



Dear Supporter,

In this edition, we bring you updates on our projects including how farmers in Africa and Latin America are continuing to develop their skills in climate-resilient agriculture. Innovative methods include the planting of underground compost baskets in Uganda and growing a natural fungus in Peru. Read about these techniques and more in our updates below.



## PROJECT UPDATES

### REAPING THE BENEFITS OF NATURAL CONSERVATION

We have now completed our climate resilience project with Peruvian coffee co-operative CECAFE, and farmers are reaping the benefits of their natural conservation methods.

Over 100 farmers have now used an eco-friendly method of protecting their plants against the devastating effects of the coffee borer beetle.

The beetle predominantly attacks coffee berries in low altitude areas, devastating farms. Prior to this project, 94% of farmers told us that due to limited knowledge and resources they had no means to protect their farm against the beetle.

Through this project, CECAFE produced the natural fungus *Beauveria Bassiana* in their laboratory and 145 farmers applied it to 124 hectares of farmland.

The project also supported CECAFE to produce organic compost from natural waste including coffee peel and animal manure. Before this project, we surveyed 91 farmers and only 12% said they were able to access organic compost. **Through this scheme, 386 farmers purchased compost and applied it to 494 hectares of land - the size of over 1,000 football pitches.**

We asked them to describe any changes seen on their farm since they applied the compost and here is some of the feedback:

***“The coffee plants have increased in size with healthier leaves”***

***“The plants are very beautiful and production has started to increase”***

CECAFE is already building on the success of this project, developing a second site for compost and fungus production with the income from compost sales.



*Organic compost produced by CECAFE is packed into bags ready to be sold to farmers*

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## **COFFEE FARMERS WITH A PASSION FOR FRUIT**

We are looking forward to seeing a Ugandan coffee co-operative's very first passion fruit harvest in July. Our project has supported 365 farmers from Bukonzo Organic Farmers Co-operative Union (BOCU) to diversify into this fruit, sometimes referred to locally as 'green gold.'

Farmers are now working in groups to produce organic fertiliser, as well as developing their skills in 'basket composting'. This innovative technique involves weaving baskets using vines and



sticks, then filling them with a combination of grass, animal manure, wood ash and water and placing them in the ground amongst the coffee trees. After 14 days these materials decompose to produce compost.

The baskets (shown in the image below) form a protective shield from wild animals and, due to their positioning, the roots of the coffee trees can feed from the contents.

***“Passion fruit is a highly nutritional and medicinal crop. With the extra income I will be able to support my family and farmers and will be able to pay children's school fees”*** (Project participant)



L: Passion fruits growing on vines constructed on the coffee farms. R: A handwoven composting basket embedded within a coffee farm.



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## SHEA DIVERSITY OF NUTS AND SEEDS

In March, we began working with 50 shea nut collectors in southern Burkina Faso. This group of women are members of Fairtrade nut co-operative Copronos.

The project will support them in making shea soap and butter to sell on the local market and to international buyers. Ten women will also hone their skills in producing soumbala, a spice popular across West Africa made from locally sourced néré seeds.

Last month, half of the group took part in an intensive training programme on shea butter production, including packaging methods and hygiene practices.

The next step is the provision of tools so that all of the women are able to produce the butter independently.



(L- R) 1. Collecting, sorting and washing shea nuts, which are then roasted and milled to form a paste. 2. Kneading the mixture into a dough, which is washed several times. 3. Heating the mix for two hours to form liquid butter, which is decanted through a cloth. 4. The final product is packaged for sale.

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## FARMERS AT OUR HEART IN RWANDA

Rwandan coffee is renowned for its full taste and rich flavour. However, farmers face challenges caused by extreme weather conditions, which can affect coffee production.

In Western Rwanda, we are working with 50 young coffee farmers as part of our Growing Fairer Futures project. As they continue to tend to their land, local coffee co-operative KOPAKAMA is providing regular training sessions on demonstration coffee farms, where soya beans have also been planted. This not only enriches the soil but also means that farmers can sell the soya beans locally as an additional income source. They expect their first soya bean harvest this summer.

*The image below shows farmers tending to the coffee demonstration plot where soya beans have also been planted.*



In February, we launched a project in Rwanda, working with Tropic Coffee, which produces Bourbon specialty coffee. The coffee co-operative describes itself as 'a family-owned business with farmers at our heart.'

This project is supporting 625 farmers to increase their climate resilience as they learn how to protect their crops from fluctuating weather conditions such as extreme rainfall and drought. A full update will be included in your next newsletter.





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## MOSS HARVESTING IN HUÁNUCO

We have launched our project with social enterprise Inka Moss, to support 1,125 farmers in the Huánuco region of Peru to begin harvesting sphagnum moss.

In this remote and rural area, many women continue to rely on traditional potato farming as their main source of income, which is insufficient to support themselves and their family. There is a tendency to burn away moss-covered land to make way for potato farming, causing significant damage to the natural environment.

This project will see us work with five communities to help protect 5,800 hectares of land.

Farmers will receive training in sustainable harvesting and conservation techniques and they will also be provided with tools and equipment.

We look forward to sharing their progress with you next time.



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## SHINING A LIGHT ON CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In celebration of Fairtrade Fortnight, we brought supporters and farmers together across a series of online events focusing on farmers' innovative climate-resilience techniques.

If you were unable to join, or would like to watch any of our sessions again, they are available to view on our [website](#).

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## TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We would love you to join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), where you can show your support by liking or sharing our posts.

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

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Yours sincerely,

Shared Interest Foundation Team



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[Visit our website to learn more about our projects](#)