



SPECIALTY COFFEE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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SCAA Announces 2015 Sustainability Award Winner To Be Awarded at SCAA's 27th Annual Event in Seattle, WA

SANTA ANA, Calif. U.S.A. (February 25, 2015) --- The Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), the world's coffee authority and largest coffee trade association, presents its 2015 Sustainability Award to Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Union for their project "Gender Action Learning System (GALS): Enhancing the participation of women coffee farmers in western Uganda." This annual award honors individuals, businesses and organizations in the specialty coffee industry that have created innovative projects to expand and promote sustainability.

In 1992, a small group of community volunteers organized self-help groups in the remote mountain villages around Kyarumba in Western Uganda. By 1999, the groups had formed a cooperative dedicated to bulking and selling their coffee. In 2004, Bukonzo Joint began to integrate a participatory framework of value chain development called Gender Action Learning System (GALS) to incentivize women's contributions in the cooperative and the community. GALS is a structured community-led empowerment methodology aiming at constructive economic, social and political transformation.

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Gender inequality and the lack of full participation by women in decision-making and financial planning for family coffee businesses are key contributors to poverty and a decrease in productivity in rural coffee farming communities. To address this critical issue, Bukonzo Joint hosts workshops in GALS for other cooperatives interested in incorporating the methodology in their work. Bukonzo Joint has been using this methodology mainly using pictograms for illiterate farmers since 2004. GALS uses very simple diagramming tools: Road Journeys, Trees, Circles and Diamonds to address specific gender issues, contexts and organizational needs. These tools are all using pictograms and therefore cross-cultural even among illiterate farmers. The GALS tools were recently piloted as GALS for youth during a week long youth coffee camp in August of 2014 to empower youth to more fully contribute to the economic and social empowerment of their communities with great success. Bukonzo Joint's efforts in training other cooperative leaders on this methodology to share with their farmers contribute to the long-term sustainability of just and productive coffee farming communities.

The addition of the GALS framework, the conscious inclusion of rural women and now youth in the growth of the cooperative union, built a strong foundation of financial inclusion for rural women. The cooperative union is now over 85% women with women holding a majority on the board. In 2013 Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Union exported 8 containers to international buyers of fair-trade and organic certified washed specialty coffee. This grassroots movement started with saving groups and grew to a microfinance office that now serves over 5000 farmers, primarily women. In 2014 the GALS project turned 10 years old. GALS is now a foundational methodology applied in all aspects of the cooperative's operations to strategically enhance women's involvement. GALS is used now by 5000 farmers from the micro station level to board meetings for planning, teaching and conflict resolution.

GALS started as a project but is now part of the foundational methodology used for all of Bukonzo Joint's activities. The methodology has been so successful in empowering women and promoting gender equality in the coffee value chain that Bukonzo Joint has now trained other cooperatives from Tanzania, Rwanda, The Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan on how to incorporate the methodology into their activities. The methodology is taught

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by GALS trainers to all new cooperative groups and washing stations as part of their training when joining the cooperative union.

To date, over 5000 of Bukonzo Joint's farmers have benefitted from GALS training including 10 additional cooperative leaders from Tanzania, Rwanda, The Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan through training of trainers taught by Bukonzo Joint.

Currently 85% of the cooperative are women members with 55% majority women on the elected board. In addition, success is measured by the overall growth the cooperative is experiencing from exporting 8 containers in 2013 to 14 containers in 2014. Currently 2015 projections are 16 containers. The cooperative, through the integration of the GALS methodology, has doubled their exports in the last two years alone.

The cooperative has grown substantially in the past 10 years from about 13 tons of coffee in 2005, to more than 300 tons in 2014; it now has over 5,000 farmers and is fair-trade and organic certified. Over the last few years the cooperative has transitioned from only collecting coffee to processing, selling and exporting washed fair trade and organic Arabica coffee. In keeping with its founding principles, Bukonzo Joint is now engaged in a major effort to deliver significantly greater profits to its coffee farmer-members by bringing all aspects of post harvest production including grading and sorting to its headquarters in Kyarumba. This facility will be the first of its kind in Bukonzo County. The goal of the cooperative through the incorporation of the GALS methodology is to bring greater employment to the community by completing the construction of the factory in 2015. This is expected to bring 50 more jobs and better working conditions for 200 women who currently assist with hand sorting the coffee. In addition, Bukonzo Joint intends to complete 2 more trainings of trainers in the next year resulting in the GALS methodology being used in 2 new cooperatives. Bukonzo Joint also intends to train 5 new micro stations with over 700 farmers in the GALS methodology this upcoming year.

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About SCAA

The Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), is a non-profit trade organization and the world recognized leader in coffee knowledge development. With over 12,000 members located in more than 40 countries, including member companies and their employees, SCAA members represent every segment of the specialty coffee industry, including producers, roasters, importers/exporters, retailers, manufacturers, baristas and other industry professionals. For over 30 years, the SCAA has been dedicated to creating a vibrant specialty coffee community, recognizing, developing and promoting specialty coffee by setting and maintaining quality standards for the industry; conducting research on coffee consumption, brewing and perfection of craft; and providing education, training, resources and business services for its members. Visit www.scaa.org.

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