



## The Phiri Award for Farm and Food Innovators

Recognising the achievements of farm and food innovators and their contributions to food sovereignty

Named for Zephaniah Phiri, the renowned water harvester and ecological farmer from Zvishavane District whose innovations in vlei farming over a fifty year period earned him first arrest and then national and international recognition, the Phiri Award for Farm and Food Innovators will open a new chapter in advancing indigenous innovation in Zimbabwe.

Just as Mr. Phiri discovered new ways to produce food abundantly and sustainably through detailed study and active management of the soils and hydrology of his land, so too are other dedicated Zimbabwean farmers making quiet breakthroughs that advance food sovereignty in their communities.

Just as Mr. Phiri shared his innovations with thousands of visitors from across the country, Africa and the world, so too can other local innovators be recognised and assisted to disseminate their innovations, technologies and sustainable farming practices. Just as Mr. Phiri's innovations – such as water infiltration pits in contour ridges and clay-lined ponds in vleis – are now adopted by tens of thousands of dryland farmers, so too can other innovations not yet recognised contribute nationally and beyond to the advancement of agro-ecological approaches to sustainable food systems.

Increasing recognition for local innovation and the creative capacity of food producers to solve deep problems and find new opportunities can help advance a partnership approach to agricultural development in which all knowledge is valued. This has a huge potential to sustain with dignity the central place of women and men who meet the food needs of their communities and the country.

The Phiri Award is a new programme brought to you by a new organisation, The Phiri Award for Farm and Food Innovators Trust, whose Trustees are drawn from leading Zimbabwean institutions in this field. Working with national networks, local government and grass roots groups the Trust will gather nominations from across the country in the last quarter of 2013; coordinate visits to selected farmers during their growing and harvesting seasons in early 2014 and document their innovations; and organise the first Award in June 2014 at a nationally publicised event. Based on the experience in year one, this prize is expected to become an annual event. The Trust will work with recognised innovators and development partners to spread their good ideas to other communities.

Winners of the Zephaniah Phiri Award will be men and women who have developed and implemented, over many years, new and exciting ways of producing, processing or distributing food that advance the principles of food sovereignty, including social justice and environmental sustainability. The winners will be innovators in their own right, and not “adopters” of good ideas promoted by organisations, researchers or projects.

These innovators will usually have relied on their own resources and energies to develop their practices, and will often have struggled for many years to gain recognition for their work. They will come from small-scale farming communities or marginalised backgrounds in urban settings. From creativity in the face of hardship, they will have developed proven new approaches that others have now begun to adopt and adapt. Through the publicity associated with the Award these innovators and their innovations will increase the opportunity to improve the lives of Zimbabweans.

We invite you to join us in this exciting process by sending us nominations of innovators whose work you know and by publicising this opportunity around the country.

The Selection Process:

1. Written nominations are invited from around the country using the application form that you can obtain from [phiriaward@gmail.com](mailto:phiriaward@gmail.com) or The Phiri Award, Box 3272, Harare.
2. The Trustees develop a shortlist of seven candidates to be visited.
3. The seven leading candidates are visited so as to experience their innovations first hand. Visits will be conducted by members of a selection committee using clear terms of reference from the trustees. Visits will include documentation for sharing more widely.
4. A short list of three candidates is drawn up by the selection committee and is presented to the Trustees.
5. With the input of the Trustees a final ranking of first, second and third is then made.
6. Award ceremony, celebration and widespread media dissemination will take place in June/July 2014. We want the whole country to understand the contributions that local innovators are making to our food systems and development.