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Introduction

1 • Why a Green World Action Manual

The value and importance of small “environmental actions”

The environment is a popular news item in the media. Often as as yet another alarming headline: Deforestation, an increase in desert land, melted glaciers and destroyed coral reefs.. This leaves many people with a feeling that there is not much one can do to change the course of man and nature.



Children irrigating the vegetable garden at the Farmers Club in Bilibiza

Small actions, however, can have a great impact when many people implement them. This is why this book has been written. The GAIA-Movement wishes to get many people to understand and implement simple systems such as the ones described in this manual. This will not only improve their own lives, but also contribute to preserve and improve their local environment.

To you - the user of the manual

This manual was written as part of the programme “GAIA Activities at Village Schools” - implemented in Central Mozambique and in Angola.



The idea is to give some practical examples of how one can improve living conditions and at the same time protect and improve the local environment. Most of the systems are simple and economical to construct or set up. This makes it possible to carry them out at village schools and in rural communities.

The manual consists of 40 concrete instructions on how to set up affordable systems related to the issues of water, soil, food, waste, energy and nature preservation.

They can be used by anybody interested in creating such systems.

With this manual, we hope to give you the possibility to acquire new skills and knowledge - and thus hopefully change your life and the lives of others to the better. Education can change lives - sometimes even the smallest things can change lives.

We hope that you enjoy using this book. Please let us know of your experiences as we would like to include more systems in future editions.

Contact us

It is a challenging task to describe technical systems on a limited space so that the user can implement them to function well.

Differences in local conditions might also make it necessary to adapt and change some of the elements.

Therefore, you are more than welcome to contact the GAIA-Movement at info@gaia-movement.org to get assistance with specific questions, or to be referred to people who can give you more information.

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www.onlinevolunteering.org

Many thanks to all of you.

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For further information about the GAIA-Movement and our projects, please visit us at:

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2 • Case Stories of Green World Actions

GAIA Activities at Village Schools

We know there is a huge need for such GAIA activities.

In September 2005 we met some of the students from the teacher training college in Chimoio, run by ADPP Mozambique (Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo). They were part of the 60 students who started to implement the GAIA project in Central Mozambique. We met them in a village 40 kilometres from Chimoio. During one year of their education they work as teacher trainees at village schools. Besides teaching, each teacher trainee also chooses a line of community work - of which one is to implement GAIA activities.

Ana was one of the students we met, and she was making slabs for latrines with a group of village people. She told us that it is good to do community work because it improves people's lives in all aspects. When the latrine was finished, the family would not need to go to the bush and would at the same time improve their hygiene.

She also told how important education was to improve the level of hygiene and sanitation, and how they were doing this in the village school and campaigns.

Community development work is not an easy task, as one often faces a variety of challenges. The students we met told how they had overcome some of these difficulties. When there was only cement for a limited amount of latrine slabs, they mobilised 25 families to make latrines with local materials. The slabs were then made with

short poles and good clay. Even though it will not last so long, it is fine for the kind of composting latrine the students were promoting. A new latrine pit will be made after one year, and a tree planted in the old pit.

Another group wanted to start production of tree seedlings, but did not yet have the seeds

and plastic bags. They therefore mobilised the pupils to collect seeds at their homes. They went to the local market and agreed that the sugar sellers should keep the small plastic bags, when the sellers sell the sugar in smaller quantities. In this way they got many planting bags to produce the tree seedlings.

The students were also able to find other local organisations to assist them with seeds and materials.

These examples show that it is possible to start the process of improving lives and conditions in the villages, even with very small means. The crucial elements are determination for change and knowledge.



Protecting the soil against evaporation with grass



Using sugar bags to produce tree seedlings



This Green Action Manual is made to give such knowledge and ideas to people like Ana who have the determination to work on improving lives and environment in their local communities.

We want to see these GAIA activities spread to many more parts of Mozambique and Angola, as well as to many other countries. Hopefully many others will find it useful as a handbook to get ideas, assistance and inspiration.



Irrigating a tree that will supply firewood



Students at the Teacher Training Colleges, EPF Chimoio and Nhamatanda discussing the results achieved in 20 communities



Producing a slab for a latrine of the kind in which a tree will later be planted



Showing how to multiply vetiver grass to use against soil erosion