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## RAPID ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACTS OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINE WAR ON RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN TANZANIA

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Cover Photo: Tanzania - Workers at a tree nursery preparing seedlings, UN Women Tanzania.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>BOT</b>     | Bank of Tanzania                                |
| <b>FAO</b>     | Food and Agriculture Organization               |
| <b>IFAD</b>    | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| <b>IMF</b>     | International Monetary Fund                     |
| <b>NBS</b>     | National Bureau OF Statistics                   |
| <b>SDGs</b>    | Sustainable Development Goals                   |
| <b>Tshs</b>    | Tanzanian shillings                             |
| <b>UN</b>      | United Nations                                  |
| <b>UNWomen</b> | United Nations Women                            |
| <b>SACCOS</b>  | Savings and Credit Co-Operative Society         |
| <b>VICOBA</b>  | Village Community Banking                       |

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In February 2022, as the world was still experiencing the residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia launched another military attack on Ukraine. This crisis has continued to cause major disruptions in global supply value chains which has translated into increased commodity prices and cost of living.

Several countries globally including sub-Saharan Africa depend on Russia and Ukraine for wheat, fuel, and natural gas imports. In addition, the war in Ukraine has had a particularly negative effect on the wellbeing of women and girls worldwide, widening gender gaps and increasing rates of food insecurity, malnutrition and energy poverty while violating their human rights.<sup>1</sup> Like in any other crisis, the war can potentially exacerbate socio-economic marginalization, insecurity, and gender inequalities.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected even in countries where the conflict is not directly taking place because of the economic knock-on effects.

Tanzania, like any other country across the globe, is not immune to the possible adverse effects of the crisis. Currently, there is no independent assessment carried out in the country that provides evidence of the effects of the Russia-Ukraine crisis on the rural population. To this end, this study conducts a rapid assessment of the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine crisis on rural livelihoods in Tanzania with a focus on various vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls.

This assessment has been commissioned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and United Nations Agency for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), both as part of the United Nations group grounded in the vision of investing in sustainable and inclusive rural economies and connecting the rural poor to markets and services; the empowerment of women; and the promotion of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development.

The assessment was carried out using a survey of 200 women in Mwanza and Ruvuma regions. The survey adopted a mixed methods approach to capture women's views on various aspects of their livelihoods. Results show that most women see commodity prices alongside the general cost of living to have gone up considerably over the past six months partly because of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine crisis, low crop yields and rising energy fuel prices.

The soaring prices of basic commodities such as edible oil, food products (maize/maize flour, wheat flour, rice), energy fuel, fish products, soap, vegetable products and fertilizer have detrimental implications on rural livelihoods and has disproportionately affected women and girls since they spend more hours on unpaid work on family farms and domestic activities including planning for household consumption basket.

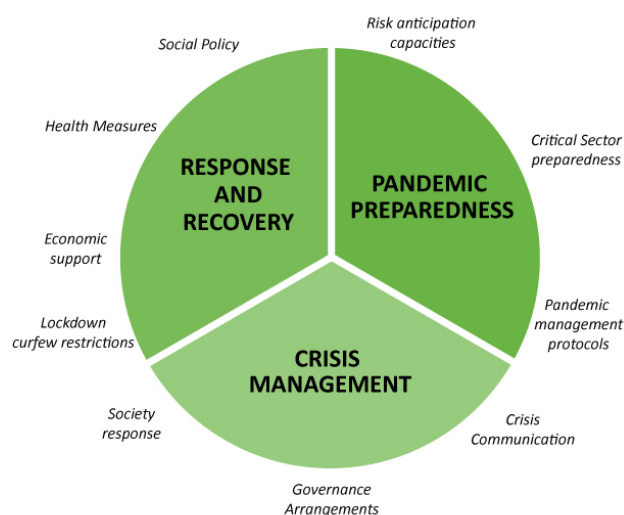
Furthermore, women in rural communities have relatively low incomes and savings (FINSCOPE 2017). Thus, any prolonged shock such as the ongoing crisis exposes the already vulnerable groups to severe food and nutrition insecurity. Unpredictable weather conditions, such as the ones experienced in the last couple of years, are another risk to agriculture production and rural livelihood. More than 70% of rural women in Tanzania are involved in agriculture and are already experiencing a gender productivity gap of around 20-30%. (17<sup>th</sup> Tanzania Economic

Update, March 2022 World Bank).

As some women also attest to experiencing income losses within the examined period, rural communities are compelled to adopt different coping strategies to get through economic hardships. These include drawing from own savings, limiting portions and the number of meals eaten in a day, seeking credit, and selling crops/livestock. Being forced into limiting food portions or opting for less preferred foods can adversely affect a child's nutrition and health status.

Even before the crisis, a third of Tanzania's children under the age of five are malnourished. This statistic is even higher in food surplus regions, including Ruvuma (URT, 2018).<sup>2</sup> No concrete evidence has been availed as to why food surplus regions have relatively higher malnutrition rates. However, the government continues to promote early initiation of breast feeding, exclusive breast feeding for the first six months of a child's life, continued breast feeding for up to 2 years, and timely introduction of appropriate and adequate complementary feeding for children aged 6-23 months (ibid).

While no one knows exactly how long the Russia-Ukraine crisis will last, it is evident that the adverse effects felt through high inflation rates are widespread. Various recovery policy measures are critical to address impacts of the crisis. These may include price stabilization, subsidizing energy fuel and agricultural inputs, and expanding domestic production of agriculture commodity items such as oil seeds and wheat. Other measures may also comprise of promoting micro-small businesses through training and issuance of low-interest loans to youth and women, strengthening the provision of targeted social assistance programs such as Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) and designing contributory social protection schemes for the informal sector.



<sup>1</sup> UN Women 2022. Global Gendered Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis on Energy Access and Food Security and Nutrition

<sup>2</sup> United Republic of Tanzania (URT), Tanzania National Nutrition Survey 2018

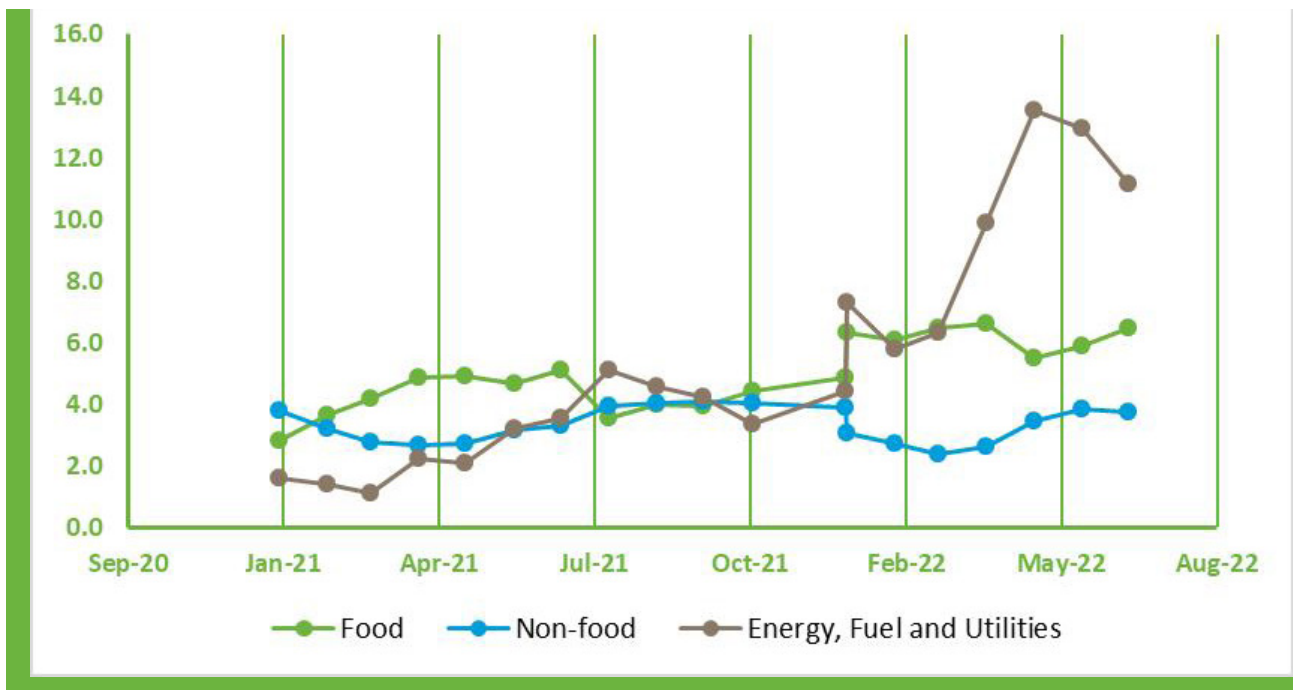
### 1.1 Background

The Russia-Ukraine crisis erupted as the world was still recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. Unsurprisingly, these two crises have posed similar effects in the disruptions of global supply value chains. The two countries contribute about 30% of the world’s wheat and barley production, one-fifth of its maize, and over half of its sunflower oil which are among the major commodities consumed in many countries. Moreover, the Russian Federation is the world’s top natural gas exporter, and second-largest oil exporter. Together, neighbouring Belarus and the Russian Federation also export around a fifth of the world’s fertilizers.

Since the onset of the crisis in February 2022, global commodity prices have gone up considerably impacting the livelihoods of communities across the world. Tanzania, like any other economy, has experienced steep domestic price increases for selected commodities. For example, in Dar es Salaam pump prices for petrol (TZS/litre) rose from TZS 2,540 in March to TZS 3,148 in May and TZS 3,410 in August 2022. The rise in fuel prices has negative multiplier effects in all other sectors as it drives up the costs of transportation and production in general. The overall rate of inflation of consumer goods rose from 4.4% in February to 5% in April before reaching 5.2% in July 2022.<sup>3</sup>

FIGURE 1:

Annual Inflation rate trend of specific commodities in Tanzania (2020=100)



Source: NBS

<sup>3</sup> Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). CPI summary referenced July 2022



Given that a large proportion of Tanzania's edible oil and wheat grain imports are from Russia and Ukraine, the ongoing crisis leaves the country more vulnerable to global price shocks of the respective commodities. Tanzania produces 205,000 tonnes of edible oil a year against an annual domestic demand of 570,000 tonnes. In addition, the country only produces 100,000 tons of wheat annually against a demand of 800,000 tons, with more than 70% of the imports to fill the gap coming from Russia.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, disruptions of export supply chains during the crisis have exacerbated the price increase of imported wheat and edible oil in Tanzania. Local prices of sunflower oil, for instance, nearly doubled between January 2020 and May 2022.

Tanzania is also facing higher fertilizer prices as it imports 20% of its fertilizer from Russia. Agriculture remains the main economic activity especially in rural areas employing about 58.4% of the country's labour force and 60.3% of women.<sup>5</sup> In addition, 24% of agriculture households use non-organic fertilizer during the main planting season. Therefore, increased fertilizer prices will likely affect the amount of fertilizer used and crop production. This could potentially create an even wider gender productivity gap from the current 20-30% in favour of men. Unlike women, men are in a better position of affording farm inputs like quality seeds, fertilizers and accessing fertile farmland. Also, men are more capable of hiring labours and advanced agriculture technologies such as tractors and animal plough.

The Russia-Ukraine crisis has uneven effects across different socio-economic groups. A recent report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) predicts a reduction of overall household expenditure due to persistent food, fuel, and fertilizer price shocks in Tanzania.<sup>6</sup> For instance, expenditure amongst rural and poor households is estimated to decline by 3% and 3.2% respectively.

During economic crises, often, the poor and more vulnerable groups including women and youth are hit the hardest. Over a quarter (26.4%) of Tanzania's population, and close to a third (31.4%) of its rural residents, pre-COVID-19 lived below the basic needs' poverty line. Female headed households (27.4%) are more vulnerable to basic needs poverty than male headed households (26.1%).<sup>7</sup> It is estimated that an additional 800,000 Tanzanians fell into poverty due to COVID-19. Therefore, high inflation rates disproportionately affect the poor particularly women in rural areas, which in turn puts them at greater risk of falling even further into poverty.

Furthermore, one in three Tanzanians derive their livelihood from informal activities.<sup>8</sup> A slightly larger proportion of women (30.3%) derive their livelihood from informal activities compared to men (28.6%).

Tanzanians employed in informal non-farm microenterprises tend to be especially exposed to economic shocks, as they often have limited savings to draw on in a crisis. Women more than men are engaged in unpaid labour, and women with wage jobs tend to earn less than their male counterparts (ibid). These challenges compounded by persisting constraints such as wage differentials by gender and inequitable access to land and assets hinder women from realizing their full economic potential which is exacerbated during economic crises.

The Tanzanian government has pursued several measures aimed at addressing some of the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine crisis. First, there is continuous monitoring of commodity prices to keep inflation in check. Second, the government has been spending TZS 100 Bn monthly to subsidize fuel imports for the purpose of stabilizing commodity prices. Third, TZS 150 Bn has been allocated as fertilizer subsidy to boost agriculture production. Fourth, the government, through local government authorities (LGAs), has supplied sunflower seeds to farmers to boost production of edible oil seeds and curb inflation of edible oil prices.

Because of all these factors, this study carried out a rapid assessment of the impact of the Russia-Ukraine crisis on rural livelihoods, with a specific focus on women and girls.

#### Specific objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the impact of the Ukraine-Russian crisis on rural livelihoods including circumstances of women and girls in Tanzania.
2. Assess rural community resilience and ability to cope.
3. To assess policy and programme recommendations options for key stakeholders and partners to improve the wellbeing of rural dwellers, women and girls affected by the Ukraine crisis, including recommendations on:
  - Appropriate government interventions to mitigate the impacts of the crisis on the vulnerable rural population, including gender-responsive support measures.
  - Addressing gender and women's rights issues as part of the recovery process (including macro-economic stimulus packages that are pro – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), and aim to build community resilience and participation).

<sup>4</sup> Regional Economic Outlook, IMF, April 2022

<sup>5</sup> National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) [Tanzania] 2022. Integrated Labour Force Survey 2020/21

<sup>6</sup> Xinshen, D., et al. 2022. Tanzania: Impacts of the Ukraine and global crises on poverty and food security. Global Crisis Country Brief 11

<sup>7</sup> URT, 2020. Household Budget Survey 2017/18

<sup>8</sup> URT. Integrated Labour Force Survey 2020/21

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study applies a mixed methods approach by utilizing, both, quantitative and qualitative primary data. The focus of the study is on women and girls who are at high risk of being left behind, especially in times of economic crisis, to ensure that their voices and concerns are represented in the assessment. Given different limitations, the survey is not nationally representative rather it provides quick insights into what the current life situation may be like in rural Tanzania. As a rapid assessment, the focus is therefore on relative change since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

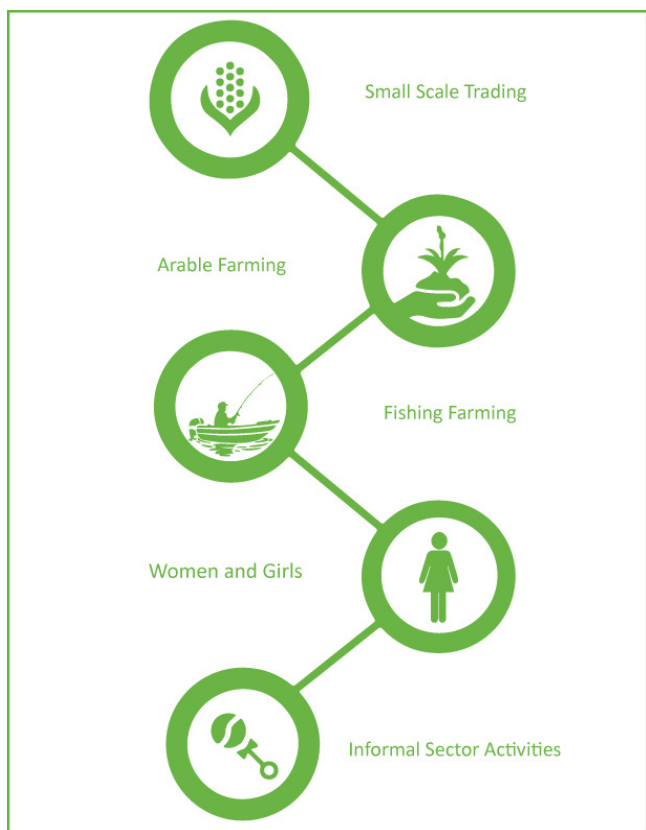
### 2.1 Area of Study and Sampling

The regions of Ruvuma and Mwanza, fitting a pre-defined set of criteria, were identified for the study. Ruvuma was selected because of the high prevalence of inorganic fertilizers utilization, high poverty levels, and because it is predominantly a rural agrarian economy. Mwanza, on the other hand, was selected because of the diversity in economic activities i.e. fishing, agriculture, trade, etc. despite being predominantly in a rural setting. One district from each region was sampled of which Songea district council from Ruvuma and Magu was selected from Mwanza. The same criteria used to select studied regions were applied in identifying the two districts. It is therefore expected that selected regions will provide a snapshot of varying experiences of the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine crisis on rural livelihoods.

### 2.2 Data Collection Methods

A sample of 200 women and young girls was used to provide quantitative data. The sample was equally divided between Mwanza and Ruvuma regions. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to women at the household level as well as in their trading/business areas. The questionnaires contained both closed and open-ended questions to allow respondents to express their views and comments freely. Qualitative information was collected via in-depth interviews with selected local government officials and through Focus Group Discussions. Interviews at the local government included District Agricultural Officer, District Community Development Officer, ward councillor, Ward Executive Officer, and women’s NGO representative from each region.

This study carried out a total of four Focus Group Discussions, two from each region. An interactive discussion was conducted with a group of 8 – 10 women. Focus Group Discussions were conducted to capture in detail relevant issues that would complement the quantitative data. These provide strong insight into different opinions to bridge research and policy. Finally, secondary data was also gathered from IFAD, FAO, UNWOMEN, the World Bank, National Bureau of Statistics, and other relevant sources. Secondary data was used to provide useful background information which helped to inform the study design.



*areas of study and sampling*



*data collection methods*

## 3.0 FINDINGS

### 3.1 Demography

Half the sample (52%) are young women aged 16-35, slightly over one-third (36%) are women aged 36-55, and the remaining 12% are older women above 56 years of age. Six out of ten (60%) have primary level education, one in five have at least secondary education (20%), and one in ten (12%) have no formal or some primary education. Again six out of ten (62%) are either married or live with their partner. About a quarter of them (23%) are widowed/divorced/separated and an equal number are also heads of their household. Women in our sample live with 5 other family members on average, nine out of ten (89%) also live with at least one child, and three-quarters (75%) live with at least one youth.

TABLE 1:

#### Demographic Characteristics

|  | N   | Percent |
|--|-----|---------|
| Age  |     |         |
| Age 15-35                                    | 104 | 52%     |
| Age 36-55                                    | 71  | 36%     |
| Age 56 and above                             | 25  | 13%     |
| Marital status                               |     |         |
| Married/living with a partner                | 123 | 61%     |
| Separated/widow/divorced                     | 45  | 23%     |
| Never married                                | 32  | 16%     |
| Level of education                           |     |         |
| No formal/some primary                       | 24  | 12%     |
| Primary education                            | 120 | 60%     |
| secondary/post-secondary                     | 40  | 20%     |
| Head of household                            | 51  | 26%     |
| Have at least 1 child (0-17 years)           | 177 | 89%     |
| Have at least 1 adult (18-34 years)          | 149 | 75%     |
| Have at least 1 adult (35-49 years)          | 110 | 55%     |
| Have at least 1 adult (50+ years)            | 76  | 38%     |
| Household size                               |     |         |
| Average number of members within a household | 200 | 5       |

### 3.2 Economic Activities and Livelihoods

The main economic activities in the researched areas include agriculture, livestock keeping, fishery, and small businesses (enterprises). In Songea rural district, people cultivate maize as the main staple crop for food and trade. Other cultivated crops include paddy, sunflower, soya beans, peas, sesame, and recently sorghum, wheat, and mushroom. Normally cultivation season starts in October or November each year when people start to prepare their farms as they wait for the rains before planting in December or January. Residents of Magu district cultivate cotton, maize, paddy, green gram, dengu, sweet potatoes, cassava, vegetables (tomatoes, onion) and groundnuts. Other economic activities in Songea and Magu are livestock keeping (cows, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry) fishing activities and small business/entrepreneurship.

However, livestock keeping and fishing in Songea is done on a much smaller scale, whereby fishing is done in areas where people cultivate paddy. Other business activities include food vending (“Mama Lishe”), selling crops (rice and vegetables), small shops, tailoring and batik designing, soap making, carpentry, and mason activities.

#### 3.2.1 Women’s Roles / Participation in the Economic Activities

Findings indicate that men and women play different roles in farming activities. While women and young girls participate in all farming activities, men play a more supportive role. This includes paying for farm inputs (such as labour, fertilizer, and tractors), and controlling household earnings from crop sales or land rent. In addition, men tend to concentrate more on cash crops (cotton, and rice), whereas women focus more on food crops (maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, and green gram) produced mainly for household consumption.



Women tilling land in preparation for planting in Tanzania.  
Photo: UN Women Tanzania

Men have also started to take interest in crops that were more popular among women due to their growing market demand and lucrative prices. Value addition done by women in potato value chain has also drawn men’s attention. As one group of women stated:

*“Men have also started to grow green gram which was traditionally cultivated by women and considered a crop of less value. It’s current market demand and favourable price has attracted men’s involvement. Also, of late, we have started processing sweet potatoes by chopping them into pieces, drying and selling them in the market which has attracted men’s attention.” (FGD, Kabila, Magu)*

Young men move to towns to engage more in non-farming activities such as petty trade, motorcycle taxi driving, masonry, welding, and car mechanics. They start participating in these activities after completing their primary, secondary, or vocational education. On the contrary, young women stay longer at home and engage in farming activities.

In general, women were seen as the ‘family engine’ as they play a key role in all farming activities from land preparation, seed planting, applying fertilizers/manure, to harvesting and storage. Women also use their earnings from farming to provide for most daily household needs. Therefore, the rising prices of food, cooking oil and fuel, significantly impact rural women’s incomes. One focus group mentioned that women, to some degree, also spend their income on farm inputs. “Nowadays, women buy fertilizers and agricultural inputs, usually done by men.” However, as men have more decisive power over marketing and household income, women are mainly responsible for the daily provision of household needs and food production.

Livestock keeping is another economic activity that rural women participate in. Though on a small-scale, women commonly keep goats and pigs. They are mainly responsible for providing animal feed, usually fetched on their way back from their farms. Other economic activities that rural women are engaged in include operating small family-owned businesses, mostly “Mama Lishe”, selling goats, pigs, chicken, eggs, and vegetables.

In Songea, women are the ones primarily responsible for livestock keeping (zero grazing) by making sure that they return with straw for feeding livestock when coming from farms. In livestock keeping, women mainly keep goats and pigs, but it is on a very small scale in which their main role is to feed them. Moreover, women are also instrumental in operating small family-owned businesses, the majority of which involve “Mama Lishe”. Women and girls also sell goats, pigs, chicken, eggs, and vegetables. In general, most entrepreneurs in the village centers are female. As one woman stated,

*“Women are the pillars of entrepreneurship in our village and ward. They are the leading providers of food and necessities; unlikely men dare to ignore the responsibility.”*

On top of that, some women are involved in the selling of soft drinks, local brews, food crops through small shops (stalls) in the community. Also, women perform an important role in the small entrepreneurship sub-sector. They make and sell washing soap, tailoring, and selling batik. It was stressed by a key informant (Peramiho WEO) that;

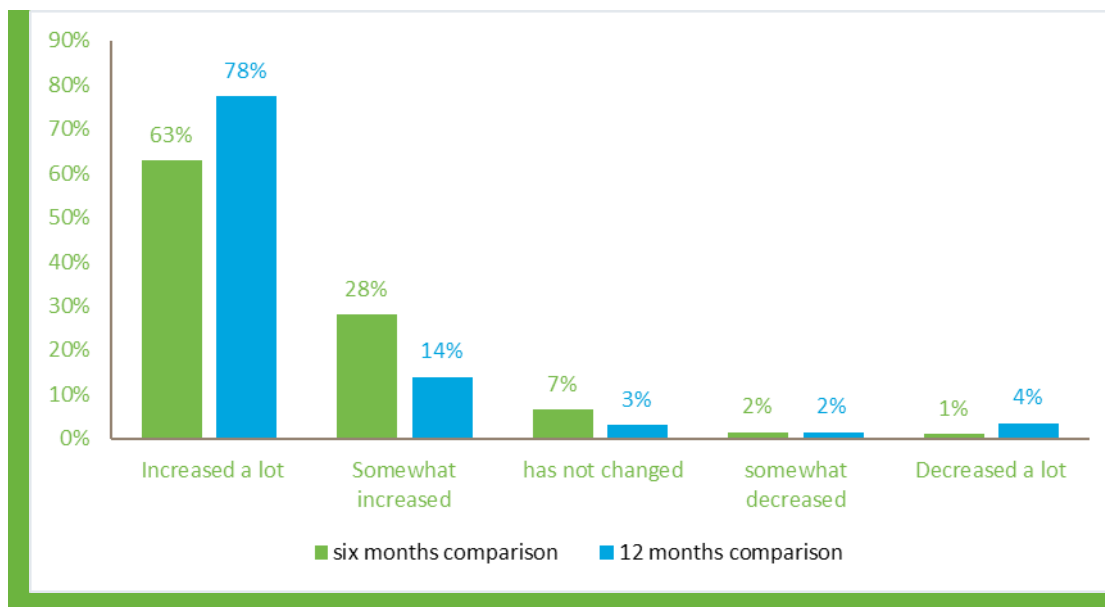
Honestly, women play major roles in all income-generating activities for example, in agriculture activities; they prepare farms, sow seeds, do crop weeding, put fertilizers on the crops and harvest. Again, they take a large part in businesses within the community. In addition to that, they are responsible for household responsibilities, including the provision of food and taking care of children.

### 3.2.2 Rural Livelihood

One area that this survey sought to examine is whether women in rural areas experienced any change in their livelihood, especially a few months into the crisis. Six out of ten (63%) women consider their current living conditions as (very) bad, compared to one quarter who consider theirs as neither good nor bad. In addition, three quarters (75%) say their living conditions have worsened compared to one year ago and almost all say the cost of living has gone up over the past six months. More women in Ruvuma (85%) compared to Mwanza (66%) say their current living conditions are (much) worse compared to one year ago.

FIGURE 2.

Women’s opinion on the current cost of living compared to 6 and 12 months ago



The expressed concerns over the rise in the cost of living reflect the increasing rates of inflation discussed earlier. In other words, there is an indication that the speed in the rise of commodity prices is felt by communities across the country. Cooking oil, food products (maize/maize flour, wheat flour, rice), energy fuel, fish products, soap, vegetable products and fertilizer are the most cited commodities said to have experienced a sharp price increase over the past six months. Several reasons have been cited as the main causes for the rise in commodity prices including:

The main causes of commodity prices increase are:

}

- Shortage of or delayed rains
- Low crop yields
- Russia - Ukraine crisis
- Rising prices of energy, fuel and transport costs
- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Government Policies (levies and charges)

Apart from the rising cost of living, over half of the women (59%) also claim to have experienced a decline in personal income since March of this year. Only one in ten say their income has gone up while a quarter (25%) have had no change in income. A third (32%) of those who experienced a decline in income adopted different coping strategies including using their savings, limiting portions and number of meals eaten in a day, seeking credit, and selling crops/livestock.

Membership in social and savings groups is not uncommon, especially amongst women in Tanzania. Such groups help to provide some degree of financial and social protection assistance when needed. One-third (33%) of the women admitted to being members of Savings and Credit Co-Operative Society (SACCOS) or Village Community Banking (VICOPA). In addition, 29% of women received loans mainly for purchasing agricultural or non-farm business inputs, paying school fees, and covering the cost of other basic household necessities such as food and clothing.

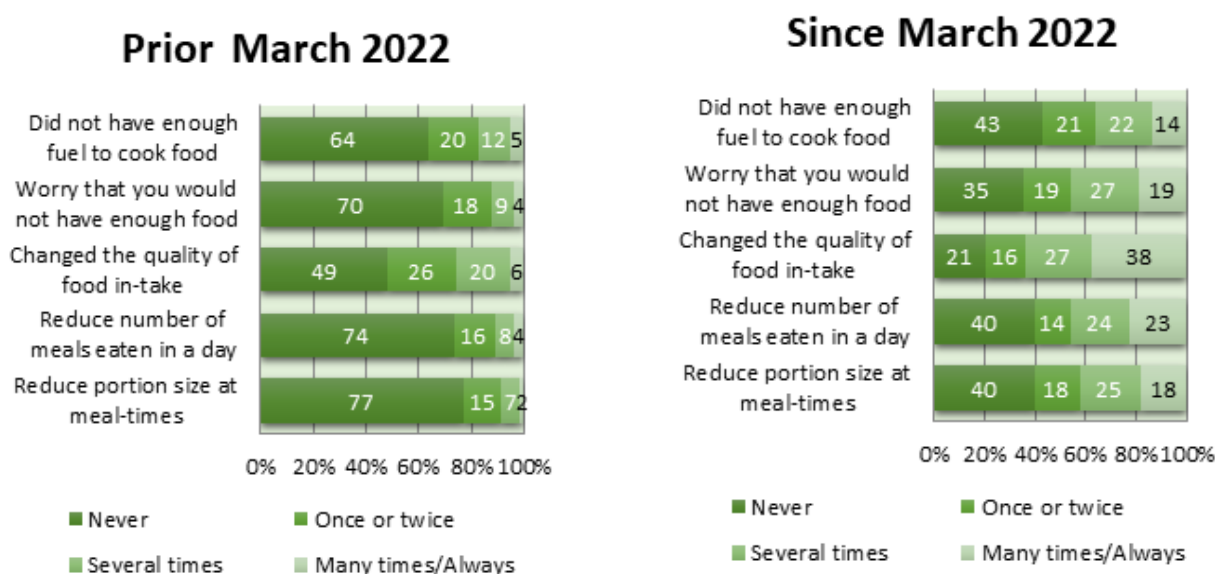
### 3.2.3 Food Security

Tanzania recorded an average food self-sufficiency ratio of 121% between 2015/16 to 2019/20<sup>9</sup>. This implies that in general there is food surplus in the country. However, this metric is mostly driven by the production of major cereal crops (maize, paddy) and legumes. There are spatial variations depending on the time of the year, weather patterns, and production levels in a particular country area. For instance, one million Tanzanians were in severe food insecurity between November 2019 and April 2020<sup>10</sup>.

Before the crisis in March 2022, seven out of ten women never worried about not having enough food for their household or reducing portions or the number of meals eaten. However, this number has dropped considerably since. For instance, the number of women who feared on several occasions that they would not have enough food for their families since March this year rose three folds compared to the period before. The same goes for those who have had to cut down on the number or size of meals eaten in a day. Similarly, since March more women (36%) and their families have had to, on many occasions, change the quality of food they eat. Being forced to opt for less preferred foods, to get through difficult financial times, can have adverse effects on children’s nutrition and health. This is still one of the key health concerns in the country as 32% of children are malnourished. Malnutrition is more pronounced in ‘bread-basket’ regions where Ruvuma has the highest proportion (41%) of malnourished children.

FIGURE 3:

How often did the following situation happen in your household?

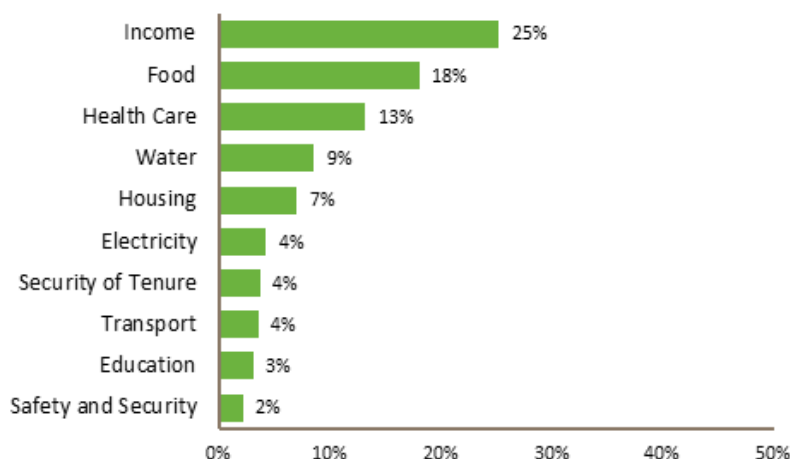


### 3.3 Household Priorities

Income, food, and health care were most cited by women as the main household priority needs. This collaborates with the results presented above, where food prices, cost of living and loss of income appeared to be major areas of concern.

FIGURE 4:

Top 10 household priorities



### 3.4 Time use

Women in traditional communities tend to work, on average, more hours than men. They not only participate in productive activities but also take care of family chores and look after children and other dependents at home. This leaves them with less time for rest and leisure compared to men. This study also investigated if there are any changes in women’s time use before and after the crisis. For the most part, there is no clear indication that, since March, women have devoted more time than usual in household activities even though women perform most household chores.

The long hours spent by rural women, not only in economic activities but also in domestic chores, compels them to move to urban areas. As explained by one respondent<sup>9</sup>:

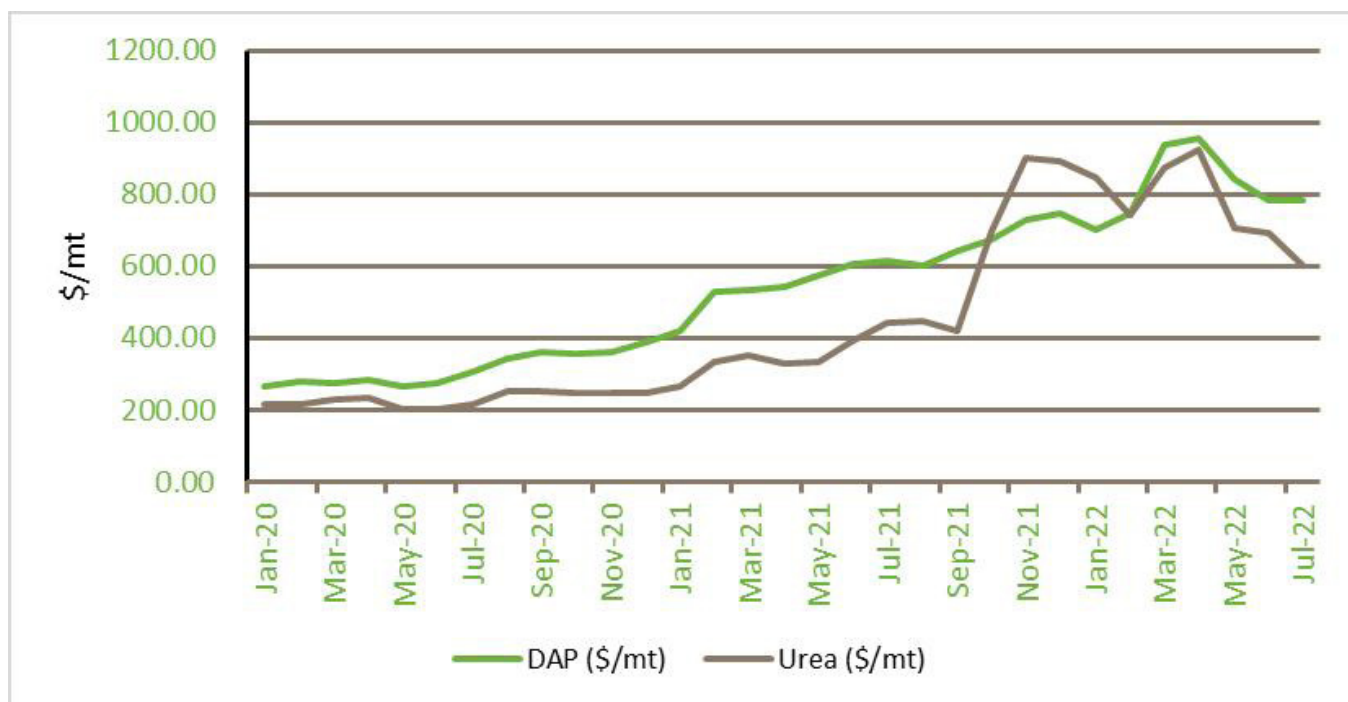
*People in our community have a saying that “life in rural areas is better for men and not for women” because, in rural areas, women are the main providers for their families. For example, they collect firewood, fetch water, and pay for daily household expenditures, including food, compared to urban areas where men provide for their wives and family. As a result, when a girl or woman receives a marriage proposal from a man living in a town, they immediately accept because it relieves them of the responsibilities they would otherwise have to bear. (KII, WEO Peramiho).*

### 3.5 Impact of the Crisis and Rural Community Resilience and Ability to Cope

#### 3.5.1 Increase in the Price of Fertilizer

Russia-Ukraine crisis has caused serious disruptions along the supply value chains. This, among others, has driven up prices of natural gas which is a key ingredient for fertilizer manufacturing. The average global price of urea in 2022 between March to May (\$835/mt) was more than twice the price observed in the same period in 2021 (\$328/mt). Likewise, the price for DAP went up nearly two folds from \$551/mt to \$911/mt over the same reference period (see figure 5). Tanzania is more likely to suffer from the higher global fertilizer prices given that it imports nearly 90% of its fertilizers. This increase in fertilizer prices is more likely to impact smallholder farmers by significantly reducing fertilizer use hence affecting productivity and household food security.

**FIGURE 5:**  
World Average monthly prices of fertilizers



Source: World Bank Commodities Prices

<sup>9</sup> Commodity prices of fertilizers, wheat flour, cooking oil and other food items mentioned in this document refer to most cited community prices during the survey

One agricultural officer from Songea region estimated that about 90% of rural women in the area depend on agriculture production, mainly for home consumption and, to a lesser degree, for commercial purposes. The price of a 50kg bag of DAP fertilizer in Songea is said to have nearly tripled from TZS 50,000 to 130,000 affecting many farmers, especially unmarried women who often carry the cost of production on their own. Similarly, in Magu district-in Mwanza, where a 50kg bag of UREA sold at TZS 65,000/= before the Russia – Ukraine crisis now costs TZS 150,000/=. The same goes for DAP fertilizer whose price has gone up from TZS 60,000/= to TZS 140,000/=. CAN from 48,000/= to TZS 140,000/=. and SA from TZS 55,000/= to TZS 135,000/=.

The price increase of fertilizers means fewer farmers can afford them. Therefore, more female smallholder farmers are forced to cultivate either smaller land sizes or go without fertilizers, leading to low production and productivity. Some farmers have claimed to reduce cultivated land from 10 to 2 acres. Women from Songea region, where non-organic fertilizers are extensively used, also testified that production on the same piece has dropped from 2.2 to 0.5 tons of maize. Declined production and productivity have meant increased food insecurity and income uncertainty as more women are worried if their food stock will get them through to the next harvest season. Agriculture in Tanzania is also largely affected by climate change impacts, the Ukraine crisis is further affecting women’s resilience to climate change.

*Our community depends mostly on agricultural produce as the Tmain income-generating activity. When a family needs money, they usually sell maize to meet their household needs. For example, when a woman needs salt or soap, she will sell maize to get the required cash. Therefore, the increase in the price of fertilizers, which has led to low productivity, has affected household income in general and women in particular. The harvests we have are not enough to cover the household’s needs. To mitigate this, women now take on more casual work where they earn TZS.5000/= per day during harvesting and TZS 3,000 or 4,000 during weeding or planting season. (KII, WEO, Peramiho)*



*Women preparing to plant seedlings. Photo: UN Women Tanzania*

The dependency on industrial fertilizers is higher in Songea compared to Magu district. Hence, Magu farmers are less affected by fertilizer prices.

Farmers in Magu usually do not use industrial fertilizers; instead, they use organic manure like cow dung on their farms. Some farmers use industrial fertilizers for crops like tomatoes, vegetables and other horticultural crops but not in crops like maize and rice. It was alleged;

*The use of inorganic fertilizer is less common in our area. During land preparation, we simply mix the soil with organic fertilizer as we await for rains and the start of planting season. With this practice we still receive good yields. (FGD, Kabila, Magu)*

In dealing with the increase in fertilizer prices, the Ministry of Agriculture recently set aside more than TZS 150 billion as fertilizer subsidy to farmers.

The aim is to reduce farmer’s fertilizer cost, increase agriculture production and productivity, hence enhance food security and availability of raw materials for local industries. The subsidy provision would be based on the actual needs of farmers according to the registration information and the allocated Government budget. To secure subsidized farm inputs, all farmers are required to register themselves and indicate the location and size of their farms.

The registration aims to make sure that the subsidies go to the intended beneficiaries and not otherwise. With government subsidy the price changes are as follows: DAP (planting fertilizer) from TZS.131, 676/= to 70, 000/= for 50kg, UREA (booster) from TZS.124, 724/= to 70, 000/= and CAN (booster) from TZS. 108, 156 to 60, 000/= and SA (booster) from TZS. 82,852/= to 50, 000/=. Therefore, there is need for local governments to ensure that women farmers are registered and benefit from this arrangement.



### 3.5.2 Increase in the Price of Edible Oils

Increased cost of doing business due to rising prices of cooking oil and wheat flour has affected many small entrepreneurs like women who sell food and bites like doughnuts, pancakes, etc. For example, it was repeatedly mentioned that one litre of cooking oil (KORIE) which previously went for TZS 3000 costed around TZS 5000 – 6000 in August 2022. Consequently, some Mama Lishe adjusted their food prices upwards while others maintained the same prices for fear of losing customers. Also, the price of wheat flour within the same period rose from TZS 1200 to 2000 per kg. Hence, with the current situation, most women in food vending are unable to maximize profit and thus fail to cater to the basic needs of their families. On the extreme end, some women closed their businesses because they were not making profit to the point where their capital investment was depleted.

*The increase in prices of cooking oil and wheat flour has greatly affected the “Mama lishe” business. Some of us had to increase the prices of served foods, for example, a plate of rice from TZS 1,000/= to 1,500/=; “Maandazi (doughnuts)” from TZS 200 to 300; “Chapati (pancakes)” from TZS 300 to 500. However, these new prices scared away customers thus reducing profit margins. The Mama lishe who did not adjust their food prices suffered by losing their capital and ultimately closed their businesses. (FGD, Maposeni, Songea).*



In light of economic difficulties faced since early 2022, most women in focus group discussions recommend the need for government support in areas of entrepreneurial skills development and access to finance. They urge that women and young girls be availed with low interest rate loans tied to less restrictive conditions. They also recommend for a review of the government credit scheme offered through local government authorities (LGAs), proposing a relaxation of borrowing conditions and increasing the credit amount set for women, youth and people with disability from 10% to 20%.

Further, the increase in the price of edible oils has affected women to a large extent, given their responsibility as cooks in families. Edible oil is a key ingredient in food preparation. Thus, its demand, particularly among women, is inevitable. For women who depend on their husbands to provide for the family, have highlighted that sometimes the money left by their husband, is not enough to buy cooking oil for their families. On occasion, they cook without oil

*(“... then the man decides to go and eat at his concubine or “Mama Lishe” who may have used cooking oil, this has increased family conflicts.”)*

and if they buy cooking oil, they must spend more money. The increased price of edible oils has forced some women to forego other expenses, such as buying clothes for their children. However, on the other hand, this increase has been in favour of other

women, particularly those engaged in sunflower cultivation and trade, whereby due to higher prices, they have been able to maximize profit.

Therefore, as a coping mechanism, some households in Songea and Magu districts have opted to use groundnuts as an alternative source of edible oil. In addition, some women in Magu use fresh milk, instead of water, in cooking rice. Moreover, the Tanzanian government is promoting the expansion of sunflower production to overcome the shortage of edible oils in the country. This opens more opportunities for women who are also more active in cultivating sunflower than men. Traditionally, the cultivation of sunflower does not necessarily rely on fertilizer use.

*This year the government, through local government authorities (LGAs), supplied sunflower seeds to farmers to boost production of edible oil seeds and cope with the rising price of edible oil. Unfortunately, the seeds did not produce the expected outputs and farmers were unhappy considering their invested efforts (KII, WEO Maposeni).*

### 3.5.3 Impact on Rural Food Systems

Findings reveal that most households in Songea district still consume three meals daily. The common meals include tea and cassava for breakfast and “Ugali” with beans for lunch and dinner. This is probably because Songea district produces maize and beans in large quantities. However, it was acknowledged that getting a balanced diet is a challenge as they mostly eat what they produce. Their incomes have decreased due to low production hence, making it even more difficult to purchase other food varieties to balance their meals. The poor households in the TASAF cash transfer program might fail to get three meals per day. This is because the money they are given is a small amount to cover the rising living cost and no adjustment has been made. There was also a worry about whether the households’ stored food will take them through the next harvest. In the last harvest, the production was low due to unreliable rainfall and failure to purchase the required farm inputs. Also, due to the rising living cost, households must sell more crops to be able to buy necessities like edible oil, soaps and sugar.

*Somehow there is an effect, as I said, inflation has made many families change their lifestyles, especially the food system. For instance, people do not have enough harvests to sell and get money to buy other foodstuffs. Even though they have money from other sources, the rise in the price of tomatoes, onion, and edible oil altogether causes a change in the food system. (KII, PAD NGO).*

Due to the increase in the cost of living some households have changed their eating patterns, including reducing the number and portions of meals taken per day. For instance, more than four out of ten women (46%) say that their families reduced the number of meals, eaten per day, at least several times since March 2022. In contrast, only one out of ten women (11%) had the same experience prior to March 2022 (see figure 3 in section 3.2.3).

### 3.5.4. Effects on supply and access to energy

The increase in fuel energy prices contributed to the rise of transport costs which affected the movement of people and prices of commodities. Before February 2022, people paid TZS 1500 – 2000 to travel from Kabila to Magu town, but in August, they paid TZS 3,000 – 4,000/= for the same trip. Also, within the same time frame, the cost of hiring a motorcycle doubled, forcing poor people to walk long distances. Soaring costs of oil and gas have had significant impacts on women's and girls' energy poverty already experiencing unequal access to energy.

Increased transport costs also meant higher commodity prices in local markets. For example, the price of a bottle of milk (350mls) rose from TZS 50 to 300. Respondents also complained about the price increase of other goods stating, "the price of a piece of soap has increased from TZS 200 to 600. As a result, we cannot even wash our clothes properly because soap is not affordable."

### 3.5.5. Socio - economic status of women in the community /households

Women are essential players in the livelihoods of the households in the studied areas and engage full-time in agriculture activities. However, some constraints affect women's progress and probably their unfavorable socio-economic conditions will be heightened during crisis like the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Such constraints include women's and girls' freedom to participate in economic activities, assets ownership and room for decision making.

The long-practiced tradition where women take charge of household and domestic chores including cooking, washing dishes and clothes, fetching water and firewood, and childcare is still common in the study areas. None the less, findings reveal that women's participation in income generating activities outside their homes is gradually increasing. Even though agriculture is still the main source of income and rural livelihood, women are increasingly moving into non-farm activities. While 73% of women in our sample have more than one source of income, nearly half (47%) of them operate small businesses. This has opened more opportunities for women's income generation and empowerment. However, there are still some women who are restricted from participating in income generating activities. Some men go as far as forcing their wives to retire at a young age to become stay at home mothers.

On the other hand, despite the gradual narrowing in gender gap asset ownership is largely in favour of men. In Magu district, for example, men are the ones who own most assets such as houses, cattle, and land, even when obtained jointly by men and women. Low asset ownership amongst women is rooted in the community's belief that women cannot manage properties. However, in recent years, some women-especially widows and unmarried women-are also more likely to own property. In the event of a divorce or separation, women with knowledge of their legal rights have a higher chance of splitting the shared assets and securing child support.

The increased awareness among women regarding their rights has enabled them to own some of the assets after divorce. The Tanzanian government has also made great progress towards protecting women's rights through different agencies like gender desks, courts, and local authorities. Normally, the court rulings assign parental responsibilities to both parents, but occasionally men abandon their partners to bear the entire burden. Also, women in rural areas are often less aware of their rights and easily denied property ownership after a divorce. Women in those areas are traditionally taught to be submissive to men; hence, they do not claim their rights from relevant authorities. On another note, financial independence among women gives them more power to own properties.

Women's position in household decision making is another area that is gaining traction in the country, despite male dominance. Women are given less room to decide or have a say over the use of household resources. For example, if a child needs school fees it is often a man who decides how the money will be raised-say by selling crops or livestock. As some women in Magu explained:

*"A woman may harvest crops and a man is the one who decides when to sell and at what price. After receiving money from the sale, a man may decide to spend all of it without consulting his wife, and the wife is not allowed to question his decision. That's why many households are not stable financially because men spend unwisely, leaving their families with no food or crops to sell." (FGD, Isandula, Magu)*

More educated men (and mostly those with an educated spouse) are more likely to engage their spouses and girls in discussions on family matters and on how to spend family resources. Wage employment was another factor which gave women better leverage in household decision making. For instance, 43% of women in our sample make independent decisions on how to spend their earnings, while 41% make the decision jointly with their spouses or with any other family member.

Despite progress made, women-especially in rural areas-are still at a disadvantaged position with regards to economic participation, asset ownership, and household decision making. The price shocks induced by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis has had direct and indirect effects on women's incomes. Increased costs of doing business, resulting from rising input prices, threatens the very existence of women-run businesses as profits and disposable incomes are eroded. For example, women in food vending businesses are forced to choose between adjusting the prices of their final product or foregoing profits. If the effects of the crisis are prolonged, any positive steps taken to bridge existing gender gaps in economic participation, asset ownership, and decision making may be in jeopardy.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusion

This study aimed at making a rapid assessment of the impact of Russia-Ukraine crisis on rural livelihoods with special focus on women and girls in Tanzania. There is consensus amongst most women in Mwanza and Ruvuma that in the last six months to a year, commodity prices and the general cost of living have gone up considerably. The price increase of important inputs including fuel energy, fertilizers, edible oils, and food stuffs has driven up the cost of production and of doing business. This has had adverse effects on women's incomes and livelihoods.

Over half of the women respondents said their incomes, since March of 2022, have declined. Women operating non-farm businesses, such as food vending, gave testimonies on how their businesses have suffered since March 2022 due to rising commodity prices. This created a dilemma where women operating businesses had to choose between adjusting the price of their final products upwards and foregoing profits for fear of losing customers. Similarly, low fertilizer use due to price increase has affected farmers especially single and widowed women in terms of lowering production and productivity. Persistent high inflation rates also means that women must spend more to pay for the same amount of household basic needs. However, due to financial constraints this can sometimes cause anxiety and tension in the family.

Reducing meal quantities and varieties was one of the coping strategies used to cushion the effects of inflation. This can have detrimental consequences on children and women's (especially those breastfeeding) nutrition and health. Other coping mechanisms included the use of own savings, seeking credit, and selling of crops and or livestock.

Women's economic participation, especially in non-farm activities, has improved over time. Women's ability to earn income is an important element of empowerment which also gives them more leverage in household decision making. The rising cost of doing business threatens the existence of women-run businesses. Closure of women's businesses takes away the opportunity for them to be economically active and earn income. Subsequently, this lowers their strategic position in the household decision process.

No one knows how long the Russia-Ukraine crisis will last or the extent of socio-economic damage it will inflict on communities across the globe. However, the world is undoubtedly experiencing adverse effects of the conflicts resulting from disruptions of global supply value chains. As a result, we are witnessing sharp increases in the prices of energy, food, and other consumer products, which in turn have raised the cost of living. The poor, and those who are traditionally marginalized, are likely to be disproportionately affected by this shock. Women, especially young women, are more vulnerable during these uncertain times. This calls for several short and long-term policy measures.

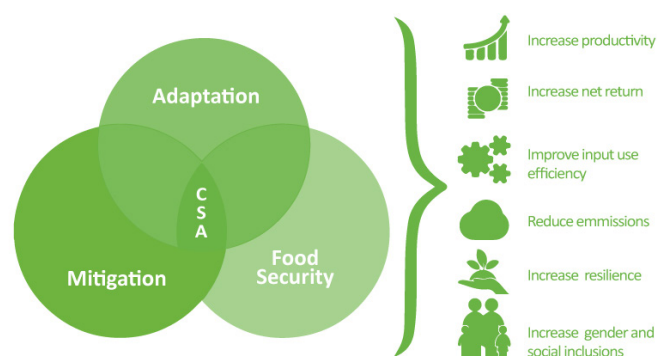
### 4.2 Recommendations on Appropriate Government Intervention to Reduce / Soften the Impacts of the Crisis on the Vulnerable Rural Population

#### Accelerate gender responsive and sustainable food systems innovation

This study finds that rural smallholder households are facing a drop in productivity due to the inflationary effects of the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The Tanzanian government should therefore strengthen its interventions towards increasing crop production

and productivity ensuring women and men equally benefit, specifically smallholder farmers. This can be achieved through increased access to quality seeds, improved soil quality and proper water management. For instance, that Tanzania imports large quantities of edible oil and wheat. Therefore, more emphasis is needed on promoting the production of crops such as sunflower, palm trees, sesame, soybeans and groundnuts, targeting domestic and international markets. Some women are already producing and processing a variety of edible oils including groundnuts.

Mitigating the effects of climate change has become one of the key policy concerns in the country, especially in more recent years. Women in the studied areas have also associated the price rise of domestically produced food with low yields caused by uncertain weather patterns. Therefore, promoting climate smart agriculture (CSA) is inevitable for sustainability, increasing farmers' agricultural productivity and incomes. Interventions should thus focus on accelerating uptake of climate smart agriculture investments by providing incentives to offset the cost of adoption, promoting practices and generating awareness and capacity for the practices.



The findings show that women are actively participating in agriculture value addition, as in the case of potato value chain. This allows women to fetch better market prices for their commodities thereby increasing their incomes and resilience to economic shocks. The government, through relevant ministries, should see this as an opportunity to support women and youth through capacity building and promotion of technology adoption to enhance efficiency. This should go hand in hand with facilitating easy access to markets, productive land, extension services, and promoting high value crops.

Survey findings also show that most women and their families have reduced their daily food intake and variety due to rising prices. This has negative implications on children's and women's nutrition. Therefore, promoting and protecting the right to nutritious food, by creating sustainable food systems, targeting women's and girls' specific nutrition needs is critical.

### Gender responsive monetary and fiscal measures

The Tanzanian government is already implementing various measures to counteract inflationary pressures caused by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis. Therefore, the government should continue to take necessary actions to monitor and stabilize commodity prices. Short- to long-term strategies may include:

- Fuel import subsidies to lower living and production costs.
- Reduce import tariffs on selected consumer products affected by the crisis.
- Farm input subsidies to boost crop production, paying special attention to women and youth.

### Social Protection

The TASAF conditional cash transfer program partly aims at (1) increasing consumption of the extremely poor on a permanent basis, and (2) consumption smoothing during lean seasons and shocks. However, findings show that with the current rates of inflation the cash transfers do not suffice to meet consumption needs. A review of the program at this point may be eminent, to account for the current landscape and in anticipation of any similar future scenarios.

In addition, the government is moving towards passing a bill for universal health coverage. If managed properly this will be of great benefit to women, children, and the elderly. Development partners can play an instrumental role in providing technical support and capacity building during the design and implementation of the program.



### 4.3 Support women to expand decent work in the formal and informal economy.

The Ministry for Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups and other stakeholders should work towards strengthening attitudinal change programs in rural areas emphasising the importance of women and young girls in decision making, economic participation and asset ownership. We have seen from the findings that wage employment plays a crucial role in women's empowerment. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis has made women more vulnerable to income loss, hence posing a challenge to their position in society.

Increase women's access to productive resources. This includes women's access to education and training, access to financial capital (including low interest rates loans), access to productive assets, including land, and access to adequate nutrition and health services. Currently, the government has committed to enhance women's economic rights and justice through the Generation Equality Forum by 2026.<sup>10</sup> Key commitment by the U.R.T includes

increase measures including investments in gender responsive public and private quality care services, expand women's access to and control over productive resources, expand decent work in the formal and informal economy and design and implement gender-responsive macro-economic plans, budget reforms and stimulus packages.

The government is already implementing various interventions geared towards empowering women. For instance, local government authorities (LGAs) are mandated to set aside 10% of their revenue collections to provide interest free loans to women, youth, and people with disabilities. There is need for effective implementation of this initiative to guarantee credit inclusion of these vulnerable groups via transparency and accountability in the distribution, appropriate management of allocated funds, and routine evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Need for national policy and interventions to recognize unpaid care, redistribute, reduce and reward unpaid domestic and care work. Discriminatory social norms explain some gender inequalities observed in unpaid care work. This is reflected in the difference in time spent by women and men doing domestic chores and unpaid care. On average, in Tanzania women spend 4.4 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 1.4 hours daily for men affecting women's participation in income generating activities.

State and non-state actors should thus advocate for fair distribution of unpaid care work at the family level. Schools and community programmes could also be designed to promote effective change in attitudes towards unpaid care work. Support women to diversify their economic activities by encouraging them to venture into production of high value crops and other opportunities outside farming. This will help women spread their risks in case of harvest failure or price fluctuations. Other non-farm businesses will also provide them with a supplementary income stream.

### 4.4. Ensure equal access to affordable and sustainable energy

- Protect women and girls and their communities from bearing the brunt of escalating fuel and energy prices by taking action to reduce price volatility in energy markets.
- Invest in time- and energy-efficient technologies that reduce women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work.

### 4.5. Strengthen gender disaggregated data

Track the impacts of rising global food prices on women and girls, ensure interventions to reduce food insecurity are accessible to and benefit them and monitor and address gendered health impacts of food insecurity, such as anaemia and the malnutrition of children and pregnant women.

### 4.6 Prioritize women's participation, leadership and decision-making

Promote women's participation, leadership and decision-making in recovery by investing in and consulting extensively with women's groups and organizations on mitigating food insecurity and energy poverty, and building their capacity to design policies and programmatic interventions for recovery.

<sup>10</sup> <https://forum.generationequality.org/home>

## APPENDICES

TABLE A1.

In general, how would you describe your present Living conditions?

|                      | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Very Bad             | 71        | 36      |
| Fairly bad           | 55        | 28      |
| Neither good nor bad | 51        | 26      |
| Fairly good          | 20        | 10      |
| Very good            | 3         | 2       |
| Total                | 200       | 100     |

TABLE A2.

Looking back, how do you rate your current living conditions compared to 12 months ago?

|             | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Much worse  | 68        | 34      |
| Worse       | 83        | 42      |
| Same        | 25        | 13      |
| Better      | 20        | 10      |
| Must better | 4         | 2       |
| Total       | 200       | 100     |

TABLE A3.

In your opinion, has the general cost of living in your area changed over the past 6 months?

|                         | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Yes, Increased a lot    | 126       | 63      |
| Yes, somewhat increased | 56        | 28      |
| Some/ has not changed   | 13        | 7       |
| Yes, somewhat decreased | 3         | 2       |
| Yes, Decreased a lot    | 2         | 1       |
| Total                   | 200       | 100     |

TABLE A4.

Looking back, how do you rate the current cost of living in your area compared to 12 months ago?

|                    | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| No change          | 6         | 3       |
| Increased a lot    | 155       | 78      |
| Somewhat increased | 28        | 14      |
| Somewhat Decreased | 3         | 2       |
| Decreased a lot    | 7         | 4       |
| Don't know         | 1         | 1       |
| Total              | 200       | 100     |

TABLE A5.

Has your personal income changed since March 2022?

|                     | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| No change in income | 50        | 25      |
| Increased a lot     | 2         | 1       |
| Somewhat increased  | 19        | 10      |
| Somewhat Decreased  | 51        | 26      |
| Decreased a lot     | 67        | 34      |
| Don't know          | 11        | 6       |
| Total               | 200       | 100     |

TABLE A6:

Prior to March 2022, how often did the following situation happen in your household?

|   | Never | Once or twice | Several times | Many times | Always |
|---|-------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------|
| Reduce portion size at meal-times         | 77%   | 15%           | 7%            | 1%         | 0.50%  |
| Reduce number of meals eaten in a day     | 74%   | 16%           | 8%            | 4%         |        |
| Changed the quality of food in-take       | 49%   | 26%           | 20%           | 6%         |        |
| Worry that you would not have enough food | 70%   | 18%           | 9%            | 4%         |        |

TABLE A7:

Since March 2022, how often did the following situation happen in your household

|   | Never | Once or twice | Several times | Many times | Always |
|---|-------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------|
| Reduce portion size at meal-times         | 40%   | 18%           | 25%           | 18%        | 0.5%   |
| Reduce number of meals eaten in a day     | 40%   | 14%           | 24%           | 20%        | 2.5%   |
| Changed the quality of food in-take       | 21%   | 16%           | 27%           | 36%        | 1.5%   |
| Worry that you would not have enough food | 35%   | 19%           | 27%           | 17%        | 2%     |

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