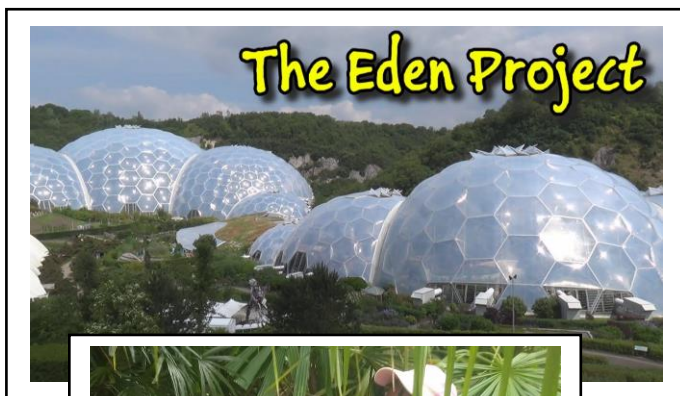




Eden Project sets example for G7

G7, the annual meeting of some of the world's richest nations, took place recently in Cornwall, UK. Coincidentally I grew up in the same area, so had more than one reason to tune in to the coverage.

Only a few Kenyans would know that when G7 leaders dined with Queen Elizabeth at *The Eden Project*, they were surrounded by one of the 21st Century's most important adverts for sustainable change. Eden was an ambitious millennial initiative which focused on reclamation of an enormous, disused quarry (the result of many years mining). Inland from its picturesque coastline, Cornwall is potholed with these massive china clay pits.



Meeting friends at Haller Park

The objective was to turn an environmental disaster into something functional ... and sustainable. It was to be an example of reclaiming the desert to forge an oasis, where flora could flourish in abundance. *Haller Park*, near Mombasa, is a smaller version of the same wasteland-to-wonderland endeavour, which underpins the value of handing something sustainable to our children, rather than something used and useless: the best we can offer, instead of the worst. And like Haller Park, Eden has been a resounding success.

If you visit Eden, you will join one million others each year, to view the enormous hi-tech, bio-domes at the base of the pit (gargantuan greenhouses one could say) and walk through those *biomes* to experience the

ecology of different climates (desert and tropical for example). You might also wander miles of pathways that circle *the pit*, to see an incredible diversity of plant life from all over the planet.

A few years ago, I visited Eden with a group of Kenyans – teachers from The Rift Valley - as part of a spin-off project titled *Gardens for Life*. The goal was to take Eden to the world: out to schools in three countries (Kenya, India, UK), incorporating gardens into the



experience and education of young people. The *Gardens* project was - like Eden itself - a great success, but regrettably did not continue in Kenya. Fortunately, its parent body lives on, to spread the message of sustainable change ... even to the British monarch and US president.

So when the elite countrys' leaders visited Eden, there were high hopes they too would be inspired to follow this example, rising to the challenges we face, such as *Covid-19* and the *Climate Crisis*. But alas, those hopes were dashed: just one billion doses of vaccine, when the World Health Organisation (WHO) tells us 11bn are required; and any major climate action pushed back to COP26 in Glasgow, later this year.

If these leaders had wished to live up to their leadership name, they could have stolen from Eden's action plan and led by example, to forge a path which brings exceptional measures to bear in these extraordinary times. Our planet is ailing badly, but those at the pinnacle of politics still seem *not* to have fully grasped that fact.

G7 was a relatively convivial get together, but much more is required on a grander scale, from G20 in October and COP26 in November. We need inspired thinking along the lines of Eden to enable sustainable change on a planetary scale.

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