

SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL GARDENS ANNUAL REPORT TO TRUSTEES 2025-2026

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

This is the twentieth Annual Report to the Trustees of Sustainable Global Gardens [UK charity reg. no. 1116243]. The document has been prepared for the charity's AGM, which is to be held on Friday 24th April at 23 Sterndale Road, Sheffield at 7.30pm. The report covers the period of SGG's twentieth financial year which ended on 31st March 2026.

The customary approach when writing this report is to look at the objectives of Sustainable Global Gardens as given in the original Business Plan, and then to comment on how far such objectives have been achieved. In the initial Business Plan the five-year target to be achieved by March 2011 was '*the annual raising of £100,000, which is to be transferred through at least 10 & preferably 20 small-scale sustainable projects to poor communities in the Developing World*' so progress could be judged against that long-term goal. As recent SGG Annual Reports have indicated that initial target has never been achieved in the way initially envisaged [i.e. a transfer of £100,000 from the North to project locations in the South]. However, our estimates concerning the annual increase in the aggregate value of trees planted or managed in SGG project sites is well above an annual increased value of £100,000. Of greater importance, SGG is now in informal partnerships with more than several hundred small-scale farmers who are using agroforestry and horticultural innovation to gradually progress out of poverty. Thus, we believe that SGG initial ambitions are being satisfactorily achieved.

Since 2019 SGG has tried to reduce our carbon footprint by limiting our field visits which require long distance air flights to an average of one visit per year. Although this means that this report may sometimes be based on less reliable data, this new approach places greater responsibility on and requires more initiative from our African partners. We regard this as progress because our ultimate goal is to be no longer needed in SGG project localities. Thus, we are pleased to report that SGG's changing role is no longer to initiate and implement development projects but increasingly to respond appropriately to initiatives already undertaken by our local partners.



Here is an example of local initiative subsequently rewarded by SGG small funds to encourage further development of work already started. This field [see above left] contains 133 Hass avocado planted less than 2 years ago. This work was entirely the initiative of Stella, seen to the left of one of her fruit trees. She has responded to a growing global demand for avocado. SGG's first knowledge of this was from a report given by Emmanuel Kweka, our "tree counter" in Tanzania. He is standing to the right of Stella. These trees are already producing fruits [see above right]. Employing Emmanuel means that we can reward tree planting communities over a wide area of Northern Tanzania for their tree projects, which SGG officials do not have sufficient time to visit.

Progress in Africa and increased local initiatives are two of the themes I wish to emphasise in this report, as in the last three Annual Reports. Previously, I have cited FOCUSSA, who are based near Matayos in Busia County, and St Denis Libolina School for the Physically Challenged in Bungoma County as showing exceptional progress. Last year we illustrated the changes being made around Nankhunda village near Zomba, Malawi. This year I shall not illustrate these themes with one outstanding example, but instead provide several examples where these changes are evident.

This report covers the twentieth year in which SGG has been operational. It is therefore a good time to recall our basic aims, core strategies and values. The founding purpose of SGG is to make a contribution to the UN. Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Such hunger & poverty exist in many parts of the world, but these problems & challenges are particularly evident in rural communities South of the Sahara where subsistence & semi-subsistence farming predominates. Our core strategy is to take a participatory approach towards innovation on small-scale farms in those regions where SGG fieldworkers & partners have significant previous experience. Those regions include Western Kenya, Northern Tanzania and Malawi. After twenty years of actions and field experience, SGG now see ourselves as well on the way to establishing a model of rural development which is appropriate for extensive areas south of the Sahara and which can make a major contribution to Africa's 'Green Revolution'. The major features of this model are: an increase in tree cover through both agroforestry planting and forest restoration; attention to the maintenance of soil fertility, a shift from traditional agriculture methods towards more intensive multiproduct farming & horticulture; and increasing local capital by commercialisation of at least one farm product and microfinance schemes. For this development model to be applied on a wider scale, SGG needs to find partners in those above-mentioned regions who have the capacity to implement projects similar to those given in SGG's Annual Reports for the last few years.

As all three regions where SGG operates are moving towards the same model of rural development, it seems more appropriate here to consider each region in turn rather than follow the previous format of considering each type of project.

NANKHUNDA TRANSFORMATION-ZOMBATREEZ-SGG PARTNERSHIP



Several years ago ZombaTREEZ started a forest restoration scheme, with SGG only a recent contributor to this project. In 2019 this [see left] was the state of the lower part of Magube Choir's conservation area – a boulder-strewn valley with few mature trees. This [see below] is the same site in February 2026. Here is a clear example of SGG supporting the initiative of others. A total of 37,800 trees has so far been counted in 16 similar conservation areas.



Within the Nankhunda Transformation-ZombaTREEZ-SGG partnership our focus has been mainly on village lands where small-scale farms dominate. Thus, although much time was spent estimating the trees in ZombaTREEZ conservation areas, more attention was paid to on-farm agroforestry planting.



The strategy to promote agroforestry planting is to encourage each farmer group to establish a tree nursery. Here [see above left] seedlings from Ginny Kagwe's nursery are being distributed to Magube Choir members. Humphrey, sitting & wearing a blue shirt, is from the ZombaTREEZ team and is checking what seedlings are taken by each member. The lady in the white blouse is Ginny's daughter who is also checking. There is a double system of payments here. SGG paid Ginny about £300 for 1020 trees & 95 fruits. Next year SGG will pay the farmers a similar amount but counting only trees which have survived. This means farmers are being paid to take proper care of these young, vulnerable trees – a payment which greatly improves survival rates. A similar tree distribution took place at Chigwandembo's tree nursery [see above right].

In 2026 we almost completed the counting of already planted agroforestry trees. The total counted is now 46,246 located on 438 farms, which compares well with the 27,564 agroforestry trees counted by November 2024. This is yet another case of SGG rewarding local initiative. Counting is often slow work as many farmers already have more than 100 trees, even on small-scale farms [see below left]. One of the main benefits of agroforestry planting is that they can help reduce soil erosion on large fields. However, it is important that trees are planted in a horizontal line, following contours on sloping terrain. Here [see below right] Humphrey is being trained to use an Abney level so that new trees can be planted along the contours.



Another of the main intentions around Nankhunda is to promote horticulture. This has the benefit of improving the local nutrition and also providing crops better adapted to the challenges of climate change. Earlier in this project what was required was the establishment of two Demonstration Kitchen Gardens. These continue to be productive, but the focus now is more on the construction double-dug raised beds which have at least three vegetables planted.



Here [see above left] Nsanama Women's Group are tending their Demonstration Kitchen Garden. They have here a tree nursery, providing trees for the members, and also a successful banana crop. A slightly unusual crop is vetiver grass, which is vital for soil conservation on cultivated steep slopes [see above right], which are common around Nsanama.

Here [see below left] the Nankhunda Transformation team are busy making double-dug raised beds. In 2026 they have already constructed 23 such beds on individual farms to add to the 29 beds prepared last year. The biggest single development here though was the 10 raised beds prepared by a group of Mbedza trainees at their Special School in Namadidi.



SGG firmly believes that one of the most important needs for small-scale African farmers is to improve on farm soil quality. This requires the prevention of soil erosion, by such methods as tree-planting and the use of vetiver grass, especially of sloping terrain. It also requires improving the organic content & fertility of the soil. For semi-subsistence farmers, the regular use of synthetic fertiliser is far too costly so alternatives need to be found. In many rural communities the obvious solution is a reliance on animal manure, but many Malawi farmers lack even this source of fertiliser. Around Nankhunda there appears to be a gradual increase in farmers keeping poultry or goats, but these local sources are far from sufficient to meet local fertiliser needs. This means that villagers around Zomba need to become much more willing to invest dry season time on compost-making.



This [see above left] is a compost heap being prepared at Mbedza's Special School. Everything used [i.e. twigs, tithonia leaves, dry grass, soil, & water], except a bag of manure, was collected within 50 metres of this heap, which suggests this is an innovation which could benefit most local farmers. It is a definite improvement on the traditional practice of burning agricultural waste. Most maize in February is no more than shoulder height. However, [see above right] this farmer has had the benefit of being trained in deep bed farming.

Of course, another aspect of soil improvement is deep-bed farming which improves the aeration and moisture retention of soils, which in turn leads to increased harvest yields. Details of this important innovation can be found in www.tiyeni.org. The accompanying report ZTInterimReport[2.12.25], which is based on information sent to SGG earlier this financial year rather than SGG's recent fieldwork, provides strong evidence of the benefits of Tiyeni method deep-bed farming. However, farmers were reluctant to leave part of their farms unplanted, so there was no space available this year for Tiyeni training.

For those wishing to know more details of recent progress around Nankhunda village, I invite you to read ZTProgressReport[21.3.26].

WEST KENYA

Despite it being SGG's main area of operation for several years, Busia County did not have a monitoring visit from SGG from February 2024 until February 2026. Our concern was whether or not our partners in Maendeleo Mashinani Organisation had managed to continue with projects during this time of indirect contact.



Our main concern was probably the OVC feeding programme, which consumes funds rather than generating new income. Furthermore, it is a strictly unsustainable scheme as it relies entirely on external aid which could finish at any time. Nevertheless, most of the OVC groups wish to continue and even expand this activity. Following the principle of a participatory approach, this action is likely to continue as long as SGG can provide adequate funds. Here [see left] are some Tumaini children eating their lunch, while attentive hens try to steal a few morsels.

The original idea for the support of 500 orphans/vulnerable children in Busia County was to provide one nutritious communal meal per week in an effort to reduce child hunger & malnutrition. Actions within this scheme are now more varied than that. Seven out of eleven OVC groups still follow that customary pattern started in 2006. However, four of the eleven groups have also established schools or ECDC's [i.e. early child development centres] – a local equivalent to our kindergartens/ nurseries. These often provide meals on a daily basis, especially as food is a common attraction to bring poor children into school. One group uses part of their feeding money to pay for OVC fees at schools where daily food is provided.



These are two examples of OVC groups which are based at an ECDC. Here [see top left] is one of the classrooms at Starlight Academy, formerly known as Lonely Orphans. Their vision is to “To enlighten and empower children with life-skills”. The attendance at this ECDC is usually more than 50 children, so SGG is merely making a contribution to a local initiative which was well established before SGG arrived in Busia.

Siguli Centre [see below left] was also established before SGG arrived. They have struggled for many years to find sufficient funds to improve their facilities & quality of education, because very few of the OVC parents could afford to contribute to the cost of running Siguli Centre. Recently, matters have greatly improved because Siguli manage a very productive garden, which enables pupils to have regular meals. Also they have started accepting children, who are not OVCs, from fee-paying parents. If you examine photos from SGG visits a decade ago, it is easy to see the considerable progress made by Siguli Centre.



This programme was started in 2006 and the original undernourished orphans have long since left. We have wondered whether this programme should come to a timely end and have discussed this with the women who organise the weekly meals. Most seem to want to continue, even expand the programme, so we intend to follow those wishes. There is one group, nevertheless, who are willing to finish their OVC feeding scheme if those funds could be transferred into their table-banking scheme. This may be a way forward in the future.

Most community groups managed to table bank in April 2025 at the very start of this financial year. The local contribution from 10 groups to these income-generation schemes was Ksh 429,000/- [approximately £2,500], whereas the contribution from SGG to support these schemes was Ksh 175,000/- [£1020]. These figures illustrate once again that development is driven by local initiative & action, while SGG role is merely that of a supplementary funder. The total profit after 10 months was recorded as Ksh 660,040/- [almost £4,000], even without three from ten of the groups reporting figures for income. There is sufficient evidence, nevertheless, to indicate that table-banking can be an extremely useful strategy for poverty alleviation. At the end of the year none of these participants are rich, but they can see that table-banking enables them to make sufficient progress for this to be popular and sustainable.

There was significant variation in what each of these groups chose to do in order to generate additional revenue. Three groups practised pig-rearing, two kept poultry, while one group had a combination of pigs & poultry. There was also variation in the amount of income generated, with Lonely Orphans group recording as much profit as all the other groups put together. Previous SGG reports had mentioned how successful this group's goat scheme, but in February the chair of Lonely Orphans explained the basis of this success. Apparently, each female goat can produce 4litres of milk/day. Milk sells at 120ksh/litre so 12 goats can produce a potential income of Ksh 5,760/- per day [c£34]. Some of this goat milk is used to feed children on 2 days/week, thereby encouraging a great improvement in child health. A market for sales includes those who are HIV+. Goats are fed on locally available plants like napier grass, caliiandra etc so there is no need to buy feed & production costs are kept low. Members share out monthly takings, but always keep 20% in the account. Goats give birth twice/year. Kids are given to members or sold at Ksh12,000/- for a 6 month old kid. This is clearly a very successful income-generation project.

There was insufficient time during a very brief visit for SGG to be involved in tree counts. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence allows us to suggest that there will be more than 10,000 trees to count next year in this area, so this will be a priority action for 2027. In February 2026 only one site was visited for monitoring.



Rehema Kazi has restored a small forest on her land [see left]. This is important for local biodiversity, but also as a carbon sink. She has more than 300 trees sufficiently large to be part of SGG's carbon capture scheme [see below], and she receives funding annually for maintaining this 'crop' of mature trees.



The other activity sponsored by SGG in this project is kitchen gardens. For the last few years each OVC group has had their own communal kitchen garden. For this financial year the value of vegetables consumed during OVC meals was Ksh 222,200/- whereas commercial sales produced an estimated Ksh149,300/- The total revenue from these gardens was Ksh 371,500/- which corresponds to approximately £2,160. There is still much to do and several improvements to make with these kitchen gardens, but there is a gradual shift away from a diet dominated by ugali.

A new development concerning these fruit & vegetable gardens is the promotion of such in every member's home plot. There is still only one home-based kitchen garden which is found on Macbeth & Leonida's farm. This garden produced crops worth Ksh26,400/- [£150 approx] for home consumption and commercial sales. The plan to have many more such individual gardens has led to a permaculture training course at Mundika during the last week of this financial year. At the time of writing we have not yet received reports & photos of this important event.

TANZANIA

For the 2025-6 financial year our efforts in Tanzania have concerned tree projects only. These are all located in North-East Tanzania between Arusha and Same districts.



Around his family home in Machame Emmanuel Kweka, who is SGG's tree-counter in Tanzania has been recording thousands of trees. Many are *Grevillea robusta* [see above left], which is a multipurpose agroforestry species often planted along the borders of fields. Some farmers concentrate on fruits [see the avocado plot in Machame on page 1]. On these slopes of Kilimanjaro SGG is trying to encourage the preservation of mature, indigenous trees [see above right] by voluntary carbon capture. 50 such trees will absorb more than 1 tonne of CO₂e each year. SGG is looking for donors willing to give £10 in exchange for 1 tonne of CO₂e being preserved in such tropical giant trees. Here [see below left] a banana plantation is found in the grounds of a home for former street kids. One of the best places for fruits is within a kitchen garden. Here [see below right] avocados have been planted within the vegetable garden of Mailisita Secondary School, near Moshi



FUTURE PROSPECTS

For the last few years progress in Tanzania has been confined to tree projects, where progress has been more gradual than developments in Malawi and Kenya. This may well change in the coming year. Our tree-counter Emmanuel now has new invitations well away from Machame, so we anticipate the need for much greater payments in the future. There are also possibilities of some new actions concerning kitchen gardens, WASH [water, sanitation & health] projects, and natural pesticides – any of which would diversify SGG’s Tanzania portfolio.

The above possibilities are, of course, dependent on securing adequate funding. In recent post-Covid years SGG’s annual revenue has been above £30,000. In 2023-2024 total revenue reached £38,488. The following year it was £36,612. However, in this 2025-2026 financial year total revenue fell to £23,417.38p, despite the high figure of £5,217 being raised through two sets of local contributions being deposited for table-banking. There is a clear reason for this sudden loss of revenue in that for much of this year SGG had more than sufficient money for project activities in Malawi, so did not need to fundraise further. Unfortunately, much of the funding previously committed to this project was subsequently withdrawn, leaving SGG finances low. Thus, it is essential that SGG restarts a rigorous campaign as soon as possible if current possibilities and dreams are to come to fruition.

In this last section of the Annual Report to Trustees, I wish to thank all those who have contributed to the progress found in SGG’s various projects in 2025-2026. It has been a real joy for Carole and myself to witness African partners starting new initiatives, taking on new responsibilities, and enjoying the benefits of their labours. May this long continue!

Paul Keeley

SGG Managing Director

7th April 2026