

Dear Members and Volunteers,

Dear Donors and Sympathizers of the Support Association to the Mubaya Ecovillage,

Thanks to your support the Mubaya ecovillage community is able to continue its activities, despite all the ups and downs Zimbabwe experienced during 2019 (page 2). In this context, the search for self-sufficiency and sustainability induces not only food security, but also health (page 1) and collaboration with centers of expertise in agroecology such as the University of Bindura (pages 2 and 3).

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter!

News from Zimbabwe

Workshop on medicinal herbs

Four residents of the Mubaya eco-village participated in training to prepare both medicines and products useful for personal hygiene.

Cathrine Mubaya, Catherine Magaisa, Elizabeth Mubaya and Tendai Chinhema travelled to Harare in October to participate in a workshop on medicinal plants organized by the ecovillage in cooperation with SCOPE, an education programme set up by the Zimbabwean Permaculture Institute (ZIP). The courses were given by a representative of ANAMED (Action for Natural Medicine) from Malawi.

Participants learned how to grow and use medicinal herbs such as Moringa and Artemisia (Artemisia) to relieve diseases such as diabetes and asthma and to reduce some food deficiencies. These plants can also be used to make products such as soaps, lip balms, natural toothpaste and other essential products whose prices have risen sharply due to economic problems in Zimbabwe (*read more on page 2*).

Participants began growing medicinal herbs as soon as they returned to the ecovillage under the supervision of Cathrine Mubaya, who had already attended a training course organized by ANAMED in Cameroon two years ago. Mubaya ecovillage would like to thank SCOPE for organizing the workshop and the free accommodation facilities for the participants.

Read more about it:

Scope Zimbabwe: click [HERE](#)

Anamed Association (Action for Natural Medicine): click [HERE](#)



Participants have obtained an internationally recognized certificate at the end of their training.

A more than difficult year for the country

In the midst of a persistent economic crisis, Zimbabwe have had to face many political tensions and a major drought.



Thousands of Zimbabweans protested on October 25th against Western sanctions, in particular in Harare (Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi / AP).

This year was marked by instability and scarcity in Zimbabwe. According to information provided by Michael Mubaya, our coordinator in the ecovillage, the inflation rate has risen from 10% in 2018 to 350% on average this year, while workers' wages continue to stagnate. To counter hyperinflation, the government imposed the Zimbabwean dollar as the only currency of exchange in the country during the summer. As one of the seven most indebted countries on the African continent, Zimbabwe recently began talks with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to

restructure its debt. In practice, monetary instability has led to shortages of food, medicine, fuel and other essential commodities. The cost of basic food supplies has increased by more than 500% according to Michael Mubaya.

The drought that Zimbabwe has been facing since the beginning of this year is the worst recorded in 40 years. The lack of water threatens to plunge a third of the Zimbabwean population into food insecurity because it has a strong impact on agricultural production, the country's main sector of activity. Drought also has an impact on hydroelectric production. The Kariba's dam, located on the Zambezi River on the border with Zambia, may soon be decommissioned according to information obtained by Michael Mubaya. It produces more than 80% of the country's hydroelectric power.

Economic problems have also caused political tensions between the government and various pressure groups such as the public service union. Government-run hospitals had to close two months ago due to a strike by medical staff, resulting in deaths and many difficulties that also affected residents of the ecovillage. Government-approved demonstrations took place in October to draw the international community's attention to the sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States since 2001 against the government. These international sanctions are still in force, despite the ousting of former President Robert Mugabe in 2017 and his death in September 2019.

Read more about it:

Bloomberg – Zimbabwe edges closer to hyperinflation: click [HERE](#)

Organization for World Peace – Zimbabwe faces worst drought in 40 years: click [HERE](#)

Deutsche Welle – Anti-sanctions demonstrations: click [HERE](#)

France 24 – Doctors' strikes: click [HERE](#)

Collaboration with the University of Bindura

Students in agroecology from the University of Bindura went to the Mubaya ecovillage to do internships.

Mubaya Ecovillage's approach, whose inhabitants are keen to integrate the social and collaborative dimensions of permaculture into the practice of agriculture in Zimbabwe, is increasingly attracting interest in a country that is facing persistent economic difficulties. The Faculty of Agriculture and



Spiwe Mhlanga

Environment of the University of Bindura has contacted Michael Mubaya to allow some students to do practical internships. Spiwe Mhlanga is one student who decided to go to the ecovillage to do a three-month practical work required to obtain her diploma.

Sharing knowledge and good practices is at the heart of the collaboration between the Mubaya ecovillage and the University of Bindura. The agronomic training of the students proved to be very useful for the inhabitants of the ecovillage. Spiwe Mhlanga has developed a soil fertilization program using compost that includes plant and animal residues. She helped Michael Mubaya prepare herbal pesticides grown in the ecovillage to more effectively control aphids that attack vegetables in the garden. She also advised the inhabitants of the ecovillage how to feed farm animals such as pigs or rabbits, proposing in particular to include false mimosa (*leuceana leucocephala*) in their diet.

Spiwe has enthusiastically joined other activities in the ecovillage's daily life such as livestock monitoring, weeding and greenhouse refurbishment. She would like to thank the inhabitants of the ecovillage for their wise advice and warm welcome. Three other students are currently doing a six-month internship at the Mubaya ecovillage until spring 2020.

Read more about it:

Traineeship's report written by Spiwe Mhlanga: click [HERE](#)

Faculty of agriculture and environmental sciences of the University of Bindura: click [HERE](#)

News from Switzerland

Flea markets

Markets are an opportunity for our team of motivated volunteers to raise funds for the Mubaya ecovillage.

Who would have bet on the sale of items recovered from garage sales would be such an effective way to raise funds for the Mubaya ecovillage?

This is the bet that Christine Zimmermann, a member of our association and a great brokerage amateur, has set for herself. She participated with a team of volunteers in numerous flea markets in the old town and on the Place de l'Esplanade in Biel/Bienne as well as in Portissimo, an event in the nearby village of Port on the 14th September.

The association would like to thank Christine in particular for setting up these stands. We are very grateful for her commitment and

hope to be able to count on her help during the next flea markets in the region of Biel/Bienne in 2020, dates of which will soon be published on the website of our association.



The stand of our association at the Portissimo flea market in Port

Future events

General assembly 2020

On May 2nd 2020 16:30 – 19:00

At Selbsthilfe/Info-Entraide premises
Bahnhofstrasse 30 / Rue de la Gare 30 in Biel/Bienne

In addition to the usual statutory points, the report of the trip to Zimbabwe will be presented, bearing in mind that it will take place in April 2020 if the conditions are right. Further information on the General Assembly will be provided to you at the beginning of 2020.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Exhibition “Innehalten im Advent”

Friday, November 29th 18:00 – 21:00

Saturday, November 30th 10:00 – 17:00

19:30 – 21:00

Sunday, December 1st 10:00 – 16:00

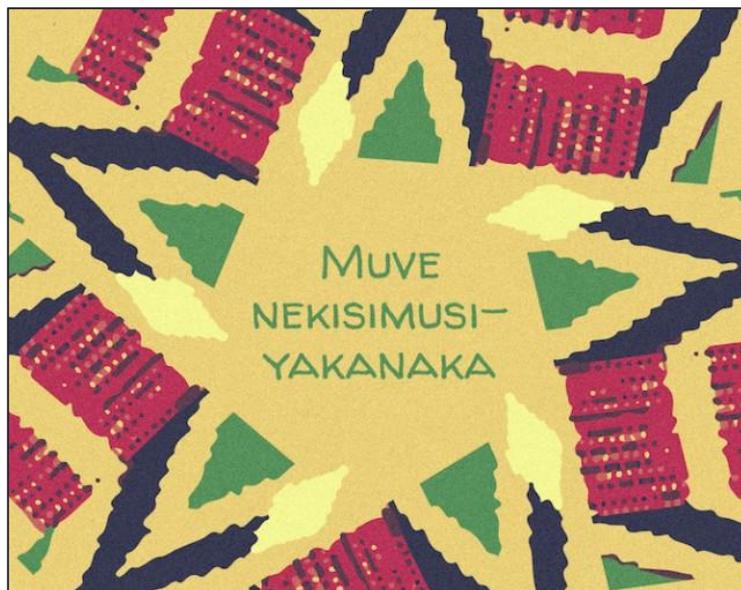
GinaB's Workshop

Schützenmattweg 4, Nidau (near Biel/Bienne)

Our association will participate in this exhibition to present the activities of the Mubaya ecovillage to the people of the region of Biel/Bienne, particularly about the rainwater retention basin.

More information: www.ginab.ch (only in German)

We thank you warmly for your financial support and wish you all the very best for the holiday season!



“Merry Christmas” in Shona, the language spoken at the Mubaya ecovillage

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