

From Household Strain to Shared Progress: Lizzy Kagumba's Agroecology Journey

📍 Makina Village, Ward 2 — Dande Valley, Mount Darwin District



No smallholder should suffer the indignity of poverty

In Makina Village, Ward 2, Lizzy Kagumba has seen how easily household wellbeing can be undermined by poor harvests, limited resources and family conflict over money and decision-making. At 52, married and raising a family in Dande Valley, she had long relied on crop and livestock farming for survival. But before joining APT's Sustainable Farming Systems Programme in 2025, the household faced recurring food shortages, weak resource management and tensions within the family.



Lizzy says the turning point came through agroecology training that incorporated Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methods, helping her family to plan together, share responsibilities, consult one another on household decisions, and manage income more deliberately. She attended every session and began applying the lessons at home. According to Lizzy, this brought an important shift in mindset. "Equality has improved, with joint decision-making and shared responsibilities," she explains. She says this has reduced conflict in the home and brought greater peace, unity and cooperation.



At the same time, the training gave the family practical ways to strengthen production despite limited resources. Lizzy adopted techniques such as Pfumvudza, helping the household make better use of small plots while conserving water, disturbing the soil less, and reducing dependence on purchased inputs. She also learnt how to prepare Dande basal and top-dressing fertiliser using locally available materials, lowering production costs while improving soil fertility. According to Lizzy, these changes have brought visible improvements in her farming and helped secure year-round household food availability.

The benefits have extended beyond crop production. Lizzy has diversified into rearing goats, sheep and chickens, which now contribute both food and income. This has enabled the family to pay school fees for her granddaughter at Mavhuradonha Secondary School and to help support her daughter's university education.

For Lizzy, the change has not only been in what the family grows, but in how the household works together. Her story shows that agroecology is not only about farming practices in the field. It also depends on fairness, participation, planning and the wise use of resources within the household. In her case, agroecology training, supported by GALS methods, has helped build a more cooperative family, a more productive farming system, and a clearer path toward a more secure future.



Agroecological principles reflected in this story: ⚖️ Fairness — Joint decision-making and shared responsibilities | 🗳️ Participation — Active engagement in training and applying lessons at home | 🌱 Soil Health — Soil-enriching fertiliser and improved fertility management | ♻️ Recycling — Use of local resources in Dande fertiliser | 💧 Input Reduction — Less dependence on purchased inputs | 💰 Economic Diversification — Crops plus goats, sheep and chickens