

THIS IS EXCELLENT

Autumn 2013

To transform lives,
just add water.

 **Excellent** | Pioneers of
Sand Dams



Excellent Development is a UK registered charity that supports people in rural drylands to overcome hunger and poverty with dignity.

We work with local partners to support communities to build sand dams.

Sand dams provide clean water for life and the opportunity to grow enough food to eat, store and sell.

Our goal is to enable millions of the world's poorest people to transform their lives through sand dams.

www.excellent.org.uk

WHAT'S INSIDE?



Excellent accredited by UN

Excellent Development is accredited by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.



Sand dam team 2013

In September 2013, ten enthusiastic volunteers took on the challenge of building a sand dam in rural Kenya.



Patrick's story

"I visit homes and train people on how to grow mangoes. I want the entire community to have knowledge on growing mangoes."



Get invovled...

For an experience of a lifetime, find out how you could join our Excellent expedition in September 2014.

EXCELLENT NEWS

Excellent accredited by UN

In September 2013, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) accredited Excellent Development as a Civil Society Organisation (CSO).


Excellent was accredited for its work combating desertification - one of the world's most critical environmental challenges.

As a UNCCD CSO, Excellent Development will play a role at major UNCCD conferences, providing a valuable link between dryland smallholder farmers and the convention.

The UNCCD says: "They [CSOs] are indispensable partners for UN efforts at the country level, and they are consulted on UN policy and programme matters."

As a CSO, Excellent is promoting the value of sand dams as one of the solutions that can significantly contribute to sustainable land management in drylands.

Excellent Development's Executive Director Simon Maddrell said: "There is no silver bullet solution [to desertification].

 I LIKE VERY MUCH, NOT ONLY THE APPROACH OF SAND DAMS, BUT I LIKE THE PASSION BEHIND, I LIKE THE PEOPLE BEHIND. I REALLY WISH THAT WE COULD DO MORE IN TAKING THAT TECHNOLOGY, THAT APPROACH, THAT UNDERSTANDING, AMONG OTHERS.

Luc Gnacadja
Executive Secretary, UNCCD
(2007-2013)

"Even technologies that work in one situation cannot be copied and pasted from one place to another. They must be applied to a specific context.

"The reason we promote sand dams is because they are massively under-utilised and have the potential to transform millions of people's lives in drylands."



Sign up for monthly news at:
excellent.org.uk/keepintouch

EXCELLENT WORKER

Andrew Musila Silu

Andrew Musila Silu is the Development Director with our strategic partners in Kenya - Africa Sand Dam Foundation (ASDF).

Musila's commitment to the philosophy of self-help is second to none. In 2010 he took the highly unusual step of leaving the organisation his father led, to start Africa Sand Dam Foundation as an independent Kenyan NGO, and so retain his values of true community-led development.



Andrew Musila Silu

Musila said: "In ASDF we plan *with* the communities...The kind of development we are doing is driven by the needs of the community, not the needs of the donors or of ASDF. That motivates me because you go to a community and see the way they are working without anybody coming to tell them 'you have to do this.'"

ASDF only work with committed self-help groups who approach them for assistance. Together they develop a plan to overcome the challenges they face - starting with access to water.

Musila said: "We work with communities for five years. Every community develops a plan of what they want to achieve."

"[After then] They will have water security and knowledge of the best farming techniques and ways of getting income. That's when we can say this group stands on its own."

With his expert knowledge of sand dams and dryland agriculture, Musila is also supporting our joint vision of pioneering sand dams around the world.

OUR IMPACTS: WATER

A close-up photograph of a woman in traditional African clothing, including a patterned headwrap and a colorful striped shawl, drinking water from a public tap. She is holding a glass to her mouth, and water is pouring from the tap into it. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting.

Sand dams bring water to within 30 minutes of people's homes - saving women and children up to 12 hours a day to invest in farming or going to school.

OUR IMPACTS: FOOD

A man with a joyful expression, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a dark cap, is shown from the chest up. He is holding two large, round, green fruits with some yellowish-orange spots, likely mangoes, in his hands. He is standing in front of a tree with thick, light-colored bark and lush green leaves. The background is filled with sunlight filtering through the foliage, creating a bright and natural setting.

Sand dams provide time and opportunity for people to work their own way out of poverty with dignity.

PATRICK'S STORY

A mango masterclass

The Munyuni self-help group were suffering severe water and food insecurity when they first approached our partners in Kenya, Africa Sand Dam Foundation.

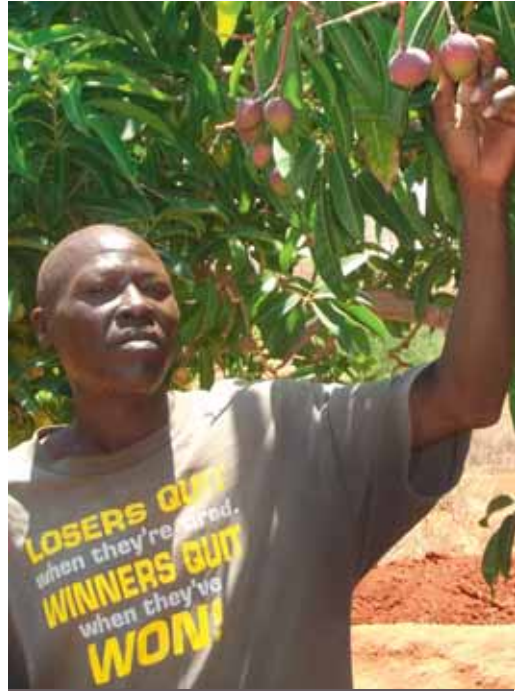
Now they are building sand dams and creating futures of hope and opportunity. This is Patrick's story:



My name is Patrick Mutisya Makau. I am the Vice Chairman of the Munyuni self-help group [in south east Kenya] and I am a farmer.

For quite some time I have been growing maize and cowpeas. But now I have changed to growing mangoes. I am hoping they will benefit me during my old age when I will be less energetic.

I plan to plant more than sixty mango trees. When the mango trees start yielding well, one tree should produce 500 mangoes. If you multiply the number of mangoes with the selling price, you are assured to get over 10,000 [Kenya] shillings (£700), which is a great income.



Patrick Mutisya Makau

I have become an expert in grafting mango trees. I visit homes and train people on how to grow mangoes. I want the entire community to have knowledge on growing mangoes.

The last time buyers came here, they bought mangoes from all the farmers who were growing them.



EXCELLENT SUPPORTERS

Building miracles

In September 2013, ten enthusiastic volunteers took up the challenge of helping to build a sand dam in rural Kenya.

Across four days, they carried stones, shovelled cement and worked alongside the Star ya Thange self-help group to build a sand dam with their community.

One expeditioner, Anita Gorasia, said: "It was a magnificent, unforgettable experience. I had an absolutely inspiring and fantastic week!"

The Star ya Thange self-help group came together to address the chronic droughts they faced.

They had already built one sand dam but, with the support of our Excellent expeditioners, they now have two. Each will store up to 20 million litres of water and provide clean, filtered water for this community within 30 minutes of their homes.

Well done and a huge thank you to the sand dam team of 2013. Your work will last lifetimes!



Our fantastic 2013 sand dam team: transforming lives.

What better way to learn about the miracle of sand dams than to help build one yourself?

Come with us on our sand dam expedition in rural Kenya between 06 and 14 September 2014.

Our expeditions are about energy, working together, learning and fun.

Experience first-hand how sand dams are transforming lives.

**Register your interest at:
excellent.org.uk/expeditions**

TRAPPING WATER, FREEING COMMUNITIES

You can also give online at:
justgiving.com/excellentdev/donate

Or text **DAMS41£3** to 70070 to
give £3 now

SET UP A DIRECT DEBIT

Your regular gifts create opportunity and hope for families where there is otherwise none. **£10 a month could support one person every month to have clean water for life.**

Regular donation	£
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Frequency (please circle)	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually
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Starting from date	
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Sharing our news and stories on social media makes a huge difference to raising awareness about our work.

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We'd love to hear from you!
excellent.org.uk/keepintouch

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