

# EMPOWERED VOICES!

## HOW WE IMPROVED OUR LIVES

A COLLECTION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES –  
BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE WASH PROGRAM IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA



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Illembi is the Health Advisory Committee Chairperson and was also one of the people involved in helping install the water pump outside the Health Post. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

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**Australian Government**  

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**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**



# ACRONYMS

<b>AACES</b>	Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme
<b>CLTS</b>	Community Led Total Sanitation
<b>DEAR</b>	Disability Education Access Right
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>HPs</b>	Health Promoters
<b>KZF</b>	Keeper Zambia Foundation
<b>OD</b>	Open defecation
<b>PPS</b>	People's Participation Service
<b>PPCR</b>	Pilot Project on Climate Resilience
<b>PWD</b>	People with disabilities
<b>SAG</b>	Sanitation Action Group
<b>V-WASH</b>	Village water, sanitation and hygiene
<b>V-WASHE</b>	Village water, sanitation and hygiene education
<b>VIP toilets</b>	Ventilated improved pit toilets
<b>VWZ</b>	Village Water Zambia
<b>WDC</b>	Ward Development Committees
<b>ZAFOD</b>	Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations
<b>ZICTA</b>	Zambia Information & Communications Technology Authority

# CONTENTS

Credits	1
Acronyms	3
Background	6
Introduction	8
Working on the AACES Program – Experiences of one of the longest serving staff	11
Access for all is good for all	14
A Program that changed my thinking	15
Knowledge acquired through implementing	17
Struggling for a better future	19
Knowledge is Power	20
People with disabilities are able	23
I am happy WASH facilities are user-friendly	24
Crop diversification leads to household food security	26
The change of my life	28
A bright future gleaming	30
A woman with a disability in marriage	32
Rise above GBV	34
Sensitization by Zambia police	35
One day GBV will be a story of the past	36
AACES program in Imalyo Ward	38
God is with me	41
Back to school after pregnancy	43

Amazing change in Lumbo Ward	45
Women are able to do what men can do	46
Bricklaying or carpentry is not just a man's work	47
From a housewife to a builder	49
A woman can be a borehole driller	51
A woman becomes a contractor	54
Taming a lion!	55
CLTS Change of scene in Lumbo Ward	58
Community knowledge empowerment	60
AACES taking me to another level	62
AACES outcomes in the Imalyo Ward	64
Personal Hygiene experiences	65
Personal Hygiene improves in Tapo area	67
Bottom up approach to development	69
Chance comes once	71
A Village that became a paradise in sanitation	73
AACES in flood/drought prone Lumbo Ward	75
Chief's involvement in AACES/WASH Program	78
Most significant development as a result of AACES-WASH Project in Imalyo Ward	80
AACES' positive interventions in my Community	82
CLTS changes living conditions	84
A woman benefiting from WATSAN	85
Changes that have come as a result of the AACES Program	86
Conclusion	88

# BACKGROUND

Water is life! Sanitation is dignity and hygiene is wellbeing!

Taken together, these constitute the heart of all long lasting socio-economic development and environmental sustainability. In fact, none of the Sustainable Development Goals could be realised without water, sanitation and hygiene activities.

Between 2011 and 2016, the Australia Government (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) funded Oxfam to work with four Local NGOs, government agencies and communities in six wards of Mongu and Luampa districts to deliver a highly flexible and innovative five year Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program, under the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES).

The program was aimed at enabling marginalised people, especially women, to have access to services they required. It essentially sought to achieve increased voice and engagement of marginalised people with decision makers and their increased demand for, and utilisation of services. It also sought to achieve increased capacity of government agencies to deliver services to all categories of individuals and communities, and to ensure public policies were responsive to local issues and evidence. Fundamentally, the program was dedicated to demonstrating far-reaching and long-lasting impacts, using marginalised people's testimonies on how the program contributed to their wellbeing and development.

The Most Significant Change Stories in this publication illustrate the deep and wide ranging impacts the WASH program achieved. The stories illustrate the usefulness of the program's unique strategy of using investments in WASH as an entry point to enable individuals and communities to achieve more and take control of their lives. The stories also show the value of focusing on human rights (especially the rights of women and children) and including all interest groups in making key decisions (women, persons living with disabilities, children, political leaders, traditional leaders, government officials, business enterprises etc.).

Furthermore, they show the importance of strengthening the ability of communities to govern themselves, building local business enterprises, increasing access to water and sanitation services, improving hygiene, and enabling poor people to initiate, manage, speak and push for their own development. Finally, the stories demonstrate the life changing impacts (on individuals and community) of equipping women with new skills, such as in construction, to enable them to earn an income, become economically independent and create employment for others, thereby earning themselves respect, recognition and a sense of dignity.

# INTRODUCTION

Oxfam Australia and Oxfam Great Britain joined together to deliver the AACES program across Zambia and South Africa, working with over twelve local community organisations, and other stakeholders to meet the program's objectives.

Despite having robust monitoring and evaluation systems where lots of information was gathered on the program, the human element of change and the impact of their stories did not surface naturally and in the numbers that reflected the many lives that had been changed. So after engaging in the story gathering process, using the Most Significant Change approach at the Annual planning and Reflection meeting in Uganda, the Program Manager David Nonde Mwamba returned to Zambia energised and determined to collect stories of change from Oxfam's communities in the Western Province. In true AACES partnership style, David engaged Barbra Babweteera Mutambi, the East Africa PRAAC Regional Support Coordinator, and Charles Mubururu, the PRAAC Project Manager Zimbabwe, from PLAN International.

The stories that resulted from the different stakeholders who took part in this process are truly amazing. Unfortunately, due to the large number of stories that were collected, it was not possible to include them all in this publication. However in choosing the selected few, we hope you will grasp a little of the amazing stories of change that occurred in the many communities where the program was conducted. For every story shared here, there are ten more that could have been told.

When viewed cumulatively, these stories provide a rich insight into the successes and unintended consequences of the AACES program in Zambia. For many of the storytellers, their journey has just begun; they don't claim to have arrived, but they say change has come and will continue to be realised in these communities as they continue to actively engage in their own development and collectively bring change to their communities.

The key areas of focus for these stories are:

- Building capacity and livelihoods
- Inclusive development
- Gender and vulnerability,
- Improvements in health
- Increased civic engagement.

These are all crucial areas where change occurred in Zambia as a result of the approach that was adopted in this program. As you read, you will see that the stories note changes that happened in more than one area, and in some cases it was difficult to categorise the change as per the themes. Although we have pigeonholed the stories using these themes, many fit easily into more than one category.

The overall aim of this publication is to create a collection of high quality compelling stories that complement other sources of data, and can be used for learning and profiling.

We are grateful that we were able to capture the voices of the many people who were involved in this program. Sit back and enjoy reading them – you can only be encouraged as you read these personal testimonies of how 'Life is now!'

Likando Songolo is employed to help build VIP toilets in Songolo village. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM



# INCREASED SKILLS AND CHANGES IN LIVELIHOODS

# WORKING ON THE AACES PROGRAM – EXPERIENCES OF ONE OF THE LONGEST SERVING STAFF

**MATILDA LIBI** - Community Mobilisation Officer, People's Participation Service  
**Mongu District**

Before the inception of the AACES program, I worked on a Disaster Risk Reduction project supported by Oxfam as a focal point person; after the resignation of the project officer who was in charge of the WASH project, I was appointed by my organisation to continue the implementation of the WASH project. This was not an easy task for me as I was not familiar with the project cycle because the former officer had not left any information, nor did he hand over any documents pertaining to the project. Drawing on the experiences that I attained from most projects that I have been implementing, I had to start familiarising myself to the project objectives and finally I managed to cope with the situation.

Initially, my thinking was that WASH project was going to continue with what the EU & ACWSI [Australia Civil Society Water and Sanitation Initiative] project used to offer, such as the installation of water points, which enabled targeted communities to continue accessing safe clean drinking water as well as the use of toilets at household level. For me it was a clear indication that my expectations would not be achieved on this program. I could not see the immediate plans to sink boreholes, build latrines and train Area Pump Menders as what used to happen in the ACWSI project. It appeared to me this was not a WASH program as we talked more about disability inclusiveness, women empowerment, different marginalised people and more of software.



After these observations, I was told that in order to bring out the voice of the voiceless in communities, a baseline survey would be conducted; I facilitated this using participatory rural appraisal tools which helped communities to identify, rank and prioritise their needs.

Despite being one of the people that resisted this approach in the initial stages of the project, reality dawned on me as none of the communities had WASH as a top priority because communities prioritised school infrastructure, health centres, and roads, among other things.

We therefore set out to develop strategies of how we could enhance the needed change, despite this change not being WASH-related. I learnt a model of how change happens through Rao and Keller's framework which holds that change occurs both at individual and community levels. We planned to build capacity of communities to demand service delivery in a more empowering and inclusive manner.

I also participated in the process of establishing sub-district structures like the Ward Development Committees to facilitate and enhance the voice of the community in demanding from government, as well as engaging private sector for development support. We also trained 20 women in construction as a way of empowering them and challenging cultural beliefs that a woman cannot do manual work. We further collaborated with the police, Department of Social Welfare and the Zambian Agency for people with Disabilities (ZAPD) to create awareness of human rights, child protection, disability inclusiveness and women's participation in leadership, decision-making and development in general. Furthermore, we innovated inclusive water points and latrines that are disability friendly as well as gender inclusive.

Through this program, I have learnt that community development can come about if communities are involved from the inception of the project; only then can they fully participate in the whole process of a project cycle and have a full understanding that it is their own initiative.



I have seen the voice of the voiceless raised to a level where they are being heard by service providers and duty-bearers and this has created a platform for appropriate interventions e.g. user friendly infrastructure for people with disabilities and provision of wheel chairs, in addition to this, people with disabilities have now capacity to run their small businesses and link their businesses with banks.

Through networking with other partners, my capacity has been built in the areas of understanding the Disability Act, and child protection, and this time around I'm able to conduct community sensitisation on child protection issues.

Through the WASH project, I realised that women can perform wonders in the field of construction if empowered, e.g. construction of VIP toilets, and other permanent infrastructures. Women have also taken a lead in decision-making and many women are holding positions of chairpersonship in community structures I also used my knowledge to change my village which is not in the catchment area of AACES from bush-type defecation, to the use of toilets making the village free of open defecation with a water point installed.

With the vast experience that I acquired, given a community in which to implement a similar program, I would perform to the maximum because I have learnt a lot about the processes of community interventions.

The most significant change that I can be proud of is the capacity that I have gained through my involvement with the AACES program. The skills and knowledge that I have obtained from AACES has taken me to another level of understanding community involvement and how to engage marginalised people in developmental activities. The knowledge that I have gained made it easier to work with communities rather than working for the communities.



# ACCESS FOR ALL IS GOOD FOR ALL

**JAMESON LUBINGO** - Technical Officer, Village Water Zambia  
**Mongu District**

My involvement with the program began in June 2013; as a partner we came in the third year to strengthen the delivery of infrastructure with regards to borehole drilling and latrine construction. There has been a great deal of training to build my capacity as a technical officer in monitoring, evaluation, and learning, and also in advocacy.

There have been a lot of changes because it's my first time working on a project with a lot of stakeholders; being able to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses has resulted in me being a better team player. My perception of how a program should be delivered has changed from a focus on the lack of service delivery towards empowering the community to develop a voice that encourages advocacy in order to make government accountable for their obligation to deliver on service.

The most significant change I had experienced is that, I'm now a big proponent of inclusive programs. Now I advocate that access for all is good for all.



## A PROGRAM THAT CHANGED MY THINKING

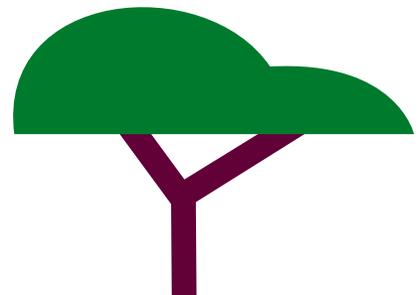
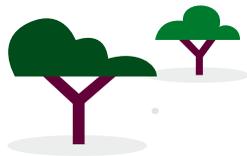
**CHANTRY MWEEMBA** - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Coordinator – Oxfam  
**Lusaka, Zambia**

I started working on AACES in October, 2013. Before joining AACES, I worked in different organisations implementing different projects.

I had a lot of experiences in human development around agriculture, WASH, child protection, disability inclusiveness projects, as well as gender mainstreaming, and each time I worked on a project, I was very sure that the project was about poverty reduction.

When I worked for agriculture project, I saw people producing a lot of food. We built their capacities through training and backstopping on how to increase their yield, how to choose the right seed and how to prepare their land, but despite having a lot of food the negative part of it was that they still complained of poverty in relation to the lack of clean water, health care services and their inability to send their children to school.

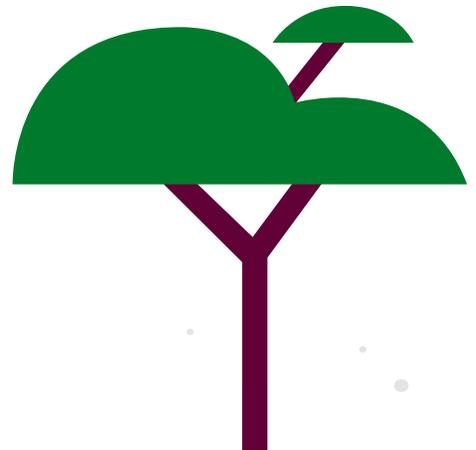
I also worked on a water and sanitation project in a community where people shared water with animals and practiced open defecation. As a project, we moved into communities and punched holes all over and sunk boreholes which enhanced access to clean safe drinking water. We also provided construction materials for latrines for each household in order to eliminate open defecation.



Coming from such a background I joined the AACES program in 2013 which works with 10 Australian NGOs operating in different thematic areas, whose funder is DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). DFAT organised learning events for all the NGOs and I have had the privilege of attending some of the events. During these events, field visits were undertaken and therefore these gave me an opportunity to interact with AACES beneficiaries in different countries.

I learnt that poverty is poverty, and it does not know any sector, so you can not address poverty from a narrow sector perspective. The AACES program in Zambia has made a serious attempt to address poverty in a comprehensive manner by focusing on human development, as opposed to simply focusing on WASH as a sector. This can be seen in the investment on issues of inclusiveness, development, women empowerment and strengthening systems which facilitate human development and poverty reduction like the sub-district structures.

After two years of working with the AACES program, I feel like I have attained a diploma in development. My view of poverty and my analysis of development have completely changed to that which is well balanced and reflects the realities on the ground. Beyond AACES, the way forward is to facilitate the strengthening of the communities through the sub-district structures and key government departments, thanks to AACES.



## KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED THROUGH IMPLEMENTING

**ANONYMOUS** - Field Facilitator

**Luampa District**

I am a Field Facilitator working in three wards of Luampa district and joined AACES Project in 2012, when I was assigned as Field Facilitator and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer of the project. Despite being a part of the organisation which was implementing AACES, I had little knowledge on what AACES was. For that reason, I so much wanted to learn about the monitoring, evaluation and learning under the AACES project.

I received training on monitoring, evaluation and learning (media communication, identifying impacts, inputs, outcomes and writing case studies). I received support from Oxfam through their monitoring and evaluation officer, Chantry Mweemba in mentorship and capacity building.

Initially, it was difficult for me to differentiate impacts, inputs and outcomes, and also on how to organise and write case studies. However, I am now able to identify the impacts, inputs, outputs and outcomes, and am very much able to organise and write case studies. For this I have organised and written many case studies out of which three have been submitted.

Additionally, am delighted to say that the many training and mentorship sessions I got, helped me to formulate five monitoring tools which the AACES program is using now in the six wards of operations (i.e. in Luampa and Mongu).

Furthermore, from the time I joined the AACES Project (2012), I am able to engage and bring on board duty-bearers, and organise and chair meetings in order to achieve AACES objects. All this is because of the knowledge and experience I acquired through the many workshops and trainings.

I had so much fear at the initial stages of my assignment of whether or not I will manage to deliver according to the expectations of the organisation and the project, however, after undergoing the trainings and mentorships, all that is now a thing of the past. I am now able to deliver according to the expectations of the organisation and the project and while there is still a lot to learn, I am getting there.

The most significant change in my life is the knowledge I have acquired through this project. I have been transformed into a useful, reliable and resourceful officer.



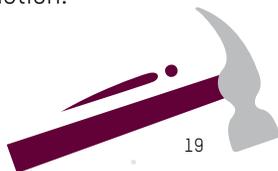
## STRUGGLING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

**NEELA SILISHEBO** - Building Contractor

**Imalyo Ward, Mongu**

My name is Neela Silishebo from Natonga community in the Imalyo ward, Mongu district; I am a woman. It was in March 2012 when people who work for Oxfam held a meeting at our school looking for girls who had a grade nine certificate. I had my certificate, so I attended the meeting. I was chosen to go to the Mongu Trades Training Institute to undergo training in general construction. I underwent the training in a serious and respectful manner, such that at the end of the training, on graduation day, I was chosen to be the best student in carpentry and joinery. I was given a prize or an award of K500.00 as the best student; that day I was the happiest person in the hall. I was involved in the following activities: bricklaying and plastering, carpentry and joinery, plumbing and sheet metal, health and hygiene, and water and sanitation. As I was doing this course, I counted myself to be one of lucky people, but before I did the training, when I just received the message that I was chosen, I was afraid; the first thing that came into my mind was, "am I going to manage to lift a block or master the names of all the tools that I am going to be using".

As an individual, I have realised that the training that I underwent has changed my life because these days I can do things that I never used to do: I can build, I can fix a door, I feel proud of myself. My community has also realised that involving girls in such activities is now a normal situation because, traditionally, girls should only be involved with cooking, sweeping and washing; girls being involved in construction was taboo! My community no longer travels long distances to Mongu looking for contractors, because they know that I am around. Being able to build is the most significant change, and I no longer fear doing my job. I am saying this because I earn my living through construction.



19



# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

**KAWEWA MALELE** - Community Member

**Lukweta, Mutondo Ward, Nalikwanda Constituency**

I got engaged in the Oxfam project after a Project Officer, Mr. Emmanuel Chisenga, from the Peoples Participation Service (PPS), a local organisation supported by Oxfam, passed a message in my community on behalf the organisation that they needed youths who had completed junior or secondary education but could not further their education due to other vulnerability factors. The selection exercise took place at Lukweta Primary School and I become one of those who qualified since I had completed my secondary education. After the selection process, I become one of those who were identified and selected to attain the vocation and skills training on manual drilling. I was sent, together with others who qualified, to Mongu district where we received training for a duration of four weeks in manual drilling. The skills training was conducted by a team of technical officers from an organisation called Village Water Zambia at its offices, and it was a composed of both theory and practical training. During the training I gained a lot of knowledge in manual drilling.

Against this background I have attained a lot of support, experience and skilled knowledge in a number of areas, such as manual borehole drilling, business entrepreneurship, and simple accounting on how to account for profit and loss. I have received adequate support and benefits from the above trainings, because any skill received in life is something that lasts for a lifetime. I strongly feel these skills will help me to meet my basic needs. From these skills I am able to generate extra income to support my family as well as improve my wellbeing. Village Water Zambia, with Oxfam backing, has continued to support me through an attachment “**JOB ON TRAINING**”. I, and my fellow youths, have been frequently engaged in the drilling of boreholes manually in various villages in the Mutondo, Imalyo and Lumbo wards.



This is a lifetime achievement for me because through these skills I am able to feed my family and take care of other immediate needs. Currently the skills and the “**JOB ON TRAINING**” attachment has assisted me to raise enough income to purchase four goats and ten iron sheets for the house I intend to build. We have been working in groups and at least, for each borehole we drill, I have been earning around ZMK 1,250.00, after sharing with my colleagues in our group. Like I said, this is a massive achievement for me because I am able to meet the basic needs at my household. Groceries like soap, sugar, toothpaste are no longer difficult to access.

Before, I faced a number of difficulties in life because after completing my secondary education I was doing very little to earn a living. I was involved in subsistence farming at a very small scale because it was difficult to access enough farming inputs. Life became very challenging after I lost my father who was the breadwinner at the time. My mother supported me and my siblings but she could not manage to do everything for us because it’s very difficult for a woman to support the entire household, compared to a man. Even when I was still in school, I still faced a lot of challenges to complete my secondary education.

Like I have stated before, I stayed in the village doing very little to earn a living until I received a message that PPS and Oxfam were looking for vulnerable youths to receive training on manual drilling. It was at this point that I gained hope and knew that the skills will make a great difference in my life. I became one of a few who were selected in my ward, and this is why I take this as a great achievement indeed.

Currently my wellbeing has continued to change for the better through the same skills. The skill of manual drilling is my most significant change because I am no longer struggling to earn an income or meet some of the needs for me and my family. I have also continued to do agriculture for extra income though it has remained seasonal. Therefore my skills for drilling boreholes manually do not only help me as an individual, but so many villages also have access to safe drinking water. Even the cases of diarrhoea have since reduced in some communities where we have been drilling boreholes.

In summary I wish to thank Oxfam, VWZ, PPS and other partners for making a difference in my life and I wish to encourage them to continue identifying vulnerable youths for further support.



A photograph of a group of people in a classroom setting. In the center, a man wearing a red turban and a white shirt with a patterned vest is looking towards the camera. To his left, a woman in a patterned dress is also looking towards the camera. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders is visible, looking down at a document on a desk. The background shows other people and a window with a metal frame.

# INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Oxfam partners and community members meet in classroom in the village to share the experiences of the WASH programs. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE ABLE

**INONGE MULEMWA** - Accountant, People's Participation Service  
**Mongu District**

I was employed by People's Participation Service (PPS) in 2010, a partner for the Oxfam-funded WASH project. I was privileged to be further trained in donor financial management and entrepreneurship, since I had already developed accountancy skills from college.

The donor financial management and entrepreneurship trainings have enabled me to report to various donors efficiently and effectively. The trainings enhanced my recordkeeping to donor required expectations, and I have gained wide experience which can enable me compete with others at all levels. Through the entrepreneurship skill trainings acquired, I am able to apply the said skills on small-scale entrepreneurship, run by the identified people living with disabilities in the Lumbo, Mutondo and Imalyo wards.

From time of project inception, people with disabilities were looked upon as beggars and unproductive, and in meetings they were taken as a group of people who could not add value in the communities. The inclusive AACES project identified people with disabilities through community representatives from their wards to be trained in entrepreneurship. During entrepreneurship training, people with disabilities proved very knowledgeable.

PWDs were taught about business identification, and they came up with their own business plans which were later appraised and approved by PPS. As a result of this, 12 PWDs received the revolving funds – 3 females and 9 males. They are expected to keep accounts records which help them monitor their small-scale business performance. The most exciting part of it is to see the PWDs who were previously neglected, now managing their small sustainable businesses. They are no longer considered as unproductive people.

I have seen how it has positively benefited the people with disabilities.

## I AM HAPPY WASH FACILITIES ARE USER-FRIENDLY

**KAFULA NALUNGWE** - Provincial Coordinator, Zambia Agency for Persons with Disability (ZAPD)  
**Mongu District**

I got involved in the AACES program from pre-inception in 2010, when I was working for ZAFOD (Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations), a disability organisation that was implementing a project called DEAR (Disability Education Access Right). While at ZAFOD, Oxfam was one organisation that visited for networking. Whilst in this interactive meeting, ZAFOD shared its project objectives of ensuring that children with disability had access to WASH, while Oxfam's objective was mainly on sustainability. Furthermore, areas of collaboration were noted and it was emphasised that ZAFOD would be of support in the new program that Oxfam was bidding for in terms of further funding. This project is called AACES.

When AACES came on board I was requested to conduct training on disability. This helped Oxfam understand issues of disabilities.

Organisations were constructing WASHE facilities that were not inclusive, and marginalised PWDs (persons with disabilities). Most women PWD who are even more vulnerable, were forgotten in the process.

I have received a lot of training from Oxfam to have a deeper understanding in water points, and council structures such as formation of Ward Development Committees, drilling and facilitation. The DEAR project interacted with Oxfam through training to create awareness on issues surrounding disabilities. It was observed that disability issues were complex, and attempting to achieve universal access was a challenge.



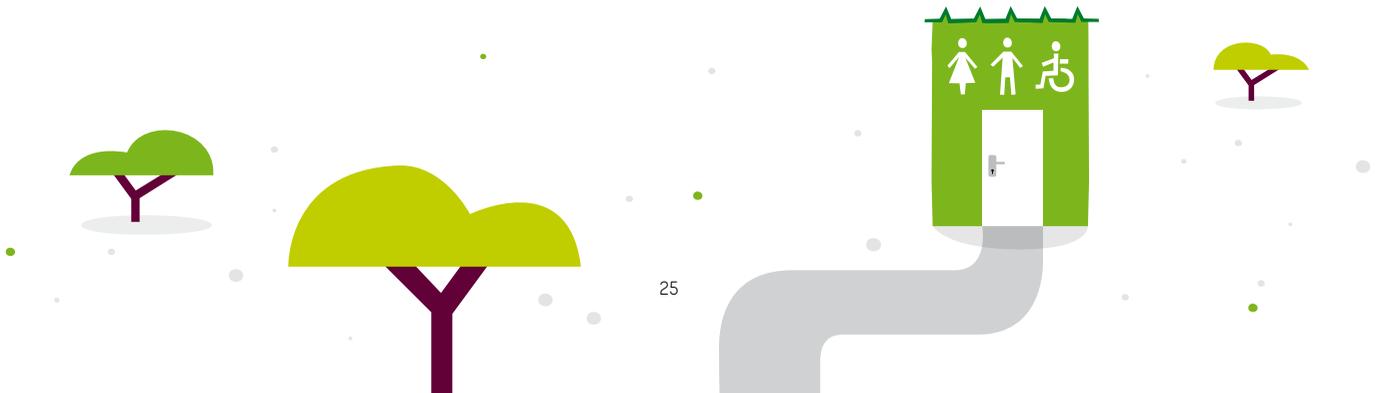
Oxfam went on first to engage a consultant to propose designs that cater both able-bodied and disabled people in the community.

After initial designs, a workshop was organised for all stakeholders to present their observations on the designs. Stakeholders provided input in the design and arrived at the universal design. In this meeting, the stakeholders made recommendations to take the design forward (implementation).

In my project area, a number of changes have taken place. Some water facilities are now accessible by people with disabilities; an accessibility audit for toilets was done. WASH facilities are inclusive, special skills on disabilities are acquired in the community despite ZAFOD having no budget. People with disabilities are actively participating in other programs such as community-based loaning which is implemented by PPS.

The stigma among PWD has reduced and service providers and decision-makers are taking people with disabilities into consideration and most essential services and facilities such as water points have incorporated disability-aware components.

The change has reduced stigma and dependence syndrome for PWD. Previous PWD were being helped by others because they were not able to access facilities; it brings joy to see PWD accessing the facilities without difficulties. Furthermore, it is very delighting to see that contractors include PWD during construction.



## CROP DIVERSIFICATION LEADS TO HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

**CHIEF IMAMUNA, BRE IMALYO** - Area Chief (Traditional Leader)

**Tusheshe Village, Imalyo Ward, Mongu District**

I am Chief Imamuna, representing the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE), in the Imalyo community of the Mongu District. I got involved in the AACES program following my participation in many meetings including the meeting that was convened by the People's Participation Service to discuss climate resilience in February 2015 at Royal Dreams Lodge in Mongu

At that meeting, we were introduced to some of the new and sustainable methods of farming which included crop diversification. At that meeting, we also highlighted how we could clear more land for cultivation through clearing our clogged canals in our communities. After that meeting, I went back home and also called a meeting where I shared with my subjects how canal clearing and crop diversification can help alleviate hunger and suffering in communities like ours that were negatively affected by changes in climate and weather patterns. At that meeting, I shared with my people what we learnt at the meeting called by People's Participation Services in Mongu. Among the topics I shared with them was vegetable gardening, conservation farming and the importance of diversifying to other crops that could withstand the current dry weather patterns in our community.

Following that first community meeting, a number of other meetings were held with my people where we discussed such important topics like gender equality, gender-based violence, child protection and how we could engage government and other stakeholders to support



development initiatives in our area. Those meetings resulted in the introduction of a number of community initiatives in my chiefdom. Among these outcomes was the formation of a Ward Development Committee to oversee and coordinate the development projects in the area. Another outcome is that my people have now mobilised themselves into groups and are able to solicit support from government and non-government organisations.

Right now my people have gained knowledge in gardening and are now involved in vegetable production and growing crops such as cabbage, rape, tomatoes, and onions. This has contributed to increase household income and there has been improved food security for most households. Prior to these new initiatives, my people were only dependent on cassava growing at a subsistence level and brewing illicit beers for survival, a situation which impacted their health negatively.

The most important change for me is that the people in my area have embraced vegetable production and are now growing vegetables for food and for sale and they have done away with bad vices like brewing and drinking dangerous illicit brews.

The change is important because it improved people's livelihood as they are now engaged in productive activities and are producing food for their families. This is a clear confirmation that crop diversification, once embraced, can improve food security and reduce hunger and suffering among our people.



# THE CHANGE OF MY LIFE

**NOTULA MUYUNDA** - Driller

**Nandimba, Lumbo ward, Mongu district**

I got involved in 2015 when PPS came to our village to say that the AACES project was looking for people with grade seven or nine certificates who were to be trained as manual borehole drillers. It happened that I was one of those who had the qualification and I went for the training in Mongu.

Through the boreholes I have been drilling, I now have money, which I never used to have, for supporting my family. As I speak now I have so far drilled 19 boreholes.

The change is that I have now found the way of living through borehole drilling. I am no longer the same person because I now have knowledge. Even the people who never used to like or consider me in the old days now have respect for me because I have money and I can take care of my family.

After training I could only drill with the help of other people, but now I can do it on my own. I thank VWZ who have continued supporting and mentoring us in this process of manual drilling. The MSC that has happened in my life is the knowledge of knowing manual borehole drilling. The reason why I have chosen this as my MSC is because I could have continued suffering, and failing to provide for my family. However now everything has changed because of manual drilling and now I can support my family..





The newly installed water pump outside the Sibongo Health Post. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

# A BRIGHT FUTURE GLEAMING

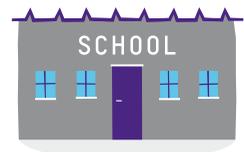
**MERCY MUCHIMA** - Community Facilitator  
Muchima Village, Namando Ward

**Project staff Notes:** At the age of three years, Mercy suffered from polio and this illness lasted for 5 years and she got affected, thus could not walk anymore and had to crawl using her hands.

I got involved in the AACES project in 2014 when Keepers Zambia Foundation (KZF) and Victim Support Unit (VSU - Zambia Police Service) conducted sensitisation and awareness meeting at Namando Primary School on the plight of people with disability, children and women's rights, GBV and early marriages. At the meeting they asked about the provisions for people with disabilities (PWDs) in school toilets and classrooms. They even brought up the fact that in the meeting, there were no PWDs, asking whether there were PWDs in the community. My parents answered that there are. The facilitators continued asking why they were not at the meetings. My parents again answered that I had no means of movement. After that meeting, KZF followed up on the matter and engaged with my parents to establish my condition. That is how I started getting involved in the program.

The support I have received from this project since I got involved is a wheelchair. I have also always wanted to go to school, but the head teacher of the school refused me admission. However because of the AACES project, as I speak now, I have started going to school. I am now in grade five at Namando primary school.

The other thing is that this project has a heart for PWD. I am very happy with this project because I used to suffer, crawling around since I had no wheelchair, and I used to have sores on my knees because of crawling but now am very thankful to the project for providing me with this wheelchair.

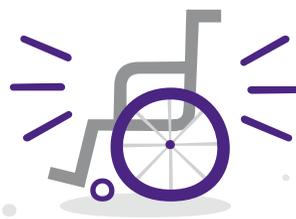


The change I have witnessed is that I no longer crawl to go to the toilet. I used to crawl to the toilet and this would cause me diseases. I also used to get burnt in October<sup>1</sup> because of crawling on sand that is hot. During rainy season, my movements used to be very difficult because the ground was very wet most of the time. This is all changed because I now have a wheelchair to use. The other change is that I am now going to school because the head teacher accepted me, despite my condition. Also I can now go to school to acquire knowledge like any other child. Before I started going to school I used to feel very bad and rejected by the community, especially when I saw my friends passing by, going to school. My wish was that one day I could also go to school like any other child. I used to trouble my parents, asking them why they didn't talk to the school management again so that I could start going to school. My parents used to encourage me and tell me that I should just wait, and that one day I would start going to school. In the mean time, they started teaching me how to write and read in both Lozi and English but I am more fluent in Lozi. I am now a happy person because even as I started going to school, I already knew how to read. Going to school has made me feel that I am now loved and accepted by the community.

The most significant change that has happened in my life is going to school. I believe that in the future, when I complete school, I will have a better life, that is why I really want to finish school as I have started now. I do not want to stay in the village forever and I really want to concentrate on school and have a bright future.

With education and knowledge, I am assured of a good future, even when my parents are no more, I can stand on my own and also support my young sister and brother. The change that this program has given me is immeasurable. Thank you very much to the AACES program and their implementers.

1. October is the hottest month in Zambia and often times the sand gets so hot



## A WOMAN WITH A DISABILITY IN MARRIAGE

**SHENDA** - Community Member

**Mangalata Village, Imalyo Ward, Mongu**

I came to know about AACES in the year 2013, when I was invited to attend a meeting at the Imalyo School, conducted by PPS. I was one of the happiest people after the meeting because I was asked to give out my views, before knowing about the AACES program, and the substance it had.

I was really living in my own world of worries and the feeling that I was not part of the community in which I was living. I was sexually abused, and to satisfy my feeling, when ever this man proposed love to me, I used to accept; I finally ended up with three children from the same man, but was not cared for properly.

His friends used to mock him because he had children with me and whenever this reached my ears, I really felt bad and marginalised. I really struggled all by myself looking after my children, with the help of the Lord. With the coming of this program, I can certify that it has really brought a positive change in how I should look at things.

I am really happy to say that people living with disability are now a subject of discussion, and that they should be included in all activities of development. The development of bringing a good rapport between able people and those living with disability, to me, is a great plus. The idea of all structures being built in an inclusive manner is another point that has added value in my life.

Kabu Kalalula is the Chairperson of the village WASH committee. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

# IMPACTS ON GENDER

## RISE ABOVE GBV

**SIBESO MWILABA** - Voluntary Counsellor (YWCA)

**Kenyon Ward, Mongu District**

I became involved in the AACES program in 2011 when I started working as a counsellor with YWCA, a partner to Oxfam. YWCA has a Drop-In-Centre (DIC) where we offer daily counselling and psychosocial support services to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors. I also interact with YWCA male champions who were trained to sensitise their fellow men on the “I Care About Her Campaign” which falls under the WASH project funded by Oxfam, and implemented by YWCA.

YWCA has a group of men trained in anti-GBV who are called champions, and these champions work directly with community members in sensitising their fellow men on how to prevent GBV. It is through this interaction with champions that I came to learn about men’s involvement in preventing GBV, and through this community I started seeing men coming to the Drop-In-Centre, reporting GBV cases and attempting to engage with GBV, and talk about how GBV can affect children and the community. It was really a surprise for me to see men speaking openly on how they are sometimes involved in violence because of lack of knowledge on violence in homes; “Wow” I was so happy to see this change and appreciate the work these champions are doing. Since 2011 when I joined the Drop-In-Centre (DIC), I never used to see men coming to report such issues, because they feared to be laughed at by their fellow men; the cultural belief that men are heads of homes and should have final voice and control made it difficult to report, and easier to perpetrate GBV. It is very interesting to see some of these cultural barriers being broken and that men have the knowledge that violence in the home has significant effects on their children’s future, their families and the community at large. This impressed me because men are often the perpetrators of GBV and if they come in to talk openly about the causes and effects of violence in homes, families and community, that is a good thing.



## SENSITISATION BY ZAMBIA POLICE

**ANONYMOUS** - Zambia Police - Community Services Department  
Liseli Lodge, Mongu District

I got involved in the AACES program mid-year in 2014; I work under Community Services Department (CSD) of the Zambia Police Service. We have five units under this department, namely Victim Support Unit, Community Safety Unit, Schools Liaison Unit and Child Protection Unit. I deal with child rights, child abuse, child trafficking etc. and these connected me with AACES.

I was involved in a sensitisation program in conjunction with PPS in 2014 in the Nalikwanda Constituency in the program of WASH and child protection. When I was sensitising the community I noticed many cases of early marriages, defilement and children stopping going to school. The parents accused each other as the causes of these. Since there was not enough time, it was beneficial for me for partner organisations to get involved to sensitise the community on WASH programs.

The change that I feel has resulted from this activity was that people were opening up to police officers who were feared in the past. The community members coming to the police, at VSU offices to request officers for more sensitisation and the reporting of cases of defilement, and early marriages in the area was a change unheard of before. The officers from the department also made a follow up on sensitisation activities in July 2015 as the community were still calling.

I choose this change among others due to cooperation and willingness to deal with the issues occurring in the WASH operation area. The forming of a neighbourhood or community is also one of the ways of eliminating such things.

# ONE DAY GBV WILL BE A STORY OF THE PAST

**TOM MBUMWAE** - Social Worker / Anti-GBV Champion

**Mongu District**

I was identified by other group members to join and form the Men's Network against sexual and gender-based violence (GBV). This was a brain child of the YWCA and was I made the chairperson for the network. I was sent for training as a champion for GBV under YWCA. My background is a social worker who does much of psychosocial counselling and research. The Men's Network was formed to involve men to join in the fight against GBV, as men are often the perpetrators of most GBV cases, while women and children are the victims.

*There are many changes that have been experienced after the formation of the Men's Network in the community. They are:*

1. We have realised that women have rights, beating is not a solution;
2. People have started talking about GBV;
3. Influential people in the community have taken it upon themselves because they don't want to lose lives;
4. School children are now aware about reporting cases to the relevant authorities;
5. Women have come to appreciate this program, as their rights are protected; and
6. Girl child education is now highly pronounced and now they are concentrating on education, rather than early marriages and pregnancies.

I have visited the royal palace (Muoyo) when I was invited by her royal highness after appearing on an aired program called I Care About Her. Her royal highness really appreciated the aired program as it was beneficial to the community in a sense that it was awareness campaign for the community on girl child education, rape, women and children's rights including property grabbing etc. Of these mentioned above, the most significant change is that men have taken it upon themselves to fight for the rights of women and children who are victims.



Women involved in the WASH program prepare lunch for the visiting team from Oxfam. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## AACES PROGRAM IN IMALYO WARD

**CHARLTON SIMONDA** - Community member  
**Kasheshe, Chief Imamuna, Imalyo Ward**

My name is Charlton Simonda. I was born in the Mongu district at Kasheshe village in Imalyo ward. The kind of life led by people in my community before the coming of the AACES program was not much different from the kind of life led by ancient Africans. At the time I was already a public figure serving as a secretary of chief Imamuna when the AACES activities started in my ward. With this background knowledge in place, am able to compare the life of people in our chiefdom before or after AACES was born in Imalyo ward.

As a secretary to my chief, the most frequent cases brought before the chief and his court were predominately wife battering. At some point, a rude man terribly battered his wife, while accusing the local authorities of misleading his wife. The man turned down the chief's wise and parental advice, a gesture meant to bring harmony and reconciliation to an almost breaking marriage.

I also saw with my naked eyes, numerous significant cases of early marriages coupled with unwanted and unplanned pregnancies. In most cases of this magnitude, the victims were always minors in our community. This resulted in increased cases of child death as it is common knowledge that female minors haven't yet fully developed physically, to withstand the pressure of labour pains. In many of such cases, their deaths were attributed to witchcraft. So people in my community spent most of their time fighting and resolving witchcraft cases at the expense of engaging in tangible and meaningful development.

I also want to note that before the coming of AACES, there were uncontrollable instances of water-borne diseases in my community. This led to frequent shortages of drugs at our only health facility built in the Lukalanya community. Drug shortages were [as rampant] as water-borne diseases which were ever on the increase. The culture of my people towards water and sanitation was negative. They depended on water drawn from ponds and canals, some breeding sources of mosquitoes and frogs. My community didn't know the importance of building toilets and slashing their immediate surroundings.

I want to give another side of my story, in connection with the coming of AACES. I witnessed a number of changes in my community; I have been involved in a number of positions being run by AACES through its partners. In particular, I want to state that I am one of the promoters of hygiene in my community. Secondly, I am also one of the community facilitators in CLTS. Thirdly, I am an active member of Anti-GBV / child protection group. I also want to say that I am one of the advocates of 'I Care About Her Campaign'.

By virtue of my position in a number of AACES programs, AACES, through its partners such as Village Water Zambia, has led to most of our communities in my ward having water points. AACES has shown us that women are not only instruments of sex and care-givers of children but they can also do that which men can do. I want to exemplify the above by saying that in Imalyo there are now women in construction and building. AACES has also enlightened my community in understanding the significant use of toilets, as well as digging rubbish pits and slashing their environment.

AACES, through PPS, has empowered schools financially, so they could venture into income generating activities to supplement government efforts. PPS, through partnering with Child Protection Unit [Zambia Police Service], has positively led to increased academic performances



as well as improved enrolment [at schools]. Through regular workshops organised by PPS and the Child Protection Unit, parents are advised to desist from all acts of physical child abuse. Let me mention that parents were cautioned to stop marrying off their children. Such meetings were often attended by police officers. This strategy had a positive move towards reversing the notion that parents have total control over the rights of children.

Of all the changes brought by AACES in my community, water and sanitation is one of the most significant changes. Acquisition of skills in construction and building by women is another such an important change. Financial provision rendered to our school is also a prominent change seen in our area.

The reason why water and sanitation occupies the first position in the significant change seen in this region is because it has more advantages than other changes. Water and sanitation awareness cuts down water-borne diseases which lead to death and are propelled by unclean environments. Construction of toilets is doubly advantageous to the community members in that their faeces would be concentrated into one place, removing it from a nearby bush area. In the future, drugs in hospitals won't finish as quickly, as diseases related to unclean environments and water contamination will be almost non-existent.



## GOD IS WITH ME

**YVONNE NASILELE** - Building Contractor

**Mutalaeti, Lumbo Ward, Mongu**

I am Yvonne Nasilele of Mutalaeti Village in Lumbo Ward, Mongu. I am a contractor. I have found myself in this program. It was in 2012 when there was a program where Oxfam needed 20 ladies to be trained in general construction.

They took this to the radio for advertisement, and the program was announced to the whole district; I started to prepare myself for this. Finally Oxfam came in our ward for selections and they were looking for ladies with grade nine and twelve certificates.

There were five volunteers who wished to be in this training but unfortunately they didn't have the qualifications that they needed, and finally I was selected; the training was about giving skills to women in general construction. These activities were as follows: bricklaying and plastering, carpentry and joinery, plumbing and sheet metal, entrepreneurship, and water and sanitation.

I didn't believe that I was going to manage this because I believed it was very difficult for a woman to build. I had doubts, but somehow I underwent the training and I performed well. I was chosen to go for a competition at National Council for Construction in Lusaka, and I came out number 3 in the whole country (Zambia). At the end of our training, on graduation day, I was chosen as the best student in bricklaying and plastering with an award of K600.00. It was a very colourful day and I was very happy to be the overall best student.

I have realised that I can build, mould blocks, do the roofing, and I am able to distinguish between buildings which are not well built, and those that are. Anyone can come for help concerning construction, and they will be charged less or I will do the job for free. The most significant change is that I am able to do construction work.

I am saying this because I care for my children through construction and I can make a lot of money.

I have been involved in the manual drilling of 28 boreholes in Mutondo, Imalyo and Lumbo ward through the support of Village Water Zambia. Hence from the 28 boreholes I have been able to purchase four goats of my own and ten iron sheets for the house I intend to build.



## BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER PREGNANCY

**KABETA WAMULWA** - Anti-GBV Champion

Soola, Ng'anga Area Mongu

In 2011, the AACES program was introduced in my community by a team of YWCA staff in partnership with the People's Participation and Oxfam. At the time, I was identified and recruited as a volunteer. Later, I was one of the people who were trained as Anti-GBV champions, where we were oriented on the content of the Anti GBV Act of 2011.

Following the training, I realised and learnt that marrying off children who are below 18, is a crime and I also came to know that the government has a policy called Re-entry, that allowed children who had dropped out of school for whatever reason, to be taken back to school.

At that time, I was living with a niece who had dropped out of school in grade nine due to pregnancy. The pregnancy of this girl had upset me as I had spent so much money paying for her school fees and other school requisites. This prompted me to consider marrying her off to a local farmer.

After this training on GBV issues and the re-entry policy, I realised that marrying her off was wrong and a crime and that is how I re-enrolled her back into school in grade nine. Currently, the girl is in school and will be re-sitting for her grade nine examinations later this year at Lukona Secondary School in Kalabo

From the AACES program, I have received skills and knowledge on issues of gender-based violence, gender and development and I have been able to use the same skills to raise awareness on GBV and child marriages in my community

Following our sensitisations, I have observed that cases of domestic violence that were being reported at our traditional court, are going down.

At the time when cases of domestic violence in my community were rife, community members were spending more time in courts at the expense of doing their livelihood activities. This brought about hunger in the area as people's harvests had also worsened. Since the sensitisations, domestic disputes in our community started going down, giving people enough time to participate in farming and produce more food for their families and for sale.

Additionally, the parents spending most of their time in courts left the children at home without care and guidance. This contributed to children absconding from school and in some cases dropping out of school completely. Now the parents have enough time to stay at home and support their families and even the children are attending school regularly.

Through this program, I, and my fellow Anti GBV champions, have facilitated the formation of anti-GBV Clubs in schools. So far, anti-GBV Clubs have been formed in 3 primary schools and one basic school in Lumbo ward and the clubs have even started sensitising the pupils and teachers at these schools through drama, songs and dances.

For me, the most important change brought about by these interventions is that I have personally known the importance of giving a second chance to children who drop out of school and I have been able to take my niece back to school.

This transformation is very important and significant because through my actions, of re-enrolling my niece back into school, other community members who were in similar situations have learnt from me and are now also giving their children a second chance of continuing with their education, even after falling pregnant.

The change is also important to me because I now realise that marrying off children at young ages, exposes them to difficulties which will make them still dependant on us their parents or guardians for survival, whereas when we allow our children to continue with their education, we prepare them for better jobs and responsibilities and they are likely to be able to take care of themselves in the future.



## AMAZING CHANGE IN LUMBO WARD

**SIBESO NASILELE** - CLTS Champion / Gender & Hygiene Promoter  
**Machalingwe, Lumbo Ward, Mongu**

I was chosen by the community to be a CLTS champion after a meeting called by PPS at Mutalaiti Primary School which is how I got to know about the AACES program; I received knowledge from the trainings which was held at Sir Mwanawina, where I was trained as a CLTS champion – gender and hygiene promoter.

After the trainings I was able to sensitise the community on hygiene matters, and to know everyone's rights around GBV. Before AACES program came in our community, there were a lot of diseases. I used to go in the bush to answer the call of nature, but now, I'm able to use a toilet

As a woman, I didn't know that I could be a leader, but now I can be a leader if chosen. The most significant change is personal hygiene because it has reduced the number of deaths in my area. There is access to safe, clean water drinking water for all.



## WOMEN ARE ABLE TO DO WHAT MEN CAN DO

I was selected to be part of the AACES program in February 2012 when Oxfam introduced the project for women in construction; they selected women with grade nine and grade twelve certificates, and I was among the 20 who were selected. We were trained in construction skills at Mongu Trades Training Institute for 6 months. In our training we covered 6 subjects and these were bricklaying, plumbing, water and sanitation, carpentry, health and hygiene and entrepreneurship skills.

While at studying, we formed a company, and Oxfam helped with finances to register our company with PACRA – the Patents and Companies Registration Authority. Our company name is MEI MALOMBA CONSTRUCTION LIMITED. MEI MALOMBA means water in a small stream; this comes from a Lozi proverb “*mei malomba kamana nyotwa*” meaning that, begged water cannot quench thirst. This, in real life, means that begging cannot sustain one’s life; to me this proverb means that depending on begging cannot sustain my life. Before the training, I had no idea about construction and I used to drink. I was a failure in life. In 2008 I passed into grade 10, but unfortunately my parents were unable to pay school fees for me due to lack of finances and this affected me so much; since that time I struggled to earn a living and I stayed in a thatched house.

In 2014, we were given the job to construct 2 VIP toilets at Malepu Primary School and at Kaande Basic School. After constructing the VIP toilets, I was empowered with the practical knowledge and skills on how to set and measure a building, the type of material needed, the depth of the toilets, and how to enter the toilet pit to start the construction.

Out of all the skills I was trained in, I was most interested in bricklaying. I also managed to construct my own flat iron sheet roof. Today I can stand and say what a man can do, a woman also can do.

This change is significant to me because it has given me self-confidence and the courage that I can do anything, regardless of my gender. I have no more fear for my future and I am assured that I will manage to take care of my two children.

## BRICKLAYING OR CARPENTRY IS NOT JUST A MAN'S WORK

**RACHAEL SAMBA** - Bricklayer and carpenter

**Sipondo Village, Mutondo Ward**

I am one of the women who is now in construction as a result of the Oxfam project. In 2011 I was one of a few women who was selected in my community by Oxfam to receive vocational and skills training at the Mongu Trades Training Institute in the Mongu district. Oxfam had introduced a program to help young women in my community who had either completed junior or secondary education but remained vulnerable in one way or another, to attain higher education. A selection activity was then held in my community at the Lukweta Primary School by Oxfam for the identification of young women who qualified. Fortunately enough, I became part of a few women in my community who were selected to receive training on vocational skills in bricklaying, carpentry and others. In the same year I was among the 20 women who graduated from the training after six months at the Mongu Trades Training Institute in the Mongu district, Western Province.

During the six months at Mongu Trades Training Institute, I received various skills such as bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, water and sanitation, and health and hygiene. It is from such skills and training that I received a number of benefits, because I am able to engage in construction of infrastructures such as houses, schools, toilets etc. I have been earning an income of my own from these vocational skills to support my child and my family. The skills are a great achievement for me, despite being a young woman. Currently I can access items for myself and my child without the help of my parents or anyone.

So many great changes have resulted from the above vocational skills because Oxfam has continued to support us by giving us contracts to construct toilets. Last year we received a contract to build a toilet for girls (type 7) at the Lukweta Primary School in my community which



we did successfully. This year we received another at the same school to construct toilets for boys (type 2). Against this background I strongly feel I am also contributing to developmental issues in my community despite being a young woman. We receive these contracts as a group and share the money accordingly after successfully completing them. Working in groups has also helped me learn to work as a team, and I have been working with my fellow women without any big challenges and it is for this reason that we have been able to successfully complete the two contracts Oxfam gave to us.

Before I was doing very little, after failing to continue my education to grade ten due to a number of reasons and difficulties my parents were facing at the time, I began helping my parents in agriculture, though at a small scale. By then I earned very little income to support myself and especially my child. Basically, I depended on my parents for some items such as soap, sugar etc. It was very difficult for me to take care of my child without the help of my parents and relatives; when I got involved in the Oxfam program, life began to change for the better. I am a very proud young woman because getting things for my own has become very easy. For example I can buy soap, sugar, clothing, and food on my own, for me and my child, and even for my parents.

So many changes have taken place in my life and I can imagine how life would have been without the support of Oxfam. The various skills in bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, health and hygiene, and water and sanitation have made a huge difference in my life. The issues on health and hygiene and water and sanitation have helped me look after my child and myself well. Previously men teased women, saying that a woman cannot do a man's work, but here I am.



## FROM A HOUSEWIFE TO A BUILDER

**ANONYMOUS** - Constructor In Building, Carpentry and Plumbing  
Chingonga village, Imalyo Ward, Mongu District

I live in Chingonga village in the Imalyo ward of the Mongu district. I'm married with one child. I became a builder in 2012. It happened that in 2012 Oxfam came to the Imalyo ward looking for people who completed grade twelve and those with grade nine certificates. They called for a meeting which was held at the Lukalanya Primary School where they said that all those who have grade twelve and grade nine certificates should write application letters and attach their certificates so that they can send them for a training in bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing at Mongu Trades Training Institute. I was lucky because I had both grade twelve and nine certificates and did apply as advised. We were told that all those who apply should drop their application letters at the Lukalanya Primary School. The PTA did the selection and my name was selected. I was told to go to Mongu on the 15th of April 2012 for a six month training course in bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing at Mongu Trades Training Institute. This is how my journey began.

During the time of training I received three major trainings in bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing. I graduated on the 26 September 2012 and since then I have been working and sustaining myself and family.

In my life, so many things have changed. Before, I didn't have an account, but after the training I opened one. I couldn't build my own house, but now I'm able to do so. These days, even when someone tells me to build him or her house, I can easily do so. I'm even able to do a bill of quantity when it comes to construction. I'm able to help my family now. These are some of the changes I have experienced in my life after undergoing this training.

At this point in time, I can now talk about the most significant change in my life, but before I do so let me confirm that before my life was not good all. After completing school, I was just a villager trying to do farming, and used to produce cassava and maize to help my family at a very small scale. Nevertheless, the most significant change in my life happened because of the training in bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing I underwent, and now I'm a female builder and I'm able to lead others. These days I no longer depend on my husband to give me money or whatever I need. I'm now able to help my relatives by sending them to school; I also help my husband buy food and even support my in-laws. I produce more food now as I employ people who do the farming for me etc.

I have chosen this part of my story as the most significant change because it really shows how this training has changed my life.



## A WOMAN CAN BE A BOREHOLE DRILLER

**MEMORY MATOMOLA** - Manual Borehole Driller

**Namando Ward, Luampa District**

I got involved in the AACES project at the time when Oxfam came to the Luampa District in the Namando Ward, which happens to be one of their areas of development. It so happened that one day, Oxfam held a meeting at the Chipungu Community School where they told the community members that they were looking for people with grade twelve and nine certificates in the Namando ward. The purpose was to train them in the manual drilling of boreholes. Being in possession of a grade nine certificate, I did apply and was later selected to go and do a training in manual drilling in boreholes by Village Water Zambia right at their offices here in Mongu, for a period of seven days.

The training was well organised and during the training I learnt a lot of things, like how to select a site for borehole drilling, for example always consider issues to do with the position of a toilet and the distance from the water point and the toilet must always be on the leeward side whilst the water point should be on the upper side. During the training, we also learnt that hygiene and sanitation plays a very critical role where diseases prevention is concerned in our communities. We also learnt how to drill boreholes using simple technologies like rota jetting etc. We also learnt how to operate and maintain water points in our communities, and after the training I have formed an enterprise and so far my group has dug 12 boreholes.

The most significant change in this story of my life is that, before I used to be a farmer growing cassava, ground nuts and maize at a very small scale, but from the time I got involved in this project, a lot has happened and the most significant change is that these days I no longer depend on anyone; I provide soap, food and all the necessities of life for myself. I'm able to fend for myself and my family. I'm now able to employ people to do farming for me.

I have chosen this part of the story as the most significant change because I feel this is the part which shows how my life has been transformed.





Neela Silishebo is employed as a builder and contractor of VIP toilets and permanent structures in the village.  
PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## A WOMAN BECOMES A CONTRACTOR

**GRACE IMUTONGO** - Building Contractor

Mutondo Ward, Mongu

I got involved in the AACES program through Oxfam. Oxfam went into rural areas of this district looking for women who were unemployed so that they could offer them training.

I got big support by being sponsored in general construction. I also attended other trainings in areas such as CLTS, HP and V-WASH and pump mender. In 2012 I got involved in many activities such as putting up a Female Hostel Block at Mongu Trades Training Institute - Town campus. In 2013, I constructed a classroom block at Sibongo Primary School. In 2014 I was given a contract by the Chinese Company to build a house, fitting doors and putting up tiles. At Malepu School I have constructed 2 VIP toilets this year. Before being trained as a contractor, I was just a peasant farmer. In my community, people never knew that a woman could be a contractor. They knew that building houses was for men. The people never used toilets, instead loved to go into the bush to relieve themselves. They didn't know about dish racks, bathing shelters etc.

As an individual, I am able to build or construct a house as well as men. I am able to lift a brick with one hand without any difficulty. The money I realise from this work is able to put my children through school. In the community I stay, there is great change because waterborne diseases are minimised. I have also started teaching other fellow women how to build and handle a trowel properly. In my community, people have learnt and realised the importance of hygiene. I am proud of that.

The most significant change is that people have and are drinking clean water in my community. It is significant because there are less water-borne diseases in the community and this has reduced many deaths in many families.



Clean water from the pump installed outside the village Health Post is enjoyed by the children in the village.  
PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## TAMING A LION!

**FELISTUS MUSHOKABANJI NAWA** - Community member

**Muoyo Royal Village**

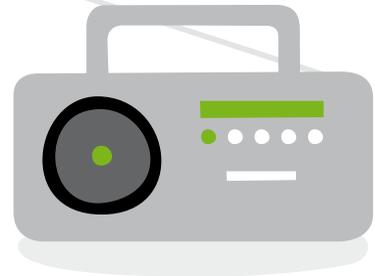
My husband and I were wrapped in a predicament: he was hooked on the bottle and whenever in a drunken stupor, he staggered, he handed insults at every family member, and he would beat me up, time and time again, including any child that expressed sympathy over my predicament. In other words, our marriage was at stake. There was no peace and harmony, but rather poverty was the order of the day; we hardly had three meals a day, and we couldn't afford modern clothes. As if these weren't enough, my husband was so strict that he would not allow me run even a small business. I was accused of being unfaithful, and sometimes accused of going out with neighbours and relatives. All the accusations were made without any tangible proof. This was very difficult for me to handle; I almost attempted suicide it was so awful and horrible.

However, the day came for this lion of a husband; he crossed the line, beat me up until I fainted for some hours. This scandal drew much attention from neighbours and sympathisers, who thought I had passed on; my husband was taken to the Muoyo police station and locked up for a week pending investigations, and he was also taken to hospitals and discharged after four days whilst detained. My husband was spoken to by ladies that belong to a group against gender based violence - they were YWCA sponsored. They reminded him that, being a head of the home came with responsibilities such as protecting the home, providing for it and setting an example; he was made aware that a woman was human and had feelings, and that she shouldn't



be beaten, forced into sex, insulted or abused in any way. In the aftermath of the counselling, he was released due to poor health, my husband also took time to listen to the program on a community radio station called, "I Care About Her" which talked about similar sentiments. The only difference being that this program was run by men who condemned GBV; not only did my husband stop drinking beer he became peaceful, loving and caring – it was a great relief to the family when he did away with his old way of life. With this change, we started a small business which he supported from the onset. This kantemba [small shop], we grew into a grocery shop; we are home and dry now. Unfortunately, my husband has since passed away, but he had left me, and my children and grand children, a course of living.

The most significant change is that before he met his fate he was chosen as section leader. He condemned GBV without reservation. Yes, he led an exemplary life; he became a darling of his community and left a legacy.



A photograph of a woman, Harriet Chinga, smiling broadly while carrying a large, bright yellow plastic water container balanced on her head. She is wearing a light-colored t-shirt with dark horizontal stripes. The background shows an outdoor setting with a blue sky, scattered white clouds, some green trees, and a simple wooden structure in the distance. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

# IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH

Harriet Chinga helps at the village Health Post and lives a few meters away from the water pump.  
PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## CLTS CHANGE OF SCENE IN LUMBO WARD

**MATILDAH MUBUKWANU** - Community Facilitator

**Tapo Village, Lumbo Ward**

In the past before the AACES program, people did not have full knowledge on how important toilets and hand washing facilities were in people's lives. They did not also care about the type of water they drank, or whether it was contaminated or not. The technique of boiling or adding chlorine was not known by the majority of people in the community. With all these unfavourable conditions in place, water-borne diseases were prevalent in the area. Malaria and diarrhoea were common, which caused severe illness and deaths among the community. Nowadays since the introduction of the AACES program, the area has been undergoing a rapid change in sanitation, hygiene and environmental cleanliness. Diseases, which were once stubborn and seriously affecting people, have now been reduced by CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation) sensitisation meetings and activities that took place in my area.

When Oxfam / PPS first operated in my area in 2011, having a Hygiene Promoter led to so many tremendous changes, which mushroomed through the AACES. Firstly in the CLTS category, I saw the formation of V-WASHE committees, SAGS (Sanitation Action Groups) and HPs (Health Promoters) in which many women took leadership positions and worked side-by-side with the men folk. This brings us to another interesting topic of gender equality because this scenario of men and women working together and sharing ideas was declared an abomination and under-practiced in the past.

The anti-GBV sensitisation meetings which swept across the entire ward changed this area into a better place by creating a conducive atmosphere to live in. PPS / YWCA, together with the anti-GBV champions went flat out in our area to sensitise the community on the consequences of violating the Anti-GBV Act. Unlike in the past, people now have changed their attitudes on



women, children and girls. Marrying off children, conflicts and abusing children are not as common as it used to be in the past. Men have now realised that wife battering is not a solution to end conflicts in a home.

In these sensitisation meetings parents have fully understood the Re-entry Policy which the government has introduced to support the girls completing school [after getting pregnant]. The democratically elected WDC (Ward Development Committees) and formation of the ward plan is major development in the history of the area; in the past when government used to plan for the people, most of the planned projects turned out to be white elephants because the community was not consulted or allowed to plan for themselves.

By focusing on the community-formed ward plans, people now, through the WDC, actively participate in zonal meetings to identify and address their concerns; WDCs, in their quarterly reports, have pinpointed the need to have many water points which are now being installed in our areas by Village Water Zambia (an NGO). Some other projects which are to be put up in this area like the ward office were once proposed by people and the WDCs. Of all these changes I've decided to choose CLTS as one which has brought the most significant change in our community. The reasons why CLTS is leading in bringing major changes are as follows:

- People know the importance of having a toilet, unlike before when they used to defecate openly in the bush.
- Diseases have been reduced to a minimum.
- People now shun drinking contaminated water from streams / ponds because they now know the consequences that may arise.
- Surroundings are now clean.
- Improved / increased washing facilities and refuse pits.
- Installation of many water ponds.



# COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE EMPOWERMENT

**STANSLAS MWENE**

**Luampa Mission Compound**

It was in 2011 when I was invited to attend a workshop on “Participatory Rural Appraisal” under the AACES project in Nkeyema. The workshop was organised by Oxfam and Keeper Zambia Foundation (KZF) where the Community Facilitators and Traditional leaders from Namando, Mulwa and Nyambi wards were also in attendance. During the workshop, we were briefed on how to conduct a baseline survey and what participatory tools to use when collecting data in the communities to come up with the Ward Plan before starting the project. Thereafter we went back to the wards and came up with the Ward Plans for each ward.

Among the problems in the Namando ward, communication and lack of trained teachers at Katondo primary school were a big challenge. Through a community participatory process in developing the ward plan [and advocacy processes afterwards], a communication tower has been constructed by ZICTA (Zambia Information & Communications Technology Authority), which has enabled beneficiaries to communicate at any time, especially the Health Post within the ward which is now able to communicate with the Luampa Mission Hospital whenever there is a maternal case which needs referral. The community has also lobbied for a qualified teacher from the District Education Board. Through the Ward Plan, Namando and Nyambi have benefited with boreholes to address access to clean and safe water.

Also as a result of the ward plan, the Nyambi ward has lobbied for a Health Post from the Ministry of Health to be constructed at Inkunikila, which is 30km away from a dependable rural health centre; it has been approved and a site has been identified, along with community contribution in terms of local materials such as stone and sand; this will relieve beneficiaries from walking long distances to access health services. The most significant change is that all the three wards are now able to solicit for community projects, in line with the ward plans, to both government and NGOs.





A group of boys play with a ball in the shade of a VIP toilet outside the Sibongo Primary School.  
PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## AACES TAKING ME TO ANOTHER LEVEL

**CLUE LUFWENDO** - Ward Councilor

**Kahonono Village, Lumbo ward**

I, Lufwendo, Lumbo Ward Councilor, having been in the program for one year eight months, have witnessed several changes in the communities within my ward. I live in the same community hence like any other person am aware of some of the key challenges faced before the AACES program.

I would single out the most critical as:

- Use of the bush to answer calls of nature (open defecation – OD)
- Drinking contaminated water from shallow wells

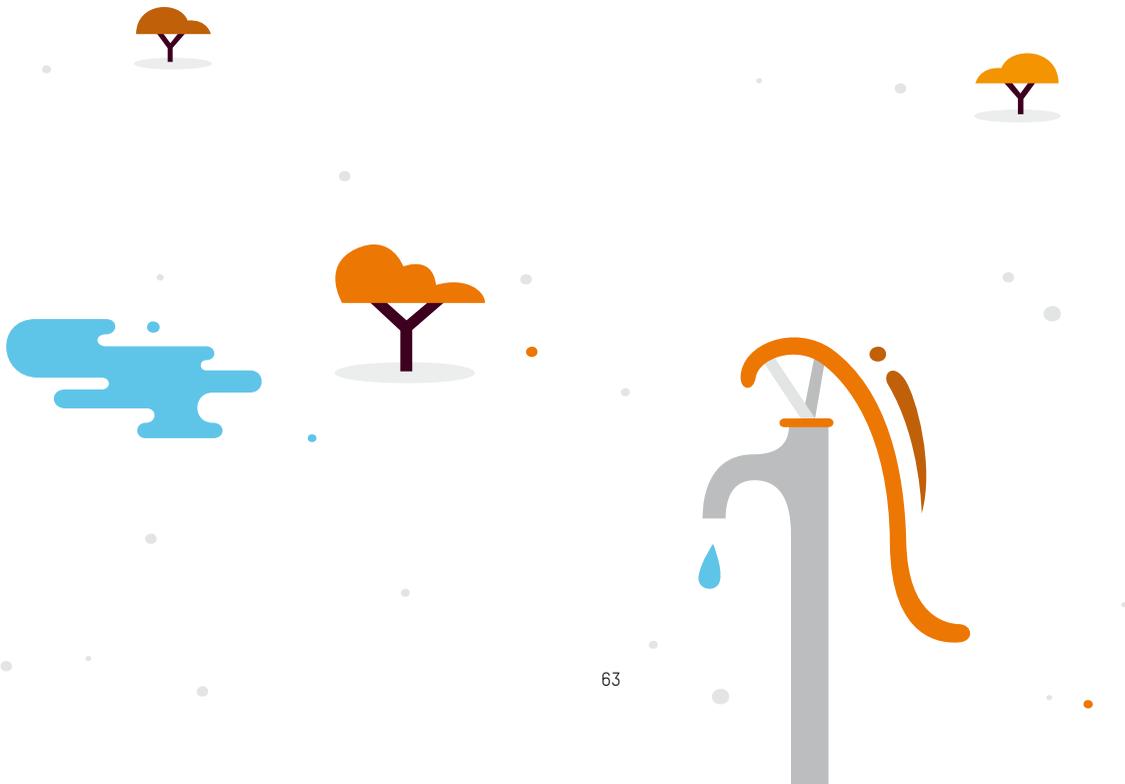
However, after working with Oxfam and partner organisations, the situation is not the same any more. Most of the communities in my ward have increased access to safe and clean water for domestic use through provision of boreholes. Further, most communities have adopted the use of pit latrines, a shift from open defecation. Equally, community members are now able to lobby for development projects which was not the case before.

Our women, most of them, have become ambassadors of change in gender mainstreaming due to training received through AACES.

What struck me most is the fact that my village at the moment has clean and safe water for domestic use. As I say, this has greatly contributed towards reduced water-borne diseases.

Families and many others in the community have pit latrines, which has led to reduced environment contamination due to reduced open defecation incidences. An environment free from contamination from faecal matter has also led to a reduction in diseases.

I am excited that lack of privacy, when attending to call of nature as it used to be during the time of open defecation, is no longer there. We have ample time, as a family, to attend to developmental projects and other economical activities due to reduced man-power loss, caused by diseases.



## AACES OUTCOMES IN THE IMALYO WARD

**MR. BRIAN CHINYEMBA** - WDC Treasurer

**Sin'anda Village**

I got involved in the AACES program as a pump mender and an elected treasurer of the Ward Development Committee (WDC).

Before the AACES program, the community depended on wells and small rivers for drinking water, hence there were high rates of diarrhoea, especially amongst the children. Communities were also ignorant in the area of gender-based violence (GBV), and there were high levels of violence amongst married couples. Leaders also lacked leadership qualities. People who were differently abled were also discriminated against.

When I got involved in the organisation I was able to sensitise the community. Thereafter, I made sure that diarrhoea diseases were reduced through CLTS sensitisation messages. Community members are able to access clean drinking water due to a number of boreholes that were installed in the area.

Among the changes so far, was that some women are leaders of certain community-based organisations such as CPACC [Community Led Program on Adaptability to Climate Change]. Another significant change is that the issues of GBV have been greatly reduced. People are able to practice good hygiene and people who are differently abled are now being engaged in developmental issues in my community through the help of Oxfam, working with PPS.

We now have a borehole which was accessed after our engagement with the V-WASHE [Village Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education Committee] who requested it from the council. The community is now accessing clean drinking water, and toilets are being constructed at every household. After two months from the time I got involved, occurrences of diarrhoea have been reduced. The people are currently living happily and able to work in good health.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE EXPERIENCES

**STANLEY MBEWE** - Sanitation and hygiene facilitator

**Kaoma, Western Province**

I got involved in the WASH project by the nature of my profession, as indicated above. In 2005 I started working with Ministry of Health (MOH) where I was responsible for carrying out roles and responsibilities in the area of sanitation and good hygiene practices. After working for 8 years in the Ministry of Health under the Government Republic of Zambia, I joined Village Water Zambia in the Kaoma district.

It was at this point that I got fully involved in the WASH project in the position of sanitation and hygiene facilitator.

My interest in WASH activities has been with passion and sincerity, thus I was interested in receiving any type of trainings as part of capacity building. Between 2010 and 2015 I received the following training:

- Community-led total sanitation training (CLTS).
- Most significant change stories monitoring technique.

To begin with, the CLTS training I have received so far has made a number of changes both at a personal and community level. As an individual I am now able to use these participatory methodologies to do my work well. In addition am also able to apply these lessons for my personal hygiene such as “washing my hands after using the toilet”. With this background I have come to strongly believe that “prevention is better than cure, and it’s cheaper”. Most importantly is to get sensitised and sensitise others in order to effectively promote prevention when it comes to sanitation and good hygiene practices.



Secondly, the messages on sanitation and good hygiene practices have greatly changed and benefited the targeted communities. Currently the beneficiaries have learnt to prevent poor hygiene and sanitation-related diseases such as diarrhoea and scabies by engaging in the prevention strategy. The community, including the old and children, now can engage in good hygiene such as accessing clean water and washing hands before eating etc.

Like I stated earlier so many changes have occurred as a result of these activities. I recall, before I was fully involved, a number of diarrhoea cases such that the local clinics were overwhelmed. Patients were being brought from various communities for treatment continuously. After the trainings and other relevant support from the WASH project, me and my organisation, engaged fully to conduct messages on sanitation and good hygiene practices to help the targeted communities. In the process of conducting these activities we also realised that people were affected because of ignorance and negligence.

After seeing the situation in the communities I have been working from, I have become very conscious and sensitised to issues of hygiene and sanitation, even in my home.

Currently, beneficiaries in our communities have finally and fully been influenced in the promotion of good hygiene practices. Hence there is a great change in the reduction of diarrhoea diseases and many other diseases that were caused by poor hygiene practices.

My most significant change was a turning point, because without the CLTS trainings and my involvement in sanitation and good hygiene practices, the story would have been different. Remember that “prevention is better than cure”.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE IMPROVES IN TAPO AREA

**MATILDAH NAMAKANDO** - Community Facilitator / Hygiene Promoter

Tapo, Lumbo Ward, Mongu

I was chosen by the community to be a hygiene promoter at a meeting called by PPS and Oxfam.

They called me for training in 2011, at Tapo Primary School. This is how I got to know about the AACES program. I received knowledge from the training, where I was trained as a Hygiene Promoter, V-WASH, GBV and a Community Facilitator.

After those training I was able to sensitise the community on how to use toilets and to understand everyone's rights. Before AACES program came in our community, I used to drink dirty water and go in the bush for the call of nature; as a woman, I didn't know that I could be a leader. Now, I use a toilet and wash my hands after using the toilets, with a soap or ash.

I also know the methods of drinking safe water. I am now able to be a leader according to the knowledge I learned from PPS/Oxfam. Even the number of toilets in the community has now increased, and the most significant change is the reduction of the number of deaths in the community.



of illiteracy

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# INCREASED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Kabeta Wamulwa is the Ward Development Chairperson and a Ward CLTS facilitator. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## BOTTOM UP APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

**MAO SIKAINDO** - District Facilitator  
**Mongu District**

I was selected by my employer, Mongu Municipal Council, to be one of the District Facilitators toward the formation of Ward Development Committee (WDCs); the project was for the establishment of three Ward Development Committees in the Mongu District. It was spearheaded by PPS and funded by Oxfam. We underwent training under the WASH project, and after that we were sent to the three wards i.e. Mutondo, Imalyo and Lumbo wards.

Whilst there, we sensitised the community members on the need and importance of establishing ward development committees (WDCs). We pointed out to the community members that the ward development committee was the sub-district structure through which development projects will reach the targeted people. After sensitising members of the community, we established the ward development committees.

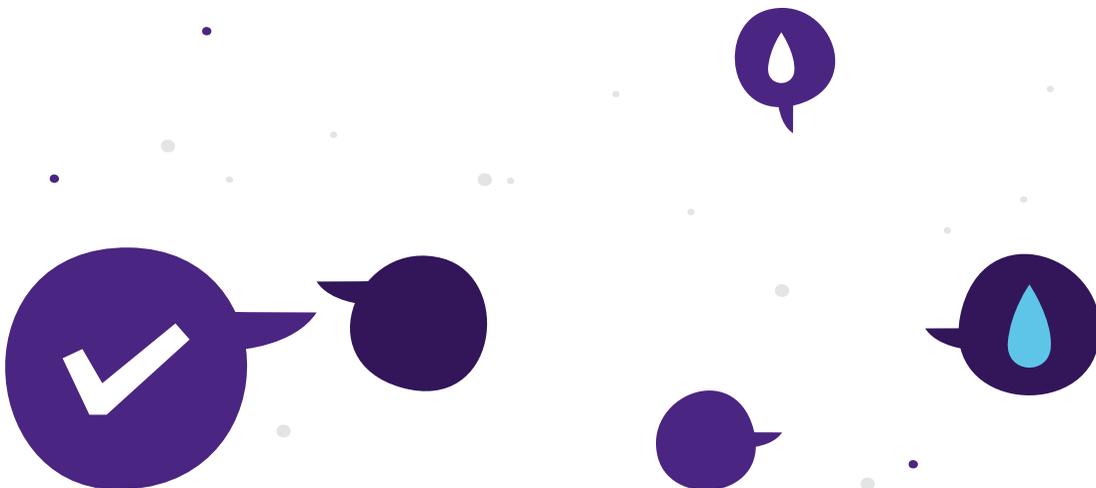
These ward development committees report to the Municipal Council and are an entry point for development activities in the community. Since the formation of these ward' development committees in the three mentioned wards, a number of changes have occurred in the affected communities. What is occurring now is that members of the community come up with their own developmental projects; they tell their ward development committee who in turn comes and reports to the Council what type of development project people from that particular area want.



One of the major changes I have seen is the involvement of the Ward Development Committee (WDCs) in Imalyo by PPCR (Pilot Project on Climate Resilience<sup>1</sup>) to help clear some canals which has really benefited all the community members. This project in Imalyo is a well funded project by PPCR which has, and will continue to, benefit all the members of the community in the ward. The council in turn has benefited through the creation of these ward development committees, because it is easier for the council to work with the people in far-flung areas as there are now some sub-district structures it coordinates with.

I was very happy for the people of Imalyo because their canal was blocked for long time and it was difficult for them to conduct any major agriculture activities. One of the conditions PPCR had attached before funding them was that they should have a ward development committee. They were fortunate to have had an existing WDC which had been established with the help of Oxfam.

1. PPCR is financed by the World Bank and implemented by government through the Provincial Administration and Local Authorities (Mongu Municipal Council)



## CHANCE COMES ONCE

**WANGU LIBINGI** - V-WASHE Treasurer

**Mandanyi Village, Mutondo Ward**

Before the Oxfam project, people lived badly because they used the bush whenever they wanted to answer the call of nature. Diarrhoea was prevalent, especially amongst babies. Dogs were also contributing to the diseases because every time they came in from the bush after eating the waste, they then ate the leftovers on the dishes and other utensils that were carelessly left on the ground.

In the year 2011, Oxfam visited my area and conducted sensitisation meetings on good hygiene where they taught the following:

- Digging rubbish pits
- Construction of traditional stands to keep dishes and other utensils or where to keep items like pounding sticks
- Construction of toilets
- Construction of traditional bathrooms
- How to clean our own households and ourselves

After being sensitised we followed the instructions and came up with a V-WASHE committee where I was a treasurer for our borehole, and kept the finances. I continued to collect user fees or contributions; right now we have been able to raise money to buy cement and paid someone to repair our broken borehole.



The other important change which has resulted is the reduction of diarrhoea as people are no longer using the bush to answer the call of nature, but rather use their own toilets at their homes. Plates and other utensils that were left carelessly on the ground now are being kept safely.

The most significant change is the drinking of safe water from the boreholes. The reason why this is the most significant change is the reduction of diseases that were caused by unsafe water and other difficulties. We now spend less on hospital expenses than before.



## A VILLAGE THAT BECAME A PARADISE IN SANITATION

**C MUKUNGU MUKOLO** - Village Headman

**Kawi Village, Imalyo Ward, Mongu**

I came to know about AACES in 2012, when I was invited by OXFAM through PPS, under my capacity as village headman. Before the coming of the program, the picture that was seen among my subjects in the area was of unsanitary activities, marrying off children at teenage ages, gender-based violence and a bad rapport between the able people and those living with disabilities.

I was totally against the idea of building toilets with my entire subjects in the village. I was one on the forefront, encouraging the system of marrying off our daughters at teenage ages, because I believed that, it was one way of bringing wealth in the family through paying dowries in the form of cattle.

Previously, I felt more comfort using the forest than using a toilet for defecation. In terms of gender-based violence, women were mainly the victims, but women considered the treatment they went through as a normal tradition. People living with disability were not counted on as part of the community because they were never included in any of the community-based organisations, committee discussions or decision making – they were totally discriminated against. Changing for a better is not a one day thing, but a continuous process. From 2012 when the program started in my area, changes were happening but in a slow manner; I remember when my village was monitored by Village Water Zambia in October 2014, the situation was still poor.

In 2015, Village Water Zambia visited my village and the situation changed for the better; all sanitation facilities were done excellently. My village became the best among all the villages and was free from empty plastic containers which were used as toilets. Marrying off our daughters has been reduced, women are holding higher positions, and persons with disabilities are now feeling part of society. Children now know their rights. The village is a paradise!

The most significant change I have seen is the building of toilets, not for the sake of building, but with the knowledge of its importance. The reason of choosing the above as the most significant change is because I have seen the value of change among people living with all sanitation facilities in place, and, in addition, diseases have been reduced, particularly those disturbed people from doing productive work such as water-borne diseases. The routine of children going to school is not disturbed due to the toilets.



A man in a striped shirt is washing his hands at a water pump. A large green bucket is mounted on a stand next to the pump. Water is flowing from the pump into a metal basin. The background is a plain wall.

# MULTIPLE CHANGES

Clean water is now available from the water pump outside the Health Post. The officers in charge can now provide clean water for their patients and keep their post hygienic. PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM

## AACES IN FLOOD / DROUGHT PRONE LUMBO WARD

**AKEKELWA MUIMUI** - WDC Chairperson, Lumbo Ward

### Tapo Village

The AACES program was first introduced to me in 2011 when Oxfam and its partner PPS were operating in the Lumbo Ward. There are so many changes that have taken place in our area from the time the program was introduced. Of all the changes that have taken place in our area, I've identified four which seem to have improved the living standards of the people, socially and economically. The most significant changes noted are:

- a. The reduction of gender-based violence cases and awareness of the Anti GBV Act
- b. The improvement in agriculture i.e. conservation farming, irrigation and fish farming / formation of women clubs.
- c. The installation of 13 water points, training of manual drillers and pump minders
- d. The improvement on CLTS activities which has tremendously reduced water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, bilharzia etc. This has attracted Village Water Zambia to come to install 10 more water points, adding to 4 which are already operating.

People are now conscious of the Anti GBV Act in our area. The YWCA and some community facilitators made several efforts to sensitise the community. In the past, cases of GBV were rampant in our area compared to today after these sensitisations; conflicts in homes like wife battering, defilement and drunkenness have drastically reduced to a minimum. The Act has created a conducive working and living environment for all the people, unlike in the past when women and children lived in fear of being battered or defiled.



The other major change is in agriculture. Vulnerable households have been encouraged to form women groups which are now registered. This was done by PPS and now these groups have acquired several grants from the government to buy farming inputs such as seeds, ploughs, oxen, oxcarts and fertilizer. Some small scale farmers were given opportunities to go for exchange visits to Namwala and Kanzungula in 2014 to be exposed to the irrigation farming system. Now the adverse effect of climate change which brought severe drought and floods has been cushioned by this technique of irrigation farming practiced in the area. The rising hunger situation and poverty experienced in the past has also been minimised these days.

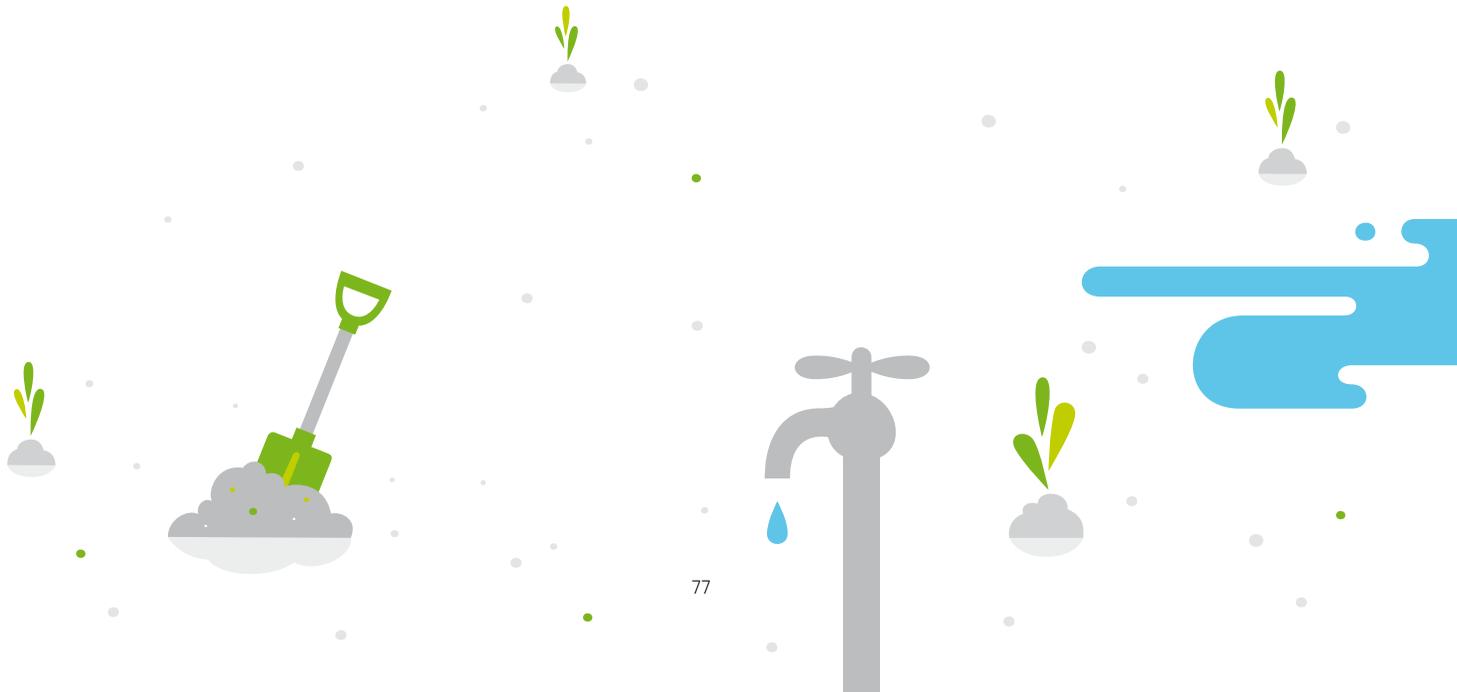
CLTS has also brought many major changes in our society. Water-borne diseases e.g. diarrhoea and bilharzia are now scarcely heard of in our area due to improved sanitation and hygiene. Our area has 58 villages, out of which 44 are now free of open defecation. Out of this number, 10 have now been certified by Village Water Zambia (VWZ) and 10 boreholes will soon be installed in these villages. VWZ was attracted to these villages because of the tremendous increase in toilets and hand-washing facilities. The CLTS program was first implemented by PPS and later joined by Village Water Zambia in 2013.

The last part of the most significant change is the training of manual drillers. Two youths (male and female) were trained to drill boreholes in the area. Already they have put up 4 water points in the ward which are functioning very well. There is a saying which says “support your local team” and now that we have these two young energetic drillers, we shall support them at all costs, so that they shall achieve their goals to the maximum. Now we don't have to hire heavy and expensive machinery from Lusaka because Oxfam and partners have decentralised and brought in these services locally at the grassroots level.



The most significant change is on the activities of agriculture which have improved tremendously from a hoe to plough, from traditional farming methods to conservation farming, from water pails to water pump irrigation system, from planting late seed varieties to early seed varieties. The agriculture sector has major significant changes and one would consider them as the most significant because of the following:

- Rising hunger situations have been brought to a minimum
- Living standards of people have improved socially and economically
- Employment has increased in the farming activities
- Grant empowerment has offered the women clubs the skills to lobby
- Poverty levels have been reduced
- The impact of adverse climate change has been cushioned and fears of food insecurity are now no more.



## CHIEF'S INVOLVEMENT IN AACES/WASH PROGRAM

**NANGANA NYAMBE** - Acting Area chief Litungi  
**Punyu Village, Mutondo Ward, Mongu District**

My name is Nyambe Nangana, acting Area Chief Litungi for the Mutondo chiefdom.

Being the acting Area Chief in Mutondo ward, I would like to thank Oxfam and its partners for the development they facilitated, through AACES program, in my chiefdom. Since time immemorial, my chiefdom did not practice sanitation and hygiene. Open defecation was a tradition as people were not used to the use of toilets. Toilets were only found in government institutions like schools and clinics. It was taboo to see a person constructing such a facility in a village. People were also used to drinking water from unprotected shallow wells which contributed to diarrhoeal diseases that resulted in a high level of child mortality rates. Cases of gender-based violence such as early marriages, defilements and child labour were also alarming in my chiefdom because of a lack of knowledge.

Despite seeing such things happening, it was difficult for me to address such issues with my subjects for one single reason: I feared to be hated, despite the Chief's Act. People did not respect this Act out of ignorance, particularly the new generation, who didn't know that a chief is protected by the Act whenever he exercised his duties.

Since the coming of AACES, people started changing their ways of living and this change came as a result of trainings conducted by Oxfam in legal enforcement, leadership, governance, CLTS, child protection and many more. After capacity building, I used it to influence change in my chiefdom by first sensitising all village headmen and informed them about the Chief's Act

and other interventions. The other changes that I influenced were to ensure that all the people adhere and participate in developmental programs such as infrastructure, by contributing stones, sand, moulding of blocks and labour during construction of water points and toilets in schools and health posts. This approach increased peoples' confidence and sense of ownership towards community projects.

At personal level, my life has changed from an authoritative / autocratic leader to a democratic leader as a result of the trainings received from AACES on leadership and governance, meaning I don't just encourage other people to do it, but I also lead by example. After understanding the concept of CLTS, I influenced this behaviour change by making people understand the disadvantages of open defecation and the advantages of using a toilet as a means of promoting an Open Defecation Free chiefdom as well as reducing diarrhoeal related diseases. For sure, this behaviour change encouraged Village Water Zambia to install more water points in my chiefdom. Now people are drinking safe water that has reduced diarrhoeal cases in our health services.

Through AACES, I have seen women constructing VIP toilets and drilling boreholes, something which was previously taboo in my chiefdom was to see a woman constructing such permanent structures in which she can raise money for her basic necessities.

Based on what I mentioned, I can say that the most significant change that I can tell is that, as a leader, I influenced positive change in my chiefdom.

The reason is because AACES built my capacity to a level that I'm able to influence change in my chiefdom. As mentioned previously, my leadership style has changed from an autocratic leader to that of a democratic one.

Thank you Oxfam for changing my lifestyle.



## MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF AACES-WASH PROJECT IN IMALYO WARD

**COUNCILOR MARTHA MWENDA** - Ward Councilor, Deputy Mayor: Mongu Municipal Council  
**Imlay Ward, Mongu**

I came to know about WASH project in 2012 when I was invited by Oxfam and PPS to attend a baseline workshop in my capacity as Ward Councillor for the Imlayo ward.

I was very happy to learn that my ward was one of the targeted wards to benefit from the Oxfam-WASH project.

During the project implementation, my experience has been that, its focus is not only on the installation of water points in villages but encompasses other interventions such as CLTS, which encourages communities to refrain from the using of bush for open defecation but adhere to the new method of toilet use in order to reduce waterborne diseases in my ward. The other experience that impressed me a lot is the introduction of the GBV awareness campaigns in my ward, as well as the training of male champions. This has brought a very big change among couples because initially, men used to beat and ill-treat their wives on regular basis but now, such cases are greatly reduced. It is real amazing to see men taking a lead in sensitising other men on issues to do with gender equality, as men were known to be culprits of GBV.

The establishment of Ward Development Committee by the Mongu Municipal Council through the financial support from Oxfam and PPS has really lessened the burden of finding ways and means of bringing development in my ward alone. It is through this structure that the ward has collectively developed a ward plan which is used as a tool for sourcing funds from different stakeholders for the development of our ward. A good example of this is the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) that came about as a result of this structure and the ward plan.

In my ward, I have also seen women holding higher positions in community-based structures and they are able to stand in front of audiences to address meetings; this came about as a result of WASH that provided them with leadership and governance training.

It is also through WASH that ten women received intensive training in general construction, plumbing and pump mending and finally formed their own companies. This has positively changed their lives because they can now compete with men on the market where construction is concerned, and they are now able to sustain themselves through the income from the construction work they are involved in. Those women who are married are now well respected, not only by members of the communities they come from, but also by their husbands and this has also helped to reduce GBV at a household level.

In view of all the mentioned developments, the most significant change that I have seen is the establishment of the Ward Development Committee in my ward.

The reason for choosing this as the most significant change is that:

- Through this structure, we mobilised people to develop a ward development plan which is used to mobilise resources for our ward
- Through this structure, we are able to advocate for the issues affecting our ward and lobby different stakeholders and duty-bearers to come to our aid and find ways and means of resolving such issues
- This structure is an entry point not only for AACES interventions but also for other service providers e.g. PPCR program
- This structure has also paved way for more programs to come
- It is through this structure that new infrastructures are constructed e.g. Ward Development Committee / Councillor offices in the ward.

For sure, AACES and the WASH project has changed my ward in so many ways that I didn't expect.

Thank you Oxfam.



## AACES' POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS IN MY COMMUNITY

**LISWANISO PUMULO** - Community member

**Liyoyelo Village, Lumbo Ward**

First of all, I would like to thank Oxfam and PPS for the job done to change from the way we used to live in the past, to the way that we live now.

There have been so many projects that have been implemented by Oxfam in our community for so many years; such projects include: flood response, disaster risk reduction, ACWSI (Australia Civil Society Water and Sanitation Initiative), CPACC (Community Led Project on Adaptation to Climate Change) and AACES – WASH.

AACES came on board to continue with activities that the ACWSI project used to implement from 2007 to 2010. This project looked at water and sanitation. The difference between ACWSI and AACES is that AACES has taught us so many things, such as advocacy, women empowerment, involvement of disabled people, and CLTS etc.

Before Oxfam, we used live miserable lives, as you can see we are living in a flood-prone area, meaning we used to drink water from the Zambezi river where people fish, bath and we lost so many lives because of crocodiles that used to catch them; the river is also used for transport and other activities that makes the water contaminated. We used the plain for open defecation and during floods, people used to defecate in water which we used to drink and this made us

suffer from so many diseases. It was difficult to think about building toilets in the flood plains, or putting up a water point. The other thing was that our village used to get flooded early, around December; we also used temporal houses made up of grass structures because of having two villages in the plains during summer and in the upper-land during rainy season.

When Oxfam came on board with its interventions, our lives changed. We were taught how to identify the problems that affect us. We received so much training in CLTS, sanitation and hygiene, and how to construct toilets. A water point was installed in our village, we started constructing toilets to avoid open defecation, and we stopped drawing water from the river.

Indeed our lives started changing, diarrhoeal diseases reduced, cases of crocodiles killing people stopped, and we started interacting with men on issues of development. One of the disabled persons was given money to start his garden.

Having mentioned all these things, the most significant change that I can talk about is the installation of a water point in our village.

The reason for choosing the water point as the most significant change is that diarrhoeal diseases reduced, the number of deaths by crocodiles reduced to zero for the past 4 years, and we have been saving money for maintaining our water point, and sometimes we use part of the savings for other developmental activities for our village, which was not there before.



## CLTS CHANGES LIVING CONDITIONS

**SIKASHAKALA SIMONDA** - Community facilitator  
**Kapulanga Village, Mutondo Ward**

In the year 2014, when I was coming back from the hospital I met people at the house of the area chief, Litungi. When I inquired about their visit I was told that they had come to document discussions on community-led total sanitation (CLTS). That was how I become interested and got involved in the discussions.

After two months, we had a workshop where we received good hygiene sensitisation messages on safe drinking water and using toilets. After that I become one of the community facilitators.

One of the benefits I received was to become one of the community facilitators in my community. Thereafter I had to start sensitising my own community.

One of the changes I assessed is that people are now using toilets and drinking safe water from the borehole. The village and people look clean because the people are now using traditional bathing rooms. There is a reduction in diarrhoea cases too.

The significant change is that people have moved away from some traditional norms to contemporary practices. People are able to appreciate hygiene by using toilets other than being embarrassed about it before. Diseases caused by unsafe drinking water have been reduced. We have also been saved from hospital expenses.

These are very important matters because people have been assisted and now they live in good conditions.



## A WOMAN BENEFITING FROM WATSAN

**ANAYAWA WALUBITA** - MEAL Community Facilitator

**Nandimba Village, Lumbo Ward**

In the year 2011, Oxfam/PPS introduced a project in the Western Province called AACES. The project looks at the wellbeing of communities and engages them in developmental issues. During Oxfam's activities on good hygiene practices, I was one of the community members who committed and constantly attended these meetings.

Because of this commitment, I was then identified and selected by the community to facilitate hygiene and sanitation. I gained a lot of experience and knowledge on hygiene and sanitation issues. Thereafter I engaged in discussions with the community, as well as carry out assessments on hygiene issues. Community members were ignorant about hygiene issues. It was challenging to change the traditional mindset of the community as they used bushes whenever they wanted to answer the call of nature. Initially I struggled to respond positively and immediately, despite being a community facilitator.

Now, however, I am able to engage with the community and examine hygiene issues in various villages. Diarrhoea has been reduced, as well as truancy among school going children. In some places, lives have been lost due to a lack of hygiene. Currently the problems have been condensed and the most significant change is the reduction in diseases. I am currently living happily because diarrhoea diseases have been reduced and I now have knowledge on hygiene issues.



## CHANGES THAT HAVE COME AS A RESULT OF THE AACES PROGRAM

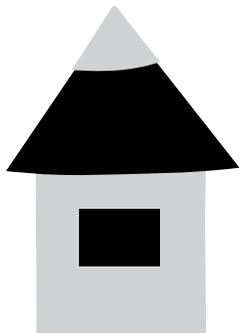
**DOREEN MONDE SITALI** - Community member

Malala village, Lumbo ward, Mongu

I came to know about AACES in 2013. From the time I have known this program, I have learnt a lot of things that have changed my life. Even if we were to bring back our forefathers who passed away long time ago, they would not believe the changes that have taken place in our village.

Particularly in this village, we didn't have toilets because we were not used to such facilities. What we knew was that toilets were only found in government institutions and towns, not in villages. Since this village was established, we have drawn water from shallow wells and lagoons which brought so many diseases like diarrhoea. In the past, people used to share one dish for washing their hands.

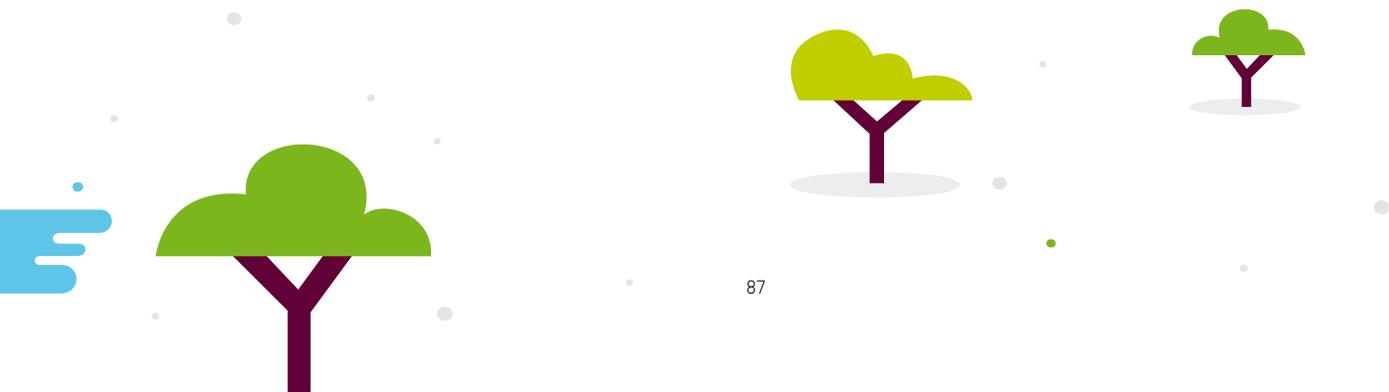
After my involvement in the project, I joined the Sanitation and Action Group (SAG) and started sensitising people on hygiene matters. This encouraged me to be a role model because, for me to convince others to adhere to hygiene, I had to show them that I also do it. We started constructing toilets, dish racks and encouraged the use of tip taps for washing hands after going to the toilet. I also taught my children to wash their hands immediately after using the toilet.



I also attended workshops on disability and women's participation in developmental programs. After I have gained knowledge, I started appreciating disabled people as people who are able to contribute positively towards development. An example of this is that currently we are buying vegetables from a person living with disabilities who was empowered by the same program with money to run his business. What I have also seen as a change in my area is to see men heading the program of anti-GBV. In the past, men used to oppose women who were seen to be active in society and such women were called prostitutes. Beating of women was a habit of men, but now I heard stories of cases of brutality against women. Women are now becoming champions in terms of decision-making and their participation in community activities is over emphasised. Women are involved in manual drilling and construction. This is as a result of AACES interventions. For me, AACES WASH is a program which has paved the way for other projects because we don't only see change in water facilities but also other interventions like child protection, women empowerment and many more.

For sure I'm a proud woman now because of AACES.

The most significant change is that hygiene and sanitation has changed my life. The knowledge that I acquired from AACES has made me able to live happily with my family in a clean environment. Thanks to Oxfam and its partners.



# CONCLUSION

The stories shared in this publication clearly show how the rural communities of Mongu and Luampa come together with other stakeholders to use their unique natural, cultural, human, social, political, and financial capital to face up to the many challenges so as to bring about the long-lasting change that they desired for themselves and their children.



Clean water from the pump outside the village Health Post is enjoyed by the children in the village.  
PHOTO © Alexia Webster | OXFAM



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