

Uburumbuke Iwacu

Prosperity in Our Families

Newsletter

August, 2025

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES



About SOS Children's Villages **in Rwanda**

Mission

We build families for children in need, we help them shape their own futures and we share in the development of their communities.

Vision

Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect, and security.

Core Values

— Courage
— Commitment
— Trust
— Accountability

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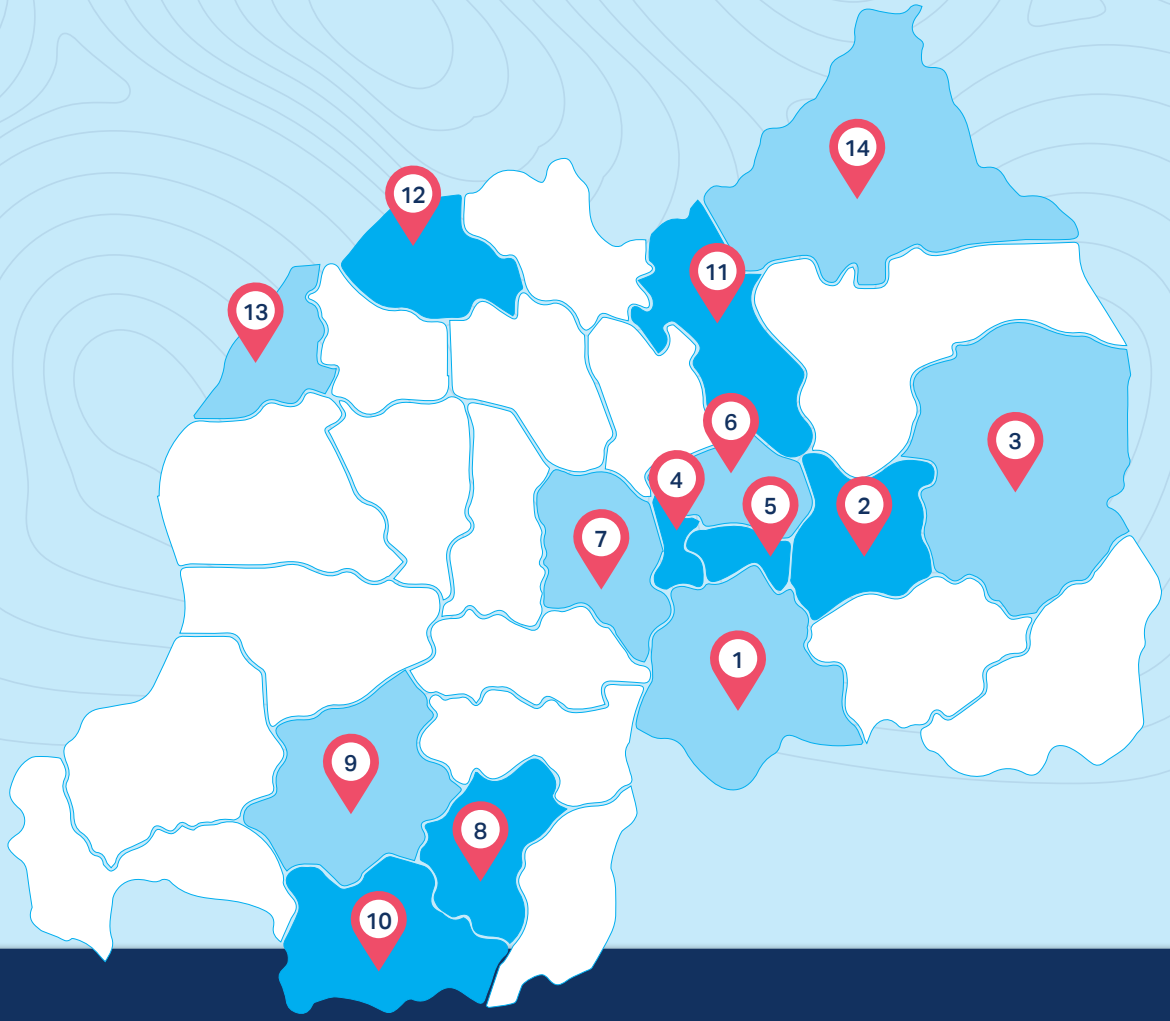


1	Bugesera	6	Gasabo	11	Gicumbi
2	Rwamagana	7	Kamonyi	12	Musanze
3	Kayonza	8	Huye	13	Rubavu
4	Nyarugenge	9	Nyamagabe	14	Nyagatare
5	Kicukiro	10	Nyaruguru		

Project **overview**

IN NUMBERS

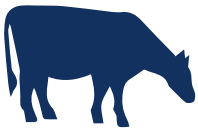
Project is supporting

300

vulnerable families from the first category of Ubudehe

109

cows have been provided to vulnerable families



400

project participants including teen mothers, participated in vocational training and resumed their primary and secondary education

Four Girl's rooms were equipped in 4 schools and supported

2469

girls to improve their school attendance and school performance in general.

In early 2022, SOS Children's Villages in Rwanda through Byumba Program Location, launched a community family strengthening project called Uburumbuke Iwacu (Prosperity in Our Families).

The aim of this project is to support 300 vulnerable families from the first category of Ubudehe. The project aims to support children and young people, particularly teen mothers, in resuming their studies, especially in vocational training.

To date, 109 cows have been provided to vulnerable families which include 58 directly purchased and 51 acquired through the revolving system. Additionally, 155 small domestic animals have also been provided.

The Uburumbuke Iwacu Project supports 233 young people including 167 Young people, 49 Teen mothers and 17 Caregivers that have been provided with start-up tool kits to start their own business.

The project participants have been supported with quality seeds (beans, Irish potatoes, and vegetable cabbages, carrots, red onions, beetroots, eggplant.

To help young people become self-reliant, 400 project participants including teen mothers, participated in vocational training and resumed their primary and secondary education. Through school clubs, 2,460 children across four schools were sensitized to gender equality. Four Girl's rooms were equipped in 4 schools and supported 2469 girls to improve their school attendance and school performance in general.

The installation of tree nurseries resulted in the production and distribution of

65,000

seedlings

Uburumbuke Iwacu Project constructed

56,803

meters of progressive terraces to enhance agricultural production and protect the environment.

The Uburumbuke Iwacu Project established

21

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) for caregivers and young people.

The Uburumbuke Iwacu Project taps into environmental protection and improvement of farming production. The following has been done:

The installation of tree nurseries resulted in the production and distribution of 65,000 seedlings, contributing to environmental protection and product diversification, including fuel wood, fruits, and fodder.

Uburumbuke Iwacu Project constructed 8.61 hectares of radical terraces and 56,803 meters of progressive terraces to enhance agricultural production and protect the environment.

The project provided temporary jobs for 378 vulnerable individuals engaged in constructing terraces and planting trees.

Four plots were identified and established as farmer Field Schools to enhance the participants' knowledge of effective and productive agricultural practices. These plots are utilized by farmer promoters and agronomists at the sector and cell levels to demonstrate techniques for preparing land, sowing seeds, and applying manure and fertilizers in lines while maintaining appropriate spacing between the lines and within the rows.

As a result, 300 project participants, along with approximately 1,500 neighboring community members, are now applying these techniques on their own plots to achieve improved agricultural production.

The Uburumbuke Iwacu Project established 21 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) for caregivers and young people. Together, these associations are able to distribute approximately Rwf 21,000,000 (equivalent to USD 14,000) each year.

This funding is used to address various family needs and is also invested in income-generating activities for families. These Village Savings and Loan Associations have significantly strengthened social solidarity and cohesion among community members. 156 families have received iron sheets to improve their shelters and enhance sanitation facilities.

Additionally, four existing water sources have been rehabilitated, providing around 1,000 families with access to clean drinking water.

Uburumbuke Iwacu Project is supported by Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland (MFA) through SOS Children's Villages in Iceland.



Aloys and his family.

Radical terraces **a key to success** – Aloys

Aloys Munyengaju, 54, and his wife Annonciatha Mukarunyana, 51, live with their six children; five boys and one girl in Nyamiyaga Sector, Kabeza Cell. They rely on agricultural activities and casual jobs for their livelihood.

"Although we own land for farming, we lived in extreme poverty and struggled with persistent hunger and food shortages. My children were unable to attend school."

"I did not count how many times my children went to bed hungry, but now, thanks to the project, i am able to consistently feed them.

We were living in a small house where the entire family stayed in a single room. We couldn't afford to buy any livestock." Aloys stated.

Aloys's family was admitted to the Uburumbuke Iwacu project in May 2022. Since then, both parents participated in various training courses organized by the project. They joined the

Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) and started saving small amounts of money, although their capacity to save remains quite limited.

As a result of the project interventions, Aloy's family decided to work together towards a common goal. They are now living peacefully, sharing household responsibilities, and focusing on the wellbeing of their children.

The family's socio-economic status has significantly improved, and they have boosted their savings in the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). In addition to farming activities, they are now engaged in a small business of buying and selling domestic animals.

The family has started working with a financial institution, Umurenge SACCO in Nyamiyaga, to save money and request a loan. They are active members, consistently saving and repaying loans without any delay. With the loan they requested, the family has built a large house for their wellbeing.

Their diet has improved in both quality and quantity. All the children are enrolled in school and are performing well. The family's dream is to become strong and prosperous. The parents provide quality care for all the children and supporting them until they reach their full independent.

The family has received support to construct radical terraces on their land, acquiring knowledge and skills to improve farming practices. They were given temporary jobs for 3 to 4 months during the construction of these terraces, earning money in the process.

This temporary jobs marked a positive turn for the family, as they were able to save enough money to purchase six goats and four chickens. They also received quality seeds for agriculture, which has notably improved their family nutrition.

Additionally, the project provided them with a cow, which not only supplies milk but also organic manure, leading to increased agricultural production. One of the children received support from the project to attend vocational training in mechanics, and he is now employed, helping to uplift the family economy.



Uburumbuke Iwacu supported with caw to the family of Aloys and Annonciatha

Savings: A Path to Self-Reliance - Bernadette

Bernadette Mukayabavuge and her husband, Faustin Mukeshimana, joined a Village Savings and Loans Association initiated by Uburumbuke Iwacu Project by contributing Rwf 200 (0,13 USD) each week. Their share value gradually increased, eventually reaching Rwf 4,000 (2,7 USD) per week.

Before joining the Uburumbuke Iwacu project, implemented by SOS Children's Villages in Rwanda at Gicumbi District, Nyamiyaga Sector, the family of Bernadette, 52, and her husband, 56, with six children lived a life marked by family conflict.

Bernadette said, "I was looking for a job to support my children. Our four girls dropped out of school because of poverty. If the project hadn't provided us with this opportunity, I would have kept working for others, making no more than Rwf 1,000 (0,6 USD) by cultivating crops traditionally, while trying to support my children. I'm happy that now, at least, I am running my own shop."

She mentioned that through this project; they learned many skills that enabled him to build a stable family. As she testified," the project educated us about child rights, allowing our children to resume their studies." The VSLA helped us manage the money we earn. We learned how to do business, attract more clients, and purchase merchandise. We put these lessons into practice, and it was a life-changing opportunity."

Through various project interventions such as capacity building, social and economic empowerment, and psychological support—along with regular coaching and follow-ups, the family has acquired the skills needed to build their livelihood. The wife runs a shop, while the husband sells local beverages. They have learned how to manage and save the money they earn.



Bernadette is running a shop

"The VSLA helped us manage the money we earn. We learned how to do business, attract more clients, and purchase merchandise. We put these lessons into practice, and it was a life-changing opportunity."



Bernadette in her shop

Bernadette added that the family benefited from joining the Villages Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). In addition to their savings, they obtained a loan of Rwf 70,000 from the VSLA group, which enabled them to start income-generating activities by preparing and selling local beverages. Bernadette stated, "I manage a small shop while my husband operates a local beer business."

They also built a fence around their house, and the main house has been renovated. Furthermore, their four daughters, who received support to complete vocational training, are now employed and contribute to the family's finances. Additionally, they own several domestic animals that they use for business.

As a result of these changes, the family's income has significantly increased, and they now earn a monthly income of approximately 120,000 Rwf from their businesses. They are making substantial progress towards self-reliance and a secure future.

Our family income has significantly increased due to these two business activities. Additionally, with the support of the project, my four daughters were able to complete vocational training in tailoring and hairdressing. We have also purchased several domestic animals, including one cow, one pig, and six chickens. Thanks to SOS Children's Villages in Rwanda, we are now a prosperous and happy family.



The family's income has significantly increased, and they now earn a monthly income of approximately

120,000 Rwf

from their businesses.

Gender clubs to **promote equality within the school**

The Uburumbuke Iwacu Project established gender clubs that include both boys and girls to promote awareness on gender equality in schools and communities. These clubs were set up in four schools: GS Nyinawimana, GS Runanga, GS Kagamba, and GS Mugina. Each school has a Boys for Change club, and a Girls Take the Lead club, aimed at advocating gender equality both in and out of school within the community.

Jean Paul, a student in S3 at GS Nyinawimana, testified: "The Gender Club at our school helped me understand the importance of being involved in domestic work at home. Previously, I would let my sisters do all the work in our household, like sweeping the ground, cleaning the house, preparing food, and washing the dishes."

He added that he used to think that some activities were only for women and girls. After gaining awareness through school clubs, I now feel proud to support my colleagues at school and my siblings at home with domestic work. "This teamwork allows us to accomplish our tasks more quickly and reduces fatigue among everyone involved." Jean Paul said.



The Gender Club at G.S. Nyinawimana

The introduction of Boys4Change Clubs and Girls Take the Lead Clubs has brought a great change in schools that are promoting gender equality according to project coordinator Pierre Bisengimana.

"The project through girls and boys organized campaigns to sensitize boys and girls to overcome gender norms. To facilitate the activities of the clubs, four sound systems (Speaker with microphones) and four drums were provided to club members in four schools. The use of the sound system not only facilitates communication but also attracts more audience and helps to spread the message to many people without difficulties." Pierre added.

Gender equality principles have begun to take root in the community, where citizens gradually recognize that collaboration between men and women contributes to family development. School teachers and head teachers have observed that tasks traditionally assigned to girls, such as cleaning and sweeping, are now being performed by boys and vice versa. Community members, including caregivers, teachers, students, and young people appreciate the contributions made by these clubs.



Savings a **pathway to success** for Donatha

Donatha Ndibwiyunkunda obtained a loan from the Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA). She started a small business to buy bananas and prepare banana juice to sell to her community members as her income generation to support her children.

Donatha, a 52-year-old woman, lives with her four children; three sons and one daughter in Gicumbi District, Nyamiyaga Sector, Karambo Cell, Gaseke Village. Her husband passed away in 2006 when the children were still very young.



Donatha is satisfied with the progress she has made

"It was incredibly hard to survive during that time, facing numerous challenges with my young age to raise four children."

I had to take care for them alone. I lived in extreme poverty and suffered from psychosocial issues, such as depression, isolation, and hopelessness.

Following the death of her husband, she had to take on all family responsibilities, including caring for her children without any support. This involved cooking for them, educating them, and assisting with their clothing and hygiene.

During the selection period for Uburumbuke Iwacu project participants, Donatha was identified as a single mother and widow with one child and three youth in her home. In 2022, her youngest child was 17 years old, and her eldest was 23.

She struggled to provide enough food and household necessities. Their home was in need of renovation. Donatha also suffered from chronic chest pain.

"After my husband passed away, I felt devastated as though the world was coming to an end. I was deeply worried about my children and how I would raise them without my husband's support. I struggled with depression and couldn't envision our family's future. However, joining the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) transformed our life by



Livestock is one source of income for Donatha

providing a chance to access financial resources through a loan, which helped to improve the wellbeing of my children.

The Uburumbuke Iwacu project provided interventions such as capacity building, socio-economic empowerment, and psychological support, along with regular coaching and follow-ups, she began to improve her farming practices, leading to increased production. She also started thinking about how to launch a small business.

She started a small business buy bananas and preparing banana juice to sell to her community members, her income has increased significantly. She is now able to save Rwf 4,000 (USD 2,8) per week through the Savings and Loan Association and has increased her shares in the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) group.

She purchased her own farming land for Rwf 600,000 (USD 428) along with one cow, four goats, and eight chickens. Additionally, she invested in bringing clean water to her home, all funded by the income generated from her business and improved agricultural practices.

Donatha added, "Thanks to the Uburumbuke Iwacu Project, my three children completed vocational training in welding, tailoring, and masonry." Additionally, she has renovated her house and purchased essential household equipment. They are now working and supporting their mother in family needs.

Now, she can meet her family's needs, including providing food, paying for medical services, educating her youngest child, and buying clothes and hygiene products. She can afford other necessities that a family may require. With her children, they rehabilitated their house and enhanced its cleanliness.

With the profits from her business, the family gained access to clean water, installing a water tap in their home, eliminating the long journeys previously required to fetch water. Additionally, she purchased a solar energy system that provides electricity for the family. She also acquired a cow, four goats, and eight chickens.





Donatha's family has access to clean water

Josephine works hard for **a better future for her children**

The living room is small, dark, and cool. The floor is made of rammed earth, and the windows are covered with two wooden boards painted green to keep out the bright morning light. The walls are very smooth with cement.

Josephine Mukampunga, 46, is a mother who lives with her five children. Her family life improved in 2021 when she became a project participant of the Uburumbuke Iwacu project implemented by SOS Children's Villages in Rwanda, in Nyamiyaga sector, Jamba cell, Gicumbi District.



In 2021, Josephine's life was weighed down by a family conflict with her husband. Her children were not attending school, and there were times when they went to bed very hungry. "I was very depressed for many years because of issues I had with my husband.

My husband has been cohabiting with four women for the last 21 years. Although he did not have time for all his co-wives," she said, "my husband failed to cope with the persistent conflicts and was not able to support his children," Josephine said. Josephine remembers the unforgettable day when she became one of the Uburumbuke Iwacu project participants.



Farming is her primary source of income

The staff from SOS Children's Village in Byumba visited my family. I remember they came with local authorities to enroll me into the project and asked about the status of my family. After only one week, they called me to participate in conflict resolution training. Unfortunately, my husband passed away a few days before joining the project.

From the project, Josephine received a cow. She started to use the manure from the cow for her agricultural produce. " Before getting a cow, I did not manage to harvest even 20 kg of beans, but now I harvest 300kg of beans." Josephine became a member of the Village Savings and Loans Association in Jamba cell, in Gicumbi district, the North of Rwanda.

The Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLAs) was established by SOS Children's Villages to encourage project participants to save and receive small loans with interest. With the money from the VSLA, Josephine bought a goat to improve her income. It now stands and grunts contentedly in an enclosure next to her house. Josephine strokes the goat's back. She takes good care of it because it is the family's biggest investment.

Before getting a cow, I did not manage to harvest even 20 kg of beans, but now I harvest

300Kg

of beans.





Celestin started renovating his family's house.

Celestin is implementing **new farming techniques**

Nteziryayo Celestin, 47 years old, a father of 6 children and married to his wife Mukabagirubwira are moving forward through modern farming techniques.

In 2022, Celestin's family joined the Uburumbuke Iwacu Project following a collaborative assessment conducted by SOS Children's Villages in Rwanda and local authorities. Before participating in the project, Celestin's family lived in extreme poverty.

Celestin shared, "Before joining the project, we were living in a cramped house that was too small for all of us. Hygiene was a significant issue, and family members frequently fell ill. Most of the time, the children were unable to attend school.

We struggled to afford enough food, health insurance was a challenge, and our agricultural income was insufficient. We felt lost and overwhelmed, unable to find ways to improve our socio-economic situation. Life was incredibly hard for us."

"I adopted new farming techniques we learnt how to practice radical terraces, we adopted advanced farming, and the harvest has exponentially increased."





Celestin is feeding his cow

With support from the Uburumbuke Iwacu project, the family received training on child rights, advanced farming techniques. As a result, all his children resumed their studies, and they are performing well in classes.

The project assisted them in creating radical terraces, which transformed their traditional methods of cultivation. As a result, they have recently harvested over 1,000 Kgs of Irish potatoes and 200 kgs of beans. Additionally, they maintain a kitchen garden that provides a variety of fresh vegetables.

The children attend school regularly, and the entire family enjoys a healthy diet composed of fresh, balanced meals. The project also provided them with a cow, which supplies manure for their agricultural activities. They have begun selling their harvest in the market, allowing them to expand and improve their home. Furthermore, they have joined a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) group to save money for future family development plans.

Upon joining the project as a participant, Nteziryayo Celestin has taken on a crucial role in implementing various project activities. He actively engages in project events such as meetings and training sessions.

As a result of modern agriculture, Celestin's family started the process of renovating their family houses. With the support of the Uburumbuke Iwacu Project, his family received 15 iron sheets, 2 doors, and 4 windows, which helped them renovate and expand their shelter to include a total of 30 iron sheets house.

The wellbeing of **my children-** Delphine

Delphine Mukansigayehe and her husband Evaliste Ntahondi have faced hardships for many years. Their children dropped out of school due to financial problems, and feeding their children was an uphill battle.

Both parents and their four children are living in Gicumbi District, Nyamiyaga Sector, Gahumuliza Cell, where the Uburumbuke Iwacu project is being implemented. Her family became project participants of the Uburumbuke Project in 2022.

Delphine stated that before joining the Uburumbuke Iwacu project, her family lived a difficult life where her children dropped out of school. Having food for them was also a serious challenge for the family.

Delphine's family practiced traditional farming which yielded limited harvests. They struggled a lot and engaged in agricultural activities that were not productive, and she could not pursue any other income-generating activities beyond local tradition farming.

"All of my children dropped out of school because of financial problems. We often struggled to feed them twice a day, and most nights, we went to bed with empty stomachs. Our lives were filled with trauma due to extreme poverty. Family conflict has arisen in our family due to poverty. Honestly, we have gone through a very difficult period." Delphine added.

After being admitted to the Uburumbuke Project, participants underwent various training sessions. They learned the importance of saving small amounts of money through the Village Savings and Loans Association, as well as techniques for resolving family conflicts and ensuring



Delphine earns money through tailoring

child protection. Additionally, the Uburumbuke Iwacu Project supported Delphine in pursuing vocational training in tailoring and provided her with essential start-up toolkits.

Delphine stated, "I appreciate the support from Uburumbuke Iwacu. Now, I have managed to start a small tailoring business where I can generate Rwf 50,000 (USD 38)." The family expanded their farming land and acquired their own cows, four goats, and one pig to provide manure and additional income. They also renovated their house.

Delphine said, "After receiving training, I completely changed my perception on child right and savings. Before joining the project, I believed that radical terraces would render my land infertile. However, after the training, I realized their importance and agreed to implement them on my land.

We then began using new farming techniques, quality seeds, and fertilizers, which significantly improved our agricultural production resulted the wellbeing of my children."

Delphine's family is committed to increase the saving in VSLA group and have opened an account in Umurenge SACCO for the family progress and sustainable development.



Delphne enjoys her life with her husband.





Olive has renovated her family house.

Olive changes her life

Olive Urayeneza is 45 years old and lifted her family from extreme poverty through the Village Savings and Loans Association in her community of Nyamiyaga Sector, Kiziba Cell.

Since 2007, Olive has separated from her husband and has been facing many challenges in her life. She has taken on all family responsibilities, including caring for their children by feeding, educating, and ensuring their clothing and hygiene. She manages all household activities on her own.

After her husband's separation, she lived in despair, facing anger, isolation, and hopelessness.

Olive said, "I felt foolish without any idea how to survive. My children were victims of this situation of attending school at an early age ... I felt like the world had ended for no reason other than death."



Olive gained hope when she became a participant in the Uburumbuke Iwacu Project in early 2022. Through the project's interventions capacity building, regular monitoring, coaching, economic empowerment, along with membership in Village Savings and Loans Associations, her life changed.

She attended training, and joined the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) where she consistently provided one share of 200 Rwf. In her first year, Olive earned Rwf 58,000 (37 USD). She used this amount to purchase materials for renovating her house. During her saving period, she also requested a loan of Rwf 20,000 (13 USD) from her Village Savings and Loan Association, which she used to buy a goat.

During her second year, she saved Rwf 68,000 (45 USD) and requested a loan of Rwf 100,000 (67USD) from Umurenge Sacco, a savings and loans cooperative at the sector level. Olive also sold her four goats and began renovating her house. She feels relieved along with her children. She has started working hard and hopes for a prosperous future.

Olive describes the training as her pathway out of poverty. She learned professional agriculture techniques. She stated, "Thanks to the farming knowledge I gained from Uburumbuke Iwacu, my agricultural production has increased from almost nothing to a harvest of around 100 kgs of beans and 300 kgs of maize per season."

Olive and her children can afford health care, the children are performing well in school, and family members have access to nutritious food and clothing. Her goal is to continue working hard to increase their household income.



Olive with a cow from the Uburumbuke Iwacu Project.



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SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

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