

Kufunda Learning Village

Kufunda Learning Village, situated just outside Harare, capital of Zimbabwe, is a place of learning and exploration where we aim to find new ways and recover old ways of living, in harmony with each other and with our environment. The core of our work is with rural communities around Zimbabwe to develop the skills and practices we need to become self sustaining and self nourishing. The principles underlying our work are deeply participatory and we invest in the long term, working towards real systemic change. At Kufunda we believe that we are practicing a new approach not only to community development but to community living - based on a new world view and a different understanding of how life works. This means growing in our sense of connection with Nature and with each other and learning to live in ways which naturally cultivate our capacity to be human.

We are conscious of trying to live our 'talk'- of being a living experiment with community solutions. We are intentional about learning and about exploring ways of being and working together with dignity, respect and grace. In addition we experiment with different technologies and techniques to see what works for us and what might work in our partner communities.

Twenty people live and work at Kufunda. We have built a centre which accommodates up to 28 visitors. We use composting toilets and minimum water. We are exploring alternative energy resources. We practice permaculture gardening and grow vegetables and herbs. We produce herbal remedies and offer health counseling services to the neighbouring community. We have started a mushroom project and are experimenting with producing our own mushroom spawn. We practise different building techniques using low cost local materials and technologies. Our preschool which serves ourselves and our neighbouring community is a rammed earth building. Our herbal processing laboratory is made of cob.

Our goal is to be a model centre where we demonstrate what is possible in terms of practical sustainable living. To this end we are moving towards a place where as far as possible we will generate our own income: by offering our centre as a venue for retreat and healing, for workshops, for inspiration - by offering our services in the practice of the Art of Hosting and as community facilitators, by selling our mushrooms, vegetables, honey and other produce, by producing and selling herbal remedies. At the same time we will continue spreading this practical work and ethic into our partner communities.

One of our focuses in 2010 is on youth in the communities. We hope to provide the inspiration, skill and leadership training to enable young people to take control of their own lives and destinies and to develop ways of sustaining themselves and their communities