

- Leadership Exchange visit ignites teamwork and agroecology innovations
- Chimanimani District monitoring team paid a visit to PORET to monitor the projects which are being implemented in the low veld
- Field impaction initiative ignites hope and innovation in Mubururu Village

CHASEYAMA AGROECOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE VISIT IGNITES TEAMWORK AND AGROECOLOGY INNOVATIONS

On February 25, 2024, a group of 30 leaders from PORET including Board Members, staff, members of the Chaseyama Permaculture Club, youth leaders and farmers, embarked on a transformative two-day exchange visit to Masvingo Province. The initiative was designed as a team building exercise focused on sharing knowledge, enhancing leadership skills and deepening understanding of agroecology and community development.

The journey began at the Shashe School of Agroecology in Mashava, a site where Zimbabwe's agroecology practices took root back in the days. At this pioneering institution, the participants had the unique opportunity to engage with agroecology veterans, including Mr Nelson Mudzingwa, one of the founding members of the school and a leading figure in the global agroecology movement, La Via Campesina. Mr Mudzingwa's inspiring account of transforming idle farmlands into vibrant, sustainable agroecology centres resonated deeply with the group. His emphasis on dedication and community collaboration motivated everyone to reimagine the potential of sustainable farming in their own areas.

Throughout the visit to Shashe School, the group experienced first hand the innovative practices that have revolutionized local agriculture. They observed interactive sessions and practical demonstrations where community members, led by Mr Mudzingwa, worked together to implement agroecology techniques that ensure sustainable food production and environmental protection. The participants also visited a successful local project led by farmer Mr Mutsenhure, where they witnessed how integrated agroecological practices have been adopted as a foundation for community resilience.



Above: part of the participants looking at a fishpond constructed at Mr Mudzingwa homestead in Shashe.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This edition highlights three significant events: Simone's monitoring and support visit, the Chimanimani District Monitoring Team's visit to PORET and the Leadership Exchange Visit where the participants visited Shashe School of Agroecology and Great Zimbabwe monuments all in Masvingo Province.

These engagements were instrumental in strengthening our work within the community, providing valuable insights for growth and improvement. As we move forward, our focus remains on deepening our collaboration with different stakeholders and amplifying local voices. The dedication and resilience of our community continue to inspire us in our mission toward promoting food security and community empowerment.

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The exchange visit also included a trip to the Great Zimbabwe Monuments, a site steeped in cultural and historical significance. Against the majestic backdrop of ancient ruins, the participants engaged in team-building activities that fostered a spirit of unity and shared purpose. The setting not only provided an environment for reflection but also allowed the group to bond over their common goals of advancing sustainable agriculture and community development.

The two-day visit proved to be more than just an educational excursion. It laid the groundwork for enhanced collaboration among PORET Board

Members, staff, CPC leaders, youth leaders and local farmers. By stepping away from their routine roles and immersing themselves in an environment that championed teamwork and innovation, the participants created a stronger connections and shared valuable insights that will benefit their on-going efforts in agroecology and sustainable community development.

As one of the wayforward of this visit, the participants have committed themselves to develop centres of agroecology excellence back home and a new idea of coming up with a culture centre put on the table.

CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT MONITORING TEAM PAID A VISIT TO PORET TO MONITOR THE PROJECTS WHICH ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED IN THE LOW VELD

The District monitoring team, led by DDC Mr Mushayavanhu of Chimanimani, recently paid a visit to the PORET project as part of its annual district monitoring exercise of the work which is being done by development partners. Representing the council, public works and engineering departments, the team set out to assess the progress of the watershed project being implemented in various low veld villages. This initiative, carried out by PORET in partnership with local communities is designed to complement government efforts in water conservation and sustainable agriculture and the visit provided a timely opportunity to evaluate both achievements and challenges.

Before heading out on the site tour, local farmers presented their work, sharing detailed accounts of their efforts to implement water harvesting initiatives. In these presentations, the farmers explained how they have been constructing and maintaining rainwater collection structures such as swales, dams, gabions, infiltration pits and pit beds. Their commitment to innovative watershed management techniques highlights the critical role that local knowledge and hands on labour play in addressing water scarcity. The pre visit presentations not only set the stage for the site assessments but also underscored the community's

active involvement in safeguarding their natural resources.

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During the tour, the monitoring team observed first-hand tangible outcomes of these efforts. They visited several project sites where they witnessed the construction of structures designed to capture and conserve rainwater.

These systems are essential in areas where rainfall can be unpredictable and they provide a reliable source of water for both irrigation and household use. The careful planning and execution of these

initiatives demonstrated how combining traditional farming practices with modern water conservation methods can yield significant benefits for the community. The improvements noted during the visit have the potential to boost agricultural productivity and contribute to a more resilient local ecosystem.

DDC Mr Mushayavanhu used the occasion to offer several recommendations aimed at further enhancing the project's impact. He emphasized the need to organize dedicated meetings with village heads as a strategy for raising awareness about the project's objectives. Such meetings, he explained, would help ensure that every community member understands the importance of preserving resources. He also advocated for exchange visits among farmers from different areas, suggesting that these trips could foster a network of knowledge sharing and mutual support. By exchanging best practices in water management and sustainable agriculture, the farmers could build a stronger, more united community.

In addition to these recommendations, Mr Mushayavanhu stressed that it is crucial for all members of different committees to fully grasp the project goals and their individual roles. To address this need, he advised that further training and support should be provided to help overcome any challenges encountered during project implementation. This additional guidance is expected to ensure that all guidelines are followed meticulously, thereby facilitating the smooth progress of the project and enhancing its long-term benefits.

The visit proved to be an invaluable opportunity for the PORET team to share their experiences and learnings with government officials, reinforcing the strong bond between local authorities and the farming community. This collaborative approach is essential in fostering an environment where sustainable practices can thrive. As the project continues to evolve, the insights gained from the monitoring visit will serve to strengthen efforts in water conservation, improve agricultural practices and ultimately contribute to the well-being of the community.

FIELD IMPACTION INITIATIVE IGNITES HOPE AND INNOVATION IN MUBURURU VILLAGE



Above: participants gathered at Mabvira Homestead during the HLL Learning and Monitoring exchange visit

On March 29, 2025, Mubururu Village was abuzz with energy as 78 passionate participants gathered for the Holistic Land and Livestock Management

Learning and Monitoring Exchange Visit which was held at Mr and Mrs Mabvira. The event brought together local leaders, farmers and other community members eager to learn about the field impaction technique that has been transforming dry land agriculture to provide food for the community.

At the centre of this initiative is the drive to improve soil fertility and boost the production of small grains using livestock as a climate change adaptation measure. Mr Mabvira 78 and his wife, 70, have become local pioneers by using cattle and goats not only to regenerate their land but also to reduce erosion through strategically constructed water harvesting structures. Their success, along with inspiring results from other agroecology practitioners like Obert Mubururu and John

Kembo who began similar efforts in 2021 and achieved high yields in challenging dry conditions, has spurred widespread interest in this sustainable farming method.

During the visit, participants toured the Mabvira fields, where they observed a unique mix of three seed varieties planted in the impacted area, with the Macia dwarf being the primary focus. The demonstration was worth seeing, while traditionally managed fields needed rainfall to yield a harvest, the impacted fields were already showing readiness for harvest. Thanks to improved soil structure and moisture retention. The farmers remarked on how the simple act of allowing cattle to rest in the boma sheet could bring about overnight changes in the soil, a testament to the natural regenerative power harnessed by field impaction.

One of the day's highlights was the boma sheet construction exercise, led by a farmer Morden Chieza. He demonstrated how to measure and plan the kraal, using a formula where a 7 by 6-meter area (42 square meters) is designated to accommodate 14 cattle, setting a target of impacting 252 square meters in the next season. While some new farmers found the measurements challenging at first, those who had practiced impaction in previous seasons readily shared their insights, creating a sense of collective learning and cooperation.

The exchange visit provided a platform for farmers to engage in discussions, ask questions, and share their experiences. Topics ranged from integrating manure into impacted fields to the benefits of conservation farming practices. One participant queried the feasibility of field impaction for those without livestock, prompting advice to leverage available village livestock while maintaining proper care. Other discussions touched on the noticeable improvements in germination, crop height, color and harvesting time when the soil is well-fed, demonstrating the tangible benefits of this method.

Despite challenges such as cattle health during drought conditions, the consensus among the farmers was one of optimism. As the CPC main Committee secretary, Mr Mashereni, remarked, the very challenges they faced underscored that something meaningful was underway in their community. He encouraged everyone to synchronize their efforts and pool their resources, ensuring that larger areas could be effectively impacted to boost overall food production.

The day's program concluded with a joyful celebration, where farmers came together to share a traditional song a playful reminder that complacency could be as harmful as inaction. The sight of the host farmer in her signature black T shirt, accompanied by her husband in blue, epitomized the pride and satisfaction of a community that is steadily transforming its agricultural landscape.

The HLLM Learning and Monitoring Exchange Visit not only exceeded expectations in participation but also reinforced a powerful message, through shared knowledge, teamwork and innovative practices like field impaction, even the harshest dry land can be turned into a thriving source of nutritious seeds and food. Participants showed interest in carrying out livestock field impaction.



Above: participants engaged into the construction of a boma sheet at Mr and Mrs Mabvira field in Mubururu Village.