

Date: July 2017

Location: Naumbi Village, Marromeu, Mozambique

MA Staff Member: Matthias Reuter

At 32 years old, Antona Chicu has become somewhat of an innovator in her rural Mozambican village of Naumbi.

Until just a few months ago, the idea of eating salad greens came with a highly negative stigma for Antona and the others in her village: greens are the same as grass and only the poorest of the poor eat grass. Though they live simply in the Zambezi Delta, very few are poor enough to consider eating grass and many would rather go hungry. Nonprofits throughout Africa consistently fight to overcome this stigma, and because of it, numerous agricultural projects have struggled or failed in Mozambique's Zambezi Delta alone.



But all of that changed one day when Antona visited a nearby village and was shocked to find her own friends eating “grass.”

“Why do you eat this grass?” Antona asked them with a hint of disdain in her voice, “you are not poor.”

Her friend was eager to answer, “No, we are not poor. But amazing things started happening when we started to eat it. Look at us. We are healthy; none of us is sick. Even if we get sick, the sickness does not last long. These vegetables are good for us and they even taste good!” Antona was amazed by her friend's answer. After enjoying her own taste of these previously marginalized vegetables, Antona returned to Naumbi, eager to share what she learned with her village

Soon after that, Antona heard the rhythmic pounding of the Mercy Air helicopter approaching the village. When the helicopter landed, the YWAM agriculture team unloaded boxes of young lettuce, kale, cabbage, tomatoes, green peppers, and onions seedlings. Together the YWAM team and the villagers planted a vast garden of these nutrient dense vegetables. Previously, the villagers of Naumbi would have preferred to stick with their familiar, “non-green” crops, but now they are excited to see if these greens and other vegetables will improve the health of their village as it did for Antona's friends.

