

Cocoa people

My name is **Nana**. I am known as the Queen Mother of an area called Manso, which includes Mim village. 'Nana' is the Ashanti name for a traditional chief. The Queen Mother is the mother of the chief.

I am a Kuapa Kokoo cocoa farmer and won the prize for best cocoa farmer in the district in 1999.

This year my harvest was halved because of a disease called black pod. Lots of other farmers had this problem too but lost even more than half their crop; they couldn't afford the anti black-pod spray. Kuapa Kokoo farmers can buy pest sprays and fertilisers in bulk, which makes them cheaper. We also use 'natural' sprays that are more healthy and better for the environment. So although we pay a membership fee to Kuapa Kokoo, which some farmers struggle to afford, we certainly get our money's worth.

I am **Victor Owusu**, age 17, and my father is the president of the Mim Kuapa Kokoo society.

I don't want to be a cocoa farmer because it's really hard work and you don't earn very much. But I do know that Kuapa Kokoo is good for my family and makes farmers' lives easier. The price that Kuapa Kokoo pays its farmers is better than other companies that buy cocoa, and Kuapa Kokoo never cheats you. The money Kuapa Kokoo makes is shared among the farmers or spent on useful things for them – it doesn't just go to rich countries to make a few people even richer! Kuapa has given my dad training to help him run his farm better. He even has a say about how Kuapa Kokoo is run.

I quite like helping dad on the cocoa farm at harvest-time, when it's really busy.

I am **Ama Swerwaa** and I live in a village next to Mim called Nuwimeso, and I work hard as a Kuapa Kokoo farmer.

Houses in my village don't have running water, but there is a well, which has clean, pure drinking water, and was built with money earned by selling Fairtrade cocoa beans. There were big problems with the old well – some people in my village were even poisoned when chemicals from a gold mine got into it! Plus, we used to have to walk nine kilometres to collect water and carry it back in a bucket on our heads. Now the well's less than a kilometre away, and everyone's delighted. It's not as easy as turning on a tap, but it's a lot better than before, thanks to Fairtrade.

My name is **Addae Mensah Joseph**. I am a Kuapa Kokoo farmer and also the recorder for the Mim Kuapa Kokoo village society. Being a recorder means I weigh the sacks of cocoa beans, pay the farmers and keep note of all the cocoa that is sold. I have been elected by the co-operative society for this very important job and I am very trustworthy. The Kuapa Kokoo scales I use are often checked so they always show the correct weight and have a clear dial, so everyone can read them. I pay the farmers in Ghanaian cedis, or by cheque, which they can definitely exchange for cedis nearby.

I can read and write, and that's one reason why they voted for me as recorder.

I am **Kwaku Owusu**, Kuapa Kokoo cocoa farmer and President of the Mim village Kuapa Kokoo society. My job as President includes running the society's meetings and making sure all the farmers turn up and have their say.

Some of the cocoa we grow is sold to a company, Divine Chocolate, which makes Fairtrade chocolate. Their bar of chocolate is called Divine. They also make Comic Relief's Fairtrade chocolate bar, Dubble. I'm proud of Kuapa Kokoo's slogan, 'Pa Pa Paa!'. It means 'the best of the best' in Twi, my language, and I know it's true!

My name is **Kopanyin Gyimah**. I am a cocoa farmer living in a town called Old Tafo. Unfortunately, Kuapa Kokoo doesn't work here. I grow quite a lot of cocoa, but I often don't earn enough to feed my family. I grow corn and cassava too, and pineapples, to sell for extra money.

I am 65 and often struggle with the heavy jobs on the farm. I have to work even though I have had a bad stomach for ages. I can't afford to go to the doctor's. The price for cocoa has gone down each year, but the prices of things I need to buy have gone up. Some of the companies who buy cocoa in Old Tafo also treat us cocoa farmers badly. Sometimes the weighing scales are fixed to show the wrong weight. Sometimes they won't pay on time or only pay really low prices. Sometimes they pay with cheques that we can't cash at the bank. We even have to argue to get our money. Sometimes we don't get paid anything!