

Mars, Incorporated Update on Gender Empowerment, February 2015:
Attracting the Next Generation of Cocoa Farmers

Introduction:

At Mars, we believe that only a holistic strategy that combines community development and improved productivity, with supporting interventions for women, will increase families' income and secure a sustainable next generation of cocoa farmers.

Our commitment and action is not new. In 2010, we commissioned initial research which prompted us to innovate in this area through empowering the voice of women in communities and supporting their needs with micro projects as part of our ongoing community development work. We took the learnings from this work into our Vision for Change program in Cote d'Ivoire. We scaled our activities on the ground to 75 communities as we developed a package of productivity improvement and community based interventions.

Searching for the most comprehensive and impactful approach, in June 2013, we commissioned an additional study by an independent gender expert which showed that a more explicit gender focus would benefit women cocoa farmers even further, recognizing they are often excluded from obtaining the benefits related to cocoa production (training, membership in a cooperative, improved income).

Progress to date:

Since June 2014 we put in place a Mars Chocolate Gender Action Plan to integrate the learnings from our 2013 study into Vision for Change and strengthen the role of women in cocoa communities through the transfer of knowledge, skills and opportunities.

These included:

- Leadership and engagement: Vision for Change's local development committees identify, promote and manage projects to support the 75 cocoa communities where we work. At least one of the five committee members has to be a woman, and we ensure that women's voices are heard by conducting regular focus groups. We aim to increase that participation by 25% in 2015 and plan to evaluate progress by the end of 2015 to determine if that approach is effective. These projects are financed by Mars and the Ivorian Cocoa Committee (CCC) after we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2012.
- Engaging civil society organizations: Vision for Change is supporting 20 women's groups in cocoa communities, with an average of 30 members each, to develop income-generating activities to empower women (e.g. vegetable growing and breeding small animals). Support includes training on production techniques and good agricultural

practices, as well as on nutritional aspects (food preparation) to improve households' nutrition and food security. We aim to increase this engagement to a further 5 women's groups that extend beyond Vision for Change in 2015. We plan to continue expanding that outreach beyond 2015 and will have specific metrics in our updated action plan.

- **Developing women entrepreneurs:** Cocoa Village Clinics (CVC) run by rural entrepreneurs provide productivity enhancement services to cocoa farmers. We are proud to now have our first CVCs (specifically 2 CVCs that are women) run by women up and running, and our goal is to increase significantly over time, specifically to add 10 during the next selection process which will take place during the second quarter of 2016. CVC operators have a strong standing in the community given their ability to train and improve productivity of cocoa farmers, and encouraging women to take this role can significantly empower women in the communities where they operate.

Plans for 2015:

We will commission further research that will look at causes for women's lack of participation as direct cocoa suppliers and discrimination faced by unpaid female family farmers and waged workers. As part of that research we will consult with a broad range of stakeholders including women's groups/cooperatives, women leaders, and local civil society organizations. The findings will be published as part of our Gender Empowerment Plan which we will make public by June 1, and we will communicate specific goals, metrics and our progress towards them.

We will build on our recent community-based interventions by initiating farm level and supply chain interventions and further strengthening gender specific measurement of results in Cote d'Ivoire.

This will allow us to address the disproportionate gender based distribution of responsibilities, benefits, income and financial decision making in cocoa farming households.

Additional details of our plans for 2015 and beyond are described below:

- **Community interventions:** In 2015, we will initiate the strengthening of our existing interventions in our supply chain by piloting the implementation of **Village Savings and Loans (VSL) schemes** among women's groups to provide the financial means to build capital and re-create social dynamics that support self-reliance. This approach is oriented towards helping women increase income through support for non-cocoa as well as cocoa farming based activities. We will target at least 150 women in 5 villages.
- **Introduce household-discussion methodologies** to bring women and men together to co-create strategies to address gender inequalities within their households and communities. We will target 150 women and 80 % of men. Our training program will be available for review by 1 June.
- **Productivity interventions:** We will conduct a gender review of our interventions in early 2015 and will revise our approach based on those findings. Through Cocoa Development

Centers and Cocoa Village Centers (CDC-CVC) where farmers physically and visually “experience” farm rehabilitation techniques and increased yields (V4C currently has selected 25 CVC operators in different villages), we will address the “marginalization” faced by women working on cocoa farms (as unpaid family labor mainly, but also as farm managers or paid labor) through the following interventions:

- **Increase the number of female CVC operators in the next selection process** by revising selection criteria to attract and ensure women are selected; setting clear targets for the number of women CVC operators to be recruited; and developing support plans for women who may need additional help.
- **Build capacity for women working on farms serviced by CVC operators within their regions** by ensuring technical support to 500 women working on farms in 2015 and we will aim to increase that number to 1000 by the end of 2016; developing a Farmer Field School training curriculum for women working on farms; and ensuring follow up on women receiving their support, documenting success stories. We will accomplish this by training current and future CVC operators to reach out directly to women farm owners, managers or laborers and providing specific training to them. In 2015, a total of 100 women will be provided with the Farmer Field School training and that will increase to 200 in 2016 and 400 in 2017.

Improved measurement: In designing these programs, we will identify the gender gaps we are targeting and measure whether the planned interventions are leading to empowerment of women (e.g. through increased income, increased sharing of benefits, assets and responsibilities, increased decision making authority). We will provide annual updates of our learnings and progress.

Sector Level Influence: In Cote d’Ivoire, Mars continues to share results on our gender efforts with the Ivorian Cocoa Committee (CCC). The CCC has expressed an interest in addressing women’s empowerment within the supply chain and in 2015 we will investigate opportunities to partner with the CCC on women’s programs – thus sharing the learning and further expanding the reach of the programs. Through our activities in CocoaAction we will continue to share the learnings from our activities and work with the other companies to determine best practice approaches as well as methods to expand the reach of these interventions.

We commit to expand our reporting on gender to Indonesia in 2016. By June 1, we will have a more detailed plan on the timeline and actions to get us to that goal.

We are confident that the modifications to our original action plan will strengthen our efforts on women’s empowerment, bringing best practice activities into the Vision for Change and supplier based programs while assisting women at the community and farm levels and including women who are active within Mars’ supply chain.