



**Project Fund Request: [ORGANIC GARDENING]**

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Reference to Matibi Program Strategy: 2017 PROJECT 2

### 1 Management Summary

Organic gardening is now a common livelihood strategy in most of African rural areas due to incessant droughts and crop diseases. In Zimbabwe it is being championed by especially NGOs while government is ceased more with conventional agriculture which involves mobilisation of modern seed and chemicals. However, with the serious lack of funds prevailing in the country for over a decade and half now, a majority of needy communities have hardly taken up this strategy. In Masvingo Province one of the most painfully overlooked case is Mwenezi District, with the poorest agronomic conditions and yet the least number of meaningful interventions. Matibi community is one of these Mwenezi communities in dire need of urgent support to sustain food production. To date, the community has hosted countless humanitarian projects where donors distributed free food. While these gestures are acknowledged, their implication in sustainable community empowerment has been seriously problematic. Worse still, the government and other agencies have distributed maize seed (the staple) and chemical fertilisers in this and other communities but largely without successfully solving the food security question. For a long time now, such communities have fallen prey to political groups which manipulate their plight in pursuit of partisan vendettas.

It is the recognition of the above realities that led the village women of Mwenezi District's Ward 3 to request the hand of FFM in constructing 2 gardens to grow organic crops and vegetables. The gardeners are in need of fencing materials and they are mobilising everything else by themselves. They have secured their own labour to construct the gardens from the digging of holes through the erecting of fences right up to the making of garden beds. The women have also gathered the implements to be used in the project such as diggers and watering flasks. They have also organised their own seed varieties with the assistance of the agricultural officer of the area who understands the requirements of organic agriculture as well as the local climatic demands. One garden is 180m perimeter while the other is 210m. The total calculated cost of this project is 5.666 USD out of which the community contribution is 2.000 USD, leaving the net request of 3.666 USD being the materials to be procured from Masvingo city.

### 2 Total estimated costs of the project

Total project cost in USD	
Seeds	200
Fencing materials	3.509
Labour for fencing	1.000
Transporting costs	157
Garden tools and implements	800
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.666</b>

### 3 Funding

<b>The total costs of the project is planned to be funded as follows:</b>	
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Cash funding from Friends for Matibi Switzerland	3.666
Local funds	2.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.666</b>

#### 4 Time plan for realization

Activity	Timeframe	Assumptions
Organising the gardeners	Done since January 2017	We assume that 2 gardens will be enough to cater for the 30 registered households
Mobilising labour	Secured already	That the identified local skills will still be available when the project kicks off
Arranging garden tools	Done	That the adjacent sources of water will still be functional
Purchasing of fencing materials	A matter of 2 days to have them at Matibi	That the quoted items will still be in stock by date the purchasing will be done
Erecting the fences	1 week for each garden	As said above about labour
Preparing garden beds	2 weeks	That each gardener has sufficient household labour
Acquisition of seeds	Waiting for the gardens to be ready	That if the seeds are acquired too early they will get spoilt
Planting and onwards	1 week	That only organic manure and humus will be used as well as organic remedies for pests

It has to be noted that the gardening activities are most successful when they are started before the onset of the rainy season.

#### 5 Financing plan

Items to be funded	Payment arrangements	Responsible persons
Fencing materials and transportation	FFM to deposit 5.666 USD into one of Matibi mission accounts (hospital or school)	Adnos will do the purchasing and transportation of the materials
Seeds, labour and tools	The agricultural officer organised villagers to gather 2.000 worth of resources for these costs	The agricultural officer will pay each item when it is due. For example, labourers will be paid after the completion of fencing.

#### 6 Person(s) in charge

The administration of this project will be shared between Adnos of FFM and the local agricultural officer Jemitius Pedzisai. Adnos will be responsible to care about the plan implementation, budget utilisation and reporting. He is the one organising project information and preparing technical procedures to request funds as well as to lay project timeframes. When this is done, he will work with Jemitius to put into action all the planned procedures. For Jemitius in particular, responsibilities will include day-to-day monitoring of the project steps. He will brief Adnos immediately of any acted part of the project assignments or any incidences. Jemitius is the one interacting on daily basis with the project beneficiaries and occupies a role in the local FFM setup as a project officer for Sustainable Livelihoods Intervention.

#### 7 Detailed information about the project

##### 7.1 Detailed project description

The project is intended to serve the community of Matibi in Ward 3 of Mwenzezi Rural District. The ward has 17 villages and 8 of these have similar projects. Most of the villagers practice summer agriculture whereby they wait all year for the summer rains. Aside from this conventional peasant agriculture they have not managed to expand their means of livelihood. Some have tried livestock keeping but even these are often affected by frequent droughts.

Information with the agricultural officer is that the villagers have tried several times before to do gardening but with varying degrees of success. One of the challenges has been the withdrawal of determination by some members especially men as they try out different other ventures. Women who usually remained in the garden projects were those that had no alternatives at all to eke out a living other than just holding on to the

gardens. Most of these women are elderly and/or single parents with heavy dependence burdens in their households. This proposed project is designed with especially them in mind; hence the refreshed gardens register will be predominantly women.

### 7.2 Project goals

This project is primarily meant to bust the biting household economies in the community. The economic situation is bad for far too long in the villages, with women-headed families faring the worst. Gardens are at the base of community-wide strategies to grow food even for those with the littliest of means. If the gardens are properly and adequately supported, the villagers will utilize them to grow food throughout the year even outside the rains. This is especially so with organic gardening which requires no special sophisticated skills and inputs. In organic gardening, the villagers engage in those crops and vegetables that normally do well in the local environment and can withstand native crop diseases. Most of the species grown in organic gardening are traditional, with tried and tested nutritional qualities.

At Matibi, the FFM has already funded 2 gardens before. The proposed 2 new gardens will add on to those 2 older gardens that are operational. At a general level, currently there are 46 gardens in the whole Ward 3 serving 604 families. The anticipated 2 new gardens will bring the total gardens in the ward to 48 and will contribute 30 new households to end up with 634 served families. However, the local agricultural office has it that the total number of needy households in the Ward is 1.284, meaning a remaining deficit of 650 after the intended addition of 2 gardens.

The benefits of the organic style of gardening being introduced will not be enjoyed at the targeted project site alone but will spread out in due course. Funded gardeners will be instruments of the intended agricultural revolution and be the torchbearers in the proposed best practices. Beginning at small scales in these gardens, the option of growing indigenous small grains and traditional vegetables will later be accepted extensively in the country's arid regions. It has to be hinted also that even where organic gardening is currently being done, the gardeners are still clinging to the growing of exotic vegetables such as spinach, covo and lettuce which are being promoted by health officers and have a potential to fetch a better demand in the flea-market. The market of garden produce is bad currently bad though, making it rather futile to emphasise market gardening. It is in the scope of this project to promote indigenous species as well because they are considered to wield better pest resistance capacity and are generally more nutritious.

### 7.3 Project risks

Common risks associated with gardening include depletion of irrigative water. The core target group is composed of women with limited physical capacity to ferry water from afar. The project is designed to utilise the nearby Muchingwizi weir, a bigger dam at Musaverima as well as the currently dysfunctional boreholes that are likely to be repaired sooner or later. Another possible risk is the likelihood of vandalism. It has happened sometime before when the water pump installed in the local dam was stolen. However, with the commitment demonstrated by the benefiting groups to this far, it is hoped that they will provide the necessary safeguards to the best of their ability to keep the project afloat once it kicks off.

### 7.4 Negative impacts of not realizing this project

The project sits in the core of various other community projects. If this project is not implemented, the consequences will spillover on those other livelihood strategies. Successful organic gardening is the necessary bedrock upon which future projects like market gardening will rest. Villagers need to satisfy their basic subsistence needs first, before they can expand into marketable produce. Organic gardening ensures a steady headway out of food poverty. If it is not realised, the villagers will not develop food and nutritional self-sufficiency. Without self-reliance food-wise, the community can not meaningfully do commerce because they will remain nervous about bread and butter issues. So, this proposed project may move the Matibi residents up from the prevailing humanitarian/relief mode into a sustainability/self-reliance mode of existence.

Another critical angle from which this project can be justified is the angle of economic inclusion. The project is a deliberate manner in which affirmative action for the discriminated groups can be effected. Current and past strategies have not managed to effectively incorporate women in reliable livelihood schemes. Worse still, these prior activities (for example conservation agriculture) proved to be too strenuous such that the frail among women found themselves structurally excluded. Such is the situation with elderly women of ages 50 years and above. The presently proposed project comes handy with hopes to salvage this forgotten

vulnerable group. If it fails then it will spell continued gloom for these deprived common people who have not had significant economic enablement custom-designed for them.

**8 Other organizations or governmental support**

This project is being introduced in Matibi but has been implemented somewhere by other agencies. CARE International has implemented a variety which did not include indigenous crops and it faced the challenge of sustainability because the kinds of vegetables grown in the gardens were not local favourites. That variety also overemphasized the for-sale component too early when the villagers were still concerned about subsistence. So, in as much as this proposed project taps from the experience of other earlier projects of near-similar nature, there are numerous modifications prepared to improve sustainability especially.

Better still, project consultations have been made with Caritas, a Catholic agency for charitable projects. The Caritas is especially important in this project because it has done successful organic gardening in 3 districts of Masvingo province. The planners of the current proposed project had a chance to visit some of these projects in Bikita District. Also, the planners consulted the agricultural mechanization unit of Masvingo province and this department gave the assurance that such a project is the 'in thing' in the country these days.

**9 Additional information**



*FFM-funded garden at Vhure 1 with exotic vegetables*



*FFM-funded Vhure 2 garden with indigenous species*

**10 Personal comments**

Here is a potent project with a broad community base and which involves the poverty-stricken villagers more directly than any other interventions we have made before.

**11 Decision FFM Switzerland**

Project funding request status:

- |   |                                     |   |                                    |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Ready for decision | <input type="checkbox"/> Cancelled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declined       | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved   | <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation     | <input type="checkbox"/>           |

Decision made by:

- |   |  |   |                          |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E-Mail circular | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone conference | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|

Decision date: 2017/10/02

Signatures (two necessary)



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Oliver Müller  
President  
Friends for Matibi

Michael Zuberbühler  
Vice president  
Friends for Matibi