

How nutrition project transforms lives in Mkanda Village

Who would imagine that by just changing eating habits one can have academic performance catapulted just like how it did for Joyce William's children in Mkanda village, Balaka district.

Mkanda village, nestled within the traditional authority Kalembo in Balaka district, has become a testament to the transformative power of comprehensive nutrition programs.

Joyce William, a 58-year-old single mother of eight, once wrestled with the guilt of seeing her children suffer the effects of dietary lacks that brought about health issues and poor performance at school.

However, since becoming a beneficiary of the Eagles Relief Nutrition Project in 2020, supported by the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprises Program (FARMSE), Joyce's story has taken a remarkable turn.

The project, designed as a multifaceted approach to deal with poverty, offered training in business management, farming practices, nutrition, and financial literacy.

Joyce, armed with newfound knowledge, seized the opportunity to cultivate change in her life. The project equipped her with vegetable seeds, enabling her to establish a household garden. The proceeds from vegetable sales did not only provide financial sustenance but also afforded her the means to enhance family's dietary choices, marking a pivotal moment in her children's health journey.

Joyce's shift from a reliance on limited maize harvests to diversified crop production has seen her cultivating sorghum, soybeans, maize, and pigeon peas. This strategic move shields her against crop failures, ensuring a consistent yield to sustain her family.

Leveraging organic manure preparation techniques, she overcame the challenges associated with fertilizer scarcity, achieving higher yields and increasing income.

The impact on her children's well-being has been profound. Joyce's newfound knowledge in preparing diverse meals has translated into improved health for her two young children. The visible change in their well-being is reflected in their enhanced attendance and performance in school—a stark departure from the days when poor health hindered their education.

Community volunteer Rebecca Sewed acknowledges Joyce's commitment to implementing the project's teachings. "Joyce's dedication and application of the knowledge gained from the project have not only benefited her family but have also become a source of inspiration for the community," notes Rebecca.

Joseph Maulana, the FARMSE Nutrition and Social Inclusion Specialist, expresses profound gratitude for witnessing the community's embrace of the project's knowledge.

"Joyce's success story exemplifies the transformative potential embedded in projects that prioritize nutrition and holistic development. Her resilience, coupled with the community's receptivity, signifies a step toward individual and communal prosperity," states Maulana.

Joyce William's journey from food insecurity to cultivating a flourishing garden stands as a beacon of hope, demonstrating how targeted interventions can break the chains of poverty and ill-health in rural communities.

The Eagles Relief Nutrition Project, with its comprehensive approach, continues to sow the seeds of change, nurturing not just crops but the well-being of families like Joyce's.