

## Breaking Barriers, Building Hatcheries: A Mother, Engineer and Farmer Redefining Agriculture.



*Faith Mutheu Kitata inspecting eggs in the incubator at PAFA Poultry Breeders and Hatcheries.*

When Faith Mutheu Kitata graduated as an electrical engineer, she expected to work in a formal job. Instead, she found herself raising a small batch of chicks outside her rental house in Kenya. What began as a simple way to earn income has grown into a thriving agribusiness that now produces more than 3,000 chicks every month.

At just 30 years old, Faith is the founder of PAFA Poultry Breeders and Hatcheries. She fabricates egg incubators, provides hatchery services and trains farmers in poultry management. Her journey reflects the resilience and innovation of women farmers who are strengthening agrifood systems in their communities.

After struggling to secure employment, Faith decided not to wait. Customers who visited her small shop heard chicks chirping and began asking to buy them. Demand kept growing. “I did not plan to become a poultry farmer,” she says. “But when I saw the opportunity, I chose not to wait for employment. I decided to build something of my own.”

Her early incubator produced poor results, with a hatch rate of only 55 percent. Drawing on her engineering skills, she redesigned the insulation system. After months of testing, the hatch rate rose to 85 percent. This breakthrough allowed her to begin fabricating improved incubators for other farmers.

By making affordable and reliable equipment locally, Faith helps small-scale farmers many of them women enter poultry production with confidence. She later introduced fireless brooders, reducing brooding costs by up to 60 percent. Lower costs mean higher profits and greater resilience for farming households.

Women farmers, Faith believes, are central to food security. Through her hatchery, she supplies chicks to farmers across counties, supporting egg and meat production for families and local markets. By increasing productivity and reducing losses, she contributes to improved household incomes and nutrition.

In 2023, with support from the Micro Enterprises Support Programme Trust (MESPT), Faith expanded her operations. She moved from working in a shared rental compound to leasing a larger facility where she now employs technicians and farm workers. During vaccination periods, she hires additional labour, creating employment opportunities for youth in her community.

Her work goes beyond production. As a Trainer of Trainers, she teaches poultry management, feed alternatives such as azolla and black soldier fly, and climate-smart practices that reduce costs. She also practices circular farming by crushing eggshell waste into calcium-rich poultry



feed.

“I decided my project must be circular,” she explains. “There should be no waste. Everything must have value.”

Despite her success, Faith faces gender-based skepticism in technical spaces. “Sometimes people don’t believe a woman can fabricate machines,” she says. “But when they see my work, they understand.” Her determination challenges stereotypes and inspires other young women to see agriculture as a pathway to leadership and economic independence.

As a mother of three, she balances business responsibilities with caregiving. Her income allows her to meet her family’s needs while employing others. She sees this as part of a larger mission.

“When women succeed, they lift their families and their communities,” she says. “Farming can change your life if you are focused.”

Looking ahead, Faith hopes to expand solar-powered incubators to reduce energy costs and environmental impact. She plans to employ more women and youth, strengthening inclusive and sustainable poultry value chains.

Faith Mutheu Kitata’s story reflects the goals of the International Year of the Woman Farmer. Women farmers are not only producing food they are innovating, protecting the environment,

reducing poverty and building resilient agrifood systems. Through courage, technical skill and determination, Faith is proving that when women are supported, communities grow stronger.



“Do not wait for employment. Start with what you have. Farming can change your life.” – Faith Kitata