

field report # 1

March 15th 2026

HOME AT LAST

It has been an incredibly long 6 years since I've been able to go to kumusha (my rural home), and finally, tasvika (we arrived)! This long-awaited trip was re-scheduled a couple of times over these years, and my, my, its filling me up, seeping into all of my pores, as if it has provided refreshing water to someone who was very thirsty. The rather long, but quite desirable, United flight through Chicago and Ethiopia was fortunately very uneventful and landed me safely in Harare where I blew through the regular customs easily.

Last year, I met a wonderful humanitarian woman, Susan Dimbi, with quite a large heart and home ([in case you need a sweet place to stay in Harare](#)). She is donating part of my lodging (search "De Gletwyna" on Google Maps). [After a lovely first night at her home](#), we came out to the rural home in Mhondoro where this sunset bedazzled us all.



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GETTING THINGS MOVING

It takes a day or two to grease the wheels and get things moving for our hopeful progress. The Magayas' new solar system had a fuse go out on two occasions, and so repairs were in order, to be able to get online. Now this is like living in the modern age...amazing...my Whatsapp call home was clearer than when I phone from the farm in Lacombe! The panels are indeed hooked up to Starlink. I'm glad I've been able to experience the how things were before, you know, the old-fashioned way with zero network, but am so grateful for these cutting edge innovations.

Also, Tuesday we visited Chief Nherera, the chief of the villages of which we are part. His father passed on last year, and was such a good and friendly man, and this young fellow, his son (mid-30's?), inherited the chieftainship, which is responsible for over 50 villages. There are often wrinkles to iron out for Nhimbe, and he is in our corner, so the time is always well spent. This is the face of modern rural Zimbabwe...not too many feathers or animal skins, but the official nature of the chieftainship is there. Zimbabwe has two governments. One is the chieftainships and the other is the Parliament. This truck is from the government for Chief Nherera's service.

The Young Chief Nherera Manages 56 Villages



RESTRUCTURING

Moving through the week we began tackling the record-keeping and sorting out our new structure and hierarchy for Nhimbe.

When Cosmas passed on in 2020, we had to make decisions fast to adapt. Now several pieces of the puzzle have moved around, and so we are rejoining the pieces in that light.

Muda needs to focus on the work of a family man, as well as finish his last year at music college, so Matilda, Cosmas' eldest daughter, is stepping up to share the load. I'm super happy to work with her as we always get on well, and the videos she has sent in the past have been great. Very hopeful! Muda will still be involved but freer to pursue his life's work.

PORTIA Yay!

Many thanks to those of you who were able to contribute to Portia's hospital surgery and follow-up. It was truly a life-saving effort and it took us all.

She is a young mid-forties mother of five and is so full of vibrance now! She is quite a beauty, full of personality, and such a contributor as well, working full time and raising the children.

Thank you again for the support during the family's time of great need!



RURAL LIVING

I did tell some of you that staying in the rural area is like camping. Quite true, but when you look up in the morning you see a thatched hut like this. Due to complications at my homestead, (Joshua and Matilda's), I am staying with Muda and Matilda, which is Cosmas' original home, now with his kids. Its a bit fresher than my place, also being quite pleasant with all the family around. I hire help cooking and cleaning so that leaves me freer to work.

An abundance of bugs is the thing that crosses my mind often. There are these huge spiders, much like Peru, which I just try to ignore. There was a beetle of about 2 1/2 inches that strolled into my hut yesterday coming from a manure delivery for the garden. No scorpions. But, a village vendor came by with these huge-ish crickets he had harvested and sold us 25 for \$1. Called *makurwe*, they are a well-loved delicacy!



RURAL LIVING—continued

Roasted Makurwe

These very large cricket type bugs are loaded with protein and quite flavorful, drawing people out to say, “I love them!”. They fry them in a bit of oil and voila!



Another piece of living in the rural area is getting from one place to another by car, or any means, for that matter. The as-

phalt potholes have seriously gotten worse since I was here 6 years ago. It now takes an hour to get from home there to highway 52, and its only about 27 kilometers (17 miles). It's a straight road but just bumpy. Now, to avoid the potholes, they drive along the parallel dirt trail as far as they can, but with the rains, sometimes they also get stuck in the mud. [Here is a clip from our 3 hour drive to town](#) (a smoother part of the washboard).

MHANDARA MONTHLY CARE (MMC)

Friday is MMC meeting day. Normally, they receive marimba or sewing lessons, or go to the library, along with a little sports. The beginning of the year there are all kinds of sporting camps through the schools, so attending MMC on a Friday doesn't work well, but now that those camps are over, [attendance is happily returning to normal](#). This Friday (13th) there were probably half of the regular attendees, [singing, dancing “welcome”](#).

[Its gratifying to see that the balls we brought them in 2019 \(3 for preschool, 3 for MMC\) are still holding up!](#) We bought them from a special organization that knows the terrain in Africa, and these balls are really meant to sustain the abuse of the bush play.

MHANDARA MONTHLY CARE (MMC) - continued

The library is needing shelves, tables and chairs. But, it has needed them for a very long time, so with all there is to do this trip it's unlikely we'll get that sorted. This little girl from the Chibikira primary school (3.75 miles away—yes, they walk to attend meetings) enjoys reading, and it is natural for her. [She is reading a book about foods, and what causes food to go bad.](#) I asked the librarian to keep an eye on her progress – she is the kind of child who would likely really excel if sponsored to go to school. Remember that in Zimbabwe, there is no free education, and everyone pays tuition to attend, even at preschool level!

With the reduced numbers attending, I was told that most of their best experienced marimba players weren't there today, but [they were still having a great time playing Chemutangure.](#) Plus, [this video is just a relaxed jam session](#) since there was no lesson today.

Thank you for all of your prayers and kind thoughts holding us in your hearts. Blessings your way!   

Who Are We? And, How Do We Work?

Ancient Ways was founded in 1993 by Jaiaen Beck in Lacomb OR, established as a non-profit in 1994, receiving charitable tax status in 1996. Over the last 32 years we have worked to preserve the life-giving traditions of indigenous peoples, with a focus on their music, art and healing practices, giving attention to music lessons and performances.

Nhimbe for Progress was started in 1999 by Jaiaen and Cosmas Magaya, established as a Trust in 2010, currently awaiting NGO status. Over the last 26 years, overcoming all obstacles presented by economic hardships and volatile political policies, we have developed an infrastructure for success, continuity, and permanence. Nhimbe focuses on uplifting the rural residents' sub-standard living conditions to better assure preservation of Shona heritage. In 2020, when Cosmas Magaya passed on, Mudavanhu, his son, and Febby Shava, began a shared co-director partnership for Nhimbe. In 2026, we now expand to include Matilda Magaya's collaboration as the co-director's executive assistant.

The focus continues to be finding the best succession planning approach both in Zimbabwe and the US...are you interested in getting involved? Do you love humanity and desire to serve? Welcome!

A CHILD'S LIFE IS THE PATH

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