

Determination key to community garden success

In 2006 a group of middle-aged women in the mountainous area of Ga-Mokgotho, northeast of Burgersfort, Limpopo, decided to take the fate of their community into their own hands by starting a food garden that everyone could benefit from.

The village of Ga-Mokgotho can best be described as a one-horse town. It's one of thousands of small villages across South Africa where communities are learning to fend for themselves.

Josephina Magotho (53) was part of the group of women who started the Phafogang community garden. "We don't have a lot here, so we decided to help ourselves by growing veg for our families and our community. We knew we were the only ones who could make a difference. It hasn't been easy because we don't get a lot of rain, but we were determined and that's why we asked Shoprite for help."

Shoprite stepped in and through its implementation partner, Food and Trees for Africa, provided a water tank, drilling and connection to a borehole, plant material, seedlings, training workshops, shade nets for the seedlings, and tools.

"We really needed the water tank and the borehole. We haven't had any rain this year. The last time it rained was in December last year, so it was hard to water our crops," says Magotho.

During the training workshops, Magotho and the other women who work in the garden were taught the basics of permaculture, how to plant sustainably, when to water, what are good companion plants, how to take care of the soil, how to plough and what plants can be used in pest control.

"We learnt how to make our garden sustainable. Now we are selling our vegetables to the community and this is helping us to plant more vegetables," Magotho explains.

The crops from the garden, which include spinach, tomatoes, onion, beetroot and sugar beans, also feeds orphans and vulnerable children from the nearby primary school. "We give the vegetables to the teachers at the school and they cook it for the children," confirmed Magotho.

ENDS

Follow us on [*Twitter*](#) and [*Instagram*](#): @WeActForChange