

# The Domboshava Community Project

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The Domboshava community project was not a planned or well thought out idea at the beginning but arose from a place of desperation which called for desperate measures. 2008 was a very challenging time for all in Zimbabwe where the economy took tremendous knocks and shelves in the shops were empty. Cash was difficult to get from the banks because of inflation. Faced with a problem of trying to fix a broken borehole which required \$50.00 USD, I had to come up with a plan, my husband had just left for Rutgers University to teach summer school. The person who was going to fix the borehole gave me an idea to sell my children's used clothes because there was a huge demand for them at Domboshava showground market; to raise the needed cash for the repairs. The banks could only give out \$100 Zimbabwean dollars a day (enough to buy a loaf of bread) which meant standing in a line every day for however long it was going to be, to raise the equivalent of the US dollars.



**Tomatoes are the backbone of Domboshava**



**Hard working women at the market-Domboshava.**

At the market I met so many amazing hard working rural women who changed my perception of life. I just wanted to spend more time with them talking, bonding and trying to understand how they were so cheerful, resilient and kept it moving under their own circumstances. They were even better than most of us in the city because they had readily available cash and they circulated it amongst themselves selling. Even though they had limited food choices they were healthy and strong, one problem though is for all the hard work they did not make good money. The vegetables they sold were flooded on the market bring the price down and sometimes the leftovers from their sale would have to be tossed away. That really broke my heart considering how much the city women who bought the vegetables for resale were making (over 100% more). The Domboshava Showground market is about 30 miles from Harare. The women from Harare travelled daily to buy vegetables to sell in the city, making much more than the rural women and they worked the hardest.

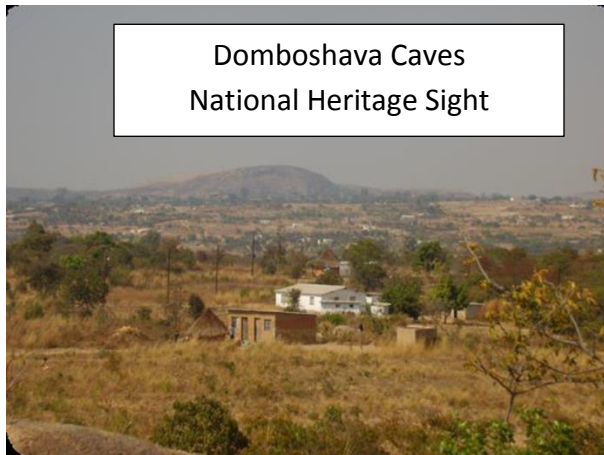


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I decided to offer my help by trying to look into diversifying what they produced, introducing cultural tourism and other income generating projects, and that is how the Project started. This was also new to me, it was just an idea that I had having been in the Sales and Marketing field (Printing) for a very long time, I felt we could work something out and improve their situation. One of the ladies bought into the idea and showed me the channels to follow in order to work with the community and she helped me to set it all up. It was not easy but we persevered and by 2009 we had a few friends coming to the project through cultural tourism. There were challenges dealing with family groups and I had to rethink and redirect my efforts in the community. I decided to form women groups only and explained why it was important and necessary for women to support one another, encourage and work together. So our objectives and goals were as follows:

- To use our skills by making a difference in our community
- To enhance those skills through training
- To develop a positive attitude towards each other and also get some meaningful direction from knowledgeable people and share that knowledge with other newly formed groups in order to improve the environment and for community development.
- To promote cultural tourism by connecting with other people in Zimbabwe, regionally and internationally.
- To develop a Cultural Museum and uphold our heritage whilst exchanging resource for advancement.
- To develop organic farming & taking care of the environment for future generations.



Keeping chickens - diversifying

## **The driving force behind this was:**

- The need to be empowered and taking care of others who are less fortunate
- The need to conserve our culture, environment and enhancing land productivity
- The need to develop and improve skills in both children and adults in their areas of interest for a better future.

**Some of the current Income Generating projects are:** Chicken rearing, farming, arts & crafts, drying vegetables, Bee Keeping, tree planting and Cultural tourism. The scenic environment also creates an opportunity for photographers and artists to explore, which is another source of generating income. It would be wonderful to get willing artist to train the women in those areas.



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Organized School Tours for city schools are also a possibility: To learn about Zimbabwean Culture, the environment and activities such as cattle herding, gardening, dances, cooking traditional meals, storytelling from elders, playing music especially mbira which has special meaning in shona culture and service projects for university students.

The Fishers Foundation is all about teaching, sharing and connecting with others to help create a better life and being prosperous both financially and spiritually.

We all have talents; we are all exposed to networks of people who are involved in various markets, programs and have amazing skills and we need to connect with those networks to help empower the Domboshava women groups and grow the Project locally and nationally.



**Cultural Tourism**



**Mbira Music**

**Training**



**Bun-Making**



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Ayva and Rachel organized a fundraising talk where I spoke about Fishers Foundation -The Domboshava Community Project at Princeton Library for their Bat Mitzvah Project (April 2014)



**Some of The Domboshava women receiving money raised by Ayva and Rachel**

Domboshava is very close and dear to my heart for many reasons, my mother is from that area even though further than where my projects are and also my husband took me to the Domboshava caves on our first date and he is very fond of my grandmother. Domboshava means red rock.

Sylvia Hove

Founder: The Domboshava Community Project –Fishers Foundation