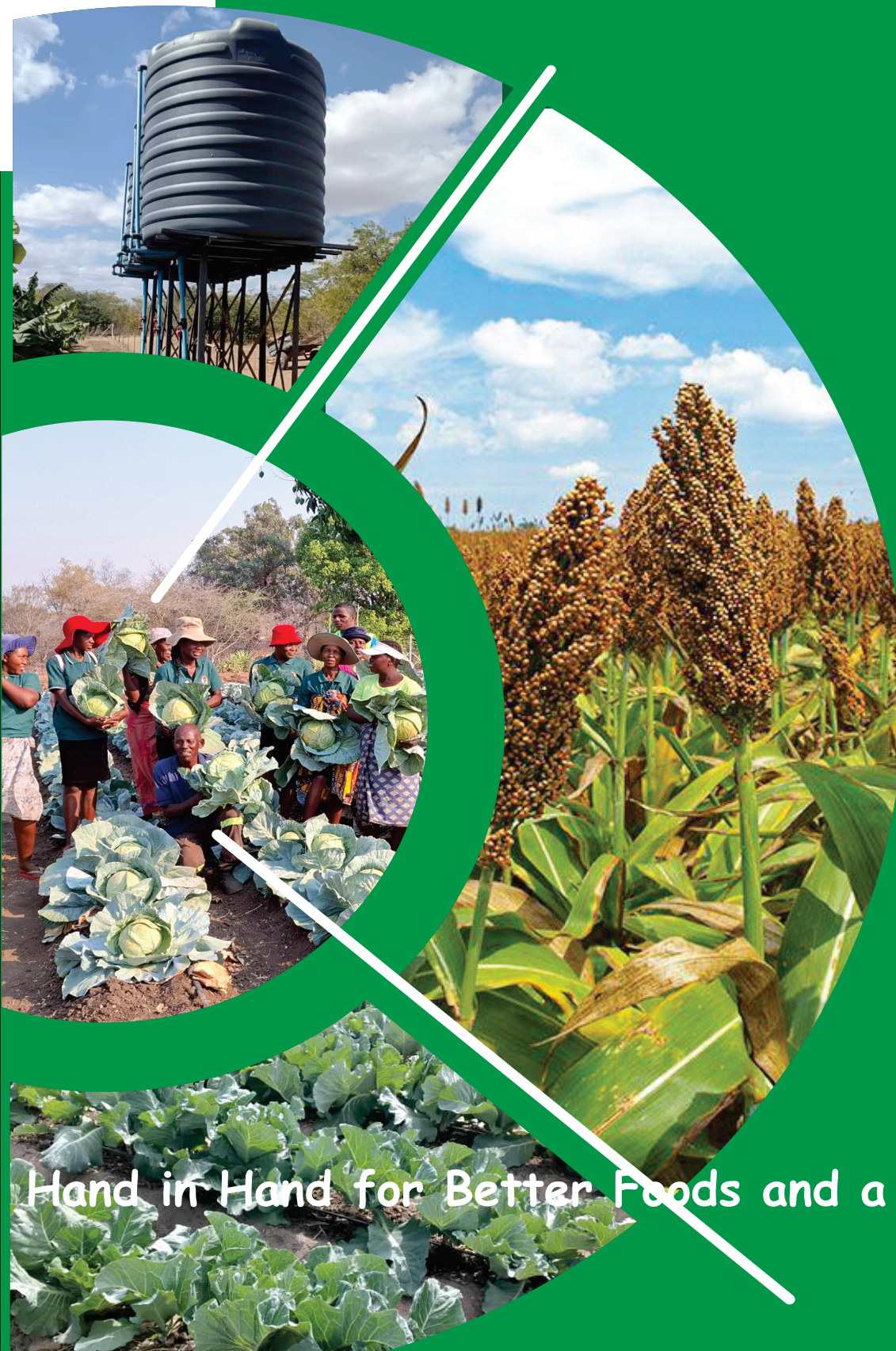




World Food Day 2025



Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future



SACP rehabilitates 4 schemes... 246 hectares brought under irrigation



One of the centre pivots at Mug Ivhu Irrigation Scheme



A farmer harvests water melons at Nhakayedu Irrigation Scheme

The Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project has completed rehabilitation of four irrigation schemes for the year 2025 with a hectareage of 246 hectares. These schemes include Nhakayedu Irrigation in Kwekwe, Midlands where the scope of included the change of the in-field system from hose-reel to semi-portable sprinkler, the supply and installation of a standby pumping unit which has brought 20 hectares under irrigation.

The project has also completed the rehabilitation of Chipiri Irrigation Scheme in Muzarabani District where four centre pivots were installed, enabling irrigation of 96 hectares and benefitting 206 farmers

In Mashonaland East, the project completed rehabilitation of Mug Ivhu Inhaka Irrigation Scheme in Murehwa, which was established by Government under the Agribank Facility in 2003. The 60 hectare scheme, which has 128 beneficiaries saw a change of infield system from semi-portable sprinkler to centre pivots using the existing conveyance line as well as the supply and installation of new pumping unit.

The project has also recently completed Mamina Irrigation Scheme in Mhondoro Ngezi, Mashonaland West. The 50 hectare is benefitting 87 smallholder farmers/



The maize crop at Nhakayedu



IFAD and SACP project staff inspect some of the installed equipment at Nhakayedu



Harvesting health and wealth – Crop production for nutrition security and incomes

The goal of the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project is to increase incomes and improve nutrition through sustainable transformation of the smallholder farmers. Crop and livestock production guarantees food and nutrition security among smallholder farmers. Growing diverse crops increases dietary diversity, ensuring a steady supply of food which reduces hunger and lowers food expenditure for farmers.

The major crops produced by farmers under the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project include traditional grains such as sorghum and pearl millet, legumes, oilseeds, vegetables and fruits. The different crops produced by farmers supply different nutrients to the consumer hence production and consuming diverse foods ensures a variety of essential nutrients for food and nutrition security. Production of livestock ensures that farmers get the necessary nutrients through production of meat and milk. Farmers get income from the sale of surplus from their own production and are able to buy food items that they are not able to produce to meet their dietary requirements.

In order to promote the adoption of biofortified crops, the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster has supported the production of iron-rich NUA45 beans in Mt Darwin in Mashonaland Central Province. Production of such crops ensures that farmers get the necessary required micro-nutrients from their own production to reduce malnutrition.

The project is also supporting value chains that include production of small livestock such as goats, cattle for beef and dairy as well as indigenous chickens to ensure that farmers get meat, milk and eggs.



Farmers at Jompani Agriculture Producer Group walk past their sorghum field. Sorghum is one of the value chains supported by SACP



One intervention...multiple solutions- VBUs transform rural communities in Zimbabwe

As part of its infrastructural intervention to build climate resilience among smallholder farmers, the project is establishing 100 multi-purpose water points, spread across Matabeleland North, Midlands, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central. The multi-purpose water points, commonly called village business units are similar to those established by Government under its Rural Development 8.0 intervention and have presented multiple benefits for farmers in arid areas.

The intervention included fencing off a 1.25 hectare garden, with 1 hectare being used for commercial use and 0.25 hectares is for nutrition purposes. The project installed two 10 000 water tanks, multiple water taps for domestic water use and a drinking trough for livestock .With the solar power that is part of the infrastructure intervention, the multi taps for fetching water and drinking troughs for their livestock, they provide multiple relief for villagers.

Kasikili Jabula Village Business Unit in Hwange District is one such intervention. The VBU has 30 beneficiaries who grow different crops in the garden, which include green mealies, cabbage, carrots, spinach, garlic, onions, tomatoes, okra and kale.



A farmer showcases an onion crop at Jabula VBU Hwange



Farmers prepare carrots for sharing at Jabatshaba VBU, Lupane

Increased production and productivity

During a recent visit to the garden, Albert Moyo, the committee secretary for the garden explained, “Before SACP we had a small nutrition garden, which measured 70 metres by 70 metres where we used to grow vegetables for consumption. It was, however, not sustainable because we could only irrigate the garden using buckets and the land was small. After the coming in of SACP, we cleared the land and we grew our first crop, which was cabbage and green mealies.

The farmers at Jabula adopted a market-led approach where they engaged an off-taker before growing any crop. Moyo explained, “Each crop that you see here is a response to the demands of the market in the nearby resort town of Victoria Falls. The off taker for the VBU comes here every week to pick up vegetables for sale in Victoria Falls. We are assured of a reliable, steady income and we are sure that we will not suffer any losses emanating from the lack of markets. Right now we are in our second crop cycle.”

Improved nutrition

The rural community, which faced perennial challenges of inadequate food has reported being food secure, following the



One intervention...multiple solutions- VBUs transform rural communities in Zimbabwe

establishment of the garden. Moyo added that, “We also established a nutrition corner where we cultivate kale, onions and tomatoes which have done extremely well. We are food secure at homestead level and also able to supply vegetables to nearby schools to support the schools feeding programme, complimenting Government's efforts as it is supplying grain used to prepare the staple food, *isitshwala*. The vegetables from this garden provide relish for our children during these feeding programmes.”

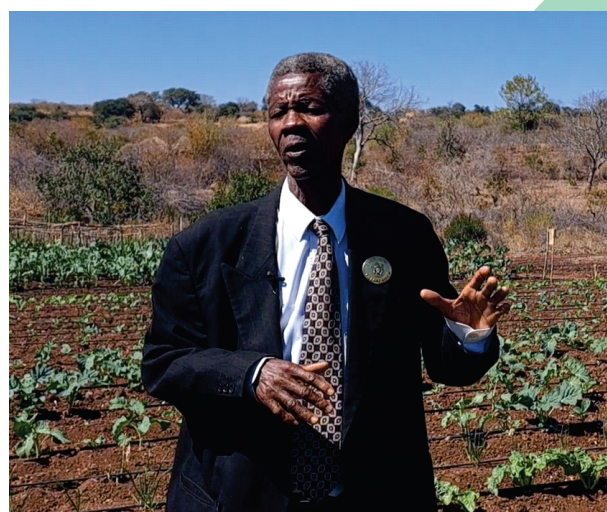
Mrs Lillian Sibanda, another member of the Jabula VBU adds that, “We planted okra, spinach, covo, carrots, and garlic, with a dedicated nutrition corner for family consumption. This garden serves as a source of relish for us and our neighbours who are not members of the garden.”

At another Village Business Unit in Jabatshaba, Lupane, Lucy Moyo the VBU chairperson said, “While we sold the bulk of our crop from the commercial plot, we also harvested and shared 120 cabbages which were shared among the 30 households for consumption. We also utilised 120 buckets of tomatoes for domestic consumption and these were shared among the 30 beneficiary households. In addition to the crops in the commercial plot, we have cultivated carrots and leafy green vegetables which are shared among households. From the nutrition corner, we have also realized a surplus which we are selling to nearby boarding schools, Mabhikwa High School and Fatima High School.”

More money in the pocket



Mrs Lillian Sibanda of Jabula VBU



Traditional leader, Christopher Sibanda, Jabula VBU

Another benefit of the multi-purpose water point has been the improved incomes for the farmers. Lillian Sibanda of Kasikili Jabula said, “We are now generating income from the sale of the garden produce, which we are using to pay school fees. For us, the VBU has generated US\$4 122 from its first crop cycle. We grew cabbage on 0.35 hectares and harvested 10620 heads which the farmers sold for \$2,134. The tomato crop from 0.05 hectares yielded 1000 kilograms which we sold for US\$414.00.

From our maize crop which we grew on 0.55 hectares, we harvested 3,300 kilograms which we sold for \$1,400. We also sold okra, carrots, covo, spinach and chomoullier where we got an income of US\$174”.

It is the same at Jabatshaba VBU in Lupane, where the Chairlady Lucy Moyo, said, “The beneficiaries have started realizing an income from the village business unit. After planting the first cycle of crops which included cabbages, tomatoes as well as carrots and rape which formed the nutrition corner, the farmers realized US\$6 431.00.

The farmers harvested 636 buckets of tomatoes which they sold for prices ranging from US\$4 to US\$7 depending on the tomato sizes and quality and made a total income of US\$3 672.00. Out of the 3 332 heads of cabbage, making an income of US\$2559.” The garden already has a plan for maintenance which constitutes 10% of their income. This will be used for any repairs to both the water point and the garden.



One intervention...multiple solutions- VBUs transform rural communities in Zimbabwe

Reduced livestock losses

Jabula, which is close to both Hwange National Park has been experiencing livestock losses to wild life attacks. Among the numerous benefits to the Jabula community is the ease of watering their livestock. The addition of the drinking trough and the solarisation of the borehole has enabled the community to water their livestock closer to their homesteads. Lillian Sibanda notes that, “The solarization of this borehole by SACP has reduced the distance livestock travelled to Zambezi River for water and minimized instances of stock theft by cross border cattle rustlers. I would like to thank SACP for this project.”

Traditional leader, Christopher Sibanda reiterates, “It's now easier to water our cattle. They used to walk about 5km to the nearest water point or sometimes even more. Some of the cattle would go missing after being eaten by wild animals. Because of SACP, we now water our cattle in the drinking trough that is part of this VBU.”

Better access to water, less time spent queueing for water

In dry areas lying in the Agro-ecological region 5 like Hwange and Lupane, communities rely on boreholes for drinking water. However, most of the boreholes are bush pumps which are often difficult to operate.

At Jabatshaba, Lucy Moyo said, “Before this intervention, it was very hard to operate this borehole. It had 16 pipes and was very heavy. Women were forced to pump as groups as one person was not able to operate the borehole. Now, we just open the taps and fetch water, there are less conflicts over water and watering livestock. Community members used to spend a lot of time at the water point, and there were endless arguments over who came to the borehole first. This water point has made it easier for all community members including the elderly and PWDs to easily access water.”

Inclusive technology

The borehole has also ensured ease of use for vulnerable members of the community such as the elderly and Persons with Disabilities. Thembelani Ndlovu, the Vice Chairperson of the Jabatshaba VBU who also has a disability added, “For some of us who have disability, this intervention has made a positive difference. We no longer pump water from the borehole but we fetch water from the taps. This is less strenuous for us and the elderly. This SACP intervention has enabled us to water the livestock as PWDs since the technology is no longer laborious.”

Whats on your plate?- Empowering women through nutrition

Women and nutrition are connected in many ways. In many communities around the Zimbabwe, it is women who still predominantly manage family meals and care for children. Through these roles, women are the key to delivery of good nutrition in their communities and families. The focus on women is borne out of the realisation that they make up the bulk of the workforce in agriculture and food systems and are also the custodians of nutritious diets in their different households. This consists of different interrelated elements, such as women's use of income for food and non-food expenditures, the ability of women to care for themselves and their families, and women's energy expenditure

Energy and nutrient requirements are influenced both by sex and biology while nutrient uptakes might be influenced by gender roles and responsibilities. Thus, gender roles significantly influence nutrition outcomes, affecting how food is produced, accessed, dietary practices, health, with women and girls often bearing the brunt of nutritional inequalities through how nutrition services are provided and used.

Addressing gender in nutrition is critical, tackling gender inequalities can result in larger improvements in malnutrition than if gender inequalities are not tackled. Without addressing the core issue of gender (e.g. decision making, access to productive and financial resources, power), we may not make as much progress as is needed to improve nutrition. Therefore, addressing gender can help put an end to inter-generational malnutrition.



As part of SACP's work to integrate gender lens in programming, the following have been prioritized One approach that SACP builds on is increased **income to be associated with nutrition education and Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC)** activities. The project is promoting nutritional education and supporting actions that reshape food systems and improve nutrition security through behavioural change in targeted communities.

The project is employing the Action Learning Systems (GALS) tools to enable communities to analyse the root causes of undesirable nutrition behaviours. This is considered important in transforming communities' attitudes and behaviours to improve the nutritional status of women of child bearing age and children under the age of 5 years.

Under SACP, which is offering financial support to Agriculture Producer Groups, women make up 50% of the membership while the youth make up 30%. The project is also supporting Small and medium enterprises and value chain lead enterprises that will offer services to farmers in the agriculture producer groups as well as buying their produce where women will make up at least 25%.

Empowering women through income generating ventures ensures that they benefit from household incomes for them to take care of themselves, and be able to fund nutritious food and non-food expenditures.

Nutrition corners- a key cog in addressing hunger

According to UNICEF, hidden hunger refers to lack of essential vitamins and minerals in one's diet, leading to malnutrition. Hidden hunger often affects communities that consume diets that consist of starchy staples with insufficient diversity. In Zimbabwe, the majority of communities rely on staples prepared from white maize. This condition can affect individuals who appear to be well-nourished or even overweight who may suffer from deficiencies of crucial micronutrients such as iron, zinc and vitamins. The consequences of hidden hunger can be severe, particularly in children where it can lead to stunted growth, weakened immune systems, and impaired brain development. Among women of child bearing age, it manifests as anemia, resulting from a shortage of iron.

The burden of hidden hunger in the country.

The burden of hidden hunger is a significant public health concern in Zimbabwe, affecting various populations, particularly children under five and women of reproductive age.



The provinces that are benefitting from the SACP interventions include Matabeleland North, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East

SACP interventions to address hidden hunger “micronutrient deficiency”

In order to mitigate the effects of hidden hunger, the Small-holder Agriculture Cluster Project has established multi-purpose water points, commonly known as village business units (VBU) which house a 0.25 hectare nutrition corner. While the crops cultivated on the 1 hectare are meant for commercial sale, the crops in the nutrition corner are meant to be consumed by the beneficiaries with the aim of improving their nutrition. In response to the challenges of hidden hunger faced by the country, crops grown in nutrition corners at VBUs include carrots (Vitamin), spinach (iron), tomatoes and other leafy vegetables. These crops, grown for their nutrition value have started bearing fruits for the farmers.

Other nutrition interventions include nutrition education sessions and supply of starter packs for the 70 VBus that have been established under SACP. The nutrition corner starter packs included iron rich spinach, vitamin A rich carrots, onions and tomatoes to be planted on a space of 0.25ha and ultimately meant for household consumption. In order to increase the production of nutrition rich crops, the project will establish 18 demo plots throughout the districts of operation. These demo plots will be supplied with biofortified crops like Nua 45 beans, orange maize and orange fleshed sweet potatoes to promote adoption of micronutrient rich foods.

Farmer Testimonial

In this nutrition corner, each farmer received their portion. We first planted carrots, then we planted leafy vegetables, spinach tomatoes and onions. We were trained about the nutritional benefits of these crops, for example, we learnt that carrots are good for eyesight while spinach contributes to healthy blood. We no longer have challenges of relish for our meals

As women, we previously had challenges in accessing water to irrigate the crops. We used to carry water in buckets to come and water the crops, all that has changed as now use the drip irrigation system. The process of irrigating the garden is no longer laborious for us as women and the elderly. Now we just turn the taps to fetch water for domestic use. We are grateful to SACP for the intervention. As you can see, I look strong and healthy because of the variety of nutritious crops that we cultivate here. Every VBU member is food secure.



Lucia Ndlovu, Mathambo VBU