**“Field Day” Started the Year for TLC**

TLC had a chance to start the year by celebrating with farmers on the “Field day” for farmers that was organized by TLC and their partners in the second week of January 2019. The day started by visiting different groups that were created in different villages in Gicumbi District. Partners and community local leaders were pleased on how working together in groups towards one goals can bring a big change in the people’s life. The conservative agriculture was created in a way to promote saving (money) groups and fighting poverty or famine in the country by starting with a few citizens in different areas that are willing to work towards those goals.

Countrywide, there are 102 groups made up of 2005 people in total. In a village called Nyahenda there is a group made up of 30 people and not only do these people cultivate and save money but also have a spirit of unity and familiarity that allows them to help and strengthen each other.

In the year of 2018, the group of Nyahenda saved more than 1 million Rwandan Francs! That money is used to give loans to members of that group in different activities they would want to carry out like paying fees and health insurance.

Farmers use different technics that does not take up a lot of space on land, manure or any other machines that are usually needed in farming. These technics were learned from an organization called “Garden for Health”and not only did they teach them how to use them as a group but also even in their own fields at home by themselves.

The day proceeded by a huge ceremony with about 165 farmers who talked about their experiences and how much they developed from being a part of these farmers groups. The ceremony also had local leaders from the mayor’s office to the executive’s secretaries of those communities.

They local leaders’ delegates were thrilled to see how happy their citizens were because of the growth they had made intellectually, and mentally as citizens who felt like society had forgotten them, but in reality they had to step it up and work hard as they did to achieve their goals.

# Farmers shared different testimonies



Figure Yvette, a farmer

“I joined the farmers group in 2015, and I was renting a house that only had one room that had to be shared with me and my whole family. After one year, the money I bought land from the money I made from the harvest. I then built a bigger home, and got electricity in the house, better furniture and now I am working towards getting water in my own compound. Before joining, I was antisocial because I was ashamed of my life style but now I am advocating for the value of teamwork and saving money while working towards a certain goal. It is very rewarding.” Said Yvette.

 “I was living in an old house that has a bad roof top and leaks, I have kids and my husband’s job couldn't provide for all of us. We had no health insurance. I joined TLC trainings, they later on put in me a group where I started saving 500 frw per week. Few years later, through the savings I made, I bought a house for my family, I learnt how to not fear loans and got some loans to cover some expenses that I needed. I have never been educated, never went to school in my life but I am now a farmer. A farmer that can even teach other people about the conservative agriculture. I got a land to increase on my skills and also grow my own crops to feed my family and also sell them to get profits out of it. Through saving, having willingness to learn, not giving up on life and being passionate at what I am doing, I developed myself and I am working towards taking my children to better schools and have a big farm. I am now an ambassador for TLC savings groups because I believe that very many people can develop themselves starting from very little they have and believing in themselves.” Said Tuyisenge Emeliene.

Figure Emeliene, a farmer

 “ I and my wife started cultivating years ago, however, due to lack of enough knowledge and technologies that are used to have better harvest, it became difficult for us to grow crops in abundance and we would lose what we invested in the process. Through TLC I learnt how to cultivate by the use of what I have. Conservative agriculture doesn’t need any hard skills or machines that used to be hard for me to afford. I started investing in conservative agriculture by just giving time to what I was doing and saving money. A few years later since, I had the skills, I now own a hectare of land, I have a house and a farm that has goats, hens and pigs, and these also provide manure easily. My wife and I have 8 children and are now able to provide for them what they need as children. Shared, Tuyisabe Damien

Figure Damien, a farmer

Very many testimonies were given and farmers added on how they did not only learn about agriculture and saving but also family planning and eating healthy balanced meals. These improved their health in general, where a person would visit the hospital twice a month due to malnutrition but now months can pass without visiting the doctors for that issue.

A lot was shared, including fun games, skills learn from each, a huge feast of meals and prayers towards each other to start of the year of 2019 with a goal of more success.