



FRIENDS FOR MATIBI END-OF-PROJECT REPORT

KOTAMAURIME IRRIGATION

INTRODUCTION

The SLI department of FFM was ready to implement the drip irrigation projects for Kotamaurime and Ruzambu gardens in September 2019 but these projects were paused because of a report about theft solar panels at Tamuka Garden. Interestingly, the gardeners suspected that the contractor who installed the irrigation at Tamuka had a hand in the theft of the solar panels. The community decided to disengage with this company and look for other service providers for future work, beginning with Kotamaurime irrigation. The project resumed after a year in September 2020 with the wiring of deposit money to cover one garden out of two. During the pause, a decision was made to drill boreholes instead of using the river source. However, the project was paused again because part of the fund was advanced to some pending works at the Matibi Nook. When the Kotamaurime project resumed, its total cost was 14,388 USD of which the gardeners contributed 4,253 USD and FFM donated 10,135 USD which is being reported hereunder.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Irrigation work at Kotamaurime Garden opened with the digging of trenches by gardeners. This took only 4 days, indicating enthusiastic community commitment. However, the contractor took over 2 months to gather the materials and bring them to Matibi. This was caused by double tasking whereby the same contractor was asked to take over the borehole system at the Nook which was left incomplete by a previous contractor. The next step involved erecting a tank stand with concrete footing. Unfortunately, the footing collapsed only 5 days after the announcement of project completion, reportedly due to persistent rainfall. The community helped the contracted company with manual labour during the laying of the under-structure, even during the installation of the second tank. Two agricultural officers were present to inspect the finished work before the contractor could be paid. However, the inspection was a bit delayed because one of the officers lost his mother and had to be away from duty for some time.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The work presented the following lessons and recommendations:

- That the community is a decision maker when it comes to choosing the best way forward when faced with a crisis. They suspected a contractor and as a result a new contractor was called.
- That a delayed project is not necessarily a failed project. Kotamaurime came out to have the most reliable water source so far due to the bold decision to drill a borehole.
- That a contractors' database is important. In the past, there seemed to be a shortage of companies that are into irrigation business.
- That it is ever convenient to pay the contractor after work inspection. Perhaps the contractor was going to delay attending the broken tank if the payment was already made.
- That the tanks must be mounted a safe distance away from the garden beds and other spaces where people frequently gather. The falling tanks can destroy crops and even injure or kill people.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the introduction, Kotamaurime irrigation was supposed to take place concurrently with Ruzambu irrigation. The approved project proposal had these two sub projects forming one double assignment. The completion of Kotamaurime irrigation means the urgent need to attend to Ruzambu irrigation which is its twin garden. For Ruzambu, the total cost is 14,400 USD and the requested donation is 10,555 USD.