

# Bee the Solution - Newsletter 10, August 2017

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## PROJECTS DETAILS

More details on Projects are available on Bee the Solution website @ [www.projects.beethesolution.org](http://www.projects.beethesolution.org)

Each post is a short story about the people, how we came across each other, the seed of the projects... as we grow with the projects, more and more details will be added.

Also browse the website [www.beethesolution.org](http://www.beethesolution.org) for more information.

## FEATURE OF THE MONTH

### [Be grateful for what you have...](#)

**..but keep dreaming/working for better.**

Last month, I talked about showing/expressing gratitude for what we have and not longing for what we don't... ([Be grateful for what you have...](#) not longing for what you don't)

This is the common saying and this is in response to what some people express at time: "oh, this is it? Anything else? I don't like this"... The point is to receive what comes our way with thanks. If you get a Samsung smartphone, be grateful that you got a smartphone, do not complain that you wanted an iPhone... *(note: no commercial message here... only based on something I have heard more than once... I don't have either!)*

But don't get me wrong. Being grateful does not mean that you must sit and don't wish for more/better. You can be grateful for small, yet dream for bigger/better. How you go about this longing is what makes the difference.

Yet, if you are just grateful, you can become complacent. You can remain in a static way and don't take action to reach a goal. Longing for something in the sense of dreaming for better (instead of expecting better) can fuel you to find solutions to advance towards what you want.

When I had the accident I was first upset that my dream was finished before even starting. My car/house was broken, all was done. But then I was grateful to still be here, and able to work on getting back on the road. This longing to do what I had set-off for drove me to work harder and find ways to attain my goal.

But you need to channel the longing. Take action. One step at the time. While you need to be grateful, if you want more, ask yourself "how can I make it happen?". Don't just expect more but do something to show that you are motivated to work toward something. It is likely to come your way, even if alone you can't do it. Whatever age and whatever means you have.

The kids on the picture might not have much - they enjoy a good fire and "acting" for pictures. It did not take much to give them this. They actually made the fire, I only provided the place. They were grateful for that evening, but that does not mean that they can't be longing for more in life. They want to read, have stories by that fire. Books are limited, they have no means to buy more. But they can show their willingness to have books by learning how to take care of the ones they have and by making efforts at school to learn how to read. Books will come. If they just want for the sake of receiving more, why would they receive those books?

Learning to channel longing is difficult - it asks for a shift from "just" being greedy to taking action towards what you want to achieve/have. What is **your** longing? What do **you** do about it?

## What do we want to achieve? Teaching to fish or...

Our vision is to help people help themselves in improving their conditions.

“Improving condition” is a very wide topic. The obvious is to have access to education, to water, to light, to safe living environment, etc... But there is more to it...

Every little things that makes your life better is an improvement. And it will depends on every individual. We do not all want the same things, and we will not all feel an improvement with the same actions/items. And for me, those little things can be/should be the first step to improving access to education, to water, etc...

Improving condition is also a slow process - you improve step-by-step. It is like building a house: one brick after the other - “Rome was not built in one day”...

I have been told recently that what I was doing was great. That it is better to teach people how to fish than to give them a fish (and, again... another cheesy saying... I love them!). But then, this was never my pretention in a way. I thought about it differently... A lot of what we are trying to do is not even about teaching to fish. It is rather to show people that they already know how to fish... they have the tools, they have some knowledge... it is now for them to use it in a different way... They can be/are the solution for many things...

And so, we do lay the foundation bricks or plant the seeds, however you want to say it, in people mind about their capacity. We try to motivate. We try to empower. We try to bring confidence. We try to bring support.

What we try to achieve is for people to feel that they can actually do something for themselves. At individual or community level.

And we can see that it is starting to happen.

People putting an idea into action, only because we say they could. They had thought of it, but were too shy to start. Now, they can start to unlock their potential because they have someone beside them.

People being motivated because they read at the back of Maya “Be Proud of what you do, even your mistakes. Because mistakes mean that you are trying”. We rarely get things right first time!

People “finding” money (that they had) to buy something they wanted because we showed them basics of money management.

People realising that they don’t need me to build the roof of a community building... I don’t know how to do it... but they do! They have the supplies, they have the knowledge... They only need to work together as a community!

You can find some stories on the Project website, with more to come as I manage to publish them...

## [Why do we need to be on the ground? Part 5 - Demonstration](#)

In our modern days, everyone can learn on the internet - there are tons of how-to step-by-step instructables or demonstration videos...

However, this is not always accessible to all.

As we have seen, access to internet is not necessarily [easy](#) (because of network) or [affordable](#) (because of the device cost and/or data cost).

But this is not only about access or cost. Learning online is also a mindset and does require some "internet education". It is not easy for everyone to just go online, "google" something and then do it... I do know people in Europe who can't do it. And we sometimes do step-by-step telephone teaching but this is not the most efficient or easy, and not applicable for everything...

One can also argue that we used to learn before the internet era... We used to have books... and they still exist (thankfully!!!). There are also other written documents. For example the recipe on the side of a pack of rice or soup... Again, books in Africa might not be available (many schools do not even have the required text books for their curriculum). But also, people might not be able to read them properly due to their literacy level. Those we want to serve are those who might not have been fortunate enough to attend school or have access to knowledge bank (books or internet).

But the main reason for being on the ground is because people learn better through demonstration and this is what they want. This is especially true in Africa, but applies to many places.

We come from a long tradition of oral knowledge. Think about the schools nowadays: while we have books, the teacher is still talking to us...

We often are visual learners (we need to see what is happening) and do learn by practising. Again, think about the school: we do have practical teaching to complement the theoretical teaching - on the job learning -- not only theoretical learning.

I have many examples where I gave explanations verbally but people want a demonstration. People have to see. People have to practice.

And this is how we believe we can bring more knowledge, we can teach better. And this takes time to go places, spend time to teach, come back to assess...

## FIRST RULES OF...

### First Rules of adaption/integration through language

I move a lot around Southern/Eastern Africa. I come across a lot of different cultures. And with the culture also come different languages... While English is an official language in all the countries I am staying in, this is still not the home language of the majority of people.

Adapting to the local conditions often goes through learning basic words. Even on holidays, if you know a few words in local language, you have made an effort and people will be more open towards you.

So, when I arrive in a new place, I do try to learn the very basics... Hello, How are you, Thank you... but this will be all I will learn... Unfortunately, there are many different languages within each country (the best illustration is South Africa, with 11 official languages and a few others...) and I can't keep up. But I try... and people appreciate. And then, English is not my home language either, so we have a common ground: we both had to learn another language so that we can communicate. And this is the basis of integration: make an effort, do your best to learn something locally, show due diligence... people recognise the effort and will reciprocate, taking you in as you are...

### First Rules of politeness through language

How do you say please and thank you in your language?

Those are the 2 words that we are taught very early on. This is part of being polite. When you ask for something, you say "please". When you receive something, you say "thank you".

When I was little, "please" was the magic word to make things happen... Interestingly though, this is not a word that I do learn in the local language... I always learn "thank you" but not "please"... maybe because I cannot ask for something so I never have to say "please"...

But I found out as well that in some languages, the word simply does not exist... As I was teaching children the first rules of politeness, they were struggling with saying "please". I explained the reasons to say it, and to help them into the habit, I told them that they could say it in any language... they speak English at school, Afrikaans some times and one of the San dialect at home... I know in English and in Afrikaans, but not in San. When I asked them, they could not think of the word... So I asked some adults... and there is none... They don't use it.

Unfortunately, the children will still need to learn this rule in English and Afrikaans because this are the languages and culture they will encounter outside of the conservancy (or with tourism) and need to adapt.

But, at the end of the day, these are the "First Rules" of politeness I did learn in my culture - these are not necessarily the same rules for all cultures... Another lesson to add to the "First Rules" of adaptation: what are the "First Rules" of politeness in this culture?...

*"Politeness is the practical application of good manners or etiquette. It is a culturally defined phenomenon, and therefore what is considered polite in one culture can sometimes be quite rude or simply eccentric in another cultural context. ([Wikipedia](#) in English)*

*Each culture has different rules of politeness.(...) Politeness is a mode of communication: it only concerns the form (the "how"). Respect concerns the meaning of the message that is communicated (the "what") and has nothing to do with the "how". (translated from [Wikipedia](#) in French)"*

Check this article from an Australian about English politeness to see how different cultures of politeness could lead to confusion, even without language differences: [Practicing the English art of politeness](#)

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Find all our newsletters in pdf format @ [www.newsletter.beethesolution.org](http://www.newsletter.beethesolution.org)

To make sure that you receive our monthly newsletter, sign up on the website, for the English and/or the French edition: [www.newsletter.beethesolution.org](http://www.newsletter.beethesolution.org)

## **FEEDBACK**

Please do not hesitate to contact us @ [info@beethesolution.org](mailto:info@beethesolution.org).

Feel free to send us feedback. We are open to suggestions and comments. As we are still young and learning, we value your opinion even more than usual and are very grateful for it.

Let us know about what you want to see in the Newsletter, which projects you are interested in, any ideas you have for a project.

Have a safe month ahead

Chrystel, (Maya), Odile, H  l  ne and Jean-Louis



**Be grateful for a good day...**