



In response to rampant hunger and need in conflict torn Sudan. Body Harmony is a contributor to the solution, and so are YOU!

Over the past decade, **Afrika Mba, Inc.** has created an infrastructure for a sustainable Shea oil industry for the women of Southern Sudan and other parts of Africa, ensuring the rights of African women as the traditional guardians of the Shea nut tree. Processing Shea oil is extremely labor-intensive, but with proper storage, Shea oil can be

preserved year round for use. Through the careful organization of nut collection sites and oil processing centers, enough Shea oil can be produced in Southern Sudan and other parts of Africa to meet local demand and to convert surplus oil into marketable skin care products.

### **The Lulu Tree: Sudan's and other parts of Africa's Vital Natural Resource**

The nilotica variety of Shea nut tree (called lulu in Arabic) grows mainly in a narrow band of savannah extending from Senegal to Ethiopia. Lulu trees grow abundantly on the ironstone plateau and the alluvial plains of Southern Sudan and other parts of Africa. This medium sized deciduous tree rarely exceeds 15m, and is estimated to live between 200 to 300 years, with 15 to 20 years of growth required before fruiting.



Because the tree's rich bounty of nutritious lulu nuts yields at the exact time of the seasonal hunger, the lulu tree is greatly celebrated in Southern Africa as a vital natural resource. The economic value of lulu nuts is also extremely high, providing women guardians with income and household food security.

### **Nilotica vs Paradoxa: The Advantage of Purity**

The *vitellaria nilotica* variety of Shea nut varies from the better-known paradoxa



variety that has been commercially exploited in West Africa for decades. The oil from darker *paradoxa* nuts has to be bleached and deodorized before processing into skin care products, so the resulting butters lack the untouched purity of butters crafted from *nilotica* oil.

Since *nilotica* oil has a naturally pure and mild flavor that requires little processing, it has become a highly coveted additive for natural skin and hair care products. Rich in olein, *nilotica* oil from these nuts is superior in cosmetics and is known in Africa and around the world for its positive effects on the digestive system, the hair and skin.



### **The Guardians of Life**

Over the past century, the secrets of the lulu Shea nut have been unearthed and passed down by Sudanese women, the traditional guardians of the lulu tree. The women share a symbiotic relationship with this life-giving tree, eating the fruit, processing the nuts into oil and enjoying the tree's cool shade. The nutritious oil was particularly important during Sudan's civil war and is still a main source of food security during the yearly dry season. Corporations have sprung to the defense of African women and the exploitation of their labors. **Afrika Mba, Inc. is only one in many.**

### **Turning Nuts into Oil**

Wild-crafted, non-certified organic lulu nuts are collected and fully dried, then pounded into a mash using a large mortar and pestle called a *funduk*. Women push the mash through a hand-powered cold press mill that squeezes the oil from the nuts, retaining the nutritive properties and yielding clear, lightly scented oil that transforms readily into a creamy butter. The women add beeswax and essential plant oils to convert the lulu oil into naturally pure soaps and lip balms.



### **Profits for the People**

Afrika Mba, Inc. is helping women maintain a healthy household with money for food, clothing, education and medical care. Sustainable living coupled with a wide variety of productive investments is contributing greatly to the development of the local economy.

**A few of the ladies shared their thoughts:**



**Elprida Gamba**

*I used to walk all day or all night to get to a market and sell my harvest, for very little money. I didn't even have enough money for clothes or shoes. My children could never go to school. Now all my children go to school. With this work, the women in our village have been bringing a lot more money into the family.*

**Rebecca**

*I cannot read or write. I have three children less than 6 years. I used to earn money by making beer and alcohol but now I do not have time to do this. I wanted to do other work that did not mean I was to make drinks. Now I can do things for my children. I want to build my own home. I love my work and do it well.*

**Ukuol**



**Unia Singajoo**

*My biggest dream is that all my grandchildren get an education, so that they can get a good job and they can then look after me and I can rest in a good home.*

*Thank you for helping us feed our children.*