

#ASHTAG

MAGAZINE

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Brot
für die Welt



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Editor's Note



Hello everyone and welcome to another exciting issue of your favorite magazine #tag. Join us as we follow the journey of our ten female citizen journalists. These ten young women are telling their stories and their community stories, true ambassadors and voices of their communities. They have grown as storytellers and continue to perfect their writing, social media, and photography skill as they thrive to capture the stories from their contexts.



As CITE, we are excited about the growth of these young storytellers and the role they are playing in amplifying the voices of rural communities and spreading information in the communities through their newly found digital skills. The girls are actively sharing their and CITE stories through WhatsApp groups ensuring communities are kept informed about current issues.

Thank you for joining us on this growth journey. Enjoy

Nozibusiso
We The Future Coordinator

NKAYI VILLAGERS LOBBY GOVT FOR MORE SCHOOLS

By Sandile Ncube

The poor state of infrastructure of schools in Nkayi district, Matabeleland North continues to affect learners who are forced to walk long distances to school.

The lack of proper infrastructure and resources has been cited as the major contributor to the low pass rate in Matabeleland schools.

Due to few secondary schools, learners are forced to walk long distances to the nearest school.

Villagers who spoke to this publication noted that due to the long distances their children travel to school, it is difficult for them to concentrate.

“I have two children they walk 15 km every day from Mathetshaneni to Nkayi High School,” Misheal Dube said.

“When they get to school they are already tired and it will be difficult for them to concentrate and absorb the information being delivered by their teachers.”

Due to these harsh conditions especially during winter and the rainy season, most learners end up dropping out of school.

“It is not easy for us to wake up at 3 am every day to prepare for school, leave home at 4:30 and walk 2 hrs 30 mins to school,” said Dumo a learner at Komayanga Secondary School.

Activists have in the past called on the government to channel more resources to schools in the district and build more schools to lessen the distance traveled by learners.

According to the constitution, children have a right to education and should not travel more than 5 kilometers to school but sadly this is not the case for learners in Nkayi district.



Image by Marvelous Gumbo



IRRIGATION SCHEME IMPROVES VILLAGERS' LIVES

By Enele Mpofu

Butshilo irrigation scheme has become a source of hope for Gubula villagers in Matobo.

The scheme which was sponsored by Hope of a Child in Christ (HOCIC) has seen villagers venturing into market gardening growing valuable crops such as cabbages, onions, tomatoes, and carrots.

The farmers have also ventured into poultry farming.

“The project has helped us fight hunger as we benefit food for the families and we are now paying school fees for our children and meeting other demands,” said Pretty Ndlovu, the project secretary.

The villagers said the project has helped them a lot to overcome financial problems and helped improve their standard of living.

“My two children dropped out of school last year due to financial difficulties, but with the help of the money I got from this project I have managed to send them back to school this year and I have hope I will manage to pay their examinations fees this year,” said Mercy Khumalo.

The project has also benefitted young people from the area.

“With the money I got after selling my produce, I will be starting my own business, all thanks to the HOCIC for giving such an opportunity,” said Archie Ngwenya.

In the long run, villagers want to expand their market by supplying big companies and also setting up their fruits and vegetables shop.

MATOBO YOUNG WOMEN FORM SAVINGS CLUB

By Moreblessing Ndlovu

A group of young women from Zwehamba village, Matobo, have come together to form a cooperative called Progress which seeks to empower them financially.

The group which was formed in June 2021, is made up of 10 ambitious women aged between 19 and 24 years.

Each member contributes R50 every month and in order to grow their fund they lend the money to interested members and charge 10 percent interest.

So far, the women have managed to buy goats which were distributed to all group members.

In an interview, Princess Ndlovu said after buying goats, the women saw that they are capable of making greater investments.

“After receiving our goats in December 2021, we had hoped to continue with the club as we saw that we were capable of doing great things, and the club members were determined to do so,” said Ndlovu.

In 2022, the women bought blankets with each member getting at least two blankets.

In April this year, the group managed to raise about R4 500 and they bought themselves plates and dishes.

“We are planning on increasing the amount provided by each member to R100 for next month so that we can get something big for ourselves,” said Ndlovu.



Image by Marvelous Gumbo

SILTATION OF INGWENYA DAM AFFECTS NTABAZINDUNA VILLAGERS

By Cingani Nkiwane

Ntabazinduna villagers under Chief Khayisa, in Umguza District, have raised concerns over the siltation of their main source of water, Ingwenya Dam.

The dam is the largest and most reliable water source for the Ntabazinduna community, which supplies the precious liquid for domestic consumption, livestock, and agricultural production.

The villagers noted that despite the high rainfall recorded in the area, the dam did not collect much water because of siltation.

Siltation has become a major concern in many parts of the country and researchers have confirmed that a number of water sources are now holding less water than their usual capacity, a development that needs the intervention of the government and non-governmental organizations.

Ward 4 headman and Drought Resilience Chairperson, Philip Ndaba, said the siltation has affected their livelihood and livestock rearing.

In Ntabazinduna, such organizations as HOCIC and Anglican Dioceses have tried to install solar-powered taps to alleviate water problems but this too is not entirely effective.

“INGwenya dam is our main water source. We rely on it for farming, livestock rearing, and for domestic purposes. However, the dam now fails to supply the community adequately due to siltation. A large portion, about three-quarters of it, is covered with sand and reeds,” said Ndaba.

Ndaba implored the government and various organizations to provide funds and machinery to remove the sand.

“We plead for help to scoop sand out of INGwenya dam. We implore the government and other organizations to provide funding and equipment such as caterpillars. Even the streams supplying the dam like Jikijane and Nongwenya also, need to be scooped,” he said.

Image by Marvelous Gumbo



NTABAZINDUNA VILLAGERS STEP UP FIGHT

AGAINST OPEN DEFACATION

By Progress Nkiwane

Mgiqwa villagers, Ward 4 in Ntabazinduna under Chief Khayisa in Umguzu District have resolved to construct public toilets at cemeteries in their community to eradicate open defecation.

Open defecation refers to the human practice of defecating in fields, forests, bushes, bodies of water, or other open spaces.

The villagers held a community meeting earlier this month to discuss how they can implement the project.

This conversation comes at a time when the community has, on several occasions, failed to implement the project owing to various factors, mainly lack of funding.

Speaking at the meeting, Coleman Ndaba, emphasized on the importance of building toilets at cemeteries, citing that it was a requirement from the Environmental Health Department.

“The Village Development committee will ask for government support on behalf of the community. As Mgiqwa villagers, we will also contribute small amounts to buy building materials. The date will be announced when the headman, Village Health worker, the builders and other villagers will go to the cemetery grounds for proper siting of the public toilets,” said Ndaba.

“Having toilets at cemeteries is a requirement from the Environmental Health Department hence it should be treated as a priority by all villagers here in Ntabazinduna. We all use these cemeteries to bury our loved ones.”

The villagers concurred with the idea and suggested that each household contributes a certain amount of money to acquire building material, and should the funds not be adequate, they would engage the government for more.

They agreed on starting digging toilet pits such that should there be well-wishers who want to assist them they would find them at an advanced stage.

“Last time we failed to achieve our goal due to lack of resources, this time we can ask for donations from the government such as cement, bricks, and funding,” suggested one villager, Mbayiwa.

“I would recommend that each household contributes US\$0.50 each homestead, we would be able to buy building materials such as cement and bricks since builders have volunteered,” Mrs. Sibanda also added.

ELDERLY WOMAN LOSES HOUSE AFTER TOWN PLANNER CLAIMS IT'S AN ILLEGAL STRUCTURE

By Lindsey Muzembi

A 66-year-old woman in Lupane was forced to rebuild her house after the Local Board's Town Planner demolished it citing construction irregularities.

Leaster Lusinga (66), a nurse, who resides at the New Stands of Lupane built her house six years ago after she was given the go-ahead by the Town Planner.

This was after he had done the inspection of the slab and the bricks to be used for the construction as part of the steps to make sure the building was safe to live in.

However, later on, this year, as Lusinga's house was nearing completion, she received a phone call from a neighbor while she was at work at St Luke's Hospital, informing her that her house was being demolished by the Town Planner.

"I was shocked upon hearing the news that my house was being destroyed during my absence as I never got any call from the Town Planner to warn me about the decision to destroy the house even after he was done," Lusinga said.

Three days after that incident, Lusinga traveled to see the remains of her house.

"I felt my knees getting weak after seeing that there was nothing left where my house used to be. Only the slab remained," she said.

"Lusinga said all the building material she had used when building the house was nowhere to be seen, a development which she described as a drawback because she had to start afresh.

"I confronted the town planner about the issue and the only response I got was that the house was not in good shape," said the aggrieved homeowner.

Since Lusinga has no one to assist her in getting justice, she is now using her pension funds to start buying new construction materials to rebuild her house.

"At my age, I still have to rent. It hurts a lot because this is the time when I should be enjoying my pension without having to worry about building a house but here I am, rebuilding a house with the only source of income I'm earning as a retired nurse," she said.

With perseverance and determination, Lusinga has managed to speedily rebuild the house and has already reached the roofing level.

"I still wish to have some assistance so that I can finish the construction of my house," Lusinga said.

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INFO@CITE.ORG.ZW

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HUSTLING QUEEN A ROLE MODEL TO MANY

By Princess Thandeka Tshuma

Nobukhosi Ditima (34) of Diba village in Plumtree, also known as NaMwali, has a successful company selling a variety of commodities in the border town.

Ditima stated that her first job was doing domestic work in South Africa, which she described as difficult.

This, combined with the difficulties that migrants encounter in Zimbabwe, prompted her to leave her job in 2017 and return to the country.

Ditima returned to Diba and began selling chips like she had done every time she visited over the holidays.

“I would sell small packets of chips and sweets at gatherings or meetings that were held by fellow community members,” she said.

Ditima’s chip business finally became profitable, as she opened a grocery store and a boutique at Diba Shopping Centre.

Ditima now sells a variety of items as well as fresh cream doughnuts, cakes, pies, pizza, bread, and scones.

She was also able to expand her business and now owns a farm where she grows a variety of vegetables.

Ditima was able to purchase a vehicle through her business and inscribed the logo, ‘Hustling Queen’ on it.

“Working and having a livelihood like this, is a path to hope,” she said and noted that she was lucky to have grown independent because not many women had such a privilege.

“In many parts of the world, a lot of women are not equipped with skills, capital, and the knowledge that allows them to start working and taking control of their future.”

Ditima has become an inspiration to fellow women in the community who depend on their husbands working in the diaspora.

“I have a sustainable livelihood and have started redecorating my home,” she said and encouraged a lot of women to think innovatively so they can be self-sustainable.

“You can start small then expand step by step.”



Image by Marvelous Gumbo



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+263 78 808 4339



Ashley@cite.org.zw
info@cite.org.zw



45 Moffat Avenue, Hillside, Bulawayo

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WE THE FUTURE





Image by Marvelous Gumbo

Poverty forces many girls into early marriages

By Loreen Dube

Talent Moyo, 21, of Dete, is married to a 70-year-old man in what is seen as a marriage of convenience.

Moyo's mother died when she was just a month old, and she was raised by her grandmother.

She attended primary school but was unable to continue since her grandmother did not have enough money to pay her fees.

Moyo said during her primary school years, she demonstrated intelligence by receiving high grades.

"I used to be the best student in my class but due to a shortage of funds I had to drop out. I then became pregnant at the age of 18 and delivered a baby girl," she said.

Due to circumstances, Moyo said she was forced to marry an old wealthy man.

"My grandmother and I didn't have any source of income so I had no choice except to get married," she said.

As a result of the trauma that Moyo has experienced, she said was developing mental disturbances.

"I fear I am losing it. I am stressed each and every day because my husband has children who are way older than me, who always accuse me that I do not love their father but I am after his wealth. They do not even respect me. It's really difficult," she said.

"I really want to go back to school, I wish my grandmother and I could get somewhere to stay, and we find some work to do so that we have money to buy food and clothes. Having to depend on someone for your livelihood is very painful. I am heartbroken."

Image by Marvelous Gumbo



TSHOLOTSHO COMMUNITY UNITE TO BUILD NEW SCHOOL

By Sikhonzeni Ndlovu

Owing to the shortage of schools in the Tsholotsho district, something that has seen learners walking long distances to the nearest schools, Ward 5 villagers have joined hands to build Tshino Secondary School.

The villagers contribute towards the purchasing of building materials while some provide labor.

"I do not mind spending the whole day helping the builders to build our secondary school, because we are concerned about our children, they travel long distances and they are exposed to danger on their way to the schools. Especially the girl child they face a lot of problems, others end up getting unwanted pregnancies or getting raped and there have been many dropouts," said Betty Ncube.

So far one classroom block and a block of toilets have been constructed.

Villagers who spoke to this publication said the school will cut the distance their children used to travel to the nearest school.

"We are happy that our children will not have to walk long distances to school once Tshino Secondary is completed," said Grace Ndlovu.

Headman Daika Mpala said the project was progressing well and was confident that the school will soon start operating.

In 2017, floods destroyed public infrastructure including schools in Tsholotsho. The government has since chipped in by constructing houses for the flood victims.

government and the communities have been struggling, with children walking long distances to reach secondary schools.

During the rainy season, most learners miss out on school as they fail to cross flooded rivers.

The construction of Tshino Secondary School will provide relief to some learners who lose a lot of learning time.

MAN RAPES A DISABLED TEENAGE GIRL IN FILABUSI

BY MOREBLESSING SIBANDA

A hearing and vocal impaired teenage girl in the Mahole area in Filabusi has been raped by a man who took advantage of her disability to attack her.

The teenage girl is facing several challenges due to her disability which hinders her from accessing help.

On the day of the attack, a 26-year-old man stalked her on her way to fetch water at the borehole.

When the girl was out of sight in the bushy area on the way to the borehole, the attacker pounced on her violently. He forced himself on her knowing that she could not scream because of the hearing and vocal impairment.

The girl later alerted her family members who reported the matter to the police. However, the attacker had gone into hiding and police could not locate him for several weeks as already had some pending cases with law enforcement.

He later reappeared at Mahole Business Centre where he got drunk and maliciously damaged property breaking the windows of the bottle store.

The owner of the shop beat him up, subdued him, and called the police who came in and arrested him.

The teenage girl's family says they are hopeful that justice will be served.

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Editor:

Lesley Moyo

Mentors:

Clayton Moyo
Bhekizulu Tshuma

We The Future Co-Ordinator:

Nozibusiso Sivalo

Cover:

We The Future Class Of 2023

Associate Editors:

Tanaka Mrewa (CITE Reporter)
Senzeni Ncube (CITE Reporter)
Lulu Brenda Harris (CITE Reporter)

Writers:

Princess Thandeka Tshuma
Lorreen Dube
Enele Mpofo
Moreblessing Sibanda
Moreblessing Ndlovu
Sandile Ncube
Progress Nkiwane
Cingani Nkiwane
Lindsey Muzembi
Sikhonzeni Ndlovu

Photographer:

Marvelous Gumbo (Featured)