Fostering Sustainable Cocoa Production
Madagascar

Smallholder cocoa farmers in Madagascar receive much needed capacity building in good agricultural, social and environmental farming practices. A needs assessment further paves the way for potential future support in agricultural and community development.

Context
Although Madagascar’s cocoa sector is small compared to other origins, the country is home to finest varieties of flavor cocoa. Approximately 33’000, mainly smallholder cocoa farmers located in the Sambirano valley, produce around 6000 to 7000 tons of cocoa beans per year. The sector is not regulated, infrastructure lacking, and farmers receive very little, if at all, support from the government or non-governmental organizations, leading to very low yields. This one-year pilot project aims at changing this situation by supporting farmers to ameliorate their practices, and in a second step, improving their livelihoods.

Project Content
The project contains two main elements which represent a solid start for an engagement in Madagascar: Training & capacity building, and a needs assessment for agricultural and community development.

Farmers are organized in groups and receive comprehensive training in agricultural, social and environmental cocoa farming practices. Based on training materials used in other countries, the developed content is structured around nine modules and covers all essential topics necessary for Malagasy cocoa farmers to improve their practices. Farmers learn for example about the right time to harvest, how cocoa beans have to be fermented and dried, which cocoa branches need to be pruned to maintain strong trees, what to do about diseased or infected trees and cocoa pods, how soil has to be nourished with organic material, how to cultivate new cocoa seedlings, what children are allowed and not allowed to do on the farms, as well as topics around nutrition and women’s empowerment.

About the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:
The Lindt Cocoa Foundation was found in 2013 and has the declared purpose of working to achieve social and ecological sustainability in the cultivation, production and processing of cocoa and other raw materials used in chocolate production. Learn more: www.lindtcocoafoundation.org
Knowing that training and capacity building will not be sufficient to improve the livelihoods of the Malagasy cocoa farming families, a needs assessment is conducted. The needs assessment covers the entire local cocoa value chain in order to find out where additional investments will be necessary for agricultural and community development. This paves the ground for a future engagement, either by the Lindt Cocoa Foundation or hopefully also additional supporters.

The project is accompanied by an extensive monitoring and evaluation system to gather learnings for a possible expansion. Further, the project is also evaluated by an external and independent party.

**Serving the mission of the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:**
The project puts Malagasy cocoa farming families in the center, and touches upon two of the focus areas of the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:

1) Training and capacity building to create the motivation, capabilities and capacity of farmers to improve their farming practices

2) A needs assessment laying the base for potential future agricultural and community investments to foster an enabling environment and remove constraints farmers face to improve their practices

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