

# The Drought Rangers Team Propose Innovative Plan to Combat Water Shortages

by **Whitney S Sibanda** — September 28, 2024 in **Uncategorized** 0



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## The Drought Rangers Team Propose Innovative Plan to Combat Water Shortages in Bulawayo

Multinational researchers group, The Drought Rangers, who won the Wetskills Challenge, propose an Integrated Data Management System that utilises advanced prediction and data transmission technologies. This initiative is designed to enhance communication and collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring that the entire community is engaged in water conservation efforts.

In a recent interview following their victory, Ghanaian researcher and spokesperson for the team, Ebenezer Padi Narh, outlined an ambitious plan aimed at enhancing drought preparedness and resilience in Bulawayo.



“We were driven by a people-centred project because the issue of drought is one

that concerns everyone, both those in power and those that are not,” Narh stated. His remarks highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive system that unites individuals across various sectors, particularly during times of environmental distress.

The initiative, known as the Siyaphambili Plan, emphasises a people-centred approach to address the critical issue of drought affecting both the government and citizens alike.

The Drought Rangers team, composed of Chantele K. Baipai, Chenai O. Kanenungo, Mbekezeli Sibindi, Mzingaye Ncube, and Padi N. Ebenezer, aims to tackle the pressing problems of reduced water supply due to fast-declining dam levels, water loss from weakened pipe systems, and wastage by consumers.



To combat these challenges, the Drought Rangers propose an Integrated Data Management System that utilises advanced prediction and data transmission technologies. This initiative includes the implementation of communication tools and channels designed for civic engagement, fostering community ownership and responsibility regarding water usage.

“The whole idea was to integrate a system that involves you and I, no matter where we are,” Narh explained. “When we are in crisis, and there’s a commendable coalition, we will be able to sail through every trial.”

Despite their vision, Narh admitted that funding remains a significant barrier to the

project's implementation.

"As we stand here, we do not have the funding, but we believe that it is one that can receive the support of donor agencies and the government," he said.

Narh expressed optimism about securing the necessary financial backing, emphasising the importance of collaboration with various stakeholders.

The Drought Rangers are focused on implementing straightforward strategies that are crucial for their project's success. These include infrastructure upgrades, investment in technology, and community programs aimed at enhancing water conservation practices. "We are looking forward to implementing every simple strategy we put on our projects," Narh stated, underscoring their commitment to practicality and effectiveness. He believes that engaging in roundtable conversations with potential donors and government representatives will be vital in garnering the support they need.

Looking ahead, Narh is confident about the project's potential impact over the next five years. "In the next five years, we anticipate Bulawayo with everybody playing his or her role in observing and protecting the resources we have," he said. His vision includes fostering a strong sense of community cohesion, whereby residents are prepared to tackle drought-related challenges head-on.

"Being that as little as in May, we are anticipating a cohesion between the state and its residents," Narh explained. He envisions a scenario where both the government and the people of Bulawayo work collaboratively to mitigate the effects of drought, ensuring that the community is well-equipped to face any environmental emergencies. "Before or after any catastrophic season or any emergency drought or issues, the people of Bulawayo will be ready to tackle it," he emphasised.

The project is not without its risks, particularly regarding behaviour change among stakeholders. However, the anticipated benefits include cost-effectiveness, increased resilience, and heightened public involvement in water conservation efforts. By fostering a sense of collective responsibility and proactive engagement among community members, the project aims to build resilience against the impacts of climate change.

In conclusion, Ebenezer Padi Narh and the Drought Rangers are championing a

forward-thinking initiative that seeks to empower communities in the face of environmental challenges. While funding remains a barrier, their commitment to a people-centred approach and collaboration with various stakeholders offers a promising pathway toward sustainable solutions for drought management.

As Narh aptly put it, “When we have a roundtable conversation, we will be heard, and these implementations will be fruitful in the near future.” The project’s success could serve as a model for other communities grappling with similar issues, demonstrating the power of unity and collective action in addressing the challenges posed by climate change.