

# Solidaridad



## ANALYSIS OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE COCOA SECTOR IN COLOMBIA

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FEDERACION  
NACIONAL DE  
CACAOTEROS  
FONDO NACIONAL DEL CACAO

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## ANALYSIS OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE CACAO SECTOR IN COLOMBIA

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- Asociación de Cacaoteros de Norcasia (Asocanora)
- Asociación Semillas del Campo
- Asociación Victoriana de Cacaoteros (Asovica)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contribution of women to the cocoa sector: progress has been made, but improvements are urgently needed

This study seeks to identify gender-inclusive practices in the Colombian cocoa sector in order to provide information which contributes to its sustainable development. The results show that, although the cocoa industry has made efforts to address gender equity, women are still marginalized both socially and economically, a factor that represents a challenge to improving the sustainability of cocoa farming.

The study was carried out in the second half of 2020 and used a qualitative methodology to explore the life experiences of **60 families** of cocoa farmers in **three regions** of Colombia (**Antioquia, Caldas and Huila**) with the participation of **two partner organizations, Colcocoa and Fedecacao**.




The cocoa industry in Colombia has significant participation of women, **even though there are no firm statistics in this regard**. There is an urgent need to generate knowledge about the socio-demographic character of producer families, using data which has been disaggregated by gender, to enable organizations to plan interventions and carry out work intended to close gender gaps.

Cocoa production in Colombia has great international exposure due to it being a differentiated product for the export market, and there are opportunities to increase production without affecting High Conservation Value Areas; as women typically favor environmental sustainability, there is enormous potential for them to contribute to implementing more ecosystem-friendly agriculture.

Female cocoa farmers are promoting sustainable growth within the sector because, according to the study's findings: i) they consistently and creatively adopt technical recommendations to improve crop productivity and sustainability; ii) they pass on the knowledge acquired in training sessions on the technical, environmental and social aspects of cultivation to their families and the wider community. iii) they go beyond the boundaries of their own farms and participate in solidarity and associative activities within the community.


However, the study shows that cocoa production is an activity in which the contribution made by men is much more visible, and in which **the role of women is not yet sufficiently recognized**. This is associated with a social over-valuation of the masculinized, productive environment, and an underestimation of reproductive work, which is assumed to be feminine "by nature". This can be linked to two factors/situations:

**1**

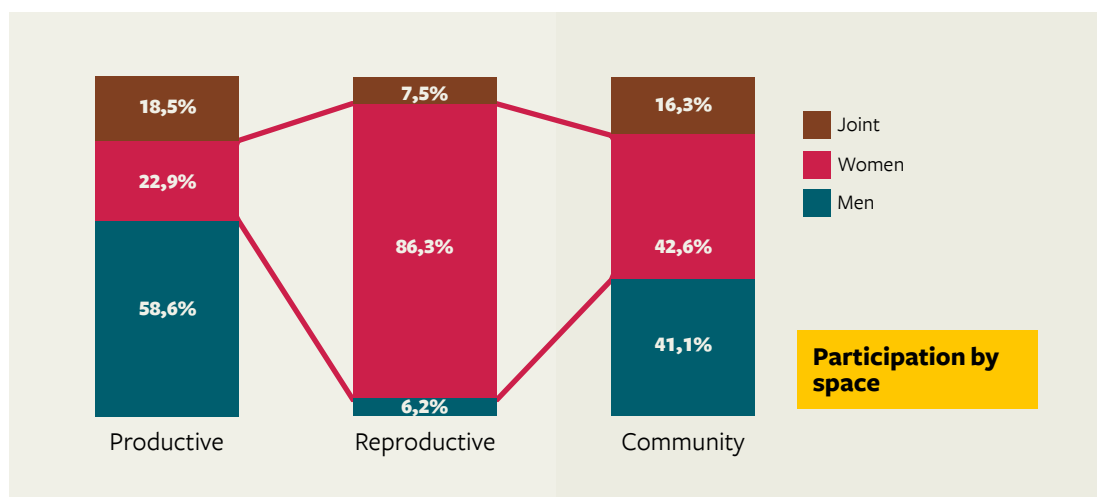


Women encounter institutional, social and cultural barriers that restrict their right to own, use and control land, which in turn limits their access to and control of resources.

**2**



Housework and caring tasks are usually the responsibility of women.



**FIGURE 1.** Participation differentiated by gender for the three spaces

According to the technicians surveyed in the study (**Figure 1**), when comparing the average participation by gender for the three spaces, there is a distinct **imbalance in the participation of women in the productive space**, with just **22.9%** compared to **58.6% of men**. In comparison, **male participation in the reproductive space is just 6.2%** compared to **86.3% participation for women**. In the **community space, there appears to be a trend towards more equal participation that could contribute to reducing gender gaps**.



The stages of cultivation where there is greater participation by women are those related to harvesting, processing, marketing and transformation.



Although the role of women in the maintenance of nurseries and grafting is also increasing due to the specialism of the work, and the greater delicacy and care shown by them in these activities.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS ARE PUTTING ON THEIR GENDER GLASSES

There are important advances in the implementation of gender-based approaches by organizations within the cocoa sector in Colombia. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the experience of **Hacienda La Tentación de Colcocoa, in the municipality of Victoria (Caldas), which has formulated and developed an explicit gender inclusion policy**, providing employment opportunities for women within the sector, promoting their specialization in cultivation and processing work, and providing them with training and incentives. **Fedecacao, for its part, has a union initiative to promote a brand strategy and increase visibility of Colombian cocoa using the image of María del Campo**, who has the potential to become an icon of the empowerment of women within the sector.

## CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

We hope that the results of this study will become a management tool to facilitate the recognition of gender practices in **cocoa-producing families and the organizations** that support them. Some of the challenges that should be prioritized include:

- ▶ **Strategically highlighting** the increasing participation of women in a variety of activities both on the farm and in the community, in order to transform the social construct that “men are providers and women are caregivers”, in other words, denaturing inherited gender stereotypes.
- ▶ Training and empowering technical teams to **implement gender-based approaches** in their work. Based on the experience of Solidaridad, it is proposed to develop inclusive technical assistance from a **family perspective**, since the involvement of all members of a household ensures that fair and balanced benefits can be achieved.

For **Solidaridad**, which began its Cocoa Program in Colombia in 2019, this gender analysis will be developed into a **roadmap describing the strategy and actions of the sectoral agenda in matters of social inclusion connected to the challenges faced by producers and partner organizations** in increasing their sustainable and differentiated crop yield.



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# 1

## **INTRODUCTION**

In a bitter year, cocoa lends a sweet flavor

According to data from the Colombian National Federation of Cocoa Growers (Fedecacao), between 2019 and 2020, the cocoa sector in Colombia recorded the highest production figure in history with 64,281 tons. Similarly, bean exports showed 46% growth, increasing from 8,067 to 11,769 tons within the same period.



Clearly, the above figures show important advances for the sector in a challenging year, where the uncertainty due to Covid-19 imposed a new world order. However, there are additional growth opportunities for the sector, especially in the following areas:

- ▶ Colombia's membership of the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)<sup>1</sup>.
- ▶ Increasing the amount of cocoa produced according to Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS).
- ▶ Increased production and productivity, and quality improvements, such as support for the implementation of the Zero Deforestation Agreement in Colombia.
- ▶ Opportunities for expanding markets, strengthening associativity, and exploring market niches specifically related to the post-conflict context.

<sup>1</sup> Global organization made up of cocoa-producing and consuming countries. It works towards a sustainable global cocoa economy, encompassing social, economic, and environmental dimensions of production and consumption. In addition, it encourages the formulation, financing, and execution of cocoa development projects for the benefit of producer countries that are members of the organization (Fedecacao, 2020).

## GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, KEY FACTORS IN THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SECTOR

Rural women are key to achieving the economic, environmental, and social change necessary for the sustainable development of the sector, because they contribute innovative perspectives in terms of economic sustainability, efficient farming, peaceful coexistence within the territory, and care of cocoa-producing families. In addition, the active engagement of women ensures that the various actors within the production chain can participate and benefit equally from opportunities, resources, and rewards in terms of social and economic development.

Recent research on the gender perspective in cocoa agroforestry in Ecuador and Peru highlights that it is essential to attach greater relevance to the role of women in intensifying and adopting sustainable cocoa production practices. It has been shown that women favor the cultivation of cocoa within agroforestry systems, rather than traditional monoculture. This indicates that strengthening their involvement in decision-making could lead to more sustainable land use (Ramos, Páez and Blare, 2019).

**Solidaridad** believes that promoting gender-based social inclusion from a **family perspective** has a greater impact, since involving all members of the household in the transformations in this field ensures that fair and balanced benefits are achieved. Hence the importance of developing inclusive technical assistance which promotes the participation of fathers, mothers, and children, and in which the different contributions made by each individual are recognized, not only at the productive level, but also at the household and community level.

Recognizing the role women play in the chain contributes to the systemic change required to face up to the global challenges of population growth and the impacts that this entails, since women are most affected by these inequalities.

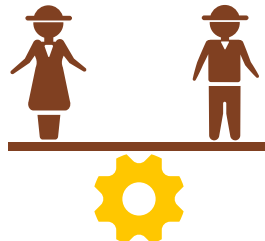
Gender equity means affording women and men the same conditions, treatment and opportunities, adjusted to the characteristics or special circumstances (sex, gender, class, ethnicity, age, religion) of the different groups, in such a way that it is possible to guarantee fair access (Solidaridad, 2017).

To support this approach, the organization established the following ABC:



### **Address barriers to participate**

Eliminate obstacles, practices and barriers that limit women's involvement in projects.



### **Balance gender relations**

Ensure access to resources, participation and representation for both men and women.



### **Create togetherness**

Change perceptions and norms around gender and encourage family dialogue.

Gender analysis is a management tool for organizations working in cocoa production. It allows them to determine whether or not the proposed activities of the projects they support contribute to achieving gender equity and social inclusion, based on the differences that exist between women and men with respect to:

- ▶ conditions, needs and levels of participation,
- ▶ access to and control of resources,
- ▶ development opportunities,
- ▶ access to benefits, and
- ▶ participation in decision-making.

We hope that the results of this study will become a management tool to facilitate the recognition of gender practices within **cocoa-producing families and organizations**, based on the categories of analyses included in its design. Additionally, the study establishes a series of conclusions and recommendations to mitigate against or close gender gaps, aimed at organizations and cocoa farmers. This seeks to contribute to strengthening the sustainability of the cocoa production sector.

**Solidaridad** started the cocoa program in Colombia in 2019. This study will be developed into a roadmap describing the strategy and actions of the sectoral agenda in matters of social inclusion connected to the challenges faced by producers and partner organizations in increasing their sustainable and differentiated crop yield.

## CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE SECTOR: PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT IMPROVEMENTS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED

### GLOBAL SITUATION

Various studies show that rural women face inequalities that limit improvement of their living conditions. Some of the most significant challenges include: concentration of land ownership, scarce education and healthcare options, the wage gap and unpaid work, lack of access to credit and technical assistance, and gender-based violence. All situations that are aggravated by food crises, climate change and, currently, by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Rural women represent a **quarter** of the world's population; they work as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs.

Less than **20%** of landowners worldwide are women.



**37.1%** of farm workers are women; they represent more than half of the national agricultural workforce in **22 countries**.



In rural areas, the gender pay gap can be as high as **40%**.



**80%** of the people displaced by climate change globally are women.

If women in rural areas had the same access to agricultural assets, education, and markets as men, agricultural production could be increased, and the number of hungry people reduced by 100-150 million. (United Nations, 2020).



## NATIONAL SITUATION

The *Situación de las mujeres rurales en Colombia 2010- 2018* [Situation of rural women in Colombia 2010-2018] study, undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) in partnership with the European Union and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), published in 2020, provides interesting data on the demographic, social and economic conditions of rural women in Colombia and the variations in indicators over a ten-year period.

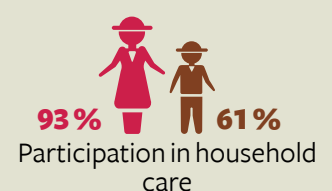
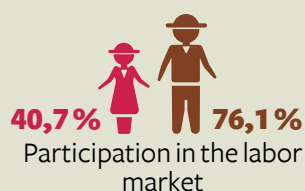
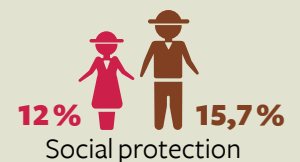
At the national level, **rural women represent 47.2%** of the population living in rural areas. Between 2010 and 2018, the percentage of rural households **headed by women increased by almost 4%**, with a marked reduction in family size: 3.3 people on average. There is also lower **participation of women in the labor market, almost 30% lower than that of men**, and with lower incomes, due to the fact that they have less access to paid jobs and productive assets. Another explanation for this phenomenon is the presence of minors in the household, since, in most cases, women are the main caregivers.

Rural women spend the most time on activities associated with care: **8 hours per day compared to 3 hours per day for men**. They are more likely to perform these activities: **93% of women compared to 61% of men**, which reduces the time available to socialize, study and participate in the labor market with fair remuneration.

According to the ILO, most care work is carried out by unpaid people, **76.2% of which are women and girls**. The economic value of unpaid care work in Colombia is **COP 185.7 trillion**, equivalent to **20% of GDP**, a not inconsiderable figure that should be front and foremost in discussions around policies and programs to better redistribute economic conditions (Mesa Intersectorial de la Economía del Cuidado, 2020).

At the **educational level**, there is a gender gap in favor of rural women. The school attendance rate for girls is higher than for boys. It is striking that this indicator is not reflected in participation in the labor market. The rural-urban gap in educational attainment persists, since rural women have limited access to higher-level education compared to urban women.

## RURAL STATISTICS



Source: MADR, EU & FAO, 2020

There is significant participation of women in the cocoa industry in Colombia, despite the lack of specific statistics in this regard. It is a traditional peasant economy crop planted in small to medium-sized productive units, where family labor is favored.

The above panorama shows the large international impact that Colombian cocoa has as a differentiated product for export markets, which will result in more foreign exchange for the country. Although efforts have been made to address gender equity, women are still marginalized both socially and economically, a factor that represents a challenge to improving the sustainability of cocoa farming.





# 2

## **STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

## OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To recognize the gender-inclusive practices in operation within the cocoa production sector at the level of producer families and organizations.
- ▶ To generate dialogue within producer families about gender relations in productive, reproductive and community spaces.
- ▶ To identify strategic areas of action to promote gender equity within Colombian cocoa production sector organizations.
- ▶ To provide specific recommendations regarding the integration of a gender-inclusive approach within the organizations and producer families of the Colombian cocoa farming sector.

## METHODOLOGY

This study took an exploratory qualitative approach, integrating elements of traditional qualitative and quantitative social research. The intention was to take an open and comprehensive approach to gender practices and their interpretations by different key actors within the cocoa supply chain in Colombia.

As this is an exploratory qualitative study, we did not seek to draw general conclusions about the sector, nor were representative samples taken. Rather, we sought to provide an in-depth look at the complexity of the actors involved in the study (technical teams and cocoa-farming families), and thereby identify the various nuances that explain the ways of life, gender differences and inequities, in the words and from the perspective of them as protagonists (Maxwell, 2012).

Accordingly, we contacted organizations that have a national presence in cocoa-producing regions and that have a high participation of associations of women producers.

The following steps were completed as part of the study:

### DOCUMENT REVIEW

This process sought to understand the context of the study and capitalize on Solidaridad's previous experience in gender issues with other supply chains. We consulted secondary sources of information on the object of the research to allow us to design the intervention, as well as reviewing successful experiences of increasing the empowerment of women in the cocoa production sector at the international level.

### FIELD WORK

The field work was carried out in four (4) of the country's cocoa-producing regions and brought together various actors:

- ▶ **Two partner organizations, Colcocoa and Fedecacao**<sup>2</sup>, which supported the selection and invitation of participants.
- ▶ **15 technicians or outreach workers**, who provided support to the producer families.
- ▶ **60 members of cocoa-producing families** with a balanced sample of men and women, aged between 21 and 65 years. It is important to note that the partners favored groups of women organized in associations which have a long history and regional recognition.

<sup>2</sup> **Colcocoa** is a Colombian company which specializes in exporting high-quality cocoa beans. It works with more than 4,000 producers in six departments within the country with a vision of prosperity and sustainability. Fedecacao is the body that has represented and defended the interests of cocoa farmers nationwide for 60 years.

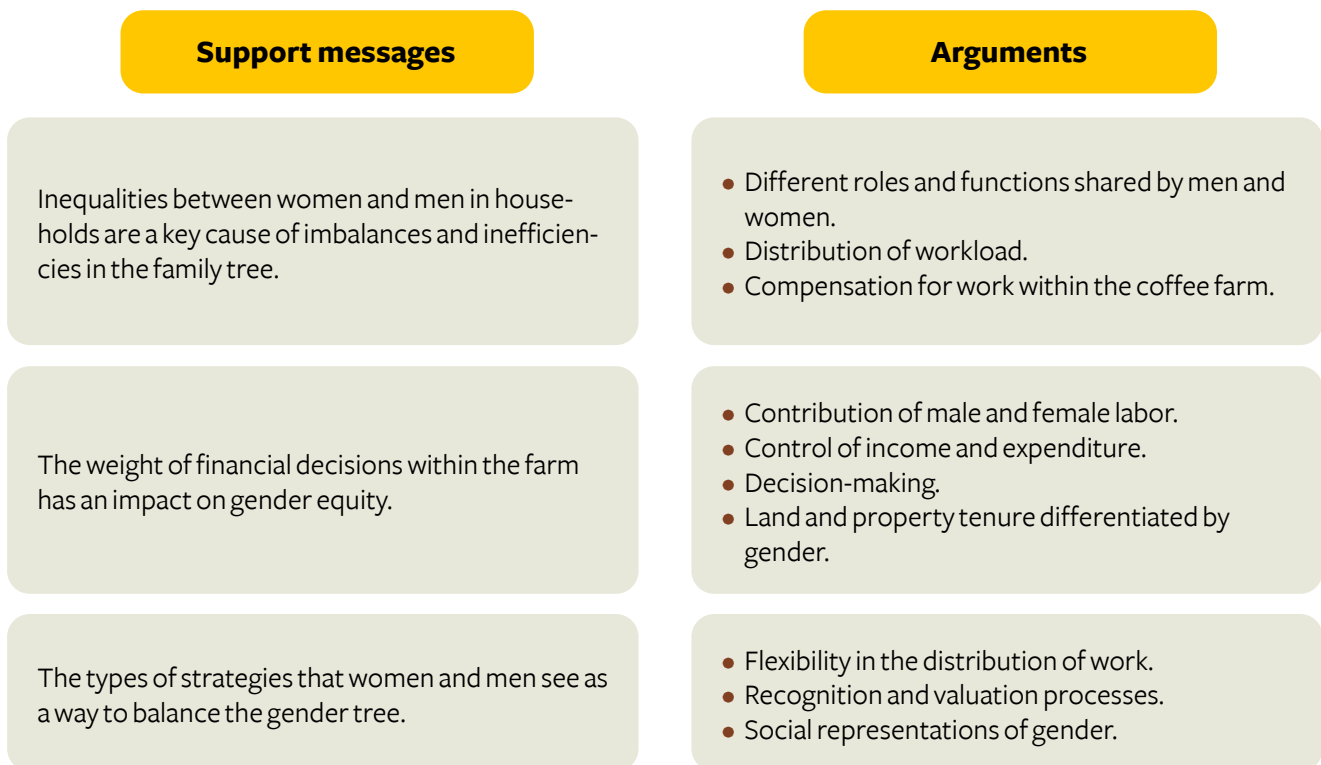
PARTNER	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	PARTICIPATING ASSOCIATION	NO. OF PRODUCERS	NO. OF TECHNICIANS
Colcocoa	Antioquia	Maceo	- Asociación Agropecuaria de Mujeres Emprendedoras Macetitas (Asamem)	17	7
Colcocoa	Caldas	Norcasia & Victoria	- Asociación Victoriana de Cacaoteros (Asovica) - Asociación de Cacaoteros de Norcasia (Asocanora) - Asociación Semillas del Campo	22	3
Fedecacao	Huila	Palermo	- Asociación Agropecuaria de Mujeres Emprendedoras del Huila (CocoAgro)	21	5
<b>Total</b>				<b>60</b>	<b>15</b>

At the methodological level, the field work consisted of two differentiated processes for each actor, as follows:

### a. With the cocoa-producing families

Through the Gender Balance Tree workshop, actions were identified that participants can implement to improve gender balance and increase household well-being, through a more efficient division of labor, to achieve a more equitable distribution of productive expenses and property, and thus improve decision-making on cocoa-producing farms.

#### GENDER BALANCE TREE WORKSHOP MAIN THEME



*Own elaboration based on the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) Methodology,<sup>3</sup> (Mayoux, 2014).*

<sup>3</sup>The associated *Gender Action Learning System* technique is an empowerment methodology that works with men and women to reflect on gender issues in the home and in their productive unit.

This was complemented by a focus group with farmers about their experiences, conceptions and practices around gender equality and inclusion. Aspects related to all categories of analysis were addressed, particularly those issues that may not emerge during the workshops.

## b. With the study's partner organizations

The information collected from the technical teams comes from two sources: first, an individual survey conducted during the field visit, and second, a focus group with the participation of the technicians who serve the region. Both techniques allowed information to be obtained on their approach to gender issues, and the practices they employ to incorporate a gender equality and social inclusion approach in their work with cocoa-farming families.

### DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

During this phase, qualitative tools were used to analyze the data obtained from the workshops and focus groups. Similarly, quantitative analysis provided information resulting from the survey of field technicians and outreach workers.

In the first case, the workshops and focus groups were completely transcribed and the analysis categories were coded, recoded and integrated based on the matrix proposed in the study design (see matrix).

The quantitative information was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of this analysis were triangulated with the qualitative information.

### PREPARATION OF THE GENDER ANALYSIS REPORT

The final document was constructed from the results of the field work and the participants' observations by the consulting team. They collated testimonial evidence and photographic records of the activities carried out with the cocoa-producing families and with the technical teams that participated in the research.

### Matrix of analysis categories and technique used to collect information during the field work

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	FAMILY WORKSHOP	FAMILY FG	TECHNICIAN	ENCUESTA TÉCNICOS
<b>Gender roles</b>	Roles in the reproductive, productive and community areas.	X		X	X
	Individual and shared roles.	X			X
	Modifications of roles in times of higher demand for work.		X		X
	Flexibility in the division of labor or in the assumption of roles not associated with gender.	X	X		
	Gender-related family socialization practices.	X	X		
	Aspirations around farm management differentiated by gender.		X		
<b>Access to and control over resources</b>	Ownership of resources: land, animals, vehicles, etc.	X			X
	Access to resources: training, credit, supplies, tools, technology, leadership opportunities (in the home, community, organization).		X	X	X
	Structure of income by gender.	X			
	Structure and control of expenditure.	X			
	Compensation for work.		X		
	Prevalence of decisions in the reproductive, productive and community areas.		X	X	

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	FAMILY WORKSHOP	FAMILY FG	TECHNICIAN	ENCUESTA TÉCNICOS
<b>Care for human development</b>	Self-recognition processes: self-worth.		X		
	Self-esteem/self-exclusion gaps.		X		
	Care economy.		X		
	Time available for leisure and recreation.		X		
<b>Cultural interpretations of gender practices</b>	Social representations of the feminine and the masculine.		X		
	Conceptions about gender equity.		X	X	
	Importance of including a gender perspective in programs and projects.		X		X
	Differential valuation of the roles of men and women.	X	X	X	
	Perception of the situation of women in cocoa production.		X	X	
	Transformation of gender relations based on generational change.		X	X	
<b>Participation and leadership</b>	Reduction of existing barriers to participation.		X	X	
	Leadership positions in governance structures.		X		
	Transformation of gender roles in leadership matters.		X	X	
<b>Promotion of gender equity in the institutional context</b>	Existence of a gender issues manager or leader.				X
	Allocation of resources on gender issues.				
	Gender distribution of the technical team.				
	Consideration of the needs and interests of men and women.		X		X
	Promotion of equitable access to resources.				X
	Implementation of a gender-based approach in information management (indicators).			X	
	Actions targeted directly at female cocoa farmers.			X	X
	Current and new mechanisms to encourage the participation of women (incentives, invitations to training and farm visits).				X
	Staff sensitivity towards gender issues.			X	X
	Awareness-raising and training activities on gender issues.				X
	Learning needs in relation to gender equity.			X	X
	Lessons learned in relation to gender equity.			X	

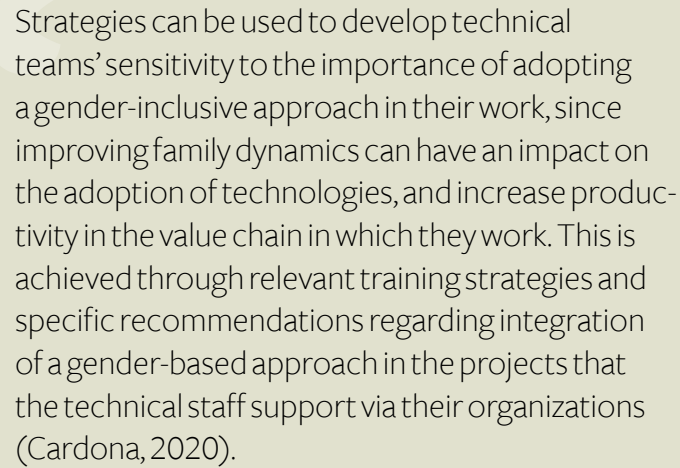


**3**

**RESULTS FROM THE  
POINT OF VIEW OF  
THE ORGANIZATIONS**

This section describes the reflections and practices that are promoted or planned at the institutional level to adopt a gender-inclusive approach internally, and in their work to support cocoa-farming families.

Solidaridad believes it is essential to promote inclusive technical assistance, which achieves results in the short term, through simple strategies that can be applied on an everyday basis.



Strategies can be used to develop technical teams' sensitivity to the importance of adopting a gender-inclusive approach in their work, since improving family dynamics can have an impact on the adoption of technologies, and increase productivity in the value chain in which they work. This is achieved through relevant training strategies and specific recommendations regarding integration of a gender-based approach in the projects that the technical staff support via their organizations (Cardona, 2020).

This section was constructed based on the results of an individual survey of representatives of the Colcocoa and Fedecacao technical teams. The information was complemented with focus groups, which allowed us to dive deeper into the existing knowledge and practices around the gender equity and social inclusion approach adopted during technical assistance processes carried out in the intervention regions.

## **PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE TECHNICIANS**

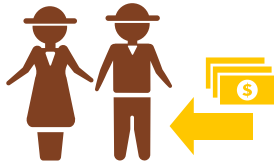
### **PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUITY**

According to the technical staff, social norms regarding female roles do not allow many women to challenge this normalized “homemaker” role. Despite the fact that “there are already women who are empowered” in the areas where they work, the technical staff believe that we must continue fighting for them to gain more space in the world of cocoa production.

They admit that there have been positive changes regarding gender equality in the sector, since women are given more decision-making power in the productive and community spheres. In their view, there is now more acceptance of women being active in the productive space of the farm, but they are not yet equally involved in more “important” decisions; i.e., those relating to crop management, commercialization and the adoption of technology.

For the purposes of this study, gender roles describe the set of behaviors and attitudes that are considered appropriate and desirable for a person based on their biological sex. These roles are based on the ideas that societies have built about the feminine and the masculine. Without ignoring or denying other gender identities, in this paper, we will focus on the roles of women and men whose gender identity coincides with their biological sex.

## TYPE OF ROLE



### Productive

Creation of goods and services that generate income.



### Reproductive

Carrying out activities aimed at caring for the home and family.

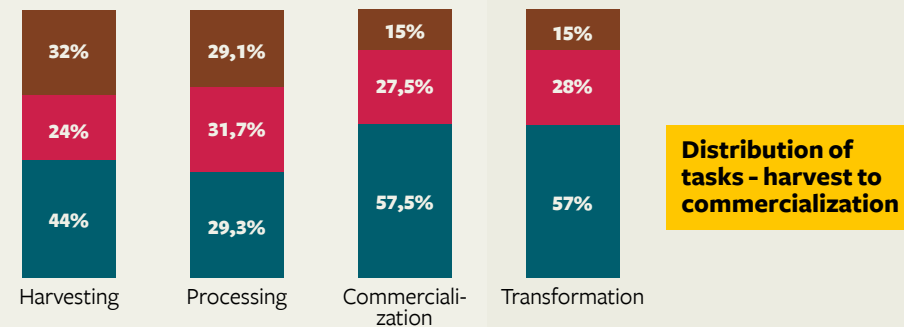
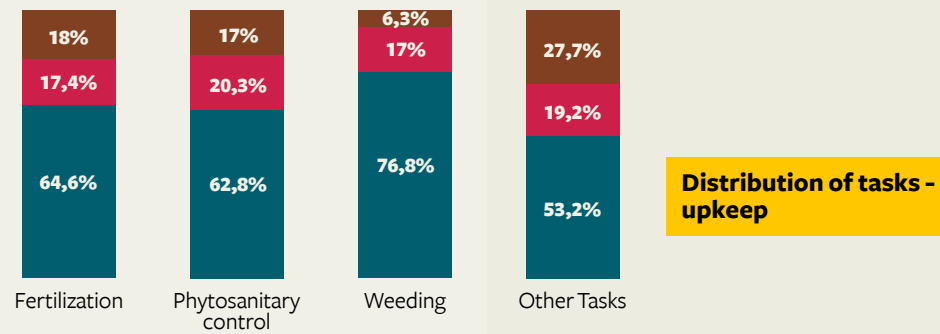


### Community

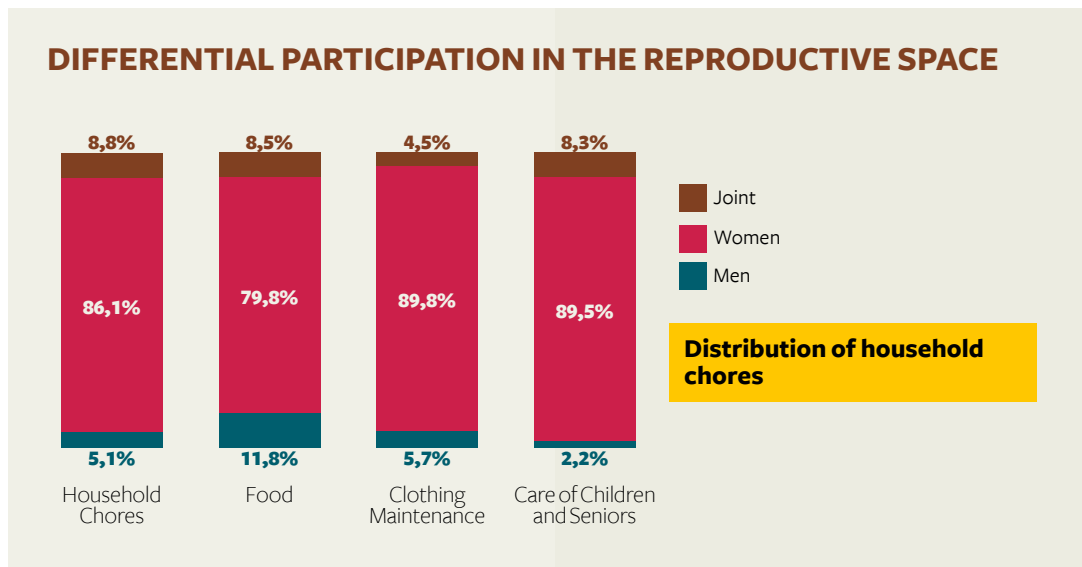
Participation in community benefit activities.

As mentioned above, the following results relate the perceptions of the technical team about the differential participation of men, women or joint work for the following items. This is based on an approximate percentage of the number of families that each one serves in their region.

## DIFFERENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PRODUCTIVE SPACE

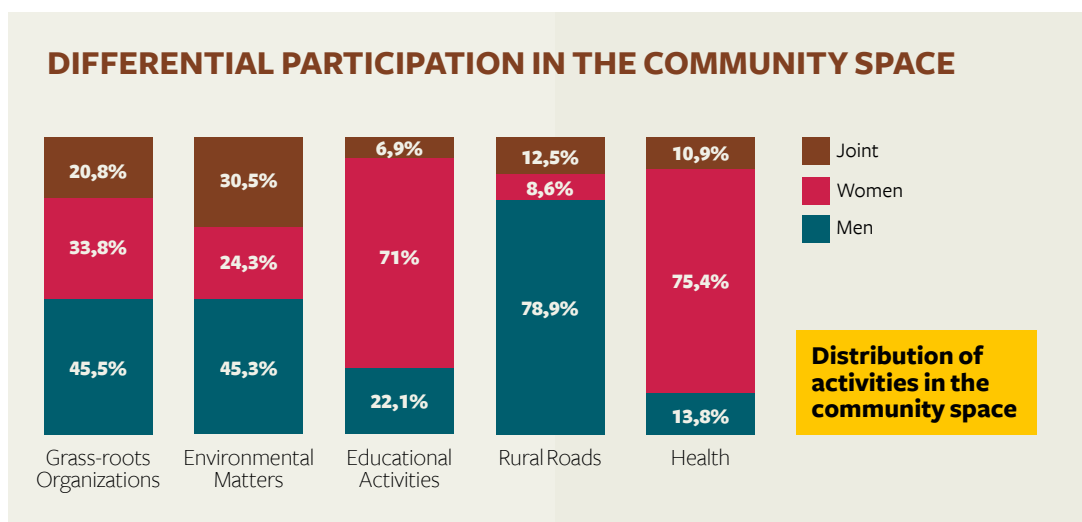


According to those surveyed in the productive space, men predominate with 56.8% participation. The stages of cultivation where there is greatest participation of women are those related to post-harvest and commercialization, with an average participation of 29.1%. The technicians point out that they have encouraged the participation of women in specific cultivation tasks, such as at the nursery and grafting stage, given the care required, and the good results obtained with their support.



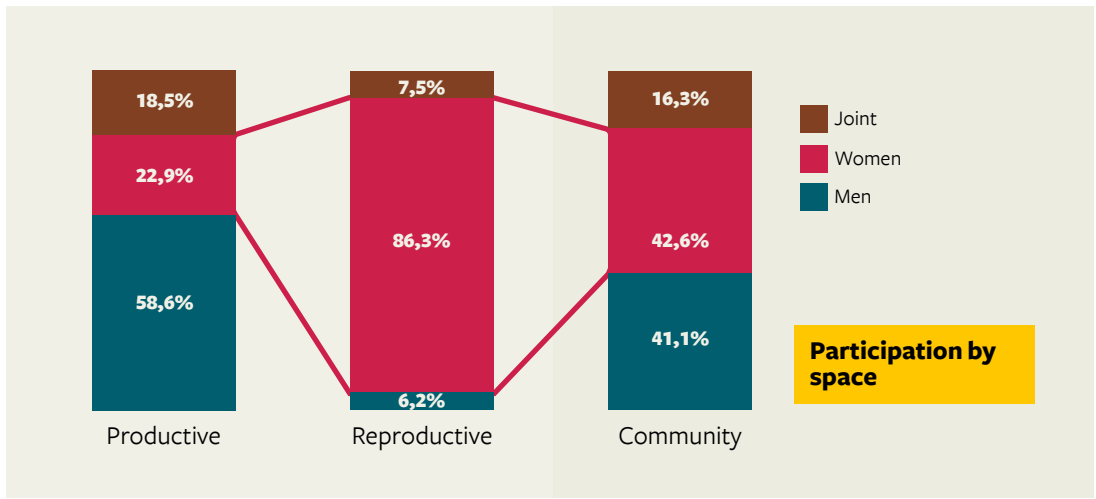
According to the technicians surveyed, there is a predominant participation of women in tasks associated with the reproductive work area; 86.3% corroborate that a gender gap exists. According to recent statistics for Colombia, the participation of women in household care is 93%, while for men it is 61% (MADR, EU and FAO, 2020).

Historically, activities in this area fall more heavily on women, either because it is an inherited pattern, or because of social and cultural gender stereotypes. It is striking that the highest participation of men in activities in the reproductive field occurs in food with 11.8%.



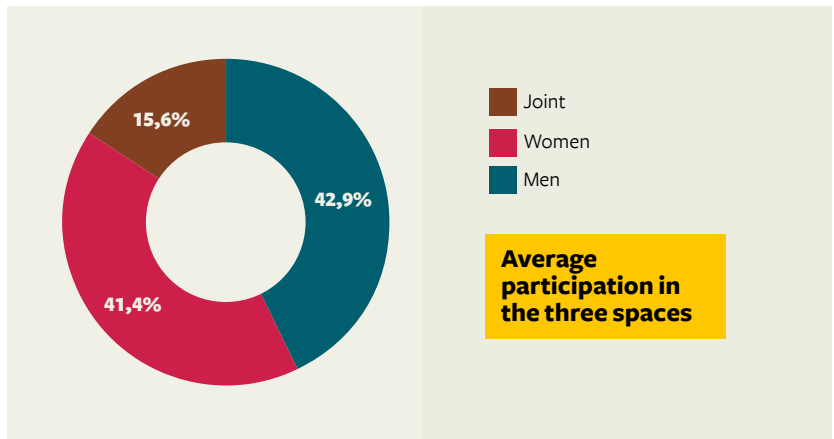
At the community level, according to the technicians, the highest participation of women occurs in the promotion of health issues (75.4%). While for men, highest participation is seen in the maintenance of rural roads (78.9%).

The technicians state that there is currently a greater presence of women in community-based organizations, and the levels of participation in leadership positions have increased.

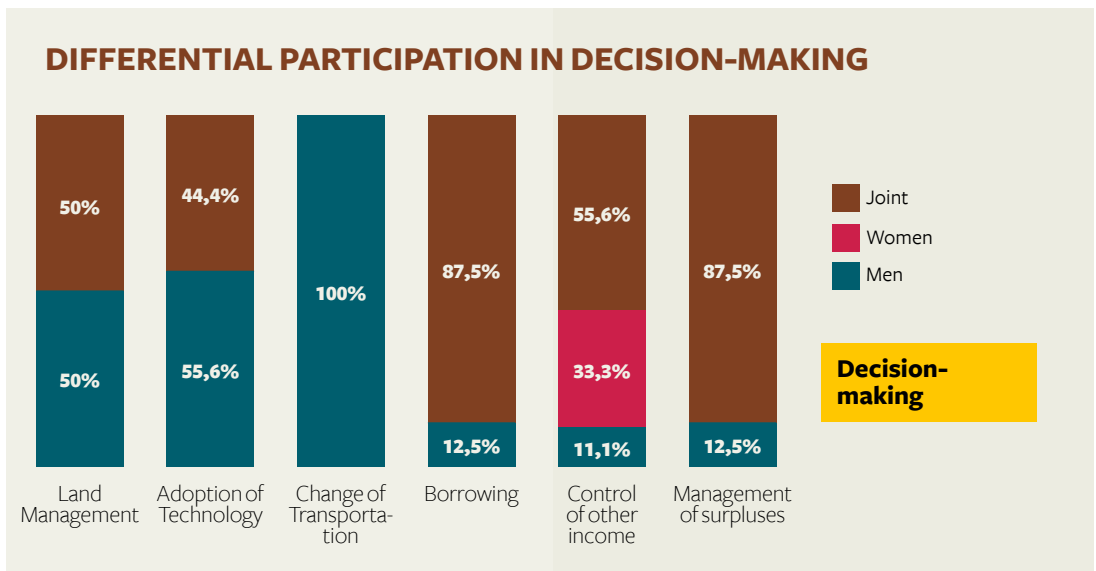


When comparing the average participation by gender for the three spaces, there is a notable imbalance in the participation of women in the productive space, with 22.9%, compared to the participation of men in the reproductive area, with only 6.2%.

In terms of tasks where there is participation by both sexes, the greatest predominance is in harvesting: 32%, support in environmental matters: 30.5%, and household chores: 8.8%.



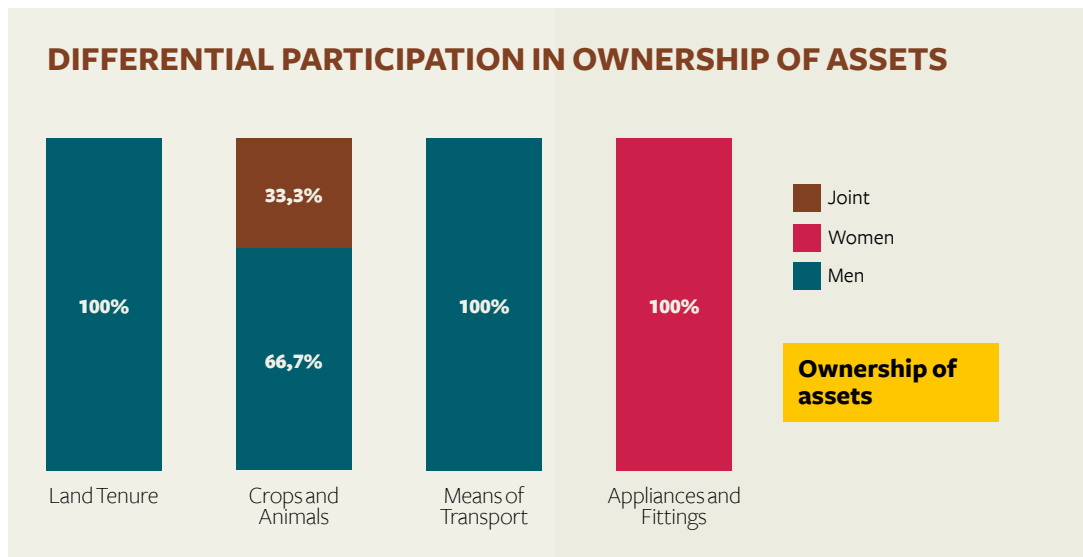
The average participation of women in the three areas is 41.4%, while the participation of men is 42.9%.



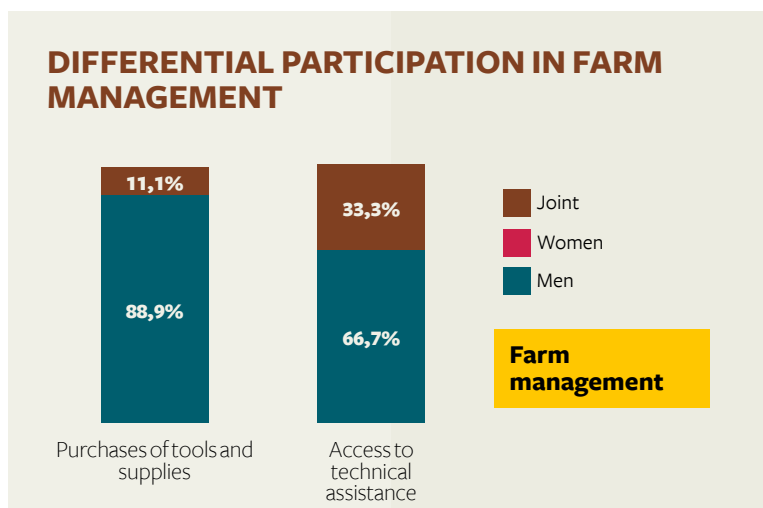
Joint decision-making has a predominance of 54% and decision-making by women with respect to the control of other income is striking at 33%. Regarding the variables referring to money-management decisions (borrowing, control of other income, and management of surpluses), there is a predominance of joint decision-making, at 76.9%.

According to the technicians, women today have greater involvement in technology adoption processes, which represents an opportunity to improve their access to technical assistance, and to have a measurement system for this aspect.

Despite the previous result, it is important to note that the ownership of the assets is not joint, as presented in the following graphic.

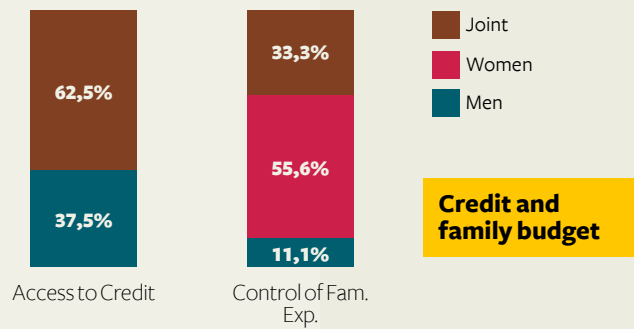


According to the technicians, there is a marked difference in favor of men in the ownership of assets, 67%; with participation concentrated in productive and high-value assets. These results corroborate the hypothesis that the main barrier to empowering rural women is related to the importance of land tenure.



Although it has been identified that women have 23% participation in tasks within the productive space, their participation in activities related to the farm itself and in technical assistance processes is very low. According to the technicians, it is an issue that has been improving, but there is a lack of clearer direction from the organizations in this regard.

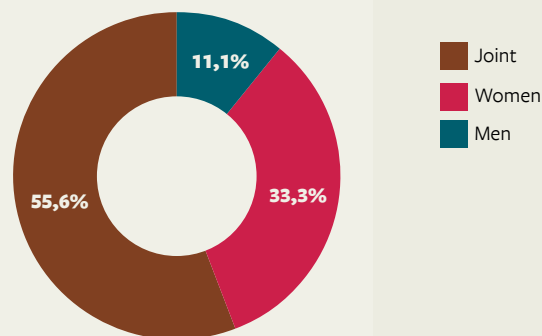
## DIFFERENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN ACCESS TO CREDIT AND CONTROL OF FAMILY EXPENDITURE



Regarding borrowing, although decisions are primarily made jointly, 87.5%, access to credit does not present the same behavior, since joint access is at 62.5%. From this result, it can be inferred that women, even if they do not themselves have access to credit, participate in the decision to borrow money, and the credit is granted to the man.

Restrictions on access to land limit women's productivity, or more effective use of the productive resources to which they have access; credit and technical assistance stand out in these results.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



According to the technicians, joint leadership opportunities have a 55.6% predominance. It is important to note the low percentage assigned by technicians to leadership exercised exclusively by men, just 11%.

As the technicians indicate, women currently have stronger linkages compared to men within the governance structures of producer associations and other community-based organizations. They indicate that there is an awakening of women with regard to leadership issues.

There is a tendency to recognize and value the participation of women, within organizational and community participation processes, by the organizations that support producer families. The representatives of the technical teams point out that the qualities of female leadership, both at family level and in producer associations, are a factor for success, since the common good prevails over individual gain.

## PRACTICES AROUND GENDER EQUITY

Differing levels of appropriation of gender and social inclusion approaches are observed in the two organizations participating in the study. This area can be strengthened with explicit direction by the managers who lead the strategy, and with clear and precise indicators to allow progress in this regard to be monitored and evaluated.

In both cases, the technicians interviewed highlight the involvement of women in productive activities, despite stating that they have not received specific training in this regard.

The technicians have encouraged the participation of women in specific cultivation tasks, such as nursery maintenance, grafting, pollination, and pruning, since they are more careful and have developed skills for these tasks. They consider that the participation of women in technical assistance has also increased, although they recognize that this process had not been implemented deliberately or systematically within the organizations they represent, due to the fact that the conventional means of invitation, methodologies, and forms of evaluation prevail in the planning and implementation of outreach methods (training workshops, farm visits, method demonstrations, tours and Field Schools); i.e., there are no gender-differentiated processes for this purpose.

“ I think that men’s knowledge of crop management is still a little higher. This imbalance continues because we still need knowledge and training as technicians to involve more women in training and support (representative of the technical team).

From their testimonies, the technical teams are aware that their own vision, points of view and experiences facilitate or limit the transformation of gender stereotypes, and therefore their relationship with all members of the cocoa-farming families. Recognizing your own biases in respect of gender issues, and knowing how to address them in your project support role, can be essential for obtaining better results.

“ I see that women are getting more involved in managing their farms. This is a very large trend and one that has been gradually permeating culturally in regions where there is more access to information, where gender projects have a greater impact. The world is changing, and women and men see that they can share roles. I give them my example: at home, I help my wife, I iron, I do everything. If the organizations have the tools, strategies, and policies, perhaps the idea is to “evangelize” more, go deeper and use them in our technical advisory work (representative of the technical team).

When enquiring about specific practices or actions that encourage the participation of women, both men and women in the technical assistance service use informal strategies, and depend on their own initiative in the projects they carry out. For example, one technician says that he gets involved in kitchen chores as an icebreaker activity on field visits; this allows him to share more with the women and make observations at the same time as he deals with aspects related to his work (productive and administrative issues associated with cocoa farming).

Another technician states that a good practice is to invite the ladies to share food with them, since generally that space is reserved only for male producers.

In addition, they try to include children in the visit, taking advantage of topics of interest, such as technology, and the handling of calculations that can be more complex for their parents.

The technical staff included in the study recognize the important role of female cocoa producers in passing on lessons about farming techniques and administration to their families and the community in general. That is why they have gradually increased their invitations to training workshops, tours, and other rural outreach techniques. However, there are barriers that limit more women in cocoa production from participating in these spaces, either because their husbands do not agree with their growing leadership or because the technicians intentionally do not invite them, and also due to logistical aspects, such as schedules, meeting places, methodologies, and other constraints.



Some learnings experiences of the technical staff from the work carried out with women include:

- ▶ Women are more likely to put common well-being first, and this has a positive impact at the family and community level.
- ▶ Due to the high participation of women in the reproductive sphere, as caregivers for children and performers of household chores, organizations must be more flexible in their support strategies.
- ▶ Women show a high commitment to following technical assistance recommendations.
- ▶ The skill and care shown by female producers in some tasks related to cocoa farming facilitate better cost-benefit ratios.
- ▶ Women tend to replicate what they have learned through workshops and various outreach methods to a greater extent with all family members.

## **TRAINING NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Appropriating an inclusive technical assistance approach in organizations working in the cocoa sector involves a process of training and supporting internal personnel that streamlines processes at the field level. As mentioned in a previous section, in Solidaridad's experience, it is key that said support has a family perspective. This is to achieve a greater impact on the adoption of farming technologies, and also to reduce gender inequalities at the rural household level. Therefore, technical teams should take a closer look at family practices that favor or limit their technical assistance work.

Various studies indicate the importance of motivating field staff to include women in technical assistance to a greater extent. This helps address the structural problems faced by women: the heavy workload of female producers, and the low priority that outreach workers often afford to women (FAO, n.d.).

Training processes on social and specific gender equality and social inclusion issues are scarce or non-existent, according to the information provided by the Colcocoa and Fedecacao technical teams. As mentioned above, each technician puts in place actions that involve women in their advisory and technical support work according to their own personal criteria. Only those staff who have been part of specific women’s projects have had some introduction to training processes, but these have not been permanent, nor have they had support in incorporating them into their working practices.

The following graphics show the results of a survey of technicians from both organizations to take stock of learning and training needs in respect of gender equity. Each of the participants assigned a rating from 1 to 5 to the topics suggested by the facilitating team, where 1 is the lowest rating and 5 is the highest in terms of importance. The graphics consolidate the averages for each of the organizations.

The average rating for the variables in both groups is very homogeneous. It is important to note that no rating was below four (4), which indicates that the technical teams believe these topics to be relevant to their professional practice. The highest-rated topic for both groups focuses on the development of indicators related to gender.

### COLCOCOA TECHNICAL TEAM



### FEDECACAO TECHNICAL TEAM



These results can act as guidelines for organizations on the topics of greatest interest to technical teams, to enable them to take ownership of an inclusive technical assistance approach that will allow them to recognize the work performed by men and women in the cultivation process, and thus promote a culture of gender equity and social inclusion with the cocoa-farming families that they support.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A common recommendation on the issue of gender and agriculture is to promote the inclusion of women in technical teams, and determine whether this gives different results with respect to the adoption of technology, access to knowledge, and relationships with members of producer families.

To this end, female technical assistants have been entering a space that was believed to be reserved for men in the cocoa sector. In the specific case of the study participants, the people in this role were **33% women**.

According to what was expressed in the family focus groups, now they even see more women than men in program support. They believe that there has been an improvement in this regard but acknowledge that there is still work to be done within the sector.



Technical assistance is a reflection of what is experienced in producer families. Patriarchal systems limit the number of women technicians in the sector because they don't have faith in our physical ability to take on the tasks entrusted to us (female representative of the technical team).

Female technical staff insist on the importance of women being included in farm decisions. Therefore, they are more aware of involving them in technical assistance processes and highlight the good results in terms of adopting good agricultural practice recommendations in cocoa cultivation.

The communities served by women call them names, such as “wild boar”, because they drive motorcycles, walk along trails, perform farming tasks with the families they serve, etc., workspaces that are generally limited to men. However, they themselves believe that producers put more faith in the recommendations of the male technicians.

The foregoing shows that there is still a lack of socio-cultural transformation within families, and within the organizations themselves, to increase the participation of women in the roles of outreach worker or technical assistant.



## INCLUSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUCCESS STORIES AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

### HACIENDA LA TENTACIÓN-COLCOCOA

We note the empowerment of women in the municipality of Victoria, located in the east of the department of Caldas. Thanks to the opportunity provided by **Colcocoa**, through **Hacienda la Tentación**<sup>4</sup>, women have jobs as cocoa farm workers.

The Hacienda management raised awareness around providing employment for women, and a gender-inclusive policy was developed in 2013 that “seeks to implement specific actions that reaffirm their contribution to reducing gender inequality and demonstrate their commitment to human rights and the promotion of opportunities on equitable terms.”

The deployment of this policy is visible in i) the equitable inclusion of women in all work teams and in all positions and ii) the adoption of measures that promote the participation and empowerment of women.

An explicit indicator is that 15% of Hacienda staff in the plant will always be women, who will carry out tasks and occupy positions according to their capabilities and skills.

Some of the most relevant results in relation to gender inclusion reported by Hacienda la Tentación include:

- ▶ Through the company’s study of times and movements, it was possible to identify that women have better performance in certain specific tasks in cocoa cultivation, such as irrigation, monitoring of pests and diseases, harvesting, and post-harvest. Once this performance has been identified, they join the working groups for these specific tasks.
- ▶ Women have flexibility in terms of maternity leave and leave to fulfill their obligations as mothers, given their importance to the growth and development of their children.
- ▶ The women linked to the company have found economic independence at home, since the employment contract system guarantees fair salary conditions to meet all basic needs and improve their quality of life and that of their family group.

The Colcocoa technical team, which has closely monitored the process with the women, highlights the following aspects, which complement those we have already described:

The women linked to the project are motivated to study and train, seeking to improve their work, and progress within the company, which results in job satisfaction for them, and loyalty for the Hacienda. It is striking that hiring women has reduced labor mobility, which was a constant process when the hiring of men was favored.

The Hacienda, with the support of Colcocoa, has implemented a relevant training process, accompanied by a system of incentives and recognitions to reward the performance of the women they hire.

<sup>4</sup>A farm that has seven years’ experience in the cultivation of fine flavour cocoa in Colombia. It has a 200-hectare plantation with established agroforestry systems, 150 hectares of which are dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity, forestry, and the protection of hydrographic basins.

There has been evidence of a change in the living conditions of families in the region, due to the economic income received by women, which is usually invested in their children and in home comforts. This has resulted in higher rates of schooling for them and their children. Some of the workers have even been able to opt to enter higher education, mainly technical and technological training on issues related to the agricultural sector.

Regarding the management of finances by women, their organization and capacity for foresight in money management are notable, since they choose to have their own savings, which has had a social impact in the area of influence of the project.

In contrast, an increase in divorces has been reported in the region, perhaps explained by the growing leadership that women have had within the home. In this sense, it is essential to support this process from the perspective of gender equity to reduce the tensions that exist between couples due to the predominant patriarchal viewpoint.

### **MARÍA DEL CAMPO: THE WOMAN WHO REPRESENTS COLOMBIAN COCOA FARMING AND THE PROSPECTS OF PACIFISTIC AND UNITED WOMEN**

Fedecacao decided to invite women cocoa farmers to select someone who could symbolize the cocoa-farming families in Colombia, and represent Colombian cocoa in national and international markets. Out of more than 600 applications, they selected **María del Campo**, a woman from Nilo, Cundinamarca, who is a mother, wife, unity leader, and who promotes environmentally responsible cultivation.

By highlighting these various roles in the person of María del Campo, Fedecacao makes visible the diversity of the contributions of rural women as entrepreneurial women with a spirit of solidarity, who work every day to help transform not only the productive space in relation to farming, but also social and economic aspects of the lives of women, their families, and communities.

Furthermore, María del Campo makes female cocoa farmers visible in an “array” of ways of being a rural woman. These include female heads of households, widowed women, childless women, and women who are wives and mothers. This representation confirms that cocoa is a family crop that requires the contribution of complementary roles into which the men and women of all generations fit. Likewise, recognition is given to female chocolatiers, women who, without being cocoa producers, are promoting, for example, the artisanal chocolate industry. In short, the María del Campo brand makes the women who participate in the subsector visible throughout the cocoa-chocolate value chain in all their social, economic, political, cultural and scientific dimensions.

One of the main objectives of the María del Campo brand is to make visible the contribution of female cocoa farmers in their productive and social aspects. In terms of production, the brand is making visible contributions that go beyond the known, although it is almost “an unquestionable truth”, and highlights the contribution of female cocoa farmers to the harvesting and post-harvest processes and in ensuring the quality of dry cocoa beans. It is about making visible their contributions to certification processes on farms, and the protection of the environment.

Furthermore, María del Campo is making visible the role of women in leadership processes within solidarity organizations. As part of this mobilization, women are asserting themselves, recognizing their capabilities, and are daring to participate. Along the lines of “cocoa as a crop of peace”, women are gaining space, not only as associates but also as leaders. In this way, they contribute to repairing the social fabric in territories affected by the conflict and generate true solidarity and social prospects that permeate families, communities, and society.

Although the impact of María del Campo has not been measured, Fedecacao believes that this representation has influenced and is inspiring rural women. They clarify that this representation is not part of a “beauty contest”, and therefore breaks with cultural stereotypes. Currently, the idea is being replicated, and several municipalities are inviting women to be the local María del Campo. In addition, Fedecacao, in partnership with international cooperation, is making progress with leadership training programs and strengthening associations. The major aim is for women to become the main transmitter of cocoa culture, due to their role as family integrator.

**The sector is represented by the character María del Campo since 2016**

*Photo: Fedecacao*





4

**RESULTS FROM THE  
POINT OF VIEW OF  
COCOA-FARMING  
FAMILIES**

This section presents the main conclusions of the dialogue with men and women who dedicate themselves to cocoa production, and who see cocoa farming as an opportunity to improve their living conditions. Their experiences and points of view on gender relations in productive, reproductive and community spaces allowed us to better understand the valuation of the feminine and the masculine, as well as some of the barriers that women in the sector face to exercise their rights and capabilities in full.

## PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER RELATIONS AMONG PRODUCER FAMILIES

Traditionally, in rural areas, gender roles are reflected in the distribution of specific tasks between men and women in specific spaces. Agricultural production, on which the family's economic livelihood depends, is primarily a male responsibility; while women take charge of the housework, caring for the family and food crops near the home (FAO, 2011; Cortínez, 2016). The study findings confirm this trend. Both the members of the families and technical team staff validate this distribution of roles on cocoa farms:

“Men do the heaviest work. The women stay inside the house and do the little things around the home” (male participant).

“There are women who have left that place, but we still have many women who are still there, in that pressure and in that machismo, where the wife only washes dishes and takes care of the children, nothing more” (female member of the technical team).

Among cocoa-farming families, this distribution of responsibilities is reinforced by the idea that men have a greater capacity than women to perform tasks that require physical strength, as is the case with many tasks on the farm. However, women also recognize their capacity for productive work.

We as women do not have the physical capacity of strength, which I consider to be the greatest value in a man, which is that strength that women do not have. I say that we all have that capacity, but in other aspects. I argue that women cannot suddenly do everything all at once, as they say, but slowly, slowly we are doing everything (female participant)

Men are also attributed greater strength of character, which is why, both at home and in public, they usually represent authority. While women are perceived as being more compassionate and docile. But, as will be seen later, women also tend to be described as “much more

organized.” These stereotypes associated with *femininity* serve in many cases to justify their preponderant role as educators and caregivers.

Although these roles tend to be largely fixed, they are not immutable, and depend on circumstances such as individual and family trajectories. Over time, both men and women, but particularly woman, have come to perform activities that do not correspond to their traditional roles. In some cocoa-farming households, they are responsible for a large proportion of farming and processing tasks, especially female heads of household who have assumed productive roles that were previously exclusively held by men, in addition to being prominent leaders in their associations.

Although the traditional roles assigned to men and women are still in force, some male participants report that their home education included “learning to do everything,” which includes tasks such as cooking, washing, and other household chores. While, in the case of women, some claim to have received a family education that encouraged them to learn to get ahead on their own, without waiting for emotional or financial support from a partner. These cases are exceptional.

Although these boundaries between male and female work may be flexible, the imbalance in roles remains notable. It is more common for women to be involved in productive work on the farm than for men to contribute to the housework or care for other family members.

In times of increased work, women’s working time increases considerably without them receiving support with housework in return, or only exceptionally, for example, when they get sick or have to run errands. Their greater participation in production work does not necessarily translate into a greater role in household economic decisions. In this regard, women continue to be in a markedly disadvantaged situation.

## GENDER-RELATED FAMILY SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES

While, even within many families, it is believed that the roles assigned to men and women are natural and do not merit being contested, other participants, both men and women, recognize that the education received since childhood, “the way we were raised,” influences the way we now see and experience gender roles as adults. “I once heard a lady say when a girl was born: ‘Ah! Another woman for the kitchen, another cook...’ That’s the mentality she was raised with” (male participant).



To this end, some families try to involve their sons and daughters in household chores from an early age.

“The idea is that as a family when our children are growing up, that we show that part, that there is equity, dialogue in everything, and sharing. So that our children will go away with all this, so that in future generations the woman will grow up and be put in the same position as the man (female participant).”

They consider that these teachings not only have a practical purpose for adult life, but also contribute to dismantling the general system which decrees that women should be responsible for tasks in the reproductive sphere, while men have a productive role, which is more highly valued socially.

## WOMEN IN COCOA PRODUCTION

Women have gained important spaces in cocoa production. They perform tasks in which they have specialized, such as pollination, grafting and pruning, as they are considered to be more skilled and careful. As indicated in the previous section, women’s participation in technical matters has also increased; through workshops and various training courses, they have acquired new knowledge about crop management and post-harvest processes.

However, asymmetries and barriers persist that prevent the role of women in cocoa production from being valued equally to that of men:

“One time, here at the Association, they had to do some cocoa tests and the person in charge of the fermentation was a woman. I remember there were three men and they were surprised, and one made a macho comment like: “Hmm, that won’t turn out well...” (female participant).”

The fact that productive work is oriented towards the market and provides economic returns, while women’s activities are usually described as *help* and not as *work*, is a factor that exacerbates the lesser visibility of their contribution to their families’ livelihood.

## RECOGNITION PRACTICES: ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES

Although women continue to gain ground in cocoa farming, gaps persist in terms of access to and control of resources, and in decision-making on the farm. In the opinion of some participants, their role is not valued in part because they themselves refuse to recognize the value of their contribution:

It is not that women are not capable; it is that we as women have taken on the task of letting the man make decisions about our lives, and that is why, on many occasions, decisions are made that are poorly made, because often men do not employ the same caution that women do when making decisions (female participant).

Because, according to traditional gender roles, women are expected to be responsible for domestic activities, they have little time to participate in technical training and associative activities. This limits their opportunities to become more decisively involved in productive matters, and prevents them from acquiring new knowledge, which would give them more tools to empower themselves in their role in production and marketing, and therefore also in terms of income.

Although the families spoke about joint decision-making regarding household and farm management, many farm decisions are often in the hands of men. Consequently, in a productive system, it is men who mostly govern crop management and marketing practices; men also have the technical and practical knowledge related to the sale of the final product. This also results in women being frequently neglected in many technical assistance practices.

Regarding the ownership of resources, exploration of the issue with the cocoa-farming families made it clear that, even when women are formally listed as owners, it does not necessarily imply that they have a voice in decisions about how to manage the farm. It is common in these cases for the man to make the decisions and manage everything farming related. This indicates that social pressure derived from traditional gender roles is another barrier to participation. However, the participants note that a change is taking place in this regard.

### **INCOME STRUCTURE AND EXPENDITURE CONTROL BY GENDER**

Although both men and women work in the cocoa industry, it is common for the man to receive the income and exercise control over these resources. This is partly due to the fact that, in the distribution of tasks and roles, it is usually the man who travels to the municipal capital to sell the farm's products (coffee, cocoa, bananas).

According to conversations with coffee-growing families, in general, the largest expenses are agreed together. For example: the purchase or lease of a new lot to extend the crop, investments in home improvements, or the acquisition of an electrical appliance. Although there is a perception that women are better money managers, which reinforces their participation in decisions about certain purchases, expenditure related to investments concerning work on the farm (such as specific utensils or tools) in general are decisions which are taken by men. Since it is the man who usually sells the cocoa, it is he who manages expenditure related to cultivation, such as the purchase of fertilizers.

She doesn't know what type of fertilizer should be used. She doesn't know what a bundle of compost or a bundle of lime is worth, but she says: "Go yourself, you know what you buy, how you buy it, what lime you need, what fertilizer you need", that almost always happens to me (male participant).

This is related to women's reduced access to technical knowledge and lesser experience in cultivation.

## COMPENSATION FOR WORK

As mentioned above, childcare and housework are less valued, despite being essential to a family's livelihood and domestic life. When evaluating the different contributions made by women and men, the men participating in this study noted that women's work is much less visible than theirs.

I think that the most thankless work, really, is that done by women. It's like the least noticeable (male participant).

She is the first to get up and the last to go to bed, and, in the evening, she looks at what she's done and she's not done anything... At least we go out to cut and come home in the evening. And at least we see the plot we made or some other thing, but in the house in the evening what do you look at? Then again, the same, and the next day she gets up early to do the same again (male participant).

Women's work with the crops is rarely compensated monetarily. The participants agree that women do not receive the financial compensation they should for their cultivation and production work. For example, in marketing, there is no specific incentive for women that is reflected in a special premium.

Women work, but they do not receive a monetary benefit, which is what I would like, for women's work to be equitable at the time of the trade (female participant).

I have witnessed, in the commercial part, that is to say when the cocoa is put up for sale, that the man will receive the money and not give it to the woman. And the woman harvests cocoa, dries it, and everything related to fermentation, and he only takes it to sell it and the money remains for him (member of the technical team).

Eventually, the lower quality product or "pasilla" is allocated to the women and they receive an income from its sale. The act of leaving lower quality cocoa as a gift for the women or a small batch for them to manage are ways of acknowledging their contribution.

Remuneration for work depends largely on a man's discretion. In many cases, men do not value the contribution made by their wife or partner to the productive work to the same extent as the wage of an external worker<sup>5</sup>.

But, in other households, the monetary compensation for work is more balanced. It is considered that, since both participated in production, both should also be compensated with the income from the sale of cocoa, and the profits shared. In these cases, the earnings are part of a "common pot" for everyday expenditure or for unexpected circumstances (scythe repair, purchase of medicines, etc.).

In the matter of production, she works with me, she deseeds, she stirs, she chooses. It is sold, but it goes ... as we say ... always to the same place. Here, it's not a case of this is your share, and this is your share. No. It's always common money, and we use it for the fertilizer, for the children's things, for what we need, it always goes in the same joint pot of what we have (male participant).

Some women talk about symbolic compensation through words (such as when their partners or family members praise them for the good taste of the food they prepare). They also see their work rewarded with gestures from their husbands, such as invitations to go out to eat, buying something ready-prepared for lunch, receiving a gift, or having a rest from housework on Sundays.

Sometimes the money from the sale of cocoa is invested in household appliances, which, in the opinion of some participants, represents a kind of compensation for the women, because it lightens their workload or provides them with some form of satisfaction.

As shown in the case of Hacienda La Tentación, some large farms hire women for pruning and grafting tasks who receive the same remuneration as men.

## CARE PRACTICES FOR WELL-BEING

Among the participating families, there are growing opportunities to facilitate the performance by men and women of care and domestic activities. These opportunities potentially represent gains due to the diversity of perspectives and skills that are integrated into the management of the family, the farm and the cocoa sector as a whole. Increasing these opportunities requires increasing the visibility of life experiences that illustrate the benefits of distributing care and domestic work more fairly between men and women.



<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that, within the small agricultural family economy, the producer usually does not account for their work as part of the production costs.

Traditionally, there is an unequal distribution of domestic and care work between men and women on the farm.

“That is where the inequality is, that is where I do not agree, this is the inequality that women have to stand up against. For example: a girl gets up at four in the morning, leaves breakfast, makes lunch, or whatever, washes, does everything and starts straight up. Not the husband. He gets up “Mummy, serve me breakfast” and she goes to do it. In the afternoon he arrives at four o’clock, he rests; she also arrives, organizes food, her son, and all that, or whatever, that’s where the imbalance is (female participant).

The first aspect, domestic work, includes household maintenance activities, such as food preparation and cleaning; while the second aspect includes care work, and activities around caring for people, such as children, the elderly, or people with special needs. Typically, there has been greater participation of women both in domestic work and in caring for people. A participant stated: “Men always see themselves as the providers for the household, and women are the ones who take care of them.” However, some families in the study mentioned that men, and children, are gradually becoming more involved in carrying out these activities.

The study made it possible to explore various beliefs around caring that are expressed in family practices. On the one hand, women are expected to take care of the family, which demands a lot of responsibility, physical effort and time. On the other hand, it is believed that due to their physical fragility, they cannot or should not assume certain tasks on the farm. As a result of some of these beliefs, in the traditional context of the division of gender roles, there is a tendency to exclude women from more active participation. In other words, she is either too busy in the kitchen (domestic work) or looking after children (taking care of people), or she should not be involved due to her status as a woman.

Despite this, according to one participant: “Kitchen work is very hard; that’s why I don’t do it.” Cooking is an interesting example put forward by several families, because it is both work that promotes a family’s health, well-being and finances, and work that requires great physical effort and time. By stopping to reflect on these practices with men and women, the need for care work to be recognized and shared to a greater extent becomes evident to the family.

Domestic and care work activities were not observed to be remunerated in any of the families. This practice coincides with the national and global trend for the care economy (Mesa Intersectorial de la Economía del Cuidado, 2020). Because this study was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was possible to observe and corroborate the global and national trend in the differential impacts on men and women, since women experience a greater demand in respect of care activities. With the number of possible day laborers on the farm reduced, both men and women have to get involved to meet farming needs, but this means that the working day is extended even more for women.

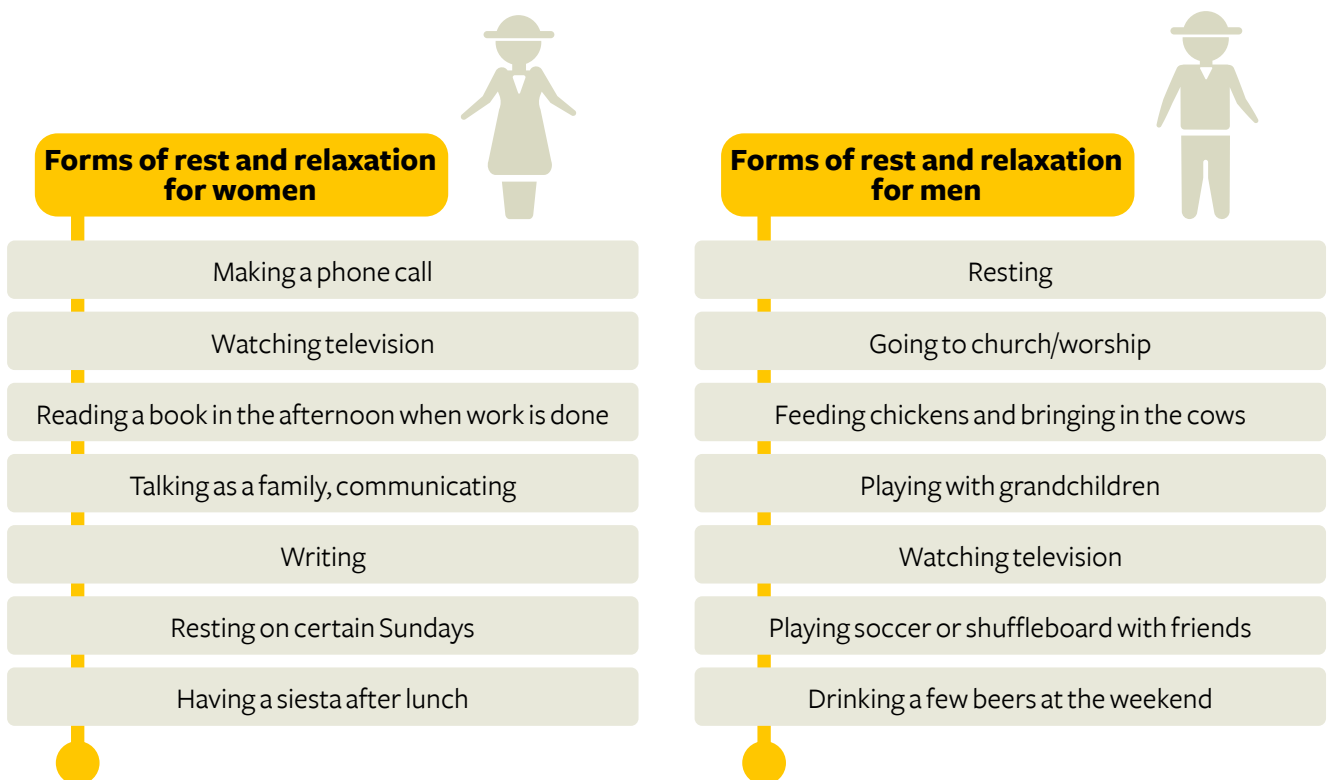
One dimension of the analysis of self-care practices allowed us to see that when care work is distributed more equitably among family members, women’s time is fundamentally freed up for two possibilities: one is self-care, and the other is more active participation, either in farm management or in community activities.

Self-care tends to be valued more highly insofar as benefits are shown for the health and well-being of the family. The concept of self-care includes rest, the cultivation of creative skills, play, and healthy eating, among other things. Different interpretations of rest are presented, but in general it is stated that women have fewer opportunities for rest than men or, in any case, they are expected to have greater availability.

“I’d say that it’s not so much that women don’t rest, but that they have to be available all the time. In other words, women can have a little time to themselves, like watching a program, making a call, but they have to be there and available, if you understand me? Breakfast, lunch, the dishes, and whatever time she has left she has to be there (female participant).”

In a social culture that overvalues productivity, speed and competition, it is not easy for men or women to justify rest time. A participant stated: “We do not have a rest culture”, despite the fact that allowing time for men and women to rest brings benefits that can be observed in a better family life. More importantly, prioritizing rest time is associated with a satisfactory domestic life; i.e. achieving a state of well-being. This can be a difficult undertaking considering the context of armed political conflict in Colombia, and specifically the impact on the social fabric in the territories where cocoa is produced. One of the participants highlights the potential of rest when she explains the value of spending time with neighbors, getting to know each other, “sharing more, sitting down and chatting.”

**Testimonies by the male and female participants regarding self-care and rest practices**



Sharing tasks and distributing roles is a way to facilitate mutual rest and relaxation. In a family where awareness has been raised about equity in the distribution of care tasks, it is even possible to engage in creative play exercises to involve everyone.

“There are times, depending on individual workload, for example, at night, often after meals. “Listen, son, let’s play a little game of cards and whoever loses has to wash the dishes.” We sit down, and there are times when my son loses, but most of the time he wins. But we entertain ourselves for a while as our food goes down, we play some cards, and well, whatever happen happens, and it’s restful (male participant).

In this case, rest for women is achieved when men take on household tasks. However, it appears that the main restrictions on self-care are lack of time and lack of financial resources. With regard to lack of time, in the case of women, this tends to be resolved specifically by achieving a better distribution of the tasks involved in caring for others. “On Sundays, I have a schedule. I get up early, I make the aguapanela, and the chocolate, I dry the rice, and when she gets up, I already have everything ready, so you just have to serve and it’s ready” (male participant).

Lack of economic resources was analyzed as being a manifestation of a structural problem in the Colombian countryside. The participants stated that the farming situation makes it difficult to have savings to dedicate, for example, to recreational trips:

“Yes, it is necessary to take trips and it is very necessary... I don’t know if I’m disorganized or whatever, but I will say for myself, and for us, that saving up to take even a little trip every other year, not even every other year, a farm doesn’t give you enough for that (male participant).

## **PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP**

Since women achieved greater participation in associative processes, they have had to come a long way before men started recognizing activities such as attending training meetings as being legitimate. In the beginning, these activities were difficult to attend because, according to their own testimony, they had to do a lot of explaining to their husbands. It is considered that women who lead collective processes are still in the minority, since in general, they do not enjoy the same opportunities to participate in decision-making spaces. “I look at the community action board meetings in the various villages where I have been. I always see more men than women, and the women are like submissive” (male participant in the study).

However, women have also become more involved in decision-making in community spaces. There is a growing tendency to facilitate and value the participation of women in community organization and participation processes. The participants in this study mentioned examples of women who have managed to get involved in managerial positions, and whose work is widely recognized in their villages. In their opinion, when women assume community leadership roles they are contributing to the transformation of cultural patterns inherited from a patriarchal culture that affect both the family and the community. Furthermore, according to the study participants, the leadership style exercised by women, and certain qualities of the female perspective, are factors that strengthen associative processes within the cocoa sector. Despite the foregoing, for these community organization and management processes led by women to increase and strengthen, it is necessary to promote certain conditions and overcome restrictions in both family and social culture.

Traditional patriarchal culture is typified by domination and competition, rather than cooperation and solidarity. The study reveals that, as women become aware of their potential for leadership, they are able to make a difference. “Women are more careful, more delicate, more intuitive. So, with all these qualities that we have, well that is what we need to take advantage of to continue making a difference, to continue occupying or filling spaces” (female participant).

For them, being part of the cocoa production association has allowed them to gain autonomy, and not only from an economic viewpoint.

“At the beginning, I had problems, but afterwards they supported me. My son told me “Do it, Mummy. Don’t mind my Dad. It doesn’t matter if he is angry for a little while. Afterwards, he’ll understand. Do it.” My son was a very beautiful support, I mean, I feel very proud because I know how to do the work of processing chocolate, and he feels proud (female participant in the study).

In general, the male and female participants recognize qualities of female leadership in the associations that benefit all members. For example, in this dialogue between two male participants, they highlight organizational and administrative capabilities:

Participant 1: What happens is that women are much more organized within the association than us...

Participant 2: They are better administrators, they know how to manage better, and the thing is that men do not know how to save money, whereas everything is very good with the women.

When reflecting on the process of creating the conditions to generate more female leadership in the sector, three factors stood out: first, self-recognition; second, the ability to negotiate internally with one's partner and family, and third, mutual female empowerment when other female leaders serve as inspiration and role models. Regarding self-recognition, as has been said in another section of the document, little by little it is becoming evident that women are gaining confidence in themselves and recognizing qualities in themselves that contribute to the community.

“Despite the fact that there are women who are leaders and get fully involved in cocoa cultivation, there are others who are still afraid of starting or standing up with their husband or partner in order to achieve that (male participant).”

“Standing up”, in the context of this work, is an expression that indicates starting a collaboration, rather than a confrontation. Hence, negotiation within the family is essential for women to be able to take on tasks, i.e., regarding the exchange of responsibilities, rights, and distribution of roles. A participant who had to start traveling away from home to other departments to participate in community activities in exercise of her responsibilities within the cocoa farmers association, summarizes aspects of this negotiation as follows:

“You feel freer, because, before, you're more focused on the farm, on the house, and when you begin to go out and travel to Santander and other places, then they think “time to pull our sleeves up.” It's a bit difficult, but they understand that you're capable too and that you also have the right to leave... So you have some inconveniences, but reach agreements and learn to be a bit more independent (female participant).”



In general, families argue that promoting female leadership for the benefit of the entire community requires a learning process for the whole family. The responsibility of external stakeholders, such as unions and other actors, is to promote this learning from a family perspective, with genuine recognition of the complexities of promoting a cultural change of this magnitude. One of the participants explained the importance of meetings that take a family approach, since this enables women to advance in social and community leadership processes in the following way:

“Often, husbands don’t have a sufficiently open mind to say: “My wife went to the conference and it lasted a whole week in Manizales or Bogotá,” and then that generates a lot of conflict. But when you share, and the other person knows what you are doing, you can put yourself in your partner’s shoes (female participant).

Because it is a “change in mentality”, the risk, as with all cultural change, is resistance to change. The most sensitive issue in these households is that the empowerment of the woman may be seen by her partner as a threat that ultimately weakens the family structure. In the workshops, there was talk of a tendency towards conflict between couples in the early days of women starting to take on these leadership roles.

“Women began to have a certain autonomy and to contribute more to their households and make certain decisions for themselves; and, curiously, there was a time, just when the issue started, when the policy was twenty-five percent women, when we realized that there were many separations, right? So, I think that this may be related to the empowerment that we offered to women so that they could decide for themselves (male participant).

From a gender perspective, the subsector’s organizations and unions must offer comprehensive advice and assistance to support families through this cultural transition, while promoting female leadership. It is essential to involve both men and women, and also younger generations, in these activities and processes.

Finally, a third factor that fosters the emergence of new female leaders is the mutual empowerment felt by women working together and supporting each other to achieve their aspirations, often while pushing against the barriers of social pressure. In general, the participants emphasize that when women work together, they commit themselves fully and with great responsibility.



They lasted all morning, a whole day making chocolate and then they went home at six in the evening, tired, after having left everything well organized. The next day they collected and put the cocoa on the papers. They practically had to do that work alone, as only five of them were doing it; in other words, that should be recorded in the association's history books ... these are things that we mustn't forget ... what happened back then, when they started on that path, and how they did it, and how it is now, now that they have I don't know how many members (female participant).

The documentation and socialization of these leadership experiences involves making visible the contribution of increasing numbers of women who, from a range of possibilities, are committed to developing their own crops, and contributing to the well-being of the community.

### GENERATIONAL SPLICE

The study found a spectrum of generations among the participating families. The working groups in the workshops were made up of couples who had been together for 10, 20 and 50 years. Consequently, different beliefs, values and behaviors were observed in relation to family gender equity practices, and this allowed the challenges of generational splicing to be understood from the point of view of the families themselves.

Within the Colombian context, marked as it is by the ongoing armed conflict, older generations have experienced the impact of the presence of armed groups more strongly, and some of the participating families had even been victims of forced displacement on more than one occasion. Due to this context, the real capacity of families to aspire for their young children to remain in the field and grow up on the farm was reduced.

In conversation with the younger generations, for whom the idea of cocoa as a culture of peace and an environmentally friendly crop is a more tangible possibility, we begin to see a change in perspective. These families want to involve their children by generating opportunities in three specific areas: family care practices, generation of income with bridges between the countryside and the city, and participation of the youngest family members in associative and community activities.



The first aspect presents opportunities for generational splicing in terms of how the family is educated, with more inclusive practices to balance the distribution of household and care work. As highlighted in the previous section, mothers in particular question the historical distribution of roles, and believe that both their sons and daughters must prepare for the demands of the urban-rural world that they will encounter.



We have educated our children, I say that because my youngest son is now 26 years old, and I feel that we raised three children with that process of knowing what field work is, knowing what it is to live in a society, and knowing that, for example, that process that they took from the country to the city is very different. And they highly value what they experienced at home: work; suddenly shortfalls in food, in education, although all three of my children studied, well, with difficulties and everything, but they had those experiences (female participant).

Faced with the second aspect, families are creating opportunities that appeal to the interests of young people and, at the same time, build bridges between the country and the city. This is an interesting situation that has been observed in large part due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The paralysis of many urban activities motivated the children of cocoa-farming families to innovate and add value to family production, since they had greater knowledge of new technologies. This opportunity positively affected intergenerational relationships.



I had an experience with avocado. I have two nieces, they have nothing to do with the countryside, they have their jobs in Bogotá, but, as a result of this, I told one of them one day: “Well, I’m going to send you some avocados,” and, together with her friends, they began to sell them. They already know a lot about avocado; in other words, it was that much that she said to me: “send me more things”. So I sent them pumpkins, I sent them plantains, when they didn’t even go to the supermarket to buy a plantain. They are both industrial engineers and they got into the idea, through Instagram, where one of them has a page. In the field, I think if somebody were to get used to it, they could get a lot of benefits at this moment (female participant).

Finally, this is how one of the participants expresses herself with respect to the third aspect: the creation of opportunities for the youngest family members to participate in the community and within associations, so that each person contributes according to their situation and capacity.

“Associations, as they literally focus a lot on the members, but... within organizations and within training sessions, there could also be spaces with the family, being with the children, generating those spaces in which you can be with your husband, with your children and make everything become more comprehensive. So we are all together, because usually the mother or the father is trained, and our children always stay at home and we really want to make them part of this and teach them, but if we don't bring them and teach them what we do, then the boy won't be interested either. So I think that it is important to involve the whole family and for them to enter to do the process both in the workplace, as well as in the training courses, on the trip, on the little outing, because then the boy says: “You take me farming, Let's go to graze, to load and to work, but when you go on the tour, you go alone”, the boy feels mmm (female participant).

As stated in the previous section, implementing a family-based approach contributes to the process of incorporating gender equity within the cocoa sector, and in turn contributes to the generational splicing process.



**5**

**CONCLUSIONS**

This study sought to identify gender inclusion practices within the Colombian cocoa sector, in order to provide information that contributes to its environmental sustainability and its greater social and economic productivity. The study was carried out in the second semester of 2020, and used a qualitative methodology to explore the life experiences of cocoa-farming families in three regions of Colombia.

The main conclusion reached by the study is that a growing number of women from diverse cultural contexts and demographic profiles are participating in the strengthening of the Colombian cocoa sector, and in the sustainability of the communities in which they operate. These women contribute time, knowledge, and work in all links of the cocoa-chocolate chain, although their contributions are not always visible or recognized within their families and communities.

For the cocoa sector to take advantage of women's full potential, it is necessary to conduct greater research into their life experiences, at both the family and community level, from a perspective that allows us to appreciate both the barriers and the opportunities. Likewise, concrete actions are necessary in the short, medium, and long term based on a gender analysis of the sector, including research, training, communication, and cultural transformation.

## GENDER ROLES AND WELLNESS CARE PRACTICES

This study found that **the traditional roles assigned to women and men in reproductive and productive work**, respectively, prevail within cocoa farming. There are ingrained stereotypes about abilities and interests resulting from “natural” differences that make them unfit for certain responsibilities and tasks. According to this system, it is assumed that women are better caregivers — both in terms of caring for others and for the home— and their role is within the home. Meanwhile, men act as the main economic providers, through their work outside the home.

Throughout the study, the majority of reported experiences support the idea of an imbalance in family life, where women have more responsibilities than men in terms of caring for others.

There is evidence of a so-called “**care economy**” within the sector, understood as the work that is done within the home related to domestic work. Other people in the home or community are cared for, and the paid workforce is fed and sustained. This work, in general, is done mostly by women and is largely unremunerated.

Furthermore, and in connection with the above, women tend to “**neglect self-care.**” There is a relationship between self-recognition and the decision to make self-care possible. As women begin to value themselves, and the qualities and work that they contribute to the home, the farm, and the community, they gradually embrace the idea that they, like other family members, need time for rest, creative use of non-working time, adequate nutrition, and sleep. Faced with the foregoing, some families indicated their interest in **generating changes in the home**, assigning their children small domestic responsibilities to allow them to internalize from an early age that these tasks are part of the range of activities that men must also perform, and not only women.

A relationship was also found between self-recognition and greater participation of women in activities from which they “exclude themselves”, both on the farm and in the community. **Self-exclusion, associated with self-esteem gaps, is the result of cultural patterns which exclude women.** Breaking with these traditional patterns enables women to start and continue to care for the farm; as well as to engage in community leadership roles generally reserved for men.

From the exploration with the families and the technical team, it was concluded that women have gained important spaces in cocoa farming as producers and leaders. In the communities included in the study, both men and women are involved in participation and association spaces, and the role of women in managerial positions is highly valued. However, they also recognize that **women face more obstacles than men to participate in decision-making** that affects communities, since, in many cases, dedicating time to housework is a priority for them.

**The participation of women in leadership activities within governance structures improves the performance of growers' associations.** Likewise, their participation contributes to the democratization of elected **bodies**, such as municipal councils. In both cases, at both the grower level and at the political level, women bring commitment, organization, administrative capacity, and an ethic of solidarity.

Women are becoming more directly involved in cocoa production, and there is evidence of a **diversification of their participation in different links of the production chain.** According to the technical teams, the greatest participation of women is concentrated in post-harvest and marketing activities. They are also specializing in cultivation tasks, such as nursery maintenance, grafting, pollination, and pruning, as these are tasks that require greater care.

The Colcocoa and Fedecacao technical teams value the growing participation of women in money-management decisions (borrowing, control of other income, and management of surpluses), **while recognizing that this participation is limited because the ownership of productive assets and high-value products is still concentrated in men.** Important work remains to be done to address the structural barriers that women face in overcoming their limited roles in decision-making.

This study concludes that **a structural barrier to women's participation is related to land titling schemes.** While change is taking place, in the sense of recognizing women's right to access land and the benefits of production under conditions comparable to those of men, this change is not accompanied by a legal and institutional framework that allows them to effectively access better conditions to gain economic autonomy.

From a broader perspective, families also expressed their concern regarding **the generational splice in cocoa farming.** Several factors have contributed to the fact that young people, the sons and daughters of producer families, leave the field and instead choose to study or work in the city. In this study, **the two major factors motivating this phenomenon are the violence which generates forced displacement, and lack of opportunities.**

Aspirations of a life away from the countryside are also nurtured by families' perceptions of personal progress based on better income and opportunities in the cities. **Many families want to avoid their children following their own career path,** since they consider that the nature of their work, and the conditions in which they work in the fields, do not provide sufficient compensation to lead a dignified life.

## **OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO GENDER RELATIONSHIPS AND INEQUALITIES WITHIN THE CACAO SECTOR**

Cocoa is a key product for rural development in territories that require alternative livelihoods and which have an environmental offer that potentializes bringing differentiated cocoa to the international market. In this sense, the organizations that support crop sustainability processes **must develop intervention strategies that include a component of empowering producer families, and improving their capabilities** at the productive, environmental, economic, and social level. This study provides clear guidelines for addressing social issues.

**Gender analysis can be a management tool for organizations** working in the sector, as it allows them to recognize the needs, demands and levels of participation of men and women within the cocoa value chain. When organizations adopt a gender-based perspective, they make the barriers to participation visible, which constitutes the first step in working purposefully towards overcoming these barriers.

In the same way, this approach makes it possible to determine whether or not the proposed activities contribute to achieving gender equity and promote changes in gender relations at all levels, both internally within the organization, and within the partner companies, technical teams and the beneficiary families of the projects.

From the perspective of the surveyed technicians, **women now participate more in technical assistance, but they recognize that it is not due to an intentional strategy on the part of the institutions.** Sometimes, technical assistants take the initiative to bring women into conversations about the progress of the production process on the farm, as an informal strategy for gender inclusion. This indicates that the technical staff are sensitive towards gender issues, and that they require deliberate tools to strengthen and focus that sensitivity, tools that the organizations can provide.

Organizations have also made progress in **consolidating a gender-based approach by including a significant proportion of women within their teams.** This contributes not only to opening up more professional spaces for women, but also offers the opportunity to change the models used in rural areas, and the perception that technical assistance is a “men’s” job, an area in which there is still a long way to go.

Organizations do not necessarily have a direct manager or person in charge of social issues, such as women, family, gender relations, generational splicing, etc. For this reason, it can be complicated to ensure a gender and social inclusion approach is followed internally within organizations. Although there have been advances, such as the success stories mentioned in chapter 3.4. of this study, **clear guidelines are needed regarding minimum practices to manage gender equity within organizations.** These guidelines should underpin concrete actions to effectively address both internal organizational change and the gender inequalities present in the sector.

However, there has been significant progress in the inclusion of a gender-based perspective within organizations in the cocoa sector in Colombia. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the experience of **Hacienda la Tentación de Colcocoa, in the municipality of Victoria (Caldas), which has formulated and developed an explicit gender inclusion policy,** providing employment opportunities for women within the sector, promoting their specialization in cultivation and processing work, and providing training and incentives. For its part, **Fedecacao’s trade union initiative is to promote a brand strategy and the visibility of Colombian cocoa using María del Campo,** an image that has the potential to become an icon of the empowerment of women within the sector.



6

RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- ▶ Organizations must **adopt a gender-based perspective** in their programs; concrete examples of this approach could include:
  - Reviewing how resources are distributed from a gender perspective.
  - Identifying and implementing methods in which women appropriate technical, social, economic, and environmental knowledge.
  - Developing a differential approach to care for women who are responsible for the administration of their productive units, since their time management, gender roles, access and control over resources differ greatly from women who are supported by their husbands and children.
- ▶ Organizations must **adopt a family-based approach** in their programs to complement and contribute to gender equity. Specifically, it is recommended that they review technical assistance programs so that they involve the men, women and young people who make up the family unit.
- ▶ Collecting **statistics with a gender perspective** in order to plan project interventions and reduce the inequities that still persist for women in the sector at the economic, social and political level. The above supposes undertaking an exercise to determine the sociodemographic character of the producer families, with data disaggregated by gender.
- ▶ Organizations can **action educational, cultural and communication programs** that help **break the stereotypes** that prevent or inhibit women from taking on leadership activities. It is necessary to allow both men and women to learn about gender equity and promote practices that recognize the work that both do within their homes, in cocoa production, and in their communities. This type of program can be actioned through training strategies for the different members of the family, which highlight the importance of transforming cultural values, and recognize the contribution that each individual makes in the productive, reproductive and community spheres.
- ▶ The care work done by women (domestic work and caring for others) is unpaid and therefore perpetuates the asymmetric distribution of income within cocoa-farming households. Organizations must **accept the social and economic value of caring work**. Firstly, by recognizing family dynamics, and also by promoting remuneration or compensation that ensures a fairer allocation of economic and social benefits (income) from the sale of family-produced cocoa.
- ▶ Organizations can promote family arrangements that allow women to improve their **direct access to income and productive resources**. To achieve this, it is recommended that they review technical assistance programs, access to microcredit, supplies and technology from a gender perspective. Until these changes occur, women will continue to access second-rate incomes (lower quality corridors and volumes) in cocoa farming.
- ▶ Organizations can **promote associativity and other forms of solidarity economy** where women exercise leadership activities for the common good and the protection of the environment. It is important for producer associations to **encourage the involvement of women within their governance structure** in order to expand both their participation in decision-making spaces and their leadership opportunities. To achieve this, incentives can be created to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions, increase women's membership of cooperatives and producer associations, strengthen leadership processes, etc.

- ▶ Taking advantage of the potential of cocoa producers to pass on technical and administrative lessons related to farming, within their families and to the community in general. This allows them to influence the changes that can take place at farm and household level to reduce gender inequalities. In this sense, technical teams can carry out pilots led by women who are examples in their communities and inspire positive changes at the productive, family and community levels. They can even use campaigns, contests, invitations, etc., **to make visible the contributions that women make throughout the cocoa-chocolate chain.**
- ▶ It is recommended that organizations **recognize the impact that greater participation of women can have on family life and relationships, and support families with comprehensive counseling.** Taking an “action without harm” approach, it is recommended that organizations recognize that, in some documented cases, for example, in this study, interventions aimed at empowering women seem to be related to an increase in cases of family breakdowns and divorces. For this reason, the family-based approach that corresponds to cocoa as a family crop demands that these possible damages be recognized and mitigated, always from a sociocultural perspective, knowing that each region is different and requires a different approach.
- ▶ It is advisable to consider **incentives that facilitate generational splicing**, through opportunities for young people to get to know and get involved in cultivation. A first step for this is to **offer comprehensive technical assistance that connects fathers, mothers, and children**, and the contributions of the different generations should be recognized during the technical assistance visits.
- ▶ The technical teams can adopt interventions situated in the context of the producer families themselves, understanding that culture and social norms are localized phenomena. There can be no transformation towards gender equity if the pillars underpinning interpersonal relationships are not adequately taken into consideration.
- ▶ It is necessary for organizations to recognize and make visible the importance of promoting gender equity and social inclusion, by **strengthening the capabilities of internal personnel**, and bringing together strategic allies that facilitate discussion of the issues and practices with the cocoa-producing families they support.
- ▶ It is necessary to design and implement **a training and follow-up process for the technical teams that support cocoa-producing families**, in order for them to appropriate the elements of inclusive technical assistance that allow them to identify the differentiated needs of the women and men participating in the chain. Likewise, it is necessary for technical teams to adopt concrete and measurable actions in aspects such as inclusive language, processes for inviting people to attend workshops and group activities (schedules, distances, places, methodologies); and also processes to encourage greater involvement of women and young people in technology adoption processes. Solidaridad has developed a training plan for technical teams as well as a guide with recommendations for inclusive technical assistance that can be used to implement this process.
- ▶ It is essential to **adapt and launch new financial products to meet the needs, demands and debt capacity of women**, since there are barriers to them accessing credit within the formal system. One strategy that has worked is Revolving Credit Funds (FRC) managed by women, characterized by a culture of payment and growth that guarantees their sustainability.
- ▶ **Promoting the use of technology by women** can foster their capacity to associate with their family and with their community, since technology democratizes their access to knowledge, and improves their ability to make decisions, given their commitment to managing records and information to manage their farms. As one study points out, “digital development can scale and sustain information services in unprecedented ways. The combination of women and technology could be an important force multiplier effect in

development” (Agrilinks, 2021). Farming Solution and Extension Solution are digital applications developed by Solidaridad. They allow the adoption of good practices in cultivation to be monitored and evaluated and can serve to pilot initiatives with women.

- ▶ It is essential to design a measurement strategy including gender and social inclusion indicators to evaluate how technical assistance activities contribute to assessing the scope of the expected results in favor of equal rights for men, women and young people. These indicators should go beyond evaluating differential attendance by gender at workshops. Here are some examples: percentage of men and women who adopt Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) on their farms, percentage of cocoa-farming families that have received training in gender relations, increase in yield (in kilograms) in men’s and women’s plots for participants in cocoa cultivation training sessions, proportion of credit and services granted to men and women, among others (FAO, World Bank, 2017). The monitoring and evaluation of these indicators will allow lessons to be learned and best practices to be replicated.

## FOR FAMILIES

- ▶ Guarantee assistance for couples within the support for projects that promote gender equity, in such a way as to minimize the tension that may arise due to the growing leadership of women. It is suggested that this kind of support start at the household level, **opening up conversations about gender relations** that involve all members of the family to facilitate an environment that is conducive to negotiation rather than imposition. Subsequently, this will transcend the associative or organizational level, with trained personnel and methodologies that enable mediation of any conflicts that may arise.
- ▶ Promote co-responsibility on the part of family members for the distribution of tasks that contribute to the transformation of gender stereotypes. This avoids the overload of work experienced by many women. In some cases, the economic, social, and political empowerment of women is detrimental to their well-being. There are proven methodologies that can help to recognize gaps or inequities in respect of women, such as Famipuntos, an App developed by Solidaridad.
- ▶ Support women to join committees, associations, cooperatives, and other spaces for social and political participation.
- ▶ Involve younger generations (children and young people) more in cultivation. This involves attending to their differential interests and their way of learning with outreach methods, incorporating innovative training methodologies, including the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Furthermore, it is key to promote joint working with parents, so that they value and recognize their contributions on the farm.
- ▶ Consider practical income-generating initiatives for women, taking into account their areas of interest and the best use of their capabilities, in order to provide them with a supplementary source of income. These activities must not indiscriminately increase the workload of women.

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