



## SEED's Urban Greening Programme

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### Executive Summary:

SEED (Schools Environmental Education and Development) works at transforming learning environments through Permaculture. SEED has grown out of the harsh Cape Flats Primary School Environment and has now established a national permaculture schools programme that is being rolled out across the country. The program supports curriculum integration of environmental education, and the development of school gardens for healthier, greener schools. In addition, SEED conducts Accredited Permaculture Facilitator Trainings and other environmental career pathing initiatives.

SEED's Urban Greening Programme is a new programme to expand environmental awareness and to bring the benefits of greening to the broader Cape Flats community. We aim to plant thousands of trees and windbreak hedgerows for shade, fruit and ecological habitat within Cape Flats settlements, and, through greening, to mobilise a community conservation ethic.

The Cape Flats are an expansive, low-lying flat area, situated to the south east of the central business district of Cape Town. Described by some as 'apartheid's dumping ground', from the 1950s the area became home to people the apartheid government designated as non-White. Race-based legislation forced non-white people out of more central urban areas designated for white people and into government-built townships in the Cape Flats. Today the Cape Flats has become home to much of the population of Greater Cape Town.

From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape\\_Flats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Flats)



**The Cape Flats as marked by the black circle: A critical greening opportunity.**

The Cape Flats is a vast area of beach sand that has accumulated over hundreds of thousands of years. The area has a Mediterranean climate, with warm dry summers and cool, damp winters. It is generally exposed to the wind, both from the NW (winter) and SE (summer). Flooding can be a problem, especially in July and August. Cold, wet spells, especially in August and September, can make life very difficult for those living in sub-standard housing. The beach sand, wind and water make for extreme conditions for human living and for growing plants and food. In addition the

Cape Flats is fraught with extreme social conditions characterized by unemployment, gangs, substance abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, high school failure rate, teenage pregnancy and poverty.

### **SEED's Urban Greening Programme:**

The programme will visibly beautify Ward 81 in Rocklands, Mitchels Plain, City of Cape Town through the planting of 2500 trees and provide entry-level training for the community on How to Plant, Care For and Value Trees. The programme will add considerable value to the quality of life and civic pride of the people of the Cape Flats with a broader objective to motivate, inspire and mobilise a grassroots conservation movement linked to and supported by SEED'S Rocklands training centre and National Schools Permaculture Programme.

The initial drive of our programme is focused in Mitchells Plain which is the community surrounding the SEED offices and training centre in Rocklands on the Cape Flats. The programme works to initiate development and empowerment of the community via greening education & tree planting.

The programme will initiate a greening programme in ward 81 that supports the environment, creates job opportunities, improves social and environmental health, and boosts the general quality of life for the people of Mitchells Plain.

Greening disadvantaged suburbs helps to improve the standard of living of the communities in newly developed, often barren, post-construction RDP housing villages. Urban Forestry helps to meet the needs for food and shade while providing aesthetic, calming and healing benefits associated with nature. Creating green lungs in cities helps to reduce global warming, carbon emissions and dampens noise. Trees contribute greatly to the biodiversity and quality of life of a city.

The project will contribute to the development of the Cape Flats by providing the following short and long-term benefits:

- Planting of at least 2500 fruit, shade and windbreak trees and shrubs in homes, community organisations and schools.
- Employment and training of Urban Community Foresters in basic environmental skills and awareness to build their capacity to communicate and mobilise others around the importance of trees and how to maintain them.
- Beautifying Ward 81 as a model for sustainable urban greening and ecological restoration, demonstrating urban habitat creation, soil conservation and reduction of water run-off
- Empowerment of local environmental groups and SMME's.
- Establishment of an edible fruit tree & food forest
- Planting of hedge row windbreaks to help control wind & dust, and mitigate noise & pollution
- Provide an aesthetically pleasing and healthy environment for the people of the Cape Flats
- Environmental awareness and the creation of short-term jobs in the environmental field on the Cape Flats.
- Establish a Greening office in Ward 81 of the City of Cape Town at SEED's Rockland's Training Centre
- Raise awareness for the necessity of urban greening and its economic, environmental and social benefits through involvement of local government and community based organisations in this campaign.

## SEED Track Record:

In the past nine years, SEED has delivered a diverse range of outcomes, from developing curriculum for environmental education and green entrepreneurship (4 text books, a series of posters), to the design and installation of robust food gardens in schools across the country and the development of Accredited Applied Permaculture Training. Our methodology is based on a design system for sustainable living and land use called Permaculture that teaches a new breed of environmental ethics, with care of people, care of the earth, and sharing of surplus at its core.

## Programme Aims:

- To plant at least 2500 shade, fruit trees and windbreak shrubs for private family households, public facilities including libraries, clinics, police stations, & schools, as well as trees for public open space.
- To train and encourage the community in basic tree care and the value of greening, and mobilise them to dig holes to plant trees on their homesteads.
- To develop a well planned urban forest as a lasting legacy for the people of the Cape Flats improving the quality of life of the historically disadvantaged population in South Africa by adding value to people's homes and communities.

## Project Implementation:

The starting point is to engage with the community residents to assist them in developing their own 'green plan' for their neighbourhood. Mobilising and developing a core group of Community Volunteers– including youth and women, who will receive basic education and training related to the greening initiative will achieve this. The aim for this group will be to understand environmental issues, promote community conservation and contribute to environmentally sustainable urban services through the provision of planting materials, awareness and education programmes. These volunteers, known as community foresters will then link to the broader community, facilitating a pathway towards urban and community greening that incorporates climate change mitigation and the promotion of sustainable development.

The Cape Flats Greening Project contains elements of urban renewal, capacity development, community upliftment, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It will supply trees and training to community members, promoting the planting of trees in residential homes in order to spread the responsibility of maintenance, to build environmental awareness, and to develop a sense of community pride and ownership for greening activities.

The **training** will cover topics such as where to plant trees on a property, how to plant a tree and how to efficiently maintain the trees for optimal growth, survival and productivity. The training will also cover the social, environmental, public health and economic benefits of trees. Concise resource materials in vernacular languages will be developed to communicate these simple but essential environmental messages.

A public notice will be distributed to recruit the Urban **Community Foresters** who will be responsible for facilitating the programme within their community. The Community Foresters will receive basic training on trees and urban reforestation, and will be provided with skills to help facilitate community meetings and mobilise community action.

The Programme manager will co-ordinate with the Ward Councillors to arrange events where they can educate residents on the importance of trees and other introductory environmental issues, such as waste management, grey water re-use and recycling. Residents are then provided with trees over 1 metre in size and given on-site support from the Community Forester and Programme Co-ordinating Team to upgrade their own homes. Community members will also receive training on how to set up home gardens and be provided with seed and compost to assist them.

All participants receive educational materials on the following topics: collecting and utilising domestic grey water to water the trees, soil stabilization and environmental regeneration at

individual households. The core groups of Community Foresters will be responsible for further program marketing and transferring skills and greening into the extended neighbourhoods. The community members who will be benefiting from the program will do the implementation and planting.

### **Budget:**

The programme has a straightforward budget. With economies of scale, it will cost SEED R 80 per tree to run this programme. With a minimum of 2500 trees to be planted for the initial program, the cost will be R200,000.00.

Included in this cost are the following:

- the expertise and experience of SEED staff trained in urban greening
- a community workshop to recruit and train community foresters
- community foresters working on a street level to get the community to dig holes for trees, pamphlets on how to plant and maintain a tree with sponsors logo distributed to 2000 homes
- T-shirts and caps with sponsor's logo for SEED staff, community foresters and some of the community
- an event and media with the sponsors being recognised and the opportunity for staff to get involved in a community tree planting event
- SEED will also develop and distribute media on the project in partnership with the sponsor

**By supporting the development of the Cape Flats Greening Project, you will help to develop a living legacy forest that will survive in perpetuity while capacitating a community environmental ethic in the people of Mitchells Plain.**

### **Conclusion:**

This project adds value to the quality of life and civic pride of the people of Mitchell's Plain while creating partnerships to provide a replicable model for sustainable urban development. The programme aims to create a highly visible model for urban greening focusing on the Cape Flats as a node for Public Greening and the nurturing of a community conservation movement that initiates a sustainable natural resource management ethic working with and supporting the environment, creating job opportunities, improving environmental and social health and the general quality of life for the community of Mitchell's Plain, the surrounding Cape Flats and the people of Southern Africa.

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