

# Women as Inclusive Business partners

## OLVEA Burkina Faso: Sustainable cosmetics built of 'women's gold'

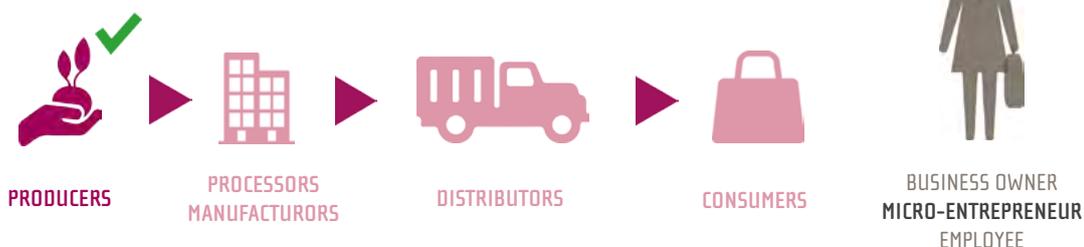


*With cosmetics you cannot take risks ... We want the best quality and we need to pay for that full traceability. Now we are sure that we have high quality nuts. ...For us, this is not a question of image, but about having a sustainable supply chain'.*

Christophe Godard, sustainability supply chain manager OLVEA Burkina Faso



### ENGAGEMENT IN THE VALUE CHAIN



- **Company:** OLVEA Burkina Faso, a subsidiary of the French company OLVEA Vegetable Oils, is a supplier of intermediary products to the cosmetics and food industry since 1929.
- **Business focus:** OLVEA produces and packages vegetable oils and butters from shea nuts, for the food and cosmetics industry.
- **Started:** 2010 (public private partnership) till 2015

#### Results for women

12.000 female collectors of shea nuts, organized in 5 cooperatives, are being integrated in a stable and beneficial formal supply chain. They are trained and coached to operate in an efficient way and supply quality products. This also broadens their horizon and increases their self-esteem. Using the premium generated through the higher quality products, a special fund for social aims, incl. health care and education has been created.

#### Results for business

OLVEA BF receives a stable supply of quality products. Supplies from the cooperative to OLVEA BF increased 425% in four years' time. The company developed into a profitable niche player in the organic segment with an increased market share.



*'It is an attractive business deal for the women. However, perhaps even more important than the good price, is having a stable and reliable buyer who pays on delivery and sometimes even in advance.'*

Herman uit de Bosch, FMS

### **'Women's gold'**

Shea nuts are seeds from the shea tree, which only grows in the semi-arid Sahel region of West Africa. It is a favorite ingredient for beauty products and food production (chocolate).

Traditionally collecting and processing is done by women. A key reason for this is that collection is not bound by land ownership. As a result women have a lot of generations-old knowledge regarding the trees and harvesting the nuts. By default the traditional production process is organic.

About 50% of rural women in Burkina Faso are engaged as collectors. This is the reason why the product is called 'women's gold'. Many women, however, are not organized and thus therefore not informed about market requirements.

### **Booming business**

Local and international demand for shea nut increased by over 1200% over the last 10 years.

Business through middlemen is common practice, but this results in inconsistent quality and volumes. To strengthen its commercial business and comply with international standards OLVEA in France decided in 2008 to establish OLVEA Burkina Faso. So that they would be able to source directly from producers, make the chain transparent and controllable and be able to better communicate to end-customers about the source of their products. Processing of the butter is done in Burkina Faso which offers added value in the country and the residue of shea cake is used as a source of energy.

Business performance improved once OLVEA turned to the organic and sustainable niche markets and a public private partnership (PPP) was established in 2010.

### **Public Private Partnership**

The PPP was with ICCO Cooperation, a Dutch based development organization, and Fair Match Support (FMS), a Dutch value chain facilitator. ICCO offered linkages to the first cooperative, FADEF-SO, as well as co-financing of risks together with OLVEA and payment of FMS.

The PPP will end in 2015 as its goals, i.e. a mutually beneficial, stable and transparent value chain, will by then have been achieved. The women collectors will be fully integrated in the formal value chain as self-confident and professional market players through their cooperatives. For all parties the investment will eventually pay itself back.

*For more information about OLVEA Burkina Faso visit the [website](#).*