



"It's a big job, but it's worth the effort!"

Support for coffee growers in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).



fhAgriculture
TRANSITION TO AGROECOLOGY



New enthusiasm for coffee

FH Switzerland supports 2,800 small growers in Burundi and the northern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as they revive coffee production in the region. Although coffee growing once flourished, it was gradually abandoned following regional conflicts and as the aging of existing coffee plantations resulted in a decline in productivity.



From coffee grower to buyer

Omer Ntawe is a specialist in the coffee value chain. He assists coffee grower cooperatives supported by FH through all stages of production ; In particular, he helps connect them with buyers.

What are the effects of FH's support for coffee growers?

In Burundi, coffee growers are glad that the yield per coffee tree has increased considerably because of the training they received on plantation maintenance. In the DRC, the project transformed the countryside in Uvira territory. Thousands of coffee seedlings have been grown and distributed to replace aging plantations. The washing station built on the ruins of one from the 1960s has brought renewed hope to the population. As for the construction site for the Luvungi hulling mill – which is the only industrial-scale unit of this type in all of South Kivu province – it is the pride of the whole region!

What is the involvement of women in coffee growing?

The work in the washing station is done exclusively by women. It is an opportunity for women to gain access to an income and is something they value highly.

Who are the coffee buyers?

Through Schluter SA (a Swiss trading firm) and others, the coffee production is sold in Europe, the United States and South Africa.



Washing station built in Lubumba 75 km west of Uvira.

Construction site for the hulling mill.
Coffee cherries.

Opposite: Green coffee ready for export.



Encouraged by her neighbor

Marie-Josée shared her story in September 2016 at the second agroecology workshop organized by FH. She is the mother of 11 children.

"We used to practice slash-and-burn cultivation*, but I was really discouraged because we harvested hardly anything. I even wanted to stop everything and go work in the mines. It was then that a neighbor came to tell me about the agroecology workshop she had attended in Kigali. She showed us how to mulch the coffee fields (mulching involves spreading straw between the plants. This method helps to nourish the soil and protect it from drying out). It's a lot of work, but it's worth the effort: before, during the dry season, the leaves of the coffee trees wilted, but now, with the straw, they are all green, it is magnificent! I was able to harvest 23 bags, each with 200 kg of crop – that is eight bags more than I usually harvested. That encouraged me a lot. We also used the mulching technique for corn. Our harvest tripled!"

*This technique involves burning the vegetation on a plot of land to be cultivated. The resulting ash is rich in minerals beneficial to plants. However, the burning process also wastes the nitrogen and carbon contained in the vegetation, and the life of the soil is destroyed. It is a widespread technique but is not recommended because it is not sustainable.





From coffee tree flowers to coffee cherries. And in the end, after many steps, a cup of coffee!

Coffee: From cherry to cup

Coffee production is a long and meticulous process. Before being sold as green coffee for export, the coffee cherry goes through the following processing steps.

Pulping: The harvested crop is carried, usually on foot, to the washing station where the pulping process separates the bean from the pulp. **Fermentation:** The beans are soaked in water for twelve hours to separate them from the slick substance that covers them after pulping. **Washing:** The resulting coffee, called parchment coffee, has to be washed. **Sorting:** Then the coffee is sorted. It is mainly women who carry out this meticulous work. **Drying:** The coffee needs to be dried for between 1 and 3 weeks, depending on the amount of sunlight. The coffee is spread out on large tables. When its moisture level reaches 11%, it is bagged and stored. **Hulling:** This is the last step before exporting – it consists of using friction to separate the bean from the parchment skin. The resulting product is known as green coffee. **Roasting:** This step (heating and roasting beans) is generally done in the importing country.

Your donation helps us to continue supporting coffee growers:

With CHF 40.-

You make it possible for us to buy 10 kg of coffee seeds to produce new coffee trees.

With CHF 100.-

You make it possible for us to provide a farmer with the educational materials needed for a week of training on agricultural techniques appropriate for growing coffee.

Thank you very much for your generosity!

FH Switzerland is committed to the fight against poverty locally through personal and community development throughout the world. FH Switzerland is part of the international network of Food for the Hungry (FH).



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