



RESTORING HOPE FOR RURAL WATER SUPPLY

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Ward 8 is one of the wards in Chiredzi district that succumbed to cholera in 2009. Drought also emerged as a menace, having left Chibwedziva struck by food insecurity and drinking water became a serious challenge. It was also affected by wild animals from Gonarezhou National Park and the situation promoted food insecurity since crops and domestic animals were destroyed by wild animals hence insuperable problems. As a result, this place was also left with limited hygiene promotion escalating cases of diarrhoea, cholera and eventually deaths.

However in a bid to mitigate such cases, the government of Zimbabwe through its international partners (PEPFAR) has taken a centre stage in the provision of non-food items (NFIs) to 451 beneficiaries in ward 8 with Chibwedziva inclusive. The project is being managed by UNICEF and German Agro Action as an implementing partner. As a local authority, Chiredzi Rural District Council has worked very hard in monitoring WASH projects in Chiredzi district. Apart from monitoring, CRDC also takes a centre stage in the mitigation of hygiene related diseases through various projects. Catherine Chauke at her home in Chibwedziva, ward 8 of Chiredzi

Since she lost her sight for about 8 years, she lives with her grandchild called Chenai as her care giver and her son who is mentally disturbed. She received 18 strips of *Aqua* tablets, 1 jerrycan, 1 bucket with a tap, 6 bars of soap and IEC materials.



Catherine Chauke at her home in Chibwedziva, Ward 8

Catherine explains that she is grateful as she received *Aqua* tablets for water treatment and that will help her drink safe water. She makes it clear that she never had a bucket to store drinking water before. She also understands well on the use of the water treating tablets she got.

“Ndakawana chigubhu cheku-cheresa myura, bucket, sipo ne mapepa ekuverenga maerano nezveutano naizvozvo ndinotenda kanzuro ye CRDC nevainoshanda navo pachirongwa ichi”, said Catherine with her lips trembling.

Since she got soap, the old woman says she prefers washing her hands frequently, and she can grope for a soap when her grandchild is away. It is profusely heard trending when she shares her story that she used to suffer from severe diarrhoea, a problem emanating from the water she used to drink before she got the *Aqua* tablets for water treatment. Chenai uses a 20 litre jerry can to ferry water from a next door neighbour's well, approximately 800 metres away from their homestead and she closes with a lid to avoid contamination during transportation. Since Catherine got a 20 litre bucket with a tap, her grandchild stores water and makes sure she drops 2 *Aqua* tablets and waits for about 30 minutes and then uses a tap to extract the water. Incredibly, Catherine says she can tell whether the water is treated or not, and she says it feels healthy

drinking treated water.

With the bars of soap she got, she took some for her mentally challenged son and Chenai. Chenai had an unwanted pregnancy and she had a child, one of the reasons her grandmother gave her some bars of soap for a healthy baby care. She also uses soap to wash hands. Chenai left school at a very early stage, but she frequently reads the IECs for her grandmother and also for her to understand more about hygiene, Catherine confirms. *Chenai washing kitchen utensils with soap “Ndinogezva maoko ndabva ku toilet*

uye muzukuru wangu anondiverengera zvakanyorwa pamapepa iwaya achindiudza nezvekusham-



bidzika. Ndave neruzivo kuti ndinofanirwa kugeza maoko angu nguva dzese”, said Catherine before she takes a deep sigh.

The IEC materials have various tips on them about hand washing, food preparation, prevention of diarrhoeal diseases among other hygiene tips.

Ostensibly, the members of the community in Chibwedziva have whole heartedly embraced the programme and they seem to have understood that it is aimed at improving lives through hygiene.