



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2020
FARMER STORIES

THERESE DESERVES FAIRTRADE

THERESE BELONGS TO CAVA CO-OPERATIVE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE.

Therese believes her children deserve more. So that's her priority – doing everything she can to offer them better chances in life. In her words, **'to leave them higher'**.

Perhaps the single most important thing that happened to Therese – or didn't happen – was that she didn't go to school. **'This was devastating to me.'** She knows the opportunities education can offer, the choices it can open up. And it's left her determined to do whatever she can to make sure her children have those chances.

As an Ivorian cocoa farmer and a woman at that, Therese is one of the fortunate ones. Both she and her husband own their own cocoa farms. She belongs to a group of farmers who have a market for their beans through Fairtrade. Most importantly, this means that she has a safety net in the form of a minimum price for her crop. This is vital, as prices for cocoa are some of the most volatile on the market and frequently plunge to levels that leave farmers like Therese hungry and out of pocket.

It's this security that allows Therese and her husband to support eight children. The oldest is at university in Côte d'Ivoire's capital city, Abidjan. The others study in the biggest nearby town, which is still a bumpy two-hour drive away. They stay there, which means not only that she must pay for their fees and books, but that she must find a place for them to stay and pay for their food.

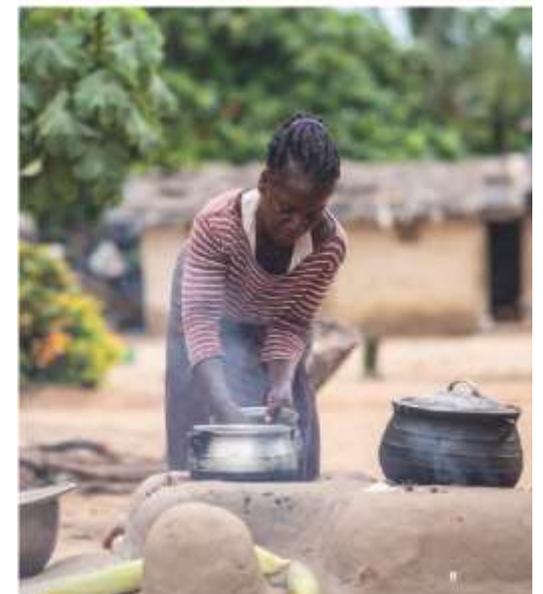
Most of her money goes on their education but there's no question the sacrifices she makes are worth it. She and her husband supplement their income with other crops, because the money from cocoa only comes in a couple of times a year and more often than not, doesn't last that long.

' I AM SUFFERING AT THE MOMENT FOR MY KIDS TO HAVE A GOOD JOB IN CITIES SO THAT THEY WILL NOT COME BACK HERE AND SUFFER AGAIN LIKE ME. '

'When there is no more cocoa at all I do peanut farming. I do bean farming, I do chilli farming, I do okra farming, to earn money, additional revenue than what I have from my cocoa farm.'

'At the moment life is very hard around here. My husband is making money from cocoa himself. I am making money as well. I am here to support my husband with the money I earn so that we can leave the children high in their studies.'

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THERESE DESERVES FAIRTRADE

As is so often the case across the world, the responsibilities of cooking, washing and cleaning the house also fall to Therese. Collectively, the co-operative she belongs to earns extra money through Fairtrade, called the Fairtrade Premium. Together they decide what they should spend it on for the most benefit to their community.

For Therese, one of the biggest changes brought about by this is the water pump. The village she lives in has seen an improvement in child health: *'In the past the water we used to have to drink, even if people were asking you to do their washing in it, you would have refused because it [the water] was unclean, but we used to boil that water before drinking.'*

‘ THANKS TO THE CO-OP CAVA, TODAY WE CAN HAVE CLEAN WATER IN OUR VILLAGE TO DRINK. IN THE PAST WHEN WE USED TO DRINK THE DIRTY WATER FROM WELLS AND RIVERS THE CHILDREN WERE GETTING SICK ALL THE TIME, BUT TODAY, BECAUSE OF THE WATER COMING FROM THE PUMP, CHILDREN ARE FEELING WELL, HEALTHIER, AND EVERYBODY IS HAPPY ABOUT THAT.’

For Therese, the price she gets now for her cocoa is better than before. She illustrates how powerless the cocoa farmers are in the supply chain. They were at the mercy of whatever anyone would pay them.

'Thanks to co-operative CAVA, we can say that CAVA is respecting the government's price, but before the co-op we used to have here, private buyers, that were hiding to come and buy, who would not respect or enforce the price. Now CAVA is respecting the price and our revenues are increasing.'

It's not all about the Fairtrade price though. Therese is keen to highlight the other benefits of being part of Fairtrade. It's not just the Premium that farmers like Therese value. It's the way the co-op is organised, and how it ensures health and safety and other rights at work are upheld.

'When I am selling through CAVA co-op, the price is respected. In addition, the co-op is in charge of the treatment, they provide pesticides, they provide boots, they provide machetes, they even provide cash money to the farmers so that they can handle the farms, this is called the Premium and I really appreciate that.'

SHARE THERESE'S STORY TO SHOW HOW FAIRTRADE SUPPORTS FARMERS PUSHED INTO POVERTY BY UNFAIR AND UNSUSTAINABLE LOW PRICES.

EDITH DESERVES FAIRTRADE



EDITH IS A MEMBER OF SCAEK CO-OPERATIVE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE.

When Edith talks about harvesting tomatoes, you can see her smiling behind her eyes. She loves the simple act of picking a ripe tomato from a plant, the satisfaction of knowing her hard work has come to fruition.

Life has thrown up some challenges for Edith, but she has not let them set her back. She deserves all these chances to grow.

Edith's life hasn't been easy, but her experiences have inspired her to change things for the better for herself, her family and her community. Edith has faced several tragedies in recent years. She's overcome them to build an incredible community of women, determined to build secure futures for their families, all supporting each other.

Edith lives in a small town in Côte d'Ivoire. She lives in a household of seven, including her son, and her brothers and sisters. She hasn't always lived here. She moved to the capital, Abidjan, to get married, and had her son there. But, when she divorced her husband, she brought her son back to her homeland, to live with her family.

Edith's mother owns a cocoa farm, and together they tend the trees and harvest the cocoa. But even as part of a Fairtrade co-operative, the cocoa trees alone don't bring in enough money. Edith is determined that she will earn enough money to take care of herself and her son into the future, whatever that might bring.

This is what feeds her entrepreneurial spirit. She's bought two motorbike taxis, and employed two local men as drivers to ferry people back and forth from their houses to their farms which are often a few kilometres out of town. She's also started a business hiring out crockery for parties, alongside farming and raising her son.

Like many people in Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa is Edith's passion. As she worked the farm with her mother, she dreamed of ways to do better with what they had. Not just for her, but her friends too.

Edith and her friend jumped at the chance to blaze a trail in the first group of women to take part in the Women's School of Leadership, a Fairtrade project to bring out confidence and skills in the women of the cocoa farming communities. During her training, her son's father suddenly died. She decided now that she alone was supporting her son, she would make sure she would always have money coming in.

The two women came back from their training brimming with ideas and excited to get started. They made some plans to help not just themselves but women from their community to earn money all year round, and have their own income. They shared their ideas with their friends and neighbours and started to bring them into their exciting plans. **(Continues next slide)**

EDITH DESERVES FAIRTRADE

But tragedy struck when her dear friend died. Edith and her community were devastated. The shock and sadness of their loss left the women unable to think about the future. Edith could barely bring herself to do anything, and lost all motivation. She thought: ***'What am I going to do now as I am alone?'***

With time, the grief became less raw and Edith remembered why they had started on their journey: because they wanted women in their community to be independent and have money to support themselves and their families. Edith knew that carrying on with their plans was the best way to honour her friend's memory. Bringing the group together was her legacy.

'We don't want to let the name of our late sister disappear. We want to keep her memory with us because she was the leader at the beginning.'

The friends put their money together to rent some land, separate to their cocoa farms. They were able to get seeds to grow vegetables on their community farm. They have already found a buyer in Abidjan for their tomatoes. They are also growing peanuts to sell, and learning how to process them. The women spend every Wednesday and Friday there, tending their crops, singing, talking and laughing as they do it, and the rest of the time on their cocoa farms. The income they receive from these crops is becoming more and more important in keeping their households afloat, especially as the rains have become more unpredictable and the amount of cocoa they are producing has been affected by this.

Edith herself says she can see the effects of a changing climate on the crops they grow in the form of diseases.

I CAN SEE THAT LEAVES ARE DRYING WHEN WE HAVE MANY DRY DAYS AND THE RAIN IS NOT COMING MUCH, THE LEAVES ARE GETTING YELLOW, WHEN YOU SEE THE COCOA PODS THEY ARE SMALL AND THE TREES MAY DIE. SO WE ARE SCARED BECAUSE THE TREES MAY DIE.

On the women's cocoa farms, pests and diseases spread more quickly, among them 'black pod' where cocoa pods turn dark and mouldy on the tree.

Edith and her mother see the threat of climate change and know they and their fellow farmers cannot rely solely on cocoa. It's what makes projects like the community farm so valuable.

With other ways to bring in money, they can afford to be strong when the rains don't come. Some years, not all of their cocoa has even been sold. As small-scale farmers in West Africa, they have not been the biggest contributors to manmade climate change, yet they are already living with the reality of it.

Edith and her community of women will keep encouraging each other, to turn things around when life gets hard, to thrive and grow. We can be part of their story, and support them and countless other unbowed, ambitious women like them, by buying Fairtrade cocoa.

SHARE EDITH'S STORY TO SHOW HOW CHOOSING FAIRTRADE SUPPORTS TIRELESS WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WHO WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO PROVIDE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES.

LUCIA DESERVES FAIRTRADE

LUCIA BELONGS TO A FAIRTRADE COCOA CO-OPERATIVE CALLED NGOLEAGORBU IN SIERRA LEONE.

Lucia is a cocoa farmer in Sierra Leone. She lives in a community nestled on the edge of the Gola rainforest, sharing her forest home with chimpanzees, hundreds of rare bird species and the elusive pygmy hippo, of which only 3,000 remain.

Lucia cares deeply about her forest home and wants to protect it. But it is not easy to do that when you have to make difficult choices to survive.

Farming in the rainforest is tough. The environment is hot, wet and provides ideal conditions for the rapid spread of plant disease. In the past, Lucia's family have been left hungry because disease has riddled their cocoa farm. They simply didn't have enough money to spare to try out growing other crops to fall back on when their cocoa was unripe or diseased. Without these options, Lucia's family were pushed deeper into poverty and hunger.

Even when the family worked hard to grow healthy disease-free pods, challenges remained. Chimpanzees would come to the farm and wreak havoc, hollowing out the ripe, sweet cocoa beans from their pods, destroying the whole crop and leaving the farm strewn with empty shells. With their crop gone, so was the family income. Once again, Lucia and her husband, Sidie, would struggle to find the money to feed their children. Lucia has seen many farmers harm animals out of desperation, or turn to mining, logging or rice farming as alternative

sources of income.

But she has also seen the destruction these activities bring to her beloved forest. Although life as a farmer has been difficult for Lucia, she is determined to improve her family's livelihood through cocoa, while protecting their forest home.

This belief holds true for many more farmers like Lucia. Lucia and other cocoa farmers on the edge of the Gola rainforest were supported by RSPB, Divine Chocolate and Comic Relief to come together and form a Fairtrade co-operative called the Ngoleagorbu Cocoa Farmers Union, where passions for social and environmental justice run deep. Their name means 'we who live by the forest edge'.

'In Ngoleagorbu, cocoa is our hope. Because we work together, the quality of our cocoa has improved, and our income has increased...'

Lucia's determination shines through when she speaks about Ngoleagorbu's formation. She is justifiably proud of the changes she and her husband have made to their farm. Ngoleagorbu were certified in late 2019 and are now selling some of their cocoa on Fairtrade terms to the UK, which means they will receive the Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium.

It's clear that Lucia is passionate and hopeful about the future. Her drive for change has led her to be chairperson of the Fairtrade Premium Committee, a decision-making role which will help determine the future of Ngoleagorbu.



“WOMEN NOW TAKE PART IN LEADERSHIP ROLES AND HAVE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES. THAT WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED BEFORE. WE FEEL MORE EMPOWERED IN OUR COMMUNITY.”

SHARE LUCIA'S STORY TO SHOW WHY BETTER INCOMES ARE IMPORTANT TO PROTECT THE WORLD'S PRECIOUS NATURAL RESOURCES.

ESTHER DESERVES FAIRTRADE

ESTHER JUMA IS A RECORDER AT BIGOT FLOWERS IN KENYA.

Everyone deserves to dream. But keeping those dreams alive can be hard when things turn out differently to our plans.

In Kenya, nursing is a popular choice for study, with the chance to go on to a hard but secure and rewarding job. Most nursing courses are three years, and they cost about KES 164,900 (£1,230). It's a lot of money, especially if you're in a family of five, struggling to make ends meet deep in the heartlands of Ol Kalou, near Nakuru in Kenya.

Esther, the third born in her family of five, had her heart set on studying to become a nurse after secondary school. The college fees were more than the family could spare and so she stayed at home, helping her parents bring up her siblings.

Esther's parents worked hard, juggling family and work commitments and often surviving financially by doing odd jobs here and there to sustain the family. Her loyalty to her family meant Esther had to stay at home for three years and during that time, she got pregnant.

Now a single mother of two, Esther had to fend for her own young family. She found a job at Bigot Flowers as a general worker. Here, on a Fairtrade certified flower farm, she enjoyed the benefits of relatively good wages, and the chance to make her voice heard at work.

Perhaps it was this atmosphere of empowerment that rekindled her sense of ambition. Through Fairtrade Africa, she received a one-year bursary to study for a Diploma in Information Technology (IT).

It wasn't the nursing qualification she'd dreamed of, but above all else, Esther was determined to make a better life for her children. When she finished her IT course, she applied for a job as a recorder in the packhouse at Bigot Flowers.

With her new position, Esther has been able to pay school fees for her two daughters and offer them a better standard of living, compared to how she grew up. Her children attend a school built by Bigot Flowers through the Fairtrade Premium, and now they are set on a path to fulfil their own dreams. There are systemic obstacles which prevent ambitious women from pursuing their goals, but with the support that Fairtrade can offer, Esther and others are able to take an active part in shaping their future.

“ WHEN YOU EMPOWER A WOMAN, YOU EMPOWER A WHOLE COMMUNITY. ”



SHARE ESTHER'S STORY TO SHOW HOW FAIRTRADE CAN EMPOWER WOMEN WORKERS AND HOW THE FAIRTRADE PREMIUM BENEFITS COMMUNITIES.

ROSINE DESERVES FAIRTRADE

ROSINE BELONGS TO FAIRTRADE CO-OPERATIVE CAYAT IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE.

Rosine believes firmly in do-it-yourself. With that philosophy, she and her community have laid plans, worked hard to see them through and found themselves sharing the successes and setbacks together.

As a mum of five, she's used to fitting as much as she can into her day, and that includes, unusually for Côte d'Ivoire, owning and running her own cocoa farm. This was passed to her from her mother, and for that reason as much as any, she's determined to make it a success.

With past harvests, Rosine would sell her cocoa to local middlemen (*pisteurs*), who would visit farms at harvest time and buy cocoa from individual farmers. They drove a hard bargain and would often leave farmers struggling to make a living that way. Rosine heard about a meeting happening in her village – a local co-operative was coming to explain their experience of Fairtrade. It was only a couple of hours, but it was the start of something brighter for Rosine and her farming friends.

By 2016 she had sold her first Fairtrade cocoa harvest. And through training, she's now increased her harvest and earning more.

“ I’VE SEEN THAT FAIRTRADE HAS HELPED US A LOT IN COCOA FARMING. THE FAIRTRADE PREMIUM HAS ENABLED US TO DO MANY THINGS. IT HAS ENABLED US TO ADVANCE OUR CHILDREN, AND ALSO WE USE THE FAIRTRADE PREMIUM TO BUILD FOR THE FUTURE. ”

But there were difficult times ahead as the price cocoa farmers received dropped by a third in 2016 and in 2017, and still hadn't recovered in 2018. It's still dropping. Even in 2019, Rosine described her harvest as **'not very famous'**. Yet she reached her target of getting a harvest of nearly 500 kilogrammes on her two hectares. She gives credit to training from Fairtrade for this, but her ambition plays a big part too.

So what's driving Rosine? She's got plans for her increased income. In the spirit of do-it-yourself, she's set out to build a house. It's going to take a while but she has already started buying what she needs, because her co-operative also operate a subsidised hardware store in town, funded by Fairtrade Premium. That way, locals can get their hands on materials and equipment at an affordable price.



'I'm building a house. It's only two bedrooms and a living room, but it's my idea. I bought packets of bricks with my Premium.' Rosine is overseeing the whole project herself. ***'I have already laid the foundations of the house but I think it is essential... to plan the construction budget so as not to be out of breath when the structural work begins'***.

Always on the lookout for ways to move into her dream home faster, Rosine is a leading light of her co-operative's Women's Society. This group is for independent-minded women who want to increase their family's income. **(Continues next slide)**

ROSINE DESERVES FAIRTRADE

Their projects are fruitful and many. Growing extra vegetables to sell, setting up a fishery, upgrading the cassava mill, all funded by the Fairtrade Premium but all sailing to success with the hard work of the women members. Many are mothers, wanting to be able to send their children off to school and put food on the table, instead of having to choose which of those things they will do. Others are hoping to be able to save some money to set up their own businesses, to be less reliant on the falling, unreliable cocoa price.

Rosine speaks passionately about the support the women offer each other, what they dream of, and why they work so hard.

“WE ALWAYS SAY IN THIS SONG THAT WE SING THAT WE ARE STANDING UP AND WORKING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN. BECAUSE IT’S THEY WHO WILL COME AFTER US.

“WE WANT EVERYONE AMONGST US TO SEE OUR FREEDOM, TO SEE WE HAVE OUR OWN HOUSES. WE WANT TO BUILD DECENT-SIZED HOUSES THAT WE CAN SLEEP PEACEFULLY INSIDE, WITH OUR HUSBAND AND CHILDREN.”

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

‘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.”

SHARE ROSINE’S STORY TO SHOW HOW CHOOSING FAIRTRADE SUPPORTS TIRELESS WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WHO WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO PROVIDE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES.

SEGUNDO AND HUGO DESERVE FAIRTRADE

SEGUNDO GUERRERO IS A MEMBER OF FAIRTRADE CO-OPERATIVE NORANDINO IN PERU.

When Segundo Guerrero found himself in a tight spot over 25 years ago, Fairtrade was part of the solution. Now, his community is facing an even bigger challenge. How will Fairtrade support him to tackle that too?

Segundo surveys his 20 acres of vertiginous land in the Piura region of Peru. On three quarters of it, he grows coffee. But he remembers when he came so close to giving it all up. Back in the early 1990s, he and his fellow coffee farmers were falling into an inescapable cycle of poverty and debt as coffee prices crashed and they received less and less for what they could grow. These were desperate times, with farmers leaving coffee farming altogether and moving into the cities, or trying other crops.

Without the savings to fall back on for drastic changes like these, Segundo and his friends began looking for another way. He became one of the founders of CEPICAFE in Peru, now known as Norandino, which now has over 7,000 farmer members. Through working together as a group, the benefits for the farmers were greater than the sum of their parts.

They could get the Fairtrade Minimum Price (which never falls below the lowest price paid to farmers on the volatile coffee market) and Premium. They were able to make a living from their farms, and meet other needs in their community. Today farmers flock to join, as it offers a lifeline in the form of loans and training to support them through unstable situations.

He looks back on this time with pleasure:

“ I AM VERY HAPPY TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE ALL OF MY DREAMS, AND ALL OF THE GOALS WE HAVE ESTABLISHED FOR OURSELVES. NOT ONLY IN THIS AREA BUT FURTHER AWAY IN THE REGION AND I AM PLEASED WITH THIS GROWTH AND SUCCESS. ”

It's a sure sign of this success that two of Segundo's eight children have returned from their studies to work on the family farm. Talk about bucking the trend. The lure of jobs in cities, the perception of coffee farming as a difficult job with no future has seen so many young people turn their backs on family farms.

Omar, 35, is an accountant at the Norandino office in Piura, where the farm sends its coffee for processing and Hugo, 33, has come back from university to help his father with his crucial knowledge of organic techniques and crop diversification.



It's true that the children of those first Fairtrade coffee farmers are looking at a bleak future. Recent years have seen some alarming changes in weather patterns and temperatures, and it's increasingly clear that coffee farmers are on the front line of the climate crisis.

As temperatures change, and pests and diseases become more prevalent, farmers must adapt by farming at different altitudes or changing the type of coffee they grow. Sadly the varieties of coffee that produce better quality coffee are those most affected by diseases and pests caused by climate change. Sometimes, farmers have little option but to change to other crops, or leave farming completely. **(Continues next slide)**

SEGUNDO AND HUGO DESERVE FAIRTRADE

But Hugo (pictured right) is Segundo's secret weapon. His training and scientific understanding could be the answer that will allow the family to grow speciality coffee for the future.

For Segundo, it's a reason to be hopeful. He and his coffee farmer neighbours have tackled big challenges before, together, and with the support of Fairtrade. He knows that the more farmers who join, the stronger they are.

'I wish that more farmers could join the co-operative as many have similar problems, like low education, no training, no access to technology to help them work, and they do not have support to help manage plagues and diseases. These farmers cannot invest for the future and so are changing their coffee plants to sugar cane. The coffee price goes up and down and is not predictable, unlike sugar cane from which they can earn quick cash and is not affected by disease.'

'I am a little worried that coffee might disappear entirely from this area. If we can produce coffee that is higher quality we can get a better price at export, but it's very difficult for many farmers to grow the high quality coffee plants.'

Hugo adds:

I LOVE THE FARM, AND I AM TRYING NEW EXPERIMENTAL VARIETIES HERE THAT ARE ALL ORGANIC, ONLY USING WHAT WE HAVE HERE ON THE FARM. I HOPE TO COMPLETE THE CIRCLE, STARTING ON OUR FARM. I ROAST OUR OWN SPECIALITY COFFEE AND I WANT TO CREATE A MARKET FOR IT IN PERU, WHERE MOST PEOPLE CONSUME ONLY HALF A KILO PER PERSON PER YEAR – MOSTLY SECOND OR THIRD QUALITY COFFEE THAT ISN'T EVEN PERUVIAN.



SHARE SEGUNDO AND HUGO'S STORY TO SHOW HOW CHOOSING FAIRTRADE SUPPORTS FARMERS PUSHED INTO POVERTY BY UNFAIR AND UNSUSTAINABLE LOW PRICES, AND HOW INEQUALITY IS MADE SO MUCH WORSE BY CLIMATE CHANGE.