

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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Abalimi Bezekhaya (*meaning farmers of the home in isiXhosa*), established 1982, is a non-profit micro-farming organisation that aims to provide basic human necessities for indigent persons, along a development chain from survival to commercial (farmer development chain¹ - FDC), by assisting impoverished, unemployed and underemployed groups and communities within the area of Greater Cape Town known as the Cape Flats and surrounds within the metropole to establish and maintain their own vegetable gardens, so as to enable those groups and communities to supplement their supply of food and create livelihoods.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report provides a narrative review for the period **March 2020 to February 2021** to correspond with the annual financial report. It gives an outline of the main activities that happened during the year and includes key information around governance issues, strategic focus and key concerns.

The last year can be considered as one of the most challenging periods in recent history – from social impact and unemployment, to food insecurity and fear around COVID19. Our field team and garden centers are at the heart of the community and strongly experienced the impact of the Corona virus.

We were fortunate that Abalimi could continue supporting the community despite lockdown, as agriculture is an essential service. We decided to do manure runs like we did in the 90s, taking a mobile nursery with seedlings and manure out to the communities. This reduced the need for people to use public transport, while providing them with basics to keep their gardens growing to provide vegetables. Cloth masks were handed out at no cost whenever resources were purchased, as our way of supporting the community.

There has also been an upsurge in requests for new gardens. From Langa, to Phoenix in Milnerton, Vrygrond and Khayelitsha we have assisted with planning and implementation of home and community vegetable gardens.

¹ http://abalimibezekhaya.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Abalimi_Farmer-development-chain.pdf

2 STRATEGIC FOCUS

As experienced around the world, the COVID pandemic had a significant impact on the operations of Abalimi and led to a surge in interest around food gardening.

With agriculture being an essential service, Abalimi could continue **providing support to the township farmers around growing vegetables** during lockdown based on the following four main pillars:

- Provision of training and extension services about growing vegetables organically;
- Provision of resources for organic farming, such as seeds, seedlings and manure;
- Provision of support with capital infrastructure investment, specifically around soil building (composted manure) and irrigation (pumps and irrigation); and
- Assist with market access for sale of surplus vegetables.



Figure 1: Manure runs were done during COVID 19 to supply resources

The recent COVID19 pandemic increased the need for and focus on food security, while it recognized urban food gardening as an essential service. Climate change continues to impact on the most vulnerable communities with longer, drier and windier summers, as well as deeper and longer droughts. We believe that the core of the work that Abalimi does, to support food security in the townships, remains essential to our target audience.

**“COVID19
increased the need
for and focus on
food security”**

3 GOVERNANCE

The Abalimi board continued to provide the core of the governance within the organization and the **board members** during this period outlined below:

- Morwesi Ramonyai – Chairperson
- Grace Stead – Secretary and Public Officer
- Macmillan Dzeha - Treasurer
- Rob Small
- Sibongile Sityebi
- Ma Nancy Maqungo (stepped down June 2020)
- Ma Christina Kaba (stepped down June 2020)
- Jeremy Jones (joined June 2020)

The core responsibilities of the Board have been confirmed as providing:

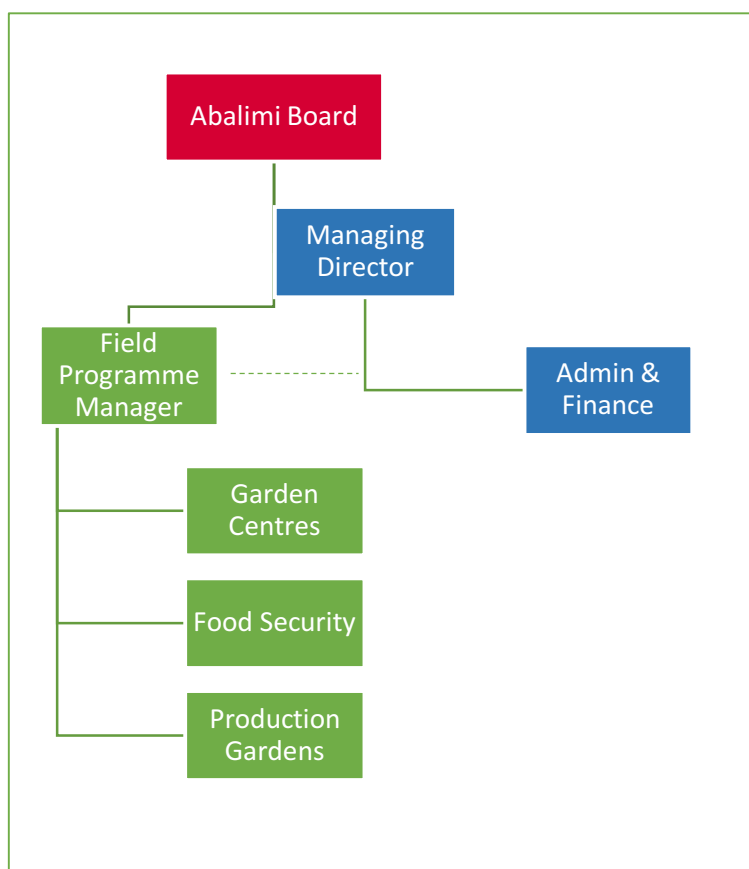
- Strategy
- Policy and systems
- Oversight – check on implementation
- Disclosure – reporting / M&E

4 STAFF OVERVIEW

The staff remain a key resource and with their dedication and resilience a showcase of the strength that has kept Abalimi going through thick and thin. Even during COVID they refused to stay at home because they felt their community needs them. Through adapting the way in which we worked, we provided ongoing support in a difficult time and came out stronger in the end.

The organogram as outlined on the right has not changed in the past year, with training and field team work integrated into the core tasks of the field team

The team is still led by Grace Stead (Interim Managing Director) with the support of Dave Golding (Field Program Manager). There has been a change within the admin and finance team members, however the field team remains the same.



We are pleased to have welcomed two **agricultural graduate interns** sponsored by the Department of Agriculture for a period of two years. Unfortunately, we were not able to host international volunteers due to COVID, but look forward to welcoming them again in September 2021.

All staff have formal **contracts** in place. A **pension plan** is in place for staff who opted to contribute towards this. The Consolidated Employers Organisation (CEO) and SEESA have continued to provide **labour support** to Abalimi during the past year although there were no staff concerns.



Figure 2: Abalimi team (Grace Stead was taking the photo)

At the end of February 2020 there were a total of **12 full-time staff members**, with the majority women (82%) and two men. Nine are African (73%), with one Coloured and two White staff members.

The Managing Director position is still an interim position (since April 2018) because the focus has been on sorting out of the administrative problems, setting up suitable systems and securing long-term funding. Once long-term funding is secured a permanent appointment will be made. Three staff members are 65 and we are currently working on succession planning to allow staff members to retire.

5 BENEFICIARIES

Abalimi's core geographical focus remains the Cape Flats and specifically Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi and surrounding areas, although more recently there seems to be a slightly wider reach with queries from Mfuleni and beyond. During COVID we also assisted additional gardens on request beyond our core geographical focus area.

The beneficiaries are mostly Black, disadvantaged individuals from the townships. Around 80% of the people are unemployed according to the farmer register (up from 78% the year before). From September 2019 to August 2020 there were 1265 new individuals who engaged with Abalimi through training and the garden centres, with 2219 people returning, making it **3484 active gardeners coming through the garden centres** (compared to 1786 the year before). They support households with an average 4,7 people per household, which is an **estimate of 16 375 people** that are supported through micro-farming. Data has been captured since 2008, with a total of 10 832 micro farmers gaining training, access to resources, mentoring and support through Abalimi. Around 24% of the farmers were younger than 35 years (up from 11%).

16 375
household
members
supported



Figure 3: Some of Abalimi beneficiaries

6 LOGISTICS & COMMUNICATION

Our administrative **office** is based at 20 Boston Circle, which is accessible and in a safe environment, with safe on-site parking for vehicles. The core of our activities is however run from the **garden centres** based in Khayelitsha and Nyanga.

Communication systems are functioning well and we are pleased to have office-hours uncapped wifi at the office and both garden centres. We have managed to retain our Telkom line with the same telephone number, which can also be accessed off-site. The office and field team computers, laptops and software were upgraded during the last year. An uninterrupted power supply (UPS) should be invested in specifically for the server and wifi to allow for work continuity during Eskom blackouts.

Teething problems around **Pastel Accounting and Pastel Payroll** have been sorted out and the financial management systems are working well. The 2020/21 annual financials have been submitted to HGCA for auditing.

Our **social media** presence is still looking good, focusing on Instagram and Facebook to promote the work that we are doing. There is also a dedicated marketing campaign for the farmers in the townships, which is done via flyers and posters rather than social media.

The new Nissan bakkie has been very busy doing general **collections and deliveries** in the townships. We are still in the situation where most staff members don't have driver's licenses, or if they do, they don't have vehicles, which puts a lot of strain on logistics and most of the staff travel by public transport for work purposes.

7 TRAINING & GARDEN CENTRES

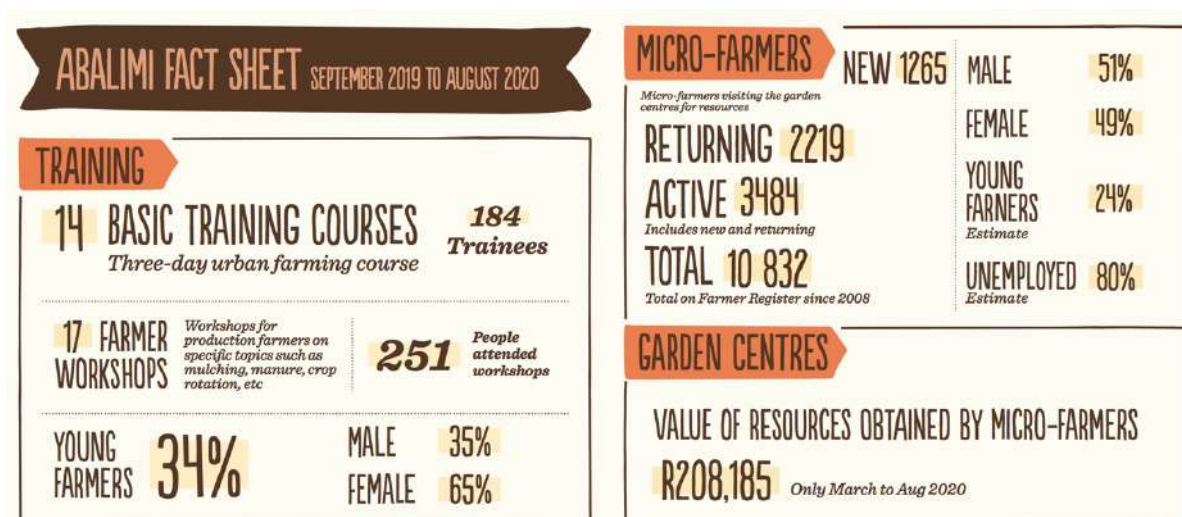
COVID-19 had a significant impact on training and sales, which lead to an increase in interest and support around food security. Over 440 people were **trained** during the period of March 2020 to February 2021, including basic training courses, demonstrations and focus farmer workshops. During the peak of COVID-19 we were not able to do training, but as the pandemic lifted there was a surge in interest and training sessions were done back-to-back.



Figure 4: Training community members in Nyanga

The **training manual** has been reviewed and translated into English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, while a set of posters have been designed to support training sessions. Some of these posters have also been adapted as posters for distribution with resources, such as "how to plant a tree", "worm farming" and "greywater systems".

Because lockdown made it difficult for people to get around, we started to do **manure runs** as we did in the early 1990's. This allowed us to take bags of manure, seeds and seedlings to the surrounding community and sell these at nominal cost. This reduced the need for beneficiaries to take public transport, while they could get resources to grow their own vegetables. A specific crowdfunding campaign was run to support this initiative, and it included the distribution of cloth face masks at no cost.



The **garden centres** have been a buzz of activity as community members stream in to buy resources and come for training. There has been a focus on promoting membership, with a membership drive for community gardens during February and March. Plant and seedling propagation at the Khayelitsha Garden Centre is also taking off and sales are increasing.

8 SPECIAL PROJECTS

The following special projects were implemented during the past year:

8.1 COVID Support

During the heat of the pandemic the focus was on providing resources to the local community by doing manure runs. Over 1000 cloth face masks were distributed at no cost when any agri-resources were sold. Various new gardens were established including Lusaka Food Garden (Khayelitsha –existing garden with new members), Phoenix (Milnerton), Khayelitsha Bible School (Khayelitsha),

Hazeldean (Philippi – training and resources support). Assessments



Figure 5: Khayelitsha Bible School

were done for Revolutionary Yoga at Smallville Community Garden (PHA) and Vrygrond, but no implementation could be done because they needed a front end loader to level the area.

8.2 Training and resource distribution to 300 households

Abalimi was appointed by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to provide training and resources to 300 households. The beneficiaries were mostly from the Cape Flats area and were required to have a keen interest in food gardening and earn below R4500 per household. All the beneficiaries had to participate in basic urban agriculture training and complete an application which was then reviewed and approved by the DOA. Beneficiaries received resources including potting soil, composted manure, seeds, seedlings, a tree, planter bags, tools, watering, a worm farm and a greywater system. Abalimi also provided a voucher system to allow them to come to the garden centre to get additional seedlings over the next few months as part of the overall package.



Figure 6: DOA resource distribution to household gardens

8.3 Assessing and supporting community gardens with VPUU

Abalimi was approached by the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrade (VPUU) project to assist with implementation of a project “from a handout to a circular economy”. Our role included the



Figure 7: VPUU site assessment at Nonkululeku

assessment of over 65 community-based gardens to determine what resources and support they need to be more productive post COVID, as well as agri-resource distribution and mentoring. These gardens were in specific geographical areas where VPUU works, including Kuyasa, Harare and Monwabisi in Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Nyanga, Manenberg and Bonteheuwel. It was a great opportunity for these gardens to get infrastructure including irrigation and shaded harvesting areas.

8.4 PEDI farmer training

Philippi Economic Development Initiative (PEDI) asked that we assist with training of 50 farmers in the Philippi area at an entry level, so we provided three training sessions on basic introduction to urban agriculture (3 days each). These farmers could also apply for the DOA resource packs and will be receiving additional support from PEDI.

8.5 Khulisa Amafama

UCOOK, PEDI and Abalimi have teamed up to provide support to four community gardens to help them to secure market access, develop their skills, increase income for better livelihoods and ensure community food security.

The project will run over a period of a year and forms part of the UCOOK For Good Initiative. By developing a production plan that suits the needs of UCOOK, we can secure market access for the farmers. Abalimi is providing the agricultural support, while PEDI is providing logistical support. The project is furthermore providing financial support for agricultural resources and infrastructure, with the aim to make a lasting impact on these gardens.



Figure 8: Khulisa Amafama project with UCOOK and PEDI visiting Feed the Khaltsha

8.6 Neighbourhood Old Age Homes

We were approached by Neighbourhood Old Age Homes (NOAH) to assist them with training of over 70 of their members in food gardening, as well support the establishment of communal gardens at five of their residences. This fortunately coincided with the DOA project, so they could apply for the DOA resources and will be receiving ongoing mentoring and support from Abalimi in the year ahead.



Figure 9: Training NOAH beneficiaries

8.7 Support for SCAGA from FTFA and Shoprite

Shoprite has been providing support to the Siyazama Community Allotment Garden Association (SCAGA) line of gardens via Food and Trees for Africa (FTFA), which has been implemented by Abalimi. This included support for resources and tools, as well as monthly educational sessions. Through this partnership, the SCAGA line have also been able to sell their spinach to the Spinach King. There is however an ongoing battle to try to get a lease agreement in place for the SCAGA line.

8.8 Planter boxes for ECDs

This project has unfortunately taken quite a bit longer than anticipated, due to school holidays and COVID constraints, however it is finally complete with nine Early Childhood Development (ECDs) Centres receiving planter boxes for growing vegetables. The teachers also received training and tools, as well as seeds and seedlings. Abalimi will continue to provide support to these ECDs.



Figure 10: Planter boxes at various ECDs

8.9 Manelisi's Urban Food Garden

Manelisi Mapukata is a farmer in Gugulethu who was taught by his father to grow vegetables and his love for farming has only grown over the years. He started out at his home in Gugulethu, but expanded to a portion of land at Fezeka. Abalimi received dedicated funding from the Silvertree Trust to support Manelisi with his garden and has been working with Manelisi and Rosie Campbell to upgrade the garden.

8.10 Umingonaphaka



A Swedish based Triathlon and Swimrun group has been supporting the Umingonaphaka Educare for a while, and requested that Abalimi support them with establishing food gardens. This included training of staff and parents from the area, provision of resources, as well as an upgrade to the existing garden at the school.

Figure 11: Supporting Umingonaphaka Educare in Khayelitsha with training, resources and mentoring.

8.11 Participatory Guarantee System

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) South Africa in partnership with the South African Organic Sector Association (SAOSA) have launched a PGS Pollinator programme to help with the establishment of various PGS groups across the country. Abalimi is helping the Ikamva Lafama PGS in the Cape Flats and aim to have ten farms certified by the end of the year. Ikamva Lafama PGS is one of five groups in Cape Town, and each group has its own independent organisational structure and members.

8.12 Vendor Programme

The vendor programme has grown over the last few years with more vendors starting to sell resources within their local community and vendors also growing their beneficiary base. The COVID pandemic helped to create awareness around the importance of food security, which helped the vendors to reach out to more people in their communities.



Figure 12: Ludwe from the vendor programme

9 AWARDS

The **2020 Eco-Logic Awards** was truly a double delight for Abalimi Bezekhaya, as we won gold awards for both the Eco-Community Category, as well as the Green Economy Category for their work in creating market access through Harvest of Hope.

Abalimi won the Eco-Community Gold Award, sponsored by Dis-Chem, and gave recognition to the work that Abalimi has done within their community to protect, preserve, or restore the Earth's eco system and natural resources.

Harvest of Hope won the Green Economy Award, supported by the National Cleaner Production Centre South Africa (NCPC-SA), for providing a service that supported the growth of the Green Economy in South Africa. This award recognized the fact that Harvest of Hope was the first community based organization to buy organic vegetables from the township based micro-farmers for resale through a box scheme and business-to-business for hotels and restaurants. Over a period of

11 years HOH worked hand-in-hand with the farmers until they were in a position to stand on their own feet.

Harvest of Hope was established at a time when local organic produce was not readily available in the main supermarkets, making it even more unique. This pioneering move led the way to demonstrating that access to markets for the farmers was possible, built confidence of the farmers and inspired others to follow suite and take it forward.

Having opened the opportunity for farmers to sell directly to former clients or alternative outlets, Harvest of Hope closed their doors in December 2019. Abalimi will continue to support the farmers with market access while they grow and sell their vegetables, but no longer act as an intermediary. It is a graduation, not a funeral, and this award gives recognition to the achievement of creating the market access for the farmers.



Abalimi, Harvest of Hope and the urban farmers are pleased to have received recognition for the work done over many years by many people.

10 FINANCE

Abalimi again received a clean audit for 2019/20, while the 2020/21 financials have been submitted and a clean audit is anticipated. All outstanding SARS payments were made and we are pleased that we finally have access to our SARS profile again and have received our SARS tax certificate. We have bought a new vehicle for deliveries and all long-term creditors are paid up with only one long-term no-interest loan still outstanding with Ineke Meijer (R285 000).

10.1 INCOME

Our core funders have continued to support us and we have been able to do additional training and implementation which brought in funding from special projects. We are extremely grateful to our donors, which are a mix of private-individuals, independent trusts and foundations, and Misereor.

The following provides an overview **donations** received during the last year (**R 2 161 810**):

• General donations from Abalimi friends and donors	R 605 421
• AC Louw Trust	R 250 000
• Dandelion Trust	R 60 000
• Douglas Jooste Trust	R 250 000
• FH Baumann / St Olas Trust	R 140 000
• Farm & Garden Trust	R 174 269

• Back-a-Buddy	R 24 360
• Global Giving	R 111 000
• Misereor	R 989 890
• Uthando	R 136 760

The following funding was received through **special projects (Total)**:

• National Development Agency	R 64 994
• Food & Trees for Africa	R 14 128
• Department of Agriculture Households Project	R 321 000
• Violence Prevention Through Urban Upgrade	R 209 990
• External training	R 165 996

There has been an increase in donations, however this could be attributed to COVID, which is now being followed by donor fatigue. Now that we have our SARS tax clearance back in place we can do more work for government and apply for government financial support.



Figure 13: The garden centres services over 3500 people

10.2 EXPENDITURE

There was a strong focus on curbing unnecessary costs with the main expenditure items outlined below, with a total expense of **R3 772 916**:

• Administration (rent, insurance, maintenance, feed, etc)	R 432 917
• Transport & vehicles	R 30 979
• Staff (salaries, PAYE, UIF, WCF, contract staff)	R 2 051 291
• IT & communication (website, telecoms, IT)	R 52 929
• Suppliers (manure, seedlings, irrigation, etc)	R 465 211
• Accounting & auditing	R 331 106
• Other (loan repayments, newsletter)	R 407 586

The reduction in both income and expenditure is due to the closing of Harvest of Hope

High level overview of the main **income and expenditure** is attached as an annexure, although detailed Annual Financial Statements are still being audited and can be made available on request.

11 CLOSING STATEMENT

The past year will always be remembered for the COVID pandemic which hit communities across the world and impacted on food security. This was no different in Cape Town where Abalimi Bezekhaya experienced a surge in the need for food security and interest in being more self-sufficient by growing their own vegetables. Various new gardens were supported and Abalimi assisted with the implementation of a number of special projects, which helped to bring in core funding and create awareness around the importance of the work that we continue to do in the disadvantaged communities.

We believe our work is vital to create a new culture of food gardening among the poor and unemployed, which could contribute to the sustainability of communities where food security is a major issue.



Grace Stead
Managing Director
Abalimi Bezekhaya
April 2021



Morwesi Ramonyai
Chairperson
Abalimi Board