

# field report #3

## December 6, 2019

## ANCIENT WAYS

### Preschool Update—2019 Graduation!

**Summertime at the preschool is hot, even in the morning.** The kids play outside, but also have many wonderful learning spaces where they draw, use blocks, read, and learn song and dance.

We were able to attend the graduation ceremony this week (school year is January to December). There were 75 children attending this year and



25 of them graduated, moving onto grade 1. They are so well prepared compared to the average preschooler.

They recited songs and poetry as well as received a very nice certificate. Special prizes were given for most improved student, most outstanding, perfect attendance, etc. Some parents attended, joyfully ululating as they swung their child in the air. It was a very warm day, and the kids sat patiently in the sun outside the pre-



school's cement wall. What self-control! Reminds me of Oliver Mutukudzi's album called Tolerance.



Photo Credits Jessica Sienkiewicz

### Infrastructure and Accountability

**Over the years, we have held the infrastructure together here** with the help from our book keeper in town. He is now in his 80's and is a delightful fellow, living here for all these years through these changes, and seeing so many things unfold. Maybe our accounting practices are not a newsworthy item, but I have to tell you, that without our book keeper, we would be in a very compromised situation. He is our an-

chor. He understands both the rules and regs of the Zimbabwean world, as well as what our own IRS requires. He came on board in 2004 and it was like the heavens opened up for me, and manna began falling to earth. I had been trying to hold it all together with excel sheets and folks in the village who had no formal training, and this was all during the radical hyperinflation changes of those days.

Wow...when I look back I'm grateful for sanity and prayers! I don't want to overemphasize, or trivialize, the importance of this piece! Patricia does her accounts monthly using her computer, turning over receipts etc., and we get our regular reports that are fully satisfying the worldly requirements of this work. We are now in another phase of inflation where there are two currencies to cross-reference. We convert everything by

the bank rate and it all gets recorded. And, our book keeper continues to save the day, along with Patricia's business savvy and over time becoming highly skilled at the computer. They make an excellent team!



Photo Credit Jaiaen

## NHIMBE FOR PROGRESS

Zimbabwe Field Report #3  
December 6th, 2019

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## Weather, Food, and Life in Zimbabwe

**Many people are working their fields now as its late spring going into summer.** These oxen are just outside my bedroom hut. This is the second go around. First time they plowed, then planted by hand, and the maize is now up about 6" plus. This time they are tilling in between the maize rows with these huge oxen! How skilled is that?! They then follow up with hand tool weeding for whatever



the oxen didn't do. Most people don't have oxen and so are digging by hand, while fervently praying for adequate rains.

Visiting with friends in town, who are in their 70's, always brings more insights and perspectives. Even in the US, those born late 40's and before, have seen so many changes! Here, we hear that they fondly remember the days of regular weather patterns always raining full force by the 5th of November, and the resulting food abundance. They also reminisce about when there was clean water in the cities, garbage pickup regularly, roads without potholes, school fees paid for every child, and health clinics in every rural area helping women with deliveries. Today is another story and Zimbabwe struggles to repair these broken systems with various approaches.

*Photo Credits Jaiaen*

Some of you may be worrying about how the Zimbabweans view us, with all of our political insanity. I know that some of you think that everyone in the world is laughing at us. Those in the city who have access to internet or satellite TV, and work in the corporate structure, might joke with us about it (what else can one do?) but the average Zimbabwean doesn't care. They have their own quite enormous issues to solve. **These are the newspaper headlines of the day.**



## Textile Projects Continue with Vigor!

**Even as we are starting the packing to come home, we are still full steam ahead on textiles.** Winifilda made 23 large purses and 20 small ones in all. She is also making Zimbabwean clothes for Carina and Jessica, and all of this without electricity!

There are still a few of the large purses left in case you are interested. Just reach out by email. Here she is in her sewing room with 3 machines – her regular industrial machine, her overlocking (serger) machine, and the borrowed treadle on the left, since there was no electricity since the first of November and she really had serious sewing to complete!

The embroidery continues so well by a group



*Photo Credit Jessica Sienkiewicz*

of 15 women, with many beautiful blocks being finished up. Because of the tote donation through the Amazon Smile charity list, we are able to bring back totes with blocks attached. Everyone thanks you so much!

Here is an example of a rhino, *chipembere*, which was completed by someone just learning—this was her first official block! Look at the embroidery close up and



*Photo Credits Jaiaen*

check out that sewing! They all continue to make extremely tiny amazing stitches.

Wait until you see the experienced women's work! These totes are also available when I return on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Besides rhino, we have tortoise, zebra, monkey, giraffe, elephant, lion, hippo and leopard. These totes are also \$26, the same as the tie-dye bags. **Thank you in advance for your interest. Just email [gogreen@ancient-ways.org](mailto:gogreen@ancient-ways.org) to order as soon as possible.** We will be going to the post office on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> to mail anything, which is non-local to the mid-valley.

We also have a small project of a dozen or so blocks for random use, which say "Zimbabwe", embroidered with variegated floss in many colors. Can you think of a special project for you to use this lovely design? **Tatenda Chaizvo!**



## Follow-up on 130+ Wells Built by Nhimbe

We have gone to a few wells to see how things are coming, all with varied results. The first well we saw was built in 2016. Its gone dry, starting in this year, 2019. The drought here has taken a toll on so very many people. This farmer will need to hire someone to deepen it.

The second well was also recently drying up. Again built in 2016, the owner was a widow and uses it for selling vegetables as a primary focus. This well shown here was about 20' down and has been deepened 10' more so that the water is unfortunately currently rather cloudy. She paid 140 bond to deepen, which was about \$10. She will be hiring someone to deepen it another 10' for the same amount, unless they raise the price, since the bond rate is now higher.



This particular well is one we have much film of it being built found on our wells website page.

The third well we visited was built in 2012. We found out that one of the builders made the holes too small for the bucket. This resident moved the well lid off of his well to be able to use it, but didn't tell anyone. It is still tilted to the side these many years later, and the well edge is deteriorating (pic below). He will need to repair the edge and we will build the new lid.



The fourth well is like the third but they brought it to the attention of our Well Program manager, so they got a new well lid. This is when our Nhimbe team found out that the holes weren't being built in a standard way. The

team went to the Health department and got a form to use that would be large enough for a regular bucket. Ah! Problem solved!

The wells are a key for everyone's survival. We are learning a lot about well depth – what used to be okay is no longer working. We have also discovered other non-standard well issues, and so have a plan for exploring what the status is of all of our wells!

Whitney's well testing has found that all wells have a pathogen load including e. coli., except for the Chief Nherera's bore hole. Treating the wells is a regular solution here so we are continuing to talk to the Health Inspector about it. We didn't realize how many wells really need this treatment!

Additionally, we were able to offer the [SODIS system](#) again; its been several years since it was introduced. We visited the Schweppes company a few times, and managed to pickup 150 bottles from them the day before our planned distribution date. **Schweppes donated them to us, which was super generous! We fit their sustainability department's vision.**

*Photo Credits Jessica Sienkiewicz*

## SODIS and Moringa Day!



*Photo Credit Jaiaen*

**76 families, some with more than one member present, came to receive the 2-liter bottles.** We weren't able to give out 2 per family, since some people would go home without. We use our continuing survey information to keep track of what resources are going where. The rest of the bottles are in our inventory and will then get distributed to more of the residents in the coming weeks. We will also pursue getting more bottles so every family can have more than one. First, let see them use them!

The Health Inspector attended our gathering and shared much about the local issue with diarrhea, reporting that 12 people in the last 2 weeks came asking for help. This is a very serious problem because cholera can follow such a pattern. We continue to ask questions and stimulate the discussions while we are still here, to help everyone get on top of this situation. Whitney has been exploring the water topic with everyone. With so very many people attending rural home funerals regularly, everyone's exposure is great! At this event, we also were able to again share about the moringa. Everyone went home with a palmful of seeds to plant, plus one moringa pod per family.

We had found a widow in town able to sell us all of the pods off of her tree for \$220 bond (around \$15 USD). Cosmas



*Photo Credit Carina de Barros Fernandes*

also bought some leaves from her that she picked and dried, so he could begin his moringa supplementation routine.



*Photo Credit Jaiaen*

## Ancient Ways

PO Box 346 Scio OR 97374

Phone: 541-259-HOPE 877-TATENDA  
Whatsapp stateside: 541-570-9059  
Whatsapp thru 12-11: +263 361635187  
Email: gogreen@ancient-ways.org  
Paypal Email: Zimbabwe@ancient-ways.org

[www.Ancient-Ways.org](http://www.Ancient-Ways.org)

### *A Child's Life is the Path*



## More Moringa Notes!

As it turns out, years ago when we first looked into moringa, during the Donhodzo Health Centre days, Cosmas had actually planted a tree there at his place when starting an orchard, but then forgot about it. There it was...right in the field with the other trees!

We also have quite a horticulturist here in the villages, named Peter, who may be able to help us look after the program. He has an amazing array of trees and plants that he tends. The more we talk about moringa, the more we find that there are local folks who know a great deal. Muda, Cosmas' son, has a friend who is an expert in moringa as well, so we can ask him to share his knowledge with the villages.

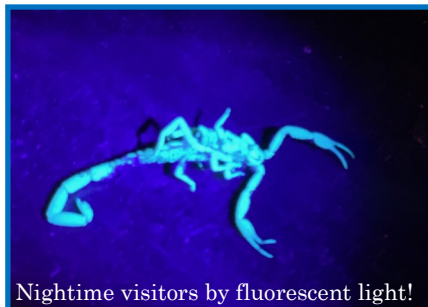
Standreck (the Tsotso Stove project leader seen in the 2004 documentary) also is demonstrating quite an interest in trees and plants, so may be able to become involved here again.

## ...Inside View...



Photo Credit Whitney Menzel

There are so many great pictures and video to share but so little time and so little battery. Here is a fun one with the camera crew. I pondered putting one in here of me, where I looked nicely frazzled, like a long 21-days at the office, but I controlled myself.



Nighttime visitors by fluorescent light!

Photo Credits Jessica Sienkiewicz

## Who Are We? And, How Do We Work?

*Ancient Ways* was founded in 1993 by Jaiien Beck in Lacombe OR, established as a non-profit in 1994, receiving charitable tax status in 1996. Over the last 25 years we have worked to preserve the life-giving traditions of indigenous peoples, with a focus on their music, art and healing practices.

*Nhimbe for Progress* was started in 1999 by Jaiien and Cosmas Magaya, established as a Trust in 2010. Over the last 20 years, overcoming all obstacles presented by economic hardships and volatile political policies, we have developed an infrastructure for success, continuity, and permanence. In 2013, Patricia Nyamande Magaya joined the Nhimbe team as a co-director, providing the gifts and talents to assure efficacy and detail business management of our growing programs and services, also managing solo the Mhandara Monthly Care program. Nhimbe focuses on uplifting the rural residents' sub-standard living conditions to better assure preservation of Shona heritage.

## Many Thanks!

We all continue to be grateful for your continuing support as we tackle everything put on our path here! The local residents are facing difficulties we can't even imagine. We are here seeing it unfold, and living through their struggles, but can't get our brains around any of it. They are a strong and resilient people. Their internal compass is set on "overcome" *kukunda!*

Every way that you are able to support our programs and services, create Nhimbe for Progress — a reality in the making!

