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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES YOUNG SUSTAINABILITY ENTREPRENEUR PRIZE

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 **UNIVERSITY OF  
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SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP



# Charles Batte

Tree Adoption Uganda



At 62%, youth unemployment in Uganda is amongst the highest in Africa. Over the last 15 years Uganda's forest cover has declined by 26%, left unchecked this would rise to 100% in 40 years. Founded by Charles Batte, 27, Tree Adoption Uganda (TAU) takes a novel approach to jointly tackle both these challenges.

TAU is an NGO that offers a three year programme of business training and mentoring to impoverished young people, helping them to create, develop and grow new businesses. Participants build up start-up capital via TAU's "Tree Capital" program; they set up tree nurseries and the trees are sold to large companies, who buy them as part of their corporate social responsibility commitments. The trees are planted as part of reforestation campaigns in Uganda's National Forest Reserves.

Charles was born in Kamwokya; a slum in Kampala riddled with poverty and poor health services. At 20 he used savings from his part-time job to start a small-scale farm. Seven years later it employs 50 people and he has used the profits from the farm to start a health centre and TAU, which launched in 2012.

The basis for the services TAU provides is vested in the conviction that youth unemployment is rampant because young people lack capital and skills to become entrepreneurs. Since its launch, TAU has delivered entrepreneurship training to 600 high school students and given 150 more students hands-on experience setting up fruit tree nurseries. Through its Household Empowerment Program (HHEP), TAU will empower 150 women and 50 men to start their own small-scale businesses, enabling them to financially sustain their families and alleviate poverty, funded by the planting of 200,000 trees.