

PARITY CHIZELA

Innovation Specialist · Product Manager · Human-Centred Design Practitioner

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Innovation Specialist, Product Manager, and Project Manager with over 8 years of experience building products, and embedding Human-Centred Design and user research into the full product development lifecycle. I have planned and conducted empathy interviews, usability testing, design sprints, insight formation sessions, focus groups, surveys, A/B tests, and contextual observations across Zambia's development, fintech, banking, health, and public sectors. I am skilled at translating user insights into actionable product decisions, facilitating HCD workshops with diverse stakeholders, and working within agile teams to ensure digital systems are built around real user needs. My experience spans 100+ startups, large institutions, and government-adjacent programmes, giving me a rare ability to bridge the gap between users, researchers, and technical teams.

CORE COMPETENCIES

User Research & Usability Testing | Human-Centred Design | Design Sprint Facilitation | Agile / Scrum
Product Management | Stakeholder Facilitation | Requirements Gathering | Innovation Programme Management
Prototyping & User Stories | Data Analysis | Cross-functional Team Leadership | Trainer of Trainers (HCD and AI) | Technical Project and Programmes Management

WORK EXPERIENCE

Digital Channels Product Manager

Good Nature Agro | Jan 2026 – Present | Lusaka, Zambia

- Led delivery of the Farm Depot farmer-engagement platform across 26+ outlets nationwide, managing the full product lifecycle from user research to rollout.
- Led the delivery of some features on the Farmer Engagement System, supporting 40,000+ farmers across 3 countries, conducting requirements gathering and translating user needs into product features.
- Set up an AI first call centre and IVR system using 3CX integrated with local Mobile Network Operators, with user experience as the primary design driver.
- Led the development of a USSD platform giving smallholder farmers access to credit scores, inputs, financing, crop information, and artificial intelligence powered extension services and advice. Led a campaign to onboard 10,000 farmers and tracked feature adoption to inform iterative improvements.
- Managed a development team to build a stock management and processing plant system that has processed millions of tonnes of crops. I gathered requirements, made user stories, conducted usability tests, and trained users.
- Managed a development team to build an internal self service portal to handle human resource, payroll, vehicle management, travel management, and many operational processes, improving the company's efficiency, and saving resources.
- Leading the team to build an Agriculture focussed artificial intelligence platform to power multiple farmer facing and extension agent facing channels for agriculture support, advice, and insights..

IT Project Manager

Good Nature Agro | Jan 2025 – Jan 2026 | Lusaka, Zambia

- Elicited requirements and modelled business processes (BPMN) to guide design and development of the Farm Depot platform.
- Produced user stories and flowcharts, steering cross-functional teams through design, development, and rollout cycles.
- Managed integration of the Farmer Engagement Platform with ERP and dispatch/warehouse management systems, ensuring real-time synchronisation.
- Led a support team handling field-staff tickets, establishing standardised workflows that reduced response times and improved user satisfaction.

- Coordinated the development of the Good Nature Agro USSD service (*462#), ensuring seamless experience for remote farmer interactions.
- Coordinated the team in building a payments middleware to support payments verification for more than 40,000 farmers.

Senior Innovation Associate

BongoHive Technology and Innovation Hub | *May 2023 – Feb 2025* | Lusaka, Zambia

- Conducted user research, empathy interviews, contextual observations, focus groups, surveys, and A/B tests to address complex client problems and identify innovation opportunities across fintech, banking, development, startups, and construction sectors.
- Led and facilitated Human-Centred Design processes for over 100 startups and organisations, running full design sprints and Trainer of Trainers workshops to embed HCD practices within teams.
- Managed the Human-Centred Design training project for engineers in the construction sector, in partnership with the Association of Consulting Engineers of Zambia.
- Facilitated the USAID Internews MSI Design Thinking workshop and assisted in the USAID BEP Pause and Reflect session, promoting evidence-based co-design with diverse stakeholders.
- Managed the Zanaco Internal Innovation Challenge, supporting teams in building products that addressed the bank's most pressing user challenges.
- Coordinated innovation programmes including the AICCRA Innovation Challenge, Stanbic Project Innov8, the MTN MoMo Hackathon 2023, and Standard Chartered Women in Tech Cohort 4
- Managed the Stanbic Project Innov8 internal innovation challenge, leading design sprints, insight formation sessions, and demo day with the exco, while assisting participants to improve their prototypes using user feedback in readiness for implementation.
- Managed the MTN/WWF Pachipanda Innovation Challenge 2.0, supporting startups through an intense design sprint, leading the demo day where they showcased their innovations.
- Led the TEDx Lusaka AI Workshops (6 sessions) for stakeholders from multiple industries, in order to gather insights and map the understanding of AI amongst participants, producing a report with insights at the end of the project.
- Provided corporate innovation support to clients including Zamtel, developing roadmaps for AI and digital transformation.
- Managed and supported GIZ MAKE-IT IN AFRICA Open Innovation Programme, mentoring participants and driving innovation aligned with market needs, while facilitating co-creation sessions with industry experts..

Digital Product Development Tutor

Swalisano Advisory (on behalf of GIZ) | *Sep 2022 – Jan 2023* | Lusaka, Zambia

- Provided Digital Product Development Training for the GIZ EnACT project (Enabling Access to Justice, Civil Society Participation and Transparency) a directly government-adjacent, public-interest context.
- Tutored 34 students in building technology-based solutions for the legal sector using Human-Centred Design and low-code tools. The participants included lawyers, legal assistants, development sector experts, public sector employees, and technology enthusiasts.

Project Manager

Palnet Solutions | *Apr 2021 – May 2023* | Lusaka, Zambia

- Conducted user research to validate the need for an e-commerce platform for a Chinese chain store, translating findings into product decisions.
- Managed development of a bulk SMS gateway integrating with mobile telecom APIs, working with fintechs and e-commerce companies.
- Led development of a stock trading educational app from ideation to MVP, applying HCD principles throughout.
- Managed development of a web application for a US-based telemetry company that improved efficiency by 80% and speed by 50%.

Africa Operations Lead

Hack Club | *Aug 2019 – Dec 2021* | San Francisco / Lusaka

- Managed operations across Africa to help high school and university students start and run coding clubs.

- Disbursed grants to coding clubs in Zambia and other African countries, examining applications and approving those that met criteria.
- Managed remote hackathons and innovation projects during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating adaptability in low-connectivity environments.

Software Developer / Scrum Master

FlexiLearn Academy | *Jun 2021 – Mar 2022* | Lusaka, Zambia

- Conducted user research using Human-Centred Design principles to validate the market for an e-learning platform, starting with Moodle as MVP.
- Served as Scrum Master for a cross-functional engineering team building the platform after market validation.

Software Engineer

Palnet Solutions | *May 2018 – Mar 2021* | Ndola, Zambia

- Conducted requirements gathering and analysis for more than 20 client software projects.
- Built web applications and websites for small businesses across multiple sectors.
- Managed on-premises servers and provided maintenance engineering and support.

Co-Founder / CEO

Palsis Education | *Aug 2018 – Mar 2020* | Ndola, Zambia

- Co-founded an EdTech startup building data science and intelligent analytics tools for schools.
- Used data science to identify and measure the metrics that most impacted educational outcomes, then built tools to distil insights.
- Participated in the Injini EdTech Bootcamp Accelerator in partnership with BongoHive.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Google Foundations of Project Management — Certified (currently pursuing PMP)

Bachelors in Information Technology (Incomplete) — Zambia ICT College, 2018