

CHASEYAMA AGROECOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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- Healing the Land: Lessons from Victoria Falls – Africa Centre for Holistic Management
- PORET expands watershed management practises across Zimbabwe
- PORET bringing positive change to communities through youth and women empowerment programs
- Over 600 farmers trained in soil and water management in Chimanimani

Healing the Land: Lessons from Victoria Falls – Africa Centre for Holistic Management

A group of farmers, community leaders, government officials, PORET and TSURO staff set out on a journey to the Africa Centre for Holistic Management (ACHM) in Dimbangombe, Victoria Falls. The visit was done from the 13th to the 17th of November 2024. This was no ordinary trip; it was a journey into the heart of land restoration, a chance to witness first-hand how broken ecosystems could be brought back to life through innovative methods and community-driven action.

ACHM has become a beacon of hope for regenerative land management. Here, the land tells a story, a story of transformation, resilience, and unity.

Our visit began with a lecture by ACHM expert Mr Elias Ncube, who walked us through the principles of Holistic Land and Livestock Management (HLLM). They explained how, by mimicking nature's cycles, livestock could be used as tools to heal the land. Rotational grazing allows grasses to recover, prevents soil erosion, and supports soil fertility. "Livestock is not the problem," he said. "It's how we manage them."

The lecture also emphasized the importance of community participation and unity. Without a collective vision and shared goals, the most effective techniques could fail. They encouraged us to document every step of our journey—photos, data, and stories—not just for accountability but also as inspiration for others.

After the lecture, the real magic began. We embarked on a guided tour of the ACHM site, walking across lush green pastures and along revived streams. These areas were once barren and lifeless, yet now they pulsed with life.



Above: Participants gathered at one of the revived streams in the ACHM Farm- Dimbamombe.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As the year comes to an end, we at PORET celebrate the incredible achievements of over 600 farmers trained in watershed management. Their dedication to healing the land and restoring water systems is an inspiration to us all. We are excited to award them with Level 1 certificates on the 7th of December 2024, marking a significant step towards sustainability.

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas filled with joy and peace and a New Year full of hope, growth, and continued collaboration for a greener future. Thank you for your support in making 2024 a remarkable year for our communities and the environment!

Julious Piti (PORET Director)

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We saw how strategic grazing had restored the water cycle: streams that had dried up decades ago were now flowing, recharging underground aquifers and sustaining plant and animal life.

We were captivated by the harmony between livestock and wildlife. Cattle grazed alongside antelopes, each contributing to the balance of the ecosystem. Birds chirped overhead, and the air was filled with the scent of fertile soil—a testament to how nature heals when given the right support.

But the visit wasn't just about what we saw; it was about what we felt. Walking on revitalized land, we felt hope. Listening to the success stories of ACHM staff and community members, we felt determination. Witnessing the fruits of collective action, we felt inspired.

As we left ACHM, our minds were full with ideas for Chimanimani. What if we could restore our watersheds using HLLM principles? What if we could recharge our rivers, bring life back to our lands, and strengthen biodiversity?

This exchange visit was not just a learning experience; it was a call to action. With the knowledge we have gained, we are ready to build a localized HLLM model, empower our communities through training, and take steps to heal our landscapes one pasture, one stream, one community at a time.

Together, we can transform Chimanimani, just as ACHM transformed Dimbangombe. And like the thriving lands of ACHM, we too can tell a story of hope and renewal for generations to come.

PORET EXPANDS WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PRACTISES ACROSS ZIMBABWE



Above: Swale constructed in Tsholotsho District

PORET Trust is working with organisations and communities across Zimbabwe to solve land degradation problems through water harvesting. This work started in Chimanimani, where PORET worked with local people to build systems that collect and save water. These systems, like swales, gully reclamation, dams, infiltration pits and gabions, made a big difference in the area. Now, PORET is sharing this knowledge with other Districts in the country.

PORET has been contracted to work in places like Mudzi, Rushinga, Gokwe, Hwange, Kariba, Tsholotsho, and Bikita implementing various water

harvesting structures. Below are some of the remarks made by people who were involved in the implementation of these water harvesting structures in various Districts.

Hololo village is in ward 22 under Chief Magama in agroecological region 5 of Tsholotsho District. Maximum temperature is up to 40 degrees Celsius and minimum of 10 degrees Celsius. When PORET team visited the village, the ground was bare, with little vegetation. People in the area cut down trees and use the logs to construct kraals and also to secure their homes. Amos Piti

During our visit to Rushinga, we visited a nearby river that had completely dried up. Villagers were digging deep wells within the silted riverbed with hope of accessing water. Observing this situation PORET team emphasized the urgent need for effective watershed management in the catchment areas. Without intervention, the community will continue facing severe water scarcity and erosion issues that degrade soil quality, further worsening food production challenges. Heaven Mashingaidze.

When we left Gokwe, we were sure that our team has done justice in assisting the people with water

harvesting structures. We have put in place dams, swales and infiltration pits. I was so impressed by one man called Joram Mapfumo who was in our group. He replicated what we were teaching back at his home. When we left Gokwe, he challenged us that on our next visit, we are going to see his big horticulture project. Edward Piti.

The work PORET did was not only about building these water harvesting structures. They also teach people how to care for the environment and use sustainable water-saving methods. This means the knowledge stays in the community, and farmers are better prepared to deal with droughts and protect their land for the future.

What started in Chimanimani as a local initiative is now helping many other districts in Zimbabwe. PORET's work shows that local solutions, guided by experts, can bring big changes.

These projects are giving hope to farmers, improving the environment, and helping communities become stronger. PORET's dream of a greener Zimbabwe is slowly coming true as more places join this effort.

PORET BRINGING POSITIVE CHANGE TO COMMUNITIES THROUGH YOUTH AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

PORET is making an impact in local communities by introducing projects that uplift youths and women, improve livelihoods, and strengthen community empowerment. Through various initiatives in Jinga, Zvokuitirwa, Mumera, and surrounding villages, PORET is empowering people to build better lives for themselves and their families.

In Jinga Village, young people are benefiting from a goat pass-on scheme. Under this program, youths receive goats to start their own small livestock projects. The scheme not only helps improve their livelihoods but also inspire them to take an active role in supporting their community's development.

PORET is leading change, with several empowerment programs under the guidance of Grace Gumba, (PORET Learning Secretary) being implemented in several villages. In Mumera Village, women and young mothers received a baobab processing machine. This has opened up new opportunities for them to create products from baobab fruit, boosting their incomes and financial independence.

In Zvokuitirwa Village, women were provided with a seed house to improve seed storage and management. This initiative supports sustainable farming and strengthens food security for families in the area.

PORET is also promoting community engagement through activities like soccer tournaments. These events bring people together, build teamwork among youths, and encourage healthy lifestyles. Alongside these, PORET continues to implement other livelihood projects that create income-generating opportunities for families.

These initiatives highlight PORET's dedication of empowering marginalized groups and creating lasting positive change. By supporting youths and women with practical tools and opportunities, PORET is helping communities to grow stronger and more resilient. The future looks bright as more people embrace these life-changing programs.

Coming Up Next

1. District Tree Planting Day to be held in Changazi on the 7th of December 2024. The theme of this year is; ***Trees and Forests for Ecological Restoration and Improved Livelihoods***. The tree of the year is *Raulvofia caffra*

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OVER 600 FARMERS TRAINED IN SOIL AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN CHIMANIMANI



Above: farmers from Nyanyadzi taking a tour around PORET Nursery garden during a participatory soil and water management at PORET Centre

More than 600 farmers across the low-veld of Chimanimani have successfully completed Participatory Soil and Water Management courses aimed at healing the land and restoring underground water. These workshops were organized to prepare farmers to implement watershed projects in their villages, focusing on recharging rivers and improving water availability for the future.



Above: shows bare land in Dzitiro village ward 20. Most of the land is now bare full of gullies.

The training sessions were conducted by a team from PORET, and the trained local farmers known as Peer trainers. Participants were taught about practical techniques such as building swales, constructing water harvesting systems, and

managing soil to prevent erosion. The workshops also emphasized teamwork, encouraging farmers to work together in protecting and regenerating their landscapes.



Above: Swale construction in Mutsiyo Village under Nyanyadzi River Watershed Management Project

This initiative has brought communities together with a shared goal of healing their environment and creating sustainable water systems. Many farmers have already started applying what they learnt by building structures in at their homes that reduce water runoff and conserve soil.

To celebrate this milestone, 600+ farmers will be awarded Level 1 Certificates in Watershed Management on December 7 during the national tree planting day. This recognition not only honours their hard work but also empowers them to continue leading change in their communities.

The success of these workshops highlights the importance of community-driven solutions in tackling environmental challenges. With their new skills and knowledge, these farmers are well-equipped to create healthier ecosystems and ensure water security for future generations.