



## Promoting Gender Equality as a Strategy for Community Development in Ghana: Moving Beyond the Rhetoric



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### ABSTRACT

Gender equality has gained unmatched attention in recent times in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Globally, governments and organizations are encouraged to institute measures to promote gender equality. This study examined the efforts World Vision Ghana (WVG) made in promoting gender equality under the Cocoa Life Project, using Wasswa East District as a case. The alternative development and participation theories grounded this study. Data was obtained from 342 respondents using an interview schedule and focus group discussion guide. Frequencies, percentages and independent samples t-tests were used for the quantitative analysis whereas content analysis was done for the qualitative data. The study discovered that WVG had put in place measures such as the provision of training on modern farming practices and financial literacy equally for men and women to promote gender equality under the Cocoa Life Project. The Organization also offered equal access to information, alternative livelihood programs and credit facilities for men and women as a strategy to promote gender equality in the District. No significant differences manifested in the views of male and female beneficiaries regarding the efforts WVG made to promote gender equality. However, despite the sensitization programs organized by WVG, achieving gender equality in terms of access to farmlands in beneficiary communities was challenging. The paper outlines key theoretical and policy implications of the findings. WVG should effectively collaborate with Cocoa Life Division, Community-Based Organizations and local authorities to design new communication strategies to help enhance women's access to farmlands in beneficiary communities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender is both a sociological concept and a development approach. Gender as a sociological concept relates to the social relations between men and women which are based on culturally acquired values and norms associated with masculinity and femininity. These relations often vary from one time and location to another. Across the globe, social relations between men and women are fraught with inequalities that disadvantage women. The sociological approach claims that although men are dominant in terms of power, decision-making and access to and control over resources in all spheres of life, social structures, powers and systems can be altered to bring about greater equality.<sup>1</sup> As a development approach, gender is about raising awareness regarding prejudice, discrimination, inequalities and subordination mechanisms women and girls, and men and boys face in society in order to combat them. Again, gender as a development approach focuses on human empowerment. It is about empowering men and women and ensuring that there is an equal share of power between them.<sup>2</sup>

Gender equality is key in development discourses in general and community development, in particular. Indeed, the value of gender equality in development discourses has been reinforced by alternative development and participatory theories.<sup>3</sup> Both theories emphasize that promoting gender equality is vital to meaningful development. Specifically, in a community development context, it is recognized that if elites control the decisions over which community interventions to sponsor, the overall program is likely to miss its objective to meet the needs of the poor and the under-served.<sup>4</sup> Gender equality strategies must, therefore, improve project effectiveness and outcomes, especially, in community development. Providing women's quotas for their inclusion in development is critical in community development. Being at a disadvantage women benefit from projects only when it is mandated in the project and accountability is enforced.<sup>5</sup>

Particularly, gender equality in community development demands that all stakeholders including NGOs put in place measures to make it a living reality.<sup>6</sup> For NGOs to promote gender equality in their works, they need to adopt the rights-based approach. NGOs need to endorse human rights tenets which promote gender equality and also conduct the organization's work in harmony with the treaty principles. The second is through gender mainstreaming. They should also review and respond to external policies from gender-sensitive perspectives and ensure that gender-sensitive analysis becomes standard practice beyond just the development sector. NGOs are to communicate and cooperate with other NGOs, parliamentary bodies and grassroots organizations working in the same region, and encourage them to adopt a gender equity-focused lens and work in coordination

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. Report on The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA 2010-2011), Women in Agriculture. Closing the Gender gap for Development. (2011).

<sup>2</sup> FAO. Report on The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA 2010-2011).

<sup>3</sup> John Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*. (Cambridge : Blackwell, 1992); David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organisations and Development*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Amartya K. Sen, *Development as Freedom*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. Gender dimensions of community-driven development operations: A toolkit for practitioners. East Asia and Pacific Region. Washington, DC: World Bank ((2011a), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ghazala Mansuri and Vijayendra Rao, *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?* World Bank Publications (2021). Accessed on June 22, 2018.

[http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/pdf/lgd/Localizing\\_Development\\_Does\\_Participation\\_Work.pdf](http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/pdf/lgd/Localizing_Development_Does_Participation_Work.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Council for International Development, Gender Equity and Gender Equality: A Brief Overview of these Issues and their Application within NGOs, 2012. Accessed on 12/04/18, [www.cid.org.nz](http://www.cid.org.nz)

toward gender equality. Moreover, NGOs need to nurture women's involvement in conflict resolution accordingly since women have proven to be effective at peacebuilding.<sup>7</sup>

One notable NGO in Ghana making some efforts to promote gender equality is World Vision. In several ways, World Vision Ghana (WVG) undertakes interventions that are sponsored by various organizations. Over the past decade, WVG has been undertaking development services to transform the lives of cocoa growing communities. The interventions are mainly sponsored by Mondelez International (MI), the largest chocolate company in the world. As the industry leader, MI has a unique responsibility to help transform the lives of cocoa farmers and their communities over the long-term through its Cocoa Life Program. The Cocoa Life approach defines what cocoa sustainability means to MI's business and the approach they take to the development and supply of cocoa. Among other things, the Program seeks to ensure cocoa growing communities thrive to continually produce cocoa for the chocolate market.<sup>8</sup> As an implementing partner of the Cocoa Life Program, WVG designs projects and interventions aimed at, among other things, improving the lives of farmers and communities.

An important component of the Cocoa Life Program is gender equality. Implementing partners are required to institute adequate measures as part of their interventions to promote gender equality.<sup>9</sup> As a strategy, MI uses its leading role in the cocoa sector to advocate for gender equality and women empowerment through its engagement with key multi-stakeholder initiatives and with public and civil society institutions.<sup>10</sup> Under the Cocoa Life Project, implementing partners in the beneficiary nations including Ghana are enjoined to undertake measures to promote gender equality. Thus, implementing partners NGOs work to improve training for female farmers and women working on cocoa farms and increase women's access to farm inputs, land ownership and membership in farmer organizations. They are also expected to empower women and men to play an active role in decision-making in their households, communities, and with district and national farmer forums. NGOs engage community members including women in drawing up Community Action Plans on issues that affect community members.<sup>11</sup> To address gender inequality, Cocoa Life Program seeks to increase access to finance for women, and also improve literacy and household food security. Implementing NGOs again works to promote women and girls' involvement in the Cocoa Ambassador scheme and community reading clubs.<sup>12</sup>

However, since the inception of this noble Program, no empirical studies have been done to thoroughly interrogate the efforts WVG, in particular, has made to promote gender equality in its operational zones. This knowledge gap offers a big challenge to the continuing relevance of WVG and the Cocoa Life Program in contributing to making gender equality in the context of SDG 5 a living reality, hence this study. Specifically, the study focused on the Wassa East District (WED). The District has been a beneficiary of the Cocoa Life Program since its inception in Ghana, with WVG as the sole NGO which was charged to deliver interventions. It has benefited from several interventions

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<sup>7</sup> Council for International Development, Gender Equity and Gender Equality.

<sup>8</sup> Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*. (Amsterdam: Mondelez International, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*.

<sup>10</sup> Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*.

<sup>11</sup> Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*.

<sup>12</sup> Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*.

in areas such as agriculture, financial literacy, credit facilities, business development and alternative livelihood programs to improve the lives of beneficiaries. Other interventions such as capacity building on local leadership, training on community planning, health care services, and water and sanitation were provided by WVG under the Project.<sup>13</sup> Among others, the theoretical and policy implications of the results are also presented in the study.

## OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Theoretical Context*

A vital theoretical framework that underpins gender equality is the alternative development theory (ADT). ADT highlights the need for development stakeholders to focus on local development as against development led by the state and market forces. Thus, ADT promotes bottom-up strategies which thrive on effective political and institutional reforms.<sup>14</sup> It also calls for stakeholders to explore alternative ways of improving the social, economic and political lives of people. In essence, the theory holds the key to the healthy development of the economic, social and political systems.<sup>15</sup> Inherent in the theory are mechanisms such as ensuring that local communities are self-sufficient; encouraging participation of people in decision-making processes; empowering marginalized groups and promoting gender equality.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the ADT calls for the need to pay much more attention to mechanisms that promote gender equality.

Another essential theory highlighting the importance of gender equality is the participation theory. Like the ADT, participation theory focuses on bottom-up strategies to bring about effective social, economic and political improvement in the lives of people. The participatory theory calls for the active involvement of people in making decisions that affect them. The theory is premised on the conviction that when the participation of stakeholders promotes more inclusive decision-making processes which ultimately brings about ownership of development services and projects. Participation promotes self-reliance, empowerment and equality.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, a key measure to make both the ADT and the participation theory practically meaningful is the adoption of appropriate communication strategies. In other words, the tenets of both the ADT and the participation theory will not be achieved when effective communication is absent, especially, in the context of development service delivery. Thus, the theoretical foundation of this study was derived from the ADT and the participation theory which help to locate the place of gender equality in community development discourse.

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Odoom, "Relevance of Cocoa Life Project Interventions to Community Development in Rural Ghana: Exploring the Views of Beneficiaries in Wassu East District." *Journal of Development and Communication Studies*, Vol. 8 No. 1 (2021): 22-48.

<sup>14</sup> Jan N. Pieterse, *Development Theory. Deconstruction/Reconstruction*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010); Baffour Gyimah K. Sarfo, *International NGOs in Development through the promotion of children's right to quality education: The case of Awutu-Senya district of Ghana*. A Masters' Thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology. (2013).

<sup>15</sup> Pieterse, *Development Theory. Deconstruction/Reconstruction*; Sarfo, *International NGOs in Development through the promotion of children's right to quality education*.

<sup>16</sup> Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*; Lewis, and Kanji, *Non-governmental Organisations and Development*.; Sarfo, *International NGOs in Development through the promotion of children's right to Quality Education*.

<sup>17</sup> Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

### **Conceptual Issues**

As a concept, gender denotes the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are usually constructed in families, societies and cultures. Gender also entails the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both men and women in society or a given defined setting. The roles and expectations of gender are often learned. They can also change with time and they vary within and between cultural settings.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, systems of social differentiation such as age, ethnicity, political status, class, and physical and mental disability, among others, alter gender roles. The concept of gender is crucial as it shows how women's subordination or men's domination tends to become a social construct. Since gender is not biologically predetermined such subordination or domination can be changed or ended.<sup>19</sup>

Again, gender refers to those socially defined differences. Societies themselves define certain behaviors and qualities as being masculine or feminine and identify certain activities as being appropriate for men or women in a specific society. What is women's task in one society or community might be men's in another? Particular gender behaviors are based on and influenced by the cultural, legal, social, economic and political settings in which people live. Also, regarding family relationships, gender behaviors are deeply rooted and defined. Due to gender differences, women and men have different experiences in life and their knowledge, perspectives, and priorities are not the same.<sup>20</sup> Gender also relates to a set of roles and responsibilities associated with being girl and boy or women and men, and in some cultures, a third or other gender owing to societal constructions and creations. Gender roles vary greatly in different societies, cultures, and historical periods. The roles also depend on socio-economic factors including age, education, ethnicity and religion.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of gender equality implies equal enjoyment of rights by men and women. Gender roles are the sets of behavior, roles and responsibilities attributed to women and men respectively by the society which are reinforced at the various levels of the society through its political and educational institutions and systems, employment patterns, norms and values, and through the family.<sup>22</sup> The state or condition that affords women and men equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities and resources, allowing both sexes the same opportunities and potential to contribute to, and benefit from, all spheres of society (economic, political, social, and cultural) is gender equality.<sup>23</sup>

Gender equality also denotes that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. It refers to the equality by society of the similarities and the differences between men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on men and women being full partners in their home, their community and their society.<sup>24</sup> According to Kabeer, discussions on gender as social relations serve as a reminder that gender is not the only inequality in women's lives, and that women are not the

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<sup>18</sup> UNESCO, UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework: Baseline definitions of Key Concepts and Terms. UNESCO, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO, UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework.

<sup>20</sup> Nicolien Wassenaar, Incorporating Gender into your NGO (2006). Accessed August 3, 2022.

<https://networklearning.org/library/incorporating-gender-into-your-ngo/51-incorporating-gender-into-your-ngo-pdf/file>

<sup>21</sup> Naila Kabeer, *Reversed Realities. Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought.* (London: Verso, 2003); Ruth Meena, *Gender in Southern Africa. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues.* (Harare: SAPES Books, 1998); Sandra Whitworth, *Feminism and International Relations. Towards a Political Economy of Gender in Interstate and Non-Governmental Institutions.* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

<sup>22</sup> Wassenaar, Incorporating Gender into your NGO.

<sup>23</sup> Wassenaar, Incorporating Gender into your NGO.

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO, UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework.

only people who suffer from inequalities. Kabeer adds that gender inequality relates to class, race and other social issues – all of which are interwoven.<sup>25</sup> In essence, gender balance should be understood as the state of having the same (or a sufficient) number of women and men's representation and participation in all areas of activity and interest.<sup>26</sup>

As a strategy, women's participation in development must be meaningful and not superficial.<sup>27</sup> Other strategies to achieve gender equality in development include incorporating gender equality objectives into development activities, programs or projects; using participatory strategies to involve both women and men in the design and implementation of services; ensuring there is adequate time and resources for fieldwork during design, and also ensuring that gender strategies are practical, and based on quality gender analysis.<sup>28</sup> Other strategies to promote gender equality in development include supporting women's organizations to work towards gender equality; strengthening women's leadership capacity using participatory strategies; targeting women with programs; as well as working with men to promote equality for women.<sup>29</sup>

More so, to promote gender equality, there is the need for stakeholders to implement women-only groups to discuss, propose and manage community development projects.<sup>30</sup> The success of this strategy has been echoed by Fonchingong,<sup>31</sup> although it is not the only vehicle for women's inclusion.<sup>32</sup> It is believed that having single-sex groups can work by increasing women's skills, bargaining power and respect for them in the community. Thus, men and women can be allowed to form their groups to discuss and propose projects to address their peculiar needs.<sup>33</sup> The projects suggested by such groups should be considered and adopted by the development partners. This will ensure that the concerns of both men and women are heard and met.<sup>34</sup>

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Research approaches are generally grouped into three, namely the quantitative and qualitative approaches, and a combination of the two (mixed method approach). Each of these approaches has specific research designs useful for conducting studies within a given context. For this study, the mixed method research approach was employed, with the descriptive survey as the design. The study

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<sup>25</sup> Kabeer, *Reversed Realities. Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*.

<sup>26</sup> Wassenaar, *Incorporating Gender into your NGO*.

<sup>27</sup> A. Lubbock and A. Carloni, *Does unfettered CDD hurt women more than it helps them?* Discussion paper submitted by IFAD. World Bank - SDN Week - 22 February 2008.

<sup>28</sup> USAID, *Evaluation of USAID/OTI's women in transition initiative in Rwanda*. Office of Transition Initiatives and the CDIE(1999); World Bank, *The Gender Dimensions of World Bank Assistance: An Evaluation of Results*. (World Bank. 2002a).

<sup>29</sup> Sida, *Empowerment of Women through Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan and Orissa, India*. Sida Evaluation 00/31(2000); USAID, *Evaluation of USAID/OTI's women in transition initiative in Rwanda*. Office of Transition Initiatives and the CDIE, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Zalal Uddin Ahmed, , C. Euler, Saba Gul Khattak and Maria Tariq. "Assessing The Impact of Community-Driven Development Twenty Six Years of Pakistan's Rural Support Programmes." (London: DFID, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Charles C. Fonchingong, *Citizen strategizing amid a solidarity economy in Cameroon: Are Village Development Associations (VDAs) Resilient?* Draft paper prepared for the UNRISD Conference Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy 6–8 May 2013, Geneva, Switzerland, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> R. Nadelman, *Haiti Community Driven Development Project Gender Assessment*. (Washington, D.C: World Bank, n.d).

<sup>33</sup> Ahmed, et.al., *Assessing the impact of Community-Driven Development*.

<sup>34</sup> Evie Browne, *Gender In Community-Driven Development*. Helpdesk Research Report, 2014. Accessed on July 24, 2018, [www.gsdr.org](http://www.gsdr.org); World Bank. *Gender dimensions of community-driven development operations: A toolkit for practitioners*.

specifically used the sequential-dependence mixed method design. In conducting mixed method research, researchers are advised to pay attention to the purpose, theoretical drive, timing, and integration of the issues in the study.<sup>35</sup> Even though Schoonenboom appears to discredit the issue of the theoretical drive as crucial in mixed method research, she supports the idea that the purpose, timing and integration are vital elements for researchers to consider in mixed method studies.<sup>36</sup> The study relied on the sequential explanatory design. In undertaking the sequential explanatory design, researchers gather quantitative data first, followed by the collection of qualitative data. However, priority is given to the quantitative aspect of the study, and the findings are interpreted during the interpretation phase of the research.<sup>37</sup> In this study, qualitative data was collected after quantitative data collection. In other words, the focus group discussions were done after the administration of the interview schedule. Again, the same approach informed the analyses of the study.

The Wassa East District (WED) formerly Mpohor Wassa East was originally carved out from Wassa Fiase Mpohor District in 1988 under LI 1385. Daboase is its capital. The District is located at the South-Eastern end of the Western Region. It is bounded to the North East and South East by the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira, Twifo Ati-Morkwa and Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Districts, all in the Central Region. The District is again bounded on the North West by the Prestea Huni-Valley District. In the south, it is bounded by, the Mpohor and Shama Districts in the Western Region and occupies an area of 1880 square kilometers of which 344 square km are used as cultivable land. In 2012 Legislative Instrument (LI) 2019 split Mpohor Wassa into two namely Wassa East and Mpohor Districts. Wassa East Assembly has a total membership of thirty-two (32), made up of Twenty-one (21) elected members, eleven (11) Government Appointees, the District Chief Executive and the Member of Parliament. There are four area councils. These are Daboase, Ekutuase, Ateiku and Enyinabrem Area Councils.<sup>38</sup>

The District has large deposits of gold, traces of iron and kaolin hence, the upsurge of mining activities in the district. Small-scale mining activities are carried out in areas like Sekyere Krobo, Sekyere Heman, Nsadweso and Ateiku. Before the District was split, the population was 123,996. The District's population is estimated at 94, 507 made up of 49,616 (52.5%) male and female of 44,891 [47.5%].<sup>39</sup> The District's share of the total population of the Western Region is 6.4 percent but its fertility rate (4.5%) is higher than the regional figure of 3.6 percent. There are 192 settlements in the District and a spatial analysis indicates that the provision of services in the District is inadequate and their distribution skewed in favour of the District capital. The District is predominantly dominated by agriculture, with mining contributing about one-third of economic activities. About 70 percent of the active population are into peasant farming, producing food crops and cash crops like cocoa, coffee and oil palm with about 20 percent indulging in small-scale mining activities. The main agricultural produce is foodstuff. This calls for a massive investment in food processing which would lead to competitive prices for the farmers, hence higher incomes. The District faces several development

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<sup>35</sup> Judith Schoonenboom, "The Multilevel Mixed Intact Group Analysis: A Mixed Method to Seek, Detect, Describe and Explain Differences Between Intact Groups." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 10,(2016): 129–146.

<sup>36</sup> Schoonenboom, "The Multilevel Mixed Intact Group Analysis,"129–146.

<sup>37</sup>Greg Guest, "Describing Mixed Methods Research: An Alternative to Typologies." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 7, (2013):141–151.

<sup>38</sup> Wassa East District Assembly, 'The composite budget of the Wassa East District Assembly for the 2015 fiscal year'. Daboase: WEDA, 2015

<sup>39</sup> Ghana Statistical Service. *2010 Population and Housing Census. District Analytical Report: Wassa East District*. Accra: GSS, 2014.

challenges including poor road networks, the poor market for agricultural produce, inadequate educational facilities, and inadequate health facilities. In addition, the District is saddled with inadequate safe and clean water, toilet facilities and sanitary facilities. The situation in the District means that more efforts need to be made in terms of development services from development actors and stakeholders.<sup>40</sup>

The researchers relied on project beneficiaries who were farmers, members of village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), gari processors as well as soap makers as the study population. Using stratified, simple random and convenience sampling methods, a total of 430 respondents were selected for the study. This was made up of 221 farmers, 98 members of VSLAs, 71 gari processors, and 38 soap makers for the study. However, in the collection of the quantitative data, 342 respondents took part, giving a response rate of 84.6 percent. Regarding the instruments for data collection, the researchers relied on an interview schedule and focus group discussion (FGD) guide. Two FGDs were organized, one each for selected beneficiaries from Daboase and Ekutuase Councils. There were eight members in each FGD. Communities in these two area councils mostly benefited from the Project. The instruments were piloted in the Fanteakwa District since it is the only district apart from WED where the Cocoa Life Project was first implemented by WVG in the country. Descriptive analysis using frequencies and percentages and inferential analysis based on independent samples t-test were done for the quantitative data whilst content analysis was conducted after transcribing the qualitative data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the study based on the research aim. Several aspects of gender equality were examined including access to training on modern farm practices, farm inputs, productive resources, career opportunities and alternative livelihood programs. Other issues of gender equality explored include benefits from financial literacy training, access to credit facilities, access to information, and participation in decision making, among others as discussed below. The results based on the interview schedule are presented in Table 1. It is clear from the table that there was more access to training on modern farming practices for men (85.3% and women (83.1%) under the Cocoa Life Project.

**Table 1: Views of beneficiaries on the efforts WVG made to promote gender equality under the Cocoa Life Project interventions**

<b>Through the Cocoa Life Project interventions of WVG:</b>	A	U	D
Men had more access to be trained on modern farming practices	85.3	2.0	12.7
Women had more access to be trained on modern farming practices	83.1	6.1	10.8
Training on modern farming practices was provided equally for men and women	82.4	4.1	13.5
Men had more access to farm inputs	85.7	5.0	10.3
Women had more access to farm inputs	74.8	7.0	18.2
Access to farm inputs was equal for men and women	71.9	7.9	20.2
Access to farm land reflected gender balance	45.7	2.0	52.3

<sup>40</sup> Wassa East District Assembly, ‘*The composite budget of the Wassa East District Assembly for the 2015 fiscal year.*’

Access to productive resources was equal for men and women	63.2	9.6	27.2
Access to career opportunity was equal for men and women	59.3	13.5	27.2
Women and men had equal opportunity to take part in alternative livelihood programs	71.9	7.9	20.2
Financial literacy training was provided to participants irrespective of their gender	83.1	6.1	10.8
Women and men had equal access to credit facilities	82.4	4.1	13.5
Men and women had equal opportunity to increase their incomes	74.8	7.8	17.4
Men and women had equal access to information	85.7	5.0	10.3
Women and men had equal access to decision-making processes	73.4	7.6	19.0
Men and women had equal access to take part in community planning	70.5	8.2	21.3
Access to health care services was equal for men and women	63.4	8.5	28.1
Men and women equally participated in community meetings	67.5	7.3	25.2
Access to membership in community groups was equal for men and women	66.4	10.5	23.1

**Keys:** 'A' represents Agree 'U' represents Undecided 'D' represents Disagree

### Gender Equality in Modern Farming Practices

In Table 1, it is seen that access to training on modern farming practices was provided equally for male and female respondents (82.4%). This implies that both male and female beneficiaries had equal access to be trained on modern farming practices. The FGDs with selected beneficiaries showed that access to training on modern farming practices was provided equally for male and female beneficiaries. Beneficiaries who participated in the discussions at Daboase Council said, "Both men and women were equally trained on modern farming practices. On their part, beneficiaries from Ekutuase stated, "Even though equal access to training on modern farming methods was given to men and women, many women were unable to take part in the training due to domestic several duties they had to attend to. However, there were concerns about participation on the part of women. For instance, at Daboase, the beneficiaries said, "There were many instances women were informed to be part of upcoming training on modern farming methods, but some of them could not avail themselves since they had to take care of their children who were not yet in school." This means that several constraints due to the structure of society make the goal of gender equality very difficult to achieve.

Nevertheless, the results from the quantitative approach showed that there was gender equality with regard to access to modern farming practices which corroborates the assertion of Mondelez International and Cocoa Life that men and women had equal access to modern farming practices. Cocoa Life Project improves the knowledge and practice of men and women beneficiaries in farming.<sup>41</sup>

### Gender Equality through Access to Farm Inputs

On the issue of access to farm inputs, Table 1 reveals that there was gender equality (71.9%). This means that access to farm inputs through the Project reflected gender balance. The results from the

<sup>41</sup> Mondelez International and Cocoa Life, *Cocoa Life Committing to Empowering Women through Community-Centered Programs*. (Amsterdam: Mondelez International, 2013); Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*.

FGDs at both councils indicated that women and men in the communities had equal access to farm inputs provided through the Project. However, beneficiaries from Ekutuase Council said, “Men still had the upper hand over women since many men who were in executive positions were generally in charge of the collection and distribution of farm inputs, so they were in a better position to act to their own advantage.” Despite this fear, the results from the FGDs and the interview schedule showed there was gender equality in terms of access to farm inputs under the Project. This revelation confirms a previous study that found that ensuring equal access to inputs for men and women is a major strategy to promote gender equality.<sup>42</sup>

### **Gender Equality in Access to Productive Resources**

Again, more (63.2%) respondents believed that there was gender equality in the provision of access to productive resources under the Project. During the group discussions, participants noted that both men and women had equal access to productive resources. They further explained that although productive resources women obtained were sometimes different from what men had, equal access was generally provided concerning productive resources. At Daboase Council, participants noted, “Unlike men, many women got access to gari processing machines in the communities since many of the gari processors were women.” Also, beneficiaries from Ekutuase Council remarked, “Our women had equal access to productive resources. Sometimes women had certain productive assets such as gari processing machines which many men did not have.” Generally, WVG made some efforts to promote gender equality through productive resources given to beneficiaries. This finding confirms Hunt and Brouwers, and Wassenaar's assertions that equal access to productive resources for men and women ensures gender equality.<sup>43</sup> Further, the study conforms to Mondelez International and Cocoa Life Progress that there is gender equality in access to productive assets.<sup>44</sup> Access to productive resources is vital in the context of the SLF.<sup>45</sup>

### **Efforts to Ensure Gender Equality through Career Opportunities**

Another aspect of gender equality examined is career opportunities. Most (59.3%) respondents stated that access to career opportunities was offered equally to both men and women under the Project. However, group discussions with selected beneficiaries proved that access to career opportunities was not equally created for men and women. For example, beneficiaries from Ekutuase Council, “The project targeted the youth in terms of career opportunities. They wanted them to go into cocoa farming which was already dominated by men. No effective measures were put in place to enable female youth to also go into cocoa farming.” A similar view was expressed by beneficiaries from Daboase Council. Thus, although both approaches indicated that there was gender equality with regard to access to career opportunities, there were some concerns with the efforts as seen from the FGDs. Nevertheless, the importance of this finding generally supports Hunt and Brouwers who concluded that equal access to

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<sup>42</sup> Wassenaar, Incorporating Gender into your NGO.

<sup>43</sup> J. Hunt and Ria Brouwer, Review on Gender and Evaluation: Report to DAC Working Party on Evaluation undertaken by the Australian Agency for International Development and the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003; Wassenaar, Incorporating Gender into your NGO.

<sup>44</sup> Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International's Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*; Mondelez International *Mondelez International Reports Strong Progress in Cocoa Life Sustainability Program*. (Amsterdam: Mondelez International, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> FAO & ILO, *The Livelihood Assessment Tool-kit* (1st ed.). Geneva: FAO and ILO, 2009.

the creation of career opportunities for men and women constitutes a vital strategy towards achieving gender equality.<sup>46</sup>

### **Gender Equality in Alternative Livelihood Programs**

In Table 1, a majority (71.9%) of the respondents believed there was gender equality in terms of access to alternative livelihood programs under the Project. This suggests that most beneficiaries felt there was gender equality in accessing alternative livelihood programs. Also, the FGDs with some beneficiaries showed that there were some specific interventions including training on soap making and modern gari processing methods which targeted mainly women as a way of empowering female beneficiaries. FGDs organised at Ektuase Council observed, “Women had training on soap making in addition to other skill training programs they attended together with men in the communities.” Also, FGDs at Daboase revealed, “Both men and women equally benefited from the business skill training which was organised for the beneficiaries. The training programs help to empower us.” Empowerment is vital in gender equality initiatives. It occurs in many dimensions such as economic conditions including the provision of diverse alternative livelihood choices. Alternative livelihood is critical in any sustainable development drive.<sup>47</sup> Also, the decision to provide specific livelihood programs for women is an essential strategy for gender equality since livelihood needs and strategies of men and women are different due to contrasting gender roles and responsibilities, coupled with gender disparities in access to resources. As such, development interventions that fail to incorporate these differences will be ineffective in empowering people, especially women to play their active roles in development. Ahmed *et al.* point out that specific interventions can be implemented based on the peculiar needs of men and women to promote gender equality.<sup>48</sup>

### **Gender Equality through Financial Literacy Training**

In this study, it was found that there was gender equality through access to financial literacy training (83.1%). This shows that beneficiaries had equal access to financial literacy training under the Project irrespective of gender. These views were largely supported by participants in the FGDs. For example, participants from Daboase Council agreed, “Many financial training programs were given to us. All of us, whether men or women equally took part in the training.” Similarly, beneficiaries from Ektuase remarked, “Through Cocoa Life, WVG organised financial literacy training for community members. Both men and women equally benefited from the training.” Participants from the two Councils claimed that the mode of delivery at the training should be improved upon. They added, “The duration of the training was too short. Such training programs are very helpful, so we need enough time to learn to adapt to the changes.” The results from both the FGDs and the interview schedule depict that through its financial literacy program WVG promoted gender equality. This supports the position held by Lopez-Claros and Zahidi which shows that access to financial literacy training promotes gender

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<sup>46</sup> Hunt, and Brouwer, Review on Gender and Evaluation.

<sup>47</sup> A. Malhotra, S.R. Schuler, and C. Boender, Measuring Women’s Empowerment as a Variable in International Development. (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2002).

<sup>48</sup> Ahmed, et. al., *Assessing the impact of community-driven development.*

equality.<sup>49</sup> Again, financial literacy is vital for sustainable livelihood and overall economic empowerment of people.<sup>50</sup>

### **Ensuring Gender Equality in Access to Credit Facilities**

Additionally, on the issue of credit facilities in the District, a large number of respondents (82.4%) said there was equal opportunity. In the same vein, the results from the FGDs with some beneficiaries revealed that access to credit facilities was the same for men and women. For instance, beneficiaries from Daboase Council said, “Access to credit facilities for male and female beneficiaries was the same. All that is required is for you to belong to a savings and loans group.” Also, at Ekutuase Area Council participants stated, “Many community members can access credit facilities through the village savings and loans schemes formed under the Project. The terms of repayment of such loans are flexible.” From the two approaches, it can be said that WVG made some efforts to promote gender equality in respect of access to credit facilities. This result is valid because access to credit helps to promote gender equality and SLF.<sup>51</sup>

### **Promoting Gender Equality through Access to Information**

Access to information is an important approach in promoting gender equality.<sup>52</sup> In this study, there were more beneficiaries (85.7%) who agreed that both men and women had equal access to information throughout the delivery of the various interventions of the Cocoa Life Project of WVG. A similar view was expressed during the FGDs. Beneficiaries from Daboase agreed, “Information is provided equally to women and men at meetings. Beneficiaries from Daboase added, “Men and women both had members who were representing them in the various groups. Information was sent to the members by the various groups by their representative.” Besides, beneficiaries from Ekutuase mentioned, “Both men and women had equal access to information throughout the various interventions.” In essence, access to information was created equally for male and female beneficiaries of the Project. Other studies by World Bank and Council for International Development support the importance of this study.<sup>53</sup> Providing women and men with information promotes gender equality.<sup>54</sup> Also, the finding is in support of Sen who established that access to information is useful in promoting gender equality.<sup>55</sup>

### **Gender Equality through Participation in Decision Making**

On access to decision-making, most beneficiaries (73.4%) stated that there was gender equality. In essence, as a result of the Project interventions of WVG women and men had equal access to freely participate in decision-making processes in the District. The results from the FGDs showed that no discrimination based on gender was made in the decision-making process. For instance, at Ekutuase Council, participants revealed, “We all have the same opportunity to take part in the decision-making

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<sup>49</sup> Augusto Lopez-Claros and Saadia Zahidi, *Women’s Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap*. (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> FAO & ILO, *The Livelihood Assessment Tool-kit* (1st ed.). Geneva: FAO and ILO, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> FAO & ILO, *The Livelihood Assessment Tool-kit* (1st ed.); Wassenaar, Incorporating Gender into your NGO.

<sup>52</sup> World Bank, *The Gender Dimensions of World Bank Assistance: An Evaluation of Results*. (World Bank, 2002).

<sup>53</sup> Council for International Development Gender Equity and Gender Equality; World Bank, *The Gender Dimensions of World Bank Assistance: An Evaluation of Results*.

<sup>54</sup> World Bank, *The Gender Dimensions of World Bank Assistance: An Evaluation of Results*.

<sup>55</sup> Amartya K. Sen, “Development as Capability Expansion”. In J. DeFilippis & S. Saegert, *The Community Development Reader (2nd Edition)*, 320-323. (London: Routledge, 2012).

process whether male or female. At the community level, most groups meet on Wednesdays to discuss relevant decisions which affect their lives and the communities.” However, participants from both councils could not tell whether there is equal opportunity and control over decision-making processes at the household level for men and women. They stated further that more needs to be done at the household level to achieve equal access and control for men and women in decision-making processes. Despite the skepticism, the study showed that women and men generally had the same access to the decision-making process. This agrees with Care International, Cocoa Life, and Mondelez International on the contribution of Cocoa Life towards increased participation in decision making.<sup>56</sup> Also, this study supports other studies done in places such as Peru and Vietnam.<sup>57</sup> The result also coincides with UNESCO’s submission that gender equality occurs when men and women have access to decision-making processes. Equal access to participation for men and women is key in the overall development process.<sup>58</sup> Mosse, as cited in Odoom et al., argues that total participation of both men and women in the decision-making process helps to maximize the benefits of development programs. Mosse explains further that participation entails the active involvement of key stakeholders in decisions that affect their lives.<sup>59</sup>

### **Equality in Participation in Community Planning and Community Groups**

The study further established that gender equality occurred with respect to access to decision-making on community planning (70.5%), and membership in community groups (66.4%). These results were reinforced during the FGDs. WVG formed various groups in the communities. In these groups, both men and women had the same access to become members. Beneficiaries from Dabase observed, “There are committees for community action plans in various communities. Membership and leadership of each group are equally open to males and females.” Beneficiaries from Ekutuase claimed, “Weekly meetings are held by group or committee members to discuss matters of importance to them and the community. In such meetings, both women and men are equally represented.” In short, the Cocoa Life interventions of WVG helped to ensure that access to community planning and community groups was equal for both men and women. This result also conflicts Mammah’s claim that women are discouraged from participating in community meetings like their male counterparts.<sup>60</sup> The study further contrasts Mansuri and Rao who discovered that local participation in development interventions is often the preserve of wealthier, more educated, male participants, with higher social status and more connections.<sup>61</sup> Again, this study coincides with Jones, Petrin and Scott study in Indonesia which found that Cocoa Life interventions have enabled both men and women to be part of community groups. Contrarily to the situation in Indonesia, women in WED are part of the leadership structure of

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<sup>56</sup> Mondelez International, *Mondelez International Reports Strong Progress in Cocoa Life Sustainability Program*.

<sup>57</sup> Hunt and Brouwer, Review on Gender and Evaluation.

<sup>58</sup> UNESCO, UNESCO’s gender mainstreaming implementation; Mondelez International & Cocoa Life, *Mondelez International’s Cocoa Life Program Unveils Third-Party Verification Framework*; Daniel Odoom, E. Opoku and D. Ayipah-Ntiakoh, “Participation of Women in Local Level Elections in the Afigya-Kwabre District of Ghana: Can this be a better example?” *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, Vol. 6 No. 2 (2017): 93-103.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Odoom et al., “The Challenge of Participation in Community Development activities in Rural Ghana: Implications for Effective Development Communication.” *Tanzanian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 19 No. 1(2021): 1-31; World Bank, *The Gender Dimensions of World Bank Assistance: An Evaluation of Results*.

<sup>60</sup> T. Mammah, Community participation and sustainable development: A case study of participation in the early childhood care and development programme interventions of Plan International. (An unpublished Mphil thesis, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> Mansuri and Rao *Localizing Development: Does participation work?*

community groups.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the result on community planning and membership of community groups is relevant in the context of a sustainable livelihood framework.<sup>63</sup> Also, membership in community groups is a great social capital which can be exploited in effective development services.<sup>64</sup>

### **Gender Equality in Access to Farmlands**

In efforts to ensure access to farmlands under the Project more beneficiaries (52.3%) said there was no gender equality as seen in Table 1. This means that beneficiaries did not believe WVG had made enough efforts in promoting equal access to farmlands under the Project. The FDGs showed that though WVG provided sensitization programs for community members on the need to support women to own land to cultivate cocoa and other crops, the very little result was achieved. Beneficiaries from Daboase Area explained, “Women actually had access to farmlands. However, this access is often relinquished to men due to financial constraints, cultural factors, power relations, and other challenges.” At Ekutuase, FGD members intimated that within the Akan land tenure systems, women have access to family lands. However, because women often tend to lack the ability and power to own, control and manage lands, they tend to lose their lands to males in the families. In both Councils, the FGD participants stated, “Women in the communities generally do not have the financial capacity to till the land. This constraint makes it very difficult for women to own, control and benefit from farmlands.” Besides, all the beneficiaries bemoaned that women mainly take care of domestic chores such as cooking and taking care of children, so they do not have enough time to make good use of farmlands even when it is given to them coupled with the belief that men are the breadwinner of the family who must control and use all the resources of the family. In effect, power relations, inadequate funds and cultural factors limit women’s access to own, control and use lands for productive activities. This seems to corroborate the views expressed in the interview schedule.

The findings on access to farmland contradict Wassenaar who argued that gender equality occurs in access to land for community members.<sup>65</sup> However, the results agree with FAO study that there is gender inequality in access to land in many communities in developing nations.<sup>66</sup> Again, the study mirrors Abane, as cited in Odoom *et al.* who found that financial constraints and cultural factors limit the abilities of women, especially in Africa.<sup>67</sup> Further, the result suggests that more efforts need to be made to achieve women's empowerment in the communities. Empowerment helps to create avenues for the marginalized in society including women to enhance their capabilities, maximize the benefits of the opportunities available to them and transform the various kinds of power relations existing in the social structure.<sup>68</sup> Without secure access to land, access to credit facilities is hampered greatly.

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<sup>62</sup> Meghann Jones, Robert Petrin and Leila Scott, Cocoa Life: Impact In Indonesia Outcome Assessment of 2015 Cohort by Ipsos. Date Accessed 22/06/2022, 450507\_025 CL Indonesia Report\_w17 (cocoalife.org)

<sup>63</sup> FAO & ILO, *The Livelihood Assessment Tool-kit* (1st ed.). Geneva: FAO and ILO, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> UNDP Livelihoods and Economic Recovery in Crisis Situations. New York: The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Group, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Wassenaar, *Incorporating Gender into your NGO*.

<sup>66</sup> FAO & ILO, *The Livelihood Assessment Tool-kit* (1st ed.). Geneva: FAO and ILO, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Odoom, Opoku and Ayipah-Ntiakoh, “Participation of Women in Local Level Elections in the Afigya-Kwabre District of Ghana.” 93-103.

<sup>68</sup> Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*; L. VeneKlasen, V. Miller, C. Clark and M. Reilly, “Rights-based Approaches and Beyond: Challenges of Linking Rights and Participation.” *IDS Working Paper* No. 235, (2004):1-62.

A further analysis using an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether or not differences existed in the views of male and female beneficiaries in terms of the efforts WVG made in promoting gender equality through its Cocoa Life Project interventions. Table 2 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores for males (M=77.59, SD=13.76) and females [M=75.65, SD=16.25]. This suggests that both male and female beneficiaries perceived WVG's efforts to promote gender equality as the same.

**Table 2: An independent samples t-test for the mean perception of WVG's efforts to promote gender equality for male and female respondents**

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	Df	Sig.
Male	184	77.59	13.76	.074	340	0.233
Female	158	75.65	16.25			

(Statistic is significant at 0.05): *df* = degree of freedom

## THEORETICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This section considers the theoretical and policy implications of the study. In particular, the policy implications focus on the use of communication for promoting sustainable development. First, the findings on equal training programs given to both men and women by WVG and the result on access to information resonate well with the ethos of ADT and the participation theory. This is essential because both theories call for stakeholders of development to devise strategies to enable people to gain access to information, knowledge and skills in order to widen their social, political and economic lives. Similarly, the findings on access to farm inputs, credit facilities and alternative livelihood programs whose ultimate goal was to empower the beneficiaries help to sustain the practical relevance of the ADT and the participation theory. Importantly, empowering especially the marginalized, and promoting gender equality are at the heart of both the ADT and the participation theory.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, the overall efforts WVG made to promote gender equality are critical in achieving self-reliance on the part of the project beneficiaries. The value of self-reliance has been echoed by Sen who contends that efforts to promote self-reliance help to strengthen the place of ADT and participation in development discourse.<sup>70</sup>

Further, the results on participation in the decision-making process, community planning and community groups confirm the practical value of ADT and the participation theory. Indeed, the importance of participation in decision-making processes and activities cannot be over-emphasized in terms of the discourses surrounding ADT and the participation theory.<sup>71</sup> Besides, the observation that women's access to farmlands was constrained due to factors such as power relations and cultural beliefs despite the various public sensitization programs WVG undertook presents a huge challenge to the full realization of the dividends of ADT and the participation theory. Indeed, the observation with

<sup>69</sup> Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*; Lewis, and Kanji, *Non-governmental Organisations and Development.*; Sarfo, *International NGOs in Development through the Promotion of Children's Right to Quality Education.*

<sup>70</sup> Sen, *Development as Freedom.*

<sup>71</sup> Lewis, and Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organisations and Development*; Sen, *Development as Freedom.*

respect to meaningful access to farmlands on the part of women exposes the obvious inadequacies inherent in the sociological approach to gender. The sociological approach to gender is premised on the belief that though men are dominant in terms of power, decision-making and access to and control over resources in all spheres of life, a conscious alteration of social structures, powers and systems can bring about greater equality.<sup>72</sup>

Equally important is the fact that the situation regarding women's access to farmlands raises questions about the effectiveness of the communication policy the Organization adopted in its development service delivery. Particularly, challenges associated with women's access to farmlands suggest that WVG needs to re-examine its communication policy to ensure that it is very capable of helping the Organization reach a shared understanding in respect of changing long-held beliefs and attitudes of people. Communication policies are an important tool for promoting gender equality which is critical to sustainable development practice. However, for communication policies to be effectively deployed in promoting sustainable development programs, development stakeholders are required to develop a culturally and socially relevant communication dialogue to help them engage their constituents. In support of this view, Servaes asserts that development stakeholders should develop a culturally and socially relevant communication dialogue to engage their constituents if they really want to achieve sustainable development.<sup>73</sup> The UNICEF strengthens Servaes' position by reporting that the best way to transform attitudes and norms which perpetuate gender-based discrimination is by employing appropriate communication strategies.<sup>74</sup> An important part of any effective communication policy for sustainable development is participatory communication. It is believed that when organizations adopt a more participatory communication approach in undertaking development services, it helps them to deconstruct the apparent power relations and long-held cultural beliefs which tend to impede gender equality. Participatory communication strategy entails the creation of mechanisms to consolidate citizens' ability to listen and negotiate with stakeholders to reach a shared understanding of how to deal with challenges that confront society.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, despite the challenges associated with women's access to farmlands, the findings of this study generally support the practical relevance of SDG 5. SDG 5 calls on all stakeholders including governments and organizations to develop measures to achieve gender equality and also empower all women and girls. Thus, WVG's efforts for promoting gender equality under the Cocoa Life Project as a community development strategy are a critical step beyond the rhetoric.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WVG has several measures to promote gender equality under the Cocoa Life Project. For example, the Organization ensures that its alternative livelihood and financial literacy training programs reflect gender balance. Also, WVG provides equal access to credit facilities and information to both male and female beneficiaries under the Project. WVG ensures that there is no discrimination in access to farm inputs, productive resources, membership in community groups and participation in community decision-making processes for both women and men. However, challenges such as inadequate finance,

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<sup>72</sup> FAO. Report on The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA 2010-2011).

<sup>73</sup> Jan Servaes, *Communication for Development and Social Change* (Sage Publications, 2008)

<sup>74</sup> UNICEF, *Gender Equality and Rights: Gender Responsive Communication for Development: Guidance, Tools and Resources*. (UNICEF, 2018).

<sup>75</sup> World Bank 'Development Communication.' (2006). Accessed:

<http://www.worldbank.org/WBSITEEXTERNALTOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/0,,menuPK:34000201~pagePK:34000189~piPK:34000199~theSitePK:423815,00.html>.

power relations and long-held cultural beliefs make WVG's attempt to promote gender equality in terms of access to farmlands a very difficult task. Although there is equal access to training on modern farming methods for men and women, women find it very difficult to avail themselves of such training due to heavy domestic duties. Even though there is gender equality with respect to participation in financial literacy training, the duration of the program is too short coupled with the fact no clearly defined measures exist to enable female youth to also go into cocoa farming. No statistically significant difference exists in the views of male and female beneficiaries regarding the efforts WVG makes to promote gender equality.

As a way of recommendation, WVG is encouraged to effectively team up with Cocoa Life Division, Community-Based Organizations and local authorities to design new communication strategies aimed at enhancing women's access to farmlands in beneficiary communities. At the heart of the new communication strategies should be measures to ensure participation of all key stakeholders. Again, Cocoa Life and Mondelez International are encouraged to sufficiently support WVG in order for the Organization to be able to continually create access to training on modern farming practices, farm inputs and productive resources equally for men and women. Cocoa Life and Mondelez International should also team up with WVG to improve upon career opportunities created for men and women in the communities. There should be specific project interventions which address the peculiar needs of both male and female youth in the communities. To maximize project outcomes, WVG should effectively team up with Cocoa Life Division, Community-Based Organizations and local authorities to incorporate more participatory communication approaches into the Cocoa Life Project interventions. Finally, WVG should pay increased attention to alternative livelihood programs for women in order to empower them financially and also team up with Mondelez International and Cocoa Life Division to extend the duration of financial literacy training and alternative livelihood programs provided for project beneficiaries. A key limitation of this study is that the views of WVG officials were not captured. It is recommended that further studies be conducted on the subject matter which will capture the views of WVG officials.

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