

Women & Cocoa

Women play important roles in cocoa farms and communities, but participation of women in Farmer Field Schools in Côte d'Ivoire is as low as 5 percent. Cargill, Kellogg Company and Asda commissioned a study by CARE to understand what's holding women back.



This study is based on a qualitative, participatory approach that included a desk review plus twelve focus groups and nine face-to-face interviews. The participants of the study were directly involved in identifying the problems and determining the causes of these issues, as well as formulating appropriate solutions to allow for effective gender integration in the cocoa value chain. The study targeted two geographical areas: Aboisso in the southeast and Duékoué in the west.

Top 5 Insights

1

The Perception Gap

Women's role in cocoa varies depending on whom you ask. Neither women nor men recognize women as farmers.

When we asked men in Côte d'Ivoire about women's role in cocoa, they said women help with the harvest and weeding. But when we asked women, they said they are involved in nearly all production activities. And neither men nor women take women seriously as farmers.

Roles men identify women involved in Roles women identify themselves involved in

LINING AND PEGGING		MAINTENANCE		HARVEST	
HOLE DIGGING FOR SEEDLINGS		SANITARY HARVEST		BREAKING OF PODS	
PLANTING		SHADING AND PRUNING		FERMENTATION	
WEEDING		COMPOSTING		DRYING	

Women are excluded from decision making in the community.

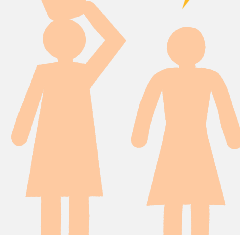
"Cocoa is a man's crop, field schools are a man's space"



"Our wives only give a little hand"



"We are wives accompanying our husbands to the field"



Women are involved in almost all cocoa farming activities, but we need to recognize and reward their efforts, and help them build their confidence as farmers.

2

Barriers to Productive Resources

Women lack access to and control of cocoa farming assets.



LAND

Traditionally, women don't inherit land and it is too expensive to buy.



CROP INPUTS

Women have less disposable income than men to buy seeds, fertilizer, crop protection and planting materials.



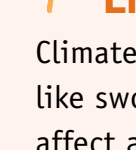
TOOLS

Few women have boots or gloves, and they generally use men's second-hand machetes. Women lack knowledge of how to use tools properly.



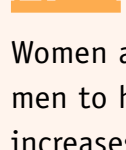
FINANCE

Cocoa Cooperatives provide loans, but few women borrow.



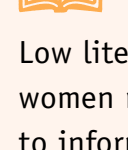
ENVIRONMENT

Climate change and viruses like swollen shoot, which affect all cocoa farmers, compound the barriers women already face.



LABOR

Women are more likely than men to hire laborers, which increases their costs of running a cocoa farm relative to those run by men.



LITERACY

Low literacy among women reduces access to information and capacity to manage their farms.

Work with men and women to overcome barriers to productive resources.

3

Barriers to Income

Men sell cocoa and control the income.



Support women to sell cocoa and/or other crops in the market.

4

Barriers to Participation in Farmer Field Schools

As few as 5% of training attendees are women. Farmer Field Schools are not designed with women in mind.



Cocoa is a man's crop, field schools are a man's space.



Locations too far for women to travel.



Women have less time and higher workloads.



Training is not relevant or attractive.



Extension agents need more tools and support on gender.

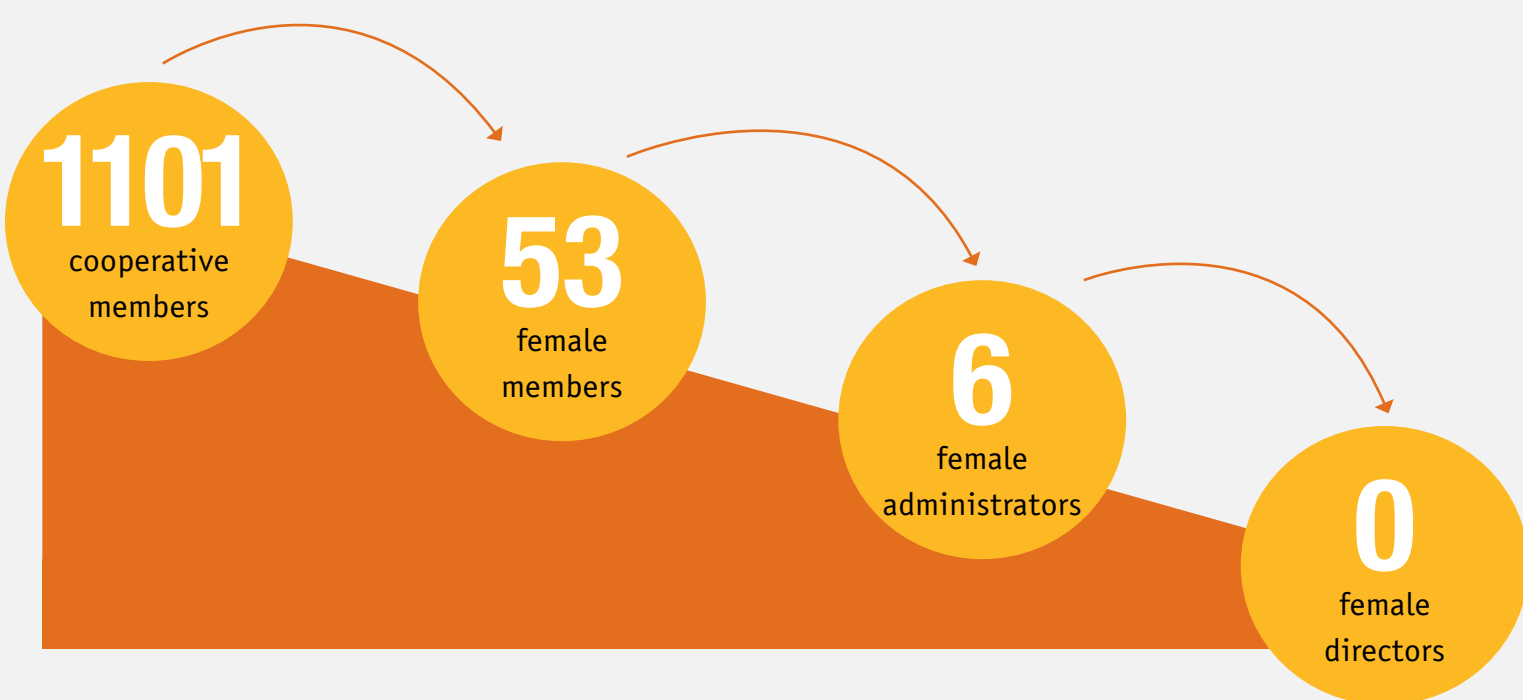
Encourage the government to create training programs for female producers, promote the training of female extension agents, and increase their presence in areas where there are female producers.

5

The Nature of Cooperatives

Most women do not adequately benefit from cocoa cooperatives.

Cooperative membership is restricted to one member per household, which is usually the man. We need to extend rights and access for cooperative members to women and households more broadly.



Encourage cooperatives and private sector industry partners to develop and implement gender-based policies, and support women's empowerment initiatives through intentional recruitment of female staff, more diverse membership and leadership initiatives.



It takes investment and expertise, but it is possible to change these perceptions and norms. This study has found some reasons for optimism.

Discussions with husbands in Aboisso show they are open to supporting projects targeting women. They recognize that women help them manage their plantations and diversify products they can sell.

A few female leaders in Aboisso and Duékoué are emerging, taking initiative to organize women into cooperatives and associations.

Taken from the study *Situational Analysis of Gender Integration at Production Level in the Cocoa Value Chain*.

