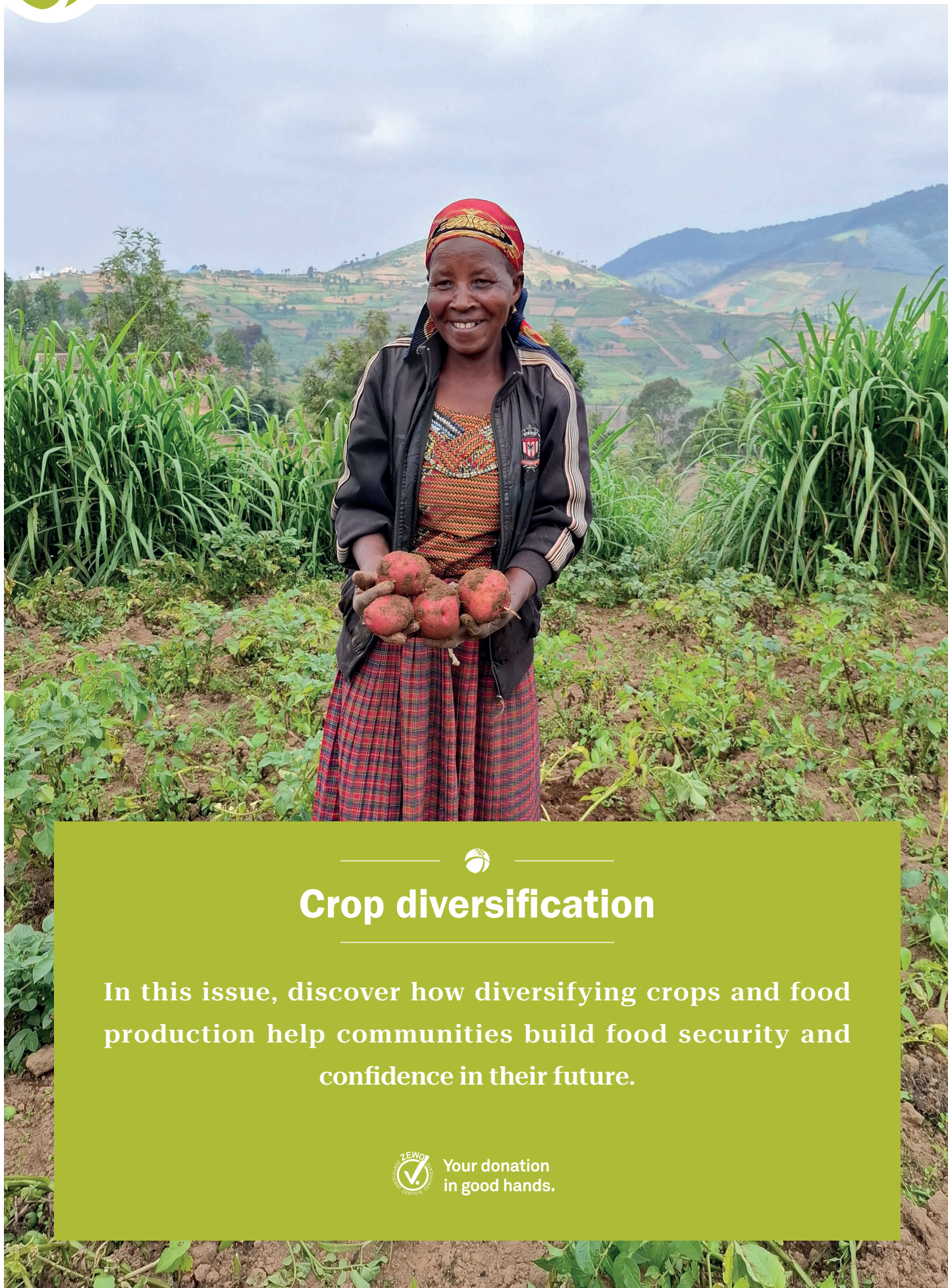




## Crop diversification

In this issue, discover how diversifying crops and food production help communities build food security and confidence in their future.



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# Meeting the Fishermen of Gatare

## Back from Burundi

Last August, Vreni Rutishauser from FH Switzerland visited fishermen on Lake Rweru, a small lake straddling the border between southern Rwanda and northern Burundi. In Vreni's words:

«  Suddenly, the dirt road we were driving on came to an end. Our vehicle had to weave its way between the mud huts to reach the small village of Gatare, where we were going to meet the fishermen. One of them had just brought his catch ashore and was sitting in the grass, cleaning the fish. He proudly showed us the five species he had caught.

The canoes used by the fishermen and their families are carved from tree trunks, and the nets are hand-made. I was shocked to learn that fishermen regularly drown in these canoes, which capsize easily. Of all fishermen there, only one was wearing a life jacket. »

## Supporting the Fishermen

Fishing is the main source of income for Gatare's residents. But without proper equipment—especially life jackets—it's a risky way to make a living.

FH Switzerland is working with these fishermen to improve fishing safety and help them process, preserve, and sell their catch in the town of Busoni, 15 km away.

This initiative is part of a comprehensive program aimed at strengthening the resilience of rural communities in Busoni (Kirundo Province) against climate change.

Our Objectives?

- **Increase production** through agro-ecological practices.
- **Diversify livelihoods** across agriculture, livestock, and fishing.
- **Support farmers** in marketing their products.
- **Increased incomes** for families and communities.



A fisherman returning from fishing.

## What are the current challenges facing international cooperation?

The main challenge for humanitarian organizations is shrinking funding, even as the number of people in need—and their requirements for food, clean water, healthcare—continues to grow. This means we must focus our efforts where we can create the most immediate and significant impact.

## Can you share a story that has particularly inspired you?

Among the people I have met, Adélaïde's story stays with me. She's a model farmer trained by FH who has shared her agricultural knowledge widely throughout her community.

She produces her own seeds and continues to inspire new trainees. Now self-sufficient, she is financing her children's education and owns a house with running water. Her story illustrates the lasting impact of agricultural training

and its multiplier effect—one trained farmer can transform an entire community. I am proud and happy to be a witness to these changes. -----

A consultant for development organizations including the FAO, Jean Nibayubahe also trains farmers in his village and works as a certified seed multiplier. He previously worked with FH Burundi since its founding in 2006 until 2021, serving as coordinator, program monitoring and evaluation officer, and food security officer.

Read the **full interview** at: [fh-switzerland.ch](https://fh-switzerland.ch)

Our documentary **"The Earth, My Friend"** will tell you more about our approach. It is available on our YouTube channel: **FH Suisse - Food for the Hungry.**

Opposite, from left to right: Prosper Niyonsaba, and other members of the FH Burundi team and Jean Nibayubahe.



## The Lasting Impact of Agricultural Training

An interview with Jean Nibayubahe, based in Burundi, who joined FH Switzerland in July 2025 as the new project coordinator for Africa.

# A Future for My Family

Bwira is located in the hills of the Ngororero district in western Rwanda, 95 kilometers from Kigali. This cool and rainy mountainous region depends heavily on agriculture, yet its communities often struggle with malnutrition and chronic food insecurity. Despite these challenges, the people of Bwira are driven by a shared determination to build a better future together. Among them is Valérie, a dynamic farmer whose journey reflects transformation and hope.

**We have prospered thanks to the diversification of our activities.**

“Before attending FH training courses, I used to farm ‘haphazardly,’ mixing potatoes, corn, and beans, without monitoring or calculating my costs or results,” Valérie recalls. “Through the training program, I learned to plant in rows, select suitable crops varieties, and maintain basic financial records.”

Today, I know how to build terraces to protect the soil, manage manure efficiently, make natural insecticides, use medicinal plants, and improve the crops storage methods. Thanks to an exceptional potato harvest, I earned around 6 million RWF (CHF 3,300), which allowed me to buy new plots of land and gradually expand my farm. The following year, my income enabled me to build a large cement house.”



Over time, Valérie and her husband diversified their activities, developed an integrated system that combines agriculture and livestock farming. She grows corn and beans, while her husband manages the cows and pigs for breeding. They even sell stones collected from their fields to support construction activities. As a model farmer, Valérie is training a dozen learners in potato cultivation and fertilization techniques. She demonstrates in on her own land, then visit the learners to assist them on their plots. “Today, we produce almost everything our family eats,” she says proudly.”

**Valérie’s neat and productive field reflects her commitment and resilience—an inspiring example of how knowledge, planning and community support can build a sustainable future for her family and community.**

## Integrated Approach Between Agriculture and Livestock

In organic and agroecological farming, obtaining sufficient fertiliser without animals is difficult. Since synthetic fertilisers are excluded, farmers create organic compost from plant waste and manure. Manure is essential—it starts the compost fermentation process and forms the foundation of soil health. Animals are vital partners in this system. Some farmers even keep cows solely for their manure, understanding its value.

## Cascade Training and Farmer-to-Farmer Learning

Farming families join ‘cascade groups’ where model farmers train ten other farmers, called ‘learners’. This peer-to-peer approach spreads proven techniques—soil conservation, erosion control, fertility restoration, and agroforestry—across communities. In Bwira, FH Rwanda trained **100 model farmers** now training **1,000 learners**, creating lasting change.

## Building Food security Through Local Production

Today, Valérie considers herself to be food secure. She buys only essentials like salt and oil, producing everything else her family needs from her own field. Her experience demonstrates how organised and professionalised local agriculture can empower farming families and contribute to resilient food systems.

## An Agricultural Cooperative

Looking ahead, Valérie dreams of a cooperative with a shared storage facility to preserve agricultural products awaiting sale. When women farmers begin to plan for cooperatives and collective management, it signals a crucial transition: from addressing immediate food insecurity to building long-term economic resilience.

# The Great Lakes region of Africa and Chad: Communities We Serve

## Chad

Provinces of Guéra and Mandoul

Number of people supported: **1951**

## Uganda

Northern Uganda, Karamoja Region, district of Amudat

Number of people supported: **8027**

## Rwanda

Western and Eastern Provinces

Number of people supported: **5553**

## Burundi

Provinces of Kayanza and Ngozi

Number of people supported: **10418**

## DR Congo

South-Kivu, Uvira Territory

Number of people supported: **2287**

**Yes, I support FH Switzerland's efforts to provide communities with a dignified life.**

**With 50.-**

You can help purchase equipment (life jackets and fish storage) for the fishermen of Gatere.

**With 100.-**

You can support the donation of livestock (goats, pigs, cows) to provide families with manure.

**With 150.-**

You can contribute to training in agroecological practices for farmers.

### How to make a donation:

#### Via IBAN:

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#### Via our online form:

[fh-switzerland.ch/en/donate.html](https://fh-switzerland.ch/en/donate.html)

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**Thank you very much for your support.**

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