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BUILDING LIVELIHOODS: YOUNG PEOPLE AND AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIALISATION IN AFRICA: ZIMBABWE COUNTRY STUDY

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ACRONYMS

A-level	Advanced level
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
APRA	Agricultural Policy Research for Africa
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
CIRAD	Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement [French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development]
CMED	Central Mechanical and Equipment Department
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DSTV	Direct Satellite Television
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
ICA	Intensive Conservation Area
ICTs	information and communication technologies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JV	joint ventures
O-level	Ordinary level
MLAWCRR	Ministry of Land Agriculture Water Climate and Rural Resettlement
PLAAS	Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies
POSB	People's Own Savings Bank
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RTGS	Real time gross settlement
SALS	Savings and loans clubs
SMEs	small- and medium-sized enterprises
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is concerned with how young people in rural Zimbabwe engage with or are affected by agricultural commercialisation. The objective of the study was to provide an understanding of steps and pathways with which groups of young people seek to construct livelihoods in or around agricultural commercialisation hotspots, and the outcomes associated with these efforts. The paper draws on empirical work based on in-depth interviews of 40 young people between the ages of 15 to 35 in the Mvurwi Farming Area in Zimbabwe.

Mvurwi's commercialised rural economy offers opportunities for young people to engage in a range of activities as producers, on-farm and off-farm wage workers, and/or as business operators. The findings of this APRA study reveal that young people had not initially placed farming as an aspiration while at school. They had aspired to move into white-collar professions such as: 'nursing', 'veterinary science', 'teacher', 'police force', 'army', 'business', 'motor mechanics', and 'computer engineering.' Disappointment around education, financial need, and for some opportunities created by the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) were key motivations for entering the rural economy.

Engagement in these agricultural activities allowed the youth to accumulate a range of assets including residential plots, investment into their own education and that of their children, household goods, vehicles, and business operations. While many of the activities engaged in by young people have low barriers to entry, most still required some form of assistance or support to get started or to access resources in the form of land, capital, and inputs. The constraints highlighted included lack of capital, limited access to land ownership and markets, unavailability of credit, and cash shortages. Social networks, family, multiple and short-term employment; savings; group loans obtained from a bank; casual work on other farms (*maricho*); gold-panning (*kukorokoza*); and savings and loans clubs (SALS), were ways in which young people accessed capital or resources to start and maintain their economic activities in Mvurwi.

The findings of the study show an agile and determined group of young men and women who have consciously decided to make good of their early setbacks and have turned to the rural economy for a myriad of economic activities to augment revenue streams. However, the livelihood activities of these young people are vulnerable to hazards, which can destroy any economic gains made from their multiple economic activities. The hazards described include drought and unreliable rain, the unstable macroeconomic environment, price distortions due to interference by the middlemen, ill-health, and demand for money to meet the obligations of the extended family. As such, young people adopt a 'ducking and diving' approach to navigate the structural, physical, and individual hurdles or hazards that they encounter in a bid to forge a living and future within this vibrant rural economy.

The overall conclusion of the study is that an area of intensive agricultural commercialisation, compared to one with limited commercialisation, provides opportunities for young people across the different modes of engagement.

These findings have two key implications for strategies that seek to promote employment for Africa's youth who reside in rural areas. Firstly, policy options for young people in Zimbabwe's rural economy need to first acknowledge that the rural economy presents opportunities for young people across the different modes of engagement. Second, policy and existing programmes ought to protect young people's accumulated gains from hazards in the rural environment. One way to do this is through social protection programmes to support initiatives emerging from within the rural economies themselves, such as the expansion of access to resources under a government subsidy programme, not limited to ownership of land. There may also be opportunities to use programmes to make it less likely that key assets would need to be liquidated in order to meet unexpected or emergency expenses. The findings also have relevance on the need to address issues around quality, completion, and outcomes associated with rural people's education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Policymakers, development organisations, and young people themselves are all wrestling with the challenges of Africa's youth bulge, which is a result of a relatively late demographic transition (Canning, Raja and Yazbeck 2015). For those focused on economic policy, the aim is often described in terms of capturing the demographic dividend, a one-time boost to economic growth which should arise if most young people in the youth bulge find productive work (Ahmed *et al.* 2016; Bloom, Kuhn and Prettner 2017; Eastwood and Lipton 2011).

Many African economies have small manufacturing and formal service sectors and are dominated by the informal sector. In addition, it is likely that a significant proportion of young people will continue to live in rural areas for decades to come. These realities support the proposition that only the rural economy – built around agriculture but encompassing much more – will be able to provide employment opportunities for many millions of young people into the foreseeable future. The case is carefully argued by Filmer and Fox (2014) and the idea that agriculture and rural areas have the potential to provide decent livelihoods has become the new policy orthodoxy (AGRA 2015; Berlin Charter 2017; Brooks *et al.* 2013; G20 2017; Losch 2012, 2014, 2016; Proctor 2014; Vargan-Lundius and Suttie 2014; Yeboah 2018).

An essential element of the case is that in order to provide young people with employment that is remunerative, decent, and meaningful, agriculture in Africa, and rural economies more broadly, must go through a process of transformation (or must go through that process at a faster rate). Most accounts of the transformation that is envisaged highlight one or more of the following: increasing use of technology (increasing use of improved agricultural technologies and/or techniques designed to improve productivity, plant-improved varieties, recommended fertiliser applications and spacing arrangements, and ICTs), engagement with national, regional, and global value chains, productivity enhancement, development of/engagement with markets (including land rental markets), mechanisation, entrepreneurship, greater business orientation, increasing importance of processing and value addition, diversification, and investment in research and infrastructure.

To date, there has been little research that looks specifically at how rural young people in Africa engage with or are affected by two processes closely associated with this transformation – agricultural intensification and agricultural commercialisation.²

There is a handful of studies that look at land access as a determinant of young people's engagement with the rural economy (e.g. Berckmoes and White 2014; Bezu and Holden 2014), although these are as much about population pressure as commercialisation.

The proposition that underpins the APRA Youth Policy Study,³ of which the research reported in this working paper is a part, is that important insights about rural youth and commercialisation can be gained from the study of existing commercialisation hotspots. Specifically, the study aimed to develop a better understanding of steps and pathways by which particular groups of young people seek to construct livelihoods in or around these hotspots, and the outcomes associated with these efforts.

The study was organised around two research questions:

- In areas where agriculture is already highly commercialised, what pathways do young people use to get themselves started in farming and/or in associated (farm and/or non-farm) economic activities? How are these pathways affected by different crops and commodities, commercialisation models, and dimensions of social difference?
- Within commercialisation hot spots, what are the barriers to entry for young people who want to farm or to get involved in ancillary economic activities, and how do they navigate these barriers? How important are family and inter-generational dynamics in this navigation? How are these barriers and outcomes affected by dimensions of social difference?

This working paper focuses on the Mvurwi Farming Area situated in Mazowe District, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe. We argue that an analysis of

the pathways that young people in Mvurwi employ to get started in commercial agriculture should provide valuable and policy-relevant insights about opportunities and challenges for Africa.

The rest of the paper is organised to include a methods section which discusses how data was collected, presented, and analysed. This is followed by a discussion on the context of the study area wherein the geographic and demographic context is provided, including, a pre- and post-independence background for a historical understanding of agricultural commercialisation in the area. We then present the empirical findings on how young people are building their livelihoods followed by a discussion of the key emerging issues from the research, which then leads to a conclusion and discussion of some policy implications.

2. METHOD

This research focused on rural areas where agricultural commercialisation is already well developed. In these areas, farm production continues to be very important, while the revenue generated from agricultural commercialisation, and the services that support it, create a diverse and dynamic rural economy offering both on-farm and off-farm opportunities for wage labour and business. In exploiting and/or developing the opportunities associated with these forward and backward linkages, the assumption is that young people (and others) will be able to build livelihoods that do not necessarily involve them in on-farm production or necessitate access to land.

In analysing young people's efforts to build their livelihoods, and particularly their income-generating activities, the APRA study for which this was a part distinguished between 'modes of engagement' with the rural economy on the one hand, and actual 'activities' on the other. The framework identified four possible modes of engagement: (1) on-farm production, (2) on-farm wage labour, (3) off-farm wage labour, and (4) business operation. Within each of these modes of engagement there are many possible activities: on-farm production might entail production of cereal crops, horticultural crops, or purely commercial crops such as cocoa, cashew, or tobacco; while off-farm wage labour might entail working in a hairdressing shop, or as an assistant in a shop or canteen, or helping to build houses. The assumption is that there are differential resource, knowledge, and social barriers to entry, both between and within the different modes of engagement, which will have important implications for who is able to take advantage of particular opportunities.

The analysis of how young people build their livelihoods draws on Richards (1986) who placed the notion of 'hazard' at the centre of his analysis of small-scale rice farming in Sierra Leone. Richards conceived of hazard as including accidents, weather events, and mistakes by rice farmers that have (or could have) negative impacts on their farms, and in some cases these impacts can be cumulative. For Richards, a family illness that then affects farming operations represents hazard, as would early rains that disrupt land preparation, or a decision to plant late-maturing varieties in what turns out to be

a drought year. As will become evident, young people's efforts to initiate, sustain, and in some cases grow, their income-generating activities can be badly affected by hazard, including, for example, rental of flood-prone land, theft, produce being spoiled on the way to market, and wages left unpaid by unscrupulous employers.

This study employed a qualitative research approach to understanding the different ways young people engage in the rural economy in Zimbabwe. Four modes of engagement that include: (1) producer; (2) business operator; (3) on-farm wage worker and (4) off-farm wage worker were utilised in the identification of participants. Within these categories there are a range of agricultural activities that are undertaken. Many interviewees were involved in multiple activities across one or more modes of engagement.

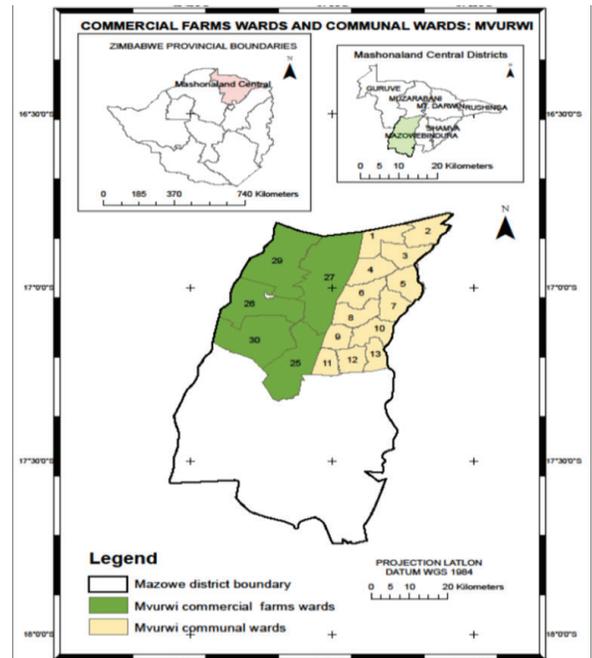
A pilot study of five young people engaged in different economic activities was undertaken in October/November 2017 to guide the formulation of questions for the main study with the assistance of an Agritex⁴ officer and a social worker who works on youth-related projects. A snowball approach was used to identify the participants for the main study. In some instances, the observation of an economic activity such as a grinding mill was used to identify potential participants. Forty individuals, 20 females and 20 males, between the ages of 15 to 35 were selected. The interview schedule covered (1) the basic statistics such as age, gender, and education of each participant, (2) a history of his/her economic activities and, (3) plans for their immediate and distant future as well as their perception of the possible constraints they might face to the realisation of those plans. On average, each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Before each interview, a statement of consent covering the objectives and expectations of the interview was read in English and interpreted in the local language (Shona). Permission was sought to record the interviews with a digital audio recorder. The audio files were transcribed and compared several times with the audio recordings to ensure accuracy. QDA Miner Lite software⁵ was used to code the interview transcripts.

3. THE CONTEXT

The study was conducted in the Mvurwi Farming Area (previously known as the Mvurwi Intensive Conservation Area (ICA)) situated in Mazowe District of Mashonaland Central Province and located approximately 100km north of Harare (Figure 1). The Mvurwi Farming Area is one of four colonial subdivisions of commercial farming areas in the district (Barwick, Marodzi-Tatagura, Mvurwi, and Glendale ICA) (Sukume *et al.* 2015). It consists of 128,386 hectares subdivided into 18 administrative wards that encompass 'commercial', 'new resettlement', and 'communal' farming zones (Figure 1) and is serviced by Mvurwi town, one of the administrative centres for the province as a whole. The Mvurwi Farming Area includes both commercial and smallholder production, with smallholder production largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture, while commercial production is supplemented with irrigation. A range of crops including tobacco, maize, soybeans, and horticultural crops are grown. Livestock ranching is also practised.

Mvurwi is in the high-altitude region (Highveld) of Zimbabwe and is characterised by savannah-type vegetation and two main seasons, summer and winter. The area straddles agro-ecological region II, which is considered a high potential farming region with an annual rainfall of between 700 and 1,050 millimetres, most of which falls during the five summer months from November to March when average maximum

Figure 1 The Mvurwi Farming Area within Mazowe District



Source: Map created by C. Maguranyanga, 2017.

temperatures range between 20 to 35 degrees Celsius. Like most of Mazowe District, the topography of Mvurwi is characterised by blocks of granite and ranges of steep hills. It is dominated by sandy soils derived mostly from granite which makes it suitable for the intensive production of tobacco (Sukume *et al.* 2015).

4. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW ON COMMERCIALISATION IN THE MVURWI FARMING AREA⁷

Commercialisation in the Mvurwi Farming Area dates to the period between 1890 and 1930, when European settlers established commercial farms and mines in the Mazowe District of colonial Zimbabwe (Kwashirai 2006). The colonial agrarian economy that promoted commercial farming was largely dependent on state support. Initially, in 1907, the British South African Company which managed the colony launched a commercial farming programme for tobacco, maize, cotton, wheat, sorghum, groundnuts, and sunflower. By 1909, a Department of Agriculture was established as well as key technical institutions such as agricultural research stations which provided agriculture advisory service support to settler farmers (Kwashirai 2006). By 1912, the colonial government established a Land Bank which was critical to settler success, providing cheap loans for the purchase of farms, equipment, and other inputs (Kwashirai 2006: 543). The production of tobacco and maize received major research and financial support because of their commercial and food value respectively.

The first European settlers began to grow tobacco in the area around Mvurwi in 1901. By 1908, a third of settler farmers grew tobacco as a key cash crop (Rubert 1998: 2; Kwashirai 2006). Mvurwi became a major centre for flue-cured Virginia tobacco production with the crop becoming a critical contributor to the national economy by the 1920s. During the colonial era and through to the post-independence period prior to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) of 2000, close to 84 per cent of commercial farming within the Mvurwi area concentrated on tobacco production, alongside maize, wheat, and soybean production. Maize and wheat were grown as an integral part of the rotation system to stem the build-up of nematodes. Beef production for export to the European markets was another key activity during this era. Massive investments in infrastructure (dams, roads, etc.) as well as subsidies for inputs made this agricultural development possible. Prior to 2000, most of the commercial farms in this area carried out year-round agriculture using irrigation with water sourced from dams (built on the farms) and perennial rivers and streams. By contrast, smallholder farming was viewed as backward and primitive and in need of improvement, rather than investment, even though most maize was

produced by smallholder African farmers, especially in the Chiweshe area in Mvurwi.

Mvurwi town developed as a service centre for large-scale commercial farming with input suppliers, transporters, and other service providers also being members of the commercial farming group. The town had a small industrial sector, mostly dominated by the Delta Brewery Company, which purchased the sorghum, wheat, and maize produced by commercial farmers, and tobacco buying and sales companies. The town also attracted financial institutions, such as the Standard Chartered Bank and the Central African Building Society Bank that served the farming community. Despite all the early activity in the town that coincided with the commercialisation of this area, it is described by some as being a 'dormant agricultural centre' which only became vibrant following the implementation of the FTLRP in 2000 (Scoones *et al.* 2017).

With the exception of the Mazowe Citrus Estate and Forrester Estate, under the FTLRP, all commercial farms were acquired by the government for resettlement: 5,290 people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities were resettled either as small-scale and/or subsistence farmers (referred to as the A1 settlement model based on communal farming), or as a variant of small-, medium-, and large-scale commercial farming (referred to as the A2 settlement model) (Matondi and Chikulo 2012). Under the FTLRP policy, land allocations within A1 and A2 settlement schemes across the country were expected to include at least two young people although the actual number of allocations made to young people varied.

In the end, the land reform produced a tri-modal agrarian structure in Mvurwi with A2 schemes (commercial agriculture), A1 schemes (smallholder farming), and communal areas (smallholder and/or subsistence farming). Moreover, over time, new farmers and new variants of commercial agriculture production emerged such as joint ventures (JVs). At least six JVs with Chinese and former European commercial farmers in the A2 settlement scheme have been established. These JVs are characterised by high capital investment in infrastructure development and crop production.

Since 2000, agrarian production in this area continues to be dominated by tobacco, now produced by smallholders working under contract for tobacco buying companies since most smallholders, including A1 settlers, do not have capital. This shift has impacted on the economy of Mvurwi town that today has at least 13 tobacco buying companies, compared with one pre-Fast Track, plus a wide variety of small- and medium-sized enterprises such as grocery shops, sawmills, food outlets, hairdressing salons, butcheries, beer-halls, and hardware shops, reflecting the increase in disposable income of smallholder farmers. These changes have been supported by financial institutions such as AgriBank, the People's Own Savings Bank (POSB), and CBZ, government-owned banks that offer services to resettled farmers.

In addition to tobacco, several smallholders have diversified into commercial poultry production to meet demand in the town, while others have pursued horticultural production, with the vegetables having a ready market in cities such as Harare and the surrounding towns. A small percentage of the A1 and communal farmers grow cotton. A2 farmers who have profited from their agricultural activities have also set up small- and medium-sized enterprises which produce more revenue for them and cater for the population in the town. Other sources of income for the farmers in Mvurwi are house rentals, livestock sales, transport businesses, vegetable sales, building, carpentry, fishing, and woodcarving. Casual labour is also an important source of income to Mvurwi residents even though employment on farms is often temporary, seasonal, and low paid.

There are strong linkages between the Mvurwi area and Harare due to their proximity. Harare offers readily accessible markets for farmers and is a comparatively cheaper source of farm and other inputs, food, and supplies that they need. All tobacco grown in the area is transported to and sold in Harare, and horticulture, tobacco, and maize farmers are linked to suppliers of packaging materials in this city. For tobacco, specialised packaging is required to comply with international regulations while maize surpluses are sold by farmers and middlemen at the Grain Marketing Board (Mavedzenge *et al.* 2016).

Since the year 2000, and until today, Zimbabwe has experienced significant economic challenges. In the first decade after the FTLRP, the economy experienced hyperinflation. Then in 2009 the government dollarised the economy, which brought some real stability in pricing and the macroeconomic environment, enabling farmers to receive real value for their products. However,

after 2015, the country began to face significant money supply problems, and experienced significant liquidity challenges in the supply of US dollars. Consequently, in 2016, in an effort to reduce the liquidity issue, the government, through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) announced a monetary policy that introduced a pseudo currency, the bond note (*bollars*), which theoretically is valued on a 1:1 exchange rate with the USD but is not recognised or tradeable outside Zimbabwe.

The reality, however, is that the value of the *ollar* is much lower on the parallel market on which USD cash can be found. Over the years, the value of these bollars to the real USD has ranged from 1:3 to as high as 1:5 (in 2018). This means that those who run hardware and spare parts businesses, or who sell agro-products, require foreign currency to import these goods, which are not locally produced. However, the shortage of hard USD dollar cash in the banking system has resulted in most banks failing to dispense foreign currency and operators forced to transact with middlemen on the black market, which has a high exchange rate compared to the government rate.

5. INTERVIEWEES

Our interviewees, drawn from Mvurwi town and the surrounding farming area include young people living on former commercial farms that were acquired for resettlement under the FTLRP. A total of 40 interviews were conducted in which an even number of males and females were interviewed; the majority (60 per cent) of the interviewees were 26 years old or older (Table 1).

The higher proportion of males interviewed compared to females in age categories 26–30 and 31–35 was due to the reluctance of women to participate. Women often deferred to their husbands as the heads of households. As shown in Table 2, the majority (65 per cent) of the interviewees were married or were single but in a relationship, and 25 of our interviewees had children (Table 4). The average number of children per married interviewee was 1.5. Interviewees in the 31–35 age category, who constituted 35 per cent of married households, had on average five children per household. Two female interviewees indicated that they married young, one at the age of 15 and another at 16, just after completion of her Ordinary level (O-level) qualifications. Seven of the interviewees in the age category 21–25 were in a relationship, with some intimation of long-term commitment.

Fifty per cent of the interviewees were born and raised in Mvurwi. Of this group, some had left Mvurwi temporarily to pursue education or seek employment and had returned through marriage or lack/loss of employment. The other 50 per cent of the interviewees were migrants who had relocated from various suburbs of Harare, the capital city, and from the surrounding districts in Mashonaland Central Province – including Guruve and Mutorashanga – where Mvurwi is also located. Migration to Mvurwi was primarily influenced by kith and kin, marriage, relocation of parents to the area under the FTLRP, employment (on-farm), and for business opportunities (mostly in hardware and transport).

Fifty-eight per cent of the interviewees had attended secondary school and completed their O-level exams. Females comprised 20 per cent of the interviewees that had only primary level education or had dropped out of school before completing their O-levels whilst males comprised only 8 per cent of this group. The disparity in the level of education between the genders is noted after O-levels, where four of the male interviewees had completed A-levels and two had some form of tertiary education (Table 3), whilst none of the female interviewees had proceeded beyond O-level.

Table 1 Age and gender distribution of participants

Age	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
20 years or less	6	2	8
21–25	5	3	8
26–30	4	8	12
31–35	5	7	12
Total	20	20	40

Source: Author's own (2018).

Table 2 Marital status of interviewees

Marital Status	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Single	2	4	6
Single, but in a relationship	4	3	7
Married	13	13	26
Widowed	1	0	1
Total	20	20	40

Source: Author's own (2018).

The challenging macroeconomic environment since the late 1990s caused by austerity measures from the economic structural adjustment programme, and later by hyperinflation were proffered as reasons for interviewees either dropping out of high school before completing O-level or only completing their primary schooling (Grade 7). Those who dropped out (ZM_002, ZM_003, ZM_019) indicated that their parents could no longer afford to pay their tuition. Only two male interviewees (ZM_006 and ZM_019) had completed tertiary education.

In relation to their education, most interviewees indicated that they had aspired to move into white-collar professions such as: 'nursing', 'veterinary science', 'teacher', 'police force', 'army' 'business', 'motor mechanics', and 'computer engineering.' Notably none of the interviewees had placed farming as an aspiration while at school.

Table 4 provides a summary of the information of each of the 40 interviewees, while Appendix 1 provides a more detailed summary of their work histories.

Table 3 Level of education attained by interviewees

Level of Education	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Grade 7 and below	4	0	4
Below O-level	4	3	7
O-level	12	11	23
A-level	0	4	4
Tertiary	0	2	2
Total	20	20	40

Source: Author's own (2018).

Table 4 Summary of interviewees' demographic and life history

ID / name	Gender, age, relationship, children, local/migrant, education
ZM_034	F, 15, has boyfriend, 0 children, non-migrant, Grade 6
ZM_039	F, 19, no relationship, 0 children, non-migrant, O-level
ZM_040	F, 21, married, 1 child, non-migrant, O-level
ZM_005	F, 24, married, 1 child, non-migrant, O-level
ZM_024	F, 26, married, 1 child, non-migrant, O-level
ZM_002	F, 32, married, 4 children, non-migrant, below O-level
ZM_033	M, 22, married, 1 child, non-migrant, below O-level
ZM_021	M, 27, has girlfriend, 0 children, non-migrant, A-level
ZM_022	M, 27, married, 1 child, non-migrant, O-level
ZM_015	M, 29, no relationship, 0 children non-migrant, tertiary
ZM_003	M, 29, no relationship, 0 children, non-migrant, below O-level
ZM_013	M, 31, married, 3 children, non-migrant, below O-level
ZM_028	M, 32, married, 3 children, non-migrant, A-level
ZM_016	M, 34, married, 2 children, non-migrant, O-level
ZM_035	F, 18, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, below O-level
ZM_032	F, 19, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, Grade 7
ZM_030	F, 19, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_011	F, 20, married, 1 child, migrant, O-level
ZM_036	F, 21, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_017	F, 24, married, 1 child, migrant, O-level
ZM_037	F, 25, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_007	F, 26, married, 1 child, migrant, O-level
ZM_026	F, 27, married, 4 children, migrant, below O-level

ZM_018	F, 28, married, 1 child, migrant, A-level
ZM_020	F, 31, married, 3 children, migrant, Grade 7
ZM_014	F, 31, married, 3 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_025	F, 34, widowed, 3 children, migrant, below O-level
ZM_012	F, 35, married, 4 children, migrant, Grade 3
ZM_029	M, 19, has girlfriend, 0 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_038	M, 19, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_031	M, 23, married, 1 child, migrant, O-level
ZM_010	M, 24, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_001	M, 27, has girlfriend, 0 children, migrant, A-level
ZM_027	M, 29, married, 2 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_019	M, 30, married, 3 children, migrant, below O-level
ZM_023	M, 30, married, 1 child, migrant, O-level
ZM_006	M, 31, married, 2 children, migrant, tertiary
ZM_004	M, 34, married, 3 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_008	M, 35, married, 3 children, migrant, O-level
ZM_009	M, 35, no relationship, 0 children, migrant, O-level

Source: Author's own.

6. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

6.1 Modes of engagement and economic activities

Interviewees were involved in a variety of economic activities across the four modes of engagement; producers, off-farm wage workers, on-farm wage workers, and business operators (Table 5). Seventeen interviewees were engaged in multiple activities across one or more modes of engagement; among these, eight were female and nine were male.

Table 5 Modes of engagement and economic activities of interviewees

Mode of engagement	Activity
Producer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beans (ZM_024) • Potatoes (ZM_024) (ZM_014) • Maize (ZM_002) (ZM_040) (ZM_012) (ZM_026) (ZM_025) (ZM_024) (ZM_011) (ZM_037) (ZM_003) (ZM_031) (ZM_021) (ZM_027) (ZM_15) (ZM_009) (ZM_ZM_022) (ZM_004) (ZM_010) (ZM_013) (ZM_016) • Tobacco (ZM_012) (ZM_024) (ZM_011) (ZM_014) (ZM_031) (ZM_013) (ZM_027) (ZM_010) (ZM_033) • Soya beans (ZM_025) (ZM_024) (ZM_021) (ZM_010) • Vegetables (ZM_024) (ZM_026) (ZM_002) (ZM_008) (ZM_0033) (ZM_009) • Butternut squash (ZM_033)
On-farm wage worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting, weeding, and harvesting tobacco and maize (ZM_035) (ZM_034) (ZM_020) (ZM_032) (ZM_011) (ZM_033) (ZM_019) • Grading, reaping, and spraying tobacco (ZM_019)
Off-farm wage worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canteen assistant (ZM_037) • Flea market attendant (ZM_039) • Till operator (ZM_007) • Early Childhood Development teacher (ZM_014) • Shopkeeper (ZM_036) (ZM_022) • Mobile phone repair (ZM_038) • Hardware man (ZM_009) (ZM_029) • Bricklayer (ZM_031) • Hardware manager (ZM_006)

Business operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits and vegetable seller (ZM_002) (ZM_005) (ZM_017) (ZM_026) (ZM_035) (ZM_001) • Hardware selling farm equipment (ZM_018) (ZM_016) (ZM_004) (ZM_008) • Tractor trader (ZM_028) • Motor spare parts seller (ZM_023) • Truck hiring (ZM_010 with partner) • Transport/taxi operator (ZM_027) • Grocery selling (ZM_018) • Flea market operator (ZM_040) • Meat seller/butchery (ZM_018) (ZM_023) • Farming inputs seller (maize seed and fertilisers) (ZM_029) • Grinding mill (ZM_013)
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Note: **Bold** = women. Source: Author's own (2018).

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the distribution of primary activities undertaken by gender. It is noteworthy that nine of the fourteen interviewees who operate businesses are women.

Table 6 Distribution of primary modes of engagement by gender

Mode of engagement	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Producer	7	5	12
Wage worker (on-farm)	4	2	6
Wage worker (off-farm)	4	4	8
Business operator	5	9	14
Total	20	20	40

Source: Author's own (2018).

The interviewees who engage in on-farm production grew mostly maize, tobacco, and horticultural crops (sweet potato, tomatoes, strawberries, onions, potatoes, and green leafy vegetables). Interviewees indicated that tobacco and maize were the key cash crops. All the interviewees pointed out that Mvurwi had good rainfall and soils for horticulture, maize, and tobacco production. Many of the interviewees rented land which was between 0.5–2.5 hectares from resettled farmers in the area. Those who undertook tobacco production hired tobacco barns to cure their tobacco. They had not raised enough capital to invest in their own tobacco barns. Interviewees did not provide information on the actual number of tobacco bales they sent to the auction floors. However, it was clear that those who farmed tobacco did well as proceeds from sales were used to purchase assets such as cars (average cost of a low-range car is US\$1,500–3,000).

For instance, ZM_013, a 31-year-old man, grew his first tobacco crop during the 2016–17 season and earned US\$7,300. He bought a Toyota car and a grinding mill that he used for income generation. Tobacco, although formerly grown by large-scale commercial farmers in Mvurwi, has become an attractive crop in which

to invest, with good returns. Interviewees cited the favourable pricing policy and farmers' ability to choose with which company to contract. Prior to the FTLRP, tobacco contracting companies preferred to hold contracts with large-scale commercial farmers than with smallholders.

Interviewees who grew maize and had good harvests pointed out that the government-owned Grain Marketing Board's (GMB) pricing of US\$390 per tonne was more attractive to farmers than in previous years. The price offered by the GMB was higher than that offered in the region or by private buyers. As a maize producer (ZM_023) put it:

In 2017, I planted two hectares of maize and harvested three-and-a-half tonnes. I sold two-and-a-half tonnes to the GMB and got about US\$900 which I invested in my butchery business.

When interviewee ZM_013 harvested his crops in the 2015/16 farming season he used money acquired from the sale of his products to purchase more agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilisers, etc.) for growing maize in the next season. He harvested two tonnes of maize and

sold one tonne to the GMB at US\$390. He indicated that 'as long as the government has a good pricing structure for producers, young people will be attracted to farming as an economic opportunity'. ZM_015, as shown in Figure 2, found farming to be an attractive economic option when he failed to secure a job as a social worker. His uncle provided him with land, and he has since been growing maize as his main cash crop. He has found that he enjoys farming, can make money from farming, and now understands the business he has landed into by default. He envisages himself growing in this field and acquiring his own land to continue his farming activities.

Eight interviewees engaged in on-farm wage labour, five of whom were female. Their work involved the planting, weeding, and harvesting of crops, particularly maize and tobacco. One interviewee was involved in the grading, reaping, and spraying of tobacco. For some, on-farm wage work was seasonal. None of the wage workers considered themselves permanent employees. The wage they received depended on the level of development and commercialisation of the farm. ZM_019 who worked as a seasonal labourer on an established large-scale commercial farm in the area received a wage of US\$84 for grading and packing produce, while those who worked on tobacco farms under the A2 Joint Venture model earned US\$2.88 per day. ZM_032 and ZM_033 indicated that in some instances one could earn US\$3 or US\$4 for half a day of work on some A2 commercial farms. ZM_020 indicated that the number of days worked in a given month determined your pay. Therefore, he preferred to work longer during the tobacco season to earn a substantial amount of money. For those involved in weeding, one could earn US\$5 per 10–20 lines weeded.

The eight interviewees who were off-farm wage workers were mostly shop assistants who worked in fast food outlets, agro-dealer shops, hardware shops, flea markets, and for vegetable vendors in Mvurwi town. Male interviewees were mostly employed in hardware shops, while females were found in the more 'domestic-type' jobs such as cooking, selling of clothes, and vegetables. One female interviewee working at a flea market provided an account on how she liked fashion and clothes, and on completion of her O-levels she took on employment offered by her mother's friend to sell clothes. This job provides her with an income that enables her to buy the 'things that she wants, like nice clothes'.

Some on-farm and off-farm wage workers also did other agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Those, like ZM_033 who ventured into crop production such as tobacco and maize farming, did so foremost as a

means of survival, while others did so to raise capital to set up their own business. ZM_033, an on-farm wage worker, went into tobacco production in the 2018–19 season because he wanted to improve his family's standard of living. On the other hand, ZM_037 started producing maize in order to raise capital to start a business.

Business operations were varied and gendered. They comprised fruit and vegetable vending, flea markets, farm inputs, and equipment supply, hardware supply, and transportation. Businesses operated by females mostly focused on fruit and vegetable vending and flea market enterprises. Those females who owned hardware shops held these jointly with their spouse or were in a business partnership with some male relative. ZM_018, a 28-year-old female, has a business that is a joint venture with her brother, although she primarily runs the shop.

Interviewees involved in fruit and vegetable vending sold apples, oranges, grapes, tomatoes, cabbages, potatoes, butternuts, and strawberries. These commodities were purchased from a variety of sources including local farmers or from wholesale markets like the Mbare Musika, in Harare.

Those who sell clothes indicated that their customers are mostly farmers and farm workers, and sales are often high during the post-harvest period when farmers have sold their produce to the market. The tobacco selling season is characterised by an increased level of activities, and business operators view it as a season to make money. It is in this period when farmers buy their property and other goods and services:

Figure 2 ZM_015, a university graduate involved in farming



Source: Author's own (2018).

I am waiting for the tobacco harvesting season. The tobacco harvesting season is a great opportunity to make money. I engage in several small businesses during the time. (ZM_029)

The tobacco farmers have a tendency of keeping their damaged mobile phones until they sell their produce. It is a common phenomenon to see farmers coming with two or three mobile phones for repair. Since they would have just earned huge amounts of money, they rarely negotiate the charges. They just pay. This is good for business. (ZM_038)

Interviewees involved in hardware and spare parts either worked from a rented shop space or had a stall at a flea market near the people's vegetable market. Those who own hardware businesses in a built-in shop employed an average of two people, while those who operated from stalls managed the stall themselves, or a family member stood in for them. ZM_016, a 34-year-old male, has a hardware shop (that stocks primarily bolts, bearings, solar materials, and spanners). ZM_008, 35-year-old male sells fertilisers, seeds, crop chemicals, and cement. His shop is located at the transport rank where people board local and national buses. He chose, like ZM_018 (a 28-year-old female), to locate his business at the rank because of the high concentration of customers in that place. In addition, it is more convenient for transporters who are his customers. He accepted different modes of payment such as mobile money transfer (Ecocash), swipe (real time gross settlement (RTGS) transfer), and cash payments. ZM_008 employed three people and paid his workers based on profits made by the business.

6.2 Accessing resources

6.2.1 Capital

The key sources of capital for agriculture were multiple and short-term employment; savings; group loans obtained from a bank; casual work on other farms (*maricho*); gold-panning (*kukorokoza*); savings and loans clubs (SALS), and family and friends. Access to capital for the 12 producers in the sample was primarily from other business activity or short-term employment. Forty per cent of them accessed capital to start their farming from money earned from temporary or full-time employment in Mvurwi town. Of this group, one (ZM_015) indicated that he saved money from a temporary job at an engineering firm and used it to purchase farm inputs. ZM_008 raised capital through multiple income-generating activities such as off-farm and on-farm wage employment and from his mother. ZM_004 and ZM_027 used profit from their small

business operations (tuckshops and *spaza* shops) to invest in farming and purchase inputs required, while ZM_010 and ZM_013 used income earned by hiring out their cars or ferrying passengers in and around the Mvurwi areas (a practice commonly termed as *pirating*) to support their farming. One female interviewee (ZM_026) used the money she got from the savings and loans group (commonly referred to as a *maround*) to purchase poultry. ZM_014 indicated that she obtained funding from a friend to buy chickens and start a poultry business: this was during the hyperinflation period and so she was easily able to pay back the loan and continue production.

ZM_008 narrated how he migrated to South Africa in search of greener pastures during Zimbabwe's hyperinflation period. He returned when things did not work out for him. His first step was to set up a poultry business, which he started with US\$250 that he had saved from his time in South Africa. He used this money to buy 100 chicks and feed. He ran the project for a year in the high-density Harare suburb of Dzivarasekwa. He raised US\$700 from the project and in 2013, moved to Mvurwi (his rural home) where he expanded the project. He received funding from a friend. The funding enabled him to build the infrastructure for his poultry project. It also enabled him to purchase 500 birds. To diversify his income, he used the money from poultry sales to start horticulture gardening. He sells to vendors at Mbare Musika. In 2015, he employed three people to assist him in the garden. Later in the year, he dropped his poultry-rearing project and concentrated his effort on horticultural projects. He grows tomatoes, onions, and leafy vegetables.

Access to capital for business operators came primarily from group loans, social networks (saving and loan clubs), family, personal saving from full-time or part-time employment, and even gold-panning (*kukorokoza*). The two females that owned vending stalls acquired their start-up capital from their husbands. ZM_005 indicated that she started vending in March 2017 with US\$100 which she got from her husband. ZM_040 noted that she got the capital to start her flea market business from her husband who sold his mobile phone, a Samsung Galaxy, for US\$300.

Those who owned hardware and car spare-part businesses indicated that someone either sponsored them (ZM_018) or they were involved in a group loan from AgriBank. Group loans are easier to obtain than individual loans because they are considered less risky in terms of defaulting in payment. ZM_016 took a loan of US\$200 from AgriBank to start a hardware shop. The loan was part of a US\$1,000 loan given under the cooperative loan scheme, which was shared amongst

four people. ZM_018 obtained her start-up capital from her brother who works in Harare. This business is a joint venture with the brother, but she runs it. Now she is not reliant on her brother to assist her in difficult times. She gives him a percentage of the profits.

6.2.2 Land

Access to land was gained from inheritance, social networks, rental from A1/A2 farmers, or through links to a non-profit organisation such as Kurainashe. ZM_001 rents a plot where he grows maize (3ha) and beans (2ha). ZM_016 also rents land for farming. He has been farming for three years. ZM_003 and ZM_015 paid US\$100 to rent a one-hectare plot of land. Informal discussions with Agritex officers indicated that rents vary from US\$100 to US\$300 per hectare per month. There are also joint ventures in which the land-owner is provided with a certain amount of income based on what is sold by the renter. In some instances, such joint ventures are undertaken by those who own land in Mvurwi but live and work in Harare. Renting out land is an arrangement for these 'suitcase farmers' to demonstrate to government that they are using their agricultural land and to avoid repossession on grounds of non-production.

ZM_002, a 32-year-old female, accessed land via her husband who inherited the plot of land when his father died. She is the main farmer in the family and grows sweet potato and maize. She also grows tomatoes, leafy vegetables, onions, and potatoes on one acre of land provided by the Kurainashe community project in the area.

Social networks such as family played a key role for some interviewees accessing land for agricultural production. ZM_030 and ZM_037 were given pieces of land to farm by their parents, and they do not pay any rent. Where the family cannot provide land, especially for those engaged as wage workers, relations with community members and farm owners was critical for access. For example, ZM_033, a 22-year-old farm worker, got access to land from the owner of the farm on which he worked. He negotiated access to land for his own production in exchange for working on the owner's fields for a specified number of days.

6.2.3 Inputs and stock

Generally, those in agricultural production accessed their inputs through the agro-dealer shops like Farm and City and smaller dealers in Mvurwi town. However, they noted that the supply was very erratic and inconsistent. Seeds and fertilisers were often in short supply. Those who rented land could not access agricultural inputs like communal farmers and resettled farms

from government programmes such as Command Agriculture and the Presidential Inputs Scheme.

Operators of hardware and spare parts shops obtained their stock from Harare and outside the country; mostly South Africa at the Messina border. It is cheaper to buy in South Africa if one has foreign currency, and it gives a competitive advantage over those who purchase their stock in Harare. Prices at wholesale shops in Harare are considerably higher than buying outside the country.

6.3 Critical role of family and social networks

Social networks, and particularly family, play a significant role in the interviewees' effort to build their livelihoods. In addition to the examples, already given, ZM_029 was offered a shop (building) by his father without rent for his egg-selling business, while ZM_030 and ZM_040 got land to start farming from their parents who are beneficiaries of the FTLRP.

Farming groups also motivate young people to engage in farming. ZM_030's case illustrates this:

I saw others doing gardening, farming vegetables, potatoes, and other crops. They invited me to learn how they do it. That was towards the end of 2016. They have a group called Kushingirira Cooperative (loosely translated as 'endurance'). As a group, they farm and sell their produce together, at the market and share the profit. So, I realised that they were making money and learnt potato production from them and then decided to do it on my own.

6.4 Constraints

The constraints highlighted by the interviewees included lack of capital, limited access to land and markets, unavailability of credit, and the current cash shortages. Nine interviewees indicated the lack of capital as a major constraint. Interviewee ZM_012 remarked:

Our main challenge in this farming business is lack of capital to expand our activities. We need more labour to work on the farm if we are to expand and exploit the land at our full potential. The cash shortages from the bank costs us because we have to wait for many days to get cash from the bank yet buying things using plastic money is too costly here.

Even where the interviewees have access to land, they still need financing to purchase inputs. Most of the participants were either financed by family members or themselves to start up in agriculture and related economic activities. The capital constraints are illustrated by interviewees:

We also work in other people's farms to get money to buy extra inputs. (ZM_004)

I got an opportunity to work for an engineering company for three months where I raised money to start my farm project. I started with US\$500 which I used to pay US\$100 for renting the one hectare which I am using. I hired a government tractor and the planter and all the inputs for the one hectare using my money. I do all the operations by myself. I have no capital to hire labour to assist with farm activities. (ZM_022)

I started in March 2017 with US\$100 which I got from my husband. I get about US\$150 per month if sales are good, and less than US\$100 when the market is poor. I also participate in societal groups to supplement my income. (ZM_024)

In addition, both producers and business operators pointed to the role of the middlemen (*makoronyera*) as a barrier to their agricultural and business practices. ZM_021 said that the middlemen, who act like a syndicate, would force or intimidate young farmers to sell their produce at a low price. In addition, the *makoronyera* are also involved in the transport industry – they are referred to as 'rank marshals' and are accused of doubling the fees for farmers ferrying their produce to the local market. Discussions with some of the interviewees who were complaining about the *makoronyera* revealed that they are mostly young and unemployed. It was also suggested that these middlemen were financed by some 'chef' (a person with money and political connections).

Business operators complained that the prevailing poor economic environment was a major constraint and could result in the closure of their operations due to high transaction costs involved in acquiring cash or foreign currency. ZM_018 gave as an example his need for hard cash to buy motor vehicle spare parts. Since his customers were not transacting in cash but rather through internet banking or mobile money platforms such as Ecocash, he could neither obtain cash in the pseudo currency, nor as US dollars through the formal banking channels.

Consequently, he resorted to transacting with the middlemen who supplied cash on the black market at high exchange rates. As such, the current economic environment makes the cost of doing business unsustainable and endangers the livelihood options and viability of many businesses. The fluctuating rate of the black market for foreign currency makes the importation of goods expensive, but operators cannot pass the cost on to a price-sensitive farming community.

The continued short supply of agricultural inputs and lack of ownership of land was cited by some interviewees as a constraint to realising their future in agriculture. ZM_012 also highlighted labour shortage, as well as not having enough income to pay for labour. Another issue that was identified by the interviewees was access to land. Eleven interviewees acquired land through inheritance from parents, or a spouse who had acquired the land during the land reform programme; eight were renting and two used community gardens. Those who inherited or rented land used A1 farms which are six hectares, and community gardens which are one acre. One farmer remarked:

My sister's husband acquired a plot of land through picking up (zvivharo) bottle lids labelled with plot numbers e.g. plot 1, plot 2. This was done on farm plots which had been acquired through the land reform programme. He then registered the land at the Ministry of Lands in Concession. However, he is now deceased, and I rent half a hectare from my sister. But it is not my land. (ZM_022)

The majority (60 per cent) of farming interviewees indicated that they also use the six-hectare A1 plots. However, two of the interviewees reported that they share the land with other family members and hence only a small portion of one to two hectares is available for them to use.

A female interviewee (ZM_017) noted that childcare acted as a barrier to her business. She could not travel to larger markets and was forced to use unreliable suppliers within the Mvurwi area, which meant that her customers saw her as unreliable. Another female business operator who ran a hardware shop (ZM_018) cited sexual harassment as a barrier for young women who participate in agro-based businesses. She indicated that she had weathered the storm but experienced difficulties in the beginning.

7 LIVELIHOOD BUILDING IN A CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIALISATION

7.1 Learning to work

Less than 3 per cent of the interviewees had studied agriculture as an O-level subject in high school, and none of the producers had a Master Farmer certificate nor any vocational training in agriculture. Either one or both parents of eighteen interviewees are (or were) farmers. As such, many interviewees involved in agricultural production noted that they had learnt to farm by assisting their parents or grandparents, particularly over the school vacations. One male producer, ZM_006, said:

I got the passion for agriculture from my grandmother whom I used to visit during holidays and assist her farming activities and so gaining the skills, and from my experience from our own farm. My father retired from the banking sector to undertake full-time farming.

Similarly, ZM_009, a 35-year-old male, said he gained his farming skills while growing up as he assisted his parent in the field. ZM_012, a 34-year-old female, said:

I went to school up to Grade 3. I dropped out of school at that stage because I did not like the long distance we walked to school. I began to work on a farm together with my friend, picking pests and weeds from crop fields. The owner would give us money for doing that.

Another male, ZM_003 reported that he learnt to farm through part-time jobs he undertook to raise his school fees. He stated that he ‘... learnt to farm through doing part-time jobs like cutting and selling wood and ploughing other people’s fields.’

The two interviewees who were on-farm wage workers had acquired their skills as child labourers on the farms where their parents worked. ZM_020 said:

My parents moved to Mvurwi in 1996, when I was in Grade 1. My father was a foreman on a farm run by a white person and my mother worked in the fields. My sister and I did piece-work on the farms where they worked.

Almost half of the interviewees who owned some form of business had gained experience through training

either at an institution or on-the-job by assisting someone (often a family member or friend) in the same business. ZM_004, a 34-year-old male who runs a shop that supplies hardware and farm equipment, received assistance and mentorship from a friend who was running a similar business. After completing his A-level exams, ZM_028 entered a two-year apprenticeship training programme at the government-owned Central Mechanical and Equipment Department (CMED)⁹ in diesel and motor mechanics. He remarked that this training made him more passionate about mechanics and his present line of business in which he refurbishes farm equipment. One 24-year-old, female vendor, ZM_005, noted that helping her mother run a fruit and vegetable stall gave her the experience and confidence to start her own business. She indicated that she had learnt from her mother the various markets from which to order commodities, the reliable suppliers, and market pricing based on the season’s supply and demand.

The other half of the business operators plunged into the thick of it when the opportunity arose and learnt through trial and error. For example, ZM_018 said that she did not take any courses but learnt everything on the job. She has learnt not to waste money so that the business grows. She budgets her money for paying the rental space for her container and for the operating licence from the shop income. She also ‘spins’ or ‘burns money’,¹⁰ any USD cash or bond notes, in order to get more money which enables her to pay rent for two to three months in advance.

ZM_007, an off-farm wage worker, indicated that the management at the Farm and City hardware shop exposed her to the different range of operations in the organisation. She gained experience as a till operator, sales person for agro-products, and was also exposed to financial accounting for the business. This exposure provided her with the necessary skills for advancing her career.

ZIM_010 owns a transport company, which helps farmers ferry their produce to the market. He learnt the transport business through a friend who had hired him as a driver after he had acquired his driver’s licence. From this experience, he learnt the different routes that were profitable and later branched out on his own. He argued that there was a high demand from farmers

and people living in Mvurwi who required transport and therefore there was no conflict with his friend as 'the pie was big for everyone.'

7.2 Early steps

The early steps of all of our 40 interviewees began with schooling, and almost two-thirds completed O-levels while four attended secondary school and aspired to work in various professions not related to agriculture. However, three failed in school and could not pursue their desired career path, while the university graduates could not find full-time jobs as social workers. Most of our sample began working in agriculture as a last resort: it was not part of their imagined futures. ZM_007, a 26-year-old female, stated that 'I got this job not because I was interested in agricultural activities but because I just had to find something to do and earn an income.' ZM_026, a 27-year-old female, indicated that she and her sister did not finish school because her father re-married and the stepmother did not allow them to go to school. As such, she took on low-skilled jobs working as a housemaid in Harare, and later as a labourer on a research farm in Mazowe where she met her husband who was working as a security guard. She was not ambitious and had no life goals as she felt she had been robbed of an education. She stumbled into farming through the Kurainashe project when she was allocated a small plot of land to grow vegetables. She then discovered that she enjoyed farming and was good at growing things. She utilises part of her husband's money from his wage employment to buy inputs and takes advantage of her benefactor, the trustee of Kurainashe who sometimes brings seeds for people involved in the project.

The pathway taken into agriculture or associated activities was determined by a set of pre-existing conditions such as failure in school or inability to secure a job. However, in the cases where interviewees fell into farming, like ZM_026 and ZM_027, they noted that they now enjoyed farming and wanted to pursue it further. Some even went as far as to say that they have a passion for agriculture and believe there is a lot of money to be made in farming.

ZM_028 was provided with employment by his father after completing school and vocational training. In 2005, he started work as a part-time truck driver, and by 2007, he was employed full-time and being groomed, together with his two brothers, to take over the father's business. In 2017, with his brother, he took full control of the business. His brother runs the transport and logistics side (buses, lorries, etc.), while he concentrates on farm machinery and implements. He employs four part-time workers from Mvurwi town

and the surrounding farms, who are on three-month fixed-term contracts that are always renewed. The tractors they use cost between US\$5,000–7,000 to purchase, and he makes a profit of US\$3,000–4,000 when selling them. He also refurbishes and reconditions tractors bought mainly from former white commercial farmers and sells them to new farmers in the area.

ZM_028's success with no false starts is premised on obtaining a fully functional business from his father and maintaining its success. His passion, vocational training, and rise up the ladder in his father's business provided the necessary ingredients for him to succeed. He has acquired several assets (including residential plots) from the profits generated by the business.

On the other hand, not many of the interviewees had such an easy or straightforward time getting established. Often their farming, off-farm wage employment, or low capital agriculture-related business or vending were undertaken as part of a survival strategy. ZM_022 did not inherit much from her father, and she and her family were left struggling. The mother became a farmworker, and our interviewee completed her O-levels from the money raised by her mother. Unfortunately, she failed her O-levels and could not pursue her chosen career as a teacher. She started work as an off-farm wage worker and then met the man whom she married in 2014. They were provided a small plot of land by his parents on which to work and live. They are now farming full-time but do not grow enough to sell on a regular basis. At times they sell horticultural crops such as sweet potato to a local businesswoman and philanthropist, despite the low quality of the crop. They have not been successful in turning their farming into a commercially viable project.

Figure 3 ZM_028 who sells farm machinery



Source: Author's own (2018).

Some like ZM_003 with a tertiary education, could not find a related full-time job. Disillusioned, he used money raised from a temporary job to fund his agricultural activities. It is too early to assess whether he will be successful in farming; however, at the time of the interview, he had grown almost a hectare of rain-fed maize on a rented plot.

I completed university in 2016 and volunteered with the Kurainashe organisation from 2016–17. I then got an opportunity to work for an engineering company for three months where I raised money to start my farm project. I thought of doing full-time farming after I found that getting a stable and well-paying job could not be found. (ZIM_003)

8 IMAGINED FUTURES

Almost three-quarters of the interviewees wanted in the immediate future to own a piece of residential land, particularly in Mvurwi town. Those that were doing well aspired to have low-density residential plots in the more affluent suburb of Mvurwi. These plots are expensive. ZM_026 indicated that she would need to raise US\$4,000–6,000 to purchase such a plot. It was clear from the interviews that ownership of land is an important sign of economic status and achievement and provides a sense of belonging and attainment of manhood. Young men were advised to invest their savings in buying land and a home. ZM_027 indicated that to be a real man you needed to have your own place, and not always be renting (*'Kuti uve murume unofanirwa kuvanemusha wako, haikono kugara uchilodger'*). Some interviewees were aware that house ownership, rather than renting accommodation, made savings that could be invested in economic activities, easier.

ZM_015 indicated that if he acquired enough money from his current farming, he would increase his land area by renting another piece of land. Further, he wanted to start a poultry project as it would quickly generate income. He also aspired to buy a plot in a medium density suburb. He thought it would be easy for him to get land from the town council since he had been employed as an intern there. ZM_017 would like to buy several plots since she aspires to own quite a lot of shops in different localities in Mvurwi.

Almost all the interviewees who were farming indicated that they (a) wanted to increase their acreage for crop production; and (b) wanted to find a way to become landowners either through the FTLRP or the purchase of land. They argued that holding some form of title or tenure to land could open doors for acquiring loans or even government subsidies (for inputs, machinery, seeds, etc.) through various government programmes. The government-run input schemes, namely the Command Agriculture and the Presidential Inputs Scheme only provide subsidies to farmers who hold some form of title on paper (permit or lease under the FTLRP). ZM_016 and ZM_024 spoke of their intention to access land through their affiliation to the youth wing of the ruling party.

Five interviewees (including ZM_005, ZM_007, ZM_022, ZM_020) indicated that they were keen to go back to school and pursue their desired careers (in nursing, veterinary science, accounts, electrics). Nevertheless, except for ZM_007 who wanted to finish her accounting qualification and go to Belgium, the rest saw themselves continuing to engage in farming or other aspects of this rural economy. For example, ZM_005 wants to be a veterinary nurse while another wants to be an electrician and continue with farming. ZM_022 aspires to do a course in earth-moving vehicles and run his own business based on this qualification.

Some of the interviewees that operated businesses indicated that they wished to expand by either increasing employment and merchandise or opening up shops in areas surrounding Mvurwi. It is noteworthy that those who operated street stalls, or were housed in more informal structures, all aspired to formalise their business through moving into a formal built-up shop that is recognised by the council. Historically, informal street trading or vending has been met with a heavy hand by both central and local government. Additionally, moving from operating from a stall to a formal shop structure is viewed as a sign of socioeconomic achievement. Five interviewees (ZM_015, ZM_020, ZM_024, ZM_002, and ZM_003) saw asset building as a major goal for the next five to ten years. These assets were directly linked to either agricultural production or the agricultural economy more broadly.

One, interviewee (ZM_037) aspired to own a business:

I expect to operate my own business. I expect to open my own takeaway shop if I get money. All I need is a place, some plates, and a refrigerator. I have no timeline in which I can achieve this, I just hope I will be able to generate more money so that I will be able to operate my own business. The only challenge is to generate enough capital. To counter this challenge, I have ventured into farming this year. I planted my one hectare of maize on my father's plot.

Apart from two interviewees, most others could not imagine or plan a future beyond the next five-to-ten-year period. The two interviewees who saw a more distant future were business operators. ZM_028 looked to set up several shops across Mashonaland East Province. He indicated that he saw an opportunity since most white-owned shops that served the farming districts in the province had shut down after the land reform programme. He saw he had a competitive advantage and was keen to take advantage of the opportunity for future expansion. ZM_023 highlighted future investment in housing plots, which are likely to increase in price in the near future. He saw this as an opportunity to build his real-estate assets. Both linked possible constraints to realising their plans to the poor socioeconomic environment in the country that included limited access to finance.

Two producers spoke about climate change and climate variability being key constraints to their future agricultural prospects (ZM_024 and ZM_021). Without the ability to irrigate, reliance on rainfall would continue to make farming risky, and could contribute to their failure. ZM_024 cited his experience with drought in one year and heavy rain in another (the El Niño and La Niña phenomena) which resulted in loss of their crops and a major setback to production. ZM_021 complained that despite having a dam close to their farm, they could not afford to invest in irrigation equipment. He pointed out that there is little funding for youth in agriculture and a lack of funding hinders their ability to purchase inputs and equipment and 'upgrade' into fully mechanised commercial farming. While we might appreciate this ambition in young people, we are aware that such funding is probably limited for a large proportion of smallholders, regardless of their age.

9 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study started with the recognition that policy and academic research have paid little attention to the steps that rural young people take in order to build their livelihoods. The brief early histories of this small sample of young people living and working in a commercial hotspot in Zimbabwe, at a time of significant economic challenges, provide some insight into these steps.

The overwhelming aspiration of this group of young men and women was to get good grades at school and eventually enter a profession of one kind or another even though the majority left school at O-level and immediately looked for work or sought the means to start a business. The value of learning or gaining skills for work appears in several of their stories. The young women were seen to drop out early from school and to marry at a young age which constrained their ability to get paid work. Most went into unpaid domestic care work or worked as on- and off-farm workers for a low wage.

The significant role that agriculture plays in the livelihood building of this group, including that of the single university graduate, reflects the fact that Mvurwi lies at the centre of a high potential farming region, and that the farm economy has benefited from a long history of tobacco production, a high-value export crop, supported by the state. Its present dynamism reflects a current boom in tobacco along with a good market for maize and other products such as vegetables. Half of the young people in this sample were attracted to this location from elsewhere because of the businesses and jobs generated by its agriculture.

For some, income from full- or part-time employment was significant in providing capital to start in farming, especially tobacco production, and other ancillary services. However, although this is a commercial hotspot, most of the young people interviewed were 'ducking and diving' to make a living. That is, finding different ways to earn an income and where possible, make small savings. Many involved themselves in multiple activities across the four different modes of engagement and those who engaged in farming were astute in the type of farming in which they engaged. For example, those involved in tobacco farming took

advantage of the tobacco boom in the country, and the possibility of entering into contract farming with the increased number of companies. It is not surprising that access to capital for farming and businesses development is presented as a major constraint.

Access to land was not generally a constraint on young people engaging in agriculture even if they were not allocated land under the government's 20 per cent quota system in the FTLRP. There are multiple ways in which these young people accessed land. Land was accessed through rentals, inheritance, community projects, and negotiated joint ventures with land owners. In fact, many young people entered into rental arrangements or joint ventures with 'suitcase farmers' from the A2 resettled commercial farms. These are a win-win for those who acquired A2 farms but could not actively farm the land themselves, and yet were able to enter into some land rental or joint venture arrangements with young people as a means of demonstrating to government their productive utilisation of the land. Often the cost of renting in such cases was nominal.

There were some noticeable cases in which female producers used their social networks to acquire small pieces of land to farm. Often, they grew food crops (maize, groundnuts, sweet potato) primarily for domestic consumption and any income generated was used to meet domestic needs and for paying school fees. On the other hand, young males involved in agriculture diversified into cash crops and used income generated to invest in other businesses or assets that allowed them to generate more income.

Even though young people engage in multiple activities that seemingly have a low barrier to entry, the study showed that the majority required some form of financial assistance or support to kick-start their activities. Support from family, broader social relations, and from benefactors (like those supported by the Kurainashe project) were key to enabling them to overcome barriers associated with getting started or progressing with their economic activities and accessing markets and land. Young people also organised themselves into groups in order to access loans from the bank for their economic activities.

Most of the interviewees imagined futures were closely linked to the immediate future in which asset accumulation, starting new business ventures, acquiring a piece of land to farm or build, growing a business from informal to formal (both in infrastructure and licencing), and investment in their own and/or their children's education featured. Imagined futures were often limited to a five- to ten-year horizon. It is noteworthy that at least two interviewees seemed 'beaten by the system' and could not imagine a future beyond the farming activities in which they were currently involved. One female farmer indicated that she had achieved in life by finding a husband and farming on the plot of land he had inherited. Her difficult childhood and lack of access to resources made her see her current status as a success and having arrived at her imagined future.

What is noteworthy is that livelihood activities of these young people are vulnerable to hazards, which can destroy any economic gains made from their multiple economic activities. The hazards described by the interviewees include drought and unreliable rain, the unstable macroeconomic environment, price distortions due to interference by the *makoronyera*, ill-health, and demand for money to meet the obligations of the extended family. These hazards negatively affected many of the interviewees and across the different modes of engagement. The interviewees demonstrated a ducking and diving approach to navigate the structural, physical, and individual hurdles or hazards they encounter in a bid to forge a living and future within this vibrant rural economy. Except for two interviewees, most young people did not let

the setbacks deter them. The Mvurwi case shows an agile and determined group of young men and women who have consciously decided to make good of their early setbacks and have turned to the rural economy for a myriad of economic activities to augment revenue streams.

The young people's resilience in the face of a difficult macroeconomic environment and little support from government in terms of social protection programmes, and their ability to see and seize opportunities for their livelihoods, points to youth who are motivated to succeed and who can be assisted with policy or programmes that can help them protect their gains.

Policy options for young people in Zimbabwe's rural economy need to first acknowledge that the rural economy presents opportunities for young people across the different modes of engagement. Such a recognition would enable social protection programmes to support initiatives emerging from within the rural economies themselves, such as the expansion of access to resources under a government subsidy programme, not limited to ownership of land. This would benefit many young people. Equally, capacity building to enable young people to understand the fundamental tenets of lease/rental agreements, joint ventures, etc. as ways to mitigate disputes or loss of production when rental agreements go sour would be a good starting point for reducing the hazards of early livelihood building.

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ENDNOTES

1. Independent consultant, Harare, Zimbabwe.
2. We define the term 'agricultural commercialisation' as 'occurring when agricultural enterprises and/or the agricultural sector as a whole rely increasingly on the market for the sale of produce and the acquisition of production inputs, including labour' (Poulton 2017: 30). In short, this term refers to the 'process of increased market production' (Hinderink and Sterkenburg 1987: 1).
3. Agricultural Policy Research for Africa (APRA) is a DFID-funded, five-year research programme that examines programme impacts and outcomes on rural poverty, empowerment of women and girls, and food and nutrition security in sub-Saharan Africa. The APRA Youth Policy Study was conducted in Ghana (Yeboah 2019), Tanzania (John and Manyong 2019), and Zimbabwe (this paper).
4. An employee of the Ministry of Land Agriculture Water Climate and Rural Resettlement (MLAWCRR) who provides agriculture-related extension/advisory services support.
5. <https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/>.
6. The agro-ecological regions describe the potential productivity/output of a given area. Regions I, II, and III have the most favourable climatic conditions for intensive crop and animal production.
7. Most of the information on the local economy of this area is based on the work of Scoones et al. 2017, Sukume et al. (2015), and Scoones (2017).
8. This is a certificate obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture when a farmer has completed the requisite training course offered by the Ministry through its agricultural extension officers.
9. The Central Mechanical and Equipment Department (CMED) is a government run parastatal that provides transport, procurement of vehicles, fuel supply, training and testing of drivers and administration.
10. Burning or spinning money is a process of selling hard USD cash and the surrogate currency 'bond notes' to foreign currency dealers. The dealers transfer money into one's bank account at a higher rate. i.e. at the time of the research, one USD dollar traded on the black market for US\$60 dollars of electronically transferred money.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEWEE WORK HISTORIES

Case ZM_001

He got the encouragement into farming from his friend Frank who is a mechanic by profession but he is also doing farming. He says there is money in agriculture. Bought three trucks and built eight roomed houses. Trucks are used for ferrying their goods supplies and for hiring. They bought plasma TVs and Android phones.

Challenges with changing exchange rates which affects prices for imported commodities they buy from Mbare such as onions, apples, and bananas.

Case ZM_002

Current activities

About her business: she got the inspiration and skills to start her own *musika* from her mother. She started off in 2003 when she got married. Started with US\$5 selling oranges. She rents the table from the local council and pays US\$4 per month. Now they get approximately US\$100 per month. She pays for *mupiro* at their Jehovah's Witness church. She got the inspiration and skills to start her own *musika* from her mother. She rents the table from the local council and pays US\$4 per month.

She owns a one-acre portion of land at the Kurainashe project where they grow tomatoes, leafy vegetables, onions, and potatoes with other project members. She also owns inherited land from the husband's parents who are now late. They grow *mbambaira* and maize at that land. The husband is responsible for managing the garden at Kurainashe and their personal field. She also goes to the fields to assist the husband. For *musika* she gets supplies of fruits and vegetable commodities from their garden and the field while some products they get them from local farms. She also owns inherited land from the husband's parents who are now late. They grow *mbambaira* and maize at that land.

They face challenges with cash shortages which lowers sales as she does not accept other payment modes which then makes customers go to other vendors. She wants to buy a fuel-powered irrigation pump to ease watering their garden so that they expand their activities.

The other challenge is on transport; they hire transport to ferry their orders which is expensive.

Case ZM_003

Past activity

During his A-levels, he was paying fees for himself. He got the money from doing part-time jobs like cutting and selling firewood, ploughing people's fields, and fetching river sand for construction for the school in exchange for fees.

Current activity

He grows maize and that is his first round running from the 2017 to 2018 season. He does all the operations by himself.

He started up with US\$500 which he used to pay US\$100 for renting the 1ha he is using. He hired the government tractor and the planter and all the inputs for 1ha using the money. He also assists in managing his uncle's field. He does not pay rent but often contributes with food when he gets money and there is need in the home.

He faces challenges of lack of capital to hire labour to assist with the farm activities such as weeding the field. He also can't access the presidential inputs to expand his activities due to legal requirements such as land offer letters.

Transport to the field is also another challenge. He has to commute to the field which requires money, yet he does not have anywhere to get it since he is not employed somewhere and this is his start-up project.

He cannot develop the land and build a temporary home to reduce transport costs since he does not own it.

He recommends the government adjust the Command Agriculture initiative to fit the needs of youths like him.

Case ZM_004

Past activities

After school he continued with his soccer career. He came to stay with his aunt's mum in Mvurwi town in 2001. He played soccer up to division one level for the Mvurwi and Bindura teams.

He was later employed at Mbvukwesi Primary as a general hand assistant (2001–2005). In 2006, he opened a bottle store business in Mvurwi town but it did not go well in 2008 due to inflation.

Current activities

He then opened hardware in 2011 selling farm equipment. Kudzanai took a loan from AgriBank to start the hardware. He joined a group of four people as was required by the bank and they took the loan and shared the money. He started with US\$300 capital. Amongst his business products are bolts, bearings, plough components, and torch lights. He gets the products from South Africa and Botswana and his customers are local. He puts a 60 per cent mark-up on his products' prices. He gets approximately US\$300 that he pays himself monthly from the hardware.

He uses cash, Ecocash, and swipe as modes of customer payment; however, there were customer complaints about the high rates charged on the services.

He practises farming in Hariana and Cooldell A1 farmlands. He grows maize. He started in 2015 as an investment from the hardware income. He is doing this to diversify income so that he reduces the need to take loans to raise capital for business expansion. He got four tonnes in the previous season.

His major challenge is one of labour. He requires more labour to leverage on the hardware and the farm. His current income capacity does not support that yet. Challenge with access to agricultural support schemes such as the Command Agriculture for inputs which requires land ownership documents which most youths do not possess.

Case ZM_005

She sells fruits and vegetables: potatoes, cabbages, and tomatoes, etc. She gets income of about US\$150/month if sales are good and less than US\$100 if the market is poor. She started in March 2017 with US\$100 which she got from her husband.

She started in March 2017 with US\$100 which she got from her husband. She got the skills from her mother who is also a vendor.

The motivation came from the desire to supplement the husband's income and cater for other expenses while saving money for her college fees. She also does this just to find something to occupy herself as a housewife.

She gets income of about US\$150/month if sales are good and less than US\$100 if the market is poor.

She bought herself a kitchen unit for US\$360 (was delivered early 2018), a two-plate electrical stove – US\$70 (2017) and a two-plate gas stove – US\$75 (2017). She also buys clothes and her hairdressing using the income from her musika (stall).

Her business challenge is of cash shortages. Her other challenge relates to her nursing condition where it discourages her from going into farms to purchase commodities with other vendors so she relies on suppliers who bring them into the market which may be quite expensive because of the transport cost and also poor quality might be delivered.

Case ZM_006

Past activity

From 2010 to 2012, he worked at my family farm called Harare Farm. They were offering irrigation services in four provinces: namely Matabeleland, Masvingo, Mashonaland West, and Mashonaland Central (Mt Darwin) but the business later went down and we remained operating in Matabeleland. He was working as a manager overseeing all the operations.

Current activity

Nyengeretai said he works as a manager at Windmill Hardware in Mvurwi town centre. The shop was three-quarters full of stocks of grain seed and stock feeds. Vegetable seeds were also packed on racks close to Nyengeretai's table.

In 2015, he enrolled with Women's University for a degree programme in Horticulture Agriculture. After that I got a job to work at Windmill Hardware. I am a manager.

Case ZM_007

In 2015, that is when I got a job to work as a till operator at Farm and City Hardware, Mvurwi. I got this job to work not because I was interested in agricultural activities but it was just to find something to do and earn income. At Farm and City Hardware, I am exposed to a wide range of activities which include receiving and financing stocks and I have gained experience and skills in communication through daily interactions with different people. Farm and city hardware sells garden vegetable seeds, farm inputs, building material, veterinary products, crop chemicals, and protective clothing. We get our supplies from many different companies. There are three youth employees (including me) working at our branch; two are till operators and the other one works in the administration department. I earn a salary amount of US\$300.

I have gained experience and skills in communication through daily interactions with different people.

With the experience I gained from working in the Farm and City shop, I am planning to do an extra course, either in veterinary science or crop chemical science with the aim of being a financial advisor in these areas.

My ultimate goal is to complete my financial accounting course and go abroad where my husband stays in Belgium.

Case ZM_008

Past activities

During my time in school, I used to work in our garden doing horticulture and sell the produce. The money I would use for buying extra school things like socks, shoe polish, and books. My mother worked in Mt Pleasant as a house girl and I stayed with her in Mt Pleasant from 1997 to 1998 looking for a job. I got a job in Masasa as a panel beater at a garage. From 1998 to 1999, I did not have a job staying with my mother in Mt Pleasant. I would work for her boss washing cars and assisting in the garden earning some money. From 1999 to 2008, I got a job from the Power Sales Clothing Supermarket as a casual worker. In 2008, I went to work in South Africa as a warehouse operator which was selling health products. I worked there for two years. When I got back to Zimbabwe that is when I started poultry farming in Dzivarasekwa at our family house. I started off with US\$250 and bought 100 chickens and the food. I was not paying rent. I ran the project for a year in Harare and raised US\$700. In 2013, I moved to our rural home and expanded the project. I established a big poultry house. I got funding of US\$2500 from a friend to buy 5,000 chickens. I later started growing vegetables selling them to Mbare to diversify my income source. I would load two-tonne trucks per trip to Mbare. In 2015, I employed three people to work in the garden.

Current activities

I left poultry in September 2015 and invested fully into horticulture. I grew tomatoes, onions, and leafy vegetables. Later in December I thought of opening a farm hardware store at Mvurwi rank where I am operating to date. I sell fertilisers, seeds, crop chemicals, and cement. I accept Ecocash, swipe, and cash payments. I employed three people and they are paid based on profits made by the business.

The main challenges we face are of insufficient funds to expand the business; for example, if we want to purchase

a tonne of fertilisers we require a lot more money which we cannot raise from our business capacity so we can only purchase a few stocks which limits us to get discounts from buying in bulk.

The legal requirements are too stringent and limit our growth as a small company such as Zimra tax requirements.

We wish that the government would establish lending facilities that are specially designed in favour of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Case ZM_009

Past activity

From 2001 to 2003 when I finished school I went to do mining (mukorokoza) in Mutorashanga mining chrome. From 2003 to 2006, I was in Bindura working at the Trojan mine as a mine worker. From 2008 to 2009, I was back in our rural home in Mutorashanga because of economic hardships. I went back to mining from 2013 to 2015 when the economy got better.

Current activity

I left in 2015 to Mvurwi when I started farming again. I rent one acre of field until today. I grow maize during the rainy season and during the other time of year I grow vegetables in the garden. I started with US\$20. My parents assisted me with some farm inputs to complement my US\$20 because it was not enough. They also gave me the skills of doing farming through my experience in their farming activities in our rural home when I grew up.

I usually grow rape vegetables and sell them. I can earn US\$34 profit per month from selling my vegetables. I sell green mealies from which I can get US\$20 to US\$30 per month. When I harvest dried maize I can get two tonnes from my harvest.

Case ZM_010

Past activity

While I was in school I used to work in the fields assisting my parents with farming.

I started working in my uncle's butcheries just to assist him. I was not earning a salary but sometimes he would give me some money. In 2012, I went to Bindura to do mining as a mukorokoza and would earn almost US\$50 to US\$100 per week. I used the money to get a driver's licence.

Current activity

In 2013, I started driving trucks. My friend who owns trucks employed me to use one of his trucks. He first gave me a one-and-a-half tonne truck for hiring services. I offer hiring services to farmers from their fields to the market.

I have managed to buy more farm inputs and increased tobacco production by 1ha at our farm. We do joint farming with my father. We grow soya beans and maize also on the farm. We sold one tonne in 2017. We sell to GMB and the National Foods company. I also bought three cattle from my truck hiring job.

Case ZM_011

The farm is owned by his father (my father-in-law). He gave us a one-hectare portion to use for farming. We did not have to raise money to buy farm inputs so my mother-in-law assisted us with the inputs. He gave us a one-hectare portion to use for farming.

We also work in other people's farms and get money to buy extra basic inputs and to buy food in the house. We earn US\$5/day for our services and we normally do tobacco harvesting for other people.

We started farming on our own this 2017–18 rain season. We grow tobacco and maize on our one-hectare field.

We got the inputs from government through political platforms. We got one bag of D fertiliser, one bag of top dresser, and 10kg of maize seed. Mother-in-law gave us tobacco seed and chemicals to spray the tobacco.

Case ZM_012

Past activities

I dropped school at that stage because I did not like the long distance we walked to school. I began to work on the farm, picking pests from the crop fields and the owner of the farm would give us some money together with my friends at that age.

Current activity

In 2001, my husband got a farm at Micklan through the land resettlement regime. He also registered my name under the farm ownership papers. The land was given us for free but now we pay a land ownership fee to the government (mutero) since 2015. Of the six hectares we got, we gave two hectares to our children.

We grow maize and tobacco at our farm. We hire cattle and tractors to till the land. For cattle we pay US\$40/ha and tractor US\$65/ha. Our farming activities are limited to growth because of lack of financial capital to purchase adequate inputs. My husband is still working at the garage and the money he gets we use it to buy inputs and to pay school fees for his children.

I am the one who is fully responsible for the farm operations since my husband will be out at work. We also grow vegetables for sale in our garden. We supply them to vendors in Mvurwi and some we sell to the community.

Our main challenge in this farming business is lack of capital to expand our activities. We need more labour to work on the farm if we are to expand and exploit the land at our full potential. The cash shortages from the bank costs us because we have to go and wait for many days to get cash from the bank, yet buying things using plastic money is too costly here.

Case ZM_013

Past activity

After school knowledge, worked as a farmer worker, cutting down trees for the new farmers who occupied the Pembichesi farm after the land distribution programme in Zimbabwe and other A2 farmers in the surrounding areas. He also did gold-panning for a year in Mount Darwin, but left after operation (Chikorokoza Chaperera).

In 2013, he started work at Mvurwi pharmacy where he worked as a cleaner but he was later taught on the job to count and to dispense medicines.

Current activity

During this time starting in 2015 he used the money he acquired from the pharmacy to buy farming inputs to use in the family garden. When he harvested he bought more inputs and then did half a hectare where he harvested two tonnes of maize and sold one tonne to the GMB for at US\$390.

Knowledge invested this money to inputs for tobacco farming. During the 2016/17 season, he grew tobacco and made US\$7,300 when he sold the crop. During the 2016/17 season he grew tobacco and made US\$7,300 when he sold the crop. He bought a Toyota Wish car from the car sales in Harare using the US\$7,300 plus a grinding mill in Mbare. The grinding mill is at the Pembichesi farm outside his parents' house.

Knowledge is also involved in taxi-pirating to supplement his work salary. He operates in Centenary. He does his taxi-pirating business during his off-days at work.

Case ZM_014

Past activity

She had shop, bottle store, butcher which belonged to the husband. The shops closed during the Zimbabwe dollar crisis in 1998. She rented these shops.

From 1998–2018 she had chickens, sold 600 chickens, and bought one commuter omnibus for US\$1500, a Toyota Hiace. She raised more chickens (from 600–1,000), sold them, and bought a second car. She bought the two commuter omnibuses and the car in 1998.

Current activities

Afterwards she started market gardening and farming as forms of livelihoods. She grows potatoes and tobacco. The farm is six hectares and is A1. She owns three to four gardens – each garden is about an acre. She says the Pembichesi farm was once owned by a white man called Dovini.

She sells tomatoes and kapenta in Mozambique in Mukumbira. She goes to Mozambique two to three times a year.

She is involved in a savings group of 15 people. She uses the money she gets from the group to pay workers and buy firewood. She pays workers US\$3 (vanokowa).

She also works at a crèche for US\$130 a month. At the crèche there is no building and it's at a beerhall in the afternoon. She also works with Kurainashe organisation. Kurainashe gives her projects poultry and garden projects.

Case ZM_015

Past activities

After completing his secondary education, he did relief teaching from 2011 January–August 2012. In addition to relief teaching, he did piece jobs such as brick moulding and other manual duties at the school. When he completed his degree programme, he worked at the Kurainashe organisation from August 2016 to August 2017. He left the organisation because of lack of funds.

Current activities

At this point, he decided to do farming. In November 2017, he worked for Bitsol engineering who were fixing roads. He worked as a general head for three months and earned himself US\$500. The US\$500 earned was used as start-up money for farming.

He currently rents a one-hectare piece of land where he is farming maize. He pays US\$100 rent per hectare. He faces land ownership challenges. He says he doesn't even bother applying for land because it's not easy to get it since he doesn't have an offer letter.

Another challenge he faces is because he works alone, he doesn't have enough money to hire workers, so the work becomes intensive. He also says the transport costs are high; he travels every day from home going to the field (he uses one dollar every day).

He recommends the government to adjust the Command Agriculture policy; the programme only avails farmland to those with offer letters. Secondly, he urges the government to cut the farm sizes because some people with big farms are leaving theirs idle. Lastly he wishes for the government to make land available to the youth so it is easier to develop the land, build a house, and reduce transport costs.

Case ZM_016

In 2001, he worked at Umvukwezi Primary as a general hand. He ventured into the bottle store business.

Current activity

Then in 2010 that is when he started selling hardware. He took a loan from the Agribank of US\$200 to start the hardware. The loan was a cooperative loan which was shared between four people. In his hardware store he sells things such as bolts, bearings, solar materials, spanners, etc. He buys his equipment from Botswana and South Africa.

His customers are the farmers in Mvurwi and the surrounding areas of Mvurwi. He also rents fields for farming. He has been farming for three years. He used his capital from his hardware store as start-up capital to do his farming.

Rainfall is the biggest challenge that affects his hardware business. This is because his hardware stall is located outside. Another challenge comes from trading in Mbare where he buys some of his hardware equipment. The traders refuse coins and want hard cash, and sometimes he may only have coins; therefore, buying equipment becomes difficult. Another challenge that he pointed out was that he cannot do Command Agriculture; only A1 and A2 farmers have access because they have offer letters.

He recommends the responsible authorities to build better infrastructure to avoid inconvenience from the rain.

Case ZM_017

In March 2017, she started the vending business with US\$100 that was given to her by her husband. She sells cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, and fruits such as apples and bananas. She also participates in society groups to supplement her income from vending. She is only doing vending as a part-time job to raise money to pursue her career. She would like to go to Mazowe College to do veterinary science.

Sometimes fruits and vegetables are in short supply and this affects the business. She also noted child-rearing as a challenge. She said she is not able to go to buy from places like Mbare because she has a child to take care of and thus has to wait for suppliers close by. She recommends the government to give young people projects to improve their wellbeing. She said young people (in this case young men) in Mvurwi are more involved in taxi-pirating which is not a sustainable form of livelihood.

Case ZM_018

She owns a car spare parts shop and a butchery in Mvurwi. Her parents live in Mvurwi. Her brother works in Harare; he gave her start-up capital and told her to look for a place to set a shop for car spare parts. Her brother saved US\$500 from where he worked. The shop was opened in 2015. The shop premise is a container of an old van/lorry and belongs to her. The space is very crowded but there is lots of traffic from people and combi drivers. The space rental is US\$150. Her clients come from around Guruve, Dande farmers – although business from them is seasonal, especially during the tobacco season and regarding things to service cars. Chinese who are doing tobacco in joint ventures also buy from her.

She faces sexual harassment as a female shop owner. She orders from Harare or South Africa. She goes twice every three months; she brings ball joints, bells, bearings, shoes, brake pads, clutch pads. Foreign currency shortage in the country causes her to go to the black market to get foreign currency and this is very high. Another challenge is that farming is seasonal so sometimes people do not have money.

Case ZM_019

He lives in compound. He does farm work in the compound; the compound has 23 plots. It's an A2 farm.

From 2009–18 he was a Citifresh (Forrester) peas quality controller. He started as a packer then was approved to quality. He worked with Shaun Philips and Director Chris Brooker. Seasonal job US\$84 per month, for 221 hours, six months' paid overtime over R5 per hour (US\$321). He can go off and still get paid. More hours so hours extra US\$84 plus overtime. Have grades A1 B1 C1, A2 B2 C2, A3 B3 C3, and B4. A1 gets US\$82. How you participate you got more money. China US\$2.88 per day, how you work is how you get paid. Working hours 6am–noon, two hours' lunch, 2–5pm.

Case ZM_020

She and her young sister attended school at Mvurwi Primary and they only got up to Grade 7 because their parents could not afford to pay for their secondary education. She and her sister did piece jobs (farm work) in the settlements.

Growing up, she aspired to be a nurse. She would like to go back to school.

Case ZM_021

Past activity

After Form 6 he did contract work for ZESA to fix lines, maintenance, fix broken poles. He worked in Mvurwi, Guruve, and Mahuhure.

Current activities

He used the salary from ZETDC as start-up for farming in 2015. In 2015, he grew soyabean; one hectare produced 37 bags and sold to National Foods at US\$280 per tonne. In 2016, grew soya bean on two hectares of land, produced 42 bags and sold to GMB at US\$550 per tonne. He also grew maize on one hectare, produced 36 bags,

sold to GMB at US\$390 per tonne. He used money to buy inputs.

He wants to be an electrician and go for course. Save money to do this line, especially colleges or polytechnic.

However, he says he will not leave farming because farming has profits. He says he has been farming for years.

Need finances for input, there is not sufficient funding, we would like loans to pay workers. Description of loans e.g. AgriBank. Command/presidential scheme difficult because they give large-scale, and small-scale farmers are looked down upon.

Case ZM_022

He has been working at Prime City for four years now. The products sold at Prime City include fertilisers, vegetable seeds, animal chemicals, and agriculture chemicals. He receives a monthly salary of US\$200.

In 2017, he planted one-and-a-half hectares of maize in Ceasar and harvested three-and-a-half tonnes of maize. He sold two tonnes of maize to the GMB. The maize is sold at US\$390/tonne. This year, he did not have time to plant maize and planted one hectare of butternuts instead. In 2017, he bought a car, a Honda Fit using the money he acquired from selling his maize crop.

Money is the main challenge; he requires US\$400 to do the earth-moving machines course. The course runs for one month with a condition that if an individual is a faster learner, the individual can complete the course in two weeks and get the certificate.

Case ZM_023

Past activities

In 2008, he went to Mvurwi to look for something to do. He worked at Delta for one year on contract. Then he left and worked at Citifresh as a scouter, where he would work in the farms inspecting oranges, avocados, granadillas, and nectarines to see if they qualify as export quality. He worked at Citifresh for one-and-a-half years.

Current activities

Then left and started running his own business selling car spare parts. He owns a business in Mvurwi in the location to do with selling car spare parts. His wife runs the business. In 2017 he planted two hectares of maize and harvested three-and-a-half tonnes, and sold two-and-a-half to GMB and got about US\$900 which he invested in the butchery business. He supplies chicken (he keeps chickens), pork (he buys the pork from the farmers in Mvurwi) to Grilliam butchery in Mvurwi.

He also helps out at the butchery every day; during the interview he cut and sold meat to the customers.

Many people are now into running spare parts businesses and thus there is a lot of competition. As a result, prices have gone down and making the business less profitable. He used to get spare parts in Tanzania but now he gets from Harare. Another challenge is that rent space where his business is located is expensive: US\$150 per month. He says he only rents the space; he puts his own iron sheets structure so that is why he pays more. He wishes the rent was US\$50.

He recommends the government to give projects to the youth especially those who may not have enough funding to proceed further with their studies.

Case ZM_024

Past activity

He completed school in 2005 then started working at ZESA.

Current activities

From 2007 until 2018, the husband has been at the farm working as a full-time farmer. Both she and her husband have no desire to go back to school. They want to be full-time farmers and make a living for the family. The farm is

six hectares and is an A1 farm. They grow maize, tobacco, soya beans, and beans. They sell their produce to GMB (GMB takes three tonnes as credit and two tonnes is what they give cash). She and her husband also have a one-acre garden where they grow potatoes, vegetables, and tomatoes. They sell the potatoes they produce in pockets (US\$10 per pocket) to takeaway restaurants and vendors. One hectare of potatoes produces 100 pockets. Her husband says when they harvest a good crop they generate roughly US\$600 from the potatoes. In 2017, she and her husband are beneficiaries of the Command Agriculture.

One of the challenges mentioned was that there is not enough capital to increase acreage. Another challenge was in 2016 when heavy rains washed away fertilisers from the fields. Her and her husband think the heavy rains will continue to be a challenge because of climate change. Another challenge they faced was in 2017; their maize crop was affected by the armyworm but they were able to treat their crop early.

Case ZM_025

Past activities

In 2003 she worked at Chihure general dealer shop for one year. She left working there in 2004 with a second pregnancy from a different man outside of wedlock. She went to stay home again doing farming on the rural homestead.

Her sister is a farmer; she grows maize and soya beans on a six-hectare A1 farm. The sister's husband who is deceased acquired the farm through land reform (jambanja) (bottle lids are numbered placed in a hat; the number you pick becomes your farm then you register with Lands in Concession).

Current activities

Her sister gave her a portion of land. She grows maize and soya beans.

She started work at Kurainashe in 2013 and gets a monthly salary of US\$60. From 2013–18 she has been at Kurainashe.

She started work at Kurainashe as a community officer in 2013 and gets a monthly salary of US\$60. From 2013–18 she has been at Kurainashe.

In 2018, her maize crop was affected by the sun. She planted 15kgs on one-and-a-half hectares of land and was looking forward to harvesting four tonnes but the sun affected her crops. Another challenge she faces is the use of plastic money; she said things have become more expensive. For example, if she wants to buy fertiliser for US\$30 she uses US\$40. If she wants to buy groceries for US\$20 she will use US\$30. She also wanted to be involved with the Command Agriculture but it was only given to land owners of A2 farms.

Case ZM_026

Past activities

When she finished Form 1, she started working as a house girl (maid) in Harare, Waterfalls, full-time for two years.

She also worked in Borrowdale Brooke for her father's young brother for a year but he did not give her enough money. In addition, she worked in Hatcliff, Glenview, and Kuwadzana. She left jobs because people did not have money so she could no longer live there; this happened during 2004–06.

Current activities

Now she is a farmer she went into farming because it is life to her. It's not easy for her to do because she did not go to school. She got land community garden because she lived there. She grows vegetables, beetroot, onion, sweet potatoes, butternut, maize, and pumpkin leaves. She used her own money as capital. She gets her seeds from Mai Mugweni (Kurainashe organisation).

She sells vegetables in the Mvurwi location. She wants the government to help with tractors, fertilisers, seeds to improve their farming. She says people have the desire to farm but they do not have land.

Case ZM_027

Past activities

In 2007, he farmed sugar beans and maize.

From 2008–10 he opened a tuck shop; he used the money from the tuckshop to finance farming. From 2011–13, he became a commuter omnibus conductor (assistant).

Current activities

In 2015, he used the money from pirating to grow tobacco and maize on his father's farm. The farm is an A1 farm and is seven hectares. He used two hectares for tobacco and because the farm is small, then asked another person to rent one hectare to grow maize. In 2017, he planted two hectares of tobacco; he also used to pirate. After he harvested he got US\$5,000 and bought a Honda Fit (duty inclusive) in South Africa at the Messina border car sales (GDI car sales). He makes US\$6,000 from growing maize and tobacco (makes US\$4.5 from tobacco only). He gets US\$130 per week from his Honda Fit which is used for pirating.

Case ZM_028

After A-levels, he did an apprenticeship at CMED in diesel and motor mechanics in two years. This had always been his passion. He grew up in a family that deals with trucks. His father worked in the council and would go and collect. His father had many friends that were white farmers who sold him implements. He rebuilds these and sold. During the holidays he would help in the business.

His other brother went to trucks and he took the farm implements business. They are just restructuring. In 2005, he used to be a truck driver for his father. In 2007, he became full-time under his father. Then in 2017, he took full control of the company, which was a combined business (inheritance from father). Currently father does nothing. He gets paid a share from both businesses by his sons. He believes he's living his dream.

Now he turned the tractor yard and buys tractors from farmers, reconditions them and resales. He has four part-time workers, who work for three months then renew contract. The working hours are start (8–5pm) with tea and lunch breaks in between. The workers are from Mvurwi; some come from one farm and one local Mvurwi town.

They sell a tractor for US\$5,000–7,000, get a profit of \$3,000–4,000, buy tractor and service and resale. Tractors are mainly from white and black farmers e.g. the Mahuhure and Mashumbi areas where they grow cotton.

Spare parts are expensive in Zimbabwe so he goes to South Africa to purchase. Another challenge is the bond note challenge because his buyers do not buy in USD, usually use RTGs or bonds; he gets foreign currency in the streets in Harare (black market). The rate is 125 bond against 100 USD; the RTG rate is 145–40 (February 2018).

Case ZM_029

Past activities

My father had taught me satellite dish installation. So when I finished O-levels, that was the same time when Direct Satellite Television (DSTV), (DSTV is a Sub-Saharan African direct broadcast satellite service owned by Multichoice) was trending in this area. I had many piece jobs of installing satellite dishes.

In 2015, I found a job at a certain timber company, I do not remember its name. I decided to join that company so that I could at least have a fixed, reliable source of income. I worked for six months without being paid. At times we could even work overtime, until 10.00pm.

After leaving the timber company, I spent about three months doing nothing. I then thought of sweet potato production. I grew sweet potatoes here in the peri-urban fields. To get the inputs, I assisted someone to grow maize at his farm, then he paid me with sweet potato seed. I did not manage to have a good harvest. This was because I failed to get enough inputs. I partnered with a friend in 2016. My friends invested more money than me. We ventured into the egg business. We could buy eggs in large quantities and at wholesale price from Irvines in Harare and resale them at retail price here. I was offered a shop by my father to use so we did not pay rentals for a shop.

Current activities

Currently I am working in a spare parts shop selling spare parts. I also have my own business of buying and selling farming inputs. We buy fertilisers and seed from other farmers who could have got them from the government yet they are not able to farm. We then sell them to those in need.

Case ZM_030

When I completed Form 4, things were tough for me. It was difficult to survive. I had to ask my parents for anything that I needed and I was not comfortable with it. When I asked for money to start potato production, they initially denied, arguing that I should just be at home and it is their responsibility to provide for me. Now they are happy that I am doing my things.

I saw others doing gardening. Farming vegetables, potatoes, and other crops. They invited me to learn how they do it. That was towards the end of 2016. They have a group called Kushingirira Cooperative (loosely translated as 'endurance'). As a group, they farm vegetables, tomatoes, and potatoes together, then they sell at the market and share the profit. So I realised that they were making money and learnt potato production from them, then decided to do it on my own. I am not a member of any group or organisation, I do farming as an individual, with the assistance of my parents. I started in 2017.

I started with a small portion, about half an acre. During harvesting, I realised I had done better and quickly bought inputs for the next crop so that I no longer depend on my parents. The market is here in Mvurwi. I come with the potatoes to town, sell them either to restaurants which sell fresh chips or to women in the location who resale in smaller quantities at their stalls or any other individuals. Some customers come to the farm to buy directly.

Case ZM_031

I sat for my O-levels in 2010 and scored three subjects. After that I worked as an assistant bricklayer for someone, starting in 2013. Since I had done building studies at school, I managed to learn much about building when I was an assistant bricklayer. I was motivated by my maturity. As a mature person, I needed a source of income so I decided to venture into building. I build tobacco bans, houses, and fowl runs here in the farms.

My earnings from building are not fixed and reliable. At the beginning of the farming season, there is much work as many farmers want to have their tobacco bans fixed or built from the start. After farmers have returned from auction floors, there is also much work as some farmers would want to have their houses built.

I started farming in 2013. I wanted a dynamic source of income so I had to complement building and farming so that I earn more money. I also saw people of my age doing tobacco farming and making money so I was motivated to start tobacco farming too. This could enable me to take care of my ageing parents. My first tobacco crop in 2013 was 2,000 plants. I decided to venture into tobacco farming because it pays. Most people of my age were making money through tobacco. In 2014, I expanded to 5,000 plants and in 2015, I expanded again to one hectare. In 2016 and 2017, I maintained the one hectare and this year (2018) I am expanding to two hectares.

In 2013, I earned US\$600, in 2014, I earned US\$1,000, in 2015, I earned US\$200, in 2016, I got US\$5,500, and in 2017, I earned US\$6,100. I used my profit to buy cattle, farming equipment, and other properties. In 2013, I bought one cow, in 2015, I bought two cattle, and in 2016, I bought a scotch cart and mouldboard plough and last season I bought a car. I am stepping up.

The major challenge in our farming is that it is seasonal. When it is off-season, we do not have a source of income and that affects our life. In trying to curb such challenges, I have maintained my job as a builder and when I am not in the field, I am building somewhere. This helps to complement my income from farming. In the future, I would like to venture into poultry in order to expand my source of income.

Case ZM_032

Past activities

I went to work in Glen Norah B, Harare in 2012 as a house maid. I was 14 years old then. I got the job through a son to the owner of this farm who is a soldier. I decided to take the job so that I could help my parents to put food

on the table. However, I only worked there for three months and quit. The employer was so talkative, she was not providing enough food and the working conditions were so bad. For instance, I could sleep at 21.00 hrs and wake up at 0300 hrs to go and fetch water because there were water problems in the area. So I could not continue doing that and decided to leave. I was earning US\$60 per month and on that money I could keep US\$20 for personal use and send the remainder to my mother so that she could use to buy food and other things at home. For me it was a good salary because I could survive but the working conditions were so hard for me. Maybe it was also because I was still young, only 14 years old then.

Current activities

I came back in 2012. Since then, I have been working on surrounding farms. I do not have a permanent job. The job is seasonal and I work for any farmer who would have hired me. I get piece jobs of planting maize and tobacco at different farms. We compete for jobs at this farm. Everyone who resides in this compound looks for a job when the rains come. It is rare to go to work every day because there are few jobs. After planting, we do weeding and after that harvesting. That is how I survive. Payment varies. Some farmers pay US\$4 from 6am to 1pm, some pay US\$3 for the same hours. Some pay US\$5 per ten lines of weeding and some pay the same US\$5 for 20 lines. So it depends on the farmer.

If I could have money to go back to school I could go. Maybe that can open more opportunities for me.

Case ZM_033

I help my mother to generate income for survival. We both work in the farms during the farming season and when it is not farming season I do gardening for survival. I have been working in the farms. I work in different farms so that I can earn a living. I do planting, weeding, and harvesting. The conditions vary with the farmer. Some use the target system where they give you ten lines for weeding and pay 20kgs of maize; some give you six lines for weeding and pay with a bar of soap. Some pay US\$5 per 15 lines of weeding. I prefer being paid both in cash and in kind because I need groceries and money as well. Sometimes you meet better farmers who pay better. Last year, I got a contract with another farmer where we agreed that I help him do his farming from the beginning of the farming season until harvesting. He was supposed to pay me US\$500 after selling his tobacco but he failed. He paid me US\$200 and said his tobacco did not do well at the market.

I also bought inputs so that I grow my own tobacco. I bought fertiliser and my mother assisted me with US\$25 to buy tobacco seed. I have already done land preparations. I accessed land in the same way I accessed it from gardening. The farm owner does not care much about it. As long as I can work for him when he wants me to.

Case ZM_034

At times I could go to work in farms but I could not pay for my school fees because the money I generated from work had to be used to buy food at home. I am struggling. If we do not work in farms, we will not have anything to eat. I help my guardian to work and buy food.

In the farms I do planting, weeding, and harvesting of tobacco and maize. Sometimes the farmers do not like to employ me because I am young. They argue that I do not perform the job well. But have no option than to work in farms because I need money.

Case ZM_035

Past experience

When I was at school, I was working in farms in order to afford some school needs; right now, I am still working in farms. It seems my life is not moving forward. Currently, for survival I get money through working in farms, buying and selling goods like tomatoes, and also at times I can be given money by my boyfriend who also works in the surrounding farms.

I could also get employed as a house maid in town during the school holiday and get US\$80 for the holiday month. I could use that money to partly pay my school fees and my relatives could assist with the remainder. Unfortunately, last year I failed to raise money for myself and dropped out of school.

Current activities

I worked at Chigamba farm between September and October 2018. I was planting tobacco. I left work there after the owner said there is no longer much work and the people at the farm compound can provide enough labour.

From then, I have been getting some piece jobs in the nearby farms. I have engaged in tobacco and maize planting. I had prior experience in tobacco planting because when my parents were renting a farm they used to grow tobacco and maize among other crops. I used to work in people's fields when I was going to school so that I could afford school fees and other needs at school.

I have also been buying and selling tomatoes. I could buy tomatoes at a certain farm for US\$7/20-litre bucket and sell them to people in smaller quantities. After selling in smaller quantities I could gain US\$13. I did this three times and the supplier ran out of tomatoes so I had to stop. This was a better way of increasing my income and it could enable me to buy food at home.

Case ZM_036

Past activities

In 2016 I joined a relative assisting him in dressmaking. I had done Fashion and Fabrics at school so I knew how to do dressmaking. I left after about four months because I had found employment in a small Murwisi supermarket in Buhera where I had dropped my CV earlier. I was a till operator.

Current activity

I started working at Glow in January 2018. I was stationed at Murambinda (Buhera). From then I was transferred to a branch in Harare because there was too much work there. After working for some months in Harare I was transferred to this branch (Mvurwi) to replace a girl who died. My position at Glow has always been that of a shop keeper.

I am just a shop keeper. I sell these groceries – sugar, cooking oil, drinks, bread, buns, snacks, etc. Recently, my job has expanded to include mobile money transfers (Ecocash). Due to the current cash crisis in the country, the owner of the shop comes with cash from Harare and I sell it to people. The current charge is 10 per cent. So for instance, when someone has money in an Ecocash account and want hard cash; for every US\$10 cash, they send me US\$11.

Maybe the only challenge is there are no off-days. I work seven days a week. Start work at 7am and finish either at 5 or 6pm. If you do not lie, you don't get off-days. For example, last week I had to lie that my mother is not feeling well in Harare and I was given two days off to visit her. Otherwise beside off-days, I am not facing challenges here.

Case ZM_037

I started working here in 2014. By then, I was assisting a lady who was cooking Sadza. I decided to take up this job so that I can get income.

My job was to wash the dishes, buy vegetables, prepare them for cooking, and at times serve customers. This lady taught me how to cook Sadza well and I also learnt how to do it through observation. When that lady died, some two years ago, I then became the sole cooker, running the takeaway on behalf of the owner. My job involves buying all the requirements for cooking such as mealie-meal, vegetables, meat, and washing the dishes, preparing the meals, and serving customers. It's a tiresome job. At times, I get orders to buy live chickens from distant places and I have to go buy them, dress them, and do the cooking.

Case ZM_038

Past activity

Just after completing my O-levels, I took a driver's licence in 2014. I started driving a small lorry, carrying farm produce like avocados and oranges from Mvurwi (Galloway farm) to Chinhoyi. This was a family business; the lorry belonged to my father and the farm produce were for the farm owner who hired the lorry and my services. The job was paying. But later on, the lorry had a breakdown and was later sold last year (2017).

Current activity

I then ventured into mobile phone repairs. I work under my uncle (employed by my father's young brother). He is the one who called me to join him. He is the one who pays the rentals for the place so I am employed by my uncle.

In terms of scale, when there is business, we can make up to US\$400 a day. Our clients come from different areas. Some are even referred here from Bindura, Harare, etc. This is because we provide quality services and we also advertise the business using business cards.

I get paid every day's end. I am paid US\$20 per day. I save my money for long period. I have no responsibilities at home so I can just save my money.

Case ZM_039

Since I finished O-levels in 2016, I was seated at home doing nothing. Last year, 2017, in April the owner of this business (the business is of selling new and second-hand clothes) asked for my services from my mum. She wanted me to help her in selling the clothes whilst she goes to South Africa to buy more wares. She said I could do it until I think of doing something else, be it studying or anything. Because of the need to get some money for myself, I decided to pick up the job. So until now I am still working here.

My salary is US\$50/month but it depends with the season. In December, and during the two/three months when tobacco farmers go to the auction floors, my salary increases to US\$80 but in normal months it's US\$50. I use my money to buy clothes, anything in fashion. I follow fashion trends.

Because of the need to get some money for myself, I decided to pick up the job. So until now I am still working here.

At times, the business owner send me to South Africa to buy clothes to sell here; in most cases my day-to-day activity is to sell clothes to different customers. I do not move from one place to another, I am stationed here. We specialise in kids' stuff. I have no idea why the owner decided to sell kids' stuff over other stuffs. There is a good number of customers for kids' stuff. I have no other sources of income.

Case ZM_040

Past activity

In July 2017, I got a job to work in shop in Chiweshe. I am not related to the shop owner, he just advertised the vacancy and I got a chance. I worked there for a month. I decided to take up that job because I wanted money to buy myself clothes and other personal needs as a girl. I did not want to rely on someone for my personal needs. I earned US\$60 for the one month I worked. I decided to take up that job because I wanted money to buy myself clothes and other personal needs as a girl.

Current activity

I opened this flea market in May 2018. I decided to open the flea market because my husband is a student and does not earn anything so he cannot provide for our child. As a result, I had to find a way of generating income. I was given the idea of opening a flea market by my in-laws who are already in the business. They told me that it pays. I sell a variety of plastic shoes.

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