AID-FOR-TRADE: CASE STORY

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

Support to agricultural sector supply chains in Mali

CASE STORY ON GENDER DIMENSION OF AID FOR TRADE

SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURAL SE CTOR SUPPLY CHAINS IN MALI

To achieve these results, the project has introduced and facilitated a better-adapted and more effective technical approaches for the production of these crops, as well as increased access to improved inputs and market knowledge.

GE Mainstreaming

The choice of crops for this project was influenced by the strong role of women in their production. The target clientele is almost exclusively female for the Shea butter crop, and is predominantly female for the shallot onion and garlic crops. The project's strategy for equality between women and men aims for equitable participation by economic operators in the development of the two crops in terms of access to resources, services and the spinoffs. It targets, on one hand, the improvement of women's working conditions and economic power and, at the same time, the strengthening of the position and status of women in decision-making roles and in organizations that influence the development of the two chains.

Thus, women's interests in the two crops are safeguarded and improved within the traditional context of the rural setting in the project. Specifically, the project requires that:

- the benefits of developing these chains are divided fairly among its members;
- women can contribute on an equal footing with men towards the sustainable development of these two crops.

In this way, the project is contributing directly to two of the three CIDA policy objectives in the area of gender equality, including more equal participation of women and men as decision makers; and greater equality between women and men in terms of access to and control over the resources and benefits of development.

Design and Implementation

The chain approach allows all players to be integrated into the overall supply chain so as to add value at each link (production – processing – marketing), relieve bottlenecks and thus make the chain more efficient and competitive. In real terms, this will mean working on better technical routing in terms of production, better processing and preservation techniques, and identification of markets capable of absorbing production at remunerative prices.

Problems Encountered

As pointed out by the executing agency, the willingness to improve the Shea butter extraction process has opened the way for introduction of diverse and varied techniques and technologies in Mali and throughout the sub-region. As it happens, many of these facilities have not really managed to either relieve the arduousness of the work or boost product volumes to a critical mass, enabling production levels to be improved, sales increased and the visibility of Malian products to be raised. Many facilities are no longer being used today.

Factors for Succes/Failure

Inequality of access to economic opportunities, unequal allocation of roles and responsibilities in the division of labour and disparities in the use of the resources generated by individual or collective work in the household are among the constraints faced by the Malien woman, regardless of her affiliation. These factors account for the feminization of poverty.

PAFA intervenes precisely in these two almost exclusively female chains. It thus helps to improve the living conditions of women through greater access to development resources.

Results Achieved

A major project milestone was the active participation of women's Shea butter associations in the "Global Shea 2010" conference. From the outset, it was clear that for this product participation by the Support to Agricultural Sector Supply Chains project (PAFA) in the "Global Shea 2010" event from March 16 to 19 in Bamako has been beneficial, since it brought about a certain consensus

among Malian stakeholders, to the effect that the status quo is not tenable and efforts must be made to rebuild the reputation of Malian Shea products throughout the chain. As has been stated, the key players must go beyond theory and deliver concrete results, which is where PAFA comes in. The results of the participation in the Bamako "Global Shea 2010" conference by PAFA's experts show that PAFA has a useful role to play as facilitator among the main players, in particular by supporting Mali in its role as a leader in piloting agricultural supply chains. Organizing workshops to encourage participation by all players in order to map the chains or gain a better understanding of their social reality is part of this role.

http://www.sheabutterexperts.com/2010/02/05/global-shea-2010-bamako-mali/
In terms of results attained, male/female equality objectives have borne fruit:

- Validation of the gender-based approach with antennae: with women and their organizations, certain institutional partners and PAFA field staff;
- A review session on implementation of the gender-equality strategy with the PAFA team at the mission renewal meeting, resulting in the team's starting to buy in and identify needs for a workshop to strengthen capacity in anticipation of PTA-2;
- Tools: contributions to male/female equality in developing the application guide and evaluation and monitoring tools; to the tool for establishing the reference basis for each application and measuring poverty reduction (female/male beneficiaries); to developing application forms, integrating the gender dimension, developing eligibility criteria for targeted OPs and an application evaluation grid; to the methodology for in-depth diagnosis of the organizations, enterprises and associations whose applications have been accepted;
- The organizational diagnosis currently includes a female/male comparative analysis highlighting the practical needs and strategic interests of female operators, staff or membership composition by age and sex, activities, members' educational levels and modes of participation, technologies mastered, acquired and potential markets, perceived needs and remaining constraints.
- Proposed regulatory clauses on PAFA's gender-equality policy, for use in terms of reference, calls for tenders, and subcontracting and partnership agreements;
- Drafting of many documents and parts of documents: updated gender-equality strategy, revised PMO, half-yearly/yearly activity reports, and PTA – 2 activity reports.

Lessons Learned

The Shea butter project has allowed the participating women to make substantial progress as operators in the chain. However, there still remains much to be done in terms of training in business management before the members of the various partner co-operatives can achieve a satisfactory level of organizational autonomy. A plan for progressively empowering the managers of these co-operatives will be needed if they are to become viable industrial entities. Training activities have to be developed that can be reproduced with several operators. The impact of such products may affect all agricultural chains.

As one of the lessons learned, the agricultural chain approach has become widely used in Canada, in particular for resolving problems common to all players in the same product line (producers, processors, distributors). This approach is also practised in West Africa, where CIDA already supports several projects of the "chain support" type. Unlike a more "sectoral" approach, the chain approach looks at the overall dynamic of those working on the same product(s), from production to consumption. One of the main lessons to emerge from these experiments is : **Creation of added value is key**

Implementation of a chain approach reaching every link in the overall supply chain must aim to create added value at each link. The venture has demonstrated that this approach can generate meaningful results if the direction (creation of added value) is maintained, addressing bottlenecks in the chain directly to make it more efficient and competitive.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the initial design of PAFA acts precisely on two chains where there is a great majority of women. It thus helps to improve the living conditions of women through greater access to development resources.

In order to identify baseline social indicators for operators who are beneficiaries of PAFA support and define strategic orientations for grasping opportunities beneficial to women, it is important for gender-equality analyses to be conducted at the initial diagnosis stage.

In addition, it has been recommended that issues of women's access to property be examined. PAFA must reach agreement with national authorities (Agriculture, Water and Forests, MPFPEF, Prime Minister's Office) on the terms of reference of a study of the link between obstacles to women's group's access to land and repopulation of Shea tree stands. The issues for study are: i) Do women's groups with access to land replant Shea trees more than those without such access? ii) What public policy measures need to be enacted to encourage women's groups to replant Shea trees? These are important questions for promoting women's progress as decision-makers in this field.

Annexes and/or References
http://www.sheabutterexperts.com/2010/02/05/global-shea-2010-bamako-mali/

APPROVED BY: CIDA MALI DESK