

# **DABANE TRUST**

## **WATER WORKSHOPS**

### **1999/2000 Annual Report**

The long range weather forecast for the 1999-2000 rainy season predicted 'normal' rains to the end of 1999 with a reduced rainfall for the rest of the season. There was, in fact, scant rain at the beginning of the season but enough for crop germination – what we now accept as normal rains. However, at the beginning of 2000 season we endured a stream of cyclones which caused continuous rain and widespread devastation and flooding with extensive damage to homes and infrastructure in southern Zimbabwe.

There has once again been extreme hardship in the south and west, only this time through crop loss from water logged soil and from collapsed houses either from broken roofs or from destruction of daga walls from driving rain. In addition access to hard hit communities and the groups we work with was limited by damaged and destroyed bridges as well as roads which became impassable even to four wheel drive vehicles. Although we enjoyed the much needed rain, it has come at a price and we had to extend the programme to include home rebuilding in the Beitbridge District where we have completed 30 homes and are now hoping to commence work on another 30. Fortunately not everything was destroyed and many communities reaped their best crop for many years.

#### **Planning**

We engaged in an extensive planning at the beginning of 2000 for the new 2000-2003 programme period. We have held lengthy sessions revisiting all our programme documents from staff job descriptions to programme policy and operational agreements with groups and communities. However, after all the detailed planning and co-ordinating of activities between programme units, we have unfortunately fallen behind in the implementation of the targets because of the initial difficulty of travelling and then the need to return again to undertake repair work on flood damaged dams and pump installations.

Acknowledging that the price of crude oil has tripled in price in the last year and that supplies to Zimbabwe will always be, at best erratic, we have tried once again to better co-ordinate our activities and visits to localities, communities and groups. However, it is not easy to achieve this, as even if three units attend a community with three different initiatives, only one unit can work with the community at a time. We have particularly tried to harmonise activities such as feasibility, site surveys and leadership group dynamics. This year we have also set out to complete activities such as all installations and infrastructure to a garden at one time, rather than gauging the progress of a group and then adding a degree of development as the group progresses. We have continued to undertake extensive journeys to several communities for a week rather than a day at a time and have co-ordinated training courses and activities as much as possible.

## **Gender**

The programme has considerably developed its awareness and sensitivity towards gender, in all parts of the programme. Due to the realisation of poor and unequal gender relations Dabane Trust has been prompted to develop a Gender Policy. The policy seeks to find entry strategies that will ensure gender sensitivity throughout all of its development activities. We hope that by mainstreaming gender into the programme and all activities, the gender gaps between men and women will be narrowed, enabling women to take control of their lives.

## **Gardens**

### **Artisan Workshops**

Artisan workshop groups are generally flourishing. Most groups could be termed as a success story as evidenced by the progress we see in Ndwane (Lupane) and Maboleni (Midlands). This group has been weaned but they continue to work enthusiastically. Training in artisan skills have continued to be given in especially the new groups. These skills include, tinsmithing, welding, fence knitting and business management.

### **Water Sources**

The after effects of Cyclone Eline were catastrophic for many. Rivers spread 4 to 5 times beyond their banks and instead of flowing for a day or two, flowed for several weeks. In fact, many are still flowing, if only with an apparent trickle. This means that the huge sand deposits in the rivers are completely saturated and as a result installations are only been able to commence recently. However the moist soil for construction in Beitbridge was too good an opportunity to miss, we thus took advantage of this and have been able to construct Mpande Dam, the largest we have yet achieved. The embankment is complete and work is progressing well on the spillway.

During the cyclone some of the larger rivers flowed 5 to 6 metres deep, huge trees were uprooted and debris was deposited way up into the forks of trees. Fortunately most of the dams that Dabane assisted with, withstood these floods. However, one of the largest of the dams, Madzibe in Beitbridge, could not withstand the massive flood that swept down the river. Consequently, a 25m section of the 4m high spillway collapsed. This saved the dam as a whole, but with the community we are now turning round to re build this massive spillway all over again. In order to speed up work and to ensure that the mortar is thoroughly mixed we are in the process of getting a concrete mixer.

### **Water Supplies**

Modifications have been made to the pumps which should make them more easily accessible for maintenance and repair work. Initial meetings have been held with 6 proposed garden groups for this year. The Unit is keen to complete the outstanding work left over from last year and complete its plans and targets for this year.

## **Water Harvesting**

### **Sand Abstraction Research**

The study to establish the opportunity for 'sand-abstraction' and to develop the advantages and the potential of the system has progressed well. A realistic field research programme is underway to establish criteria which can be used in the selection of suitable abstraction sites. The research equipment in use has been designed and fabricated and there has been significant community input into the study.

Rural communities who are all keen to develop their water supplies have showed considerable interest in the study. Discussion and research is in hand with a selected number of communities into traditional systems and technologies. The study and practical research to date has indicated the acceptance of the technology and thus opens the way for possible further options, which can ideally be developed in conjunction with communities. Sustainability of systems is a most important aspect as it is obviously vital that people are able to operate, service and repair equipment and installations.

### **Feasibility and Monitoring**

A successful seed fair was held in May with other OXFAM Canada partners attending. Farmers from Siyachilaba, local and Government leaders from Binga were also at the fair. On display were the grinding mill, thresher/sheller and other traditional methods of threshing and pounding grain. An evaluation of the exercise revealed that it was a great success and should be an annual event.

Other activities to be implemented include vegetable gardens, toilets, establishment of demonstration plots and malaria control. This is an exciting programme but at the same time keeps us very busy. More workshops are lined up for the farmers in leadership training, cropping and land preparation.

### **Business Management and Capacity Building**

Planning workshops have been held on marketing for gardeners and for workshops and a third on the potential involvement of women in artisan workshops. This session was organised to encourage women to become involved in the workshops either as artisans themselves or simply to know what their husbands were involved with. Each workshop proved to very popular, dealing with issues of concern to the groups. The Unit also managed to discuss and complete a number of group constitutions. There has also been an initial contact with a new group at Hingwe and plans have been made to make further visits and start constitution formulation.

The gardens have also been adversely affected by the heavy rains, with some of the pipes being washed away and even some of the gardens being underwater. Gardens which were able to re-plant made good prices because of the nationwide shortage of vegetables, particularly tomatoes.

### **Rural Livelihoods Programme**

#### **Staffing and Staff Development**

We were all deeply grieved by the untimely death of our good friend Mandlenkosi Tshabalala. Mandla had instilled himself into the programme and had become a very

competent and able staff member with a canny sense of humour. There is much we miss him for. Mandla was replaced mid-year by a young man, Thembalani Tshuma who is settling well to the work of plumber and installation technician. Florence Ndlovu has taken on Mandla's responsibility in the sand-abstraction research work with the field research workers. She has been able to combine this well with her pump training courses and recently assistance with food preservation.

We were sorry to say "goodbye", to Noble Moyo who had been with the programme since its inception. He decided to leave the programme in order to concentrate on a personal business he is establishing. He did much to make the garden establishment programme a success and very largely developed the pumping and irrigation technology. He also helped a great deal in the establishment of the sand abstraction research. Fortunately he ensured that his team members understood the various technologies so from that point of view they have continued well. To overcome the loss of Moyo, Donald Ncube has undertaken the co-ordination of both the Water Supplies and Artisan Workshop Units. This system has worked well, easing over-all planning and allowing for more flexibility on the technical side of the programme.

Judith Moyo who had been doing the accounts also left unexpectedly and before the accounts had been brought up to date after the 1998 – 98 audit. To fill the gap Sibusisiwe Ngwenya joined the programme as an accounts clerk in February 2000 and we contracted Owen Zaba as a finance officer to get the books up to date. John Schmid has given much voluntary time to the setting up of a detailed computerised accounts systems and spreadsheet.

Dabane now has two contract tractor-drivers on dam construction work. Phillimon Mukosera and Derik Moyo are contracted during the months when we are most active with dam building. They do not attend staff or planning meetings, but keep things going on site. They are responsible to both Ekron Nyoni, dams supervisor and Benard Mpofu, as senior driver.