

Abalimi and the Harvest of Hope



ABALIMI

ABALIMI is a Non-Profit Organisation which works to empower the disadvantaged through urban agriculture and environmental programs and projects. It operates in the socially and economically neglected townships of Khayelitsha, Nyanga and the surrounding areas on the Cape Flats near Cape Town. Abalimi means "the Planters" in Xhosa, which is the home language of the community Abalimi assists.

Abalimi tries to provide a means of basic survival and long term sustainability to the communities it helps, but also tries to provide a healthy organic lifestyle.

Through Abalimi's experience, it can be seen that organic group gardening facilitates community building, and helps the personal growth and self-esteem of individuals.

Rob Small, who is currently serving as Secretary to the Board and as a member of the management team, is involved intricately with all aspects of Abalimi, but is most interested with the human aspect, ensuring that the communities and groups work effectively as a group, as this is essential for the sustainability of the project. Rob is passionate about this cause, and Neutrog is only too happy to be involved with an organisation whose people are so committed. Rob recently gave Neutrog staff a tour of the gardens and the pack shed facilities.

Neutrog donates 12 tons of **Bounce Back** and 12 tons of **Rapid Raiser** to Abalimi, which amounts to R36 000 each year. Feeding their plants **Bounce Back** and **Rapid Raiser** allows their produce to be marketed as "organically produced". Rob says that Neutrog products that are applied with manure have helped create and maintain healthy levels of soil fertility in the Cape Flats, as most people will know the sandy nature of the soils in this area are notoriously difficult to grow any produce in, let alone vegetables.

"The farmers are now able to farm all year round with the help of the Neutrog guarantee, which allows reliable fertility enhancement

throughout both summer and winter months", says Rob.

Once produce has been harvested, approximately 50% gets packaged and sold on consignment through a project called Harvest of Hope, which has been set up in partnership with the South African Institute of Entrepreneurship (SAIE) and the Business Place Phillipi, funded by the Pick 'n Pay Foundation. The other 50% is consumed by the farmers, sold locally or given to sick or poor people in their neighbourhoods. Harvest of Hope was established to find and secure long term external markets for the farmers. The farmers provide produce such as carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes and much more.





The long term vision for Abalimi and Harvest of Hope is to take the growth of the gardens within the community to sustainability at all stages - Survival Stage, Subsistence Stage, Livelihood Stage and even Commercial Stage with the additional goal of possibly selling to the likes of Pick 'n Pay, who helped to fund the set up of the Harvest of Hope project. Rob hopes that with the use of Neutrog products, Abalimi will be able to increase their production by a substantial amount - currently, up to 120 boxes of fresh organic vegetables are sold to as many school-going families in Cape Town. By 2009/2010, there will be between 150-200 farmers in about 20 community gardens producing 600 boxes per week and earning up to R2000 or even R3000/month each. Over the last 25 years since its

establishment in 1982, Abalimi has helped the community to initiate and maintain the growing of many thousands of organic vegetable gardens. Neutrog and Abalimi look forward to a long and bountiful relationship together.

ABALIMI- A Non-Profit Organisation operates in Khayelitsha, Nyanga and the surrounding areas on the Cape Flats.
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This article was the result of a visit to Abalimi projects and Harvest of Hope by Vanessa Heyman and Daniel van Vuuren, May 2008. The article is written by Vanessa Heyman. Photography by: Vanessa Heyman.

