

## **Growing better lives with access to fresh, healthy produce**

Combined with the right healthcare, good nutrition is essential to tackling chronic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB). Access to fresh produce can be a challenge for rural communities located far from commercial centres, but the Retsshewenyegile Home-Based Care Centre in Lokgabeng Village, near Taung, has found a way to provide vegetables to 800 patients all year round.

Located in the North West province, the Centre – whose name means ‘to care’ – is a non-profit organisation (NPO) run by 16 men and women. They provide home-based care for orphaned or vulnerable children as well as patients living with HIV/AIDS and TB.

Led by project manager, Bokang Sebokolodi, the Retsshewenyegile Home-Based Care Centre cultivated a garden to produce fresh vegetables and medicinal herbs. Spinach, onion, tomato, green pepper and other crops are distributed to residents when caregivers visit their homes and any surplus is sold to the community to finance the costs of maintaining their borehole.

“We wanted to expand our garden so we can sell more produce in the shops, ensuring that people in our community never run short of the essentials they need,” explains Sebokolodi.

Shoprite has been supporting the Centre to promote the importance of better nutrition and to boost the garden’s productivity by hosting a series of workshops that cover crop rotation, soil health, companion planting, natural remedies and pest management. The retailer also replaced old, rusty and damaged tools; installed a grey water system and shade cloth to protect the plants; and supplied compost, seedlings and other plant materials to help develop a cash crop.

“Shoprite’s support really has made a great difference and our community is also very happy. We are now able to plant more vegetables and there is always a line of customers waiting to buy whatever we produce. We love welcoming visitors because we know how impressed they will be by what we achieved.”

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