

Partnerships between ODA and NGOs: for more effective international co-operation (5)

Part 5: AAI and NGOs - Our project in Zimbabwe (contd.)

In the previous issue we reported on one of the NGOs AAI hopes to collaborate with in the future for our original development projects in Zimbabwe. This time we would like to introduce another.

[Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB)]

The reason for selecting ZWB as our partner NGO was that its organization is fairly large and stable, it stresses the importance of community participation in its projects, and ZWB showed sufficient willingness to work with AAI. This organization is large compared to ZWP, which we reported about in the previous issue. ZWB has 13 project sites, which is not only rural area in arid and semi-arid area but also sub-urban, across the country. This fact which is acting extensive was particularly appealing.

ZWB aims to improve the social basis of local communities and achieve sustainable local development. It is carrying out training, information dissemination, financial support etc. for women and their families in both rural and urban areas. As more specific themes, it is working on the issues of basic education, gender, women's rights, health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS, land acquisition and utilization, poverty alleviation, efficient utilization of natural resources, and training and loan schemes for business management which aims at enabling people to create opportunities to gain profit on their own.

ZWB was established in 1978 as a result of the movement to improve the status of women and was initiated by students and teachers in urban areas. Compared to other NGOs born and developed in rural areas, the urban-born ZWB takes extra care in maintaining a good relationship with local communities. Women working as ZWB's field workers in charge of activities in each project site are not sent from cities but are chosen from local communities, who are far more familiar with local matters. They are working as a bridge between ZWB's headquarters and local communities. Since their field activities are shaped according to local realities and needs, their projects are accepted by local communities without difficulty.

Their field activities at over ten projects sites across the country include exchanges between farmers and the inspection of successful farms, distribution of solar cookers and so-called homestead development. This entails household-level activities such as rain water harvesting, kitchen gardening, and small livestock husbandry for the purpose of improving livelihood, health and hygienic conditions within each household. At the same time ZWB helps with construction of local activity centers, which serve as a base for the group members of each project site to carry out various activities such as bee keeping, handicrafts, pottery, plantation, production of cooking oil, rice farming, organic farming, etc, and the supply of equipment and materials. It also provides technical assistance. When it comes to actual activities, ZWB basically leaves the initiative to the local members.



“Homestead Development”
Contour ridges are built to harvest water, and water melons etc. are planted to prevent soil erosion.



“Indigenous fruit tree”
It is used to produce liquor from the fruit and nuts from the seed.



“Bee keeping boxes”
The harvested honey is shipped to market.



“Seedling plot at a project site”
Seedlings of mainly indigenous tree species are produced, to be distributed or marketed later.