

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

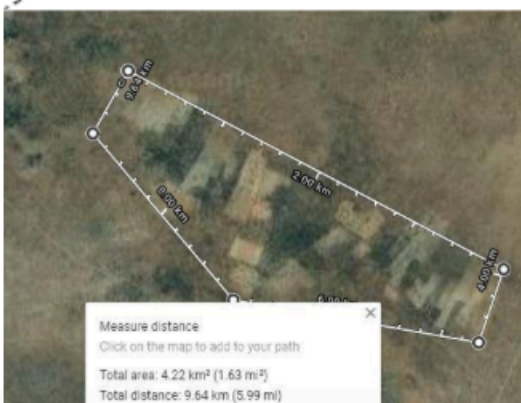
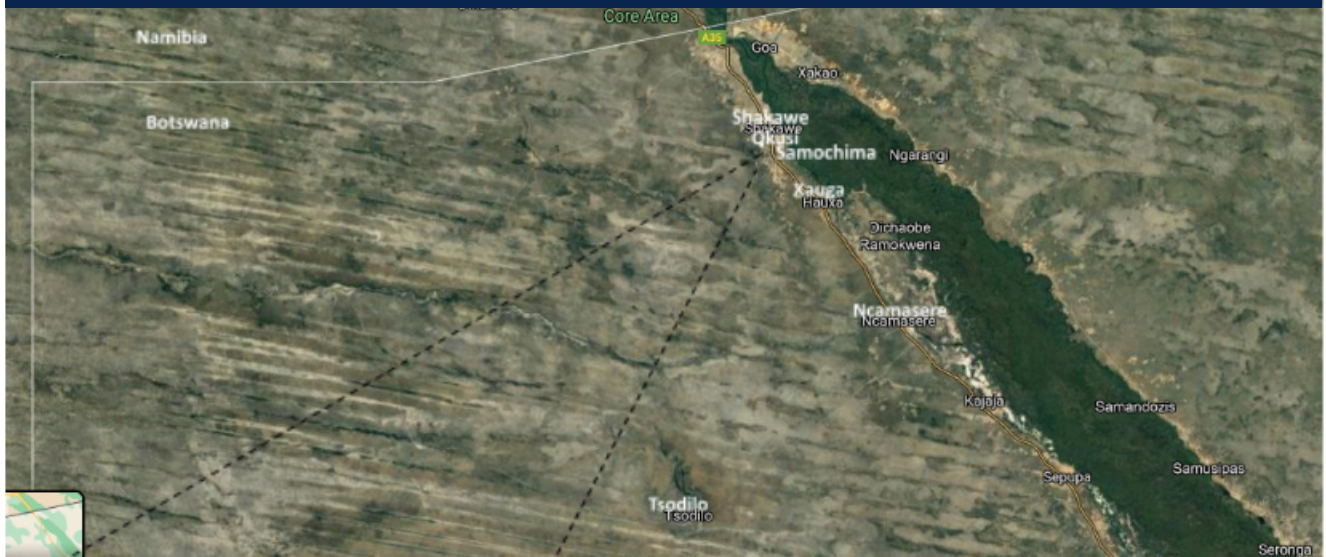
# PABALELO TRUST



REGISTRATION NO: TUHGB-000132-20



**Pabalelo Trust Target Area** - Western Okavango Panhandle villages Okusi, Samochima, Xauga and Ncamasere.



**Cover page:**

**Ms Tiego Sesinyi and Ms Kamene Karekango with a bumper harvest collected during lockdown, due to more hands in the fields and ample rains.**

# Table of CONTENT

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
COVID-19: How did the pandemic affect our work?	1
COVID-19 and our target communities	3
Adapt or die	5
<b>Projects and Activities</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Backyard gardens	8
2. Cluster field	10
3. Beekeeping	12
<b>Highlights of the year</b>	<b>13</b>
Strategic planning and internal evaluation	13
US Embassy Self-help Fund	15
UNDP funding received	16
<b>Natural Resources</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Financial overview</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>21</b>
Contact us:	23







**P**abalelo Trust like all other organizations was not spared by the negative effects of the Corona pandemic. Whilst a lot of activity had to be put on hold due to abiding by the regulations and protocols of the pandemic, the year 2020 saw some significant changes at Pabalelo. Early in the year 2020, the Board and members of staff convened in Gaborone and developed a strategic plan for the organization. This is an important planning document that took stock of where the Trust is, and where it wants to go.

Another significant milestone in 2020 was the registration of the Trust with the Master of the High Court of Botswana. This was a very involving processes that included work by the Board members, the Lawyers, and the Trust Accountant. Despite the back and forth, I am proud to

state that Pabalelo Trust is now a legally registered Trust under the laws of the Republic of Botswana.

On yet another front, Pabalelo was able to mobilize some substantive financial resources in 2020. These resources will see the Trust implement strategic projects in the next coming two years.

All these milestones have been achieved through the dedication and commitment of the staff of Pabalelo, the Board members and our loyal and faithful sponsors and supporters. I therefore humbly acknowledge and express my heartfelt gratitude to you all, for and on behalf of Pabalelo.

Thank you, le kamoso Bagaetsho!

*Innocent Lefatshe Magole*  
Board Chairman



# INTRODUCTION

It is one year down the line since COVID-19 hit Africa, when seemingly overnight change also reached even the smallest villages and cattle posts strung along the banks of the Okavango “Panhandle” in Botswana. At first, we had hoped that our remoteness, our hot sun, and the large open spaces would protect us from the pandemic wave, but eventually no-one could escape the effects, even of enforced protective measures and the threat of an invisible enemy. Sitting at village meetings all masked and separated from each other, poking elbows instead of shaking hands and makeshift soap dispensers hanging on gate posts, we remain suddenly almost bizarrely united with an unseen world without answers.

Gratefully, Pabalelo Trust managed to keep going, despite being restricted from our outreach work and having had to change direction to survive. While so many other organizations and business operators had to close doors, our experience has not been entirely negative. We had to tighten our belts to survive, but COVID-19 brought inner reflection, re-evaluation of our values, adjusting our mission and our strategies. One of Pabalelo strengths has always been its adaptability, and this past year that strength was tested to the extreme and sharpened to an edge.

## COVID-19: HOW DID THE PANDEMIC AFFECT OUR WORK?

By the Grace of God our whole team and our entire Board of Trustees have been wonderfully protected this far. Unbeknown to us at that time, the virus was already in our country during our strategic planning session in Gaborone, March 2020, which was attended by all staff and our full Board. Less than three weeks after our epic journey down and back from the capital (with two breakdowns and 4 different public buses, travelling in tight and cramped spaces), the whole country went into lockdown. While our health was not affected, the lockdown and subsequent travel restrictions impacted enormously on our funding, as two assessment visits by donors with whom we were in the last stages of negotiations for funding had to be cancelled indefinitely. Where we had been convinced that soon there would be enough working capital to roll out our plans and establish our newest projects, after lockdown ended in May we were forced to survive almost a whole other year on very slim resources, retreating and reassigning our resources to survive. We were grateful our winter garden project was unaffected,





enabling us to work outside and with small groups of village gardeners on establishing more backyard gardens, a project that also boosted health and kept the hope going by providing fresh greens and good nutrition. However, we had to abandon our larger group training schedules for subsistence farmers as well as our weekly school education programme, as country laws as well as resource deficiencies restricted such work.

With the help of friends' contributions and smaller donors (see acknowledgements) we pulled through till end November 2020, when we received our first funding from the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) under the UNDP Small Grants Programme. This enabled us to immediately start preparing for our planned communal village garden, to establish a visible and participatory training and demonstration area for horticulture and natural resource utilization.



## COVID-19 AND OUR TARGET COMMUNITIES

All Pabalelo staff took the lockdown period in April as annual leave, a move much appreciated by our Board, as Pabalelo therefore did not need to adjust salaries or downsize like so many other organisations had to do. An unforeseen benefit was that the lockdown period also strengthened social capital for our target population. Although large numbers of people lost their income, due to especially the tourism sector suffering, the small farmers experienced the closing of the schools for the entire month of April as a true blessing. Children could now assist their parents in the fields like in the old days, just as extra labour was welcome due to good rains with just the right amount of rain staggered throughout the season. Most families therefore had a bumper harvest to be brought in at the end of May and experienced less elephant damage as the good rains filled pans and provided elephants with enough grazing and water away from the fields. Therefore, this year, farmers took home plenty of bags of mahangu (millet), maize, beans, and pumpkins and Pabalelo could assist with transport, labour, and monitoring progress without much extra effort!

With the staff present where their families were engaged in traditional agriculture, the lockdown enabled the Pabalelo staff to kill two birds with one stone, as most families had isolated themselves at cattle posts or fields. Being there with their own families, they could continue to carry over principles of Conservation Agriculture and soil preservation, assist with labour needs and train on sight at the same time.



*Kewabone Bontsibokae assisting his mother in her field during lockdown School children assisting their parents during lockdown – a huge advantage!*





On the negative side, the school schedules were disrupted throughout the year, which might still have long-term effects on the future of many children. No-one could plan, as the travel restrictions were imposed as the virus moved through Botswana. Borders were closed which separated families, digital processes for permits for travel was not always accessible to everyone, funerals, weddings, church, and other gatherings of more than 50 people were prohibited, therefore social life changed overnight. These restrictions intensified after Christmas 2020, as the virus spread faster into Ngamiland.

The impact of all these changes on culture, social life, the economy, and the agricultural sector yet remains to be seen. In general, it can be said that the Okavango Panhandle communities have more challenges due to less employment. However, with the good signs of an abundant rainy season ahead of us, Pabalelo Trust remains committed to our cause, as subsistence agriculture and natural resource utilization would continue to build resilience and give hope, regardless of what the future might hold.







School children wearing masks – a way of life no-one expected

Mixture of soap and water for visitors to wash hands at the gate to reduce spread of covid

## ADAPT OR DIE

Quite a few sudden and drastic adaptations to our work style and strategic planning had to take place, necessitated by the realities we faced. The first shock was when the whole Peace Corps volunteer group in Botswana was evacuated from the country within a few days after the pandemic reality struck. Overnight we lost two Peace Corps volunteers who had been involved in planning and setting up our intended involvement in a pilot project with the Dept of Poverty Eradication, therefore effectively, we found ourselves minus 2 staff members and without solid agreements with the District Council with whom we had started joint planning. Without the funding we were working on as well as the expertise Frank Goldsmith and Jill McCullough would have added to our team, and without being able to maintain our regular training schedule, we had to creatively find ways in which to still honour our strategic goals from the Board meeting, but package them differently.

The unexpected loss of our friend and mentor Frank Taylor, a long-term friend and well-known Botswana change maker in the field of community development, resulted in us having to shelve another project completely. His shocking and most traumatic death happened during the lockdown period, having been stung by a deadly scorpion.

Frank Taylor was the pioneer of natural resource utilization in Botswana, active and full of creative energy even at an advanced age. Another strategic change was needed as we were ready to start joining hands with Frank on experimentation with some of the alternative crops we wanted to introduce to small farmers in the area.





The late Frank Taylor while visiting the mongongo oil extraction project in Shakawe.

In honour of our old friend and funded by his friends and family, Pabalelo continued to plant some of his favourite indigenous trees from this area, not only to help us build up the plant material needed to carry out such trials in future, but to carry forward a great man's legacy. By the end of 2020 "Frank's Orchard" had been planted with mongongo and morula trees with some experiments done on Kalahari melon.



Preparation of "Frank's Orchard". Moyambo Mosupi and the new tank stand.



Moments from 2020





# PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

## 1. BACKYARD GARDENS

Fortunately, funding for our winter home gardens programme was not affected and our regrouping after lockdown matched the season well, so we could jump straight into our backyard gardening project since end of May. With caution, adhering to prescribed protocols, we started our work with selected “champions” who have already proved themselves by implementing the earlier training we have given to gardeners in the villages of Samochima and Ncamasere. With funding from the Netherlands Christian Reformed Churches (Deputaten Diaconaat), as well as from the Muttathara Fund and some individuals donating via the Taaibosch Foundation, we had our work cut out for us between the months of May till end of August. A total of 13 home gardens are now a positive and concrete testimony to how household activity could counteract all the uncertainty and provide people with a direct and nutritious food secure option.



Visit to one of our champions gardeners.





“ A total of **13 home gardens** are now a positive and concrete testimony to how **household activity** could counteract all the uncertainty and **provide people with a direct and nutritious food secure option.**”



## 2. CLUSTER FIELD

After the winter gardening season was over, the time for preparation for rainfed fields brought investigation into the status of the Samochima cluster field plans. All agree that solar powered electric fencing has proved to remain the only effective measure left by which farmers could withstand the pressure of elephants breaking into their crops, therefore the Farmers' Committee, and elders representing the farming areas Koroga and Shaikarawe were interviewed, gps readings taken of the proposed area and assistance offered to prepare applications for government support through especially the ISPAAD programme. We were honoured by a visit by the Coordinator of the Ministry of Agriculture's Crop Production unit, during which Mr. Mokomme expressed support for our strategy, promising to fast-track applications from the Okavango subdistrict, due to the very high human-elephant conflict situation in this corner of Botswana.

Regular networking and negotiations with our important strategic partner, the local Crop Production Office in Shakawe, forms the backbone of the support to cluster field committees. If funding permits, Pabalelo would like to roll out cluster fields as a strategy for human-wildlife conflict on the entire western Panhandle side, by helping to develop several model projects in our adjacent villages. For these we hope to be guided by the LUCIS (Land-use investigative system) in which our partner on the Eastern Panhandle side, Ecoexist, is an active leader. The LUCIS process will ensure that fields do not straddle traditional elephant pathways and would therefore not increase future conflict zones.

One ideal which we continue to fundraise for, would be to have a borehole at each cluster, to enable people to even grow vegetables and keep small livestock away from the river. This would help to sustain a more permanent presence in their fields and enable farmers to integrate livestock management with crop production. By providing an alternative water source away from the river, we hope to reduce dependency on the Okavango River but also reduce conflict with elephants as people would not need to commute between fields and villages daily.





The map of proposed Shaikarawe cluster field (10.4 km Perimeter and 465 ha Area) where the VDC elders and Pabalelo Trust members visited.



Documenting, supporting and encouraging farmers to keep growing food every year, despite elephant raids, droughts and lack of labour. Diphoso with elderly farmer at Xauga.



### 3. BEEKEEPING

In September Diphoso Maitiyo and Kewabone Bontsibokae attended a beekeeping course in Gunotsoga by the government's beekeeping department but offered by Ecoexist with donations from the Elephants and Bees Project. Introducing beekeeping to these cluster fields would be one of several elements to try and reduce conflict, which would have potential to provide farmers with alternative nutrition and income. By year end the beehives have not captured any bees yet, but with the abundant flowers of the 2020/21 rainy season they are sure to come.



After attending beekeeping course at Gunotsoga, now ready to capture them



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INTERNAL EVALUATION

The strategic planning meeting was funded by Centrum voor Ontmoeting der Volkere, with the intention of helping Pabalelo re-align itself to its goals and find the way forward for the next 5 years. At the same time, it became a successful team building experience, as we shared a B&B with some Board members and our Peace Corps volunteers; for some of our staff the first time to visit the capital of Botswana. The strategic planning was facilitated by Board member Nlisi (Chillie) Motshusi, with the input from some experienced resource people in Botswana and over two days led us to a documented guideline towards what we want to achieve and who we want to be. At the same time new positions were chosen for Board members and Innocent Lefatshe Magole was chosen as Chairman, Chillie Motshusi is Vice Chair/Treasurer. Our lawyer board member Dineo Makati-Mpho resigned, but still took on the obligatory re-registration process of all companies and Trusts with the Masters' Office, until, with help of our Board members in Gaborone we were finally re-registered and legally compliant, at the end of 2020! Our long-term treasurer from the Taaibosch Foundation, Mr. Paul Zweers from the Netherlands, reverted to the position of Board Advisor. Prof. Liesl van As from the University of the Free State, South Africa, agreed to serve another term and the term of Ms. Chandida Manyadzwe, who could not attend the meeting, was extended. The position of Willemien le Roux as being placed within Pabalelo staff as Founder member was retained. Therefore, despite having been held back from much of our normal practical project work in 2020, we made much progress administratively as an organization and at the end of 2020 received our now updated registration certificate and new constitution. Pabalelo Trust would not have been what it is without the expertise and willing assistance of our honoured Board members.



During the month of August, we revisited the strategic plan as a group, reflecting more intensively on our strengths and weaknesses as a team, as well as assessing the gaps in our own knowledge and content of our training programme. Some very helpful peer assessment sessions helped to realign ourselves with our vision and mission in preparation for the projects we hope to undertake in 2021. This reflective period was an enriching capacity building experience for all staff and would not have been possible had we been in a normal “delivery” schedule. We therefore consider this as one of the positive outcomes of an otherwise disrupted year! In the new year we look forward to applying some of the proposed leadership readjustments and specialization inside the organization, which was brought to light during this internal evaluation period.



Strategic planning meeting at Gaborone, with Peace Corps volunteers and Board members and staff



## US EMBASSY SELF-HELP FUND

We were most honoured to receive a delegation from the United States Embassy in Gaborone, to visit the backyard gardens projects they funded in 2019 through the Self-help fund. The team included several members of the Embassy as well as the British High Commission, everyone excited to be able to travel again after the extended lockdown period!



Ms Phatsimo Kwename and Ms Danna Schaper admiring the US Embassy plaque at Pabalelo Trust headquarters.



## UNDP FUNDING RECEIVED

Pabalelo Trust became one of the recipients of the GEF (Global Environment Fund) under the UNDP Sustainable Land Management Programme's grantees, much to our relief and joy. Not only were we saved financially by this injection of funds by the end of the year, but we are now part of a network of climate smart projects within Botswana, which is empowering and stimulating. The GEF office staff have been most helpful and accommodating and Willemien le Roux and Diphoso Maitiyo took part in the launch of the programme at the Travelodge in Gaborone, at the end of November.

Over the next 18 months we hope to have established a new demonstration and training farm adjacent to Samochima village, with borehole and irrigation systems and protected by a solar powered fence, funded by this grant. The rationale for this project, alongside the backyard gardens we have erected, is that there would be a more secure water source for village gardeners, seeing that municipal water becomes too expensive, and supply is erratic and unpredictable. The new communal training area, designed to become a model for village-based food security instead of the more vulnerable backyard garden system, would also be further away from monkeys, hippos and other wildlife, elements that currently frustrate progress in our training area.



Receiving GEF grant cheque at Gaborone.



# NATURAL RESOURCES

This section of the GEF-funded project hopes to experiment, do trials, and offer suggestions for marketable products derived from some of the natural resources from this area, to find those with the most potential to be introduced as a new subsistence cash crop. This could be either through harvesting or cultivation and builds on work done with the late Frank Taylor.

We will first do a survey, then plant and harvest some of the plants for which there seems to be a potential commercial value, to help convince farmers that there are untapped resources in this area which could be grown with less conflict with wildlife, but which could open more viable markets than currently the case of farmers' limited produce. At the same time, we will experiment with cash crops for which there is a sure local market and help to unblock some of the delivery issues on these.

We intend to buy a small oil press and through our membership of SAEOPA (Southern African Essential Oils Production Association), hope to come to the best conclusion over the next two years. From an assortment of wild fruits, herbs and melons, product selection will depend on each one's cost-effectiveness and marketability. The Botswana-based company BOTSOL (Pty) Ltd will be our partners and facilitators, training us and leading the way over this period. They will also introduce home solar power systems of which our new intake of trainees will be the first beneficiaries.

We hope to integrate the "Champion" backyard gardener group as the backbone of our demonstration and training programme, for which we hope to recruit young farmers who could get support from government if they have sufficient training.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## OVERVIEW ON PABALELO FINANCIAL STATUS

**DECEMBER 2020**

2020!!! What a game changing year it was – not just for Pabalelo but worldwide – and we all had to adapt to the “New Normal”. After our survival year of only being able to do “essential activities” in 2019, 2020 opened up with a better footing financially and also a new way of thinking on sustainability and a more focused approach.

Our persistent application for funding finally paid off and we were approved by the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) under the UNDP UNDP Small Grants Programme as well as finalising of the Resilient Waters (USAID) funding in the final stretches, for 2021. With these two funders on board Pabalelo will be enabled to consolidate our new strategy - communal village gardens and communally fenced crop fields for better food security and protection, a project that will run from 2021 to 2023.

1. Taaibosch Foundation (Netherlands), with the help of a few individuals and support organisations abroad, once again kept Pabalelo’s overall running costs afloat. Through their continued fundraising, their total funding covered 42% of our expenses. Added to this were also contributions by individuals (Alan & Jennifer Egner and Matthias & Patricia Guenther), vegetables sales and administrative allowances from other Pabalelo funders. Taaibosch remains committed to still raise funds abroad for Pabalelo in the future, and our stalwart previous treasurer who represented the organization, Paul Zweers, has retired from that position but remains as Financial Advisor to Pabalelo.
2. COV (Stichting der Volkere in the Netherlands): Funding from this organization at the end of 2019 to be used in 2020 expanded Pabalelo’s own capacity and mainly covered the remuneration of our Project Manager. As this organization has disbanded, we will sadly not receive any further funding from them.

3. The Backyard Gardens Project was funded by five donors, i.e. Deputaten Diaconaat, from the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Muttathara Fund through the Taaibosch Foundation (Netherlands) which also included donations from Henk & Marian Smit and United Economy. Gardens from 2019 were upgraded and new recruits furnished with “beginner” equipment, to a total of 13 Gardens over 2 villages established with this funding. All the materials and equipment were bought with these funds as well as for Pabalelo training costs, staff and administration. Currently there is a small, combined balance of unused funds available and Pabalelo hopes to get permission from the funders to apply these funds to cover gaps in the funding from the GEF funding for our communal village gardens in 2021.
4. A small, once-off fund from The Anglican Sisters in the United Kingdom, administered by Mrs. Margaret Taylor from Gabane, to the amount of P10,000.00 was paid into the Pabalelo Trust account to be used at our discretion for especially young women and girls affected by Gender-based violence or COVID-19.
5. A small fund to establish a memorial orchard at Pabalelo gardens was donated by friends and family of our natural resource advisor, Frank Taylor, who passed away in April 2020. This fund enabled Pabalelo to enlarge the gardens area and increase water reticulation, in order to plant trees in “Frank’s Orchard.”

Pabalelo Trust is excited about the next two/three years ahead – albeit hard work and new things to learn and teach. We currently enjoy so much more backing and support of experienced and qualified people and therefor reiterate how we ended the report of 2019 ... “We believe that with the expertise and assistance of our new hands-on and local Board of Trustees we will be successful in sending Pabalelo Trust into a new direction of prosperity.”

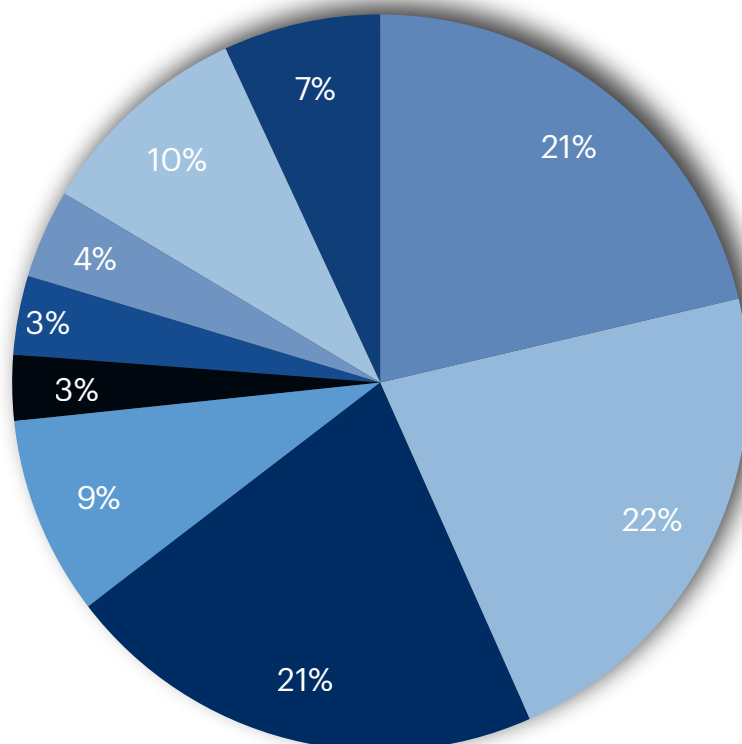
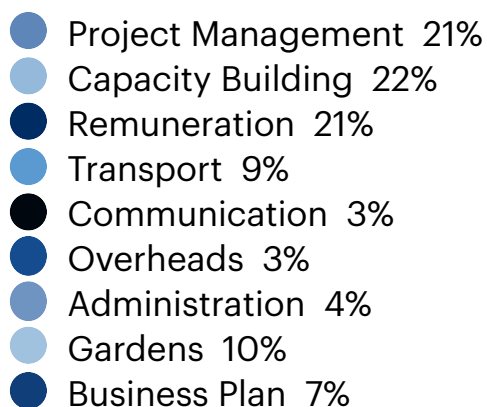


**M Dames**

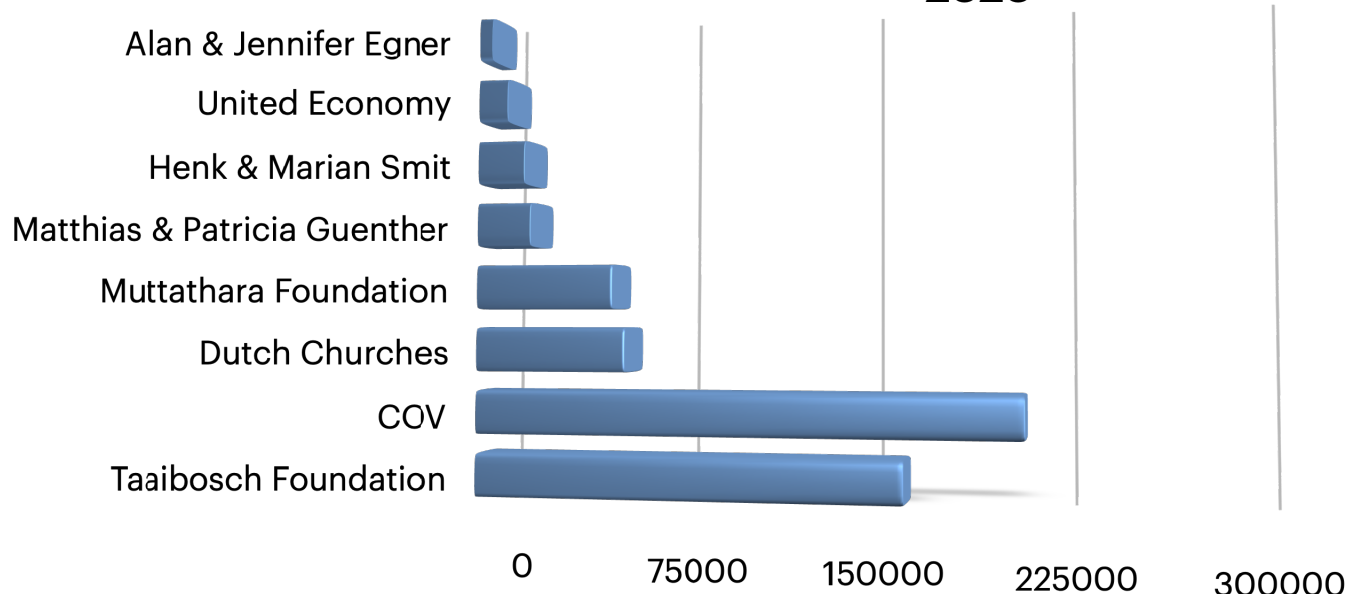
*Financial Administrator Pabalelo Trust*



### Pabalelo Trust Funding Distribution 2020



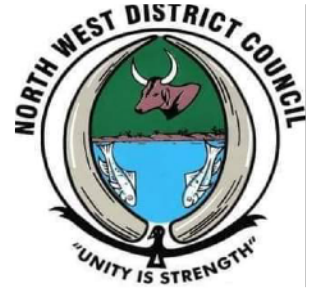
### Pabalelo Trust Funding Received 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pabalelo's work cannot happen in isolation. We would like to acknowledge and thank the following partners who have supported and facilitated our work in 2020:

- ▶ **Department of Crop Production Shakawe**, under the **Ministry of Agriculture** and the **Department of Poverty Eradication** under the **Gumare Sub-district Council**.
- ▶ Our **Samochima Village Development Committee** (VDC) and **Customary Court** (kgotla) as well as the **Farmers Committee in Samochima** have given us support and included us in the village administration.
- ▶ We also thank our partner NGO, **Ecoexist**, for friendly collaboration and for sharing and learning together.
- ▶ One partner organization that always must be singled out for their loyalty and wisdom and their unwavering commitment to the Pabalelo ideals, is the **Taaibosch Foundation**. For many years they have filled the gaps in our running cost, but also guided us and gave us emotional support. Once more we honour and thank this small group of activists in the Netherlands, as well as the individuals and other organisations who donated through them, listed in the Financial overview section. We salute you, Taaibosch Foundation!
- ▶ We sadly have to greet two Board members who wish to retire, therefore we would like to extend our gratitude to
  - ▶ **Dineo Makati Mpho**, a lawyer from Makati Law in Gaborone, and thank her for all the support in getting our registration in order.





- ▶ A very special gratitude to our longstanding (and one of our first) Board members, **Paul Zweers** from the Netherlands. As co-founder of Taaibosch Foundation as well as being a retired tax consultant, Paul provided guidance and wisdom, moral as well as financial support. Pabalelo would not have been what it is without Paul. We thank you, and are grateful that you are willing to remain as special advisor to the Board.



## Other donors and contributors:

The cash contributions made by some of our friends saved our lives in difficult times. The following people's donations were of great value, we thank you!

- ▶ **Jenny and Alan Egner**, Gaborone.
- ▶ **Matthias and Patricia Guenther**, Canada.
- ▶ **Frank Taylor's friends and family** through the initiative of his son Mike Taylor, to help establish "Frank's Orchard".
- ▶ We are grateful for the generous funding received from the **Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands** (Deputaten Diaconaat) which was a true blessing for not only Pabalelo but also the gardeners who now have the means and received the training to grow their own food.
- ▶ Towards the end of 2020 we gratefully received funding through **GEF (Global Environment Fund) under the Small Grants Programme of the UNDP in Gaborone**. We look forward to a period of joint implementation till mid 2023.



## CONTACT US:

### PHONE:

+267 73 761 619

+267 73 769 676

### EMAIL:

[pabalelo.trust@gmail.com](mailto:pabalelo.trust@gmail.com)

### ADDRESS:

Post: Box 68, Shakawe

Physical: Klipsop Farm, Samochima

### WEB:

Website: <http://pabalelotrust.wixsite.com/home>

Facebook: [Pabalelo Trust](#)



Above : **Pabalelo Trust's staff 2020:** Front left to right, Willemien le Roux (Director) Itireleng Disho (Intern), Marna Dames (Financial administrator). Back, left to right: Diphoso Maitiyo (Project Manager), Muyambo Mosupi (Field demonstrator), Tsheko Karombe (Field demonstrator), Chillie Motshusi (Board Treasurer/vice Chair), Kewabone Bontsibokae (Intern).