

Salai Nikisi's Journey to Empowerment and Land Ownership



'I own my own land for farming, Thanks to FARMSE,'

In the heart of Mkamda village, Traditional Authority Kalembo, nestled within the balmy district of Balaka, Salai Nikisi, at 32 years old, has etched her name into a success story that resonates with resilience, determination, and the transformative power of women empowerment.

Her journey unfolds through the Eagles Relief project, a beacon of hope funded by the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders, and Enterprises Program (FARMSE).

Salai, amidst life's struggles, harbored an unyielding desire to own her own land for farming. The uncertainty of realizing this dream loomed until 2022 when she was selected to benefit from the Eagles Nutrition Project. Through this initiative, she received comprehensive training in financial literacy, business management, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, and good farming practices.

With newfound knowledge, Salai kick started a business with the K117,000 she received from the project, dealing in maize. A profit of K470,000 later, she turned her dream into reality by purchasing a two-and-a-half acres plot of land, acquiring three bags of fertilizer, and providing uniforms for her three children.

In the second phase, Salai received K119,000, enabling her to expand her business further. Profits from this phase facilitated the purchase of 32 iron sheets and the hiring of bricklayers, setting the stage for the construction of her dream house after the rainy season. Her gratitude towards the project is palpable, "I am grateful for the project. It has changed my life and my family's future."

The pass-on program, providing Salai with five goats, proved instrumental. Not only did it yield manure for organic farming, the knowledge gained from the project enhanced her harvest, ensuring food security. The gift of vegetable seeds perpetuates her financial independence, as she sells produce, occasionally supplementing her income by selling goats or chickens.

Salai's resourcefulness extends to her village bank, where she increases her savings by reinvesting the earnings. "I use the money to buy shares so that I can use it in the future or during difficult situations," she proudly states.

The impact of nutritional training on Salai's health and that of her children is immeasurable. She joyfully attests, "I have seen a great improvement in our health."

One of the devoted volunteers in her community, Rebecca Sewed, applauds FARMSE through Eagles, remarking, "They have done a commendable job to change the lives of the hopeless, particularly women like Salai."

The FARMSE Nutrition and Social Inclusion Specialist Joseph Maulana, echoes this sentiment, expressing joy at the potential ripple effect of change not only for Salai but for the entire community.

Salai Nikisi's story stands as a testament to the profound impact of empowering women and fostering self-sufficiency, transforming dreams into tangible realities.

