

PnP promotes sustainable transformation with community food garden

While community food gardens can address food security, they also create opportunities for people to take ownership of improving their own long-term health and wellbeing.



Image credit: [Piknpay.co.za](https://piknpay.co.za)

According to Suzanne Ackerman, Director of Transformation at PnP, "A successful food garden project is one of the most effective ways to promote real, sustainable transformation within a community. Food gardens are an opportunity for environmental education - helping people to understand waste management and sustainable urban farming and diversity as well as community engagement - and the ultimate goal, which is to turn a garden into a small enterprise."

PnP currently supports 242 community food gardens around South Africa, which produce high-quality fresh produce for over 4,600 people.

Ackerman says the key to a successful food garden is community buy-in and commitment to the long-term success of the project. "When this happens the results can be extraordinary," she says.

Recognising the need for ongoing support in managing these food gardens, PnP works with a number of organisations to teach communities how to go about establishing a food garden and how to keep it going over time. They also aim to teach people the basics of healthy eating so that they can get the most out of the food they produce.

Partners in the food garden project include organisations like Food Basket for Africa, The Siyazisiza Trust, Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA), Mhani Gingi Social Business Development (GSBD), Feeding the Nation and Humana People to People.

To generate enterprise from the produce

"Our ultimate goal is to empower communities and individuals to generate fresh produce for their own consumption, and if

possible to generate enterprise from the produce. To date, approximately 54 functioning home gardens have been established by participants in the Pick n Pay community gardens - using the skills and knowledge they have acquired through the community garden."

Some communities succeed in growing their gardens to such an extent that they are able to create their own enterprise from the produce. The Denzhe Mukulao organisation, in a remote area of Limpopo started as a community garden and now supplies the Thohoyandou Family Store with spinach, cabbage, butternut and onions weekly. Amata Trading, another community garden in Limpopo has also grown into a small supplier of butternut, cabbage and tomatoes to the Giyani Family Store.

With this end in mind, Ackerman says the potential food garden projects submitted to the Pick n Pay foundation for consideration are assessed very carefully and according to a strict protocol. "We are committed to our food garden project choosing to support projects that we believe will enjoy long-term success within a community, with the right level of community and organisational support is an important focus for us."

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