



FAIRTRADE  
FOUNDATION

# FAIRTRADE CLIMATE STORIES

Image: UNESCO National Park Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. Image credits: Chris Terry.

# JAIME'S CLIMATE STORY



**Name: Jaime Alberto García Flórez**

**Country: Colombia**

**Commodity: Coffee**



Image: Jaime Alberto García Flórez, coffee farmer from the Red Ecolsierra coffee Fairtrade co-operative in Colombia. Image credits: Chris Terry.

# JAIME'S CLIMATE STORY

Jaime Alberto García Flórez is a Fairtrade coffee farmer from the Red Ecolsierra coffee Fairtrade co-operative in Colombia.

In recent decades, temperatures have gone up so much that Jaime can no longer grow coffee on the lower parts of his land because it is too hot, so he has had to replace coffee bushes with cocoa.

"We're in danger because of climate change. We used to think it was something existential and far away, but now we see it is really here. Temperatures today are so different to how they were 20 years ago, let alone 30. We farmers are the first to feel the change... It is going to be very hard to continue producing coffee now that climate change has arrived."

Jaime is a part of the coffee cooperative Red Ecolsierra, which is a Fairtrade organic cooperative that unites 414 farming families in the UNESCO National Park Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia.

He is a native of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and feels sad about the fact that local forests have disappeared, the mountains are drying up, and everyday climate change is getting worse.

Jamie even worries that there might not be any coffee at all in the future, as his crop yield depletes with high temperatures and unpredictable rainfall. "If we received a decent price for our coffee, things could be very different, but at the moment the harvest doesn't cover the cost of production and we don't receive any financial support."

Jamie has a clear message to the British public. He tells us that, "we need more businesses to pay higher prices and to value our work up here, given the higher production costs. It's very important to support good quality organic coffee which allows us to protect our environment and remain in business."



Image: Jaime Alberto García Flórez, coffee farmer from the Red Ecolsierra coffee Fairtrade co-operative in Colombia. Image credits: Chris Terry.

# JAIME'S CLIMATE STORY

*"I want to thank consumers for supporting us with our work. I want to tell them to look at what's behind a cup of coffee because behind each cup you are drinking there's a huge family that depends on that product."*

*Fairtrade really helps us through higher prices, something we didn't have in the past. Fairtrade also supported us to improve our houses, farms and educate our children. We wouldn't be able to keep producing coffee without Fairtrade."*

Image: UNESCO National Park Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. Image credits: Chris Terry.

"We farm from the heart, and we love growing. With the love I have for my land, I don't see myself working anywhere else. For me, producing coffee is a tradition. If we can't continue, we lose our way of living and our way of life. When you do what you love, it's not a job, it's a passion."

## **FAIRTRADE FARMERS PROTECTING FORESTS**

Jaime and the other farmers from Red Ecolsierra co-operative have made a number of climate adaptations including introducing agroforestry systems, shade-grown crops, soil-friendly bioproducts, forest conservation projects, ecotourism, and other services.

Since adapting to eco-friendly farming techniques the co-operative members have reported positive trends in habitat restoration, increase of microorganisms in the soil and the ability to better control fertilizer management. Alongside this, constant monitoring and training by the

technical team has allowed the co-op to expand its service portfolio and provide support and advice to other organizations of small producers.

Jaime says, "I believe there are things we can all do to help maintain nature's natural balance that will help protect our environment and our future." Where small holder farmers and workers can protect the forests local to them, we can support on a global level by continuing to purchase Fairtrade products.

## **WATCH THE FULL STORY**



# JOHN & THE SANKOFA PROJECT'S CLIMATE STORY



**Name:** John Kwabena Narh

**Country:** Ghana

**Commodity:** Cocoa



Image: Bismark Kpabitey a cocoa farmer, offers training to Emelia Debrah, John Kwabena Narh and Nicholas Amponsah. Image credits: Chris Terry.

# JOHN'S CLIMATE STORY



Image: John Kwabena Narh, cocoa farmer from the Sankofa Project in Ghana. Image credits: Chris Terry.

When John first inherited his father's land after he passed, he cut all the timber trees because he needed money. He says: "In my father's time there were lots of timber and shade trees on our farm, but as young men who didn't know better, we cut them down."

Years later, whilst taking part in a dynamic agroforestry (DAF) farming project, he returned to his father's approach by planting lots of timber as they provide crucial shade for cocoa to thrive in. This is exactly what the project Sankofa is trying to achieve, a more natural, traditional approach to farming. (Sankofa symbolises a bird looking backwards).

"Before DAF we really struggled without shade trees. But now we're going back to farming in the traditional way. Sankofa actually means 'going back' to our roots or 'looking back' at lost knowledge," he says.

He was one of the first farmers to take part in Sankofa and was motivated because back in 2016 it had been a particularly bad year for his cocoa harvest. He instantly noticed the difference with his new DAF plot, where the cocoa seedlings were doing better compared with his conventional farm. "At the time all the trees were dying.

Formerly when I planted cocoa by the end of the year everything died. I piloted these new dynamic agroforestry methods on my farm. Today my farm is very productive."

As well as the benefits to the biodiversity, for he farms without the use of any insecticides or weedicides, not having to pay for any chemicals or fertilisers is a big saving. The other plants he now grows intercropped with cocoa are important as they improve soil health, provide organic matter, food for his family as well as an extra source of income. John says he now gets a better price from his yam, plaintain and cassava crops on the local market, and he adds:

# JOHN'S CLIMATE STORY



Image: Ghana forest scape. Image credits: Chris Terry.

"I now grow vegetables such as cassava, fruit trees, avocado, orange, lemons, oil palm and coconut." The variety of trees and plants create a habitat that is rich in pollinators and the cocoa pods are less susceptible to pests because the insects have a variety of plants to feed on. In a monocrop system of farming pests will attack whatever is available.

## **FAIRTRADE FARMERS PROTECTING FORESTS**

Sankofa, which means "to return for or retrieve" in the Twi language in Ghana. The project aims to promote dynamic agroforestry practices with 400 farmers, each farming at least 1 hectare by 2025, and for another 1,000 farmers to start using these practices too. Dynamic agroforestry involves intercropping cocoa with other trees such as mango, avocado, and orange.

The project is also scaling up other diversified food systems (which involve integrating other non-tree

crops, such as cowpea, taro root and cassava) with a broader base of farmers, aiming for at least 2,500 households.

With dynamic agroforestry practices and diversified production systems, the risk of further deforestation can be mitigated and biodiversity in forests can be promoted. This also contributes additional income to farmers and promotes food security. The expected result of this work is to increase the knowledge and adoption of dynamic agroforestry and climate-smart practices.

## **WATCH THE FULL STORY**



# MARISOL'S CLIMATE STORY



**Name: Marisol Villar**

**Country: Dominican Republic**

**Commodity: Cocoa**



Image: Marisol Villar, cocoa farmer from the the COOPROAGRO co-operative in Dominican Republic. Image credits: José García.



# MARISOL'S CLIMATE STORY

Farming has been in Marisol's family for generations. When she inherited her farm, she gave up her job as a business administrator to carry on the tradition. Joining the COOPROAGRO co-operative, she has now been farming cocoa for over a decade. And in that time she has embraced the opportunity to learn more about protecting her local environment and taking on the effects of climate change.

"I have taken on roles as a leader. I gained a lot of knowledge about organic practices I was not familiar with. And I learned about Fairtrade, which has had an impact on me." For Marisol, the impact of climate change can not be ignored. Without action, it threatens her entire future as a cocoa farmer. Many fellow cocoa farmers in her community – and far beyond – face a similar threat, as cocoa is a crop especially vulnerable to climate change.

"With climate change, the way of life has changed. Now we don't know when we will harvest or when the harvest will take place. We are uncertain when there will be rain or when there will be drought. We are out-of-sync." But Marisol also sees hope in her work. She has embraced organic methods and is really keen others can earn enough to do the same.

"Organic cocoa is much better, providing better quality for both humans and the world, [it's better] for bio-diversity. I am proud that my co-operative, COOPROAGRO, has Fairtrade certification."

Because of that hope, Marisol has a simple message for those who choose Fairtrade chocolate.

"I urge those who consume chocolate with Fairtrade certification to eat with pleasure, as they are supporting the sweet outcome of the hard work we producers put in to achieve the best benefits from Fairtrade certification."



Image: Marisol Villar, cocoa farmer from the the COOPROAGRO co-operative in Dominican Republic. Image credits: José García.

# MARISOL'S CLIMATE STORY



Image: Dominican Republic forest scape. Image credits: José García.

## FAIRTRADE FARMERS PROTECTING FORESTS

Marisol passionately wants to protect her environment. But like so many small-scale farmers, unfair trade denies her the money she needs to really invest in sustainable practices. Growing organically can be good value long-term, but cleansing the land and getting organic certification costs money many farmers simply don't have.

That's where Fairtrade comes in. Through Fairtrade, Marisol and other farmers at COOPROAGRO have been able to earn a fairer deal and invest in important environmental and community projects.

"We have a project called Resilient Cocoa for Climate Change, which has helped us by replanting old trees. Also, we are not a monoculture, but grow diverse crops within our cocoa production. These projects are funded by Fairtrade Premium."

Growing diverse crops helps both protect bio-diversity and gives more sources of income for farmers. Fairtrade Premium is generated by people like you buying Fairtrade, so all of us are part of Marisol's hard work to protect the environment.

## WATCH THE FULL STORY

