

In Rwanda's rural areas, farming families face many challenges, from the high cost of fertilizers to poor soil quality. However, the Abdullah Kiromba Foundation, in partnership with the Zakat Foundation (ZF) of America, has been providing hope by transforming lives through their livestock distribution program, practical farming training, and a focus on resource sharing.

Stories from farmers like Abdul Nibizihirwa, Bonane Sylvester and Claudine Uwase, Codence, as well as Mukakalisa show how these efforts are improving agricultural sustainability, food security, and strengthening communities.

Abdul Nibizihirwa, a farmer from Kabeza Cell, Kabarore Sector in Gatsibo District faced many difficulties in his agricultural journey. "Fertilizers were too expensive, and the weather made it hard to grow crops," he says.

The 56-year old grows crops like maize, beans, sweet potatoes, and peas under the "Tubura" program, which promotes agricultural growth. However, participating in this program comes with financial hurdles. Fertilizers for planting cost Rwf 750 per kilogram, and fertilizers for weeds cost Rwf 660 per kilogram. Maize seeds cost Rwf 1,300 per kilogram. Abdul explains, "For someone who depends on this sector, you have to first secure all these requirements."

When Nibizihirwa joined the foundation's program, he received two goats that changed the course of his farming. "The manure from the goats allowed me to make my own compost, which reduced my need for expensive fertilizers," Nibizihirwa shares. "Now, my crops are healthier, and I can sell some of them to generate income. I'm able to provide for my family more reliably now."



*Nibizihirwa pictured above with his goats shared with Mukakalisa.*

Nibizihirwa also shared two goats with Mukakalisa, a fellow farmer in the same community who was struggling to sustain her garden.

Mukakalisa, a widow with children, faced the dual challenge of farming and raising her family alone. With limited resources, I couldn't afford fertilizers or proper tools. Joining the foundation's program gave her a new sense of hope.

"The goats have made such a big difference in my life," she says. "I use their manure to improve my soil, and now my crops are growing much better. I'm able to

sell some of my harvest at the market, which helps me provide for my children.”

Mukakalisa, like the other farmers in the same community, appreciates the spirit of resource sharing. “The sharing has brought us closer as a community. We no longer feel isolated. Instead, we work together to improve our lives,” she says.

Muhawenimana Codence, a widow with six children, was also struggling with high fertilizer costs and poor soil quality. After hearing about the foundation’s support, the 45 year old eagerly joined the program. “The goats have really made a difference for me,” she says. “They provide manure for compost, and I can also sell the offspring for extra income.”

Thanks to the program, Muhawenimana now grows crops such as maize, beans, and vegetables which are thriving thanks to the compost. “My crops are healthier, and I’m able to sell some at the market. The extra income helps me support my family and even helps me renovate my house,” she adds.

Muhawenimana shared one of her goats’ offspring with Bonane and Uwase, helping them benefit from the program as well.

Bonnane Silvestil and his wife, Claudine Uwase, from Gatoki Cell in Gatsibo District, rely on farming for their livelihood. Despite owning a small plot of land, they struggled to produce enough crops. “We couldn’t afford fertilizers, so our yields were low,” says Bonane. Without fertilizers, their crops failed to thrive, making them vulnerable to pests and diseases.

In 2023, they joined the foundation’s program after hearing about it from other farmers. As part of the program, they received a goat from Muhawenimana. The shared goat gave offspring; these goats provide her with manure, which helps them make compost. “The compost has improved our crops significantly,” says Claudine. “Now, we grow enough to eat and even sell some at the market, which helps us buy essentials like soap, sugar, and other household needs.”

The Abdullah Kiromba Foundation, in partnership with the Zakat Foundation, has implemented a resource-sharing program that has significantly transformed the Kabarore Sector community. “Sharing with others has created a ripple of positivity,” explains Donate Niyonsaba, the Foundation’s President and Legal Officer. “It’s rewarding to know that our efforts are not only uplifting ourselves but also benefiting the entire community.”

“Our successful livestock program has distributed over 600 goats, 400 sheep, and two cows, driving increased agricultural productivity, improved household incomes, and strengthened food security,” he added. “These initiatives are transforming lives, empowering families and communities to achieve financial independence, better health, and sustainable nutrition.”

The foundation’s approach goes beyond simply providing livestock. They offer hands-on training to help farmers maximize the benefits of their goats. This training includes how to manage manure, create compost, and practice sustainable farming methods. By reducing their reliance on expensive fertilizers, these farmers can produce healthier crops and improve their income.

Through this successful livestock program, we have distributed over 600 goats, 400 sheep, and two cows, enhancing agricultural productivity, income, and food security. These initiatives empower families and communities towards financial independence, better health, and sustainable nutrition.