



Sustainable  
Cocoa  
Initiative

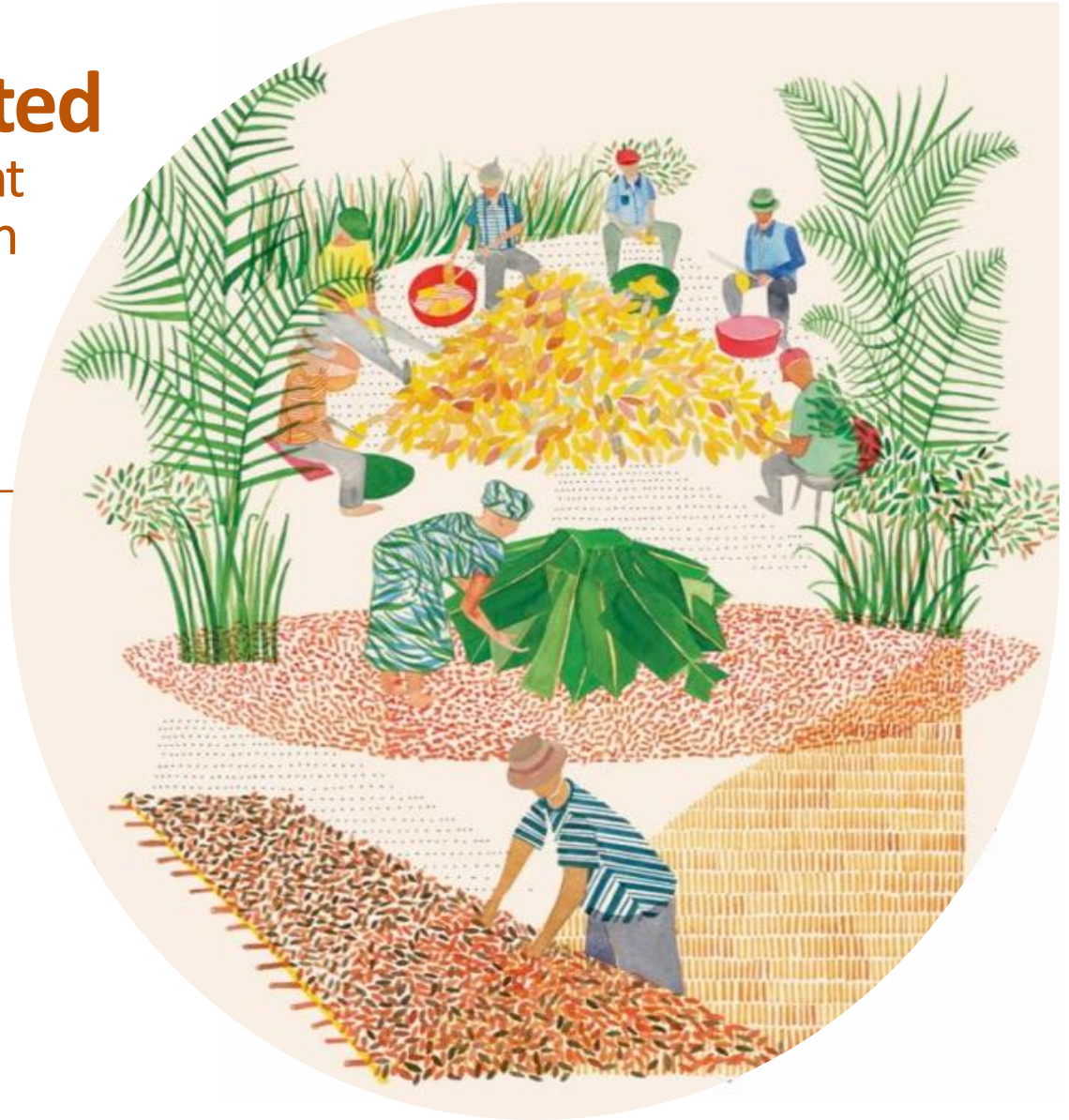
# Mars Incorporated

Community Development  
in the Cocoa Supply Chain  
of West Africa

Sue D'Arcy

Amsterdam

28 March 2014



**MARS**

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# Cocoa Farming – The Context

*Many of today's five million smallholder cocoa farmers face challenges. Unproductive cocoa farms, aging cocoa trees, depleted soil fertility and ongoing battles with pests and diseases threaten their incomes and, ultimately, quality of life.*



- **Cocoa is a smallholder crop**
  - 90% of the world's cocoa production is estimated to be cultivated by more than 4 million farmers
  - Average farm size 2-4 hectares
  - Extensive farming with low yields
  - High crop losses due to pests and diseases
- **Cocoa is a labor-intensive crop**
  - Typically two harvest periods each year
  - The extended family will help during harvest
- **Cocoa communities are typically isolated**
  - Poor infrastructure
  - Limited market connections
  - Poor education and health services

# The Mars Position in the Cocoa Supply Chain

- **Mars does not own any commercial cocoa farms**
- **Mars does not purchase directly from farmers/farmer organizations**
  - More than 80% of farmers are unorganised
  - Mars purchases from large trading companies
- **Mars has many projects on the ground in cocoa farming communities around the world**
  - Some programs have been in place for 20+ years
  - Main focus is to improve productivity and overall sustainability for cocoa farmers
  - Projects are founded on the Mars Mutuality Principle
- **Fundamental concern**
  - Sustainability of current farming practices



# The Mars Approach in Cote d'Ivoire

- **Vision for Change (V4C)**

- Flagship program

- **Putting Farmers First**

- Focusing on the next generation

- **Two pillars of action**

- Productivity

*Improve family productivity and income by rehabilitation of farms*

- Community

*Address social change with emphasis on community empowerment*



# Community Development

- **Work at community level in V4C area**
  - Community driven development model with micro project funding support from Mars and Cote d'Ivoire government
- **Address labor practices by working in partnership with others**
- **Seek improved effectiveness of education services**
  - Improved educational infrastructure and quality of service
- **Impact poverty and unsustainable incomes**
  - Improved income for farm families captured within the community
  - Increased likelihood of school attendance





# Gender Assessment

- In March of 2013 Mars publicly affirmed its commitment to ensuring that female farmers fully contribute to and benefit from cocoa development programs
- This co-incided with Oxfam America's release of a *Behind the Brands Scorecard* report, urging leading cocoa-using companies to address gender inequality in their supply chains



# Gender Challenges in the Cocoa Sector

- **Industry sustainability programs have not adequately focused on addressing issues faced by women**
- **Most cocoa farmers continue to live in poverty**
  - Female cocoa growers often earn less than men
- **Women provide nearly half the labor on cocoa farms**
  - Yet do not systematically benefit from the income
- **Women cocoa farmers have less access than men to land, credit and training**
- **Women working on cocoa farms experience substantial discrimination and inequality**
  - And are denied advances in income, status or opportunity

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



# What is the reality for women in V4C communities?

- Needed to review our flagship program
- Commissioned an independent assessment
- Margaret Greene





# Independent Assessment

- **Objectives**

- Identify the gender based constraints to women's participation in the V4C program
- Outline opportunities and strengthen how V4C supports women's equitable participation
- Prioritise recommendations for Mars and its local partners

- **Methodology**

- Literature review; field visits; review of project and research documents
- Key informant interviews
- Focus group discussions with male and female cocoa farmers



# Key Findings from Gender Review

- **V4C was designed without a formal gender focus**
  - Status quo was likely to be maintained
- **Low women's literacy and low girls' school attainment in the program area**
  - Disadvantage maintained
- **Without adjustments, V4C will concentrate power within traditional structures**
  - Traditional structures are male dominated
- **The process to select lead farmers is unlikely to identify women candidates**

# Recommendations

## Capacity Building

- Stronger skills, greater support and buy-in for gender activities
- Conduct comprehensive training on gender for all V4C staff and partners to increase awareness about gender and its implications for V4C programing

## Interventions

- Productivity Pillar - greater involvement of women - greater skills contribute to increased productivity
- Community Development Pillar - support for women's household contributions and contributions to productivity

## Monitoring and Evaluation

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

## Advocacy and public messaging

- Share V4C experiences of working towards gender equality and motivate partners to engage with these issues in their activities

# Challenges

*Mars programs historically focused on productivity and community, but lacked a gender lens.*

*Assessment shows that women's contributions are generally not respected.*

*Local help is essential to help change existing norms.*



- **Lack of sensitivity towards gender**
  - Cote d'Ivoire ranks 136<sup>th</sup> in the UNDP 2011 Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)
- **Low level of literacy and numeracy of women in the rural areas**
  - Limited qualifications for advanced opportunities
- **Local NGO/government capacity to design and implement programs is unknown**
  - How to assess local capacity on gender expertise?
  - Local expertise is essential to help change existing norms

*Work is underway to identify a local partner able to operate in the rural area of V4C*
- **DO NO HARM**





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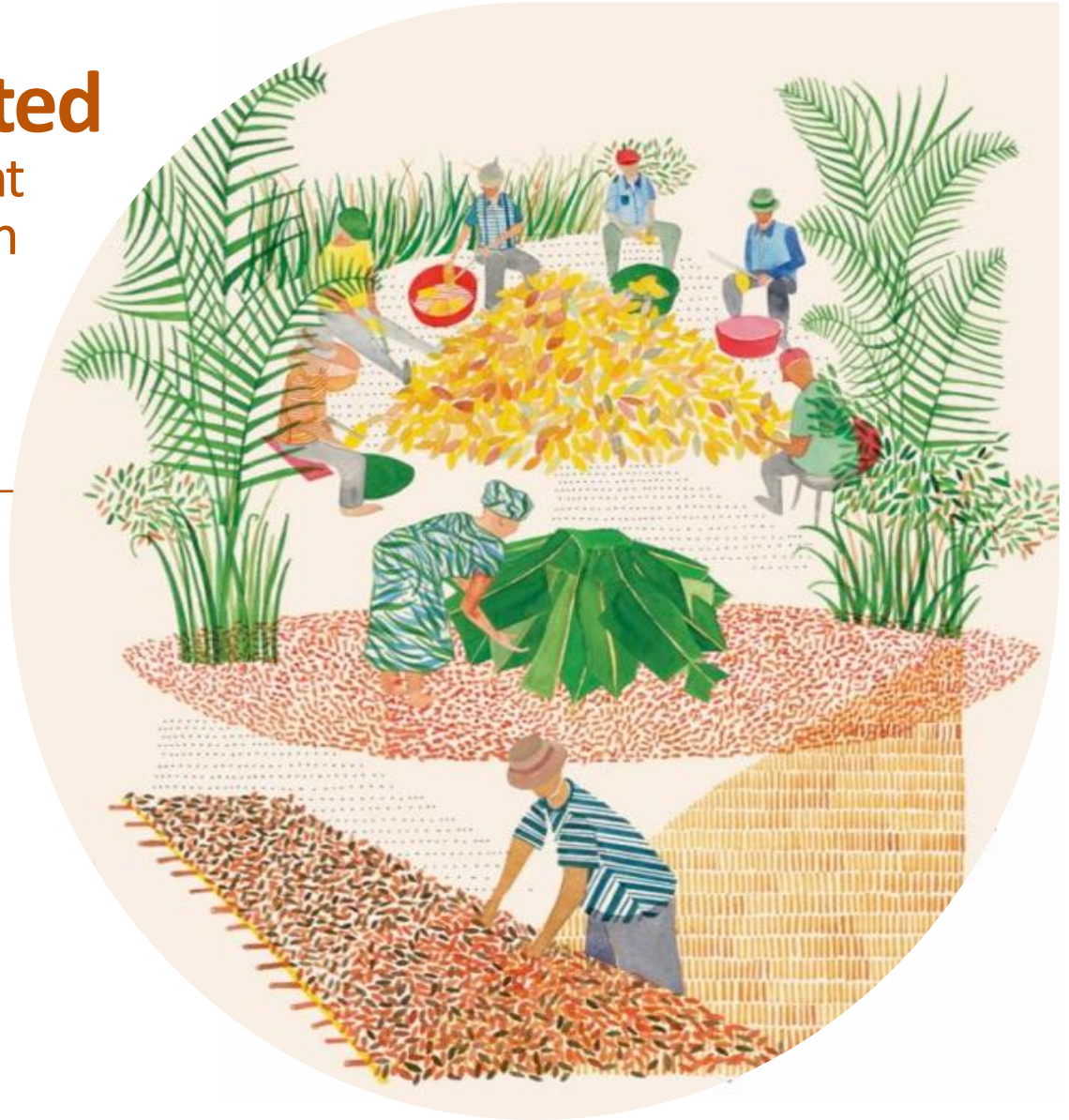
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