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Uganda

Jovia KISAKYE

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"Up-cycling inedible spoilt milk into a mosquito repellent lotion was the spark that ignited my business".

Jovia grew from humble background of peasant farmers in a rural area where malaria is endemic and does not spare anyone. She says she was a *chronic occupant* of clinics due to rampant malaria episodes in her youth, one of leading causes of death among children in Africa. Growing up, she witnessed the misery faced by cattle farmers who often had to throw away milk because of lack of proper storage and market. It is estimated that more than 15% of fresh milk produced in Uganda is lost on farms or on its onward journey through the dairy value chain.



Her innate curiosity brought her to play with the idea of a business that could recycle plenty of milk that would be wasted and, at the same time, could help control the spread of malaria. Sparkle Agro brands is a sustainable agricultural brand that transforms milk and dairy products that would go to waste into an affordable, innovative and sustainable mosquito-repellent lotion that lasts longer than conventional repellents, thanks to the lactic acid which nourishes and hydrates the skin.

The milk is recovered from smallholder farmers, mostly women, as well as processors, vendors and consumers. Her company provides small-scale farmers with an income opportunity, as she pays spoilt milk the same price they would get for fresh milk. In return, she sells them mosquito-repellent lotion and soaps made from that milk.



Since she started the company in 2019, Sparkle Agro brands sold 100,000 units of its mosquito-repellent lotion. 20,000 units of the lotion were also distributed to refugee settlement areas in the country, through the support of partners and organizations engaged in fighting malaria.

In 2021, Jovia attended the Business Recovery Series and the Empretec Entrepreneurship Training Workshop (ETW) offered by Enterprise Uganda, the local Empretec centre. Thanks to the training and the support received, she improved her business finances and successfully applied for additional funding from different organizations, including the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Uganda Hi-innovator competition. The funds allowed her to expand her business and develop a business model that targeted other businesses, in addition to customers.

At Sparkle Agro brands, Jovia set up a structure that promotes distributed authority and responsibility, with virtually no hierarchy, making everyone a co-leader. 70% of her employees are women, and 50% of women hold top management positions. From 2019 to 2023, her business increased its workforce 9 times, including part-time workers.

In the coming years, Jovia intends to expand to East African markets and add other products, all based on up-cycled milk.