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New impact investment partnership, “Women for Chocolate,” launches in Ghana to ensure women cocoa farmers thrive

Seattle, USA A collaboration among [Seattle Chocolate Company](#), [Specialty Cocoa & Chocolate Associates](#), [African Cocoa Marketplace](#), [Three Mountains Cocoa](#), and [Rikolto Ghana](#) has brought a new level of support for women cocoa farmers across Ghana. Seattle Chocolate’s “women-powered” ethos and support for women and girls locally and globally was the driving force behind the collaboration, whose successful first phase has now led to a second round of impact investment.

In the start-up phase, Specialty Cocoa & Chocolate Associates worked with Seattle Chocolate to strategize Seattle Chocolate’s first impact investment in West Africa. With increased access to water as well as improved planting materials identified as top priorities, African Cocoa Marketplace then led on project implementation with Cocoa Mmaa and Three Mountains Cocoa cooperatives.

In March 2024, Seattle Chocolate Owner & CEO Jean Thompson and Brand Manager Ellie Thompson visited Ghana to see the results of these impact investments in the Three Mountains community of Takyikrom in Ashanti region: a refurbished borehole, a new borehole, and a new seedling nursery. (Subsequent to their visit, a new borehole was also completed in Cocoa Mmaa’s Teacherkrom community in Central Region, bringing the project impact to even more women farmers.)

Jean Thompson said, “It was a long journey from Seattle to the Three Mountains Cocoa cooperative and it enabled us to better understand the challenges farmers face operating in such remote locations. It was an honor to be there with the entire community to christen the new well and seedling nursery. Being there and speaking with the farmers, we could really feel the immense impact these investments will make in their lives every day. It was so gratifying to use some of the profits from the sale of chocolate in the USA to help the hard working farmers in Ghana.”

Three Mountains Cocoa Founder Leslie Agyare said, “Hosting chocolate makers from Seattle here in Ghana, we were able to share the firsthand realities of cocoa cultivation and the challenges farmers face. The community’s appreciation for the new borehole and seedling nursery with ceremony and song, showcased the positive reciprocal impact of these investments.”

For the second phase, Seattle Chocolate is co-funding an innovative capacity-building partnership with Rikolto Ghana. This phase builds upon Rikolto’s ongoing cocoa program in Ghana, which is supported by the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD). Women for Chocolate will be carried out in collaboration with Three Mountains Cocoa and their farmer groups. A special emphasis will be placed on assisting widows and other financially disadvantaged people with skills to help them prosper.

Rikolto Ghana brings extensive experience in Ghana’s cocoa sector to the next phase of impact investment. An important project outcome will be to set up Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in Three Mountains communities. As farmers earn the bulk of their cocoa income in just 3-4 months during the main harvest, lack of cash flow can be a serious problem during the rest of the year, making it very challenging to meet basic needs or provide for emergencies. VSLAs provide crucial savings and loan support to see farmers through the difficult off-harvest periods.



Rikolto will also undertake holistic programs to empower women and youth, including the Three Mountains Widows Group, providing training on alternative income-generating activities and specific coaching on nutrition.

Rikolto will also train Three Mountains farmers on regenerative agriculture to promote improved soil health and carbon capture on farms. This work will build upon the strong foundation in organic agriculture for cocoa and local food crops that Three Mountains has undertaken in its supplier communities since 2020.

Marshall Anala of Rikolto Ghana said, “We collaborate with smallholder farmers, as well as women and youth, to ensure improved and sustainable lives through a food system approach to living income interventions that secure affordable, quality food for all.”

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