



## Impactful women empowerment programs

No agricultural transformation in Africa will take place without the participation of women. Investing in the economic empowerment of these populations is a high-yield investment that will have multiple effects on the continent's productivity, efficiency, and inclusive growth. OCP Africa engages with these strategic populations for African agriculture and deploys innovative programs tailored to their challenges.

### Women in Agribooster

Women farmers contribute up to 50 percent of the workforce on farms in sub-Saharan Africa. However, women farmers have long been neglected or marginalized when it comes to disbursing facilities such as credit and other logistics. In Ghana, a dedicated Agribooster program (s) was launched in 2020 to help 5000 women farmers gain access to quality inputs and ensure a linkage with the market, all coupled with training throughout the growing season to strengthen their farming practices.

In addition to access to inputs, training on good agricultural practices, and market access, the program provides technical support to increase food productivity. TROTRO TRACTOR and SAYeTECH, two Ghanaian startups, winners of the first IMPULSE cohort, have supported women farmers in mechanization through a mobile on-demand platform that connects farmers to tractor operators and harvesting activities via smart machines. Trotro Tractor allowed one acre to be plowed for each of the 2,000 selected farmers, while SAYETECH manufactured 10 multi-purpose threshers for the 5 aggregators to be used for husking and threshing maize and rice. 20 paddy fields were purchased to be used for harvesting rice by women farmers.

This program has allowed OCP Africa to create innovative links between startups the company supports and vulnerable populations. Also, women farmers benefited from an innovative agricultural platform called e-Extension, which trained them on good agricultural practices and production monitoring in collaboration with the Millennium Promise Alliance (MPA).

Through these two initiatives to support women farmers during the Covid19 pandemic, 5,000 women have received support from OCP Africa in land preparation through mechanization and intelligent techniques. These women farmers have also been able to reduce post-harvest losses with modern tools and harvesters.

1. **BEST PRACTICE (Tips and elements to consider in implementing the initiative)**
  - Among elements to consider, we note: the low economic power of women farmers, limited access to resources & the level of vulnerability
2. **KEY METRICS ABOUT WOMEN IN AGRIBOOSTER**
  - No. of women farmers registered – 5,000
  - Investment made - \$155,000
  - Level of impact
    - i. 2,500 acres ploughed
    - ii. 10 Multi-crop threshers supplied
    - iii. 20 hand-held rice harvesters provided
    - iv. 25% average yield increase achieved

### 3. CHALLENGES

- v. Lack of adequate finance to procure inputs by women  
**Solution:** They are encouraged to set up Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) to save and buy inputs for the farming.
- vi. OCP also had initial discussions with partners such as Agric Dev. Bank to provide cheaper credit to the farmers.
- vii. Low financial capacity of the women aggregators.  
**Solution:** They are being encouraged to engage in input dealership in order to raise funding for their activities.
- viii. Access to smartphones by women farmers for the e-learning.  
**Solution:** Form clusters to encourage sharing by those who have with those without.

## Sandiara Agribusiness Innovation

OCP Africa launched a program in Sandiara, Senegal, to assist young entrepreneurs and women from rural agribusiness cooperatives in building up their capacity. The program enables women's groups to develop a sustainable organization that brings members together around an economic activity (processing agricultural products and poultry) and promotes inclusion in markets. With support in the formalization of their businesses and in strengthening their technical skills to improve their productivity, the incubation program acts as a real spur for entrepreneurs. In the long run, the aim is to foster a relationship between the two beneficiary categories by establishing a contractual mechanism between entrepreneurs and women's groups. So far, the program has benefitted 150 women and 10 entrepreneurs.

### 1. BEST PRACTICE (Tips and elements to consider in implementing the initiative)

- The involvement of targets throughout the design process helped identify relevant modules that meet their needs.
- Always include in the beneficiaries of the initiative instructed young women to help with the gathering of data and information needed.

### 2. KEY METRICS ABOUT WOMEN IN AGRIBOOSTER

- Investment made - 55K\$
- Level of impact: 5 cooperatives of 150 women trained

### 3. CHALLENGES

- The level of women cooperatives was in general in the initial state of development despite their seniority. Women's groups are at an initial stage of development where a whole lot of redesign had to be done. The very prerequisites for an organization are not met for all the groups identified that have been identified in the intervention zone. Therefore, we had to train them with the basis knowledge of the way a cooperative should operate to have their official papers and accounts updated and to establish an internal organization of the group that can allow them to achieve performance objectives.
- Also, the members of the cooperatives did not have a common activity bringing them together except that of getting credit from the bank, sharing the credit among them and repaying together on the due dates. Each member carries out a small business activity on his own. We train them to master the techniques of agricultural products processing together. We identified the groups that were interested in the transformation of a product and we did the training to them together and tried to make them keep the same dynamic after the training than during the training.



**4. ANY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

- Equal access to land.
- Microfinance interest rate to be revised downwards.
- Advocacy for higher rates of women literacy