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# TACKLING GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN

Are the big chocolate companies delivering on their global commitments in Ghana?

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>CHED</b>    | Cocoa Health and Extension Division (COCOBOD)      |
| <b>CLMRS</b>   | Child labor monitoring and remediation systems     |
| <b>CMC</b>     | Cocoa Marketing Company Ltd. (COCOBOD)             |
| <b>COCOBOD</b> | Ghana Cocoa Board                                  |
| <b>CRIG</b>    | Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana                  |
| <b>CWC</b>     | Cocoa waste company                                |
| <b>FLA</b>     | Fair Labor Association                             |
| <b>GALS</b>    | Gender Action Learning System                      |
| <b>GAP</b>     | Good agricultural practice                         |
| <b>ICI</b>     | International Cocoa Initiative                     |
| <b>ILO</b>     | International Labour Organization                  |
| <b>LBC</b>     | Licensed buying company                            |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Nongovernmental organization                       |
| <b>OFIS</b>    | Olam Farmer Information System                     |
| <b>OLC</b>     | Olam Livelihood Charter                            |
| <b>RDF</b>     | Rural Development Framework (Nestlé)               |
| <b>SPD</b>     | Seed Production Division (COCOBOD)                 |
| <b>UNGP</b>    | UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights |
| <b>UNICEF</b>  | United Nations Children’s Fund                     |
| <b>V4C</b>     | Vision for Change (Mars)                           |
| <b>VSLA</b>    | Village savings and loan association               |
| <b>WCF</b>     | World Cocoa Foundation                             |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, leading chocolate companies Mars, Mondelēz, and Nestlé made global commitments to reduce gender inequalities across their cocoa supply chain. This report follows up on these commitments and presents findings on the gender equality programs Mars, Mondelēz, and Nestlé – and their agribusiness suppliers – are implementing in the cocoa supply chain of Ghana, a key sourcing country. Specifically, the report examines the extent to which each of the companies has (1) conducted and published impact assessments on women in their cocoa supply chains in order to understand and show how this population is faring in Ghana, (2) developed a specific action plan to address issues raised by the assessments that could lead to improved conditions for women, (3) signed on to the United Nations’ Women’s Empowerment Principles, a set of seven principles for businesses offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and community, and (4) engaged with other powerful actors in the cocoa industry to develop sector wide programs that address gender inequality.

To understand the progress of implementation or delivery of the gender commitments made by the companies, the methodology for this study involved three main iterative phases: literature review, semi-structured interviews with company representatives and visits to cocoa producing communities. The research was conducted in 2019 but references were provided by companies up until October 2021.

Only Mondelēz has published a detailed assessment on the conditions of women in its cocoa supply chains. Although Nestlé had published assessments on the conditions of women in its cocoa supply chains in Côte d’Ivoire, it had not published an assessment on women in its supply chains in Ghana. Mars had not conducted a gender assessment of its cocoa supply chains; however, toward the end of 2019, Mars engaged KIT Royal Tropical Institute, a Netherlands-based organization that supports sustainable development, to conduct a gender assessment within its cocoa supply chains in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Indonesia.

Only Mondelēz has published a detailed, time-bound, multi-year action plan for how the company will implement its commitments to addressing gender inequality issues in the cocoa sector. Nestlé continues to work with partners, clients, and traders on some interventions aimed at addressing gender inequality, but these plans and their progress have not been made public. Mars’s attention to addressing gender equality has predominantly focused on Côte d’Ivoire and not in Ghana, and Mars has not developed a detailed, time-bound, multi-year action plan for how it will implement its commitments to addressing gender inequality issues in the cocoa sector in Ghana.

Finally, all three companies signed on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles, and all three are involved in sector wide programs, which have some program aspects designed to address gender inequality (for example, the World Cocoa Foundation’s CocoaAction (now ended), Oxfam in Ghana’s System Innovation for Women’s Economic Empowerment [SIWEE], or the Cocoa & Forests Initiative).

The study, however, noted progress being made by the companies towards tackling gender inequality. For example, Mars addresses gender issues across all its value chains (including, but not specifically, cocoa) as part of the company’s global sustainability plan, the Sustainable in a Generation Plan launched in 2017. Mars’s efforts in Ghana, though limited, have focused predominantly on creating producer groups or cooperatives, training on good agricultural practices, and creating income-diversification activities to improve income for women. Mars is doing little in other important areas such as improving women’s land rights and tenure, access to leadership positions, and participation in cooperatives and producer groups. According to Mars, the company sources cocoa from suppliers in Ghana and does not intervene directly on the ground. This research did find gaps and limited disclosure of supplier interventions so it is also important to note that companies can play a role to close those gaps.

Mondelēz's commitments and actions to promoting gender equality across its cocoa supply chain is mainly through the Cocoa Life programme. Cocoa Life in Ghana systematically integrate training of women and men cocoa farmers on good agricultural practices, income-diversification activities to improve income for women, improving women's land rights, participation of women in cooperatives and producer groups and encouraging women's leadership in structures such as the Women Extension Volunteers, Cooperative Societies, VSLA leaders, Community Action Committee Chairpersons. A Mondelez representative mentioned that the company has Gender Dialogue Platforms in Ghana.

The Nestlé Cocoa Plan represents the main entry point through which Nestlé is delivering on its commitment to gender equality in Ghana. Nestlé has focused greatly on VSLA projects, combined with Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) methodology, to empower women and men cocoa farmers to overcome gender norms and make prudent financial decisions. Nestlé recognizes that access to land is a big challenge for women cocoa farmers; it recognizes the problem of women's limited access to inputs for cocoa production and the challenge of improving women's acquisition of such inputs. However, addressing women's time poverty and heavy work burden because of household chores has not been systematically integrated into Nestlé's core sustainability interventions.

The report calls on the companies to:

- Provide sex-disaggregated data on their progress on commitments made toward gender equality on annual basis – in their annual reports.
- Commit to and enhance actions to improve women's access to cooperatives, inputs, training, and up-to-date extension services.
- Commit to and expedite actions to improve women's access to credits and financial services.
- Commit to and implement effective actions to improve women's leadership positions at various levels, including prioritizing cooperatives that have women in leadership positions.
- Commit to tackling time poverty and put women's economic empowerment at the heart of business operations.
- Institute deliberate policies that recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid work so as to free time for women to actively participate in economic activities.
- Work with agribusiness suppliers to improve transparency and actions on human rights protections in the company's supply chain.
- Publish a detailed, time-bound, multiyear action plan for how suppliers will implement – and report on the implementation of – the company's relevant policies on women.

# INTRODUCTION

This report examines the gender equality programs chocolate-making companies Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé – and their agribusiness suppliers – are implementing in the cocoa supply chains of Ghana, a key sourcing country. It analyzes the progress of these three companies regarding commitments they have made to reduce gender inequalities across their cocoa supply chains.

This report emerges from the global concern that today's food system is not working for everyone,<sup>1</sup> particularly not for large numbers of women and small-scale food producers. These workers are at the heart of food production yet often lack secure rights to the land they depend on, which makes them vulnerable to dispossessions by governments, private sector investors, and even family members for expanding agricultural commodity production. Women producers often have limited access to inputs, markets, land, and credit – factors that contribute to gender inequity.

In February 2013, Oxfam launched the Behind the Brands campaign to challenge 10 of the world's biggest food and beverage companies (referred to as the 'Big 10') on their social and environmental policies and practices, and to amplify the voices of key stakeholders (such as farmers, communities, consumers, and investors) calling on these companies to take actions to create a truly just and sustainable food system. These 10 companies were targeted by the campaign because they collectively generate revenues of over \$1 billion per day and employ millions in their supply chains, making them the most powerful branded actors among food and beverage producers. Between 2013 and 2016, the campaign sought to drive more sustainable sourcing policies and practices among these 10 biggest food and beverage companies globally.

Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé are three of these 10 companies that responded to the campaign by making significant new commitments to reducing gender inequality across their cocoa supply chains. Over the past few years, Oxfam has continued to engage these companies, both on the global level and in Ghana specifically, to monitor their progress and provide advisory support regarding implementation of their commitments. This study analyzes the gender equality programs Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé – and their suppliers – are implementing in the cocoa sector in Ghana, providing insights into the extent to which these companies and their suppliers are delivering on their gender commitments. It follows up on global commitments made by these chocolate companies to (1) conduct and publish impact assessments on women in their cocoa supply chains in order to understand and show how this population is faring in Ghana, (2) develop a specific action plan to address issues raised by the assessments that could lead to improved conditions for women, (3) sign on to the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles, seven principles for businesses offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and community, which demonstrate each company's commitment at the CEO level to empowering women in the company's entire operations, and (4) engage with other powerful actors in the cocoa industry to develop sector wide programs that address gender inequality.

This report is intended to facilitate a dialogue among the companies, Oxfam, and relevant stakeholders on the ways gender equality and women's economic empowerment can be enhanced in the Ghanaian cocoa sector for a truly just and sustainable food system. This report is limited to discussions on gender equality and does not cover the companies' activities in other areas such as water, health and sanitation, climate, or environmental protection.

# OVERVIEW OF THE GLOBAL COMMITMENTS BY THE CHOCOLATE COMPANIES

As part of their responses toward creating equality for women cocoa in the cocoa supply chain, the chocolate companies made the following commitments when the 'Behind the Brands Campaign':

1. Conduct and publish impact assessments on women in their cocoa supply chains in order to understand and show how women were faring. As such all the three companies committed to conducting a gender impact assessment in Côte d'Ivoire, the top cocoa-producing country, by 2014.
2. By 2020, the companies will each conduct and publish impact assessments in two more key sourcing countries. Impact assessments will be conducted by third party organizations.
3. Put in place a specific action plan within a year's time that will address issues raised by the assessments and lead to the improvement of poor conditions.
4. Sign up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles. The principles demonstrate the companies' commitment at the CEO level to the empowerment of women across their entire operations
5. Engage with other powerful actors in the cocoa industry to develop sector-wide programs that address gender inequality

Following a section describing our methodology, this report analyzes the three companies' progress on the four commitments. Because agribusinesses are powerful actors that provide links between the people who produce the world's food and consumers, the report further looks at steps taken by the main suppliers of the big chocolate companies – Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Cocomo (now known as Beyond Beans), and Olam – towards promoting gender equality.

# OVERVIEW OF THE COCOA LANDSCAPE IN GHANA

The cocoa sector forms a critical economic sector in Ghana. Cocoa contributes significantly to the GDP of the country; it is a major earner of foreign exchange and is a source of employment or economic livelihood for nearly 800,000 households. The main stakeholder groups in the value chains of cocoa include farmers/producers, input suppliers, licensed buying companies (LBCs), aggregators, local processors, government regulatory and promotive agencies, civil society organizations, and international development partners. In this section we review the cocoa value chain and then review the key international partners also involved in the cocoa landscape in Ghana.

## COCOA VALUE CHAIN

The cocoa value chain in Ghana is complex but can be simplified to three main steps: Farmers grow, harvest, and dry cocoa beans. After the beans have been dried, LBCs buy the cocoa from these farmers. (Regulations in Ghana permit only LBCs to purchase cocoa directly from farmers.) The LBCs aggregate and bag the cocoa and make it ready for quality checks by the Quality Control Company, a subsidiary of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

COCOBOD is a specialized agency of the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) responsible for the production, regulation, research, extension, internal and external marketing, and quality control of cocoa. COCOBOD also has other specialized agencies that undertake pre-harvest and post-harvest functions to develop the cocoa sector. These agencies include the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), the Seed Production Division (SPD), and the Cocoa Health Extension Division (CHED). Other subsidiaries are the Quality Control Company, as mentioned, and the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC). Every year, following recommendations from the Producer Price Review Committee, the government announces the price to be paid to farmers for each ton of cocoa.

After processors buy the cocoa beans they process them, either to intermediate products (liquor, butter, and powder) or to chocolate couvertures and compounds, as is the case of Barry Callebaut. Some LBCs, such as Olam, have a processing subsidiary. Nestlé also has a factory in Tema, Ghana, and the company confirmed that Milo energy cubes are produced there. Due to a series of acquisitions, three processing companies account for about 60 percent of all traded cocoa: Barry Callebaut, Cargill, and Olam.<sup>2</sup> Mars, Mondelēz, and Nestlé buy cocoa from processors and agribusiness suppliers.

Figure 1: A simplified cocoa value chain and pathways of gender commitment programs

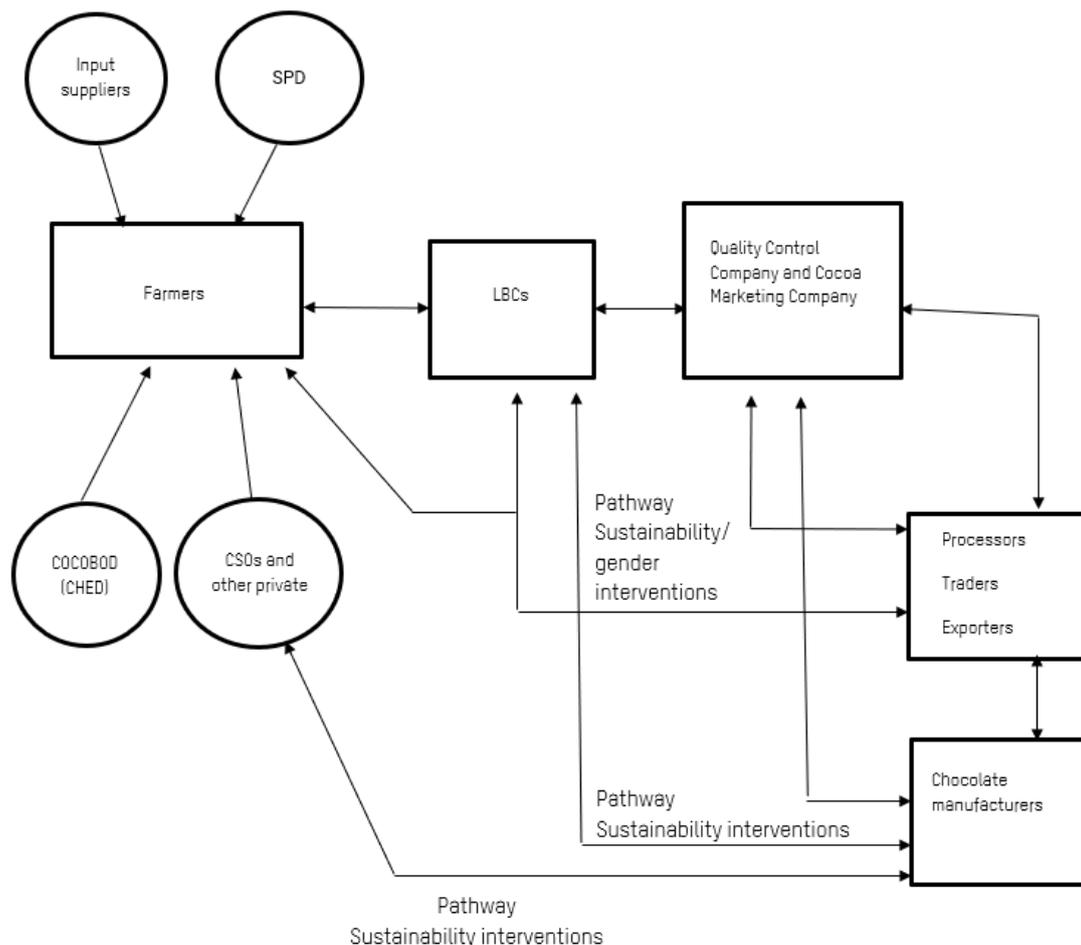


Table 1: Overview of different actors across the cocoa value chain

| Actor(s)  | Function(s)   | Outputs  |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Private input dealers, COCOBOD's Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) and Seed Production Unit (SPU)</i> | Input supply  | Supply seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides  |
| <i>Farmers</i>  | Production  | Grow and harvest cocoa beans   |
| <i>Licensed buying companies (LBCs)</i>   | Marketing within Ghana  | Purchase cocoa beans from farmers and deliver to COCOBOD                                 |
| <i>Haulers</i>  | Transportation  | Transport cocoa beans from LBCs to ports   |
| <i>Cocoa Marketing Company</i>  | Exports   | Works with agribusiness suppliers to export cocoa beans                                  |
| <i>Agribusiness suppliers, processors, and grinders</i>   | Processing and refining cocoa inputs that go into manufactured cocoa products | Produce cocoa powder, cocoa butter, cocoa liquor, cocoa couvertures, and cocoa compounds |
| <i>Cocoa waste companies</i>  | Cocoa waste marketing   | Export inferior cocoa and cocoa waste  |

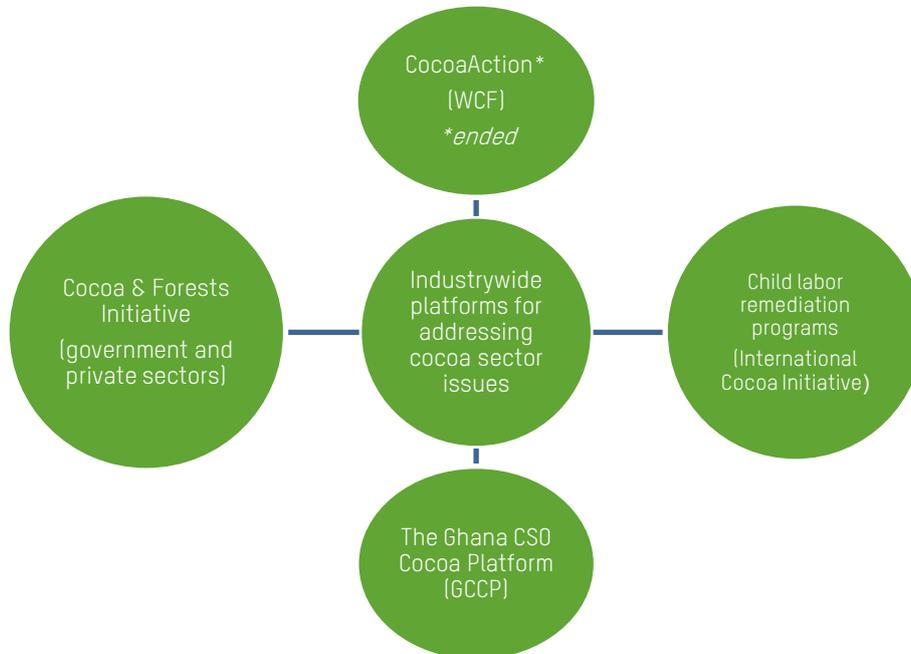
|                                       |                            |   |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Manufacturers and processors</i>   | Manufacture cocoa products | Make cakes, chocolate bars, and cocoa beverages |
| <i>Big supermarkets and retailers</i> | Retail                     | Deliver products to consumers                   |

## INDUSTRYWIDE PLATFORMS AND INITIATIVES TACKLING COCOA SECTOR CHALLENGES

Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé interact as industry players on several platforms and initiatives, including CocoaAction (ended in 2020), the Cocoa & Forests Initiative, the International Cocoa Initiative (on child labor remediation programs) and Oxfam in Ghana’s System Innovation for Women’s Economic Empowerment (SIWEE) initiative.

CocoaAction, established by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) in 2014 to address critical issues facing the cocoa industry, brought together nine companies operating in the cocoa sector (Barry Callebaut, Blommer, Cargill, Ferrero, Hershey, Mars, Mondelez, Nestlé and Olam) to pursue ways to enhance sustainability in the sector. CocoaAction described itself as ‘a voluntary industry-wide strategy for a rejuvenated and economically viable cocoa sector.’<sup>3</sup> CocoaAction focused on issues of social and environmental sustainability as well as on women’s economic empowerment. CocoaAction ended in 2020. The WCF has also developed tools and resources to guide its members to integrate gender concerns into their programming (for example, its Gender Guidance Notes and Gender Continuum Marker).<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 2: Overview of industrywide platforms for cocoa value chain actors**



The **Cocoa & Forests Initiative** (CFI) unites the biggest cocoa-producing countries and key cocoa companies in addressing deforestation by committing to not convert more forestland to cocoa production. The initiative, which was signed by 34 private sector actors in the cocoa supply chain and the Ghanaian government during the 2017 UN Climate Change Conference (COP23), also

recognizes the need for a special focus on women and youth in its activities and stipulates that all programs should be 'gender and youth sensitive.' The initiative further encourages signatory companies to improve supply chain mapping in the cocoa sector in Ghana, and signatories of CFI's Joint Framework for Action commit to improving supply chain mapping, 'with 100% of cocoa sourcing traceable from farm to first purchase point by 31 December 2019.'<sup>5</sup> The private sector signatories and Ghana's government have developed a joint action plan that maps out key principles, steps, and milestones. Each of the private sector signatories operating in Ghana has also developed its own action plan detailing specific intervention it intends to implement to achieve the targets in the Cocoa & Forests Initiative.

The **International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)** works to 'unite the forces of the cocoa and chocolate industry, civil society, farming communities and national governments'<sup>6</sup> to tackle the issue of child labor in the cocoa sector. Although the aim of the ICI is to ensure children's rights and a better future for children, its core program involves community empowerment and gender empowerment. Mars, Nestlé, and their agribusiness suppliers are part of this platform, along with civil society representatives that include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like Solidaridad and Save the Children, and workers' associations like the General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) in Ghana. The initiative is also advised by UNICEF and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The **Ghana Civil-society Cocoa Platform (GCCP)** is an independent campaign and advocacy platform for civil society actors in the cocoa sector – comprising of Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Community-based Organizations, Farmer-based Organizations, Farmer Associations, Media and interested individuals. The main aim of the platform is to advocate and influence cocoa sector policies and programmes. GCCP is currently being hosted by SEND Ghana with membership across the country, especially in cocoa growing areas.

# **GENDER INEQUITIES IN THE COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN: KEY ISSUES REQUIRING ACTIONS**

Gender inequalities in the cocoa sector constrain growth and development. This section highlights some of the core challenges faced by women in cocoa production. These challenges are outlined below:

1. Women's access to land for cocoa production
2. Women's rights/tenure to land
3. Women's access to markets and financial services
4. Women's access to inputs for cocoa production
5. Women's access to training and extension education
6. Women in leadership positions
7. Women's access to producer groups or cooperatives
8. Women's disproportionate burden of household chores
9. Overall women's improved income or economic empowerment

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND FOR COCOA PRODUCTION**

Land is a key asset for agricultural production. It is also a source of social and legal entitlements. Field interviews undertaken for this report suggest that access to land for cocoa farming is generally becoming difficult owing to illegal mining and conversion of lands to more immediate cash crops, such as rubber trees.

The legal and institutional framework regarding land in Ghana does not overtly discriminate against women. However, a combination of sociocultural practices in property ownership, land access, land acquisition, inheritance, and other customs means women cocoa farmers in many cocoa-growing communities have more limited access to land for cocoa production compared with men in these communities.

Our literature review and conversations during field visits revealed that women's access to land for cocoa production is aided mainly through endowment from families/clans or requests to fathers or husbands to allocate a separate cocoa farm to an individual woman's control. Acquiring land in other ways is difficult for women. Women farmers working (together with husbands) as tenants, sharecroppers, and hired laborers who play critical roles in the production of cocoa face particularly daunting tasks when it comes to access to land for cocoa production for their own control.

Evidence from the literature review and community focus group discussions reveals that women are often perceived by land-owning families to lack the physical strength to be cocoa producers in their own right (unless accompanied by husbands or other male relatives) and that they generally lack the financial wherewithal to make the initial financial payments required to acquire land for cocoa production.

Commitments to gender equality, therefore, require prioritized attention to actions that facilitate women's aspirations to obtain land for cocoa production. Companies can use their power and influence to aid women in obtaining land for cocoa production.

## **WOMEN'S RIGHTS/TENURE TO LAND**

Aside from the overall difficulty women face in accessing land for farming, women in Ghana also experience severe land insecurity challenges and generally have insecure land rights. Not only are women less likely than men to own or have control over the land they cultivate with cocoa, but most women working as cocoa farmers also have limited knowledge about their rights in relation to land.

Conversations held during field visits also indicated that women working as cocoa farmers often have no documentation or agreements covering the land they are using and its boundaries – a situation that renders them at risk for dispossession when male relatives or their husbands die, or marriages are dissolved. Also, the traditional systems of land tenure mean that men constitute the majority of recognized farmers, which makes them the main recipients of training, extension services, access to finance, and possession of passbooks (special books issued to farmers for recording cocoa purchases or transactions) required for selling cocoa to LBCs and one of the key means to proving that a person is a cocoa farmer, which aids his or her access to services such as input distribution and credit.

Commitments toward gender equality in the cocoa sector should incorporate actions from companies to use their influence and power to advocate and enhance the rights and security of land for women and disadvantaged men in the cocoa supply chain.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO MARKETS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Most people living in rural Ghana do not have access to a bank, credit union, or similar financial services, and this lack of access is more prevalent for women. Compared with their male counterparts, women farmers in the cocoa sector were 20 percent less likely to have received a loan in the past year and almost 50 percent less likely to have a bank account.<sup>7</sup> And even if women do have access to a bank, the conditions of the banks to be granted a loan are rigid and constraining for women. Although recent years have seen the proliferation of microfinance and cooperative programs to bridge this gap in services, significant barriers exist as most rural farmers are not in close proximity to financial (and quasi-financial) institutions. Furthermore, as noted, in the cocoa sector, men usually possess the passbooks required for sale of cocoa to LBCs; the passbooks allow them to access finance, providing further barriers for women to have collateral.<sup>8</sup> Informal mechanisms such as moneylenders sometimes fill the gap in providing financing, but moneylenders are usually risky due to high interest rates, lack of formal regulation, and the potential hazard of indentured servitude. Limited access to finance and credit contributes to women's lower levels of access to important farm inputs such as fertilizers and chemicals, along with lower levels of technical training on the use of such inputs, ultimately reducing household income and family well-being. Given these factors, clear actions to facilitate women's access to finance should be central to interventions and commitments to gender equality in the cocoa sector. Having better access to financial services would allow women to escape the low investment–low production–low returns cycle.

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INPUTS FOR COCOA PRODUCTION

It is clear that access to productive inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, paid labor, and farming technologies for cocoa production are more constrained for women farmers than for men. In the cocoa sector, for instance, women farmers are 25% less likely to have received training and they are 30-40% less likely than men to use crucial farm inputs such as fertilizer.<sup>9</sup> Women are 20 percent less likely to use insecticide, 66 percent less likely to use herbicide, and about 30 percent less likely to use motorized mist blowers.<sup>10</sup>

Given the importance of inputs to cocoa outputs and the subsequent impact on household income, any commitment to creating equality for women cocoa farmers needs to integrate effective actions to make inputs (specifically, fertilizers, pesticides, but also tools like machetes used for weeding and clearing weeds) accessible to women.

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EXTENSION EDUCATION

Training in good agronomic and agricultural practices enables farmers to learn about and apply newer production techniques that increase yield and income from produce. However, women cocoa farmers in Ghana are 25 percent less likely to have received any training in the past cocoa season in comparison to their male counterparts. At the same time, less than 5 percent of agricultural extension services reach women, and only 15 percent of agricultural extension agents are female.<sup>11</sup> Women's limited access to training and technologies results in several negative consequences for women: increased health and safety risks, less investment in agricultural inputs and thus reduced productivity, lower-quality cocoa beans, and lower income from economic activities.

Our interviews during community visits highlighted several factors that contribute to these statistics. First, LBCs usually communicate with farmers they know regarding training and other opportunities, meaning that women farmers (who are usually working as unpaid family labor and are rarely direct suppliers of cocoa beans to LBCs) must rely on their husbands or male relatives for access to training, inputs, and information, and are often not included in training. In addition, available training often fails to recognize how schedules for training compete with women's care work. Another barrier is that, even if women do attend a technical training, their often-lower literacy levels may hinder the benefit of the training. In the cocoa sector and others, additional biases that exclude women from training include training selection criteria, the limited recognition of women's work in the agricultural value chain, and the related notion that men are the main economic agents.

Thus, addressing gender equality in the cocoa sector will require that companies and other stakeholders look for more creative, inclusive, and accessible ways to deliver training and extension services to enable both men and women to benefit equally from such interventions.

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Discriminatory laws, patriarchal structures, social norms, traditional division of labor, lack of education, and women's lack of confidence as leaders combine to prevent or discourage women in agriculture from taking higher-value productive roles and from accessing leadership positions in producer groups, in their communities, and in local government. Our field visits revealed that at the community level, women are unlikely to take roles as leaders. Similarly, women are poorly represented in collective decision-making processes in local government, and women are also

underrepresented in formal political spheres at higher political levels. It is important therefore that commitments to gender equality explicitly include actions that create opportunities for women to occupy leadership positions at various levels, including within cooperatives or societies, in their communities, and in local governance.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO COOPERATIVES**

Farmers cooperatives and/or associations help women work collectively to overcome some of the barriers that limit access to productive assets for cocoa production. However, women's membership in and, by extension, leadership of such cooperatives is usually very few. Our field interviews suggested that although cooperatives are usually open to all farmers, it is a common practice for the women to stay off and rather allow their husbands and male relatives to join such cooperatives. Furthermore, our interviews and analysis of the available literature showed that sociocultural norms mean that some of these cooperatives prioritize the leadership of men and subordinate women's voices in decision-making. Other reasons for women's lesser participation in cooperatives and the scarcity of women in leadership in cooperatives include the low access women have to formal education as well as the gendered division of labor in Ghana, which requires women to spend more time taking care of family members and household chores, thus reducing their available time to participate in cooperatives. A commitment to gender equality should include actions that increase access and limit the barriers women face so that women can participate fully in cooperatives and producers' groups.

## **TIME POVERTY AND THE DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES ON WOMEN**

Ghana has discriminatory social norms, perceptions, and cultural attitudes that significantly affect women's engagement with the economy and in productive activities across the cocoa value chain. As a consequence of Ghanaian sociocultural expectations that tasks like cleaning, cooking, other household management duties, and caring for children and the elderly are 'women's work,' women engaged in cocoa production in the country have higher workloads than their male counterparts, resulting in greater time poverty for women. This 'women's work,' rarely paid although it contributes to local and national economies, limits the time and energy that women have to devote to paid work. Women are also time poor because they have limited access to time-saving technologies that could ease the burden of their activities. In cocoa production, time poverty manifests itself particularly at the post-harvesting stage of production when women head-carry the plucked/fermented cocoa beans over a long distance for drying at homes before the cocoa beans are sent for weighing at sheds. Any commitment to addressing gender inequality must incorporate actions that bring changes in community and household relations to enable women to contribute to social and economic development, both through their existing roles, and new productive roles.

## **WOMEN'S IMPROVED INCOME GENERATION AND OVERALL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

The barriers facing women cocoa farmers – in relation to their limited access to productive resources, finance, and land; unfavorable sociocultural norms; and limited recognition of the value of their time – all impede on the income-generation potential and overall empowerment of women. Addressing gender inequality successfully requires an integrated and effective way of tackling these barriers to improve the livelihoods, income, and savings potentials of women in cocoa.

# HOW COMPANIES ARE DELIVERING ON THEIR GENDER COMMITMENTS

In this section, we review progress Mars, Mondelēz, and Nestlé have made on the specific gender commitments they made and then focus on each of the three chocolate companies in terms of how they are addressing the nine gender inequity issues identified in Section 3 in the cocoa supply chain of Ghana.

## PROGRESS ON SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS

As noted, the three companies agreed to four key commitments: undertaking and publishing impact assessments on women in their cocoa supply chains, developing and enacting action plans based on these assessments, signing on to the Women's Empowerment Principles developed by the United Nations, and engaging with influential cross-sector actors to develop programs to address gender inequality in the cocoa farming sector. These four commitments and the companies' responses are discussed further in this section.

## PUBLISHING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ON WOMEN IN COCOA SUPPLY CHAINS

The three companies committed to publishing impact assessments on women in their cocoa supply chains to understand and show how women are faring. The three companies first undertook gender impact assessments of Côte d'Ivoire and agreed to conduct similar impact assessments in other key sourcing countries, such as Ghana, by 2020.

- Mars prepared and published an impact assessment<sup>12</sup> regarding cocoa communities already targeted by the company's Vision for Change (V4C) program in Côte d'Ivoire,<sup>13</sup> however, a gender and impact assessment on women in Mars's cocoa supply chains in Ghana had not been published at the time of this research, in July 2019. In 2019, Mars engaged KIT Royal Tropical Institute (known as KIT), to conduct a gender impact assessment within Mars's supply chains in Ghana, Indonesia, and Côte d'Ivoire.
- Mondelēz developed two gender impact assessments: one for Côte d'Ivoire, commissioned to CARE International, and one for Ghana, undertaken by researchers from Harvard University. These reports have been made available to the public.
- Nestlé committed to placing additional focus on gender issues when an independent external assessment of the company's cocoa supply chains was undertaken. The Fair Labor Association (FLA), which conducted the assessment, however, examined only Côte d'Ivoire; a specific gender assessment of the cocoa supply chain of Ghana has not yet been published.

**Table 2: Company progress on researching and publishing impact assessments on women in cocoa supply chains**

| Company         | Status                                   |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Mars</i>     | Completed (in December 2020)             |
| <i>Mondelēz</i> | Completed (at the time of this research) |
| <i>Nestlé</i>   | Not comprehensively done for Ghana       |

## DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS AND ENACTING THESE ACTION PLANS

The three companies also committed to putting in place specific action plans to address issues identified in the impact assessments that could lead to improving the situation of women in their cocoa supply chains.

- Mars has not published and made public an action plan detailing how it is addressing gender inequities in the cocoa supply chain in Ghana. However, a company representative stated that Mars supports supplier-led interventions on women’s empowerment in Ghana.
- Mondelēz developed an action plan to incorporate gender equity in its Cocoa Life sustainability program in both Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. The Cocoa Life program has also been extended to other countries. Mondelēz also periodically provides updates on its progress in regards to women’s empowerment in Cocoa Life annual reports.<sup>14</sup> A Mondelez representative highlighted that there is a Gender Strategy that informs the actions in Ghana.
- Nestlé initially developed an action plan in response to FLA’s gender assessment, though not all the recommendations derived from the assessment were incorporated. Nestlé subsequently developed updated action plans for 2014 and 2015. Although the FLA plan focused on Côte d’Ivoire, it had two performance indicators that applied to Ghana: tracking women farmers who supplied cocoa to Nestlé, and women farmers trained in good agricultural practices. Two more performance indicators for Ghana were added to the 2014 plan: women trainers as a percentage of total trainers and women in decision-making positions in farmer organizations. Nestlé promised that it will ‘measure progress against the actions outlined ... and report on our achievements on an annual basis,’<sup>15</sup> and in 2019, the company released a progress report.<sup>16</sup> Nestlé has also published a best practice in ‘empowering women across the entire value chain’ to outline actions to improve livelihoods of women in five priority sourcing locations by 2020.<sup>17</sup> However, implementation has focused on Colombia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Côte d’Ivoire,<sup>18</sup> not Ghana.

**Table 3: Company progress on action plans**

| Company         | Status            |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Mars</b>     | Not done in Ghana |
| <b>Mondelēz</b> | Completed         |
| <b>Nestlé</b>   | Not done in Ghana |

## SIGNING ON TO THE UN WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

The three companies have signed on to the seven UN Women’s Empowerment Principles. Future research may be needed to understand the extent to which all the principles are being operationalized across the supply chain.

Table 4: Company progress related to signing on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles

| Company         | Status    |
|-----------------|-----------|
| <i>Mars</i>     | Completed |
| <i>Mondelēz</i> | Completed |
| <i>Nestlé</i>   | Completed |

## ENGAGEMENT WITH INFLUENTIAL ACTORS TO DEVELOP SECTOR-WIDE PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY

In Ghana, some of the influential actors and initiatives for addressing gender issues in the cocoa farming sector include CocoaAction, previously coordinated by the World Cocoa Foundation; the child protection program coordinated by the International Cocoa Initiative; and the Cocoa & Forests Initiative. To date, the three chocolate companies were members of CocoaAction and are signatories to the Cocoa & Forests Initiative. Under the Cocoa & Forests Initiative, the companies committed to ‘develop gender- and youth-sensitive action plans by December 2018.’ However, no update on the state of implementation is currently publicly available.

Table 5: Company progress regarding engagement with influential actors to develop sector-wide programs to address gender inequality

| Company         | Status      |
|-----------------|-------------|
| <i>Mars</i>     | In progress |
| <i>Mondelēz</i> | In progress |
| <i>Nestlé</i>   | In progress |

## MARS

Mars, one of the world’s leading food manufacturers, produces well-known candy and chocolate brands including M&M’s, Dove, and Snickers. Mars has been sourcing cocoa in Ghana for a long time and buys cocoa from agribusiness suppliers, such as Cargill, ETG (formerly Cocomect) and Olam, amongst others.

## MARS: SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM AND COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

Mars addresses gender across all of its value chains (including, but not specifically, cocoa) as part of the company’s global sustainability plan, the **Sustainable in a Generation** Plan launched in 2017<sup>19</sup> Mars delivers its global commitment on gender equality under the Thriving People pillar of this plan, focusing on three main areas to drive change: increasing income, respecting human rights, and unlocking opportunities for women in its workplaces, in marketplaces, and across supply chains.

In 2018 Mars launched its Cocoa for Generations Strategy (C4G) backed by a plan to invest \$1 billion over ten years (2018–2028) with the ambition of contributing to transforming the cocoa supply chain so that global sustainable development goals are met, human rights are respected, the environment is protected, and cocoa farmers, their families and their communities have the opportunity to thrive. **Cocoa for Generations** has two pillars: Responsible Cocoa and Sustainable Cocoa.<sup>20</sup> The Responsible Cocoa pillar of Cocoa for Generations aims to ensure that by 2025, 100 percent of cocoa is responsibly sourced globally and is traceable, though details of implementation of this objective has not yet been made public. Responsible Cocoa also focuses on having systems

in place to address deforestation, child labor, and higher incomes for farmers. The Sustainable Cocoa pillar hopes to demonstrate that significant change in farmer income and livelihoods is possible. In partnership with an initial global group of 75,000 cocoa-farming families and cocoa suppliers, Mars intends to test ways to increase productivity, income, resilience, and overall sustainability through crop and income diversification, gender programs, village savings and loan models, and farm development plans.

According to a company representative interviewed, Mars's sustainability programs and focus have traditionally been in Côte d'Ivoire (for commercial reasons). Mars's gender work with women farmers and producers in Ghana is largely exerted through suppliers and other strategic partners such as the International Cocoa Initiative and CARE. Interviews showed that as part of efforts to understand gender equality in cocoa farming households, Mars has an agreement with its agribusiness suppliers to collect gender-disaggregated data on the farmers who supply them.

## **MARS: GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY**

As noted, Mars has agreed to the key commitments of the Behind the Brands campaign: undertaking and publishing impact assessments on women in its cocoa supply chains, developing and enacting action plans based on these assessments, signing on to the Women's Empowerment Principles developed by the United Nations, and engaging with influential actors to develop programs to address gender inequality in the cocoa farming sector.<sup>21</sup>

Beyond these commitments, Mars post-2015 sustainability strategies announced further global benchmarks and ambitions for women in its cocoa supply chains. While Mars's Women Empowerment Plan focused almost exclusively on Côte d'Ivoire and made no commitments in other countries, in Mars's Full Potential initiative plan, Mars stated that it would 'take actions to provide more opportunities for women which will not only benefit women across the globe, but also benefit business and our society.'<sup>22</sup> Also, at the launch of Cocoa for Generations, Mars committed to implementing crop and income diversification programs, gender programs, village savings and loan models, and farm development plans to increase productivity, income, resilience, and overall sustainability.<sup>23</sup>

## **MARS: EXTENT OF DELIVERY OF GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY**

### **CONDUCTING AND PUBLISHING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ON WOMEN**

Mars is making progress on delivery of its global commitments to gender equality, although gaps remain. In 2013, Mars contracted a third party to prepare a gender and impact assessment on cocoa communities in Côte d'Ivoire already involved in Mars's Vision for Change (V4C) program,<sup>24</sup> which aims to achieve sustainable cocoa production by jointly addressing farmer productivity and community issues.

### **PUTTING IN PLACE SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS TO ADDRESS GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN**

The gender assessment study completed by KIT in 2020 is expected to provide the basis for an integrated gender equality strategy and approach in the Mars cocoa supply chain. However, at the time of completing this report in October 2021, Mars has not published a country-specific action plan for Ghana. A company representative said that Mars plans with and supports agribusiness suppliers and other partners in implementing annual actions and interventions (such as trainings on good agricultural practices) that are expected to improve conditions of women in the company's cocoa supply chain.

## **SIGNING ON TO THE UN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES**

Mars Chocolate signed on to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles in April 2013 and remains a signatory.<sup>25</sup>

## **ENGAGING WITH OTHER POWERFUL ACTORS IN THE COCOA INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP SECTOR-WIDE PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY**

Mars was part of CocoaAction and participates with industry platforms such as the International Cocoa Initiative, which seeks to eliminate child labor. Mars has also signed on to the Cocoa & Forests Initiative and made a commitment to develop gender- and youth-sensitive action plans by December 2018.

## **MARS: EXTENT OF PROGRESS ON FURTHER ACTIONS FOR CREATING GENDER EQUALITY**

The 2018 scorecard of the Sustainable in a Generation Plan attests that Mars has created opportunities for and engaged 7,700 women in its cocoa and mint supply chains 'with economic empowerment programs designed to boost their savings rates and entrepreneurial skills.'<sup>26</sup> The scorecard further reports that 96,000 farmers have been reached with a 'combination of good agricultural practices, access to inputs, [and] the latest plant science.' However, the scorecard does not disaggregate these figures by country, making it difficult to analyze how much of this progress is being achieved in Ghana.

Mars's actions have focused predominantly in Côte d'Ivoire, and Mars had not conducted a gender assessment in Ghana at the time of the research for this report. However, Mars engaged KIT to conduct a gender assessment in Ghana, Indonesia, and Côte d'Ivoire in late 2019, and KIT's report was released in 2020. A Mars representative reported that Mars was rapidly scaling up child labor monitoring and remediation strategies and VSLA into Ghana.

Further interviews and publicly available information show that of the nine gender inequity issues (identified in Section 4), Mars's efforts through its suppliers in Ghana have focused predominantly on creating producer groups or cooperatives, training on good agricultural practices, and creating income-diversification activities to improve income for women. Mars is doing little in other important areas such as improving women's land rights and tenure, access to leadership positions, and participation in cooperatives and producer groups.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND FOR COCOA PRODUCTION AND LAND TENURE**

Mars's representatives reported that Mars advocates for better working conditions and respect for human rights for all workers across its supply chain. However, Mars has not addressed land access nor land tenure issues in Ghana. The gender assessment study completed by KIT in 2020 is expected to provide the basis for an integrated gender equality strategy and approach in the Mars cocoa supply chain.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO MARKETS, CREDITS, AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Mars's women's empowerment plan and the unlocking of women's opportunities component of its Sustainable in a Generation Plan place significant emphasis on women's access to finance and income-generating opportunities. However, those interviewed noted that Mars's women's empowerment efforts were undertaken primarily in Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana, Mars's main action and delivery mechanism to improve access to credit and finance for women is VSLA; Mars and CARE expanded their collaboration by investing \$10 million with the goal of setting up more VSLAs targeting about 50,000 members in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire by 2025.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INPUTS FOR COCOA PRODUCTION**

Those interviewed mentioned that although Mars has done little work in Ghana on inputs, its partners, traders, and suppliers continue to provide education and guidance to women cocoa farmers.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EXTENSION EDUCATION**

To improve women's access to training and extension services, Mars works through its partners and suppliers to offer training on good agronomic practices for women cocoa producers in its sourcing communities in Ghana. It is clear that there is a need for greater disclosure of outcomes and impact of key suppliers that Mars sources from. The agribusiness section below highlights this gap further.

## **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

Although Mars acknowledges that the lack of women's leadership is a constraint women cocoa farmers face, Mars is not currently operating any programs in Ghana to increase the number of leadership positions held by women in its supply chain.

## **WOMEN'S DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

While Mars's suppliers and partners may be working on the issue of the disproportionate burden of household chores on women, this issue has not been systematically integrated into Mars's programs in Ghana. The Mars representative interviewed indicated awareness of the need to tackle broader gender norms, injustices, and sociocultural practices that drive child labor and gender inequality.

## **INCOME GENERATION AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Mars's Cocoa for Generations strategy recognizes that women play an important role in cocoa production. However, there are few details about the plan's progress in Ghana. Mars focuses on training and income diversification, the main actions it intends to implement to improve income generation and women's economic empowerment.

# **MONDELÉZ**

Mondelēz, a multinational confectionery, food, and beverage company, has owned the well-known chocolate brand Cadbury since 2010. It has been operating in Ghana since 1908 (originally as Cadbury and then later as Kraft). Mondelēz's present sustainability program was established in 2008, as Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, and from 2012 to date as Cocoa Life. Mondelēz is rolling out Cocoa Life to some of its other brands, such as Milka and Green & Blacks. At least 25 percent of the cocoa used for making Cadbury chocolates is sourced from Ghana,<sup>27</sup> mainly from the Ashanti, Western, Western North, Ahafo, Eastern, and Central administrative regions.

Mondelēz has a long-standing relationship with the cocoa industry in Ghana. Its close working relationship continues in areas of research and development, seed production, seedling nurseries, extension support and services, quality control, and trading.

Mondelēz is not a licensed buying company and mainly works with Olam and Touton. However, it is able to work closely with farmers at the community level through Cocoa Life, which focuses on farming, community development, livelihoods, youth, and environment, with child well-being and women's empowerment as cross-cutting issues.

## **MONDELĒZ: SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM AND COMMITMENT TO GENDER AND EQUALITY**

Mondelēz's actions toward gender equality in the cocoa supply chain are strongly embedded in Cocoa Life, which is its overarching sustainability program in Ghana. The thematic areas of the Cocoa Life are farming, community, livelihoods, youth, and environment. To achieve specific gender goals, Mondelēz's key objectives are to facilitate women's equal access to Cocoa Life resources (for example, employment, markets, income-generation, and skills training); to take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making structures (for example, leading roles in planning and targeting); to recognize and reduce security risks incurred by women in Cocoa Life activities (for example, ensuring that interventions do not increase the risk of violence to women); and to improve generation, dissemination, and use of sex-disaggregated information for planning and monitoring. Available reports on Cocoa Life show that it prioritizes gender equality as a strategic approach in realizing its vision and mission.

Those interviewed said that Mondelēz continues to educate its staff on gender issues through ongoing staff training program on gender equality. Some staff members are initiated by the national lead implementation partner on gender, the NGO ABANTU for Development, in Ghana. ABANTU also under the Cocoa life programme undertakes assessments every year, focusing on a component of its gender mandate: Livelihoods and gender, VSLA and gender, the effectiveness of the gender dialogue platforms etc. Others are trained through regional exchanges and by the international gender team. Given its structure and nature of operations, a question remains as to whether Cocoa Life is really targeting Mondelēz producers and whether there is a way of tracing this. Those interviewed said that Cocoa Life targets Mondelēz producers.

Company representatives said that the sustainability program is built on an assumption that cocoa is predominantly a male crop despite women farmers' significant participation in the sector. As such, the programme has a strong orientation towards addressing gender inequality across the supply chain. Mondelēz also looks at the extent to which women's role in the household, especially in terms of decision-making, is amplified once their economic power is enhanced through both cocoa production and alternative livelihoods. As a consequence, Cocoa Life prioritizes gender equality as a strategic approach in realizing its vision and mission. Every year a gender work plan is produced. Out of that, an implementation plan and results framework are developed to enable Cocoa Life to track the extent of responsiveness to the above principles of gender equality promotion. The three levels of implementing the commitments to gender equality in Cocoa Life's program in Ghana are (1) dedicating an implementation partner to lead the process of gender mainstreaming in Cocoa Life in Ghana, (2) strengthening the capacities of all direct stakeholders of the Cocoa Life program in Ghana to enable them to mainstream gender in all their activities and to use specific gender tools such as gender analytical approaches developed to deal with direct stakeholders to ensure that there is understanding, ownership, and competency as related to the process of 'doing gender,' and (3) implementing capacity building, research, and awareness creation and leadership training among women as the main target beneficiaries in cocoa growing communities.

## **MONDELĒZ: GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY**

As noted, Mondelēz has agreed to the four key commitments of the Behind the Brands campaign: undertaking and publishing impact assessments on women in its cocoa supply chains, developing and enacting action plans based on these assessments, signing on to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles developed by the United Nations, and engaging with influential actors to develop programs to address gender inequality in the cocoa farming sector.

Following its gender assessment and subsequent publication of its action plan, Mondelēz committed to promote women's empowerment further by extending its reporting on gender rights in cocoa farming, ensuring a consistent approach to gender programs in key cocoa origin markets,

and advocating for industrywide actions. It further committed to the following actions to improve gender equality in Ghana.<sup>28</sup>

- Improving farming training for women farmers and women working on cocoa farms; increasing women's access to finance, farm inputs, and land ownership; increasing membership in farmer organizations.
- Helping women develop other livelihoods by increasing their access to finance, improving their business entrepreneurial skills, and teaching the importance of household food security.
- Empowering women to play an active role in decision-making in their households and communities, and in district and national farmer forums; engaging women in developing community action plans.
- Training community leaders, Cocoa Life implementing partners, and staff in gender awareness; engaging district and national government institutions on issues affecting women.
- Supporting literacy programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and community reading clubs.
- Tracking progress on key performance indicators and local metrics in response to the commitment to gender mainstreaming for each program objective and focus area.

In a 2015 update of its Cocoa Life program, Mondelēz adopted specific key performance indicators across its focus areas, and further committed to an annual publication of a sex-disaggregated report on the progress of Cocoa Life.

## **MONDELÉZ: EXTENT OF DELIVERY OF GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY**

### **CONDUCTING AND PUBLISHING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ON WOMEN**

Mondelēz developed two gender impact assessments – one for Côte d'Ivoire,<sup>29</sup> commissioned to CARE International, and one for Ghana, commissioned to researchers from Harvard University – which are publicly available.<sup>30</sup> These reports assess the conditions women face in the cocoa sector in the two countries.

### **PUTTING IN PLACE SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS TO ADDRESS GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN**

Following the publication of the two gender assessments, Mondelēz developed an action plan in 2014 (updated in 2015) in response to an external analysis done by Oxfam.<sup>31</sup> The action plan was incorporated into the gender component of the Cocoa Life sustainability program in both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The Cocoa Life program was extended to other countries with greater attention to gender issues. Mondelēz also periodically reports on its progress on women's empowerment in yearly Cocoa Life reports, of which the most recent one was in the *2018 Cocoa Life Progress Report*, published during the first quarter of 2019.<sup>32</sup>

Cocoa Life's annual report disaggregates progress by country but not by gender – contrary to the commitments made by Mondelēz during the 2015 update on Cocoa Life.<sup>33</sup> The 2018 annual report states that 447 cocoa farming demonstration plots have been established and 38,417 farmers have been trained on good agricultural practices (GAPs).<sup>34</sup> While the published report does not disaggregate information by gender, a Mondelēz representative said that 24,847 of those trained were men and the remaining 13,570 farmers trained were women. The 2018 annual report also states that Cocoa Life has trained 60,730 community members on gender awareness. Again, the report fails to disaggregate these training participants by gender; a company representative said the breakdown of those trained was 33,846 men and 26,884 women. There were also some 8,146 community members (4,606 men and 3,540 women) are involved in other income-generating activities.<sup>35</sup>

Mondelēz reports that two independent entities, Ipsos and FLOCERT, verify its impact on farmers and communities and measure progress toward Mondelēz’s goal of sourcing all of its cocoa sustainably. Ipsos measures progress on the ground by conducting farmer, farmer household, and community studies to evaluate Cocoa Life’s global key performance indicators across all Cocoa Life program areas. FLOCERT verifies the flow of cocoa from Cocoa Life communities into its supply chain with a focus on the benefits cocoa farmers receive, such as premium payments and trade terms.

There are two Cocoa Life progress reports that are important to note since this research was conducted, in 2019<sup>36</sup> and 2020.<sup>37</sup> In those reports are updated data that is relevant to take into account.

### **SIGNING ON TO THE UN WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES**

Mondelēz signed on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles in 2013.

### **ENGAGING WITH OTHER POWERFUL ACTORS IN THE COCOA INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP SECTOR WIDE PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY**

Mondelēz was part of CocoaAction is part of the International Cocoa Initiative.<sup>38</sup> Mondelēz has also signed on to the Cocoa & Forests Initiative.<sup>39</sup>

## **MONDELĒZ: EXTENT OF PROGRESS ON FURTHER ACTIONS FOR CREATING GENDER EQUALITY**

Mondelēz’s commitments and actions to promoting gender equality across its cocoa supply chain in Ghana integrate the nine key issues that significantly create disadvantages for women cocoa farmers (noted in Section 4). To understand the conditions of women in its supply chain, Mondelēz published an internal and third-party assessment of Cocoa Life in 2016.<sup>40</sup> Mondelēz also promised to undertake a robust evaluation of its actions, which will include data from control communities, to better understand the impact of Cocoa Life by the end of 2019.

### **WOMEN’S ACCESS TO LAND FOR COCOA PRODUCTION AND LAND TENURE**

Cocoa Life acknowledges that nearly 70 percent of the work on cocoa farms globally is done by women, despite women owning only approximately 2 percent of the farmland. Consequently, Cocoa Life has integrated actions to expand women’s access, ownership, and rights to farmlands into its activities. These actions include awareness raising on sustainable practices at the community level with the aim of supporting a paradigm shift among community leaders, husbands, and male family heads to support women’s access and rights to lands for cocoa production. Mondelēz is also exploring partnerships with land-rights organizations such as the Civil Society Coalition on Land (CICOL) to increase education on land rights among women.<sup>41</sup> In addition, Cocoa Life is providing technical assistance to farmers to map their cocoa farms, which is expected to lead to a better understanding of land tenure and to encourage women and men to acquire lands properly, with documentation. The 2018 annual report of Cocoa Life mentions that 39,653 farms have been mapped since 2012. However, no evaluation to understand the impact of this initiative has been published to date, and little detail on outcomes or the extent to which Cocoa Life has contributed to women’s access to land for cocoa cultivation in Ghana is available.

### **WOMEN’S ACCESS TO MARKETS, CREDITS, AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Mondelēz is implementing actions to increase women’s access to markets, credits, and finance through its Cocoa Life program. Mondelēz is also promoting VSLAs, training in entrepreneurial skills, and income diversification as key means to improve women’s access to finance and credits. Cocoa Life has also been focusing on sensitizations for women’s increased ownership of passbooks (as noted, passbooks entitle holders to sell cocoa).

On VSLAs, Cocoa Life's 2018 annual report mentions that 342 of them have been established (and are operational) since 2012 in Ghana, representing roughly 12,400 participants. The report does not break down participants by gender, however, which would allow for a clearer understanding of the progress of these interventions on gender equality.<sup>42</sup> The report also states that 20 VSLAs are linked to financial institutions. Although focus group participants shared that the VSLAs had presented platforms for them to save and have proven to be important sources of timely finance and credit during hard times, the impact of VSLAs on longer-term access to finance remains unclear.<sup>43</sup> The 2016 external analysis on Cocoa Life published by CARE International concluded that despite the role of VSLAs in creating access to finance in the short term, little data exists about its impacts on women's financial savings in the longer term and if women have actual and relevant control over household income and expenditure.<sup>44</sup> A Mondelez representative reported that Cocoa Life Ghana hoped to commission an external evaluation in 2020 to update and assess the impacts of VSLAs on women's financial empowerment.

Regarding entrepreneurial training, the report states that 17,672 community members have been trained in business skills, 8,146 of them are involved in income-generating activities, and 12,635 of them have received financial literacy training. Here too, the report failed to disaggregate by gender, which would allow a better understanding of progress toward gender equality.<sup>45</sup> Interviews carried out during field visits further revealed that despite the important knowledge transferred during such entrepreneurial training (especially in areas such as breadmaking, soapmaking, and beadmaking), it is difficult for women to enter these income-generating activities because of insurmountable start-up equipment costs and initial financial capital needs. A Cocoa Life representative said that in response to such challenges, Cocoa Life Ghana has rolled out an initiative to resource the enterprise groups with start-up toolkits to enable participants to engage in these income-generating activities.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EXTENSION EDUCATION**

The Cocoa Life program recognizes that women's lack of access to training and extension education is an important barrier to empowerment. Cocoa Life has therefore integrated trainings into its sustainability program. Available reports and interviews showed that Mondelez is investing in improving knowledge and skills on good agricultural practices. The 2018 annual progress report on Cocoa Life reports 38,417 trainings since 2012. Although the report failed to disaggregate by gender, a company representative clarified that 24,847 men farmers and 13,570 women farmers have received trainings since 2012. According to Mondelez, gender-disaggregated data is captured but it is not publicly reported.

Our research also showed that women farmers are periodically trained on areas such as establishing nurseries, pest and weed control, soil nutrient treatment, proper application of agrochemicals, and water conservation. During our community visits, some women and men from the focus group discussions said that they have doubled their cocoa yield in the past few years – which they partly attributed to these trainings. Mondelez and Cocoa Life's implementing partners including LBC are also championing the practice of women extension volunteers (WEVs) as a critical component of the company's sustainability plan. Under the WEV program, implementing partners solicit women volunteers for extension training. Once trained, these women in turn train women in their farming communities. WEVs also provide training at the district level, encourage women to attend training sessions, and provide advice on how to enhance women's participation.

## **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

Mondelez is making progress in increasing women's leadership in positions of power. Working with ABANTU for Development, Cocoa Life is training implementing partners, NGOs and communities to facilitate community action planning using a gender-transformative process. In addition, the Cocoa Life program encourages women's leadership in structures such as WEVs, in cooperative societies, as VSLA leaders, and as community action committee chairs. The Cocoa Life program is pursuing a quota strategy of allocating 30–50 percent of leadership roles to women and supporting women farmers in playing an active role in decision-making in community structures and at district and

national farmer forums. A Mondelez representative said that the Gender Dialogue platforms are inputting into the Cocoa Life Programme. Mondelez needs to do more, however, to build the confidence and the capacity of women farmers. During our community interactions, women participants shared their unwillingness to participate in leadership meetings because of issues related to illiteracy and the extensive time they must spend on domestic chores.

### **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO COOPERATIVES**

Mondelez's Cocoa Life has an explicit focus on increasing women's access to and membership in producer groups and cooperatives, and it has facilitated the formation and functioning of at least one farmer-based organization in its operational areas. According to the 2018 progress report on Cocoa Life, 447 cooperatives have been established since 2012. These cooperatives come together to constitute cooperative unions at the district level. However, not all the members are active. Also, at the district levels, a recent assessment showed that women are reluctant to take positions within the district cooperative unions mainly because of their household responsibilities.<sup>46</sup>

### **WOMEN'S DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

The 2014 Gender Action Plan committed that Cocoa Life interventions will integrate actions that ensure that 'women are not over-burdened with multiple roles.'<sup>47</sup> Interviews for and program documents report that the focus of Cocoa Life in improving women's agency and household gender dynamics are helping Mondelez to partly address women's time poverty and disproportionate burden of household chores.<sup>48</sup> The 2016 progress report included examples of men increasingly being involved in chores such as food preparation, childcare and water gathering – which provide springboards for reducing the time poverty that contributes to women's disempowerment. However, the report noted that many women from the program's communities continue to face the challenge of childcare while they are engaged in livelihood activities, community work, or training and capacity-building opportunities offered by the program.

### **INCOME GENERATION AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Mondelez is making progress in delivering on its commitment to improving the overall economic situation of women. The Cocoa Life program recognizes that female cocoa farmers earn 25–30 percent less than male farmers in Ghana, and that women in Ghana typically face greater challenges than men in achieving economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods due to obstacles centering on income levels, access to finance, access to farm inputs, and participation in farming collectives and cooperatives. Cocoa Life's gender strategy and development of women's empowerment action plans help to ensure that project activities target several of the obstacles that constrain women's economic empowerment.

## **NESTLÉ**

Nestlé is among the world's top five chocolate companies, with about 11 percent of market share,<sup>49</sup> and it has been operating in Ghana for several decades. It has a factory in Tema that produces many Nestlé brands. Nestlé is not an LBC in Ghana, but sources cocoa beans via a number of agribusiness suppliers and partners, mainly ECOM Agroindustrial and Cocoanect/Beyond Beans (or Cocoa Merchants). In 2018, the total volume of cocoa purchased by Nestlé in Ghana was 14,750 tons.<sup>50</sup>

### **NESTLÉ: SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM AND COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY**

Nestlé is implementing a global cocoa sustainability plan, the Nestlé Cocoa Plan, which has three main pillars: (1) better farms and yields, (2) better lives, and (3) better cocoa. Though this plan – with its focus on 'being on the world's largest sources, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana'<sup>51</sup> – was developed

in 2009, it was not until 2014 that the plan was rolled out in Ghana, together with the Nestlé Rural Development Framework (RDF).<sup>52</sup> The RDF is a diagnostic tool that Nestlé uses to develop an understanding of the status of farmers, farmworkers, and communities the company sources from. Nestlé uses this information to identify and implement interventions that will align business and social needs in projects in rural communities. The program is implemented in partnership with the NGO Source Trust, Noble Resource, and ECOM Agroindustrial.<sup>53</sup>

The better farms pillar of the Nestlé sustainability plan focuses on good agronomic practices to increase yield and farmers' income. It is geared toward improving agricultural practices, rejuvenating plantations, and tackling deforestation. The better lives pillar focuses on reducing child labor and supporting communities to increase their access to basic essential services such as education, water, sanitation, and gender equality. The better cocoa pillar focuses on research to improve the quality of cocoa at various stages of production and on production and management practices that ensure that better cocoa is produced by the farmer.

## **HOW NESTLÉ IS DELIVERING ON ITS COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY**

The Nestlé Cocoa Plan represents the main entry point through which Nestlé is delivering on its commitment to gender equality in Ghana. According to the local Nestlé representative, the main approach Nestlé is adopting to deliver on its gender commitment, on the basis of the three pillars above, is through an integrated VSLA project combined with the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). GALS uses inclusive and participatory processes and simple mapping and diagram tools for: Individual life and livelihood planning; Institutional awareness-raising and changing power relationships; Collective action and gender advocacy for change.

This approach combines various community-driven methodologies (such as GALS and Participatory Action Learning System [PALS] methodologies) and traditional VSLA or microcredit programs in a manner that ensures gender empowerment and equity for sustainable development. Nestlé also uses analytical tools such as the Gender Continuum Marker designed by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) in its work. WCF's set of gender guidelines and corresponding assessment tool, the Guidance Note, aim to accelerate progress toward individual and collective sustainability goals and to contribute to the development of a comprehensive, industrywide commitment to gender equity. Nestlé's partners ECOM Agroindustrial and Cocoanect/Beyond Beans are the main actors responsible for operationalizing these assessment tools in Ghana. Nestlé has also worked with Participatory Development Associates, a private consultancy firm, to enable it to measure the impact of GALS/PALS.

Nestlé works with trading partners such as ECOM Agroindustrial to promote VSLAs across some of its sourcing communities in Ghana. According to the Nestlé representative, the VSLA enables men and women to invest frequently, even in small amounts, keeping their money and earning interest. These small groups comprise between 15 to 25 people in the local community who save together. The representative said that VSLAs allow members to build their savings more easily, which in turn – at least in theory – contributes greatly to improving the security of households. Savings are maintained in a loan fund, from which members can borrow small amounts. Savings activities of the group run in cycles of one year after which the accumulated savings are distributed back to members in interest.

According to the company representative, Nestlé has supported the establishment of 47 VSLAs, educated 14,010 farmers about VSLAs, and trained 3,904 farmers on VSLA. It has also rolled out VSLA/GALS with the first round taking place in 19 communities, reaching 481 participants of which 70 percent are Cocoa Merchants farmers. The company representative said that an additional 10 VSLAs were established in 2020, representing 750 farmers trained in VSLAs and 3,904 farmers sensitized on VSLAs. The company added that Nestlé views women's empowerment as an essential strategy to child labor reduction in the cocoa sector. Regarding child labor, Nestlé has visited 18,110 farms for child labor monitoring, and has trained 152 field team members (27 women, 125

men) who have in turn trained 9,202 farmers on child labor and continue to refine the digital tool for collecting data for child labor monitoring and remediation systems (CLMRS).

## **NESTLÉ: GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY**

As noted, Nestlé agreed to the four key commitments of the Behind the Brands campaign: undertaking and publishing impact assessments on women in its cocoa supply chains, developing and enacting action plans based on these assessments, signing on to the Women's Empowerment Principles developed by the United Nations, and engaging with influential actors to develop programs to address gender inequality in the cocoa farming sector.

## **NESTLÉ: EXTENT OF DELIVERY OF GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY**

### **CONDUCTING AND PUBLISHING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ON WOMEN**

Nestlé committed to placing an additional focus on gender issues when the Fair Labor Association (FLA) conducted an independent external assessment of the company's cocoa supply chain, though the FLA's assessment only covered Nestlé in Côte d'Ivoire. (A gender assessment in the supply chain of Ghana has not yet been published.)

### **PUTTING IN PLACE SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS TO ADDRESS GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS**

Nestlé initially developed a gender action plan in response to the gender assessment carried out by the FLA, though not all the association's recommendations were incorporated. Nestlé subsequently developed an action plan for 2014 and 2015. Though the action plan focused largely on Côte d'Ivoire, it had two performance indicators focusing on Ghana: tracking women farmers supplying to Nestlé and women farmers trained in good agricultural practices. Two more performance indicators were added in the 2014 update: women trainers of total trainers and women in decision-making positions in farmer organizations. Nestlé promised that it will 'measure progress against the actions outlined ... and report on our achievements on an annual basis,'<sup>54</sup> and a progress update was published in 2019.<sup>55</sup> In 2017, Nestlé's *Tackling Child Labour* report made references to only two indicators on gender: 81 cumulative cooperatives participating in gender awareness trainings and 33 percent of Nestlé Cocoa Plan nurseries run by women.<sup>56</sup> However, the report does not disaggregate this information by country.<sup>57</sup> Nestlé also published a best practice in 'empowering women across the entire value chain,' which outlined actions to improve livelihoods of women in five priority sourcing locations by 2020.<sup>58</sup> However, implementation has so far focused on Colombia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>59</sup>

### **SIGNING ON TO THE UN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES**

Nestlé signed on to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles in October 2013.

### **ENGAGING WITH OTHER POWERFUL ACTORS IN THE COCOA INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP SECTOR WIDE PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY.**

Nestlé was part of CocoaAction and is on the ICI local board, with a focus on eliminating child labor. Nestlé has also signed the Cocoa & Forests Initiative with the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources in Ghana and with the Côte d'Ivoire government, along with all major cocoa companies.<sup>60</sup>

# NESTLÉ: EXTENT OF PROGRESS ON FURTHER ACTIONS FOR CREATING GENDER EQUALITY

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND FOR COCOA PRODUCTION AND LAND TENURE

Nestlé recognizes that access to land is a big challenge for women cocoa farmers. Nestlé's 2014 gender action plan listed women's land access as one of Nestlé's gender commitments, though the focus of the plan was Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana, although the company advocates for better conditions and human rights for all workers across its supply chain, the issue of enhancing women's access to land has not been systematically integrated into core sustainability programs and the company has not published any actions it is taking to address women's access to land and land tenure.

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO MARKETS, CREDITS, AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Nestlé's integrated VSLA project is the company's main delivery mechanism for increasing women producers' access to markets and financial services. However, a field visit revealed that VSLAs often face operational challenges on the ground that potentially weaken their operations, resource mobilization, and distribution of the funds that members have contributed. Interviewees reported that Nestlé, through its suppliers, also advocates for and works with some financial institutions to provide credits to farmers. However, such credits are on an ad hoc basis and are not necessarily integrated as a core component of Nestlé's delivery mechanisms for gender equality. As of September 2021, Nestlé has established and monitored a total 82 VSLA's with women making up 1276(54%) of a total membership of 2363.<sup>61</sup>

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INPUTS FOR COCOA PRODUCTION

Nestlé recognizes the problem of women's limited access to inputs for cocoa production and the challenge of improving women's acquisition of such inputs. Nestlé has not made public any specific actions it may be undertaking in this area, but a company representative said that the sustainability programs Nestlé is implementing with suppliers is expected to improve women farmers' incomes, which would enable them to acquire inputs.

Nestlé reports that its programs support good agricultural practices which involves sponsoring actual pruning and has a targeted and offer free pruning services for 182 women covering 73hectares of cocoa farms. According to its 2019 progress report, 4,131 women have benefited from 62,106 shade trees have that have been planted on a total of 3,105 ha of cocoa farm area and received 515,982 high tech cocoa plantlets for either replacement or rehabilitation.<sup>62</sup>

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EXTENSION EDUCATION

Nestlé's better farms and better cocoa pillars provide pathways for training to all farmers and producers, and extension education provided by trading partners targets men and women producers alike. As part of Nestlé's work on women's empowerment, since 2019, 5,131 women have been trained on Good Agricultural, Environmental and Social practices while 585 women have been targeted for coaching involving farm diagnostics and treatment to follow soon. According to Nestlé, this helps collate a base data to categorize women farmers in terms of general farm maintenance and good agricultural practices (GAP) adoption level.<sup>63</sup>

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Promoting women in leadership positions is not a core component of the Nestlé Cocoa Plan though a company representative reported that Nestlé asks its partners to ensure that field operators recruit a certain percentage of women. (It is not clear how this provision is monitored for compliance)

According to a 2019 progress update, Nestlé helped create VSLAs and combined them with Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training. Nestlé reported that a total of 224 women are benefitting

from GALS training. The 2019 progress report states ‘the percentage of women farmers is approximately 28% while the percentage of women in decision making has increased from 8% in 2017 to 11% in 2019, still low but heading in the right direction. The coaching women to take up leadership positions will have contributed to this increase.’<sup>64</sup>

### **WOMEN’S DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

Although addressing women’s time poverty and heavy work burden because of household chores has not been systematically integrated into Nestlé’s core sustainability interventions, the company’s focus on installation of labor-saving devices such as water pumps as part of the better lives pillar of the Nestlé Cocoa Plan is expected to reduce the time women and girls spend on domestic work, and thus to free up women’s time for other income-generating activities

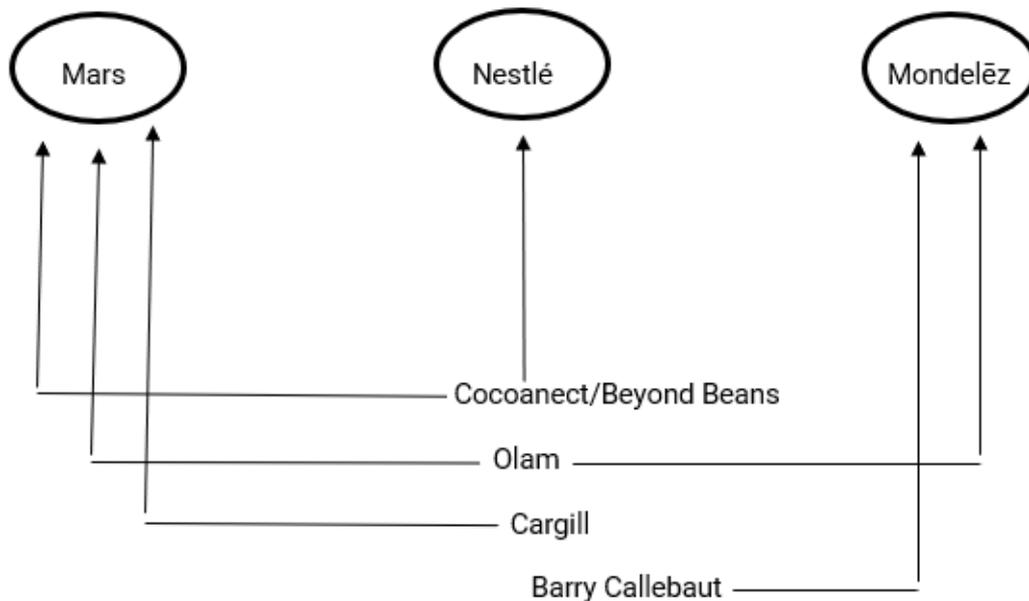
### **INCOME GENERATION AND WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Nestlé’s VSLA project is combined with GALS methodology, which aims to empower women and men cocoa farmers to overcome gender norms and make prudent financial decisions. VSLA/GALS provides a basis for increasing women’s economic empowerment, but operations on the ground remain limited. Nestlé’s company representative said that 3,207 women farmers have been trained in additional livelihood businesses including soapmaking, baking bread, vegetable farming, and keeping poultry to support their income-generation efforts. In the 2019 progress update, Nestlé reports that 41 women have been given start up inputs to go into vegetable production (chili and cabbage) including animal rearing ventures to supplement their incomes.<sup>65</sup>

# HOW AGRIBUSINESS SUPPLIERS ARE SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS

This section outlines how the agribusiness suppliers of Mars, Mondelēz, and Nestlé are supporting the delivery of gender equality commitments across the cocoa supply chain. Agribusinesses are powerful actors within the global food system; they are the links between the people who produce the world’s food and consumers. Thus, agribusinesses’ policies have a direct impact on the lives of millions of small-scale food producers, especially where they have direct sourcing relationships. Agribusinesses also sell and distribute commodities and products to both middle actors and food and beverage companies. Regardless of the precise role agribusinesses play, their position in the middle affords them better access to information than other supply chain actors. This report engaged four key agribusiness suppliers of the three chocolate companies studied: Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Olam, and Cocoanect.

**Figure 3. Relationships between the three chocolate companies studied and four key agribusinesses in Ghana**



## CARGILL

Cargill represents itself as a company that ‘brings food, agricultural, financial and industrial products to people who need them all around the world.’<sup>66</sup> Cocoa and cocoa products are one of the many food and agricultural products Cargill trades and manufactures globally, and in Ghana, Cargill works as a supplier of cocoa and chocolate products, including cocoa powder, butter, liquor, coatings, and fillings. Cargill buys cocoa beans from farmers and processes them into cocoa and chocolate as ingredients. Cargill has been sourcing cocoa from Ghana for more than 40 years, and in 2008 Cargill opened a processing factory in the Tema Free Zone.<sup>67</sup> Cargill also established its own LBC, Cargill Kokoo Sourcing, in 2016. Mars is Cargill’s customer that participates in the Behind the Brands initiative.

In 2012, Cargill launched the Cargill Cocoa Promise, which is a ‘global commitment to improve the livelihoods of farmers and their communities and to secure a long-term supply of cocoa’<sup>68</sup> in the five countries Cargill sources cocoa from: Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon, Indonesia, and Brazil. Cargill has set ambitious 2030 goals for 100 percent farmer-to-plant traceability of its cocoa beans, 100 percent chocolate ingredients sourced in line with the company’s sustainability code of conduct, zero deforestation in its supply chain, and one million farmers and their families benefiting from the services of the Cargill Cocoa Promise.<sup>69</sup> Cargill says that these goals are in line with CocoaAction’s (former) goals, and that Cargill will work in partnership with other key players in the cocoa industry to achieve these goals.

While our research did not come across a published comprehensive gender assessment of women in the supply chain of Cargill, the company is aware of the issues women face in cocoa supply chains and has launched a number of projects related to women to address gender concerns. Cargill’s approach, published on its website, acknowledges that gender inequality is a problem in the cocoa value chain, and subsequently Cargill commits to increase the income earned by mothers and other women and to further support them ‘by raising awareness of gender issues in cocoa-growing communities and by offering the skills, tools and resources they need to reach their full potential.’<sup>70</sup> In line with this strategy, Cargill reports that 169, 893 farmers have taken part in gender sensitization training to date through farmer field schools and farmer training days in all five of its direct origination countries. However, there is no breakdown of the data to identify how many of these participants are in Ghana.

Cargill has worked with partners such as CARE International on a series of programs with gender components over the past decade. As of fall 2021, Cargill had not signed on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles, but the company was, as noted, a part of CocoaAction.<sup>71</sup> Cargill is also part of the System Innovation for Women’s Economic Empowerment (SIWEE) initiative from Oxfam in Ghana, a multi-stakeholder initiative to share knowledge and support pilots that address the main challenges for women’s economic empowerment in the cocoa sector.

## COCOANECT (BEYOND BEANS)

Cocoanect (now known as Beyond Beans) is a cocoa trading company whose operations are focused on sourcing in West Africa (Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Cameroon). Cocoanect/Beyond Beans’ sustainability programs include, among others, community development, women’s empowerment, and child labor. The main companies – within the context of this report – that Cocoanect/Beyond Beans trades with are Mars and Nestlé.

Cocoanect/Beyond Beans works in collaboration with cocoa-buying and cocoa-processing companies to initiate and implement programs on behalf of its partners and clients. Some known programs organized over the years are the VSLA/GALS project implemented in collaboration Participatory Development Associates (PDA). The Cocoanect representative interviewed in 2018 said that 38 champions had been trained on GALS, focused on changing perceptions of gender roles and

promoting income diversification. A fact sheet shared by Coccoanect representative listed 19 Coccoanect-facilitated VSLA groups in 14 communities for Coccoanect clients, with about 481 members (of which 50 percent are women). According to this fact sheet, these VSLA groups have cumulatively saved 188,000 Ghanaian cedi, with nearly 228 members receiving loans worth 145 Ghanaian cedi. Such loans are used to purchase farm inputs, pay school fees and hospital bills, and support business.

Although the company representative said that Coccoanect recognizes many of the barriers women cocoa producers face, Coccoanect has not published a gender assessment nor an action plan committing to address gender in improving equality in the cocoa sector of Ghana. It has however, worked with partners such as Nestlé, Cocoa Merchants, and Participatory Development Associates to implement integrated VSLAs with GALS in the Ashanti region. The VSLA/GALS project is a financial inclusion and gender empowerment program that aims to build the financial, economic, and social capacities of more than 500 cocoa farmers in the region through self-governed savings groups. As of fall 2021, Coccoanect had not signed on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles. It was, however, a part of CocoaAction, and in 2019, Coccoanect committed to the Cocoa & Forests Initiative to implement gender-focused programs in 10 cocoa communities by 2022 (details of the programs have not yet been published).

## OLAM

Olam has been operating in Ghana for more than 20 years, and the company operates in nearly all cocoa districts in the country. In 2014, Olam acquired Archer Daniels Midland’s cocoa business, making it one of the world’s largest cocoa bean originator and one of the largest cocoa ingredient processors. To strengthen the traceability of its supply chains, Olam launched the Olam Farmer Information System (OFIS), a digital platform that allows for the collection and analysis of data, including ‘first mile’ transactions, on smallholder cocoa farms. It uses this data to provide Farm Development Plans with tailored advice on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) adoption, inputs, and farm rehabilitation. Digital payments can also be made directly to farmers via the OFIS app. During our field visit, we observed that some internal training was being organized for staff, associates, and purchasing clerks on OFIS.

Olam’s cocoa sustainability strategy, Cocoa Compass<sup>72</sup>, sets measurable goals for 2030, with milestones for action in 2020 and 2024, that are focused on helping farmers earn a living income, eliminating child labour and protecting forests.

Olam sustainability staff said that Olam expects to increase farmer productivity and income for both men and women, which will improve their livelihoods. However, further research will be required to demonstrate that its interventions are indeed increasing incomes. Those interviewed said that Olam applies a gender-sensitive approach in its program and prioritizes women when giving loans, providing cocoa rehabilitation, and filling leadership positions in cocoa production and the supply chain. Olam has also committed to providing gender-sensitive assistance and professional development to women smallholders and producers across its supply chains.

Although Olam has an action plan and publishes an annual report on impacts on women farmers in its supply chain, it only reports Ghana-specific data as part of its Cocoa and Forests Initiative reporting. Those interviewed said that Olam recognizes many of the barriers women cocoa producers face, including limited access to finance, inputs, and training. In its 2020 Cocoa & Forests Initiative [report](#), and in its Cocoa Compass 2019/2020 report, Olam’s cocoa business reported the following progress in Ghana, in partnership with its customers:

- 11,163 farmers offered a financial product
- 42,921 farmers trained in Good Agricultural Practices
- 32,465 farmers participating in additional income generating activities
- 580 women participating in empowerment projects and activities

- Twenty (20) education funds created across twenty traditional areas to support underprivileged high-performing students
- 100% child labour monitoring and remediation systems in sustainability programmes
- Child protection committees set up covering 210 communities<sup>73</sup>

Olam has signed on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles and was part of CocoaAction. Olam has also committed to implementing gender-focused programs in its operational communities as part of the Cocoa & Forests Initiative.

## BARRY CALLEBAUT

Barry Callebaut is among the world’s largest cocoa processors and chocolate manufacturers, accounting for about 25 percent of cocoa grindings. In Ghana, Barry Callebaut has also established a subsidiary known as Nyonkopa Cocoa Buying Ltd (100 percent subsidiary of Barry Callebaut) that works as a Licensed Buying Company (LBC). According to a Barry Callebaut representative, Nyonkopa Cocoa Buying has established over 100 buying stations across all the cocoa regions of Ghana, and Barry Callebaut has also instituted an additional layer of traceability where each society waybill is accompanied with a farmerwide breakdown of cocoa purchased in kilograms, enabling Barry Callebaut to trace the cocoa it purchases back to farmers and producers. Barry Callebaut, like Cargill, also has processing factories located in the Tema Free Zone.<sup>74</sup>

In 2014, Barry Callebaut founded the Cocoa Horizons Foundation with the mission ‘to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their communities through the promotion of sustainable, entrepreneurial farming, improved productivity, and community development.’<sup>75</sup> The Cocoa Horizons Foundation currently operates in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Tanzania, Indonesia, Ecuador, and Brazil; the foundation reported working with 27,951 farmers in Ghana in 2017.<sup>76</sup> This number increased to 71,318 in 2020, 31% of which are women.<sup>77</sup>

Barry Callebaut, in collaboration with the foundation, launched its own cocoa sustainability plan in 2016, Forever Chocolate, which it describes as ‘an overarching, holistic strategy to scale up our own, and industry’s efforts’<sup>78</sup> to make sustainable cocoa the norm, based on the premise that ‘business as usual is no longer acceptable.’<sup>79</sup> The strategy sets four goals for 2025:

- Eradicate child labor from Barry Callebaut’s supply chain
- Lift more than 500,000 cocoa farmers out of poverty
- Become carbon and forest positive
- Have 100 percent sustainable ingredients in all Barry Callebaut products<sup>80</sup>

According to a company representative, Barry Callebaut aims to tackle gender inequality issues in the cocoa sector through the following programs and interventions (some being implemented by the company and some by clients):

- Implementing 868 VSLAs in Ghanaian cocoa communities under Cocoa Horizons, of whom 65% of members are women
- Developing income-diversification programs (including poultry rearing, vegetable gardening, and soapmaking)
- Providing trainings on gender and social issues
- Running women’s nursery management and upkeep programs
- Distributing cookstoves to women
- Providing access to safe drinking water
- Launching a pilot program targeting women’s participation in child protection committees

- Offering a skillful parenting pilot for caregivers (mostly women)
- Providing business management skills for women

The company representative reported that 31 percent of farmers in the company's supply chain are women, 21 percent of women farmers own the land they use to cultivate cocoa, and 22.6 percent of farmers supported by an income-diversification package are women.<sup>81</sup>

The 2018–19 progress report – the third since the launch of Forever Chocolate – reported that the company has lifted 104,645 cocoa farmers out of poverty as defined by the company's metrics; replanted 420 cocoa farms; and provided access to coaching, inputs such as tools and seedlings, or finance to approximately 50,000 cocoa farmers in the reporting year.<sup>82</sup> The report also states that Barry Callebaut identified more than 22,965 cases of child labor, and of these, 4,971 of the reported cases we found in previous years, are under remediation. . The report notes that (according to the company's metrics) 51 percent of Barry Callebaut's agricultural raw materials were sustainably sourced; 37 percent of products sold containing 100% sustainable cocoa or chocolate, as defined by the company's metrics; and 61 percent of non-cocoa raw materials were sustainably sourced according to their metrics. The report does not disaggregate data by country or gender beyond participation on VSLAs; however, nor does it specifically address gender inequality in its supply chain.

In fact, neither the Forever Chocolate strategy nor its progress reports mention gender issues or working for women's empowerment in a concentrated manner, though Barry Callebaut's efforts to combat child labor and its poverty reduction programs could potentially provide some entry points for gender equality efforts. The Cocoa Horizons Foundation strategy involves an element of women's empowerment, though gender issues are not given as much importance as other elements of the cocoa sustainability strategy. A Barry Callebaut representative reported that the company monitors the progress of its interventions and maintains a gender breakdown of progress to ensure that interventions are the most relevant and impactful for farmers.

Barry Callebaut participates in many of the leading industry associations including the World Cocoa Foundation and CocoaAction, as well as the International Cocoa Initiative and other cross-industry platforms such as the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform and the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH). The company has also signed onto the UN Women's Empowerment Principles in March 2021. In 2017, Barry Callebaut signed on to the Cocoa & Forests Initiative with the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The company also works with a range of certification organizations, including Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, Organic, and Fairtrade.<sup>83</sup> Barry Callebaut also works with civil society organizations like Solidaridad West Africa, the CODESULT network for child labor prevention and remediation, Heifer International (for training on income-generating activities via poultry, beekeeping, and soapmaking projects), World Vegetable Center (for the creation of nutrition/income-generating activities (IGA) projects based on vegetable gardens), Envirofit International (for the distribution of energy-efficient cookstoves), and the Wageningen University and Research Center (WUR) (for impact measurement and reporting of the various interventions on the ground).

# HOW AGRIBUSINESS SUPPLIERS ARE ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUITIES

This section evaluates how the agribusinesses are implementing gender equality programs in terms of the nine gender inequity issues considered in this report.

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND FOR COCOA PRODUCTION AND LAND TENURE

Interventions to improve access to land and to improve land tenure security remain limited among the agribusiness suppliers. Cargill's representative said that because of the complexity and embeddedness of land issues in Ghanaian customs and traditions, Cargill has not prioritized interventions to facilitate women's access and rights to land (and has not implemented any interventions), though the company acknowledges land access and tenure as challenges that need to be addressed.<sup>84</sup> Despite the lack of published material on Cargill's work on women's access to land and land security, the company representative said that the firm takes gender equity seriously and noted that 34 percent of the farmers that Cargill works with in Ghana are female. Barry Callebaut and Cocoman were, at the time of the research, also not working explicitly on facilitating access to land and improving land tenure for women. However, a Barry Callebaut representative said that 21 percent of women farmers it works with own the land they use to cultivate the cocoa. Of the four agribusinesses that participated in the study, only Olam is directly working to sensitize traditional authorities, family heads, and general community members to facilitate women's access to land and security to it once it is held by women farmers. Olam also worked with the NGOs Solidaridad and SNV Ghana to pilot a program that allowed women to own or purchase lands for cocoa production with flexible payment terms in the Sefwi district. However, a company representative said that the program is on hold following the government's initiation of a rehabilitation program in which compensation is expected to be paid to both landowners and settler farmers. However, the company reports it is working with the government to find an acceptable solution to restart the program.

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INPUTS FOR COCOA PRODUCTION

All four agribusiness suppliers in this study recognized the challenge of women's access to inputs such as seedlings, fertilizers, and other agrochemicals. The suppliers are addressing this challenge largely through the distribution of seedlings and the provision of training, placing a focus on improved productivity, which they expect to enable farmers to obtain higher incomes to invest in inputs. Olam, for instance, has distributed over five million hybrid seedlings to support the rehabilitation of 4,000 hectares of farmlands.<sup>85</sup> The distribution of planting materials comes with technical support provided by Olam. Also, Cargill has set up nine cocoa seedlings and shade tree nurseries across its operational areas to supply cocoa seedlings to farmers, women inclusive. Cargill has also set up an electronic savings program to help farmers – including women farmers – save toward the purchase of crop protection products.

## WOMEN'S ACCESS TO MARKETS, CREDITS, AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Discussions with company representatives showed that the main strategy being used by all the agribusinesses to improve access to finance for women is VSLAs. They said that VSLAs enable members to select, plan, and manage income-generating activities as well as access credit at lower rates. For example, a Cocoman representative reported that Cocoman has facilitated the setting up of 19 VSLA groups in 14 communities, helping roughly 481 farmers (of which 50 percent

are women). Cocoanect was also planning a program that would pay price premiums to farmers directly via mobile money. Similarly, Cargill's website states that 2,180 people (of which 58 percent are women) have benefited from access to VSLAs since the Cargill Cocoa Promise began in 2012. Evaluation studies in 2018 from CARE, an implementing partner, found that these VSLA members saved more than \$112,000 combined.<sup>86</sup> Barry Callebaut also said that it has implemented 1,000 VSLAs in Ghanaian cocoa communities under Cocoa Horizons, covering 20–30 people in each group and targeting women (although not excluding men). In its 2019/2020 Cocoa Compass report, Olam reported helping Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) to save USD1,200,000 to promote women's financial inclusion and help cover education expenses. In addition to VSLAs, Olam also offers USD1 million worth of interest-free loans to farmers in Ghana every year. These loans can be repaid with cocoa beans within the season, allowing farmers to invest in their farms and support their households.

## **WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EXTENSION EDUCATION**

An essential strategy for all the agribusinesses is to improve access to training on good agricultural practices and to extension and support services. Cargill's approach is to work with partners to deliver training for both women and men on gender awareness, as well as business literacy and productivity training programs targeted exclusively at women to address the specific challenges they face. A Cargill representative stated that GAPs training has reached 149,577, with 23,266 producers in Ghana of which 7,910 are women cocoa farmers. Olam has also focused on GAPs, skills training, and digitization of services as a way of increasing knowledge and introducing newer technologies for producing cocoa and managing farms.

## **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

The four agribusinesses appreciate the need for increased women's leadership, but more actions are required in this area. Thus far, approaches from the agribusinesses fall short of the transformation needed to increase women's leadership at community and district levels. Cargill's work on increasing women's leadership positions has centered largely on working with partners to mobilize women's groups and encourage greater participation of women in decision-making processes related, for example, to community action plans.<sup>87</sup> Cocoanect's main efforts center on training and encouraging more women to take on supervisory positions. Barry Callebaut's efforts to improve women's leadership involve a recent pilot program targeting women's participation in child protection committees. Olam's work on improving leadership positions among women cocoa farmers has featured education to take positions, confidence building, and raising the productivity of women through income diversification activities so that they become financially empowered.

## **WOMEN'S DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

All the agribusinesses acknowledged the challenge women face in that they carry a disproportionate burden of household chores, but to date none has identified or enacted an explicit strategy to address this burden. Cocoanect considers time poverty as a key component in VSLA/GALS programs. For Olam, the focus has been on sensitization activities in households to encourage men and boys to take on household chores to free up time for girls and women to spend in other productive areas. Cargill's approach is to work with partners to sensitize and encourage gender dialogues to allow for greater women's participation in decision-making processes at household levels. For Barry Callebaut, a key strategy is the distribution of cookstoves, which it expects will decrease its carbon footprint, improve women's health, and save women time. Also, Barry Callebaut integrates the provision of safe drinking water to communities to not only improve health, but also to free up time for women to focus on income-generating activities.

## INCOME GENERATION AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The agribusinesses in this study recognize the need to improve women's income and women's economic empowerment. Cocomat sees women's economic empowerment as one of the main outcomes of VSLA as well as VSLA/GAPS, which it is implementing. Olam's strategy for enhanced women's economic empowerment includes creating income diversification initiatives for women, and teaching entrepreneurship skills and other trades so that women can earn income apart from cocoa production. (Olam's livelihood initiatives include batik making, rodent [grasscutter] farming, beekeeping, vegetable farming, and soap making, among others). Barry Callebaut focuses on income-generating business skills training and diversification programs including poultry rearing, vegetable gardening, and soapmaking, and has introduced these programs to improve the financial empowerment of women and increase family incomes. Additionally, Barry Callebaut has piloted a skilful parenting training program that targets mostly women caregivers. Topics cover early childhood nutrition, household budget management, and spouse relationships. Barry Callebaut said it expects to empower and enable women in household and childcare settings. According to a company representative, 22.6 percent of farmers who are supported by one of its income-diversification packages are women (interview conducted in 2019).

Cargill's work in Ghana has been to identify and address barriers to women's economic empowerment as a means to enhance income opportunities for women. Cargill supports women in starting their own income-generating activities by helping them to access training, productive resources, and services. Cargill has a community well-being framework that includes a focus on women's economic empowerment and supports the creation of women's associations, gender equality, access to productive resources and finances, and income-generating activities.<sup>88</sup> Cargill has also worked with CARE in Ghana for more than a decade on women's empowerment initiatives in cocoa communities.<sup>89</sup> Women supported in CARE-Cargill programs between 2016 and 2019 indicated a 30 percent increase in participation in household financial decision-making, an 18 percent increase in women holding formal leadership positions, and a 19 percent increase in opportunities to engage in formal decision-making spaces and to serve as leaders within the community.

# WHAT MARS, MONDÉLÉZ, AND NESTLÉ – AND THEIR SUPPLIERS – NEED TO DO TO FURTHER DELIVER ON THEIR GENDER EQUITY COMMITMENTS

This report recommends that the three chocolate companies examined – Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé – take eight broad actions to further enact their gender equality commitments. These actions include providing sex-disaggregated data in all reports and taking steps to improve conditions for women in areas of land access and tenure, training, and financial resources. The report also recommends three key actions that these companies' suppliers take to ensure that gender equality and women's economic empowerment are at the heart of their businesses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE THREE CHOCOLATE COMPANIES

### **PROVIDE SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA ON THEIR PROGRESS ON COMMITMENTS MADE TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY ON ANNUAL BASIS**

- Publish and make public progress on commitments toward gender equality on annual basis.
- Disaggregate this progress by sex and other farmer characteristics.
- Address and remove obstacles to the collection of sex-disaggregated data on the progress of actions targeting gender equality in the cocoa supply chain.
- Cooperate with government and state agencies to provide gender-disaggregated data at the national and subnational levels for women cocoa farmers.

### **ACCELERATE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND AND LAND TENURE**

- Take steps to facilitate women's access to land for cocoa production, including using the company's power to build awareness and advocate for more land to be allocated to women for the purposes of cocoa production.
- Take steps to enhance the land tenure and land security of women by, for example, educating them on their legal rights and by supporting farmers to clarify and document the lands they work on.
- Commit to respecting all the land rights of cocoa farmers, including those who may be affected by the company's, suppliers', and partners' operations through a companywide policy, which includes adherence to the principle of free, prior, and informed consent.<sup>90</sup>
- Companies should prioritize working with cooperatives with women in leadership positions

- Publish a detailed, time-bound, multiyear action plan for how the company will implement its commitment to assisting women cocoa farmers to secure land rights for their cocoa farms.
- Publicly advocate for peer companies, suppliers, and governments to address the systemic challenges of securing land rights, to tackle land grabbing, and to support responsible agricultural investments in Ghana.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **COMMIT TO AND ENHANCE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO COOPERATIVES, INPUTS, TRAINING, AND UP-TO-DATE EXTENSION SERVICES**

- Commit to equal access to extension services for women cocoa farmers and take actions to achieve such access and report on progress annually.
- Ensure that training and extension services prioritize improved knowledge and capacity for women farmers, taking into consideration the social and economic constraints women face in production.
- Ensure that training and extension services are designed with participation of women cocoa farmers to ensure that such trainings and services are held at a time when women are available and in a place where women are available – and that women farmers feel comfortable with technical training staff.
- Ensure that cooperatives and producer group groups have a high representation of women.
- Design and implement information technology and tools that take into account women's unique physical, economic, and social needs.
- Design programs and take actions to enable women farmers to learn and apply agrochemicals at the right time and in the right quantities.
- Work with input suppliers to recognize the particular situations and challenges of women cocoa farmers to tailor their supply and input-credit programs to women's needs.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **COMMIT TO AND EXPEDITE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO CREDITS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- Establish programs that extend rural credit lines to women cocoa farmers taking into account their needs and constraints, such as existing assets and land ownership.
- Form and support alternative means for women to access finance, such as through pooling their resources in groups.
- Use the company's power and influence to sensitize and educate local banks regarding gender and their lending practices to promote greater inclusion of women.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **COMMIT TO AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS**

- Commit to empowering women's active roles in decision-making in their households, communities, local government, and national farmer forums.

- Create opportunities for women to fill leadership roles, including as administrators, lead farmers, and field technicians.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **COMMIT TO TACKLE TIME POVERTY AND PUT WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AT THE HEART OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS.**

- Incorporate campaigns and awareness-raising actions to promote shared responsibilities for caring work in the home to address women’s time poverty.
- Publicly challenge unequal gender norms and unpaid care responsibilities across the cocoa sector and in the company’s own operations.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **WORK WITH AGRIBUSINESS SUPPLIERS TO IMPROVE THEIR POLICIES AND ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN.**

- Publish a detailed, time-bound, multiyear action plan for how suppliers will implement – and report on the implementation of – the company’s relevant policies on women.
- Encourage agribusiness suppliers to sign on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **WORK WITH AGRIBUSINESS SUPPLIERS TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS IN THE COMPANY’S SUPPLY CHAIN.**

- Support suppliers in respecting human rights. Integrate policies and approaches into supplier selection processes and contracts.
- Make an explicit commitment to uphold the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR), to report on implementation progress, and encourage suppliers to implement clear and accessible grievance mechanisms and a human rights due diligence process.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGRIBUSINESSES**

### **PUT GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AT THE HEART OF BUSINESS.**

- Follow the examples of the chocolate companies and conduct and publish impact assessments on women in agribusiness cocoa supply chains to understand and illustrate how women are faring.

- Publish a detailed, time-bound, multiyear action plan to implement – and report on the implementation of – actions to improve the conditions of women cocoa farmers in the cocoa supply chain.
- Put in place a specific action plan that will address issues raised by the impact assessments and will lead to better conditions.
- Sign on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles (if not done already).
- Engage with other powerful actors in the cocoa industry to develop sector-wide programs that address gender inequality.
- Publicly challenge unequal gender norms and unpaid care responsibilities across the cocoa sector and in the company’s own operations.
- Work collaboratively with farmers and civil society organizations, women’s rights groups, peers, traders, and other stakeholders to identify the cost-of-living needs of farmers in cocoa supply chains to close the gap between prevailing and living incomes.
- Commit to equal access to extension services for women cocoa farmers, take actions to achieve this commitment, and report on progress annually.
- Invest in training and technical support to enhance the skills and knowledge of women cocoa producers to build their resilience and enable them to improve their productivity.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS IN THE COMPANY’S SUPPLY CHAIN.**

- Commit to respecting human rights and integrate policies and actions to uphold the rights of workers and cocoa producers.
- Make an explicit commitment to uphold the UNGP and report on implementation progress.
- Publish progress on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

## **ACCELERATE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN’S ACCESS TO LAND AND LAND TENURE.**

- Take steps to facilitate women’s access to land for cocoa production, including using the company’s power to sensitize and advocate for more allocation of lands to women for the purposes of cocoa production.
- Take steps to enhance the land tenure and land security of women through educating them on their legal rights and supporting farmers to clarify and document the lands they are working on.
- Commit to respecting all land rights of cocoa farmers including those that may be affected by the company’s, suppliers’, and partners’ operations through a companywide policy, which includes adherence to the principle of free, prior, and informed consent.
- Publish a detailed, time-bound, multiyear action plan for how the company will implement its commitments to assisting women cocoa farmers to secure land rights for their cocoa farms.
- Publicly advocate for peer companies, suppliers, and governments to address the systemic challenges to securing land rights, to tackle land grabbing, and to support responsible agricultural investments in Ghana.
- Publish progress reports on actions and results on an annual basis.
- Disaggregate results in progress reports by gender and other farmer characteristics.

# ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY

We employed three methodological approaches to evaluate the progress Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé have made in implementing or delivering on their gender commitments: literature review, semi structured interviews, and visits to cocoa-producing communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

We surveyed literature in two broad areas: (1) company publications and secondary sources of data on each chocolate company (including company websites, press releases, company statements, annual reports, and occasional reports), and (2) broader literature on gender and the cocoa supply chain, particularly regarding Ghana.

This second research area included gathering information on best practices for improving gender equality, which Oxfam had already identified and shared with the three companies at a workshop in 2014.<sup>91</sup> This workshop and the literature review revealed nine key gender inequity issues central to any commitment to gender equality across the cocoa supply chain in Ghana, further elaborated in Section 4 of this report:

1. Women's access to land for cocoa production
2. Women's rights/tenure to land
3. Women's access to markets and financial services
4. Women's access to inputs for cocoa production
5. Women's access to training and extension education
6. Women in leadership positions
7. Women's access to producer groups or cooperatives
8. Women's disproportionate burden of household chores
9. Overall women's improved income or economic empowerment

Given the centrality of these nine gender inequity issues to the discourse and practice of gender equality in the cocoa sector, we integrated them into this report's examination of the three companies' progress toward meeting their gender equality commitments in Ghana.

## SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES

The second phase of our research involved interviews with representatives from the companies – and some of their agribusiness suppliers who were closer to cocoa farmers – to understand how the companies were delivering on their gender commitments including through their agribusiness suppliers. Emails and questions for the interviews were first sent to representatives at Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé (usually a leader in the company's sustainability team) and to their five main suppliers operating in Ghana (Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Cocoanect, and ECOM Agroindustrial, Olam<sup>92</sup>).

We then interviewed representatives from the three companies by phone, but only two (Olam and Cocoanect) of the five contacted agribusiness suppliers agreed to phone interviews: ECOM Agroindustrial declined to participate in the study, and Cargill and Barry Callebaut preferred to

answer our questions directly by email. Questions primarily addressed the kinds of gender equality programs the respective agribusinesses were implementing in cocoa supply chains to achieve their gender commitments.

## **FIELD VISITS TO COCOA-GROWING COMMUNITIES**

As part of the research, a day visit was undertaken in three cocoa-growing communities in the Ashanti and Western North administrative regions of Ghana. The communities were recommended by the agribusinesses as each of the chocolate companies' is supporting a sustainability intervention in the respective communities. The visits were undertaken in September 2019. The objectives of the field visits were twofold: (1) to obtain further insights from women farmers about the gendered constraints that limit their access to resources and that negatively impact their economic empowerment, and how community-level actors, chiefs, and institutions can work together to address these constraints, and (2) to understand the dynamics present within each company's approach to social sustainability interventions conducted at the community level.

## **VALIDATION WORKSHOP AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT**

As part of validating the responses, we convened a workshop in October 2019 to discuss the draft findings of the research. The workshop was attended by representatives of some of the big chocolate companies, their agribusinesses and industry players. In the fall of 2021, a draft report was shared with companies to correct any possible misrepresentations or inaccuracies that may have found their way into it.

# NOTES

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- <sup>56</sup> On child labor, the Nestlé representative in Ghana said that the company has visited 18,110 farms belonging to 9,202 farmers across nine cocoa districts for child labor monitoring, and that Nestlé continues to refine the digital tool for CLMRS data collection.
- <sup>57</sup> More information on the progress report on tackling child labour report can be found via: <https://www.nestle.com/sites/default/files/2019-12/nestle-tackling-child-labor-report-2019-en.pdf>
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- <sup>62</sup> [Additional Income Opportunities Improve Farmer Livelihoods | Cocoa \(nestlecocoaplan.com\)](#)
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