

**ROLE OF TIKONDWE
FREEDOM GARDENS IN
AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATION WITH LOCAL
SCHOOLS AND GLOBAL
PATNERS**

▶ ***" ENVIRONMENT IS THE BEST PROFESSOR. IT HAS NO MOODS, AND PROVIDES WHOLESOME LESSONS. COOPERATE AND DO NOT COMPETE WITH NATURE. ALL IS THERE IF ONLY PEOPLE CAN LEARN TO SEE. WHAT IS REQUIRED IS NOT MORE LESS PAIRS OF HANDS, BUT AN INCREASED EFFICIENCY OF THE CURRENT PAIRS OF HANDS, BACKED BY BRAINS THAT ARE WILLING TO EXPERIMENT."***

▶ **LATE DR CHINKHUNTHA'S OWN WORDS.**

{1944-2007}

1 . HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 HUMBLE BEGININGS

- ❖ As late **Dr Glyvyns Chinkhuntha** believed, so do we that a simpler life, less dependent on money, but rich in all that one needs to lead a healthy and happy life, is possible for everybody in Malawi, and beyond.
- ❖ **Tikondwe Freedom Gardens (TFG)**, set off on **1st May 1982**, with an initial investment of **MK100 (then USD5)** on a small piece of land measuring **100m²** . From those humble beginnings, TFG has expanded to **10.81 ha**.
- ❖ Since the beginning of **Tikondwe Freedom Gardens**. The farm is not money based, but life based as it is based on a healthy ecosystem. Therefore all production systems are environmental based.

- ❖ TFG practices Permaculture which is an acronym derived from the word Permanent Agriculture/Culture. So it is a way of living.
- ❖ Permaculture is also referred to as Sustainable Agriculture/Farming.
- ❖ Permaculture is a system of farming that uses indigenous knowledge and utilizes the understanding of the ecosystem process along with the scientific technology.
- ❖ It is a holistic approach towards nature in that it takes care of every aspect of the environment.
- ❖ It is a system of farming that takes care of the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation/compromising the future from meeting its own needs.
- ❖ This is the system of farming that is permanent, because it maintains the ecosystem such that what is used for the present generation is also used for future generations.

- ❖ The idea of TFG was originally conceived by the father and founder, late **Dr. Glyvyns Chinkhuntha**, & **Mrs. Chinkhuntha** out of concern for two main basic needs, these are:
 - Food Sovereignty & Economic Welfare for his family and the extended family circle.
- ❖ Tikondwe Freedom Gardens literally means let us be *free* and *happy*.
- ❖ The owners are from Mzimba district of the northern region of Malawi.
- ❖ The initial (100m²) land was asked for in 1981 from village headman Chinkhwiri in Dowa district. The implications of these are twofold:
 - Firstly late **Dr. Chinkhuntha**, as an outsider, was given marginal land (no one usually gives cream land to an outsider).
 - Secondly, TFG was established on marginal land. The upper side of the farm was severely degraded with gullies all over the place, and the interior was also not good in its original form because it was wholly swampy and full of reeds.

- ❖ From the humble beginnings, he wanted to win TFG from dependence on industrial or external inputs; hence TFG is the result of persistent and systematic trial & error for carrying out indigenous environment conservation practices to reclaim 10.81 ha.
- ❖ It has over time become the hub of food production throughout the year in an environment that is fragile & susceptible to environmental degradation & soil erosion owing to growing population pressure on the land.
- ❖ As a service to the community. TFG never turned back a job seeker on the farm especially for food for work, because this becomes a moral obligation to assist the individual to alleviate hunger. The farm has provided work for food to more than 200 people from the surrounding community, especially for the past years.
- ❖ TFG extends its services to huge communities around it and the local region. It has also become a training center for Permaculture (natural farming) and a national as well as regional focal point for regional Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM).

5. SOCIAL IMPACT

ESTABLISHMENT OF NANGO VALLEY WOMENS ORGANISATION

- ❖ The group was established in 1996 to augment the effort of TFG & to promote hygiene & sanitation around the homes in the catchment area of TFG, and to promote attainment of abundant food as well as nutrition security & economic welfare.
- ❖ The women in the group are involved in income generating activities such as;
 - ✚ Bakery
 - Poultry production
 - ▣ Catering services to patrons visiting the Gardens
 - Village Savings & Loans
- ❖ The group use the farm's premises & products free of charge.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MIDLAND ORGANIC GROWERS ASSOCIATION

- ❖ The association was formed in 1996. The farmers got trained & inspired by the late Dr. Glyvyns Chinkhuntha; hence they trained in organic production by undertaking experiments on the farm & sharing with Dr. Chinkhuntha.
- ❖ Their objective was to produce & sell organic products, and they had so far secured a market for their produce.
- ❖ However, the group is no longer in operation with the passing away of Dr. Glyvyns Chinkhuntha.
- ❖ Plans are underway to revive the group.

FORMAL TRAINING

- ❖ Tikondwe Freedom Gardens has offered organic farming training to many people from different parts of Malawi, many of them have ventured into farming as business.

INFORMAL TRAINING

- ❖ Villagers have been informally trained on farming through casual labour & permanent employment. Some of them have graduated into full time farming (self employment) and are assimilating TFG organic practices & system of farming.
- ❖ Villagers have started farming both upstream & down stream of TFG as a result of casual employment on TFG.

EMPLOYMENT

- ❖ TFG employs local & regional labour both for money & food.

SELF EMPLOYMENT

- ❖ Villagers buy TFG products on wholesale price for resale; this creates self employment & economic welfare for the villagers.

TIKONDWE FREEDOM GARDENS IS INVOLVED IN THE FOLLOWING

- ▶ **MOBILE SCHOOL**
- ▶ **TRAINING & TEACHING**
- ▶ **STUDENTS ATTACHMENTS**
- ▶ **STUDENTS GET TOGETHER**
- ▶ **DONATIONS**

MOBILE SCHOOL

- ❖ **Freedom Gardens has been involved in local Primary School Agricultural Education about Sustainable Agriculture in partnership with Virginia Tech. in a project called Mobile Malawi Project (MMP).**
- ❖ **MMP connects schools & communities to address issues related to teaching about sustainable agriculture in the Malawi Primary Schools.**

- ❖ **The goal is to develop an instructional multimedia that draws from indigenous knowledge, to be shared widely with educators, students and community members.**
- ❖ **MMP uses mobile technologies as primary data collection & delivery platforms.**
- ❖ **Lessons are taken from mobile curriculum.**
- ❖ **The teacher asks for knowledge on the lesson to be covered based on mobile curriculum and the learners are involved in practicing the lesson.**

THE FOLLOWING IS THE CURRICULUM

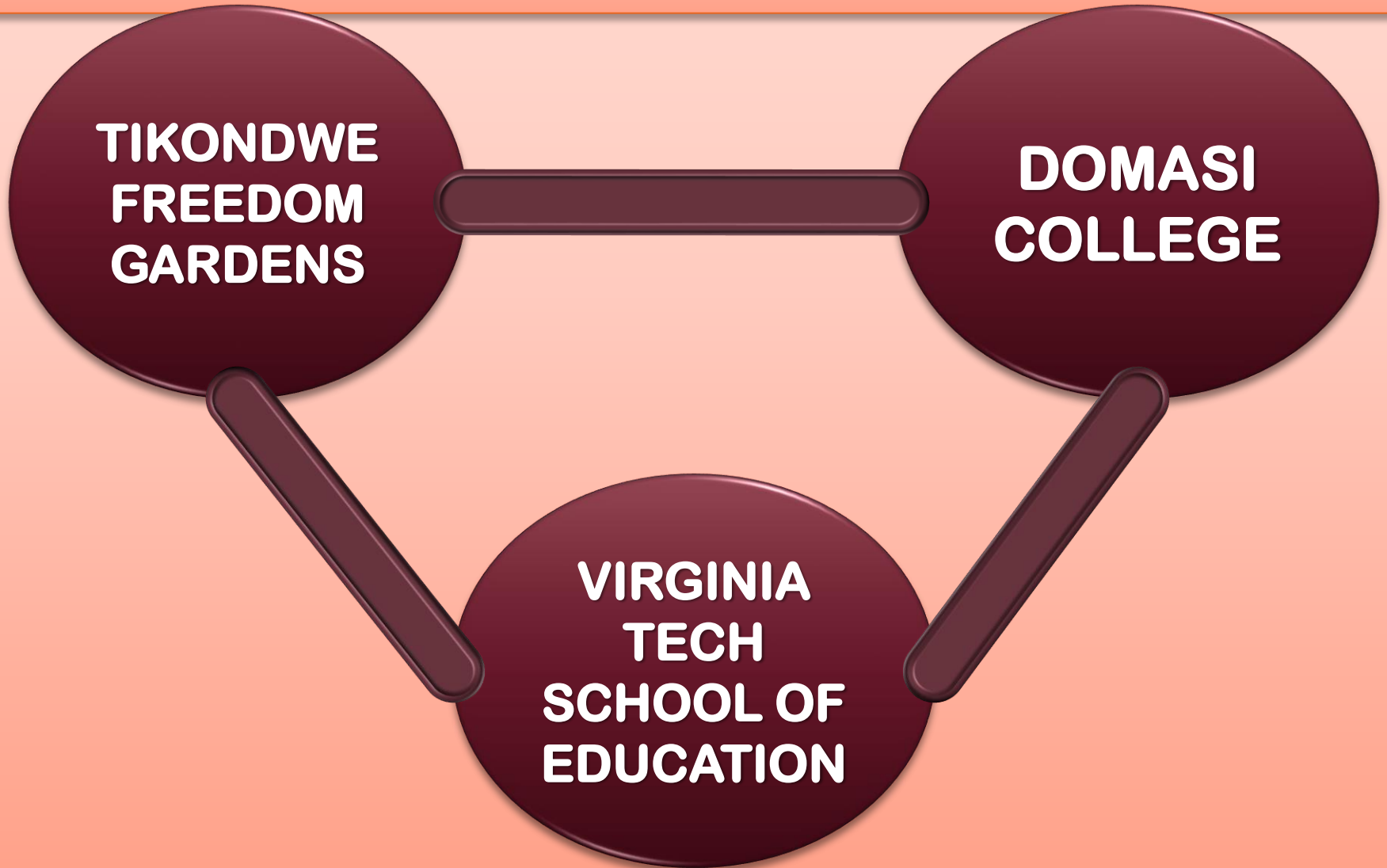
- ❖ **FURROW IRRIGATION**
- ❖ **SUNKEN PLOTS**
- ❖ **COMPOSTING**
- ❖ **PEST CONTROL (Integrated Pest & Disease Management)**
- ❖ **GARDEN PLANNING**

PROJECT SITES

**TIKONDWE
FREEDOM
GARDENS**

**DOMASI
COLLEGE**

**VIRGINIA
TECH
SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION**



TRAINING & TEACHING

- ❖ **Tikondwe Freedom Gardens offers Sustainable Agriculture training to local & international farmers, and schools for primary, secondary & tertiary education students.**
- ❖ **The students attend a class on Sustainable Agriculture before they are engaged to practice in the garden.**
- ❖ **The training offered is practical.**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON STUDENTS & PROFESSORS ATTENDING A PERMACULTURE CLASS.





**FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (SWITZELAND),
PRACTICING RESIDUAL INCOOPEATION.**



**HAVEN MODERN ACADEMY STUDENTS,
LEARNING GOOD FARMING PRACTICES**



**GOLDEN GATE SCHOOL STUDENTS,
STAKING TOMATOS.**

ATTACHMENTS

- ❖ **The Garden offers hands on practicals for tertiary education students, both local & international.**
- ❖ **The students are engaged in the daily farm's duties.**

GRACOUIS & AUSTIN (LUANAR STUDENTS), STAKING TOMATOS.



GET TOGETHER

- ❖ **Tikondwe Freedom Gardens facilitates get together of international schools with local schools, that are close to the Garden.**
- ❖ **Students interact through sharing experiences and playing sports. International students learn the real life of rural students, while rural students are motivated to work hard and to pursue their education.**

DONATIONS

- ❖ **Freedom Gardens facilitates donations of learning items from international schools to local schools that are close to the Garden.**
- ❖ **Currently, Freedom Gardens is facilitating the donation of computers from TASIS School (Switzerland), to Mbalame Full Primary School.**

