



Annual Report for 2020



About fepa

Since 1963, fepa has financed and accompanied local self-help initiatives and grassroots organisations in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Supporting them in implementing innovative and sustainable improvements to their living conditions. In 2020, fepa carried out partnership project work under difficult conditions. The COVID19 pandemic unfortunately brought many setbacks for the development of the people in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The COVID19 crisis showed that fepa and its partners were able to respond to the challenges, pursue project objectives and also provide effective information activities and concrete support in the communities because of their grassroots approach and concrete support in the communities. Together with our partners, we analysed the local and global challenges of the pandemic, in order to keep communities empowered, and to anticipate and address long-term impacts and

disadvantages. fepa partners urge that those affected have a voice in understanding the impact on ordinary and disadvantaged people, and in developing responses. The approach of "helping people to help themselves" is anything but outdated.

In 2020, fepa therefore lived the "partnership" intensively. We accompanied our partners, discussed project adjustments and provided flexible support. Overall, in doing this, we were able to contribute toward protecting vulnerable people, while giving disadvantaged people a chance, and enabling activists to become involved in the communities.

Working in partnership in Zimbabwe

All Zimbabwe: youth participation

For many years, we have been working with the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT), this is a nationwide network of 40 youth organisations, to promote youth voices through the "Youth for a Voice" programme. The program creates opportunities for decision-makers and young people to meet. The prerequisite is young people who are aware that they have rights and feel empowered to contribute to the development of their community. Some have already come a long way on this path. They have concrete projects on how to move their communities forward. In 2020, YETT organised countless hearings of parliamentarians, authorities and private service providers with young people. Because of COVID-19 they were often on media channels (radio, social media). During a camp event thirty-three selected young women, many of them from rural areas, were comprehensively supported during a whole week in October, to bring about change to their communities. Last but not least, we facilitated activities for four youth organisations that harnessed the great commitment of young people to social causes. While at the same time, thanks to the accompaniment of YETT, who facilitated important learning steps: local authorities and health posts were provided with, among other

things, awareness of the needs of deaf young women, videos and educational brochures. Twenty young people were trained as citizen journalists. They launched their community reports on a now popular internet TV. Two youth organisations intervened with demonstrations at hotspots of gender-based abuses- in rural Zvimba, 228 young women conferred with key local authorities at several events- 50 participated in a training for small business owners- in a remote part of Matabeleland, 40 young women were recruited and trained as "transparency and human rights" monitors and the 10 most talented were selected as focal persons.



Thanks to the flexibility of the young people, the activities could all be carried out during the safe times and COVID-19 did not have any negative impact. At the beginning of the first lockdown YETT with an additional contribution from fepa. conducted several awareness-raising activities on COVID-19 with young people.

[The financial contribution made directly to YETT in 2020 amounted to CHF 30 450.](#)

Township (Harare): Vocational training opportunities for disadvantaged young people

The vocational training programmes at the Kuwadzana Skills Training Centre (KSTC) were hit the hardest by the COVID-19 measures. The lockdown meant the closure of training facilities in textiles, metalwork, infant care and hairstyling for several months. With fepa's support, the team's initial reaction was to introduce simple

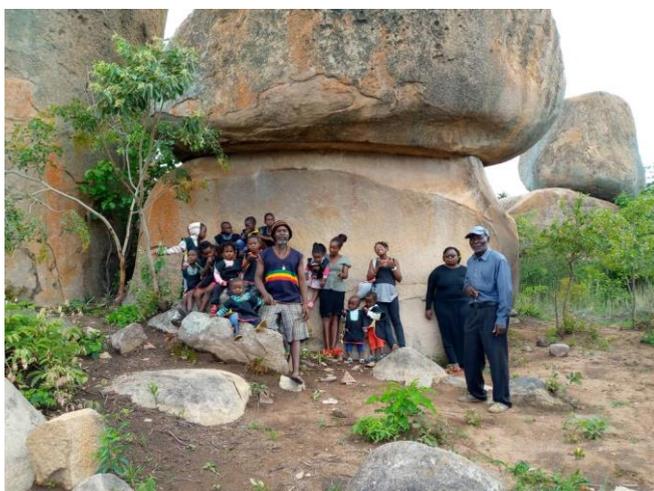
e-learning. While thanks to WhatsApp the life counselling could be continued effectively by the KSTC team, the theoretical lessons covered the learning needs of the trainees only for a short time. We quickly started to develop a decentralised teaching offer that moved the technical training into small groups. This allowed us, against the general trend in Zimbabwe, to maintain the right to education for the disadvantaged young people (80% women). The price for this was a large additional workload for the team of teachers and also for fepa in the project redesign. The successful conversion to decentralised teaching was only possible thanks to the commitment of the teaching staff and also thanks to some investments in the training infrastructure, which the KSTC was fortunate enough to make in the last two years. Overall, the young people experienced significant delays in their training, so that the graduation of the 70 trainees will be delayed by about 5 to 6 months and will not take place until 2021.



[The project costs for tuition and scholarships at the KSTC amounted to CHF 27 129 in 2020.](#)

Satellite town Chitungwiza: Kindergarten

Every child has a right to early education. That is why the fepa partner Dangwe Arts has created a kindergarten for children from disadvantaged families, which fepa has fully supported since 2019. The kindergarten year 2020 was also marked by Covid-19. We therefore ensured that the 15 children continued to receive support despite school closures and also continued to be accompanied in their social and economic needs. During one of the trimesters, no pre-school classes could take place due to the tightened lockdown. The Dangwe collective used this time to more than double the size of the two small class rooms. The result is a friendly and much more practical space that will be able to accommodate up to 30 children in the future. Throughout the year, especially during the lockdown when the dining room had to be closed, the preschool team supported the children's families with food from their own garden including soup.



fepa contributed CHF 18 045 to the running of the Dangwe pre-school and its social programmes in 2020.

Manicaland, Chipinge District: Rights and Protection for Girls and Young Women

Our partner organisation Platform for Youth and Community Development PYCD, which works for the rights of girls and women at the grassroots level in eastern Zimbabwe, has again broadened its activities in 2020. This was despite the fact that for a few months only activities in smaller groups were possible. The building up of a group of activists which took about three years, is now paying off, because the young people can reach many others. PYCD received 7430 participants to their activities. These activities are diverse and dependent on the needs. It uses the appropriate tool for: Door-to-door visits, a drop-in reception, women's forums, men's meetings and youth clubs. All these are part of the means by which PYCD seeks to talk about gender issues and to advance its education and "awareness-raising work".



PYCD works from within and opens many doors with its culturally sensitive approach. In 2020, we accompanied these projects intensively by networking and supporting a soft professionalisation. The activists also needed constant support and training. Overall, in partnership with PYCD, we are able to provide important inputs into the communities beyond the issue of gender justice and strengthen the protection of rights on a broad scale. In 2020, especially in the area of COVID-19 measures, which hit the rural community hardest, were sometimes unfairly enforced. In 2020 PYCD also piloted a micro-finance project: "financial literacy for women". This project took on a momentum of its own, with which we are not entirely happy with. We

slowed down the implementation a little and started an evaluation in November which will lead to improvements.

[fepa supported the activities of PYCD 2020 with direct contributions of CHF 48 016 in total.](#)

[Manicaland, Chimanimani District: Future through sustainable agriculture](#)

The establishment training centre (PORET) in the arid lowlands of Manicaland Province is fepa's most financially intensive project. It is about food security and an ecological turnaround. In tandem with fepa, the German Weltfriedensdienst is now a strong partner on PORET's side. The training centre flourished: accommodation and a training hall were built, and during the first temporary easing of the Corona situation, the first large groups were received. The forest garden and other demonstration objects on the site are developing and ensuring the visitors and the small farmers on site, that it is possible to keep the soil fertile while creating sustainable livelihoods with the right cultivation methods.

On this foundation, a grassroots agro-ecological movement has emerged, which strives for a sustainable use of natural resources. We are now seeing that graduates of earlier training courses are building dams on their property and growing trees. They have increased soil fertility and therefore harvest more, and can also earn their first additional income through supplementary activities. The number of members in the permaculture club has now grown to over 450. The club now has active groups in 28 villages. Furthermore, the most important step towards these visible agricultural and ecological improvements, is the participatory work in the community. We funded trainings e.g., on "water harvesting", and compensated agro-ecological agricultural extension workers. Every training and every new consultation are preceded by a

process of listening to decision-makers and potential contributors, negotiating expectations and conditions, and addressing potential conflicts. In the process, marginalised people could also be integrated. In 2020, PORET continued to do this demanding work with a view for long-term impact. Since the beginning of 2020, we have also been supporting the "Climate Heroes", who turned one of the local middle schools into a climate school. This project was slowed down by the school closures. We therefore reversed the process for the first phase: Instead of beginning first with a nursery, the students planted hundreds of trees from PORET's nursery in their school garden immediately after the school reopened. The nursery will not be built until 2021.



[In 2020, the cost of supporting this agro-ecological movement was CHF 78 363.](#)

[Manicaland: Reconstruction aid after cyclone Idai](#)

In March 2019, Cyclone Idai hit eastern Zimbabwe. We enabled PORET to repair erosion damage and provide long-term stabilisation of mountain slopes with a reforestation project. Over 2000 indigenous trees and around 200 fruit trees were planted. The follow-up shows that this is a successful measure with an exemplary character. Plans emerged for a social enterprise to meet the continued need for saplings.

[CHF 3934 was released from the reconstruction fund in 2020.](#)

Masvingo Province: Primary Health Care in COVID-19 Times

Together with BHASO, fepa's long-standing partner in the field of HIV/AIDS, we reacted at the very beginning of the lockdown to the harsh impact the lockdown had on people in the HIV support groups. Those on treatment need a stable nutrition and safe access to medication. With an immediate monetary contribution, we made it possible for BHASO to provide the smallest bridging cash assistance to elderly people in urban Masvingo. Above all, it was a matter of enabling BHASO to make a supply tour to remote health posts by using its own vehicle, in close cooperation with the local health structures in Mwenezi. Our contribution was a sign of solidarity to the self-help groups that have been built up with the support of fepa over many years.



[Contribution directly to BHASO 2020: CHF 2939.](#)

Partnership work in South Africa

[Central Karoo, Western Cape: "Betterment of farm worker communities".](#)

In the Karoo, farm workers and their families have formed committees, which in turn have formed an umbrella organisation, the Central Karoo Farmworker Communities Association (CKFCA), to work together for their rights. For 2020, we had set ourselves the goal of supporting the CKFCA in broadening and activating its base. Up to the time of the well-attended general meeting in March, this was off to an excellent start. However, the resolutions passed and activities planned there had to be put on the back burner. The farm workers' communities were shaken up by the pandemic. On many farms, necessary work continued without adequate protective measures, while family members in the small towns of the central Karoo, who mainly work in the catering and hotel industry on the major trunk roads, immediately lost their income. The CKFCA made immediate changes and activated a network of people in the communities who served as sources of information and as mediators, for example when dealing with authorities. A group of community activators organized and supported by the CKFCA, spontaneously emerged, and were also able to

access a limited emergency fund to a limited extent.



[The 2020 fepa financial contribution to the partner organisation in South Africa amounted to CHF 12 990.](#)

Commitment in Switzerland and internationally

2020 was one of the most intensive years in our solidarity work in Switzerland. Unfortunately, on the corporate responsibility initiative the narrow majority was defeated by the majority of the cantons. In the area of the pandemic, we internally and publicly addressed the global and unequal effects and the repercussions with regard to the UN sustainability goals.

fepa has been committed to exchange and mutual learning for decades. Fortunately, we were able to carry out our main focus of the year, namely the exchange visit of two women's rights activists to Switzerland at the beginning of March 2020. On the occasion of the Women's World Day of Prayer for our partner country Zimbabwe and International Women's Day on 8 March, we invited the two women's rights activists Rosewita Katsande and Cynthia Gwenzi to Switzerland for around 10 days. We learned a lot already during the joint preparation that we could pass on, and this continued during the intensive 10 days of Rosewita and Cynthia's visit.



The aim of the meetings and events was not to always convey the same message, but to create a space for genuine encounter. We think this was very successful and see that the exchange visit has created new friendships and cooperation. fepa has been steadily active in 2020 in the Zimbabwe European Network, the NGO Platform Switzerland-Zimbabwe and the Campaign for Debt Relief and Redress in Southern Africa.

General

We were also lucky with the General Assembly, which we were able to hold physically after only one postponement. Almost 70 people came to the former Capuchin monastery in Solothurn and participated in the meeting. There, we also presented the first results of a survey we had conducted among members and donors. This showed that our work is supported and that there is a lot of trust. The feedback confirmed that we are building on a membership that is well informed and identifies with fepa's goals out of solidarity. We were able to deduce from the survey that we as a board have set the thematic priorities well and that our very direct cooperation in partnership on a basis of both solidarity and professionalism is recognised as a good approach.

Personnel

The office has been managed by Marcel Dreier since January 2015 (60%). Christian Furrer is in charge of the early intervention project of Dangwe Arts. fepa also offers interns a small salary and the best possible learning environment. We received the greatest commitment and diverse skills from the interns Mickie Mshana-Aeschlimann, Tibor Rechsteiner and Iria Mudimu. Since August, Katja Majirija has been supporting the partnership and fundraising for PORET. In 2020, fepa again received countless hours from volunteers, without whom the accompaniment of partners, our fundraising, parts of the administration and the events, for example the exchange visit in March, would only have been half as effective. In total, well over 1500 hours. Almost half of the work in 2020, was done for fepa by volunteers from the board and others. fepa again received great help in 2020 from supporters, experts and specialists who provided their professional work at greatly reduced rates and sometimes without a fee. To you all, who make an invaluable contribution to fepa: Thank you!

Annual Accounts

The accounts are prepared in accordance with ZEWO requirements. For a long time, it looked like a very difficult year for fepa. Some hoped-for contributions were delayed. Members and private donors were all the more committed to fepa. With CHF 138 429 in unrestricted contributions and CHF 163 697 in earmarked contributions, fepa achieved a remarkable result in 2020, reflecting the commitment shown by many members in a difficult year. Together with 30,000 Swiss francs from legacies, fepa can therefore present a balanced annual account. Particularly important here: We were able to maintain our plans for the new year and provide stability for our partners. With funds and equity in the amount of around 100,000 Swiss francs each, we can secure the work for around half a year in advance. CHF 265 194 flowed directly into the project work. We thus almost maintained the high level of the previous year. Since 2016, which was a particularly difficult year financially, fepa has thus managed to increase project expenditure by around a quarter, while the costs for administration and fundraising have barely risen.

What you don't see in fepa's annual accounts: The voluntary work in Switzerland and even more so among the project partners, who work for their communities out of conviction and commitment, and who for the most part do unpaid or sparsely paid work.

In 2020, fepa again refrained from paid scatter advertising with small exceptions in social media advertising. Thus 78.5 per cent of the expenditure went into partnership-based project work, around 6 percent was used for fundraising and 15.5 percent for general administrative tasks.

Conclusion and Outlook

2020 was not a year of crisis for fepa, but a very intensive, busy year. With a bit of luck and

thanks to attentive supporters, we were able to achieve the goals we had set, with a few exceptions. Where it was difficult, especially in the education sector, or in dealing directly with the health and economic cuts due to the COVID19 pandemic, our partners made a special effort with our support, so that new activities were added.

It would certainly be good for all partners and also for fepa if 2021 were to be a year of efforts on the usual level of effort. However, we have not planned only in this direction, but also incorporated the longer-term effects of the pandemic year in the conception of the project partnerships. For fepa this does not mean that more and more emergency aid is needed, but that we will continue to work so that people in Zimbabwe and South Africa can develop institutions and structures more equitably.

active and dedicated partners, with whom fepa has set common goals and strives to have effective projects with. We look forward to their implementation and results.