

Muchakata Eco Farm, Marondera West, Zimbabwe Field Day, 3 June 2022

Mr Simango represented the District Agriculture and Extension Officer of Marondera District as the Guest of Honour.



Women also attended the MEF event. The event was attended by 115, including local councillors, community farmers from Par A and B, Coffee, Pin Hoe, Balmoral, Vicks, youths, Batanai Primary School teachers and school children, Officials from Agritex, the Forestry Commission and the Environmental Management Authority. Initially the target attendance was less than 60 people.



An illustration on beekeeping was presented by Mr Manhanga, the Apiculturist. The session here was on how best to harness bee keeping as potential way of managing forestry and income generation. His presentation emphasised the friendly nature of bees as pollinators of crops, honey production for household use and marketing.



Mr Manhanga displaying his skills in managing bees, showing a honeycomb half full of bees and half of honey.



Catch them while young. A school child from Batanai Primary School enjoyed being part of the Bees Inspection Team.



University of Zimbabwe (UZ) Students Lifelong Learning Association (SLLA) also took part, learning and refining their skills on community engagement and innovation. Left of Mr Manhanga are Tinotenda Mamvoto and Evidence Kupara, both of whom greatly appreciated their participation in this educational event.

MEF Biogas Initiative



Mr Hove from the Technology and Industrial Development Association (TIDA) gave a presentation on the progress of MEF's biogas production. Attendees listened attentively to TIDA's presentation.



Mr Hove from TIDA explaining how the biogas plant functions to one of the community members.



This biogas storage drum is ready to supply the methane gas for cooking. The drum is seen rising from the slab due to presence of biogas inside the drum. Compare this picture with the previous one. For demonstration purposes, the pipe from the drum is connected to a one plate gas stove.



Supply of fresh cattle dung is key for biogas production. It is important to take care of livestock production in-order to support and sustain the interdependence of the MEF initiative.



Mrs Makosine (floral dress) and Mrs Nduru proudly showing two gas plate stoves supported by MEF for their biogas home usage. Mrs Nduru and Mrs Nduru are both Village Heads for Par Farm A and B respectively upon which the MEF project is centrally located.

Batanai Primary School Tree planting event



Batanai Primary School children with University of Zimbabwe students posed for a photo under Mobola Plum Tree ready to go to the next MEF field day assignment.



Batanai Primary School Tree Planting Groundbreaking Event. Here, the Local Councillor, Mr William Siziba, commissions the MEF tree planting project at the school grounds. Behind the guests is a tree regenerating site with close to 600 young trees. With support from the community leadership, the MEF project has since incorporated the site into the tree regenerating initiative. It was also a learning opportunity for encouraging community members to identify similar sites in their individual plots that can also be planted some trees.



Joachim the engineer and the brains behind the MEF model handing over a water berry tree for planting at Batanai Primary school project site to the Local Councillor of Ward 8, Mr William Siziba.



The Local Councillor, Mr Siziba planting a water berry tree with support from Mr Wiston Chigwenese, the local Chief's representative witnessed by Mrs Tigerapayi (Agritex Supervisor in red).



The local Chief Representative, Mr Wiston Chigwenese planting a red mahogany tree at Batanai Primary School grounds.



Batanai Primary School pupils planting a frangipani tree with support from Miss Wendy Tsiga, a student from the University of Zimbabwe (in spectacles and green jacket).



Next move touring of MEF tree planting site.

Touring the Eco Farm Tree Planting Site







Martha Nyanga, MEF project leader, proudly displaying a Chocolate Berry Cake produced and consumed during the MEF Field Day.





Chocolate Berry cake.

Tinotenda Mamvoto UZ Student and her colleagues had a chance to taste the delicious MEF Chocolate Berry cake



Data Gathering on the perception of stakeholders on the MEF model



Mr Siziba, the local Councillor completing a UZ questionnaire on his perception on the MEF model.



Mr Last Shumba, UZ student, gathering data on the community perception on the MEF model.



Miss Tonotenda Mamvoto, UZ student gathering data on the community perception on the MEF model.



Miss Evidence Kupara, UZ student gathering data on the community perception on the MEF model.



Miss Tinashe Savanhu, UZ student gathering data on the community perception on the MEF model.

A quick synopsis of the major recommendations from the data gathering exercise:

- a) The model is ideal for promoting sustainable forestry management in the community.
- b) A training centre with adequate funds should be established to support the initiative.
- c) MEF should intensify beekeeping production and marketing should be expanded to the whole community.
- d) Biogas production should be promoted as an alternative energy source to avert cutting down trees, which was rampant in the area.
- e) Conservation farming being promoted by MEF should be up scaled to support the entire community in terms of food security and employment creation.
- f) In partnership with relevant stakeholders, the MEF model should prioritize research in forestry and non-forestry value addition that emphasise indigenous fruits, timber and non-timber forest products, and marketing for employment creation.
- g) MEF should be developed into a fully-fledged eco-tourism resort centre.
- h) MEF should support tree planting, restoration and fencing in all schools in the area as a way of enhancing learning and protecting the environment.



Value addition of wild fruits. Through processing various edible wild fruits e.g., chocolate berries, Indian plum, MEF is trying to promote the production and utilisation of fruit juices, cakes and chocolates.



The MEF team conducting the tree listing and counting exercise.