

ActionAid Zimbabwe
NEWSLETTER JAN-MAR 2020

**ACTIONAID
UPSCALES
DROUGHT
RESPONSE
PROGRAMME
as food crisis
and COVID-19
hit Zimbabwe**

**PREVENT THE
SPREAD OF
COVID-19**



WASH HANDS
FREQUENTLY WITH SOAP



AVOID TOUCHING
YOUR FACE



WEAR A MASK IF YOU
HAVE COUGH / FEVER



AVOID CLOSE CONTACT
WITH PEOPLE



STAY AT
HOME



AVOID CONTACT
WITH SICK PEOPLE



DISINFECT OBJECTS
& SURFACES



AVOID TRAVEL



AVOID FAKE
NEWS

ACTIONAID UPSCALES DROUGHT RESPONSE PROGRAMME as food crisis and COVID-19 hit Zimbabwe

From the **Head of Programmes and Resource Mobilization**



Andrew Itai Chikowore, ActionAid Zimbabwe, Head of Programmes and Resource Mobilisation

The year 2020 started on a positive note for ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ), despite the current COVID-19 Pandemic.

The tone was set with programmes planning across all priorities (departments) and projects with an aim of frontloading key activities during the first half of the year. More effort has been put towards food aid through the Lean Season Assistance (LSA) programme being implemented in Nyanga and Makoni in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP). AAZ has kept its promise to support communities in natural and man-made disasters. This has been achieved through assisting communities that were affected by Cyclone Idai in March 2019 to date. However, support is still required until they achieve sustainable livelihoods where they were before. AAZ

is currently providing support to communities affected by flash floods in Binga to help them safeguard the gains they had made through the livelihood programmes supported under the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF). Special mention goes to the ActionAid Global – International Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Team (IHART) that provided technical support during this period through upholding our humanitarian signature on promoting women led emergencies and accountability to all stakeholders.

We also put our energies towards supporting girls through the adolescent girls for improved quality of life programme through advocating service to provide sexual reproductive health rights among others. Great strides have been made using our feminist approach to advocate for the reduction of gender-based violence both at home and at the workplace as well as recognizing unpaid care work. This has been achieved by instituting action researches and policy positions that proffer solutions to end gender-based violence (GBV) and unpaid care work. On the same note, through our tax justice advocacy and campaigning work we

have been able to hold the government accountable for tax collection, allocation and spending to ensure that Government provided Gender Responsive Public Services to the citizens. This has included our work around advocating the government for improved health and agriculture sectors through social accountability monitoring.

Consequently, we have continued to provide livelihoods and resilience support to communities facing shocks resulting from prolonged droughts. This has been achieved through strategic programming targeted at the provision of short season and drought resistant grains, improvement of livestock breeds among other interventions. This has also been achieved through the goat and pork value chain project supported under the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme, with the aim of supporting communities to produce viable livestock products.

Despite the COVID 19 Pandemic that the world is faced with, we at ActionAid remain resilient and positive and believe that we need to work together to fight it together.

Stay Healthy and Safe, Let's not discriminate against COVID 19. ■



A woman receiving food assistance during the distribution process in Makoni

By **Nomsa Katsumbe**, Nyanga Lean Season Assistance District Coordinator

ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ), with funding from the World Food Programme (WFP) is upscaling its food drought response programme from 50454 people reached in Makoni with Lean Season Assistance (LSA) in December 2019 to 97558 people from Makoni and Nyanga in Manicaland Province being reached as a slow onset drought which has affected the country for the past 10 years escalates.

Zimbabwe is at the epicenter of a southern African food crisis with citizens facing daily consequences of a long term and multidimensional climate and macroeconomic crisis where over 7.7 million people are facing starvation according to latest government of Zimbabwe statistics. To respond to this, AAZ has thus scaled up its food distribution process from Makoni to Nyanga as the drought situation increases. Currently, a total of 418151 and 50628 vulnerable people in Makoni and Nyanga are receiving a monthly food basket of ration comprising 7.5kgs cereal, 1.18kgs pulses and 0.56kgs vegetable oil per each person.

People interviewed in Nyanga and Makoni, said food insecurities continued to increase as families were now having on one meal per day compared to three meals a day. One of the people assisted, Sarudzai Chibaya (31) from Nyatate Ward 17 of Nyanga said:

“As women we are the most affected by food shortages as children look up to the mother to provide them with food.

The food crisis is taking place at a time when Coronavirus (COVID-19), a new global crisis has struck the world, Zimbabwe included. The outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Zimbabwe with 11 cases and three death as at 9 April 2020, means the vulnerability of people living in poverty will continue to deepen as some of the protection measures cannot apply to communities concerned with finding food on the table for the families. The President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa declared COVID-19 a National Disaster in March 2020.

AAZ has continued to distribute the food in Makoni and Nyanga Districts as it follows the COVID-19

prevention measures of making sure the people assisted are practicing social distancing, washing hands regularly and staff wear masks and gloves to prevent the spread of the pandemic. ■



Social distancing during food distribution in Makoni



A woman washing hands before receiving food in Makoni



AAZ Staff taking precautionary measures amid COVID-19



Lean Season Assistance Programme, reaching out to the most vulnerable

By **Barnabas Halimani** M and E Officer, LSA programme

Chipo Kambango (65) of Mugomba Village in Ward 36, is one of the people assisted under the LSA programme being implemented in Makoni District. A widow with four grandchildren under her care, Chipo struggled to provide food and basic needs for them. A breakthrough in her family came when AAZ in partnership with the WFP introduced the LSA Programme in Makoni as one of vulnerable districts of Zimbabwe as per the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC) recent reports.

According to the ZIMVAC report recorded in March 2019, 40% of the people in Makoni District are economically marginalised while

20% live below the poverty datum line and live on less than US\$1 a day. Makoni, which has been experiencing incessant droughts in the past 10 years, has over the years been one of the prime agricultural areas for Zimbabwe which significantly contributed to the food reserves in the country.

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Chipo said: "I have been struggling to meet my grandchildren's food and other basic needs including school fees payment.

"My grandchildren were malnourished as they usually had unbalanced diet. I gave them porridge made from baobab fruits and sadza with sour milk in the evening. During the day they survived on gathering wild fruits from the nearby forest. My granddaughter was always sick and dropped out of school. I got stressed and depressed."

Poverty caused untold suffering to Chipo and her family. Fiona Kapita, the Sister in Charge at Mugoti Clinic which services the ward in which Chipo stays highlighted how bad Chipo's family' health status was. Fiona said Chipo's family had deficiencies in Vitamin A, C, Iron and Protein due to lack of food. She said this was also prevalent in Chipo's community. There were cases of severe acute malnutrition especially among children under the age of five and breastfeeding mothers.

In October 2019, Chipo was selected a beneficiary of the LSA Programme as the community. In December 2019 Chipo received her first food basket of 37.5kg of Maize grain, 7.5kgs of Pulses and 4 Litres Vegetable Oil. She also received 6kgs of super cereal plus porridge for her four-year-old granddaughter. Her granddaughter was underweight and had severe acute malnutrition according to the Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurements taken at Mugoti Clinic in June 2019.

"I am very grateful to God who created ActionAid people who came to my rescue during my time of need, I had nowhere to find food but now I am able to work in my field and no longer weak. My

grandchildren are now going to school with lunch boxes full of food. They are now able to play with other kids at school and participate in core curricular activities as was not the case before due to hunger. As a woman I am the recipient of the food assistance and I attended several trainings on conservation agriculture, where we learn new ways of farming and I am expecting an increased harvest to feed my family till next farming season."

Mr. Mhuriyengwe, ward 36, Makoni councilor said:

"The LSA programme has enabled people ample time to work in their fields as they no longer spend a lot of time scavenging for food some of its wild fruits. Many people in the ward including women are being trained on conservation farming which improves agricultural productivity."

AAZ has provided livelihoods support in Makoni and Nyanga districts for over a decade now and is currently giving food assistance to 50454 and 42332 people in Makoni and Nyanga Districts respectively for mitigating short-term (transitory) food insecurity during the peak of the hunger period (October 2019 to April 2020). The assistance is provided through a SCOPE card system, an electronic or cloud-based digital solution that helps AAZ and WFP to know better the people it serves so it can provide them a more personalized and helpful assistance. The SCOPE system is used to register people, regulate their entitlements, deliver that assistance and subsequently manage the operational data coming in, all serving to provide a responsive information system to guide effective programming. ■



Siwendaba Siavuwa

Child and forced marriages in Binga and Kariba communities as climate change takes toll

Siwendaba Siavuwa (31) of Sinasengwe Ward 4 of Binga got married at 15 after dropping out of school for two years. She completed her Grade 7 Examinations in 2002 and obtained 13 Units, which was a B class pass as per Zimbabwe education system. Instead of proceeding to Form 1, she stayed home and decided to marry two years after.

Now a mother of two children, Siwendaba wanted to pursue a sewing course had she continued with her education.

"My parents could not afford to pay school fees for me to continue with my education. All my family members including my other two young sisters did up to Grade 7 for their education," said Siwendaba who said she does not want the same thing to happen to her children.

"I will encourage my children to work hard, a boy and a girl and make sure I pay school fees for them to go up to university," Siwendaba said.

Many women in Swindeba's community have adjusted their eating habits to twice a day instead of three times a day due to food shortages caused by perennial droughts in the area. Many women in Siwendaba's community are opting to marrying at young ages so that they find someone to look after them.

"I decided to marry at the age of 15 because I was an orphan and had no one to look after me," said Pedzisai Mungwari (34), who is now a mother of one child from Kariba.

Babra Muchimbo (29) another woman from Siwendaba's community said she got married at 18 because her mother, who was a single parent who could not afford her education.

"I have two children, who are both girls and are going to school," said Babra who is supporting her family through a cattle breeding programme supported by Action-Aid and partners under a Zimbabwe Resilience Building

(ZRBF).

"We are now resorting to livestock projects as the crops are failing due to droughts. In 2017, I produced 20 bags of maize and in 2018, I only got one bag of maize which lasted for less than a month. Now we are doing better trade of livestock such as cattle and goats so that we can buy maize. We are also trying short season small grain crops like millet which do not require a lot of rains as part of the support under the ZRBF programme," said Babra.

There are reports of gender-based violence and early child marriages due to poverty and the food insecurity in the two districts.

Binga and Kariba, situated west of Zimbabwe lie mostly in the rainfall region 5 of Zimbabwe and perennially experience drought which has worsened in the past three areas. In Binga of the 25 Wards, 2 wards are in rainfall region 3 and receive good rains yearly. However, they cannot meet the needs of all the other wards which are in region 4 and 5. There has been a slow onset of the rains in both districts, with little rains falling in January 2020 and delayed by two months as they usually start in November every year but are changing due to climate change.

Government declared 2018-2019 rainfall season a disaster and the 2019-2020 is pointing to another

disaster for both districts. Due to poor rains farmers have had to replant between four or five times, wasting the much-needed seed and using uncertified seed. Government is being encouraged to do an early response following glaring signs showing a poor 2019-2020 season.

There is need to fundraise for women led emergency and protection programmes in Kariba and Binga which are missing in the food aid programmes being implemented by other players in Binga and Kariba. ■

Short season small grain crops promoting resilience building in the Zambezi Valley



Mavis Chuma admiring a short season millet crop

The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) programme is training farmers to produce short season small grain varieties to ensure farmers have food in the face droughts affecting Zimbabwe for the past 10 years. To improve the programming of the resilience work under the ZRBF, short season crops (up to three months) like pulses, small grains and maize are being recommended to ensure the communities cope with the droughts which have seen shorter rainfall seasons now.

The small grain crops, such as some varieties for sorghum and millet take three months to mature as compared to longer term varieties which take five months. The small grain crops also require less rains. This programme, which aims to improve the community's capacities to withstand shocks and stresses such as droughts is being implemented in the three districts of Binga, Kariba and Mbire in the Zambezi Valley supported by the ZRBF under the Zambezi Valley

Alliance (ZVA) partnership where ActionAid is the lead organization.

The Zambezi Valley, generally a dry region has in recent years been experiencing droughts whose severity is worsening yearly.

The food security situation caused by a multifaceted problem like climate change induced droughts and harsh economic situation, is increasing yearly in Zimbabwe for the past 10 years. ■



TOWARDS AN IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

ActionAid Zimbabwe partners, Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwean Chapter (FAWEZI), Aids Counselling Trust (ACT) and Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe (LCDZ) met district stakeholders on the 17th of February 2020 in Harare to discuss public service delivery for communities. This is aimed at improving the quality of life for adolescent girls in Shamva, Chitungwiza and Hopely. The meeting which was a one day workshop involving stakeholders such as District Development Coordinators (DDC), Ministry of Education, Ministry of women Affairs, National Prosecuting Authority, and among others is

part of ActionAid and partners' effort to contribute to an improved sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR) for adolescent girls who are the target for the Empowered Adolescent Girls for Improve Quality of Life Project. This is part of ActionAid Priority 1 which aims at Empowering women and Girls living in Poverty to challenge the structural causes of violence and secure economic justice. Above in the picture are the stakeholders and partners during the meeting on 17 February, and below is a link of some of the work under the adolescent girls initiative: <https://youtu.be/mjC9UeMaYhc> ■



Inaugural programme and all staff meeting to coordinate country programme

AAZ Country Director Joy Mabenge (at the front), giving his opening remarks at a programmes and staff meeting held in Harare from 18-20 February 2020. The meeting was held to guide 2020 activity implementation as part of the country programme coordination and deepening its programming under the 2018-2023 Citizens Collective Actions for Social Justice Strategy. The meeting was attended by AAZ staff members (in the picture above).



Activista in movement building to mainstream youth issues

Alex Mujeketwa, Activista Masvingo Province (at the front left) delivering his presentation on movement building.

Activista Zimbabwe kickstarted 2020 with a movement building exercise, co-creating the movement's guiding principles and code of conduct to advance the frontiers of social justice for youths. The Meeting was held on the 29th and 30th of January at Youth -Hub in Harare with Activista representatives from all the ten provincial chapters in attendance.



AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE. New Found Hope For Youths In Zimbabwe

The sky is the limit for **Melissa** (left) here with **Blessing Moyo** another Activista Member

Melissa Museka (24), from Warren Park, Harare has left no stone unturned with regards to advocacy work around the popularisation, ratification and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy (ACDEG) in Zimbabwe.

“Every young person should be involved in pushing for the implementation of ACDEG because the Charter defines the Zimbabwe We want,” said Melissa, who is the Activista Zimbabwe Focal Person for ACDEG. She is also the secretary General for the Activista Masvingo Chapter.

ACDEG is an African Union (AU) instrument that sets the standard and tone for good governance, popular participation, rule of law and human rights in Africa.

After attending trainings on the Charter facilitated by ActionAid Zimbabwe in partnership with the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO

Forum, Melissa has been instrumental in ensuring fellow Activista members across the country are aware of what ACDEG entails and what it means for youths.

“I have made it a point to cascading the trainings wherever I see large numbers of people such as at church, at the borehole when I fetch water for household use and at college. I want the youths to know that they can use ACDEG to define the future they want for Zimbabwe. So far, I have reached about 100 youths.”

“I am envisaging a Zimbabwe that is free, tolerant and accommodative to the views of all people especially young women like myself. Article 2:11 of the ACDEG speaks about promoting gender balance and equality in the development processes. Article 3:6 focuses on gender equality in public and private institutions and young women should know about this,” said Melissa, who is currently a 4th

year Midlands State University Student studying for a Bachelor of Education in Management and Leadership.

In addition to Melissa initiatives Activista Manicaland Chapter members have facilitated the translation of the ACDEG booklet into local languages such as Shona as part of the Popularisation of the Charter. Other Activist ACDEG popularisation have included use of drama and poetry in communities to spread the message across.

Over and above working with Activista Zimbabwe, AAZ has been working in partnership with civic society organisations such as included Elections Resource Centre, Zimbabwe Election Support Network, Zimbabwe Peace Project, ZIMRIGHTS, VERITAS, Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation and the Development Practitioners Network in the push for the ratification and implementation of the Charter in Zimbabwe.

Part of the advocacy work with civic society, Activista Zimbabwe and the media has been with the Parliament of Zimbabwe and ministries of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Electoral Commission. Zimbabwe has made remarkable steps on ACDEG ratification and there remain a few outstanding undertakings to make the document legally binding on the country. Following the approval of the Charter by the President of Zimbabwe and the Parliament, what is outstanding now is the transmission and deposition of the document with the AU secretariat in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia—thereby symbolising full ratification.

Melissa has participated in all the ActionAid Zimbabwe supported processes towards ratification of the Charter. ■



LAZARUS PROVES THAT WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY

By **Bbaido Ndlovu** M and E Officer, Basilwizi Trust

Lazarus Muchimba using a grinding meal he bought from income savings scheme supported by ActionAid Local Rights Partner, Basilwizi

Lazarus Muchimba (36) of Tyunga ward 22 in Binga district Matabeleland North province in Zimbabwe is a married man and a father of four school going children. Lazarus lives in Tyunga ward 22 - one of the excluded areas in Binga District mainly because of absence of mobile communication technology and very bad gravel road. Lazarus had to work very hard to improve his family's living standards. Most people in Tyunga ward rely on subsistence farming whilst a small proportion of the population in the ward practice small scale fishing on the lake shores of the Zambezi River. Lazarus also tried fishing, but it has not worked for him.

Even with bounty fish catches, Lazarus's income still frustratingly fell short. Profits were barely not enough to feed and fend for his

wife, old mother, and four school-going children, such that to try chicken vending to supplement his income. The fishing venture earned Lazarus an average income ZWL 1000.00 (US\$66) per month. With this income, it was difficult for him to cover basic needs and education fees for his four school-going children.

The "economic salvation" for Lazarus was not to buy more fishing nets or to fish in fish-breeding areas, but to branch out into income savings and lending schemes. In income and savings scheme, group members contribute equal amounts of money monthly and lend it out to members to run income generating activities and return it the next month on an agreed interest. In 2016, Basilwizi Trust in partnership with AAZ and Small to Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (SMECD) established and trained income savings groups in Tyunga and Luunga wards. On quarterly intervals, the three organisations monitored and conducted

strengthening activities for the income savings and lending groups. New groups sprouted along the way and new members joined as community members realised the economic advantages in the savings concept. Lazarus is one of the members who joined *Tuligwasye* (Let's empower ourselves) group based in Njobola Village of Tyunga Ward.

After joining the group in 2016, Lazarus used his first loan from the scheme to buy goats for resale. Profits from the goats selling business enabled him to buy two cows. In 2019, he went on to buy a grinding mill which is currently running. The grinding mill gives Lazarus an average income of ZWL\$4000 (US\$266 per month).

The grinding mill gives at least **US\$266** per month

Lazarus said: *"I do not regret my decision to abandon fishing and venturing into income savings and lending scheme. I have gained a lot through this business venture. I now have 4 cows, 60 goats and a grinding mill which gives me income throughout the year".*

Lazarus is one of hundreds of community members who were trained in income savings and lending schemes in both Tyunga and Luunga wards. In Lazarus's group, Rosina Muchimba managed to purchase two cows from the scheme proceeds and Edith Muzamba managed to revive her family's fishing business by renovating a fishing rig using money loaned from the income savings group.

The project has also gone a long way in enhancing recognition and valuing unpaid care work for women in

Tyunga and Luunga wards as they are respected through their economic contribution in their families and households.

However, Lazarus, like any other income savings scheme group member lamented the challenges they were facing because of the changing economic policies in the country that have led to continued skyrocketing of commodity prices. Lazarus said:

"Trading in Zimbabwe has proven to be very difficult as prices keep on escalating because of the changing policies and other contributing factors which we cannot control. It is now very difficult to predict a price for any product. ■"

THE 6TH SESSION OF THE AFRICA FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 20

Juliana Makonise (19) from Activista Zimbabwe at the 6th session on Africa Forum on Sustainable Development.



ActionAid Zimbabwe participated at the 6th Session of the Africa Forum on Sustainable Development held in Victoria Falls from the 24th – 27th February 2020 under the theme, "2020-2030: A Decade to Deliver a Transformed and Prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063." The Session also coincided with the United Nations 75 years anniversary commemorations. This presented an opportunity for the organization to network and showcase the work that AAZ is doing in promoting and monitoring the implementation of

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Zimbabwe is one of the countries that has endorsed the SDGs as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 10 goals prioritized by the Government of Zimbabwe correlate to the priorities ActionAid Zimbabwe is advancing between 2018 and 2023.

The 6th Session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development kick-started on Saturday 22nd February 2020 with preliminary activities for young

people from all Zimbabwe's ten Provinces participating at the Africa Regional Science, Technology & Innovation Youth Bootcamp focusing on Artificial Intelligence & Innovation as key drivers towards the attainment of the SDGs. The need to harness digitalization to maximize the SDGs was cited as critical when focusing on SDGs Financing in the era of Digital Technologies. This is in sync with AAZ 5-year Country Strategy Plan for 2018 – 2023 Strategic Shift 4 focusing on embracing a culture of innovation and actively striving to undertake digital transformations

that revolutionize our ways of working in Zimbabwe and throughout the federation.

ActionAid in collaboration with Restless Development organized and held a side event on Day 1 of the conference dubbed #Youth Power on Young people and Sustainable Development focusing on the effects of climate change and youth participation towards the attainment of the SDGs. AAZ supported participants from the Activista Zimbabwe movement. Juliana Makonise and Abel Sibanda from Activista Zimbabwe, provided an overview of the movement's work in participatory democracy, policy advocacy and sustainable development with support from ActionAid Zimbabwe. The members shared the work that the Activista movement is doing in advancing youth activism especially in relation to AAZ's Primary Priority 2 which focuses on civic participation and state accountability. Juliana noted the progress made in the

advocacy and lobby on the ratification of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

Mr. Isheunesu Kurasha from the Southern Africa Development Committee Parliamentary Forum emphasized and urged the importance of youths to work together with duty bearers and local leaders such as Chiefs, headmen to ensure accountability outlining how collaborations can work to address accountability issues in our communities thereby bridging the gap between "us" referring to the youths and "them" in relation to the duty bearers in the quest of ensuring youth access public office and play a critical role in politics. Young people shared on their ideal Youth Leadership and Accountability models on policy influencing and accountability which is largely informed by the marginalization of youth, need for posterity and harnessing the demographic dividend in Zimbabwe

On another hand, the launch of an African Women Leaders Network Zimbabwean (AWLN) Chapter proved a welcome development in ensuring the expansion of civic spaces for women and girls to actively, meaningfully participate and influence policies in support of AAZ Social Justice Campaign on decent work and unpaid care work. African Women Leaders Network Zimbabwe Core Team member, African Union (AU) Goodwill Ambassador, ActionAid Board Chair Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda said the AWLN was a space for women empowerment. Gumbonzvanda reiterated that "Every woman is a working woman," hence the need to recognize, redistribute and reduce the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls because every woman is a decision maker every day and the toughest decision is placing food on the table every-day for family. ■

PARTNERSHIP FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT KICKS OFF

By **Yeukai Kaponda** AAZ Communications Intern

Following the official launch of the Partnership for Social Accountability (PSA) project in Zimbabwe in December 2019, preparations of the project to be implemented in the selected districts began in 2020. AAZ in partnership with Southern Africa AIDS Dissemination Service (SAFAIDS) organised an inception meeting for the PSA in Binga District on the 26th and 27th of February 2020, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Corruption (SDC). This was done together with the AAZ implementing partner Basilwizi Trust and local stakeholders from the Ministries of information and Publicity and Health and Child Care, the District Administrative Office and the Young Peoples Positive Network. The PSA project seeks to achieve comprehensive service delivery including on



AAZ staff members, Southern Africa HIV and AIDS, Dissemination Service (SAFAIDS) other local and national stakeholders and Basilwizi Trust members during Partnership for Social Accountability (PSA) inception meeting at Tusimbe in Binga

inclusive of HIV and other SRHR Public service for adolescent and young people with a focus on girls .

The project has two pillars ,the Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and Agricultural service being implemented in Mutoko and Binga .The agricultural service aims to improve effective engagement between small holder farmer organisations ,civil society ,government departments ,media and parliamentary o district council to enhance accountability and gender responsiveness in agricultural services for small holder famers at district level .In Binga District the focus on the need to empower adolescents and young people on SRHR through information dissemination as they are the future of the country and so that they being able to make informed choices on their health. Addressing stakeholders at the workshop, SAFAIDS Programme Coordinator Sazilinah Makumbe said:

“As we launch this project in Binga we are encouraging the strengthening of community engagement to ensure that these adolescents are being involved in the process of planning and make duty bearers to be accountable”

In a bid to cascade ActionAid priority 2 on Gender Responsive public service, Delight Moyo AAZ programmes manager ,indicated the importance of consulting and community needs to hear the personal needs of young girls and mentioned that the project cannot work in silos but rather collaborate with Government institutions to produce effective results .This is also in line with the aim of empowering women and girls living in poverty to challenge their structural causes of violence,

“As a project we are going to be interacting more with key stakeholders we have invited today from government, as we seek to produce good results, we are ensuring that we are going to fully these institutions throughout the implementation of the project.” Said Delight Moyo.

The issues of early unintended pregnancies among young adolescents caused by lack of creational facilities in Binga as the children are idle and resort to sexual activities was topical.

Other local traditional leaders in Binga District also welcomed the project as they looked forward to it

going raising awareness among adolescents on SRHR issues.

“As a district, we are facing a huge challenge especially amongst our adolescent young people because they are being involved in all sorts sexual activities since there are little or no recreational facilities here. So, we are ready to work together to push this project since we are the ones to benefit,” said Chief Saba of Binga.

Information presented by the Ministry of Health and Child Care during the inception meeting in Binga indicated that there was a high percentage (70%) of young women especially adolescents that are involved in sexual activities without protection.

The project is targeting to reach 111,810 through the 5 stakeholders' groups and it the duration of implementing the project is 4 years (2019 -2023). ■



MUDZI GOAT PRODUCER MAKING INROADS TOWARDS COMMERCIALISATION

Reveling in his blossoming goat herd, Oliver Chimwendo of Ward 2 of Mudzi District in Mashonaland East is a man on a mission. With a little over a year since he began goat rearing, it is a marvel that Chimwendo has already grown to be one of the leading goat farmers in the district. He speaks of his journey so far with pride and great expectation for the future. "I have always had a passion for goats and began this project in 2018, to date I have a 258-goat herd consisting of 200 does and 5 bucks. My greatest desire is to see the growth of goat producers in my area."

Chimwendo was selected to be one of the 1000 anchor farmers under the project and will have an opportunity to contribute to the growth of goat production by leading small and medium scale goat producers in his area towards the goal of commercialisation.

In an area like Mudzi, a drive towards commercial goat production is not without its challenges, due to rampant retreating of veld, scarce water sources and unviable markets.

"We are struggling to find adequate forage for the goats

coupled with shortages of water, tired and inferior genetics and lack of access to viable markets as well as high costs of veterinary drugs" says Chimwendo.

On the back of these binding constraints in goat production, the project comes in as a breath of fresh air raising the hopes and expectations of farmers like Oliver across the districts.

The project is organising the farmers into goat producer business associations to leverage on economies of scale and spearhead collective action along the entire value chain from inputs supply, marketing and financing services. In addition, a goat improvement centre will be established as a hub where farmers can access improved genetics, fodder seeds, veterinary drugs and trainings on various topics on farming as a business.

"I am happy about the EU funded VALUE project and I believe it will go a long way in transforming the goat value chain for small and medium players," added Chimwendo.

In a bid to imbue in the farmers the sense of commercialisation, the project has begun undertaking

commercialisation trainings at district and ward levels. For Chimwendo, these trainings have already started bearing positive results. He explains the impact of the trainings.

"I have taken part in a learning visit to a commercial goat farm in Beatrice as well as at the goat indaba where interactions with other value chain players changed my perspective. In addition, I have attended project-facilitated trainings on goat management, commercialisation, planting fodder gardens and goat feed formulations."

For the first time in his goat enterprise, Chimwendo planted over three hectares of fodder plants for the purpose of providing supplement for his goats. The plants consist of sunflower, sorghum, sunhemp, velvet bean and cow peas.

Having already purchased a grinding mill, Chimwendo is looking forward to supplement feed for his goats to improve their live weights, he has made a commitment to cascade the trainings he has received and invite other farmers in his group to learn and benefit from his experience. ■



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