



Komeho Namibia Development Agency

## The Kalahari Garden Project Newsletter

### April 2008



**Harvesting beetroot in  
Corridor 18**

The Kalahari Garden Project now has a total of twenty two gardens spread between three villages in Corridor. Eighteen gardens are yielding produce while six have only recently been constructed. Between January and March 2008, San beneficiaries harvested watermelons, pumpkin, butternut squash, onions, chard, tomatoes, beetroot, carrots, beans (cowpea), maize and chilli peppers.

The project team has recorded harvest data and foods eaten from the garden during this period, which suggests that diets have improved significantly with the addition of these foods to the daily staple of maize porridge. Some of the larger food crops such as watermelons and pumpkins have been sold locally, bringing in additional household income.

As winter is approaching, many of the gardens have recently cleared lines for winter crops and we have just completed our second garden workshop, which focused on gardening tips for the winter. This was headed by Komeho Namibia's agricultural technician, Bethel Kadeywa and included information on vegetables suitable for winter, how to sow these and organic pest protection. We also focused on marketing and the potential of the gardens for income generation.

As part of our efforts to improve water infrastructure and management in Corridor, we have recently installed a raised 10,000L water tank in Corridor 18, with the help of the Rural Water Supply. With active participation from the community, we laid approximately 1.5km of new pipeline, from the borehole to the 10,000L tank, and from the tank to the beneficiary households. Each household was equipped with a new garden tap. This pipeline now delivers free water (pumped with diesel donated by the project) to each of the beneficiary San households. This has improved the water pressure and given the San more control over the water available for the gardens. Previous to this new delivery system many San households didn't have their own tap and water payment was done by rotor in the village. This rotor system meant that if one household didn't provide diesel, the rest of the households went without water. The new system should result in a more reliable and secure water supply.

In a move toward project sustainability, we are currently in the process of facilitating the community election of garden representatives from each of the villages we are working in. The representatives will be trained and mentored in garden management and project supervision. A San representative has recently been elected in Post 17 and is beginning her

training with the team. We expect representatives from each of the other villages we are working in to be elected and trained by June 2008.

The field team, with whom the trainees will be working currently includes Hattie Wells (Project coordinator), Abraham Motlhaping (Assistant Coordinator), and Joseph Bessa (a trainee field technician). We are sorry to have recently said goodbye to Megan Glore, our horticultural assistant who volunteered for six months on the project. She did a stellar job out here and helped build the foundations of this project. We would like to wish her the best of luck with her future endeavours for The Global Diversity Foundation in Mexico.



**In memory of Marcella Meike Ditshabue (24/05/1974 – 17/02/2008)**

It is with great sadness that we report the recent death of Marcella Ditshabue. Marcella was a beloved colleague and close friend to the Kalahari Garden Project team and will always be remembered for her cheerful, generous and uplifting spirit. She was a highly respected member of the

community in Corridor and was renowned far and wide for her singing and dancing as a key member of the !Gubi Family music group. To our team she was a constant source of inspiration and made us all feel welcome in Corridor, by opening her heart and culture to us. She has left behind five beautiful children, through whom her spirit will shine forth on the world. Our sympathy and condolences go to her family and friends. We will all miss her dearly.

**Our plans for the rest of 2008 include the following:**

- Improve the water delivery system in Corridors 2, 4, and 15
- Build twenty more gardens throughout the project sites
- Conduct garden training workshops for beneficiary households from Corridors 2, 4 and 15
- Plan and create a kitchen garden at the local primary school
- Train the garden representatives and establish a functioning garden project committee
- Begin the documentation of San knowledge of wild edible plants
- Develop an indigenous vegetation demonstration garden
- Continue monitoring and evaluation of the project (e.g. household and food security surveys), statistically analyse the data and produce a report on the influence of the gardens on household food security
- Hold a workshop on the importance of improved nutrition for HIV infection related diseases
- Continue developing a guide to vegetable gardening in the Kalahari
- Develop a collaborative business plan with the Omaheke San Trust for craft development and marketing in Corridor, as a means of assisting with livelihood diversification and income generation in the project area

**Until the next newsletter we would like to thank you all for your continued support of this project.**