



# Impact Brief

## PROSPER II: Ghana (2019-2022)



Photo credit: Laura Noel

**OVERVIEW** PROSPER II aimed to directly improve the food and nutrition security and empowerment of 157 cocoa-producing communities, reaching **70,325 people (46,090 women) directly and indirectly**. The project facilitated greater access to financial services and livelihood diversification, improved household income and dietary diversity, reduced food insecurity, and contributed to improved gender parity in the community.

**25.5%**

decrease in proportion of households that ran out of food because of lack of money or other resources

Proportion of households living below the poverty line fell by

**7.9%**

**60.5%**

of women hold leadership positions in community groups and associations, up from 27.1% at baseline

## Background

PROSPER II was implemented in Western North and Western Regions, Ghana between September 2019 and August 2022 in partnership with Cargill. The project focused on four main areas of change, including:

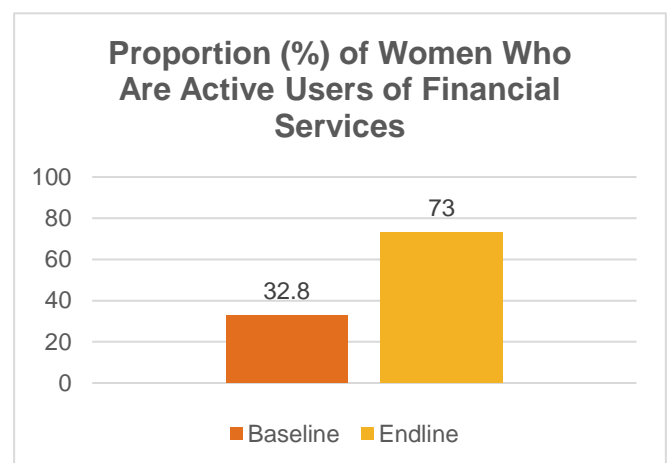
- 1) Women's Empowerment
- 2) Access to Productive Resources (Financial Services and Financial Literacy)
- 3) Improving Nutrition in Cocoa-producing Communities
- 4) Strengthening Community Governance and Influencing Policy and Practices through Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

PROSPER II reached **14,065 people (9,218 women)** directly and **56,260 people (36,872 women)** indirectly across **157 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 & Access to Productive Resources

- PROSPER II held 336 gender dialogue sessions with 14,065 people (9,218 women) that focused on addressing inequities in workloads and household decision-making among men and women, contributing to 53.7% of women reporting increased control of income at endline, compared to 32.8% at baseline, and 94.5% of women now able to equally participate in financial decision-making, compared to 91% at baseline.
- Through the project's gender approach, the percentage of women holding leadership positions in community groups or associations increased more than two-fold, from 27.1% at baseline to 60.5% at endline.
- PROSPER II formed 570 Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) with 14,065 members (9,218 women), saving \$751,779.30 and providing \$520,024.80 in loans to support farming and income-generating activities (IGAs). 13,070 members (8,507 women) from 524 VSLAs were also trained in financial literacy. This led to a two-fold increase in active women users of financial services, from 32.8% at baseline to 73% at endline
- Altogether, 13,563 members (8,885 women) from 545 VSLAs received entrepreneurial training. As a result, there was a 22.8% increase in women who had increased capabilities to do economic activities, from 3.8% at baseline to 26.6% at endline.
- Greater knowledge and entrepreneurial skills led to 1,408 VSLA members (1,103 women) establishing additional IGAs. As a result, these IGAs had a total startup capital of \$144,217 from VSLA loans, a cumulative



monthly income of \$74,813, annual income of \$897,756 and per capita income of \$638/year, contributing to a 7.9% reduction in the proportion of households living below the poverty line.

### Improving Nutrition

- Nutrition promoters (463 total, 269 women) were trained and sensitized VSLA groups, households and communities, reaching 14,065 people (9,218 women) 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 Ministry of Agriculture, 13,142 VSLA members (8,007 women) established home gardens. This activity was complemented by 150 cooking demonstrations held with Ghana Health Service and Ministry of Food and Agriculture, reaching 13,875 people (9,157 women).
- 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 two-fold, from 30% at baseline to 63.2% at endline.
- These combined efforts led to an increase in the average Household Dietary Diversity Score, from 4.9 at baseline to 5.8 at endline. Households that eat at least five out of the 10 food groups also improved from 57% to 78%, while household consumption of vegetables increased from 69.8% to 96.5%. The proportion of women of reproductive age who consume a minimum adequate diet also rose from 60% to 73.5%.

### Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

- The project facilitated the establishment and training of gender inclusive community development committees (CDCs) in 61 communities with 721 members (230 women). These CDCs developed 61 community action plans (CAPs), addressing 184 community needs and engaging district, municipal assemblies and government agencies in improving local development and governance. To date, these communities completed 112 (61%) of their CAPs while 14 (8%) are in progress.
- CDCs mobilized \$47,619 in support of community-initiated projects. Activities include the construction of boreholes, conversion of manual boreholes to mechanized, construction of school projects, provision of streetlights and refurbished market centers.

### Conclusion

The project positively impacted cocoa-growing communities. PROSPER II improved access to financial services through the creation of 570 VSLAs, incomes through entrepreneurship training and diversification via IGAs, and household nutrition through the establishment of 13,142 home gardens and 150 cooking demonstrations. Some families were lifted out of poverty through expanded investments in diversified livelihoods like food crop farming and livestock rearing, while food security was improved through the project's integrated approach, which facilitated greater income and access to nutritious food through homestead production. Lastly, women are greater represented in leadership, have more household decision-making power and agency as a result of the project's gender approach.