

Barry Callebaut empowers cocoa growers in Tanzania

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Improving access to cocoa seedlings and providing agricultural training are two key priorities at Biolands - Barry Callebaut's direct sourcing and farm services organization. Biolands works closely with farmers to improve cocoa quality and yields, as well as farmer livelihoods.

As part of a joint initiative with Belgian chocolate maker KIM's Chocolates that began in Tanzania in 2016, Biolands has pledged to distribute at least 100,000 cocoa seedlings per year. For the 2016/17 season, the distribution of 140,000 seedlings is planned, depending on the demand from farmers.

In Tanzania, Biolands has four nurseries across the Kyela and Busokelo districts where cocoa seedlings are nurtured before being delivered to the cocoa farms for planting.

However, some cocoa farmers live in remote areas and do not necessarily have the means to travel to the nurseries. That is why at Biolands seedlings are not only supplied on site at the nurseries but are also brought directly to farms in the region.

To extend its distribution network, Biolands is involving people from local communities. One of them is 32-year-old Joyce Iponja. She has trained as a senior nursery assistant at Biolands' nursery in Kyela and now belongs to a dedicated team that visits farmers.

The team not only supplies seedlings from the nursery but also shares valuable know-how on how to best plant and care for the seedlings – including aspects such as spacing, shade and irrigation.