
Market Development and Capacity Building for Shea Butter Producers



Rahama Wright, President Shea Yeleen

Shea Yeleen's Mission

Promote **sustainable economic development** and empower women in rural West Africa through organizing and training **women-owned cooperatives** to produce, market, and sell high quality **shea butter**; and **educate U.S consumers** about natural body care products and fair trade.



Organizational Overview

- 2005 – Founded **Shea Yeleen International (501c3)** after Peace Corps service in Mali
- 2011 – Established **Shea Yeleen Health & Beauty (LLC)** as for-profit arm of SYI



- **Focus** – Cooperatives in Northern Ghana & Mali
- **Strategy** – Provide market access for shea butter products made by women
- **Goal** – Train, employ, and generate living-wage for over 5,000 women

Why Shea Butter?

Vitamin A

Helps to...

- Reduce Wrinkles
- Improve Acne
- Treat Eczema & Psoriasis
- Heal Wounds

Vitamin E

Offers...

- UV Protection
- Anti-Oxidants
- Anti-Pollution

Vitamin F

Helps Fight...

- Free Radicals
- Skin ailments

Cinnamic-Acid Esters

Provides
Sun Protection

Triterpene Esters

With Anti-Inflammatory
Properties



**Stimulates
Collagen**

**Restores Skin
Elasticity**

Nourishes Deeply

Relieves dry skin

Capacity Building



- Organize Women's Cooperatives
- Train in Quality Standards
- Create Value-Added Products
- Develop Market Linkages
- Act as a Bridge

Consumer Education

2011 Smithsonian Folklife Festival



- Presented Our Story to 7,000 Visitors
- Sold Over \$30,000 of Products in Less than 10 Days
- Opportunity for producers to see market opportunities

Commitment to Impact



Gladys P.

- From Northern Ghana
- Supports Six Dependents
- Before Earned \$30/month
- Now Earns \$70/month

Helping Women-Owned Cooperatives to Increase Income

A New Life for Gladys:

+ 133%

Income Increase
after collaborating with Shea Yeleen

3 YEAR SHEA YELEEN™ GOAL: **4x INCREASE IN INCOME**

Partnerships

Proud Member of...



- Ensure Producers Earn Fair Wages
- Support Environmental Sustainability
- Ensure Healthy Working Conditions



- Promote Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability through Mission-Driven Products
- Promote Entrepreneurship Among People under 35

Lessons Learned

- Be Patient
- Value Your Network
- Know Your Product
- Take Risks
- Do Something You Love



Looking Ahead

- Expand distribution of skincare line via national retail outlets
- Establish offices in Ghana and DC
- Recruit new board members and officers
- Distribute products in African market



Thank You
