

19



COUNTRY	Zimbabwe
BUDGET	USD 250,000
SDG TARGETS	3.9, 4.4, 5.1, 8.b
OUAGA+10	KPA 2
DURATION	2016–2017
FUNDING SOURCE	UN, ILO (RBSA)
ILO POLICY OUTCOME	1

Zimbabwe Building a future with decent work in rural areas

Sixty per cent of Zimbabwe's population is rural, and 67 per cent of the employed population works in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, which also accommodates 43 per cent of the country's micro, small and medium enterprises. Moreover, seven out of ten working women are in agriculture. Despite its importance, the agriculture sector suffers from significant deficits in terms of decent work, including low incomes, occupational hazards and lagging productivity. Additional challenges faced by Zimbabwe's rural economy include climate change and natural resource depletion, particularly land and water. Post-harvest losses, estimated at 20 to 30 percent in storage alone, can be as high as 40 percent when including field, transportation, handling and processing losses. In most communal areas of the country, cereal production is characterized by one year of good harvest followed by two or three years of deficit.

A transformed community

Ringari in Zimbabwe's Makonde District, a community with 108 households and 560 residents, was cut off from the rest of the world. Clean water was 12 km away, electricity had been disconnected for 9 years and the road was barely passible. The programme collaborated with the local government in rehabilitating an old irrigation system so that the area could have easier access to clean water for household use and for crop irrigation. The electricity was reconnected and the road repaired to facilitate the community's access to markets and other services.

Skills development is key to overcoming many of these constraints as it raises the value and output of labour, empowers and enriches the lives of workers, and improves the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of enterprises. National training systems, however, are not aligned to the needs of the rural economy. Moreover, agriculture and vocational training are not perceived positively by young people.

Since 2010, the ILO has been working with the Government of Zimbabwe, employers and workers organizations to design and implement strategies and programmes that increase productive employment opportunities and decent work in the rural economy using the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology. "Building a future with decent work in rural Zimbabwe" was a local economic development project implemented in seven districts, in which local economic opportunities were assessed to identify promising employment and income-generating opportunities for young people and women.

Removing barriers to women's economic participation

Recognizing that social and cultural norms act as a barrier to women's economic participation, the intervention began by promoting gender transformation in the home and the community. The project trained 60 heads of government departments across four provinces and 137 service providers and community leaders in seven districts to deliver gender responsive economic empowerment training programmes. Following their skills training programme, government officials from the provincial and district levels rolled out community sensitization campaigns, reaching 3,159 influential community members, as well as women, their partners, traditional



Rearing broilers for a better future

leaders, faith-based leaders, other government officials and people in business. The training improved the general community's appreciation of gender issues and women's rights. Personal mastery and transformational leadership enabled the women to confidently project themselves in their pursuit of economic opportunities.

Skills training for decent work and income

The project facilitated access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities for women and young people to familiarize them with climate smart farming practices, as well as encouraging them to switch to high value crops. Farmers were also provided with business management skills. In addition, youth and women benefitted from post training support for self-employment, including access to finance, markets, technology, business development services and capacity for value addition. Some 580 youth and women generated self-employment opportunities, each of which created three indirect jobs. The incomes of male and female beneficiaries rose by 37.8 per cent and 76.6 per cent, respectively, compared to non-beneficiaries. The beneficiaries reported an increase in child support and health expenditure by USD 240 and USD 108 respectively per year; they also had a higher likelihood of owning a business (34 per cent) and reported higher levels of self-confidence.

Risk reduction training

The project recognised that the agricultural sector was among the most hazardous work environments, with health risks in handling of heavy materials, strenuous work postures and long working hours. Farmers further suffer exposure to harsh weather conditions, agro-chemicals, pesticides and dust. In small rural holdings, the workplace also includes the family homestead and affects living conditions. Across all the seven districts, beneficiaries and extension officers received training on how to undertake risks assessments and introduce improvements in working and living conditions using the ILO Work Improvements in Neighbourhood Developments (WIND) programme. Farmers developed action plans and made improvements to their work places and

homes. Occupational safety and health (OSH) training helped beneficiaries to increase productivity, preserve quality of their produce, prevent fatigue and reduce work related accidents. Project beneficiaries shared their knowledge with the wider community to identify and remedy hazards in agriculture. New housing and work structures were constructed in the communities, taking into account the knowledge on ventilation and storage requirements acquired during the OSH trainings. The project also sought to contribute to a reduction in new HIV infections through enhanced prevention programmes and focus on behaviour change among the target groups; and to facilitate for the quality of life for workers affected by HIV and AIDS through care, support and treatment.

Pauline Mapiko's story

“I failed to complete my formal education as my family could not afford the fees”, said Pauline, who is one of the 30 members of the Zvikomborero Poultry Business in Chinhoyi. “For years, I struggled to make ends meet, I relied on wages from casual work as a farm labourer”, she continued. In early 2017, Pauline underwent skills training and started a poultry business with her peers. She has seen a 50 per cent increase in her income since starting the business. “The thing I am proud of the most is my bank card, it represents a better future for my family. I never thought I would be able to have a bank account in my name, let alone be able to have savings to guarantee a better future for my family.”

Financial and entrepreneurial skills

In addition to TREE, the beneficiaries received training programmes on farming, on entrepreneurship (using the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) package) and on financial literacy, including the development of bankable business proposals for submission to micro-finance institutions. The women were also encouraged to establish Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) to improve their access to finance. The modality has proved instrumental in providing the women with capital for business expansion, as well as household consumption.

Women's health and rights

A key component of the project was to improve awareness on women workers' rights. Special attention was paid to maternity protection in rural areas. Women were supported to develop maternity leave schemes in their group enterprises – pregnant women got six weeks off their usual duties. A member-managed day care system was established to allow the women to work with peace of mind, knowing their children were safe.



The fruits of hard work