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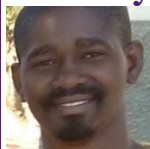
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Small Scale Farmers Find Farming Profitable At Long Last

A Story of Transformation from Mozambique



Juvêncio Mataria
Program Advisor
Mozambique

Poverty is still predominantly a rural phenomenon in Mozambique — more than 70% of poor households live in rural areas. Farming is the main source of food and income for these households, and alternative sources of income are few. But agricultural productivity is low, impacted by the lack of appropriate agricultural technology and adequate support for farmers, including access to markets that are distant, unreliable, and not competitive for smallholder farmers. Niassa province in northeast Mozambique in particular has the ideal makings of a robust farming community but continues to struggle with low agricultural productivity among the small-scale farmers who depend on traditional farming methods and low-yield seed varieties. These rural poor have little buffer against food insecurity.

In the town of Cobue in Niassa Province, horticultural production is changing dramatically for Mrs. Alice Chimutha and thirteen other women with the support of World Renew and our local partner there, the Diocese of Niassa. "In the past we used to rely only on maize and cassava production for both selling and home consumption," says Mrs. Chimutha, "and our supply



wouldn't last to the next agriculture season, making it difficult to feed our families or buy school supplies and uniforms for the children."

Although they were blessed with arable land and water, and were willing to try horticulture on a large scale, the women didn't have enough money to buy the seeds, fertilizers or pesticides they needed. Worse yet, collecting water at the river for irrigation was too risky because of the crocodile population there.

Previously most of us only planted kale in a little garden at home," she continues. "But with the support of World Renew and the Diocese of Niassa, we gathered ourselves and were able to start a garden on almost a full acre, where in addition to kale we now grow tomatoes, cabbages, onions, carrots, lettuce, and peppers. The project opened our eyes to crop diver-

sification, alternative irrigation schemes in order to avoid the crocodiles, and organic agriculture inputs, such as organic pesticides and composting with manure, which all reduced the cost of production."

Mrs. Chimutha goes on. "Now, with the agripreneurship and crop cycles training that we received, we can better market and expand our business, as well as increase the land we cultivate from that one acre to two and a half, producing a minimum average income of US\$200 per month plus enough yield for family consumption. Personally, with the money I am making, I can also actively participate in our village savings and loan association, pay for my daughter's school and contribute to the building our family home." Her face breaks into a broad smile. Wouldn't yours?

Whose Story Is Being Changed?

A Story of Transformation



Ruairidh Waddell
Country Consultant
Zambia Team

You've probably seen World Renew use the phrase "Changing the Story" to describe their mission. In the field, we think of this primarily as changing the story of the most poor and vulnerable, those that need a helping hand to move from sheer existence into safety, security, and resilience.

However, we don't often think about the people who feel called to join us as volunteers, serving in communities we walk alongside. On reflection, I realize that perhaps our mission would be better titled "Changing Stories," as it seems those who serve find their stories changed too.

For the last month, we have been working with three community schools in Western Zambia that are all facing a terrible scarcity of water. Students walk up to 15 km a day with a gallon of water to go to school; the underground water is dangerously saline; the nearest surface water sources dry up in August; and in other months these same sources are home to a significant population of crocodiles, making the task of collecting water a very perilous one.

In order to try to overcome this challenge, two volunteers have been working with the communities of Adonsi, Alibuzwe, and Aibeliliwe in Western Zambia to install rainwater collection and storage systems at each school. Here is a reflection of one of the volunteers that details how this experience has changed his perspective, how it has changed his story.

Hi, my name is Peter Prime. I am a farmer from the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia and for most of August 2017 I have been in Mwandi village in Western Zambia. Here in Mwandi, I am working with Ian Mountford from England. Together we have been working on a World Renew project to provide water to three schools in the Mwandi district which currently have no access to suitable drinking water for much of the year.

We will see one school completed in our time here. This school is called Adonsi and is 2 hours from Mwandi by vehicle. It is a challenging, bumpy ride by any standards — transporting large, bulky building materials can take an entire day.

Attaching fascia and gutters to buildings not designed for water harvesting has been another challenge. After some delay in delivery of materials for these projects, Ian and I decided — or most likely God decided — that we could not complete the work on all three



schools in our time here. We have since then taken on two staff partners, Kalaluka and Morris, with whom we have been working through all the aspects of completing fascia, gutters, downpipes, tanks, and fittings on the remaining schools.

It has been very rewarding for us to see Kalaluka and Morris adapt to this challenge and learn new skills. We would show them how to do one side of a building and then get them to do the other side of the building, using local community members who were also keen to learn new skills as their labourers. It was exciting and pleasing to see how quickly they picked things up! The reason I said this was God's decision earlier is that initially Ian and I were disappointed we would not be able to complete the projects. But how much better has it turned out that the skills and oversight needed to complete the other projects remains here in western Zambia instead of departing with us.

In our world, we take so much for granted. When our first gutter was completed, and the Adonsi community members saw the water fall from the roof and down the gutters, they cheered, clapped, and laughed with great joy. They could see the potential of this! Some have even enquired about the cost to do this to their own buildings. Sheer joy for both them and us.

What struck me about the above testimony is how so many different stories on so many different levels have been changed. The change in the child not having to carry water on her head for miles, or risk death to simply collect water. The change in Ian and Peter's stories of not just being givers, but teachers too, and receiving the gift of joy, delight, and celebration from communities in return. The change in young men like Morris and Kalaluka who have learned new skills and have been empowered. The story of communities that have come together to support and overcome a challenge that until now appeared insurmountable. Finally, the story of the donor who made all this possible through an incredibly generous estate gift. That single act of generosity changed so many stories. To God be the Glory.



Mike Bos

A Man Who Changed Lives

Mike Bos loved biking, soccer, snowboarding, and travelling. He was a family guy loved by his mother Jannette, his late father Bert, and his four brothers.

Mike spent the first ten years of his life on farms in Blyth and Drayton, and then moved Cambridge, Ontario. All of his adult life he worked in construction, where he was



valued for his work ethic. Mike passed away after a brief illness on September 5, 2015 at the age of 48. His mother; brothers Bill, Dave, Rick, and Jamie; nephews Curtis and Joel; and nieces Laura and Hannah wanted to honour Mike in a way that would reflect his interests and values. They choose to donate gifts they received from Mike's estate to pay for a water collection system for two schools in the Mwandi district of Western Zambia.

Jannette Bos heard from Peter Timmerman, a good friend of Mike and former World Renew Southern Africa Team Leader, about the drought in this region caused by El Nino and the food assistance that World Renew was providing to people whose crops had failed. Peter also told Jannette about the plan to build community gardens at the schools in Mwandi to supplement the school feeding program and

serve as demonstration plots for more drought resistant crops like cassava. Given the scarcity of water in the area, World Renew staff in Zambia proposed installing gutters on some of the schools to funnel rain from school roofs during the rainy season into water collection tanks for drinking and garden irrigation. Jannette and her family decided that this was just the kind of project that Mike would appreciate.

Mike changed the lives of the people who knew him for the better. His family's gift to World Renew's work in Zambia will change the lives of more. As is true with so many gifts given in God's name, the impact of this gift will be felt by many and continue to give far beyond the sphere of Mike's life.

Southern Africa Fresh from the Field

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(“Whose Story”, Continued from page 3)

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Ru



Perma-Gardens

A Story of Transformation from Malawi, Word Alive



By Steve Sywulka
Team Leader
Southern Africa Team

"How do you do it?" a young man asked me. "Usually village churches just spend time fighting and accusing one another of sheep stealing." It was in fact unusual to see a group of people from three different churches so unified and enthusiastic for each other's success.

My colleague Faye and I were visiting the homes of people who had attended a World Renew-sponsored permaculture course earlier this year. It was a sunny day and I enjoyed seeing the hills in the distance as we drove to the village. "Great place to hike" said Faye, pointing at one of the hills. We started at one church and then made our way from house to house as each person proudly showed us what he or she had accomplished since the training event.

Permaculture — otherwise known as "permanent agriculture" — is essentially a system of agricultural design that seeks to design gardens or farms as nature would. The idea is that nature is already an efficient system and, by observing and modelling it, farmers can save energy and work and eliminate waste, making their efforts more sustainable and viable.

One woman showed us a perfect example of this. "I planted this banana tree right near the bathing area so it can get the run-off water," she said. See? She took advantage of the natural way water was already moving to design her garden. No water-hauling for her!

Another trainee, a man named McDonald was especially proud — and rightly so. Vegetables under the laundry lines

caught the drips from wet clothes. Intensively planted food crops of all types decorated every part of his compound wall. And talk about recycling — he had planted food in all kinds of "waste" containers, including an old pair of rubber boots! Near the house was a small table where he and his wife now sell tomatoes. "We used to have to spend money to buy vegetables at the market" explained his wife. "But now we are selling to others." **These are signs of change.**

By noon we had all gathered back at the church, a gathering of people from three different churches unified in celebration of purpose and success. There was the usual singing and a few short speeches, but the main purpose of the event was to hand out certificates to those who had participated in the course, honoring their achievement.

As we headed to the car to begin our journey back to the city, I couldn't help but stand in awe at how God is working. People from different theological backgrounds all gathered in the same building, celebrating the changes taking place in their community. Tiny little gardens, some smaller than an SUV, may not seem like much to an outsider, but they are signs that seeds of change have been planted. Those gardens are critical sources of food for hungry children. These are places to re-use so called waste, and re-purpose it into something beautiful and productive. **And that's kind of like what God does with us.**



Prayers for the Sywulka Family

We praise that:

- our family is together again
- batteries and solar panels keep us working
- gardens are changing communities

We ask prayer for:

- which church to become involved in
- our language learning
- our internal peace in the midst of much work

Talking about the Realities of Child Marriage

A Story of Transformation from Malawi



Faye Yu
Program Consultant
Malawi Team

In Malawi, 1 in 2 girls marry by the time they reach 18 years old and 9% marry before the age of 15. **Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world.** This is not surprising because poverty is cited as one of the biggest contributing factors to child marriage and Malawi is one of the world's poorest countries. In April of this year, the Malawian constitution was amended to raise the legal age of marriage with parental consent from 15 to 18 years old. **This is a huge first step to ending child marriage.** But there is a lot more work to translate this law into reality in the villages.

Last week we went to one of the rural churches that we work with to talk about the reality of child marriages in their community. We went into the village with many assumptions. We believed that parents married off their children to reduce financial burdens when times are hard; we believed that cultural norms allowed children to marry before 18 years old. While these may be true in some instances, we also found some surprising realities.

Parents and guardians disclosed that they felt unprepared to deal with a changing environment in which their

children have access to social media, internet, and sexually explicit film. They said that their children come home "different" and they don't know what to do. Their daughters receive new clothes and other gifts, and they don't know who gave those gifts to their daughters. The parents say that when they see their daughter's behavior change and when they start to bring gifts home, these are signs that they will "marry" soon.

On the other hand, daughters see their family's financial struggles; there is not enough food. A daughter may live with people who are not her biological parents or with a stepfather and feels she has to work hard to help the people she stays with. She is mistreated, unwanted, and seen as a servant. She believes that if she lived somewhere else, and if she got married, she would have a more comfortable life and have more food to eat. She would have her *own* family. She would be her own boss. Naively, she runs off with an older man who promises her a dream.

In our conversation with parents in this church, most said they don't think their daughters should marry before they are 18 years old. And yet child marriage is a common occurrence in their village. Why? One possibility: parents and



Parents create a decision-making matrix that looks at who has what power to decide what things at both the household and community level.

guardians simply don't know how to talk to their children, so they ignore the situation. As we asked more questions, the parents and the church realized that they needed to do something about this problem in their community. As I sat there listening, I couldn't help but think how the challenges that these parents face are similar to the challenges parents face in the United States and Canada. **We are not so different.**

Child marriages will not end with laws and regulations alone. The opportunity to facilitate a conversation for the people in this church has helped them to recognize their role in this problem. **Please continue to pray for them as they to figure out how to best help the young girls in their community.**

Mike Bos: A Man Who Changed Lives

Mike Bos loved biking, soccer, snowboarding, and travelling. He was a family guy loved by his mother Jannette, his late father Bert, and his four brothers. Mike spent the first ten years of his life on farms in Blyth and Drayton, and then moved Cambridge, Ontario. All of his adult life he worked in construction, where he was valued for his work ethic. Mike passed away after a brief illness on September 5, 2015 at the age of 48. His mother; brothers Bill, Dave, Rick, and Jamie; nephews Curtis and Joel; and nieces Laura and Hannah wanted to honour Mike in a way that would reflect his interests and values. They choose to donate gifts they received from Mike's estate to pay for a water collection system for two schools in the Mwandi district of Western Zambia.

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Mike changed the lives of the people who knew him for the better. His family's gift to World Renew's work in Zambia will change the lives of more. As is true with so many gifts given in God's name, the impact of this gift will be felt by many and continue to give far beyond the sphere of Mike's life.

