

# DABANE TRUST

## WATER WORKSHOPS

### 1997/98 ANNUAL REPORT

This year has again been busy with staff making a concerted effort to meet the goals and targets set during the January planning meetings. Four groups have become independent of the programme and seven new groups have been taken on. The gardens are proving that they are able to improve the livelihood of rural people in this part of the country and are demonstrating their sustainability and success.

We have continued to work with several other organisations, sometimes with difficulty as some plans and courses have had to be cancelled and then re-scheduled. This has become a difficult issue which will be discussed at the staff retreat. A further issue to be discussed will be the need for better planning and communication to avoid duplication and wasted trips. Another big factor affecting our work this year has been the increased number of funerals which people are attending. Many times visits and even courses have had to be cancelled because the community is involved in a funeral. Again we need to improve our methods of communication.

#### Gardens

The programme is beginning to make a significant impact on rural livelihoods through the gardens which we have assisted. Faced with poor rainy seasons and recurring drought, many groups are realising that stability and food security can be obtained through intensive food crop production. This can be done either through direct food production or through relish crops which can be grown and sold with the proceeds used to purchase staple foods. The programme has assisted 8 gardens along the Shashane River and continues to receive further requests. Two gardens are now in their fifth year of production which proves their sustainability and capacity. Gardens are now being assisted along the Semukwe River and there is one along the Sansukwe at Makorokoro where it is interesting to see a proliferation of individual gardens. Unfortunately we cannot yet say that the area is turning into a green belt but certainly there is beginning to be a regular, substantial supply of locally available vegetables. This aspect of the programme should certainly be expected to continue for the next few years.

In order to prevent excessive production of one or two crops, new and alternate crops are slowly being introduced to the garden groups. Some successful fruit tree growing courses have been held and a course on food preservation is presently being held with several groups at Tshelanyemba. The most experienced groups are now beginning to appreciate the value of mulching and in conserving water when irrigating. We have finally been able to find a very basic system to assist in crop watering which most gardeners find acceptable. Most of the gardens now have a simple system of three sub-surface water tanks down the length of the garden. Water drawn from these considerably eases and speeds up watering.

## **Workshops**

The existing workshops have continued to operate successfully with several courses being arranged throughout the year. Three workshops, Maboloni, Tshelanyemba and Ndwane have completed their token payments and have virtually become independent. Two other workshops, Chipego and Makorokoro have started paying their token fees. The new workshop group at Mkhubazi, Tsholotsho has got off to a good start and has been encouraged to work closely with Ndwane who will be able to encourage them. Fund raising exercises with the generator-welder at a number of the workshops often raises over \$5 000. The community at Mzimuni has been encouraged to re-start the workshop and a new group has begun with a few tools.

Requests for new workshops are however only being received occasionally. There are interested artisans but because of the market research and reluctance by communities to assist with feasibility study meetings, the pace at which we are getting new groups is very slow. There are however efforts to get things moving in communities such as Ngwezi in the Mpoengs area of Bulilimangwe South, St Marys in the Likosi area of Hwange and the Dombodema Community which is still struggling to get things moving. We had expected to have these groups operational during this year as there have been many trips made to each group, however things are still not moving.

A limiting factor is the shortage of skilled artisans who are prepared to work as a group. Rather than wishing to work in groups it does appear that people prefer to work in their own way, as individuals. Further consideration must be given on how to, or in fact whether to, continue to support this aspect of the programme, especially as the recent PRA and base-line surveys have given little support for this initiative. If it is agreed to continue with support for artisan workshops there will be a need to develop a different support approach which will encourage active participation of both artisans and communities. (D Dube).

## **Water Sources**

The dam programme continues to be one of the busiest with four full time staff and assistance from two others. Two dams in Binga have been completed and officially handed over to the communities. In order to simplify transport and servicing we are now trying to concentrate on dam building within the area which is serviced by the road to Beitbridge. Work continues on all dam sites while new work has been started at the big dam in Madzibe, Beitbridge. We have also assisted with some compressor work at Ipaye dam in the Beitbridge area.

## **Water Supplies**

This also is a very busy unit, especially at this time of year. Most gardens have now been equipped with two pumps and two holding tanks, a basic irrigation system and a toilet. Regular pump maintenance courses have been held in three stages with each garden group, or in combined groups. These courses have meant less time spent going out to gardens to repair equipment and also less down time for the garden groups when they are unable to irrigate.

## **Water Harvesting**

All forms of water-harvesting, underground water tanks, surface dams and sand abstraction schemes are in great demand. Most areas where water is in short supply need one of these methods of water-harvesting to store water for both irrigation and livestock. There are more than ten farmers who have requested our assistance with underground water harvesting tanks in Tsholotsho, as well as a family group in Sinde and one old man at Hope Fountain Mission, South of Bulawayo. Binga also has areas that need dams as highlighted in the recent baseline survey conducted under the Oxfam Canada programme.

Filtration pits are being tried by the Makorokoro community to improve moisture retention in their arable fields. A number of people have constructed bunds (contour ridges) for this purpose. A workshop is being organised for early September in 1998.

To augment our work in sand abstraction and dam or weir construction work there would appear to interest in the programme developing a comprehensive water-harvesting programme which would include soil conservation and watershed management. Little has been done in this regard except in areas immediately around gardens and dams. However if this were to be undertaken an additional person would be required to assist D. Dube with essential activities.

Many communities are experiencing difficulties in maintaining their borehole water supplies now that DDF has withdrawn from this service. Requests have been received by the programme to train and/or equip pump minders and village people in pump service and maintenance. Should the programme consider this in the future as many boreholes have water that cannot be pumped out due to inadequately serviced or broken pumps? (D Dube)

### **Food Security**

Training of grinding mill operators has continued and many of them are now competent to satisfactorily operate and maintain their milling equipment. As a result Dabane has been able to minimise activities on this aspect of the programme. We now offer only general service work and no repair work. Several grinding mills have been weaned and are no longer visited regularly. This has meant that Jabulani Sibanda has more time to help in the Water Supply Unit.

Close links are being maintained with the Matopos Research Station with regard to new varieties of sorghum which we continue to distribute to worthy farmers.

### **Feasibility & Monitoring**

There is a continuing need for us to re-visit Local Government offices and Rural District Councils in areas we operate in to keep them abreast of the activities of the organisation. There have been requests made by Binga, Tsholotsho and Matobo districts with regard to the activities Dabane Trust is undertaking. Requests from Rural Councils are for details on the financial, material and technical assistance we are injecting into the district in order for them to include it in their five year development plan.

### **Gender and Capacity Building**

Two seminars have been held within the year, both with very positive results. One was held in the Plumtree area and one in Lupane. Both looked at the roles of family members, with particular emphasis on sharing the work load within the family and of building self confidence, particularly amongst the women. This continues to be a big drive within the Dabane programme.

### **Staffing and Staff Development**

In June of this year our accountant, Mr Mennell retired and his place was taken by Miss Judith Moyo who trained at Solusi. She, with help from Mr Mennell has been able to bring the accounts to the point where they have been audited. She is now working on the 1998/99 accounts and is entering them into the new computer accounting programme which came from Canada.

Philemon Mukosera who had long been a part time worker for Dabane, was taken on full time, but on a yearly contract and is assisting as an equipment operator within the dam building programme.

Several members of staff have attended conferences, both local and regional. Three members of staff attended a water conference in South Africa while other members have been involved in conferences and workshops on issues as varied as starting businesses, to poverty alleviation and drought mitigation.

Douglas Dube and Thelma Ntini have taken on the co-ordination of the joint OXFAM Canada programme while Douglas Dube and Joyce Dube have become involved in the Joint Partners OXFAM GB programme.

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