



**FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY**

Ending Poverty Together



REPORT: JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 2021

# Mwumba, Burundi

## Background

This programme is designed to graduate the nine communities within Mwumba by October 2024. We are working with 14,778 direct beneficiaries (including 9658 children under 18) and 18,473 indirect beneficiaries.

## Farming and Food Security

This quarter, we have chosen to give a more detailed report on activity within this sector.

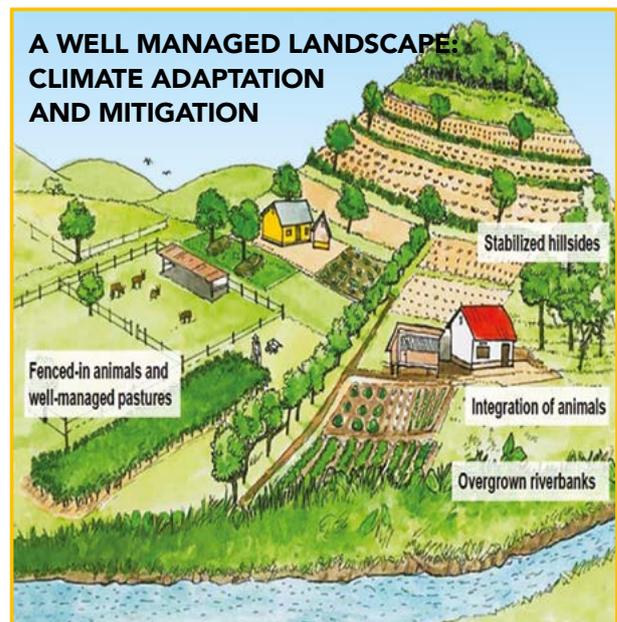
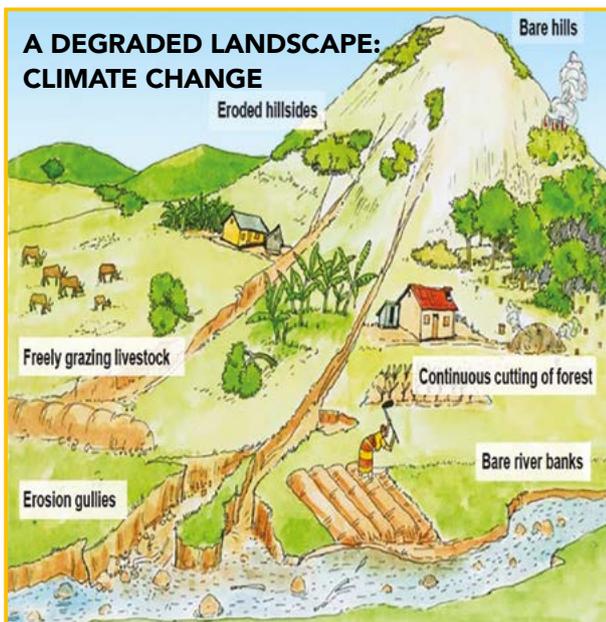
More than 90% of the population of Mwumba relies on subsistence agriculture to survive. Climate change has contributed to recurrent drought, torrential rains, pests and deteriorating soils. Diminishing soil fertility is exacerbated by shrinking farm sizes, as a result of increased competition for land by a growing population. Maize fields have been affected by pests such as army worms. How is Food for the Hungry helping the community to address this?

Climate Smart Agriculture is a way of transforming farming to support food security as the climate changes. FH agronomists have trained groups of the poorest farmers in better techniques.

The most influential farmers have been selected as model farmers to cascade Climate Smart information to neighbours and demonstrate the increased crop yields the techniques achieve. The training includes these topics:

- No tilling and minimum soil disturbance, which reduces erosion
- Soil coverage with mulch or crop residues
- Crop rotation and improved seed varieties
- Integrating crop and livestock management
- Fenced in animals and well managed pastures
- Addressing pests through push-pull technology
- Diversifying production (including kitchen gardens and vegetables)
- Producing own seeds
- Ensuring women's access to resources and decisions

The new practices are changing lives in Mwumba. Here, Cyprien and Sophie share their experiences. Cyprien is a lead farmer and cascade group



volunteer who is responsible for passing on the skills and techniques he has learnt. He demonstrated the benefits of these by farming one plot using traditional techniques, and farming a similar plot using the new methods. Then he showed his neighbours the results.



He says, "On the same land and with the same quantity of seeds, my production has increased from 150kg to 300kg for beans, from 100kg to 300kg for maize and from 50kg to 500kg for potatoes. This has fed my family, helped me pay school fees for my six children and buy seeds for the next harvest. Before FH trained me, I was carrying out traditional farming. God bless this organisation."

Sophie, a widow living with her daughter and infirm mother with just a small plot of land says:



*"My life is changing for the better due to wide-ranging FH support and empowerment. I was mentored in better farming techniques, borrowed Burundi Francs 40,000 (£15) from my savings group and rented some marshland. I planted leeks using the FH methods. My plantation is extraordinary and serves as a model for others. I expect the harvest to generate at least 150,000 Burundi Francs (£60). I will repay my loan and invest the rest in income generating activities, schooling for my daughter and care of my mother."*

We are extremely encouraged by these and many other enthusiastic reports of the difference FH Climate Smart Agriculture is making in Mwumba.

### **In brief, the focus of activity in other sectors has been as follows:**

#### **Health and nutrition**

This quarter FH staff have trained 17 cascade groups on health and hygiene particularly given Covid-19 outbreaks. The 272 cascade group volunteers have passed on the messages they have learnt to their neighbours using pictorial flip charts reaching 4080 members within the community.

#### **Education**

Students who had performed well in school were rewarded with prizes in community meetings to help encourage parents and the children in the value of education. Assistance was also given to the most vulnerable children in the form of notebooks and pens/pencils to encourage attendance.

#### **Training church leaders**

Training was given to 20 church leaders from a church leader training manual covering theological training on God's story of reconciliation in the bible from creation to Jesus' return. The manual is designed to encourage leaders to act out their faith in action as well as words. We have noticed increased involvement in church members in savings groups and cascade groups.

