



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

" Participants in TGC will benefit immensely from IT/Connectivity as a whole new world will be opened to them. They'll acquire computing skills & have instant access to appropriate agricultural information. They'll also be able to communicate & share food growing ideas with friends Worldwide & learn about markets & other important factors affecting agriculture. "

Dr. Joe Kwarteng

Professor of Agricultural Extension, University of Cape Coast, Ghana & TGC Ghana Coordinator

GROWTH & CHOICE...

WORK TOGETHER,
BRINGING SUSTAINED
FOOD SECURITY &
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



IN SCHOOLS...

TGC ENABLES YOUTH TO BRING HOME FRESH FOOD & CONTRIBUTE MATERIALLY TO THEIR FAMILIES. IN THE RURAL DEVELOPING WORLD, THIS ADDS VALUE TO EDUCATION & ENCOURAGES FAMILIES TO KEEP CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS LONGER

CULTIVATING FOOD, CONNECTING MINDS, HARVESTING HOPE

THE GROWING CONNECTION IS A GLOBAL NETWORK OF YOUNG FOOD PRODUCERS WITH ACCESS TO THE INNOVATION AND INFORMATION THEY NEED TO IMPROVE NUTRITION AND BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY.

IN THE GROWING CONNECTION, YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD USE PROVEN, AFFORDABLE FOOD-GROWING INNOVATIONS TO GROW HIGH-VALUE PRODUCE. THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED, VIA THE INTERNET AND ICTS, TO EACH OTHER AND TO VITAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE.

OUR CHALLENGE...

Over 800 million people live on less than one dollar a day and depend on agriculture - *the land, nature, the seasons* - to feed and raise their families. Access to information - *on what to grow, the weather, pests and disease and new technologies* - can be the difference between a successful harvest and failure. Equally important, growers need price and market information to negotiate fair returns. Unfortunately, most of these 800 million lack access to information and the means to share knowledge.

OUR SOLUTION...

...in **THE GROWING CONNECTION**, is **GROWTH** and **CHOICE**. **GROWTH** is the production of highly nutritious vegetables using innovative, intensive horticultural methods. **CHOICE** is opportunity derived from access to information and communications.

WATER-EFFICIENT, YEAR-ROUND FOOD PRODUCTION

Central to TGC is the EarthBox, a proven breakthrough in growing high-value produce in areas of poor soil, water and space availability.

The EarthBox relies on an innovative nutrient and water gradient system. Soil is not depleted and no chemicals enter the water tables.

The EarthBox is low-cost, low-maintenance, uses local inputs, and consumes one-fifth of the water of in-ground drip irrigation.

BRINGING NUTRIENT-RICH CROPS TO REMOTE PLACES

JALISCO, MEXICO: In the remote mountain community of Haimatsie, youth and families participating in TGC are using EarthBoxes and hoop houses to grow nutritious leafy greens – fresh and on the spot, within weeks of planting.

Families at Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya also benefit from the water-efficiency and portability of the EarthBox.

Use of the EarthBox has immediate positive nutritional impact for people otherwise unable to farm or to purchase food. This includes the landless, urban and peri-urban dwellers, HIV/AIDS sufferers and disaster victims.



AT A GLANCE...

- **THE GROWING CONNECTION WAS DEVELOPED BY THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS.**

- **SINCE 2003, TGC HAS SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SITES IN 9 PILOT COUNTRIES:**

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
GHANA
JAMAICA – IN 2006
KENYA
MEXICO

NICARAGUA
SENEGAL
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
UNITED STATES

- **TGC IS READY TO REPLICATE & SCALE UP THE SUCCESS OF ITS PILOT PHASE INTO NEW COUNTRIES.**
- **FAO HAS PLATFORM PROJECTS FOR POTENTIAL EXPANSION OF TGC ACTIVITIES IN OVER 100 COUNTRIES.**
- **TGC'S BOARD OF ADVISORS IS CHAIRED BY VINT CERF & DR. MARC CATHEY. THE BOARD INCLUDES LEADERS FROM THE IT, HORTICULTURE, EDUCATION, HEALTH, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT SECTORS.**
- **TGC IS BASED ON PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, COMMUNITIES, NGOS & BUSINESS.**

- **OUR PARTNERS INCLUDE:**

AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS,
CHICAGO
BALTIMORE MAYOR'S OFFICE
EARTHBOX
GARFIELD PARK CONSERVATORY
CORNELL UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
DAVIS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR
SCHOOL FARMS, GHANA
UNIVERSITY OF GUADALAJARA, MEXICO
SELVA NEGRA FUNDACIÓN, MEXICO
A.C.E.S, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
UPLIFTMENT JAMAICA
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CLUBS
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

PLEASE CONTACT US

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" I have learned how to grow & care for vegetables like cabbages, carrots, garden eggs, tomatoes, green peppers & so on, without using chemicals on them. I was happy to learn because I know in the future I can get a job from it. "

Bernard Arko
School for the Deaf,
Cape Coast, Ghana

CONNECTING YOUTH IN THE DEVELOPING & DEVELOPED...

...WORLD. YOUTH COMMUNICATE & COLLABORATE AS PEERS, SHARING WHAT THEY GROW & HOW THEY GROW IT. THEY PULL DOWN RELEVANT INFORMATION, CONTRIBUTE PLANT GROWING DATA & SHARE SOLUTIONS, IDEAS & SUCCESSES.

NEW INCOME-GENERATING OPPORTUNITY

THE EARTHBOX ENABLES PARTICIPANTS TO GROW HIGH-VALUE PRODUCE OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE, TO UTILIZE TRADITIONALLY UNSUITABLE AREAS & TO EXTEND THE GROWING SEASON, EVEN INTO THE DRY SEASON.

TGC PARTICIPANTS GAIN NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR YEAR-ROUND INCOME GENERATION & VALUE-ADDING.

A SMALLHOLDER FARMER CAN EARN HIGHER RETURNS SELLING PRODUCE DURING THE DRY SEASON, OR AN URBAN DWELLER CAN GROW ON A ROOFTOP TO SUPPLY RESTAURANTS WITH SPECIALTY PRODUCE.

Cultivating Food, Connecting Minds, Harvesting Hope

The Growing Connection

The Growing Connection Project Ghana

P.O. Box UC301 Cape Coast, Ghana; Tel. 233 42 37596 & 233 20 8134762

Summary of Activities (January – December 2005)

(Note: The activities listed below exclude routine visits to schools which are carried out on a continued basis.)

January—February

- TGC Teachers' Meeting (Jan. 10). The meeting discussed progress and problems facing school farm projects and ways to move things forward.
- Local IT providers were taken to all TGC sites for inspection and study to enable them develop proposals aimed at bringing internet connectivity to schools for TGC activities. These proposals were forwarded to TGC in USA for evaluation.

March

- Simultaneous International Teacher Training (SITT), March 5.
22 teachers and principals of 5 schools in the Central Region were given an overview of The Growing Project which included: Review of Project objectives and presentation on record keeping, training in assembling and setting up of EarthBoxes within the layout of a school farm/garden, tour of an established school farm, training in internet communication and use of TGC website, practice of chatting with partner teachers.
- EarthBoxes were added to participating schools to bring the number in 5 schools to 20 Earthboxes each.
- EarthBoxes were set up and planted at school for the Deaf.

April

- Setting up and planting of EarthBoxes at Flowers Gay School
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) students from USA work in TGC projects
- Denkyira Students undertake field visits to Growing Connection project site at Cape Coast School for the Deaf

May—June

- Setting up TGC vegetable garden (EarthBoxes and planting on beds) at Mankessim Senior Secondary Technical School. Proper procedures and techniques for making vegetable beds demonstrated to all members participating in TGC.

- University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) visiting students continue working as volunteer interns in TGC projects.

July—August

- The School of Agriculture, University of Cape Coast (UCC), attaches a student intern to TGC project. The student is trained and begins working making several routine and training visits to TGC project sites.
- Field trip by Mankessim Sec. School to Cape Coast School for the Deaf
- Fencing of Mfantisiman Girls Secondary School Garden and planting on beds. Replanting of EarthBoxes.
- Visit by Rotary Club/ Aggrey Memorial Secondary School (AMSS) to DASFA/TGC office and training site at Cape Coast school for the Deaf to observe how it all fits within the school farm system. Visit to Cape Coast School for the Deaf. 3 teachers from AMSS and 1 teacher from St. Aquinas School, Accra.
- Harvesting and sharing of EarthBoxes produce at Flowers Gay Schools. Students make and enjoy sandwiches with a portion of the produce from the EarthBox garden.

September—October

- Ida participated in TGC Planning Meeting in Washington D.C. and visited Seaton Elementary School Washington, D.C. where she participated in resetting of EarthBoxes in School Garden and planting of lettuce.
- Webcast between Flowers Gay School, Cape Coast and Seaton Elementary School, Washington, D.C. as part of TGC activities.
- Inspectors from the Ghana Education Service Directors—Mr. Odoi and Mr. Ackaah—visit two TGC schools as part of assessment of school farms for farmers' day awards.

November

- Approval of TeleFood proposals and commencement of Rabbit and water storage project at Cape Deaf School for the Deaf and Mankessim Senior Secondary Technical School.
- Aquinas Senior Secondary School approved to participate in TGC activities. Training for Aquinas postponed because of scheduling difficulties.

December

- Completion of TeleFood Project. Water storage system added to support TGC activities at the School for the Deaf and Mankessim Secondary Technical School.
- Sharing of farm profits for students of Cape Coast School for the Deaf at the end of a Parent-Teacher Association meeting.

Activities planned for 2006

1. Expand the scope of TGC activities to completely include St Aquinas Secondary school and Odorgonno Secondary School in the Greater Accra region and expand activities to new schools in the Central Region.
2. Continue to search for and engage local partners to support DASFA and Growing Connection Activities
3. Support new schools with vegetable seeds and small livestock when means allow
4. Continue to improve existing agricultural enterprises in all TGC schools
5. Build capacity of TGC Agro-Youth Clubs in schools through leadership training
6. Organize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training for all TGC Agro-Youth Clubs
7. Continue to explore the issue of internet connectivity for schools
8. Build networks and linkages with other youth-related NGOs and school groups who would like to incorporate TGC activities into their programmes and who have the financial means to support their activities
9. Formally request a site at the University of Cape Coast Technology Village to mount an EarthBox demonstration.
10. Hold TGC meeting of Heads of Schools and participating teachers
11. Facilitate exchange visits among participating schools
12. Continue to encourage teachers in Ghana involved in TGC to engage more with partner teachers in the USA through regular internet café visits.
13. Get important personalities in the country to visit TGC project sites.

Steps for TGC Project Implementation

- 1. Identify and formally engage local partner institution**
 - a. Local NGO, University, FAO Country or Regional Office
 - b. Agrees to coordinate site participation, including
 - i. Identification of and ongoing communication with project sites
 - ii. Identification of institution/individual to conduct local horticultural adaptation trials of inputs for the EarthBox
 - iii. Arrange logistics for physical installation of project
 - iv. Arrange on-going horticultural and IT training for participants
 - v. Engage local resource points including horticultural experts, marketing and information services, local IT firms or NGO's focusing on rural connectivity, local Internet Cafes
 - vi. Monitoring and evaluating
 - vii. Fundraising, where applicable
- 2. Secure funding**
 - a. Corporate, Foundations, Rotary Clubs, Universities, NGO's, Individuals
- 3. Begin local adaptation trials to find low-cost, no-cost planting media, fertilizers and other horticultural inputs for use with the EarthBox.**
- 4. Identify participants**
 - a. Criteria dependent on country, but will include
 - i. Location – Accessibility of the village
 1. Location in terms of on-going training and evaluating purposes -condition of roads, etc.
 2. Location in terms of rural connectivity – existing IT connectivity, line of site considerations, proximity to networks
 3. Location in terms of demonstration purposes – Is the project visible and accessible to the greater community
 - ii. Commitment of Participants
 1. Community leaders, school officials, local extension agents, students and families
 - iii. Needs of the community
 1. Nutritional, educational, financial, general health
- 5. Project installation**
 - a. Ship Boxes from USA
 - b. Production of instructional and training material in local language
 - c. Arrange for horticultural inputs, including the planting media identified in local adaptation trials. May also include polytanks for water, greenhouses, water pumps and other inputs.
 - d. Planting and training sessions at sites
- 6. On-going horticultural training**
 - a. Identification of local resource and information institutions and individuals
 - b. Introduction to the community of the resources available
- 7. IT Installations**
 - a. Identification of NGO's, local IT companies, etc. working in rural connectivity
 - b. Creation of connectivity strategy for access to connectivity for identified sites. *Has included using Internet Cafes or local institutions rather than wiring each individual site.*
 - c. Procure required equipment
 - d. Physical installation of IT
 - e. Initial training and orientation session
- 8. On-going IT training**
 - a. Includes basic computer training, Internet research, record-keeping and databases, online communication using forums, email, instant communications, web casts etc.