

# Combating Food Insecurity with Homestead Farming Production

*by Soren Meeuwisse  
December 2021*

All around the world, in every country, people experience food insecurity. Food insecurity is related to many factors and can be experienced in a variety of ways. Accessing safe and nutritious food is a daily concern particularly for people living in low-income countries with high poverty, high birth rates, and unreliable and changing climates. Unfortunately, a healthy diet composed of diverse nutrients is largely inaccessible and too expensive for many of these people made vulnerable by circumstances often beyond their control (World Health Organization, 2020).

Reach One Touch One Ministries (ROTOM) supports seniors in Uganda and Ethiopia who experience poverty and food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Acayo, 2020). While people are calling upon local governments to respond to the food crisis, non-governmental and charity organizations play a key role in addressing food insecurity. ROTOM is an example of a non-profit organization that uses **homestead farming production** to combat food insecurity in rural areas of Uganda and Ethiopia.



**Homestead farming production (HFP)** refers to a home garden or small farm. The goal of HFP is to provide families with the means to grow nutritious food and farm livestock. Sustainable food security, nutrition, and family finances are just a few of the many benefits of HFP (Galhena et al., 2013). A study conducted in rural South Africa found that introducing an HFP program improved the supply and consumption of food within the family – reducing food insecurity by 41.5% - and strengthened family financial security by the selling of excess HFP production or livestock (Tesfamariam et al., 2018). A traditional method of combatting food insecurity is to provide people with basic food staples, such as cereals. However, these grains do not offer all the necessary vitamins and nutrients needed to support daily health. HFP can dramatically improve the diversity of foods eaten, such as having more vegetables and fruits, therefore improving the nutritional status of a family. For example, anemia significantly improved in women and children with the introduction of HFP in poor populations of Asia

(Talukder et al., 2010) – an indication of improved iron intake. For a successful HFP, a person or family must be provided with education, empowerment, and various supplies and resources. While it can be challenging to implement a sustainable HFP, the positive impacts on the nutritional and economic status of a family are immense.

**ROTOM's Food and Income Insecurity Fund** helps seniors and their families benefit from HFP - providing seeds for planting and livestock such as chicken, goats, cows, and pigs. By donating to this ROTOM campaign, you are meaningfully contributing not only to the nutritional status of a ROTOM senior and child, but you are also contributing to their economic and health empowerment.




The gift of a single animal can change the course of a life. Madeline, a ROTOM senior in Uganda, was given a pig that produced four piglets, then later six more. By learning to care for, sell, and trade her livestock, Madeline gained empowerment and economic security. She now has a small HFP business and uses her income to improve her home kitchen and sanitation facility, pit latrine, and food purchases. Madeline's story illustrates the complexity and interconnectedness of poverty: by supporting a ROTOM senior in one area of life, such as food insecurity, you are also positively impacting many other essential needs, such as safety, shelter, independence, and overall quality of life for that senior and their dependants.

To learn more about ROTOM's **Food and Income Insecurity Fund** and how you can get involved, please feel welcome to connect with us via email, social media, or our website.


#### TO CONTACT ROTOM CANADA

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## About the author



Soren Meeuwisse is a Master of Science in Global Health student at McMaster University and volunteers with ROTOM Canada as a Social Media Assistant. With a Bachelor (Honours) of Science in Kinesiology background and an interest in women's empowerment, she aims to pursue a career in health and gender advocacy.

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