



Yoba for Life Foundation

Locally produced probiotic yoghurt for health and wealth



INTRODUCTION

In challenged communities around the world, stimulating economic activity and improving public health are key mechanisms to build a better and more prosperous future and inclusive transformation.

The Yoba for Life Foundation is a non-profit international development organization founded in the Netherlands in 2009. The foundation aims to help people in resource-poor countries by catalysing the local production of a probiotic yogurt which has proven health benefits. Yoba for Life conducts its main activities in Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, and pilots are running in other countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, Nepal and Indonesia).

Yoba for Life is working with NEADAP on scaling up yoghurt production, developing an online training course and promoting probiotic yoghurt.

→ Find more information and references at www.yoba4life.org

A NUTRITION INTERVENTION WITH A BUSINESS CASE

Yoba for Life has made a unique invention in the form of a probiotic yoghurt **starter culture**, tailor-made for small- and medium-scale production of probiotic fermented food in rural areas. The foundation's expertise is in a low-tech **production protocol** with widely **proven applicability** in the African context to produce yoghurt using the starter culture. Secondly, the foundation has specialized training material on running a small-scale yoghurt business, including advice on sourcing inputs, marketing, bookkeeping and financial management. Producers are thus able to put a health-promoting product on the market while earning an income. Finally, in recent years Yoba for Life has developed experience in linking the probiotic yoghurt producers to schools, such that the product becomes part of school feeding programs.

- The concept and impact of Yoba for Life has featured on the **website** of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.
- Watch a summary of Yoba for Life's work in this **5-minute video**



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RAPID EXPANSION IN EAST AFRICA

Yoba for Life started promoting yoghurt production and consumption in Uganda in 2011. In 2016, operations expanded to Tanzania and Kenya and in 2020 to Ethiopia. Currently, 340 production units produce 97,000 liters of probiotic yoghurt per week. This means employment for 1,500 small-scale producers and their employees; 51% of these businesses are owned by women. The estimated number of regular consumers is 400,000, among which are 40,000 school children who consume the product on a weekly basis.

Yoba for Life owes this rapid expansion and adoption to successful partnerships with SNV, Heifer International, Agriterro, Fair & Sustainable Ethiopia, the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI), Makerere University (Uganda), Mellow Foods and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Kenya).

➔ Find out more about Yoba for Life's story in this [10-minute video](#).

NEADAP is a partner in the development of an online training course and in the promotion of probiotic yoghurt in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. In Kenya, a fee-based training approach is being tested as part of the scaling work Yoba for Life is doing with NEADAP.

➔ Find out more about how we support Mellow Foods to introduce a fee-based training approach in Kenya in this [5-minute video](#).



Figure 1: A Dutch innovation and training program empowering local entrepreneurs to do business by selling healthy and tasty fermented food.

PROBIOTIC FERMENTED FOOD

The Yoba starter culture contains a **generic variant** of *Lactocaseibacillus rhamnosus GG (LGG)*, the world's most researched probiotic bacterium. Since the expiry of the LGG patent, the Yoba for Life Foundation has made the bacterium freely available to people who can benefit most: those living in resource-poor countries who commonly face serious health risks that the bacterium can mitigate. Research has shown that LGG inhibits a wide range of harmful bacteria; it prevents and reduces **diarrhea**, **respiratory tract infections** and **ulcers**; and it binds and **degrades aflatoxins**. Yoba for Life and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam have recently confirmed some of these benefits in **Ugandan school children**.



SCHOOL YOGHURT PROGRAM

Since 2018, Yoba for Life has been promoting the consumption of probiotic yoghurt in schools in Uganda, in collaboration with SNV. In 2022, this initiative spread to Ethiopia and Tanzania. In those three countries, 40,000 children in (pre-)primary school are now consuming probiotic yoghurt on weekly basis. The school feeding program is sustainable, as the yoghurt is produced by small-scale producers located near to the school, and directly paid for by the children's parents, allowing them to enjoy the health benefits of regular consumption of probiotic yoghurt.



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