Propcom Mai-kaﬁ (PM) is stimulating changes in markets which matter most to poor people living and doing business in rural northern Nigeria. In 2015, PM worked in 20 northern states and expanded our activities to more markets, particularly to markets which benefit women and which have the potential to increase the resilience of poor farmers and small scale rural entrepreneurs. The markets in which PM worked were agricultural inputs, agricultural mechanisation, feed finishing, electronic warehouse receipting, seed multiplication, soap and hand-washing, poultry, shea, rice parboiling, vegetables, soybean, cooperatives, and conservation agriculture. Here’s what PM did:

PM supported input businesses to make fertilisers, seeds, and crop protection products (CPPs) more accessible to rural farmers. In 2015, PM worked with 3 inputs partners to tap into rural input demand opportunities in northern Nigeria. PM’s partners reached 55,500 smallholder farmers with inputs and trainings.

Fertilisers: To facilitate greater fertiliser penetration into rural markets, PM modified its fertiliser market strategy to focus on working directly with fertiliser distributors (DPs) and not with production companies. PM partnered and linked 6 fertiliser distributors to fertiliser companies, and worked with over 80 rural promoters (RPs) in 12 northern states to improve rural distribution networks. PM also trained the DPs and RPs on effective service delivery. DPs purchased fertilisers in packs of 1, 10, and 25kg from fertiliser companies, and sold these to RPs. The RPs in turn sold to smallholder farmers living in and around their communities. Putting distributors at the centre of the supply chain has translated to a more seamless trickle-down effect. In 2015, our DPs held 12 demonstration events to train farmers on good agricultural practices and fertiliser use, and sold 1,997MT of small pack fertilisers to more than 35,000 farmers.

Seeds: PM supported WACOT to strengthen its rural distribution network, giving more farmers access to affordable certified seeds. During its pilot in the 2014 / 2015 dry season, WACOT held awareness campaigns on the use of certified rice seeds and its benefits via “market storms” in three local government areas of Kebbi state. From that pilot, 2,500 smallholder farmers achieved a cumulative additional income of N25,000,000 (£83,333). WACOT also sold 4,292 packs of rice seeds, generating N13,000,000 (£43,333) in sales revenue.

“...The current partnership between WACOT and Propcom Mai-kaﬁ has opened a new era in terms of partnership initiatives for the company and bringing in a positive change in the life of poor and marginal farmers.”
- Anuj - Head of CR&S at WACOT

During the 2015 wet season, PM supported WACOT to scale up the rice seed programme to four new states: Kaduna, Katsina, Plateau and
Niger. WACOT trained 2,000 farmers on good agricultural practices in maize and rice production. The company also sold a total of 30,892 packs of maize and rice seeds to 6,500 farmers, generating a revenue of N12,700,000 (£42,333) in sales.

Crop protection products: PM continued its partnership with Syngenta, supporting them to build the capacities of 16,000 farmers in Kano and Katsina states, and to increase the company’s branded retail stores from 14 in 2014 to 50 in 2015. Syngenta also reported an increase in the number of smallholder farmers who attended three of its four-sequence demonstration/learning events. In 2015, farmers who received trainings reported significant increases in their maize and rice yields in Kano and Katsina states.

Ishaqa Abdullahi, a lead farmer in Kano state says that the cultivation techniques he learnt from Syngenta’s demonstrations were different from how he had farmed in the past. When he planted two side-by-side plots of land using best practices versus his old techniques, he harvested 15 bags of rice on the best practices plot and 10 bags on his old practice plot.

Sesame seed multiplication: PM partnered with WACOT to pilot a seed multiplication programme which will increase the availability of certified sesame seeds to farmers. PM leveraged on WACOT’s expertise in seed multiplication and contract farming to mobilise farmers’ groups to adopt the use of certified seeds, quality inputs, and good agronomic practices for quality output. In a pilot which started in late 2015, 25 groups were formed and 749 farmers trained using WACOT’s 8 demonstration plots. The groups are now cultivating 1,186ha of land with sesame seeds in Kaduna state and the FCT.

In 2015, PM brokered more tractor loans between banks and service providers, and facilitated the acquisition of tillers for women’s cooperatives.

Tractors: In 2014 PM facilitated 27 tractor loans for members of Tractor Owners and Hiring Facilities Association of Nigeria (TOHFAN) and linked them to a tracker vendor to install GPS trackers on their tractors. These trackers have helped the members to monitor the volume of work which their hired operators carry out daily, and has minimised losses in revenue. As a result, members have been earning an average of N2,680,000 (£8,933) / annum in revenue after operational costs, and been able to maintain monthly repayments to the lender, First City Monument Bank (FCMB). Consequent to the successful pilot, in 2015 FCMB voluntarily disbursed 67 more tractor loans worth N227,800,000 (£759,333) to TOHFAN members. On the heels of FCMB’s success with TOHFAN, PM saw some crowdfunding in with Sterling Bank voluntarily issuing ten tractor loans to TOHFAN members. PM also saw another form of crowdfunding in with the entry of corporate members to TOHFAN. In 2015, 64,139 more smallholder farmers accessed tractor services as a result of the tractor loans given TOHFAN.

PM worked to improve poultry farmers’ access to vaccines, and pilot new markets for local chickens. In 2015 PM worked to boost rural vaccination services for poultry and to create demand for local chickens.

Poultry health: PM supported Agriprojects Concepts International Limited (ACI) to expand its supply of vaccines to 6 new communities in Gombe state, as well as continuing with its prior states of Nasarawa, Benue, Jigawa, and Niger. ACI also replicated the vaccine supply model in new states of Kaduna, Zamfara, Plateau, Taraba, Kebbi, and the FCT. PM supported the use of community-based organisation as a vaccine delivery channel and developed a marketing tool for village-based vaccinators (VBVs). In 2015, ACI sold 4,214 vials of vaccine to VBVs, and 6,246 farmers (2,318 women) received vaccination services from the VBVs.

PM signed an MoU with the Nigerian Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI) to optimise their production capacity on the manufacturing of thermos-tolerant vaccine, as well as supporting them to market and distribute the ND-i2, of which NVRI is the sole manufacturer in Nigeria.

PM also lobbied the Veterinary Council of Nigeria (VCN) to commit to championing the development of a regulatory framework which will guide the certification and

PM stimulated and expanded access to mechanisation. On-farm mechanisation reduces the time and labour requirements of land preparation, as well as labour costs.

Tillers: PM worked with the Small-scale Women Farmers Organisation of Nigeria (SWOFON) and tiller vendor Habgito to facilitate the purchase of tillers by SWOFON. Through our linkage, Habgito supplied tillers to the association at a payment rate which was spread over a one year period. Habgito additionally trained the women’s groups on how to operate the tillers and committed itself to providing after sales services to them. 100 cooperatives in 8 states (Plateau, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano and Kaduna) purchased tillers under the partnership. The tillers are reducing farm labour requirements for these women, and enabling their farm expansions.
supervision of animal health workers. PM signed an MoU with VCN and commenced the process of standardising the curriculum and defining an operational framework for training and deploying Community-based Animal Health Workers.

Local chicken processing: Developing viable markets for processed local chickens and creating demand can shift the production and business behaviour of village chicken owners; who are mainly comprised of women. In 2015 PM piloted an intervention around the processing, packing, sale and promotion of local chickens. PM carried out a value chain assessment and a consumer behaviour survey to develop a business model which will interest private sector investors. A major challenge identified was the need for an aggregation system for birds from diverse households to ensure a steady and bulk supply, and which would stimulate the interest of processors and retail outlets. PM partnered with Nkataa; an Abuja-based online grocery shop on a pilot sales programme and also linked them to a lead aggregator for supply. Within the first month of the pilot in November 2015, Nkataa reported sales of 720 local chickens. PM also looked to expand the market and met with Master Meats, a major supplier of fresh meat to Shoprite’s 30 outlets. Master Meats agreed to put local chickens on sale at their outlets in Abuja for a trial period.

Farmers stored their grains and participated in fertiliser swaps. PM partnered with AFEX to pilot the electronic warehouse receipting programme in Kaduna state. The pilot allowed farmers to safely store their grains and sell at peak price points in the year. Farmers also had the option of “spot selling” to AFEX at its warehouses which they tended to prefer as they found AFEX’s prices higher than the local markets’. During the pilot, 92 farmers sold to AFEX and made an average of 58% net profit, in contrast to the 19% which they received from the open market. Farmers also saved on the cost of transporting their grains to the local markets.

AFEX additionally introduced a fertiliser swap model to farmers, allowing them to trade their grains for fertiliser. In 2015, 1,217 farmers (253 women) swapped grains for 96.2MT of fertiliser worth N10,582,000 (£35,273).

PM also facilitated a partnership with AFEX and LAPO Microfinance Bank to provide fertiliser credit to farmers who did not have grains to swap or money for outright purchase. PM negotiated an interest rate reduction for farmers from 3.2% to 2.2%, and supported LAPO to design a loan recovery plan. LAPO disbursed credit to 775 farmers who each received 5MT of fertiliser worth a cumulative N28,677,000 (£95,590). From the outcomes and learnings of the pilot, AFEX plans to expand its reach to Katsina, Zamfara, Benue, Taraba, and Gombe states, as well as continuing in Kaduna state.

“How to Make Money in Shea” conference held in Abuja on 15 November 2015, PM worked with three feed companies (Animal Care, Feed Masters, and Hybrid Feeds) to train 488 farmers on improved production techniques. During the year, PM reached 1,078 farmers (259 women) who feed finished small and large ruminants.

PM supported households to feed finish ruminants. PM took on the feed finishing component of GEMS 1 - a market systems development programme also funded by UK aid and implemented by Palladium. Feed finishing is the process of using improved feeding technology to increase the quality of animal meat production while shortening the required rearing duration. Feed finishing allows farmers to complete 4 - 6 animal rearing cycles in a year. Commencing from the third quarter of 2015, PM worked with three feed companies (Animal Care, Feed Masters, and Hybrid Feeds) to train 488 farmers on improved production techniques. During the year, PM reached 1,078 farmers (259 women) who feed finished small and large ruminants.

PM continued to encourage hand washing with soap. PM supported PZ Cussons to carry out 'community activations' which involved product sampling, distribution of posters and merchandising of the selected soap brand - Premier Cool Deo (PCD). Activations were held at 45 communities in four states, directly reaching 70,408 people with the soap and hand washing message. During the activations, 9,450 bars of PCD were sold by merchandisers directly to households. Based on data drawn from the pilot programme, our estimations show that households save N6,795 (£22.65) per year from sickness avoided and man-hours saved as a result of handwashing with soap.

PM facilitated linkages between women’s groups and shea processors. PM worked with two private sector companies (SALID Nigeria Ltd. and Ladgroup Ltd.) to implement grassroots shea nut procurement strategies. In 2015, SALID procured 150MT of shea kernels from women nut pickers. PM linked Ladgroup to Quintessential Business Women’s Group to test their shea supply capacity with the prospect of increasing support to the women in 2016. In 2015 a total of 1,033 women benefitted from our shea partnerships. PM also facilitated a shea nut supply contract of 5,000MT for SALID from IOI Loders Croklaan, valued at £157,000. PM facilitated the development of a Shea Procurement Standard Operating Procedure with a business incubator agency, Enterprise Integrators, and SALID. PM also convened a shea meeting within the framework of a shea conference held in Abuja on ‘How to Make Money in Shea’. The...
meeting provided a platform to engage with stakeholders and to identify market growth opportunities.

PM reinvested in the Babban Gona franchise. Babban Gona (BG) continued to expand and show that agriculture is profitable. PM had invested N72m (£288,000) in BG in 2013, and N40m (£280,000) in 2014; this time with particular emphasis on women. 2,722 farmers have benefited from the franchise in Kano and Kaduna states. In 2015, PM reinvested the capital and interest accrued from the first bond into a third bond. BG also expanded to cultivating cowpea and soybean, in addition to maize. Farmers under the BG franchise continue to have access to private extension services, inputs, mechanisation, and to storage and markets. The net income of BG farmers have increased by 281%, with an aggregate net additional income of N183,074,246 (£610,247). BG plans to work with 10,000 farmers in 2016.

"Without Babban Gona, by now I would have moved away from farming to the buying and selling of grains because of the low prices I was getting for my crops. Or I would have been doing menial jobs during the dry season to supplement my income".

- Halliru Saleh - Kaduna farmer

PM partnered to promote conservation agriculture. In 2015 PM collaborated with Value Seeds to demonstrate conservation agriculture techniques to farmers and introduce them to the appropriate inputs. This strategy helps farmers to reduce land preparation costs, to increase access to quality inputs, and to improve crop yields and soil fertility. PM trained Value Seeds’ extension agents on conservation agriculture, who went on to train farmers. PM also provided support to Value Seeds on the production and promotion of a Value kit which consists of maize seeds, crop protection products, fertiliser from one of PM’s partners, Golden Fertilisers, and aluminium phosphide (a chemical for grain storage). Value Seeds established 80 demonstration plots in Kaduna, Kano and Katsina states, and trained 1,543 farmers. Value Seeds additionally sold 2,059 kits, and has now adapted a similar kit for rice farmers.

PM launched more markets which target women. Women in many communities in northern Nigeria are relatively secluded from the market space, despite being engaged in productive activities around agriculture and trade. In 2015, PM invested more in designing programmes for women, taking into cognizance the socio-cultural norms of the region.

Commercialising services of community-based organisations (CBOs): PM commenced working with CBOs and cooperatives who have large women’s memberships in rural and poor communities very effective. PM assessed and identified two CBOs to work with: Quintessential Business Women Association (QBWA) and Fantsuam Foundation. QBWA has a membership strength of 80,000 women in northern Nigeria, and Fantsuam has a membership base of 5,000 rural women and men. PM worked with both CBOs to identify their priority needs, one of which is linkage to markets for their products. PM facilitated business negotiations between the CBOs and Ladgroupl Ltd. for the supply of shea nuts, and with AFEX for the supply of maize. PM’s vision is to help these CBOs to engage in business relationships with the private sector so as to enable their members to access markets.

Rice parboiling: 95% of rice parboilers in Nigeria are women in rural communities, many of whom live below the poverty line. The benefits which they gain from this business is constrained by lack of resources and information to effectively participate in markets and to negotiate competitively, they have limited knowledge of improved processing techniques, as well as limited access to finance to invest in technologies to improve the quality and/or quantity of paddy or parboiled rice. PM partnered with a local NGO to develop the leadership and negotiation skills of 90 women leaders. PM anticipates that this training will help them to navigate their business transactions, especially with male traders. PM identified twenty rice traders for linkage to the women’s parboiling groups, as well as two microfinance institutions to give credit to both parboilers and traders. PM aims to reach 3,000 women in Kano and Jigawa states under this pilot.

Soybeans: PM re-entered the soybean sector for the significant role played by women in production. PM partnered with ABJ Nigeria Limited to build the capacities of soybean farmers on good production techniques and to serve as a ready market for their grains. PM trained 12,420 soybean farmers (7,925 females and 4,495 males) on good agricultural practices and linked them to other partners for inputs. Value Seeds sold 792MT of soybean seeds to the farmers, and Syngenta sold insecticides and herbicides.

Vegetables: PM piloted vegetable trial programmes using demonstration plots to gauge the yield potential of using improved seed varieties for tomatoes, potatoes and onions. Rural women are heavily engaged in homestead vegetable farming and the results of this pilot will guide PM in scaling up this intervention.

Propcom Mai-ka’fif aims to raise incomes of more than half a million people in northern Nigeria by 2018. The project seeks to increase investment from the private sector into rural markets upon which poor farmers, entrepreneurs and consumers, especially women, rely for access to important goods and services. Propcom Mai-ka’fif is funded by UK aid and implemented by Palladium.

Contact us
Tel: 234 (0) 805 479 6992
Email: info@propcommaiakarfi.org
Website: www.propcommaiakarfi.org