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**Promoting Gender
Equality in the
Cocoa-Chocolate
Value Chain:
Opportunities and
Challenges in Ghana**

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Executive Summary

The chocolate industry faces an increasing challenge sourcing sufficient quality cocoa to meet demand. Cocoa is mainly grown in West Africa by smallholder farmers. Cocoa production is constrained by low productivity and quality whilst demand for chocolate (particularly in Asian markets) is expanding. Industry specialists forecast a possible one million ton shortage of cocoa by 2020 on current trends. Chocolate confectionery companies are becoming increasingly concerned about securing access to sufficient quality cocoa and the future resilience of their supply chains. Many are now promoting women's empowerment as part of their programmes to support cocoa farming.

Cocoa has long been deemed a 'male crop', and only approximately 20% of recognised cocoa farmers are female. Women largely work on their husband's land as unpaid family labour, and it is estimated contribute up to 45% of labour input. Research indicates that within the gender division of labour women play an important role in certain activities – particularly early crop care and post harvest fermentation and drying. It is increasingly recognised in the cocoa-chocolate industry that these specific activities are critical to enhancing future crop yields and final production of quality beans.

This study examines the gender dimension of the cocoa-chocolate value chain. Value chain analysis traces linkages between inputs, production, processing, manufacture, distribution, and retail. Contemporary value chains are consumer-oriented and governed by lead firms. The gender dimension of value chains focuses on socially constructed relations between men and women at different value chain nodes, which can vary over time and in different geographical contexts.

Research shows that enhancing the empowerment of women leads to significant gains for them as individuals, and improves the welfare of their children, households and communities. It can also support commercial success. Women play an important role at the production *and* consumer end of the cocoa-chocolate value chain, given that women constitute the majority of customers. However, the cocoa-chocolate value chain demonstrates significant gender imbalance. Many chocolate manufacturers and cocoa traders are predominantly led by male senior management and directors (with the exception of Mondelez International and ADM which have women CEOs). Cocoa trading and production have long had reputations as male activities.

Chocolate-confectionery companies have come under pressure from Oxfam to address gender issues within their cocoa-chocolate value chains. Leading brands have now made public commitments to promoting gender equality. The World Cocoa Foundation CocoaAction Plan also includes a gender commitment. There is increasing recognition in the industry that support for women's economic and social empowerment could make an important contribution to the future sustainability of quality cocoa production and cocoa communities.

The Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership (CCP)* programme was established by Cadbury in 2008 to address challenges of the socio-economic sustainability of cocoa farming. It

was subsequently expanded in 2012 by Mondelēz International under the *Cocoa Life* (CL) programme. From inception *Cocoa Partnership/Cocoa Life* (CCP/CL) has involved an alliance with international organisations and NGOs as well as government bodies and implementing partners at a local level. It has the goal of promoting ‘thriving communities that support a sustainable cocoa supply chain’. CCP/CL has had a gender lens from an early stage of its design, and promoting gender equality is a cross-cutting theme of the five CL pillars.

Concern over the future socio-economic sustainability of cocoa production in Ghana led Cadbury to commission independent research in 2005-7.¹ It highlighted problems of poverty, low yields, poor social provision and youth aiming to leave cocoa production.

The research reported here provides a follow up, in order to assess the gender dimension of CCP/CL programme in the Ghanaian context. It is based on a small case study in two CCP/CL communities in Ghana, and it is not an evaluation of CL, nor representative of the programme. It aims to provide background information on the opportunities and challenges to promoting gender equality in cocoa and inform learning for all those engaged in the cocoa-chocolate value chain.²

Gender inequality is deeply embedded within the customary norms and practices of cocoa producing regions in Ghana. Traditional systems of land tenure mean that men constitute the majority of recognised farmers. In that capacity they are the primary recipients of training, extension services, access to finance, and possess the passbooks required for sale of cocoa to licensed buying companies (LBCs). Where cooperatives are formed, only the recognised farmer/landowner can become a member. Women working as unpaid family labour are reliant on their husband for access to information, inputs and income from cocoa, and are often not included in training.

There are signs of change with more men bequeathing land and some male farmers ‘gifting’ part of their land to their spouse, who then becomes a recognised farmer. Women cocoa farmers often face greater production constraints than male farmers, with less access to training, extension support, inputs and finance. Yet their yields are often equivalent to male farmers. Enhancing gender equality and support for women working in cocoa as farmers and family labour could enhance the productivity and quality of cocoa production.

Enhancing gender equality requires addressing both the commercial and social dimensions of cocoa farming. Hence the gender relevance of these two dimensions of

¹ See S. Barrientos, K. Asenso-Okyere, et. al. (2008) *Mapping Sustainable Production in Ghanaian Cocoa*, published by Cadbury. Available at: <http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/gdi/research/impact/Mapping%20Sustainable%20Production%20in%20Ghanaian%20Cocoa.pdf>.

² For a preliminary evaluation of Cocoa Life see M.J. Hiscox and R. Goldstein (2014) *Gender Inequality in the Ghanaian Cocoa Sector*, Harvard University, available at: <http://www.cocoalife.org/~media/CocoaLife/News%20Articles%20PDF/Ghana%20Gender%20Assessment%20by%20Harvard%20University.pdf>

the CCP/CL programme. The NGO implementing partners play dedicated roles supporting the programme within selected cocoa communities. This includes facilitating linkages between the commercial and social dimensions of the CCP/CL programme at a community level, and ensuring that gender equality is integrated across the pillars. The research reported here focused on two of the five CL pillars in the two communities studied – the Farming and Community Pillars:

Farming Pillar

The research found that CCP/CL programme has made important strides in extending support for cocoa production to community level.

Gender has been embedded into the delivery of the Farming Pillar of the CCP/CL programme, particularly through the training and extension component. CCP/CL training and extension at community level is open to all women engaged in production (whether or not the recognised farmer). Production of a Gender Manual has supplemented more technical training material and supported gender training of trainers. Women Extension Volunteers (WEVs) deliver key messages and support across wider farming communities.

Improved training and extension provision has led to increased yields (a doubling of yields was reported in the two communities visited in this study, but the sample is too small to generalise). In both communities, male and female focus group discussions (FGDs) indicated that as a result they now have a more professional approach to cocoa farming, which they now see as a business. Women engaged in cocoa farming are often quick to adopt new methods. As a result, women working in cocoa (both as recognised farmers and family labour) now have better access to information, are better able to enhance yields and quality, and contribute to gaining a better income from cocoa.

Many challenges remain, particularly rising costs of inputs that are offsetting gains made through rising yields. Women farmers need to use more hired labour than male farmers, but find it difficult to afford rising input costs. Greater emphasis on children attending school has increased educational costs on household incomes.

Gender inequality and the view that women play a subordinate role in cocoa production is clearly deeply ingrained within these two communities. The CCP/CL programme has begun to address embedded attitudes and norms. But despite the same goals, outcomes to date are mixed between the two communities.

In community one, the potential benefits of women's participation has become better recognised, encouraging some male farmers to gift land to their wives. In community two, enhancing women's contribution is seen more as a challenge to men's position. Male farmers deem it a threat that women could be responsible for better cared for cocoa. In both communities, women's contribution as family labour in cocoa production remains subordinate and largely unremunerated.

Community Pillar

Promoting gender equality is also a key component of the Community Pillar of the CCP/CL programme. This has informed the design and implementation of the Community Action Plans (CAPs), facilitated by *Cocoa Life* at community level. Research in the two communities for this study indicates that CCP/CL has been successful in enhancing grass roots processes of decision making, engaging both men and women equitably. However, the translation of the CAPs to district level faces challenges of embedded gender bias in Ghana's system of public governance.

Livelihoods remain an issue for both women and men in cocoa communities given poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities (especially schooling) and rising costs offsetting the benefits of increasing yields. Few farmers want their children, who are now in receipt of better education, to go into cocoa production. However, it is recognised that some children will work in cocoa farming when older.

The research supports evidence from other studies that an increase in women's income is more likely than men's to be spent on enhancing children's education and health. Women often have greater concern for the social viability of cocoa communities. Increasing women's access to information and income could help enhance children's futures and development outcomes, promoting more sustainable cocoa communities attractive to future generations of farmer.

Vision by CCP/CL and its partners from an early stage helped to ensure that promotion of gender equality was and has remained embedded in the programme as a cross cutting theme. However, the subordination of women is deeply embedded in the culture, norms and institutions of Ghanaian society. Based on these findings, the CCP/CL programme clearly has taken important steps, but faces many gender challenges. Linking the commercial and social dimensions of cocoa production could make an important contribution to the promotion of gender equality and thriving cocoa communities in the future. Only concerted action involving multiple actors can address this, and it will be a slow process changing engrained attitudes and practices.

The need for a more professional cocoa-farming sector is increasingly recognised in the sector given risks to the future of cocoa supply. This provides a lever for change, and industry actors are now becoming much more gender aware and engaged. Promoting gender equality can both enhance the well-being and empowerment of women as well as enhance the future resilience of the cocoa-chocolate value chain. Company, industry, public and civil society actors engaged in the cocoa-chocolate sector ignore gender equality at their peril.

Recommendations

The following provisional recommendations by the authors help to identify issues that could be further developed by all stakeholders to enhance gender equality in the cocoa-chocolate value chain. These need further elaboration through discussion with key stakeholders:

- **Cocoa-chocolate value chain:** All companies and organisations in the cocoa-chocolate value chain (including Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), government ministries, industry bodies, traders, processors and manufacturers) need a clear strategy and reporting on gender equality both within their own organisations and along their supply chains.
- **Recognition of women in cocoa:** Better recognition, support and incentives to source from women as producers in cocoa production independent of their land tenure status.
- **Cooperative unions and small producer organisations:** Women need better access to cooperative unions and small producer organisations as cocoa producers, independent of recognised land tenure status (e.g. joint and/or associate cooperative membership).
- **Land rights and information:** Greater information and training on women's legal land rights. Better implementation of government regulation on land rights, which are often not observed. Greater encouragement of land gifting by male farmers to their spouses engaged in production.
- **Training:** Training sessions should be open to all those engaged in cocoa production (both recognised farm owner and family labour) and where possible provided at community level to ensure women are able to participate. More women trainers and gender sensitivity training for male trainers are needed.
- **Extension:** Support needs to be provided to both women and men engaged in cocoa production (recognised farmer and family labour). More women extension offers are needed with more support to reach all farmers. Women extension volunteers need better support, and compensation for their input.
- **Public governance:** Public bodies, including COCOBOD, Ministries and District Assemblies, need to have clearer strategies for promoting gender equality in cocoa. Clearer channels are needed to provide community input into district and national policy formulation. Greater alignment between public policy and commercial strategies is needed to promote gender equality.
- **Linking commercial and social support:** Men and women engaged in cocoa farming need to reap better rewards for their efforts (both through commercial and social provision) that take account of gender differentiated needs. Promoting gender equality needs to be made a priority if cocoa farming is to be attractive to future generations.

1. Introduction

The chocolate-confectionery sector faces major challenges with regards to the future resilience of the cocoa supply chain. On the demand side this results from changing consumer trends, with rising demand for quality chocolate and increased chocolate-confectionery consumption in emerging economies, especially Asia.³ On the supply side, the challenges are a results of the declining socio-economic sustainability of cocoa production, especially in West Africa where 70% of cocoa is produced. Chocolate manufacturers and processors are now engaged in numerous programmes to support and promote cocoa farming, along with industry bodies (including the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) and World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)), cocoa producing governments and civil society organisations.

Increasing concern over the future of cocoa led Cadbury Plc. to commission a study mapping the socio-economic sustainability of cocoa production in Ghana in 2005-2007. The study, published in 2008, examined the wider cocoa-chocolate supply chain, and interviewed men, women and youth in cocoa farming communities.⁴ The research found low levels of productivity, low incomes often below the poverty line, poor access to farm level services and lack of farmer information or awareness. Hazardous work, and some child labour, remained a problem on poor family farms, which were unable to afford rising input and labour costs.⁵ A lack of social services (including education and health) and poor infrastructure (including water, electricity, transport and access to finance) persist in the cocoa regions. Many youth aimed to leave cocoa farming, which they viewed as an occupation of low esteem and last resort. Few wanted their children to become cocoa farmers.⁶ These challenges indicated future risks to the resilience of the cocoa supply chain. A subsequent prediction by Amajaro that on current trends there would be a 0.8 million-ton shortage of cocoa by 2020 reinforced the urgency of addressing the problem.⁷

Cocoa farming has long been deemed a 'male crop'. However, the above research and other studies have found that women also play an important but often unrecognised role in production on small-scale family-based farms. Research has revealed that women are particularly involved in early plant care and fermentation and drying. These are critical to enhancing yields and producing the quality of cocoa required by the

³ Mintel estimates Asia will account for 20% of the global market by 2016, cited by ICCO EX/146/7:25.

⁴ See S. Barrientos, K. Asenso-Okyere, et. al. (2008) Mapping Sustainable Production in Ghanaian Cocoa, published by Cadbury. Available at: <http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/gdi/research/impact/Mapping%20Sustainable%20Production%20in%20Ghanaian%20Cocoa.pdf>.

⁵ Following media exposures on child labour in West African cocoa, the International Cocoa Initiative was formed to address the problems. See: <http://www.cocoainitiative.org/>

⁶ Other reports have also found similar trends in cocoa producing countries, see (Oxfam 2009; Fairtrade 2011; Ryan 2011; Hütz-Adams and Fountain 2012; Greene 2014; FLA 2013).

⁷ Amajaro 2011. A more nuanced but still pessimistic analysis of trends in cocoa supply and demand was provided to the World Cocoa Foundation by LMC International (LMC 2011). See also Barry Callebaut Sustainability Report 2013-4.

chocolate industry.⁸ However, women's contribution is often undervalued, and they are provided with insufficient training or access to inputs and resources to maximise their potential to enhance production. Women could thus play a critical role in the future resilience of cocoa supply, but to achieve this they need to be better recognised, supported and integrated into cocoa programmes.

Cadbury subsequently established the *Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (CCP)* in 2008, followed in 2012 by Mondelēz International *Cocoa Life (CL)*. Their aim is promotion of more sustainable cocoa farming and to create empowered, thriving cocoa communities as the foundation of sustainable cocoa. From an early stage CCP/CL included support for women in its programme. Other private, industry and civil society initiatives promoting farmer livelihoods have also incorporated a gender focus.⁹ This includes the industry-wide World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) CocoaAction Plan launched in West Africa in 2014.¹⁰

The research reported here follows up on the 2008 Cadbury study. The aim is to explore how the CCP/CL programme has addressed gender and the opportunities and challenges for promoting gender equality in Ghanaian cocoa. Research for this paper was carried out in Ghana in 2014. It included 27 semi-structured key informant interviews conducted with key company (manufacturers, processors and licensed buying companies (LBCs)), government and civil society personnel. Two communities were selected in discussion with *Cocoa Life* personnel in Ghana (one in Western Region and one in Eastern Region). Field research in each community involved 3 focus group discussions (6 in total): one with cooperative union members, one with men farmers and one with women working in cocoa (as farmers and family labour). Both communities had formed part of the first 100 implementing communities of the *Cadbury Cocoa Partnership/Cocoa Life* programme. Given the communities had been involved in both phases of the Programme, this will be referred to as 'CCP/CL' in this study.¹¹

This was a small case study and was not representative of all the communities in which CCP/CL operates, nor was it an evaluation of the *Cocoa Life* programme.¹² The aim is to garner insights from CCP/CL's learning that could inform more effective strategies

⁸ See S. Barrientos (2013) 'Gender Production Networks: Cocoa-Sustaining Coco-Chocolate sourcing from Ghana and India' *Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper*, No. 186, University of Manchester. Available at:

<http://www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk/research/publications/gdi-working-papers/bwpi-wp18613/>.

⁹ The Oxfam Behind the Brands campaign launched in 2013 helped to highlight the importance of gender in cocoa-chocolate value chains, and spurred companies to integrate gender more centrally into their programmes. It also tasked companies to sign up to UN Women's Empowerment Principles. For more information see <http://www.behindthebrands.org/en>.

¹⁰ See <http://worldcocoafoundation.org/global-chocolate-and-cocoa-companies-announce-unprecedented-sustainability-strategy-in-cote-divoire/>.

¹¹ At the time of the research, *Cocoa Life* was expanding its programme to new communities, however this was not part of the study and is not reported here.

¹² For a preliminary evaluation of *Cocoa Life* see M.J. Hiscox and R. Goldstein (2014) *Gender Inequality in the Ghanaian Cocoa Sector*, Harvard University, available at: <http://www.cocoalife.org/~media/CocoaLife/News%20Articles%20PDF/Ghana%20Gender%20Assessment%20by%20Harvard%20University.pdf>.

for promoting gender equality, and enhance women's participation in future cocoa production. This study also draws on a gender analysis of data from the Cadbury 2008 study¹³ and related research reports (see references).

Section 2 of this paper profiles the gender dimensions of the cocoa-chocolate value chain. Section 3 examines the role of women in cocoa farming, and considers their contribution to enhancing quality cocoa production. Section 4 reports on the findings from research in the two communities, and considers both the achievements and constraints faced by the Cocoa Life programme in promoting gender equality in cocoa. Section 5 provides preliminary recommendations for enhancing women's position and promoting gender equality within a more socially resilient the cocoa value chain.

2. Cocoa-Chocolate Value Chain: A Gender Profile

The cocoa-chocolate value chain traces the linkages from production through processing and manufacture to the final consumer. Value chain analysis focuses on consumer trends that influence lead firms (cocoa processors and chocolate manufacturers) that increasingly coordinate their supply chains. More traditional agricultural analysis focuses on producer-led output supplying conventional arms-length markets, with less focus on downstream value chain linkages.¹⁴ A value chain approach helps to link the economic and social dimensions of production, distribution and retail. Lead firm supply chains are increasingly attuned to the changing socio-economic context in which sourcing and retail occurs.

The cocoa-chocolate value chain has evolved rapidly over the past decade. At the consumer end, the global chocolate-confectionery retail sector has experienced significant growth of nearly 8% per annum between 2002 and 2011 (ICCO 2012). Whilst European and North American markets have grown slowly despite economic recession, there has been a rapid rise in consumption within emerging economies. The Asian market is expected to account for 20% of world chocolate-confectionery consumption by 2016. Changing patterns of demand for chocolate-confectionery has also led to an increase demand for quality chocolate (fine flavour, high cocoa content and certified).¹⁵

Gender relates to social relations between men and women (rather than biological difference), which can vary between socio-economic contexts and change over time. Gender analysis examines the socially prescribed division of labour between women and men's work. In most countries the prevailing social norm is that women's work is predominantly unpaid within the household, and men's work in commercial and paid activity within the wider market economy. A gender value chain analysis examines the

¹³ The 2008 Cadbury study was undertaken in six communities across three regions. The case study was based on a survey of 217 farmers (77% male, 23% female). The research also involved focus group discussions (in total 45 owner-operators and caretaker operators, 12 youth and 12 women), 24 life histories and key informant interviews with actors in each community.

¹⁴ For more detail on value chain analysis see Kaplinsky and Morris (2002) and Gereffi and Fernandez Stark (2013)

¹⁵ ICCO The World Cocoa Economy: Past and Present, EX/146/7 July 2012.

roles of women and men at different segments of the chain, and the differential opportunities and constraints they face. It also helps analyse the commercial implications of women playing more active roles as producers, commercial actors and customers.¹⁶

In a differentiated chocolate-confectionery market gender plays an important role in the marketing of chocolate-confectionery, with many products targeted at women consumers. Women are responsible for the majority of consumer purchases overall - 80% in the UK (Keynote 2012). Market research indicates that women are more likely than men to buy higher-end chocolate (Carter 2010), although recent data for the UK indicates men are not far behind women in terms of overall frequency of chocolate consumption (Mintel 2014).

Increasing consumer awareness and access to information (via mobile communications and social media) has led to greater demand for more ethically and sustainably produced cocoa. These include no child labour, fairer trade for farmers, labour standards and environmentally friendly farming practices. Many (though not all) such initiatives and standards incorporate principles addressing gender equality. For example, in the UK 35% of consumers see ethically sourced chocolate as worth paying for, and the share of new chocolate-confectionery products launched carrying ethical claims grew from 4% in 2010 to 17% in 2013 (Mintel 2014). Women are slightly more likely than men (23% women to 21% men) to buy fairly traded food and drink (Keynote 2013).

There is increasing evidence that gender diversity within companies promotes greater business success in consumer responsive markets. One study found that companies with greater gender diversity are 15% more likely to outperform commercially than equivalent industry competitors (McKinsey 2015). However, the cocoa-chocolate value chain demonstrates significant gender imbalance. There is increasing corporate concentration amongst chocolate manufacturers and cocoa processors. A gender analysis of leading companies indicates that senior management is predominantly male, but with some differentiation between companies. The percentage of women amongst the executive officers and senior management of the three leading chocolate-confectionery companies are: Mondelez (29%), Mars (8%), Nestlé (7%). An equivalent gender profile of three leading cocoa processors is: ADM (17%), Cargill (7%) and Barry Callebaut (0%).¹⁷ Of these, Mondelez and ADM both have female CEOs. There is a long way to go to achieve greater gender diversity across all nodes and leading companies within the cocoa-chocolate value chain.

¹⁶ For information on gender value chain analysis see: Barrientos 2013; Mayoux and Mackie 2007; Laven and Verhart 2011; USAID 2009.

¹⁷ Source company websites accessed November 2014. See:
<http://www.mondelezinternational.com/about-us/our-management-team>;
<http://www.mars.com/global/about-mars/global-leadership.aspx>;
<http://www.nestle.com/aboutus/management/executivecommittee>;
<http://www.adm.com/en-US/company/leadership/Pages/corporateofficers.aspx>;
<http://www.cargill.com/company/management/>;
<http://www.barry-callebaut.com/62>.

All these companies (and many others in the sector) have adopted programs to support cocoa farming within their supply chains resulting from increasing concerns about future supply chain resilience. Some (including CCP/CL) have long incorporated a gender focus, but this often been under-reported in their public communications. Following Oxfam's *Behind the Brands* campaign, leading companies including Mondelez, Mars and Nestlé, made public commitments to addressing women's empowerment and provided gender assessments of their sustainability initiatives.¹⁸ Leading cocoa-processors have also incorporated addressing women's empowerment in their sustainability initiatives, but their commitments to promoting gender equality are more variable, and they have not been tasked by Oxfam to provide gender assessments. All leading chocolate-confectionery and cocoa processing companies are members of WCF. In 2014, WCF launched the CocoaAction Plan, which also includes a commitment to promoting gender equality in the industry. A CocoaAction metrics framework has been developed including clear reporting on women's empowerment outcomes as well as gender disaggregated data on productivity outcomes.¹⁹

At the production end of the value chain, cocoa farming is highly fragmented, and largely carried out by small-scale producers who are primarily responsible for world production (WCF 2012). The majority of cocoa sourcing is from West Africa, with Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana responsible for over 60% of global exports as the first and second largest exporters respectively (ICCO 2012). West African cocoa is produced by an estimated 2 million small-scale family based cocoa farmers (1 to 2 hectares being common). Although accurate data is difficult to acquire, it is estimated that approximately 20% of cocoa farmers in West Africa are women,²⁰ and that 45% of work on cocoa farms is undertaken by women (largely as unpaid family labour).²¹ However, supporting women's participation in cocoa production means addressing entrenched gender norms, which are examined in more depth in the next section.

3. Women in Cocoa Farming: Challenges and Opportunities

Cocoa production is primarily undertaken in fairly remote rural locations where deeply embedded gender norms prevail based on differing social, cultural and ethnic traditions. As cocoa producing countries develop economically and socially, gender norms are gradually changing. Greater integration along the cocoa-chocolate value chain linking farmers, traders, processors and manufacturers also exposes cocoa farming communities to more contemporary commercial practices. Enhancing productivity and quality may involve challenging embedded gendered norms, but to be sustainable change also needs to come from within those communities, and there can be tensions between these processes. This section provides an overview of the gender profile of cocoa farming in Ghana, and some of the changes taking place. This provides

¹⁸ See <http://www.behindthebrands.org/en>.

¹⁹ See <http://worldcocoafoundation.org/about-wcf/cocoaaction/>.

²⁰ Hiscox and Goldstein (2014) survey found 18% female farmers.

²¹ Greene and Robles (2014).

important context for consideration of the opportunities and challenges facing the CL programme examined in the following section.

Women in Cocoa Farming

In Ghana, as in many other cocoa producing countries, recognition of who counts as a cocoa farmer is primarily associated with recognised land ownership. Prevailing gendered patterns of land ownership were originally linked to male clearance of virgin forest, which was deemed a rite of passage for men to recognised ownership, with women gaining access through marriage (Quisumbing et al 2001). The traditional notion is that it is the conjugal duty of the woman is to help the man on his farm, especially in the matrilineal societies. Women's involvement cushioned the husband from the effects of high labour costs during the initial stages of farm development (Duncan, 2010: 303).

Land inheritance systems in Ghana are complex and largely based on customary practices, which vary by locality and ethnic group. These can involve matrilineal and patrilineal processes. Under Ashanti custom, elder women help decide land transfer in collaboration with village chiefs. However, according to the matrilineal principle, inheritance and administration of lineage property normally passes from the mother's brother to the sisters' sons. It can also be transferred from a deceased man to his brother or nephew (sister's son) in accordance with the decision of the extended family or matrilineal clan (Amanor 2001; Quisumbing et al 2001). Therefore the norm is for land to pass to male members of the extended family. In some cases women may gain access to small parcels but these are generally smaller than those of men (Duncan 2010). Female spouses do not customarily inherit land in their own right if their partner dies. The male recipient takes responsibility for holding the land in trust for the extended family and future generations. In patrilineal societies women are denied access to land ownership and engagement in decisions over inheritance, and can only access land through marriage.

Recognised land ownership validates who is recognised as the farmer. It is this person who receives and holds the passbook, sells cocoa to LBCs, and acquires the cocoa income earned. The recognised farmer also normally has access to extension services and inputs, participates in training and receives related support. Land ownership constitutes an asset that provides security for access to banking and credit. Therefore women's participation in cocoa farming is constrained by traditional gender norms and practices. Lack of access to land or formal recognition is a major inhibiting factor in women's equitable participation in the cocoa farming.

There are signs that gender patterns of land ownership and recognition of women's participation in cocoa are gradually changing. Ghanaian law was revised in 1999 to facilitate spouse inheritance, but this is often not implemented in practice, with customary practices continuing to prevail (Quisumbing et al, 2004). Many women have low levels of literacy or access to information, and are unaware of their legal rights. However, a study undertaken in 2004 found there is a gradual increase in 'gifting' of a

portion of their land by male farmers to their female spouse (Quisumbing et al 2004). Interviews during this research in 2014 (reported below) found the trend is continuing in some locations but is varied - in one community land gifting was increasingly common, but not in the other community.

Various factors help explain land gifting by male farmers. As Ghanaian society evolves, and migration erodes extended family ties, there has been increasing concentration on the nuclear family and inheritance by the farmers' own children (rather than relatives' children) (Amanor 2001). Some farmers want to ensure that some land remains in the hands of their female spouse so that she has a source of income once he is deceased, and is not beholden to extended family members. As commercialisation advances, some current farmers are beginning to realise they can expand current production and raise yields if they gift a portion of land to their female spouse (Quisumbing et al 2004). Being formally recognised as a farmer allows a woman to have her own passbook. However, key informants interviewed for this study indicated that not all women gifted land take this up, some continue to sell through their husband's passbook (in part because of time/difficulties taking cocoa to the purchasing clerk).

Women who own land and operate as farmers in their own right often face greater constraints than men. Their land size tends to be smaller, access to inputs, training and credit more difficult and incomes lower. But available evidence suggests women can be just as productive as male farmers. Vigneri and Holmes (2009) found that these constraints did not reduce women's ability as farmers with no significant difference in land productivity between male and female farmers, whilst women used hired labour more efficiently. In the 2008 Cadbury study more male (73%) than female (61%) farmers reported having access to credit and finance if needed. However, it found little difference in yield (bags of cocoa harvested per acre) between men and women (Barrientos and Asenso-Okyere 2008).

Gender Division of Labour

Women also play an important role in cocoa production as family labour on the farm of their spouse or male relative. However, where they are unpaid family labourers, their role is often unrecognised. Within Ghana's traditional division of labour, women's role is socially assigned to household-related activities, such as caring for subsistence crops, whilst men focus on market-related activities, such as care and marketing of cash crops. However, given cocoa is largely grown on small-scale family farms, the division between household and market activity is blurred. Data for women's activity in cocoa is difficult to obtain, but a number of case studies indicate that women do make an important contribution.²²

Table 1 provides an example of the gender division of labour in Ghanaian cocoa. It indicates that:

²² See for example: Agare-Kwabi (2009); Vigneri and Holmes 2009; Barrientos 2013; TWIN 2014; Greene and Robles 2014; FLA 2013; UTZ 2009.

- Cocoa is often said to be a ‘male crop’ because the work is deemed physically arduous. Yet, when we look at the gender division of labour, women are involved in most activities – with the exception of pod carrying and to a lesser extent spraying, pruning mature trees and harvesting.
- Women’s activity is concentrated in planting and early care of young trees. Young trees are grown alongside subsistence and other crops, which are traditionally tended by women.
- Women and men are both actively engaged in drying and fermentation, which often takes place outside or near the homestead.
- Sale of cocoa to purchasing clerks of LBCs is primarily done by men, who are the formally recognised farmer and receive the cocoa income.

Within the cocoa sector, a number of industry professionals indicate that early plant care, fermentation and drying are critical to enhancement of cocoa quality and productivity (key informant industry interviews 2008; Daniels et al 2012) and hence the quality and value of the final chocolate. As demonstrated in Table 1, women play a key role in these activities.

Table 1 Gender roles on small-scale cocoa farmers in Ghana

Activities	Women	Men
Weeding and land preparation	Mostly women	Some men
Purchasing of cocoa seeds/ seedlings	Some women	Mostly men
Planting	All	All
Intercropping of food crops	Mostly women	Few men
Cocoa spraying	Exceptional cases BUT women fetch water for mixing of chemicals	Mostly men
Thinning and pruning	Few – considered hazardous and dangerous for women	Mostly men
Harvesting/plucking	Some women	Mostly men
Pod breaking	All	All
Carrying to homestead/ depots	Mostly women and hired labourers	Some men
Fermenting	All	All
Drying and portorage	All	All
Bagging	Some women	Mostly men
Sale to local buying agencies	Few women who own their farms	Mostly men

Source: Adapted from Agare-Kwabi (2009).

Ghana’s low levels of yield per tree is partly accounted for by ageing of trees and disease. Regeneration of existing farms and replanting of new trees is critical to future growth and there are schemes to support use of disease resistant hybrid seedlings. Planting methods including specified spacing and pruning methods are critical to future

yields. However, training is essential for farmers to understand the good agricultural practice. According to cocoa specialists, the prevailing production culture in Ghana is that young trees should not be pruned back, which means energy goes into growth of the tree rather than cocoa pods and limits future yields (key informant industry interview 2008). If training is reaching men (not women who care for the young trees), then the message is failing to get through to the key people.

The fermentation stage is key to aroma and flavour formation “No matter how high quality the beans are at harvest, poor control of post-harvest processing can ruin their flavour.” (Daniels et al, 2012:18). Some cocoa experts indicated male farmers often shortcut quality processes in order to get beans to market, whilst women care more for the beans and better understand the implications for quality (key informant industry interviews 2008).

The 2008 Cadbury study did not find much difference between men and women farmers in the length of time they fermented cocoa beans. Most reported fermenting their beans for four to six days, which is close to the recommended period of five to six days for best quality using the heap method. However, it found a larger difference in the length of time men and women dried their beans. The recommended time for drying to attain quality is 5 to 12 days, but farmers often keep drying times to a minimum in order to sell and earn an income on their beans. The study found that the majority of men (77%) and only a minority of women farmers (42%) reported drying in six days or less, whereas a higher ratio of women (38%) to men (21%) reported drying their beans for seven to 10 days (subsequent analysis of data from study by Barrientos and Asenso-Okyere 2008).

Women therefore play an important role in cocoa production, both as recognised farmers where they have been able to acquire land, and also as unpaid family labour on the farm of their spouse, which is often unrecognised. Women’s contribution is particularly important in activities that are critical to quality. However, support and training on good agricultural practices in cocoa is normally delivered to male farmers. There is an assumption men will pass information to their female partner, but interviews and focus group discussions indicate the extent to which this actually occurs is at best patchy. A cocoa-chocolate industry that is increasingly concerned about future supply and quality is missing a critical factor if it ignores and fails to support women in cocoa production.

4. Cadbury Cocoa Partnership and Cocoa Life

Recognition of the challenges to the socio-economic sustainability of cocoa farming, and potential threat to future supply led Cadbury to launch the *Cadbury Cocoa Partnership* in 2008. This was superseded by *Cocoa Life* in 2012 with the aim of supporting cocoa farming across the main Mondelez International sourcing countries

(Ghana, Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia and the Caribbean).²³ *Cocoa Life* aims to support over 200,000 cocoa farmers and 1 million people in their communities internationally over the period 2012-2022.²⁴

A key component of CCP/CL was building alliances with civil society and institutional partners. These involve: external advisors from organizations such as WWF, UNDP, Anti-Slavery; and implementing partners Care International, Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and World Vision. Local alliances were also formed within each country, which in Ghana included Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and NGOs. Cadbury subsequently converted some of its main branded products (including Cadbury Dairy Milk) to Fairtrade certification to enhance the incomes going to farmers and their communities through the social premium.²⁵

The approach adopted by Cadbury was to seek solutions through dialogue at community level, in order to be sensitive to the future needs of farmers themselves. The Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership* set up alliances with local implementing partners (IPs) to identify initiatives and develop farmer and community focused action plans. This facilitated the creation of a bottom up and top down agenda, without which Cadbury believed solutions are less sustainable. Initial support was provided to 100 villages/communities in Ghana. The Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership* set out with the aim of enhance business strategy and opportunities for farmers, promote sustainable livelihoods and support community centred development (Croft and Cole 2011). Its vision was to link the social and commercial dimensions thus promoting “thriving rural communities that support a sustainable cocoa supply chain”.

From an early stage the Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership* included gender as a theme underpinning its programmes. There were multiple drivers:

- First, the brief of the original research commissioned by Cadbury to examine wider social issues had identified women and youth as important groups at community level whose participation could affect cocoa.
- Second, the NGOs participating in the alliance themselves had commitments to promoting gender equality, which informed the programme’s design.
- Third, in Ghana the appointment of a programme manager who came from the NGO sector, with a keen commitment to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.

²³ In 2008 Cadbury Plc. announced investment of UK £45 million to support the work of the *Cocoa Partnership*.

²⁴ See press release ‘Mondelēz International to Invest \$400 Million to Help One Million People in Cocoa Farming Communities’ (23 November 2012). Available on <http://www.mondelezinternational.com/Newsroom/Multimedia-Releases/Mondelez-International-to-Invest-400-Million-to-Help-One-Million-People-in-Cocoa-Farming-Communities>. Accessed April 2014.

²⁵ See Croft and Cole, 2011.

- Fourth, an early realisation it was not possible to address issues such as child labour and youth without integrating gender as a key component.

The year after its launch, a gender assessment was commissioned by the Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership* in Ghana. This was conducted by ABANTU for Development, an NGO based in Accra with experience in gender issues, and reported in September 2011. The assessment was based on research in 14 communities across four regions where the Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership* programme operated. The assessment identified advances in women's voice within those communities, but also systemic gender constraints (including women's difficulty accessing land ownership, and lack of public representation within District Assemblies). This informed the development of a Gender Equality Strategy which was mainstreamed across the Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership/Cocoa Life* programme, forming a key theme within cutting across its main pillars.

ABANTU for Development also developed a training manual and programme on gender issues in cocoa growing communities for Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership/Cocoa Life* field staff and related implementing partners and stakeholders. This was rolled out in August 2012, aiming to raise gender awareness broadly, and included modules on gender issues in cocoa communities, and knowledge and skills for addressing them. It is used to train trainers, extension officers and professionals in partner and related cocoa organisations. The gender training manual followed a separate *Cocoa Manual* published in 2010 developed by the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) with support from Cadbury, focusing more narrowly on technical aspects of good practice cocoa production.

Mondelēz International further expanded the scope of the programme when it launched the *Cocoa Life* in 2012, building on the Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership*. Oversight of the programme continued to be carried out by an international committee of partners with local implementing partners in each country. Gender continued to be a cross-cutting theme of the goals of *Cocoa Life*, and Mondelēz International has made significant public commitments to promoting gender equality in its value chain.²⁶ The five pillars of *Cocoa Life* are in brief:

- **Farming:** access to information and resources to improve farming practices, raise yields and enhance cocoa incomes.
- **Community:** empowering cocoa farming families to transform their communities into places they and future generations want to live in and promoting gender equality.
- **Livelihoods:** helping farming communities create new entrepreneurial businesses, access micro credit to raise non-cocoa incomes and increase security.

²⁶ For more detail see: <http://www.cocoalife.org/>.

- **Youth:** Making cocoa farming a more attractive profession for the next generation, increasing training and job opportunities at village level, creating thriving communities.
- **Environment:** protecting the landscapes in which cocoa is grown to maintain eco-systems and provide viable environments and farming land for future generations.

The focus of research reported in this paper was to examine the gender dimension of the Cadbury *Cocoa Partnership/Cocoa Life* within Ghana with a focus on the cocoa value chain. Given limitations on time and resources, the research focused on the first and second pillars of the *Cocoa Life* programme. A larger study would have been needed to address other pillars. The next two sub-sections are divided between the Farming Pillar, which encapsulates the commercial dimension of the value chain, and Community Pillar which encapsulate the social dimension.

4.1. Farming Pillar

In the selected cocoa communities, CCP/CL programme supported the formation of cooperatives, both as a means of supporting farmer development and as a source Fairtrade certified cocoa. CCP/CL has also provided significant support to its selected communities through training and extension services. The aim of these interventions has been enhancement of yields and quality. We examine each of these in turn in the wider context of cooperative, training and extension provision within Ghana, supplementing this with analysis of the gendered opportunities and challenges for cocoa farming based findings from research in the two communities in this study.

Cooperative Societies

Agri-coops have a long history in Ghana dating back to the colonial period and continued post-independence. By 1960 it is estimated that 40% of all cocoa was channelled through coops, but their political popularity ebbed and flowed, and they subsequently declined. During the 'Green Revolution' in agriculture, much attention shifted to 'technocratic' solutions to innovation and productivity. However, the need to address wider institutional obstacles was subsequently acknowledged. Following the 1980s, support for market-oriented farmer-based organisations increased among the public, the private sector, NGOs and donor organisations (Salifu et al 2010).

Cooperatives are registered with the Department of Cooperatives, and controlled by legislation. All recognised farmers residing in a community are able to join the cooperative society. However, cooperatives tend to perpetuate customary land tenure practices (Salifu et al 2010). Caretaker farmers are able to join a cooperative with the agreement of the absentee farm owner. Women are normally unable to join cooperative societies in their own right unless they own land or are gifted land by their spouse (Fairtrade 2015; Smith 2015). Only members are formally able to attend cooperative meetings and participate in a society.

Kuapa Kokoo is a long-standing cooperative within Ghana and is unique in that it is also a registered licensed buying company (LBC). It is Fairtrade certified and supplies Fairtrade cocoa to Cadbury-branded chocolate.²⁷ Kuapa has a long-standing strategy of addressing women's empowerment developed following a gender assessment carried out in 1996 leading to a Gender Programme established in 1998 (Chan 2010). This targeted support to women members (training, skills, credit) and promoted women's representation across the organisation. By 2010, 12 out of 20 of its National Executive Committee members were women and it had appointed a woman President, followed by another woman when she passed away. Only women who are the recognised farmer can join, but Kuapa is encouraging male farmers to gift land to their female spouse. Women increased from 26% of the coop's membership in 1996 to 32% in 2013.²⁸ As the production of certified cocoa has expanded in Ghana, other cooperatives have also been formed that produce certified cocoa, some supplying Mondelēz International.

From an early stage, CCP/CL promoted the formation of cooperative societies across all the 100 communities in which the programme operates, which joined cooperative unions. These provided small-scale producers participating in the programme with a democratic organisation through which to channel their voice, receive support and training, organise savings and loans associations, and elect a committee to allocate the Fairtrade social premium. Farmers were encouraged to join their cooperative societies, and membership grew as the benefits became apparent.

The two cooperative unions visited at community level as part of this research were formally registered in 2009 and 2010 respectively. One had 44 and the other 25 cooperative societies within their union. It was reported that women represented approximately 30% of members in both. In one, a woman was part of the cooperative leadership, but the other the leadership was all male. Both unions were Fairtrade certified. One had received revenues from the Fairtrade social premium for two years, rising from US\$21,000 in 2012 to US\$90,000 in 2013-2014. In order to decide how to spend the social premium, a general assembly was called to which each society could bring three members, at least one of whom had to be a woman (although some societies brought more).

Both cooperative union focus group discussions (FGD) indicated that men were encouraged through training to gift land to women, who were then encouraged to join the cooperative and have their own pass book. Subsequent male and female FGDs at community level indicated that one union had been more successful in encouraging land gifting than the other (the union in community one with a woman in its leadership). The female focus group in community one was made up of 14 women, eight of whom owned land, four had been gifted land by their male spouse (three others inherited, and

²⁷ Kuapa Kokoo is not formally registered as a cooperative with the Department of Cooperatives due to differences in its ownership structure, but adheres to most cooperative principles (industry informant).

²⁸ Chan 2010 and personal communication with Kuapa Kokoo 2014.

one bought land) and the remainder worked on their husband's farm. Discussion in the male FGD in this community indicated an increasing awareness of women's role in cocoa production, which they attributed to training. The female focus group in community two was made up of 19 women, eight of whom owned land, none of whom had been gifted land by their husband. None of the men in the male FGD in this community had gifted land to their wife. When the issue of land gifting was raised with them, it prompted laughter, and one participant said: "If you are struggling how can you give land to woman?" (FGD Male 2).

Training and Extension Services

Within Ghana, COCOBOD is responsible for the provision of training and extension for cocoa, and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOFA) responsible for provision in relation to other cash and food crops. Both organisations have limited resources available at district level and delivery of extension and training to cocoa communities is often sparse and sporadic.²⁹ COCOBOD normally deals only with recognised cocoa farmers. It has no formal unit responsible for gender within Cocoa Health and Extension Division. COCOBOD estimates that approximately 20-30% of those attending training are female.³⁰ Training often takes place at district level away from the communities, making it difficult for recognised women farmers to attend, given other household responsibilities and cultural sensitivities of travelling away from their home community. There is an assumption that men will transfer information back to women in the household working on cocoa farms, but key informant and community level interviews indicated the extent to which this actually occurs is ad hoc and variable.

MOFA has a directorate responsible for women in agricultural development that influences extension policy, given women are primarily responsible for food crops.³¹ There are no formal links between COCOBOD and MOFA nationally (in the 2000s MOFA was involved in cocoa extension, but COCOBOD now has sole responsibility). At district level there is sometimes informal coordination between COCOBOD and MOFA extension agents, and some MOFA extension agents give informal advice on cocoa where it is being cultivated with other food crops. However, this is ad hoc, and could have implications for future cocoa yields given women normally tend young cocoa plants, but often receive no cocoa training.

One challenge promoting gender awareness within training and extension provision is the low number of female relative to male extension officers, the majority of whom are male in both MOFA and COCOBOD (key informant interviews). This arises partly from cultural norms limiting the numbers of qualified applicants - women face difficulties working and travelling in remote rural areas. A number of interviewees indicated that

²⁹ One extension MOFA officer indicated he now had no transport available through the Ministry, and had to fund it out of his salary. He tended to visit communities close to his office but rarely visited more distant ones.

³⁰ Personal communication COCOBOD.

³¹ It is estimated that women are responsible for 70% of food crop production within Ghana (African Development Fund 2008).

when training is provided by a woman, farmers are more likely to take the role of women in cocoa production seriously.

A major plank of the CCP/CL programme has been facilitation of the provision of training and extension services within its target communities. CCP/CL has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with COCOBOD to support the employment of community extension agents dedicated to servicing the programme's implementing communities. The CRIG Cocoa Manual (CRIG 2010) produced with support from Cadbury supports the training of extension officers. The CL/CCP gender manual is used to instil gender awareness to staff involved in extension, as well as other stakeholders.

Both communities visited for this research indicated they had received little or no training prior to joining the CCP/CL programme. They now regularly see the local *Cocoa Life* Cocoa/Community Extension Agent responsible for their community, and receive regular COCOBOD and MOFA training and extension services, as well as other support. Implementing partners such as Care, VSO and World Vision facilitate linkages at community level between COCOBOD and MOFA extension officers, as well as related service providers (such as Department of Social Welfare training on child labour). The IPs also provide some training themselves on broader issues such as livelihoods and leadership. The role of IPs coordinating training was well received in both of the communities visited as part of this study.

Important principles advocated by CCP/CL are that training is:

- Delivered wherever possible at community level (rather than at district level which women find difficulty attending).
- Open to everyone within the community (male and female) working in cocoa independent of land ownership or cooperative membership.
- Women are encouraged to attend, and gender is integrated into all aspects of training.

Another plank of the CCP/CL programme is the establishment of Women Extension Volunteers (WEVs). These arose from the recognition, that a more proactive approach was needed to enable training and extension support for women. The concept of the WEVs was developed by one of the IPs in the north of Ghana and has been adopted by MOFA who oversees them. Women appointed as WEVs provide a focal point for training of women at a community level. They attend district level trainings, encourage women to attend training sessions and provide advice on how to enhance women's participation. This covers good agricultural practices in cocoa production, as well as wider issues such as marriage rights, animal rearing, sanitation and environment. WEVs travel to outlying communities to transfer key messages and provide advice to women working in cocoa farming.

WEVs are often women engaged in cocoa production who are also interested in developing leadership roles. However, as volunteers they are unremunerated, and

receive few resources to support their work (such as a travel allowance, boots and torches). One of the WEVs interviewed is a cocoa farmer and widowed single parent with children. Given other calls on her time she has had to reduce the extent to which she could attend monthly MOFA district meetings or visit other communities.

Focus group discussions in the two communities provided many examples of how training had helped to improve production:

- “Before we were weary of pruning, and thought best practice was to have pods at base of tree. Now we prune better and have pods across tree, and better yields.” (Coop Union FGD 1)
- “Major change is way cocoa planted. Before we were not taking into consideration distance between trees, now been taught how to space trees... Before this the farm was too shady. Before we were applying fertilizer anyhow, now we are trained on amount to spray per acre.” (FGD Male 1)
- “Before cocoa production was low, and also we didn’t have enough knowledge, especially in fermentation, and just fermenting for 3 days. We were told it becomes lighter, but if left for 6 days heavier, and flavour better, and seen a lot of changes in business.” (FGD Female 2)

Focus group discussions in the two communities revealed that as a result of the CCP/CL programme, more women have gradually received training. In community one, FGDs indicated men saw the benefits of women having better knowledge of cocoa farming in terms of improved yields and incomes. However, in community two, whilst the male and female FGDs indicated women had benefited from training, some resistance was expressed by men to the idea that as a result women might prove better farmers than themselves.

- “Yes, women attend training. Because of cocoa training, some women here are more knowledgeable than men, they participate, and are very active. Passbook has nothing to do with attending training. Don’t have to be Society member to attend training. Yes, women are doing more in production now, yes, and its helping to improve yields....Now women are into nursery, and are getting their own pods from nursery, and their cocoa is so beautiful. We don’t know why women are challenging us like this. [Others agreed].” (FGD Male 2).

Discussing the issue in the female FGD in the same community, a woman said: “It’s true, women’s farms are more beautiful, because they don’t wait till weeds get out of hand before going for labourer. Women do it immediately. So women’s farms are more beautiful.” (FGD Female 2)

Box 1 – Photographs Comparing Adjacent Cocoa Farms



An example of the benefits to the farm of one widowed woman cocoa farmer interviewed at community level is provided by photographs in Box 1 above. As a result of training the woman now keeps her trees better pruned, farm cleared of weeds and mistletoe, and has a timetable for the different activities she needs to undertake. In contrast, the adjacent farm shown in photo 2 is owned by a man who is not a member of the society or under the CP/CL programme. His farm is overgrown with weeds, and his cocoa trees tangled with climbers. Agronomists recommend clearance as one aspect of enhancing cocoa yields.

Productivity and Yields

Research undertaken for this study indicates that there have been clear benefits for cocoa farmers under the CCP/CL programme in terms of enhancing productivity and yields. However, it should be reiterated that this was only a small case study limited to two communities and not representative. A full evaluation is currently underway led by Michael Hiscox at Harvard University. This involved a base line study undertaken in 2009 of the 100 CL communities and a control group of 235 non-participating communities. A follow up study in 2014-2015 of the same communities will facilitate statistically robust data on improvements in the CCP/CL communities as a result of the programme compared to the control group.³² This will yield more substantive findings.

In the case study reported here, all interviewees with relevant knowledge of the programme in Accra indicated there had been an increase in yields as a result of training and extension support. This was confirmed within the two communities, although data is not exact given verbal reporting was in FGDs. Figures could have been affected by regeneration with new cocoa trees coming on stream. A purchasing clerk in community 2 confirmed “production has increased because people are selling

³² See Heinmueller, Hiscox, and Tampe (2011) and Hiscox and Goldstein (2014).

more beans, I can testify on increase in production.” FGDs indicate a doubling of yields in some instances, as given by the following examples:

- “At first I could make 3 bags, which I thought was enough, now I make 6-7 bags, so that’s a big improvement” (Coop Union FGD 1)
- “Those who initially started in group, they have seen a lot changes. One acre, 2 bags of cocoa, now they get 4-5 bags for same acre.” (Coop Union FGD 2)
- “Before training if we were getting one bag, now we can get 2 bags.” (FGD Female 2)
- “One guy was harvesting 1.5 bags, now harvesting 3 bags.” (FGD Male 2)

Production Challenges

Although this was not an in-depth study of production, production issues were aired in FGD discussions. One concern was access to agrochemicals, and supply of substandard products by traders. Sometimes access involved travelling long distances to obtain inputs. Better local provision of input supply would help to address this. Another issue raised in a number of FGDs was difficulty of accessing finance. This was becoming increasingly important as input prices increased, requiring credit for their purchase. In one community, there were complaints about the purchasing clerk being located some distance away, and having to visit the purchasing clerk a number of times to secure payment for their cocoa. One person complained of having to wait two months for payment. Given there were no alternative purchasing clerks in the area, they had no alternative buyer.

Women farmers face specific gender challenges in cocoa, particularly where they are widowed or have no male relatives in the household. A major problem is hired labour, which is rapidly increasing in cost. Women often need to hire more labour than male counterparts, both for tasks they are unable to undertake themselves and as they have less access to unpaid family labour. Examples and the implications were discussed in focus groups:

- “Women have a lot of challenges in raising productivity. She cannot spray farm alone, needs someone to help. Even weeding cocoa farm, she needs a hand as well as removal of mistletoe, and harvest of cocoa pods.” (FGD Coop Union 2)
- “Yes, there is improvement in income, but income goes into the expenditure, because can’t do many things, and more going into expenses. Inputs are high, labour is high, so a lot is going into expenses.....Last year harvesting [labour] was 10 cedis. Now 15 cedis by day for harvesting [labour]....Last year weeding [labour] was 5-6 cedis, now its 8 cedis for weeding.” (FGD Female 2)

In community one, the cooperative union indicated other members often helped women farmers. In community two, the woman farmer whose clean and tidy farm is shown in

photo 1 above indicated that due to rising costs she could not afford fertiliser this year, which is likely to reduce her future yield.

Income

Rising yields meant that farmers were now paid more for their cocoa by purchasing clerks. However, all interviews at community level indicated that this has to be offset against rising costs of inputs. For example, one community union indicated that the cost of fertilizer had increased significantly in the past year,³³ yet the price of cocoa had not increased in 2013-2014. Labour costs were also rising, which as indicated affects women more than men, as they are more dependent on using hired labour. The issue of rising costs was raised in all FGDs across the two communities:

- “As far as finances, even though getting these bags, we don’t see much improvement..... The cocoa price is not that good, when you consider your expenditure, you are at the point where you are not earning much. We have no additional livelihood, we are depending on cocoa.” (FGD Male 1)
- We have been encouraged to use fertiliser. This year fertiliser cost doubled, but cocoa price the same.” (FGD Male 2)
- “Yes, increase in yield, but when you deduct costs of inputs and labour, you realise you are equal to zero. Some encourage you that good times will come, so you continue with farming. But when you take out expenses, you have nothing.” (FGD Male 2)

Women who are the recognised farmer through land gifting should formally hold the passbook. This allows them to independently sell their cocoa to the purchasing clerk, and access the income. However, anecdotally some interviewees indicated this does not always happen. Women sometimes continue to sell under their husband’s passbook, and he receives the income. One reason is women do not always have the time or are unable to carry cocoa to the purchasing clerk, especially when they need to travel out of the community.

Where women work on their husband’s farm, and he is the recognised farmer, he holds the passbook. Even in community one where more land gifting had occurred, the male focus group was quite adamant that only the man should hold the passbook if he was the farmer:

“The pass book is for the men only. If the woman has cocoa then she has own passbook. But if wife is supporting me, then I have the passbook. Depends on who owns the farm. Owner owns farm, I hold it not my wife. If man can’t go, and woman has to go to sell, then she has the passbook. But then she gives it back to man.” (FGD Male 1)

³³ Government fertilizer was sold in 2014 at 52 Ghana cedis and on the open market at more than 100 cedis. In the previous year fertilizer was sold by the government at 45 Ghana cedis and on the open market at 90 cedis (industry informant).

In this situation, it is the man who controls the income, and decides what portion to provide to his wife. When asked in two FGDs if men share the income if a woman has participated in production, the question elicited laughter and the following replies:

- “After selling cocoa, men may give women something because she also played a role. You could give the woman something. But role of man is to keep bigger portion and to give some as housekeeping money.” (FGD Male 1)
- “No pass book if working with husband, it’s in his name, so he gets money.... If you have development of your child at heart, then you cannot tell your husband to divide in two, you have to take whatever your husband gives you. (FGD Female 2)

The above focuses on the commercial dimension of the cocoa value chain and how the gender strategy has been integrated into the Farming Pillar of the CCP/CL programme. As can be seen from research in the two communities, the CCP/CL programme has helped to open up opportunities for women. But it also faces many challenges promoting women’s equitable engagement given deeply embedded attitudes and norms, but that these can vary between locations. We will now turn to the social dimension of the CCP/CL programme. After this we can assess the broader opportunities and challenges of promoting women’s equitable engagement in the cocoa value chain.

4.2. Community Pillar

A critical dimension of the CCP/CL programme is taking a holistic approach to cocoa farming that links the commercial and social dimensions. This is encapsulated in the goal of developing “Empowered, thriving cocoa communities as the foundation of sustainable cocoa”. Often the gender division of labour prevalent in rural Ghana tends to allocate women a caring role at household/community level, overlooking the important role they also play in cocoa farming. Women are thus critical to both the commercial and social dimensions of cocoa farming. Linking these two dimensions has important implications for promoting thriving communities that are both appealing environments for farm households and support more efficient quality cocoa production and incomes.

Community Action Plans

The community pillar of CCP/CL explicitly addresses the goal of promoting gender equality. “*Cocoa Life* supports men and women to work together to transform their communities by developing action plans that can bring about changes to the community that they want to see. Women’s groups improve knowledge and confidence, and a sense of opportunity and ownership emerge as communities begin to thrive.”³⁴

³⁴ Mondelēz *Cocoa Life* Guidance Document July 2013, p.7.

Community Action Plans (CAP) are at the core of the CCP/CL community programme. They provide the basis for organisation at a grassroots level in order to identify community needs and channel their requirements to those bodies able to address them. Action plans are initially developed in groups using participatory methods, where they undertake ranking and scoring methods to identify their needs. Groups then meet at community level to collate these into a community action plan, again using participatory methods, and identifying the resources needed. The implementing partner NGO in each CCP/CL community facilitates the process.

Gender equality is integrated into the decision making process to ensure that women's voices come through. The process was discussed in some detail in the female FGD in one of the communities. They said that they organise different group meetings for men and women. Each documents their needs using participatory methods (ranking and scoring issues) and draw up a plan with a facilitator. The two then meet as a group and share the needs they have identified. They vote on each to prioritise their needs. When asked, they indicated they felt women's needs are taken into consideration in the final CAP through this process. "Sometimes it's 3:2, sometimes the other way round, but we feel our views get through." (FGD Female 2).

Issues raised in CAPs that relate to the 5 pillars of *Cocoa Life*, are addressed by the programme. Where wider issues are raised (eg roads, electricity or schooling), they identify the relevant institution with whom to engage, the resources needed, and who could provide finance.

A Development Committee is formed to review progress and pursue implementation of the CAP. The community identifies key individuals to participate in the Development Committee (e.g. community chief, District Assembly representatives). Once a CAP is agreed at the community level, the Development Committee takes it to the District Assembly.

The District Assembly is the main public decision making body at district level under Ghana's system of government. Their members are one third appointed by government and two thirds elected by the community members. The District Assembly is meant to consult with different bodies, including civil society organisations and faith based organisations as part of their decision making process (FES 2010). However, in reality consultation is often poor at a community level. The CAPs provide a channel through which the needs of cocoa communities can be agreed and reported to the District Assembly for incorporation into District Development Plans (which inform the National Development Plan).

Key informant interviews indicated that there can be gender tensions in the process at the intersection between community and district level. Women in the CAPs often focus on social issues such as education and health. Men more often focus on infrastructure projects such as electricity and roads. Whilst the CAP process incorporates gender balance at community level, District Assemblies more often have a disproportionate appointment of men, and tend to pursue male priorities.

The cooperative unions interviewed indicated that whilst women were involved in developing the CAPs, sometimes their CAP recommendations worked but often they did not at district level. One female District Planning Officer interviewed was more positive, saying the *Cocoa Life* gender strategy was influencing the process and helping to raise women's voice in the District Assembly. Addressing gender bias in District Assemblies is beyond an individual programme such as *Cocoa Life* alone, and other actors are also advocating a more gender-sensitive lens in Ghana's governance process (key informant interviews).

Livelihoods

As discussed above, farmers face a challenge of cocoa generating sufficient income to sustain household livelihoods. Women often do other things to make money to support their family and pay for children to go to school. This can include making soap and selling grasscutters (a small animal popularly consumed in Ghana). Many women in the FGDs indicated that they do not depend on cocoa alone because they have to do other things to maintain their family. When asked about whether women give a portion of their own income from other activities to their husband, one woman indicated this does not happen:

- “No, but women use money to cook, so husbands benefits. Man won't give her money when he sells beans so she won't give him money when she earns money.” (FGD Female 2)

Some focus group discussions indicated that increased yields provided more household income to look after their children. However emphasis on children attending school (following campaigns over child labour) had also increased their financial costs, as they have to pay school fees and costs.

Schooling was indicated as a serious problem in one of the communities. The community has a building provided through the *Cocoa Life* programme for use as a primary school and community meeting place. But they have problems keeping teachers, as there is no nearby accommodation for them, and teachers prefer to work elsewhere. “If teachers don't live in community they don't have engagement with children, they come late, some days [when raining] don't come.” (FGD Coop Union 1). Children going to secondary school have to travel very long distances every day.

In this community, the female focus group discussion discussed the main challenges they faced. These included cost of hiring labour, cost and difficulty of buying chemicals, schooling, and having to carry beans a long way to the shed of the purchasing clerk. They were asked to rank the issues starting with those of most importance to them. Their ranking is shown in Box 2:

Box 2 - Ranking of Challenges (Female Focus Group)

- i. Shed
- ii. School
- iii. Chemicals
- iv. Labour
- v. Electricity
- vi. Drinking Water
- vii. Start-up capital e.g. for soap making business

(FGD Female 1)

This ranking indicates that both farm and family issues are of concern to women, and are intertwined. Improving their livelihoods requires addressing both the commercial and social dimensions of cocoa farming.

Future

All focus group discussions included the question of whether they wanted their children to go into farming in the future. On the whole the answer was negative:

- “No I don’t think they would like to go into farming, its not lucrative, and doesn’t pay much. Having put my children through school, why would I want my children to come into cocoa.” (FGD Coop Union 1)
- “Cocoa farming is a difficult business. Look at our houses, made of bamboo. When it rains, the rain gets into the room, so in future we hope our children will not go through what we go through, but will be a little comfortable.” (FGD Male 1)
- “We don’t want our children to become cocoa farmers. People say we should not use our children in cocoa farming. So it’s our responsibility to train our children to be responsible in future. So we don’t want our children to be cocoa farmers.” (FGD Male 1)

However, some indicated that whilst they did not want *all* their children to enter cocoa farming, it was possible *some* might:

- “Who will look after farm? We know some of them will become farmers, because they have interest in business, but we don’t want all of them to become cocoa farmers.” (FGD Male 1)
- “Some children already have interest in cocoa, some willingly accompany you to farm, even though some say children should not go to farm. The thing is we are supporting our children to school. After school, if child wants to come back to cocoa farming, then I won’t prevent child, you need money to invest in farming as a business. But I will not tell my child to stay at home to become a cocoa farmer, no, that I will not do it.” (FGD Female 2)

Some indicated that if there was an increase in the price of cocoa and the government would help with the price of inputs, this might motivate children to go into cocoa in the future. Another issue mentioned by a few individuals briefly is that a cocoa pension scheme for farmers, if established, would help motivate children to go into cocoa in future and serve as an incentive.

There is evidence from a number of studies that women are more likely than men to spend income they receive on household wellbeing, including education and health (World Bank 2009 and 2011). Women often have greater concern for the social viability of cocoa communities. Increasing women's access to information and income could help enhance children's futures and development outcomes. Promoting more sustainable cocoa communities could make cocoa a more attractive option to future generations. It would encourage younger farmers to remain in cocoa, helping to raise productivity and quality of future cocoa production.

5. Summary and Recommendations

This and other studies have shown that women *do* play an important role in cocoa farming, despite its reputation as a 'male crop'. Women are particularly engaged in activities critical to enhancing yields and quality (early plant care and post-harvest fermentation and drying). However, women cocoa farmers face specific challenges, and women's input as family labour is often unrecognised. Promoting gender equality in the cocoa-chocolate value chain is central to enhancing the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their children, addressing supply chain resilience, and making cocoa farming as an attractive occupation to future generations.

It has taken vision by CCP/CL and its partners from an early stage to ensure that promotion of gender equality was and has remained embedded in the programme as a cross-cutting theme. The programme has made important steps forward in linking the commercial and social dimensions, helping to incorporate women as both farm and community participants. However, significant challenges remain given the subordination of women is deeply embedded in the culture, norms and institutions of Ghanaian society. Change is gradually occurring within cocoa farming, and promoting gender equality within the cocoa-chocolate value chain could make an important contribution to this process. However, achieving gender equality is well beyond the capability of one intervention or programme, and requires concerted engagement by all actors (private, public and civil society).

Much of the cocoa-chocolate industry has long been gender imbalanced and commercial actors are often oblivious to gender issues. Only concerted action involving multiple actors can address this, and needs to involve a change in attitudes and practices at every level of the value chain. The need for a more professional cocoa farming sector is increasingly recognised in the sector given risks to the future of cocoa supply. This provides a lever for change, and industry actors are now becoming more gender aware and engaged. Promoting gender equality can both enhance the well-being and empowerment of women as well as help enhance the future resilience of the

cocoa-chocolate value chain. Company and industry actors (private and public) engaged in the cocoa-chocolate sector ignore promotion of gender equality at their peril.

Recommendations

The CCP/CL gender assessment and programme have helped to identify and address key areas needed to promote gender equality in cocoa farming. Learning is needed from the CCP/CL programme, and successful components further rolled out. All stakeholders (commercial, public and civil society) need to engage in more joined up strategies to promote gender equality in the cocoa-chocolate value chain.

The following provisional recommendations help to identify issues that could be further developed by all stakeholders to enhance gender equality in the cocoa-chocolate value chain. These recommendations by the authors are provisional only to help identify issues, and need further elaboration through discussion with key stakeholders:

- **Cocoa-chocolate value chain:** All companies and organisations in the cocoa-chocolate value chain (including COCOBOD, government ministries, industry bodies, traders, processors and manufacturers) need a clear strategy to promote gender equality both within their own organisations and along their supply chains. Industry players need gender training on the importance of enhancing women's role at all stages of the value chain. All leading companies (manufacturers and processors) should sign up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles. Regular reporting on progress in promoting gender equality should be made a norm and incorporated into all formal reports.
- **Recognition of women in cocoa:** Women participating in cocoa production should be given recognition as producers independently of their land tenure status (e.g. joint passbooks). Differential needs of women cocoa farmers need support (e.g. better access to credit, training and extension). Incentives should be provided to increase cocoa purchase directly from women cocoa producers.
- **Cooperative unions and small producer organisations (SPOs):** Women need better access to cooperative unions and small producer organisations as cocoa producers, independent of recognised land tenure status (e.g. joint and/or associate cooperative membership). Cooperative and SPO training and support should be open to all those engaged in cocoa farming both as recognised farmers and family labour.
- **Land rights and information:** Greater information and training on women's legal land rights. Better implementation of government regulation on land rights. Greater encouragement of land gifting by male farmers to their spouse engaged in production.
- **Training:** Training sessions should be open to all those engaged in cocoa production (both recognised farm owner and family labour). Where possible

training should be provided at community level to ensure women are able to participate. More women trainers are needed to convey women's ability to engage as specialists in cocoa, and encourage by example women's participation in cocoa innovation.

- **Extension:** Support needs to be provided to both women and men engaged in cocoa production (recognised farmer and family labour). Extension officers need better resources to reach women engaged in production and remote communities. More women extension offers are needed, and provided with gender-relevant support (such as safer transport). Women extension volunteers need better support, and compensation for their input.
- **Public governance:** Public bodies, including COCOBOD, Ministries and District Assemblies need to have clearer strategies for promoting gender equality in cocoa. Channels linking community, district and national policy need to take account of both the needs of women and men in cocoa farming communities. Greater alignment is needed between public policy and strategies of key value chain actors (industry and civil society) to promote gender equality.
- **Linking commercial and social support:** Men and women engaged in cocoa farming need to reap better rewards for their efforts (both through commercial and social provision) that take account of gender-differentiated needs. Promoting gender equality needs to be made a priority if cocoa farming is to be attractive to future generations.

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