

## **Garden helps Pinetown community go and go**

They abandoned their first food garden because there wasn't a sufficient water supply plus goats trampled and ate the plants.

Now ten years later Nurses at a Go, an NPO focused on improving the lives of people affected by HIV, has a flourishing food garden in a different location. Their garden is supported by Shoprite and provides fresh vegetables to a community in Luganda, Pinetown.

The organisation started out in 2008 providing home-based care for people living with HIV/Aids in the area. Good nutrition is an integral part of the treatment of such individuals, so the need for a food garden was immediately apparent. "For years we were dependent on food donations and purchases for our soup kitchen. Last year we revisited the plan to plant a food garden," says Bongiwe Mazibuko, project manager of Nurses at a Go.

They were given new land by the community and partnered with Food and Trees for Africa, Shoprite's implementation partner in its drive to establish sustainable community gardens throughout South Africa. Through this partnership Nurses at a Go was provided with garden training and tools, seedlings, rainwater harvesting infrastructure and a pump to transfer water from a nearby river to the vegetable patches.

"The impact of this support has been real. Our patients are receiving training, which they use to grow their own gardens at home. We no longer have to worry about where we'll get fresh vegetables for the children dependent on a daily meal from our soup kitchen. We are really making progress now," explains Mazibuko.

Almost 600 people benefit from the more than one-hectare garden. Vegetables not used in the soup kitchen are given to people living with HIV/Aids, who prepare healthy meals with them at their homes.

Their ultimate goal is to have enough produce to sell to the community and Mazibuko is confident that they will reach that goal soon. "By selling the spinach, cabbage, peppers, potatoes and lettuce we grow, we would be able to pay the 12 volunteers working the garden, thus creating jobs in an area where many people are unemployed" she adds.

CAPTION: NPO Nurses at a Go gives some of the vegetables grown in its food garden to people affected by HIV so they can prepare nutritious meals for themselves.

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