



GardenAfrica

Development Strategy 2009 and Beyond

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Introduction

GardenAfrica was established in 2002. It works in partnership with communities and local NGOs, in the design and implementation of garden-related projects aimed at reducing poverty and malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa. Often called '**the silent emergency**', malnutrition kills millions every year, exacting a terrible toll on the health and welfare, of children in particular. It impairs intellectual growth, sapping the productivity and potential of entire societies. Malnutrition also increases vulnerability to HIV infection and hastens viral progression to AIDS. But whilst the effects of malnutrition are devastating, the impact of good nutrition is equally powerful. Improving the nutritional intake of communities through the creation of training and resource gardens, can help overcome many of the major health challenges facing Africa today.

Our projects create multi-purpose gardens on land adjacent to schools, hospitals, health and community centres. Almost any plot of land, however degraded, can be restored to provide food and life-saving nutritional supplements. Our gardens are designed to address a range of specific local needs, focusing on food security, health and nutrition, education and training, income generation and recreation. They provide a practical resource base from which to encourage the development of home gardens and similar initiatives. Each garden aims to promote and enhance the relationship between communities and their environment, improving productivity, welfare and quality of life among the most vulnerable.

At **GardenAfrica**, we:

- Collaborate with partner organisations to identify appropriate and sustainable solutions, creating an enabling environment which adds value to their existing strengths. We link partners with diverse expertise to deliver an integrated approach to training and livelihood development.
- Follow the values of agro-ecology; using ecological principles to manage resources in ways that are sustainable and culturally appropriate for small scale agriculture and localised economic growth.
- Undertake research and engage in advocacy at local, national and international levels to promote policies aimed at improving food sovereignty, combating climate change and its effects, increasing access to and control over resources and technology, and reducing pressure on global commons.
- Use natural methods, minimising external inputs and obviating the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, which decrease long-term soil productivity and adversely affect the body's immune system. We encourage the diversification of existing local plant life and the reintroduction of the wild vegetables and fruits which once provided a vital nutritional resource in the community.
- Recognise that *much* indigenous knowledge can be used to a greater effect and that the protection of diversity, both biological and cultural, is central to our work.

Every **GardenAfrica** garden provides a practical resource from which to encourage similar initiatives. By training local people, the techniques can be promoted throughout the community, greatly increasing the long-term impact of each project. A training garden project in KwaZulu Natal, monitored over many years, showed that over 250 families began cultivating their own plots of land after attending workshops at a demonstration garden, and a further 400 gardens were established in the area using the same techniques. Community health was improved, with diseases relating to malnutrition greatly reduced.

Monitoring and evaluation is a vital component of all of **GardenAfrica's** work, both to gauge success and to inform wider programme objectives. A sound process of M&E also ensures cost-effectiveness. Small amounts invested wisely can produce tangible results whilst building a strong foundation from which communities may reap substantial rewards in the future.

GardenAfrica designs its programmes to make a positive contribution towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

These goals, to be met by 2015, are a response to the world's main development challenges and form part of the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state during the **UN Millennium Summit** in September 2000. The declaration promised to: "free all men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty". The eight specific goals, each with quantified targets, were intended to motivate the international community and provide an accountability mechanism for actions taken to enable millions of poor people to improve their livelihoods.

The Goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Whilst there has been some progress made towards achieving the MDGs, it has been uneven and slow – particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The 2007 UN report charting the progress of the MDGs stated that:

"In the 2008 report, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pointed out that 'the task of meeting the goals by 2015 is now more challenging than ever since the largely benign development environment that prevailed in the early years of this decade is now under threat. We face a global economic slowdown and a food security crisis of uncertain magnitude and duration. Global warming has become more apparent. These developments will directly affect our efforts to reduce poverty: the economic slowdown will diminish the incomes of the poor; the food crisis will raise the number of hungry people in the world and push millions more into poverty; climate change will have a disproportionate impact on the poor'."

The report stresses that the current food crisis calls for special attention to be given to the potential escalation in hunger and malnutrition. This was also the concern of World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick, who wrote:

"I am particularly concerned about the risks of failing to meet the goal of reducing hunger and malnutrition, the 'forgotten MDG'. As the report shows, reducing malnutrition has a 'multiplier' effect, contributing to success in other MDGs, including maternal health, infant mortality and education".



While the creation of a garden may at first seem a small gesture in the face of Africa's overwhelming need, if lasting change is to be achieved, it must start here, firmly rooted in the community. **GardenAfrica** believes in the **business** of development. Its programmes offer practical solutions, emphasising the value of integrating traditional systems of land care and food production as a means of stimulating localised economic development. This community-driven approach ensures tangible and sustainable benefits, acting as a catalyst for future change and growth where it is most urgently needed.

The challenges for the global community, both in the developed and developing worlds, are to mobilise financial support and political will, re-engage governments, re-orient development priorities and policies, build capacity and bridges to link partners in civil society to the private sector.

GardenAfrica recognises that issues relating to poverty and underdevelopment are complex and dynamic, requiring an inter-disciplinary approach to locating positive and sustainable solutions. Whilst each of our projects is designed to address the individual needs of the community it serves, there are a number of key social and environmental issues relating to specific MDGs that are central to **GardenAfrica's** work.

These cross-cutting issues include:

HIV/AIDS (MDG 6)

More than 29 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa today - 70% of the global total. It is well understood that HIV/AIDS travels along the fault lines of poverty. While poverty makes people more vulnerable to HIV infection, HIV/AIDS makes poor people poorer. The reality of HIV/AIDS is devastating not only to the family and community: it is disastrous for the entire continent, with skills being lost on a massive scale.

Whilst the life expectancy of someone living with HIV in Europe is 15 years, in Sub-Saharan Africa it is less than five years. It is increasingly understood that the one of the reasons for this deficit is poor nutrition (UNAIDS), which impacts directly upon the immune system. Anti-retroviral medicines are an important factor in controlling HIV, allowing the immune system to reconstitute. Immune reconstitution itself is dependent on good nutrition, delaying the onset of opportunistic infections, which would otherwise seal their fate. For a child, this is perhaps the difference between being orphaned at seven or 17.

Addressing the nutritional shortfalls of those with HIV/AIDS is therefore a primary focus of **GardenAfrica's** work, providing patients and health professionals with information and training in the cultivation and preparation of food is central to promoting effective and accessible health strategies for those living with HIV. Improving nutrition in vulnerable communities will help those affected to continue to support their families, improving the quality of life of those living with and around the virus, to lead a full and productive life.

Traditional Medicine (MDG 4, 5, 6 and 7)

There is an increasing awareness that **traditional medicine** can play an important role in tackling the debilitating opportunistic infections associated with HIV. Much of what we call **conventional medicine** today is based on the synthetic reproduction of plant properties for pharmaceuticals. Over 30% of these pharmaceuticals remain primarily plant-based. One such example is the Madagascan Periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*) which remains the only known, effective cure for childhood leukaemia. Despite this, we tend to ignore the important contribution that can be made by plants, particularly for those without access to conventional healthcare. The World Health Organisation now recognises that "traditional medicine is the surest way of achieving total healthcare coverage of the world's population".

Furthermore, effective medicines, which are available to all, can be grown locally, for health and income. However in many areas medicinal plants have all but disappeared due to over-use, with disastrous social and environmental results. An important aspect of our work is providing training in the sustainable management of these scarce resources, so that valuable medicinal resources can be made more widely available to those living with HIV/AIDS as a complement to clinical care. As an important contribution to research currently being undertaken, **GardenAfrica** works in collaboration with experts at the Jodrell Laboratories at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Diversity (MDG 7)

The protection of diversity, both biological and cultural, is integral to all **GardenAfrica** projects. Decline in nutritional intake has been linked to the spread of large-scale commercial agriculture, resulting in the loss of natural habitats which previously provided a diversity of food supplements and natural pest control. The move away from localised, sustainable farming methods to technology-dependent, export-driven monocultures continues to degrade the environment at an alarming rate, increasing the flow of rural poor to urban centres, where they are more exposed to poverty and disease. This drain on human resources has placed a huge burden on those who remain in the villages – mainly women and children – severely eroding the oral tradition upon which communities have relied for generations. Fortunately there are still members of the community who maintain vital knowledge of indigenous plants and food systems. A cornerstone of **GardenAfrica's** work is the recognition that indigenous knowledge can be used to a greater effect. Our projects protect the diversity of existing plant life and, in consultation with the community, encourage the reintroduction of indigenous vegetables and fruits, which are **already drought and disease resistant**.

Livelihoods (MDG 1)

Whilst the initial objective of each project is to meet the immediate needs of the host community, surplus produce can be sold locally, improving community health. In addition projects give practical assistance and support on a wide range of income generation schemes. Workshops include business skills and training in horticulture, building rain-water catchment systems, micro-nursery and smallholder management, all of which provide environmental products and services which can be produced and traded locally to stimulate localised economic growth.

Gender Bias (MDG 3)

Cultural norms in many developing countries often lead to women being excluded from decision-making. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 80% of all food consumed in the home is produced by women. A common misconception is that by increasing women's access to synthetic inputs (pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers) this not only increases her yield, but also adds value to her role as primary producer. In fact an **FAO study** found that such home garden production, which constitutes only 2% of the land utilised on a homestead or farm, generates 50% of total income due to the fact that, unlike her husband, she is unable to



purchase expensive agricultural inputs. The same study also found that, measured according to total harvest, traditional systems of multi-cropping could produce more than 1,000 times more food than industrial mono-cultures.

Despite this central contribution to household food security, women producers tend to be overlooked in development strategies. The cultural and sociological factors that limit women's access to resources will increasingly be questioned as their access to education rises. The empowerment of women is vital for increasing food output, raising levels of nutrition, and improving the living conditions of rural populations. Training opportunities offered by **GardenAfrica** projects make a significant contribution to the enablement of women by adding value to their work, improving health, income and status.

Education (MDG 2)

Across Africa, children must attend school in full uniform, placing a huge burden on families. Despite extreme hardship, many see education as so important that uniforms will often take priority over food. **GardenAfrica's** 'Living Classrooms' projects support schools by providing a practical resource rooted in the heart of the community, where vulnerable children who arrive hungry can enjoy a nutritious school lunch. Training includes assisting the teachers to integrate garden activities into formal learning, covering many of the curricular subject areas. This is vital to enable hard-pressed teachers to enliven the process of learning – bringing fun and imagination to the education of Africa's youth.

Appropriate technology (MDG 1 and 7)

This is technology applied most appropriately to the environment and culture it is intended to support. Low capital cost and maintenance requirements are essential considerations. These simple technologies are used at all levels of **GardenAfrica** projects:

- Appropriate social plant use – multi-use plants for medicine, food, fodder, natural pest deterrence and building materials
- Value-added food processing and storage for income generation
- Soil stabilising, through species selection, drainage, terracing and intercropping
- Conservation and resource management
- Irrigation, water harvesting and grey-water recycling.

The nature of **GardenAfrica's** projects offer a unique opportunity for further research, development, and implementation of technologies appropriate and beneficial to sub-Saharan Africa.

Sustainability (MDG 7)

Sustainability, both economic and environmental, is essential to the success of all projects. Environmental sustainability means using natural resources wisely and protecting complex ecosystems on which our survival depends. Achieving the goal will require greater attention to the plight of the poor, whose day-to-day subsistence is often directly linked to the natural resources around them.

GardenAfrica's initial development was planned in two three-year stages. The main objective for the first three years was to establish a number of pilot projects in South Africa, combining poverty reduction, health, HIV-related nutrition and environmental sustainability. These projects have already brought tangible and sustainable benefits to each host community, and continue to offer practical demonstrations of how **GardenAfrica's** approach can make a significant and valuable contribution to all the main target areas set out in the Millennium Development Goals.

This stage has been successfully completed and **GardenAfrica** is now working in partnership with a number of foundations, universities and government departments in developing ongoing projects, operating through a growing network of knowledgeable and trusted local partners who can guarantee successful implementation. Having developed a sound project-base in South Africa, **GardenAfrica** now intends to expand its activities to a number of other countries.

Specific examples of GardenAfrica's ethos in practice

The Africulture Project, Grahamstown, South Africa.

The Africulture Project comprises a training resource and nursery specialising in the cultivation, processing and marketing of medicinal plants. The project consists of a four year foundation phase (2005-09) developed in partnership with the **Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew** and local training partner **Umthathi**, with funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (**Defra**). The project has strong institutional support from the South Africa National Biodiversity Institute (**SANBI**) and **Rhodes University**.

The Africulture Project was initiated to address the loss of biodiversity within the Eastern Cape Province (Eastern Half of the Albany Centre of Floristic Endemism), focussing on conserving indigenous medicinal plant species. Many species are currently harvested illegally from the wild and are threatened by over-exploitation. Indigenous medicinal plants are vital to traditional health care, with more than 80% of South Africans relying primarily on the informal sector for health provision.

Medicinal plants are therefore part of a 'hidden economy', thought to be worth in excess of £30 million per year in South Africa alone. Other species are also under threat due to horticultural demand or their value to the international market. Innovative methods of supplying the market with medicinal plants are essential to conserve these species, as is the traditional knowledge associated with them, for future generations. By promoting alternative rural livelihoods based on the sustainable cultivation and utilisation of indigenous plant species, biodiversity conservation will be positively effected.

The Project promotes the sustainable use of genetic resources for health and livelihood benefits. Training incorporates cultivation and sustainable harvesting from the wild, and extends to producers across 17 districts, training them to establish micro-nurseries to supply the traditional healthcare market. Methods promote conservation management through training with traditional healers and harvesters – in accordance with the **International Convention on Biological Diversity**. The Africulture model is also designed to advocate on behalf of traditional health care practitioners and harvesters to ensure that their rights are duly considered in relation to changing legal frameworks around harvesting, plant-use, and indigenous knowledge protection.

With a successful bid for European Commission funding matched by local corporate donors, the Africulture Project is now set to move into its next phase (2009/11) which will see this approach extended.



Sustainable Schools, Cape Flats, South Africa

The **Sustainable Schools Programme** incorporated 12 schools in the Cape Flats, and continues to be being facilitated by **SEED**, a valued local training partner, which has extended the programme to a further 24 schools. Over a three year period, two grades at each school will take part in 'active arts' such as painting, theatre and traditional story telling. Open activity days, with garden competitions, further encourage the involvement of parents to learn ways in which they can more fully utilise the resources around them to develop similar gardens – providing food and improved home environments.

This Programme helps teachers to deliver the syllabus and is instructive to at least seven of the eight learning areas: mathematics, natural sciences, technology, life orientation, economics, art and culture, and management sciences.

The high level of HIV infection at schools in the Cape Flats is a stark reminder of Africa's predicament – with infection rates amongst students at 10%; 25% amongst children and teachers. For this reason, all **GardenAfrica** projects work towards increasing access to nutritious foods and employing land management systems with a low input, high output driven approach to cultivation and production.

Sustainable Health Management - Soweto Clinics Programme

To implement this Project, **GardenAfrica** worked with **HIVSA**, a South African organisation that provides support services to people living with HIV/AIDS at Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital. This is the largest hospital in the world, and serves the treatment, feeding and support needs of more than 2,000 HIV+ women and children every week.

With financial backing from a number of foundations, including The Body Shop and the Elton John Aids Foundation, **GardenAfrica** established a one hectare training and resource garden to teach HIV+ patients to address many of their own care needs in a way that they would be able to sustain. The garden is run by HIV-positive trainers which **GardenAfrica** trained, who continue to share information and skills on cultivation techniques - teaching people how to optimise nutritional intake when preparing and cooking food. Over 2,000 people across Soweto have now been trained in basic food production, most of whom now produce on their small urban plots, and others have since established their own training gardens at churches and schools.

Ntandabantu Women and Orphans Project, KZN. South Africa

Having lost many adults to HIV/AIDS, Ntandabantu consists largely of elderly women and children, with households supporting up to 16 children on declining state pensions. This rural project centred upon the creation of a **food and medicinal herb garden**, with the aim of addressing extreme poverty and malnutrition.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the village has seen many children orphaned, with some cared for by their extended family, and others who are themselves, heading households. Underpinning this project was the need to re-establish oral tradition as central to re-forging and extending traditional knowledge and support to this most vulnerable group.



Despite the importance of oral tradition, many elders remained unaware that, with the loss of the median generation to AIDS, they must pass traditional techniques of cultivation and cooking on to the next generation. To kick-start this process, we began with a school competition designed to encourage children to ask questions relating to indigenous knowledge - such as wildlife, medicine and foods. When the children were provided with colour pens and pencils for the first time, the results were vibrant and exciting, invigorating a frenzy of knowledge exchange. The competition ended on a celebratory note, with women and children searching out wild ingredients, often up to four times more nutritious than imported 'exotic' varieties, culminating in a festival of story telling and traditional food.

From this, **GardenAfrica** gained a valuable insight into local life, and ensured that the resulting garden and training was relevant to local needs and tradition. The main garden, based at the school, also enables teachers to use it as a living classroom. Added to which, the women have been able to engage some of the children, who are heading households, to assist them in their ever more productive community garden, from where they share skills, produce and seed. Some of the children have now established their own gardens, allowing them to trade their produce in return for their obligatory school uniforms, and pay for school fees.

Training Resources

As well as specific materials created for, and applied to each programme, **GardenAfrica** has been working with its local partners and UK-based specialist advisors to develop generic training materials which are more appropriate to the social and environmental conditions in which we train.

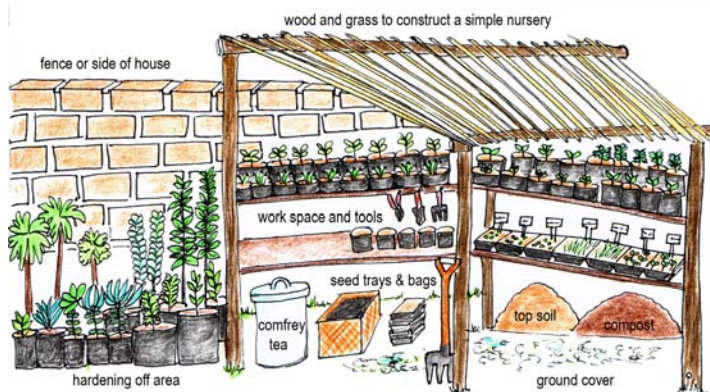
Permaculture Training Manual

This extensive resource has been developed as a reference tool for local facilitators extending training at community level. This was begun with funding from the Elton John Aids Foundation (2006/07), and is to be shared with other training partners. The manual will also be freely available on **GardenAfrica's** website (www.gardenafrica.org.uk) during the coming year, so that other interested parties from across sub-Saharan Africa who have requested it, can streamline the integration of appropriate resource-use techniques, food security and HIV-nutrition into their own programming.

Short TV Films on Cultivation & Health

GardenAfrica has worked with The Life Channel in the UK, which produces captive broadcast programming for UK clinics. Eleven short films have been produced (funded by Gauteng Dept of Health, South Africa) and have now been piloted across the Province. The subjects covered so far include:

- 1) Introduction to Ecology
- 2) Planning your Garden
- 3) Water Management
- 4) Soil Management
- 5) Making Compost
- 6) Planting & Harvesting Calendar
- 7) Nutrition & You Immune System
- 8) Food Values
- 9) Simple Recipes
- 10) Recipes to Aid Nutrient Absorption
- 11) Personal Hygiene and Food Safety



Leaflets

GardenAfrica has begun working on a series of pictorial leaflets which may be made available at hospitals and clinics, as well as take-home materials for our own course participants. We have begun working with South African illustrator **Jeannine Davidoff** to contribute to the beginnings of what we hope will become a library of small leaflets. These will be made available online, for anyone to print and use, including the many training organisations from across sub-Saharan Africa that contact **GardenAfrica** for resources and assistance.



Beyond 2009

Kalahari Garden Project, Namibia

We are working in partnership with the Global Diversity Foundation and The Eden Project, as well as local NGO, Komeho, to develop the Kalahari Garden Project, which has been established to support the internally displaced San peoples, who once hunted and gathered for edible and medicinal plants, on land that is now owned by vast commercial farms. Many of the plants and techniques used over thousands of years to utilise and manage resources are now at risk of being lost to future generations.

The project is working with schools and communities to assist them in the task of feeding themselves and their children, and will, in the coming year, pilot indigenous gardens - researching and putting into cultivation species which are more culturally and ecologically appropriate.

The Project has a total of 42 gardens spread between five villages, the majority of which are already yielding produce. The harvest and consumption data recorded in the past year suggests that diet has been significantly improved by this simple but effective intervention, providing considerable hope that this population may be able to make a successful transition, for the future generation.

Over the coming year, we expect that Project activities will achieve the following:

- Improve the food security, nutrition and health of a population of approximately 650 by providing access to a reliable and nutritious food supply.
- Improve access to clean water – promoting systems for sustainability (of each water source) and re-use.
- Provide specialist training in resource-use to local partners to increase their capacity for outreach in insecure environments.
- Consolidate and expand current knowledge of San plant-lore, information that is currently threatened by changing subsistence strategies and increased competition for natural resources.
- Disseminate information about the positive impact of improved nutrition to build natural immunity against HIV-related infections.
- Emphasise the value of indigenous plants and associated knowledge and encourage the transmission of this information within the local community.
- Help build the skills and infrastructure necessary for the diversification of livelihood options and the development of self-reliant communities



Food Security in a Changing Environment, Hhohho, Swaziland

During its foundation phase, this Project has developed **homestead based gardening practices** appropriate to adverse climatic conditions through an inter-disciplinary, practical approach. It has successfully enabled an appropriate and effective response to acute food insecurity, and health and livelihood challenges in two diverse pilot rural communities.

There are **70,000 orphans in Swaziland**. When including those whose parents are too ill to care for them, this figure rises to 130,000. Approximately 15,000 households are headed by children. Most Swazi live in rural areas that are ravaged by drought, overgrazing, soil depletion and invasive species. The northern Hhohho district is the second most populated in Swaziland. There are 20,000 people currently living with AIDS and only 2,000 hospital beds in the national hospitals. Affecting over 40% of the 1 million population, Swaziland has the second highest per capita HIV prevalence in the world. Despite many combination therapies requiring medication to be taken with food, about 25% of the population depends on food aid, presenting a serious challenge to the provision of effective treatment.

With our pilot nearing completion, we have made a successful bid for EU funding to roll out this approach across a further six communities in 2009-11. This will support and enhance the management of natural resources to boost the cultivation of food, and enable the establishment of plant-based livelihoods. As with the pilot, we will achieve this by selecting and training rural people. They will be supported to establish nurseries at their home-steads, from where they can transfer their new skills to others, whilst earning an income.

A simple garden demonstration site is under development with **GardenAfrica's** local partner, **Vusumnolfo**. Successful candidates will be selected for intensive training, whilst implementing what they have learned at home. Trainees will also benefit from agro-ecology training which is new to Swaziland. This will address food insecurity in adverse climatic conditions, by using an inter-disciplinary approach that will have a positive impact on the cross cutting issues of environment, gender, HIV/AIDS care and support, and impact mitigation

Each primary garden will encourage the establishment of a further 50 gardens through skills and materials transfer. This would lead to 2,500 gardens producing food for a diverse diet. At an average of eight people per household, that equates to 20,000 people with improved access to nutritious food. The Project will also provide specialist training to our local facilitators, who will continue to roll-out this approach and train government agricultural extensionists long after **GardenAfrica's** direct involvement is completed.

One of the applicants for the project was **Victory Mkhonta** (below right). Victory was successful in claiming one of the places available on the course. She has since created a highly productive garden and successfully grows a diverse range of fruits, herbs and vegetables for family consumption. She has begun sharing her new-found knowledge with others in her community. Once other gardens are established with her encouragement, Victory will be able to trade or sell her seedlings and seeds, growing a sustainable livelihood whilst also providing an important public service.



Zimbabwe

GardenAfrica recently carried out an assessment of possible areas of activity in which it could establish programmes capable of delivering real benefits in the midst of the current food security crisis and rapidly declining life expectancy. **GardenAfrica's** response is being framed around 'recovery' principals, rather than emergency feeding.

GardenAfrica is committed to supporting local organisations which struggle to provide vital services in health, education and agricultural extension, in the absence of any coherent formal state provision. In consultation with these organisations, **GardenAfrica** has identified the need to promote improved smallholder productivity and health.

Smallholder Peer Training Programme

Since approximately 90% of Zimbabwe's staple crop, maize, used to be produced by smallholders, there is clear evidence that investment in smallholder agriculture should be seen as an investment in the entire economy. Since investment in smallholder agriculture has the most significant impact on households' income generation, this clearly indicates its importance in rural poverty alleviation strategies.

Using the successful model from Swaziland, this Programme will see two candidates selected and trained from each of the six provinces. These 'model smallholdings' will then provide a working example to others in the community, transferring skills, seed and other materials to generate an interest in agro-ecology techniques and seed varieties which have been locally adapted to suit specific conditions.

This model is a cost effective way of providing localised dissemination points for research and further training at district level. Smallholders will be paid for the hire of their land for periods of training, providing an additional source of income, and reducing the need for additional and expensive 'centres'.

Sustainable Schools

Beginning with a cluster of seven schools in Matabeleland, this programme will extend food security for the children, most of whom arrive at school hungry, by creating indigenous gardens around the schools grounds. As with our programme in Cape Town, teachers will have the opportunity to take part in training which will integrate garden activities into the national curriculum, enabling them to enliven learning.

Clinic Gardens

From discussions with a network of clinics and health professionals, it is clear that there is very little to dispense in the form of conventional allopathic medicines, and there is increasing interest in the complementary role of medicinal plants for addressing many common ailments. Simple approaches to improve sanitary conditions in the home using plants with anti-bacterial properties will all be made available. Also used will be plants with activities for the treatment of respiratory ailments, inflammation and sores where appropriate.

GardenAfrica has been approach to add value to a series of 12 clinic gardens already established. By training health professional as trainers, we will support the outreach of a further 10 community-based volunteers from each clinic, to work at home level. Each of the 12 clinic gardens will become small nurseries from which volunteers and others can take cuttings, and learn how to cultivate these at home to address their own healthcare needs in a sustainable way.

Conclusion

When **GardenAfrica** was established, its first objective was to develop a number of pilot projects in South Africa. These projects would provide practical solutions, emphasising the value of integrating traditional systems of land care and food production as a means of stimulating localised economic development. In addition to the tangible and sustainable benefits to each host community, the pilot projects would offer practical demonstrations of how GardenAfrica's developmental approach can make a significant and valuable contribution to all the main target areas of the **Millennium Development Goals**.

The objective of this next stage of **GardenAfrica's** development is to create a network of **training and resource gardens** in a further six targeted countries - including Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Namibia. **GardenAfrica** is currently in discussion with potential implementing partners in these target countries, with programmes scheduled to commence in Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe during 2009.

As the network grows with the addition of each garden or group of gardens, so its effectiveness increases through the interchange of ideas, information, materials, research, M&E data and other linkages. The collective strength of the network will continue to grow, its projects bringing tangible benefits to millions of people currently living in extreme poverty.

Garden projects may range in size from a single training garden of a hectare or less, to larger-scale developments such as the 10 hectare Africulture Project, or groups of interrelated gardens as in the case of the Swazi programme. The cost of a single garden project will vary according to its location, specific needs and design, harshness of terrain, necessity for irrigation, or security.

An average budget of £10,000 covers all infrastructure costs, including land preparation, fencing and irrigation; construction and equipping of commercial nursery facilities - from propagation to market; provision of tools, shade netting, secure storage and utility areas. The budget also covers all training and workshop costs for the first year: with two key trainers based at each garden providing on-site training, offering advice in sustainable cultivation, food processing and income generation. **Each garden can provide training to approximately 2,500 people a year.**

During the next five years **GardenAfrica** programmes aim to have been instrumental in the creation of more than 500,000 new family gardens, positively affecting the health and welfare of at least 3,000,0000 people.

An investment in a **GardenAfrica** project guarantees real sustainable growth. Net gain may be calculated in terms of lives saved, improved and empowered, and in terms of land returned to utility and biodiversity protected.

GardenAfrica sees its work not as charity, but as solidarity. The communities we work with do not need our charity, just the means by which to provide for their own future. Equally we see funds raised, not so much as 'charitable' donations, but as investments in a more sustainable future from which we will *all* benefit.



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