



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# FAO Rwanda Newsletter

Volume 3 - Issue#4  
4th quarter 2017



Rebalancing Agriculture to improve gender equality in the sector and promote best agricultural practices.

In 2017 we witnessed achievements from years of efforts FAO and partners have invested in farmers in Rwanda!

# WELCOME



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

**2017** has been a fruitful year for FAO working with the Government of Rwanda and other partners to implement projects that have improved the livelihoods of the people they were intended for.

The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) poultry project in Gakenke district helped in reducing malnutrition rates complimenting the already on-going laudable efforts of the government and other partners. Positive results have been registered in our small-scale irrigation project in the districts of Kayonza, Nyagatare and Kirehe. Through supplying irrigation equipment and training farmers

in the use of small scale irrigation technologies, has contributed to year round bumper harvest and jobs creation in the once food insecure Kirehe district. In this newsletter you will read about a farmer who was food insecure and vulnerable but today he has earned a living out of vegetable cultivation.

FAO and UN Women in November held a high-level policy dialogue with Rwanda's Parliamentarians on Rwanda agriculture policy and its nexus with gender equality, in achieving the country's global commitments such as SDGs, Malabo declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation.

Through the project "*Enable women to benefit more equally from agri-food value chains*" women and men in the districts of; Kayonza, Rwamagana, Gicumbi and Nyagatare were trained on the proper feeding of animals, farm management, and more. The project's objective was to increase food security through agri-food systems which are more inclusive, efficient and which address gender inequalities.

I take this opportunity to thank all our partners who have been part of the journey for the invaluable support and dedication to FAO to see the tremendous achievements recorded. Thanks to all FAO colleagues from the Country Office, SFE (Sub regional office for Africa), RAF (Regional office for Africa ) and at the Headquarters, for the fantastic team work and one FAO spirit that guided us, with a strong quest for impactful results on people's life.

The year ahead will bring its own challenges but FAO is more than committed and I am sure by working together, remaining focused on the key priority of achieving the zero hunger and end poverty goals leaving no one behind, we will have a hunger-free Rwanda and World.

I wish you all a joyous and healthy festive season, and a prosperous 2018!

Attaher Maiga

FAO Representative in Rwanda

## Contents

- Page 2 **Facilitating understanding the importance of gender mainstreaming among Parliamentarians.**
- Page 3 **Smallscale irrigation project transforming agriculture in the Eastern province**
- Page 4 **Strengthening women's involvement in agri food value chains**
- Page 5 **ASTF poultry project ending malnutrition in Gakenke district**
- Page 6 **World Food Day 2017: "Investing in food security and rural development".**
- Page 7 **Staff spotlight! Upcoming events**



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

*Left-Right: FAO Representative, Attaher Maiga; Speaker of Rwandan Chamber of Deputies, Donatille Mukabalisa and UNWOMEN's Fatou Lo listen to the Parliamentary plenary session. FAO engaged the lawmakers and other stakeholders on involving women in the attainment of national and global commitments such as; SDGs, Malabo declaration, AU Agenda 2063.*

## FAO in Rwanda Parliament to raise awareness on gender mainstreaming in development

**O**n November 14<sup>th</sup>, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) collaborated with lawmakers in Rwanda to discuss the importance and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as the country works to realize global and regional commitments.

This high level policy dialogue, titled *“Rwanda agriculture policy and its nexus with gender equality: Malabo Declaration and the SDGs for Climate-Smart Agriculture”*, highlighted challenges that are still evident in mainstreaming gender, such as constraints in accessing markets, limited access to tools and transport facilities, and women having less access and control over their household’s agricultural resources.

Although Rwanda has made strides in promoting gender equality, women are still the primary labourers in a wide range of activities that support agricultural development. Rwanda’s 2012 census indicated that 72 per cent of workers aged 16 years and above are employed in agriculture, of which 82 per cent are females.

Senators, the Chamber of Deputies, and other government institutions and stakeholders participated in the dialogue to help

Parliamentarians understand and address persistent gender gaps in commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Malabo Declaration, the AU Agenda 2063 and the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

The Speaker of Parliament, Ms. Donatille Mukabalisa, stressed that mainstreaming gender equality in agriculture increases agricultural productivity.

“As lawmakers, we will monitor and support the efforts and activities towards attainment of the Global Goals to ensure the rights of women,” she noted.

The FAO Representative to Rwanda, Attaher Maiga, told the plenary that FAO aims to improve agriculture and enhance livelihoods, leaving no one behind.

The Agricultural Strategic Plan (PSTA<sub>4</sub>) is expected to guide the country towards meeting the target goals. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Ambassador Claver Gatete, noted that gender has been a cross-cutting issue in all sectors.

FAO believes lawmakers have a critical role to play in achieving a hunger-free generation and end poverty through legislative measures to address issues facing the country, especially gender inequality in agriculture, food insecurity and malnutrition.

# Irrigating towards the resilience of small-scale farmers in Rwanda

**J**ean De dieu Habiwaremye was hungry and had no job.

Although a farmer, he was starving. In 2008, he decided to migrate to neighboring Uganda in search of food and work.

Jean de Dieu is from Nasho in Kirehe District, an area prone to drought caused by climate change, which negatively affects food production. These conditions also affect jobs for rural people, as 80 per cent of Rwandans derive their livelihoods from agriculture.

"I migrated from this place because we were experiencing terrible famine, and during that time we didn't know about irrigation," says Jean de Dieu, father of two children.

Like Jean De Dieu, many rural farmers in Rwanda still rely on rain for agricultural activities.



**Above:** Fortunée uses a rain-gun sprinkler for his tomato garden.

**Below:** A Rwanda woman uses the horse pipe. This equipment was distributed as part of FAO's irrigation project. The Farmers also received capacity building and maintenance training to help them increase production.



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

Despite his farming area being near Lake Nasho, Jean de Dieu and other farmers had never used the lake for agriculture. FAO has supported smallholder farmers in Rwanda developing affordable technologies to manage critical resources, such as water and rainfall, for sustaining productivity.

In 2015, FAO launched a project to enhance small-scale irrigation technologies, targeting Kirehe, Kayanza and Nyagatare Districts to support farmers like Jean de Dieu to do their passion. The pilot project benefitted nine cooperatives and one individual farmer.

Life has changed for farmers like Jean de Dieu, and the face of agriculture has been transformed in Kirehe District. They no longer depend on rain to grow crops, and can cultivate year-round.

"Using irrigation has improved my vegetable farming for by more than 85%. On one hectare of land, I invest about 2.3 million Rwandan francs and produce a harvest worth four million in just four months," says Fortunée Twagirayezu, one of the first person in Nasho trained on irrigation technologies.

Jean de Dieu's cooperative "CALENA" received irrigation equipment & training on how to use the new technologies. Members of the cooperative are now able to farm their fields by pumping water from Lake Nasho.

"When I came back from Uganda, I found people irrigating. I started by cultivating a small piece of land and by growing tomatoes and green peppers. I realized irrigation helped create a higher output, so I was motivated to grow more. Since using irrigation, people have stopped emigrating from this area," said Jean De Dieu.

With increased crop production due to irrigation technologies, people are getting jobs, have enough food to eat, and markets are well supplied.

## Did you know...

- **16% of the World's fields are irrigated, yielding 36% of global harvests**
- **In developing countries, irrigation increases yields of most crops by 100 to 400%**
- **Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest portion of cultivated area that is irrigated, just over 3% against almost 21% at global level.**
- **Rwanda is currently irrigating 45,000Ha out of 100,000Ha projected by 2020.**

# Strengthening women's involvement in agri-food value chains



*Numukobwa Dorothé feeds her cow with the new variety of grass introduced by FAO from a communal kraal in Kitazigurwa village.*

© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

**N**umukobwa Dorothé, is a widow with seven children living in Kitazigurwa Model Village. She was given a cow by the Government to help her get milk for her children, and she was able to milk up to four liters a day.

However, the two liters she sold to earn money were not enough to meet her family's other needs. To supplement her income, Dorothé worked on farms owned by other people.

"Even the small amount of milk we supplied to the community was not bringing in enough money. My children had to stop going to school because I could not afford school fees," she said.

Dorothé belongs to the second category of Rwanda's socio-economic classification "UBUDEHE" programme. The Government provided her with a house, but she has to make health insurance contributions for all members of her family. Raising 3,000 Rwandan francs for each of her seven children proved to be too great a challenge.

In 2016, FAO implemented a project to enable women to benefit more equally from agri-food value chains. Dorothé was one of the people trained on the proper feeding of animals, farm management, and more. "The training transformed our lives at home. I care more about my animals now," she said.

Dorothé and others were trained how to mix nutritious animal feeds and how to maintain the cleanliness of animal fodder.

"I was giving my cow banana stems, leaves and reeds, but now we feed them grass. FAO gave us nutritious salt and vitamins, which I give to the animals so they stay healthy," she said.

Dorothé's cow began to produce more milk due to good feeding practices Dorothé also began working in a cooperative, realizing that they provide stable and reliable markets for milk sales.

"Today, I get 10 liters of milk from my cow every day. We bring our milk to the collection centre and we are assured an income," she said with a smile.

Dorothé sees a future in dairy farming. She has started growing new varieties of protein-rich grass. Now that she makes a steady income from her milk supply, Dorothé plans to buy more fields to expand animal keeping, turning it into a more profitable business.

"I am now able to pay school fees for my children and make health insurance contributions. Life is promising," she said happily.

The Project benefited women and men in the districts of; Kayanza, Rwamagana, Gicumbi and Nyagatare.

It aimed to promote gender equality in agri-food value chain and to increase women participation in the management and utilization of family resources.

# More than just chickens: improving nutrition in rural Rwanda through poultry project

**M**alnutrition in Gakenke district, North of Rwanda by 2015 was recorded at 46% of children below 5 years of age (Demographic Health Survey 2015). In response, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) introduced a poultry project in Gakenke to help to combat poor nutrition.

The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) funded project "Promoting Agricultural Diversification to Reduce Poverty, Fight Malnutrition and Enhance Youth Employment Opportunities in Eastern Africa," in Gakenke supported 200 vulnerable households, mainly women-headed, to establish poultry farms for egg production. The project also helped improve nutrition, as families benefitted from additional protein by adding eggs to their diets.

"I had gone for a mandatory child nutrition test at the health centre, when I was told that my child exhibited signs of stunting," says Benimana Annociata, a mother of five children.

Annociata is a member of the local group "Twitezimbere" or "Let's develop ourselves". The group has 24 members, six of whom are women.

The group received 425 laying hens reared in a shelter with poultry farm equipment, including feeders and drinkers, and supported with poultry feed provision for four months. Members of the group also received training, technical supervision and other services to manage the farm.

Each member received ten eggs to feed their children. After eight months, the group had made a profit of about 1,300,000 RWF.

Members also received 5,000 RWF per month to supplement their incomes.

Manure from the chickens has also encouraged people in the area to establish vegetable gardens, thus increasing consumption of vegetables for each family.

"Today, you cannot find even a single malnourished child in our area. We mix the eggs with other foods to boost their diets," Annociata said.

"Things have really improved for us. For example, where we used to harvest 100 kilograms of maize, today we can harvest 600 by fertilizing with manure from the chickens. We generate money and satisfy many household needs. More people in Gakenke are now building vegetable gardens because we are able to give them the highly productive chicken manure," said Majyambere Jean Baptiste, the Twitezimbere group leader.

The group is confident that they will sustain the activity as FAO gradually withdraws support.



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

*Left & above: Women beneficiaries of ASTF supported poultry project. Households that received the chickens were in the First and Second categories of Socio-economic classification known as "Ubudehe". FAO and the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) fund are supporting hundreds of farmers in Rwanda to diversify and improve their agricultural production.*



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

## “Investing in food security and rural development”.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World every year in October observe the World Food Day. The day coincides with the founding of the Organization in 1945. The day usually celebrated on the October 16 globally, in Rwanda was held on the October 26, 2017. The event was marked by planting beans on the hillside terraces in Rubengera Sector, Karongi District; different Organizations exhibited their activities towards zero hunger.



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

**All united against hunger:** FAO-Rwanda staff, UN agency colleagues, the army, other government counterparts and local and international stakeholders, participated in the planting of seeds to mark the beginning of the planting season in Rwanda.

**Nutrition:** The Minister of Agriculture and Animal resources, Geraldine Mukeshimana (with a plate) and other UN and government officials feed children on a balanced diet as a sign of ending malnutrition in Rwanda.



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

Farmers showcased their productivity at the celebrations. According to FAO's SOFI 2017 report, across all region rural based economic activity can be as effective for rural poverty reduction as that of urban areas.

All officials who delivered the key message emphasized the importance of investing in food security and rural development for economic growth. Achieving SDGs to end hunger and extreme poverty by 2030 will depend on developing rural areas where over 70% of the population lives in Rwanda.



© FAO/Teopista Mutesi

*Christian Nkubito is a professional intern here at FAO Rwanda having joined the Organization late this year. He is currently supporting the National Green Growth and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Projects. He holds a bachelor's degree in soil and water management from the University of Rwanda.*

***What knowledge and skills did you bring to the Organization?***

Given my past experience working with different institutions in agricultural technologies, I intend to offload my skills in irrigation in support of FAO's mandate of ensuring food security through facilitating countries to address climate change.

***Since joining in October, what has been the exciting part of working with FAO so far?***

It is a good working environment to better my professional skills. FAO being a knowledge and skills institution with vast technical expertise there's always something relevant to learn in different fields.

***As a professional intern what do you do?***

I support projects related to climate change strategies, notably, following up on the implementation of the national green growth and climate change strategy and to suggest capacity development activities that would enhance FAO Rwanda support to climate change related activities.

***What kind of sports/exercise do you enjoy most, and why?***

Volleyball, because it always reminds me of teamwork, and it makes the whole body exercise.

**Office Address:**

FAO Representation Rwanda  
Umuganda Blvd,  
Glory House, 2nd Floor,  
Kacyiru, Kigali



**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 1502 Kigali,  
Rwanda

**Email:** FAO-RW@fao.org

**Twitter:** @FAORwanda  
[www.fao.org/rwanda/en/](http://www.fao.org/rwanda/en/)

## Upcoming Calendar of Events

- January 1st:** New Year's Day
- February 1st:** Heroes' Day
- March 21st:** International Day of Forests
- April 7th:** Genocide memory in Rwanda



Waters of Lake Kivu, Rwanda