



• WfW Programmes Manager Skills Development and Operations Tumba Mupango.



• TUMBA Mupango giving some remarks during a workshop in Lusaka.

Upclose with Tumba Mupango

WATER FOR WATER (WfW) Zambia Programme Manager Skills Development and Operations

AFFORDABILITY is still the main limit to providing clean water to everybody. The service needs to be paid for and poverty, together with the high unemployment rate which was at 11.41 per cent as of November 2020, makes it hard to afford for most of the population. These challenges are not limited to Zambia. The situation is similar in most African countries, especially Sub-Saharan ones. According to the 2018 Demographic and Health Survey, Zambia is taking control of the situation and slowly improving. In 2018, 7 per cent of Zambian households had access to drinking water against 63 per cent in 2014. Our staffer **DOROTHY CHISI** had an interview with the Programme Manager – Skills Development and Operations, Tumba Mupango with some insights by the interview series “Unseen Heroes” which is shining a spotlight on extraordinary women and their inspiring stories of WATER FOR WATER (WfW), an organisation whose vision is making the use of the water resources climate-friendly and fair.

Question: Tell us more about Water for Water.

Answer: WATER FOR WATER (WfW) was founded in 2012 by two brothers, Lior and Morris Etter. The story behind it is touching. Their third brother Basil passed away at an early age.

This raised some existential questions for the remaining two brothers and they very much felt the urge to give back to society in a meaningful manner. While travelling, they experienced these unbelievable differences that exist in terms of water. In Switzerland (where the brothers are from), there is a lot of water of high quality available, whereas in other countries many people do not have

access to clean and safe water.

This led to their motivation to use their privileged situation to do something about those global inequalities. Ten years later, the mission of WATER FOR WATER (WfW) is to find a solution for the sustainable and fair use of water. Our organization is active in Zambia, Mozambique and Switzerland. Depending on these different contexts, of course, there are different challenges but also opportunities. We always search for context-specific solutions, in Switzerland for example, we promote the consumption of tap water to act more environmentally

friendly. In Zambia, the focus is more on safe access to water and sanitation as well as on water-related vocational training.

Question: How does WfW interpret its presence in Zambia?

Answer: WATER FOR WATER (WfW) in the Zambian context is one of the organisations that is working in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector as well as the skills development sector.

It is a unique positioning as the organisation supports capital investments in water supply systems as well as supports skills development to maintain these investments.

We work in peri urban areas, as they are highly populated and mainly lack basic sanitation and water access. Urban migration is here today and in the future, we cannot neglect the plight of people who move from rural areas and mainly end up living in the peri-urban areas.

In Lusaka under our Water Access project, working through our partner Water Supply and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) and Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company (LWSC) we have supported Misisi, John Laing, Kanyama and Linda townships. In Livingstone, together with WSUP and Southern Water and Sewerage Company (SWASCO) we have worked in Burton, Nakatindi and Livingstone city itself. We have an ongoing Water Access project in Gondwe Lusaka.

In terms of number of people with improved access to water supply we have reached over 4,000 in Kanyama township, over 20,000 in Linda township, over 43,000 in Misisi township and over 65,000 in the John Laing area. As for the Gondwe project in Lusaka, we are targeting to reach 8,400 people.

Question: Since the commencement of the projects in Zambia, have you noticed any improvement in the last decade?

Answer: According to the 2018 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS), more than 36 per cent of Zambia’s population lacked access to basic

drinking water services while more than 67 per cent lacked access to basic sanitation services. An estimated 10 per cent of the population practised open defecation while 76 per cent of households did not have access to a hand-washing facility with soap and water in 2018.

Over the past 10 years, Zambia has been making strides to address these challenges but more action still needs to be taken to achieve universal and equitable access to safe affordable drinking water by all by 2030 as per the sustainable development goals.

WfW has contributed to the strides that have been made by providing water supply to peri urban areas of Lusaka and Livingstone. So far four peri urban areas in Lusaka have gained access through WfW’s support working with partners such as the water utilities.

Question: You sit on the Skills Advisory Board of Government addressing issues relating to water and skills development. How has been your journey?

Answer: Zambia’s vision 2030 emphasises developing quality human capital, including investing in quality education and skills development.

To attain the desired human capital development, we have focused on the need to build inclusive and appropriate skills that respond to the demands of the labour market. With this in view, there is a national skills advisory group for the water and sanitation sector that looks at bridging the gap between the skills demand and the skills offered.

To support skills development, WfW through the partner schools have supported about 600 Zambian youths to attain a Trade or Craft qualification in water-related courses at Lusaka Vocational and Technical College (LVTC) since we started working with the college in 2014.

WfW in partnership with LVTC introduced water-related courses namely “Water Supply and Sanitation Operations” and “Plumbing and Pipe



• MUPANGO

Fitting”. Our support to the college includes paying students bursaries, support with infrastructure development and general administrative issues. Most of those trained are assimilated in the water utility companies and some work in the private sector.

Some of the graduates are lecturing at the same institution. What we did was, when we supported the first class, we picked the best four whom we sponsored to do a teaching methodology course at Evelyn Hone College, and now they are lecturing at LVTC.

Question: How do you help out schools which are struggling with water and sanitation challenges in the areas

you operate?

Answer: Our focus is working with TEVET institutions, so in the institutions we work, we support water and sanitation projects.

An example of this is Mansa Trades Training Institute (MTTI) where we have built an ablution block and also put up a water tank. A conducive training environment is also an important aspect, hence we have also supported the institution by rehabilitating the workshop and classroom. We also plan to buy equipment for the newly rehabilitated workshop.

Question: What are some of the challenges that are being faced in the accessibility of quality water and sanitation services?

Answer: There are a lot of challenges being faced in the water and sanitation sector. The main challenge is lack of access to sanitation. You find that we still have a significant number of people who do not have access to sanitation, as open defecation is still being practised in many parts of the country.

Access to safe and clean water, which is still a challenge, we see people walking long distances to be able to access this commodity.

Of course, Zambia has a lot of water bodies, but the water cannot be consumed by people in its raw form from our rivers, streams and lakes. There is need for treatment and other capital investment to

ensure that the water is accessible, clean and safe for people to drink.

There is an additional challenge in ensuring that there are skilled and qualified people to construct, manage and maintain the water and sanitation systems that are being constructed and those that are already in existence.

Question: What do you feel about women especially them being vulnerable in the absence of water?

Answer: In a lot of cases nowadays I see that water is still women’s business, and I feel most women should take the lead in water and sanitation issues because we bear the burden of the home.

We are the ones to ensure all household chores are done and most of the household chores require water. Being a woman working in sanitation and the water sector, I feel I can play a role in promoting access to water and sanitation services.

If we free women of the burden of queuing or walking long distances to fetch water and also provide them with the dignity of having a good sanitation facility, this can free up time for them to engage in economic activities.

Of course, like many other sectors, we still need more women to participate in the water and sanitation sector.

Currently, as in most other sectors, the sector is predominantly male-driven, but then we are seeing women coming up and taking leadership positions as well.

I encourage young females to pursue careers in the water and sanitation sector as this sector is key to solving some of the challenges that we face as women.

Conclusion: As women, let’s bring life to whatever we do because we carry the responsibility of bringing life on this earth. It’s our responsibility to ensure that the earth we bring our children into is habitable and conducive for life.