

SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL GARDENS ANNUAL REPORT TO TRUSTEES 2023-2024

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

This is the eighteenth Annual Report to the Trustees 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 5th July 2024 at 20 Kensington Gardens, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear, UK. The report covers the period of SGG's eighteenth financial year which ended on 31st March 2024.

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 January-March 2023.

Since 2019 SGG has tried to reduce our carbon footprint by limiting 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 financial year the 'one long distance flight per year' principle was reestablished with a two month monitoring visit to Malawi, Kenya and Tanzania in the January-March period. This tight schedule meant that some activities previously undertaken by SGG had to be greatly reduced. This applied particularly to the counting of trees on individual farms, which would have been quite impossible in view of the numbers now being planted by participating farmers. Local community leaders will have to take over this task in the future, and SGG approves of this type of progress: progress in rural Africa will only be sustainable when local communities initiate, implement and take full responsibility for their own development. The simple task of tree counting is just one small step along that path.

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 can be difficult to easily illustrate this to others. Last year the Annual Report mentioned how FOCUSSA had transformed in a decade a community near Matayos in Busia County. Now we wish to show how St Dennis Libolina School for the Physically Challenged has been transformed in less than two years.

The dramatic change there was made possible by the SGG decision to initiate a project, by the generosity of the Rotary clubs of Sherwood Sunrisers in Nottingham and Bungoma Rotary in Kenya, the generosity of a few individual SGG supporters, the effective implementation strategies of SCOPE who trained the school on permaculture, and the many from the school community who undertook the physical labour needed to complete activities. Well done, St Dennis Libolina School. And a grateful thanks to all who helped. This has been an inspiring example of action in support of Sustainable Development Goal No 17, the promotion of international partnerships for the benefit of the less fortunate.



This photo [see left], taken on 23/4/2022, shows the children at St Dennis Libolina. Most of the children with physical difficulties/challenges remain hidden away in the crowd, but there are more than 100 such children here. Note here that most of the school grounds are grass with patches of bare ground. Note especially to the left of the classroom in the background where there is also patchy grass. This next photo [see middle left] is that same area on 12/2/2024. There is now a new water tank attached to the classroom block. That water is used to irrigate the new vegetable patch where bananas & a pawpaw tree, sweet potatoes, sugar cane & kales are now growing. Behind this permaculture garden an additional row of Grevillea robusta trees have been planted.



The third photo [see below left] shows the narrow strip of land, perhaps 2 metres wide, which was waste space, a place to throw rubbish, in 2022. It was also a space where any water which ran off the classroom roof was simply lost. Now that roof runoff is used to water bananas and a crop of sweet potatoes.



The above are just two small examples of how the school grounds have changed from unproductive space to surplus food production. There is insufficient space here to indicate most of the 2023 improvements made, which include 180 fruits planted [i.e. 5 mango, 15 avocado, 100 pawpaw & 60 banana stems] as well as a diversity of vegetables [e.g. kales, tomato, capsicum, cowpeas, sweet potatoes, amaranth, black nightshade, spider plant, onions]. There are also the improvements to the kitchen, the repair of the toilets, and the additional water tank to consider. For a more detailed picture we suggest you browse: www.sustainableglobalgardens.org.uk/projects which includes a section on St Denis Libolina School for the Physically Challenged..

What this establishes, above all else, is that when diverse individuals & groups work in partnership much can be achieved for the benefit of hundreds of people, who are currently languishing in poverty. What is required for African development is a continuation of North generosity, a mixture of expertise from both the North and the South, and a willingness among African communities to work for their own benefit.

With less time scheduled for fieldwork in recent years, SGG has managed to maintain an adequate income by greater emphasis on fundraising while at home. The total UK income for this 2023-2024 financial year was £32,581.40p, which compares satisfactorily with the 2022-23 income of £31,456. Despite periodic concerns about SGG's financial security, we continue to have sufficient capital to carry out our planned activities. Furthermore, during the Kenya visit local groups were very eager to use SGG's table-banking scheme with a total of £4,280 raised for local contributions. This increases SGG total income to £36,861.40p with a total expenditure of £26,129.13p for the year. The bank balance on 31/3/2024 was £13,075.84p, which is rather higher than would be ideal, but a very healthy start for next year's expenditure.

CURRENT PROJECTS

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

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

SGG did not have a specific water project this year. However, we have been involved in various water-related schemes. The Kasiwe Farmers Association on Rusinga island have been developing an irrigation project based on extraction of water from Lake Victoria, and tank storage of water to be used for irrigation of lakeshore plots. By 5/2/2024 they had raised sufficient funds to purchase the diesel pump and water tank, but requested Ksh 40,000/- [about £200] for the pipework required. This was paid with the expectation that more intensive land use of lakeshore plots will generate a significant increase in household income. We can also mention here how the new water tank, not funded by SGG but through SCOPE, and permaculture practices have improved water supply for food growing at St Dennis. A third example is forest restoration near Zomba Forest Lodge where increased tree cover helps maintain village water supplies.

- **Project 2, support for 500 orphans & vulnerable children [OVCs] in Busia.**



The above are the two newest OVC groups to join this feeding programme. We were invited to see the Tenda Farmers-Asante Kwa Jembe children [see above left] at Matayos on 11/2/24. Their meal was rice with greens [usually a mixture of sukumawiki & amaranth] and a slice of melon. The agreement is that we pay this OVC group £30 per month to provide 4 meals for 25 orphans &/or vulnerable children. That is £1.20p/child/month. As such these are basic meals, but note that there are more than 25 children in this photo. The group leaders regularly allow a few more hungry mouths to join the meal. Eating conditions are often very simple, with the Tumaini Women's Group Esikhoma children sitting on the bare, but shaded ground under a tree [see above right]. Nevertheless, every scrap of food is eaten. This is the other group of 25 OVCs with a £30/month allowance.

The total cost of this feeding programme for 500 orphans/vulnerable children is now £7,920 per year. We are constantly concerned about the possibility of failing to reach this budget target, but once again we have managed to secure sufficient funds for what the SGG Directors regard as a priority project. For this budget to have been reached SGG would like to thank various Trusts, including the Lady Leech Fund, the Canning Trust, Paradigm Norton, St Peter's Aid for the Needy, for their generous contributions and also SGG individual supporters of this project. At this point I would like to give a special thanks to Mr Farmer for the legacy left for the well being of these underprivileged children.

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.



Here [see above left] is a typical table-banking session – a meeting on 10/2/24 when I was discussing with members of Nyusa Farmers the various options for income generation. The usual pattern for Nyusa Farmers is that they spend half of their Ksh 100,000/- [c£500] on a poultry project and use the rest for a Voluntary Savings and Loans scheme which they administer themselves.

Here are the Baker Boys [and Girls!] who told SGG an unexpected & inspiring tale. They are all former OVCs at Lonely Orphans. They have got together to form a youth group, and less than two years ago started a cake bakery. At present they are spending Ksh 1,500/- per day on ingredients but have typical sales of Ksh 2,800/-. If a profit is made of Ksh 1,200/- on a particular day, each of the 3 workers that day receives Ksh 250/- wages, with the remaining sales income being saved for future investment. Here they are standing behind their baking machine, but they also want to buy a mixer to save labour time or a motorbike so that they can extend their market area. We applaud their enterprise and wish them well for the future.

Last year we reported great interest in table-banking with local contributions reaching £3,532. This year this figure increased to £4,280 with some new applicants in addition to the usual 11 OVC groups. We do not know precisely how many farmers & OVC guardians are involved in these income generation schemes, but we have every reason to believe that it is more than 200 of the local farming community.

- **Project 11 Tree Planting & Conservation in Africa.**

In terms of activity, participating farmers and spread of locations this is by far the biggest of SGG's current projects. There are now several hundred small-scale farmers planting, growing or caring for trees, so it is no longer possible for SGG to count & confirm tree numbers at every location. We are now developing a new strategy which will enable us to make reasonable estimates of growing trees.



This [see above left] is a very common agroforestry strategy using *Grevillea robusta* on the perimeter of small-scale farm plot. In the past the most common tree type around Kitale, Kenya was eucalyptus, but now Kitale Friends Environment Group are promoting diversification of tree species. In this case [see above right] there are several different species in the field but coffee bushes & avocado are the main types. The majority of SGG tree schemes are agroforestry planting similar to the above examples.

Many tree schemes concentrate on fruits which can improve local nutrition and for which there is a growing commercial demand in urban areas. Here [see below left] Bw Eli Kisimbo of Mount Shengena Rotary Club, Same has a plot of more than 150 such pawpaw trees and about 50 bananas. Some tree schemes concentrate on forest restoration where there is some spot-planting of important indigenous species but where the main action is fire suppression & clearance of weeds to allow natural regeneration. Here [see below right] Happy Hammers Sports Club are cutting weeds to encourage more rapid forest restoration near Zomba. These photos above & below illustrate the typical types of tree project supported by SGG in the past and in the future.



During this year's monitoring visit there was considerable tree counting amongst members of the ZombaTreez community around Nankhunda & Nsanama villages. In this location 19,269 trees were recorded as agroforestry planting on 173 small-scale farms. A further 11,853 trees & shrubs were counted in conservation areas where forest restoration is practised. Only 4 weeks were spent in Kenya and Tanzania, so general tree counting was not undertaken unless it was a specific tree type which SGG wants to promote.



Tephrosia vogelii, which can be used both as a natural pesticide & as a soil improver, is one of the species SGG promotes. Here [see above left] a member of CIF near Sioport, West Kenya has 60 such bushes. *Sesbania sesbans* provides excellent fodder. Here [see above right] is a small copse with about 20 such trees near Butula. Although we promoted *Sesbania sesbans* among CIF members, the results were very variable with between 90% & 5% survival rates. Nevertheless, 292 were recorded at this location. We were pleased to note that an estimated 3,500 *Sesbania* has been planted at a new demonstration site near Matayos, but these were funded by the NGO Hands in Hands not by SGG. We hope this will encourage greater local use of this species in the future.

Rehema Kazi has 'a little forest' around her home near Matayos. SGG can confirm that here [see below left] there are 359 trees suitable for carbon capture [i.e. similar to the ones to the left & behind Carole], so Rehema received £70 from a UK rotarian wishing to reduce his household carbon footprint. The prime reason for a visit to the Kilimo Bora group in Machame, Tanzania was to record the planting of *Tephrosia vogelii* and find out how it is being used. We recorded 772 shrubs on the plots of the 29 members. We also recorded a total of 4,138 agroforestry trees, excluding bananas. We noted that most of Kilimo Bora had mature indigenous trees [see below right] which SGG intends to market next year for voluntary carbon capture.



Although very little tree counting was done in both Kenya and Tanzania, SGG is confident that tree projects are increasingly widespread in East Africa. Furthermore, they are not only one of the best strategies for poverty & hunger eradication, but they are also crucial for climate change mitigation. We anticipate that in the 2023 to 2028 period SGG will be able to confirm the planting or growth through natural regeneration of more than 250, 000 trees in either Malawi or East Africa. Furthermore, we believe that the many farmers who participate in such work should be satisfactorily paid for their efforts. Thus, SGG will need to undertake considerable fundraising in the near future.

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

SGG has had an excellent year as far as this project is concerned.

The work done with SCOPE [see <https://www.scopekenya.net>] has already been mentioned as the most impressive single action of 2023, so we would encourage those who wish to know more to browse our website www.sustainableglobalgardens.org.uk

As SGG prepared for a second training visit to ZombaTreez in January there was concern about what damage may have happened to the Nankhunda Demonstration plot, but when I arrived there on 6/1/24 the news was very good. Despite the rather flimsy fence the garden had survived the ferocity of Cyclone Freddy in February-March 2023, and the vegetables there were used to feed the local residents who had lost their houses in the storm. Furthermore, the 5 farmers trained in January 2023 had subsequently spent time showing other villagers how to make double-dug raised beds for vegetable production. There were 29 such beds by January. Members also requested a second Demonstration Plot at the neighbouring village of Nsanama.



The Nsanama Demonstration Plot posed a series of challenges not found at the Nankhunda plot. The site chosen was good for access, but the ground was steep, rocky with clear signs of soil erosion. This stony terrain was not ideal, but as many of the neighbouring farms had similar problems, it seemed worthwhile to see what could be done. Double digging proved to be a laborious task with the need to remove many large stones [see above left]. As the ground was steep it was necessary to terrace the slope & use lines of vetiver grass to reduce erosion. One small area where a raised bed was planned had a large slab of rock just below the surface, so it was used instead as a site for the compost heap. Here [see above right] compost is prepared by: a) collecting & chopping maize stalks; b) adding manure to the maize together with any ash & Tithonia leaves available; c) covering the layered mixture with soil; d) watering the heap; e) then covering the heap with a plastic sheet to retain moisture and speed the process of decomposition. Low soil fertility is a major limitation on food production, so compost making is essential for sustainable land use and food security. After a week's work 10 women had constructed 8 raised beds & planted them with tomatoes, made terraces, made a fence of local materials, planted 10 banana stems & 3 pawpaw as well as 15 Tephrosia seedlings. The women involved & SGG thank Mrs Downton for funding this development.



The best garden news at ZombaTreez was that the trainees at the Nankhunda Demonstration plot in January 2023 had taken initiative and constructed 29 raised beds within their community. Here [see above left] is one of them with a mixture of tomatoes & kales. At a meeting of Nankhunda Transformation leaders on 29th January a quick survey was made concerning these raised beds. The 9 questioned had between them 15 such beds, all of which contained 3 vegetables, with tomatoes, rape, & ‘chinese’ being the most common. Within these 15 beds there were examples of 13 different vegetables. Such variety is an important step to improving local nutrition levels. They are also a sensible strategy for adaptation to a changing climate as these vegetable can produce a harvest in 3 months whereas maize is usually 5 months.

While much of SGG’s attention has focussed on kitchen garden & permaculture in Malawi and at St Dennis Libolina School, the 11 OVC groups in Busia continue to flourish. Here [see above right] is the kitchen garden of Mukwano. Last year SGG were disappointed with the limited progress in this garden, but this year we can confirm that they had a large plot of sukumawiki – sufficient to feed their orphans for several months.

There have been some activities during this financial year when progress has been slow or absent, but when all the projects are considered together we think this is probably the best year in terms of impact since SGG was founded in 2005. We can therefore look forward to the coming year with reasonable optimism, although we shall need to maintain the same or an increased levels of funding.

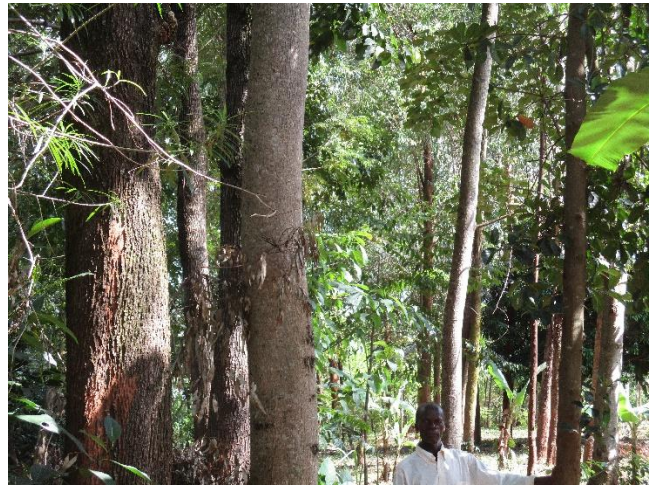
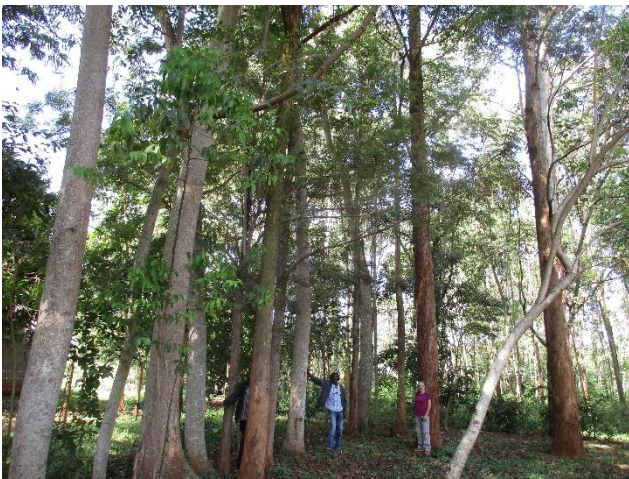
FUTURE PROSPECTS & RELATED ISSUES

If one examines the full portfolio of projects described in recent Annual Reports, it is clear that SGG is now paying more attention to the implementation of project activities in Zomba District, Malawi. This is entirely justified by the fact that Malawi is one of the economically poorest countries in the world, and it has been SGG’s policy to give priority to the poor whenever this is practicable. Most of the countries below Malawi in HDI rankings are in a state of war, political instability, or environmental collapse, all of which make project implementation very difficult with the limited resources available to SGG. As the latest Human Development Index data ranks Malawi as 172th out of 193 states in the world, whereas Kenya ranks 146th, it is reasonable to increase SGG’s efforts in Malawi even if this means less time spent in West Kenya.

A second factor has encouraged greater attention to Malawi. The Rotary Club of La Haute Vallee de l’Aude has taken an interest in SGG’s Malawi project: funds have been raised and more than 15,000 euros pledged to support both tree and permaculture work. Much SGG time since my return from Africa in early March has been devoted to the preparation of documents & grant applications as we seek to secure funding for a budget in the region of £50,000 which will be spent over the next four years.

Those who wish to know more details of the SGG-ZombaTreez project are invited to read Appendix 2: ZombaTreezProgressReport[4.4.2024]. The activities mentioned there will all be included, we expect, in a future Rotary project where SGG is a key partner.

If there is a second trend of growing importance in SGG's project portfolio it would be climate change mitigation by funding African farmers to keep already mature trees for carbon capture. SGG is painfully aware that all our development efforts over the last 18 years could be in vain if climate change is not limited. Previously we have noted African concern about climate problems, and now we have started addressing this issue in practical terms. By the New Year 2024 SGG had secured funds of £1,506 specifically for carbon capture. We also have a list of farmers with at least 50 trees suitable for carbon capture, but it will be next financial year before agreements are made and payments transferred.



Here above are just two examples of trees grown by small-scale farmers in West Kenya who are members of one of SGG's 11 OVC groups. Many of these trees were planted about 2015 as part of the Treadom project. Both of these farmers are now receiving revenue from those trying to reduce their carbon footprint. SGG does emphasise though that reduction of CO₂e emissions is the essential activity of everyone if climate disaster is to be avoided.

Thus, there are many signs of progress towards our fundamental aim of global poverty & hunger eradication, but also many problems which we continue to face. With such a context, 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, and SDG No 13, which is climate action. My best wishes to all of you.

Paul Keeley
30th May 2024