

Now Africa Initiative – Impact Profile

Now Africa Initiative (NAI) has registered significant growth in its quest for sustainable rural development. To date, 200 smallholder coffee farmers have been trained about the need to embrace sustainable agricultural practices (like Timely Pruning, Planting and Maintaining indigenous shade trees, Integrated Pest Management, Mulching and Application of Compost Manure...) and good harvesting practices plus proper post-harvest handling practices and this has led to significant increase in yields and for these farmers this has led to an increase of income by 37% as per the survey that was carried out in 2019 and considering that the average size of family is 7, this translates to 1,400 individuals as direct beneficiaries. Our goal this year is to train 200 more smallholder coffee farmers.

The farmers are now more aware of the need to allow their children to attend school (they can help on the farm during holidays and do work commensurate to their age and under the guidance of an older person in most instances) and also for men to engage women when it comes to planning for money received from coffee sales. At the primary school, which NAI helped to start and continues to support so as to serve our disadvantaged community, the current enrollment is 350 pupils and 13 teachers are directly employed plus a cook. A school garden has been set up, where fruits and vegetables are being grown so as to boost the nutrition of pupils and also act as a learning center for both pupils and farmers from the community in a bid to promote fruits and vegetable consumption so as to curb the hidden hunger (micronutrient deficiency) which is rampant in the community and which has serious impact on the growth and development of most especially young children, pregnant and breast-feeding mothers.

As per the released results of Primary Leaving Examinations that were done in late 2019, all our pioneer grade 7 pupils qualify to advance for their secondary school education. We did not register any failures and we were the second best in our region (Kanyantorogo Sub-County).

With the coffee processing in place, more jobs will be created and it is intended to serve most of the smallholder coffee farmers in the community by offering high quality value addition services and bulking and selling the processed coffee as a group so as to by-pass the middlemen.

Before the launch of NAI, there was no nearby primary school offering quality education, women were being marginalized when it came to planning for the proceeds from the coffee sales yet, they provided most of the labor and some children were not going to school. Most farmers were not caring about adoption and maintaining good agricultural practices for example they had bias about pruning of coffee trees as they thought it would reduce yields and would take time for rejuvenation to occur yet it actually improved yields as more old trees are maintained, their production starts dwindling and there is no rejuvenation.

Some farmers were destroying bird nests in their coffee gardens, yet it is actually important to be bird friendly as having birds on the farm, they substantially help in control of some pests by acting as predators and hence saving the farmer substantial amount of money that would have been spent on purchasing agro-chemical for control of pests and this is harmful both to the

applicator and also the environment. The trained farmers are now more aware of the need to embrace integrated pest management.

Now Africa Initiative is committed to continue dedicating 20% of its profits to drive community / grass root initiatives and also supporting the primary school in a bid to achieve sustainable rural development as its primary purpose is to alleviate the suffering of smallholder farmers.