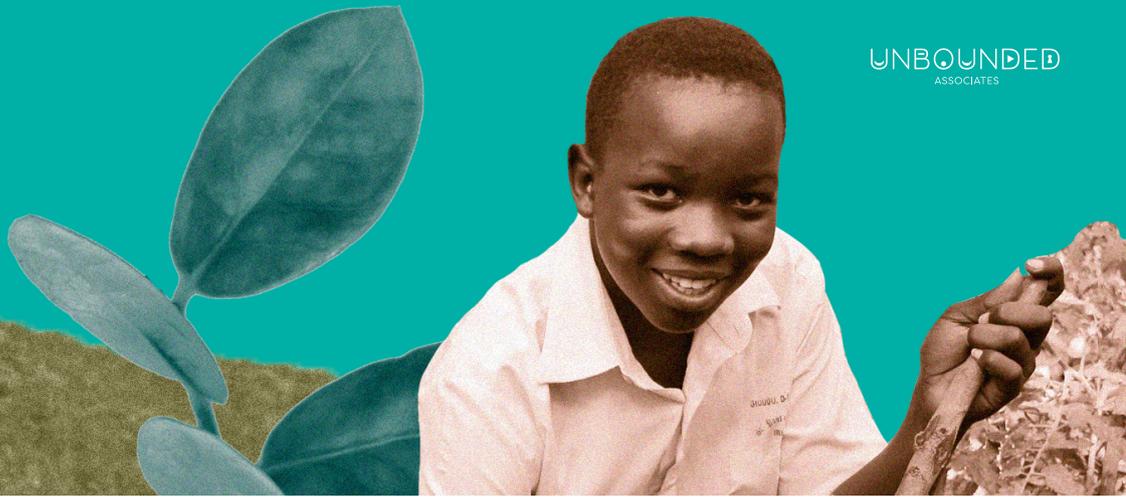


CASE STUDY

Climate-Smart Agriculture



The Cascading Impact of Green Agri-preneurship on Youth Income Generation in Uganda: The Story of Byeffe Foods Company

Youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector can provide direct career opportunities for young innovators while also promoting a cascade of positive economic outcomes for other young people along the agricultural value chain and reducing the carbon footprint of food production.

Key to unlocking this ripple effect is using market systems approaches to support locally based youth green “agri-preneurs” to develop entrepreneurship, leadership, and workforce readiness skills to thrive in the pursuit of more sustainable livelihoods. Doing so develops food supply chains that are closer to markets and simultaneously lowers costs and carbon footprints compared to imported food products. The story of **Byeffe Foods** and the support they received from the USAID-funded [Feed the Future Uganda Youth Leadership for Agriculture Activity \(YLA\)](#) highlights the potential of youth green agri-preneurship to create decent green jobs for youth while promoting a just transition that leaves no one behind.

[Byeffe Foods Company Limited](#) was founded by Fatuma Namutosi in 2015 after she graduated college in Uganda. “Byeffe” is a Lugisu word that literally means “Ours.” Byeffe is a female youth-led duly registered health food processing company that produces nutritious food products mainly from pumpkins, soy, and other blended cereals and grains. The products are promoted for improved nutrition, food security, and to create sustainable incomes for people through on- and off-farm employment. Their products range from enriched porridge and flours to roasted pumpkin seeds, pumpkin seed oil, and pumpkin seed powder.

Byeffe, through extension support, trains farmers to use a locally adapted variety of pumpkin that can be grown year-round using organic practices that support soil health. These regenerative production practices include year-round soil cover, soil-nutrient restoring composts, and soil-water conservation, which are less extractive



Byeffe Foods Company Limited founder, Fatuma Namutosi, at an exhibition of her products. Photo Credit: Byeffe Foods Company Limited

and result in less soil carbon emissions and more atmospheric carbon sequestration than traditional agricultural practices. Additionally, the pumpkin products are dried using solar energy, further reducing Byeffe Foods’ carbon footprint.

A year after starting her business, Fatuma had the opportunity to participate in a career symposium event hosted by YLA. The event, called Agrikool, was designed to help increase young people’s awareness and excitement about



Fatuma Namutosi sorting pumpkins to be used in her nutritious food products. Photo Credit: Byeffe Foods Company Limited

jobs in the agriculture sector in Uganda. At the time of this event, Byeffe had only seven youth farmer groups, with limited drying capacity, and was struggling to meet demand from individual consumers, retail outlets, and schools. Through a grant partnership, YLA helped Byeffe Foods increase raw material supply by partnering with 1,280 young contract farmers. Through these partnerships with Byeffe Foods, smallholder farmers —predominantly youth and women in Mbale District, Eastern Uganda — were able to increase their incomes through the sale of their produce to Byeffe and other markets linked to them. Byeffe Foods also provides extension services to these young farmers, educating them on regenerative practices and promoting climate-smart agriculture.

Among the young contract farmers YLA helped Byeffe Foods partner with is Annet Wabukalu, a mother of five, who, before becoming a grower for Byeffe Foods, was a subsistence farmer in Uganda. Introduced to Byeffe Foods through a friend, Annet was trained in pumpkin production and, within a year after her first harvests, she could afford to start a banana business, buy a motorcycle, and raise a cow, diversifying her income to relieve her family's reliance on subsistence farming. Annet's income status drastically increased thanks to her involvement with Byeffe Foods, and her children's diets were much improved from increased access to the nutrient-fortified pumpkin porridge she was helping to produce. She has also increased her resilience to the effects of climate change, with droughts and floods now less likely to have catastrophic effects on her more diversified livelihood.

Byeffe Foods has also grown enough to hire youth as sales agents, reinforcing its supply chain of locally grown products. With the support of YLA, Fatuma chose to offer these job opportunities to young women who are not enrolled in school and

therefore at a high risk of marrying — or bearing children — early if they cannot attend school or earn a consistent and decent income. Byeffe Foods employed 19 unenrolled young women as sales agents, paying them a 20 percent commission as well as a monthly retainer allowance. With their income from working as Byeffe Foods sales agents, these young women can now afford to return to school if they choose to do so, and generally are more financially independent.



In addition to promoting equity through her business, Fatuma is also an active voice for change in her community and at the national and international levels, advocating for fair and inclusive climate-smart agriculture practices and economic growth that supports youth livelihoods. She is currently partnering with SNV Netherlands under the Climate Resilient Agribusiness for Tomorrow (CRAFT) Project Uganda, reaching more than 3,000 small holder farmers in climate-smart production of soybeans.

Between 2016 and 2020, Byeffe Foods helped more than 5,000 youth access economic opportunities, and more than 2,500 youth enter entrepreneurship networks. By taking a market systems approach to support local youth agri-entrepreneurship, as Byeffe Foods has done, international development programs like YLA can foster food supply chains in proximity to markets with a low carbon footprint and enjoy a cascade of positive outcomes related to the extension of climate-smart practices and green youth employment.