



# THE INVISIBLE WOMEN BEHIND OUR CHOCOLATE



Sawadogo Mariam Adja harvesting cocoa pods on her farm near Appoisso

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UK chocolate industry is worth at least £4 billion each year.<sup>1</sup> And yet despite this, most cocoa farmers live in abject poverty. In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, where most of the world's cocoa beans are grown by approximately two million smallholder farmers,<sup>2</sup> a typical cocoa farmer earns under 75p a day.

As a nation of chocolate lovers – consuming more per person than any other European country<sup>3</sup> – the UK should be leading efforts to ensure that all cocoa farmers, especially women, can earn a living income.

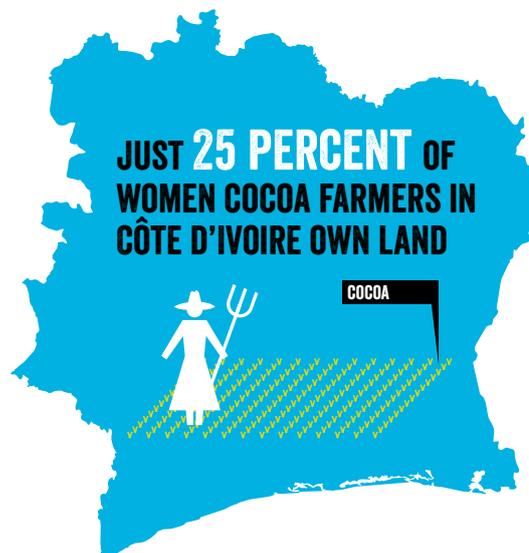
Fairtrade believes that all farmers should be paid fairly for their work and be able to earn a living income. Simply put, a living income should cover the costs of food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transport, clothing and other essential needs, including provision for unexpected events.

Last year, as part of our 'She Deserves a Living Income' campaign, we published *Craving a Change in Chocolate*, a report that set out an ambitious agenda for action. We showed how governments, chocolate companies, traders, retailers and shoppers can help achieve living incomes for cocoa farmers.

A year on and momentum in the chocolate industry is building towards making this goal a reality. In this report, we share the progress being made by Fairtrade working with others. They include governments in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and across Europe, and forward-thinking chocolate companies.

As welcome as this progress has been, there is still a long way to go, particularly for women farmers. New research commissioned by Fairtrade<sup>4</sup> highlights a diverse set of challenges facing different groups of women working in cocoa farming.

Far from being a 'male crop' when men do all the 'hard work' as commonly depicted, women's labour is crucial for cocoa production. When considering farming, household and other non-farm tasks together, women's working hours exceed those of men by nearly 30 percent.<sup>5</sup>



This is set against the fact that just 25 percent of women cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire own land.<sup>6</sup> Even those who do own their land tend to have smaller, more remote and less productive farms. And our new research argues that there are a further group of women who tend to be invisible to market, research and policy actors – those who lack land ownership.

On cocoa farms owned by male partners, women will not usually have the documentation needed to participate in farming and community-related decision-making – through farmers' organisations or development programmes. And because sharecroppers (read on for more about this group of workers) and their wives do not own the land on which they farm, they too face similar barriers to their access and agency.

The UK Government has been a prominent champion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With only ten years left, the ambitious goals and targets enshrined in the SDGs to end poverty, support small-scale farmers and provide decent work for all will not be met unless urgent action is taken to support these 'invisible' women.

<sup>1</sup> As of 2015. Fairtrade Foundation, *Fairtrade and Cocoa (2016)* [https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/~media/fairtradeuk/farmers%20and%20workers/documents/cocoa%20commodity%20briefing\\_online7.pdf](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/~/media/fairtradeuk/farmers%20and%20workers/documents/cocoa%20commodity%20briefing_online7.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Antonie Fountain & Friedel Huetz-Adams, *Cocoa Barometer 2018*, <http://www.cocoabarometer.org>

<sup>3</sup> 2017 data from Mintel Global New Products Database. C. Ritschel, 'Chocolate Production And Consumption On The Rise Across The Globe, Says New Data' *The Independent*, 27 March 2018 <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/chocolate-production-easter-mintel-gnpsd-europe-consumption-vegan-a8276236.html>

<sup>4</sup> D. Skalidou, *Cocoa and the 'invisible' women (2019)* <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/~media/FairtradeUK/What%20is%20Fairtrade/Documents/cocoa-and-the-invisible-women.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> R. Vargas Hill and M. Vigneri, 'Mainstreaming gender sensitivity in cash crop market supply chains', ESA Working Paper No.11-08 (2011) ICCO *May 2018 Quarterly Bulletin of Cocoa Statistics* <https://www.icco.org/about-us/icco-news/389-may-2018-quarterly-bulletin-of-cocoa-statistics.html>

<sup>6</sup> Antonie Fountain & Friedel Huetz-Adams, *Cocoa Barometer 2018*, <http://www.cocoabarometer.org>

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- **We've put together an updated agenda for action** that builds on the progress that's been made over the last year towards a living income in cocoa. But it also recognises the challenges facing these women.
- **We renew our call on governments, chocolate companies, traders, and retailers** alike to set ambitious, timetabled commitments to reach a living income in cocoa.
- **We also call for specific action to address the situation of women cocoa farmers**, especially those who are particularly disempowered, or invisible. All policy and programme interventions in cocoa should address the challenges facing women cocoa farmers, with tailored action plans and strategies.



### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UK GOVERNMENT:

1. **Play a leadership role** and join the Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa by the end of 2020.
2. **Support Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) in cocoa.**
  - At a global level, Fairtrade is calling on the European Union (EU) to enact legislation that requires all companies placing cocoa or cocoa products on the EU market to enact mandatory due diligence on human rights, child labour and the effects of cocoa production on the environment.
  - Though Britain is leaving the EU, we urge the UK Government to bring forward HRDD regulations that align with these proposals, and include similar bilateral arrangements in any new trade deals with cocoa origin governments.
3. **Make sure interventions on the ground reach women.**
  - The Department for International Development (DFID) should put achieving living incomes and wages at the heart of its Economic Development Strategy, supporting programmes and businesses that take living income seriously.
  - This report calls on DFID, working with the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and the chocolate industry, to design, implement and pilot gender-sensitive programmes that would improve women's economic empowerment.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UK CHOCOLATE INDUSTRY:

**We call on UK-based chocolate companies, traders and supermarkets to:**

- Join the Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa.
- Support the introduction of HRDD legislation in the UK and across Europe, as set out on the left.
- Design and implement gender-sensitive programmes that would help enhance the economic empowerment of women cocoa farmers, as set out on the left.
- Commit to sourcing their cocoa on Fairtrade terms as a first step.
- Commit to the goal of ensuring that cocoa farmers receive a living income by 2030.



Rosine Bekoin leads her women's association to earn extra income from cocoa by creating home made chocolate for the local market

# CHAPTER 1 – MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS LIVING INCOMES IN COCOA

There is growing momentum towards the need to move to a fully sustainable cocoa supply chain that provides living incomes for cocoa farmers. This year, progress has been achieved by both Fairtrade and others working in the chocolate industry. Here's how:

## Tougher requirements from Fairtrade

### *Increasing the Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium*

Fairtrade has been working hard to secure a better deal for the farmers who grow the cocoa in our chocolate. On 1 October last year, **we increased the Minimum Price and Premium by 20 percent each**. The Minimum Price acts as a safety net for farmers when market prices fall, while allowing them to benefit when market prices rise. For cocoa, the Minimum Price is now \$2,400 per metric tonne at the point of export (known as Freight on Board, or FOB). Meanwhile, the Premium helps to build strong and viable co-operatives that can respond to their members' needs and strengthen them as long-term business partners for buyers. That is now \$240 per metric tonne, the highest fixed premium of any certification scheme.

Given today's cocoa prices in Côte d'Ivoire, this means the Minimum Price is kicking in to give an additional 17 percent.<sup>7</sup> Fairtrade producer organisations are required to forward this additional payment onto their farmer members. **Fairtrade is the only certification scheme to guarantee these measures.**

Nearly 60 companies source Fairtrade cocoa in the UK and are now subject to the new Minimum Price and Premium requirements. There is a huge range of Fairtrade chocolate sold throughout the UK's high streets. In addition to 100 percent Fairtrade companies such as Divine Chocolate, major high street brands source high volumes of Fairtrade cocoa, including Mars, Nestlé and Green & Black's. All UK supermarkets sell branded Fairtrade chocolate and many supermarkets have significant commitments in their own-label ranges too. For example, Co-op's chocolate confectionery range is 100 percent

Fairtrade and Waitrose & Partners have just converted their confectionery range to contain 100 percent Fairtrade cocoa. Meanwhile, retailers like Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Lidl and Aldi also use Fairtrade cocoa in many of their own-brand lines.

Over the past five years, Fairtrade cocoa co-operatives have earned £107m in Premium to spend on projects of their choice that benefit their businesses and communities. In 2018 alone, Fairtrade cocoa farmer co-operatives earned nearly £39m in Premium to invest in their communities and businesses.<sup>8</sup>

### *Living income strategy*

**Fairtrade's living income strategy**<sup>9</sup> (see right) sets out a comprehensive approach bringing together tactics such as raising productivity, farm efficiency and Fairtrade sales. Central to success is increasing the price farmers receive. Fairtrade has introduced the Fairtrade Living Income Reference Price (see right), which we estimate to be \$2,200 per metric tonne at farm gate in Côte d'Ivoire and \$2,100 in Ghana.<sup>10</sup>

The Living Income Reference Price indicates the price needed for an average farmer household with a viable farm size and an adequate productivity level to make a living income from the sales of their crop. The price has been established after extensive research and consultation with stakeholders including cocoa farmers, traders, companies, researchers, civil society and governments.<sup>11</sup>

The Living Income Reference Price is not a mandatory requirement, but is Fairtrade's assessment of the target price required – in combination with other interventions – to secure a living income. It helps us to see how close different actors are to the goal of living income.

Since last summer, Oxfam Fair Trade<sup>12</sup> and Belvas<sup>13</sup> in Belgium have both committed to the Fairtrade Living Income Reference Price. Tony's Chocolonely, a new brand in the UK market, committed to paying the revised Living Income Reference Price from October last year. Meanwhile, the Fairtrade 'Way to Go' chocolate bar launched in Lidl stores across Belgium and the Netherlands last year, which pays additional money on top of the Fairtrade Premium to the Kuapa Kokoo cocoa co-operative in Ghana.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For the period 1 October 2019 – 31 March 2020. After that a new set of government pricing will apply

<sup>8</sup> These figures have been converted into £ from € figures available in the FI Annual Report 2018-2019 <https://www.fairtrade.net/library/2018-19-annual-report-choosing-a-fairer-future-through-trade>

<sup>9</sup> Fairtrade International Living Income Strategy (2017) [https://files.fairtrade.net/2017-10-23\\_Fairtrade\\_Living\\_Income\\_strategy\\_EN.pdf](https://files.fairtrade.net/2017-10-23_Fairtrade_Living_Income_strategy_EN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Fairtrade International announcement on Living Income Reference Price (2019) <https://www.fairtrade.net/news/fairtrade-leads-the-fight-for-decent-incomes-for-cocoa-farmers>

<sup>11</sup> More information on how the Living Income Reference Price is calculated can be found here: [https://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/content/2009/news/releases\\_statements/2018-12\\_ExplanatoryNote\\_FairtradeLivingIncomeReferencePriceCocoa.pdf](https://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2009/news/releases_statements/2018-12_ExplanatoryNote_FairtradeLivingIncomeReferencePriceCocoa.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Oxfam-Magasins du monde Bite-to-Fight <https://www.oxfammagasinsdumonde.be/blog/video/bite-to-fight/#.Xk7HcS2caek>

<sup>13</sup> Belvas Cocoa Direct Program <https://www.directcocoa.org/fr/accueil> (in French)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.confectionerynews.com/Article/2019/09/19/Lidl-pays-Ghana-farmers-extra-premium-with-new-super-fair-bars>

# FAIRTRADE'S LIVING INCOME STRATEGY EXPLAINED

Our strategy works to close the income gap through seven interventions:

## 1. Sustainable pricing:



A Living Income Reference Price indicates the price needed for full-time farmers with adequate, sustainable productivity levels\* to earn a living income. We have calculated Living Income Reference Prices for West African cocoa, and vanilla in Madagascar and Uganda. And we are working on coffee.

A Living Income Reference Price is based on the following key parameters:

- Cost of a decent standard of living (living income benchmark)
- Sustainable yields (productivity benchmark)
- Viable farm size (to fully employ the available household labour)
- Cost of sustainable production (in order to achieve above-mentioned yields)

\* The cost of sustainable production will include the cost of a fair remuneration of hired labour on smallholder farms. Hence, the Living Income Reference Price would cover both a living income for the farmer household as well as a living wage for hired workers.

## 2. Fairtrade sales:



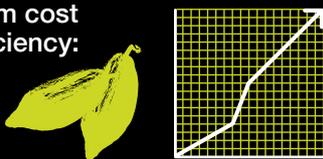
The more farmers sell on Fairtrade terms, the larger the impact of sustainable pricing. Fairtrade works in more than 20 countries to raise consumer awareness and promote demand for Fairtrade products.

## 3. Sustainable farm yields:



There is still a lot of room for improving productivity and resilience on most smallholder farms. When farmers can grow the same amount on less land, they free up space for other crops to supplement their income and reduce their dependency on a single product. Boosting productivity requires investment, which the Fairtrade Premium can provide (see below).

## 4. Farm cost efficiency:



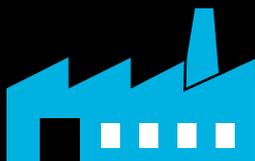
We are developing tools to help farmers track their actual production costs and revenues, equipping them to make informed business decisions and become more efficient farmers.

## 5. Producer organisation efficiency:



Fairtrade producer networks support co-operatives to improve their governance and management capacity, so they are strong and reliable business partners, create value for their members and gain access to important additional services such as loans.

## 6. Strategic Premium use:



Small-scale producer organisations often invest their Premium funds into productivity and quality improvement, supporting their members to achieve sustainable yields. They can also choose to invest in things like business development, better service delivery or processing facilities that expand farmers' share of the value chain.

## 7. An enabling environment:



Government policy, including aid strategy and business regulation, has a critical role to play. We are campaigning alongside like-minded companies, governments and civil society to make living incomes for farmers the norm.

## Women's School of Leadership

We continue to see results coming from our Women's School of Leadership, which aims to empower women and increase women's leadership in Fairtrade co-operatives. Set up by Fairtrade Africa and initially funded by Co-op and Compass Group UK & Ireland, it has been supporting women to gain practical skills and greater confidence. Through training, women are gaining the power to take ownership of their lives through their increased capacity to make decisions, to take control and to manage resources. The training has also meant supporting the women to actively participate and voluntarily take on leadership roles in producer organisations and in their communities.

So far, the programme has reached nearly 1,000 women and over 200 men, from more than 20 communities across seven co-operatives in Côte d'Ivoire. The women have established a Women's Association in each of the seven co-operatives, and have submitted proposals in each co-operative for income-generating projects. They have also fought and won access to land to grow their own crops, and worked together to run savings groups that strengthen their income in the long-term.



## LEADING THE WAY

Rosine Bekoin is a graduate of the Women's School of Leadership, and Secretary of the Women's Society at CAYAT cocoa co-operative in Côte d'Ivoire.

Leading the way, standing out and speaking up appears to come naturally to Rosine. But it hasn't always been that way. As a graduate of the Fairtrade Africa Women's School of Leadership, Rosine trained for this. She picked up skills and ideas at the School to share with other women in the co-operative to improve their situation. Rosine believes firmly in the power of women to play a key role bringing communities out of poverty.

**She says: 'They [lots of women] don't believe they can do it. If you ask them who is the head of the family, they say the man. Why can't you be the head of the family, a woman? If you can save money, you can be the head of the family... Why are you walking behind? Put yourself in front, women!'**

But even with these changes and the women's determination, Rosine knows there is still a long way to go. It's not a daunting thought for her. She dreams of seeing women go right to the top: **'And then, to have our children, girls too, to work in their offices, like as we see on the TV, the ministers, the President – why can't a female producer be the President too? We can do it.'**

## West Africa Cocoa Programme

In recognition of the specific challenges facing cocoa farmers, Fairtrade established the West Africa Cocoa Programme in 2016 to provide further support to them. The programme helps co-operatives to become stronger, more inclusive and viable businesses that are better equipped to respond to their members' needs. It is helping thousands of farmers by giving co-operatives technical support and training, which supplements the financial benefits they receive through sales under Fairtrade terms.

This means farmers have the resources to put the training into action and are able to purchase whatever resources, tools, transport or equipment they need to run their farms. Fairtrade is carrying out monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of its long-term goal of increasing farmers' incomes. While the project is ongoing, there are positive indications that this support is helping farmers to improve their yields, a key element of our living income strategy.



Pauline Ahin'da attending women's literacy class in Premium-built agricultural school, a service delivered by CAPRESSA cocoa co-operative, Apprompron, Côte d'Ivoire

## PILOTING NEW APPROACHES WITH BEN & JERRY'S

Ben & Jerry's are working jointly with Fairtrade, Sustainable Food Lab and Barry Callebaut on an innovative pilot in Côte d'Ivoire to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers through Fairtrade pricing, improved farming practices and access to livelihood-improving assets.

Ben & Jerry's already source Fairtrade ingredients for their ice cream, but wanted to go further to address the systemic problems of low incomes for cocoa farmers. And so 2020 has seen the launch of a new phase of the programme, which seeks to offset carbon while ensuring livelihood gains for farmer households, and especially women.

The programme has provided packages of shade trees for the farms and cookstoves for the households, the latter alleviating the need to cut down forest for firewood, and reducing the health risks of smoke. Women will be able to save money by not spending on cooking fuel, and will also save time that used to be spent collecting firewood. Meanwhile, the shade trees prolong the lifespan of their cocoa plantations. Thanks to Ben & Jerry's Fairtrade sourcing and commitment to Fairtrade Africa's West Africa Cocoa Programme, women in the co-operatives covered by the pilot have received training and report feeling more empowered. Moreover, always striving to ensure the best outcome for the farmers in their supply chains, Ben & Jerry's are now working with Fairtrade to further promote the women's groups in the co-operatives through bespoke business support.

*Campaigning for change*

We launched our ‘She Deserves a Living Income’ campaign during Fairtrade Fortnight 2019, calling on everyone to play their part in making living incomes a reality for cocoa farmers, especially women. The campaign made a huge noise. There were 4,000 campaigner events reaching one million people, 10,000 new supporters joining us on our journey, and businesses and MPs making their voices heard on the issue. A total of 75 MPs attended our campaign launch in Parliament.

Meanwhile, on 7 August 2019, Côte d'Ivoire's Independence Day, Fairtrade campaigners joined Fairtrade Foundation staff at 10 Downing Street to hand in a petition with more than 50,000 signatures. It called for Prime Minister Boris Johnson to back cocoa farmers fighting for a fairer deal through UK-funded aid projects, business and human rights legislation, and by joining international efforts that unite governments, chocolate companies and civil society to achieve living incomes.

The Secretary of State for DFID, Alok Sharma MP, praised Fairtrade's campaign in his written response to our petition and noted a number of areas of existing DFID support that ‘encourages the growth of more ‘for benefit’ businesses in the cocoa supply chain.’ While this work is welcome, we encourage DFID to explicitly place achieving living incomes and wages at the heart of its Economic Development Strategy, supporting programmes and businesses that are taking demonstrable steps towards this goal through their purchasing practices and other interventions, and excluding those that do not. Stronger signals on the need for living incomes and wages from DFID would boost ‘first mover’ action by businesses across the cocoa industry and beyond.



Harriett Baldwin MP (left), former DFID and Foreign Office Minister, with Awa Traoré, Director of CAYAT co-operative, at the Fairtrade Fortnight 2019 parliamentary reception

## Growing momentum for change in the chocolate world

In the rest of the chocolate world, a number of promising initiatives are building momentum towards the collective action we need to achieve the greatest difference for cocoa farmers.

### *Living Income Differential*

Farmer incomes will increase further next year with the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana's remarkable policy decision in June last year to introduce a 'Living Income Differential'. From 1 October 2020, the governments' intervention will see farm gate prices for cocoa increase to \$1,820 per metric tonne.

Fairtrade strongly welcomed this announcement.<sup>15</sup> As proud as we are of our impact, since the majority of cocoa produced in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana is not Fairtrade certified, the governments' intervention is a real opportunity to drive change at scale for farmers in the two countries.

We should note that the price of \$1,820 still leaves some way to go by comparison with Fairtrade's definition of a Living Income Reference Price at \$2,200 per metric tonne at farm gate in Côte d'Ivoire and \$2,100 in Ghana.

### *Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa*

Fairtrade is also part of a promising new initiative on living incomes in cocoa due to launch this year, bringing together European governments, chocolate companies, traders, retailers, civil society organisations and certifiers.

The Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa now has the support of the German, Dutch, Swiss and Belgian governments, traders Barry Callebaut and Olam, the chocolate company Ferrero, Rainforest Alliance and the VOICE Network. The Alliance aims to contribute to systemic change in the cocoa sector to ensure that farmers receive a living income. It will seek to encourage collaborative action, both to achieve greater impact at scale and to create efficiency by avoiding duplication, promote policy dialogue and provide expertise. The Alliance will build on already existing organisations and initiatives.

### *Beyond Chocolate in Belgium*

One such initiative is the Belgian government's Beyond Chocolate partnership. This is made up of Fairtrade Belgium and a number of Belgium-based chocolate companies, traders and retailers. Signatories to this exciting and ambitious partnership have committed to enabling cocoa farmers to earn a living income by 2030. It also commits the partners to ending deforestation due to cocoa-growing for the Belgian chocolate sector by the same date. By 2025, all chocolate produced and/or sold in Belgium will be part of a certification scheme, including but not limited to Fairtrade.<sup>16</sup>

### *Fairtrade joins calls for HRDD in cocoa*

Fairtrade was pleased to join Mars, Mondelez International, Barry Callebaut, Rainforest Alliance and the VOICE Network in calling for **strong new EU regulations** to ensure cocoa imported into the EU is truly sustainable for people and our planet. Most critically, for Fairtrade, the joint position paper states the ultimate aim is a fully sustainable cocoa supply chain that provides living incomes for cocoa farmers.<sup>17</sup>

As by far the largest importer and consumer of cocoa in the world – the majority of it from West Africa – the European countries between them have a greater ability than any other consumer market to drive change in the cocoa sector. It also has a clear duty and the opportunity to take responsibility and demonstrate leadership, including through legislative action to address these issues. A Europe-wide approach to due diligence will benefit all actors in the supply chain in terms of a clear and consistent set of rules and common intent.

It will be important that the burden of costs of implementation of any legislation are not passed to farmers who are living in poverty. Well-written legislation is designed with a multi-stakeholder approach that is inclusive of governments, civil society, companies and, critically, farmers. Giving farmers a voice in their future is central to Fairtrade's own structures and consultative processes, and we expect to see this in any proposed legislation.<sup>18</sup>

In our recommendations, we set out our proposals for how this progress can be built on, and the role the UK Government and UK chocolate companies should play. But as welcome as this progress has been, there is still a long way to go towards achieving living incomes for cocoa farmers.

### *Retailers in Germany sign voluntary agreement to promote living incomes and wages*

In January 2020, a group of large German supermarkets, including Aldi and Lidl, signed a voluntary joint agreement pledging to work towards living incomes and wages in their agricultural supply chains, including cocoa. Convened by the German government, the agreement sees retailers pledge to a number of actions. These include embedding living incomes and wages into their sustainability policies, making their supply chains more transparent and increasing traceability, assessing income and wage gaps, and supporting responsible sourcing.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.fairtrade.net/news/fairtrade-supports-implementation-of-a-living-income-differential>

<sup>16</sup> Beyond Chocolate Initiative <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/initiative/beyondchocolate>

<sup>17</sup> Joint position paper on the EU's policy and regulatory approach to cocoa (2019) <https://www.voicenetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Joint-position-paper-on-the-EUs-policy-and-regulatory-approach-to-cocoa.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Fairtrade International blog on the HRDD joint position <https://www.fairtrade.net/news/why-fairtrade-supports-strong-euregulations-cocoa>

<sup>19</sup> Commitment by German Retailers Working Group on Living Income and Living Wages <https://www.nachhaltige-agrarlieferketten.org/aktuelles/living-income-arbeitsgruppe-gemeinsame-erklaerung/> (in German)



Salimata Diakite cooking at her family home in Abengourou, Côte d'Ivoire

# CHAPTER 2 – THE STORY OF THE ‘INVISIBLE WOMEN’

Unfortunately, the unpalatable truth in the cocoa industry is that the production of this precious commodity rests all too often on inequality, injustice and exploitation. The average cocoa farmer in Ghana earns around \$1 per day (around 75p), with farmers in Côte d’Ivoire earning less than \$1 per day.<sup>20</sup> In both cases, this is well below the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per day (about £1.40). And even further behind the amount a living income is estimated to be – US\$2.50 (about £1.86) per person per day in Côte d’Ivoire and US\$2.16 (about £1.60) per person per day in Ghana.<sup>21</sup> This already unacceptable situation is even worse for a large number of women farmers.

In Côte d’Ivoire, women carry out 68 percent of the labour involved in cocoa farming and yet the Africa Development Bank estimates that they earn just 21 percent of the income generated.<sup>22</sup> Research by the KIT Royal Tropical Institute has shown that female-headed households in Ghana have around a third less income than male-headed households.<sup>23</sup>



**WOMEN CARRY OUT 68 PERCENT OF THE LABOUR IN COCOA FARMING, BUT EARN AROUND 21 PERCENT OF THE INCOME.**

<sup>20</sup> Estimated figures are based on best available evidence at the time of publication. Conversions into £ are approximations as they are based on 2018 exchange rate (exchange rates fluctuate and therefore \$ are most accurate)

<sup>21</sup> D. Taylor, *Craving a Change in Chocolate*, Fairtrade Foundation (2019) <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/~/-/media/FairtradeUK/Resources%20Library/Fairtrade%20Fortnight%202019/Craving%20a%20Change%20in%20Chocolate%20-%20February%202019.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> African Development Bank *Economic Empowerment of African Women through Equitable Participation in Agricultural Value Chains* (2015) [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Economic\\_Empowerment\\_of\\_African\\_Women\\_through\\_Equitable\\_Participation\\_in\\_Agricultural\\_Value\\_Chains.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Economic_Empowerment_of_African_Women_through_Equitable_Participation_in_Agricultural_Value_Chains.pdf)

We commissioned new research to better understand the situation facing women cocoa farmers. We published this separately so that the detailed findings are available to those working in the cocoa sector.<sup>24</sup> Far from being a ‘male crop’ when men do all the ‘hard work’ as commonly depicted, women’s labour is crucial for cocoa production. Men are able to intensify their cocoa farming, and expand and upgrade as farmers, because they rely on women (single or multiple spouses, sisters, daughters and other younger women in their care) growing food crops and doing the household work, while also undertaking certain cocoa farming tasks.

These tasks include weeding and preparing the land for planting; purchasing seeds and seedlings; planting cocoa seedlings; caring for young trees and intercropping of food crops while the trees are young; harvesting and plucking; pod-breaking; carrying the beans to the homestead or depot; fermenting and drying, and bagging the dried beans. In fact, there are few tasks that are mostly undertaken by men alone.<sup>25</sup>



**WOMEN SPEND 1.5 MORE TIMES ON DOMESTIC (UNPAID) WORK THAN MEN – 26 HOURS VS 10.**

Meanwhile, it has been estimated that women spend on average 1.5 more times on domestic (unpaid) work than men (26 hours vs 10). And when considering household, farming and other non-farm tasks together, women’s working hours exceed those of men by nearly 30 percent.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Median total income is US\$1,153 a year for female-headed households, compared to US\$1,740 a year for a typical male-headed household. Marcelo Tyszler, Roger Bymolt and Anna Laven, *Analysis of the income gap of cocoa producing households in Ghana*, KIT Royal Tropical Institute, (2018) <https://cocoainitiative.org/knowledge-centre-post/analysis-of-the-income-gap-of-cocoa-producing-households-in-ghana>

<sup>24</sup> This detailed study is published separately by the Fairtrade Foundation. D. Skalidou, *Cocoa and the ‘invisible’ women* (2019), <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/~/-/media/FairtradeUK/What%20is%20Fairtrade/Documents/cocoa-and-the-invisible-women.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> S. Barrientos and A.O. Bobie, *Promoting gender equality in the cocoa-chocolate value chain: opportunities and challenges in Ghana*, GDI Working Paper, 2016-006 (2016)

<sup>26</sup> R. Vargas Hill and M. Vigneri, *Mainstreaming gender sensitivity in cash crop market supply chains*, ESA Working Paper No.11-08 (2011)

Despite their central role in cocoa production, women face many more constraints than men, too, both as landowners or labour providers.

Just 25 percent of women cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire own land.<sup>27</sup> Even those who do own their land tend to have smaller, more remote and less productive farms. The small size of their land makes them less able to achieve economies of scale. Because land rights tend to be weaker if land is left fallow for long periods of time, women facing greater land tenure insecurity may not be able to leave their land to recover, undermining its fertility and therefore future profitability.<sup>28</sup> These women also tend to have less ability to mobilise workers (whether it be unpaid labour from other family members, or wage labourers), and face more restrictions in accessing inputs, extension services, training and credit. As a result, they also have lower returns from cocoa production.<sup>29</sup> Women who do not have a partner to share the farm work need to hire more casual labour, increasing their costs.

But special attention needs to be directed at an additional group of women who tend to be invisible to market, research and policy actors – those who lack land ownership.

On cocoa farms owned by men, their wives will not usually have the right documentation – known as a farm passbook – that not only provides rights to the farming land and the profits from the harvest (ie access to tangible economic resources) but also visibility. That means a lack of access to co-operative membership, agricultural extension services, inputs, training, financial credit and premium payments from certification schemes.<sup>30</sup> It also means they are not participating in farming and community-related decision-making – through being part of farmers' organisations or development interventions, for example. As a result of all this, women's agency and access are significantly constrained.

The wives of farmers who are sharecroppers can similarly lack access and agency. Sharecroppers, usually migrant farmers from poorer areas neighbouring the cocoa lands, receive one third of the cocoa crop in exchange for performing all the necessary production tasks of a mature farm (ie spraying, weeding and harvesting).<sup>31</sup> But they do not own the land on which they farm – it is owned by others. As such, sharecroppers and their wives face similar barriers to their access and agency.

Added to this, though the practice appears to be fading away among the current generation of cocoa farmers, it remains common for farmers who are sharecroppers to have more than one wife or partner. These women are seen as providing additional (unpaid) labour, but some research suggests that the second or 'junior' wife may have little choice or control and are particularly disempowered.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Antonie Fountain & Friedel Huetz-Adams, *Cocoa Barometer 2018*, <https://www.voicework.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2018-Cocoa-Barometer.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> M. Goldstein and C. Udry, 'The profits of power: land rights and agricultural investment in Ghana', p.3

<sup>29</sup> R.Vargas Hill and M. Vigneri, *Mainstreaming gender sensitivity in cash crop market supply chains*, ESA Working Paper No.11-08 (2011)

<sup>30</sup> S. Smith, 'Assessing the gender impacts of Fairtrade', *Social Enterprise Journal*, vol. 9, no.1 (2013), p.102; R. Meinzen-Dick et al., 'Women's land rights as a pathway to poverty reduction: Framework and review of available evidence', *Agricultural Systems*, vol.172 (2019), p.72; D. Skalidou, In or out?: Exploring selection processes of farmers in cocoa sustainability standards and certification programmes in Ghana, PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia (2018)

## SHARECROPPING EXPLAINED



- Sharecropping agreements are widespread in cocoa production, at least in Ghana.<sup>33</sup> Under these agreements, land-owners leave the care of already developed farms (ie already bearing fruits) to sharecroppers who receive one third of the crop in exchange for maintaining the farm.



- Sharecroppers, usually migrant farmers from poorer areas (such as the northern and eastern regions of Ghana, Burkina Faso and Togo), can be considered both tenant farmers and labourers, 'dependent yet independent', at the same time.<sup>34</sup>



- Therefore, they can be seen as a hybrid between the two, being paid their share as 'labourers', but also paying over a share of the crop as 'tenants'.<sup>35</sup> This ambiguity often renders sharecroppers (and those farming with them, such as wives and other family members) invisible to research and policy actors.

Even ambitious goals to enable cocoa farmers to achieve a living income will fall short without full consideration of the situation of invisible women within intervention strategies. This will require specific interventions, tailored to address the different challenges they face.

In the next section, we set out revised recommendations for how the UK Government and UK chocolate companies can work towards living incomes for all, and in particular women cocoa farmers and workers.

<sup>31</sup> T. Takane, 'Incentives embedded in institutions: the case of share contracts in Ghanaian cocoa production', *The Developing Economies*, vol. 38, no. 3 (2000), p.374; M.H. Knudsen, and N. Fold, 'Land distribution and acquisition practices in Ghana's cocoa frontier: The impact of a state-regulated marketing system', *Land Use Policy*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2011), p. 378

<sup>32</sup> D. Skalidou, In or out?: Exploring selection processes of farmers in cocoa sustainability standards and certification programmes in Ghana. PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia (2018)

<sup>33</sup> S. Boni, *Clearing the Ghanaian forest*. Institute of African Studies, University of Legon, Ghana (2005); T. Takane, 'Incentives embedded in institutions: the case of share contracts in Ghanaian cocoa production', *The Developing Economies*, vol. 38, no. 3, (2000), p.374

<sup>34</sup> A. Robertson, 'On sharecropping', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol.15, no.3 (1980), p.411

<sup>35</sup> A. Robertson, 'On sharecropping', p.411

Women working on a community farm in Kotobi, Côte d'Ivoire, founded by graduates of the Women's School of Leadership



# CHAPTER 3 – OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The ambitious goals and targets to end poverty, support small-scale farmers and provide decent work for all enshrined in the SDGs will not be met unless there is urgent action to support farmers in some of the poorest parts of the world and make living incomes possible for cocoa farmers, especially the ‘invisible women’ of cocoa. This large group of ‘in-work poor’ – there are estimated to be two million cocoa farmers in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana<sup>36</sup> – need to be prioritised by decision-makers.

**We renew our call on governments, chocolate companies, traders, and retailers alike to set ambitious, timetabled commitments to achieve living incomes in cocoa.**

**We also call for specific action to address the situation of women cocoa farmers, especially those who are particularly disempowered, or invisible. All policy and programme interventions in cocoa should address the challenges facing women cocoa farmers, with tailored action plans and strategies.**

Below, we outline an updated agenda for action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UK GOVERNMENT

### 1. Play a leadership role – join the Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa

As highlighted earlier in this report, the Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa now has the support of the German, Dutch, Swiss and Belgian governments, as well as a growing number of cocoa traders and companies, certifiers and CSOs, including Fairtrade. The Alliance aims to contribute to systemic change in the cocoa sector to ensure that farmers receive a living income.

- **We urge the UK Government to join this international initiative by the end of 2020.**
- **We encourage the Alliance and its members to take collaborative action to address the challenges facing women cocoa farmers, including the invisible women this report has identified.**

### 2. Support HRDD in cocoa

Fairtrade is calling on the EU to enact legislation that requires all companies placing cocoa or cocoa products on the EU market to enact mandatory due diligence on human rights, child labour and the effects of cocoa production on the environment. We have co-signed a joint position paper in support of this with trader Barry Callebaut, chocolate companies Mars and Mondelez International, certifiers and CSOs.<sup>37</sup>

We are calling on the EU to:

- a) Establish a regulatory and policy framework within the EU to ensure that companies conduct human rights and environmental due diligence in their supply chains. This will help encourage sustainable cocoa production, support consumer trust and help sustain market demand for cocoa from West Africa over the long-term.
- b) Aim to negotiate bilateral agreements with cocoa origin governments to create the frameworks necessary to achieve the aim of sustainable cocoa, and provide financial and technical support to those governments to do so.

We are calling on the EU to begin a consultative process around due diligence regulation on cocoa this year with a draft regulation to be published no later than the end of 2020.

**Though Britain is leaving the EU, we urge the UK Government to bring forward HRDD regulations that align with those being proposed at the EU, and include similar bilateral arrangements in any new trade deals with cocoa origin governments.**

<sup>36</sup> Antonie Fountain & Friedel Huetz-Adams, *Cocoa Barometer 2018*, <http://www.cocoabarometer.org>

<sup>37</sup> The full proposal can be read at <https://www.voicenetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Joint-position-paper-on-the-EUs-policy-and-regulatory-approach-to-cocoa.pdf>



Salimata Diakite (right), graduate of the Women's School of Leadership, discusses income generation plans with members of her women's association, Abengourou, Côte d'Ivoire

### 3. Interventions on the ground – how to make sure they reach women

Ambitious goals to enable cocoa farmers to achieve a living income will fall short without specific interventions to reach women cocoa farmers.

**We renew our call for DFID to put achieving living incomes and wages at the heart of its Economic Development Strategy, supporting programmes and businesses that take living income seriously.**

**In addition, below we set out suggestions for how donors such as DFID, working with the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and the chocolate industry, could design and implement gender-sensitive programmes that would help enhance women's economic empowerment.**

#### a) Programme design – what do programmes need to look like to reach invisible women?

The most effective programmes will not 'bolt on' action to support women but develop gender-sensitive theories of change to critically think about the design, implementation and evaluation of their initiatives and programmes. This will be needed if interventions are to effectively reach and engage all women involved in cocoa production, including those who are hard-to-reach and especially disempowered. Programme design should also consider how women with different degrees of access and agency can potentially benefit from the intervention.

Programme design needs to be conducted in a participatory process together with all women involved in cocoa production. This will ensure that programmes are better aligned with their needs, account for female-specific barriers, and enhance women's ownership and empowerment over the programme.

It is important that women are not inadvertently blocked from taking part in programmes – barriers to participation need to be accounted for. For example, land ownership or entitlement should not be a requirement for women to participate. Other factors such as education levels, gender-based violence or reproductive health should be identified and accounted for.

A process of permission and trust-building is likely to be important or may be necessary in order to open up the space to engage more marginalised women. If women are marginalised and hidden, men are most likely to resist their participation. This should include working with men to build awareness and support for gender equality, at the farm, community, co-operative or producer organisation level.

#### b) Programme implementation – turning theory into practice

It is not enough to increase access in theory to economic opportunities. Women need to be able to access them in practice, by enhancing their agency over those resources – their self-confidence, leadership and decision-making abilities.

Given that women involved in cocoa production are far more likely to lack land holdings than men, it is crucial that women in roles of unpaid family (for example spouses or daughters), sharecroppers or wage labour are assisted too. In the Ghanaian context, encouraging husbands to hand out passbooks to wives can also lead to female access and agency enhancement.

Interventions should ensure that women lacking access to land still get access to other resources, such as premium payments, inputs and credit.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, activities that can boost one's

<sup>38</sup> S. Barrientos, 'Women in cocoa production: where is the gender equity?', *The Guardian*, 8 March 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/women-cocoa-production-gender-equity>, (accessed 04 September 2019)

agency such as training and extension services should be open to all those engaged in cocoa farming, regardless of membership status – thereby ensuring that all women can take part.<sup>39</sup>

Interventions should explicitly focus on women without, however, excluding men. Programmes should take gender-differentiated roles and opportunities into account. Evidence suggests that getting men's support is critical to, and often necessary for, the success of gender-responsive projects.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, effective communication regarding participation eligibility should be used to engage hard-to-reach women, tackle misconceptions (such as around their own eligibility) and ensure their participation in programme design and activities.

### c) Ideas to pilot

There is an urgent need for innovative ideas to enhance the access and agency of women cocoa farmers. Below, we put forward two suggestions that we think could work well, but would need proper testing through pilots.

#### 1. Improve women's access and agency

Quotas could be used to increase the representation of women and to ensure their participation in management decisions. This could apply to user groups, rural producer organisations, service provider organisations, governing boards and policy-making bodies.<sup>41</sup>

Women-targeted unconditional or conditional cash transfers (conditional on children's school attendance), could be an option to explore and pilot. Such transfers could allow women to pay school fees, and hire extra labour when needed. They could also take the form of direct access to credit.

#### 2. Support women's organisations

Women-only producer organisations could be a mechanism to facilitate women's market participation, as they may feel that their interests are better served, in comparison with producer organisations dominated by men.<sup>42</sup> As mentioned previously, our Women's School of Leadership programme is seeing women set up their own Women's Associations which, among other things, is helping them set up income-generating projects to diversify their incomes. There have been positive experiences in other commodities that can be learnt from, including Fairtrade's Women in Coffee programme in Kenya.<sup>43</sup> Women's organisations could improve their access to inputs and certification-related premium use, serve as a product and price differentiation strategy by creating a 'produced-by-women' brand, increase their participation in organisational decision-making and make women's work more visible across the value chain.<sup>44</sup>

However, at least in the short-term, women-only groups may be more restricted by a lack of knowledge, communication and resources than mixed producer organisations. It is therefore important to directly support women's organisations with working capital and technical support.<sup>45</sup>

### d) Gender mainstreaming

In addition to the ideas put forward above for specific programmes to support women cocoa farmers, more could be done to mainstream gender in all cocoa-related policies and programmes.

Recruiting and training women as service providers (such as delivering agricultural inputs, training or credit), or running a scholarship scheme for girls have proven to be effective ways to improve the gender balance in service delivery.

There is evidence that the Gender National Services in Côte d'Ivoire<sup>46</sup> was effective in creating awareness on gender issues and helping mainstream gender across national policies. There may be value in the cocoa boards of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana creating a specific body aimed at gender mainstreaming.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UK CHOCOLATE INDUSTRY

At the World Cocoa Forum in 2018, stakeholders including the global chocolate industry agreed they should develop and implement policies that enable cocoa farmers to make a living income.<sup>47</sup> As this report has noted, steps have been taken towards that goal but much remains to be done.

We call on UK-based chocolate companies, traders and supermarkets to:

- Join the Alliance on Living Incomes in Cocoa.
- Support the introduction of HRDD legislation in the UK and across Europe, as set out previously.
- Design and implement gender-sensitive programmes that would help enhance the economic empowerment of women cocoa farmers, as set out previously.
- Commit to sourcing their cocoa on Fairtrade terms as a first step.
- Commit to the goal of ensuring that cocoa farmers receive a living income by 2030.

<sup>39</sup> S. Barrientos and A.O. Bobie, *Promoting gender equality in the cocoa-chocolate value chain: opportunities and challenges in Ghana*, GDI Working Paper, 2016-006 (2016) p.32

<sup>40</sup> J. Ashby et al., 'Investing in women as drivers of agricultural growth', *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook* (2008)

<sup>41</sup> J. Ashby et al., 'Investing in women as drivers of agricultural growth', p.6

<sup>42</sup> C. Oya et al., *Effects of certification schemes for agricultural production on socio-economic outcomes in low- and middle- income countries: a systematic review*

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Media-Centre/Blog/2018/February/Women-doing-it-for-themselves-the-first-coffee-grown-by-women>

<sup>44</sup> C. Oya et al., *Effects of certification schemes for agricultural production on socio-economic outcomes in low- and middle- income countries: a systematic review*

<sup>45</sup> Cocoanect, 'The Women in Cocoa Business Initiative, Ivory Coast, [website] (2017) <http://www.cocoanect.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Women-in-cocoa-business-initiative-2017.pdf>, (accessed 4 September 2019)

<sup>46</sup> The World Bank et al., *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, Washington DC (2009) p.74

<sup>47</sup> ICCO Berlin Declaration of the Fourth World Cocoa Conference (2018) <https://www.icco.org/about-us/icco-news/387-berlin-declaration-of-the-fourth-world-cocoa-conference.html>

# CONCLUSION

With only ten years left to meet the SDGs, urgent action is needed to enable all cocoa farmers, especially women, to reach a living income. These ambitions will fall short without addressing the position of invisible women, and doing so will require tailored interventions.

We call on the UK Government and UK-based chocolate companies to act with ambition and commitment, and join us in ending the exploitation of cocoa's invisible women.



**COCOA FARMERS DESERVE  
A LIVING INCOME**



Toure Mariam (left) running a training session for the women's savings group, AVEC, in Gore Ya Plohi village (the woman on the right is a member of AVEC)

This report was written by David Taylor, drawing on research by Dafni Skalidou and Léna Prouchet.

For more information please contact:

David Taylor  
Policy Manager, Fairtrade Foundation  
david.taylor@fairtrade.org.uk

**fairtrade.org.uk**

Fairtrade Foundation,  
5.7 The Loom, 14 Gower's Walk,  
London E1 8PY

Tel +44 (0) 20 7405 5942 Email: [mail@fairtrade.org.uk](mailto:mail@fairtrade.org.uk)

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Front cover image for illustrative purposes only.

Top row, left to right: Amanie Melanie, CEAA; Kouassi N'da Assoh, CEAA;  
Adringa Yaoua, CAYAT. Bottom row, left to right: Ahou Yvonne, SCOOPACA;  
Bity Sylvie Corinne, CEAA; Kone Fatim, CEAA. All Côte d'Ivoire.



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