

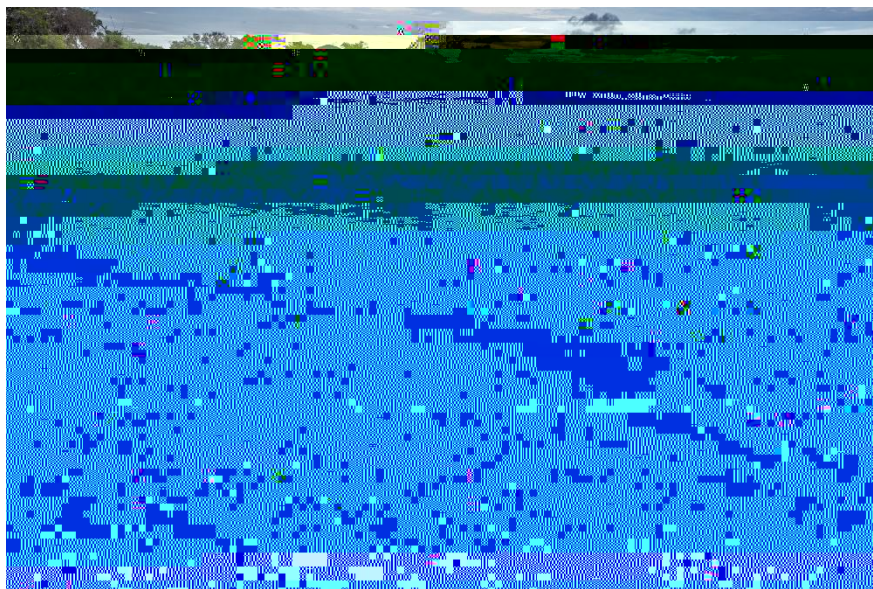
Nyarai Zirugo lives with her two children, parents and sisters in Njani, Mutoko.

As subsistence farmers previous efforts to diversify through rearing chickens, or growing other varieties of crops were unsuccessful. Low rainfall meant small yields for crops and the family rarely achieved a surplus.

When Christian Aid's partner organisations started working in the community, things started to change for the family. "We realised that if we want to improve our lives, we can't carry on in the same way as we had done in the past".

The first new venture for the family was wild product harvesting. Christian Aid partner Bio Innovation Zimbabwe (BIZ) taught the community about sustainable wild product harvesting. Last year the family made USD700 from the sale of six different products. "BIZ also taught us the importance of looking after our environment if we want to make an income from it", says Nyarai.

The family subsequently diversified their crops and livestock to grow a wider range



of grains and legumes as well as practicing conservation agriculture techniques.

Nyarai sums up, "We have seen our livelihoods, diet and farming methods improve greatly. We're better able to sustain ourselves even when droughts hit our area".

Nyarai has also seen changes in

the community. "Women are also becoming more independent and incidences of gender-based violence have been reduced. The community has been empowered through knowledge".

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