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Mars, Mondelez and Nestle and the fight for women's rights

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Background

Oxfam's Behind the Brands scorecard shows major gaps in the policies of the "Big 10" food and beverage companies when it comes to protecting and promoting women's rights. Substantial evidence shows that women get a raw deal in food and beverage company supply chains and companies are failing to adequately address the challenges. An Oxfam investigation into how women fare in cocoa supply chains in four countries revealed stories of neglect, inequality and unfair treatment. Although they do not directly employ or control them, this report shows how Mars, Mondelez and Nestle, three of the most powerful chocolate producers in the world, must help lead an effort to bring about equality for women cocoa producers and women workers throughout food and beverage company supply chains.

Introduction

Today, "comfort foods" and sweets are extraordinarily popular, and despite a worldwide recession, food and beverage companies are enjoying unprecedented success in selling chocolate to consumers across the globe.¹

In fact, sales of chocolate confectionery in Latin American and Asia-Pacific more than doubled in the five years leading up to 2011² and Mondelez International's (formerly Kraft) Oreo is now the "world's favorite cookie" with top sales in the U.S., China and Venezuela.³ In 2012, Snickers and M&Ms together generated an estimated \$7 billion in sales for Mars⁴ and Nestlé's KitKat is today available to shoppers in 72 countries.⁵

Yet despite this success, similar advances in wealth and status have not trickled down to the millions of farmers and laborers who supply food and beverage companies with their most precious ingredients. In spite of global progress in reducing the number of hungry people in the world today, most people who work along the cocoa supply chain continue to live in poverty,⁶ and malnutrition in cocoa producing areas of the world is rampant.⁷

Women are often the primary target of company marketing campaigns. Yet women working in cocoa fields and processing plants suffer substantial discrimination and inequality. And while women increasingly occupy positions of power in food and beverage company headquarters, women working in company supply chains in developing countries continue to be denied similar advances in wealth, status or opportunity.

Agnes Gabriel, a 37-year-old migrant worker living in Ayetoro-Ijesa, Nigeria, gets paid \$3 a day for her work on a cocoa farm while her male counterparts make more than twice that amount. Arti, a laborer at a cocoa exporting factory in Makassar, Indonesia, says she is

made to work without a contract and is called "an animal" by her supervisor. And at the cocoa processing factory where Munir works in Makassar, Indonesia, all female workers were laid off after a few demanded equal treatment and pay.

Over the past century, food and beverage companies have become giant multinational conglomerates whose success has often been tied to their appeal to female consumers. Yet these same companies have not done nearly enough to address inequality, hunger and a lack of opportunity for women working within their supply chains.

Oxfam has been working in cocoa for years both in our programs and in advocating for more positive social impacts in the supply chain. Oxfam recently visited more than a dozen cocoa producing communities across the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Indonesia and Brazil to interview women cocoa growers and hear firsthand accounts of the issues they face. Based on that information and the data gathered in Oxfam's Behind the Brands scorecard, along with our years of experience in cocoa supply chains, we urge three of the world's largest and most powerful food and beverage companies – Mars, Mondelez International and Nestlé— to lead a more aggressive effort to support and protect the rights of the millions of women worldwide who grow the cocoa essential for products. Investing in women is good for the chocolate companies and good for cocoa communities because it would help to increase yields and promote food security. It is also – simply – the right thing to do.

The Problem

Around the world, 190,000 pounds – or 95 tons – of chocolate are consumed every second.⁸ Global chocolate confectionary sales topped \$100 billion for the first time in 2011⁹ and demand continues to rise, particularly in the massive emerging markets of Russia, China, Brazil and India.

Yet surprisingly only three food and beverage companies – Mars, Mondelez International and Nestle – control more than 40% of global chocolate market share. ¹⁰ Together these companies purchase nearly one third of the world's harvested cocoa ¹¹ and net more than \$45 billion a year in confectionary sales. ¹²

But this rise in sales has not translated into a better life for the more than 5.5 million small scale farmers who currently supply 90 percent of the cocoa used by major food and beverage companies. ¹³ Poverty and hunger among cocoa growers remains endemic; ¹⁴ in fact most smallholders and cocoa workers live below the poverty line, ¹⁵ especially those in West Africa where 70 percent of the world's cocoa is grown. ¹⁶

Gender Discrimination in cocoa value chains in Indonesia

Oxfam's Behind the Brands scorecard does not assess company policies related to factories but our field research documented first-hand accounts from workers which illustrate the extreme vulnerability of women throughout the cocoa value chain. www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/imce/oxfam-cocoa-case-studies-web.pdf

Arti* (female, mid-30's)

Arti is a laborer at a cocoa exporting factory in Makassar. She says she has been working as a laborer in cocoa processing since 2008. She works without a legal contract, and is paid just Rp. 50,500 or \$5.25 USD per day. But Arti often goes for more than a week without receiving any wages at all, as she only gets called in when there is a stock of cocoa. The money she makes is less than the minimum wage and does not stretch to cover the cost of food, water and her rent. She pays Rp.150,000 or \$15.50 USD per month for a dark and stuffy 2.5 x 2.5 square meter room made of galvanized aluminum in a workers compound.

Arti says she does not receive the legal rights that workers should get under Indonesian law, such as Worker's Social Security. She says she is often scolded and insulted by the supervisor at the factory who calls her an 'animal'. "We are scolded even though we work properly," said Arti. She even reported being hidden in the back of the plant when 'guests' from outside visit. "After the guests left I was asked to work again." Yet she says she does not dare to fight this discrimination. "I never complain, I take it for granted, for fear of being fired."

Munir* (male, early 30's)

Munir works part-time at a cocoa exporting plant located in Makassar. Munir says the plant where he works has 34 male workers and no female workers. He says this is because some years ago the factory management fired all the women after some had been demanding basic rights, such as wage increases and worker protections guaranteed under Indonesian employment law, such as menstruation leave. This right gives women the option of two days leave per month, and is aimed at those doing physically demanding jobs where long hours and overtime is the norm, such as factory workers. Many of these women suffer from anemia and especially during their periods they are particularly vulnerable and physically weak.

*Names have been altered to protect the identities of the workers.

Worldwide, an estimated 40-50 million people rely on cocoa for their livelihoods.¹⁷ Yet a farmer in Cote d'Ivoire for example earns a mere \$342 a year for their efforts while the poverty line in that country is \$5840, 1608 percent more than a cocoa farmer makes annually (see figure 1 for income in Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire).

Visual 4 Income increase needed to escape from poverty and absolute poverty

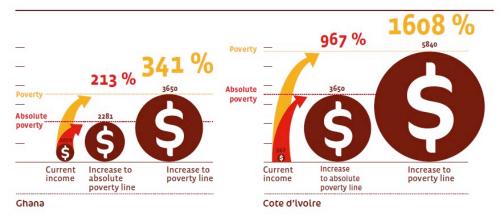


Figure 1: From 2012 Cocoa Barometer¹⁸

Child labor also remains rife within the industry. ¹⁹ Basics like running water, electricity and toilets are scarce in cocoa growing areas of countries like Nigeria.

Sadly, the bad news does not end there. Millions of women cocoa farmers and laborers worldwide also face rampant inequality and discrimination.

- Women working on cocoa farms usually get paid less than men, if they get paid at all for their work.
- Women cocoa farmers rarely own the land they farm even if they work the same plot their entire lives. ²¹
- Many women working on cocoa farms who face problems like harrassment or discrimination while at work have no way to complain or fight back.²²
- Women cocoa farmers don't have the same opportunities to attend agricultural or financial training as men.²³
- Because of a lack of capital and land, women cocoa farmers struggle to get loans or credit, no matter how hard they work. This severely limits women's ability to purchase fertilizers, better performing seeds, or irrigation systems which could help increase yields.²⁴

Hard work for low and unequal pay in Nigeria

www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/imce/oxfam-cocoa-case-studies-web.pdf

From nurturing the trees to drying the beans for sale, cocoa production is a labor-intensive pursuit. Generally, both men and women work on family farms and are hired as farm laborers. But in interviews with women in four Nigerian cocoa producing communities near llesa in Nigeria's Osun State, women laborers reported being paid less for their work than men and typically are only hired to do the lower paying jobs.

While everyone struggles to survive on the meager income made from cocoa, it is the women laborers who appear to fare the worst. Agnes Gabriel, a 37-year-old migrant worker living in Ayetoro-Ijesa says that one of the jobs she is hired to do on local cocoa farms is lug water to be mixed with pesticides. Other tasks include removing the beans from their pods during harvest time, carrying them to the site where they will ferment and then helping with the drying process. For her efforts, she earns 500 Naira a day, or just over \$3. Farmers say women are paid \$2-3 for a typical day's work, while men earn about \$7 per day.

So why focus specifically on cocoa farming?

Of course, the issues women farmers and laborers face are not limited to the cocoa industry. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that women small-scale farmers in Africa own just 1 percent of agricultural land, receive only 7 percent of extension services, and less than 10 percent of agricultural credit is offered to women.

As much of 60 percent of the global agricultural workforce is made up of women who produce everything from corn to tomatoes, vanilla to tea.²⁵ Yet across the board, women in agriculture are over-represented in the lowest-paid jobs and are underrepresented in higher paying positions.²⁶

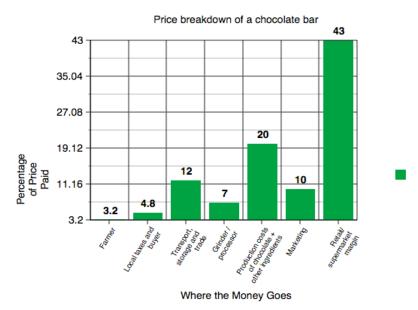
Overcoming this discrimination could be the most important thing that can be done to cultivate equitable and sustainable growth. As *The Economist* has noted, the increase in employment of women in developed countries, during the past decade, has added more to global growth than has the economic emergence of China.²⁷ And the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that just giving women the same access as men to agricultural resources could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by up to 150 million people.²⁸

Women play an indispensable role in the production of cocoa; they plant and care for young trees, break harvested pods, and are responsible for fermenting and drying cocoa before it is sold to traders.

Additionally, unlike other commodities like soy and tea which are typically grown on huge plantations, 90 percent of cocoa is grown by small scale farmers who work 5 hectares or less of land.²⁹

In the Ivory Coast, for example, one of the world's centers of cocoa production, women account for at least 25 percent of the 720,000 small-scale farmers who produce cocoa today.³⁰ Women also work on cocoa farms as laborers. In Nigeria, women contribute an estimated 60-80% of agricultural labor.³¹

This means that improving working conditions and pay along the cocoa supply chain could impact millions of women and their families around the world. But companies are not doing nearly enough to help address these issues even though small changes like guaranteeing women a fair price for cocoa – while costing companies very little – could have a profound affect on global poverty and hunger. As the chart below shows, the percentage farmers earn out of the price consumer's pay for chocolate is miniscule.



Oxfam Novib. Frank Mechielsen. (2009). Eerlijk duurt het langst, de Nederlandse chocoladebranche doorgelicht

In Nigeria for example, some farmers earn only 320 Naira or \$2.04 per kilogram for cocoa beans. For a full year's effort then, a farmer could earn a mere \$612 a year, less than \$2 per day. 32 Yet Mars sells one kilogram boxes of chocolates for as much as \$26.45 – more than ten times what a farmer in Nigeria makes for the same amount of cocoa. 33

It is in everyone's best interests to reimagine and redesign the cocoa supply chain

It is the responsibility of companies who make significant profits from the hard-work of cocoa farmers to help protect and promote the rights of men and women in their supply chains. But it is also within a company's best business interest to see conditions improve for women cocoa growers. Companies that continue to deprioritize these issues are missing a major opportunity.

Although global demand for chocolate is rising, the once seemingly endless supply of cocoa has significantly slowed due to a changing climate,³⁴ and an aging workforce³⁵, giving companies concern for the future of their own supply chains. Millions of young people leave cocoa farming in droves due to low pay and a lack of opportunity, and established farmers are considering switching to other crops like rubber and palm oil.³⁶

"Please tell the companies that if the price is not better, it will be difficult to produce in the future," Marhanah a 43 year old farmer from Indonesia told Oxfam. "If the welfare of cocoa farmers does not improve, especially for women, cocoa will be replaced."

Companies are already taking steps to try to sure up supply but there is strong evidence that investing in women will yield greater marginal returns and increases in agricultural productivity while improving product quality and the lives of millions of women and their families.³⁷

Consumers too are demanding more information about the food they eat and how it was grown, and supply chain issues are now reputational risks for multinational companies. Attention to child labor and environmental degredation in the chocolate industry, for example, has already pushed food and beverage companies to implement new sustainabilty initiatives; the systemic discrimination of women in the supply chain is sure to also strike a nerve with women shoppers.

The time is then ripe for change in the industry. And by investing in and protecting the rights of women cocoa farmers and workers, companies will work to both secure their own supply chains and reputations while helping raise millions of women out of poverty.

What can food and beverage companies do?

Food and beverage companies often advertise their supply chains as a place for opportunity and income in poor countries. Yet most food and beverage companies are doing little to address the inequalities women face within the supply chain.

As part of Oxfam's GROW Campaign, the **Behind the Brands scorecard** investigated and ranked the ten largest food and beverage companies in the world (including Mars, Mondelez and Nestle) on the social impacts of their supply chain policies, and found an almost universal lack of attention to the issues women face in the industry.

- None of the companies collect and publish any data or information regarding how many women work in their supply chain or the conditions they face.
- Five of the largest food and beverage companies do not even mention women or their unique challenges in their sustainability or corporate social responsibility reporting.

- Only half of the companies have any projects in place which demonstrate any effort to work directly or indirectly with women farmers and laborers to foster economic equality and positive income growth.
- None of the ten biggest food and beverage companies have committed to eliminating discrimination of women throughout their supply chain.
- Nestle, Mondelez, and Mars all earned failing scores for their gender policies with scores of just 4, 2 and 1 out of 10 respectively.
- Neither Nestle, Mondelez nor Mars has signed onto the UN Women's Empowerment Principles

It is true that Mars, Mondelez and Nestle have all attempted to improve the sustainability of the cocoa sector in recent years through certifications like fairtrade, sector-wide initiatives, and by increasing investments in select company programs. Mars, for example, made an ambitious promise in 2009 to use 100% certified cocoa by 2020 and Nestle has commited to 100% certified sourcing.³⁸

Oxfam applauds the efforts these companies are making to increase the yields of cocoa farmers and to reduce the incidents of child labor. There is serious work underway to improve outcomes for cocoa farmers. Yet thus far these projects have not directly addressed the issues facing women working within company supply chains. Instead, programs have largely focused on productivity challenges by training mostly male farmers.³⁹

Serious questions have already been raised about the efficacy of these initiatives to truly address child labor.⁴⁰ Child labor will only end when adult laborers in the field earn a wage from which they can feed their families. An important step in that direction is would be to focuse on women -- higher yields can be achieved by giving access and training to the millions of women farmers working in cocoa fields,⁴¹

For all of these reasons Oxfam is calling on Mars, Mondelez and Nestle to lead the way in forging equality for women in the cocoa industry and across the entire supply chain.

Specifically companies must take three important steps to root out gender inequality in their supply chains. Below, Oxfam highlights thirteen specific ways these steps can be implemented.

Step One: "Know and show" how women are treated in their value chains.

- Conduct third party-impact assessments on how women farmers fare in every country from which the company sources, making sure to use confidential, off-site interviews specifically focusing on women workers and women on family farms.
- Publish all relevant gender disaggregated data and assessments and engage with local stakeholders, specifically women's groups.
- Establish a road-map to conduct assessments at least every 5 years in the company's cocoa supply chain and share the relevant gender disaggregated data and assessments. Engage with local women stakeholder groups to improve the company's practices.

Step Two: Commit to transparently adopt a "plan of action" to specifically increase opportunities for women and address inequalities in women's pay and working conditions along the supply chain.

- Require suppliers to provide farmers with a fair price and workers with a living wage that can provide for their basic needs.
- Create agricultural extension services and training programs for women farmers and workers on women's empowerment and discrimination. Also training women farmers on how to increase yields, invest in their farms, and increase their resilience to price shocks and natural disasters. Create a goal to hire a significant number of women extension service providers and ask suppliers to do the same.
- Actively promote female recruitment and leadership of smallholder and cooperative groups that supply companies.

- Reward cooperatives that improve contracting so all farmers men and women receive contracts, and on equal terms.
- Ensure women are a part of teams that audit suppliers, and who train and mentor women farmers.

Step Three: Engage with and influence other powerful and relevant public and private actors to address gender inequality.

- Immediately sign on to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles and encourage all direct suppliers to sign on as well
- Advocate for laws in countries in which the company operates or sources that
 promote gender equity in agriculture including land reform policies and the promotion
 of equal access to training and other services (credit, inputs, marketing).
- Work with certification schemes (RA, FLO, Fairtrade USA, Utz) to incorporate standards and trainings that will address gender inequity and foster women empowerment.
- Work with sector initiatives like WCF, ICI, ICCO to develop joint programs for the cocoa sector to address gender inequality.
- Work with the big cocoa processors, ADM, Cargill, Barry Callebaut, and traders like Olam, Armajaro and others to address gender inequality within their sourcing policies and practices.

Women fighting for change - Olga Rosine Adou, Ivory Coast

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In spite of significant obstacles, many women cocoa producers continue to be ambitious, entrepreneurial leaders in their communities. If they can find willing partners in companies, these women can be powerful agents for change and can create opportunity for a new generation of farmers.

Membership in cocoa growing cooperatives can afford growers significant benefits, including access to trainings, fertilizer and insecticide as well as premiums paid at harvest. But it is rare to find women in cocoa coops in the Ivory Coast, especially in roles of leadership. Olga Rosine Adou a 38 year old cocoa farmer living Agboville thought farmers needed to be organized but there were no cooperatives--, so she started her own. The COOPASA cocoa cooperative was founded with 100 members in 2010 and now has about 300 of which about 30 are women including its director Epi Joelle Kouamela.

Adou's cooperative currently sells to a number of small mostly local buyers. They are seeking certification which could help increase the prices they receive and help them access the supply chains of international companies like Mars, Nestle and Mondelez. But Adou says that startup costs to get certification are high and they cannot afford to pay them.

"There are many things we want," Adou said, when asked what international companies could do to help women cocoa farmers in Ivory Coast. "For example, we want to be trained, taught about what steps to take to do it well. We also need tools, equipment, machetes, motos, buckets, etc, to get the work done. If we had those things, it'd be easier."

"We want these conditions to get better," Adou said. "We want men to understand that women can do what men do. Women are not inferior to men. Men must understand that. And I think that with international pressure, things will start to change." Adou wants to forge a new path for women in the Ivory Coast, "I hope other women will follow us. We want women to realize they can do whatever men can do."

Conclusion

The chocolate industry is poised for change. Climate change is forcing food and beverage companies to look to new lands and growing techniques to meet growing demand, while farmers are less willing to work under poor conditions. Consumers are demanding more responsible practices and certification and sector-wide initiatives are being employed to address the impact of operations on communities around the world.

But thus far, companies have been missing one of the most important and potentially game changing elements of the global supply chain: women. Not only do women make up a large

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percentage of those who plant, pick and process cocoa, they are also the key to food security and sustainable, equitable growth.

Oxfam now calls on three of the world's largest cocoa buyers to take responsibility for the impacts in their supply chains and to improve conditions for the women who make their products possible.

Oxfam

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Oxfam is an international confederation of seveteen organizations working together in 92 countries: Oxfam America (www.oxfamamerica.org), Oxfam Australia (www.oxfam.org.au), Oxfam-in-Belgium (www.oxfamsol.be), Oxfam Canada (www.oxfam.ca), Oxfam France (www.oxfamfrance.org), Oxfam German (www.oxfam.de), Oxfam GB (www.oxfam.org.uk), Oxfam Hong Kong (www.oxfam.org.hk), Oxfam India (www.oxfamindia.org), Intermon Oxfam (www.intermonoxfam.org), Oxfam Ireland (www.oxfamireland.org), Oxfam Italy (www.oxfamitalia.org), Oxfam Japan (www.oxfam.jp), Oxfam Mexico (www.oxfammexico.org) Oxfam New Zealand (www.oxfam.org.nz) Oxfam Novib (www.oxfamnovib.nl), Oxfam Quebec (www.oxfam.qc.ca)

Notes

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- ⁴ Ad Age, "Snickers Surging to Top of Global Candy Race." Found at http://adage.com/article/news/snickers-surging-top-global-candy-race/237349/
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source: Cocoa barometer 2012, visual 3 (p.5) and visual 8 (p.11)

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