



**MDUKATSHANI**  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

# Annual Report 2016







Election Day, August 2016: Voters gather at the Neunjane Voter Registration Station on Mdukatshani's Top Farm

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**A SILVER MEDAL AT THE ROYAL SHOW**

It was a hectic ten days for our staff. More than 124 500 visitors passed through the gates of the Pietermaritzburg Royal Show this year, and one of the first to visit our stand was the MEC for Agriculture, Mr. R. T. Mthembu. He took one look at the handy veterinary kits on display and asked: *Can I have one too?* The enormous interest of passers-by kept staff on their feet, answering questions, particularly on Open Schools Day, when every child walked away with a pencil and badge saying: *Make Every Kid Count*. And for those who doubt that indigenous goats ever reach a good size, there were 20 hefty Msinga goats to show that even on a diet of thorn bush, local goats are champions. The stand was awarded a Silver Medal.



### **Mdukatshani's Vision**

To find and promote options for farmers in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal that improve their lives, their livelihoods, and their productivity, while using locally available resources wisely for long-term sustainability.

### **Mdukatshani's projects**

Increasing women and youth involvement in livestock and value-adding activities through prioritizing women-owned livestock and income-generating activities in order to create wealth for the poorest. Improving livestock productivity of farmers in Msinga by intervening in livestock health systems supporting local youth in enhancing value chains leading to commercialisation of local herds. Promoting health and knowledge transfer in Grade 5 and 6 school children through school clubs. A craft project using beads, metal wires and local grass to create jewellery and art for the local and international market



Nkosi Gangendhlovu Mchunu examines the framed title deed which transfers the farms Koornspruit and The Spring to the Bambanani Machunu Community Property Trust. It had taken Mdukatshani 23 years of effort to get the transfer through – pushing, prodding, pleading, visiting government offices, and finally using legal intervention to get documents signed, and the transfer finalized. Creina Alcock and Mphethe Masondo formally presented the title deed on behalf of Mdukatshani.

### **KOORNSPRUIT The Story of an African Farm**

When we found Koornspruit in January 1975 it was an empty expanse of unfenced bush sloping down to a dry river bed. It had changed little in the 111 years since J. H. Spence first surveyed the boundaries of the farm in 1864. His description was not promising. “Beacons A and B both stand on stony ridges,” he reported. “E stands on the face of a round kopje densely covered with Thornwood,” while Beacon F was placed “on a long stony ridge also covered with thorns and very stony.”

The stony ridges are still there, and the thorns, and the scars of long occupation. The river remains dusty, only flowing after storms, but if you follow the road across the broken river bed you will find signs of settlement. Six boreholes. Three dams. Five group gardens, comfortable homesteads, and a store with a fridge. The people call their settlement Ncunjane, a tribal name for a tribal ward that stretches beyond Koornspruit to encompass adjoining farms. Today there are 83 families living in the Ncunjane ward, and although only 53 of those families live on Mdukatshani land, everybody from Ncunjane came to celebrate when the farm was formally handed over to the tribe in March 2017.

If Koornspruit was empty when we arrived - where had the families come from?

Koornspruit has had a troubled history. The farm lies on the boundary of the Mchunu and Mthembu, two of the biggest tribes in Natal, and has always been overflow space for the crowded Location next-door. In 1944 the tribes clashed in a fight that has been described as “the greatest single battle fought since the Anglo Zulu War”. More than 6 000 men took part, and 69 were killed. After a Special Court at Tugela Ferry asked for volunteers to hand themselves over for trial, 279 men and 10 indunas were sentenced to varying periods of imprisonment.

On the farm homesteads were burnt and livestock raided, and police supervised the women who buried their dead, digging shallow mass graves among the stones. Over the years the graves have subsided, unmarked among the stones, but the hill has remained holy ground. In 1989 the Mthembu regiments marched to the graves to collect the spirits of their dead, and in 1993 the Mchunu regiments carried their spirits home. Even today, in times of trouble, the hill remains a place of prayer.

How do you farm land with such a history? There is no record of who was living on the farm when it was surveyed in 1864, but in 1929 a government survey reported there were 26 Mchunu and 23 Mthembu families, all of them “labour tenants” - families who were allowed to live on the farm in return for supplying labour to the owner. A succession of white owners never lived on the farm. They visited occasionally and went away. It wasn't white man's country.



Koornspruit was not the only labour farm in the district. It was part of a vast block of thornveld farms that would make Weenen district notorious. In 1949 a Commission of Inquiry into Tribal Disturbances reported that of the 97 farms in the district, only 13 were occupied by their owners. The remainder were labour farms like Koornspruit and essentially tribal land.

In 1969 the government abolished the labour tenant system, and 10 000 people were forced off Weenen farms. The first to be removed were 47 families on Koornspruit, 21 Mchunu and 26 Mthembu, some of whom had lived on the farm for more than 50 years.

The farm had been lying empty for seven years when we set up our first tents in the bush. We would discover the farm's history gradually, and in the years, that followed worked hard to ease tribal tensions, running the farm through a combined Mchunu-Mthembu Farm Committee with representatives of both tribes sitting on our Board of Trustees (something that continues today).

Not until 1979 did the first Ncunjane settlers make a tentative appearance, asking for a temporary place to stay. It is these later settlers who have inherited the farm, not the 47 families removed in 1969. The settlement is not contested as was evidenced at the handover celebration in March. Both the Mchunu and Mthembu *amakhosi* were there, with indunas from both tribes, as well as some of the original residents who now live elsewhere.

Much has changed in 50 years. Many families have moved away, and those who remain are frontier people, well aware of the difficulties of farming the thornveld. Their bond with Mdukatshani is a strong one, built on years of openness and trust. While they continue to provide pilot sites for our interventions, we continue to provide support and advice, as well as work for the Ncunjane crafters.

NB: Mdukatshani was bought as a block of 3 farms sold as one due to a lack of surface water- Koornspruit (1214 hectares), The Spring (519 ha.) and Loraine (810 ha). Although Koornspruit was surveyed in 1864, The Spring and Loraine were only registered as farms the year of the battle, 1944. While Koornspruit and The Spring have been transferred to the Mchunu tribe, Loraine is seen as Mthembu territory, and a separate transfer process is underway. The project will retain 150 hectares for its headquarters.



The Mchunu *Nkosi* (in skins) watches as the Mthembu *Nkosi*, Siphamandla Mvelase, and the local Mayor, Jabulile Mbhele, cast stones on a traditional cairn, or *isivivane*, to commemorate the day



The march of the matrons



Almost dancing in the dark

## THE GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT (GAP)

The following activities took place as part of GAP, a five-year programme run as a partnership between Mdukatshani, Heifer Project South Africa, the national department of Rural Development and Land Reform, and the KwaZulu Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. GAP targets farmers in five district municipalities in Natal and Zululand, and aims at improving home food security and rural livelihoods. More detailed reports on GAP appear regularly on our website.

### TRAINING

Training continued to be one of our most important activities, and although staff conducted 32 training courses for 2125 people, we couldn't keep up with the demand for our courses. Our classrooms - and students - varied. Some courses took place out in the open at dip tanks. Others took place in the formality of classrooms or community halls. Courses varied from intensive one-week courses, covering theory and practicals, to two-day courses every three months.

One of the most important developments of the year was the AgriSETA accreditation of our training materials. SETA is the government's Sectoral Education and Training Authority, and accreditation means that in future our successful students will receive a National Certificate in Animal Production. The AgriSETA accreditors were so impressed with our training workbooks, they have asked for permission to use our materials on their roadshow, making them available to other service providers. As this raises the question of copyright, we are currently setting up a separate entity, *Abafuyi Media*, to give us copyright on all our publications.

During the year we trained 231 Community Animal Health Workers, 1013 Dip Tank members, 365 members of Livestock Associations, and 516 other groups. Meanwhile our own staff received further training from MSD at Malelane and Dundee.



Jubilant CAHWS examine their vet kits at Mkhuze. To earn a kit, they have had to pass a formidable assessment from a team made up of government and veterinary officials, diptank chairmen, and Mdukatshani and Heifer training staff.

### PRETTY COWS

It's an unfortunate name, and it causes confusion, but Mdukatshani follows international practice in calling its Paravets CAHWS – Community Animal Health Workers, pronounced *cows*. The first Paravets were trained at Msinga five years ago, just in time for the first ever goat auction near Tugela Ferry. They were a pretty – and startling – addition to what was considered an all-male domain. In the years since the CAHWS have become a familiar sight along the footpaths of the hills, neatly dressed in khaki uniforms, and carrying knapsacks with all they need to immunize, vaccinate, or treat the livestock of the homes they visit. Mdukatshani does not select the CAHWS for training – each young person put forward for training is selected by the local Livestock Association. One effect of this system has been the gradual appearance of women at Livestock Association meetings – once an all-male zone - where they represent their home communities as secretaries. In the past year 231 new CAHWS's were trained in 17 week-long courses. So far 57 have passed the rigorous assessment which allows them to receive vet kits, and to charge for their services.



## OUR CLASSROOMS



Ncunjane



KwaMabaso -Msinga



Jozini – Africa Union delegation



Dip tank- Mchunwini





Ncunjane men and boys make history



The first day at the first goat dip in KZN

### THE DIP TANKS

In 1897 the African cattle owners of Weenen - Msinga lost between 90% to 95% of their cattle due to rinderpest, an epizootic disease which swept through Africa, killing millions of cattle, and disrupting transport systems across the continent. Only ten years later East Coast Fever arrived, and this time local Africans lost more than 80% of the herds that had been built up since rinderpest. Although the losses to East Coast Fever were huge, this time there was a solution: Dipping. In 1908 government erected the first dips at Msinga, and the dip has been a focal point of community life ever since.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of the local diptank to a rural area. There are more than 1 600 in KZN, all registered with government, which builds the dips and provides free insecticide. Every month men and boys drive cattle to the local dip, where the animals are immersed in a mixture that kills the parasites that cause disease. But the diptank is much more than a veterinary structure. It is a neutral meeting place that overrides political and social boundaries, where news and views are exchanged, problems shared and representatives elected to sit on the district's Livestock Association, which meets monthly and has direct contact with state institutions. For years Mdukatshani has worked closely with Livestock Associations, and used diptanks as venues for training. Although dip tanks once had a section for goats, they have never been used due to the difficulty of making goats jump, a difficulty that raised dust and laughter on the day Ncunjane pioneered the first new goat dip in KZN. Six pilots have since been built in the Jozini and Uthukela districts.



KZN Premier Willes Mchunu (left) watches a goat being dipped.



The Premier chatting at the launch with the KZN MEC for Agriculture, Mr. R. T. Mthembu (in red shirt).

### A GOAT DIP for the PREMIER

The request came from the Premier's office. Could we build a goat dip high in the hills above Nquthu? Premier Willes Mchunu was launching a Food Security Programme in the area, and he would like to demonstrate the dipping of goats. As our staff discovered when they visited the site, it was pretty country, with airy views, but there was no sign of running water. While men toiled with picks to excavate boulders for the dip, Gugu Mbatha trained 32 men and women whom government had selected as "goat beneficiaries." The night before the launch everything was in place. The marquee was up. The caterers were ready. There was only one problem. There was no water to fill the dip. After frantic phone calls an official arranged for the Dundee fire engine to leave at dawn on a four hour trip to fill the dip. When the Premier arrived, the dip was brimming. The day was considered a success.





### WHERE DO THE GOATS COME FROM? A Fact-finding Trip to Namibia

Anybody travelling regularly on the freeways of KZN will have noticed the large-multi-storey trucks carrying red-faced Boer goats from Namibia. How far have they travelled? How many are sold in KZN every year? And who are the producers? Small farmers or commercial breeders? In May Rauri Alcock and Gugu Mbatha were part of a team of six who spent a week on a study tour of Namibia. After travelling hundreds of kilometres, attending an auction and sales, and speaking to state officials, as well as large and small producers – the team came back with as many questions as answers. While an estimated one million goats may be leaving Namibia for KZN every year, there are no direct transactions. Namibian farmers, by law, can only send goats across the border if they have orders from South African buyers. And who are these middlemen? Nobody was willing to say. If the trip did nothing else, it reminded the team how fortunate they were to be living in KZN, where even in dry years the rainfall is well above the desert average of 150 mm. Those who went on the tour included Justice Manana, Head of Special Projects in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Trevor Dugmore and Zandile Ndlovu of the Department of Agriculture, Marisia Geraci of Heifer Project South Africa, and Rauri Alcock and Gugu Mbatha of Mdukatshani.



To market, to market... Both buyers and sellers arrived at the goat auction in horse and donkey carts, a rare sight for the South African visitors. The carts seemed a sensible solution to transport in terrain where the team had four punctures in two days.



A landscape of Kokerbooms told the team they were in a strange new country.



And this was a strange new breed - a cross between a Kalahari Red and a Boer goat.





The inaugural innovation platform



The second innovation platform

## INNOVATION

What is an Innovation Platform? In April a large crowd of researchers, officials, auctioneers, and members of NGO's met at the Riverside Hotel in Durban to find out more. Many of them had already been members of the Goat Interest Group, and the Innovation Platform was an extension of the original idea of getting all possible role-players together to prioritize and plan a research agenda. With all interested parties in one place, it was possible to start asking: What do we understand about goats? What do we not understand? Where do we start? What has been done already? The discussions at the first meeting led to second platform, this time a field trip to Jozini to look at the problems farmers were facing during months of drought. Were there interventions that could help the farmers get their animals through hard times? And how could such interventions be linked to research? Members of the Innovation Platform plan to meet four times a year.

Not all innovation takes place in the formal sector and for those living close to the dagga gardens of Msinga, the year marked some extraordinary advances. Although dagga (*Cannabis sativa*) is a winter crop, the gardens are prepared in summer when the women replenish brushwood fences, remove dead plants, and hoe the ground in readiness for planting. This year the gardens suddenly doubled in size, and for the first time a tractor and span of donkeys arrived to plough the increased area. Next piping was delivered and it became a familiar sight seeing young women on the road carrying pumps on their heads. When the pumps break down, the young women fix them. They also patch the irrigation pipes that never quite stretch far enough, losing precious water to leaks. While the police show little interest in the crop, which is grown openly close to main roads, the end of the industry may be in sight. An appeal to make dagga legal is currently before the South African Supreme Court, and if the appeal is granted, the innovative local women will be out of business.



Dagga -an about-to-be legal crop



Manning the pumps -the new mechanics.





### THE SCHOOLS PROJECT

Umgeni Valley is less than two hours drive from Msinga – but it could have been a different country for the 40 Msinga children who arrived for a weekend camp at the end of winter. At home the world was bare. No grass, no water – just rocks and dust and shrivelled thorn bush. They had never seen open grassland. They had never seen a landscape blackened by fire. And they had never seen a running stream of crystal clear water. These were just some of the delights of a camp that had a serious purpose - but a purpose delivered with enough treats and fun to make it seem like a holiday.

The camp was part of Mdukatshani's Schools Project, and the children were Grade 5 learners from our Animal Health Clubs at Mathintha and Ntombiyodumo Primary Schools. Two teachers accompanied the children, together with six Mdukatshani staff members, and Deborah Ewing, our child participation specialist, whose fact-based storybook was designed with community input to help the children meet their everyday realities.

Some of those realities were addressed at the camp – through games, quizzes, stories and role playing. Children donned white masks to enact the terrible danger of rabies, an endemic disease at Msinga, and role-played the work of a paravet, animal vaccination, and leather craft work. But they also learnt about human communicable diseases, like HIV, TB and cholera, as well as non-communicable diseases like asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. And when the serious work was done – there was singing, dancing - and on the last morning, pancake - making.

The Schools Project was developed in 2010, and currently involves Grade 5 learners at four local schools: Bambanani, Ngongolo, Mathintha and Ntombiyodumo. Facilitators are two Mdukatshani fieldworkers, Sindi Ngubane and Hlengiwe Ndlela. Although we have been asked to expand the project to new schools, and to extend clubs to Grade 6 learners too, our work is limited by funding constraints.







### THE CRAFTERS – The Formal Market



It was another difficult year for crafts, with a slack economy that saw two long-time customers closing shop. But the hardships of the year were forgotten at the end-of-year film show and braai, where the women celebrated just being together. The crafters like to wear outfits that make them stand out as a group and this year arrived in red white and blue, a colour scheme they wore at the many homecoming events of Christmas. One of the highlights of the year was the return-of-the-spirit ceremony for Natty Duma, beloved craft organiser who died in 2011. More than 60 crafters travelled to her home in the hills to remember Natty, and even the lame got to their feet to dance.

### THE CRAFTERS - The Informal Market



Nobody knows the value of crafts sold at informal markets along the roadsides of the province. These are not crafts for tourists. These are the skins, pots, beads, mats and medicinal plants which are essential for traditional ceremonies, for births and deaths, weddings and worship. The demand is huge and growing, and as full Zulu attire becomes a sign of affluence, the market is moving away from trinkets to produce expensive articles like *bheshus* and *isidwabas* (skin kilts and leather wedding skirts). Today a traditional crafter can sell a full set of skins for about R 6000. It is to meet this demand that we are training young people in leatherwork – a project to be fully reported on next year.







Students from Cologne university, Germany, learning about drought interventions

### RESEARCH PROJECTS and REPORTS

The following are some of the research activities currently underway, or nearing completion, based on work with Mdukatshani.

- Professor Ben Cousins of the University of Western Cape has continued his research on small farmers on the irrigation plots at Tugela Ferry.
- Manqhai Kraai is close to completing her PHD on goat research at Msinga. She is a lecturer at the University of Natal.
- Michael Malinga has registered with University of Western Cape for a Masters degree on goats at Msinga.
- Dee Smythe has published *Rape Unresolved: Policing Sexual Offences in South Africa*. The book draws on the docket research she supervised as part of the “Pathways to Justice Project” previously covered in Mdukatshani reports. Dee is Director of Research at the Law Department, University of Cape Town.
- Professor Sindiso Mnisi Weeks is in the final stages of a book covering her research work with headmen at Msinga. The provisional title of the book is *Access to Justice and Home Security – Challenges in Rural South Africa*. The book will be published as part of the Routledge series on Cultural Diversity and Law.
- Thomas Pooley has published a paper on *Umaskandi Izibongo: Semantic, Prosodic and Musical Dimensions of Voice in Zulu Popular Praises*, which acknowledges research undertaken at Msinga.

Finally – in September 2016 Martin Gottsacker of Misereor brought a party of 20 young German geography students to spend a day and a night among the families at Ncunjane, on Mdukatshani. The students are all trainee teachers, and have been working on creating a collection of teaching materials based on their experiences in South Africa, to be published by Misereor. In April one of the students, Julia Mueller, returned to Mdukatshani for three months of fieldwork towards her Masters thesis at Cologne University, her special interest being small scale agriculture and the role of women.

NB: Dee Smythe’s book, *Rape Unresolved*, has resonated locally where a child rape case is now in its fourth year. The child, the twelve-year-old daughter of an Mdukatshani crafter, was raped by a neighbour in 2014, but despite frequent hearings and remands, the case is still a long way from completion.







**THE LOCAL ELECTIONS  
...and water protests.**

The 2016 local elections drew large crowds, dressed in their best, to vote at the two voter registration stations on Mdukatshani, one on the top farm, one on the lower farm. There was intense interest in the outcome, and for days little groups of women sat in the shade of thorn trees, waiting for the results.

Mdukatshani lies on the boundary of three different local municipalities, which has always created problems. While the boundaries are invisible, police summoned to collect a body will argue over where it lies, and who is liable for collecting it. The 2016 elections added new problems to the old, as two previous municipalities (Umtshezi and Ndaka) were collapsed into two new, enlarged municipalities (Nkosi Langalibalele and Alfred Duma). And even that was not the end of the complications. Local Municipalities do not supply water. That is the job of the District Municipalities. So Mdukatshani finds itself on the boundaries of the Msinga, Nkosi Langalibalele and Alfred Duma Local Municipalities, as well as the Uthukela and Umzinyathi District Municipalities.

According to Statistics South Africa 3,5 million people in South Africa live on less than R 418,00 a month, and the most poverty-stricken districts in KZN are those in which Mdukatshani is working. They are also districts with very little water, a fact which was emphasised when all roads in and out of Msinga were blockaded for three days in May as a result of violent. Water protests. For the past three years most Msinga households have been dependent on a once-a-week delivery via water tanker, or reservoirs which are filled on a weekly basis only. When the water ran out – who was to blame? Government? The authorities? Nobody knew, and nobody cared. Shots were fired as police battled to control protesters who stoned vehicles, looted shops, and blocked the gates to the hospital. The Mayor of Msinga, Mrs. Buyiswa Ngcobo, was despairing. It wasn't the fault of the Msinga Municipality, she said. Water supply was the job of the Umzinyathi District Municipality, based at Dundee 100 km away – a municipality “in a state of paralysis after council could not be constituted following a stalemate between political parties following last year's local government elections. As a result, there is no communication between the local and district municipality given there is no mayor or other office bearers that I can talk to in Umzinyathi,” she said.

At Msinga the road blockades went on, preventing staff – and schoolchildren – from getting to work, while leaving a GAP auction with no water for goats. Although the municipal situation is slowly stabilizing, water tenders have run out, and it will take months for new tenders to be operative. Meanwhile private people are delivering water for a fee to those who can afford it – and most of the population has returned to digging wells in dry river beds, or collecting water from the Tugela River.





## TWO NEW AMAKHOSI IN MSINGA



A large contingent of Eastern Cape royalty attended the installation of the new Mthembu *Nkosi*, Siphamandla Wiseman Mvelase, at Tugela Ferry on August 30, 2016. The Eastern Cape royals included Crown Prince Azenathi Dalindyebo, who has subsequently been installed as Acting King of the Eastern Cape Mthembu. The presence of the Eastern Cape Mthembu was confirmation of a relationship that goes back more than 200 years, when the parent tribe split, half remaining in Natal, half moving on to settle in the Cape. Nelson Mandela was an Mthembu, and Mandla, his grandson, has been in the forefront of attempts to re-unite the tribe. As speakers at the installation reminded the large crowd - they were Mthembu first, not Zulu. (If their numbers are counted together the Mthembu are the biggest tribal grouping in South Africa today). Siphamandla, the new Mthembu *Nkosi*, takes the place of his father, Ngoza the Second, who died in August 2012 after ruling for 44 years.



On December 28, 2016, the Mchunu installed their new *Nkosi*, Gangendhlovu Elijah Mchunu, in a ceremony at the royal kraal at Nhlalakahle, Msinga. It was a special date for the tribe. On December 28, 1944, the previous *Nkosi*, Simakade, had been installed, to rule the Mchunu for the next 71 years. One of the highlights of his long and happy reign was the birth of his heir on that lucky day, December 28, 1964. The little boy would grow up to be trained for leadership in the modern world, the tribe paying for his education from primary school to the University of Natal, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration in 1998. After gaining experience first as a teacher, then as an employee in both the Durban and Msinga municipalities, in 2002 Gangendlovu was formally installed as Acting Chief of the Mchunu, taking over the administrative duties of the tribe on behalf of his 87-year-old father, who died on August 22, 2015. The formal installation of *Nkosi* Gangendlovu on his 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday was a happy occasion.





## DRESS CODE: ROYAL and ELEGANCE

The invitation caused some anxious moments for fieldworkers Rauri Alcock and Gugu Mbatha, accustomed to khaki and the dusty environs of the hills. But on the big night they were suitably attired when they appeared at the Durban International Convention Centre to receive honorary awards in Agriculture and Rural Entrepreneurship Development. The awards were made “in recognition of the excellent role you play in uplifting the poor and serving as agents of change, putting KZN on the global map.” The awards are made annually by the Office of the Premier and the Rural Youth Development Foundation of South Africa “to acknowledge youth, entrepreneurs and individuals who work tirelessly to make our province a better place, serving the community of KwaZulu- Natal through their natural talent and inspiring others to do better.”

## THE COME LATE OF THE CAR

*Hey we sorry about the come late of the car.  
It because we not done no time at Nxamalala.  
I think it can arrive by 6 p.m. Sorry sleep well.*

Our roads are not safe after dark, so it's a staff rule that all vehicles are home about sunset. If the rule is often broken – our fieldworkers will say it's unavoidable. They work a long way from home, along tracks that are often just wheel marks in the bush. Because they won't leave a job until it is done the come-late-of-the-car gets later and later, and the moon is often high in the sky before they are dropped off at home. The rule remains fixed. Home before dark. But if they are in range expect a message: *Hey we sorry the come late of the car.*



## FILM CREWS

During the year three film projects recorded aspects of the work at Mdukatshani. The first was a documentary on the impact of drought and famine for an OXFAM project, and recorded interviews with local people. The second, directed by Michael Cross, followed Mdukatshani and Heifer staff at work sites in Zululand and Natal. This film is intended as a communication tool to introduce the project to outsiders as well as groups interested in reproducing our methods in their areas. Rehad Desai led the third crew on a number of visits filming life at Msinga for a documentary based on GG Alcock's book, *Third World Child*. Apart from local interviews, the team also recorded the inaugurations of the Mthembu and Mchunu *amakhosi*.







David's last Trustee meeting. Front row from the left – Zamani Madonsela, Mkhosi Mchunu, Khonzokwake Mvelase, Eric Appelgren and Rauri Alcock. Back row: Mphephethe Masondo, Creina Alcock, David Alcock Deborah Ewing and Gugu Mbatha.

### DAVID ALCOCK

Soon after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer in March, David Alcock (67) and his wife, Carole, organised a “Celebration of Life” party to say goodbye to family and friends. Among those who flew in from overseas was Bill Ball, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at John Hopkins University in the U.S.A, and a longtime collaborator with Dave on water projects in the rural areas of KZN. Founder of “Engineers without Borders”, Bill has been responsible for inspiring young American engineering students to spend their vacations in KZN, working with Dave on the construction of ram pumps to bring water to rural communities. Bill came to the party with a scrapbook containing messages from more than 80 students, who all agreed their work with Dave had been a turning point in their lives. When Dave died on August 31<sup>st</sup>, he left heartache among the many Msinga families whose lives he had touched. He also left a legacy of “free water” pumping gently at more than 150 sites around KZN.

### IS THE DROUGHT OVER? Not yet ...

Mdukatshani has an average annual rainfall of 604 mm. The rainfall for the past three years has been well below average, as can be seen from the following totals:

2014 473 mm

2015 343 mm

2016 574 mm

Meanwhile 2017 has been another dry year, with only 256 mm measured between January and August. This is a shortfall of 100 mm compared to the same period last year.