

Mangaung community garden enables local Care Centre to feed 130 people daily

The food garden at Dikonyana Community Based Care Center is not only a place for growing crops; it's a lifeline for the people of Namibia Square in Mangaung, providing hope under the unwavering leadership of its founder, Selina Majafi.

Since establishing the centre in 2004, Majafi, has become a pillar of strength for her community, which faces significant poverty due to unemployment.

"I saw a growing need to care for vulnerable children and families in my area. I felt compelled to create a safe space to offer support where it was desperately needed," explains Majafi.

She planted a food garden to overcome hunger in her community, but due to limited resources and expertise, the project failed. Undeterred, Majafi revived the garden in 2012.

Now twelve years old, the community garden provides reliable work opportunities and agricultural skills to four unemployed youth. These members have used their newfound skills to not only generate an income for themselves but also established homestead gardens to support their families.

In partnership with Commonwealth Handling Equipment Pool (CHEP), Shoprite has supported the garden with much needed infrastructure such as fencing, shade netting and a water harvesting system. Garden members have also received 18 months of hands-on permaculture training (an approach of working with, rather than against nature), and the retailer continues to provide essential gardening resources such as seeds, seedlings and fertilizer. fertilizer.

The Centre now feeds over 130 people, increasing its meal services from three to five days a week. Any surplus produce is sold, with proceeds reinvested into the garden.

"The support from the community and partners like Shoprite keeps me going. Seeing the joy and gratitude on the faces of those we serve, fills me with pride and reminds me that our work truly matters," adds Majafi.

For Majafi, the garden is more than a project – it's a symbol of resilience and a testament to the power of community. Her unwavering dedication has not only fed hungry mouths but has uplifted her entire community, making her a true matriarch of Namibia Square.

Hunger relief and food security lie at the heart of Shoprite's [Act For Change programme](#) which supports over 250 community food gardens across Southern Africa. The food garden programme has indirectly impacted around 80 000 beneficiaries since its inception in 2015.

"We are committed to strengthening the resilience of the communities we serve. Food gardens enable vulnerable communities to become more self-sustaining, making them a crucial part of our strategy to help address food security in South Africa," said Sanjeev Raghubir, Chief Sustainability Officer.

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