



Community workers digging tail end drains at Gudyanga Irrigation Scheme @2020

Engendering Irrigation Rehabilitation

Key Highlights

7 irrigation schemes rehabilitated with Operation & Maintenance Manuals and commercial plans

504 hectares
of irrigated land to be
covered by the schemes



906 smallholder
farmers' households to
benefit from the
irrigation schemes

Results

20 women
accessing
childcare
facilities
at 2 worksites



54% of hired
community workers
are female

Background

Following severe flood damage to irrigation schemes located in the Save Valley, UNOPS identified seven irrigation schemes that could benefit from the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure. The seven schemes were selected through consultations with the local government, Department of Irrigation, and the local community. An extensive scope was developed for the rehabilitation of the schemes in early 2020, focusing on "Building Back Better". With this aim, plans have been developed for improving the schemes' sustainability and climate resilience.

To amplify the impact of this rehabilitation work, UNOPS is engaging the local community in the provision of labour intensive works. This direct engagement allows ZIRP to provide livelihood support to local communities, create a sense of local ownership in the schemes, and train farmers in the operation and maintenance of the facilities.

Changing the status quo: A Story of emancipation

Christine Maphosa is a 34 year old married mother of three. She was born in Nyanyadzi in Chipinge. She comes from a family of communal farmers and has lived in Nyanyadzi all her life. Christines' husband manages a plot in the Nyanyadzi Irrigation Scheme and together with her husband they work on the plot as a livelihood and sell off any extra crops they harvest. When UNOPS engaged the community for community laborers to work on the irrigation rehabilitation, Christine assumed that her husband would work on the project for extra income. UNOPS explained that they needed 50% of the work force to be women because women are often left out in manual labor work thereby missing an opportunity to earn an income and at the same time to learn a new skill.

"I never thought that I would be chosen to work and assumed that my husband as the man would be selected. I cannot believe that I will actually earn money and buy something that will always remind me that this was UNOPS!" -

Christine Maphosa



Contact us



info.zim@unops.org



www.zirp-zimbabwe.org



ZIRP HOTLINE:
0808 0430



/zirp-zimbabwe

Re-Imagining family and gender roles

Working in the scheme changed Christine's view on gender roles. Her learning point was that women can also get paid for working in the scheme other than to farm their plots. The induction on gender also helped Christine understand that there is a need to balance work and family roles to reduce social conflict and GBV. Christine has also gained a new technical skill in canal repairs and can even use a peak to dig trenches which was something that she had previously thought was a man's role.

UNOPS under the World Bank Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) is rehabilitating irrigation schemes. Through a robust beneficiary selection process, UNOPS has ensured 54% of the 359 community labourers selected so far are women.



Removing barriers to employment of women

Women are often excluded from work due to their caregiving role. Their responsibilities in maintaining the homestead and cooking for their families prevents them from committing to full time work. UNOPS recognised this impediment and has made it possible for women to participate in labour works in irrigation schemes. UNOPS has set up child care facilities where infants and toddlers of community workers access supervised care while their mothers are working. Not only does this empower them to earn a living, it gives them peace of mind to contribute productively to the conservation of the plots in the irrigation schemes.

The free of charge facility is located near the scheme to allow nursing mothers to breastfeed their children. UNOPS provides a tent, play mats, toys and refreshments for the children. Usually each group of workers per site will have at least three women with children. The mothers of the children take turns to babysit the children. *"I feel very important when my role as a mother is recognised and I can also work at the same time," says Thandiwe, one of the mothers who works at Bwerudza Irrigation Scheme at a UNOPS site.*

Since this facility was introduced in September at Bwerudza Irrigation Scheme and Tanganda-Nyunga Road Rehabilitation, 20 mothers have managed to come to work with their children.