

CEDAR Fund 2022-2023 'Care for the Disaster-stricken Poor' Donation Campaign Report

Climate change has had severe impacts on many countries around the world. CEDAR and our partners have been consistently concerned about the 'disaster-stricken poor' in various places. In 2022/2023, CEDAR continued to work with partners to launch several relief and development projects related to the climate crisis, including disaster risk reduction and conservation agriculture training. The locations and numbers of projects are as follows:

- Bangladesh: 2
- Ethiopia: 2
- Hong Kong: 1
- India: 3
- Zimbabwe: 2
- Lebanon: 1
- Myanmar: 1
- Creative Assess Nations: 1

The 13 projects mentioned above directly benefited 88,444 people and indirectly benefited 117,738 people.

Extreme climate change has led to frequent natural disasters, affecting already low-income farmers, resulting in lower crop yields, reduced income, and a more precarious livelihood. Below, we will introduce our partner in Zimbabwe, Foundations for Farming (FfF), which launched conservation agriculture and financial management projects in three communities in Zimbabwe in 2022/2023 to help poor local farmers.

Introduction of Foundations for Farming (FfF)

Foundations for Farming was established in 1982, and CEDAR began partnering with FfF in 2016 to provide training to resource-limited Zimbabwean farmers. This collaboration aims to help farmers achieve self-sufficiency with limited land resources and even generate additional income from surplus produce. FfF's work includes teaching farmers to restore overexploited land and conserve soil for sustainable farming. They also help smallholder farmers access nutritious food and escape poverty.

FfF's advocated practices of conservation agriculture and land stewardship are based on Bible teachings. In addition to agricultural work, they focus on reconciling relationships between God and men, also between men and the land, bringing fundamental changes to the lives of smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe.

Project Information

Project Name: Conservative Agriculture Training and Financial Stewardship Promotion Programme

Location: Shamva, Chaminuka and Heather Chimoga regions

Period: September 2022 to August 2023 (this is the second-year project report of a three-year project)

Objective: Improved (1) land stewardship (soil protection, crop diversity and yields) and (2) financial stewardship (budgeting, saving habits and debt reduction) through field-based training and local transfer.

Beneficiaries: The second year of the project directly benefited 450 people and indirectly benefited 2,700 people.

Background

From 2019 to 2021, CEDAR and FfF carried out the first phase of the 'Conservative Agriculture Training and Financial Stewardship Promotion Programme' in the Madziwa community, providing farmers with training on leadership skills and conservation agriculture. The partner also began collaborating with the Christian organisation Crown Financial Ministries to teach farmers financial stewardship skills.

After the completion of the first phase, CEDAR and its partner deemed the results satisfactory. Based on this experience, they initiated the second phase of the project in new communities (Shamva, Chaminuka and Heather Chimoga).

Project Details

The partner taught 'Pfumfudza' farming techniques and 'Money Map' financial management skills to encourage poor farmers to practise conservation agriculture and financial stewardship.

Pfumfudza (meaning 'new season' in Shona, the mother tongue of 75% of the people of Zimbabwe) is a farming technique based on agriculture conservation. The partner taught farmers how to use smaller plots of land and less labour to produce more crops. The agricultural training primarily involves on-site practical instruction. The partner provided training and funding to farmers who participated in the first phase of the project, enabling them to become facilitators for the second phase, training an additional 450 farmers at 15 other locations.

On the other hand, the partner collaborated with Crown Financial Ministries, an organisation that promotes Christian management practices. Through the 'Money Map' course developed by Crown, they helped farmers effectively manage the income they earned from selling agricultural products. The 10-month 'Money Map' financial stewardship training taught farmers about God's ownership of all resources, responsible work attitudes, financial planning and spending, how to avoid debt, saving and investing, practising generosity, character and financial management, and leaving a legacy for the next generation. The belief behind the course is that

when everyone manages resources and exercises leadership correctly in God, it will bring transformation to individuals and communities.

Finally, the partner selected some individuals in the three served communities to receive the next phase of leadership training. Through experiential learning, simulation games, and spiritual formation, they learn to become servant leaders of God and help transform their communities.

After completing the training in the Shamva community, farmers were able to produce an average of 4 to 8 tons of maize per hectare. Those who adopted all the principles taught and diligently weeded their fields achieved an exceptionally high yield of 14.4 tons of maize per hectare. The trained farmers also reported extensively planting alternative crops, including sweet potatoes, traditional grains, legumes, and peanuts, to obtain diverse nutrition, additional income, and soil regeneration.

A Life-changing Story: Story of Sheilah

For many African women, widowhood is more terrifying than death because losing their husbands often plunges their families into a life of hardship, leading to social isolation, hunger, poverty, and abuse. However, Sheilah's testimony brings hope to other widows.

Sheilah is a widow with two children who faced difficult days after losing her husband. 'For me, it was challenging to provide two meals a day for my children, let alone three meals... We spent our days in hunger.' She had to rely on temporary jobs or even begging to obtain food to feed her family daily.

In 2019, Sheilah participated in a two-week training course organised by CEDAR partner, FfF. There, she learned the 'Pfumvudza' farming technique, and her life slowly began to change. Initially, she was a bit hesitant in her learning, but when she tried to apply the farming knowledge she had gained to the only two small plots of land she had, she received an unexpectedly good harvest. She began to obtain enough food to feed her family without begging for a living. She then decided to teach her two children the farming techniques she had learned. Thankfully, the following season, she farmed with her two children, and their harvest also increased. Upon discovering that the new farming techniques could significantly boost crop yields, she decided to expand the size of her farmland further to produce more food and earn an income. With her savings, she was even able to expand her house.



Sheilah Happily Showed the Results of Her Hard Work

Now, Sheilah is not only self-sufficient but has also become one of the trainers for the project in the Chaminuka area, teaching over 30 farmers the same conservation farming methods. Her son is currently studying construction at a local technical college and will graduate this year. She is also encouraging her daughter to enrol in an agriculture-related course next year to improve their family's livelihood.





Farmers Learn New Farming Techniques on Sheilah's Land

Sheilah happily says, 'My life has changed dramatically since I implemented the conservation agriculture methods taught by FfF. Through learning Pfumvudza, my increased income has allowed me to expand my house and build a toilet. This project has been a lifeline for me. I used to be penniless and homeless, with very few visitors. But today, I walk proudly and confidently in the community, knowing I am no longer a beggar. I am very grateful to the FfF team and CEDAR Fund for their help, providing me and my family with valuable training and opening new opportunities for us!'

Although Sheilah's family has experienced difficult times, they have shown that widowhood does not equate to despair. Through FfF's training programme, she has experienced life transformation, and her children have gained educational opportunities. We deeply hope that their lives will continue to improve.

Donation (Please specify: Care for the Disaster-stricken Poor)

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