

The Plymouth coffee shop on a mission to raise awareness of the Rwandan genocide

The founders of a coffee shop in Plymouth are hoping to raise awareness of the impact and consequences of the Rwandan genocide with a new short documentary showcasing their story.

Husband-and-wife duo Jabo Butera and Liliane Uwimana are the founders of Jabulani Coffee on Union Street – and are on a mission to connect the UK and Rwanda through coffee and education. The pair, who are from Rwanda but now live in Plymouth, have been working to bring people together and support local communities in both locations through social impact projects funded by profits made in their shop.

One such project is on a plantation in Rwanda's Gakenke province. Following the genocide in 1994, the Twongerekawa Coko cooperative began championing regenerative farming using organic and environmentally sustainable practices. Chameleons were introduced as a natural pesticide and water recycling was used for washing and cleaning the beans. Alongside the almost entirely female workforce, the project connects ambassadors from the UK and Rwanda to exchange knowledge to help support and secure the future of agriculture in Rwanda.

More locally, sales of coffee from the shop support Devon-based Owens Coffee Roastery, enabling the business to buy more beans directly (and ethically) from source. The Diversity Business Incubator (DBI) in Plymouth also gains revenue to continue supporting local refugees and developing young ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

The story of Jabulani Coffee was recently captured on film by two Devon creatives – Christina Wilkins of Brand Biscuit and Tom Carder of Tom Carder Media – who travelled to Rwanda to

make the documentary.



The sale of coffee from Jabulani supports social impact projects in Rwanda

(Image: Jabulani Coffee)

Ms Wilkins said: “We discovered on our journey this brand means more than just a crop and a cup – It is a culture and a lifeline. We explored, discovered, witnessed and captured a beautiful spirit of togetherness that has emerged since the genocide ended in Rwanda in 1994. Piecing together a remarkable brand origin story about a country’s survival and revival around a women’s coffee cooperative, who have made it their mission to work in unity and support many now dispersed mountain communities.”

Ms Wilkins and Mr Carder are working together with DBI and Owens Coffee Roastery on spreading brand awareness through a Jabulani Coffee relaunch event on Friday (October 28) to share the story with the people of Plymouth and the South West.

The event includes a premiere of the documentary and a photography exhibit, which was produced by the duo while over in Rwanda, alongside complementary African food and coffee samples to try.

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