



Zimbabwe Council of Churches

# HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND DIAKONIA



## ACTIONS OF HOPE NEWSLETTER

JAN-FEB 2025

# Table of Contents

**Zimbabwe Council of Churches  
Launches Livelihood Training Centre to  
Strengthen Community Resilience in  
Mbire** **3**

**Impacting Lives Through Food  
Assistance: Allen Taguta’s Story** **5**

**Breaking the Cycle of Hunger:  
Elizabeth’s Story** **7**

**ZCC Launches Groundbreaking  
Initiative to Curb Risky Migration** **8**

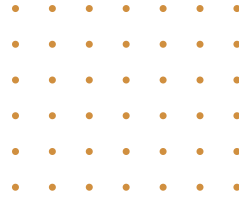
**Food Assistance Restores Hope for  
Sithandazile Mabhena** **10**

**A Grandmother’s Struggle for  
Survival and Hope** **12**

**Climate Resilience in Action!** **14**

**Voices of Resilience** **15**

# Zimbabwe Council of Churches Launches Livelihood Training Centre to Strengthen Community Resilience in Mbire



The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) officially launched the Mbire Livelihood Training Centre, a significant milestone in empowering local communities with vital knowledge and skills in livestock management and climate-smart agriculture. Funded by the Japanese Embassy, with additional support from the United Church of Canada and Global Ministries, the center aims to enhance community resilience to climatic shocks through free training programs.

In his remarks, ZCC General Secretary Rev. W. Dimingu, speaking on behalf of ZCC President Bishop Dr. Ignatius Makumbe, emphasized the initiative's focus on community-centered development. "As I officially open this center today, I invite you all to join us on this journey towards strengthening the resilience of communities in this area. Let us work together to make this center a success and a model for community-centered development," he said.

Rev. Dimingu expressed gratitude to the funding partners for their contributions. "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the generous support rendered by the Japanese Embassy, the United Church of Canada, and Global Ministries. With this support, we have constructed the facilities before us and embarked on promoting diversified livelihood opportunities and empowering local communities through training and demonstration."

**“As I officially open this center today, I invite you all to join us on this journey towards strengthening the resilience of communities in this area”**



Natsuni Sato, a representative from the Japanese Embassy

Natsuni Sato, a representative from the Japanese Embassy, highlighted the center's role in addressing local challenges. "This center will provide the community with practical knowledge and skills in livestock management, disease prevention, and fodder production. Additionally, it will train them in climate-smart agriculture and offer a marketplace for their livestock, reducing the financial strain of transporting animals to faraway markets," Sato said.

The contributions from the United Church of Canada and Global Ministries have also been instrumental in providing goats and livestock management training for the center. "Following the completion of the facility, church leaders have mobilized 50 members to attend training sessions on livestock management and other livelihood activities. We are optimistic this will strengthen their economic empowerment and resilience," Rev. Dimingu noted.



Water Infrastructure: A solar-powered borehole with a 5,000-liter storage capacity

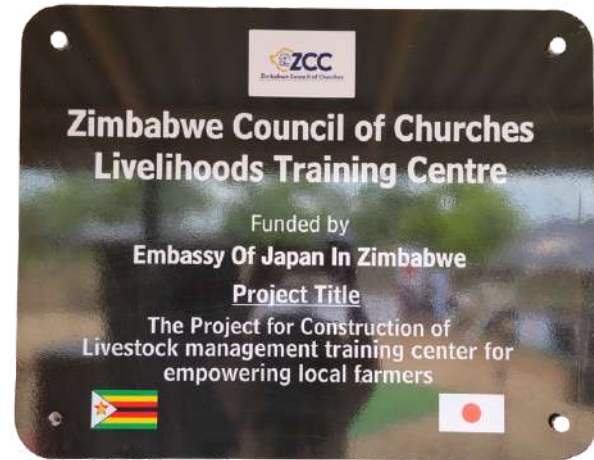


Training Facilities: A state-of-the-art classroom block with a training auditorium and two offices.

The center aligns with Zimbabwe’s National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) and Education 5.0, focusing on innovation, entrepreneurship, and poverty alleviation. Mr. R. K. Maruta, speaking on behalf of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Mashonaland Central Province, urged ZCC and the government to collaborate in empowering communities. “This center embodies the government’s vision of creating meaningful opportunities for youth and women, contributing to Vision 2030 of an upper-middle-income economy,” he remarked. The establishment of the Mbire Livelihood Training Centre reflects a collective commitment to equipping rural communities with tools for self-reliance, ensuring sustainable development, and fostering economic empowerment in the region.



Figure 3: Partitioned and fenced goat pens housing 49 goats for training and demonstration purposes.



## Impacting Lives Through Food Assistance: Allen Taguta’s Story

Deep in Mutoma Village, Ward 31, Bikita, Allen Taguta, a 27-year-old man, faced an unimaginable crisis. He is a devout member of Johanne Marange Church and a head of a large household of 15, including his four wives and children. Allen struggled to provide for his family amidst a devastating drought. With food scarcity, the family was forced to survive on just one meal per day, leading to deteriorating health and rising tensions within the household.

When the Humanitarian Food Assistance Program was introduced, Allen was initially not listed as an eligible beneficiary. Desperate, he reached out to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) through the suggestion box, explaining his dire situation. After a thorough verification process, the ZCC team found his circumstances compelling and included him in the program.



Allen’s wives at Chikuku Food Distribution Point in Bikita

For the past four months, Allen's family has been receiving 150 kg bags of mealie meal, 30kgs of beans, and 11.25 liters cooking oil each month. The impact has been life-changing. His household now enjoys two decent and nutritious meals a day, and for the first time in a long time, happiness has been restored to his home. The Complaints, Feedback & Reporting channels has proven to be a powerful tool for community engagement and inclusive decision-making. The channels have been an instrumental platform for individuals to voice their concerns, needs, and recommendations. In Allen's case, it played a crucial role in ensuring that his family's dire situation was recognized and addressed. By enabling open communication between communities and service providers, the CFR channels fostered transparency, trust, and responsive interventions, ultimately enhancing the impact and reach of this programs.

Reflecting on the transformation, Allen expressed his gratitude:

*"Ndinoda kutenda veZCC neprogram yavakauya nayo nekuti taive takuvara nezvara. Iyezvino maidzimai angu arikufara zvikuru nekuti havachanetseki kuti vopei vana. Chikafu tinoisa mukitchen yamai vangu vakashaika saka pamadzimai angu hapana anoti chikafu chiri mumba mangu. Zvokudya tinongobika pamwechete semhuri."*

("I want to thank ZCC for this program because we were suffering from hunger. Now my wives are happy as they no longer struggle to find food for the children. We keep the food in my late mother's kitchen, so there is no conflict among my wives. We cook and eat together as one family.")

**“I want to thank ZCC for this program because we were suffering from hunger. Now my wives are happy as they no longer struggle to find food for the children. We keep the food in my late mother's kitchen, so there is no conflict among my wives. We cook and eat together as one family.”**

Allen's story is evidence to how the Humanitarian Food Assistance Program help communities cope with food insecurity and address negative effects of food insecurity at household level. Through ZCC's intervention, families like Allen's are not just surviving; they are rebuilding their lives with dignity and hope.

Johane Masowe Church accommodates and promotes polygamy and women appear to be the majority of members in the Johanne Marange Church. Johanne Marange as the founder of this social movement, had thirteen wives. The church has been promoting polygamy, and polygamous marriage, in line with traditional African. For support and legitimation of polygamous marriage, the church draws on Biblical examples of the Israelite progenitors of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon, who are regarded as exemplary forebears of faith in God (Julius Museveni. 2017). Non-theologically and pragmatically speaking, Dillon-Mallone (1978) interestingly shows that polygamy among the Johanne Marange apostolic group, simply fills the gap of the numerical difference of the women to men ratio, and that this is why it is encouraged.

As ZCC continues its humanitarian efforts, stories like Allen's highlight the profound impact of faith-driven initiatives in uplifting communities and ensuring no one is left behind in times of crisis.

# Breaking the Cycle of Hunger: Elizabeth's Story

In the remote Ward 18 of Bikita, Elizabeth, a 65-year-old woman, faced an unimaginable struggle. As the head of a household of two, she battled hunger and extreme poverty, exacerbated by a prolonged drought. With no food available, she and her granddaughter were forced to survive on termites, often going an entire day without a proper meal.

When the Humanitarian Food Assistance was introduced, Elizabeth became one of its participants. For the first time in months, her household no longer had to endure hunger. She now receives a monthly food basket comprising of 20kg mealie meal, 1.5 liters of cooking oil and 4kg sugar beans allowing her and her granddaughter to eat nutritious meals every day.

Elizabeth's transformation is evident—not just in her well-being, but also in her outlook on life. She shared:

*"Chirongwa chakauya neve ZCC chakatinakira zvikuru, zvokwadi mungadai makanzwa kuti umwe munhu akafa mudunhu rino. Iyevino ganda kupenya kwarava kuita kudai kuwana zvokudya."*

("The program brought by ZCC has been a great blessing to us. Honestly, without it, someone in this area could have died from hunger. Now, our skin is even glowing from having enough food to eat.")

Through ZCC's intervention, Elizabeth and her granddaughter no longer live in desperation and uncertainty. Instead, they now enjoy a life of nourishment, and hope.

The Humanitarian Food Assistance Program continues to transform the lives of the most vulnerable, ensuring that no one is left behind in the fight against hunger and poverty.



Picture of Elizabeth Gweru at Gedhe Food Distribution in Ward 18 Bikita

**“The program brought by ZCC has been a great blessing to us. Honestly, without it, someone in this area could have died from hunger. Now, our skin is even glowing from having enough food to eat.”**

# ZCC Launches Groundbreaking Initiative to Curb Risky Migration



On January 30, 2025, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) took a bold step toward addressing the growing crisis of irregular migration by launching the Accelerated Ecumenical Interventions for the Reduction of Risky Flight, the Schools Social Work Program, and the Multi-Disciplinary Expert Facility in Gwanda District.

This milestone was made possible through the generous support of the Evangelical Church in Württemberg, seeks to tackle the root causes of unsafe migration and provide sustainable alternatives for young people key migration-prone areas, including Gwanda, Bulilima (Matabeleland South), Chipinge, Chimanimani (Manicaland), and Mwenezi (Masvingo), regions heavily affected by migration to South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique.

The event brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, local authorities, church leaders, development partners, and members of the community, all united in their commitment to safeguarding the dignity and future of Zimbabwe's youth. Addressing the gathering, the ZCC General Secretary emphasized that this program is not just a series of projects but a "call to action, a commitment to justice, and a mission to restore hope."

Zimbabwe has witnessed a sharp increase in irregular migration, especially among youth driven by economic hardships, social instability, and climate-related disasters. Many embark on legal migration in search of better opportunities, often falling victim to exploitation, abuse, and, in the worst cases, loss of life. Recognizing this crisis, ZCC has designed a comprehensive intervention that tackles migration at multiple levels.





## Key Components of the Initiative:

- Provision of Basic Services - Ensuring youth have access to essential resources that reduce vulnerabilities and enhance their well-being.
- Access to Accurate Information - Educating young people about the risks of irregular migration and empowering them to make informed decisions.
- Economic Empowerment - Providing skills training, financial literacy education, and start-up support to create viable livelihoods within their communities.
- Multi-Disciplinary Expert Facility (MDEF) - A network of psychologists, social workers, and legal professionals from ZCC member churches offering psycho-social support, legal aid, and counseling.
- Schools Social Work Program - Supporting vulnerable learners at risk of dropping out due to challenges like drug abuse, bullying, and early pregnancies.
- Community Awareness Campaigns - Using innovative tools such as sports events, multimedia campaigns, and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials to spread awareness about the dangers of irregular migration.

As Zimbabwe grapples with the realities of migration, our initiative offers a beacon of hope. By addressing economic vulnerabilities, strengthening social support systems, and providing viable local opportunities, the program aims to empower youth to thrive in their communities rather

As the words of Isaiah 40:31 remind us, *“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”* With faith, unity, and determination, ZCC and its partners are paving the way for a future where migration is a choice, not a desperate escape.

# Food Assistance Restores Hope for Sithandazile Mabhena



Sithandazile Mabhena happy to receive her food vouchers

In Mangubo Village, Ward 12, Sithandazile Mabhena has been the sole provider for her family since 2021. After her husband have migrated to South Africa in search of better opportunities during the COVID-19 era, Sithandazile has shouldered the full responsibility of caring for six children—four of her own and two nieces who lost their mother. Her life is a delicate balancing act as she strive to provide food for her family, while ensuring the children continue their education despite the challenges she faces.

Before receiving food assistance, Sithandazile relied on selling samosas to make ends meet. On good days, she earned R150 a week just enough to buy a 12.5kg bag of mealie meal. However, when sales were low, she was forced to buy food on credit from local shops to prevent her children from going to bed hungry. The financial strain has taken a toll, forcing Sithandazile to make difficult decisions, including skipping school fee payments for her children, compromising their educational future and perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Through the 'Emergency Response to Drought Affected Communities in Zimbabwe' Program, Sithandazile received food supplies that significantly eased her burden. The monthly food basket for her household comprised of 60kg of mealie meal, 6 liters cooking oil and 9kg sugar beans. This ensured her household had a steady supply of staple food.

## Impact of the Assistance

The food assistance has been life-changing for Sithandazile and her family.

- Reduced Financial Strain - With mealie meal provided, she no longer has to buy food on credit, freeing up her income for other household needs.
- Children's Education Secured - The money she previously spent on food is now used to pay school fees, ensuring that her children remain in school.
- Improved Well-Being - With a reliable food source, the children's nutrition and overall health have improved, reducing stress for Sithandazile as a mother.



Sithandazile Mabhena collecting her food supplies

"Before this assistance, I worried every day about how I would feed my children. Now, I can focus on working without the fear of going to bed hungry, says Sithandazile. This support has given me hope and dignity."

Despite the assistance, Sithandazile still faces challenges, including the need for a more stable income and support for other household essentials. However, her story highlights the importance of food assistance in cushioning vulnerable households and allowing them to redirect limited resources toward other critical needs, such as education.

Sithandazile's story is a proof to how food assistance programs can transform lives. As she continues her small business, additional support in the form of economic empowerment programs, such as access to microfinance or training in income-generating activities, could further enhance her resilience and self-sufficiency.

By bridging the food security gap, humanitarian food assistance has not only ensured her children are well-fed but has also given them a chance at a better future through education.

**“ Before this assistance, I worried every day about how I would feed my children. Now, I can focus on working without the fear of going to bed hungry, says Sithandazile. This support has given me hope and dignity. ”**

# A Grandmother's Struggle for Survival and Hope



Monica Nleya Posing for a photo

In Mangubo village in ward 12, Monica Nleya, a 65-year-old grandmother is the sole caregiver for her two grandchildren. With no stable source of income or external support, she relies on the generosity of her community to feed herself and the children. Her resilience and determination reflect the harsh realities faced by many elderly caregivers in marginalized communities.

Life has been incredibly difficult for Monica. She has no steady income and survives by begging for food from neighbors. On good days, she received small portions of mealie meal, enough to prepare porridge for her grandchildren. However, she often went to bed on an empty stomach, prioritizing their survival over her own well-being.

Her eldest grandchild, a 14-year-old boy, completed primary school but was unable to collect his results due to financial constraints. Without his results, he cannot proceed to secondary school, leaving him trapped in a cycle of poverty and limited opportunities. The younger grandchild also remains out of school due to the family's financial struggles.

To make matters worse, the whereabouts of their parents are unknown. Her daughter, the mother of one grandchild went to stay in town and has never come back whilst her son also disappeared years ago, and has no idea where both her son and daughter are. All the parents of the children are absent leaving the grandmother with the overwhelming responsibility of raising them alone.



Monica Nleya Packing her food supplies

Through the HEF funded Program, Monica has received essential food supplies that have brought much-needed relief. Her monthly food basket comprised of 30kg mealie meal, 3litres cooking oil and 4.5kg of sugar beans has:

- Reduced hunger in the household, ensuring the children do not go to bed without food.
- Eased the grandmother's burden, allowing her to focus on caregiving rather than begging for food.
- Restored dignity and hope, as she no longer feels completely dependent on the kindness of neighbors for survival.

This intervention has been transformative. The food assistance has provided stability and ensured that the family has at least one proper meal a day.

*"I used to worry every day about where the next meal would come from, says Monica. Now, I can cook without knocking on people's doors asking for food. I only wish my grandchildren could go to school, but at least they are not starving anymore."*

While food assistance has helped address immediate hunger, the family's challenges remain severe.

- Education support is needed to help the 14-year-old collect his results and enroll in secondary school
- Sustainable livelihood support for the grandmother, such as a small income-generating activity, could help her become more self-reliant.

This case highlights the urgent need for holistic humanitarian interventions that go beyond food assistance. While addressing hunger is crucial, ensuring access to education and economic opportunities is equally important in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Monica Nleya's story is one of resilience, but it is also a call for action. Through continued support, this family—and many others in similar situations—can find hope and a path toward a better future.



"I used to worry every day about where the next meal would come from, says Monica. Now, I can cook without knocking on people's doors asking for food. I only wish my grandchildren could go to school, but at least they are not starving anymore—Monica Nleya


## Climate Resilience in Action!



Meet Functure Musha's field, a first-year farmer thriving in climate-smart agriculture! Through the Scaling Up Resilience Project, implemented by Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) in Gutu and Bikita, we are empowering farmers with Climate Smart Agriculture to strengthen agricultural productivity in the face of climate change effects.

In this thriving field, Functure has planted sorghum (Marcia variety)—a drought-tolerant crop well-suited for climate resilience. This is a remarkable achievement for a first-year farmer, demonstrating the impact of Climate-Smart Agriculture.

"While there's great progress, we identified an opportunity to enhance mulching, a key CA principle, to improve soil moisture retention and fertility" - said Functure

 A great learning curve for an enthusiastic farmer!

# Voices of Resilience



Meet Idah Nkomo from Mwatsi village in ward 12 in Bulilima—a woman whose radiant smile masks the struggles she has endured. A pillar of strength for her family of six, she stands tall through adversity, unwavering in her resilience. Today, at 58, she is overwhelmed with joy for the support she has received.

“ I thank the Scottish Government for bringing relief and joy into my life and family. As a mother, I am happy that I am taking home food, just like a bird provides for its young ones. My prayer every day is that this project continues, because I know you can see the glow on my face.



Ellen Ndlovu from Mwatsi village in Ward 12 is filled with gratitude as she reflects on the impact of the food assistance program on her family. With a household of six to care for, putting meals on the table has often been a struggle. However, since the program's implementation, she has found great relief knowing that her family has food security. The support has not only nourished them but also empowered them to focus on their livelihoods.

“ We can now tend to our fields and with full stomachs, free from the constant worry of what we will eat when we return home. This assistance has genuinely transformed our lives,” she shared with a smile



At 92 years old, Mutenhe Magaya has lived through a lifetime of challenges. Now a widower, he shares his modest home with his 17-year-old nephew, who recently completed his Form 4 studies. With no stable source of income, the pair has been surviving on the kindness of neighbors, often going to bed hungry.

“Because of my age, it is now difficult for me to work, hence, for me, this is a blessing from God to receive assistance from ZCC and Canada”



She is Taniso Tachiona, a widow from Mundete village in Gutu. She stays with her grandchild Tafara (from her daughter who is now late) who is 8 years old. The grandchild is an orphan who lost both parents. “Each day is a battle to provide for my 8-year old grandson Tafara, who looks to me for strength and care”

Today, I hold more than just food in my hands - I hold hope, compassion, and the reassurance that we are not forgotten. To those who made this possible, you have lifted a heavy burden from my heart and give Tafara and me a chance to face tomorrow with dignity and for that I say thank you.





Meet Beatrice Mupunga and Simukai Mupunga, a resilient elderly couple who have shared nearly 60 years of marriage. Living with their four orphaned grandchildren, life had become an unrelenting struggle, forcing them to rely on farming activities and the generosity of neighbors just to get by. Currently, they are part of the Humanitarian Food Assistance Program.

“Your kindness to us and our grandchildren, is a light in our darkest moments and we will forever be grateful”, said Beatrice Mupunga



Meet Irene Chasekwa, a 55 year old single mother from Chibvongodze village in Gutu. She stays with her two children.

“Before the food assistance, I struggled to provide for my children. Some days, we would go to bed hungry. But with this support, I can now cook a proper meal for my family. It has given us hope and strength to face each day.”



Bernard Mutambasere. He stays with his wife and two children. Due to unemployment, Mr Mutambasere does piece work for example if one needs assistance with farming. His family has been surviving on assistance from NGOs.

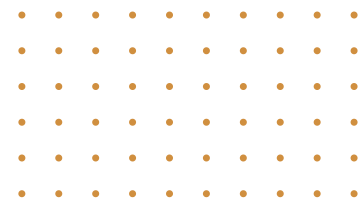
“Gratitude fills my heart as I hold these gifts. Today my smile is proof that generosity still exist. With the help of the ZCC and CFGB, my family has food on our table and I am really grateful”



Irene Kubiku, 39 years of age. She is a single mother. “As a mother, the weight of responsibility is heavy, but it is one I carry with pride and love because of my children. Being a single mother means being the provider, the protector and the source of hope for my children.

“Today this food support reminds me that I am not alone in this journey. It gives me strength to keep going knowing that my children’s needs are met even in the toughest times. A mothers heart never stops fighting and with a little help, we can overcome any challenge”, says Irene.”

# Mbire Livelihoods Training Centre Official Opening in Pictures





# More Information About Us



The Humanitarian Services and Diakonia department focuses on emergency preparedness and response, recovery and long terms development programs across multiple sectors which include WASH, Food Security, Health among others

**Thank You to all our partners and team !**

## Contact Us :



Phone Number  
**(024) 2572122**



Email Address  
**info@zccinzim.org**



Office Address  
**27 St Patrick Road, Hatfield, Harare**



Zimbabwe Council of Churches



[www.zccinzim.org](http://www.zccinzim.org)

Prepared and Designed by: Miriam A. Nkambule  
Communications and Visibility Coordinator

Editorial Advisor : Ms Audrey Moyo  
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer