



ANNUAL REPORT FOR MUBAYA ECO VILLAGE YEAR ENDING 2017

INTRODUCTION / GENERAL SITUATION

The year 2017 was a continuation of hardship in Zimbabwe as the political and economic situation continued to deteriorate at a very terrible pace. The currency crises kept on putting more pressure on the day to day running of the country. The country is still running without a currency: the currency we are using is still the American Dollar but it is not on the market officially and the availability is zero.

In November this year we had a show down when the Army arrested the former president Robert Mugabe and forced him to stand down. We now have a new government in power, although it's still the same regime, but we are looking forward to seeing some transformation within the sectors.

The rain season (November 2016 to April 2017) was very good with the help of the monsoon winds from the Indian Ocean, although it did come with some repercussions in some other countries (South Africa and Mozambique). We had a very good average rainfall; country wide 99% of all country dams were 100% full. The harvest was excellent and we were able to sustain ourselves until the new rainfalls in November 2017. The level of underground water rose as well and the vegetation was effectively restored.



TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENTS OF THE ECOVILLAGE

Due to the experienced political and financial hardship, the progress was a bit slow. We did not accomplish or meet our expectations but we still managed to accomplish some of the projects. The Center has greatly improved in terms of the principals of permaculture and sustainability: the water system is running very well and the trees are looking great. It is very encouraging to see how people are planting trees and how they are eager to learn.

We have started the construction of beehives ourselves. So far we have been able to construct ten and will add another ten at the beginning of next year. Bees will hopefully be attracted by the fruit trees we started planting and by the growing number of flowers from the herbs and other plants in the gardens.

HUMAN RESOURCES

As the project is getting bigger and bigger, with more labor intense work, we have found ourselves in need to engage more people on a small salary scale as workers or, I would say, helpers. Due to my medical condition and to the fact that Cathrine Mubaya is concentrating more of her time on the herbal garden and the production and processing of herbs, we realized that more people were needed to maintain the rate of growth of the project. Finally, we ended up with some helpers leaving because of the low pay. We are now working with three paid people.

PROJECTS

A. Accomplished projects

1. LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

We managed to do a leadership training and community building workshop in January 2017 with an external expert from Zimbabwe, who is currently attending a management-training course in Switzerland. This workshop consisted of mainly young boys in the community who are finding life very tough.



We are still hoping that in the future we will do a follow-up workshop on the leadership training. For the community building, a map of the village was drafted with the over 50 households, their facilities and needs which will be continuously completed. Furthermore, work of art was created on one of the houses of the Center.

2. TREE PLANTING

We managed to offer a tree planting workshop which we was initially planned with the Forestry Commission. We eventually managed to find another source that provided us with trees and the necessary training. We planted 1200 trees including Muzhanje, Mangoes, Avocado, Paw Paw and Peach. This project serves the principles of permaculture in providing food, shelter and cover for the ground to prevent soil erosion. We have the motto in the Ecovillage that says each household should plant a minimum of 10 trees each.



3. SOLAR PUMP

Due to electricity cuts and the idea to drift away from the grid, we thought it was a wise move to start slowly moving away from the grid into green and cleaner energy. Considering the urgent need of pumping water and the cost of electricity, we started with changing to a solar pump. Sometimes we would go for two weeks without power.



With the new solar system to get the water out of the bore hole, we can guarantee continuous provision of water for the drip irrigation of our vegetable fields. Next year we want to continue with a wider project of energy autonomy.

4. ANIMALS

We have increased the number of animals. We started with four pigs and now have ten pigs. We also bought two goats and two sheep. These animals are very important and in line with the permaculture principals. They help a lot in loosening the soil and provide manure for our fields and gardens.



5. VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

We have a large variety of vegetables in the garden but once the rains start the vegetable production reduces due to lots of diseases and pests. We have to look into natural pesticides in the future. We also planted some strawberries and grapes, which are doing very well. The berries are already producing fruits and we are expecting the grapes to be ready next year.



6. ECO-VILLAGE SHOP

We renovated a shop that existed and we now use it as a convenience shop for the people of the village and surrounding areas; the shop only sells basic stuff like sugar, salt, bread, fresh milk, some of our vegetables and so forth. The income from the shop could help us to meet some other expenses that we don't financially request, but now it's running very slow due to the financial constraints in the country. In the future we want to sell more of our own produce.



B. Social Permaculture

We are very much aware that for permaculture to grow into the permanent culture it proposes, it cannot simply end at the bottom of the garden. We must, as individuals, as communities and as a movement, deeply and positively involve ourselves with the people around us, bridging our differences and asking the question, "How can we help one another in bettering ourselves, our environment, our country and our planet?" Therefore, we offered different social activities at the Center.

1. TALENT SHOW

In order to identify talent within the Eco Village we organized a talent show for young people to demonstrate their talent. There was no restriction on age, whoever wanted to show what he or she could do was welcome.



2. SPORTS

In order to involve people we also put together a football team and a netball team. We were incorporated into a local league with 13 teams competing for the trophies and fortunately we won the league both for the boys and girls.



Boys football team



Girls Netball team



And their trophies

C. Trainings of the staff of the eco village Center

1. TRAINING ON SEED HARVESTING

In September 2017 Michael Mubaya attended a two-week training in Portugal (Tamera) on seed harvesting. The main objective of this training was to learn about how to harvest and process seeds. We started by harvesting seeds from the seed garden and bringing the seeds to the seed house for processing. We also harvested fruits and produced juice out of the different type of fruits found in Tamera. I managed to bring back some seeds with me that I planted and I have now harvested quite a number of plants and have produced a good amount of seeds. Below are some of the images of the seeds that we have produced.



2. WORKSHOP IN THE SOLAR VILLAGE

Michael Mubaya attended the energy autonomy seminar soon after he completed the seed harvest training. In this seminar we discussed different methods that could be used to produce different forms of energy. We were put in groups and were asked to come up with a theme. Our theme was to heat up the caravans during the winter time using compost to replace the system they were using that was costing Tamera about EUR 70,000 per month. We did a pilot project while I was still there, where we constructed the compost using wood chips and installed the radiator into a resting room. When I left, the temperature inside the compost was 60 degrees and 40 degrees in the radiator.



3. SEMINAR IN NATURAL MEDICINE

Cathrine Mubaya attended a seminar in Cameroon. The aims of this training seminar are to train 30 people (healers, pastors, missionaries, health workers, teachers and others active in the community) in:

- a) the recognition, knowledge and cultivation of several medicinal plants in a medicinal garden.
- b) the hygienic production of effective Natural Medicines from these plants, (e.g. teas, different medicinal oils, ointments, tinctures, soaps, medicinal charcoal, black stones for snake-bites) and learn how to use several simple technologies.
- c) the treatments of many medical complaints and diseases, including malaria, skin problems, diarrhea, HIV/AIDS and wounds.
- d) the influence of good nutrition and lifestyle on health.

Following the seminar, the participants were expected to:

- e) create their own garden of medicinal plants,

f) prepare their own natural medicines,

g) treat themselves, their families and others within their area of competence, and

h) teach their families, colleagues and others in their communities.

Cathrine already has a medicinal garden and began treating people, especially those with asthma.



C. Unaccomplished projects

Fish pond

We constructed a fishpond that is 6x10m big. In this pond we can accommodate 600 breams and again this is in compliance with the principals of permaculture. We can then use the fertilized water in our gardens and get food (fish). This project is not yet 100% completed due to a heavy work load, especially this season when most people were occupied in the fields. We are almost 80% completed. We are confident to be able to complete this project the latest in the beginning of next year (2018).

Health and Nutrition

People are not always aware of the interaction between food and health. They also often don't think that food needs to have a certain quality in order to be healthy. We therefore had planned to do a permaculture, health and nutrition workshop in September/October. It had to be cancelled mainly due to the political situation. We hope to be able to do this workshop in the near future when the political situation calms down.

Dam restoration

We did not manage to scoop the dam due to lack of availability of earth moving equipment. We had hoped that we could get assistance from our local council but, unfortunately, they don't have the dam scooper. So we were left with the option of hiring the dam scooper 120km away, at a cost of 300 US\$ an hour, and would have to be carried on a big lorry because it's not allowed to drive on public roads. So definitely this could not be done this year. We will have to find space for next year as it's an important project for water retention.

Printing workshop

We also wanted to do an art and printing workshop with the youths but this did not happen because of lack of availability of the artist in due time.

Composting Toilets

We were also supposed to construct compostable toilets but we have moved this project for next year, 2018, because we need to construct the visitors' houses first, in order to know where exactly we want to put these toilets. We are planning to build sustainable houses next year.

MICHAEL MUBAYA December 30th, 2017