

# NEWSLETTER



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FARMERS OF HOME  
015-337 NPO

# TO OUR FRIENDS

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New Eden in Khayelitsha

before



after

"New Eden" is a community garden, where only men are farming. Usually it is only women making gardens! It was started at the end of 2007, after the deserted land was restructured. The Department of Social Services helped to fence and equip the garden. It is one of the projects supporting Harvest of Hope and gives lots of vegetables to farmers themselves and to the community, with potential for

much more. Next to New Eden there are already two more big gardens being established. The men work hard on their farm and even water on the weekends, alongside their family, community and church life. They learn to produce compost and a part of the garden has shade cloth where seedlings and more sensitive crops are grown.

Dear Friends

In the 12 months between April 07-March 08 we assisted approximately 1000 micro-farmers in about 800 home and community gardens to get started, keep going or improve their work.

In this newsletter we report on our new Harvest of Hope initiative, which for the first time in South Africa proves (even to the sceptics) that good money can be made by uneducated people from tiny urban gardens. Then we write about the 're-launch' of our Home Garden Movement. Home Garden Members were interviewed to see how they are doing. You will read how home gardens can be the foundation for bigger plans and dreams!!

Your support for this work is essential - It costs between R50-R200 per month per farmer (depending on stage of development) to provide comprehensive start-up and training support to these brave people, who are changing the face of poverty in the city.

Viva Micro-Farmers Viva!

Rob Small  
resource mobilisation

## HARVEST OF HOPE

IT IS EARLY MORNING IN THE TOWNSHIP, SUN IS RISING AND DROPS OF DEW ARE SPARKLING IN THE GRASS. FARMERS ARE ENTERING THE GATES OF THE GARDEN. IT IS TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO THEIR CROPS AND SEND THESE ORGANIC FRESH VEGETABLES ON THEIR TRIP TO THE MARKET. IT IS THE TIME OF HARVEST: HARVEST OF HOPE.

The farmers live in sub-economic 'townships' which are built in a huge space of sea-sand soil called the Cape Flats, near Cape Town, in the Western Cape, South Africa. A lot of poor people live in these townships. They have time and they have the power to start and to learn. Until Abalimi came along they hardly had any healthy food for their children. But now the combination of space and time has become a great basis for establishing gardens!

A gardening movement among many thousands has been the result! Abalimi started to support local gardening in the townships in 1982 and continues to provide necessary training, seeds, seedlings and manure for all people who are interested to change the sand to fertile soil and become farmers. Once a new farmer learns how to plant and grow vegetables, she becomes able to feed her family and sell her excess crops to other people. New gardens are, at first, usually too small to run commercially, and/or the gardeners are not immediately able to handle other "scary" work like bookkeeping, marketing and contracting which are connected to commercial activities. But Abalimi, with the help of the South African Institute of Entrepreneurship and The Business Place Philippi, and supported by the Ackerman Pick n' Pay Foundation, had the great idea to create a new social business that should support the sustainability of the community gardens in the Cape Flats area into the future: Harvest of Hope!

Harvest of Hope was launched at the beginning of 2008. The aim was to sell vegetables in a very direct, friendly and personal way so that farmers would benefit from a secure and fair income while customers would benefit from reasonably priced and locally produced



(low carbon footprint!) organic vegetables. Customers would also have the knowledge that their money is giving people jobs and conserving the environment through local organic farming among the poor. Therefore the best market place is at schools, where parents come to fetch their children after the classes and are anxious for fresh and organic vegetables for their families.

Harvest of Hope is now producing more than a hundred extraordinary vegetable boxes, from 50 farmers in 20 community gardens, every Tuesday. The medium term aim is to increase to 150 farmers and 600 boxes and then to many more. Every box consists of 11 items of seasonal organic veggies. The cost to purchase one box is R85 (~£5, €6, \$9) and people can sign-up to be a standing order customer. Abalimi provides all the training to the farmers, administration work, space for washing and packing. Abalimi also contracts farmers in the community gardens, who are now proudly able to deliver a constant flow of top quality, fresh, seasonal, organically produced vegetables every week to happy client families. If you want to know more, or get the Harvest of Hope e-news, please visit [www.harvestofhope.co.za](http://www.harvestofhope.co.za) or send a query to [harvestofhope@abalimi.org.za](mailto:harvestofhope@abalimi.org.za).

### PLANTING



Abalimi is facilitating the production planning and delivers seeds to the contracted gardens

### GROWING



The farmers make sure that the crops develop right and become big and flourishing

### HARVESTING



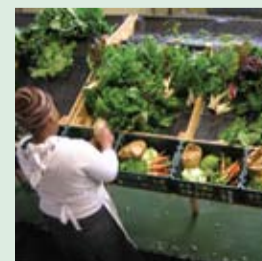
On Mondays and Tuesdays vegetables are harvested in the mornings and taken to the packshed

### WASHING



In the packshed all the veg is brought together, cleaned and bundled

### PACKING



Boxes are packed like in a factory production line, but with way more fun

### DISTRIBUTING



The boxes are being handed out by Abalimi staff and volunteers at schools in Cape Town

# HOME GARDEN MOVEMENT

## THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

The Home Garden Movement began in 1982 when Abalimi was founded. Many thousands of home gardens have been started and supported over the years, but it was not possible until recently to keep exact records of every home gardener. This is because not everyone had an identity document and also because unemployed people (who are often also the people who keep gardens) could not afford to pay even a small membership fee.

But, since 1994, the Government has done a good job to issue everyone with an identity document. Furthermore, the government has initiated and expanded a good system of modest



Nyaniso (middle) picking seedlings for customer's at the Khayelitsha Garden Centre.

social grants to the poor- in particular child-support grants have become widely effective in the last couple of years. This means two things- people can now easily identify themselves and they can usually afford a small membership fee! Since 1994 (the first democratic elections) Abalimi focused its efforts on initiating over 300 community gardens throughout the sub-economic "townships" of Cape Town and did not pay special attention to Home Gardens. But after a decision made in Abalimi's annual evaluation in July 2007, Home Garden Membership was re-launched as a leading programme in future development of Abalimi's aid. Home garden's are easy to preserve, can be taken over by other family members, if someone gets sick or gets a regular job and they help to maintain health and provision of low cost food for a person or even a whole family.

The Home Garden Movement, also known as "Individual Membership sign-up" campaign, is asking individuals in the townships of Khayelitsha, Philippi, Nyanga, Crossroads, and many more to sign up for a one year membership for R25 (~£1.5, €2, \$3). In return for the R25 the individual gets a demonstration on how to start a garden and how to grow vegetables, gets a starter-kit (enough for two seasons) consisting of 2 doz mixed seedlings and 20 kg of manure for a plot size of two doors (4m<sup>2</sup>), worth R50, and constant access to follow up at the Garden Centres, to get answers and help for growing vegetables at home. The Garden Centres in Nyanga and Khayelitsha play a major role in the Home Garden Movement as they are the distributor, communicators and "first-aid" stations for persons in

the townships. They are closely linked to the Fieldworkers who look out for needs of the individuals, in terms of expanding their home plot or starting community plots, or how to improve the gardening in general.



Preparing a seed sowing demonstration at Nyanga Garden Centre to show Home gardeners how to plant different seeds

Mr. Vusumzi Msuthu (47) is working in his home garden as his hobby, having just replanted his garden with new carrots and onion seeds. He is disabled and has to use crutches, but he is independent from neighbours and family, and even helps his mother in her garden in New Crossroads, since she became sick. He married in February 2008 and uses the food planted for him and his wife.

But since he established the garden in 2000, he still had mostly to buy additional veggies, due to the small plot size. The cost of living is too high, so he started gardening. He plants potatoes, onion, spinach, turnips, tomatoes, cabbage and carrots. His hands are his tools, as he just has one spade to dig. The major problems are dogs coming in and digging in his plot, destroying his plants, and also worms and snails, though he found an answer to the latter ones: salt.

He would like to get a bigger plot somewhere else, as he is planning to build a garage on his land, so the garden would have to disappear. He heard about Abalimi from his former neighbour in New Crossroads and also lived close to Mabel Bokolo, who's running the Nyanga Garden Centre. Both spoke to him about Abalimi's support and so he became a customer and member, who is glad about Abalimi's help. He now is talking to his neighbours about home gardening and tries to show them the advantages.

His best year in the long period of home gardening was 2006, as the plants had grown to a big size and he had enough to support himself.



Alice Veliswa Xala (62) came from the Transkei to live and work in Cape Town. Her family used to have big land to plant and she grew up working in the garden. In December 2007 she found out about Nyanga Garden Centre and signed the membership form, got her 1st season package and developed her home garden, mostly motivated by selling her products in small scale. She is living with her adopted son and the garden looks prosperous and has enough veggies for them, and also for her two daughters' families, who are living in other townships.

On good days she can even give to neighbours. She is planting cabbage, parsley, turnips and onion, but also traditional African tobacco, which she can sell for traditional events. Even though she works with a spade and her hands only, and has to deal with snails and dogs coming in her garden, she loves what she's doing. She is looking for a bigger plot of her own to develop her idea of a small business.



Siakolo started his garden about 3 months ago. He has a small plot of about 5m<sup>2</sup>, and is gardening for his family, which consists of 6 members (2 parents and his siblings) staying in the house directly next to the garden. He is unemployed and thought he could do better than just waiting for something to do, so he started gardening, and after a start on his own, he quickly turned to Abalimi for help, and attended the basic training course.

He is producing only for himself and his family. But this is not enough, and he has to buy additional vegetables as well. He is planting cabbage, spinach, beetroot and carrots and was supplied with seedlings by the Nyanga Garden Centre. His biggest problems are the lack of tools, as he just has a small hand fork, although he can rent a spade if needed from his neighbour, and also his own chickens are a problem, as the garden is not properly fenced. The costs of manure are too high for him, so he has to stay without, which is forcing his production in some parts to slow down or even not grow at all.

His future plans are, to get a bigger piece of land close to a clinic, so he can plant more and maybe even become a farmer, since he is still young with his 33 years of age. Our Abalimi Fieldworker is currently trying to negotiate with the people operating the space next to the clinic.



# NEWSFLASH

## HOME GARDEN MOVEMENT – NEWSFLASH

In August 2007 advertisements were driven through radio, newspapers and mouth-to-mouth. In the first months, over 200 people had signed up as members or potential members, while many more are coming to the garden centres to get support. But many people are still suspicious of becoming a member, even though they would have a lot of advantages, mainly because the R25 membership fee is still a hurdle to be climbed. But Abalimi continues to encourage them to register as it is essential to help them in the follow-up work. The annual membership is also connected to a second season package, containing the same amount of seedlings and manure as the first one. This enables individuals to have a good basis for growing fresh food at home.

# AGRIPLANNER

## THE AGRIPLANNER SUITE OF TRAINING COURSES

Africa's commercial agricultural potential is mostly untapped. The AgriPlanner Suite of Training courses is based on a unique simulation game tool to teach several business skills concerning agriculture and marketing to small scale farmers, and individuals or groups trying to become a big fish – or even just a viable 'business fish' - in the market. The Suite consists of different courses, which start with basics about vegetable production in South Africa (and special focus on the training's location area), go over to finances in business cycles, and explain, show and learn to teach how to farm at survival, subsistence, livelihood and even commercial level. It was developed by the South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE) in close cooperation with Abalimi. Abalimi's fieldworkers were amongst the first in Africa to complete the course and become trainers for one of the courses. The way the skills and knowledge are taught – without relying on academic theory, but rather on the actual situations of the farmers - is outstanding.

If you have questions or want to take part, please contact Abalimi at : [info@abalimi.org.za](mailto:info@abalimi.org.za) or SAIE: [robin@entrepreneurship.co.za](mailto:robin@entrepreneurship.co.za) or visit the SAIE website at [www.entrepreneurship.co.za](http://www.entrepreneurship.co.za)



While growing up in the Eastern Cape **Gladis Luthuli's (59)** family had a veg-garden. She feels it's natural for her to have one herself. She developed her homegarden 3 years ago on the outside of her plot in front of the house. The land does not belong to herself, but it didn't cause the government problems so far, so she continues growing.

She wanted to eat fresh veggies and thinks that every women should have a home garden to support herself and her family. That is also why she is working together with her daughter. Since her husband died she is living together with 4 other family members in her house, who all eat from the veggies, although it sadly is not enough to depend on alone. She likes to work in the garden a lot, and grows baby marrow as her favourite veg next to carrots, cauliflower and many more. A community garden next to the school is close by, where she also goes to plant and harvest. Sometimes neighbours come and ask for veggies, so she sells, but it is not a business and she is not thinking about making it into one.

Her main problem is pests eating some of the veggies. Since her plot its too small she does not have a chance to plant other plants which attract the pests more. She also has a water issue, as she would like to have a tank to collect water and have a more constant resource. Her hose pipe and several tools were stolen as she worked in a community garden and didn't watch them close enough, so she also lacks tools. Abalimi has taught her techniques of planting and composting and she is really happy to be in contact with somebody, who can help her. In the future she would really like to have more land to extend her work.

**Mrs. Cynthia Mnyamana (56)** started gardening some years ago, but had to put it aside, when members from her church moved on her family's plot to have a place to stay. But in March 2008 after returning from Eastern Cape she had been to the clinic, located right next to the Nyanga Garden Centre, and became curious about the green garden next to the public building. So she went, asked, and got information about the Abalimi Home Garden Movement.

She joined and was supported with the 1st season package and a demonstration which got her started. She started the garden due to health problems of her husband, who needs more vegetables and, seeing the lack of money to buy veggies, she started to grow them on her own. She and her whole family are unemployed and live off very little money from the government. But the garden plot is too small, so she cannot sell to neighbours, since it is not even enough for her and her 12 family members. She plants cabbage, spinach, tomatoes and peas, but always in small amounts, since the land is too small. Although she has so little, she still gives some to disabled people, who come past her fence and ask for some veggies. As tools she just uses a broken spade and her hands, but if she ever needs something more, she can go to neighbours to be supported.

Her biggest needs are more equipment, resources like manure, and more free water, since her family is already big and uses a lot, and the garden needs water, too. The first 600l are provided free, but then she has no money to pay for more. Her future plans are to establish a bigger plot next to a school or somewhere in the neighbourhood, to plant enough for her and her family, but chances are low, as the land is rare in her area and even schools do not have big space like in Khayelitsha.



**Mrs. Grace Mamase's (58)** garden started in March 2008, when she had attended Abalimi's basic agricultural training. Six years ago, before moving to Hazeldean, she had a home garden in Guguletu, and didn't know how to start in her new home. She just had a very small strip in front of her house, didn't know if it was enough space.

One day she went to the area of Nyanga Garden Centre and saw the nice green vegetable garden. So she asked, got information and attended Abalimi's basic training. Now she is still connected, as she buys her seedlings at the Nyanga Garden Centre and gets advice at this place. The garden helps her to get better health, save money for living and also make money out of it. So far her two children and herself are being fed from the garden, and seldom have to buy additional veggies. Her attempt to start a neighbourhood business didn't get through yet, but she handed out veggies for free to neighbours as an advertisement for her garden, but also to encourage them to start their own garden.

The tools she has consist only of an old spade. She uses buckets to water her garden, and digs with her hands and a fork to grow her veggies. Bigger problems in her garden, though, were rats due to which she moved her garden plot to the other side of the house. But there it's brown worms, dogs, goats, sheep and birds now eating seeds and plants from time to time!

She would need a fence to protect the area, not only the small wall she built out of things she found. Because of lack of manure her plants sometimes stay small. In the future she is planning on extending her house, but not touching the garden plot by doing so. To find a bigger plot in a community garden or wherever, is her other goal and to work more on business scale, even though she has health problems and therefore does not want to be part of a group as a responsible member.



# Special Mentions – Volunteers

During the last period we had wonderful volunteers, who came and helped in many areas – in the field, in our office, in the packshed or wherever help was needed.

**Jenny Smuts** continues to be a cornerstone in Abalimi's work. She markets Harvest of Hope and therefore makes sure Abalimi's farmers get money into their pockets. Her demonstration garden looks wonderful and teaches us and inspires us all!! We thank her very much for opening markets, doors and ways for Abalimi's future!



Jenny Smuts together with Fieldworkers Dora and Zodi

**Do it Day Volunteers 2007**– A big thank you to all the volunteers who came to work in the gardens via the Greater Good Foundation and Just Do It Day in October 2007.

**Lou Burger**– Special thanks goes to Lou Burger, who compiled many huge activities reports from piles of “disorganised” loose data.

**Clare Linder** continues to coordinate the “Plant Growers Group” who regularly contribute plants and tools to Abalimi through her. If you want to contribute plants or any gardening equipment to our work, please contact Clare at: (021) 671 93 23 and clinder@mweb.co.za . Thank you, Clare and all the volunteers at the “Plant Growers Group” !!!

**The ABALIMI Governing Board**– you know who you are. Without you to watch over us, we would feel unprotected and insecure.

**Maria Le Blevic and Juste Kelsaite** Two special volunteers from the European programme Global Education Network of Young Europeans ([www.glen-europe.org](http://www.glen-europe.org)) helped for 3 months where ever help was needed and took on special tasks:

**Maria**, a student of Agriculture, put her skills into the mapping project, combining data into one system, for easier overview and better analysis. She also supported and improved the measuring system of assessing the sustainability of community projects.

**Juste**, a student of Social Sciences and Humanities came from Lithuania. An all round wonder-woman, she wrote up evaluation notes and reports, restructured and re-organised the database and several other things in the office, while at the same time producing the last Friends Newsletter.

They brought us a big step forward. Abalimi wishes them the best in their future personal and professional life!



Maria and Juste with Fieldworker Liziwe at their departing ceremony

## Core Team Brief Bio's

The manpower for fixing irrigation and all kinds of heavy work in Abalimi and Harvest of Hope lies big time on **Nyaniso Matwa's** shoulders, who is working with Abalimi since 1998. He loves the challenging work, the different ideas and people, and is glad to be part of Abalimi.

**Vatiswa Dunjana** came from Eastern Cape, fleeing from the police to Cape Town in 1986, finishing an agricultural training of Quaker Foundation in 1996 and becoming a trainer for Abalimi since 2002. She is in charge of training in Nyanga area and many more activities.

**Lovinia Mangcotywa** moved to Cape Town from Transkei and started working as a community fieldworker in order to prevent violence. She developed a passion for gardening and started in Abalimi as a Fieldworker in 2002 and is now a Field Support Worker in the Khayelitsha Garden Centre.

**Joyce Camagu** is a contracted Fieldworker on the Khayelitsha side, training, working and following up on community gardens. She got involved with Abalimi in 2000, when the project “Sakhe” was launched and is happy about having skills and employment through Abalimi.

**Christina Kaba** came illegally with her husband Matthew to Khayelitsha in 1984 starting a home garden on her own. She got training and was lifted by Abalimi in challenging positions she thought she would not be able to handle. But now she is a main power and inspiration for Abalimi's work. As part of the management team she oversees all field projects and activities.

**Dora Mangcunyana** moved to Cape Town in 1988 and worked in different places until finding Abalimi in 2004, and taking part in the basic course for farmers. She loved it and worked voluntarily, until she became a contracted Abalimi Fieldworker in September 2007.

**Zodidi Langa** is the youngest team member of Abalimi. She grew up on the family farm in Eastern Cape until she decided to move to Cape Town. She met Christina and was hired to work as a contracted Fieldworker on Khayelitsha side from 2007 on.

**Mabel Bokolo** works for Abalimi's Team since 2006. Starting as a contracted Fieldworker she is now the Field Support Worker in Nyanga Garden Centre and is distributing seeds and seedlings to home gardeners.

**Weziwe Dlwengu** grew up in the townships of Cape Town. She studied administration and worked coevally as an economic development facilitator. With her experience in the development sector, she is now working for Abalimi being responsible for the organisation of the fieldwork.

**Roland Welte** came from Germany to Cape Town in 1991 to work in the tourism sector. Connected to Catholic Welfare and Development he came to Abalimi, and is now working as financial and administration manager, and is the chairman of the management team.

**Rob Small** was born in Zambia and grew up in South Africa. He trained as a Bio-Dynamic gardener and farmer in the UK, but has worked with community agriculture projects in South Africa since 1982. Rob is a co-architect of Abalimi as it is today and has been assisting Abalimi full time since 1991 as development coordinator, director and now resource mobilisation manager.

**Matthew Kaba** is “pensioned” from his political activities in the ANC and got involved in Abalimi through his wife, and helps as a contracted driver and deliverer of all sorts. He keeps things “rolling” at Abalimi.

**Bridget Impey** is a qualified organic gardener coming from the UK. She joined Abalimi in 2005 as a volunteer, being employed shortly after. She is the manager of Harvest of Hope.

### Abalimi's core staff with volunteers, casuals and packshed helpers



Abalimi has an excited, involved, moved, powerful, happy, caring, loving and authentic Team, and wants to present itself in a short way, so you get to know who is leading and working in Abalimi

## Roll of Honour

Thank you to all of our friends! **Please, see the insert for the full list.** The diversity and spread of ABALIMI's friends is the result of 16 years of relationship building. This list covers the reporting period of April 07 – March 08.

NOTE: if there is anyone who should be mentioned, or anyone who no longer wishes to be mentioned, we will make amends. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and commitment. Every cent is efficiently utilised to deliver results. Audited financial statements are available on request.

## Notice Board

**Change of address?** Should your addresses / contact details change, please notify our admin office at [info@abalimi.org.za](mailto:info@abalimi.org.za) so we can rectify our mailing list.

**Cheques** should be made out to ABALIMI BEZEKHAYA otherwise they are not bankable.

If you want to be part of an **ABALIMI – Harvest of Hope tour** on Tuesday, please contact us at [info@abalimi.org.za](mailto:info@abalimi.org.za)

### Volunteers are welcome!

We welcome all volunteers! Please note however that Abalimi cannot pay for living costs or stipends. In particular, we seek self-motivated volunteers who can commit for longer periods.

### At the moment, we especially seek the following:

- Black professionals who love gardening and nature who would love to sit on our Governing Board.
- Extra hands - There are plenty of community gardens who need extra hands on a regular basis to help with weeding and other green finger tasks!
- Librarian – to assist us with restructuring and developing our resource library.
- Legal eagles who like to give ongoing pro-bono support (as if it was paid for) to highly effective social profit agencies.
- Database developers – Anyone out there who would love to help us improve our database systems. These are the core of our reporting structure. And we always need extra help!

**Editor:** Rob Small  
**Producer:** Matthias Hoehne, Ida Adolfova  
**Photos:** Matthias Hoehne, Ida Adolfova, Juste Kelsaite, Wiebke Unger  
**Reports:** Matthias Hoehne, Ida Adolfova  
**Design:** INKFISH

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## Historical first

We do not usually feature logos in this newsletter, except for the newsletter sponsor – if we did we would have to give up most of the reporting space to advertise our wonderful and dedicated funders and donors! **But because this is a historical first**, we felt that a special celebration and acknowledgement is in order.

**Neutrog** is the first ever big Green Industry player to step forward with significant support for micro-farming among the urban poor!! They are providing an ongoing development subsidy to our emerging farmers of 2 tons of organically accredited Rapid Raiser and Bounce Back fertiliser every month, on a continuous basis!! Because of their commitment, our emerging farmers are more sustainable. Viva Neutrog Viva!!!

