



What can we learn from the past to prepare for climate migrations and food production in southern Africa?

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Growing food in the early settlements of southern Africa

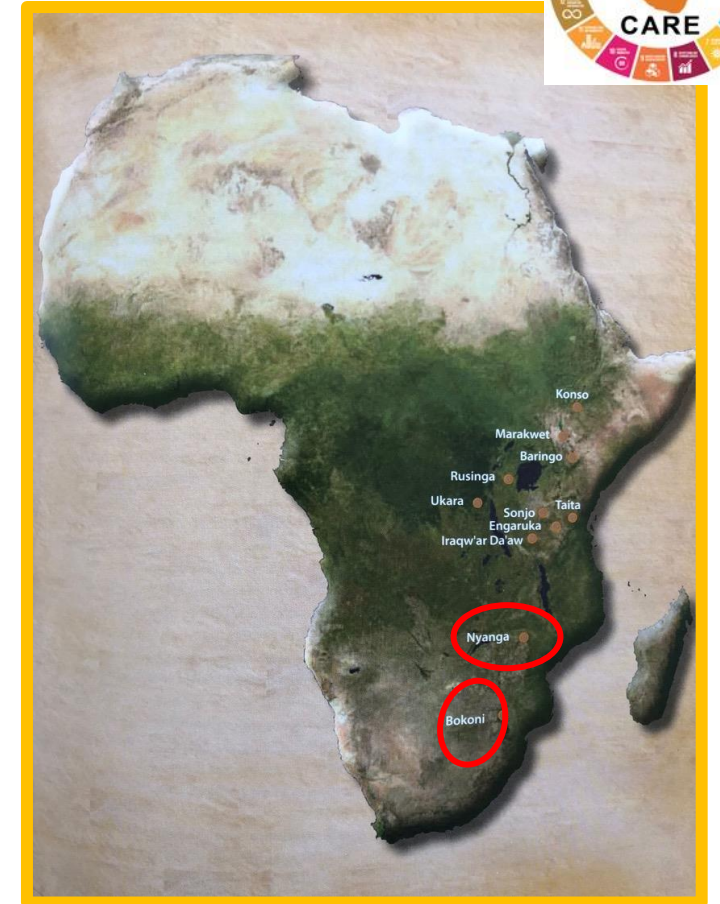
Cycles of drought and famine were mitigated by the development of expertise in soil-water retention. Most notable here were the terraced agro-ecological lands of East and southern Africa. In the south we had Bokoni, on the central plateau, Nyanga and many more in the East Africa.

These are all tourist attractions today. They are on hillsides and there are many mystery stories about the of the disappearance of our stone city cultures.

We now know that these were early settlements of Africans in places where 'elevation' brought better rainfall and summer pastures free of the Nagana cattle disease.

The disappearance of these early cultures of stone settlements is commonly attributed to social and political disruptions fueled by drought and famine.

The terraced lands appear to have been for water retention and thus soil moisture for germination and crop growth in early stone settlements. Early stone settlements may have become depopulated owing to depletion of productive land, cycles of regional political conflict in time of famine, struggles for the control of resources and perhaps cycles of cholera that developed alongside expanding trade exchanges with India and beyond.



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Concern: Mitigating climate change

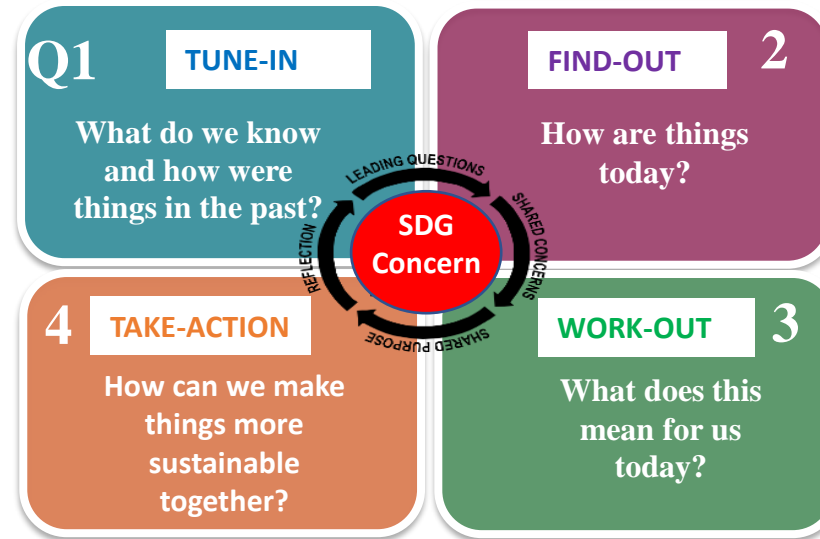


Start-up Story:

1. Further south in the region of the Transkei grasslands of the maPondo and Xhosa, we still find seasonal cycles of ukuGalesha, a practice to ‘trap’ upland soil moisture for ploughing and planting with the summer rains. If the rains are late, the soil will still be soft for ploughing and with light rain in a drought year will have moist for germinating sorghum.

2. In drought years when the sweet veld pasture of the Transkei could not support the abundant herds of the Xhosa, the cattle would be moved to the early summer pastures of the Zuurveld. The cattle would be kept there for a few months until these pastures declined and by which time the summer rains had allowed the pastures to recover.

Inquiry: How do farmers prepare for seasonal climatic variation and extreme events today?



Deliberation: How are we preparing for regional climate migrations and food shortages in southern Africa

Action:

What can we do at home and in our communities to mitigate climate migrations and food shortage?