

Food-for-Peace Success Story

The Women Who Built Pateni Dam



Phumzile Moyo, Catherine Gumbo and Bessie Moyo at Pateni Dam Commissioning Ceremony in Tsholotsho

“Amalima has softened the hearts of our husbands like butter left in the sun. They do not mind helping us out with our household chores anymore, there is so much love now. I have learnt that most conflict is caused by hunger and poverty. Siyayibonga iAmalima! (We are grateful to Amalima).” – Catherine Gumbo



Mr. Richard Moyo, Provincial Affairs Minister Matabeleland North and David Brigham CNFA Chief of Party for Amalima, cut the ribbon at Pateni Dam Commissioning

Phumzile Moyo, Catherine Gumbo, and Bessie Moyo are just three of hundreds of women who over the last seven years have fully embraced the teaching they've received from the Amalima program. They shared how their lives have changed for the better and how taking part in the construction of Pateni Dam is just a part of the legacy they will leave behind for their children.

Dikili Village in Ward 19 of Tsholotsho South lies in a region characterized by low and poorly distributed rains, prone to frequent droughts. Poor soil structure and sparse vegetation cover are also typical of the district and together increase the risk of land degradation and soil loss in the area. Poor land management strategies practiced by communities residing in the Pateni catchment area also result in high levels of soil erosion and siltation into the river system.

The main water source for livestock and domestic use is the silted riverbed where farmers use sand abstraction as a means of accessing water. In the dry season, the community's livestock health is severely compromised due to scarcity of water in the area. It was therefore vital that conservation measures be implemented in the catchment area with the construction of the dam to avoid siltation of the riverbed.

250 members (163 youth, 52 women, 25 men) participated in the construction of Pateni Dam which started on the 27th of May 2019 and concluded on the 15th of September 2019. Pateni Dam serves as a water source for approximately 2,800 cattle and 500 households.

The women shared how having water via the dam, greatly improved their livestock's health. Before the dam was constructed, they would walk 8km to the river with their livestock to get them water and skip going the next day because it was too taxing to walk daily. Now the animals go to the dam whenever they want to drink. Phumzile Moyo shared some of her challenges during construction: *“The days were long and challenging. I would wake up at 3am to make sure that I cook and leave food for my husband and children at home...As a DRR committee member and leader, I had to work a full day which meant I was there from 8am all the way to 4pm because someone had to oversee [the] process at all times.”.*

Provincial Affairs Minister for Matabeleland North, Mr. Richard Moyo praised Amalima for their work and challenged the local authority to invest towards the establishment of a fisheries project to create jobs for the youth and women entrepreneurs. David Brigham, CNFA Chief of Party for Amalima said, *“Dams last long and as Amalima, it feels good to leave something that will bring productivity in the area. With the way they worked closely together in building the dam, we are confident the community will make good use of the dam.”.*