

Mars Chocolate: Women's Empowerment Plan

SCOPE

Our vision is to empower women in the cocoa supply chain. Our plan, which is informed by external consultations and direct field research, focuses on strengthening the role of women farmers in our demonstration project - Vision for Change (V4C) - in 2015 and 2016. Beginning in 2015, we will use learnings from V4C to build the women's empowerment program within our own supply chain, in West Africa, Indonesia and elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

Women provide nearly 45% of the labor in cocoa supply chains, but do not benefit from training or access to resources, such as fertilizers and better plants. In family farms, where they serve as unpaid labor, they are rarely acknowledged as farmers. They also experience frequent discrimination and inequality.

Mars Chocolate is working to create a sustainable cocoa supply chain through its Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI). The SCI consists of programs to boost productivity and improve farming communities in cocoa-producing regions, including in West Africa and Asia. Empowering women - financially and socially - is critical to achieving sustainability goals.

The SCI approach - productivity and community development - is considered an effective way to help farming communities, including women and children, and has been broadly adopted by the industry. But it lacked a specific gender focus, which is why we [published](#) an independent gender assessment of our SCI demonstration program, Vision for Change (V4C), in June 2013. V4C is focused on cocoa-growing communities in the western region of Côte d'Ivoire. Based on the assessment, we [developed](#) a Gender Action Plan in 2014, followed by a progress [update](#) in February 2015. In September 2014, we recruited an experienced Gender Expert to focus on strategy and field research, who is based in Côte d'Ivoire.

We are pleased that our progress has been noted by stakeholders, including in Oxfam's 2015 Behind the Brands scorecard. We have a long way to go, but we are eager to start the next phase of our gender program. This document lays out these plans.

What we mean by women's empowerment:

- Increasing women's access to economic and social opportunities
- Providing resources to help women farmers improve yields and incomes
- Enabling women to make decisions in cocoa farming communities and households.

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY AND KEY PARTNERS

V4C: Mars' SCI flagship program, Vision 4 Change (V4C) in the Soubré region of Côte d'Ivoire. V4C uses a network of CDCs and CVCs. It also includes 75 community development committees that drive programs in this area

CDC: Cocoa Development Centers (CDCs) serve as distribution and training hubs, providing agricultural training, good quality plants, fertilizers and pesticides to farmers

CVC: Our Cocoa Village Centers (CVCs) sell approved plants and provide training, and are run by local entrepreneurs trained by a CDC

ICRAF: The International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) is an implementation partner for V4C

ANADER: 'Agence nationale d'appui au développement rural' - the national extension services in Côte d'Ivoire, and an implementation partner on V4C.

FFS: Farmer Field Schools (FFSs), facilitated by ANADER, deliver Good Agricultural Practices training to farmers.

At a glance: Women's Empowerment Plan

Our Vision: Empower women by increasing access to economic and social opportunities, providing resources to help improve yields and incomes, and supporting decision making in cocoa farming communities and households.

Our Strategy

Economic empowerment

- E1 - Improve access to training, technical advice and production inputs for women farmers and laborers
- E2 - Develop and strengthen support for women to improve their personal and family livelihoods

Social empowerment

- S1 - Increase women's leadership and participation in community decision making bodies, including cocoa co-operatives
- S2 - Engage with men and boys to increase appreciation of work done by women and address gender inequalities in households and communities
- S3 - Advance research into causes of women's lack of participation and discrimination

Our Operating Principles: Monitoring, Verification and Engagement

- O1 - Develop and implement robust KPIs and monitoring systems to track program data
- O2 - Conduct regular gender reviews of all interventions and carry out third party verification at regular intervals.
- O3 - Use engagement and partnerships to strengthen interventions and increase influence

	Goals	Commitments	Target Beneficiaries	Target Date
Economic Empowerment	E1: Improve access to training, technical advice and production inputs for women farmers and laborers	Farmer Field School training for women only	100 women 200 women 400 women	2015 2016 2017
		Providing technical support for women through CVCs	500 women 1000 women	2015 2016
	E2: Develop and strengthen support for women to improve their personal and family livelihoods	Strengthen Income Generating Activities	25 community women's groups in V4C Extend to communities outside V4C	2015 2016
		Partnership with CARE will include savings and loans program	At least 10 V4C communities, totaling at least 300 women At least 10 additional communities	2015 2016
Social Empowerment	S1: Increase women's leadership and participation in community decision making bodies, including [cocoa co-operatives]	25% of members in local development committees are women	All V4C communities	End 2015
		20% of CVC operators are women	10 new female CVC operators	End 2016
		Define interventions in Mars' supply chain	Mars supply chain	June 2016
	S2: Engage with men and boys to increase appreciation of work done by women, and address gender inequalities in households and communities	Provide formal gender-sensitization training for V4C implementation staff	25 ICRAF staff	Completed
		Partnership with CARE on household dialogues and engaging men and boys on gender equality	150 women and 80% of men in at least 10 VSLA program communities (approximately 120)	End 2015
	S3: Advance research into causes of women's lack of participation and discrimination	Commission research (V4C and beyond)	Field research ICRW global research CARE baseline study	2015 2015 2016
Operating Principles	O1: Develop and implement robust KPIs and monitoring systems to track program data	ICRW team develop overarching framework	Mars' Women's Empowerment Plan	2016
		CARE's M&E framework	VSLA participants	2016
		Strengthen ICRAF and ANADER M&E	V4C communities	2015
	O2: Conduct regular gender reviews of all interventions and carry out third party verification at regular intervals.	We will publish regular reviews of all interventions	Mars' Women's Empowerment Plan	2015
		Identify an independent verifiers to evaluate gender interventions	Mars' Women's Empowerment Plan	2016
		Initial assessment of Indonesian supply chain	Indonesia	2016
	O3: Use engagement and partnerships to strengthen interventions	Share results of programs with key stakeholders	CocoaAction companies	Ongoing
			Local governments	Ongoing

Economic Empowerment

GOAL E1: Improve access to training, technical advice and production inputs for women farmers and laborers

Why this is important

Research has shown that women farmers typically achieve yields that are 20-30% lower than men, because of lack of access to resources such as fertilizers and plants.¹ Our field research has found that female participation in our V4C Farmer Field School (FFS) training programs accounted for less than 3% overall. We want to help women farmers and laborers get the knowledge, life skills, technical resources, and inputs they need to improve their productivity and incomes. This work will impact many women in our supply chain, including farm owners, laborers and women from migrant families.

Our commitments

- Increase the overall participation rate of women in V4C FFS training from the current level of less than 10% to a minimum of 20% by reaching:
 - 100 women in 2015
 - 200 women in 2016
 - 400 women in 2017
- Increase the services and outreach we provide to women farmers through our Cocoa Village Centers (CVCs) by providing technical support to:
 - 500 women in 2015
 - 1000 women in 2016

Implementation plan

- In 2015, we are organizing FFS training exclusively for women farmers and laborers. By providing women's only training, we will scale up overall participation rates of women in FFS. The pilot will begin in June 2015 with 100 women attending four FFS sites. Training, lasting between six to nine months, will cover different modules including hands-on Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) training on cocoa and vegetable growing, access to finance, income development, and essential management skills. The four FFS sites will be chosen by communities and our implementation partner ANADER based on ease of accessibility for local women.
- We have formalized our CVC registration systems to identify the number of women farmers and laborers who use CVCs. We will use this data to meet our commitment to provide technical support to women working on farms serviced by CVC operators.

Monitoring and KPIs

We are working with ANADER and ICRAF to deliver V4C training programs. KPIs will include total number of women reached through women-only training, and overall rates of women participating in the program, compared with men. We will conduct field research to document the training processes, and identify challenges and best practices through qualitative data collection.

¹ Source: http://www.farmingfirst.org/women_infographic/

GOAL E2: Develop and strengthen support for women to improve their personal and family livelihoods

Why this is important

Research shows that women invest a greater proportion of their disposable income in family and community well-being.² This has a powerful multiplier effect for the well-being of children, families and communities in the cocoa supply chain. We want to help women improve the wellbeing of their families by developing their leadership capabilities, diversifying their income and promoting self-reliance. Increased financial independence and capabilities to grow nutritious crops will enable women to provide a secure food supply for their families.

Our commitments

- Initiate crop diversification/food security actions within 25 community women's groups, and convert at least half of these into Income Generating Activities (IGAs) by end 2015
 - Develop and implement IGAs for women in communities outside V4C beginning in 2016, with targets set by the end of 2015.
- Partner with CARE in at least 10 V4C communities, targeting at least 300 women, to set up savings and loans schemes that provide access to finance by end 2015
 - CARE will also provide women with financial literacy training, planning and marketing skills and basic accounting skills to facilitate IGAs.

Implementation plan

- In 2014, 19 women's groups were functioning and conducting an IGA (e.g., vegetable growing, animal husbandry, soy bean and plantain production). Ten of these groups produced soy beans, a crop recommended by ICRAF to boost nutrition and contribute to a balanced diet.
 - We are working to strengthen group dynamics, leadership and product marketing. For example, soy bean producing groups will be trained by local experts on soy-based food preparation and marketing of surpluses.
 - In 2016, we will develop and implement IGAs for women in communities outside V4C.
- We are partnering with CARE to implement their Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) methodology in 15 V4C communities.³ This project, starting in 2015, will target 300 women and girls, aged 15 to 49. Mars and CARE will:
 - Use household surveys and focus group discussions to establish the baseline in targeted communities.
 - Train community members to establish VSLA groups, identify group promoters, and monitor how the groups implement the methodology in the first and second years.
 - Provide micro-grants to fund inputs for up to 10 projects that will allow women entrepreneurs to scale up their businesses in year 2. The projects will be selected by a committee made up of ICRAF, ANADER, CARE, Mars and government representatives.
 - In 2016, identify at least 10 more communities to implement the VSLA methodology (20 communities in total)

² International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), (2009), Empowering women in cocoa farming communities, ICRW Final Report, Washington DC: International Centre for Research on Women (page 3)

³ The VSLA is a CARE-pioneered microfinance methodology. It was developed by CARE International in Niger in 1991 and has spread to at least 61 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with over 6 million active participants worldwide. (Source: CARE International)

Monitoring and KPIs

CARE will develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework in collaboration with Mars' partner, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). The framework will use elements adapted from the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index to measure five domains of empowerment: production, access to resources, control over income, leadership, and autonomy. Mars will work with CARE and ICRW to identify KPIs that relate to women gaining influence and increased income. Indicators could include: percent of women's contribution to household expenses from IGAs; number of meals per day per household; and school attendance rates.

Social Empowerment

GOAL S1: Increase women's leadership and participation in community decision-making bodies, including cocoa co-operatives.

Why this is important

Our gender assessment found that the V4C program was unintentionally reinforcing male-centered power in communities. The selection criteria we used for recruiting CDC and CVC staff was not designed to attract women. Similarly, cocoa co-operatives - whose members receive more access to technical and financial services - often restrict the participation of women because members are required to own land - a significant barrier for women in West African countries. We want to ensure that women are empowered to participate actively in the development of workplaces, homes and their communities.

Our commitments

- Ensure there is at least one woman on each community development committee in V4C communities. We will aim to increase that participation to 25% of all committees by end-2015.
- Add 10 new women CVC operators during the selection of the next cohort, boosting percentage of women CVC operators from less than 5% to a minimum of 20% by end 2016.
- Define specific interventions in Mars' supply chain that will increase women's participation in the management of farmer organizations supplying Mars by June 2016.

Implementation plan

- Currently, 12 of 75 V4C committees include one woman member, while all other committees (63) have at least two women. In total, 22% of committee members are women. The committees are renewed every three years, depending on their individual start dates. Committees are appointed through community meetings facilitated by ICRAF and ANADER. These meetings raise awareness on the importance of women on committees and in decision-making functions.
- Two out of our 25 CVCs are run by women, and we will add 10 women operators in the next group. We will:
 - Review the selection process to identify obstacles that prevent women from applying.
 - Interview current CVC operators and ICRAF staff involved in the selection process to ensure we develop effective selection criteria that is more inclusive of women.
 - Provide additional training to the selected female CVC operators depending on needs identified.
- Strengthen interventions in Mars' supply chain by increasing women's participation in the management of farmer organizations that supply Mars, and define supply chain interventions by June 2016.

Monitoring and KPIs

This work will be monitored by ICRAF. KPIs will include the number of women selected to be CVC operators,

number of women CVC operators given management and technical training.

GOAL S2: Engage with men and boys to increase appreciation of work done by women, and address gender inequalities in households and communities

Why this is important

Our gender assessment found that there is little financial value placed on women's labor on family farms. Women also assume a disproportionate share of family responsibilities. We want to increase and improve the dialogue between women, men and boys to help women strengthen their influence on household decisions and in communities.

Our commitments

- Provide formal gender-sensitization training for at least 25 ICRAF staff
- Engage women, men and boys on gender equality through the partnership with CARE, targeting 150 women and 80% of men (approximately 120) by end 2015
 - Introduce household and community dialogue methodologies
 - Target the 10 communities in which VSLA will be initiated in 2015.

Implementation plan

- In September 2014, we delivered a training workshop on gender sensitization and awareness for 25 ICRAF staff, facilitated by ICRAF's Gender Implementation Team based in ICRAF headquarters in Nairobi.
- As part of the partnership with CARE, we will:
 - Provide gender awareness training of ICRAF and CARE project staff working in VSLA communities. The three-day training to broaden their understanding of the role of women in society will include modules on power, violence, sexuality and male engagement.
 - Establish 'community male champions' in the targeted communities. The champions will talk about the positive changes they've made with respect to women, and the impact of these changes on their households. The champions will be identified through a community selection process to ensure ownership and commitment.
 - Deliver bi-monthly group dialogues with couples that will raise awareness of the difference between how women and men are treated in the household, and help them understand the benefits of listening to each other.

Monitoring and KPIs

Indicators reflecting the effectiveness of the household dialogue will be developed in conjunction with CARE and ICRW and will be used beginning in 2016.

GOAL S3: Advance research into causes of women's lack of participation and discrimination faced by unpaid female family and waged workers

Why this is important

Research is critical for improving program implementation and impact. Our 2013 gender assessment and Oxfam's 2014 [analysis](#) recommended that we commission additional research into the causes of discrimination against women and their lack of participation in cocoa sector activities, and expand the research scope beyond V4C communities.

Our commitments

- Publish the findings from our field research by end 2015
 - Conduct field research in communities beyond V4C in 2016
- Partner with International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) on research to look at causes for women's lack of participation as direct cocoa suppliers and discrimination faced by unpaid female family and waged workers. This will include perspectives on the role that land tenure and land ownership plays for women in terms of their position within the cocoa sector and communities. Findings will be published in 2015.
- Partner with CARE to conduct a baseline study as part of the partnership. Findings will be published in 2016.

Implementation plan

- The Gender Expert, based in Côte d'Ivoire, is conducting field-based interviews in V4C communities with farmers, laborers, and community members to understand the limitations they face in cocoa farming and financial opportunities. Key findings of this research will be published by end-2015.
- The ICRW is a leading global institute dedicated to field-based research and analysis, technical support, advocacy, and strategic advisory services to empower women and girls. Mars worked with ICRW in 2009 to strengthen the Mars sustainability program. In May 2015, we initiated a new partnership with ICRW, which will:
 - Review and synthesize global evidence on what works to empower women economically, with a focus on agricultural supply chains.
 - Further refine the Mars Women's Empowerment Plan and develop a theory of change.
 - Develop a framework for monitoring progress and measuring program impact.
 - Convene a meeting of selected sector and regional experts to validate the Women's Empowerment Plan, theory of change and the measurement framework.
 - The above activities will be accomplished and reported before the end of 2015.
- As part of the partnership, CARE will conduct a baseline study in targeted communities. They will use household surveys and focus group discussions to establish baselines on data points relevant for women's empowerment. The Terms of Reference for the baseline will be jointly designed by CARE, ICWR and the Institut National Polytechnique Houphouet Boigny (INPHB).

Monitoring and KPIs

ICRW will validate its research, strategic plan and measurement framework through engagement with selected sector and regional experts. We will publish their findings by end 2015.

Operating Principles: Monitoring, Verification and Engagement

GOAL 01: Develop and implement robust KPIs and monitoring systems to track program data

GOAL 02: Conduct regular gender reviews of all interventions and carry out third party verification at regular intervals.

GOAL 03: Use engagement and partnerships to strengthen interventions

Why this is important

Our 2013 gender assessment identified a need for monitoring and evaluation for V4C. Further, the [2014 Oxfam analysis](#) strongly suggested strengthening our monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment mechanisms. Transparency and accessibility are important to us, as demonstrated by our commitment to publish our research findings. We aim to ensure proper monitoring and measurement of program results to drive impacts and support the communication of best practices.

Our commitments

- Develop and implement robust KPIs and monitoring systems to track program data
- Conduct regular gender reviews of all interventions and carry out third party verification at regular intervals.
- Use engagement and partnerships to strengthen interventions and increase influence

Implementation plan

1. **Develop monitoring frameworks:**
 - a. **ICRW:** The ICRW team will develop an overarching framework to measure goals and actions within the Mars' Women's Empowerment Plan. The framework, developed with third party consultation, will help us build the women's empowerment plan for Mars' supply chain.
 - b. **CARE:** CARE's Monitoring and Evaluation framework will track the impact of changes in perceptions and actual empowerment of women targeted by the VSLA program. This will also inform the measurement of activities developed for Mars' supply chain. Potential indicators include: % of women in community organizations; % female cocoa farmers; % of women's contribution to household income; nutritional status of children; school enrolment and attendance; adult literacy rate.
 - c. **ICRAF/ANADER:** We will strengthen the capacity of ICRAF and ANADER to carry out the monitoring and evaluation activities in their role as implementation partners in V4C communities.
2. **Conduct Reviews:** Our M&E program will include regular reporting from the field against an agreed set of output and outcome indicators. In addition, we will:
 - a. Carry out and publish an assessment, including field research and local stakeholder consultations, of the gender situation in the Indonesian supply chain. This 2015 assessment will inform our action plan for tackling women's empowerment in Indonesia.
3. **Verification:** By end-2016, we will identify an independent verifier who will conduct an external evaluation of our gender interventions.
4. **Partnerships and sector level influence:** To strengthen existing partnerships, we will share the results of our programs with key stakeholders, including the 11 companies participating in [CocoaAction](#) and the government of Côte d'Ivoire. We will also identify new partners as we expand this effort into our own supply chain.