



NACSO PICTURE STORIES

FISH FOR SOBBE

Rural electricity supplied by conservancies



Things are changing in Mashivi village. Although Zambezi Region is famous for its fish – Tilapia and Bream are firm favourites on the menu – Mashivi is 40 kilometres from the nearest river, and the residents want fresh fish.



This young entrepreneur has taken advantage of the new village electricity transformer to power a refrigerator. He buys fish wholesale in Rundu, over 300 kilometres away, and sells it in the village.

The electricity comes courtesy of Sobbe Conservancy, where Mashivi village is situated. Several Zambezi conservancies have decided to provide transformers as a social benefit, instead of paying cash benefits to residents.



Hapelezu is an enterprising young man. His building is decorated with small lights because he wants to open a small restaurant and sell soft drinks. There is a toaster and a chip fryer inside his simple mud-walled shop, and his sister Lumba is selling chips on neat, cling-film wrapped paper plates to villagers who have gathered on pension day.





Sobbe's electricity is being provided in three phases. In the first phase, three villages have been connected on a single line. Two other villages will come on line over the next two years, as money becomes available. Up to now, Sobbe has spent N\$ 400,000 on transformers, which are installed by NORED, the regional electricity supplier.



There is not enough money to run cables to all of the houses, so residents have to pay for their own connection. Fredrick Mate has done just that. Inside his house is a junction box, and at the flick of a switch he has all the light he needs – and a freezer.



The cost for a connection usually about N\$ 3,000. The first to sign up are usually businesses such as shops and shebeens. There's a downside for Mashivi. The peace of the village has gone, thanks to the music blaring out from a local bar. But the upside is fresh fish.

