

# Discover Newsletter

March 2020 II



## Progress Report: Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is once again in crisis. The Discover Zimbabwe team is working very hard to improve the situation in their area, Manicaland in the east of the country.

### Background

On 30 December 2019, the World Food Programme reported:

Nearly eight million people – half the population – is now food insecure. WFP is planning to double the number of people it assists - up to 4.1 million - but needs over US\$200 million for its emergency response in the first half of 2020 alone.

“As things stand, we will run out of food by the end of February, coinciding with the peak of the hunger season – when needs are at their highest,” said Niels Balzer, WFP’s Deputy Country Director in Zimbabwe. “Firm pledges are urgently needed as it can take up to three months for funding commitments to become food on people’s tables,” Balzer added.

Years of drought have slashed food production in Zimbabwe, once an African breadbasket. This year’s maize harvest was down 50 percent on 2018, with overall cereal output less than half the national requirement. By August of 2019, WFP was forced to launch an emergency lean season assistance programme to meet rising needs, months earlier than anticipated.

Source: (<https://tinyurl.com/us2gub9>)

### The response of Discover Zimbabwe

In response to my asking, on 12 March I received this message from our partner, Dr Joachem Nyamande, the Director of Discover Zimbabwe:

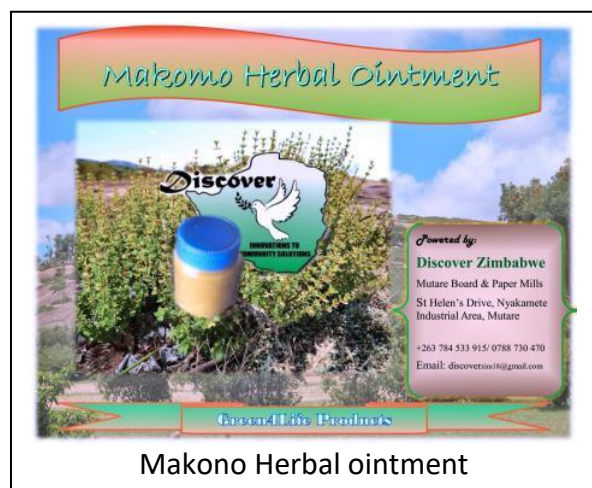
*“Greetings. The drought was severe during the*

*early season, which led to the wilting of some crops that were planted*

*early. However, some late relief rains came, rather late to resuscitate such crops. Some farmers were bold enough to replant the late crops, but*



Discover Zimbabwe Project Team members: From the left Simba our Finance and Admin Officer, then Marvellous and Jane, project members who are very active in producing Makomo ointments.



Makono Herbal ointment

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UK donations please via “Stewardship”: <http://www.stewardship.org.uk/>, From elsewhere via Paypal

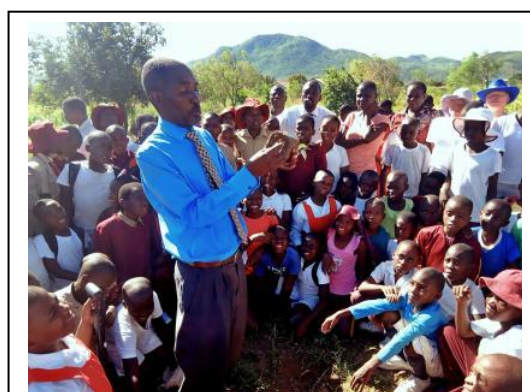
*harvesting is very doubtful as the rains suddenly disappeared again. As usual, mealie meal (maize, the staple food) is hard to come by as the national food strategic reserves have since dried up. So the situation is pathetic at the moment, even our project members and their immediate family members are affected.*

*From the proceeds they're generating from the sale of Makomo products, however, they can support their household food requirements.*

*Since last year, our members have also been using our ointments to supplement the imported and very expensive sunscreen lotions, with great success. “*

One can see from the first picture that two members are very light skinned. Such people are known as albinos. In Sub-Saharan Africa such people are often persecuted. They lack melanin in their skin and are therefore not protected from the African sun. I applaud Discover Zimbabwe for this initiative.

Makomo is the name under which they market the products. Makomo means mountain, and the herbal ingredient is the “resurrection plant” (*Myrothamnus flabellifolius*), so-called because the very dry, dead looking leaves turn green within seconds after receiving water. This plant grows in very dry areas in Zimbabwe. I have never seen it in East Africa.



The headteacher, Mr Edward Chahwanda was emphasising the need to continue planting trees in the school grounds.

## Tree-planting



Joachem Nyamande talking with the “tree-planting champions”, encouraging them to be role models in the community.

In 2019 Discover Zimbabwe planted 6000 trees. They used the motto “Every child a tree” to encourage every child to plant a tree and to care for it to ensure its survival.

This year, 2020, they aim to plant another 5000 trees. They planned to start on 21 March, the International Day of the Forests”, but found it more convenient to hold the event a little earlier.

Joachem wrote, “On 12 March we planted 100 *Croton gratissimus* and 20 water berry (*Syzygium cordatum*) trees at the Sacred Heart Primary School. More than 500 pupils from classes 5 to 7 were present, as well as Discover Zimbabwe project members, the Discover Zimbabwe Board Chairperson, the local councillor for Ward 17, the school headteacher and other teachers.”

I am very encouraged. Please feel free to support Discover Zimbabwe to achieve their tree planting target for 2020!

Keith Lindsey, 18 March 2020