

peacemail

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POSTAGE PAID
OFF PEAK
AUSTRALIA

act for peace
reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities



Across Zimbabwe, Christian Care (CC) is rushing to distribute agricultural inputs ahead of the summer rains, but returning the country to a state of stable food production in this year will be difficult. In the first quarter of 2009, nearly seven million Zimbabweans relied on emergency food aid; initial forecasts by aid agencies are that about 2.8 million people will require food assistance in the last few months leading up to the April 2010 harvest.

The unavailability of agricultural inputs like seed and fertilizer during Zimbabwe's economic implosion, as well as unseasonal dry spells, made the country (once known as the breadbasket of southern Africa) dependent on food aid to stave off starvation for several years.

CC was formed by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in 1967. Projects include rural development, disaster relief, dam construction and irrigation, water and sanitation, livestock restocking, HIV/AIDS prevention and advocacy on behalf of the disadvantaged. There is fear that the cholera epidemic, which last year claimed more than 4,000 lives and afflicted nearly 100,000 others, may again be a problem with the summer rains.

\$100 can provide vital training for four Zimbabwean farmers in methods of sustainable agriculture which will increase the yield of their crops.

\$350 can provide each farmer trained with an initial kit of seeds and equipment. They are expected to demonstrate the improvements in production and to educate their whole community.

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

"The Christmas Bowl People!"



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THANK YOU Partners for your commitment to Act for Peace through your regular gifts. Thank you for your generosity, especially those who have chosen to increase the amount of their giving. Together, we are making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people affected by conflict and extreme poverty.

If you would like to upgrade your regular gift, simply free call Howard or Jordan on **1800 025 101** or email hgraham@ncca.org.au. Also, all feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners.

If you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to join this special group of committed givers, or would just like to help this project, your call or e-mail will be welcomed! All gifts of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

'Conservation farming has changed my life.'

Dear Act for Peace Partner,

My name is Nolina Twala, I come from Lupane district in Matabeleland North Province. I am a 34 year old widow living with HIV. My husband, Twala died in 2006. I care for our three children, along with Twala's aged parents. My young sister, Jennifer Mpofu lives with us and she is also HIV positive.

Life had been so difficult for us, especially after Twala died. I also faced a lot of prejudice because of my HIV status. For some years, my family failed to grow enough food because our four hectare sandy field had become "tired" following decades of cultivation through conventional farming. We also did not have enough money to buy fertilisers.



Almost every year our harvest would last us about two months. The situation was made worse by drought. We also didn't have any animal or mechanical help in ploughing. Over the years I relied on my neighbours for a helping hand, but it often came late when everyone else had planted and so we would miss the best of the season. Life seemed to converge into endless hopelessness for my children and me following the death of my husband. I felt like a great burden was on my shoulders as bread winner in a family with greatly compromised livelihood, due to two HIV affected members.

When Christian Care (CC) came to assist us through the Conservation Farming (CF) program, I did not understand the benefits. The program emphasises soil preparation, mulching and rotating crops. Their continuous support encouraged me to put a piece of land under CF in the next season.

After looking at the results of the first year of using CF, I was convinced it works and I have never turned back. I harvested much more, compared to the adjacent plot that was using conventional techniques. I realised that planting early, conserving moisture and nutrients for the crop while minimizing weeds is the winning formula!

I was quick to engage my whole family into action the following season. We expanded our land to half a hectare and started our land preparation as early as July. Meanwhile I received training in vegetable growing and was elected to be a committee member in the local community nutrition garden.

I was also taught a lot about healthy eating, living positively and growing nutritious organic vegetables. The garden members agreed to incorporate CF aspects in the growing of vegetables and herbs in the gardens. That year I discovered that my family was migrating from poverty to the freedom of self sufficiency. The harvest we got was able to take us throughout the year and we could also sell excess vegetables to raise income.

Thank you Act for Peace Partners, for helping to support CC to teach us use better ways of farming so that we grow healthier and become more self-sufficient everyday.



Nolina

Partner's Prayer Points:

Improved democracy in Zimbabwe, with genuine dialogue between parties, leading to a society of equality and respect.

Help for those who still need access to food and to those affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS.