

Bethany Project Newsletter

Volume 2





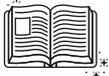
INSIDE THE ISSUE

- Director's message
- Empowering Communities: My Journey as a Focal Person
- Transforming Lives, Empowering Adolescent Boys and Girls with Dignity and Education
- A Ray of Hope: Chivaraidzo's Journey from Hardship to Opportunity
- From Burden to Empowerment: How Piped Water Transformed Thomas's Life
- Bianga Machingura: A Journey of Resilience and Empowerment
- A Lifeline for Caregivers: The Impact of the Bethany Project Infant Feeding Scheme

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on the second quarter of our journey, it is with immense pride that I present this edition of the Bethany Project newsletter. Over the past few months, we have made significant strides in our mission to foster safer, healthier, and more empowered communities in Zvishavane and Mberengwa districts. Our focus on strategic pillars: Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) prevention, Community Capacity Building, Institutional Strengthening, Food Security, and Social and Economic Empowerment has yielded transformative impacts.

Our efforts in Community Capacity Building have empowered local leaders and community members to drive sustainable development, while Institutional Strengthening initiatives have enhanced our organizational capacity, ensuring the scalability and sustainability of our programs. Our Food Security initiatives have made a tangible difference, empowering individuals and families to achieve food sovereignty and improved nutrition. Furthermore, our focus on Social and Economic Empowerment continues to break the cycle of poverty by providing skills training and entrepreneurship support, enabling community members to unlock their full potential. As we look ahead, I extend my deepest gratitude to our supporters, partners, and stakeholders. Your unwavering commitment and collaboration are the driving forces behind our progress. Thank you for being part of this journey, and stay tuned for more stories of transformation and hope.



Empowering Communities: My Journey as a Focal Person

My name is Linear Takawira, and I am the focal person at Mabasa Information Centre, dedicated to disseminating essential Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information, with a focus on HIV/AIDS, sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse. Having once had limited access to SRHR knowledge, I am deeply passionate about this work. Through educational programs and outreach efforts, I have raised significant awareness on SRHR, leading to more young people seeking these services and information. I also provide counseling to help young people navigate complex life challenges. I have also raised awareness using different initiatives to address drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, promoting healthier decisions among adolescents.

A major milestone in my journey has been the establishment of the Pamumvuri and Humwe Forums, which foster open dialogue, community support, and comprehensive SRHR education. These platforms empower individuals with the knowledge to lead healthier lives. Through equipping the community, especially adolescents and young people, with crucial SRHR information and referring them to appropriate services, I strive to create a well-informed and proactive generation. This project has strengthened the bond between the organization and the communities. Witnessing these positive changes and increased awareness in Mabasa community has been incredibly rewarding, and I remain dedicated to continuing this impactful work.



“To promote comprehensive and sustainable community based care and support for male and female children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS, living with disabilities and vulnerable”

Transforming Lives, Empowering Adolescent Boys and Girls with Dignity and Education

In the heart of Zvishavane District, in Ture, Dayataya, Mapirimira, and Ngomeyebani wards, Bethany Project in partnership with Oxfam under the Judith Nelson Foundation is making a significant impact through the project; **Empowering Adolescent Girls and Transforming Lives through Education**. Central to this project was the distribution of dignity kits to 100 girl learners across ten schools, Sibozza, Ngomeyebani, Sivanga, Govarizadze, Mpumelelo, Ingome, Shonhayi, Ture, Utongani, and Rusvinge Schools in Zvishavane District. These kits, comprising sanitary pads, a face towel, Vaseline, bath soaps, a 20-litre bucket, and three panties, aimed to promote menstrual hygiene among in-school girls, ensuring they could attend school regularly and confidently, free from the disruptions caused by inadequate supplies. During the verification process for all learners, an unexpected revelation emerged, boys in the community faced similar challenges regarding hygiene and personal care, impacting their attendance and well-being. This realization underscored a critical yet often overlooked need within the community. Bethany Project expanded its reach by distributing dignity kits to 30 boys as well. These kits were tailored to the specific needs of boys with items such as soap, face towels, Vaseline, a 20-litre bucket, and underwear, thereby empowering boys to maintain personal hygiene and attend school with dignity. For the girls, the dignity kits alleviated the burden of missing school during menstrual cycles, allowing them to concentrate on their studies without embarrassment. Amina (pseudo name), one of the beneficiaries, shared, "Before, I would miss school days every month. Now, I can come to school every day and focus on my dreams." The distribution of dignity kits by the Bethany Project not only promoted menstrual hygiene among in-school girls but also fostered inclusivity and support for boys, creating an effective and nurturing educational environment.



Verification processes being conducted by Henry Ndlovu Project Officer .
Photo credit Tinashe Ruwengo

A Ray of Hope: Chivaraidzo's Journey from Hardship to Opportunity

From Burden to Empowerment: How Piped Water Transformed Thomas's Life

My name is Chivaraidzo Maphosa (pseudo name), a 16-year-old student currently studying in Form 3 at Ngomeyebani Secondary School. Life has not been easy for me. At the tender age of three, tragedy struck when I lost my father in a devastating road accident. Since then, my mother has been working hard in South Africa, leaving me under the care of my loving aunt, she is a strong woman, but life as a peasant farmer has been tough, especially with the erratic weather patterns affecting our crops. This year has been particularly challenging for us. The inadequate rainfall has made it even harder for my aunt to support our household, let alone afford my school fees and supplies. It felt like the weight of the world was on her shoulders, and I could not bear to see her struggle. But just when things seemed bleak, a ray of hope emerged. Oxfam, through the Bethany Project, reached out to help me. They provided me with a complete school uniform, including much-needed school shoes, a dignity kit and payment of my school fees. These were not just items to me, they were symbols of dignity, pride, and opportunity.

With my new uniform and school shoes, I no longer felt ashamed or excluded among my peers. Instead, I walked into school with my head held high, ready to embrace my education fully. The dignity kit provided me with essential hygiene products, ensuring my comfort and well-being during my menstrual cycle. I cannot express the depth of my gratitude for the support I have received. It has lifted a burden off my aunt's shoulders, and I am more determined than ever to succeed. I promise to work hard in my studies, not only for myself but also for my aunt, who has sacrificed so much for me. Through the kindness of organizations Bethany Project and Oxfam my dreams of a brighter future are no longer distant aspirations but tangible possibilities. I am filled with hope and determination, ready to overcome any obstacle that comes my way.



“To promote comprehensive and sustainable community based care and support for male and female children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS, living with disabilities and vulnerable”

Life has drastically changed for Thomas, a father and farmer, thanks to the installation of a piped water scheme by the Bethany Project in partnership with Oxfam under the WE CARE Program in Mapirimira ward. Before this transformation, Thomas spent countless hours each week walking long distances to fetch water for his family's daily needs and his crops. The burden of this unpaid labor was immense, leaving little time for other productive activities and often taking a toll on his health and well-being.

Since the establishment of the piped water scheme, Thomas's life has significantly improved. Clean water is now readily available at a communal tap near his home, drastically reducing the time and effort previously spent on water collection. This has allowed Thomas to dedicate more time to his farming, leading to better crop yields and increased income. Additionally, the health of his family has improved, and his children can now attend school regularly without the daily chore of fetching water. The piped water scheme has not only alleviated the burden of unpaid domestic work but has also empowered Thomas and his community to focus on growth, education, and a brighter future.

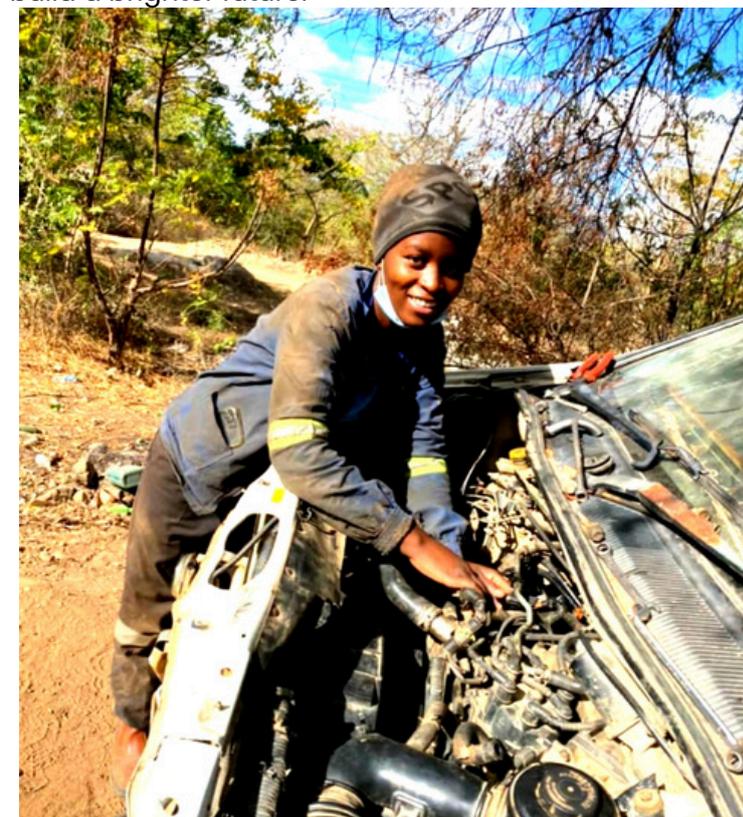


Thomas fetching water from the piped water scheme. Photo credit Tinashe Ruvengo

Bianga Machingura: A Journey of Resilience and Empowerment

My name is Bianga Machingura, a 21-year-old from Mabasa Zvishavane village, Nagomuguti, under Chief Masunda, Ward 8. I live with my grandmother and younger brother. My mother divorced my father before I was born, we never saw him, leaving my grandmother as the sole provider. After my Form 4 exams, I stayed home for two years, searching for employment to alleviate my grandmother's burden. Eventually, I found work as a shopkeeper, enabling me to contribute financially to my household and purchase school supplies for my younger brother. However, my true transformation began when I enrolled in a vocational training program, which taught me how to fix cars. Despite starting with no knowledge of automobiles, I am now proficient in handling spanners and other tools, and can confidently repair cars.

The Bethany Project vocational training program has not only equipped me with valuable skills but has also instilled a newfound confidence and independence. My dream is to open a large garage and a shop selling car parts, ensuring financial stability for my family and myself. However, I still face challenges, particularly the lack of money to buy essential items like sanitary pads and body lotion. Despite these obstacles, the training has given me hope and a clear vision for the future. With startup capital for a small business, I could generate the income needed to afford these necessities and continue supporting my family. This program has been a beacon of hope, transforming my life and aspirations, and providing me with the tools to build a brighter future.



Bianga Machingura servicing a car. Photo credit MC Sande

A Lifeline for Caregivers: The Impact of the Bethany Project Infant Feeding Scheme

In the small community of Kosvoro, nestled in the heart of Zvishavane district, lives Miriam, a devoted grandmother and caregiver to her infant grandson, Blessing. After the untimely passing of her daughter, Miriam was left to care for Blessing amidst financial and emotional hardships. Providing for Blessing's nutritional needs was a significant challenge, as Miriam had limited resources and knowledge about infant nutrition. This dire situation changed when Miriam became a beneficiary of the Bethany Project's infant feeding scheme. Through this initiative, Blessing received essential infant milk formula and peanut butter, which provided the crucial nutrients needed for his healthy growth and development. The consistent supply of nutritious food led to a remarkable improvement in Blessing's health, making him stronger, healthier, and more active.

Beyond providing nutritional aid, Bethany Project also organized nutritional support sessions that educated Miriam about proper infant feeding practices, balanced diets, and overall child healthcare. These sessions empowered Miriam with the knowledge and confidence to ensure Blessing's continued well-being. Additionally, the emotional support and sense of community she received from other caregivers and project staff offered her much-needed encouragement and strength. This holistic approach not only addressed the immediate nutritional needs of Blessing but also equipped Miriam with the tools to sustain his health long-term. The profound impact of the Bethany Project's infant feeding scheme is evident in the transformation of Blessing's health and the empowerment of Miriam as a caregiver, offering them a brighter and more hopeful future.



“To promote comprehensive and sustainable community based care and support for male and female children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS, living with disabilities and vulnerable”

Gallery

