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# LATTER-DAY SAINTS CHARITIES PROJECT– (LDSC)

Enhancing water access and usage towards securing livelihoods.

## OVERVIEW

The Latter-day Saints Charities (LDSC) grant of USD\$400 000 supported the establishment/construction and rehabilitation of productive water technologies to enhance resilience for smallholder farming households' projects and livestock across Mberengwa and Chiredzi districts of Zimbabwe. It ran from March 1 to February 2021. Through the project, communities have year-round access to productive, clean, and safe drinking water, boosted production of food crops at irrigation schemes and nutrition gardens and increased livestock access to water.

This project came on the background of El Niño-induced droughts that led to cereal (mainly maize and small grains) insecurity for more than 50% in both districts (Mberengwa, 64.4%; Chiredzi, 56.5%). Coupled with the economic crisis, smallholder farmers also lost livestock, a key resource that they could previously rely on during times of crisis. As a result, the water has addressed challenges relating to livestock and crop production, and improved food and nutrition security for smallholder farming households, including those headed by women and youths in each of the two districts.

## COMPONENTS

### INSTALLATION OF SOLAR POWERED BOREHOLE

LDSC enabled convenient access to water through the establishment of 8 solar powered boreholes benefiting livestock and 3571(1920F&1651M) individuals. In addition, it minimized the risk of using unsafe water sources thereby contributing to good water and sanitation practices. The water is serving household use, brick moulding and livestock drinking. LDSC also conducted asset management trainings and revived the community revolving fund to ensure that resources are available for repairs during breakdown. The boreholes have reduced the amount of labour and time (queuing for water reduced from 15-30 minutes to less than 10 minutes), at watering points especially for women and girls who normally shoulder the responsibility of fetching water.

### REHABILITATE SMALL IRRIGATION SCHEMES

Later Day Saint Charities rehabilitated 2 irrigation schemes in Chiredzi and Mberengwa and this has enabled an increase in area under cropping and reduced excessive water losses from dilapidated canal and underground tanks. In addition, increased water access to irrigate crops within reasonable short distances of 5 to 10m opposed to the previous 40 to 50m distances from the underground tanks using the bucket system. 277 smallholder farming households 1780 (735 males & 1 045 females) now have access to year-round water supply throughout the crop production cycle.

### WEIR/ SMALL DAM CONSTRUCTION

Construction of Maperekeni dam is expected to be complete by early April 2021. The main uses of this water are livestock watering, gardening and fishing. A minimum of 983 cattle, 763 goats and 965 individuals (484 Male & 481 Female) will benefit from this weir. Increased access to water by livestock will cushion households against food insecurity when dry land cereal production fails and with improved access to water, households' livestock is preserved.

### **ONE (1) HECTARE NUTRITION GARDEN CONSTRUCTION**

The project established nine (9) one-hectare nutrition gardens in both districts Chiredzi and Mberengwa, and Communities have started planting leaf vegetables and high valued crops including butternuts for consumption and income generation. 435 households are participating in the nine nutrition gardens established with 2296 (1358 females & 938 males)

### **COMMUNITY AND HOUSEHOLD WATER HARVESTING STRUCTURES**

The project protected 30 deep wells in Chiredzi District and four (4) weirs in Mberengwa district with an additional one individual household water harvesting structure. The assets are benefiting livestock and 663 households with 6627 individuals (2905M & 3722F).

### **LIVESTOCK DRINKING TROUGHS**

LDSC constructed 17 livestock watering troughs, 7 in Chiredzi and 10 in Mberengwa. They are benefitting 942 households with 8213 cattle, 461 donkeys & 6633 sheep & goats drinking water from the troughs. The troughs have helped reduce livestock mortality by lowering trekking distances in search of water (from 3-5km to 1.5 km), which is a contributor to body condition deterioration. The livestock troughs have also decongested large water bodies and reduced pathogenic organism contamination by providing clean and safe water.

### **DRILLING OF BOREHOLES IN WARDS WITH CRITICAL WATER SHORTAGES.**

Two boreholes were drilled in Chiredzi and equipped with Type B Bush Pumps. The boreholes have reduced the time taken (from +1 hour to 15-30 minutes) and the distance women and young girls travel to access portable water, (from 4km to a maximum of 2 km), whilst also providing safe and clean water for both human and livestock consumption. The 2 boreholes are directly benefiting 78 households who own 490 cattle and 523 goats in Chiredzi. As a way of enhancing sustainability, the ZRBF-ECRAS project will facilitate the establishment of water point committees and a revolving fund at each of the drilled borehole site to ensure that resources are available for repairs during breakdown.

