

Feeding disadvantaged children one garden at a time

To help fight hunger in the area, the Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE) community centre in Tshikudini village established a food garden with support from Shoprite.

TREE provides local children with an early learning centre, aftercare centre, and a feeding scheme, among other services.

“We started the food garden, because we saw how costly it was to buy groceries to feed around 200 children every week day. We wanted to be able to grow produce that we could use to supplement the meals that we make for the children,” explains Patricia Makhani.

“At first it was very difficult to farm this land. It’s very dry land and hard to dig. Shoprite organised a tractor to loosen the ground so that we could make beds,” Patricia continues.

Shoprite is also providing permaculture training over a period of 18 months. “Once a month, a trainer comes to share his knowledge with the 13 members who work in the garden. We have already been taught about pest control, how to make beds and companion planting,” explains Patricia.

Based in a very arid area of South Africa, Patricia admits that water scarcity makes farming challenging for them. The organisation has a borehole that uses solar power, and Shoprite will be providing them with a water harvesting system including a 5000-litre tank, gutters and connections. “This will really help us, so that we aren’t relying solely on the borehole. We will be able to store water when it does rain.”

The Shoprite Group has a robust programme in place to address the food security challenges faced by so many people across the continent daily. Through its support of 151 community food gardens and 2 538 home-based gardens across the country’s 9 provinces, the Shoprite Group fosters long-term food security and generates livelihood opportunities.

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