



www.sendseedstoafrika.org

What we do!

Community members, Organic Grocery stores, restaurants and small catering and banquet halls have been recruited to save non GMO seeds from the vegetables they use. Volunteers are also saving unused utility envelopes and washed out clear milk bags to keep costs down.

This process is cost effective, environmentally friendly and creates awareness. People are not always in the position to contribute financially and are more likely to donate in other ways, such as saving seeds. By doing so, the community feels engaged by contributing to a greater social cause beyond their community's borders.

To begin **'The Silozi Seed Bank'**, will provide approximately 100 vegetable seeds to community members in Zambia. They will be handed out to each participant in the unused envelopes, they will also be provided with a washed milk bag to hand in their interest seeds consisting of 25 seeds. When interest is paid, participants will receive 100 more seeds for planting. Participants must attend a training session on cultivating, drying and propagating seeds for year round growth.

Interest seeds may be from vegetables grown or from fallen tree seeds around their compounds.

The tree seeds collected will then be used for the **'Trees for Elephants'** Program & Nursery. The aim is to begin a reforestation initiative of the surrounding community to reverse the damage from the overharvesting of trees for fuel, timber and elephants by planting quick growing exotic, fruit and local trees. The local trees would be sold to reforest establishments who house elephants. Chilies will also be grown to sell as they are a deterrent to elephants that raid vegetable gardens. At the household level we provide planting tubes and seeds, together with training and monitoring, so that 25 quick-growing trees, like Blue Gum and 10 fruit trees can be grown per household. Quick-growing exotic trees provide an immediate benefit to the community who use the trees like a crop: coppicing the

tree (cutting off the branches for firewood without felling the whole tree), which then grows back quickly to provide more wood.

While these tree seedlings are growing, and the nursery is being maintained, participants will be trained to make compost toilet stands and the proper techniques to be implemented to plant a tree in the pit once the compost toilet is removed. Participants will also be taught how to make fuel efficient cook stoves out of hand made bricks and local clay to reduce fire wood use and reduce damage to eyes from fire smoke. We will also teach participants how to build small shade enclosures to protect seedlings from the hot sun. By providing a variety of seeds initially we are creating interest. The fact that participants have to provide interest in the form of seeds creates accountability. By improving vegetable varieties we improve vitamin consumption, better health and provide an option to create jobs. The training provided will increase community knowledge and facilitate change.

This innovation could grow exponentially if we engage restaurants and other food outlets to save the seeds that would otherwise be thrown out in the cities and towns in Zambia.

- At present we have started the project in Mongu Zambia but once construction of the road from Mongu to Kalabo is completed in 2015/16 we will expand the projects to assist an even more rural client base. Construction of this road linking the isolated Kalabo district to the rest of Zambia and Angola is underway and will bring an influx of travelers along this major route by 2015/16. Kalabo will need trained individuals to support new commerce and trade and a vegetable and tree nursery will be a viable source of food and income. The facility will be both the product of community efforts and the formative source of community change. By providing a vegetable and tree nursery in a central location, the community will have a meeting place for ongoing education and discussion.
- Kalabo district does not have elephants so it is a perfect place to grow the trees that they eat, i.e. the increasingly scarce Baobab Tree and fast growing Acacia tree.
- A local weekly Market is established in Mongu & Kalabo whereby participants can bring their vegetables to sell and exchange any additional seeds and training materials. Based on the last national census conducted in 2010, the population of Mongu is 178,454 and Kalabo was measured to be 132,968. Approximately, 35% of this population is under the age of 5. Better vegetable selection at a young age will decrease the chances of blindness which afflicts 1% of the Zambian population.
- Developing good health begins at a young age. By providing nutritional sources containing high levels of Vitamins it will help to reduce health problems resulting from poor nutrition.
- We will engage local youth and bring Canadian students to Kalabo through a eco-tourism venture to help plant the trees.

- By providing the seeds and requiring something in return, the interest seed, they are in fact paying for the seed. If they learn how to stagger planting, save, propagate and grow seeds they will have a constant supply year round and the project will work to directly benefit both children and adults. See our SEEDS Tree & Garden Planting Guides.
- Both Mongu and Kalabo have access to the Zambezi river system and we will stress the need to supplement their protein diet of fish with vitamins received from vegetables.

We have two generations interested in continuing this project for years to come both on the Zambian and Canadian teams.