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TAKUNDA GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT STORIES



OCTOBER 2023



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Takunda in Brief

Zimbabwe Takunda is a five-year 55 million USD United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) funded Resilience Food Security Activity (RFS), implemented by CARE International and its partners, International Youth Foundation (IYF), Family Health International (FHI 360), Nutrition Action Zimbabwe (NAZ), Bulawayo Projects Center (BPC), Environment Africa, ICRISAT and FANRPAN. The Program focuses on Manicaland and Masvingo Provinces in Zimbabwe, targeting 301,636 vulnerable and food insecure women, men, and youth (young men and women) from extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households and households with adolescents, children, and women at risk of chronic and acute malnutrition. The following four factors impede their ability to attain food and nutrition security:

- Poverty and limited financial resources;
- Gender inequalities and limiting negative social norms;
- Cultural beliefs and behavior; and
- Limited youth empowerment

Takunda addresses these challenges through several critical pathways aimed at sustainably and equitably improving **1. Household Income, 2. Nutritional Status, and 3. Resilience to shocks and stressors**, prioritizing the cross-cutting areas of gender equality, youth empowerment, local governance accountability, and environmental safeguards. Gender equality and youth empowerment interventions aim to reduce gender disparities and increase the capability of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making at the household, community, and institutional level.

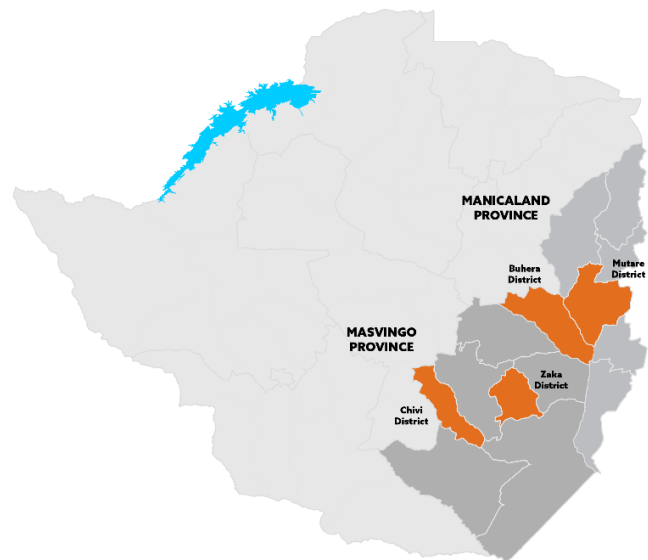


Figure 1: USAID Takunda Operational Areas

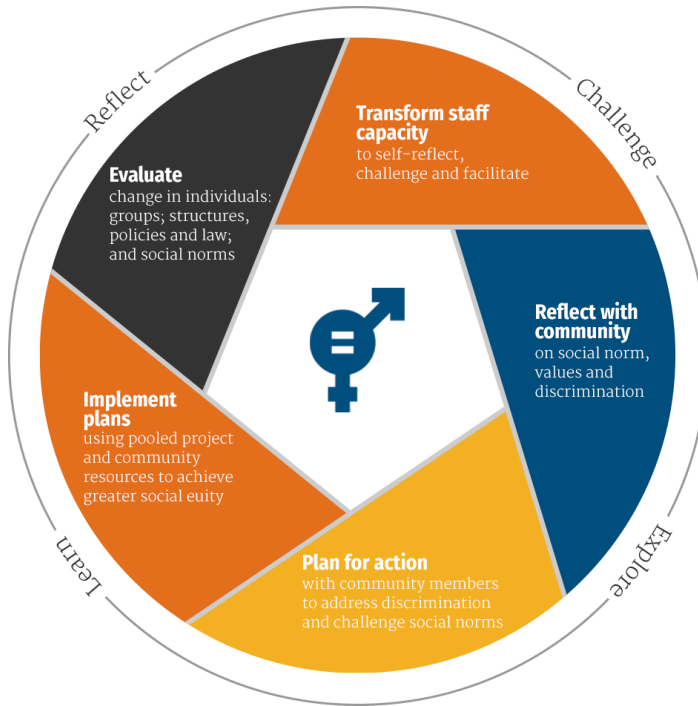
Gender Integration in Takunda

While women and adolescent girls contribute about 70% of household and family labor, they continue to suffer from gender and generational inequalities that are rooted in patriarchal, cultural, and religious values, beliefs, and practices. The inequalities have serious implications on income generating and resilient livelihoods capacity, nutrition, maternal and child health, hygiene and community resilience to disasters, shocks, and stressors. Women's constraints and competing roles as mothers, housewives and income-earners leave them with little time and energy to grow and prepare food, resulting in negative impacts on the nutrition of their families. With the understanding that promoting food security requires attending to the different needs, experiences of women, girls, men and boys and addressing gender, age, life stage and social dynamics, Takunda employs Social



Analysis and Action (SAA) as the core approach, creating space to engage with men’s groups, women’s groups, young people’s groups, Farmer Field Business Schools (FFBS) and the entire community for dialogue and consultation towards positive norm change.

Social Analysis and Action Model



SAA is a model through which individuals and communities explore and challenge the social norms, beliefs and practices around equitable role distribution, participation, access and control of resources and decision making. The goal of SAA in Takunda is to catalyze a community-led change process through which community members challenge restrictive norms and act together to create more equitable gender norms as well as community support for household and food nutrition and security programming. Unique and central to SAA is that the process of critical reflection and dialogue begins with staff and SAA facilitators to prepare for implementing the model with the community. The SAA process has four core elements: 1) reflection, dialogue and exploration, 2) envisioning alternatives and challenging harmful norms, and 3) action for improved food security and nutrition: 4) Continuous learning to improve and adapt. This booklet presents impact stories of change for women and men as a result of engaging in SAA dialogues.



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How a monthly \$5 investment led to one household's access to diversified income sources



APRIL, 6, 2022: PHILOMINA RONGEDZAI (46) proudly stands inside her house, "Takunda yauya, ndakwanisa kutenga ma bag 5 esemende ndikawedzera kukudza imba yangu nekuwedzera imwe room kuti aite matatu", after joining Takunda, I managed to buy 5 bags of cement which helped me to extend my house and to add another room to make them three rooms. ©Sydney Saungweme/ CARE

"I want my life to show progress like a graph, progressing from selling clothes, expanding my business to including poultry, piggery until I park a car here," as **PHILOMINA RONGEDZAI** (46) points at a cool shade made by a mulberry tree at her homestead. A mother of four children, three girls and a boy, she used to earn a living from securing casual work, mainly weeding neighbors' farms for two to three days only to earn a bucket of maize (17.5kg) worth an equivalent of Five United State Dollars. Undertaking hard labor was new to Philomina as she came from a background of a better life prior to marrying **OSMOND CHARUMBIRA** (53). "My father worked and would provide food every month and paid fees in full yearly," as she explains how her previous life was comfortable.

Philomina remembers, "One time I failed to raise exam fees for my son, **PRIDE RONGEDZAI** when he was 16 (turning 22 on 19/08/2022) to sit for crucial Ordinary level exams" Philomina humbly sort assistance, "I had to ask my aunt for help to pay exam fees for my son." Not one to be left behind, she did not want the same fate for her daughters. "I attended the Takunda Community Visioning (CV) process at Mhiti Business Centre in November 2021 and learned the River code."



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The *River Code* is an illustrative short skit depicting how different people internalize the process of getting help to cross a river. Some need to be carried, others need to be hand-held, and others need to be shown how to cross, while there are those that fear and simply don't attempt. Philomina says she is one of those that learned how to cross, while there are some members in her community that



Figure 2 APRIL, 6, 2022: OSMOND CHARUMBIRA (53), Philomina's husband, showcasing a section of the house his wife developed using proceeds from the VSLA. ©Sydney Saungweme/ CARE

did not even attempt. The process resulted in the development of a Community Action Plan (CAP) where VSLA was one of the activities of interest of the village.

As a resident of Nyambi village, **Philomina** always wanted to save money through VSLA, but Osmond had reservations, "We had tried this before with another donor we were made to contribute towards the purchase of butter-making machines. We were swindled of the little that we had by some of the members. So, when I heard that my wife wanted to be part of the

VSLA, I was reminded of this experience," said a cautious **Osmond**. Convinced that VSLA would improve the quality of life, Philomina joined Tichafara VSLA behind Osmond's back, "Some of the things I did without telling my husband, Osmond." When Osmond started to see the returns from his wife's membership in VSLA, he started to be supportive.

Upon joining, **Philomina's** initial loan was USD60 which she invested in a clothes Income Generating Activity (IGA), purchasing clothes worth USD40 and the other USD20 used for transportation to and from Harare and realized an income of USD130. She made another round of orders worth USD100 and realized an income of USD250, which was used to repay her loan with interest back to her VSLA group.



APRIL, 6, 2022: PHILOMINA RONGEDZAI (46) poses for a group photograph with members of her family. ©Sydney Saungweme/ CARE

Philomina is determined and motivated to venture into more diversified and profitable income-generating activities, resonating with her dream of seeing her life as a rising graph. She has set her eyes on investing her income in dried fish, poultry, shop, and eventually piggery towards reaching her long-term dream of owning a car in the near future.



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Written by: Emmanuel Mazangwa, Everlisto Taruvinga and Sydney Saungweme



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Empowering Women Through Sustainable Farming Practices



In 2012, **SIPHATHISIWE SIBANDA-GODHINI** (49) and her husband relocated to his home village in Ward 14, Zaka, from Gokwe. Seven hundred kilometers from the home she knew in Sikhobokhobo (Nkayi), Siphathisiwe found herself alone and overwhelmed with five sons to raise as her husband decided to migrate to South Africa in search of better opportunities. Opting to farm to fend for her children, she found it would be a little more challenging to do than in her rural home, *“This area is prone to low rainfall and, sometimes, we can’t even get water to drink. At times, my family and I fail to harvest our crops because our soil lacks nutrients, and I cannot access seed or fertilizer,”* a frustrated Siphathisiwe says. As a result, she has to walk at least 7km to the nearest water source as there are no boreholes near her homestead.

Access to water is only one of the challenges the Godhini family faces, *“On the rare occasions that we harvest our crop, we do not have market spaces where I can sell my produce.”* Siphathisiwe’s challenges are echoed by many women in both Manicaland and Masvingo provinces. Determined to change the fate of her family’s livelihood, Siphathisiwe joined a workshop to harness ways to increase agricultural productivity.



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DECEMBER, 2021: SIPHATHISIWE SIBANDA-GODHINI (49) a farmer in Zaka, shovels soil out of a dead level contour she will use to harness water. © Godfrey Muvhuti/ Takunda RFSA

Motivated, Siphathisiwe says, *“I learned how to create dead level contours, and on its edges, I planted different crops. In my permagarden, I learnt how to double dig and plant crops with higher nutritional value like spinach, green pepper, covo, and rape. I now know how to use a combination of fruit trees and a half-moon to maintain moisture in the soil. The training encouraged me to build a toilet, and I installed a tippy tap just outside it.”*

Today, she walks purposefully through her maize field, slowing down briefly to inspect the maize one stalk. Pleased with the progress her maize crop has made, Siphathisiwe makes her way towards the permagarden, *“After applying what I learned, I am confident that we will harvest more than we ever expected because the contours collected water and the plants harnessed the moisture brought by the water. I hope I will continue to farm this land because it has contributed to improving my family’s livelihood.”*



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DECEMBER, 2021: SIPHATHISIWE (49), a farmer in Zaka, stands next to the deadline level contour she created. Two months later, her maize stalks have grown, the pumpkin leaves are providing shade and the soil has visibly retained moisture. © Godfrey Muvhuti/ Takunda RFSA

Siphathisiwe walks into her permagarden, characterized by a fence made from a repurposed mosquito net her husband sent from South Africa. She picks up a yellow metal dish and begins to pick tomatoes, “I added more dead level contours, increased the number of doubles dug beds, and added beans to increase nutritional meal options for my family.”

This has impacted Siphathisiwe’s day-to-day life, “It has created more time for me to attend to other household tasks and participate at community meetings. I used to irrigate my garden every three days, and now I only do so once a week. This is because my family and I mulched our garden beds and installed sheds to slow down the impact of heat on our crops.”



MARCH 02, 2022: SIPHATHISIWE SIBANDA-GODHINI (49) a farmer based in Ward 14, Zaka holds a metal dish filled with produce- tomatoes and green pepper- harvested from her permagarden. © Godfrey Muvhuti/ Takunda RFSA



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With the free time added to her schedule, Siphathisiwe has committed to diversifying her sources of income, *“I can sell the maize and vegetables from my garden. I have chickens, goats, and breed cattle. The income generated from projects contributes to my children’s education.”* She encourages other women like her to adopt and incorporate the same resilience design systems and ensure the improvement of their livelihoods.

Written by Godfrey Muvhuti & Tariro Tshuma

Harvesting of Good Fortune



Fifty-nine-year-old LUCIA ZINDIMO lives in Musiringofa Village in ward 11; Mutare lives with a family of ten, seven of which are school-going children. Lucia’s homestead was identified as a potential location for implementing resilience design structures during the community visioning process.

The criteria for selection included identifying households with poor soil fertility, inadequate water- for both consumption and irrigation, land degradation, and inadequate inputs for agricultural production. Lucia expressed interest in working with fellow community members in her own right, opening her residence for other farmers in Ward 11 to learn.

“I constructed a half-moon (bioswale) to recharge the well,” shares Lucia. In addition, five dead level contours and bioswales were constructed to reduce the speed of water runoff, harvest, distribute, and allow the water to sink underground for crop use and recharge of water sources. At the homestead, greywater management structures for the bathroom and pots cleaning water were put in place, repurposing the water and redirecting it towards planted trees.



OCTOBER 2021: Lucia Zindimo's resilience design plot during the process of initial implementation in Musiringofa village, Ward 11 in Mutare district. © Kudakwashe Murambadoro/ TAKUNDA RFSA



DECEMBER 2021: One of Lucia Zindimo's bioswales and crops during the developmental stages in Musiringofa village, Ward 11 in Mutare district. © Lawrence Nyangwande/ TAKUNDA RFSA

Lucia boasts, “These contours band water swales work very well at conserving moisture for my crops. The cowpeas, pumpkins, and maize I planted on the contours are growing well. The cowpeas and pumpkins are already ripe, and my children are going to school on a full stomach.”

The water level in her well has increased in volume, surpassing previous seasons. She now has adequate water for family consumption and continues to reap a healthy harvest on her plot. This is only one of the successes Lucia has noted at her residence.

Written by: Lawrence Nyangwande



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Eugenia's Mission to Promote Gender Equality



JUNE 05, 2022: Everyday, ZACHARIAH ZAVA (51) helps his wife fetch water for their household from a nearby stream in Musakanda village, Ward 4 in Zaka district. © Charmaine Chitate/ CARE

EUGENIA MUZAVAZI's (45) neighbors were always curious to know what she did to make her husband, **ZACHARIAH ZAVA (51)**, help around the house. Some of them felt it was unacceptable for a man to fetch water and attend to household chores, it's his wife's role. It was difficult for her to explain her husband's commitment to easing the burden of work on her shoulders and creating time for her to make a meaningful contribution to the community.

Egged on by Zachariah, Eugenia took on the role of a gender champion with the hope of addressing social norms affecting the equitable distribution of household chores and women's participation in public spaces. Eugenia, trained in Social Action and Analysis (SAA), male engagement, disability inclusion, and gender-based violence, now hosts monthly meetings to cascade the learnings and manage the community's feedback and concerns.



JUNE 05, 2022: EUGENIA MUZAVAZI (45) is a gender champion and a member of lead elderly women group. © Charmaine Chitate/ CARE

This has contributed to a wider acceptance of men tending to household chores and joining in community garden-related activities. Eugenia has also ensured that the community is aware of the referral pathways available to them by delivering training at the village level and this contributed to a decrease in gender-based violence.

Written by: Siphwe Maphosa



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Fostering women's participation in public spaces



After her care group meeting, Dorothy Marivasa, stands by the side of a road carrying a bag containing learning materials she uses as a lead mother in Mamutse village, Ward 29 - Zaka. © Tariro Tshuma/ TAKUNDA RFSA

Thirty-three-year-old DOROTHY MARIVASA lives in Mamutse village under Chief Bota in Ward 29 Zaka district. The last born in a family of 11, Dorothy was spoilt by her parents as they provided everything she wanted and needed more than they ever did for her siblings. She cherished the memories of her upbringing as she as they clashed with the reality of marriage in a patriarchal society.

Dorothy met and married Christopher from Dekeza village in 2007. Together they have four children, the eldest being fourteen years of age. As the couple is not formally employed, they rely on horticulture and casual jobs such as brick molding & preparing other people's fields to earn a living. This has led to their waking time being consumed with daily tasks to make ends meet. The transition into becoming Christopher's wife was a difficult experience for Dorothy.

It was not her place to voice her concerns but to take instructions from her husband without question. It wasn't her place to discuss some of the challenges they face as a household, let alone advise him on the best decision to make for their family, as it always led to frustration.

The onus was on Dorothy to tend to the household chores, including fetching water, as Christopher did not believe it was his place to assist with around the household as he had a wife and children to do so. "His tone was always harsh when he spoke to the children and I," confides Dorothy and adds she was not allowed to



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participate in community meetings, as the husband felt it was the men's job to plan for their women and children.

With the advent of the Takunda project, Christopher attended a meeting where a team from Takunda was sensitizing the community on male champion training and group registrations. Christopher decided to follow through on what he learned and joined a men's fora group led by a peer. Dorothy said, "Joining the men's fora meetings transformed him. Everything changed, and we started planning as a family."

Cheerful, Dorothy is grateful for the peace and happiness in her family. Christopher now actively and openly discusses their financial issues with her and the children. Sometimes, he fetches water and helps her wash the dishes, a job which was previously done by Dorothy and the children. Christopher said, "My family did not believe it during the first days when they saw me doing dishes and fetching water; to them, it was a joke." Now they are used to it. Dorothy had this to say about her household vision "I want us to succeed as a family through Takunda and for my family to remain united."

Christopher has gone on to encourage Dorothy to attend community meetings. His support led to her joining a village savings and loans association in her village and provided her with the initial capital.

This has boosted her confidence to participate in public spaces, where she is now a lead mother mentoring pregnant and lactating young women from her village in a care group.

Written by: Tariro Tshuma

A Remarkable Transformation Into A Supporter Of Gender Equality



Elias Mahachi. © Shingirirai Mashangu/CARE

At the end of each working day, **ELIAS MAHACHI**'s household was apprehensive as his family knew he was now on his way home. *"I was renowned for gender-based violence in my community. I would beat my wives occasionally and for no good reason,"* Elias shares. Now in his fourth marriage, he looks back on his life choices to paint an image of the man he once was, *"I was a harsh and violent family man who resolved small misunderstandings with a slap across the face without weighing the main cause of it."* His physical advantage as a man was not enough, *"I believed that as the head of the family, the opinions of a woman, 'my wives,' should never override mine. As an alcoholic, I carried grievances from the bar. I offloaded them on my wife at home even when she had never wronged me,"* a bold admission from Elias from Shonhiwa village, Cluster 1, Buhera district in Zimbabwe.

Elias' confession is not unique; however, it takes a brave and transformed man to acknowledge alternative ways to resolve conflicts. Following his participation in 'Training for Transformation (TfT)' delivered 2022, Elias volunteered for the 'Feedback between leaders and fellow community members' session. The session is anchored on the reciprocity of feedback, where community members share comments and observations about their day-to-day interactions with their leaders.

In the community, Elias' name became synonymous with gender-based violence and mayhem influenced by his low social capital. He emphasizes, *"I have changed. I now spend most of my time working for my family's survival. The community is shocked to see that I no longer indulge in acts of violence besides the fact that I am human; I have a temper sometimes."*



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Having gone through the community visioning process for his community, he attended complementary sessions on Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Social Analysis and Action (GEDI-SAA) and other Takunda-led interventions where violence was consistently underscored as an enemy of successful development. During feedback after participating in the Training for Transformation, Elias shared, and the participating community members unanimously agreed that “At home, my children do not suffer emotionally, and when they see me because there is now peace, love, and happiness at home. They see a friend and a father.” He has gone on to support his wife to participate in a village savings and loans and jointly attend Takunda and other partner sessions so that we grow in together while helping each other to take good care of the children.

As the Vice-Chairperson of Ward community-led monitoring and evaluation committee (CLM & E), the community is inspired by the prospects of transformation in their locale under his leadership. *“I am a confident leader, and I encourage others to work hard rather than waste time and energy in violence. I am a farmer, I am a gender champion, I am a vice-chair, and I am happy.”*

Written by: Shingirirai Mashangu



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113th Zimbabwe Agricultural Show: Spotlight on USAID Takunda's Premiere



Tinashe Pedzai (39), his wife, Privilege Janga (31) and their son Anotidaishhe (17 months) at the Harare Showgrounds © Kaizer Makope/ CARE

This year, USAID Takunda, a resilience food security program working in Manicaland (Buhera & Mutare rural) and Masvingo (Chivi & Zaka), made its debut at the 113th edition of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show (ZAS). As part of its legacy, ZAS offered a platform where farmers and those offering services to farmers to showcase adaptations of shared agricultural practices and how these have contributed to their productivity and lastly create linkages for knowledge sharing and commerce.

Launched under the theme 'Sustained Growth. Adaptation. Productivity. Linkages,' the ZAS week (August 28 – September 02) was a national platform for farmers invited by USAID Takunda to have peer-to-peer conversations advocating for the adoption of the Resilience Design Approach for enhanced productivity. At the event, USAID Takunda presented nine smallholder farmers from three out of four of the program's implementing areas. These operational areas are characterized by low rainfall and bad soils leading to little to no productivity. USAID Takunda's exhibition, delivered in collaboration with CARE International in Zimbabwe, was anchored on Tinashe Pedzai, a smallholder farmer and 'Resilience Design Master' from Museki village in Ward 14, Zaka, and his wife, Privilege Janga, a lead mother in a care group. The team, were a representation of at least six of the 16 local service providers USAID Takunda identified in its sustainability parameters namely, *Community Animal Health Workers/Paravets, Lead Farmers/Market Facilitators, Lead Mothers, Business Development Facilitators, Community-Led Monitoring & Evaluation Committee and Community Weather Forecasters.*

As the exhibition week progressed, participants received feedback from peers and customers on the quality of their product coupled with suggestions on how to widen their client base. Between them, and despite coming from different districts, the farmers exchanged information on standards of presentation and agreed on a standard pricing model for their product. Together, they ensured that each Enriched Porridges group made a sell. Where sales were low, they strategized together and stepped out of their comfort zones to source more customers. **MANETA MATINGWINA** from Muganuri village, Cluster 4, Ward 24, in Zaka district is a Facilitator at Tichaedza Farmer Field Business School,

a Community-led Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Vice-Chair, a Business Development Facilitator and Enriched Porridges participant, *“We thought we would sell a packet or two. We were surprised when people said they liked our porridge and were buying many packets. Our millet and roundnut porridge was most popular. Sitting at home, waiting for our friends to buy our porridges will not work for us anymore. Here we learned that we can approach random people and convert them to customers. We are going*



back to make more porridges to meet the demand of all the customers who shared their contact details with us wanting to order more,” shares Maneta on how showcasing at ZAS boosted her confidence. Promotion of enriched porridges is being done through care groups as Patience Marange a lead mother from Chitakatira village in Ward 15, Mutare notes, *“We called it Super Enriched Porridge because most of our children are malnourished. The ingredients we combined to make the porridge provide nutrients. We just need to work on developing more attractive packaging as some of our competitors won customers because of this. We met with people from Buy Zimbabwe and they shared the same feedback.”* The enriched porridge participants, who are care group members and lead mothers, sold a total of US \$141 worth of product and the highest grossing day being the 5th day of the event, when ZAS was opened to the public. Maneta adds, *“In addition to this, and as an FFBS Facilitator, I spoke to the Holiday Inn and told them that we’re looking forward to selling to them including our beetroot, cauliflower, and peas to them even to OK stores and Pick ‘n’ Pay.”*

Two additional key linkages were made, the first with the media and the second, with Mr. Ivan Craig, a respected influencer of public opinion and policy on farming innovation.

In the first, Zimbabwe Television News (ZTN) and the national broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) interviewed Tinashe Pedzai and Maneta Mantigwina to get a holistic view of the impact of climate change on small holder farmers. The ZTN interview was precursed by an interview with the President of Zimbabwe, where His Excellency, Emmerson Mnangagwa shared the national plight of the smallholder farmers and the various approaches the Government of Zimbabwe has used to address low-productivity with a particular reference to *Pfumvudza*. Tinashe’s interview was a continuation of the



AUGUST 29, 2023: Left to Right - **MANETA MATINGWINA** (43) from Mugwanuri village in Ward 24, Zaka district, and **PATIENCE MARANGE** (40) from Chitakatira village in Ward 15, Mutare, collaborate in promoting and selling an array of enriched porridges they produce. In a single day, the two made sales worth just over US\$40 and look forward to receiving more customers at the stand. © Kaizer Makope/CARE



conversation, at a human interest level of a smallholder farmer, where he shared the benefits of *improved-pfumvudza*, bringing the resilience design approach conversation to regional television. This conversation was carried to, and mirrored on ZBC with an addition from Maneta on the role of the Community-led Monitoring and Evaluation Committee to support the implementation of both Government-led and development-led initiatives and innovations to ensure sustainable outcomes.



ARDA Board Chair, Mr. Ivan Craig, in discussion with USAID Takunda participants (L to R) Gandani Nhachi (43) from Buhera, Tinashe Pedzai (39) from Zaka and Sithebile Zingwe (50) from Buhera. The three are Farmer Field Business School Facilitators, where their roles are anchored on Seed Multiplication (Sithebile), Animal Health (Gandani) and Resilience Design (Tinashe). © Kaizer Makope/ CARE

Lastly, a visit from Ivan Craig, the Board Chair of the Agricultural & Rural Development Authority, cemented the realisation of USAID Takunda’s goals for exhibiting. These goals were embodied in **TINASHE PEDZAI**’s statement, “When I left Zaka to attend this event, I yearned to teach what I had learned through USAID Takunda and share how I had adapted some of these approaches - to peers from all over Zimbabwe. I also wanted to meet representatives from different organisations related to farming looking to market produce from my next harvest season, search for any farming inputs I don’t have and return to Zaka to share the information gained with other farmers. My expectations were met. In discussions with different visitors to our stand, some

expressed an interest in giving us access to markets, some wanted us to visit their areas and consult for them on the resilience design structures. I look forward to working with them as I shared that I can only do this at a fee and they were agreeable. This fee will ensure that, outside of my own farming, I earn enough income to take care of my family’s needs.” Mr. Craig is a key stakeholder with the potential to facilitate the adoption of resilience design at a national level through his role at ARDA and his many features on farming related programming on national television. Enthralled by the confidence exuded by the participants and the quality of content they shared, he shared an interest in further conversations. Markedly, he was impressed by the increased harvest Tinashe noted between *Pfumvudza* and *Improved-Pvumvudza*. By the end of the conversation, Mr. Craig was able to articulate the key concepts of the resilience design approach and a follow-up conversation is required to link this engagement with USAID Takunda’s partnership launch with the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Analysis Network (FANRPAN), held in February of this year. Engaged, Mr. Craig will be a key proponent in increasing awareness of USAID Takunda’s upcoming policy paper on the impact of the resilience design approach.

Written by: Godfrey Muvhuti & Charmaine Chitate



Championing resilience design activities in Sengejira Village



Netsai Zira stands in the middle of her maize field. Her maize crop has shown resistance to harsh climate conditions. © Juliet Madhuku/ TAKUNDA RFSA

Buhera is in natural Region 5, an area associated with low rainfall, extreme weather conditions, and other events associated with climate change. Netsai Zera, a mother of three with two twin boys doing form four, lives in Sengejira Village, Ward 15 of Buhera district.

Netsai is one of five farmers who volunteered as she qualified to join the Takunda Resilience design team of five members who undergo resilience design

training and provide land for RD sites at their homesteads. Priority shocks inform the RD strategy. It stresses that the program has been identified through the community visioning process and secondary information and forms the foundation for increasing household resilience.

It is envisioned that these RD sites will be model composite sites characterized by the integration of WASH, Nutrition, Food Security, VSLAs, FFBS, and, Gender and Youth activities. Netsai's husband stays and works in Harare, and she wants to demystify the traditional myth that women do not own land. With the twins' help, the farmer dug two contour ridges and set a 0.02 perma-garden. The contours were helpful as they collected water and sustained pumpkins, cowpeas, and pigeon peas planted on the contour.



Netsai Zira's bioswale with pumpkins and cowpeas planted on top. The bioswale is in between 2 portions of her maize field. © Juliet Madhuku/ TAKUNDA RFSA



Netsai Zira scouting for pests and diseases on her pawpaw trees. The half-moons on the trees collected water which has subsided now and it has helped the trees to remain healthy. © Juliet Madhuku/ TAKUNDA RFSA

Netsai boasted, "I followed the RD principles I learned, and today, I have access to various vegetables. I've given some to my neighbors, and the nutrition in my vegetables has increased." The RD principles referred to by Netsai are *slow, spread, and sink* the collected water. She planted okra, carrots, beans, covo, and tomatoes in the Perma garden. Netsai indicated that by introducing a

multi-cropping system, she diversified her household diet, and a four-star diet is always on the table.



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She dug four infiltration pits in each contour and adopted a low-cost, environmentally friendly technology to manage surface runoff and erosion.



Netsai Zira's half moon with a dual purpose of supplying water to the fruit tree and recharging the deep well: © Emmanuel Mazangwa/ TAKUNDA RFSA



The Food For Assets (FFA) Officers admiring Netsai Zira's perma-garden with a variety of crops that help her improve household nutrition as well as share with friends. © Juliet Madhuku/ TAKUNDA RFSA

Netsai planted 33 paw-paw trees in December 2021, and despite the prolonged dry spell, the trees remained green due to water collected by the half-moons.

Written by: Joshua Bhuza