



Binga women with their baskets

The case for baskets

Weaving baskets is a traditional skill in many parts of Africa. With support from Africa Now women in Zimbabwe are getting a fair deal for their efforts.

Our project in Zimbabwe, which is exclusively for women, offers basic business and financial management training. This allows the women to develop and sustain their own incomes and is producing very positive results.

The people of the area are famous for their woven Tonga baskets. In the past, the baskets were frequently exchanged for ridiculously low prices or a small amount of food and then sold on by traders at up to 650% profit.

But now, having learnt about quality control, how buyers operate and how to organise orders, the women no longer have to accept insultingly low prices - previously it was not uncommon for them to get 6p for a 45cm diameter basket that could take a week to weave and easily be sold on for £40.

The baskets are sold to an **Africa Now** partner, Binga Arts and Crafts, at a consistent and fair price, and then on to exporters. This means that the women can be confident of getting the right price for their handiwork, and can plan ahead for the livelihoods of their families which gives them a great sense of worth and morale.

Edith, Secretary of the Bulawayo Kraal producer group, said: *"We are very happy with this Africa Now project. At last we have our own money and can budget for our families' needs."*

Your gift of **£20** could train more women in business management.

Ethical flowers

Towards the end of 2002 bad labour practises within the Kenyan flower industry were exposed.

ROB HALE, **Africa Now's** Kenya Representative, explains how he has been involved in addressing the situation.

"At the end of last year, two Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) representatives and two UK buyers' representatives came out to Kenya to get a picture of what was going on. They visited a number of flower farms and met industry representatives as well as government officials and NGOs involved in the sector.

Their report showed that, whilst conditions had improved there was still evidence of bad practices. A Stakeholder Steering Committee (SSC) was formed to oversee a thorough investigation into the sector and provide a forum for growers, NGOs and the government to tackle the key issues.

Africa Now is providing advice to the group, particularly on setting ground rules and helping information be shared.

We have also worked on developing a proposal for taking the SSC beyond its current mandate to becoming a legal entity that would promote ethical issues across the horticultural sector."

Rob adds: "Our real strength is that we're seen to be neutral and can mediate when disagreements occur."

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Beekeeping update

In last year's newsletter we told you of the success of Joel Akaki and Africa Now's bee keeping programme. Father-of-four Joel had struggled to find work in economically unstable Kenya and was hindered further by a disability.

But that was before Joel attended a bee keeping demonstration and training session run by **Africa Now** and Honey Care. He bought six hives, and since November 2002 has had three very good harvests amounting to 89.5 kg of honey. With

the profit, Joel hopes to buy ten more hives.

Life for the whole Akaki family continues to improve. Joel can now afford to send his son to school in Uganda and his other children to school locally. Joel's wife is fully supportive

of her husband's new career. And his income has helped with her dress-making business in the local market.

"I was able to make the bee suit that Joel wears when he inspects the bees," Mrs Akaki told us proudly.



Joel at honey harvest time

EU seal of approval

Great news!!

The European Union has agreed to provide 75% of the funding for **Africa Now's** Bee Keeping and Dairy projects. However we can only claim this money if we are able to find at least 15% of the total costs from private European sources, the other 10% can come from other institutional donors.

So £20 received as an individual donation could allow us to claim £100 of EU money. If the donor has signed a Gift aid donation their donation of £20 could become over £140, more than seven times the original sum they gave.

But don't forget this will **ONLY** happen if we can raise 15% of the project costs. If you have any fundraising ideas please get in touch.



Pump priming



Nicholas demonstrates the pump

What do you get if you take an old tyre, some rope and various parts of a bicycle?

The answer, as **Africa Now** found out, is accessible clean water at minimum cost. For people in Africa who often have to walk for miles to get water, which is frequently contaminated, this simple invention – the Rope and Washer Pump – has the power to greatly improve everyday life.

Africa Now saw the opportunity for a new and innovative project – to train 120 artisans in Western Kenya to build the pumps, link them to hardware stores who would sell their products, and

provide demonstrations of the pumps for local communities.

The pump has several beneficial elements for rural Africa. It is cheap to make, requires no power source and is quick and easy to operate for people of all ages. In a survey done by **Africa Now**, 95% of respondents previously used a rope and bucket to collect water, but opted for the rope and washer

pump once they had seen its advantages

This project not only helps communities by providing drinkable water, but is also a major business opportunity for individuals. Nicholas Olwande, of Kodiaga in the Siaya District of Kenya, attended a training session organised by **Africa Now** and is now making a very good income. He is greatly excited by how his life has turned around.

*"Thanks to the training from **Africa Now**, the Rope and Washer Pump is my main business. **Africa Now** arranged for me to have space on a Ministry of Trade stand in Nairobi recently where I received 86 orders and have completed 40 of them."*

Your gift of **£10** could help build a new pump for a village in Africa.

Women take financial lead



Women take a front seat at a shareholders meeting

It is hard for most of us to imagine not having the security of being able to bank our savings. But in the villages of Africa, the financial services that we take for granted are considered an unobtainable luxury.

This can be a major constraint on the standard of living for rural people. Because charges are too high, they are not able to get even the most basic financial services from mainstream banks.

Africa Now has introduced a scheme which allows individuals to overcome financial restrictions and generate income. As a direct result, in villages around western Kenya, people's lives are being transformed.



Knowing from experience that women are better able to manage finances and more reliable at repaying borrowed money, the project aims to establish village banking systems owned and run by women.

The women pool their money and form a village bank which opens an account with a commercial bank. As a result, savings are safe, and the shareholders can borrow money and have instant access to financial services such as money transfers and cheques.

With credit, setting up a business – whether bee keeping or growing cash

Your gift of **£50** could help women in Africa with financial services.

crops – becomes a reality for these women. When money is made it is actually possible for savings to be banked and accrue interest.

Serem, in the Vihiga District of Kenya, is one of the 12 villages where the project is underway. The potential shareholders aged 18 – 70 are all thrilled by the opportunity that **Africa Now** has given them:

*“I am particularly happy with **Africa Now** because our standard of living is now better than before,”* one of the Serem shareholders said. *“We can access credit to use to produce more cash crops.”*

Golden supporters!

Africa Now is fortunate to have some very generous and highly creative supporters. Take Mr and Mrs Robertson of Derbyshire – as part of their 50th wedding anniversary celebrations they suggested that friends and family made donations to **Africa Now** instead of giving them a conventional present. This wonderful idea raised over £400 for **Africa Now's** work.

Maybe you're thinking of doing the same. Or have a fundraising idea of your own... Not only will you be making a difference to the lives of people in Africa, you will also have lots of fun.

Africa Now can provide an informative fundraising pack filled with ideas and advice, and promotional materials to help you make the most of your enterprise. Please don't hesitate to call if you're interested on 01865 249 997.

Africa Now appreciates all your efforts, however large or small.



Buy @ Africa Now and help us raise funds

From books to wine you can earn us donations from retailers such as Amazon, Blackwell's and Comet when you buy from our online shop at www.africa.now.org. Simply by going through our website link you will earn Africa Now a donation from the retailer of up to 10% of the purchase price, at no extra cost to you. Just remember, you must go through our link to earn us the donation, so why not bookmark it. While visiting our site don't miss the regularly updated news on our work, ideas on how to get more involved, as well as more in-depth information and links to our partners' sites.

Kenya

What do you think of when someone says Kenya? White beaches and a sun-kissed coastal paradise? Wildebeest sweeping majestically across the plains? Huge slums and desperate living conditions?



Test your knowledge about Kenya using this comparison with the UK on some key statistical figures: with just over twice the area of UK but only about half our population Kenya makes some interesting reading, not all bad either.

Population growth rate:

UK 0.21% Kenya 1.15% (2002 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

UK total population: 77.99 years

Kenya total population: 47.02 years

Population below poverty line:

UK 17% Kenya 50% (2000 est.)

Labour force – by occupation:

UK Agriculture 1%, industry 25%,

services 74% Kenya agriculture 75%-80% (1999)

Unemployment rate:

UK 5.2% (2002 est.) Kenya 40% (2001 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

UK lowest 10%: 2%, highest 10%: 37% (2000)

Kenya lowest 10%: 2%, highest 10%: 28% (1995)

Any surprises there? Further information on Kenya and the projects that **Africa Now** implements to help solve some of these problems can be found on our website and the links it contains.

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Sneezing elephants

Chillies can help poor farmers make money and keep elephants out of the crops without harming the animals. **Africa Now**, the Mid Zambezi Elephant Project (MZEP) and the Chilli Pepper Company are working to expand this successful project.

Research conducted by farmers and MZEP has shown that chilli pepper crops are an effective deterrent against crop predation. Other crops can easily be grown alongside chillies, making it easy for farmers to surround them with chilli plants to protect them from being eaten by wildlife.

Elephants do not like to eat chillies and can be chased away from fields very effectively by burning chillies. As the smoke makes them sneeze and because they have

good memories, elephants then tend to avoid sources of irritating chilli smoke.

By helping farmers organise and market the harvested chillies, **Africa Now** estimates that the income of farmers can increase ten fold.

This project is already helping communities to harvest more food. Previously, the farmers harvested all their crops early to avoid them being eaten by wildlife. This meant minimal crops of poor quality. But now farmers can be

sure of high quality crops, by allowing them to fully mature and dry in the fields.

The hope is that 10 more communities will have the opportunity to flourish with the help of this **Africa Now**/MZEP project. But development of the scheme depends heavily on funding. If you are interested in this creative and exciting project, check out the details on our website and find out how you can become involved.

Legacies

Your legacy – a future for Africa's children

Africa Now believes that every African family deserves the opportunity to earn an income and support themselves. Change won't come overnight – but each new project we launch is a step in the right direction. That is why the pledge of a legacy to **Africa Now** is such a valuable gift.

Before we can submit a project to major donors for funding, our experts in the field must complete rigorous research. Legacies cover this vital groundwork, as well as the search for new ideas to combat poverty.

As many as 60% of us in the UK have not made a Will. Whether you are making yours now or amending an existing one, please consider a legacy to **Africa Now**. For our free booklet, please contact us.



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