

Fish Pond Project

The fish pond has been developed by a small group of the volunteer care givers within the Home Based Care, at Sancta Parish. They initiated this project as a means of sustainable income generation and sought the advice of a local villager who was trained in fish farming by the Ministry of Agriculture and who has already established his own fish pond at his home village.

The women's fish pond has been developed at Sancta Maria Mission in an area of clay soil in close proximity to the Zambezi river. The situation of the pond in this area means that the natural environment provides a suitable water retention capacity for the pond without the need of any artificial lining.



Initial digging of the fish pond

In addition, since it has been excavated within an area of natural seepage, there is a constant and natural supply of fresh water to the pond. This is compensated by natural seepage out of the pond downslope and an overspill pipe has also been inserted on the downslope side of the pond should natural seepage out not adequately compensate for increased surface flow into the pond during the rainy season. This pipe will safely channel excess water into the main river flow. The inlet to the pipe is covered by net mesh to prevent the fish from moving out with the excess water.



Outlet pipe to allow excess water to drain from the pond

Feed for the fish can be obtained at relatively low cost as much of it comprises of residual rice and maize husks cheaply bought from local village mills or indeed saved within the households of the women. In addition the fish can also feed on a variety of local leaves.

The women feed the fish once daily, five days per week



Thus, after the initial digging of the pond, stocking with fish fingerlings, and occasional weeding, overall maintenance and financial outlay is a bare minimum. If successful it is hoped to develop further ponds whereby off-spring may be used to restock into the future.



The women weed out growing vegetation as part of the pond maintenance

Once the fish have matured they provide food for the women and their families or sold for income. Fish is a natural food supply for the people of Lukulu due to the proximity of the Zambezi river. However it is unavailable for consumption from 1st December until 1st March each year due to a closed fishing season in order to protect breeding and hence sustained fish stocks within the river. Fish farming in ponds allows for harvesting through this closed period as it is already a managed stock and does not impact on the overall river stock. Thus the women can have a good food supply themselves through the closed season or sell (under licence issued by the local Dept of Fisheries) to have a sustained income.

Another advantage is that the women will have their own source of fish and will not be dependent on buying from the local market. Since the road to Lukulu was improved in recent years there has been a substantial trade of locally caught fish to neighbouring Provinces within Zambia that are further away from the river. As a result prices have increased substantially within the market even for local people. Having their own fish supply means that these women will not have to buy local fish at an inflated cost, which they can ill afford.

The fish are growing well and the women hope to harvest and sell the fish in February which is still within the during the closed season for fishing in the Zambezi river, thus they are hoping to get a good price for the fish that they sell. We will keep you up to date on their first harvest (although there are some fears that the local Nile Monitors (very large lizard type creatures may indeed be helping themselves to fast food and take aways!!).