

## Freedom Through Chicken Keeping



**After listening to Dodoma FM’s radio programme *Nyakati Zinabadilika* (The Times Are Changing), Robert started keeping chickens and was able to break his reliance on money borrowing during the dry season.**

48-year-old Robert Taigo lives with his wife and some of his children in Songambele B village, Dodoma region, Tanzania. Like all of his fellow villagers, Robert has relied on maize farming, but notes that the change in rainfall patterns in recent years has made life hard. ‘Whereas previously I could get 5-7 sacks of maize per acre, now I only get 1-2 sacks’. Because his harvest has been poor during the maize season, Robert has been forced to borrow money at an interest rate of 100% to ensure his family survived through the dry season.

Robert first heard about *Nyakati Zinabadilika* (The Times Are Changing), a radio programme produced by Dodoma FM, in

November 2013 when he was invited to join a listening group with 10 of his fellow villagers. The programmes explore different ways in which people can overcome the impact of climate change in the region.

“Two programmes in particular motivated me to change”.

‘BBC Media Action came to our village, gave us a radio and taught us how to listen to and discuss the radio programmes as a group’, recalls Robert. After that the group met once a week. Robert remembers two

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programmes in particular that motivated him to change, one about chicken keeping and another one about vegetable farming.

In the programme about chicken keeping the group learnt that you build a profitable business quickly with very little initial investment. After discussing the programme, all of the group members decided to buy some chickens. Robert himself purchased four chickens for 20,000 Tanzanian Shillings (£6) at the beginning of 2014 and now has 70 chickens and 14 chicks. The group also agreed to buy vaccinations collectively and share the cost as this was cheaper than buying them individually.

In the programme about vegetable farming, the journalist interviewed farmers in Mpwapwa. Robert realized that he could grow vegetables when the maize season was over and that would help him feed his family instead

of borrowing money. In early 2015 he sold 30 of his chickens for 300,000 Tanzanian Shillings (£90) and used the money to buy some spinach and radish seeds and rent 16 small plots of land on a farm near a well. During the dry season he grew 10 plots of spinach and six of radish using the techniques he had heard the Mpwapwa farmers describe on *Nyakati Zinabadilika*. He did not need to take a loan and was able to send his son to secondary school – the first of his children to enter secondary education.

‘After seeing my success, people came to visit me and asked me how I had managed to change’, recalls Robert. He told his friends about the money he was making from keeping chickens and how it helped him rent the vegetable plots. Now four of his fellow villagers not in the listening group have also started to keep chickens too.

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**STORIES OF CHANGE**  
▶ RADIO THAT IMPROVES RESILIENCE



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