

Feed Love Change International



December 20, 2023

Greetings Friends of FLC!

I left Bulawayo 10 days ago, having spent four days with our management team. We listened, observed, sought to understand, participated, and engaged conversations, to understand our collective roles in our partnership.

It has taken this trip to realize the breadth and depth of corruption in Zimbabwe, first by Mugabe's government of 30 years and now Mnangagwa's for the past six. The consequences to your average Zimbabwean is a steady and compounding decline (the degree of corruption is outlined well in a 4-part, sobering documentary on YouTube called Gold Mafia). Unfortunately the conclusion of most Zimbabweans is that Mnangagwa's leadership is leaving them worse off than Mugabe. In turn, this translates into ongoing and increased hardship in the lives for ordinary people, continued decline in local infrastructure, and an increased malaise/cynicism in the broader population about the future of their country.

As I walked the Nketa neighbourhood with our management team, and they shared their dreams, there was evidence of a thriving community garden with a bore hole. Opposite, an empty lot strewn with trash. The contrast between hope and despair. Nketa community is not the poorest in the world, nor in Zimbabwe, and I wondered as we walked as to why FLCI were there. People lived in 'decent' homes, some better cared for than others; we were not among the poorest of the poor in Zimbabwe, and certainly not in Africa.



It's taken a bit of distance to answer that question and have concluded the work we are doing is right. And good. And necessary. We remain a small, intentional organization that is keeping people from the lowest levels of poverty. We are starting "mid-way" if you will, up what is an ever-steepening mountain. And importantly, "we" are not seen as the principal operator changing community lives, but our management team, in conjunction with the local church. We are their silent partners. They remain the "light" in their community, persistent in their efforts to feed, clothe, love and challenge their community. Through these faithful stewards, and your steadfast commitment, we are beginning to see the fruit.



In Nketa, just outside the gates of the local BICC church, I was able to refill my water bottle, drink from it, as can the community at large because of the partnership between FLCI, FLC Zim and the local BICC church to manage the well into perpetuity. Anyone can bring their watering cans and know the water is clean and safe to drink. *This is what you have participated in.* I was able to be part of their monthly Sunday distribution of maize, oil and beans. I met two of our scholarship orphans, one a first year, and the other in second year, truly grateful for our assistance. *This is what you have participated in.*



Perhaps most impactful was the hour-long drive to Fig Tree, the hub of four neighboring villages, and hear, see, and “walk through” the plan unfolding: a 99-year lease for nearly 18 hectares of land for agricultural and husbandry. It’s a matter of formalizing this incredible opportunity for both FLC Zim and Fig Tree. *This is what you are participating in* each and every time your monthly/yearly donation occurs.

So, thank you team for your silent donations each and every month. I am reminded again of the verses prior to Jeremiah 29:11 wherein the Israelites were struggling. God reminded them “settle down, plant gardens” insinuating they might be there a while. This is a hard message to wrap our heads around, to encourage others with. Yet, this is the hope. While there is a general malaise, the church, its congregants, and importantly a good portion of the youth engaging in Sunday morning discussions rejected the malaise, adopting instead hope in Christ and his intentions for their future. So while the ground may be barren yet, the church is not. It is thriving. It was heartwarming.



Land to develop

Pragmatically, what does this mean for FLC moving forward and what assistance can we offer? During our time together, a recurring thought: “how do we stretch a dollar so as to “triple” our bottom line? In other words, a dollar just can’t be a dollar. A dollar needs to somehow net three. Whether that’s in resources, time saving opportunities, or reciprocity from the recipients, the dollar needs to somehow net more than just face value.

Friends, our FLC Zim Management Team’s goals for 2024 is to begin farming at Fig Tree, in addition to opening up an education space at the local church wherein anyone can come for tutoring opportunities made available by the teachers, volunteers and scholarship recipients. For the former, land must be tilled, livestock purchased, and a commercial contract in place for the sale of crops other than corn which will be used for the local community. It is a tall order. Regarding the former, it means internet connectivity in the church, and asset mapping how the local talent can be harnessed, scheduled and



FLC Zimbabwe Management Team

coordinated in such a way that it is useful to the very least among Nketa.

- 1) Would you consider increasing your monthly giving or yearly giving?
- 2) Would you consider a one-time gift, allocated for a tractor that can be both used for the land, but also rented out to other farmers in the area, as a revenue stream?
- 3) Would you consider sharing our work with family or close friends who might also consider financially partnering with us?

In closing words fail to convey the richness of the time spent with our team, or share with you their conviction and unselfishness of both time and resources. How encouraging it was now to see that despite how little they have, their intention to “share” the Love is now reaching beyond the Nketa community and into the lives of the Fig Tree community. Their Resistance, Resilience, and desire for Restitution need our support.

May Joy, Peace, Love – all the very best gifts of the season, continue to be yours.

On behalf of FLC International, and FLC Zimbabwe, blessings to you this Christmas season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Sailor', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Sailor,
Board Chair, FLC International