

Food-for-Peace Success Story

Lunyimbi Dam to Transform Lives in the Arid Communities of Gwanda

As drought becomes more frequent and prolonged in arid communities of Zimbabwe and water scarcity more severe, the lives, livelihoods, health and well-being of rural subsistence farmers and their families are at greater risk. Failure to implement drought coping mechanisms could bring untold suffering to these communities.



Lunyimbi Dam has been strategically placed to benefit three villages: Mtandawenhema, Garanyemba and Nsimbi with access to water supply for livestock and agriculture. 4000 cattle are expected to benefit from the dam.



The dam is one of the over one hundred community shared assets that have been constructed by the Amalima program through its Cash for Assets (CFA) activities to improve access to and availability of food, strengthen community resilience to shocks, improve nutrition and health, and promote gender equality.



Community members celebrate completion of the dam and the benefits to come.

On September 18, 2019, USAID, CNFA, partners under the Amalima program, government officials, media and local residents gathered in Mtandawenhema village, Garanyemba ward 13 in Gwanda to celebrate the completion of a dam – a community-led project envisaged to improve livelihoods, increase water access and enhance health conditions for communities and livestock in rural Matabeleland. Organised by the community itself, hundreds from neighbouring communities attended the event to witness this huge milestone for the Garanyemba community.

Speaking at the event, district development coordinator, Mrs Kiliboni Mbedzi, acknowledged the hard work of the community in constructing the dam and called the project “a big step towards resilience.” She urged the community to safeguard the asset as it presents many opportunities including enhanced community resilience to drought.

According to Miklasi Ndlovu, councillor for ward 13, “because this part of the country is so dry, when rain does fall, most of it is simply lost. This dam will help retain water and combat the problem of water scarcity.”

The best representation of transformation was perhaps through community testimonials. In an interview, Sibongile Siziba, 51, a mother of three and resident of Nsimbi village, shared her experiences in the drought ravaged area. “We would wake up at wee hours and walk 10-12km to the nearest dependable water source, Garanyemba dam, in the neighbouring village. Getting there, we would scoop holes in the riverbed to get water for our livestock. This was tedious and time-consuming. Now with this dam, even in severe drought, our cattle and crops will have access to water all year-round. We just hope mother nature will be gracious this year.”

The councillor also shared exciting plans for the community, including the allocation of land for irrigation schemes and fish production. “Development and resilience are the two big priorities for this community,” he said.

These plans provoked wild celebrations from the community. “All because of water availability through this dam, we will now be able to plant crops. We are looking forward to this bringing income, greatly boosting our diet and bringing out a healthier community” said Gibson Ndlovu, ward 13 resident and chairperson for the dam.

“The story of Garanyemba community is a great example of community participation and a showcase of what communities can do,” concluded David Brigham, CNFA/Amalima chief of party.