

Gertrude Gurup

“Cocoa, the tree of benefits”

**Over 1,000
cocoa trees planted in place of
destroyed Betelnut trees**

Gertrude Gurup and her husband Timothy Gurup are cocoa farmers in Mutzing, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea, who used to farm Betelnut. In 2006, after their Betelnut trees were destroyed by pests, Gertrude decided to plant over 1,000 cocoa trees in their place, even though she knew it was a risk as the Betelnut business was making good money for the people in Markham Valley.



From primary school teacher to cocoa farmer

For 25 years, Gertrude had devoted her time to teaching primary school students, and she struggled to imagine life without the chaos of the classroom and the children who would grow into adults remembering her life lessons. Gertrude decided to retire in 2012, two years after she opened her fermentary in order to fully commit to her cocoa plot with her husband.

But her risk paid off, and soon she started to see [the benefits of the cocoa trade](#). In 2010, Gertrude built a small fermentary, the first of three in her village, that enabled her to dry the cocoa beans herself. Things were going so well that Gertrude was considering quitting her full-time job as a primary school teacher.



Ripe cocoa is yellow or white when the husk is scraped

Utilizing Papua New Guinea's land

Gertrude believes that the customary land of Papua New Guinea should be utilized by its people. "In PNG, we have untapped customary land banks. We have land that can generate income for farmers, and seeds are free from our land. We only have to have dreams to use our land." Together, Gertrude and Timothy branched out into other small businesses, opening a store, rearing chickens, and farming vegetables on their small plot of land in order to support their children.

Branching out with the cocoa proceeds

With the proceeds from the **cocoa** plot, they purchased two trucks and a small tractor on loan, to assist them in plowing their land for farming. Their cocoa plot has allowed them to repay their loans and provide for their six children, who have since purchased small pockets of land, owning trade stores and a small guest house. The fruits of their labor have been sweet, and they're proud of what their children have achieved with their support.



Gertrude's cocoa fermentary scraped

“**At Eiliven, they are now selling a 63.5kg bag at K450.00. I can sell 5 bags during the peak period in a week from my plot, or even more when I set up the scale and buy wet beans from customers. During quieter weeks, I can sell 2 bags, and still see a lot of money from farming cocoa.**”

- Gertrude Gurup

Following in their mother's footsteps

Gertrude's daughters have followed in their mother's footsteps and are farmers who run poultry businesses. Both Gertrude and Timothy understand that Cocoa farming is hard work, especially after an illness that meant Timothy needed a leg amputation, providing quite a setback for their business. The pair struggled to make ends meet for eight years and were unable to renew their fragmentary license, meaning they were not legally allowed to sell their cocoa.

Now, it certainly helps that the cocoa price is good, says Gertrude. "At Eiliven, they are now selling a 63.5kg bag at K450.00. I can sell 5 bags during the peak period in a week from my plot, or even more when I set up the scale and buy wet beans from customers. During quieter weeks, I can sell 2 bags, and still see a lot of money from farming cocoa."

Today, Gertrude and Timothy have one full-time employee and have since renewed their fermenter license so they can sell their cocoa once more. Gertrude is also thinking of running a fishery as a new business venture.