

Handover of Livestock Management Training Centre for Empowering Local Farmers

On 25 October 2023, The Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr Satoshi Tanaka, handed over a new livestock management training centre for small-scale farmers in Mbire District. It will provide training to farmers so that they can rear livestock sustainably despite climate change, thus improving their livelihoods. The project was supported through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects or GGP scheme with US\$ 89,969 provided in funding, and was implemented by a local NGO, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC).

Due to the low rainfall and arid conditions experienced in Mbire District, many small-scale farmers rely on livestock farming for food and income. However, there was a lack of knowledge and skills on animal husbandry, such as preventing diseases. In addition, due to a lack of market linkages, farmers accepted prices well below market value for their livestock, or they had to incur high costs to take their animals to faraway markets in Harare. Furthermore, climate change exacerbated by deforestation has resulted in a depletion of grazing land. These factors have resulted in the sickness and death of livestock, and the loss of income and livelihoods of farmers.

The new training centre has furnished training rooms with solar lighting, an ablution block, a solar-powered borehole and a perimeter fence. It will provide training to small-scale farmers on sustainable animal husbandry, including such topics as disease prevention through routine dipping, growing fodder crops, climate-smart agriculture and marketing. The centre will also provide extension services and provide links between farmers and buyers, such as hosting livestock market fairs. It is expected to help farmers to rear their livestock successfully even during drought years and realise fair prices from the sale of their livestock. Around 1,200 farmers are expected to be trained annually.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Ambassador Tanaka expressed his hope that this new centre would greatly improve the livelihoods of members of the community for many years to come. He emphasised the importance of involving all stakeholders, including Government authorities, farmers' associations, farmers and buyers, in all activities, so that they felt a sense of ownership in the new centre.

The GGP scheme, launched in Zimbabwe in 1989, has supported 150 projects throughout the country, providing over US\$ 15 million in funding. The scheme's primary objective is to promote grassroots-level development and enhance the human security of Zimbabwe's people.

(See photos below)



The new training centre



New water tanks



New solar-powered borehole



Group photo in the front of new ablution block



Ambassador Tanaka cutting the tape to officially open the new centre



Ambassador Tanaka and Rev. Dimingu, the ZCC General Secretary, checking the new water system



Ambassador Tanaka emphasises the importance of ownership of the centre by the local community



Rev. Dimingu appreciates the support from Japan to local farmers



Signboard showing support from Japan