

## Not a Seed Goes to Waste at Josmak International (U) Ltd.

Gina Vega, Organizational Ergonomics

“We have a mission to produce highly valued and quality products profitably in an environmentally sustainable manner,” said Joyce Kyalema, founder and Managing Director of Josmak international. “As a social enterprise,” she continued, “when the business grows, the community is also transformed.”

Transformation of the community was Kyalema’s main goal when she launched her pumpkin processing company in 2012. By 2016, her goals had shifted to rapid growth and expansion of pumpkin processing and product distribution well past her local community in Uganda to all of East Africa and the world beyond. Enthusiasm, international partnerships, and a readily available workforce, however, were not enough to make the transition from a local social enterprise to an international force. She needed a plan.

### Uganda

Uganda was among the poorest countries in the world, with nearly 25% of its population living below the poverty line. As a landlocked country, Uganda had to maintain good relations with its eastern neighbors to gain access to the sea, and this was not always easy. Seventy-one percent of its land was devoted to agriculture, employing over two-thirds of the work force. The population was estimated at approximately 37 million, nearly one half of whom were younger than 14 years of age. Uganda struggled against many challenges over the recent decades, including prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the development of a functioning economy and social structure after the ousting of Dictator Idi Amin. Since 1986, an uneasy peace has alternated with periods of serious upheaval in Uganda. Corruption and fraud were major problems, and unemployment was among the highest in Africa. Some sources suggested that it was as high as 83% among young people, who comprised three quarters of the population under 30.

### Josmak International (U) Ltd.

As a 25-year old advocate for women entrepreneurs and gender equality and an entrepreneur herself, Joyce Kyalema launched her pumpkin-based company in 2012 with several goals in mind. She wanted to organize women in rural areas to find ways of increasing their household income, improving food security and nutritional values that could reduce malnutrition in their children and for those in surrounding areas, increase employment for young women, and minimize environmental problems through planting pumpkins, the growth of which reduced land degradation.

As of 2016, she offered a variety of organic pumpkin products that were easy to access at national markets. These products included pumpkin juice, wine, pumpkin leaf powder made from leaves and flowers, pumpkin roasted seeds, pumpkin seed powder, pumpkin flour used to make bread, cakes, cookies, bagias (vegetable fritters), pumpkin soup, pumpkin tea spices, and seed butters. No part of the pumpkin went to waste; all residues from product manufacture were used to make animal feed and fertilizer for improved agricultural productivity.

Kyalema partnered successfully with several organizations that provided her funding for growth, training and mentoring for herself and her staff, and the acquisition of some machinery for production. She learned more and more about the various ways to use pumpkins and their health benefits—they were low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. They were a good source of a variety of vitamins and were particularly rich in zinc, which addressed many health problems endemic in Uganda, including low birth weight, insulin irregularities, chronic fatigue, and others. Her products were very much in demand and were sold to hospitals, hotels, restaurants, supermarkets, schools, and individuals through retail outlets.

### **Social impact**

By 2015, Josmak had had an impact on 150 community members who had either gained employment in the company, grew the pumpkins that were the raw material for Kyalema's popular products, or who worked within company-held firms or gardens, doing processing, packaging, and marketing tasks. See Exhibit 1 for an organization chart. One result of which Kyalema was very proud was the improvement in the health and nutritional standards of some 500 community households.

Food security improved for many households, as did access to basic education and sustainable agricultural practices which had been adopted by the 150 rural women in three districts. This, in turn, led to improved land usage and a reduction in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, as pumpkin plants consumed some of the gas produced. The community overall benefited through the use of the residue mash from pumpkins as organic fertilizer for their gardens and for animal feed. The lives of women and youth in the districts engaged in Josmak activities also improved significantly as a result of the extra source of income the company created.

### **Goals**

Kyalema had big goals that went far beyond her initial founder's objectives. She wanted to modernize her plant through automated equipment to increase production. She wanted to educate more people internationally about the benefits of pumpkins on their health. She wanted to reach more potential customers globally. Her annual sales quadrupled by 2015 to USD 34,000, but this was just the beginning for Kyalema.

Her big goals were to achieve the following:

- To set up a pumpkin processing plant that would enable her to increase production and meet the demands both of her existing customers and those she hoped to get in the future.
- To develop marketing strategies to sell pumpkin products valued at USD 15,000 monthly by the end of 2017.
- To diversify into processing other vegetables and fruits such as carrots, tomatoes and chili sauce, pineapples, berries among others by December 2016.
- To expand production of pumpkin products to 10 new varieties by August 2016.
- To acquire irrigation systems that to be used to water the pumpkin plantations in order to avoid the effect of climatic changes on pumpkin crops in order to be able to produce throughout the year.

She needed some help designing the action plan that could help her meet these ambitions.

**Sources:**

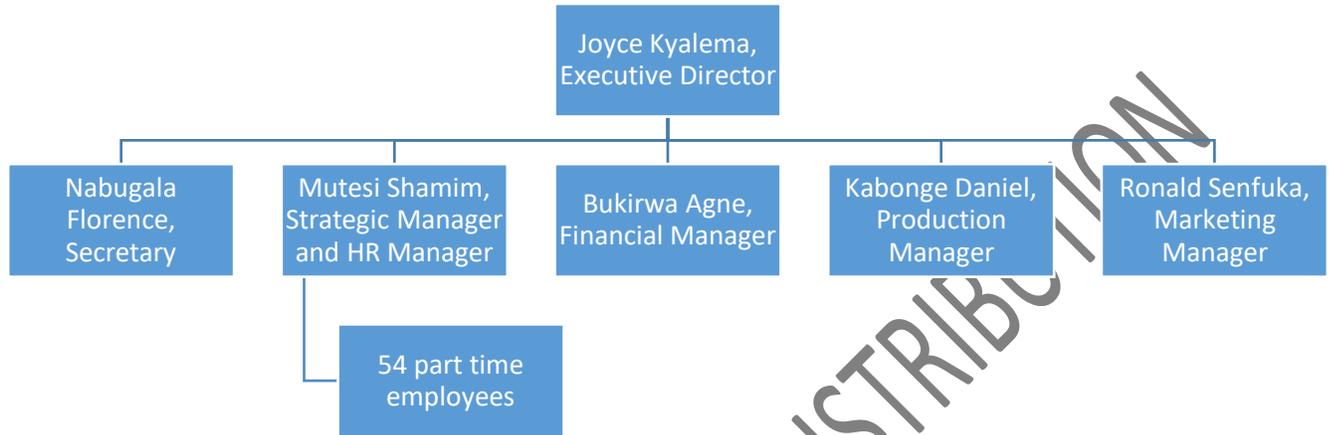
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**Exhibit 1      Organization Chart**

**Responsibilities:**

- Joyce Kyalema, Executive Director  
Supervises, monitors, guides, and supports staff
- Mutesi Shamim, Strategic Manager and HR Manager  
Monitors staff, evaluates performance, prepares plans and formulates strategies
- Bukirwa Agne, Financial Manager  
Manages finances, makes annual budgets and financial reports
- Kabonge Daniel, Production Manager  
Responsible for manufacturing processes, maintains schedules, controls quality
- Ronald Senfuka, Marketing Manager  
Develops and performs sales activities, staffs and directs a sales team
- Nabugala Florence, Secretary  
Does bookkeeping, prepares payroll, handles transportation and documentation of all data collected, prepares monthly reports
- 54 part time employees  
Handle the processing twice weekly

**Author biography**

Gina Vega is a Fulbright Specialist with assignments at St. Petersburg University, Russia (2010) and Cranfield University, UK (2012). She is past president of The CASE Association, a CASE Fellow, past Editor-in-Chief of The CASE Journal and past associate editor of the Journal of Management Education. Currently, she is Accreditation Coordinator for The CASE Association, Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Instructional Cases and Teaching Case Section Editor of Project Management Journal. Dr. Vega has received numerous awards for teaching, research, writing, and mentoring of case writers.

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