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Defying the dry: Binga's Mampata Nutritional Garden cultivates a brighter future

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Mampata Nutritional Garden.

Gibson Mhaka



IN the heart of drought-stricken Binga District in Matabeleland North Province, a beacon of hope thrives as the one-hectare Mampata Nutritional Garden in ward 13 under Saba area flourishes with a variety of crops, including maize and sugar beans providing a vital source of sustenance for the community.

The green oasis stands in stark contrast to the surrounding parched landscape, a testament to the tireless efforts of the local community.

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The Mampata Nutritional Garden project is aimed at scaling up sustainable food and nutritional security, income, opportunities for value addition and development of agro-business value chains in rural areas.

The project boasts a strong sense of gender balance, with 30 members comprising 26 women and four men.

This inclusive approach empowers women as key players in ensuring community food security.

The project is part of the agriculture component of the Government in partnership with United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)-led Climate Adaptation Water and Energy Programme (CAWEP) and funded by the UK government through a £13.6 million grant.

It is one of four such one-hectare gardens established in Wards 9 and 13, specifically in Siansundu, Mankoboli, Kadika North, and Kadika South areas.

The nutrition gardens are part of a broader strategy to promote food security, serving as local hubs for cultivating a diverse range of fruits and vegetables.

Also, by empowering communities to produce their own food, the programme aims to enhance dietary diversity and reduce dependency on external food sources.

They are being implemented in tandem with a horticulture recovery and growth plan, which seeks to reconfigure the industry towards being private sector driven.



vegetables and fruits.

The Mampata Nutritional Garden project benefits from water supplied through the rehabilitation of the existing Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) scheme, including its 65-kilometer pipeline, and the installation of a new eight-kilometer pipeline.

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River.

Mampata Nutritional Garden chairperson Mr Edison Mwinde narrated how the project is set to improve members' lives.



Mampata Nutritional Garden chairperson Mr Edison Mwinde

“This is the first project of its kind in our area, and it has the potential to be a game-changer. It will fight hunger and improve our access to nutritious food.

“The project aims to develop self-sufficiency in food and nutrition by promoting the cultivation of healthy crops. We wholeheartedly embraced this government initiative.

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implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund's (UNDP)

Climate Adaptation Water and Energy Programme (CAWEP) and the UK government. This project is designed to promote livelihoods and transform lives by narrowing the income gap between rural and urban communities,” said Mr Mwinde.

The project has emerged as a success across the Saba area, poised to help eradicate malnutrition and promote balanced diets.

Another beneficiary, Ms Familiar Nkodoko, expressed her belief that the garden will be a turning point for their lives.

She said they will not only be able to sustain themselves but also supply neighbouring villages with fresh produce.

“With the harvest underway, we're hopeful of paying our children's school fees. This project is a game-changer, boosting both our nutrition and livelihoods. We are relying on NGO donations, but with this project we can now envision ourselves as major suppliers, ensuring fresh vegetables not only for our families but also for neighbouring villages. This will significantly improve our lives,” said Ms Nkodoko.

Agriculture extension officer attached to the project, Mrs Nomore Magwira said the project was being implemented to build resilience among rural farmers, while increasing opportunities for value addition and the development of agro-business value chains.



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Mrs Nomore Magwira

“This project arrived like a lifeline for the Saba community, addressing their urgent need for food and financial security. Its inclusive nature ensures everyone participates – women, men, and youths – making it a true family effort.

“As a crucial step forward, the project is specifically targeted at improving food and nutritional security for disadvantaged families.

“Food is a basic necessity, and proper nutrition is essential for overall well-being. This nutritional garden goes beyond simply providing food; it tackles chronic and non-communicable diseases by promoting physical activity, improved dietary choices, and



UNDP communications officer for CAWEP, Mr Paul Sixpence said the purpose of the programme is to climate-proof communities and ensure food security. He said Binga is one of the districts that have been hard hit by climate change.

“As part of efforts to enhance climate-smart agriculture, UNDP through its funding partner which is the United Kingdom government, has ensured that communities in the Mlibizi area in Binga have access to new agricultural methods that enhance adaptation to

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four one-hectare nutrition gardens in Wards 9 and 13, specifically in the Siansundu, Mankoboli, Kadika North, and Kadika South areas,” said Mr Sixpence.

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