



2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT



Abalimi Bezekhaya

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1 INTRODUCTION

For over four decades, Abalimi Bezekhaya has been a beacon of hope and resilience, empowering communities in Khayelitsha, Nyanga, and beyond through urban farming. More than cultivating crops, we cultivate self-sufficiency, aspirations, and economic opportunity. In the face of urban challenges, we help transform barren spaces into thriving green oases.

Our commitment to organic farming not only provides nutritious food but also strengthens community well-being and environmental health. Every seed planted represents a step toward food security, income generation, and a brighter future.

As we mark our 43rd year, the demand for food security continues to grow, with training participation surpassing pre-COVID levels. This report outlines our key activities and impact from March 2024 to February 2025, highlighting the progress made in supporting micro-farmers with training, resources, and market access.

Established in 1982, Abalimi Bezekhaya, meaning "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.

*The services provided are based on our **five pillars of development**, such as:*

- *Training and development services;*
- *Accessible and affordable resources;*
- *Infrastructure support;*
- *Market access support; and*
- *Social and organisational development support.*

Abalimi Bezekhaya promotes sustainable livelihoods by empowering communities to take ownership of their food sources through vegetable gardening; enhancing well-being and resilience among vulnerable populations.

2 STRATEGIC FOCUS

2.1 Expanding Impact and Strengthening Food Security

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, we placed renewed emphasis on strengthening food security by scaling up our services. The demand for training and resources at our garden centres has grown significantly, reflecting a broader shift towards home and community food production.

Before the pandemic, we trained an average of **350 individuals annually**. **Post-Covid**, this number has increased to approximately **850 beneficiaries per year**. While this growth is partly driven by special project funding, we've also seen a consistent rise in individuals independently paying the R70 training fee to gain basic skills and establish their own gardens. This trend highlights the growing commitment of community members to self-sufficiency and food resilience.

We've also seen a steady increase in gardens selling their produce through Harvest of Hope (HOH), with more farmers ramping up production and market participation. While HOH operates as an independent entity, Abalimi continues to provide extension services and access to affordable agricultural inputs, and plays an active role in mentoring, financial oversight, and governance support for the initiative.

2.2 Our Core Areas of Support

We continue to provide services anchored in five key pillars:

- **Training and Extension:** Education and support in organic vegetable cultivation.
- **Access to Resources:** Provision of seeds, seedlings, compost, and other agri-inputs for organic farming.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Assistance with capital investments in soil building (e.g., composted manure) and irrigation systems.
- **Market Access:** Helping farmers sell surplus vegetables through trusted outlets like HOH.
- **Social and Organisational Development:** Strengthening community structures and governance within farmer groups.



2.3 Growing Our Reach

Our expansion into the Eastern Cape, though gradual, remains steady. We currently support three rural villages and are exploring further growth opportunities in response to interest from potential funders. Our approach is intentionally low-risk, ensuring support can be sustained without placing undue financial or operational strain on the organisation.

2.4 Preparing for the Future

As our team grows, we remain committed to **succession planning and leadership development**. Two of our senior trainers have been with Abalimi for over 20 years, and we are actively mentoring interns and junior staff to take on greater responsibilities. Cultivating the next generation of leaders is vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our work.

3 GOVERNANCE

The Abalimi Bezekhaya Board continued to provide strong governance and strategic direction throughout the year. The Board's core responsibilities include setting strategy, establishing policies and systems, overseeing implementation, and ensuring accountability through reporting and monitoring.

The Board members for this period were:

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

Their collective expertise and dedication remain vital to Abalimi's success in driving sustainable urban farming and community empowerment.

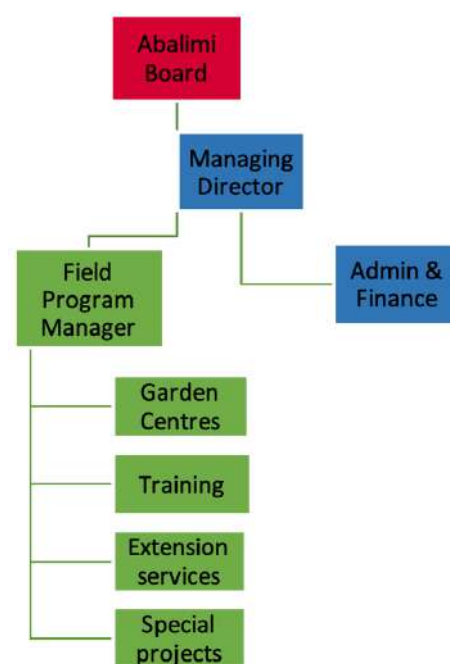
4 STAFF OVERVIEW

The overall structure of Abalimi Bezekhaya remains unchanged, as outlined in the organogram. The management team continues to be led by Grace Stead (Managing Director), with Babalwa Mpayipeli (Field Programme Manager) and Kwanele Khanzi (Financial Administration) playing key roles in operations and finances.

Our core team has remained steady, with an increase in interns from the Department of Agriculture, including both local and international participants. These interns bring fresh insights, enhance team diversity, and contribute to knowledge-sharing across our garden centers and office.

Women make up 70% of our permanent staff, with 90% of employees being of African descent and 30% being youth. Abalimi continues to work with SEESA for skills development and labor-related support.

Our staff is the backbone of our organization, and their dedication is fundamental to our ongoing success. At a recent staff workshop we reviewed our core values to showcase what we strive to achieve.



5 BENEFICIARIES

Abalimi Bezekhaya primarily serves Black individuals (99%) from township communities who face significant socio-economic challenges. Over 80% of our beneficiaries are unemployed, with an average household size of 4.3 people. Despite these challenges, Abalimi remains steadfast in its mission to uplift and empower those in need. The gender distribution among our beneficiaries remains balanced, demonstrating the inclusivity of our programs.

Our work continues to focus on the Cape Flats, particularly in Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi, and surrounding areas such as Mfuleni and Eersterivier. Additionally, the NOAH Special Project supports communal home gardens in Stellenbosch, Woodstock, Elsies River, and Athlone. We also provide remote support to farmers in the Eastern Cape, with aspirations to expand our reach in the future.

6 LOGISTICS & COMMUNICATION

Our office space continues to function as the administrative hub, while field activities are conducted from our garden centers in Khayelitsha and Nyanga. We have a lease agreement with Caritas for Khayelitsha while Nyanga continues to function on a

The implementation of the PiCortex system has been slower than anticipated, but we remain confident that digitizing garden center sales will improve oversight and planning. Financial operations are managed internally, supported by an external accountant, with independent annual audits ensuring accountability.

Our social media presence is expanding, with WhatsApp groups playing a key role in facilitating peer-to-peer engagement among farmers. Staff have access to laptops and cellphones, ensuring smooth communication primarily via email and WhatsApp. While both the office and garden centers have Wi-Fi, connectivity issues in the townships persist, with limited viable alternatives from service providers.

This year, we faced vehicle challenges. After an accident resulted in our Nissan being written off, we initially purchased a Ford Ranger but found it unsuitable. It was later traded in for a Nissan NP300. Additionally, the Opel remains part of Dave Golding's estate, complicating license renewal, and it is currently not in use. Funding for an additional vehicle is needed to support our operations effectively.

7 TRAINING & GARDEN CENTRES

One of Abalimi's core services is providing training and extension support to small-scale farmers. Our practical, hands-on training equips participants with the skills needed to establish and maintain productive gardens. We offer three main types of training:



- **Basic Training Course (3 days):** An introduction to starting a garden, covering both practical and theoretical aspects. Participants receive a training manual, meals, a certificate, and a one-year Abalimi membership, granting access to discounted resources. They also receive a start-up kit with seeds, seedlings, fertilizer, and compost.
- **Focused Farmer Workshops (half-day):** These ongoing workshops cover a variety of essential topics, including composting, green manure, seed saving, plant propagation, nutrition, record keeping, and pest & disease management.
- **Agriplanner Training (4 days):** Designed for farmers looking to manage their gardens as businesses, this course uses experiential learning to teach record-keeping, production planning, and teamwork.

Trainees doubled from 350 pre-Covid to 850 trainees post-Covid

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, our training program has seen significant growth, with the number of trainees doubling from around 350 to 850 per year. Training remains heavily subsidized, enabling local residents to participate at a minimal cost (R70 for a three-day course). Training is conducted at both of our garden centers and is reinforced through mentorship and follow-up visits.

Training	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Basic training courses	19	20	14	39	27	29	26	courses
Focus farmer workshops	15	18	17	14	15	23	16	workshops
Agriplanner sessions	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	sessions
Total sessions	34	38	31	55	44	53	43	sessions
Basic course attendees	226	236	184	670	379	553	452	people
FF workshop attendees	NA	251	242	196	404	404	340	people
Agriplanner attendees	-	-	-	42	30	15	22	people
Total attendees	226	487	426	908	813	972	814	people

There has also been a gradual rise in youth participation, while the gender ratio among participants has remained stable despite minor fluctuations.

Training	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average
Youth (age 15 to 35)	14%	16%	26%	20%	13%	19%	31%	20%
Men	37%	43%	34%	34%	32%	32%	37%	36%
Women	63%	57%	66%	65%	63%	68%	63%	64%

The **garden centers** serve as key community hubs, providing affordable resources such as seeds, seedlings, manure, and tools. They also produce vegetables for sale within the community and through Harvest of Hope (HOH). Over the past year, we have expanded our seedling production even further, successfully increasing self-sufficiency. Additionally, medicinal gardens were established at both garden centers, supported by specialized farmer workshops on medicinal plants.

8 SPECIAL PROJECTS

Throughout the year, Abalimi has continued to implement a number of special projects, many of which are long-term partnerships with local and international organisations. These projects support food security, community development, and sustainability through training, resource provision, and market access.

8.1 African Bank

This initiative supports five household gardens in Gugulethu and surrounding areas by providing training, infrastructure, agricultural inputs, and marketing support. The project originated from a partnership event at the Vukuhamba Centre for the Disabled, which included the clearing of a local dumping site.

Phase one of the project has been completed, and a proposal for phase two has been submitted.



8.2 Biodynamic Farming

In collaboration with the Iona Foundation, this project promotes biodynamic (BD) farming principles within the community. BD farming encourages farmers to produce their own inputs or source them from certified biodynamic suppliers, aligning with Demeter standards. Unlike organic farming, which allows for the purchase of permitted inputs, BD focuses on self-sufficiency and closed-loop systems. It is groundbreaking work for any farmers, let alone micro-farmers in the townships!

8.3 Eastern Cape Outreach

Abalimi continues to support farmers in three villages in the Eastern Cape. Despite facing challenging drought conditions during the winter, we are actively pursuing additional funding to strengthen our support to this region and help communities build climate resilience.

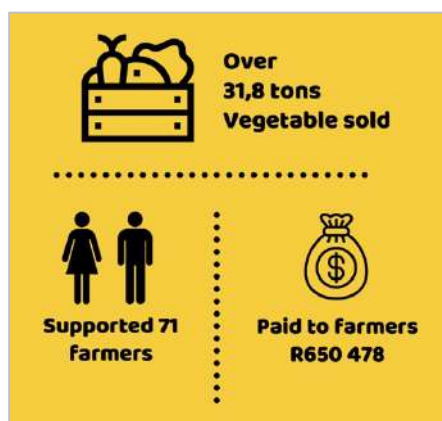


8.4 Foundation for Human Rights (FHR)

In partnership with Hope Foundation and CESVI, this project identifies and trains 50 women from Nyanga and Khayelitsha who are interested in food gardening. Eighteen women will receive tools and start gardens post-training, while tool and resource distribution will also extend to the Eastern Cape.

This collaboration, launched in 2023, is modest in funding but rich in impact, and we value the strong partnership with FHR.

8.5 Harvest of Hope (HOH)



We are proud to report strong growth in HOH's operations. Farmer payments increased significantly—from R408,819 in 2023/24 to R650,479 in 2024/25. HOH currently supports 71 members, with 58 farmers actively selling produce weekly. Almost 32 tons of vegetables was sold during the last twelve months.

HOH hosted its second pricing workshop and AGM in early 2025 and has submitted an application for NPO status. Following advice

from the NDA, there are ongoing discussions around registering as a cooperative instead.

New clients include the Mount Nelson Hotel, with outreach also underway to the Vineyard Hotel and Oranjezicht City Farm Market (OZCF). They have an active social media presence and are currently busy updating their website to create better marketing opportunities.



8.6 Kelpak Partnership

We are grateful for the generous support received from Kelpak in both 2024 and 2025. Through their donation of liquid fertiliser and funding, we were able to significantly boost support to both Abalimi members and HOH-affiliated community gardens.

As part of this initiative, every HOH garden received a bakkie-load of composted manure, helping to improve soil health and productivity. In addition, Abalimi members benefited from a Kelpak liquid fertiliser special offered during membership renewals, further supporting home and community growers in improving their yields.

This collaboration has enhanced our ability to offer meaningful, value-added support to our farmers, and we deeply appreciate Kelpak's commitment to community-based food security.



8.7 Khayelitsha Swim Run Project

Now in its third year, this project originally supported a daycare centre in Zwezwe, Khayelitsha in starting a food garden. The funders have shifted to supporting Abalimi directly. Although some delays have occurred due to international transfer issues, we are confident the funding will resume soon.

8.8 Mahmud Ahmed Trust

This ongoing project focuses on supporting the most vulnerable. From 2024 to 2025, **20 farmers** have been trained and provided with agricultural inputs and tools to start their own food gardens, enabling improved food security and income generation.

8.9 Moya weKhaya Agrihub

A collaborative project involving Uthando, Abalimi, Moya weKhaya and Harvest of Hope, the Agrihub aims to establish a community-led facility for aggregation, agri-processing, and training.

The land is provided by Moya weKhaya (who holds the City lease), Uthando is raising and managing the funds, HOH will run the packshed, and Abalimi offers project oversight.



Following initial planning and a draft due diligence report, The Natural Building Collective (NBC) was appointed as architects and builders in March 2025. Abalimi continues to support Moya and facilitate stakeholder engagement and project management.

8.10 Neighbourhood Old Age Home (NOAH)

Our partnership with NOAH remains strong. Abalimi supports **six communal gardens** and **70 households**, providing training, inputs, and extension services. The goal is to enhance food security, nutrition, and income for NOAH's elderly beneficiaries.

8.11 South South North (SSN) - Kuyasa Project

This project focuses on Kuyasa, where **70 individuals** have been trained and are actively involved in household and community food gardening. In partnership with the City, nutrition workshops and Wonderbag distribution are supporting local ECD centres. The project aims to address high levels of unemployment and malnutrition in the area.



8.12 Vendor Programme

Our vendor initiative remains robust. We currently support **12 community-based vendors** who receive subsidised inputs and seedlings from Abalimi. This enables them to sell resources at competitive prices while generating income in the process.

8.13 Visitor Programme

It has been uplifting to welcome back tourists to our gardens, especially during the summer months. To ensure a smooth experience for all, we have developed new guidelines for hosting group visits. While informal in nature, this programme continues to build awareness and support for our work.

9 FINANCE

We were fortunate to receive generous donations over the past year, which enabled us to carry out essential renovations and maintenance at our garden centres. A key upgrade was the replacement of irrigation systems at both sites—these new, automated systems are significantly more efficient, helping to save both time and water.

Abalimi received a clean audit for the 2023/24 financial year, and the 2024/25 financials are currently being processed, with another clean audit anticipated. We are proud to report that Abalimi remains debt-free and holds a valid SARS tax clearance certificate.

We remain deeply grateful to our donors—ranging from private individuals to independent trusts and foundations—whose continued generosity has made it possible to expand our training programmes and implement various special projects that have provided critical funding. All valid Section 18a Tax Receipts have also been issued via ActiveDonor.

Although the financial climate remains challenging, we have been able to sustain our operations thanks to the unwavering support of our donor community and the successful rollout of special projects. We continue to explore options for long-term financial sustainability, though progress in this area remains gradual.

A strong emphasis remains on prudent financial management, ensuring that every expenditure is purposeful and aligned with our core priorities. Financial records are available on request.

10 CLOSING STATEMENT

As we reflect on another year of growth, resilience, and community, we are reminded that Abalimi's strength lies not just in the gardens we cultivate, but in the people who nurture them. From dedicated farmers and trainers to loyal donors and partners, every individual has played a vital role in sowing the seeds of food security, dignity, and hope.

While the challenges we face remain real, the spirit of collaboration and perseverance continues to drive us forward. With your continued support, we remain committed to building a future where every home has a garden, every garden feeds a family, and every farmer thrives. Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Grace Stead
Managing Director

Morwesi Ramonyai Thonga
Chairperson