

MUSHROOM GROWING EXPERIENCE

BY

Josephine Nakakande

Who is Josephine Nakakande



- Female Ugandan born 1974
- Has four brothers and three sisters.
- Father is a retired teacher and mother is a house wife/farmer
- Was born and grew up in Hoima district (District bordering Lake Albert)
- A professional agriculturist with veterinary knowledge as well.
- Started and running a community development NGO in 2007
- Passionate about women economic empowerment

Who is Eco-Agric Uganda



<https://www.coagricuganda.org>

- Community member organization that aims at sustainably improving livelihoods of the critically vulnerable absolutely poor people in Uganda
- Targets the critically vulnerable absolutely poor people in Uganda (those in the middle of no where). Illiterate, most of them cant read and write
- Legally registered in Uganda. Non partisan, not faith based, believe in equity and equality. We

Why mushroom for economic empowerment

- Simple to grow with high health benefits and High market demand.
- It is a fun, low-cost hobby. Raw materials are cheap and readily available.
- Can be done in a small space
- Oyster mushrooms matures fast, within six weeks you start harvesting.
- Easy and quick for poverty recovery

History of Mushroom growing in Uganda



- Traditionally, they were picked from the wild as a wild edible fungi.
- Being culturally important and medicinal, people loved them.
- Commercial mushroom farming in Uganda started in 1989 with oyster mushrooms.
- I first learned about mushroom growing in 2008, from a workshop on Oyster mushroom growing.

Introduction of mushroom growing to farmers

Perception by farmers;

- Mushrooms needed a special house
- Spawn only found in Kampala and very expensive
- Needed a lot of technical knowledge.

In 2010, I got a four years funding from Vibrant Village Foundation to promote sustainable vegetable (Mushroom and tomato) growing and girl child education in Wakiso district targeting 300 women and 300 girls.

Introduction to farmers contrn..



- Started with Button mushrooms because I wanted to export but failed twice with only two mushrooms from **half ton** of substrate. We got disappointed and almost gave up.
- First year of the project was totally wasted. So I was advised to grow Oyster that was easy to grow and had local market as well.
- First time we only got 2Kg from 200kgs of substrate.
- This indicated a ray of light and a colleague was specifically assigned to mushroom growing.

Success starts



- In the second year of the project, we made two mushroom growing demonstration sites.
- Visited other mushroom growers to learn from them.
- Using the demo sites, we re-introduced mushroom growing. We got a breakthrough and harvested 182Kg of mushroom from 300 kgs of substrate

Expanding mushroom growing

- In 2015, we got funding from the Murr-Munning Trust
- Promoted Vocational studies and urban farming for economic empowerment of 150 Vulnerable Adolescent girls and 150 women headed households. It was a total success
- Uganda Private Sector support Program supported us introduce solar driers to prolong shelf life

Setting up a mushroom growing unit



- Setting up a simple mushroom growing business costs about Shs300,000 (\$81).
- Get a hand spray pump for sprinkling water onto gardens at Shs7,500 (\$2).
- Get a metallic drum (200 L) costing Shs60,000 (\$16) and gunny bags for holding substrate during boiling costing about Shs10,000 (\$2.7).
- Get a black polythene materials 10M for darkening the incubation area costing Shs50,000 (\$13.5) while nylon strings for hanging up gardens costing about Shs3,000 (\$0.8) and a 20L jerrycan at Shs10,000 (\$2.7).
- 1 sack of substrate of different materials like cotton husks costing Shs40,000 (\$10.8).

Requirements contn..



- Ready-to-inoculate spawns (2-3 kg) costing Shs50,000.
- Building lime;500g at Sh300
- 2Kg of nutritional supplements esp. wheat, rice, or maize bran at Shs1,200
- Disinfectant at shs 5000 (\$1.4).
- Polythene bags each pack costing Shs3,000 (\$0.8).
- Firewood or charcoal worth Shs5,000 and 100 L of water.

NB: The basic starter capital is Shs545,000 (\$147.2).

Achievements



- Since we started, we have trained 678 women and so far over 400 women are involved in mushroom growing.
- Spread mushroom growing to Hoima district.

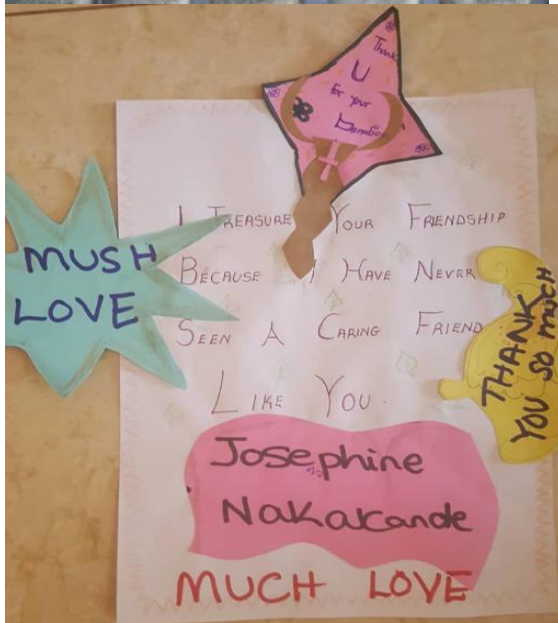
NB: **Though the market is getting big, there are two major challenges;**

- ❖ *Poor, scarce and expensive Spawn and substrate.*
- ❖ *Poor colonization due to poor spawn and contamination*

Lessons learnt

- The most important thing is having people to support guide and advise in what you are doing(mushroom growing) along the journey. The people we visited, learnt from, my colleague, Iris, welcome_to_mushroom, Myc Tyson, Brett Burdo, Earthy Shroom Maama, Nick Sanford
- Practical skills are very important. For example I was told about card boards Joe Foye showed them to me physically on messenger.

Progress made



- Got supporters like you, Iris, Myc Tyson, Joy Foe, Welcome_to_mushroom_hour and the wife
- Learnt to produce spawn. So far, I have made spawn that has supported 27 women grow mushrooms. This is from the funds got already \$1,955.3
- Plan for an improved mushroom growing house done in collaboration with Iris. Has taken us eight months is in final stages.
- Failure rate reduced from 70% to 40%.
- **A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO EVERY ONE THAT HAS HELPED ME IN ANY WAY. THANK YOU SO MUCH**

Next phase

- The 120 women will be trained to start commercial mushroom growing.
- Four mushroom demonstration sites will be set up
- After the trainings, 8 women groups formed and will be given; 8 drums, 480kg of spawn, 240 sacks of substrate, 120 watering cans, 240 kgs of maize bran and 120kg of lime to start commercial mushroom production
- After one month, each woman will be able to make a profit of \$4-\$6 per day and have enough food for home consumption.
- Savings made from the mushrooms will help women support girls stay in school and continue growing.

Request



- The first most important thing I need is ***YOU***. Please accept to grow mushrooms with me and the women I work with
- Requesting for funding through <https://www.givingway.com/campaign/a7df7d>
- Though we need **\$8,797**, we have raised **\$1,955.3** from twenty donors.

Next step

- How do we walk together along this journey?
What do we do?

***Please accept to walk
with me on this journey.
I need to be with you***