



Grow**Asia**

Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Value Chains in Southeast Asia

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Executive Summary

Globally, women smallholders face barriers to empowerment due to lack of access to and control over resources and time allocation. Southeast Asia (SEA) poses an individual set of challenges and opportunities for women in agriculture. Fundamental barriers for women in Southeast Asia include:

- Barriers related to pervasive cultural and social norms limiting women's agency and voice
- Limited access to resources and finance
- Lower educational and technical knowledge levels

These barriers vary greatly in nature, and consequently, a one-size-fits-all approach would fail. Achieving greater gender equality for women in agricultural value chains in SEA requires a locally-relevant, multi-sectoral approach. Therefore, identification of challenges and development of interventions should be based on expertise of Grow Asia's 520+ partners and contextualized across their six Country Partnerships, which include 46 public-private-producer Working Groups driving market-based smallholder farmer interventions.

Background

In 2020, Grow Asia established a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, in response to our partners' interest and recognition of the important role of women in agricultural value chains. As a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership, Grow Asia's approach targets deeper engagement and understanding about the value of gender mainstreaming among our partners. The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is online at www.growasia.org/gender.

Report Objective

Grow Asia partnered with Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) to produce a baseline report of current gender-inclusive practices among the Grow Asia network. Grow Asia conducted this report in 2020 with twin objectives:

1. Disseminate learnings and best practices from our network: private, public & producer sectors
2. Identify strategic areas of action for Grow Asia to positively impact gender equality in our region



Business Case

Macro level - As highlighted in a [report](#) from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), promoting gender equality is not only good for women, but more broadly, agricultural development as a whole as the gender gap leads to lost agricultural output, food security, and economic growth.

Micro level - The business case for individual actors is often less evident. Yet many companies operating in the agricultural value chain have integrated practices and policies aimed at empowering women in their workplace, and among suppliers, distributors, and communities they serve. These industry leaders recognize that supporting gender equality has direct benefits, such as positive ROI, revenue generation and increased organizational performance and reputation.

Research & Findings

To understand the best practices Grow Asia partners use to advance equality for women, BSR interviewed 15 organizations, representative of diverse stakeholders, countries, and value chains within Grow Asia's network.

The interviews identified two primary areas of action: Gender equality practices implemented inside the organizations through **organization-level policies, strategies, and initiatives**; and **value chain and community-level** gender equality and women's empowerment programs and interventions.

- **Organization level findings:** MNCs and regional companies have gender equality policies and strategies in place across their operations. Meanwhile, local companies tend to promote gender equality through company leaders. CSOs, NGOs and international organizations have policies on issues within their organizations, and establish strategies to mainstream gender within their programs to inform and design interventions.
- **Value Chain and Community-Level findings:** CSOs, NGOs and international organizations take advanced approaches in implementing interventions, focusing on women's agency and upskilling. Company interventions occur mostly through training programs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, BSR has developed action steps for Grow Asia to implement its Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. The recommendations are presented in an incremental timeline where each of the activities builds upon the next to achieve the longer-term objective. Across all recommendations, Grow Asia should leverage its unique selling points. This includes disseminating, evaluating and synthesizing the content, knowledge, and tools that exists, while bridging the gap between private sector, policymakers and NGOs/CSOs.

The recommendations are categorized by Geographic Scope (Regional vs. In-country) and Level of impact (Farmer, Partner, Network).

- **Farmer Level:** Country Partnership Working Groups to adding gender inclusive approaches in their value chain interventions
- **Partnership Level:** Partners work to increase in their support for women-led businesses and internal leadership development for women
- **Network Level:** A gender inclusive mindset is embedded into Grow Asia's modus operandi and is demonstrated across relationships, workstreams, processes and policies

Immediate Future (2021)

Baseline

- Publish baseline report showcasing key challenges and barriers to gender equality in agriculture in SEA
- Develop an internal guidance document – based on best practices - for Grow Asia on integrating gender into its governance and decision-making, and train staff and leadership on these processes

Accelerate Learning

- Form Gender Mainstreaming Community of Practice (COP) to facilitate cross-learning, exchange of good practices, strategies and business benefits among partners

Generate Action

- Support Working Groups to develop targets at project level, and in measuring impact
- Facilitate partner connections to implement projects on the ground

Short Term (1-2 years)

Baseline

- Publish a “State of Women in Agriculture in SEA” report (annual)

Accelerate Learning

- Publish a “What Works, What’s Needed” Public report (annual)
- Consolidate best practices and methods to improve gender inclusiveness in programs
- Share research on the business case for gender mainstreaming in agricultural value chains and engage partners by asking for data and case study contribution

Identify Opportunities

- Identify key opportunities relevant for partner program investment at regional and country levels, e.g. women’s access to finance, women’s access to technology, etc.

Long Term (3-5 years)

Baseline

- Define meaningful impact: set aspirational goals for Grow Asia and partners to align over time

Achieve Growth

- Seek long-term funding for public-private partnerships (PPP) to scale programs
- Utilize research, case studies, targets, and reports to support ASEAN policy advancements, greater representation of women in Grow Asia leadership, and test scalable/replicable opportunities

Conclusion

Findings from this report suggest that business, NGO and government leaders are recognizing the urgent need to bring about major improvements for women in agricultural value chains and their own organizations in SEA. Moving forward, Grow Asia will capitalize upon this opportunity by taking action regionally and in-country, and to create impact at the network, partner and farmer levels. By addressing gender equality from a Multi-Stakeholder approach, according to local context and Grow Asia’s network of partners have the opportunity to effect significant change.

Introduction

About This Report

Women face multiple barriers to achieving gender equality.¹ In smallholder farmer communities in Southeast Asia, women are often invisible, perceived as being “unproductive” compared to men farmers and are generally expected to provide unpaid farm work – all the while bearing the burden of care and reproductive work within the family and community. While recognizing the variance in how gender roles are defined and women’s differential access to and control over resources across different farming communities in Southeast Asia, this report provides a set of recommendations for [Grow Asia](#) to consider in the implementation of its regional [gender mainstreaming regional program](#). Specifically, this report:

- Maps existing gender inclusion and women empowerment initiatives within Grow Asia’s network, drawing primarily from interviews with a selection of Grow Asia’s private, public, international donor and non-profit partners operating in countries where Grow Asia has established Country Partnerships - Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Vietnam.
- Reviews and evaluates the role Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs) like Grow Asia can play in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment at the Farm Level (i.e., program implementation) and at the Network Level (i.e., within Grow Asia’s governance structures, strategies, and policies).
- Identifies areas where, as an MSP, Grow Asia could support its network of 520+ partners in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in Southeast Asia’s agriculture sector.

This report is the outcome of four months of research conducted by [BSR](#) from August – November 2020. The insights outlined here have been gathered through a series of interviews with the Grow Asia Secretariat, a selection of their partners and an extensive review of existing research and literature.

About Grow Asia

Grow Asia is a unique partnership platform that brings together farmers, governments, the private sector, NGOs, and other stakeholders in Southeast Asia to increase the productivity, profitability, and environmental sustainability of smallholder agriculture in the region. Grow Asia does this by facilitating multi-stakeholder sectoral coordination around macro-level issues and the development of inclusive and sustainable agriculture value chains.

For more information: www.growasia.org



1. In this report, we use gender equality, as opposed to any other possible term (i.e. gender equity, parity, etc) because it is a commonly used term in international development. This term has precedence for Grow Asia and is the term used and accepted by our primary funder, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The UN Women definition of gender equality is provided.



About The Authors

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BSR™ is a global nonprofit organization that works with its network of more than 250 member companies and other partners to build a just and sustainable world. From its offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR™ develops sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. Learn more about BSR's 25 years of leadership in sustainability.

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- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** SNV Netherlands Development Organization (Vietnam); Swisscontact (Regional).
- **International Organizations/Govt:** Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) (Philippines); Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (Myanmar); Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT) Program, an Aus4Equality Initiative (Vietnam); Australia-Indonesia Partnership (AIP) for Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA) (Indonesia).
- **Private sector companies:** Bayer CropScience (Regional); Cimory (Indonesia); East-West Seed (Regional/Myanmar); Golden Agri Resources (Regional/Indonesia); Kirirom Food Production (Cambodia); Mars (Regional/Indonesia); Natural Agriculture Village (NAV) (Cambodia); Nestlé (Philippines); Sasa International (Myanmar).

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Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming - the Role of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs)

We use UN Women's definition of gender equality to frame this report and its findings:

“The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on [their gender]. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women.”

- *Concepts and Definitions, UN Women*

Achieving gender equality requires coordinated collaboration between many different actors, including policy makers, private sector companies, and civil society. It also requires taking a multidimensional perspective by addressing barriers and challenges that manifest themselves in different forms across various industry sectors and by connecting with other areas of the sustainable development agenda (e.g. health, poverty, education, etc.).

For instance, a 2017 McKinsey article, “[Partnering for Parity: Strengthening Collaborations for Gender Equality](#)”, commented on how collaboration is imperative to foster gender parity for women in any sector:

“To make progress, governments need to reform policies that inhibit women's property rights and impede their access to markets; companies need to design and market financial products for women; and NGOs need to raise women's awareness of opportunities for self-employment, while helping them develop their workforce capabilities. [...] If these individual efforts were conducted in tandem, imagine the multiplier effect that would accelerate progress toward gender parity.”

Given their nature, MSPs appear to be ideal for addressing the complexities of global challenges, such as gender equality, due to their ability to incubate and implement collaborative efforts.

According to the [Partnering Initiatives](#), MSPs (also known as Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives and Public-Private Partnerships) are:

“A vehicle through which interested players can collaborate on specific challenges or exploit opportunities in ways that achieve greater impact than they could achieve alone.[...] They tend to focus on policy and advocacy, setting of standards and norms, showcasing action and pledges, creating good practice and knowledge exchange, and developing financial instruments/ common trust funds.”

How can MSPs impact gender equality? So far, MSPs have played a powerful role in promoting good practice in certain industries, such as apparel and agriculture, where women make up a great percentage of the workforce. There is potential to scale up the impact that MSPs bring to women in global supply chains.

Several global and regional MSPs, such as Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Roundtable for Responsible Palm Oil (RSPO), and Rainforest Alliance, provide good examples of gender mainstreaming in their programmatic actions.





Examples of How MSPs Integrate Gender

BCI drives sustainability in the cotton supply chain through a market-driven approach by developing [Better Cotton](#) as a sustainable mainstream commodity.² With support from BSR, BCI has developed a gender strategy and approach by creating a strategic framework with focus pillars, recommended activities, and proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The [BCI Gender Strategy](#) sets forth a clear approach to mainstream gender across BCI's work by pursuing gender mainstreaming throughout BCI's operations at the farm level, in the sustainable cotton community (market and supporting environment), and within the BCI organization. This aligns with BCI's Theory of Change. The BCI Strategy document provides:

- A brief overview of gender dynamics in cotton production, including country-level overviews of female participation at farm level and in training programs across different countries and a detailed discussion of the range of challenges that BCI faces when promoting gender-equal practices within its programs.
- Detailed implementation plans based on three pillars (Sustainable Cotton Community, including BCI members and stakeholder community; Farm, including employers and farm level institutions; Organization, including BCI itself and its ecosystem). For each of these pillars, the strategy sets clear commitments, goals, and action plans.

Rainforest Alliance's 2020 Certification Program gives farms and companies new tools to understand the gender gaps and issues in their operations and how to address them:

- The new standard introduces a risk assessment on gender as part of the Risk Assessment Tool, which allows farms and companies to gain insights into gender issues specific to their context and identify targeted ways to address them. By collecting all relevant data for men and women separately throughout the process, farms and companies can better visualize gender gaps and progress made. An additional tool, called gender equality Smart Meters, will enable farmers to set their own goals for addressing the specific gender issues on their farm.
- The Rainforest Sector Partnership Program, implemented across nine countries, also has a dedicated focus on women's empowerment. This program provides support to local organizations producing cocoa, coffee, and tea to advocate for changes in policies and programs that can make the sector more sustainable and inclusive, especially for women smallholders, farmers, and workers. This program is intended to ultimately help empower women by making their voice heard and putting their issues on the political agenda.

RSPO has integrated gender into its [Standard Principles since 2018](#), aiming to ensure a gender-balanced approach. It has developed a [dedicated guidance document](#), which includes various strategies for addressing issues in the workplace for independent smallholders and for local community engagement. It also provides tools for assessing processes and capacity, which are intended to promote gender balance in its operations to meet relevant criteria and indicators.

Moreover, leading MSPs are also looking at their governance structure to ensure that women play a leading role in the consultation and decision-making processes involved in overseeing their programs and actions. One case example is [EITI](#), the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative, which has developed and published a guidance document entitled "[Towards Gender-Responsive EITI Implementation](#)." It applies to EITI governance structures within the EITI's 52 implementing countries, focusing on enhancing women's representation and participation in implementing countries' multi-stakeholder groups (MSGs) and on monitoring, disclosure, and impact measurement by identifying opportunities for disclosing gender-disaggregated data under EITI requirements.

2. Farmers who adhere to the Better Cotton Principles and Criteria receive a BCI license and can sell their cotton as Better Cotton.

Grow Asia and Gender Mainstreaming

Grow Asia, as an MSP, focuses on the challenge of “improving smallholder productivity, profitability, and sustainability” in the agricultural value chain in Southeast Asia. Grow Asia achieves this goal by supporting and coordinating activities on the regional and national levels, such as forums, policy dialogues, learning and networking events, and running dedicated programs on issues like digital technologies and responsible agricultural investments. Grow Asia has reached over 1.8 million smallholder farmers through their network of 520+ partners in six countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Vietnam). Each country supports Working Groups, which are organized to impact smallholder farmers around specific cross-cutting issues (e.g., agrifinance) or value chains (e.g., coffee) and comprised of public, private and producer sector actors.

Since its inception in 2015, Grow Asia’s network of partners have adopted practices to intentionally strengthen women’s leadership capacity and mainstream gender into internal structures, programs, projects and policies. To understand and provide a platform to share these practices, Grow Asia held two “women in agriculture” roundtables convened in 2017 and 2018. In light of partner priorities and interests, starting in 2020, Grow Asia has recommitted to a cross-cutting and comprehensive approach to gender.

Grow Asia recognizes that there is a growing need to facilitate empowerment among women in agricultural value chains. To support this need in Southeast Asia, Grow Asia has developed a strategy that aims to:

- **Embed a gender consciousness into our approach to agricultural development and**
- **Amplify the business case for women’s empowerment** among our partners to incentivize investment in gender inclusive actions, practices, and policies in Southeast Asia.

Grow Asia’s work includes actively brokering partnerships within the network, distilling and disseminating good practices across companies and sectors, embedding gender-inclusive internal policies and practices, and supporting gender-responsive policymaking at national and regional levels.

Grow Asia has set targets at three Impact Levels in its 2020-2022 Gender Mainstreaming Strategy:

- **Farmer Level:** Grow Asia Working Groups demonstrate intent to increase gender inclusive approaches in their value chain interventions.
- **Partnership Level:** Partners show an increase in their support for women-led businesses, internal leadership development for women.
- **Network Level:** A gender inclusive mindset is embedded into Grow Asia’s modus operandi and is demonstrated across relationships, workstreams, processes and policies.

As part of the first steps of this strategy’s implementation, Grow Asia partnered with BSR to conduct research and produce a baseline report of gender-inclusive practices in 2020. As part of the research, BSR interviewed representatives from 15 organizations, representative of the stakeholders, different countries and commodity value chains that are part of Grow Asia’s network and its Country Partnerships. These included:

- **Multinational companies** with a regional presence in Southeast Asian countries, including Bayer CropScience, East-West Seed, Golden Agri Resources, Mars, and Nestlé
- **Local companies**, i.e. companies based in and operating in one of the countries participating in Grow Asia’s Country Partnerships, including Cimory, Kirirom Food Production, Natural Agriculture Village – NAV, and Sasa International
- **CSOs/NGOs** that are active and operating in Southeast Asia, including the SNV Netherlands Development Organization (Vietnam) and Swisscontact.
- **International Organizations/Govt:** Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Aus4Equality Initiative’s Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT) Program, Australia-Indonesia Partnership (AIP) for Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA).

The research further included exploration of gender-inclusive practices within the Grow Asia network itself, including hiring policies, professional development, and gender balance in leadership policies.

Barriers to Gender Equality in Agricultural Value Chains in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia has a diverse social and cultural landscape that influences gender equality. If we look at how the countries where Grow Asia has presence (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Vietnam) among the 153 countries evaluated in the latest World Economic Forum [Gender Gap Report](#), we can identify significantly different positions in the ranking. The exception is the Philippines, which scores relatively high in the ranking both in the global index (16th) and in the economic participation and opportunities subindex (14th). The remaining five countries can be clustered in two main groups:

- Which are positioned from the middle to the bottom of the ranking in the global index but relatively high in the economic participation and opportunities subindex—Vietnam 87th and 31st respectively and Cambodia 89th and 25th respectively.
- Which are positioned from the middle to the bottom of the ranking in both the global index and the economic participation and opportunities subindex—Indonesia 85th and 68th respectively, Myanmar 114th and 102nd respectively, and Papua New Guinea 127th and 70th respectively.

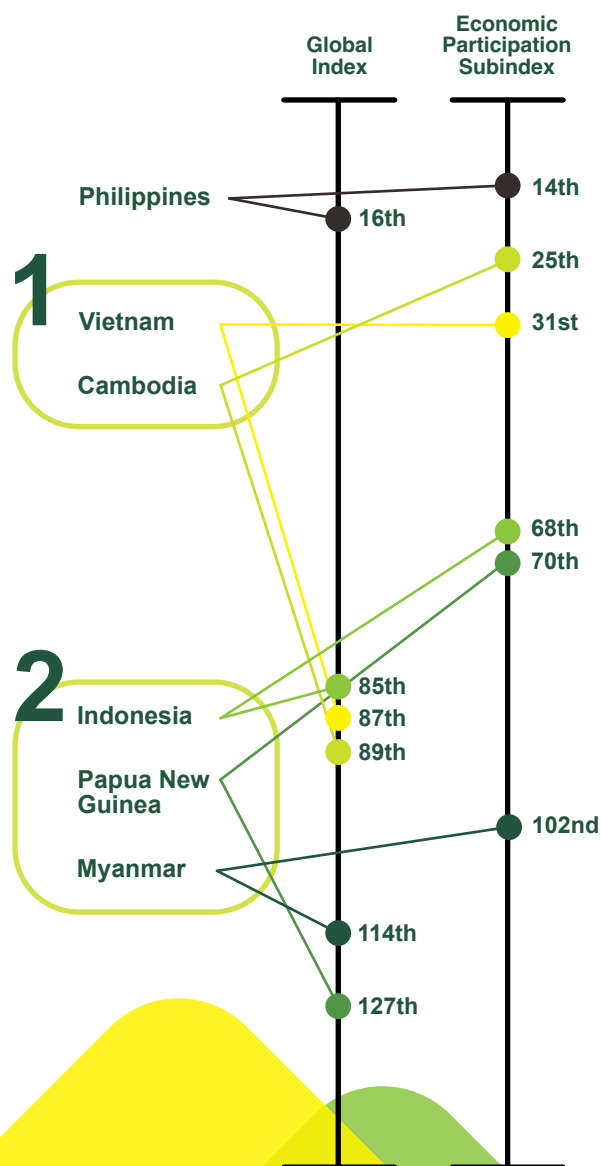
It is worth noting that despite the relatively low position for most of these countries in the global index, the economic participation and opportunities subindex, which includes, among other considerations, women's participation in the labor force and earned income, shows more positive performance than the overall global index. This is a good indication for women's economic participation despite general challenges.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN FAO) [says](#) "one fact is strikingly consistent across countries and contexts: women have less access than men to agricultural assets, inputs and services and to rural employment opportunities."

However, when looking deeper at Southeast Asia, [research](#) published in 2017 seems to tell a different story. In Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, women appear to have relatively equal access to productive resources, such as land and inputs, and greater control over household income than men. Meanwhile, important intra-regional heterogeneity is observed in terms of community-level empowerment: while women play an active role in agricultural groups in Thailand and in the Philippines, this is predominantly men's territory in Indonesia and Myanmar.

The interviews conducted for this report pointed to several barriers to gender equality in the Southeast Asian agricultural context.³

Gender Gap Ranking of Grow Asia Country Partnerships (WEF, 2019)



3. The list of barriers listed here is not meant to be a comprehensive and general overview applicable to all the countries in Southeast Asia. It is based on anecdotal evidence from the interviewees, and some barriers may appear to a greater or lesser degree (or not appear at all) in certain social, political, cultural, and agricultural contexts versus others (among and within Southeast Asian countries).

Pervasive cultural and social norms:

- Cultural and social norms influence women's agency. Within the family, decision-making power tends to be balanced, and women are empowered to make decisions that relate to the household, especially when it comes to managing family matters. However, women are less visible in the community.
- This is more evident in certain cultures that are more patriarchal, where social norms can limit women's agency and can make it harder for women to fully express their potential and less able to voice their opinions and concerns.
- Security concerns for women in certain contexts may impact their ability to work, especially when the job requires traveling to different locations.

More limited access to resources and finance:

- Mostly within the context of patriarchal structures, women face challenges related to financial literacy and access to finance. Within the family, women are empowered to make day-to-day financial decisions for the family and the farm, but have less decision-making power with more substantial expenses.
- Women tend to be left behind on access to quality agricultural input and information services provided by the private sector and on access to essential services provided by the government.

Operating environment with lower educational level:

- In certain contexts, especially among the poorest communities, educational levels of women are very low, including on issues related to health, nutrition, and self-care.
- Women working on farms tend to have more limited access to information, training, and upskilling opportunities and tend to have less technical knowledge than men.

These different and seemingly contradictory perspectives show that more robust country-specific research and frameworks are needed to extract meaningful conclusions. These conclusions would help in informing policy action as well as potential new directions for Grow Asia's gender mainstreaming strategy.

How Grow Asia Partners Are Working to Address These Challenges

More business and government leaders recognize the urgent need to bring about major improvements for women. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) raised global ambition levels to achieve gender equality, and business leaders have made bold commitments on diversity, equality, and opportunity in boardrooms and in the workplaces.

An FAO [report](#) makes the macro level “business case” for addressing gender issues in agriculture: “the agriculture sector is underperforming in many developing countries, in part because women do not have equal access to the resources and opportunities they need to be more productive. The gender gap imposes real costs on society in terms of lost agricultural output, food security and economic growth. Ultimately promoting gender equality is not only good for women; it is also good for agricultural development.”

At a micro level, the “business case,” for gender equality and women empowerment can be less evident, particularly for the private sector. Clear evidence of positive business returns is particularly critical for mobilizing private sector action.

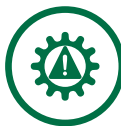
While not widespread, there are today several companies that operate in the agricultural value chain that are committing to empowering women in their own workplaces, among their suppliers, their distributors, and within the communities they serve. Why have they made these commitments? The business benefits for supporting gender equality within and outside of the organization can be summarized as:



Direct financial benefits, such as positive ROI/revenue generation. For example, supporting women’s access to inputs and information services can improve market penetration by targeting segments of the potential customer base that were otherwise untapped.



Increased organizational performance and reputation. Supporting gender equality can lead to increased positive impacts on organizational culture and operations, improved talent attraction and retention, and increased efficiency and productivity. Commitment to gender equality can prove a company’s overall reputation as contributing to positive outcomes in the workforce, in local communities, and in society.



Risk mitigation may be less evident; however, supporting gender equality can contribute to risk mitigation in the workplace due to better employee engagement, and lower turnover thanks to an improved and more inclusive work environment. In local communities, supporting gender equality often creates an amplifying effect and can mitigate other risks, such as child labor.



As an MSP that facilitates collaboration and cross-learning, Grow Asia is in a position to raise the bar on gender equality by supporting its partners by (1) demonstrating the “business case” for gender equality and (2) developing a holistic approach for gender equality and women’s empowerment. This includes initiatives and programs that tackle systemic and structural factors hindering women’s progress in agricultural value chains.

The following framework presents the **Categories of Action on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Initiatives** (big icons on top) which we have mapped the Grow Asia partners’ existing programs and initiatives.⁷ Each category included in this framework can provide potential business (small green icons below).



Gender Policy/Strategy: Organization-level policies and strategies geared toward an organization-level mindset change; supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment or fostering and measuring integration of gender mainstreaming in the organization’s activities and programs.



From a business returns perspective, this type of initiative is tied predominantly to risk mitigation and increased organizational performance and reputation.



Women’s upskilling and access to economic opportunities: Formal/informal professional development initiatives benefiting women workers/farmers, creating access to support mechanisms for women’s access to land, money, and inputs, among others.



From a business returns perspective, this type of initiative is tied predominantly to direct financial benefits (as women workers become more efficient and effective and have greater spending power).



Addressing women’s different needs: Formal policies/procedures or initiatives to protect and support women at work and their work life balance (e.g. specific health and safety protocols and adapted equipment and facilities; enhancement of social protection and support/provision of childcare).



From a business returns perspective, this type of initiative is tied predominantly to risk mitigation and increased organizational performance and reputation.



Support to women’s health: Field programs in support of women’s health and nutrition; access to and control over reproductive health and family formation.



From a business returns perspective, this type of initiative is tied predominantly to risk mitigation and increased organizational performance and reputation.



Women’s agency and addressing social and cultural norms: Dedicated programs supporting women’s participation and voices at work, in their family, and in society; addressing obstacles deriving from social and cultural norms; initiatives to ensure workplaces are free from violence, intimidation, and sexual harassment.



From a business returns perspective, this type of initiative is tied predominantly to risk mitigation and increased organizational performance and reputation.

Overall, Grow Asia partners are already working to support gender equality by working inside and outside of their organization.

4. To develop this framework, we started by considering the eight building blocks developed by the International Center for Research on Women and Dalberg Global Development Advisors, which have been endorsed by BSR, the Dutch Foreign Ministry, and the Win-Win Coalition and can be found on page 8 of this [report](#). This approach is closely tied to how organizations seek to drive improvement in women’s economic opportunity and equality at work, in health and well-being, and supporting women’s participation and voices. This is applicable to how companies directly and indirectly impact women across the entire value chain, from the upstream design and manufacturing of products and sourcing of raw materials to downstream activities, including the marketing, distribution, and use of products and services by the consumer. The framework used for this report is a simplified version of this previous research, which we believe better reflects the outcomes of the interviews and regional context where Grow Asia operates.

Inside the Organization

Organization-level policies, strategies, and initiatives consist of: 1) ways organizations integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace to ensure women's representation, equity, and inclusion or 2) ways for companies to commit to and mobilize action across their sustainability activities.

Across most of the organizations interviewed, we identified organization-level policies, strategies, and initiatives. Key findings are:

- MNCs and regional companies have gender-equality policies and strategies in place that are applied across the different countries of operations.
- Local (domestic or SME) companies tend to have more informal approaches. In such cases, leadership from the top, especially when women lead or own the company, is seen as a powerful driver for promoting gender equality.
- CSOs/NGOs and Intl organizations generally have policies in place on issues such as women in leadership positions and gender balance within their organizations. They also have dedicated policies and strategies to mainstream gender within their programs to inform and design interventions.

Outside the Organization

Gender equality and women empowerment programs are dedicated actions and programs that organizations conduct at farm level or in farming communities and with women workers in other areas of the value chain, such as in operations and downstream in sales and marketing.










































Across most of the organizations interviewed, we identified gender equality and women empowerment programs/interventions. Key findings are:

- CSOs/NGOs, Intl organizations have advanced approaches. Many also implement dedicated interventions, often focused on **women's agency and upskilling**.
- There are a few examples of company interventions dedicated to **women's upskilling**, mostly through training programs. Even if companies do not have specific initiatives in place yet, there is willingness to collaborate with potential partners.
- In general, the organizations recognize that, when dealing with the poorest communities in the agricultural value chain, **addressing women's needs**, such as basic education or women's health and nutrition, can have an amplifying effect in the communities. This includes enhancing food security and therefore productivity of workers or mitigating risks such as child labor.

Grow Asia Network Case Studies

Based on the information collected through the interviews we present in this report a selection of ten case studies, representing different geographies, type of organizations (MNCs, regional and local companies, and CSOs/NGOs, Intl organizations) - and different levels of intervention. These interviews were conducted from August – October 2020.

Table 1. Selected Case Studies from Grow Asia Partners

Legend	Organization	Type of initiatives
 <p>Gender Policy/ Strategy</p>	 <p>Australian Government Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research</p>	<p>Organizational level: </p> <p>Farm level program in the Philippines:  </p>
 <p>Women's upskilling and access to economic opportunities</p>	 <p>PRISMA Promoting Rural Income through Support for Markets in Agriculture</p>	<p>Farm level program in Indonesia:  </p>
		<p>Sales program in Indonesia: </p>
	 <p>EAST-WEST SEED INTERNATIONAL</p>	<p>Farm level program in Myanmar:  </p>
 <p>Addressing women's differential needs</p>	 <p>golden agri resources agribusiness and food</p>	<p>Farm level program in Indonesia:   </p>
	 <p>KIRIROM Food PRODUCTION</p>	<p>Organizational level: </p> <p>Farm/Factory level in Cambodia:  </p>
 <p>Support to women's health</p>	 <p>MARS</p>	<p>Organizational level: </p> <p>Farm level program in Indonesia:  </p>
		<p>Farm level program in Cambodia:   </p>
	 <p>Nestlé</p>	<p>Organizational level: </p> <p>Farm level program in the Philippines: </p>
 <p>Women's agency and addressing social and cultural norms</p>	 <p>SNV</p>	<p>Organizational level: </p> <p>Farm level program in Vietnam:   </p>



The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is the Australian Government’s specialist agricultural research-for-development agency, within the Australian aid program. The purpose of ACIAR is to contribute to reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of many in the Indo-Pacific region through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research. Find out more on www.aciar.gov.au

Type of Organization: Government

Location of Case Study: The Philippines

Gender Equality Initiatives

Organization Level: Gender equity⁵ policy / strategy

- ACIAR aims to lead by example through integration of gender equity within the organization policies and ways of working, including through strong commitment at the leadership level, recruitment processes, training on gender awareness and gender / cultural bias to ACIAR staff, and promoting flexible working hours.
- As part of its mission ACIAR commissions research and through a dedicated policy and toolkit that drives gender integration into the research programs, it strives to ensure that there is no gender blind research, in particular:
 - All project proposals must include a gender focus where the gendered implications of activities and outcomes are articulated.
 - Findings from the integration of gender into the research programs are used to design gender-aware transformative interventions.
- ACIAR outreach and capacity building initiatives are also designed to support gender equity and women’s empowerment, ensuring that they are accessible and suitable for both men and women. A new fellowship program was also established to specifically support women’s participation and leadership in agricultural research for development.

In the Philippines, ACIAR and partners are doing action research aimed at women's upskilling and improving access to economic opportunities:

- A value chain and community development project that integrates key aspects of gender equity, such as
 - Investigating gender roles in the vegetable production value chain and in the community and designing interventions to empower women’s access to market and negotiation skills.
 - Designing training for women farmers to ensure that childcare was available while the training was undergoing, so that women could focus on the training and not worry about their family care responsibilities.
 - Conducting a gender awareness training involving men and women in the households for participants to share their perspectives and concerns, with the objective to raise men’s awareness and recognition of the household burdens carried out by women.
- Agriculture extension and livelihood improvement in conflict-vulnerable areas. Key elements of the research were gender roles, social relations and cultural context which influenced the design and delivery of interventions. It was observed that many communities saw women as proficient communicators and negotiators, who take on leadership roles, build trust, maintain farms and food production, initiate small enterprises, and support community-based recovery processes.

5. ACIAR’s [policy and strategy on gender](#) (2017-2022) focuses on gender equity, recognising the need to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages faced by women. However, the end goal is an equitable playing field for the men and women in the agricultural system.

PRISMA

Promoting Rural Income through
Support for Markets in Agriculture

The Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Promoting Rural Incomes through Support for Markets in Agriculture (AIP-PRISMA) is a development partnership between the Government of Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, DFAT) and the Ministry of National Development Planning of the Republic of Indonesia (Bappenas). The multi-year development partnership aims to accelerate poverty reduction through promoting inclusive economic growth. Find out more on www.aip-prisma.or.id

Type of organization: Australia-Indonesia Partnership

Location of case study: Indonesia

Gender Equality Initiatives

Farm level program in Indonesia: Women's upskilling and access to economic opportunities; Women's agency and addressing social and cultural norms

- PRISMA works together with key stakeholders implementing rural development projects within 19 agriculture sectors in Indonesia including maize, rice, vegetables, amongst others. As part of its activities, it also collaborates with the private sector to carry out gender inclusive initiatives. These are aimed at supporting companies to identify the business value in empowering women.
- PRISMA's approach integrates gender considerations within the project life cycle, by integrating gender into all market and impact assessments which analyze women's roles at the farm level. Based on the different roles and needs identified, the team then defines different engagement strategies with partners. For example, after conducting such assessments with one of its partners in Papua and West Papua, PRISMA identified that women farmers play integral roles in agriculture production. As a result, it is important to engage women lead farmers through the development of women-led demo farms, which support community capacity building and ensure effective knowledge transfer.
- To track the effectiveness of its actions, PRISMA has defined dedicated measurement indicators which regularly monitor the outcomes and impacts of interventions for women's empowerment on issues such as economic advancement, access to opportunities and services, decision-making in the household, agency and leadership.
- As part of its response to the COVID-19 crisis, PRISMA has collected field information and insights to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on women sales agents. Aimed at identifying new opportunities and roles that emerge for women as a result of the crisis, the team looked at issues such as access to products and services to remain productive, marketing, sales and distribution challenges, changes and shifts in roles and impacts on women leadership and agency.
- PRISMA has recently captured and published its learnings on women sales agent programs, and its effectiveness in reaching more women farmers. These insights and recommendations, along with a COVID-19 rapid assessment can be found at:
 - [Women Agents – Insights and Recommendations](#)
 - [COVID-19 Update – Women Direct Sales Agents](#)





Cimory Group is a protein-based packaged food and beverage product manufacturer in Indonesia, with a leading market share in yogurt and premium sausage. Founded in 1992, the Group currently manufactures processed meat, dairy, soy, and egg products under various brands, including Cimory, Kanzler, and Besto, which are sold through various channels including modern and traditional retailers, food services, and their proprietary door to door direct-selling team. The company started in a small village in the mountains of Java with funding from the Dutch government to enhance fair trade with local farmers of milk. The Group is based in Jakarta, with manufacturing facilities in Greater Jakarta and Central Java. Find out more on www.cimory.com

Type of organization: Local Company

Location of case study: Indonesia

Gender Equality Initiatives

Sales program in Indonesia: Women's upskilling and access to economic opportunities

- As part of its downstream sales activities, Cimory has designed a door-to-door sales model that involves a large number of women as part of the salesforce (Miss Cimory program).
 - Cimory rents out small houses (100 distribution centers) in poor neighborhoods where women are recruited to become agents and conduct door to door direct product selling. Women sales agents are assigned to certain areas of 1000 households as exclusive selling areas where they deliver and sell Cimory products. They do not need any capital to start and the model allows them to work part time or take another job to increase their income and support income of their families.
 - Women sales agents deliver milk and yoghurt daily in the morning and in the afternoon. This is done not on a consignment system, meaning that in the afternoon they only need to pay back to Cimory what they sold and can return the unsold without any financial burden.
 - In addition, Cimory provides training and equipment and women participate in training activities daily, including on financial management to support the women sales agent's financial literacy.
- Cimory identified specific business benefits deriving from the implementation of this sales model, including limited spending in advertising and marketing thanks to the door-to-door relationships established by the women sales agents; good customer relationship management because all the customers are at one degree of separation from the company; and better logistical system to extend the products shelf life with door to door selling.





East-West Seed (EWS) was founded in 1982 in the Philippines, with a mission to improve the income of farmers through high-quality vegetable seed. The company breeds, produces and sells high-quality tropical seeds adapted to local markets and agronomic conditions. EWS has a unique focus on smallholder farmers, who are the main clients of the company. In addition, the company educates farmers and helps them to maximize their yields through better knowledge on vegetable production. With leading positions in Asia and rapid expansion in Africa and Latin America, East-West Seed is now the 10th largest vegetable seed company in the world. Find out more on: www.eastwestseed.com

Type of organization: MNC

Location of case study: Myanmar

Gender Equality Initiatives

Farm level program in Myanmar: Women upskilling and access to economic opportunities; Addressing women's differential needs

- To ensure pre-commercial training activities are most effectively geared towards benefiting smallholder farmers, the company created an independent non-profit foundation 'East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer'. Dedicated to improving the livelihoods of smallholder vegetable farmers, East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer (EWS-KT) works hand-in-hand with farming communities in Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Philippines, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Bangladesh. The objective of EWS-KT is to showcase profitable and sustainable farm practices by providing long-term technical support - directly within farming communities. To date, EWS has trained about 300,000 smallholder vegetable farmers through field-based activities. EWS's vision in the next five years is to train one million farmers making significant increases to rural incomes in very poor areas. EWS also believes that with higher volumes of safer to eat vegetables available throughout the year, there is huge potential to positively impact nutrition and food security. The increase in vegetable production boosts per capita consumption in countries where the average is often less than half of the World Health Organization's recommendation.
- EWS provides vegetable production knowledge to small famers and trains them from seed to harvest with the ultimate objective to increase income of farmers. Trainings cover farming practices such as how to prepare soil substrate for seedlings, how to make necessary land preparations, transplanting, fertilizer and pesticide application, pest and disease management and keeping record of cost and benefit calculation. EWS technical staff provide theory and practical training and partner staff from MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) organize community mobilization for training and field-day events, as well as market linkages for farmers.
- EWS monitors participants' engagement through specific KPIs, including participation of women in the training programs. One program has involved 60% women farmers in the training and overall women represent 36% in the training audience. To drive more women participation in trainings in some regions, EWS has been approaching the leaders of the communities to help define locations that are more convenient for women that also consider their childcare and family responsibilities.
- EWS identified specific benefits from women participation in trainings, including supporting knowledge sharing and EWS market outreach, as women are much more likely than men to share the knowledge they gain during trainings with others in their communities.





Golden Agri-Resources (GAR) is one of the largest palm oil production companies in the world. GAR manages nearly half a million hectares of palm oil plantations (including smallholder farmers), located in Indonesia. The company is a leading seed-to-shelf agribusiness—from growing oil palms with farmers to producing food and fuel for the present and future. Find out more on www.goldenagri.com.sg

Type of organization: Regional Company

Location of case study: Indonesia

Gender Equality Initiatives

Farm-level program in Indonesia: Women's upskilling and access to economic opportunities; Women's agency and addressing social and cultural norms

- GAR runs sustainability programs with palm oil suppliers and collaborates with other companies in initiatives such as the [Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (RSPO) and [Decent Rural Living Initiative](#). Such initiatives also address gender aspects and are working to advance gender equity in the palm oil sector and agri value chains. In the villages, GAR works with customers like L'Oréal to support community livelihoods, e.g. growing food and cash crops for food security and increasing the income of families.
- GAR has also set up dedicated programs within its own estates:
 - The company supports the establishment of gender committees that look after the wellbeing of women workers and share information and support with school, nurseries, healthcare, etc.
 - GAR also runs dedicated training on sexual harassment, health and nutrition, provision of skills training and upgrading, growing organic vegetables, post-processing, packaging and sales. GAR is also looking for partners to establish a focused program on financial literacy.
- Examples include :
 - Gender committees on more than 100 estates to provide a vehicle for women to raise, discuss and address issues, including the raising of grievances;
 - Secure hotlines and confidential grievance procedures to allow reporting of inappropriate behaviour or harassment;
 - Support for breastfeeding and working mothers, through the provision of pumping rooms for breastfeeding mothers who have returned to work, early childcare facilities, and access to free education for children.
 - In September 2020, more than 70 Human Resources and Sustainability staff participated in an internal socialisation event featuring Ibu Zaki (Wasingatu Zakiyah), gender advisor on Market Transformation for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (MTRE) Project at UNDP.
 - GAR has signed up to be a member of Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (IBCWE).
 - 506 women have benefitted from skills training and increased household incomes from projects implemented as part of GAR's Peat Rehabilitation Project in PT AMNL in West Kalimantan.
 - Women make up more than 50% of participants in Alternative Livelihood programmes implemented in more than 40 communities in Kalimantan and Sumatra.
- GAR believes it can scale up existing initiatives with the support of more partners with relevant expertise and resources. The company is actively engaged in identifying such partnership opportunities.





Kirirom Food Production (K.F.P) Co., Ltd is a leading dried fruits manufacturer in Cambodia, exporting to 12 countries and retailing local, high-quality products. KFP works with 2,000 smallholder farmers who supply fresh mango to its factory, and employs around 1,000 people in its plant, mostly women from rural communities. Find out more on www.kfp.com.kh

Type of organization: Local Company

Location of case study: Cambodia

Gender Equality Initiatives

Organizational level: Gender Policy/Strategy; Women's agency and addressing social and cultural norms

- Despite the lack of a specific gender policy, 75% of the leadership at KFP are women, and most workers in the production facility are women. Women are encouraged to take on leadership roles, and the company actively promotes gender equality with its staff, for example by addressing cultural norms according to which women can traditionally only work certain jobs or take care of the household.
- KFP's owner is a woman, and this is recognized by senior staff as the main driver for the company's promotion of gender equality. Challenges for women in Cambodia include:
 - Discrimination (in other Cambodian companies, discrimination against women still exists, and leads to women working lower-ranked jobs compared to men).
 - Lack of women in leadership roles (in companies owned by men, women have limited power in leadership).
 - Social norms that are detrimental to women (e.g. housework being considered more appropriate for women than men).
- KFP tries to address these challenges by educating its workers and offering them opportunities.

Farm/ factory level: Women upskilling and access to economic opportunities:

- KFP directly engages with women farmers and hires in their manufacturing plant women from the rural communities living near the plant. These communities, and especially the women living there, traditionally lack economic and job opportunities due to their remote location.
- KFP recognizes that the factory's employees may lack basic knowledge (such as literacy and personal hygiene) and where possible invests time and money to train them. KFP is aware that by educating women the company will benefit, but it can also have a positive amplifying effect in the community. For example, women can teach their children what they've learned, and may be more inclined to send their children to school, which would prevent child labor.



MARS

Mars is a family-owned business with more than a century of history making diverse products and offering services for people and the pets people love. With more than \$35 billion in sales, the company is a global business that produces some of the world’s best-loved brands: M&M’s®, SNICKERS®, TWIX®, MILKYWAY®, DOVE®, PEDIGREE®, ROYAL CANIN®, WHISKAS®, EXTRA®, ORBIT®, 5™, SKITTLES®, UNCLE BEN’S®, and COCOAVIA®. Mars associates proudly take care of half of the world’s pets through nutrition, health and services businesses such as Banfield Pet Hospitals™, BluePearl®, Linnaeus, AniCura, VCA™ and Pet Partners™. Headquartered in McLean, Virginia in the USA, Mars operates in more than 80 countries. The Mars Five Principles — Quality, Responsibility, Mutuality, Efficiency and Freedom — inspire more than 125,000 associates to take action every day to help create a world tomorrow in which the planet, its people and pets can thrive. Find out more on www.mars.com

Type of organization: MNC

Location of case study: Indonesia

Gender Equality Initiatives



Organizational level: Gender equality policy / strategy

- The overarching company strategy on gender equality is the "[Full potential Mars Platform on Gender](#)", which is part of the "[Thriving people](#)" pillar of the company Sustainability Strategy – the "[Sustainability in Generation Plan](#)". "Thriving people" focuses on value chain actions to ensure respect to Human Rights, support farmers income and unlock opportunities for women with dedicated goals in each area of action. The company is also signatory of the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) (WEPs).
- To reach its goals Mars has designed different levels of actions, which include commitments, goals and implementation plans inside and outside of the organization. In particular, within the organization, Mars aspires to reach 100% gender-balanced business leadership teams across its global business, supports flexible working arrangement to support individual needs, productivity and performance and is committed to equal pay for male and female employees across its global business.



Farm level program in Indonesia: Women's agency and addressing social and cultural norms



- Through its Mars [Cocoa for Generations strategy](#), the company has established partnerships with NGOs in different countries of sourcing of key ingredients (e.g. CARE International in Cote d'Ivoire and Tanager in India) to develop and implement farm level programs to support women farmers.
- In Indonesia in particular Mars has been working with farmers and other partners to ensure its global sustainability strategy is implemented in the communities and by taking a research-based approach.
- As part of its Cocoa for Generations (C4G) strategy, Mars Wrigley aims to empower women in its cocoa supply chain, both socially and economically. To this end, Mars engaged the KIT Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and Pabla van Heck (independent) to develop insight-driven recommendations for potential future interventions to advance women empowerment. The research team conducted qualitative research towards understanding and exposing behaviors, experiences and attitudes in relation to the (in)equality and (dis)empowerment that women face in their daily lives in cocoa growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Indonesia.
- The outcome of this work will inform further engagement with Mars' suppliers and other (implementing) partners, while supporting Mars' Cocoa for Generations (C4G) sustainability strategy.
- Mars has identified specific business benefits deriving from the implementation of women empowerment programs, including improving the productivity of women farmers, adding diversification and stability to Mars' supply and better positioning the company to increase its chocolate production.



Natural Agriculture Village (NAV) is a Cambodian wholesale company working with smallholder farmers to bring quality and safe fruits and vegetables products to the market.

Type of organization: Local Company

Location of case study: Cambodia

Gender Equality Initiatives

Farm level program in Cambodia: Women upskilling and access to economic opportunities; Support women’s health; Women's agency and addressing social and cultural norms

- NAV directly works with smallholder farmers growing fruits and vegetables, providing capacity building and supporting quality control of the products. The company conducts various types of training including on horticulture standards and how to comply with them, and technical advice. NAV also conducts awareness raising initiatives with its workforce and with farmers on issues such as health and wellness and security.
- As part of the effort to increase participation of women in its training activities the company explicitly invites both women and men to the meetings and trainings. Overall, mostly women join the trainings while men conduct the manual work in the field.
- Beyond farmer trainings NAV also engages with farmers committees, which have the role to peer review quality control, support collection points and send products to the markets. Among other activities, NAV supports farmers committees during the election of their representatives to ensure they have equal representation of women and men.



Nestlé is the world’s largest most diversified multinational food and beverage processing company headquartered in Switzerland, with more than 2000 brands and operating across 191 countries across the world. Find out more on www.nestle.com

Type of organization: MNC

Location of case study: Philippines

Gender Equality Initiatives

Farm level program in the Philippines: Women upskilling and access to economic opportunities

- In the coffee production communities in the Philippines, Nestlé reaches out to farmers through training programs using a train the trainer approach - training programs within the communities are led by trained community members, aka coffee ambassadors, many of whom are women. Coffee ambassadors help sustain capacity building in the communities.
- Moreover, women often participate in the production/plant related trainings and Nestlé makes all effort to facilitate their participation.



SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) is a not-for-profit international development organization that helps people living in poverty to raise incomes and access basic services. SNV focuses on three sectors and has a long-term, local presence in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Find out more on www.snv.org

Type of organization: NGO/CSO

Location of case study: Vietnam

Gender Equality Initiatives



Organizational level: Gender policy / strategy

- Since several years, SNV has launched a [Gender Policy](#) reaffirming its commitment to reduce gender disparities, transform gender relations and promote women’s empowerment.
- The policy provides for an overall framework focused on SNV’s organizational systems and accountability towards gender equality. SNV staff, together with leaders across the world, pledge to take decisive, visible, and measurable action as champions of gender parity via a specific approach called: Balancing Benefit.



Grassroots level program in Vietnam: Women’s upskilling and access to economic opportunities (especially climate responsive agribusinesses); Women’s agency and addressing social and cultural norms; Addressing women’s differential needs



- SNV’s women empowerment programs in Vietnam emphasize leveraging women’s role through development of inclusive agriculture value chains of rice, horticulture and spices. SNV utilizes the Balancing Benefit approach that combines gender transformation, business development and management, enabling environment, market, and leadership enhancement.
- Promoting household and village dialogues that challenge social and cultural norms. SNV uses a model of working with a few husbands and wives that practice the dialogue, then bring family issues into the village dialogue and act as role models and catalysts of change. This model has an objective to encourage men to share housework tasks and decision making with women and promote solutions to help reduce women’s workload.
- Supporting women entrepreneurship in climate responsive agribusiness via enhancing empowerment of women in three segments: producers, cooperatives and MSMEs. The women empowerment program supports participation of women in the management of farmers groups or in the farm businesses, attendance at farmers’ field schools, and supports women’s access to climate responsive farming techniques, finance, information and market. Beyond the general support to women entrepreneurship and business management skills, the program promotes women leadership in cooperatives and agriculture extension services; and promotes women’s business start up and innovation. Women champions have been selected and trained to be role models for women entrepreneurship and advocacy agent for change for gender equality.
- Analyzing public policies to identify the gaps and why they may not work for women empowerment. This includes policy advocacy planning to ensure gender sensitive approaches, and climate and agriculture policies that better serve women empowerment.
- Through WEAI (Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index) baseline and end-line surveys, SNV measures specific KPIs to evaluate progress of its programs including impact indicators, such as gender parity in workload, control over income, and leadership. Accordingly, SNV assesses the number of women who have increased their income, number of women leading an enterprise or startup, number of new jobs created for women, number of women with increased capacity and leadership, number of cooperatives and MSMEs led by women profitable. It also measures progress indicators, such as number of gender-sensitive policies, number of women attending leadership training, etc.



Recommendations

Based on the findings and the local operating context, BSR has developed a set of recommendations for Grow Asia to consider as next action steps in the implementation of its Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.

These recommendations are:

- 1** based on the suggestions that emerged from interviews with Grow Asia's partners, as well as BSR's own experience, and
- 2** aimed at supporting Grow Asia in working towards promoting and enabling gender equality within its network.

When addressing this issue, it will be key for Grow Asia to leverage already existing resources and established players and initiatives in the space - some examples of which are included in this report and take inspiration from them.

As a collective, the recommendations in Table 2 indicate that Grow Asia should focus on its unique selling points (USP). This would include disseminating, evaluating and synthesizing the content, knowledge, and tools that already exist, while bridging the gap between the private sector, policymakers and NGOs/CSOs.

Broadly, Grow Asia must also consider how to best to measure its impact. Our suggestions for impact measurement include:

- 1** Measure levels of change (in terms of practices, policies or processes related to gender mainstreaming) within partner organizations based on qualitative inputs.
- 2** Demonstrate the change over time in the number of members collecting gender-related information.
- 3** Quantify member companies that have specific focus or program with a stated target related to gender mainstreaming.
- 4** Measure whether companies use their influence to support women smallholder farmers (for example, a position statement sent from Grow Asia partners to the ASEAN Secretariat with concrete policy recommendations).



The recommendations presented below have been developed into a matrix (see Table 2):

- Timeframe for Action:
 - Immediate (2021)
 - Short-term (1 – 2 years)
 - Long-term (3 – 5 years)
- Impact Levels: the three levels of Grow Asia's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy:
 - Network (directly relevant to staff/leadership of Grow Asia)
 - Partner (where partners support and inform each other, facilitated by Grow Asia)
 - Farmer level (relevant to Grow Asia Country Partnerships' Working Groups' direct actions or interventions with farmers)
- Geographic Scope:
 - Regional (led by Grow Asia Secretariat)
 - Country (led by any of the six Grow Asia Country Partnerships)

Summary of Recommendations Matrix

In the immediate future (2021), Grow Asia will consider:

- Publish a Grow Asia baseline report around gender equality to demonstrate key challenges and barriers to gender equality in the agricultural context in Southeast Asia.
- Develop an internal guidance document – based on best practices - for Grow Asia on integrating gender into Grow Asia governance and decision-making processes and train staff and leadership on these processes.
- Form a Gender Mainstreaming Community of Practice (COP) that facilitates cross-learning (e.g. training, learning events), exchange of good practices among partners on gender policies, strategies and business benefits around working on gender equality.
- Provide access to trainings for Country Partnership staff to support their Working Groups on gender mainstreaming targets and impact measurement.
- Facilitate partner connections to implement projects on the ground that impact women farmers.
- Support relevant Grow Asia Working Groups in developing their Theory of Change (TOC) for gender mainstreaming within their scope of work and define related impact measurement.

In the short-term (1- 2 years), Grow Asia will consider:

- Publish a "State of Women in Agriculture in SEA" annual impact report outlining how Grow Asia's network and partner efforts will contribute to gender equality in the region.
- Publish a "What Works, What's Needed" Public report (annual) to include review of impact metrics and tools used by partners as part of the "State of Women in Ag" report. This would include country supplements from all six Country Partnerships.
- Define a Grow Asia gender equality Theory of Change (TOC), integrate it into the 2020 – 2022 Grow Asia Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, and socialize it within the network.
- Consolidate and share research to demonstrate the business case for gender mainstreaming in agricultural value chains and engage partners in the process by asking for data and case study contribution.
- Identify key opportunities relevant for partner program investment at regional and country levels, e.g. women's access to finance, women's access to technology, etc.
- Develop a gender equality guidance/share inventory of existing resources that can support private sector partners in developing relevant gender equality policies and strategies and implementing gender-aware programs in agricultural supply chains.
- Facilitate sharing, among partners, methodologies to create more gender-inclusive approaches and outcomes within farmer-level programs.

In the long-term (3 – 5 years), Grow Asia aims to build on the above actions to:

- Define what meaningful impact looks like, through aspirational targets and goals for Grow Asia and partners to align to over time.
- Seek long-term funding for public-private partnership (PPP) approaches to scale programs that impact women in agriculture in SEA, based on success of the Community of Practice (regional) and Country Partnership efforts.
- Utilize research, case studies, targets, and reports to support ASEAN policy advancements, promote representation of women in Grow Asia leadership, and test scalable/replicable opportunities.

In many of the above suggested actions, there are a series of questions that Grow Asia must consider. For example, in the formation of the **Community of Practice**, Grow Asia (together with its partners) must determine:

- How and with what resources Grow Asia wants partners to engage
- How the Gender Community of Practice (COP) is differentiated from Grow Asia's overall strategy and brings added value to the gender mainstreaming landscape in Southeast Asia
- Level of formality (greater formality leads to greater resources required)
- Level of governance (more governance does not necessarily equal greater effectiveness)
- What incentives Grow Asia can provide to COP partners
- How Grow Asia can leverage its unique selling points to add value to (rather than duplicate) existing gender mainstreaming support programs and initiatives in agriculture

In the following matrix (Table 2), we provide a list of recommendations, including showcasing potential outputs as a result of those recommended actions. Where relevant, we offer specific examples from other MSPs and other types of initiatives. Examples provided are not necessarily specific to Southeast Asia and/or agricultural value chains, but they can serve as inspiration for the recommendations presented.



Table 2. Recommendations, Possible Outputs, and Examples for Grow Asia’s Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

● Immediate ● Short-term (1 - 2 Years) ● Long-term (3 - 5 years)

Scope	Regional			Country	
Impact level	Recommendation	Output	Examples	Outcome Opportunity	Examples
Network	<div>● Publish a Grow Asia baseline report around gender equality to demonstrate key challenges and barriers to gender equality in the agricultural context in Southeast Asia, with support of local experts.</div>	Grow Asia baseline report around gender equality in agricultural value chains in our 6 Country Partnerships	<div>● SNV, Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE) Program, baseline report, Kenya, 2017</div> <div>● BSR, Supporting Women in the Luxury Supply Chain: A Focus on Italy, 2019</div>		
	<div>● Develop an internal guidance document for Grow Asia on integrating gender into Grow Asia governance and decision-making processes, based on best practices. Train relevant staff and country representatives.</div>	Grow Asia internal guidance document for women participation and involvement in Grow Asia governance, decision making and activities	<div>● EITI, Guidance Note 30, Towards gender responsive EITI implementation. 2019</div>		
	<div>● From this research, develop a position on how Grow Asia can contribute to gender equality.</div>	Grow Asia "State of Women in Agriculture in SEA" annual impact report as contribution to larger body of research on women in agri value chains in SEA	<div>● Rainforest Alliance, Sustainable Development Goals Position Paper How The Rainforest Alliance Aligns With and Contributes To the Sustainable Development Goals, 2020</div> <div>● Better Cotton Initiative, Gender Strategy, 2019</div>	Grow Asia annual position paper on gender equality - what are the key impact areas and recommended indicators of success in each country	<div>● Rainforest Alliance, Sustainable Development Goals Position Paper How The Rainforest Alliance Aligns With and Contributes To the Sustainable Development Goals, 2020</div> <div>● Better Cotton Initiative, Gender Strategy, 2019</div>
	<div>● Create data- and case study-driven analysis of “what works, what is needed” as part of the "State of Women in Ag" report.</div>	Grow Asia “What Works, What’s Needed” Public report (annual) to include review of impact metrics and tools used by partners	<div>● UNAID, Gender Action Plan 2018–2023, a Framework for Accountability, 2018</div>	Country supplement to “What Works, What’s Needed” report	<div>● UNAID, Gender Action Plan 2018–2023, a Framework for Accountability, 2018</div>
	<div>● Define a Grow Asia gender equality Theory of Change (TOC) for 2021 - 2030, integrate it into the 2020 - 2022 Grow Asia Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, and socialize it within the network.</div>	Gender Equality Component in Grow Asia's Theory of Change (TOC)	<div>● Better Cotton Initiative Theory of Change</div>		
	<div>● Define what meaningful impact looks like, through aspirational targets and goals for Grow Asia and partners to align to over time.</div>	Revise and update Grow Asia and partner Gender Strategies to reflect learnings over time.	<div>● BSR and C&A Foundation, Gender Data and Impact tool, 2019</div>		
	<div>● Seek long-term funding for public-private partnership (PPP) approaches to scale program impacts to impact women in agriculture in Asia, based on success of the Community of Practice (regional) and Country Partnership efforts.</div>	Establishment of strong connections with relevant funders and influencers in the agriculture and gender equality space—visibility of Grow Asia perspective on this topic	<div>● Several examples of PPPs included in the IFEAD report, IFAD and public-private partnerships: Selected project experiences, 2013</div>		
	<div>● Utilize research, case studies, targets, and reports to illustrate ASEAN policy needs, Grow Asia/ member leadership, and scalable/ replicable opportunities.</div>	Opportunities for partners to engage on specific ASEAN policy-related dialogues, using partner and Grow Asia resources	<div>● MACN collective action in Argentina in support to new regulatory reform to tackle corruption in ports</div> <div>● World Bank Group, Applying a Gender Lens throughout the PPP Project Cycle, Integrating Gender in the PPP Legal and Regulatory Framework</div>		

Table 2. Recommendations, Possible Outputs, and Examples for Grow Asia’s Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Immediate

Short-term (1 - 2 Years)

Long-term (4 - 5 years)

Scope	Regional			Country		
Impact level	Recommendation	Output	Examples	Recommendation	Outcome Opportunity	Examples
Partner	<div>Form a Gender Mainstreaming Community of Practice (COP) that facilitates cross-learning initiatives (e.g. training, learning events), exchange of good practices among partners on gender policies, and strategies and business benefits around working on gender equality.</div>	<div>Form a Gender Mainstreaming Community of Practice (COP) that facilitates cross-learning initiatives (e.g. training, learning events), exchange of good practices among partners on gender policies, and strategies and business benefits around working on gender equality.</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Form a Gender Mainstreaming Community of Practice (COP) that facilitates cross-learning initiatives (e.g. training, learning events), exchange of good practices among partners on gender policies, and strategies and business benefits around working on gender equality.</div>			
	<div>Consolidate and share research to demonstrate the business case for gender mainstreaming in agricultural value chains and engage partners in the process by asking for data and case study contribution.</div>	<div>Share examples through the COP focusing on positive ROI, increasing income, risk mitigations</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Share examples through the COP focusing on positive ROI, increasing income, risk mitigations</div>	<div>Share examples through the COP focusing on positive ROI, increasing income, risk mitigations</div>	<div>Increased access to partnership opportunities for Grow Asia partners for farmer-level programs (e.g. through access to relevant practitioner network)</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">EU Practitioners’ Network of European Development Cooperation;Examples of existing private sector collaborations that are active in specific agricultural value chains, e.g. Action for Sustainable Derivatives</div>
				<div>Develop a gender equality guidance/share inventory of existing resources that can support private sector partners in developing relevant gender equality policies and strategies and implementing gender-aware programs in agricultural supply chains.</div>	<div>Partner guidance on gender equality strategies based on intel from "what works, what's needed" report</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">BSR and UN Global Compact. The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Gender Gap Analysis Tool;RSPO, Practical guidance on Gender Inclusion, Final draft under consultation, 2020</div>
	<div>Identify and illuminate key opportunities relevant for partner program investment at regional level, e.g. women’s access to finance, women’s access to technology, etc.</div>	<div>Illustration of key opportunities, including digital wages, access to technology, financial inclusion/banking, which informs "What Works, What's Needed" report</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">BSR HERfinance. Digital Wages: Positive Impact for Women and Business, 2020</div>	<div>Identify and illuminate key opportunities relevant for partner program investment in country, e.g. women’s access to finance, women’s access to technology, etc.</div>	<div>Illustration of key opportunities in country, including digital wages, access to technology, financial inclusion/banking, which informs country-level "What Works, What's Needed" report</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">BSR HERfinance. Digital Wages: Positive Impact for Women and Business, 2020</div>
Farmer	<div>Provide access to trainings for CP staff to support Grow Asia Working Groups on gender mainstreaming targets and impact measurement.</div>	<div>Trainings for staff completed by at least 3 Country Partnerships</div>		<div>Support relevant Grow Asia Working Groups (WGs) in developing their TOC for gender mainstreaming within their scope of work and define related impact measurement</div>	<div>Grow Asia WGs’ TOC, including impact and outcome measurements informed by existing projects.</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">BSR HERproject, Impact framework</div>
	<div>Through COP, facilitate sharing, among partners, ways and methodologies that can be used by Grow Asia partners to create more gender-inclusive approaches and outcomes within farmer-level programs.</div>	<div>Library of “usage tools” for engaging farmers (e.g. how to create company policies that support working mothers)</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Circular Economy case studies</div>	<div>At WG level, facilitate sharing, among partners, ways and methodologies that can be used by Grow Asia partners to create more gender-inclusive approaches and outcomes within farmer-level programs</div>	<div>Library of “usage tools” translated for local language and environments</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Circular Economy case studies</div>