

Opening up opportunities

Often Mainza anticipates that the **CHIANSI IRRIGATION PROJECT** will support his vision for an 'evergreen' community.

Often moved to Zambia's Kafue District in 1982. With a welcoming grin, he says, "I have grown up here, it is my area. I am proud to be here in this area."

He currently grows maize, groundnuts, rice and vegetables but talks about the challenges of relying on fluctuating rainfall. "There are challenges, last season (2018) we had a drought. Mealie meal (maize meal) prices are high and we can eat 5kg in 3 days so feeding my family is a real challenge for me. I have seven children in school, including a daughter at the School of Nursing, but I am failing to pay their fees."

As Secretary of the Demu Irrigation Cooperative Society, Often has worked hard to engage members with the Chiansi Irrigation project. "I am the chief spokesperson for the community. Everything goes through me and I make sure that information is shared with everyone."

The Chiansi project will link Demu and neighbouring communities to water from the Kafue River. Construction work is underway following an official launch by the President of Zambia. "When the President came to open this project, I knew that we had scored a goal in our community! This project cannot fail!

When the water comes, I will do wonders! Some of the crops I grow will be for food security, others I will sell to pay school fees for my children. I want them to get degrees instead of just diplomas!

My ambition is to see to it that our community will be evergreen!"

