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CHASEYAMA AGROECOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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FARMERS GENERATING INCOME THROUGH NURSERY PRODUCTION

By Chitenderano Mutsadyanga

Before attending workshops about nursery production, many farmers, both in the CPC and the villages, did not recognize nursery production as a way of income generation. Most of the farmers did not find value in raising nurseries as they do not see the monetary value attached to it. That's the reason why nobody liked to venture into a nursery project of any kind. Through capacity-building and nursery production training workshops facilitated by PORET, farmers are starting to see the value of having nurseries at home.

CPC, in collaboration with PORET, managed to train farmers about nursery production. A lot of people have benefited from this program including individual farmers, farmer groups, and schools. Farmers have been trained in propagation methods such as budding and grafting, which will increase the production of many indigenous and exotic trees.

Some of the trained farmers are now enjoying income through selling trees from their nurseries. Farmers like Rebecca Chimimba have managed to realise USD200 from her sale of mango seedlings. Morgan Ziyachinga generated USD400 from the sale of 400 mango trees. We also have Mr. Mazungunye from Zvokuitirwa and a lot of other farmers who are benefiting from selling of tree seedlings.

Trees which are being produced in these nurseries include mango, lemon, orange, and also indigenous trees such as mahogany. Currently, the Chaseyama Permaculture Club is advocating for the planting of trees as this will help in combating environmental, social, and economic problems associated with deforestation.

According to PORET's Programs Manager, Mr. Chamudondo, about 816 tree seedlings have been developed in Ward 2 and 2,435 in Ward 5.



Above: Nemutenzi Permaculture Club members showing trees from the nursery they have established.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We are now four months before the end of 2021. We had lined up a lot of programs which we wanted to implement this year. The atmosphere was not in our favor due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Thanks to our PORET team and the Community Volunteers for being helpful in implementing some of the projects and also reaching the community sharing information about COVID 19. We hope COVID will become a thing of the past and our beloved community will rise again on its feet. Thank you to our partners for helping the community realise its development goals. Let's stay safe, mask up and sanitise. COVID is real. **Julious Piti**

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YOUTHS BENEFITED FROM PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE



Participants constructing swales during the PDC



Participants receiving their certificates after completing the PDC

By Kumbirai Dube

PORET Trust, with the support of local traditional leaders and the Chasesyama Permaculture Club, has trained youth through its Permaculture Design Course (PDC) to enhance sound environmental management, reduce land degradation, promote sustainable farming systems and improve food sovereignty and sustainable livelihoods in the community.

It is well known that long back farmers were communicating with nature very well. There were good natural connections of elements, good recycling of nutrients, and adequate food from forests. There was a good ground cover and the ecosystem was well balanced. But later, the land was cleared, the soil was cultivated, crops were grown. Heavy machines were used. Chemical fertilizers were applied to get a high yield from the same piece of land over many years.

This caused high temperatures, low rain rainfall, massive soil erosion, increased pests and diseases, prolonged droughts, land degradation, and hunger. High input is now required to boost soil fertility for it to support plant life.

To get healthy food from a healthy environment, PORET trained 63 youths from Mhandarume Ward 2, Chakohwa Ward 3, Rupise Ward 5, and Chayamiti Ward 6. The training started on the

22 March and ended on 5 May.

The PDC syllabus covers the history of Permaculture, ethics, and principles of Permaculture, 4 ecological blocks, water harvesting, soil fertility (including biofertilizers), plant propagation, climate change, conflict management, food processing,

sustainable sources of energy, integrated pest, and disease management, and land use design.

After the PDC training, the youth are expected to work at their respective villages, supporting the implementation of CPC 2021 plans. The PDC is PORET's key training course and takes place both at the Centre and in the community.

MORE FARMERS TAKING UP HOLISTIC LAND AND LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

By Chitenderano Mutsadyanga and Kumbirai Dube



Above: Farmers from Chibuwe Village who are working towards soil improvement in their fields through livestock management. Second from the left is Mr Joshua Maringe who is implementing the HLLM program. The farmers have requested to be supplied with more boma sheets so that they can manage a sizeable herd of livestock to help improve soil fertility.

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LAND DESIGNING: THE STORY OF DAVID MAKUYANA

By *Chitenderano Mutsadyanga*



Above: part of the gabions made to close a gully

Mr. David Makuyana lives in Nenohwe village in Ward 5 of Chimanimani, with his family of eight members. He works as a cross border truck driver.

According to Makuyana, he noticed that the land he thought to be a paradise to practice farming was being degraded due to erosions and water runoff. More of the rich soils were being swept away and rocks were being exposed due to forces of erosion and denudation. In 2019, he drilled a borehole and installed a tank to store water.

His motive was to plant more trees at his place and create a sustainable orchard for his family. So after drilling the borehole, Makuyana planted his trees and put a security fence around his orchard. In 2020, he invited PORET's Programs Manager Mr. Chamudondo to come and witness his project.

During the visit, Mr. Chamudondo observed a few things which were needed to be improved. He suggested that the farmer should design his land in order to create a lucrative outlook for his place and at the same time direct rainwater towards the orchard.

Gabions were to be made as well as some rock walls to guide the water in the place. In April this year, Mr. Mutsadyanga PORET's Outreach Officer visited the place together with other CPC members on Makuyana's invitation. During the visit, the delegation and the farmer decided to work on the land implementing recommendations that were made by Mr. Chamudondo.

Now the place is beautified with the land design through gabions and gully reclamation through stones. The activities done at the homestead have not only helped Mr. Makuyana's place to look nice but it also helped in minimizing soil erosion as well as improving the water supply to his lovely orchard.

TRADITIONAL LEADERS ADVOCATE FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

By *Kumbirai Dube*

A meeting which was held at PORET's Training Centre on the 3 June 2021 has helped to increase youth participation in the community development programs. 12 traditional leaders from Mhandarume Ward 2, Chakohwa Ward 3, and Rupise Ward 5, the main Chaseyama Permaculture Club, and youth's representatives who attended the PDC all attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of the youth and their contributions to community development. It was noted that most of the youths did not participate in development projects and only elders are seen at the forefront. That's why a meeting with these youths was important to discuss with them and find out why they were not much interested.

During the discussion, it was found that most of the youths were reluctant to be part of these farming-related projects. Through discussions with youth representatives, it was noted that some youths are spending most of their time at the business centres drinking beer, smoking and some are crossing to the diamond fields where they are trying their luck mining diamonds. At the same time, girls are being married young and some are engaging in prostitution to raise income.

After scrutinizing all these challenges through dialogues, the participants suggested conducting training and capacity building workshops in agroecology so that the youth initiate their projects and work in their projects to earn a better living. PORET requested the traditional leaders and village CPC committee to identify youth who were then trained. These youth also supported CPC members in implementing their plans.

A total of 63 youths were trained, 31 in ward 2 and 32 from wards 3, 5, and 6.

Soon after PDC training, village heads were invited to get information from youths and also to give recommendations to PORET

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and CPC main committee so that they can improve their working conditions to fulfil the needs of the farmers. Through continuous assistance from the traditional leaders, quite a number of youth are now attending farming programs. This year only, youth have managed to help village CPC committees to prepare and facilitate the village Seed Fairs. They also supported farmers in Field Days. They have been engaged in water harvesting projects, biofertilizer making, supported nursery production at Zvokuitirwa, and have shared information about COVID 19 with elderly people. Many have also joined the CPC.

Thanks to the traditional leaders for their involvement and support they are giving to the youth for them to be part of the community development vision.

TSOTSO STOVE IMPROVING RURAL WOMEN LIVELIHOOD

By Grace Gumba

After PORET witnessed the mass deforestation happening across the lowveld of Chimanimani, it introduced the Tsotso stove workshop in September 2020 as part of introducing sustainable energy supply program. The workshop was held from 23 September to 3 October highest number being youths. It was attended by 55 participants and was facilitated by an experienced woman Mbuya Stella Hanyana from Nemutenzi village. The workshop demonstrated molding the clay, baking the tsotso stove at a high temperature enabling it to be used for cooking. Once ready it only uses twigs and small branches as a source of energy.

Rebecca Chimimba participated in the workshop. She mobilized her friends to take the project further in their village. They aimed not only to raise awareness about the sustainable utilization of natural resources but also to focus on earning a living through making tsotso stoves for sale. PORET supported the group of 8 women to make the tsotso stoves and helped with the marketing. In July 2021, the group sold 20 tsotso stoves at US\$4 each. They are now working on order of 35 tsotso stoves for a poultry project in Chivhu. The group is happy and they believe that it is worthwhile for others to try tsotso stoves as a project.

Almost half of CPC members rely on the tsotso stove for cooking. These improved cookstoves are cleaner, emit less smoke, more efficient, and use less wood. The project teaches women to mold the stoves and train others. The resources to make the stoves are free and locally available, and the women have been earning money through the sales of these stoves. Users of the stove have reported that family members no longer had runny noses and eyes during cooking.

During winter, the tsotso stove is used as a heater. When it is raining or cold you just lift it and place it where you want.

Through these tsotso stoves, PORET is finding that farmers are saving trees and are helping to combat climate change.

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Above: Boma sheets being put in place in Jinga Village

In a very dry area with little animal forage and poor rainfall of around 300mm per annum, seven farmers from Jinga village have planned to bring together their livestock to help bring back lost biodiversity in their village. The seven livestock owners have a total of 128 cattle and other livestock owners in Jinga village have promised to join.

At first, they had no material to use like boma sheets and could not afford to cut down tree branches because they were afraid of destroying the environment. After PORET learnt that the group was organised and eager to initiate the project, it provided a boma sheet on 13 July that accommodates 15 cattle each (7m x 6.5m = 45.5m²). Nine men constructed the movable kraal but there is a need to add more boma sheets in order to accommodate all the 128 cattle.

As a result of this practice, farmers foresee that there will be: improved soil aeration; increased water penetration in the soil; high seed germination; nearby rivers in the area that had ceased to flow would start to flow again. There will be plenty of grass that will improve the quality of the meat. Land will be rehabilitated and healed.