

PROGRESS REPORT – 1 AUGUST 2000 – 31 DECEMBER 2000



THE ABALIMI TEAM:

From left back: *Dia (casual worker), Nyaniso (seasonal field support worker), Marc (Temporary assistant to the director), Cristoff (volunteer agronomist), Landy (Field Programme Co-ordinator & fieldworker), Roland (Financial manager).*

Second row: *Thembaikosi (Field support worker – Khayelitsha Nursery), Christina (Outreach Co-ordinator & fieldworker), Nosisa (Fieldworker – greening focus), Sindiswa (Fieldworker – urban agriculture focus).*

Front row: *Rob (Director), Julius (part time field support worker), Belinda (Greening Co-ordinator & fieldworker).*
Absent: *Whitey (Field support worker – Nyanga nursery)*

Dear Friends,

We missed our deadline for a December 2000 newsletter. Instead, we would like to offer you our greetings for New Year 2001 and warm, though retrospective, Christmas-tide good wishes.

Perhaps one of the most wonderful results of our work is also the most difficult to document, because it is a process, not a product. It is the spontaneous regeneration of community and social life which arises when people act together for their survival.

We would like to quote Harrison Owen – “Riding the Tiger” in this regard. Between the lines of all our work, these words describe a daily occurrence we witness in the field among the poor. A reality which – in our direct experience, is our starting point for “ground-up” environmental renewal, conservation, poverty alleviation, work-creation and development. . .

“Genuine community occurs, not because it is a nice thing (which it is), but because there is literally no other choice. When ego is transcended, because it was kicked out of the way by chaos, and life continues, as it seems to, you are left with what you had to begin, the reality that we are all in this together. Nobody is in charge, we all are. And each one of us bears full responsibility for our brothers and sisters, to the extent of our ability: otherwise the whole ship goes down.”

We hope that you will be as inspired as we are by this newsletter and progress report. We look forward to keeping you informed about what promises to be an even more lively year ahead.

THE CAPE FLATS GREENING PROGRAMME (CFGP)



← Town Two youth helps with the preparations for Arbor Day.



↓ From left Mr. Rashied Khaan (Dept. Water and Forestry), Mr. Victor Booie (principal of Naluxolo Primary) and Therese Brinkate (The Green Trust) are helped to plant a tree by some of the children from the community.

↑ Viva D.W.A.F and Parks and Forests! – All the trees for our big distribution arrive at the Garden Centre.

ARBOR WEEK 2000 . . .



← Despite the rain, members from the community came out to join in the celebrations and collect a tree, bag of manure, cup of fertiliser and instructions.



↑ Back home, getting on with the real business of Arbor Day!

For Arbor Week 2000 Abalimi's focus was in Samora Machel, a new housing development in Philippi, which is virtually devoid of any plants. For Abalimi it was once again a real joy to join forces with so many committed partners to share in the celebration of this annual event. With the support of our funders, the community, the Philippi Youth Forum and Naluxolo Primary, Abalimi was able to distribute 3 630 trees and raise awareness within the community. A further 2 871 trees were planted elsewhere.

Luhlaza High Enviro Club in action! – The TOTAL SA greening focus for 2000

Luhlaza High School's Environmental Club must be congratulated on all their enthusiasm and hard work, which won them first place in the National Eduplant Competition. Well done Luhlaza!

For the pupil driven environmental club, the work really has been a labour of love, inspired and encouraged by Ms. Le Tape – a teacher who is not afraid of digging in and getting her hands dirty! Their work has resulted in a beautiful vegetable garden, involving the community, an indigenous garden with a wooden walkway, a rockery garden, fishpond and many lessons in working together and overcoming disappointments and obstacles. This year as the Total Arbor Week greening focus Abalimi, sponsored by Total SA, worked with Luhlaza to upgrade the entrance of the school.



Eindhoven Primary – Before . . .



and . . .

AFTER! ↓



Eindhoven Primary is leading the way in the Delft community! Eindhoven was one of the 3 schools which won a R5000 award from TOTAL SA during Arbor Week 1999 and one of the 12 schools involved in the iSLP project in the Cape Flats. For us this school represents an outstanding example of what can be achieved when a school is committed to making a difference to their environment and to following through with our workshop process. Our five day Integrated Land Use Design workshop is aimed at sharing information in an interactive way to support and empower schools to take on the initiative for transforming their school grounds themselves.



Behind the scenes – work in progress

In an environment that is sandy, windy and rife with theft, vandalism and violence, Eindhoven worked with many partners to help realise their vision. One of these partners was Roger Meintjies, a South African artist, who as part of his artwork for an exhibition in Lisbon, donated an extra R15 000 to implement the school's greening plan. Thanks to Roger, the iSLP and TOTAL SA, the dedication of the greening committee and the support of the community and School Governing Body, this school has become a real work of art – a leading model and inspiration to other schools.



Bongolethu Primary

← A pupil from Bongolethu Primary together with the principal, Mr. Mlindizawe, present Mr Sigi Naidoo from Murray and Roberts, with a drawing of their new school grounds. Thank you Murray and Roberts!



↑ Pupils enjoying their "new" school!

The Bongolethu Greening Celebration, held on 12 October 2000, marked the end of the Murray and Roberts Greening Project. This project has been an ongoing project for the past 15 months, following on from the SEED pilot programme which was begun in the school in 1998.

The very active and enthusiastic Greening Committee and the generosity and commitment of Murray and Roberts, has transformed the school grounds.

THE URBAN AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME (UAP)



Umanyano Lomama

Umanyano Lomama, meaning "Woman's Unity", is a remarkable group of gardeners from the Town II community in Khayelitsha. Although most of the women are themselves unemployed and struggling to make ends meet, they have been moved to action by the need in their community. They are currently feeding 98 children daily, through their church and two of the local schools, from the food they grow in their vegetable gardens. The group is also involved in training other mothers, like themselves, to grow vegetables. The independence, initiative and hard work of this group continues to be an inspiration for our Urban Agriculture Programme. Abalimi is proud to be in partnership with them! In many ways this group has achieved the kind of independence and sustainability we hope to see in all our groups.

← Umanyano Lomama with some of the children they help to feed.



↑ Hard at work discussing common agreements

Over the past season our community garden groups have been busy indoors as well as outdoors! During our last internal evaluation the Abalimi staff began to develop an organisation building "project cycle" focusing on the steps required to help groups to develop internal capacity and to provide them with a solid base from which to work. In this way we hope to be better able to help emerging groups towards sustainability and reaching their goals. Recently the fieldwork team ran workshops with the new members of the S.C.A.G.A. garden and emerging Nondyabo Community Group. The workshops focused on helping the groups to identify problems and possible solutions, to create a common vision and reach some basic agreements about how they will work together.



← Abalimi and Quaker Peace fieldworkers inspect the produce at S.C.A.G.A.

Abalimi and Quaker Peace have for many years both been working with urban agriculture in the Cape Flats Townships. Recently, in the spirit of the Local Agenda 21 initiative, it was decided that we should meet together in a more organised manner to strengthen the relationship between the two organisations. An initial meeting was held and then two fieldwork exchanges – one to look at Abalimi's projects and one to look at the work Quaker Peace is doing. This was followed up by a workshop to consolidate learnings and future steps. The aims of the exchange were to share ideas, experiences, problems and solutions. To come together in order to strengthen our impact and voice in the communities in which we work.

The Constantiaberg Garden Clubs and Abalimi field staff with members from Abalimi supported community gardens. →

In November The Constantia Valley and Constantiaberg Garden Clubs held another magnificent open day. The clubs invited the public to visit 5 of their beautiful gardens, with tea provided. Abalimi was the main recipient of this event, which happens every second year. This year we received R20 000!

We also had a very successful cultural exchange between the Constantiaberg Garden Clubs gardeners and community gardeners from the townships. This proved to be a learning and sharing experience, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. In Autumn 2001 the Constantiaberg gardeners will be coming to have a look at the Khayelitsha gardens.



THANK YOU

FOR DONATIONS AND SUPPORT RECEIVED DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD:

- THE GREEN TRUST/ WWF for your kind donation of office furniture and equipment and your special ongoing partnership and support for the whole greening programme.
- OLD MUTUAL for this newsletter.
- THE CONSTANTIA VALLEY AND CONSTANTIABERG GARDEN CLUBS for your interest, friendship and the magnificent donation raised at your open day to support our township gardeners.
- ROGER MEINTJIES for the R15 000 donated to Eindhoven Primary.
- MISEREOR for your genuine partnership and support over the years.
- ANGLOVAAL MINING LTD. for R16 500 for assisting three community groups with resources.
- BP SOUTHERN AFRICA for supporting the establishment of the Peace Lily Project.
- CITY OF TYGERBERG for R10 000 for the greening of Ikhusi Primary School in Khayelitsha.
- THE COLD CHAIN for your ongoing support for micro-vegetable gardens.
- DE BEERS FUND for R22 000 for training opportunities for the community.
- The D.G. MURRAY TRUST for their generous grant for all our work.
- THE PEOPLES DEVELOPMENT TRUST for R10 000 towards staff training.
- THE ST OLA'S TRUST for R14 000 towards tree planting and micro-farming.
- HYM AND JEN RABINOWITZ for R1 260 from Hym's Open Day.
- TOTAL SA for the greening focus at Luhlaza High and the prize money awarded to 3 schools during Arbor Week 1999, which is being used for greening.
- D.W.A.F. (Dept. Water Affairs and Forestry) for the 3 000 trees for Arbor Week and for your commitment and support.
- NETAFIM for donating 2 "state-of-the-art" drum-drip irrigation systems.
- MR. MOHR for your ongoing donation of manure for Arbor Week.
- LAUGHTONS & CO. (Pty) Ltd. for donating bags for manure and organic fertilizer for Arbor Week.
- NEULANDS PARKS AND FORESTS NURSERY for your generous donation of 1 500 trees for Arbor Week.
- SHADOWLANDS AND CAPELANDS NURSERY for your Arbor Week contributions.

Our many friends – Individuals, Clubs, Small Business, Social and Church Groups – your ongoing interest and support are a great encouragement, and your donations in kind and cash are an endless inspiration to us.

If we have missed anyone who wishes specifically to be mentioned, please let us know.

↓ Members of the community groups documenting their hopes and fears on balloons. Later they burst the fear!



NOTICE BOARD

Shopping List:

Our last "Shopping List" resulted in a flood of much needed and much appreciated furniture, heaters and an answering machine – thank you all so much! There are, however, things which we still need to upgrade our training room at the Khayelitsha Garden Centre:

Fans – the heaters will be great in the winter, but at the moment we are melting!!

Carpeting for the training room

Material for new curtains

Storage shelves

A large blackboard or whiteboard.

Provisional dates for Open Day tours:

Thursday 29 March 14h00

Tuesday 3 April 09h00

If you are interested in coming along please contact Belinda at 361 3497, before 9 March 2001.

Some up-coming features to watch out for in the next newsletter:

Ilitha Park Gardening Group and horticulture training

Abalimi and Constantia Garden Club exchange

Drum-drip irrigation system in action!

A LETTER FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN . . .

The EDEN gardeners with some of their beautiful produce, December 2000. →

Dear Friend of ABALIMI,

France Mxokozeli (centre), the initiator of this unique men's garden, situated in the "bush" just outside of Khayelitsha, has this to say . . .

"I came to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape in 1975 to look for work. Three years ago, I decided that I could no longer sit and wait for a job that may never come, so I began growing vegetables here in the bush.

I told my neighbour, Khumbulani "Rasta" Ndzeke (far left in photo) to come and look at what I was doing. He was so inspired that he joined me. In this way more men have joined. There are now nine of us working here together in the bush and others who want to start.

Our dream is to become proper market gardeners and create jobs for ourselves through this work, by selling our produce at the markets . . ."

ABALIMI normally supports women growers, who have been the most active in gardening for many years.

But now, with unemployment biting ever deeper, we are also assisting groups like EDEN to get going. Since 1999, we have provided them with training and marketing support. They have sold many hundreds of rands worth of beautiful organic produce locally and to outlets in Cape Town. So far, they have paid for all their own production inputs. We are planning, with them, to find a permanent site where they can establish their dream.

Can you help?

There is the possibility of land to which they could move. But the soil there is unfenced, unprotected pure sand. Unless we can find extra help, their dream will remain just that.

It costs R250/£25.00/\$60.00 m² to establish a community market garden in the Cape Flats sand, including fencing, water-wise irrigation, start-up seed and manure, windbreaks, tools, further training, follow-up, planning and marketing support.

Any amount, large or small, will go a long way (see donation form enclosed). By donating to this project, you will be assisting many men, women and their families to stay clear from malnutrition, desperate poverty and the temptations of crime which come along with it. You will be helping such people build a new grassroots self-help economy in their communities. This economy is perhaps the only real long-term solution to unemployment among the poor.

I am excited about EDEN and similar projects. A movement in the grassroots is gradually forming. I hope that you, too, will feel the excitement and stay with us, or join us, in the push for "ground-up" employment.

Many thanks,

Robert Small

Director

P.S. I am confident that you will be pleased with the results of our work and extend an invitation to you to come and see for yourself!

