



Keith Chitembeya, a youth volunteer and assistant builder working at the dam rehabilitation project site. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

Dam rehabilitation in Zimbabwe: Community restores water source

ST. Boniface’s concrete dam wall casts a mirror image upon the water. For the first time in many years, the dam is full. The reservoir stretches out, mirroring every detail of the environment, abundant with life. The dam holds not only water but a story of human endeavor, resilience, and hope.

Nestled in Hurungwe district, Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe, St. Boniface Dam directly benefits more than 3,000 people in the neighboring community, including two schools with more than 1,000 children. The dam has a capacity of 260,000 cubic liters and is replenished by a river that flows all year-round.

Taking charge: reclaiming the community’s pride

Zimbabwe is feeling the impacts of climate change: most water sources are drying up and the country has received erratic rainfall in recent years. Drought and irregular rainfall patterns threaten communities that depend on agriculture, including those who live near St. Boniface Dam.

In 2021, community leaders approached the Catholic Church seeking support to repair the dam, a piece of infrastructure fundamental to their ability to support their families. The original dam was built with the help of the church. The community hoped the Church could come through for them once again.

Continued on page 2 >>

In this issue...

- **PAGE 1,2,3:** CRS dam rehabilitation project takes shape
- **PAGE 4:** USAID partners with CRS to respond the El-Nino drought
- **PAGE 5:** CRS receives drought insurance payout
- **PAGE 5:** Project Spotlight—BRIP
- **PAGE 6:** CRS successfully hosts Impumelelo Yabatsha webinar
- **PAGE 6:** CRS responds to cholera in Hwange

[Here](#) [Here](#)

Follow us...



Main article, FROM page 1 >>

In 2022 Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Zimbabwe sourced funds for the rehabilitation of St Boniface Dam. In partnership with Caritas Diocese of Chinhoyi and the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ), CRS launched the Zim Ecosystems Services Project.

The project centers on the restoration of the dam and surrounding ecosystem to increase the availability of water and other productive assets such as trees, livestock, gardens and fish farming for the nearby communities.

Before the rehabilitation, the dam was leaking due to some cracks in the wall. Because of the leakage, the dam quickly dried up.

Community members use it for both household use and income generation through drip irrigation for agricultural plots, fruit tree production, animal fodder production, and aquaculture. Now that the dam has been rehabilitated, people living near the reservoir once again have a reliable source of water.

“Before the rehabilitation, the dam was leaking due to some cracks in the wall. Because of the leakage, the dam quickly dried up, especially during the summer season. Last year it dried up and we had to dig mupfuku (shallow wells) in the dry reservoir. Now that the dam rehabilitation has been completed, a lot has changed. There is enough water for eight villages and neighboring schools. I am so happy that people have enough water for their needs,” said Renious Chademana with a huge smile.



MEN AT WORK: Community volunteers working during the rehabilitation of the new dam wall. Photo for by Caritas Chinhoyi for CRS.



Keith plans to enroll for vocational skills training to nurture his newly acquired skill. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

The roadmap: working with communities

To kickstart the St. Boniface Dam rehabilitation, CRS and Caritas Chinhoyi started by engaging traditional leaders, government stakeholders, and the community. Both organizations worked with community members to help them establish their vision and action plan for land restoration, creating a road map for how they will communally

manage this revitalized resource. Local traditional leaders sourced construction materials, such as sand and rocks, and organized volunteers, including many young people, to help with repairs. Volunteers gained transferable skills in masonry and construction work they can leverage for future employment. Keith Chitembeya, a 22-year-old young man from Kandororo Village, is one such youth volunteer.



Nyasha Kunguma fishing at St Boniface Dam. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

FROM page 2 >>

“When I finished school in 2022, I started helping my parents with farming. When this project started, I volunteered to be a builder and we were trained by the lead builder. I had no prior experience in brickwork, and I had to learn. Now I have been promoted to Junior Assistant Builder. I have developed an interest in brickwork, and I plan to enroll in vocational skills training.”

Women play an essential role in managing water resources

While repairing the dam is the central part of the project, CRS and Caritas Chinhoyi have included an important community-based approach to build relationships and connections between community members.

The purposeful inclusion of women in decision-making and reservoir management was built into the project and incorporated into long-term

community plans. The program includes gender champions, smart couples, and positive masculinity training to reduce Gender Based Violence (GBV) at the family, community, and systems levels. For women like Nyasha Kunguma, a mother of five from Chabumhe Village, the project has been a blessing, as she can now access water closer to home.

I will use water from the dam for gardening. I sell vegetables in Chabumhe and neighbouring villages

“I will use water from the dam for gardening. I sell vegetables in Chabumhe and neighboring villages. However, in the past few years, we have been facing water challenges because the dam was drying up. Most women and girls from my village were walking seven kilometers just to fetch water. We welcome this project, and

we are so excited that we finally have water in our community,” said Nyasha.



WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

0774 994 469 OR 08010108

USAID partners with CRS Zimbabwe to respond to El-Nino induced drought

The USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is partnering with CRS Zimbabwe to reach more than 13,400 people in dire need of food, through the Zwitile project worth US \$2 million. The El Niño-induced drought has resulted in high temperatures and erratic rainfall in Zimbabwe and other parts of Southern Africa, affecting crops and livestock. Zwitile means "in their own hands."

The project is providing 'Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)' and immediate food assistance for vulnerable households in Gwanda and Mangwe districts of Matabeleland South Province, as well as skills, resources, and support to rehabilitate dams and restore the natural landscape. The project aims to reduce communities' dependency on humanitarian assistance.

Due to the El Niño-induced drought, most families in Gwanda and Mangwe are vulnerable to hunger because of crop failure, livestock deaths and depleted food stocks. An analysis by CRS/Zimbabwe projects a rise in food prices and food shortages in many parts of Zimbabwe.

Our goal is to ensure that households meet their basic food requirements by promoting climate smart agriculture practices

In response to the crisis CRS, with support from USAID, has developed programs to strengthen communities' resilience to and preparedness for future droughts and disasters. The FFA program will work with communities to create healthier natural environments, reduce the risks and impact of climate shocks, and increase food productivity.



Community members from Datata village, Gwanda district, Matabeleland South doing Food Assistance for Assets (FFAs) activities - catchment area protection works and galley reclamation around Domboritsa Dam. Photo by Rujeko Nyandoro/CRS

CRS is partnering with the Caritas Archdiocese of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe to support the food needs and rehabilitate the community productive assets of 3,200 drought-affected households from 10 wards in Gwanda and Mangwe. CRS/Zimbabwe and Caritas will mobilize project participants through a community-based planning process. Each household will receive 50kgs cereals, 10kgs pulses, and 3.75 liters of cooking oil every month (over five months).

This is conditional on their participation in community asset-building activities. The project will also provide unconditional food assistance to vulnerable community members including the elderly, people with disabilities, and those with other special circumstances, who may not have the capacity to participate in asset-building.

"Our goal is to ensure that households meet their basic food requirements by promoting climate-smart agriculture practices. We look forward to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to help vulnerable people, together, during this difficult time. We appreciate USAID's partnership to address the immediate food needs through much-needed emergency relief to affected communities," said Dr. Tapfuma Murove, CRS Country Representative in Zimbabwe.



CRS Zimbabwe receives drought insurance payout

CRS Zimbabwe Country Representative Dr Tapfuma Murove participated in a payout ceremony representing the Start Network at the Drought Risk Insurance Payout from Africa Risk Capacity (ARC). CRS Zimbabwe is a member of the Start Network, a locally-led humanitarian action that provides early, effective crisis response through proactive financing and innovation. Start Network's local implementing partners, Family AIDS Caring Trust - FACT Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Project Trust were also present.

From the payout, \$8.9 million will go towards members of the Start Network, \$16.8 million towards the Government of Zimbabwe, and \$6 million towards the World Food Programme. Funds will be channeled towards addressing the immediate



CRS Zimbabwe Country Representative, Dr Tapfuma Murove receiving the payout cheque from ARC Group Chair, Dr Mothae Anthony Maruping and Minister for Finance and Economic Development of Zimbabwe, Mthuli Ncube. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

food needs of the most vulnerable and drought-affected communities across 27 districts in Zimbabwe. CRS will be implementing its project in Beitbridge in partnership with Caritas Zimbabwe

Diocese of Masvingo. This goes towards addressing El Nino-induced drought effects among affected communities.

Project Spotlight - BRIP

CRS Zimbabwe and Caritas Diocese of Masvingo have been implementing the Beitbridge Rangeland Improvement Project (BRIP) project in five wards of Beitbridge in conjunction with Agricultural Advisory and Rural Development Services (AARDS) and Forestry Commission Zimbabwe, Beitbridge Rural District Council (BBRDC), Department of Climate Change, and Environmental Management Agency (EMA).

The BRIP project aims to strengthen local rangeland management systems by adopting a community-based approach to improved rangeland management in Ward three, five, six, nine and 11 of Beitbridge District.

Through the project CRS has engaged strategies to sustain and improve the fodder base considering the changing local context of increasing animal populations, climate change, increasing land degradation and loss



Photos showing the land restoration progress after the planting of fodder trees in Malala Woodlot, Beitbridge. Photos by Gilbert Chigwandaza (CRS Masvingo) for CRS.

of traditional non-farming, income-earning opportunities. The BRIP project supports improvements to rangeland-based value chains, aimed at enabling poor households to increase livestock productivity and income to improve food security and livelihoods. .

The BRIP project has achieved considerable milestones in rangeland management including community sensitization, establishing community based rangeland management

committees, establishing fast growing multi-purpose woodlots and grazing management. Building on these achievements, CRS has been partnering with various stakeholders to develop an overarching 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.



CRS Zimbabwe successfully hosts Impumelelo Yabatsha Awareness Webinar

CRS/Zimbabwe in collaboration with Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU) successfully hosted the Gender and Youth Activity (GAYA) - (Impumelelo Yabatsha) Project awareness webinar in June.

The 18-month project is funded by Save the Children International's USAID (BHA) GAYA initiative, is directly targeting 80 youth aged from 19 and 29 years to lead in developing, piloting, and packaging of a Youth-Led Market Assessment (YMLA) toolkit. The toolkit will become a resource for CRS and other food security, resilience, and livelihoods actors, for aligning programming strategies and approaches with the needs and aspirations of distinct groups of vulnerable youth, including youth with disabilities.

The webinar served as an introductory to three-part series learning webinars to be hosted throughout the project. The webinar recorded 105 attendees, and 113 registrants ranging from global and local development actors; government officials; and youth, 20 of which attended in person.



Some of the youth representatives participating in the in person webinar in Bulawayo. Photo by Tariro Mhute/CRS

The key highlight during the webinar, was the attendees' actionable recommendations on how the project could enhance meaningful youth engagement.



CRS Zimbabwe responds to cholera in Hwange

With support from the CRS Humanitarian Response Department, CRS in Zimbabwe is participating in the Southern Africa Regional Office (SARO) Cholera Response project in Hwange Urban, Matabeleland North Province.

The four-month project worth USD86 000.00 is being implemented through a local church partner, Caritas Hwange and is set to benefit 10 000 project participants. Zimbabwe has been grappling with cholera since February 2023 and to

date the country has recorded 34,414 suspected cholera cases, 3,964 confirmed cases, 715 deaths with 87 being culture confirmed and 629 being cholera suspected deaths. The Case Fatality rate stands at 2.1%.

The emergency response project seeks to contribute to the reduction of mortality and morbidity from cholera in Hwange Urban district through improving access to safe water and basic sanitation as well as increased awareness to cholera and the

adoption of positive hygiene and health behaviours by the project participants.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

0774 994 469 OR 08010108



Catholic Relief Services | 95 Parklane Kenyan Embassy, Harare, Zimbabwe | crs.org | For more information, Follow our Facebook Page, CRS Zimbabwe, Twitter Page @Crs Zimbabwe or Call on 0242-761808

©2021 Catholic Relief Services. All Rights Reserved. 21MK-348670M