



Dear Supporter,

Welcome to your first newsletter of 2022. This edition includes updates from Nicaragua, where women are growing their skills in sesame farming, coffee farmers in Peru who have found an innovative way to protect their crops, and Ghanaian weavers growing vegetables without the use of soil. Catch up on all of this and more below, including new projects starting this spring.

But firstly, we would like to reflect on the fantastic progress made in 2021. As you can see from this useful graphic, your support helped us impact the lives of over 10,000 producers in seven countries. You can read the inspiring stories of the farmers involved in our [**2021 Annual Review**](#).

SHARED INTEREST FOUNDATION IN 2021



With the support of
1,049 DONORS
& 5 GRANT MAKERS



We delivered
9 PROJECTS IN
7 COUNTRIES
across Africa and Latin
America working with
8 local partners



We worked with
7 CO-OPERATIVES
who support
10,257 PRODUCERS
(3,862 WOMEN)



Delivering training to
740 FARMERS
(56% WOMEN)



Supporting
PRODUCERS
of 6 commodities
(coffee, cocoa, sesame,
honey, vegetables,
passion fruit)



PROJECT UPDATES

A GROWING PASSION FOR FARMING

In our [previous newsletter](#), we introduced our work in partnership with Ugandan co-operative Bukonzo Organic Farmers Co-operative Union (BOCU), supporting 365 coffee farmers to diversify into passion fruit.

Since then, farmers have received tools and practical training to improve the quality of their coffee beans. In September, over 18,500 passion fruit seedlings were planted and organic fertiliser was produced from local materials including animal manure, charcoal dust and wood ash. We look forward to reporting on the first passion fruit harvest in the spring.



Left - The photo shows a practical demonstration of pruning techniques. Above - A farmer plants a passion fruit plant on her farm.

"I AM A BUSINESS WOMAN WITH MY SESAME"

In rural Northern Nicaragua we are supporting 40 women to become organic sesame farmers. We are delighted to share that they have now received organic certification. This will enable the women to sell their sesame internationally at a higher price.

One participant told us how she feels this project will have a long-term benefit for the women in her community:

"I am a businesswoman with my sesame. Before the women here couldn't even grab a machete, and now I am able to. I feel proud and satisfied because us women were remembered."



FIELD SCHOOLS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

In addition to providing training and resources to 50 young farmers in Northern Rwanda, we have supported coffee co-operative KOPAKAMA to prepare and plant two demonstration farms (also known as Farmer Field Schools).

KOPAKAMA are using these farms to deliver monthly training sessions to their members in good coffee farming practices including pruning and compost production. It is hoped that these Field Schools will help prepare the next generation of coffee farmers.



FORMING NATURAL DEFENCES

In the Amazonas region of Peru, we are working with coffee co-operative CECAFE to increase their environmental resilience.

Last spring, CECAFE began to produce a fungus in their onsite laboratory. The fungus is mixed with water before being sprayed across coffee plantations (as demonstrated in the images below). Over 100 farmers have now used this natural method to protect their plants against the devastating effects of the coffee borer beetle.



CECAFE are also producing organic compost from natural waste products including coffee peel and animal manure. The compost is sold to farmers at the affordable rate of £8 per 50kg bag, which can be purchased through a payment plan with the co-operative.

A year ago, the commercial cost of a 50kg bag of compost was £15 but prices have since soared to £46 per bag due to an increase in transport costs and inflation.

CECAFE General Manager José Elmer Sánchez told us that without this compost scheme the majority of farmers would not be able to afford organic fertiliser. This would impact significantly upon their coffee production, sales and income.

FROM BASKET WEAVING TO BOX FARMING

In partnership with TradeAID, we are supporting 120 basket weavers in Northern Ghana to grow vegetables without the use of soil.

We are delighted to announce that, with the box farms and storage facility established, vegetable planting is now underway. Here you can see the women preparing a mix of rice husks, cocoa peat, manure and saw dust, which is used in place of soil.



The first harvest is expected in early April and we will keep you posted on progress.

COCOA IS THE BUSINESS FOR YOUNG FARMERS

Since our last update, 50 young farmers in Ivory Coast have established their own cocoa farms. Over 37,000 cocoa seedlings have also been planted inter-cropped with native fruit trees. The farmers have been also received specialist training in how to turn their farm into a successful business.

It will take between three and five years to establish cocoa production. During this time, local cocoa co-operative CAYAT will continue to support farmers in maintaining their farms and nurturing the growing trees.



Anita Akaffou (*pictured above right on her farm*) lives in the village of Becedi Brignan with her four children. Before joining this project Anita had no source of income and relied on her husband to provide for herself and her children. Anita's father is a cocoa farmer and she had benefitted from the income of this activity growing up *"it is with cocoa money that he ensured our schooling, health care and others"*.

Although she was interested in cocoa farming, she did not have money to start her own cocoa business. The workshops and provision of tools and planting inputs enabled Anita to establish her farm and she received two hectares of land from her father.

*"I think that with an application of everything we learned during the trainings thanks to this project **the cultivation of cocoa will be a source of income.**"*

Over the next five years Anita hopes to expand her farm by a further three hectares. She also plans to continue planting fruit trees on her farm as *"trees protect cocoa trees, enrich the soil and also **fight against climate change.**"*

NEW BEGINNINGS THIS SPRING

We are delighted to share news of new projects starting this spring. In Rwanda, we will be supporting coffee farmers to increase their climate resilience. Meanwhile, in rural Burkina Faso, we are supporting a group of women to produce butter, ointment and soap from the shea nut. We will update you more on these projects in our next newsletter.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT EVENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

As we continue to work with farmers to increase their climate resilience, we welcome you to join us for an update on this innovative work. This 45-minute virtual event will take place during Fairtrade Fortnight, on Monday 21st February at 10am. Please click [here](#) for more details.



JOIN US ON OUR JOURNEY

For more regular updates from our projects, come and join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). You can show your support by liking or sharing our posts, or even passing this newsletter on to family and friends.

Thank you for your ongoing support. To help spread awareness, please consider sharing this newsletter with your friends, family, and networks.

Yours Sincerely,

Shared Interest Foundation Team



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