

INSPIRATIONS IN SUSTAINABILITY

IVORY COAST - MAY 2021

Kacoua Akoua Mireille and Assi Messou Franck

Kacoua Akoua Mireille and her husband Assi Messou Franck own a cocoa and rubber farm in Amiankouassikro in Ivory Coast. In 2020 they both joined the Village Savings a Loan Association (VSLA) named "Amankanze".

"When we joined, we were told that the VSLA would support us in creating our business", Mireille said. "After saving money for four months, we were able to take out a loan from the VSLA. With this loan, we bought the supplies we needed to open our store".

The shop now sells clothes and cosmetics, as well as tools to harvest rubber from trees. It has become a successful business and the couple has already paid back their first loan.

Together Frank and Mireille have 6 children of which 4 still go to school. The additional income from the store helps the couple pay for school fees and school supplies their children need. They can also now afford to buy more diverse produces at the market which greatly improved their families' diet.

"Without the VSLA it would be very difficult for us to get a loan here in the village", said Mireille. "I am thankful to be a member as it allowed us to really start our business which helped improve the conditions at home".



Kacoua Akoua Mireille and Assi Messou Franck in their store

The woman and children clothes sell particularly well. Her and her husband are still members of the VSLA and continue to save money. They would like to take a second loan to get more inventory and expand their business.

The VSLA "Amankanze" was already in its second year at the time Mireille and Franck joined, and had grown to 30 members. It was created by community members following the same model Blommer directly established in the village as part of our Sustainable Origins programs.

Across our network, the copycat effect has so far spontaneously generated an additional 42 VSLAs with 1,330 members (76% women). This is what true sustainability looks like: when others want to do the same! We also support these new groups with some mentoring from our team.