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Author: Simiyu, Robert Wamalwa Romborah

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Gendered division of labour in urban agriculture

This chapter highlights the labour contributions of men and women in urban agriculture, the gender relations that underpin these patterns, and the implications of the labour distribution patterns for household and individual livelihood outcomes. The allocation of labour within urban agriculture in Eldoret is considered at two levels. Firstly, the analysis focuses on the sharing of overall responsibility for crops and livestock. Since it was common for different household members to assume responsibility for different crops and livestock, for purposes of analysis, gardening and livestock enterprises were disaggregated into the different crops and livestock types. Each crop grown and each livestock type reared at the household level was considered as constituting a separate instance for responsibility taking.¹ However, taking responsibility for a particular crop or livestock did not necessarily mean that the individual involved performed all tasks in respect of the crop or livestock. Rather, tasks were commonly shared with or even performed by other household members. In other instances external labour was hired. Thus, the second level of analysis focuses on the performance of specific tasks in crop production and livestock keeping.

Division of responsibility for crops

Table 10.1 and Appendix 10.1 present data on responsibility-sharing between men and women in crop cultivation. The data show that responsibility for crops was shared by men and women in only 9% of the 419 instances. In 85% of the instances, crops were the sole responsibility of only one spouse, and it was three

¹ In other words, a household cultivating three types of crops would be considered as presenting three responsibility-taking instances, and one with two types of livestock considered as presenting two responsibility-taking instances.

times more likely that the spouse involved was female. These gender differences were replicated in the case of subsistence crops, as well as maize (the staple crop) when considered separately. However, men's level of involvement with income-earning crops was higher and although women still dominated this category of crops, they did so to a lesser extent compared with subsistence crops.

Table 10.1 Responsibility for crops, by gender (%)

Type of crop	N	Male head	Female spouse	Joint
All crops	419	21	64	9
Subsistence crops (incl. maize)	314	19	65	10
Maize	91	24	60	10
Income-generating crops	37	30	51	16

Note: The percentages do not add up to 100% because household members other than the male household heads or the female spouse also took responsibility for crops in certain instances (see Appendix 10.1).

The patterns of gender division of responsibility were underpinned by various factors, which motivated men's and women's participation in crop cultivation to significantly different levels (see Table 10.2). Men and women mostly assumed responsibility for particular crops because they 'had time' or because the cultivation of the crop was their 'own initiative/investment'. While in the latter case both male and female spouses were motivated to more or less the same extent, the time factor was more important in explaining women's than men's role in taking responsibility for crops. Considering the time demands of women's domestic responsibilities and the fact that many women also participated in other income-generating activities,² it would perhaps be more accurate to think about the importance of the time factor for women not in terms of *availability per se* but rather in terms of *flexibility* and their supposed ability to juggle between domestic roles and gardening.

It has already been noted that women were more inclined towards taking responsibility for subsistence crops, presumably because preparation of food was part of their reproductive roles. This can be inferred from 15% of the instances where women's responsibility for crops either was part of the cultural expectation of them (8%), doing so benefited them the most (7%), or it was related to

² 52% (N=119) of the female spouses were involved in non-farming livelihood activities, most of which were either home-based or carried out within the neighbourhood in close proximity of the home (see Chapter 6).

Table 10.2 Reasons for taking responsibility for crops, by gender (%)

	Men	Women
<i>No. of instances:</i>	87	270
Own initiative/investment	28	22
Culture/tradition	7	8
Has technical knowledge	23	0
It is just a small project	5	13
It benefits me the most	7	4
Have time	29	48
Relates to other responsibilities	2	3
Cannot afford hired labour	0	2
Spouse's decision	0	1
Total	100	100

Chi-square: $X^2=69.599$; $df=8$; $p=0.00<0.05$.

their other responsibilities (3%). Yet, in-depth interviews also suggested that crop cultivation served men's interests as well in terms of fulfilling their social obligations. During good economic times men tend to rely on income from non-farming activities outside the home to meet their household obligations, including food provisioning. However, the difficult economic circumstances appeared to have limited men's ability to provide for their families causing many of them to take increasing interest in crop cultivation as an alternative source of living (see Chapters 8 and 9). Mhubiri's account is testimony to this:

The vegetables we grow on the plot are very important for the household. We save money on vegetables. We also buy sugar, milk and other minor household items from the sale of vegetables. Sometimes my children are also able to meet some school needs from the vegetables such as transport to school and books (...) Nowadays I take a lot of interest in urban farming because if I don't I will be the one expected to meet all these expenses. You can't manage at this time. It is very difficult to get money out there.

(Mhubiri, 30 May 2009)

Mhubiri's is one of many examples of men who, owing to persistent and growing economic hardships and shrinking opportunities in the 'masculine' public arena, were retreating into the 'feminine' domestic space in order to fulfil their gender roles and obligations. However, because of the continued social construction of home as a woman's place – and as such it being considered unmanly for men to just 'sit at home' most of the time – many men continued to venture outside the home, as a result of which they had little time to tend home gardens. But just as women's domestic responsibilities explained why they dominated home gardening, men's outdoor activities not only explain men's relative absence from home gardens but also the tendency for them to take primary responsibility for off-plot farming. Not to mention that off-plot farming was done on

relatively bigger plots and for both subsistence and income. Ongeris³ is a case in point. A retired primary school teacher, Ongeris owns one-eighth of an acre plot in Langas settlement on which his household maintains a small vegetable garden measuring about 20 m², besides having access to two bigger plots in the peri-urban areas. While Ongeris's wife – a housewife who knits sweaters from home for income – was responsible for the home garden, Ongeris took primary responsibility for off-plot farming because his wife could not manage to take care of it due to distance, but also because of the scale of production and potential profitability (see Chapter 6). He expected to harvest about 60 sacks of maize from the plot. Estimating his household maize requirements to be eight sacks, Ongeris intended to sell the rest and make a 'decent income'.

As with their greater involvement with off-plot farming, men were also more likely to be responsible for crops that required relatively higher levels of technical knowledge and skills than women could muster (see Table 10.2). For instance, Onyancha personally took responsibility for the household garden because, as he put it:

I am the one who knows how to organize the plot, when to plant different crops, and how to prune them. I am also the one who understands better which chemicals to use and when and how to use them. My wife doesn't understand most of what goes on on this plot. The only crop she can handle on this plot is *sukuma wiki* (kale). But not the others like *dhania* (parsley), green paper, spinach, onions, tomatoes and carrots. She only assists when it comes to harvesting and selling. Even then I must show her what is ready for harvesting and how the harvesting should be done so that other crops are not damaged.

(Onyancha, 23 May 2009)

It should be noted that most of the crops in Onyancha's garden are exotic crops that are not traditionally grown in Onyancha's rural home area, where both he and his wife, who share the Kisii ethnic background, grew up and from where they had migrated to Eldoret only recently. Thus, while home gardening may be traditionally associated with women, on account of the crops he cultivated, Onyancha was not subject to any particular social sanctions. Thus, his choice of crops amounts to a reconstruction of the 'feminine' domestic space in a manner that makes it socially acceptable (or tolerable) for a man to make a living within it (see Overå 2007). The couple also had comparable levels of education, having both dropped out of secondary school, on marriage, at the same time. However, while Onyancha soon after started looking for construction jobs in his rural town where he gained some masonry skills, his wife stayed at their rural home to attend to domestic chores, which she continued to do upon moving to Eldoret with her husband. As such, the knowledge gap between the couple regarding crop husbandry may be attributed to the man's outdoor activities and social networking, attesting to the value of public space as a source of agricultural information

³ Interviewed on 7 June 2009.

and knowledge. Yet it could also be argued that maintaining the status quo in terms of the knowledge gap and the resultant division of labour served the interests of Onyancha's wife by placing limited demand on her labour on the plot. Such would be consistent with literature on intra-household bargaining that documents how women in diverse contexts have sometimes exploit their social spaces to advance their livelihood goals and interests and/or to challenge gender norms (see e.g. Mwaipopo 2000; Freidberg 2001; Trauger 2004).

Performance of tasks related to crop cultivation

Respondents were asked whether they personally performed selected tasks related to crop cultivation. Table 10.3 presents data on the relative involvement of men and women with selected tasks in the 40 households where both spouses were interviewed (of these, 36 performed crop cultivation). It can be inferred from the table that the distribution of the tasks between spouses was gendered. For instance, men were involved more with fencing, and with finding seeds, fertilizer and pesticides as well as applying pesticides, while women were involved more in plot preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting and marketing.

Table 10.3 Performance of crop-related tasks, by gender (%)

	N	Men	Women
Finding seeds/seedlings	52	62	39
Plot preparation/plowing	47	38	62
Finding fertilizer	23	65	35
Sowing/planting	58	43	57
Weeding	42	29	76
Finding pesticides	21	81	19
Applying pesticides	22	73	27
Harvesting for home use	39	10	90
Harvesting for sale	27	30	70
Selling produce	30	23	76

Chi-square: $X^2=62.919$; $df=9$; $p=0.00<0.05$.

In-depth interviews provided insights into the role of social constructs of maleness and femaleness in partly explaining patterns of labour allocation. Men tended to perform what were considered to be difficult or hard tasks while women's tasks were considered to be easy or less strenuous. Thus, the feminization of land preparation, a task that is traditionally considered a man's job, owes to the fact that unlike in rural areas where it usually involves bush clearing and/or tilling of hardened grounds, most plots in Langas were relatively small and were

continuously worked making the task less laborious. Men tended to be involved in the tilling of land, as well as fencing of plots, when the work to be done was generally considered hard or strenuous. Where no male household member was available to perform such tasks (as was common in female-headed households), external male labour was hired to do the job if the household concerned could afford. Tasks that were performed by women such as weeding, harvesting and selling of produce were considered to be less strenuous and therefore manageable for them:

I hired someone to help me dig the ground when I wanted to plant crops on this plot for the first time. The ground was so hard and it required a man to dig it. After that I have been doing the rest myself. I always have crops on the plot every time of the year so most of the time it is just weeding.

(Mama Shiko, widowed, interviewed on 12 June 2009)

I do most of the hard labour and my mother does the rest (...) We rarely apply chemicals and chemical fertilizer on our farm but whenever we do, it is me who takes responsibility because my mother would not know the right chemicals to apply and where to purchase them. She cannot also understand instructions (...) Fencing is my main responsibility; I cannot expect my mother to dig holes and to do the fencing because it is a difficult task.

(Kimani, a widow's son, 20 June 2009)

Another feminine attribute that was invoked to explain women's suitability for the task of marketing farm produce was their supposed bargaining skills; although some men, from across the ethnic groups, attributed their own limited participation in the selling of vegetables simply to cultural sanctions:

Most vegetable buyers are women. And you know women are very difficult to deal with. They will always complain about one thing or another. Either that the vegetables are of bad quality or that the amount of vegetables you have given them is too little for their money, and so on. They need someone who is patient enough and who can bargain with them. That is why I leave it to my wife to sell the vegetables.

(Waswa, 1 August 2009)

Mostly it is my wife who sells vegetables in the plot because it is her fellow women who come to buy. In my culture men are not supposed to involve themselves so much with vegetables. That is women's department. But sometimes when she is not there I can sell, although mostly I will call my daughters to sell.

(Mhubiri, 30 May 2009)

Mhubiri's comments above also show how the social construction of vegetable home gardens as women's (physical and social) spaces restricted men from appropriating opportunities accruing to such spaces.

It should be noted that besides just being easy to perform or requiring other feminine attributes or sanctioned by culture, some of the tasks left to women were those that were performed on a regular and repetitive basis. As such, they not only required the attention of someone who kept around the homestead most of the time, but also took up cumulatively substantial amounts of time. Indeed, some of the tasks that were socially constructed as 'easy' were not necessarily

perceived as such by the women themselves. Rather, as many women's accounts regarding their responsibility for weeding illustrated, the women perceived such tasks as requiring specialized skills that only they possessed and hence their hesitation (i.e., in most instances) to give up such responsibilities. Compared to women's tasks, men's tasks were mostly those that were undertaken on a one-off basis or only intermittently and as such took up less time relative to women's. In addition, such tasks were more likely to require a certain level of technical knowledge and information, financial resources or access to the market. The excerpts below illustrate these patterns:

My husband buys the seeds. I am the one who plants and weeds because most of the time he is out looking for a job. However, when he is around we do it together (...) When the maize is ready for harvesting we assist each other. He cuts down the maize, then I harvest. I am responsible for weeding the vegetable garden, while my husband buys chemicals and sprays the vegetables.

(Mama Ben, 8 June 2009)

Mostly it is my wife who weeds the plot. The children also assist her when they are not in school. I do not do it because I am not there most of the time. My main task is spraying the crops with pesticides. My wife and children cannot manage that role.

(Lang'at, 3 August 2009)

My wife stays at home and does most of the work on the *sukuma wiki* garden. I buy maize seeds and fertilizer because I know better how maize is planted, which seed variety to plant and fertilizer to apply. In addition my wife does not work so she cannot afford the cost of seeds and fertilizer.

(Shikuku, 9 July 2009)

When you look at the plot you will realize that it is difficult for anyone else to weed it because it is crowded with different crops (...) I do not even allow my sons or any other person to venture into the garden because they will trample on the crops. I am the only person who knows how to weed it.

(Mama Shiko, 12 June 2009)

The patterns captured by the excerpts above also reflect skewed gender relations, and men's superior entitlements in terms of financial resources and knowledge and information.

Another pattern that can be discerned from the urban farmers' responses is that men exercised greater control over women's labour than women over men's labour. Men could make decisions on what should be done and leave the rest to their wives. They would only give 'a helping hand' at their own time and when they did, they mostly performed tasks which, in their view, could not be managed by their wives or other household members. This is clearly captured in the following comments:

Although my husband decides what we should plant and brings seeds and seedlings, he does not himself participate in the planting, leave alone weeding. He leaves everything to me. The only task he performs is the spraying of the vegetables when they are attacked by pests.

(Muronji, 19 July 2009)

His (the husband's) main responsibility is to look for chemical fertilizer and pesticides whenever they are required. He does not weed. I cannot even imagine asking him to weed. He cannot accept to do it. However, he participates in planting, but not always.

(Mama Sella, 30 May 2009)

However, as in the case of taking responsibility for crops, a closer look at the various testimonies referred to above reveals that while the farmers were alive to cultural norms relating to gender division of tasks, in many cases both men and women showed flexibility. There did not seem to be a rigid distinction about male and female tasks, nor particular sanctions for those performing 'untraditional tasks'. Often the farmers predicated their non-participation in certain activities to constraints other than cultural norms. As is now apparent, men generally cited the time constraint as the main reason they did not participate in many urban agriculture activities, while women tended to be handicapped more by a lack of technical knowledge and information. And even those, like Mhubiri, who subscribed to cultural norms related to work did, under certain circumstances, perform tasks associated with the opposite gender.

Flexibility with regard to male labour was also observed where gardening took place off-plot, and where the activities to be performed were time-specific. Women were usually constrained by time and distance given their reproductive responsibilities in the home from participating fully in off-plot urban farming, not only in taking responsibility for crops but also in performing the tasks they would ordinarily perform in their home gardens. In the circumstances, either the male household members would perform such tasks or outside labour would be hired for the purpose. It was common, however, for households involved with off-plot farming to mitigate the constraints of female labour by cultivating crops that were less labour-intensive and that required only occasional attention. In terms of seasonality and time specificity of activities, the onset of rains would, for instance, cause someone like Mhubiri – who ordinarily leaves farm work to his wife and other household members – to suspend his masonry work and participate in land preparation and planting “because the rains cannot wait for you”.

The crossing of traditional gender boundaries was similarly evident among unmarried women who neither had access to male labour in their households nor could afford to hire external labour. Such was the case with Redempta⁴ who noted thus: “I do all the work on this plot because there is no one else to assist me. I buy seedlings, weed and harvest (...) I do everything by myself.” Similarly, women whose husbands were mostly absent from the home were also more likely to perform most urban agriculture tasks, including those that are considered men's tasks.

⁴ Interviewed on 26 May 2009.

Division of responsibility for livestock

Compared with crops, spouses tended to jointly take responsibility for livestock, especially large ones, to a greater extent. This was the case in 19% (N=179) of instances involving all livestock and in 22% (N=101) of the instances involving large livestock (see Appendix 10.2). However, women still shouldered the bigger burden, being twice as often to assume responsibility for livestock, although their (as well as men's) level of involvement varied between large and small livestock. Whereas their role in both cases was greater than that of men, women were represented more among primary care takers for small livestock than for large ones. Considering the decision-making patterns in these respects (see Chapter 9), it can be construed that women more often took responsibility for men's livestock (mostly large livestock) than men were willing to give a helping hand to the women for the latter's livestock (mostly small livestock).

The reasons for taking responsibility for livestock varied significantly between men and women (see Table 10.4). Like in the case of crop cultivation, the time factor was an important reason why either men or women were responsible for livestock. The importance of the time factor relates to the fact that the keeping of some animals, particularly dairy cows, but also confined pigs, were labour-intensive undertakings that, in the words of one urban dairy farmer, "was like a full-time job with which one could not do much else".⁵ Women were more likely

Table 10.4 Reasons for taking responsibility for livestock, by gender (%)

	Men	Women
No. of instances:	40	97
Own initiative/investment	41	21
Culture/tradition	13	14
Has technical knowledge	10	1
It is just a small project	5	6
It benefits me the most	0	9
Have time	21	39
Relates to other responsibilities	0	6
Cannot afford hired labour	8	0
Spouse's decision	3	4
Total	100	100

The statistics refer to the 137 instances where only one spouse was solely responsible for the livestock. In the remaining 42 instances, both spouses were jointly responsible.

Chi-square: $X^2=28.052$; $df=8$; $p=0.00$.

⁵ Wandera, interviewed on 30 May 2009.

than men to have been responsible for livestock on account that they had time to do so.

Whether or not the keeping of livestock was a personal initiative or investment for a spouse was another important determinant of the spouse's involvement with the livestock. This reason was cited in one third of all instances, and was more important among men than among women. The fact that 'own initiative/investment' was a more important factor in livestock than in crops could imply that livestock keeping was a more individual livelihood strategy compared to crop cultivation. In-depth interviews revealed that this was more the case with sheep, pigs and small livestock than with dairy cows. Mhubiri's case is illustrative. The farmer used to keep pigs, which he personally took responsibility for. According to his wife, "[T]hey (the pigs) were his property and he would sell them any time as he wished. He would never ask anyone or reveal the price at which he sold the pigs". Mhubiri's household also kept sheep that, unlike pigs, were shared out among family members, a strategy that had been adopted, as he explained, "to remove any conflict in the household and to motivate family members to take greater interest in taking good care of the animals". However, whereas he could sell his sheep whenever he chose and for whatever reason, his wife was not as privileged. Although Mhubiri had no problem with his wife selling chickens and ducks, he had this to say about the sheep:

When it comes to selling sheep, I normally do not involve my wife. Sometimes there are pressing issues to sort out urgently such as paying school fees or an electricity bill. But if I were to consult her about the need to sell some sheep, she would not agree with me. She would say that men should look for money from elsewhere to solve family problems instead of selling household assets. In the circumstances I decide to sell by force, even when I know she would feel bad about it. (...) I cannot give her that freedom (to sell sheep). Even when I am far and there is an emergency that would warrant selling of sheep, I must give authority before she can sell the sheep. You must always draw boundaries with your wife, otherwise you may one day return home only to find that she has sold your livestock and gone away. Our culture does not allow women to sell sheep. Were that to happen, elders would have to be called in.

(Mhubiri, 30 May 2009)

Mhubiri's wife echoed her husband's sentiments, including cultural restrictions on women's ability to sell livestock. However, as was shown in Chapter 8, single women from her community exercised greater control over their livestock – large and small – and could sell them whenever without any restrictions.

Although it influenced the farmers to a limited extent, the role of one's knowledge and information about the animals for which they took responsibility revealed clear gender differences, being a more important factor among men than among women. In-depth interviews revealed, for instance, that dairy cows and pigs required a certain level of technical knowledge and information related to sourcing for feeds, accessing veterinary services (common with cows), and find-

ing the market for the animals (common with pigs). For these reasons – coupled with the labour requirements discussed above – the keeping of dairy cows and pigs was men’s primary responsibility in most instances. On the other hand, sheep and small livestock were easier to keep; hence, women’s labour was more visible.

Performance of specific tasks related to livestock keeping

As in crop cultivation and for more or less the same reasons, patterns of task-sharing among spouses in livestock keeping households were gendered, although to a lesser extent. Table 10.5 suggests that in the 40 households where both spouses were interviewed (of which 28 kept livestock), men were more often involved with tasks that were undertaken only occasionally, and that required a bit of more technical knowledge and financial resources, as well as the ones that were of an outdoor nature. Men more often fenced plots, purchased animals on the market for rearing, sought veterinary services for their animals, treated the animals, and grazed them off-plot.

Table 10.5 Labour involvement in livestock-related tasks, by gender

	N	Men	Women
Securing plot	13	11	2
Purchasing animals	18	11	7
Seeking veterinary services	11	8	3
Treating animals	12	9	3
Cleaning pens	20	2	18
Finding feeds	24	11	13
Feeding animals on-plot	24	9	15
Grazing animals off-plot	2	2	0
Watering animals	24	5	19
Milking animals	5	2	3
Selling animal products	14	5	9

In contrast, women’s tasks were commonly carried out within the households’ compounds, and performed on a more regular and routine basis. The tasks included the cleaning of animal pens, and feeding and watering of the animals on-plot. However, there were other tasks that were performed by both spouses to more or less the same extent, such as finding animal feeds, milking and selling animal products. Whether and to what extent men and women shared livestock-related tasks also depended on the type of livestock involved, the nature of dif-

ferentiation of tasks related to its upkeep as well as the motive for keeping the livestock. Although it was noted above that men dominated dairy and pig-keeping enterprises because they were labour-intensive, it must be pointed out that female labour was still important, but more so in the case of dairy cows as compared to pigs. This is due largely to the fact that the latter were kept for a purely income motive while the former were kept for both income as well as direct home consumption of milk. In addition, unlike pigs whose care was less differentiated and revolved only around feeding and watering, rearing of cows was multi-tasked with a clear gender division of tasks. Milking, selling of milk and on-plot watering were mainly done by women, either because the tasks were performed on-plot or they required certain feminine attributes such as marketing/bargaining skills in the case of selling milk. Thus, there was greater room for co-operative arrangements between spouses in the context of dairy cows than in the case of pig keeping. This is reflected in the following narrative:

Wandera and his wife, Auma, had been keeping dairy cows since 1993 when he was still employed by Rift Valley Textiles. His wife used to perform most of the tasks then and he would only assist whenever he was not working. However, after leaving his job, he got involved more with the livestock and shared tasks with his wife. He would look for fodder in open spaces and on people's plots and once he brought it home, it was his wife's responsibility to feed the animals and give them water. Cleaning the pen, milking and selling of milk were also done by Auma. Whenever the cows fell sick it was Wandera to look for a vet or for veterinary drugs. However, since Auma's health started deteriorating in 2005, Wandera had to take up most of his wife's responsibilities, much like she did when he was still employed. Drawing from his experience, Wandera advised thus:

"It is important that both spouses understand various aspects of rearing cows. They should also like livestock keeping and be willing to assist each other. Were it not for my wife, we wouldn't be having these cows. You know, men are not people who stay at home or at one place, so unless the wife understands what to do with the animals you cannot succeed. Similarly, should anything happen to your wife and you can't do what she used to do, then you are finished. My wife used to do most of the work when I was still employed and now I do most of it because of her poor health."

(Wandera, 30 May 2009)

Where income was the main motive for keeping livestock and the upkeep of the livestock involved only a few tasks, gender division of labour sometimes reflected individual household members' preferences and interests, and the crossing of gender boundaries was common. For instance, some men monopolised certain livestock-related activities including those that are ordinarily performed by women as a strategy to control income, and to illegitimate any claims by their wives to the income. The division of labour between Obachi⁶ and his wife, Kerubo,⁷ illustrates this point.

⁶ Interviewed on 6 June 2009.

⁷ Interviewed on 6 June 2009.

The couple kept livestock, including two dairy cows and four pigs. Obachi took overall responsibility for the livestock. He looked for feeds, took cows and sheep out for grazing, watered them, etc. His wife assisted him with watering cows, and especially milking the cows and selling surplus milk. Obachi did not ask about income from milk sales so long as there was food in the house. However, as his wife pointed out, “When it comes to pigs, he prefers to do everything by himself. He never asks for assistance.” In the end, and much like Mhubiri above, he sold his pigs whenever he wanted without consulting his wife because, as he claimed, “doing so only precipitates quarrels especially when she knows how much money I will get”.

The importance of Obachi’s strategy of assuming all responsibilities related to pig keeping is underlined by the fact that in some cases women reportedly resisted men’s unilateral actions of selling animals and negotiated access to income accruing to livestock sales by threatening to withdraw their labour subsequently. One pig farmer explained thus:

It is common in this area for men who keep pigs to look for a potential buyer and even receive payment in advance without the knowledge of their wives. But when the person comes to take away the pig(s), most women usually protest and refuse to give away the pig(s) unless they see the money. Often the men would have already spent part if not the whole of it. Women resist because they are sometimes the ones who do most of the work related to pig keeping. When such a thing happens, the man will have no choice but to listen to the wife, otherwise she will refuse to attend to the animals subsequently. Such incidences happen all the time in this area.

(Njoroge, 23 May 2009)