



# Impact Brief

## PROSPER II: Côte d'Ivoire (2019-2022)



**OVERVIEW** PROSPER II directly improved socio-economic conditions across 23 cocoa-producing communities, reaching **64,290 people (43,178 women) directly and indirectly**. The project facilitated greater access to financial services, literacy and training, livelihood diversification, improved household income, reduced food insecurity, better nutrition, enhanced child wellbeing and improved gender parity across communities.

### Background

PROSPER II was implemented in Côte d'Ivoire between September 2019 and August 2022 in partnership with Cargill. The project focused on six main areas of change, including:

- 1) Women's Empowerment
- 2) Access to Productive Resources
- 3) Inclusive Markets
- 4) Nutrition
- 5) Social Protection
- 6) Strategic Partnerships and Influencing Policy and Practice through Advocacy

PROSPER II reached **8,572 people (5,757 women)** directly and **55,718 people (37,421 women)** indirectly across **23 cocoa-growing communities**. CARE used an integrated approach, focusing on women, smallholder producers, and their families to facilitate access to the resources, support, information, skills, and confidence they needed to invest in their farms, businesses, families, and communities. This entailed promotion of financial inclusion, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship skills, improved nutrition behaviors and strengthened community governance. Through PROSPER II, farmers – especially women – boosted their production and generated income that they used to send their children to school, feed their families, expand their businesses and create a culture of savings to help them withstand shocks like the pandemic and rise in food prices.



## Key Accomplishments & Impact

### Women's Empowerment

- PROSPER II held 880 couples dialogue sessions with 3,279 people (1,981 women) focused on changing gender norms, strengthening communication, managing household income, and making decisions more equitable. As a result, household gender norms and dynamics changed. By endline, 65% of women reported equal participation in household financial decision-making, an increase from 25% at baseline.
- The project organized leadership training with 813 people (568 women) and as a result, women's participation in leadership positions tripled, from 27% at baseline to 81% at endline.
- 750 members (510 women) participated in literacy training which directly contributed to an improvement in women's ability to read and write, from 43% at baseline to 57% at endline. As a result, women's management of their income generating activities (IGAs), and their income, increased as this skill enabled them to better manage their finances and businesses.

### Access to Productive Resources & Inclusive Markets

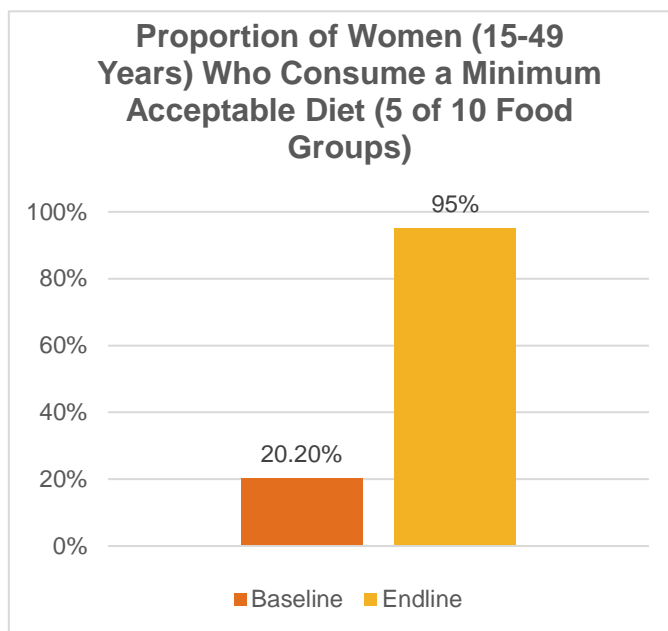
- PROSPER II established a total of 306 VSLAs with 7,896 members (5,436 women), saving \$748,183 while also providing \$345,883 in loans to support 395 IGAs. As a result, 69% of women are active users of financial services, a significant increase from 31% at baseline.
- The combination of access to entrepreneurship training, support for IGA establishment and growth, and greater access to financial services to support IGAs, led to increased income and a 58.1% reduction in the proportion of households living below the national poverty line. At endline, average per-capita income increased by 53% compared to baseline.
- Greater income also supported better food security, with 65% of endline respondents reporting they were not worried about running out of food in the past 12 months, compared to 28% at baseline. Furthermore, the

severity of food insecurity also decreased, with the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity falling from 67% at baseline to 23.6% at endline.

- To improve access to agricultural inputs, 262 VSLAs with 6,996 members (4,653 women) were involved with food crop production and marketing activities that directly contributed to a more than a two-fold increase in women’s reported access to agricultural inputs, from 57% at baseline to 88% at endline, and a 41% increase in women’s reported access to output markets to sell their production, from 47% at baseline to 88% at endline.

## Nutrition

- Through nutrition awareness sessions, PROSPER II reached 8,572 people (5,757 women) directly and 55,718 people (37,421 women) indirectly with educational sessions on the 10 food groups, complementary feeding of children between 6-23 months, and maternal nutrition for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.
- In collaboration with the National Nutrition Program (NNP), 19 health workers (four women) were trained on the malnutrition referral system, monitoring the healthy growth of children under the age of five, and conducting cooking demonstrations on preparation of infant porridges and purees from local foods.
- As a result, PROSPER II fostered improved nutritional knowledge and behaviors of cocoa farming families by promoting food availability, access, and usage through home gardens as well as through entrepreneurial activities so that families had alternative income sources and ability to purchase nutritious food. The proportion of households who reported a change in nutrition behavior increased more than two-fold, from 45% at baseline to 97% at endline.
- These combined efforts led to a slight increase in the average Household Dietary Diversity Score, from 5.22 at baseline to 5.25 at endline. There was also a significant impact on women’s nutritional status. The proportion of women of reproductive age who consume a minimum adequate diet (five of ten food groups) rose from 20.2% at baseline to 95% at endline. Also, there have been no registered cases of malnutrition in local health centers in the last three years.



## Social Protection

- During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project worked with the 23 WASH committees to conduct community sensitization and support the construction of 1,000 tippy tap handwashing stations, which reached 63,254 people (42,564 women).
- In partnership with the Ministry of Women, Family and Children’s Affairs, the project established 23 child protection committees with 230 members (69 women); 164 of those members (109 women) participated in child protection sessions, and eight community leaders (two women) learned about combating child labor. As a direct result, 75% of members reporting using the skills acquired to help eradicate child labor, and 92% have noticed a change in the community regarding school enrollment.

## Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

- Through additional partnerships with Pasquier, Hershey, and Global Water Challenge, eight schools, two maternity hospitals and a midwifery house were constructed, 13 water pumps were installed, and an ambulance was procured to help meet emergency health needs.
- A successful pilot was launched in Felixkro and Sahota communities with 153 members (111 women) to facilitate the acquisition of quality agricultural inputs, create a network for safe marketing, and increase the income of participating farmer households.

## Conclusion

The project positively impacted cocoa-growing communities across Côte d'Ivoire. PROSPER II improved socio-economic conditions across 23 communities by increasing access to financial services through the creation of 306 VSLAs, promoting linkages to formal microfinance institutions, and building leadership and negotiation skills as well as literacy for women. The project supported livelihood diversification, leading to increased incomes and families being lifted out of poverty through the establishment of 395 income generating activities. Household nutrition was enhanced through nutritional sensitizations sessions and cooking demonstrations. There is greater representation of women in leadership and women's household decision-making power through gender committees and 880 couples dialogue sessions. Lastly, we promoted child wellbeing via establishment of 23 child protection committees while also empowering community development committees to lead community-initiated projects in collaboration with local authorities.