



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Growing Chili Peppers and Opportunities for Women in Uganda



OPIC

Sorting African bird's eye chili peppers grown by farmers in eastern Uganda for Sunshine Agro Products, a chili and spice exporter, and one of the businesses supported by OPIC client Root Capital.

Nearly two billion people worldwide live in rural areas and are heavily dependent upon small-scale subsistence farming, and the majority of these smallholder farmers are women. As the demand for crops from developing countries increases, more smallholder farmers have ramped up their production and attempted to connect with the global supply chain. However, these farmers often lack the technical and managerial skills to effectively navigate finances, production costs, fluctuating market prices, and crop pests and diseases.

To address this challenge, the [Overseas Private Investment Corporation](#) (OPIC) has committed more than \$30 million in loans to Root Capital, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit social investment fund that lends capital through rural farm cooperatives throughout the world and provides farmers with training to support finance activities and productivity management.

So far, Root Capital had disbursed more than \$600 million in OPIC loans to rural farmers and is nearing the one million mark in numbers of agricultural producers reached. Most of these producers are women, who can use the loans to invest in their household farms and expand them into profitable businesses.

One of the cooperative Root Capital has supported is Sunshine Agro Products, a chili and spice export business that purchases birds eye chili peppers from farmers in eastern Uganda. The company received a loan facilitated by OPIC and Root Capital to help expand operations, increase productivity, reduce production costs, improve value chain efficiency, respond to social needs and ultimately improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in an area with few alternative sources of income.

So far, Sunshine Agro has grown from 15 to 924 chili farmers, with an estimated \$140 of additional income generated per year, per farmer. In addition, thirty percent the company's suppliers are women, who, on average, can support a family of eight on only a half-acre of chili peppers.

OPIC is the U.S. Government's development finance institution, mobilizing private capital to help solve critical development challenges and, in doing so, advance U.S. foreign policy and national security. [Learn more](#) about how OPIC and Root Capital are working together to transform agricultural development.