

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE COCOA SECTOR

Examples of emerging good practice



Member of the cooperative Coopasa, Côte d'Ivoire (September 2015). Photo: Yel Ratajczak/Oxfam

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Women cocoa farmers are central to the sustainability of the cocoa supply chain and cocoa-growing communities. Although too often unrecognized and undervalued, women's labor makes significant contributions to the amount of cocoa produced, which is under increasing demand. Empowering women cocoa farmers not only has a positive impact on the lives of women, men and communities, but also has a business advantage. When women have control over their own income or family earnings, they reinvest in their families, children and communities, increasing the well-being and the sustainability of cocoa-growing communities. This report provides examples of emerging good practice to address gender equality in the cocoa sector and where there is potential to make even greater change.

FOREWORD



Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of Oxfam International

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) mark the agreement of ambitious commitments to achieve gender equality, and protecting and enhancing women's rights has become a defining challenge of our time. At Oxfam, women's rights and gender equality are at the heart of what we do: they are important goals in and of themselves, and they are necessary for development.

Critical to the achievement of the SDGs are partnerships, and around the world, increasingly, leading companies are recognizing the role they must play as partners in eliminating gender inequality. This role must not be limited to addressing discrimination in the workplace; it has to also challenge the broader social norms which foster gender inequality in the communities that companies are a part of, and confront the economic model and fiscal policies which see women and girls disproportionately impacted by global economic inequality.

Women's economic empowerment can be a key driver in challenging the social norms which create violence against women and girls (VAWG), and in allowing women to have the resources to leave violent relationships. However, women can experience increased violence as a result of their employment or economic activity, and it is important that businesses acknowledge and play their part in addressing VAWG through workplace policies and practices.

This shift in role also requires a shift in practices: investing in women, supporting collective action and truly empowering women in business as leaders and advocates for their own needs and priorities. Raising women's voices and being accountable to them is as important for healthy supply chains as it is for communities lifting themselves out of poverty and being able to thrive.

Three years ago, Oxfam launched the Behind the Brands campaign as a catalyst for change among the world's biggest food and beverage companies. Through the campaign, Oxfam challenged the cocoa sector to take specific measures to strengthen the rights of women cocoa farmers. Within months, they responded and made significant commitments to address women's empowerment at the farm level. While companies have acknowledged that women cocoa farmers are the backbone of the sector and have made strong commitments to foster women's equality in the cocoa value chain, there remains very little shared knowledge of what emerging good practice actually looks like.

The leadership shown by the companies which contributed to this report is commendable. Without exchanging best and worst practices and without embarking on shared learning, the sector cannot progress.

Today, the cocoa sector is facing a considerable sustainability crisis and a range of social, environmental and economic challenges. Transformative structural solutions and cooperation on supporting women cocoa farmers is a critical step for the global cocoa sector to create a future where it not only survives but prospers – with the communities it works with.

This report on emerging good practice is a valuable contribution to exploring solutions and taking them to scale. This is only a beginning. The sector cannot afford to lose momentum. It must now seize the opportunity to invest in genuine solutions which put social, economic and political empowerment for women cocoa farmers at the center of overcoming the global cocoa crisis.

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SUMMARY

Women cocoa farmers are central to the sustainability of the cocoa supply chain and cocoa-growing communities. Although too often unrecognized, women's labor makes significant contributions to the amount of cocoa produced, which is under increasing demand. Empowering women cocoa farmers not only has a positive impact on the lives of women, men, and communities but also a business advantage. Across cash crops, buyers have found that women often produce higher quality products than men when given needed support. When women have control over their own income or family earnings, they reinvest in their families, children and communities, increasing the well-being and the sustainability of cocoa-growing communities. And women's empowerment is important for women and men because it is an essential component of thriving rural communities.

Many of the existing programs have tended towards community development in cocoa communities without understanding the links of female beneficiaries to their supply chains. Programs that focus on supporting and enabling women's contribution to the productivity, quality and sustainability of the cocoa supply chain have been fewer. And yet there are important emerging good practices within pilots that speak to the business case for investing in women in the cocoa supply chain.

This report identifies emerging good practice in areas that were identified as priorities for addressing women's role as cocoa farmers during a multi-stakeholder meeting held in Accra, Ghana, 10-11 September 2015, with cocoa traders, chocolate brands, cocoa producers' organizations, government and NGOs. Using these conversations as a starting point, it builds on them with additional research.

Work on gender and cocoa is in early stages and significant efforts are still needed. However, good practice is beginning to emerge in ten key areas that support various stages of change with specific outcomes for women farmers and an accompanying transformation of cocoa supply chains.

To reflect the efforts in these priority areas, the report looks at examples of a number of projects that include those that have been in place for some time as well as others in critical areas where change is needed, but projects are just being started. It largely focuses on emerging good practice coming out of Africa, given that Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire make up two of the world's three largest cocoa-growing countries, and that Nigeria is revitalizing its cocoa sector.

These projects range from the Fair Labor Association's mapping of women in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain in Côte d'Ivoire to gender sensitization efforts in Nigeria's cocoa communities with Oxfam and FADU, a local farmers' union. The report looks at the governance and gender commitments of projects such as Mondelēz International's Cocoa Life partnership with several NGOs and the leadership initiatives of Kuapa Kokoo, one of Ghana's leading cooperatives. And it looks at steps taken to build technical capacity of women through pilots such as Barry Callebaut's tree nursery and farmer trainings as well as the World Cocoa Foundation's use of video clubs to reach women farmers.

Other projects focus on bridging the gap in women's access to tools and financial resources, including Care's use of village savings and loans with women in cocoa communities and Nestlé's early attempts to tailor farming tools to female cocoa farmers. Finally, the report looks at new efforts by CocoaAction and longer-standing corporate initiatives like the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership to engage and partner with governments.

Based on these projects and supplementary research, key lessons include:

Data

To be able to create greater understanding of women in cocoa supply chains, greater efforts must be made to collect sex-disaggregated data, undertake gender mappings and extend partnerships to include efforts by suppliers and traders.

Women's leadership and voice

Women, as well as communities, identify their own needs as farmers and their priorities to have the greatest impact and avoid unintended side effects.

Gender sensitization

A household approach to gender sensitization builds awareness of roles and the contributions that men and women make, and creates a shared vision for change.

Women's empowerment and leadership training

Training and empowerment must be tied to resources to improve women's basic education levels.

Governance and gender commitments

In best-case scenarios an organization's commitments to women's greater inclusion has stemmed from an overarching organizational commitment to gender equality.

Technical training

Training programs are designed recognizing that women farmers/laborers have distinct interests, needs, and requirements. These should take women farmers' needs into account during the design of courses in terms of content such as access to land and lower literacy rates, time and location.

Access to credit

Programs address constraints such as access to collateral and limited control over financial resources, and must address the growth of women's businesses.

Tools and technology

These resources are adapted to women's needs, from tools made for different body types to design and use of ICTs that are not dependent on literacy, are affordable and can be adapted to address specific gender roles.

Market access

Platforms, opportunities and trainings that increase productivity and build skills to access markets are critical for women farmers' shared financial gains in cocoa.

Engaging government

Keys for success include a transparent process where there is consistent communication with women farmers and one that is substantive and includes key actors such as the Ministry of Gender.

1 INTRODUCTION

Integrating women farmers into cocoa supply chains and supporting them in their existing roles is something that is relatively new to many of the players along the supply chain. Finding the best way to do so is a process of understanding the challenges that women face; piloting projects and learning based on the successes and shortcomings of those projects over time.

In this report, for the purposes of acknowledging women's roles in the production of cocoa regardless of land ownership, we refer to all women who own cocoa farms as well as those who provide labor on cocoa farms at differing stages of production as women 'farmers.'

While many are eager to identify best practice that can be replicated there is an important intermediary step: identifying 'emerging good practice.' These are the ideas, pilots, and shifts in power relations that are beginning to take place and that provide learning along the road to best practice.

Many of the existing programs have been designed as community development in cocoa communities without understanding the links of women farmers to their supply chains. Programs that focus on supporting and enabling women farmers' contribution to the productivity, quality, and sustainability of the cocoa supply chain have been fewer. And yet there are important emerging good practices within pilots that speak to the business case for investing in women farmers in the cocoa supply chain.

Who this report is for

This piece of work aims to speak to the questions raised by companies that have made initial commitments to integrate gender issues into their cocoa supply chains, or those that are considering doing so and require resources and additional support to put theory into practice. It also aims to speak to the needs of implementing partners, given that many private sector initiatives include partnerships with non-profit organizations or governments.

Scope of the report

This report investigates emerging good practice in ten key areas that were identified as priorities during a multi-stakeholder gender and cocoa meeting held in Accra, Ghana. These priorities are grouped to reflect a process of change that begins with 1) understanding the problem and 2) building awareness and securing commitments to equity. They then move on to 3) building capacity, 4) providing necessary tools and resources to create change, and 5) providing an enabling environment for women farmers and women's businesses.

Geographical focus

To reflect the efforts in these priority areas, the report looks at examples of a range of projects that include those that have been in place for some time as well as others in critical areas where change is needed, but projects are just being started. It largely focuses on emerging good practice coming out of Africa, given that Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire make up two of the world's three largest cocoa-growing countries, and Nigeria is revitalizing its cocoa sector. Additionally, gender and cocoa commitments have initially been made by brands in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire before expanding into other regions. As a result, many pilots are concentrated in these countries.

Gaps

While progress is being made, the process of identifying emerging good practice for supporting women cocoa farmers' roles also highlights the limited scope of the efforts currently under way, particularly when compared with some of the programs for women farmers in crops like coffee, and the significant need for greater commitments. This is both in terms of the number of interventions as well as the quality and scope of those interventions and ensuring design that would allow them to be sustained and scaled up in the future.

2 THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WOMEN IN COCOA

Women farmers are central to the sustainability of the cocoa supply chain and cocoa-growing communities. Although often overlooked and unrecognized, women farmers and laborers make significant contributions to the amount of cocoa produced, which is under increasing demand. Across cash crops, buyers have found that women often produce higher quality products than men when given needed support.¹ And when women have control over their own income or family earnings, they reinvest in their families, children and communities, increasing the well-being and the sustainability of cocoa-growing communities.²

Women farmers in Ghana and elsewhere participate in all stages of cocoa production to varying degrees. The one role that men farmers play almost exclusively is in the transport of cocoa beans to marketing centers and the negotiation of sales, according to producer and industry experts in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. This limits women farmers' ability to benefit economically from cocoa growing and prevents them from asserting their rights as cocoa farmers. Ultimately, many women cocoa farmers have very little agency and voice in decision making when it comes to cocoa production.

Women make up a large portion of cocoa labor and farmers in West Africa. In Ghana 25 percent of cocoa farmers are women, according to official figures. However, there is significant underreporting of those figures due to a bias towards farmers being defined by land ownership, from which women are often excluded. A significantly larger number of women in Ghana provide labor on cocoa farms; particularly farms owned by their husbands and families, but are often not recognized for their roles in cocoa farming.

In Côte d'Ivoire women own 25 percent of the cocoa plantations and make up approximately 68 percent of the labor force, according to the African Development Bank. That said, they only earn 21 percent of the income generated.³

The quality level and the dwindling supply of cocoa are among the greatest challenges for industry actors such as traders, grinders, processors, and manufacturers and therefore cocoa traders and chocolate producers; along with an aging cocoa farmer population and a lack of younger farmers interested in taking on the trade. Value chain experts agree that women farmers are critical to the success of initiatives to increase quality and maintain production. These issues can't be addressed without jointly looking at women's critical role as cocoa farmers.

'If you begin from the starting point that [women] are both doing most of the work and are also involved in all the key steps [in cocoa production] where quantity and quality is at stake you can't really ignore that,' says one value chain expert and trader. 'You have to address these two things from a gender perspective,' he adds. He also points out that these issues are currently being sidelined in many of the projects in West Africa, and that women's core role as cocoa producers has to be addressed hand in hand with good agricultural practices and good quality control systems.

Until now there has been a tendency to focus on women's roles as caregivers and custodians of cocoa communities. A shift towards acknowledging women's existing and future roles in the core production and the quality of cocoa has to take place. This is important both for the health of the cocoa supply chain as well as to ensure that women enjoy their right to meet their full potential and benefit equally from economic activity in their communities. This sentiment was echoed by some of the industry representatives in West Africa at a recent cocoa and gender workshop in Accra, Ghana. 'Business must go beyond corporate social responsibility. What we are doing is not just about a moral responsibility. We have to go deeper, beyond putting schools in communities. We need to make sure that women are regarded as farmers,' said one chocolate company's country representative.

3 WHAT MAKES 'EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE'?

We often hear the term 'best practice' as a range of organizations and businesses try to leapfrog over lengthy stages of research, experimentation, and learning and ultimately reach innovation and growth. In essence, best practice has come to mean a set of business practices, whether carried out by companies, the government, NGOs or farmers' organizations, that are seen as most effective.

However, what has previously been considered best practice in the business arena has not always been aligned with what is best practice from a social perspective. That said, many businesses, including those in the cocoa sector, increasingly understand that what is good for business must also be good for workers and communities.

And yet innovation can be stifled by focusing on the need to generate best practice too early in the process of tackling a new challenge or working in new ways. This is particularly true in the context of creating inclusive and responsible supply chains. Actors at each stage of the chain need the time and space to evaluate assumptions, social norms and biases that underlie their daily practices and habits. The process is as important as the change in practices, and tends to make the changes in practices more 'owned' by the participating organizations and thus more sustainable. Actors need to experiment with new ways of operating while discovering ways they can respond to women's interests and needs along the chain.

By allowing good practice to emerge in the earlier stages of making change, the exchange and gathering of information, including from women and within communities, is encouraged and various actors can correct course before reaching a stage where significant investment has been made and a project has either failed or succeeded. So, what makes emerging good practice?

Emerging good practice takes into account a number of important factors, even if it has not yet been perfected. It may embody a few of these principles and still require further inclusion of others to make it truly best practice. And it is expected that emerging good practice may continue to change and evolve as more information is gained.

Among critical factors that contribute to something being an emerging good practice and which place it on the path to best practice are:

- The participation of affected people in design and delivery;
- Demonstrable positive impact and continued improvement;
- Addressing underlying causes;
- Building capacity of women and key actors in the supply chain and community;
- Non-discriminatory/shared benefits;
- Leading to sustainable change; and
- Creating understanding and support between women and men.

4 IGNITING A PROCESS OF CHANGE: EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

Significant analysis has looked at change in cocoa supply chains from a commercial perspective. But scholars point out that bringing the gender dimension of production into focus means looking at the social dimension of production and companies' interactions with communities and other important actors.⁴ Creating cocoa supply chains that are inclusive of women farmers also requires understanding the basic assumption that cocoa is predominantly a male crop despite women farmers' significant participation in the sector, and unpacking how that shapes all the stages of production.

Interventions are needed at each stage of this process, from identifying the problem to building capacity and creating enabling environments to ensure success, though they may take different forms depending on local contexts and needs. There are additional steps for change that follow the initial ones identified here, which we are not able to address. That said, monitoring and evaluation efforts in particular are critical for continual learning that creates a cyclical process of adapting and improving programs and interventions.

While work on gender equality in the cocoa sector is still in early stages, good practice is beginning to emerge in ten key areas that support various stages of change with specific outcomes for women farmers and an accompanying transformation of cocoa supply chains:

Sex-disaggregated data and gender mapping (1) and **needs assessments** (2) with and by women are fundamental to understanding the problem and the existing situation. **Gender sensitization** (3), which includes men and youth, and **governance and diversity policies** (4) are critical for building awareness and securing commitments to change. **Women's leadership and empowerment trainings** (5) and **technical trainings** (6) are the backbone of the capacity building that will enable women farmers to take on new roles and prosper both as cocoa farmers and as decision makers in cocoa supply chains. **Inclusive technology** (7) and **access to credit** (8) allow women farmers to apply their skills and knowledge and continue to improve and grow their farms and businesses. **Market access** (9) and **working with governments** (10) create enabling environments for gender equality and for women to be recognized and supported as cocoa farmers, and to access opportunities and programs that will support their livelihoods.

Many of these steps build upon one another, such as the collection of good gender-disaggregated data which then enables effective interventions in a number of areas.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

1 Sex-disaggregated data

There is a saying, 'What hasn't been counted doesn't count.' It is difficult to properly identify problems, set goals, design interventions and measure progress towards more gender-equitable and inclusive cocoa supply chains without a baseline understanding of the numbers of women farmers and laborers who work in the cocoa sector, and how women contribute.

Collecting sex-disaggregated data is not just a matter of tallying the numbers of men and women in the sector, but rather understanding their contributions and the consequences of the different traditional roles they may play in social and economic contexts.⁵ There are a number of areas in which it is important to have data that paints a picture of how women's experiences in the sector are different from men's. This includes the income of female as compared with male farmers; women's access to leadership roles; the extent to which men and women are able to

access credit and their access to and preferences for certain kinds of trainings, tools and technologies.

Previously governments were expected to collect information on the demographics of agriculture and business. But, in the past decade or two, organizations like the World Bank have pointed out the growing role of the private sector and a range of other actors in gathering and disseminating information and shaping agricultural policy and the roles that men and women play.

One industry source observed that it is difficult to trace the supply chain. In part this can be attributed to the fact that most large food manufacturers buy cocoa from traders, rather than from cooperatives and farmers themselves. Currently data is not being disaggregated, or at least not made public, in terms of who is supplying cocoa to the traders. This leaves a significant gap in the sector and points to a key area of commitment and collaboration for making change.

'We have to start by simply understanding the issues and where there are gaps. A lot of people are not aware,' explained an industry source at recent meetings in Ghana.

Goals to work towards

- Full mapping of the contributions of women farmers to industry supply chains, by looking at what they do, what they have access to and control over and whether they are able to make decisions.
- Addressing and removing obstacles to the collection of sex-disaggregated data collected by cooperatives, suppliers/traders and companies.
- Cooperation with government to ensure gender-disaggregated data at the national level for women cocoa farmers and female labor in cocoa. This must encompass an inclusive definition of farmers to sufficiently capture women's participation in the sector and address current under-reporting and invisibility of female labor in census and labor data.

Emerging good practice example: Mapping of women farmers

Following commitments made by Nestlé for Oxfam's Behind the Brands gender and cocoa work, the company commissioned the Fair Labor Association (FLA) to do a mapping of women farmers' roles in their supply chain in Côte d'Ivoire. The study provided an important understanding of the number of women farmers in the supply chain, the ways in which they contribute and where the challenges are that they face. The study did not undertake a comprehensive mapping of all women in cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the size of the study and the combined use of surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews would suggest that these trends would apply more broadly across the sector in the country.⁶

The mapping covered 20 percent of Nestlé's Ivorian cocoa supply chain, which is sourced through 45 cooperatives. The FLA randomly selected five cooperatives from among the 45, visiting 200 farms, interviewing 120 male and female workers and undertaking an additional 244 interviews with rural women in cocoa communities.

The research was particularly important because it highlighted the invisibility and under-reporting of women's work in cocoa to date. Ninety-three percent of women interviewed reported working in cocoa production, either on family farms or cocoa plantations. However, because women's work in cocoa often does not have formal terms or conditions it goes unreported by the local cooperative or by Nestlé.

The study also identified that women play a large number of direct roles in the cocoa supply chain, as well as carrying out the household work and care work that enables all workers and

men farmers to be productive. It pointed out the barriers that hinder women farmers' ability to fully participate in the sector and highlighted that women farmers are almost entirely absent from leadership roles in cocoa cooperatives.

At the same time, the study identified challenges in gathering full data about women's contributions to the sector without further commitment from and collaboration with other players in the chain. The FLA concluded that numerous intermediaries involved in the remaining 80 percent of the supply chain who have not yet addressed these issues present challenges for further mapping at this time. Such mappings can be considered emerging good practice, but they do not replace the need for good sex-disaggregated census data.

2 Women's leadership and understanding community contexts

Any given community is a patchwork of social, political, and economic factors that influence the roles, responsibilities, and opportunities and therefore the needs of those living in it. In order to support women's roles in the cocoa sector, an organization has to have a basic understanding of the needs of women cocoa farmers and the needs of those in communities within which they work.

For example, research in Nigeria showed that among the household factors that most enabled women's ability to make decisions in cocoa, and therefore some of their greatest needs, were higher levels of formal education, greater amounts of time available for contributing to cocoa farming, and the ability to make greater financial contributions.⁷ All of these factors are linked to an investment in building the skills and knowledge of women and girls and reducing excessive and arduous unpaid care tasks and unequal housework so that they can participate in farming and be a part of economic activities outside of the home.

Experts such as those at the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) highlight that needs assessments must be tailored to look at different needs of men and women, how these needs have come to exist (which inequalities are at the basis, for example) and then how to address these needs, from a gender perspective.⁸

For instance, while this paper focuses on women's core roles in cocoa production, existing assessments highlight that there are significant needs for women and youth in cocoa communities related to the production of food crops and raising animals. Women and youth contribute substantially to cocoa production; however, they do not gain financially from their contributions, amplifying their need for other sources of income and subsistence.⁹ This also points to a need to address power dynamics and inequities within communities over time.

Additionally, because many of the social, economic, and gender factors are intertwined within communities, interventions and projects can have unintended impacts or domino effects if there is not an understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that influence the needs of a community and women farmers. One potential unintended impact of women's increased earnings or new roles in cocoa growing communities is increased violence against women in the short term as an initial response to power shifts within the household and community.¹⁰

The well-being of women in the cocoa sector cannot be disentangled from the well-being of their communities and the sustainability of livelihoods in the sector. Low earnings for cocoa farmers in general, whether due to low cocoa prices or low productivity levels on small farms, will make it difficult for the livelihoods of women farmers to improve without addressing the larger context. Left unaddressed, poverty in cocoa-producing communities will continue to contribute to the use of unpaid and invisible female labor and at times child labor on family farms.

The design and delivery of any project or intervention in the cocoa supply chain must therefore include affected people in order to take into account the context, needs, and numerous challenges that female cocoa farmers face as well as the needs of the community more broadly.

Goals to work towards

- Including a needs assessment and community context survey prior to any cocoa and gender interventions as standard practice.
- Ensuring integral participation of affected people, particularly women, while including men, youth, and communities more broadly in needs assessments.

Emerging good practice example: Cocoa community needs assessments

Through its work on Cocoa Life, CARE is facilitating communities to do their own needs assessment prior to the development of Community Action Plans (CAPs), which serve as the roadmap for prioritized development projects in the community.

The exercise helps the communities identify and prioritize their needs, the requirements to meet those needs, resources they could mobilize locally and what would be needed in terms of external support; whether material, financial, or human resources.

A cross-section of the community participates in the exercise, including youth, women, men, opinion leaders, chiefs and elders, representatives from religious bodies and any other important organizations in the community. Once the needs are identified and prioritized, the community is given an opportunity to reconfirm them. A Community Action Committee (CAC) is then put in place to lead the implementation of the identified projects.

The assessment is currently being used in cocoa communities, but it is not specifically being used for women's participation in cocoa. That said, it is a tool that can be adapted to place greater focus on women's productive role in the cocoa supply chain in the future.¹¹

BUILDING AWARENESS AND SECURING COMMITMENTS TO EQUITY

3 Gender sensitization trainings

Many of the challenges that women face in the cocoa sector are reflective of social norms that attribute characteristics, roles and responsibilities to women and men, girls and boys. From who takes on which roles on the farm and in housework to who makes decisions, gender norms are at play in all aspects of daily life. As a result, they are at the root of many of the challenges that different actors along the cocoa supply chain must address.

Without addressing these basic challenges based on collection of data and needs assessments, projects are unlikely to succeed and create the long-term change required. Additionally, agricultural projects that do not address and build growing awareness of gender roles and stereotypes may increase women's workload, increase tensions between men and women or simply not be effective.¹²

With this in mind, gender sensitization trainings are an important tool for starting a transformative process, increasing understanding, reflection and dialogue. They change behavior through growing understanding while offering participants new sets of skills.

Gender sensitization programs often only include women and focus on building their awareness of their rights and the roles that society has placed on them. However, workshop participants at the recent gender and cocoa workshop in Ghana highlighted the particular importance of engaging men and youth as well as focusing on the shared responsibility which men and women have for understanding and shifting gender roles and stereotypes. This can mean undertaking a household approach to gender sensitization, which builds awareness of the

workload and contributions which men and women each make in their households. It also tackles ideas about men and women's roles in the house, in the economic activities of household members and in their rights to family resources such as land.

Gender sensitization training can also be an important tool for identifying gender biases in the conceptualization, design, and delivery of development and cocoa productivity initiatives.

In part, this means recognizing and supporting women's roles in rural and community development and agricultural productivity, while tackling gender stereotypes such as men being farmers and women only contributing labor on family farms.¹³ It also means supporting individuals in understanding their own gender biases and looking at how various organizations and institutions contribute to gender norms and biases, from community leadership bodies to churches to companies.

Goals to work towards

- Use of gender sensitization trainings at all points in the cocoa supply chain, from farmers to cooperatives to traders and producers, to build awareness of the various actors' own gender assumptions and contexts within which they work.
- Inclusion of men and women in gender sensitization training at the household level and a focus on shared responsibility.
- Greater numbers of men and youth involved in interventions/project response.

Emerging good practice example: Gender and learning trainings

In Nigeria the Farmer's Development Union (FADU) is adapting the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), which has been used in development for a number of years, to build understanding of gender issues in cocoa communities between women and men and to build the foundations for empowering and supporting female cocoa farmers.¹⁴

GALS largely uses picture-based diagramming tools and exercises to raise awareness about gender, to look at the dynamics within households and to encourage a process of joint planning and undertaking change. As part of the approach, GALS looks at a household perspective and includes exercises that enable men and women within households to evaluate, discuss, and negotiate the roles they play, the amount of time they spend working and who controls and benefits from income.

As part of the process of adapting GALS, FADU and Oxfam Nigeria have developed a tool to map the cocoa supply chain as a way to promote collaboration and respect between different value chain actors. It includes methods to discuss gender norms between men and women and identifies powerful actors in the chain who are important partners in developing skills for action learning and gender-equitable practices in cocoa.

The various exercises in the program build on one another as the skills and awareness of those using it are developed. This includes exercises that look at the basics of gender inequality and link them to how those inequalities may hinder income generation at the household level. The exercises also build towards activities that enable women and men in cocoa communities to jointly envision what a successful and peaceful future looks like together, putting to use their growing gender awareness.¹⁵

GALS is also increasingly being adapted in other cocoa programs, including the use of GALS in Côte d'Ivoire in two communities as part of the FLA-Nestlé Gender Dialogue Project.

4 Governance and gender commitments

The inclusion of gender commitments within governance structures such as gender and diversity policies, and writing quotas for female participation into organizational charters play an important role in the creation of an inclusive culture. This is true throughout the cocoa supply chain from growers' organizations to companies to implementing partners. They provide tools for concrete responses to the information generated by sex-disaggregated data and needs assessments about existing inequalities. And they demonstrate commitments to equal opportunities for women farmers and provide the foundations for setting specific goals and creating initiatives that will make them a reality.

One growers' cooperative quickly realized that committing a certain number of seats for women leaders alone was not enough to make women leaders come forward. Success came from gender and diversity commitments and women's leadership quotas in the coop's constitution being met with programs that built the confidence and skills of women as well as providing financial resources to enable their participation. And yet, without the governance structures in place there would not have been a foundation to build on or goals to work towards.

Equally, cooperatives have had to begin to look at the regulations that govern membership, which have excluded women because they have been dependent on land ownership, from which women are often excluded.¹⁶

Increasingly, companies have also begun to make commitments to gender equality (or to promote women farmers) in their supply chains. Several have signed on to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles, which among other things commits to high-level corporate leadership for gender equality, often found in the form of company policies. While not yet the norm, in the best-case scenarios, companies' commitments to women's greater inclusion in the cocoa supply chain and producers' organizations has stemmed from an overarching organizational commitment to gender equality and inclusion. This reflects conversations taking place inside of corporations about greater diversity and inclusion from the highest levels of leadership in the company through the various levels of staff. Taking up gender issues in supply chains has therefore been a process of extending those commitments one step further, whether by working with producers' organizations to incorporate gender policies into their governance or working on gender equality and cocoa programs with implementing partners.

At a recent workshop, a cocoa industry insider highlighted that having women and men in positions of decision making and in field outreach positions is about 'walking the talk': providing role models when it comes to the commitments that companies have made to gender equality and the work that they do with implementing partners on the ground. It also makes programs more effective and makes women and men feel comfortable and that they can access resources and projects.

Goals to work towards

- Policies that spell out commitments to ensuring women farmers' inclusion, participation and decision making in membership organizations.
- Goals that benchmark progress towards women's equal participation in the governance of organizations at various stages in the supply chain.
- Initiatives to recruit and train female extension staff and field staff.

Emerging good practice example: Governance in gender and cocoa programs

Among the brands producing chocolate, Mondelēz International has the longest track record of work on gender, through the early work of the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, which started in 2008. The length of time that the company has worked on the issue in partnership with development organizations and other players in the supply chain has brought to their attention

the need to include targets for women farmers' participation in the governance of their programs.

Through the Cocoa Life partnership, communities are brought together to form cooperative societies. These in turn, form district cooperative unions. Membership is open to anyone who works on a cocoa farm, which is an important element of the program's bylaws and governance, since many women do not own land.

To ensure inclusive governance, each cooperative society or union is required to have women to make up one-third of its executive members. To date, cooperative societies have reached these goals. District cooperative unions still have a little way to go, with women in 10 out of 35 positions.¹⁷

Mondelēz and Cocoa Life have also built measures for inclusion into the work of community training and extension services. One employee linked with the program highlighted that it is important for those who go into the field to work on women's empowerment. 'It needs to be women leading the work – it's a matter of messaging; women need to lead their own empowerment.' For this reason Mondelēz ensures that at least 40 percent of trainers are women. As part of this work, Cocoa Life has trained 218 women extension volunteers to speak to the fact that women are often more comfortable learning from and sharing information with other women. These exchanges also aim to build confidence among female participants and position some of them for leadership in farmer's groups and in some cases in local government institutions.¹⁸

BUILDING CAPACITY

5 Leadership capacity building and empowerment

Women farmers from cocoa-growing countries and communities have an important leadership role to play to influence the governance of the cocoa sector, from participating in local-level decision making to inputting into industry and policy arenas that set standards and goals for the sector at the national and international levels.

Leadership rooted in the empowerment of women is thought to have an impact that is two-fold in that it 1) builds the internal assets of women and girls which increases their bargaining power and ability to advocate for themselves and 2) allows them to draw on these resources to inspire and mobilize other women.¹⁹ Of equal importance is women's increasing ability to make changes in organizations, businesses and the communities around them. Having women in leadership roles, starting with the household and community level all the way up to the company and government levels, also provides role models that men, boys, girls, and other women start to consider as 'normal.'

While creating goals and quotas for women's leadership and participation in growers' organizations, cocoa-growing communities and implementing organizations is important, they have to go hand in hand with support, training and skills development to ensure that women have the education, skills and voice that lead to empowerment and enable their leadership.

Many women in rural communities have low levels of education. Basic skills development and education therefore must often form a foundation for empowering them and building the tools and the confidence to participate in greater levels of leadership and decision making on the farm in coops and in running their own businesses.

Research in cocoa communities in Nigeria showed that women with higher levels of education were more able to make greater contributions to farming decisions. In part this is attributed to

having greater skills. Equally, women with higher levels of education may be more aware of their rights and responsibilities and more able to negotiate and advocate for themselves.²⁰

In addition to formal leadership trainings, in many countries women's self-help groups have been an important platform for building the confidence, voice and leadership of rural women as well as providing a financial vehicle for women to collectively amass and access financial resources. (See *Access to Credit and Resources*).

Goals to work towards

- Women farmers' equal access to skills development and opportunities that position them for leadership in cooperatives and in the cocoa supply chain.
- Leadership training that addresses women's specific needs, concerns, and time constraints, including the need for basic education and literacy to allow them to participate.

Emerging good practice example: Cooperative leadership development

Kuapa Kokoo is a large Fair Trade Certified cocoa cooperative in Ghana that has approximately 80,000 members. The cooperative recognized that women play significant roles in cocoa production and yet are under-represented in leadership. As a result, through the gender program that they have run since 1996 they have begun to build the capacity of women to position them for leadership. At the same time, they have put in place initiatives targeted at making the governance of their organization more equitable to enable women to fill leadership positions.

Kuapa Kokoo undertook a three-year partnership with WIEGO in 2012 to train 2,800 Kuapa women cocoa farmers in leadership and participation in the cooperative. The Leadership & Business Skills for Women Fair Trade Producers program is based on a cascading approach. A small group of experts is trained in the cooperative. Those experts in turn train local women leaders/facilitators who in turn train other women in their communities.

The core of the training is based on women's legal rights, leadership and business skills; however Kuapa has been encouraged to customize the training to the context of their female farmers. This can include anything from translating materials into different languages to inviting men to special sessions to engage them in dialogue about the benefits of women's leadership and empowerment and adapt to local culture.

Kuapa Kokoo has found that using community facilitators allows for new ideas to be generated and incorporated as part of the leadership training and makes them more context-specific.²¹ Another of the lessons that Kuapa Kokoo learned is that leadership training is not sufficient. Once women have received training they need to have access to resources. For instance, women need resources to travel and participate in decision making forums in order to exercise their leadership. Women's empowerment must be tied to resources and opportunities.

It appears that this leadership development has had demonstrable results. The trainings, along with the formation of district-level Gender Committees, has led to a 75 percent increase in the number of women putting themselves forward for the National Executive Council (NEC) in 2014. As a result, 46 percent of Kuapa Kokoo's current NEC members, including the new president, are women.²²

6 Technical training

Women farmers and laborers are provided fewer extension services in general, but especially women in female-headed households, which limits their knowledge of available technology and its use.²³ A number of biases exclude women, including training selection criteria that link

participation to land ownership; the design of technical training that does not take into account women's lower literacy levels; social norms that assign women responsibility for household tasks that compete for their time; and their limited mobility due to social norms and unequal responsibility for care work.²⁴

Worldwide it is estimated that women only receive 5 percent of extension services and technical training, and just 15 percent of the world's staff providing agricultural technical training are women.²⁵ This is a challenge for women in cocoa. For example, in Ghana women cocoa farmers are 25 percent less likely to have received technical training in the past year.²⁶

Programs that build women farmers into the design and delivery of technical training stand to greatly increase women's ability to participate and will also provide important tools for increasing their productivity and contributions to the cocoa supply chain. For example, in cocoa this can mean training on the use of inputs such as fertilizer or the care of trees in nurseries, improving the quality of crops and increasing their yields.

Technical training can also help women farmers participate in other parts of the supply chain. By providing them with skills for processing cocoa and turning it into products such as cocoa butter or artisanal chocolates they can add value to cocoa harvests and move up the value chain.

To make the training of women a success, technical programs have to build women and their specific needs and concerns into the design of courses. This means including women in the process of identifying the time and location of trainings as well as making sure that their interests and concerns are reflected in the content. At the same time, research shows that farmers are more likely to take in information and adopt practices they are taught about by someone of the same gender, making it particularly important to have women as technical trainers.²⁷

Goals to work towards

- Equal access to extension services for female farmers and laborers.
- Extension services that prioritize building the capacity of women farmers, taking into account the social and economic constraints women face in production.
- Extension services that are designed with participation of women cocoa farmers to ensure that they are held at a time and in a place where women are available and that female farmers feel comfortable with technical training staff.

Emerging good practice example: Women's agroforestry pilot

Barry Callebaut, the cocoa supplier, has funded a pilot called the Women's Agroforestry Training Program in Côte d'Ivoire with IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative. It is a three-year tailored training and coaching program for women on agroforestry, combining cocoa production with production of food crops. As part of the program, women produce on their own plots of land and are given skills training as well as being linked with opportunities for income generation.

The training requires that applicants negotiate ownership or sole use of a minimum of ¼ hectare of land for women to farm. An estimated 15 participants are selected for an intensive three-week training program that provides technical skills through a mix of lectures, small group teamwork, planting of their own plots, field observations, and coaching. A female farmer and a trained agroforestry expert train the women farmers and provide expertise that they can relate to. On completion of the training, women continue to receive follow-up coaching over the next two years to help them at various stages of learning to farm their land. An evaluation takes place each year and the approach is adapted each year as needed.

Women who have already gone through the program have the option to become paid trainers for other farmers, to encourage them to put their skills to use, share them with others, and provide role models in the farming community.²⁸

PROVIDE RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR CHANGE

7 Access to credit and resources

Women across sectors find it difficult to build and grow their businesses because of their inability to access credit. It is even more difficult for rural women, given that they often have lower levels of education and financial literacy and are not in close proximity to financial institutions. Barriers to access include a lack of ownership of land and other forms of assets that can be used as collateral, a lack of credit history, and the fact that in some countries women require their husband's consent to take out loans.²⁹

In Ghana, women farmers in the cocoa sector were 20 percent less likely to have received a loan in the past year and almost 50 percent less likely to have a bank account, according to research from Harvard.³⁰ The lack of finance also contributes to women's lower levels of access to important farm inputs, along with lower amounts of technical training on the use of inputs. Again, research in Ghana showed that compared with men farmers, women cocoa farmers are 25 percent less likely to use fertilizer, 20 percent less likely to use insecticide, 66 percent less likely to use herbicide, and about 30 percent less likely to use motorized mist blowers.³¹

Programs that help women overcome these barriers are critical to enable women to access the inputs and funds needed to run farms and rural businesses and operate at scale. In recent years there has been a proliferation of micro-credit programs through NGOs, local coops, and in some cases even through banks. These programs can provide important seed funding and access to farm inputs for women as well as an opportunity to build greater financial management skills.

There has also been an emergence of a number of women's associations in cocoa communities that could be strengthened and groomed to address the credit gap, in addition to the multiple other roles the groups play, based on learning from existing programs elsewhere. For example, programs like Oxfam's Saving for Change (SFC) program have piloted new ways to bridge the gap in women's access to financial services, especially credit across Africa. In SFC groups, women design the structures and governance of the groups, writing the bylaws of the group, electing their own officers and keeping records of their weekly meetings. Members save the same amount every week and will draw from that fund, taking out loans when they need them and paying them back with interest, agreed to by the group. At the end of the cycle, savings, a share of the income from interest on loans, the group's income-generating activity (if it exists), and fines, are then distributed to members. The group decides when to close the cycle; usually when they most need the cash, between the planting and the harvest. Groups with a lot of experience may also decide to share only a portion of the fund at the end of the cycle, keeping the other one in the cashbox to avoid interrupting access to credit.

While micro-credit and community savings and loans programs have been an important tool, there is also a need for greater ambition for rural women's businesses to allow them to access greater pockets of finance and farming inputs as their cocoa farms and businesses grow. The amounts of money they provide are very limited and do not allow women to grow their businesses beyond a certain size or undertake larger investments in land, machinery or agricultural inputs. Research has also shown that microcredit has in many instances failed to shift women's roles within the household and therefore they don't control decision making over the money they borrow. For instance, in Bangladesh where microcredit began, men make the decisions and use women's microcredit loans in 89 percent of cases.³²

To date, the vast majority of rural credit and savings programs do not take into account the fact that women's legal, social, and economic position in their communities is different from that of men.³³ For instance, in many countries women have to have their husband's signature on micro-credit and bank loans.³⁴ To be more effective, programs and traditional financial services that extend credit to women must be designed to support women's ability to exercise control over the money they access and have to be structured to consider the growth of women's businesses over time.

Goals to work towards

- Rural credit lines extended to female farmers that take into account their needs and constraints, such as existing assets and land ownership.
- Formation and support of alternative means for women to access finance, such as through pooling their resources together in groups.
- Gender sensitization with local banks about their lending practices to promote greater inclusion of women.

Emerging good practice example: Cooperative credit union

The Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union is part of the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative. The Credit Union currently has 8,300 members in Ghana and provides savings facilities.³⁵ Women's groups have been formed through the cooperative in different communities, which together now access loans from the credit union.³⁶

The cooperative has increasingly made changes to make access to credit more inclusive and to facilitate women's needs. For example, no collateral is required to secure loans, which is often a barrier for women, and only a peer group approval of someone as credit-worthy is needed.³⁷

Kuapa Kokoo staff highlight that work with female cooperative members to access credit starts with understanding their needs and building some basic financial literacy. This generally leads to women farmers being given access to micro-credit and small loans. As women have successfully used micro-credit and reached a stage of needing larger loans to take their projects or businesses to the next stage, Kuapa has begun to look into options for linking them to formal credit through banking institutions according to lessons shared at a recent workshop in Ghana. Recognition of women's need for growing amounts of credit is particularly important in that initiatives for women often focus on micro-credit but do not enable women to grow and scale up the ambition for their production and businesses over time.

Emerging good practice example: Village Savings and Loans Associations

Working with Care, WVG and VSO, Cocoa Life established Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to provide start-up funds for small businesses and capital for smallholder cocoa farmers. The groups also help female cocoa farmers and their families to save during the cocoa harvest season and to carefully plan their finances over the year to compensate for the fact that their income is concentrated in specific times of the year.

Forty-five VSLAs were initially set up in 11 cocoa-growing communities, with women making up 68 percent of total membership.³⁸ By August 2015, 217 VSLAs were implemented across 60 communities in Ghana and 141 VSLAs across 11 communities in Côte d'Ivoire – involving more than 7,600 members. The groups have worked to promote a culture of savings, have taught financial literacy, and helped to increase women's voices within their households around financial decision making. They also provide an opportunity for loans to other members of the group.

VSLA members use the funds for a broad range of investments, including starting new cocoa farms, rehabilitating old cocoa farms, hiring laborers, or using the funds to deal with family

emergencies like illness. As an example, one VSLA member lived hand-to-mouth before joining the VSLA. She has now been able to properly maintain her farm, pay for laborers, and send her grandchildren to school.³⁹

The program is also beginning to look ahead to women's greater financial needs and make connections to commercial micro-credit programs that can provide larger loans than the VSLAs.

8 Inclusive tools and technology innovation

When women are involved in the design of tools and information and communications technology (ICT), the technology reflects their interests and can support their role as cocoa farmers. Women farmers can then benefit from emerging knowledge and innovations that increase their productivity or quality of production and allow them to access markets and make decisions within the cocoa sector.

'Design has morphed into the cornerstone of equity, culture, and socialization,' says Patricia Moore, a North American industrial designer who uses design for the inclusion of people of a range of ages and sexes with differing needs. 'It's about bringing resources to people who don't have them ... The power of design is to look at each individual, their home, their community, and the infinite small things that make for success or failure of interaction in those realms...' she concludes.⁴⁰

In many communities women participate in almost all stages of cocoa production: from planting to weeding to harvesting and drying cocoa. However, there are some parts of the process that have been more difficult for women to participate in, because of the physical nature of the tasks and the fact that there is a gender bias in the design of the technology and tools that enable cocoa farmers to take on these roles.

As a result, research by the FAO shows that introduction of technology generally creates gender shifts within agriculture, with men spending more time on cultivation of crops and women spending less time as soon as technology is introduced. This may in part be due to the fact that technology is often designed for male use in everything from the size of machinery to the shape of the body for which it is designed. Women also have less access to technology because they have less access to the finance needed to purchase it.⁴¹

That said, technology can also be used to address critical issues of women's time poverty or lack of time for production and marketing activities due to family care responsibilities or unpaid labor responsibilities in the farming activities of their husbands. For instance, technology that reduces the time required to carry water, gather wood, or hand-grind food staples can enable women to choose to invest more time in their own growing of cocoa and other crops.

ICT can also have a significant impact for women in rural communities by expanding communications and access to information, according to the FAO. However, men often control the technology as well as the financial resources that enable accessing the technology, leading to women having less knowledge of how ICTs can improve their livelihoods. Women's lower literacy rates also limit their ability to use ICTs such as the Internet. This means that for women to benefit from e-agriculture, appropriate technology has to be used such as mobile phones and community radio, which are not dependent on literacy, are affordable, and can be adapted to local contexts and to address specific gender roles and dynamics in communities and cocoa production more specifically.⁴²

Goals to work towards

- Design and implement the wide use of farming and information technology and tools that take into account women's physical and social needs; whether accounting for women's smaller physical stature and concentration of strength in the lower body, or women's lesser levels of access to finance and lower levels of literacy, which limit access to needed information about technology.
- Female farmers' equal access to extension services that teach them about how available technology can help them, and train them in the use of that technology.

Emerging good practice example: Gender-sensitize design of farm equipment

In its work with communities in West Africa, Mondelēz realized that women could not use pruning tools because of the way that they were designed and the strength needed to use them. As a result, this excluded women from pruning work and made it difficult for female cocoa farmers to prune their trees. Equally, the machines used for pesticide application were designed to fit a man's body and as a result made it very uncomfortable for women to use. With this in mind, Mondelēz began looking into procurement of technology that had been designed and adapted to enable women to use it and perform pruning and pesticide application should they need to or want to be able to participate in all stages of cocoa growing and care.⁴³

Emerging good practice example: Using tech to include women farmers

In the process of running farmers' field schools, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) found that it was difficult to engage women due to limited time and cultural constraints. As a result, the WCF developed a Video Viewing Club through a grant to the Sustainable Tree Crops Program. These clubs were designed to bring together women cocoa farmers to learn a range of technical skills and to discuss them. The female farmers and their facilitator watch training films, review a supplemental handbook and discuss hands-on field activities. The participants are encouraged to apply the information in their own families, as well as teaching other women and their families. By 2010, nearly 1,600 farmers in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana had been trained through the Video Viewing Clubs.⁴⁴

A survey done in 2008 found that those in the training program hadn't improved their cocoa crop yields, but they had significantly higher amounts of knowledge than those who had not gone through the video trainings.⁴⁵ It should also be noted that the program provided access to information for women within acceptable existing gender roles, rather than addressing the limitations of those roles and setting goals for longer-term transformation.

That said, a large part of what appears to make the trainings successful is the inclusion and feedback of women trainees in choosing the location and time of the training. All the training materials were also developed in close consultation with female and male farmers to ensure that they were engaging and easy to understand. The materials used were also designed for low literacy rates of farmers and women in particular.⁴⁶

9 Access to markets

Creating links to markets through private sector initiatives that specifically target women producers is an important enabler that can help to overcome some of the barriers that they traditionally face in sharing the economic benefits from their work in agriculture. These links can be critical for enabling women's market access in different stages: 1) local market access (i.e. women's ability to participate in the commercialization of cocoa) and 2) global market access (i.e. women's ability to become part of global chocolate companies' supply chains). Additionally, while supporting women's productive roles in cocoa, private sector initiatives can enhance the diversification of products that women have available to market, given the very seasonal nature of cocoa.

Across crops, evidence shows that women lose control over products and the resulting income in the marketing stages, which reflects traditional social norms about male and female access to and control over resources as well as the constraints on their mobility. Where crops traditionally grown by women become lucrative, men even begin to take over their production and marketing.⁴⁷ Access to markets can also be a significant challenge for female farmers, given that they often have fewer financial resources for transportation and investment in vehicles for transport.

Women also face a number of challenges in producing the quantity and quality of cocoa needed for export as well as having the contacts, the knowledge and the finances to start businesses that operate at the scale required to take advantage of larger national markets and international trade opportunities.

Women are, however, often able to address some of these challenges and gain greater control over the marketing process through the development and support of dedicated marketing platforms, such as the creation of female cooperatives. Research by Oxfam highlights that women's collective action in agricultural markets in Africa and beyond has considerable untapped potential to deliver economic gains for women. At the same time, the research emphasizes that cooperatives and female collectives that aim to address underlying social norms and barriers to market access, in addition to economic aims, lead to the most significant shifts in women's empowerment and equitable participation in agriculture.⁴⁸ With this in mind, Oxfam Great Britain has developed work in Latin America and other parts of the world to address gender bias and facilitate women's market access at varying stages from market selection to identifying opportunities and creating business plans.⁴⁹

The marketing of socially aware products has also been an entry point into international markets and global supply chains for women's cooperatives and business across a range of cash crops from coffee to cocoa. These products have also been coupled with programs that teach women about improving their production and strengthening their business management skills. There have been several brands that produce and market female-grown coffee, including specific labels that distinguish them from others. While such market access tools have not yet been developed to the same extent in cocoa, socially oriented chocolate makers have specifically partnered with women's cocoa cooperatives and cooperatives with women's initiatives to create special-brand chocolates.

Goals to work towards

- Greater inclusion of women in cooperatives and ability to participate in substantive decisions about market access and setting market price and terms, as well as the creation of female farmers' cooperatives that enable them to collectively access markets.
- Making supply chain trade more transparent and creating proactive opportunities for women to access them through producer and trade facilitation programs.
- Access to credit or work with village savings and loan groups to amass resources for a shared asset that facilitates transport to market.

Emerging good practice example: Building knowledge about market access

The Dutch company The Original Bean partnered with the Lorna Young Foundation to work with women's farmers and coops in Democratic Republic of Congo to grow sustainably grown cocoa and to help them access markets. The project was carried out in Virunga National Park in a protected area that has suffered from the impacts of poverty, deforestation and conflict-related migration. The project originally aimed to train 10,000 female farmers in how to sustainably grow cocoa and link to specialty chocolate markets.

When the model of training farmers to then train others did not prove viable, the project turned to radio as a means to deliver technical information and information about accessing markets.

They trained small groups of women in farming coops to be radio presenters to encourage a female audience to listen and organized female listening groups to come together through the cooperatives and discuss what they had heard. Radio programs covered a range of topics, including improving quality of cocoa production, understanding what cocoa is used for, market access, buyers and foreign markets. Those who were literate could submit questions via text message on behalf of the listeners' groups to the radio program. While the use of text messages proved to be a limiting factor due to women's low literacy rates, the radio programs have proved to be highly effective and will allow women to call in with questions in the future.

The project also worked with Esco-kivu, a cocoa exporter, to get farmers to improve the quality of their cocoa to export standards. Because many of the women in the program had just recently begun growing cocoa, their product was not yet ready for the first round of export. But, they were trained in what they would need to do to export.

Some of those in the program who already had cocoa available were also able to sell it to Original Bean for inclusion in their sustainably grown and marketed chocolate bars. It is expected that in the future more women will be able to sell to the chocolatier.⁵⁰

Emerging good practice example: Gender branding

In the US market both retailers and consumers have been responsive to the idea of supporting women cocoa farmers. In early 2014, this led Divine Chocolate to create a stamp on one of its chocolate bars that profiles their support of women farmers through Kuapa Kokoo. Divine Chocolate is a company in the UK and US which creates a unique market access relationship between a brand and cocoa farmers; Kuapa Kokoo owns 44 percent of the company. The decision to create the women's stamp in particular was seen as an opportunity to increase sales, especially in core natural markets that value mission and brand story highly, along with generating extra awareness.

In 2014, Divine sold 133,440 of the bars featuring the women's program in the US. The bars do not in and of themselves generate additional income for women's programs but instead raise the profile of the role that women play in cocoa farming and the support that Divine provides to women through Kuapa Kokoo. Two percent of Divine's profits are invested in earmarked projects with Kuapa, one of the most important of which is literacy and numeracy lessons for women farmers. This is the only income stream for which Divine and its partner Twin Trading work with Kuapa Kokoo to direct the income generated. The company generates significant additional income for the farmer's collective for which the priorities are decided by Kuapa Kokoo and the farmers themselves.

To date, the bar has been a successful tool for helping to raise awareness among consumers about women's role in cocoa farming and the benefits particularly for women of the unique relationship between Divine and chocolate growers. The women's stamp has also been an important opportunity 'for customers to visually connect to Divine's story and mission – it serves to remind consumers and retailers that Divine has a powerful connection to cocoa farmers, and women cocoa farmers in particular,' according to the company. It has also provided an opportunity to partner with organizations that focus on women's empowerment and highlight holidays such as International Women's Day.⁵¹

10 Working with government

Governments play a critical role as partners for change in cocoa supply chains, given the multiple ways in which they shape the landscape for women cocoa farmers. This includes (1) establishing the legal frameworks for gender equality and ensuring basic human rights; (2) providing infrastructure and basic services that support development in cocoa-growing

communities; (3) creating the conditions and parameters for cocoa production and sales; and (4) facilitating and regulating private sector development and investment by foreign suppliers and food companies.

On the most fundamental levels, governments create the legal frameworks for women's equal treatment and opportunities in their countries which then enables setting targets and goals to measure progress and engage. As one of Cadbury's sustainability leaders pointed out, 'There are a number of issues that support the business agenda, that only government policy can enable, such as supporting land rights for women to enable them to invest in improved production.'⁵²

Land rights and inheritance laws are just one example of how the barriers that women cocoa farmers face can be exacerbated by government policies and regulations, or a lack of proactive efforts by governments to address gender imbalances. Laws governing cooperatives can also be prohibitive for women by linking their membership to land ownership or by establishing governance structures which in effect discriminate against women becoming members or board representatives.⁵³

The private sector and its gender and cocoa implementing partners can play an important role to encourage, engage, and support progressive and inclusive government initiatives and policies. The UN guidelines on business and human rights⁵⁴ also emphasize that while governments have important responsibilities for ensuring the rights of women and men, businesses have a role to play not only in respecting human rights but helping make them a reality at work and in supply chains.

Companies and their implementing partners should therefore consider the various ways in which they can engage national governments and align their own efforts with equitable national priorities. This can range from lobbying national governments to amend laws and regulations that restrict women's opportunities, such as inequitable cooperative laws, to providing technical or financial support for programs that promote opportunities for women, such as technical training programs and scholarships for rural women to access education.⁵⁵

Companies can also create long-term social benefits and improved business environments through investments that parallel and support those of governments in rural infrastructure and trade and by attracting service providers, such as financial institutions, to rural areas while working towards national priorities. This can be achieved through engaging with governments and again by lobbying for progressive policies.⁵⁶

When structured properly, partnerships with government can also ensure an alignment of goals between business, economic development and social agendas, as well as creating vehicles for delivering change through local government.

Emerging good practice example: Government engagement

The work of CocoaAction, a joint effort of twelve major chocolate brands and cocoa suppliers, is in early stages, including its commitment to include gender issues into the cocoa supply chain. That said, the coalition has taken some important steps with respect to engaging government in its early stages of development.

It has long been accepted as good practice to ensure that international efforts are aligned with national priorities. To date, CocoaAction has sought to align its strategy with governments' national plans and to develop and implement the coalition's plans in partnership with the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Industry and the government are in discussion about the steps to put in place a structure for the community development goals of the coalition. This has included engagement with Ghana's Ministry of Gender and Child Labor Unit.⁵⁷ However, the success of the process is yet to be seen. It will depend on ensuring a robust partnership, a transparent process, and one that is

substantive in nature – aligning not only with economic priorities in the cocoa-growing communities but building towards legislation, goals, and initiatives for women’s equality and economic development in cocoa-producing countries Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire.

Emerging good practice example: Multi-stakeholder partnership

As one of the longest standing multi-stakeholder cocoa initiatives, the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (CCP) created substantive collaborations between industry, government, and non-profit implementing partners to address the sustainability of the cocoa supply, increase productivity, and to address social issues in cocoa communities. Cadbury International initiated the CCP in 2008. With the changing of hands of Cadbury to Kraft/Mondelēz, the work of the CCP has now formed the basis of Mondelēz’s Cocoa Life program.

By 2010 Cadbury had spent US\$4.6m on the CCP in Ghana. Through education and empowerment programs there was increased awareness about issues such as child labor and gender equality through education. And, about 30 percent of partnership communities were run by women.⁵⁸

The CCP brought together various key actors in the government in Ghana, including the cocoa board COCOBOD, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

NGO implementing partners include Care International, World Vision International Ghana (WVG), and Voluntary Services Organization (VSO). However, an opportunity was missed by not including the Ministry of Gender to ensure issues specific to women cocoa farmers were addressed and aligned with national plans.

Care Ghana, VSO and WVG have facilitated community action plans that have been identified through participatory learning action to cater for local needs. To complement the effort by the government, the CCP sometimes provides funds to support the execution of community action plan projects, and appropriate community members provide in-kind support. This decentralization has been one of the CCPs biggest successes, because the projects identified by communities are integrated into the district assembly’s development plan.

The FAO estimates that the main problem for the CCP has been finding effective ways to work with a number of government agencies, district and community-level partners, and private partners that are geographically disbursed and have different ways of working. These challenges have been addressed through ongoing joint planning, monitoring and evaluation with distinct and clear roles and occasional joint trainings. However, there may still be power dynamics to be negotiated between the various actors in the CCP.⁵⁹

5 THE ROAD AHEAD

Many of the cocoa and gender initiatives are in very early stages. Of those that are underway, a large number focus on development in cocoa communities without specifically addressing and supporting women's productive roles in cocoa.

That said, there are some important lessons beginning to emerge within the cocoa sector. Over the coming months and years they should be revisited, evaluated and adapted to the changing circumstances within supply chains, communities and the lives of women cocoa farmers and laborers.

One of the main challenges in the future will be to measure and understand the impact of the various interventions to support women in the cocoa supply chain. Many of the issues at hand are rooted in underlying gender inequalities in cultures and communities around the world. Therefore, actors at each stage of the supply chain need the time and space to evaluate the assumptions, social norms and biases that underlie their daily practices and habits.

Interventions are needed at each stage of this process, from identifying the problem to building capacity and creating enabling environments to ensure success; though they may take different forms depending on local contexts and needs. As projects mature, monitoring and evaluation and a process of incorporating learning will be critical to be able to adapt to changing community and market contexts.

Those working on Cocoa Life, one of the longer standing gender and cocoa projects, point out that the ability to scale up their approach and change the way the cocoa industry works will depend on the ability to demonstrate real change and partner with key stakeholders.⁶⁰

Women themselves must be at the heart of this change – identifying their needs and leading their own 'empowerment' and development in ways that allow them to make greater contributions to the cocoa sector and have their existing roles acknowledged. Without buy-in from women themselves and the men in their families and communities, projects will not be sustainable over time and will not lend themselves to being scaled up. At the same time, those investing in programs targeted at women in cocoa will have to make a sustained commitment, given the lengthy processes of change at play.

There are a number of needs that have been identified by cocoa growers, traders, and manufacturers alike for which initiatives have not been developed to the extent needed to generate good practice to date.

This highlights a greater need for attention to a range of critical issues, not least of which is greater access to markets and an understanding of business opportunities for women farmers in the cocoa supply chain.

The success of initiatives and the ability to identify that success and learn from it is dependent on a number of factors. Key among them is creating a nuanced understanding of how women participate in and contribute to the cocoa supply chain, and where they continue to face barriers to do well and to benefit from it.

Overarching lessons highlight the importance of transparent supply chains that are in direct engagement with producers, particularly women. Good data and gender needs assessments are an essential starting point to enable work on gender sensitization, governance, training, and market access, among other critical steps. Key lessons from emerging good practices and research include the following:

Data

Industry insiders point out the fact that there is still limited understanding of gender issues and how women play a role in their supply chains. To further understand supply chains and undertake more robust mappings, partnerships must be extended to those who link farmers to chocolate producers – the suppliers and traders through whom the vast majority of cocoa passes.

Women's leadership and voice

Emerging good practice reconfirms the importance of engaging women and communities in identifying their own needs as farmers and their priorities, to have the greatest possible impact and ensure that there are not unintended side effects such as increasing violence against women with shifting economic and power dynamics.

Gender sensitization

Undertaking an approach that engages men and boys as well as women to gender sensitization, which builds awareness of the work burdens, roles and contributions that men and women each make in their households and encourages a shared vision for change. Gender sensitization is also an important tool for ensuring inclusion of gender in the conceptualization, design, and delivery of development and cocoa productivity initiatives.

Women's empowerment and leadership training

Women's empowerment and leadership training must be tied to resources, opportunities, and follow-up activities, rather than being undertaken as one-off events. It has also been most effective in coops when combined with some training to raise women's basic education levels, and when carried out with local trainers who can adapt to local contexts as needed.

Governance and gender commitments

Success came from gender and diversity commitments and women's leadership quotas in cooperative constitutions being met with programs that built the confidence and skills of women as well as providing financial resources to enable their participation. And in the best-case scenarios, companies' and organizations' commitments to women's greater inclusion and leadership in the cocoa supply chain have stemmed from an overarching organizational commitment to gender equality.

Technical training

Technical training programs have to build women and their specific needs and concerns into the design of courses, from identifying the time and location of trainings, making sure that their interests and concerns are reflected in the content and that there are women trainers available who understand their needs.

Access to credit

Programs that provide access to credit for female farmers must look at women's financial needs at differing stages of their development to enable them to continue to grow. The provision of finance also has to take into account women's constraints, such as access to collateral, and must find ways to help women maintain control of the money they borrow.

Inclusive tools and technology

Women stand to gain significantly from tools and technology that are gender-sensitive; whether gender and cocoa programs provide tools made for different body sizes, or are adapted to take advantage of forms of ICT, such as mobile phones and community radio which are not dependent upon literacy, are affordable, and can be adapted to address specific gender roles. However, there is a need to build women's awareness of how these tools can improve their lives.

Markets

Dedicated marketing platforms for women, such as the creation of female cooperatives, is one important step as well as increasingly including women in the marketing stages in male and female cooperatives. Women's knowledge and skills for marketing are critical for accessing market opportunities, including opportunities in socially aware product markets, as is increasing their productivity to be able to access opportunities. Creating forward and backward supply chain linkages for the cooperatives is important for sustaining women's cooperatives.

Engaging governments

Ensuring a robust partnership and a transparent process, one that is substantive in nature and includes key actors such as the Ministry of Gender, are critical elements for engaging with government. Longstanding projects also show that working with local government to integrate projects identified by communities into the district's development projects has been a successful model.

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