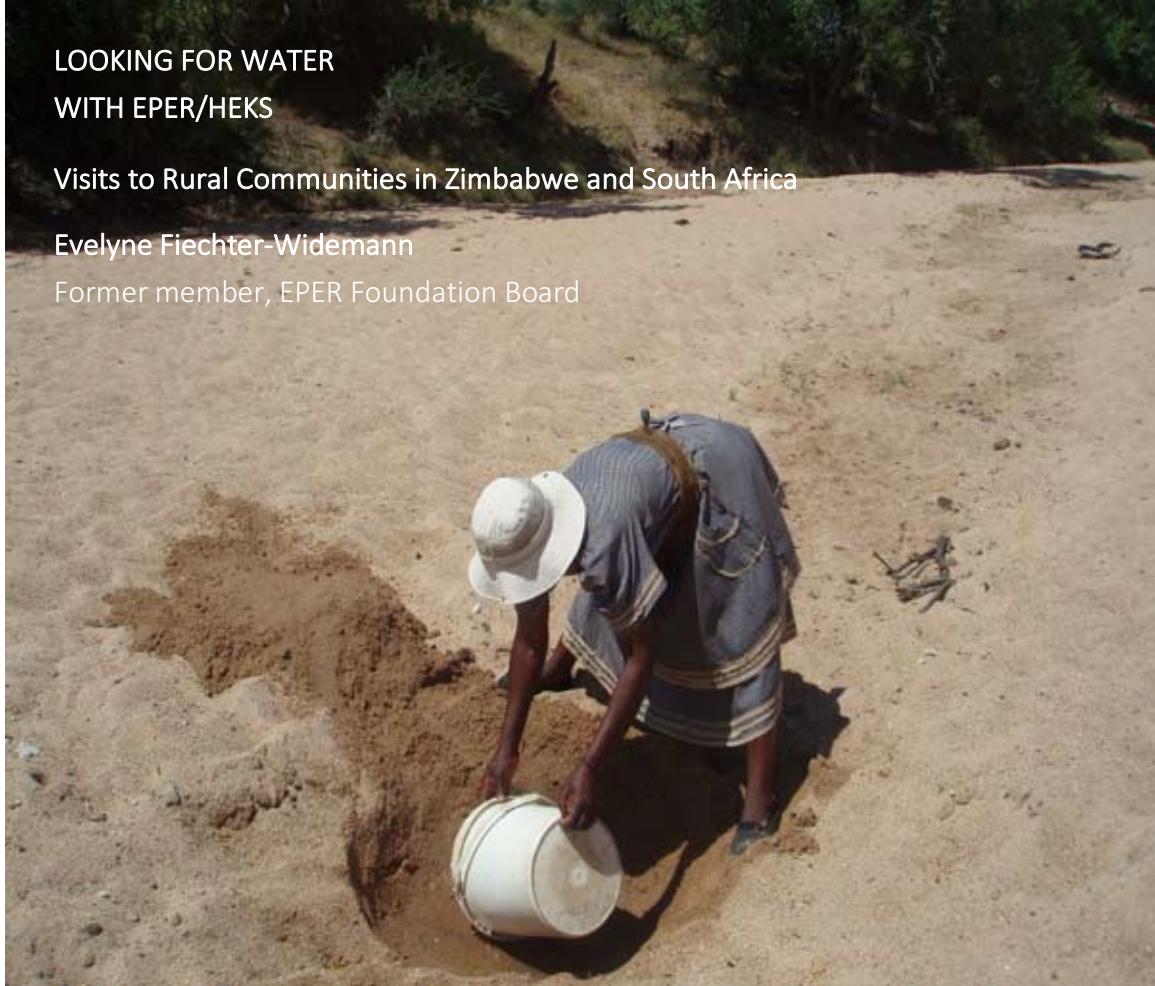


LOOKING FOR WATER
WITH EPER/HEKS

Visits to Rural Communities in Zimbabwe and South Africa

Evelyne Fiechter-Widemann

Former member, EPER Foundation Board



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Acknowledgments

While serving on the EPER/HEKS (Swiss Church Aid) foundation's board from 2006 to 2009, I was inspired to undertake an academic study on the ethical challenges of water at the University of Geneva, in the Autonomous Faculty of Protestant Theology.

Thanks to EPER/HEKS's management, especially Esther Oettli, manager of the International Division, I had the privilege of meeting Valentin Prélaz, the head of Swiss Church Aid's Lausanne-based Protestant aid program for southern Africa. After interviewing him about his projects, I shared my interest in acquiring a better understanding of water-related issues, especially the difficulties that southern African populations face in gaining access to potable water. He spontaneously agreed to let me participate in one of his official supervisory visits to Zimbabwe and South Africa from March 24 to April 3, 2011.

Being able to hold an on-site dialogue with the recipients of humanitarian aid provided by this Protestant NGO was an unforgettable experience.

In one tangible demonstration of this very warm exchange, a woman taking part in a large assembly at Makhasa Dam in Zimbabwe gave me a bag containing about a kilogram of small broad beans. Over a hundred people had gathered and, after spontaneous dancing accompanied by stirring songs, met for about two hours.

I offer warm thanks to EPER/HEKS and its representatives, especially those who agreed to add an extra passenger to their team, namely Valentin Prélaz for the entire trip and employees Juliana Manjengwa in Zimbabwe and Donna Andrews in South Africa.

I could hardly fail to be moved by the memory of the simple and unaffected welcome I received throughout the ten-day trip, both in Zimbabwe from the partners at Christian Care and Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre, and in South Africa from Oupa and the managers at IDEP (Itireleng Development and Educational Project). I was able to share in the joys and also the real concerns of the communities we visited.

These acknowledgments would be incomplete if I neglected to thank Laurence-Isaline Stahl Gretschi, the head of Geneva's History of Science Museum, for her layout work on this report.

LOOKING FOR WATER WITH EPER/HEKS¹

Visits to Rural Communities in Zimbabwe and South Africa

A. Zimbabwe

EPER [Swiss Church Aid] collected feedback from rural communities in Zimbabwe (Matobo District, located in the southern province of Matabeleland)² on Monday and Tuesday, March 28 and 29, 2011.

The schedule for these two days was packed, given the long distances that had to be traveled and the need prepare for the community meetings with the partners, Christian Care's Bulawayo Office on Monday and Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre on Tuesday.

I will limit myself to giving a general picture of the visits we made with these two partners, bearing in mind that Valentin Prélaz has filed a detailed report with EPER's management in Switzerland.

1. EPER's First Partner, Christian Care

I would like to mention the wonderful welcome we received in Maphisa from Christian Care's employees. This organization was founded in 1967 by Zimbabwe's Council of Churches and is one of the largest of the country's institutions concerned with food security. Its objectives include improving access to water and public health, education, and organic farming.

The project head, Duduzile Sikosana, had prepared a packet with the schedule for the day, the activity report for January through March 2011, and a glossary in the local language, Ndebele (a Bantu language). She was assisted by David, who is responsible for food security, and Pastor Everson Ndlovu, who takes charge of development and education and who presided over the discussions all day without showing the least sign of fatigue—an impressive performance.

¹ Hereafter referred to as EPER.

² Prélaz, Valentin, "Linking Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change and Poverty Reduction," Certificate of Advanced Studies thesis, Lausanne 2010, p. 3: "this district is considered as a semi-arid/arid area."



The Vilakalidli garden (March 28, 2011).

1.1. The Vilakalidli Garden

The community that hosted us was represented by about twenty people, mostly women. The very lively discussion covered mainly water-supply and livestock issues. I am pleased to note that the women expressed themselves freely.

Access to Water

Concerning the first topic, the pictures speak for themselves. The subject was pumping water to irrigate the field, which was too dry due to a lack of rain. One of the participating women explained to me that during the dry season, the river runs underneath the sand and one must dig a hole to reach the water.

A manual pumping system was recently installed, but unfortunately turned out to be inadequate because the women tired too quickly. Furthermore, the pipes that should have been used for pumping had been damaged by heavy rains the previous fall.

During the meeting, mention was made of the search for an alternative solution. On behalf of the community, the woman in the red hat (cf. page 419) requested that a diesel pump be supplied.



Duduzile Sikosana and Juliana Manjengwe.



Valentin Prélaz and community members.



Evelyn Fiechter-Widemann and community members.



Valentin Prélaz pointed out that two conditions would have to be met for such a piece of equipment to be furnished:

- a supply of diesel would have to be secured;
- arrangements for regular maintenance of the system would have to be made.

Protecting Livestock

The other point addressed had to do with livestock. Managing stock is difficult, not only because some animals die due to a lack of medication, but also because they are highly coveted and are sometimes stolen. However, the members of the community are so proud of owning cattle that they are redoubling their efforts to avoid such losses. To my great surprise, an on-the-spot poll by Valentin Prélaz revealed that the farmers prefer them by far to goats or chickens: it is a real question of honor and social standing! An article in the July 31, 2011 edition of the *Bulawayo24 News* confirms that owning cattle, which are an important source of income, is a sign of power and authority in Ndebele culture.



1.2. Bambanani Ward Centre

Our host community sent nearly as many men as women to the meeting on Monday, March 28, 2011. Discussions focused mainly on the new constitution adopted by its members. By constitution³ is meant a document containing corporate bylaws, which specify the annual contributions likely to cover the costs of vaccinating the livestock and the methods of managing the animals so as to increase their numbers. This constitution seems to play a positive role in a very real way: several villagers have been able to acquire ownership of a cow over time.

The final goal is of course for every member of the village to own a cow after a few years.

³ [French footnote omitted.]



One of the women shows us her sorghum crop, of which she is justifiably very proud. Her crop is well tended and the harvest looks promising.



Duduzile Sikosana (Christian Care) and Juliana Manjengwa (EPER) (standing to the right).

Governance

The difficulty lies in electing a committee to take charge and call meetings regularly. As things stand, it seems that governance is not optimal and that enforcement of the constitution is spotty. At least, that is what Valentin Prélaz and Juliana Manjengwa implied, without actually spelling it out. But I see the regular monitoring by EPER employees as an encouragement for the communities to move forward with their projects.

1.3. Makhasa Dam

A community of about a hundred people awaited us with many songs and dances at the Makhasa Dam, built in 1951.





New pipes and a siphon system were installed by Christian Care...



... resulting in well-kept gardens.



It was truly a joy to meet this community, which is so grateful to Christian Care and EPER. We were offered many gifts, including seeds.

The many speeches, often impassioned, were very informative and interspersed with songs. The open-air gathering beneath a tree (which I may go so far as to call the “palaver tree”) was attended by young and old, men and women alike. In addition to CF (conservation farming), gender⁴ issues and AIDS-related topics were an important part of the discussion.

An Awareness of Women’s Role

It seemed clear from the discussion that the men had become aware of women’s important role as far as both CF and health issues were concerned. However, as Valentin Prélaz noted in his report, a gulf still exists between the new laws supporting access to economic resources and the cultural customs that subordinate women.⁵

Another topic mentioned was how the constitution was being applied especially effectively in the area of organic farming. Many people (even some of the men) spoke up to say that a good 50 percent of the crop is now raised by “katchopo” (conservation farming), and 50 percent by traditional means.

Among the projects mentioned were education, mobility (request to purchase a mountain bike), and the construction of latrines near the community’s regular meeting place. We had seen a number of such facilities in the area during our short trip from the meeting place to the location of some fields we were visiting at nightfall.



Anecdote and Questions

I asked one of the participants, who had come along in the car driven by Juliana Manjengwe, about a brand-new large building that I pointed out. He answered that it contained latrines built by World Vision, but that he himself built others for the community at nearly no charge.

Is this anecdote not food for thought? Are our organizations doing too much? Would it not suffice to make the people we want to help aware of the importance of access to public health facilities, then let them provide it using their own methods?

⁴ [French footnote omitted.]

⁵ Prélaz, Valentin, “Linking Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change and Poverty Reduction,” *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Debriefing and Goodbyes

After a debriefing at the Christian Care center, we said an emotional goodbye to that organization's representatives and spent the second night in the Agricultural Development Authority's guest house, which has faucets and toilets but not water (at least, not any more). The precious liquid must be fetched from a hosepipe several meters beyond the house, or from a cistern out front.



The guesthouse, which has no running water.

Two aides, Juliana, Valentin and Evelyne.



2. EPER's Second Partner, the Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre

The Fambidzanai foundation was created in 1988. (Fambidzanai means “walking together.”) Its main objective is to develop and promote organic farming and demonstrate its viability through numerous projects in the field as well as training courses and seminars.



On Tuesday, March 29, 2011, the two representatives of the center that we met took us to visit several gardens as well as a resource center under construction. Since my study was focusing on how communities water their crops, at this point I will mention three types of irrigation: water brought from the river, and irrigation aided either by a windmill that works a pump, or by manual pumping.

A sixty-year-old woman was working in the first garden while a young woman went to get water from a river five minutes away.

Seven holes had been dug in which to plant mango, avocado, and orange trees. The Fambidzanai Centre plans to provide a water pump soon.





In the second garden, a windmill and bore hole system supplies the water (at a cost of between 10 and 15 thousand dollars).

I was amazed to see that the farmers do not use the available hoses to water the crops directly; instead, they fill buckets, carry the water to the plants, and pour it out.



At the third site, a manual water pump is used.

1. Training for Better Governance

The various debriefings conducted by our hosts after the site visits revealed that the issue of accountability by aid recipients is absolutely crucial.

I could see that project monitoring was not a mere formality. EPER, for example, must use all the diplomacy it can muster to encourage the communities to comply with the rules set in their constitutions. It does have a field officer whose job is to verify compliance with the rules that are so necessary for the survival of the populations in question. However, without Juliana Manjengwa's invaluable and efficient work, and the semiannual visits by the program head from Switzerland, the constitution might well go unheeded.

I will round out my observations by noting that the visits also usually include workshops, for example those jointly arranged by EPER and BFA (Bread For All) in October 2010 on the topic of global warming, the risk of drought, and the challenges posed by AIDS.⁶ These sessions are extremely important as tools for both communication and training with the goal of fighting poverty.

⁶ Prélaz, Valentin, "Linking Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change and Poverty Reduction," *op. cit.*, p. 3.

B. South Africa

As in Zimbabwe, we had many meetings, which took place on March 31 and April 1, 2011.

1. Khanya College

The moment we arrived in Johannesburg we were welcomed by Donna Andrews, an EPER employee, and had a long discussion with Oupa, an activist from the apartheid days. He said he was very frustrated with what was currently happening in his country, despite the smooth transition from apartheid to democracy under charismatic President Nelson Mandela (a statue of whom we saw at the Johannesburg airport) and the outstanding work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission⁷ to ensure the healthy rebuilding of South African society.

He hastened to list the problems, for example:

- the financial crisis and considerable foreign exchange losses
- termination of EPER support (planned for the end of 2012)
- the gap between South Africa's 1996 constitution and reality

Oupa was very committed to supporting a winter school⁸ to teach activists their rights, especially the right to resist.



⁷ Fiechter-Widemann, Evelyne, "Pardon, catharsis de la violence extrême" [Forgiveness: can it bring catharsis in cases of extreme violence?], paper given at the Faculty of Theology, Geneva, 2001, www.fiechter.name.

⁸ www.khanyacollege.org.za.

2. Itireleng Development and Educational Project (IDEP)

The Itireleng Development and Educational Project (hereafter referred to as IDEP) is EPER's partner in the Mopani District (located in Limpopo Province, whose 5.7 million residents are among South Africa's poorest people).⁹



Director Matome Malatji (left front); behind him are Valentin Prélaz, Donna Andrews (white t-shirt), and other employees.

2.1 Framework Conditions for Current Hunger-Prevention Projects

IDEP director Matome Malatji compels respect by his precise and resolute speech. At the beginning of the session, he recalled the history of IDEP, which was created in 1988 but has been especially active since 1994. IDEP has set up eight associations, which themselves are members of a federation called the Mopani Farmers Union (hereafter MFU).¹⁰ Its primary objective is to combat hunger and acquire the means to do so, which consist in particular of providing training and support to about 1220 farmers. This includes not only raising the rural population's awareness of climate and ecological challenges, but also offering training in effective water management and overseeing irrigation systems to improve the use of water, a scarce resource in this region¹¹ due to low rainfall.

⁹ See report by Prélaz, Valentin, "IDEP and HEKS EPER, Water Infrastructures Improvement Project Proposal," December 2010, p. 1: "Today, less than 10% of households have piped water in their homes, 38% rely on communal taps for access to water and 19.5 % on dams, rivers and springs for water. (...) Only few emerging small scale farmers rely on bore holes (...)."

¹⁰ See the appended Constitution of the Mopani Farmers Union.

¹¹ Prélaz, Valentin, "IDEP and HEKS EPER, Water Infrastructures Improvement Project Proposal," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

IDEP and EPER schedule workshops on a regular basis. IDEP also organizes farmers assemblies at which current events are discussed and problems identified. This attests to IDEP's "catalyst" philosophy, an approach that aims to make small farmers aware of their responsibilities and attentive to their own needs. This is known as "empowerment" or "People's Participatory Planning and Action" (PPPA).¹²

It should be noted that in addition to the legal framework provided by the associations and the federation, the government has set up an anti-poverty program in rural and disadvantaged areas such as the region covered by IDEP.¹³

Matome Malatji deplored the government's unwillingness to grant access to land as it had promised. In ten years, only 3% of the land has been redistributed to the farmers.¹⁴ The former owners often burn the trees and break the pipes when they leave their property, as we saw in the field (see below, second visit).

A long discussion of a water supply project supported by a Genevan attorney followed. A group of heirs he was representing had offered to donate 15,000 francs for a project, if possible the building of two bore holes, which are a way of drilling for access to water. But the two young women working for Matome Malatji, with the lovely names of Mokhadi and Kedibone, explained that this would be very expensive in South Africa. Valentin Prélaz asked them to contact at least three companies so the work could be awarded to the one offering the best price.

¹² Prélaz, Valentin, "IDEP and HEKS EPER, Water Infrastructures Improvement Project Proposal," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹³ Southern Africa Regional Programme 2007-2009 and its extension until end of 2012, see Prélaz, Valentin, "IDEP and HEKS EPER, Water Infrastructures Improvement Project Proposal," *op. cit.*, p. 3. This report also mentioned the following stakeholders: Department of Agriculture, Department of Land Affairs, Department of Labour, Department of Health and Social Development, District Municipality, etc.

¹⁴ Restitution Land Rights Act, Cooperatives Act.

2.2 Site Visits

2.2.1 Mzilela Gardening Project

This association has approximately three hundred members. Lazarus Moger is the manager.

Lazarus Moger and Valentin Prélaz.



Lazarus Moger and his water pump.

Moger is a young retiree (he worked in a mine until 2007) who has become the manager of a plot of about 222 hectares. He proudly showed us his fields of beans. He also grows a large number of fruit trees, especially mangoes, and employs many small farmers, including his son. His fields are well tended, with working irrigation. He himself installed a water pumping system.



Moger was awarded a prize from the municipal government for his management of the land. He explained that together with the neighboring farmers, he is required to produce 20 metric tons of fruits and vegetables per year for Pick n Pay; failure to do so would result in termination of the contract. He noted an urgent need for new tractors, as his were defective. To end the visit, we were asked to complete the usual form¹⁵ attesting to our visit.

¹⁵ All of the communities had us fill out such a form.

2.2.2 Trichardsdaal Balloon Farm



The South African farmers reclaimed this farm after a years-long legal battle. Despite having been paid by the government, the former owner absolutely refused to leave. He was finally separated from his property in 2010, but not without first having destroyed the pipe system! Such serious clashes show the difficulty of getting beyond the issue of apartheid in the real world, even though it was banned in 1990.

2.2.3 Khomananihitirha Farmers Association

This delightful half-hectare farm was run by a woman in her forties. She gives preference to organic methods and teaches this type of farming to the association's other forty-nine members. She talked about the difficulty of obtaining water.





She shows visitors a hollow where two palm trees have been planted; she hopes to build a small dam there. She also plans to plant a *marula* tree, a species typical of South Africa, next year. She noted that in addition to the association farmers, her four sisters help her a great deal.



2.2.4 Nursery in Maruleng



Four women and a man, all of a certain age, greeted us next to an enormous termite nest. The very humble man was the municipal secretary; he spoke enthusiastically about current projects. He explained that he had formerly worked in a mine.



He told us of his wish to help the land he administers prosper and how grateful he is that the visitors were taking an interest in his water problems. He wanted to build a bore hole so that women would not have to go so far to get water in buckets from the river. This would enable them to take better care of the garden.

Seedlings in the greenhouse were covered with ashes to deter locusts.



A Ray of Hope

EPER employee Donna Andrews¹⁶ spoke passionately about the Mopani Farmers Union, of which the projects mentioned above are illustrative. She concedes that resources and potential vary widely. But she thinks that this IDEP-supported union is an innovation in South Africa and that its philosophy and structure foster true solidarity among farmers. She has high hopes, is certain even, that this system will make it possible for the “new farmers” to have a better life. Thanks to the MFU, the association’s member farmers are leaving the multitudinous ranks of the unemployed (48%) and can live life with dignity. They are in control of their own future, and so can avoid becoming welfare recipients.

C. Conclusion

I returned to Switzerland having been both enriched by striking images of water problems, like the one the cover page of this article, and persuaded that despite the difficulties, we must tirelessly continue our dialogue with the African partners.

Both the partners and the communities with which we met were cooperative and anxious to improve their living conditions by training themselves as best they could to face their challenges. I note that, very often, I saw in them a sense of responsibility and commitment, with the desire to be completely free to take up the challenges of daily living.

Such freedom can be won through the associations they have created.

However, obstacles of all sorts—institutional, political, climatic and economic—are such that help is always welcome. For example, they were very thankful for the support they were receiving, and also expressed their great hopes of being able to count on assistance from EPER for a long time to come.

Modest though it may be, Switzerland’s contribution is essential, because it provides real encouragement to fight for a better future in a climate where water is especially unpredictable, but real potential exists.

Here I would like to state my admiration for those who share their expertise with the African people, the employees of this charitable organization of the Swiss churches. They are helping to bring these people closer to us, ultimately to become true brothers and sisters for whom we can and must show concern.

This trip to Zimbabwe and South Africa in the spring of 2011 helped me decide to focus mainly on Africa when I write my dissertation on the topic of justice for water, a project I mentioned in the introduction to this report.

Evelyne Fiechter-Widemann

¹⁶ Of Cape Town.

CONSTITUTION

OF

MOPANI

FARMERS

UNION

CONSTITUTION OF MOPANI FARMERS UNION

1. Name:

The name of the organisation shall be called Mopani Farmers Union, abbreviated as MFU.

2. Founding statement

Mopani farmers union is a district farmer's organization found in Mopani District municipality in the Limpopo province of South Africa. It is constituted by village farmers associations which are the basic unit of the organisation. Village associations are also clustered into areas associations to ensure smooth coordination and easy access to members support. The union consists of six (6) areas namely:

- **Bolobedu area:** which consist of the following villages: Ramotshinyadi, Mawa block 08, 09, 12, Wally 02, Thlohlokwe, Lekgwareng, Mokgwathi, Mookgo 05, 06 and 07
- **Dzumeri area:** which consists of the following villages: Mageva, Daniel, Loloka, Zava, Mghoghoma, Bambeni, Mphakani, Matsotsoela, Mzilela, and Mayephu, Maphata, Mbhedle and Mushiyani
- **Selwane-Prieska area:** which consists of the following villages are covered Prieska, Mahale and Khashane
- **Makhuva-Phalaubeni area:** which consists of the following villages: Phalaubeni and Nsavulani
- **Nkambako area:** which consists of the following village: Nkambako village
- **Phalaborwa area:** which consists of the following villages: Namakgale, Mashishimale R2 and Majeje

The Union aims to continue to mobilize for more members in all five municipalities, until the union is fully accessible to all the rural poor of the district. That MFU will remain a union of village associations and not individual farmers.

3. Mission and vision Statement

- Build a strong united independent voice of farmers that will lobby and advocate for access to resources that are land, financial, human and material resources.
- Effective and efficient utilization of resources for job creation and total poverty eradication.
- Ultimately ensure sustainable livelihood for the poor farming communities.
- Provide support to the small scales farmer
- Collectively secure markets and sustain them.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To build a voice of the emerging farmers in the district enabling farmers to access resources and information for local economic development – food security.
- To identify skills gaps of the farmers and lobby relevant institutions and government departments to empower farmers with such skills.
- To ensure that the needs of the farmer's communities are prioritized in the integrated development plans (IDPs) of both local and district municipalities to boost the local economy, food security and better livelihood for the poor farmers.
- To ensure the active participation of the farmers in the transformation land and agrarian policies such that they favour the poor farmers

5. Logo

- People tilling the land using two cattle's
- Maize, citrus tree (oranges), bees on top of the tree, a sun

6. Colours

- Green for vegetables
- Yellow for fruits
- Gold for the sun
- sky blue for hope
- Black for the participants
- Red for the stock

7. Operational area

- The union will have Mopani district area as its area of operation.

8. Body Corporate

The organization is a body corporate with perpetual succession and legal existence independence of its members and shall

- Be able to own property and other possessions.
- Be able to sue and be sued on its own name.
- The office bearers will be elected into office as per the constitution.

9. Election of office bearers

- The office bearers shall be elected during general conference constituted by representatives from village farmers associations.
- The leadership of the MFU shall decide on a process of nomination from time to time and monitor that such processes are conducted democratically at village association level.
- The nominations shall be made at the village association level and the names of nominees forwarded at least 21 days before the date of the general conference.
- The newly elected executive committee shall meet at least within the first two weeks following their election for hand over operationalisation of the resolution take at the conferences.

10. Leadership

- The leadership of the union shall be elected democratically at a conference properly convened for that purpose
- The Exco will manage the union.
- The exco will be made up of 17 members.
- If a member of the exco fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without written notice or valid reason the member area association should be informed through a written notice which will include the recommendations to be taken.
- The exco will meet at least once in a month
- Quorum will be 50% +1
- The office bearers are not personally liable for any loss suffered by any person as a result of an act or omission which occurs in good faith while the office bearer is performing functions on behalf of the union or any member association

11. Term of office

- The term of office shall be 3 years.
- Member of the executive may be re elected into committee

12. Office Bearers

The office bearers shall consist of:

- Chairperson
- Deputy chairperson
- Secretary
- Deputy secretary
- Treasurer
- Publicity Secretary / Public Relations Officer
- Young Farmers Coordinator
- 10 additional members.

(e) Public Relations Officer

- The publicity secretary will recruit members to the union
- Will be responsible for making public statements as mandated to do so by the general council or executive committee.
- Will speak on behalf of the Union
- Will publicize the activities of the union
- Will form part of all teams that might be delegated to represent the interest of the association at any forum.

(f) Treasurer

- Shall be responsible for keeping proper financial records and admin systems.
- Shall collect subscription fees from members and perform such other duties as the executive may direct.
- Shall submit reports with regard to the financial position of the union to the executive committee and during general conference.
- Will attend all general and executive meetings.
- Shall attend all finance related trainings / workshops
- Shall be responsible for fundraising and processing financial transactions that might be deemed necessary by the MFU.

(g) Young farmers' coordinator

- Motivate other young farmers
-

(h) Additional members

- Attend all the meetings
- Deliberate on issues during the meeting

13. Duties and functions of the office bearers

(a) Chairperson

- The chairperson shall preside at all Executive meetings of the MFU at which he or she is present.
- He / she shall enforce the observance of the constitution.
- The chairperson shall sign minutes and other relevant documents after approval by the Exco.
- S / he shall not have a deliberate vote, but shall in event of an equality of votes, have a casting vote.

(b) Deputy chairperson

- The deputy chairperson shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the latter or when ever delegated by the chairperson to do so.

(c) Secretary

- The general secretary shall issue invitations of meetings of the executive committee and all other meetings decided upon by the executive committee, write and circulate minutes of the previous meetings.
- He / she will conduct all correspondence and all incoming and outgoing communiqué.
- Shall attend all meetings of the executive committees' and record minutes of the proceedings.

(d) Deputy Secretary

- The deputy Secretary shall exercise the power and perform the duties of the Secretary in the absence of the latter.

14. Powers of the Exco

- The executive committee shall exercise its policies responsibilities, fiduciary, financial powers and give strategic direction to the union.
- The executive of the union shall be responsible for the implementation of policy and decisions in the union.
- The executive is the custodian of the assets of the union and shall provide a full report of such assets.
- Ensures that finances of the union are properly managed.
- Shall recommend and call for any changes and amendments in the constitution of the union. The Executive shall make all such recommendation will then be discussed and approved at the general conference or and general council.
- Shall maintain cordial and amicable relationship with other members.

15. STRUCTURES

The structures of the MFU shall consist of

- Village association which are the primary structure of the organisation shall consists of a minimum seven members and maximum of ten members.
- The area association which will be coordination structure to ensure access to support and payment of membership. Consist of a minimum of seven and maximum of 10 members.
- The Mopani farmers Union which will consist of 17 members.

16. Joining and subscription fee

- Member area association will be required to pay annual membership fees which will be determined from time to time by the conference or general council in between conferences.
- All membership fees shall be payable within the three months period after the end of financial year.
- The annual subscription fees will be paid over to the account of the MFU by respective areas association on behalf of their members.

17. Membership

- MFU is a union of different farming area associations and only such associations can be members of the union.
- A member association seizes to be a member if it did not comply with the rules, regulations and the code of conduct of the organisation as set in the constitution, policy documents and any other official document documents of the association.
- Ceasure or suspension only applies when necessary procedure have been complied with.
- The member has the right to appeal to the high structures of the executive of the association through a written notice within 30 days of his or her expulsion after verdict passed.
- Two third majority of the general council shall decide upon the membership / subscription fees during general conference.

18. Affiliation

- The district union has the right to affiliate to any union/formation that prescribes to its vision and mission and that have similar aims and objectives.
- A decision to affiliate should be discussed and agreed upon by the majority of the members association present at a conference / General council.

19. Termination of membership

The executive member shall cease to be a member of the executive when:

- S/he gives notice of his / her resignation as executive member, which resignation shall have effect from the date of such notice, or such later state therein.
- If after the member has been absent from meetings of the executive for three consecutive meetings without written apology or officially communicated the reason of his or her absence.
- Member association write a letter to withdraw its representative from executive due to lack of unsatisfactory work / if that member does not serve his/her association to its satisfaction.
- If a member is expelled from the Union on reasons of misconduct that warrant such expulsion.

20. Meetings

(a) Exco

- The exco shall meet at least once a month to discuss fiduciary / policy and other relevant issues.
- The committee will manage the day to day activities of the MFU.
- Special meetings may be called when deemed necessary.
- Majority shall take decisions

(b) General Council(GC)

- The meetings of the GC shall be held at least once a year.
- Representatives decide upon propositionally from the area farmers association as well as the exco will constitute the general council of the MFU.
- The GC is the highest decision making body in between the general conference.

- The chairperson of the General Secretary directed by the executive shall convene such meetings.
- At least 7 days notice shall be given to members in writing prior such meetings commencement.
- The chairperson of the MFU shall preside over such meetings.

(c) Conference

- General conference shall be convened once after three years.
- This is a broad mass based gathering of member area association at the district level. Originally consist of associations but with the intention to outreach to more areas within the district.
- Recommended representations to the conference shall be decided proportionally among its members as per village associations
- The constitution may be amended at this meeting and such amendments shall require a two- third majority.
- The GC shall elect new members to the portfolios as required by the constitution
- The coordinating structure of farmers shall induct the new elected body.
- The proceedings (minutes) of all meetings will be recorded by the secretariat, be signed by the chairperson and secretary and be kept safe / filed for future reference.
- An officer from IDEP or somebody designated by IDEP shall act as an electoral officer / IDEP will preside the elections.

21. Voting rights and meeting procedures – voting procedure

Focus mainly on the voting during the conference

- The chairperson shall have deliberating and casting votes.
- Voting will be done through show of hands or as may be decided at a specific time.
- Members have the right to vote in meetings and decision – making forums and may move a vote of no confidence to any member of the union.

22. Funds and finance

- All financial transactions made to be conducted through a banking account, current account, cheque account / book will be appropriate and any other account can be opened when deemed necessary by the union or its executive committee.
- There will be proper financial systems and procedures in place to be followed by the bookkeeper (treasurer) to ensure proper financial management.
- The funds of the union shall be used for the purposes of the business of union only.
- The treasurer shall control day to day financial matters of the union and whenever financial transactions are made, at least two authorized signatories must sign such transaction.
- The chairperson, secretary and treasurer shall be signatories of the union.
- An independent accounting firm to be appointed to audit the finance books of the union at the end of the union's financial year

23. Property

- The union will keep an inventory / asset register or records of everything it owns.
- A member of the union can only be paid back once s/he submitted a proof of the expenses incurred on behalf of the union.
- Prior approval of such expenses is a pre-requisite
- Members or office bearers of the union do not have rights over property that belongs to the union except on occasion when they are performing the duties of the union.
- The union will not be liable for individual or private debts and obligations of its members.

24. Discipline

All members without exception should abide by the constitution and all rules and regulations decide by the union from time to time.

All members of the Union and farmers associations without exception shall be subjected to the discipline of the Union and must submit to the constitution of the Union all times. Disciplinary proceedings shall be confined to violation of the constitution of the MFU.

The officials of the Union (top five) shall constitute a disciplinary committee of the MFU.

Where a member within the top five is considered to be in violation of the constitution an additional member of the committee shall be co opted to serve as a member of the disciplinary committee pending the outcome of such inquiry by a top five member in question

The quorum for the disciplinary committee shall be three.

A member of union / may be suspended, fined or expelled as may be deemed by the Executive Council/ Executive Committee.

- If it infringes any of the terms of the constitution or acts in a manner which is detrimental to the interest of the union or found guilty of misconduct.
- All members in violation of the constitution shall be notified of such violation in writing and be called to appear before the disciplinary committee.
- The member in violation shall have the right to have one or two other people to come and represent them during the hearing.
- Disciplinary proceedings will take place at the level where the alleged misconduct or violation has taken place.(village association, area association level or at the MFU level) and all such levels shall constitute disciplinary committees.

The outcome of the disciplinary hearing shall take the following forms;

- Reprimand
- Suspension
- Expulsion.
- Where mismanagement of finance of the Union /association has been shall payment of fine or recovery of such money will be sought.

The following shall constitute misconduct that will warrant disciplinary proceedings to be executed against affected members.

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- Misappropriations of the finances and assets of the MFU and the farmers association at all levels of its existence.
- Conviction in a court of law and being sentenced to an imprisonment without an option of a fine for serious crimes.
- Behavior which brings the union and or all its other primary structures into disrepute.
- Engaging in sexual or physical abuse of women and children or abuse of office to obtain sexual favors or any other undue advantages or enrichment
- Behaving in such a way as to provoke serious divisions within the union and its members.
- Members who shall not be satisfied with the outcomes of disciplinary committees shall have the right to appeal to the high structure and in the case of the MFU level they shall appeal to the MFU executive
- The decision of the MFU executive shall be final

25. Winding – up / Dissolution

- Mopani Farmers Union may cease to exist if at least two third majority of the members voting at a meeting convened for the purpose of considering such a matter is in favors of such dissolution.
- A notice of at least 21day shall be made to members with a clear indication that dissolution of the MFU shall be discussed during the meeting in question.
- A statement of financial standing of the organization shall be made and discussed in such a meeting when dissolution is considered.
- All debts. shall be settled prior to any dissolution taking place.

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- Assets of and balances of organization finances shall be given over to similar organization that have similar objectives once dissolution is decided upon.

26. Amendments

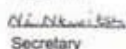
- A written notice shall be handed out to members in not less than fourteen days before the meeting at which the changes to the constitution are proposed.
- The constitution shall be read, amended and adopted at a conference by the members.
- Two – third majority votes shall be required to make changes in the constitution.
- The notice shall indicate the proposed changes to the constitution that will be discussed in the meeting.

The constitution was discussed and adopted at the first General Council of Mopani farmers Union / General Conference held on the 17th to the 19th of October 2007 at Eiland Aventura Spa.

Signatures:


Chairman

ID no: 524964579639 Date: 19/10/2007


Secretary

ID no: 591104568639 Date: 19-10-2007

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