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CAPACITY BUILDING

KITUI SAND DAM COMMUNITIES

Introduction

SASOL started construction of sand - dams in Kitui in 1996. To date 400 structures have been constructed. At the beginning this was an idea for mitigation of the frequent drought in the area. Only scant information about the functioning of dams was available at this time. The programme was therefore an act of faith backed by sound reasoning about the expected results. The results obtained by these dams today exceed by far the deemed expectations.

Dam Construction Process

In Kitui sand dams are constructed by the communities. SASOL has on facilitating role only. The driving force for sand dam construction is the demand for water, which can be an extremely scarce commodity in this area.

The model followed is sand dam construction is firstly for the community to pick a suitable site for the development. Secondly, the community elects a site committee which will plan and superintend the works. Material delivered to the site by SASOL is in ownership and protection of the community. Locally available material and all labour in the dam construction is provided by the community. In overall costing of the dam the community provides 65% and SASOL 35% of the cost.

Coupled with the construction SASOL carries out training in Natural Resource Management, Project Management and Hygiene and Sanitation in the community. This increases the capacity of relevant knowledge in the community with a great influence on the resultant use of the developed water source.

Potential of sand dams

Sand dams have shown a great potential for poverty reduction and distribution of wealth among the participating communities. Some activities which are undertaken using sand

dam water are; Vegetable growing, brick making, tree planting, both fruit timber, animal fodder, building sand and water. All these are in addition to drinking water for people and animals.

These activities broaden the income base and result in savings and monetary circulation in the community.

The sand dam thus becomes an important asset in the community, which can drive and improve livelihoods when prudently used.

Need for new organizational structures

Although 400 dam site committees have been formed most of them have collapsed after the construction. This is so because they see their major role as the implementation of the construction.

The new activities undertaken at the site, new skills and functions demand new organizational and operational structures. These new organization would need to focus on the emerging issues of modified production patterns, marketing of produce without the intervention of middlemen who take all profits and value addition to ensure a just return.

These new structures which are currently not defined require the communities to acquire: Management, financial, Systems, Marketing, Production, Organizational, Processing and Investment Skills. Almost all these skills are at very low level or totally lacking in the dam committees.

The Pilot in Dam Community Capacity Building

It is imperative to discover the new structures required, the current level of skills and the establishment of community requirement to achieve the anticipated standards of living and perpetuate them.

For the pilot study and testing we would suggest four areas where the community instituted the use of sand dam water and are at differing levels of utilization. These are Wii, Kamale, Imale and Kyangunga.

SASOL is looking for money and expertise to engage the community in definition of what suitable structures will move them forward and what they need in terms of capacity building.