



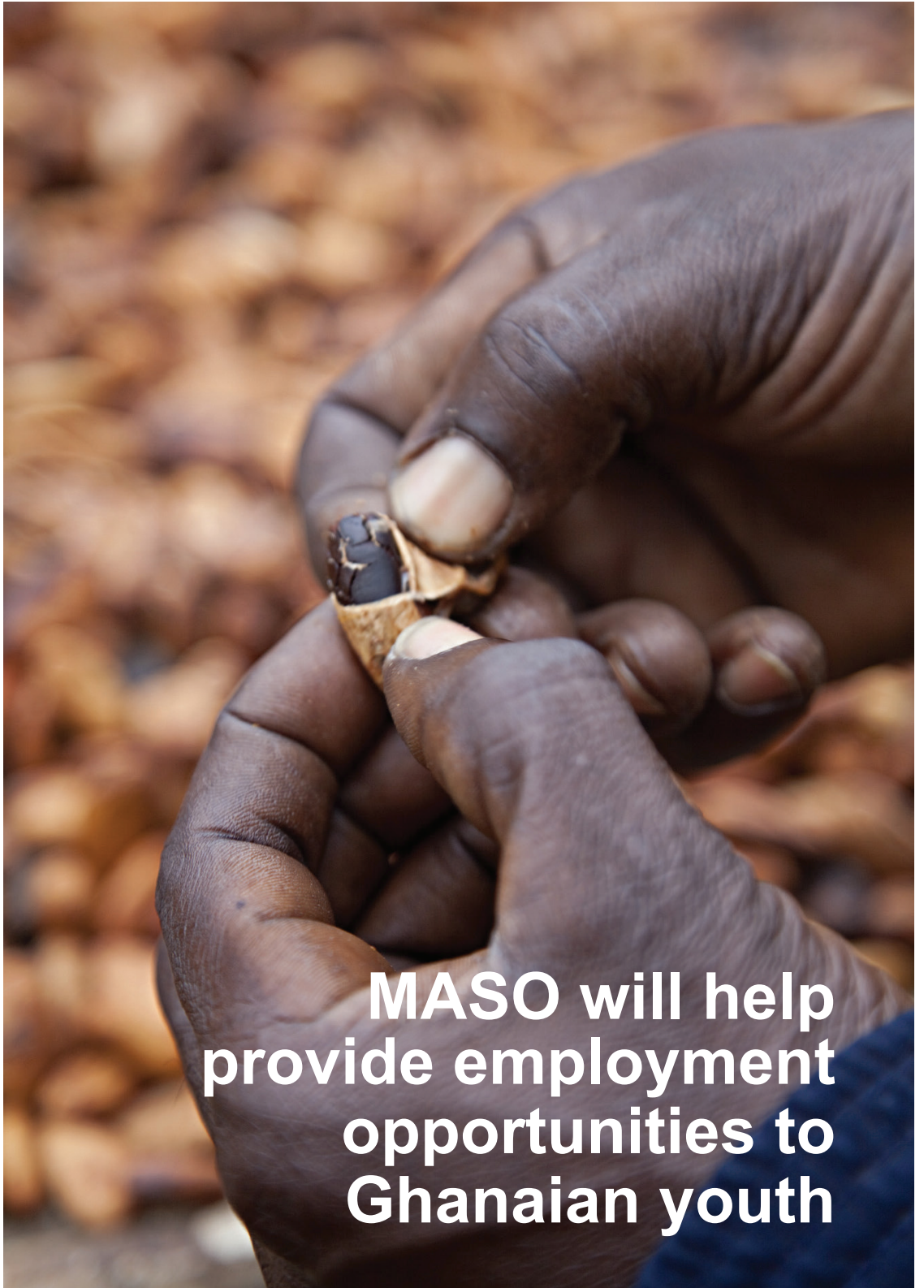
# Partnership Guide

2016 - 2020



YOUTH  
POWERED  
**MASO**





**MASO will help  
provide employment  
opportunities to  
Ghanaian youth**





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# 1 Introduction



## MASO Partnership Guide

The Partnership Guide (PG) describes the strategic intent of the MASO youth incubation programme (2016-2020) in Ghana. It describes the aspirations and objectives of the programme and outlines how you can join as a partner. It also describes how the programme governance is organized, how progress is tracked and how results are measured. The Partnership Guide lays out the playing field for all partners involved in the MASO programme.

The Partnership Guide does not cover arrangements on confidentiality; this will be done through a separate Non Disclosure Agreement when deciding to participate as a partner. It does cover intellectual property rights; all products and services developed under the MASO programme, whether developed in a pre-competitive manner or not, will be considered as “open-source” material. Therefore, when the programme ends, partners are free to use and upscale developed interventions, products & services whilst acknowledging development under MASO.



## 2 MASO's Rationale and Vision

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### A Background

#### **Ghana and the great chocolate gap**

Unemployment amongst rural youth in Ghana is high and increasing. With few prospects for gainful, meaningful employment in their communities, youth are migrating to urban centres in search of a better life, only to find equally challenging conditions, but now without the support of their families.

At the same time, cocoa production is Ghana's largest agricultural activity; it accounts for 8% of GDP and supports approximately 6.3 million people (30% of Ghana's population including 800,000 smallholder farmers). It generates more than US\$2 billion in annual bean sales, yet output is declining due to a number of factors, whilst the demand for cocoa and chocolate products keeps growing every year.

The 'Great Chocolate Gap' is starting to look very real; we call it Ghana's great opportunity for the next generation.

#### **The next generation of cocoa farmers and entrepreneurs**

The MASO youth farmer and entrepreneur incubation programme seeks to create attractive, exciting, local employment opportunities in cocoa by demonstrating how cocoa farming and its associated enterprises can allow the youth to have productive, fulfilling and rewarding lives, either as a viable farmer or an entrepreneur in cocoa growing communities or a mixture of both to generate decent incomes. At the same time, the steps taken here will help support and rejuvenate a vital sector of the Ghanaian economy.





MASO is one of the four programmes under the Youth Forward Initiative which is supported by The MasterCard Foundation. The Youth Forward Initiative seeks to provide sustainable employment opportunities in the agriculture and construction sectors for young people in Ghana and Uganda.

## **B Our vision for a rejuvenated cocoa sector in Ghana**

- Young cocoa farmers and entrepreneurs (including women farmers and entrepreneurs), are empowered, organised, skilled, entrepreneurial and are able to earn sustainable incomes;
- Rural communities are economically resilient, socially and environmentally conscious, and are able to attract and support new generations of cocoa farmers and entrepreneurs;
- The Ghana cocoa sector will contribute to improving the living and working conditions of existing and next-generation farmers, workers and their families.



### 3 MASO the youth incubation programme

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#### A Goal, strategy and expected benefits

MASO's **goal** is to empower youth to be a catalyst for change in the cocoa sector. The programme will facilitate the creation of profitable cocoa farming and related businesses in cocoa growing communities, to provide a viable career choice for the youth.

Our **strategy** to achieve this by harnessing and incubating the energy, ambition and ability of currently unemployed youth through an incubator approach combining training, coaching support and a youth network, while lowering the barriers to accessing land, finance, and markets. This will ensure that the youth will get comprehensive and intensive support over a significant period of time, along with access to critical resources.



To equip and motivate youth to enter cocoa farming as a business



To train youth to start businesses in cocoa growing communities



To facilitate youth exchange of best practices, learning and create a common voice







The **expected** benefits include a burgeoning and youthful cocoa farmer workforce and a growing cohort of entrepreneurial service providers that will revitalize the Ghanaian cocoa sector. It will lead to increased employment opportunities in the cocoa growing communities as well as in other sectors related to cocoa production.

**MASO**, from 2016 to 2020, will reach more than 80,000 of Ghana's youth. Creating self employment opportunities for approximately 29,000 participants and external employment opportunities for nearly 30,000 people, while increasing the employability of all participants. A minimum of 40% will be female participants; addressing a much under-represented and undervalued segment of Ghana's youth.

#### **THE MEANING OF MASO**

"MASO" is a phrase derived from the Akan language, which is the predominant dialect spoken in the cocoa producing communities in Ghana. The phrase means "lift up" as well as "I am of age". MASO will uplift, elevate and improve the cocoa sector in Ghana with the involvement of young vibrant entrepreneurs. These young people are of age and ready to begin an economically independent life either as a cocoa farmer or as an entrepreneur.



### 3 MASO

## the youth incubation programme

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#### B Geographical coverage

MASO will be implemented in communities across districts in five (5) cocoa growing regions:

- Ashanti Region: Adansi South – Ataasi Nkwanta, Adansi South – New Edubiase;
- Western Region: Sefwi Wiawso – Pillar 82, Bia West - Elluokrom, Sefwi Akontombra, Sefwi Wiawso – Appiakrom;
- Brong-Ahafo Region: Sunyani Municipal, Asunafo North – Kasapin;
- Central Region: Twifo Atimkwa and Assin North and Assin South;
- Volta Region: Hohoe Municipality, Jasikan and Kadjebi.

The communities have an overlap with the Cocoa Rehabilitation and Intensification Programme (CORIP-Ghana) Rural Service Centre's infrastructure.

#### C Gender

MASO has interwoven gender mainstreaming into its design at different levels:

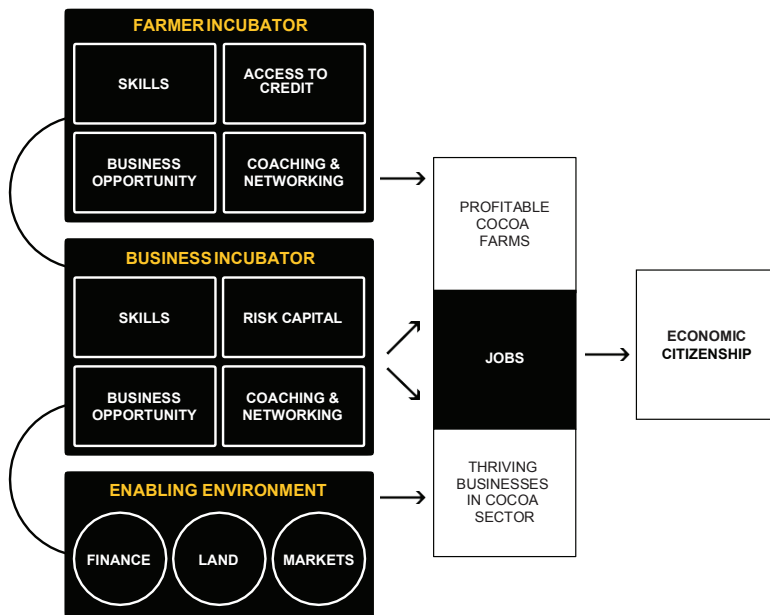
- a) Organization and Structure,
  - b) Research & Learning and
  - c) Programme.
- Attributes (see Annex 1).

In short, MASO will work towards ensuring that at least 40% of participants are female. A gender specialist has been hired to facilitate the effort towards full gender inclusion, taking into account all potential barriers. Efforts will be made to establish one Farmer Incubator and one Business Incubator for girls in the programme. By doing so, we will be able to test our approach for training girls to overcome cultural or social pressures based on gender. Through training on life skills development, special attention will be given to gender inclusivity. Additionally, each youth participant must, as part of their training, teach three other youth, with a special emphasis on including females in the secondary group.



## D Monitoring & evaluation, learning

### MASO - THEORY OF CHANGE



Through the two incubators (MASO AGRO ACADEMY and MASO BUSINESS ACADEMY) and by lowering barriers to create an enabling environment, MASO will create new self-employment as well as external employment opportunities for youth in Ghana's cocoa sector, along with increasing youth employability as a whole, leading to the next generation of economically empowered citizens.



### 3 MASO the youth incubation programme

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One of the innovative aspects of MASO is the combination of productivity/income driven indicators (hard indicators) and youth-centred learning indicators (soft indicators).

Data gathering will be continuously conducted through “readiness scans” where baseline profiles of participants will be gathered, in combination with mid term and final impact assessments.

We will use Rural Horizons, a Solidaridad-developed farmer self-assessment tool, which enables farmers to assess within two hours after data entry, the status of their practices in relation to legal and voluntary standards (i.e established best practices in the management and maintenance of cocoa farms on an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable basis) as well as in relation to their peers. The tool generates a tailored roadmap for improvement and provides information on what practices have worked and what haven't. Young farmers will be empowered to collect benchmark data, track their own progress, improve capacity, while simultaneously providing Solidaridad and MASO partners with data for monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, we will seek annual feedback from private sector companies that invest in the incubators. We will follow up on the (self) employment rates of our graduates and regularly dialogue with their employers to understand what skills are have value and what are lacking, and to address the gaps through the programme. In terms of the financial sector, we will work closely with financial partners to ensure graduates from our incubator qualify for financial services.



## E Communications

Consortium partners will be recognized for their investment by MASO in the following ways:

- Consortium partners will be featured on the website;
- Selected participants will be profiled and their progress tracked during the project;
- A media campaign to raise awareness and attract new participants will be conducted yearly;
- An annual learning exchange will be convened with the Steering Committee, Programme Advisory Group and actors in the cocoa sector, to garner publicity in Ghana and internationally;
- MASO and originating consortium partners will attend events and conferences such as International Cocoa Organization/World Cocoa Conferences and National Cocoa Platforms;
- MASO will share success and impact stories of young people as they move through the program.



### 3 MASO

## the youth incubation programme

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#### F Governance structure, mandates & representatives

Governance for MASO will be structured to guarantee proper management, direction, supervision and guidance of the programme and to ensure that learning from the programme is shared with a wider audience.

The governance structure is organized at four levels, each with a specific mandate and representation. The different levels are ordered as follows:

- Programme Management;
- Steering Committee;
- Programme Advisory Group;
- Youth Forward Committee.

The table on the next page summarizes the composition and key mandates of the different bodies within the programme governance structure.



MASO GOVERNANCE	PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT	STEERING COMMITTEE	PROGRAMME ADVISORY GROUP	YOUTH FORWARD COMMITTEE (YFC)
<b>Mandates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Day to day management</li> <li>- The MasterCard Foundation Contract &amp; Fund Management</li> <li>- M&amp;E and Learning (MEL)</li> <li>- Offer proposals to start, continue, and improve interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-development and approval of Annual Plan</li> <li>- Provide guidance to management</li> <li>- Share trends &amp; developments that influence MASO</li> <li>- Selects Programme Advisory Group members and may propose special invitees to join them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To advise the Steering Committee and guide the overall direction of the programme</li> <li>- Ensure alignment with national sectoral policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To inform and advise the broader community on the activities, learnings and experiences of the various Youth Forward Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Representatives</b>	Solidaridad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementing Partners (6x)</li> <li>- Youth Representative (1x)</li> <li>- Enabling Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steering Committee (2x)</li> <li>- YFC (1x)</li> <li>- Eminent representatives of the cocoa sector and expertise areas (4x)</li> <li>&gt;1 Government</li> <li>&gt;1 Chief (representing parents and communities)</li> <li>&gt;1 Business</li> <li>&gt;1 Cocoa Sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multi-Consortium Partners of The MasterCard Foundation in Ghana</li> <li>- 6 key consortium partners of MASO</li> </ul>
<b>Arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly meetings with 6 key consortium partners</li> <li>- Update Quarterly Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>- Annual Report</li> <li>- Prepare recommendations for the Steering Committee including Annual Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chairs of Steering Committee</li> <li>- Quarterly meetings</li> <li>- Minutes</li> <li>- Quarterly Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>- Dissemination of learnings (Reports, Research etc.)</li> <li>- Learning visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semi-Annual Meetings</li> <li>- Minutes</li> <li>- Dissemination of learnings (Reports, Research etc.)</li> <li>- Learning visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting semi-annually</li> </ul>





# 3 MASO

## the youth incubation programme

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### G Key Consortium Partners

- Consortium Lead: Solidaridad
- Education Partners: Aflatoun  
Ashesi University
- Financial Service Provider (FSP) Partners: Fidelity Bank Ghana Limited
- Government Partner: Ghana Cocoa Board  
(COCO BOD)







## 4 Why join MASO?



MASO is unique in that it is solution oriented with the market in mind. It addresses youth unemployment in cocoa communities and creates market conditions for sustainable cocoa production via youth engagement. The two incubator programmes (MASO AGRO ACADEMY and MASO BUSINESS ACADEMY) and the MASO CONNECT (youth network), will link the youth to each other to share best practices, while simultaneously linking them to the market, therefore contributing to a sustainable cocoa sector and thriving cocoa growing communities.

Keys to success are:

1. The combination of technical skills and life skills (e.g. social, financial, entrepreneurial and leadership) development in one curriculum to increase long-term behavioural change;
2. Access to youth-appropriate savings and loan products;
3. Access to land, in cooperation with traditional community leaders and government;
4. Access to markets;
5. The establishment of supportive and robust infrastructure through coaching, mentoring and youth networks. The latter will represent youth and offer continued support and guidance to emerging youth entrepreneurs, create awareness on youth employment opportunities in the cocoa sector and help shape public policy.



## 5 Our offer to you

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MASO is a vehicle for your effort to ensure youth inclusivity, entrepreneurship and livelihoods development in cocoa growing communities in Ghana.

By joining the MASO programme as a partner, you will become part of a consortium benefitting from:

- Leadership and raising brand equity: Exemplify good behavior to peers and the broader sector and catalyze stakeholder buy-in;
- Innovation: Contribute to solutions in the field of youth (self) employment, robust infrastructure, enterprise development and income generation;
- Continuity:
  - Inspiring a new generation of cocoa farmers and entrepreneurs;
  - Having access to potential employees in Ghana;
  - Securing the future of cocoa supply and cocoa growing communities;
- Credibility: Achievement of your own sustainability goals, supported by independent third party evaluation of the MASO programme and a strong governance structure including a Steering Committee and a Programme Advisory Group;
- Financial responsibility: Investment risks are leveraged amongst MASO partners;
- Joint communication: Under a unified identity for MASO, with options to translate to your own communication strategy.



## 6 How to join?



### A Partnership options

Different levels of engagement and investments are possible within MASO as an enabling partner:

1. In-kind investment in the implementation of MASO-defined strategic pillars and their respective interventions. In-kind contributions such as technical assistance and resources are provided by the Partner with a market conform value;
  - No double charging of interventions defined under MASO;
  - No diluting of MASO targets;
2. Financial investment (and/or in-kind investment) to allow for growth of the MASO programme in terms of target reach or strengthening of knowledge areas;
  - Introducing new interventions, adding to existing ones or expanding efforts which are not prioritized at a given point in time by MASO (E.g. supporting new cocoa growing communities);
  - Contributing to an increase of MASO targets.



## 6 How to join?

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### B Entry Criteria for Partners

- A player in the cocoa and chocolate sector, including commitment from the organization to create a more inclusive and sustainable cocoa and chocolate sector;
- Willingness to share learning and co-create innovations, working in a pre-competitive manner;
- Readiness to jointly communicate on MASO with partners;
- Long term commitment (> 2 yrs.);
- Minimum co-investment (monetary and/or in-kind) yearly of USD \$100.000 - “pay to play”.

### C Application and screening process

Partners can show their interest and join throughout the course of the MASO programme.

The application process is outlined in steps 1 to 4 below and is expected to take from 4 weeks to 4 months.

1. Indicate your interest to participate in MASO (NDA + LOI);
2. Due diligence on entry criteria and commitment forms;
3. Provide a concept note outlining how you would wish to engage in the partnership. There are opportunities to join as an Observer to the Steering Committee;
4. Implementation of partnership (Contract).

The first point of contact for the application process is the European Programme Manager for Cocoa, Beatrice Moulianitaki ([beatrice.moulianitaki@solidaridad.nl](mailto:beatrice.moulianitaki@solidaridad.nl)) Upon signature of the contract (step 4), MASO Programme Manager, Fred Frimpong ([fredf@solidaridadnetwork.org](mailto:fredf@solidaridadnetwork.org)) will be the first point of contact.  
Programme website: [www.masogh.org](http://www.masogh.org)





## 7 About Solidaridad and MASO

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Solidaridad is a not-for-profit network organisation with 9 regional offices on 5 continents. We envision a world in which all we produce, and all we consume, can sustain us all while respecting the planet, each other and the next generation. We bring together commodity supply chain actors and engage them in innovative solutions to improve production, ensuring the transition to a sustainable and inclusive economy that maximises the benefit for all.

### **ABOUT MASO**

MASO is a five year programme, focused on creating employment opportunities for the youth (aged 18-25) in Ghana's cocoa communities. It is implemented by five consortium members made up of Solidaridad, Aflatoun, Ashesi University, Fidelity Bank and the Ghana Cocoa Board.

MASO is part of the Youth Forward Initiative, a partnership led by The MasterCard Foundation, Overseas Development Institute, Global Communities, Solidaridad, NCBA-CLUSA and GOAL. Its focus is to link young people to quality employment or to start their own businesses in the agriculture and construction sectors in Ghana and Uganda.

This five-year, US\$74 million initiative will reach more than 200,000 economically disadvantaged youth aged 18-25. The Youth Forward Initiative uses a holistic approach that combines market-relevant skills training, mentorship, internships and access to financial services to help young people transition out of poverty and into sustainable livelihoods.



# Annex 1 Gender

MASO will address gender considerations by:

## A. Organization and Structure

- Hiring a gender specialist to ensure that gender specific issues are addressed throughout the programme.
- Appointing a gender focal person to the steering committee.
- Conducting comprehensive training on gender specific issues for all programme staff and partners to increase awareness about gender and its implications.

## B. Research and Learning

- Identifying the specific constraints to women's participation in cocoa programmes as part of our pre-implementation needs assessment.
- Evaluating, updating and revising gender programming effectiveness throughout the programme as part of the overall MEL process.

## C. Programme Attributes

- Weaving gender sensitivity into all our interventions. With the "DO NO HARM" principle, all interventions should be evaluated carefully to determine possible influences on the sometimes fragile gender relations in communities, before they are implemented.
- Ensuring that 40% (minimum) programme participants will be girls/young women.
- Designating one MASO Agro Academy and one MASO Business Academy as female only entities.
- Encouraging women farmers to obtain their own passbooks in their name allowing them to sell the cocoa they grow to licensed buying companies.
- Ensuring that all MASO Agro academies and MASO Business academies (not only all-female ones) are sensitive to gender issues and actively support women's equitable participation now and in the future.
- Gender specific constraints will be considered when establishing curricula, location and other programme components.
- Encouraging current female farmers, employees and entrepreneurs in the cocoa sector to become our ambassadors to create awareness about the specific role women can play. These ambassadors will also reach out to their own networks and communities.
- Creating awareness through change agents in communities. Traditional and community leaders and churches will be approached as part of our preparatory work to diplomatically encourage them to actively support the participation of all youth, but especially females.
- Encouraging discussion about gender relationships, amongst youth, using the Aflatoun curriculum component on identity and values.
- Encouraging female-run enterprises within all our incubators, not just female only.
- Requiring male MASO Agro Academy graduates, as part of their training, to pass on their knowledge to 3 additional youth, of whom at least one must be female.
- Requiring female MASO Agro Academy graduates, as part of their training, to pass on their knowledge to 3 additional youth, of whom at least two must be female.
- Expanding COCOBOD's "Farmer of the Year" award to include "Youth Farmer of the Year" and "Female Farmer of the Year" awards.
- ~~Matching female coaches with female youth, when and where possible.~~





**We help  
open the  
right doors**





[www.masogh.org](http://www.masogh.org)



**Solidaridad**

