

LWR & QUALITY COFFEE

FROM CROP TO CUP



Jake Lyell for LWR

BACKGROUND: THE CHALLENGE OF SMALLHOLDER FARMING

Over 25 million coffee farmers face challenges in maximizing their coffee yield, obtaining a fair price and meeting their families' basic needs. Most are vulnerable to a variety of shocks at the household level, including the impacts of climate change, volatile markets and food insecurity. To address these challenges, LWR uses an agricultural value chain approach to support local partners and farming families as they increase their resilience to these shocks and improve their livelihoods in ways that are economically and environmentally sustainable.

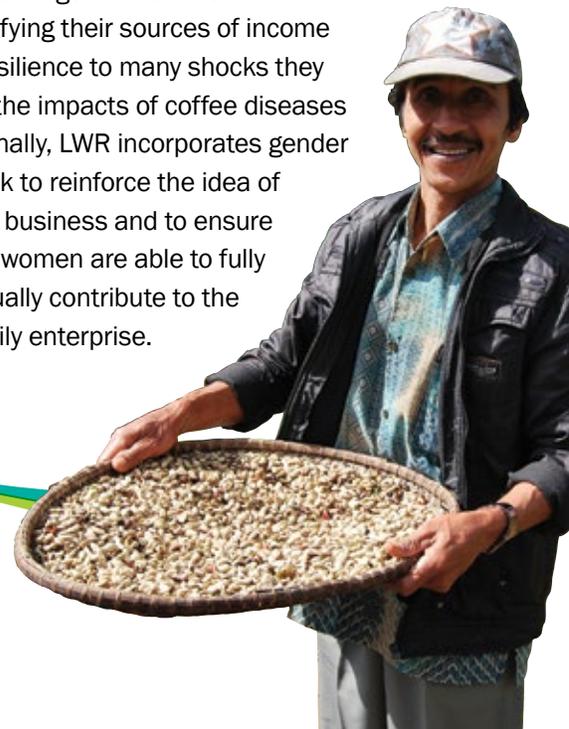
HOW DOES LWR WORK?

LWR accompanies local organizations in implementing holistic programs that include improved natural resource management and access to inputs, technical assistance and global markets. When a project ends, LWR's accompaniment model allows the local organization to become stronger, more independent and better equipped to assist farmers well into the future.

LWR'S APPROACH TO QUALITY COFFEE

LWR has worked with smallholder coffee farmers since 1988, building on farmers' own skills and knowledge to maximize coffee earnings, yields and quality through climate smart agricultural practices. LWR works with farmer cooperatives to access markets for Arabica and Robusta coffees, and in doing so, assists farmers in improving earnings from coffee while also helping them meet the basic needs of their families.

Because coffee is a high-value crop, many farmers have devoted all of their land to its production and as a result, are entirely dependent on coffee earnings. LWR supports farmers in operating their farms as businesses to maximize their earnings from coffee while strategically diversifying their sources of income to increase their resilience to many shocks they may face, such as the impacts of coffee diseases like la roya. Additionally, LWR incorporates gender initiatives in its work to reinforce the idea of farming as a family business and to ensure that both men and women are able to fully participate and equally contribute to the success of the family enterprise.



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IMPROVING COFFEE QUALITY

High coffee quality is a requirement for success in the specialty coffee market. LWR provides producers with technical assistance focused on quality improvement on the farm and throughout processing.

LWR supports coffee farmers' adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices like crop diversification, the renovation of coffee plants and soil and water conservation. Shade-grown coffee production is encouraged to improve coffee quality and soil health, as is the intercropping of fruit trees in coffee parcels to supplement farming families' incomes and access to nutritious food. LWR promotes locally prepared organic fertilizers and bio-pest controls as low-cost and highly effective methods of improving coffee production.

BETTER ACCESS TO FINANCING AND INPUTS

Access to credit is critical as it allows farmers to purchase the vital inputs like fertilizers, necessary to improve their coffee yields, quality and earnings. LWR facilitates pre-harvest financing by linking cooperatives to local, national and international financial institutions. It strengthens the cooperatives' financial management systems thus facilitating their access to credit and helping farmers obtain loans to improve their farms' productivity.

INCREASING ACCESS TO MARKETS

Coffee farmers need reliable access to markets where they can sell their coffee. LWR equips cooperatives with better information, improved bargaining power and stronger logistical management to access markets for conventional and certified coffees.

LOOKING AHEAD

For decades, the focus of coffee farmers on improved quality, quantity and pricing has not changed, yet recently the world around them has changed rapidly and unpredictably. Three major drivers of this accelerated change are climate change, technology and youth migration.

Climate change is presenting unprecedented challenges in the form of droughts, floods and increasing temperatures that are moving high quality coffee production to higher altitudes. LWR is working closely with coffee farmers in helping them implement climate smart agricultural practices to enhance their production and sustain the natural resources they depend on.

Technology is improving communication where it was limited only a few years ago. LWR is combining the effectiveness of community knowledge workers with the reach of smart

phone technology to provide many coffee farmers with access to timely information on market prices, weather and best growing practices so they can receive a better and fairer share of their product's market value.

The average age of a coffee farmer in parts of Latin America and East Africa is over 50 years old, and many young people are leaving coffee communities for better opportunities in urban centers. Many ask, "Who is going to grow and harvest the next generation of specialty coffee?"

Through a holistic approach, LWR is striving to keep coffee farming a viable family business that will meet today's needs and the aspirations of future generations.

CASE STUDY: UGANDA



Since 2008, LWR has partnered with Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise (GCCE) to improve the coffee value chain for over 6,000 smallholder farmers in Uganda. This partnership has transformed GCCE from an organization that was registering losses of \$250,000 in 2007, into an internationally recognized specialty coffee source, generating annual net profits of over \$500,000. The main lessons learned from this project and new realities on the ground were the basis for the development of this new 39-month project targeting 15,000 smallholder coffee producers. LWR leveraged more than \$479,000 in resources from a wide variety of stakeholders to support this project, including GCCE, the Grameen Foundation, Opportunity Bank Uganda, MicroEnsure and We Effect..

In order to achieve its goal, the project includes a two-pronged approach to strengthen the farmer organizations: to improve the *quality* and *quantity* of coffee brought to market. At the same time, it is supporting smallholder farmers' efforts to enhance productivity through increased investment in production and post-harvest handling and the use of technology to provide agricultural extension, financial services and marketing to bring about positive and sustainable improvement in the lives of smallholder farmers in Uganda.