

Even when 2SCALE ends, milk will continue to flow in Nigeria

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FrieslandCampina Wamco is a leading milk processing company. The partnership intends at reducing the import of raw material and increasing local sourcing from Fulani herders.

Summary

FrieslandCampina Wamco (FCW), a milk processing company, and Fulani pastoralist farmers come together in this dairy partnership story. This is a new business model for the Fulani women, who get support from internal (embedded) and external coaches to achieve the milk quality and supply goals of FCW. The story takes the perspective of an external business coach called Stephen who manages to become embedded in the cluster through taking on new and paid services. In this way, he can be sure to continue his coaching work even if the 2SCALE funding should end.

Errant bits of dust trailed Stephen's vehicle as he makes the last turn into Gaa Yakubu, one of the Fulani camps located on Iseyin-Awaye road. He has just made the 5 km journey from his house in Iseyin to Gaa Yakubu. His locally made slippers gather a few stains as he steps out of his car to see Alhaja Agba, the oldest woman in Gaa Yakubu. She is a milk vendor for the dairy partnership. They are already expecting him and they briefly exchange pleasantries. Yakubu is the milk producer, the camp is named after him and he owns the local Bunaji breed of cattle. Alhaja Agba

is his first wife, and according to Fulani custom, she and Yakubu's other wives have the role of selling the milk for family upkeep. While it is not Stephen's first trip to Gaa Yakubu as a coach on the 2SCALE project, it is his first time there for milk collection.

Collecting milk: a new business for Fulani pastoralists

FrieslandCampina Wamco (FCW) operates milk collection centres (MCCs) targeting Fulani milk producers in the

area. Last year, the company's target was to buy 30,000 litres of milk per day. To meet the volume and quality required by FCW, the milk producers and vendors together play important roles along the supply chain of milk from the farms or camps to the MCCs. Milk collection is a completely new business for these producers. Previously, milk was only produced for own consumption and milk products like cheese were sold locally and the rest wasted. This is the only business women have with the cows. Fulani men, the owners of the cows, thought nothing of it and had never been interested in the milk or its products.

This changed with the coming of the 2SCALE project. In the new set-up, the cows are milked early in the morning, and the women pool and pour the milk into specially designed and calibrated cans. They take care to keep to the required quality standards and have the milk cans ready for delivery to the MCC by 9 am at the latest, as agreed. Most of the women milk vendors prefer having their milk collected right at the camp without having to make the trip to deliver it to the MCC themselves.

Stephen glances briefly at his mobile phone and smiles with satisfaction. He is on time. As a coach on the 2SCALE project, Stephen's primary role is to facilitate business support services to the Iseyin dairy agribusiness cluster actors. He and three other coaches for the dairy partnership are described as "external" coaches as they are not directly engaged in the dairy business. Instead, they were contracted by 2SCALE to support the dairy clusters in improving production and quality of milk; and helping them to establish their "cluster", i.e. networks with other local actors involved in the dairy business, like transporters, feed and veterinary drug suppliers. Although competent, Stephen and the other external coaches are not Fulani and therefore face cultural and sometimes language barriers. This means they need to interface with the cluster actors through the Community livestock workers (CLWs). CLWs are young Fulanis working in the clusters as milk transporters, veterinary drug suppliers or as producers. These CLWs are considered to be "internal" intermediaries or coaches as they are business actors within the dairy cluster.

Inventing new ways to continue coaching services

Last year, Stephen and the other external coaches were suddenly confronted with the problem that they could not renew their 2SCALE contracts due to administrative delays, which affected their earnings. Stephen discussed his situation with Saliyu, who is a CLW. Even though he is not himself a Fulani, Stephen had built up competence and trust with the dairy vendors of Gaa Yakubu. This became a powerful asset. Through their company SPPS Limited, the coaches sought opportunities to become part of the milk business with the Fulani women. Stephen then managed to reach an agreement with the milk vendors in Gaa Yakubu, to take on collection and transportation of their milk to the MCC using his personal car. His other colleague Rahman

began supplying dry season supplementary feeding materials to the milk producers through the CLWs – an important activity needed to ensure the cows are properly fed and continue to produce milk.

Building trust and shifting norms

It has been months since this arrangement was initiated and there is so much trust in their relationship that Stephen now gets the milk from the women on credit. He also uses his other networks with a rural evangelical group to facilitate other opportunities for the women such as literacy training, maternal health and children nutrition advice, training and support for extra-mural evening classes for in-school and out of school children and youth in the area. Stephen now averages a collection of 200 litres of milk per day from about 10 women milk vendors and the credit has run as high as 100,000 Naira (about €270). He pays the women only once he gets paid by FCW. Seeing how profitable this new milk business is, the men are now also becoming interested – a hitherto unheard of cultural shift in the Fulani social norm.

Done loading the milk cans, Stephen starts the engine of his car, waves a quick goodbye to the women knowing he will be back again the next morning. He is sleeping better these days being an internal coach directly working with the Fulani dairy vendors, and having continuity in his job guaranteed. Alhaja Agba acknowledges Stephen, also feeling secure in the knowledge that when the 2SCALE project phases out, FCW will continue to get its milk supply from her and others in the dairy partnership.

13 The Fulani (Fulbe) are mainly pastoralists whose occupation is herding cattle and leading various forms of sedentary and nomadic living patterns. There are various Fulani sub-groups across West Africa, often with transboundary connections among the different countries. Apart from herding cattle and producing milk, there are huge numbers of Fulani engaged in business or trade, religious learning and politics. Fulanis who still keep livestock often stay in rural settlements or camps, spatially separated from those of the indigenous rural population. There is a large population of Fulani milk producers in the northern part of Oyo State, Nigeria. FrieslandCampina Wamco (FCW) operates milk collection centres (MCCs) targeting Fulani milk producers in the area.

