



## Rusike village - sustaining change

Rusike village is really where the SEED project began. It has been, and continues to be a partner in the development of the SEED Project model. Not everything we have tried has worked, but Rusike offers an example of how our approach can make sustainable change happen.

Rusike is a village in the Goromonzi district to the east of Harare, Zimbabwe. Like many rural areas in Zimbabwe, the villagers struggle daily with a range of health and hygiene issues related to limited access to clean water. At the time SEED began working with the people of Rusike, HIV/ AIDS-related illnesses were presenting a significant threat to the social and economic fabric of the village, reducing the numbers of fit for work adults and leaving a high number of orphans.

When we arrived in 2003 the local pastor, Pastor Sikiyani owned a plot of land with a three-roomed house and separate kitchen for the Pastor and his family - and some of the orphans in his care - which he had built himself. There was also a church used only on Sundays for services.

Water was brought by wheelbarrow from about a mile away, where there is a hand-pumped well which dries up in the dry season. There were two (unfinished) brick toilets.

The remainder of the land was usually planted with maize, Zimbabwe's staple crop. But the poor quality of the soil, even when fertilizers are used means it frequently fails to yield sufficient maize to support the nutrition needs of the local people.

### Improving health

With help from the SEED Project there have been noticeable improvements in the health of the people of Rusike. SEED has:

- helped to complete the building of the two existing toilets and added three new ones;
- sought out alternative crops and methods of gardening such as permaculture to increase harvests and support the environment;
- and perhaps the biggest single improvement to date, bought and installed an electricity powered borehole, enabling the community to grow a nutrition garden to help feed the children in the pre-school. This alone is having a significant positive impact on the health of these children.

Working with the community on initiatives like these SEED is delivering better hygiene and nutrition, bringing down the number of hygiene related disease like scabies, cholera, dysentery and typhoid.



*Great strides have been made in delivering clean water – and therefore improved health – to the villages. Sadly, following the burn out of the motor when it was struck by lightning, the borehole is out of action. We are working with the community to raise the \$600 it needs to have the borehole fixed’.*

Robert Kazunga, SEED Project Manager, Zimbabwe





### **Educating children**

Together SEED and the people of Rusike are making robust improvements to the education and support for orphans in the local area. In many ways these projects represent micro models for further developments that can be extended to the wider community.

When SEED arrived Pastor Sikiyani was struggling to access funding for the orphanage he ran with his family. We helped the Pastor to embed a structured process of registration which in turn provides prospective donors with assurance and has increased donor support for the orphanage.

SEED has also helped Pastor Sikiyani and Rusike parents to establish the Little Stars Pre-School for four to five year olds. With SEED's help, teachers have accessed training through Oasis Zimbabwe and we've funded a carpenter to build essential classroom furniture. The pre-school is now run locally with regular input from us - for example we recently instigated an initiative to improve professionalism among teaching staff. The continuation of the pre-school has shown the community what they can achieve when they participate in learning and innovating for themselves. Already, the staff and teachers in Rusike are working with neighbouring villages to help them set up their own pre-schools.

Looking ahead, we need to establish an environment that helps children to learn. A lot has been achieved through the professional development of the teaching staff. Now the class size has grown, more needs to be done to make sure every child has a chair to sit on and adequate books to learn from. We also want to ensure there is a local, sustainable source of income to cover the running costs of the school.

### **Embedding participation**

Sustained development depends on enhancing people's capacity to improve their own lives and to take control of their destinies. This concerns everyone and must consider culture, economics, relationships, environment and decision making. Sustainable development is therefore a long-term process. This why the SEED Project works on a small scale, but for extended periods - to embed within communities the capacity and confidence to sustain positive improvements to people's lives.

The people of Rusike have ideas about what they need, but the structures for participation and for encouraging the funding that engenders sustainable change had been non-existent until the SEED Project arrived. SEED invites local people into a discussion about the challenges that are priorities for them. This helps create a sense of ownership among the community and encourages the sustainability of achievements.

In Rusike today, community meetings are building community participation. The people of Rusike are beginning to believe that sustainable, positive change is something which should and can involve everyone.



*There was no platform for the community to come together and participate in issues to do with their development ... community representatives like councillors, kraal heads and chiefs were seen as the ultimate inventors of development in the area – there was no sense of a participatory approach to development'*

Robert Kazunga, SEED Project Manager, Zimbabwe

