

Links

The UN Refugee Agency: UNHCR <https://www.unhcr.org/>
Memel Project, South Africa :: <https://caddispc.com/portfolio/memel-south-africa/> and
<https://memel.global>
Bryan's email address bryan@caddispc.com
Here is the Treehouse Village website <https://treehousevillage.ca/cohousing/>

Day 3 Tour Memel Transcript

00:09:15.000 --> 00:09:30.000

We're going to go next to a different part of the world, and I'm going to ask. Brian to share a tour of mammal cohousing.

00:09:30.000 --> 00:09:41.000

Sounds good.

00:09:41.000 --> 00:09:47.000

Okay, so you guys can all see that it can hear me everything.

00:09:47.000 --> 00:10:00.000

Good. Cool. So, again, thanks, Grace number for putting this on because it's super cool I'm really enjoying hearing everything you guys all have to say and I think I'm going to, like, encourage everyone to submit stuff for medicine as well because I think

00:10:00.000 --> 00:10:08.000

the stuff that's being presented here would be really useful for everyone to hear. And our little us spot.

00:10:08.000 --> 00:10:16.000

So, the work we're doing in will also Katniss, like you guys need to see this picture of Katniss that was Germantown comments in Nashville.

00:10:16.000 --> 00:10:26.000

So Katniss is a form of like you know 1011 people from all over the place doing work, including cohousing all over the country in Canada and South Africa.

00:10:26.000 --> 00:10:42.000

But we're, we're doing a lot of work here in schools, and single family homes and right now a lot of burn recovery things happening here in Boulder, and athletic facilities and actually, we're going to be coming to Sydney Australia here pretty soon to

00:10:42.000 --> 00:10:46.000

do an athletic facility down there, which is pretty cool.

00:10:46.000 --> 00:10:50.000

So, that's us.

00:10:50.000 --> 00:10:54.000

So, one of the closing conferences, years ago.

00:10:54.000 --> 00:10:56.000

2010.

00:10:56.000 --> 00:10:58.000

Maybe 11.

00:10:58.000 --> 00:11:12.000

I met Stephen A Blondie and Cindy burns who are XUNHCR lifers who were basically in the worst places that we can all imagine in our adult lives.

00:11:12.000 --> 00:11:25.000

Doing refugee kind of work, and after leaving there they retired and moved to South Africa, and really fell in love with rural landscape there in the sort of, you know, post apartheid.

00:11:25.000 --> 00:11:42.000

Amazing culture that is South Africa. And so they asked me to come down there and, and take a look at it and, and honestly like every architect has some kind of like, you know, baloney international project that they did that no one there knows about

00:11:42.000 --> 00:11:53.000

that it's some kind of cool paper exercise and I don't want to get involved with that I was just like looking for you can do something that's useful that's, that's great but if it's just like some sort of like ego thing and we're not doing it.

00:11:53.000 --> 00:12:08.000

So the only reason I, the only way I can figure that out was to go visit them, and so it's been a week there and it was as if Stephen had choreographed like seven days of constant like education indoctrination and exposure for me on how everything works

00:12:08.000 --> 00:12:19.000

there and it was just brilliant and I walked away completely sold on the fact that, you know, having Stephen and Cindy there is you know American expatriate folks who understand

00:12:19.000 --> 00:12:24.000

and have like an observers eye towards what could happen in rural South Africa.

00:12:24.000 --> 00:12:37.000

On the ground listening to what people have to say was super important. So it's not just like, you know, Brian from Boulder, trying to impose Danish cohousing ideas that have been figured out through some American stuff on people in South Africa is really

00:12:37.000 --> 00:12:43.000

important figure out like, how can these ideas

00:12:43.000 --> 00:12:51.000

work to serve the needs that people actually have, and I've been asked this a lot and I actually think I think this is maybe the most important thing of the whole talk which is like.

00:12:51.000 --> 00:13:05.000

I haven't asked over and over again by people of color or poor people or different cultures, you know, you know from the outside cohousing looks like a bunch of white people who have enough money to afford an extra house to hang out in, like, is that

00:13:05.000 --> 00:13:15.000

really all it is and it's like, no, cohousing is actually the idea of talking to the residents about what they need and what they want to do and then trying to help them do that.

00:13:15.000 --> 00:13:27.000

That to me is what is the, the magic of what we're all talking about here. So, you know, you go and talk to people like numbers and find out what they need and see if you can do that.

00:13:27.000 --> 00:13:42.000

So, memo and Zamani memos white town and the money is the black township and that's how a lot of this stuff happens in South Africa, there was a white town, and then the, you know, servants quarters or the location they often often call that is the township

00:13:42.000 --> 00:13:59.000

township next door where people were in the past, held behind fences, but now are free and still mostly live in the same places, although there's a huge growing black middle class there that's been pretty green couple of watch happen.

00:13:59.000 --> 00:14:05.000

It's in the High Plains, like 5000 feet elevation three feet arena year.

00:14:05.000 --> 00:14:15.000

And about as much sun is like, but as far south as like El Paso or southern US is north.

00:14:15.000 --> 00:14:31.000

It's a great growing seasons, beautiful soil and the money is that loosely formed Township, on the left, and then. Meanwhile is like sort of the the Dutch inspired grid with really clear location of the church and the business section and very crisp sort

00:14:31.000 --> 00:14:41.000

of European style planning, and then a bunch of footpaths back and forth between the two were people who are trying to work one place and sleep another have to go back and forth.

00:14:41.000 --> 00:14:55.000

The population of the money is about 10 times the population of the mall, and maybe about the same geographical area maybe a little less. And also if you look at the memo maps here you'll see, like they.

00:14:55.000 --> 00:15:05.000

It's been built all the way out this original hundred and 50 year old town plan is still got open lots of have never been built on.

00:15:05.000 --> 00:15:15.000

And so there's not a very strong population x really, you know, from a from the whites perspective it's a pretty poor agricultural communities as well.

00:15:15.000 --> 00:15:29.000

So, because you know me I'm all kinds of money or places with people in them they're complex and they have all kinds of different characteristics and so I was stumbled with like how do we explain what we're doing and it's not just co housing but here's

00:15:29.000 --> 00:15:43.000

some of the pieces. And there's, there's this works been going on for like 1215 years now so there's a lot of things that have gone on but you know one of the biggest ones was a beginning of a organic permaculture CSA that provided like food like food

00:15:43.000 --> 00:15:58.000

directly to people skills training to people and create a business model where they were able to sell food. That was grown and minimal to people in Pretoria who are willing to pay higher prices for organic permaculture hand grown food.

00:15:58.000 --> 00:16:04.000

So they did a great thing they're like lining up that ability to produce something with a high end market.

00:16:04.000 --> 00:16:09.000

That wasn't really quite available in Pretoria yet.

00:16:09.000 --> 00:16:19.000

And that has many many layers to it. You know, that's, you know, when Stephenson started doing this stuff in South Africa they.

00:16:19.000 --> 00:16:32.000

Nobody was growing food in the townships but everyone was going to work on farms. And after doing these permaculture trainings they started, see the people popping up in their own gardens, or their own like little plots of land, their own gardens, and

00:16:32.000 --> 00:16:36.000

they started like really trying to get that education out there they created a seed bank.

00:16:36.000 --> 00:16:47.000

They created a group of like what they call the grannies who was like all the old ladies who come in like talk and have tea and hang out around the seed bank and and take those seeds and go out and plant things and teach other people how to do what they're

00:16:47.000 --> 00:16:48.000

doing.

00:16:48.000 --> 00:17:05.000

They started a program that called granny gardens where they help those ladies, several hundred of them get rooftop rainwater collection and raised beds and good soil prep to get, you know, all of them their own garden at home.

00:17:05.000 --> 00:17:20.000

gives everybody the ability to like, you know, access tools and have tools that are well maintained to do all kinds of interesting stuff. And there's jobs like this basic economic model behind all of this right like you know 30 4050 people have jobs.

00:17:20.000 --> 00:17:30.000

The general metric is if you are employing one person in the township they're supporting eight other people. So if you think if you got 30 people, you know, got 240 people who are being supported.

00:17:30.000 --> 00:17:34.000

So there's a pretty good numbers.

00:17:34.000 --> 00:17:41.000

Then she wins is amazing program if you guys are interested in women's health or girls or sports at all really check it out.

00:17:41.000 --> 00:17:52.000

They looked around they saw like wow there's like all kinds of stuff for boys here but there's nothing here for girls. And, you know, they're just really second thoughts.

00:17:52.000 --> 00:18:02.000

So this program called she wins for after school training for girls and there's a picture of it here in the top, middle, and all the young girls crop that hurt short so although young girls look like boys and all the slides.

00:18:02.000 --> 00:18:06.000

So, the

00:18:06.000 --> 00:18:17.000

impact of that has been maybe five or 700 girls have gone to this program, elementary school girls primary school aged girls. And during that time, none of these primary school girls have had pregnancies.

00:18:17.000 --> 00:18:27.000

And really, I think you could say safely say no primary primary girls primary school aged girls have pregnancies. That's probably not a wanted thing that's happening.

00:18:27.000 --> 00:18:41.000

And so a lot of education is going on about women's health body issues, sports, self confidence, it's amazing and they've had like these young girls, some of them gone all the way to like nationals in athletic competitions.

00:18:41.000 --> 00:18:52.000

And then the format is they bring a couple young girls from the US young woman from the US post college age, athletes usually to go there and coach things after school so it's like yoga and all kinds of cool stuff happens.

00:18:52.000 --> 00:18:57.000

The closing piece is causing I'll get to that in a minute. There's couple layers to it.

00:18:57.000 --> 00:19:07.000

The. There's a library system they built three public libraries there were no libraries there the conventional wisdom, kind of, even among blacks was that black people don't need books.

00:19:07.000 --> 00:19:16.000

And so it's a very, there's a lot of self limiting internalized racism, of course, like in a population like this it's been subjugated for this many decades.

00:19:16.000 --> 00:19:27.000

And so providing books has been this like wonderful eye opening world expanding thing and they partner with rotary and some other people to get books there and ship them.

00:19:27.000 --> 00:19:41.000

And honestly, if you go visit them there which the doors always open. It's really a beautiful place to visit. You'll be asked to bring like a suitcase of books or like a drill or, you know, something along with you every time we travel they're all of

00:19:41.000 --> 00:19:57.000

luggage weighs 49.9 pounds and it's, as many pieces as we can take that is healthcare, they partnered with Starkey company to provide hearing analysis and hearing aids to hundreds of people in the township, and in town that was like one place where like

00:19:57.000 --> 00:19:58.000

blacks and whites did. Connect over some of those basic human health issues.

00:19:58.000 --> 00:20:15.000

Connect over some of those basic human health issues. And they saw people who and you know you're hearing it stories are amazing people who've lived their entire lives not being able to understand what's going on around them very well, like all of a sudden being able to hear and like accessing verbal communication,

00:20:15.000 --> 00:20:20.000

for the first time is just like I mean imagine what it's like to go without that.

00:20:20.000 --> 00:20:28.000

And how do you do well in school without that, you know, like, a lot of layers, you do a job.

00:20:28.000 --> 00:20:41.000

And then one woman who's one of those she wins volunteers was like interested in doing something more than just coming in volunteering was enough to go and like spend three months of her life, helping other people, she want to do more so she arranged

00:20:41.000 --> 00:20:52.000

for a sanitary napkin maker machine to be imported from India to South Africa as a whole long convoluted story involving bribing dock officials and everything to get it there.

00:20:52.000 --> 00:20:56.000

And the.

00:20:56.000 --> 00:21:08.000

So they now are making their and sanitary napkins cuz that's one of things that's really typical in South Africa is young girls school aged girls don't have access to any kind of sanitary napkins and they end up like staying home and they have their periods

00:21:08.000 --> 00:21:15.000

and there's also like well go out into the fields to pee and stuff and the that makes them.

00:21:15.000 --> 00:21:19.000

Target easy targets for people.

00:21:19.000 --> 00:21:25.000

And then pickle ball is like the one that really has like boomed recently, you know, Stephen got into pickle ball.

00:21:25.000 --> 00:21:43.000

And they started, they went and played with him in the US and I was I realized like when I was getting my butt handed to me, to me, by two like 75 year old women that this is a democratizing equalizing sport, because you're close in proximity it's like

00:21:43.000 --> 00:21:55.000

the CO housing of sports, and everybody can do it because you don't have to be like a crazy athlete, and you have to be a little smarter than the average bear and like, so it's pretty cool to see people doing that and it's been, you know, in South Africa

00:21:55.000 --> 00:22:12.000

soccer is for blacks and rugby's for whites and there's like separation around that. And even after the World Cup was there, and to see them. When we built the first official like pickup ball court and me Mr South Africa, so it's like the epicenter of

00:22:12.000 --> 00:22:24.000

pickup ball in South Africa but seeing Stephen send out videos of people playing together across age and race boundaries is cool from South Africa.

00:22:24.000 --> 00:22:32.000

So the first thing we did we start talking about co housing there is like what we're talking about because things are like in the town.

00:22:32.000 --> 00:22:43.000

For people who can afford to, you know, buy homes. But we thought, you know, well let's maybe start in Zamani for people who really can't afford to buy homes and so we built a little for unit cause and community.

00:22:43.000 --> 00:22:45.000

That's a common house.

00:22:45.000 --> 00:22:51.000

There's no services inside the four homes they

00:22:51.000 --> 00:22:57.000

are roofs are used for rainwater collection their passive solar they rammed earth, and they can't freeze.

00:22:57.000 --> 00:23:01.000

So it's much more dignified safe housing then attend checks around them.

00:23:01.000 --> 00:23:14.000

And typical stuff that people are cooking inside the tin shacks and, you know, getting health issues like disease. And then, so the communists we did a little demonstration roof garden on that with a solar hot water collectors there's hot water there.

00:23:14.000 --> 00:23:26.000

We set we pumped packed all the ways to septic systems and we're going to get it, haven't quite done it yet, but we're going to get a method, they just throw in there that will provide the methane to cooking facilities inside which is kind of cool.

00:23:26.000 --> 00:23:33.000

And I could talk a lot about all the green building things but you know one thing that we looked at when we were there. First off is like okay you got a ton of labor.

00:23:33.000 --> 00:23:47.000

Lots of people sitting around who can do work, and the soil is like, just a little bit too clay for rammed earth, so you can like mix it down with a little bit of sand and all sudden you can like from the earth you excavate build a house, which is fairly

00:23:47.000 --> 00:23:55.000

amazing from a green building perspective so these are ultra Lark low carbon.

00:23:55.000 --> 00:24:03.000

So we wouldn't built them. That's my little white kiddo they're getting sunburns in the African sun.

00:24:03.000 --> 00:24:10.000

And when we stripped off the forums and it came out beautifully. This was the first piece that we built.

00:24:10.000 --> 00:24:18.000

There's something about seeing all the construction guys who got an over the course of these like taking selfies in front of it and being just super stoked and coming to me and me being like hey mr Brian.

00:24:18.000 --> 00:24:26.000

I'm going to go my mama house out of this stuff this is cool. And I'm like, Alright cool we're making some changes is great. And it's been rolling out.

00:24:26.000 --> 00:24:32.000

And the great thing about it is like I don't have to keep going back there I'm not flying back and forth to South Africa all the time to like do things like they're doing it.

00:24:32.000 --> 00:24:35.000

We handed off a lot of this knowledge and they're doing it.

00:24:35.000 --> 00:24:45.000

We also designed it so that like they could fit On the inside, basically it's a hollow shell each of these little units. And so if you have like, you know, a kid or you make a bunk bed if you and actually those two images in there right from the common

00:24:45.000 --> 00:24:47.000

house that we built little kitchen in there.

00:24:47.000 --> 00:24:50.000

From

00:24:50.000 --> 00:24:56.000

that guy right there's bright he's the sort of our main, main man there He's amazing.

00:24:56.000 --> 00:24:58.000

Great guy.

00:24:58.000 --> 00:25:04.000

This is an example of what the government's building in the same context, so

00:25:04.000 --> 00:25:07.000

not verifying scale, pretty brutal.

00:25:07.000 --> 00:25:11.000

And they're spending more money per thing doing it than we are.

00:25:11.000 --> 00:25:20.000

And a company comes in and build them and leaves, so the people who are like there that could build them, but they're not viewed as a resource, so.

00:25:20.000 --> 00:25:32.000

So the organics MIMO organics you know the site is actually in town they prove that you can, you know, produce a giant amount of food on a very small piece of property, talk a lot about that on, probably the first thing we built was a guest house because

00:25:32.000 --> 00:25:46.000

really want to have a demonstration building that showed essentially when South Africans have like a relatively luxurious form living says that little trick triplex to one bedrooms in one two bedroom.

00:25:46.000 --> 00:25:53.000

And he's like old sketch drawings from a million years ago. And,

00:25:53.000 --> 00:26:04.000

you know, some of the stuff gets pushed into like how many things can we try it out on one project right so they were trying to demonstrate yeah you can do green roofs and Larry's rainwater collection and you can do this stuff so sometimes we're maybe

00:26:04.000 --> 00:26:07.000

trying to do too many things at one little building.

00:26:07.000 --> 00:26:18.000

That's one things I think I talked to talk to my cousin groups about quite a bit is like these are not that big of buildings like you don't have to have them do a million things just having to do one thing really well.

00:26:18.000 --> 00:26:22.000

So that's it, built.

00:26:22.000 --> 00:26:32.000

One of the guys got really into the idea of like making the corners stripy So, Madame stripy. It's cool.

00:26:32.000 --> 00:26:35.000

And this is a friend of ours from the US who she was visiting.

00:26:35.000 --> 00:26:46.000

And, and there's some stuff that's cool they're like these, you know, like Nana walls or something that everybody wants their big projects here in the US but they cost like 1200 50 hundred bucks a linear foot to put in there and they're they're like not

00:26:46.000 --> 00:26:51.000

that expensive so that was cool.

00:26:51.000 --> 00:27:00.000

So on the cousin property we basically have a bunch of things that we're working with already right there's already the permaculture farm in place there's the belt the guest house has a bunch of existing buildings.

00:27:00.000 --> 00:27:11.000

We turned one of existing buildings into a common house is basically dilapidated old farmhouse that had like chunks of roof missing and was infested in just got rehabbed into something really great,

00:27:11.000 --> 00:27:24.000

The cars and communities itself is really designed to be two phases and we've had a lot of like tension over like how it's going to get built, I mean we've had this design sort of sitting on the shelf for a number of years now and we put it on hold because

00:27:24.000 --> 00:27:34.000

we had opportunity to a bunch of other things around the region. so we started doing some other stuff and let this sit, but it's basically back on the front burner and one of these is really interesting about it is like for a while we you know we were

00:27:34.000 --> 00:27:46.000

And one of things is really interesting about it is like for a while we you know we were thinking like, it's really hard to make this work for what first it was meant to be for you know the, this up and coming black middle class like we had this idea

00:27:46.000 --> 00:28:03.000

that would be this great union between whites and blacks and like pretty strong ideas around that. We also learned a bunch of things like a lot of the blacks who are, I mean the habitation patterns are really interesting so a lot of blacks who are there,

00:28:03.000 --> 00:28:14.000

they, they will go home, like their home is there like original home, but they're living in Johannesburg or they're living in Pretoria the living somewhere else, they don't really consider that like their home so in some ways like you can't get someone

00:28:14.000 --> 00:28:27.000

to move on to something and make it their home they already have a home, even if they move there. Right. And there's some things like we found out through talking to people and learning that, you know, if you don't own the land in and around your house

00:28:27.000 --> 00:28:43.000

like you can't conduct the, you know, ritual sacrifices required for your religious pursuits and that blood soaking into the ground is important than burying the relics of your mom in the ground is important and so like, you know, supplying like American

00:28:43.000 --> 00:28:50.000

condo model like doesn't really like suit, so we're learning a lot about cultural

00:28:50.000 --> 00:28:59.000

adaptations there, but they think that's kind of interesting is like since it sort of sat around for a while the kind of word spread people got more involved and now it's really become more of a black lead project.

00:28:59.000 --> 00:29:10.000

So, like really like we're kind of like not doing as much on it, we're just like sort of like letting it be run by the people who are going to live there, right, like seems like a reasonably good idea.

00:29:10.000 --> 00:29:19.000

So we're building a lot of good stuff has already happened in there, two phases of CO housing, and they're basically little like you know,

00:29:19.000 --> 00:29:33.000

closing in it's arranged in duplexes triplex is in little pods because we feel like this landscape doesn't really the site doesn't really suit itself to like the sort of some of the normal site diagrams that we often see, but basically we're trying to

00:29:33.000 --> 00:29:39.000

create little like groupings of, you know, 345 units, and then those are part of the overall whole.

00:29:39.000 --> 00:29:49.000

And if anybody wants to see more on this I'm happy like sharing these things with you guys just let me know hit me up via email or whatever.

00:29:49.000 --> 00:30:03.000

And, and these are basically just designed enough so that we could take them to people and say here's what we're trying to get you to get involved with.

00:30:03.000 --> 00:30:17.000

And, you know, pretty simple little units, it's cool because like in some ways, you know, in the US we're dealing with such a bureaucratic building code, and high standards for certain things that like there.

00:30:17.000 --> 00:30:28.000

I mean honestly like oh you're hitting the building that's cool. You know, like some of this stuff is like puts us in pretty good position.

00:30:28.000 --> 00:30:36.000

But, you know it's good architecture, it's all just about indoor outdoor spaces and, you know, connecting people to each other. A lot of the usual causing principles are being applied here.

00:30:36.000 --> 00:30:51.000

And it's really interesting to interweave amongst all that housing permaculture organic farming for money for food so it's not just a hobby stuff it's like an a working space.

00:30:51.000 --> 00:31:00.000

And luckily it's beautiful. It's not like American agriculture yet so it's not like we're trying to run combines through their people just gardening.

00:31:00.000 --> 00:31:10.000

And then wider planning efforts we got involved with looking at like this got asked by the government to look at it like what do you do with all of the land around there, if you just did the same thing we're doing so he said look like a bunch of in housing

00:31:10.000 --> 00:31:15.000

different housing types and methodologies and dealing drainage patterns patterns, stuff like that.

00:31:15.000 --> 00:31:27.000

The South African governments not like known for its efficacy so what ended up happening is they asked us for a lot of ideas and then they just didn't do, do it and they took the whole plot of land that we're looking at and said okay, if you will, can

00:31:27.000 --> 00:31:27.000

just move there now.

00:31:27.000 --> 00:31:32.000

there now. So we'll see what people do. Maybe they've learned some stuff from what we're talking about, maybe not.

00:31:32.000 --> 00:31:44.000

So then I had a sneaky additional project, which I was going to like get under the tent flap here, which was just thought I'd throw in a couple quick slides of triage village.

00:31:44.000 --> 00:31:53.000

I'm not gonna like presented a whole bunch but it's a cool little Passive House project that hit the construction process during the pandemic.

00:31:53.000 --> 00:32:12.000

And we found out that in the March of last year, Nova Scotia had already used up it's like annual allocation of lumber and like that we're gonna have to wait till it next year so they flipped the entire project to being a foam ICF project so it's like,

00:32:12.000 --> 00:32:27.000

you know, foam ICF plus like six more inches of foam and Passive House windows and so it is like wearing like all of the puffy jackets all at once, as a, as a building.

00:32:27.000 --> 00:32:30.000

Good, right we're getting over time.

00:32:30.000 --> 00:32:33.000

This year, like maybe two quick images or something.

00:32:33.000 --> 00:32:41.000

Yep, that's all I put in there so cool I'm wrapping up. Thank you guys for watching because I forgot to set my timer.

00:32:41.000 --> 00:32:54.000

Yeah, so it's it's causing project you can check it out and for those of you who are in Canada i think it's it's gonna be a pretty cool one. And they could use help, you know, spreading the word about, units for sale too so if you can give them a boost.

00:32:54.000 --> 00:32:58.000

Thank you guys.

00:32:58.000 --> 00:33:00.000

Thanks, Brian.