ISSUE

Grandmother of six and mother of four, Tabitha is from Mbooni District in South Eastern Kenya. In 2013 The Salvation Army met Tabitha in her home district. She shared the issues their community was facing and they worked together to connect with other community members to try and make a difference.

Mbooni District was drought stricken. Tabitha and her family struggled to find water and food every day. As a 60 year old retired teacher, she has difficulty walking the long distance to the nearest water supply - which is often unsafe to drink. Eventually her grandchildren were going to have to collect water, but that would mean that time they could be spending in school would be taken away from them. This is not something that Tabitha wanted for her grandchildren, especially as she was caring directly for one of them.

The lack of water affected the whole community. There was tension and fighting over land and water supply. Farming was also limited and small scale farming, planting trees and engaging in other productive activities became less of a focus. This meant that the area developed a dependency on relief and emergency food assistance.

DESCRIBE AND ANALYSE

Research was vital to make sure that The Salvation Army was able to support the community with the most sustainable solution possible. They worked together with a local organisation called Utooni Development Organisation (UDO). A number of community conversations took place, as they were the best way to approach the issues highlighted and make sure as many people as possible were able to give input.

The community recognised the Tumalize Nijaa Self-Help Group as an asset to their initiative. The research into the land and provisions available recognised a sand dam as the most appropriate form of support to address water needs. Community members from Kiambwa sub-location, facilitated by the Tawa Corps Officer, also assessed ways they could address the critical problem of food insecurity in their community.

PLAN

The community came up with the initial proposal and committed to providing labour, rocks, sand and water. The Self-Help Group (SHG) was appointed by the community to oversee this work.

ACT

66 community members worked in shifts for one month contracting the sand dam. They provided the labour, sand and stones for the sand dam - whilst UDO and The Salvation Army support with some food, cement and other items.
**EVALUATE**

The Dam has created a local water source for the local community and has transformed the lives of many. Tabitha now has a water source close to her home and a means for income. This has meant that the fear of relying on her grandchildren to collect her water has disappeared and has been restored with a positive outlook on the future education of her grandchildren and her hopes as an outcome of this project. She said;

“I now help my grandchildren to go to school- I given my coin [contribution] to help them out”

Over 2000 children including Tabitha’s children and grandchildren have benefitted from this project, together over 1000 men and women. The community spirit has strengthened and small scale farming has been introduced meaning there is no longer fighting over the local land. Tree nurseries and terraced gardens have come as a direct result. Tabitha tells us;

“We are very healthy nowadays. I am very, very happy as I know I have an income for my retirement and a healthy family”

**ONGOING IMPACT**

The Sand Dam has sparked positivity across local politicians, community leaders, research students and SA representatives. There are 30 new soldiers and 50 new Junior Soldiers as a direct result of the positive impact of this project.

The Sand Dam’s sustainability will support the community in the future. Local community members have agreed to pay a monthly fee towards any ongoing maintenance that may be required, and UDO have also committed to provided support if required in the future.

**LESSONS LEARNT**

The Salvation Army see the importance in learning and developing in every project we carry out. The lessons we take from each project can help benefit the success of the next. After reading the story, what do you learn about:

- Participatory decision-making
- Building on local strengths and contributions
- Sustainability