

Walmart Foundation- Empowering women cocoa farmers in West Africa 2015 Annual Report

Provide a brief description of the grant program and major goals.

The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) recognizes the need to increase outreach to women cocoa farmers in West Africa in order to improve farming productivity, increase women's economic empowerment, and improve the well-being of cocoa farming households. To meet these objectives, WCF and its public and private partners entered into a program with the Walmart Foundation to train approximately 70,000 cocoa farmers (50,000 women, 20,000 men) in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria over three years (2014-2016) under the WCF Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP).

The Cocoa Livelihoods Program is a ten-year (2009-2019) program with the goal of assisting West African farmers in increasing both cocoa and food crop productivity on their cocoa farms. In CLP Phase II (2014-2019) WCF is supporting member companies to directly reach cocoa farmers with training and services. WCF is working with member companies under a matching grant mechanism, where WCF as well as cocoa companies commit matched levels of resources for CLP activities. Each matching grant partner (MGP) implements a set of activities within the CLP framework, committing to reaching key milestones as part of the CLP program.

Country	Matching Grant Partner (MGP)
Ghana:	Company 6; Company 5; Company 11 (previously Company 7)
Côte d'Ivoire:	Company 9; Company 10; Company 4; Company 1, Company 2 (& Company 3),
Nigeria:	Company 8 (now Company 4)
Cameroon:	Company 4

WCF provides direct technical support and coordination to the nine MGPs to successfully meet program goals. The Walmart Foundation supports WCF on improving gender outreach activities through these CLP matching grant projects.

The program has the following goals:

Goal 1: Increased Farmer Training and Outreach with a Focus on Women

Gender inequality is a significant challenge within the cocoa sector, and activities that provide training and resources for farmers often exclude women. This not only adversely impacts gender equality, but productivity and the overall well-being of cocoa households as well because family tasks and responsibilities are typically the women's primary responsibility. With the support of the Walmart Foundation, WCF will target and train women farmers. By providing them with the skills necessary to improve and better manage farming activities, the program will help women increase cocoa and food crop production and generate more income, which will lead to greater economic empowerment. As women are typically responsible for the well-being of the household, greater income generation will improve the welfare of entire cocoa farming families. The program will also increase the number of women leaders and role models within households and cocoa farming communities, supporting women to take leadership roles in groups and cooperatives while encouraging the formation of women-only groups.

Goal 2: Increase Cocoa Productivity on Farms

Most cocoa farmers in West Africa have limited skills and minimal knowledge of improved farming practices. Women account for 50% of labor in cocoa production giving them significant potential to impact farm production. WCF particularly recognizes the benefits of targeting women for training in farm management and household finances to empower women and improve the wellbeing of the farming household. Funding from the Walmart Foundation is helping WCF's efforts to directly train women in improved production and farm management practices to increase on-farm productivity and income generation. Increased income generation for women from farming activities will have a greater impact on the well-being of the farming household as more funds will be available to meet the health, nutrition, and education needs of the family. WCF will also encourage farmers to open savings accounts and pursue small loans for the purchase of farm inputs (fertilizers and agro-chemicals) for cocoa production.

Goal 3: More Prosperous and Food Secure Households

More than 75% of the rural poor depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, yet risks such as climate change and price fluctuations threaten farming communities, especially in West Africa. Women are typically responsible for 80% of the labor associated with food crop production on farms. Walmart Foundation funding is promoting household resilience by providing training to increase food crop production on cocoa farms, allowing farmers to complement their cocoa incomes and increase the amount of nutritious food that is available for household consumption. WCF will provide training to improve the productivity of food crops commonly grown on cocoa farms, such as cassava and plantain, targeting women farmers as the primary food crop producers.

Summarize the work of your program. Please highlight a few success stories, include quotes, if possible.

Goal 1: Increased farmer training and outreach with a focus on women

WCF works with MGPs to improve training and outreach to women farmers by assessing current capacities of MGPs to carry out gender sensitive projects and by training them on how to increase women's participation in interventions. WCF also developed a set of tools and activities specifically tailored to women farmers.

a. Assessing and building capacities of MGPs

WCF provided trainings to MGPs on building technical capacities for gender sensitive programming and on finding gender equitable approaches to community development projects. WCF also enhanced women leaders' capacity to operate as volunteer extension agents (WEVs) and trainers of other women. These workshops resulted in further activities focused on helping women leaders overcome gender barriers such as reduced access to land, increased domestic workload and limited participation in decision making.

Success Story: In Ghana, WCF worked with Company 5 to introduce a minimum quota for gender representation and leadership in farmer associations: at least one executive seat must be filled by a female candidate. Six districts elected ten women leaders for the first time in May, and women now represent 23% of the cooperative leaders working with Company 5. These numbers will grow now that Company 5 has introduced new gender awareness modules in its Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

b. Gender sensitization of cooperatives

WCF organized workshops on gender sensitization for cooperative board members and directors to help create an environment conducive to better gender representation of women in cooperative leadership organs, farmer field school events and food security initiatives. WCF trained 115 cooperative board presidents, vice presidents and directors on promoting gender balance in cooperative activities and in the development of gender action plans. These action plans included increasing female leadership in cooperative decision making groups, promoting women's access to GAP knowledge and supporting women's access to farmland.

Success Story: MGP Company 3/Company 2 organised a workshop for 30 cooperatives on the gender integration in cooperative and community activities. Mr. Tasembedo Inoussa, a cooperative president learned of the negative impact that women's inability to own land was having on the livelihood development of cocoa families. Upon returning to his village, Mr. Inoussa worked with other producers to offer 1.5 hectares of land for food crops to 70 women spouses of cocoa producers.

c. Gender tool development

Recognizing the need to develop tools and resources for gender sensitivity in cocoa, food crops and community development, WCF and the Netherland's Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) developed a gender toolkit. WCF is organizing a series of one-on-one consultations with MGPs to train them on using the toolkit to increase training and outreach to women. English and French versions of the toolkit are available at www.genderandcocoalivelihoods.org.

d. Establishing female community extension leaders

One strategy to encourage greater women's participation is to identify and train leaders within communities to serve as female extension volunteers. An Ivorian farmer noted "a woman has the ability to talk in the right way to another woman. She has the ability to convince them." In Ghana, one project trained 1,229 female extension volunteers (WEVs) to serve as community volunteers and to support extension activities. WEVs help women improve farm operations while providing gender sensitization in communities and also received training on entrepreneurship to mentor women small business owners.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Company 1 is setting up Cocoa Village Centers (CVCs) to supply farm inputs. CVC operators train farmers in cocoa and food crop GAP in addition to selling inputs. The program targets women as CVC operators to encourage more women to participate in CVC services and lessen the perception of cocoa production as man's work. It is also seen as an opportunity to grow confidence in women's ability to lead.

e. Assisting women's associations

Working with women's groups is at the core of MGPs' strategies to address food security and nutritional issues within cocoa communities, promote diversification of incomes, and contribute to women's financial autonomy. One of the ways MGPs are interacting with women's groups is by combining training to women's groups on food crop GAP with training on entrepreneurship. As a result, an increasing number of women have access to credit through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA), have started small scale businesses and are applying business skills.

Goal 2: Increase cocoa productivity on farms

GAP trainings provide up-to-date information on cocoa GAP while incorporating business management skills. Extension agents carry on the majority of these trainings, supported by volunteers and farmer leaders. In 2015,

WCF trained 16,269 women in cocoa GAP. Ghana has seen more success in reaching women partly due to the use of WEVs to provide basic extension delivery. WCF is doing the same in Nigeria and will also do so in Côte d'Ivoire. MGPs in Côte d'Ivoire target whole households with extension training, instead of only cooperative members, who tend to be men. WCF also established pilots of women-only FFS in Côte d'Ivoire.

Goal 3: More prosperous and food secure households

a. Training on food crop productivity

Food crop training was largely a new subject for the cocoa and chocolate companies and therefore required capacity and partnership development to ensure quality training for farmers. In 2015, WCF trained 5084 female farmers in food crop GAP in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria. In Cameroon, the process of establishing training work plans started later than expected due to management and coordination issues surrounding Company 4's acquisition of Company 8. This activity will be scaled up in 2016. WCF also developed a food crop manual to build and improve women's empowerment and food security in cocoa communities. The Company 1 project in the Soubré region of Côte d'Ivoire introduced soybeans and other vegetables to improve nutrition levels in areas where low nutrition has plagued inhabitants for years.

Ghanaian farmer Bony Akissi Yvonne noted "we learned how to grow cassava and plantain using modern and more efficient techniques. We didn't even know that we could process our cassava into flour and the process is very easy!"

b. Training women in farm business skills

WCF's farm management trainings help farmers make more informed investments and improve productivity. Inhibited by resource and timing issues associated with the training curriculum, MGPs have been generally slow to incorporate farm management training into their programs. WCF is working with MGPs to determine how best to incorporate the curriculum into their programs and productivity training activities. In 2015, WCF train 2,990 farmers in farm management.

Digital Technologies to target women - Digital Green

WCF is partnering with Digital Green to produce extension training videos specifically adapted to the needs and interests of women. In Ghana, training of MGPs is scheduled for January 2016. WCF and Digital Green are also collaborating with the Ghana Ministry of Agriculture to develop a series of videos to improve food crop productivity which will directly target women. Training in Côte d'Ivoire is planned for February 2016.

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How is your program impacting the lives of individuals? That is, how is it helping people live better?

While many West African rural households depend on cocoa for their livelihoods, productivity remains low. Women farmers are underrepresented in cocoa development activities, despite significant contributions. Even though they often play key roles in nursery management and post-harvest activities, these women are not considered farmers and therefore lack access to training and other agricultural resources. By ensuring effective outreach to women on food crop production and farm management initiatives, this program contributes to income diversification for increased stability and resilience.

Where women do own cocoa farms, their productivity remains lower than men's. Women face constraints in accessing productive resources and farm labor unlike their male counterparts. Including women in CLP activities and ensuring that cocoa productivity trainings are accessible to women as well as men boosts cocoa productivity and quality, which in turn increases household incomes. In addition, women are not only key actors in the cocoa value chain, but also play a critical role in the production of food crops. Food crops are an important source of income which complements seasonal cocoa income. Women who have benefited from food crop trainings have reported improved production and marketing potential, resulting in increased income. Increasing women's income in turn benefits the entire household; it is positively correlated with children's health and nutrition.

In addition, the program is providing training to women to become entrepreneurs, increasing their individual and household income. For example, women are learning to produce, store and process cassava. In Ghana, a female farmer of a Company 6-assisted group reported how she has made money selling "garrri", a granulated version of processed cassava. Her group now exports *garrri* to international buyers at competitive prices. With the income earned, she contributes to the financial support of her family and now takes part in family decision making. In addition, the program is supporting the establishment of women's savings clubs, which have proven successful in supporting women entrepreneurs. An immediate impact of these clubs is that they have helped create a culture of saving that women can fall back on in times of difficulty. It also helps women self-finance their businesses without relying on support from their husbands or other relatives.

How is your program impacting the community?

Confident female entrepreneurs: With the knowledge acquired in business skills and farm management trainings, many female farmers gained the confidence to start their own small-scale income generating activities around food crops. As their businesses grow, these women are becoming economically empowered and serving as change agents in their communities. Working with female extension volunteers, the women are using their newfound skills to increase their production and grow their businesses.

Land parcels for food crop cultivation: As a result of gender sensitization and farm management training, a number of cooperatives have allocated plots of land specifically for women to cultivate food crops. Matching grant partners in the field observed that communities that benefited from GAP training in food crops and processing were willing to dedicate community plots for women's food crop cultivation. Individual farmers also increased land allocations to their wives to grow food crops. Over time, an increase in food crop production will improve food security for the community as a whole.

Encouragement to acquire new skills: Through sensitization efforts, usually organized as open cooperative and community meetings, men better understand the value of more educated or knowledgeable spouses for the benefit of the entire family. Women are better able to generate income and contribute to the household's needs. With a changing perspective on gender equality, men often encourage and support women to participate in trainings and take on leadership roles. Community members, both male and female, have generally welcomed new quota systems for women in leadership positions in cooperatives, and a number of cooperatives have changed or adapted their bylaws to permit it.

Addressing food insecurity Cocoa communities experience both seasonal caloric deficiencies as well as general malnutrition, as farmers who depend solely on cocoa can have an increased risk of food insecurity. Cocoa is harvested twice a year and during times of poor or late harvests, household funds to purchase food is stretched. Changing weather patterns as a result of climate change are further impacting productivity and farmers' lives. By promoting the production of food crops, the grant contributes to food security in cocoa communities, ensuring that cocoa households can grow enough food to meet their needs and provide additional income through the selling of food crops. In addition, WCF directly impacts nutrition in communities through the production of soy, vegetables and fortified cassava.

Analyze your program and share those aspects you have found to be the most successful and why.

Under the first objective of increased farmer training with a focus on women, WCF found that women extension volunteers (WEV) are highly effective in increasing outreach to women because of their gender and expertise. In many communities, WEV coach or mentor young women and serve as gender equality advocates by organizing sensitization events to raise awareness on gender issues. Through their leadership and advocacy, WEV create opportunities for women's empowerment while increasing outreach to women.

Company 1's Cocoa Village Centers (CVC) was very successful in reaching entrepreneurial women to become CVC operators, or 'cocoa doctors'. CVC operators receive training in extension delivery and benefit from business mentoring and market linkage support. This makes the role of a CVC operator extremely influential in their communities. As more and more women see the business success and community influence of current CVC female operators, more will likely join the program.

The gender awareness workshops organized for leaders of cocoa cooperatives contributed to breaking down many of the barriers women face in participating in and benefitting from the cocoa value chain. Feedback from some of the female farmer participants in gender awareness trainings demonstrated that the workshops increased their willingness to engage in decision making in their communities and cooperatives. One participant, commenting on the gender awareness training offered by Company 6, considered the trainings to be very useful "especially as it gave men the opportunity to see the importance of sharing in household tasks and supporting women to gain equal opportunities." Participants, particularly men, leave feeling that what they learned is an eye opening in regards to the gender inequities faced by women in the cocoa value chain. The program expects that this will encourage men to become more open to sharing decision making opportunities with women especially at home.

Under the second objective of increased farm productivity, WCF has been particularly successful in engaging women through cocoa demonstration plots. Demonstration plots are used to show the results of applying the different techniques of GAP taught in the FFS. To reach out to more women, FFS are increasingly working with demonstration plots located close to village centers. Bringing plots closer to homes allows women with busy schedules to attend trainings more easily. The FFS have also been successful because they emphasize practice rather than theory and worked with locally available lead farmers to conduct trainings. This teaching method is particularly well adapted to a farmer population facing literacy challenges. Because women have lower literacy levels than men, this approach encourages their participation and increases their self-confidence for active group participation.

Analyze your program and share those aspects you have found to be the most challenging and why. Include any barriers to your program's success that are not part of your programmatic work. Please explain how you are addressing these challenges.

In 2015, a few challenges delayed implementation of project activities. WCF met these challenges by remaining flexible in the implementation of activities and, to the extent possible, adapting its gender strategy and approach to realities on the ground.

- Training in farm management and business skills has started but with delays. The MGPs experienced challenges incorporating the cocoa GAP and food crop GAP training due to resource availability and overall timing of the different trainings. In addition, the partners are using a variety of different training methodologies making quality control difficult. In order to address these challenges, WCF is working with each MGP individually to determine the most effective way to incorporate the farm management training with other trainings, focusing on targeting women farmers. In addition, WCF is developing a harmonized training curriculum which the MGPs can adopt in their activities. We expect that this training will be scaled up in 2016.
- In 2014, matching grant partner Company 4 acquired Company 8. As this process was carried out, Company 4's matching grant program activities in Nigeria and Cameroon were delayed as was their ability to focus on activities related to gender outreach. Similarly, in 2015 Company 11 acquired Company 7 Cocoa and its activities in Ghana. Consequently, the field activities have been delayed due to management and coordination challenges associated with the acquisition.
- Each MGP possess different levels of capacity for and understanding of gender outreach. Their corporate commitment to gender issues and gender programs differs and varies considerably, making it challenging to have a single, uniform and standardized approach. As a result, WCF has to work with each company individually to build their internal capacities in order to implement gender activities. WCF is working with the MGPs one-on-one to train them and tailor their gender work plans to their specific needs. The MGPs have made great strides activities and are incorporating a step-wise approach to scale up their activities in 2016.

WCF has also faced some challenges in empowering women in cocoa communities and increasing female leadership in cocoa cooperatives and communities due to existing land tenure arrangements and low self confidence in leadership abilities among women. In Côte d'Ivoire, cooperatives require members to be land owners. Since many women do not own land, they can neither become cooperative members nor benefit from cooperative services. Even women cooperative members face barriers in taking on leadership roles. These barriers often include a

lack of time to commit to cooperative activities, low self-esteem in leadership capabilities and lack of male support.

In order to address this, in Ghana, WCF and industry partners are building the capacities of female cooperative members through leadership training and coaching, while collaborating with cooperatives to adjust leadership eligibility criteria in favor of quota systems that guarantee at least one seat to a woman. In Côte d'Ivoire, WCF and industry partners are building the capacities of women leaders to be better mentors of future women leaders and to influence cooperative decision making processes. With respect to land tenure challenges, WCF industry partners in Ghana have organized several community forums on the legal rights of women to inherit and own land. These awareness meetings usually involve village leaders and key community decision makers who can influence changes regarding land tenure arrangements in the community.

Developing strategies to increase women's participation in training activities remains a considerable challenge. Women undertake household as well as agricultural responsibilities and cannot always find time to participate in training activities. WCF continues to work with MGPs to make training schedules more gender sensitive, choosing locations and times that encourage women's participation, and to also incorporate new technologies such as Digital Green, which allow for more flexible scheduling.

Under the second objective of increased productivity, one of the main challenges lies in ensuring that farmers, particularly women farmers, actually apply GAP following training. A previous evaluation indicated that, even though farmers showed a great deal of enthusiasm in FFS events, this did not translate into practice. For many female cocoa farmers, applying labor-intensive GAP can be prohibitively expensive; women tend to rely more on outside labor due to their busy schedules. WCF is addressing this challenge through diversification of income sources, as well as increased access to credit to support these costs.

If your program is being implemented in collaboration with other organizations, please provide a narrative on your partners' roles in program execution and their effect on your ability to achieve your programmatic goals.

WCF collaborates with two organizations to provide additional support and capacity building to MGPs: Digital Green and the Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). Digital Green provides trainings of trainers in the use of video technology, giving extension agents flexible and adaptable tools to reach more women farmers in the field. Additionally, Digital Green uses locally-produced videos to enhance farmers' engagement and comprehension of the material. WCF and Digital Green disseminate training videos on both food crops and cocoa GAP. WCF experienced some challenges developing this partnership to carryout program activities. First, Digital Green was unwilling to incorporate Côte d'Ivoire in the scope of activities, focusing solely on Ghana. WCF addressed this challenge by increasing WCF staff's capacity to train and provide support to MGPs in Côte d'Ivoire to adopt Digital Green technology. However, this has impacted the execution of the program in the country. In addition, the majority of Digital Green staff dedicated to the development of this program either left the organization or have been shifted to other programs. As a result, there were numerous delays in the development of the agreement and implementation of the program. WCF intended to implement the Digital Green program in 2015 but training was delayed to Q1 2016.

WCF also partners with the Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute to provide valuable input on gender issues in the cocoa value chain. With input from WCF, KIT developed a gender toolbox for MGPs on mainstreaming gender into their interventions which the MGPs are adopting in their

projects. Being a research based organization, KIT's strength lies in its ability to backstop WCF's gender strategy design through the development of a gender learning agenda. The learning agenda also captures suitable methods for documenting best practices in gender outreach for women, which can be scaled up as an industry best practice. Not only will this allow more women to benefit from field tested solutions that contribute to their personal and economic development, it will also enable WCF to constantly review ways to improve program delivery. However, given its limited presence in the field, WCF periodically organizes one-on-one meetings with partners to provide technical support in programmatic activities but also in documenting best practices.

Please provide a brief description of the methodology used to evaluate this program

WCF implements a multi-staged monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to track both progress and impact of project activities. WCF has a dedicated M&E specialist tracking progress against the Walmart Foundation grant components. The M&E concept feeds directly back into the WCF learning circle, where it informs programmatic adjustments and shapes future learning agendas.

The M&E methodology relies on three main components for results based management:

Baseline, Mid-Term and Impact Evaluations

Baseline, mid-term and final impact evaluations follow programmatic progress over the long-term. These evaluations are implemented by the WCF M&E team and independent experts. In 2015, WCF and partners took a baseline statistical sample from Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria as part of its Cocoa Livelihoods Project. To ensure that the baseline tracks gender-specific progress, WCF used gender-disaggregated data, the inclusion of food-crop farm assessments and the use of the household concept, i.e. involving all members of the household, in the survey's design. The baseline data specifically addressed questions on challenges faced by female cocoa farmers or cocoa household members, informing future strategies of CLP activities. To enhance the sector's understanding of gender concepts in cocoa communities, a dedicated gender income survey will review the impact on farmer benefit and household income distribution in 2016. The mid-term evaluation will be carried out in Q1 2016 and results are still being analyzed.

Field Visits to Program Sites

WCF's M&E approach also integrates qualitative data through field visits to program sites organized with beneficiaries and member companies. These visits provide opportunities to observe the progress of activities and get first hand feedback on the program's impact from the beneficiaries themselves. During these visits, the WCF country team coordinator and gender specialist hold group meetings with members of farmer cooperative and women's groups. This work enables WCF to stay abreast of gender concepts in cocoa communities. By closing the contact gap, WCF learned how to build program requirements around the busy schedules and opportunities of women in cocoa.

Reporting

Matching grant partners provide WCF with semi-annual reports based on routine monitoring. WCF supports partners in providing disaggregated data to capture the impact on women. WCF

expects that gendered data will become more widely available as industry partners apply gender-aware reporting concepts and guidelines developed in CLP. The WCF 'Gender Sensitive Data Collection Tool' has been an important component of this effort.

Please describe how this program is contributing to the overall goals of your organization.

WCF has an overarching objective to support cocoa farmers in reaching sustainable cocoa production through innovative public-private partnerships. Its mission is to promote a sustainable cocoa economy through economic and social development and environment stewardship in cocoa-growing communities. In 2014, WCF developed and launched the CocoaAction strategy (www.worldcocoaafoundation.org/about-wcf/cocoaaction), focused productivity and community development in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

The CocoaAction productivity package provides farmers with GAP and farm management training to increase farm-level productivity. The training provided through the Walmart Foundation will directly contribute to these CocoaAction targets. The CocoaAction community development package further includes women's empowerment as key cross-cutting issues for the wider cocoa growing communities. The Walmart Foundation allows WCF to pilot innovative approaches to supporting women within the cocoa household and cocoa growing communities and provides specific support to participating member companies through the public-private-partnership collaboration facilitated by the CLP program. Lessons learned from this program will be applied to the CocoaAction strategy as well as to other WCF programs outside of West Africa.

Briefly summarize what you are learning (including challenges and successes) about the issues addressed by this grant program

a. Providing individualized support

WCF capitalizes on MGPs' unique implementation experiences by sharing successes at quarterly meetings. The diversity of approaches, however, also creates challenges. MGPs had different levels of gender-aware capacities and understandings of effective gender interventions, making a uniform assessment approach difficult. WCF learned that providing individualized guidance allows for better results and for better learning. One-on-one meetings allowed WCF to tailor the assessment to each MGP's needs, learn from feedback and adapt as necessary.

b. Creating enabling environments

WCF registered success taking a multi-faceted approach to women's needs. WCF learned that an environment supportive of women's participation is essential to effective gender interventions. While promoting women's participation through quotas increased women's participation, sensitizing other cooperative members to the importance of female participation and leadership was even more successful. WCF applies these lessons when creating enabling environments in other gender interventions.

c. Understanding contexts

WCF found that a sound understanding of socio-economic, cultural and environmental contexts is essential to designing effective interventions. Women face unique constraints in accessing training or other agricultural resources, making adapting interventions to their needs crucial. To

design better interventions, WCF included a situational analysis tool featured in WCF's gender toolbox. This tool will allow MGPs to rapidly and effectively understand the contextual challenges women face in order to design gender-sensitive interventions.

d. Engaging men as partners

WCF found that engaging men in women's empowerment is effective in addressing many of the constraints faced by women. For example, with men's support and involvement, women can more easily shoulder the heavy domestic workload that often impedes their participation in public life. However, continuous sensitization is needed to overcome the stigma faced by men who help women in this way.

What modifications, if any, do you anticipate making to your program as a result of what you are learning?

WCF is prioritizing learning and adaptation within CLP implementation, and the project is constantly adapting to the needs of MGPs in order to effectively carry out program goals. As a first step, WCF worked with MGPs to assess their current gender capacities, and identify the support needed to improve gender outreach. Learning from this experience, WCF found it necessary to modify its strategy in conducting individual assessments, and provide additional individualized support. WCF is currently leveraging the outcomes of the assessment for program design.

WCF is further building on successes in program activities and adapting implementation strategies accordingly. Quarterly country team meetings provide opportunities for matching grant partners and WCF to come together and share their experiences and learnings within CLP, as for example the importance of creating an enabling environment for effective results described in the preceding section. These forums allow WCF to take full advantage of the rich learning opportunities presented by matching grant partners' diverse field activities, and to tailor program activities accordingly. Regular M&E activities also present learning opportunities, providing feedback on successes and challenges of program implementation as well as informing CLP evaluation needs for effective learning.

As described in the program summary section, due to numerous reasons, the implementation of training activities has been delayed. Over the course of 2015, WCF worked with matching grant partners to continue to improve their capacities and develop their strategies for gender outreach. They have all developed work plans to scale up training activities for 2016.

What are best practices you would recommend to others engaged in this work based upon your experience working on these issues?

Ensuring local buy-in from key stakeholders in the community is key to program success. Though stakeholders may not be directly targeted as beneficiaries, their influence over the community can work in favor of (or against) the projects. This is particularly important for gender-related activities, where community leaders (elders, chiefs, religious leaders), must be engaged as allies and supporters for program success.

WCF recommends that implementing partners carry out a participatory gender situational analysis where possible to avoid unexpected outcomes when working on gender issues. A gender situational analysis is a study of the local context for project staff to gain insight on the local gender dynamics that could influence the project outcomes. This recommendation follows the lesson learned on fully understanding the context within which gender interventions take place. In 2013, for instance, WCF piloted a situational analysis tool in the communities of Abengourou and Amelikia in Côte d'Ivoire to identify factors affecting girls' and boys' primary and vocational school attendance. WCF leveraged the information to develop intervention strategies that addressed these constraints in an adapted manner.

Using innovative approaches to address development issues for women can have great payoffs. The case of the industry support of the VSLA to improve access to finance for women demonstrates the impact that innovation can have in bringing livelihood improvements.

Having solid M&E structures in place that capture short term, medium term and long term impact is important for keeping track of project progress. WCF uses a combination of approaches to M&E in order to capture details from different angles. WCF relies on field monitoring visits in which discussion sessions are held with project benefits matching grant staff to review project results, semi-annual reports which are provided by matching grant partners and the progress of the projects through surveys.