



UPDATES ON FFM WORK AS AT SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2021

GENERAL SITUATION

Zimbabwe is currently experiencing political quietude with political rallies expected to resume next year ahead of polls which are due in 2023. Gatherings are limited as the country continues with COVID-19 lockdown which is currently at level 2. The country recorded 129,360 confirmed COVID-19 cases as of September 24th, including 4,602 deaths. Over 3 million and 22 thousand people were vaccinated against COVID-19 by this date, and the government is saying there are enough vaccines for over 10 million people. Recently the government donated some vaccines to Namibia. There is however an alarming infection rate among children in school where there is unreliable supply of personal protective equipments.

On the economic front, some spectacular accomplishments are being witnessed in the transport sector where roads are being rehabilitated, disused rain coaches being revived and new buses being procured. Another accomplished sector is agriculture wherein the public are encouraging government to continue on the path of zero tillage conservation farming which performed wonderfully in the previous season, except in marginal low veldt regions such as Matibi. Other sectors such as mining and manufacturing continue in the mode of promises and investment deals which are yet to materialise, save for one gas plant which was launched in Mutare in July. A winery deal was signed earlier this year for Mwenezi but action on the ground is yet to be visible.

Masvingo as a region has embraced the devolution agenda with stunning enthusiasm. The Minister of State for Provincial Affairs singled out the underway Matibi Nook as inspiring on track and promised to publicise it under the placard of devolution. The District authorities in Mwenezi are increasingly visiting the yet to commence Nook and calling to ascertain its progress.

The region is also slowly experiencing changes in weather patterns. The southern districts including Mwenezi used to be extremely hot around 40 Celsius degrees but the agriculturalists are saying the average has dropped to around 33. They ascribe this development to the recently constructed Lake Tugwi-Mukosi which spurred a micro climate. Local transport network remains a greatest challenge as the available dust roads are unusable and the government is busy with major highways. All roads linking to Matibi are riddled with ripples and potholes which damage vehicles and the best that the government does is to grade the roads, which solves the problems for barely a week and the surface is rippled again.

PROJECTS IN BRIEF

a) **Nook**

The Nook is now ready to embrace its users. The Nook team will finish some few final touches (especially corrections of some finished assignments) while resident in the Nook. They are currently arranging the equipment in the hall, which was transported with the help of the Rural District Council which charged US\$80 for fuel. They will soon transfer their unfinished 'projects' in Bulawayo to Matibi, for which they need US\$110 advanced by the Bulawayo team for materials.



Also, the Nook is now connected to the internet installed by a government-owned company called Tel One. The internet installation exercise had an unplanned expense of US\$10 for a bag of reinforcement cement. The Nook already requires office accessories such as a printer and other stationery.

Sheldon will soon engage the contractor who partitioned the hall for corrections on the warped wall boards. Gilbert will oversee the corrections on the French doors which were fitted with clear glass instead of obscure glass. The plumber promised to repair a leakage in the toilets in the first week of October as he was tied up with other work.

Currently the Nook Hopper in India is preparing to come and commence the trainings at Matibi Nook. He is applying for voluntary work visa targeting to be in the county by October 4th. Over half of the items on his preparations checklist had been done by September 25th, with the rest possibly going to be complete by the 30th.

b) CHS

A brief meeting was conducted on 22 September with the Medical Superintendent, the Sister-in-Charge and the Hospital Administrator to appraise the projects. They were happy with the commitment by FFM towards the welfare of the hospital, for example through allowances for doctors. Appreciation was also expressed for solving the previously troublesome sewage problems.

They however reported that they were previously facing challenges in the Pharmacy leading to delays in preparing drug requirements. There is now a fulltime pharmacist to help with this work on everyday basis, meaning that the delays will be a thing of the past. They request the helpers to be strict about the expiry dates of the donated medicines so that they will have a shelf life of at least one year.

Regarding the staff garden, the meeting highlighted that irrigation was long awaited but they were finding it difficult to raise quotations (only one quotation was at hand). A suggestion to seek quotations on social media platforms was welcomed.

It was also decided with finality that a new theatre was not needed but to renovate the existing one, for which the contractors will be found via social media. Dr Arituri agreed to attend Trust meetings and to report on behalf of the hospital regularly.

c) EEA

The school appreciates the efforts of the FFM in various projects for which support is still needed. In the textbooks project, it was mentioned that junior classes were in need of new curriculum books. Furniture was supplied up to Grade 6 now and the following year will be the turn for Grade 7. Enough staff furniture was already in the process of being supplied, and the supplier said they will deliver by 28 September.

The school expressed disappointment with the supplier of fencing material who diverted 25kg tying wire and is failing to replace it in good time. They threatened to sue the supplier if the wire is not replaced by end of September.



The Priest-in-Charge took the opportunity to convey the bishop's request for support in constructing a secondary school in the next 5 years. The Teacher-in-Charge also understood the need to regularly attend FFM meetings at the Nook with reports. She said she was ready to sign the organic garden constitution but the AGRITEX officer was busy.

d) SLI

Two new gardens are now fenced (Banda and Chimurudze) and their toilets are being constructed, bringing the total gardens to 6 now. The agricultural officer agreed that next year there will be no new gardens because of a lot of work that needs to be done in the existing ones. The officers said that 2 pumps (for Njeremoto and Kotamaurime) had broken down, and maybe this has to do with pump capacity which should be relooked before increasing the number of gardens under irrigation. Tamuka garden which lost solar panels (4 of them) is still struggling to replace them.

Interesting commitment is showing in the gardens as production never ceased regardless of the said challenges. The gardens even conducted localised agricultural shows called field days.

The need to diversify activities at the existing garden sites was also noted, meaning that each garden will need to rear small livestock and keep honeybees to intensify activities at the sites. This speaks to the importance of dew ponds and bee houses which can no longer take place in 2021 as scheduled but must not fail in 2022 before resuming with establishing new gardens in 2023. The contractor drilling a borehole at Ruzambu was given up to end of September to resume the work or to quit.

e) Administrative

The Board of Trustees reviewed the bank accounts and chose to keep the one with account number 21519-35538944233010. The other active account will be closed and the Projects Coordinator has since collected the account closure form. Other accounts were already closed by the bank due to dormancy.

The signatories also signed the new account mandate as requested by the bank to update the signing arrangement. Currently there is no local signature in Panel A and the Trustees agreed to add Adnos to Panel A.

The Trustees together with staff are proposing to start-up a project to generate petty cash. They are proposing to fund this project through personal contributions and then ask FFM Switzerland to assist with shortfalls. Sheldon and Gilbert are already gathering information about the requirements of rearing pigs for pork at the Nook. Other creativities are welcome to help the Trust in tackling minor everyday costs such as travel and subsistence.