



2017 Case Study



Chankwakwa

BACKGROUND

“I learned to be an entrepreneur from a young age. My parents ran a retail outlet and I learned to stand behind the counter at the age of five, when I could barely see above the counter and served the customers in our community,” said Dorothy Ericksson, Owner of Chankwakwa, a food processor specializing in the production of dried fruits, jams, sauces and honey in Kabwe, Zambia.

Born into a family of 13, Dorothy developed business skills from a young age at her father’s shop outside of Lusaka, Zambia. As a young adult, she worked for Zambia Airways and Alitalia Airlines as a hostess. “In those days, customers had to pay for their drinks or food. That was my first interaction with marketing products,” she said. At 18, Dorothy met her husband and just three years after getting married in 1970, the pair bought 1,227 acres of land to start a farm specializing in soya beans, maize and tomatoes. “My first 100 orange trees I watered with a watering can. Those are the same orchards we are making marmalade from today,” she said.

Dorothy had a number of entrepreneurial ventures before starting Chankwakwa. She opened a restaurant, called Dorothy’s Country Kitchen, which sold Zambian food in Kabwe Town. Then, she launched a bakery, called Upper Crust Bakery, which is still in operation in Kabwe Town.

But the prosperity of Dorothy’s farm came to a startling halt when Zambia’s agriculture sector crumbled and the family farm went into financial crisis. “We found ourselves going from riding on a high horse to wondering what is going to happen every single day,” she said.

It was around this time that Dorothy had another business idea. “I saw the mangoes in the market sitting there, being wasted. And I was aghast thinking, *what is happening? How has our country reached this? The agriculture sector is destroyed and nobody can do anything with these mangoes,*” she said. Dorothy searched for different product options to prevent the wastage and settled on drying fruits and producing jam. She started by cooking marmalade jams in a five liter pot using the oranges from her orchard and drying tomato, since there was a surplus in the market. She then moved to drying mango, selling her products in small shops around town.

Like a true entrepreneur, Dorothy began thinking of how to scale her business. She explained, “I realized that it wasn’t the commercial farmer that had the mango. It was coming from the community. It is three trees here and three trees there. It’s the trees that the farmers were sitting under.” As Dorothy organized farmers to purchase mango in bulk she simultaneously built a new factory, brick by brick, using the funds from her farm and with donor support.

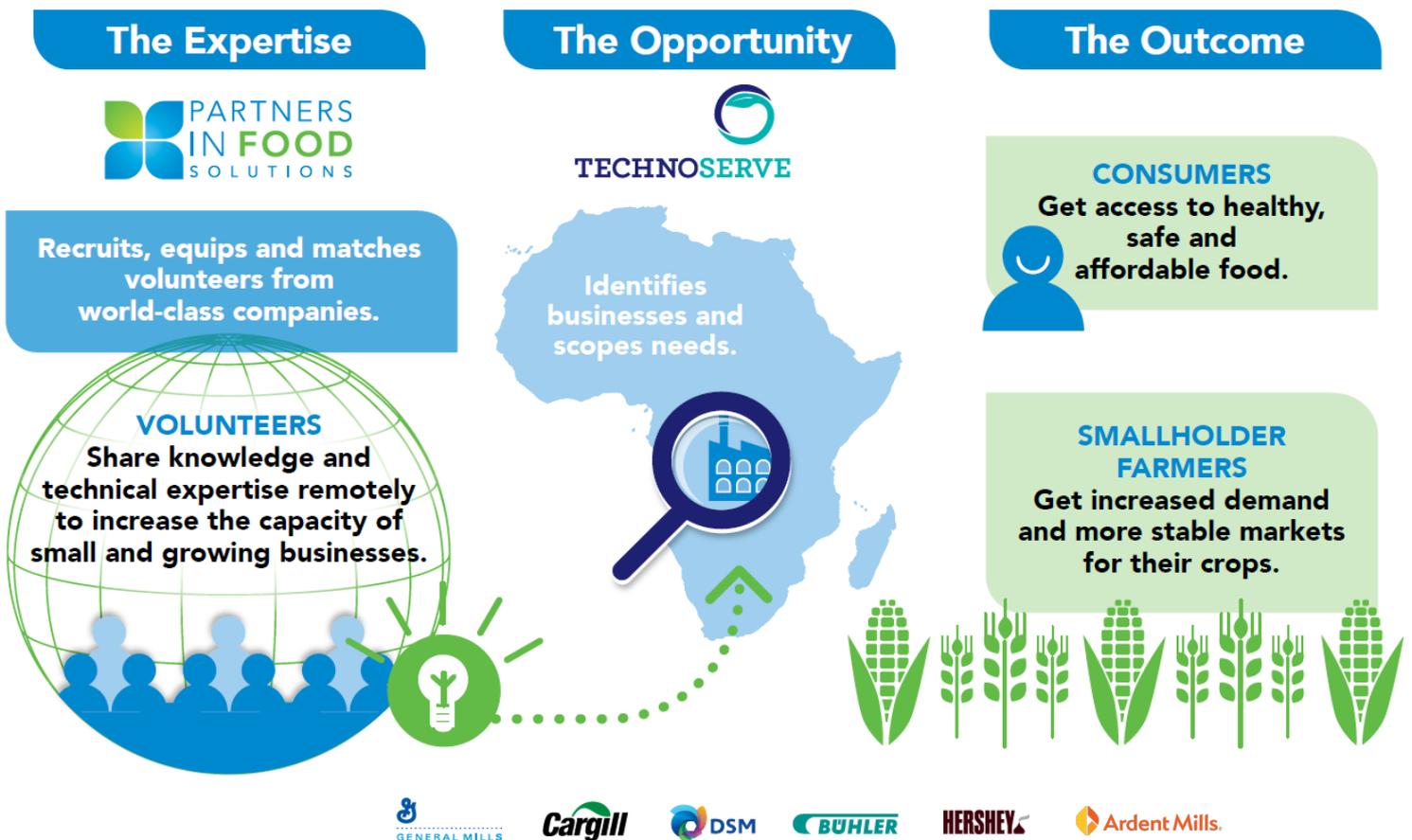
In October of 2011, TechnoServe started working with Chankwakwa through the African Alliance for Improved Food Processing (AAIFP), a USAID-funded program which aimed to build capacity to develop sustainable and competitive local processors within food sector value chains through knowledge and technology transfer and to improve the supply of high-quality, nutritious food. Through this program, Chankwakwa received technical support to increase efficiency and the quality of their products. For example, Partners in Food Solutions volunteers from Cargill identified a new mango drying technique using a solar drier.

Despite the support of AAIFP, Chankwakwa continued to face challenges common to a growing enterprise. The company lacked a marketing plan on how to increase sales and access new markets, as well as the technical knowledge to increase the quality and shelf-life of their products. “When TechnoServe came, we realized that we had no unique marketing. Our jam bottles looked the same as our competitors. Everyone in Zambia is using the same bottle. So our products were sitting on the shelf with the same bottles and orange or red lid.” said Dorothy.

OUR APPROACH

In November of 2013, Chankwakwa joined Solutions for African Food Enterprises (SAFE), a TechnoServe program in partnership with USAID and Partners in Food Solutions (PFS), with the aims of increasing the competitiveness of the African food processing sector and expanding the availability of affordable and nutritious foods. PFS is a non-profit organization formed by General Mills to link the technical and business expertise of volunteer employees from General Mills, Cargill, Royal DSM, Bühler, The Hershey Company and Ardent Mills. This program provides knowledge and technology transfer to build the capacity of African food processors, improving availability of nutritious foods and creating market opportunities for smallholder farmers.

HOW IT WORKS



The Expertise



Recruits, equips and matches volunteers from world-class companies.

VOLUNTEERS
Share knowledge and technical expertise remotely to increase the capacity of small and growing businesses.

The Opportunity



TECHNOSERVE

Identifies businesses and scopes needs.

The Outcome

CONSUMERS

Get access to healthy, safe and affordable food.

SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Get increased demand and more stable markets for their crops.



The interventions TechnoServe and PFS implemented with Chankwakwa through the SAFE program include:

1 BANANA CHIPS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Volunteer experts on product development from General Mills advised Chankwakwa on a new slicing technique by which staff slice bananas directly into a metabisulfate liquid which decreases the time the bananas are exposed to air. This process reduces the discoloration of the banana chips, making the banana chips more appealing to consumers. The SAFE team also advised Chankwakwa to purchase a slicing machine to maintain consistency in the size of their banana chips.

2 NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Through the technical advice provided by volunteer experts in product development from General Mills, Chankwakwa developed a dried fruit bar using leftover mango pulp from production.

3 BRAND DESIGN IMPROVEMENT

Volunteer experts in marketing from General Mills worked with Chankwakwa to improve the design of their jam and sauce labels to attract more customers. In addition, the team designed Chankwakwa advertisements for the sides of their delivery vehicles.

4 DRIED FRUIT PACKAGE IMPROVEMENT

Research and development volunteers from General Mills identified the best type of packaging for Chankwakwa's dry products to enhance shelf life.

“We really learned about the importance of building relationships between volunteers and clients from the start. The client lead for this project took that to heart and created a PowerPoint slide of her family and about herself and then sent it to Chankwakwa who then did the same. It turned out that they ended up having a nice relationship and it made a big difference in the way they communicated. Both sides were much more responsive and understanding. Now, when we get a new client we do a client bio and picture and get to know each other before diving in.”

- Indra Mehrotra, Former PFS Country Lead, Zambia





mango jam

CHAN KWAKWA

500g

INGREDIENTS: MANGO PULP, CANE SUGAR, PECTIN, CITRIC ACID, PRESERVATIVE: SODIUM BENZOATE. PRODUCED BY THE EMBASSY BRANDS.



IMPACT

“The moment we changed our labels, we doubled our sales. We have asked Pick N Pay to give us more shelves. SAFE’s training on branding opened my mind to other ways of doing the marketing. Our truck is a moving billboard,” said Dorothy.

Since participating in the SAFE program, Chankwakwa has experienced the following:

- **Increase in number of supplying farmers:**

Chankwakwa increased the number of farmers supplying raw goods from 199 to 403 farmers. Previously, these farmers did not have a reliable market for their produce.

- **Increase in production capacity:** Since starting with the SAFE program, Chankwakwa’s dried mango production has increased by 580 percent, from 600 kilograms to 4.5 tons annually.

- **Increase in processor revenue:** Improved quality and increases in the sale of dried fruit and jams has resulted in a 714 percent increase in revenue (from 306,020 ZMK to 2,544,413 ZMK). “The quality changed so much because of the technical advice they gave me,” said Dorothy.

- **Increase in product visibility:** Due to the advertisements and brand adjustments made through the SAFE program, Chankwakwa is experiencing more brand recognition. Dorothy said, “In the Copperbelt, people see the delivery van and are asking, ‘What company are you?’”

- **Job Creation:** In addition to the 49 permanent workers on the Chankwakwa team, the processor also employs 75 casual workers, most of whom are women, during the mango season.

- **Access to new markets:** Chankwakwa is now selling its products in major supermarkets in Zambia, such as Pick N’ Pay and ShopRite.

BY THE NUMBERS



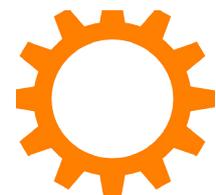
103%

Increase in number of supplying farmers



714%

Increase in processor revenue



580%

Increase in production capacity

“As a woman growing up in a family of 13, it didn’t matter if you were a boy or a girl, you were still put behind the shop counter. I climbed trees, I did everything like the boys. I think we should scream that we are women because we are now heard. We should be proud that we are women entrepreneurs,” said Dorothy.

At 65, Dorothy has no thoughts of slowing down. She has her sights set on extending the farmer base that she is sourcing from to over 1,000 farmers because she believes that there is more potential. “We have not even touched the other provinces. There is Western, Eastern and Northern. I have people calling me from Zambezi and I am thinking that I can go empower them with the skills so they can run their own businesses down there.”

FROM THE FARMER’S SIDE

“Our mangoes were rotting and we were throwing them away. There was no market at all,” said Obert Miyengu, Chairman for Mango Outgrowers Association (MOA). Chankwakwa worked with MOA to organize farmers so they could sell their mangoes in bulk, as well as provided agronomy training to improve the quality of their mangoes. The group has now grown from 66 farmers in the beginning to 158 farmers. After making just 300 ZMK selling mangoes in his first season in 2011, Obert increased his mango sales to 920 ZMW in the 2016 season. With the profits from his mango sales over the years, Obert has been able to build a new kitchen, purchase a mattress for his bed and a color television, as well as pay for his children’s secondary school fees.

Obert Miyengu shows off one of his mango trees at his home in Kabwe, Zambia.



