

Supporting local solutions

Mark Nyamusunga was among the founders of the **CHANYANYA IRRIGATION PROJECT**. He is passionate about the benefits it has delivered for local smallholders.

“What prompted us to start this project?”

Mark answers his own question saying, “We could not continue living on handouts from the government. We were losing respect from our families.” He joined a small group of smallholders to discuss the possibility of harnessing the potential of the nearby Kafue River to irrigate their land.

“At the start it was difficult, we wrote an application which was taken to look for money. They found InfraCo Africa but they are partners, not donors, they needed us to be organised. It took us three years to form a recognisable cooperative, but we did it! We elected a committee, and InfraCo (Africa) was able to fund us.”

Smiling broadly, he says, “It makes me proud to be the founder of this. When I die, my legacy will still remain.”

No longer the cooperative’s Secretary, Mark devotes his time to farming, “I grow cabbages, chilli, onions and okra – I am well known for being the first person to grow okra and for being the best at growing it here! I love watching my vegetables grow. I talk to them, and they look to me like, ‘our parent has come!’ Some are for sale, others are for my table at home.”

He also supports his children’s education. “Sending my children to school has been my greatest achievement in life. I even put my child through the University of Zambia, paying about 60% of that from money I earned right here in the gardens!”

He concludes, “I am what I am today because of the gardens.”