

**Initiatives on equitable urban health and  
wellbeing in East and Southern Africa**

**CASE STUDY REPORTS:  
HARARE, ZIMBABWE**

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### **Roles:**

This document draws on

1. Case study terms of reference prepared by R Loewenson (RL), G Mhlanga (GM) TARSC with input from ISUH (Marian Gomez)
2. Context information for Kampala prepared by GM, with review feedback from SC, RL
3. Three case study reports with lead writer S Chaikosa (SC), reviewed by RL, GM, and finalised by SC
4. Light technical edit by RL

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## 1. Background

The International Society for Urban Health (ISUH) is implementing the Accelerating City Equity (ACE) Project to build a 'community of practice' (CoP) on healthy urban societies to accelerate the exchange of global knowledge on the drivers of equity in sustainable urban development, and contribute to the implementation of practices found to be most catalytic in cities. The work connects six regional hubs and working groups, who will identify and assess 'bright spots' with a shared framework of key questions regarding the mechanisms and processes that promote equitable health and wellbeing in 'bright spot' examples, workshopped with the regional hubs to review and provide feedback in order to adjust it to the local context. Towards this, work is being implemented by TARSC in EQUINET between April and October 2022 in East and Southern Africa (ESA) to map the actors, priorities and actions on determinants and pathways for change towards equity in urban health and wellbeing, to contribute to the learning in the region and to share and exchange with other regions in the ACE Project. The work includes evidence on urban 'bright spot' case studies from a defined urban area in 4 ESA countries. Kampala was selected from a background document review by TARSC (separately reported). This document presents the Harare context and three case studies prepared by Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD), Zimbabwe, drawing on documents and key informant interviews of initiatives in Harare that demonstrate promising practice in improving urban health equity and wellbeing.

## 2. General Harare context

Harare is the capital and most populated city in Zimbabwe with a subtropical highland climate (Wikipedia, 2022). The city was founded in 1890, as a fort, (Salisbury) during colonisation by British South Africa Company (and became the capital of the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia from 1923. It was renamed Harare in 1982, after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. The post-independence period saw an accelerated development of new road infrastructure and suburbs. However despite this expansion, the mostly black suburbs suffered from overcrowding as the population boomed, spurred by a rise in rural to urban migration. Significant investments were made in healthcare, agriculture, and education in the early years following independence, which led to the creation of a sizable middle class and subsequent economic growth. This was however short-lived because by 1992, the nation had already started to experience an economic downturn. An Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) implemented in the late 1980s produced gains in some sectors, such as the finance sector, but also with liberalised trade resulted in a significant loss of manufacturing jobs, increased unemployment and income inequality.

According to 2019 estimates, Harare's metropolitan area at 3.1 million people, incorporating the municipalities of Chitungwiza and Epworth suburbs. The rise in population has resulted in a growing urban and peri-urban population mostly settled in undesignated areas without provision of basic amenities such as water and sanitation. This has led to a rise in water-borne diseases as people fetch water from shallow wells and practise open defecation, further contaminating the ground water. In response, the Zimbabwean government in May 2005 demolished shanties, illegal vending sites and backyard cottages in Harare, Epworth and other cities in the country in an operation dubbed Murambatsvina ("Drive Out Trash"). According to authorities, the unplanned nature of the settlements and a rise in crime and diseases made the operation necessary. This was followed a year later, by *Operation Garikayi/Hlalani Kuhle* (also known as "Operation "Better Living") which involved providing better accommodation for people whose homes had been destroyed. However not enough accommodation was provided to cover those who were affected. The city has continued to experience significant population growth beyond its formal urban boundary, with predictions are that the metropolitan area will reach 4 to 5 million by 2025 and unchecked and unregulated development unaccompanied by a matching growth in services.

**Economic features:** The Economist Intelligence Unit rated Harare as the world's least liveable city out of 140 cities surveyed in February 2011, rising to 137th out of 140 in 2012. The city fared poorly in terms of stability, healthcare, and infrastructure. The report noted that quality housing is only available for the wealthy, and quality private education is unaffordable for most residents and attracts the best teachers away from Harare's impoverished government schools. (Newsday, 2021). According to a 2021 study conducted by the Harare City Authority with assistance from

the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Harare accounted for over 34% of Zimbabwe's economy between 2015 and 2020, with a per capita GDP of US\$2 901, lower than other capital cities in the region (ECA, 2021). This Zimbabwean economy experienced hyperinflation from 2007 to 2009, with peak inflation was estimated at 79.6 billion percent month-on-month and 89.7 sextillion percent year-on-year in mid-November 2008. Following a period of stability, during which the economy dollarized, the inflation rate dropped to as low as 2.9% in June 2018 but has been rising over the past several months to a high of 191.6% in June 2022 (Trading economics, 2022). According to the African Development Bank, the onset of the COVID–19 pandemic and continued drought led to a 10% contraction in real GDP in 2020. (ADB, 2022). As a result of the harsh economic environment, wages have been low compared to inflation and there have been frequent labour strikes for better pay, often impacting on users of public services in lower income brackets. As a result of economic and climatic shocks, poverty rose sharply, and extreme poverty reached 42% in 2019. The COVID19 pandemic worsened the situation by adding 1.3 million Zimbabweans to the numbers of those in extreme poverty, with jobs and income lost in urban areas such as Harare. (The Guardian, 21 June 2021). In response to the economic crisis, Harare city is embarking on a new economic and financial resilience plan, with support from ECA to tackle the effects of the pandemic and build resilience against future shocks (ECA, 2021).

After 2002 political conflict, hyperinflation and economic downturn negatively affected livelihoods, and the running of local councils, especially Harare. This has resulted in basic services like garbage collection, the provision of potable water and sanitation, refuse collection, health care, housing and accommodation, and road maintenance, etc reaching the point of collapse in most parts of Harare, especially in areas where the poor and marginalized residents live. Harare had a poverty index of 34% in 2003 up from 26% in 2001 (Knoema, 2003). The city has a vision to achieve world class city status by 2025, and has developed a strategic plan that outlines the direction it will take to realise this vision, but economic challenges and a mainly poor and informal economy are likely barriers to achieving it. As a result of poverty, most residents are not able to pay rates, further hamstringing the city's capacity to provide adequate services (City of Harare, 2020). Harare City Council provides health services, recreation, housing, water and sanitation, fire and ambulance services, road construction and maintenance, burial and cremation services etc through its 13 departments which are headed by Directors (Pindula, 2022).

#### **Infrastructures and services:**

The Zimbabwe Constitution states that every person has the right to *safe, clean, and potable water*. It obligates the state to *take all practical measures to ensure the provision of basic, accessible and adequate health services throughout Zimbabwe*. It provides for emergency treatment and preventive measures the *right to have access to basic health-care services, including reproductive health-care services* for every citizen and permanent resident. At present, the city falls far short of realising these constitutional rights for its residents (Veritas, 2019). Harare's health bylaws are in line with the Public Health Act [Ch15-17] (No. 11/2018) which is the principal health law in Zimbabwe (Veritas, 2019).

Despite these legal rights, most residents of Harare do not have access to safe water and sanitation as a result of the city's obsolete and inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure, an ever growing population and severe droughts. The water and sanitation situation in Harare is largely the same as it was in 2008, when Zimbabwe experienced the severest cholera outbreak in Africa in 15 years, with over 100 000 people infected and 4 200 deaths. It is estimated that more than 40% of pumped treated water is lost due to leakages and leakages in both the water and sewage pipes have resulted in sewerage in the streets and flowing tap water mixing with sewage in several places resulting in diarrhoeal outbreaks. A cholera and typhoid vaccination program carried out with WHO and UNICEF support has managed to halt the diseases and these agencies have drilled boreholes in the city (Reliefweb, 2021). The problem of water supply has been compounded by the Zimbabwe National Water Supply Authority (ZINWA), which at some point confirmed pumping untreated sewage into Harare's water supply dam, Lake Chivero. As a result, Harare city has reported requiring up to 10 chemicals to purify the water requiring the city to spend US\$3 million a month on water treatment chemicals. Frequent water cuts have also led to resort to getting water from open wells, streams,

water vendors, and council-drilled boreholes (Mbugua, 2019). Vending sites such as Market Square and Mbare Musika are equally affected by water supply and sanitation challenges increasing risk of disease (Pindula news, 2022). The poor state of high density suburbs has been worsened by neglect/ lack of capacity by the local authority with poor roads, recreational facilities, parks, water and sanitary services and unreliable electricity supply. The use of firewood/ charcoal for cooking is therefore commonplace in these areas and contributes to high rates of respiratory infections. The residents also face severe transport challenges especially to and from the city centre. The city has numerous open markets in which thousands of people set up stalls to sell meat, vegetables, fruit, and livestock, and many different wares (Wikipedia, 2022). The shortage of water, sanitation, non-collection of garbage has in the past resulted in outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and typhoid as some residents have resorted to digging shallow wells within their backyards as sources of water for household use. Living conditions have become unhealthy for many, especially those who live in the city's highly populated areas, due to free-flowing wastewater caused by blocked and ruptured sewer pipes, combined with the general water deficit. (Wikipedia, 2022).

The city's population is served by 4 major hospitals, 41 clinics and over 100 private medical facilities. (Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe, 2022). The city independently runs 12 polyclinics which offer primary care services, family health services and maternity care, 2 hospitals as well as several satellite clinics. The city provides home based nursing services and monthly scheduled outreach services to geographically inaccessible parts of the metropolitan area. (City of Harare, 2019). Despite the Zimbabwe government policy that councils should not charge health user fees, the city charges and uses user fees at local level to enhance the health system (City of Harare, 2020). This has, however, led users, especially pregnant women, bypassing local clinics and self-referring to government specialist hospitals which charge less, with resultant overcrowding and poor service delivery at those facilities. As part of efforts to cater for the needs of the poor and reduce maternal and child mortality, the city in 2014 introduced a demand-side voucher program to target the bottom 40 percent households in Mbare and Hopely wards, for access to maternal and child health services. Selected beneficiaries (pregnant women) are exempted from paying clinic user fees, and the expense is borne by the Results-Based Financing program.

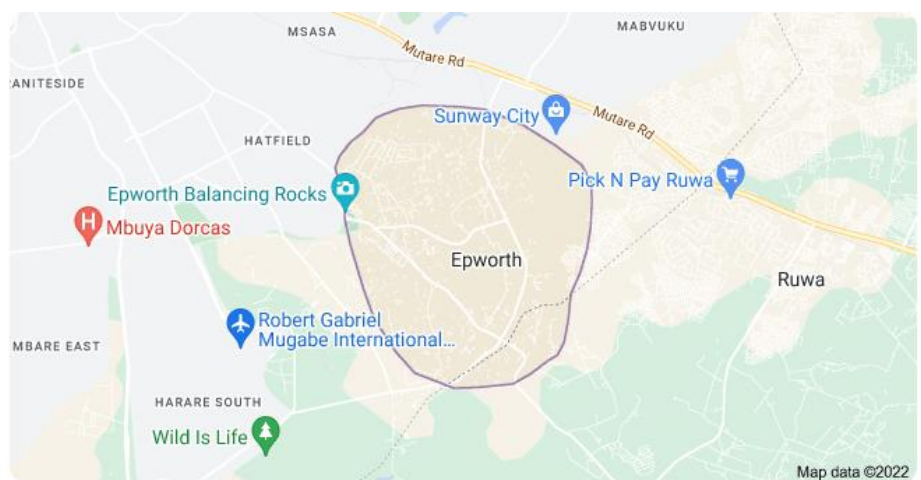
### 3. Case study 1: Enhancing sustainable access to clean water and gender-sensitive sanitation in Epworth

**Summary** The Civic Forum on Human Development in partnership with UN-Habitat, Santinton Contractors and community based organizations working in Epworth worked with residents to introduce inexpensive water supply and sanitation methods and enhanced local structures for sustainability, applying innovations and technologies that are gender sensitive and responsive to the limited availability of water for sanitation use in Epworth, a mixed urban settlement. The easy-flush technology provided CFHD with a strategic opportunity to strengthen community based assessment and planning, awareness creation activities by the local authority and gathering of evidence on water quality, to empower low income communities with innovations, and enable self-determined demand driven sustainable local development in Epworth.

#### 3.1 Context:

##### Location, population and socio-economic features

This initiative was implemented in Epworth, a peri-urban district which is located about twelve kilometres from the [Harare](#) city centre. It is a high-density [dormitory town](#) administered by the Epworth Local Board that was established in 1986 and is independent from the Harare city council administration. Epworth has a large population which according to the



2012 national census stands at 161 840 (81 046 females and 80 794) and is the fourth largest settlement in the country after Harare, Bulawayo and Chitungwiza Municipalities (Zimstat, 2012).

The settlement was established in the late 1890s through the Methodist Church led by John White. The Church acquired three farms in the area namely Epworth, Glenwood and Adelaide. Throughout the colonial years the settlement grew as a Church Mission consisting of two main villages, that is, Chiremba (Muguta and Makomo) and Chizungu (Chinamano and Zinyengere). However, the late 1970s saw a surge in the population as people fled the liberation war which had heightened in the countryside. A large influx of people occurred during the late 1970s and early 1980s with the population rising to 20,000 in 1980 and 35,000 in 1987. Again, in the early 90s, more people entered the cities in search of economic opportunities and Epworth with its informal set-up provided an easy destination for the new arrivals. Faced with this unprecedented growth, the Church donated part of Epworth Mission land to government for the subsequent establishment of a local government structure. In 1986, this led to the creation of Epworth Local Board whose main task was to administer and regulate the growth of the settlement. The inception of the Local Board therefore saw the unveiling of regularization and formalisation of initiatives. Other initiatives included the establishment of extensions to decongest overcrowded areas. Meanwhile, the formalisation process also resulted in Epworth becoming more attractive to settle in and resulting in a continued influx of more people. The net effect was the emergence of even more informal settlements as people occupied the remaining open spaces. These uncontrolled developments resulted in areas that are now popularly known as 'Ma-Gada' which translate to "self-settlement". It is against this background that the situation in Epworth progressively changed to where 70% of its 30 000 families are staying in informal settlements with the remainder (30%) in formal areas ([Wikipedia](#), 2021).

### **Motivations and assets for the initiative**

Epworth being a peri-urban area and mostly informal settlement, has poor water and sanitation infrastructure due to a number of factors such as lack of resources to provide services and the harsh economic situation that the country has experienced over the past decades. Crime has also been on the increase in the overcrowded suburb (Wikipedia, 2021). The Epworth Local Board has been struggling to respond to the prevailing challenges through the provision of equitable and quality services in the area as mandated by the Urban Councils Act Ch 29:13. Some of the services that the local authority has been struggling to provide include refuse collection, provision of safe drinking water, sanitation, health services and other social services.

The area has a high water table and a large part of the district is not fully connected to the local sewerage system. Only 8% of the residents are connected to a water borne sewer system, 42% use ventilation improved pit (VIP) latrines, 48% use ordinary pit latrines, and 2% have no latrines at all. About 65% of the residents use water from shallow wells (Chisungo, 2018). The combination of a high water table and wide use of pit latrines has resulted in groundwater pollution, posing serious health risks to residents. The use of contaminated ground water sources in the area has in the past resulted in cholera outbreaks. In 2009 and 2015, a total of 2,500 cholera cases and 67 deaths were reported in Zimbabwe including in Epworth (Relief web, 2021). To prevent further outbreaks and curtail the spread of diseases in general, there is an urgent need for increased and sustained access to clean water and sanitation services in the area as well as establish water systems for public places such as health institutions, markets and schools.

The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) has been working in Epworth since 2005 implementing initiatives on housing; Community Based Planning; Water, Hygienic and Sanitation (WASH) and Gender and Women Empowerment. The CFHD is a network based organization formed in 1995 with the core mandate to foster positive communication, dialogue and consensus building in relation to service delivery. Over the past decade the Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) has been working and building the capacities of low income communities in urban, peri-urban areas and rural areas of Zimbabwe. The CFHD views low income communities as effective change agents in improving access to affordable services and local economic growth in a context of poverty, unemployment, marginalization of communities, increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and in formalization. CFHD's participatory approaches have been strengthened over the years through the implementation of grassroots-centred programmes that have been supported by various development agencies. The programmes focused on WASH, social enterprise development, local economic development, renewable energy and inclusive service delivery for local economic growth. Residents from Epworth who participated in learning platforms conducted by the CFHD highlighted that they were making concerted efforts to engage and work with the local authorities in order to identify amicable solutions to some of the challenges in WASH to no avail.

### **3.2 The aims of / areas of change in the initiative**

The CFHD in partnership with UN-Habitat, Santinton Contractors and community based organizations working in Epworth introduced inexpensive WASH methods and enhanced local WASH structures for sustainability. Realizing the challenges of water in Epworth, a two litre flush system was introduced to replace the Blair Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine (BVIP). The technology was introduced to the community of Epworth after a series of learning platforms conducted by the CFHD where the communities expressed the need for WASH innovations and technologies that are gender sensitive and responsive to the limited availability of water for sanitation use in Epworth.

The flush system was initially introduced as a pilot program to demonstrate in practice how the technology functions in peri-urban set-ups with limited availability of water. This was done to build confidence in the use of the technology and encourage its wider uptake in the community in a more sustained manner. The pilot phase benefited 30 vulnerable households initially but is now in large demand and many households are making their own arrangements with the private company, Santinton Constructors, for installation of this new system in their homes. Given the

lessons learnt and the impact this initiative has made, there is a strong case for it to be replicated in other wards in Epworth and in other informal settlements in Zimbabwe. The easy-flush technology provided CFHD with a strategic opportunity to strengthen community based assessment and planning, awareness creation activities by the local authority and gathering of evidence, such as on water quality, to empower low income communities with WASH innovations, and enable self-determined demand driven sustainable local development in Epworth.

### **3.3 The design of the work**

The CFHD, together with United Nations Habitat, Epworth Local Board, CBOs and the community designed and implemented the WASH initiative on Enhancing Sustainable Access to Safe Clean Water and Gender Sensitive Sanitation Services in Epworth.

#### **Strengthening community based planning**

The introduction of the technology was informed by an assessment that involved the participation of the local community, described further in the section on implementation. The findings from the rapid assessments revealed that Epworth had no useable/ habitable latrines and this was posing a health hazard. The assessment also established that only approximately 40% of local members of the community were applying any form of water purification/treatment before use. The findings from the assessment were used in designing of the initiative particularly on the need for the active participation and involvement of local communities' water testing, water purification and sanitation innovation.

#### **Demonstrating and catalysing uptake of a health promoting technologies**

The main innovation of the initiative was supporting the rehabilitation of 30 pit latrines through the installation of Easy -flush toilet flushing systems which use only 2 litres of water for flushing as compared to 9 litres used by conventional flushing systems. The Easy -flush toilet can easily be adapted for use in all areas ranging from rural to urban, informal settlements, schools, including areas with good water supply as well as areas with limited or restricted water supply. The unit can either be used as a pour flush application or as a conventional cistern flush unit using only 2 litres of potable or grey water to flush. This reduced water usage allows for the Easy - flush to be used with a "leach pit" in areas without onsite infrastructure, eliminating strain on the municipal treatment plants (described further in *Section 3*). The design of the toilet seat is also suited for children as there is a child seat on the pedestal.

#### **Strengthening community based management and sustaining uptake**

The initiative also took account of the need to improve the functionality and reliability of water points through capacity building of "pump minders" that are now capable of maintaining existing and new water points in good working order (described further in *Section 3*). Activities to create awareness on hygienic practices were conducted during the implementation of the initiative the Epworth Local Board, community based organizations (CBOs), water committees and health and hygienic educators (PHHEs). The water committee and PHHE are a community group responsible for the management of the water and sanitation facilities mainly comprises of the residents benefiting from the WASH facilities. The targeted beneficiaries of the technology and their respective community based organisations also participated in monitoring and reflection meetings were conducted with the targeted communities using a jointly agreed monitoring framework.





Edwin from Santinton Contractors making a presentation on how the easy-flush system operates

### **3.4 The implementation of the work/initiative**

The initiative's main components as described above included a community based assessment, discussion of the technology and selection of households for the pilot. The introduction of the technology, the training of community pump minders, representatives of CBOs and of the Epworth Local Board within the context of the initiative in community based water and sanitation management. The Ministry of health was involved in the initiative and its role was on the deployment of EHT to support the processes of the initiatives including WASH awareness. Epworth Local Board is a third tier of Government, and has been involved at all levels of the initiative implementation.

Actions and resources that were used in the implementation of the intervention included: needs assessments, procurement of the components of the easy-flush technology, water testing, provision of aqua tablets and community capacity building workshops. The cost for the initiative was funded by UN-Habitat which covered the following components: procurement of the easy - flush technology which costed \$500 per unit, water testing of 20 water points which costed \$3000, procurement of water purification tablets which costed \$500 and as well as capacity building workshops and awareness raising workshops which had a budget of \$5000. The piloted household's contribution during the pilot phase was the provision of support labour particularly in the digging of trenches for the septic tank.

#### **The community assessment (and water quality assessment)**

The rapid assessment was conducted by a consultant who was engaged by the CFHD, who conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with representatives from each of the targeted 3 wards. Each of the FDGs had the participation of 10 members of the community (4 females and 6 males). Participants were chosen to ensure households headed by a child, female, or person with a disability were represented. The consultant also conducted 3 key informant interviews with CBO representatives working in WASH and Community Health Workers (CHWs).



Administering a WASH household socio-economic assessment, Epworth

### **Design and selection of households**

The successfully improved functionality and reliability of water points through capacity building of pump minders that are now capable of maintaining existing and new water points in the targeted 3 wards has brought joy to the 30 households supported by the project. Members of the community were trained as pump minders in partnership with Santinton Contractors, an innovative local private company that promotes appropriate sanitation options for poor low income earners. Pump minders are community members who are responsible for ensuring proper usage, management and maintenance of community WASH facilities and to support healthy living in the communities. The households that benefited from the initiative were selected through a participatory process that was biased towards the selection of low income households, women headed households, child-headed households and households hosting people with disabilities. The ward development committee (WADCO) was tasked to collectively identify households that best met the set criteria. Even though the process was marred with debates and strong argument the ward leadership was able to unanimously agree on the targeted households.



From left leach pit hole before and after the insertion of blocks, CFHD, 2022

### **Water testing and purification**

The initiative also promoted water quality testing at water points in collaboration with private local companies such as Aglabs and Chematron. The need to engage the private local companies was informed by the results from the rapid assessments which revealed that the local community was engaging in unhygienic practices and pointed to the need of having their water tested. The findings from the rapid assessments and water testing were shared with the respective households, Epworth Local Board, Community Health Workers and representatives from the Ministry of Health and Child Care ( MOHCC). The private companies were engaged to come up with possible solutions that are responsive to the problems and challenges on the ground for low income earners. The process facilitated learning and reflection platforms with the targeted communities that involved the development of appropriate, reliable and cost effective water testing and treatment options for people living in informal settlements such as Epworth. Water purification tablets were procured and distributed to the local communities by the project. The aqua tablets were procured following the recommendations of the water quality specialist who analyzed the test results of 30 water sources.

The results from the 30 water points revealed that all the water points yielded water that is unsafe for human consumption and the water quality parameters measured were below the standards recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The parameters measured were PH, total alkalinity, total hardness, colour, turbidity, iron, manganese, nitrate, fluoride, suspended solids, total bacteria count, coliform bacteria and ecoli bacteria. The findings from the rapid assessments and water testing were shared with the respective households, Epworth Local Board, Community Health Workers and representatives from the MOHCC (CFHD, 2019).

### **The training of community pump minders and community awareness outreach**

The Pump minders were selected from amongst the local youth by the community, and are responsible for maintaining the established easy -flush toilet flushing systems and in the installing of the technology to interested households. Capacity building of the pump minders was done in partnership with Santinton Contractors, an innovative private company that promotes appropriate sanitation options for poor people. As noted earlier, activities to create awareness on hygienic practices were conducted during the implementation of the initiative the Epworth Local Board, community based organizations (CBOs), water committees and health and hygienic educators (PHHEs). The initiative had the full support and backing of the Epworth Local Board which also participated in outreach activities to create awareness on hygienic practices during the implementation of the initiative together with Community Based Organizations (CBOs), water committees and health and hygienic educators (PHHEs). The initiative has generated huge demand from non-participating households which would require a much bigger intervention in terms of initiative size and outreach to satisfy households in the district.



Training pump minders in business management and value chain development, CFHD, 2022

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and reflection meetings were conducted with representatives from the ELB, local CBOs, community health care workers and targeted communities using a jointly agreed monitoring framework which involved the following i) joint monitoring field visits; ii) reflection and review meetings iii) observations and iii) external visits by community health workers. The intention of the monitoring and evaluation meetings was to reflect on what was working and not working, making appropriate adjustments to the initiative and for encouraging wider-uptake of the innovation across Epworth. Ongoing household and community assessments have shown that most of the non-participating households have started building up resources to establish their own flush BVIP systems, and also in the hope of being supported by the initiative.

## Efforts towards wider spread and uptake of the innovation

The knowledge and information about the initiative was spread by a wide range of local actors who comprised of councillors, community leaders, representatives from CBOs, local NGOs and MOHCC. This provided an opportunity for the initiative to train local community facilitators on business skills and the need to form Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) groups to raise money for community based sanitation improvement. This presents a great opportunity for massive scaling up of the initiative to address the huge water and sanitation gap in Epworth and to influence government towards funding of improved BVIP latrines. Even though there has been interest in the innovation by other NGOs, the initiative is yet to receive further financial and technical support.



Women involved in the construction of the BVIP toilets, CFHD, 2022

## 3.5 The outputs and outcomes

### Outputs of the Initiative

The initiative resulted in the attainment of the following outputs

- Increased collaboration and engagement by all the relevant actors and institutions that are involved in WASH programming in the Epworth district. A total of 5 local stakeholders (representing Women, Youths, Retailing business operators, Small to medium enterprises (SMEs), elderly and the disabled) and 6 Community Based Organizations (Combined Epworth Residents Trust (CERET), Shanduko Yeupenyu Child Care Trust, Epworth Business Association, Epworth Women Empowerment, Mukando Wamadzimai and Simukaufambe

- A total of 30 households had their pit latrines rehabilitated and installed with the easy-flushing system.
- A total of 30 builders (15 males and 15 females) were trained in the construction and installing of the easy-flush toilet system. The builders will support the maintenance and repairs of the easy-flush system beyond the lifespan of the project.
- A total of 10 key stakeholders within the Epworth district comprising of representatives from the Epworth Local Board (ELB), water committees, community health workers, local business operators, and representatives from the informal sector received knowledge on the principles of Community Based Water and Sanitation Management.

### **Key outcomes**

The key achievements from the initiative can be assessed in terms of the 3 aims of the initiative of i) introduction of a health promoting technology with health outcomes; ii) testing and creating confidence for wider and more sustained and demand driven uptake of the technology and iii) Supporting and strengthening community based planning with the following outcomes:

#### ***Introduction of a health promoting technology with health outcomes***

- Successful enhancement of the capacities and skills of a total of 5 local stakeholders (representing Women, Youths, Retailing business operators, Small to medium enterprises (SMEs), elderly and the disabled) in the management of water and sanitation services.
- Six (6) Community Based Organizations, namely Combined Epworth Residents Trust (CERET), Shanduko Yeupenyu Child Care Trust, Epworth Business Association, Epworth Women Empowerment, Mukando Wamadzimai and Simukaufambe also had their skills and practices in the management of water and sanitation services enhanced.
- The initiative successfully conducted outreach activities to create awareness on good hygienic practices during its implementation. The outreach was carried out by the Epworth Local Board, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), water committees and health and hygienic educators (PHHEs).

#### ***Testing and creating confidence for wider and more sustained and demand driven uptake of the technology***

- Promotion of water quality testing of existing water points in collaboration with private companies such as Aglabs and Chematron that are involved in the development of appropriate, reliable and cost effective water testing and treatment options for people living in informal settlements such as Epworth.
- Supported the rehabilitation of 30 pit latrines through the installation of easy-flushing systems. A total of 30 households benefited from the initiative.

#### ***Supporting and strengthening community based planning***

- Improved community ownership of water and sanitation interventions in the targeted 3 wards of Epworth. This was through the involvement of the local community in the design, implementation and monitoring of the implementation of initiative.
- Improved coordination by all the key stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of water and sanitation initiatives. This was through how the project challenged the communities to play an active role in the implementation of the initiative.
- The pilot initiative has generated a huge demand in the district. Households are now making arrangements with Santinton Company in groups to access the Eaziflash technology. According to the feedback from the project beneficiaries, the initiative though small in terms of budget size which was only \$40 000, was able to make a huge impact on the informal settlements of Epworth and offers lessons, such as the easy flush technology, that can be replicated in other informal settlements. Capacity building and trainings in WASH have changed people's attitude towards water quality testing and hygiene.

**Some areas of intended change didn't happen.** The initiative only targeted three of the seven wards in Epworth and failed to respond to the overwhelming demand for the technology from the whole community of Epworth District. Funding was a huge challenge to address the high demand generated by the project.

### **3.6 Enablers, barriers and learning from the initiative**

#### **Key enablers were**

- Use of local community-based targeting approach (CBTA) in identifying the beneficiaries proved to be a reliable way to identify and reach vulnerable households, with the full involvement and ownership of communities.
- Working with the community leaders such as the councilors in mobilisation for the community involvement in the initiative.
- Working with Community based organisations in ensuring sustainability of the action.
- Capacity building and training of the community on WASH which has resulted in a change in people's attitude towards water quality testing and good hygiene practices.
- Demonstrated effectiveness of the intervention enabled/ facilitated wide uptake.
- Central Government and Epworth Local Board support and participation in the project provided a boost for the initiative, resulting in WASH policy change. (Civic Forum on Human Development, 2019).

#### **Key barriers were**

- Project authorization requirements by authorities at the provincial and district level which delayed the implementation of the project.
- Lack of adequate resources against overwhelming demand for the technology.
- Private initiative requiring funding by the community itself or by institutional funders such as the Government, municipality, donors etc.

#### **Learning from the Initiative**

The project has generated huge demand from non-participating households which would require a much bigger intervention in terms of size and reach to satisfy demand. The initiative though small in terms of budget size, although small in size is capable, with enough funding, to have a huge impact not only in Epworth but in other informal settlements around Harare which can replicate the lessons learnt and use the easy flush technology. The flush system introduced as a pilot benefited 30 and because of its appropriateness, caught the interest of other households in the area, resulting in over 100 households expressing interest to have it installed within their households.

Capacity building and trainings in WASH have changed people's attitude towards water testing and hygiene. The initiative introduced inexpensive WASH methods and enhanced local WASH innovation that are sustainable given the poverty, water and sanitation challenges in the area.

It was learnt that community driven initiatives have the potential of building harmony and good relationships between the residents and service providers such as the ELB. Capacitating of local youths as pump minders was identified as key in ensuring skill transfers to the local residents and imparting new knowledge which is also key in building sustainability of the initiative.

Based on the lessons learnt and the impact the initiative has made, there is a strong case for it to be replicated in other wards in Epworth as well as other informal settlements in Zimbabwe.

## 4. Case study 2: Urban Agriculture in Hatfield and the Cheziya North Farmers Association.

**Summary:** The case study covers the urban agriculture activities in Hatcliffe extension which the communities engaged in to improve their own livelihoods through self-organisation and unity. The case study further explores how the community united and worked towards achieving their goals

### 4.1. Context

Hatcliffe is a peri-urban settlement that was established in the late 1980s. It is located 21km north of Harare city center and is divided into four administrative sections. In the early 1990s, Hatcliffe Extension was established as a holding camp. It is a settlement that was formed when people were moved into the area from Porta Farm and other squatter areas in Harare. Several cooperatives came in and subdivided the area, allocating stands to the residents. Most of the residents lived in plastic shacks donated by the Roman Catholic Church while others built their own homes. The building processes were not well planned as it was an informal settlement.

Hatcliffe is a heterogeneous high-density suburb which was developed in two phases, Old Hatcliffe was established in 1920 and the new side known as Hatcliffe extension was established in 1999. Hatcliffe extension was initially established as a temporary settlement for families who moved from Churu farm in 1993. "Operation Murambatsvina" of 2005 also contributed to a large influx of people with some of the people living in shacks and wooden cabins. Some of the families were informally settled, in unsuitable areas such as wetland. Residential properties in Hatcliffe are at various stages of development with the vast portion of houses in the suburb still under construction. According to the "Zimbabwe Red Cross Society's 2013 Vulnerability Capacity Assessment shows that Hatcliffe has 11 658 households and a population exceeding 45 000 people".

According to the Harare Metropolitan Police Offences Code List, urban agriculture in Harare is defined as the production of crops and/or livestock within the administrative boundaries of the city. The World Climate Data Maps shows that Harare has favourable conditions for urban food production that includes a relatively wet climate and large open spaces within the city boundaries. Urban agriculture can be classified into the following three categories based on its location; these are, peri-urban agriculture, on-plot agriculture and off-plot agriculture (Mbiba, 1998b).

- **Peri-urban agriculture:** this category is the production of crops and livestock in areas outside the city boundary. Because of the availability of land and existing rural agricultural support networks, this sector offers immediate and viable options for enhanced food production, resulting in urban household food security.
- **On-plot agriculture:** this farming is practiced on plots/land around houses, such as backyard gardening. It mainly involves crop production and maize is the main crop produced during the wet season, while vegetables are produced throughout the year. Women and children provide the bulk of the labour for on-plot agriculture. Health laws prohibiting livestock rearing are largely successful, and so this practice is rare. At most, a negligible 1% of households keep small livestock, such as poultry in the city, (Mbiba, 1995). During dry spells, tap water or water from shallow wells is used to irrigate crops. In low-density areas, borehole water is also used for agricultural purposes. Water use has not been quantified in the city, and there is no meaningful data regarding quantities of manure, fertiliser and other inputs used. Poor households, tenants and recent rural-urban migrants hardly have access to on-plot land due to limited space and lack of adequate water.
- **Off-plot agriculture:** this is conducted in public open spaces, utility service areas and agricultural allotments. Most reports regarding off-plot production, however, are about agriculture taking place in public open spaces, where production is largely "uncontrolled", "illegal" or heavily "contested". The production is mainly for home consumption, although a slightly higher percentage is marketed as compared to on-plot production. The poor and

vulnerable groups, who could participate in this sector, are progressively pushed out by higher-income households, (Chitekwe-Biti, 2009).



Harvesting beetroots from a backyard garden, Xinhua/Tafara Mugwara, 2022

As in the case of on-plot production, women and children provide the bulk of the labour. With rapid urban development over the past few years, large agricultural allotments within the city boundary have almost disappeared and no new land has been added to formal agricultural allotments since 1980, (Mbiba, 1998). Observations show that communities in Hatcliffe Suburb are mainly practising off-plot agriculture for own consumption and any excess product is sold.

In May 2005, the Government of Zimbabwe launched a month long clean-up campaign termed “Operation Murambatsvina”, translated as Operation Drive out the filth. The Operation was justified as a program to enforce City bylaws and halt allegedly illegal activities and realize high standards of cleanliness and well - being in major cities and towns throughout Zimbabwe. According to Taibajuka (2005), the settlement has been relatively unstable since its re-establishment in 2002. The clean-up campaign was carried out from the 19th of May to the 12th of June 2005 throughout the major cities and towns of Zimbabwe, Taibajuka (2005). This impacted the poor such as lodgers using backyard structures in established suburbs. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were rendered homeless, without access to food, water and sanitation, or health care, (Amnesty international, 2006). Education for thousands of school age children was disrupted. The affected communities who had also been utilizing the surrounding open spaces for urban agriculture and other economic activities to eke out a living also lost their sources of food and livelihood. Many were left exposed to the weather elements during the coldest time of the year, exposing them to disease.

The work in this case study was carried out as a co-operation between three organisations and the residents of Hatcliffe



- The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) has worked with the Hatcliffe community for the past 10 years in various activities. CFHD worked with Hatcliffe community with the funding of International Organisation on Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Homeless People Federation (ZHPF) under the project titled “Scaling up Coordinated Protection, Promotion and Enforcement of Human Rights for Citizens and other Vulnerable groups including Internally Displaced Persons in Zimbabwe”.
- International Organisation on Migration (IOM) is part of the United Nations System as the leading inter-governmental organization promoting since 1951 humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, with 174 member states and a presence in over 100 countries. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people. IOM Zimbabwe started operations in 1985.
- Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation is a community-based organization consisting of a network of housing savings schemes found in low-income communities that collectively save for housing and other poverty-related challenges. The Federation was founded in 1997 with the initial grassroots housing savings schemes being established in the then two holding camps of Hatcliffe Extension and Dzivarasekwa Extension. The Federation exists in 59 local authorities countrywide with over 300 housing savings schemes (Dialogue on Shelter, 2022). Housing savings schemes as the smallest unit of organization for the Federation provide the platforms for rallying the community together around common challenges and defining sustainable solutions. It is also within these schemes where the various rituals that characterize and strengthen the Federation process are originate and cascade to other levels.

The collaboration was designed to enhance the capacities of the citizens in Hatcliffe to identify their needs and challenges and to drive their own way of development. Through engagements with the Hatcliffe community, CFHD has managed to monitor and document initiatives that were being generated in the community such as the establishment of water piped schemes, electrification of households and farming activities.

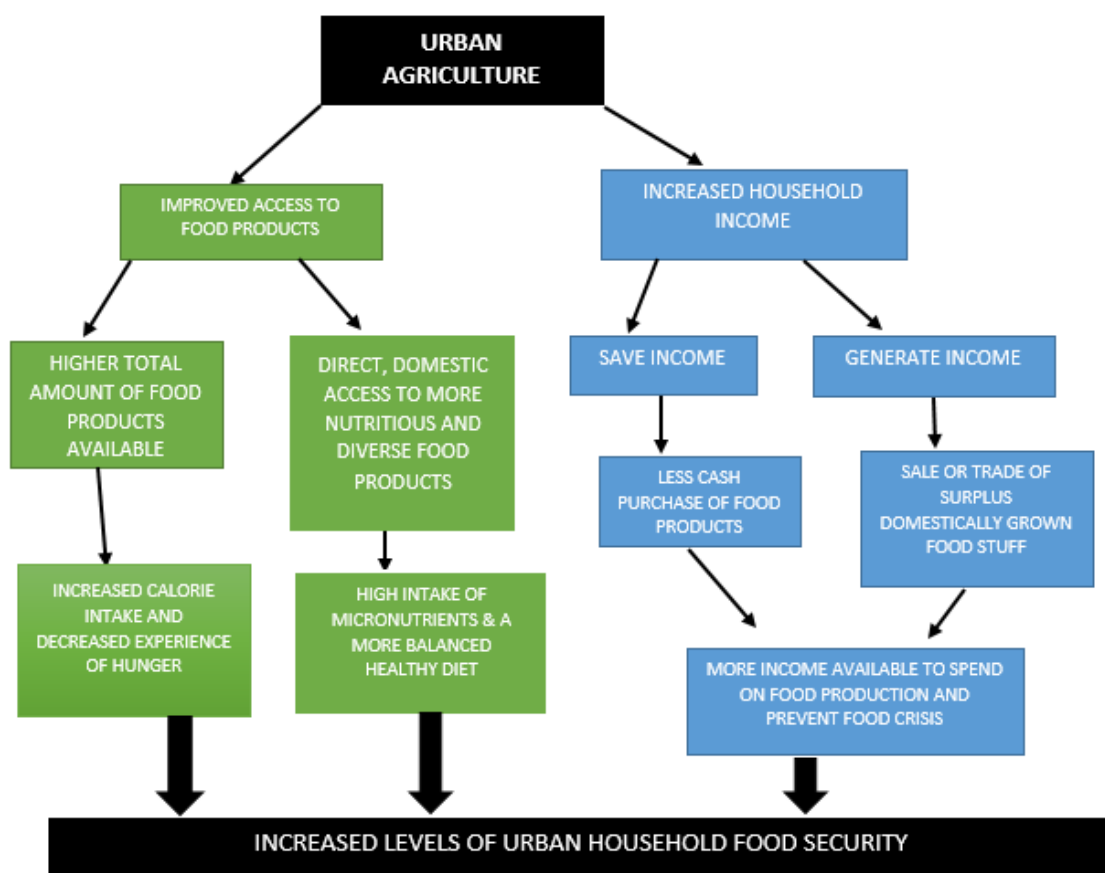
## 4.2 The aims and design of the work

The Goal of the initiative was to promote food sustenance for low income earners in Hatcliffe. The aim is to collaboratively work as a team in off-plot urban agriculture through acquisition of land and extension services.

Most urban farmers point out the importance of urban agriculture in meeting household food requirements, income generation and increased savings derived from consumption of self-produced food. It is estimated that over 60% of households in Hatcliffe rely on urban agriculture for their maize meal needs while the remaining 40% purchase maize from those that are actively involved in the practice (Mushora, 2003). In a way, the urban agriculture initiative being practiced in Hatcliffe also aims to promote community social cohesion, stability and food security. Residents in Hatcliffe are mainly low income earners and are at risk of food insecurity if there are no other means of securing food are made. The urban agriculture theory supports the notion that it there is improved access to food products if communities engage in urban agriculture subsequently resulting in increased household income due to savings and sale of surplus food products as shown in *Figure 1*.

The beneficiaries of the urban agriculture initiative are residents of Hatcliffe Suburb that were mainly affected by the 2005 *Operation Murambatsvina* exercise described earlier. The families did not have food and any source of income following the exercise, and most households were relying on food handouts from the social welfare department of the Ministry Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. which were grossly inadequate. As a result, most of them resorted to illegally allocating themselves pieces of land for growing rain-fed crops at a nearby *Mariyawanda Farm*.

Figure 1: Two key pathways for urban agriculture and food security



Source: Stewart et al., 2013

### 4.3 The implementation of the initiative

According to the residents, the agricultural activities in Hatcliffe started in 2002, three years before they were evicted. The citizens were later removed from the area when the area was allocated to national priorities that is the Zimbabwe Open University, a clinic and Zimbabwe Defence Forces Activities. Another open space was identified. The open space was becoming a hot spot for crimes such as theft, and the community identified the land to be suitable for off-plot agriculture because it was lying idle with uncut grass and shrubs. The open space will connect Hatcliffe Extension residents to the nearby suburbs for work such as *Borrowdale*, *Pomona* and *Vainona*. Initially other households were not willing to take up the land for agriculture. Over 1935 households benefited initially but the number continued to grow yearly as more people joined after the realization that the agricultural activities were benefitting the households in agriculture. The activities were organised by the *Cheziya North Farmers Association* committee which was put in place by the members of the association. The committee was made up of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and additional committee members.

At the beginning of the initiative, members started off with plots measuring 100 square metres. However, due to increase in the demand for the land, the spaces were later reduced to 80m by 50m and this was further reduced to 50m by 30m. The organizing committee was responsible for the allocation of the land portions. The allocations were made in consultation with local leaders that included the councilors, church leaders and the general community members. The allocations were made in response to the challenges that were being faced by the communities to curb crimes that were increasing in the community. However the allocations were deemed as illegal as the urban agriculture activities were trespassing on the land.



Maize being harvested at the plots in Hatcliffe, CFHD, 2022

The practice of off-plot agriculture remained a threat to many interested parties that included the members of the community who were not part of the organizing team at the start of the initiative. The interested parties included politicians, the Harare City Council and the Institute of Engineering. This was due to the fact that the land in question was a contested territory. The issue was also brought to the courts and it was not clear on what the verdict was and the residents continued with the farming practices. According to the residents, the court did not make a verdict on the matter, because of the involvement of high profile politicizations till this day.

The communities organized themselves to engage the Institute of Engineering in 2008 so that they could utilize the open space to grow crops for household food consumption. An arrangement was also reached in principle with political parties who supported the initiative as a way to compensate the residents who had been negatively affected by the government's hostile evictions under the *Murambatsvina operation*. However, no formal lease documentation was amongst the involved parties that included the *Cheziya North Farmers Association* and the Ministry of Agriculture Institute of Engineering in Hatcliffe.

From the beginning of the initiative, there was a lot of confrontation but at times, open dialogue between the parties involved and this has continued up to now. It was confrontation in the sense that the communities organized themselves and formed a group called *Cheziya Farmers Association*, which encouraged the citizens to move onto land without permission from the local authorities. The *Cheziya Farmers Association* was formed in 2013, with a committee of seven members which include two female committee members. The Committee is made up of representatives from various social groups in the community. As a result, association members occupied the open space before they engaged the then Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, through its authorities at the Institute of Engineering in Hatcliffe, resulting in conflict. The group also sought some political influence so that they would be supported underpinning the call to unemployment and poverty. There has been no resolution and the members of the *Cheziya North Farmers Association* are currently facing the challenges of some of the portion being taken for land development for new low density suburbs.

#### 4.4 Outcomes from the initiative

Over 1935 households benefited from the farming initiative before the other part of the land was taken over by land developers, leaving 935 households active on the ground implementing the farming initiative. The families that participated in the initiative have been able to provide for their families through production of food crops. The families have been able to sell excess to get extra income. The families have been able to be food secure, thus minimizing dependency on the already burdened government for food handouts. The strong will of the community in agriculture has further cascaded to other local initiatives where communities contribute funds for different projects. Another group associated with *Cheziya North Farmers Association* from Hatcliffe extension managed to organise two major projects to improve their livelihoods. The groups have been able to fund using own finances installation of solar powered boreholes and connection of electricity to households in the suburb. The community has been able to establish a solar piped water scheme which is benefitting 26 families by providing piped water for household use. The piped water scheme/initiative is ongoing and is expected to benefit more households in the future. The community has also organised itself to electrify their homes. The households have established a fund whereby households pay money towards electrification of their homes and to date, 100 households have been electrified.

#### 4.5 Enablers, barriers and learning from the initiative

**The enablers** for this initiative include but are not limited to: Unity of the community members towards the need for survival through self – help, made it possible. The initiative promoted social community cohesion and solidarity as the community members came together for a common purpose. The political support of the initiative also enabled the implementation of the activities as the members of the farmers' association continued with that activities without disturbances. The political leaders endorsed the activities as a solution to the poor in Hatcliffe extension to have some land for growing their own food. The farmers have also been receiving technical support from the Institute of Engineering staff for free, since the start of the project, resulting in increased yields. The formation of the *Cheziya North Farmers Association* was a big building block towards the success of the initiative, as the seven member committee provided leadership, guidance and courage to members to continue with their work on the ground, despite legal litigation in the courts.

**Various challenges** were faced by the community in implementing a livelihood project on a contested piece of land, and without appropriate legal title as demanded by the laws of the country. The expansion of residential housing development has displaced over 1000 original members of the group from farming activities as their plots have been taken over by land developers. According to the community members, a farmers meeting was convened and a resolution was made on the need to reduce the size of the plots to accommodate the effected members of the Association. On the other hand, more land was identified on the neighbouring farm, and some of the affected members have been allocated land under the leadership of *Cheziya North Farmers Association*. This is an ongoing initiative as it needs careful handling to avoid commotion, according to the Association chairperson. Lack of security of tenure is a big threat to the Hatcliffe urban agriculture initiative. Theft of farm produce is also a big challenge that has resulted in the farmers employing security personal for three months every year to protect their fields.

Due to the high cost of living that continues to be experienced by the generality of the Zimbabwean population, the group resorted to agriculture to increase their sources of income and promote food security at household level. The group's original aim to promote food production at household level was achieved. However, expansion and growth of the city is threatening the survival of many household in Hatcliffe, as the city expansion encroaches on the agricultural land. Furthermore, some of the land has been re-allocated to land developers for residential stands development and many plots have therefore been taken away from farmers. Similarly, many families are no longer able to carry out their agricultural activities in Hatcliffe as their self - allocated plots have been fenced-in and houses constructed.



Left: Maize harvested from the plots in Hatcliffe Right: Harvested maize being put out for drying in Hatcliffe, CFHD, 2022

This initiative is however ongoing. The initiative provided learning on how in a low income insecure setting such as Hatcliffe, communities being self-organized and able to work together are able to tow achieving agreed community priorities such as urban agriculture, provision of potable water and electricity and operating money saving schemes. It is through initiatives such as the urban agriculture by the Cheziya North Farmers Association that have shown that unity at local level can bring development and self-reliance.

## 5. Case study 3: Warren Park two, Harare, Herbal and Nutrition Garden

**Summary:** The focus of the case study is on the herbal and nutrition garden situated in Warren Park area of Harare. The garden is dedicated to providing fresh fruit, herbs, fish. From the onset of the initiative, it was envisaged that it would also become a centre for learning purposes by different groups, among them the elderly, youth, women and men, for the benefit of humanity.

### 5.1. Context

The Herbal and nutrition garden is located in Warren Park two suburb of Harare on a two-hectare piece of land allocated for the community initiative under a five year lease agreement by Harare City Council. Warren Park constituency covers areas such as Warren Park one, Warren Park D, Lincoln green, Ridgeview and belvedere Warren Park two is a densely populated suburb in southwest of Harare. Warren park two is a mixture of medium and low-density suburbs and used to be part of Kambuzuma constituency. The new constituency also received parts of Harare Central, according to the ZimStat Census Report of 2012. The total population of Warren Park constituency was 87 768 with 41 579 males and 46 192 females. Males constituted 48% and females 52% of the total population of the constituency. The constituency had a total of 21 569 households (2012 Census report). However, due to lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector, many people have found themselves in the informal sector to earn a living (Willemse, 2011).

The area has many open spaces being utilised by the residents for urban agriculture to improve household food security in the face of increased urban poverty. Residents in Warren Park two are highly poverty stricken as they face challenges such as high food prices, accommodation, user fees for water and electricity, and associated debt. The situation is compounded by high unemployment and low economic activity. Poverty is widespread in Warren Park urban and the area is fast becoming increasingly worse off. Indeed, the Poverty Assessment Survey Study (PASS) revealed that between 1995 and 2003 both general and food poverty in urban areas increased at a faster rate than in rural areas (GoZ, 2006). It is unfortunate that in most cases the residents do not seek permission from the local authority before utilization council land resulting in acrimony between the local authorities and the residents.

It can be argued that community gardens can mitigate some of the problems that plague urban areas such as urban poverty, malnutrition and unemployment. They can be a beneficial addition to many communities by increasing the availability of nutritious foods, strengthening community ties, reducing environmental hazards, reducing food miles and creating a more sustainable system (Toriro et al., 2005) On the other hand, community gardening offers a unique avenue to well-being through engagement in activities and responsibilities that encourage social cohesion, skills acquisition, and personal growth. The importance of well-being has been identified in occupational therapy and occupational science, but its conceptualization has been problematic (Mbiba, 1995).

Urban gardens have attracted considerable academic attention in recent years. Several studies have, in fact, emphasized their positive contribution in terms of social integration, community health, urban regeneration, and food security, and explored individual gardeners' motivations behind these practices. It can be argued that community gardens are one way that residents can mobilise themselves to beautify urban neighbourhoods, improve access to fresh produce, and engage youth and adults in productive activities that can generate income for them. Furthermore, community gardening initiatives can provide opportunities for constructive activities, contribute to community development, relationship building and interpersonal skill development, improve social networking, exploring cognitive and behavioral competence, and improved nutrition (Ndiripo, 1999). Purnomohadi (2000) noted that urban agriculture, including herbal and nutrition gardening, was being conducted for household food security, income generation,

employment, and to make use of readily available resources. It can be argued that urban agriculture requires a complete council permission as well as training and extension services. Urban agriculture involves crop and herbal planting on-plot or off-plot throughout the year, and there is no security of produce making it a very risky business for any one venture into (Conyers, 2002). Urban agriculture can contribute in increased access to affordable and nutritious food; local ecosystem, air quality and public health improvements; urban island effect reductions; healthy eating lifestyle awareness raising; and strengthened community ties and social cohesion (Veenhuizen, 2006).

## **5.2. The aims of the work**

The **overall objective** of the initiative was to promote sustainable environmental management system in Warren Park two area of Harare through the promotion and production of herbs, use of herbs, and educating the community on the benefits of herbs, fish farming and vegetable production for household consumption and to sale at commercial level. The action aimed at harnessing local resources, create local employment, and to promote vegetable and herbal production and uptake at a commercial level. The theory of change was that; the neighbouring communities and schools would benefit from the herbal and nutrition garden initiative which started as an initiative of two households. Additionally, the community would enjoy improved living standards and well-being through increased income from herbs and the availability of balanced and nutritious food. The initiative also aimed at creating community social cohesion.

## **5.3. Design of the work**

The idea of approaching the local authority emanated from the fact that the project leaders had managed to create a huge demand for hot Chili in the area. The two used to give it out for free chill at the local beer drinking places in Warren Park two. The hot chillies were produced by the project leader in his home garden, between 2005 – 2007. When the demand for chili was high in the area, they resorted to sourcing the chili from Indian run shops in the City center for resale in Warren Park two, before deciding to approach Harare City Council for land to grow their own chili. The two friends approached the local authority with their request for land to start a herbal and nutrition garden in 2007. The local authority responded positively and allocated land to the project managers on the wetlands in Warren Park two area of Harare, but without a lease agreement during the same year.

The initiative also had a component of vegetable production and fish farming, thus creating a good source of healthy food and income. The fingerlings for fish breeding were purchased from the National Parks department in Lake Chivero, to kick-start fish breeding on site. Three fish ponds were developed as a collective initiative.

## **5.4. The implementation of the initiative**

The initiative involved re – visioning from the individual perspective to a collective and shared understanding resulting in the formation of a Warren Park two Herbal and Nutrition Garden with over 30 households in 2009. The membership was open to all ages and membership was free. A management committee was put in place to facilitate the application for land from the local authority. The committee was comprised of 10 people which included the youth, elderly and female members. Initially, the project managers were working from the Herbal and Nutrition Garden site with the approval of Harare City Council, but with no formal agreement/ lease, making it difficult to receive funding from donors.

In response, the local authority allocated two hectares of land for the initiative on a five-year lease agreement, with a renewable option after every 60 months. The lease agreement, between the project leader and the local authority has to date been renewed for the third time since the start of the initiative. The initiative attracted donor funding resulting in the formation of a community herbal and nutrition garden group with well over 30 community members, which included 19 women and 11 men. It is generally held that women predominate in urban agriculture because they bear responsibility for household sustenance. They also tend to have lower educational levels than men and therefore have more difficulty finding formal employment (Hovorka, 2001). The involvement of men and women in urban farming can also depend on the

production system. For instance, the Warren Park two Herbal traditional garden is dominated by women and they also play an important role in marketing their produce.

During 2007, international funders supported different projects, with agents on the ground but also a political agenda. The Warren Park two Herbal and Nutrition Garden was approached by a funder. To get funding the community was urged to be a group of above twenty. The funding conditionalities forced the project managers to invite other community members to join them so they could qualify for funding and technical support. Over 30 households joined the Warren Park two Herbal and Garden initiative intending to learn herbal production skills so that they could earn a living from selling herbs. A committee was set by the project leader, although it was not that effective. The project had no timeframe period as it was an on-going thing and everyone benefited with knowledge, skills and some allowances which were given by the donors which were in the form of money or food. The project had no proper constitution as it was registered in the name of the project leader the member who started with the initiative. Meetings were only held when having workshops and were spearheaded by the donors. The group was registered through the city of Harare. The group comprised of youth, elderly, men and women, who were largely unemployed community members.

Having secured a lease agreement with the City of Harare, the initiative attracted donor funding, herbal seed and vegetable seeds and the big work started by clearing of the land. Each member was allocated a portion of land for a nutritional garden. Three fish ponds were developed and fingerlings were purchased from the National Parks in Lake Chivero. The group worked on the herbal and fish ponds projects collectively. The initiative had the potential to transform the lives of the founding members as well as those of the community had it been well planned, coordinated and implemented.

Each member of the group was allocated a portion of land for nutrition gardening. These members included men, women and youth. The herbal portion was a collective responsibility and each group member would contribute labour whenever the need arose. The same approach was applied to the three fish ponds.

The initiative attracted external support with donations of different varieties of herbs, vegetable seeds and fingerlings were purchased from the National Parks in Lake Chivero to facilitate fish breeding on site. Three fish ponds were developed and fish breeding commenced. The group members provided free labour in the development of the three fish ponds. The community herbal and nutrition group received training in 2007 on environmental management, herbal production and processing and marketing skills. The training was conducted by various funding partners including the local Roman Catholic Church and Africa University among others.

The initiative was donor-supported in the areas of capacity building in herbal production and processing, nutrition gardening and fish farming. Collaboration was initiated with institutions in USA, Germany, Sweden and Africa University with interest in herbs, and collaborators used to come from these countries and institutions to support the initiative. Local collaboration was also created with ten schools that benefited by receiving skills, free herbal seeds and the establishment of herbal gardens. The local community and people from other parts of Harare would purchase herbs for treating various health challenges such as Hypertension, diabetes mellitus, sexually transmitted infection (STI) and other ailments. These services are still been offered at the center. Unfortunately, many herbs as well as fish were looted during the COVID19 first lockdown as the communities, who were desperate for survival looted the project's produce. This is because the project area is poorly secured.

The garden flourished in 2009-2013 during the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe, as during that period community projects attracted huge funding. This however later dried up soon after the (GNU) ended in 2009 and the initiative depended more on local and household resources. This led to the disintegration of the original Warren Park two herbal nutrition community garden group in 2013. Lack of funds which saw the collapse of the project and debt due to payment of leases. Local resources and mutual agreement between the three



principals and the 30 plus elderly community members enabled them to use the land temporarily while these resource issues were resolved.

The leadership of Warren Park two herbal and nutrition initiative meanwhile connected with the local schools and managed to influence and facilitate the establishment of herbal and nutrition gardens in ten schools in Harare. Free herbal seeds were donated to ten schools by **Warren Park two Herbal and Nutrition Garden** to kick start the herbal garden initiative. Resources for travelling to various schools for the schools' herbal and nutrition gardens initiative were provided by funders such as Sida and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Europe Aid



Warren park Herbal garden sign, CFHD, 2022

The herbal garden targeted both the young and elderly to receive knowledge and skills on herbal production and use, now and in the future. "In other words, these projects thrive to establish an information and counselling centre on a broad scale," One of the founding members, indicated that

*"We are cognisant of the fact that the youths should be informed and taught the intricacies of herbs and herbal treatment. We feel it is our cultural duty and we also embrace the broader collective responsibility to bring these young people on board to our social and cultural setting. This is a legacy which we thrive to leave behind, to let pass from generation to generation."*

## 5.5. Outcomes

The Warren Park Two Herbal nutrient garden has grown to become an alternate for vegetable area and provides access to fresh produce at affordable prices. These projects show that community gardens are assets to their communities. Further as in other experiences, the community gardens are an effective tool able to aid in community building, to increase neighborhood interaction and cohesion, reduce crime, establish neighborhood pride, and enhance neighborhood beautification.

The initiative benefited the local schools, community and former members of the group as they acquired skills in herbal production and use. The current 30 plus elderly citizens working on the

site are also benefiting through nutrition gardening. The two founding members of the initiative are benefiting by selling herbs to the general public and getting an income.

Warren Park Two Herbal nutrition garden also trained ten schools which include Mbare, Warren park, Kambuzuma among others on traditional herbs used to manage high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, arthritis and STIs. The urban gardens thus brought health, social and economic benefits, and reconnected people with food practices.

## 5.6. Enablers, challenges and learning

### Enablers and challenges

Internal and external factors influenced the design and implementation of the initiative. Environmental factors that influence the extent of the initiative include terrain, climate, soil properties, and soil water. It is the combination of these four factors that allow specific crops to be grown in certain areas. Internal factors, such as attitudes, values and beliefs, also have an important impact.

A combination of factors contributed positively to the initial success of the initiative including ; availability of land and lease agreements, willing funding partners to support the initiative and residents' willingness to offer labour.



Part of the remaining Herbal plants, CFHD, 2022

The two founding members of the initiative are still active on the ground because of their passion, determination and vision. Furthermore, the initiative is providing herbs for the treatment of common health challenges in the community. Following the looting that occurred during the first COVID-19 lockdown, efforts are underway to rejuvenate the initiative.

**As challenges,** Warren Park two herbal and nutrition initiative is ongoing but under different circumstances, as the 2009 community group disintegrated soon after the donor funding dried up in 2013. The initiative is now being driven/ spearheaded by the two founding members of the initiative. The other reason that forced the 30 plus members of the group to withdraw and leave was the issue of making contributions for the payment of outstanding leasing fees for the land to Harare City Council. Over the years, collective accumulated a debt due to non-payment of fees to the city resulted in debt collection. A payment arrangement was however agreed upon between the local authority and the project originators thus preventing the cancelation of the lease agreement and allowing the project to carry on. The founder of the project has remained a

pillar of strength for the initiative. Thirty elderly community members have been invited to undertake nutrition gardening on an unused section of the leased land.

Given the foregoing, weak group cohesion and dependence on external funders are seen as negative contributors to sustainability of the initiative. This needs to be managed in future as it could take the communities back into poverty circles again, despite the prosperity opportunities that have been created. It calls for strong local institutions to drive local initiatives in a sustainable manner. If the element of strong local institutional development is not addressed, the future is not bright. Deliberate efforts should be made to empower local communities including unlocking their capabilities to drive their own development, based on cultural norms and values of the communities.



The community hall and cultural center under construction on site, CFHD, 2022

### **The learning from the initiative**

Households that practice urban agriculture including herbal and nutrition gardening are also more likely to have access to a wider variety of nutritious foods such as vegetables and animal products. Urban agriculture allows for the development of a variety of environmental, economic, and social benefits to the surrounding communities. Urban farming can reduce transportation costs, help reduce runoff associated with heavy rainfall, and lead to better air quality (Ottawa, 2006). Due to growing concern over deteriorating environmental conditions, legal systems around the country should increasingly recognize the interests of future generations

The initiative managed to generate learning on the need to have committed people to initiate and participate in community-based initiatives, and not just coming together because of the availability of donor funding. The funding partners should also learn to support ongoing best practice initiatives in communities and be sensitive to community knowledge systems even as they introduce new ideas and ways of doing things.

It highlighted how if residents work with the planning authority to avoid acrimony, this will enable community initiatives to be implemented smoothly with the full support of authorities. The co-operation between the City of Harare and the Warren Park two Herbal and Nutrition Garden demonstrated urban development best practices in terms of partnership between a local authority and community group, resulting also in ten schools benefiting from the initiative. Lack of group cohesion becomes a huge barrier to the continuation of the initiative beyond the donor funding

period. It suffices to say that the two founding members of the initiative are still working on the ground in pursuing their objectives and vision. It can be argued that the project will grow in the long run if the leaders take lessons/learnt from what happened in the first phase. In the future, urban initiatives should involve people who have mutual understanding and respect for the founding principles. It would also be necessary to have an agreed constitution to guide the operations of the initiative and clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations of all involved.

There was also learning from the negative outcome. It was assumed that the initiative would continue to flourish beyond the funding cycle of donors, and to become self-sustaining and to support its members financially. Unfortunately, this did not happen due to a lack of group cohesion, and shared vision and proper planning.

The original Warren Park two community group initiative collapsed as soon the donor funding dried up. The other reason for the disintegration of the group is that it was not the original idea of the project leaders to form a collective but the idea was imposed on them, and at that time, they had no choice but to accept it as it was a condition-precendent for them to receive donor funding. This raises the problem of donor dependency and sustainability of community projects when donor funding dries up. It is thus important that such community initiatives incorporate sustainability mechanisms in their design, including the measures for vertical and horizontal accountability, and freedom from political interference.

The initiative also showed that weak local institutionalization can make initiative fragile. Training contributes to institutional support but further activities are needed, including the provision of incentives, equipment, infrastructure and policy-dialogue aimed at promoting an enabling environment for broader institutional innovations and organizational expansion to facilitate scaling up. Training and more innovative types of capacity-building also appear to be essential in equipping communities with the functional, administrative, technical and social skills necessary to manage their groups and investments, develop their products, and participate in planning and decision-making, among other activities.

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### **Key informant interviews (7)**

Member of the Hatcliffe Development Committee

Chairman of the Cheziya North Farmers Association

Two founding members of the Warren Park herbal garden initiative

Male youth working at the Warren Park herbal garden initiative

The wife of one of the founding members of the Warren Park herbal garden initiative

Chairman of the Combined Epworth Residents Association.