

Can you feel  
change coming?  
#agroecology

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FUTURE

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ActionAid Zimbabwe

NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2023

**#ClimateJusticeNow**

**ActionAid Zimbabwe Building Resilient  
Communities Through Agroecology in the face  
of Climate Crises.**

# THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S WELCOME NOTE

Joy Mabenge, ActionAid Zimbabwe Country Director.



Greetings! It is my pleasure to welcome you to the September-October 2023 edition of our newsletter, focusing on Agroecology in the face of Climate Change. In this newsletter, we will explore the ways in which agroecology, as opposed to industrial agriculture, serves as a key alternative in the fight against climate change, and how it contributes to creating a more just and equitable food system along with resilient communities.

Agroecology is an approach to agriculture that takes into consideration the social, economic, and environmental impacts of farming practices. It is a holistic, interdisciplinary method of food production based on the principle of establishing a sustainable balance between human activities and the environment. This approach not only safeguards the environment but also fosters the development of resilient local communities and economies.

In recent years, Zimbabwe has experienced the heightened effects of climate change, evident

through extreme weather events such as Cyclone Idai and Tropical Storm Freddy. These events have led to unprecedented disruptions in agriculture, resulting in devastating impacts on food production and livelihoods. Agroecology emerges as a means to mitigate these impacts and create more sustainable and resilient food systems.

Simultaneously, climate justice calls for ensuring equitable access to resources and the right to food for all. As AAZ, we stand in solidarity with those hit the hardest by the consequences of the climate crisis, and advocate for countries in the global north, financial institutions, and all other investors to cease funding industrial agriculture and instead #FundOurFuture by investing in agroecological practices.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and valuable. Together, we can build a greener future for all.

**Happy reading!**

# AGROECOLOGY: A SUSTAINABLE PATH FOR ZIMBABWE'S FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

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A small holder farmer practising agroecology in  
Chiendambuya



Zimbabwe, with over 3.8 million people in rural areas expected to face food insecurity during the 2022/23 lean season. This crisis is part of a global trend, with over 345 million people worldwide facing acute food insecurity in 2023, more than double the number in 2020.

The reliance on industrial agriculture, the second-largest contributor to global greenhouse gases, exacerbates these challenges. Despite being historically viewed as a solution to feed a growing global population, industrial agriculture's intensive methods, including large-scale monoculture, genetically modified plants, and synthetic fertilizers, have proven disastrous for the environment. Furthermore, industrial agriculture approach to farming aggressively markets agrochemicals that lead to large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions and drive deforestation. This approach not only contributes significantly to climate change but also leaves small holder farmers vulnerable to climate impacts, further threatening crop yields and incomes.

ActionAid International's groundbreaking report titled 'How the finance flows, the banks fueling the climate crisis' launched during the Africa Climate Week in Nairobi, Kenya exposes the hypocrisy of some of the big economic powers in the world who have perfected the rhetoric around climate change. The report reveals that globally, money is going in the wrong direction and this needs to stop. Fossil fuels and industrial agriculture are receiving 20 times more financing from banks than government departments are receiving for climate solutions.

## **Agroecology: A Sustainable Alternative**

In response to industrial agriculture's methods and approaches that overlook their contribution to the climate crisis over profits, a movement advocating for food sovereignty and the decolonization of Africa's food systems has emerged. Agroecology, defined as farming techniques in harmony with nature, emerges as a sustainable alternative to industrial agriculture. It involves farming and managing crops, livestock, forests, and fisheries in ways that are viable, long-lasting, and resilient to climate change.

Agroecology, viewed by ActionAid as a powerful solution to the climate crisis, offers numerous environmental, social, and cultural benefits. By reducing land degradation, improving soil health, and embracing practices such as composting, agroecology enhances resilience to drought, leading to increased production and profits for farmers. Studies indicate that smallholder farmers, responsible for 80% of the food supply in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, including Zimbabwe, benefit from agroecology by reducing reliance on harmful inputs and promoting biodiversity.

Stories like that of Tarisai Kandiyado, an ActionAid Zimbabwe project participant based in Chendambuya district, attest to the effectiveness of agroecology in improving both yield and nutrition. Kandiyado, in her testimony, said she has managed to improve her yield and nutrition since she started implementing agroecology principles and practices.

### **Call to Action: Government Support for Agroecology**

To address Zimbabwe's pressing food security and climate adaptation needs, there is a compelling call for the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) to shift its support towards agroecology initiatives. Redirecting the existing substantial budget allocations for agriculture towards sustainable and environmentally friendly production models will empower farmers, ensuring both food security and independence. GoZ is urged to develop legislation supporting agroecology, aligning with National

Adaptation Plans and surpassing revised NDC targets from 33% to the current 40% by the 2030 deadline.

While recognizing GoZ's support for agriculture, which has received over 10% of the national budget, there is a plea to channel these funds towards agroecology research, development, and extension services. This redirection aligns with domestic climate financing goals, and international collaborations can secure additional funds committed in the Paris Agreement. As advocated by ActionAid's report, "How the Finance Flows," supporting agroecology aligns with global movements fighting for climate justice and an end to poverty.

The adoption and scaling up of policies like Pfumvudza/Intwasa over the past five years indicate positive steps by the government, and further commitment to agroecology promises enhanced food security, sovereignty, and climate adaptation for Zimbabwe. It's time for the government to prioritize sustainable, environmentally friendly practices to secure a resilient and prosperous future for its people.

Scaling up successful policies like Pfumvudza/Intwasa, adopted over the past five years, can further enhance food security, sovereignty, and climate adaptation. The government's commitment to these initiatives aligns with the global movement toward agroecology, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for Zimbabwe's agriculture.



**FOSSIL FUELS AND INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE ARE RECEIVING 20 TIMES MORE FINANCING FROM BANKS THAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE RECEIVING FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS.**

# GLOBAL PLATFORM ZIMBABWE'S IMPACTFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL WEEK OF CLIMATE ACTIONS

Global Platform Zimbabwe actively participated in the Global Week of Climate Actions, mobilizing young people from September 15 to 24. The week, aligned with ActionAid's #FundOurFuture campaign, highlighted the disproportionate financing of fossil fuel and industrial agriculture industries by global financial institutions. This was emphasized in a concurrent research report. Activities included a social media campaign where young people shared their perspectives on the climate crisis and calls for increased climate justice consciousness. Online engagements urged government regulation of fossil fuel exploration and investments in industrial agriculture, emphasizing the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes. The week strengthened networks, raised awareness on climate action urgency, and showcased the potential of young people in climate justice efforts.

The diverse participation of young people in Zimbabwe showcased their power in leading the fight for climate justice. The week's activities raised awareness on the urgency of climate action, particularly promoting agroecology. Global Platform Zimbabwe, committed to continued mobilization, aims to engage young people in community-led advocacy for climate justice.

## KEY FACTS

The World Food Programme (WFP) reports a food deficit in Zimbabwe, with over

# 3.8 million

people in rural areas expected to face food insecurity during the 2022/23 lean season.

# 345 MILLION

people worldwide facing acute food insecurity in 2023, more than double the number in 2020

# 80%

of the food supply in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, including Zimbabwe are from smallholder farmers

GoZ to develop legislation supporting agroecology, aligning with National Adaptation Plans and surpassing revised NDC targets from 33% to the current 40% by the

# 2030.

# AGROECOLOGY TRANSFORMS LIVES: TSITSI SUPADA'S SUCCESS

Tsitsi Supada standing in front of her sorghum field.



“ Previously we grew a variety of crops such as maize and small grains without enough knowledge which resulted in poor yields and at one point, we relied on food handouts from the social welfare but through the ZRBF I can now manage to sustain my family without any need of food aid.

Tsitsi Supada, 42, from Muchenje Village, Mbire, thrived through agroecology training under the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF). In 2021, her 2-ton sorghum harvest, sold at \$3800 ZWL per ton to the Grain Marketing Board, earned her \$76,000 ZWL (USD 680). This income significantly

improved her family's livelihood, covering school fees, household needs, and even allowing for a new wardrobe. Tsitsi's success exemplifies the life-changing impact of agroecology on rural communities.

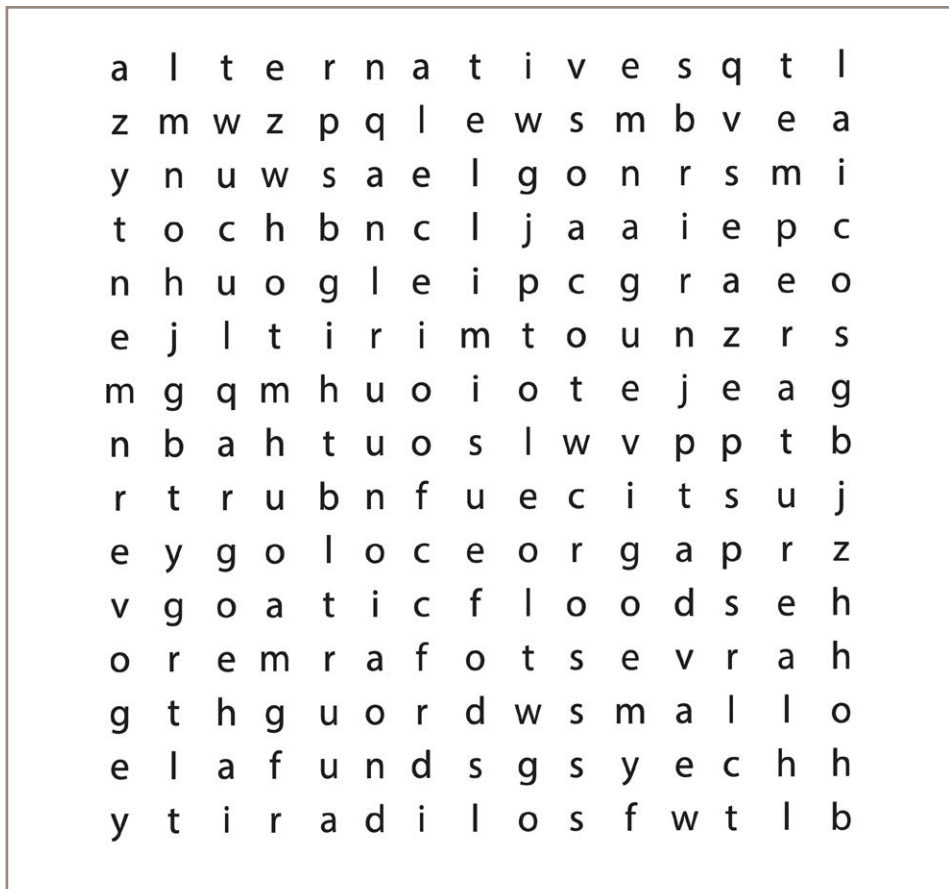
Last year alone I harvested 13 bags of sorghum and six bags of millet. Previously I grew these crops without enough knowledge which resulted in poor yields, and I had given up. From the small grains we get food and also use some in livestock feed formulation with surplus sold for money with which some we pay fees and buy basic household commodities. Currently we have managed to provide feed for our Kushinga Group Bosch chicken project as well as for goat feeding and pen fattening as we currently have 4 cows being fattened.



## Nyaradzai's Agricultural Triumph.

Nyaradzai Dzinodya, 41, from Mbire, practices agroecology on her land, focusing on zero tillage while cultivating sorghum, cowpeas, and millet. With the support of ZRBF ZVA, Nyaradzai successfully combated farming challenges by adopting small grains farming, pen fattening, and artificial insemination. The training not only improved her farming skills but also guided her in increasing income and savings. Venturing into goat and cattle rearing, Nyaradzai's livestock multiplied significantly, with over 75 goats and 14 cows by 2022, becoming a vital income source and improving her family's nutrition.

# FIND THE WORD IN THE PUZZLE.



action  
cows  
funds  
harvest  
social  
women

agriculture  
drought  
global  
justice  
solidarity  
youth

Agroecology  
engage  
goat  
millet  
sorghum

alternatives  
farmer  
government  
people  
south

Climate  
floods  
grains  
small  
temperature

# UPDATES SECTION



ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) is celebrating 20 years of community rootedness programming, strategic partnerships and taking sides with people living in poverty, exclusion and the vulnerable groups, women, youth, and children included. Since its establishment in 2003, the organisation remains

grounded in communities from which it derives its mandate, with a geographic footprint embedded in Local Rights Programmes (LRPs). We are celebrating together with communities, social movements, partners by sharing positives in the sector and solidarity actions. **Stay tuned!**

**CAPTION FOR COVER PICTURE:**

Agroecology beneficiary from Chendambuya.

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