

From Struggle to Success

Zelda's Journey of Empowerment through Chicken Farming

In Muganza Village, within the Kigoma Region of Tanzania, lives Zelda Steward Mupengu, a 39-year-old woman, wife, and mother of five children. Life was never easy for Zelda. She was constantly grappling with the challenge of providing for her family. Relying on income from crop farming and selling dried sardines wasn't enough. But her true passion was chicken farming, even though she faced tremendous difficulties, from high chicken mortality rates to the lack of proper nutrition and disease control knowledge.

Zelda recalls the frustration of trying to raise chicks: "Raising chicks posed a challenge. While many were hatched, only a few survived." The chickens were not growing well due to poor feeding practices, and Zelda didn't know how to prevent the diseases that plagued her flock. However, all of that was about to change.

In 2020, a life-changing opportunity knocked on Zelda's door. She joined the **Giving Machine Project**, funded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and facilitated by CWS. This project was designed to support local farmers by providing training and resources. Zelda became a member of the **Umoja Farmer Group**, a community where farmers shared knowledge and skills. Through CWS, Zelda learned Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHPs) that revolutionized her approach to chicken farming.

Zelda received training in disease control, biosecurity, feeding, and housing management. She learned to control diseases through vaccinations and how to feed her chickens properly using local feed formulation techniques. The project also provided her with three chickens (one rooster and two hens) to start her flock, and soon, Zelda was seeing real results.



With her newfound knowledge, Zelda began to raise chickens successfully. She built local brooders to manage her chicks and implemented synchronized natural hatching methods to ensure higher survival rates. The impact of this program on Zelda's life was immediate and profound.

"Through this project, I successfully raised chickens, sold them, and earned Tanzanian Shillings 200,000 (USD 80), which allowed me to purchase one acre of land," Zelda proudly shares.

Her growing success in chicken farming didn't just benefit her; it positively affected her family as well. The income from selling chickens helped meet her family's needs, and the eggs and meat from the chickens provided regular nutrition for her children. Zelda's dedication didn't go unnoticed—she was elected as the **Lead Farmer** of her group, where she now trains others in her community in the techniques she's learned.

But Zelda didn't stop there. In 2022, six farmer groups, including Zelda's, signed a contract with CWS to rear and supply improved indigenous chickens. Their efforts were astounding. They raised and distributed over 3,500 chickens to more than 1,100 new beneficiaries, earning over 36 million Tanzanian Shillings (USD 14,528). Building on this success, in 2023, the groups expanded their operations, providing nearly 6,000 chickens and earning 53 million Tanzanian Shillings (USD 20,994).

Reflecting on her journey, Zelda says, "In the past five months, I have reared and sold more than 62 chickens. Currently, I have 56 chicks that are one month old." Her goals are clear: to expand her business by building a larger chicken shed and to pass down the skills and knowledge she's gained to her children.

"I find myself deeply committed to chicken farming and I am determined to impart my knowledge to my children, who enjoy the fruits of this project—they eat eggs and chicken regularly," she adds.

Zelda's story is one of empowerment, determination, and transformation. From struggling to provide for her family to becoming a successful farmer and leader in her community, Zelda's journey illustrates the life-changing impact that knowledge, resources, and community support can have on an individual and their family.

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