

The 11-member jury of the 2010 Buckminster Fuller Challenge unanimously selected *Operation Hope: Permanent water and food security for Africa's impoverished millions* submitted by Alan Savory as the winner of The 2010 Buckminster Fuller Challenge..

The strategy is a paradigm shifting solution to reversing desertification – a major leverage point in the solution to combat global climate change.

“Not only are we struck by the courage of the original thinking and the commitment to the proof of concept, there is also heart in this project and that is inspiring.”

-2010 Buckminster Fuller Challenge Jury

The United Nations Environment Program estimates that 250 million people are directly affected by desertification or land degradation in dry regions, and more than one billion are at risk. With arid and semi-arid land covering up to 40% of the Earth's surface, more than 110 countries are at risk. Desertification exacerbates poverty and political instability by causing water scarcity and famine, which leads to conflicts and forces unintended migration. Pressures where “environmental refugees” re-settle cause poverty, loss of cultural identity and social instability. In the US alone, desertification costs \$42 billion a year. There is no question that a sound strategy to reverse desertification or land degradation would have significant impact worldwide.

Allan Savory is a former wildlife biologist, farmer, and politician and a true pioneer in a field that he virtually created himself - the field of holistic rangeland management. He co-founded the U.S.-based Center for Holistic Management in 1984 and currently operates under the Savory Institute. Savory's approach to reversing desertification is common sense but very counterintuitive and challenges prevailing wisdom of land and herd management.

Where old strategies continue to fail us Operation Hope shows how understanding nature's processes can drive sound decision making and can achieve full restoration of land that was once completely degraded. What's refreshing is that the success of this strategy requires a paradigm shift rather than relying on a more of the same technical tools or industrial-style approaches. As such, this entry most reflects, “design aligned with nature's fundamental principles” a major component of the criteria for the Buckminster Fuller Challenge, and could be instrumental in reversing desertification, a key leverage point in combating climate change.

“With Holistic Management there is a focused tangible impact, and it’s also scalable and holistic. It’s a real comprehensive approach. ”

-2010 Buckminster Fuller Challenge Jury

Allan Savory, has been diligently developing and testing the *Holistic Management* approach for over 40 years, starting first in Africa and gradually sharing the strategy with other communities across the globe who are facing similar land degradation. Holistic Management principles can be applied to any environment, however the bulk of the research has been tested in partnership with 5 tribal chiefs at the African Centre for Holistic Management, located in the drought prone landscape of Zimbabwe, Africa.

The decision-making framework that supports the approach to land management is what makes this proposal a breakthrough strategy. It starts with the “whole” by first taking into account nature’s processes, broadly defined as: water cycle, mineral cycle, energy flow and community dynamics.

By operating from a whole systems approach, the process restores the land and comes closest to Buckminster Fuller’s idea of comprehensive design. The African Centre for Holistic Management is at the core of this human centered strategy where the people bring the process alive. Not only is it a research centre it is a place where people can come to train so they can take the practice back with them. With Holistic Management there is a focused tangible impact, and it has the capacity to scale..

“From a design aesthetics point of view, there is nothing more beautiful than what is being brought back– water, plant life and people’s livelihoods”

-2010 Buckminster Fuller Challenge Jury