

CRS F2F Uganda

Poultry, prosperity & peace: a Farmer-to-Farmer story from eastern Uganda

PROJECT LOCATION	Uganda
TIMEFRAME	2019-2023
COUNTRY PROJECT	Livestock
HOST	Kamuli District Farmers Association (KDFA)

PROGRAM STATISTICS

417

Number of assignments conducted

23,838

Number of people directly trained

191

Number of hosts supported

Zaina Nangobi is a 49-year-old homemaker and mother of nine living in eastern Uganda. A member of Tusubira Farmers' Group under the Kamuli District Farmers Association (KDFA), Zaina is a crop farmer and she recently tried her luck in the poultry sector. She invested the money she raised through her savings group in this new venture but, despite her best efforts, Zaina's poultry business never got off the ground.

Zaina was ill-equipped for poultry farming. She did not own a brooder house, instead, she placed locally made nests under her bed for the hens to incubate their eggs. After hatching, the chicks were let into the yard to fend for themselves. There was no feeding regime, and chicks had no protection from cold weather and were in danger from wild cats and eagles. Consequently, 90% of the chicks died. When CRS met Zaina, she was in low spirits; she had spent most of her savings and was struggling to make ends meet.

KDFA is a farmer-led organization in Busoga sub-region of greater Kamuli in Eastern Uganda. The organization was founded in 1992 and has 4,801 members across 95 farmer groups and 6 cooperatives, and roughly 50% of members are women. The majority of KDFA's members are smallholder farmers engaged in crop production, dairy, raising pigs and poultry, apiculture, aquaculture, and small retail businesses.

The increasing demands for land, due to population growth and the growth of the sugarcane industry, has forced many farmers to enter the poultry sector because it is less land-intensive. Poultry is an emerging industry in Uganda, making up 5% of the country's gross domestic product and almost a fifth of the agricultural sector's sales. Between 2013 and 2017, egg production in Uganda grew by 9%. Chicken eggs are in high demand and offer a quick return on investment, require limited space, and are not tainted by cultural or religious taboos. Many people go into poultry farming with the hope of making money, despite their lack of knowledge about the business. As a result, many see their enterprises fail.

KDFA approached George Ntibarikure, CRS's F2F director in Uganda, seeking technical assistance to support farmers like Zaina with guidance on an array of topics including breeding, housing, feed rationing, vaccination, and health management.



Zaina Nangobi feeding her layer chicks.
Photo by Tom Kasaija

CRS recruited local volunteer Dr. Wilfred Eneku, an Assistant Lecturer and Veterinary Pathologist in the Department of Livestock and Industrial Resources at Makerere University, and remote U.S. volunteer Dannica Wall, an extension research specialist at North Carolina State University, to provide technical assistance. In F2F training, Zaina and her peers learned about synchronization: having three to five hens incubate eggs and hatch them at the same time. They learned how to construct a brooder house from locally available materials. They adopted the brooder management techniques of humidity control, heat regulation, appropriate lighting, and feeding and litter management. Thanks to her training, Zaina saw her business turn around. For the first time, she raised healthy chicks with a mortality rate of less than 2%.

F2F training has helped Zaina make enough money to feed her family and meet other household needs. By selling one-month-old chicks for \$2.50 and mature hens at \$5.50 each from a batch of 100, she has been able to buy seven goats, plus an exotic cow at a cost of \$333. Zaina's 16-year-old daughter has reentered school since her family can now afford tuition. The family now eats two meals a day, instead of one and they eat a more balanced diet thanks to vegetables grown in their kitchen garden, which Zaina planted following a recommendation from Dr. Eneku.

When the CRS F2F team visited Zaina, she told them of an unexpected but very welcome change that



Zaina in her kitchen garden, attending to onions.
Photo by Robbinah Hakiza/CRS

came about as a result of her successful business venture: it helped address the issue of domestic violence. In the past, Zaina's husband came home drunk and was angry there was nothing to eat, sometimes becoming violent. As the family's income improved, thanks to Zaina's efforts, her husband became remorseful and started supporting Zaina by picking vegetables from the kitchen garden and cooking with her. They started planning together, including how to sell the chicks, and are now jointly running the business. As a sign of gratitude for this change, Zaina molded a chair out of clay and placed it in the kitchen for her husband to use when they cook together.

The uptake of poultry as an enterprise has given hope to KDFA members who cannot enter the sugarcane business because they simply don't own enough land. This F2F assignment has empowered landless women and youth to provide for their households by helping them pursue poultry farming as a source of income. Sixty women-headed households have also benefited from a chicken project funded by Rotary International and complemented by F2F technical assistance. The project includes a pass-on scheme in which a farmer group is given start-up support, in the form of 200 layer-chicks, and when those chickens start laying eggs, the group sells the eggs and buys another 200 chicks with the proceeds to pass on to a second group. Through this scheme, more members of KDFA stand to gain from the project.

Vincent Galisansana, the Chairman of KDFA, had this to say, "With sugarcane plantations overtaking swaths of land, agricultural enterprises, such as poultry, that require less land are the way to go to counteract food insecurity in Busoga region." For volunteer Dr. Eneku, the experience with F2F was eye-opening. "It was enlightening for me to interact with local people who valued my knowledge and were able to put into practice what I taught them," he said. "As a teacher, my happiness comes from the change I see happening in the people I have helped."

As for Zaina, her experience has been life-changing. "Before the F2F training in poultry management, I did not have the money to feed 11 people twice a day and I faced domestic violence. Thankfully, that has since changed. We are now a happier family because we have food at home. Thanks to CRS F2F, there is more peace in my home."