



Greening Coffee Production in Kenya's Nandi Hills

[SWITCH AFRICA GREEN - GREEN TO GROW](#) · [MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2019](#) · READING TIME: 5 MINUTES

Located at the foot of the picturesque Nandi Hills is Chepsangor Hills Coffee Limited, a coffee estate established by Ms. Rosebella Langat and her family. A passion for sustainable coffee farming and community empowerment is the force behind this estate. For the Langats', growing coffee sustainably means conserving the environment, while providing better livelihoods for the people that produce it. Tulon- a Nandi word loosely translated as 'Hill' - is the brand name for Chepsangor Hills Coffee.

In May and July 2019, Ms. Rosebella Langat participated in training sessions on sustainable coffee production and consumption and eco-management practices led by Green to Grow: *A Revenue Generation Approach for Sustainable Consumption and Production Practices Dissemination in Kenya*. A project within SWITCH Africa Green flagship that is funded by the European Union to help in the effort to transition African

countries towards an inclusive green economy. Green to Grow focuses on building the capacities of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the coffee, mango and dairy sectors in Kenya to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices.

MSMEs go through a rigorous training program where they can learn the importance of environmentally and economically sound practices, management skills and benefit from hands on value addition sessions per each individual sector. “It was motivating to interact with entrepreneurs who have been in the coffee industry for decades! I learnt a lot on sustainable consumption and production practices and built synergies that will be beneficial for our coffee estate in Nandi.” Remarks Rosebella.

Green to Grow trainings are crucial for they provide traditional and technical knowledge of sustainable practices that can be adopted by MSMEs, while also guiding them through the adjustment of their business models to properly accommodate sound sustainable consumption and production practices. Embracing sustainable consumption and production practices will ensure a positive impact on the quality of their product as well as on the efficiency of their business models.

Through Chepsangor Coffee estate, the Langats’, are making a remarkable contribution towards the transition to an inclusive green economy in the country, thanks to practices learnt from Green to Grow training sessions.

This Green to Grow beneficiary is promoting green transformation in the Coffee Value Chain through a series of sustainable consumption and production practices and technologies such as the utilization of eco pulping machine, organic farming, single stem pruning system, canopy farming and forestry and ecological hydraulic system.

Eco Pulping machine

Besides venturing into growing coffee, this Green to Grow beneficiary has also installed an eco-pulper in their estate and as a result also scaled up the coffee production of

neighboring coffee farms. Unlike traditional coffee processing methods, the eco-pulper operates with substantially less water which can also be reutilized. The overall process is much less energy consuming while maintaining the quality of the product.

Organic Coffee Farming

Currently, Chepsangor Hills Coffee Limited has planted 1050 organic coffee trees. “I must admit that growing organic coffee requires unlimited patience!” remarks Rosebella. Through organic and sustainable production, the overall means of production are improved. Moreover, organic coffee makes Kenyan Micro Small and Medium Enterprises more competitive in international markets.

Single Stem System

One of the most challenging elements of coffee farming is ensuring maximum production at minimum cost.

The single stem system involves establishing one permanent stem with a strong framework of primary branches. On average, this system is reported to produce four times more yield averaging between 17kg/tree to 80kg/tree. “I learnt about the single stem system through the Switch Africa Green training and later paid a visit to one of the demo farms in Embu. Eventually, we decided to incorporate this system in a section of the farm. We are currently in the process of planting 171 coffee trees that will be trained into single stems.”

Canopy farming and Forestry

The Nandi flame tree is endemic to the Nandi region. It is an indigenous tree that provides plenty of shade in coffee plantations. In her estate, Ms. Rosebella makes use of agroforestry while preserving the existing flame tree and planting new ones. In addition, with the support of a local advocacy group, she campaigns against deforestation of the Nandi flame and other indigenous trees.

Hydraulic System

At the heart of the Nandi hills lies the source of river Nyando. The wetlands meander in between the coffee estate, providing a naturally available and replenishing water source. The farm sources its water from the river without interfering with its natural flow and uses gravity backed by a hydraulic water pump system at the source. The water is then stored in reservoir tanks for use in the farm.

A Revenue Generation Approach for SCP Dissemination in Kenya project identifies traditional and advanced practices and technologies and encourages MSMEs to apply them for their own environmental and economic benefit, while generating a positive social and economic impact in the local communities. MSMEs may benefit from transitioning towards an inclusive green economy. Similar to the Langat's who have utilized traditional knowledge and technologies to increase the quality and production of their coffee while also positively impacting their community, other MSMEs may also benefit from sustainable consumption and production practices to reduce energy and water consumption while generating incomes, creating jobs and alleviating poverty.

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