



The *Ikawa Yacu* Project reinforces women's role in coffee value chains in Burundi. Photo: CRS, 2018.

# The Ikawa Yacu Project:

IMPROVING BURUNDIAN COFFEE FARMERS' PRODUCTIVITY & LIVELIHOODS

## CRS' response to coffee's global impact

Coffee is one of the world's preeminent smallholder cash crops. More than two of every three pounds of coffee are produced by smallholder farmers, who represent the largest and most vulnerable group of coffee supply chain actors. Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Coffeelands Program is a global initiative created in 2016 to consolidate the agency's global efforts in the coffee value chain. The program contributes to sectoral learning on effective, efficient, and high-impact strategies for improving the livelihoods of coffee-dependent populations.

## The Coffeelands program in Burundi

Coffee is a crucial crop for the Burundian economy and is one of the main sources of foreign exchange (60-80%). For coffee growers (who constitute nearly 40% of the population, or 600,000 families), coffee also generates significant income. Coffee production in Burundi, however, has been on the decline in recent years with a 50% decrease between 2004 and 2014. Productivity constraints include aging coffee trees, poor production practices and producers' lack of access to finance services and markets.

In response, CRS/Burundi has partnered with the Kahawatu Foundation since August 2017 to implement the *Ikawa Yacu* Project (meaning our coffee in the Kirundi language), designed in complementarity with the five-year USAID/FFP-funded *Amashiga* Program aimed at reducing malnutrition. In the north-eastern Muyinga Province, a large portion of families tend coffee plantations where poorer households earn income from wage-labor opportunities. As such, the coffee value chain presents viable income-generation opportunities for even the most vulnerable populations.

## Project Goal

COFFEE-DEPENDENT HOUSEHOLDS INCREASE INCOMES VIA PRODUCTIVITY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, AND DIVERSIFICATION IN THEIR COFFEE SYSTEMS

4,035

# OF SMALL-HOLDER COFFEE-PRODUCING HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED BY IKAWA YACU

250

AVERAGE # OF COFFEE TREES PER TARGETED HOUSEHOLD

\$244/ha

AVERAGE ANNUAL PROFIT PER HOUSEHOLD FROM COFFEE PRODUCTION

50%

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME DERIVED FROM COFFEE PRODUCTION

## Improved access to markets and financial services

Ikawa Yacu empowers coffee farmers to overcome their financial barriers by participating in savings and internal lending community (SILC) groups. In addition to becoming their first point of access to financial services, the SILC approach strengthens the management and entrepreneurial skills of coffee producer organizations (POs). POs targeted by this project are organized around two local coffee washing stations, owned by Bugestal SA, in order to strengthen the partnership between farmers and processing facilities.

## Increasing coffee productivity and environmental sustainability by diversifying production systems

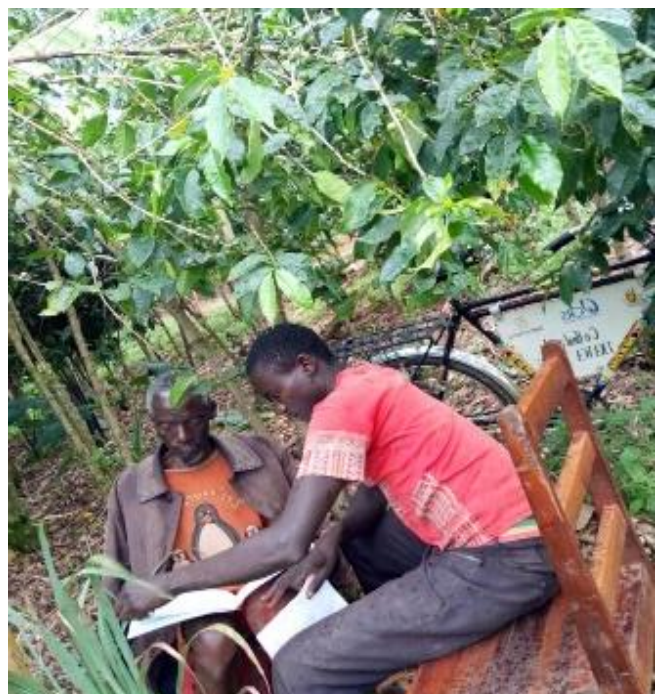
Project participants are trained on modern farming techniques and good agricultural practices to promote increased productivity, improved natural resource management, and increased economic efficiency. The project promotes basic soil and nutrient management practices that do not require cash expenditure. Coffee farming families are supported to diversify their production systems and livelihoods through agroforestry and integration of other nutritious foods including bananas and dwarf beans.

## Promoting inclusivity in Burundi's coffee sector

Prior to the *Ikawa Yacu* Project, residents of the Muyinga Province largely considered coffee production to be a man's responsibility, despite the important role of women in production and post-harvest management. CRS is implementing its signature couples' strengthening curriculum, *The Faithful House*, to reinforce joint decision-making at the household level. In addition to community sensitization, this approach is helping shift destructive gender norms and strengthen inclusivity within the coffee sector. Additionally, the *Ikawa Yacu* Project is actively engaging youth to participate in coffee production, specifically by supporting elderly farmers with less education to monitor and record their production. While the average age of coffee producers in the Muyinga Province is 55 years, this approach helps engage a new generation to support the sustainability of coffee production in Burundi.

## KEY RESULTS FROM YEAR ONE

- After mobilizing **4,035 households** (most of whom were at the point of abandoning coffee production), the targeted population is now farming **8,456 fields** containing **994,147 coffee trees**
- Team agronomists leverage **10 demonstration plots** to lead "Farmer Field Schools", reaching **141 Lead Farmers** who replicate these trainings on their model fields to promote wide adoption of good agricultural coffee practices
- The project collaborates with **2 women's associations & 4 youth associations** to increase their participation in the coffee sector
- **3 coffee nursery associations** were formed, providing an additional income-generating activity to 61 coffee growers



Youth leverage their business savvy to support local coffee growers in recording and monitoring their production. *Photo: CRS, 2018.*