



Women Empowerment Through Cocoa Entrepreneurship

A venture of Farmgate Cocoa Alliance

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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

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 eliminate gender inequality and achieve equality in cocoa farming, the project is focus to engage and recruit more women in cocoa farming communities into a professionalize cocoa farming. Activities include, training and capacity building that will enable women to effectively manage cocoa farm as a businesses. The dissociation of modern cocoa farming from traditional household activities among women, and to re-establish it as to be a major step to promote women independent through cocoa farming entrepreneurship.

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, including new cocoa growing regions such as: Sierra Leone. Liberia and Uganda.

Project Activities

The project is focussed largely on training women on how to begin or convert to professional cocoa farmers that will socially and economically improve women living standards in cocoa communities. To achieve this, we will use our Community Field Agents (CFAs), who are operating in cocoa growing communities to identify and encourage participation of more women into cocoa farming business. These women will have the opportunity to acquire training on issues like, GAP, better business skills. Women will also be sensitize to on how to train and pass their farming and advocacy knowledge to other local women.

Training and capacity building will be conducted in groups, with a minimum of 50 women per group. The CFA are responsible for groups formation and needs, and to report challenges and lessons learned Farmgate Cocoa Alliance national secretariat team. The national team keep tracks, progress, and set-backs and to be communicate to the head office.

Group women will be encouraged to join exciting coops and or farmer groups. They also have the right to start a group or cooperative advised, which FCA will guide them on how to manage the registration process. These cooperatives will ensure that members have better GAPs, knowledge, skills and also a direct market access, to secure a stable income that facilitates and strengthen women social and economic independence.

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.



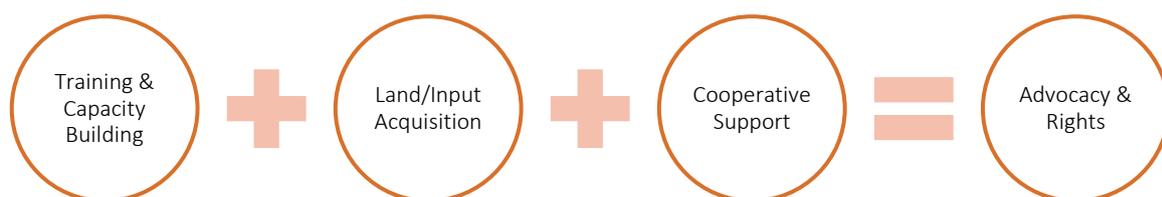
In addition to key training and capacity building, the project will facilitate the acquisition of inputs and tools for professional cocoa farming, including the most important but often most problematic asset: land. The key topics that will be included in the training of women in cocoa communities are seen below:

- 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

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:





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

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 on how you can become a partner or support this activity, please kindly contact us using one of the following contacts:

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