

Beating Hunger: The Chivi experience
A community based approach to food security in Zimbabwe

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Readers of New Agriculturist edition 01-3 may remember the review of *The Water Harvester*, the story of Zephaniah Phiri, a farmer in Zimbabwe who developed highly effective soil and water conservation techniques. Mr. Phiri crops up again in *Beating Hunger*, the story of a ten year food security project in Chivi district; as part of the project, farmers from Chivi visited his Zvishvane farm and were inspired to copy his methods.

Technical improvements were just one of the positive outcomes from the project. Even more important has been the co-operation which has grown among the farmers, and the greater co-ordination between farmers' clubs, and women's garden groups. Building confidence was also key; through 'Training for Transformation' methodology, farmers developed the confidence to negotiate effectively with service providers, for example with the agricultural extension services. Local leaders became more self-critical, and village committees more representative and effective. *Beating Hunger* makes an enjoyable and inspiring read; it gives an in depth picture of one community's struggle to improve their situation, not by external capital investments, but by pooling and developing the resources they already possessed.