

Fairtrade certified producers in West Africa support their communities to fight COVID-19

Fairtrade Certified Producer Organisations in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are supporting the fight against COVID-19 by providing their members with personal protective equipment and sanitary items, as well as helping to create public awareness in their communities.

In Ghana, cooperatives like Asunafo North Farmers Union, West Akyem and ABOCFA cooperative have embarked on a series of sensitization efforts in their communities to help prevent the spread of the disease. In Cote d'Ivoire, cooperatives have also embarked on education campaigns partly with support from the Conseil Café Cacao.

Asunafo North Farmers Union

Asunafo North Farmers Union is a finalist of this year's Fairtrade Awards, award winner of the 2019 Most Formalised Cooperative of the Year for the Ghana Cocoa Awards and a beneficiary of [Fairtrade's West Africa Cocoa Programme](#). The cooperative on Friday 10th April donated cash and sanitary items to the Municipal Health Directorate of the community in the Ahafo Region of Ghana. The cooperative also donated items and a cash amount to the municipal office for the National Commission on Civic Education to be distributed to the communities around Asunafo. The cooperative did this partly with funding from Tony's Chocoloney and Mondelez's Cocoa Life.

Tony's sponsored the cooperative with funds that supported the purchase of 1200 pieces of 200ml sanitizers and 1375 pieces of 500ml of liquid soap. The union itself also sponsored with 250 gallons with a tap that allows for fetch water, and 600 bottles of 500ml liquid soap both for hand washing. This soap is locally produced by the community. For their part, the cooperative provided these items with funds from their Fairtrade premium.

In addition, Asunafo cooperative donated some of the items to members of the union to be given to individual farmers for use in their homes. The cooperative has a total of 8,108 members spread across 67 communities. This gesture is a preventative measure aimed at sensitizing the farmers on the disease. The farmers were also given educational materials in the form of posters and a demonstration of handwashing to help sensitize their communities and other fellow farmers.

Asunafo North Farmers Union also sponsors a local radio talk show on Success FM which started in 2018, to educate farmers on good agricultural practices and allows them to call in with questions. In recent times, due to the global pandemic, the radio show now focuses on educating farmers on preventative measures against the corona virus disease, sensitising them on measures to keep safe and helplines to contact. The radio station reaches some 25,000 listeners across the area.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Mr. Daniel Amponsah Gyinayeh, President of Asunafo Union, said: "As a farmer cooperative, we are very concerned about our members and their welfare. We are also in our own way joining forces with local health authorities to create more public awareness and education. We are grateful to all our partners and supporters who have made it possible for us to reach out to communities as part of our contribution to helping prevent the spread of the disease".

ABOCFA supports its members

ABOCFA is a Fairtrade certified cooperative that deals with both organic and inorganic cocoa. The cooperative has also reached out to its members by donating soaps, hand sanitizers and other sanitary equipment to the members of the society. The cooperative has more than 900 members, and supports its members through [various initiatives](#).

West Akyem embarks on community sensitization and education

West Akyem farmer cooperative is a Fairtrade certified organisation. The cooperative, through the Mondelez Cocoa Life Programme, has been able to support its members and the community with posters and other educational materials on corona virus prevention. In addition to posters, the cooperative has also donated items to its members.

SCJPAB (Société coopérative des jeunes producteurs Agricoles de Bangolo)

SCJPAB in Bangolo in Cote d'Ivoire has also provided sanitary items to its members. The cooperative also organised a sensitisation awareness for its members.

As a Fairtrade certified organisations these producer organisations are committed to helping to empower their farmers in these times to ensure their safety to sustain their livelihoods and to run their households. In addition to these producer organisations, other Hired Labour organisations in Ghana such as banana exporters, Volta River Estates Limited and Golden Exotics Limited have put in place measures to ensure the safety of their staff and workers such as the provision of hand sanitizers, face and nose masks among others.

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