

IN THIS ISSUE:

- A Decade of Development by the Director, V. Nkomo
- Stories from the communities in Patana and Bambanani projects.
- A message from the donors.
- A word from the Board Chairman, Dr Robert Mupawose.
- Where we work, a map showing current and future projects.
- How we work, a brief on the project cycle from community consultation to project implementation.

**Including lots of photos from the field*

For more details on 'ProAfrica@10' see the back page.



ProAfrica

Editorial: A Decade of Development

2010 is a special year development and for us in Pro Africa. At Pro-Africa we are celebrating a decade of working with communities to deliver development initiatives, mainly dams and gravity-fed irrigation schemes. It is also this year that water has been declared by the United Nations as a 'fundamental human right' at a time millions of people around the world do not have access to safe drinking water and to sanitation. For water has vehicle to empower communities to create worth for their families and their communities.

We have partnered with the government under a consortium of NGOs to promote the 'Give-A Dam' campaign that helped build 47 dams between 1995 and 2001.

We want a step further to promote the development of irrigation schemes for every dam built when we realised that fewer schemes had taken off. Without a tradition of irrigation in Matabeleland South Province, we engaged communities to work for themselves by using irrigation schemes to roll our market gardening projects.

In this commemorative magazine, some of our partner communities from Patana and Bambanani projects share their stories of success and challenges. We are encouraged by the resilience of communities to have stuck it out in times of challenges to realise the goal of harnessing water for development.

The past ten years have been for us a decade of growth in terms of refining our mission and vision for the organisation and for our projects. The partnerships in building dams and irrigation schemes have taken Pro Africa to a new level of project management. In addition, it has expanded our scope in terms of promoting water productivity. Water is wealth and we have to protect it and use it wisely. Our training programmes have started to discuss water conservation and rais-



ing the awareness of communities to how best they can use the water for maximum yields. In

Water is the vehicle to empower communities to create worth for their families.

In addition, we are exploring ways in which the building of irrigation schemes protects the environment instead of destroying it. Marketing has also features as a key issue for communities to access markets for their produce and we are beginning to see the importance of promoting entrepreneurship in agriculture so that farmers know how to improve the quality of their produce and get fair prices for it.

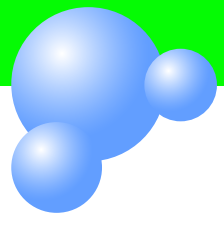
We look forward to many years of collaboration with farmers, the government, donors and the private sector in using water to make a difference in development in our country as we look at spreading our wings to other parts of the country. We have gained enough experience and documented the best practises that will benefit other communities in Zimbabwe to make water use a way to wealth.

We look forward to many years of collaboration with farmers, the government, donors and the private sector in using water to make a difference.

I would like to thank our partner communities for welcoming us to work with them, our donors and partners for an investment well made, the government authorities for paving the way for us to complement its programmes, our Board for the counsel and support and our friends for continuing to urge us

on. This not a celebration not just for Pro Africa buy for everyone who believes water if life, let us make it available to those with limited access to it.

Velenjani Nkomo
Director



It's in the Water

Mission

To reduce poverty among local population through the empowerment of communities and to foster sustainable and dignified livelihoods.

To assure appropriate feasibility and to influence development policy in context with all stakeholders involved to implement projects according to latest scientific findings in development research.

To get practically involved in implementation, training and future design of development projects.

Senior Kraal Head Madema loops her arms besides her to illustrate her increased waistline. She says it's thanks to good food, enjoying her work and the enriching community spirit of members of the Madema irrigation scheme in Patana village of Gwanda, 250 km south of Bulawayo.

“Our success is linked to the way we have used water here,” Mrs. Madema, says during a tour of the 8, 8 hectare irrigation scheme funded by Pro-Africa, a Zimbabwean development organisation, formed 10 year ago.

“This project has made a difference in my life and in the lives of the people in our village.”

Despite her position as a Senior Kraal Head, Mrs. Madema, has no title once inside the expansive project, seen as a success story of commitment and collaboration between Pro Africa and communities in Matabeleland South Province.

Matabeleland South province lines in agricultural region 5 characterised by short seasonal rainfall which makes water a precious resource. Pro Africa, in realising this challenge joined the government Zimbabwe in the ‘Give A Dam’ (GAD) campaign to provide irrigation schemes in every dam built to provide water resources in this province of more than a million people. GAD, initiated in response to the devastating drought of 1992, provided dams in Matabeleland South as a pathway out of poverty.

In the last 10 years, Pro Africa has build 48

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gravity-fed irrigation schemes around 52 dams with water holding capacities ranging from 50 000 to 5 million cubic litres. Most of the dams provide water throughout the season, ensuring round the year farming.

The defining success of the Patana village project has been the commitment of its members whose livelihood have been improved by the productive use of water, says Mrs. Madema.

Pro Africa has to date invested over \$1 million in the last ten years, in irrigation schemes and training communities. Communities have invested their labour, collected building materials such as sand and shown unbreakable self will to better their livelihoods.

From building better homes, buying assets such as livestock to seeing their children through school, communities have an inspiring story to tell about how their irrigation scheme projects have made a difference. The greatest impact has been the provision of food all year round ensuring that many families did not go to bed hungry.

Excess crops and vegetables grown in the schemes have been sold for cash.

Thabiso Dube, says that the Madema village project has enabled her to save for a new zinc roof to replace her thatched home, while her goats provide meat and ready cash when there is need.

Another member of the project, Mr. Tapson Moyo, said the hard work had opened his eyes to new opportunities and made him self reliant.

The Madema irrigation grows wheat, green maize and a wide range of vegetables that are sold to local schools. Markets in Bulawayo have even been sampled. Currently, the project has potatoes and butter nut that have taken root and the farmers expect a good harvest in early November this year.

More than 1 200 people are indirectly supported by the scheme through jobs, food, a source of income. Besides, the scheme has unified communities where political affiliation, tribe and creed has no place.

“This has been a success in terms of collaboration between government, Pro Africa and communities,” says Pro Africa Director, Velenjani Nkomo, “We are looking at the next 10 years with great optimism and a sense of pride in working with the communities to bring about positive change in their lives and in giving a fresh impetus to our programmes.”



The Patina scheme is worthy of replication and members of the Bambanani project in Gwanda are worthy candidates for a look and learn visit.

The Bambanani is taking shape with construction having been started early last year. Pro Africa provided funding to fencing the 11 hectare plot. Communities have been clearing the area to make beds for crops and vegetable beds. A visit to the site was a peek into the development process in action. Community's members were sharing tasks in between laughter and debate. Sand was being brought in donkey drawn carts, youths were mixing cement and pit sand to line canals that will bring water from the Dam downstream to the plots. Women were busy smoothing the edges of the moulded canals.

"Pro Africa have challenged us to help ourselves and we would like our project to boost our income to ensure we have food and can pay school fees for our children," said Gloria Dube, a Committee member of the Bambanani project. "It is important that women participate in this initiative because women play an important role in development and Pro Africa has partnered us to do better than growing vegetables on small plots but to think big and grow cash crops."

Pro Africa Director, Velenjani Nkomo, is pleased with the progress.

"The best test of the impact of our work in how communities have realised their dream of developing their families and earning better income through the irrigation projects," he says. "The investment in these projects has been worth every cent but more importantly it has ensured communities work together in realising a common goal of reducing poverty and generating income through agriculture."

While celebrating success, communities admit it has not been an easy flow from planning the projects to building them. Water shortage has been of major concern because of erratic rains in

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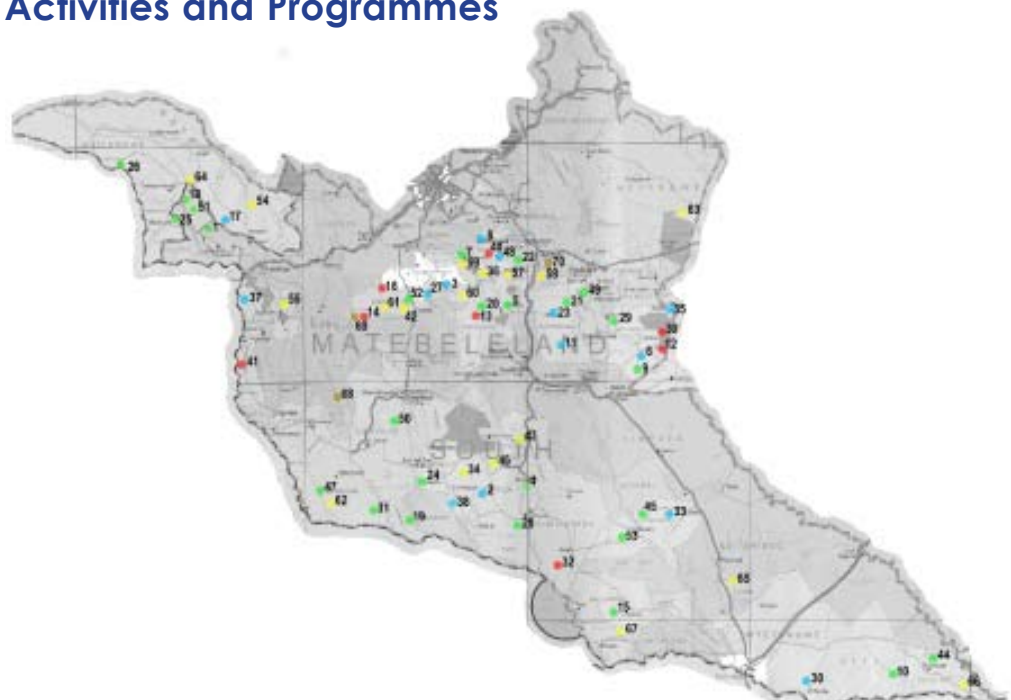
Senior Kraal Head Madema

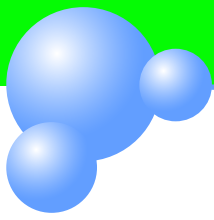
the Matabeleland South province. Getting the community buy-in was also been a challenge despite initial consultations to explain the concept behind irrigation schemes which have not been part of the farming tradition in the province. Some members showed up during the initial days of discussion to quench their curiosity but were absent in the tasks of digging, tree stumping, collecting stones for no pay.

The future is promising. Communities are aiming to explore more and better markets for their produce to raise their incomes. In addition, others are planning to diversify into cattle projects from the proceeds of the irrigation schemes.

Pro Africa has plans to spread its wings and duplicate the success story in Matabeleland South Province in other provinces of the country because the wise use of water can unlock wealth.

ProAfrica's Current Activities and Programmes





A word from the Board Chairman: PPP – A Way of Life

About Us

Pro Africa was established in August 2000 with the aim to assist communities in Zimbabwe in prioritizing their needs in order to come up with proposals for economical viable projects and to source funding for the same. The organisation has grown its programmes from one gravity dam first build at in 2000 and the first irrigation was established at..... in 2000. The latest project is the Bambanani project at dam.

In business circles, the PPP represents the Public, Private Sector Partnership, an ideal relationship for today's business. At Pro Africa, we have our own PPP representing people, passion and performance.

As we celebrate our first 10 years of operation, the three 'Ps' have more resonance in defining our work with communities in Matabeleland South Province.

As we mark this milestone, as ProAfrica we have learnt that development is not a sole effort, nor can it be done by one organisation. It is collective effort of ideas, commitment and action. I believe Pro Africa, its beneficiaries and partners have an equal share of all three.

It is as if the communities we have partnered in these projects knew our vision before we even called at their homestead because they have complemented our work seamlessly. They chose us and not the other way round by opening their lives and sharing their dreams with us. Despite teething problems related to the economic environment and some initial scepticism, communities did their utmost in ensuring that the schemes were built, maintained and are an example of self reliance. We are indeed proud to have played a role in this over the last ten years and we hope other partners will join us to play an even bigger role in harnessing water for development not only in Matabeleland South

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province but in other parts of Zimbabwe where water remain a development challenge.

My board remains passionate about building dams and providing the necessary infrastructure for irrigation schemes. We applaud the government for its commitment to resuscitating irrigation schemes at national level as a pathway out of poverty. Water is key to agricultural development in the back ground of climate change when farmers need mechanism to cope with it.

Our partners have been nothing short of marvellous through their financial and technical support which has ensured that we prospered. I pay tribute to Misereor, Hivos and DeD for believing in our dream and supporting it to become a reality. We look forward to many years of partnership to build and legacy for generations to come.

I recognise and salute Velenjani Nkomo and his team at Pro Africa for supporting the Board with their ideas in realising the mission of the organisation. They have remained resolute in the face of challenges -- and they have been many -- in the last decade. Thank you to my fellow Board members for the wise counsel, skills and experience which has strengthened the Board in carrying out its mandate to communities in Matabeleland. I invite you to celebrate with us.

Happy Birthday Pro Africa!

Dr. Robbie Mupawose



ProAfrica Activities and Programmes Implemented

Up till now, the operations of Pro Africa have been limited to the two Matabeleland provinces of Zimbabwe, where a broad experience base has been built up through the execution of projects and the consequent interaction that has taken place with a large section of society in the region, which includes local and international NGOs. Government agencies, farmers unions, churches and clubs at village level.

The main focus of Pro Africa's work till now has been the implementation of gravity fed irrigation schemes, with the aim to enable the benefiting families to enjoy a more diverse diet and earn cash with the sale of excess produce.

Many efforts have been made since independence in 1980 to develop irrigation schemes in the drier parts of the country. While there are success stories in other parts of the country, the quest for irrigation in the communal areas of Matabeleland has been rather elusive. It is true that there are a few dozen irrigation schemes that are operational and that seem to be sustainable, but few of these schemes are not as productive as expected.

Yet logic dictates that the long term solution to food production in Matabeleland must include irrigated agriculture. One of the problems that continue to beset irrigation projects is that they appeal to everyone's imagination. It is not sufficiently recognized that, although many rural farmers in Matabeleland show interest in irrigation development, there is no real irrigation tradition to speak of. Irrigation is a new phenomenon and as such it should be introduced with caution. Matabeleland is cattle country and farmers are first and foremost committed to rearing cattle. If there is a shortage of water, livestock gets priority over crops. In spite of the hype about irrigation, irrigated crops have to contend with second place after livestock.

Irrigation by gravity on the other hand is much more attractive in that it does not require pumping at all and therefore reduces the operational expenses.



It is sometimes assumed that water for irrigation can be found by drilling a borehole within a fenced area but the expected yield of that particular borehole might not be enough. Even in the unlikely event that it yields sufficient water to meet the demand, the question arises how to pump this water to the surface and how to apply it to the crops. A motorized pump can be the solution but the problems related to the running and maintenance costs make it not a sustainable solution for a small irrigation scheme. Hand pumps are sometimes an option but the lift is critical in the choice of a hand pump. The higher the lift the less amount of water that can be pumped manually.

Irrigation by gravity on the other hand is much more attractive in that it does not require pumping at all and therefore reduces the operational expenses. It is more sustainable in terms of main-

tenance. Gravity irrigation options are however limited and extensive site surveys are required to identify gravity irrigation options. The initial capital outlay for such a scheme is usually high and can be a deterrent, particularly if it includes the construction of a dam. However, in a situation where a dam already exists, the required capital input is sometimes very low.

Pro Africa is implementing gravity irrigation schemes in all the districts of Matabeleland South province and in Nkayi District in Matabeleland North. Water is being sourced from existing dams. To date 48 gravity fed irrigation schemes have been established with a total hecterage of 201 ha and benefiting 2116 households.

To assist rural communities in Zimbabwe and adjacent countries in prioritizing their needs and formulating proposals for sustainable projects

Since its establishment in 2000, the main focus of its work has been the development of gravity fed irrigation schemes in Matabeleland province.



Our Board

The board of Pro Africa consists of the following trustees:
 Chairman: Dr. R. Mupawose (a prominent Industrialist and Co-Chairman of the Zimbabwe Economic Forum); Secretary: Dr. Eric Bloch (a Chartered Accountant and Economic Consultant); Members: Mr. M. Suhr (a former Regional Deputy Director German Development Service and now with World Vision, Switzerland), Dr Graf N. Leutrum (a former German Ambassador to Zimbabwe) and Dr B. Ndimande (a former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture), Mrs. Mildred Sandi (CEO of DP Foundation, former Chairperson of NANGO) and Mrs. Sikhangele Zhou (Bulawayo City Council Chamber Secretary).

Our Staff

Nkomo Velenjani,	Director
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Bethule Juliet	Capacity Building & Gender Co-ordinator
Mathe Memory	Workshops Facilitator
Onias Dube	Extension Officer
Godfrey Mashoko	Water Technician
Moses Ncube	Works Supervisor
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