

A photograph of two women in a lush green coffee field. The woman on the left is older, wearing a black headwrap and a yellow and green patterned top. The woman on the right is younger, wearing a red and blue headwrap and a light blue shirt. She is holding a large green plastic basket filled with coffee cherries. The background is filled with coffee trees under bright sunlight.

STRONG COFFEE | STRONG WOMEN

Footprint 2024

Bèkske: Rwandan Empowerment Coffee
www.rwandanempowermentcoffee.com

Strong coffee | Strong women

Bèkske

Rwandan Empowerment Coffee

Mission

Bèkske has a simple but clear mission: empowering women in Rwanda. The way we do this, is:

- ☉ with quality coffee as a basic product;
- ☉ with as much local impact as possible;
- ☉ in a sustainable way;
- ☉ and in a transparent way.

Bèkske believes in the power of women. They want the best for their families and are the cornerstone of society.

As entrepreneurs, they are real **agents of change**, making the difference. With Bèkske, we focus on female coffee entrepreneurs in the south of Rwanda. Women who grow and process the coffee in rural Rwanda. In doing so, they play a pioneering role, because worldwide it is mainly men who work on coffee plantations. The Rwandan women that Bèkske is supporting, are all survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi. Most of them have also survived sexual violence.

Although the women in our empowerment program have experienced a terrible period in human history, resulting in great losses, trauma and poverty, coffee entrepreneurship offers them a hopeful future. Supporting Bèkske ensures that we contribute to their social and economic independence. This enables these resilient women to restore their self-esteem and (re)take their place in society. And that increases the chance of a better backpack for both the community in which they are active and the next generation. The women (and indirectly also the children and men) who are included in the program and the community, are fully aware of this.



Origin of the name 'Bèkske'

It started in Tilburg...

Thanks to the financial support of the municipality of Tilburg to the Mukomeze Foundation - that supports Rwandan genocide survivors of sexual violence since 2008 - the import of the first 500 kg of coffee beans from Rwanda became possible at the beginning of 2018. Tilburg endorses 'global citizenship' and, with the Bèkske-project, brought the world of delicious and honest coffee a little closer to Tilburg and the Netherlands. Early 2019 Bèkske continued under the name 'Bèkske: Rwandan Empowerment Coffee' as a separate company, ran by three women living in the southern Province Brabant and who have lived and worked in Rwanda for several decades. The name Bèkske symbolises a bridge between the women in Rwanda and the Netherlands. In addition, we allow Tilburg students to experience social entrepreneurship in practice by thinking along with us in developing the Bèkske for the Dutch coffee market. For all these reasons, Bèkske is rooted and based in the Tilburg and Breda area (Brabant Province).

Despite the fact that the big coffee brands say they are working on better living conditions for the local coffee farmers, we still see surprisingly little of this. Bèkske believes in thinking differently: by communicating transparently about the entire coffee chain, including the financial flow. With as main aim: The empowerment of women via the coffee business.



Rwandan coffee belongs to the category of *specialty coffee*: a quality indicator that is only given to 5% of the export coffee. Quality standards for specialty coffee have been developed by the *Specialty Coffee Association* (SCA). Coffee must achieve at least 80 out of 100 points to be classified as *specialty coffee*. Bèkske coffee does this! The coffee is assessed on 11 different points by means of a so-called cupping test. During this coffee tasting, the coffee is assessed on aroma, aftertaste, sweetness, taste experience and balance, among other things.

Quality coffee: *Specialty Coffee*



And that's not surprising: Rwandan coffee has, on a regular basis, been held to be among the best coffees in the world because of its exceptionally good quality. The high government standards and strict controls in Rwanda, from berry to bean, closely monitor the quality process. For *specialty coffees* one therefore pays a considerably higher price than for other coffees. On the one hand, this is due to the unique taste properties that result from the right height, location, breeding ground and climate. On the other hand, the farmer has to do a lot of extra (manual) work for the production, processing and monitoring of the process in order to produce *specialty coffee*.

Quality coffee: *Specialty Coffee*



Rwanda, the land of a thousand hills in East Africa, has the right climate and altitude to produce delicious coffee. Moreover, the Bèkske beans come not only from one country, but from one region, namely the south-west of Rwanda. This makes Bèkske a *single origin* coffee.

Our Bèkske arabica beans grow on the hills with an altitude of 1800-2000 meters. The area is known for having the best quality coffee compared to other areas in Rwanda because of the very fertile volcanic soil. The coffee is best described as a mix of honey, chocolate, vanilla, fruit and floral flavors.



Local impact: delicious and honest coffee

Bèkske stands for local impact; the proceeds of the coffee should flow back as much as possible to the country and the people where the coffee comes from: Rwanda. Rwanda is a country where a terrible genocide against the Tutsi took place in 1994, but is now doing much better. Yet there is still a world to be won.

Drinking Bèkske contributes to a better future for Rwandans, in particular by providing the coffee entrepreneurs a decent standard of living (by making around 188 USD per month according to the Global Living Wage Coalition). Bèkske coffee wants to make an impact on the lives of Rwandan women who have survived the genocide and who can build a bright future by growing and selling coffee. In this way, Bèkske contributes to six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, namely:

- ending poverty (SDG 1);
- good health and wellbeing (SDG 3);
- quality education (SDG 4);
- promoting gender equality and empowering women (SDG 5);
- decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); and
- responsible consumption and production (SDG 12).

Moreover, Bèkske not only has a local impact on the female coffee entrepreneurs, but also on the Rwandans working for our other Rwandan partners, most of whom are also (female) genocide survivors.

Shortly, Bèkske stands for not only delicious, but also honest coffee. It's about quality coffee with a story: just by drinking Bèkske coffee you make an impact on the lives of Rwandan women who grow the coffee.



Partners in Rwandan Empowerment Coffee

The female coffee entrepreneurs (Rwanda)

In south-west Rwanda, Bèkske currently supports 75 women who grow coffee on individual and collective coffee plantations. By growing and selling their coffee beans, they can earn a livelihood and build a future, not only for themselves, but for the whole family (about 300 children). For every kilo of coffee they sell, they receive a nationwide fixed amount of around \$0.26. Bèkske adds €1 per kilo sold: the income is partly put by the women in a community fund so that they can continue their coffee business and thus accelerate their empowerment; and partly they receive it individually.

The 75 women in Bèkske also share in the profits as shareholders (for 25% via the Mukomeze Foundation): in this way they clearly make their voice heard in the Bèkske company. As Adria, one of the 75 women, puts it so beautifully: *“This coffee gives us the prospect of a future that we can look forward to.”* Bèkske coffee has a clear focus: first empower these 75 women before supporting other female entrepreneurs.

The Mukomeze Foundation (the Netherlands)

The Mukomeze Foundation was set up in 2008 to support survivors of genocidal sexual violence through an individual sponsorship program and income generating projects for groups of survivors, in particular in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, business, and education. Mukomeze works together with the NGO Solace Ministries in Rwanda (see below). Over the years they have together supported hundreds of genocide survivors of sexual violence in making a decent living.



Partners in Rwandan Empowerment Coffee



Solace Ministries (Rwanda)

Solace Ministries, founded in 1995 in the capital Kigali, is a non-governmental organization run by genocide survivors who, in turn, support other genocide survivors. They provide holistic support to around 50,000 survivors across Rwanda, in some 60 communities: psychological, physical, socio-economical, and legal.

Solace Ministries is in direct contact with the 75 women of Bèkske who grow the coffee on the flat land in the south of Rwanda. They take care of the right training, the (mental) guidance, the supply of materials and manage the community fund, so that the coffee entrepreneurs can continue to grow the *specialty coffee* in a responsible and sustainable way. To support

Solace Ministries - and thus also 'our' women - in this, Solace Ministries receives €1.80 for each bag of Bèkske coffee sold. Moreover, Solace Ministries opened a coffee shop in their own Guesthouse in 2018. Bèkske is thus not only dependent on export, but is also sold and drunk more often in Rwanda.

Partners in Rwandan Empowerment Coffee

Nyamurinda washing station (Rwanda)

Nyamurinda Coffee Growers Ltd., located in south-west Rwanda is run by 2 sisters, also genocide survivors.

This washing station grows, washes and dries the coffee beans that come from the sisters' own coffee plantations as well as from nearby plantations of other women. In this way, a constant supply of coffee is guaranteed for Bèkske as an organization, and thus also a constant income for the 75 women. In line with the washing station's mission - to economically empower women (and their families) who work there - 90% of the people employed at the washing station are women. Nyamurinda is in the possession of the Rainforest Alliance Certificate.



Partners in Rwandan Empowerment Coffee

Pure Flavor (the Netherlands)

The green beans are traditionally roasted at Pure Flavor in Den Bosch (the Netherlands) according to the traditional method, whereby the coffee is slowly roasted in a rotating drum at a temperature of about 195 °C (light roast), 202 °C (medium roast) or 208 °C (dark roast). The light roast coffee has a subtle and slightly fruity taste; the taste of medium roast coffee is slightly more powerful with a slightly sour aftertaste; dark roast has a bitter but full flavor. A light roast coffee is very suitable for filter coffee, while dark roast is often used for espresso, but because flavors differ, it is of course best to find out for yourself what is the most delicious Bèkske for you (and this can also differ according to your 'mood').

Once cooled, the roasted beans are packed in beautiful packages with the women (and their short story) on the packages. Bèkske is ready for one of your 100% delicious and honest moments!



Sustainable coffee

Food is produced and transported in different ways. That is no different with coffee. Het Bèkske wants to stand up for sustainable coffee as far as possible. Our partners in Rwanda and the Rwandan government are constantly working hard to achieve this. For example, the female coffee entrepreneurs ensure that the soil on which the coffee bushes stand is covered with old grass that is not only biodegradable, but is also used as fertilizer and retains water and moisture for the coffee bushes. So the women use organic fertilizer mixed with just a little bit of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Chemicals are only used in very exceptional situations; to prevent serious and contagious diseases. The ditches around the coffee plantations are a natural barrier against erosion in times of heavy rainfall, where the retained rain is simultaneously filtered for later use. Women plant "vetiver" on the sides of the ditches; a tall grass that retains water and grows in harmony with the coffee bushes.



This sustainable way of working is also continued in the washing station. For example, by using the pulp from rejected coffee berries as natural food for the coffee bushes. By reusing water from a nearby natural spring used in the washing station to wash the coffee beans to irrigate nearby fields. Used raw materials are used optimally in this way, with as little waste or environmental pollution as possible. Moreover, this process ensures that the real full flavor of the arabica beans comes into its own.

Sustainable coffee



However, even on this side of the world, in the Netherlands, we try to do everything we can to act as sustainably as possible in line with SDG 12 'responsible consumption and production'. As far as transport is concerned, this is a difficult task; in any case, we make use of transport by boat or airplane. On the other hand, we deliberately choose Rwandan partners, which means that more revenue is left behind in Rwanda.

Bèkske certainly still has a lot to do in the field of sustainability, but the first steps have been taken. Think of the possibility to have coffee refilled in the shop by recycling old coffee bags, by revitalising coffee grounds as fertiliser, soil improver or polish, by using an electric coffee roaster and not a gas one, and by entering into partnerships to make transport more sustainable. By working on a constant improvement in the production method, the composition of the range, the transport and the marketing, we are working towards the most sustainable Bèkske coffee possible.

Transparent

Bèkske is there for everyone who wants to make responsible choices and wants to contribute to a better world in a very accessible way. In order to give everyone who wants to contribute to the realisation of our mission, we think it is only normal to give insight into the process and the costs involved in the creation of a coffee berry or a cup of coffee. That is why we communicate our actions and choices as transparently as possible on our coffee bags, website, Bèkske Social Impact Model, and Bèkske Empowerment annual reports.

Logically, we expect the same openness from suppliers, partners or customers. Whenever there is room for improvement, we are open to any suggestion. With transparency across the board - financially, logistically and in terms of impact - we continue to challenge ourselves to take a critical look at the necessity of each step. Our goal at all times remains: the greatest possible positive impact locally, especially for the female coffee entrepreneurs.

Through this transparent - in our view the most honest way of communicating - we try to set a new standard by which we can really make an impact on the local economy, the environment, of course our women, but also on the coffee drinker.



Price structure

No less than 4 times more than what is usual for most other coffee brands goes back to the 75 coffee entrepreneurs we work with. Concretely for our 75 women, this means that they receive €1 per kilo extra (on top of the nationally determined around \$0.26 per kilo). They also receive - via our partner organisation Solace Ministries in Rwanda - support in sustainably growing the coffee on the plantations. For this, Bèkske has reserved €1.80 for each kilo Bèkske coffee sold. In addition, another 25% of the profit goes to the women because they share in the profit (via the Mukomeze Foundation). This is independent of all the women who profit from the sale of the Bèkske at other parts of the production process (e.g. at the washing station where we also buy the coffee).


By constantly challenging ourselves, we will continue to look for ways to make the coffee flow back even more locally, for example by making use of (partial) roasting and packaging of the coffee in Rwanda itself in the future and by not using a trader.


Bèkske Social Impact Model

Empowering Women in Rwanda

Bèkske Rwandan Empowerment Coffee is a social enterprise that uses its profits in favor of the empowerment of female coffee business women in Rwanda.

We contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:





Our 4 pillars

HONEST

Bèkske coffee provides at least 3 to 4 times more local impact than regular coffee brands. In doing so, we support the socio-economic independence of Rwandan women and their families who survived the genocide against the Tutsi, many of whom have also experienced sexual violence.



- Of every kilo of coffee sold, €1 goes to the women (40% directly into their account and 60% goes to the community fund).
- €1,80 goes to our local partner organisation Solace Ministries for the continuous sustainable and responsible cultivation of the coffee trees.
- On top of that, the women also share 25% in profits.

DELICIOUS

Bèkske is specialty coffee: High-quality coffee with unique flavours (a mix of honey, chocolate, vanilla, fruit and flowers). Specialty coffee is rated on 11 points by a cupping taste.

5% =
specialty coffee




Specialty Coffee		
80-84	85-90	90-100
Very good	Excellent	Outstanding

Bèkske qualifies, with a score of at least 85 points, as an excellent specialty coffee.

SUSTAINABLE


Reuse of water from natural sources and organic manure, ditches around the fields as a natural barrier against erosion in the production process, the product design in our packaging materials... Small but essential steps that are part of our sustainable business.



- We strive for partnerships that pursue the same standards openly and thus strengthen or accelerate our impact.
- We continue to work on mapping the ecological footprint of Bèkske as an organisation.

TRANSPARENT

We strive for transparent communication throughout the production chain. In this way, we provide insight into what exactly flows back to our partners throughout the process.



- We continue to share the women's story together with the personal impact the coffee and coffee business has had on their lives.
- We continue to challenge the status quo of the coffee industry by communicating the way we pursue impact.

Strong coffee | Strong women

Bèkske

Rwandan Empowerment Coffee



We would like to emphasize that this document is continuously updated, with possible changes in steps and subsequent calculations. The goal will nevertheless always remain the same: to make as much positive impact as possible on the female coffee entrepreneurs!



FOLLOW US:

website: www.rwandanempowermentcoffee.com

e-mail: info@rwandanempowermentcoffee.com

Sterke koffie | Sterke vrouwen

Bèkske

Rwandan Empowerment Coffee

1 kg

100% ARABICA
(H)EERLIJKE
SPECIALTY COFFEE

Heel erg bedankt
in het Rwandese!

Murakoze cyane koffie
voor je goede smaak
en eerlijke hart.

Viviane Uwitonze

DE (H)EERLIJKE BONEN VAN HET B

#1 Sterke vrouwen
wordt door vrouwen in
reproductie. Sterke
Bèkske en vaak ook
vold hebben overleefd.

#2 Empowerment
Met iedere kop koffie maak je
onderdeel uit van hun succesvol
ondernemerschap.

#3 Rwandese
van het gezin
koffie maak

#4
vrijlijk
voor minimaal 4x
st dan reguliere
overop delen de
in de winst.

#5 100% arabica
Niet gemengd met ander bonen
heeft het Bèkske een zacht/zoete
smaak met een mix van honing,
chocolade, vanille, fruit en bloemen.

#6
In oorsprong mogelijk gemaakt door
Tilburg, versterkt het Bèkske de band
tussen Nederland en Rwanda.

#7
armoede
empowerment

#8 Milieubewust
Met niet alleen oog voor mens, maar
ook voor milieu, worden de
koffieresten in het productieproces
recycled.

#9 Roots