



Food and Agriculture Organization  
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# FAO Rwanda Newsletter

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*As 2016 draws to a close, FAO-Rwanda reflects on project successes and shares how in 2017 and beyond we will continue working to eradicate poverty and end hunger.*

# WELCOME



**A**s 2016 draws to a close, this is a good time to reflect on our achievements and challenges over the past twelve months. While this time of the year can be hectic, it provides us with the opportunity to assess how programmes and projects are contributing to our Country

Programming Framework. It is also a chance to examine how we collaborate with colleagues and partners, within and outside the Organization, to translate national priorities into impactful and people-centered interventions. Additionally, during our recent staff retreat, we reflected on and discussed how FAO can further demonstrate results and efficiency in the framework of its new delivery mechanism.

In this newsletter, we highlight a few of our closing projects that left a deep impact on our beneficiaries. From the economic and leadership achievements of our Rural Women's Economic Empowerment project to the enhanced business operations of farmers in our Aquaculture Commercialization project, it is exciting to see the growth of Rwanda's citizens over several years. We also want to share how FAO-Rwanda, in close coordination with One UN in Rwanda, acts swiftly during natural disasters to help communities recover and become more resilient. Keep reading to learn about our assistance to landslide victims in Gakenke district, Northern Province under the project funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund.

On behalf of the entire FAO-Rwanda team, I would like to thank all of our partners and colleagues across FAO for contributing to our successes over the year. I hope you enjoy this final newsletter of 2016, and I look forward to sharing more of our work in food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, value chain development, and institutional collaboration in 2017! I wish you all a joyous and healthy festive season, and a prosperous new year.

Attaher Maiga

FAO Representative in Rwanda

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# “Linking up” for a better Rwanda



*FAO Social Protection Team Leader Natalia Winder Rossi (far right) and FAO Representative Attaher Maiga (second from right) listen to a question about linking social protection and agriculture during a meeting with the entire Parliament of Rwanda.*

**O**n November 29, FAO held a full-day plenary session for the whole Parliament of Rwanda to increase awareness of the linkages between social protection and agriculture. The programme included contributions from Ministers, high representatives of the government bodies LODA and RAB, governors, and development partners including UNICEF and DFID. The meeting focused on how social protection, in combination with agriculture, can lead to the eradication of poverty and hunger. The day built on the outcomes and enthusiasm of a FAO organized policy dialogue earlier this year.

Over the past five years, Rwanda’s poverty rate has dropped by 12% according to the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II. Data from the flagship social protection programme of the government, Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme, reveals that the social protection sector was a key contributor to this remarkable achievement. “The linkages between agriculture and social protection are crucial to reach sustained graduation out of extreme poverty”, said FAO Representative Attaher Maiga in his opening address. FAO Social Protection Team Leader, Natalia Winder

Rossi, built on his remarks by educating the audience on social protection programmes and how they can increase small-scale farmer resilience through increased production and income.

The meeting also pointed out that sustainable graduation out of extreme poverty is impossible if the focus is on social protection in isolation. From civil society to the development community, FAO emphasized the need to develop a common understanding about the complementarities of agriculture and social protection. Bringing on board the Parliament is a major step toward this goal and the Speaker of Rwanda’s Chamber of Deputies, Donatille Mukabalisa, agreed.

“Partners should continue to dialogue with lawmakers so that they better understand opportunities and challenges in the linkages between social protection and agriculture in fighting hunger and poverty,” she said, after Mr. Maiga lauded this moment as only the beginning of a partnership between FAO and Parliament. “The dialogue will help us enact laws that promote and strengthen consistency between social protection and agriculture.”

# The road to resilience: FAO supports landslide and flood victims in Gakenke district



*Gakenke residents construct terraces to mitigate future heavy rainfall.*

**W**hen flooding and landslides struck Gakenke district in May 2016, the destruction was widespread.

The disaster killed and injured community members, destroyed houses, and washed out crops. To support the recovery of these communities, FAO received funding from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). In September, FAO began to

support 4,317 households most affected by the disaster to rehabilitate their lands and earn money from cash for work activities.

The project is already making an impact. FAO distributed high quality maize and fortified beans which mature quickly. Through a cash for work scheme, 93 ha of valley were rehabilitated and 319 ha of hillside were repaired by planting improved seeds and building terraces. Beyond the environmental and agricultural benefits, the farmers earned money to buy household non-food items and nutritious food to supplement food rations distributed by the World Food Program. Local agriculture extension staff and 10% of farmers are also enrolled in a “training of trainers” where they learn climate smart agriculture techniques to share with other community members. The affected population will soon benefit from tools and a second distribution of seeds.

Together, these interventions ensure that the farmers will not only recover from the flooding in May, but also grow more resilient to climate related disasters in the future.



*A National Facilitator explains results from a needs assessment.*

## Innovations for development

**F**or three months, National Innovation Facilitators conducted capacity needs assessment on five niches in Rwanda through the FAO and Agrinatura supported **Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project**. CDAIS promotes innovations within agricultural niches to reduce poverty in a socially inclusive manner. Facilitators analysed technical and functional skills, niche gaps, and stakeholder partnerships.

In December, FAO held a two-day event to validate the exercise’s findings and highlight core recommendations. Facilitators noted that there are different ways to build capacity, including through enabling environments or organizations. They also found that actors require more skills to manage partnerships. Arnaud de Vanssay of the European Union emphasized this point. “The assessment looked at the history of agricultural innovation systems in Rwanda. The next step is to bring more innovations and knowledge to enhance partnerships,” he said.

The Director General of Agriculture Development in MINAGRI also spoke optimistically about CDAIS. “We believe the CDAIS project will help in building capacities so that all value chain actors develop.” He added, “This will bring to the forefront the need to invest in functional capacities in Rwanda. Through agriculture innovations, we can develop even more as a nation”.

# Empowering rural women for stronger communities



*A member of Impinduka waters tomatoes in the group's FAO-supported greenhouse..*

**T**riffine Nyiranshuti's was devastated when her husband was sentenced to nine years in prison. Until then, Triffine was a typical rural housewife; she cooked, cleaned, and took care of her six children. However, after the conviction, Triffine isolated herself and was unsure how to support her family financially. Her neighbors stopped speaking to her, she did not want to leave her house due to the shame of the incarceration, and eventually she stopped bathing and eating regularly. Over time, her children stopped going to school and eventually they dropped out entirely.

But when FAO selected Triffine as a beneficiary of its Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) project in Nyaruguru district, she began to feel hopeful.

Through FAO's Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS) approach, beneficiaries like Triffine receive life skills training on nutrition, hygiene, conflict management, family planning and entrepreneurship. They also receive inputs for production like fortified beans, vitamin-A rich

sweet potato cuttings, livestock and capacity building trainings. Beyond trainings and inputs for improved individual household status, beneficiaries also received support as a collective. They organized into a group called "Impinduka" which means "transformation" in Kinyarwanda and FAO supported them with a greenhouse for tomato production.

Assumpta BYUKUSENGE, executive secretary of Nyagisozi sector where Triffine lives, attests to the impact the FAO has made. "Thanks to the RWEE project, our sector won the trophy for best performing sector in Nyaruguru district for three consecutive years! The project has improved hygiene, and malnutrition rates dropped sharply as people's mind set changed."

Triffine is now a leader in Nyagisozi. Through her group's Savings for Life Scheme, she borrowed money and started a small business. She uses the income to pay for school materials, health insurance, and farm inputs. Through RWEE, she gained knowledge, respect, and a newfound sense of peace in her community.

# Improving nutrition through aquaculture

Over the past 18 months, FAO's project "Support to Enhancing Development of Commercial Aquaculture (EDCA)" helped 10 aquaculture cooperatives and 3 individual fish farmers to improve their fish farming methodologies and business models. FAO trained beneficiaries on modern aquaculture techniques, business plan development, and more.

Dufatanye Cooperative in Nyanza district is one of the benefitting groups. Its 56 members rear fish in ten ponds and enjoy improved and diversified production. However, beyond the economic benefits of the project, Dufatanye members also see an improvement in their food security and nutrition.

Mukarubibi Constance, a 46-year-old widow, is one member who sings the praises of fish.

"I live with HIV and hypertension. The doctors told me to stop eating fried foods and other things but since I am a widow and poor I could not afford the diet the doctors advised. Through this project I earned money to buy better foods and now I also eat a lot of fish which is good for me and my family," she remarked.

Mukashema Marie Grace, another member, said FAO helped women change their attitudes about rearing and eating fish. More women are working in the male dominated sub-sector, which is an important shift as they are also influential actors in household nutrition.

"The majority of cooperative members are women and now we understand the nutritional value of fish. Each member is given fish to take home and we earn extra money by taking care of the ponds," she said. "That's good for our children, for our friends, and for our community."

## Spotlight on EDCA Beneficiaries



*Aquaculture workers at Fine Fish Company Ltd. harvest tilapia from a pond.*



*Jerome Musomandera, owner of Baraka Fish Farm, and a company employee showcase their fish cages on Lake Kivu.*



*FAO supported several companies with hatcheries to improve regional access to quality fingerlings.*

# World Food Day: Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too

Every October over 150 countries commemorate the founding of the FAO through the celebration of World Food Day. Since it was founded in 1945, the FAO has worked to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition around the globe. World Food Day is an opportunity to celebrate achievements and bring awareness to the millions who still suffer from hunger. On October 20th in Huye district, Southern province, FAO-Rwanda, partners, and community members rallied around the global message “Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too”.



*In the morning, FAO-Rwanda staff, UN agency colleagues, government counterparts and Huye district community members participated in a variety of “Umuganda” or “community work” activities. Participants constructed progressive terraces which mitigate erosion by slowing and directing the flow of precipitation.*



*Participants plant improved maize seed on an animal-manure fertilized field. After seeding, the field was watered using a small pump. Adapting to climate change requires a multi-faceted approach from inputs to equipment to climate-smart agriculture education. FAO-Rwanda is committed to helping farmers adapt to their changing environment.*



*Representative Maiga and WFD participants transplant seedlings in a demo kitchen garden. Rwanda has a high rate of stunting and kitchen gardens improve household dietary diversity. FAO-Rwanda uses kitchen gardens as a platform for nutrition education and promotes iron fortified beans, vitamin-A rich sweet potatoes and other nutritious vegetables.*



*After speeches on the importance of WFD and how FAO-Rwanda and partners are rising to the challenge of “Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too”, it was time to eat! Agency heads and school children alike enjoyed grilled corn and beverages. Meanwhile, children under two years sipped delicious and nutritious milk (with some help). A WFD success!*

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT!

Ahadu Tekle is the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at FAO-Rwanda. Prior to joining FAO three years ago, Tekle worked as a visiting scholar at Michigan State University. She was also a research assistant at West Virginia University during her graduate studies there.

## What do you do as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer?

I ensure that projects maintain their strategic vision and achieve intended outputs in a timely manner. I also design and implement M&E activities for projects, and assist project managers in preparing their reports on project progress.

## What do you like about working at the organization?

Working at FAO is very exciting! I deal with most of the projects, covering a wide range of areas from nutrition and food security to sustainable agriculture and resource management to agri business and value chain development. Every day I learn new things and challenge myself in the process.

## What do you like about living in Rwanda?

Rwanda is a beautiful country, rich in culture and nature. I especially like the stunning mountains. I live in Kigali and it is a beautiful, safe and clean city which makes it a wonderful place to raise family.

## What do you do in your free time?

I like to visit new places and take road trips outside of Kigali, which I would like to do more often. There are so many natural attractions to visit and experience in Rwanda.



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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- January 1st: New Year's Day
- February 1st: Heroes' Day
- February 20th: World Day of Social Justice
- March 8th: International Women's Day



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