



Marula Zimbabwe : Zimbabwe

Rural women cultivating, harvesting, processing and marketing marula tree products

Project description

The women-led initiative Marula Zimbabwe trains local women to produce, process, quality control and market marula tree products. The fruit, bark, juice, skin and leaves of this native plant are used to produce a variety of products, such as jam, wine, dried kernels, oil, nuts, herbal powder and soap.



Business model

The Development and Finance Institute for Rural Women Trust (DFIRWT) encourages women in the Chivi District in Southern Zimbabwe, grouped as Marula Zimbabwe, to generate additional household income by processing traditional marula tree products. As well as receiving advice on production and processing, the female entrepreneurs are trained in finance, business management, savings and credit.

Marula Zimbabwe, in collaboration with the Zvishavane Water Project (ZWP), has successfully acquired two hydraulic oil-pressing machines and ensures consistent product quality through sampling, etc. Such quality monitoring is essential in order to achieve a high quality of the products, especially the oils, and thus to market marula products effectively. The initiative also works with PhytotradeAfrica, a regional trade association, which carries out product research and development as well as providing links to markets for the initiative's finished products. International marketing of marula products is also planned.



Scaling up activities in 2012

- Provide training for around 100 women and plant an additional 800 trees
- Introduce organic farming methods in surrounding communities that are not members of Marula Zimbabwe
- Apply for organic and fair trade certification
- Improve the production process for soap making and body oil
- Enhance the business area of flavourings for cereals, biscuits and sweets
- Mentor approximately 45 entrepreneurs
- Introduce a credit component into savings and credit schemes

Immediate needs

- Financial support to increase the capital base of the entrepreneurs and scale up the business
- Support for mentoring activities
- Capacity building in the area of marketing
- Product development for body oils, cereals, sweets, etc.
- Purchase of a marula cracking machine



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Partnership

- ❶ **The Development and Finance Institute for Rural Women Trust (DFIRWT)** is the initiator of the project and is responsible for developing entrepreneurs and raining them in business management and financial planning
- ❷ **The Zvishavane Water Project (ZWP)** facilitates planning, training and quality control. It has provided in-kind support in the form of hydraulic oil-processing machines
- ❸ **Phytotradafrica** is a regional trade association that offers information and advice on research, marketing and product development. It can provide the initiative with links to local and international markets



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: Marula Zimbabwe enables women to generate additional household income. It engages in long-term capacity building by providing women with training in all aspects of business management and the production process. More than 200 people have so far received training, approximately 80 % of them women.

Environmental impact: DFIRWT aims to protect the native marula tree and prevent over-harvesting by promoting sustainable harvesting methods. The

community has planted some 200 marula trees so far. Ending the use of pesticides and fertilisers will promote organic production.

Economic impact: Marula Zimbabwe generates revenue that contributes to overall community development and supports other sectors of the local economy. Non-members can use the oil-processing machines for a fee, which facilitates local production and businesses.

Contact

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SEED Partners

SEED's founding partners are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and SEED is hosted by UNEP-WCMC. Other current partners are the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; the European Union; Conservation International; and SEED's corporate partner, Hisense.



About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: www.seedinit.org

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