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ZIMBABWE -No time to rest

Precious Moyo, the oldest of five children, is particularly proud and happy that he was chosen by his village to receive building training from Silveira House, supported by Christian Aid. He says,

“I would like to thank you for your support. I can be someone and help my family.”

Precious found the training extremely useful and at the end was qualified enough to be asked to build a shop for a local businessman. He is part of the Sonke Sakhile Builders cooperative. In the last few years, Silveira House has trained around forty-seven builders and carpenters, five of whom were women. Most are between 18 and 35 years old. The group operates out of a new building, which was given to them as part of the government workspace scheme lobbied for by Silveira House. Precious is now working with his brother, Sibongumuzi Nyathi, fitting out another shop in the same area. He especially likes the fact that he can employ others to take on such tasks as mixing the concrete or unloading.

He explains,

“It is good to be at work as it means I am not hanging around home. I like it so much as there is no time to rest.”

Working has meant that he can support his mother and father as well as buy himself some cows. Silveira House are particularly keen that those they train go on to get recognised qualifications. Precious understands this.

“Upgrade yourself so you can train others. Do the formal training and then you can train others in your community.”

Christian Aid partners see this form of multiplying as the key to helping a whole community develop and prosper. Helping others gives confidence and self-esteem. Precious Moyo, builder, knows that.

BANGLADESH

It is always good to hear how the training and help from Christian Aid partners has changed lives and brought joy. Here are a few messages from forum members in South West Bangladesh, supported by Christian Aid partner Shushilan.



Kazol Mondal “People are willing to learn. This is very important. I hear what is being said at meetings so, with the training, I can go and try it out and then help others. This is making life good.”

Hadondada Mondal “Before Hurricane Aila hit us we used to get a good crop but, after Aila, the crops were not healthy and the yield low. Through Shushilan we have learnt to adapt. This has helped us to stay here. Now we use less seeds as we measure our fields out. First, we prepare the beds, then we sow the seeds and then plant them out in rows. Through this system nothing is wasted. Earlier it was haphazard but now we put them 6 inches apart in straight rows. It is simple and it reduces the fertilizer and makes it easier to harvest.”

Gogonananka Kaman Mondol explained, “We have benefitted from production training. Now we go to market first and negotiate the price before we bring the produce. If it is a good price, we take the crop to the buyer. We negotiate and this make us proud.”

Karuna Raptan has been involved in fish cultivation. “Earlier I went about it in an unplanned way. After a year and one harvest I was taught to clean the pond, then put food in with the new fish eggs. This has meant I have double and sometimes triple the yield than I had before. I use snails as food. I break the shells and mix with sand, dust, straw and use as food and fertilizer.” Blowing a shell to make a noise is a sign of joy in Bangladesh. In this community forum

that sense of joy is palpable, especially among the women playing a full part in the business and work.

CENTRAL AMERICA - Changing a Machismo society step by step

Beatriz Claros is a confident woman, part of the growing number of women working and taking their full part in society. She works at the Ministry of Economy and gives technical support to small cooperatives on business and agriculture. When I met her, she was visiting the shrimp cooperative supported by Christian Aid partner PROCARES.

She explained. "Women have earned the opportunity to be in this cooperative. When it comes to fishing and agriculture they would earn about 60% less than a man doing the same job. In the cooperative, they get the same share as the men. They are learning to be more active and confident citizens."

When asked if things are changing in the home, she laughed, "In most households, Mum still gets up first to get breakfast and then goes off to work. She comes home to prepare a meal and then returns to work. She returns in the evening to do start more cooking and washing etc. Whereas the man, he has his meals ready for him when comes home and everything is done for him. However, in this rural community, the women generally are more empowered because of education and training from PROCARES and this has resulted in less domestic violence."

Beatriz, her partner and their two and a half year old son, live in San Salvador where they have a small business together. She is a fully trained agronomist, who studied at the National Agricultural College. Her mother and father were both guerrillas and she was born in exile in Nicaragua. She remembers that people then trusted you more and there was less violence. Today, she said, there is much more violence. The first time she was robbed was in San Salvador. She was on a bus and, although she made a noise, everyone just backed away down the other end of the bus and did not help. She could not understand this but has realised that most people are fearful. From an early age, her mother taught her to work.

"I sold products on a little stall when I was 7 years old. I worked whilst I was at high school. I started studying biology but could not pay. However, I managed to get a scholarship to pay my way. The war changed my mother. I come from a long line of matriarchs so I am bringing up my son differently from many of my compatriots. My partner originally saw men as superior but now he understands gender inequality much more and is happy to take care of our son when I need him to. He sees the social inequality and the injustice women face and understands."

Scottish Parliament comes out in support of trade democracy

Global Justice Now just scored a win in our campaign for trade democracy. They have been fighting to make sure that parliament and the public get a say in international trade deals that affect our lives. Last week, thanks to their campaign, the majority of the Scottish Parliament voted in support of trade democracy.

Green MSP Mark Ruskell spoke about the importance of trade democracy during a key debate on Scotland's international policy framework and priorities for 2018. He praised the Principles for Just Trade Deals that Global Justice Now Scotland had developed with the Trade Justice Scotland coalition. Based on those principles, Mr. Ruskell introduced an amendment to the new international policy framework, saying that "trade deals should support rather than undermine human rights, labour and environmental standards and... should be based on solidarity and facilitating the two-way sharing of knowledge and technologies with the Global South". What's more, the amendment calls on the UK government to make sure that devolved administrations have a role in the negotiation and democratic scrutiny of future trade agreements.

This amendment passed by 80 votes to 30, showing that MSPs are strongly committed to democratic and ethical trade. Building on this victory, they are calling on MPs and MSPs to stand up for trade democracy. You can join Global Justice Now in taking action here: <https://act.globaljustice.org.uk/dangerous-deals-are-being-done-dark>.

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