

The Trustees for the Xhabbo Farm Trust



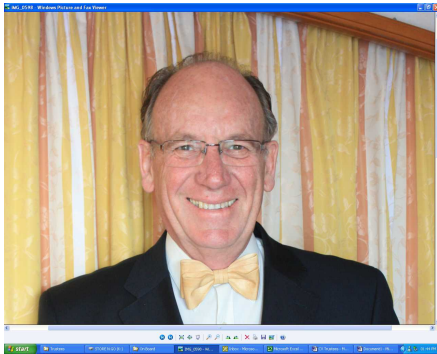
Paul Cohen

I first became interested in sustainability issues through my own interests in the human potential movement and after visiting places like the Esalen Institute, (<http://www.esalen.org>) and the Findhorn Foundation (<http://www.findhorn.org>) in 1987. At the same time I became aware permaculture and was driven to set up a centre in South Africa that could inspire people toward these new ideas. In 1990 I started the Tlholego Learning Centre and Ecovillage (<http://www.tlholego.org.za>) as a pioneering centre for this purpose. Over the last 20 years, together with my wife Stephne, I have worked more or less full time on this project, bringing together many international leaders in related fields of work to design and run training programs in permaculture design, natural building technology and ecovillage development. Through the Tlholego experience, I have gained experience in many aspects of ecovillage living, from infrastructure design and development to running training programs, organizational development, fundraising and project management, food production and seed saving to setting up small businesses, conflict resolution including the personal, behavioural and cultural perspectives underlying living in community within a diverse South Africa context. In 1997 I received an Ashoka fellowship (<http://www.ashoka.org>) for my work in addressing South Africa's housing and settlement crisis through creating self-reliant family dwellings that contribute to the sustainability of rural villages. I have a Bsc in Mechanical Engineering from UCT and an Mphil in Sustainable Development from Stellenbosch University. I am currently working on the application of integral theory (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_thought) to the design of local economic systems and sustainable communities in an African and global context. I am a member of the Living Tao Foundation (<http://www.livingtao.org>) and a student of Tai Ji.

Nicola Robins

I've spent the last seven years bumbling around at the interface of traditional African knowledge and mainstream complexity thinking. The first passion emerged from personal experience of transformative African ritual and I remain in awe of these technologies and their potential contribution to addressing personal and community dilemmas of today. Applied African wisdom is the focus of The Raintance Network (web-site under development) which I co-founded with Niall Campbell. The second passion (complexity stuff) informs my work on sustainability and its critical contribution to informed business strategy in the corporate sector. In applying this, I am a founding partner of Incite

Sustainability (www.incite.co.za); a senior associate of the Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (www.cpsl.co.za); a visiting lecturer in sustainability and leadership at the UCT Graduate School of Business; and a sustainability coach and facilitator. On Thursdays, I am a sangoma and personal coach in private practice. These are all my communities – some more functional than others. At heart, I am a dancer and endlessly fascinated by the human body. This I have explored through traditional dance training, Mixed Martial Arts and training as a deep tissue massage therapist and Myosteo-practitioner (www.myosteopractic.com). I am a graduate of the Ngonyama School for Traditional Healers, Botswana, have a BSc (Hons) from UCT and an MSc in Environmental Science from Yale University.



John Raimondo with recycled wooden bowtie!

Sustainability issues have always been a concern of mine. How can people expect a finite earth to sustain a growing human population, with increasing consumptive demands. I remember pondering this dilemma on my first Wilderness trail with Ian Player about 50 years ago.

This concern was reflected in the design of our family's business which was conceived by my father and managed by my brother and myself – collecting old waste corrugated boxes and from them making paper and then board and then new boxes which were sold. This integrated factory recycled all waste waters, a lot of its heat and used energy management for our electric motors – all designed in the late 1960's. Being relatively small but integrated and based on recycling enabled us to out perform all our competitors.

I tried to apply the same principles to my other activities – for examples while heading up the Wildlife Society's education programmes, and the work I have undertaken with other NGOs. I "retired" when we sold our business in 1980 and returned to University to gain an MSc in Environmental Science [I already had a BSc in Chemical Engineering and a PhD in Paper Technology. I then applied environmental management and sustainability principles as a consultant to government, industry, the United Nations and the World Bank. In the end, I found that I was not able to influence decision makers as much as I had hoped - to the extent that it would lead to a sustainable lifestyle for most folk.

I believe that society will not adapt quickly enough to the changing climate changes, energy shortages, or economic structures; nor face the issues associated with population and consumptive growth.

I have therefore decided to find a model that demonstrates what I believe and see if it is possible to live sustainably. For the past few years have been discussing this with many people and doing a lot of research. This has influenced me in the conceptualization and design of this sustainable farming venture. The physical aspects are relatively easy, the social ones will be the real challenge!

I am hoping that others will want to join me in this adventure!