EMPOWERING WOMEN COCOA FARMERS IN WEST AFRICA

An industry experience in women’s empowerment through public private partnerships
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Acknowledgement

*If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. African Proverb*

We will like to thank all Cocoa Livelihood Programme members and the Walmart Foundation for their collective commitment to promote women’s economic empowerment within the cocoa sector in West Africa.
Executive Summary

The Cocoa Livelihoods Program is a ten-year (2009-2019) program working to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers in Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria. Supported with funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the program uses a matching grant mechanism to work with industry members in driving innovations that improve farmer livelihoods. Under CLP Phase II (2014-2019), WCF partnered with several company members to meet the following program objectives:

- Increase farm-level cocoa productivity to 1,000 kg/ha by providing farmers with production training, farm management training, cocoa inputs (fertilizers and agrochemicals), including credit to purchase the inputs, and certified planting material;
- Improve service delivery efficiency to farmers to promote long-term productivity gains, with a focus on farm rehabilitation; and
- Improve farmer resiliency through food crop production training and inputs.

In early 2014, CLP II began leveraging its capacity building efforts to expand outreach to women farmers in the sector, through a 1.4 million USD grant provided by the Walmart Foundation. WCF received the grant as an opportunity to leverage CLP’s capacity building activities to benefit more women, by training 70,000 farmers (50,000 women) and increasing the incomes of 14,500 farmers (10,000 women). The main goals of the Walmart Foundation grant included:

- Increased Farmer Training and Outreach with a Focus on Women;
- Increased Cocoa Productivity on Farms; and
- More Prosperous and Food Secure Households.

This report outlines the implementation processes and results of the grant received from the Walmart Foundation to meet the above objectives and promote women’s economic empowerment in the cocoa sector of West Africa.

Implementation Strategies

Leaning on previous gender analysis studies conducted under CLP I, the program initiated a series of gender capacity assessments of all its matching grant partners. The assessments provided insight on partners’ current capacities in gender programming and guided the formulation of appropriate strategies needed to engage the industry on women’s empowerment issues. This led to the adoption of a strategy focusing on three entry points and a step wise process for its implementation. The entry points and step wise approach included:

a) Entry points:

- Interventions directly targeting CLP MGP sustainability teams;
- Those targeting cooperatives; and
- Interventions targeting communities/women groups.

b) Stepwise process:

- Gender capacity assessment
- Gender workplan development
- Curriculum development
- Toolkits development
- Capacity Building
- M&E & Knowledge Sharing
Activities and Achievements

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

The program focused on integrating gender within the sustainability initiatives of program partners to improve women’s access to productivity enhancing opportunities, with an emphasis on growing female capacities as leaders and trainers. The output target set for this activity consisted of training 140 (100 – male, 40 – female) trainers during the grant cycle. At the close of the program, a total of 3,394 (2,278-male, 1,116 – female) trainers were trained. The program achieved these results by training project stakeholders and farmers on a range of skills – gender awareness, advocacy, extension, and entrepreneurship, mentoring, among others.

Goal 2: Increase cocoa productivity on farms

The program sought to improve outreach to 15,000 women farmers across the four countries with cocoa GAP trainings. At the close of the grant cycle, the it exceeded this target by training a total of 43,122 female farmers. The program applied on innovative approaches ranging from using digital video extension tools, working with female grassroots leaders with extension competencies, adjusting time and location settings for training events and engaging with government extension agencies to ensure wider coverage and sustainability.

Goal 3: More prosperous and food secure households

Under this goal, the program focused on improving food security and the entrepreneurial capabilities of farmers. Female and male farmers received training in food crop GAPs and farm management skills to improve food security and household incomes. At close, the program had trained 35,826 farmers in food crop GAP, including 17,015 (10,805 male and 6,210 female) farmers trained in 2016 alone. This exceeded the project target of 25,000 farmers (15,000 male and 10,000 female). The program achieved these results by assisting women farmers and women’s associations with entrepreneurial skills and food crop GAP training.

Program Impact:

On a whole, some of the ways in which the program benefitted farmers among others included:

- Women’s capacities developed in leadership and decision making;
- Female extension resources in cocoa communities increased;
- Additional livelihood opportunities for women created to spur the development of commercial activities around post-harvest practices;
- Farmers benefitted from better farming practices to promote higher cocoa yields and increased income; and
- Increased number of men engaged as male gender advocates for their communities.

Key Success Contributors and Challenges

Success contributors:

Overall, the main success contributor to this program resided in the commitment to applying innovative models to gender programming. Some of these approaches ranged from applying peer to peer grassroots training mechanisms and investing in gender awareness raising through workshops and other forms of capacity development. The program introduced women farmers to new cocoa plant propagation techniques such as grafting as an income generation activity while also serving as an opportunity to increase female labour force in core cocoa productivity.
activities. It also focused on creating opportunities for women to generate income through diversification and additional livelihood interventions in the sector.

**Challenges:**

Some of the challenges experienced among others included:

- Absence of cocoa sector policies
- Barriers to land access for women farmers
- Low female representation in cooperatives
- Mergers and acquisition among company partners - constant mergers and acquisitions affected field activities due to associated management and coordination challenges
- Limited cooperative resources to follow through on gender action plans

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

To measure progress the program employed different approaches ranging from conducting baseline studies, midterm evaluations, regional survey and other in country studies. The results of these studies enabled the program to make necessary adjustments and stay on track for the achievement of its objectives.

**Recommendations and Lessons Learned**

Based on the project learnings, the program derived the following recommendations:

1) **Inclusive mechanisms:** Working with inclusive strategies that engage women groups, cooperatives and community leaders for project interventions generate better and more sustainable results;

2) **Capacity building:** Significant investment in capacity building needs to be at the core of program efforts for successful interventions targeting women;

3) **Segmentation:** Program efforts need to apply a segmentation approach, easily adaptable to the differences existing in stakeholder needs, and that can reflect the diverse categories of beneficiaries at the different levels of the value chain;

4) **Internal resource mobilisation:** Project investments on approaches that favour internal resource mobilisations needs to be scaled for more sustainable results to be reached for women;

5) **Engaging men:** Investing on interventions that work with male farmers as change agents for women’s empowerment is effective in bringing long-term transformation. Getting the buy-in of men, especially the spouses of beneficiaries is an important element to consider; and

6) **Situational analysis:** Conducting a situational analysis to guide the process of results monitoring as well as conducting periodic assessments to review progress on outcomes are necessary elements for program success.
Introduction

Cocoa Livelihood Program and Walmart Foundation

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.

CLP objectives:

- Increase farm-level cocoa productivity to 1,000 kg/ha by providing farmers with production training, farm management training, cocoa inputs (fertilizers and agrochemicals), including credit to purchase the inputs, and certified planting material;
- Improve service delivery efficiency to farmers to promote long-term productivity gains, with a focus on farm rehabilitation; and
- Improve farmer resiliency through food crop production training and inputs.

WCF recognizes the need to increase outreach to women cocoa farmers in West Africa to improve farming productivity, increase women’s economic empowerment, and improve the well-being of cocoa farming households. To do this, WCF and its public and private partners entered a program with the Walmart Foundation to train approximately 70,000 cocoa farmers (50,000 women, 20,000 men) in Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire (also known as Ivory Coast), Ghana, and Nigeria over three years (2014-2016) under the WCF Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Matching Grant Partner (MGP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>ECOM Agrotrade Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Barry Callebaut; Cargill; ECOM Agrotrade Limited; Mars, Inc; Nestlé &amp; Olam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Mondelēz; The Hershey Co.; Transmar, Touton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Armajaro (now ECOM Agrotrade Limited)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background - The WCF Gender Mainstreaming Context

In 2014, WCF received a 1.4 million USD grant from the Walmart Foundation to support gender outreach within the cocoa sector, by leveraging the capacity building efforts of the Cocoa Livelihoods Program. Promoting gender equity notions within the value chain was considered an important step to achieving higher productivity and better impact in sustainability initiatives. It would lead to better economic opportunities and higher incomes, and ultimately contribute to achieving better development outcomes. Data for instance from the Sustainable Tree Crop Program indicated that yields per ha of women on average were 61 kg less than that of male farmers. Closing that gender-based yield gap would generate an additional 30,000 MT of cocoa beans (World Bank, 2012).

1 The virtuous cycle – USAID online presentation on gender and value chains
The inception of this grant was preceded by a series of studies conducted by WCF\(^3\) to review sector interventions efforts directly targeting and benefiting women farmers. The studies revealed the following trends in women’s participation in cocoa farming for all four CLP countries:

- Women are in the minority in cocoa farming;
- Lower educational attainment affected their prospects for farming success. Female cocoa farmers were more likely never to have attended school at all and less likely to have attended secondary school;
- Women managed smaller plots of land, therefore produced less cocoa (and lower yields), had higher costs to maintain their farms due to labour requirements, and earned significantly less than men;\(^4\)
- Inheritance and the laws and traditions governing it may be important factors affecting women’s access to farming. The fact that 15-45 percent of female cocoa farmers (in the study sample) were widowed (compared to 2-3 percent of male farmers), which suggests that the death of a spouse may be an important mechanism through which women come to own their farms;
- The concentration of female cocoa farmers in certain language groups and geographies suggests that culture-specific traditions of inheritance may be important in determining how women own farms; and
- Household demands may limit female farmers’ use of their own labour and increase their reliance on hired labour.

The Walmart Foundation grant will eventually be used to leverage CLP capacity building efforts to improve outreach to female cocoa farmers, as a means of responding to some of the issues identified above. The grant has three main goals, four output areas and one main outcome mentioned below.

\(^2\) Ibid 1
\(^3\) Studies conducted by Mathematica in 2011 on Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan for the Cocoa Livelihoods Program
\(^4\) Gender in the cocoa sector in West Africa, through the lens of the Cocoa Livelihood Program (KIT)
Walmart Foundation Grant Goals

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

Gender inequality is a significant challenge within the cocoa sector, the production of cocoa being commonly referred to as a “man’s business”. For some activities that provide training and resources for farmers for instance, women are excluded. This level of exclusion not only adversely impacts gender equality within the sector, but equally affects the productivity and the overall well-being of cocoa households.

With the support of the Walmart Foundation, WCF decided to expand outreach to women farmers by training them with livelihood improvement skills. WCF would work with women to increase cocoa and food crop production, provide them with support in generating more income, thereby contributing to greater economic empowerment. Given that women are typically responsible for the well-being of the household, our hypothesis was that, greater income generation for women would improve the welfare of entire cocoa farming families. Through the program, the number of women leaders would also be increased, helping them to become role models within their households and cocoa farming communities. Women would be supported in taking up leadership roles in groups and cooperatives while encouraging the formation of women-only groups.

**Goal 2: Increased 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 entrepreneurship as catalysts for empowerment. Funding from the Walmart Foundation would help 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 would 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. WCF working with the Walmart Foundation funding would promote household resilience by providing training to increase food crop production, allowing farmers to complement their cocoa incomes and increase the amount of nutritious food available for household consumption. This would be complimented with 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.
### Walmart Output and Outcome Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Output / Outcome Statement</th>
<th>Target / Measurement</th>
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</table>
| **Goal 1: Increased Farmer Training and Outreach with a Focus on Women** | Training of trainers | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 100  
Female: 40  
Total: 140 |
| **Goal 2: Increased Cocoa Productivity on Farms** | Number of farmers trained in cocoa Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 0  
Female: 15,000  
Total: 15,000 |
| **Goal 3: More prosperous and food secure households** | Number of farmers trained in food crops GAP | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 15,000  
Female: 10,000  
Total: 25,000 |
| **Total programme outcome** | Increase in income from cocoa and non-cocoa activities | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 4,500  
Female: 10,000  
Total: 14,500 |

### Program Implementation Strategies

WCF organised its implementation strategy around entry point which included:

a) Interventions directly targeting CLP MGP sustainability teams;

b) Those targeting cooperatives; and

c) Interventions targeting communities/women groups.

WCF developed a step-wise implementation approach for each of the levels above to improve outreach to women. This consisted in crafting out a strategy to support MGPs in leveraging CLP capacity building activities to meet the Walmart Foundation grant goals. The strategy involved the following steps:

#### Organisational Gender Capacity Assessments

WCF conducted capacity assessments in the first year of implementation to identify how each MGP fared with respect to their ability to take on gender programming. The assessments enabled WCF to start and bring discussions on gender integration with partners at the forefront. It equally enabled WCF to analyse what were some of the gender related programming issues within the different companies in a more methodical way which facilitated the next step of developing MGP gender work plans.

#### Gender workplan development

WCF worked with MGPs to develop individual company gender workplans to serve as a road map for activity implementation. The workplans also provided a clear framework for tracking and monitoring program results.
**Curriculum and resource development**

WCF developed learning resources and curricula to respond to the training needs identified through the gender capacity assessments. The program developed training modules and manuals to address a range of concerns raised by MGPs related to their capacity to undertake gender programming. The modules also addressed the capacity development needs at each of the intervention levels mentioned above: MGP, cooperative, and community. Modules included:

- General gender awareness notions;
- Integrating gender in cooperative activities;
- Women and leadership within coops;
- Entrepreneurship for small-scale income generating activities; and
- A guide to raising gender awareness within farmer field schools.

The range of training sessions provided under the grant addressed more subjects than those mentioned here. Some of the capacity building interventions were sourced to third party service providers. These service providers developed the modules as part of their training engagement to address the farmer skills gaps identified under the programme.

**Gender Toolbox development**

WCF and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) developed a series of tools for integrating gender into MGP interventions, including:
- Gender capacity self-assessment tool;
- Gender situational analysis tool;
- Gender sensitive data collection & management tool;
- Women in cooperatives leadership assessment tool;
- School garden tool; and
- Food crop tool.

In 2015, WCF organized a series of workshops and one-on-one consultations with the MGPs to train them in the use of the tools. Following feedback from MGPs, the project revised the food crop toolkit in 2016 to include a Savings and Loans component. WCF continues to consult with service providers and MGPs to pilot the revised food crop tool in the field. Once the revised tool is piloted, the results will inform future food crop interventions that will be adopted by WCF as its strategy going forward to expanding diversification outreach to female farmers. The other tools are available online at www.genderandcocoalivelihoods.org.

**Capacity building**

WCF organized several workshops to support the achievement of the goals and provided technical guidance to MGPs in conducting other workshops with farmers. Workshops targeted MGPs, members of cooperatives, and community members, including women groups, village leaders, and other community stakeholders. This segmented approach was essential given that each target category had different levels of responsibilities with respect to gender programming, different knowledge levels or altogether different experience with gender issues. The activities undertaken under this step will be explained in greater detail below.

**M&E, knowledge sharing, and learning**

WCF also pursued a consistent approach toward monitoring and evaluation to help measure progress towards results. This equally enabled the programme to capture learnings to apply for programme improvements. Periodic field visits, evaluations, reporting, and knowledge sharing and learning events constituted the key elements of this component.

**Programme Activities and Achievements**

The program leveraged CLP II capacity building interventions to design activities that increased outreach to women.

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

The program focused on mainstreaming gender equity within the sector by building the capabilities of project actors to promote outreach to women farmers. Women farmers face a unique blend of agricultural and social constraints that limit their access to productivity-enhancing opportunities, such as training and entrepreneurship programs. These constraints include:

- Cultural norms that affect the degree of control they can exercise over capital assets, e.g. land;
- Domestic workloads that affect the time women can dedicate to productive activities; and
- Gender barriers that limit their opportunities to contribute to decision-making and leadership.
One strategy to increase opportunities for women was to promote access to more leadership roles, such as cooperative leaders and farmer trainers. Serving in these roles allow women a greater voice in decision making, promotes discussion on gender issues (e.g. land tenure), and encourages female participation in program activities. The output target set for this activity consisted of training 140 (100 – male, 40 – female) trainers during the grant cycle. At the close of the program, a total of 3,394 (2,278-male, 1,116 – female) trainers were trained. The program achieved these results by leveraging the capacity building efforts of CLP II in training project stakeholders on a range of skills – gender awareness, advocacy, extension, and entrepreneurship, among others. The project also focused on the development of knowledge resources to reinforce the program’s impact. Overall, the program used a combination of strategies in the three-year grant period as seen below.

**Conduct gender organizational capacity assessments and work plan development**

Gender organizational capacity assessments helped situate where each MGP was with respect to their ability to improve outreach to female farmers. This involved reviewing the different organizational structures and policies of each MGP and organizing two workshops to train MGPs on the capacity assessment process. Interviews were also conducted to assess the levels of gender awareness among the staff of these organizations. The program analysed the collected information for gaps. The result showed that most MGPs had very little exposure to gender programming. From these results, the program developed a road map for gender implementation with each MGP.

Individual company workplans served as the road map for the implementation of gender interventions, providing a clear framework for tracking and monitoring program results. Under the program, gender workplans were discussed and developed and then updated on a yearly basis with MGPs. The workplan development process conversely shaped WCF’s gender support strategy to MGPs, and continues to define how WCF addresses gender concerns within the sector today, including through its CocoaAction strategy.
Capacity building

WCF focused primarily on the training of trainers (ToT) and leadership training to build the gender capacities of partners. To conduct the trainings, the program used segmentation approach to building capacities as follows:

- Capacity development targeting MGPs and associated government field agents;
- Capacity building targeting cooperatives; and
- Capacity building targeting communities and women groups.

The ToTs often addressed key program areas such as, extension support in cocoa and food crop GAP, gender awareness, entrepreneurship and farm management. In some cases, the ToTs addressed only one of the above themes, while others addressed all of them.

Capacity development targeting MGPs and associated government field agents

Under this element, the program focused on building MGP internal staff capacities on gender programming. The program trained MGP staff on gender equity strategies to stimulate a positive change in staff attitudes and facilitate the transfer of these competencies into their program interventions. In previous years, 183 MGP staff benefitted, and 2016 saw 70 additional MGP staff trained, bringing the total number of trained resources with gender programming capabilities to 253 by the end of the program. Those targeted for training included members of MGPs sustainability teams and their associated government field agents. These staff have the responsibility for designing and implementing community development interventions with a direct impact on women farmers. The program emphasized gender awareness building and mainstreaming in program initiatives to avoid pitfalls that may have affected women’s ability to benefit from interventions. Core modules involved basic notions on gender, its integration into community development projects, and conducting basic gender analysis.

Capacity building for cocoa cooperatives

The program built the capacities of cooperative leaders on integrating gender within cooperative activities and formulating gender work plans to guide implementation. Advancing gender equity within cooperative structures influences the way communities perceive and embrace women’s empowerment. The objective of these trainings offered by the program consisted of: 1) Promoting gender representation in cooperative leadership structures; 2) Leveraging cooperatives for productivity interventions targeting female farmers; and 3) Introducing gender work plans to help track cooperative progress on implementation. For instance, the gender workplans supported the cooperatives to:

- Identify and put in place Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely (SMART) objectives to achieve their gender goals;
- Show commitment to improving gender outreach; and
- Provide simple monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms to monitor progress.

Targeted cooperative leaders included members of the cooperative board of directors, committee members and management staff. At the close of the program, WCF directly trained 205 cooperative leaders in Côte d’Ivoire. The program used a different approach for Nigeria, Ghana, and Cameroon, that focused mostly on building the capacities of women and community leaders. The lack of gender balance in cooperative structures was more evident in Côte d’Ivoire than in other program countries, which informed the choice of the approach.
Capacity building targeting communities and women leaders

Under this segment, program interventions built the capacities of women leaders to serve as gender advocates within their communities, cooperatives while dispensing basic extension training to other female farmers. The program trained over 1,000 women leaders to promote peer-to-peer training. These women received training to mentor younger women, support community extension efforts and promote gender awareness within their communities. In some cocoa growing areas, cultural norms restrict female association with non-family, male cooperative members. The communities in these areas tend to exclude female farmers from most extension services that are available unless female extension agents are present. Additionally, communities limit female decision-making opportunities in many areas, cooperatives as well as in the home. Grooming female leaders with a range of skills to advocate for gender equity while supporting extension delivery enabled the program to expand agricultural and entrepreneurship competences to many female farmers.

The program found for instance, that women can much more effectively reach fellow female farmers with extension messages and training. WEV are selected female leaders that MGPs train to provide a host of services to other women in their communities such as gender awareness building, basic extension services in cocoa and food crops, mentoring and entrepreneurship.

Resource development and knowledge sharing and collaboration

Gender toolkits

Recognizing the need to develop tools and resources for gender sensitive work in the sector, WCF and Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) developed a series of tools for integrating gender in MGP interventions. The tools developed include:

- Gender capacity self-assessment tool;
- Gender situational analysis tool;
- Gender sensitive data collection & management tool;
- Women in cooperatives leadership assessment tool;
- School garden tool; and
- Food crop tool.

In 2015, the PMU organized a series of workshops and one-on-one consultations with the MGPs to train them in the use of the tools. Following feedback from MGPs, the project revised the food crop toolkit in 2016 to include a Savings and Loans component. WCF continues to consult with service providers and MGPs to test the revised tool in the field. Once the tool is piloted, the results will inform future food crop interventions that will be adopted by WCF post Walmart Foundation grant. The other tools are available online at www.gendercocoalivelihoods.org.

Gender sensitization manual and image box

To facilitate training on gender awareness, WCF developed a manual to guide field agents and lead farmers in introducing gender notions in FFS. The manual is a step by step guide for using participatory techniques in addressing culturally sensitive issues in gender relations that affect women's empowerment. Using contextually adaptable examples, the guide focuses on engaging men in the process of lifting gender barriers and creating opportunities for women to thrive economically and socially. The importance of gender equity for household poverty alleviation is referenced through the examples used in the guide. Currently, the manual is the only existing
guide within the sector that facilitates gender advocacy to non-literate farmer groups. MGPs are using this for their farmer facing field interventions.

**Strategic collaborations and knowledge sharing**

Throughout the three-year grant cycle, WCF built strategic partnerships with other development partners to share knowledge, build expertise and promote women’s empowerment in line with the work carried out through this grant. Some of these collaborations include:

- Partnerships with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the training on cocoa GAP of leaders of the Ivorian federation of women cocoa producers;
- Partnerships with GIZ and the Ivorian national extension office to train 3,000 women cocoa producers on business skills and cocoa GAP; and

These partnerships and collaborations cut across a range of public, NGO, and private sector partners to leverage the expertise that each could bring to the process of mainstreaming gender equity in the sector.

In early 2017, WCF organized a global conference in Accra, Ghana to review the gains made in gender inclusion within the sector, identify gaps, and discuss potential solutions. The conference brought together global industry stakeholders and development experts to brainstorm on priority areas for women’s empowerment interventions over the next few years. For example, land tenure and financial inclusion emerged as the two hot-button issues. WCF is using the conference feedback as a guide for formulating its strategy for promoting women’s empowerment in the future.

**Goal 2: Increase cocoa productivity on farms**

Due to high domestic workloads, limited access to land, limited membership in cooperatives, and lack of literacy, women are often excluded from benefiting from training interventions. The program focused on improving outreach to women farmers with training on cocoa GAP (weeding, pruning, pest and disease management, good harvest management, and share management).

The program set an ambitious goal to train 15,000 female farmers in cocoa GAP across the four countries using several strategies. WCF greatly exceeded this target and trained a total of 43,122 female farmers including 18,529 female farmers trained in 2016 alone. The success of surpassing the project target can be attributed to a host of innovative approaches including:

**Working with government extension agents**

The program improved the existing capacities of government extension agencies to expand outreach to women, often in partnership with MGPs. With a national geographic coverage, government agents had installations in the different intervention zones on which the program could build. Government extension staff used their knowledge of the different farmer contexts, e.g. local cultural norms, to improve the transfer and scale of GAP training. The government has general oversight in driving national extension reform. By engaging the government, the program transferred key competencies and contributed to shaping national extension delivery mechanisms that promote outreach to women.
Working with female leaders

The program, through its MGPs promoted the use of peer-to-peer trainers to facilitate greater access by women to extension services, such as the WEV model mentioned above. By being present in the communities, WEV for instanced supported in facilitating women’s access to GAP training. MGPs in Ghana and Nigeria have particularly driven the use of this approach for building women’s leadership skills while increasing access to women for extension services.

In Cameroon, WCF trained women farmers on grafting techniques in early 2017. Grafting is a method of propagating cocoa trees through cuttings. The process involves cutting a branch from a stem juncture from a tree that is being propagated. When the branch is cut, this leave a bud at the juncture, and the bud is also removed to leave a “hole” on the propagated tree. A branch from another cocoa tree (of a healthier tree variety) is then cut and affixed in the “bud hole” of the propagated tree. Because this branch is of a healthier cocoa specimen, it causes the propagated tree to now produce healthier cocoa from the grafted specimen. The advantage of this procedure is that, in addition to having healthier cocoa yields, all the trees that have been grafted from the same source will also contain the same genetic material making it easy for the farmers to manage their cocoa farms by applying homogenous cultivation mechanisms. The women farmers acquired grafting techniques and served as master grafters to assist other farmers in yield improvement and farm renovation. This skill enhancement created an opportunity for the women to provide paid grafting services to their communities and generate income in the process.

Adjusting time and location of training

As is the case with most farms, most cocoa demonstration plots used for FFS lessons are in the peripheries of villages. Thus, field staff and farmers usually scheduled FFS lessons to happen during the early morning to accommodate the farming schedules for the day. However, with the high domestic workload, this presented significant difficulties for women to attend FFS in these locations and within the early morning hours. Through the gender sensitization interventions of the program and using an approach that focused on men as partners in transformation, the project encouraged cooperatives to organize FFS on demonstration plots closer to the village. It equally encouraged the creation of women only FFS with meeting schedules more adapted to the realities of women farmers. The program raised awareness on the importance of associating women in the scheduling process to ensure that FFS sessions were held at periods of the day when women had the most freedom to attend.

Use of digital technology to disseminate training to women

WCF partnered with its technical partner and sub grantee Digital Green to integrate training videos and methodologies specifically adapted to the needs and interests of women. Digital Green is an international development organization that uses an innovative digital platform for community engagement to improve lives of rural communities across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. WCF through the grant partnered with Digital Green to leverage their capabilities in using video production for extension messaging and social issues awareness raising. In Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, WCF, in collaboration with them, trained MGPs on producing and disseminating extension videos. After the training, two MGPs produced individual videos on specific cocoa and food crop GAP. The project uses these videos to supplement FFS training. Video training and flexible training schedules benefit female farmers who, because of heavy domestic workloads, face challenges in attending FFS trainings. Video dissemination sessions for farmers under the Digital Green approach are organised and led by
extension staff or lead farmers, who play the role of facilitators, receiving and responding to questions regarding the GAP process and video content.

Goal 3: More prosperous and food secure households

WCF focused on providing training to farmers in food crop GAP and farm management training to improve food security and household income. Communities that focus primarily on cash crop production often have a high rate of malnutrition because of limited opportunities for food crop production. The aim of this goal was to provide women and men farmers with the technical skills to produce more food crops and more effectively manage a farm as a business to generate greater income.

Assisting women's associations

Strengthening women’s groups to address food security and women’s economic empowerment remained at the core of MGP’s strategies to reach program goals. By combining food crop GAP with entrepreneurship training, the program supported small-scale business creation and increased the number of women accessing credit through VSLAs. For instance, in Côte d’Ivoire, a CLP MGP supported 13 women groups (12% male membership) with a focus on income generation through food crops. These groups received training on food crop GAP, entrepreneurship and VSLA operating mechanisms to auto-generate the funds to invest in their businesses. To review the impact of these interventions, KIT (WCF technical partner and sub-grantee) in collaboration with WCF, worked with the MGP to organize an assessment on the impact of the VSLAs among group members. The results of the assessment indicated that women farmers value VSLAs the most when conducted in combination with an income generating activity. The results of the study will help to inform the piloting process of the WCF food crop tool, to make VSLAs a more efficient and sustainable component in food crop related initiatives targeting women’s groups.
**Training on food crop productivity**

At close, the program had trained 35,826 farmers in food crop GAP, including 17,015 (10,805 male and 6,210 female) farmers trained in 2016 alone. This exceeded the project target of 25,000 farmers (15,000 male and 10,000 female).

WCF, in collaboration with KIT, trained field staff of the Women in Agriculture Department (WIAD) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoFA) in Ghana on improved program delivery mechanisms for women focused projects. WIAD leads field interventions for women farmers with additional livelihood services around food crops production and processing. Following the KIT training, WIAD conducted workshops to train one hundred female farmers on additional livelihoods. The additional livelihoods approach develops women’s capacities to build businesses out of locally conserved and transformed crops. The participants of the workshops received training on different processes for drying and transforming cassava into flour among other products. Participants can use this flour to prepare a range of local delicacies to help with income generation. To facilitate the transformation of the local crops, the program worked with WIAD to install four solar dryers in four different communities in Ghana. The food dryers would be used to improve women’s food preservation efforts, create new avenues for income generation using conserved products, improve food availability during lean seasons and reduce food waste.

**Training women in farm management / entrepreneurship skills**

Since 2016, WCF facilitated the training of approximately 10,000 out of a target of 25,000 female farmers in farm management and entrepreneurship. Farm management trainings are known to assist farmers in making more informed investments to improve productivity. Initial integration of farm management training was delayed because MGPs wanted to ensure that farmers were adopting cocoa GAP practices before adding on new farm management training modules. Thus, the farm management training was not fully integrated until the last two years of the program. The Walmart Foundation grant played a considerable role in integrating farm management training into the training strategies provided to farmers through the company programs. In the coming months and years, we anticipate that companies will provide more farmers with this training. Over the period of this grant, the program also observed that the current manual being used to provide farm management training greatly benefitted farmers with a given level of literacy capabilities. However, given that women farmers constitute the majority within the non-literate farmer category, this raised significant concerns about women’s exclusion from the benefits of the farm management trainings. Therefore, in the next year and with separate funding, WCF in collaboration with other sector stakeholders and government extension services, will work towards developing a more simplified and inclusive version of an entrepreneurship manual to promote greater outreach to female farmers.

WCF also introduced the Gender Action Learning for Sustainability (GALS) approach to program partners, because of its adaptability to non-literate audiences. The GALS methodology helps participants develop their vision, assess opportunities, and identify steps to reach their objectives. In February 2017, WCF, in collaboration with the Fair Labor Association (FLA), organized two workshops to train MGPs and farmers in the GALS methodology in Côte d’Ivoire. Eighteen staff received training, and their gender activity planning for 2017 will improve outreach to female farmers by being aligned with this methodology. The intention is for MGPs to internally train other farm facing personnel to better engage non-literate farmers (male and female).
The GALS workshop also trained 97 farmers (90% women, 10% men) on building business plans/projects using the methodology. Participants learned to develop their own entrepreneurial vision using drawings. They mapped out their vision journey, analysed the strengths, weaknesses of their plans, and potential challenges using drawings. The workshop encouraged participants to identify solutions by leaning on their own capacities first before those that can be offered by their communities/households.

**Gender Action Learning System (GALS) Workshops**

Following the GALS workshops in the region of Abengourou, Côte d’Ivoire, farmer participants immediately formed a women’s group for cultivating and selling cassava using the GALS approach. The strength of the GALS methodology is derived from the fact that drawings are used to describe a user’s vision, making it easy for non-literate audiences to develop their own visions. Another strength of the approach is in its ability to empower users to analyze their plans and identify solutions that are internal/local. In applying the methodology, the women were therefore constrained to limit external dependency for the development of their businesses and focus on resources that can be internally mobilized, making them empowered as the main drivers of their own change. Finally, one enthusiastic participant commented, “this is the first time in my life to ever hold a pen.” For the mainly non-literate participants, being able to hold a pen for the first time was a significant achievement.
Programme Impact and Company Examples

Growing male gender advocates and increasing access to land for women in cocoa communities - WCF observed that cooperatives and communities benefiting from program interventions on gender awareness showed a higher willingness to support women to access land. In some cases, village heads who participated in these trainings led the efforts.

**Working with village chiefs on gender**

Mrs. Nobie Mariam, a female farmer from the village of Zongodougou, Côte d’Ivoire, wanted to cultivate food crops. In Zongodougou, like many cocoa growing areas, most community land is dedicated to cocoa production, often reducing land available for other crops. In addition, cultural norms prevent women from easily accessing land. Unable to get land from their spouses, Mrs. Nobie decided to seek the help of their village chief.

An MGP that sources cocoa from Zongodougou collaborated with WCF to provide gender awareness training to farmers. On the invitation of the MGP, Mr. Rouamba, Madi, the village chief of Zongodougou, attended one of the gender awareness workshops. At the close of the event, he left determined to promote change in his community by becoming a gender advocate. Back home in Zongodougou, using arguments gained from the workshop, Mr. Rouamba convinced the men of his community to provide their spouses with the land they requested. Through his efforts, Mrs. Nobie and her groupmates received farm land and are now cultivating food crops. The crops cultivated will provide food security and additional income for their households.

Building women’s capacities in leadership and decision making - While many women contribute to the welfare of their families, their role in contributing to decision-making within their homes and communities is less established. WCF through its partners addressed this by conducting workshops on gender and leadership for women leaders and potential leaders of cooperatives and women’s groups.

**Women Extension Volunteers (WEV) Program**

In 2011, an MGP instituted the WEV program to develop the capacity of women to become skilled leaders, gender advocates, and community change agents. Since its inception, the program has trained WEVs in many communities in Ghana with entrepreneurial skills, mentoring, gender advocacy, community mobilization, and group governance.

This is case of the Akrofi community, where following a community gender sensitization organized by the MGP, Mrs. Esther Amankwa, a 38-year-old mother signed up to become a WEV. From the program, she learned business skills, received extension training to support women in her community as well as skills in additional livelihoods. She also learned how to process cassava into garri (cassava flakes). After her training, Mrs. Amankwa became a community change agent. She now mobilizes other women, raises awareness on gender issues in her community and produces and sells garri. Her income generating activities are giving her financial autonomy while reducing the financial burden of her family during the low cocoa harvest seasons.

**Improving female extension resources in cocoa communities Cocoa Village Centres (CVC)** - Under this program, women were targeted for CVC operations to grow their involvement in cocoa production and extension services delivery, while providing gainful opportunities for revenue generation.

**Cocoa Village Centres (CVC)**

Mrs. Elise Afoue Nguessan received training on extension service delivery mechanisms for cocoa and food crop GAP, agro-inputs, as well as basic financial, accounting, and inventory skills. She now provides farmer services to those in her community and running an input shop. Being a CVC operator helped her to earn an income with which she could be financially autonomous and support her family.
Income generation and economic empowerment

The program created additional livelihood opportunities for women to develop commercial activities through post-harvest practices - WIAD, in collaboration with WCF, trained female farmers in drying and processing of staples like cassava. This not only helped communities conserve food, but it also helped women to transform food crop activities into income generating businesses.

**Investing in Additional Livelihoods**

Mrs. Agnes Mensah is a 62-year-old farmer and mother of six children from Dunkwa – Pokukrom, Ghana. Mrs. Agnes was selected by an MGP to attend the additional livelihood workshop organized by the WIAD in collaboration with WCF. During the training, she learned how to produce high quality cassava flour, and use the flour for pastry making, as a source of income generation. After the training, Mrs. Agnes enlisted the help of her daughter and immediately went to work, creating pastries from the methods learned from the workshop, to sell to other people in her village. From an initial investment of 50 cedi, Mrs. Agnes gained almost 100 cedi from the proceeds of her first pastry sales. “We decided to practice at home before training the other women in the group, and I made good spring rolls with a start-up of 50 cedi and was able to get almost 100 cedi sales. Now I don’t have to depend on my farm only. This business is very good and I will continue and even teach the other women in the group who may be interested,” Mrs. Agnes recounted. The MGP plans to continue to scale up the training to reach more women.

**Better farming practices, increase in cocoa yields and increased incomes** - Due to program interventions, farmers are reported higher cocoa yields. In an income survey conducted by the program in 2016, farmers attributed the increase in their cocoa yield to the adoption of the GAP training provided by the program MGPs. For instance, farmers in the study reported that average cocoa yield in kilogram per hectare increased in 2015 by 14.7%, 52% and 6.1% respectively for Ghana, Nigeria, and Côte d’Ivoire over that of 2014. Interestingly, the study also found women to be more motivated than men in cocoa production. The proportion of females who reported an increase in income generated from cocoa between 2014 and 2015 for Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire was 89.15%, 92.68%, and 47% respectively.

**Building decision making and leadership capacities of women** - As part of the income survey process mentioned above, WCF assessed the impact of the program in building the decision making and leadership capacities of women in intervention countries. To assess the impact, the project evaluated women’s decision making in households and over productive assets, as well as in their public participation (or voice).

Overall, the study indicated that the program had improved women’s decision making and leadership capabilities. However, there were some variances based on country context and type of decision. In Ghana, for instance, the study found that most women made decisions on issues related to minor household expenditures such as for food (64%), taking on wage employment (54%), and selling food crops to the market (60%). On all other issues, less than 16% of women felt their husbands or other males in the household were the main decision-makers. Between 14% and 36% of the female interviewed felt that decisions on some issues were made jointly with their husbands.

In Côte d’Ivoire, women tended to be the main decision makers over family planning (58%), minor household expenses related to the daily feeding (50%), joining associations/groups
(49%), start-up of a non-agricultural activity (35%). The men primarily made decisions pertaining to: purchase of inputs for farms (55%), access to inputs (51%), expenses for major household items (50%), types of crops to produce (48%), and whether to start a new cocoa farm (40%).

The study found that 65% of Ghanaian women interviewed felt “very comfortable” speaking in public to help decide on local government development issues including building infrastructure. In contrast, in Côte d’Ivoire, 39% of respondents felt “relatively comfortable” speaking in public about infrastructural development issues while 7% were not comfortable at all.

In Nigeria, 82.8% of women stated that since their participation in program trainings, the level of confidence among farmers within the communities greatly increased because they could participate in public discussions in their communities. The female respondents could contribute to decision making about public amenities and infrastructure (like small wells, roads, and water supplies). Eighty-eight (88%) of the women indicated that they now have the confidence to ensure equality in the affairs of their community. About 81% felt comfortable sharing their views publicly on issues even in the presence of their spouse. The women also demonstrated taking up leadership roles in the various groups, associations and cooperatives, as well as making significant contributions to household management.

*Land access an important element for implementing food crop GAP*

The program has improved women’s access to land. Some cooperatives began allocating plots of land to women’s groups with land usage rights, for the cultivation of food crops because of gender awareness activities. With land usage rights, women’s participation in cooperatives and training activities became easier.

*More resilient and self-sufficient farmers*

The program introduced interventions to help build farmers financial resilience and independence. The training in food crops promoted diversification and reduced dependence on cocoa income streams. Results from the income survey organized by the program indicated that farmers associated their income increases on the ability to diversify their income streams and reduce dependence on cocoa income alone. The program also used innovative mechanisms such as GALS and VSLAs to encourage internal resource mobilization among farmers. These approaches build on self-sufficiency strategies to raise seed capital and identify solutions to address business challenges. Through GALS, for instance, women groups were taught to apply the “what do you have in your hand” strategy to identify sustainable business solutions from locally available resources. Communities accumulated financial resources through a growing number of small businesses financed through VSLAs.

**Key Success Contributors and Challenges**

**Success Contributors**

*Peer-to-peer training approach* - The program attributed the peer-to-peer approach as one of the reasons it could successfully expand outreach to a high number of female farmers under objective one. This is because:

- Literacy capability wasn’t a main selection criteria for becoming a trainer under most of peer to peer approaches used, including the WEV. This enabled more women than the
project originally planned to enlist and benefit as trainers. This contributed to the program exceeding output targets in cocoa GAP than would have been the case.

- Peer trainers were most often members of the local communities where they had farms. Their presence there ensured that participating communities had extension competencies that women farmers could resort more easily; and
- Peer trainers served as role models. In taking on their responsibilities, women trainers were breaking into areas previously and traditionally reserved for men. By being a visible part of the community leadership, their experience served as a motivating factor for other women aspiring to leadership.

**Gender workshops** - Through gender awareness workshops for MGPs and leaders of farmer associations, the program was also successful in helping reach program targets by breaking down many of the barriers women face in generating income. By engaging men and community leaders, the workshops accelerated opportunities for women to generate income. In several cases, cooperatives and village leaders offered land (with land usage rights) to women’s groups for food crop cultivation after participation in the gender workshops. In cases where women received cocoa farm land from their spouses for instance, this could become the gateway for their registration into cooperative as farm owners. In Ghana, some program partners reported growth in cooperative membership for women as male members began registering a portion of their cocoa farms in their spouses’ names.

Some comments from male participants following an MGP organized gender workshop included:

- Support their wives in carrying out some daily household tasks and initiating income generating activities;
- Allow wives to voice opinions on household decisions; and
- Create affirmative action opportunities in their cooperatives’ decision-making structures for at least one woman.

**Introducing newer technologies for productivity** - Under the second objective of increased farm productivity, women learned how to adopt new approaches. In Cameroon, cocoa grafting training was particularly successful with women farmers by leveraging skills that the participants already possessed. For example, the women were considered better at doing more delicate and exacting work, a critical element for successful grafting. Targeting women with grafting techniques helped to accelerate the cocoa propagation agenda of origin governments, increase cocoa yields, and enable the trained women farmers to generate income by providing grafting services to their communities.

**Introducing additional livelihoods training to compliment food crop GAP training** - Female farmers successfully received training on food crops that involved post-harvest and entrepreneurship components under the third goal. In Ghana, training offered by WIAD on cassava cultivation, conservation and processing into flour for commercialization received very positive reviews. The success of the training rested on its capacity to enable learners to transform local crops for income generating opportunities. By working with locally available crops, financial investment is reduced, making it possible for more women to take up business endeavours.
Challenges:
In past year, a few challenges affected the roll-out of project activities. WCF met these challenges by remaining flexible in its program implementation, and to the extent possible, by adapting its gender strategy and approach to realities on the ground.

Absence of cocoa sector policies - Adoption of GAP is most effective when implemented within a strong policy environment – one that addresses a range of issues necessary to facilitate GAP adoption. The issues include easy access to planting materials, inputs, and extension services. However, the program experienced challenges stemming from a weak policy environment in implementing countries, affecting farmers access to planting materials and other inputs. For instance, in Côte d’Ivoire, in the preliminary months of implementation, the program faced challenges due to the absence of a central hub for input and planting material distribution. This affected farmers capacity to receive planting material on time, an element important for the adoption of cocoa GAP. To address this, the program worked with government and other MGPs to re-organize the distribution mechanism, having two central platforms to manage the process through planting material and fertilizer thematic groups. Since working through these hubs, the distribution process has become better and farmers are now accessing inputs and planting materials with less delays. In addition, the program collaborated with other WCF initiatives and the government for the development of an input and planting material policy, which is continuing independently following the conclusion of the program.

Barriers to land access for women farmers - One of the major barriers faced by women in cocoa producing areas is access to land – to exploit as users or as owners. The land tenure context for most West African countries often contains cultural norms which prohibitively affect women rights to own land. Even though land laws exist that guarantee equal access for all, these are often trumped by traditional laws that guide the land distribution processes. Though varying from one country to the other, the program faced significant challenges in engaging women because for the most part these women neither owned land nor could benefit from long term user rights to land. A common concern usually provided by female farmers on invitation to enlist in program activities often consisted of their inability to procure land. To address this situation, WCF partners addressed land rights issues as part of their gender sensitization programs conducted in communities. These meetings usually involved village leaders and key community decision makers who can influence change regarding land tenure arrangements. WCF partners also worked with cooperatives to support women in accessing land with user rights for food crop cultivation.

Low female representation in cooperatives - The barriers women face in accessing land limits their opportunities to join and participate in cooperative activities. In Côte d’Ivoire, on average female membership in cooperatives ranges between 4%-5%. Moreover, women also constitute a higher percentage of farmers with limited education. Even where cooperatives show interest in applying certain gender equitable activities with respect to gender representation, there are often few women members available to select from, and/or they may not meet the minimum requirements to join leadership structures. To address this issue, the program focused on associating women’s groups (made up of spouses of cooperative members) in project activities. From among these women’s groups, the project selected and trained female leaders on group dynamics and other leadership elements. The program promoted female decision-making opportunities within the communities, creating an impact in cocoa homes and cooperatives.
Mergers and acquisition among company partners - Constant mergers and acquisitions affected field activities due to associated management and coordination challenges. To enable continuity of program activities, WCF worked closely with the MGPs to ensure that all relevant staff were up to date on program activities.

Each MGP possess different levels of capacity for and understanding of gender mainstreaming - MGPs’ corporate commitments to gender issues and gender programs differed considerably, which made it a challenge to find a uniform approach. Thus, WCF worked with each company individually to build their internal capacities to implement gender activities. WCF also worked 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 in activities, and since 2016, they have been incorporating a step-wise approach to scale up their activities.

Limited cooperative resources to follow through on gender action plans - The program made extensive efforts to promote gender equity within cooperative and community structures. A lot of these activities, unfortunately remained mostly project driven. Cooperatives face significant challenges in financial and human resources capabilities to follow through on some of the commitments made in their action plans. To address this, WCF worked with partners, to develop government field staff gender programming capabilities. This helped increase the amount of human resources within communities available to support cooperatives on gender issues. Other partners instituted Community Development Committees and WEV to volunteer in their communities as gender advocates, ensuring that the gains made by the program stayed overtime.

Lack of a national standard for WCF and MGPs to mirror in the implementation of gender activities - Currently, there is no cocoa sector gender strategy in the different implementing countries. A gender strategy driven by the government creates incentives through which sector stakeholders can align. However, with the absence of a sector strategy, the program has driven gender programming in the sector for the most part. To address this, WCF collaborated with government stakeholders to put gender integration at the forefront of government policies for the sector. An initial step occurred with the participation of the Hon. Otiko Afisa Djaba, Minister of Gender, Solidarity and Family of Ghana in a WCF-organized Global Conference on Women in Cocoa. The Minister made the opening address at the conference held in Accra, Ghana in February 2017, pledging to make women’s empowerment a sector priority. Synergy building continues to occur with government institutions in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. Building from the efforts made by the program on gender programming, WCF is now planning to engage the respective governments for the development of a gender sector strategy.

Program Impact and Evaluation

Outputs & Outcome

Number of farmers trained in cocoa GAP - The goal of this output was to increase productivity in cocoa farms. The total output target for the program was 15,000 female farmers trained in cocoa GAP. The total achieved at the close of the program was 43,122 women trained. The main approaches used in achieving output targets included: working with government extension officers, using peer-to-peer trainers, and creating easy access for women to cocoa demonstration plots and farmer field schools.
Number of farmers trained in food crop GAP - The main goal for this output was the creation of more prosperous and food secure households. The total output target was 25,000 farmers (15,000 men, 10,000 women) trained in food crop GAP. At the close of the project, a total of 35,826 farmers were trained (22,027 men, 13,799 women). Men unexpectedly showed a stronger interest in food crops. Data from the income survey attributed this to an interest in having secondary income streams to cocoa.

Number of farmers trained in farm management - The main goal for this output was the creation of more prosperous and food secure households. The total output target was 30,000 farmers (5,000 men, 25,000 women) trained in farm management skills. At the close of the program, a total of 31,276 farmers were trained (21,698 men, 9,578 women). Low literacy among women affected the program’s outreach to them using industry recommended farm management modules. WCF would develop an entrepreneurship module adapted to female farmers in collaboration with other sector stakeholders.

Number of trainers trained - The main goal for this output was increased farmer training and outreach with a focus on women. The total output target was 140 trainers (100 men, 40 women) trained. At the close of the grant period, a total of 3,251 farmers were trained (2,175 men, 1,076 women). The high numbers of female trainers resulted from the program adopting a peer-to-peer training approach that engaged female community leaders.

Main outcome - to increase farmer incomes from cocoa and non-cocoa activities - The total outcome target was 14,500 farmers (4,500 men, 10,000 women) with increased incomes. At the close of the grant, the total number of farmers that experienced income increases was 10,632 (3,469 men, 7,163 women). The challenges WCF faced in reaching this outcome included the following: 1) Income increases experienced in Nigeria were adversely affected by high inflation when exchanged against the dollar, and 2) Low reach in farm management affected program efforts to stimulate income generation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Output / Outcome Statement</th>
<th>Target Measurement</th>
<th>Achieved at program close</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Goal 1: Increased Farmer Training and Outreach with a Focus on Women** | Training of trainers | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 100  
Female: 40  
Total: 140 | *Total Achieved:*  
Male: 2,175  
Female: 1,076  
Total: 3,251 |  |
| **Goal 2: Increased Cocoa Productivity on Farms** | Number of farmers trained in cocoa GAP | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 15,000  
Female: 15,000  
Total: 30,000 | *Total Achieved:*  
Male: 21,698  
Female: 9,578  
Total: 31,276 |  |
| **Goal 3: More prosperous and food secure households** | Number of farmers trained in food crop GAP | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 15,000  
Female: 10,000  
Total: 25,000 | *Total Achieved:*  
Male: 22,027  
Female: 13,799  
Total: 35,826 |  |
| **Total programme outcome** | Increase in income from cocoa and non-cocoa activities | *Total Project Target:*  
Male: 4,500  
Female: 10,000  
Total: 14,500 | *Total Increased:*  
Male: 3,469  
Female: 7,163  
Total: 10,632 |  |

WCF implemented a multi-staged monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to track both progress and impact of project activities. WCF had a dedicated M&E specialist tracking progress against the Walmart Foundation grant components. WCF relied on its M&E systems to inform its policies, provide advisory services to partners and promote a learning agenda within the organization and sector. During the Walmart Foundation grant period, the program conducted a range of studies/assessment through external and internal sources.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

**2015 – Baseline study** - WCF and partners took a baseline statistical sample from Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria as part of its Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP). 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.

**2016 – Gender Programming Midterm Evaluation** - WCF, in collaboration with KIT, conducted a mid-term evaluation to assess the level of progress made by partners by the second year of the program, with their different interventions. This study informed WCF on adjustments to be made in its gender programming for the remainder of the grant cycle.

**2016 – Cocoa derivative market assessment** - WCF conducted a market assessment in Cameroon to identify opportunities for female farmers to generate income through the transformation of cocoa by-products. The result of this study indicated that women enjoyed easy access to land for producing cocoa and other crops. However, due to the strong export value placed of cocoa beans, farmers hesitated to divert portions of their stock for small-scale transformation. The study also revealed that, while there was a significant market for certain
artisanal cocoa by-products, more efforts needed to be invested to help women improve their bargaining and entrepreneurial skills.

2016 – Women’s Income Survey - WCF also conducted a regional assessment of household income and expenditure in three countries – Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria. The study which mostly based on farmer reported data, identified the impact of WCF gender focused activities on increasing the income of farmer beneficiaries between the period 2014 to 2015. Respondents indicated that their average income increased due to taking part in WCF/Walmart Foundation grant supported activities. They attributed this mainly to the capacity building on good agricultural practices, farm management, entrepreneurship, and gender awareness. Farmers reported that average cocoa yield in kilogram per hectare increased in 2015 by 15%, 52%, and 6% respectively for Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria over that of 2014. In addition, between 2014 and 2015, many of the farmers reported increase in their income from cocoa farming. For women, the results were: Côte d’Ivoire = 47%; Ghana = 89.15%; and Nigeria = 92.68%. It is worth mentioning also that because the data collection process relied greatly on recall and on a small sample size from three intervention countries, this in a way affected the level of rigor than the program would have preferred, when interpretation, extrapolating and presenting of the results.

2017 – Savings & Loans Positive Deviance study - WCF conducted a positive deviance study of women’s groups successfully operating tontine (village savings and loans) schemes in resource constrained communities in Cameroon. The results of the study indicated that all positive deviant groups engaged in an income generating activity, either as a collective or individually. The study also established the link between successful tontine operations and members’ ability to reinvest loaned funds to some income generating activity. The results of the study will inform future scale-up activities within similar geographies to increase income access to women.

Field visits - WCF’s M&E approach integrated qualitative data collected during field visits to program sites organized with beneficiaries and member companies. These visits provided opportunities to observe progress 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 held group meetings with members of farmer cooperatives and women’s groups. This work enabled 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 provided WCF with semi-annual reports based on routine monitoring. WCF supported 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 through the program. The WCF ‘Gender Sensitive Data Collection Tool’ has been an important component of this effort.
Knowledge Transfer and Learning

Knowledge Transfer
The program transferred knowledge within the organization to shape its gender strategy. The following reflected this transfer of competencies:

1) The Walmart Foundation grant goals have now constituted four main pillars that drive gender outreach within the organization. These were:
   - Gender awareness-raising and leadership capacity development;
   - Cocoa productivity;
   - Food security; and
   - Farm management and entrepreneurship.

2) As part of its CocoaAction strategy, WCF shared an overarching objective to support cocoa farmers in reaching sustainable cocoa production through innovative public-private partnerships in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana (www.worldcocoafoundation.org/about-wcf/cocoaaction). The CocoaAction community development package includes women’s empowerment as key cross-cutting issues for the wider cocoa growing communities. Learnings acquired from the implementation of the Walmart Foundation grant shaped the performance indicators its women’s empowerment component.

3) WCF worked with governments to promote gender programming for the sector. It continues to engage them for the development of a sector strategy document building from lessons learnt over the three-year grant period, on integrating gender and promoting outreach to female farmers.

4) The technological innovations introduced through the program such as Digital Green transformed GAP trainings. WCF built on this technology to promote the use of other technologies that showed potential to improve women’s outreach, notably around financial inclusion.

Program Learnings & Recommendations
Four main lessons emerged through the implementation of the program activities:

Outreach to women farmers is more effective when conducted in an inclusive environment that engages cooperatives and community leaders in project efforts
- Women farmers typically live in communities where cultural barriers prevent them, in most cases, from owning land. To create opportunities for land access, collaborative ties need to be built with community leaders, who for the most are the custodians of community lands.
Community leaders play an influencing role in providing land to women groups to exploit for food security and income generation purposes. In some cases, however, as observed by the program, the provision of land to women groups does not automatically translate into to wealth creation. Some groups may still need operational assistance (or hand holding) especially in the early stages of the project. Cooperatives are in a good position to provide such assistance, especially in their role as the economic engines of their communities. Cooperatives assistance can range from providing crop seeds, mobilizing male members to support farm activities, providing trucks to transport produce to the market etc.

Recommendation: Work with inclusive strategies that engage women groups, cooperatives and community leaders for project interventions that require land access for the achievement of outcomes.
Building stakeholder capacities is important for ensuring program sustainability - During the grant period, program interventions with the most dividend consisted of those accompanied with strong capacity building support to stakeholders. Stakeholders included MGP staff, government institutions, farmer leads, cooperatives, and community leaders. Some good practices observed through the program included:

- **Farm-level capacity building had the most potential to bring about change.** Farm-level interventions included directly delivering training to farmers in a live environment as opposed step-down trainings. However, this is the more expensive option given the number of farmers that need capacity-building support. MGPs addressed this by using peer-to-peer training. This had the advantage of bringing the training close to farmers and increasing the number of well-trained local farmer-trainers;

- **Strengthening the capacities of government extension staff.** The extension services had a large geographic spread giving them the opportunity to intervene in almost every part of the country. MGPs did not have the same capacities. Building the capacities of government extension staff ensured that the program gains will be maintained well beyond the program cycle; and

- **Finally, strengthening the capacities of MGP staff contributed significantly to the success of the program.** By being trained, the staff ensured the mainstreaming of gender concerns within their respective sustainability programs. The staff became gender advocates in the design, implementation, and monitoring of community interventions. Their strong engagement is a reason why gender has been integrated into the cocoa value chains of the different intervention countries, especially Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

**Recommendation:** Significant investment in capacity building needs to be at the core for the success of outreach interventions targeting women. Capacity building efforts need to be segmented, to address the various stakeholder knowledge gaps at the different levels of the value chain.

**Farmers take ownership over activities for which they perceive themselves as the key drivers -** This learning particularly informed the way WCF conducted farmer outreach by promoting self-sufficiency among beneficiaries. In addition to supporting the use of VSLAs, the program promoted the use of the GALS approach. This approach helped farmers to map out the steps to achieving their vision by focusing on internally mobilized resources. Community GALS champions received training to coach farmers on their visions and identify local resources to help them achieve their goals. Through GALS, the program helped communities take ownership of their own economic futures and reduce dependences on project funds. Because of the GALS methodology, project interventions with farmers are expected to continue well beyond the project cycle.

**Recommendation:** Project investments on approaches that favour internal resource mobilisations needs to be scaled for more sustainable results in outreach for women.

**Engaging men as partners and ensuring the buy-in of local stakeholders -** WCF found that engaging men, particularly those that were the spouses of participants, in women's empowerment was effective in addressing many of the constraints women face. For example, with men's support and involvement, women could more easily shoulder the domestic workload that often impedes their participation in public life. Men also served as advocates for women in
program activities and within communities and cooperatives. However, continuous sensitization was needed to overcome the stigma faced by men who help women in this way.

**Recommendation:** Explore and invest on interventions that work with male farmers as change agents for women’s empowerment. One of the main criteria that needs to be sought in project interventions should be the buy in of men, especially the spouses of beneficiaries for faster results.

**Effective M&E mechanisms are important especially those that are built on contextual realities** - M&E mechanisms that are developed based on the contextual knowledge and contributions of programme beneficiaries and stakeholders encourage participation and increased ownership of the projects.

Prior to the launch of the Walmart programme, to gain a better perspective of the program context, WCF (with project partner, KIT) conducted a situational analysis in some program areas to gain insight into the local context and gender dynamics that could influence the project outcomes. This led to the development of the Gender Situational Analysis toolkit piloted in the communities of Abengourou and Amelekia in Côte d’Ivoire. A situational analysis helps to identify the challenges that people face and how these could be addressed, it helps to identify appropriate strategies and interventions, providing guidance on how progress can be monitored. The WCF leveraged the information gained from this pilot in determining what aspects to pursue in evaluating the program impact around the three Walmart goals.

WCF also conducted periodic assessment on the progress of the program. For instance, periodic program assessments revealed the inadequacy of FFS gender awareness sessions alone to bring about transformation in community gender relations. For some matching grantees, this led to the development of image boxes to support gender awareness-raising efforts. It also reinforced program support towards the development of cooperative gender workplans to facilitate the tracking of project progress.

More generally, WCF uses a combination of approaches to M&E to capture details from different angles for all its different initiatives. For instance, WCF relies on field monitoring visits in which discussion sessions are held with project beneficiaries and matching grant staff to review project results, content provided in semi-annual reports, and the progress of the projects through surveys.

**Recommendation:** Conduct a situational analysis to guide the process of results monitoring, conduct periodic assessments to review progress on outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

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5 World Cocoa Foundation Gender & Cocoa Livelihoods Situational Analysis toolkit: [http://genderandcocoa livelihoods.org/tool/gender-situational-analysis/#about](http://genderandcocoa livelihoods.org/tool/gender-situational-analysis/#about)