

Wild Coast Capacity Building by SWC

SWC continues to invest in capacity building amongst rural communities along the Pondoland Wild Coast, with the belief that it is only by empowering people with suitable resources, networks and the capacity to make informed decisions about their future, that equitable human development can take place. Two recent exciting capacity building events that SWC networks helped to arrange were participation by Wild Coast locals in Gen-Afrika Eco-village and resilience education, and a vision building and cultural heritage appreciation workshop undertaken by SWC as part of SWC's local capacity building Innovations Programme. Reports of these events follow:-

Nokwanda's eco-village and resilience building visit to Egypt and Findhorn

In the last week of November, Nokwanda Langazana, one of SWC's key community development facilitators and young community leaders, received a sponsored invitation to a Gen- Africa symposium taking place in Egypt sponsored by funding from German foreign ministries. The invitation was for people who have previously done Eco-Village education (EDE). A few days later she received an invitation to a course called 'Transition to Resilience' by the Findhorn Foundation in collaboration with Gen-Europe, to take place at Findhorn eco-village in Forres, Scotland, at the beginning of December. This is her report of her experiences.

" I jumped at the opportunity though I was worried that I might not get the visa as there were only days to apply for the visa, so I went to Pretoria and applied for priority service and my visa application was processed and finalised within 3 working days. I travelled 27 hours to get to Findhorn, from mini bus taxi from Port Edward to Durban, then by plane to Dubai then to Glasgow, and then a long train trip Forres. I had a bit of challenge when I arrived in Glasgow airport, Scotland when my bank card didn't want to work whilst I needed money for the meter tax to the train station and train ticket to Forres. I was very nervous as I was 5 and half hours away from Forres but after a bit of prayer the last machine accepted my bank card. I travelled in cold mid -winter of Scotland without any sleep, being the only black African I saw.

In my arrival I was impressed by the warm welcome I received from Kosha Joubert (President of GEN) and Robin Alfred (Chair of Trustees, Findhorn foundation). As I was freezing on my arrival Kosha lent me her jacket and several pair of socks that I used the whole time I was in Scotland.

Training

We registered on Saturday and introduced ourselves. I felt very small on the first day as the room was full of very experienced, knowledgeable people who are high profile where they come from. We were a small group of 16 participants; 9 men and 5 women from different parts of the world. We did several exercises which helped us feel at ease and made us feel a full part of the group. These are some of the exercises.

The Journey of the hero

This is talking about the call; on what makes you start doing what you doing. It has 8 steps as follows

- The Call- On was to ignite a fire which made you believe in what you are doing

- Crossing the Threshold- this is about meeting the guardian someone who believes in your call and is willing to support you
- Building the Fellowship- this is about allies, mentors and magical instruments that keep you going
- Exploring the World- this is where you meet success and failures; and what you doing is acknowledged or criticized
- The Belly of the Beast- this is a time of facing the supreme ordeal; a time of real fear where key people disappear and one lives through painful moments (In this phase some people die physically, or emotionally, some doubt their call or give up). This is also the stage where the call is tested, whether it is really your call or you just do it .
- The Magical Flight- this is the time where you decide to return (This is where you come up with more courage encouraged by something such as a previous newspaper article , the award you received, or a motivational speaker, or even remembering why you started in the first place)
- Resurrection – Integration and forgiveness. (In this phase you step to the next step, forgive people that failed you or you accuse for your downfall. It's a time of hope and finding peace)
- The Return- Sharing the gift (This is a time of expanding, your gift is ready to be produce fruits that are useful to your surroundings; a time to shine)

This exercise help me to realised that my work is not just work, but it's a calling to serve which is tested in order to reach the stage of producing fruits.

Truth Mandala

In this exercise our facilitators Kosha and Robert set up the room whilst we were still on break. They divided it into 4 round sections, or 'rooms' by a rope. These sections were as follows;

- Stone- In, where there was a stone with a paper written Fear. In this section you talked about all your fears in life in a deeper sense.
- Hard stick. This was a room of anger. When you entered there you talked about whatever makes you angry, releasing all your angry emotions to the stick.
- Empty bowl. This is the room of loneliness where you realise all the inner emptiness ,the gaps you have in life, how deeply you feel inside about emptiness and loneliness.
- Dry leaves, a room of pain and sadness. When you enter you talk about what has caused you pain, things or people you have lost or things that keep you sad.

This section was very emotional as people shared things with deep trust and confidence in group members. We were granted larger breaks than usual to find the person to share one on one, or take the walk in the forest by yourself or even go to relax or sleep in your room. I discovered that that there are places within me I never visited but I got there on that day.

Inner critic/coach exercise

This exercise is where you listen to the voice that is holding you back in your life. This voice is called inner critic. The opposite of this voice is the encouraging inner voice that is called inner coach. The inner coach says positive words you want to hear when 'inner critic' is criticising you. We did this exercise practically using people to represent both voices. When this exercise was done I got so much courage to pursue my dream.

Coaching Processes

In this exercise we paired into two, then one person asks you some questions about what you want to do, how and what's holding you back. This exercise gives time to think and find hidden answers within you.

Dreaming Circle.

This looked at finding the steps of doing a project. It is done by putting four spaces as follows:-

- Dream- this is where you decide what are you going to do, with whom and how?
- Plan- this is when you put your dream into plan; finding resources to make your dream possible, finding people to support it, or who are interested to a dream
- Doing – this is the implementation period
- Celebration- time to celebrate your success. This point was emphasize because they said many people do not do celebration after their success, as a result they don't feel they have done something (and end up losing courage of what they are doing)

Through this I discovered the importance of planning

Presentation

One of the key learning areas was doing an effective presentation. I learnt that effective presentation starts with a story of self, followed by a story of us(inclusion of people) and goes on to a story of others (on how should everyone be involved and be included?) We learn this through the speech of President Obama after winning first elections.

I also learnt about elevator speech- this is how you shorten your presentation if you have to pitch your project in a period of 2 minutes (Our facilitators said this type of presentation is very useful when you meet a funder who is interested in your project rushing to his/her business meeting and only interested to listen to you for 2minutes)

Key things to say in this presentation is the place where the project is to be done, what are the challenges in the area, what is your project about (or how your project is going to address the situation), what you need to make it happen and what the person you talk to can help with.

Each of these questions is answered with one short sentence so that the whole thing fits in 2 minutes.

The story of Findhorn can be found on www.findhorn.org

The overview of being in Findhorn

I was very happy to be in that eco-village. I liked their vegetarian food, and the way the community related to each other made me think that is what we are gradually losing in my community; the sense of being the community, sharing food, sharing songs and having more dinner together. The whole course was very informative. I enjoy every moment, even the fall of snow on me for the first time. On Saturday we left Findhorn – Scotland for Egypt where GEN-Africa symposium was going to take place.

GEN- Africa Strategy Symposium

The aim of this conference was to make GEN- Africa visible by bringing together many people who attended EDE in previous years, so that proper documents to guide this organisation with design and council can be drawn, together with an advisory board being elected.

For more information please see:

- Global Ecovillage Network <http://gen.ecovillage.org>
- Global Ecovillage Network Europe <http://www.gen-europe.org>
- Global Ecovillage Network Africa <http://gen-africa.org>

I was pleased to meet Africans from different countries as I never have a chance to relate well with other Africans, which made me realise that we share the same challenges.

I was impressed by the development made by Sekem people where the conference took place. They are very independent; I say it because they have built their own school, they plant most of their food in which they also process and sell. They produce their organic food from tea, coffees, juices, honeys etc. For more info you can visit SEKEM <http://www.sekem.com> . It indeed blows my mind to hear that they have created more than 1200 jobs for the local community excluding farmers who produce plants to be processed to be a finished product. I felt so privileged to be invited amongst and being amongst so many people who has done visible change in their community, which made me gain more courage to continue with community work.

I find out that eco-village is not something new but is how our traditional villages use to practice for many years, just added some technologies on it.

We came back with invitation for individuals, CBO and NGO who are interested to be part of Global Eco-village network building resilient communities. This is not a one man show but can only happen when same minded people think together. The above websites explain it all.

Thanks for all of you for your support to make this trip successful, I feel blessed to have you by my side”.

SWC/ DGMT Innovations Programme at Noqhekwana (Poenskop)

Report by programme coordinator Sinegugu Zukulu

We had a fantastic time running a workshop near Post St John's this past weekend at Noqhekwana, also known as Poenskop. This was part of SWC work on the DGMT funded Innovations Programme (IP). We facilitated a workshop which involved two villages (Mtambalala and Noqhekwana). There were 10 people from each village. The group was mixed with women, men, and youth, though the majority were young people.

The first session required each member of the group to come forward and present two photographs of what they have identified as something very close to their heart and significant for the development of the community. It was indeed a very exciting session with members of the community coming forward presenting their ideas, which included amongst other things: farming and working on the land to produce their own food and selling surplus produce, making of crafts to sell to tourists, sewing as a business, Education and training (skills development), discouraging alcohol abuse amongst the youth, encouraging the good behaviour and getting rid of ill-discipline amongst young people, looking after the environment; etc.

The second session focused on culture, looking into what has been lost over the past five decades or so. This focused on food, crops and traditional attire. All these discussions really moved the people and got them wondering what could be done to revive that which has been lost which is still valuable to the lives of the people today. The outcome was that people of these two villages would like to hold an information day or cultural open day during which they will show or exhibit their traditional dishes that are no longer available today. The purpose is to revive this knowledge and transfer it to the young people of today to learn from their heritage.

The proposed open day will take place at Noqhekwana/Poenskop village near the sea. A committee of four people has been setup to start organising this event locally. The date is the 22 Feb 2013, which is on a Friday so that schools may be invited to attend. The committee is going to approach the municipality and request to be sponsored with a big marquee (tent) with chairs and tables that will be housing the exhibition stalls, if weather is not permitting. A nice spot overlooking the beach will be identified to pitch the tent. The members of the community participating will dress in traditional attire, prepare traditional dishes and bring produce for exhibition on the day. The people present attending the event will have an opportunity to pay a nominal fee of about R10 to test the food.

What they are requesting (sponsorship) for the event

- Publicity (marketing),
- Media coverage on the day,
- Sponsorship for transport for Mtambalala people to be able to transport their food to the coast (R4000,00);
- A tent in-case the municipality does not come on board,
- Chairs and tables for exhibitors.
- Any other suggestions will be welcome to help this become a success.

