

SCPP Knowledge Brief

Transformative Coaching



SUMMARY

Swisscontact's Transformative Coaching is tailored to support sustainable commodity sourcing networks. It is a unique synthesis combining the proven goal-oriented performance coaching framework of GROW with the participatory tools of Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS). It is tailored to be relevant to smallholders and implemented directly by private sector companies field staff or by their service providers.

CONTEXT

Major consumer food brands have committed to sourcing their ingredients through sustainable traceable supply chains. For years, the dominant strategy for them to upgrade smallholder based supply chains was to provide trainings to groups of farmers, such as the Farmer Field Schools. Though these proved beneficial to promoting greater social cohesion amongst farmers, time passed, adoption of best of best practices tended to drop off. Farmers wanted bespoke solutions.

In response, companies are investing in one-on-one coaching to farmers. However, the current efforts are falling short for several reason. The people delivering the coaching are not adequately trained to be a performance coaches. The coaching methods are top-down and disempowering to the farmer coachees.

Finally, current approaches fail to include the principal partner in smallholder family farming enterprises -- the wife. Swisscontact's **Transformative Coaching** addresses these weaknesses.

INNOVATION

For 2018 and 2019, Swisscontact participated in two coaching programs initiated by global food company partners. Both had similar formats: collect data and observations about the farmer, input the data into an algorithm that generated recommendations intended to fit the farmer's needs, and then present that to the farmer for his approval.

There were two major shortcomings that Swisscontact observed about these plans. First, the farmer had very little to no understanding to how the recommendations were generated. This denied the coachees own agency in choosing which course of action to take based upon their own reasoning and core motives. Second, these coaching approaches tended to ignore the other main shareholder in the family farming enterprise, the spouse.

Therefore, Swisscontact introduced the proven performance coaching method of GROW*¹, to the smallholder coaching effort in 2018 that emphasized the farmer understanding and choosing their course of action. But that was only half the solution.

In 2019, Swisscontact was introduced to the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), pioneered by Linda Mayoux of Oxfam as part of another initiative with Mars and Rainforest Alliance. GALS emphasized participation of female household members into decision making.

These participatory tools help the farmer and spouse to discuss their goals, their family finances, divisions of labor, and, together, how they plan to improve and transform their farm more openly.

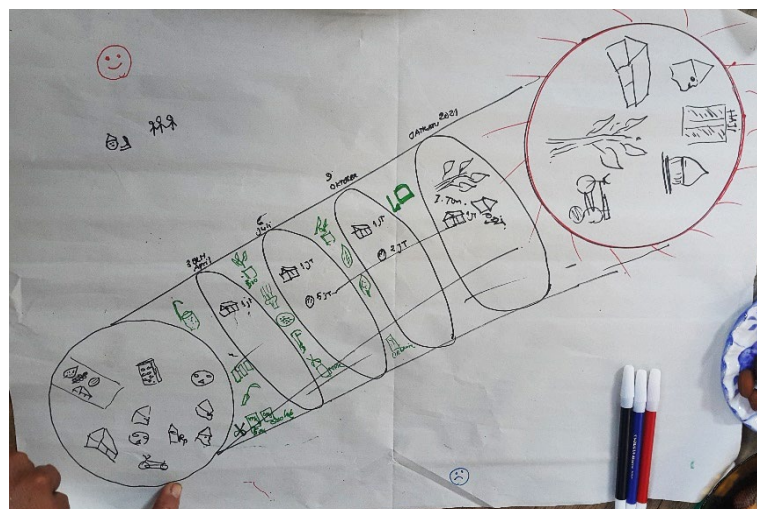
*GROW stands for *Goals, Reality, Options, and Will*, and is one of the most popular performance coaching approaches of the last 30 years.

By combining these different but complementary approaches, Swisscontact was able to launch a new coaching approach, *Transformative Coaching for Sustainable Commodities*.

There are no products in the market that combine these three capacities. The Transformative Coaching product is delivered in two sequential modules:

- (1) a 3-day Intensive Training Seminar to Coaches
- (2) a season-long Coaching Mentorship Support to trained coaches.

Participants in the 3-day Seminar are trained to succeed in their role of transforming family farming units. The Mentorship Support within the FarmNetX Framework will enable them to scale to the entire supply network over a 3-year period. This length of time is period that the most common sustainable certification bodies allow for a network to become fully compliant with the sustainability standards, of which includes “network wide improvement” in sustainability.



“We had never before understood our cash-flow, especially our monthly expenses as we do now.” (Pak Anwar, 33, Farmer)

“I was nervous at first to express my goals and dreams to others, but now that I have, I have added energy and confidence to attain them. I believe more in myself.” (Ibu Marliang, 58, Farmer)

“I don’t usually plan what I’ll do for more than a week in advance. I tap my rubber trees and harvest cocoa when in season. But here, I’ve made my plan for the next 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. This is something new for me.” (Pak Abdul Rasyid, 47, Farmer)

Overall Impressions:

“This approach is very good because it focuses not only on technical matters related to garden improvement, but also how farmers have dreams so that they touch emotional matters with farmers. Adoption is more visible.” (Samsyul Bahri, 29, Coach)



Swisscontact piloted the Transformative Coaching in 2020. 17 farmers were selected to be coached using the FarmNetX tools. The results were a correlation between volume of beans sales and the selection of the 17 coachees. They averaged 379.2kg per farmer in beans sales as compared to the 135.9kg for the average farmer in the network. Also, the coachees immediate followers and other farmers in the immediate sold more volume into the network than the average farmer.

The process of efficiently assessing the results of the coaching engagement was a major focus during this pilot. For that we developed a *Coaching Effectiveness Index* that evaluated the effectiveness of the coaching plan in terms of being able to deliver results to the farmer and to be evaluated by management.

KEY LESSONS

- Effective coaching requires a designed approach. This has been lacking in company sponsored, coaching initiatives. There, the emphasis has been providing agronomic solutions without adequate attention to the human dimensions: farmers' motivations need and their in-depth participation.
- To have an impact in the larger supplier network, we recommend a data driven decision tool like FarmNetX be used to select farmers for coaching based on their level of innovation and importance to the network.
- The Transformative Coaching technique was highly rated by coach and coachee alike in the test pilot. This is an early indication that the Transformative Coaching Methodology will be received well when scaled, leading to greater productivity, increased loyalty and sales to the network, and higher incomes for farm families.

WAY FORWARD

To organize and facilitate a Coach Development Clinic to supply chain partners. This could either be with a company that maintains coaches within its network, such as Mars, or to a service provider, such as Koltiva, that provides coaching services to its corporate customers.

