



Discover Zimbabwe Trust

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1.0. Introduction

Discover Zimbabwe Trust (DZT) is a registered non-profit making organization mandated to promote healthy, economic and peaceful opportunities that strengthen and support, marginalized communities to realize their full potential and well-being in both rural and urban areas. The organization was established on the 1st of August 2018 but officially registered on the 27th of February 2019. Among its key objectives, DZT seeks to promote sustainable livelihoods and lifelong learning that mitigates the impact of poverty, disasters, and emergencies through innovative and collaborative approaches in Zimbabwe. The organization is constituted by a multi-skilled board with expertise in governance, environmental, human resources, financial, NGO, business and risk management as guided by organizational policies. The day to day management is composed of highly qualified and committed personnel responsible for leadership, financial, compliance, production and marketing, research and learning management. This structure is supported by a pool of volunteers as conduits upon which the organization interfaces its activities with key stakeholders and targeted communities and relevant government departments. The organization is in the process of mobilizing adequate resources to facilitate crafting of its strategic plan for the coming 5 years.

Specific activities conducted and running projects to date

Environmental Awareness, education and training in the context of climate change.

a) National Clean –Up Campaign

The establishment of Discover Zimbabwe Trust (DZT) in August 2018 as one of the community's development partners coincided with community engagements and awareness raising towards the national clean-up campaign. In the national clean-up campaign, DZT was actively involved in activities that were conducted in Mutare urban in particular ward 17 of Hob House. The protracted activities eventually led to the launching of the national clean-up campaign on the 1st of November 2018 under the theme dubbed "My Environment and My responsibility". The declaration made it mandatory for every citizen, private and public organization to be actively involved in the national clean-ups dedicated to the first Friday of each month of the year.



Photo 1: Discover Zimbabwe Director, Joachem Nyamande with the Manicaland Provincial Development Coordinator, Mr Seenza, Dr Ellen Gwaradzimba-Minister of State for Manicaland Province (with black cap and khaki jacket) and Mutare City Council Official.



Photo 2: They all actively participated in garbage cleaning and collection at Sakubva Market.

b) Discover Zimbabwe Trust Project sensitisation meetings

As a community entry, DZT managed to introduce the organization and the Green4LifeProject to traditional leadership comprised of Chief Zimunya and Chief Marange. The Chiefs are the most venerated people in the community. As such, direct interfacing with both Chiefs was key as entry points to Mutare Rural District. Main issues discussed and agreed were on the need to conserve the environment by planting and taking care of trees. With support from NetOne, DZT Director handed-over some trees (avocado, orange and guava) for planting at their homesteads. In addition, the DZT team also encouraged the two Chiefs to plant indigenous fruit trees like the wild loquats and monkey oranges which were becoming extinct in their jurisdictions. The need to promote the utilization and conservation of the resurrection plant as an economic venture was also debated.



Photo 3: DZT Director wearing African attire met Chief Zimunya and his wife at his homestead in the presence of his council and local leadership.



Photo 4: DZT Director met Chief Marange and his family at his homestead. The DZT Director, second from left, was accompanied by Mr Gondai Mutambanashwe (kneeling) Ward 17 Councillor

c) Community Sensitization Cascades

Following the successful consultations with the traditional leadership, similar awareness raising were further cascaded to lower community structures. In this regard, headmen, school heads, village heads, religious leaders and representatives of youth, women and people with disability groups were actively engaged. This approach made the Green4Life Project to have a solid and grounded community entry. The following table illustrates the attendance by area, number and gender;

Area	Attendance			Comment(s)
	Males	Females	Total	
Chinota	25	40	65	From the attendance 50% were youth
Chiwere	16	32	48	From the attendance 45% were youth
Hamamaoko	19	10	29	From the attendance 65% were youth
Shavambiri	10	6	16	From the attendance 55% were youth
Nyamakamba	9	10	19	From the attendance 89% were youth
Marange	11	16	27	From the attendance 50% were youth
Total	90	114	204	

During the gatherings, current environmental awareness and education in the context of climate change were critically discussed. From the discussion, areas that required urgent action were prioritised that included the destruction of the *Lantana camara*, training and planting of trees to urgently reforest bare community lands. The quick-win approach to capitalise the low hanging fruits was to engage schools as a methodology with “Each-Child-A-Tree” to reach out to the larger community with “Each-Community-Member-A-Tree”. The vicious cycle of poverty among communities was

regarded as one of the major culprits. This in-turn was causing wantonly destruction of trees leading to poor environmental management practice as people struggle to survive thereby contributing to the negative effect of climate change. As a result, selling of firewood as fuel energy was a common practice among communities to support their livelihoods. Outside the school structures, community mobilisation particularly targeting the youth through ball games was identified as the most effective way to kick start the process. Apart from planting trees, the consultations emphasised the need to promote some economic ventures to support the communities. As such, a strength-based approach of initiating and utilizing natural resource-based projects were identified as potential projects for community economic empowerment ventures. Such projects, would include bee keeping, commercialization of wild loquat fruits, cultivation, harvesting and marketing of the resurrection plant products.



Photo 5: Chinota Community and



Photo 6: Shavambiri Community Consultations

d) Destruction of *Lantana camara* and planting of trees

Green4LifeProject spearheaded the mobilization of communities in Ward 34 of Mutare Rural District to destroy the invasive *Lantana camara* starting from March 2019 to date. *Lantana camara* has been declared by the Zimbabwean government as an invasive plant. This is because the plant destroys pastures and arable land including causing high deaths of livestock due to poisonous trace elements found in the leaves. Initially, *Lantana camara* was introduced as a foreign plant meant to aid in the rehabilitation of gullies caused by erosion due to poor land use management. To date, the successful implementation of this intervention in ward 34 resulted in the total destruction of *Lantana camara* amounting to 5 hectares in Chinota, Chiwere, Hamamaoko and Nyagundi areas. Football and netball clubs have been mobilized as conduits upon which *Lantana camara* is being destroyed from strategic areas like fields, pastures, institutions and road servitudes.



Photo 7: The Invasive *Lantana camara* shrub



Photo 8: Youth in Action destroying *Lantana camara* at Chinota Clinic.

Notwithstanding the achievement in the destruction of *Lantana camara*, some community members initially had some strong reservations regarding the introduction of the innovations. They feared that their live fenced gardens and fields using the invasive plant against stray livestock were going to be disturbed by the project. As a remedy, the project also managed to convince NetOne to donate moringa seedlings for distribution to the targeted communities as replacement. Moringa is a highly valued plant because it is fast growing and provides good nutrition to both livestock and humans. However, instead of only waiting for external help, the project also encouraged targeted communities to establish their own nurseries to support the ongoing tree planting programme. As such, the project facilitated the establishment of four project committees and volunteers to continue taking the lead in sourcing and planting trees from local suppliers.

Use of ball games like football and netball tournaments have been used to attract high attendance in conducting project activities. Before playing or watching ball games, community members have been encouraged to participate in the destruction of the *Lantana camara*, planting or watering their plants. In total, 10 football and 6 netball teams were formed. Each team has its own executive with a constitution to guide the way members behave when participating in project activities. Among the constitutional provisions, project members are required to pay equal attention to all project activities. As such, members who fail to observe the fundamental requirements are issued with warnings and consequently face group imposed penalties or sanctions. The project managed to support each of the team with 2 balls and a pump. Participating teams or communities are expected to excel in all the disciplines with destruction of *Lantana camara*, planting of trees and playing of ball games

being regarded as recreational activities. The emphasis of project achievement is on project members' ability to execute all the assigned tasks equally.



Photo 9: Hamamaoko and Nyagundi Netball Clubs to the final project gala tournament



Photo 10: Chiwere and Chinota Football clubs made it to the final gala tournament

e) Tree Planting

In partnership with NetOne (**Photo 11**), the Green4LifeProject managed to mobilize communities in Chinota, Chiwere, Hamamaoko, Nyagundi and Shavambiri to plant 6000 trees from March 2019 to date. Trees planted included moringa, oranges, pine, grape, mangoes, guavas, nartjies and avocado species. Before planting trees, sessions on environmental awareness and education are conducted to create common understanding of issues under discussion among project members. This is followed by Green4LifeProject team conducting some demonstration sessions on how to prepare holes, planting and caring of trees (**Photos 13 to 14**) using the 50cm width x 50cm length x 50cm depth principle including manuring, watering using bucket system (**Photo 15**) or 2 litre plastic bottles as water dripping devises (**Photo 16**). In all sessions, project members are actively involved in the demonstration exercises in a participatory way. The incremental growth made the project to gain ground as the spill-over-effect is now being felt in the neighbouring wards in particular wards (5, 10, 15, and 22). Such wards are demanding that similar projects be conducted in their areas.



Photo 11: NetOne handing over trees to Project members and Hamamaoko Primary Each-Child-A-Tree concept



Photo 12: Green4LifeProject handing over trees to project members at Chinota Clinic School through Each-Community-Member-A-Tree



Photo 13: Hole planting demonstration (50 cm width x 50cm length x50 cm depth)



Photo 14: Tree planting demonstration (Increase soil fertility, tramping, water basin shaping)



Photo 15: Bucket Watering Demonstration by the Village Head, Mr Dema at Shavambiri in Ward 17



Photo 16: Dripping devise using 2 litre plastic bottle upside down with a small hole drilled in the lid



Photo 17: Catch them Young! Green4LifeProject encouraging schools to participate in tree planting



Photo 18: Hamamaoko School, NetOne and Green4LifeProject staff happy with tree planting progress



Photo 19: Hamamaoko Primary school orchard back to life with fruit trees planted as a result of the Each-Child-A-Tree's effort. Each tree carries a name tag of the child responsible for its planting and caring. Thanks to NetOne for the generous support. At the edge of the established orchard are remnants of the *Lantana camara* destroyed with the project's encouragement.

f) Value Addition to indigenous fruit trees

In addition, for their participation in the project, members are also obliged to plant some trees on annual basis especially towards or during the rainy season. Apart from just planting exotic trees, community members are also encouraged to plant indigenous trees for timber, fuel energy, producing fruits and supporting bio-diversity of the ecosystem. For the indigenous fruits, the organization has a keen interest to spearhead innovations that also promote entrepreneurship and survival skills of project members. As such, value addition and commercialisation of indigenous fruits like the wild loquat among others as economic community ventures are highly encouraged. The wild juicy and delicious loquat fruits are highly treasured in Zimbabwe. Surprisingly, there are no deliberate efforts done to domesticate and propagate the tree for commercial purpose. The potential to develop the loquat fruits into economic products like yoghurt, jam and beverages are very high. However, the major concern is that the wild loquat trees like other trees species are at the verge of extinction as communities have limited knowledge on good environmental conservation practices.



Photo 20: The Wild Loquat Tree and fruits in clusters



Photo 21: The Wild Loguat Ripe Fruits

g) Promotion of Resurrection Plant Products for Community Economic Empowerment Project

With financial and technical support from Next World Now (NWN) and Discover Germany respectively, the Green4LifeProject managed to secure funding that has helped the organization to initiate a project promoting the harvesting, processing, marketing and cultivation of the resurrection plant as an economic empowerment venture. The resurrection plant (common name) or *Myrothamnus flabellifolius* (botanical name) is one of the endemic species found in the predominately mountainous area of Mutare District. The area falls under farming ecological regions 4 and 5. As such, the area receives low rainfall patterns in Zimbabwe. The situation is further compounded by climate change induced-droughts with the generality of the population surviving on food handouts on perennial basis due to high crop failure. As a coping mechanism to supplement food handouts, the local community survives on cutting down of trees to generate some income. This therefore is compounding the vicious cycle of poverty among communities that further increases the burden of vulnerability to the conservation of natural resources. The resurrection promotion project has been mooted as an alternative source of livelihoods to crop failure and cutting down of trees. The potential benefits of promoting the utilization of the resurrection plant are three-fold. Traditionally and further supported by conventional research, the resurrection plant is a good source of nutrition, therapeutic and cosmetic use. However, for some unknown reasons, this plant has been underutilised yet communities are faced with chronic poverty levels.

Before commencing the project, a baseline survey (**Photos 22 to 23**) was conducted to establish the benchmarks for measuring the project success covering wards 10, 15 and 17 of Mutare District.



Photo 22/23: Nyamakamba group participated in project baseline survey

From the baseline survey, it was evident that the resurrection plant like the rooibos tea of South Africa, if fully exploited can effectively contribute great fortunes to the local community and the nation at large. The rooibos tea of South Africa is derived from the rooibos plant that grows naturally in the forest. Through some innovations, its utilization have been turned into a multi-million dollar project now supporting the local economy to generate multiple jobs and earn the much needed foreign currency.



Photo 24: Resurrection plant at dormant stage a self-preserving mechanism to survive the arid and harsh conditions. Nyakamba Project team members proudly standing behind the miraculous plant



Photo 25: Resurrection plant rejuvenated back to life following the onset of the recent rains. Project Team with Chief Marange representatives

Although the implementation of the resurrection promotion project is now close to 3 months, some positive results are already showing on the wall. From the targeted communities, the availability of the resurrection plant that grows in clusters with their roots strategically feeding from the mountain rock crevices is the main vegetative cover. Apart from just harvesting, the plant does not require any particular attention in terms of watering and weeding. At times the plant is regarded as a nuisance since it tends to disturb the growth of pastures, arable land, movement of livestock and human beings. In addition, the platform that is created through community groupings for project work, provides some opportunity for members to be innovative on conserving the environment, harvesting and cultivating the plant.



Photo 26: Harvested resurrection leaves being dried



Photo 27: Bags of dried resurrection leaves ferried for transportation, processing and marketing.

h) Processing, Packaging and Marketing of the Resurrection Promotion Products

All the initial stages of harvesting, processing, packaging and marketing of the resurrection plant products are a combined effort involving project members and staff testing the workability of the project's systems and procedures. As this is a learning phase, the refinement of the project model is quickly revisited and adjusted accordingly. To increase standardization of the project, the logistics of milling, packaging and marketing of the products are centralized with the project office taking the lead and coordinative function. This is done to increase the level of project transparency and accountability. All processes and procedures are well documented with some segregation of duties followed and refined along the way. **Photo 26** shows processed resurrection powder nicely packaged in 150g and 50g respectively using a recently acquired sealer machine. **Photo**

27 shows four potential products that can be produced from the resurrection plant powder. Such products include herbal tea and spices for refreshing tea and nutrition due to presence of numerous anti-oxidants. As cosmetic ointment and soap for managing skin disorders and beautification due to its anti-aging effect. In fact, for people suffering from albinism, resurrection herbal soap and ointments can serve as good remedy and as a sustainable alternative to sun screen lotions that are hard to come by and if available are very expensive to buy as they are imported from abroad. As such, plans are underway among other trainings to equip project members with skills and knowledge on how to produce the products for self-care and income generation.



Photo 28: Variety of Resurrection Herbal Products

i) Establishment of group and individual resurrection plant production units

As a requirement for project membership, each member is encouraged to establish a resurrection production unit with at least 100 as a minimum number of plants at membership registration and approval time. The need to be proactive in planting the resurrection plant will ensure that the plant is not over-harvested for extinction. As such, this approach will make sure that there is constant supply of the product to the project at all times of the year. In establishing the production units, the project with technical support from the Environmental Management Authority and Agricultural Extension Service are training members on organic farming methodology that discourages use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. In addition, a training manual is still yet to be developed to assist members to run the project with standard operating procedures and guidelines towards harvesting, drying, processing, packaging of the resurrection plant products.



Photo 30: Resurrection Plant Production Unit established in Ward 10. Project members showing some enthusiasm towards the innovation

j) Conclusion

In view of the above narratives, as Discover Zimbabwe, it is our humble request that our organization is endowed with unique innovations but resource limitations are a stumbling block to achieve the good intentions. We are therefore kindly requesting for technical, financial and material support from Discover Germany to enhance and increase our programming coverage. Among others, such coverage can include without any order of importance; strategic planning, capacity to facilitate planting of more trees, development of technology and capacities. Such support can further help our organization to empower communities to effectively conserve and utilize indigenous trees and knowledge systems towards a better living especially for the poor and marginalised groups. In addition, the requested help can also include staff level of effort and procurement of a programme vehicle to increase field work mobility, timeous monitoring and evaluation of programme activities.

It is important to also mention that any form of support that shall be received from Discover Germany into the organization shall be respectfully acknowledged, utilized and accounted for according to the grant agreement. In addition, the partnership shall be afforded equal visibility in all communications, sharing and learning platforms at all times.

Submitted By

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