

# From Mindsets to Markets: Unlocking Gender Transformative Agribusinesses

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Côte d'Ivoire, a quiet revolution is reshaping agribusiness.

Launched in 2023, the Gender Makes Business Sense Plus (GmBS+) approach has already trained over 80 expert facilitators, sparking a movement to embed gender-smart business practices into West Africa's cashew and rice sectors.

GmBS+ is more than a training program. It is a transformative movement that begins with individual awareness and radiates outward to strengthen markets and institutions.



## Undervalued Contributions, Missed Opportunities

Women are central to African agriculture, yet they face systemic barriers to land, finance, decision-making, and business development. Cultural norms, societal expectations and financial illiteracy often limit their participation.

But gender inequality is not just a social issue. It is also a business constraint. According to FAO's 2023 Women in Food Systems report, closing the gender gap in farm productivity and pay could increase global GDP by USD 1 trillion and lift 45 million people out of food insecurity.

Recognizing this, the MOVE Project introduced GmBS+ to equip agripreneurs with practical business tools while embedding gender-transformative thinking into agricultural value chains.

## Practical Learning, Wider Reach

To maximize impact, MOVE integrates GmBS+ into its Training of Trainers (ToT) model. This intensive five-day, in-person course for agribusiness owners uses a human-centered design approach. It combines business development strategies with personal reflection, gender awareness, and financial literacy, making learning both practical and transformative.

*The training begins by challenging participants to rethink gender's role in agribusiness. They explore how inequality manifests in agriculture and how shifting perceptions can unlock new personal and professional opportunities.*

Using the Business Model Canvas, participants then design business models that incorporate pricing, market risks, and gender-smart goals.

Crucially, the program encourages participants to see themselves as change makers. They examine power dynamics in business and communities, learning to use their influence to promote inclusion. Practical money management is another cornerstone: participants acquire skills in managing income, calculating costs, understanding cash flow, and planning sustainable investments all through a gender lens.

The final phase helps each agripreneur envision a stronger business future. They set personal and professional goals, defining clear steps to embed gender-transformative practices into their enterprises.

Through dynamic exercises, case studies, and peer learning, participants gain not only knowledge but also confidence, emerging as agents of change in their homes, businesses, and the wider agricultural system.

## From Training to Transformation

Since 2024, three ToT sessions have been held. In Ghana, MOVE partnered with the Women in Agricultural Development Directorate (WIAD). In Nigeria, senior managers from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) took part. In Côte d'Ivoire, private sector partners including OLAM Food Ingredients (ofi) and Cashew Coast engaged actively.

Participants learned to unlearn biases, think strategically, and even redefine family dynamics. One participant shared: "I didn't think I could manage a business, but now I know I can. I've started planning with my family."



Trainee facilitators also gained confidence and stronger presentation skills. Many set ambitious goals, including training 1,200 agribusiness owners, with 300 expected to formalize their businesses by the end of 2025.

What makes GmBS+ effective is its ripple effect. Trainers return to their organizations, ministries, companies, and research centers where they cascade knowledge, integrate gender awareness into daily operations, and influence policies from within.



## Looking Ahead

As GmBS+ expands, its potential multiplies. MOVE aims to scale the model within partner organizations to reach more agribusiness owners, while ensuring sustainability by embedding it into national agricultural training systems. Stronger partnerships with financial institutions and the private sector will open new value chains and unlock capital for gender-inclusive agribusinesses.

Ultimately, the strength of GmBS+ lies in its simplicity and its ability to change minds before changing markets.

This is how one female participant from Cashew Coast summed it up:

“ I used to think gender was only about women. Now, I see it's about giving everyone a fair chance to thrive ”

And that, truly, makes business sense.

