

Mary Mangatchaya's Inspiring Journey of Cash Crop Diversification



Now, I have a variety of crops to sell

In the heart of Kuthambo Village, under the Traditional Authority Phalula, resides Mary Mangatchaya, a 52-year-old resilient mother of four.

In the sprawling fields of Balaka District, Mary's story unfolds as a beacon of hope and triumph over financial hardships, all thanks to her strategic embrace of cash crop diversification.

In the year 2020, Mary found herself at the crossroads of adversity and opportunity when she became a beneficiary of the Eagles Relief Nutrition Project. This initiative, fueled by the visionary support of the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Stallholders, and Enterprises (FARMSE) Program aimed to empower individuals like Mary through comprehensive training programs.

Little did she know that this endeavor would not only transform her life but also serve as a testament to the potential of sustainable agriculture.

The training Mary received encompassed a wide array of essential skills, ranging from good farming practices and business management to financial literacy and nutrition. Armed with newfound knowledge, Mary made a bold decision to delve into cash crops, specifically focusing on those resilient to the challenges of fertilizer scarcity.

Groundnuts, cowpeas (Khobwe), Beans, Pigeon Peas (Nandolo), velvet bean (Kalongonda) and millet (Mapira) became her allies in this journey towards financial independence.

What set Mary apart was her commitment to sustainable farming practices. Instead of relying on conventional fertilizers, she harnessed the power of organic manure, a skill honed through the training provided by the Eagles Relief Nutrition Project.

This eco-friendly approach not only boosted her harvest but also paved the way for a diverse range of crops, ensuring that she would no longer be tethered to the uncertainties of a single crop.

Mary, reflecting on her transformation, shared, "The knowledge I gained from the project opened my eyes to a world of possibilities. Now, I have a variety of crops to sell, providing me with a stable income throughout the year."

In addition to the invaluable knowledge, Mary also received a financial boost of K 117,000 through the project. Recognizing the power of entrepreneurship, she wisely invested a portion of the funds into starting mandasi business. The returns from this venture not only sustained her daily household needs but also enabled her to afford school fees for her children.

Gratitude echoed in Mary's words as she expressed, "I am thankful to this project for giving me the means to provide for my family and create a better future for my children."

Embracing the second phase of support from FARMSE, Mary once again received K 117,000, which she channeled into livestock farming. With an entrepreneurial spirit, she purchased three goats and chickens, creating multiple streams of income for her family.

Presently, Mary owns eleven goats, three of which were strategically sold to meet household needs and purchased fertilizer.

The impact of the project extended beyond cash crops and livestock. Mary's maize production witnessed a significant upturn, thanks to her adept use of organic manure, a technique she acquired during the training. Moreover, she was fortunate to receive vegetable seeds, transforming her household garden into a source of additional income.

Paul Likhonyopwe, a dedicated volunteer in Mary's area, attested to her inspiring journey, saying, "Mary's resilience and determination exemplify the transformative power of sustainable agriculture. She has not only secured a better future for her family but has become a role model for others in the community."

Joseph Maulana, FARMSE Nutrition and Social Inclusion Specialist, emphasized the broader impact of such success stories, stating, "Mary's journey is a testament to the potential within every individual when provided with the right resources and knowledge. We are proud to be a part of her success story and the positive ripple effect it creates in the community."

Mary Mangatchaya's story is more than just a tale of triumph; it is a testament to the profound impact of empowering individuals with the tools to transform their lives. As she continues to cultivate success in her fields, Mary stands as a living testament to the extraordinary outcomes achievable through strategic cash crop diversification and sustainable farming practices.



I channeled the money I received in second phase into livestock farming