

In general

2019 was a very difficult year. The economic situation has deteriorated since the so-called new dispensation came into place, and the political situation is not improving, which has caused a great deal of tension and pressure among the poor, innocent citizens. The water situation had a major blow in 2019, as most wells and water sources ran dry due to less rain fall in the 2018/2019 season. We lost a number of cattle in this past year; at least five of our cattle died since the beginning of 2019.

In 2019, we listed a number of projects that we were supposed to tackle, but only a few projects were realised due to a number of challenges. Projects that were listed are as follows: PDC Poret, Anamed, fish pond, salaries for workers, compostable toilets, gazebo, and a water management project. We also had other projects that were not listed in the initial list but came up later on; these were electricity and the car issue.

In 2018, a representative was sent from Switzerland to assess and give feedback to the Swiss Association in Switzerland on the progress of the projects. When he was here in Zimbabwe we discussed the issue of water and also, the Anamed project. After doing a walk through the area, viewing all possible sites where we assumed the dams could be constructed, we realised that it was a much bigger project and would require a proper fund raising.

Anamed project

The Anamed project consisted of a workshop on the use of medicinal herbs with an expert from Anamed (Action for natural medicine in the tropics), that was supposed to have been conducted at the demo centre at Mubaya Ecovillage but, in the end, it was held at SCOPE Zimbabwe (Schools and Colleges Permaculture Programme in Harare). The reason why we moved the project to Scope was due to the political situation. For this reason, we reduced the size of the project and renounced to do the crowd funding, which was foreseen in the beginning. We then engaged Scope Zimbabwe to do a joint venture, since they were also interested in hosting an Anamed training at Scope. Initially, we wanted to send 10 people to attend the Anamed training but we ended up with 4 participants. They all were awarded with an Anamed certificate. The project was facilitated by an Anamed accredited facilitator from Malawi. It was a seven day workshop that covered detailed theory and practical work. Our team came back motivated and requested a small funding to make some of the products that they made during the training, like soaps, tooth paste, oils, and shoe polish, in order to be sustainable at the centre and in the village.



This was the last day of the training and the participants were awarded with the certificate.

PDC Poret

We have created a relationship with Poret in Chimanimani in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe. In 2018, we sent five participants to participate in a PDC training at Poret, and in 2019, Poret offered us a discounted price to send a further four participants to do PDC training.

Water Management

This project is actually a big project and a bit complex, as it requires some consultation on the technical side and also on the local authority, which is in charge of the area. So far, we have identified places where we want these water retention basins to be located, and we have also identified the two dams that need to be scooped. We also, through our elders, approached Chief Chirau, informing him about our plans. From the feedback, we were told that the Chief was very happy with what we are doing in the community and he also said he hopes that some other communities under his chieftainship will emulate and copy and practice our plans. He also said that these are not big dams so they fall under his jurisdiction; he has the power to authorise such small projects. In the village we also have a water engineer working for a big cooperate sugar cane Company in Mozambique; he will work as our consultant so we don't need to hire or bring in someone at a cost to do the consultancy work.



This is one of the dams that needs scooping to get rid of deposits.

Car Repairs

This is not a project but an absolute need to be covered, since we use the pick-up for a lot of things, in case there is something that needs to be carried.



This is the car that we requested money for repairs.

Almost three quarters of the car was not working, which actually affected us a great deal, and my movement was very restricted, since our transport system in the country does not support my condition. So, I bought all the spare parts that I was asked to by the garage and the car was repaired, but it is still not in good condition. I was advised to change the whole engine since the engine has expired its lifetime.

Electricity Bill

This is also not a project but an assistance from the association as well, to cover the bills from years back. We requested help from the association to settle the bills, since our power has been cut off due to default. We managed to settle our bills and now the power has been reconnected. But still, due to cut outs, we receive just 10% of power.

Salaries and Clothes for the Workers:

Salaries and protective clothing are not necessarily projects, but this was a gesture from the association after we requested support. We asked for help with the protective clothing for five people, including students, since it is a requirement that they should use protective clothing.

We requested some money to buy protective clothing for the workers and the students.



Fish Pond

This project was tried and tested in 2018 using plastic as the under layer of the pond. We soon realised that, yes, one can use plastic, but it has to be a thicker plastic that does not get worn through very quickly. In June 2019, when I came to Switzerland, we discussed the fish pond issue and agreed that we will use material like a tent to put as the under layer. Looking at the rain pattern, we decided to put this project on hold, since the water is not enough. We will wait and see how the rains will be this season, 2019/20.



At one point we did put the plastic as a measure to keep water in the pond but it did not work well.

Gazebo and Compostable Toilets

These two projects were on the list for 2019 but we could not manage to do them; we hope to include them in the 2020 projects list. The dry toilets are a priority as we realised that we are losing a lot of humus by using these conversional toilets. The gazebo also is a priority; we realised that as a united team we need a proper place where we can sit comfortably and share. During the rain season, we don't have a common place to sit together and continue with the work as a team.

The Team

Our Team is comprised of two volunteers (Cathrine and myself), four workers (Antony, Tinashe, Patricia and Rivers) and three students (Cathrine, Tindo and Tendai), who are studying Agro-ecology with Bindura University in partnership with Fambidzanai permaculture centre in Zimbabwe. The students are on attachment until June 2020; they spend about 10 months on attachment, but during this time they go back for their theory and exams for two weeks each block (there are 3 blocks per whole duration). Antony is the last one who joined our team. He is 21 years old and very enthusiastic and organised. He has been working with SCOPE for 4 years, and is also a holder of a PDC certificate and other trainings that he has done while at SCOPE. He is very important, a team leader, and already in 3 weeks he has integrated very well with the team and has come up with some permaculture concepts that are working excellently. He works very well with the students and is a good cover when I am not there. We also have Tinashe Mtikizha, 26 years old, who has been with us for 3 years now. At first, he was working in the shop, but when we closed down the shop, he joined us. Rivers Banda is a young boy who is 21 years old, and has been with us since he was 18. Rivers has never attended school, but is a good worker. When we engaged him, he was basically to help with the animals, as he said that's where his strength is, but now he is enjoying the garden work. Finally, Patricia Mhande, who has worked with us for 2 years now, and is very hard working, although she has a very basic school education.



Tindo (student).



Cathrine a female student pegging the raised beds.



Tendai Chimhenya female student planting some vegetables.



A discussion on the Mandala between Antony and myself.



Construction of walking paths with Rivers on wheelbarrow.



Tinashe and Tindo the male student pegging the herbal garden.

Garden Work

Below are designs of the kitchen garden. From the kitchen garden we are starting on the seed garden, and then we go on to the supermarket garden. After that we will work on the herbal garden. Each area is in charge of their garden, although we still work together in these gardens.



Designing the raised beds for the kitchen garden.



Pegging the kitchen garden.



A child holding the frame for levelling the ground.



Preparing the kitchen garden before pegging and making the raised beds.



An elevation of the mandala before mulching.



Starting to mulch the completed kitchen garden.



This is the final point with bananas and suger cane where all the water is collected after the mandala has been filled with it.



Construction of a path way.



The final point for water collection.

Michael Mubaya, project manager

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