

## **Banda Transforms through Nutrition Project**

How can a farmer in a remote village turn limited resources into abundant harvests and financial stability? Saiti Banda, a resident of Kuthambo village in Balaka District, faced this challenge until a transformative opportunity came his way.

In the heart of Kuthambo village, where providing for a household of ten seemed like an insurmountable task, Saiti Banda struggled as the sole breadwinner.

Limited farming knowledge and lack of inputs resulted in a meager harvest of less than 8 bags of maize, leaving him grapple with the constant worry of providing enough food for his family throughout the year.

In 2020, a ray of hope dawned on Saiti as he became a beneficiary of the Eagles Relief Nutrition Project, supported by the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders, and Enterprises Program (FARMSE). This initiative offered comprehensive training in business management, farming practices, nutrition, and financial literacy, providing Saiti with the tools to transform his life.

"I decided to wholeheartedly embrace the training in anticipation for change," says Saiti Banda. Recognizing the financial challenges of acquiring fertilizer, Saiti turned to organic manure, a technique taught in the training sessions. Utilizing the dung from his cattle and goats, he produced high-quality manure, resulting in a remarkable increase in maize harvest.

In 2021, Saiti proudly harvested 15 bags of maize, marking a significant milestone in his journey.

Since adopting organic manure, Saiti's family no longer worries about food shortages throughout the year. Buoyed by his success, he anticipates tripling his harvest this year, showcasing the sustained impact of the project.

The distribution of vegetable seeds further augmented Saiti's progress. Cultivating vegetables in his household garden not only fulfills domestic needs but also provides an additional income source through sales.

The financial literacy training played a pivotal role in Saiti's journey to success. "Through village banking, I've learned to record daily expenditures and income, enabling proper budgeting," he remarks. The village bank has become the backbone of Saiti's financial life, offering access to loans whenever the need arises.

Jacqueline Mahawyo, a volunteer in the area, expresses admiration for the positive transformations witnessed. "It is impressive to see that people can apply the knowledge acquired through this project and change their household status," she notes.

Joseph Maulana, the FARMSE Nutrition and Social Inclusion Officer, echoes the sentiment of appreciation. "It is heartening to witness such tangible changes due to the project, underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts from implementing partners," he acknowledges.

Saiti Banda's success story stands as a testament to the transformative power of targeted interventions, empowering individuals to break free from cycles of poverty and build sustainable livelihoods.