

Esnart's Journey to Food security through Diversification



If one food crop fail, at least one thrives

In the heart of Nkanda Village, under the vast sky of Traditional Authority Kalembo in Balaka District, Esnart, a resilient 38-year-old woman, once faced the daunting challenge of providing for her five children.

Living in the shadows of meager harvests and traditional reliance on maize, she yearned for a change that would transform her family's life.

Esnart's story takes a remarkable turn with the intervention of the Eagles Relief Nutritional Project, generously funded by the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders, and Enterprises Program (FARMSE). In 2022, she became a beneficiary of this transformative initiative, breaking free from the chains of a monotonous and unproductive agricultural routine.

The project unfolded a tapestry of opportunities for Esnart, providing her with extensive training on nutrition, sustainable farming practices, post-harvest management, business acumen, budgeting, and crucially, sanitation and hygiene.

Armed with newfound knowledge, Esnart saw a lifeline and considered herself fortunate to be part of this groundbreaking initiative.

The initial phase of the project empowered Esnart with a grant of K112,000, igniting the flame of entrepreneurship within her. With determination and vision, she ventured into selling usipa, securing a daily income that not only sustained her family but also allowed her to invest in her community through weekly village bank shares.

The true turning point, however, was Esnart's decision to diversify her crops, a practice she adopted from the invaluable insights gained during the project. Acknowledging the wisdom of not relying on a single food item, she diversified her cultivation to include cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, rice, and more. This strategic move meant that if one crop failed, others would provide cover, ensuring food security.

Utilizing organic manure techniques acquired from the project, Esnart's harvests witnessed a staggering improvement. Previously, she had to live off just six bags of maize, she now proudly harvests over 27 bags, complemented by a variety of other crops. The impact on her family's well-being is evident, as they now enjoy a consistent and plentiful supply of food throughout the year.

Esnart emphasizes, "The nutritional training transformed not just our meals but the health of my children. It's a change I never dreamed possible."

Echoing her sentiments, a dedicated community volunteer Rebecca Sewed notes, "now, community members can diversify food crop production, reducing dependency on a single crop. This will undoubtedly mitigate hunger and starvation when faced with crop failures."

The FARMSE Nutrition and Social Inclusion Specialist, Joseph Maulana, expresses heartfelt gratitude, witnessing firsthand the community's embrace of project knowledge for individual and communal prosperity. Esnart's journey is a testament to the power of education, empowerment,

and the ripple effect it can have on an entire community, proving that through food diversification, hope can be sown, and prosperity reaped.