Civil Society Organizations in Value Chain Collaborations

A study of the role of civil society organizations and their effects on inclusiveness in Ghana’s cocoa value chain


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June 2019

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Abstract
Partnerships between companies and producers are one of the main strategies employed to address some of the challenges faced by producers and in some cases advance their inclusion in value chains. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are increasingly listed as relevant actors in these partnerships. However, research has not fully explored the different identities of these organizations and their contributions to value chain collaboration. This study first aims to address this knowledge gap by creating a typology of CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector and identifying the different roles these organizations play in value chain collaborations. Then, taking an inclusivity approach, the impacts of different degrees of CSO involvement in partnerships are studied at the community level. Data for the first part of the research was collected primarily through CSO interviews. Data for the second part of the research was collected through interviews and focus groups with cocoa farmers. First, the research finds that, based on their driving actors and purpose, there are seven types of CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa, that contribute to partnerships in ways ranging from implementing company projects to involving farmers in decision-making. Second, CSO involvement at the community level generally had positive effects on the inclusivity of partnerships, but often still failed to take structural value chain issues, such as diverse vulnerabilities of more marginalized farmers, into account. This research concludes that both the type of CSO and the degree of CSO involvement in a CSO-company-community partnership have an impact on the type of activities carried out and the type of inclusiveness targeted. This study contributes to a better understanding of the types and roles of CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector, and if and how CSOs can be involved in public-private-producer partnerships in a manner that positively affects their inclusivity. This should be taken into account in the development of future corporate and CSO strategies as well as in theories on value chain collaboration.

Key words: Partnerships, civil society organizations, value chain collaboration, inclusivity, cocoa, non-governmental organizations, Ghana
Acknowledgements

I would, first and foremost, like to express my gratitude to Dr. Mirjam Ros-Tonen for her invaluable guidance, helpful feedback, and overall support throughout the entire research and thesis-writing process. I also want to thank Dr. Mercy Derkyi and her team within the University of Energy and Natural Resources for welcoming me to Ghana with open arms and graciously helping me figure out the practicalities of my fieldwork. A special thanks goes out to Rachel Yeboah Nketiah for being a fabulous research assistant, translator, and guide during the fieldwork period. It would have been impossible to have had such interesting interviews and focus groups without your help. I am especially grateful for all the cocoa farmers, community members, and CSO representatives who were generously willing to take the time to participate in my research and contribute their insights. I would like to thank Mike for helping me get started in my fieldwork and all the other people who helped make my stay in Ghana so valuable, enjoyable, and eye-opening. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Courtney Vegelin, for being the second reader of my thesis. To my friends: thank you for motivating me to work hard, but also helping me take my mind off of work every once in a while. Last but not least, a special thanks goes out to my parents and siblings for their unwavering support.
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<tr>
<td>4P</td>
<td>Public-private producer partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AELB</td>
<td>Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Cocoa Abrabopa Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Community action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Cocoa Marketing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCOBOD</td>
<td>Ghana’s Cocoa Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSV</td>
<td>Creating Shared Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>Farmer-based organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>Good Agricultural Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1</td>
<td>International Cocoa Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEG</td>
<td>Institute for Democratic Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFDC</td>
<td>International Fertilizer Development Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFOAM</td>
<td>International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IITA</td>
<td>International Institute of Tropical Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBC</td>
<td>Licensed Buying Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public-private partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROMAG</td>
<td>Projects, Planning &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCC</td>
<td>Value chain collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>VSLA</td>
<td>Village Savings and Loans Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>Voluntary Service Overseas</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCF</td>
<td>World Cocoa Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCFO</td>
<td>World Cocoa Farmers Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WVI</td>
<td>World Vision International</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background
Over the past years, the focus in the study of value chains has shifted from primarily analyzing productivity and governance, to new dimensions such as sustainability, livelihood improvement, and inclusivity (Deans et al., 2018). This has gone together with many corporations taking steps to incorporate ideas of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and later Creating Shared Value (CSV) policies (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015; May, 2016). Ideally, these policies enhance the public image and competitiveness of companies, while simultaneously advancing the economic, environmental, and social conditions in the communities in which it operates (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Worldwide, the number of civil society organizations (CSOs) (see Section 2.2 for definition) has been growing since the 1970s, and it is increasingly common for corporations to list CSOs as partners in their sustainability and inclusivity strategies (Harangozo and Zilahy, 2015). Glin et al. (2014) identify CSOs as relevant actors involved in implementing, facilitating, or validating the programs that result from CSV and CSR policies. The growing role of these CSOs is partly reflected in the value chain literature, which signals a tendency to extend activities beyond the chain, both in terms of focusing on objectives other than productivity, and on actors other than those directly involved in production or commercialization (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). However, there remains a limited understanding of whether and how CSOs can impact partnerships between companies and smallholders and how this affects the inclusiveness of value chains (see Section 3.3 for conceptualization). Furthermore, the overall effectiveness of involving CSOs in value chain initiatives remains contested (Hutter & O’Mahony, 2004). A major benefit is that CSOs can potentially provide companies with better information of context-specific problems that can help them formulate strategies to make targeted contributions to local communities (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004). However, critics argue that CSOs are listed as partners primarily to enhance a company’s public image and can actually divert attention away from more salient, but less visible problems that communities face (Hutter & O’Mahony, 2004). For example, a CSO whose main focus is on environmental issues may not be as equipped to recognize and help address other prevalent issues in a community, such as gender inequality.
Several programs and initiatives that resulted from new corporate policies based on CSR and CSV have taken place in Ghana’s cocoa sector, often targeting smallholder cocoa farmers and local communities (Amoako, 2015). Several CSOs are active in Ghana, some of which are explicitly identified as partners in the CSR and CSV strategies of large cocoa-buying companies such as Mondelez International, Cargill, and Unilever. However, the focus of the existing literature on Ghana’s cocoa value chain has been largely on the role of cocoa companies (e.g. De Leth, 2018) and smallholder farmers (e.g. Laven, 2010), while the growing role of CSOs in the sector has not been subjected to in-depth research thus far.

1.2 Research objectives
This study aims to address the academic gap in knowledge regarding the role of CSOs in partnerships between companies and smallholder farmers (see Section 3.1 for definition). It does so from a social science perspective in the context of Ghana’s cocoa sector, using inclusiveness as an analytical lens. First, the roles and objectives of the different types of CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector are mapped, in order to provide a broad typology of the relevant organizations (see Chapter 5). Then, by focusing on specific CSOs’ involvement through three case studies, this research aims to analyze how CSOs can affect the inclusiveness of the aforementioned partnerships and how smallholders perceive these impacts. Gaining a better understanding of the benefits and limits of collaborating with CSOs to achieve greater value chain inclusivity can help inform what role CSO partnerships can or should play in the future development of corporate policies and inclusive value chain initiatives.

1.3 Main research question and sub-questions
The main research question is:
How do civil society organizations (CSOs) active in Ghana’s cocoa sector affect partnerships between companies and farmers and what is the impact of their involvement on the inclusiveness of value chain collaboration?

To help answer this question, the study addresses the following sub-questions:
1. Which CSOs are active in Ghana’s cocoa sector and how can they be classified?
2. What role do these CSOs (claim to) play in partnerships between cocoa companies and smallholder farmers?
3. Based on case studies of three case studies of CSO involvement, how do these CSOs operationalize and implement strategies to promote the inclusiveness of partnerships between cocoa companies and smallholder farmers?
4. How do smallholder farmers perceive the impacts of CSO involvement in their partnerships with cocoa companies?

1.4 Thesis setup

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides introduces the topic, gap in knowledge, the research objectives, and the research questions that guide the study. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework, within which existing theories, concepts, and analytical frameworks related to partnerships between smallholders and farmers, CSOs, and inclusivity in value chains are discussed. This chapter concludes with a conceptual scheme, which provides a visualization of how different actors and components of the theoretical framework are related. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach of the thesis, including a reflection on the quality of the research and its limitations. The research context is introduced in Chapter 4, which describes Ghana’s cocoa sector and its value chain inclusivity issues as well as the changing roles and relevance of CSOs in Ghana. Chapter 5 then presents a classification of different types of CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector and identifies the different roles these CSOs (claim to) play in value chain collaborations. Chapter 6 describes, analyzes, and compares the inclusivity effects of three different degrees of CSO involvement in company-smallholder partnerships, based on CSO and community/farmer perspectives. The main findings and theoretical contributions of this study are discussed in Chapter 7, along with future recommendations for research and practice.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used for this thesis. First, it outlines the trends in types and purposes of partnerships between companies and farmers (Section 2.1). Then, the existing literature on CSOs is discussed, specifically focusing on what is known about CSO-company relations and CSOs’ roles in value chains (2.2). The main concept of value chain inclusivity is broken down into various relevant dimensions, using several theories on inclusiveness (2.3). Finally, the conceptual scheme visualizes how the central actors and main concepts of the theoretical framework are interrelated, as derived from the relevant literature (2.4).

2.1 Partnerships between companies and smallholder farmers

Smallholder farmers can be defined as “farmers who produce goods and services for both markets and subsistence, based mainly on family labor and limited access to land” (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015, p. 523). Smallholder farmers who operate in agricultural chains in developing countries are among the most marginalized and vulnerable members of rural society, commonly due to environmental challenges, such as increased competition for land and water, climate change, rising input prices, and underinvestment in agriculture (IFAD, 2013; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). Smallholder farmers can also face social and economic constraints in terms of lower bargaining power and weaker accessibility to technology, resources, information, and finance (Thorpe & Maestre, 2015). It should be noted that the degree to which these constraints and challenges apply to individual smallholders or communities varies greatly, as smallholders are not a homogenous group (IFAD, 2013).

Partnerships with companies are currently one of the main strategies employed to address some of the challenges faced by smallholders and in some cases advance their inclusion in value chains. Partnerships can broadly be defined as “voluntary and collaborative arrangements between actors from two or more societal domains”, which can simultaneously seek to “fulfill development goals and private business interests” (Helmsing & Vellema, 2011, p. 221-222). There are different degrees of engagement in partnerships, ranging from informal cooperation, where partner networks are mostly implicit and casual, to formal collaboration, where the involved partners share the risks, resources, and rewards (Bitzer et al., 2011). Ultimately, the goal of most partnerships is to create win-win situations, which requires the broad participation and contributions of all relevant or critical stakeholders (Bitzer et al., 2011).
Ros-Tonen et al. (2015) conceptualize value chain collaboration (VCC), a form of partnership, as voluntary associations between different actors in and beyond a value chain. Generally, this is between producers and buyers, but often civil society organizations or governmental organizations participate as well. VCCs generally aim to increase the productivity of smallholders and their integration into the market (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are a common example of VCC, which has been argued to combine goals of development and private business interests through increasing market productivity and drawing on both private and public funds to invest in innovation and sustainability (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015; Janssen & Jacobs, 2018). Increasingly, the focus has been on making VCCs more inclusive, as it has been argued that these partnerships often lacked representation from local communities and smallholders located in developing countries (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015 and under review).

2.1.1 **Advanced value chain collaboration and public-private-producer partnerships**

Literature on partnerships and VCCs increasingly emphasizes the need to deal with the power asymmetries by ensuring that smallholders are treated as equal and respected partners in negotiations (Janssen & Jacobs, 2018). The exclusion of smallholders can be addressed, in part, through “advanced VCC” (Deans et al., 2018), such as public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps), which go beyond PPPs by including smallholders as active participants in the partnership, rather than solely viewing them as beneficiaries (Thorpe & Maestre, 2015; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015; Janssen & Jacobs, 2018). In order to effectively create active or authentic partnerships, the 4P approach must prioritize farmer ownership, align the incentives of all the partners, and build trust between them, manage risks, create mutual benefits, be transparent, and facilitate long-term, sustainable market systems (Thorpe & Maestre, 2015; Deans et al., 2018). Brokers, which are independent and temporary facilitators during the 4P process, are often viewed as critical for establishing these partnerships and ensuring their success (Thorpe & Maestre, 2015; Janssen & Jacobs, 2018). Brokers can take on several roles during different stages of the 4P process, such as helping each partner understand the other partners’ motivations and cultures and helping design effective business arrangements (Thorpe & Maestre, 2015).

Newer or “advanced” forms of VCC, such as agricultural 4Ps, also tend to focus on objectives that go beyond productivity and innovation, such as sustainable sourcing and enhancing livelihoods (Deans et al., 2018). 4Ps are often driven by companies’ CSR or CSV motives and the assumption that failing to address societal and environmental problems would likely result
in supply failure or loss of productivity in its value chain (Deans et al., 2018, p. 144). Although data on the actual outcomes or impacts of these approaches are limited, the 4P process has received criticism for failing to address persisting forms of exclusion (Thorpe & Maestre, 2015). For example, although the agricultural 4P approach aims to integrate smallholders, more marginalized farmers and communities are often still excluded. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (2015), exclusion can occur “because commercial incentives and the difficulties of working with often widely dispersed smallholders mean that value chains involve more organized, asset-ready and geographically accessible farmers” (p. 13). Ros-Tonen et al. (2015) further argue that the new, pro-poor forms of VCC, such as 4Ps, have led to corporations engaging with certain smallholders in “easy win-win projects”, but that this does not imply that fundamental problems regarding sustainability and inclusivity in the value chain are addressed (p. 527). Furthermore, inclusion in partnerships or value chains may not always be desired by smallholders, as inclusion under unfavorable terms may ultimately lead to adverse effects such a decreased profit or greater risks (Laven, 2010; Ros-Tonen et al., under review).

2.2 Civil society organizations

Civil society organizations are generally non-profit organizations that are mostly separate from the market and state, and can include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charities, trusts, foundations, advocacy groups and community-based organizations (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004; Hutter and O’Mahony, 2004; Sokphea, 2017). CSOs can differ in their scope of operations, ranging from local to international, and are often focused on a particular domain, such as environment, human rights or health (Hutter & O’Mahony, 2004). Typologies and categorizations of NGOs or CSOs are still underdeveloped and inconsistent across literature (Bromideh, 2011). Clearly categorizing these organizations is complicated, due to their frequently overlapping and interrelated objectives and activities (Vakil, 1997; Towe et al., 2017). Overall, existing typologies most often categorize NGOs based on their stated missions and activities, relations with the private sector, or a “strategic fit”, derived from various characteristics and resources (O’Connor & Shumate, 2014). Vakil (1997) proposes a broad framework that suggests that orientation and level of operations are primary descriptors of an NGO, with sectoral focus and evaluative attributes as secondary descriptors. However, she also suggests that it is possible to construct specific categorizations for a certain context (i.e. Ghana’s cocoa sector), based on which criteria represent the most relevant differences between those organizations. This can, however, limit the ability of these categorizations to be relevant in other contexts (Vakil, 1997).
CSOs are playing an increasingly important role in transnational governance through “(1) identifying emerging issues, (2) facilitating grassroots voice, (3) building bridges to link diverse stakeholders, (4) amplifying the public visibility and importance of issues, and (5) monitoring problem-solving performance” (Brown & Timmer, 2006, p. 6). For the purpose of this research, I am going to focus primarily on the existing literature and theories related to the role of CSOs in value chains.

### 2.2.1 CSOs and companies

Most of the existing literature related to CSOs’ influence on value chains focuses on relationships and partnerships between companies and CSOs, or more narrowly, NGOs. As companies have shifted to position themselves as corporate citizens, opportunities for CSOs to collaborate with the private sector have increased (Hutten & O’Mahoney, 2004). The scope of influence of CSOs has therefore moved from only being able to endorse or challenge products to strategy dialogues and joint ventures (McIntosh & Thomas, 2002). Collaborating with companies can be beneficial for CSOs, as it often allows them to upscale their interventions to the scope or level at which a company operates, while companies can benefit from CSOs shouldering the major time and resource costs involved in undertaking CSR and CSV initiatives (Hutter & O’Mahoney, 2004; Bitzer et al., 2011). Figure 2.1 shows the different types of relationships between NGOs and companies, which range from fully hostile to fully participatory, and different activities associated with each type of relationship.

**Figure 2.1** Company/ NGO relationships. **Source:** McIntosh & Thomas, 2002, p. 40.
2.2.2 CSOs in value chain collaboration
CSOs are often identified as potential partners in different forms of value chain collaboration, although the actual impact of their involvement, especially in terms of inclusiveness, remains under-researched. Developments in value chain studies have led to a shift in focus from solely studying vertical relationships between actors in a chain to a greater focus on horizontal relationships with non-chain actors, such as CSOs (Bolwig et al., 2010). Focusing more on horizontal relationships helps gain a more holistic understanding of the increasingly complex value chain playing fields, with multiple (new) stakeholders, multiple centers of decision-making, and multiple goals (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015; Deans et al., 2018; Ingram et al., 2018). Overall, non-chain actors can regulate activities in a value chain, engage in development promotion, and/or strengthening the abilities of actors within the chain (Helmsing & Vellema, 2011, p. 26). In agricultural 4Ps, CSOs can help build the capacity of smallholders by supporting them to integrate as more equitable partners in negotiations with the private sector, such as through facilitating the development or expansion of farmer organizations (Rankin et al., 2016). CSOs can also potentially be brokers (see Section 2.1.1 for definition) during the process of establishing 4Ps, given that they are only temporarily involved in the partnerships (Janssen & Jacobs, 2018; Thorpe & Maestre, 2015).

2.2.3 CSOs as bridging organizations
CSOs acting as brokers can also be seen as bridging organizations that coordinate and facilitate collaborative partnerships by mobilizing actors, resources and knowledge; building trust; and mediating in conflicts (Berkes, 2009). Overall, bridging organizations have three main roles: (i) contributing to the building of local institutions that allow marginalized people to channel and mobilize their resources and ideas for self-help, (ii) creating horizontal linkages to expand and sustain development, and (iii) building vertical linkages to allow for a greater grassroots influence on policy (Brown, 1991). Stafford et al. (2000) highlight the specific “strategic bridging” role that environmental NGOs can take on when collaborating with businesses. This type of bridging is particularly useful when the involved stakeholders cannot easily negotiate, due to mistrust or logistical problems (Stafford et al., 2000). However, the ability of an actor to remain an effective (strategic) bridging organization remains largely dependent on the willingness of the internal stakeholders (i.e. companies and smallholders) and external stakeholders (i.e. government) to support their agenda for a sufficient amount of time (Brown, 1991; Stafford et al., 2000).
2.2.4 CSOs as stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as actors who have a stake and/or interest in a certain policy problem and either contribute to the problem, can help solve the problem, or are affected by the problem-solving activities (Runhaar et al., 2006, p. 41). According to stakeholder theory, CSOs that aim to “solve problems” in the cocoa value chain can best be classified as secondary stakeholders. These are stakeholders that can influence the success of a company but, unlike primary stakeholders, are less likely to be essential for the survival of the company (Harangozo & Zilahy, 2015). By establishing that CSOs can be stakeholders in value chains, a stakeholder analysis, as outlined by Runhaar et al. (2006), is an appropriate approach for analyzing the interests, perceptions, and role of CSOs in a multi-actor context, such as Ghana’s cocoa sector. Here, traditional stakeholder analysis, focused on the characteristics of individual stakeholders, is combined with network analysis, which is focused more on understanding the positions of relevant actors and the interdependencies and relations between them (Runhaar et al., 2006). Understanding CSOs as a heterogeneous group of stakeholders further reiterates the idea of Helmsing and Vellema (2011) that “different chain and non-chain actors may hold different economic and social-cultural conceptions and meanings”, which in turn influences what each individual actor views as the main goals of value chain collaboration and corresponding strategies (p.30).

2.3 Inclusiveness in value chains

As was previously mentioned, there has been a growing awareness of problems surrounding the inclusiveness of value chain participation, which often remain under-addressed even in newer forms of value chain collaborations, such as the 4P approach. Inclusiveness, in relation to smallholder value chain engagement, has several different conceptualizations and dimensions derived from different strands of literature (Ros-Tonen et al., under review). This thesis primarily draws from theories of inclusive development and inclusive value chain approaches to form the most relevant analytical framework for researching the impacts of CSOs in value chains (see Section 3.3 for the operationalization of inclusiveness based on the literature and inductive coding).

2.3.1 Inclusiveness in process and outcomes

Laven and Jaskiewicz (2015) argue that inclusiveness in value chain collaboration is both about the nature and the outcome of the process. Understanding inclusiveness is therefore not only about who is ultimately being included, but also about how inclusion processes in value chain partnerships take the diverse assets, aspirations, vulnerabilities, and capabilities of local
smallholders into account (Laven & Jaskiewicz, 2015; Ros-Tonen et al., under review). Important elements of inclusivity processes are recognizing the heterogeneity of smallholders, in terms of assets, opportunities and constraints (Laven & Jaskiewicz, 2015) and attention to their empowerment in terms of voice (decision-making power) and choice (autonomy and agency) (Van Eerdewijk et al., 2017; Ros-Tonen et al., under review).

Focusing on processes of inclusion rather than solely outcome reflects the critique that those who are “included” do not necessarily share the same positive development outcomes (Hickey & Du Toit, 2013; Vos, 2017; Ros-Tonen et al., under review). Existing inequalities of economic, social, or political power can influence inclusion processes and in turn lead to adverse incorporation or inclusion (Hickey & Du Toit, 2013; Hickey et al., 2014). Therefore, studying how CSO involvement influences the different dimensions of inclusive smallholder engagement in value chains outlined in the sections below (based on Ros-Tonen et al., under review) involves developing an understanding of underlying causes and structures that help perpetuate marginalization, which in turn influences the inclusion processes and outcomes.

2.3.2 The economic dimension
The economic dimension of inclusiveness is partly rooted in CSV corporate discourse, which, posits that companies should aim to create greater economic and societal value for all stakeholders involved in their production processes (De Leth and Ros-Tonen, forthcoming). Early strategies focused on increasing access to inputs, services, and markets to facilitate better market integration – and therefore the economic inclusion – of the poor (Stoian et al., 2012). According to Ros-Tonen et al. (forthcoming), incorporating an economic dimension into the analysis of inclusive value chain integration reflects that most chain actors engage in forms of value chain collaboration for economic reasons, such as “increasing productivity, acquiring an income, and making and sustaining profit” (p. 11). Therefore, addressing social, relational, and environmental inclusivity problems within a value chain must not go against the economic targets of companies and smallholders, such as profitability and economic growth. As several studies corporate sustainability or CSV strategies have made clear, the profitability of a company determines the extent to which they are able and willing to invest in the social dimension of sustainable development (Moncoquet 2018; Ollivier de Leth 2018).

2.3.3 The social dimension
Social inclusiveness, most broadly, is about creating and/or bettering opportunities for meaningful participation and community-based steering, and investing in human capital (Gupta
& Vegelin, 2016). At the local level, social inclusiveness implies taking marginalized individuals and groups into account (Gupta et al. 2015; Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). This further corresponds to the idea that diversity and heterogeneity of smallholders, in terms of household composition, age, and landownership, for example, must be taken into account during value chain integration (Laven & Jaskiewicz, 2015; Ros-Tonen et al., under review).

2.3.4 The relational dimension
Relational inclusiveness questions underlying power structures and politics that influence problem solving and highlights that skewed power relations and actions of others often result in poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation (Gupta & Pouw, 2017; Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). This includes issues such as gender inequality and intersectionalities with ethnicity, age and location, which can often contribute to social exclusion or adverse inclusion (Hickey & DuToit, 2013; Kabeer, 2015; see Ros-Tonen et al., under review). Relational inclusiveness therefore most closely relates to the aforementioned idea of analyzing the nature of the inclusivity process, instead of only outcomes. By addressing the structural causes of inequality and inequality in a society it is argued that long-term social inclusiveness can be ensured (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016).

An important dimension of relational inclusiveness in value chains is empowerment, in terms of strengthening marginalized farmers’ autonomy, agency, and capacity to negotiate with companies and other actors, so that they can ultimately create more favorable and inclusive terms of participation (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015; Ros-Tonen et al., under review).

2.3.5 The environmental dimension
The need for environmental inclusiveness in inclusive development is strongly based on the fact that the society’s poorest tend to be most dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services (Gupta et al., 2015). Therefore, environmental inclusiveness, at the local level, “requires access to and ownership of resources as well as protecting local ecosystems” (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016, p. 438). To be more equitable, all stakeholders must share environmental resources, rights, responsibilities, and risks (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). For inclusive value chain integration, the potential trade-offs that exist between economic growth and environmental and social sustainability must also be recognized. Awareness of these trade-offs can help actors take action to avoid some of the negative environmental effects associated with economic growth,
such as through the promotion of resource-efficient products and production processes for smallholder farmers (Ros-Tonen et al., under review).

2.3.6 Enabling environment
Creating an enabling environment for inclusive value chain collaboration incorporates elements of all four dimensions of inclusiveness (Ros-Tonen et al., under review). This involves, in theory, the active involvement of “political will, local civil society and producer organizations” to create favorable conditions for other processes of inclusiveness to emerge (Ros-Tonen et al., under review, p. 23).

2.4 Conceptual scheme
The main concepts addressed in this study are partnerships/value chain collaboration, and inclusiveness. The key actors are CSOs, smallholder farmers, and cocoa-buying companies. The conceptual scheme (Figure 2.2) shows how these concepts and actors, as described in the theoretical framework, are interlinked. First, it lists what underlying structures, assets, and goals can influence how a CSO functions, which will be further explored in sub-question 1. The scheme also highlights the potential relevance of the CSOs’ direct relations with smallholder farmers and companies, which can affect CSOs’ contributions to value chain collaboration, the subject of sub-question 2. CSOs are hypothesized to influence the inclusiveness of value chain collaboration, either in process, outcome, or both. Answering sub-question 3 will provide more insight into the exact strategies that CSOs apply to address the inclusivity of the partnerships. These potential changes in inclusiveness most directly affect smallholder farmers, whose perceptions of CSO involvement is the focus of sub-question 4.
Figure 2.2 Conceptual scheme.
3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this research. First, the overall research design (Section 3.1) and ontological and epistemological positions of the research (3.2) are introduced. Following is the operationalization of the study’s main concepts (3.3). Then, the units of analysis and observation (3.4), research location (3.5), and research methods (3.6) are discussed. This chapter concluded with reflections on ethical considerations and the overall quality of the research.

3.1 Research design

This study consists of two main parts. The first part of the research is exploratory in nature, in order to answer the first two sub-questions and create a typology of the CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector. This requires developing an understanding of the different CSOs’ backgrounds, objectives, problem perceptions, and relationships with other stakeholders. Then, a comparative case study design is employed to answer sub-questions 3 and 4. This case study particularly looks at the perceptions that smallholders at the community level have of various CSOs, their activities, and decision-making processes, and how/if they perceive the different types and degrees of CSO involvement to affect the inclusiveness of their partnerships with cocoa-buying companies.

3.2 Ontology and epistemology

This research takes a critical realist epistemological and ontological approach, which suggests that the conceptualizations and categories employed to understand reality are often subject to change (Bryman, 2012). This approach acknowledges that, at the empirical level, perceptions and narratives can influence how reality is observed and experienced, but also posits that some knowledge can be closer to reality than other knowledge (Fletcher, 2017). Critical realist research aims to gain understanding by researching the interpretations and subjective knowledge of social actors as well as “independent structures that constrain and enable actors to pursue certain actions in a particular setting” (Wynn & Willams, 2012, p. 788).

3.3 Operationalization

The dimensions and variables used to operationalize the main concepts (Appendix I) relate to literature across the theoretical framework, but are primarily based on Runhaar et al. (2006),
Laven and Jaskiewicz (2015), Thorpe and Maestre (2015), Gupta and Vegelin (2016), and Ros-Tonen et al. (under review). Some of the indicators, specifically regarding the concept of inclusivity, were adjusted during the course of the fieldwork, as local context helped inform what variables or indicators were relevant for the CSOs and smallholders that I interviewed.

3.4 Units of analysis and observation
The primary units of analysis in this research are the CSOs that are active in Ghana’s cocoa sector. The first half of the research aims to focus on all CSOs involved in Ghana’s cocoa sector, with CSOs as the main unit of observation. The second half of the research focuses on specific CSOs active in each community in order to develop a greater understanding of how CSO involvement actually affects inclusivity. Here, the CSOs that have been or are active in each community are the units of analysis, and smallholder cocoa farmers and other relevant stakeholders are the units of observation.

3.5 Research location
A large portion of the fieldwork for this research took place in Accra, the capital of Ghana, where many of the main offices of CSOs are located. This was an important starting point for interviewing several key respondents. One CSO interview was also held in Kumasi, Ghana’s second largest city. The first two researched communities are located in in the Ahafo Ano North District of the Ashanti Region, in the communities of Nkyensadnho and Manfo. The third and fourth communities, Aboagyekrom and Nyamegyeso, are located in the Sefwi-Wiwiso District of the Western Region. All these communities are located in hubs of cocoa production.

3.6 Data collection methods
Both parts of the research follow a qualitative methods approach, as this generally allows the researcher to better understand the different problems perceptions, objectives, interactions, and roles of relevant actors in a specific context (Bryman, 2012). Triangulation of different qualitative methods (see sub-sections below) has occurred in order to provide more comprehensive results and enhance confidence in the findings, by reducing bias that may occur when one method of data collection is used (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

3.6.1 Website and document analysis
A qualitative analysis of CSO websites and documents occurred throughout the fieldwork period in order to provide background information on local context and become acquainted with the formal discourse surrounding the CSOs’ overall objectives. This allowed me to prepare
the most relevant questions on areas or topics that required further information in order to answer sub-questions 1 and 2.

3.6.2 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with CSO representatives and smallholders during the fieldwork period to provide data relevant to all sub-questions. There were general questions to guide the interview, with space to ask follow-up questions which will allowed for greater elaboration or explanation of unclear or significant responses (Johnston, 2010; Bryman, 2012). The topic lists and interview guides remained flexible throughout the fieldwork and often changed based on what topics were found to be most relevant, new topics that emerged from other interviews, or topics that required further elaboration.

For the CSOs, the interviews helped provide more in-depth information about the CSO’s actual initiatives in the cocoa sector and relations to other stakeholders, which were often missing from existing documents or websites. The interviews with CSOs also provided insight into the general landscape of CSOs working in the cocoa sector, with regard to their perceptions on the key similarities and differences between the organizations. In total, 17 interviews with 15 different CSO representatives were conducted. On average, these interviews lasted about 45 minutes to an hour. If permission was granted, these interviews were recorded and ultimately transcribed. Otherwise, notes were taken.

During the second part of the research, which involved smallholder farmers, interviews were held with the help of a research assistant who translated the smallholders’ answers, as these interviews were mostly conducted in their native language, Twi. These interviews aimed to generate insights into how CSOs ultimately implement strategies and how different smallholders and other stakeholders, such as purchasing clerks, perceived their involvement. These interviews were recorded if permission was granted. However, I always took thorough notes alongside the recordings, due to the frequent presence of background noise. On average, these interviews lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. For pragmatic reasons (time), I ultimately chose to type out these notes rather than transcribing the entire interviews and to listen back to the recordings if the notes required elaboration, due to the high number of smallholder respondents (N=61) and overall clarity of my notes (Table 3.1).
3.6.3 Focus groups
During the second part of the research, one focus group was conducted in each of the four communities, with the help of a research assistant, who translated throughout. The focus groups, with smallholder farmers as participants, were held in order to gain further understanding of the local context and the communities that were studied, using a general topic list. Ideally, these would involve a heterogeneous group of six to eight smallholders, as this would best facilitate participants with diverse perspectives to interact and discuss (Bryman, 2012). However, because community mobilizers or leaders set up these focus groups for me, two of the focus groups had more participants than would be ideal (Table 3.2). These mobilizers did ensure, however, that there was a gender balance and relatively diverse group of farmers present. The focus groups allowed me to adjust some of the inclusiveness indicators of my operationalization and topic list accordingly, and helped improve the relevance of the resulting interview questions. The discussion in the focus groups were also useful for creating a clearer overview of what organizations had been present, what exactly each one did, and during what time frame, as the collective memory of the farmers often appeared to be more accurate than individual accounts. Therefore, this served as an important method for triangulating some of the data derived from the interviews.

Table 3.1 Overview of interviewees and focus group participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured in-depth interviews with CSO representatives</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured in-depth interviews with farmers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group community 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group community 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group community 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group community 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.4 Observations and field notes
Throughout the research process, field notes were taken detailing certain observations or initial reflections. Specifically, on field visits, more informal interviews or conversations with members of the community provided certain insights into specific topics or contextual factors
that I took into account for the remainder of the research. During the attendance of a CSO conference in Accra and a community savings group meeting in Nkyensedanho, observations were made and notes were taken on the proceedings.

3.7 Sampling
The sampling method used to reach both CSOs and smallholders was primarily snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012). I was already able to identify several CSOs active in the cocoa sector, but asked the CSO representatives to identify other relevant organizations that would be willing to participate, in order to ensure that I could create the most comprehensive typology. These representatives often provided the contact details of representatives for those CSOs as well. For the case study, critical case sampling was used to select the communities that were studied. Using this type of sampling ensured that the communities being studied have had CSO involvement, and could therefore best provide information on the impacts of this involvement (Bryman, 2012). For the first two communities, this meant selecting communities that were Cocoa Life partner communities. The last two communities were selected by asking the local CSOs to list communities in which they felt they had been the most active. Within the communities, a combination of snowball and convenience sampling was used to find cocoa farmers who were willing to be interviewed and were included to different extents, while remaining conscious of the need for a gender balance in respondents, which occasionally led to the use of purposive sampling. The sample size per community ranged from 14 to 16 respondents, because this allowed for a clearer understanding of farmer heterogeneity within each community, and how this is or is not taken into account by CSOs.

3.8 Data analysis
The transcriptions and notes from my interviews and focus groups were coded, along with other forms of data, such as observations, using ATLAS.ti. A combination of deductive and inductive coding was used to create the final codes and code groups (Appendix I). Given the exploratory nature of the research, a primarily inductive approach was taken to analyze data on the CSOs and their roles in VCC. This inductive approach also allowed potential for new theories and concepts to emerge, specifically regarding dimensions of inclusiveness. This occurred partly through open coding, which involves identifying different dimensions of categories that have emerged out of the interviews (Given, 2008). However, the research questions, the theories and concepts identified in the theoretical framework, and the operationalization did help inform
what some of the categories were, which means that deductive coding also occurred during this process.

3.9 Research ethics and positionality
Throughout the research, I made it a priority to ensure that the ethical considerations related to informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and safety were addressed. Before the interviews or focus groups took place, participants were fully informed of the purpose of the research, the fact that their identity will remain confidential, and the fact that participation was voluntary and could be stopped at any time. For the respondents who spoke Twi, the help of a research assistant/translator was necessary in order to ensure that all the information on the research and consent was fully understood. The interviews and focus groups would usually take place in safe spaces and times that were convenient for the respondents, to ensure that respondents feel at ease. Verbal consent was needed in order for the interview to start, for the interviews to be recorded (alternatively, notes were taken), for pictures to be taken, and for the interview to be included in the research. It was also made clear that responses cannot be traced back to specific respondents. Participants were also informed that they can always refuse to answer a question or retract responses. Lastly, I clearly stated that I am not affiliated with any of the CSOs or cocoa companies, as this can lead to respondents giving desired answers and/or can create the impression that I have the ability to change circumstances. However, managing expectations was sometimes difficult. For my interviews with farmers, I often asked in-depth questions about the problems that they or their community were facing. Although I tried my best to explain before each interview what my research and my intentions were, the people in the communities would sometimes still perceive that I would be able to help fix these problems. To remain ethical and non-deceiving, I tried my best to manage expectations through reiterating my extremely limited ability to influence the government, companies, and CSOs.

My overall ethical objectives were to ensure that respondents would not be harmed in any way and to operate in a manner that was culturally sensitive, which ultimately contributed to researcher, research assistant, and participant safety. I followed the guidelines of Cohen et al. (2007) regarding researcher safety in the field by using common sense, finding the most suitable transport, leaving details of where I am going, and bringing accompaniment, all of which my research assistant helped with in the second half of the research.
An important area that required continuous reflection throughout the research process is my positionality in relation to the research context. I am a young, white, female student from an affluent country, which can both influence how I conduct research and likely influenced how participants viewed me, their trust in me, and how they responded to my inquiries. When visiting and interviewing cocoa-farming communities, I relied largely on my research assistant, who helped me ask my questions in a manner that may be more appropriate for the local cultural context and for informing me how to behave in a culturally sensitive manner.

3.10 Quality of the research
This section discusses the quality of the research that I have conducted. Due to the fact that the conducted research was entirely qualitative, criteria for assessing the quality of solely qualitative research, adapted by Bryman (2012) from Lincoln and Guba (1985 and 1994), will be used. This involves assessing the research with two primary criteria, trustworthiness and authenticity. Using these, rather than only evaluating reliability and validity, partly reflects the research’s critical realist approach, as Lincoln and Guba also argued that there could be more than one account of the social phenomena (Bryman, 2012).

3.10.1 Trustworthiness
Trustworthiness consists of four sub-criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2012).

For the research to be credible, it must give a comprehensive account of the social reality. Triangulating my sources was my main strategy for strengthening the credibility of the research. This involved using multiple methods of data collection and using different sources to gain a better understanding of the context. If a respondent gave an unexpected answer to question, I would adopt this in my interview questions to check if their opinions or perceptions were shared by other respondents. By adhering to the ethical objectives outlined in Section 3.9, I attempted to build trust between myself and the respondents, which could have also helped increase the credibility of the research. The language barrier was a major limitation to my research that could have affected credibility. The CSO interviews were conducted in English, the official language of Ghana, and Dutch. However, the rural community members were often unable to speak English, which meant that I had to rely on a translator for those interviews and focus groups. This meant that the quality of my data for those respondents could be influenced by my research assistant’s interpretations of the questions and answers, which could have led to relevant information being lost in translation. Using an interpreter also created a larger gap between the
respondents and myself, which could have negatively affected the level of trust felt by the respondents.

As Bryman (2012) states, “qualitative findings tend to be oriented to the contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world being studied”. The first half of my research was specifically focused on understanding the landscape of CSOs working in the cocoa sector in Ghana at a specific moment in time, so transferability to other contexts could be low. However, providing a thick description and contextualization of Ghana’s cocoa sector and the communities that were studied makes the specific research context explicit and allows readers to determine themselves if the findings can be applicable elsewhere.

To ensure that there is some degree of dependability of the research process, I kept extensive record of important decisions I have made during different phases the research process, in the form of the initial problem statement, interview transcripts, and respondent list, as is proposed by Lincoln and Guba (Bryman, 2012). These were shared with my thesis supervisor, who audited them to ensure that proper procedures had been followed.

Confirmability aligns with objectivity criteria (Bryman, 2012). Overall, I made it a priority to be objective throughout my interviews and focus groups and make this known to participants in the research. Occasionally, being very involved in the data collection process led to me sharing my opinions in an interview. However, this was primarily done for the purpose of generating a discussion rather than to influence respondents’ answers.

3.10.2 Authenticity
Authenticity of the research is closely related to the social and political impact of the research. Most broadly, this is enhanced through discussing the practical relevance of the research and adding recommendations for CSOs and companies, based on my findings, in the conclusion of my research (see section 7.4). Some of the sub-criteria for authenticity provided by Lincoln and Guba are more relevant for action research than other forms of social research (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, I will discuss primarily the sub-criteria of fairness and briefly the ontological and educational authenticity of the research.

To ensure fairness, in the sense that the research represents the different perspectives and opinions of different members in each setting (the CSO landscape and the communities); I attempted to speak to as many different CSOs as possible. However, one respondent informed me that the CSOs that I had interviewed were generally more international CSOs, rather than
local or national CSOs. This was largely due to the fact that these CSOs had greater funds to build websites and have offices located in Accra. This also could have negatively affected fairness and created a bias in the typology presented in Chapter 5. In the cocoa communities, purposive sampling was used to ensure that there was a gender balance of smallholder respondents and that not only the leaders of the community were interviewed.

Ontological and educative authenticity are related to helping participants of the research to better understand their social settings and the perspectives of other members in those social settings (Bryman, 2012, p. 393). I did not consider this to be a priority of my research, but the discussions generated in community focus groups about what organizations had done for community members, who was potentially left behind, and what companies owed to cocoa farmers could have potentially contributed to these forms of authenticity.

### 3.11 Other limitations to the research

One major limitation to the first part of this research was gaining access to CSOs for interviews. Despite my best efforts, some CSOs did not respond to my calls or emails, which means that the data on the CSOs that were unwilling to participate is restricted on internet information only.

The largest limitation faced in the farming communities was the lack of consistent answers on which CSOs did what and when in the community. Often, respondents were unable to remember exactly which CSOs had come to the community. When they were able to recall organizations, their recollections of the activities and projects done by each CSO was not always consistent with the answers of other respondents. Using focus groups helped, in part, to overcome this limitation, because it allowed respondents to discuss with each other if they believed answers given were inaccurate, and eventually obtain a clearer understanding of what each CSO had done.
4. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

This chapter provides contextual information regarding the Ghanaian cocoa sector and CSOs in Ghana. The role of cocoa in Ghana will be discussed in Section 4.1, followed by an introduction of the main actors usually identified within Ghana’s cocoa value chain and some of their characteristics. Then, Section 4.2 presents a broad overview of the changing roles and relevance of CSOs in Ghana. This chapter draws primarily from existing literature and contextual data derived from key respondent interviews and observations during fieldwork.

4.1 Ghana’s cocoa sector

The cocoa sector is often described as the backbone of Ghana’s economy, due to its significant contributions to the gross domestic product (GDP) and employment in Ghana (Laven & Boomsma, 2012). About one-quarter of the world’s cocoa is produced in Ghana, which makes it the second largest producer of cocoa worldwide (AELB, n.d.). Cocoa is Ghana’s second largest export product, in terms of earnings, and is an important source of livelihood for about 30 percent of Ghanaians (Kolavalli & Vigneri, 2011).

The cocoa chain in Ghana is often visualized as an hourglass. At the base of the hourglass are an estimated 800,000 cocoa-producing households (World Bank, 2013). The smallholder farmers in these households work on land ranging from 0.5 to 10 or more hectares (Ataa-Atsantewaa & Ros-Tonen, 2015). In Ghana, household labor is the main source of labor for cocoa farms, accompanied with the use of (day) laborers for more difficult or heavier farming tasks (Bymolt et al., 2018). The average age of cocoa farmers in Ghana is advanced (higher than 50), due in part to youth leaving the cocoa sector to pursue jobs they deem more profitable (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; Ataa-Asantewaa & Ros-Tonen, 2015).

Farmers sell their cocoa beans to privately owned Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs) for a fixed price (AELB, n.d.). There are 27 LBCs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector, the majority of which are Ghanaian companies (Laven & Boomsma, 2012). After purchasing the cocoa from the farmers, the LBCs sell the cocoa to Ghana’s Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) (World Bank, 2013). LBCs are also responsible for ensuring that the cocoa beans meet the quality standards set by COCOBOD (World Bank, 2013).

COCOBOD forms the narrowest part of the cocoa value chain “hourglass”. Apart from buying and selling cocoa, this state-owned cocoa marketing board has several central responsibilities
in the supply chain, such as quality control, providing inputs and extension to the farmers, and conducting research on cocoa (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; Ataa-Asantewaa & Ros-Tonen, 2015). COCOBOD also sets the prices of cocoa in Ghana. This includes the farm gate price, which is the price that farmers receive for cocoa from the LBCs’ purchasing clerks, and the price that COCOBOD pays these companies, which includes a fixed buyer margin for the LBCs’ services (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018). This means that, as opposed to prices in countries with liberalized cocoa sectors, which fluctuate with the changing world market price, the price of cocoa in Ghana is stable throughout the year (Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018).

All exports in Ghana’s cocoa trade are handled by the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC), a subsidiary of COCOBOD, which sells to processors and manufacturers (Laven & Boomsma, 2012).

4.2 Value chain inclusivity issues in Ghana’s cocoa sector
Several issues in Ghana’s cocoa sector negatively affect the value chain’s economic, social, relational, and environmental inclusivity.1 Fountain and Hütz-Adams (2018) argue that “poverty lies at the root of almost all of the challenges facing the cocoa sector” (p. 45). The average cocoa yield in Ghana is one of the lowest in the world, signaling low productivity which translates into low disposable incomes for cocoa farmers (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; World Bank, 2013). The cocoa farms’ low productivity is caused, in part, by poor farm management and cultivation practices, the old age of cocoa farms, and a decline in soil fertility (Wessel & Quist-Wessel, 2015; Kongor et al., 2018). Low incomes impede the ability of farmers to obtain costly inputs or make other investments which could improve farm productivity, creating a vicious cycle which could hurt the Ghanaian cocoa sector’s overall growth and sustainability (World Bank, 2013). The aging farmer population combined with the lack of youth interested in pursuing cocoa farming also threatens the future ability of the Ghanaian cocoa sector to meet global demands (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; Deans et al., 2018).

Social and relational inclusivity issues have also been identified as prevalent in Ghana’s cocoa sector. Despite sector-wide efforts, child labor still remains a significant problem in Ghana. Estimates for children working on cocoa farms in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire are as high as 2.1

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1 The distinction between economic, social, relational and environmental inclusivity draws from Gupta et al. (2015) and Ros-Tonen et al. (under review).
million, with an estimated 41.1 percent of children in cocoa-growing areas engaged in child labor (Kapoor, 2017; Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018). Causes of this high rate include low farmer incomes and a lack of school facilities and adequate local infrastructure (Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018). Another social/relational inclusivity issue is the lack of bargaining power that farmers in Ghana hold. Being at the bottom of the value chain typically translates into a weak bargaining and price negotiating position, a position that is worsened by the fixed farmer gate cocoa price in Ghana (Bymolt et al., 2018, Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018). Forming a farmer organization can increase bargaining power, however the majority of farmers in Ghana are not a member of a farmer organization, due in part to weak organizational capacity caused by farmers’ low levels of education and literacy (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; World Bank, 2013).

In general, the monopolistic role of COCOBOD and the annual fixed cocoa price are subjects of debate, as it has both positive and negative impacts on farmers. Benefits include a government price guarantee if the global market price for cocoa falls during the year (Bymolt et al., 2018). However, COCOBOD receives critique for its lack of transparency when it comes to decision-making and its inefficiency in providing farmers with extension and inputs, which, as a result, fails to improve productivity (Laven & Boomsma, 2012; Bymolt et al., 2018).

Several environmental inclusivity issues are present in Ghana’s cocoa sector, some of which can ultimately affect the likelihood of a long-term sustainable cocoa supply. Climate change is expected to result in specific current cocoa-growing areas being significantly less suitable for cocoa cultivation than in previous decades, threatening the livelihoods of smallholders and Ghana’s cocoa supply (Abdulai et al., 2018). Land scarcity for cocoa farmers, which is already becoming a problem due to population growth, will likely worsen with climate change rendering more lands unsuitable for farming (Bymolt et al., 2018). The expansion of Ghana’s cocoa sector has also significantly contributed to deforestation and forest degradation (Ameyaw et al., 2018). Clearing land for farming purposes led to a deforestation rate of 2 percent a year in the last decades, resulting in a loss of the majority of Ghana’s primary forests (Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018, p. 19).

Stakeholders in Ghana’s cocoa sector have been increasingly concerned with addressing some of these inclusivity issues. This has resulted in value chain actors implementing their own programs as well as sector-wide initiatives and value chain collaborations focused on goals such as sustainable sourcing, livelihood improvement, and mitigating effects of climate change (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015; Deans et al., 2018; De Leth, 2018). These partnerships and initiatives are often driven by the private sector, such as international cocoa companies and LBCs, backed by
the government of Ghana, but have also been initiated by government agencies, donors, and private organizations (Deans et al., 2018).

4.3 CSOs in Ghana
Starting in 1990, the number of CSOs active in Ghana has grown substantially, with the emergence of new types of organizations, such as research institutes and policy centers, bringing greater variety to the CSO landscape (Abdulai & Quanston, 2009). Arhin et al. (2018) argue that, for the past 20 years, Ghana has been conducive to CSO and NGO presence and aid inflows due to its peaceful elections and relatively strong and accountable institutions. This resulted in official development assistance comprising 6 percent of Ghana’s 2009 GDP (Arhin et al., 2008, p. 349).

Throughout the years, the changes in sizes and funds of CSOs in Ghana also led to a shift in their influence. In the 1980s, these organizations were seen as the means for carrying out charity work, whereas in the 2000s, their roles shifted to include advocacy, resulting in a greater capacity to influence public policy to be more catered towards helping poor and marginalized people (Abdulai & Quanston, 2009; Arhin, 2016). Overall, CSOs in Ghana present themselves as development actors separate from the state, private sector, and other purely political entities (Arhin, 2016). Due to this self-imposed role, CSOs in Ghana are expected to also fulfill several roles apart from advocacy, such as delivering services to marginalized people and communities and brokering and facilitating other actors for developmental purposes (Arhin, 2016).

The NGOs active in Ghana depend heavily on international funding. Porter (2003) distinguishes between international NGOs and southern NGOs in Ghana and finds that southern NGOs often rely on international donors and NGOs for funding. It is estimated that NGOs in Ghana receive at least 70 percent of funding from foreign donations (Arhin et al., 2015). Having an international source of funding inevitably leads to most NGOs in Ghana adapting more western approaches to addressing poverty and other development issues, as opposed to home-grown or local ideas informing what actions should be taken (Porter, 2003). The majority of NGOs in Ghana are therefore categorized as compliant, meaning “they do not have the desire to question development agendas, or articulate alternative visions, whether radical or reformist” (Townsend et al., 2004, p. 873). Some NGOs in Ghana are consultants in disguise., assumedly because registering as NGOs attains greater recognition and implies lower tax rates (Ros-Tonen, personal comment).
Several developments have contributed to a changing role of CSOs in Ghana. In 2010, Ghana rose from a lower-income to a lower middle-income economic status (World Bank, 2016). This led to dwindling inflows of aid, and therefore a significant portion of bilateral and multilateral donors and partners for CSOs (Arhin, 2016; Arhin et al., 2018). CSOs in Ghana have adopted several strategies to adapt to this changing landscape and remain sustainable, such as appealing to more local funders, cutting costs, creating networks for influence and acquiring funds, building more credibility, and enhancing visibility to gain support (Arhin et al., 2018). CSOs also increasingly pursue formal partnerships as a response to dwindling funds. Some NGOs seek funding from governmental or private actors through project proposals and collaborations (Arhin et al., 2018). According to Arhin (2016) and Osei (2017), adapting to changes and attempting to appeal to donor interests has led to the Ghanaian CSO sector acting more with and like the private sector, which has further moved CSOs away from the grassroots and community interests.

4.4 Conclusions
This chapter first presented an overview of Ghana’s cocoa sector and its value chain inclusivity issues in order to understand the relevant actors and developments in the sector and VCC. Therefore, as Deans et al. (2018, p. 144) state, “Being a well-established industry that has considerable experience with VCC, the Ghanaian cocoa sector provides an interesting case to analyze the impacts of different kinds of VCCs on farmers’ livelihoods and sustainable practices” or, in the case of this research, the impacts of different CSOs involved in VCCs. Understanding the changing roles of CSOs over the years helps explain why these organizations are increasingly involved in forms of VCC in the Ghanaian cocoa sector, both directly and indirectly. The next chapter focuses specifically on identifying what different kinds of CSOs are active specifically in Ghana’s cocoa sector and how CSOs specifically (claim to) influence partnerships between cocoa farmers and companies.
5. CSOs IN GHANA’S COCOA SECTOR

This chapter addresses the first two research questions, namely: which CSOs are active in Ghana’s cocoa sector and how can they be classified, and what role do these CSOs (claim to) play in partnerships between cocoa companies and smallholder farmers? It presents a classification of CSOs in Ghana based on website analysis, online documents made available by the organizations, and interviews with CSO representatives (Section 5.1). For each of the CSO categories, the differences and similarities of CSOs in each category are discussed in terms of their assets, relationships with other actors, funding sources, and level of operations.

Section 5.2 identifies the different roles that CSOs (claim to) play in Ghana’s cocoa VCCs, specifically in partnerships that cocoa companies have with farmers.

Table 5.1 Classification of CSOs active in the cocoa sector of Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of CSO</th>
<th>CSOs identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental CSO</td>
<td>Solidaridad, A Rocha, EcoCare Ghana, IDH-The Sustainable Trade Initiative, Conservation Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development CSO</td>
<td>Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Every (CARE) International, SNV Netherlands Development Organization, Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), World Vision International (WVI), Projects, Planning &amp; Management (PROMAG) Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer-based CSO</td>
<td>Cocoa Abrabopa Association (CAA), World Cocoa Farmers Organizations (WCFO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company-driven CSO</td>
<td>Lindt Cocoa Foundation, World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification CSO</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance (RA)/Utz, Fair Trade, International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research institution</td>
<td>International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute (AELB)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 CSOs and their classification

In the specific context of Ghana’s cocoa sector, the most relevant criteria for classifying the non-profit CSOs were their purpose, means for achieving that purpose, and driving actors. Important to note is that most of the CSOs identified in the research fit best into one category, but it is nonetheless possible for CSOs to have overlapping missions or drivers which allow
them to fit into more than one of the categories. The categories used here include environmental, development, farmer-based, company-driven and certification CSOs, as well as research institutions and consultancies. An overview of the CSOs can be found in Table 5.1

5.1.1 Environmental CSOs

Environmental CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector can be primarily defined by the centrality of environmental goals in their overall mission statement. Environmental conservation, halting deforestation, and improving the overall health of ecosystems are among the main goals of these organizations. Environmental CSOs perceive the cocoa sector to be a major driver of deforestation and climate change in Ghana. According to these organizations, this is in part due to the planting of cocoa in protected area, excessive chemical application, inadequate farmland available for all farmers, and the use of inorganic inputs. However, the CSOs also see cocoa smallholders as some of the most vulnerable members of society when it comes to the long-term effects of deforestation and climate change, such as lower cocoa productivity.

Some of the means used by these organizations to achieve their objectives in the cocoa sector are: providing smallholders and communities with trainings on sustainable cocoa farming practices, training farmers on climate change mitigation and adaptation, promoting crop diversification and agroforestry, helping farmers obtain organic certification, participating in national policy discussions, and supporting extension services. All the environmental organizations interviewed mentioned advocating for environmental policies and initiatives to companies, COCOBOD, and government as an important means for achieving their objectives, suggesting that these organizations view nation-wide, cross-sectorial partnerships and initiatives to be crucial for environmental goals in Ghana. Increasingly, these CSOs are invited to implement and provide inputs on projects such as the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, which aims to halt deforestation in the Ivory Coats’s and Ghana’s cocoa sectors.

In general, these organizations viewed their convening power (see Section 5.2.3) and specific knowledge on sustainability and conservation topics as their main assets, while being dependent for exerting more influence and financial inputs. Most of the environmental CSOs that were interviewed received their funding from international organizations, some from international governments and embassies, and few received funding for specific projects done in collaboration with companies.
5.1.2 Development CSOs

A CSO can be described as a development CSO if its primary activities involve designing, facilitating, and implementing development-related projects (Kamat, 2003). For the specific context of this research, the definition of this type of CSO can be specified further. In Ghana, development CSOs tend to have broad objectives related to development and poverty reduction. Although environmental sustainability is part of these objectives, it is typically not as central in these organizations’ mission statements as for environmental CSOs. Alternatively, development CSOs were most likely to have projects related to female empowerment and gender equality in cocoa-growing communities.

The roles of these organizations in Ghana’s cocoa sector are diverse. First, several organizations carry out their regular activities and projects across different types of communities in Ghana or in specific regions, which can include cocoa-farming communities, but do not specifically target cocoa-farming communities. Second, it is increasingly common for development CSOs to be directly involved in partnerships with international companies and LBCs. Typically, companies seek these CSOs to create strategies and implement the social objectives of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and creating shared value (CSV) frameworks. Different CSOs create proposals for how they would carry out these objectives, leading to one or more being selected as formal partners. Reoccurring means used by these organizations in cocoa communities include community capacity building, youth skills training, and setting up Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). Typically, other actors in the cocoa value chain depend on these organizations for their experience and expertise in community development projects and initiatives and the time that they are able to allot to projects.

A relevant sub-dimension in classifying developmental CSOs is whether they are local, regional, national, or international. The international organizations active in Ghana receive a significantly larger share of the funding from donors and partnerships.

5.1.3 Farmer-based CSOs

Larger farmer-based organizations (FBOs) in Ghana’s cocoa sector tend to form a link within the value chain, meaning that they mobilize cocoa from members and sell it. Therefore, many of these well-known organizations, such as Kuapa Kokoo, are for-profit, and cannot be classified as a typical CSO.

An FBO that can be defined as a CSO is the Cocoa Abrabopa Association (CAA). According to a CAA representative, CAA is the only major non-profit Ghanaian FBO. This organization
has several objectives, including helping farmers achieve higher productivity and incomes, to improve cocoa farmer livelihoods and make cocoa production sustainable. Means for this include training farmers in order to help them become certified by the Rainforest Alliance, sharing knowledge on more efficient and productive agricultural practices, providing input packages on credit, and helping farmers access a pension scheme (CAA, n.d.). CAA is funded through member dues from over 7,000 farmers across seven regions in Ghana, voluntary certification premiums, and financial and administrative charges for the input packages. (CAA, n.d).

In order to ensure that the cocoa produced by farmers gets sold, the CAA teams up with LBCs. The association is responsible for ensuring that the cocoa sold by members is of high quality. When asked what CAA contributed to the cocoa sector, the representative commented:

“We believe that with the intensive agricultural and agronomic knowledge that we provide to our farmers, they are able to come up with better beans.... And so, we believe that by doing so we are contributing to the wellbeing of Ghana, by ensuring that quality farmers can come out.” (interview CAA representative).

CAA remains dependent on farmers for funding and on COCOBOD for occasional input provision. CAA is unique compared to other CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector, due to their dependence on farmers in terms of finances and relatively strong involvement of farmer representatives in their main decision-making council.

The World Cocoa Farmers Organizations (WCFO) is another farmer-based organization that allows individual Ghanaian smallholders to become part of an international platform and gain access to productivity and capacity-building trainings and farming inputs in exchange for a membership fee (WCFO, 2018). Although several of their objectives and means related to social and relational inclusiveness overlap, the WCFO focuses more on defending farmer rights and influencing sector policy at the national and international level than the CAA.

5.1.4 Company-driven CSOs
A specific type of CSO that can be observed in Ghana’s cocoa sector is the company-driven NGO. These NGOs were created by and/or are largely driven by private sector actors, in terms of finances and board members. If not driven by a single company (e.g. The Lindt Cocoa Foundation), company-driven NGOs are dependent on membership fees and donor

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2 Interview held in Kumasi on February 12, 2019.
contributions for funding their actions. In the latter case (almost) the entire sector comes together in an organization to rally behind a certain purpose. Two major examples are the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI).

The WCF exists to achieve broad objectives of social, environmental and economic sustainability in the cocoa value chain (WCF, n.d.). The objectives are set and primarily carried out by actors in the cocoa industry, while the staff of WCF helps create specific strategies and indicators to ensure that all members are contributing to the goals. Originally, the WCF, in partnership with NGOs and with funding from companies, also carried out the implementation of projects, but cocoa companies have built up a capacity over the years to do this implementation work themselves. According to a representative from the WCF, the sector-wide nature of the organization helps with its ability address problems and topics that can best be addressed through collective action, such as climate change, widescale improvement of farming practices, and digital finance (Nketiah et al., 2018). WCF’s sector-wide membership also helps the organization with lobbying the government for specific interests and policies. This is because the government plays a large role in Ghana’s cocoa supply chain, which means that individual companies are often hesitant to push the government, while the WCF is able to communicate the needs and wants of the entire cocoa industry without having to explicitly name companies.

The ICI was created to address the sector-wide problem of child labor in cocoa-growing communities in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire. A major difference in ICI and WCF’s governance structure is that ICI also has CSO board members, rather than solely cocoa company board members (ICI, 2019). The main strategies employed for achieving child labor elimination are child-centered community development and facilitating more responsible supply-chain management in cocoa, all through the development of public-private partnerships and the creation and application of good practices (ICI, 2019).

5.1.5 Certification CSOs

The primary purpose of certification organizations is to develop a set of standards to which farmers must comply in order for their crop or product to gain a specific type of certification. Examples of certification CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector are the Rainforest Alliance (RA)/Utz (previously two different organizations, but recently merged), Fair Trade, and the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM). These organizations’ crop certification schemes focus on one or more of the following objectives: consumer,
producer, and/or labor-wellbeing and environmental sustainability (Waldman & Kerr, 2014). Interesting to note is that helping farmer groups obtain certification was often named by non-certification CSOs as one of the means for achieving their objectives. Adopting the agricultural practices necessary for receiving certification requires increased costs for farmers, which can be compensated through buyers providing certified farmer groups with a premium (Ansah et al., 2019).

In formulating standards, certification CSOs frequently involve stakeholders, such as LBCs, international cocoa companies, research institutions and farmer groups. Apart from developing the standards, certification organizations also frequently monitor to ensure that certified cocoa actually meets the standards and provide companies and LBCs with technical expertise. According to Fountain & Hütz-Adams (2018), certification was viewed as the only means for achieving sustainability in the cocoa sector for a long time, but due to increased efforts by CSOs and cocoa companies, “the sector now has a much wider range of interventions at its disposal” (p. 38). One company-driven CSO representative expressed that, in the last years, most companies’ CSR and CSV initiatives have started surpassing what is required by certification standards, leaving certification CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector unclear about their future purpose. As a result of this uncertainty, some certification CSOs, such as RA/Utz, have started taking on new activities, such as consultancy, advocacy and capacity building (Fountain & Hütz-Adams, 2018).

Certification bodies receive most of their funding from donors and some from fees paid by members such as large farmer groups and companies. They are further dependent on other actors for inputs and expertise related to what should be included in the certification criteria.

5.1.6 Research institutions

Although many organizations incorporate research in their activities and strategies, this type of non-profit institution exists principally for the purpose of conducting research. The research institutions active in Ghana’s cocoa sector typically focus on research related to multiple agricultural commodities. The missions of these organizations include reducing (rural) poverty, enhancing food security, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, and environmental conservation. For cocoa specifically, these organizations seek to improve farmer livelihoods by using research to find solutions to problems such as poor cocoa soil fertility and low productivity, while remaining conscious of potential environmental and climate-related trade-offs.
Specific means these institutions employ, apart from conducting research, include developing better cropping practices, developing more effective inputs, helping create farmer field schools and demonstration plots, and training farmers on best agricultural practices.

These institutions consider their ability to generate scientific knowledge as their main asset. Their main dependencies on other actors were for funding and dissemination of research, since the research organizations do not have the capacity to do this by themselves. These organizations use the existing service-delivery and extension networks that LBCs or companies have to bring the research findings to cocoa farmers and receive feedback on the effectiveness and applicability of recommended practices. The research institutes not only depend on international organizations and governments for research funding, but also depend on other actors to finance the recommended practices derived from the research, and to ensure that they are affordable for low-, middle-, and high-income farmers.

5.1.7 Consultancies

In Ghana’s cocoa sector, consultancy CSOs can best be described as organizations that have specific expertise or knowledge on aspects of (cocoa) value chains. These organizations do consultancy work for the private sector, developmental organizations, or international organizations, but can still be non-profit. In Ghana, Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute (AELB) is a strong example of a non-profit consultancy CSO. AELB provides “professional services to agricultural chain operators” such as training, capacity building, applying research and market studies, and improving linkages between value chain actors (AELB, 2018). AELB works primarily on a project basis, rather than receiving donor funding. The organization’s expertise comprises certification, sustainable agriculture, project management, farmer organization, and quality management (AELB, 2018). Consultancy CSOs often have broad missions to which they aim to contribute with their projects. For example, AELB’s main mission is livelihood improvement for farmers.

One CSO representative argued that AELB represents the future direction that many CSOs will need to take to remain relevant in the cocoa sector, in terms of taking on a service provision role based on having well-established knowledge and expertise on specific topics that companies and/or cooperatives do not have.
5.2 The role of CSOs in partnerships between cocoa companies and farmers

Most of the CSOs interviewed claimed to directly and indirectly influence partnerships between companies and farmers in Ghana’s cocoa sector in one or more ways. The following sub-sections describe the different forms in which CSOs contribute to Ghana’s VCCs.

5.2.1 Implementing company projects

Certain cocoa companies and LBCs in Ghana, such as Cargill and Mondelez, partner with CSOs for the implementation of their social and/or environmental sustainability initiatives. These companies view CSOs as being better equipped for these tasks than companies, due to experience and expertise. In this instance, the CSOs form a link between companies and farmers through formulating and implementing specific strategies and projects to achieve the objectives outlined by companies. The CSOs interviewed often viewed themselves as understanding farmer needs and community development better than companies, and therefore view CSO involvement as crucial for the success of company CSR and CSV initiatives. However, one environmental CSO representative believed that the organizations that are selected by companies to carry out the companies’ projects are generally Western NGOs that do not critique potentially unfair company practices and other sector issues, such as low premiums and a lack of transparency. Furthermore, one developmental CSO representative who was involved in implementing a company’s social initiatives expressed that for greater success in these partnerships, CSO partners should be more involved in developing the CSR strategies for companies in the future, rather than just focusing on the implementation thereof. The representative believed this would make the program more effective, because the CSOs, based on experience, would engage the communities before developing strategies.

5.2.2 Company capacity building

Company capacity building is another way in which CSOs in Ghana impact the partnerships that companies have with farmers. Specifically, some CSO representatives argued that they helped build the capacity of cocoa companies to create sustainable, positive changes in their value chains and make their partnerships with farmers more inclusive. VSO Ghana, a developmental NGO, facilitates short-term volunteer placements in cocoa-growing communities for senior leaders from the international cocoa company Mondelez. The purpose of these volunteer trips is to allow Mondelez staff to “learn about the origin of cocoa and importance of a sustainable supply chain”, “work with Ghanaian counterparts in an immersive leadership development opportunity” and gain a better understanding of their CSR program (VSO, 2019). Solidaridad trains companies to implement certification standards on their own,
without needing to outsource the work to other organizations. Many former staff members of CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector, such as Solidaridad, proceed to work for the sustainability staff of various cocoa companies, using the specific knowledge and skills gained from working at a CSO. Research institutions also claim that many of their top scientists are being hired for companies’ own research units. The growing focus on company capacity building helps explain why some CSO representatives believed that CSOs had a declining role in partnerships in Ghana’s cocoa sector. However, other CSOs countered this claim by arguing that companies’ business- and profit-oriented nature does not allow them to properly address all problems in the cocoa sector, which leaves a gap for CSOs to fill.

5.2.3 Convening partners for a common purpose
This function of CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector strongly corresponds to the bridging or brokering roles that can be fulfilled by CSOs. CSOs generally facilitate the convening process by identifying and uniting relevant stakeholders and helping these stakeholders rally behind common goals. These goals can range from halting deforestation in cocoa production, for which IDH acts as a convener, to developing certification standards, in which the certification NGOs, such as RA/Utz, act as conveners. Usually, the CSOs will facilitate discussions and ensure that all stakeholders are contributing. Sometimes, CSOs will include a diverse array of stakeholders from all links of the value chain, including farmer groups and companies, while other times, the stakeholders convened represent one part of the value chain. For example, ICI convenes government, civil society, companies, and farming communities to tackle child labor issues, while the WCF often convenes just cocoa companies to identify and work on common objectives of social development and productivity. Often, CSOs view convening actors as one of the most effective ways in which they can create transformative change to address complex value chain issues, such as deforestation, child labor, and climate change, and secure the future of cocoa farming. According to representatives from A Rocha and IDH, enhancing discussions and dialogue between value chain actors, for example, through multi-stakeholder conferences, is one of the most effective strategies CSOs can employ for bridging the knowledge gap between stakeholders and ensuring that all partners are rallying behind common objectives.

5.2.4 Monitoring
Some CSOs in Ghana take on a monitoring or “watchdog” role in the cocoa sector. The purpose of monitoring is usually to ensure that stakeholders fulfill their obligations. These obligations can be related to meeting certification standards or adhering to agreements such as the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI). The CFI is a joint initiative between cocoa companies, government,
and civil society to “reserve the deforestation caused by cocoa production in the cocoa production belt of Ghana”, while contributing to farmer livelihood and mitigating potential social risks. (IDH, 2018, p. 16). CSOs involved in the creation of this initiative viewed landscape or participatory approaches as essential for its implementation and for monitoring stakeholder commitments, which is reflected in the 2018-2020 CFI implementation plan (IDH, 2018). During a conference outlining CSO responsibilities in CFI monitoring, CSOs’ local knowledge was highlighted as being crucial to ensure that companies and other stakeholders are actively involved in implementation while respecting farmers’ rights and promoting social development. A conference speaker from EcoCare Ghana highlighted that local CSOs were also suited to monitor farmer and community activities. The example of CSO monitoring in the CFI illustrates how CSOs can partially bridge a gap between companies and farmers by ensuring that all members of a partnership are contributing to a common purpose and are held accountable for their actions. Independently, CSOs in Ghana also occasionally monitor the state of an issue and how or if the cocoa industry is contributing. For example, some environmental CSOs, such as A Rocha, bring out independent reports and articles on developments related to deforestation in cocoa-growing areas. This often fits in more with the “watchdog” and advocacy roles of these organizations as the goal of this type of monitoring is often to make the private sector more accountable and highlight the necessity of inclusive partnerships for addressing problems.

5.2.5 Advocacy and representing farmer interests

Often, CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector have notable experience with community engagement. They therefore view themselves as understanding cocoa farmer and community needs and interests better than many other value chain actors. This view often goes paired with the assumption that CSOs are able to act on behalf of farmers through means of advocacy, participating in policy discussions, and attending stakeholder meetings. If this assumption is true, then CSOs essentially use their knowledge, influence, and contacts to make farmer interests known to other stakeholders, such as companies, which could affect the types of partnerships companies decide to have with farmers. IDH views other CSOs as pushing inclusion agendas and ensuring that different members of civil society and different types of farmers benefit from the decisions made at the national level.

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3 Monitoring CFI Commitments through Participatory Approaches (MoCCPA) Conference held in Accra on February 21, 2019.
Some respondents argued that Ghanaian organizations operating at the district or regional level fulfill the “representing civil society” role of CSOs more than international NGOs, which tend to be based in the cities of Accra and Kumasi. However, these more local organizations often do not have the financial or organizational capacity to go to stakeholder meetings and conferences in Accra and Kumasi to contribute and truly represent civil society and farmer interests. One source argued that having true representation is expensive. He gave the example that, if cocoa companies pay the accommodation and travel fees for local CSOs to attend stakeholder meetings, it essentially creates a power imbalance, which can make local CSOs hesitant to speak out against industry actors who paid for their presence. This reduces the overall ability of CSOs to accurately represent farmer interests at the national or industry level.

5.2.6 Involving farmers in decision-making

A less common strategy used by CSOs is involving farmers directly in making decisions related to their partnerships with companies. Often, farmers are still absent from decision-making and conferences. Certain CSOs acting as conveners, such as Solidaridad, directly involve cocoa farmers in their annual stakeholder conferences, to ensure that the assumptions made by actors in the cocoa sector match with cocoa farmer perspectives. IDH also involves cocoa farmers in steering committees and invites some farmers to attend larger stakeholder meetings. However, according to an IDH representative, the farmers mobilized by CSOs to be involved in decision-making are often only selected from the small percentage of farmers who can read and write in English. This means that the majority of farmers do not have the opportunity to be directly involved in decision-making. A representative from AELB drew attention to the fact that most farmers also lack the relevant knowledge to be able to strongly contribute to these multi-stakeholder platforms and best represent farmer interests, which means that direct involvement of farmers in decision-making at the national level is not always the most effective way to ensure that the outcomes strongly benefit farmers. A WCF representative argued that his organization usually tries to find the most capable representatives of farmers to contribute to their discussions through the help of its member farmer cooperatives.

5.2.7 Farmer capacity building

Farmer and community capacity building is a strategy that some CSOs in Ghana claim to employ, in part to help cocoa farmers gain more favorable terms of inclusion in their partnerships with companies. Previous sections outlined problems with directly involving farmers in decision-making, while involving CSOs in decision-making as farmer representatives may not always be effective either. Therefore, farmer capacity building is an
increasingly popular CSO strategy in Ghana’s cocoa sector. This corresponds to a central function of bridging organizations: contributing to the building of local institutions that allow marginalized people to channel and mobilize their resources and ideas for self-help (Brown, 1991).

Farmer capacity building is approached through several strategies. First, several CSOs in Ghana, including the PROMAG Network, the CAA, and A Rocha, help promote the expansion of education or provide their own education to cocoa-farming communities on topics such as conducting business and understanding farmer rights. Greater access to information is often viewed as an important starting point for capacity building. Some CSOs also enhance community institutions. For example, CSOs such as CARE International and World Vision International help cocoa-growing communities set up meetings and community committees, negotiate support from local authorities, and create community action plans (CAPs) (CARE International, 2018a). CAPs are seen as useful for identifying collective community needs and enhancing the ability of communities to communicate these needs to government and other value chain actors. Another way in which farmer capacity building occurs is through empowerment initiatives, which organizations such as VSO Ghana, SNV, and the WCF claim to implement. However, these initiatives do not always have the desired effects:

“We empower these farmers, unfortunately when the farmers are empowered, companies feel very uncomfortable. So, one of the companies has decided not to work with the farmers, because the farmers questioned the calculations for the premium” (interview Conservation Alliance representative).4

5.3 Conclusions

This chapter provided an overview of the different types of CSOs and the roles they (claim to) play in VCCs. It identified seven types of CSOs, including environmental, development, farmer-based, company-driven and certification CSOs, and research institutions and consultancies. The CSOs were found to have several roles in partnerships between cocoa farmers and companies. Some functions reflected CSOs’ growing tendency to work with and for the private sector. However, CSOs also claimed to work in several ways related to strengthening farmers’ positions and therefore their ability to partake in beneficial partnerships. Hence their role ranges from company-focused activities (implementing company projects, company capacity building), to farmer-centered activities (advocacy/representing farmers’

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4 Interview held in Accra on January 31, 2019.
interest, involving farmers in decision-making and farmer capacity building), while some CSOs also have overseeing roles (convening partners for a common purpose, monitoring whether partnership commitments are met). The descriptions of different CSOs revealed the changing roles of CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector, with a greater emphasis on the relevance of consultancies and specialized organizations and a decline in the importance of certification NGOs.

How different types of CSO involvement in partnerships plays out at the community level and how cocoa smallholders in different communities perceive their presence and effects will be the focus of Chapter 6. Based on case studies, that chapter also discuss how specific CSO characteristics affect their contributions to the inclusiveness of partnerships between companies and farmers.
6. THE IMPACT OF VARIOUS TYPES AND DEGREES OF CSO INVOLVEMENT IN COCOA COMMUNITIES

This chapter addresses the last two research questions, how do CSOs operationalize and implement strategies to promote the inclusiveness of partnerships between cocoa companies and smallholder farmers, and how do smallholder farmers perceive the impacts of CSO involvement in their partnerships with cocoa companies? It presents a description of three different types of CSO involvement in company partnerships with cocoa communities, based primarily on interviews and focus groups in four cocoa-growing communities in Ghana, as well as CSO interviews. Then, for each type of CSO involvement, the CSOs’ perceptions and specific strategies are discussed, in terms of how these contribute to or fail to address different dimensions of inclusiveness (Sections 6.1.1, 6.2.1 & 6.2.2). Lastly, each section focuses on how community members (primarily farmers) perceive their partnerships or relations with the private sector, CSO involvement in these partnerships, and the resulting projects and trainings, as well as which problems they feel remain largely unaddressed (Sections 6.1.2, 6.2.2 & 6.3.3).

6.1 Company-community partnership with strong CSO involvement: Mondelez International’s Cocoa Life program

A company-community partnership with strong CSO involvement was observed in two Cocoa Life communities in the Ahafo Ano North District, located in the Ashanti Region. Cocoa Life is an international sustainable sourcing program created by the cocoa-manufacturing company Mondelez International. The overall mission of this program is to create empowered and inclusive cocoa communities, improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers, and protect and conserve forests, in order to create a strong foundation for a sustainable cocoa supply chain (Mondelez International, 2019a). The Cocoa Life program, launched in 2012, was preceded by the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, Mondelez’s earlier CSR program, which started in Ghana in 2008 (Mondelez International, 2019). These interventions primarily started out as a response to the poor livelihoods and relatively low productivity of Ghana’s cocoa farmers. Mondelez identified several key causal factors of these problems, including limited farmer capacity to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and manage their farms and finances efficiently, poor access to farming inputs, aging farmers and lack of youth involvement, and poor social amenities and infrastructure in cocoa-producing communities (Institute for Democratic Governance, n.d.). The Cocoa Life program aims to tackle these problems by addressing farmers’ needs in five thematic areas or “pillars”: farming, livelihoods, community, youth, and
environment. The farming projects are directly implemented by Mondelez officials while the projects related to other pillars are implemented by Mondelez’s partner CSOs. In Ghana, these partners include Solidaridad, Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) Ghana, World Vision International (WVI), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), CARE International, Abantu for Development, the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), and Fair Trade (Mondelez International, 2019a). According to a WVI representative, Mondelez created Cocoa Life’s main goals and objectives, but many of the strategies for achieving these objectives were formulated by the CSOs, who receive funding from Mondelez to implement these plans. Many CSO representatives viewed Mondelez as the cocoa company that most strongly partnered with CSOs in their sustainability program. Section 6.1.1 further elaborates on CSO involvement in Cocoa Life and specific contributions of CSOs in two Cocoa Life communities.

Currently, there are about 447 Cocoa Life partnership communities in Ghana, with more than 38,000 participating cocoa farmers (Mondelez International, 2019b). Cocoa farmers pay a registration fee of 10 GHC to join their community’s Cocoa Life society and pay a monthly due of 2 GHC. Mondelez does not directly buy the cocoa from these farmers, since it is not an LBC. Rather, Mondelez requires its Cocoa Life members to document and report the volumes of cocoa they have sold to their respective LBCs. Then, Mondelez purchases an amount of cocoa equal to those volumes from the CMC, which it labels as Cocoa L Ife sustainably sourced cocoa.

The communities studied in the Ahafo Ano North District were Nkyensedanho and Manfo, both of which have been Cocoa Life partner communities since 2016. The vast majority of residents in both communities are cocoa farmers. At the time of the fieldwork, 91 farmers in Manfo were members of the Cocoa Life society, compared to 85 in Nkyensedanho.

6.1.1 CSO perspectives and contributions

In Ghana, the Cocoa Life Program is divided into four different units, referred to as cohorts, each comprised of multiple districts. In each cohort, specific CSOs are responsible for contributing to specific Cocoa Life pillars (community, livelihoods, youth, farming, and environment). If a developmental CSO focused on livelihoods, communities, and youth is operating in one cohort, a similar CSO with the same pillars will not be operating in that same cohort.
cohort. For example, VSO Ghana, WVI, and CARE International operate in different cohorts, since they address the same topics and have similar expertise.

This research focused on two communities in Cohort 3, which has a total of 121 Cocoa Life partner communities. The CSOs responsible for the communities in this cohort are WVI, Right to Play, and Abantu for Development. WVI is the main NGO for Cohort 3, and is responsible for the community, livelihoods, and youth pillars. Abantu for Development focuses on women’s empowerment, which currently falls under the community pillar, and Right to Play addresses children’s rights and child labor issues, which are part of the youth pillar. Mondelez and COCOBOD extension officers focus on activities related to the farming pillar; this pillar is therefore not directly addressed by the partner CSOs. UNDP is the development program of the United Nations, an intergovernmental organization, and can therefore not be classified as a CSO based on the definition of CSOs provided in Section 2.2. Officials from UNDP are primarily responsible for the environment pillar in Cohort 3.

Analyzing Cocoa Life CSO’s perspectives on and contributions to social inclusiveness involves understanding their strategies for enhancing farmers’ (material) wellbeing and how they attempt to understand and address different smallholders’ and community members’ needs and wants. To improve livelihoods and material wellbeing, the Cocoa Life program provides trainings on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), creates community savings groups, and helps farmers find alternative income-generating activities. Mondelez is the primary actor providing GAP trainings. Mondelez also provided the communities with some fertilizers and pesticides, free machetes, protective boots, and pruning and spraying machines. To use these machines, Cocoa Life members pay a maintenance fee of 5 GHC, while non-members pay 10 GHC. The farming techniques and machinery contribute to increasing productivity and farmer yields, which is expected to lead to higher incomes and greater material wellbeing. Mondelez also provides training on cultivating vegetables for personal consumption, which contributes to farmer food security. WVI is the main CSO addressing non-farming initiatives related to livelihood improvement. Setting up self-sustaining village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) is WVI’s main strategy for cultivating farmers’ savings habits and giving access to small loans for starting up alternative economic enterprises. According to a representative from WVI,

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6 These are understood as safe and sustainable agronomy practices and efficient farming techniques and include more diligent fertilizer and pesticide application, weeding, pruning, and shade management (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016; Mondelez International, 2019e).
“Normally, during the lean period, most of the cocoa farmers do not have much to do and mostly they are broke….With the VSLAs, they can have some savings they can rely upon and they can also have soft loans in those periods to be able to undertake whatever economic activity they are supposed to” (Interview WVI representative).7

Trainings on alternative livelihoods, such as soap making and other trades, are also given by WVI and Abantu for Development. Apart from the year-round savings and loans available for undertaking economic activities, the Cocoa Life VSLAs also have social funds, which require a weekly contribution of 1 GHC per member. Loans from the social fund are used for medical emergencies, funeral costs, or other unanticipated situations. At the end of the year, the money from the social fund is used to purchase something that benefits the entire community.

To address problems of aging farmers and youth unemployment in cocoa communities, WVI, in collaboration with Mondelez, claimed to promote the creation of youth groups or “gangs”, a workforce which farmers can hire to carry out more physically demanding farming activities, such as using the heavy mechanized equipment, pruning, or harvesting.

While some of the social projects run across Cocoa Life partner communities, such as the VSLAs, others are dependent on what the community expresses they need or want. For example, in Nkyensedanho and Manfo, WVI facilitated meetings in which society members listed which facilities they wanted and voted on which one they preferred Mondelez would first build, ultimately resulting in a community action plan (CAP). This led to Mondelez funding a kindergarten building in Nkyensedanho and a mechanized borehole in Manfo. Apart from listening to the community through community meetings, WVI also used its own observations to make suggestions to Mondelez about what inputs were needed to achieve greater social development in their cohort’s communities. For example, local WVI representatives noticed that in several communities, children were not attending school, because the walk was too long. To tackle this issue, these representatives reported this to their superiors, who provided the school-going children with bicycles in exchange for a small fee.

In terms of accommodating heterogeneity, WVI and the other Cocoa Life CSOs did not engage separate groups within the communities such as women or youth to understand their specific needs and vulnerabilities. While some projects and topics focused on gender or age, differences

7 Interview held in Accra on February 14, 2019.
between farmers in terms of land size, land ownership, and/or assets were not taken into account in their formulation of strategies for the communities.

Topics related to environmental inclusiveness were mostly addressed by UNDP. One of their main strategies in Nkyensedanho and Manfo is promoting agroforestry to mitigate the effects of climate change on cocoa farms, in part through providing free nurseries with native shade and timber tree species for the entire community. Farmers were taught to register these trees in their own names, so that Ghana’s Forestry Commission could not legally cut these trees.\(^8\) Often, during dry season farmers make dams to move water from the rivers to their farm, which had harmful effects on the fish supply, so UNDP and Mondelez discouraged this practice. Lastly, UNDP and Mondelez provided trainings on bushfire prevention, focusing on the dangerous effects of burning the farms and applying unapproved chemicals during dry season, and instead promoted leaving dead leaves from the cocoa trees on the land to act as a natural fertilizer. Correct methods of chemical and input application during each season were also taught, with the goal of increasing productivity while reducing farmers’ use of harmful chemicals and application practices. To make communities self-sufficient in the regulation of these practices, UNDP encouraged them to set up a community environmental committee. This committee, consisting of three people, received training on when and how to properly burn farmland. Community members have to ask this committee for advice and permission to burn their farm. The use of community committees reflects UNDP’s overall strategy of incorporating community-based approaches to address environmental sustainability problems in cocoa production (Mondelez International, 2019c).

Some relational inclusivity aspects of CSOs’ engagement in Cocoa Life communities have been briefly addressed in this section. Dimensions of empowerment, such as labor rights and community/farmer capacity building, are, to some extent, part of the Cocoa Life program. In terms of labor rights, the focus is primarily on child labor prevention, which is carried out by Right to Play in Nkyensedanho and Manfo. Right to Play gave trainings to prevent child labor and encouraged parents to send their children to school, as opposed to carrying out manual labor on the farms.

Several different aspects of the Cocoa Life program contribute to community capacity building. The community meetings, facilitated by WVI, involve Cocoa Life members and allow them to

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\(^8\) In Ghana, all naturally regenerated trees fall under the custody of the Forestry Commission (FC). The FC issues logging permits to officially registered timber operators. Farmers are only allowed to cut trees that they planted themselves and only need a permit to transport the timber (Ros-Tonen and Derkyi, 2018).
exert influence over the projects funded and implemented by Mondelez and the CSO. Committees, such as the community environment committee, build the capacity of the community to allow certain pillars to become self-sustaining. Several boards in the community, such as the board of the Cocoa Life society and the VSL group board, are elected by and comprised of community members, which aims, in part, to empower community members. Several actions taken by CSOs specifically target differences in opportunities related to gender and empower women in Cocoa Life communities. First, women are encouraged or even required to fill some of the positions on the community boards. According to a WVI representative,

“What we are doing now is reserving some positions for the women. So, whether the community likes it or not, for those positions, like treasurer or organizer, we want them to give us a woman. Sometimes it’s a challenge, because some of the women do not feel they should step forward to apply for the position. But we still insist we cannot have all men leading the society” (Interview WVI representative). 

A few women in each community were also selected to receive training from Abantu for Development on how to register their lands, how to maintain and clean their households, how to prepare children for school, and how to settle disputes with their husbands. Abantu for Development also gave some women trainings on alternative livelihoods, such as soap making or beekeeping. These women were then responsible for disseminating the information from these trainings to the other women in their communities. Women are also encouraged by the Cocoa Life CSOs to partake in the VSLAs. In the studied communities, the majority of VSLA participants were women. The overall goal of these interventions is to empower female cocoa farmers, by enhancing their decision-making power, land ownership, and opportunities to generate their own income (Mondelez International, 2019d).

It was expected that, if the Cocoa Life program functions effectively within a community, more members would want to join the society. This allows the company to purchase a larger quantity of cocoa from COCOBOD’s Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC), since Mondelez purchases an equivalent of the volume of cocoa sold by Cocoa Life society members to their respective LBCs. Furthermore, as was mentioned in the previous sections, several Cocoa Life initiatives focus on increasing productivity and thereby cocoa yields, which is argued to contribute to profitable outcomes for smallholders and Mondelez alike, illustrating the economic

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9 Interview held in Tepa on February 28, 2019.
inclusiveness of the partnership. Since the partner CSOs in Cocoa Life communities receive funding from Mondelez, it is in their interest to ensure that increased profits, one of Mondelez’s main goals, is compatible with their actions and projects. In general, the interviewed Cocoa Life partner CSOs felt that their actions, related primarily to addressing social and relational inclusivity, did not compromise the ability of smallholders and Mondelez to attain their economic targets. However, these organizations did express that they are more focused on development goals, while Mondelez is generally more business- and profit-oriented. According to a representative from VSO Ghana, every Cocoa Life initiative must contribute, directly or indirectly, to improving Mondelez’s business.

Overall, Cocoa Life partner CSOs claim that their specific expertise and experience in developmental work are major assets to Cocoa Life which contribute to the program’s overall effectiveness in addressing a wide array of farmer and community problems.

6.1.2 Community perspectives

Generally, farmers in the two studied communities perceived their partnerships with Mondelez and CSOs’ roles in this partnership positively. In Manfo and Nkyensedanho, farmers believed that Mondelez and its partner CSOs understood what issues they were facing and were helping the communities more than other companies or CSOs had done before. Most farmers joined the Cocoa Life societies to see improvements on their farm. Overall, the Cocoa Life program helped farmers achieve this goal, because most Cocoa Life society members in the two communities recorded a substantial increase in their yields. Several farmers saw their yields double, which they attribute to Mondelez’s trainings and provision of farming materials and machinery. However, smallholders also highlighted the importance of Mondelez involving CSOs. One farmer argued, “Mondelez gave pesticides and fertilizers and WVI gave the children bicycles, so they are helpful to the community in different ways” (Interview 26).

Farmers listed several projects and outcomes as being the most important improvements in their lives and communities resulting from the Cocoa Life partnership. The increase and yields and VSLAs were often named as significantly contributing to farmers’ material wellbeing. Many farmers successfully started saving through the VSLAs and were able to start practicing and supporting their alternative livelihoods and trades after acquiring a loan from the VSLAs. Unlike the banks, the VSLAs did not charge members high interest rates on their loans. The community-wide projects, the provision of bicycles, a mechanized borehole in Manfo, and a

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10 Interview held in Manfo on March 5, 2019.
kindergarten building in Nkyensedanho, were also frequently named as the most important contribution of Cocoa Life. Several farmers argued that seeing the different benefits of the Cocoa Life program made it more attractive for other community members to join the Cocoa Life society. Community members were unable to mention negative effects of the Mondelez’s and CSOs’ involvement in their communities.

Cocoa Life society members generally felt that they were able to influence what projects and trainings were given by Mondelez and its partner CSOs in the communities. Cocoa Life members viewed the community meetings, in which they were asked by WVI to prioritize their needs and vote on which project they wanted, as a fair process through which they could express their community’s most salient problems to Mondelez and the Cocoa Life CSOs. If community members disagreed with any projects or actions, or wanted to provide other feedback, they could contact the society’s chairman, who could easily contact Mondelez and WVI officials in Tepa. Several community members in Nkyensedanho believed that several Cocoa Life CSO initiatives contributed to greater unity in their community as well as female empowerment, both of which resulted in women participating and expressing themselves more during community meetings than before the inception of the Cocoa Life program.

Although most community members felt they could participate in decision-making, several community members faced barriers to participation. Diverse vulnerabilities of more marginalized farmers in the community, which impacted their ability to partake in decision-making processes, were not always taken into account by Mondelez and its partner CSOs. For example, several of the farmers interviewed who had lower incomes, such as laborers or single mothers, claimed they could not pay the Cocoa Life membership fee and/or faced time constraints which reduced their ability to attend the meetings in which community decisions were made. These barriers also implement the ability of these smallholders to benefit from several trainings, inputs, and projects provided through the Cocoa Life program. One Cocoa Life society member, who supplemented his insufficient farming income by working at bars, declared, “I think people who have time to attend the meetings can benefit a lot more. The meetings are usually held at 3 or 4 p.m., which is when the customers come, so I do not have time” (Interview 20).

A few discrepancies were found between CSO perspectives and community perspectives on Cocoa Life. CSOs mentioned the introduction of youth teams in communities, but there was

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11 Interview held in Manfo on March 4, 2019.
little evidence of these teams being active in either community. One respondent argued that, “The youth came to my farm once, but I did not see the results. The Mondelez training hasn’t been consistent, so they do not know how to do it well” (Interview 16). The dissemination of the information provided by Abantu for Development, appeared to be poor, with many women being unaware that members of their community had received these gender-specific trainings.

Furthermore, there were some problems with the uptake of certain initiatives. UNDP strongly encouraged the societies in both communities to set up volunteer environmental committees, but in Manfo, the larger community, no such committee was created. Other limits to the uptake of suggested activities were caused by a lack of available materials. For example, although many trainings focus on the correct application of fertilizers and pesticides, many farmers are unable to obtain these inputs.

Although the communities were generally satisfied about the impacts of the Cocoa Life program, many community members and farmers still faced substantial difficulties. Generally, respondents wanted their children to pursue education and not follow in their footsteps, due to the lack of farmland available and the (financial) hardships they, as cocoa farmers, felt they faced. Major problems related to infrastructure (i.e. poor roads, lack of sanitation facilities, and inadequate boreholes) and access to sufficient inputs remained unaddressed, although farmers often felt this was the government’s responsibility, rather than that of Mondelez and/or CSOs.

6.2 Company-community partnership with a single CSO’s involvement: the CARE-Cargill partnership

A company-community partnership with a single CSO’s involvement was observed in a community in Nyamegyeso, a community in the Sefwi-Wiawso District. Cargill, an LBC and cocoa-processing company, partners with farmers in this community as part of The Cargill Cocoa Promise, their global corporate social responsibility program. The broad objective of this program is to “improve the livelihoods of farmers and their communities and to secure a long-term supply of cocoa” (Cargill, 2019). Cargill, in cooperation with COCOBOD and occasionally other LBCs or CSOs, provides trainings and other forms of support to improve the yields and overall livelihoods of farmers (Cargill, 2019).

CARE International, a developmental NGO, has formally engaged with Cargill on projects in several countries since 2008. In 2013, Cargill formally renewed their partnership with the NGO

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12 Interview held in Nkyensedanho on March 1, 2019.
to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers in Ghana and better primary education in cocoa-producing communities (Cargill, 2019). Several projects and initiatives have occurred in different Ghanaian cocoa-growing communities under this partnership, including the establishment of VSLAs, Farmer Field and Business Schools, child protection, community capacity building, the facilitation of CAPs, the establishment of school and community gardens (CARE International, 2018b).

Nyamegyeso, the case study community, is one of the partner communities in CARE and Cargill’s PROSPER project, which was launched in the Sefwi-Wiawso District in 2017. This initiative contributes to the Cargill Cocoa Promise. The overall aim of this three-year project is to, at the community-level, improve education, empower women, and build community capacity to develop sustainably (Kudu, 2017).

CARE, however, is not the only CSO active in Nyamegyeso. Winrock International, in collaboration with the Community Development Consult Network (CODESULT), have implemented the Mobilizing Community Action and Promoting Opportunities for Youth in Ghana’s Cocoa-Growing Communities (MOCA) project in an effort to address child labor and youth unemployment issues. The PROMAG Network, a local CSO, has been active in Nyamegyeso since 1999, focusing on community capacity building, water and sanitation, and, in collaboration with IBIS, child protection.

6.2.1 CSO perspectives and contributions

Although several CSOs are involved in Nyamegyeso, this section will specifically focus on CARE’s role in the community, and its partnership with Cargill.

The CARE-Cargill partnership contributes to several aspects of social inclusiveness. In terms of improving material wellbeing, several actions are taken to increase productivity of the farmers selling to Cargill, such as the provision of pesticides and GAP trainings. In Nyamegyeso, it is only Cargill and occasionally COCOCBOD extension officers who are facilitating farmer field schools and training farmers on correct fertilizer and pesticide application, pruning practices, and limiting the spread of cocoa tree disease. These trainings and field schools aim to improve the livelihoods of farmers by increasing their yields and thereby their incomes. Although neither CARE nor Cargill sets up VSLAs in Nyamegyeso, CARE encouraged community members to save money at the bank. No projects or trainings provided by CARE or Cargill strongly contributed towards providing alternative livelihoods or addressing the topic of aging farmers or youth unemployment.
CARE, with financial support from Cargill, is responsible for identifying the social needs of the community and executing all other social projects in the partner community. In Nyamegyeso, CARE first facilitated the creation of a CAP, which outlined the ten most pressing needs and wants of the community, including the lack of electricity in the clinic and inadequate boreholes. Based on this CAP, CARE decided to bring 2,400 GHC to the community to purchase materials for a kindergarten block, a project that fit within their capacity and contributed to the overall aim of the PROSPER project. CARE officials did little to accommodate heterogeneity in their community engagement; CARE did not approach separate groups or individuals with a view to understanding how needs and vulnerabilities differ within the community.

Environmental inclusiveness was incorporated as part of the Cargill trainings. Farmers were given strategies to reduce the damage caused to their cocoa trees and land by incorrect pruning methods and fertilizer application. Cargill also informed farmers not to set fire or cook on their farms during dry season, in order to reduce the chance of bushfires.

Relational inclusiveness is incorporated by CARE in several ways. First, the funding of the kindergarten block contributes to the PROSPER project’s goal of improving education facilities and longer-term efforts of CARE and Cargill to prevent child labor. Although some community structures, such as committees and meetings, already existed in Nyamgyeso, the capacity of the community to communicate their needs to other actors was enhanced through the creation of the CAP, which was facilitated by CARE. Cargill provided information on treating the farm as a business and recognizing unfair LBC practices (i.e. incorrect scales), which could potentially enhance the position of farmers in relation to LBCs. Lastly, CARE officials informed farmers in Nyamgyeso that they had the right to contact Cargill or other LBCs to ask for help with their individual or community problems.

In terms of empowering women, there appeared to be a discrepancy between plans outlined in CARE and Cargill’s online documents and their actual contributions to the communities. Although women were included in decision-making, no initiatives by CARE or Cargill explicitly aimed at improving the position of women in the community.

All initiatives of the CARE-Cargill partnership contribute to improving the community’s perceptions of Cargill. Since Cargill does not provide loans to the farmers selling to them, they rely, in part, on making their trainings and social projects attractive to farmers. If more farmers in the community decide to sell their sustainably sourced cocoa beans to Cargill, it contributes
to the LBC’s economic growth. Several Cargill trainings also aim to increase smallholders’ productivity and profits. Therefore, none of the strategies employed by CARE and Cargill appear to contradict the economic inclusiveness of the partnership with Nyamgyeso.

6.2.2 Community perspectives

Overall, farmers in Nyamgyeso felt they were benefitting from the different aspects of the PROSPER project and had positive perceptions of CARE and Cargill. Many farmers had recently started selling to Cargill as a result of the LBC’s fair scales, free trainings, and the CARE projects they saw in their community. However, it became apparent that several farmers were unaware that CARE and Cargill were partners in their community. Community members who were aware of the collaboration between CARE and Cargill did not always perceive that the partnership led to additional community benefits, arguing that Cargill and CARE working separately would have similar or even better effects on their livelihoods and community development. This perception was fueled by the fact that the majority of respondents believed that the MOCA project, led solely by a CSO, had led to more community-wide benefits than the CARE-Cargill partnership.

Generally, respondents could not name any negative effects resulting from the CARE-Cargill partnership. The training for farmers and the funding of the kindergarten block were most often named as the most important impacts of the partnership.

Although community members had channels through which they could directly communicate with Cargill, most respondents believed that CARE understood and responded to Nyamgyeso’s problems better than the LBC. According to one respondent,

“Though Cargill brought CARE to this community, we deal directly with CARE. We have their contacts and they got the community to develop an action plan. Through the action plan, they know all the needs and wants of this community” (Focus group 4).13

This illustrates that including a CSO in a community-company partnership can potentially increase the capacity of the partnership to address the community’s most salient needs. The CAP in particular provided an important means through which the community felt they could influence which projects Cargill financed and, through CARE, implemented. However, some farmers expressed that they felt they had a greater capacity to negotiate with Cargill than CARE,

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13 Focus group held in Nyamgyeso on March 12, 2019.
because they could always threaten to sell their cocoa beans to another LBC if they are not satisfied with Cargill’s actions.

Some farmers faced barriers to participating and benefitting from the CARE-Cargill partnership. Several farmers chose not to sell to Cargill due to their dependency on loans, which Cargill, unlike several other LBCs, does not provide. These smallholders could therefore not participate in the exclusive farming trainings provided by Cargill. A lack of time available, often due to second or third jobs, led to some community members being unable to participate in the formulation of the CAP. Lastly, several respondents believed that the benefits of having CSOs active in the community, including CARE, were not equally shared by all community members. One respondent explained that the range of what CSOs can do is often limited by their financial capacity and their “focus areas”, and most of the CSOs in Nyamgyeso have a dominant focus on the wellbeing of youth and education.

According to smallholders in Nyamegyeso, several problems remained largely unaddressed. Most farmers saw their cocoa yields decline in the last years, often due to disease and/or a lack of rainfall, but received few to no trainings or strategies on how to effectively combat disease and mitigate the effects of climate change on their farms. Farmers therefore generally faced difficulties with having enough income throughout the year, leading to a dependency on loans. It was unclear why this issue was not addressed through the introduction of a community-wide savings group by CARE, an organization with considerable experience in setting up VSLAs. A VSLA, similar to those in Cocoa Life communities, could also have helped women in Nyamegyeso who expressed wanting greater control over their finances. Similar to the Cocoa Life communities, timely access to fertilizers and pesticides was an obstacle faced by many farmers. Overall, farmers did not view cocoa farming as a lucrative future career for their children, mainly because of the difficult labor, lack of available land, and declining yields. Other remaining issues mentioned by community members were primarily related to infrastructure. There was a lack of consensus among farmers in Nyamgyeso on who they could approach (other community members, CSOs, government bodies, or LBCs) to help find solutions to their problems.

6.3 Multiple CSOs in a community without a company-community partnership

Aboagyeckrom, a community in the Sefwi-Wiawso District, is populated primarily by cocoa farmers, who sell to various LBCs. However, these companies, compared to Cargill in Nyamgyeso or Mondelez in Nkyensedanho and Manfo, did not have strong CSR programs
based on community engagement. Some LBCs, such as Amajaro, provided farmers with incentives such as GAP trainings or farming inputs, but did not clearly venture into fulfilling development goals through social or relational projects. Therefore, the relations between this community and its LBCs cannot be strongly classified as a company-community partnerships that actively tried to involve relevant stakeholders and go beyond profit-oriented activities.

Multiple CSOs have been active in Aboagyekrom over the last two decades: a local developmental CSO (the PROMAG Network), an environmental CSO (Forest Watch Ghana), a company-driven CSO (the International Cocoa Initiative, ICI), and a certification CSO (Rainforest Alliance).

Although some of these CSOs have varying relationships with the private sector at the national and international level, none collaborated directly with LBCs or companies at the community level in Aboagyekrom.

### 6.3.1 CSO perspectives and contributions

This section discusses how CSOs acting (mostly) independently from companies perceive and contribute to the various types of value chain inclusiveness in Aboagyekrom. Understanding the basic background of CSOs helps provide insight into their different roles and collaborations within the community. Starting in 1999, the PROMAG Network worked on sexual and reproductive health education and water and sanitation projects in Aboagyekrom. During this time, the PROMAG Network also conducted baseline surveys in several communities in the Sefwi-Wiawso District, in order to map impoverished communities and identify their specific needs and problems. The PROMAG Network was involved in an ICI project several years later, where one of its tasks was to select communities where child labor on cocoa farms was prevalent and thus where ICI could have a significant impact. Based on the PROMAG Network’s previous data collection, Aboagyekrom was selected for the ICI project. The PROMAG Network also helped Forest Watch Ghana select communities near forested areas, which included Aboagyekrom.

Different CSOs contributed to several aspects of enhancing social inclusiveness in Aboagyekrom. Out of all the CSOs, the ICI most explicitly focused on enhancing the material wellbeing of farmers and community members through the establishment of a farmer field school where farming practices aimed at increasing yields, such as productive fertilizer and pesticide application, were demonstrated. ICI’s main motivation for the introduction of a farmer field school was helping farmers gain additional income, with which they could finance the
educational needs of their children (ICI, n.d.). ICI also aimed to improve food security for children through the provision of a school kitchen, where food is prepared daily for schoolchildren (ICI, n.d.). A portion of the forest was reserved for the planting of food crops, which further contributed to community food security. According to one respondent, alternative livelihood training on soap making was provided by one of the CSOs to the women in the community. CSOs in Aboagyekrom did not initiate projects related to savings/loans, aging farmers, or youth unemployment in the cocoa sector.

CSOs in Aboagyekrom engaged the community primarily through meetings to announce their presence and goals and try to ensure that their projects were compatible with the residents’ needs. To help outline community needs, the PROMAG Network facilitated the creation of a CAP, first using focus groups as a tool for taking the heterogeneity of community members into account. According to the executive director of the PROMAG Network,

“The community members themselves came up with their needs. We held focus group discussions. We met with women, children, men, and other different groups. Those groups came up with their needs. Then we met the entire community and said: ‘We met with women, these are there needs. We met with men, these are there needs. So as a community, what are your needs?’ So, they prioritized their needs and came up with composite needs, and that goes into the building of the CAP” (Interview PROMAG Network Representative).

The resulting CAP highlighted the need for a local junior high school to increase school attendance and reduce the risk of teenage pregnancy and child labor in the community’s cocoa farms. The PROMAG Network helped communicate the CAP to ICI, which led to the construction of the school and a school toilet facility.

Forest Watch Ghana, with help from the PROMAG Network, implemented trainings and projects related to environmental inclusiveness, particularly focused on the protection of local ownership of forest resources. Community members were trained to monitor and report illegal activities in the surrounding forest areas. Trainings also covered topics such as what non-timber forest products could be legally accessed and how to negotiate with timber firms to receive community compensation for logging. One respondent mentioned that the Rainforest Alliance had collected spatial data of farms in the area, which is one of the strategies through which the

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14 Interview held in Wiawso on March 11, 2019.
CSO ensures that certified smallholder farmers are not converting forest areas and are therefore complying with its 2017 Sustainable Agriculture Standard (Rainforest Alliance, 2018). The CSOs did not provide environmental projects related to mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing environmental impact on cocoa farms.

Relational inclusiveness was incorporated into several of the CSOs’ plans in Aboagyekrom. The overall priority of the ICI was to eliminate child labor, which was done, in part, through setting up a community-run child protection committee with the PROMAG Network. In general, many of the initiatives by the PROMAG Network aimed to build the community’s capacity to collectively work towards improving their standards of living. The PROMAG Network provided trainings on how to effectively generate and manage funds, how to hold effective meetings, suggested the election of a community mobilizer and facility maintenance committees, and facilitated the creation of a CAP. All these actions aimed to strengthen the ability of the community to identify and work towards collective goals. However, no CSOs explicitly encouraged smallholders to communicate these goals to cocoa-buying companies. Overall, CSOs did not aim to influence smallholders’ relations with cocoa companies.

During the focus group held by the PROMAG Network, differences in opportunities based on gender were identified, such as many women not having their own income due to their husbands owning the farmland. The alternative livelihood training on soap making was the only initiative specifically targeting gender differences in opportunities and outcomes in Aboagyekrom and no further CSO action was taken to follow up on this training or provide start-up materials.

In terms of contributions to economic inclusiveness, CSOs did not claim to work towards improving any company’s profitability. However, the farmer field school, implemented by the company-driven ICI, did focus on increasing smallholders’ yields and incomes, which complements value chain goals of economic growth and profitability.

6.3.2 Community perspectives

Smallholders in Aboagyekrom generally believed CSOs to be helpful. Most community members felt that the PROMAG Network best understood the community’s needs, due to its length of involvement in the community and its more local offices. Other organizations, such as ICI, were based in Accra and paid occasional visits, which often led to the PROMAG Network acting as a bridge between Aboagyekrom and other CSOs. However, formal collaborations between the PROMAG Network ended several years ago, with ICI opting for
direct implementation without partner CSOs. Community members claimed that since then, ICI had not visited Aboagyekrom to follow up on its projects.

Although the PROMAG Network was perceived to be closest to the community, it was not often named as the CSO that brought about the most important changes. Rather, the building of the junior high school by ICI was seen as the most significant CSO action in Aboagyekrom.

In general, cocoa farmers in Aboagyekrom felt unable to influence cocoa companies and make their LBCs more socially responsible. Several smallholders believed that LBCs were gaining much more than farmers, as they were not delivering the incentives they had promised. However, these farmers felt unable to make LBCs more accountable, due to the farmers’ perceived lack of bargaining power. Community members did not believe any of the CSOs, including the company-driven ICI, were bridging any gaps between the farming community and cocoa companies. When asked if NGOs ever appeared to work together or communicate with LBCs in Aboagyekrom, one cocoa farmer replied, “No, I do not see NGOs negotiating with LBCs or representing our interests to the LBCs. The NGOs help us more than the companies do” (Interview 43).15

Community members generally believed they could influence what actions CSOs were taking in the community, primarily through the community-wide meetings that were called to allow community members to share their opinions and make requests for specific CSO projects. However, similar to the other case study communities, more vulnerable smallholders were more likely to face time constraints or failed to access information regarding upcoming meetings, both of which reduced their abilities to participation decision making. For example, one smallholder explained that she was responsible for preparing her grandchildren for school, and therefore had later farming times than other community members, which made her unable to return in time to attend the meetings (Interview 46).16

According to smallholders in Aboagyekrom, several problems remained largely unaddressed. Cocoa farmers believed that LBCs were using unfair weighing scales, which negatively impacted their income. Many farmers reported lower yields than previous year, due to the unfavorable climate. Lower incomes made it difficult for farmers to buy fertilizers, pesticides, and other farming inputs that could increase productivity. The lack of opportunities for loans with favorable interest rates in the community also posed difficulties. According to one focus

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15 Interview held in Aboagyekrom on March 9, 2019.
16 Interview held in Aboagyekrom on March 10, 2019.
group respondent, “we cannot access loans to invest into our farms, because the loans have an interest and we cannot pay the interest back at the end of the season” (Focus group 3). Cocoa farmers generally wanted their children to pursue education and not become cocoa farmers, due to the lack of land available, and because, according to one farmer, “[Cocoa farming] is not easy. The labor costs, buying insecticide, is not easy. We work hard and do not get money. Those who are not educated can work in cocoa” (Interview 45). Wider community problems that respondents felt were unaddressed were primarily related to infrastructure, youth unemployment, and education facilities having inadequate materials for the number of students.

Most community members perceived that their own willingness to contribute time and labor in combination with COCOBOD, government, and CSO aid could help create solutions to some of these problems. Some respondents believed that cocoa companies owed it to its farmers to contribute, but did not believe this was very likely to occur.

6.4 Conclusions
This chapter outlined how three different types of CSO involvement in cocoa-growing communities impacted its farmers’ partnerships with cocoa-buying companies. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the activities contributing to different dimensions of value chain inclusivity in each case study. The table shows whether each activity is primarily implemented by a CSO (C), cocoa company (CC), or intergovernmental organization program (I).

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17 Focus group held in Aboagyekrom on March 9, 2019.
18 Interview held in Aboagyekrom on March 10, 2019.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mondelez International's Cocoa Life program</th>
<th>CARE-Cargill partnership</th>
<th>Multiple CSOs in a community without a company-community partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Training: GAP (CC), cultivating vegetables (CC), alternative livelihoods (C)</td>
<td>Training: GAP (CC), farmer field school (CC)</td>
<td>Training: Farmer field school (C), alternative livelihoods (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other activities: Provision of farming inputs (CC), kindergarten building (CC/C), mechanized borehole (CC/C), VSLAs (C), provision of bicycles (C)</td>
<td>Other activities: Encouraging saving habits (C), financing a kindergarten building (CC/C)</td>
<td>Other activities: Construction of junior high school and facilities (C), portion of forest reserved for planting food crops (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Free tree nurseries (I), trainings on bushfire prevention, chemical application, and water protection (I/CC), environmental committees (I)</td>
<td>Trainings on bushfire prevention and more sustainable farming practices (CC)</td>
<td>Trainings and spatial data collection to prevent deforestation (C), trainings on local ownership of forest resources (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Capacity building (C): community meetings, elected boards, and committees; creation of CAP Gender (C): training on land registration, alternative livelihoods, and housekeeping, encouraged to partake in VSLAs, leadership positions for women Child labor (C): Child labor prevention trainings, improving access to education and facilities</td>
<td>Capacity building (C): creation of CAP, disseminating information on recognizing unfair LBC practices and communicating community needs to companies</td>
<td>Capacity building(C): community meetings, introduction of committees, creation of CAP, trainings on managing funds Gender (C): focus groups to identify gender-specific needs, alternative livelihoods training Child labor (C): Child labor prevention trainings, improving education facilities, child protection committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Several trainings and projects aim to increase both company and smallholder profits (CC)</td>
<td>Several trainings and projects aim to increase both company and smallholder profits (CC)</td>
<td>Field school focused on increasing yields and smallholder incomes (C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several conclusions, outlined in the following paragraphs, can be drawn based on the CSOs’ similar and different approaches and contributions to value chain inclusivity as well as similarities and differences in how communities perceived these contributions, in comparison to their needs and wants.

Based on the case studies, CSOs contributing to company-community partnerships were found to be responsible for projects that enhance the social and relational inclusiveness of the partnership, while companies are primarily responsible for the productivity-related initiatives. Some partner CSOs, such as CARE and WVI, also influence how farmers are included in partnerships, using their considerable experience in attempting to understand the needs of communities and strengthening communities’ capacity for participation in decision-making. However, a CSO’s limited scope of expertise can sometimes inhibit its ability to enhance inclusivity. For example, developmental CSOs with a focus on youth-related topics are not as well equipped to address problems such as climate change and aging farmers. This issue was particularly apparent in the company-community partnership with a single CSO’s involvement and in the community with multiple, similar CSOs active. To counter this problem, the approach taken by Mondelez in its Cocoa Life program, which involves and coordinates the activities of several organizations with different areas or “pillars” of expertise, appears to be most effective way through which to enhance the inclusiveness of topics addressed and ensure that no major areas are overlooked.

CSOs in all studied communities did not explicitly claim to increase the capacity of farmers to negotiate with or influence LBCs. However, through the CSO-facilitated introduction of CAPs, community meetings, and committees, the overall capacity of the community to organize and express their problems to different actors increased. The likelihood that companies acted based on these concerns still appeared to be dependent on CSO involvement in its partnership; if a CSO directly collaborated with a company, that company was more likely to finance or implement projects in line with a community’s action plan.

A remaining problem in all communities was the involvement of more vulnerable smallholders, who due to time or financial constraints, often found themselves unable to participate in decision-making processes. Although some CSO strategies aimed to reduce gender gaps in decision-making, the effects of different incomes, land size/ownership, and family composition on participation were neither taken into account by CSOs working independently nor by CSOs working with companies.
While Sections 6.1. and 6.2 were mainly focused on the contributions of CSOs to company-community partnerships, Section 6.3 helped illustrate how a lack of company partnerships cannot be fully compensated by a strong CSO presence. First, the ability of CSOs to act in communities is largely based on how much funding they receive, and the decline in donor funding makes CSOs in Ghana increasingly dependent on partnerships with the private sector to carry out their activities for the necessary amount of time. As was illustrated in Aboagyekrom, CSOs acting independently were not able to follow through on many projects, likely due to financial constraints. Furthermore, actions taken in company-CSO-smallholder partnerships were, compared to independent CSO actions, more in line with economic inclusiveness and profitability of company. This focus on profitability meant more trainings and projects related to helping farmers increase their yields and obtaining, as a result, more income, which most farmers listed as one of their main goals.
7. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis presented in the previous chapters, this final chapter first synthesizes the main findings of the study by answering the research questions (Section 7.1). Then, this chapter presents a reflection on the theories and concepts presented in Chapter 2 (7.2). Lastly, suggestions for future research (7.3) and recommendations for civil society organizations (CSOs) and companies regarding the improvement of CSO involvement and strategies for achieving more inclusive VCC (7.4) are provided based on the findings of this thesis.

7.1 Summary of findings

This thesis was guided by the main research question of how CSOs affect partnerships between companies and farmers in Ghana’s cocoa sector and how this involvement impacts the inclusiveness of value chain collaboration (VCC).

The first sub-question asked which CSOs are active in Ghana’s cocoa sector and how they can be classified. This study distinguished seven distinct types of CSOs, based on their overall objectives, means for achieving those objectives, and driving actors (Section 5.1). The “driving actors” criterion was particularly relevant for company-driven and farmer-based CSOs, which are most closely linked to actors within the value chain. Other types of non-profit CSOs identified in this research were development, environmental, and certification CSOs, as well as consultancies and research institutions (see Table 5.1 for an overview).

The second sub-question addressed the role that these CSOs (claim to) play in partnerships between cocoa companies and smallholder farmers. The analysis of each CSO revealed several developments in their roles and relevance, often reflecting broader changes in the Ghanaian CSO sector (see Section 4.3). In particular, the importance of certification CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector appeared to decline, with many cocoa companies already going beyond the certification standards. However, there was an increase in sector demand for organizations, such as consultancies, that provide services based on their well-established knowledge on complex topics, which companies’ or cooperatives’ corporate social responsibility (CSR) or creating shared value (CSV) departments are unable to address independently.

Section 5.2 outlined seven ways through which CSOs (claimed to) contribute to or influence partnerships between companies and farmers in Ghana’s cocoa sector. Some of these CSO activities equally target companies and smallholders, such as monitoring to ensure that all stakeholders are fulfilling their obligations or convening relevant stakeholders for a common
purpose. Other CSO roles are more oriented towards cocoa companies, such as partnering with companies to implement their social and/or environmental sustainability initiatives and building the capacity of companies to implement these initiatives. Lastly, several CSO activities focus on farmers and aim to improve their bargaining position within VCC. These activities include advocating for and representing farmers’ interests, involving farmers in decision-making processes, and building farmers’ capacities to gain more favorable terms of inclusion in their partnerships with companies.

The second part of the study focused on the impacts of three degrees of CSO involvement on the inclusiveness of VCC, by analyzing the operationalization and implementation of specific CSOs’ strategies (third research sub-question). Three case studies were carried out to answer this question, encompassing a case with strong CSO involvement (Mondelez’s Cocoa Life Program); a case of single CSO involvement (the Cargill-CARE partnership); and a case in which there was no company-community partnership, but several CSOs present in a cocoa community. The analysis thereby distinguished between economic, social, relational and environmental inclusiveness (Sections 2.3, Chapter 6).

The researched CSOs most strongly targeted social and relational dimensions of value chain inclusivity. CSOs partnering with companies were generally responsible for selecting and implementing social projects, such as constructing school facilities or introducing village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) in farming communities. CARE and World Vision International (WVI), in their partnerships with Cargill and Mondelez, respectively, influenced how farmers were included in their collaborations with companies, using their experience in attempting to understand the needs of communities and strengthening communities’ capacity for participation in decision-making. The studied partner CSOs remained limited in their ability to recognize and accommodate heterogenous needs of farmers, leading to few programs addressing specific groups based on criteria such as land ownership or gender.

The Cocoa Life program had the most comprehensive approach to tackling environmental problems, such as the effects of climate change, through farming trainings by Mondelez and community member participation. This can mainly be attributed to the strong involvement of an intergovernmental organization (United Nations Development Program). The partner communities reported an overall increase in yields, in contrast to the CARE-Cargill partner community, where only Cargill addressed environmental issues. Environmental issues were also addressed in the community were several CSOs were active, but not in a direct partnership
with a company (Section 6.3). These included an environmental CSO (Forest Watch Ghana) and a certification CSO (Rainforest Alliance).

It can be concluded that, in Ghana’s cocoa sector, a CSO’s classification often influenced the type of inclusiveness most strongly targeted in its strategies. Development CSOs involved in company-smallholder partnerships are generally focused on social and relational value chain inclusivity processes and outcomes. The expertise of environmental CSOs active in Ghana’s cocoa sector makes them capable of contributing to the environmental inclusiveness of company-smallholder partnerships. However, these CSOs took on roles of monitoring and advocacy and were generally not as involved as developmental CSOs in the formulation and implementation of company strategies. Company-driven CSOs were more likely to incorporate elements of economic inclusiveness into their strategies, such as the International Cocoa Initiative’s farmer field school, potentially reflecting the more business-oriented approach of their driving actors. Farmer-based CSOs aim to address relational inclusiveness by uniting farmers and enhancing their bargaining position. Research institutions in Ghana are more concerned with primary social and environmental objectives and secondary economic objectives. Exceptions to this finding are certification CSOs, which either strongly contribute to environmental inclusiveness (Rainforest Alliance) or relational inclusiveness (FairTrade) and consultancies, which focus on different dimensions dependent on the project and client.

Finally, this study addressed the question of how smallholder farmers perceive the impacts of CSO involvement in their partnerships with cocoa companies. Farmers generally experienced added benefits from CSO involvement in their partnerships with Cargill and Mondelez, especially regarding social projects, and felt that the CSO-facilitated community meetings and community action plans (CAPs) helped CSOs and companies better understand their community’s needs. However, more vulnerable smallholders often found themselves unable to participate in decision-making processes, due to time or financial constraints. Other structural value chain issues that remained unaddressed, according to smallholders, were primarily related to power relations between farmers and LBCs and inadequate incomes from cocoa farming.

Overall, the degree of CSO involvement in a company-smallholder partnership was found to have the greatest effect on the thoroughness of inclusivity dimensions addressed, with the company-community partnership with multiple CSOs involved (Mondelez International’s Cocoa Life program) addressing more topics than CSOs acting independently or the CARE-Cargill partnership. In the partnership with a single CSO involved, the identity of CSO
influenced which dimension was most strongly addressed; developmental CSO CARE primarily focused on social and relational projects, while projects or trainings related to environmental inclusiveness were less central in the CARE-Cargill partnerships. CSO involved in partnerships, as opposed to CSOs acting independently in a community, also contributed to a greater likelihood of CAPs and community needs being reflected in company-financed projects.

In conclusion, both the type of CSO and the degree of CSO involvement in a CSO-company-community partnership have an impact on the type of activities carried out and the type of inclusiveness targeted. However, CSOs remained limited in their ability to address certain structural value chain issues.

7.2 Theoretical reflection

The findings of this thesis confirm and provide further insights into three main concepts and relating theories described in the theoretical framework (partnerships between companies and smallholder farmers, CSOs, and inclusiveness in value chains) in the context of Ghana’s cocoa sector.

First, the social, economic, and environmental challenges and constraints faced by the interviewed smallholders reflected those outlined in literature (see Section 2.1). A variety of partnerships were attempting to address some of these problems in Ghana’s cocoa sector. This research was primarily exploratory regarding the role of CSOs in these VCCs, due to the lack of comprehensive literature on this topic. Therefore, the findings did not appear to contradict existing literature, but rather provide a foundation for better understanding the function of CSOs in partnerships. However, there are limits to the generalizability of CSO types and roles in VCC found in this research, as it was only conducted in the context of Ghana’s cocoa sector. This thesis did confirm that horizontal relationships, such as those between companies and CSOs, should not be overlooked in analyses of VCC and partnerships. CSOs in Ghana play several important roles that affect decision-making and implementation in VCCs, but, as was theorized in literature on agricultural public-private-producer-partnerships (4Ps) (see Section 2.2.2), can also be temporarily involved to help build the capacity of actors within the value chain (e.g. cocoa companies or licensed buying companies) to more effectively create positive changes and/or (in the case of farmers) be equitable partners in negotiation (see Section 5.2). Overall, this research provides more specific insight into how CSOs can contribute to VCC inclusiveness.
Many of the researched CSOs can be classified as bridging organizations, as conceptualized in Section 2.2.3, due to their contributions related to partnering and creating linkages with various supply chain actors and capacity building of cocoa-growing communities for self-help and expressing concerns and needs. However, CSOs in Ghana’s cocoa sector were not as effective in facilitating greater grassroots influence on policy, a role of bridging organizations described by Brown (1991). Some of the developmental CSOs, such as World Vision International and CARE, took on strategic bridging roles in company-community partnerships, as described by Stafford et al. (2000), by helping overcome some of the logistical problems that farmers may have when directly communicating and negotiating with cocoa companies.

Stakeholder theory (see Section 2.2.4) largely guided the analysis in this thesis. Treating CSOs as independent stakeholders and focusing on their individual characteristics as well as their network (Ghana’s cocoa value chain for this research) was a relevant approach for understanding the roles and contributions of different CSOs and is reflected in the conceptual scheme (Section 2.4). However, since many CSOs were directly partnering with and receiving funding from companies, the objectives relevant in their network (as determined by value chain actors) could become more relevant than their own individual mission and objectives. This reflects the overall trend of CSOs in Ghana having to cater more to the private sector (Section 4.3).

Using value chain inclusivity as an analytical framework for analyzing specific CSO involvement in communities contributed to understanding the different perceptions, strategies, and impacts of different value-chain and non-value chain actors, both in processes and outcomes. The analysis has shown that CSOs in Ghana were able to have positive impacts on value chain inclusivity, albeit more effectively through formal partnerships with companies. The strongest relationship in the case studies existed between CSO involvement and social and relational dimensions of inclusivity, reflecting the centrality of development CSOs in these partnerships. The potential tradeoffs between economic, social/relational, and environmental outcomes, as illustrated in the conceptual scheme (Section 2.4), were not strongly recognized by studied CSOs partnering with companies. Although CSOs generally described themselves as more “development-oriented” than the “profit-oriented” companies, they generally shared company perceptions that more socially and environmentally sustainable farming practices and initiatives would ultimately contribute to a long-term cocoa supply, company growth, and farmer livelihood improvement.
7.3 Suggestions for future research

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, there are several topics and remaining knowledge gaps which have not been researched in detail for this thesis. The impact of different types of CSO involvement on inclusivity was only studied at the community level. Future research could therefore focus more on the regional, national, or international impacts of CSO involvement in VCC. More research is also needed to gain further insight into company perspectives on CSO involvement and motivations for collaborating and partnering with specific CSOs. Also, future studies could be conducted to discover whether the CSO types and roles in VCC outlined in this thesis can be identified in other contexts, such as different sectors or countries, to assess the generalizability of these findings.

Understanding the roles and inclusivity impacts of government and governmental agencies in VCC requires further research, as several respondents indicated the involvement of government actors in sector or company projects at different levels. Further research could focus on the distinction between roles and impacts of agency actors within the chain, such as COCOBOD, and those not directly involved in selling or buying cocoa, such as the District Assemblies.

Further research could also delve deeper into understanding the relevance of a partner CSO’s highest level of operations. Although several CSOs and smallholders hinted at differences between international and regional CSOs, the majority of the researched CSOs partaking in VCC were international organizations. Future studies could therefore more explicitly compare how local partner CSOs and international partner CSOs differ in their capacity to create more inclusive partnerships.

7.4 Recommendations

Many CSOs in Ghana were found to address the same objectives as other CSOs and companies, which occasionally made several of their activities redundant, while more technical problems remained unaddressed. It is recommended that, to make relevant future contributions to the cocoa sector and partnerships, CSOs should truly aim to find a niche and develop knowledge and expertise in that area, rather than taking on a relatively weaker holistic approach.

If cocoa companies aim to create inclusive partnerships with smallholders, both in process and outcome, they should ensure that their partner CSOs have varying knowledge and experience which helps them address most areas of inclusivity. Of the researched and observed partnerships, Mondelez’s Cocoa Life program most effectively involved partners (both CSOs
and the UNDP) with different areas of expertise to create a more inclusive partnership with smallholders. Other companies and CSOs could create more community-wide benefits by adopting several aspects of this program, specifically the introduction of well-organized VSLAs. VSLAs could help address smallholder problems such as a lack of savings throughout the year and difficulty in accessing loans to invest in their farms or alternative livelihoods, two problems which were prevalent in the CARE-Cargill partner community and in Aboagyekrom, the community with several CSOs and no strong community-company partnership.

The observed CSOs acting in communities, either independently or as part of a partnership, shared several key areas in which they could improve their impact on VCCs. First, CSOs should aim to create more awareness of which organization or company is implementing each project or training in the community. Many community respondents were unaware of the names of organizations or unable to match each organization with their activities, with no clear means for tracing activities back to organizations or companies and holding them accountable for their actions.

Second, many smallholder farmers still felt they lacked the ability to influence their licensed buying companies (LBCs) and hold them more accountable. To help address this problem, CSOs or other actors could partake in more value chain activities addressing the fairness of farmer-LBC business relations and tackle uneven power relations. For example, CSOs could expand their monitoring role to ensure that LBCs are delivering their promised incentives to farmers and are using accurate scales.

Lastly, almost all the partner-CSOs can significantly improve their effectiveness by recognizing and accommodating heterogeneity among smallholders when formulating their strategies. CSOs should attempt to understand heterogenous needs and engage different types of farmers, such as through focus groups, instead of only using community-wide meetings to come up with a composite set of needs. Often, CSOs only communicated the composite set of needs back to the cocoa companies, which led to fewer projects targeting issues faced by specific or more vulnerable groups of community members such as women and youth. Furthermore, CSOs are recommended to use a greater variety community meeting times to also present the opportunity for more marginalized smallholders with time constraints to participate in decision-making.
REFERENCES


## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Operationalization table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main concepts</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Indicators/ Guiding Questions</th>
<th>Source/ Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil society organizations</td>
<td>Organizational features</td>
<td>Nature of organization</td>
<td>Who is the (financial/organizational) driver behind the CSO? (e.g. consultant, company, church, advocacy organization, community organization, farmer association/ cooperative)</td>
<td>-Document/ website analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level of operations</td>
<td>Is the CSO a local, district/regional, national, or international organization?</td>
<td>-Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goal of CSO</td>
<td>What is the main mission statement of the CSO?</td>
<td>-Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily operations</td>
<td>What are the day-to-day activities of the CSO?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision for Ghana’s cocoa sector</td>
<td>Problem perceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td>What is/ are the main problem(s) in Ghana’s cocoa sector as identified by the CSO? What/who does the CSO consider to be the causes of these problems?</td>
<td>-Document/ website analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>What are the CSO’s main objectives for Ghana’s cocoa sector? What are the motivations for their involvement?</td>
<td>-Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Means of achieving objectives</td>
<td>What strategies does the CSO (plan to) undertake to meet these objectives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships with other stakeholders</td>
<td>With cocoa-buying companies</td>
<td></td>
<td>What is the nature of the relationships between the CSO and other stakeholders (hostile, participatory, etc.) (informal networks vs. formal collaboration)? What activities/ forms of collaboration occur between the two? Are there any formal tasks assigned to the CSO by these stakeholders, or vice versa?</td>
<td>-Document/ website analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With smallholder farmers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>With governmental organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>With other CSOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role in value chain collaboration</td>
<td>With miscellaneous stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Interviews with smallholders (for case study)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource (inter)dependencies</td>
<td>Resources of the CSO</td>
<td>What critical resources can the CSO contribute (i.e. authority, time, funding, expertise)?</td>
<td>- Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the CSO dependent on resources of other stakeholders to achieve their objectives? Who funds the CSO?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brokering</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO act as a temporary and independent facilitator for setting up partnerships? (e.g. mobilizing funding, actors and knowledge)</td>
<td>- Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating participation</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO ensure that companies and smallholders are involved in the partnership and decision-making and have the capacity to make meaningful contributions? (How) does the CSO help ensure that partners understand each other’s cultures and motivations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aligning incentives</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO help find common goals between smallholders and companies?</td>
<td>- Interviews with smallholders (for case study)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO create spaces for clear and transparent dialogue between partners? (How) does the CSO influence whether and how smallholders receive information from companies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring/evaluation</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO monitor and evaluate actions in the value chain?</td>
<td>- Structured observation of projects implemented by the CSO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Contribution to] value chain inclusivity</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Compatible with profitability/economic growth</td>
<td>Are the CSO initiatives/strategies compatible with goals of profitability and economic growth?</td>
<td>- Interviews with CSO representatives</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Contribution to farmers’ (material) wellbeing</td>
<td>Do the CSO initiatives/strategies help improve livelihoods, incomes, and food security (i.e. increasing yields, providing trainings on alternative livelihoods, delivering societal benefits)?</td>
<td>- Interviews with smallholders and community members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment with smallholder reality</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO take heterogeneity and differences in opportunities, constraints, and vulnerabilities of smallholders into account? (How) are different aspirations taken into account? Does the CSO address what smallholders consider to be the most pressing issues?</td>
<td>- Focus groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO strengthen farmers’ capacity to negotiate with companies and other actors? Do smallholders believe they have the ability to influence CSOs or companies? Are labor rights addressed (i.e. child labor prevention)?</td>
<td>- Structured observation of projects implemented by the CSO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>(How) does the CSO address differences in opportunities and outcomes related to gender? Are there trainings/projects specifically for women?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Environmental sustainability</td>
<td>(How) does the CSO help mitigate negative effects of climate change on the farms? (How) does the CSO introduce initiatives that promote sustainable practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix II: Final coding frame

### CSO ASSETS
- ASSET- can represent sector as a whole
- ASSET- convening power
- ASSET- coordination/mobilization ability
- ASSET- decentralized system
- ASSET- experience
- ASSET- network
- ASSET- specific knowledge
- ASSET- specific objective
- ASSET- time

### CSO OBJECTIVES IN THE COCOA SECTOR
- CO- agroforestry
- CO- better access to inputs
- CO- build business capacity of farmers
- CO- certification
- CO- child labor
- CO- education for children
- CO- empower women
- CO- empower youth
- CO- farmer livelihood improvement
- CO- farmer rights
- CO- food security
- CO- gender equality
- CO- good agricultural practices
- CO- higher income
- CO- higher premiums
- CO- higher yields/better productivity
- CO- improve health of ecosystem
- CO- improved trade and logistics infrastructure
- CO- increase access to financial products and services
- CO- increase women participation in cocoa
- CO- inputs
- CO- integrated pest management
- CO- market response to investment in farm environmental practices
- CO- organic farming practices
- CO- quality management
- CO- social inclusion
- CO- soil fertility
- CO- spreading of information and knowledge
- CO- stop deforestation
- CO- strengthen FOs
- CO- value for money
- CO- youth employment opportunities
- CO- youth in cocoa
- CO/MEA- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- CO/MEA- crop diversification

### CSO DEPENDENCIES ON OTHER ACTORS
- DEP- cocoa knowledge
- DEP- credibility
- DEP- disseminate findings
- DEP- finances
- DEP- inputs
- DEP- knowledge
- DEP- Need more actors to have more influence
- DEP- time

### CSO SOURCES OF FUNDING
- FUND- banks
- FUND- cocoa companies
- FUND- embassies/int’l gov’ts
- FUND- Farmer organizations
- FUND- International organizations
- FUND- member fees
- FUND- member registration
- FUND- premium

### CSOs’ GREATEST LEVEL OF OPERATIONS
- LOO- International
- LOO- national
- LOO- regional

### CSO GENERAL MISSIONS
- MIS- benefit local communities
- MIS- biodiversity protection
- MIS- Conservation
- MIS- create responsible business
- MIS- enhance farmer-gov’t dialogue
- MIS- farmer empowerment
- MIS- female empowerment
- MIS- food security
- MIS- improve extension services
- MIS- make cooperatives bankable
- MIS- reduce (rural) poverty
- MIS- Religious
- MIS- sustainable economic development
- MIS- sustainable sourcing

### MEANS FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES
- MEA- creating better cropping practices
- MEA- demo farms
- MEA- district community engagement meeting
- MEA- environmental training
- MEA- environmentally sound crop nutrient technology
- MEA- farmer field school
- MEA- farmers part of governance structure
- MEA- financial literacy training
- MEA- forest protection trainings
- MEA- governance and structure
- MEA- improve access to finance
- MEA- improved planting materials
- MEA- improving facilities
- MEA- input provision
- MEA- intergenerational discussion
- MEA- knowledge networking
- MEA- length of involvement
- MEA- life skills training
- MEA- market linkages
- MEA- market power
- MEA- media involvement
- MEA- micro enterprises
- MEA- nursery/seedling provision
- MEA- organic certification
- MEA- participating in policy discussions
- MEA- passing on farmer knowledge
- MEA- pension scheme
- MEA- premium payment
- MEA- promoting good practices
- MEA- providing education
- MEA- re-enroll kids in school
- MEA- Research
- MEA- satellites
- MEA- service delivery SMEs
- MEA- support extension services
- MEA- training on input application
- MEA- value chain approach
- MEA- village savings/loans
- MEA- vocational training
- MEA- warehousing solutions
- MEA- youth skills training
- MEA- youth teams
- MEA/CO- alternative livelihoods
- MEA/CO- provide access to information

### CSO PROBLEM PERCEPTIONS
- PP- aging farmers
- PP- bad hygiene
- PP- climate change
- PP- cocoa in protected areas
- PP- cocoa soils
- PP- COCOBOD
- PP- deforestation
- PP- difficulty training farmers
- PP- education level of farmers
CSO CONTRIBUTIONS TO VCC

VCC - amplify voice of farmers
VCC - bridging gap
VCC - brokering/bridging
VCC - carry out plan
VCC - convene/ rally stakeholders for common goal
VCC - coordinating partners
VCC - directly involving company employees
VCC - general thoughts on role of CSOs
VCC - implementing company CSR projects
VCC - involving farmers in decision making
VCC - joint learning/knowledge sharing
VCC - monitoring/watchdog
VCC - partnership for disseminating research findings
VCC - policy dialogue
VCC - pushing companies farther
VCC - representing farmer interests
VCC - traceability
VCC/MEA - company capacity building
VCC/MEA - creating and piloting strategies for private sector

CSO WORK AREAS

WORK AREA- communities assigned by companies
WORK AREA- communities most in need?
WORK AREA- company catchment area
WORK AREA- FOs
WORK AREA- Ghana
WORK AREA- high-forest zones
WORK AREA- household level

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Ghana’s cocoa value chain
CL- background
CL- problem perceptions
Community background

CSO PERCEPTIONS

CP- benefits of CSO involvement
CP- community approach
CP- companies
CP- facilitatory role
CP- limits to involvement/effectiveness
CP- monitoring
CP- projects based on needs of farmers
CP- rem prob- lack of farmer groups for advocacy

FARMER BACKGROUND

FB- alt livelihood
FB- caretaker
FB- children
FB- crops farmed
FB- farms with...
FB- highest education level
FB- laborer
FB- land size
FB- LBC
FB- money from farming is enough
FB- own land
FB- sharecropper
FB- years in community

ECONOMIC INCLUSIVENESS

ECO- access to fertilizers/pesticides
ECO- best practice training/ farmer field school
ECO- extension officers
ECO- farming machinery
ECO- fertilizer/pesticide application
ECO- free cocoa seedlings
ECO- pollination training
ECO- profitability company (outcome)
ECO/SOC- bonus
ECO/SOC- increase yields (outcome)

ENVIRONMENTAL INCLUSIVENESS

ENV- agroforestry
ENV- climate change mitigation
ENV- correct fertilizer/chemical application
ENV- environmental committee
ENV- forest protection
ENV- general trainings
ENV- land burning

SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS

SOC- accounting for heterogeneity?
SOC- adoption of practices
SOC- adult school/literacy classes
SOC- alternative livelihoods
SOC- barriers to participation- access to information
SOC- barriers to participation- farm location
SOC- barriers to participation- time/ alt livelihood
SOC- bicycles
SOC- business/financial management/ negotiation training
SOC- capacity building of farmers
SOC- certification
SOC- child protection committees
SOC- children's rights
SOC- community center
SOC- community development
SOC- community selection
SOC- cutlers
SOC- demonstration farms
SOC- education facilities/school supplies
SOC- equal benefits?
SOC- food security
SOC- information center
SOC- land rights education
SOC- material wellbeing improvement (outcome)
SOC- mechanized borehole
SOC- participation in decision making
SOC- protective boots
SOC- record keeping training
SOC- reproductive health
SOC- savings groups
SOC- school attendance
SOC- tricycles
SOC- youth specific trainings?
SOC- youth teams

RELATIONAL INCLUSIVENESS
REL- ability to influence companies/LBCs
REL- ability to influence govt
REL- ability to influence projects
REL- ability to provide feedback
REL- child labor/protection
REL- community action plans
REL- community capacity building
REL- community empowerment
REL- community meetings
REL- election of leaders
REL- female empowerment
REL- gender-specific projects/trainings?
REL- meeting attendance
REL- negotiating power?
REL- women in leadership positions
REL/FP- greater unity in community (outcome)

FARMER PERCEPTIONS
FP- CSO involvement
FP- enough income?
FP- expectations met?
FP- future wishes children
FP- future wishes community
FP- future wishes farm
FP- future wishes relation with company
FP- length of involvement needed
FP- Mondelez
FP- most important change
FP- most important goals
FP- on being a farmer
FP- overall view of CL
FP- projects meet needs?
FP- what can improve?
FP- who should help?
FP- why join society

ORGANIZATIONS
ORG- ABANTU for Development
ORG- CARE
ORG- Civic Response/Forest Watch Ghana
ORG- IBIS
ORG- ICI
ORG- IDEG
ORG- MOCA
ORG- other organizations
ORG- PROMAG
ORG- RA
ORG- Right to Play
ORG- UNDP
ORG- VSO
ORG- WV
ORG/COM- LBC projects
ORG/COMP- Mondelez

REMAINING PROBLEMS
REM PROB- access to healthcare/health facilities
REM PROB- access to loans/saving/interest rates
REM PROB- access to machinery
REM PROB- accountability (and solution)
REM PROB- bad road
REM PROB- cannot diversify crops
REM PROB- climate change
REM PROB- COCOBOD/gov't
REM PROB- declining yields
REM PROB- delay in input provision
REM PROB- difficulty farming for the aged
REM PROB- education facilities
REM PROB- fertilizer/pesticide access/quantity
REM PROB- fixed cocoa price/ lack of bargaining power
REM PROB- food security
REM PROB- govt accountability
REM PROB- jobs for youth
REM PROB- lack of bridges
REM PROB- lack of land
REM PROB- lack of leadership
REM PROB- lack of pesticides
REM PROB- lack of rain
REM PROB- lack of social amenities
REM PROB- lack of water
REM PROB- landfill
REM PROB- little profits
REM PROB- no electricity
REM PROB- no pension scheme
REM PROB- not enough money outside of cocoa season
REM PROB- not enough spraying machines
REM PROB- sanitation facilities
REM PROB- soil fertility
REM PROB- source of income for women
REM PROB- streetlights
REM PROB- teachers' quarters
REM PROB- tree disease
REM PROB- unfair LBC practices
REM PROB- who do you tell?

OTHER TOPICS
TOP- CSO/Company relations
TOP- frequency of CSO visits
TOP- limits to what CSOs can/want to address
TOP- local vs int'l CSOs
TOP- member benefits
TOP- Mondelez as LBC
TOP- not part of cocoa life
TOP- role of education in participation
TOP- role of gender in participation
TOP- "civil society" organizations?
TOP- certification
TOP- CFI
TOP- choosing projects
TOP- future of NGOs in cocoa
TOP- govt control
TOP- Int'l NGOs vs local CSOs
TOP- over-addressed/under-addressed areas?
TOP- participation in platforms
TOP- perceptions of private sector
TOP- premiums
TOP- types of CSOs in cocoa