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“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## The Wellbeing of Smallholder Coffee Farmers in Mount Elgon Region- a Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of a Rural Community in Eastern Uganda

ANNA LINA BARTL<sup>1</sup>, ISABEL BARTL<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Germany*

<sup>2</sup>*University of Applied Sciences and Art (HAWK), Dept. of Social Work and Health, Germany*

### Abstract

For many smallholder farmers in the Mount Elgon region of Uganda, Arabica coffee cultivation is the major activity for earning their living. It is well-known that smallholder coffee farmers often do not live under conditions that surpass existential needs. On the contrary, different levels of wellbeing and perceptions of smallholder coffee farmers are not well examined. In this study, we classify different levels of wellbeing and investigate how the own wellbeing is perceived.

We use quantitative data of 431 smallholder coffee farmers in the Mount Elgon region to identify different levels of wellbeing using the material, the social, and the personal wellbeing dimensions. In addition, 10 qualitative interviews with the households' mother help to understand correlations between household wellbeing, composition, challenges, and possibilities with regard to health care, and water supply.

Results indicate three levels of wellbeing and an impact of household composition on the levels of wellbeing. Furthermore, we found that the sense of personal and social wellbeing strongly correlates with the households' economic situation. Besides, available healthcare provisions are linked with very high costs; one consultation of a doctor nearby may constitute costs exceeding an eleventh of an average annual household income from coffee selling. Even so, most of the farmers do not perceive life quality influencing factors like the lack of health insurance, health care nearby, water supply, or the lack of infrastructure as one of their major deficiencies. In contrast, deficiencies that impact the constitution for farm management activities are perceived as more constraining.

For all life quality influencing factors, better educational opportunities are mentioned from the mothers' perspective to provide the best solution for better levels of wellbeing for future generations.

**Keywords:** *Coffea arabica*, Mount Elgon, smallholder coffee farmers, Uganda, wellbeing