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Filmmaker brings Zimbabwe to Boulder

Daily Camera staff
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BOULDER, Colo. -

At age 21, Tatenda Muchiriri founded the Machapro Boys Club in his home village in Zimbabwe, with the goal of changing the way African men view and treat women.

It was a revolutionary idea there.

"I've heard of people doing programs with young women to empower them to take care of their bodies, take care of themselves and prevent AIDS from affecting them," said Robin Truesdale, a University of Colorado graduate who met Muchiriri on a 2006 trip to Zimbabwe. "But I've never met a young man who was interested in approaching it from the male angle, and I just found that fascinating."

So much so that Truesdale -- despite the danger of filming in the repressive and poverty-stricken country -- returned to make a documentary on Muchiriri's efforts. Her film, "Tumbuka Bloom," will be screened locally for the first time Sunday at Boulder Public Library.

Truesdale, who returned to shoot the film in 2007, used small, consumer video cameras so she could go undetected by the government of President Robert Mugabe.

"If I had been discovered making a film about Zimbabwe, I probably would have been arrested," she said.

But the risk was worthwhile, Truesdale said.

"It's a personal project for me," she said. "I did it because I really believed in this man and what he was doing."

While people who've seen the film have asked Truesdale what they can do to help, she said that wasn't necessarily her motivation.

"My purpose was not to raise money with this film. It's not a fundraising film; it's a hope-raising film," she said. "It's mostly just to give people something to think about and open their eyes to what it's like in Zimbabwe."

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