



GIZ GENDER COMPETITION 2020

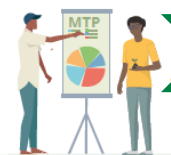
Reflecting Reality of Women's Active Role in Cashew Value Chain; ComCashew's Contribution to Gender Equality & Women's empowerment

The Competitive Cashew initiative (GIZ/ComCashew) is one of four value chain projects under the umbrella programme Agricultural Value Chains for Sustainable Development (A4SD), whose work has a strong impact on the lives of women, particularly women in agriculture. The four projects, which operate in 15 countries, are:

- the Competitive African Cotton Initiative (COMPACI) on cotton,
- the Competitive African Rice Initiative (CARI) on rice,
- the Competitive Cashew Initiative (ComCashew) on cashew, and
- the Sustainable Smallholder Agribusiness / Cocoa-Food Link Program (SSAB) on cocoa and food crops.

More than 450,000 women have been trained in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and in Farmer Business School (FBS). In the trainings, they learned how to apply Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) on their fields. On the other hand, the FBS strengthened smallholders' business attitudes, their management and bookkeeping skills. This knowledge is one requirement in order to be able to receive a credit or to get access to other agricultural inputs, necessary steps to improve female farmers' agency. On average, men and women increased their income by up to 287% by implementing lessons learned in GAP and FBS trainings.

For the Competitive Cashew initiative (GIZ/ComCashew), putting gender at the forefront of our work is aimed at reflecting the reality of women and men's participation in the cashew value chain. Women are actively engaged throughout the cashew value chain; forming about 80% of the labour force involved in harvest activities on the farm, and more than 80% of the workforce in cashew processing. However, this strong participation of women in cashew is not seen at higher levels, as women ownership of farms is estimated at less than 10% ownership of cashew factories and representation at management levels is less than 5%. To address this, ComCashew works to mainstream gender in project countries; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone.

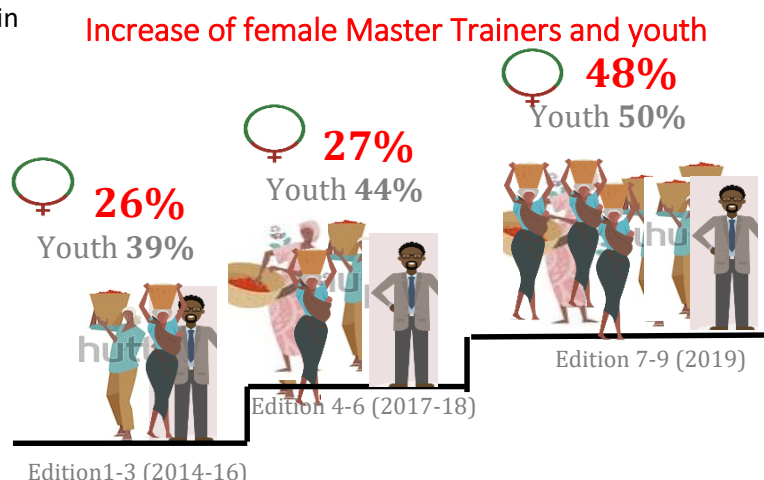


Gender Mainstreaming in the Cashew Master Training Programme

When ComCashew (formerly African Cashew initiative (ACi)) started operating in 2009, hardly any value chain experts could be found in the African cashew sector. This was particularly true for female experts. For this reason, in 2014, the project started to train people with experiences in the sector in its Master Training Program (MTP). The Sustainable Smallholder Agribusiness / Cocoa-Food Link Program (SSAB) also engages in a Master Training Programme in conjunction with the Farmer Business School. To date, 728 cashew master trainers have received comprehensive training and certification in technical and cross-cutting topics in cashew. The training has a gender-sensitive design, with 50% of trainers and resource persons being female, including a woman-led medical team on the training site. A gender module is also included in the course content, covering definitions, gender in the cashew value chain and gender analysis. Graduates have shared how the knowledge and skills gained from the programme has resulted in job changes and promotions.

Over the years, however, it was noticed that female and youth participation in MTP needed a boost, and so alongside encouraging applications from youth, ComCashew and its partners introduced new interventions, which are:

- Encouraging female and youth application in advert and in person
- Giving minimum 2men:1woman quota communicated to organizations who send applications of employees (introduced 2018)
- Providing child care/ covering costs for nannies of participants with young children (introduced 2019)
- Giving priority to women and youth applicants qualifying for the programme.



The on-site woman-led medical team is also prepared to care for children that come with their parent. These have resulted in an increase of female participation by almost double from 2018 (27% to 48%), proving again that the challenge is not the absence of women in the sector, but in making sure they have access to available opportunities.

“Thanks to MTP, there is a lot of improvement in my professional skills. I can now carry out field visits. I also acquired public speaking skills while I gained in self-confidence. Before attending the Programme, I could not have eye contact with my audience. Previously, I was focused on my mobile phone in the lift, not visiting colleagues in their office to greet them. I used to panic when I was given an assignment, but I now confidently organize my job. I feel there is an increase in my knowledge.”

Aminata Traoré, Assistante de productions Végétales et Animales au Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement, Côte d'Ivoire, and MTP Graduate.

“Being a nursing mother is not a barrier to my career”

Some female MTP participants who benefitted from child care provisions in 2019 share their stories:

“I never had such an experience before. When I heard about MTP, my first impression was this won't be possible for me! Being a nursing mother with a four-month baby and still wanting to attend such a high profile programme with my baby and a nanny, all costs borne by ComCashew. The reality was quite fascinating: well organized with all details planned to take into consideration my comfort and that of the baby so that it doesn't disturb my learning. My room was close to the conference room. During the field visits, I moved with the baby and nanny” **Mirjam TRAORE-ARNOLD, Responsible for certification and agronomic development with Gebana, Burkina Faso, and participant of 2019 MTP edition 9**

“While registering, I raised the issue I was facing –being a nursing mother. The feedback provided amazed me: the Programme encourages women's application. Therefore, from Aburi to Abidjan via Sunyani, I was able to travel with my breastfed child. On top of that, I had the opportunity to come with my other son to Sunyani and Abidjan. This really gave me peace of mind and allow me to focus on my learning.

I strongly encourage the motivation of other ladies to apply for the Programme. Being a woman, a nursing mother, a spouse is neither an obstacle nor a brake to the learning process.”

Barkissa DAH/GHOLO, Technical Advisor in charge of the dialogue public-private in the rural sector with GIZ/PDA, Burkina Faso. MTP 9



Barkissa DAH/GHOLO with her children and nanny



CashewWomen; Connecting women, documenting success

GIZ/ComCashew has, since 2017, collaborated with [CashewInfo](#) for [CashewWomen](#), which involves the publication of stories of inspiring women in cashew, and a networking group. The aim of CashewWomen is to:

- Facilitate mentoring, learning and information sharing;
- Highlight the contributions of successful women in the cashew sector;
- Draw attention to an overlooked group in the sector through strategic discussions; and
- Influence more women to take up leadership roles in the value chain.

CashewWomen provides a multiple interaction platform for women through CashewWomen meetings at international cashew events. Since 2017, seven meetings have been held through various approaches to strengthen networking, experience sharing, collaboration, business link creation, boost motivation and encourage personal development. This enables CashewWomen members to create tailored-made solutions to specific needs (work-life balance, leadership models) for their professional and personal development.



CashewWomen's meeting during the 2018 World Cashew Convention, Macau, China. Source: GIZ/ComCashew

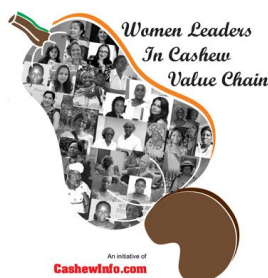
Women have confirmed it allows them to make informed decisions, open them to the peer-to-peer learning and mentoring in order to make their businesses viable and sustainable. Beyond these meetings, a CashewWomen WhatsApp group has been created to facilitate easy information sharing, especially for cashew trading. It currently has a membership of about 200 women worldwide with a majority from Africa and Asia.

Also since 2017, the project has chaired the CashewWomen movement, and actively written and promoted women's success stories in the Cashew Value Chain. Three CashewWomen books have been published, a 4th volume shall follow in February 2020:

Volume 1: http://cashewwomen.com/Women_EBook_English.pdf

Volume 2: http://www.cashewwomen.com/Women_EBook_English_2018.pdf

Volume 3: http://www.cashewwomen.com/pdf/Women_EBook_English_2019.pdf



Walking the Talk; the ComCashew Team

It is important for ComCashew to not only have gender-inclusive activities but to be inclusive internally as well. The project has a staff strength of almost 60, with 58% being female and 67% youth. 83% of middle management is female, and top management has 50% male and female.

A Joint Effort

GIZ Internal

ComCashew is part of the gender strategy and Gender Team in Ghana and Burkina Faso, and strongly benefits from their platforms and meetings.

ComCashew has 3 gender focal persons who are in contact with the other projects, disseminate information and learn from experiences of similar interventions. The gender team reports to the Monitoring and Evaluation manager and to the management team, presenting their activities and findings during the annual strategic planning.

Private-Public Partnerships

ComCashew has a multi-stakeholder approach, with a board comprising 19 public and private members including *Government Ministries for Food and Agriculture, private companies and professional cashew sector networks.*

*Application prepared and submitted by GIZ/ComCashew Gender Focal Points:
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