



Burundi, Giheta: “Food Security for All” – “SAT”

Introduction:

“I am a widow and mother of 6 children. Thanks to the SAT project, I am proud to be able to feed my children without having to beg.”

As a result of an extensive awareness-raising campaign on the conservation of agricultural products, 1,050 families now use sheds to conserve their maize crops, which has helped stabilize the price of maize and now enables many vulnerable people in this region to feed themselves. Many young people have been invited to join agricultural production cooperatives to grow staple crops, and intergenerational cooperatives have been created to promote inclusive economic empowerment.

Background:

Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world. More than 55% of children suffer from chronic malnutrition and more than 60% of the population is in need of food aid. One of the main causes of this food shortage is the trading system that allows merchants to build up stocks of food at low prices during the harvest period and then resell them at exorbitant prices during the off-season. This makes it impossible for poorer people to buy the products they need to feed themselves and sow new crops. During this off-season period, the health structures take in many children suffering from diseases caused by malnutrition and more women beg in the big cities.

Project theme and activities:

The “SAT” project initiated by AIC Burundi in 2018 aims to raise awareness among the population about the conservation of agricultural products by encouraging them to rent or build sheds to store basic foodstuffs. The aim is to set up a system that will stabilize the price of key foodstuffs such as beans, rice and maize so that everyone can enjoy food security.

Activities:

- Raising awareness among the beneficiaries and setting up a chain of self-education to change old practices
- Financial borrowing and fundraising to finance:
 - The rental/construction of sheds for the conservation of harvested crops
 - The rental of a truck to transport them
- Membership in agricultural production cooperatives for:
 - The cultivation of basic foodstuffs (maize, rice, beans)
 - Pest and bacteria control activities
- Seed selection after harvest



Young beneficiaries cultivating a field of maize after joining an agricultural cooperative

- Purchase of seeds and free distribution to the most disadvantaged people
- Creation of intergenerational cooperatives to integrate older people into young people's solidarity-based economic initiatives and promote inclusive economic empowerment (minimum 30% participation of older persons and equal profit sharing among all)

Key figures:

- Direct beneficiaries: 325 women living in vulnerable situations
- Indirect beneficiaries: 16,000 inhabitants of the Giheta area
- €165 allows almost 550 families to rent a shed to store a total of 35-40 tons of maize for 90 days (shelf life).
- €21 allows for the purchase of 100kg of seeds at harvest time.

Partners:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- The Congregation of the Bene-Yozefu brothers
- Caritas Burundi
- Local government, including food agencies
- Cooperative networks



Shed used to store maize

Impact:

- As a result of awareness-raising actions:
 - 1050 families use sheds to store their maize harvest.
 - 160 young people have joined the National Youth Cooperative against Active Unemployment in Agricultural Production.
 - 6 intergenerational cooperatives have been created around different income-generating activities (raising pigs, rabbits and chickens; growing maize and beans; food shops). They have a total of 248 members.
- Each direct female beneficiary receives 10kg of seeds free of charge.



Future prospects:

- Broadening of seed varieties used for crops to be able to store other staples in addition to maize (beans, rice and wheat)
- Seeking partners to provide the necessary equity capital so that beneficiaries can build their own sheds, buy their own truck and farm their own land
- Creation of a center for the multiplication of selected seeds and membership of "Abarwizambuto", the national network for the multiplication of selected seeds
- An AIC restaurant project to offer hot meals to mentally ill people living on the streets



Intergenerational maize-growing cooperative