

[CURRICULUM LINKS](#)[BACKGROUND INFO](#)[CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
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To view each section of these notes, click on the links on the left or scroll down using the sidebar.

Alternatively, the entire document, including the photocopiable student activity sheets, may be printed out on A4 paper.

Learning Together uses the story of a rural Zimbabwean community to illustrate the way in which a group of people can effect dramatic and sustainable change simply by working together.

It also encourages readers to consider their own problems and to follow the examples from Chivi to change things for the better.

The website story can be read in class or as a homework activity and used as a starting point for planning responsible community action, or for exploring the use of innovative technologies which enable community building.

The story is suitable for students at key stages 3 and 4.

The resource delivers the following requirements of the National Curriculum:

Citizenship (England):

- 1f** - understand the work of community-based, national and international
 - voluntary groups, and the opportunities for these groups to bring about social change
- 3a** - use imagination to consider other people's experiences
- 3b** - take part responsibly in both school and community-based activities
- 3c** - reflect on the process of participation

Design and Technology:

- 1.** Developing, planning and communicating ideas:
 - consider issues that affect planning - for example, the needs and values of a range
 - of users: moral, economic, social, cultural and environmental
- 3.** Evaluating processes and products:
 - identify and use criteria to judge the quality of other people's products,
 - including the extent to which they meet a clear need, their fitness for purpose,
 - whether resources have been used appropriately, and their impact beyond the
 - purpose for which they were designed

Geography:

- Knowledge and understanding of places:
 - effects of development
 - changes in economic activity
 - impact of new technology
 - attempts to manage environments
 - resource planning management

The political situation in Zimbabwe

The ongoing confrontation between the Zimbabwean ruling party and opposition organisations threatens the stability of Zimbabwe. The policy of land reform – the forced removal of the minority white farmers from their farms and resettlement by blacks – has led to violence and bloodshed. International condemnation of the violence and concerns regarding the legality of government policies has led to political and economic sanctions being placed on Zimbabwe. This has meant that prices for food and cash crops fluctuate daily. Furthermore, the infrastructure in rural areas is collapsing with the result that travel to and from markets is both difficult and dangerous. In the current economic climate, it is the poorest farmers in the most drought-ridden regions – such as the people in Chivi – that suffer the most.

See the **weblinks** section for more information about the political situation in Zimbabwe

ITDG Zimbabwe

Intermediate Technology Development Group Zimbabwe is an independent non-governmental organisation which works to support local people by facilitating their access to and use of appropriate technology. ITDG Zimbabwe is staffed by local people and is supported by funds raised from around the world.

The following activities were used by people in Chivi to develop skills, raise awareness of issues, build communities and bring about change. They can also be used by students in the UK to promote the skills and responsible participation required for active citizenship. The activities follow the steps outlined in the website story.

These **four steps** to active citizenship are based on a learning cycle that emerged from a process of community development in which farmers, researchers and local advisors worked together to solve local issues. In Zimbabwe, this method is known as the **Participatory Extension Approach**.

1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Objectives:**
- **Learn to work as a team and to compromise**
- **Maximise each other's strengths**
- **Have confidence and trust in each other in order to learn and share new skills**

ACTIVITY A. (5 – 10 minutes)

- Show students picture A.
- As a whole class, discuss the metaphor provided by the image.
- What is the picture trying to tell us?
- How could all the passengers get to where they want to go?

ACTIVITY B. (10 -15 minutes)

- Ask students to describe what is happening in cartoon B.
- In pairs, students compose short rhymes to remind them of the moral in the cartoon.

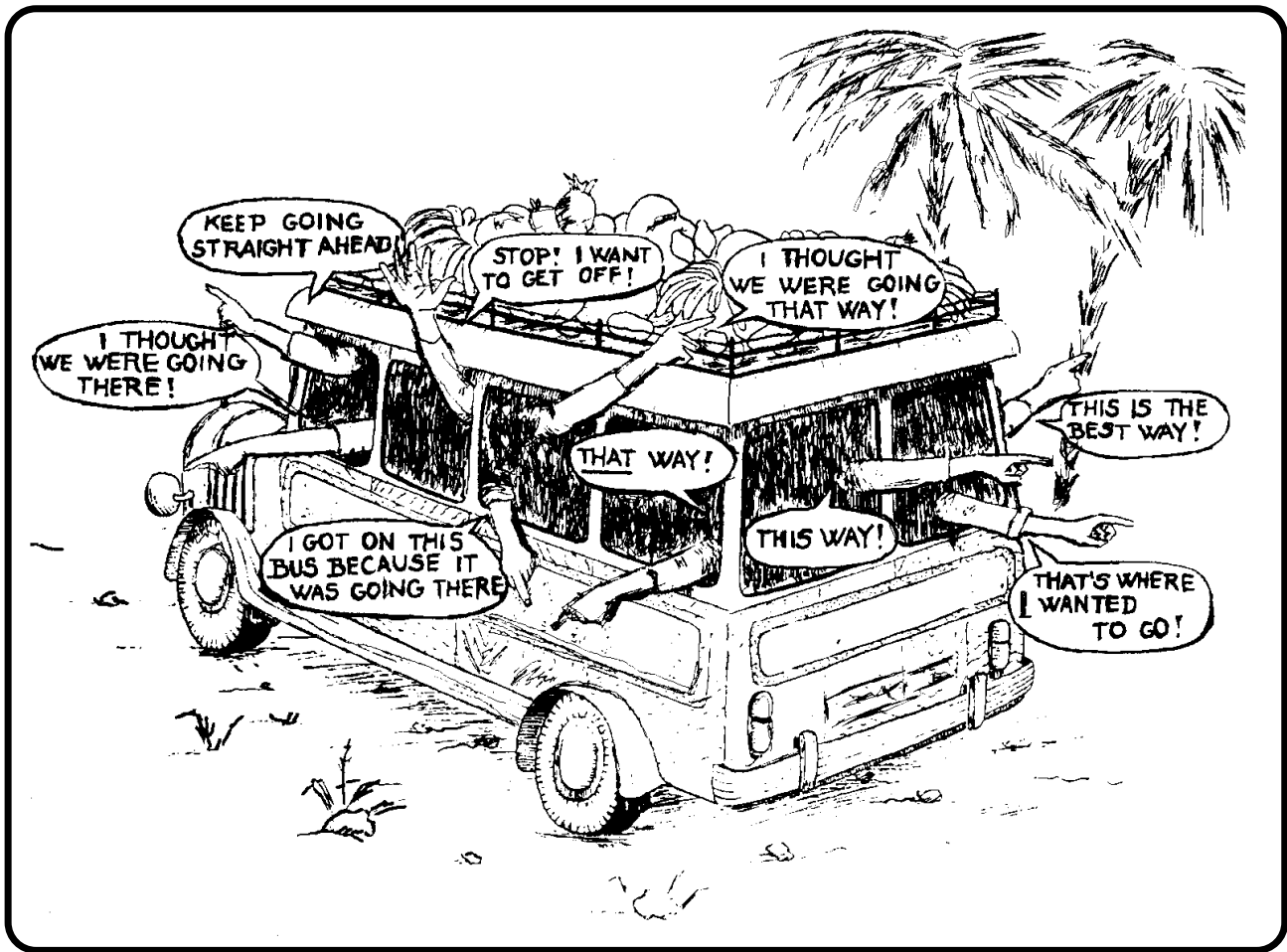
ACTIVITY C. (20 minutes)

- Students read the description of 11 characters in table C.
- In pairs they discuss which character should be eliminated from the football team on the basis of their strengths and weaknesses.
- As a whole class, pairs take it in turns to say who they think should be eliminated from the list written on the board. As soon as a name is nominated it is crossed off. Continue until there are very few or no names left.
- As a class, discuss what happened. Explore the conclusion that without 11 players there would not be a team and they would not be able to play.
- Finish the activity by discussing the moral: It is better to celebrate the strengths of a group rather than dwell on their weaknesses.

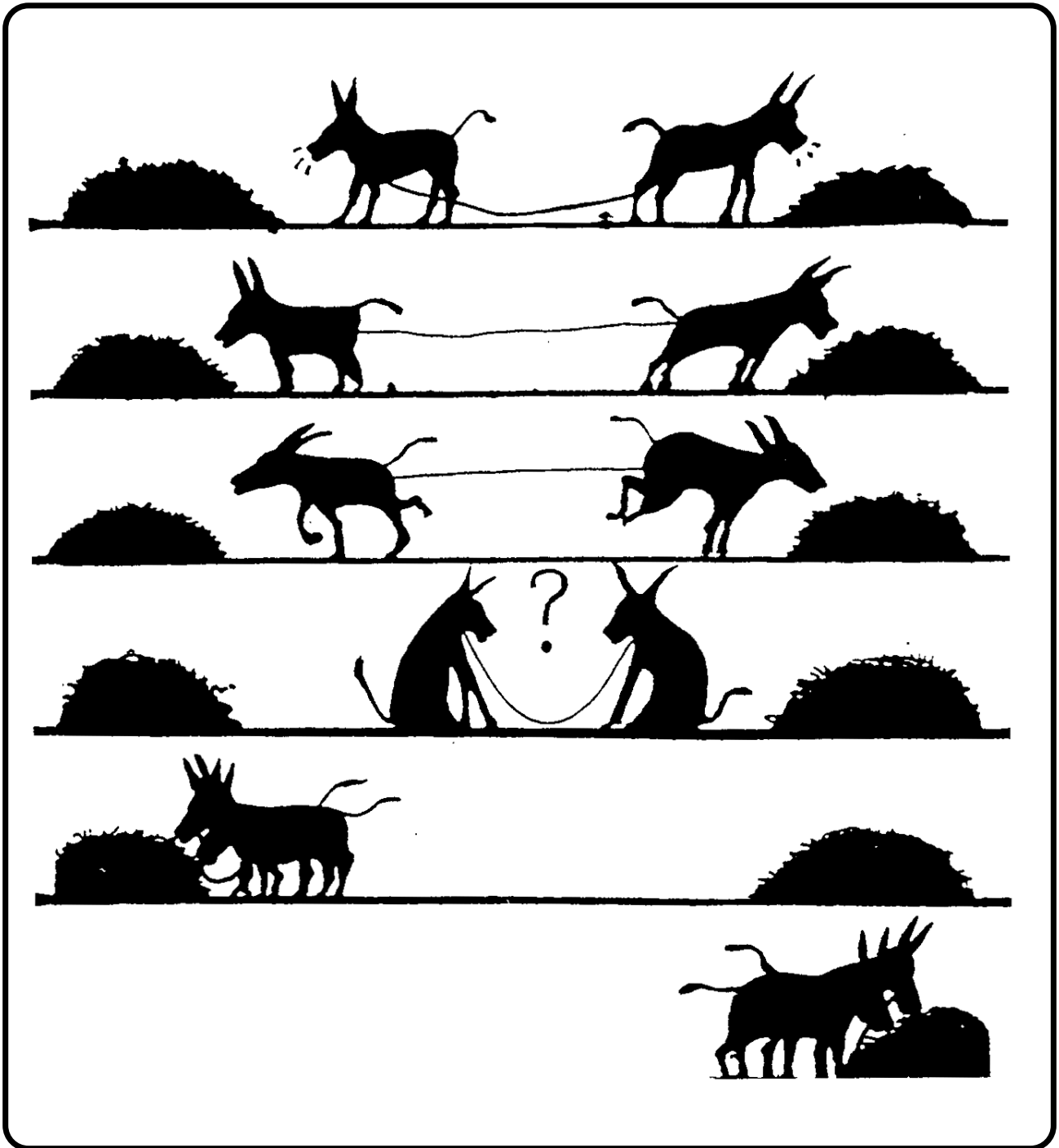
ACTIVITY D. (20 minutes)

- Ask students to read / act out story D.
- As a whole class discussion, explore the message behind this story:
- What approaches were used to help the men get across the river?
- What do the two sides of the river represent?
- Which types of people are the three men meant to be?












1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT : ACTIVITY A



1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT : ACTIVITY B



1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT : ACTIVITY C

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	Best forward the team has ever had	Never passes the ball
	Fantastic in midfield	Is always grumpy and refuses to talk to half the team
	Takes great corners	Is always late for matches
	Has lots of money and is willing to pay for kit & equipment for the team	Can only play once a month as has to work on other days
	Excellent penalty taker...	...but useless at everything else
	Has a car and is happy to drive the team to other matches	Likes starting fights with the <input type="checkbox"/> opposing team!
	Is really enthusiastic	Doesn't understand the rules of the game
	Doesn't mind washing the team kit each week	Runs away from the ball
	Excellent ball skills	Useless at tackling
	Is great at taking goal kicks	Can't save penalties
	Has real flair and great on the left wing	Speaks another language – can't understand what other players say

Two men arrive at a river and look for a place to cross. The current is very strong and they are both afraid. A third man comes along and offers to help. He leads them up river to some stepping stones. He encourages them to step on the stones to cross the river, but the men are scared, so he agrees to take one on his back. By the time he gets to the middle of the river, the man on his back seems very heavy, so when he reaches a small island in the middle he leaves the man there.

He returns to fetch the second man, who wants to climb on his back, but he says 'no'. Instead he takes the man's hand and encourages him to step on the stones himself. Halfway across, the second man starts to manage alone. They both cross the river.

When they get to the other side they are extremely pleased with themselves! They walk off together completely forgetting the about the first man sitting alone on the island in middle of the river frantically gesturing for help...

2. PRIORITISE AND PLAN

- Objectives:
- Sharing issues with others in the group
- Analysing the cause of problems
- Proposing solutions to problems

A. (60 minutes)

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- In small groups students discuss issues that they see as problems within the local
- community (school or neighbourhood).
-
- They then think about the cause or root of the problem, the effects it has, and propose
- ideas for possible solutions.
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- They add these to a large picture of a tree, with the cause of the problem written in the
- roots, the effects of the problem written on the branches, and solutions to the problem
- (or part of problem) written in the fruits of the tree.
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- Names from the group can be written next to the fruits to indicate who will
- take responsibility for solving that part of the problem.
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- The tree pictures should be displayed in a central area to act as a visual reminder of what
- the problems are, and how they can be solved.
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- In Zimbabwe, the awareness raising session ended by highlighting that**
- the best way to solve problems and build knowledge is to share ideas for:**
-
- Nobody knows nothing, and nobody knows everything***

3. TAKE ACTION

Following successful community building, prioritising and planning, taking action should be relatively easy! However, students should be reminded that change can take time, and that they may need to rethink their course of action depending on the circumstances in order to succeed.

- REMEMBER
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- Action proposed by students may need to be agreed by the Head Teacher. Action outside
- of school will need agreement from parents or guardians and appropriate supervision.
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- Students will need to follow health and safety guidelines at all times.
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4. EVALUATE AND CELEBRATE!

It is important to reflect upon the action taken and learn from any mistakes. Students should discuss whether they have made a difference, or what they would do differently next time.

It is also important to recognise the value of team and community building as this will bring long term benefits and be of considerable help to the group in the future.

The first page of each activity provides a **background** to the issue, outlines the **problem** and sets a **challenge** for the students to solve. It also lists the **materials** that the students may use. The second page outlines the **solutions** to the problems developed and used by the people in Chivi.

Students should sketch their proposals and annotate their drawings with instructions for use/application. If time is available, students should construct and test their solutions for activities 1 and 3 and judge the quality, ease of use and fitness of purpose of their own ideas against those used in Chivi.

The limited range of materials available for use can be used as a basis for a follow up discussion concerning sustainable technology, and the need to recognise the economic, environmental and social impacts of technology choices.

1. RUNAWAY RAIN

2. PRECIOUS EARTH

3. A DROP TO DRINK?

1. RUNAWAY RAIN

The Background

The rainfall in Chivi is very low, and the area suffers from frequent drought. When the rains do come, the water runs off the baked earth, washing away the top layer of fertile soil.

To prevent run off and to ensure that the rain soaks into the ground, the people of Chivi realized that they needed to collect the water in ditches running along the steep slopes, following the contours of the land.

The Problem

But how could they ensure that the ditches followed the contours of the land? The implications for making a mistake are very serious – if the ditches ran downwards instead of across the slope, they would act as channels for the rainwater and the whole hillside would be severely eroded.



Ditches following contours of hill

The Challenge

Design and construct a device for marking the contour lines of a slope.

The Materials

String, wooden poles, a pebble, a hammer, nails, a pencil

1. RUNAWAY RAIN - The Solution

1 The people in Chivi, constructed a frame in the shape of an A. They tied a piece of string to the top of the A, and tied a stone weight to the other end so that it hung just below the horizontal crossbar of the A.

To calibrate their A-frame, the farmers stood it on level ground, and marked where the two legs stood. They then marked the point where the string crossed the bar.

Next, they turned the A frame around so that each leg stood where the other had been and made a second mark where the string crossed the bar. Halfway between these marks is the point at which the string would cross if the frame was on exactly level ground. This point was notched into the bar.

2 To map out the contours, the farmers stood the frame on the hillside, marked the position of one leg and swung the second leg until the string crossed the horizontal bar at the notch. The second leg was then marked with a peg, or stone.

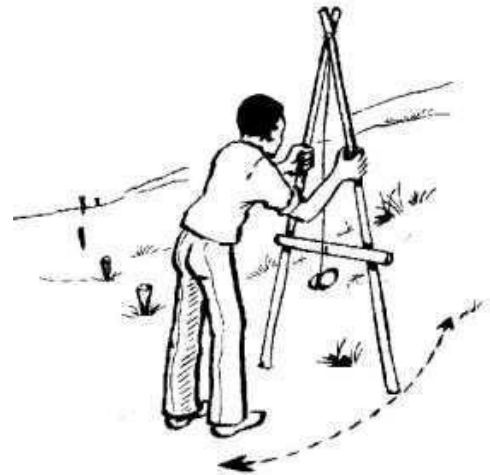
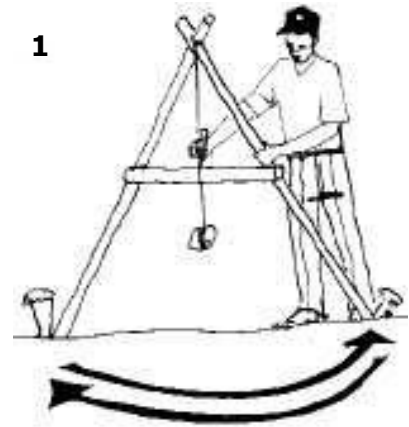
Keeping the second leg still the first leg was swung around and the A frame pivoted until, once again, the string crossed the notch.

The farmers repeated this process until they had a line of pegs marking out the contour line. They then dug ditches to catch the water, or built terraces to grow crops.

The people of Chivi soon recognized the value of this technique for preventing run-off:

'Mr Ngrishi who had pegged part of his field with the A frame and the rest by guessing lost his field when Cyclone Eline hit and the latter contours broke up and washed away his field.'

ITDG ZIMBABWE



2. PRECIOUS EARTH

The background

The agricultural soil in Chivi is easily eroded. Soil erosion happens when particles of soil come loose and are carried away by water or wind. As the soil is eroded, the fertility of the soil decreases because the top layer of soil, which is rich in decaying vegetation and animal droppings, is washed away first.

The problem

How can the people of Chivi protect against soil erosion and maintain the fertility of the soil?

The challenge

In addition to the water conservation techniques outlined in the Activity 1, propose further methods for conserving soil in Chivi.

The materials

Local plants, animal manure

2. PRECIOUS EARTH - The Solutions

1. The farmers added manure to the soil to promote vigorous plant growth.
2. The farmers planted trees and shrubs along the contour lines to help bind the soil and cushion it from the impact of rain (so reducing the amount of rainsplash erosion). The shrubs grew quickly and protected the soil from erosion, while allowing water to seep down to replenish the water table. The trees helped to recycle nutrients from deep underground, and decaying leaves and fruit created a rich humus soil. Trees also provided shade, which prevents an increase in soil temperature and thereby reduces the amount of water that evaporates into the air. They also acted as windbreaks to prevent the erosion of soil by wind. Finally, the trees provided a source of fuelwood, charcoal, timber and fruit.

3. A DROP TO DRINK?

The background

In Chivi, the irregular rainfall throughout the year and the lack of suitable water storage facilities can leave people short of water for raising their food crops.

The problem

How can the people of Chivi collect sufficient amounts of water during the rains to raise their crops?

The challenge

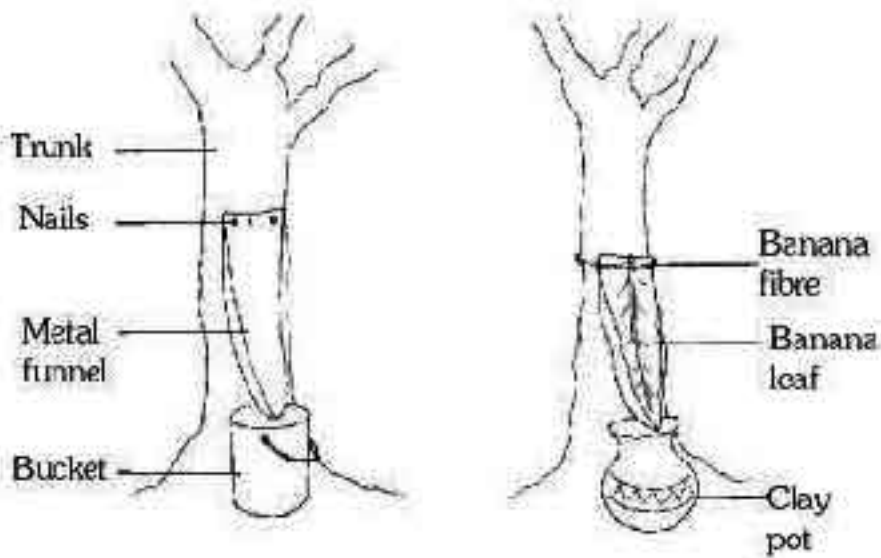
Design a system of capturing rainfall from everyday objects found in a Chivi homestead or village.

The materials

Pots, some metal sheeting, banana trees

3. A DROP TO DRINK? - The Solution

Farmers in Chivi (and in other areas of the world where water is scarce) collect the rain which runs off trees. They attach some metal sheeting or a banana leaf to the trunk and funnel the run off into a pot or storage tank. The water is then stored until needed by the farmers for their food crops. The water can also be drunk by the family, but must be filtered and boiled first.



For further support in facilitating active citizenship see the Get Global pack available as a pdf on the following websites. The pack is full of ideas about how to prioritise, plan, promote, carry out and assess a programme of active citizenship.

www.actionaid.org/schoolsandyoung
www.cafod.org/schools/teachersresources
www.christianaid.org.uk/learn
www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet
www.savethechildren.org.uk/education

Other useful sites promoting active citizenship include:

www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk
www.justdosomething.net
www.byc.org.uk (website of the British Youth Council)

For innovative use of technology to support development and community building around the world, see:

www.stepin.org

WEB LINKS

ZIMBABWEAN CULTURE

www.shonalanguage.fsnet.co.uk - an introduction to the Shona language spoken many Zimbabweans

www.mbira.org - a website devoted shona music

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

www.africantears.netfirms.com - monthly newsletters written by Zimbabwean farmer Cathy Buckle

www.dailynews.co.zw - an independent newspaper with comments and editorials focussing on events in Zimbabwe and South Africa

www.theindependent.co.zw - online edition of a Zimbabwean newspaper

www.zanupfpub.co.zw - the official website of the ruling paper, Zanu-PF (Zimbabwean African National Union Patriotic Front)

www.mdczimbabwe.com - the official website of the Movement for Democratic Change – Zimbabwe’s strongest opposition party led by Morgan Tsvangirai

www.zimbabwedemocracytrust.org - A London based pressure group promoting democracy in Zimbabwe. Provides an overview of the political issues

www.bbc.co.uk - search the BBC site for stories about Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, Zanu-PF and the MDC

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews> - the site from Children’s BBC with search facility for stories from Newsround

www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/zimbabwe - stories about Zimbabwe from the UK newspaper The Guardian

LAND REFORM / AGRICULTURE

www.justiceforagriculture.com - a highly politicised site written by white Zimbabwean farmers who wish to remain in Zimbabwe

www.fco.gov.uk - search for Zimbabwe and then for land reform to read articles from the UK government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office in response to the land reform issues in Zimbabwe

www.irr.org/book.htm - the sustainable agriculture extension manual from the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction. The manual is very readable (although quite long) and covers issues such as gender, land use, cropping systems and soil and water conservation

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN ZIMBABWE

www.campfire-zimbabwe.org - an organisation which aims to help local people benefit from the use of wildlife and ensure wildlife management in communal areas. Includes facts sheets about trade in elephants, and managing woodland resources

www.worldtrek.org/odyssey/teachers/africaguide.html - a series of lesson activity ideas focussing on Zimbabwe written by teachers and other travellers who wish promote peace

FACTS AND FIGURES

www.ocdi.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/zi.html - the Zimbabwe page from the world fact book prepared by the CIA. Provides a list of useful facts and figures (correct as of Jan 2002) on Zimbabwean geography, people, government and economy. (Note – stick to the facts given on this page, as the links will take you to general information not relevant to Zimbabwe)

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/africa/zimbabwe - information about Zimbabwe and its tourist attractions from the Lonely Planet online travel guide