

## **Mbire-based drama group benefits from Spotlight Initiative Funding**

***Fig 1: Kusakura drama group members***



***Photo: T Chikwasha***

Creating jobs, improving nutrition, and supporting local economic growth have changed the Mbire District community's livelihoods. The Kusakura Drama Group is a female-led group that runs their own bakery in Mbire District, Mashonaland Central Province. The group comprises of seven hardworking and passionate members, five females and two males.

Kusakura Drama group was established by the LGDA Consortium in 2020 as one of the edutainment groups during the Spotlight Initiative Phase one project with support from UNWOMEN and funded by the European Union. Since then, the drama group has been holding plays within the community and during District Events and other commemorations to educate people on issues that affect women and girls such as promoting Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), early child marriages, teenage pregnancies etc. The main thrust was to scale up information dissemination strategies to cover a large audience through offering edutainment services where the community is educated through entertainment.

In a development that points to the growing success, the Mbire based drama group is among the twelve Community Based Organisations (CBOs) selected in Mashonaland Central Province to benefit from sub-grants meant for designing and implementation of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and SRHR programmes at community level.

Through guidance from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED), Mbire District Office and funding from LGDA and partners, the group is now running a bakery called the Gomba Bakery in Ward 9 to generate income and eradicate poverty in the Mbire community. The group members made good use of the opportunity to increase their income, enhance their food security and improve their standards of living.



**Spotlight Initiative**  
To eliminate violence against women and girls

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations



*“This baking project has offered us women a level of independence we may not otherwise have gained without the support from LGDA and partners. With the money I earn from the bakery, I can now afford to buy the basics for my family. As a group, we now have access to both sustainable, gainful employment and bakery’s profits”* said Juliet Ruben, a member of the Kusakura bakery.

**Fig2: The group members demonstrating underground baking**



**Photo: T Chikwasha**

The group currently bakes buns and bread and sells at 20 cents and 90 cents each respectively. The community has been involved since the beginning of the project and those who haven’t tasted our baking are eager to try the affordable and nutritious bread and buns, their support helped create. After deducting the costs of production, the group is getting a profit averaging US\$150 per month. The market for buns and bread will be extended to a local boarding school and LGDA Training Centre since fresh bread is not always available in shops and when available at times it will be stale.

**Fig 3: Bread and buns ready for packaging**



**Photo: J Rueben**



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*“The challenge we face as a group is of customers who want to barter trade bread or buns for maize or sorghum grains. We end up not getting customers for the grain that we would have collected as payment,”* added Juliet.

Kusakura group members could not contain their joy when they received the grant. *“We want to thank the partners for selecting us to benefit under such an important scheme. As an edutainment group, we also hope that one day we will get a slot on the national broadcaster, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) to educate people on the effects on GBV through our dramas,”* added Juliet with a contented smile. The group expressed their gratitude towards the rare gesture. With funds permitting, the group members said they would want to have their own bakery on another piece of land and electrification to ease up the baking process.

Councillor Musanyara Musarurwa, Ward 9 paid tribute to LGDA and partners for extending the scheme to her ward. *“I am confident, the help you have extended to the CBO in my ward, will go a long way in assisting them to end violence against women and girls. The gesture will alleviate the hardships faced by vulnerable persons,”* she added.

MWACSMED Mbire Community Development Officer, Ms Caroline Raradza encouraged rural women to embark on income generating projects as they improve their livelihoods in the wake of limited employment opportunities in the country. *“The impact of these projects will mean a growth in income which will help them pay for necessary household items, school fees for their children and grandchildren and importantly, stable livelihoods for themselves and future generations,”* she concluded