

ANNUAL REPORT 2006/7

The past year has seen GardenAfrica grow from strength to strength – with our income and corresponding expenditure increasing to meet the needs & aspirations of those with whom we are working. In project terms, we have tightened our focus to ensure that the projects to which we are dedicated are able to flourish with increased capacity to delivery training to the highest possible standard. We will continue to innovate, monitor & document our work in the field to ensure that these initiatives respond to ever shifting socio-political environments, providing the best possible opportunities for our partner organisations and beneficiaries.

PROJECTS

Africulture Project (foundation phase)

Now in year 3 of this exciting 4 year foundation phase, in collaboration with local partner Umthathi, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, GardenAfrica continues to receive funding from the Defra' s Darwin Initiative, who have provided excellent support during mid-tem monitoring and evaluation, and project revisions, which took place in February 2007. The Project, which is working towards the creation of an ex situ conservation and training site for effective management & use of medicinal plants to mitigate the effects of opportunistic infections, has now commenced training with traditional healers and vulnerable wild harvesters, to facilitate a shift from wild harvesting practices, which are considered unsustainable, to the use of cultivated alternatives. The project also aims to advocate on behalf of traditional health care practitioners, harvesters & traders to ensure that their rights are duly considered in relation to changing legal frameworks around harvesting, plant use, and indigenous knowledge protection.



In accordance with Darwin funding, in February/March 2007 the first 1 ha of the 10 ha site was fenced and prepared to house the projects growing collection of medicinal species in a series of shade houses. This year also saw the commencement of pilot training with traditional healers, who self selected to participate in order that the Africulture approach receives the approval of traditional healer associations, 3 of which had taken part in training by March 2007. With co-operation of Rhodes University Pharmacy Dept, workshops with traditional healers also commenced to assess attitudes to HIV/Aids and to establish the projects approach to advocating safe-use and medicinal practices in relation to anti-retrovirals.



With collection permits in place, the Africulture Project has collected the seeds of 65 species, 40 of which have now been sown and germinated successfully. In addition, 10 of the 30 target species (those which are rare and endemic) have been put into successful cultivation on the 1 ha nursery site, in preparation for training expansion.

In December 2006 GardenAfrica enlisted the expertise of a business advisor who worked intensively with Umthathi to produce a comprehensive Africulture Development Plan which, as a working document, was largely complete by April 2007.

Sustainable School Programme – Cape Town

GardenAfrica continues its support for Seed in Cape Town, and has further provided funds raised during one of its UK garden centre events, in order to complete this 3 year pilot with a full impact assessment, which will enable the roll-out of this approach across Gauteng and Limpopo provinces of South Africa. GardenAfrica then hopes to move forward with Seed in support of a further 22 schools in the most deprived areas of the Cape Flats where Seed continues to do sterling work.



Creating an Environment for Improving Nutrition - Soweto Clinics



This year has also seen the completion of the Soweto Clinics project, with trainers having completed their business skills coursework, to ensure sustainability at each garden resource. 18 local people were trained as trainers in natural resource management, low input / high yield food cultivation techniques for the immune compromised, and HIV/AIDS related nutrition & sanitation. With a final instalment of funding from the Rowan Trust, these trainers developed training gardens at 7 community-based clinics, and have been assessed on their ability to

transfer these skills amongst support groups. The main 1ha training garden at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital continues to provide training through HIVSA, to whom responsibility of the garden was handed at the end of the project period, as a complement to its non-clinical support services to people living with HIV and orphans and vulnerable children taking part in its Sizinani summer camps.

A major output from this project has been the development of a comprehensive training manual in collaboration with Ukuvuna, which combines low input / high yield cultivation techniques with nutrition and sustainable health management for those affected by HIV/AIDS. This resource will be shared with, and tailored to, the needs of all GardenAfrica's future projects and beneficiary groups.

PROJECT RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Swaziland

Through extensive consultation, and with funding from the Erach & Roshan Sadri Foundation, GardenAfrica has now developed its rural Swazi programme with local partners Vusumnotfo and the Moya Centre, who will undergo and extend training with GardenAfrica's Zimbabwean training partner Ukuvuna as part of this 3 year project. The project, entitled ' Food Security in a Changing Environment' will support and enhance the sustainable management of natural resources to boost the cultivation of food, and enable the establishment of plant-based livelihoods to combat extreme poverty.



We will achieve this by selecting and training 50 rural people to develop and manage home-based resource gardens across the Hhohho district of Swaziland, from which to train others to build health and security in a rapidly changing environment. Fundraising for this initiative has now commenced with further funding from the DTC.

AWARENESS RAISING

Chelsea Flower Show Project

GardenAfrica was very proud to be able to present our approach at the 2006 Chelsea Flower Show which received an amazing response from the public. In collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and with great commitment of an expert team, our 'African Township Garden' highlighted the utility of many medicinal plants, many of which were cultivated specially for the event by the RBG Kew, and others which were on loan from Kew collections to increase the sustainability and cost of taking part in such an event. The event also sought to provide information on species used in the UK for common ailments, and organic, low input, and drought tolerant methods to enable the UK gardener to build diversity towards a more sustainable future, which it achieved with great success. During a very wet May, we were also able to amply demonstrate water harvesting and reuse, and how to ensure that a garden, planted on a slope can be fixed into place with both hard and soft planting to prevent soil loss. The exhibit was further enhanced, and costs reduced, by large structural plants loaned by the Eden Project, which now has the majority of the exhibit in storage – until such time as their new dry tropics biome is complete and ready to house it.



This was an incredible opportunity to gauge the interest of the British public, and to share with others around the world – with excellent coverage on appearing on the BBC (Chelsea Flower Show coverage, BBC Breakfast and a Year at Kew) as well as appearances on Sky and numerous radio stations and publication. This event was quite an undertaking for a small team, and was pulled together by our committed volunteers, and our 2 designers, Ross Allan and Alan Capper. Achieving our silver-gilt and an incredible amount of publicity for our work during

this most prestigious event would certainly not have been possible without our sponsors (Seeds of Change and 3 anonymous UK trusts) and the steadfast support of the RHS.

ADMINISTRATION

GardenAfrica operates with only 1 full time member of staff in London, and a dedicated team of volunteers and expert advisors in order to dedicate the vast majority of funds raised to generating innovative project in the field with our partners, upon which to grow our reputation. 2006/7 has seen a small increase in management & admin costs, these which remain at approximately 2%. This will need to increase in the coming year to support GardenAfrica' s projected growth & sustainability.

GardenAfrica remains committed to its goal of achieving best practice in its work, and continues to review its internal practices in line with growth. Independent project reviews continue to involve our in-country partners, and independent evaluations are closely analysed with a view to the disseminating research material generated by our training models. At GardenAfrica we are satisfied that our reflexive and integrated approach to working with vulnerable communities will continue to be reflected in our organisational growth.

On behalf of all at GardenAfrica, our partners, and beneficiaries we have greatly welcomed the generosity of all those who have supported us over the past year.

Georgina McAllister
Chair of Trustees