

# SUCCESS STORY

## In pursuit of safety from malaria: The Doma people of Northern Zimbabwe shift towards building walled dwellings

**The Mariga Village Health club built her a new dwelling after realizing that she was unprotected from malaria causing mosquitoes in a shelter without walls**



*Fema Saizi, working on her pottery outside her new solid dwelling that protects her from mosquitoes at night*



*Fema Saizi's old dwelling without walls*

Fema Saizi, a mother of six children lived in a Doma style dwelling, without walls since she was born. She and her family were always exposed to malaria causing mosquitoes. Bouts of malaria for Fema and her family were a common occurrence. New ideas about protection from mosquitoes and malaria control reached her through 'Dipa La Malaria' malaria control audio book. She was inspired to join a health club which was formed to spearhead health activities in the community in Mariga village, Chapoto Ward of Mbire District in northern Zimbabwe. The club built a new walled structure for her.

Fema, an industrious Doma woman whose occupation is pottery appreciates her new home and says:

*"I thank the ZAPIM 'people' who have given our people the idea of providing me with a proper structure, which protects me from malaria through use of sprayable structure. I can now 'also' use a net on a proper floor unlike when I was in the temporary shelter, it was impossible. This year I did not have any bout of malaria like I used to do for the past years."*

The Health Club that she joined is a community body of a few volunteers committed to the cause of influencing behavior change in the community and improving the health status of the community.

The US President's Malaria Initiative- supported Zimbabwe Assistance Program in malaria in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Child Care has been working with the Doma community through the Health clubs and VHVs over the past four years to influence social and behavior change for improved malaria outcome. Fema's recent breakthrough comes from her community's direct actions facilitated through the ZAPIM supported *Community Action Cycle (CAC)* mobilization model which empowers the community to identify health problems collectively, plan together, act together and evaluate together on health issues. The Health Club in Fema's village after undergoing CAC training noted that one of the drivers of incidence of malaria were the wall-less dwellings which were not being sprayed (IRS). Mosquito nets were also not used. The club acted on providing protective and sprayable structures.

The success story of Fema has resulted in building of more huts with solid walls.