



2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT



Abalimi Bezekhaya

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Abalimi Bezekhaya (*meaning farmers of the home in isiXhosa*), established 1982, is a non-profit community based 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

We had a successful year in 2022, with a major highlight being the celebration of 40 years of township farming by Abalimi. The Farmer Festival, Wild Foods Cook-off, and Open Gardens events were all successful in bringing attention to the work being done by Abalimi and its farmers. These events not only celebrated the milestone of 40 years but also provided a platform for farmers to showcase their work, exchange knowledge and network with other stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

Despite the celebrations, Abalimi continued with its normal agricultural activities of providing training, extension services, and agricultural resources to the farmers. These activities are crucial in ensuring that the farmers have the necessary skills and resources to succeed in their farming ventures. The field team played a critical role in providing the needed support and implementing special projects to improve the farmers' outcomes.

Harvest of Hope was relaunched unexpectedly after the closure of PEDI Agrihub, however they were able to build on a solid foundation and make great strides in the first few months of the relaunch. Abalimi's role in providing logistical and organisational support was critical to the success of the relaunch.

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

In terms of governance issues, Abalimi continued to adhere to its policies and procedures, ensuring transparency and accountability in its operations. The strategic focus remained on empowering township farmers and promoting sustainable agriculture. Key concerns included ensuring the financial sustainability of its operations and responding to the ever-changing needs of its farmers.

Overall, the Annual Report for the period of March 2022 to February 2023 highlights a successful year with notable achievements and some challenges. Abalimi's commitment to empowering township farmers and promoting sustainable agriculture remains strong, and its efforts to address key concerns and challenges are commendable.

2 STRATEGIC FOCUS

The main focus for 2022 was the forty year celebration of Abalimi, however we continued to deliver services based on our five 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);
- Assist with **market access** for sale of surplus vegetables; and
- Support around **social and organisational development**.



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
- Jeremy Jones
- Charles Bertram
- Dr Ethel Phiri

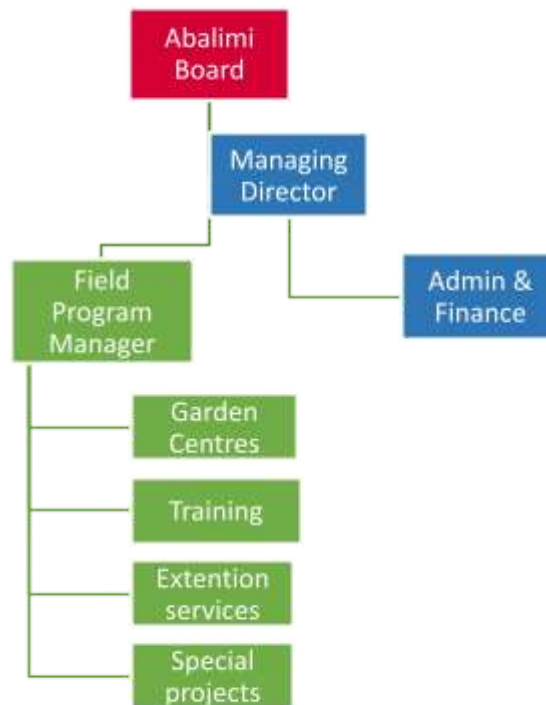
The **core responsibilities of the Board** have been confirmed as providing:

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

4 STAFF OVERVIEW

This section highlights the importance of the Abalimi staff, who have been committed throughout the years despite the pressure placed on them. The team is led by competent individuals, including the Managing Director and team leaders in field activities and administration and finance.

Abalimi has also made efforts to ensure that staff have formal contracts, and a pension plan is in place for those who choose to contribute towards it. Abalimi has also received labour support from external organisations, such as the Consolidated Employers Organisation (CEO) and SEESA.



The NPO has a diverse staff composition, with the majority of employees being women (66%) and the majority of African descent (83%). The organization has also welcomed interns and volunteers from various backgrounds, which adds to the diversity of the team and provides valuable opportunities for learning and growth.

We recognise the importance of the Abalimi staff in achieving our goals and highlights the NPO's efforts to support and provide opportunities for its employees.

5 BENEFICIARIES

Throughout the year, Abalimi has remained committed to its core geographical focus on the Cape Flats, specifically in the areas of Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi, and the surrounding areas. While maintaining this focus, Abalimi has also received inquiries from other areas, including Mfuleni and Langa, indicating a slightly wider reach.



Our beneficiaries primarily consist of Black individuals (99%) who are disadvantaged and residing in townships. It is important to note that over 80% of our beneficiaries are unemployed, and the average household size is 4.3 people. Despite these challenges, Abalimi has continued to work towards improving the lives of those we serve.

Our efforts to empower the community through home gardening have seen positive results. Over 85% of the clients we served at our garden centers were interested in establishing their own home gardens. The gender ratio of our clients was equally split between male and female, demonstrating the accessibility and relevance of our services to a diverse range of individuals.

In summary, Abalimi's commitment to its core geographical focus and the communities we serve has remained steadfast. Our efforts to empower individuals through home gardening have continued to yield positive results, and we remain dedicated to improving the lives of those we serve.

6 LOGISTICS & COMMUNICATION

Our administrative office is conveniently located at 20 Boston Circle, offering easy access and a safe environment, with secure on-site parking facilities for vehicles. While this serves as our administrative hub, the core of our activities is conducted from our garden centres situated in Khayelitsha and Nyanga.

Our financial management systems are functioning well, although manual capture of sales dockets from the garden centres remains a time-consuming process. This is managed internally, with support from an external accountant and annual financial audits. We are currently preparing to submit our 2022/23 annual financials to HGCA for auditing.

We are pleased to report that our communication systems are functioning optimally. Our office and garden centres are equipped with office-hours uncapped wifi, enabling efficient communication. We have also retained our Telkom line with the same telephone number, which can be accessed off-site. Our office and field team computers, laptops, software, and anti-virus systems are all kept up to date.

Our social media presence has grown significantly, with a particular focus on celebrating our 40th anniversary during 2022. We have observed an increase in engagement via WhatsApp and SMS, with encouraging peer-to-peer discussions and learning opportunities among our farmers.

To facilitate deliveries, we primarily use our Nissan bakkie, while the Opel bakkie is more suited for site visits as it has a canopy. As part of our efforts to enhance our service delivery, we continue to encourage staff to obtain their driver's licences.

Overall, we are pleased with the performance of our administrative and communication systems and the progress made in enhancing our social media presence. Our transport fleet is adequately serving our needs, and we are committed to further improving our services in the future.

7 FORTIETH CELEBRATION

In April we hosted the Farmer Festival with over 1200 micro farmers, while in July we had an amazing cook-up with chefs and farmers. The final activity for the year was to showcase the home and community gardens across the townships as we hosted the Garden Showcase with an award ceremony.

Farmer Festival

Saturday, 23 April 2022, saw the gathering of over 1 200 micro-framers (home and community gardeners) in a historical gathering by Abalimi Bezekhaya to celebrate 40 years of township farming. The main purpose of the event was to celebrate the success and longevity of the organisation, provide micro-farmers with the opportunity to learn, and offer opportunities to network and engage around organic and regenerative farming.



Celebrating 40 years of township farming



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The event was hosted at Zola Senior Secondary School in Khayelitsha, where 23 exhibitors displayed their goods and services while engaging and interacting with local community farmers. A range of educational presentations took place on topics such as soil health, medicinal plants, orphaned crops and how to run your farm as a business, as well as an introduction to PGS, the organic certification system.

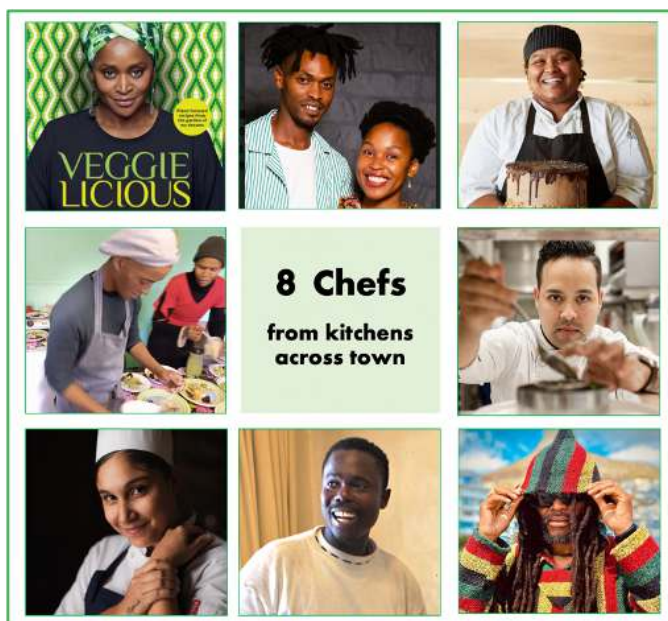
For the Abalimi team it was important to support the local economy: 14 community based vendors were included along with 10 local businesses that

supplied services. 52 jobs were created on the day to assist with various activities related to the festival, while 36 local taxis were hired to transport people from across the Cape Flats to the event.

Wild food cook-off

During its years as the distribution arm of Abalimi, Harvest of Hope managed to buy freshly grown and organically harvested produce from township farmers and sell this to upmarket families and restaurants in town. Between 2008 and 2019 they sold over R16 million worth of veggies, and over R10 million was paid directly to the farmers for the produce.

The chefs were from across town and Mokgadi Itsweng from Johannesburg. Wesli Jacobs and Brinelle Chunningham were representing Table Bay and Mount Nelson Belmond Hotels, while Nabo Binase and Lipato Shogole were from Ukutya at Makers Landing. We were also very pleased to have Zuko Mdatyulwa, Palesa Klaasen, Theba Shumba and Luyanda Sogiba representing the communities of Khayelitsha, Delft, Gugulethu and Nyanga.



The farmers were from community gardens in Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu and surrounds. Siyazama Community Allotment Garden Association (SCAGA or also known as the powerline project) was established by Abalimi in 1996 as the first large urban micro-farm in the country, while Moya weKhaya (meaning “spirit of home”) was established in 2014. Feed the Khaltsha was started during COVID by a group of young men, while Masiphile is a group of different farmers working together. Asande and Manelisi are from Gugulethu, while Zingisa is a community garden in Nyanga and Sunshine Organic Farm is in Driftsands.



The indigenous ingredients being made available to the cooking teams have been grown by the farmers. Along with Pedi Farm and the Sustainability Institute, they have been the early adopters who are innovating cultivation of Western Cape winter rainfall wild plant foods that were traditionally only ever wild harvested.

The conventional ingredients were all sourced from community food gardens in the townships. These vegetables are all grown without any poisons or chemical fertilizers, as Abalimi only supports organic farming principles. Moya weKhaya and Feed the Khaltsha have also been PGS* Certified, as naturally grown.

Garden Showcase

The aim of the Garden Showcase was to invite people from across town to visit the gardens. They could meet the farmers and chat to them about their challenges and even buy their produce straight from their garden.



8 TRAINING & GARDEN CENTRES

The **garden centres** are still the stronghold of the work that Abalimi does. This is where the community can buy affordable and accessible resources, such as seeds, seedlings and manure, as well as tools. The garden centres also produce veggies for sale to the community and HOH. They have demonstration gardens and are a shining example of what can be achieved.



Training is a core pillar of Abalimi and provides training opportunity about basic food gardening for the local community. The training is done at both garden centres, but followed up with mentoring and extension services through visiting the gardens.

Training has decreased slightly compared to the previous year, but still much higher than pre COVID numbers. The reason for the decline is most likely because we did the DOA training in 2021, which pushed up the numbers quite a bit.

Type of training	2021	2022	
Basic training	39	26	sessions
Basic training	670	379	people
Focus farmer	14	15	sessions
Focus farmer	196	404	people
Agriplanner	2	2	session
Agriplanner	42	30	people
Total sessions	55	43	sessions
Total people	908	813	people
Youth	20%	13%	
Men	34%	32%	
Women	63%	68%	



9 SPECIAL PROJECTS

The following special projects were implemented during the past year, some of which are ongoing over a longer term where we have partnered with local organisations:

9.1 Neighbourhood Old Age Homes (NOAH) Gardens

The partnership with NOAH is still going well. We have trained 100 beneficiaries in this project and continue to support 90 households in Khayelitsha and six communal gardens based in Elsies, Stellenbosch, Khayelitsha, Woodstock, Maitland and Athlone.

The project is a great partnership where we can work with the NOAH team to provide training and support to their beneficiaries.

The goal for the partnership is for the households to consume fresh and healthy vegetables for the beneficiaries. The communal gardens need to be able to sell their produce locally for income generation.



9.2 Beautiful Gate

The partnership with this Beautiful Gate continues, we trained 20 people in this project and continue to support, mentor and provide agricultural resources to six local community gardens based in the Nyanga areas.

The goal for this partnership is to support these gardens to be able to provide Beautiful Gate with vegetables for their soup kitchens.

9.3 SPCA

Abalimi was approached by SPCA in November 2021 to provide training and support to their beneficiaries based at iThemba Labs with the aim to create and support food gardens. The project included site assessments, training (20 people), follow-up visits and focus farmer workshops.



9.4 Umingonaphakade

The Swedish based Triathlon and Swimrun group have continued to support the Umingonaphakade Educare. This included additional training, provision of resources and support around their irrigation.

The aim is for the project to use the vegetables grown in the garden to be used at the daycare to provide healthy and fresh vegetables to the kids, reduce costs and for kids to learn gardening skills.

9.5 National Lottery Commission



We received R488 000 from the NLC which we could use for core funding and project costs. The largest contribution went towards purchasing composted manure that was distributed through the membership drive to over 60 community gardens. It also contributed towards the training budget deficit and also printing of the booklet “How to start a garden with just a few cents”.

This funding impacted over 56 community gardens who received manure and were able to increase production and income generation through vegetable sales. Over 4000 households were able to produce enough vegetables for their families.

9.6 Partnership with Cooktastic and Khayelitsha Finest Wines



In September 2022 we were requested to provide vegetables for an event with the Finish Embassy, which led to a partnership with Cooktastic and Khayelitsha Finest Wines.

Cooktastic is an NGO that trains disadvantaged youth to work in the hospitality industry and they agreed to do the catering for the Finish Embassy event. They used the vegetables from the farmers and curated a meal around this to suite the event. We also teamed up with Khayelitsha Finest Wines who source small batch wines and encourage the responsible drinking of good wine. We continue to explore ways to work with both of these organisations.

9.7 Kuyasa SSN Project

We received a request from South South North to support them with implementation of a project in Kuyasa (Khayelitsha) as part of the Kuyasa CDM project. The focussed on providing training, resources and ongoing support within the Kuyasa community for home and community gardens, as well as institutional gardens at ECDs. This is a long-term project over the next three years.

The goal for his project is to improve food security and nutrition for the residents of Kuyasa as there is a high rate of employment in the area and malnutrition.

9.8 Mahmud Amhed

We continue to implement the Mahmud Amhed Endowed fund where support is provided to the poorest of the poor for resources for their gardens. This is an ongoing project. We have supported 30 people with resources on this project to be able to produce vegetables for themselves and their families. These beneficiaries are the most disadvantaged in their communities and need constant support.

9.9 Kelpak

We were pleased to team up with Kelpak who donated fertiliser, but also funding for supporting community gardens. 50 community gardens received manure on this project and 300 home gardens received Kelpak fertiliser through a training that was conducted on how to use the fertiliser which was conducted by Kelpak.

9.10 Participatory Guarantee System

The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) pollinator program continues to be implemented and this year we have a new pollinator who is working with the Ikamva Lafama PGS group. The certification has been slow, but it is still moving ahead slowly.

This is a great organic certifying programme as it is peer to peer and is conducted in the community which reduces travel costs and eliminates the red tapes required by third party certification. It is a supporting system for the farmers for knowledge exchange and sharing of information.



9.11 Vendor Programme

The vendor programme continued to support local communities through making resources available at a reduced cost for resale by vendors. Five active vendors continued to service their local customers.

This is a wonderful programme as it supports individuals who are unemployed to receive income through sales as they purchase from Abalimi at a reduced cost and make a mark up on the sales.

9.12 Market Access

During the year the initial focus was on supporting a group of women to sell their veggies at local farmers markets, including Triggerfish in Somerset West and Mountain Market in Vredehoek. Additional market access research was done to gain a better understanding of the buying patterns in the townships.



The biggest change was however that PEDI Agrihub closed unexpectedly at the end of September 2022 and this left many farmers out in the cold because the farmers had no alternative markets. After various discussions and negotiations it was agreed to support the farmers to set up their own market. Abalimi provided them with transport to get their veggies to market

for the first five months. In addition to this Abalimi has been supporting them with mentoring and setting up financial and logistical systems.

The farmers had indicated that they were keen to take over the Harvest of Hope branding, as it could help draw back previous clients. Fortunately Ladles of Love agreed to buy all the excess basic vegetables which helped with bridging the gap. We believe that this is a great opportunity for the farmers to grow their town market access opportunities.

10 FINANCE

Abalimi again received a clean audit for 2021/22, while the 2022/23 financials are being processed and a clean audit is anticipated. All main debts and loans have been settled, and we have a valid SARS tax certificate.



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

Financially things are still very tight, but we have managed to continue through the ongoing support of loyal support and the implementation of special projects. Various options have been explored for securing long-term funding, however it is a slow process.

There was still a strong focus on curbing unnecessary costs with the main expenditure. Financial records are available on request.

11 CLOSING STATEMENT

It has been an amazing year celebrating the 40th anniversary of Abalimi, which showed the world that we are still going strong. The farmer festival was a huge success raising more awareness within the community about the work that we do, while the cook-off allowed for more external marketing and the garden showcase allowed the farmers to show their gardens and the work that they do.

All around it was a very successful year, with the main focus going forward looking for long-term funding support for our core funding.

Grace Stead
Managing Director

Morwesi Ramonyai
Chairperson