

Equal opportunities for rural women in Zimbabwe

Ethel Mumpande grins as she watches cattle pass by: 'In my village, I am the first woman to own goats and my goal in 2017 is to buy a cow,' she says.

In Binga district in north-west Zimbabwe, it is unheard of for women to own livestock beyond chickens. However, thanks to Christian Aid and Commitment for Life, women like Ethel are challenging cultural norms.

A year ago, life was difficult for 35-year-old Ethel, her husband Tumulumbe and their three children. Like many men in their village, Tumulumbe, had no stable employment and due to the cultural norms, Ethel was unable to pursue options such as owning livestock.



Ethel is the first woman in her village to own goats, thanks to Commitment for Life.

In 2016, with support from Commitment for Life, Ethel's group received training in business management, advocacy and lobbying, plus gender issues and learned to make work suits, bed covers and dresses. With improved marketing, their income increased every month.

Ethel says: 'I strive to expand my business and make more money.'

After receiving her share of the group's income last September, Ethel bought three goats, followed by another four by the end of the year. This has impressed her husband and enhanced the status of Ethel's family.

Thank you for helping to break down cultural barriers to women earning a living. With your support, we will help more women grow thriving, resilient livelihoods.

'My goal in 2017 is to buy a cow'

In 2015, Christian Aid's partner, Silveira House, provided vocational skills training in Ethel's village. Together with five other women, Ethel formed the Tulisumpule Enterprise Group. They received training in dressmaking and a start-up kit, including a sewing machine and materials.

Soon the women were making school uniforms and bed covers, and selling them in the surrounding villages. Throughout their first year, however, they grappled with quality issues and a lack of machine maintenance skills.

Sourced campaign success

Just over a year ago we launched a campaign asking supporters to contact their local council about tax transparency in their procurement processes.

In January 2017, the voluntary policy we asked councils to adopt was made mandatory by UK Government.

Councils spend billions of pounds each year on goods and services and now have to ask companies

tougher questions about their tax practices. This greater scrutiny of companies' tax affairs will prompt businesses to adopt more responsible tax practices, in the UK and in the world's poorest countries.

Thank you to all who supported this campaign. For more information on this and other ways you can help us campaign for global justice, please visit: christianaid.org.uk/ActNow