



Trees 4 Life

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Helping people to help themselves

The Trees 4 Life project is an ambitious and visionary programme that looks at strategically creating food security and an income for communities, individuals and families. The project looks at sustainability and profitability so that families do not merely eke a living from the earth on a day-to-day basis but can generate enough money to send their children to schools and varsities, regain their dignity, have a better standard of life and a better future.

Background

In Africa in general and South Africa many of us have been conditioned to be consumers who only buy our food at the supermarkets and have now forgotten or have been socialized to forget to grow our own food. By so doing we have forgotten our link to the earth and how to make the earth feed us just as she has been doing from the time that humankind came into existence. The commercialization of life has created patterns that are unhealthy for both the earth and ourselves. Some of the patterns and habits subconsciously make us do things that are counterproductive and break the positive cycle of the earth re-nourishment, and the vital link between Humankind and the earth. For example we take seeds, vegetable peelings and skins that should naturally go back into the earth, place them on plastic bags and dump them in toxic underground dumps or dump fill site. The dump sites kill the seeds that at one stroke deny us, and others, a natural food source that nature provides to meet our needs. This also denies the earth the nourishment it needs to grow food and feed us and thus this places us at the mercy of supermarkets or the food industry. People say there is no food; there is enough food it's the lack of money that creates the lack of food not food itself. It's also the relationship we have with the earth that shuts out our food supply because of our poverty of thought and the lack of ideas. There is a laziness

of thought or a forgetfulness of the earth as our nourisher, and us its protector, that leads to this situation we find ourselves in.

In South Africa there are many projects that aim at the amelioration of conditions around poverty but the project looks at breaking the very cycle of poverty in keeping with global norms and governmental thrusts. The project is aimed at engaging poverty at all levels and has a programme of actions that builds communities whilst giving them both purpose and hope. The Project works on the economies of scale and aims to create sufficient scale and scope to change the economies substantially rather than just feeding someone and keeping them in the same condition of poverty.

Currently the thrust is staged and aimed at growth and will work in stages or phases

Phase 1

1. give seedlings to communities or the vulnerable
2. teach them how to grow them
3. teach them about markets
4. teach them about products that they can supply
5. uncover the processing aspects
6. create linkages to local markets
7. create seed banks

Phase 2

1. create cooperatives
2. enter into processing or add value engagement at a higher level
3. increase economies of scale by combining resources eg products and land
4. access chain stores or export markets
5. product escalation and multiple offerings eg chickens and goats

Phase 3

1. create abattoirs and packaging plants
2. create community markets

3. create value chains and distribution networks at the higher end of the market

The philosophy underpinning the project is to use-a-seed-to-produce-a-forest and as such create a catalytic chain reaction that creates food for everyone

What can you do to help

1. adopt the programme and run it in your neighbourhood
2. help with training
3. help with infrastructure (land, human power, distribution networks)
4. provide seeds
5. provide seedlings
6. help finance or sponsor something
7. become the market and buy from communities

What are the benefits?

1. Linkages will be created between people and the earth
2. A better value system will emerge that makes us appreciate the earth
3. More career choices for the youth as they understand nature and how it works
4. Income generation businesses and jobs
5. Less dependency on stores
6. More consumption of organic foods
7. Healthier lifestyle
8. Independence
9. Dignified existence

Growth and the challenges of growth

Whilst the project is easy to do whilst it is small soon it will become the victim of its own success and will need office space, land and labour to work efficiently and deliver on its goals and objectives.

This is not my project but your project and it is you that can help people help themselves

Thanking you

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