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# CRIG launches Cocoa Club Ghana for basic schools to help cocoa preservation



by **Neil Nii Kanarku** — January 2, 2024 Reading Time: 3 mins read



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As part of efforts to encourage the youth to connect with cocoa from bean to bar and develop their knowledge in cocoa and its related activities, the management of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) in Tafo, Eastern Region, has launched the Cocoa Club Ghana.



The Cocoa Club Ghana also aims to introduce basic school students to career opportunities in the cocoa sector, such as cocoa farming, through technicians, research assistants, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

The aims and objectives of the Cocoa Club are to provide proper incentives and inspiration for the pursuit of scientific knowledge in a rigorous way by broadening their scientific outlook. It also aims to develop among the pupils the spirit and attitude of healthy competition.

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Deputy Director of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, Michael Owusu-Manu.

Deputy Director of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, Michael Owusu-Manu, spoke at the official launch in Tafo, explaining the rationale behind setting up the Cocoa Club in the first place.







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"Cocoa has been the backbone of the Ghanaian economy for over a century, with over 2 million people directly and indirectly employed in the sector. It is a primary source of income for many people globally, as well as Ghanaian households (families and communities). Additionally, it is a major source of revenue and foreign exchange for the economy. Cocoa has tremendous health and nutritional benefits with major uses in the food industry (confectionery, beverage, etc.), health (medicinal/therapeutic (pharmaceutical), etc.), cosmetic, and other industries."

"Today, we have come to unveil and name a newborn, the Cocoa Club Ghana project. The idea began sometime early last year here at the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), New Tafo, incubated, nurtured, and went through a phase of testing. This project aims to encourage the youth to connect with cocoa from bean to bar, to shape and develop their knowledge of cocoa and its related activities. It also aims to introduce them to career opportunities in the cocoa sector, such as cocoa farming, through technicians, research assistants, scientists, entrepreneurs (cocoapreneurs/chocopreneurs), among other businesses and professions."

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For a start, about two hundred and sixty (260) pupils from the CRIG Primary School and JHS were taken on an educational tour from October to November 2022. The pupils were given the necessary history of cocoa and were also taken through some experiential farms, fermentation, and drying processes of cocoa beans before they are made into chocolate.

On his part, the Executive Director of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, Dr. Francis Padi, noted the importance of the Cocoa Club, challenging the government to ensure the sustainability of the cocoa sector to help in students' development.



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"We believe it's time to unveil and spread cocoa education through the Club into other schools, the formal launch of Cocoa Club Ghana, which we need your support to execute. Cocoa is the most important commodity produced in Ghana and is not formally taught in schools or part of the regular curriculum. As such, organizers of Cocoa Club Ghana found it imperative to informally bring education on cocoa into the schools. We hope to educate, inform, share knowledge, and promote the use and consumption of cocoa and cocoa products," he said.

He added, "We want the government to take the needed steps to preserve the Cocoa sector by first tackling all problems in the sector, including illegal mining. This is an opportunity for our younger generation to develop and promote their interest, realize their scientific potential, and fulfill their quest for acquiring in-depth knowledge information through activities in the cocoa sector. The Club will provide insight into career opportunities within the cocoa sector by understanding the sector and activities therein. It will also provide information about cocoa farming, marketing, trading, processing, and manufacturing, so they can appreciate how wealth can be created along the supply chain."

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