Investing in young people to harvest future-proof solutions

**GENERATION FOOD**

Generation Food is an international agri-food movement aiming to solve food-related problems in collaboration with universities, businesses, local food production/distribution initiatives, municipalities, and farmer organizations by promoting innovation and giving new entrepreneurs a boost. Since its launch in September 2019, we have established Generation Food incubators in different cities across the world.

**ENGAGING WITH INNOVATORS IN LEUVEN | BELGIUM**

Since the launch of Generation Food in 2019, Rikolto has been working to engage 350 young entrepreneurs in the co-creation and development of new business ideas, for farmers, food start-ups, and local organisations, in collaboration with the province of Flemish Brabant, Boerenbond, PROEF, EIT Food, KU Leuven, UCLL, KBC, in the City of Leuven.

**THE INNOVATION-TRACKS WITH HACKATHONS IN OUAGADOUGOU | BURKINA FASO**

As of mid-2020, Rikolto detected the youth potential and set up a Generation Food incubator in Ouagadougou. 60 participants were encouraged to innovate and co-create business ideas during hackathons. 15 new innovative agribusinesses have been created and have access to start-up funding. A rotating fund has been set up to make sure that other youth entrepreneurs can tap into start-up funding in the future. Through the project we are stimulating 80 young entrepreneurs in a six-month training programme to innovate business plans with practical experiences and developing business skills.

**BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FOODTURE THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ARUSHA | TANZANIA**

The Generation Food journey in Arusha started in early 2020. Since then, 158 young entrepreneurs who had been informed through social media platforms and radio stations in Arusha participated in a 2-day Hackathon and 65 selected young entrepreneurs were trained in a 2-week Generation Food Camp to improve their marketing, financial and entrepreneurial skills. The 25 finalists were awarded low-interest loans.

**YOUNG COCOA AND COFFEE FARMERS TAKING CARE OF QUALITY | ECUADOR AND PERU**

In 2012, Rikolto pioneered one of the first youth involvement initiatives in the cocoa and coffee sector. Since then, we have empowered over 400 young people to pursue opportunities across the cocoa and coffee chains, ranging from production to processing, quality control and marketing. Our mobile cupping labs, allowing both young and older farmers to significantly improve the quality of their coffee, have been particularly successful. This approach is currently being replicated by other institutions such as local authorities and cooperatives.

**REJUVENATING COFFEE PLANTATIONS, ONE TREE AT A TIME | DRCONGO**

In 2014, Rikolto started an ambitious programme in the coffee chain in Eastern DR Congo. Rikolto motivated young people to start tree nurseries and sell the young plants to the members of four coffee cooperatives, thus contributing to the rejuvenation of old coffee plantations. Specific training was given to improve their business and especially marketing skills. There are currently 70 commercial tree nurseries operating in the area.

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The Young Force Behind Compost Plants | Senegal

52 new jobs for young people have been created in the banana supply chain by increasing and maintaining soil fertility. Specific compost plants have been set up in three villages to meet the banana farmers’ needs. They are run as businesses by 52 young residents. So far, about 85 metric tonnes of compost have been produced, leading to a total annual turnover of more than 7,500 euros. The quality of the compost is very much appreciated, and demand is high. However, airing the compost is a tough manual job, and it is only through future mechanisation that they will be able to increase volumes.

Raising Entrepreneurial Spirits | Indonesia

Special attention is devoted to integrating young people into the cocoa chains in which Rikolto is working. Membership of young farmers in the farmers’ cooperatives is still very low (<5%), but through workshops and specific training, Rikolto staff are inspiring young people to find new opportunities in the food and agriculture sector. The focus is on technology and on increasing young people’s entrepreneurial spirit. Each year, rice farmers groups in Java also organise Organic Youth Camps for their sons and daughters to motivate them to take up a role in the agriculture sector.

Access to Finance for Young Farmers | Honduras

In 2014, in the vegetable sector in Honduras, we have empowered 45 young members of the ASOFIAL cooperative in Intibucá to play a full part in the development of the cooperative. We have set up a revolving fund, for the younger members to gain access to working capital.

Young People on the Hunt for Business Trends | Peru

Today, 15 young workers and children of coffee growers in a Peruvian cooperative that produces organic coffee mainly for export, have another use for it by selecting and drying the coffee shells to transform them into a high-value premium product aimed at the tea market. The use of coffee husks is a rising trend in the sector, and young people along the chain (baristas, entrepreneurs, professionals in cooperatives) are promoting it as part of a new circular coffee economy, as well as to renew the business. The marketing of the product was also driven by the group of young people.

Capturing the Voices of Young People | Latin America

Rikolto and the International Labour Organization have pioneered a new methodology to capture the voices of young people in rural areas. The Youth in Agriculture Scan is based on SenseMaker principles and uses micro-narratives as a starting point to determine the drivers and expectations of young people in a certain context. In Ecuador, Peru and Nicaragua, we investigated the triggers for the integration of 876 young people into the coffee and cocoa sectors. The insights provided input for public policies matching the youngsters’ needs.

YOUTH, THE CONSUMERS OF THE FUTURE | Belgium

In 2018, a unique project; Wanted: Food for the Future was launched in Belgium, in which the Province of Flemish Brabant, Rikolto, the Colruyt Group and the University of Leuven, together with young people, experts, farmers and others, are looking for ways to feed the growing global population sustainably. During 4-day workshops focussing on (social) innovations in local food systems, 120 young people across Indonesia, Uganda, Peru and Belgium created and tested a new business idea or initiative. The workshops were designed based on the CEAL methodology.

YesYouthCan | Nicaragua

In 2015 we launched #YesYouthCan! The initiative is directed at making Central America’s cocoa sector more attractive for young people. Since then, 250 young people linked to La Campesina Cooperative in Nicaragua have been working on a single-origin chocolate. Since 2016, the Belgian supermarket chain Colruyt Group has been selling their single-origin chocolate. A committee with 24 young leaders represents the voice of young farmers in decision-making processes, and youth membership has increased from 5% to 13% in 4 years. Furthermore, each year, 75 young women and men from Honduras and Nicaragua attend a diploma course on “Cocoa production in agroforestry systems”, afterwards passing on their knowledge to their peers.

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