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CHASEYAMA AGROECOLOGY NEWSLETTER



*Jinga Village, Chaseyama,
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NURTURING RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF EL NINO

Chimanimani Low Veld - In the sun-scorched landscapes of Chimanimani, where the land thirsts for relief and the air shimmers with heat, agroecology farmers are confronting a formidable effect of El Nino. The effects of El Nino, being characterized by drought and high temperatures, has cast a shadow over the fields and tested the resilience of the Small-Scale farmers in the low veld of Chimanimani.

Zimbabwe was hit by El Nino Induced drought during the 2023-2024 farming season. Most of the crops died before reaching maturity stage. Rivers are starting to dry leaving people and animals with no enough water supply. Elnino has affected both the small scale and commercial farmers in the country.

At the heart of the struggle lies the challenge of water scarcity. With rainfall levels decreasing and rivers running dry, farmers find themselves grappling with dry soils and declining water supplies. Now in the month of May, streams and rivers like, Hapare stream, in ward 3, Mudima river in Cashel ward 1, Makuhunga dam in ward 4 are already thirsty for water. "It's a daily battle," laments Mr Makaza an agroecology practitioner from Muchakgara Village. "Without water, our crops wither and die, leaving us with little to show for our efforts."

The lack of enough rainfalls did not only affect the crop fields, but it's also taking a toll on the nutritional gardens which survives from irrigation. Farmers in the low veld of Chimanimani rely on rivers and streams for irrigating their gardens. With declining levels of water, it means that nutritional gardens are also going to be affected.



Above: Drying Makuhunga Dam in Muchakagara Village, Ward 4

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we navigate the challenges posed by El Nino in our beloved Chimanimani, it's essential to recognize the resilience and determination of our community, particularly our farmers. Despite facing water scarcity and soaring temperatures, they continue to exemplify the spirit of perseverance and innovation.

As we continue to support and uplift our farming community, let us remember the importance of solidarity and collaboration. Together, we can weather the storm of El Nino and emerge stronger and more resilient than ever before.

Julious Piti (Director)

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In the face of these challenges, agroecology farmers are turning to innovative solutions to mitigate the impacts of El Nino. Rainwater harvesting systems, and mulching techniques are being employed to conserve precious water resources and nourish thirsty crops. Shade structures and cover crops offer respite from the blazing sun, providing a refuge for plants struggling to survive in the heat.

Farmers are already turning into solutions offered by agroecology of saving water for the use in times of need. Also to those who have been doing water harvesting, their deep wells will last a long period supplying water for consumption and irrigation.

But the most powerful tool by agroecology farmers is their spirit of resilience and adaptation. Drawing

upon centuries of traditional knowledge and guided by the principles of agroecology, they refuse to be daunted by the obstacles before them. "We've faced drought before," says Mbuya Judith Bingadadi, her voice infused with determination. "And we've always found a way to persevere."

As the dry season stretches on, the challenges posed by El Nino may continue to test the resolve of Chimanimani's agroecology farmers. But with innovation, determination, and a deep reverence for the land, they stand ready to confront whatever the future may hold. And in doing so, they embody the true spirit of agroecology—a spirit that thrives even in the face of adversity.

PORET TV HAS RELEASED EPISODE 1 OF ITS TV SERIES TITLED CHASEYAMA



Above: Chaseyama the Drought movie crew

On Friday the 17th of May, PORET Director Mr Julious Piti officially Launched the Chaseyama movie called Chaseyama the drought. The movie is now premiering on PORET YouTube Channel.

The series is the first to be released by PORET which looks about the agroecology dynamics in the lowveld of Chimanimani, with the first episode focusing on the drought which has hit the country.

Farmers in Chaseyama have been busy working on a number of Agroecology practises at their homes which include land design, agroforestry, water harvesting, establishment of nursery and nutritional gardens, and other projects. These activities are

helping them to transform the region of Chaseyama into a beacon of agroecology.

The series which features Mandlovu a central figure in the whole movie is touching about how farmers have suffered from the consequences of El Nino. As farmers are crying because their crops wilted, Mandlovu is smiling because her crop field is green and her crops are healthy.

Other farmers have named her a witch because she is the one who has managed to do well whilst others are crying. Her secret only lies in agroecology which others farmers are not practising.

Mr Steve Ephraim who is the film Director said that, the movie was inspired by working examples of farmers who have managed to harvest good yields despite the effects of Elnino.

Mr Julious Piti, who is the PORET Director and also the Film Producer said that agroecology plays a pivotal role in the sustainable food production. Hence if people don't understand it, farmers will start to point fingers at each other as possible witches.

Featuring in the movie are first time talented actors and crew which include, Virginia Karisawu, Heaven Mashingaidze, Julius Piti, Tinashe Jinga, Tsvakai Dzokurasa, Chitenderano Mutsadyanga, Taurai Sithole, Grace Gumba, Saymore Mupunga, Vimbikai Chamazhika, Courage Dube, Brighton

Muchazoreka, Judith Bingadhadhi, Docusi Mabanja Nellisa Chinyanya, F Makoni, G Mucheto, Moses Kudana, Elias Jarawani, Cecilia Muzvido and Tapiwanashe Jazi.

To see the movie, visit PORET YouTube channel on poret trust Tv.

FEPA STUDY GROUP VISITED CHASEYAMA ON AN AGROECOLOGY TOUR



Above: FEPA Study Group posing for a photo with PORET staff at PORET Centre.

PORET Centre Chimanimani – A 10-member delegation of FEPA Study group visited PORET on the 14th of May 2024 and stayed until the 17th of May. PORET welcomed the delegation with members from Switzerland and German who were eager to explore the Zimbabwe rich agroecology and traditional practices.

Located in the lowveld area of Chimanimani, Chaseyama has been developing into a stronghold of sustainable farming practices and community resilience. It is against this background that the FEPA Study Group embarked on a journey of discovery, seeking to glean insights into the unique approach to agriculture and its deep-rooted cultural traditions by small scale farmers in Chaseyama.

Led by Barbra, a former FEPA Director and now one of the Board Members, the delegation was greeted with open arms by farmers from Chaseyama Permaculture Club during the first day, who

generously shared their knowledge and experiences during the first day of their visit.

On the second day, a number of activities were lined ahead of the visitors. Early in the Morning, the visitors were escorted by Edward Piti to climb the Chayamiti mountain where they could witness the sun rising and also where they can see the landscape beneath.

After the mountain visit, the Visitors were taken into the community where they visited few community members to learn about their agroecology ventures and their way of life. They visited Judith Bingadadi a farmer who lives in Hapare village. The farmer has a number of projects at her home which include, food processing, poultry production, livestock production and vegetable production. The delegate had time with Judith Bingadadi as they share notes on some of the projects she is doing. Notes were shared on how she is doing Field Impaction and generally her way of life.



Above: Visitors from FEPA listening to Judith Bingadadi (2nd from Left) as she explains about Livestock Field Impaction.

It was an exciting moment at Mr Kumbirai Dubes place in Hapare Village where the visitors witnessed a number of agroecology practices at his place. The visitors were introduced to his vegetable production project where he is growing and experimenting organic food production using the organic means. The visitors also learnt about how Dube is developing his farm to produce food for his family and sell surplus to other people in the community. The day ended well with a visit to the Hotsprings resort area where there was funny watching the springs and swimming.

The tour continues on the next day with a Visit at Mr Daniel Bandes residents in Jinga Village close to Nechitima. The visitors toured around his vegetable garden, his seed bank and also the fish ponds which are still under construction. Mr Bande explained to the visitors of the work he is doing which he said it should give him at least a dollar per day.

From Jinga, the visitors had quality time at Chakowa High School where they meet the Headmaster, his team and the students who are part of the climate hero project. The visitors shared notes with the school on its tree program on challenges

they faced on the initial project, goat project and also toured around its water supply system. The school expressed its dire need of the establishment of new agroecology projects so that learners can learn from it.

The last day of the visit was in Nemutenzi Village where they visited a holistic project area. The visitors exchanged notes on the project and discussed some of its challenges.

But perhaps the most profound lessons came from the exchanges between the visitors and the villagers, as they shared stories of resilience, community, and the enduring bond between humanity and the land were on the sustainable food production and the protection of natural resources. Through these interactions, the delegation gained a deeper appreciation for the agroecology work which is being done by small scale farmers.

As the FEPA Study Group bid farewell to PORET and Chaseyama, their hearts full of gratitude and inspiration, they carried with them the deep appreciation of the work which is being done by PORET and Chaseyama Permaculture Club.

TRIBUTE TO MAI MWATSIKA (ZVAIDAMOYO BENHURA) – PORET BOARD MEMBER

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news of the passing of Mai Mwatsika – Zvaidamoyo Benhura, a valued Board Member of PORET Trust and a respected leader in our community.

Mai Mwatsika brought not only expertise but also warmth and kindness to our Board. Her dedication and passion for our mission was evident in every interaction and decision made.

Her absence leaves a void that will be deeply felt by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with them. We will forever cherish the memories of her contributions and the positive impact she made on PORET Trust and beyond.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and loved ones during this difficult time. May she find comfort in the fond memories shared and the legacy she leaves behind.

PORET TV News Online Platform

PORET TRUST has launched its Online News Platform called PORET TV News Online. The channel is used to shared agroecology news with farmers not only in Chimanimani but also with other people in the world.

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