



Dr Benjamin Mandevere from the Ministry of Environment, Climate, and Hospitality delivering his speech. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

CRS paves the way to develop Rangeland Management Guide

Proper rangeland interventions remain key in the sustainable management of arid areas for the benefit of current and future generations. Communities enjoy ecosystem services provided by the rangelands, such as water, grass, and soil to produce high-quality agricultural products while maintaining a healthy ecosystem where wildlife, flora, and fauna flourish.

However, communal rangelands in semi-arid areas like Beitbridge are now heavily degraded due to the combination of poor management and grappling with the effects of climate change. More than 61% of the Zimbabwean population live in rural areas and rely on rangeland, underlining its importance in socio-economic wellbeing.

To improve the livelihoods of vulnerable farmers through rangeland

management practices in Beitbridge, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in partnership with Caritas Masvingo, is implementing the Beitbridge Rangeland Improvement Project (BRIP) Project in five wards.

The 12-month Charitable-Giving funded project is targeting 1 600HHs. It aims to strengthen community rangeland structures and introduce supplementary feeding through fodder, taking pressure off the range.

To ensure project sustainability, CRS works with the Agricultural Advisory and Rural Development Services (AARDS) and Forestry Commission Zimbabwe, Beitbridge Rural District Council (BBRDC), the Department of Climate Change, and the Environmental Management Agency (EMA).

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Since 2022 to date CRS has commissioned the solarization of two community boreholes and established nurseries in all the operational wards. When the nurseries mature, they will facilitate planting of 5000 leukaena trees for use as fodder, firewood, and fencing poles, among other domestic and agricultural purposes.

The BRIP project has also achieved considerable milestones in rangeland management. Some of these milestones are, community sensitization, strengthening existing community committees, establishing woodlots and homestead woodlots, developing grazing plans and contributing to the development of Bi-Laws.

To take a step further in rangeland management, CRS recently hosted a rangeland dialogue meeting in Harare to develop the Rangeland Management Guide. This was upon a consensus amongst the stakeholders that no recent guiding document in rangeland management has factored in the recent changes in demography, land use and the environment.

The workshop drew management expertise from government, academia, donors, and traditional leaders. The consultative discussion centered around the current state of rangelands in Zimbabwe (and Beitbridge) and factors contributing to their condition, applicable rangeland management strategies and their limitations, and the structure and key information that would need to be reflected in the rangeland management guide.

Speaking at the Rangeland management meeting, Dr. Benjamin Mandevere, the Climate Adaptation Officer with the Ministry of Environment, Climate, and Hospitality, said, "Land degradation is a global issue and Zimbabwe has not been spared. The rangelands which offer various ecosystem services to rural and urban habitants, are under stress.



Nqabayezwe Moyo, CRS Zimbabwe Program Manager, Food Security and Livelihoods giving an overview of the BRIP Project. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

The Government of Zimbabwe recognizes the potential risk posed by land degradation in eroding development gains, undermining the implementation of National Development Strategy 1, getting the country to an upper-level economy by 2030, and attaining Sustainable development Goals.

Several steps have been taken by the government and these include being part of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD) which it ratified in 1997 aimed at contributing to the development and implementation of programs and strategies to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation both nationally and globally.

Policies have also been put in place to create an enabling environment which include the Environmental Assessment

Policy, National Environmental Policy, and Population Policy. Zimbabwe made its commitment in 2018 to rehabilitate two million hectares by 2030. We are gathered here to strategize on how development partners, the private sector, academia, farmers, and government can work together to contribute to the above-mentioned targets. "



WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

CRS strives to deliver safe and dignified programs to communities. For any feedback and complaints please report on toll-free numbers;

0774994469 OR 08010108



Lusima standing in front of her new kitchen, in the background, her old kitchen. Photo by Tariro Mhute/ CRS

Recovering from effects of COVID-19: A tale of determination

It is early in the morning and Lusima Dube (49) from Malilawunda Village, Tsholotsho wakes up at the break of dawn to do her chores before she goes to the field. She cleans the house, cooks for her grandchildren, and lastly gives instructions to the builder working on her new kitchen. She admires the new kitchen which only started as a dream. Now her dream is close to fulfilment. For Lusima it took hard work and determination.

A lot has changed in my life since I joined this project, my business has grown for the better because of the money I received.

"I started building this kitchen in 2019, with the help of my husband and my children working in South Africa. Unfortunately, they all lost their jobs when COVID-19 started. So we were forced to put all the construction work on hold. I was hoping that we will finish this house once COVID-19 ends unfortunately after even the travel

bans were lifted my husband and daughter were laid off from work. My daughter could not even afford to pay fees for her son whom I am currently staying with.

In 2021 my grandson dropped out of school in Form Three. We were so broke and none of us could even pay his school fees. This took a toll on my mental health, I even lost weight because there was no food to eat. My husband and children were also stuck in South Africa living from hand to mouth. I ended up selling most of my chickens and cattle to put food on the table.



Lusima at her homestead. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

However, in October 2022, we were called for a meeting by the Village Head. That's when we were told about Bамbelela and how it was going to assist people affected by COVID-19 like me.

Our names were written down. Soon after we were called again, I was given \$154 USD, I was so happy because at that time my grandchildren and I were only eating one meal per day. I promised to put the money to good use. I bought a few groceries and ordered clothes in South Africa. I wanted to start my own business of selling clothes.

Since October to date I have been selling clothes and my life has changed, business is doing well. I managed to raise money and enrolled my grandson in college for a Certificate in Building. On top of that I resumed work on my kitchen and as you can see my kitchen is almost complete.

Bамbelela changed my life, not only did we receive money but also vouchers to buy chickens. I bought six chickens and attended Livestock Training. Most importantly I started attending counselling sessions which really changed my life. I was so stressed that I even feel ill during COVID-19, my blood pressure was always high.

When I started attending the sessions, I realized that most people were also going through a lot of stress due to the effects of COVID-19. After interacting with other and getting help, I am now happy and my business is thriving too. I am so grateful to USAID, CRS, Caritas, and Tree of Life," said Lusima with a smile.



BRIP Photo Gallery

Photos showing a step by step planting of fodder trees in various woodlots in Beitbridge. BRIP Project is promoting the planting of dual purpose legume tree (*Leucaena*) for livestock feed— fodder and soil replenishment. Photos by Gilbert Chigwandaza (Caritas Masvingo) for CRS.



Site selection at Malala Woodlot Ward Six Beitbridge.



Pegging of the Malala Woodlot Ward Six in Beitbridge.



Malala Woodlot land preparation (legume fodder trees planting station) by core-group members.



Core group members transplanting legumes fodder trees at Malala woodlot site.



Land restoration results in Malala Woodlot.