

## Story of Change

### WHEN FAITH IGNITES CREATION CARE. The Story of Doniyana Kabeza, From Charcoal to Cultivating Life

#### A Turning Point in Faith and Understanding



Figure 1 Mr. Doniyana Kabeza

Nestled in the heart of Nkhatabay District, a land rich with Ngoni heritage and fertile fields, lives **Doniyana Kabeza**, a woman whose life tells a story of grace, courage, and transformation.

Born in Chauluma Village, under T/A Mtwalo, Doniyana grew up surrounded by the rhythms of farming life. Together with her husband, Kabeza, she worked hard to provide for their four children, one girl and three boys. After getting married in August 2002, the couple settled in Mbowe, where they made a living through small-scale farming.

They grew cassava, maize, sweet potatoes, and soya, crops that kept food on the table but rarely brought enough income to sustain the family. To make ends meet, they joined many others in the charcoal business, cutting trees, burning wood, and selling charcoal to earn money. For years, this was their only means of survival.

In 2024, something shifted. Floresta Malawi partnered with Mbowe CCAP Church, where Doniyana and her family worship. Her church leaders recognized her commitment and chose her to serve as the Floresta Church Facilitator, a role that soon reshaped her life and beliefs.

Through Floresta's Creation Care trainings, Doniyana encountered a new way of seeing her surroundings. The teaching reminded her that humanity's first calling from God was to care for creation, not destroy it.

*"I felt so bad and regretted having destroyed so many trees in the name of making money," Doniyana recalls. "Floresta reminded me that my duty before God is to care for His creation."*



Figure 2 Mrs. Doniyana Kabeza posing with two of his Sons

The conviction led to action. She sat down with her husband, and together they made a bold decision, to quit the charcoal business and commit fully to crop and animal farming. It was a leap of faith, but one guided by a newfound sense of purpose.

Doniyana is also a proud member of Chigomezgho Purpose Group, where she continues to learn practical skills and share experiences with others.

*"Through the environmental restoration, I have learned new techniques of farming which have helped me and my family harvest more crops," she explains."*



Figure 3 "I promise to serve,"- Doniyana

Her participation in Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) has deepened her sense of empowerment.

***“Through VSLA, I managed to save money which I used to buy fertilizer and pay school fees for my children.”***

But for Doniyana, the greatest joy lies not in material progress, but in the unity and fellowship she has witnessed.

***“Floresta has united the people of Mbowe. During trainings, people from different denominations come together, and that brings me great joy.”***

As a Church Facilitator, Doniyana doesn't just speak about change, she lives it. She mobilizes church members and community groups to take part in tree nursery establishment and environmental restoration activities. Her influence has made her a trusted voice, motivating others to follow her lead.

Her journey from charcoal burning to tree planting has become a living testimony of what happens when faith transforms understanding.

***“I am so thankful to Floresta for its interventions,” she said. “Even though it has only been a few years, so much has changed, especially the mindset of the people.”***

When she's not teaching or working in the field, Doniyana enjoys spending time with her family and neighbors, nurturing the relationships that ground her faith and purpose.

For her, creation care is no longer a project, it's a calling.

***“I promise to faithfully serve alongside Floresta,” Doniyana affirmed. “Because I have seen that when we care for God's creation, He blesses the work of our hands.”***

Through Doniyana's example, the message of creation care continues to spread in Mbowe. Families are planting trees, saving money, and farming with new wisdom. Her life stands as a powerful reminder that when faith takes root, even the hardest ground can bring forth new life.

Healing the land and its people