



CARE-Cargill: PROCOCO GHANA

FINAL EVALUATION

Briefer



FINAL REPORT

Introduction

Program Background

This is the final report for the CARE-Cargill global program with funding support from Cargill, Inc. For more than fifty years, Cargill and CARE have shared a commitment to promote opportunity and create lasting change for families living in extreme poverty. After a successful five-year phase of programming from 2008 until 2013, Cargill provided \$7,550,000 funding seven project countries globally: Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and India. The newest phase of this global partnership, implemented from September 1, 2013 until August 31, 2016, built on many of the achievements from the first phase of programming while establishing new initiatives to meet our program goal: *prosperous and resilient communities*.

The program has four main components based on the following intermediate outcomes:

- ◇ **Increased quantity and quality of production**
- ◇ Key intervention: Building the production capacity of smallholder farmers in the supply chain
- ◇ **Increased access to equitable markets**
- ◇ Key intervention: Connecting producers to equitable markets
- ◇ **Increased food security and nutrition**
- ◇ Key intervention: Promoting food security and nutrition within communities
- ◇ **Well-governed and thriving communities**
- ◇ Key intervention: Addressing issues of governance, hazardous child labor, and education

The following report will evaluate the impact of **PROCOCO** in Ghana.

Program Summary

Rationale and Justification

In the past decade, Ghana has made significant reductions in extreme poverty prevalence with impressive economic growth. Agriculture is a key contributor of Ghana's success economically, accounting for 23 percent of the national GDP in 2012. The sector has grown significantly since 2007, benefiting from high international prices, particularly for its main exports such as cocoa. Cocoa is the most important export crop in Ghana, accounting for 8.2 percent of the country's GDP and 30 percent of total export earnings in 2010. The livelihood of about 6 million people, approximately one-fourth of the population, depends on the cocoa sector with cocoa production accounting for over 67% of household income. Despite impressive gains and sectoral achievements in agriculture, over a quarter of the population live in extreme poverty at \$1.25/day or less.

Underlying causes of poverty:

- ◇ Agriculture remains largely rainfall dependent and subsistence-based
- ◇ High vulnerability to climate change related stresses and shocks
- ◇ Many farmers are still dependent on rudimentary technology
- ◇ Low dietary intake that is either not providing the right nutrients or the required amounts of food

Three PROCOCO regions—Ashanti, Central, and Brong Ahafo are similarly characterized by agriculture dependent economies, coupled with high poverty rates and food insecurity. More than 25 percent of people live below the poverty line, with many families unable to produce or purchase enough diverse foods to eat. The PROCOCO Ghana regions also have disproportionately youthful populations resulting in enormous economic burden on the active working populations.

PROCOCO-Ghana

Project Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Results Highlights

Prosperous Cocoa-Farming Communities (PROCOCO) in Ghana sought to promote more prosperous, sustainable and resilient cocoa farming communities through a community development approach that engages civil society to increase cocoa production, reduce child labor, ensure food and nutrition security, and promote education in some of the country's most impoverished regions. PROCOCO, built on a previous five years of investment by CARE and Cargill, was implemented from September 2013 to August 2016 in 110 communities in four of Ghana's poorest cocoa producing districts. PROCOCO employed a variety of strategies to reach the global goal including:

- ◇ **Improving cocoa production capacities:** extension service delivery, Farmer Business School, training in good agronomic practices, GPS mapping, facilitating access to inputs for farmers, practical training on demonstration farms
- ◇ **Increasing access to savings, loans, and other sources of credit:** Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)
- ◇ **Improving knowledge, skills, and practices regarding nutrition:** social and behavior change communication and cooking demonstrations
- ◇ **Awareness and prevention of the worst forms of child labor:** community support for schools and child rights, development of school performance improvement plans and community action plans addressing child labor issues, social and behavior change communication, and school infrastructure construction and rehabilitation



The PROCOCO Ghana project was able to successfully reach the following results during the life of the project, from September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2016:

- ◇ **Increased access to assets, inputs, income, and services:** Mean assets index increased from .45 to .73, farmers *more than tripled* their income, both access to inputs and agricultural extension services *increased two-fold*.
- ◇ **Increased access to credit:** There was a *five-fold increase* in access to financial services.
- ◇ **Higher profitability of farmer products:** The percentage of farmers who have incorporated strategies to increase the value of their product and services improved from a baseline of 32% to 54.6%.
- ◇ **Increased business and financial management awareness:** Average financial literacy levels of farmers increased from 39.3% at baseline to 50%.
- ◇ **Reduced child labor:** The percentage of children engaged in child labor, including hazardous labor, *nearly halved*, from 16.2% at baseline to 9.3%.
- ◇ **Increased primary school enrollment rates:** Primary school enrollment rates increased from 95.6% to 99.6%.

With these findings as supporting evidence, the project made significant progress toward the goal of prosperous and resilient communities. Despite a 10% mean reduction in cocoa yield and unfavorable weather conditions among individual farmers, cocoa producing families have still managed to triple their income through income diversification and steady growth in the price of cocoa. This demonstrates their capacity to absorb climate-related stresses and generate sufficient income despite devastating periods of drought. These families now have more access to assets, capacities, financial capital, and services that will continue provide them with the resources they need in the event of unforeseen shocks and stresses within their communities.

Conclusion

Impact

Based on these results, PROCOCO Ghana is making strides toward its goal of fostering prosperous and resilient communities. Cocoa farmers have greater access to services, like agricultural extension and agronomic capacity building, and are applying what they know to maintain and expand their farms. Even with unpredictable climate patterns and an unprecedented time of drought, farmers were able to maintain or minimize agricultural loss, while Ghana's cocoa sector as a whole experienced a nearly 20% decrease in production. Being able to minimize loss was critical in maintaining stable income and reinforces the claim that these communities have built resilience to climate-related shocks. The combination of relatively steady cocoa production, a two-fold increase in the market price of cocoa, and livelihood diversification has facilitated a nearly three-fold increase in per-capita income among farmers. In addition to significant gains in income, families own almost twice as many household assets as before, which can serve as a safety-net in emergency situations or other unforeseen stresses within their lives. Land ownership, specifically, increased three-fold— an invaluable pathway to bringing people out of poverty.

Another dimension of resilience worth noting is access to credit. Farmers are often faced with financial capital constraints before harvesting their crops. They often need to take loans to support themselves until the next harvest yet lack of information, high interest rates, lack of collateral to take loans, and loan sharks are barriers to farmers' ability to access financial resources. PROCOCO Ghana helped farmers to increase their access to financial services by 65%, with nearly three-quarters of farmers holding cash savings at end line. The result of this increase can largely be contributed to the proportion of farmers participating in Village Savings and Loans Associations established by the project. Women especially are taking advantage of VSLAs as a platform for economic opportunity and saving, with 91% of women participating. Moreover, saving motivation has dramatically shifted. Eight times more families are saving for their businesses and twice as many are saving for emergencies. Increased household savings for business and emergencies, coupled with greater access to credit, provided historically marginalized small-holder farming families with a cushion in the case of unexpected emergencies on their farms or within their homes.

While a significant impact on nutrition and behavior change was not observed, the project's holistic approach and livelihood focus led to greater food access across the communities. There was a decrease in the average number of months of household food insecurity, from 4 to 3.5 at end line, and more than 44% of households experienced increases in household income. Nearly 65% of households reporting gains in income also reported greater access to food. The study found that increased income had the largest effect on women's food access— of the households reporting an increase in income, women were more likely than men to report increased food access (70.9% of women versus 58.6% of men). When asked what contributed to observed changes in food access, households noted local food availability and variety, farm health, and increased revenue as key factors. This is significant as the project supports communities in building women's agency and addressing the structural barriers and relations that dictate their lives.

The women's empowerment index shows a decrease in empowerment, from .84 to .81 at end line. While this negative result was unexpected, given the programmatic emphasis on women's empowerment and gender equality, the data suggests that women are more able to control farm income and assets. The proportion of women reporting the ability to make household financial decisions, particularly around children's education, also remains relatively high. That being said, women continue to report limitations in their mobility as well as a lack of social capital. Focus groups indicate there is also general unease that men have regarding women working outside the home, however, both men and women recognize the potential benefits of providing women with economic opportunity. One specific example is investing in children's education. Throughout the project, key stakeholders have been engaged to address persistent child labor issues that plague the cocoa sector. Child protection training among beneficiaries and stakeholders, combined with school-related infrastructure development and rehabilitation, placed education at the center. With education identified as the

pathway to eliminating child labor, the project was able to successfully contribute to a reduction in child labor, from 16.2% to 9.3% at end line. Education-centric social and behavior change communication, combined with child labor reduction efforts, influenced educational outcomes with primary school enrollment increasing by 4%.

Given these results, the project's achievements range from increasing income and assets ownership, increasing access to services, improving food security and food access, empowering women to have control over resources and to make financial decisions, reducing child labor prevalence, and improving education outcomes. Households are now more aware of how to prepare for the future and are less vulnerable to environmental stresses. PROCOCO Ghana beneficiaries now have the resources and tools necessary to absorb and adapt to changing contexts— and to prosper despite all of the challenges that constrain them.

Lessons Learned

Recommendations

Improve access to new technology:

There is high demand for equipment including motorized spraying machines and weighing scales among farmers. While CARE facilitates access to some equipment, access to machinery remains low among men and women farmers. The project should consider additional platforms to increase access to agricultural machinery, like *Hello Tractor*.

Improve management of input distribution:

Supply of inputs such as hybrid cocoa seedlings should be supplied to farmers based on and prior to expected rainfall. Some farmers received agro-inputs late thus missing the primary rainfall season, negatively affecting their production. Better monitoring of climate patterns and project input distribution timelines should improve input supply, utilization, and production potential.

Facilitate broader access to productive resources for women farmers:

There are access inequities between men and women, specifically accessing tools and other miscellaneous inputs. In the future, the project should focus on addressing gender inequality within farming communities, increasing access to large machinery and tools for women farmers so women can have the resources they need to maximize their productivity.

Expand farm mapping:

Supporting farmers in mapping their farmlands has enabled them to accurately access the quantity of inputs needed relative to the size of their farm. Farm expansion, however, has resulted in a need to remap certain areas to cover the additional farmland. Focus groups discussions revealed that some farmers do not know their actual farm size and this affected their ability to source the right quantity of agro-inputs, a finding that could have significant impact on their agricultural productivity.

Increase access to and availability of climate information:

The project should aim to include capacity building activities on climate change mitigation measures for cocoa farmers. The erratic rainfall pattern reported by farmers requires future interventions to include training modules on climate change mitigation and seasonal climate patterns to help farmers anticipate and adapt to climate variability.

Strengthen nutrition and gender programming:

While the reductions in dietary diversity and women's empowerment index were minimal, these findings indicate gaps in nutrition and gender programming in PROCOCO Ghana. It was apparent in the household survey and focus group discussions that farmers and their families were aware of key messages promoted by the project, however, changes in practices

that minimize our impact on optimal nutrition and gender outcomes, would transform how the project reaches its beneficiaries. Given that knowledge increased but changes in practices were not significant, a barrier analysis should be conducted to further understand the motivators and barriers to adequate nutrition. Subsequently a behavior change strategy will be developed that focuses on appropriate messages on dietary diversity of essential and micro nutrients of local foods for women and children and the promotion of homestead gardens and small animal production.

A Gender Action Plan developed by the PROCOCO team recommends mainstreaming gender equity learning and action, engaging men and boys and training all staff and partners on Social Analysis And Action for Food and Nutrition Security, a toolkit that addresses the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence agriculture practices, livelihoods, nutrition, health, gender inequality, and development.



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