

## Lechaba LandCare project

### Project background

The project is on the farm Matebeleng (Vlakfontein 739 LR), almost 75km north of Mokopane town within Mogalakwena Municipality of the Waterberg District. The farm is communal property under Kgoshi Langa of the Bakenberg Traditional Council. The size of the project is 957 ha. The project receives rainfall of 340mm to 580mm per annum. Temperatures range from a minimum of 17 °C to 19 °C and maximum of 28 °C to 31 °C during summer; and winter has a minimum of 4 °C to 6 °C and maximum of 21 °C to 23 °C. The soils are moderate clay to sandy, the area is mountainous with a very broken terrain.

The project identified challenges such as excessive erosion, poor veld management, lack of CBNRM knowledge by beneficiaries and the need to reverse the situation. The project objectives are to combat soil erosion, practise proper veld management, increase productivity, capacitate beneficiaries and create small enterprises to sustain the project.

The community approached the local agricultural office

for intervention and received advice to apply for LandCare funding. The project started during the 2000/01 financial year with the community grants from LandCare as an initiative to address land degradation through soil conservation and veld management and received R620 000,00. The grant was used for capacity building (5%), work opportunities (30%) and material (65%). The project purchased fencing material for veld management, a diamond mesh-making machine (enterprise development), wire coils, gabion materials, working tools and protective clothing. The project became part of the Mogalakwena area wide conservation during 2006/07 and continued with soil conservation, veld management and training of beneficiaries.

### Impact of project on economy and community

- The project created 110 temporary work opportunities mostly for youth and women.
- The livestock production system improved, as well as the quality of livestock and sales.
- The environment improved because of management ini-



tiatives and reduced erosion and water pollution.

- The community is empowered through involvement in the planning and implementation of project activities.
- Good and healthy animals are produced.
- Community members are capacitated through on-the-job training and workshops.
- The community inherited good infrastructure to increase production.
- An enterprise was developed for manufacturing diamond mesh wire.
- Most beneficiaries were introduced to the working conditions and had the opportunity of having a bank account.
- The production and sale of diamond mesh wire within the community provided local economic empowerment.

### Achievements

- Constructed 18 gabion structures to combat soil erosion, covering 240 ha.
- Erected 36 km fencing to subdivide grazing camps (4 camps) and arable lands.
- Controlled bush encroachment on 18 ha.
- Trained 70 beneficiaries on fence erection and maintenance.
- 30 beneficiaries were trained on gabion construction.
- 6 beneficiaries were trained on brush cutter operation and maintenance.
- 6 beneficiaries attended a Life Orientation Course.

- 1 beneficiary was trained on bookkeeping.
- 1 livestock handling facility was constructed.
- 12 beneficiaries were trained on the use and maintenance of a diamond-wire-making machine.
- Created much needed work opportunities and transferred skills to beneficiaries.
- Constructed a fire belt to curb uncontrolled fires from adjacent farms.
- Maintained 1 existing earth dam.

### Change created towards CNRM

- Positive attitude by community towards natural resources.
- Participation in Community-based Natural Resource Management meetings.
- Functional committees at grass-roots and in the municipality.
- The ownership and conservation of resources are community driven.
- The natural resources are rehabilitated.
- Natural resources are now of prime importance and land use plans are initiated.



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