allocation of wife → women work mornings in the plantation
- Women belong at homes and need permission from their husband to move out → women's capacity to access information or purchase inputs is limited

Banana cropping systems in East-Africa

Similarities across the region:

- High diversity of cultivars on-farm
- Low productivity
- Low use of inputs
- Threats: diseases such as:
 - Bunchy Top Disease
 - Xanthomonas Wilt
- Cultivated as permanent crop



Farmers' Need for Banana Seed

Usually only in exceptional situations:

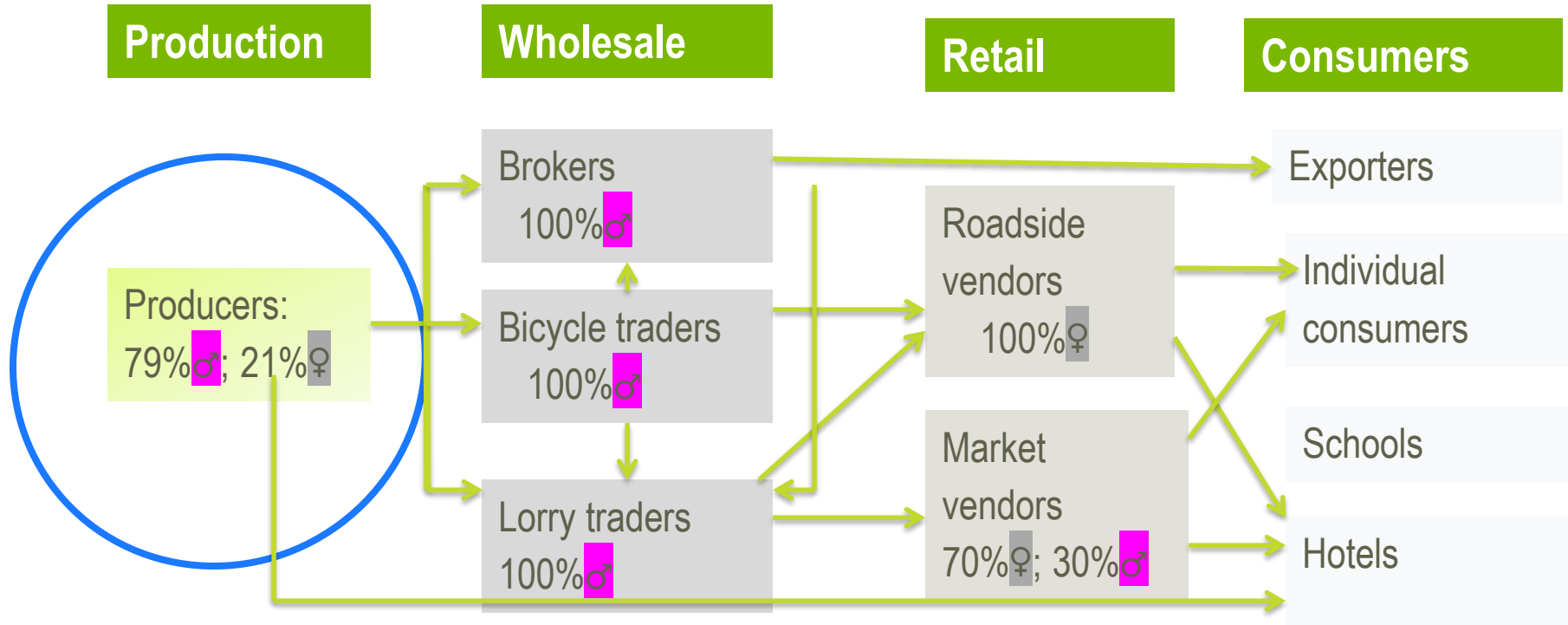
- New establishment plantation
- Expansion exceeding own sucker availability
- Disease / degeneration
- Changing production objectives (requiring other varieties)
- Or a mix of the above



Banana seed system in East Africa

- No regular complete re-planting but 'gap-filling'
- Need for seed mostly filled with own-farm available 'suckers'
- Relatively little seed exchange
- Role of 'formal seed sector' negligible
- 'Improved' varieties from research or development agencies

Gender value chain analysis Western UG



- Activities**
- Land preparation♂
 - Planting♂♀
 - Weeding♀
 - De-suckering♂
 - De-trashing♂♀
 - De-budding♂♀
 - Uprooting corms of harvested plants♂
 - Digging water trenches♂
 - Harvesting for sell♂
 - Harvesting for food♀
 - Selling♂

- Identifying producers with required volumes♂
- Harvesting♂
- Bulking♂
- Loading♂
- Transportation♂

- Off-loading♂
- Sorting♂♀
- Grading♂♀
- Peeling♀
- Selling♂♀

Key:
 ♀=Female,
 ♂=Male

Example of project approach

Project – ENDURE – aiming at improving the cooking banana value chain through various interventions along the chain

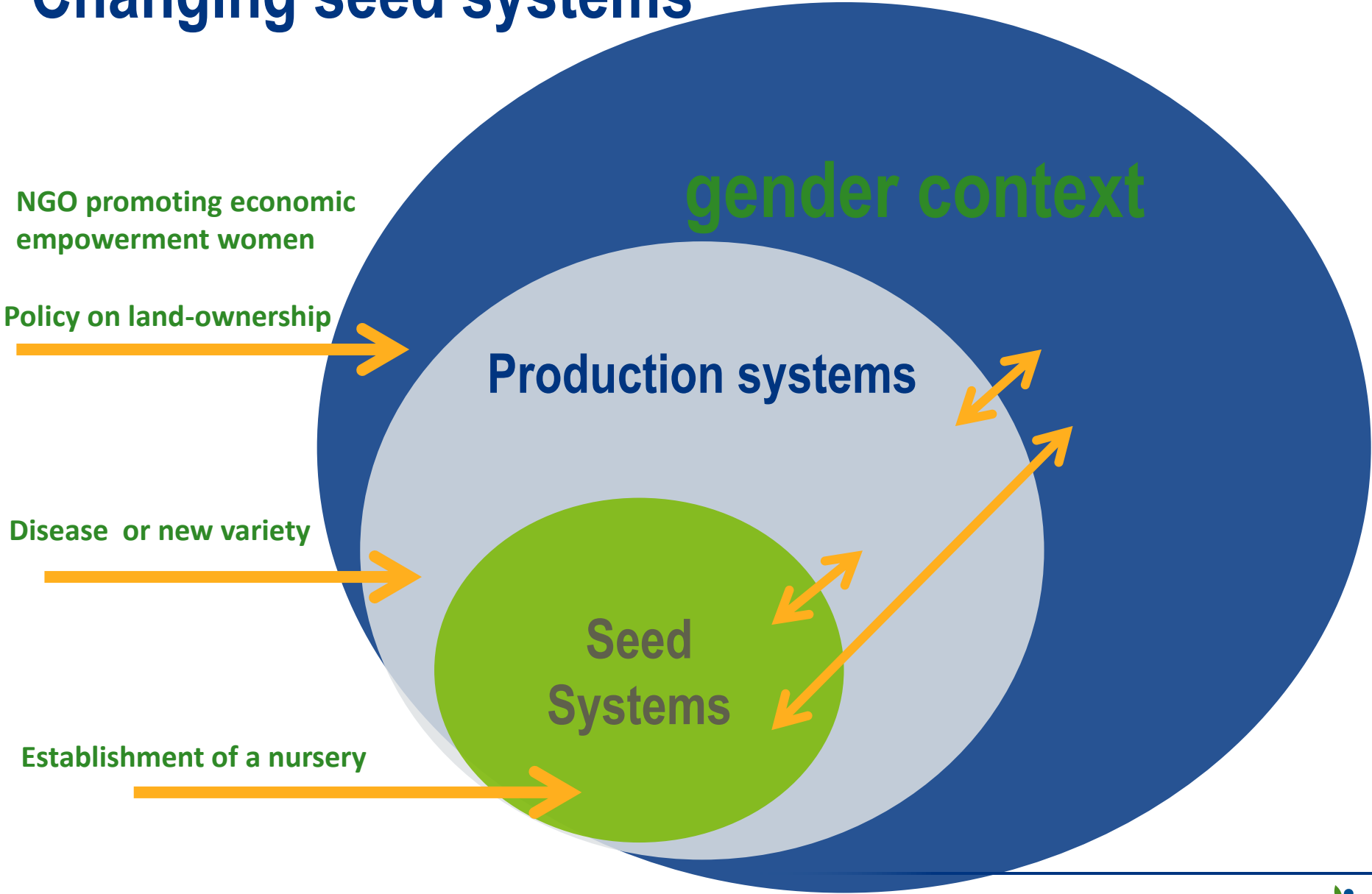
- Promotion of 4 market-demanded varieties -> establishing community-based seed production system
- Mother gardens hosted by individual farmers chosen by the communities or farmers representing groups (5 women, 5 men)
- Training in field banana planting materials multiplication techniques, and in establishment and management of macro-propagation chambers and shade

Inclusion in seed business initiatives - post

- Various commercial seed business in region copied multiplication techniques but all managed by men
- Only women still in seed-business are those part of community efforts



Changing seed systems



R&D questions banana seed and gender

- What is our objective?
 - Is it economic empowerment to men and women involved?
 - Is it to transform the ways in which men and women are involved -> promoting gender equality?
- Taken that banana is mainly a 'men's crop', is it important to have a gender-responsive seed access approach?
- What would such an approach look like?



Thank you

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