



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Rain Water Harvesting

Rainwater harvesting is a technique of collecting and storage of rainwater into reservoirs or tanks before it is lost as surface runoff. One common method is rooftop harvesting. The water harvested from the rains can be used for various purposes including gardens, irrigation, livestock and also domestic purposes. Rainwater, if harvested, can provide water during drought periods, can mitigate flooding in low-lying areas and can reduce demand on wells during water shortages. Traditionally, rainwater is harvested either directly in an open bucket or indirectly through shallow wells dug along the riverbanks.

Often times, it is women in rural areas who are the main users of water for domestic purposes and also farming activities.

# The Weekly for Zambia Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

## The Problem: Poor rainwater harvesting

In Zambia less than five percent of the farmers practice rainwater harvesting. However, most parts of the country especially the Southern, Central, Western and Eastern provinces run out of water in the dry seasons for domestic and agricultural purposes. This means women are often forced to travel very long distances to fetch water. Livestock animals have to walk long distances to find drinking water and this becomes a source of diseases

and can lead to poor meat quality.

The technologies that have been promoted for rainwater harvesting in some areas have been costly and don't use locally available materials. Water collection has mainly fallen on women. Unfortunately, men often don't see value in investing time and money in harvesting technologies especially if it is used for domestic purposes.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Ask listeners if they have practiced water harvesting? Traditionally, people used to dig shallow wells for storing water for agricultural purposes. This, however, did not last for a long time.

Some organisations have been promoting water harvesting. Ask listeners if they have participated in any programme for harvesting water? Ask listeners to share some challenges and success stories.

The Ministry of Agriculture has been promoting various water harvesting technologies, ask agriculture extension officers to come to the radio station and discuss this topic and share their knowledge.

Find out if there are other organisations promoting water harvesting in your area. Invite them to your station to talk about their activities.

We are now experiencing excessive rainwater in most parts of the country and this comes after the failure of some crops in other parts of the country.

However, farmers have an opportunity to harvest some of this water for livestock and other uses -- including gardening.

We need to promote water stewardship to all community members and not as a responsibility for women. We have seen young girls dropping out of school or receiving low marks in school because of spending more time helping with household chores including fetching water from long distances – than studying.

There is a need to start looking at simple

methods that have worked before in rural areas and see if they can be improved or scaled up. The setting up of shallow wells for farming practices is a good technique, but how can this be improved?

Climate change has a huge impact on water. We will see more and more water shortages in rural and urban areas.

There is need for people to work together and invest in household or community water harvesting opportunities.

At the household level, construction of underground tanks has been promoted, but very few people have adopted because of cost. Families can put resources together and construct a water tank that can collect water for farming and domestic uses.

Consult the Ministry of Agriculture for more details on how to construct these water tanks for your livestock, gardens or household use.

### Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment:  
Chief Environment officer, Emphrain Shitima,  
email [emshitima40@gmail.com](mailto:emshitima40@gmail.com)

Mrs Glenda Mulenga Kasuba, Rainwater  
Harvesting Association.  
[glendamm@hotmail.com](mailto:glendamm@hotmail.com)

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, FAO  
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