

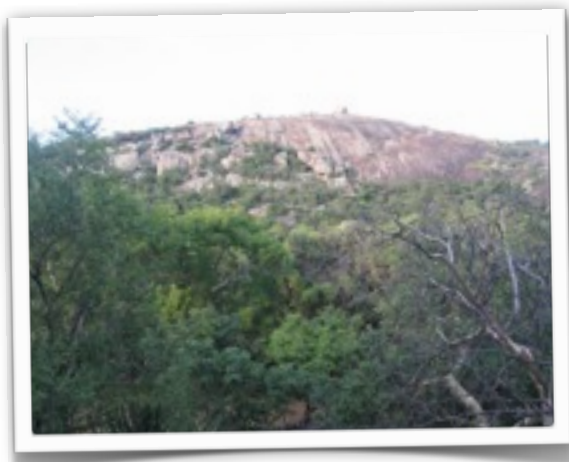
What are we Learning?

An Enquiry



into where we are now.

Why are you here?



“I grew up loving plants. I always planted something wherever I lived. Its natural, its as if its been waiting for me. I never liked tablets and I would experiment with plants without being taught. It really drove me to be here naturally. Although I knew about this place (Kufunda) I didn't know what it was. But what brought me here was learning. I had to value life. My young brother became sick and when I advised him to get tested he was already infected with Aids. I asked him to live with me, but he just left us. I couldn't sleep and I sacrificed my job to come and stay with him. That's when I came into this community. As a result of me taking my brother to the clinic I was referred by the sister in charge to come to Kufunda to try herbs. And it felt like the right place to be. Melanie, Sophia, Auntie Emma welcomed me and improved my brother's situation. I really believed in the magic within plants. My brother already had full blown aids and it was too late for him. But I realized that treatment with herbs earlier on would have been more beneficial and can really save people. I didn't want to see this also happening with others. I said 'let it be only him that this happens to.' So I really had this connection, and the passion to integrate ourselves with the plant world, and the environment.”
Daiton

“I've learned how to live with others and how to communicate with other people. About other cultures, about people who are not from Zimbabwe. I used just to live for my own self, never thinking about other people or helping other people. I just wanted enough for myself. But here I've learned to share. Whatever we have we need to share with other people.” Ticha

Why are you doing this work?

Ticha

I just fell in love with this work from the very beginning. The way how we nurture the natural environment. How we like to respect other people, why we want to change the world. It's kind of wounded. We are trying to heal it in another way which is simple and natural. And through some of these teachings that we got here, looking at our roots etc, its something I never thought of in my being and in my growing up. It gives us a way back and a way forward... what fruits are we going to bear in our lives.



Patti

When I grew up I was so clever but I didn't go to preschool. And there was a man who used to put me on his lap. It scared me. I didn't want to see him. But at the time I didn't understand what was going on. But when I was a security guard at Hampton I saw kids being raped and abused. And also child labour, because especially here on the farms children are being forced to go and work for money. So this gave me an incentive to get going and to make a safe space

for the children. And I want to let people know that you can start from nowhere. I started under a tree, but now we have this beautiful classroom and we are still kicking!

Lorraine

Since I got involved in Kufunda, there have been a lot of changes in my life. I got out of being stuck in my own world. When I came to Kufunda there was this sense of being together, working together as a community. The philosophy of ubuntu... a person is a person because of other people. And... because I'm getting a living out of it.



Sikhethiwe

Its to earn a living. Its to live in a healthy way physically and mentally. Being in a community that cares makes you healthy and peaceful. I think Kufunda is rich because everything is here healthwise, the toilets, the herbs, the chance to share and talk. People in towns don't have this chance. There is a spirit of oneness.

What do you Know?

Silas

Permaculture has become part of our everyday life. When looking at the different principles of permaculture.... for example that one element serves two or more functions..... that's how we are at Kufunda too. We don't just do one thing. And this has made us grow as individuals and as Kufunda. We are working with nature rather than against it. Diversity is a principle which applies to permaculture as well as to Kufunda. We are different in many ways but we have managed to live as a community serving each other.



Admire

How to observe. What works and what doesn't work. I've been learning about this piece of ground. For example now that we have built natural habitats for creatures I am learning to watch the lizards. If you come in the afternoon and just walk in you won't see anything. But if you sit and be quiet and wait you will see the lizards at work. And we have noticed a reduction in the pest population.

Ticha

Before I came to Kufunda I was living in a shanty town... where we used to cut down a lot of trees not knowing that we were destroying our eco system. So I've learned that we should be taking care of our environment. We used to throw litter everywhere not knowing that this makes a mess and that some of these things can be recycled and turned into something else. Where I grew up we had no toilets and I've learned here about the composting toilets.

Although I don't practice things like meditation etc I've seen that its really useful to our lives. Sometimes you need to think presently. You need to focus on the present and not always be far away. And even with communities, like with the rural people, where we grew up from there was no strong bondship, no strong relation between people. But here I've learned that we must be one family living in our communities. We need to go back to the ways of our ancestors *nimbe*, sitting in the *dare*. Here we sit in the circles and hear everyones voice. At times in other villages there is only one voice that is heard. And here we are trying to solve things as a family and to work out solutions together. All these things help us to live a better, more respectful life



Anna

I have learnt how to look after the kids at school. Also about Psycho Social Support. I know how to identify kids who have been abused. And many practical things

Fide

I have learned to be grounded and to take myself as a tree, just knowing that I am there to serve myself but also to serve the others as well. I have learned things about the art of hosting, about the flow game and how to care for others in the communities as well. Right now I find whenever I go into the communities, I'm on better levels with those people. Also practical things like making bokkens, hosting a group of people, eco building. I know most of the work to be done on the building side. Also how to overcome some problems. ... I think I have gained strength compared with how I used to be before.



Stephen

What I have learnt since I came... I now know myself. I have some practical skills, compost toilets, bee keeping, sweet potato growing, stoves, eco buildings. I have learnt different processes - about the art of hosting, deep democracy, also the tree of life. I have seen that I am also capable of being able to work in communities, or working with youth. That is the foundation of my life. That is what I discovered about myself.

Lorraine

What I've been learning is about finding my true north. Really seeing where I am, where my passion lies and how I can contribute and be in service. And also this philosophy of being in the community, being with other people, how I react, how I accept others. I've also learnt what it really means to be honest. There's a lot I've learnt, in administration especially in communications and information. Facilitation, working with youth. I feel the process beginning that is within me now.



Daiton

The list is endless, identifying herbs, how to use them, how to grow them, to facilitate on what I have learnt. The processing of wild fruits and herbs, how to add value to whatever foodstuffs I have, clinical part – education for life counseling, hiv/aids, community development work, community transformation courses, helps me to cope with what I am doing because it involves me in what I am doing, leadership, project management courses related to what we are doing.

Sikhethiwe

I've developed the skill of deep listening. The skill of co-ordination. We have learned how we can host in a better way. We are confident of managing our place, the workshops. The other day Patti was saying that when she is here she doesn't think of herself as HIV positive but when she goes out there people discriminate. Living in this community has helped me to accept everyone whatever they are. Also about sharing and being in a community that cares. Sometimes we have negatives but there is this strength of understanding each other.

Allan

Mostly I've been developing a sense of what it means to be in sustainable living. And I've been in a state of constant learning, absorbing things that are valuable. And learning who I am. The motivation and urge to be a facilitator came from being in different conversations. I feel like wow. And I was surprised to find that I was holding these things. That I actually knew what to do. For example in L.A I was able to put some of this into practice, introducing the talking piece, the circle talk, showing people what we do at Kufunda. I've learnt how to connect people how to put them in touch with other. I'm motivated by that exposure. This cleaner earth thing is a new thing for Kufunda but it's something I'm longing for. I was inspired by the trip to Denmark. I got motivated by renewable energies, and now I've experienced different workshops and even I've co-facilitated around renewable energies.

Patti

I have learnt a lot. More things about how to play with kids, especially the little ones, through look and learn visits. I have also managed to know who I am..... through visiting different places, I have grown up in my passion, also through encouragement from others. I feel myself with youth and children. You can survive with what is around you, you can make your own life without leaning on someone. Meditation helped me to release stress, has made a big impact on me. And it was great to go to India. Very strong for me.

Tsitsi

I've been learning so many things, but especially sharing....if I share it makes me know what else other people are facing. . Whatever happens to someone... when one of our Kufundees gets in trouble everyone just stands up. For example when Allan's mother was attacked and about to be robbed, Fide and all the security guards went there. We have that one spirit. Sometimes we quarrel of course, but we are like one. When it comes to problems we have this spirit of being one even though we sometimes quarrel.. But we love each other in our heart. We are like a family when bad things happen to us. I know about coping, budgeting, shopping. Also the heart of feeling for someone. If someone is in trouble I really feel it.

Sophia different workshops on food processing. .. sweet potatoes into powder, scones, moringa, I know the value and am growing it at home. Counseling...I have learned how to facilitate, how to talk to people and to help them to use the herbs especially the exotic.

What is your Ground?

Sophia

My foundation is based on being open, especially about my status. It helped me to help myself and others at large. There is light in being open. Once we started disclosing people started to point out useful herbs. So now I can help myself with herbs. I know how to look after myself. Even when my mother was bitten by a snake the knowledge of herbs helped. It feels like it was meant to be. Health from herbs comes first. And being dependent on herbs.



Sikhethiwe

I believe in God. My future lies in him. And in being in the community of people who support me. So sharing and getting advice makes me strong and gives me hope. Also my family, having a husband means I have someone to share with, I don't have to hold something on my own. Lifewise...I think together with what we have been planning it also gives us hope, even though we have some other challenges. My life is starting to grow within

a new family and its becoming different.

Ticha

In a way what's keeping my ground is my family that's here. We have built this village. I'm one of the pioneers of this place. We really need to follow it through, to see what is the goal that we have achieved.



Daiton

My foundation is the love of humankind

My ground

Tsitsi:

When you are holding something which is tough, you are relieved when you share with someone else. When Talents father passed away I was not working, so even though I was into Christianity and I was praying I didn't have hope. But when I came here to Kufunda and did the youth programme I got more strength because there was more chance of sharing stories and sharing problems. Sharing gave me hope. Also what gives me strength is also when these structures were changing in December I was not okay but after sharing with other people, I started to realize that something good can come out of something which feels bad at the beginning. There will be a future in front of us.



Allan

Understanding that my passion is to work with the youth, is to work with youngsters, is giving me my ground. What we are learning we are taking into our own work. I am finding a way to use what I am learning to sustain myself and to help Kufunda.

Silas

Meditation. Being Silent. I've learned patience. Patience with myself, with others, working at the pace of nature. You can't hurry it.

Admire

Aikido. Being grounded, focused. The practices help keep us grounded and helps to keep the focus. It also helps us to understand how to take care of the land. How to use the things that are available, the resources and wealth we have already. We are collecting manure from Sikhethwe's chickens, grass from the fields. There's an integration and an interdependence.



What is the system you are working to change? What is the system you are hoping to create?

Sophia and Daiton

We want to help ourselves to utilize the resources that we have, through the use of herbs and nutritious food to maintain our health. We want to encourage people not to look down on traditional food – which is in fact much more nutritious food than many foods people see as 'modern'. People look down on it instead of realizing that in fact things like margarine are poisonous to our systems. We can serve ourselves by not eating food that has been sprayed with chemicals and fed with fertilizers. We want to help shed light to others.



We need to own our own means of health. If we have our own piece of land that we can live off without using fertilisers etc. If we don't own our own place it is hard to escape from processed food. It's a challenge to make people aware of what is in the food they are eating. How do we publicise this? The big corporations have access to the media and advertising. How do we compete with for example, the coca cola budget? We start with the idea of people owning their own space. They can make their own juices which are nutritious. We want to help people become aware of the nutritional and medicinal properties of herbs which can help us stay away from the doctors. Prevention is better. When I look at my kids and my family, most of the time we use our own remedies, and we only go to the clinic for extremes. During the holidays for example my daughters were not well and after I treated them with the medicines that we process here, they were up and about in a couple of days.



Admire and Silas

We want to have no waste in our system. We are working on closing the loop. The grey water from the kitchen is feeding the bananas. We are using the mushroom waste and manure from the chickens. We are working now on the water harvesting system. So everything that comes in feeds the system, the circle is complete. We are working on allowing no plastic into the village because its hard to recycle. We want to look at how we use and appreciate different gifts, and make the most of our talents. Use

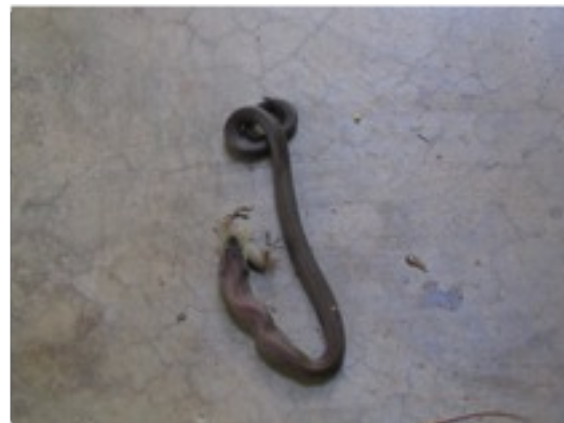
what we have. The garden is a living example of how we want to live our lives. If we can translate those principles of no waste, of recognizing and using the wealth and resources we have from the garden to our lives at Kufunda, we have a system which makes sense, which can provide enough.

Fidelis and Stephen

Fide "This is a learning centre...where there is a chance of exploring myself and where there is a chance of trying new things. This is a demonstration centre. So there is room to try new things. So where I am going is to try and empower myself at the same time as empowering others, and also having an open space where we can do this. I want to be able to earn a living from those things which we are doing, so we can be a good example. Its about learning to generate wealth with what we have. Wealth and wisdom. Also it's a place where we can invite new ideas, a place of exploring new things."

Stephen "I'm still open to new things and hoping to be more grounded in the eco buildings. What drives me to keep on these buildings is the way I see Kufunda as a learning centre. When I look at the life people are living....it costs a lot to build a house and people spend a lot of time raising the money for cement etc. This is a way where people can build simple houses."

Fide.... Its something to do with the Rastafarian way of living Its about love... for everything, even the nature. How best do we communicate with the nature. So we think of the communication we have with different animals, different soils. About living naturally."



Sikhethiwe and Tsitsi

Sikhethiwe "Yes the changes are there and its good to change but sometimes it might be too much. There is a danger of losing focus. We need to be clear what Kufunda is showing the way to."

Tsitsi "Its like a weaning process. We want to see whether the kids are growing up ok. Are they ready to think by themselves? By waiting...that's when we see.. If he's able to do by himself then let him do." *Sikhethiwe* "The way I see Kufunda myself.... where we are going right now... Is that we are heading towards sustainability. We need to fill the gaps so that we can all move together and grow together."



Lorraine

Right now I'm spending most of my time in Seke, in the community. People were seeing me from a different angle. I feel theres an impact.. still on a small scale, but I feel like I'm making a difference. I went to church... and actually used the deep democracy methodology to help people really see what was within their hearts. So I felt that I was able to help people make a decision that was really theirs and not just coming from a wish to please the important person who was present.



Patti and Anna

We want to develop a way to help our community to learn and to expose those who don't know much about what is happening outside. And there are different types of learnings here at Kufunda, gardening, herbs... all sorts of things.



Allan

Something about the whole monetary system. When people work just for money they lose their creativity. Sure I need money but I don't want it to be my primary reason for doing something. I want to look at things with a positive eye. I noticed when I was in Germany... people were surprised that someone like me was coming from Zimbabwe. The main media portrays us as so hopeless. There is no story about all the good things people are doing. All the strength. I want to be able to tell those

stories too. Look through the positive eye. Also I am holding the media side. There's a story about Africa. And I like to be in the company of artists. To design things in an artistic way.

Ticha

We have lost much of our culture. We are trying to bring that back, to be one, just to be in good relationship. A lot of things have changed globally. Our ecology has been destroyed and we need to see how we can re birth it.

On my own I cannot do it. As a village or as a family we can try and have solutions together.