



FOOD & TREES FOR AFRICA

TSHEDIMOSO HOMEBASED CARE CENTRE

VOLUNTEER DAY REPORT

PREPARED FOR

Paul Coleman and WiserEarth



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FTFA is a Section 21 social enterprise established in 1990 and registered with the Department of Welfare and the Public Benefits Department. FTFA has exemption from taxes and duties as approved in terms of Section 18A.

International and local awards for FTFA, founder and staff: United Nations Global 500 Laureate, the President Nelson Mandela Forestry Award, The Department of Environment Conserva Award, The Mail & Guardian Green Trust and Investing in the Future Awards, The Impumelelo Award, PMR Awards, the Eskom Chairman's Award, the Mail & Guardian Chairman's Award and the Institute for Housing SA Community Upgrader Award, the International Chevron Conservation Award, the United Nations Environmental Programme Sasakawa Climate Change Award, Arbor Day Foundation Award in the USA, the SAB Environmentalist Award, the best use of social media and website Sangonet award, UN supported SEED Award and Moola for Amanzi.

BOARD MEMBERS: Mr M Morobe (Chairman) • Mr MB Edwards (Financial Director) • Mr A Botes • Ms I Feldman • Mr J Mahlangu • Ms E Mokotong • Ms L Mossop-Rousseau • Dr K Naidoo • Ms J Park • Mr S Clark (ex officio)

PATRONS: Mr Keith Kirsten • Ms Graça Machel • Dr Sam Motsuenyane • Ms Judy Sexwale

1. INTRODUCTION



Paul Coleman, The Earthwalker, won the Earth Day Living competition with WiserEarth. He generously nominated Food & Trees for Africa (FTFA), an organisation he has a long green history with, as the recipient of his prize of US\$1 000.

FTFA selected a project called “Tshedimoso Home Based Care Centre”, which is based near Soweto, as the beneficiary of this grant. It was started by a group of 55+ year old citizens who are very committed to helping improve the lives of those in their local community. Last year, thanks to support from a local school who gave them a plot, they were able to start a food garden. In October 2011, Nedbank Capital IT & Projects assisted Tshedimoso Home Based Care to do this as part of a company volunteer initiative. The initiative included the donation of a Permaculture Starter Pack (PSP) level one and 60 trees.

This food garden feeds the school, the members and the community. FTFA decided that a volunteer day would be held, at the Care Centre, to commemorate World AIDS Day and provide much needed support, adding value to Paul’s gift. The volunteer day took place on 2 December 2012.

This report summarises the activities that took place on World AIDS Day, implemented through FTFA’s Food Gardens for Africa programme. A follow up evaluation is scheduled to take place on early next year, 2013, and further feedback will be provided thereafter.

2. ORGANISATION BACKGROUND

Started in 1990, FTFA is a South African social enterprise that believes in making a difference and whose objectives are:

- 🌱 To contribute to greening, climate change action, sustainable natural resource management, Permaculture food security and organic farming
- 🌱 To create awareness of the benefits of environmental improvement activities amongst all communities of southern Africa

- ④ To contribute to local economic enterprise, sustainable development, enhanced environments, capacity building and skills development.

FTFA has distributed almost 4.2 million trees, planted 140 hectares of bamboo sites, and facilitated the creation of thousands of natural food gardens and some organic farms for the poorest. FTFA launched the first South African web based carbon calculators and established the Climate Hero Awards, as well as the Carbon Protocol.

FTFA works in partnership, and with the support, endorsement and cooperation of government, the private and public sectors, aid agencies, organisations, media and individuals to achieve these aims through the six programmes.

This approach leads to healthier lives for impoverished communities, more sustainable green environments and increased awareness of how we human beings impact the planet and what can be done to address this. For a complete list of FTFA's history, development partners, board members, patrons, employees, projects, products, media, audited financial statements and more, please refer to the award winning website: www.trees.co.za.

All of FTFA's programmes complement each other and can be applied as an integrated approach to develop sustainable and healthy settlements and villages.

3. FOOD GARDENS FOR AFRICA

Food gardens are fundamental in ensuring food security. This is becoming an increasing reality with climate change affecting large scale agricultural yields and rising food costs.

Many communities and schools apply to FTFA for assistance to develop Permaculture food gardens. There are hundreds of applications from needy communities who are awaiting assistance.

FTFA's decades of experience show that ideally food gardens require support over a three year period, to ensure participants receive the necessary training and assistance throughout the seasons. Participants require commitment, passion and drive. The project members/gardeners contribute their labour, knowledge, skills and, in some instances, gardening tools.

FTFA implements food gardens through three types of intervention. These are described below.

3.1 Permaculture Starter Packs (PSPs)

Since commitment and viability of projects are difficult to discern from an application form, or a preliminary visit to assess the project, FTFA initiated the PSP. This helps minimise risk, evaluate which projects are worthy of further investment and weed out those which are looking for hand outs, thus improving sustainability.



There are three PSPs which depend on the amount of funding available. The different levels of PSPs deliver various amounts of gardening tools, seeds, seedlings, compost, educational materials, an introductory workshop that includes garden layout and design as well as practical assistance, further one day workshops and a follow up assessment and report.

The educational Permaculture resources, such as booklets, flyers and posters, help educators use the materials and the food gardens in their teaching. A garden design and an activity schedule/garden development plan are drawn up with participants at the first training session and a schedule is submitted to the sponsors.

The PSPs introduce Permaculture as a lifestyle and show how these practices can lead to a better quality of life. This helps projects either start or improve a garden, but rarely leads to a fully developed and sustainable project, since communities need more training and support.

The PSP places the responsibility of proving outcomes clearly with the applicants, who have three months from delivery to prove their commitment. If potential is shown, FTFA then recommends the project to the sponsor for the full three year support, which is an optimal time period to achieve sustainable food garden projects. If the original sponsor does not wish to offer further support, FTFA will propose that the project be funded by alternative sponsors.

3.2 One to three year Permaculture food garden support

Where project members prove their aptitude and commitment to the project, they should receive support for a one to three year period to develop sustainable food gardens. This requires not only extensive training in Permaculture food gardening to take them through all four seasons a few times, but also training in nutrition, record keeping, medicinal plants, basic business skills, food processing and possibly poultry management, as well as help to network with other organisations, communities and government who may be helpful.



Project leaders should receive additional training and the provision of necessary infrastructure and materials will further facilitate a sustainable productive garden.

3.3 Phased Development of Permaculture School Clusters

Through many years of food gardening with schools, and as an outcome of the EduPlant programme, FTFA has identified a number of deserving and motivated clusters of schools that need additional support. These centre around a school that has strong leadership, has developed a garden and shown motivation to support others nearby. This type of intervention is growing and proving to be very successful. It is also in keeping with the Department of Education's aim to develop clusters.

The initial phase, site and community assessments take place at the chosen schools to select schools who will receive a PSP2. On completion of the PSP2, the cluster is evaluated and the most committed schools receive 12 months of training, mentorship, additional resources and some project infrastructure. Support for a further two years is strongly advised.

This intervention model has proven successful in the development of sustainable and productive food gardens and is recommended for funders wanting regional impact.

4. VOLUNTEER DAY

FTFA has many requests from volunteers to assist the organisation through its six programmes. In 2012 it was decided to host volunteer days, usually associated with environmental or other national days of importance, to facilitate these volunteers.

Prior to the World Aids Day commemoration, FTFA informed Tshedismoso, one of thousands of organisations that have applied to FTFA for help, that WiserEarth and the Earthwalker were providing funds for FTFA to sustain this project. They were overjoyed!



FTFA then procured various vegetable and herb seedlings such as tomatoes, green peppers, cabbage, spinach and onions. The Care Centre has its own tools, donated from the original Permaculture Starter Pack, however the volunteers did bring along their own tools as well. All was delivered to the site prior to the volunteer day and FTFA Ecopreneur, Funboy Sebele, visited the site to ensure all was prepared. It was rewarding to see the members drawing on their knowledge obtained from the previous PSP, enabling them to teach the volunteers.



Funboy and FTFA's Communications and Media Coordinator, Lindsey Tainton, facilitated the volunteer day at Tshedimoso Home Based Care Centre (Soweto, 2 December). Funboy introduced himself, and the members from the Care Centre, who would be working with the volunteers in the food garden. In addition to the members, there were eight volunteers from Johannesburg and Pretoria. Funboy explained the objectives of the day, breaking the process down into four main activities, namely weeding, composting, mulching and planting seedlings.

At 09h00 the volunteers started removing weeds, based on an average of an hour per task, the volunteers moved swiftly, working hand in hand with the members of the Care Centre to subsequently compost, mulch and plant seedlings. It was the first time many of the volunteers had learnt about the principles of Permaculture, and FTFA hopes that they will use what they have learnt in their own gardening.

Mulch was applied to suppress weeds, reduce water evaporation and enrich the soil as it becomes compost once decomposed. The volunteers paired up to plant the seedlings. Three different seedlings were planted in each garden bed. All of the volunteers worked tirelessly to plant as many seedlings as possible.

Funboy reported that the volunteers were incredibly enthusiastic and would like to return in the future, "*Most of the volunteers suggested that we should go back there at the beginning of the February 2013 to see how the garden looks like and do some maintenance.*"

In addition, two of the volunteers had brought clothes and home ware that would be donated and distributed amongst those the centre cares for.

5. CONCLUSION

FTFA would like to thank Paul Coleman and WiserEarth for their support of this project. As a result of the funding we were able to give the Centre the support they required to sustain their food garden. Short term interventions of this nature provide projects with the boost they need to develop their gardens.

FTFA's decades of experience shows that ideally food gardens require support over a three year period, to ensure participants receive the necessary training and assistance throughout the seasons.

Tshedimoso Home Based Care Centre has shown the commitment and dedication needed to develop a sustainable food garden. The project will be evaluated early in 2013 and FTFA will report on this evaluation.