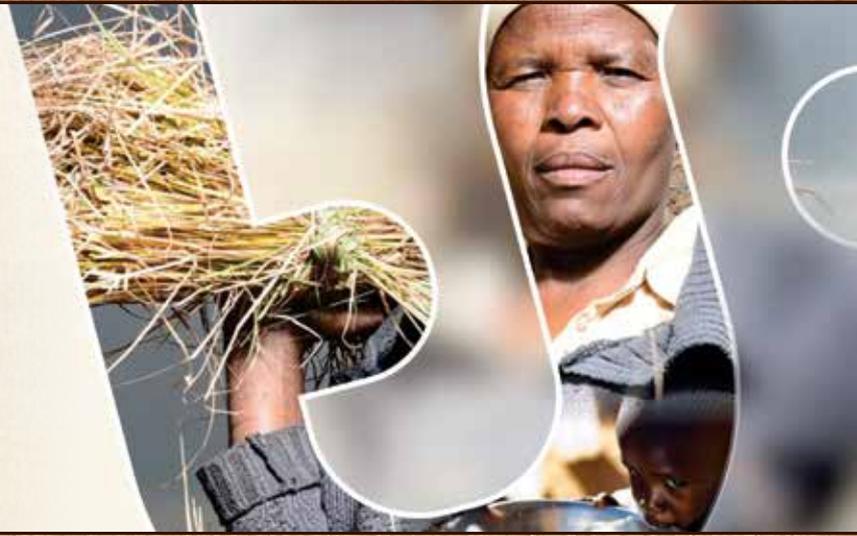


The TAG is the official newsletter of Touching Africa. We report on the activities, wanting to share our stories as we make a difference through touching Africa.



TOUCHING AFRICA



GAZETTE



Stories from:

Zambia
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North
West
Province
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TAG HIGHLIGHTS (E-TAG)

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Touching Africa is involved in the southern Zambian Barotseland. We have the opportunity to assist 30 villages in the area to get access to handpump water. This will be done by contributing the initial required R1 000 per village as a "deposit" for the drilling process.

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AGES was appointed by the Bosch Stemele and Sinakho Consulting Consortium in 2008 as the environmental consultants dedicated to the project - Bulk Water Supply Backlog Ngcobo Cluster 6 for the Chris Hani District Municipality.

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15 teenagers residing in a Children's Home participated in a community music therapy choir as part of a Music Therapy Research Project. Touching Africa sponsored the choir's final concert, marking the end of their 8 months participation in the choir.

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Considering specific questions and consulting with the community may contribute greatly to the success of a community project. This way we can contribute to the sustainability of a project, changing it from *my* project to *our* project.

Read more on page 7



Gatyana and Mhlohlozi residents in the former Transkei area received VIP toilets. The project aimed to serve communities with quality sanitation facilities and restoring human dignity. Elevating poverty boosts local economies in the beneficiary communities.

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AGES was appointed by Imbumba Consultants as employer to carry out groundwater source development at the Village of Cabazana in the Eastern Cape Province under the project management of Vuba Imagineers on behalf of the Alfred Nzo District Municipality.

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A team of multi-disciplinary professionals has been tasked with the construction of the facility at Ndofela Clinic. AGES's geotechnical inputs are purely driven by the need to give back to the industry and bless the community and their new client.

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As partners and workers together with the Manyeledi Project Team, we embrace the opportunity to start small. New lands are being identified, soil samples are being analysed, agricultural profiles are being done, and water resources are being defined.

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Zimbini Pemba won 2nd prize in the 2016 Short Story Writing & Illustration Competition. These stories will be available, December 2016, in a short story bundle, Ekasie. She will be mentored for a year towards writing a winning book seller.

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*We invite you to share your stories with us as we
take hands to make a difference*

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IS GOD LOSING CONTROL?

By Stephan Pretorius

There is only one PLAN for this world - there is only one HOPE for our world. In geohydrology, we use all the information available and develop a model. This model is then used to run different scenarios and the outcome of this process is then used to PLAN future groundwater use. The Greek word for HOPE is elpis – meaning to anticipate, to model the future as basis to a plan.

According to Colossians 1:27 God has a PLAN ready to change the world, to touch the world, to heal the world. Corrie ten Boom said, “there is no panic in heaven! God has no problems – only plans!” But us, “his people” must understand this “secret plan” He has for ALL PEOPLE: that secret is that CHRIST IN US is the GLORY of GOD on earth. What does that mean? The Greek word for glory is doxa and means to think according to God's plan! We need a corporate thinking as his people – we have to understand the corporate plan. That plan is CHRIST IN US: we are together as “his people” cooperatively a BODY. We are not primarily individuals that try to act together – we are primarily part of a BODY! But this is only possible if CHRIST – the Godly, divine, anointing of God, Christos is in us. It is not Jesus the historical man in us – it is the same Godly, divine, anointing of God in HIM – now today in history and time – IN US.

This indwelling Christos in us – is God's plan for human mankind. The solution is not that Jesus will come again on a specific day, somewhere in the future. God's plan is that the indwelling Christos in me and you make us able to be a BODY that touch and change the world around us!

Is the reality today around us – specifically in South Africa – God's plan? No – it is the result of men making plans without the influence of the indwelling Christos! God's plan for us as “His People” is to change this reality by living according to the indwelling Christos, taking hands as a BODY and ACT with an effect on All PEOPLE!

TOUCHING ZAMBIA

By Stephan Pretorius

Touching Africa is involved in the southern Zambian Barotseland from a basis 70 km north of Katima Mulilo on the eastern banks of the Zambesi river. As Benji and Celest du Preez, along with their children, are serving the community through the establishment and management of a training farm, their influence continually expands through all the surrounding villages. “Mr Benjamin” is the key word for a welcoming smile from the local people when travelling around! Stephan junior and I visited the area in September and was once again surprised with what the Lord is doing in this remote area – people have work, the standard of living has changed, people turn to the Lord and peace and happiness can be sensed on the farm and surrounding areas.

We have an opportunity to assist 30 villages in the area to get access to handpump water per village. This will help with the danger of being caught by crocodiles while fetching water for households from the Zambesi river. An average of four women per year pay for their lives while serving the community with water. We have the opportunity to assist the local villages as Touching Africa in contributing the initial required R1 000 per village as a “deposit” for the drilling process. The total cost of the project will further be covered by the Africa Development Bank. Please indicate if you are interested to contribute to this cause!!



BULK WATER SUPPLY BACKLOG NGCOBO CLUSTER 6 FOR THE CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Zikho Fatman and Jo-marie Clark

Since 2004 various studies conducted focussing on the Ngcobo area with recommendations for the upgrading of the water supply to the villages. AGES was appointed by the Bosch Stemele and Sinakho Consulting Consortium in 2008 as the environmental consultants dedicated to this project.

The Ngcobo area has a lot of villages stranded for water with the scorching heat and poor rainfall season. Most of these villages have low alternatives during these dry months and access to secure and safe for human consumption water is a daily struggle.

A total of 125 villages have been served in the project with 6369 and 38214 households respectively,

benefiting from Cluster 6 villages in Chris Hani District Municipality and some of the villages fell within Ngcobo municipality.

The general scope of these projects included:

- Spring abstraction/ protection points
- Two Water Treatment Works
- New Reservoirs
- Bulk water lines and water reticulation network and associated standpipes

The happy residents of Mgudu, Qutubeni, Gqaga, Lokshini, Singumeni and Dlulati, Sitholeni received the project which collectively served 329.17 km worth of pipeline abstracting water from

Gqagariver. The water is indeed safe and secure and is being purified from a Water Treatment Works constructed in the village!

Environmental Inputs

The environmental inputs solicited from AGES Omega were provision of:

- (1) Several Basic Assessments
- (2) Environmental Management Programme and
- (3) Environmental Control Officer Monitoring.

The end result is happy beneficiaries whilst the environment remains intact throughout and after the development!



Continual Environmental monitoring is necessary to safeguard sensitive plant communities



Archaeological Impact Assessments that formed part of the Environmental Impact Assessment to ensure the protection of this heritage site.



Environmental Impact Assessment were conducted to ensure protection of sensitive environmental zones such as seen in the above photograph



This photograph shows the Gqaga Water Treatment Works serving Cluster 6 water supply scheme in Chris Hani District Municipality

A COMMUNITY MUSIC THERAPY CHOIR

By Anrie van Rooyen

I journeyed with 15 teenagers at Bramley Children's Home for 8 months in a community music therapy choir, part of my Music Therapy Master's research project. The final performance, was a vital part of the choir's therapeutic process. Thanks to Touching Africa, an unforgettable concert event was possible.

Through interviews with the adolescents after the concert, healthy and beneficial experiences were highlighted, both personally and socially. The adolescents displayed high levels of motivation and dedication in completing a task and in utilising willpower, as well as experiencing renewed hope and plans for the future. The choir members also experienced growth in terms of their identities through increased confidence, believing in their unique abilities, increased self-esteem and being comfortable in their own skin. The adolescents experienced positive emotional experiences, learning to express and regulate their own emotions.

The group enjoyed the social interaction, experiencing growth in relationships with

one another and having sustaining relationships within the Children's Home. The teenagers value their large supporting social network now. A significant outcome for the adolescents was experiencing improved social skills, such as increased communication, experiencing acceptance,

"Thanks to Touching Africa, an unforgattable concert event was possible"

respect, trust and empathy and also development in teamwork and group cohesion. The concert affirmed their increased confidence and self-esteem as they experienced a sense of accomplishment. Receiving affirmation and acknowledgement from the audience also promoted their

experience. The interviews elicited 'fun' and 'joyful' experiences at the concert in singing and laughing with the choir - the choir, who has now become their family. Touching Africa gave the adolescents the opportunity to invite their own guests. There were 100 guests who were served refreshments after the concert, which made an informal atmosphere possible. Touching Africa sponsored 15 shirts, which not only allowed the children to feel like a family, but to look like a family. Flowers and decorations created a beautiful venue for the concert. I would like to end with a quote by a teenager in the choir:

"After the concert I told myself, 'you did it, brother, you really did it', and now I know anything is possible. I felt like a million dollars. I haven't even felt like ten dollars in my life, but now I know how it feels to feel like a million dollars."



COMMUNITY PROJECTS

By Desire Muller



These questions need to be answered prior to project implementation, but we also have to be vigilant and consider community inputs when our project is running:

- Are we still compliant with our initial community inputs?
- Are we engaging the community continuously to ensure that they are informed and negative narratives are addressed?
- Is the project successful to external stakeholders but has alienated the directly affected communities?

Considering these questions, and consulting with the community may contribute greatly to the success of a project, and by repeating these questions continuously, we contribute to the sustainability of a project and changing it from my project to our project.

New community projects fill the entrepreneurs that have envisioned them and are now planning to implement them with enthusiasm and excitement. They usually have the best interest of the community at heart and want to create change and possibilities for growth.

When these projects do not succeed or are not welcomed within the community it can be a disappointment. There may be a variety of reasons that projects do not survive, but one of the main reasons seems to be that the community does not take ownership of the project or does not welcome it in their midst.

The community component should already be part of your business plan. You should plan and provide for it as you do with all the other resources in your business plan.

Some of the questions you need to answer in your project planning are:

- Have I decided on behalf of the community what their needs and preferences are or have I consulted with them?
- How have I consulted with them beforehand and have I incorporated their inputs?
- How will I involve the surrounding community on the project?

GATYANA AND MHLOHLOZIRESIDENTS IN THE FORMER TRANSKEI AREA RECEIVE VIP TOILETS!

By Zikho Fatman

The finished product (photo right): Chief Nophengele from Ntlabane community, standing inside her newly completed VIP Toilet



For most rural communities in the Eastern Cape Province, access to basic services such as sanitation infrastructure and secure water supply is still a daily challenge. Employment opportunity and activity is very low. Poverty is rampant and government dependency is high. Youth who should be falling within the bracket of economically active members of society and contributing towards the economy, spend idle days searching for work with no luck. A majority of them eventually get absorbed into a lost generation, one that is consumed by misuse of socially accepted drugs and newer hard-core ones.

Our Social Unit has been privileged to work in Gatyana and Mhlohlozi VIP Sanitation projects. Many people in these communities have never owned a toilet in their whole entire lives. They use open spaces and/bushes as toilets, sometimes walking long distances far from the

houses. This poses certain 'discomfort' and danger, notably experienced by women. Open bushes expose women where they can be attacked by opportunistic criminals. And at worst, sexually assaulted. Some people shared that visits to the bushes during summer months, has had them also run-in against snakes which are trying to get shade under the rocks and so on.

Scope of the project

The Social unit was tasked with ISD inputs in the project that included:

- Mobilising stakeholders and community for meetings throughout the duration of the project

- Initiate, monitor and maintain communication channels amongst all stakeholders in the project

- Provide Conflict Resolution and reporting inputs

Construction of the toilets as a community collective effort

As part of the projects' scope, the beneficiaries of the toilets had to contribute towards the project by providing their own pits so as to promote a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the toilets. This was termed 'sweat contribution'. However, the project still made allowance for the pit-diggers (whether they were the direct household owners or hired labour) to get a stipend towards the digging. That created an employment opportunity in the communities for pit-diggers as well as the labour recruited to construct the VIPs with the contractors.

The project exceeded in meeting its aims and achievements. The primary aims being (1) to serve communities with quality sanitation facilities and (2) restoring human dignity. And elevating poverty and thus boosting local economies in the beneficiary communities.

Contained sanitation changing lives

Re-visit reports from the communities after months that the projects completed, were that beneficiaries thought they also noticed a decline in communicable diseases, especially those spread by uncontained faecal matter!



Communities happily assisting with water-carrying using domestic animals to collect water during the construction of the VIPs for the construction



Pit-diggers in the villages enjoying the merits of the project, a satisfactorily completed pit and a well-deserved stipend



GROUNDWATER IN CABAZANA

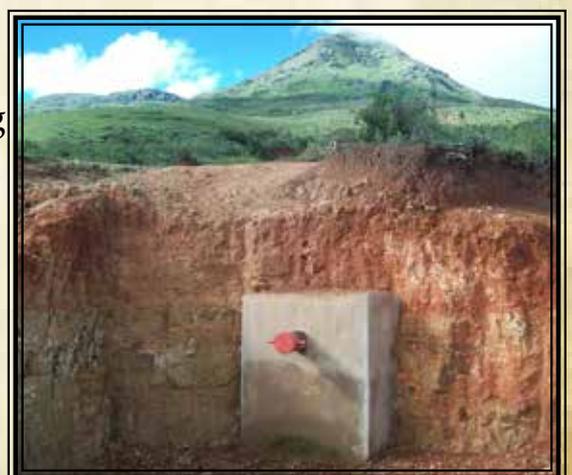
By Zikho Fatman and Jan Myburgh

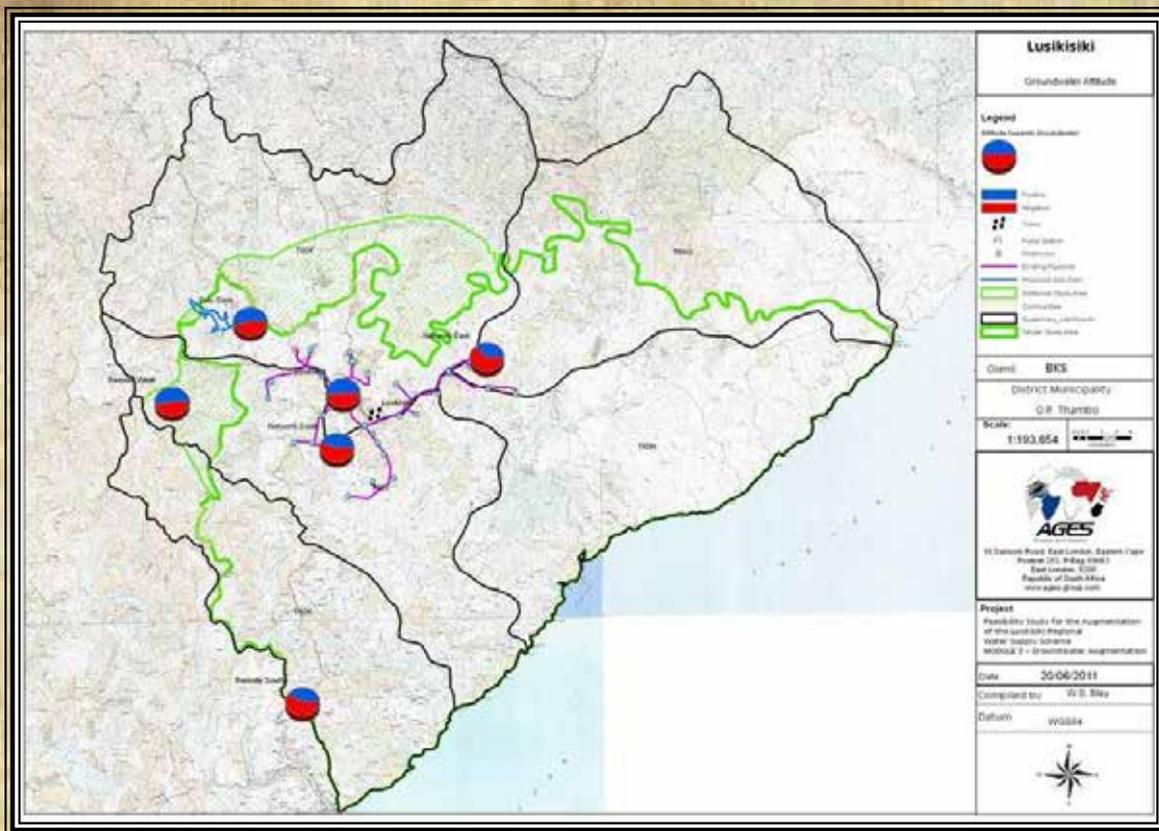
Project Background

AGES was appointed by Imbumba Consultants as employer to carry out groundwater source development at the Village of Cabazana in the Eastern Cape Province under the project management of Vuba Imagineers on behalf of the Alfred Nzo District Municipality.

The investigation involved reviewing previous work done, a detailed geohydrological investigation for groundwater source development, incorporating a hydrocensus of existing boreholes near the village, geophysical profiling for target area identification and verification, groundwater development (drilling & testing), chemical water analysis, and detailed reporting with recommendations for long term sustainable utilisation.

To address long term recommendations of sustainability for this project, it was deemed critical to implement a proper groundwater-community compatibility assessment. From a social perspective, the sustainability of this project is largely determined by many powerful social, political, structural and economic factors, which are described in this report. An understanding of these factors is critical, not only to develop sustainable water supply systems, but also to understand and implement appropriate future intervention programmes. For this reason, AGES social unit was instructed to do a groundwater compatibility assessment on the Village of Cabazana in the Eastern Cape Province.





Scope of the project

- Set up liaison contact database.
- Develop a survey that will determine the groundwater compatibility character of the project area.
- Conduct a uniform survey to determine its unique social, political, structural and economic disposition.
- Analyse data.
- Write a report on findings and conclusions.

Different research and/or community engagement tools are used to gather the data from the target participants. These are to show objective interpretation of the information and analysis without too much personal influences on the data collected.

Most societies have strong associations/ symbolism with water and spirituality. The source of the water, its flow current or still state, colour and location are all factors that mean significant different things for most ethnic groups. As this graph above shows, the communities that participated in the project thought there were very little religious and spiritual connotations to groundwater. Area 2 participants had interesting beliefs and perception of this water source than neighbouring communities. 87% of the people thought that there was a spiritual and religious link to groundwater. This information would lead the 'researcher' to investigate why the discrepancy to varying views from communities living within such close proximity to each other. Also to note, would be the authenticity of the 'researcher' and if the question was communicated and understood the same way to the participants from all the different communities.

NDOFELA CLINIC

By Malwande Busakwe

As a team and office, AGES has seen many seasons, changes, highlights, anti-climaxes/missed opportunities but has never changed its core profile and what drives this vehicle aiming to Touch Africa. After 27 years in the industry, we celebrate a new face to the company and name, AGES Omega but we want to shout on top of a zenith point in our journey that we are still Purpose driven with Passion! Yes, we are essentially a profit generating enterprise but we recognize that there is a client bigger any invoice can equate. The client of brotherliness and extending a helping hand to someone less fortunate than ourselves, especially in terms of basic survival resources.

It has been with such pride and privilege that the Technical Team has had the opportunity to do just that in Ndofela community near Sterkspruit. Ndofela is a remote village in one of

Eastern Cape impoverished communities. It is home to Xhosa and Sotho ethnic people. The community is largely 'traditional' in its ways. Formal educational levels are low and facilities such as healthcare are scarce or in poor conditions.

The village is now identified to be in need of a new and improved healthcare facility as various government, charity and specialist organisations have been engaged with by the community to assist with planning of the clinic! A team of multi-disciplinary professionals has been tasked with the construction of the facility. AGES's geotechnical inputs are purely driven by the need to give-back to the industry and bless the community and their new client. No charge attached to services rendered.



Inception of Ndofela Clinic with Mvula Trust team



MalwandeBusakhwe, our Engineer Geologist, warmly welcomed by the nursing staff of the clinic!

General GeoTech Scope

We have been tasked to provide geohydrological and geotechnical inputs on the project. The geotechnical inputs in particular include:

- Foundation investigation of the proposed clinic
- Groundwater Protocol

The project is designed in different Phases and these are:

Phase 1 entails the renovation and fencing of the existing facility

Phase 2 of the project will culminate in the construction of a R25 million healthcare facility. This phase is scheduled for the beginning of the new year, 2017.



Everybody is thrilled with this project and the community is so expectant! Watch this space, we will keep you posted with this amazing story!



MANYELEDI – NORTHWEST PROVINCE

By Robert Crosby

I found myself sitting and chatting together with invited friends and family who were called as witnesses to the graduation ceremony for the first group of learners from the Bokamosomo Agricultural Innovation Lab. The graduation was to be a celebration that recognises and honours the many hours of work that it took to set the rows and rows of green vegetables as a stark contrast against the dry and sandy conditions of the Northwest Province. Sitting in the function venue, surrounded by excited guests and dignitaries I couldn't help but be reminded of the often quoted and familiar phrase, "do not despise the day of small beginnings" (Zechariah 4:10).

Of course, even at a cursory glance we remember that the context of the LORD's encouragement of "do not despise the day of small beginnings" to Zechariah comes on the foundation of another oft quoted verse in Zechariah 4:6 "it is not by

might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the LORD". The psalmist summarises it well when he says "unless the LORD builds the house, the labours toil in vain" (Psalm 127). So, just like Zechariah, the building of the temple had begun, and despite the lack of vast physical progress, the first steps had been taken, signifying a spiritual breakthrough that would ultimately lead to a work that the LORD himself would bless.

Breakfast was served and people gathered together at tables eating, talking, sharing, and networking around the opportunities that suddenly seemed possible. Together with other visitors at my table we thought and dreamed of what the area, the community, dare we dream – the province would look like and how lives would be changed if what we saw was the start of a desert blooming. It was as if the evidence provided by this small plot of land was a catalysis for new hope.

Once breakfast was finished, and plates cleared we had an opportunity to partake in a variety of round table discussions. Distinguished presenters included MEC Tlhape from the department of Agriculture, speakers from the Agricultural Research Commission, community leaders, business leaders and financiers. Despite the broad range of topics, consensus was that working together, harnessing the resources of the land, the people and the environment we would truly see agricultural development as a significant pillar in the development of people and communities. Further, honour was given to fine example of dedication and commitment that was shown by all bringing us to this landmark occasion. The significance of the 1ha plot as the start of great things was not lost as speaker after speaker spoke of the opportunities that lay ahead.



By early afternoon the graduation ceremony was well underway. In true African spirit ululating participants and guests in traditional garb celebrated the learner's achievements. The presenters reined the students that the acknowledgment is not only for academic achievement, it is the recognition that it is possible to turn barren soil into a fruitful garden. The lessons learned are so much more than how to plant a seed and how to care for plants. Lessons of patience and endurance were learned in the hot African sun as the Lord faithfully provided a harvest.

Touching Africa partner AGES has been involved in many of the development

actions that lead to the successful equipping and use of a borehole in the vicinity of the Manyeledi Garden. Although not a high yielding borehole, the existing resource was sufficient for the initial phases of the Garden project. As the project grows however, and moves forward additional groundwater resources will need to be developed in response with the increasing water demand. A regional groundwater potential assessment has recently been completed and target areas for the development of a production well-field close to the garden has been identified. In time these boreholes will be drilled, equipped and

used sustainably as the primary water supply to the Manyeledi Garden Project.

Looking forward, and as the Lord leads - this project is only the start. We certainly don't despise the small beginning. In fact as partners and workers together with the Manyeledi Project Team we embrace the opportunity to start small, and allow the LORD to build the house. And so - new lands are being identified, soil samples are being analysed, agricultural profiles are being done, and water resources are being defined – Together, and in time – we look forward to the completed work, a work that the LORD himself will bless.

'KASI LIFE' TAKES 2ND PLACE

By Zimbini Pemba

At the time of writing those journals as a reminder of my younger days where I grew up was just a waste of my time. Or, perhaps I thought I could never get anywhere with them like all the previous lost journals. I was mistaken. This time around I can celebrate my memories with the world before my generations can even experience my kind of Kasi Life (Living in the Locations)...



August 2016 I entered the Short Story Writing & Illustration Competition 2016 of which I was a runner up (2nd place). As part of the prize, the three winners will get an opportunity to be mentored for a year towards writing a winning book seller to be published for free and to be published with compliments of AndsM (Pty) Ltd.

Our stories will be available in a soft story bundle, Ekasie, December 2016.



"We would like to congratulate our very own Zimbini Pemba... Please remember us when you're in Hollywood and they're making a movie of your book Zim" Kobus Prinsloo