

Herbal Vaseline

Recently a group of women with whom the Loreto Sisters work, especially in Health Care projects, attended a workshop where they learned how to make Herbal Vaseline. They have decided to stay together as a group and to make and sell this Vaseline locally as a means of earning income. This is seen to be a viable project as the majority of the ingredients are gathered locally from the natural vegetation at little or no costs. Since Lukulu is an area where modern health care is not well developed, traditional healing and the use of traditional medicines is still an important way of life in this culture. The Herbal Vaseline is thus desirable for sale within the local community. It is believed to be a healing medicine for body rash, aches and pains throughout the body.

The healing qualities of the Vaseline are believed to come from the healing qualities of the local herbs and leaves used in the making of the Vaseline. A great variety of local vegetation is used including the leaves of the following trees; Lemon, Guava, Mango, Paw Paw, Avocado (Katapela) Neam, (Kamwengo), Eucalytus (Mupulanga) and Moringa . Other plants are also added including Lemon Grass, the sap from Aloe Vera and lavender flowers. The women are able to collect all of these locally in the quantities required for the process. These are then combined with cucumber and carrots if available.



The making of the Vaseline begins with the melting of animal fat (lisugo) (pictured above) and a quantity of vegetable cooking oil is then added. The animal fat is the main factor in providing the thickening for the Vaseline and bees wax can also be used as an alternative. The different vegetation as listed above is chopped and cut up, added and cooked together for 20-25 mins in the fat.



After this the vegetation is strained out of the mixture and once cooled sufficiently is bottled in suitably sized plastic jars. Once it cools completely the mixture acquires a Vaseline consistency and is ready for sale. As the women are just beginning they have not yet designed a suitable label for their Vaseline but hopefully that may come with time.



The first batch of Vaseline which the women produced has been a resounding success and was sold out much quicker than expected. Demand is high with many requests which the women are struggling to keep up with at present due to the non-availability of animal fat or bees wax. All the vegetation is readily available and it seems can be varied a little depending on seasonal variation of the plants and foliage. As soon as they can obtain more fat production will be rapidly underway once more.

The prospects for the project seem very good!