



ASSESSING WOMEN'S ROLES IN NESTLÉ'S IVORY COAST COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN

Prepared by the Fair Labor Association

July 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2013, the Fair Labor Association (FLA) conducted several Independent External Assessments of working conditions at farms involved in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain in the Ivory Coast. In conjunction with this broader assessment, Nestlé requested a more specific assessment of women's roles in Ivorian cocoa-producing communities.

For the initial assessment, the FLA randomly selected five cooperatives from among the 45 cooperatives participating in the Nestlé Cocoa Plan. These 45 cooperatives represent 20 percent of Nestlé's Ivorian cocoa supply chain; numerous intermediaries involved in the remaining 80 percent of the supply chain prevent detailed assessment at this time. From among these five cooperatives, FLA assessors visited 200 farms, interviewing 120 workers, including women.

Building on this work, to assess women's roles more specifically, the FLA team conducted an additional 370 interviews from October to December 2013, including individual interviews with 244 rural women in cocoa-producing communities. This assessment reports on the roles of women, describes the unique risks they face, and makes recommendations to Nestlé and the Ivorian government for how to improve conditions for women.

WOMEN'S ROLES IN COCOA PRODUCTION

Though women play a number of direct roles in cocoa production, and additionally provide support to men producing cocoa, their direct and indirect roles often go unrecognized. For example, of the women interviewed for this assessment, 93 percent reported working in cocoa production, either on family farms or cocoa plantations. However, women's work is often not subject to any terms or conditions, and therefore goes unrecorded by both the local cocoa cooperatives, and by Nestlé.

Nonetheless, women perform numerous tasks on cocoa plantations, including establishing new cocoa nurseries; planting seedlings; maintaining plantations; collecting cocoa pods; and transporting, fermenting, and drying the cocoa. At the end of the production cycle, men take responsibility for collecting payment for the cocoa, meaning that a woman's compensation for her labors often depends on her relationship with a man. Most women combine this income with additional income-generating activities (especially cultivation of additional food crops), but still, overall, 98 percent of all women surveyed found their income too low to maintain an acceptable standard of living.

WOMEN'S STATUS IN THE COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN

In many areas of the Ivory Coast, communities recognize only male land-ownership, making a woman's ability to earn a living from any agricultural work – including cocoa production – again dependent upon on her relationship with a man. At present, access to cocoa seedlings provided by Nestlé and its in-country partners also depends largely on cooperative membership or access to land, making it more difficult for a woman to begin cocoa farming for herself.

Meanwhile, at the cooperative level, women hold almost no management or leadership positions. Of the 43 representatives on the Boards of Directors of the five cooperatives surveyed in the FLA assessment, only one was a woman. Furthermore, although both the local cooperatives and Nestlé's in-country partners have established "farmer field schools" to help share agricultural and health-and-safety best practices, very few women (only 11 percent of those surveyed) participate. As observed in the FLA assessment, a lack of health-and-safety awareness by women can lead to risky

behavior, such as improperly repurposing hazardous farm equipment for kitchen needs, or women not using the same personal protective equipment in their farm-work as men, for example.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women working in the communities assessed by the FLA team perform multiple roles. Many women, in addition to spending five to six hours per day working in cocoa production, must also perform numerous household and family tasks, tend to crops other than cocoa to feed their families, and walk long distances to and from the cocoa farms or to sell their other crops at the market. Women work hard, as do men, but women also face certain gender-specific cultural barriers, related to land access, abuse, exploitation, lack of access to credit, and their undocumented cocoa-production roles.

To raise the status of women in the Nestlé supply chain, and to improve conditions for women in the cocoa-producing areas of the Ivory Coast, FLA presents 17 specific recommendations to Nestlé and to the Ivorian government as part of this report. Among our recommendations for Nestlé, we suggest taking steps to:

- ensure equal employment opportunities among its cooperative members;
- encourage cooperatives to register cocoa farms under both a producer's name and that of his wife;
- ensure access for women to purchase cocoa seedlings;
- make training sessions more accessible and welcoming for women;
- establish platforms for women to redress grievances;
- ensure access to personal protective equipment; and
- invest cocoa premiums in additional income-generating projects for women.

Deep-seated and long-standing societal issues in the Ivory Coast limit women's ability to thrive as participants in the cocoa supply chain, which is why this assessment includes recommendations to the Ivorian government for raising the status of women overall. However, to improve conditions for women working in the cocoa supply chain specifically, all participants bear responsibility, regardless of any action by the government. Nestlé, as a powerful global company sourcing from the Ivory Coast, is uniquely positioned to ensure fair treatment of the women whose labors contribute to the company's success in the global marketplace.

A. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, Nestlé became the first food company to affiliate with the Fair Labor Association (FLA).¹ FLA is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative that combines the efforts of businesses, civil society organizations, colleges, and universities to protect workers' rights and improve working conditions globally through adherence to international standards. FLA conducts Independent External Assessments (IEAs) of its affiliates' supply chains, as a requirement of FLA affiliation, and verifies working conditions against FLA's Workplace Code of Conduct (COC).²

For Nestlé, FLA conducted monitoring visits to 200 cocoa-producing farms in ten communities that supply five cooperatives supported by the Nestlé Cocoa Plan in the

¹ On February 29, 2012, FLA's Board of Directors accepted Nestlé's application to affiliate with FLA and become a Participating Company. Nestlé started the FLA program in the Ivory Coast for cocoa and Turkey for hazelnuts.

² <http://www.fairlabor.org/our-work/labor-standards>

Ivory Coast from October to December 2013. These assessments complement earlier FLA assessments of Nestlé's Ivorian supply chain, conducted in 2011,³ and were conducted during the peak harvest period, during which a maximum number of both family and hired workers were involved in field activities.

At the same time, in response to Oxfam's "Behind the Brands" Campaign, Nestlé requested the FLA to conduct an independent study to assess women's roles in their Ivory Coast cocoa supply chain.⁴ Nestlé has committed to strengthen its efforts to improve the lives of women involved in its cocoa supply chain through the Nestlé Cocoa Plan.⁵ In cooperation with the FLA, International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), and others, Nestlé has agreed to concrete action steps, including the commissioning of this report.

During the 2013 cocoa harvest cycle, FLA's assessment team conducted a focused gender assessment of Nestlé's cocoa supply chain while in the field collecting data on the working conditions of the farms and communities. For this assessment, the FLA team conducted a total of 370 interviews, including individual interviews with 244 rural women in communities, camps, and farms. FLA assessors consulted a number of independent gender and cocoa experts seeking inputs on the role of women in cocoa production and further to provide feedback on survey methodology, tools, and data analysis.

³ <http://www.fairlabor.org/report/assessment-nestle-cocoa-supply-chain-ivory-coast>

⁴ <http://www.behindthebrands.org/> and <http://www.nestle.com/csv/ruraldevelopment/women>

⁵ <http://www.nestlecocoaplan.com>

The main objectives of this assessment are to:

1. Map women's current roles, activities, income-generating avenues, and access to resources in cocoa-producing communities of Nestlé's cocoa supply chain in the Ivory Coast.
2. Assess the risks women encounter and the barriers they face on farms and in cooperatives, villages, and camps.
3. Make recommendations to Nestlé and the Ivorian government on how to improve conditions for women.

Although the FLA team focused on cocoa farmers, workers, and their respective communities, this assessment also covered women's livelihood strategies more broadly (e.g., alternative income generation opportunities, saving schemes, production of other agriculture commodities, task mapping during the entire year, etc.). The aim of this study is not to generate a workplace labor compliance report, but rather to capture the risks and opportunities for women in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain. Nonetheless, this assessment highlights some labor compliance risks that complement other findings.

The report ends with recommendations for Nestlé on how best to use women's skills to improve labor standards on farms and to begin closing the existing gender gap. These recommendations are primarily based on women's aspirations for livelihood improvements as identified throughout the survey. Furthermore, given the complexity of the situation, as highlighted later in the report, we also provide a set of recommendations for the Ivorian government.

B. BACKGROUND

The economy of the Ivory Coast is primarily agriculture-based. With an annual cocoa production averaging 1.2 million tons (41 percent of global production), it has ranked first in global cocoa production for several years. Some 720,000 farmers produce cocoa in 9.5 million hectares of land.⁶ For decades, the Ivorian cocoa sector has faced several challenges. Child labor is a chronic issue and, as such, has fueled criticism from the global community. More recently, the role of women and the conditions they face in rural areas has come under increased scrutiny. Although women have been strongly assimilated into the rural economy, their role in the development of rural areas and, more specifically, in the cocoa sector is not well documented and, therefore, undervalued.

a. Women's roles in the agriculture sector and rural areas

Women have traditionally played several evolving roles in the agriculture sector and rural areas. These roles are affected by women's religious beliefs, age, marital status, ethnicity, cultural identity and social and economic class. Agnes Quisumbing and Bonnie McClafferty⁷ have highlighted several social and economic roles that women play in the rural areas: (1) managing complex and joint family households; (2) engaging in community work; (3) pursuing multiple livelihood strategies to make ends meet; (4) contributing to agriculture; (5) ensuring food security for families; and (6) marketing of agricultural products.

6 <http://www.cacao.gouv.ci/index.php?rubrique=1.1.6&langue=en> and <http://www.connectionivoirienne.net/les-paysans-enrichissent-la-cote-divoire-mais-eux-ont-les-poches-vides/>

7 Agnes R. Quisumbing and Bonnie McClafferty, *Using Gender Research in Development*, Washington, International Food Policy Research Institute, 2006.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women in rural settings spend most of their time and energy on producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting and transporting fuel and water (primarily on foot), engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members, and maintaining their homes.⁸ A considerable amount of women's time is spent commuting to farms and then back home, as they tend to live some distance away from their workplace. Although these activities fuel the engine of everyday existence, several of them are not defined as "economically active." The World Bank estimates that if all the domestic work that women undertake were to be monetized, the annual contribution to the world economy would be in the range of \$11 trillion.⁹ According to the United Nations Population Fund, in Asia and Africa, women work as many as 13 hours more per week than their male counterparts.¹⁰ The World Bank/FAO/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook* states that, "in rural areas, the availability and use of time by women is a key factor in the availability of water for good hygiene, firewood collection, and frequent feeding of small children."¹¹ According to the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), women perform 66 percent of the world's work and produce 50 percent of its food, but only manage 10 percent of its income and own 1 percent of its property.¹²

8 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf>

9 World Bank, *World Development Report*, Appendix 3. New York, Oxford University Press, 1995.

10 <http://web.unfpa.org/intercenter/food/womenas.htm>

11 World Bank/FAO/IFAD, *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, Washington, World Bank, 2009.

12 WCF, *Women in Cocoa Farming: "Bridging The Gap,"* Innovation in Sustainability PPP.

Oxfam highlights the vital role women play in the production of cocoa in a recent report.¹³ The report indicates that women: (1) plant and maintain farms; (2) open the harvested pods; and (3) oversee the fermentation and drying of cocoa beans before they are sold to traders. It further notes that women are regularly involved in 12 of the 19 key stages of cocoa production and play a leading role in both the maintenance of young cocoa and the implementation of post-harvest activities. The Oxfam report goes on to show that women experience inequality and injustice.

A case study conducted by Oxfam in the Ivory Coast indicates that women represent at least 25 percent of the 720,000 existing small cocoa producers who own the land where they grow cocoa.¹⁴ According to the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP),¹⁵ women comprise nearly 58 percent of the workforce in the Ivory Coast's cocoa farming industry. This figure includes women who work on their own land and on cocoa farms owned by other growers. Overall, women work in agriculture as: (1) farmers on their own account; (2) unpaid workers on family farms; and (3) paid or unpaid laborers on other farms and agricultural enterprises. Apart from commercial crops such as cocoa, women also produce food and other cash crops, and manage several agricultural operations involving crops, livestock, and fish farming at either the subsistence or commercial level.

Women are generally responsible for food selection, preparation, and the feeding of children. Additionally, in many societies,

¹³ <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/equality-for-women-starts-with-chocolate-mb-260213.pdf>

¹⁴ http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/gender-inequality-cocoa-ivory-coast.pdf?utm_source=oxf.am&utm_medium=3zC&utm_content=redirect

¹⁵ J.M. Kouadjo et al, "Production et offre du cacao et du café en Côte d'Ivoire : Rapport d'enquête," ENSEA, 2002.

including some in Africa, along with producing food crops, women often control the use or sale of food produced and grown on plots they manage.¹⁶ Women play a central role in ensuring their household's food security and are crucial in transforming agricultural produce into food and meeting the nutritional needs of the members of their households. Women also play a key role in the marketing of their produce (especially fruits and vegetables) and handicrafts in local markets and tend to spend all their earnings on food and meeting children's needs. The FAO estimates that if both women and men could access agricultural resources equally, the total number of people suffering from hunger would drop by 100-150 million.¹⁷

b. Risks women encounter in cocoa-farming communities

As women are often not heard and seldom form a part of the governing structures in most developing countries, even those that have democratic forms of government, they are vulnerable to a number of risks, listed below. As the number and potential severity of these risks suggest, representing women and integrating gender into national plans and agricultural strategies remains challenging.¹⁸

Economic risks: Women in rural areas involved in agriculture in the Ivory Coast had two things in common across all regions surveyed by the FLA team. Compared to men, women had less access to: (1) agricultural assets, inputs, and services; and (2) rural employment opportunities. Assessors also found a gender gap in ownership or access

¹⁶ Nadine Horenstein, *Women and Food Security in Kenya*, World Bank, 1989.

¹⁷ <http://www.fao.org/news/story/fr/item/52011/icode/>

¹⁸ Monica Fong, "Gender in Sector-Wide Development Policies and Programs," paper presented at the 3rd World Congress of Rural Women, Madrid, <http://www.oecd.org>.

to other assets, inputs, and services, such as to land, livestock, education and agriculture extension services, financial services, and technology. Female cocoa farmers rarely owned the land they cultivated, even if they worked in the same field throughout their entire lives.¹⁹ With neither land nor access to capital, it is difficult for women to obtain loans or credit. This severely limits women's ability to buy fertilizers, seeds, and more efficient irrigation systems, which could help increase their farms' yields.²⁰ The direct result of this inequality is that female farmers are less productive than their male counterparts. Although women are involved in all major tasks on cocoa plantations, cocoa production still is considered to be "a man's work"; consequently, the tasks that are predominantly conducted by women are generally paid less than those predominantly done by men.²¹ Most women work on the family farms without pay, but the women who are growers and landowners are often compelled to involve hired labor (usually men) in their farms, thus reducing their net income.

Labor risks: Women face many workplace risks. FLA's assessment of Nestlé's cocoa farms in the Ivory Coast in 2011 found that the most prominent labor risks for women involved harassment and abuse, discrimination, long working hours, limited access to safety equipment, lack of representation and collective bargaining,

and improper compensation.²² Additionally, women do not attend farmer field school trainings²³ and are seldom part of cooperative management structures, thereby affecting their growth in career, income, and status. According to the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, over the past five years the cocoa industry has raised farmers' incomes by: (1) increasing productivity through education via agricultural training programs (mostly related to certification programs); and (2) the provision of plant materials, loans, and fertilizers.²⁴ However, as women have fewer opportunities to participate in these training programs and receive inputs, their productivity levels remain low.

Health and safety risks: Due to numerous responsibilities related to farming and cocoa production, as well as household tasks, conveyance tasks, and childcare, women are often involved in physical labor that starts early in the morning and ends late at night. According to the FAO,²⁵ a study in Africa found that over a period of one year, women carried an average of up to 80 tons of fuel, water, and farm produce; the same study found that men carried only one-eighth as much, an average of 10 tons over a like period. Women carry more weight on their daily walk home from work than men, often with a heavy wedge on their head and a child on their back, while most men carry only a machete. Over time, the physical nature of daily farm work and labor can cause health risks, which are only exacerbated by poor (or even no)

19 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), *Empowering Women and Fighting Poverty: Cocoa and Land Rights in West Africa*, 2002.

20 Bogui, N. and Belleau, "Making the Diagnosis Gender and Development" SOCODEVI (1999).

21 The Role of Certification and Producer Support in Promoting Gender Equality in Cocoa Production, UTZ Certified Solidaridad-Certification Support Network in collaboration with Oxfam Novib, February 2009.

22 http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/cocoa-report-final_0.pdf

23 <http://www.nestlecocoaplan.com/cote-divoire-farmer-field-school/>

24 *Increasing cocoa productivity through improved nutrition*, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Center for Development and Innovation, Wageningen University and Research Center.

25 <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/women.pdf>

access to health care. Additionally, the lack of prenatal or postnatal services in rural areas exposes women to a high risk of reproductive complications.

Social risks: Women in rural areas face numerous social risks related to issues such as: discrimination, access to food, illiteracy, lack of education, increased family responsibilities, absence in decision-making processes, and restrictive practices related to local customs and traditions. Women are also less likely than men to complete their education, as they often have to stay home to care for younger siblings and organize household chores. In most cases, men make all decisions related to both family and community, leaving women simply to execute them.

C. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

a. Assessment team

The team for this assessment was made up of: (1) two FLA staff members, one based in the Ivory Coast and one in Geneva; and (2) four independent experts based in the Ivory Coast. The Ivory Coast team included one gender expert, one statistical analysis expert and two researchers. Other FLA staff members based in Geneva and Washington, D.C., provided input on the overall report.

b. Assessment stages

This assessment was conducted in three stages, from April to December 2013 (Table 1).

1. Desk-based research and tool development

- a. Preliminary desk-based research and literature survey on women and gender-related issues in the Ivory Coast.

- b. Development and adaptation of FLA's field data collection tools and questionnaires.
 - i. **Stakeholder Consultation Tool - Gender:** Guided the interviewer in consultations with local sources, gender experts, and field practitioners. Even though the emphasis was on gender, other labor and social aspects were also highlighted.
 - ii. **Community Profiling Tool:** Collected information regarding the profile of the farming communities. Data was collected through interviews with community members and local governing bodies at the community level.
 - iii. **Internal Monitoring System Tool (with additional questions on gender):** Collected information about the internal monitoring system of the regional site/cooperative, women's representation at the cooperative level, and women's participation in training programs.
 - iv. **Gender Assessment Tool:** Collected in-depth data on women's perspectives from a cross-section of women from communities, camps, farms, and co-operatives. Individual interviewees completed one form per person; focus groups completed one form collectively.
 - v. **Farm Assessment Tool:** Collected data at the farm level based on: (1) interviews with growers and workers; (2) visual inspection; and (3) documentation review. During the Independent External Assessment process, the FLA team visited a total of 200 farms; some data points from these assessments were included in the gender study.

TABLE 1: STAGES OF ASSESSMENT			
PHASE/METHOD	TIME PERIOD	WHO	CONTENT & OBJECTIVES
Desk-based Research and Tool Development	April – August 2013	FLA	Review available records on Nestlé's supply chain and gender issues for existing data and indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities/tasks • Risks • Income generating avenues • Decision making • Contribution in rural areas • Women's empowerment • Percentage of female farmers involved in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain
Stakeholder Engagement (Qualitative Survey)	August – September 2013	FLA, Gender Expert	Meeting with local experts/stakeholders to understand and map: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Income generating avenues • Risks • Contribution in family and community development • Empowering needs of women in rural areas • Other factors as described above (under desk-based research)
External Information Gathering (Observation, Qualitative, and Quantitative survey)	October – December 2013	FLA, Gender Expert, Data Collection Team	Interview with samples of farmers and women in rural areas to gauge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic characteristics • Task mapping • Economic activities • Percentage of female cocoa farmers in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain (Nestlé Cocoa Plan) and in general • Percentage of cocoa volume supplied by female farmers to Nestlé (NCP) • Women's total income in one year • Women's benefits in Nestlé's rural investment (NCP) • Percentage of women's contribution to family duties • Labor risks • Training needs and availability of time • Aspirations • Challenges
Data Analysis and Report writing	January – March 2014	FLA, Gender Expert	Triangulation of data, data analysis, report writing

2. Qualitative survey

a. Assessors gathered external information on current conditions for women through meetings and interviews with local experts on women's issues in the Ivory Coast. Assessors consulted 12 external organizations during the assessment and also collected information at the cooperative level, with meetings held either on site or at a common meeting place. A total of 126 interviews were conducted in this phase (Table 2). The FLA team conducted all

the interviews in the local language. The team held discussions with local men to understand their perspective on the role of women at home and at the farms, and on the economic contribution women make toward household expenses.

b. Assessors solicited feedback from local experts and stakeholders on the methodology, field tools, and questionnaire, and conducted pilot testing of the tools.

TABLE 2: EXTERNAL INFORMATION GATHERING

ORGANIZATION	MISSION AND AREA OF EXPERTISE	# OF INTERVIEWS
Cocoa Sorters from Buyo and Yamoussoukro	Casual employees of cooperatives	42
International Program on Elimination of Child Labor Program at International Labor Organization (ILO / IPEC)	Conducts programs in the area of child labor in the cocoa sector, promotes decent work	1
Women Action and Development (FEMAD)	NGO specializing in community mobilization and strengthening women's capacities	3
International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)	Seeks to improve working conditions in the cocoa sector with a specific focus on child labor	2
In charge –Gender, Ministry of State, Ministry of Social Issues and Technical Training	Develops gender-related policies	1
In charge – Gender, Ministry of Solidarity of Woman and Child	Develops sector-wide gender policies	1
SOLIDARIDARD	NGO specializing in gender, leadership, management, and environment	2
UTZ Certification	Certification program that conducts training and raises awareness amongst farmers	1
World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)	NGO specializing in sustainability and improving the social, economical, and environmental conditions in cocoa communities	1
Association of Women Food Producers of Lakota	Supports women in food production	27
Association of Women Producers of Coffee and Cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire (ANFPCCCI) - Divo	Promotes women's access to land and encourages women's engagement in cocoa and coffee production	24
Eboyekoun - Toumbokro	NGO promoting solidarity amongst women	12
Doubéhi - Gagnoa	NGO supporting women's economical initiatives in rural areas	9
TOTAL		126

3. Quantitative survey

The FLA team collected data from women in communities, camps, and farms, conducting a total of 244 individual interviews with women (Table 3). The interviews were conducted at homes, farms, markets and communal areas such as community centers. The choice of areas, villages, and population was intended to represent Ivory Coast's cocoa production (Figure 1). Although most visited farms produced for cooperatives participating in the Nestlé Cocoa Plan (NCP), the women's

sample covered women in these communities and in other farms. By so doing, the study gauged working conditions for women contributing directly and indirectly to Nestlé's supply chain. The FLA team conducted all the interviews in the local language and, where needed, local cooperative staff assisted in interviews.

TABLE 3: SURVEY SAMPLE			
REGION / VILLAGE	COMMUNITIES	NUMBER OF WOMEN INTERVIEWED	TOTAL
Buyo/Soubre (South-west)	Noékro	16	31
	Germainkro	15	
Gagnoa (West)	Kouamékro	30	59
	Lébré	29	
Yamoussoukro (Centre)	Toumbokro	35	70
	Gbélistou	35	
Abengourou (East)	Aniassué	15	37
	Satikran	22	
Bonoua/Aboisso (South-East)	Ahoulou Chantier	14	39
	N'zérékou	25	
Lakota/Divo (South)	Lakota	05	08
	Divo	03	
TOTAL			244



Figure 1: Quantitative data collection (Regions)

D. FINDINGS

This section summarizes findings from 126 interviews with Ivorian stakeholders and data collected from 244 rural women. The field work was conducted over a three-month period, from October to December 2013. The surveys were conducted in ten communities that are part of the cocoa supply chain of the five surveyed cooperatives supported by the Nestlé Cocoa Plan in the Ivory Coast. The surveyed women ranged in age from 16 to 76 years, with an average age of 38 years.

I. Women play multiple roles in the cocoa-producing communities and in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain

In this section, we explore how women are directly and indirectly engaged in Nestlé's cocoa supply chain in the Ivory Coast and the various roles they assume in the cocoa growing communities. A general perception of external observers about the cocoa sector is that men (and children) appear as the predominant contributors to Ivorian cocoa production, largely ignoring women's role in the industry. Our assessment found that only 7 percent of the respondents (19 out of 244 women) were not directly involved in cocoa production. A staggering 93 percent of respondents: (1) were actively engaged in cooperatives, as producers, employees, or workers; or (2) supported cocoa growers and farm workers either as family workers or paid workers.

As they actively contribute to economic development, the well-being of their families, the workforce, and their communities, women in the Ivory Coast's cocoa-growing communities play many roles.

I.1. Economic and income generation role

Women work toward wealth creation in their communities in many ways, acting as producers, employees, traders, and entrepreneurs. Based on the survey responses, 20 percent of women worked as producers; 91 percent as traders and entrepreneurs; and 4.5 percent as employees. The assessment found that 25 percent of surveyed women (49 out of 244) headed and ran their own cocoa farms. Of these 49 women, 22 directly supplied the Nestlé cooperatives. Some women worked in more than one capacity and responded accordingly (Table 4).

OCCUPATION	PRODUCERS	TRADERS & ENTREPRENEURS	EMPLOYEES
TOTAL	49	223	11
PERCENTAGE	20%	91%	4.5%

I.1.1. Women as producers

Management of the five surveyed cooperatives shared that the number of women acting as producers/suppliers in the Nestlé's cocoa supply chain has increased over the past few years (Table 5 and Fig. 2). At the time of the field work, there were 97 (as reported by the cooperatives) women producers supplying cocoa to the five cooperatives (3.5 percent of the 2768 cocoa producers). They accounted for 211.335 tons of cocoa, approximately 3 percent of the total volume supplied by these five cooperatives. The 22 women producers (out of the 97 women) who supplied Nestlé collectively generated 15,446,250 FCFA (US \$30,892.50) from the sale of their cocoa beans in 2012.

TABLE 5: PROGRESSION IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AS COCOA PRODUCERS			
YEAR	PRODUCERS	TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL SUPPLIERS IN FIVE VISITED COOPERATIVES
2011	24	1,467	1.63%
2012	58	2,242	2.58%
2013	97	2,768	3.50%

The increased participation of women as cocoa producers is slow for many reasons. First, there are few women who own land to produce cocoa. Second, most women are already involved in production activities in their husbands' cocoa farms or in the production of food crops, leaving very limited time for them to develop their own cocoa farms. Finally, in the local culture, cocoa farming is considered a man's job and therefore even if women inherit cocoa farms they must cede management of the farm to the men in the family (husband, brother, son, or another male relative).

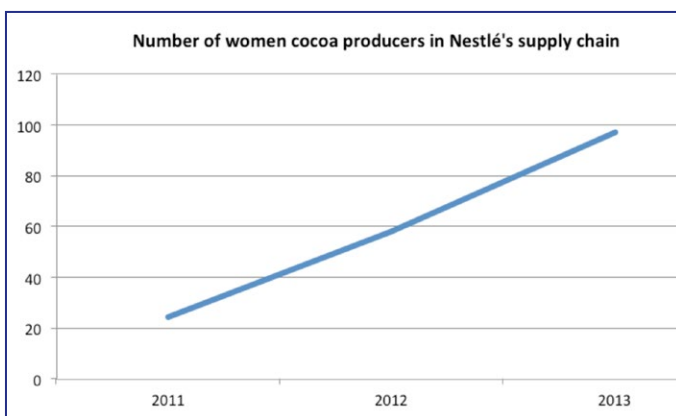


Figure 2: Progression of the number of women cocoa producers since 2011 in five surveyed cooperatives supplying Nestlé

The assessment identified some women cocoa producers supplying Nestlé, for example:

1. The owner of a four-and-a-half-hectare cocoa plantation in Agricole Bénianyé de Buyo (CABB) who supervises the work with the help of her brother;

2. The owner of a plantation 50 kilometers from Bonoua (in the village N'zérékou) who and has entrusted her farm work to a sharecropper; and
3. The owner of a two-hectare cocoa plantation in Toumbokro, who works her own land with the help of seasonal workers.

In addition to their cocoa plantations, the interviewed producers and other women also grow food crops and vegetables, own rubber and palm oil plantations and/or are involved in trade. Nonetheless, the number of women owning and producing cash crops (cocoa, rubber, palm) compared to men still remains marginal. Women producers are most active in the food-producing sector; 70 percent of the women interviewed (171 out of 244) produced food crops (such as yams, cassava, plantains, tarot, maize, millet, peanuts, and vegetables such as eggplant, okra, chili, beans, etc.). Of our interviewed sample 74 percent (180 out of 244) reported that a significant part of their income is generated from agricultural activities (both cash and food crops). Respondents reported using these products primarily to feed their families and for trading as a way to contribute to family income.

1.1.2. Women as employees at farms and cooperatives

Women are engaged as workers at different levels of Nestlé's cocoa supply chain and are employed: (1) at the cooperatives as salaried staff; (2) at the work cooperatives as daily or casual workers; and (3) on cocoa plantations as casual workers (paid or unpaid) and full-time workers.

At farms:

Almost all surveyed women reported working on plantations, either for family production or as casual employees. Female workers are

responsible for cleaning newly established farms, picking and collecting pods, and transporting either fresh or dried beans after pods have been split. On family plantations, women perform these same tasks, in addition to cooking food for other workers.

Amongst the women interviewed, 4.5 percent (11 out of 244) identified themselves as paid employees at the farms. Some worked as sharecroppers in coffee plantations (harvesting and cleaning coffee farms) as the plantations are not large and this work can be managed alongside their other responsibilities. During our assessment no female cocoa sharecropper was identified, although some were temporarily employed at cocoa farms in farm maintenance. Some women who worked as day laborers in the palm oil and rubber plantations were responsible for filling bags for nursery beds and picking up latex in rubber plantations; only a few of these women were included in our sample.

At cooperatives:

Among the 244 surveyed women, 60 percent were not involved in any activities related to the cooperatives. Six were working in the cooperatives as salaried staff (administrators) and a woman managed one of the assessed cooperatives. Twenty percent of women work as producers and the remaining 17 percent work as casual employees (Table 6), mostly as cocoa sorters, cleaning cocoa beans and filling bags. They are paid per unit of sorted bean bag and generate an income of FCFA 300 (US \$0.60) for every 70 kilograms of beans sorted (the weight of a bag).

TABLE 6: INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN AT THE COOPERATIVE LEVEL				
NOT INVOLVED	CASUAL WORKERS	PRODUCERS	EMPLOYED ADMINISTRATOR	EMPLOYED MANAGER
146 (60%)	42 (17%)	49 (20%)	6 (2.45%)	1 (0.40%)



Unlike most women in the Ivorian cocoa supply chain, who have little access to land, this farmer owns her own three-hectare cocoa farm in Divo. She has five children, including two studying at the university.

As the cocoa sorters work casually, without the benefit of an established employment contract, this cannot be considered as a stable source of income for these women. The managers of cooperatives explain the low percentage of female workers by explaining that tasks like filling, carrying, stacking, and loading heavy cocoa bags are “not fit for women.” Recruitment of workers at the cooperative level is not advertised, and is targeted towards men, with positions generally filled by recommendations from the cooperative management.

Primarily male workers run the five surveyed cooperatives that supply cocoa to Nestlé. Of the 116 paid employees (both men and women) identified at the five cooperatives, only seven were female, representing 6 percent of the overall workforce. Men also held all executive management roles at

the cooperatives. Women represented 2.3 percent of management staff. One of the cooperatives, Anouanzè of Aniassué (CAANIAS), has appointed a woman to its Executive Board, while the remaining 42 board members in the five cooperatives were men. With few female farm owners in the cocoa industry and male family members often representing women producers at the cooperative level, women's presence at the executive management level is low. Assessment of the internal management systems at the cooperatives suggests that women are neither actively involved nor encouraged to participate in the day-to-day operations or management of the cooperatives. The election process at the cooperatives is clearly defined, but seldom respected, and in many cases vacant management seats are filled (usually by men) based on recommendations or nominations made by the existing members of the management.

1.1.3. Women as entrepreneurs and traders

While 74 percent of the surveyed women drew their main income from trading, 91 percent (223 out of 244) women in the survey reported running at least one business activity, primarily retailing or wholesaling of agricultural products, textiles, cosmetics, food, and drink. While trade is the main activity for women, some consider it a way to diversify and generate more income. In some instances, women engage in trading only during certain time periods, such as during holidays or rest time and days when they are not engaged in the production of a cash crop such as cocoa. Trading may also start either early in the morning before they start their main activity or in the evening after finishing work.

Entrepreneurship and trading in rural areas are considered to be women's work. While men generally focus on the production of



Women in cocoa communities perform other economic activities, like this woman from Yamoussoukro selling her cassava.

the main cash crops (cocoa, rubber, coffee, palm, teak, etc.), women engage in a variety of income-generating activities, such as producing palm oil, sewing, performing beauty and personal-care services, hairdressing, maintaining chicken farms, or running restaurants or nightclubs. In Lébré, Noékro, and Germainkro, women traditionally process palm seeds into palm oil, which they use to make soap. In all of the areas visited, cassava is processed into side dishes, such as attiéké and placali, and sold in those forms.

During the assessment, the team found it difficult to determine women's total annual income from cocoa, from other agriculture activities, and from non-agriculture businesses they run. Women tend to consider this information confidential and furthermore report difficulty in tracking the source of

petty cash collected on market days, given the multiple avenues of income generation. Furthermore, whatever money is earned at the market selling goods is most often spent the same day it is earned buying other products from the market. Respondents indicated that they hardly had any records of earning and expenses.

In the case of earnings from selling cocoa beans to the cooperatives, even if the farmer provides a cash receipt from the cooperative, it may be the case that the same farmer also sold cocoa outside the cooperative (without a receipt) to earn more cash, again making it difficult to determine family earnings. A focused assessment on family income and spending patterns would be needed to determine the proportion of household income from cocoa as compared to women's other activities, and to determine how the family income is spent.

1.2. Role in family's well-being

Interviews with both external stakeholders and with women participating in the survey generally found that men provide financial support to families in cocoa-growing communities, and that women are responsible for all tasks at home and for the smooth functioning of the household. Their responsibilities vary depending on whether they live at their father's or relative's home, in the husband's household, or alone. We base the results in this section only on women who identified themselves as housewives. Seventy-six percent (187 out of 244) of women indicated that they live in a family home (including 173 who are married and 14 who live in a man's house without marriage) and are responsible for taking care of the household and their families.

1.2.1. Women's responsibility as homemakers

All women living with their husbands in a



This woman from Yamoussoukro runs a small eatery in the village.

household consider themselves housewives; consequently, they do not self-acknowledge the tasks they perform as work or recognize the other income-generating activities (such as food production or trade) in which they are engaged. In answering the question about their occupation, most replied "I am a housewife." Only on further probing did respondents refer to the economic activities in which they are involved. As housewives they are responsible for ensuring the house has a steady supply of water; searching for and collecting firewood for fuel; doing laundry; maintaining the cleanliness of the house, yard, and cooking utensils; bathing children; heating water for their husband's bath; and preparing the lamp for lighting the courtyard at night. Daughters assist their mothers in some of these chores.

1.2.2. Women's responsibility for ensuring food availability and meals

Of all the activities undertaken by women, those related to providing the family with food predominate. Men's contribution toward food provision tends to be limited to financing the purchase of protein (fish, meat). Women ensure the supply of fruits, vegetables, and other staples that they grow, transport, procure, process, and prepare for family meals. They are also responsible for choosing and preparing their household's daily menu. During off-peak seasons, if their husbands run out of funds, women use their savings (from trading and entrepreneurship) to provide food for the family. Parents aspire to provide food for their family, but rarely discuss the nutritional value of the food or whether a meal is balanced. Meals mainly consist of seasonal crops grown by the family, along with chicken or other meats. All the families interviewed in this assessment owned a patch of land where they grew seasonal crops.

1.2.3. Women's responsibility to ensure health care

Seven out of the ten communities we visited did not have any kind of health care center. In the absence of such local centers, when family members become ill, women assume the role of caregiver, on top of their already numerous familial roles. They do so by making (if they have the related knowledge) or buying: (1) traditional medicines (from a traditional healer); or (2) pharmaceuticals sold by individuals in the village. When they need further medical aid, women seek the assistance of men, particularly when patients need to be transported to a health center or healer. If their husbands are incapable of paying at the health center, women provide temporary-care financing. Back at home, women administer prescribed treatments to patients.



Women transporting firewood in Gagnoa.

1.2.4. Women's responsibility as educators

During the survey, the assessment team resided in the communities and, therefore, had the opportunity to closely observe several families. From their observations, the team assessed that in rural areas, on average, men spend less than two hours per day with their offspring until the children reach the age to participate in farm work. Girls primarily grow up with their mothers. By virtue of the time spent with their children, mothers are mostly responsible for teaching them life skills. Men are asked to intervene in cases related to either wrongdoing or finances.

Men are generally responsible for funding the expenses associated with sending children to school, such as books and uniforms. However, low incomes, instances of polygamy, substance abuse or other irresponsible male behavior, and the need to provide for

a large number of children will sometimes lead women to assume the cost of their children's education partially or entirely. Of the 10 communities visited, three (Noékro, Germainkro, Ahoulou Chantier) did not have a functioning school. The children of these communities therefore had to walk five to seven kilometers to reach the nearest school. In some communities, construction and operation of schools are possible largely due to private sector initiatives; for example, at Kouamékro, Nestlé has built a school in collaboration with the World Cocoa Foundation.

1.3. Contributors to the labor force

1.3.1. Women as workers on family or other farms

Most women in cocoa-producing communities work in different capacities on family farms or other cocoa farms where their husbands work as employees or tenants (sharecroppers). While farmers (farm owners), with the help of hired workers or sharecroppers, clear fields for either the creation or the upkeep of their cocoa plantations, women are responsible for ensuring the provision of food and water to farm workers, especially during the pod-splitting phase. During weeding work, women burn the piles of debris removed by men and then clean the area, so that farmers can mount ridges in the soil. Women, with the help of their children, carry pieces of yam to the mounds that are later planted by men. They plant vegetables, such as okra, chilies, plantains, and taro stems, for self-consumption of food and for trading. Plantain trees and taro plants serve as shade for the cocoa seedlings that men plant in the field at the base of the mounds.

During cocoa planting, women are involved in the transportation of young cocoa plants or pods. Women continuously weed and



Women take their children for a check-up at the hospital in Doukouyo, 7km from Kouamekro. This is the closest health care facility for the people of Kouamekro.

conduct cocoa farm upkeep until the yams are ready to be harvested. At this point, men take over the cocoa plantation maintenance. Women play a key role during the harvest and post-harvest processes. Throughout the harvest, women: (1) collect and gather pods; and (2) transport fresh beans to the area prepared for fermentation. Either before or after fermentation, women separate the beans from their placentas (which connect the seeds to the pods). The fermentation process differed across visited communities depending upon the risk of cocoa bean theft. In places where there is a high likelihood of theft, women immediately transport the fresh beans to the village, in spite of their weight (wet beans are heavier than dry beans). Otherwise, beans are transported to

the village after fermentation on the farms. Women also oversee the drying process and help men both stir the spread-out beans and protect them from rain. Along with these tasks, women continue their own activities related to household duties, production of other food crops and trade.

1.3.2 Women as employees seeking work at farms

The team's assessment found 11 women who identified themselves as the primary providers for their families, who were seeking income-generating employment at the farms (also see section 1.1.2.). At the visited cocoa plantations, women were observed working on pod collection, bean transportation, and new field maintenance. They were not involved in either seasonal or annual sharecropping.

1.4. Role of women in the community

In the absence of any state-run governing structures, the roles of both the village council and women become more important to ensure that their communities run smoothly. As usual, women carry out numerous tasks, acting as hosts, event managers, caretakers of their village's cleanliness, and as informal advisors.

1.4.1. Women as hostesses, event managers, and village caretakers

In all visited communities, as per local tradition, the village council (consisting of men) welcomed the guests into the community. Once the council welcomes guests, women take over as hostesses and are responsible for preparing lodging facilities, providing water for baths, and cooking guests' meals.

The observations and interviews indicated that the main responsibility for organizing village-level events or celebrations belongs to the village women. During festivals,



The wife of a Nestlé supplier transports wet cocoa beans from the farm to the village of Noekro Buyo.

celebrations, and events (marriages, births, etc.) women plan and organize the events, while also performing local songs and dances, cooking food, serving meals, gathering non-food items for the reception, decorating the village, and cleaning up at the end. In order to maintain village cleanliness, men are responsible for weeding around the village and camps, while women ensure daily cleaning and maintenance.

1.4.2. Women as community advisors

The survey identified some women as leaders in their communities. For example, in Aniassué, located in the eastern part of the Ivory Coast, some women were members of the village council, while in Noékro (southwest) and Kouamékro (west) women were appointed as the

Chair of the village council. Other women served as association presidents and the heads of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In positions such as these, women are considered community advisors. The survey indicated that before any important community-level decisions are made, community leaders might choose to consult with representatives of women's groups such as those mentioned above. The same holds true for individual families, wherein the head of the family (a man) could rely on the advice of his wife. Even though women are considered to be good counselors, men remain the primary decision-makers in any community.

II. Task mapping and women's activity schedule

This section provides a detailed overview of the tasks women perform in: (1) the creation of a new cocoa plantation; (2) the maintenance of an existing farm; and (3) daily and yearly living in cocoa producer households.

II.1. Creating new plantations

In the creation of a new cocoa plantation (farm), women assist men in establishing a cocoa plant nursery by filling bags with soil, watering new plants, and transferring the young pods to the new field. At the farm level, women's direct involvement begins after men have cleared the forest and established an area for the new cocoa plantation. Women prepare the cleared land by burning weeds and removing debris and leftovers from the cleared area. Once the land is clear, men plow the field and make mounds. Several crops are planted at the same time and in succession (including cocoa) on the same plot. While



Women performing tasks in the community of Noékro, Buyo.

men plant yams on the mounds and cocoa seedlings between mounds, women plant beans or other vegetables on the ground between the mounds. Women carry young plants from the nurseries to the farms and plant plantain suckers (side shoots), which provide shade for the cocoa seedlings. In most cases, women regularly clean the field. Table 7 and the following Crop Calendar (Figure 3) provide a step-by-step list of women's tasks.

II.2. Maintaining existing plantations

On existing plantations, women are involved in the activities described in Table 7. During the days when pod-splitting takes place, women (assisted by other members of their family and community) cook food for the entire team of workers cracking the cocoa pods. Since there is a risk of the harvested pods rotting, men from either the village or camps are mobilized to undertake this work.

TABLE 7: TASK MAPPING OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN COCOA PLANTATIONS

STAGES	ACTIVITIES	TASKS	NO INVOLVEMENT	SOME INVOLVEMENT	SOLE INVOLVEMENT	
Creation of new plantation	Establishment of nursery	Building a shade house	X			
		Filling small plastic bags with soil			X	
		Planting seedlings	X			
		Carrying water for spraying		X		
		Spraying water		X		
		Spraying pesticides	X			
		Clearing the farm plot	X			
		Burning the farm plot	X			
		Weeding				X
		Mounding (labor)			X	
	Planting of seedlings	Transporting seedlings				X
		Picketing	X			
		Digging holes	X			
		Planting	X			
	Maintenance of the new plantation	Planting plantain suckers				X
Clearing the new field					X	
Chemical application to maintain young plants		X				
Harvest	Maintenance of the plantation already in production	Removing leaves and other debris	X			
		Chemical application to maintain plants already in production	X			
		Cleaning of the farm under production after harvest		X		
	Collection of cocoa pods	Picking pods	X			
		Collecting pods to make a small heap			X	
		Pod gathering to put together all the small heaps to make one large heap of cocoa pods			X	
	Splitting	Splitting	X			
Pilling wet cocoa beans				X		
After harvest	Fermentation	Preparing the site for fermentation	X			
		Brewing and separating the seeds from placentas		X		
		Transporting fermented wet mass of beans to drying place			X	
	Drying	Spreading on a drying rack	X			
		Brewing		X		
		Surveillance of beans against theft		X		
		Sorting		X		
	Trading	Bagging dried cocoa beans	X			
		Transportation of beans	X			
		Sale of cocoa beans	X			
Income collection		X				

II.3. Daily and yearly schedule of women living in producer households

Individual and group interviews indicate that women work from sunrise to sunset, without appropriate rest time. Women indicated that generally they wake up at 5 a.m. and that while bedtime varied, it was not before 9 p.m. Table 8 provides the daily schedule as reported by a number of surveyed women.

TABLE 8: WOMEN'S DAILY SCHEDULE	
TIME	TASKS
5 am	Wake up and start a fire to prepare meals for children
6 am	Heat water for bathing children, prepare breakfast, clean house and wash dishes
7 am	Obtain water (from either stream or tap), take a bath themselves, bathe children, prepare them for school, and provide heated bath water for husband
8 am	Leave home for cocoa plantation
9 am - 12 pm	Perform the main tasks of the current season
12 pm	Prepare lunch for husband and other farm workers and continue with farm work. In some cases the women prepare lunch in the morning at home and bring it with them to the farms, while in others it is prepared at the farms.
1 pm	Lunch - Rest at the farms in the shade of the cocoa trees
2- 4 pm	Gather foodstuff and wood for fuel
4 pm	Travel back home
5 pm	Prepare dinner for the family
6 pm	Provide bath water for their husband and bathe children
7 pm	Take a bath themselves again, eat dinner, and clean the table
8 pm	Informal conversation with family members
9 pm	Tidy up the family courtyard and go to bed

Note: Women are involved in trading activities on the market day (usually Wednesday or Friday) and Sunday. During these days they are not involved in farm activities as they are rest days for the communities.



A woman serves rice, plantains, and other dishes to workers at a cocoa farm in Toumbokro, Ecoa.

Table 9 presents a broad overview of the activities women are involved over the course of the entire year. The food crops indicated in this table may vary depending upon the wishes of the individual producer and the region.

TABLE 9: RURAL WOMEN'S ANNUAL SCHEDULE	
MONTHS	ACTIVITIES
January	Harvest yams, harvest and sell plantain crop, maintain cassava field, and a few days of rest
February	Clear farm plot for the sowing of peanuts and take a few days of rest
March	Participate in weeding the plot designated for the creation of the new farm, weeding vegetables fields
April - May	Contribute to mounding, sow vegetables and plant plantain and help in planting of cocoa seedlings
June	Maintain peanut field, plant cassava cuttings and plantains, maintain vegetables fields
July - September	Maintain the newly created cocoa plantation; harvest and sell peanuts and vegetables in the market; supply to other women and intermediaries who buy and sell farm produce in village, camps or towns; and contribute to harvest cocoa
October – November	Contribute to harvest cocoa (collect/pick cocoa pods, provide food to workers, transport and dry beans)
December	Maintain the new cocoa plantation, harvest yams and plantains and maintain cassava field

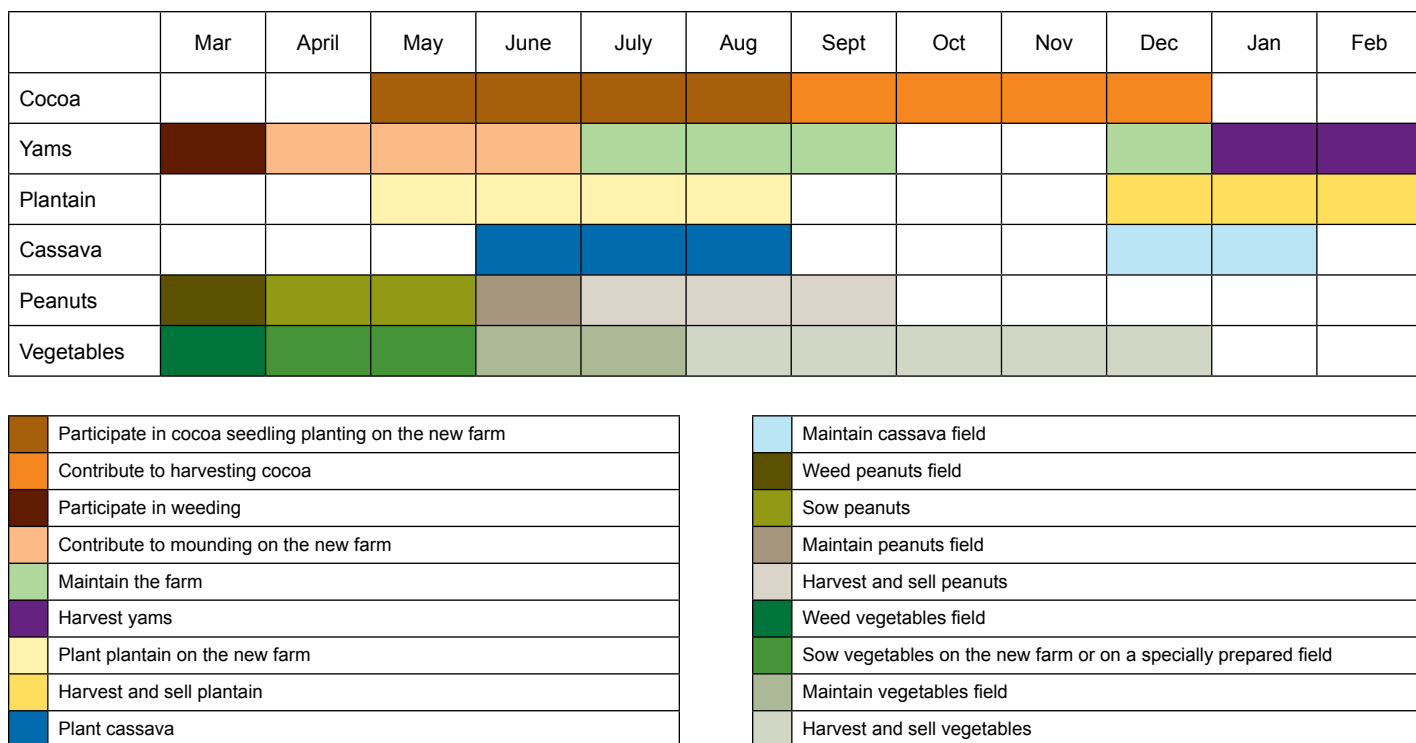


Figure 3: Crop calendar for women's activities over one year

Women usually tend a small plot of land where they grow food crops. Some women own land (inherited from parents), while others ask to use a portion of the land belonging to their parents or husbands to carry out their activities. Some crops are cultivated while a new cocoa plantation is under development. While peanuts are often grown separately, yams and plantains are planted in the same area as cocoa. Cassava is planted on the same land but separate from the cocoa plants and at different time periods. Peanuts are harvested between July and September, and subsequently cassava is planted and harvested from December to January. Other vegetables are grown all year round on smaller patches (Tables 7 and 9).

II.4. Crop calendar specific to women's farm activities

As discussed before, women carry out a number of agricultural activities that are

related to production of cocoa and other food crops. The crop calendar (Figure 3) highlights some of the key crops grown over a period of one year.

III. Risk mapping

This section summarizes the risks and barriers women faced in the visited farms and communities. Some risks are benchmarked against FLA's Workplace Code of Conduct while others are risks perceived by women.

III.1. Long working hours and health-related risks

In general, women reported having amiable working relationships with their husbands while helping them on their cocoa farms. Long working hours was the risk most commonly reported in the assessment. All surveyed women (244) reported working daily from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. (16-hour days), with a few

short unscheduled breaks. These hours are distributed among housework, farm work, and income-generating activities (Table 8). Weekly rest days, estimated at two days by most respondents, are dedicated to doing laundry and conducting small income-generating activities. The annual schedule of activities (Table 9) shows that when it comes to farm work, women do not have much rest time. According to gender experts at the various Ministries,²⁶ women in rural areas prioritize their daily tasks over everything else. As a result, rural women are unwilling to go a health center or visit a doctor, even if they feel unwell. Generally, women only go to the hospital at advanced stages of an illness. The gender experts interviewed indicated that due to lack of time, women do not go to the toilet frequently, giving rise to chronic constipation, urinary tract infections, and stomach-related complications.

Another issue raised by women during the survey was the long hours of walking between work and home, home and market or to the health centers, frequently carrying heavy loads. Cocoa plantations are often established around camps and small villages located far from towns with markets. These work environments have minimal organizational infrastructure and transportation services. For example, in Noékro, Germainkro, Kouamékro, and Ahoulou (located in the southwest, west, and south of the country, respectively), there are no markets or health centers, or a transportation infrastructure. Women in these areas must travel to the nearest urban center to either trade or obtain medical care. Women travel on foot as far as 20 km (12.5 miles) to the market carrying heavy loads on their heads, sometimes while simultaneously carrying a small child on their backs. Women carry heavy loads on market days, and also

²⁶ Ministry of State; Ministry of Social Affairs and Vocational Training; and Ministry of Family, Women, and Children.



Women in Gagnoa collect firewood for cooking.

on their daily return from the plantation, or to transport pods, beans, farm produce, or firewood.

Seven of the ten communities visited had no health center, meaning that 67 percent of the interviewed women (164 of the 244) did not have ready access to health care. Lack of a nearby health center is not the only reason women do not access primary care clinics regularly; they also lack financial means. Almost all (98 percent) of respondents indicated that their income is too low to enable them to maintain an acceptable standard of living. Women reported to assessors that they lack the financial means to go to the hospital and seek good quality treatment and care. Thus, women routinely use the services of traditional healers.

Visits to the functional health centers by the FLA team revealed that, in general, they are not equipped with specialized services that could benefit women by diagnosing and

treating certain and specific pathological conditions and diseases. Women are particularly at risk in respect to gynecological care, and are often not able to receive proper medical assistance when it is required. Some women give birth in hazardous conditions, only with the help of traditional birth attendants, and many are not able to access prenatal care and consultations.

III.2. Work-place-related risks

In the context of farm work, women carry out a number of activities that require physical effort. Total time spent at the family farms may run to five to six hours per day, and this represents only a fraction of women's work. As indicated above, women often work as long as 16 hours per day, which exposes them to several stress- and health-related risks.

At the farms, assessors recorded that women in general have low awareness of the benefits of using personal protective equipment (PPE). Men on the farms wore rubber boots that protect them from reptile bites and sharp puncture injuries; in contrast, a vast majority of women wore sandals when working in the same environment. Some women argued that they could not afford boots or do not have access to them, while others stated that they find them too heavy and uncomfortable to wear. As a result, women are more exposed than men to injuries that could be prevented by use of PPE. A similar lack of awareness often leads women to use empty chemical containers for their kitchen needs, work without taking adequate rest, or store farm equipment and chemicals in their kitchen and living areas.

The interviews highlighted that women do not attend farmer field schools organized by the cooperatives or Nestlé training partners.²⁷ Of the 244 women surveyed, 89 percent

reported that they do not participate in any kind of trainings. When asked about their reasons for not participating in the training programs, some women cited lack of time, while others stated that they: (1) thought the schools were only designed for men; (2) are not concerned with the training; or (3) were not aware that women could also participate. Unlike male cocoa producers, who generally receive support from exporters, chocolate makers, organizations, and state structures to build their capacities, female producers who are mostly producing food crops receive no such support.

Of the 244 women surveyed, only 11 percent (27) reported having participated in training sessions. They told assessors that these training sessions focused on agricultural best practices and included the creation and maintenance of a cocoa plantation, crop health tips, and post-harvest techniques. Trainings additionally covered social issues, such as AIDS, malaria, child labor, health and safety, and environmental protection. However, participants in the trainings must be cocoa producers or members of a cooperative. Because most of the women surveyed (91 percent) are not cooperative members, they have no available trainings to help them build their capacities. This lack of training continuously leads these women to use outdated practices to conduct their activities, with regard to agricultural production and management of their income-generating activities.

Furthermore, amongst the cooperative staff responsible for conducting training, monitoring, and awareness-building sessions under the Nestlé Cocoa Plan, assessors identified no women working in the role of mobilizer. The training programs are mainly developed with men in mind (based on the traditional male dominance in cocoa production) and are delivered by men.

²⁷ <http://www.nestlecocoaplan.com/cote-divoire-farmer-field-school/>

During the focus group discussions, women stated that they would like to attend training on food crops production (not necessarily only cocoa), literacy and other social issues such as health-care, family planning, and household and income management.

Regarding compensation, once cocoa beans are sold to the cooperatives supplying Nestlé, women receive payments from their husbands for the work they performed in the cocoa farms. In one case, however, a woman reported that she worked with her husband on the farm and he did not provide the expected funds to cover her needs (for example, promised money for transportation to visit her parents). She was reluctant to discuss this with the FLA team out of fear of retaliation from her husband in the form of a divorce.²⁸ In this study we found up to 73 percent of women working on family farms did so without any established terms and conditions thereby exposing them to some of the above-mentioned risks.

Finally, as indicated above, 93 percent of the surveyed women are directly or indirectly linked to cocoa production. However, there is no way to determine—either at the cooperative or the farm level—the percentage of the workforce represented by women and whether any special care needs to be taken to accommodate this working group (such as specific health and safety measures during pregnancy). In the absence of any reliable information on the participation of women in the labor force and their special needs, women are at risk of having their specific health conditions, like pregnancy (which

might require lighter work or precautions against chemical use), ignored.

III.3. Abuse and exploitation related risks

Women revealed to assessors that they feel that they are at risk of exploitation and various kinds of abuses. They explained that much of their time is spent working on their husbands' farms as opposed to running their own businesses. Table 8 shows that housework and farm work (done alongside their husbands) occupy 70 percent of women's time. The remaining 30 percent comprises routine trips (to and from home and plantations) and rest time. In return, most women receive clothing from their husbands as a reward for their efforts. Respondents reported that "more fortunate" women also receive financial support from their husbands, giving them the freedom to start a small income-generating business. In some cases, women may own a plantation (developed on a land offered to them by their parents, spouse, or relative) and receive the income raised from the sale of the crops.

In the assessment, the team identified three specific cases in which women reported that their husbands used the outputs of the family's work and income to marry a second wife. This problem was mentioned several times during the focus group discussions held at Lakota. In Noékro, a man left his family home to live with another woman and came back to collect income from the sale of the cocoa tended by his first wife. Meanwhile, this man's first wife stayed at home and, with great difficulty, continued to manage the family and take care of their children.

The land of the women producers is often registered within the cooperative under the name of the husband, who also owns his own plantation. This is done with the consent of the women. When cocoa is sold

²⁸ Her husband confirmed the allegations and stated that ill health prevented him from working, earning a living and being able to meet promises to his wife. The wife stated that the husband used the farm income to take a second wife. Issues such as this one are borderline cases between workplace noncompliance (related to compensation and employment relationships) and personal issues. They arise, in part, because of the lack of formal employment relationships.

to the cooperative, even though she may receive money from the sale of the cocoa, she is denied other benefits that are for the cooperative members, such as premiums, pesticides, trainings, and inputs (such as PPE, new seedlings, etc.) that are provided by the cooperative.

In the rural areas visited, the local population practices traditional or non-civil marriage. Seventy-one percent (173 out of 244) of surveyed women had married according to tradition (no one amongst the surveyed women had registered a marriage with the local authorities as required by the local law); 33 were single; 14 were living in a man's house without marriage; four were divorced; and seven did not provide a response to the question on their marital status. According to national law, only civil marriage (performed by a legal registry) guarantees each party their own rights before the national authorities, for example inheritance of property acquired while married.²⁹

III.4. Discrimination-related risks

According to the women interviewed, they do not face discrimination. Their principal concern is how to improve their living conditions. However, assessors identified several situations related to risks of discrimination in the areas visited based on their observations and through the interviews with gender experts.

First, instances of discrimination were observed at the family level. Despite being

²⁹ In N'zérékou (Bonoua) assessors came across a case where a husband evicted his wife from their house after more than 20 years of married life because she complained about his alcohol abuse. She was returned to her family, without any compensation. Although the couple owned 11 hectares of rubber, nine hectares of cocoa, and more than three hectares of coffee plantations and despite appeals by the woman to relevant authorities, the courts ruled against her and did not award any sort of compensation. To settle the conflict, the couple was advised to simply seek conciliation with the customary authorities.

involved in field creation and the production chain (up until the stage when the cocoa beans go through the drying process), women are excluded from the rest of the process, which includes marketing and management of cocoa plantation and the revenue it generates. Due to this practice, plantation incomes remain a secret to women. Also at the family level, women tend to cultivate food items intended for feeding the family, while men control the cash crops, which yield more revenue.

Second, within their own communities, while women are somewhat involved in decision-making in the ten localities visited, only in Aniassué (in eastern Ivory Coast) was a woman involved in the village governing body. Women's associations or delegations within the communities select a representative to serve as president of the village women, but the role of such representative is more that of a counselor than a decision-maker. While these delegations are authorized to represent village women in events organized by the local governing bodies, they are seldom given a chance to speak. During major meetings and events, women are often entirely absent due to their cooking and household management obligations.

Finally, the representation of women in management and leadership positions on cooperative boards remains marginal. Our study revealed that of the 43 individuals on the Boards of Directors in the five cooperatives visited, there was only one woman (in Aniassué). Only seven employees out of 116 workers in the cooperatives visited were women.

III.5. Land access-related risks

Land access is often identified as one of the major risks women face in the Ivory Coast.³⁰ During preliminary investigations and external information gathering, we met some women's groups and individual women in the rural communities of Divo and Lakota who work to promote equal land access rights for both women and men. In these areas, women reported that customary practices do not recognize women's right to own land. Crosschecking of information provided by leaders and elders of these communities revealed the ancestral roots of this practice.

In the opinion of the elders, any property belonging to a woman is, in fact, that of her husband. In these communities, women after their marriage cease to be part of their family and become the property of the husband's family. Therefore, any property owned by or given to women become the husband's property. Additionally, as in non-civil traditional marriages women do not inherit joint property upon the death of the husband or the end of the marriage, property remains in the husband's family. Therefore, in order to protect family property, parents continue to deny their daughters the right to inherit land, arguing that women can access land in their husbands' families if they desire. More recently, information sessions to create awareness on the problems with such practices have been organized by organizations like Association Nationale des Femmes Productrices du Café et du Cacao de Côte d'Ivoire (l'ANFPCCCI).

III.6. Economic Risks

Along with social and work-related risks, women respondents also identified economic risks. According to 236 women (97 percent of respondents), these risks are related to

market access, the lack of diversification of crops, and insufficient time to devote to their own productive activities.

Regarding market access, women indicated that most of the goods they produce (crops and other farm products) realize maximum returns in large cities as people have more money compared to consumers in rural areas, where everyone grows their own crops. However, women have no means or organization to transport their products to these areas, and even to access local markets, they need to walk for many hours.

All women from various areas meet on the same one or two days each week, known as "market day," to sell the same types of products. Lack of diversification in production and of training in new farming techniques and the absence of means to produce non-seasonal crops furthermore contribute to market saturation and low prices.

Interviewees also explained that they do not have enough time to run their own income-generating activities. This is partially due to their involvement in housework and in assisting their husbands with their plantations. In general, married women's main activities become secondary to those performed by their husbands, whose activities are seen as more important. Therefore, a wife's contributions to the management of her husband's cocoa plantation is seen as the most important of all of her tasks. Along with these activities, she must also perform her household duties. Furthermore, when a family member is sick, women are the first ones to abandon their work to stay at the individual's bedside until their recovery. Consequently, the entire period of their family member's sickness will be a time of economic inactivity. Very often, men use the money from their wives' extra businesses, after promising to refund it after the sale of the coming harvest.

³⁰ http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/cote_divoire

IV. Barriers

As conveyed in interviews, women face barriers related to education, culture and tradition, and the lack of support for their interests.

IV.1 Level of education

Generally in the Ivory Coast, women's educational level is very low and lower than that of men. The majority of women in cocoa-producing households are illiterate. Table 10 indicates that 60 percent of women interviewees (147 of 244) are illiterate, and that of the 40 percent that are literate, only 8.6 percent had reached the level of education of secondary school.

	ILLITERATE	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL	SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL
West	36	10	2
South-West	32	11	7
Center	27	19	4
South	23	20	5
East	29	16	3
Total	147	76	21
Percentage	60.2%	31.2%	8.6%

Consequently, women feel that they are at a disadvantage in their ability to carry out certain tasks in their daily lives. Illiteracy hampers women's ability to educate and care for their children, protect themselves legally, or access appropriate medical care and take prescribed medications properly.

IV.2. Adverse effects of cultural beliefs

In Ivorian society, women are often seen solely as support for men. The FLA team was told that in the past, cocoa farmers determined the number of their wives based on the extent of their land. The idea behind this strategy was to make one woman responsible for the maintenance of a

particular plot of land, viewing wives as labor force. Such behavior reinforces the beliefs of women that they are inferior to men and that their activities are secondary to those of their husbands. As men remain heads of their families, a woman's priority is to help her husband. Women rely on their husbands to manage their entire lives, as men are the ones who make major decisions and lead their families.

Our assessment found that 175 of 244 interviewed women (72 percent) are consulted for decisions such as household expenses and future of the children, but men make the final decision. Only 17 percent (42) play a similar role at the community level (where collective communal decisions are taken). Similarly, based on the traditional thinking, women do not have the right to inherit land as explained earlier in this report.

IV.3. Lack of technical support and access to finance

Other than household duties, the main activity of the surveyed women is food crop production. As these products are seasonal and perishable, they require technical expertise and resources for proper storage. Women often lack the means and technical capacity to store food long-term, and therefore lose their investment in any crops they cannot be quickly consumed or sold.

Some women told surveyors that they lack funds to start and operate their own business. For women in these surveyed villages, starting commercial business does not require huge amount of funds. However, many women lack access to even the minimum capital requirements. The Ivorian banking system is not beyond the reach of most women, although they tend not to be familiar with lending facilities and savings mechanisms. Commercial banks and savings banks tend not to market to women.

V. Aspirations of Women

In individual and focus group discussions women prioritized the following aspirations for their lives and set out the factors that could make improvements in their and their families' livelihoods.

Economic aspirations

As most of the surveyed women sell something at the market, they aspire to easier access to market through better means of transportation. They wish for a public transportation system that they could use especially on market days. In the markets, they desire better purchase prices for their food crops and vegetables. They also hope for better access to financing through public authorities, with low interest or interest-free, and to be able to use these funds to grow their business (both agriculture and non-agricultural), buy more land, and invest in their children's education.

In the case of cocoa plantations, producers and the wives of the producers and workers would like to have access to cocoa seedlings from the cooperative nurseries, farm tools, personal protective equipment (like boots), and farm inputs such as chemicals and fertilizers.

Beyond cocoa-related activities, food crop production is rural women's main source of income, based on both the number of women involved in this activity, but also in the income generated. Nevertheless, women have struggled to develop in this sector. In response to the question, "what do you expect in order to improve your living conditions?":

- 10 percent of 244 surveyed women said they want pesticides and fertilizers to maintain and improve yield and quality of vegetables they grow (eggplant, okra, tomatoes, etc.)

- 7 percent responded that they want outlets to sell their products
- 98 percent stated they want better purchase prices for their products

Such response rates clearly indicate women's interest in the improvement of the organization and yields of food crop production.

Social aspirations

All mothers interviewed would like their children to have better educational opportunities and access to a better educational system. They told the team that they would like support, including financial support, for their children's education. Some women aspire to be literate themselves, so that they are not dependent on men to carry out some of the tasks and they can support their children's learning.

Even though most women do not have the time or the financial means to access health care clinics, they do realize the debilitating effects of ill health. Therefore, access to affordable and quality health care is one of things they prioritize.

Since many women have to walk for hours each day to collect water, they would like to have easy access to water and especially potable water.

They also express the hope that some traditional practices (especially denial of land rights) would cease and they could have access to land through inheritance, purchase or gifts. Along the same lines, some women who are now separated from their husbands and are embroiled in legal disputes, wish they had access to free and good legal counseling and support.

Capacity-building aspirations

Contrary to the popular notion that women do not have time to attend trainings, many

indicated that they would like to build their capacities in good agriculture practices so that they could increase the yield of their crops, especially vegetables and food crops. They also expressed interest in training related to health care and management of the family and in adult literacy programs. According to women, trainings in these areas would strengthen their knowledge about family care and management and enhance happiness in their families.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

We base our recommendations in this section on: (1) proposals made by the interviewed women; (2) the opinions of experts and stakeholders; and (3) the observations of the assessors. It is clear that these recommendations alone cannot fully address the complex and deep-rooted social issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and lack of access to healthcare in cocoa-producing areas of the Ivory Coast. Multiple stakeholders (including the government, national and international civil society organizations, community leaders, and the cocoa industry as a whole) must collaborate to achieve progress. The recommendations provided are not exhaustive and represent only a subset of the actions identified in the assessment.

As a first step, a local stakeholder convening should be organized with the involvement of the Ivorian Government, the cocoa industry, and civil society organizations in order to discuss findings and recommendations from this assessment, prioritize areas of work, develop action plans, and identify opportunities to work with local social organizations and the existing Public-Private-

Partnership-Platforms (PPPP)³¹ to execute work at the ground level. The stakeholder convening will set the gender related agenda both for the Ivorian Government and Nestlé in the short and medium term.

A. To Nestlé

There are a number of short-term (one year or less), medium-term (two to three years), and long-term (four to five years) term steps that Nestlé can take through its implementing partners to support the women involved in its supply chain in the Ivory Coast. Implementing these recommendations will be sensitive to time, resource, and infrastructure constraints.

1. As discussed in Section II of this report, women are mostly involved in casual activities at the cooperative level, without benefit of an employment contract or stable income. Therefore, in the short term, Nestlé along with its implementing partners (including existing certification programs) should **raise awareness among its cooperative members about the importance of women in the cocoa supply chain**. Nestlé should further require cooperatives to **ensure that women receive equal employment opportunities** through advertisement of positions, a fair recruitment process, selection based on merit, and provision of legal employment contracts and fair compensation. In the medium term, Nestlé should monitor progress at the cooperative level in the recruitment of women.

³¹ Currently there are seven functioning working groups under the PPPP: (1) Elaboration de la norme pour la durabilité du cacao en Côte d'Ivoire, (2) Productivité et accès aux intrants, (3) Vulgarisation agricole, (4) Relance caféière, (5) Aspects sociaux de la durabilité, (6) Pires formes du travail des enfants, and (7) Lutte contre le Swollen Shoot.

2. According to the FLA assessment, women cocoa producers directly provide Nestlé with 3.5 percent of its cocoa, and 93 percent of the interviewed women were directly or indirectly involved in cocoa production for Nestlé (through family farms or as employees on cocoa plantations). Neither Nestlé nor the cooperatives record these contributions, and women rarely hold any management positions at the cooperatives. In the short term, Nestlé should encourage its cooperatives to **register all cocoa farms under the names of both the producer and his spouse**. Nestlé should also establish channels through which women can be made aware of the benefits of being a cooperative member, such as access to price premiums, trainings, farm inputs and personal protective equipment. In the medium term, Nestlé along with its partner-cooperatives should establish ways for more **women members to serve in management-level positions** and provide inputs on policy matters. In the long term, Nestlé along with the cooperatives should determine a way to conduct worker profiling at the farm level, to accurately record the participation of all workers in the supply chain.
3. Currently, it is difficult for most women to acquire the seedlings Nestlé distributes for the creation of new plantations. The FLA team found that to acquire seedlings from Nestlé and its partners, one must: (1) be a cooperative member (and to be a member one must be a producer), (2) own an old plantation or one in fallow, or (3) have prepared one's farmland to plant the seedlings. These conditions disqualify most women. In the short term, this assessment recommends that **Nestlé and its partners create more flexible conditions for purchasing cocoa seedlings**, so that women can access them. In Divo and Lakota, under the leadership of ANPCCCI (Association Nationale des Femmes Productrices de Café et de Cacao de Côte d'Ivoire)³² and with Nestlé's contribution of nurseries, many women now own cocoa plantations. Similar initiatives should be tested in other regions.
4. Nestlé, with the help of its implementing partners and cooperatives, currently conducts training activities at the field level (through farmer field schools). In the short term, Nestlé should require its cooperatives to **encourage women producers and workers to participate in these training sessions**. Women should be enrolled in the farmer field schools so that they can learn about better production methods, proper use of pesticides and pesticide containers, and other technical information. To maximize women's participation, given their schedules, the sessions should avoid market days, and be organized between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., or after 7 p.m. These trainings should be made available to all women. In the medium to long term, the recommended training sessions should be seen as an opportunity to enhance labor standards and to explore other relevant issues like non-discrimination, benefits of children's education, benefits of health care, financial management, and gender issues.

³² Association of Women Producers of Coffee and Cocoa in the Ivory Coast

5. Nestlé, in the short-to-medium term, should make efforts to **identify and train female trainers and communicators from the communities** to mobilize women cocoa workers. Currently, all training staff in the field are males who are not particularly sensitive to gender issues. As women cultivate strong social networks in their communities, their ability to relay information widely and swiftly becomes a strong channel of communication. In rural areas, women travel together to the fields, to fetch water and fuel, and to markets, and meet at community events. In these interactions, women are always sharing information, but only when they are convinced of its importance. For example, if women become convinced of the merits of promoting social and labor standards, they can play key role in spreading information about them.
6. Within Nestlé's existing internal monitoring and remediation program (the Nestlé Cocoa Plan) there are **specific roles to which women could be appointed** to more directly affect labor conditions in the short term. For example, women could be appointed as a Community Female Advisor to share the importance of children's education, or as a Producer Relay to collect data on labor conditions from the farms and communities. In general, women are more responsive to messages they receive from other women, and there are some issues that women will only discuss with other women. Therefore, a female Producer Relay has better chances to succeed in fully involving women in Nestlé's monitoring and remediation program.
7. Another direct role that women can play in Nestlé's monitoring and remediation system in the medium term is to support community dialogue and the handling of grievances. Through its cooperatives and implementing partners, Nestlé should explore **establishing women's platforms/forums in communities that could serve as a dialogue platform to handle and redress grievances**. Women in general find it easier to talk to other women regarding personal and workplace issues. Women community leaders selected and trained to hear and handle grievances could serve the numerous women working in Nestlé's supply chain positively, as the workplace issues and personal issues in the cocoa communities are often intertwined and go unnoticed.
8. Easier access to health care is one of the main concerns raised by women in the assessment. As part of its commitment to workers in its supply chain, **Nestlé should partner with a local or international organization to make first aid kits accessible at the village/community/cooperative level and train community members to deliver first aid**. Awareness about the availability of first aid should be created so that the women can use them in the time of need. These could even be provided free or at subsidized costs. **Nestlé should ensure access to relevant personal protective equipment (and training on their use and benefits) at no or subsidized cost**.
9. Nestlé should **actively support and encourage the strengthening of women's operational capacities for the management of their other agriculture activities outside of cocoa**, as they are the mainstay of women's economic empowerment. Nestlé engages with a

wide network of tier-1 suppliers who deal with a variety of agricultural products beyond cocoa and work directly with the growers. In the long term, Nestlé could leverage this network to disseminate technical capacity-building and training, seeds for high-yielding varieties of crops, access to farm inputs and extension services, and access to the market (through direct procurement).

10. To support other income generation activities in the cocoa communities, Nestlé should explore the feasibility of investing cocoa premiums (with the consent of its producers) in **women-targeted projects such as crop diversification, production of organic food, and food preservation**. Through these activities, women will be able to diversify their marketplaces and achieve better prices for their crops. Since most producers' wives are engaged in food crop production, receiving the consent of producers on the use of premiums may not be difficult. Nestlé could, for example, establish a partnership with CNRA (Centre National de Recherche Agronomique)³³ and ANADER (Agence Nationale de Développement Rural)³⁴ to lead this project.
11. If women's economic power is strengthened, women can more effectively promote stronger social and labor standards within their families and communities. For this, we **recommend setting up financial counseling and support services for women**. This should be done in a group setting so that women participants can build a local support group. According to the results of this assessment, women generate

income from: a) their farming activities, b) the management of their small shops, and c) entrepreneurship. At each of these levels, women need financial support and assistance to strengthen their activities.

B. To the Ivorian Government

1. The government could consider **strengthening awareness campaigns against adverse cultural practices** (such as male-only land ownership, multiple marriages,³⁵ etc.) that affect women in cocoa-producing regions. With the aid of competent local organizations and community leaders, the government could consider conducting a mapping exercise to determine the most prominent negative beliefs, and regions where women are most affected (such as Divo and Lakota).
2. Consider innovative ways to **ensure easy and quick access to credit for rural women**. The FLA assessment indicates that women currently have no property (such as land, a house, or a regularized business) to pledge to secure loans. In 2011, the Ivorian Minister for Family, Women and Children announced the creation of a women's bank to finance the development of women's socio-economic activities.³⁶ This scheme should be revitalized and expanded further, alongside other credit schemes

³⁵ The Ivory Coast ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1995. The government should consider **rigorous application of existing regulations related to gender issues**. For example, local law bans polygamy, but our assessment suggests that many men in the cocoa producing communities marry more than one wife.

³⁶ http://www.mfw4a.org/news/news-details/select_category/49/article/new-measures-announced-to-increase-rural-womens-access-to-finance.html

³³ National Center (Agency) for Agricultural Research

³⁴ National Agency for Rural Development

such as micro-credit lending,³⁷ and self-help groups,³⁸ which have proven to be effective in other developing countries.

3. As 91 percent of the surveyed women are involved in some business activity, consider providing women **access to technical training and capacity building programs** emphasizing entrepreneurship (such as simple methods of bookkeeping, marketing, market-oriented production, and operational capacity building) to help women manage their businesses and funds. This work could be done in association with the existing training platforms in the cocoa sector such as Agence Nationale de Développement Rural" (ANADER).
4. Consider a pilot project to locate some **mobile medical consultation units** near the marketplaces frequented by women. Initially, the pilot could focus on infants' and women's health. The pilot should be accompanied by awareness campaigns promoting the benefits of health care and protection.
5. Consider a program **constructing and maintaining roads and village tracks and introducing a public transportation system in key cocoa producing communities**. Improved roads will aid the flow of products. A public transportation system will reduce the burden on women having to walk long distances to access markets, health care, education, or other basic amenities.
6. **Support structures and organizations that promote women's (adult) literacy and put special emphasis on the education of girls**. Women's literacy enables them to better care for their families and support education of their children. To be effective, adult literacy programs aimed at women should be held at times when they have completed their chores and are able to attend.

³⁷ http://www.microfinancegateway.org/gm/document-1.9.24645/22944_Microcredit_in_Bangladesh.pdf

³⁸ http://www.col.org/pcf3/papers/pdfs/ghadoliya_mk.pdf