



# INVEST IN A FAMILY EMPOWER A COMMUNITY

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THE KULA PROJECT 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



A woman with a headwrap and a colorful scarf is smiling and holding a young child in her arms. They are standing in a lush banana plantation with tall banana trees and large green leaves. The sky is blue with some clouds. The woman is wearing a light-colored t-shirt and a colorful patterned skirt. The child is wearing a denim dress and yellow shoes.

**THE KULA PROJECT  
INVESTS IN THE DREAMS  
AND BUSINESSES OF COFFEE  
FARMERS IN EAST AFRICA.**



# LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER:

I used to say that Kula Project's job was to "stand in the gap" for those that do not have the opportunity to work in order to support their families. Last year, I learned that our job is not to stand in the gap, but to close the gap.

**In 2015, our families in Rwanda taught us that there is hope in opportunity and dignity in work. Together, we work to help them create both.**

The Kula Project team worked throughout 2015 to build a foundation that will support the ideas and innovations of our families in Rwanda. We learned to navigate the sometimes tumultuous waters of growth and change, and emerged alongside our families stronger than ever ready to make 2016 even better.

It's my hope that our supporters will always know the role they play in the stories of hundreds of mothers and fathers who are doing everything they can to build a future for their children. For that, we say thank you.

We are ready for 2016, and we are grateful for each of you that will come alongside us in this journey. I believe James, one of the farmers in our program, said it best when he said, "Now, we can see a new light, and I can promise you that we will continue to follow it."

With love,  
Sarah





The background image is a wide landscape under a dramatic sky. The sun is partially obscured by a thick layer of clouds, creating a powerful sunburst effect with rays of light streaming down towards the horizon. The sky is filled with various cloud formations, some dark and some catching the golden light. The horizon line is visible in the lower third of the image, showing a dark, silhouetted landscape that appears to be a mix of fields and distant hills. The overall mood is one of hope and renewal.

**"NOW, WE CAN SEE A  
NEW LIGHT, AND I CAN  
PROMISE YOU THAT WE WILL  
CONTINUE TO FOLLOW IT."**

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JAMES, KULA FARMER



# OUR CONNECTED DEVELOPMENT MODEL



## IDENTIFY LEADERS

- Entrepreneur/Local Leader Partnership -
- Streamlined Vetting Process -
- Accountability Systems -



## PROVIDE RESOURCES

- Financial Grant Assistance -
- Market Facilitation - Micro-Loans Programs -
- Expert Agronomy Training -
- Business Literacy and Financial Planning -



## MEASURE IMPACT

- Comprehensive Baseline -
- Measured Every Year After First Harvest -
- Direct Donor to Project Reporting -



PROVIDED  
**CLEAN  
WATER**

RAN A  
PROVIDED  
**LIVESTOCK  
PROGRAM  
AND  
SUSTAIN-  
ABILITY  
TRAINING**



**27K**  
COFFEE  
TREES

6.5 THOUSAND  
BANANA TREES  
**PLANTED**

MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU





# FIGHT TO LIVE

As we were driving down the red, dusty roads of Kayonza, Rwanda, our Country Director Egide turned to me and said, "There is a group of women that has requested to meet with us." Although this was a common occurrence, I had no idea what was really in store for Kula Project Team. A few days passed, and it was time for our meeting. We pulled up to 48 women sitting on hand-carved wooden stools awaiting our arrival. After hiking up the small hill, we proceeded to greet each woman with a traditional Rwandan handshake.

Shortly afterwards, a woman named Shantal stood up and began to share the group's story. She said the name of their cooperation was Turwane K'ubuzima which translates to "Fight to Live." All of the women are

living with HIV/AIDS, most of them having contracted it during the 1994 Genocide, and they desperately needed help earning a sustainable income. We learned that they started a savings circle, giving them the funds they needed to buy a piece of land – which explained why they had invited us to meet them.

The Fight to Live Cooperative wanted to turn their newly purchased land into a coffee farm, and they asked us for help. When we asked them why coffee, Shantal, a woman in the co-op said,

**"We want our children to be able to go to school. The income from this land will guarantee that." Coffee trees will produce income for more than thirty years.**

She told us that the women had signed contracts naming successors to their portions of the trees and income should they succumb to their disease before their children finish school, so no matter what, these coffee trees could fund an education.

We partnered with an incredible company called See Beautiful to invest in the women of Fight to Live. In October, they cleared their land and planted 1,000 coffee trees. Since then, they have started a new savings circle to expand their property and create a bigger farm. Kula is thrilled to be a part of this story and join them in the next phase of their work.





2013

2014

2015



ONE FAMILY

+



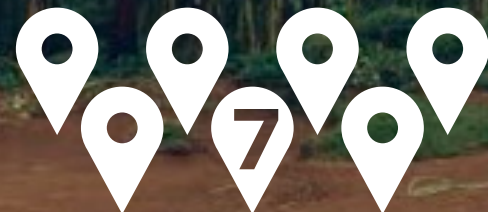
20 FAMILIES

+

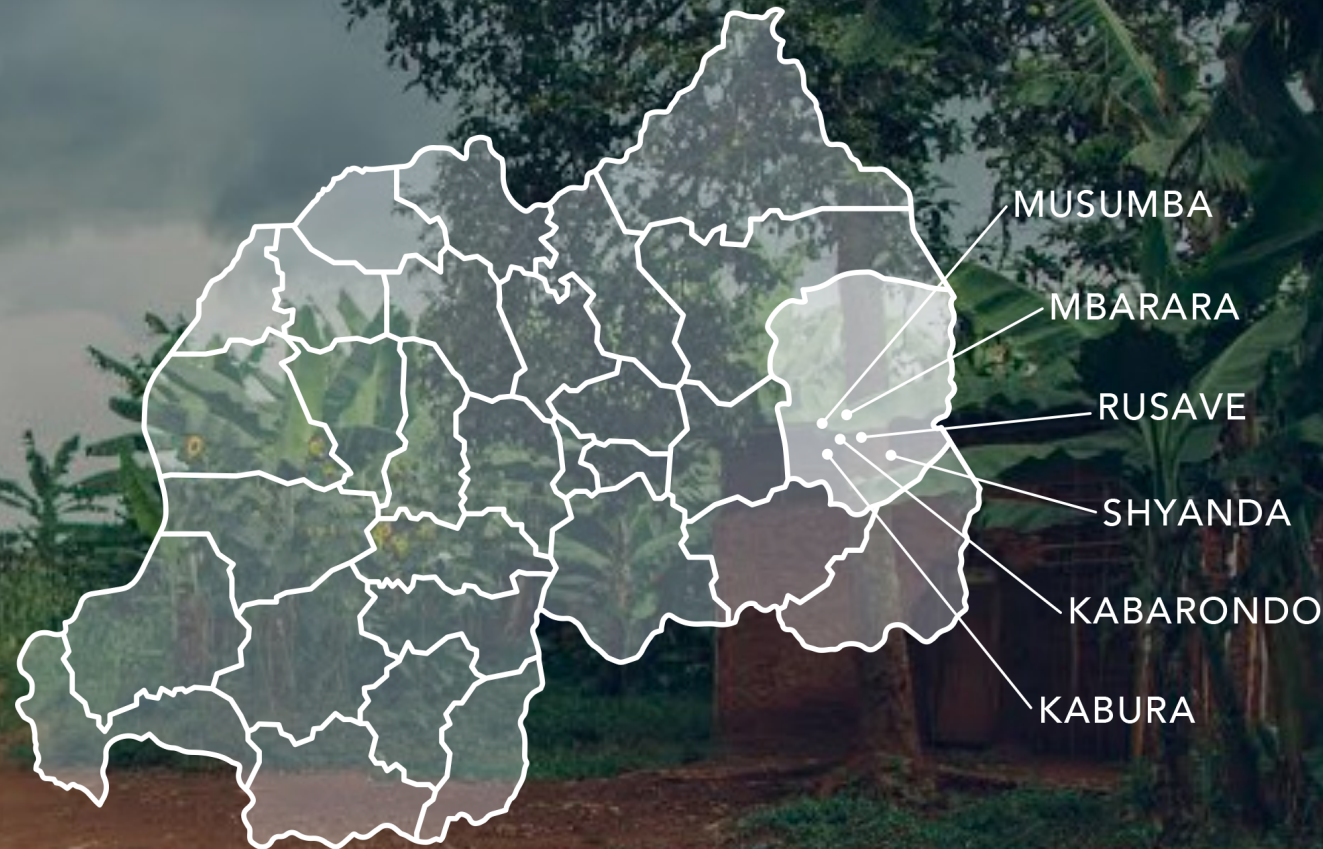


270  
FAMILIES

+



REGIONS





# 2015 GROWTH



+



**SARAH  
BUCHANAN**

Co-Founder & Executive Director

**KATE  
DOWD**

Director of Operations

**LINDSAY  
PIGFORD**

Content Strategist

**EGIDE  
MURINDABABISHA**

Country Director: Rwanda



**PLYWOOD  
PLACE**

ATLANTA, GA

## OUR BOARD

Joe Garcia  
BOARD CHAIR

Sarah Buchanan

James Sasson

Miles Murphy

Van Baird

Ryan Pernice

Tami McQueen







## LYDIA'S STORY

**I invest in Kula because of the strategic, transparent and love-filled ways they invest in, and empower others, using a sustainability model.**

Kula Project brought Rwanda to life through the stories, impact and images they share. I decided to go to Rwanda to meet the women and men who were thriving and fostering peace and gratitude in a country where just a few decades ago that wasn't possible.

**The beauty that has come from the ashes of the genocide can be life changing to witness and to see it through the lens of Kula Project's work was an opportunity I couldn't resist.**

To stand on the coffee farm of the strongest women I know and breathe their air and smile with them was a dream. Today, I get to live with the memory of sharing that space for a tiny moment with them. It's a gift.

**Lydia Criss Mays**



TOTAL RAISED  
FOR 2015

**\$219,503**

— \$179,245 SPENT

**\$40,258**  
CARRIED FORWARD

## PROGRAMS

\$117,930

## OPERATIONS

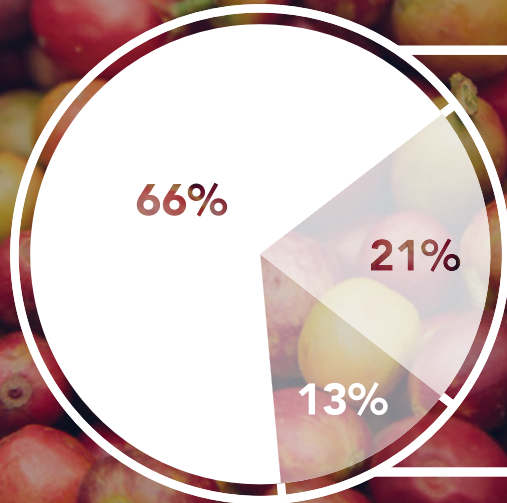
\$23,065

## SALARIES

Fully funded by Kula Project Board of Directors

**\$38,250**

WHERE THE MONEY GOES





# NAKURU WATER PROJECT

**Nothing affects the quality of coffee like the quality of the water that is used to process it.**

For Nakuru, Kenya, this was their greatest struggle. The borehole at their coffee processing center was broken, the community couldn't afford to fix it, and they couldn't get any help from their government. That's when Kula Project came in.

We knew that this coffee cooperative of 435 families would never receive a good and fair price for their coffee if

they were washing it with filthy water. We also knew that the borehole that fed the coffee center was the only water source for the community, including the primary school and the health clinic. With special friends in this community, we decided to change this coffee community by giving the gift of clean water.

By next harvest season, the price of their coffee will increase almost 10-fold. Now, the 2,000 families in Nakuru are drinking clean water. The children at primary are drinking clean water.

The health clinic is using clean water. The Kula team has a deep sense of gratitude for the people of Nakuru and the invitation to be a part of their story.

**"We hope that one day, we can be like you and help others like you've helped us."**

**James,  
Leader of Nakuru Co-op**





## JOIN OUR STORY



SHARE



SHOP



GIVE



@thekulaproject



@kulaproject



/thekulaproject



info@kulaproject.org







96% OF OUR FARMERS  
WILL USE THEIR INCOME FOR EDUCATION.





[WWW.KULAPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.KULAPROJECT.ORG)