



2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT



Abalimi Bezekhaya

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1 INTRODUCTION

Building on the momentum of our successful 40-year celebration in 2022, the past year has been exceptionally productive for our organization. From the implementation of special projects to extensive training programs and the provision of agricultural resources, we have witnessed numerous success stories that demonstrate our impact. Post-COVID, we have seen a resurgence of visitors, and our Harvest of Hope initiative continues to thrive as a farmer-driven endeavour. This report offers a comprehensive overview of Abalimi's activities from March 2023 to April 2024.

Established in 1982, Abalimi Bezekhaya, which translates to "farmers of the home" in isiXhosa, is a non-profit, community-based micro-farming organization. Its mission is to support impoverished, unemployed, and underemployed individuals and communities in the Greater Cape Town area, particularly in the Cape Flats and surrounding regions, by helping them establish and maintain their own vegetable gardens.



Operating along a developmental continuum known as the Farmer Development Chain (FDC), Abalimi Bezekhaya assists individuals and communities in progressing from survival or subsistence to livelihood farming. By providing essential skills, resources, and ongoing support, the organization aims to address immediate needs for basic human necessities, such as food, while also fostering economic self-sufficiency and empowerment over the long term.

Through its initiatives, Abalimi Bezekhaya not only supplements food supplies but also creates sustainable livelihoods. By empowering communities to take ownership of their food sources through vegetable gardening, the organization contributes to improved well-being and resilience among vulnerable populations.

In summary, Abalimi Bezekhaya exemplifies a holistic approach to community development, combining immediate assistance with long-term empowerment strategies. By promoting micro-farming and providing support along the FDC, the organization plays a vital role in addressing food insecurity and fostering economic empowerment in marginalized communities within the Greater Cape Town area.

2 STRATEGIC FOCUS

The main focus for 2023 was back-to-basics service delivery based on our five main pillars:

- Provision of **training** and extension services about growing vegetables organically;
- Provision of **agri-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**.

These five pillars have been the backbone of Abalimi's success over many years. Recently, we began exploring expansion into the Eastern Cape, guided by these foundational principles. Although the process has started slowly, we are confident that this is the right direction and that growth will come with time.

Resource mobilization remains a critical aspect of our operations, as continuous fundraising is essential for the ongoing sustainability of the organization. The majority of our income still comes from individual donors and small trusts, both locally and internationally, as well as from the sales of goods and services.



Succession planning has also been a key focus over the past year as we continue to expand and mentor our interns. With two senior trainers having been with Abalimi for over twenty years, it is crucial to prepare younger staff members to step into leadership roles in the future. Mentoring and support are also extended to the Harvest of Hope team, even though they operate independently.

3 GOVERNANCE

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

- Morwesi Ramonyai - Chairperson
- Grace Stead - Secretary and Public Officer
- Macmillan Dzeha - Treasurer
- Rob Small
- Jeremy Jones
- Charles Bertram
- Dr Ethel Phiri

The **core responsibilities of the Board** are confirmed as providing:

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

4 STAFF OVERVIEW

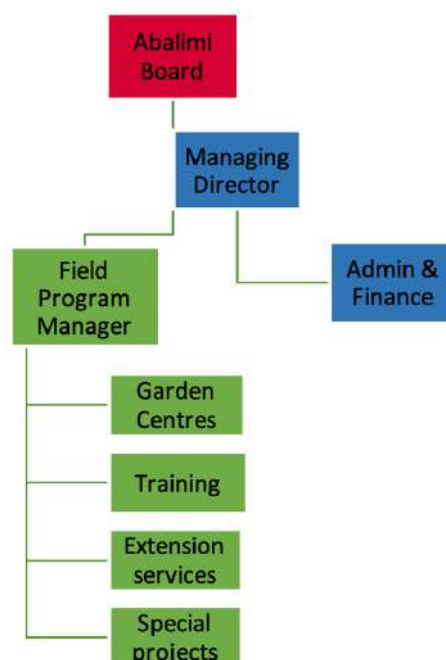
The core staff team has remained consistent, with an increase in the number of interns from the Department of Agriculture. The overall organizational structure has also remained unchanged, as outlined in the organogram.

Over the past year, the Management Team has expanded with the inclusion of Babalwa Mpayipeli (Field Programme Manager) and Kwanele Khanzi (Financial Administration), who work closely with Grace Stead (Managing Director). Notably, the majority of our permanent employees are women (70%) and of African descent (90%).

Abalimi continues to retain the services of SEESA for skills development and labour support, as well as the Consolidated Employers Organisation (CEO).

We have once again welcomed interns from diverse backgrounds, enhancing the team's diversity and providing valuable opportunities for learning and growth. This includes team members both in the field and in the office.

Our staff remains the organization's greatest asset, and it is important to recognize that they are at the core of everything we do.



5 BENEFICIARIES

Our beneficiaries are predominantly Black individuals (99%) who face significant socio-economic challenges and reside in townships. Over 80% of them are unemployed, with an average household size of 4.3 people. Despite these formidable challenges, Abalimi remains unwavering in its commitment to improving the lives of those we serve.



Abalimi continues to focus on its core geographical areas within the Cape Flats, particularly in Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi, and surrounding regions such as Mfuleni and Eersterivier. The NOAH Special Project also includes gardens at various communal homes located in Stellenbosch, Woodstock, Elsies River, and Athlone. The gender ratio of our clients remains evenly split between male and female, highlighting the accessibility and relevance of our services to a diverse range of individuals. For the first time, we have also extended our services to the Eastern Cape, as detailed in Section 8.

6 LOGISTICS & COMMUNICATION

At the end of January 2024, we relocated our office to 33 Mobile Road, Airport Industria, due to construction at our previous location. Currently, we are the sole tenants, although we may share the space with others in the future. The new office is equipped with a security system and offers safe parking for vehicles. While this location serves as our administrative hub, the core of our activities continues to be conducted from our garden centers in Khayelitsha and Nyanga.



Our financial management systems are functioning well, and we are planning to implement the PiCortex system, which will digitize the sales processes at our garden centers. Financial operations remain managed internally, with support from an external accountant and annual financial audits.

Our social media presence continues to grow, including various WhatsApp groups that facilitate peer-to-peer engagement among farmers. Communication systems are operating efficiently, primarily through email and WhatsApp. Both the office and garden centers have uncapped Wi-Fi, ensuring seamless communication. Additionally, our office and field team computers, laptops, software, and antivirus systems are regularly updated.

We continue to operate two vehicles, a Nissan and an Opel bakkie, both equipped with tracker systems and insured. However, the Opel is still part of Dave Golding's estate, complicating the license renewal process.

Overall, our communication systems are functioning well, but we will need to review our vehicle requirements in the future to ensure continued service delivery.

7 TRAINING & GARDEN CENTRES

The garden centers are at the heart of Abalimi's work, serving as places where the community can purchase affordable and accessible resources, such as seeds, seedlings, manure, and tools. These centers also produce vegetables for sale to the community and

Harvest of Hope (HOH). There are plans to upgrade the demonstration gardens to include medicinal herbs and provide information to help the community learn about and use these resources.

Training is a vital component of Abalimi's mission. We offer three levels of training: a three-day basic training course, ongoing focused farmer workshops (half-day courses), and the Agriplanner training (a four-day course) that focuses on how to manage a garden as a business. Training takes place at both garden centers and is followed up with mentoring and extension services through garden visits.

Training participation continues to increase year on year, as shown in the table below.

Type of training	2021	2022	2023	
Basic training	39	26	29	sessions
Focus farmer	14	15	23	sessions
Agriplanner	2	2	1	session
Total sessions	55	43	53	sessions

Basic training	670	379	553	people
Focus farmer	196	404	404	people
Agriplanner	42	30	15	people
Total people	908	813	972	people

Youth	20%	13%	19%
Men	34%	32%	32%
Women	65%	63%	68%



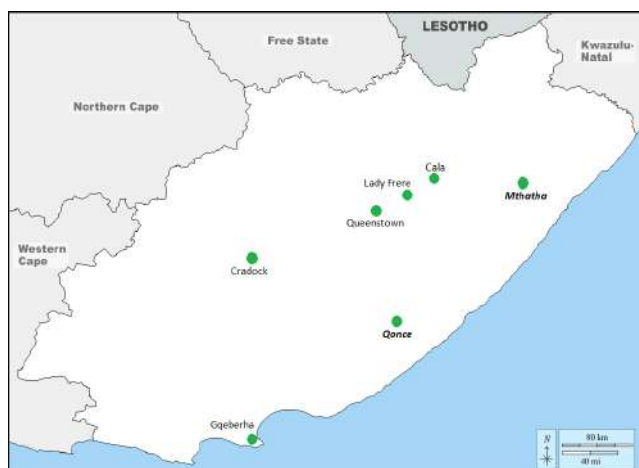
Training is still highly subsidised, allowing local residents to participate at nominal cost (R70 for a three day training course), however it means that there is a financial training deficit that needs to be funded.

8 EASTERN CAPE EXPANSION

Abalimi has begun outreach efforts in the Eastern Cape, focusing on three specific villages:

- Mthatha, Misty Mount Village,
- Middledrift, Machini Village,
- Lady Frere, Ngqoko Village.

These villages were chosen because of retired staff members who have relocated to the Eastern Cape to pursue farming. Their involvement is crucial to the success of this initiative, as they are familiar with Abalimi's operations and can effectively support the local communities on their journey.



The expansion process began with a visit to the Eastern Cape by Babalwa, Grace, and Rob to assess the needs and constraints of the three selected villages. Following this, training was provided to community members interested in learning how to farm organically. This was supplemented by the creation of WhatsApp support groups to provide ongoing advice and resources.

While this initiative is not large in scale, it represents an important step in recognizing the connection between the Eastern Cape and the work we do in Cape Town.



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)

The NOAH partnership continues to support both home and communal gardens. Training was provided as required by the beneficiaries and support was provided to six communal gardens based in Elsies River, Stellenbosch, Khayelitsha, Woodstock, Maitland and Athlone, as well as households in Khayelitsha.

The goal of the project was for the households to consume fresh and healthy vegetables, while 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 continued with continuous mentorship and support to the initial gardens that were identified. Due to limited funding the project closed out the end of 2023, but ongoing support is provided informally.

The goal for this partnership was to support these gardens to be able to provide Beautiful Gate with vegetables for their soup kitchens. Funding provided resources and mentoring for the gardens

9.3 SPCA

The SPCA project initially focussed on iThemba in 2022, with the focus shifted to the cattle farmers in Mfuleni during 2023. The project included site assessments, training (20 people), follow-up visits and focus farmer workshops.

The goal of this project was to provide the stock farmers with training and support so that they could start vegetable gardens.

9.4 Partnership with Cooktastic and Khayelitsha Finest Wines

We again partnered up with Cooktastic to provide catering for Spur Corporation Green Feather Rewards 2023 together with Khayelitsha Finest Wines. We continue to explore ways to work with both of these organisations.

9.5 Kuyasa South South North Project

The Kuyasa Project continued with providing support to both home and communal gardens in Kuyasa (Khayelitsha) as part of the Kuyasa CDM project. The project focussed on providing training, resources and ongoing support within the Kuyasa community for home and community gardens, as well as institutional gardens at ECDs.

The goal for this 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.

9.6 Mahmud Amhed

We continue to implement the Mahmud Amhed Endowed fund where support is provided to the poorest of the poor for resources and tools for their gardens. This is an ongoing project where we support households every year depending on the available funding. These beneficiaries are the most disadvantaged in their communities and need constant support.

9.7 Vendor Programme

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

This programme 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.

9.8 Market Access

Abalimi have been supporting the farmers during 2023 to re-establish Harvest of Hope. The focus has been on supporting the farmers with setting-up administrative and financial systems, as well as logistical support. Abalimi has also been working with SAUFFT to help with the establishment of a Agrihub at SCAGA.

9.9 Visitors

It has been encouraging to see more tourists coming through to visit our gardens again. This is mostly during the summer season and quite ad hoc, but we felt it is important to be ready for any guests who want to visit. We have set up guidelines for groups visiting us to help to streamline visits.

10 FINANCE

Abalimi received a clean audit for 2022/23, and we are currently processing the 2023/24 financials, with a clean audit anticipated. All major debts and loans have been settled, and we hold a valid SARS tax certificate.

We are deeply grateful to our donors, a mix of private individuals, independent trusts, and foundations. Their continued support has enabled us to conduct additional training and implement special projects, which have brought in crucial funding.

While our financial situation remains tight, we have managed to sustain operations thanks to the ongoing loyalty of our supporters and the successful implementation of special projects. Various options for securing long-term funding have been explored, though progress has been slow.

We have maintained a strong focus on curbing unnecessary costs, ensuring that expenditures remain aligned with our priorities. Financial records are available upon request.

11 CLOSING STATEMENT

It is encouraging to see how resilient Abalimi has been in the post-COVID era, especially as the demand for training and access to resources has increased. The expansion into the Eastern Cape has been a long-held dream for many of the Abalimi staff, so it is gratifying to see this initiative finally taking off. Abalimi continues to grow from strength to strength.

Grace Stead
Managing Director

Morwesi Ramonyai
Chairperson

