

# WATER FROM SAND

Summer 2019



**Excellent Development is a UK registered charity that supports some of the world's poorest people to transform their own lives.**

**We support communities in rural drylands to build sand dams, which provide safe water for life for just £13 per person.**

**Our goal is to enable 1 million sand dams by 2040, bringing clean water to 500 million people.**

**[www.excellent.org.uk](http://www.excellent.org.uk)**

# WHAT'S INSIDE?

Find out how sand dams are transforming lives with stories from all corners of our work, including Kenya, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and our new programme in Malawi.



## Investing in our future

A new sand dam project in Zimbabwe has the potential to transform the lives of around 4,000 people.



## Leading the way

Hear from two women, who, thanks to sand dam projects, have enabled their community to escape water poverty.



## Mozambique impact

Meet two farmers in Mozambique who share the early benefits of a recent sand dam project.



## A kick start in Malawi

Find out about our new sand dam feasibility work, and meet our new partners in Malawi!

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# EXCELLENT NEWS

## Regenerating the environment in Zimbabwe

**This year Excellent Development are running a new project in Zimbabwe in partnership with the Dabane Trust to construct more sand dams and implement environmental protection measures within rural communities that we hope will impact their lives and their land.**

The overall purpose of this project is to restore degraded lands in Matabeleland South Province to conserve important natural resources and reduce rural poverty.

Zimbabwe is losing its forest at an alarming rate of 330,000 hectares per year (National Forest Policy, 2016). This is due primarily to agricultural expansion, tobacco curing, over-reliance on fuel wood for energy and poor land use management. Matabeleland South Province, Zimbabwe, is no different.

Impoverished communities are often forced to cut down trees to sell as charcoal, or to find more fertile land for crops. Increased frequency and severity of droughts due to climate change, reduces the agricultural yields of these communities, and increases soil erosion. This creates a vicious cycle, with one problem feeding the others.

Sand dams can be a solution. By providing year round access to water, agricultural yields increase, and farmers can ensure food security even during periods of drought. This reduces the need for local communities to cut down trees, which in turn helps to reduce the rate of soil erosion.

The project will also implement other appropriate environmental protection measures such as establishing gabions

(metal cages filled with rocks that can be placed across gullies to control erosion) and woodlots. By planting trees around the sand dams and the surrounding land, the natural environment is given a kick start towards recovery.

Trees provide stability for the soil, locking it in place and stopping it being washed away. They provide shade and leaf litter which encourages other plants to grow. The trees can also be used by the community for timber and medicine, reducing the need to cut down trees within established forests.

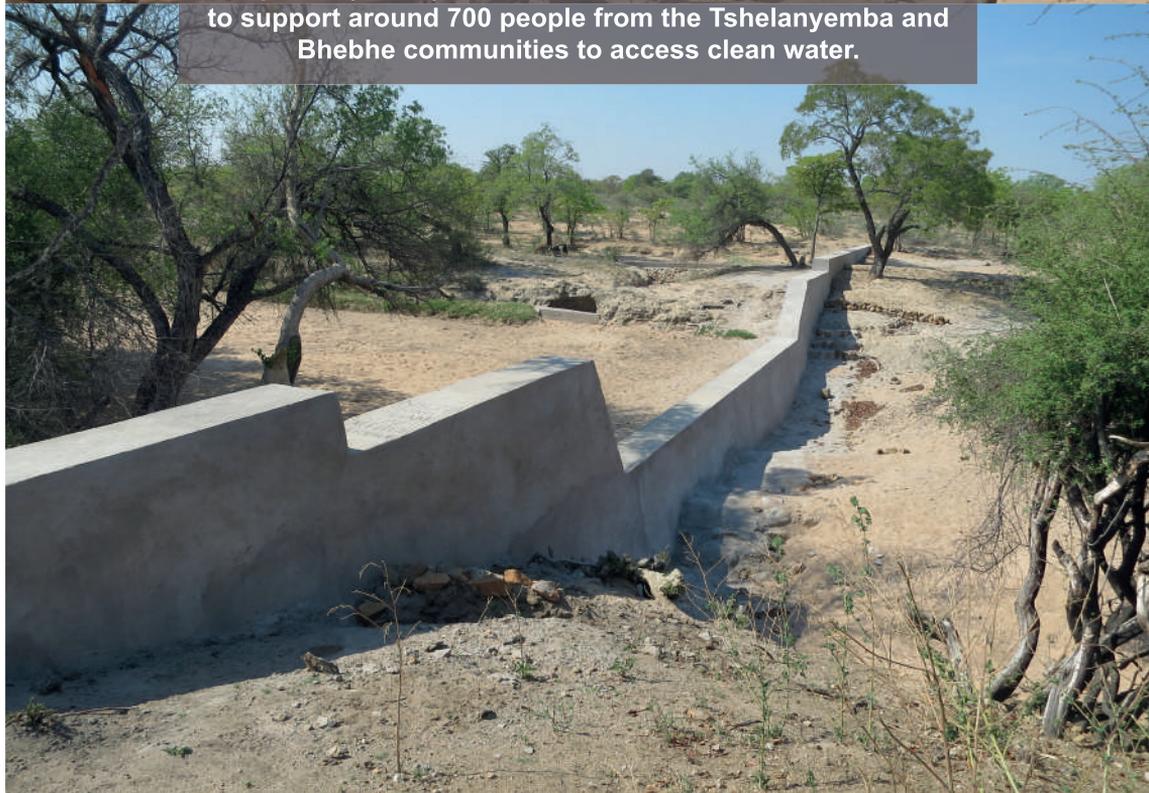
The project works with the community throughout the whole process. They are the ones that construct the sand dams, plant the trees and implement the other environmental protection measures, provided with technical supervision by the Dabane Trust.

Dabane will train members of the communities in a variety of environmental protection measures. This ensures that the community are fully engaged with the project throughout the whole process, and provides sustainability for when the project comes to a close.

Excellent and Dabane plan to construct one sand dam this year, and another in 2020-2021, with corresponding environmental protection measures which will benefit around 4,000 people in the surrounding area, and begin the process of environmental regeneration, benefiting both people and the local biodiversity.



**The Nyoka sand dam mid-construction (above) and completed (below) in Zimbabwe in 2017. This dam went on to support around 700 people from the Tshelanyemba and Bhebhe communities to access clean water.**



# EMPOWERED TO TRANSFORM LIVES

## Priscilar & Jane – leading the way

**Sand dams can change everything. As well as supplying clean water, saving valuable time and enabling food security, sand dams can change landscapes, environments - even people themselves. Just ask 39 year old Chairlady Priscilar Nzangi Kimanzi, and 57 year old Organiser Jane Katui Kiti from Ukilo wa Kilyamboo self-help group in southeast Kenya.**

Priscilar and Jane's lives were very different before they built the first of two sand dams back in 2013. Every night they walked 10 kilometres to the nearest river to collect water for their families. Priscilar describes the water as *"dirty, quite red in colour, and shared with livestock which wasn't good for us."* She adds: *"The water was so bad that people often got diarrhoea, children missed school because of the illness... in worst circumstances, some children even died from diarrhoea."*

Sometimes the journey to fetch dirty water took Priscilar and Jane from sundown to sunrise. *"Walking at night for water was dangerous"* remembers Jane. *"Sometimes our goats would get attached by hyenas."* Why risk such a dangerous journey for nothing but contaminated water? Jane explains *"this is all we knew before the sand dams, we never went to school because we spent all of our time needing to fetch water. Our parents used to get us up in the morning and say 'it's time to go get water'. That was our life."*

When they began to build sand dams, Priscilar and Jane's lives changed. Now

they are respected leaders, rallying their fellow community members throughout the dam building process. And thanks to the collective hard work of Ukilo wa Kilyamboo self-help group, everyone in the community is benefiting from a lifelong supply of clean water just 10 minutes from their homes. With such a nearby water source they are often able to collect twice (sometimes three times) the amount of water each day.

*"The extra water has helped us to farm and grow new fruits and vegetables like watermelon, spinach, papaya and kale"* explains Jane. *"We have also grown trees for medicinal use. We sell surplus crops at local markets and now we can make around 30,000 Kenyan shillings during the harvest, which we spend on developing our farms further."*

With a sustainable future in place for their community, Priscilar and Jane's children now have the chance to live better lives. Rather than waking them with calls to *"Fetch water!"* Priscilar and Jane are able to say to their children *"Wake up. It's time to go to school."*



***The water was so bad... in worst circumstances some children even died from diarrhoea.***

Priscilar Nzangi Kimanzi,  
Ukilo wa Kilyamboo self-help  
group, southeast Kenya.





Jane Katui Kiti (above) and Priscilar Nzangi Kimanzi (below) have been paving the way for their community to escape water poverty.





**Joanna Domingos (above) and Jocinto Languisse Farnela (below) working on their farms, made possible thanks to water from their nearby sand dam.**



# ACHIEVING WATER & FOOD SECURITY

## Mozambique impact

Callum Sheehan, Programmes Officer for Excellent, recently got the chance to spend some time in Mozambique catching up with the communities that we are working with in partnership with the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), to see what impact their sand dam projects are making.

*"I was shown the sand dam recently completed by the Nhansato community, and spoke to Joanna Domingos, a community member, and Jocinto Languisse Farnela, the president of the community sand dam committee.*

*Joanna described how difficult life was for her before the sand dam was constructed. Her husband passed away a few years ago, leaving her to raise eight children on her own. 'For me, my life was very hard because of a shortage of food and water. We were spending a lot of time queuing to get water. After we got it, the water was not enough to have sufficient use in the family. Apart from this, we had been facing a shortage of food for many years' she said.*



***Before, we had no opportunity to grow crops... Now, I have a hope of my family eating fresh vegetables I have grown.***

Joanna Domingos,  
Nhansato community,  
Mozambique



*If a harvest failed, then the community could face up to a year of hunger, with barely enough food to survive. Jocinto tells me how the community 'would have to find other ways of surviving, such as going into the forest to cut down trees to sell as firewood or charcoal. But this is not easy anymore as the trees are much fewer now.' This desperate situation led the community to approach CCM to ask for help in constructing the sand dam.*

*Thanks to the huge effort that was put in by the community, and the skilled guidance of CCM's field staff, the sand dam was completed in November 2018. Since its completion the communities have been able to focus on working on their farms. Though it is still early, Joanna is already starting to see the benefits: 'This is our first time growing vegetables; we can see that our lives are starting to change from this activity. Before, we had no opportunity to grow tomatoes and other such crops. Now, I have a hope of my family eating fresh vegetables that I have grown.'*

*Jocinto adds: 'During the first season I could grow maize, beans and a few pumpkins. Now, during the second season, I am growing kale, onions, lettuce and I would also like to have groundnuts and sorghum for our household consumption. I think I will have a good harvest this season. I will have enough to eat and hopefully enough to sell.'*

*As the community become more practiced at the new farming techniques, and the sand dam fully matures, they will be able to expand their farming businesses, selling more and more food, and further reducing the food and water scarcity they have suffered from for so long."*

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# PILOTING NEW SAND DAMS IN MALAWI

## A kick start for clean water in drylands

**Callum also got the chance to visit our partners in Malawi, Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD), to discuss the new project we are establishing there, and see the progress made so far.**

*“This new feasibility project aims to establish if, and where, sand dams are applicable in Malawi. So far, the project has been about explaining what sand dams are, how they work, and their impacts to CARD staff, as well as to local government officials.*

*This has been done by one of Excellent’s other partners – the Dabane Trust from Zimbabwe. This sensitisation process has been extremely successful, having gained buy-in from CARD staff and endorsement from local government officials. This means that if suitable sites are found, we will be able to construct sand dams in Malawi.*

*The focus now will be to identify sites that are suitable for sand dam construction. The two districts identified as being the most likely to be appropriate for sand dams are Chikwawa and Nsanje districts, in the southern tip of Malawi.*

*During my visit I was able to see some of the sites identified by the Dabane Trust and CARD as potentially suitable for sand dams. Further analysis will need to be carried out, but the early signs look very promising, and it is hoped that sand dams will be constructed in the area as soon as next year!*

*While I was visiting Malawi, I was also able to talk to members of the project team about the need for sand dams in the area. Mike Mwale, CARD’s Irrigation Officer, told me: ‘Most of the communities that I have worked with, I have seen them travelling as far as 10km just to access water. And the ones that usually collect the water are young girls and women so these are the ones that suffer the most. This project is the first of its kind in Malawi. To construct sand dams, to have a water source that is around even during the dry season, I would like to have that achieved. ‘*

*Mike added: ‘What we believe is that through this project we are going to improve access to water for domestic use because the water that people will be using is already purified because of the collection of the sand and the water will be protected. And also the same water will be used for irrigation so they can water their crops, which will improve food security, particularly in the months where people do not usually have enough food.’*

*Sand dams could provide year-round water access (and all the lifelong benefits that come with that), a chance for rural communities in Malawi to transform their own lives, and we look forward to sharing with you the progress from this region over the next few years.”*

For more information on our sand dam projects and the regions that we work in, visit: [www.excellentdevelopment.com/where-we-work](http://www.excellentdevelopment.com/where-we-work)

**Mike Mwale, Irrigation Officer at Churches Action in Relief (CARD), who we are partnering with on new sand dam projects in Malawi.**



# Leave a lasting legacy of freedom, health and opportunity

We know that your first priority when making a Will is to provide for those closest to you. As well as remembering family and friends, some people also decide to leave a gift to a special cause, to make a lasting difference to something they really care about.

Sand dams provide a lifelong supply of water for people living in drylands.

Water changes everything. It brings health, freedom and opportunity. **Having a water source nearby means that people, especially women and children, can save up to 12 hours a day.** Their lives are completely transformed, for generations to come.

It takes many small components to build a sand dam. Whatever you can afford, we will turn it into something important and tangible, opening up a world of opportunities for some of the world's poorest people.



***“The clean water makes us feel happy. It was helped other children and I to feel healthy, concentrate in school and improve in our studies.”***  
11 year old Harrison Mutinda Nzangi, southeast Kenya.

If you would like to find out more about leaving a gift to Excellent in your Will, please contact Judith Eaton on 020 3752 5780 or email [supportercare@excellent.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@excellent.org.uk). Alternatively, tick the relevant box on the form overleaf, and return to us in the Freepost envelope provided.

# PLEASE DONATE

Here are some ways in which your donations could help people living in drylands to build sand dams, and make a living from farming:

- £15 could provide a dryland farmer with drought-tolerant seeds, to grow a reliable source of fresh food for their children
- £30 could supply a community with a rake, gardening fork, shovel and watering cans, to plant trees for fruit, fuel and fodder
- £60 could provide a community with a roll of barbed wire, to reinforce their sand dam and keep it anchored to the bedrock
- £80 could provide 500 seedlings and a spray pump, to protect the tree nursery from decimation by insects
- £120 could provide a community with a wheelbarrow and 10 bags of cement, to help them construct their sand dam
- £160 could provide a full set of 25 metal shovels
- £370 could provide a community with manure, organic pesticides and seeds to plant a shared growing plot
- £420 could provide all of the tools needed to build a sand dam
- £580 could provide all of the barbed wire and steel bars needed to reinforce a sand dam
- £950 could provide a furrow irrigation system, to supply water to a community dam
- £1300 could provide a community with a water pump and shallow well, to safely extract drinking water from the sand dam

**My choice is:** \_\_\_\_\_

Our reference: 407

# LEGACY GIVING

- I would like to find out more about leaving a gift to Excellent in my Will.

# GIFT AID ADDS 25%!

Gift Aid makes every £1 worth £1.25 at no extra cost to you.  
Tick 'yes' to make your donation worth 25% more.

*giftaid it*

Yes

No

*I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. If it is less, I understand that I will be responsible for refunding the difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give in the future or for the past 4 years until further notice.*

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**In order for us to reclaim tax on your donation, please provide your name and postal address below:**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>First name:</b>
<b>Last name(s):</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>

Your support is vital to people living in drylands, so they can provide their families with clean water for life. We would love to send you information by telephone, text message and email on our fundraising appeals, events, expeditions and volunteering opportunities, so you can continue to support some of the world's poorest people to transform their lives. If you are happy with this, please write your email address and/or phone number above. We promise never to sell or swap your details and you can change your preferences at any time by calling 020 3752 5780 or email [supportercare@excellent.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@excellent.org.uk). To read our full Privacy Statement, please visit [www.excellentdevelopment.com/about-us/legals/privacy-policy](http://www.excellentdevelopment.com/about-us/legals/privacy-policy) or you can request a copy by post. If you would prefer to stop receiving mailings from us, or would like to reduce the number of communications you receive, please let us know, either by return post, email or telephone, and we will act on your request immediately.

**Please send this completed instruction to:**

**FREEPOST RTRA - CZTA - TTYJ**

Excellent Development, Unit G13, The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR.

*Our reference: 407*

**Your generous donations are transforming lives.**

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**We'd love to hear from you!**

**[excellentdevelopment.com/contact](https://excellentdevelopment.com/contact)**



**Since 2002, Excellent Development has supported over 1 million people in dryland communities to build over 1,000 sand dams, and to plant over 1.1 million trees. Stay in touch and up to date at: [www.excellent.org.uk](http://www.excellent.org.uk)**

