In East Africa famine, drought, and mass refugees have taxed resources to the brink.

Read More about how ADRA is providing aid and support during these times.

http://www.adra.org/site/R?i=a8983Gbwn1Xk75w7XypXnw

Widows Looking Forward

"I used to spend all day in my house alone. I was very lonely; I talked to no one, and no one talked to me," says Siforo. "Now, because of ADRA, I am part of this community. Everything is different here."

The "Goats for Widows" project in ADRA's Really Useful Gift Catalog 2008 has given widows a brighter future in the western mountains of Karongi, Rwanda. The genocide brought widowhood to 500,000 women, many of whom moved to remote rural areas. ADRA, the only organization to answer the pleas of the Rwandan government to work in this nearly impossible-to-reach village at the top of a mountain, first taught women to read and write. At the end of the training, we asked the women to identify the widows in their villages. Visiting with the widows, we introduced the idea of goat banks and the Goats for Widows project.

Read More

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END-ANTISPAM-VOTING-LINKS
Fall 2011 ADRA Works

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"I have been a widow for 17 years raising my four children. There was no one to help me," says Siforo. "First, ADRA taught me to read and write. Now I am teaching other women. With ADRA’s guidance, we formed a cooperative and learned to work together. We did not do this before because we did not trust each other. We started planting vegetables together. Then ADRA helped us build a goat house.

"When we started to build the goat house, we started to feel hope. Before then, we found it impossible to believe that we would be given goats," Siforo continues. "I was named president of the cooperative. ADRA inspired us to work hard and quickly. We planted elephant grass for our future goats.

"Then one day, ADRA took all the widows in the cooperative to the market to buy goats!” Siforo exclaims. "We were each allowed to choose a goat. Each woman did not choose her own goat; we chose goats together as a cooperative. Then we created groups to care for the goats-one group one day, another the next, and so on. This way, no one has to stop working in the garden or caring for their home and children.”

"We are one of 15 ADRA widow cooperatives in this area,” says Rachel. "ADRA helped us build the goat building so that we can easily capture both the goats’ urine and manure. They taught us to make our own organic compost that we use in our vegetable gardens. Today, we have 36 goats and 13 kids.

"We have repaid our goats to the ADRA goat bank and have not sold any goats,” says Rachel. "Together, we have decided to have a better hybrid stock. When we do sell the old goats, the income will solve many problems. We have decided that some of the income will be used to pay the health costs for all the widows in the cooperative. To have health coverage from the government we must pay 3,000 Rwanda francs [$5] each year. This is a luxury we do not have. Soon this will be possible.”

"These are our goats, and it will be hard to sell them,” says Siforo, starting to cry. "These goats have brought all of us widows together. They have made us family. This cooperative will continue because we have learned
how much better our life is working on everything together."

Learn more about ADRA's work in Africa and see where your support has allowed us to make an impact.