



Beyond Subsistence is a non-profit, Christian organisation that exists to bring about long-term, sustainable change through forestry and agroforestry development amongst the world's poorest communities.

COVID Update Zimbabwe

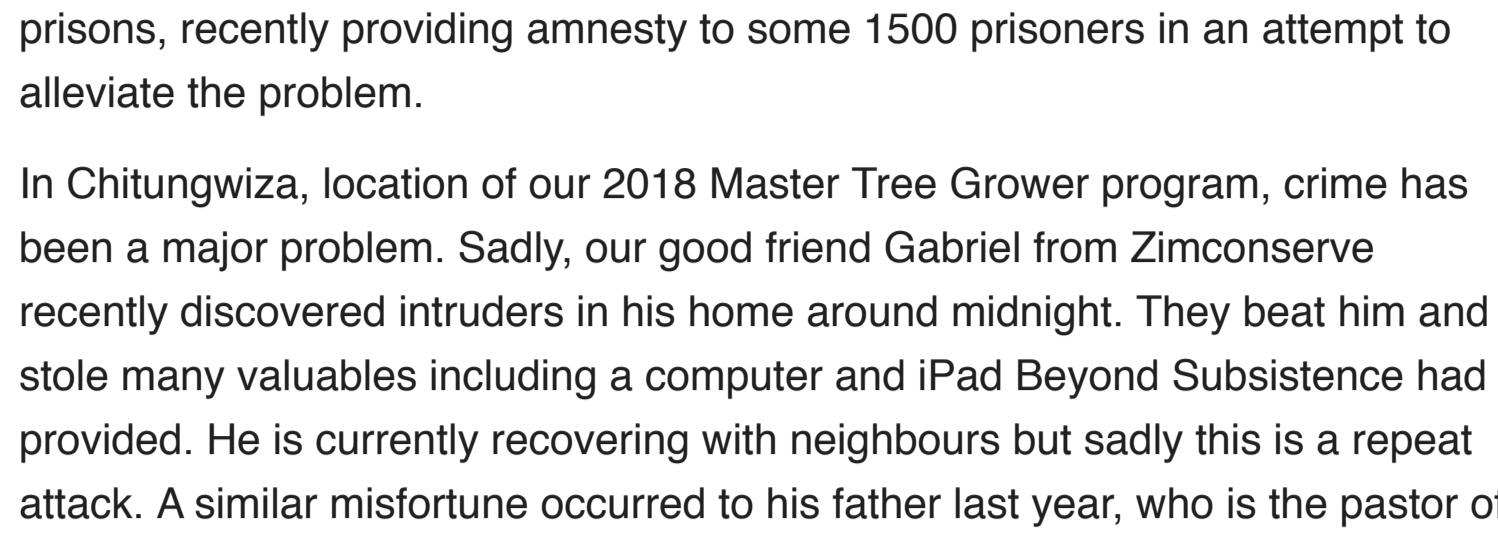
Life in Zimbabwe has become desperate in recent years with its economy again in a tailspin. Access to power is restricted to a few hours each night for the few who have it connected. Essential food supplies and fuel are often unobtainable. Running water has become a luxury with acute water shortages lasting months and sometimes years. Access to money is also difficult with banks often unable to obtain cash for their customers. Zimbabwe's health system has also collapsed with doctors protesting a lack of equipment and medicines to treat patients. Severe droughts have also affected many parts of the country with over 7 million people (half the population) facing food insecurity. On top of all this, the country is also battling a recent malaria outbreak. This has resulted in 131 deaths, although health experts expect the figure to be far higher.

It's against this backdrop that Zimbabwe is now dealing with COVID-19 as well. Its first case appeared on March 21st with the government quickly announcing a state of disaster. The country was then put into a nationwide lockdown for 21 days with all borders closed. Although this is in line with measures many other countries have taken, for Zimbabwe it will come at a significant cost. As a country already severely depleted in basic supplies, it relies on South Africa alone for 40% of its trade imports. Furthermore, it creates a major predicament for 34% of Zimbabwe's population that lives in extreme poverty (World Bank figures 2019). These people have been forced into lockdown and have no government assistance to survive on. To date COVID has officially infected 34 people resulting in 4 deaths.

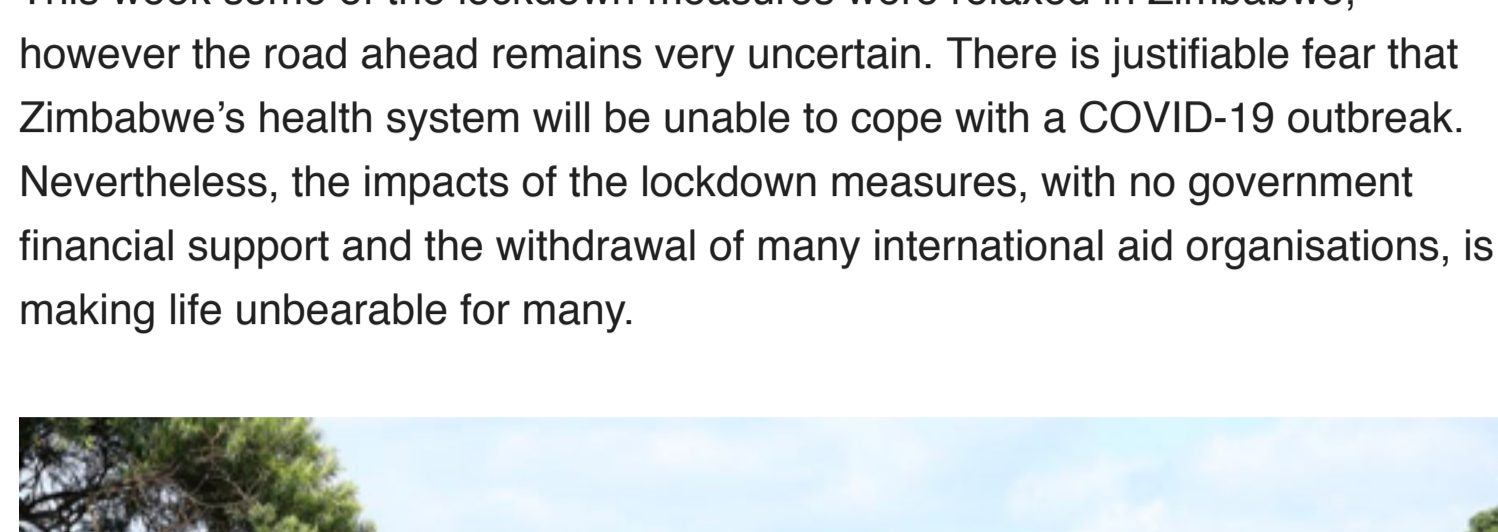
In Gokwe, where Beyond Subsistence has been working since 2014, many people live hand-to-mouth yet lockdowns have prevented people from even buying and selling food. Vendors are arrested if caught buying or selling produce outside of restrictions. Some cannot even afford to pay the fines for release. The government has also been struggling with overcrowding of prisons, recently providing amnesty to some 1500 prisoners in an attempt to alleviate the problem.

In Chitungwiza, location of our 2018 Master Tree Grower program, crime has been a major problem. Sadly, our good friend Gabriel from Zimconserve recently discovered intruders in his home around midnight. They beat him and stole many valuables including a computer and iPad Beyond Subsistence had provided. He is currently recovering with neighbours but sadly this is a repeat attack. A similar misfortune occurred to his father last year, who is the pastor of the Chitungwiza Baptist Church.

This week some of the lockdown measures were relaxed in Zimbabwe, however the road ahead remains very uncertain. There is justifiable fear that Zimbabwe's health system will be unable to cope with a COVID-19 outbreak. Nevertheless, the impacts of the lockdown measures, with no government financial support and the withdrawal of many international aid organisations, is making life unbearable for many.



Empty stalls and streets in Harare



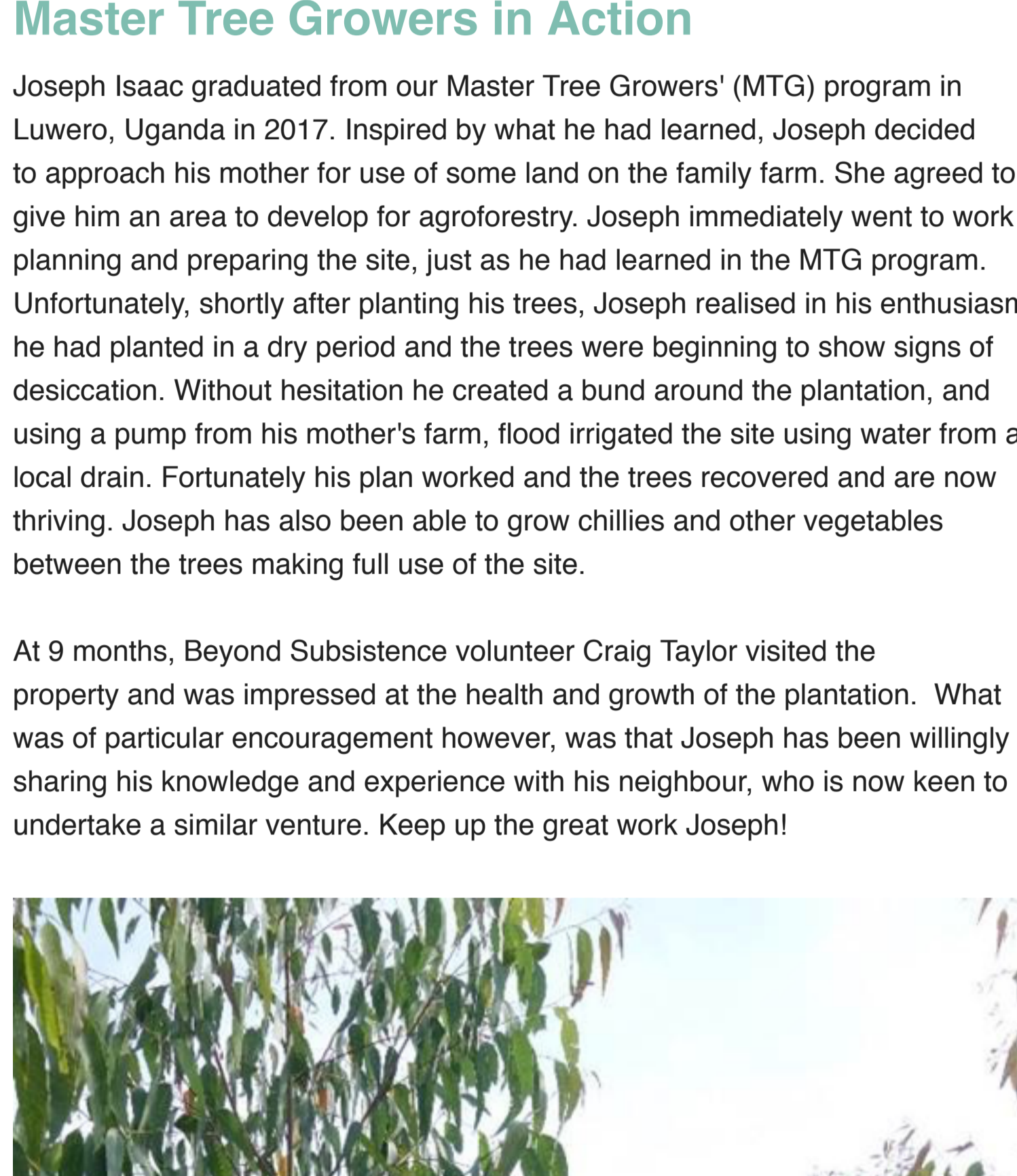
Local people lining up for food in Chitungwiza.

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Master Tree Growers in Action

Joseph Isaac graduated from our Master Tree Growers' (MTG) program in Luwero, Uganda in 2017. Inspired by what he had learned, Joseph decided to approach his mother for use of some land on the family farm. She agreed to give him an area to develop for agroforestry. Joseph immediately went to work planning and preparing the site, just as he had learned in the MTG program. Unfortunately, shortly after planting his trees, Joseph realised in his enthusiasm he had planted in a dry period and the trees were beginning to show signs of desiccation. Without hesitation he created a bund around the plantation, and using a pump from his mother's farm, flood irrigated the site using water from a local drain. Fortunately his plan worked and the trees recovered and are now thriving. Joseph has also been able to grow chillies and other vegetables between the trees making full use of the site.

At 9 months, Beyond Subsistence volunteer Craig Taylor visited the property and was impressed at the health and growth of the plantation. What was of particular encouragement however, was that Joseph has been willingly sharing his knowledge and experience with his neighbour, who is now keen to undertake a similar venture. Keep up the great work Joseph!



Joseph Isaac with his eucalyptus plantation and chillies below (9 months), Luwero Uganda

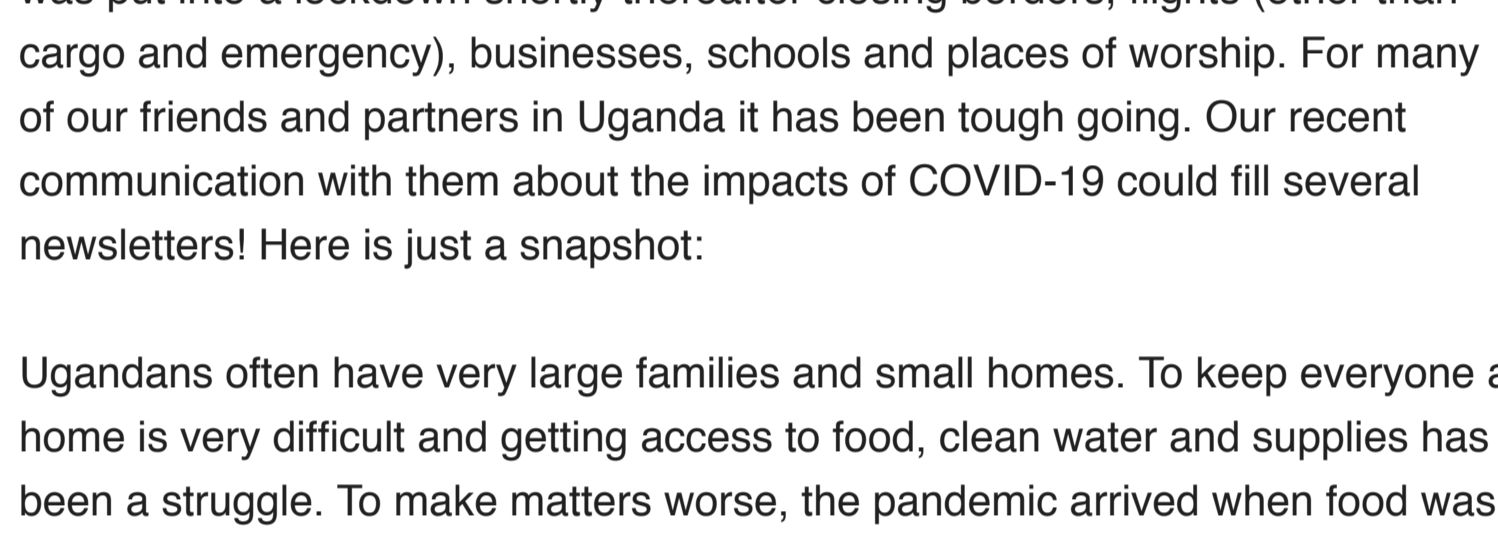
Life in Uganda during COVID-19

Uganda had its first case of COVID-19 on March 22nd and rather uniquely has yet to record any deaths from the virus despite having 89 cases. The country was put into a lockdown shortly thereafter closing borders, flights (other than cargo and emergency), businesses, schools and places of worship. For many of our friends and partners in Uganda it has been tough going. Our recent communication with them about the impacts of COVID-19 could fill several newsletters! Here is just a snapshot:

Ugandans often have very large families and small homes. To keep everyone at home is very difficult and getting access to food, clean water and supplies has been a struggle. To make matters worse, the pandemic arrived when food was at its lowest after a period of drought. In Kabale, South West Uganda, our good friend Jimmy Musime from Kabale Agroforestry Network (KAN) reports that it is common to find children scavenging garbage bins to find whatever food they can. Crime is also on the increase as people become more desperate for food. Shops are closed and streets are deserted as only a very few essential services are allowed to operate.

Sadly, in recent weeks, torrential rains have also hit several Ugandan districts. With so much of Uganda's forests removed for agriculture and fuel, rainfall moves quickly across the ground creating saturated soils, floods and landslides. The recent heavy rains have destroyed more than 1,600 acres of food crops and displaced an estimated 600 families living around Lake Victoria during a very difficult time. In Rubanda District, close to where Beyond Subsistence has been working in recent years, two young girls were tragically killed this month when mudslides swept them away.

On a positive note, KAN has reported that a number of its members, including some Land Care groups and Women's Groups, are seeing wonderful benefits from their hard work to establish gardens. These local gardens have become an important source of food and nutrients during the lockdown. Some groups have also been realising the benefits of savings schemes they established for members. These have been used in recent weeks to provide food or finance for members to buy vegetable seeds. Some members are already enjoying the benefits of harvesting nutritious vegetables such as spinach.

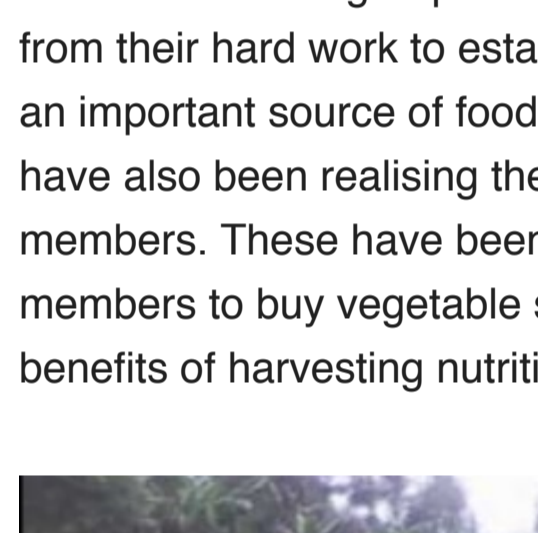


Landslide area in Rubanda District



Flooded farmland near Lake Victoria

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From the CEO

In these crazy COVID-19 lockdown times I'm sure we have all had moments where we find ourselves thinking "is this all really happening?" It seems incredible to me that across the world, irrespective of wealth, race or social status, we have all been restricted in some way and felt uncertain about the future.

In Australia we have witnessed people at times acting irrationally and aggressively, as they have stockpiled food and toilet paper with the news of COVID-19 spreading across the nation. I also know of garden supply businesses in Australia reporting huge demand for top soil as people rushed to establish their own vegetable gardens in fear of long-term food shortages.

As I've reflected on these events, it has occurred to me that our recent experience of COVID-19 in Australia has, for the first time, helped many of us understand what our brothers and sisters in Africa deal with on a daily basis. In Australia we are not used to seeing empty supermarket shelves, mass unemployment, restrictions on our travel and the reality of a highly contagious disease that has no cure. This is new and unwelcome territory for many of us. Nevertheless with every experience of pain and suffering I've learned that there is always a gift to discover at the end! Perhaps it is greater understanding for others or a renewed focus for our lives as we reassess our priorities. As one US Preacher put it, "It's like God sent every one of us in the world for time-out to think about our lives!"

As we come out the other side of COVID-19 I've no doubt life will be different in many ways. It is my hope that, for those of us living in the western world, as we exit this period of "time-out" we can identify a little more with those living in developing countries and respond with compassion and support.

Over the next few months, Beyond Subsistence will be assisting our project partners in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Uganda to re-establish themselves as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. We will then be making plans - once international travel reopens - to return to Africa to continue the work of transforming lives and landscapes.

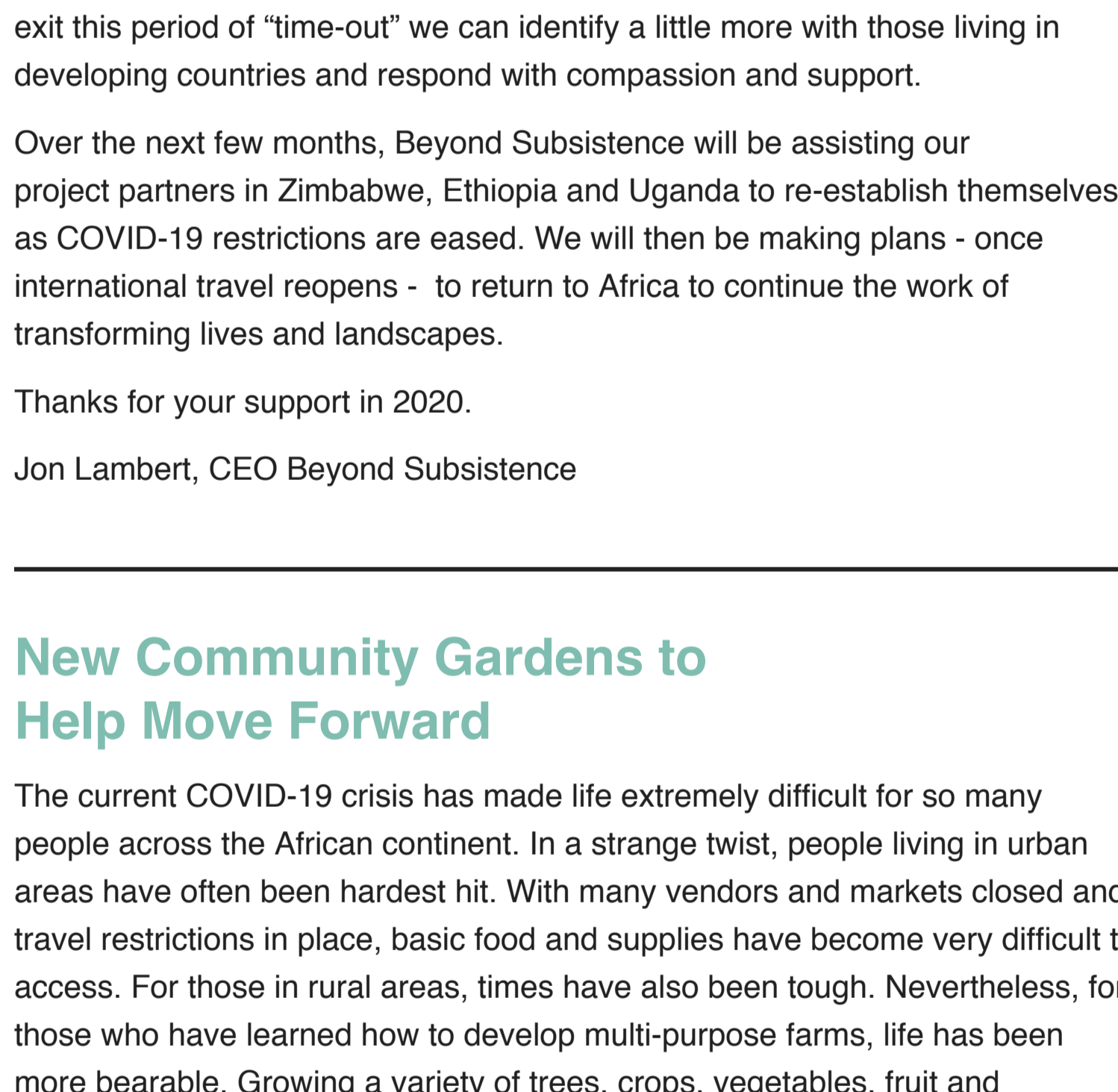
Thanks for your support in 2020.

Jon Lambert, CEO Beyond Subsistence

New Community Gardens to Help Move Forward

The current COVID-19 crisis has made life extremely difficult for so many people across the African continent. In a strange twist, people living in urban areas have often been hardest hit. With many vendors and markets closed and travel restrictions in place, basic food and supplies have become very difficult to access. For those in rural areas, times have also been tough. Nevertheless, for those who have learned how to develop multi-purpose farms, life has been more bearable. Growing a variety of trees, crops, vegetables, fruit and animals has always been encouraged through our Master Tree Grower and Sprout (schools) programs. For these participants the benefits have never been more obvious as they enjoy a variety of nutritious foods in a time of uncertainty.

As our partners exit COVID-19 lockdowns in Ethiopia, Uganda and Zimbabwe we will be turning our focus to developing new community gardens in a number of urban and semi-urban areas. These gardens will provide a range of vegetables, fruits, nuts and agroforestry trees for fuel and building. They will also demonstrate the value of growing your own resources in times such as these. Beyond Subsistence has partners and local networks who can efficiently organise and establish these new community gardens for AUD\$2,000 each. With your support, we plan to develop at least 5 new community gardens in 2020. If you would like to assist please donate below and mark "COM GARDEN" on your reference.



Locals enjoying a harvest of food from a community garden

Want to help?

Beyond Subsistence is managed by volunteers and we strive to maximise the amount provided for overseas projects. Donations are 100% tax deductible and we guarantee that at least 80% of your gift will go directly to our projects. The balance is required to pay for transaction fees and compliance costs associated with the ATO's requirements for charities with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status.

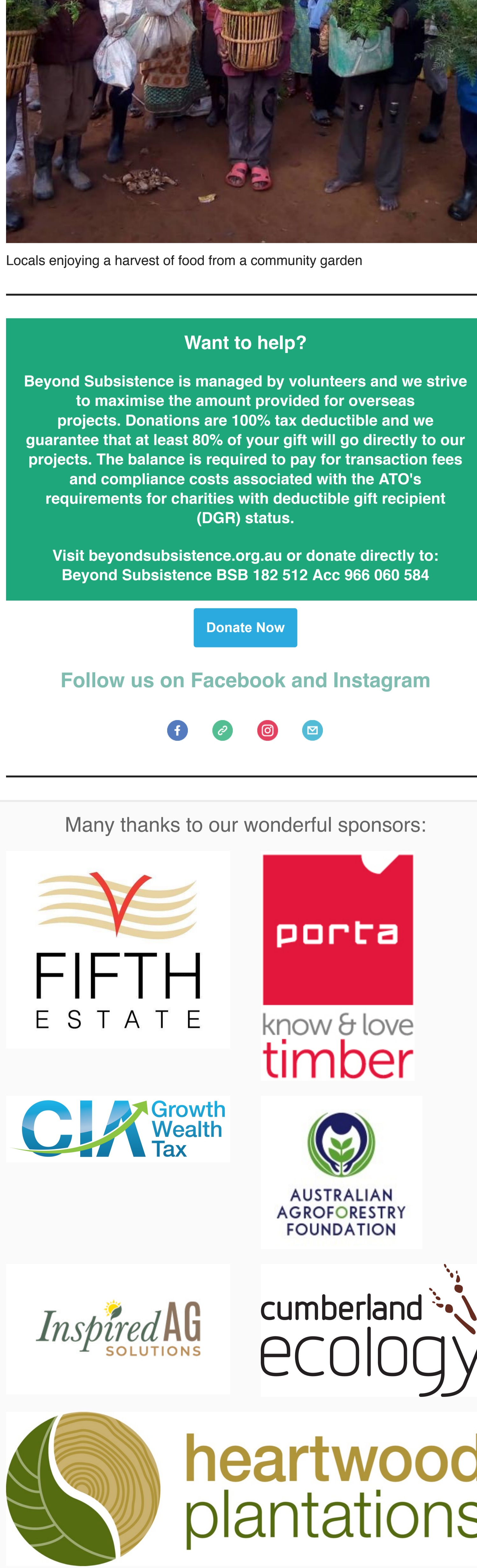
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