



MEDIA RELEASE

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International Coffee Partners: 20 years of hands-on smallholder family support

Back in 2001 during the devastating coffee crisis that led to severe hardships for coffee communities and millions of smallholder coffee farmers a select group of dedicated coffee companies decided to cooperate and join forces for fostering effective solutions that help producers and their families to move out of poverty.

Now in 2021, International Coffee Partners (ICP) is marking 20 years of continued smallholder coffee farmer family support. As a strong pre-competitive partnership of eight leading family-owned European coffee companies, ICP has proven the importance of innovative, holistic project concepts and cooperation within the coffee sector to tackle the challenges of farmer families.

Starting with the five founding members Lavazza, Löfbergs, Neumann Gruppe, Paulig and Tchibo in 2001, the non-profit partnership was subsequently joined by Delta Cafés, Franck and Joh. Johansson. “The impact of our work is a major achievement to highlight how important it is that coffee sector companies work together in a pre-competitive setup,” says Kathrine Löfberg, Chairperson of ICP.

Join the 20 years ICP event “Focus on People! How the coffee sector can ensure smallholder families’ livelihoods” on Tuesday, June 15th at 10 am CEST (Hamburg) to get to know ICP and follow a discussion about the opportunities of holistic support to coffee farmer families and working together for effectively tackling the challenges ahead. [Register here](#).



ICP so far reached almost 100.000 families in 13 coffee producing countries. Working with a long-term commitment based on 5-year strategies, ICP recently reworked its **Theory of Change**, emphasizing strongly on the holistic livelihood approach combining the topics of gender, youth, family business, farmer organizations and the adaption to climate change. “We do not only implement projects”, says Kathrine Löfberg. “We focus on the families at the centre of our work, looking at their potentials and needs. Together with them and among the ICP-Shareholders we learn and further develop our approaches and our operations.”

ICP projects in the current focus countries Brazil, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Tanzania, and Uganda are implemented by Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS). Addressing coffee production, added value generation at farmer level, diversification and better market access projects helped to raise income, stabilize cash flows and, thus, to close the living income gap. “Working with a holistic approach gives farmer families the opportunity to see their production systems as a whole”, says Michael Opitz, Managing Director of ICP. “Coffee as a viable element of rural livelihoods generates opportunities for all: families, communities and the coffee sector. This only works if we focus on the development of smallholder farming families and not just their coffee activities.”

Teddy Nkyambadda and her family form one of those benefitting. She is a young coffee farmer from Uganda. After joining the local ICP-project she not only learned about good agricultural practices and how to execute post-harvesting methods in coffee and other prominent crops. Teddy also became a role model for the youth in the area: “I train them in good agricultural practices such as measuring the garden, bottle irrigation and pruning.” She learned to see her farm as a business and that the smallholder families around are a community that needs to work together, just like in the local farmer organization referred to as Depot Committee in Uganda, that plays a crucial role for her in supporting group saving schemes and storage, processing and marketing of coffee.

“Unlocking the potentials of youth, making coffee farming an attractive business opportunity for families, supporting more competitive marketing of coffee through farmer organizations and tackling the multiple impacts of climate change are just some of the issues that we all need to work on together”, says Kathrine Löfberg.



In Uganda, Teddy is now running her coffee-based farm business with growing confidence and manages to increase the volume of her harvests. “Everything is moving on smoothly”, she smiles. “I am my own boss.”

Surely, the biggest challenge for ICP in the 20 years of operations has been the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak. Working with a long-term commitment, ICP also stands side-by-side with farmer communities during difficult times as proven throughout the pandemic. ICP quickly took significant measures to inform field staff and farmer communities while continuing possible support to protect crop cycles and financial stability of families.

Find out more about ICP by [downloading the Theory of Change](#).

About ICP:

International Coffee Partners (ICP) is a pre-competitive initiative of the leading European family-owned coffee companies, Delta Cafés of Portugal, Franck of Croatia, Paulig of Finland, Joh. Johannson of Norway, Löfbergs of Sweden, Lavazza of Italy, Neumann Gruppe of Germany and Tchibo of Germany. ICP’s objective is to contribute know-how to establish a sustainable coffee sector in key producing countries through the implementation of best-practice projects in coffee farmer communities. ICP projects are implemented by Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS).

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