

Women climate resilience remarkable story

The Feminists for Climate and Environment Alternatives (FACE) project has been a powerful initiative for empowering rural women, enhancing their climate resilience, and promoting sustainable development. Through trainings and improved cooking stoves provision, the project has successfully improved women's livelihoods, fostered leadership in environmental conservation, and ensured their active participation in the decision-making processes. Below are different success stories that highlight the positive transformative results of the project.



Dative Mushimiyimana's Journey: Dative a mother of three, living in Bugesera District, Juru Sector, is one of the women who participated in agro-ecology training aimed at combating climate change. Through this training, she learned tangible skills for stemming the environmental tides and how the skills could benefit her farming practices. With the help of knowledge acquired from the training, Dative returned to her village and immediately applied what she learnt. She put the lessons learnt into action and started a banana plantation and other agricultural farming activities.

Additionally, Dative didn't work alone; she amalgamated together the women from her sector who had altogether participated in the same training through the FACE project. They teamed up and began processing artificial fertilizers for their farms. The team work immediately capturing the attention of their neighbors, who were inquisitive about the idea of making fertilizers. Looking at the opportunity to help, Dative and her team members with similar training began teaching their

neighbors. Notably, what started as a small group of women later alone enlarged as a bigger team of one hundred and fifty members. They began producing natural fertilizers for a total of 86 households, contributing to sustainable farming practices throughout the community. Under this point therefore, the Local authorities were very grateful with the women's success story of women's efforts to mobilize additional households from Juru Sector to join the community initiative.

Before she received her improved cooking stove, Dative faced challenges during her meal preparations because of her religious beliefs. As a believer from the Adventist church, she couldn't cook neither engaged in any activities on Friday evenings and Saturdays till the sunset. However, her improved stove and food cooler as well, have transformed her ability to prepare and preserve food. "My husband and children are so overwhelmed, and healthy as a result of eating decent meals, thanks to GER-Rwanda and the FACE project," says Dative, attributing each and everything to GER.

Florida Mutezimana's Journey: Women from Mayange District, particularly those involved in the COPAGRIMA cooperative, have successfully applied the skills acquired from FACE project, ministered by GER-Rwanda. According to Florida Mutezimana, the leader of COPAGRIMA, every member of the cooperative processed natural fertilizers on their farms. After producing the manure, they used it to grow beans. Notwithstanding, having a small piece of land, the cooperative followed some footsteps for applying techniques taught in GER-Rwanda's training sessions under the FACE project. Once the compost was ripe, they applied it to grow peanuts, which flourished and resulted into successful harvest, thus improving their livelihoods.

Florida in particular observed that the project was beneficial. As a community leader, she faced challenges in campaigning for women's rights and environmental issues. However, after participating in climate change and leadership training, she gained confidence and advocated to tackle community environmental challenges. She noted how she acquired knowledge from the training that enabled her adapted to the changing environment. More to this she expressed how the introduction of improved cooking stoves changed her life style. Previously struggling with firewood, she now uses only one piece of wood per day, whereas before she used quite a few. This change has brought much happiness to her family, especially when they now enjoy hot meals every day. A single mothers faced immense challenges—raising children alone while struggling with the impacts of climate change and limited resources. These women were often excluded from decision-making and lacked the means to improve their livelihoods. Nonetheless, The **FACE** project enabled to dance the tune of climate resilience by empowering women. Last but not least, one of the most impactful aspects of the project was the provision of improved cooking stoves. These stoves saved time and energy by reducing firewood consumption and allowing the women to focus on their farms and other income-generating activities. They noticed a dramatic reduction in smoke, which improved her family's health. Their children, who had often suffered from respiratory issues, now breathe clean air. In a nutshell therefore, the Executive Director of GER-Rwanda Mr. Innocent Musore observed that all is done through supporting the existing process of Peace building and improving the live hoods through Ecosystem Conservation through women and youth who are drivers of change and community transformation.

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