

INVESTING IN UGANDA'S YOUNG AND FEMALE COFFEE FARMERS

2018 - 2021 | KANUNGU, UGANDA

Ugandan women and young people are finding it difficult to kick-start a career in one of Uganda's most profitable sectors: the coffee industry. With co-funding from the European Union and UK aid from the UK government, Farm Africa is addressing the economic, agricultural and cultural barriers stopping these groups from forging rewarding careers in the coffee sector.

With over 78% of the population below 30 and a median age of 15, Uganda is the world's second youngest country. Unemployment in Uganda is on the rise and young people shoulder the burden.

In 2015, one in three young Ugandans was unemployed. Women are more likely to be unemployed than men.

The Ugandan economy is powered by coffee. Coffee is the nation's most profitable crop, accounting for 20–30% of Uganda's foreign exchange earnings each year.

Kanungu, in western Uganda, is a major coffee growing area. High altitudes and a tropical climate provide the perfect conditions for coffee production. Strong demand for the lucrative bean should be providing youth and women with employment opportunities.

Limited access to land, quality inputs, processing services, finance and information about coffee production stop young people and women from starting successful coffee businesses.

Kanungu's coffees have the potential to be amongst the best beans in the world but poor agricultural practices relegate farmers' produce to cheap instant coffee markets, and other sub-par, markets. Farm Africa is providing farmers with training in the sustainable production of high-quality coffee so that they can meet lucrative coffee markets' high standards.

By improving their financial literacy and connecting them to markets and financial institutions, this project is strengthening the agribusinesses that provide coffee growers with commercial services, like coffee processing, and inputs, such as quality coffee plants and fertilisers.

Farm Africa is building the capacity of four Kanungu cooperatives so that farmers can sell their produce in bulk for higher prices. Farm Africa is training coffee cooperative staff to manage the businesses, engage with new buyers and process coffee.

Access to and control over land is fundamental to kick-starting a career in farming. Young people and women face difficulties gaining access to land.

In Uganda, land is largely controlled by the eldest man in the family; older men don't like to cede control over land use decisions to women or younger men. Farm Africa is raising awareness about young people and women's need for greater access to land, and working with families to identify land use solutions.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:



In 2018, with co-funding from the European Union, Farm Africa started supporting 4,800 farmers in Kanungu to improve the local coffee industry.



In February 2019, Farm Africa launched the Coffee is Life appeal. All donations made before 8 May 2019 will be doubled by the UK government. Matched funds will be used to launch a new phase of the project in September 2019, which will focus on providing women in Kanungu with the support they need to increase their incomes and earn a fair share of the profits from coffee.



All project activities will run until 2021.

Farm Africa is carrying out this work in partnership with Twin, a unique non-profit working with coffee, cocoa and nut farmer groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and facilitating their access to markets.



PHOTO: FARM AFRICA/ESTHER RUTH MUBAZI

SUPPORTING YOUNG COFFEE FARMERS



PRODUCING SPECIALIST COFFEE

Farm Africa is equipping 168 lead farmers with the ability to deliver training in sustainable high-quality coffee production. Lead farmers will use smartphones, pre-loaded with interactive learning materials, to train 4,800 farmers in sustainable production practices, how to increase yields, when to harvest and post-harvest handling.



STRENGTHENING BUSINESSES

Through tailored training and mentoring, Farm Africa is supporting the growth of businesses at all steps of the coffee production process from selling seedlings to processing the coffee to adding value before it's sold. The project is linking these enterprises to financial institutions to fund their growth.



CULTIVATING COOPERATIVES

Kanungu's coffee cooperatives, which aggregate, process and trade farmers' produce, are small, inexperienced and under-resourced. Many farmers sell their coffee to traders and middlemen who offer them a fraction of what they could be earning if they sold their product collectively through cooperatives. Farm Africa is working with four local cooperatives to:

- boost membership, particularly amongst women and young farmers.
- connect them with new buyers.
- set up micro-washing stations, which add value to Arabica coffee varieties, and train staff to use the equipment.
- build cooperative leadership teams' financial and business management skills.



IMPROVING YOUTH'S ACCESS TO LAND

Farm Africa has set up the Kanungu chapter of the Ugandan Young Farmers' Association. Young leaders have been trained in advocacy, and are carrying out a community-level land access campaign. The project is working with families to set up voluntary land use agreements, which provide young and female family members with land to grow coffee on for an agreed period of time.



The above activities are co-funded by the European Union.

SUPPORTING FEMALE FARMERS

Women provide the bulk of low paid labour, while men market the coffee and run cooperatives. Female coffee farmers typically earn 38% less than men.



ACCESS TO FINANCE

Women are responsible for household costs but struggle to maintain a healthy cash flow and gain fair access to agricultural profits. This project will:

- set up 160 village saving and loan associations, where women unite together to save and make funds available to each other to ease cash flow, meet household costs and make investments in their businesses.
- work with families to develop voluntary land use agreements that provide women with access to land and greater control over the profits generated from their agricultural efforts.
- inspire, educate and empower men and women to work together more equitably in order to achieve household goals.



INCLUSIVE COOPERATIVES

Women are under-represented within coffee cooperatives. The new project will instil a fairer working culture and support women to assume positions of responsibility within four coffee cooperatives by:

- identifying internal policies, pay structures and procedures that deny women entry to cooperatives and powerful positions within them.
- providing bespoke training to address institutional inequalities within cooperatives.
- delivering leadership training to 300 women, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to advance their careers.



AWARENESS RAISING

Women's contributions to Kanungu's coffee industry are undervalued. This project will run an evidence-based communications campaign that demonstrates the community-wide benefits of empowering women.



Give farmers in Africa the opportunity to thrive. Give before 8 May 2019 and public donations to Farm Africa's Coffee is Life appeal will be doubled by the UK government.