



GWEN JONES



1. Hello Gwen, could you tell us about your life story?

I was born from a dual heritage of a British Father who was a rancher and an indigenous Ila Tribal Mother, we lived in a Maala, a village in southern Zambia that was adjacent to the Kafue National Park. This enabled us to have a strong cultural, environmental, socioeconomic understanding of the world we came from.

2. You are a successful entrepreneur, what motivated you to work on food security?

When you have witnessed hunger firsthand and held a child in your arms who was hungry and had only eaten mangoes that day due to lack of food, it stays forever imbedded in your heart and it becomes part of you. I am inspired by the hard-working small-scale farmers that break their backs each day to eke out a living with less yields and more challenges due to climate change and lack of market access and a host of other challenges. The two greatest things that motivate me are the hungry child and the hard-working farmer. Honest, hardworking, salt of the earth people who toil with less and less results as the years go by.

3. What is your opinion on the interaction between food security, climate change and biodiversity loss?

In my humble opinion, there is so much more to food security. We also need nutritional security, better quality seeds for increased yields and access to capital. Climate change and biodiversity loss need to be addressed in a holistic manner starting with policies, both domestically and internationally. If the global north do not address imbalanced trade policies, the boomerang effect in the global south will continue.

4. How do you judge the capability for environmental impact by global not-for-profits versus the private sector?

I believe there is a place for not-for-profits but real change has to be driven by capital markets through the private sector to increase productivity in developing countries, which will create more environmental stability.

5. How can Governments help? Are they aware of the crisis?

Governments are aware of the crisis, and most governments have Ministries of the Green Economy that are working on solutions. However, market linkages and access to capital is what is needed in Africa to increase risk mitigation with innovation and investment.

6. Which solution or technology do you see in agriculture capable of tackling food security?

Precision agriculture that includes better seed quality, agrotechnology, regenerative agriculture, processing equipment, cold chains and market value chains that ensures quality delivery to the market.

7. How did you and Denise start Nzatu? and why?

We started Nzatu to help our families whom we were seeing struggling to make ends meet. They worked so hard to till the soil and produce crops that would fail, with little revenue. We encouraged them to practice bee keeping to increase their incomes as honey offered two harvests a year compared to maize and the returns were a hundredfold better. This created stronger economies by giving a hedge to maize as a single monocrop.



8. Can you tell us about the value that you see in Nzatu's work? What can be the impact? Is it true that it has a triple impact on communities, wildlife and climate? How and why?

The value of Nzatu's work is evident in the number of children that are put back in school, better housing, and increased incomes for families.

Regarding wildlife our efforts are centered on educating communities that diversified income streams offer alternatives to poaching and reduce human-wildlife conflict. Risk mitigation on climate is addressed through regenerative agriculture methods and agroforestry. With improved incomes, communities can curb deforestation and poaching.

9. What is Nzatu's current state of play?

Nzatu is really at its genesis. We have just begun but we are already seeing the tremendous impact and hope that we can deliver, going forward. Risk mitigation, combined with innovation and investment will go a long way in scaling our efforts to continue delivering triple bottom line impacts all around. Interventions needed include:

Risk Mitigation: Climate resilience through regenerative agriculture practices, profitable agroforestry, intercropping with climate friendly crops e.g., cowpeas.

Innovation: Better quality seeds for higher yields, improved farming methods, use of better farming equipment and technologies such as drip irrigation.

Investment: Market access, value chain development, cold chain delivery, warehousing, waste reduction, transportation, processing, packaging and export.



10. What is your vision for the future of Nzatu?

Our vision for Nzatu is not only reaching more farmers but holistically enabling more stable communities through a thriving ecosystem of a secure environment, incomes, and soil security.



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