

#ASHTAG

AUG  
2023

MAGAZINE



**Brot**  
für die Welt



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# Editor's Note

Hello and welcome yet again to another issue of your monthly favourite magazine Hash tag where we show case our young women's writing skills. This magazine is a space for young women to express themselves and tell their community stories and explore their creativity. This is also a demonstration of their growth as amateur citizens journalist from the We the Future Programme.

We the Future is a training and mentoring programme for young women with an interest or passion in journalism or digital work. The girls were taken through an intense training programme equipping them with digital skills, story telling skills, social media and mobile journalism. They have used these tools to tell their community stories and walk with us in their beautiful communities in Nkayi, Matobo, Dete, Tsholotsho, Lupane, Matobo and Ntabazainduna. They also have become a trusted source of information in their communities and among other youth.



This month as Zimbabwe voted and decided the young women focused on social issues affecting their communities for security reasons. However they exercised their civil and constitutional rights by casting their votes. Some were virgin voters and they their experiences on casting their vote in the ballot.

Thank you for reading and growing with us. Enjoy our August issue!

Nozibusiso  
**We The Future Coordinator**



# DIBA WOMEN FROM MONEY LENDING VENTURE - UKUGOQELELA

*By Princess Thandeka Tshuma*

Women from Diba community under Ward 2 from Plumtree have initiated a money-saving club called ukuqogelela, which is also known as community philanthropy where the group members support each other with resources.

Under ukuqogelela, the women leverage community resources and determine their use to better address challenges while improving their quality of life in the community.

This practice, according to the Diba community, has turned out to be a life-changing experience for some women living in rural areas.

Most of these saving clubs comprise between 15 to 20 women who take turns giving each other a set sum of money to a central fund every week.

The money can be borrowed by any community member and expected to pay back with a small interest. Also, any person recommended by a member can borrow and pay back.

In these groups no woman is superior to the other, all women are equal. This is to accommodate everyone due to different economic backgrounds

Women in Diba formed ukuqogelela in 2021 after experiencing hardships in accessing loans from formal banks.



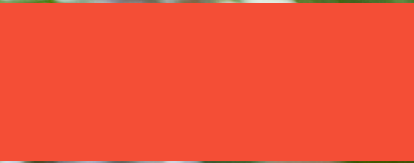
*“This is a good program for me because as women we have a lot of issues that we face at our homes, hence when we meet for ukuqogelela we get time to interact with other women and we give each other platforms to air out our problems. For example, if you have a family problem like sickness other fellow women even would come to assist where they can . Some bring firewood, fetch water or even clean the homestead in times of need,” said one of the women who preferred anonymity.*

After an interaction with some group members, it was established that most people in rural areas continue to save money outside formal banking systems due to limited banking products that are offered and while lack of knowledge of formal banking procedures.

“The formation of ukuqogelela has changed our economic situations and some women have bought properties, something that could not have happened before. The unity amongst Diba community members is growing because of the ukuqogelela program,” said another group member who also requested anonymity.









INCEST

# COMMUNITY STUNNED AFTER 'SIBLINGS' INVOLVED IN INCESTUOUS RELATIONSHIP AND BEAR A CHILD

**By Cingani Nkiwane**

A community in Mgiqwa Line, Ward 4 Ntabazinduna under Umguza District was left stunned after an incestuous relationship in the village led to a pregnancy.

Last year, a teenager Gugulethu Dlamini (19) was impregnated by her cousin, Ayanda Ndaba (20) a son of her aunt, (her mother's sister.)

An uncle of the pair, Nkosi Dlamini (47), said the two were living together at the said aunt's homestead at Mgiqwa line.

Dlamini stated that his niece was taken to Mgiqwa from Plumtree two years ago without his knowledge by her aunt, who subsequently enrolled the teenager as a Form 3 student at Madlelenyoni Secondary School last year.

The girl was meant to progress to Form 4, but her uncle grieved that she could not because she was now a mother.

*"As her uncle, I wasn't told anything pertaining to her movement from her paternal side from Plumtree, to how she was enrolled at Madlelenyoni and who the father of her child was," Dlamini said.*

Dlamini said it was until this year around July when Ndaba had a new relationship with a local girl that led to a brawl between her and his niece -Gugulethu.

When the family discovered this incident, they came together as the Dlamini and Ndaba families to solve the issue but failed.

*"I handed the matter over to my sister, who is Ayanda's mother, to solve it but she covered it up, by confining Gugulethu. My niece wasn't allowed to visit us or to talk to elders and other neighbours around. We couldn't talk to Gugulethu until the two siblings were behaving and living as husband and wife in my sister's homestead," Dlamini said.*

Since the two cousins were now living as husband and wife, Dlamini said his sister reported the behaviour of the two to him as they were now out of hand.

*"However, things turned to be unpleasant when I suggested that we have to report the case to the community elders and the police because this is a bad omen to the family," he said.*

Dlamini's wife also claimed that since their niece had been confined at her aunt's homestead in Mgiqwa, she would sneak out to visit her relatives and friends.

*"There are rumours that Gugu is being mistreated at her aunt's homestead, which brings more challenges to Dlamini in handling this case. Therefore, Gugulethu is more affected and abused by this case," she said.*







# POTHOLE PATCHING IN DETE BUSINESS CENTRE: A STEP TOWARDS SMOOTHER ROADS

*By Loreen Dube*



Dete Business Centre in Matabeleland North has recently undergone a significant improvement in its road infrastructure, as evidenced by the patching of potholes around the area.

This development in the bustling commercial hub has not only improved commuter safety and convenience but has also brought about positive changes for local businesses and the overall economy.

Aspiring Councillor Nkosilathi Mkandla and his staff, who helped fill potholes, claimed the broken roads had become an inconvenience to residents.

*“They posed a significant risk to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. By patching these potholes, the local authority has prioritised the safety of the community. The smooth road surfaces have reduced the likelihood of accidents, providing a safer environment for all road users,” Mkandla said.*

He added that the patching of potholes has greatly improved the commuter experience for residents, commuters, and visitors to Dete Business Centre.

“Previously, navigating through the bumpy and damaged roads was a challenge, causing delays and discomfort. The newly patched roads now provide a smoother and more efficient travel experience, saving time and reducing wear and tear on vehicles,” said the aspiring councillor.

“From improved safety and convenience to a boost in local businesses and environmental sustainability, the impact of this infrastructure upgrade is far-reaching. The commitment of the local authorities to address road maintenance issues promptly sets a positive precedent for other areas, emphasizing the importance of investing in road infrastructure for the overall well-being of the community.”

Locals in Dete also agreed that the patching of potholes in Dete Business Centre has brought about numerous benefits for the community.

One of the outspoken locals, Bertina Maseko, said the patching of potholes had a positive impact on local businesses since Dete Business Centre is a hub of economic activity.

“The business centre houses a variety of businesses ranging from shops and restaurants to service providers. Customers can now access these establishments more easily, attracting more foot traffic and increasing sales. Additionally, the improved road infrastructure encourages business owners to invest further in the area, leading to economic growth and job creation,” she said.

One of the youths in Dete, Marvelous Gumbo, concurred that the previous potholed road had not only affected the safety and convenience of road users but also contributed to environmental issues.

“When left unattended, potholes can collect rainwater, leading to stagnant pools that become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other pests. By patching these potholes, the local authorities have eliminated such breeding sites, promoting a healthier and cleaner environment for the community,” Gumbo said.

The aspiring councillor concluded that while patching potholes is an essential short-term solution, it also serves as a cost-effective measure in the long run.

“By addressing the issue promptly, the local authority prevents further deterioration of roads, which would require more extensive repairs in the future. This proactive approach helps save significant costs that would otherwise be incurred due to extensive road reconstruction,” Dlamini said.









# NKAYI WOMEN APPEAL FOR MATERNITY CLINICS.

By Sandile Ncube

A 19-year-old, Lisa Ncube from Mzaca village in Nkayi is not the only woman who has given birth on her way to a district hospital due to the absence of accessible primary health institutions in the area.

Her mother, Nomagugu Nkomo recalls the day her child was in labour and she was just helpless.

*"It was on the 31st of August 2023 when I was fetching water, I heard screams of my daughter from a distance. When I arrived at the hut where I left her, I discovered that she was in labour," said Nkomo.*

She said she had to alert her neighbours to assist her in rushing her daughter to Nkayi Hospital which is 13km away.

*"My neighbours gathered donkeys for us to use a scotch cart. We had to put four blankets on the surface to be comfortable as the road is also not smooth. When we were about 6km away, the baby couldn't wait any longer and Lisa had to give birth on our way to hospital," said Nkomo.*

*"I was so terrified as I thought we were going to lose the baby as we were not experienced midwives and the whole experience had traumatised me so I was shaking."*

*Nkomo said she is appealing for more clinics so that women can stay there even before their delivery time.*

*"In other areas, we have heard about waiting mothers' shelters but in our area, we don't have them," she said.*

In addition, Mitchel Ncube, a mother, said she lost her daughter on her way to the hospital.

*"My child once died on her way to the hospital, she lost a lot of blood before arriving at the hospital," said Ncube.*

She added, "We really wish the government can help us by building many hospitals in order to save lives."

*"I have to travel more than two kilometers to fetch water every day, which is hard for me because I only put one bucket in a wheelbarrow and that water cannot sustain me for the whole day," she said.*

Ndlovu said villagers who are at an advantage are those with scotch carts.

*"The only people with an advantage are those with cars and scotch carts because they are able to fetch water from the dam. Those without carts can only survive on the unreliable borehole water," she said.*

Another villager, Alvin Ngwenya said his livestock is dying due to a shortage of water in the area.

*"I am a man who has a lot of livestock but because of the water shortage, my goats have been dying and giving birth to stillborn because I have resorted to giving them the water that we use for bathing and washing so as to save water. But specialists say that this water is not good for livestock but I have no other choice," said Ngwenya.*







# MAN FOUND DEAD

By Moreblessing Sibanda

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A 30-year-old man was found dead with his body in a decomposing state in a bush in Mahlaba village, Tsholotsho.

He was found by a passerby on the afternoon, on June 18, 2023.

The passerby, Makhosi Ndlovu, narrated that he stumbled on the body while coming from buying tomatoes from the shops.

*“I pass through a bushy area when going to the shops. So, on my way home, around 2 PM, I was coming from buying tomatoes. I was disturbed by a strong stench of something rotten close to the path. I thought it was a dead animal but as I drew closer, I realized that it was a man lying on the road. From the stench, it was evident he had been there for some days,” Ndlovu said.*

*“I rushed to the village and alerted other villagers of the incident. None of us could recognize him. We called the police to inform them about what had happened.”*

The headman at Mahlaba, Daika Mpala, said the community leaders found out the man was working at a neighboring village, Mcetshwa, and had been reported missing for a few days.



*“We found out that the deceased was working in the village that is next to ours and they told us that he left home 5 days prior to us finding him. They also told us that he was working with his wife, and they are from Gokwe,” said Mpala.*

Mpala said it took the police two days to collect the corpse.

The man’s employer, who identified himself as Mpofu, said he was shocked to learn about the death.

Mpala further advised community members to avoid walking in bushy areas on their own. He said people should move in groups if they need to travel long distances that may pass through rocky areas.

*“I am in shock of what happened to that young man because he was so respectful. He did not deserve to die in such a cruel way. I can’t even talk about his wife and children that he left so early.” Mpofu said.*



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# MATOBO VILLAGERS HIT BY WATER SHORTAGES

By Moreblessing Ndlovu

Ward 22 villagers in Matobo are appealing for more boreholes as the ones available in the area are running dry.

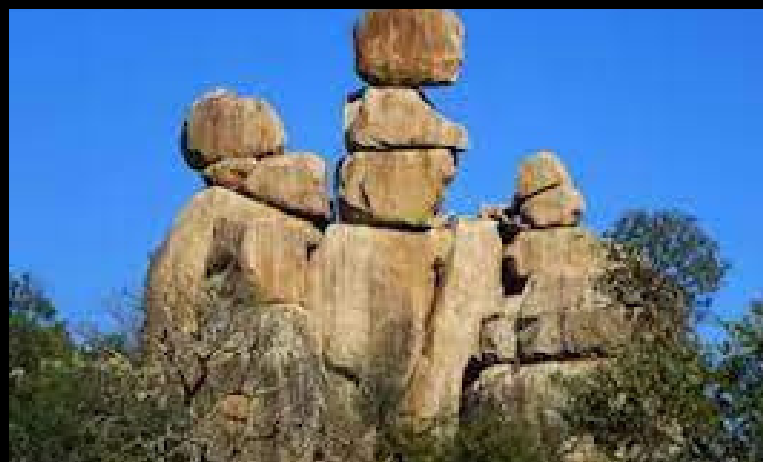
Most boreholes in the area were affected by the low rainfall received in the area in the last rainfall season.

Villagers said they fear that the water will not be sufficient to carry them through the next rain season.

In an interview, a villager Bridget Ndlovu said the number of homesteads in the ward does not match the number of boreholes they currently have.

*“In Tankeni village ward 22, there is only one borehole to support the whole community. This has led other people to travel more than three kilometres to fetch water which is a disadvantage to the elderly people and persons with disability,” said Ndlovu.*

*“I have to travel more than two kilometers to fetch water every day, which is hard for me because I only put one bucket in a wheelbarrow and that water cannot sustain me for the whole day,” she said.*

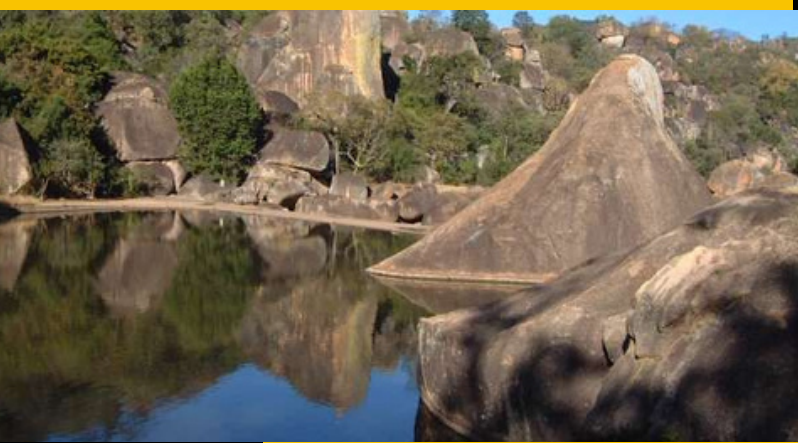


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Another villager, Alvin Ngwenya said his livestock is dying due to a shortage of water in the area.

“I am a man who has a lot of livestock but because of the water shortage, my goats have been dying and giving birth to stillborn because I have resorted to giving them the water that we use for bathing and washing so as to save water. But specialists say that this water is not good for livestock but I have no other choice,” said Ngwenya.













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# *St Anna villagers call for more schools in their community*

By Enele Mpofu

St Anna villagers in Ward 9, Matobo, have expressed concern over long distances walked by learners to school, which has resulted in some learners dropping out without finishing their studies.

The villagers noted that there is only one secondary school in the area, St Anna, which is quite far from where some homesteads are.

One of the villagers who identified herself as Mrs Bhebhe, said her daughter could not complete her ordinary-level studies because of the distance.

*"My daughter dropped out when she was about to write her 'O' level exams. She was a bright student, but she struggled with the long distance. She used to walk over an hour to get to school and the same to get back home," she said.*

*"Sometimes we would give her money for transport, but her father, who was the breadwinner, fell sick so I could no longer afford it on my own. She dropped out and went to look for a job in the city."*

Princess Ndlovu (16) said she dropped out because of the long distance she had to walk.

*"The school is very far from home. I could not walk the distance every day. I ended up stopping going to school totally, besides, I asked myself what the purpose would be because there are no jobs out there," she said.*

The headmaster at St Anna, Fedrick Chikwane, said only half of students who would have enrolled at the school per year, complete their studies because some would have dropped out.

He added that apart from the distance, some parents struggle with finances to put their children through school, so they end up dropping out and helping their parents at home.







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