

# Programme Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights

Bringing balance into development



## Opportunities and Constraints in Agriculture

A gendered analysis of cocoa production in Southern Cameroon

### INTRODUCTION

As in many Sub Saharan countries, the agricultural sector in Cameroon plays a crucial role in economic growth and poverty reduction. And since gender inequalities in economic sectors hamper growth, a removal of gender-based barriers in agriculture can make a substantial contribution to realizing Cameroon's growth potential.

Cocoa is one of Cameroon's most important agricultural commodities and exported cash crops. We undertook a survey among 1000 male and female cocoa producers, in part because Cameroonian women are particularly active in this sector. The aim was to determine the extent and consequences of gender inequality in this key agricultural sector. The survey contained questions on inputs, outputs and constraints of production.

### THE ANALYSIS

revealed a rather complex picture regarding gender inequality and its determinants in the cocoa sector: contrary to our expectations, **the number of women in cash crop production is increasing.**

Method	Male	Female
Cleared Forest	12.1	1.8
Heritage	77.2	57.8
Gift	2.5	3.7
Purchase	8.2	20.6
Marriage	-	16.1

Women can purchase and own land of similar size to men and this provides incentives to invest in cocoa farming. However, women have access to land through different mechanisms than men (table a). Women (particularly unmarried) are increasingly able to get access to land through purchase, heritage and marriage.

Furthermore, the survey data revealed that **female widows and singles have more control over land than married women.**

Frequency	Male	Female
Never	53.3	72.4
Less Frequent	16.3	12.2
Frequent	25.3	10.7
Very Frequent	5.1	4.7

However, despite their presence as land-owners and cultivators, female cocoa farmers suffer from serious disadvantages when it comes to the opportunity to access extension services (table b).

Women's limited access is also clear in marketing and control of proceeds (table c). The figures in table c show the extent to which female cocoa cultivators are marginalized compared to male. Looking only at the statements of women, it is obvious that widowers have more control over marketing and thus receive more revenue than married women. While 97% of married men control marketing, only 54% of married women do so.

The following describes some prevailing gender differences in the South Cameroonian Agricultural Sector and how their reduction could lead to an overall increase of productivity in this sector.

Additionally, **women can devote less time and expenses to land preparation** due to competing commitments in terms of household chores and food crop production.

Despite the described disadvantages that women meet, there is not a substantial difference in terms of output per unit of land between male and

c. Control over marketing cocoa by sex and marital status (in%)

Status	Male			Female		
	Myself	Wife	Other	Myself	Husband	Other
Married	97	1	2	54	43	3
Single	95	-	5	100	-	-
Widower	85	-	4	77	-	23

female cocoa farmers. Our regression results confirm that land productivity on female farms is slightly lower than that of men. However, we found as well that **given equal opportunities to both sexes, women's productivity is at least as high as that of men.**

### CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

The described **inequalities reduce efficiency in the cocoa sector** since women producers are prevented from maximizing their output given their inputs. It appears that a sizable portion of female cocoa farmers have not been given due regard by Cameroonian policy makers. Since these figures reflect realities, they **provide the necessary evidence for deriving pro-active policies** that would support women producers playing an increasingly active and independent role:

1. Equal access to formal land ownership, including married women through promotion and use of co-ownership clauses
2. Equal or, initially, preferential access to extension services for women producers to grant them equal access to information, inputs, pest controls and fertilizers
3. Support in terms of credit access and the adoption of new technologies for women
4. Greater control over the marketing process through support for dedicated marketing channels for female producers (e.g. creation of female cooperatives)

Reference: Bisseleua, H., S. Klasen and W. Kumase (2008). 'Opportunities and Constraints in Agriculture: A gendered analysis of cocoa production in Southern Cameroon', University of Göttingen and GTZ.



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