



CANAL UPGRADE

Cederberg Beukeskraal

On the banks of the Tra-Tra River, which flows from the Cederberg Mountains through Wupperthal and Langebome, is the Moravian Mission Station of Beukeskraal. This community of approximately 70 families, consists of mainly elderly people.

Dawid Hesselman, chairman of the local farmers' association, is 53 years old and grew up in Beukeskraal. For as long as he can remember, the land he now

owns, also "belonged" to his parents, about 1 hectare of land on which they may practice subsistence farming. Once a year, usually during spring, the farmers work the land, plough it and then sow the seeds for the crops that will be harvested in the coming season. Crops typically include beans, corn, pumpkins and watermelon.

After the harvest, the farmers turn the land over to pasture where their livestock graze until the next planting season.

Project objectives:

- Upgrade existing canal.
- Improve irrigation.

Long term goals:

- Increased water supply for agricultural use.
- Increase productivity.

Contact:

Dawid Hesselman and Neil Zimri
 Beukeskraal
 Wupperthal
 8138
 Tel: 027 492 3641 or
 027 492 3415
 Fax: 027 492 3641

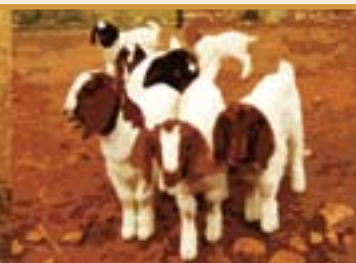


This lifestyle is what most Beukeskralers are accustomed to. There are few employment opportunities in the surrounding areas, and the younger people tend to move away to the cities and larger towns to find employment.

The few remaining young adults stay behind who care for and work with the older members of the community.

All land in Beukeskraal is actually owned by the church, with each family having rights to

Beukeskraal's isolation and





Water and Small-Scale Infrastructure



limited access to markets, employment, education, health services and other social structures, adds to the community's impoverishment.

The greatest challenge that the farmers face is the inconsistent supply of water. While the Tra-Tra River flows throughout the year, the water is not readily available when it is needed most. Flood irrigation system is used, and as Hesselman explains, "We are currently dependant on an open canal that brings the water from the river to our gardens. The canal is old, in poor condition, and a lot of the water is lost en-route. This results in water shortages in summer." To make matters worse, the Tra-Tra River's water level drops below the level of the canal's intake in summer.

Recently, work started on the repair of the canal. According to Hesselman, the planned canal route has been cleared and the first cement sections have been delivered for installation. The contractor, who is tasked with clearing the route for the canal, won the contract on condition that unemployed people from Beukeskraal would be employed to do the work. This employment will provide the community with some short term relief. The actual building of the canal is due to commence soon, but completion of the project may come too late for this year's crop.

In the longer term, Hesselman is very clear about the canal project's impact on the community: "100%! It will bring a 100% improvement. I believe that the new canal will help us to achieve better harvests, meaning more food for everyone. It will also make life a bit easier, considering that we still plough using donkeys."

