

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION PROJECTS IN CHIREDZI



For years now, rural communities in the South Eastern Lowveld have been adversely affected by food insecurity due poor rains. Natural disasters like floods, drought and epidemic diseases were also immensely contributory to the loss of human lives and domestic animals between 2008 and 2009. The situation saw many people crossing the river Limpopo to the neighbouring South Africa to look for greener pastures, leaving their large tracks of lands behind. This had also seen poor access to portable water hence the emergency of epidemic diseases like cholera. Very remote places like Malipati, Dhavhata and Pahlala were profusely disadvantaged by the drought since crops and cattle were devastated.

However this drew the attention of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) to enhance the lives of the people in wards 13, 14 and 15 of Chiredzi District. The project being Elnino Drought Response was aimed at the provision of clean water through the rehabilitation of boreholes in the respective wards. It was also aimed at the promotion of agricultural projects through the establishment of solar-powered gardens. The project saw 50 boreholes being



rehabilitated and the setting up of 7 solar-powered gardens. As a local authority Chiredzi Rural District Council worked closely with the District Water and Sanitation Sub Committee (DWSSC) in the implementation of the project.

In interviews with some beneficiaries in wards 13, 14 and 15, they testify that the project actually brought a sigh of relief to their lives. To date, about 120 households benefit from the Manjinji Garden Scheme in Malipati ward 15. The garden has vegetables, tomatoes and maize grown for business at Malipati Business Centre. Cephas Muchini is an 80 year old beneficiary whose main

interest is in farming. He does subsistence farming on his 3 hectare fertile land specialising in small grains due to little rains received in region 5. It was only in 2016 when he managed to produce for commercial purposes. Muchini explains that the Elnino Drought Response project has changed his life positively. He can now get the money to pay school fees for his grandchild and for other basic needs. By the way Muchini lives with wife Selina Chali and one grandchild Thomas and all the children have left for jobs in South Africa.