

KABAROLE

By Jonan Tuslingwire

A 15km drive north of Fort Portal leads to Kyakaigo village in Harugongo sub-county, Kabarole district, an area where pozzolana extraction has long been the main source of livelihood for many families.

Pozzolana, a natural volcanic material made of ash and fine volcanic soil, is used in cement production and construction of houses, roads, blocks and mortar. For many young people in the village, digging volcanic stones has become the only source of income.

But in a community heavily dependent on mining, 30-year-old Anna Mbabazi chose a different path. Instead of joining the stone extraction business, the mother of one ventured into farming, building a thriving enterprise that now supports dozens of families.

FARMING DISCIPLINE

Mbabazi's day starts before sunrise. By 5:00am, she is already at her dairy farm supervising milking to ensure milk reaches customers on time.

"We start milking at 5:00am so that milk gets to the market early. After milking, the cows are released to graze while workers continue with other farm activities. Farming requires constant supervision and teamwork," she says.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Mbabazi's farming journey began with 10 goats purchased at sh2m and two heifers bought at sh3m each. The capital came

CLIMATE-SMART FARMING GIVES HOPE TO MINING VILLAGE

PHOTO BY JONAN TUSLINGWIRE



Mbabazi (left) supervising her workers at the maize garden. She is practising climate-smart farming in a mining-dependent community

from savings from her previous jobs at Bank of Africa in Fort Portal, where she worked as a sales executive, and at Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation, where she served as an alert desk officer in 2019.

Using family land, she began rearing goats and cows, steadily growing the project by reinvesting profits and learning practical skills from experienced farmers.

Today, her farm has expanded to 50 goats and 20 cows, a major transformation from its modest beginnings.

"I started small after struggling with underemployment. I began with a few goats and cows, then gradually built the

permanent workers and 25 temporary workers, with over 95% of them being women, especially single mothers.

GROWING INCOME

Mbabazi says the farm generates both daily and seasonal income from dairy, crops and livestock.

She produces about 60 litres of milk daily, sold within the community. She also grows maize on 11 acres, with each acre yielding about 15 bags per harvest. The maize is sold at between sh1,200 and sh1,300 per kilogramme, depending on market prices.

Mbabazi notes that goat sales peak during Easter and

Christmas seasons.

"We sell 15 to 20 goats per season, with each goat going for sh250,000. This translates into earnings of between sh3.75m and sh5m per season."

CHALLENGES

Despite her progress, Mbabazi says access to finance remains one of the biggest barriers for women farmers.

She also cites rising agricultural input costs, particularly fertilisers, worsened by global conflicts that have disrupted supply chains.

Climate change has also disrupted her operations. "The weather is no longer as predictable as it used to be," she notes.

Recurring drought has affected both pastures and crop production, forcing her to adopt climate-smart solutions such as tree planting and pasture development.

CLIMATE-SMART SOLUTIONS

Mbabazi has embraced organic farming, relying on manure from her cows and goats instead of chemical fertilisers.

"I am practising organic farming by using manure from my animals," she says.

Her farm integrates both crop and livestock production, allowing waste from one section to become an input for another, reducing dependence on expensive external inputs.

She credits part of her success to Uganda National Young Farmers Association, which has provided mentorship, training and networking opportunities.

"It has given me training in modern farming techniques, access to networks, mentorship and exposure to new

WHAT MBABAZI'S WORKERS SAY

Nurilat Kyomuhendo, 30, says working on Mbabazi's farm has become a lifeline, enabling her to meet basic household needs, such as school fees and rent.

She says the income helps her provide for her children, despite raising them alone.

Kyomuhendo says the farm has also equipped her with practical agricultural skills.

"I have learnt how to apply fertilisers to crops and I now use those skills in my own garden," she says.

Esther Bazira, 19, says the farm gave her a second chance after dropping out of school due to lack of fees.

She says she left Mpanga Secondary School in Senior One after her family could no longer support her education.

Since joining the farm, Bazira says she has started saving for her future.

"I save sh5,000 every week and it has taught me financial discipline at a young age," she says.

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Through the association, she has also learnt how to pitch business ideas to potential funders.

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond farming, Mbabazi has gained leadership opportunities. She serves as a board member of the Toro Dairy Cooperative Society, where she interacts with experienced farmers.

She is also a member of the Young Farmers' Federation of Uganda and recently represented her community on the global stage.

Recently, Mbabazi took part in a global event called the Global Citizens Assembly on Food Systems and Climate. She was among 105 people from over 60 countries chosen randomly.

"I got a call from a colleague that they needed people to represent their communities and countries. The selection was random, and my name was picked," she says.

The assembly ran online for seven weeks from January 17 to March 14, 2026, with two three-hour sessions each week. Members learned from experts and discussed how food systems can become fairer and more resilient in a changing climate. It was the first global event focused on food systems at this scale.

"I felt so excited because it was a plus for my community

and me," she says.

Mbabazi believes such platforms allow grassroots farmers to influence global policy discussions on food and climate.

The Africa regional lead for the Assembly, Fatima Zamba, says climate and food policy has for a long time been dominated by experts and policymakers, often excluding people and dismissing their lived experiences.

"Food and climate are deeply connected. How we produce, distribute and consume food affects emissions, biodiversity, land use and livelihoods. Bringing them together in one space reflects the reality people live," she says.

The Global Citizens' Assembly developed 22 Calls to Action directly calling on officials and institutions to act decisively. The proposals cover changes from farming practices and the type of support farmers receive, to regulations, subsidies and how food is valued in society.

Mbabazi now wants the Government to prioritise smallholder farmers in subsidy allocation to improve their productivity and livelihoods.

"My biggest hope is that leaders across Africa and around the world listen to the people," she says.

"Because the solutions already exist in farms, in families and in communities. When ordinary people are truly included, we can build a better future together."

SUMMER AUTO SERVICES

Swearing-in Message

The board and management of Summer Auto services wish to congratulate the president of the republic of Uganda His Excellence Gen. Y. K. Museveni, on this historic swearing-in for your 7th term as President of the Republic of Uganda.

On this auspicious occasion we reiterate our total support and commitment to the government in its efforts to stabilize, develop and transform Uganda into a prosperous industrial and competitive economy. Indeed hard work, resilience and tolerance will continue to form the basis and foundation of our sustainable development and ultimate take off to a developed nation status.

Long live Uganda, long live His Excellence, long live the people of Uganda.

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