

ENHANCING THE LIVELIHOODS OF 'HIDDEN WOMEN' IN GLOBAL SMALLHOLDER VALUE CHAINS

DATE: **WEDNESDAY 23/06**

THEME: **LIVELIHOODS**

FORMAT: **ONLINE
WRITTEN DISCUSSION**

PARTICIPANTS

■ **Leena Camadoo**, Global Advisor - Women's Economic Justice, Oxfam GB

■ **Stephanie Daniels**, Senior Program Director, Sustainable Food Lab

■ **Julie Greene**, VP Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability, Olam

■ **Anu Huhtisaari**, Senior Programme Manager, Ethical Tea Partnership

■ **Ilaria Ida**, Manager, Global Senior Manager Sustainable Sourcing - Livelihoods and Partnerships, Unilever

■ **Inge Jacobs**, Senior Manager Human Rights and Income, Cocoa, Mars

■ **Emmanuel Mancion**, Director & Head of Global Sales, Marcatus

■ **Suzanne Munson**, Director of Global Partnerships & Alliances, Heifer International

■ **Martha Rainer Opoku Mensah**, Programme Officer, Livelihoods and Private Sector, Oxfam in Ghana

■ **Leticia Yankey**, Cocoa Farmer, Ghana

Moderator:

Katie Hyson, Director of Thought Leadership, *Business Fights Poverty*

IN THIS ONLINE WRITTEN DISCUSSION, OUR PANELLISTS EXPLAINED HOW COMPANIES AND PARTNERSHIPS CAN DECISIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING THE LIVELIHOODS OF WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SUPPORTING INITIATIVES LISTEN TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

PARTICIPANTS TOUCHED ON TOPICS RELATED TO GENDER INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATORY SOCIAL NORMS, BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES TO CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS, AND THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF WELL-DESIGNED PARTNERSHIPS.

ALTHOUGH WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR ALMOST HALF OF THE WORLD'S SMALLHOLDER FARMERS, THEY ONLY OWN AROUND 20% OF THE LAND.

KEY INSIGHTS

1 COMPANIES CAN PLAY KEY ROLES IN SUPPORTING WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Our panellists kicked off the discussion by listing several challenges that women smallholder farmers face in developing their businesses. Although women account for almost half of the world's smallholder farmers, they only own around 20% of the land. Deeply entrenched social norms are biased towards men, unpaid care work lands mostly on women's shoulders, and women smallholder farmers lack the same training and financial opportunities that their male counterparts enjoy.

Many companies have adopted a holistic approach to tackle these challenges. They offer special technical and financial support to women smallholder farmers, encourage the inclusion of women in the decision-making process of cooperatives, advocate for policies that can break power imbalances, and invest in closing pay gaps.

2 LISTENING TO LOCALS IS CRITICAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

People who live and work in local communities know in detail what types of challenges are the hardest to overcome and where sustainable solutions may be found. Participants gave multiple examples of successful initiatives taking a bottom-up approach, involving women smallholder farmers in designing and implementing new programmes that would eventually benefit their entire communities. Also, cross-sector collaborations can be highly effective to empower women, develop gender-focused programmes, and enhance gender equality. Companies can provide resources for training and financial support while NGOs and international organisations offer expertise regarding the local context, and collaborative initiatives have a stronger voice when advocating policies to governments.

3 PARTNERSHIPS ARE POWERFUL TOOLS TO ENHANCE THE LIVELIHOODS OF WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Our participants agreed that partnerships involving companies, local and national governments, civil society actors, and multilateral institutions can be decisive contributors to ensuring sustainable and resilient livelihoods for women smallholder farmers. Cross-sector collaborations can employ instruments of transparency and equal participation to gain the trust of

women smallholder farmers. Initiatives that involve communities and farmer groups in the design of supporting programmes contribute to income diversification and higher productivity for women smallholder farmers as well as the promotion of gender equality throughout supply chains. In addition, partnerships acting to combat climate change and its consequences for local communities provide for more resilient women smallholder farmers whose businesses are often in direct contact with natural resources.

INITIATIVES THAT INVOLVE COMMUNITIES AND FARMER GROUPS IN THE DESIGN OF SUPPORTING PROGRAMMES CONTRIBUTE TO INCOME DIVERSIFICATION AND HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY FOR WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AS WELL AS THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY THROUGHOUT SUPPLY CHAINS.

RESOURCES

- [Improving Every Day for Rural Women](#)
- [Women's Economic Empowerment](#)
- [Rainforest Alliance](#)
- [TECATE, for a Mexico Without Violence Against Women](#)
- [Farmers' Voice Radio](#)
- [Ethical Tea Partnership](#)
- [Responsible Farming](#)