



# Farming Family Profit Through Diversification

by Sarah Kenyi | Aug 19, 2022 | Gender, Smallholder Families, Uganda, Youth | 0 comments



It is often assumed that for farmers to make a substantial profit, they need to have large expanses of land. However, this is not very realistic in rural Uganda where the ownership of land is usually through inheritance. As the average Ugandan family is made up of 5 children, each sibling is passed down only a small portion (0.5 to 3 acres on average) of their parent's land. This was the case for Fred Lugigana from Mityana District, who inherited 3 acres of land from his father. Despite this relatively small farm size, Fred, his wife Dorothy, and their family are turning a substantial profit through diversification.

## Income diversification

In the early years, the Lugigana family grew coffee for income, accompanied by a few vegetables for food. However, after they began participating in Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung's (HRNS) programs, the family diversified their income. They began by inter-cropping their coffee with plantain/bananas, locally known as "Matoke." This provided shade for their coffee from the sun and supplemented their income as Matoke is a staple food in Uganda.



*Coffee inter-cropped with bananas on the Lugigana family farm*

After they implemented banana inter-cropping, the Lugigana family divided their farm into more sections to commercially grow maize and beans. Eventually, with the additional income, the family continued to invest in their farm enterprises. They ventured into poultry, piggery, goat farming and cattle keeping. The animal husbandry further supplemented their income through selling milk from the cows, eggs from their chickens, and pork. It also provided them with free manure to fertilize their crops and improved the family's nutrition due to the addition of protein and calcium to their diet.







*Dorothy and her daughter feed the pigs*



*Fred feeds the cattle*





*Fred, Dorothy and their daughter feed the chickens*

## **Improving productivity and building climate resilience**

Although coffee remained the family's most lucrative cash crop, their income diversification was vital between 2018 and 2020, when there was a decline in coffee prices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the Lugiganas were still able to increase their coffee yields through the application of the good agricultural practices and climate-smart practices which they learned through training from HRNS. They were successful in building their coffee's resilience to climate change by implementing cultural pest control through plucking and burning, mulching, cover crops, trenches and stumping. Through this and diversification, the family were able to turn substantial profits from only 3 acres of land.







*Mulching for moisture retention*



*Digging trenches for soil and water conservation*







*Stumping for rejuvenation of old coffee trees*

## **Joint planning and decision making**

With the increased profits, Fred and his wife Dorothy needed to jointly plan how to use the funds from their multiple farming businesses effectively. Together the couple were supported by HRNS's gender officer to create a household vision and budget. These plans guided the family on how to best spend, invest, and save their income according to their needs. As a result, by 2021, they had constructed a bigger house, invested in buying a motorcycle to help transport their produce to buyers, paid school fees for their daughters, and bought more land to increase their farm size.







*Fred and Dorothy's plan for effective use of farm proceeds*



*The Lugigana's newly built larger house in the background*



## Inter-generational knowledge transfer

After the couple acquired more land, they decided to allocate portions to their teenage daughters with the aim of teaching them the value of good farm management practices, budgeting, and saving. Growing up, the daughters were involved in managing the farm through simple chores like mulching the coffee garden or feeding the chickens so the teenagers had a great foundation. They welcomed the opportunity and with the support of their parents, they began to nurture their own coffee gardens. Thereafter their parents supported them to make simple budgets for the use of their own proceeds.



*Jane's budget and saving plan*

So far, the Lugigana sisters have already made some money from their coffee gardens. They have used the proceeds to offset their school expenses and save for their futures. Today, the sisters are on the path to becoming passionate farmers alongside their chosen professions; Jane (18) wants to be a teacher and Sandra (15) dreams of becoming a policewoman. The oldest daughter Susan (22) is currently a young entrepreneur and coffee farmer. At the beginning of this year (2022) she won an entrepreneurship award for creating her very own organic fertilizer called "Evergrow Organics." With the prize money received, she has begun the process of making her product available on the market! You can read Susan's story [here](#).



“I no longer see farming as a punishment but as an opportunity.” – Jane.

This change in mindset is being adopted by other youth in the community who are increasingly participating in agriculture. Other coffee farmers in the community who have been involved in HRNS’s programs have also adopted good farm management practices, diversified their incomes and effectively planned their household expenditure.

## Organizational development

Although many challenges remain such as volatile market prices, the ever-increasing cost of inputs, and lack of access to finance, farmer organizations and cooperatives in the rural farming community can address them. HRNS works to establish and strengthen such organizations so they can effectively offer essential support services to their members. These include access to loans, genuine agricultural inputs, training on good agricultural practices, information on proper post-harvest handling and bulk marketing for better crop prices. By becoming members of these farmer organizations, smallholder families like the Lugiganas can achieve rural prosperity.

## HRNS Celebrates International Youth Day!

by HRNS Admin | August 12, 2022 | Youth | 0 Comments

As part of our International Youth Day 2022 commemoration, we are shining the light on two young farmers from our regions who are showing us what the future of thriving coffee communities looks like! We are honored to work with unique young farmers who are building...

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