

# DABANE TRUST

## WATER WORKSHOPS

### 1998/99 ANNUAL REPORT

This year started with the internal evaluation of Dabane Trust's work. This involved all staff and a selected number of groups from all over our area of work. The whole process, including recording, interpretation of collected data, write up and future planning based on findings took longer than expected but was considered by all to be a useful learning experience. This exercise gave us a good idea of strengths and weaknesses as well as people's expectations for the future involvements of Dabane. These findings will be of further assistance when future policy is again discussed at the staff retreat to be held in September.

Staff also came together to attend a workshop on gender issues. It was felt that there was a need to take vigorous steps to change attitudes of the staff first so that we can then work together to change the attitudes within the communities we work with. It was felt that Dabane staff needed to be equipped with the skills and understanding of gender issues and to thus diffuse the negative connotations associated with the word 'gender'.

Since the evaluation staff have been very busy trying to meet the goals and targets set in the planning meeting following the evaluation. Garden groups continue to have mixed fortunes, with some doing very well and collecting a useful income while others face insurmountable odds such as sickness, old age and social problems. Dabane staff have been heartened by many groups increased use of their gardens, with many of them now producing vegetables all year round.

The dam programme continues to involve a great deal of time and planning but the end of this year should see the completion of four dams. Planning is at last going forward for gardens attached to the dams and community planning meetings have been held with most dam communities.

Inter group seminars were held first with workshop members and then with representatives from all groups. Once again it was acknowledged that these seminars are valuable opportunities for encouragement and information exchange between groups.

#### **Internal Evaluation**

It was the realisation that Dabane Trust's plans would be more effective if staff knew exactly the impact the programmes were creating which led to the idea of an internal evaluation. It was also born from the realisation that self reflection is important and integral for the survival and growth of an organisation. Although the whole evaluation took longer than expected it was a very useful exercise and staff have been able to plan their work for 1999 based on findings from the evaluation. In addition

consideration will be given at the staff retreat to the expressed requests of the communities interviewed - top priorities were for dams and water supplies. This concentration on water issues also served to confirm that Dabane's concentration on water development is in direct alignment with community needs.

### **Gardens**

Most garden groups have continued to work together to produce useful crops of vegetables. It has been encouraging to find several groups who continued to work in their gardens through the planting season, at last acknowledging the gardens as significant income earners.

Unfortunately there have been a variety of problems with groups such as illness, lack of commitment, elderly members, other gardens developing and even invasion of elephants. Staff have to try and come up with solutions to these problems through regular visits and community discussions. For instance where the members of the group are now too elderly to work hard in the gardens it has been suggested that they turn some of their land over to an orchard.

In conjunction with the Water Supplies Unit, a solution has been found to the hard work of drawing water from one large tank. In most gardens a series of smaller tanks have been built below the main tank. These tanks are sunk in the ground and the gardeners easily collect buckets of water from these for their own near-by beds.

There has been some fear expressed that some of the rivers may dry up this year, especially the Manzamnyama River. However so far the sands have continued to yield enough water to maintain the gardens.

### **Workshops**

The workshop groups have also benefited from exchange visits over the year. A particular success story is the Chipego group from Binga who have started several new lines of production since visiting other Dabane workshops. The inter-workshop seminar also served a similar purpose with groups exchanging ideas and experiences. Training in artisan skills is ongoing and among others, courses have been held in tinsmithing, welding, scotchcart making and continuing business management. Marketing has been the emphasis in training courses over the year. The new workshop at Mkubaza has started well although efforts to revive Mzimuni have again unfortunately failed.

### **Water Sources**

The dam programme continues to be very busy but has been simplified with the new policy of working on dams in the same area. Four dams are scheduled to be completed before the rains. Two of these are masonry weirs which have been under construction for a number of years. Communities have been encouraged to continue work on dams by appreciating the use of the water impounded from the last rains and by exchange visits to completed projects.

Community meetings have been held at all the completed or nearly completed dams and planning for gardens is underway. This has not been an easy process as there have been problems within communities and a certain resistance from farmers who use the water for livestock and cannot see the need to start gardens as well.

## **Water Supplies**

Water installations to garden groups are ongoing activities from April through to October. This year water has been supplied to new Dabane groups as well as to groups with Zvishavane Water Projects. This is in addition to the continuing work of upgrading existing installations and building smaller irrigation tanks in some gardens. The successful Rower and Joma pumps continue to be much in use although a new pump has been manufactured and tried in one garden but group members claim it is not as light as the original two pumps. The new pump operation and maintenance manuals will help in the ongoing training programme with garden groups.

New installations have been undertaken at Sun Yet Sen on the Shashane River and a new infiltration system and offset well has been installed with a Mono hand pump at Wasarawasara garden on the Lundi River south of Zvishavane. Second installations have been made at Siva, Tshelanyemba Primary, Shashane 5, Mazwi, Mambale, Sindombe and Kwarayi. Each of these have also had their irrigation system installed and this has also been undertaken at the Huwana gardens. Water levels have been a problem here with 1 garden almost running out of water. Alternate systems are being considered at this site.

## **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 can utilise 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 (infiltration ridges on the contour) for this purpose. A workshop on their construction is being organised for late October.

To augment our work in sand-abstraction and dam or weir construction work there would appear to be interest in a programme based on the development of a comprehensive water-harvesting programme. Such a programme would include water retention methods, soil conservation and watershed management. Little has so far been done in this regard, except in areas immediately around gardens and dams. D. Nleya is interested in this approach, however his present activities are very demanding so if such work were to be undertaken he would require an assistant.

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. A question arises as to whether the programme should consider this in the future as many boreholes have water that cannot be pumped out due to inadequately serviced or broken pumps?

## **Sand Abstraction Research**

As a first step to disseminating information on sand abstraction technology a research programme has been set up. In close co-operation with the local communities four sites have been selected on four differing rivers and research equipment has been installed. Each site has a selected member of the community to monitor equipment and keep records. The sites will be monitored over the next three years and data collected will be used in a manual on sand abstraction and its application both in Zimbabwe and further afield.

### **Manuals**

We are very pleased to be able to report that training manuals have finally been produced for each Unit. Staff wrote and designed these manuals with the assistance of Chris Woodhouse. Chris worked hard during his final weeks putting all the manuals onto computer and making copies. They will be of great assistance during training courses and will be sold at half price to interested groups. Manuals produced are on - Rower and Joma pumps, gardening practises, fruit tree growing, business management, catchment area conservation and dam management and water harvesting.

### **Joint Partner Programmes**

Our initial problems with these programmes seem to have been resolved. The OXFAM UK programme has suffered a number of set backs and is still trying to reorganise itself. In the meantime the OXFAM Canada programme, although demanding of staff time, has proved to be a useful exercise in co-operation. The seed fare in Binga was run within this programme. In addition Dabane will increasingly be sharing its expertise in setting up sand abstraction systems with the partners, while sharing their experiences in other fields.

### **Food Security**

This has progressed in conjunction with the OXFAM Canada programme and fifty farmers in Siyachilaba, Binga and SunYet Sen and Mabale, Matobo have been issued with sorghum and pearl millet seed. A successful seed fair was held in Siyachilaba, Binga where a new design grinding mill and thresher/sheller were displayed.

### **Feasibility & Monitoring**

Douglas Dube continues to keep in touch with local government officials and RDC's. Unfortunately late notification of RDC meetings has meant that he is often unable to attend these. As a result he has decided to send regular reports to RDC's in our working areas to keep them informed of developments.

Through the GAD Campaign better links have been maintained with Matabeleland South local government officials.

Dube also continues to make regular visits to all groups, particularly at the end of each year to monitor progress. Further to this many groups were involved in the internal evaluation process.

## **Gender and Capacity Building**

Gender training this year has been concentrated internally. Two members of staff attended a course at NUST on rural water and sanitation programmes where gender became an issue. In addition a workshop was held with all staff members with an outside facilitator. Women have always been very much involved in the garden and pump programmes but their position in the dam construction and artisan workshop programmes is still not fully established. Dabane Trust staff have held several very useful workshops with supported groups where gender issues and family roles have been discussed at great length. However it was found that Dabane Trust staff themselves were not clear on what gender issues are and therefore it was difficult for some of the staff to communicate this to the target groups. Issues discussed included making more of an impact on gender issues within the work of Dabane.

The workshop gave everyone some new insight into gender issues and a follow up planning session will be held in September when a programme will be drawn up incorporate these new ideas into Dabane's gender programme.

## **Staffing and Staff Development**

Following requests by unit leaders, it was decided to take on two new members of staff. Busi Ncube is assisting with business management and gender issues while Florence Ndlovu is assisting with water supplies and pumps, particularly with training.

We were joined for six months by Chris Woodhouse from Warwick University. He worked with most units but his greatest effort was in the production of training manuals in conjunction with Unit leaders.

Two staff members attended a PELUM conference in South Africa, while one attended a WEDC conference in Ethiopia. Several members of staff have attended workshops held at NUST, the first one was on gender issues in water development and the second on environmental issues.

Staff continue to attend training courses in such varying subjects as building, welding and defensive driving. All the water sources team drivers attended a tractor drivers course in Harare and all achieved good results.

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