

Coffee that 'comes with a story'

The experience of Kyagalanyi, in partnership with UTZ – The business case for the household approach in Uganda

THE COMPANY

Kyagalanyi Coffee Ltd. is the number one coffee exporter. Kyagalanyi, part of the Volcafe group, specialises in buying coffee from smallholder farmers and traders across Uganda and sells to export markets in Europe, the US, etc. A significant part of its Arabica sales are certified under the UTZ certification scheme. As there is a high demand for sustainably produced coffee, in particular for 'coffee with a story',

Kyaganalyi wants to increase the volumes of high quality coffee bought. As certified coffee is a higher value crop, the company can also invest in farmer support programmes.

SUPPLY SIDE

17,000 households of coffee farmers in West Nile, Mount Elgon and Rwenzori regions sell their coffee directly to Kyagalanyi.



GENDER-BASED CONSTRAINTS

Coffee is a men's crop

Traditionally, cash crops are considered men's crops, whereas food crops are considered women's crops. Women work alongside their husbands in the coffee garden. However, the income earned with coffee is normally taken and spent by the husbands. This does not encourage the women to improve the coffee production. Few women are allowed to have their own coffee fields. Most farmers registered as Kyagalanyi member are therefore men.

Capacity building on good agronomic practices (GAPs) did not reach women

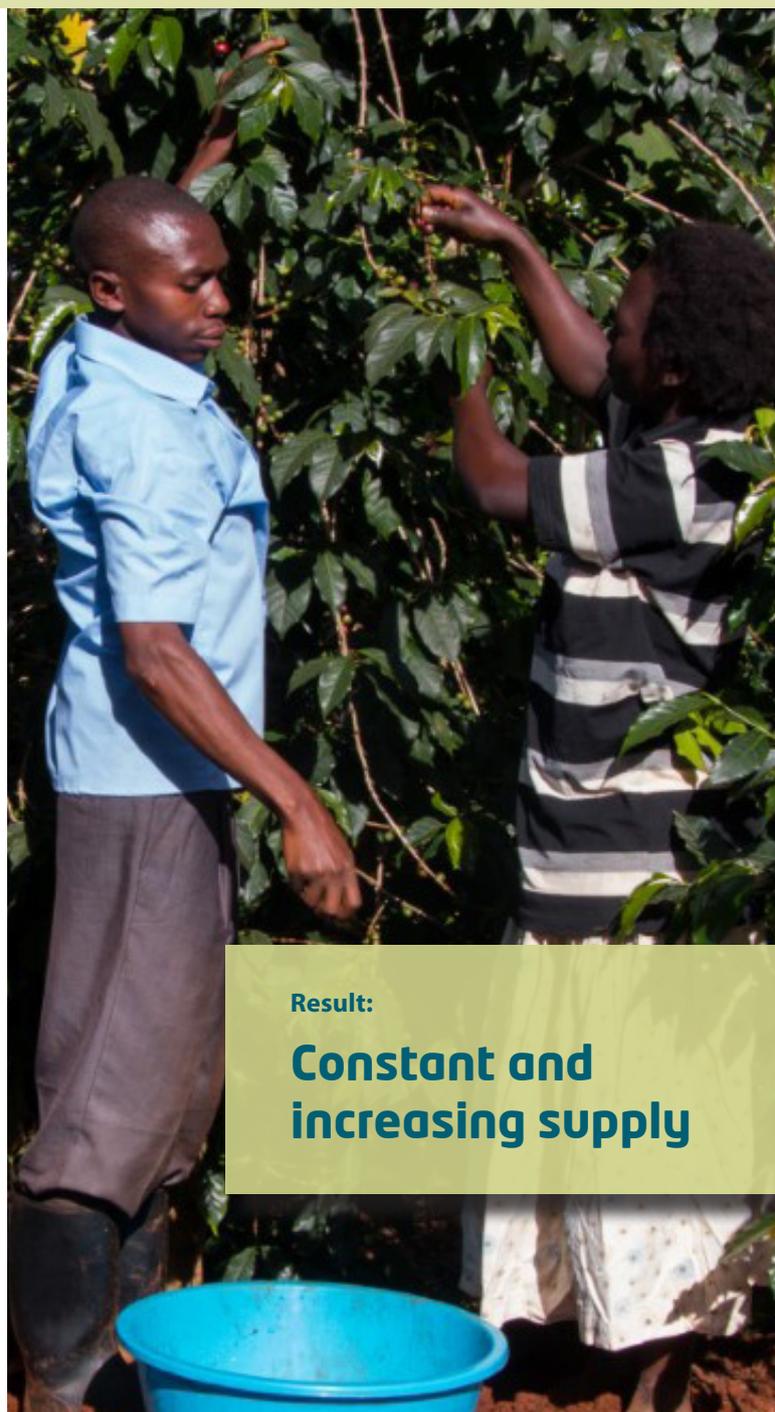
Kyagalanyi's staff used to focus their trainings on the registered members. As a result their trainings mainly reached male farmers, and women did not benefit from the capacity building activities to promote GAPs. In addition, the company had very few female extension agents, which hindered women's participation in trainings on GAPs.

Lack of collaboration between men and women at household level

In many households husband and wife were not collaborating and did not manage their farm together. Women were not motivated to work in the coffee garden, and this had an impact on volumes and quality.

Lack of financial transparency and joint planning of husband and wife

The coffee selling was usually done by men, who did not share the coffee income, whereas women resorted to stealing coffee from the garden and selling it on the side. As a result only few households jointly planned and decided together on investments in the farm and household expenses.



Result:

Constant and increasing supply



STRATEGIES

Build gender equality values and skills of the company and staff

In 2013, Kyagalanyi participated in the gender trajectory of AgriProFocus. The main aim was to improve how the company reflects gender equality values in its staff and operations. Activities included writing a gender policy and increasing female staff representation in the company. As a result there came more female staff on board (an increase from 3 to 24% in four years), bringing diversity and new talents to the company.

Build capacities of women producing coffee

Kyagalanyi staff started to recognize the important role of women in producing coffee. The company developed strategies to ensure that women would also benefit from the farmer support programme. Management encouraged the field staff to change their focus from registered members to the households. This resulted in both husbands and wives being trained during farm visits and increasing percentages of women attending group trainings. Having more female staff also attracted more female members.

Improve collaboration and decision making at household level

Mid 2017, Kyagalanyi started implementing a full gender programme in its certified value chains. The company has set up 70 gender clusters, aligned to their existing farmer groups, resulting in 1,400 households currently benefitting from the programme. Each cluster is headed by a change agent, who organizes sessions for couples, aiming at increased financial transparency, collaboration and decision making at household level. As important side-effect of this increased collaboration, part of the coffee income is now used to send children to (a better) school.

Improve financial management of households

The 70 gender clusters were trained to set-up saving groups (VSLAs). This helps families to save money, while being able to take out loans. In addition, a board game was developed which mimics the coffee season. It is played with four couples and shows them the importance of joint decision making, record keeping and good management of their coffee farms.



RESULTS

Benefits for the company

Improved volume and quality of coffee

Households work together and the improved adoption of GAPs by husband and wife resulted in higher yields (+50-70% in 5-8 years) and better quality.

Constant and increasing supply

Coffee has become a family crop instead of the men's crop it used to be. This resulted in more households selling coffee to Kyagalanyi, and better 'loyalty rates'.

Stronger linkages with buyers and consumers

Roasters selling in Europe and the USA realize that 'stories' on how coffee is produced in a fair way, benefitting both men and women, strengthens the linkage with end consumers. Some are willing to support Kyagalanyi with funds for the farmer support programme and the gender programmes.

Recognized as an ethical company

Because of Kyagalanyi's efforts to be an ethically responsible company, it received the 'Sustainable Standard Setter Award' of the Rainforest Alliance for its project to stop child labor in the West Nile region.



Benefits for women

Women seen by the company

The important role of women in the coffee production is recognized by the company. This resulted in an increase of 25% of women registered as direct members of Kyagalanyi.

Women are trained in GAPs

The capacities of women on good agricultural practices have improved. The attendance rates of female farmers participating in farm visits and group trainings have reached 50% and 25%, respectively.

Coffee has become a family crop

Coffee, which used to be a men's cash crop, is now perceived as a family crop, owned by men and women. As a result, women have become more interested in coffee production, even if this requires more work. Responsibilities are shared and men and women plan and decide together about how much coffee to sell, when and where to sell and how to spend the money earned. This translates into better livelihoods for their families.

Female role models

Efforts to reflect gender values in the organization have resulted in an increased number of female field workers. They act as role models for the female farmers.