



GardenAfrica

ANNUAL REPORT 2007/8

The past year has seen GardenAfrica investing time in research & development of new programming ideas, and developing new funding streams through protracted application processes. We trust that this will bear fruit in 2008/9, with the launch of new initiatives as well as the roll-out of those which have been successful. 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 deliver 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 environments, providing the best possible opportunities for our partner organisations and beneficiaries.

PROJECTS

Africulture Project (Foundation Phase)

This has been the penultimate year of this project's foundation phase, delivered in collaboration with local partner Umthathi, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. GardenAfrica continues to receive funding from the Defra's Darwin Initiative, and also gratefully received a small grant from the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, and Jenny River.



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. Land use patterns have changed over the past decade in the Eastern Cape, with increasing areas devoted to game farming or private nature reserves stocking dangerous animals. This trend reduces access to many wild plant populations, increasing pressure on those populations which remain accessible. 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. Innovative methods of supplying the market with medicinal plants are essential in conserving these species, and the traditional knowledge associated with them for future generations. Other species are also under threat due to horticultural demand or their value to the international market. By promoting alternative rural livelihoods based on the sustainable cultivation and utilisation of indigenous plant species, it is intended that biodiversity conservation will be positively effected. A core assumption therein, hinges on the Project's successful facilitation of a shift from wild harvested to cultivated materials, and therefore forms part of planned outputs and related activities with traditional healthcare practitioners (THPs) and harvesters. These are often the poorest of women, forced to harvest over ever greater distances to source increasingly rare plant materials.

The project is also designed to advocate on behalf of traditional health care practitioners & harvesters to ensure that their rights are duly considered in relation to changing legal frameworks around harvesting, plant use, and indigenous knowledge protection.



Since 2006, our implementing partner Umthathi has lost key staff, and struggled to fill posts, both in relation to the Africulture Project, and more generally. This is not unusual in South Africa's present employment and skills environment, which continues to hinder NGOs and projects across the country. Many of the competent people who have received training in the voluntary sector are now being co-opted into the private and government sectors, leaving a dearth of skilled personnel at NGO level. However, at the time of writing (April 08) a new management team has been appointed, by a newly constituted Board, and issues around salaries and staff moral are being quickly addressed, creating a new buzz around the

Project, and Umthathi more generally. Despite this difficult year, two key staff members have continued to push the project forward: Sicelo Dyira (left), maintaining important relationships with THP associations, and Zolani Zondani (right) who has continued to propagate the plants required for conservation, once training resumes. Their commitment has been commendable.



During this period, GardenAfrica has worked with Umthathi to develop other funding streams to take the Project beyond the foundation phase. Umthathi was successful in an application to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and together we have been successful in getting agreement on a large EuropeAid grant, the terms of which are now under negotiation. We expect this funding to come on stream during the next financial year, and to run from early 2009-11 (and will therefore be covered in the next annual report).

Food Security in a Changing Environment. Hhohho – Swaziland Foundation Phase

For the past 18 months, GardenAfrica has been working with local partners Vusumnotfo and the Moya Centre to develop a rural training programme. This 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 and drought in Hhohho, northern Swaziland. We will achieve this by selecting and training 25 rural people to develop and manage local resource gardens across the district. From these gardens they will support and train others to build health and security in a rapidly changing environment.



We were pleased to note that the appeal of this Programme meant that we were able to raise funds within a remarkably short time. We are extremely grateful for the support and enthusiasm of The le Roux Trust, the Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, The Erach & Roshan Sadri Foundation, the Rowan Charitable Trust, the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, and of course Jenny River, whose family made a generous contribution to this initiative.

The design of the Programme focuses on piloting GardenAfrica training with the local team. In so doing, it will share and develop information about creating locally appropriate strategies for sustainable resource-use training and extension. It will also combine information on cultivation, food security and nutritional health. This Programme has funded the development of a simple demonstration and training site at Vusumnotfo's base at Ngonini, from where training can continue beyond GardenAfrica's direct involvement.

Building on the methodology designed for the foundation phase, GardenAfrica and Vusumnotfo made an application in February for EuropeAid funding for a following 3 years. We have every confidence that the bid to fund the ongoing roll-out after this initial foundation year, will be successful.

The foundation phase of this programme is to commence in April 08. We therefore look forward to reporting on this in full, in the next annual report (2008/9).

Developing Practical Training Resources

Permaculture Training Manual

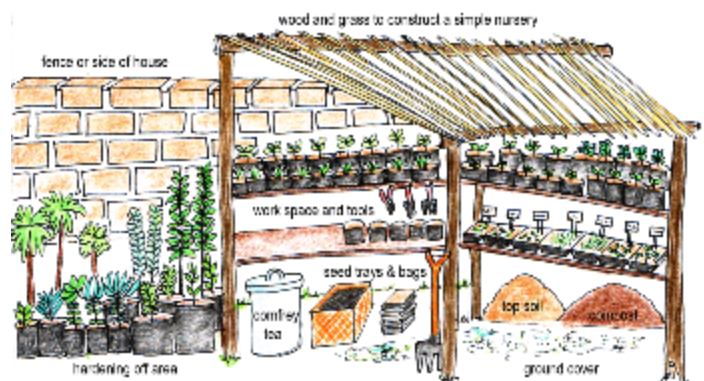
GardenAfrica has been working with its training facilitator, John Nzira (Ukuvuna) to develop a training resource for trainers. This was begun under funding from the Elton John Aids Foundation (2006/7). This resource, now nearing completion, is intended to be shared with GardenAfrica's other training partners and interested parties across sub-Saharan Africa, and is a trainers training manual to improve the integration of appropriate resource-use techniques, food security and HIV-nutrition. GardenAfrica is also grateful to its UK-based advisors, Alastair Duncan, from Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, who is an HIV Specialist Dietitian, and Professor Monique Simmonds, who heads the Jodrell team at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Both have provided their invaluable technical expertise.

We look forward to having this manual freely available on our website during the coming year.

Short TV Films on Cultivation & Health

In March, GardenAfrica was approached by The Life Channel in the UK, which produces captive broadcast programming for UK clinics. We were asked to research and develop outlines for 11 short films that were commissioned by Gauteng Dept of Health (South Africa). The intention is to show these films in hospitals and clinics across Gauteng to promote healthy living and eating. The subject areas being developed are:

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



GardenAfrica's own facilitators are to present the various segments – gardening, and cooking & nutrition – the latter of which is to be presented as a cookery programme. These programmes will be piloted across 6 sites in June 08, which we look forward to reporting on in 2008/9.

Leaflets

GardenAfrica has begun working on pictorial support leaflets which may be available at hospitals and clinics. This will enable people to take them home, and try some of the techniques raised in each of the programmes. 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 which contact GardenAfrica for resources and assistance.

We expect to have the leaflets available in 2008, and thank designer David Mann from JKR in London, who has offered his time on a voluntary basis to lay these out in an easy to read and accessible way.



Fund & Awareness Raising



Radio 4 Appeal

GardenAfrica was successful in making an application to feature in the long-running Radio 4 Appeal, which was kindly narrated by Gardener's Question Time's Eric Robson. Despite understanding that the Appeal would assist us in reaching an audience which would respond well to our particular type of work, we were amazed at the response which resulted. Despite the appeal being broadcast in early December, at the time of writing, we continue to receive donations in the post. Thanks to the Appeal team, and the R4 listenership, we have so far raised in excess of £26,000 which we are able to dedicate to growing GardenAfrica and our programmes.

Core Funding

We are extremely grateful to the Talacre Beach Group which has again supported our core costs. Without this support it would be impossible to function.

Administration

GardenAfrica operates with a small staff, and a dedicated team of volunteers and expert advisors in order to commit the vast majority of funds raised to generating innovative projects in the field. In 2007/8 management & admin costs remained at approximately 2%. This will increase in the coming year in line with 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 evaluations are closely analysed with a view to disseminating research material generated by our training models. At GardenAfrica we are determined 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 would like to extend our grateful thanks to all those who have supported us over the past year.

G E McAllister
Chair of Trustees
2nd March 2008

