



Editorial

As of the end of December 2021, we are three-quarters of the way through the project “Towards Resilience in the Matobo Hills”! Along the way, we have worked with communities to explore and improve natural resource management and land rehabilitation across ten administrative Wards, with more intensive interventions in four of these.

We are excited by the growing momentum and progress made through the continued efforts and commitment by Community Leadership, Community Members, the project’s Field Officers and Ward Monitors.

In this newsletter, we feature Holistic Land and Livestock Management (HLLM), capturing thoughts from livestock owners using the method.

Together, we can implement new approaches to land management that will improve livestock, human and environmental health and move us all towards a resilient future!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

This quarter, we focus in on catchment restoration and livelihood enhancement through **Holistic Land and Livestock Management** techniques. Find out who are the early adopters of this transformative practice, and learn more about how it works.

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Photos (clockwise from top left)

A community member secures the wall of a mobile kraal ; community members attending a workshop in Umzingwane Ward 8 are shown how to set up a dry-season mobile kraal to improve cropland fertility; Gladys Sibanda and family members inspect their overnight kraal set up in their crop field.

Women take charge in Ward 8!

by Sibakhele Tshuma, IDT

For so long, grazing management has been taken as a predominantly male practice especially in rural areas where women seldom own assets, but Umzingane Ward 8 women have defied the odds and taken a front row seat in implementing holistic land and livestock management (HLLM) principles.

As the wet season draws near, several women have initiated the grazing management calendars they produced during their training on the principles of HLLM. They have begun preparing their fields by keeping livestock in overnight mobile kraals. The intention is to improve their crop fields' fertility through use of livestock—manure and urine is deposited directly, and hoof action helps to mix the natural fertiliser into the soil.

As a new concept in the District, it is a thrilling experience to see women take charge of the whole process. They proclaim that this particular exercise has reduced labour for them as they previously were subjected to digging organic manure from home-made kraals and taking it to the crop fields. Now the livestock does all the work for them!

Councillor Alice Dube from Ward 8 noted that people are reluctant to practise HLLM because they have not seen the results that come with the exercise; however, having been to Matabeleland North she has witnessed the advantages of the practice in ensuring food security. As a female leader, she has educated other community women to take charge of the practice.

Gladys Sibanda, one of the women who has instituted an overnight kraal, said as a farmer she has always practised zero tillage, so use of livestock on crop fields has made her work much more easier and she looks forward to increased yields in the coming year.

FROM THE COMMUNITY

A POEM

By Kevin Nxumalo (Ward 8 Umzingwane)

Inkatha yempilo yikusebenza
Amhlophe mlimi osakhulayo nanto isu
Lawe omdala ukufunda akupheli Vuka!
Inkanyezi nanso sekusile Mzingwane

Owesaba indlala liqhawe lentuthuko
Olevila elithengiswayo kabone mina
Nanko umkhankaso wenotho ematojeni
Vuka usebenze, this is our heritage
Ward 8 let's go, let's soldier on!

Bakhokheli labaqoqi benhlelo
phakamani
Dambari! Dambari! Dambari!
Tshuma tshumayela Golide
Tafadzwa sesijabulisiwe impela
Ofisa badle ufisa abantu baphile

Asixokozeleni njengamaxoxo
Entuthukweni kodwa silombono
Ohemeya abakhulume benyeye
Ngentuthuko bafakaze abakwaziyo
Zulu kandaba asilimeni

Okudala kobhidliswa ngomncane
Ohluba indlubu ekhasini yinkosi
Obizela umkhwenyana emini yindoda
Nanso indaba yokudla sondela
Hlabezulu kaWard 8.

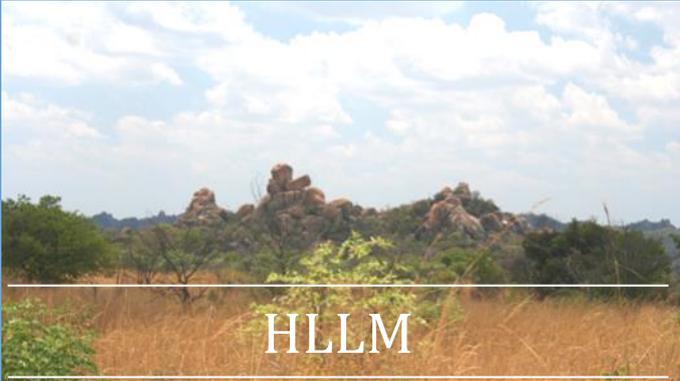
“ Thank you for bringing new ideas especially on how to improve soil fertility in our fields. What’s left is for us as a community to unite and work together to improve our lives through holistic land and livestock management. Thank you for reminding us that our land is not increasing in size but it is us who will improve through the new way you have shown us.”

Feedback from a community member following an HLLM training workshop held in Matobo Ward 15.

“ We have seen what other communities have done e.g. Hwange and Chikomba, in the video. What I know is our community now that we have had the training, we can also do it. We also aim to have field days to show how this new way can improve crop fields just like in other area ”

Matobo Ward 16 Community Development Chairperson.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS—HLLM, WETLANDS & MONITORING



HLLM

Q: What is HLLM?

A: Holistic Land and Livestock Management is a process that uses livestock to regenerate the land, grazing and water resources.

Q: How does it work?

A: Livestock owners join forces to manage grazing lands. Livestock is grazed in a rotation system according to a planned calendar, with intensive grazing in an area followed by a period of rest to allow the vegetation to recover. The animals' mouths and hooves work to improve grasses and soils, resulting in better ground cover and rainfall infiltration. At night, livestock are kept in mobile kraals that are moved every week or so. Their urine and dung and trampling help to improve soil fertility and water infiltration. In the dry season, kraals are put in croplands, to help improve the soil ahead of the planting season.

Q: Isn't it labour intensive?

A: It requires someone to herd the animals during the day to make sure they are grazing in the correct area, but herding was a traditional practice in the past. The benefits are very great—better grass resources in the dry season, healthier livestock, less run-off and siltation (so more water for everybody), better crop yields... and with livestock kraaled at night, there are fewer losses to predators!

TRY IT for yourselves and see the benefits!



MONITORING

Q: Why is monitoring done?

A: Monitoring makes it possible to detect changes in a system. Without monitoring, it is difficult to measure progress, or to identify which activities do or do not work.

Q: We've seen some people from our community with project bibs on. What are they up to?

A. We have two types of monitor active. Ward monitors help to spread knowledge to the community and also give feedback from the community to the project. Environmental monitors gather information about changes at wetland and rangeland sites over time.

Q: What are environmental monitors measuring and why?

A: There are 6 wetland and 6 grazing land sites monitored monthly by the monitors. They record information such as fire incidence, livestock impacts (especially on sensitive wetlands), changes in soil moisture in wetlands, encroachment of alien invasive plants such as *Lantana camara*, and human impacts such as resource extraction. The aim is to understand what changes are happening naturally and what changes are related to project activities such as managed grazing and wetland protection. This will help to guide rehabilitation and management efforts.

A VISIT BY USAID DELEGATES

The “Towards Resilience in the Matobo Hills” project is run under the USAID Resilient Waters Program. In mid-November, we were delighted to host four representatives from the USAID Regional Office in Pretoria, and two representatives from the US Embassy in Harare. Since the visit was very short, we were only able to visit two sites—the wetland rehabilitation site in Gwandavale village (Matobo Ward 16), and Zhilo Village in Umzingwane Ward 8 where community members have commenced HLLM techniques.

The District Authorities, community leadership and community members were all very welcoming and the delegates were treated to poems, testimonials and tours of the sites under rehabilitation.

The delegates were very impressed with progress and commented on how “excited” they were to see that people in the communities had taken ownership of the project. Such community pride and commitment are sure to lead to long-term success!



Visitors inspected the wetland fence at Tshegono Wetland (top); attended a meeting with project participants in Zhilo Village (middle); and had a group photo taken with Gwandavale villagers (bottom)

ABOUT THE CONSORTIUM

The Matobo Hills Consortium implementing the “Towards Resilience in the Matobo Hills” project comprises Dambari Wildlife Trust, Inkanyezi Development Trust and Zimbabwe Humanitarian and Livelihoods Development Trust. The project is funded by the USAID Resilient Waters Program.

**All of us involved in the project would like to wish you and your loved ones a very happy festive season, and a prosperous, healthy and resilient New Year!
We look forward to continuing the resilience journey with you in 2022!**