

Women as Inclusive Business partners

LAND O' LAKES: Strengthening women's role in family dairy farms leads to improved profit and productivity

"I wanted to work hard and be a role model. We have ideas, men have seen our results, now, I am happy."

Elizabeth Chepchirchir Sang,
dairy farmer



ENGAGEMENT IN THE VALUE CHAIN



Company Name: dairy cooperatives and processors in the Rift Valley (Kenya)

Project: Kenya Dairy Sector Competitiveness Program

Using a sector approach, treating dairy as a family business and optimize women's role in it, results in major improvements at smallholder and sector level.

Period: 2008-2013

Results for business: Farming cooperatives improved their performance, they achieved a 140% higher production; their access to formal market channels rose from 20% to 40%

Results for women:

- Livelihoods improvement of 338,000 smallholder farming households, 40% of them women;
- Household incomes increased by more than 200%;
- Better functioning family businesses through recognition of different roles and responsibilities and more equal decision making;
- Better functioning family businesses and more active cooperatives with an increase in quality and quantity of milk supply;
- Access to loans and credit for 60,000 individuals, 40 % of them women.

'Women as Inclusive Business Partners' is an initiative by [BoP Innovation Center](#) and [ICCO Cooperation](#)





The dairy sector in Kenya contributes 14% of agricultural GDP and 4% of the overall GDP. Annual growth is 5%. In the Rift Valley, women perform important tasks in dairy farming, but this was not given due recognition in the way the sector operates. To capture the growth potential and thus upgrade the dairy sector and increase volume and quality of the milk, both men and women needed to be addressed.

The CSR wing of Land O' Lakes, the second large milk cooperative in the USA, developed this project in Kenya. Is it itself not an actor in the dairy sector in Kenya.

Uptake new practices and inputs

Multiple activities were implemented: farmer households (men, women) got organized into cooperatives whereby quotas were set for women's leadership positions. Technical and organizational training & on site learning was designed and executed in line with women's needs and interests. Women were also stimulated to become trainers and service providers, e.g. for AI (artificial insemination) technology. This all stimulated uptake of new practices among women farmers whereas the new skills and jobs increased women's confidence and income.

Commercial input supplies e.g. technology, loans or fodder trees were promoted and made available to households. This had positive effects on cattle ownership for women and joint decision making and task sharing in dairy. Introduction of biogas plants with cow dung helped to reduce firewood needs. These supportive measures helped, among other things, to improve the balance between dairy work and household tasks for women.

Towards sustainability

Land O'Lakes applied a market driven approach, without subsidies, and addressed the whole value chain and sector. This helped to transform the dairy sector in the Rift Valley in a sustainable way, into a globally competitive and regional market leader. A National Dairy Task Force with all industry stakeholders guided the project to make the interventions sustainable and ensure that e.g. new activities of services providers would become integrated in regular operations.

After five years, the different actors in the sector knew how to find each other, where to find information and knowledge. Service providers were linked with farmers and producer organization and worked in a different, more demand driven way. Service providers were stimulated to offer services that were actually needed by farmers. The message of this approach, used in the KDSCP, is to involve everyone in the value chain and show them how they depend on each other and can cooperate better.

Land O'Lakes shares its knowledge and experiences and trains other organizations in other countries in the region regarding this approach.

- *Land O'Lakes Kenya Dairy Sector Competitiveness Program*