The Resilience Journey
Empathy Generation (Phase 1)

Executive Summary

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Foreword

Strong unequal gender norms and values stand in the way of the empowerment of girls and young women in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Indonesia.

Unequal norms are firmly embedded in daily lives and institutions, affecting girls' and young women's life-paths and limiting their choices. Girls are ascribed to become wives and mothers, which hampers the development of broader aspirations. Role models who show different options for girls are limited, and women are underrepresented in village decision-making bodies.

Gender-based division of household responsibilities is already instilled amongst boys and girls at a young age. With men expected to be the main breadwinner and women seen as responsible for caretaking, young wives are often financially dependent on their husbands.

Cocoa production is the main livelihood option, but it is dominated by male farmers. Although their wives are indispensable for cocoa farming, they are not valued or compensated as business partners.

Also, upstream value chain roles are filled by men and there are limited female role models in the sector, reinforcing the stereotypes that men are more suitable for leadership positions and the view that cocoa is not for women .

Changing gender norms requires men as allies for gender equality and deliberate interventions that make boys and men aware of gender inequalities and that encourage them to act as change agents.

The Resilience Journey

As part of its Cocoa for Generations (C4G) Strategy, Mars Wrigley aims to empower women in its supply chain, both socially and economically.
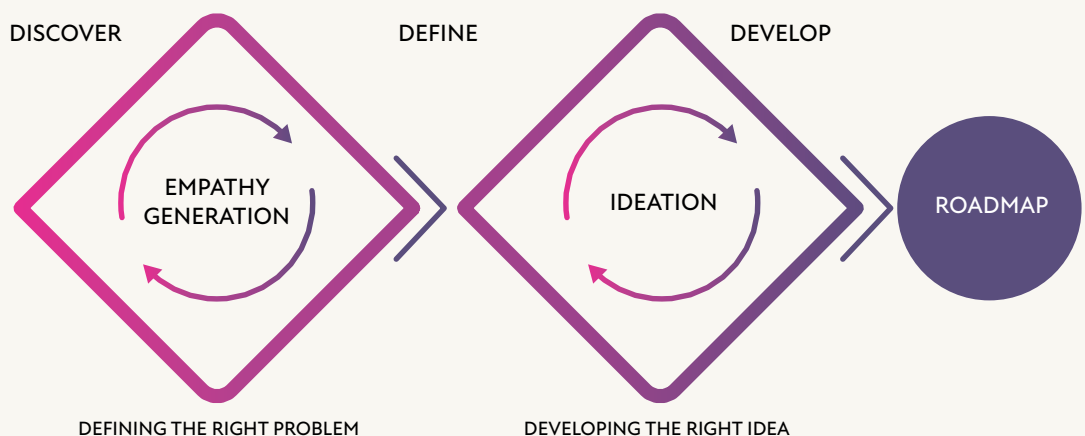
To this end, Mars Wrigley engaged the KIT Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and Pabla van Heck (independent) to develop insight-driven recommendations for potential future investments to advance women's empowerment. The outcome of this work will inform further engagement with the Mars suppliers and other (implementing) partners, while supporting the Mars Cocoa for Generations (C4G) sustainability strategy.

The objective of the 'Resilience Journey' is to uncover the barriers to empowerment that women face in cocoa-growing communities and to generate actionable insights for potential future intervention design.

The Resilience Journey contains three phases, which are based on a design thinking approach:

1. **Empathy Generation:** generating an in-depth understanding of women's daily lives (in different life-stages), their behaviors and attitudes through a gender equality lens to identify key barriers to empowerment.
2. **Ideation:** identifying existing and developing/co-creating new interventions with a high potential to address the key challenges and to serve those who may benefit most.
3. **Roadmap:** developing conclusions and actionable recommendations.

This executive summary shares the main conclusions of the first phase - 'Empathy Generation'.

DISCOVER   DEFINE   DEVELOP

EMPATHY GENERATION   IDEATION   ROADMAP

DEFINING THE RIGHT PROBLEM   DEVELOPING THE RIGHT IDEA

Framework

Using the KIT Conceptual Model of Women's and Girls' Empowerment as a guiding framework

The KIT model offers a lens to help better unpack the outcomes and processes of women's and girls' empowerment and to understand what changes are needed and how they take place. Women's and girls' empowerment is about the expansion of choice (the ability to make and influence choices that affect their life) and the strengthening of voice (the capacity to speak up and be heard, and to shape and share in discussions and decisions).

Women's and girls' empowerment requires the transformation of power relations, so women and girls have more control over their lives and futures. It is both a process and an outcome.

According to the model, empowerment is contingent on the interaction of three key elements: Institutional Structures, Resources and Agency. Agency lies at the heart of empowerment.

We used the conceptual model to guide us with the research design and data analysis during the 'Empathy Generation' phase, and it will serve as inspiration during the further development of the recommendations.

KIT'S WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT MODEL

RESOURCES   AGENCY   INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES
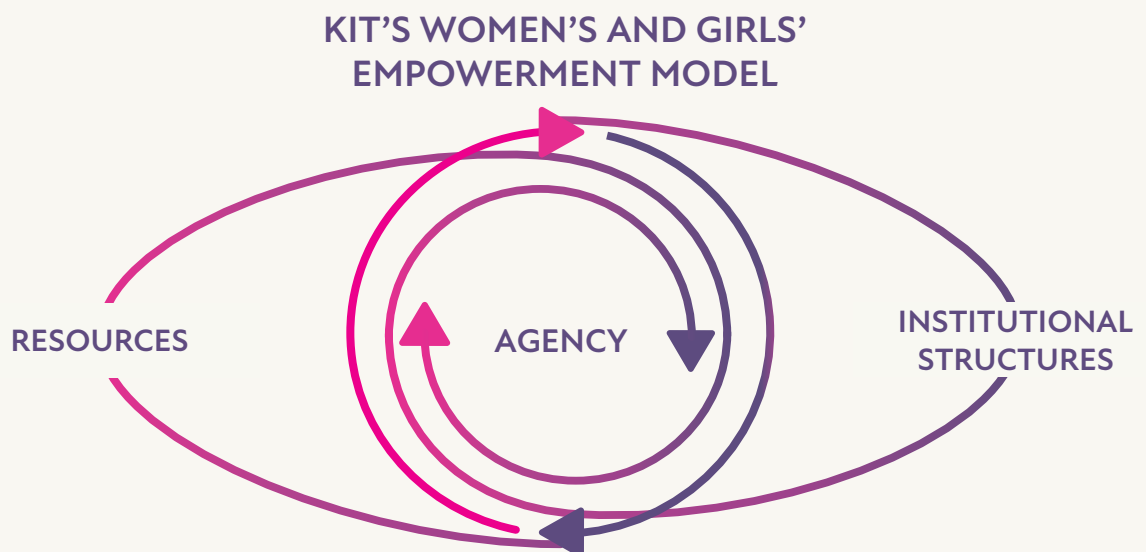
Empathy Research

Approach

During the 'Empathy Generation' phase, we conducted qualitative research in select and diverse cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Indonesia.

Our research approach was open and iterative, with semi-structured and flexible conversations, held in situ and tailored to each respondent's profile and emerging personal stories.

Insights were generated through different qualitative research formats, methods and creative visual stimuli, including group discussions, in-depth interviews and on-site observations.

Scope

The objective of the research was to understand behaviors and attitudes related to women's and girls' (dis) empowerment and gender (in)equality, the underlying rationale for them and the context in which they take place.

Our starting point was the daily lives and realities of women and adolescent girls in the community and at home instead of their role in cocoa production. We explored the local cocoa value chain, or cocoa's first mile, as a key institutional structure with its own role in reinforcing unequal gender norms.

Respondents

We spoke with more than 200 respondents, including young women and adolescent girls, but also many of their influencers and service providers, such as parents, partners, siblings, teachers and nurses.

MATRIARCHS

YOUNG WOMEN

VILLAGE LEADERS

BOYS

HUSBANDS

GIRLS

NURSES

TEACHERS

Key Findings

Despite the vastly different cultural and socio-economic contexts, the gender inequalities that women face appeared to be quite similar across the three countries. Therefore, the findings represent a consolidated analysis across all three countries.

Life in cocoa-growing villages is not easy (for women & girls)

The infrastructure in cocoa-growing villages is less developed than in towns, resulting in heavier workloads for women and girls. They are responsible for time-consuming household duties, many of which are done manually, such as carrying wood for cooking, collecting and/or boiling water, washing clothes, etc. Poor roads and a lack of transportation make journeys to markets, schools and medical centers long, which, together with safety concerns, may limit access for young women.

Youth view life in the village as boring and many aspire to leave. While online connectivity is increasingly important to them, access is limited in rural areas. Most parents support their children to receive an education so they can have a career outside agriculture, outside the village. But, not everyone can afford to put all their children through secondary school and/or tertiary education.

Cocoa is the main livelihood, but it is male-dominated

In areas where cocoa-growing plays a significant role in the local economy, cocoa farming is often a key livelihood option, but it has a male 'legacy'; farming skills and land are often passed on to male family members. Also, upstream first mile jobs are filled by men, and there are limited female role models in the sector, reinforcing gender stereotypes.

While both husbands and wives usually contribute to the family farm, wives' efforts are generally undervalued. They are often dependent on their husband for compensation and usually have little say about how the cocoa farm is managed.

Marriage and motherhood are every girls' destiny – these happen too soon and with little choice

The overwhelmingly prevailing norm across countries is that girls should and will become (future) wives and mothers. They are expected to do this 'on time', and during their most fertile years. Marriage needs to come before pregnancy, and premarital (sexual) relationships are discouraged. Spending time with boys is considered inappropriate, so girls learn little about interacting and negotiating with males. As a result, many women become wives and mothers at a young age, with little interaction or ability to get to know their future husband, whereas boys tend to marry later so that they have time to prepare for their expected role as the breadwinner. Preparing girls for and socialization with their future household responsibilities starts early, and often takes precedence over their education and income-generating aspirations.

Even if marriage is a given, relationships are not forever

There is an expectation that (future) husbands will be the provider, however, divorce, separation or becoming a widow are a fact of life. Having to generate an income without prior experience can be challenging for women that were previously financially dependent. Losing their husband also diminishes women's social standing, especially if they are seen as the initiator of a separation.

The tradition of polygamous relationships continues in West Africa, even though they are banned by law. For the first wife, this often leads to insecurity and a reduced status within the household.

Adequate sexual and reproductive health services are lacking

Access to maternal health services in rural villages is poor and the clinics in town are often under-resourced. Nurses, who serve as role models for many girls, are frequently overwhelmed by their workload.

There is a strong bias against premarital sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. As a result, sexually active teens do not receive SRH education, nor do they have proper access to contraception. Yet, there is a high level of awareness that family planning enables better care for children's needs, especially amongst married women. Cultural norms are often a barrier for men to accept the use of contraception in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, whereas, in Indonesia, smaller family sizes are encouraged through government campaigns.

Girls and young women are hampered in expressing their voice and choice

Girls' aspirations are limited by what they see. They have too little time and few external role models to develop confidence and aspirations. More girls do not complete secondary and/or tertiary education than their male peers, while out-of-school girls have a higher risk of becoming a mother or wife too soon. When just married, young wives are typically financially dependent on their husbands, which potentially reduces their decision-making power.

Community leaders are often male, and women are underrepresented, which means their voice is often unheard and not valued in public. Young women do not stand together or speak-up enough, which hampers their ability to recognize and challenge patriarchal norms. These may be harmful, such as the normalization of domestic violence against (young) women and unequal transactional relationships.

Girls and young women have limited access to resources, making them financially dependent

Young women frequently lack access to assets and resources to initiate self-employment activities, and the opportunities available to them are often gender-biased. Not having enough money makes young women vulnerable, which may already translate into exploitative

transactional relationships at a young age. Household duties, small children, a lack of time-saving devices, and limited caretaking by male partners create a 'double' burden for young mothers and wives who are combining unpaid care and earning a living.

Norms on what it means to be a man or a woman are pervasive across key institutions: community, household, marriage and religion

Traditions keep men in positions of power and prepare boys to fulfill masculine norms, while girls are prepared for their duties as future housewives. Marriages are built on specific expectations for husbands and wives, rather than joint decision-making by couples. Tight-knit communities reinforce conservative (gender) norms.

There is a strong culture of gossiping, which heavily influences girls and young women against making their own (alternative) choices and pursuing their dreams; successful misfits are not celebrated by the community. Religion-fueled beliefs inform daily lives and religious leaders, who are often conservative, are part of the norm-setting establishment.

Boys and men have their own responsibilities and burdens

Boys and men are key influencers and stakeholders in the lives of girls and young women. Masculine norms dictate that men should provide for their families, and not do 'unworthy' caretaking work. For young fathers, knowing that as the man they are financially responsible for their child can be scary and overwhelming, especially when they do not have the means. This fear can lead to young fathers 'denying' their child or disappearing, even if they may not want to.

Prioritization

Four "gender inequalities" were prioritized as starting points for the ideation phase

Throughout the 'Empathy Generation' phase, we made several iterative decisions as we progressed through our research. These included a focus on creating impact for adolescent girls and young women, especially those who remain in cocoa-growing villages and are, therefore, likely to be out of school and/or unemployed.

Unequal gender norms are firmly embedded in daily lives and institutions, which limit girls' and young women's options and decision-making while placing their male peers at an advantage. This realization led us to recognize that it is not about only empowering women, but this has to go hand-in-hand with the explicit pursuit of gender equality by and for both women and men.

Gender equality is the concept that both men and women are free to develop their abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

In advance of our Ideation phase, a further prioritization was made with the understanding that a significant shift in gender norms and prejudices is required to ultimately achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Four 'inequalities' were chosen as the key challenges to focus on and potential solution directions were defined to explore further ("How might we…?"):

1. Being 'a teenage girl' ends too soon.

How might we extend girlhood and improve life decisions, and identify interventions that help delay first pregnancy and marriage, improve voice and choice in future partner, and/or stimulate adolescent girls' confidence and ambition?

2. Young women generate insufficient income and are financially dependent

How might we improve young women's participation in, and benefits from, rural livelihoods, and identify interventions that build their business acumen and facilitate access to finance, enable young women to work in cocoa's first mile, and/or recognize and value cocoa as a 'couple's business'?

3. Gender bias is entrenched in community and household expectations for men and women

How might we address gender bias in expected male/female roles, and identify interventions that lead to changes in expectations in household responsibilities, foster sisterhood and include women in community leadership?

4. Cocoa's 'first mile' is male-dominated

How might we leverage cocoa's male (farmer) channel to engage men as allies for gender equality, and identify interventions that make boys and men aware of gender inequalities and encourage them to act as change agents?

Next Steps

Embedding and operationalizing the Resilience Journey findings in the Cocoa for Generations strategy

With the aim of developing viable and feasible recommendations for the Cocoa team at Mars Wrigley, the ideation phase will consider how to address the four prioritized inequalities through the Cocoa for Generations strategy and action plans.

Realizing that Cocoa for Generations is deployed through cocoa's male-dominated first-mile operational channel and reaches mainly male farmers, embedding the Resilience Journey into existing programs and partnerships will further strengthen ongoing efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the cocoa supply chain.

The Resilience Journey recommendations will be ready by the end of 2020, but the road won't end there.

Acknowledgments

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