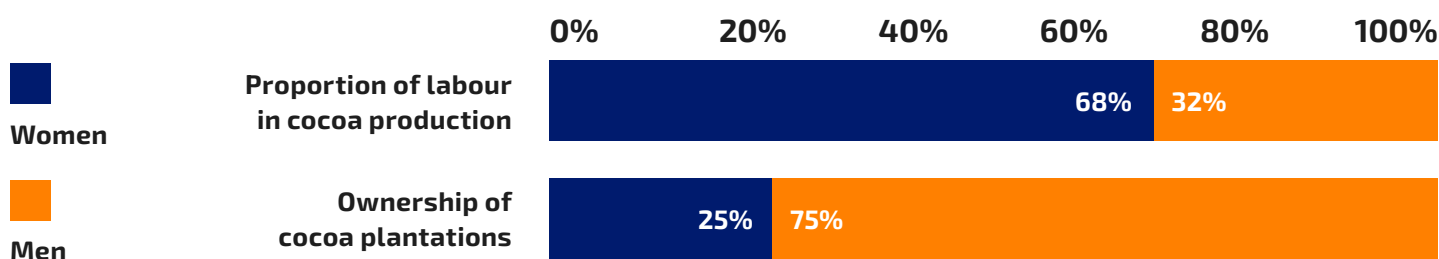


Fairtrade Cocoa and Opportunities for Women



Working with small-scale producer organizations is at the core of Fairtrade's approach to improving the livelihoods of Fairtrade cocoa farmers. Through the [Fairtrade West Africa Cocoa Program \(WACP\)](#), cooperatives are becoming stronger organizations, responsive to their members' and business partners' needs and beneficial to their communities. Our long-term aim is a sustainable relationship for all stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain.

Women's contribution to cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire is under-recognized and under-rewarded.¹



Women want to develop as farmers and take on leadership roles in cooperatives and communities. We support communities' actions to advance women's economic empowerment through our standards, support to cooperatives and the Women's School of Leadership. Working together, we attempt to reverse patterns of discrimination against women and sensitize men to promote recognition and gender equality.^{2,3}

Fairtrade Standards

The Fairtrade Standards are designed to promote gender equality in cooperatives, increase female participation, and empower more women and girls to access the benefits of Fairtrade. They:

- Prohibit discrimination based on gender or marital status.
- Prohibit sexually intimidating, abusive and exploitative behaviour.
- Require cooperatives to develop a gender policy which supports women's equality and promotes opportunities for women and girls
- Encourage the use of Fairtrade Premium funds to support disadvantaged populations. For example the cocoa cooperative CAYAT used their Premium funds to set up a radio station to promote messaging on women's empowerment in rural areas, as well as raise awareness about protecting children's rights.⁴
- Encourage cooperatives to develop a gender policy which supports women's equality and promotes opportunities for women and girls.

Women in Fairtrade Cooperatives

Fairtrade certified cooperatives are encouraged to identify challenges specific to women and girls as farmers and leaders, and take steps to address them. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, CAYAT created a Women's Society to help women overcome cultural barriers preventing them from owning land and earning their own income.



Rosine's Story

Rosine is a cocoa farmer in the CAYAT cooperative which sells Fairtrade cocoa to Europe. She has diversified her income by harvesting other crops and running a chicken farm. Rosine benefitted from the Fairtrade Premium as she received organic fertilizers at lower costs from her cooperative.

The Women's School of Leadership

At the Women's School of Leadership in Côte d'Ivoire, women acquire skills to improve their livelihoods, become more economically empowered and take on leadership roles in their cooperatives and communities. In 2021, the Ivorian Ministry of Gender, Women and Children pledged to support several income-generating activities by graduates.⁵ The program has been so effective it has attracted \$1.63 million USD from donors and commercial partners. It is being extended into Ghana with funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Our Aim

To mentor and strengthen women in their communities to reinforce their self-empowerment and leadership role.

The four phases of the year-long Women's School of Leadership program:

- 1. Identifying participants** including women in leadership positions, women in transition (e.g. single mothers, victims of abuse, widows), marginalized women and men in power.
- 2. Delivering quarterly training** covering leadership, personal development, law, management, communication, women in the economy, savings, and investments.
- 3. Establishing committees** which build community awareness about gender equality. Women participate in cooperative management, coaching and knowledge exchange.
- 4. Setting up a Women's Association** to support income-generating activities. We also promote access to savings and microfinance through village savings and loans associations.



“At the end of this training program, I feel like an accomplished woman. This training has reframed and boosted me; I now feel that I am ready to face challenges as a woman.”

Kouamé Amenan Rose, Graduate from Cohort 2

The Women's School of Leadership program includes training on topics such as human rights, entrepreneurship and financial management. It builds women producers' and workers' capacity to overcome discrimination in land ownership, access to information, access to credit and agricultural inputs.

Women use their learning in their communities during the program. At the end of the year, participants develop ideas for microenterprise projects to diversify income and present these to their cooperatives. The women then launch their projects with funds and support from their cooperatives, and regular mentoring from Fairtrade Africa.

Our Impact - Women's School of Leadership from 2017 to 2023



Participation

- **14 Fairtrade cooperatives** in Côte d'Ivoire delivered leadership training and mentoring.
- **7 Fairtrade cooperatives** in East Côte d'Ivoire attended the first cohort of the program.
- **7 Fairtrade cooperatives** in West Côte d'Ivoire attended phase two.



Awareness

- **57 communities** hosted community awareness sessions on gender issues.
- **6,835 women** developed gender awareness and sensitivity by working with graduates.



Activism

- **299 participants** have graduated and act as ambassadors who train, coach and mentor other women.
- The graduates have reached over **6,317 individuals**.



Empowerment

- **97%** of SPOs in Côte d'Ivoire and **100%** in Ghana are taking measures to get **women and young people** more involved in SPO governance and membership.
- **14 income-generating micro-projects** implemented and co-financed by the program and the cooperatives.
- **7 previously inactive women's associations** were revived and continued by **14 graduates, re-grouping members in 14 Fairtrade cooperatives**.

¹ African Development Bank (2015) Economic Empowerment of African Women through Equitable Participation in Agricultural Value Chains. [🔗](#)

² Knösslsdorfe et. al. (2021) Effects of Fairtrade on farm household food security and living standards: Insights from Côte d'Ivoire, Global Food Security, 29. [🔗](#)

³ Sellare et. al. (2020) Fairtrade, Agrochemical Input Use, and Effects on Human Health and the Environment, Ecological Economics, 176. [🔗](#)

⁴ Fairtrade (2019) CAYAT: the power of a committed membership. [🔗](#)

⁵ Fairtrade (2022) Fairtrade Cocoa – our plans for farmers and businesses 2021-2025. [🔗](#)

⁶ Fairtrade (2023) West Africa Cocoa Programme Monitoring Report (Third Edition). [🔗](#)

⁷ Fairtrade (2023) West Africa Cocoa Programme Monitoring Report (Third Edition). [🔗](#)

Fair is working together

Fairtrade offers multiple ways that cocoa companies and brands can put their values into action. Work with us to transform your supply chain and discover what is fair. To learn more about the programs, policies and projects Fairtrade is working on to address gender equality, visit: fairtrade.ca/issues/gender-equality or contact: license@fairtrade.ca.

