

Maximising yields

Monday Machenje chairs the **Chanyanya Smallholders Cooperative Society**, supporting fellow smallholders to maximise the impact of irrigation on crop yields.

The Chanyanya project saw 126 cooperative members pool their land to enable the development of an irrigated commercial farm and market gardens. Gesturing to his surroundings, now lush and green with a variety of crops, Monday says, “There has been tremendous change here since irrigation arrived. This used to be bush, but we can now grow vegetables. People formerly depended on fishing, but now more people are interested in farming and it’s their source of income and livelihood. Many people’s lives are being improved.”

For himself, Monday says, “I grow cabbage, sweet potato leaves and tomatoes. My family like tomatoes because they are used as a condiment. I sell my sweet potato leaves to people from Lusaka – there is high demand for them there and they sell fast!”

Farming has brought a lot of value in my life. I have eight children and it used to be difficult for me to raise money for their books and school fees. I am now able to cover such expenses with the money I earn from farming.”

Monday is proud to Chair the smallholders’ cooperative. “It’s the people who selected me, so that I can coordinate and lead them. It’s a great feeling, it shows that people have confidence and trust me. It is my responsibility to monitor if my colleagues are making profits and if they are irrigating their produce in the right way.”

Shouldering his hoe, he says, “If there are more markets to supply in the future, I would like to supply them and even sell my produce outside Zambia!”