

SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL GARDENS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

This is the seventeenth Annual Report of Sustainable Global Gardens [UK charity reg. no. 1116243]. The document has been prepared for the charity's AGM, which is to be held on Friday 16th June 2023. The report covers the period of SGG's seventeenth financial year which ended on 31st March 2023.

The customary approach when writing this report is to look at the objectives of Sustainable Global Gardens as given in the original Business Plan, and then to comment on how far such objectives have been achieved. In the initial Business Plan the five-year target to be achieved by March 2011 was '*the annual raising of £100,000, which is to be transferred through at least 10 & preferably 20 small-scale sustainable projects to poor communities in the Developing World*' so progress could be judged against that long-term goal. As recent SGG Annual Reports have indicated how that initial target has been achieved, a different approach is taken in this report where consideration is given only to changes since the field visit which took place April-June 2022.

Since 2019 SGG has tried to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing our field visits which require long distance air flights to an average of one visit per year. Although this means that this report may sometimes be based on less reliable data, this new approach places greater responsibility and requires more initiative from our African partners. We regard this as progress because our ultimate goal is to be no longer needed in SGG project localities. Thus, we are pleased to report that SGG's changing role is no longer to initiate development projects but increasingly to respond appropriately to initiatives already undertaken by our local partners.

In this 2022-2023 financial year the 'one long distance flight per year' principle was honoured only in its breach with three visits to Africa. The first was in April-June 2022. This was the first convenient time for field monitoring after the easing of covid-related travel restrictions, and it was really the confirmatory fieldwork for the previous financial year. Most of that fieldwork time was used for tree counts because of SGG concern that the tree projects might have come to a halt during the covid years. What we discovered was that agroforestry planting had not just continued but was very active in Kenya. By June 2022 our data sheet recorded 38,728 trees monitored during the previous seven weeks, so our estimated total for the whole four-year programme then stood at 140,025. It then seemed possible to reach a target of 200,000 trees by December 2022, when I intended to close the Tropical Tree-Planting & Conservation project in order to set new conditions and priorities for a successor tree project.

The second was a short visit to Cote d'Ivoire where I gave two presentations at the International Conference on Pesticidal Plants. SGG established many new contacts there and we hope that this opens the door for greater SGG involvement in West Africa.



The International Conference on Pesticidal Plants [ICPP3] brought together more than a hundred researchers, NGOs etc mainly from West Africa. This was very different from my usual meetings in Africa which are often held in the open, under a tree. There are two aspects of development which this photo illustrates. One is the concern about climate change & how it is a major hindrance to African development. The other aspect is that this clearly demonstrates the progress being made in Africa South of the Sahara. Here there were delegates from both anglophone and francophone Africa, using simultaneous translation to discuss ideas about the common problem of pest control. Quite inspiring!

Progress in Africa is one of the themes I wish to emphasise in this report. I meet many people in Europe who are aware of the various dramatic crises of political conflict, food shortages, natural disasters in Africa but who also seem unaware of the gradual, less dramatic progress being made there. Carole & I see signs of progress every time we visit, but it is difficult to easily illustrate this to others. However, here is an excellent example of such progress in rural Africa.



This [above left] is FOCUSA school in 2013. Note the happy children, but cracked mud walls. Ten years later FOCUSA have a new school & hostel, mentioned in our 2019 newsletter, but also a carpentry workshop [above right], and commercial piggery [below left] and a health centre [below right].



The main field monitoring visit for this financial year took place in January-March 2023. Half of this fieldwork period was spent in Malawi with SGG's first visit to our new partners Zomba Forest Lodge and various community groups around Nankhunda village. We regard this visit as very successful, partly because it is the first SGG project to combine both environmental improvement and community development in a single comprehensive programme from the initial planning stage. After a good first training & monitoring visit, we plan to repeat this action during the next calendar year. The one limitation of this Malawi visit was that it left little time to monitor projects in Kenya and Tanzania. Fortunately, Carole was able to monitor Kenyan progress with the OVC feeding programme, table-banking and the kitchen gardens while I checked progress with trees planted before 31st December 2022. This Kenya fieldwork was completed in 15 days during February, which indicates that these projects are primarily implemented by local initiative and energy. SGG's role there is now largely reduced to provision of funding to local communities and reports to sponsors. We regard this as yet more evidence of progress and an excellent illustration of grassroots international cooperation, which is UN Sustainable Development Goal no. 17. The Tanzania field visit was left until last. Although some useful monitoring was done, there was insufficient time to visit even half of our various tree-planting locations. Thus, we expect Tanzania to be the priority visit next year.

The other major SGG activity this year has been fundraising. During the fifteen months previous to this financial year we had been quite successful with applications to charitable trusts for project funding, so it has been our intention to continue with this activity. Our expectation in April 2022 was that we were unlikely to be as successful as in our previous year, partly because many trusts donate on a one-off basis and partly because we spent much of this year in Africa. Nevertheless, in this financial year SGG raised £20,680 from applications to trusts, so this has become a valuable source of SGG revenue and has replaced speaking at Rotary clubs as our main source of income. These donations from trusts have allowed SGG to increase the locations where operate and also upscale those projects with more investment. Examples of this would be the new Malawi project, the addition of new OVC feeding groups, and increased table-banking spending.

The total UK income raised in the 2022-3 period was £31,456. This figure was greatly boosted by £19,439 which was carried over from the 2021-2022 financial year when there was no fieldwork undertaken. Consequently, there was £50,895 available on the 1/4/2022 to invest in SGG projects – the most we have had available at any one time. However, we spend heavily during our various field monitoring visits, so by 31st March the SGG bank balance stood at £6,626. It is now a matter of SGG policy to keep a positive balance of at least £5,000 in reserve in case of the unexpected. On the basis of these figures, I can suggest that the financial prospects of SGG look good. Perhaps of greater importance, though, is that there is an ever-increasing network of small-scale farmers engaged in SGG projects. Concerning tree projects alone, our records now show more than seven hundred farmer participants. With the average household size in these rural localities being more than 4 people/household, we can estimate that about 3,000 people benefit from just one SGG project.

CURRENT PROJECTS

The following are projects where SGG has invested support in this financial period.

- **Project 1, improved water-supply**

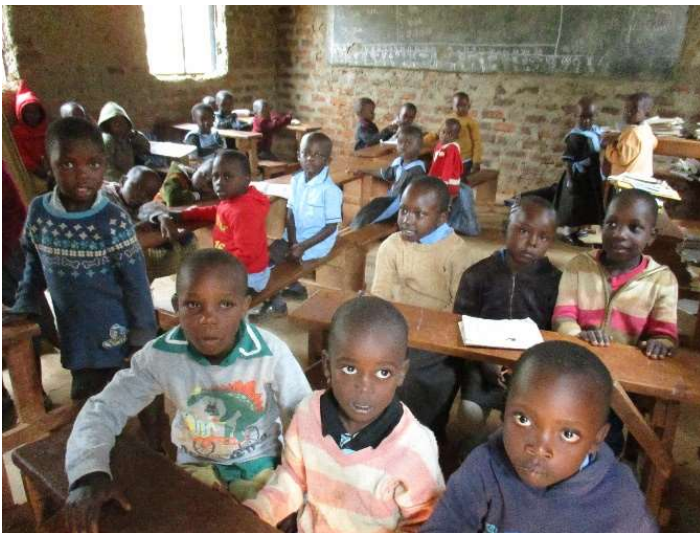
This is not one of our regular activities, but in the last few years we have managed to fund various water schemes. SGG has successfully continued this pattern. We have received funding from The Drinking Fountain Association to construct water harvesting system at Kwakihindi Primary School in Mwanza District, Tanzania. This funding has been transferred to Liana.org who take responsibility for the work to be done. We have also shared costs with the Sherwood Sunrises Rotary Club for the construction of a similar water harvesting system at St Denis Libolina School for the Physically Challenged in Bungoma District, Kenya. A different approach was taken by our partners CIF near Sioport in Busia District. Here the group used table-banking funds to purchase a diesel pump which can raise money a few metres, and thereby enable dry season production from their vegetable plots. A fourth strategy for improving water supply is SGG funding contributions for reforestation along the riverine sites around Zomba Forest Lodge.

- **Project 2, support for 450 orphans & vulnerable children [OVCs] in Busia.**

As mentioned in the last Annual Report this project was saved in 2021-2022 by generous grants from several trusts. Most of those charitable trusts continued their support during this financial year. This has allowed an increase both in the groups supported and in the amount SGG pays for each OVC. Officially we are now supporting 500 OVCs, but some of the groups have indicated that they often feed more than their agreed limit.



There is often a long queue of children waiting for food at CIF, [see above left] who are based near Sioport in Busia District. CIF is a church group who provide a communal meal for the children on Sundays – hence all the children are in their Sunday best. Another OVC group is Nyusa Farmers [see above right]. For the last 5 years SGG has encouraged the women who organise these communal meals to include greens in the meal to improve the children’s nutrition. This has not happened here at the end of the dry season when vegetables are in short supply, but we were pleased to see that all the children received a banana.



It is a common pattern in rural Africa for children to go to school primarily to receive food which is missing if they stayed at home. Within this feeding programme designed to give underprivileged children at least one good meal each week there are two ECDCs [Early Child Development Centres] which feed their learners on a daily basis. One of the ECDCs is Lonely Orphans near Matayos [see left] who offer both food and school to those in need.

For those who have so generously sponsored this project or anybody wanting to know more details we invite you to read Appendix 1, which is SGG’s latest field monitoring report concerning this project.

- Project 4 –table-banking.** The core of this popular activity is SGG representatives sitting around a table, or under a tree, discussing with a local group how to generate an additional income, using small capital investment, local initiative & a willingness to work. This activity is undertaken only during SGG field visits, so there had been no table-banking between November 2019 and May 2022. To make up for this gap the local contribution was raised to Ksh. 70,000/- which represents 70% of the budget available. In May 2022 the various OVC groups contributed an estimated £3,500 for table-banking schemes, whereas in February 2023 the total local deposit was the equivalent of £3,532. These two figures demonstrate that local contributions provide a significant sum for our OVC projects. With this in mind we are considering introducing this model of table banking elsewhere.



When table-banking started in 2009, the maximum any group could deposit was Ksh 5,000/- [about £33]. Now nearly all the groups contributed Ksh 70,000/- [£466]. This is yet another sign of progress as local farmers are increasingly involved in small business enterprises. Here [see above left] officials at Nyusa Farmers are checking their transactions. This group will spend half their funds on poultry and the other half will be invested in their own 'Voluntary Savings and Loans' scheme where they manage their own credit system. Siritanyi members have managed their own finances for several years. Here they are disbursing cash to members [see above right].

• Project 11 Tree Planting & Conservation in Africa.

Tree-planting in its various aspects continues to be a major part of SGG's work schedule. At the start of this financial year SGG's partners had claimed the planting of about 100,000 trees, but there had been no opportunity since the November 2019 fieldwork to confirm that this was really the case. Thus, the April-June field monitoring was almost entirely confined to tree counts within our core groups in West Kenya. As mentioned earlier, we were able to monitor the agroforestry planting of almost 40,000 trees, so the idea of a new planting target of 200,000 trees was established at that time. As there had been no tree monitoring in in either Tanzania nor Malawi since 2019 it seemed that such a target was within reach. Much of the January-March 2023 fieldwork was concerned with confirmation of tree numbers, so that a final evaluation of the four year programme could be made. .



Here are yet more signs of progress. A decade ago SGG's concern was to encourage small-scale farmers to practise agroforestry in their shambas. Now there are several innovations found within that network of farmers. This photo [see above left] shows some members of the Nsanama group who are paid to clear weeds etc in a conservation area with 5,095 trees on the slopes of Zomba Forest Reserve. This encourages natural regeneration of the forest. Some individual farmers have small patches of woodland. This farmer [see above right] has an estimated 250 trees in a small copse between his land and his neighbours. He is extending the tree area by practising permaculture to establish a 'food forest'. The most significant innovation is the start of a carbon capture scheme [see below left], using mature trees such as these in Busia, Kenya. A fourth innovation is the introduction of Sesbania sesbans to new areas in West Kenya [see below right] for fodder and to improve soil fertility.



SGG has reported previously the growing concern about climate change and the increased interest in tree-planting for carbon capture. Such carbon capture is becoming an increasingly important part of SGG's tree portfolio. This year we have an influx of small-scale farmers, each with at least 50 trees which are at least 3 years old, who wish to use those trees for carbon capture rather than immediate commercial sales. SGG's task now is to find sufficient clients who wish to reduce their carbon footprint in this way as part of their contribution to climate change mitigation. In May 2022 SGG was able to visit Kipsaina Crane & Wetland Conservation Group, where 15,000 trees have been planted with carbon capture planting being a crucial part of the project. The difficulty for SGG this financial year is that despite making two monitoring visits we did not have sufficient time to see the work of Aces on the Kenya Coast or that of the NGO African Malaika in South Tanzania. Nevertheless we view mangrove restoration as an important strategy for climate change mitigation as well as transformation of the local socio-economic conditions, so we intend to continue cooperation with these NGOs in the coming year.

After our return from East Africa in March, my main task was to write a final report on the four year 'Tropical Tree-Planting and Conservation Project. The official final record for trees either planted or growing by natural regeneration is 191,118. One decade ago SGG was not sure that it would be able to plant 25,000 trees among the farmers we knew. The difference between these two figures is a good indication of the progress made in recent years. With this in mind I hope that SGG's new tree project can have even greater success.

Those wishing to know more details about the Tropical Tree-Planting and Conservation project are invited to read Appendix 2, which is the final report on this programme.

- **Project 15 - the promotion of organic gardening & permaculture.**

Until 2021 SGG was largely dependent on one individual donation for the development of a demonstration plot near Matayos, Busia. Since then SGG has had an increase in donations, which have allowed a significant spread of project locations. In May 2022, SGG established a partnership with SCOPE, which specialises in using school grounds for permaculture in order to provide nutritious food for learners and also increase schools income by local sales of vegetables & fruit. See <https://www.scopekenya.net> for details of what this African NGO is doing. SGG is in agreement with many of SCOPE's core ideas [e.g. the need to make sustainable use of wasted, degraded land within school grounds, the importance of educating young Africans about the potential value of good horticultural practice]. We are particularly impressed by their experience of developing techniques specifically useful for those learners who are physically challenged. Thus, we hope to continue working with them in new locations in the future. Obviously, this is dependent on receiving sufficient funding from new sponsors.



In 2021 St Denis Libolina School for the Physically Challenged produced very little food within the school ground. After initial help from Sherwood Sunrisers Rotary Club, SGG established in June 2022 a partnership with SCOPE who specialise in permaculture within school grounds in order to provide a better diet for learners and also to increase school revenue through sales of vegetables & fruit. Here is the school garden in February [above left] and several weeks later [above right]

The main horticultural innovation this year has been the establishment of a kitchen garden demonstration plot in Nankhunda village, near Zomba.



The core activity for this kitchen garden was the construction of 10 double-dug raised beds which are to be used exclusively for vegetable production. Double digging, which often requires a pickaxe, fragments the subsoil so that root penetration is facilitated [above left]. The dug soil is temporarily removed and mixed with a similar amount of compost/manure to increase soil fertility. When the soil is returned to the bed it is much better aerated, thereby increasing rainfall infiltration and improving root growth. The raised beds are then planted with a variety of vegetables e.g. tomatoes, onions, greens, amaranth etc [above right]. After vegetable planting the rest of the plot is used for a variety of useful trees e.g. fruits [mango, avocado, pawpaw, banana], multipurpose species [Grevillea robusta, Faidherbia albida] and Tephrosia vogelii to be used in future for pest control. The final activity is the construction of a fence to protect vulnerable crops from wandering poultry and goats. In order to make this kitchen garden replicable it has to be affordable in a community where very few could afford a modern fence. This was done by using freely available bamboo and long grass, with fence posts made from sections of Pterocarpus angolensis, which can take root and form the basis of a living fence. The greatest problem here was the lack of sufficient compost-manure, so the volunteers from Nankhunda were asked to collect compost throughout the year in preparation for new kitchen gardens to be established next year.

Those who wish to know more details of the SGG-ZombaTreez project are invited to read Appendix 3: SGG-ZombaTreezProgressReport[8.5.2023].

There have been other activities during this financial year, but they have been put aside for the present as they have not yet reached fruition. What can be said, however, is that in each of SGG's main projects there has been tangible progress. We can therefore look forward to the coming year with reasonable optimism.

FUTURE PROSPECTS & RELATED ISSUES

This year SGG has managed to maintain the higher level of funding which was first reported last year. This situation is the consequence of continued support from funding trusts, who now account for the majority of our revenue. That increase in income has encouraged greater collaboration with likeminded NGOs and a broader spread of projects. The challenge for the next few financial years will be whether or not such fundraising can be maintained. New projects, such as those being developed in Malawi, also raise the issue of whether SGG can find new, and preferably some younger, volunteers who can act in an administrative-managerial role. In fact, by the end of this financial year in March 2023 I am inclined to the view that an insufficient number of members willing to monitor and evaluate the implementation of projects is probably the major obstacle to future progress.

With reference to particular projects Directors should note:

- our water supply projects are entirely dependent on finding donors and funding trusts who can afford the cost of construction. It is likely that Liana.org will continue to provide our best opportunity for such water projects;
- support for OVCs in Busia has also been based on funding trust support throughout this year. At the end of this financial year there was sufficient financial sponsorship to continue the feeding programme until the end of 2023;
- tropical tree-planting and conservation is expected to continue with financial support largely coming from SGG's many Rotary contacts. In the next financial year there will be a similar tree-based project,
- child nutrition has made great progress this year. However, we would judge that at least one more year of investment is needed in Kenya, particularly at St Denis Libolina in order to make that progress sustainable. Similar activities have developed well in Malawi, so I anticipate being active there for the foreseeable future;
- in summary SGG now faces a future with exciting possibilities but the constant need to at least maintain present levels of funding.

Thus, I wish to thank all of you, our supporters, for whatever contribution you have been able to make to our many successes this year. All supporters of Sustainable Global Gardens have a vital part to play in the development and progress of the charity, so I look forward to working with you in the coming year on Sustainable Development Goals No 1 and 2, the eradication of extreme global poverty and hunger. My best wishes to all of you.

Paul Keeley
5th June 2023