



Siaba Admini Kamene, 22, and her husband Frank Mwalwange, 28, participants of the Kahawa ya Kesho project. Photo by Will Baxter for CRS.

Catholic Relief Services Tanzania Empowering Youth to Thrive

BACKGROUND

Tanzania has one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in the world, with over 60% of the population under the age of 24. While the demographic trends represent a potential source of innovation and promise for the future, many young men and women lack access to quality education, business and technical skills, as well as access to credit and land to achieve self-sufficiency and support their families through employment or entrepreneurship. The Integrated Labor Force Survey (ILFS) in 2021 found that the national unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 was 15.2%, with a rate of 18.3% for female youth compared to 11.9% for males.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been honored to serve Tanzanian communities since 1962 in a diverse range of sectors such as health, nutrition/early childhood development, agriculture, youth empowerment, and water security. Based on a deep understanding of national priorities and complex challenges facing diverse youth populations in the country, CRS Tanzania has seen youth empowerment as a strategic program area. Guided by CRS Tanzania Youth Strategy 2020 – 2025, a result of consultation with key stakeholders, alignment with government strategies, and review of local and global evidence, we provide youth with the opportunity to realize their full development potential. Our goal is to influence the public and private sectors to adopt policies and practices that increase sustainable employment opportunities for all youth in Tanzania.

CRS YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Specifically, CRS focuses its youth interventions on the following areas: 1) **Entrepreneurship**: providing business

skills training and hands-on opportunities for youth to gain the skillset needed and self-efficacy; 2) **Formal employment**: equipping youth with demand-driven job and life skills; work with private sector partners to provide job placement for program participants; 3) **Agriculture**: providing training on good agricultural and animal keeping practices, as well as linkages to input suppliers and markets; and 4) **Financial inclusion**: organizing youth to practice financial discipline and raise capital in CRS' holistic Savings & Internal Lending Communities (SILC) and link them to financial service providers.



Members of the Nkuyu Coffee Group participate in a SILC meeting in Igale village. Photo by Will Baxter for CRS.

Informed by global evidence and local contexts, CRS Tanzania adopts an **integrated approach** for our youth programming: 1) Facilitating the **formation of youth groups** to help members access project activities, social and financial services, and to strengthen in-group cohesion and peer learning; 2) **Adapting and contextualizing CRS global youth development curricula** to fit the demand of target groups,

and adopt partners' modules where needed; 3) **Engaging the private sector**, such as technical & vocational training providers, financial service providers, youth employers and career mentors for reciprocal collaborations, so that we can ensure the skills training received by our participants is informed by the job market, and our participants are placed in jobs where CRS negotiates for better working conditions with their employers; 4) CRS' cross-cutting capacity in **government engagement, partnership and capacity strengthening, MEAL** (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning), **ICT solutions**, and excellent **management quality** globally and locally are leveraged to ensure the project effectiveness and sustainability of our impact.

In addition to mainstreaming youth engagement in all relevant programs, CRS Tanzania is currently implementing two youth-focused projects:

Tanzania Strategic Youth Initiatives Program (2018-2022)

is a CRS-funded project launched in Tanzania in April 2018 with a holistic model - YouthBuild, known as Vijana Kazi in Tanzania, that has been tested in several countries in Africa and Latin America. With the goal to help opportunity youth between the ages of 18-26 to be successfully employed, start their own small businesses, or pursue further education and training, this Positive-Youth-Development-principles-informed project provides the participants with a package of services including literacy, life skills, leadership development, entrepreneurship, job preparedness, community service, and vocational and technical skills. The project also offers youth counselling and case management services and sessions on protection awareness.

■ *CRS have established partnership with **over 20 private sector companies***

■ *Six months after graduation from the course, **107 out of 215 youth have secured self-employment and 9 chose to continue further education***

Kahawa ya Kesho (KyK) ("Coffee of Tomorrow") (2018-2025) aims to sustainably increase coffee production, foster inclusive coffee value chains, build entrepreneurial skills, and diversify livelihood activities for young men and women aged 18-35 in coffee producing communities of the Southern Highlands, specifically in Mbeya and Songwe regions. CRS partners with Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS), a German foundation to empower smallholder coffee farmers and strengthen their ability to increase income and resilience. Since 2021, with funding from Growing Hope Globally and CRS Ethical Trade, KyK has applied the same model to maize and beans value chains.

■ *Out of **514 youth (231 are women)** reached by KyK, **15 group businesses and 390 individual businesses** were established along coffee value chains including input supplies, coffee nursery, and coffee production.*



Members of the Nkuyu Coffee Group remove poor quality coffee cherries from their harvest. Photo by Will Baxter for CRS.

LESSONS LEARNED & WAY FORWARD

Program performance has shown that committed and well-trained youth leaders and joint group activities such as SILC promote cohesion among youth communities and ensure activity effectiveness. Evidence also shows that youth who have previous income generating experience are more likely to choose self-employment even with limited capital. This helps the program in mentoring youth during career choices. Additionally, participants who have completed a tailored vocational training have higher chance to get employment or self-employment, and accordingly the program included vocational training as a core component.

In the next three to five years, CRS Tanzania is committed to developing economic opportunities for young men and women in the country and fostering their holistic development, with a leadership and gender empowerment focus.

Gender transformation has been a focus of CRS youth projects. Juhudi Edward, a young man who chairs a coffee group testified: "I used to underestimate the importance of involving my wife in household decision-making. After receiving the gender education through the KyK project, I have come to understand the equal role that my wife plays and the benefits of involving her in the household issues discussion."



Juhudi Edward Mwajonga and wife Fatima Daudi. Photo by Sunday Mohagachi for CRS.