

Bringing people together

Felix Chizhuka is InfraCo Africa's Project Consultant, liaising with stakeholders on the **CHIANSI IRRIGATION PROJECT**.

"I graduated with a BA in Economics from the University of Zambia and worked for the Ministry of Agriculture before studying for an MSc in Agricultural Extension in Canada. I came back to work for the government, running a national programme which gave farmers input on seeds during a severe drought. I have been consulting on the Chiansi project for nearly 6 years now.

This project was started by farmers themselves because they experienced either drought or flood and so wanted irrigation to normalise their food supply." Felix is keen to ensure that farmers' interests are not left out of planning, "My strategy is to listen to everyone's interests and concerns and to build consensus. Building consensus has been my main achievement on this project."

The Chanyanya pilot pooled smallholders' land, irrigating an 148ha commercial farm and 15ha of market gardens. The next steps will involve the expansion of bulk water infrastructure to serve three further communities and a large commercial farm. The new infrastructure will have the capacity to irrigate up to 3,800ha of land, 'future-proofing' the project.

Felix was honoured to welcome the President of Zambia when he launched the expansion works in August 2019. "We received good feedback from His Excellency, the Permanent Secretary and the Minister for Agriculture that this joint venture between investors and smallholders is a model that may be replicated elsewhere in Zambia."

He concludes, "I have made good friends on this project, I am well known here. I feel supported by all of the actors and feel professionally satisfied. I am very excited for the future."