

Transforming lives:
Short stories from
the AACES Shared
Futures Project



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Transforming Dreams to Reality:

Nhunzvi Nutrition Garden

A 32-year-old father of one, Naison Nhau is a beneficiary of the Nhunzvi nutrition garden. He takes care of two of his late uncle's daughters who are of school age. Before he was selected to benefit from the nutrition garden intervention, his family consumed mainly sadza and vegetables and could only afford one or two meals per day. Naison struggled to pay school fees for the children, who were often sent, back home due to non-payment.

Naison was selected by fellow community members to benefit from the nutrition garden because of his vulnerability status. Naison was well known in the community for being a hard worker but he lacked resources to embark on sustainable and income-generating activities. Naison was allocated a plot in the garden and received support from the project in the form of vegetable seed packs and training from the AGRITEX officers on crop and pest management. By working hard on his garden plot, he began to provide adequate food for his family. His wife Chipso Katsande was very supportive of the project and encouraged him to engage the headman to obtain a piece of land where they could transfer the knowledge he had learnt and establish their own garden. Acting on this idea, they cultivated their own plot, using seedlings from his Nhunzvi garden plot as a start-up kit. The couple worked together, and because they consumed produce from the community garden, the harvests from their garden plot were mainly to sell. They sold their vegetables in Harare at the Mbare "musika", the largest vegetable market in the capital.

Over a period of six months, Naison and Chipso made a profit of \$1,000. They managed to pay the outstanding school fees, buy a cow for \$350, buy building materials worth \$500 (10 bags of cement, 2 door frames, 10 iron sheets asbestos and 10 rolls of brick force), clothing for his family as well as managing to purchase agricultural inputs on time. Naison is currently constructing a two-roomed family house.

"Through the garden, I feel as if I am employed. I earn more than \$200 per month. My family looks healthier and we are now a very happy family. My wife makes the most delicious meals I have ever tasted," said Naison. Chipso also shared the same sentiments highlighting that their marriage is now stronger and they have been drawn closer by working together as they spend more time together. "We are planning to construct a toilet and pot rack from the profits of the next harvest," said Chipso. Naison and Chipso appreciate the support received from the project and hope that this support can be extended to other people within their community and beyond.



Chipo Katsande, working in her garden.



Naison Nhau in his tomato garden.



Chipo Katsande, working in her garden.

Disability is not inability

Edith's story

There is a general misconception that a person with a disability cannot live a normal life. The approach is different at Community Technology Development Organization as we seek to deliver interventions that do not require people with disabilities to re-design their lives, BUT which create space within existing structures as well as enhance skills and interests they already have. To achieve this, CTDO employed a cocktail of strategies for inclusion and these were :

- Working closely with disability oriented organizations
- Creating an enabling environment through community awareness raising sessions on disability
- Engage with policy makers at local level and school authorities to push for disability inclusion and budgeting

Edith is a small livestock beneficiary from Makosa ward in Mutoko. Edith was selected in 2011 by fellow community members to benefit from the small livestock pass-on scheme being rolled out by CTDO under the AACES Shared Futures Project. Edith received 2 goats and 4 chickens, training on how to care for the animals and the community assisted her construct the livestock penn.

This development changed Edith's life for the better. Before owning livestock, Edith used to spend most of her time at the family field ensuring that animals do not graze or trample on the crops. Edith says this was a very boring and lonely life, she at times felt that it was a strategy to shy her away from the public because of her physical appearance.

After receiving the livestock, Edith's life changed for the better. This boosted her self esteem, she felt happier and the community started viewing her differently. She looked forward to each and every day as she now had something to do which she truly enjoyed.



Edith with her livestock.

Tibu Peanut Butter making group

Who ever imagined that peanut butter could go way beyond just being a delicious nutritious spread and sauce for various meat and vegetable dishes in Mutoko? Tibu farmer field school members have a different story to tell as they are now well aware that groundnuts have great potential to turn their lives around for the better.

Tibu started off as a farmer field school which graduated into a farmer business school over a three year period after having successfully completed the farming as a business course. The farmer business school has since established a peanut butter making business entity amongst other business entities. The peanut butter project comprises of ten members.

The members work collectively and their day starts at 0900hrs and ends at 1400hrs and often encompasses shelling, roasting and the actual grinding. The group also complements the hands-on work by incorporating the crucial aspects that contribute to a successful business which are record keeping, packaging and marketing of their product.

The group sells their peanut butter at \$1.00 per 375ml, targeting schools, clinics, and neighboring households. "We have not yet started selling our peanut butter outside our village or designated ward because the demand locally is overwhelming. Everybody loves our peanut butter because it is smooth and tasty! It tastes a lot different from the one ground using a stone." said Mrs Katsande.

The project is very involving as the production and processing of the groundnuts is all done onsite. The group grows the ground nuts, harvests, manages and handles the harvest. This model has instilled project ownership and enhances the business's success. The women who are part of the group feel that they have been empowered and have gained respect, along with profits. "We are now a force to reckon with at our homes as well as in the community. During community meetings such as breastfeeding campaigns, we are often given time to talk to the people, advertise our project and also share the benefits of adding peanut butter to one's diet." said Mrs Mashero.



Mr Mashero packaging peanut butter.



Tibu peanut butter.



Awakening the Sleeping Giant

Introducing Disability Inclusive Latrines in Mutoko

Kawere Primary School is one of the five schools that benefitted from the disability inclusive school latrine project. The school has an enrolment of 815 pupils of which 440 are boys and 375 are girls. The school had one block of 8-squat-hole latrine that catered for the whole school, making the ratio of the number of children-to-squat holes way above the recommended.

Worse still, the type of latrine that was there was not the recommended Blair type such that it would not completely hide from the public anyone using the latrine. The school has pupils living with disabilities who would find it difficult using the old latrine.

Admire Chitambure, a 13 year old grade 6 pupil at Kawere primary school living with disabilities, has mobility challenges due to physical impairment of his legs. Admire also has a speech challenge, with his speech slightly uncoordinated and slow. Admire explains, with difficulty, that all these years using the school latrine has been a big challenge for him because squatting was very painful. The squat-holes had no seat or side rails for support when squatting. The young boy confided that coming to school was one torrid time once he learned how difficult it would be whenever he wants to use the latrine.

Now that a disability friendly latrine is at their school, Admire expressed his joy and appreciation of CTDO's good work. In his own words, Admire concedes, "I am very happy and grateful that CTDO has done this great job. I am now able to use the latrine freely and easily without any difficulty. In fact, I am no longer squatting but am able to sit on the seat." He also appreciates the fact that the hand washing facility was built right next to the door of the latrine.



Admire Chitambure accessing disability inclusive latrine.



Admire Chitambure accessing disability inclusive latrine.



Kawere Primary School disability inclusive latrine.

Men's dialogue sessions on health: supporting women and children

In Zimbabwe unequal relations between Men and Women and the unwillingness of some men to participate or get involved in women's health issues has resulted in the low uptake of health services by women. The project in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Child Care engaged communities, especially men, in dialogues on ways of promoting male involvement in PMTCT initiatives. The effective result of these interventions was an increase in the number of men accompanying their partners to ANC visits, allowing and encouraging health centre delivery, couple counselling sessions and couple initiated HIV testing.



Traditional leaders discussing women's health issues at Kawere Maternal Waiting Home.



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No. 286 Northway Rd, Prospect, Waterfalls, Harare, Zimbabwe