

Priscilla Impraim and her **chocolate** business

Priscilla Impraim is one of the first women in Ghana to enter the chocolate business. Despite some hurdles, she founded the company Ab Ovo Confectionery Limited in 2006 with currently six permanent employees and 25 seasonal employees.



Despite some hurdles for women in the chocolate business, Priscilla Impraim has managed to build a successful business. ©GIZ

She immediately impresses her audience. ‘We have these awesome cocoa beans’, says the woman on stage, ‘but we don’t add any value to them’. Priscilla Impraim opens her eyes wide as if she is listening in surprise to her own words. Of course, she is trying to change the value: As one of the first women in Ghana to move into the chocolate business. With her right fist clenched, she now calls out to the audience: ‘We present the true taste of cocoa. And create jobs!’ It sort of feels like Impraim is on a mission here at the International Green Week (IGW), where she is presenting and selling her own chocolate at the booth of the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development).

She certainly seems to be in good spirits. Impraim strolls from the stage back to her sales table. Five different bars of chocolate lie next to each other, along with some lozenges. How did it come about? She sits down. She says that she lived in Germany in the noughties, ‘and that’s when I saw the wide range of chocolate products’. ‘I was surprised. My home country is one of the regions with the most cocoa beans – but we don’t make any varieties.’ She immediately thought that needed to change.

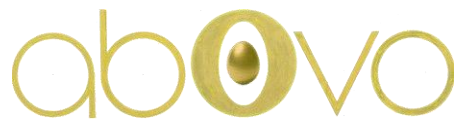
After her return to Accra in Ghana, Impraim founded a company with her savings in 2006. In 2008, she launched her business, initially offering chocolate produced under licence by a manufactory but based on her own recipe. The 54-year-old recalls: 'I started with lozenges. Their texture was softer than the otherwise rather hard lozenges on the market'. Before that, she had no professional experience with cocoa, having worked in business administration and marketing. 'I simply learned how to make chocolate and got started.' Later she added her own machines.

She says it wasn't easy at first. 'Women in Ghana have problems accessing financing.' Banks hardly have time to study business plans – 'and they charge high interest rates'.

But Impraim persistently followed her idea of turning the raw cocoa beans into high-end products and selling them, like the ones consumed en masse in other countries as the most refined food of the gods. At first, she sold her products in local supermarkets. After the first successes, she added exports to Nigeria; her company, Ab Ovo Confectionery Limited, now has six employees and 25 seasonal workers. 'These are the jobs I talked about on stage.' Her goal: The leap to Europe. 'The quality is there. It's just a question of investment', says Impraim with a smile on her face. In general, the company has come a long way – on a road paved with success. So continued growth seems only natural.

'We women simply know better how to spend money. Men are noticing it more and more – so, it comes to no surprise that we are evermore present in the business world.'

By
Jan Rubel



Visit her website: <https://abovochocholate.com/products/>