



GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN AGRIBUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

Insights from 2SCALE
Thematic Paper

2SCALE Consortium



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A woman with dark skin and short hair, wearing a blue and white patterned headwrap and a blue and white patterned dress, is smiling and holding a large pile of white rice in her hands. She is standing in front of several large, light-colored sacks, likely containing rice. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

The Netherlands-funded 2SCALE program is an incubator for inclusive agribusiness that aims to improve rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security across nine sub-Saharan countries. 2SCALE offers a range of support services to private partners - companies and farmer groups - enabling them to produce, transform, and supply quality food products to local, national, and regional end-user markets, including base-of-the-pyramid (low-income) consumers.

"Gender Mainstreaming in Agribusiness Partnerships: Insights from 2SCALE" shares 2SCALE's approach to gender, highlights case studies, and outlines lessons learned. It is the first in a series of 2SCALE thematic papers.

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ACRONYMS

2SCALE	Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness Through Learning in Entrepreneurship	ICRA	International Centre for development-oriented Research in Agriculture
ABC	Agribusiness Cluster	IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
BoPInc	Base of the Pyramid Innovation Center	KIT	Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands
BSS	Business Support Service	LGAC	Local Government Area Council
CASE	Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation	MCC	Milk Collection Centers
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	PPP	Public-Private Partnership
FBO	Farmer-Based Organization	PSBI	Plateau State Board of Internal Revenue
FIRS	Federal Inland Revenue Services	SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
		TIN	Tax Identification Number
		VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
		WFP	World Food Programme

1 INTRODUCTION

2SCALE training for women in vegetable production, in partnership with East-West Seed - Vegetable Partnership, Mali.



Inclusive agribusinesses will play a critical role in the coming decades, not only to feed 9 billion people by 2050, but also to create job opportunities and improve livelihoods for those least integrated into economic channels.

An **inclusive agribusiness** is a business initiative in the agri-food sector that explicitly incorporates low-income and disempowered individuals and groups into the enterprise's core operations in a way that creates value for both. The latter can play different roles in agricultural value chains, such as: producers of agricultural commodities (smallholder farmers); processors and suppliers of agro-inputs or services (micro and small rural enterprises); workers (e.g., in an agro-processing company); food-product distributors; and food consumers. They can be women, men, young people, or senior people in rural or urban areas. Inclusive agribusiness is not “business as usual” and requires specific approaches to promote championship and lay solid foundations for inclusive, commercially viable and financially sustainable business models.

The five-year program entitled “Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship” (2SCALE) is one of the largest incubators of inclusive agribusiness in sub-Saharan Africa.¹ It aims to improve food and nutrition security through private-public partnerships (PPPs) fostering inclusive business. 2SCALE was awarded in June 2012 by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) to a consortium led by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) and comprising the International Centre for development-oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA) and the Base of the Pyramid Innovation Center (BoPInc).

The program builds on the “Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises” (CASE) approach, which strengthens the capacity at the grassroots of smallholder farmers and nearby rural enterprises to develop, with the assistance of business support service providers, competitiveness in producing a certain commodity for a target market and to overcome the risks and other barriers related to further market integration. These local networks of interconnected stakeholders (farmers and their organizations, agro-input dealers, financial institutions, traders, processors, business service providers, etc.) constitute **agribusiness clusters (ABCs)**. 2SCALE nurtures collective learning and action to improve coordination among agribusiness cluster stakeholders and to accelerate their informed and sustained integration in target value chains and markets.

As an incubator of inclusive agribusinesses, 2SCALE strongly supports the integration and empowerment of women in ABCs and value chains, for several reasons.

First, it makes **good business sense**:

1. Women represent an important part of the labor force in agricultural value chains, although their roles, which vary from one value chain to another, are often invisible or not recognized.
2. Buyers of food products are mainly women, who thus play an important role in driving food markets.
3. Women's skills (as farmers or agri-entrepreneurs) are largely untapped, while they have incredible potential to strengthen value chains.

¹ Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Uganda. During a limited period of time, 2SCALE also supported inclusive agribusinesses in Burkina Faso, Niger, South Sudan, and Togo.

Second, it makes sense from a **food and nutrition perspective**. Despite the fact that women produce much of the food in the developing world, they also remain more malnourished than most men (FAO, 2011). As farmers (primarily of vegetable gardens and small livestock), and as buyers of food products for household needs, women influence nutrition choices for the whole family.

Actively integrating women in value chains also makes good sense from a **development perspective**, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Access to equal opportunities and benefits for all individuals is a human right that 2SCALE promotes in the agribusiness models it supports.

Therefore, the 2SCALE program is undertaking extra measures to ensure women are major beneficiaries of its support to private enterprises with an inclusive business agenda. However, through its structure and field interventions, the program faces specific challenges to make this proactive gender mainstreaming process a reality; these include the following:

- How do we get buy-in from field partners – multinational companies, African entrepreneurs, business service providers, cooperatives, and farmer organizations? How can we ensure they will implement gender-specific activities and convince them that this will strengthen and improve the performance of the PPP and value chain of which they are a part?
- How do we ensure buy-in from the entire 2SCALE team of technical specialists? In other words, how do we make sure that every staff member feels responsible for and committed to gender mainstreaming?
- How can we organize and build capacities of the program’s team to stimulate gender mainstreaming?

- Which facilitation tools should be used during the different steps of cluster formation and value chain strengthening? And how can these tools be demystified to make them as user friendly as possible?
- How should gender mainstreaming expand from activities starting in just a few local communities to a much larger number of communities in a program that is active in 50 PPPs, reaches over half a million smallholder farmers, and involves 2,500 small and medium enterprises (SMEs)?
- How should the youth dimension be addressed? Can gender-mainstreaming tools and approaches be used to some extent to facilitate the integration of young people in value chains? With what similarities and what differences?
- How should achievements and lessons learned (including challenges and shortcomings) be reported so that they can inspire 2SCALE and other practitioners?

These and other questions have been (progressively) addressed by the 2SCALE program and represent the backbone of this document. After this introduction of the 2SCALE program and gender-related questions, key concepts of gender mainstreaming in agricultural value chains are reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the approach and methodology chosen by 2SCALE to mainstream gender in its interventions – and to better include youth. In Chapter 4, examples of gender mainstreaming at agribusiness cluster and value chain level are highlighted; these cases are selected from the portfolio of PPPs facilitated by the 2SCALE program. Building on previous sections, Chapter 5 includes some recommendations with an emphasis on next steps and in particular on how to further “scale up” women and youth inclusion in agricultural value chains.



Members of a soybean processor association cut and fry soy cheese to make soy kebabs, a protein-rich food sold at schools and in local markets. 2SCALE helped the women form the association and improve processing and marketing practices – Soybean Partnership, Ghana.



2

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS: KEY CONCEPTS



2.1 The Changing Face of Farmers

The face of the farmer has been changing over the past 30 years to reflect rural demographics as well as evolving gender and generational dynamics. Global population is expected to increase to 9 billion by 2050, with youth aged 15-24 accounting for about 14% of this total. Most will be born in developing countries in Africa and Asia, where more than half of the population still live in rural areas (FAO, CTA, IFAD, 2014).

Women in developing countries produce 80% of household food (World Bank, 2014) and play a key role in household food security (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011). Women and youth can thus be considered “the farmers of tomorrow,” as men increasingly seek paid work away from the farm.

Within the context of 2SCALE, women and youth are important economic actors at the grassroots level and in value chains. They play a critical role in ABCs, because they are heavily involved in growing food and cash crops and caring for livestock or processing, thus contributing to family business and to the sector. However, women and youth remain largely invisible, including through major indicators: e.g., as lead producers of the target crop, women account for only 36% of the 516,000 smallholder farmers reached, and as owner/managers of SMEs, they represent 28% of the 1,350 SMEs supported. But beyond these numbers, 2SCALE reaches many more women: it also supports women who are hardly acknowledged or rewarded for their work, such as unpaid family labor or women farmers registered under the name of their husband.

2.2 Gender-Specific Constraints Faced by Women

Gender roles are the social and behavioral norms considered socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in a specific culture. They differ widely between cultures and over time (WHO, 2009).

Age and gender are key factors defining a person's opportunities in life. Women often face challenges and constraints that prevent them from fulfilling their roles in ABCs and in value chains. As farmers, they tend to grow on less acreage than men and have less access to resources such as land, which usually belongs to their male relatives; women also have less access to improved seeds and other inputs, water, equipment, and labor, which they have to hire. Women face barriers to joining farmer groups or cooperatives, often because they lack information about the group, their husbands do not want them to join, or member fees are too high. As a result, they are excluded from services offered by farmer organizations and, at the same time, from program-supported capacity-building activities. This also applies to financial products (input credit and trade credit) and innovations (Terrillon, 2014).

Women are often excluded from market opportunities and from benefits of commercial crop production, limiting their ability to contribute to family income. They have less education, less exposure to networks and information, and lower self-confidence. Finally, they are predominantly

responsible for heavy work in a range of activities, such as domestic work, including household chores and childcare, and productive activities. As a result of this dual responsibility, they work much longer hours than men, limiting their time, mobility, and access to opportunities offered by programs to develop their skills.

2.3 Youth in Agricultural Value Chains

Although there is no universally accepted definition of youth, “it generally refers to the transitional period from childhood to adulthood where new roles and responsibilities are taken up” (Fussell, 2006; Vargas-Lundius and Suttie, 2014). The word “youth” has been described in many different ways, sometimes as a particular age group, as a stage of life, or as an attitude. As 2SCALE is active in member states of the African Union, it adopts the African Union’s African Youth Charter definition: “every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years” (FAO, 2002).

To some extent, youth face similar challenges as women, but more opportunities are available to young men. First, young people tend to have limited economic independence. Though agriculture is often assumed to be a joint family venture, control over productive processes and assets is almost impossible for young household members. Subordination to elders in large extended family households is recurrent with young members relying on their parents to fulfill basic food, shelter, and clothing needs. Most youth are landless and have no immediate access or control over important productive resources – prompting their search for alternative livelihoods (Bezu and Holden, 2014; Vargas-Lundius and Suttie, 2014). Landlessness has an impact on access to finance, as land is often used as collateral, thus preventing young people from investing in an economic activity; it also has an impact on investments in the land, for instance, to improve its soil fertility.

Land owners remain primary decision-makers. Young people working the land are rarely in a position to make decisions over resources, earnings, and expenditures. The dependency is more acute for young women and girls. Young men can better grow out of this dependency through education (formal, vocational, or hands-on), inheritance of land, and by becoming heads of families, while women are more constrained by social norms and gender relations (Bennell, 2007; 2010). For example, early marriage and pregnancies affect young women’s mobility and ability to defy established norms in order to gain access to knowledge and training or engage in commercial activities (Pyburn et al., 2015).

As a result, young people leave rural areas looking for more profit-making opportunities in towns or abroad. This is particularly true for men who are more mobile. As they grow up, girls who stay in rural households gradually face the gender-specific challenges of adult women, moving lifelong throughout a continuum of barriers, first as young people, then as women. Continuation of agricultural production and rural entrepreneurship by the “next generation” is therefore at stake and poses a great risk for the agriculture sector (Pyburn et al., 2015).

2.4 Gender- and Youth-Specific Constraints Hinder the Performance of ABCs and Value Chains

The combination of constraints faced by young people and women in agricultural value chains prevents them from adopting innovations and new technologies as readily as men, which leads to lower productivity. The fact that women



Young farmers gain skills in vegetable production and farm management at a learning center - Vegetable Partnership, Nigeria.

and youth cannot reap the benefit of their work because of intra-household decision-making patterns also influences their motivation to actively engage in value chain activities. As a result, they do not reach their potential as farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers. Their contributions to agricultural production, economic growth, and the well-being of their families, communities, and countries is thus limited (FAO, 2011).

Within the 2SCALE context, constraints faced by women and youth linked to gender roles, social norms, and stereotypes hinder the performance of partnering inclusive agribusinesses and compromise the achievement of 2SCALE goals, namely, improved livelihoods and food security.

2.5 Gender Mainstreaming as a Way to Harness the Potential of Women and Youth

***Gender equality** is the concept that both men and women are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of men and women are considered, valued, and favored equally. It does not mean that men and women have to become the same. It signifies equality of rights, equal chances and opportunities to fulfill their potential, equal value for their work and contributions, and equal or balanced benefits accruing from development initiatives.*

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, “gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies, or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”

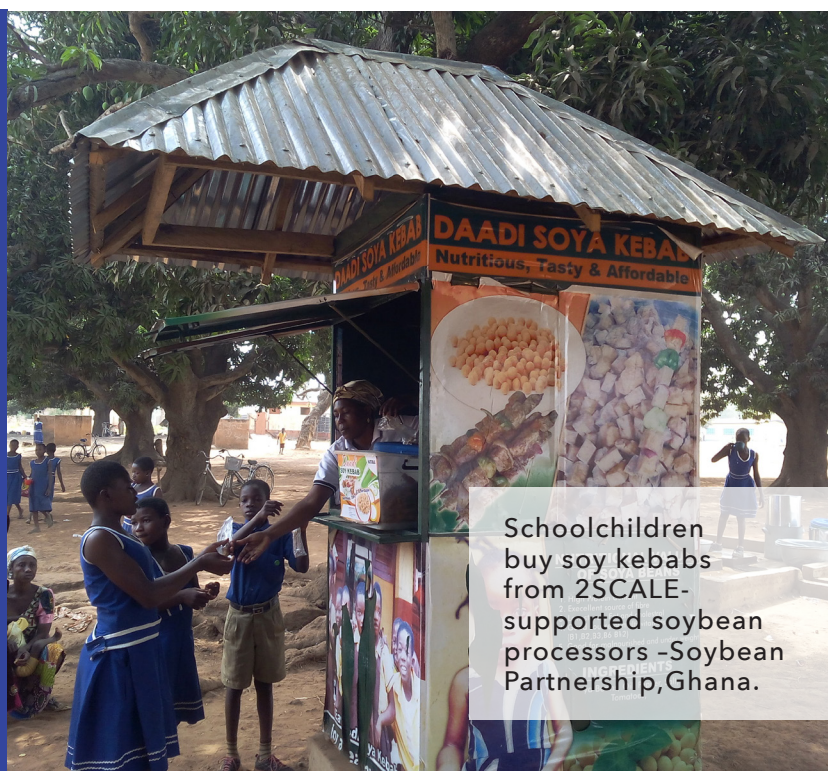
Evidence shows that enabling women to have equal access to inputs, services, and land improves yields. Female farmers often pay greater attention to crop quality than men. It is estimated that women’s increased access to productive resources would raise agricultural production by up to 4% and could reduce the number of hungry people by 100-150 million worldwide (FAO, 2011).

Young people also represent an opportunity for value chains. If their lack of access to land, knowledge, and skills and to the benefits gained through their work is addressed, they represent an ideal catalyst for change, given their

propensity and willingness to adopt new ideas, concepts, and technology (HIVOS, 2014).

In order to harness the potential of women and youth as farmers, processors, traders, and business partners, particular measures need to be implemented in value chain development interventions. 2SCALE has opted for a gender-sensitive approach and explicitly aims to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment by setting a target that at least 40% of the participants in agribusiness clusters should be women. 2SCALE understands empowerment as “a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire the ability to do so” (Kabeer, 1999).

To foster women’s economic empowerment and ensure women and young people benefit from inclusive agribusinesses that 2SCALE supports, a series of measures were developed to mainstream gender both in 2SCALE’s operations and field activities. These measures are described in Chapter 3.



Schoolchildren buy soy kebabs from 2SCALE-supported soybean processors -Soybean Partnership, Ghana.

Women’s economic empowerment can be achieved through meeting the following five key conditions or “non-negotiables” (Jones, 2012):

- *Economic advancement, increased income, and return on labor.*
- *Access to life chances and opportunities (e.g., skills development, education, information, job openings).*
- *Access to assets, support functions, and services to advance economically (e.g., land, inputs, financial services, extension, and business development services).*
- *Agency (ability to make and influence decisions within different spheres including household finances, communities, farmer groups, etc.).*
- *Manageable workload. This last dimension is closely intertwined with time and mobility and linked to productive, reproductive, and community roles.*



3

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN 2SCALE: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY



3.1 Gender-Related Activities in 2SCALE from the Outset of the Program

Background - Gender Mainstreaming Mechanisms Embedded in the Program

2SCALE managers deliberately decided not to recruit a “gender specialist” to avoid limiting gender mainstreaming to that person’s tasks. On the contrary, from the start 2SCALE underscored that gender mainstreaming was the responsibility of each and every team member. To make this a reality, various measures were taken over time.

In 2012, 2SCALE implemented its first gender-related actions. A consultant carried out a gender organizational audit. Gender considerations were, to a limited extent, taken into account in the initial staffing and organizational setup. The performance monitoring plan was appraised and revised to integrate gender-sensitive indicators wherever possible.

In April 2013 in West Africa and in June 2013 in East Africa, consultants from ICRA and the Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands (KIT) facilitated a training workshop to strengthen gender mainstreaming skills of project staff. Both workshops resulted in gender action plans for each country and for each technical specialist.

A practical toolbox was then developed, building on the seven agribusiness cluster development steps, to provide ideas and entry points to use a gender lens and address gender issues in 2SCALE; the toolbox was shared with all staff in October 2013. However, additional support was needed to ensure that project teams would apply learning from the training and implement their gender action plans.

Capacity Building in Cascade and Fostering Commitment and Accountability of Teams

In 2014, 2SCALE contracted a gender coach who introduced practical, tailor-made, and “hands-on” support to help implementing teams achieve their gender equality goals. Coaching was aimed at partnership facilitators in West African target countries, the agribusiness regional coordinator, and cross-cutting technical specialists (e.g., access to finance specialist).

Business support service (BSS) coaches also received advisory support to help them embrace a more gender-inclusive approach in their daily interaction with cluster actors, in their yearly action plans, and during monitoring and evaluation (M&E) field visits. In East Africa, a similar round of tailor-made capacity-building activities on gender mainstreaming was provided to 2SCALE teams and partners between April and July 2016 (See Figure 1, page 9).

2SCALE Gender Capacity Building System

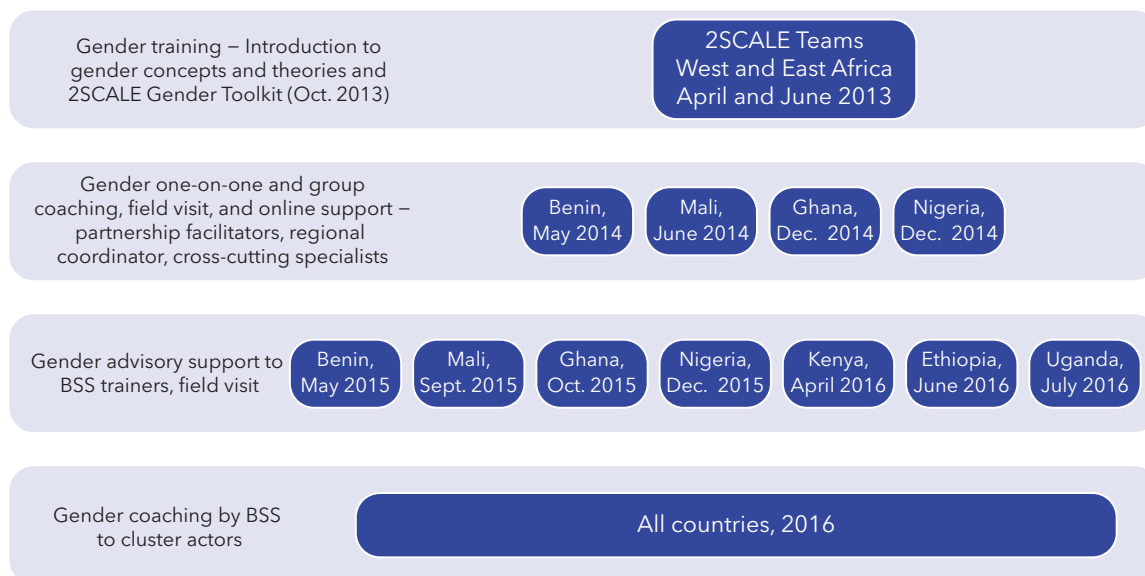


Figure 1. Capacity Building in Cascade

All 2SCALE staff members, with no exception, were given incentives to be more systematic in their use of the tools and methodologies through the establishment of gender-specific goals incorporated into their yearly performance evaluations. To reinforce skills and capacities acquired, the gender coach provided online and demand-driven support under the supervision of 2SCALE's regional coordinator. 2SCALE also contracted interns for each country to assist teams and BSSs in designing and conducting research action to better understand gender-based constraints and to address these constraints by designing and carrying out specific capacity-building activities for women.

Guided Research Action to Strengthen Teams With Gender Mainstreaming Skills

The 2SCALE gender coach used a research-action methodology to test tools (described below) with program staff and partners during field visits. Receiving practical guidance, making mistakes, and having to readjust the methodology to obtain relevant information helped teams gain confidence and “demystify” the tools. Making women's presence and contributions more visible along the value chain and discussing the key challenges they face to access resources and services helped raise awareness among 2SCALE staff, BSS coaches, and the actors themselves. It allowed them to readjust their action plans with concrete and feasible actions to improve women's participation in PPP activities and increase access to opportunities. Gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies were also introduced to and used by external consultants who carry out studies to assess needs and introduce new technologies or financial products. 2SCALE explicitly mentioned this obligation in its Scope of Work.

The gender coaching highlighted the fact that gender mainstreaming has to be undertaken by all 2SCALE staff and partners, at each level, with their roles in doing so

clarified and their capacities built: partnership facilitators, cross-cutting technical specialists, trainers and agribusiness coaches, BSSs, and external consultants. This choice differs from usual gender mainstreaming strategies at the organizational level where gender focal points are appointed to be in charge of the whole process. Building capacities and fostering commitment and accountability of human resources takes more time and effort but is a guarantee of ownership, efficacy, and sustainability.

3.2 Gender Mainstreaming in 2SCALE Field Operations

To improve gender equality, 2SCALE teams and partners adopted a gender lens in every operation. This gender mainstreaming process includes the following.

Working With and Empowering Women in Selected ABCs

A deliberate effort was made to empower women and build their capacities in female-dominated or mixed ABCs. Women are predominant in particular ABCs, either because the product is traditionally a commodity produced by women (e.g., vegetables or milk) or because the cluster is involved in certain nodes of the value chain, such as processing (e.g., soy-based milk and kebabs, parboiled rice, attiéké) and marketing. These activities usually require limited capital investment and are culturally more suitable for women. 2SCALE encouraged women's inclusion in farmer organizations and multi-stakeholder platforms. 2SCALE also sought to work with female entrepreneurs/champions within ABCs and value chains and to promote female entrepreneurship and role models.

Gender Analysis of Cluster Actors Along the Chain

Intra-Household Gender Dynamics of ABC Actors - Micro-Level

Through gender analysis, gender inequalities are systematically identified and context-relevant interventions are designed to close gender gaps. Gender analysis at the household/micro level includes understanding how roles and responsibilities are shared within the family enterprise and provides insights on drudgery, workload, and time spent on farm activities by both genders. It helps identify “who does what” (for instance, who is responsible for key activities necessary to ensure product quality). This unit of analysis helps planners, such as partnership facilitators, cross-cutting technical specialists, and BSSs, determine who should be targeted by trainings and capacity-building activities or innovations and support services. It also helps tailor services and products to the specific needs of these target groups in terms of content, location, timing, and design.

Teams were encouraged to use these diagnostic tools during key steps of ABC development such as Diagnostic and Design workshops and Review and Capitalization workshops. The research-action sessions with cluster actors led also to the design of a pictorial toolkit to reach a less literate audience and make the facilitation and data collection easier and more participatory. This toolkit was developed and tested in Uganda within the soybean cluster in Masindi, with the collaboration of a local organization specializing in designing information, education, and communication material. 2SCALE intends to use it at the cluster level.

Gender analysis of farming households implies understanding challenges faced by each actor – men,

women, and youth – to use and decide on the use of resources needed to play their roles and carry out their activities. These can be productive resources (land, inputs, equipment, means of transport) or intangible resources, such as human and financial capital or extension services provided by services supporting ABCs. Understanding power and decision-making dynamics between men, women, and youth on the use of resources and the benefits accruing from their work provides the teams with insights on gaps or specific challenges faced by those different categories to access services and resources (**micro-level tools**).

Gender Analysis of ABC Supporters - Meso-Level

The gender analysis process also includes **interacting with ABC service providers** in order to assess the level of gender “responsiveness” of their services. Service providers’ ability to understand and consider social relations of men and women and differences in their needs, interests, and aspirations is assessed. If needed, recommendations are made to the service providers to encourage them to address gender-specific barriers and take women’s specific needs and interests into consideration in the design and delivery of their services (**meso-level tool or organizational audit**).

Gender Analysis of the Value Chain Environment - Macro-Level

Finally, to understand the overall environment in which ABCs evolve and the constraints and opportunities that influence their performance, a mapping process is needed for each value chain in order to highlight female actors along the chain and factors that positively or negatively influence the achievement of gender equality. These factors can include laws or policies that regulate land rights and inheritance, droughts, infrastructure, etc. (**macro-level gender mapping**).



A woman sells Guinea fowl meat sourced from 2SCALE-supported farmers in Ghana. The Guinea fowl partnership is driven by Atibire Enterprise and the Guinea Fowl Farmer Association.

Minimum Gender Mainstreaming Good Practices



Figure 2. Gender Mainstreaming Throughout the Seven Steps of Support to ABCs and Value Chains

Gender-Sensitive Planning and Implementation

Women- and youth-specific challenges identified during the gender analysis process are addressed through gender-sensitive, and at times women-focused, interventions embedded in ABC and value chain yearly action plans. These can include designing capacity-building activities specifically for female actors, such as training in hygiene and quality assurance for female dairy farmers or organic fertilizer production for vegetable growers. It can mean designing specific financial products for women or young farmers, improving women's membership in farmer groups and cooperatives, creating women cooperatives, or designing and improving access to labor-saving

technologies such as drip irrigation, mulching, improved seeds, seed planters, etc. Chapter 4 provides concrete cases illustrating these strategies.

Gender-Sensitive Monitoring and Learning

These steps are implemented by 2SCALE teams, and their partners are accountable for results achieved toward gender equality at the ABC level (Figure 2). Partnership facilitators have yearly objectives linked to their performance on gender against which they are assessed. Teams, and in particular M&E specialists, received support through the coaching process to collect more sex-disaggregated data during field visits on key outcomes, such as women's access to opportunities (financial products and innovations). They

also received support in case study writing (e.g., template to write a gender-sensitive case study). 2SCALE reports progress systematically in quarterly M&E reports and posts field stories and best practices on its website.

Ensuring Gender-Responsive Delivery of Services and Capacity Building by Coaches of BSSs

Throughout the coaching process, it was noted that, because of gender-specific constraints, women's presence in particular ABCs remained limited (e.g., 20% of farmers on average in partnerships in Ethiopia) and their participation in capacity-building activities challenging. A study was carried out in Mali to understand the specific barriers preventing women from fully participating in ABC activities (Diakit , 2015). These include low literacy, poor access to information, and limited time and mobility due to gender roles and social norms. As a result, the 2SCALE team in Mali developed guidelines to ensure that trainers and coaches of BSSs would pay attention to the way they deliver their services.

Special measures include:

- Explicitly inviting female actors in the ABC to trainings through appropriate channels and establishing quotas, such as requiring at least 40% of participants to be women.
- Encouraging men to allow their spouses and daughters to attend trainings.
- Allowing women to bring their breastfeeding children to sessions.
- Organizing special sessions aimed exclusively at women on relevant topics linked to their activities and

needs. For example, in Mali during 2015 and 2016, 200 female processors from the B  man kan cooperative were trained on parboiled rice techniques and how to store paddy rice, thus contributing to improved quality of their products.

- Holding demonstration plots on fields owned or cultivated by women in order to encourage learning by doing. This strategy was implemented in onion ABCs in Mali and resulted in an increase in yields from 8 to 26 tons per hectare (t/ha).
- Having mixed teams of trainers (male/female), when possible.
- Looking at logistical aspects that can hinder or promote participation, such as:
 - * Scheduling sessions while taking women's responsibilities and obligations into consideration. For instance, this includes avoiding holding trainings during early morning, late afternoon, or on market days and limiting the duration of training. This is best done by consulting female actors on timing and location before organizing the training.
 - * Ensuring the training venue is located close to the homes, ensuring safe transportation and cost-sharing transport fees.
 - * Adopting gender-sensitive facilitation methods by creating an atmosphere in which women and men feel respected, safe, and encouraged to share their views and experiences. A Benin study on best gender mainstreaming practices showed that the use of discussion rounds and plenary and group sessions with female ABC actors during trainings have created opportunities to integrate their own opinion and broach problems from their perspective (Igelroth, 2016).



Women and youth participate in a 2SCALE training in pineapple production - Pineapple Partnership, Benin.

A photograph showing a person from the side, wearing a striped tank top and a patterned skirt, operating a blue manual mill. The person is holding a metal bowl and pouring its contents into the top funnel of the mill. The mill is mounted on a wooden frame and has a large black hand-crank wheel. The background consists of a red wall and green trees. A blue square with a white number '4' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

4

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES



4.1 Capacity Building and Access to Life Chances and Opportunities

Activities along the chain require a certain level of skill, which women may lack due to socialization processes shaping gender roles and stereotypes. Women face barriers such as low levels of literacy, limited mobility (which is partly due to customs and norms), and time poverty due to their inordinate share of household work. This limits their participation in training activities to gain necessary skills and hinders their participation in the public sphere and, thus, their ability to influence decisions.

Capacity-building activities on good agronomic practices are key to increase yields, quality of produce, and incomes of female farmers. Health and safety issues in crop production are also crucial; because of women's reproductive role, they are more at risk of the effects of being exposed to chemical hazards when applying pesticides. Financial literacy, budgeting, and planning are instrumental in improving women's ability to treat farming as a business and have access to financial services.

2SCALE puts in place affirmative actions and incentives to improve women's participation in trainings (see Section 3.5). Workshops are at times designed for and delivered to a limited number of female cluster actors who have been selected for their capacities to disseminate their knowledge to other female cluster actors, thus increasing outreach. The sections below provide some examples.

Improving Quality of Milk - Dairy Partnership, Nigeria

In Nigeria, FrieslandCampina and 2SCALE developed a dairy partnership to set up a fresh milk value chain with Fulani milk producers in southwest Nigeria. This partnership involves 1,800 Fulani milk producers, including 950 women, who supply an average of between 10,000 liters (wet season) and 5,000 liters (dry season) of milk per day to the FrieslandCampina factory in Lagos.

In the Fulani tradition, although cows are owned by men, women own the milk produced, because they engage in many milk-related activities, such as milking of the cows, ensuring water supply, pre-bulking milk at the camp, processing milk into cheese and butter fat production, and cooking for the herdsmen. The money earned from milk sales is usually spent on food and other household necessities.

In 2014, FrieslandCampina was concerned about the poor quality (bacteria presence) of fresh milk. Fulanis emphasized that producing hygienic and good quality milk is a challenge, because there is no reliable source of good water supply. Milking cans are washed in the same stream where animals drink and defecate. Women complained of having to wake early to search for water before collecting milk from their cattle herd, which delays milk delivery to the milk collection centers (MCC). The water scarcity also prevented many women from participating in the meeting and training.

Moreover, women had limited incentives to improve the quality of the milk, as they had a limited share of the income generated from the sale of raw milk. They emphasized that during the rainy season, when there is an increase in milk production but also in bacterial contamination, Fulani men tend to keep the money for expansion of their herds (Fasoranti, 2016).

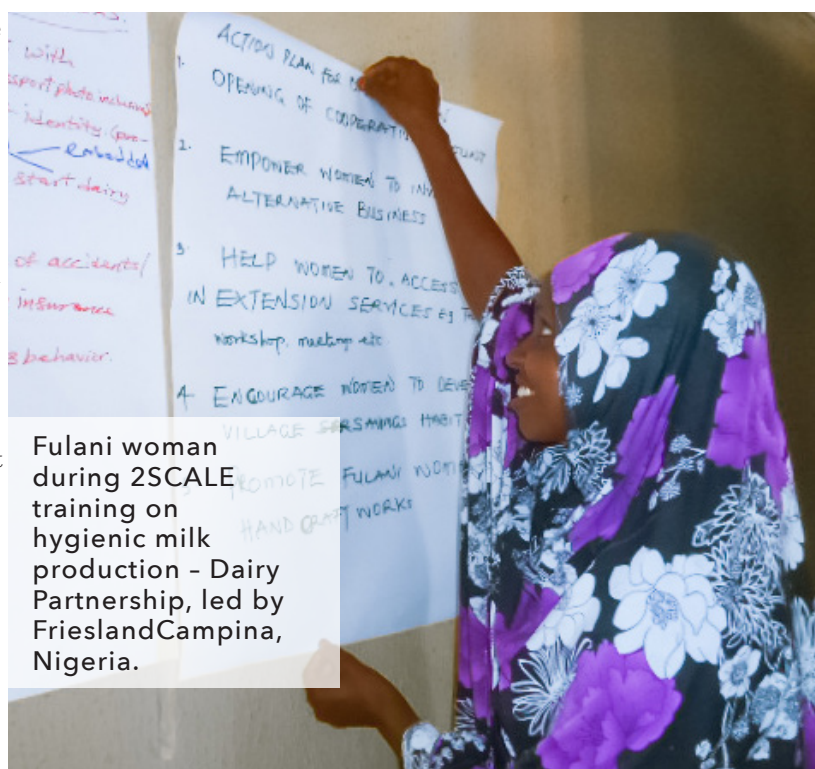
To help reduce bacterial contamination of fresh milk, FrieslandCampina first set up water points at the MCCs and dug solar-powered boreholes in the Fulani communities. Consequently, men have become more involved in washing the equipment at the MCCs immediately after delivery and women have clean water to wash buckets, sieves, and other equipment with the appropriate detergent at the pre-bulking level. The water points also saved women the time it would have taken to walk long distances to get water.

Second, women were given the opportunity to participate in trainings on milk quality and the importance of hygiene at all stages of milk production. 2SCALE organized training sessions at the community level and designed them to specifically allow for women's effective participation; trainings included demonstrations and simple messages using pictures and diagrams. Consequently, from 2015 onward, the milk quality improved tremendously. This helped women gain recognition as game changers by FrieslandCampina. Because of their key contribution to milk quality as well as their dynamism and eagerness to seize new business opportunities for the benefit of the whole Fulani community, Fulani women are increasingly receiving priority support from FrieslandCampina and 2SCALE, such as facilitation of land and barn access on a lease basis to be reimbursed in-kind (milk).

As a result, the fresh milk business allowed Fulani women more free time because less time was spent transporting water to process and sell cheese. To unlock new opportunities, 2SCALE encouraged women to become retailers of the end products of their milk as an income-generating activity. The program linked Fulani women to FrieslandCampina product marketers to access dairy products for petty trading at the community level. new opportunities, 2SCALE encouraged women to become retailers of the end products of their milk as an income-generating activity. The program linked Fulani women to FrieslandCampina product marketers to access dairy products for petty trading at the community level. Consequently, women spent less money to travel to the city and increased incomes in an area over which they have direct control.

Training Women and Men in Integrated Soil Fertility Management - Benin, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria

In vegetable production in West Africa, soil fertility is one of the key factors limiting farm productivity. Farmers grow their crops on very poor quality soil while using large quantities of mineral fertilizers with a low recovery fraction due to insufficient organic matter in the soil. Without a good understanding of the role of organic matter in the soil, farmers struggle to increase their vegetable production.



Fulani woman during 2SCALE training on hygienic milk production - Dairy Partnership, led by FrieslandCampina, Nigeria.

From 2013 to 2016, 2SCALE organized a training-of-trainers program on integrated soil fertility management in Benin, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria. The program emphasized the use of organic matter to improve soil fertility. Access to organic matter is more problematic for women since they usually do not own cows or small ruminants, such as sheep and goats. With 2SCALE's support, women cooperatives in Segou, Mali, started producing their own compost using locally available materials and adding ash from their kitchens. Combined with other good practices, this allowed them to increase their onion yield from 9 t/ha to over 20 t/ha and to increase their revenue. Organic matter also has a significant impact on the shelf life of vegetables (like onion) and fruits. This benefits traders (often women) who can transport or store their goods for a longer period. The members of the women marketers association of vegetables in Bamako, Mali, indicated that vegetables from 2SCALE-supported farmers are of better quality: the skin is firmer, the water content is lower (thus increasing shelf life), and their appearance is more appealing. These vegetables can be sold at a premium.

4.2 Innovations and Time- and Labor-Saving Technologies

Women are constrained from improving on-farm productivity because of time poverty linked to their household responsibilities. This is due to social norms and perceptions in which household work is mainly allocated to women. They also have a disproportionate responsibility for tedious and time-consuming farm activities, such as weeding, sorting, watering, and planting, for which there is low use of technology. Access to technology is costly and

often hindered by lack of capital to invest and poor access to finance. This has an impact on women's workload, time, and yields. 2SCALE introduced simple and locally made technologies and increased their accessibility by linking women to local microfinance institutions. Supporting women in their productive role increases the yields of their crops and may encourage them to upgrade their farm activity. The examples below illustrate some of 2SCALE's interventions to promote labor-saving technologies.

Introduction of Mechanized Planters - Cassava Partnership, Nigeria

Dauda Kehinde, a female cassava farmer, was the first beneficiary of the mechanized planter promoted by Psaltry International, with support from 2SCALE within the Nigerian Breweries-Psaltry cassava partnership. The introduction of this new technology helped to accelerate planting of cassava stems and improve the practice: in 2015, Dauda managed to cultivate 4.34 ha of land using the planter, compared to 2 ha the year before; she had a production of 78.73 tons, representing an average yield of 18.14 t/ha, compared to a yield of 9 t/ha when planting manually. She was able to save money on labor and increase her profit threefold. As a result, more women farmers within her community were willing to grow cassava and benefited from the mechanized planter services provided by Psaltry.

Access to Improved Irrigation Systems - Vegetable Partnership, Benin

Fifty-two-year-old Bernadette Sossou is a vegetable farmer and member of the Green Fingers Farmers' Cooperative (COMADOV) in Grand Popo, Benin. She is the head of her household and mother of six children. 2SCALE has

been working in the region to provide technical assistance to farmers like Sossou, to broker partnerships with microfinance institutions, and to identify local businesses able to supply agro-inputs to the community. Sossou took part in a 2SCALE training on good agricultural practices on a learning plot.

With 2SCALE support, she applied for and received a credit of 2 million FCFA (€3,000) without any guarantee and with a reasonable interest rate of 12% per year. The loan allowed her to grow 1 ha each of onion and tomato. By selling her products to traders with whom 2SCALE linked her, she was able to repay the loan and make a profit of nearly 6 million FCFA.

On this new basis of trust with the microfinance institution, Sossou secured a credit of 5 million FCFA, which allowed her to install a sprinkler irrigation system. This technology represented a major breakthrough on her vegetable farm. She testifies: "The sprinkler irrigation makes my work easier, reduces the cost of production, and allows me to expand the land I rent from 3 to 5 hectares. Formerly, my six children and some five other young people from the village were my main workforce. With these modern facilities, work is less strenuous, and my children have more time to devote to their studies."

Introduction of Local Solar Dryers for Chili Pepper - Benin, Mali, and Nigeria

2SCALE promoted improved technology for sun-drying chili pepper using a local solar dryer. Chili farmers' capacities were built through practical workshops. For instance, 60 farmers and small processors in Benin, including 44 female chili farmers, learned how to build a solar dryer locally and how to use it. They then trained other actors and reached 621 female farmers. A female chili farmer in Allada, Benin,



The mechanized cassava planter saves women farmers money, time, and labor - Cassava Partnership, Nigeria.

testifies: “I used to dry my chilies on the floor and also treat them with water vapor before drying. Now I know that this decreases the quality and causes possible contamination by bacteria and fungi. Drying on the floor takes a lot of time to get well-dried chilies. With the solar chili dryer, we can obtain much better quality in much shorter time and thus obtain better prices on the market. With the increased income, we the women have a better voice in the household. And since we can contribute and help other household members, our children now respect us more.”

4.3 Improve Access to Productive Assets, Support Functions, and Services

Women typically do not own key production resources, such as land, due to social norms and a patriarchal system of inheritance that allocates land to only the male offspring, coupled with a limited savings and investment culture that prevents women from obtaining land through available land markets. Land ownership is key, as it often determines decision-making and control over other productive resources (inputs, farm equipment, finance, labor). It has an impact on women's productivity because they are often the last ones able to use those “family-shared” resources. This, in turn, has an impact on the production cycle and overall farm productivity.

Strategies to improve women's access to productive assets include encouraging opinion leaders to address the sensitive issue of access to quality land, providing inputs at affordable prices, improving access to finance by fostering the creation and strengthening of non-formal financial institutions, such as village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), and creating women groups to improve access to resources and support functions. The following sections provide a few examples from 2SCALE.



Local solar dryers increase chili quality and reduce drying time - Vegetable Partnership, Mali.

Equitable Access to Land Through Sensitization of Leaders - Vegetable Clusters, Mali

In Segou, Mali, as in most West African countries, land is almost exclusively owned by men. Past efforts to improve land access for women – which generally focused on women's civil rights rather than their economic empowerment – have not been effective. Learning from those failures, 2SCALE started by identifying and involving influential men in strategic issues.

From the inception of the formation of a vegetable cluster in Segou, 2SCALE invited Mamary Coulibaly, the traditional chief of Sébougou village, to all meetings pertaining to onion production and local trade, largely attended by women. Coulibaly saw the opportunity for the whole community to have a competitive onion cluster well-linked to major Malian traders and other markets.

After witnessing the constraints faced by women farmers, he advocated on their behalf to the municipality of Sébougou. Because of Coulibaly's influence, in 2015 the municipality agreed to grant 19 ha of fertile land to women associations, an unprecedented move in the history of the village.

Access to Finance Through Non-Formal Institutions - Soybean and Rice Partnerships, Ghana

Fewer women compared to men access credit for investment in agricultural production due to limited access to collateral, fear of formal credit, and low financial literacy. 2SCALE has facilitated access to finance for some value chain actors through linkages to the formal credit system. The support enables them to invest in their various enterprises, thus resulting in increased yields and incomes.

Having witnessed and recognized the challenges associated with accessing credit from the formal sources, 2SCALE is exploring other forms of sustainable financing specifically designed for rural dwellers within the partnerships being facilitated. VSLAs are a form of rural financing suitably designed for rural communities and those excluded from the formal banking system. 2SCALE has reached 3,500 households across the soybean and rice partnerships in Ghana by facilitating youth and women groups to establish over 150 VSLAs as well as strengthening the entrepreneurial and business skills of the selected groups.

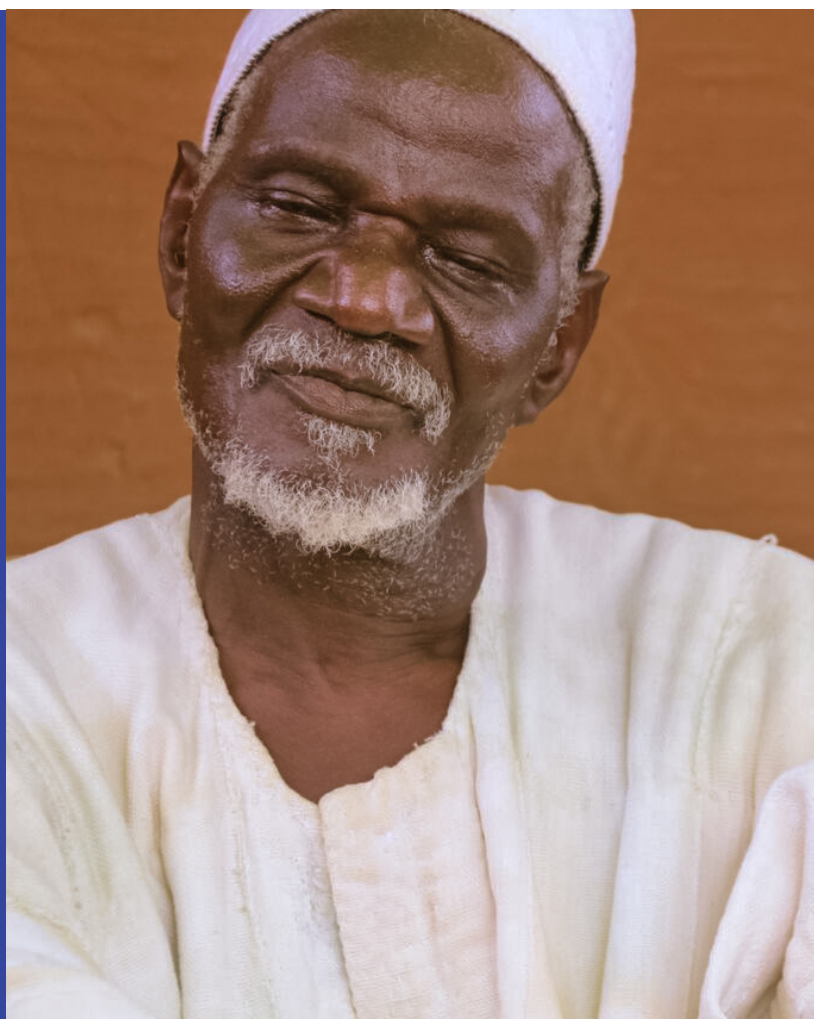
In the soybean partnership, 320 women organized into 15 VSLA groups have received 2SCALE support to set up the schemes. The groups have been strengthened in group dynamics issues, financial education, and management of income-generating activities including soy processing. Local volunteers have also been trained to support the groups.

An additional 3,000 (2,000 women and 1,000 men) members of savings groups in the rice partnership are being supported to set up 150 VSLA groups in the scaling phase of the initiative. These groups are linked to Advans Savings

*“We and our
land belong to
our women,”*

says Sébougou Village Chief

Mamary Coulibaly.



and Loans to act as their financial partner by investing their savings in viable financial instruments.

Access to Inputs as a Means to Boost Yields and Improve Produce Quality - Vegetable Clusters, Mali

Through 2SCALE facilitation, the input retailer company Guina Agricole in Niono, Mali, granted female customers with a supplier credit to procure seeds and fertilizers worth over €61,000 – fully reimbursed. Improved seeds, combined with training in onion cropping practices, increased yields from 10 t/ha in 2014 to 13 t/ha in 2016. The quality of the produce (caliber and shelf life) also improved, particularly following a training of women on how to use organic fertilizer, which strongly influences the quality of the bulbs. To ensure a remunerative market, the women were linked to Madougou S.A., a trader who sourced 112 tons of onion in 2015 to further supply a Malian factory producing seasoning cubes. Moreover, 2SCALE sensitized and trained women farmers in the safe use of pesticides. The training emphasized that young women (of reproductive age) should never spray pesticides themselves to avoid health issues affecting them or their babies; instead, they should request assistance from professional sprayers, also supported by the program. The use of professional sprayers (young men of the

locality, certified by CropLife Mali) contributes to improved crop protection, with less pesticide residue and less impact on the environment (good spraying practices, management of empty containers, etc.). The sprayers use genuine pesticides that are registered and adapted to the crop and are sprayed at the right time and right rate. To ensure women can pay for the spraying services, 2SCALE facilitated the inclusion of these services in the loan package offered by a local microfinance institution, Soro Yiriwaso.

4.4 Institutional Strengthening of Farmer Organizations and Promotion of Women's Leadership

There are fewer women than men participating in farmer-based organizations (FBOs). This is linked to their limited control of production resources such as land, to non-inclusive membership criteria, and to social norms and gender roles affecting their mobility and time availability. Low membership and women's lack of access to FBOs, in turn, limit their access to services and resources provided

by FBOs and, most of all, their capacities to influence decisions within those groups. Strategies to improve women's inclusion in FBOs include making membership requirements more flexible through sensitization of FBOs on gender-responsive services and encouraging male farmers to register their wives and bring them to meetings and trainings. An additional way for FBOs to be more inclusive is to accept as members women who concentrate in the marketing of commodities or in production as family laborers, helping their husbands (harvesting, handling, transport). Finally, affirmative action, such as setting quotas to improve women's positioning in executive functions or creating women-only organizations, can also be encouraged when gender gaps are too great. 2SCALE facilitates the integration of women in FBOs, as shown in the following examples.

Creation of Women's Cooperatives and Capacity Building in Planning - Dairy Partnership, Nigeria

The dairy partnership between FrieslandCampina and 2SCALE fostered the creation of women cooperatives to address the numerous challenges faced by Fulani women largely due to cultural and social norms. Fulani women tend to be relegated to the background, despite their involvement in dairy activities, and do not participate significantly in various production decisions. They face greater constraints than men in the use of natural resources, access to extension services, marketing opportunities, and access to finance, mainly because of their restricted mobility.

After identifying these challenges during focus group discussions led by 2SCALE, women were trained and encouraged to form cooperatives. The program organized a training in cooperative formation in each major community.



Cooperative building with Fulani women - Dairy Partnership, led by FrieslandCampina, Nigeria.

In total, 57 female milk producers from different camps elected a president, engaged in the cooperatives' registration process, and were encouraged to contribute financially. They developed actions plans at the community level to guide them in their first joint activities.

As a result, their decision-making power, as well as their visibility and recognition as key actors, was strengthened. Consequently, their access to extension services and assistance from FrieslandCampina improved. Immediately after the cooperative formation was initiated, the women also engaged in saving schemes, which are fundamental to the cooperatives' sustainability.



Youths are trained as spray service providers to turn pesticide risk management into business opportunities - Mango/Pineapple Partnership, led by HPW Fresh and Dry, Ghana.

Supporting Women to Gain Executive Positions – Maize Partnership, Nigeria

Women were previously excluded from executive positions in the Ogbomoso Ise Oluwani Cooperative in Nigeria. This issue was raised while 2SCALE carried out gender mapping with the maize cooperative members. The situation had an impact on women's access to inputs, as decisions pertaining to this access are made during executive meetings. Therefore, 2SCALE organized meetings with executive members of the cooperative to sensitize them to the challenge brought up by women. The executives then decided that a quota of three out of 11 seats of the executive council would be reserved for women.

2SCALE participated as an observer during the first election with women as candidates. With the new council in place, women had a chance to voice their concerns regarding access to inputs. As an immediate outcome, the newly elected bureau, with three women members, decided to register 200 women members (out of 600) to receive access to inputs with the cooperative's support. Although men's buy-in was challenging to obtain in the beginning, women's access to executive positions was later seen as an opportunity, since many organizations and value chain actors value working with organizations that pay attention to gender equity. Financial institutions also see women as credible business partners and regarded women on the central executive council positively.

Before 2SCALE's interventions, the situation was very different. Smallholder rice farmers were poorly organized. Women processing paddy into parboiled rice were organized in cooperatives that had ad hoc business relationships with farmers. Both paddy production and

A young woman feeds her rabbits after participating in a 2SCALE training in Benin. Demand for rabbit meat is booming in the country's urban areas. This partnership provides jobs for young breeders, retailers, and female restaurant owners.



4.5 Brokering and Networking

2SCALE fosters linkages among cluster actors and between cluster actors and value chain supporters, such as banks, research centers, extension services, or public institutions, by inviting them to participate in existing platforms, creating new platforms, and ensuring women are represented and participate. Creating these links is crucial, as it allows improved communication, transparency, and trust among cluster actors for smoother functioning of the cluster and improved efficiency of the value chain. It also improves cluster actors' ability to advocate for gender-sensitive service provision from chain supporters.

How Organizing and Linking Cluster Actors Improves Performance of the Value Chain – Parboiled Rice Partnership, Benin

In Benin, parboiled rice consumption is on the rise: production of paddy rice has increased by 174%, from 54,901 tons in 2001 to 150,000 tons in 2011. In 2012, 2SCALE supported the emergence of rice agribusiness clusters in three areas: Gogounou, Glazoué, and Lalo. They comprise 21 farmer organizations, representing over 8,500 smallholder rice farmers (52% female) and 365 local rice processors – all women. The clusters have set up an inventory warehouse system, with financial arrangements between traders, farmers, and processors. There is a good relationship between financial services and cluster actors, transparency in units of measurement used, and better negotiated prices.

quality were suboptimal, as were the quantity and quality of parboiled rice. Access to market was limited. Parboiled rice was not well-known as a product, the organization of sales was erratic, and conflicts occurred due to lack of transparency regarding units of measurement and prices. Nevertheless, the women processors wished to sell more and better quality parboiled rice, not only in Benin but also in neighboring Nigeria. They emerged as drivers of a scaling up process, but they did not know how to make it happen. That is where 2SCALE came in, with the support of other value chain supporters.

Coaches of BSSs first built capacities of the cluster actors in response to the business issues that surfaced. Coaching on “negotiation and contracting,” for example, helped strengthen the relationships among actors, improved their skills to negotiate, and led to formal contracts between processors and farmers or their organizations. The quality and quantity of paddy increased as farmers obtained credits from the women processors and were able to purchase inputs, such as good variety seeds and fertilizer. In turn, traders pre-financed the production of parboiled rice for the processors after 2SCALE brokered linkages between these actors. Another achievement of this brokering intervention, along with close coaching on the business relationship, was the agreement on a uniform unit of measurement. But cluster actors also needed to improve their skills in market canvassing and brand development to expand their knowledge on markets and to improve the penetration of parboiled rice in target markets. Therefore, 2SCALE

supported actors to prospect markets and to design new labels and introduce more variety in package sizes to meet the market demand and attract new clients. Through coaching on “business plan development” delivered to five women groups in Gogonou, 12 in Glazoué, and four in Lalo, the processor groups also learned how to carefully plan their activities and cash flow.

With 2SCALE support of local-level networking and empowerment, major changes have been achieved in this partnership. The production and sales of good quality parboiled rice increased through the improved relationships among actors, thus increasing their income.

Likie Ladies: A Micro-Franchise Model - Soybean/Maize Partnership, Ethiopia

Understanding Women's Challenges to Starting a Business

When women are involved in business, it is often considered their side activity. Businesses owned by women are often in food processing and small-scale retailing. Women concentrate in labor-intensive, low-tech types of production that require little capital and make small profits. Their businesses tend to stay small because of lower levels of education and lack of money to invest and collateral for loans. Women also tend to invest more in family needs, such as schooling, food, and housing, and as a result, their businesses do not expand as rapidly as those of men. They also have to stay close to the home. As a result, they may have less access to public spaces and networks where information is shared and find it difficult to travel to distant markets to establish business relationships. They have less access to market information, business advice, and bank loans (KIT, AgriProFocus, IIRR, 2012). Strategies to address these constraints to women's entrepreneurship include capacity building in business planning, bookkeeping, sales management and customer handling, access to loans and

networking opportunities, and access to markets, as seen in the following example.

When the Ethiopian agri-food processor GUTS Agro decided to diversify its markets to reduce its reliance on institutional buyers like the World Food Programme (WFP), it had several options in terms of product development and distribution channels. With 2SCALE's support, the company developed a marketing strategy to specifically target poor consumers with an affordable, highly nutritious maize-soya blend for young children and expectant and nursing mothers. GUTS Agro opted for a unique distribution model named Likie.

The Likie distribution model shortens the supply chain and improves the traceability of products. It is a micro-franchise model: young women – the Likie Ladies – on tricycles sell GUTS Agro products door-to-door by bringing the products directly from the factory to the consumer's house; these women are not employees of GUTS Agro but run their own business as small entrepreneurs. This micro-franchise model eliminates markups by middlemen, reduces costs for the consumer, and substantially reduces the risk of deterioration of products in transit. It also increases nutrition awareness among low-income women, as the Likie Ladies are trained by GUTS Agro to offer nutrition education.

Most women in urban areas have children, and there are many mothers who are denied any opportunities outside their home. What they miss is not only the chance to earn their own income but also interaction with people from whom they could learn. With the Likie model, this is changing.

According to testimonies collected from Likie Ladies, the micro-franchise has enabled them to contribute to feeding and meeting basic needs of their own family. Another benefit of the model is that it contributes to making



Under the Likie distribution model, women entrepreneurs use tricycles to deliver products to customers' doorsteps - Soybean/Maize Partnership, Ethiopia.



Young people engaged in the mushroom growing business - Mushroom Partnership, Ghana.

connections: Likie Ladies have the opportunity to network with peers and other retailers and with women and men in households. Most Likie Ladies had no training or previous experience to start this door-to-door distribution work, but their business attitude was the main criteria during the selection process by GUTS Agro, with 2SCALE support. For Yewegnesh, one of the micro-retailers, the major change since her new job is the time and freedom she gained to take care of her children. “It provided me with financial independence, no matter how small it is. I now earn between 40 to 100 ETB (€2 to €5) on average per day depending on how much I can buy from GUTS, and I even support my husband on days that he’s unable to work.” The Likie Ladies also believe that their new businesses help build their confidence and improve their social life. In early 2016, 50 women were running the Likie micro-franchise distribution business in five cities in Ethiopia.

4.6 Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship

Some challenges faced by women entrepreneurs are common to their male counterparts: financing, marketing, management, and globalization of the social and economic environment. However, women face extra barriers because of gender roles, social norms, and stereotypes. They have lower productivity, accumulate productive assets more slowly, and start their business with less social and working capital. They have to combine business activities and family responsibilities, which limits time for their business.

Fostering women’s entrepreneurship and working with successful female entrepreneurs is a strategy that makes business sense and pays off in terms of social impact, as

described in the three cases below. All three entrepreneurs have demonstrated through their achievements that women can be credible business partners and leaders and serve as role models for other females engaged in agribusiness, showing outstanding qualities such as perseverance, commitment, and “a nurturing attitude” that helps their businesses grow. They promote diversity in their teams by hiring more women and bringing in new points of views and new ways of working. They are integral to the communities by creating jobs, outsourcing to female suppliers, and building their capacities to engage “in farming as a business.” Finally, they have a vision, conduct projects that benefit the community, and are inspiring examples for women and the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Shalem Investments - Sorghum Partnership, Kenya

Ruth Kinoti, managing director of Shalem Investments in Kenya, is clear in her message: “A different mindset is an important condition for supporting women’s entrepreneurship and empowerment in the agro-food sector.” It makes business sense: women have a lot of perseverance and a nurturing attitude that help grow business over the years. “Men go for the quick wins, but it does not work like that,” she says.

Promoting Diversity in Teams

Shalem Investments supplies mainly to agri-food processors that produce food and beverages for human or animal consumption. Its largest customer is East African Breweries. In 2016, Shalem Investments employed seven people. As it cannot currently afford highly specialized staff, young university graduates were hired. Of the seven employees, four are women and most of the staff is under the age of 35.

“We prefer to hire women, and I’m not saying this because I’m a woman. Over the years we’ve seen the ability of women to work on various tasks under high pressure without complaining. For example, our longest serving employee of 10 years, the operations manager, is a woman. I’ve experienced that women are more committed,” says Kinoti.

Sourcing from Female Farmers

Shalem Investments mobilizes smallholders into groups of 20-50 members. The groups are formed based on business indicators, such as the type of crop, the size of land, and the farmers’ capacity. The grouping can also be based on social indicators, such as the empowerment of youth and women. There are a total of 534 groups, of which 240 are women only, 270 mixed, and 24 men only, for a total ratio of 75% women and 25% men. The core business of Shalem Investments is being the intermediary between farmers and markets and growing the farmers’ production.

Addressing Challenges Faced by Female Suppliers

One of the biggest problems is the low literacy rate among farmers, particularly female farmers, as girls from older generations tended to marry at an early age while boys went to school. Some female farmers cannot write their signature when opening bank accounts. It is very difficult for them to understand Shalem Investments’ motivation to help them and provide them with a market. Another issue is the lack of business mentality. When Shalem began, a lot of the farmers did not have a bank account, know how to organize their activities, or approach farming as a business. The lack of financial means to invest has been a significant problem. The main challenge is farmers’ capacity to engage in productive business and Shalem’s difficulty accessing affordable working funds.

Partnership With 2SCALE - Changes as a Result of Support Received

2SCALE has transformed the way Shalem Investments does business by helping define its business model and supporting the company with business and financial planning. Prior to 2SCALE, without a sound business model and the ability to forecast, the company was unsure that its activities would lead to results. Now, the future can be defined to a certain extent. For example, in 2013 the company was affected by a government tax imposed on beer containing sorghum. As a result, there was a large decrease in sales and the market for sorghum, a key market for Shalem, nearly collapsed. 2SCALE helped identify and define new uses and markets for sorghum so that the company relies less on the beer industry.

Other Challenges and Perspectives

“We have a huge challenge when it comes to financing our business. In the past we borrowed money from regular banks, which is expensive. In recent years we received loans from a social lender, but unfortunately their interest rates are quite high as well, almost similar to what the commercial banks charge,” says Kinoti. “At this moment we are not able to secure big loans, because we can’t meet the collateral demands. We hope 2SCALE can connect us with investors.” The company is also interested in international markets and hopes that 2SCALE can help expand its



Ruth Kinoti (right)
with a sorghum
producer - Sorghum
Partnership, Kenya

horizon on the international markets and open a factory to process food by 2020.

Acila - Sorghum Partnership, Uganda

Acila is located in the Teso region, eastern Uganda, and was established in 1998. The company trades in agro-inputs, such as seeds and pesticides, and sells cereal grains. Acila is one of the top three suppliers of sorghum to Nile Breweries, Uganda’s largest brewery.

2SCALE’s Support in Diversifying Activity - Acquisition of Processing Plant

2SCALE’s support came at a time when the company was facing many challenges. First, the company needed a machine to process the grains. A locally produced machine was used, but it had a limited capacity of only 15 tons per day, and the quality was too low. Ruth Okiror asked the 2SCALE team to recommend her to WFP to get a loan. To back up the recommendation, 2SCALE trained the farmers on market linkages, value addition, and farming practices, all requirements of WFP. Out of 747 applicants, Acila was selected by WFP, thus acquiring the loan and a grant for the machine. The new machine processes 100 tons a day, dries, cleans, and packages grains, mainly sorghum and maize. It cost U.S. \$280,000, of which Acila is paying 50% with a five-year loan and WFP is paying the other 50%. The machine has improved product quality considerably, now meeting international standards. However, the quality of the grains supplied by the farmers is still too low at times. 2SCALE is in the process of training agents, associations, and farmers in post-harvest handling.

Sourcing from Farmer Groups and Creating Jobs for Youth

Nile Breweries intended to source more sorghum from smallholders, so Okiror started mobilizing more farmers and now works with 200 farmer groups of about 30 farmers each (6,000 farmers total, of which 33% are women). When 2SCALE teams went to the villages, they also realized the

farmers lacked access to agro-inputs, traveling up to 20 kilometers to purchase them. 2SCALE advised opening additional agro-input outlets in the villages. Distributors from the communities were hired and trained in handling the chemicals, seeds, and the other products sold. There are 40 distributors, of which 25% are youth. The distributors collect the inputs from Acila and go to the villages to sell them, so services are closer to the farmers. Some have motorcycles; others use public transportation. Distributors are given a reduced price to cover their transportation costs and receive a commission on sales from Acila. Those who are trustworthy also receive products on credit for two weeks.

Employing Women is Good for the Company and for the Community – A Responsible Business

Acila has 14 employees. There are also 35 temporary workers who operate the machinery when it is very busy. Six out of the 14 permanent employees are women. In the office, all are women except for the accountant. “Women commit themselves to the work; they are honest and loyal. I also feel that women should be strengthened. In Africa, women are often left behind and overloaded; they have all the responsibilities,” says Okiror. For her, opportunities for training, having a “different” product, and personal persistence were essential to her career path as an agro-dealer. “All the women want to give equal opportunities for women in their business,” she says.

Improving the Lives of Its Employees

The agents who are aggregating grains and those working in agro-inputs have been able to improve their housing.

Some of them had no transportation, not even a bicycle. Now some have motorcycles. The level of their children’s education improved, since they are now able to pay school fees.

The company helps them to get further in life. Some of the distributors have opened their own shops and are taking even more boxes with them each time they go to Acila to collect products.

Psaltry International – Cassava Partnership, Nigeria

Yemisi Iranloye, managing director of Psaltry International, shared that when women are able to overcome the gender discrimination that they face in the start-up phase, especially with banks, “their gender weakness becomes a strength.” Everyone wants to be affiliated with a successful woman-led business. “My dream is income equality between men and women, the same reward for the same work, and more women-owned companies,” she says.

Psaltry International started in 2005 and is located in Oyo state in Nigeria. Psaltry produces cassava starch and supplies mainly Nigerian Breweries (Heineken Group) and Nestlé. It employs 70 women and 140 men and works with 2,000 farmers (900 women), providing them with a market.

Taking Into Consideration and Addressing Female Cassava Farmers’ Specific Constraints

Gender-based analysis carried out by 2SCALE teams and partners following staff gender coaching revealed that female farmers who supply Psaltry face challenges with having regular and timely access to productive resources. They have to pay high costs for labor and lack access to adequate inputs, mainly improved varieties, and information on the use of these inputs. Because of cultural norms and customary law, they do not own land. They are also overburdened with domestic chores and responsibilities within their households.

2SCALE encouraged Psaltry to introduce special measures to support women, such as supplying labor at harvest time and providing discounts on costs to transport women’s produce to the factory – Cassava Partnership, led by Psaltry and Nigerian Breweries, Nigeria.



2SCALE has set up a series of measures to address these women-specific constraints. First, 2SCALE facilitated trainings on good agronomic practices and stem multiplication techniques and introduced high-starch varieties to increase yields. Through advocacy and sensitization, women were given land through their husbands and could lease land at an affordable price.

Introduction of new technologies, such as cassava planters, reduced workload and increased yields as well as farm size in certain instances. Psaltry agreed to introduce special measures to support women, such as supplying labor at harvest time and providing discounts on costs to transport women's produce to the factory.

Psaltry's Vision of Women's Economic Empowerment - Corporate Social Responsibility
Ipanyole's vision of women's empowerment is to allow females to grow to any rank or any level in the company, not because they are women but because they are qualified. "We need to mentor each other, especially young women. Mentoring is key for women to choose the right education and making a reality of their dreams and ideas," she says. Ipanyole's dream for 2017 is to begin a foundation to finance business education for young women. They need to be encouraged to attend school and not pressured to marry at such an early age. Parents already see the opportunities for their children, but financing education is still difficult. She would like to encourage more girls to go to school and own businesses.

4.7 Advocacy and Enabling Environment

2SCALE focuses on supporting the emergence of inclusive agribusiness clusters and value chains and made the choice not to get involved in high-(sectoral) level advocacy interventions to improve the agribusiness environment. However, 2SCALE supports grassroots actors in local-level advocacy activities as part of its support to strengthen local networks among private and public stakeholders. The examples below from Nigeria and Benin highlight how focused and local advocacy helps improve the competitiveness of agribusiness clusters.

Equality in Agribusiness: Facilitating Single-Tax Payment for Women - Nigeria

According to a 2012 gender analysis by the British Council in Nigeria, women not only provide over 60% of the rural workforce (while men are five times more likely to own land), but they are also subject to multiple tax payments that limit their economic independence and their ability to prosper in business. The study outlines three taxation issues that reduce women's competitiveness in business: multiple taxation and coercive prosecution at local level; victimization and penalization of women (many are illiterate and unaware of their tax liabilities); and unfair deductions. In 2015, there were complaints from women vegetable farmers supported by 2SCALE in Lamingo and Bokkos about deductions in their profit margin because of multiple tax payments.

As the first issue – multiple taxation (fees/levies/tolls/charges) – was raised many times by farmers and sellers in the vegetable partnership in Nigeria, it was given special



attention during a workshop organized by 2SCALE in 2015. Some specific questions were clarified, such as: Who is collecting these multiple taxes from female farmers? How many women are affected? How often are women taxed? Where are they taxed? And moreover, what can be done to stop this inequality?

The participants indicated different ways, including advocacy at both the federal and local government level, to urge them to design and enforce laws and policies that would forbid multiple tax payments. Although taking the issue to the legislative level could be envisioned, this could take a very long time, and there is no guarantee that the regulations would be enforced or that it would be the most effective way to solve the problem.

As a way forward, 2SCALE met with the Plateau State Board of Internal Revenue (PSBI), Local Government Area Council (LGAC), and Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) in Nigeria. In November 2015, 2SCALE facilitated a meeting between representatives of PSBI, FIRS, and LGAC and women vegetable farmers from Lamingo and Bokkos.

During the interactive session, the Director of Corporate Affairs of PSBI indicated that PSBI was aware of multiple tax payments and willing to stop this practice. According to him, “One of the innovations we are setting up to remove this challenge is the establishment of a Tax Identification Number (TIN), which has been operational for almost two years now.”

In March 2016, based on the recommendation of PSBI on the need for TIN for Lamingo and Bokkos women, 2SCALE facilitated registration of TIN for 24 women (15 from Bokkos and nine from Lamingo) as a pilot to test the effectiveness of TIN to resolve multiple payment of taxes and levies. Initial results show the effectiveness of the system for educated women who understand the TIN scheme; results are less encouraging for women with a low education level, who struggle to understand the TIN scheme. Based on the results of this pilot, 2SCALE will combine the introduction of TIN to all women in the vegetable clusters and their sensitization/education on how to use the TIN for single tax/levy payment.

Advocacy to Improve Women’s Wages – Rice Partnership, Benin

Lalo ESOP is a farmer-owned mill in Lalo, Benin, that purchases rice from small-scale farmer groups for grading and resale. The key step is hand-sorting, to select the best grains for premium markets. Sorting is done mostly by women for very low wages. When starting its support to Lalo rice farmers and ESOP, the 2SCALE team in Benin first examined costs and margins of ESOP and other processors. 2SCALE carried out a study to understand the wage structure and gender-based division of tasks. Sorting is done almost entirely by women, while men are responsible for other tasks such as de-hulling and packaging. Hand-sorting is tedious and time-consuming, but the women earn only 1,250 FCFA (€1.80) per day on average, while ESOP’s male staff earn more than 4,000 FCFA (€6) daily.



Grading accounts for only 6% of processing costs – implying that higher wages for grading activities would not seriously affect the millers’ profitability.

The findings were discussed with the ESOP management and with the women employees, first in separate groups and then in a plenary session. The 2SCALE team, which facilitated these discussions, used a soft approach, simply laying out the facts and leaving the decision to the ESOP managers.

Lalo ESOP decided to increase the women’s salaries by 50%, from 1,250 to 1,875 FCFA per day. That is still less than €70 per month, and gender disparities remain. But the women are grateful that a first step to improve their situation was made. “The money was so low, we had to borrow often from others just to meet our daily needs,” explains Lucienne Hossou, a rice sorter at ESOP. “That is why most sorters resigned after a few months. With this increase, thanks to 2SCALE, we can breathe a little bit better.”



5

LESSONS LEARNED



The 2SCALE program aspires to change rural women's lives by putting in place specific mechanisms and efforts to achieve women's empowerment and ensure more inclusiveness within FBOs and firms, equitable access to opportunities, and a more balanced sharing of benefits between men and women. The points below highlight key lessons learned by the 2SCALE team.

5.1 Lesson 1: Set Internal Gender Mainstreaming Mechanisms

Allocating a budget line for capacity-building activities and mainstreaming gender in a consistent and systematic way are key to addressing gender issues. Developing a vision on expected change and presenting gender equality and women's economic empowerment as project goals are equally important. This, however, needs to be promoted and championed by executive staff/managers and embraced by all program staff and field partners. To build this sense of ownership and commitment, all staff and partners should have a basic understanding and adequate technical capacity in gender mainstreaming as well as a clear vision of what gender equality and women economic empowerment objectives entail. Training, but also customized, on-the-job, and practical coaching are essential to build the gender mainstreaming capacity of program teams and partners. Making field staff accountable for results achieved in terms of women's empowerment and gender equity, through individual annual gender-related performance goals, provides additional incentives to proactively promote gender equality. Each team member should be given practical tools and taught how to use them in the field in real-life situations with target actors.

5.2 Lesson 2: Embed Gender Mainstreaming in the Team's Daily Interventions

2SCALE teams and BSS coaches, thanks to newly acquired gender mainstreaming skills, tools, and methodologies, were able to conduct gender-based analyses at the cluster and value chain level and identify gender-specific barriers that hindered women's full participation and access to opportunities and to benefits. This was carried out by technical practitioners themselves and not by a "gender specialist." It allowed for the design of gender-responsive annual plans by 2SCALE's partners and the implementation of activities to address constraints at different levels. These activities were fully aligned with the agribusiness interventions of the whole program and did not represent a standalone intervention area. Embedding gender mainstreaming in daily activities of the technical field team/partners appears to be an effective and sustainable approach to move from gender mainstreaming concepts and strategies to concrete field activities and achievements.

5.3 Lesson 3: Customized and Practical Tools Are Key to Foster Gender Mainstreaming

Methodologies and tools to promote gender equality are many; even methodologies and tools for gender mainstreaming in agricultural value chains exist. But when they are not tailor-made to the program or clearly connected to its specific approach and intervention areas, they are most often not used by the field team.

One key factor that helped 2SCALE move from general intentions regarding gender mainstreaming to actual field-level activities was the customization of a limited set of tools to the 2SCALE approach and the training and coaching of all field staff on the use of these tools. These tools need even to be translated into the language used by the team in each country to avoid the language “excuse.”

While 2SCALE opted for no gender specialist position (see Lesson 2), contracting a gender consultant for the customization of tools was a very good investment. The consultant needs to be given a chance to first understand very well the program approach and steps, and then develop and continuously refine the tools to make them as user-friendly as possible.

2SCALE even learned that it should go a step further by developing a practical toolkit with pre-designed cards (adapted to an illiterate audience) to make the gender analysis of clusters and value chains by partnership facilitators as easy and practical as possible.

5.4 Lesson 4: Work With and Build Capacities of Women in Selected ABCs and Value Chains or Specific Segments Through Gender-Responsive Services

Through gender-based analysis at the cluster level, 2SCALE observed that some commodities and value chains are traditionally dominated by men (especially cash crops such as maize) and offer less potential for either empowering female actors or integration of a significant number of new women actors in the chain. Moreover, some value chains may be dominated by men in certain segments or functions, such as production or input provision, while others are taken over by women, such as small-scale processing or marketing. In 2SCALE's partnership portfolio, women are predominant in particular ABCs, either because it is traditionally a commodity produced by women (e.g., vegetables, milk, sesame) or in certain segments of the value chain in activities that either require small investments such as marketing or retailing and/or can be carried out close to the home, such as small-scale processing (e.g., soy-based milk and kebabs, parboiled rice, *attieké*).

2SCALE made a deliberate effort to empower women and build their capacities in female-dominated ABCs or in specific functions in mixed ABCs. It is an efficient strategy to invest in and support clusters and functions that offer the strongest potential to increase women's economic empowerment and gender equality.



Women working in Pinora's citrus processing factory - Citrus Partnership, led by Fair Trade Original, Ghana.

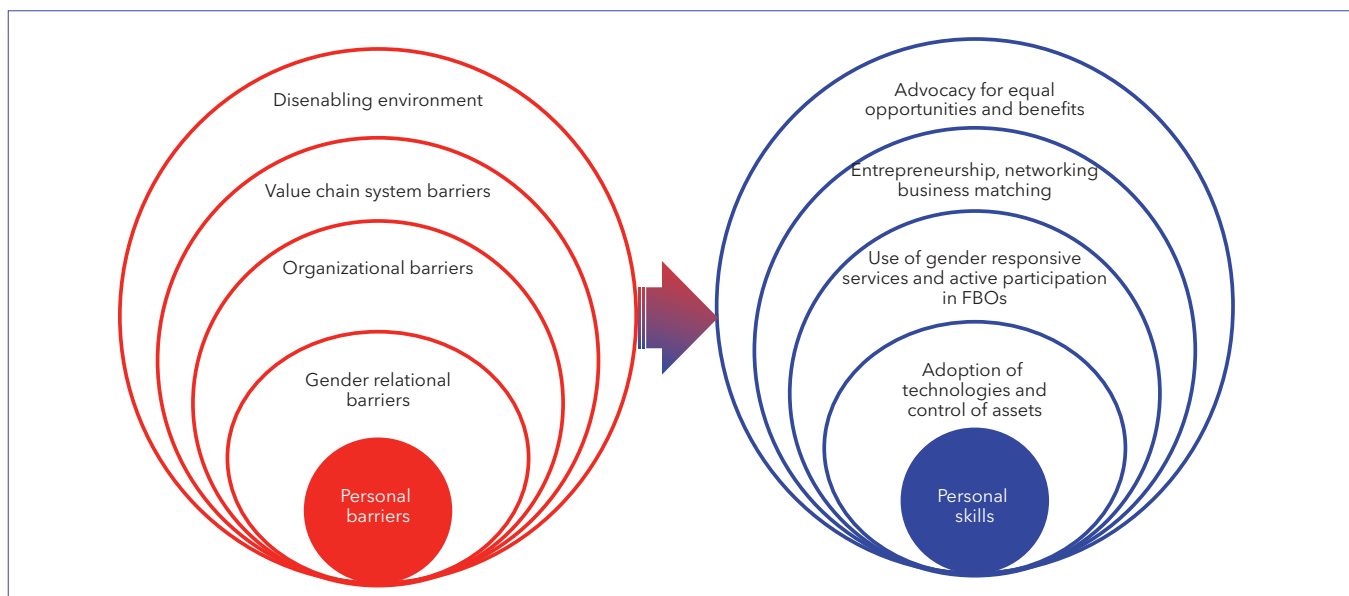


Figure 3. Barriers and Solutions to Women's Participation in Agribusiness Clusters

It was also noted that because of gender-specific constraints, women's presence in particular ABCs remained low and their participation in capacity-building activities challenging. Acknowledging and understanding specific barriers preventing women from fully participating in ABC activities were a first step. 2SCALE teams then developed guidelines to make sure trainers and coaches would be gender-responsive and inclusive when delivering their services and planning capacity-building activities, in particular regarding content, timing, location, and facilitation methods.

5.5 Lesson 5: Acknowledge and Understand Constraints Faced by Female Cluster Actors at Different Levels Through Gender-Sensitive Analysis and Planning

Gender-based analysis at cluster and value chain level with practical, hands-on tools and methodologies leads to the identification of barriers preventing women (and youth) from fully participating in agribusiness clusters. They can be found at different levels:

- **Personal level:** Challenges include low level of literacy; low technical, managerial, financial and entrepreneurial skills and poor self-confidence; limited time and mobility linked to gender roles,

social norms, and stereotypes, limiting women's productivity and incomes.

- **Relational/household level:** Main barriers are unequal access to productive resources and assets, including improved technologies, and poor decision-making and bargaining power of women within their households, hampering their productivity and their full participation as cluster actors.
- **Organizational level:** Main challenges are entry barriers to FBOs, which are non-inclusive; services that are not often adapted to women's specific needs; poor opportunities of accessing executive positions and of influencing decisions within the organization, affecting women's access to inputs, gender-responsive support services, networks, information, and markets. Firms can also be exclusive in their management practices and perpetuate gender inequalities.
- **Systemic level:** Poor organization of and linkages among cluster actors and support service providers affect the performance of the chain and actors' ability to address bottlenecks. Disabling policy, legislative, and overall environment have an impact on women's ability to play their roles as farmers, processors, traders, or other entrepreneurs.

To turn this vicious circle into a virtuous one and achieve expected outcomes, the field team needs to implement a combination of strategies addressing women's specific constraints at different levels, in a consistent and systematic way. At the program and partnership levels, having a clear vision of the desired change is an important driver.



Meki Batu cooperative members wash, peel, and package vegetables for sale to Ethiopian Airlines and other customers. After intensive 2SCALE training, the cooperative now keeps better records.

5.6 Lesson 6: Address Constraints at Different Levels Through Strategies and Actions in Line With 2SCALE's Intervention Areas

The following strategies were implemented to achieve women's economic empowerment and gender equality in PPPs supported by 2SCALE:

1. **Improve agency² and access to life chances and opportunities.** Strategies include capacity building and gender-responsive, practical trainings, when and if necessary, specially designed for a female audience. Female small- and medium-scale rural entrepreneurs acquire skills in business planning, financial management, marketing, and customer handling.
**Women become skilled, productive, efficient, and credible farmers and entrepreneurs alongside their male counterparts.*
2. **Introduce customized and locally made time- and labor-saving technologies.** This is achieved by linking women to non-formal financial institutions, which in turn improves productivity and incomes and allows female farmers to upgrade their activities.
**Women adopt innovations and technologies to increase productivity.*
3. **Improve access to productive assets and resources through sensitization of men and leaders of opinions.** Advocacy is undertaken to include women in FBOs or for the creation of

women-only FBOs through which collective action is encouraged; this is also an effective way of ensuring women's access to resources. Improving women's access to formal and non-formal financial services is also key to improving women's access to productive assets and technologies.

**Women have better control over productive resources needed to carry out their activity.*

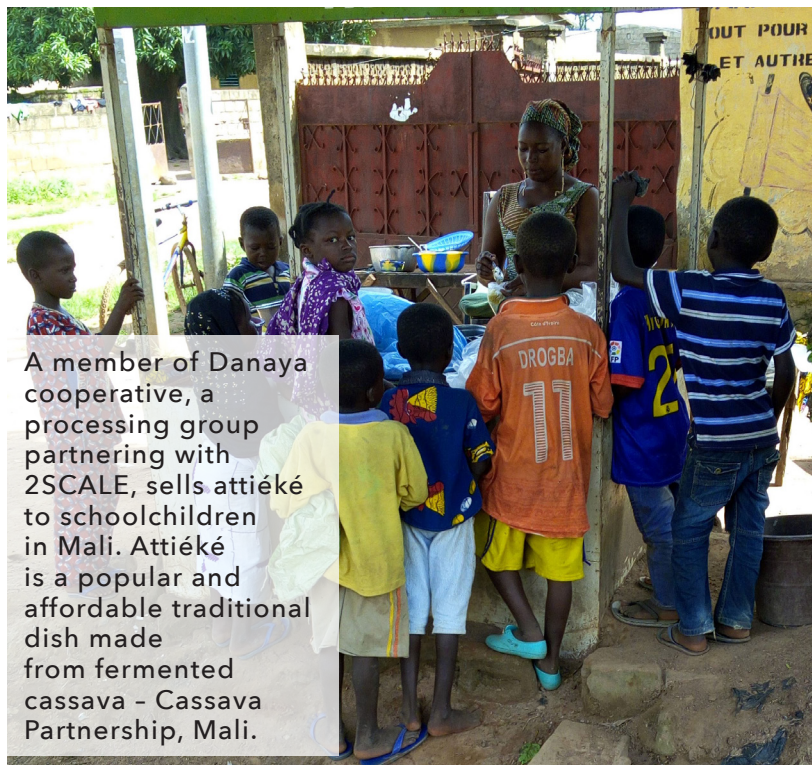
4. **Improve access to inclusive FBOs and support services and decision-making.** This encompassed institutional strengthening of FBOs to make them more inclusive and make their services gender-responsive. Promotion of women's leadership through affirmative action, such as setting quotas, and providing training in leadership are also key to ensuring women's access to services, resources, and markets.
**Women become technical, financial, and business service users.*
5. **Promote gender-inclusive and socially responsible SMEs through women's enhanced leadership and by supporting small- and medium-scale businesses.** 2SCALE supports socially responsible firms that create jobs for women and youth, outsource to female farmers, and put in place measures to address women's specific constraints. Female entrepreneurs as inspiring role models can also boost female entrepreneurship.
**Women become reliable social entrepreneurs and business associates.*

²Agency is the capacity of an agent (an individual person or other entity) to act independently, to make their own free choices, and to impose those choices on the world. It refers to capabilities, self-determination, the capacity to make choices, skills development, etc.

6. **Broker and network** among cluster actors and service providers to improve their capacity to innovate and become more inclusive and more competitive.
**Women are explicitly exposed to new business opportunities.*
7. **Advocate at grassroots level** to improve working and institutional environment for female cluster actors. This local-level advocacy appeared to be a good strategy to improve the agribusiness environment for female rural and urban entrepreneurs.
**Women's interests are addressed in multi-stakeholder platforms and policy dialogues.*

5.7 Lesson 7: Invest in a Robust M&E System, Collect Gender-Sensitive Data, Learn, and Readjust or Replicate/Upscale

To ensure strategies implemented are reaching expected objectives, a robust M&E and reporting system must be implemented from the start at the program level. At the partnership level, whenever possible, custom indicators (that are specific to one partnership only) are added, and they should also be disaggregated by sex or even specific to gender-related changes desired in the partnership. Moreover, changes should be measured beyond head farmers and owner/managers of SMEs: changes for “invisible” women and youth (such as SME employees and



A member of Danaya cooperative, a processing group partnering with 2SCALE, sells attiéké to schoolchildren in Mali. Attiéké is a popular and affordable traditional dish made from fermented cassava – Cassava Partnership, Mali.

farm laborers) should also be captured in the M&E system (which is not yet the case in 2SCALE's program-level M&E). Accountability of each team member must be stressed and encouraged through the use of gender-sensitive indicators, reporting and documentation, and learning. Data collection on gender barriers and inequality has to be embedded in the M&E system and must lead to accurate reporting, using hard facts and figures and testimonies for learning and sharing purposes and readjustment of action plans.



Wagasi cheese displayed for sale in Benin. The 2SCALE partnership aims to support smallholder farmers, particularly Fulani women, to access a larger market for locally produced cheese.

6 CONCLUSION

Women and youth involved in Promo Fruits' supply chain - Pineapple Partnership, Benin.



Since its inception in 2012, 2SCALE has made significant progress in getting the whole program team to mainstream gender in their activities, as highlighted by the examples in Chapter 4. However, there are still gaps and possible improvements to be made. These include the need for more systematic and detailed reporting on achievements and challenges regarding the integration of women into the clusters and value chains to draw additional lessons and improve further. A user-friendly toolkit for field staff and partners is also needed; at the end of 2016, 2SCALE initiated the development of such a toolkit to be used in most of its partnerships; the toolkit will be reusable, adapted to an illiterate audience, and fun to use.

Based on experience with private partners, 2SCALE also aims to make gender- and youth-related targets a non-negotiable condition for program support at the

onset, not implicit/secondary or negotiated. Targeting smallholder farmers and SMEs is not enough; there must be an ambitious and explicit target for women and youth integration in every partnership. Moreover, building on the gender approach and tools, 2SCALE intends to develop similar methodology and materials for youth (female and male), aligned with the specificities of young farmers and rural entrepreneurs.

Last, as any program has staff turnover, training and coaching of the field team must be continuous; therefore, 2SCALE will further invest resources in such, providing all field staff with a work environment conducive to gender mainstreaming and youth integration and the incentive to go the extra mile in their daily technical work in terms of inclusion of rural people otherwise marginal or excluded from agricultural value chains.

7 LIST OF TOOLS

The following tools were used throughout the coaching process and constantly adapted to meet both 2SCALE staff needs and the particular context. The initial version of these tools can be found in AgriProFocus's *Gender in Value Chains – Practical Toolkit to Integrate a Gender Perspective in Agricultural Value Chain Development*: <http://agriprofocus.com/toolkit>.

- Tool 3.2a: Making a gender-sensitive value chain map.
- Tool 3.2b: Making visible who contributes how to the quality of the product.
- Tool 3.3a: Activity mapping and the identification of gender-based constraints (and design of possible actions to address these).
- Tool 3.3b: Formulating gender-based

constraints and assessing the consequences of gender-based constraints.

- Tool 4.4a: Analyzing services from a gender perspective.

Useful explanations of these tools can also be found in the e-learning modules developed by AgriProFocus: <http://agriprofocus.com/introduction-to-gender-in-agri>.

Design in process: The Gender and Youth Toolkit is an adaptation of these tools. It will feature illustrations of the crop calendar with the activity profiles per gender, the access and control to resources and services grid, and a table to reflect who benefits from these activities. The primary users will be field facilitators (coaches) through separate gender and age focus groups.

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 Authors: Jacqueline Terrillon, Gender Coach, and Raphaël Vogelsperger, Deputy Chief of Party.
 Contributors: Mahamane Toure, Communications Specialist; Miriam Kyotalimye, Gender Coach;
 Nelleke van der Vleuten, Advisor on Gender in Inclusive Business; 2SCALE technical staff; and 2SCALE
 consultants and interns Kadia Diakite, Fasoranti Olasunmade, and Lea Igelroth.
 Photographers: Joris Maatman, Fasoranti Olasunmade, and Mahamane Toure.

