



40th
Anniversary
1980 - 2020

SUCCESS STORIES



Zambia | Story 6 – 2020

One region 16 nations Towards a common future

From the beginning of time, the principles of Ubuntu have guided African societies. Best described as an African philosophy rooted in a deep awareness of: “I am because of who we all are”; the spirit of Ubuntu resonates in every fibre of SADCs existence – past and present. The 40th anniversary of SADC in 2020 commemorates a journey of progress on the complex road to achieving peace and security, development and economic growth.

This “SADC Success Stories 2020” series shines a spotlight on the positive impacts achieved through regional integration in communities and in the lives of the people of the SADC region.

This story ‘Bringing sanitation – and dignity – to border posts’ is based on the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, adopted in 2000.

Bringing sanitation – and dignity – to border posts

“Mwami used to have poor sanitation and accessing safe drinking water was difficult. Defecation in the open was common, especially by the traders in transit, and the nights were characterised by an unbearable stench,” says Janet Ngwenya, a resident of Mwami, of the project that has brought potable water and ablution facilities to the Mwami, Mchinji and Chanida border posts.

Mwami is a busy transit point. A one-stop border post that acts as an entry and exit point for traders moving across Zambia and Malawi, it also feeds the Nacala Corridor – which links Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique to the port of Beira, located about 1,200 kilometres north of the Mozambican capital of Maputo. The port handles the import and export of cargo for Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and even the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Mwami also provides a temporary home for some people in transit. Restaurants, grocery stores, hawkers and hair salons have sprung up to cater to the needs of these people. But the one thing lacking has been proper water and sanitation facilities.

The local traders and the travellers accessed drinking water from river beds and shallow wells, while the bush and plastic containers were the only options when it came to answering the call of nature.

In 2017, the three countries that benefit from Mwami, Mchinji and Chanida border posts, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, sourced US\$1.6 million to



implement water and sanitation schemes for the shared facilities. The key priority areas for the project were to construct ablution blocks and set up water reticulation systems at the posts, thereby not only improving sanitation and health, but also strengthening their regional integration programme.

Paramount Chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni is happy that the project has been able to benefit the local people. “I am very happy that my people have been remembered,” he says. “This is what we as traditional leaders have been advocating for.

“This is a gesture of love, and we are very happy that we have water nearby because we used to suffer braving long distances before finding water points.”

Eastern Water and Sanitation Company (EWSC) Public Relations Officer Moses Nsungu says that data from the surrounding health facilities and results indicates that, in 2018, the number of diarrhoea diseases and water-borne diseases at the three locations reduced because the people started accessing clean, safe drinking water.

The funds for the project were sourced from the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility, which is under the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development. SADC countries, as members of the United Nations, have made commitments to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which call for safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.

SDG number six requires member countries to invest in infrastructure, provide sanitation facilities and encourage hygiene, and to protect and restore water-related ecosystems. For Zambia, this project is also in line with the Seventh National Development Plan, which seeks to improve the availability of water and sanitation infrastructure. The plan calls for the prioritisation of infrastructure in rural areas in order to improve the livelihoods of the rural population, which is where

the majority of the poor live. Practically, this means investing in improving access to water for domestic use.

Although the definition of domestic use varies from one country to another within the region, the SADC protocol defines it as ‘water for drinking, washing, cooking, bathing and watering purposes’. The implementation of this project has seen an improvement in water and sanitation at the three border posts of Mwami, Mchinji and Chanida.

Chipata District Commissioner Kalunga Zulu says that open defecation is not only dangerous to the environment, it also poses a great threat to human health as it pollutes water sources for domestic use. Thus, the project’s outcomes provide long-term solutions to water issues that affect the lives of the vulnerable in southern Africa.

Nsungu says that the project has benefited EWSC, which has increased its water production to 470,000 cm³ monthly while connecting 125,000 new customers to the system and getting eight kiosks operational. “Suffice to mention, the project is also environmentally-friendly in that the ablution blocks have the solar power system,” he comments.

The project has also created employment for the local people who manage the kiosks and ablution blocks. “I got a job to take care of the ablution blocks and I now have an income to help my family,” says Samson Ndhlovu, who now works at Mwami border post.

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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).