

I'd like to speak briefly about **Progressio**, an independent Catholic charity that helps poor people all over the world change their lives by overcoming the barriers that keep them poor.

Progressio works in an unusual way. It gives **people, not money**, to communities overseas. The people it gives are **highly skilled**, and they work intensively **alongside** poor and marginalised communities.

By sharing their know-how and expertise, these 'development workers', as they are called, have a lasting impact. It's **unusual, but brilliant**.

Take the women of Wedza in rural Zimbabwe. Wedza is a place on the edge. Mid-season droughts make farming, their only source of income, increasingly hard to depend on, threatening their livelihoods. Families survive on as little as \$1 a day, so there's not much to fall back on.

But **a little know-how goes a long way**. Progressio's local expert, Melody Kwanayi, works with Environment Africa, a small NGO doing big things to help local communities across southern Africa.

Melody's a farming specialist. She brings a wealth of knowledge about farming practices that are more sustainable in times of drought – it's information that isn't much known to local communities. She knows how to **conserve water** and how to **grow crops that need less** of it.

As Melody says, "**I am a person who wants to see things happen**. I am someone who is not happy when I see resources being abused or under-utilised. All this stems from my Christian faith which guides everything that I do in my life."

Melody has shown the women farmers ways to improve their yields and diversify their crops, introducing them to varieties which use less water, are

more nutritious and sell for a higher price at local markets.

And it's **revolutionary**. Because of the knowledge Melody passed on, the women and their families are much more secure; it's **pulled them back** from the edge.

But that's not all. Now the women of Wedza are **passing on** the skills they've learned from Melody to other small-scale farmers who live nearby. That's the Progressio '**ripple effect**', and it has a lasting impact passed on to the **next generation**.

Progressio calls its way of working '**people powered development**', and you can see why. Progressio's way of working is human resource intensive, but it's **economic, efficient and effective**.

But this amazing work **needs our support**. You can't buy Progressio's style of development because it's not a transaction, it's a **relationship**.

And we can be part of this relationship here, by **giving our money, our time, and our political voice** in support of people powered development.

In his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict said that "development is **impossible without upright men and women**, whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good." That means **you and me**, just as much as Melody.

So please, give a donation along with your contact details and **together** we can support the women of Wedza, Melody, and all the work Progressio does.

Thank you!