

Making impact with grassroot women processors through product and market development – case of Banda Boraе Women, Ghana.



# 1. Pioneer partnership

The Banda Boraie Women processors were part of a cluster under the soybean partnership in Ghana, championed by Yedent Agro Limited. They were located in the Northern region of Ghana.

Banda Boraie Cooperative was one of the grassroots partners with which 2SCALE developed BoP marketing activities. It was a processing group of 20 women, who processed and sold soybean kebab in Kpandai, a rural settlement in Northern Ghana.

The cooperative initially marketed their soybean kebabs at the Kpandai market without a branding or retail strategy. There were also problems of weak group governance that fundamentally needed to be worked on prior to working on other issues such as marketing. Theoretically, the women were in a group but practically they were championing their businesses individually. This was the first critical issue that the project tackled as part of streamlining their product and marketing development effort.

## 2. Replicable practice

Banda Boraie Women processors sales were seemingly effective, especially on market days in Kpandai, when all the other communities came together to buy and sell goods. However, sales remained stable and little growth was achieved. Together with 2SCALE, the Cooperative managed to expand its route-to-market by introducing a branded container as a sales outlet in a number of schools. This solution came about during the Business Model Canvas workshop and discussion on marketing issues. The strategy was supported by stakeholder engagement with school authorities (school heads and teachers) to directly target the school children for nutritional purposes. The partnership also developed a mobile channel to enable women to sell soybean kebabs in branded portable containers and sales attire in various locations to enhance their appeal and visibility. Over the course of a short (6) pilot period, these two marketing channels increased sales of the kebabs on a daily basis, from an initial average of 150 sticks to 500 sticks per seller. The cost of a stick of kebab was 10 Ghana pesewas (US \$0.02) and provided a nutritious, protein-rich alternative to the sugary snacks school children would otherwise buy.

In terms of the soy kebab development, 2SCALE introduced the women to various garnishing approaches. The essence was to improve the appeal and also the nutritional content. Various vegetables such as tomato, green pepper and onion were used with such nutrients also adding to the nutritional content of the kebab. The women were also introduced to different packaging sizes to improved affordability, especially by the students.

The pilot earned a lot of success, both from the women processors, schools, and entire community. The concept was replicated among Saboba Women Processors with slight extension in the approach and scope. It was also replicated in Nigeria (Kwara and Benue states). A member of the women group in Nigeria was in Saboba and got trained by the lead champions of Banda Boraie Women Processors. Upon her return to Nigeria, she also organised a step-down training to train her colleagues. To summarize, this practice is addressing constraints in terms of:

<p>Access to nutritious food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Availability:</b> The pilot had varied options about who was a target for the product (Soy Kebab). Almost everybody irrespective of age, status and religion consumed soy kebab in Kpandai and was highly appreciated as a nutritious product even in its natural form. We were however able to identify school children as the most important consumer targets on various dimensions. We therefore took a calculated step to bring the product to the schools by getting processors cleared for food handling via testing and forging official partnerships with school authorities. This paved way for the establishment of well branded sales containers (4) in the clusters of schools in Kpandai. We were able to establish a close proximity to the students.</li> <li>• <b>Affordability:</b> Ability to afford a bite especially the students was a prime concern to the pilot. We manage to devise a strategy of reducing the number of soy kebab ball per stick. Hence the variations in numbers were tied to the price which afforded all consumers purchasing power.</li> <li>• <b>Acceptability:</b> The acceptability aspect was created through the partnership with school heads, food safety clearance from health authorities, product appeal enhancement and brand association build up via pictorials on the sales containers. All these created credibility and product appeal to the soy kebab.</li> </ul>
<p>Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ownership:</b> The women processors were heavily involved in both the processing and marketing of the products. That motivated them to invest a lot more of their time, financial contributions, and hope. The local champion (Madam Rose) showed strong leadership even prior to group governance trainings by ICRA (Project consortium member in phase I). Her leadership skills got improved after the project's trainings and that impacted well on the group's inclusiveness and cohesion. The local champion did the soy kebab processing &amp; marketing as a full-time business and hence influenced her colleagues to a larger extent to stay focus on their business. The pilot was also very comprehensive in terms of other stakeholder engagements. The School Authorities, Health Services and District Assemblies were deeply involved in the planning and roll-out of activities.</li> </ul>

# 3. Preconditions for replication

## **Reliable raw material supply system**

Establishment of a similar pilot or its expanded form should consider a production location where raw materials are available and in significant quantities. This is important in order to reduce cost of transportation so that product price does not go up that may erode affordability on the part of low incomes.

## **Food handling clearance or product certification**

Children in general are a very sensitive and vulnerable consumer class when it comes to targeting them with food products. A pre-requisite for their engagement means getting a very hygienic and certified food. However, in situations where the product has not yet gotten certified (mostly the case with food products in rural settings in Ghana), then processors will be mandatory required to undertake food handling test to ensure women processors are free from all communicable/transferrable diseases. This will be checked by the school authorities for any intended purpose of selling food to the students and are regularly undertaken.

## **Presence of a number of schools or cluster of schools close to processors**

Apart from the wonderful taste of soy kebab which students like, it also serves an important nutritional function in the growing student. It provides quality proteins to ensure good and healthy growth and also provides appropriate nourishment for academic work. Young school children have also been found to show high interest in soy kebab and makes it business sense to target this market. It is therefore advised that schools should be prioritised in terms of potential target customers.

## **Conduct market insight studies**

This must not be underestimated, even though consumers of all classes tend to like the soy kebab. However, conducting a market scan can create possibilities of product diversification in terms of the extent of garnishing, colour arising from frying, the size of the kebab balls, and packaging. Another issue to be looked at is the taste preference variations across various consumer types (i.e., children, adults, sex etc).

## **Availability of a good milling machine**

This has always been a challenge for most processing groups as the acquisition of a milling machine is very expensive. It is prudent to check for the availability of such milling services in the community. Mostly there are individuals who run milling services for community people which can equally be used by processors where the group do not have one yet.

# 4. Results Achieved

The table below depicts the prior and end of project results recorded in terms of product & market development.

Prior Conditions / Baseline	Collaboration Achievements
Average initial sales of 150 sticks per/member/day.	Average 500 sticks/member/day.
Initially one sales channel - selling from main market and from their respective homes.	Diversified sales channel from initial one to three. Includes branded container points in schools (four points mobile sales through community (Door-to-door) and mobile sales at lorry stations.
A raw product – no branding, no unique brand name, no tagline, and no differentiation from competitors.	Developed a well thought through brand name (“Daadi” Soy Kebab) and tagline. Improved product quality and appeal by way of garnishing with variety of vegetables.
Processing support jobs initially was non-existent, with most using their kids.	Some of the women, including the lead (local champion) were able to employ six additional people to support the processing. Mainly attributed to the rapid increase in demand as a result of product appeal and diversified market channels.

## Want to know more?

In case of further information on this pilot, please contact Kwame Ntim Pipim (Senior BoP Marketing Specialist) on [kpipim@2scale.org](mailto:kpipim@2scale.org). You can also refer to the link below for other information related to Banda Borae Women Processor Cooperative.

- <https://www.icra.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/EN-Soya-%E2%80%93-Ghana.pdf>

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