

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Water Research Commission (WRC) had been supporting the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) at Glen near Bloemfontein and various other organisations over the past fifteen years to conduct research and development on in-field rainwater harvesting (IFRWH) techniques and the dissemination thereof among the members of 42 villages surrounding Thaba Nchu. The WRC approached ASSET Research to conduct an investigation, using the McMaster University's research impact assessment tool, as to the uptake and impact of IFRWH in those villages. Two surveys, one quantitative and one qualitative, were undertaken to meet this objective.

The quantitative survey revealed that the uptake and impact of IFRWH is indeed positive. It also revealed that the respondents were aware of and able to apply IFRWH in homestead food gardens. IFRWH has improved their social wellbeing and has created a common focus in the community. Concerns were the ability and the lack of clarity on the possibility of applying IFRWH on the croplands. Investigating villagers' willingness to apply IFRWH in the croplands therefore became the objective of the second survey.

From the qualitative survey it became evident that social and leadership issues are the determining factors regarding the future success and expansion of IFRWH to the croplands. It is clear that in villages which exhibited a strong social cohesion and leadership – especially from the headman – the uptake of IFRWH has advanced and the possibility of expansion is better than in those villages where that is not the case.

To summarise, the uptake of IFRWH in food gardens is encouraging in some selected villages. The key to advance IFRWH is to provide well-focused help and demonstration models for and in those villages where a good cohesion and strong social capital exist. In such a way the advances made in illustrating the benefit of IFRWH in the past can be combined with the keenness and intention as well as expectation to transfer the technique to the croplands, thereby expanding the impact of IFRWH to the betterment of people's lives.