

A Sustainable, Thriving Cocoa Sector for Future Generations: The business case for *why* women matter and *what* to do about it

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¹ We are grateful for the many inputs from colleagues who are closely familiar with the many aspects of gender and cacao in Côte d'Ivoire. They include Aslihan Kes and Anjala Kanesathasan from the International Center for Research on Women, Anna Laven of the Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute, Georges Bredou and Amari Agneroh of V4C TEAM. A special thanks to Jeff Morgan and Alastair Child of MARS who are deeply committed to development as well as to the future of the cocoa sector.

Key definitions

In crafting responses to the disadvantages women face in rural Côte d'Ivoire, this assessment relies on some important concepts. Working definitions of these terms are presented here:

Equity – Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Equality – Gender equality means that women's and men's access to opportunities and life chances is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex. Achieving gender equality requires women's empowerment and men's engagement to ensure that decision-making at private and public levels, and access to resources are not weighted in men's favor so that both women and men can fully participate as equal partners in productive and reproductive life.

About Margaret Greene:

Margaret Greene has worked for over twenty years on the social and cultural determinants of health, development policy and gender. She is widely known for her research and advocacy on the conditions faced by girls and women in poor countries and on engaging men and boys for gender equality. She has worked extensively in recent years to call global attention to child marriage, to highlight its linkages with education, health, human rights and other dimensions of girls' wellbeing, and to show how programs and policies can work to end the practice. She has had the privilege of addressing The Elders, a distinguished group of former heads of state and other global leaders, on the topic of child marriage. Over the past ten years, she has co-authored two volumes in the Girls Count series, and has conducted research on adolescent sexual and reproductive health for the World Bank, WHO and USAID. She was lead author of UNFPA's 2012 State of the World Population, titled *By Choice, Not by Chance: Family Planning, Human Rights and Development*, and served as lead rapporteur at the United Nations human rights conference on sexual and reproductive health and rights held in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, in July 2013.

In addition to heading up GreeneWorks, a consulting group working to promote social change for health and development, Margaret Greene is Chair of the Board of Promundo-US and Secretary of the Coalition for Adolescent Girls. Dr. Greene received MA and PhD degrees in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania, and a BA in linguistics from Yale University.

Executive summary | Key findings and Recommendations

What is the problem? The problem posed to the cocoa sector by gender inequality in Côte d'Ivoire is twofold: First, since women perform 45% of the work on cocoa farms, it is inefficient from an economic standpoint not to view them as farmers and to fail to facilitate their participation in training and their access to inputs. Second, given women's role in their families and homes, their social and economic marginalization has implications for the health, nutrition and education of their families. Involving women more systematically thus has the potential to increase the productivity of cocoa farms, and to improve the wellbeing of families and communities.

The purpose of this report is to present to the executive leadership team at MARS key findings and recommendations on how to integrate women more fully into Vision for Change. Based on the results of a comprehensive rapid field assessment completed in May 2013, this document identifies priority actions that MARS can take to ensure that female farmers in Côte d'Ivoire have equitable access to the resources, opportunities, and skills that will enable them to both maximize cocoa yields on their family farms and improve their livelihoods.

The assessment team interviewed numerous stakeholders, globally and in Cote d'Ivoire: these stakeholders include male and female farmers and other community members who live near Soubré; MARS staff; World Agroforestry Centre staff; ANADER staff; Vision for Change managers and beneficiaries; Oxfam staff; and other researchers with expertise in gender and agriculture.

The recommendations in this report inform how MARS' flagship program *Vision for Change* can more effectively transfer knowledge, skills and opportunities to women who already invest time in cocoa production and cultivate food crops. Drawing from research and programmatic evidence, the recommendations call for modifying existing activities to compensate for the unique social and economic challenges that women face in Côte d'Ivoire. These purposeful modifications will benefit women and their entire families, and contribute to cocoa productivity and the long-term sustainability of the cocoa sector. The findings and recommendations in this report will also serve MARS in assuming a leadership role within the cocoa sector with regards to recognizing and supporting the influential role that women play in cocoa sustainability in this and subsequent generations.

Key findings

- V4C is already taking on very sensitive social issues, including social cohesion to overcome ethnic tensions and the introduction of new farming technologies to improve traditional farming practices (page 33)
- Social change is relevant and already taking place; the introduction of new farming methods is a form of norm change (page 33)
- V4C is already reaching some women, albeit non-systematically or through structures that marginalize women's input and needs (page 33)
- Women's participation is currently usurped by male-centered governance structures, with missed opportunities to fund activities that women identify (page 34)
- In general, V4C Team staff engaged in managing V4C activities are not familiar with the community development dimensions of ANADER's trainings (page 34)
- V4C Team buy-in and knowledge of gender issues varies considerably (page 34)
- ANADER staff is relatively more aware of the need to work with women than V4C Team staff (page 35)
- Work for and with women within the Vision for Change program is very recent, lending some credibility to Oxfam findings (page 35)
- Women's involvement in cooperatives is low, however opportunities to support women exist (page 35)
- Low adult women's literacy and low girls' school attainment relative to male peers in the program area points to lasting disadvantage (page 36)
- The Vision for Change program is *concentrating* power within the traditional male-dominated structures – research suggests this approach can undermine productivity and community development goals (page 36)
- The current selection criteria for CDC and CVC staff are unlikely to attract female candidates, and this could have long-term impact on the program (page 37)
- Several opportunities exist to link Vision for Change to publicly-funded community-level initiatives for women (page 37)
- Male youth do not view cocoa production as their ideal livelihood (page 38)
- Monitoring and evaluation for V4C is currently not systematic, transparent or easily accessible (page 38)
- MARS is not publicizing its current efforts to empower women, much of the negative publicity and attention is due to a lack of communication about how it *is* being an industry leader (page 38).
- MARS's support for education in the V4C communities creates a ready opportunity to support and track gender equality in schooling (page 38).

Recommendations

Capacity Building

Outcome: Stronger skills, greater support and buy-in for gender activities

- Conduct a comprehensive training on gender for V4C Team and ANADER staff to raise awareness about gender and its applications for V4C programming.
- Ensure V4C Team/ANADER staff is informed about and trained to meet MARS expectations for human resource policies and codes of conduct.
- Provide MARS' cocoa sustainability managers (and other personnel) with gender and agriculture training.

Intervention: productivity pillar

Outcome: greater involvement of women, greater skills contribute to increased productivity

- Place CDCs on land plots of more representative members of the community and not only on the land of recognized leaders.
- Recruit and hire female CDC technicians, establishing co-technicians to learn, work and apply new technologies to the land.
- Separate out the goods (fertilizer, tools, etc.) and services (maintenance, grafting, etc.) when recruiting CVCs. Spread the wealth.
- Consider cooperative model for CVCs rather than only individual owners
- Integrate positive gender roles and couples' conversation into community radio programming (health, education, productivity, social cohesion).

Intervention: community development pillar

Outcome: Support for women's contributions to their households, and support for greater mutuality improves household wellbeing and contributes to productivity

- Create opportunities for women to gain access to micro-savings and bulk-purchasing schemes for investing in their cacao.
- Recruit and rely on female translators, where possible and when working on women-focused activities.
- Earmark funds for women's centered activities that do not rely on 'community prioritization,' and make funding decisions based on local development plans.
- Support the creation of cocoa associations for women laborers.
- Make and fund links to government programs/structures that work with women.
- Family planning – strengthen links with the health system to disseminate information about contraception and facilitate access to FP services.

Monitoring and evaluation

Outcome: Strengthen program management, ensure synergies between community development, productivity and education activities, and track integration of gender into V4C

- Ensure that baseline surveys and routine data collection include sex and age disaggregated data on the farmers' use of new agriculture practices. As part of its productivity pillar, V4C could include more gender-based indicators about the number of women who participate in trainings.
- The community development pillar could monitor how sustainable its women-centered programs are by tracking their activities over time
- Engage community in monitoring and evaluation through the use of mobile technologies and Sourcemap.

Advocacy and public messaging

Outcome: Share V4C experiences of working toward gender equality and motivate partners to engage with these issues in their activities

- Highlight public-private partnerships, both current and as V4C establishes them; disseminate V4C experience more systematically.
- Frame V4C work in a way that acknowledges the broader policy and social context for gender equality (global and CDI).
- Disseminate gender-related lessons learned and success stories of V4C's work at conferences.
- Apply downward pressure on purchasers/exporters to work with cooperatives on dissemination of V4C messages aimed at women and girls.

Report Structure

This report is structured into five sections:

1. **Introduction:** rationale and methodology for the comprehensive rapid assessment, including relevant background information about the global discourse around gender equality.
2. **Research case for why gender matters for cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire:** description of the demographic, social and political context in Côte d'Ivoire. The content includes relevant national policies and data that should inform *Vision for Change* programming that aims to empower women and achieve gender equality by concurrently working with women and men, as well as girls and boys. Drawing from national and global research, the section also outlines women's roles on cocoa farms.
3. **Business case - a theory of change:** presentation of the theory of change that links women's empowerment to increased productivity of cocoa on smallholder family farms. Building upon national and local survey data, the focus in this section is to expand upon *why* and *how* women matter for MARS to achieve its long-term goals.
4. **Key findings | Vision for Change field visit:** key findings from the in-country gender assessment. Findings are presented in ways that can best inform shifts to *Vision for Change* management, programming, and expansion. Additionally, some findings call attention to the formative work that MARS is already doing for, and with, women.
5. **Recommendations | Vision for Change:** structured across several broad categories—e.g., human resources, capacity building, program intervention, and advocacy—this section outlines priority recommendations for MARS executive leadership to consider as it supports *Vision for Change*, a program with the potential to serve as a model approach to supporting cocoa sustainability that benefits entire families: men, women and children.

I. Introduction

For decades, MARS has invested in research and community development programs. This investment has helped to ensure that the smallholder farmers who supply the company with cocoa are able to maximize yields, produce quality cocoa, and lead healthy lives. This work is not novel to many within MARS, especially among staff are familiar with the company's community-based initiatives such as the Vision for Change (V4C) program in Côte d'Ivoire.

Through Vision for Change, MARS is currently providing farmers with access to the best farming technologies and practices. V4C is also working with communities to prioritize development projects that improve community health, education and social cohesion. Investments into these two "pillars"—productivity and community development—reinforce each other in achieving a common goal: maximizing farmers' yields, improving livelihoods, and attracting the next generation of educated cocoa farmers.

Vision for Change has reached women, and MARS could certainly do more to highlight how it has become an industry leader in this regard. For example, V4C is currently supporting several income-generating activities whose direct beneficiaries are women. Additionally, smaller numbers of women have learned new farming practices, attended trainings, and participated in community decision-making.

Despite these examples, women's involvement and the benefits accrued to them have not been the result of a comprehensive strategy to equitably support female farmers. Compared to their male peers, women engaged in cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire face considerable disadvantage in their access to the economic, social and political assets needed to benefit from Vision for Change.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not yet integral to *how* Vision for Change implements its activities. This commitment is the next step for MARS and its V4C partners—a commitment that is good for women, good for families, and good for business.

How the V4C program is takes into account the specific vulnerabilities and needs that women and girls experience in cocoa producing areas is the focus of this report. *Why* a company interested in the purchase of sustainable, quality cocoa for years to come should care about empowering women is addressed in detail. The key findings and recommendations layout *what* MARS can do for women and girls.

Supporting women's empowerment and gender equality are essential for building a thriving and sustainable cocoa sector. Fortunately for MARS and its partners, integrating gender into V4C does not require wholesale changes to the program. Instead, it suggests specific adaptations to the program that logically follow from an understanding of the

important role women play in this economy and a commitment to act in an equitable way to support them.

Impetus for the rapid gender assessment of Vision for Change

In March 2013, MARS publicly affirmed its commitment to ensuring that female farmers fully contribute and benefit from cocoa development programs (Annex I). The impetus for this affirmation was Oxfam America's release of a *Behind the Brands Scorecard* report, which urged leading cocoa-purchasing companies to address gender inequality in their supply chains. Released on International Women's Day, the report called attention to the issue that female farmers were not benefitting from industry efforts to improve the sustainability of cocoa production.

Oxfam's investigation into cocoa supply chains in Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire highlighted the following:

- **Industry sustainability programs** have not adequately focused on addressing issues faced by women.
- Most cocoa farmers continue to live in poverty, and **female cocoa growers are often paid less** than men.
- **Women provide nearly half the labor** on cocoa farms, yet do not systematically benefit from the income;
- Women cocoa farmers have **less access than men to land, credit, trainings and tools** like fertilizers or irrigation systems.
- Women working in cocoa fields and processing plants experience substantial **discrimination and inequality**, and are denied advances in wealth, status or opportunity.

Rationale for the assessment

MARS's interest in gender goes well beyond Oxfam America's release of a *Behind the Brands Scorecard* report. Global attention to women's rights and empowerment in general is exerting pressure on stakeholders within the cocoa sector and global supply chains more broadly. As an agriculture-based company, MARS needs to pay particular attention to these issues and to consider similar work being done in other supply chains. This gender assessment, however, refers specifically to the cocoa sector in Cote d'Ivoire.

From a strictly objective point of view, Cote d'Ivoire faces two sets of challenges arising from gender inequality in the cocoa sector. The first is the economic inefficiency of failing to view women, who provide 45% of the labor in the cocoa sector, as farmers. The second is the lost opportunity of the social and economic marginalization of women for the health, nutrition, education and overall well-being of their families.

In many communities where MARS operates, women are not often able to fully realize their full potential in their homes, relationships and communities. The discrimination they face starts at an early age, and intensifies as they move into adulthood. Little education, poor access to health services and limited training or support as cocoa cultivators greatly disadvantage women from the resources that might enable them to better shape their livelihoods. MARS recognizes that poverty, which affects men and women alike, poses unique risks to women—risks that MARS cannot ignore if cocoa is to be considered a thriving, worthwhile livelihood to pursue.

Internal factors also call upon MARS to identify opportunities to support women’s empowerment and gender equality. The principle of “mutuality” places upon the company an obligation to ensure that MARS’ efforts to promote an improved quality of life does not exclude women who account for almost half of the labor on cocoa farmers. “A mutual benefit is a shared benefit; a shared benefit will endure.” This corporate principle, coupled with MARS’ commitment to the principles of “responsibility” and “profit” are compelling reasons for action.

Women’s empowerment and gender equality go beyond serving public relations and social corporate responsibility goals. The long-term sustainability of cocoa rests in part on the ways the sector capitalizes on the full potential of women who labor long hours on cocoa farms, often to cultivate both cocoa and food.

Objectives of the assessment

The objectives for this rapid gender assessment are:

- (1) To identify the gender-based constraints to women’s participation in the Vision for Change program and to assess their implications for the cocoa farming supply chain in Côte d’Ivoire;
- (2) To outline opportunities to strengthen how the Vision for Change program supports women’s equitable participation; and
- (3) To prioritize recommendations for Mars and its local partners to consider as they design, implement and evaluate Vision for Change.

This assessment is part of MARS’ comprehensive set of commitments publicly shared in response to Oxfam’s *Behind the Brands* campaign (Annex I).

Methodology

The research team collected information via literature review, teleconference calls, and field visits to Abidjan and the area around Soubré, Côte d’Ivoire during May 2013. The team reviewed project and research documents; conducted key-informant interviews; and facilitated focus-group discussions with male and female cocoa farmers and other community members.

The assessment is grounded in qualitative research methodologies, including:

- A comprehensive review of: (i) peer-reviewed and unpublished literature on the constraints faced by women on smallholder farms and the effective methods for addressing these gender-based constraints; (ii) studies and assessments by other researchers, advocacy groups and donor agencies, with an emphasis on women in agriculture e.g., subsistence vs. cash crop, gender constraints, etc.; (iii) V4C project documents and training materials. The rapid assessment team reviewed over 120 documents.
- Qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders including: MARS staff; World Agroforestry Centre staff; ANADER staff, Vision for Change managers and beneficiaries; cocoa cooperative managers; Oxfam personnel; government officials; and other researchers with expertise in gender and agriculture. The rapid assessment team conducted over 25 key-informant interviews.
- Focus group discussions with women and men in 3 villages where V4C is implementing programming, and in a “control village” where V4C has not yet implemented any activities. The rapid assessment team conducted focus group discussions with approximately 250 adult women, 100 adult men, and 25 male youth.
- Observational assessment of implementing partners’ field activities and roles, as well as of beneficiaries’ involvement during visits to Vision for Change program sites. The rapid assessment team also visited villages where V4C does not currently implement activities.

The selection of persons for key-informant interviews and project sites was based on purposive sampling. In consultation and collaboration with Jeff Morgan, MARS Global Programs Manager, the assessment team prioritized opportunities to gather relevant and useful information from individuals representing a range of perspectives (see details of field visits in Annex II, and complete list of people interviewed in Annex III).

Women provide 45% of the labor on cocoa farms in Côte d’Ivoire, yet tend not to be viewed or referred to as “farmers.”

Women cocoa farmers are viewed as making up only a small minority of cocoa farmers.

II. Research case for why gender matters for cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire

This section describes the demographic, social, and political context in Côte d'Ivoire and outlines women's roles on cocoa farms, drawing from national and global research in peer-reviewed and unpublished literature.

Women are involved in most every step of cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire (ICRW, 2009). A recent survey assessment of women's role on cocoa farms there concluded that women carry out approximately 45 percent of the labor on cocoa farms; the same survey by the International Food and Policy Research Institute found that women account for 85 percent of food production for their households (Laven & Verhart, 2012).

The Cocoa Development Centers (CDCs) and Community Village Centers (CVCs) to introduce new agricultural practices are being implemented in some of the poorest communities in Côte d'Ivoire, where women are at a significant social and economic disadvantage compared to men.

A. What is "gender," how does it differ from "sex," and what does it mean to integrate it into programs?

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, expectations and definitions a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men (and boys) and women (and girls).

In most societies, the norms that define socially acceptable roles and expectations disadvantage women and limit the social, educational, and economic opportunities that would help protect their health and well-being. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, young women, for example, are expected to be sexually passive and faithful, to become mothers at an early age, to be the caretakers for their families and to defer to their husbands' decision-making. By contrast, the dominant ideals of what it means to be a man dictate that they should show sexual leadership through dominance and in some cases multiple partnerships, to assert their toughness, be economic providers, to be the ultimate decision-makers within the household (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

Sex – The biological difference between women and men. Sex differences are concerned with women and men's physiology.

Gender – The economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male. These vary among cultures and change over time.

Patriarchy refers to historical power imbalances and cultural practices and systems that accord men on aggregate more power in society and offer men material benefits, such as higher incomes and informal benefits, including care and domestic service from women and girls in the family (United Nations Division on the Advancement of Women, 2003). Versions of manhood associated with the dominant social class or ethnic group in a given setting may have greater power and salience, just as heterosexual masculinity often holds more power than homosexual or bisexual masculinity (WHO, 2007).

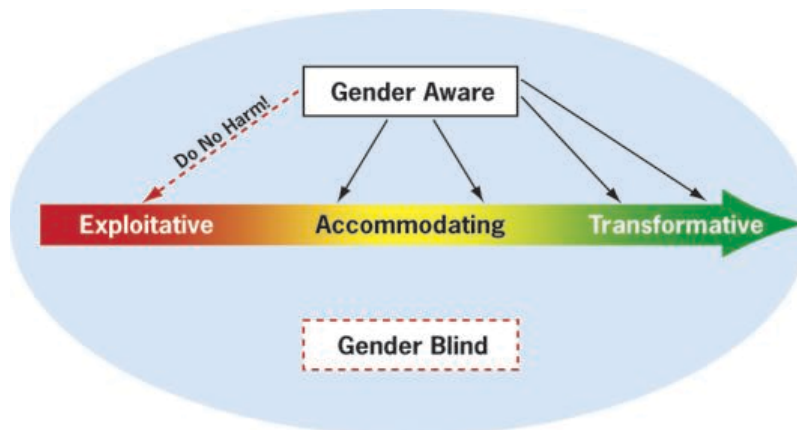
Rigid, gendered divisions for women versus men have negative consequences. Women in relationships with men who do not value ideals of equality and have very rigid adherence to hyper-masculine values are at greater risk sexual and physical violence; additionally, these women are less likely to benefit from educational and training opportunities, less likely to access life-saving health services, and less likely to have a say in family assets. On a systematic level, these “gender norms” influence customary laws that dictate inheritance practices and land tenure. They also contribute to the perception that women are not “cocoa farmers” even though they provide 45 percent of the labor.

What does “integrating gender” look like?

Numerous studies have affirmed that when programs work to shift attitudes among young and adult men and women toward greater mutuality and cooperation, the development outcomes of interest are more likely to be achieved. The social expectations of what women and men of all ages should (or should not) do can change over time. These studies underscore the links between gender individuals’ gender equitable attitudes and improved outcomes in maternal health, family planning, caregiving, education, and savings (WHO, 2007; Barker, Nascimento, Segundo, & Pulerwitz, 2004; Rushdy, 2012; WHO, 2006). Most development programs that effectively integrate gender provide a space for women and men, individually and jointly, to discuss and reflect upon how their socialization is linked to the social, economic, health, educational and livelihood opportunities made available to them.

What does “integrating gender” look like in the context of diverse programs? The United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) [Interagency Gender Working Group](#) has developed a visual representation of how programs do – and don’t – address the gender inequalities that stand in the way of achieving outcomes of interest (see gender integration continuum below).

USAID Gender Integration Continuum for Development Programming



The Vision for Change program would currently appear somewhere around “accommodating.” This is because although the program recognizes the difficulties women face, and knows the extent of their contributions to cacao cultivation, it has largely accepted the assertion that only men are truly farmers because they are the ones that own land, and so it works only with men. The program could be transformative, however, in much the same way it has worked toward social cohesion, by making women cocoa visible, by listening to their requests and preferences, and by ensuring that training and access to inputs and resources are equitably extended to them.

USAID Gender Integration Continuum for Development Programming:

The gender integration continuum is a tool for designers and implementers to use in planning how to integrate gender into their programs/policies. Under no circumstances should programs take advantage of existing gender inequalities in pursuit of health outcomes (“do no harm!”), which is why, when printed in color, the area surrounding “gender exploitative” is red, and the arrow is dotted.

Gender aware programs/policies are expected to be designed with gender accommodating or transformative intentions. Programs/policies may have multiple components that fall at various points along the continuum, which is why multiple arrows exist. The ultimate goal of development programs/policies is to achieve health outcomes while transforming gender norms toward greater equality; therefore, the area around “gender transformative” is green (‘proceed forward’), and the arrow extends indefinitely toward greater equality.

Gender exploitative approaches, on the left of the continuum, take advantage of rigid gender norms and existing imbalances in power to achieve the health program objectives. While using a gender exploitative approach may seem expeditious in the short run, it is unlikely to be sustainable and can, in the long run, result in harmful consequences and undermine the program’s intended objective. It is an unacceptable approach for integrating gender.

Gender accommodating approaches, in the middle of the continuum, acknowledge the role of gender norms and inequities and seek to develop actions that adjust to and often compensate for them. While such projects do not actively seek to change the norms and inequities, they strive to limit any harmful impact on gender relations. A gender accommodating approach may be considered a missed opportunity because it does not deliberately contribute to increased gender equity, nor does it address the underlying structures and norms that perpetuate gender inequities. Gender accommodating approaches often provide a sensible first step to gender integration. As unequal power dynamics and rigid gender norms are recognized and addressed through programs, a gradual shift toward challenging such inequities may take place.

Gender transformative approaches, at the right end of the continuum, actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power as a means of reaching health as well as gender equity objectives. Gender transformative approaches encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community, such as service providers and traditional leaders.

Program/policy planners should keep in mind that a particular project may not fall neatly under one type of approach, and may include, for example, both accommodating and transformative elements. It is also important to note that while the continuum focuses on gender integration goals in the design/planning phase, it can also be used to monitor and evaluate the program.

B. Social context in Côte d'Ivoire, shaping norms and opportunities

The total population in Cote d'Ivoire is 19.7 million, with nearly half (40.6 percent) of the population under age 15 and more than 50 different ethnic groups (PRB, 2012; BTI, 2012). In 2011, the 48.7 percent of the population lived in rural areas (UN Data, 2011).

Despite more than 10 years of crisis marked by conflict and the recent post-electoral unrest, Côte d'Ivoire is the second largest economy in West Africa, after Nigeria (IMF, 2013). This **macroeconomic stability is largely driven by the nation's oil and cocoa industry**; Cote d'Ivoire has remained the world's largest exporter of cocoa—accounting for about 35 percent of the world's cash crop production (ICCO, 2013; World Bank, 2011).

Continued production of cocoa, however, has not translated into improved livelihoods of small farmers, most especially women. Poverty has increased to 49 percent in 2008, up from 10 percent in 1985, and the most recent World Bank estimates suggest that more 46 percent of the population is living on less than \$2 per day² (World Bank, 2008). Poverty is more acute in rural than urban areas (African Development Bank Group, 2012).

Girls' enrolment in both primary (79.4 percent) and secondary (55.1 percent) education is among the lowest worldwide. Literacy rates are low for youth—72 percent for males and 61 percent for females ages 15-24 (UNICEF, 2010). Though they have risen dramatically over the past 15 years, the lower literacy rates among young women can be explained in large part by the challenges the country faces in expanding education to reach women and girls. Vision for Change can – and has, along with its predecessor IMPACT – make a difference to school attendance and gender disparities in education. Its support for schools in the communities in which it works, and its future attention to the proportion of *girls* specifically, grade by grade, provide an important impetus for improvements in schooling in these communities.

² At 2005 international prices

Key education-related definitions, measures and concepts

Literacy rate - Percentage of persons in an age group who can read and write.

Gross primary or secondary school enrolment ratio - The number of children enrolled in a level (primary or secondary), regardless of age, divided by the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the same level

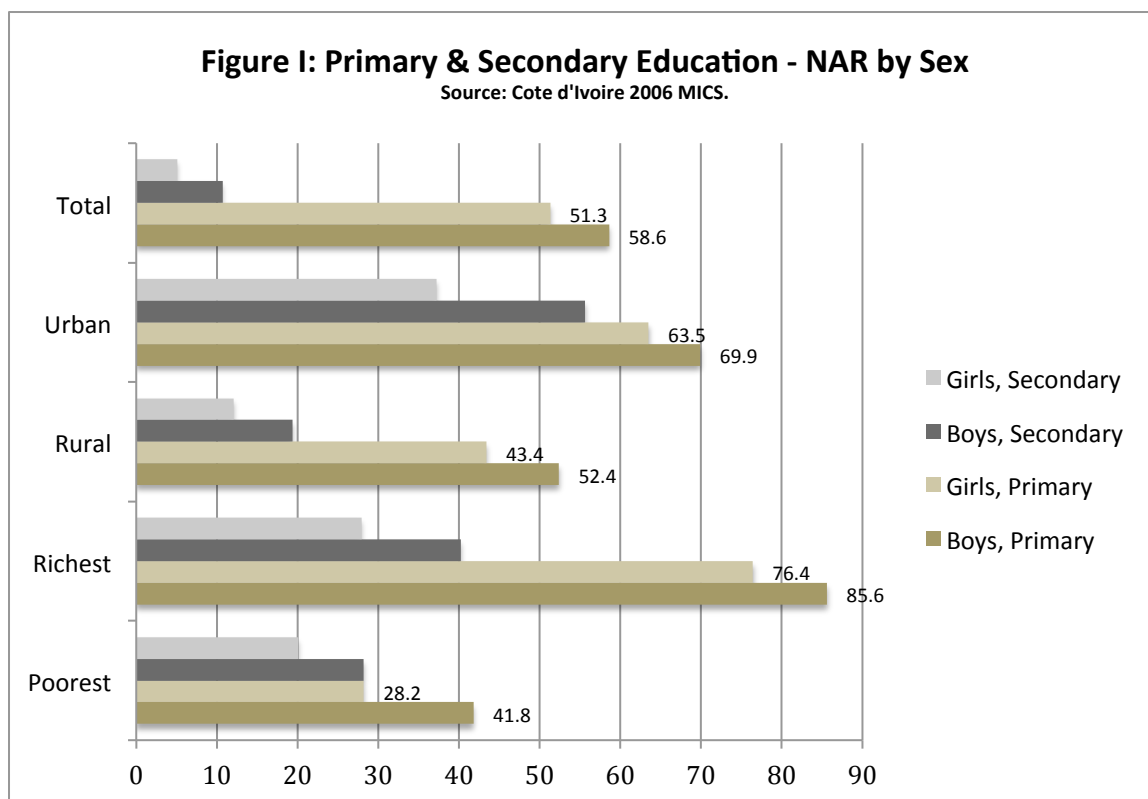
Net primary school enrolment ratio - The number of children enrolled in primary school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to primary schooling, divided by the total population of the same age group.

Net primary school attendance - Percentage of children in the age group that officially corresponds to primary schooling who attend primary school. These data come from national household surveys.

Note: The quality of the schooling children receive varies dramatically. In some places, the school system struggles to get teachers to come to work. In others, large numbers of students learn together in inadequate spaces, taught by teachers with limited training. The point is that the quality and relevance of what students learn affects the meaning of their schooling.

Source: UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/stats_popup5.html

Geographic and income-based disparities in net attendance rates increasingly disadvantage girls and young women as they age, especially in poor households in rural communities. Net attendance ratio does not account for thousands of young out-of-school children, but the statistic is a proxy indicator of the select demographic that *actually* benefits from the skills, resources and networks accrued to young people who attend school in Côte d'Ivoire (Figure I). Additionally, an estimated 46.5 percent of orphans (10-14 years) do not attend school.



In Soubré (and other rural communities that produce cocoa for export), the poor educational enrolment and achievement among women and girls negatively impacts their wellbeing and restricts the opportunities to independently improve their livelihoods. For example, an extensive body of literature finds the higher levels of women’s education are associated with improved health outcomes for women and their children, as well as greater autonomy, wages, and labor market participation (Lloyd, 2009; Levine, Lloyd, Greene, & Grown, 2008).

Low educational achievement and high levels of illiteracy among women in Côte d’Ivoire have implications for breaking generational cycles of poverty and improving livelihoods. Globally, adult literacy rates are increasing; however, the United Nations has identified several countries where progress has been alarmingly slow. With a national adult (15+ years) literacy rate of 48.1 percent, and a youth literacy rate of 59.8 percent, Côte d’Ivoire is among these slow-progressing countries (UNESCO, 2006). Women and girls are almost two times less likely to be literate, as compared to their male peers. National surveys in Côte d’Ivoire define literacy as the “as the ability to read easily or with difficulty a letter or a newspaper.”

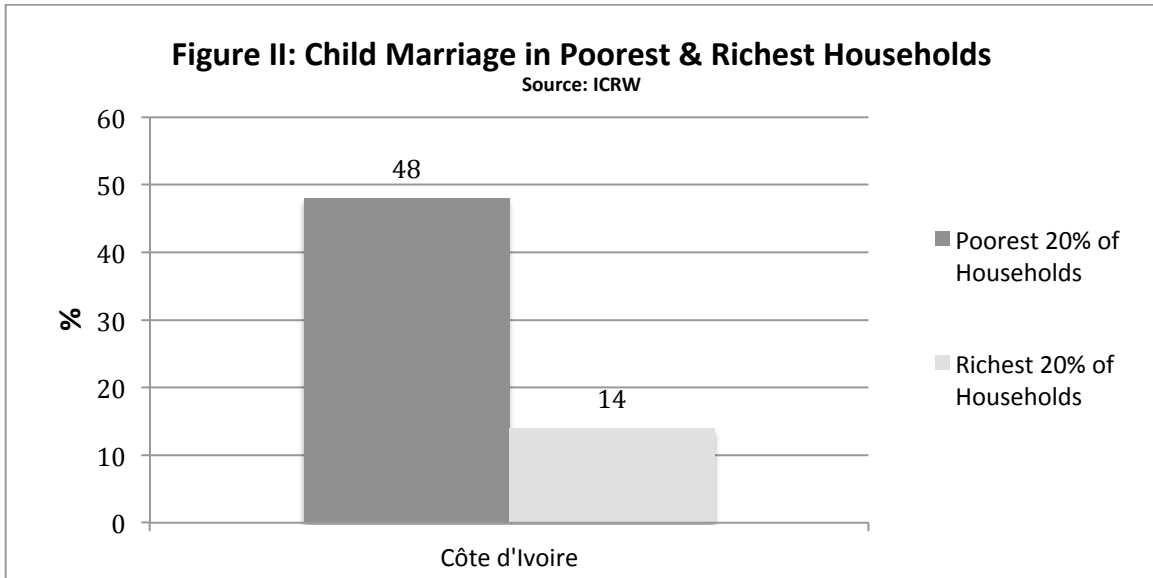
The literacy challenge facing Côte d’Ivoire is complicated by the strong links between illiteracy and poverty. There is a negative correlation between measures of poverty and the adult literacy rate e.g., where poverty rates are high, such as rural Côte d’Ivoire, the literacy rates tend to be lower. Based on a 28-country study of developing countries

with the lowest literacy rates, UNICEF has concluded the following key points (Car-Hill, 2005; UNESCO, 2006):

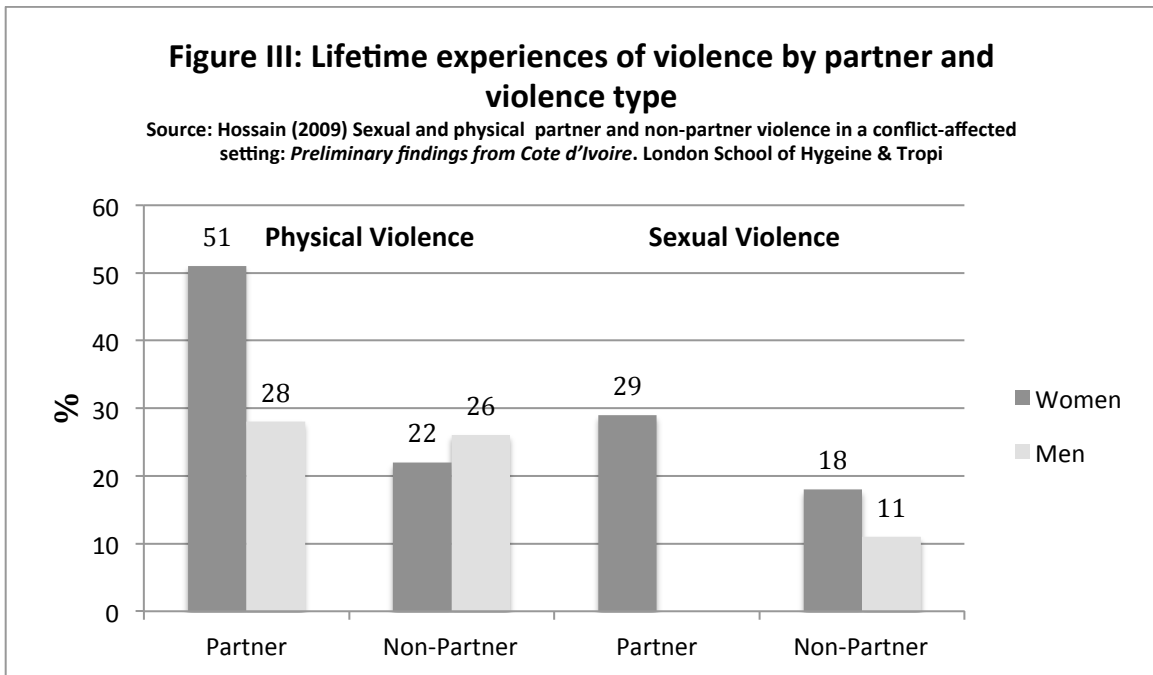
- Women are significantly less likely to be literate than men. Age is nearly always a significant factor, with older people more likely to be illiterate than younger people (this relationship is weaker than the association with gender).
- Whether or not an individual ever went to school has the strongest and most significant effect on literacy.
- In most countries household size is not associated with literacy; however, in some cases, individuals living in larger households are less likely to be literate.
- Individuals from wealthier households are more likely to be literate than those from poorer households, but the strength and significance of this association vary.
- Urban residents are more likely to be literate than rural residents, although this factor is weaker than others.

Reliance on child labor is acute in Côte d'Ivoire. According to the last nationally representative survey that United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) coordinated, 35.3 percent of children between 5 and 14 years old are gainfully employed in Côte d'Ivoire, and (UNICEF, 2006). Since its release, this statistic has caught the attention of the public and private sectors, resulting in greater investment to mitigate child labor. MARS has taken steps to help end child labor, in collaboration with industry partners, government institutions, and international agencies.

Women and girls are vulnerable to harmful practices that undermine their livelihoods; these harmful practices include child marriage and other forms of violence. Nationally, 36.4 percent of women and girls (15-49 years old) have experienced female genital cutting, and nearly a quarter of girls marry as children in Côte d'Ivoire (i.e., before the age of 18, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Child marriage is associated with poor maternal health outcomes, larger family sizes, lower education and marketable skills, reduced independence and civic participation and entrenched cycles of poverty across generations (UNFPA, 2012). In Côte d'Ivoire, as in many other countries, child marriage is intimately connected to poverty (Figure II).



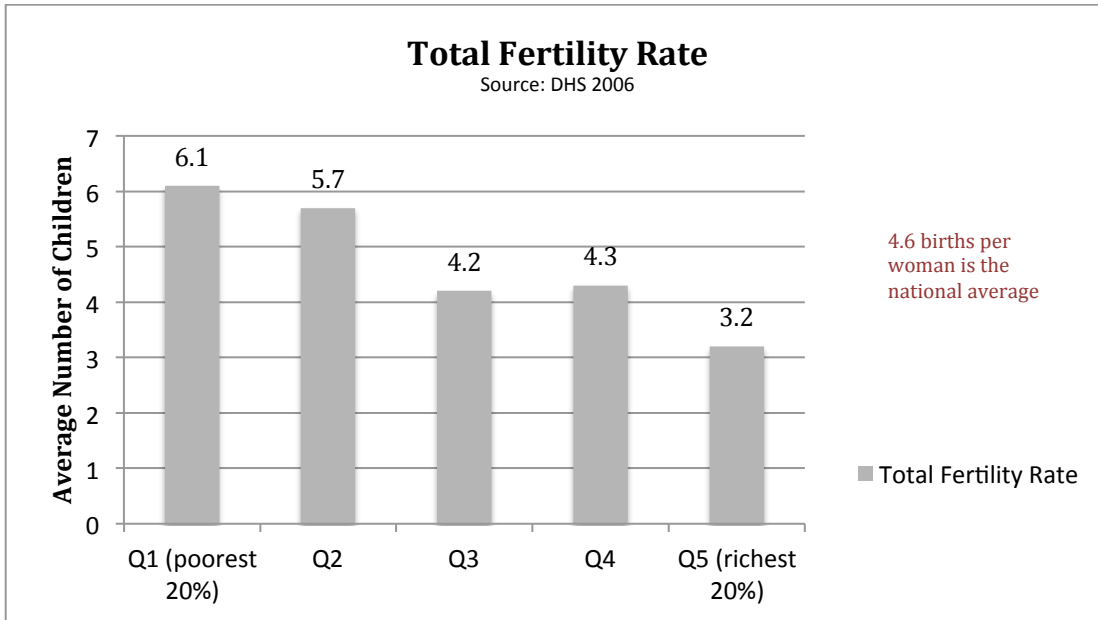
Despite the country having returned to a period of calm after two civil wars, women (15-45 years) are at greater risk of violence both in their homes and communities. In 2010, a cluster randomized control to assess the impact of an a community focused violence prevention program in 12 rural communities in Côte d'Ivoire found that women, most especially younger women who have much older partners, are particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual violence (Figure III). The study was inclusive of rural communities in the Soubré region.



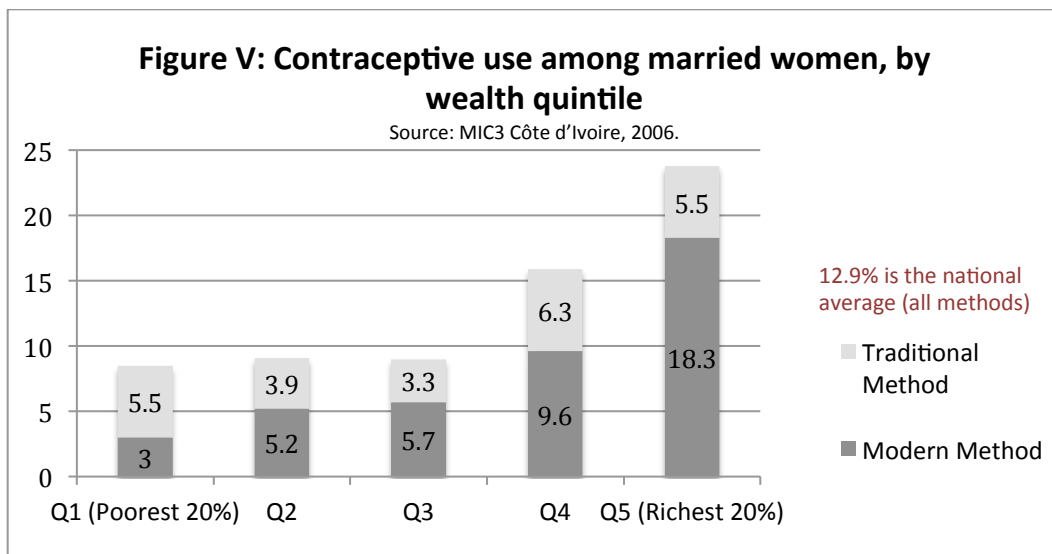
The family and social expectations that boys and girls experience as they mature from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood differ, setting them down different life paths (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Greene & Levack, 2010). The social expectations that all members of a community reinforce as they interact with each other have a great impact on women's abilities to obtain an education, acquire the skills, or build social networks that secure them better employment prospects (Lloyd, 2009). In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, women are less present in the modern labor market: **in 2005, women occupied only 12.71 percent of modern jobs, including legally registered head-of-household farm owners** (IMF, 2009).

Young girls are often not expected to excel in school as compared to their male peers, and they experience pressures to marry young and to have children. The adolescent fertility rate is high in Côte d'Ivoire (130 reported births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years)—this translates into 42 percent of women becoming pregnant with their first child by age of 18 (Institut National de la Statistique et Ministère de la Lutte contre le Sida [Côte d'Ivoire] et ORC Macro, 2006). The high fertility rate affects young women's health and their children's health: compared to older women, births to women aged 15–19 years old—whose bodies have not yet fully matured enough to survive the labor-induced trauma—have the highest risk of infant and child mortality, as well as a higher risk of morbidity and mortality.

Adult and adolescent fertility rates are high because women's contraception in Côte d'Ivoire is among the lowest in the world, most especially among the poor. The numbers of children that women who live in poor communities is almost double the number that women from the richest households - see Figure IV (Institut National de la Statistique et Ministère de la Lutte contre le Sida [Côte d'Ivoire] et ORC Macro, 2006). Disparities exist between women in rural areas at 5.5 births per woman, as compared to 3.6 births for those in urban areas. Women's education has a considerable impact on the number of children women have: 5.3 births per woman with no education versus and 2.7 births among women with a secondary education or higher.



A considerable factor in high fertility rates among the poor is the limited access to family planning information and services. According to national health surveys, the contraceptive prevalence rate in Côte d’Ivoire is 13.1 percent (UN Data, 2011). This figure, which refers to the percentage of married women (15-49) who are currently using, or whose sexual partner is currently using, at least one method of contraception, is among the lowest in the world. The national statistics masks disparities, particularly the much lower rate of contraception use among the poor who often live in hard-to-reach rural areas—the same rural areas where a considerable portion of cocoa farming occurs (see Figure V).



Low contraceptive prevalence has implications for women’s health, and for the health of newborn children, since a majority of women in rural and poor households do not give birth in the presence of a skilled health worker. A majority of pregnant women in Côte d’Ivoire are able to seek some type of services during pregnancy; however, institutional deliveries are less common. According to the latest survey data from 2006, only 57 percent of women deliver with the assistance of skilled medical personnel. Again, there are significant disparities: while 95 percent of women in the wealthiest quintile delivered with skilled health personnel, only 29 percent of women in the poorest quintile obtained such assistance. Additionally, 47 percent of women with no education delivered with skilled health personnel as compared to 87 percent of women with secondary education or higher (UNICEF, 2006).

Women (and men and children) in cocoa producing regions do have reliable access to health services. The government’s 2008 Cocoa Report shows that cocoa-producing regions suffered from a lack of health centers, with 72.2 percent of villages surveyed having no health center. According to the World Bank in 2004 there were 0.12 doctors per 10,000 people and 0.60 nurses per 10,000 people (WHO, 2008).

C. Political context for gender equality in Côte d’Ivoire

Côte d’Ivoire has not submitted a report on the status of women to the United Nations Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This kind of reporting is useful as it provides an official statement of the government’s approach to gender equality. Gathering from other sources, however, it is clear that the institutional context for gender equality in Côte d’Ivoire is very weak:

- The country is ranked 61 out of 86 in the 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index;
- The Human Development Index for Côte d’Ivoire is 0.400, ranking the country 170 out of 187 countries for which data are available;
- The Gender Inequality Index rating is 0.655, placing the country at 136 out of 146 countries for which the GII has been measured.

These indicators reflect social institutions that disadvantage or discriminate against women, including:³

- A discriminatory family code, and very weak implementation of existing supports, e.g., polygamy is outlawed and the minimum age at marriage is 18 for women, yet 35% of women, and 24% of girls aged 15-19 live in polygamous unions;

³ <http://genderindex.org/country/cote-d039ivoire>;
<http://reproductiverights.org/sites/default/files/documents/cotedivoire.pdf>

- Restricted physical integrity, e.g., domestic violence is not penalized under Ivoirian law;
- Son bias reflected in various ways, including significant disparities in primary school enrolment, for example;
- Restricted resources and entitlements, though civil law permits widows to inherit property; under customary law, land cannot be registered to a woman. Some banks require a husband's permission for a woman to open an account;
- Restricted civil liberties as the threat of physical and sexual violence limit women's freedom of movement.

Women's political participation and decision-making is limited. This limited participation is a staple, from national representation in Parliament to government and informal decision-making structures at the community level. Since the last elections: only 19 seats in Parliament are occupied by women out of 223, representing 8.5 percent of available seats; only 9 women out of 197 are Mayors, representing 4.6 of available seats; and only one woman is President of a General Council out of 58 Presidents of General and District Councils (IMF, 2009).

Under the Civil Code in Côte d'Ivoire, no gender discrimination regarding access to property is permissible, and women and men have equal land ownership rights. (FAO, 2010). However, the enforcement of civil law is weak and many communities abide by the customary laws, which do not allow land to be registered to a woman (Koné, 2006). Even where the Civil Code affirms non-discrimination in property ownership, the laws include clauses that link marriages to community ownership. Furthermore a 1967 decree that gave ownership rights to those who were at the time cultivating the land remains largely unenforced, creating uncertainty and insecurity around land rights. (Crook, 2007). The result is that the State and its institutions and systems defer to customary laws when disputes arise. This deference to a system that views men as the sole heads of the household and gives them the authority to manage assets disfavors women (FAO, 2010; IDLO, 2013).

In Cote d'Ivoire, land rights remain under the purview of customary law, which often disfavors women. In many villages, communal landownership is the customary practice (ICRW, 2009). In some communities, native landowners parse out their land to migrant families that can maintain the land as long as it is cultivated (Crook, 2007).

D. Women's roles on cocoa farms

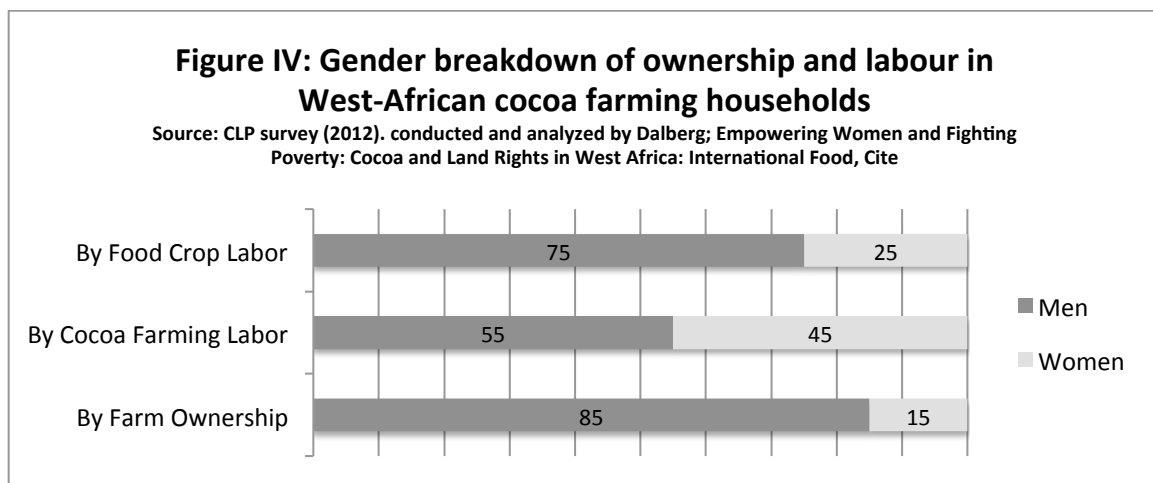
Due to the accrued discrimination over time and the limited access to land, women face difficulties in accessing markets, credits, and other essential resources needed to participate in cocoa farming or to maximize their cocoa yields. Their restricted ability to own land limits women's access to other assets and services, like training, inputs and credits (Laven & Verhart, 2012). These factors also make it more difficult to become

members of farmer organizations and cooperatives. Given the gender-based barriers women face in terms of land ownership and lower levels of participation in farmer organizations, they are unable to meet the lending criteria established by banks, such as a title to a house or production of a profitable cash crop (Laven & Verhart, 2012). In 2010, the Freedom House reported that some banks in Côte d’Ivoire also required married women to secure their husband’s approval for loans (Freedom House, 2010).

Among the comparatively small number of women who do own land, the breakdown between the types of crops they grow is stark (Doss, 2002). A 2012 regional study of cocoa ownership and labor across thousands of West-African cocoa farming households, inclusive but not limited to Côte d’Ivoire, reported the following key findings (Cocoa Livelihoods Program, 2012):

- Female ownership of cocoa farmers is relatively low (25% women versus 75% men); and when women do own a farm, they tend to hire more male workers because domestic responsibilities leave them time-poor or because they need additional assistance
- Gender breakdown of labor is about equal: women do around 45% of the labor on the cocoa farm, often working on their husband’s plot of land
- Women work the cocoa farm, and they women take up a dominant role in subsistence farming/food production; they provide 85% of the labor for this activity

Unlike spouses of male farmers, women owners directly manage their farms and have control over the income generated from it. Female farm owners, and women who manage their own plots of land, are more likely to depend on hired labor and less likely to be members of cooperatives. Women’s limited involvement in cooperatives can reduce their profits, since their investments in hired labor are less likely to be offset by the training, inputs, and services that cooperative afford their members (UTZ Certified and Solidaridad, 2009).



The rigid gender roles that reinforce the idea that “women’s work” is caring for the children and producing food crops overlooks the reality of women’s contributions and potential. Even on farms own by men, female family members do a considerable portion of the work, yet receive little of the income from crop sales and have little say in how money is spent (Schneider & Gugerty, 2010). A recent survey assessment of women’s role on cocoa farms in Côte d’Ivoire concluded that women do approximately 45 percent of the labor on cocoa farms; the same survey by the International Food and Policy Research Institute found that women account for 85 percent of food production for their households (Laven & Verhart, 2012). A recent literature review found not only that this trend is widespread in African contract farming schemes, but that men frequently spend the income they earn from contract farming on personal rather than family needs (Schneider & Gugerty, 2010).

Considering women’s contributions to the social and economic welfare of families, the benefits of making sure that new inputs reach women are great - e.g., trainings to introduce new information, skills and techniques. Additionally, putting women in a position to assert their agency and protect their health through reliable access to family planning, literacy, and business skills can maximize the gains they represent for family health and cocoa production.

Women are time poor, assuming a disproportionate share of family responsibilities.

The 2009 ICRW report highlighted the fact that women are under considerable pressure to complete many tasks. In short, relative to men, they are “time poor.” While contributing to the household farming of cash and food crops, women must accommodate additional demands on their time to complete household tasks, to care for children, and to, hopefully, care for themselves. The ICRW report noted that women “spend over half their day on productive work (cocoa farming, other agricultural or income generation activities), with more than half of this time dedicated to cocoa during high season ... with another 31% spent on household chores and child care, including cooking, cleaning, fetching water, etc., leaving them only 15% of the day for sleep and other ‘free’ time” (ICRW, 2009). In Côte d’Ivoire, the ICRW study found that collecting water was the third largest time-user, after non-cocoa (cash crop farming) and cocoa related work; women reported having to “walk up to 10 kilometers a day to fetch the water they need.”

Table I. Summary of Existing Literature: constraints & opportunities for female cocoa farmers⁴

Constraints	Causes	Opportunities
Limited access to training and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New agricultural knowledge and innovations are often not addressed to women - Little attention for specific needs of women - Lack of coop membership - Little awareness of opportunities for training - Cultural/social barriers, including gender roles - Approval of husband required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use approaches that are better directed to women - Make training accessible for family members of cooperative members - Recruit female advisors and rural extension services - Tailor trainings for female cocoa laborers - Support the creation of women's only cocoa farmer groups - Expand definition of cocoa farmer beyond "land ownership"
Limited access to land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land tenure structures - Heritance laws and traditions - Gender discrimination - Approval of husband required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjust heritance laws, - Apply existing laws better - Inform women about their land rights - Disseminate gender equitable messages on topic
Limited access to credit, savings, and independent income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of house title, land title, production of a profitable cash crop - Approval of husband required - Credit schemes are often directed to associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forming associations of women to obtain credit more easily - Adapt SMS technologies to help women save money in personal accounts - Disseminate gender equitable messaging about women's economic empowerment as good for relationships, families and women
Limited access to cocoa markets or cooperative memberships, and limited representation in local governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited access to information for women - Distance to markets - Lack of infrastructure and transport facilities - Lack of coop membership - Lower quality and quantity of cocoa Only land owners can access markets and/or become members - Social norms, and rigid views that decision-making is the man's domain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimulate coop membership - Improve infrastructure and transport facilities - Training on good post- harvest practices to improve quality - Improve access to inputs and credit Awareness-raising of men and women separately - Establish quotas for female representation - Set up women's associations through which women's needs and concerns are specifically addressed

Source: (UTZ, Solidaridad, Oxfam Novib, 2009) and (ICRW, 2009)

III. Business case – a theory of change

There are compelling ethical and social reasons for MARS and the cocoa industry to ensure that women and girls benefit from the purchase of cocoa from their communities. Proactively making sure that women benefit from their labor on and away from the cocoa farm is a good business investment that can yield greater returns. Improving the condition of women who directly and indirectly contribute to family cocoa farms is certainly also good from the perspective of public relations and social corporate responsibility.

An investment in women’s empowerment and gender equality can improve productivity, quality, and set in a motion a series of intra-household decisions that attract the next generation of farmers to cocoa. Providing nearly half the labor – of all varieties – required for cocoa cultivation, women cannot achieve the highest levels of productivity and quality if they are not well trained, resourced, or paid for their work. As women work on their families’ cocoa farms, they are making decisions about techniques and practices: without information on the best practices and without the resources to purchase quality inputs, women will not be using these means of improving their cocoa cultivation. When women are not fully engaged and have no access to the income from their labor, the opportunity to capture the ripple effects for their families is missed. Whether women are the *primary* decision makers or not, they have a profound influence on household decisions and resource allocations. Given the cultural context, MARS needs to draw women into its activities more proactively.

A. Business case

Increasing the participation of women in smallholder-based supply chains, and improving the technical support they receive, can help maintain or grow production volumes and improve productivity. Specifically, the benefits of making sure that women (and girls) are involved in cocoa sustainability project like *Vision for Change* include:⁵

- Improved quality
- Greater productivity
- Lower costs, healthier labor force
- More secure supply chain

Improved quality. A study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2012 found that staff who are responsible for the purchase and collection of smallholder cash crops consistently report that women often produce a better product (Chan & Barrientos, 2012). Even through this evidence is largely anecdotal, interviews with MARS

⁵ (Chan & Barrientos, 2012).

sustainability managers, gender scholars, and members of local communities affirm that women are often more diligent and attentive to their crops.

Greater productivity. Even though women may not own significant portions of land, they are cocoa farmers; they work land. Wives of cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire are regularly involved in at least 12 of the 19 stages in cocoa production, play a lead role in tending to young cocoa trees, and support post-harvest activities (UTZ, Solidaridad, Oxfam Novib, 2009). Overall, women do approximately 45 percent of the work on cocoa farms. In order to maximize the scope and scale of trainings' impact on productivity, the cocoa industry can ill afford to not actively recruit women or to not adapt trainings to their schedules, needs, and roles on cocoa farms.

In Ghana, an evaluation of a video training program found that women increased their cocoa yields by 59 percent, as compared to only 47 percent among men. By applying the new cultivation practices, many more women than men doubled their cocoa yields (David & Asamoah, 2011).

In addition to providing technical trainings to women, either in isolation through women's group or during couples/family-centered training programs, greater productivity can be achieved by increasing the portion of land that women cultivate. Disseminating gender equitable messages about sharing plots of land and cash-crop revenue with women can help companies meet their supply-side goals (e.g., 1 million tons of cocoa). Finding ways to link women's labor to their being compensated for their efforts can arguably create a stronger incentive for their working to maximize cocoa yields.

Additionally, more money in the hands of women translates to a greater portion of funds invested back into the family household; studies have shown that of every dollar we invest in women living within poverty stricken areas, 90 cents will go towards her family and local community. Of that same dollar, men invest between 30 and 40 cents back into their families (ICRW, 2009). Thus women's empowerment is linked to benefits for productivity, for household quality of life, and for children in the home. Women's bargaining power within the household, measured by the share of assets within the household owned by women, is shown to affect household decisions, including household expenditure patterns, and health and education outcomes for children (Doss C. , 1997; Doss C. , 2002).

Lower costs, healthier labor force. Studies have found that women are very good networkers who diffuse new information and resources among their peers and across their communities [citation]. Additionally, women are often better at recruiting new members to attend trainings (Chan & Barrientos, 2012). Taken in combination, the opportunity to purposefully tap into women's social networks and relationships can take every additional dollar invested in productivity and community development much

farther, as compared to approaches that do not make a concerted effort to reach women.

Women's empowerment is good for business because it is good for health and development of almost half the labor on cocoa farms. This labor pool, while most often unpaid, is also the centerpiece of family health. The wellbeing of mothers and daughters in cocoa communities is the critical link to family food security and nutrition, health service decision-making for newborn and child health, and the long-term prospects for a future of educated cocoa farmers. Therefore, the ripple of effects of investment in women has multiplier effect for the long-term V4C goals.

More secure supply chain. Empowering women strengthens the long-term viability of the supply chain. Worldwide, the percentage of smallholder farmers who grow cash crops is unlikely to grow, in large part because population growth over the next decade is projected to both increase and be most concentrated in urban areas (McGranahan, 2009; UN, 2007). The patterns of outward migration from rural to urban areas is not the same for men and women: men, most especially the male youth, are more likely to seek nonfarm employment in urban center as compared to their female peers. Over time, greater numbers of women will (have to) assume formal leadership and managerial roles on cocoa farms (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2008). Given that field assessments by researchers in several cocoa producing countries across West Africa confirm that young men are not necessarily interested in pursuing cocoa farming, the cocoa industry will have to turn an equitable portion of its resources towards women, youth and children.

HARNESSING WOMEN'S TRANSFORMATIVE POWER FOR WOMEN THEMSELVES, FOR FAMILIES, and FOR PRODUCTIVITY. Gender equality in education, in health, and in economic decision-making enables women to break cycles of poverty (Hill, 2011; UN Women, 2012) – this transformative power has implications for increased cocoa productivity, improved quality of life, and sustainable cocoa sector.

The fact is that more than 70 percent of economically active women in the least developing countries work in agriculture; in cocoa producing areas, even if they do not own the land, women make up almost half the labor force (Laven & Verhart, 2012). Despite their contributions, women in sub-Saharan Africa account for only 15 percent of landholders and own only 1 percent of the land. Globally, the World Bank estimates that women receive only 5 percent of all agricultural extension services. Additionally, women work 20 hours more than men per week, while receiving less than 10 percent of available credit (FAO, 2010).

In addition to assisting women reduce their dual work burden at home and on the farm through initiatives that cut their having walk great distance for water and tools, the cocoa sector should focus on organizing women around efforts to build their literacy, business acumen, and knowledge about life-saving health services. In conjunction with income-generating activities, empowering women with these resources, as well as purposefully including them in the dissemination of new cultivation practices will tap more fully the potential they represent.

In short, when women in cocoa communities are offered these basic, marketable life-skills they can better influence and shape their futures as well as guide investments in family health and wellbeing; studies have shown that women use almost all they earn to meet household needs while men use at least 25 percent of their earnings for other purposes. As more men migrate to urban centers and increasing numbers of male youth decide to not pursue cocoa as a livelihood, the cocoa industry cannot be left having missed an opportunity to invest its capital more equitably across half the labor force.

IV. Key findings | Vision for Change field visit

The purpose of this section is outline key findings from the rapid gender assessment conducted between 18 – 25 May 2013. During this time, the assessment team visited three villages where *Vision for Change* operates, as well as one “control village” where the project has yet to establish any productivity or community development programs. These findings are informed by observations of program staff, a review of program documents, focus group discussions with male and female community members, and key-informant interviews with various stakeholders (see methodology, page 10).

Key findings – overview:

- V4C is already taking on very sensitive social issues, including social cohesion to overcome ethnic tensions and the introduction of new farming technologies to improve traditional farming practices (page 34)
- Social change is relevant and already taking place; the introduction of new farming methods is a form of norm change (page 34)
- V4C is already reaching some women, albeit non-systematically or through structures that marginalize women’s input and needs (page 34)
- Women’s participation is currently usurped by male-centered governance structures, with missed opportunities to fund activities that women identify (page 35)
- In general, V4C Team staff engaged in managing V4C activities are not familiar with the community development dimensions of ANADER’s trainings (page 35)
- V4C Team buy-in and knowledge of gender issues varies considerably (page 35)
- ANADER staff is relatively more aware of the need to work with women than V4C Team staff (page 36)
- Work for and with women within the Vision for Change program is very recent, lending some credibility to Oxfam findings (page 36)
- Women’s involvement in cooperatives is low, however opportunities to support women exist (page 36)
- Low adult women’s literacy and low girls’ school attainment relative to male peers in the program area points to lasting disadvantage (page 37)
- The Vision for Change program is *concentrating* power within the traditional male-dominated structures – research suggests this approach can undermine productivity and community development goals (page 37)
- The current selection criteria for CDC and CVC staff are unlikely to attract female candidates, and this could have long-term impact on the program (page 38)
- Several opportunities exist to link Vision for Change to publicly-funded community-level initiatives for women (page 38)
- Male youth do not view cocoa production as their ideal livelihood (page 38)
- Monitoring and evaluation for V4C is currently not systematic, transparent or easily accessible (page 39)
- MARS is not publicizing its current efforts to empower women, much of the negative publicity and attention is due to a lack of communication about how it *is* being an industry leader (page 39).
- MARS’s support for education in the V4C communities creates a ready opportunity to support and track gender equality in schooling (page 40).

V4C is *already* taking on very sensitive social issues, including stimulation of social cohesion to overcome ethnic tensions and the introduction of new farming technologies to improve traditional farming practices. A common apprehension with businesses that support development-centered programming is that “gender work” is too sensitive. The perception that efforts to support women’s equality in their communities infringes upon deeply held cultural norms that are beyond the “comfort zone” or program objectives. How can we possibly shift the way people interact, most especially their attitudes and practices about the socially-acceptable roles and behaviors that women and men are assigned?

What is clear about *Vision for change* is that it already touches upon very sensitive topics. Through its community development pillar, the ANADER team already engages communities in dialogue to promote social cohesion. The recognition that Soubré is a diverse region, where many migrant persons from within and across borders grow cocoa, shapes how ANADER structures its methodology around community prioritization. Efforts to promote “social cohesion” across ethnic groups have also led V4C to creatively use radio programming. V4C radio programs disseminate messages about ways to increase cocoa yields messaging, while at the same time weaving messages that promote mutual respect and collaboration between a diverse set of characters who interact with each other in a post-crisis context.

Social change is relevant and already taking place; the introduction of new farming methods is a form of norm change. Men, women and youth all reaffirm that “cocoa is a way of life” for them. This statement is illustrative of the deep-seeded attitudes and practices that V4C aims to shift, with benefits for MARS and for farmers. The ends, however, do not change the fact that introducing new information and resources into a community presses against customs. For example, when V4C informs farmers that pruning their trees can increase yield, this information often contradicts a deeply held belief that more branches equate to greater crop yields.

Shifting norms within a community—if not viewed with a consideration for the gender dynamics between women and men, and even among groups of men and women themselves—is a missed opportunity to maximize programming. A disregard for ways to support gender equality can have unintended consequences when a program selectively shifts some norms and not others.

V4C is already reaching some women, albeit non-systematically or through structures that marginalize women’s input and needs. Vision for Change is already engaging women through both project pillars—productivity and the community development work. Although participation is not necessarily the result of targeted efforts to make sure that women benefit from CDC trainings, some women do attend events. ‘They can attend and participate if they come,’ is a common response to questioning about how the productivity pillar engages women.

Another common response about V4C's efforts to reach women is, 'we have income-generating activities.' While such activities are very important, taken alone these activities do not constitute a comprehensive program that integrates a gender-sensitive approach to its work.

Women's participation is currently usurped by male-centered governance structures, with missed opportunities to fund activities that have been identified by women's groups. ANADER is implementing a thorough community-driven development methodology that seeks the input of men *and* women throughout diverse community settings. However, women's needs and priorities are vulnerable to being sidelined and not being funded given the male-centered governance structures through which communities make their decisions. Community prioritization is a worthwhile principle, but the program must be aware of (and compensate for) how the approach can overshadow women's voices and participation.

When ANADER works with community committees, the EPL (Equipe de Planification Local, or local planning team) conducts focus groups and interviews with women. Together, they develop plans at the village level (Plan de Développement Villageois, or PDV). Information gathered during this stage feeds into a list of community development priorities that small "community development committees" filter and submit for consideration at the higher-level PDL (Plan de Développement Local, refers to the *terroir*, which can include multiple villages and *campements*). Their plan is approved by the Comité de Planification de Développement Local (CPDL). Women's abilities to advocate for their needs at the local level are stifled given the composition of each community development committee—one woman per 10 positions. At the CPDL level, where the ultimate decision to submit a list of community development priorities to V4C is made, women make up an even smaller portion of the governance leadership. As a result, V4C may be missing opportunities to fund activities that might more directly benefit women.

In general, V4C Team staff engaged in managing V4C activities are not familiar with the community development dimensions of ANADER's trainings. The V4C Team staff who oversee the V4C program are more familiar with the productivity-related work and have a limited knowledge of the work ANADER does to support community development. This may reflect the sense that because the content is delegated to ANADER, it does not need to be focused on. The same is not necessarily true about ANADER's understanding of V4C Team's work to support the productivity pillar. Gaps in V4C Team understanding make it more difficult for them to relay ANADER's methodology, curricula, and monitoring and evaluation procedures. One consequence is the missed opportunity to identify and cultivate the synergies between the community development and productivity pillars of the program.

V4C Team buy-in and knowledge of gender issues varies considerably. Staff knowledge about gender and its links to agriculture productivity, health, education, governance,

and intra-household decision-making vary considerably. V4C managers do not effectively convey the importance for work with women and girls; they often communicate that they do not take it seriously at all. Moreover, some staff demonstrate limited buy-in and a lack of interest when they speak with community members. For example, the assessment team observed managers reinforcing stereotypes of male authority over women during visits to villages. Moreover, the assessment team overheard comments and observed behavior that reasonable human resource offices would consider inappropriate. These often occurred in social settings among V4C personnel.

ANADER staff is relatively more aware of the need to work with women than V4C Team staff. In conversation with ANADER staff, from senior management levels to on-the-ground members of the community development teams, there is a more substantial awareness about gender, and its relevance for V4C program goals. ANADER program staff who support V4C activities have themselves identified several opportunities to better link women and girls to existing health services and education programs. For example, ANADER staff has insights into how better to link women in V4C communities to health extension services run by the local government.

Work for and with women within the V4C program is very recent, lending some credibility to Oxfam findings. As referenced earlier, V4C is already investing into women's livelihoods. Most of this work is in the form of income-generating activities that have started since April 2013. During site visits, women leaders relayed that their women's groups had received materials to initiate their income-generating programs within the last few weeks. This work, in conjunction with ANADER's concerted effort to document women's perspectives, could receive greater attention in publicly disseminated announcement within MARS and across the cocoa sector.

This finding has two key implications for MARS: (1) it affirms MARS commitment and is an example of the substantive work that the company is doing with and for women through V4C; and (2) the timeline lends some credibility to the conclusions in the Oxfam report, provided that these initiatives were not yet underway when it conducted its assessment.

Women's involvement in cooperatives is low, however opportunities to support women exist. MARS could explore, through its relationships with international buyers and traders who are involved with cooperatives, opportunities to include more women. Even though women are not explicitly denied membership, their limited access to land rights is a barrier. The assessment team visited four cooperatives, and all of them required members to own land. Restricting membership to landownership is a barrier to women's participation, since a limited number of women meet this criterion. Research affirms that cooperative members receive more technical and financial services including training in production, marketing and management and access to credit-based inputs and household loans (Calkins & Ngo, 2005). Given their limited membership,

women's leadership in cooperatives is also low. In 2009, UTZ conducted a field survey and found that women represent only three to four percent of presidents, secretary-generals or directors (UTZ Certified and Solidaridad, 2009).

During a visit to ECAM, a woman-led cooperative of 900+ members, the rapid assessment team did learn of opportunities to integrate micro-savings programs for male and female farmers. The partnership ECAM has struck with local banks could form the basis of a women-centered program for women that V4C reaches through its community development activities.

Low adult women's literacy and low girls' school achievement relative to male peers in the program area points to lasting disadvantage. A stark disparity between the literacy levels for men and women is a common characteristic in the communities where V4C operates. MARS investments into school infrastructure, such as Kragui School, are significant contributions in support of better education, and more can be done to raise the profile of this work. However, a visit to the primary school in Kragui made clear that young girls are not advancing through their schooling at the pace of their male peers; as they age, the dropout rate is greater among young girls. The difference between young men's and women's advancement through school reflects the different social expectations that communities have for their daughters. When the assessment team conducted focus group discussions in Pti Bouaké and Kragui, communities took note of the divisions in literacy among the men and women in the communities. The results were lively, safe, and productive discussions, as well as recognition among women (and some men) that the status quo raised questions about why the differences existed, and the (gendered) routines that reinforced it.

The V4C program is *concentrating* power within the traditional male-dominated structures; research suggests this approach can undermine productivity and community development goals. At present, the V4C program reinforces positions of male-centered power with communities. For example, the site selection for CDCs and the initial selection of CVC operators has largely relied on word-of-mouth and less-than-objective selection processes that benefit men. This strategy, while currently being evaluated and revised, is susceptible to favoritism and conveys that resources (and CVC business) are to be awarded to a select 'lucky' few. If the program maintains the status quo, it will contribute to enforcing existing power structures.

By placing new information and resources in the hands of well-positioned men within a community, the productivity pillar further concentrates power within the communities it aims to help. This approach can alienate the wider community of men and women who do not necessarily identify with village leadership. Research in other settings has found that the way to have members adopt new behaviors is to empower individuals who are most similar to the target group [Rosenberg, 2012]. Furthermore, the productivity gains that CDCs visually offer to farmers can be viewed as resulting from wealth and access to resources that ordinary farmers may feel are not available to them.

For V4C to change norms around family in a lasting way it should find ways to diffuse knowledge and resources across a wider social network.

By relying on local governance structures, the community development pillar also defers to a male-centered governance structure whose composition can mask women's concerns.

The current selection criteria for CDC and CVC staff are unlikely to attract female candidates. To date, V4C has employed one female CDC technician, and all five initial CVC operators are men. Selection for these positions has not necessarily been the most transparent, and the V4C Team team is currently revising its selection and hiring process for the next phase of CVC operators. The current selection criteria for CVC operators are:⁶

Requirements: Age: 21-55 years old; Education level: 4^{ème} minimum (secondary school); Ability to keep record of activities (sales, cash, banking, etc.); Living in the community; Integrated, accepted by the community (reference check)

Desired: Experience in cacao farming; Experience in business management (nursery manager, agro-dealer, etc); Women candidates are highly encouraged

Given the significant differences in access to education and relevant employment histories between men and women, these selection criteria are unlikely to attract to many qualified female candidates without either some modifications, upfront investment into training the most qualified female applicants, or more active recruitment of female leaders where V4C operates. The risk of proceeding without any attempt to select women is that virtually no women will be participating in the future. In addition, women will not be engaged in reaching out to community members, and only men will benefit from the economic rewards of this work.

Several opportunities exist to link V4C to publicly funded community-level initiatives for women. In conversations with community members, ANADER staff, and government officials, the assessment team identified opportunities to link V4C's community development initiatives to existing health and education services for women.⁷ Examples of these services include a Ministry of Labor skills training for young women, Ministry of Education adult literacy programs (and others that are organized by churches), a program for the mothers who have fought for the schooling of their adolescent girls, and so on. It would be worth conducting a local scan to identify existing resources with which the V4C program could connect.

⁶ Source: Email from V4C Team leadership

⁷ See recommendations for details

Male youth do not view cocoa production as their ideal livelihood. Not one young male interviewed during the field assessment spoke about wanting to pursue cocoa farming as their primary livelihood. Most males spoke about wanting to engage in other trade activities such as running a barbershop or being a mechanic. Many male youth spoke of wanting to own and raise livestock.

Monitoring and evaluation for V4C is currently not systematic, transparent or easily accessible. The program monitoring and reporting between implementing partners to MARS about on-the-ground development remains nebulous. MARS staff is currently in the process of systematizing this process e.g., indicators, tracking procedures, and reporting timelines. This is of concern both from a general management perspective, and from the point of view of wishing to track the integration of gender into the community development, productivity and education activities of the program.

MARS is not publicizing its current efforts to empower women, much of the negative publicity and attention is due to a lack of communication about how it is being an industry leader. MARS could do more to highlight the work it is doing at the community level with, and for, women. Word searches via online search engines results in very little information about V4C, much less about V4C commitment to women's empowerment. At the moment, V4C is not necessarily reaching women through strategic means, but the company has not sufficiently elevated the work that it does do. If industry leaders, international agencies, and government are unable to easily publicly access select documents about V4C, then it remains unlikely that MARS will receive positive recognition for its role in moving the industry towards a participatory community-development approach to agriculture that also compensates for women's disadvantages, extending to them services and skills that will help them to be healthier, more educated, and more productive farmers – now and for generations to come.

MARS's support for education in the V4C communities creates a ready opportunity to support and track gender equality in schooling. Given MARS's commitment to building the education infrastructure, V4C is well positioned to look for opportunities to ensure gender equality in boys' and girls school attendance. Girls are dropping out at higher rates than boys even in primary school. This imparts a long-term disadvantage to girls and women for the reasons elaborated on throughout this document.

VIII. Recommendations | Priority Actions

This section outlines recommendations for the V4C program in Côte d’Ivoire. Each recommendation is designed to better ensure that V4C is well positioned to improve cocoa farmers’ productivity and livelihoods through strategies that promote gender equality between men and women. Adopting these recommendations does not require wholesale changes to V4C. The recommendations modify or build upon what the program already does.

For the V4C to realize its productivity and community development goals, the program will have to modify *how* it reaches women: from a passive, cursory engagement through one-off income-generating activities to a more systematic, purposeful approach that compensates for existing disadvantages, reduces women’s barriers to program participation, and leverages resources to equalize relations between men and women. As a company, MARS is committed to these same ideals in its corporate culture. These recommendations are drafted in alignment with realizing those same ideals in Côte d’Ivoire.

Recommendations are divided into four categories:

1. Capacity building
2. Intervention:
 - a. Productivity pillar
 - b. Community development pillar
3. Monitoring and evaluation
4. Advocacy and public messaging

1. Capacity Building to build an enabling environment

Outcome: Stronger skills, greater support and buy-in for gender-related activities

Conduct a comprehensive training on gender for V4C Team and ANADER staff to raise awareness about gender and its applications for V4C programming. Implementing partners are not necessarily fully aware of how gender is relevant for V4C to achieve its program goals. The assessment team recommends that MARS support an independent, third-party training workshop to build V4C Team/ANADER staff’s capacity to mainstream gender throughout V4C. Since staff has their own gender biases—and reinforced gender stereotypes in the company of the assessment team and community member (e.g., systematically distinguishing between “women” and “farmers,” though so many women are working on cocoa farms—the training should include time for a personal reflection about their own gendered socialization and biases. ANADER is a strong partner, and we are happy to work with you to identify a strong third-party organization that could provide additional support.

Ensure V4C Team/ANADER staff is informed about MARS expectations for human resource policies and codes of conduct and trained to meet them. The assessment team observed V4C Team staff comport themselves in ways that would violate reasonable human resources policies; these actions occurred while representing V4C. Staff should be held accountable to comply with high standards that reinforce compliance with national laws and corporate policies pertaining to non-harassment, unwanted touching, among others.⁸ Seriousness about this work needs to be conveyed and supported throughout the organization. It is important that partners represent MARS and its commitments well in their engagement with local beneficiaries.

Provide MARS' cocoa sustainability managers (and other personnel) with gender and agriculture training. Staff within MARS has expressed interest in having an opportunity to complete a gender training that has applications to agriculture, health, and education. In addition to an in-person seminar that could be scheduled during an annual event, MARS should recommend that cocoa sustainability managers complete this training course in advance of replicating V4C in other communities. MARS staff could also access eLearning on the links between gender, agriculture, health and education that the World Bank and USAID make publicly available.

2a. Intervention: productivity pillar

Outcome: Greater involvement of women, greater skills contribute to increased productivity

Place the CDC on land plot of a 'representative' member of the community. As V4C replicates its implementation model in other communities, it should actively seek out more representative members of the community who might have land near highly trafficked areas. Studies have found that "compatibility" is a key factor in successful adoption of new agricultural practices. V4C could attempt to place more CDCs on plot of land owned by less senior community members, for example. One study in India found that the success of agricultural programs is linked to the inclusion of such participatory strategies (Raj, 2010):

"Generally, public extension, private consultancies, and agricultural business firms suggesting new crops and varieties, plant protection chemicals, which are not regularly practiced by the clientele, makes [farmers perceive them as] less compatible. But, NGOs concentrating on few technologies, with more emphasis on local wisdom may be the reason for perceiving more compatibility with new technologies. Participatory approaches adopted by NGOs make the clientele to feel like the technologies are more compatible with community practices and wellbeing."

⁸ The assessment team is willing to provide MARS leadership with details upon request.

A significant body of behavior change research has found that the successful adoption of new behavioral practices is linked to recruiting people who most resemble the broader population in the adoption and dissemination of new practices. This participatory approach enables people to identify themselves with the behavior change, feeling capable and equipped to achieve the same result (WHO/ILEP, 2007; Krenn & Limaye, 2009; FAO, 2012).

Recruit and hire female CDC technicians, establishing co-technicians to learn, work and apply new technologies to the land. Where feasible, V4C should proactively recruit females to assume CDC technicians. As referenced earlier, the criteria for selection will unlikely allow V4C to attract several qualified candidates. Nevertheless there are solutions that could help ensure that women are seen as part of having generating the increased yield.

For example, V4C could identify several women leaders within the communities where CDCs are located; they do exist. These women could form the basis of an “apprenticeship” program of co-CDC technicians that work the land in collaboration with a male CDC technician. The goal of this recommendation is twofold: (1) to link productivity changes to women’s involvement, and (2) to systematically infuse the productivity pillar with a strategy that disseminates new agricultural practices across female cocoa laborers in the community. V4C already employs one lead CDC technician Gnobojo. Women who apprentice under CDC operators could serve as an initial pool of candidates for CVC operator positions.

Track the use of CDCs and the people who come there to learn. This will provide key information for use in stimulating greater use of the CDC as a community resource. The program can be measured for having achieved its proper outreach to women, ensuring everyone’s use of the training and learning opportunities.

Separate out the goods (fertilizer, tools, etc.) and services (maintenance, grafting, etc.) components of the job when recruiting CVCs. Spread the wealth. As V4C replicates the CVC model, the program can diffuse power and better engage women by not concentrating goods *and* services into one CVC position. The accounting aspects of the CVC job likely require higher levels of schooling, but it may be that sharing information or providing technical assistance in the community is something that less educated women and men could do, thereby expanding the number of people who benefit from the CVC opportunity.

Consider a cooperative model for CVCs in addition to the current model, which focuses on recruiting individual owners. In addition to the current approach, MARS should consider a cooperative model for the CVCs. This would reflect the experience of an income generation project model (as is currently being attempted via women’s associations).

Draw in more humble farmers, people more on the edges of cocoa farming rather than community leaders or the rich and powerful, as the messengers of practices to be changed. Research in diverse settings has shown that “someone like me” is always the best person to learn from. The purpose of the CDC and CVC-related activities is to spread the word about new practices and technologies. The more diverse the community members who deliver these messages, the broader the reach of the information and the greater the likelihood that new practices will be taken up.

Integrate positive gender roles and couples’ conversation into community radio programming (health, education, productivity, social cohesion). V4C already uses radio programming to disseminate messages about ways to increase cocoa yields, while at the same time weaving messages that promote mutual respect and collaboration between a diverse set of characters who interact with each other in post-crisis context. V4C could seize this opportunity to weave messages about gender equality and women’s empowerment into its existing radio spots. Additionally, the V4C could draft additional radio spots that directly address women’s roles on cocoa farmers. Radio messages could explore positive, equitable examples about how men and women jointly work their cocoa plantations, harvest food crops, support their children’s education, and make decisions about money. The links between gender, health and education could also be explored. Examples include: dialogue about sending both sons and daughters to school, as well as a husband’s encouraging of his wife to visit the health clinic for antenatal care before joining him on the cocoa farm; dialogue that involves a husband taking their daughter to secondary school while the wife picks up payment for the cocoa yield from the cooperative; etc.

2b. Intervention: community development pillar

Outcome: Support for women’s contributions to their households, and support for greater mutuality improves household wellbeing and contributes to productivity

Create opportunities for women to gain access to micro-savings and bulk-purchasing schemes for investing in their cacao. In general, women lack access to micro-savings and microcredit. Without land to serve as collateral, women are often unable to access credit that would enable them to buy the necessary land improvement or inputs—seeds, tools and fertilizer—to improve their food and cash crop yields. The assessment team noted that a local cooperative, ECAM, has established partnerships with local banks to set up micro-savings programs.

Additionally, since V4C is already exploring the use of mobile technologies to disseminate messages in program areas, V4C could also explore the use of mobile technology to facilitate savings and money transfers. For example, M-Pesa is a mobile-phone based money transfer and micro-financing service in Tanzania and Kenya that has allows users with a national ID card or passport to deposit, withdraw, and transfer money easily with a mobile device (M-Pesa, 2013). In combination with efforts to

promote savings, V4C could establish women's-only bulk purchasing schemes that make available to women the economies-of-scale benefits that men can access through their cooperative memberships.

Note: While the women's income generation project in Pti Bouaké is a laudable experiment, it may represent too much risk for the women's association, which includes many illiterate women who have received limited training in raising chicken and in developing a business. In addition, they may face challenges when they decide to slaughter or transport the chickens, as they are currently without crates or transportation, to mention two important resources.

Recruit and rely on female translators, where possible and when working on women-focused activities. Wherever possible, the use of female translators to interpret and relay information to other women should be prioritized. The assessment team observed varying degrees of respect for women's perspectives and concerns when men translated on behalf of women. Also, women's willingness to openly share their perspectives is often curbed by men's presence.

Earmark funds for women's centered activities that do not rely on 'community prioritization,' and make funding decisions based on local development plans. At the moment, activities for women are subsumed within male-led community structures. Through ANADER's community diagnostic and participatory methodology, women's issues are recorded. In many instances, their requests and priorities make their way into local community development plans. However, when these plans are united at the terroir level through the CDLP group, their voices are often masked by other priorities. Since V4C makes funding decisions at this macro-level, it is possible that the program is neglecting their perspectives. The assessment team recommends that V4C earmark funds for women's centered activities and makes funding decisions *after a pre-post comparative assessment of women's requests within plans at the community and terroir levels.*

Support the creation of cocoa associations for women laborers. V4C can actively redefine what it means to be a cocoa farmer, from the owner of land to the laborer who cultivates the crop. Even though V4C should not shy away from ensuring that communities respect land tenure laws and support women's ownership where appropriate, the program can make the creation and support of women farmer associations an integral part of the program. These groups can serve as the mechanism through which V4C disseminates messages about new agricultural practices, relevant business/accounting skills, and information about health and extension services that V4C make available to them, with their input.

Make and fund links to government programs/structures that work with women. ANADER staff and representatives at the Ministry of Labor identified specific opportunities for V4C to link its community-centered approach to existing government

programs that promote health, family planning, literacy, and skills-building for women and (pregnant) girls. V4C should facilitate these linkages, which are a low-cost-great-gain investment. In the villages near Soubré, for example, the Ministry of Women, Family and Children is conducting literacy trainings, and the Ministry of Health has community-health extension services (see next recommendation for a specific example). In some cases, V4C could earmark funds for transportation services or advocate for services to reach V4C communities.

Family planning – strengthen links with the health system to disseminate information about contraception and facilitate access to FP services. Providing women with the information and services to decide the timing and spacing of their children is a fundamental part of women’s empowerment. This access is not only good for women’s health and good for MARS sustainability goals, it is an internationally recognized human right. V4C is well positioned to collaborate with *Agents de Santé Communautaire* to bring FP information and supplies to communities where CDCs and CVCs operate. This work can be done in conjunction with the dissemination of positive messages about the benefits of family planning.

As part of MARS’s pursuit of expanded and strengthened education infrastructure, efforts should be undertaken to increase girls’ attendance and to lower girls’ school dropout rate. This effort might start with the simple effort of tracking the data on school attendance by sex that the teachers post at the front of each classroom. Some focus group discussions with girls, boys and their parents might also clarify the specific reasons that girls do not stay in school and offer ideas for solutions. In the longer term, it is hoped that the more educated girls might be recruited to support community activities and in the very long term, that they might be candidates for work as CVC operators.

3. Monitoring and evaluation

Outcome: Strengthen program management, ensure synergies between community development, productivity and education activities, and track integration of gender into V4C.

Ensure that baseline surveys and routine data collection include sex and age disaggregated data on the farmers’ use of new agriculture practices. As part of its productivity pillar, V4C could include more gender-based indicators about the number of women who participate in trainings. Moreover, data collection could gather information about participants’ satisfaction with their access to services. Some same indicators include:

- Percentage/number of women and men who have adopted environmentally sound technologies by year x

- Percentage/number of women and men who are satisfied with access to and quality of extension services

The community development pillar could monitor how sustainable its women-centered programs are. For example:

- # Implemented, and percentage of, women-run income-generating activities still active after 2 years
- Percentage of males and females within the community who aware of project objectives, activities, and methodologies related to community development plans

***Monitoring** is defined as “the continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to agreed schedules and of the use of inputs, infrastructure, and services by project beneficiaries.”*

***Evaluation** is defined as periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact (expected and unexpected) of the project in relation to stated objectives.*

Engage community in monitoring and evaluation through the use of mobile technologies and Sourcemap. V4C could engage men and women in sharing when they apply new farming practices as well as their increased yields. Women and men could also relay their individual success stories from the community development initiatives. V4C is already exploring the use of mobile technology to disseminate messages; thus this effort could use the same medium to better monitor program implementation, results, and impact.

4. Advocacy and public messaging

Outcome: Share V4C experiences of working toward gender equality and motivate partners to engage with these issues in their activities

Highlight public-private partnerships, both current and as V4C establishes them; disseminate V4C experience more systematically. V4C is a formative initiative – MARS and its partners are leading the industry in how they approach community-driven solutions to pressing agriculture and livelihoods issues. However, if people are not made aware of the work that V4C is doing, then MARS and its partners may find itself being more reactive to negative press. As the organization moves forward with the development of its online tracking system, Sourcemap, V4C should elevate the prominence of its programming for women, including income-generating activities, numbers of women’s associations formed and supported, health services coverage for

family planning and maternal health, micro-savings programming, and literacy trainings. If V4C drafts radio messages that integrate messages about gender equality and women's empowerment, these program could be made available, as well as their dissemination and estimated reach reported.

Frame V4C work in a way that acknowledges the broader policy and social context for gender equality (global and CDI). As the MARS discusses its work at national and global forums, the assessment team recommends that MARS articulate its efforts to increase cocoa yields as an integral piece to improving livelihoods for families – men and women. The efforts to empower the current and next generation of women farmers can be couched within a frame that acknowledges their rights to education, health, and self-determination. This approach includes being clear about the challenges and opportunities to making sure that women benefit from their labor on cocoa farms.

Disseminate gender-related lessons learned and success stories of V4C's work at conferences. Through V4C, MARS is well positioned to share lessons-learned about its work, particularly around its efforts to work with and for women. The company should make concerted efforts to draft and disseminate these lessons-learned. At baseline, V4C could share testimonials from women's involvement in income-generating activities, participation on community development committees, and eventually, their having applied new agricultural practices and access essential health services.

This dissemination is a form of advocacy that could exert some pressure on industry partners to adopt similar methodologies.

Apply pressure on purchasers/exporters to work with cooperatives on dissemination of V4C messages aimed at women and girls. Even though men largely hold cooperative memberships, V4C should not shy away from applying downward pressure on the supply chain to recognize women as integral to the long-term sustainability of the industry. For example, in much the same way that purchasers, exporters, and cocoa certifications have tackled child labor, MARS/V4C could facilitate a dialogue about how these stakeholders might better partner with V4C to disseminate messages about women's empowerment and gender equality.

Through MARS relationships with the trade that is purchasing from cooperatives, influence the purchasing trade to take a gender-sensitive approach. Cargill and 10-12 other trading organizations (ADM, Barry Callebaut, and others as well). 600,000 farmers don't have the ability to move their cocoa into the market (i.e., Abidjan or San Pedro) and depend on the international trade and local *traitants* (who are primarily Lebanese and deliver directly to the exporters). These groups are interested in increasing yields because it is efficient for them to pick up from one location. They also are training farmers and could be influenced by MARS and its partners to address gender inequalities in their work.

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Annex I. MARS public affirmation of commitment to gender equity

Annex II. Field visit agenda

Annex III. Complete list of interviews (forthcoming)

Annex I.

Mars Chocolate and Oxfam America Agree to Intentional Approach to Empower Women to Enhance Well-being of Cocoa Communities

Mars Chocolate strongly believes that [empowering women](#) is critical to making sure that cocoa is sustainable. In our Vision for Change program in Cote d'Ivoire, we've worked with women who are [leaders](#) in their communities to help [develop plans](#) that will improve their lives and the lives of their families and neighbors.

So we are pleased to announce an agreement we've reached with Oxfam America for a plan of action to empower women in cocoa communities. Both Oxfam and Mars Chocolate agree that an intentional approach across the sector is needed to improve the lives of women living in villages and towns where cocoa farming is dominant. We will be implementing a set of actions in the short, medium, and long-term that will help the industry evaluate and strengthen their current programs to ensure that women are able to both fully contribute to and benefit from development programs in cocoa.

This plan of action builds on the leadership Mars Chocolate has already demonstrated in empowering women. Mars Chocolate recognizes that the most effective way to address socio-economic challenges in cocoa communities around the world is to work comprehensively and holistically. The Sustainable Cocoa Initiative we launched in 2009 operates under the principle of putting farmers first. By helping farmers become more productive through better research, training, and a strong certification protocol, we believe we are also aiding them and their families improve their quality of life.

Within the Vision for Change program, Mars Chocolate has been listening to the concerns of women and working with women leaders in their communities to help develop community engagement plans. In addition to strengthening the voice and role of women in community leadership, Mars Chocolate is also working in a targeted way on the economic empowerment of women, which we believe will benefit women in cocoa communities specifically and farmers as a whole.

The company understands that women invest significantly greater proportions of their disposable income in family and community well-being. We've learned that the economic empowerment of women is not only a tool for gender equity in its own right, but that it also has a powerful multiplier effect for the broader well-being of children, families and communities. Recently, Mars Chocolate funded six economic development projects within the Vision for Change program to train women in developing local enterprises in areas such as animal rearing and crop production, which benefits both the nutritional needs of families as well as the income of women who sell surplus production in local markets.

To achieve the goals of strengthening programs within the sector to empower women in cocoa communities, we've committed to the following actions:

- Completing a comprehensive assessment of the condition of women cocoa farmers in our Vision for Change (V4C) program – which provides cocoa farmers with training in updated agricultural methods and is a key element in the company’s Sustainable Cocoa Initiative - in Côte d’Ivoire by the end of this year.
- Signing the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles before May 1st.
- Developing and publishing a plan of action based on the assessment to ensure the Vision for Change program adequately addresses gender equity by April 1st of next year.
- Developing the foundation for a sector-wide assessment of gender equity by examining existing third party data on gender in the global cocoa sector and by using this review to identify knowledge gaps in 2014.
- Establishing a set of draft gender equity indicators that align with Vision for Change and can also be used across the global cocoa sector in conjunction with the V4C assessment.
- Using this review to advocate for and support a sector level review of gender equity in cocoa production through the sector-wide organizations by January 1, 2015.
- Support a sector level plan of action to address gender equity concerns by the same date.
- Reporting regularly on the condition of women in cocoa production in our top four cocoa origin countries by 2018 as a way of showing our commitment to transparency.
- Establish a plan of action to address in these origin countries as well by 2018.

Mars Chocolate has long been guided by the principle of Mutuality as one of our five Principles - this means we believe that everyone along the supply chain must benefit from the work we do. Our Sustainable Cocoa Initiative has also been guided by another principle - putting cocoa farmers first. We feel that this plan of action accords with these longstanding principles and we look forward to helping to improve the lives of women around the globe.

Annex II. Field Visit Agenda

*Names have been removed for privacy reasons

DRAFT OF FIELD PROGRAM

Margaret Greene and Omar Robles – 18 to 24 May

Date	Time	Activity	Participants	Observations
Samedi 18/05/13	Tbc	Arrival Meg& Omar		-Will arrive separately - arrange a driver and car
	Tbc	Brief intro at hotel		arrange a driver and car.
Dimanche 19/05/13	9h 00 am	Meeting at Pullman Hotel. V4C overview, Review logistics		- arrange Sandwich - arrange 2drivers & 2 cars for trip to Soubre
	12h00	Trip to Soubre		
	17h00	Arrival at Soubré		arrange booking at Campement
Lundi 20/05/13	8h-9h am	Meeting with V4C TEAM team Review of field program		At V4C TEAM office
	8h am	Departure for Pti Bouake		Have worked there since 2011
	10–12 h am	Visit to Pti Bouake interview with women		- Visit chicken raising project with women's association
	12h pm	Field lunch		arrange the field lunch
	13h - 14 h pm	Departure to Kpada		Village where V4C has not yet worked
	2h30 pm	Meeting with ANADER		
	2h–4h pm	Meetings in Kpada		Community where V4C has not yet worked
	5h00 pm	Courtesy visit to Prefet		arrange visit
	19h	Dinner		Open
Mardi 21/05/13	8h – 10h am	-Plots visit Pti Bandokou		- arrange CDC & CVC visit, V4C women's group AGR -BENE arrange field visit
	10-12h pm	Meeting with GBLETIA CDLT		
	1-2pm	Field lunch		arrange field visit
	1h- 3h pm	Interview with farmers		

	4h– 5 h pm	Interview with CVC Operator		Greet prefet
	5h pm	Return to Soubre		
	7h pm	Dinner		Open
Mercredi 22/05/13	8h am	Departure to Kragui		
	8h30-10ham	-Meeting with women AGR group of Kragui		arrange the field visit
	10h-11h	Meeting with 3 cooperatives		
	11h – 12h30 pm	Visit of woman cocoa farm		
	12h30-13h	Field lunch		
	1h- 3h	Interview with community committee		
	3h – 4h am	Visits to CDC plots & Community activities		Refurbished school (by project)
	4h pm	Visit to Meagui, ECAM		Visit to Mme Fanny
	7h30 pm	Dinner		arrange the dinner
Jeudi 23/05/13	8h am	Wrap up at V4C TEAM office		
	9h	Meeting with ANADER		Request training materials
	12h pm	Lunch		arrange the lunch
	3h pm	Meeting with V4C TEAM & wrap up		
	7h pm	Dinner		arrange dinner
Vendredi 24/05/13	7h am	Departure to Abidjan		arrange a car with a driver
	13h pm	Meeting at ANADER with gender dept		
	15h pm	Meeting with government colleagues		
	Late pm	Meeting		
Samedi 25/05/13	am	Debrief		

