

Keeping people safe

Robert Meikle works for our partner on the **CHIANSI IRRIGATION PROJECT**. With InfraCo Africa's support, he implements stringent safety measures designed to ensure that every worker returns home safely at the end of every day.

Robert believes that establishing and clearly communicating safety protocols is key to keeping HSES front of mind: "I hold daily meetings with my senior supervisors. Our discussions reinforce to them the importance of creating a safe environment and they pass that on to their teams. Supervisors conduct a 'Safety Reminder' chat before work commences each week, encouraging open conversations and issuing advice. He continues, "Before starting work, sub-contractors receive a 'Toolbox Chat' attended by our HSES consultants."

Robert highlights some of the challenges inherent in a project of this scale: "If a worker arrives without a piece of safety gear, the distances involved in sending them to fetch it are considerable. Establishing an HSES mindset is key." With 92 workers currently working across an expansive site, he acknowledges that accidents and near-misses do happen:

"We record, investigate and address any incidents swiftly. If I spot any concerns myself – on site or in the community near the canal works - I stop and correct the issue, explaining why it was dangerous and what should be done differently going forward. That has a big impact on these individuals and they spread that knowledge to others."

When asked what makes him most proud about his work, Robert is quick to answer: "I feel that I have managed to build greater awareness of the importance of HSES here at Chiansi and the community at large; getting everyone involved and thinking about safety. We should not be shy or nervous of talking about our experiences – good or bad - with anyone, including those who are watching out for our safety standards. We must be willing to learn and improve our understanding so that we can prevent future incidents."

