
PROFILE / APERÇU BIOGRAPHIQUE

The subject of our last issue's profile was a Canadian who has satisfied his inborn love of learning through distance education, and completing high school and a B.A., B.D., M.Ed., and Ph.D., in this way. The profile for this issue has a very different subject—a woman who is involved in distance education as a teacher as well as a learner, and whose concerns are primarily extremely practical, rather than academic. Together, the two profiles form a useful reminder of the wide horizons of distance education.

Pauline Thaanyane works on instructional materials with the Appropriate Technology Section (ATS) of the Ministry of Interior, Chieftainship Affairs and Rural Development of the government of Lesotho in Southern Africa. She also edits the ATS Newsletter, which (like the JDE) began publication in 1986. The ATS has the important task of disseminating, through distance teaching and workshops, basic and vital information about developments in domestic and agricultural technology. The December 1986 issue of its Newsletter, for instance, contains material on: the importance of reforestation, and on how to establish a small wood plot plantation; on a variety of stone and metal stoves and cookers with which villagers can replace dangerous and uneconomical open fires; on solar heating; on new and more hygienic methods of drying vegetables; and on Growholes, which can provide fresh vegetables throughout the year.

Pauline Thaanyane's story is based on her own memories. It was originally published in the ATS Newsletter to show the ATS in operation.

The Editors

Being a Teenage Mosotho Girl was a Misery but ATS has Changed it All!

Pauline Thaanyane,

Editor and Instructional Materials Worker, A.T.S.

At first I thought wood gathering was fun. When I was a young and energetic little girl, my grandmother used to ask me to join her down in the veld to collect cow-dung or we would climb uphill to gather some wood.

We spent most of the morning hours gathering broken tree branches. I would retire from there with my grandmother still busy and start to play by myself. I would climb from one tree to another with all the swiftness a young girl could have. I almost regarded wood gathering as my hobby. Granny would call me when it was time to go home, and she usually put a small bundle of wood on my head. She would shower me with praise, saying I was growing into a big girl, and I

would smile radiantly, unaware that growing into a big girl meant bigger bundles of wood for me every week.

It was not until I was in my teens that I discovered with dismay that wood gathering was routine. I began to hate what I first thought was a hobby because grandma would even call me from where I was playing to remind me of wood collecting. I cursed my grandma for not being able to afford paraffin, for she had a paraffin stove which was good for nothing as it was hardly ever used except when my father had visited us from town.

Heating water meant more problems for me because I would wake up very early in the morning to build a fire. If I didn't, I would have to have a cold bath, and would be late for school.

All my miseries were washed away when one day I turned on the radio and heard of Appropriate Technologies. To my surprise these people talked of "FUEL SAVING DEVICES." I could not believe what I was hearing: "All fuel scarcity problems solved?" They talked of a modified Paola; of course we had a bucket Paola at home, but it never solved any of my problems. The one they were talking about was a stone-built Paola, very easy to use and cheap to build and also ideal for saving fuel.

I was very keen to learn from ATS about all the fuel saving devices they had. I began to attend ATS courses and workshops. Although I have grown into a big girl today, instead of having bigger bundles of wood on my head every day, I have one every two weeks.

Wood gathering has again turned into a hobby, as fishing is to some fishermen. Thanks to the new technology, I cook with a beautiful Stone Paola, easy to use and also fuel saving.