



Women Empowerment Through Cocoa Farming

Project Summary

2018

cocoa-alliance.org

info@cocoa-alliance.org



Gender in Cocoa Farming

Low level of participation of women as cocoa farmer is a big challenge for sustainability and improvement of livelihood in cocoa growing communities and cocoa farming as a profession. Female participation and empowerment in general has been constrained by well-documented socio-cultural and institutional conditions that leave women marginalised and excluded from development activities. For example, when compared to male cocoa farmers, the illiteracy rates of female farmers are much higher, resulting in fewer prospects for women and lack of involvement of women in business and leadership. In addition to education, acquisition of key assets is also problematic for women, through lack of financial, legal or social independence that leads to limited access to tools, inputs, land and finance, as listed below:

Key Challenges for Women in Cocoa:

- Limited access to education
- Lack of socio-economic independence
- Cultural expectations of the role of women
- Limited rights to land and legal limitations
- Dependence on male figures for approval
- Household and family expectations and commitments

Box 1 Key Challenges for Women in Cocoa

Despite the numerous challenges that women face, they are key to the growth and development of cocoa farming communities. Therefore, Farmgate Cocoa Alliance is committed to ensuring that women are provided with opportunities to empower themselves and their communities to achieve the following:

- ✓ Generate income for women
- ✓ Break the poverty cycle in cocoa farming households and communities
- ✓ Stimulate female socio-economic independence
- ✓ Increase supply of sustainable cocoa beans
- ✓ Decrease rates of rural-urban migration
- ✓ Facilitate female access to land, inputs, tools and markets

To achieve these goals, Farmgate Cocoa Alliance propose a project to encourage and work with women of all ages in cocoa growing communities in west and central Africa to promote and give them the opportunity to become professional cocoa farmers.



Project Objectives

To achieve equality in cocoa farming, the project will involve the engaging with women in cocoa farming communities to offer training and capacity building that will enable them to effectively manage their own cocoa farming businesses. This will include the dissociation of cocoa farming from traditional household activities, and to re-establish it as an independent, professional business enterprise. The objectives derived from these aims are as follows:

1. Facilitate women's access to training and capacity building for sustainable and professional cocoa farming
2. Assist women in cocoa producing countries to secure access to arable lands, suitable to produce best quality sustainable cocoa.
3. Provide women with additional livelihood in cocoa farming professional for long term self-reliance benefit.
4. Support women to have direct access to market for their cocoa crop and to engage in cooperatives or FBOs

The project targets 70,000 women in four key producing countries, being Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Sierra Leone.

Project Activities

The project is focussed largely on training women in cocoa communities in how to begin or convert to professional cocoa farming that is sustainable and economically successful. To enable this, Farmgate Cocoa Alliance proposes the realisation of all-women teams, known as Community Field Agents (CFAs), that will operate in cocoa growing regions and communities to identify and encourage the participation of women in cocoa farming. These CFAs are trained

Key Training / Capacity Building Topics

- ✓ Land preparation for new farm
- ✓ Nursery techniques for seedlings
- ✓ Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)
- ✓ Pest, disease and weed management
- ✓ Soil management
- ✓ Fertilizer and agrochemical management
- ✓ Harvesting and pod breaking
- ✓ Post-harvest handling
- ✓ Climate change mitigation and environmental conservation
- ✓ Business management
- ✓ Financial management
- ✓ Cooperative management (where applicable)
- ✓ Advocacy on women's rights and equality

Box 2 Key Training Topics



by Farmgate Cocoa Alliance in key topics such as GAPs and business skills, and with this training they will pass on their knowledge to local women. The key topics that will be included in the training of women in cocoa communities are found in the box 2.

Training and capacity building will be conducted in groups, with a minimum of one Community Field Agent allocated per 50 women. The CFA is responsible for reporting on group needs, challenges and lessons learned, with monitoring and evaluation taking place regularly with Farmgate Cocoa Alliance to keep track of progress, set-backs and successes, and communicated with relevant partners.

Women will be encouraged to form cooperatives, if suitable, and will be advised on how to manage and run these cooperatives effectively, with support from their local Community Field Agents. These cooperatives can ensure that women have better market access and therefore a more stable income that facilitates their economic independence and development.

The training will take various forms such as on-farm practicals, study tours (on-field) and education on local climate and weather patterns and their effects on cocoa production.

In addition to key training and capacity building, the project will facilitate the acquisition of inputs and tools for professional cocoa farming, including the most important but often most problematic asset: land.

To overcome the challenges of land acquisition among women, Farmgate Cocoa Alliance will link women to farmlands of about 2 ha that have been identified as available and appropriate for cocoa farming. Similarly, women may access land through the rehabilitation of old farms from relatives or elderly farmers that are no-longer maintaining their farms. In this case, female cocoa farmers will undertake a 'service-provider' role whereby they will provide their newly acquired farming knowledge and skills to regenerate neglected cocoa plantations. This will lead to income generation that can be shared between the land owner and the female farmer accordingly, supporting cocoa farming communities and encouraging socio-economic development.

To ensure that asset acquisition is facilitated easily for women in the future, advocacy skills will also be covered in training and capacity building, to enable women to approach local and national governments concerning legal restrictions applying to women in securing land, financing and other assets and services.

Therefore, the key project elements can be summarised as in the figure below:

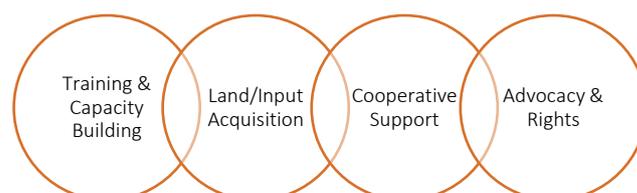


Figure 1 Encouraging Women in Cocoa Activities



Project Results

The realisation of this project, focusing on the identification and training of women in professional cocoa farming, has numerous benefits for the cocoa value chain, as well as for the socio-economic development of cocoa farming communities in both this and future generations. The key outcomes of the project include:

- ✓ Transparency and accountability on issues concerning women in cocoa
- ✓ Increased production of sustainable cocoa beans
- ✓ Increase in women-owned, registered farming businesses
- ✓ Creation of environment for women to promote, sell and export their crop
- ✓ Strengthen women lobbying and advocacy capacity especially in related to justice and women rights.
- ✓ Support and promote female-oriented cooperatives and activities in growing communities with partners in the value chain
- ✓ Develop the capacity of women cocoa farmers to enable them to effectively articulate interests of their community and to advocate for their rights at national level

Box 3 Key Project Outcomes

Farmgate Cocoa Alliance invites stakeholders in the supply chain who share our values to contribute to the realisation of this project. We believe that the cocoa sector must be sustainable for all, providing livelihoods and opportunities from bean to bar. This requires unified action to reform the value chain and implement real, lasting projects that create positive change.

For more information about this project or on how you can become a partner, please kindly contact us using one of the following contacts:

Savannahweg 17
3542 AW UTRECHT
Phone: +31(0)302765110
Fax: +31(0)306336524
E-mail: info@cocoa-alliance.org