

## **“Can Men Really Make a Difference?” - A Story on Male Involvement in Family Planning in Zimbabwe**

---

Innocent Chofamba-Sithole

October 2003

This report was made possible through support provided by the US Agency for International Development, under the terms of Cooperative Agreement Number HRN-A-00-00-00002-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development.

---

Advance Africa Project  
Management Sciences for Health  
4301 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 400  
Arlington, Virginia 22203  
Telephone: 703-310-3500  
[www.msh.org](http://www.msh.org)

## Can Men Really Make a Difference?

By Innocent Chofamba-Sithole



Lyton Farm, a community deep in the commercial farming district of Marondera in Zimbabwe, is home to many young men whose sexual behaviours feed the flames of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Meet Alec Bunhu, a newly-married man who collects condoms on behalf of his shy friends but hardly uses any himself. “I recently got married, and I don’t see why I should use condoms since I do not have any extra sexual partners,” he says. If he doesn’t need them, I ask, then why does he come to Beauty Bhubho, the local community-based distributor (CBD), for the condoms? “Well, some of my friends do not know much about this disease, and I try as much as possible to teach them the benefits of condom use,” Bunhu replies. “They are shy to approach Bhubho for help and so I collect the condoms for them.”

In this deeply traditional rural community, where open discussion of sex and sexuality is often confined to matrimony, Bunhu’s friends are rattled at the prospect of approaching the motherly Bhubho with what they consider a most embarrassing request. As Lyton Farm’s CBD, Bhubo is her community’s main resource for contraceptives and information on family planning, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Lyton Farm is one of the sites for the Expanded CBD Programme, which is administered by the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC). Advance Africa, a USAID-funded family planning and reproductive health service delivery project, provides technical support. This particular site of the Expanded CBD Programme was designed after a satellite model, in which a trained health worker and the community leaders decide on a central meeting point for the distribution of condoms, contraceptive pills, and information. This programme has integrated HIV/AIDS information and services into the long-established ZNFPC network of CBDs in 16 districts of Zimbabwe.

While Bhubho is her town’s official CBD, Bunhu believes positive peer pressure can change the attitudes of his friends, and he continues to talk with them about HIV/AIDS and the importance of safe sex. Sadly, countless men across Zimbabwe are still ignorant of the dangers of HIV/AIDS; their choices continue to fuel the fire of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. And yet Alec Bunhu and the indefatigable Beauty Bhubho still fight to extinguish the consuming flames. It is in such seemingly small, individual efforts that Zimbabwe’s hope lies.

