



Summary of Project

Building Next Generation Cocoa Farmers

Investing in the future

Global demand for sustainable cocoa is growing annually by 2 to 3%. Production in West Africa, which makes up 70% of global supply, has in recent years been declining by 2% annually. Although the region faces increasing demand from the world market, it is facing complex economic, social and environmental issues. These issues include the lack of interest from young people and the marginalisation of women involved in cocoa farming.

Regarding the inclusion of youth, most cocoa farmers, particularly in West and Central Africa, are aged 50 and over, resulting in high risk to the supply of cocoa due to an aging farmer generation. As many cocoa farmers are living in poverty and have very limited income from their farming businesses, young people are not inspired or motivated to take up the profession themselves.

A report by FAO and IFAD showed that even though cocoa growing countries such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Cameroon have a great opportunity for youths to tap into, these youths prefer to migrate across the Mediterranean in search of greener pastures. Particularly in developing countries facilitating the youth cohort's participation in agriculture has the potential to drive widespread rural poverty reduction among youths and adults alike.

Therefore, it is essential to encourage youth participation in cocoa farming as a profession, revitalizing the aging generation and bringing prosperity to cocoa farming communities.

As for women in cocoa farming, females often face problems of inequality on a daily basis, for example in lack of access to inputs, land, and equal pay. In some cocoa farming communities, it is also common for women to be dependent on male counterparts, meaning that they may have little economic or social independence, further contributing to marginalisation of women in cocoa farming.

To effectively build a new generation of cocoa farmers, both women and young people must be actively included in professionalisation, providing them with access to training, education, inputs and financial services to support their cocoa farming businesses.

Project Objectives

Farmgate Cocoa Alliance has therefore developed a project to facilitate opportunities for rural youth and women in cocoa communities in Ghana, Ivory Coast and Cameroon. By facilitating job opportunities and income generation, we can secure the next generation of cocoa farmers,



operating in a sustainable and professional context, supporting the value chain and contributing to rural development.

The key project objectives are:

1. Assist the youth and women of cocoa producing countries to secure access to arable lands, suitable for producing high quality, sustainable cocoa.
2. Train and develop skilled and qualified labour that would provide the requisite services to ensure proper implementation and maintenance of Good Agricultural Practices for improved productivity and sustainability.
3. Provide market access and stimulate fair pricing for the produce of youth and women

Project Activities

To achieve these objectives, the project will consist of three phases:

Phase 1. To identify interested youth and women in cocoa growing communities

The project will kick start with the identification of youth and women with the potential and interest to venture into cocoa farming. Project is aimed at reaching about 50,000 vulnerable youth and women in cocoa communities in three countries in west and central Africa, i.e. Ghana, Ivory Coast and Cameroon. The pilot of this project will be carried out in rural cocoa communities in Ghana.

Phase 2. Training and Capacity Building

For youth and women to successfully participate in the cocoa sector, access to both information and education are crucial. This project will train and capacitate potential youth and women in good agricultural practices (GAP), basic business and finance skills, planning, evaluation and risk management. This capacity building will be done within organised groups that will allow for co-learning, coaching and effective knowledge sharing and mentoring. With women in particular, the goal is to set up a sustainable income generating model from cocoa production, so that women can own cocoa farms and not just operate as workers, but as independent entrepreneurs.

Phase 3. Selection of youth and women to be train as Service Providers

Access to services and assets such as land is extremely important for people trying to earn a livelihood in agricultural and rural areas. Land access is not only the number one requirement to starting farming, but it can also contribute to household food security, access to credits and is a means for employment creation and income generation. In this phase, there will be a number of proposed strategies for linking beneficiaries (youth and women) to land. FCA, together with other relevant partners, will enter into short-term lease agreements with aged landowners that do not wish or do not have the capacity to utilize their land in the foreseeable 12 months, whereby youths and women can make use of this land, providing their services to grow cocoa and generate income from the land.



FCA will communicate the availability of the land to current or prospective youth and women groups through Community Field Agents and project officers. Some preselected groups will then be invited for an interview and may be allocated a plot of land. In addition to this, a similar approach will be taken with farming machinery to provide access to women and youths, and financial services facilitated.

Key Values

By including women and young people in the cocoa farming sector in a way that encourages them to be independent, professional business people, there are numerous benefits related to the socio-economic context, including:

- Increased supply of sustainable cocoa beans
- Employment opportunities for women and youth in cocoa communities
- Reduced rates of rural migration
- Improved economic activity in cocoa communities
- Poverty alleviation
- Secure production for the foreseeable future

The inclusion of women and youth and cocoa has the potential to pave the way towards a sustainable and stable supply of cocoa beans that has positive impact for cocoa farmers themselves, cocoa growing communities and the cocoa value chain.

For more information about this project or on how you can become a partner, please kindly contact us using one of the following contacts:

Savannahweg 17
3542 AW UTRECHT
Phone: +31(0)302765110
Fax: +31(0)306336524
E-mail: info@cocoa-alliance.org