

### Three Development Projects

**Large-Scale:** The Cahora Bassa Dam, Mozambique (bilateral aid)

The Cahora Bassa Dam is the largest each EP scheme in southern Africa, with five turbines and a surface area which is the second biggest in the world. It is the third Dam to have been constructed in the River Zambezi basin. It is potentially the most important.

Despite it being a huge electricity resource, only 1% of Mozambique's rural homes have a direct electricity supply and this has hardly changed because of the dam. Most power is sold South Africa which makes money for the Mozambican economy but does not provide power for its inhabitants.

The dam has much greater potential than it is currently used for. With the help of other energy producing projects (such as natural gas, solar and wind) the dam could provide Mozambique with all the power it needs for the foreseeable future.

The fact that there are three dams in one basin has led to environmental damage; River flow has been reduced, and the shrimp fishing industry has been almost destroyed. A new dam (Mepuna Uncua) is also planned for construction downstream from the Cahora Bassa, which could lead to further environmental damage.

The Cahora Bassa has much greater potential than has been realised. If it concentrates on serving Mozambique its success will be much greater; if it is to work in harmony with other dams its potential might serve the whole region of Mozambique plus perhaps neighbouring countries. Some success with major river flooding control has been experienced but with more careful control more could be achieved.

**Medium-scale:** Voluntary aid in Kolkata (ActionAid)

ActionAid is a UK charity which works in local communities in the developing world. Its six target areas of relief are HIV/AIDS, hunger and food, woman's rights, the right to education for all, the right security for all, and the right to a good government. The ultimate aim of aiding the target areas is to alleviate poverty.

ActionAid works in the poorest districts of Kolkata such as to Dharavi, which is known as the world's worst slum- this area has high population densities and few services.

Some of ActionAid's work is supported by sponsorship schemes; donors are encouraged to give monthly or to sponsor a child and/or a family or community. This is a successful approach. Donors like the idea of improving life chances of individuals, especially when there are children.

ActionAid's donors feel they are doing something worthwhile for real people. Low technology has been implemented. ActionAid work benefits the locals (both individuals and communities); thankfully, costs are low. Sustainability is an important aspect of ActionAid work and hence environmental quality has been improved.

**Small-scale:** Community youth empowerment programme, Uganda

The SPW (student partnership worldwide death) is again a UK-based organisation. It places gap year students in development projects in countries like Uganda; these work with school pupils and farmers. They work with Ugandan students to do four main things. Firstly they raise awareness of the risk of AIDS. Secondly they improve the knowledge of environmental health concerns such as nutrition and sanitation. Thirdly, they teach energy conservation methods. And finally they promote sustainable organic farming ideas. Two examples of projects include the construction of a covered water tank to keep pollution out of the three natural springs in Kebager village, and the introduction of SPW students as volunteer teachers into both primary and secondary schools in Bwanyanga village. Appropriate technology has improved standards of living as well as enhancing the environment.

By Daniel Goode