

## Food Security in Zambia: A tale of two farmers

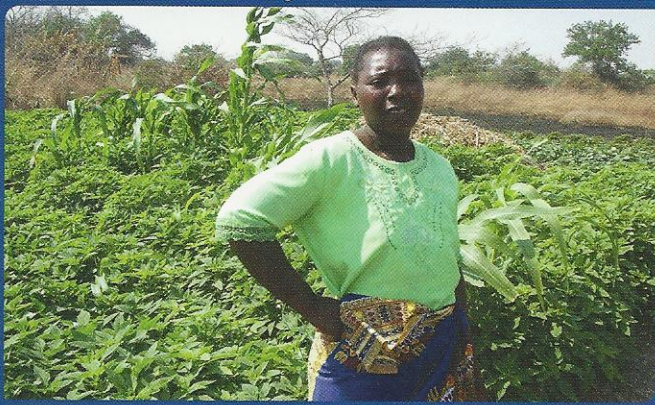
Ilishebo Susiku is Project Coordinator at Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) in Zambia

The two farmers featured in this article were participants in a three-year training project implemented by KATC and supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Canadian Jesuits International (CJI). The final report on the project, submitted earlier this year, noted the project's success not only in training the 100 farmers involved (including 60% women) but also in demonstrating the benefits of organic agriculture to thousands of neighbouring farmers.

### Hervent Silwindi

Hervent Silwindi is a farmer who resides in a village called Mwalubemba in Zambia. She is 39 years old and has 7 dependents, including 3 grandchildren. Before joining KATC's farmer training program in 2012, Hervent was a conventional mono-cropping maize farmer. Feeding her family was difficult and she rated the nutritional value of their diet as "poor."

Hervent Silwindi in her home garden.



When Hervent enrolled in KATC's program, she was trained in organic vegetable production, biological pest management, food processing and preservation, small animal production, and other areas. By the third year of the program, she had a home garden with 9 different vegetables. She was also practising crop rotation in her rain-fed field, with maize, soya beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, and other crops.

Hervent's annual income is now over four times higher than at the beginning of the program. She has been able to send her children to school, build a new house, rent a garden plot, and buy a water pump, solar panels and household goods. She believes the KATC program has changed her life in many valuable ways. These include self-confidence, leadership and family relationships. She is thankful to GAC and CJI and asks God to continue blessing the people of Canada.

### Robert Lungu

Robert Lungu resides in Chipokolo village in Zambia. He is aged 55 and currently has 3 dependents. Robert worked for an employer for 12 years, but due to low wages he chose to leave his job and focus on farming. He could typically produce 14 bags (700kg) of maize on his 3 hectare field per year. This was sufficient for home consumption, but it left him with nothing extra to sell at market.

Robert heard about organic farming at KATC from his wife, but he did not have the money for tuition. It was a prayer answered when he learned that KATC was recruiting farmers for the GAC-funded project.

By his third year in the KATC training program, Robert's annual income had also greatly increased and enabled him to build a larger house for his family. He appreciates the knowledge he acquired of organic agriculture and now also rears goats and ducks and collects manure from the animals for his garden and rain-fed fields.



Robert Lungu and his wife in their rain-fed maize field.

Robert rates the current nutritional quality of food in his household as "excellent" and reports that the incidence of illness in his family has been reduced. He is thankful to GAC and CJI for the KATC project and wishes it could continue. ■