

## **Bronkhorstspuit co-operate diversifies food garden with Shoprite's support**

“We were growing sweet potatoes, green peppers and cabbage. But now with Shoprite's help we have expanded to also grow spinach, kale, brinjals, beetroot, tomatoes and pumpkins.”

Zanele Mahlangu's mother Elizabeth, together with a few community members, started the Mmakgomo Agricultural Co-operative in Bronkhorstspuit years ago.

“The land is about 120 hectares in size. We plant maize on 60 hectares of the land and have unploughed land for livestock. The vegetable garden is just 2.5 hectares of the land because it needs more water than maize and livestock,” explains Zanele.

With Shoprite's support, the Mmakgomo Agricultural Co-operative now has the necessary water infrastructure in place, including a reservoir and an irrigation system. This, explains Zanele, has enabled the co-operative to diversify the kind of vegetables they are growing.

“We used to use municipal water and we only had watering cans and one little hosepipe. We were struggling to water, but with this irrigation system it is so much easier to water the garden.”

The co-operative's members are also receiving hands-on permaculture training over a period of 18 months. These workshops include soil preparation, making compost and mulch, seed saving techniques and more.

“Shoprite has done quite a lot for us to further our garden and I want to thank them for making a big difference to us.”

“Community food gardens play an important role in food security. Our priority is to ensure sustainability, therefore our support extends beyond meeting the immediate food security needs of communities. We help community members to sustain themselves and their families by creating independence through transferring skills,” said Sanjeev Raghubir, Sustainability Manager at the Shoprite Group.

Hunger relief and food security are at the core of the Group's corporate social investment programmes. The retailer currently supports more than 175 community food gardens and over 3 400 home gardens, which impacts almost 53 000 beneficiaries. In the past year, more than 2 700 community members were trained in sustainable food gardening, assisting them to grow nutritious and organic food.

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