



Moses Obbi

Cohort 2 – Uganda

Track - Business & Entrepreneurship



Empowering women Cocoa Growers in Uganda

Moses Obbi is a former chapter chair of YALI RLC Uganda, cohort 2 business track, winner of the 2023 US Mission Uganda Outstanding Leader in the Alumni Community award, the YALI honorary Alumni award winner and many more, former guild president at Uganda Management Institute, and founder of three businesses; Aeroprint Consult Limited (for printing and branding), Edupudon Limited for consultancy, and recently Grange Masticate Limited for chocolate making. He currently spearheads the YALI Fund committee to build the YALI Cooperative Society in Uganda that will financially empower alumni to continue impacting their communities.

COCOVA

Grange Masticate Limited is a chocolate making business that runs a corporate social responsibility project called the COCOVA project with an objective to significantly improve the bean quality of rural women cocoa growers in Mukono and Kayunga, Uganda by reducing post-harvest losses and enhancing cocoa management practices with the aim to increase the bean quality from the current 30% level to maximise harvested cocoa bean value.

The COCOVA project mission seeks to empower and uplift rural women cocoa growers in Mukono and Kayunga through tailor-made and targeted training in the best cocoa management practices to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge in pruning, harvesting, fermenting, drying, packaging, and storage necessary in producing high-quality cocoa beans and reduce post-harvest losses significantly.

Its vision is to create a sustainable and thriving cocoa industry for rural women cocoa growers in Mukono and Kayunga in which rural women cocoa growers possess the expertise and resources to implement the best cocoa management practices, resulting in improved bean quality and higher value for their cocoa harvests that will enhance their household income and improve their livelihoods, and contribute to the overall development of their communities.

YALI Transformation

Prior to joining the YALI RLC EA program, I only had one business, Aero Print Consult Limited. It had limited visibility, employed only two staff and barely won contracts. The YALI program empowered me to anticipate client needs by seeking to understand clients better and using design thinking to deliver solutions to their needs. This is the same approach I used to begin the consultancy and the chocolate companies.



In just under 2 years, in a network of over 240 rural women cocoa growers, 34 have been targeted, trained and empowered to the adoption of best cocoa management practices that have improved their cocoa bean value from 30% to 68%, more than 100% quality improvement. By the end of 2023, the project targets to increase the number to 60 women and at least 80% bean quality value. Grange Masticate Limited provides a ready market for the trained women's cocoa which is made into chocolate, cocoa butter and drinking chocolate.

By use of the design thinking approach, the project has successfully influenced attitudes and behaviours among rural farmers related to cocoa farming practices in Mukono and Kayunga. Through education and training, rural women cocoa growers have embraced sustainable and best practices such as proper pruning, harvesting, fermenting, drying, packaging, and storage techniques. This shift in behaviour has not only improved bean quality but also promoted environmental sustainability and conservation efforts. The chocolate business employs a total of 7 Alumni and 4 non-YALI Alumni.

COCOVA Project is closely linked to the learnings and experiences gained from the YALI RLC EA program which provided valuable training, mentorship, and networking opportunities, enabling me and the YALI Alumni part of the chocolate business to acquire essential skills in leadership, entrepreneurship, and community development that have enabled us to collaborate with rural leaderships in mobilising rural women cocoa growers for training. Design thinking, as was taught at the RLC, was instrumental in effectively designing and implementing the COCOVA Project, incorporating principles of inclusive leadership, sustainable business practices, and social impact. The training received through YALI RLC EA played a crucial role in equipping the COCOVA project leaders with the necessary tools and strategies to drive the project's success.



Design thinking a problem-solving approach stood out more during the program. It emphasised the understanding of community needs, involving the community in generating creative ideas for prototype development and testing solutions. I have applied the approach in solving community challenges successfully because it is a human-centred and iterative process that has always allowed my team to revisit or repeated incomplete strategies as new insights and feedback are obtained.

The YALI RLC program empowered me with leadership skills through a framework for self-mastery and interpersonal effectiveness for personal growth and success. I learned to master what I do best to deliver to my community the very best solutions through design thinking. The 7 Habits of highly effective people enhanced my proactiveness enabling me to anticipate a challenge and design a solution ahead of time like I did with the chocolate business. It taught me the need to continuously learn, a skill that accounts for the 3 businesses I now own. The emphasis on effective collaboration, communication and time management enabled me to create the YALI Uganda chapter cohort heads to decentralise leadership and have all alumni have a say in the country chapter development, an approach that founded the unity within the chapter



leading to the first chapter award of the eagle. The YALI program enabled me to build 3 businesses from one when I had just joined the centre. I have created over 12 permanent jobs and 37 part-time jobs in the last 6 years.

In Five Years...

I envision Grange Masticate Limited as a recognised and respected company owning C&T Dulcet as a household brand in the chocolate industry, known for its high-quality, artisanal chocolates, drinking chocolate, cocoa butter creams, chocolate bread spread and commitment to sustainability with a rural community impact on over 3,000 rural cocoa growers in 5 years. Individually, I hope to venture into affordable medicine manufacturing upon the successful IPO of the chocolate company. I hope to build brands that heal humanity from its diseases and promote coexistence and collaboration without restrictions by viral infections like the COVID-19 pandemic.

YALI RLC EA Network

I have made a large network resulting from YALI RLC EA leading to 600 individuals in Uganda alone and over 200 in East and Central Africa. The network has granted me an opportunity to give back to various communities by contributing to various community solutions through donations to individual alumni ventures within and outside Uganda by responding to their calls for financial donations, voluntary engagements and technical support in graphics design, business and financial management free training facilitation and more collaborations. The network has also benefited me and my businesses through client referrals and business opportunities by and from Alumni.



Advice for someone who wants to join YALI RLC EA

Had I been introduced to YALI RLC EA at the age of 18, I believe by now, my business would have directly employed two million Ugandans due to the robust leadership development program offered by YALI RLC EA, which has honed my skills and allowed me to achieve recognition through leadership awards. YALI RLC EA fosters inclusivity by bringing together participants from different backgrounds, cultures, and sectors and stands out by providing a unique platform for connecting with a diverse group of like-minded individuals. By joining YALI RLC EA, you become part of a globally esteemed community committed to personal growth, leadership development, and making a positive impact in society. Join today if you aspire to grow as a leader and drive positive change in your community.

