

Extracts from One Month of Mr. Phiri's Early Field Research Work Reports (1987)

Introduction and Background Explanations

As a member of the Research Team Mr. Phiri wrote daily reports on his interviews and work in large A4 Duplicate Notebooks. During 1986 when he started this work with Ken Wilson the focus was on learning about people's understanding of water and wetland issues, both in agriculture and for domestic use, and his notes were therefore basically transcriptions of interviews and field studies. As 1986 progressed his work shifted to working with communities to find solutions to these problems, and to begin to conceive and find funding for Zvishavane Water Project. By 1987 Mr. Phiri was animating and backing around two dozen community projects in both Mazvihwa Communal Area (where the Research Team were based in the home of Mr. and Mrs Mukamuri at Marozve/Mototi) and in his home region of Runde Communal Area to the north and west of Zvishavane.

The research notes presented here in edited format date from just a one month period August 17th - September 17th 1987 (during which he was on leave one week: August 18th -24th). The original notes were located by Ian Scoones for this Life Book; Ian was leading the Research Team at that stage and had kept copies of Mr. Phiri's notes.

Although Mr. Phiri was involved in a great diversity of project work during the dry season of 1987 it was still being done essentially without funding, beyond a micro-grant from a group of German graduates and some seed funding from Oxfam which was just starting to kick in.

Apart from community contributions and what the Research Team contributed, in August-September the work was reliant for its resources on partnering with Local Government, particular Social Services through the Food for Work program (this being a severe drought year), and the District Development Fund, which had tools, technical skills (e.g. to use explosives to blast hard rock), and access to cement. Furthermore, these kinds of projects required Government authorization. Agritex (as the Agricultural Extension agency was then known) was needed to peg and approve dams. Activities in wetlands, even those granted to individual farmers required permission from the then Natural Resources Board and a positive nod from Agritex. The locally-elected Ward Councilors needed to recommend all these actions. Clinics and Schools had water problems, and the Headmasters and Health Departments had views on how these should be solved. The District Administrators and District Council actively coordinated development efforts in Zvishavane District, including those of NGOs, and they had to handle many and complex demands. As will be abundantly clear from these notes Mr. Phiri therefore found himself working as closely with these various Government agencies and individuals as he did with communities and their landscapes. Fortunately the civil servants and elected leaders were active and dedicated to addressing development issues, even if they were not used to interacting with a community-driven process activated by participatory research. Resources – time, cement, skilled technicians, transport – were always limiting and frustrating delays normal, but month by month wells and dams were

completed and the area transformed. And numerous friendships developed from the challenge of the work. But of course it proved harder to transform the set of colonial land use regulations which constrained the work, particularly in agricultural wetlands.

To make Mr. Phiri's notes more accessible they have been lightly edited in three respects:

1. Notes on development of selected projects and activities have been arranged in chronological order under each project.
2. Notes on about half of the on-going projects have been omitted, including the projects in Runde Communal Area (to save space).
3. A few explanatory notes are introduced in [square brackets] to clarify local or technical details.

The materials have been divided into the following sections: (a) well making (b) dam building and (c) working with institutional structures.

These notes give a sense of the extraordinary complexity, skill and hard work involved in Mr. Phiri's founding efforts for the Zvishavane Research Team that grew out of the Research Team's presence in Mazvihwa in the 1985-1987 period.

(a) Well Making

i. Developing a Well Project: The Mwando Group Meeting

September 7th, 1987: I went to Mr Mwando's field as they had asked me to come and be with them at their meeting on "water problem". When I got there I found them ready for the meeting and Mr Mwando called them and told them why they had come together.

He introduced me to the gathering and then gave me chance to talk to the meeting.

I said I am here with you to talk about drinking water. I asked "where do you get drinking water?" They said "From that well there". I then said could we go and see your drinking water? We went and found that their well is a pool that has water and people come and draw water from this well. People laughed when I said "your water is dirty, and why do you go in the pool when you draw water?" They said "we draw water when we are outside". I said "who can go and draw water as for us to see?" One woman took part and when she was there I said "How does the well look like when the rain falls?". They answered that "it gets full", and I said "where does the water flow to?", and they answered "into the well". [From that I could show them that} "your well is dirty" and that "if you want I can show you how to make it a good well, and that your feet would never in any time step in the well". "You can", I said "line your well with stones and concrete rings. [But] I want to tell you that stone linings have a problem with snakes as these snakes come to the well for frogs. So I see that stone lining is bad due to that."

“Concrete rings are very good for wells for you can even put a slab over it and your water is protected. I then said it is up to you to choose which lining you would like on your well and I would help you in any of the lining.”

(ii) Nvuto Well (Murowa, Mazvihwa)

August 17th, 1987: I went to Nvuto Well and found him lining the well. Oh what good work is being done. I found that the people have the spirit of the wells. I told them that they need to have a Water Committee for the wells. I also said they need a collection of Z\$20.

September 1st, 1987: I went to Mr Nvuto and found him and also the well he had lined. [It is] left [only] to finish the lining and then have the slab. I told Mr. Nvuto that on September 15th, 1987 we were going to have visitors of the NRB [Natural Resources Board]. I told him we would like to see the well and his vlei and have talks with them. I said I would ask them about a fish pond at his vlei.

September 4th, 1987: I went to David Nvuto’s Well and found him at home and I informed him that visitors are no longer coming next week, but are coming on the 10th September, 1987. I told them we would come in the morning and I said we need some people to be with them.

September 8th, 1987: I went to David Nvuto and told him visitors were coming on September 10th, 1987 in the morning and I would like to find you with your group as to meet the visitors. I also told him to have the lining high.

September 10th, 1987: We then drove to Mr. Nvuto’s home [with the NRB Delegation] and at this place we found a very big gathering

(iii) Dzabvu’s Well (Mototi, Mazvihwa)

August 26th, 1987: I then drove down to Dzabvu Well to fit the concrete rings. When I got there I found them fitting them very well. The well has now 22 rings fitted and I hope the well is going to be very nice.

August 27th, 1987: Since Mr Ndhlovu is sick I went to see the work supervision at Dzabvu Well. The gang went to collect stones as stones were getting few. But when they came to the end of the day they said the hammer was lost. I told them that they better look for it very carefully [and that] that hammer has to be found for the DDF [District Development Fund] may demand money from those who have missed it.

August 28th, 1987: I went to Dzabvu’s Well and fitted some concrete rings up to 32 and left to finish the lining by two more rings.

September 1st, 1987: I then left for Dzabvu Well and found women crushing stones for making concrete rings. I came to the well and found the group working at the well filling the soil and stones for lining. I told them to make the concrete rings and finish the lining.

September 4th, 1987: I went to Dzabvu Well to see the work. I found the gang at work and started putting stones to fill the pit and then put concrete rings. The well has 35 concrete rings and is nearly completed putting of rings. I hope I still need one [more ring].

September 8th, 1987: I went to Dzabvu Well and informed the gang working there that we were to start on these concrete rings [for use in the river beds to make “mifuku” – sand infiltration pits that enable water to be withdrawn faster and of higher quality] as from tomorrow September 9th, 1987. So we need to finish the well. I said those crushing stones could [continue] near Mathou’s home and crush there.

September 15th, 1987: I went to Dzabvu’s Well and found the gang doing the work. But those at the well soil filling was not good. I then told them to fill that part of the well [side filling] with more soil and then pack stones over the soil there and after those stones a concrete should be filled over the stones. The work went that way and the making of concrete rings is going well.

September 16th, 1987: We drove to Dzabvu [with Mr. Chokela of the Health Department] and when we got there he was also very much impressed to see Dzabvu Well and said that work was very great. Mr. Chokela said he would like me to take him to any of my projects because he has much to learn too.

September 17th, 1987: I drove to Dzabvu Well to go and see the top part of the well as I told the group to put stones and crush them so that a concrete slab could be put over that well. I found they were doing as I had told them. I then drove to Marozve HQ for petrol but I found there was [only an] empty chigubu [container] and since I had taken [fuel] only once when I went to Murowa on September 16th 1987 I am worried how fuel is being used. I think next time I better have my fuel at my place.

(iv) Murowa Clinic Well (Murowa Clinic, Mazvihwa)

August 25th, 1987: I went and found the work going very well. Only that the community could not dig deep the well. I am sure that these people do not understand the reason why they should dig deep. I have a feeling that if these people knew the goodness of digging deep they could do so during these bad years [1987 was a severe drought, making it easier to dig below the normal water table] so that by the time of good years they could store much more water.

August 28th, 1987: I went to Mr Mhuka the Health Assistant and had talks with him about water in Mazvihwa. I told him I had talks with his Health Worker in Murowa who told me he does not consider any well of 45m depth as a deep well and said all wells in Mazvihwa are not wells to fit pumps. Mr Mhuka then said “Phiri, do not worry – those

are young boys from school and that place is [their] first station. Try and show him what the area and community want.”

(v) Guva’s Well (Murowa, Mazvihwa)

September 2nd, 1987: When we got there we found Guva’s son and told him we had come to have the well improved and then line it [as requested]. He agreed [to start] and went for tools for digging. We dug the well from 9am up to 12 noon. The well has much water and I hope that well is going to show the community what a clean well is. I then wrote a letter to Mr. Mabomba [the Headmaster at Murowa School] for cement and also that they go for shutters [the concrete ring moulds] at Mr. Nvuto’s home. Richard [Ndatshana, a new assistant] would be there till September 5th, 1987 when I could collect him and he would be paid for his four days.

September 8th, 1987: I went to Mr Guva and found him and then told him visitors were coming to his place on September 9th, 1987 in the afternoon. I checked the well and found it OK.

September 16th, 1987: We drove to Guva well and showed that well [to Mr. Chabwela of the Health Department] and [he] was very happy to see such work. Mr. Chokela wanted water to drink from that well and said pumps could be given to such wells.

(vi) Improving Sand Extraction Wells (Mifuku)

September 8th, 1987: I went to inform Mr Ian [Scoones] that I was going to the Councilor [of Marozve Ward, Mazvihwa] to tell him that I was going to make some mifuku rings [concrete rings to sink in sandy river beds to enhance the speed and purity of extracted water] as for garden projects to have water for watering. I got Mr Bwoni [the Councilor] at the School and we solved the plan. He said he was going to inform the Social Service that we were going to start the concrete rings as the well is near finishing [this to authorize people to do this under Food for Work]. I told Mr Bwoni also that I hope the rings are going to be very many because we need also mifuku for people to drink. I hope we are going to have about 40 projects: I said we were going to start from Runde [River] over near Mr. Magaya then follow Gwengombe [River] projects.

(b) Dam Building

(i) Tungase Dam

August 27th, 1987: I drove to Tungase Dam and the work is also going well. Only that the DDF has not brought the explosives to blast the stone which are on the way of our wall. The gang is working on the wall building and are now 1.70m high and I have told them to work on the other side of the dam wall. I had to be with them for two hours on this day showing them how to put the step.

September 4th, 1987: The work at Tungase is going well, only that water is becoming a problem. The Food for Work gang is drawing water 4km away from the dam. I have heard them saying since it is becoming a problem find water then they think they may have one day off carrying water and then the builders remain doing the work while others go on carrying water.

September 8th, 1987: I drove to Tungase and found them working but the problem is water for building and no cement. I found Mr Bwoni [Councilor of Marozve ward] and he gave me a letter to Mutambi Irrigation to go and see the boss-boy working [there] Sadial [to ask] him to transfer from there to Tungasi Dam as Sadial is able to drill some holes on a hard rock [to insert dam wall reinforcement]. Sadial said "I don't want".

(ii) Muchekwachekwa Dam

August 25th, 1987: The work is going well building the wall, carrying the soil to put on the bank, carrying of stones by women and other old men. I am sure the work is going. I should say they have a problem of water. They carry water 8kms away to and from [the dam]. [If not for this constraint] they could have built very high.

September 4th, 1987: At Muchekwachekwa Dam is going on well in the building of the wall. The only problem being water for building. The group goes for water in boreholes and the borehole has very little water supply.

September 15th 1987: I went to Muchekwachekwa Dam to check the work. I found that the work was going on very well. Carrying of soil, carrying of stones, mixing of concrete and the Builders were all doing the work very well.

(iii) Mukwakwe Dam

August 17th, 1987: I went to check the work at the Dam and found that the work is going well. I wish the DDF [District development Fund] should come and see so that people could start building.

August 26th, 1987: I went to Mukwakwe Dam to see if they are through with the trench. I found that they are going very well with the trench but [it] needs to have the big stones blasted. I told them to also prepare the road so that our visitors come to see our work.

(iv) Chomukaka Dam

August 17th, 1987: I went to Chomukaka Dam to see the Dam Chairman, Mr. Enock Matara for the problem of the Dam. I saw him and informed him that they could go and carry 30 bags of cement from Murowa and build their dam. Mr Mutara said he would organize that soon. I then gave him a letter to Mr. Mubomba at Murowa Primary School.

September 2nd, 1987: I went to Chomukaka Dam and found people had left and they had started building the inside part of the dam wall. I went to the Dam Chairman's house

(Mr. Enock) and told him I was happy they had carried the cement from Murowa and this to me it shows me that you like your project. Then work hard and break all the stones you have seen because they cause your dam [to] lose water.

September 4th, 1987: I went to check the work at this dam and found that they had not gone for work on this day as they were at the Mapedza meeting [with the District Administration].

(v) Working with Ponds for Vlei Farmers

September 16th, 1987: We drove to Muzvondiwa and found him. I introduced Mr Chabwela to Mr. Muzvondiwa, and Muzvondiwa to Mr. Chabwela. We then went to see the pond for Mr. Muzvondiwa [dug in his vlei fields], and also found that Muzvondiwa was still working on the pond (digging). Mr Chabwela was very much impressed by the pond. I told Mr Muzvondiwa to carry as many stones as he can so that we stone patch the spillway.

(C) Mobilizing Programs and Working with the Structures

August 29th, 1987: Chibi Area. On this day Ian [Scoones], Billy [Mukamuri], Johnson [madyakuseni, another member of the Research Team] and I left Marozve Township for Chibi for a Vlei Seminar but when we got to the place we found that no one was there. On the same day the kick start got broken when I wanted to start the red bike for the Chibi seminar. We then drove to the Musuvugwa Irrigation to try and find a man to weld the broken start but he was not there.

Letter from Oxfam: Mr Scoones gave the letter from Oxfam about our projects. I then took the letter to try and make up an order for all tools I would like to have for the projects in Zvishavane and also to see when I could ask Munatsi and Ndatshana [his new assistants] to start work.

August 31st, 1987 Visit to Zvishavane DDF and Social Services, Mr. Mapako

I went to Zvishavane for some missions:

1. To see the D.A. [District Administrator]
2. To see the DDF
3. To pay Walker [Walker's garage, the supplier of fuel and oil on account]
4. To pay Sealey [Supplier of construction and work materials]
5. To visit Mr. Dzabvu at the General Hospital
6. To fix the bike's kick-start

I wanted to see the DA but found he had left for Mazvihwa.

DDF: I went to look for Nyati and the old man Mr Dembera as I wanted to know of my last week's letter on Mapedza and Mukwakwe Dams' problems on stone blasting, as

requested. Mr Dembera said they had the same talks in their meetings. He said the compressor is in [the neighbouring district of] Mberengwa but the Mberengwa DDF had promised the compressor to be brought to Zvishavane last Friday. So they were going to phone Mberengwa that morning to make a very strong request of this compressor.

I said to Mr Dembera: "I am sure Mr Dembera you know that rains can come on any day [the rainy season was due], and if you think of those trenches washed away and also the money which the Food for Work has been spent on, then this must be a very big loss to the country. I am asking you to try all means of bringing those dams to a move. Time is running out." I asked again: "Mr Dembera could you tell me when you are going to come? He said it could be today or the next day 1st September 1987. He went on "today I am taking the DA to Mazvihwa".

I asked if they had seen my reports about the wells I visited last week in Shiku and Masunda [Runde Communal Area]? They said they had not. I told them they are in the Office, please try to look for them.

I told them Mr Dembera that since last year the Research Team had applied for money from overseas and also that we had asked money from Oxfam-UK to help me with two Community Workers who are Mr. Joshua Munatsi and Richard Ndashana to help me in the water projects as one well sinker and two community workers. I said Oxfam has agreed to pay salaries for these men and I said could I have some blasting materials from you? Mr Dembera said yes.

Social Services: I went and had talks with Mr. Mapako about people who I feel I should work with when sinking these shallow wells. He said OK but we need a written application which will say where the projects are.

DDF Office: I went to the DDF Workshop to have the cycle repaired and it was.

I went to the General Hospital to see Mr. Dzabvu [community leader for one of the well projects] who is sick. I found he was improving. He was able to talk and also was able to eat. He said his problem was on toes but was better.

September 4th, 1987: I went to Marozve [the Research team base in Mototi] and got fuel and then from there I drove to Mapedza for a meeting. I got to Mapedza Dam and found that the DDF had blasted the big rocks in the dam and I was told the DA had asked the Councilor to organize this meeting to tell the people what they need to do as to bring up that dam: unity is wanted. He said the community is to work with the Agritex in the building of this dam. He said that he would first ask Rev Moyo of Mapedza to open the meeting with a word of prayer. After that the Councilor explained to the people what the DA had said.

A number of dams have been approved: Mapedza dam, Chomupako, Chomukaka (and Chorumhasa Dam).

He then said he would have Mr. Bengesa explain these dams. Mr Bengesa said the dams he is talking about are those in Mutambe and hopes that people are going to work hard to finish these dams as then to have irrigations.

Mr Z. Phiri was asked to talk to people as to what I am doing in Mazvihwa. I said I am happy to know that all the dams in Mutambe are supported. I said my work is known by every one and I am proud for you all see what I am doing.

I am working on wells, dams, concrete rings, and gardens and vleis.

Wells: I am sure it is only a bad year. But once we come to a good year those of you who shall have taken my advice during this dry year and do the well sinking shall be very proud in the near future.

I am asking you all to make use of us (or me) for I may go and you will have to say “Had I known I should have called Phiri”.

I said in sandy river beds I am making concrete rings and people along the Gwen’ombe are using those concrete rings for watering their gardens.

Vleis: I said in these vleis if you want you can grow fish, bananas, any fruit trees and gardens. You can in makomo [granite hill/vlei landscape] have ponds.

People were so happy when I told them the area has this time. Some knew wells and dams going on:

Dzabvu Well, Marozve
Guva Weel, Murowa
Murowa Well, Murowa
Murowa Clinic Well, Murowa
David Nvuto Well, Murowa
Madzoke Well, Murowa
Zebediah Well, Mutambe
Mrs Handson Well, Marozve

And many under way. I then told them I have other people who are doing the well sinking and I hope are going to see the great work they have just done during this year is going to prove to them good luck.

September 9th, 1987, Visit of the Natural Resources Board:

I went to Marozve B/C [the Research Team HQ] and then drove to Magwidi for the goat which was to be killed. Mathou and I found Mr. Magwidi and [he] told us the goat had been taken to school. We drove to the school [and] found the goat. We then asked the boy to drive the goat to [the Research team HQ]. He did and when we got [there] we drove past to Dzabvu to look for tomatoes. We drove past to Maride [an area with many

gardens on Lundi River] and got them. When we got [back] to the [HQ] we found them having come.

Mr Scoones then opened the meeting by giving introduction and some remarks on why we have come together. He gave much explanation for the great need of the NRB [Natural Resources Board] to come among people and also find out why people do plough near rivers and also why they cut trees, and many other reasons. He went on: “from our Research we have come out with much reasons”. So when you too are in an area you have to see that there are other flexible laws. Mr Scoones said as you have come you are going to visit many parts of these wards and also you are going to see vleis, gardens along Lundi [Runde] River and Gwen’ombe. “I hope” he said “from these visits you are going to prove how much the people can tell you about vleis and what soils are found in these vleis and also from top, middle, and down the vlei. They will tell you which grasses grow on those different soils in the same vlei. They will also tell you which part of the vlei keep water. These people know how soil erosion is formed. They are also able to say when one can plough and plant these vleis. They also know why they should plant during that time”. Mr. Scoones then said “I hope the time with us you will see many things they are going to prove”.

Nursery Visit: we all then took a walk to Mathou [Chakavanda] to go and see the [indigenous] tree nursery there [another community program of the Research team]. We saw many trees and this gave everyone a feeling that protection should be taken to keep these trees safe from goats and cattle. Mathou’s nursery has oranges, pawpaws, guavas, munyii, mangos, mutobwe, mupane, mukamba, and also mubondo and many other trees.

Machokoto: After lunch we drove some to Machokoto and some walked to near gardens to see what is going on with our Research. Those who walked to the gardens I cannot say what they saw. But the team that went to Machokoto I am able to say. I left Billy Mukamuri, Mr Nyoni, Mr Sola at Machokoto, while Peter Gondo and Robert [Mukwanda] and I went to Guva. At this place we found people waiting for us and at this place I sunk a well of 3.5m and it has water of about 1m deep. This well was lined, and is left to have a pump or windlass.

Peter then asked if people and us all could walk around the fields and have some discovery and then explain over these discoveries. From that tour we had much to talk over. People saw many kinds of grasses from one place to another and also soils were not the same soils. Peter asked: “What were the problems they commonly had in the vleis?”

1. They said vleis had more work than the dry land
2. You have to winter plough it as soon as it is still wet and see that it is not left with big lumps [of clay] which may not be easy for you to plant next [to].
3. You need to manure the vlei so that your crops grow fast
4. The soil on the upper part of the vlei is always with poor soil. So we have to work hard to improve that part of the vlei
5. Vleis have many grasses [weeds] which need often cultivating or cleaning.

At this time Robert took the time to ask people [questions] and also people asked him questions about what could they do to have these vleis wet once more. They said that they want them. “Why are they drying?”

I then said farmers always build granaries after promises of good harvest. That is done by all farmers. But then those who need water do not wait for rains to fall and then build houses for water. You have to have those water storages before. You need dams, wells, tanks, ponds and many pits you want to store your water. Your contour [ridges] too. If you do not have any of these, well you are not ready for your problem of water storage. I went on “the old man has sunk this well I am sure he has done good. What about you and you? God said we shall eat after working hard. That is what we need to know.”

Well the time ran off [and] our meeting came to an end.

We drove back to Machokoto and took the team that was there back to the HQ in Marozve. When we got to the HQ we found others waiting for us. We finished the day’s work with the NRB.

September 10th, 1987

I drove to the Marozve HQ to meet others to go to Murowa for a Tour with the NRB Team on our Research. I took Billy [Mukamuri] with me as those others were to meet us at Murowa Primary School. We got there at 9:30am and found them waiting for us.

Mr Mabomba [The Headmaster] asked us to come and sign as we had visited the school. After that I introduced the team to them and those I was with were: Mr Nyoni, Mr. Peter Gondo, Mr. Robert Mukwanda, Mr Sola, Mr. Billy Mukamuri and I.

When we came to Mawara we divided ourselves into two groups. One group remained at Mawara and the other team of three drove to Muzvondiwa. Billy, Nyoni and Sola remained at Mawara, while Peter, Robert and I drove to Muzvondiwa. On our way to Muzvondiwa we went past David [Nvuto] letting him know we were coming after Muzvondiwa.

Muzvondiwa Vlei: We went to Muzvondiwa’s vlei and started Research from the starting of the vlei. They were able to see the different kinds of soils as we went along the vlei. The team was Peter Gondo and Robert Mukwanda. When we had walked a few yards from the mountain Mr Muzvondiwa came and I gave the introduction to both.

After that Mr. Muzvondiwa was asked of how long he had ploughed his vlei?, how many kinds of soils is he able to tell [there] are in this vlei?, which grasses grow in these soils?, and the names of these grasses? (Dodlani, Gondla, Singizani, Hachi, Bayamou, Sine, Dimba and many other grasses were said by Muzvondiwa.

They asked what does he dig the pond for? He told them that “I want water for gardening, and if it can possibly be... I would like to stock fish in that pond for the place keeps water up to September if the year is a good one”. Muzvondiwa was asked why he puts ant heap [termitaria] soil in his fields. He said he wants to add clay in the sandy soil so that his soil [and nutrients] should not be washed away by water. He went on “if my soil has been taken by running water I then replace it by adding this ant heap soil”. He was asked why does he winter plough. He said “to keep moisture in the soil”. “Why does he bury all the stalks [crop residues] left in the field?” “So that all the grasses become plant food for the next crops”. He went on “winter ploughing is also part of manuring your field”. He said “I also manure to add plant food in the soils”. He was asked “which fertilizer do you use?”. He said he only uses manure, for fertilizers are costly. He said he is able to harvest [ground] nuts in February and is able to have money for his children for school. Muzvondiwa gave the Research NRB Team a wonderful knowledge.

We then drove to Mr. Nvuto’s home and at this place we found a very big gathering. I then asked Mr. Nvuto to call all people as for us to start the meeting. A word of prayer was given by Mrs Gandiwa.

Mr Sitamba was asked to chair the meeting and then he also introduced the gathering to us and then I was asked to introduce the team of our research. I introduced to them Peter Gondo and Robert Chikwanda. After that Peter said they would go together in the vlei land and would discover many things together. They then divided people in four groups. Billy came as we started and said Peter should go and bring Nyoni and Sola from Mawara as they have finished at Mawara.

Four groups were formed and all went on discovery. I told them that we were to come to an end at 2:30pm and everyone would be at this place.

Questions were asked from people: how many kinds of soils are common in a vlei field? Some said three: you have the very poor sandy soil at the top near the hill or mountain; as you come down you come to the grey loam soil, and then the dark grey heavy loam soil in the middle of the vlei, and on that part of the vlei you have much water. They said they even know grasses which grow on those soils. They said they know Gondya, Singizani, Shengezhu: all these are found in the vleis. They also said in these vleis people can sink wells and also if well organized people can make ponds for fish. Well all groups came to an end and then we drove back to Marozve HQ.

September 11th, 1987: On this day we all came together and the Research Team from the NRB gave what they discovered during their tour.

Peter’s remarks were very nice, only I could not fully understand when he said people they interviewed were people informed what to say or answer. Well I did not like to say any word because I was sure they were not true of what they were saying. It could have been that they found that the people they were talking to were very much above their thoughts. I did not enjoy the report back they gave. I found they were unable to

interview a group of people. They had even said they were not happy to have seen some of the Health Team among those who had come to meet us. Well I am very much worried of what they said.

They went on to say people who informed the community are not reasonable people who should next call the people. Well I would say it will take me time to understand their ideas. Robert Chikwanda was asked a question he could not answer at Guva. I have a feeling that it is why they then wanted one person to interview. I am sure Robert proved to people he did not know what he was to answer. Anyhow in Research one has to ask from anyone and from your question you will find what you want and not because you are asking one person, but that the answers are always one.

So I hope from this visit those Researchers learnt a lot and I hope that they shall always find it wise to have one person to ask being aware of hardships they may be looking for in Zvishavane.

Mr Scoones told the Research Team of NRB that the people were told [informed of the meetings] in the way we also interview them. If you go in the area without the information of your coming you may end up in troubles in Zvishavane. We then came to an end, but I am sure that those of us who went out to inform people of their coming were not happy with the remarks given.

[This response from the NRB Team presumably meant that they did not feel it necessary to respond to farmer's requests to legally utilize their vleis fields.]

On the same day when we finished the reports Ian [Scoones] left with the NRB Team [and] I left for Dzabvu Well and also Muchekwachekwe Dam and Tungasi. I found that the work was going, only [that] cement was not delivered and also water was a daily problem. I then drove to Plus 2 Well Mapedza to see the work at this well. I found that they had done mud scooping and we [are] left to line the well. So what is left is for them to raise money for the cement.

On my way back to the house I was told Billy [Mukamuri] had a crash with someone near Zirubi Business Center at around 3pm. [Mr Phiri attended to this until finding and getting Billy home at 11pm and sorting out the person hit on the next day. All of *September 12, 1987* was spent resolving this issue "since I was the only person able to drive the motorcycle"].

September 13th, 1987 Community Meeting at Nyevedzana's VIDCO, Gudo, Mazvihwa

I went to the Marozve HQ to take Mr. Mathou [Chakavanda, his colleague in the Research Team, and the lead on indigenous trees] to Gudo as there was a Tree Meeting on this day. We got there at 9:20am and meeting started at 10am. The VIDCO [Village Development Committee] Secretary opened the meeting s he tok the chair. He asked Mr. Zezi to give a word of Prayer, and then he gave the meeting to Mr Mathou. We had 25 people at the meeting at Nyevedzanai VIDCO.

Mr. Mathou introduced me to these people and then told them we were working under the Research, and that Phiri is working on water projects, wells and dams. Mathou said we get all of the information of your need from you. So we want to talk about your VIDCO today over your grazing area. Do you have trees there? Yes they said. He asked which [additional] trees could you want in your grazing? They said they would need Mutobwe, Musumha and many others. Mr Mathou said “Do you know that you are the people using these trees? So it is you again who are going to replant them in your grazing.

Mr Mathou asked which are the [traditional] laws that make you keep your trees? [They answered:] “No one is allowed to just cut a tree without use. One has to have a reason to cut the tree, and you are not allowed to cut two or three trees near each other. You can cut trees at about 50m apart.”

Trees in Fields: They said in fields we need trees with fruits and those with good shades even when they are not those that have fruits. Mubhondo has good shade but it kills crops. They said they want Mutohwe, Mufura and many other fruit trees [in their fields].

Homes: At home they said they want oranges, guavas, pawpaws, bananas.

When asked where they want to plant these fruit trees in their VIDCO they said they would plant them at the Clinic first and then see if they do well then they could plant them at home.

One woman asked for some medicine for killing ants. Mathou said they should use Aldrine for gum trees and Ridant for oranges and demetton for fruit trees. [He said you could] buy [these] at [the] Farmers Coop. [He said] you treat the pits and also the watering water.

One woman asked: “Are we going to stump [existing] trees where we are going to plant these fruit trees?”. Mr Mathou said “Since we do not know yet that the fruit trees are going to grow well we should not stump out the trees [currently] there. We only dig pits and then plant.” He said: “We fear that if we stump the trees in that plot, in case the fruit trees die so that place [can] remain without trees”.

Mathou said again “People should not burn a tree with fire [i.e. fell it through burning so that it cannot coppice back] but should use cutting [to fell those trees] allowed to do so.”

Mr Mathou gave me time to talk. I said I am also working under the Research team but my work is mostly on water projects such as wells, dams and also gardens and wetlands. I said to have a good garden is when you have water. To have clean people is when you have water. To plant nice orchards is when you have water. So people to have good water for drinking is when you shall have sunk that well. so I have all means to show you how you can dig and line the wells and also when you collect the \$20 we give you cement to line your well.

Dams I said when you want a dam I first see the place and then I ask the Agritex who come and peg the dam.

Concrete rings I said to all of you who drink from mufuku I make concrete rings and I put them in the sand and then dig while the concrete ring divides the sand till you come to water and water becomes a pool and you can draw from that pool or mufuku.

One woman said “Gudo Dam needs to be scooped all the mud; could you Phiri do that? I said “You people have to do that work”.

One man said “we have a place we want you to come and see and then we can make a dam.” OK I said I was going to come and see the place.

Chivendera said: “Could you come and see our well: it has water. We want it worked on. OK I said I would come the next day (September 14th, 1987).

The Meeting came to an end with a prayer led by Mr. Zezi.

(On *September 14th, 1987* he did indeed return to Chivendera and reported “I saw it and [it] is a very nice place which needs a well sinker. I was able to see three wells just at that place. I said I would see them next week when I come from Harare.]

September 15th, 1987 AGRITEX Team

On this day the Agritex Man, Mr. Hungwe and Mr Bengesa came to Dzabvu Well and said the work done at this well: the lining is very good and said “Mr Phiri your work is wonderful. We hope to see many wells in Mazvihwa sunk and lined in the same way.”

September 16th, 1987: Shoko of the Health Department

I went with Mr Shoko to Mutambe Ward at Zebediah’s Well and showed him what Mr Zebediah was doing. He has dug his well 5m deep and still going deeper and has not got water. Mr Shoko said “Mr Phiri, your work is very encouraging.” We then went to Mr Chikudo and came to one well that is said to be a Ninga Well [a sacred well, with a water sprite guardian]. This well has water [this was an unusually severe drought] and people have dug it to 3.5m deep. Then one woman asked me to come with her and see where they draw water from. I got there and found a number of women waiting for water. I went into the well and found that they were drawing water [from] under a large stone. When I talked about using concrete rings those present said they do not want cement there. [Because cement would “pollute” this sacred site and reduce the living vitality of the well and its ability to provide water even in the face of drought.] I then went to a new place and showed them and asked them to see their village chairman. I said I was going to come next week Wednesday September 23rd, 1987.