



## **NESTLÉ GENDER DIALOGUE PROJECT: BASELINE SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA) IN YAOKOUAKOUKRO AND ZARANOU, CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Report prepared by Fair Labor Association  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

In July 2014, following Oxfam's "Behind the Brands" campaign<sup>1</sup>, the Fair Labor Association (FLA) published a report<sup>2</sup> based on an independent assessment of women's roles in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain in Côte d'Ivoire. In response to a recommendation made by the FLA - "Exploring the establishment of women's platforms/forums in communities that could serve as a dialogue platform to handle and redress grievances." - Nestlé committed to a pilot project to develop and promote local women's associations in its supply chain and to "give women a voice." To achieve these objectives, Nestlé and the FLA are collaborating in two cocoa growing communities supplying to Nestlé: Yaokouakoukro (Gagnoa) and Zaranou (Abengourou). The overall project includes the following components:

- 1) community profiling and mapping of women's associations;
- 2) a baseline for the social impact assessment (SIA) to identify the involvement of women in local governance structures and their needs (as detailed in this report),
- 3) capacity building interventions at the community level, and
- 4) an evaluation of the SIA to assess impact of the capacity building activities.

This report summarizes the activities and findings of the SIA baseline assessment conducted by the FLA from July 13-24, 2015 in both Yaokouakoukro and Zaranou. The baseline assessment was conducted by FLA's field staff along with external assessors, and supported by FLA's global

technical and statistical advisers. Prior to this baseline, with help from Nestlé, FLA staff held an introductory community visit from March 16 - 27, 2015 to engage the two target communities. During the community visit, FLA staff consulted with stakeholders, defined the project's indicators, set up the sample size, and pilot-tested the SIA tools. A report on the introductory visit was submitted to Nestlé.

The SIA baseline assessment collected quantitative data on a sampled group of community members to assess the general situation at the beginning of the project. The baseline assessment provides a critical reference point for comparing the situation before and after the intervention. At the later stage of the project, an evaluation will be conducted to assess any changes and impacts made by the program and capacity building activities of this project.

## II. METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION

The baseline assessment consisted of face-to-face interviews using a structured SIA questionnaire designed to measure current conditions in the communities, such as the status of women and their needs.

### 1. Selected Communities and Sampling

#### *Profiling of Yaokouakoukro*

Yaokouakoukro is a camp located in the sub-prefecture of Ouragahio, 47 kilometers from Gagnoa, in the center-west of Côte d'Ivoire. It is the capital of a canton of 44 camps, founded in 1965 by Yao Kouakou, a cocoa farmer from Djébonoua<sup>3</sup>, while he was in search of cultivable land. Yaokouakoukro currently has about 146 inhabitants and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2015-03-31/unilever-takes-top-spot-oxfams-behind-brands-scorecard>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/nestle\\_gender\\_report\\_7-9-14\\_0.pdf](http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/nestle_gender_report_7-9-14_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Djébonoua is located in the region of Bouaké in Central Ivory Coast.



TABLE 1: SAMPLING FOR YAOYOUAKOUKRO

	TOTAL MALES IN THE COMMUNITY	TOTAL FEMALES IN THE COMMUNITY	TOTAL POPULATION OF THE COMMUNITY	TOTAL MALES IN THE SAMPLE	TOTAL FEMALES IN THE SAMPLE	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Yaokouakoukro (25%)	40	50	90	10	12	22
Blaisekro (25%)	83	79	162	20	19	39
Total	123	129	252	30	31	61

approximately 12 households. Majorities speak Baoulé, the language of the founder. Only two non-native Malinké families, descendants of the former employees of the founder of the camp, reside in the camp. The main activity of community residents is agriculture. Mostly men hold large cocoa farms (averaging five hectares each) while women<sup>4</sup> mostly grow food crops<sup>5</sup>. This community is linked to Nestlé through the Union des Sociétés Coopératives de la Région du Goh (USCRG) cocoa cooperative.

### *Sampling for Yaokouakoukro*

The sample for the Yaokouakoukro community was selected from two camps: Yaokouakoukro and Blaisekro. Both provide an important membership base to the women's association Bah-Mé-Tioh.<sup>6</sup> According to data available at these villages, Yaokouakoukro has 12 households with 146 inhabitants (50 women, 40 men and 56 children) and Blaisekro has 30 households with 260 inhabitants (79 women, 83 men and 98 children). For the baseline SIA, 25 percent of the population were randomly selected as the sample, with at least one person was selected per household from both Yaokouakoukro and Blaisekro.

4 Some women like those in the Women's Association (President of the association) are producing cocoa.

5 To know more about the profiling of Yaokouakoukro, please refer to « NDP Report of introductory visit »

6 'Ba mé Tioh' meaning 'It's for the children' is a Women's Association and linked to Nestlé through the cooperative USCRG and has been selected for project intervention in Yaokouakoukro. It is one of the Women's Associations that is directly connected to Nestlé.

Therefore, a total of 61 respondents (31 women and 30 men) were interviewed. Table 1 provides the summary of the sample size for Yaokouakoukro.

### *Profiling of Zaranou*

Zaranou is a sub-prefecture located 40 kilometers from Abengourou, in the east of Côte d'Ivoire. It has a cosmopolitan population of about 33,539<sup>7</sup> inhabitants, comprising the following ethnic groups: Agni (indigenous), Malinké and Lobi (non-native), Nigerians, Burkinabe, Malians and Ghanaians (allogeneic). The social life in Zaranou mixes traditions from the indigenous Agni community as well as the non-native Morés and Burkinabe communities. Several religions coexist in this community including Christianity, Animism, and Islam. Various cooperatives and women's associations are active in this community. The village is linked to Nestlé through the Coopérative des Producteurs Agricoles de Zaranou (COOPAZA) and its women's association AFEDEZ<sup>8</sup>. According to the cooperative and women's association, COOPAZA has 875 members including 163 women and 712 men, while AFEDEZ has 210 women as members.

7 According to the 2014 Census. This number includes population from the surrounding villages part of the sub-prefecture. According to the Sub-prefect, the number of inhabitant per village is not yet available.

8 AFEDEZ, Association des Femmes Dévouées de Zaranou.

TABLE 2: SAMPLING FOR ZARANOU

	TOTAL MALES IN THE COOPERATIVE & WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION	TOTAL FEMALES IN THE COOP AND WA	TOTAL POPULATION OF THE COOP AND WA	TOTAL MALES IN THE SAMPLE	TOTAL FEMALES IN THE SAMPLE	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
COOPAZA (10% of male members)	712	163	875	72	00	72
AFEDEZ (37%)	00	210	210	00	77	77
Total	712	373	1085	72	77	149

TABLE 3: ACTIVITY CALENDAR

DATE	ACTIVITY
July 13, 2015	Travel to community 1 (Yaokouakoukro - Gagnoa)
July 14 - 18, 2015	Data collection in Yaokouakoukro
July 19, 2015	Travel to community 2 (Zaranou – Abengourou)
July 20 - 24, 2015	Data collection in Zaranou
July 25, 2015	Travel to Abidjan
August 3 – 14, 2015	Data entry
November 11 – 30, 2015	Data verification and cross checking
December 10 – 20, 2015	Data analysis
December 20 – Jan 10, 2016	Report writing

### Sampling for Zaranou

For the assessment sample, 37 percent of AFEDEZ<sup>9</sup> members and the equivalent of 10 percent of the COOPAZA male members<sup>10</sup> were selected, ultimately resulting in a total of 149 respondents including 72 male and 77 female participants. The respondents were selected randomly to provide a diverse sample with regards to age, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Table 2 provides a summary of the sample.

<sup>9</sup> The assessment team selected exclusively 37 percent of women's association members because the project focuses on empowerment of women's associations that are linked to Nestlé and this allowed for collection of data from direct beneficiaries. Some of these women are producers, members of Coopaza.

<sup>10</sup> The sample size for men was calculated based on the number of the cooperative's male members, but due to the unavailability of all respondents from the cooperative, others men cocoa producers, no members of COOPAZA, were selected from the village.

## 2. Data collection

The FLA team used the SIA questionnaire to collect information from the sampled respondents through face-to-face individual interviews. Data were processed by the field staff, and later analyzed by FLA's research and innovation staff using the SPSS statistical software. Table 3 presents the activity calendar.

### Assessment team

Two FLA field staff members based in Abidjan were responsible for data collection and were supported by two external assessors and one data entry specialist. Three other FLA team members outside of the Ivory Coast provided support for the project.

### III. FINDINGS

This baseline assessment examined four main topics in Yaokouakoukro and Zaranou:

- 1) work related aspirations,
- 2) community level dialogue structures,
- 3) grievance mechanisms, and
- 4) women's leverage in decision-making process.

#### 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

In Yaokouakoukro, 60.7 percent out of the total 61 interviewees could not read or write and had no schooling at all. Comparing the

length of education for men and women, the research showed that on average, men in Yaokouakoukro have attended schools for 3.8 years while women only attended schools for 1.2 years.

In Zaranou, close to half of the interviewees (45.6 percent) had no schooling at all. Men had an average of 5.9 years of basic education, while women received only an average of 1.7 years of schooling. The age of the interviewees in Zaranou ranged from 16 to 98 years old.

Full data on participants' education, marital status, household size, and age appear in Tables 4 and 5.

**TABLE 4: CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEWED PEOPLE IN YAOKOUAKOUKRO<sup>11</sup>**

	(%)		(%)
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Marital Status<sup>12</sup></b>	
Male	49.2	Single	29.5
Female	50.8	Married	23.0
<b>Education</b>		Co-housing	39.3
No schooling	60.7	Widowed	6.6
Primary school (1 to 6 years)	31.0	<b>Average Number of Children (no.)</b>	4.3
Middle school (7 to 9 years)	1.6	<b>Household size</b>	
High school and above (10 years and above)	6.5	Average Number of People in the Household (no.)	9.55
Average Length of Education (years) for Women	1.2		
Average Length of Education (years) for Men	3.8	<b>Average Age (years)</b>	40.2

**TABLE 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEWED PEOPLE IN ZARANOU**

	(%)		(%)
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Marital Status</b>	
Male	48.3	Single	10.7
Female	51.7	Married	51.7
<b>Education</b>		Co-housing	14.7
No schooling	45.6	Widowed	12.1
Primary school (1 to 6 years)	27.6	<b>Average Number of Children (no.)</b>	5.0
Middle school (7 to 9 years)	8.7	<b>Household size</b>	
High school and above (10 years and above)	14.8	Average Number of People in the Household (no.)	9.3
Average Length of Education (years) for Women	1.7		
Average Length of Education (years) for Men	5.9	<b>Average Age (years)</b>	47.9

<sup>11</sup> Figures may not add up to 100% due to unanswered questions.

<sup>12</sup> Married here means 'traditional marriage' according to the local customs. These may not be legally registered with the administrative authorities.

## 2. Work Related Aspirations

The SIA first assessed work-related aspirations, evaluating if women in the community needed more support to enhance their economic, social, and psychological status. This section first depicts a typical day of a cocoa farmer to demonstrate workers' activities and their needs relating to their farm work. The report then analyzes how factors such as farm ownership and cooperative membership may have an association with participants' satisfaction with their current life.

### *Typical day of a farmer*

All interviewees in Yaokouakoukro worked on the cocoa farms, with 42.6 percent of the interviewees reporting that cocoa farming was their only work. More than half (55.6 percent) of the interviewees indicated that in addition

to farm work, they did house work and took care of children. A small proportion (6.5 percent) reported that they were engaged in other economic activities such as small trading. All female interviewees were found to be performing housework and taking care of their family in addition to doing farm work. In contrast, while 86.7 percent of men reported that they did farm work, only 10 percent reported that they did housework as well. Interviewees spent an average of six hours per day performing farm work (6.6 hours for men and 5.5 hours for women). Women were found to be spending more time at home doing housework and spending time with their children, while men spent more time by doing other remunerative work (6.5 hours per day). On average, men spent more time (2.9 hours) on leisure and community activities than women (2.1 hours).

**TABLE 6: TYPICAL DAY OF RESPONDENTS (FREQUENCY)**

Activity	YAO KOUAKOUKRO		ZARANOU*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Only farm work	26	0	59	9
Farm work & trading/other economic activity	1	0	5	0
House work & farm work	2	29	1	57
House work, farm work & other economical activity/trading	1	2	0	6
Other economic activity only	0	0	3	0

\*In Zaranou the total number of respondents was 149, of which 9 indicated that they are too weak, old, or ill to work. Therefore, the percentages are calculated using 140 as the total number of respondents in this category.

**TABLE 7: TYPICAL DAY OF RESPONDENTS (AVERAGE HOURS)**

Activity	YAO KOUAKOUKRO		ZARANOU	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Farm work	6.6	5.5	6.9	6
Other remunerative work	6.5	3.8	8.2	5.5
House work	0.1	5.6	0.4	4.5
With children (education and playing)	0	1.9	1.3	1 <sup>13</sup>
Community activity	2	0	2	2
Leisure activities	2.9	2.1	3	2.5

<sup>13</sup> The interviewed females in Zaranou did not give exact number of hours that they usually spent with their kids on education and playing. Therefore, we lacked the information here.

TABLE 8: TYPE OF FARM THE RESPONDENTS WORKED ON

Type of farm	YAOKOUAKOUKRO			ZARANOU		
		Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Cocoa only	(Total)	7	11.5	(Total)	19	12.8
	(Men)	7	11.5	(Men)	16	10.8
	(Women)	0	0	(Women)	3	2.0
Food crops only	(Total)	7	11.5	(Total)	6	4
	(Men)	0	0	(Men)	0	0
	(Women)	7	11.5	(Women)	6	4
Cocoa and food crops	(Total)	46	75.4	(Total)	115	77.2
	(Men)	23	37.7	(Men)	51	34.2
	(Women)	23	37.7	(Women)	64	43.0

A vast majority (92 percent) of interviewees in Zaranou reported that they did farm work, while the rest indicated that they did not work either because of age and health conditions or due to other commercial activity such as running a small shop. Similar to the interviewees in Yaokouakoukro, 45 percent of the interviewees in Zaranou indicated that they farmed only, while 44.3 percent of the interviewees stated that in addition to farm work, they took care of their family and did house work. A small number (9.4 percent) reported that they did other commercial activities to earn more money such as selling bread, running a small shop, trading, and collecting cocoa beans for the cooperative. Most female interviewees (84.4 percent) stated that they took care of their family in addition to doing farm work.<sup>14</sup> By contrast, men focused mainly on the farm work, with only 6.9 percent stating that they did house work as well. Interviewees at Zaranou spent an average of 6.5 hours doing farm work (6.9 hours for men and 6 hours for women). A small proportion of men took other remunerative work in order to increase their

family income, spending an average of 8.2 hours on it, much longer than the time spent on farming. Women played a very significant role in maintaining the household and taking care of the family, and the hours women spent with the family were far longer than those of men.

### *Type and ownership of farm*

A majority (75.4 percent) of the interviewed farmers at Yaokouakoukro worked at both cocoa and food crops farms (Table 8). Among the interviewed sample, 11.5 percent stated that they worked exclusively on food crop production; all of these respondents were women.

For those who worked on a cocoa farm (including those working on both cocoa and food crops farms), 41.5 percent indicated that they owned the farm and 54.7 percent reported that the farm belonged to their partner or their family (Table 9). Only a small proportion (3.8 percent) stated that they were sharecroppers on a farm belonging to others. When the interviewees at Yaokouakoukro

<sup>14</sup> 11.7 percent female in Zaranou indicated that they focused on farm work only and the rest 3.9 percent were very old and were no longer working on the farm.



TABLE 9: OWNERSHIP OF COCOA FARMS (%)

	YAOKOUAKOUKRO		ZARANOU	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
My own cocoa farm	69	8.3	92.8	50.0
My partner or family's	27.6	87.5	5.8	48.5
Other's farm as worker	3.3	4.2	1.4	1.5

were asked about the ownership of the cocoa farmland, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of male respondents indicated that they themselves owned the farm. The percentage of women who cropped cocoa on their own farm was much lower -- 8.3 percent of all female interviewees.

Similar to the results of Yaokouakoukro community, a large proportion (77.2 percent) of the farmers interviewed in Zaranou told assessors that they worked at both cocoa and food crop farms (Table 8). Almost 13 percent of the interviewees state that they worked on cocoa farms exclusively, while the other four percent worked on food crop farms only. Half of the female interviewees firmly said that they owned the cocoa farm where they were planting (Table 9), with the other half (48.5 percent) reporting that the farm belonged to their partner or family. This was a significantly larger percentage of female farm ownership in Zaranou compared to Yaokouakoukro.

### ***Women's leverage in family***

In Yaokouakoukro, when asked about whether they were consulted by their partner in managing family income, 17 out of 24 partnered women (70.8 percent) said that they were not consulted. For household-level decisions, 40.9 percent likewise stated that they were not consulted. When male farmers were asked whether they consulted their partner on management of family income, only 44.4 percent indicated that they did not while another 50 percent said that they did. Correlation analysis did not find associations

between men's or women's education level, age, or other characteristics and the tendency of men to consult women on matters of family income or household decisions. This suggests that other factors such as tradition or culture may be at play.

In Zaranou, by contrast, 51.5 percent of partnered women were consulted on management of family income, while the other 48.4 percent said that they were not consulted. Almost all of the interviewed women (92.5 percent) indicated that they were consulted on household-level decisions. The responses given by the male farmers to these questions were consistent with the women's. Again, correlation analysis did not find any associations between these findings and the respondents' education level, age, or other characteristics.

### ***Satisfaction and aspirations towards current life***

The majority (61.7 percent) of farmers in Yaokouakoukro, both males and females, felt satisfied with their current life, while more than one-third (35 percent) expressed their dissatisfaction. Still, 80 percent of all the interviewees stated that they wanted to change their current situation. When asked about what changes they would like to make, most wanted to change something related to their farm work: replacing old cocoa trees with a new variety and increase yield (32.8 percent); having access to their own land or more land to grow cocoa and other food products (13.1 percent); hiring workers to

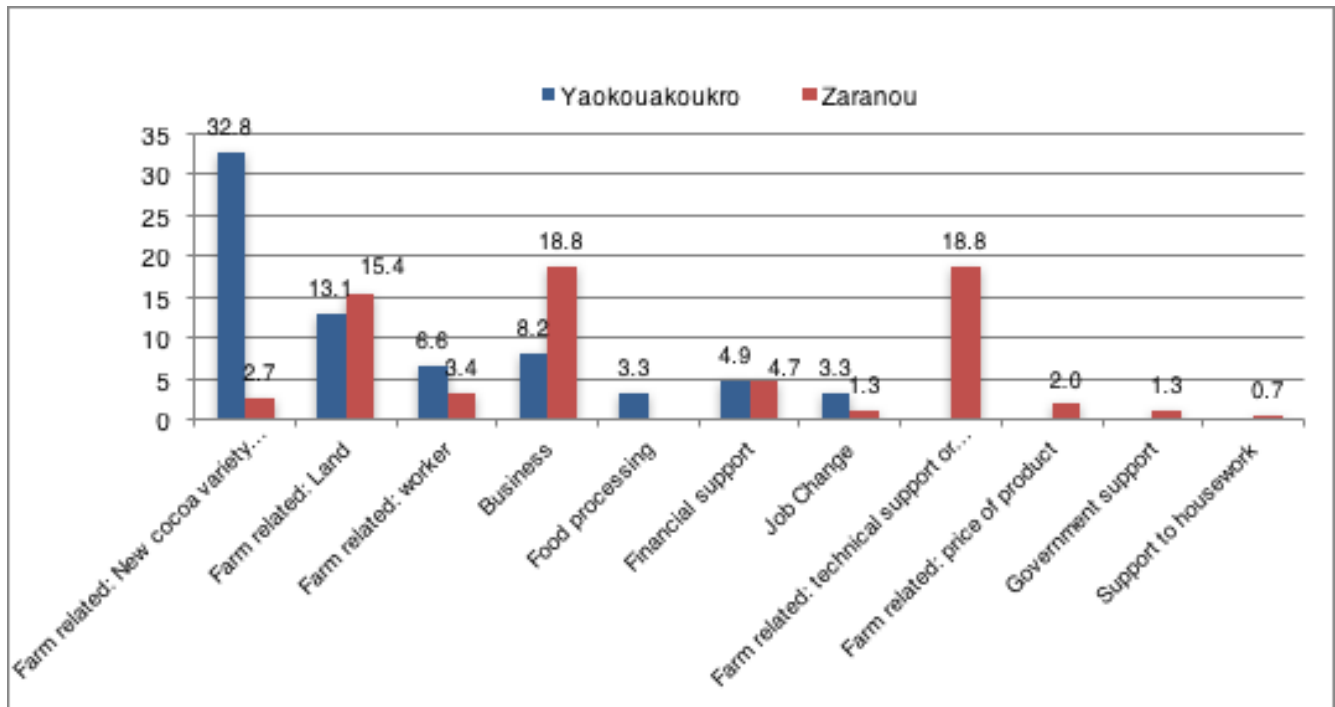


Figure 1: Changes that the respondents desired (%)

assist with planting (6.6 percent); and learning better skills to process food (3.3 percent). In addition, 8.2 percent of the interviewees indicated that they wanted to undertake additional business endeavors beyond farming to increase their income. A minority, 3.3 percent, stated that they wanted to change to another type of occupation entirely, such as a driver or a cloth seller. Also, 4.9 percent of interviewees expressed the need for more money to support their families.

The interviewees expressed concerns about achieving positive changes due to financial constraints; lack of experience; or lack of access to seeds, a cocoa tree nursery, technical support, or training on the use of fertilizer and chemicals. Some women also expressed concerns that their husbands would stand in the way of positive changes.

Approximately two-thirds (68.4 percent) of interviewees in Zaranou felt generally satisfied with their current life while 22.8 percent did

not. Satisfied or not, a significant number (70.5 percent) of all interviewees wanted to make changes to enhance their living standards.

When asked what changes they would like to make, the interviewees gave quite diverse answers. Many of them wanted to see positive changes in their lives by: receiving technical support and training on planting crops so that the yield and their income would increase (18.8 percent); having access to their own land or owning more land to grow cocoa and other food products (15.4 percent); hiring workers to assist with planting (3.4 percent); and replacing old cocoa trees with a new variety (2.7 percent). Two percent stated that they hoped the market price of cocoa beans would increase and that they could benefit from the increased market price. Nearly 20 percent of the interviewees expressed their wishes to diversify their income by establishing a business such as a shop, or trading in fish



**FLA's field staff and the president of women's association "Bah-Mé-Tioh" with young people preparing food crops farming land for women in Yaokouakoukro.**

or clothing. A small proportion (1.3 percent) of the interviewees in Zaranou also hoped for additional support from the government. Like the interviewees in Yaokouakoukro, interviewees in Zaranou were also concerned about insufficient finance, and lack of technical support or training about planting and farming skills.

#### ***Use of personal protective equipment when working on cocoa farm***

Nearly half (47.5 percent) of the interviewed farmers in Yaokouakoukro indicated that they used personal protective equipment (PPE) while working on the farm, while half (50 percent) reported that they did not. Among those who used PPE, assessors found that the farmers wore boots or closed shoes,

trousers, and shirts with long sleeves. Five (out of 28) stated that they wore hats and only one mentioned using gloves. The reasons given for not wearing PPEs varied, but the most common was that the farmers could not afford them<sup>15</sup>.

More interviewed farmers in Zaranou than in Yaokouakoukro stated that they used PPE, with only 25.5 percent stating that they did not use PPE. Similar to the responses in Yaokouakoukro, a vast majority (69.2 percent) of those who did not use PPE said they could not afford to, while another 10.3 percent expressed that they "don't need" or "don't

<sup>15</sup> 70 percent of those who did not wear PPEs said that PPEs are too expensive. 6.6 percent thought PPEs were not available. One person expressed no need for PPE and another two persons did not want to wear any PPE.



want” to use PPE. Those who wore PPEs stated that they wore boots or closed shoes, trousers, shirts with long sleeves. Only a few mentioned wearing glasses and hats.

The information collected from the two communities indicates that farmers require training on PPE use and access affordable PPE. The interviewed farmers also expressed their wishes to receive technical trainings on fertilizer and chemical usage, both of which would require educating farmers on the proper usage of PPE.

### ***Support for farming activities***

Many interviewed farmers in Yaokouakoukro owned a small parcel of land for growing cocoa trees. About one-fifth (19.6 percent) reported that they or their partner owned at least a two-hectare cocoa farm, while 10 percent owned three hectares, and 8.3 percent owned six hectares or more<sup>16</sup>. Among the interviewees, two respondents stated that they owned a cocoa farm of at least 50 hectares, far larger than most. A significant number of interviewees (24.6 percent) said they did not know the size of their or their partner’s cocoa farm.

The reported yield of cocoa beans per hectare varied significantly from farmer to farmer. While the average yield was 472 kilograms per hectare, the minimum yield per hectare was 150 kilograms during 2014 harvest while the maximum reached around 1250 kilograms. Cross tabulation of responses received from the interviewees showed that those who reported a smaller hectare yield and have smaller farm size more often say they need further technical support to improve

their planting skills, soil fertility, selection of quality seeds, and proper use of fertilizer and chemicals.

Correlation analysis shows that the number of people in a farmer’s house was positively correlated with the yield of cocoa beans per hectare<sup>17</sup>, meaning that the more people in a household, the higher yield per hectare the farm produced. Farmers’ education levels were also positively correlated with the size of their or their partner’s cocoa farm<sup>18</sup>, meaning that those who attended more school either owned a larger farm or married to a partner who owned a larger farm.

Most (80.3 percent) of the interviewees owned plots of one to two hectares where they grew food crops<sup>19</sup> to satisfy their living needs and to supplement their income. Nearly half (47.5 percent) of the interviewed farmers believed that they had quality seeds, while 26 percent of them either had no access to quality seeds or said they did not know. When asking about the types of support (of any kind) that they had received for their farming activities, 60.7 percent indicated receiving no support. The rest, however, stated they had received support on equipment, training, and chemicals.

In Zaranou, the size of cocoa farm owned by interviewed farmers also varied from farmer to farmer, ranging from one hectare to 150 hectares. Most respondents or their partners owned a cocoa farm between two and ten hectares. However, 21.5 percent of the interviewees in this community did not

<sup>16</sup> The answer to the hectare of cocoa farm varied from person to person. The minimum number was one hectare, which was given by 4.9 percent interviewees in Yaokouakoukro. The rest of the interviewees reported at least four hectares (6.6 percent), seven hectares (4.9 percent), ten hectares (1.6 percent), and 12 hectares (1.6 percent).

<sup>17</sup> The correlation coefficient between the number of people in a farmer’s house and yield of cocoa beans per hectare is 0.570 (statistically significant at 0.05 level).

<sup>18</sup> The correlation coefficient between education level of a farmer and the size of their or their partner’s cocoa farm is 0.540 (statistically significant at 0.01 level).

<sup>19</sup> Among those who had food plots in Yaokouakoukro, 46.4 percent were female and 53.6 percent were male.





*A view of Yaokouakoukro.*

know the size of their or their partners' cocoa farm. The cocoa bean yield per hectare also varied significantly from farmer to farmer. The minimum yield per hectare was reported to be 100 kilograms during the 2014 harvest while the maximum yield reached 1250 kilograms. The average yield was 394 kilograms. Similar to Yaokouakoukro, cross-tabulation of data from Zaranou shows that farmers with smaller size farms and with lower yields were more in need of agro-technical support to enhance their planting knowledge and skills.

Correlation analysis for the Zaranou data found results similar to the Yaokouakoukro data. The number of people in a farmer's house was positively correlated with the yield of cocoa beans.<sup>20</sup> The education level of a farmer was also found positively correlated with the yield of cocoa beans per hectare<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> The correlation coefficient between the number of people in a farmer's house and yield of cocoa beans is 0.217 (statistically significant at 0.05 level).

<sup>21</sup> The correlation coefficient between education level of a farmer and the yield of cocoa beans per hectare is 0.275 (statistically significant at 0.01 level).

Most (88 percent) of the interviewed farmers in Zaranou had small plots to grow their food crops<sup>22</sup>. More than half (51 percent) of the interviewees also sold the crops that they grew to supplement their income. When asked about the types of support that they received for their farming activities, almost all interviewed farmers mentioned equipment, training, fertilizers, and chemicals, and 71.1 percent stated that they had access to quality seeds.

### ***Cooperative membership and training***

In Yaokouakoukro, 23 (37.7 percent) out of 61 interviewed farmers were members of the cooperative, including four female members (though no female members held any leadership role). The 8.7 percent of respondents who had ever held a leadership position at the cooperative were all male.

<sup>22</sup> Among those who had food plots in Zaranou, 56.4 percent were female and 43.6 percent were male.

In addition, 17 (27.9 percent) of the interviewees in this community attended agricultural trainings provided by a cooperative last year; only one trainee was female. Those who did not stated that they did not attend any trainings because:

- they were in the process of becoming a member of the cooperative;
- they were not yet a member;
- they had been disappointed by the cooperative;
- trainings were not available to them.

One woman stated that women were usually not invited to such agricultural trainings provided by cooperatives.

In Zaranou, 65.1 percent of the interviewed farmers<sup>23</sup> were member of a cooperative, with 48.1 percent of female farmers as members of a cooperative and 6.5 percent of them in leadership positions. Compared to women, 83.3 percent of the male interviewees were members of the cooperative, and 15.3 percent of them held a leadership position. Among the 36.2 percent of interviewees who said they attended agricultural trainings provided by a cooperative in 2014, one-third (33.3 percent) were female and two-thirds (66.7 percent) were male. Those who did not attend explained that:

- trainings were not available to them because they were not invited or informed;
- they were not yet a member of the cooperative;
- they had no interest nor time to attend;
- the cooperative did not have a training plan;

<sup>23</sup> The sampling methods used in this community contributed to a higher percentage of reported cooperative membership.

- someone else in the family attended such a training;
- they were too old to be trained.

Female farmers might have more chances to attend cooperative training in Zaranou than in Yaokouakoukro, but a gap remained between men's and women's access to training opportunities.

### 3. Community Level Dialogue Structures

After work-related aspirations, assessors considered the second broad category of the community-level dialogue structures, investigating what kinds of dialogue platforms existed in the two communities, and whether women's associations function as a type of dialogue platform at the community level.

#### *Dialogue structures at the community level*

All interviewees in Yaokouakoukro indicated that community-level meetings function as the local dialogue structure. Most (82 percent) stated that community-level meetings took place whenever local problems required community members to gather for discussion. Families in the community learned about the topic and establishment of a meeting via public announcements made by the community chief. Similar to the Yaokouakoukro community, the vast majority of respondents indicated that publicly announced community-level meetings in Zaranou served as the venue for solving problems or discussing issues.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Most (96 percent) interviewees affirmed that community-level meetings took place in general, with a slightly smaller majority (83.2 percent) of the interviewees stating that community-level meetings took place when problems arose. Some (10 percent) indicated that they heard about public meetings through family members rather than public announcement.

### ***Women's Associations***

In Yaokouakoukro, 71 percent of the women interviewed said they belonged to an association called Ba-Mé-Tioh, one of the two women's associations selected by Nestlé for participation in this project and linked to the Nestlé supplier cooperative USCRG. Most women (78.2 percent) who had joined an association indicated that the association was useful to them, primarily because the association brought mutual support and promoted solidarity among women (77 percent), or provided members with financial support when they encountered problems (6.5 percent). Some women (13 percent), stated that the association was somewhat inactive and one woman indicated that many programs were announced but no positive results were achieved.

Similarly, 70 percent of the men interviewed in Yaokouakoukro said they belonged to an association, though men joined a wider number of associations, such as the association Ahouman (26.6 percent), USCRG (23.3 percent), and E Wouka Ehoun (10 percent). The rest mentioned they joined a Self-Help Group or an association still under creation. Almost all (95.5 percent) of them spoke highly of the association as they believed associations were useful to them, mainly in two ways: 1) provided them with necessary financial support by mutual support or loans; 2) increased their knowledge by training them and providing its members phytosanitary products.

In Zaranou, assessors found that a vast majority (85.7 percent) of interviewed women belonged to an association, with 74.1 percent belonging to AFEDEZ, and the remainder belonging to COOPAZA, Gnamien Môh, or 'Ye

Bô Yô Kon. Of the women who belonged to an association, almost all told assessors that they saw advantages to their membership, including:

- Assistance with problem solving;
- Provision of phytosanitary products;
- Opportunities to meet and discuss issues together with other women, building understanding and solidarity;
- Motivation to function as a group and provide mutual aid;
- Skills training leading to increased confidence.

Almost all the men (98.6 percent) interviewed in Zaranou said they were members of one of the following associations: 1) COOPAZA, 2) AFEDEZ, 3) EBOYEKOUN, an association dedicated for Baoule people living in Zaranou, 4) the Ghanian people's association of Zaranou, 5) a Muslim association, 6) a Christian association, 7) another religious council, or 8) a youth association. Those men who joined an association stated that their memberships were useful to them<sup>25</sup> in securing financial support, loans, job opportunities, phytosanitary products, and trainings on agricultural techniques. Interviewees stated that religious and youth associations gave their members social opportunities, and helped their members in times of difficulty.

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<sup>25</sup> Of the men interviewed who belonged to an association, 95 percent said they thought the association was useful.



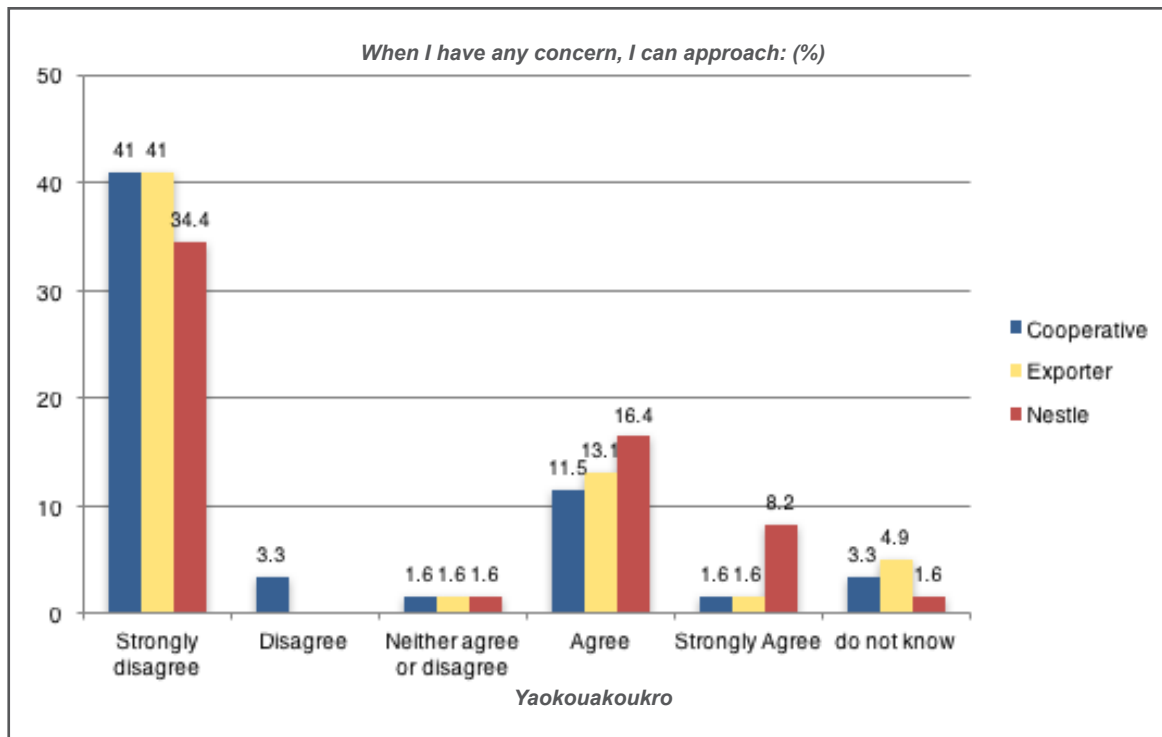


Figure 2: Grievance channels in Yaokouakoukro

#### 4. Grievance Mechanisms

In examining the grievance mechanisms available in the communities, the baseline assessment investigated: (1) to what extent farmers living in the community were able to resolve their conflicts; (2) how community grievance channels functioned; (3) whether external grievance channels were available for farmers when they sought external assistance; and (4) to what extent women were empowered to resolve conflict.

##### *Grievance systems at the community level*

Grievance mechanisms in Yaokouakoukro were generally clear to all the farmers interviewed. According to the interviewees, when there was any contentious issue in the community, community courts consisting of a village or community chief, family representatives or family chief, and a youth leader would help resolve the issue. Family-

level conflicts would be resolved within the family and by family chief. Young people said they would rely on youth leaders to judge and resolve the conflict among them. Thus, community chief, family chief, youth leaders were the main points of contact who would be approached by residents in the community to resolve grievances. Interviewed farmers also mentioned that they would probably approach their friends, elders in the community, or neighbors they knew well when they wanted to talk about a contentious issue and seek assistance.

Nearly 92 percent of the interviewees in Yaokouakoukro said that community grievances were generally solved immediately. For grievances that could not be resolved immediately, interviewees reported that the timeliness of their resolution would depend on the nature of the problem.



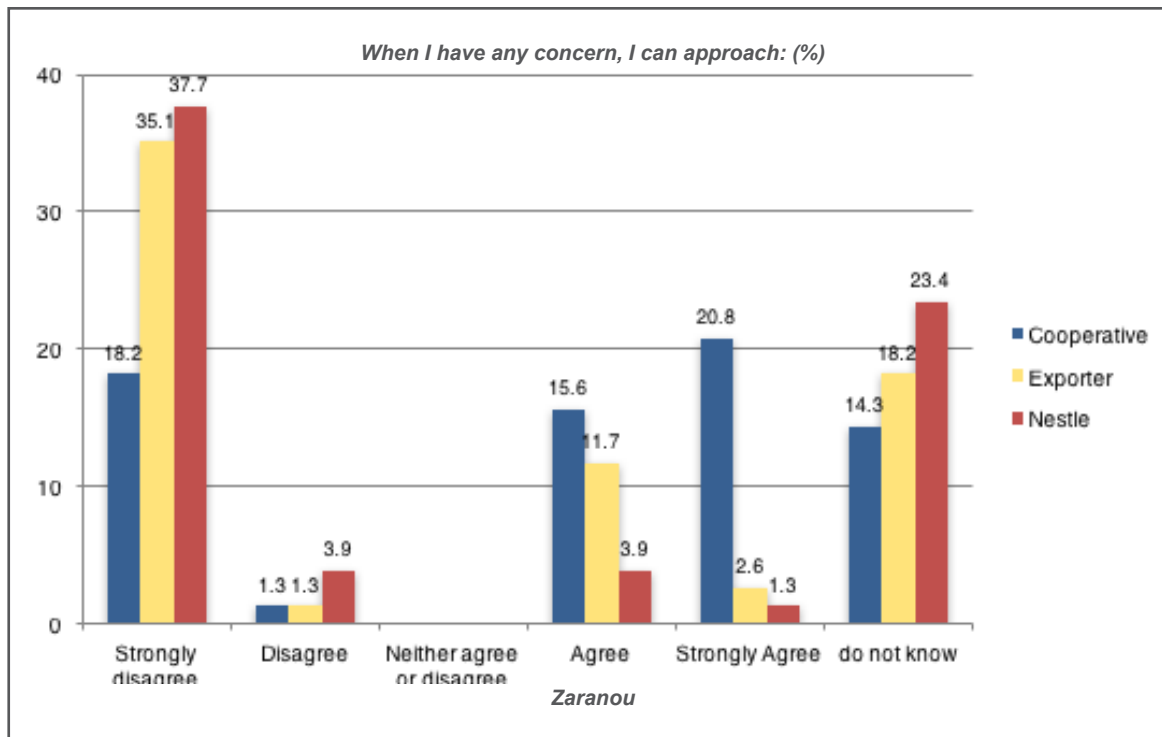


Figure 3: Grievance channels in Zaranou

Findings for the Zaranou community suggest a community-level grievance system at similar to that of Yaokouakoukro, with community courts playing a significant role in resolving issues and coordinating the process. In addition to the types of leaders cited by the Yaokouakoukro community as grievance channels, respondents in Zaranou also named ethnic leaders as important in judging and resolving issues. Of the Zaranou interviewees, 70.8 percent indicated that issues were mostly resolved at once with a few (9.7 percent) reporting that grievance resolution takes 'weeks' or 'months'. The time taken to resolve an issue also depended on the nature and complexity of the problem.

The results above show that both of the communities had functioning and well-recognized internal grievance channels in place.

### External grievance channel

As for seeking assistance outside of their communities when they had any concerns, the interviewees in general did not consider approaching external channels<sup>26</sup>. Approximately two-fifths of the interviewees in Yaokouakoukro strongly disagreed that they could approach the staff of a cooperative (41 percent), an exporter (41 percent), or Nestlé (34.4 percent) when they had an issue.

The assessment results from the community of Zaranou (where most of the interviewees were cooperative members) indicated a somewhat different perception, with the cooperative seen as more approachable than an exporter or Nestlé. e members.

<sup>26</sup> External grievance channels hereby mean channels that are outside of the community.

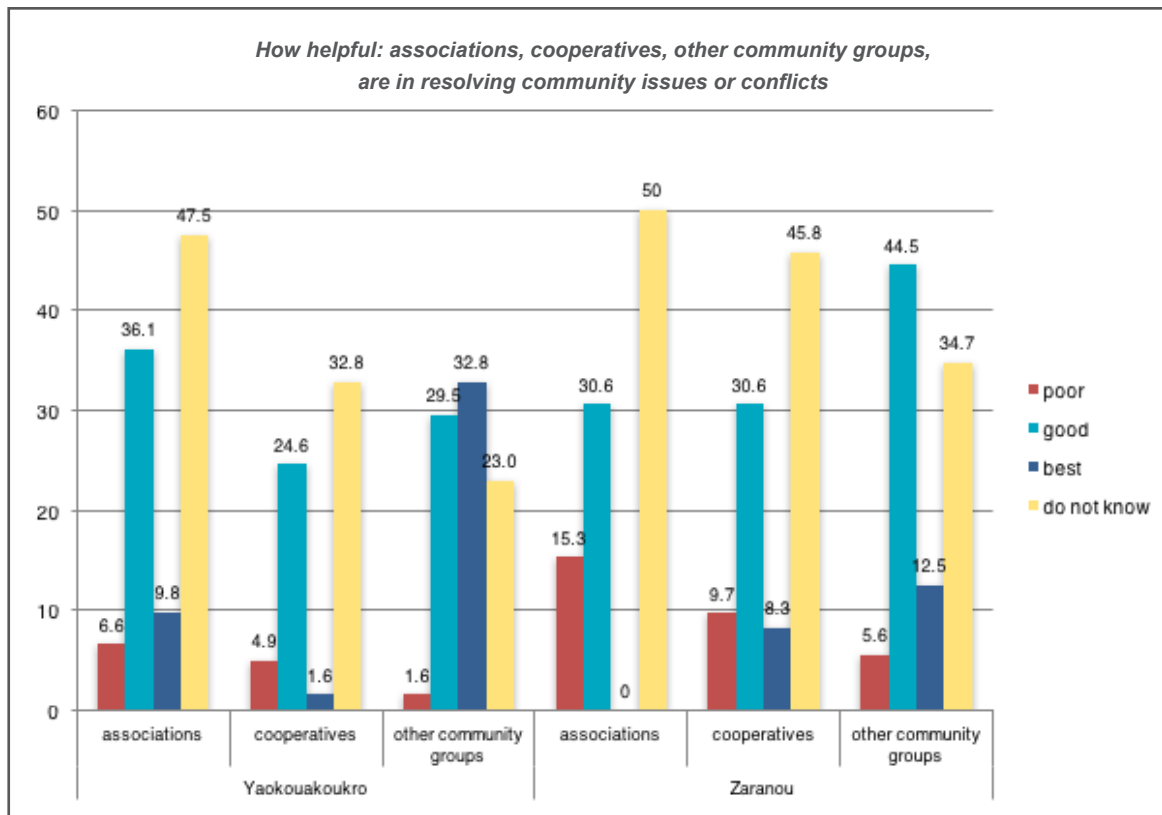


Figure 4: Effectiveness of community level conflict resolution mechanisms

Observations in the communities establish that a variety of grievance channels may exist at the community level and their use is related to the nature of grievance. When the concerns are related to cocoa, respondents raise them with the cooperative, when they are personal, they are raised within the family and when they are related to community, they are handled by the community platforms. Based the survey, the assessment team found that some religious associations play a role in addressing both family- and community- level grievances.

### ***Perspectives on usefulness of associations,<sup>27</sup> cooperatives, and community groups<sup>28</sup>***

When the interviewees in Yaokouakoukro were asked to rate the helpfulness of associations, cooperatives, and other community groups in resolving conflicts or community issues, interviewees gave a generally positive feedback. During the interviews, the respondents tend to mix these different types of organizations and sometime referred them interchangeably. Regarding the usefulness of each type of the group in resolving conflicts, 62.3 percent of the interviewees

<sup>27</sup> Associations are groups of people with a common vision to achieve a goal. Most of the time, women constitute associations to address common economical issues in communities.

<sup>28</sup> Community Groups are mostly social help groups constituted in communities to promote solidarity amongst members through various means such as performing farm work on each other's farms.

rated community groups as ‘good’ or ‘best,’ followed by 45.9 percent for associations, and 26.2 percent for cooperatives. However, a high percentage of interviewees indicated that they ‘do not know’ how to comment on community groups (23 percent), associations (47.5 percent), and cooperatives (32.8 percent). In some cases, the particular group might not have been active in the interviewee’s community.

Interviewees in Zaranou gave similar positive feedback on the usefulness of the associations, cooperatives, and community groups, with 57 percent of the interviewees rating community groups as ‘good’ or ‘best,’ followed by 38.9 percent for cooperatives, and 30.6 percent for associations. The proportion of the people who indicated that they ‘do not know’ how to comment on associations, cooperatives, and community groups were larger than those of Yaokouakoukro, reaching 50 percent, 45.8 percent and 34.7 percent respectively.

These findings show that in both communities, most of the interviewees recognized that the community groups were most useful in resolving conflicts. However, a “don’t know” answer from a significant number of interviewees suggests that active associations and cooperatives may need to engage in better communication with community members to encourage participation.

### ***Voices of women***

In Yaokouakoukro, almost all the women who were willing to talk in depth (24 out of total 31 interviewees) expressed their wish to create a strong women’s association so that women’s voices could be heard. They also believed that women should be involved in the decision-making process of the community and the involvement of women in resolving problems would be helpful to the community. In their opinion, women, and not just men, should

truly engage in community management, and they suggested that training could be provided to both men and women to promote mutual understanding, especially men’s understanding of women.

Women in Zaranou expressed similar opinions, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and mutual respect between men and women, and equal involvement in the management of community affairs. They also stated that women should be empowered to handle problems especially within women’s groups. A female interviewee in Zaranou said,

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**‘if women are financially independent, they (community members/men) listen to her in community affair management.’**

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This statement reveals the relationship between the economic situation and social stature of women in the communities. The assessment team frequently heard similar sentiments, in the informal conversations held before and during the baseline assessment amongst both men and women.

## **5. Women’s influence in decision-making process at community level**

This assessment looked into women’s influence in making decisions at the community level by evaluating women’s participation and comfort level in the community meetings.

Of the interviewees in Yaokouakoukro, 67.2 percent reported that they attended community meetings where decisions were made. More men participated in such a meetings than women, which was consistent

with other findings of this report<sup>29</sup> showing that men had a higher social position in Yaokouakoukro. Though women's actual participation was lower than men's, 80 percent of women stated that they regularly participated in community meetings for making decisions., with 51.6 percent saying they felt comfortable attending such meetings. Their discomfort mainly came from their fear of public speaking as many women said they were generally not allowed or encouraged to speak in public. The situation was quite different for men as most men interviewed mentioned they felt very comfortable attending such meetings. Only two men indicated that they were not comfortable. One stated that he had never tried to speak in public, while the other was still young and his father spoke on behalf of the family.

The results of Zaranou were very similar to those of Yaokouakoukro, with 51.9 percent of women participating in community level meetings to undertake decisions, compared to 90.3 percent of men.. In this community, only one-third of the women felt comfortable attending such meetings, with another 30 percent of women indicating their discomfort, mostly based on fear of public speaking. Some interviewees stated that women had no right to express their opinion in such occasions. Men stated that their discomfort<sup>30</sup> was based on either not being used to speaking in public, or wishing to respect their elders by deferring to them in public settings. Correlation analysis for the Zaranou data found that the economic power of women was positively correlated with their participation

29 80 percent of the interviewed men said they had attended community level meetings for voting for a decision. Yet, only 54.8 percent of women indicated that they participated such meetings in the past.

30 Of the interviewed men in Zaranou, 75 percent felt comfortable attending community-level meetings for reaching a decision. Only 13.9 percent of the men reported their discomfort.

in the community-level meetings.<sup>31</sup> This was not found in the correlated data for Yaokouakoukro, partially because their were too few women owning farms to measure a correlation.

These findings suggest that to a limited extent, women in these communities were engaging in decision-making processes, but not at the same levels as the men, and without being encouraged to make decisions. Women also lacked confidence and communication skills to express themselves in public. Women said they deferred to men and men said they deferred to elders when deciding whether to speak in public. The data from Zaranou showed that a higher economic status for women correlated positively with a stronger ability to speak up and participate in community life.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This baseline assessment shows that in general:

- Both male and female farmers were working on cocoa farms. Male farmers were more likely to be working to earn money to support their families, while women were more likely to spend more time taking care of family members. Thus, most women were economically dependent on men and held a lower social-economic position than men.
- Women had some leverage in family management, especially in allocating family income and making household decisions. However, at the community decision-making level, their leverage was

31 The correlation coefficient between the economic power of women and their participation of community level meetings is 0.439 (statistically significant at 0.01 level). The question 'whose names are listed as the farm's owner' in this survey contributed to the analysis of the economic power of women.



limited. Women were not encouraged to or invited to be a part of the decision-making process. They lacked confidence and necessary skills to express themselves in public, and deferred to men in public settings.

- Women had a generally high awareness of the opportunity to join an association, though their association membership rates were lower than men's. They were aware of the importance of joining an association, recognizing that they would have more opportunities for training and mutual assistance, and could collectively ensure that the voices of women are heard in their communities.
- Both men and women said they required more technical support and training about planting and farming skills to increase their crops' yield. Helpful agri-technical trainings might include instruction on the proper use and accessing of personal protective equipment, proper use of fertilizers and chemicals, how to establish a nursery of cocoa trees, information on cocoa variety and seed selection, and basic health-related knowledge as the community lacked sufficient hygiene services.
- In both communities, interviewees (both men and women) believed that the presence of different kinds of associations, cooperatives, and community groups brought benefits to them and helped resolve conflicts or community issues. However, active associations and cooperatives may need to engage in better communication with community members to encourage participation.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Recommendations on Training*

Based on findings of this assessment, we recommend that the project should develop and implement a comprehensive training plan to address the agro-technical training needs identified for the two project communities. The agro-technical training should utilize hands-on experience and should include the following:

- How to select good seeds and nurse cocoa trees;
- Proper use of PPEs for preparing and spraying pesticides, and other tasks;
- Proper use of fertilizer and chemicals to maintain soil fertility and prevent diseases and pests.

The assessors also recommend community-level trainings on gender equality, and women's engagement and participation in community affairs. Such trainings should be offered to both women and men.

### *Recommendations on women engagement and community level communication*

As the report has found, women's leverage and participation in the community level affairs was very limited. In addition to the trainings, it is important that the community members (community chief and men) provide more opportunities to women to attend meetings, and to express themselves freely. Capacity building activities should focus on providing equal opportunities to women to speak freely and be involved in decision-making and community life.

Community-level communication of conflict resolution can be further improved to ensure that all the members of the community are informed of important progress on community issues. External grievance channels are

another good way to provide assistance to farmers, although farmers may not be aware of these channels. If Nestlé chooses to promote such channels, the company should communicate this clearly to the farmers, and ensure farmers feel empowered to contact the company about community or workplace issues related to cocoa production.

### ***Recommendations for associations, cooperatives, and community groups***

Findings of this assessment suggest that it is beneficial to have many associations, cooperatives, and community groups in place, working at the community level. If these associations, cooperatives, and community groups can actively cooperate they may be better positioned to ensure that their goals can be reached in a complementary way.

## **VI. NEXT STEPS**

In order to address some of the issues raised in the SIA, such as underlying gender inequality issues, lack of economic empowerment for women, and insufficient opportunities for women to engage in dialogue with other community, the FLA is planning follow-up actions related to three main thematic areas.

1. Collaboration with Dr. Linda Mayoux to introduce a community-led visioning and planning methodology known as the Gender Action Learning at Scale (GALS). This technique encourages women and men together to develop a realization that gender inequalities are not 'natural' but social constructs, and that they can improve gender equality in their communities. The GALS methodology provides tools for people to analyze their lives and assess their willingness to change. That change becomes easier
- when many people come to a realization together and support each other in the positive changes they want to make to have more control over their lives and work together on a basis of shared visions and values of equality.
2. As part of the GALS training and ongoing facilitation efforts, the trainings will focus on ways to increase household income.
3. The FLA will be working with the selected women's association to build its capacities, professionalize its work, and strengthen the association as a support structure for women. The project will enhance the association's function to integrate women's voices into the existing community-level dialogue structures.



***FLA's field staff interviewing a woman in Yaokouakoukro.***