

## Discover News sheet for colleagues in Africa March 2021 – Challenges of modern life



The history of humankind is full of exciting developments and catastrophes. It seems that each time there has been some big step forward, a new scientific invention or development, sometime later we suffer the side effects. Each development made life easier – but later we pay the price.

	Benefits	Problems caused	Positive suggestions	Your ideas?
Money	It replaced barter. Easy to buy and sell, even with people in other areas.	Greed, jealousy, thieving. Money is the root of many problems! People with a lot of money are NOT superior to those with little money!	Decide what we mean by wealth – in good relationships, or good family life, in nature and the environment ...	
Electricity	We have light at night, we can use many different machines.	Electricity must be generated from fuel. Fossil fuels have created vast amounts of carbon, thus causing the climate catastrophe, and atmospheric pollution.	Life without electricity is inconceivable, but we could generate electricity with solar energy – which is abundant in Africa. Plant trees to absorb carbon.	
Plastic	We have a vast array of plastic products, including replacement hips and other body parts.	Plastic waste pollutes almost every African village and town and is now found in large quantities in the oceans and on the beaches.	Ban plastic bags. Use paper whenever possible for packaging. Find uses for plastic waste.	
Fertilisers	Plants grow faster and bigger, thus giving a better harvest.	The natural fertility of the soil is depleted. We forget how to work with nature to have good results.	Develop skills in organic farming and in producing and using compost and manure. Ground cover, cover crops and agroforestry.	
Pesticides and herbicides	Crops can thrive without being attacked by insects or choked with “weeds”.	They are absorbed by fruit and vegetables and pollute drinking water. They are toxic to pollinators; bees die, pollination fails, food production and biodiversity suffer.	Develop skills in making natural pesticides, for example with neem, garlic and/or chili.	
Cars, buses, motorbikes and lorries.	Transport, mobility	Road accidents (deaths and injuries), main roads are noisy and dangerous for pedestrians and air pollution, which causes asthma and other respiratory diseases,	Build pavements for walkers and tracks for cyclists. Exclude traffic from town centres and control vehicle emissions and speeds.	
Antibiotics	Miraculous treatment for bacterial infections. Many lives have been saved and healthy cattle are raised.	Because of the overuse of antibiotics by doctors and in animal care, there are today many antibiotic resistant infections which are extremely difficult to treat.	Keep as healthy as possible; eat lots of fruit and vegetables (for vitamins and minerals) and take a lot of exercise. Practice natural healthcare with locally available herbs.	
Internet, social media	The internet gives access to information. Facebook and WhatsApp are great for communication.	False information (fake news!) can be easily spread. People without money and electricity are further disadvantaged.	Examine all new information very critically. Develop solar energy to give more people access to this resource.	

What in your opinion is the moral of this account? I say, “Take new steps with confidence – see if the outcomes are positive! If not, change something.