

# JALA PEO NEWSLETTER

## "Plant the Seed"

### News from the National Steering Committee

BY GRAEME WILKINSON

#### THE NURTURING POWER OF WATER

Your school food and nutrition garden is a living thing. And just like you and me, it needs to be nurtured for it to grow. It needs to be planned for. The seeds of expectation need to be carefully planted in a context of rich soil. It needs a vigilant eye, always on the look-out for pests and competing weeds. But most of all, it needs water.

**"To live, everyone must have water,  
To give, not to deny each other,  
To bring from source to mouth just like  
The food of love from a nursing mother."  
(Anders Edenroth, 2015)**

The Jala Peo Initiative Steering Committee understands this power. We work tirelessly to ensure that your district school food and nutrition garden Forum is planned for, and nurtured. We have deployed a project coordinator to ensure that the fertile compost of 'mutually beneficial multi-stakeholder collaboration' is made and equally distributed. And within this fertile compost, we have carefully planted the seeds of hope - that each school in your circuit will have a thriving school food garden used for teaching and learning. But to this garden of gardens, must come the life-giving water of care and nurturing. And you are the source of this water. We rely on you to provide the care that your garden needs. Because without you caring for the garden, it won't be able to grow and flourish to its full potential.

You will see from the examples highlighted in this newsletter, that not only is it easy to care for a garden but doing so can also be very rewarding. I look forward to reading about the different ways you have cared for your school food garden in the coming editions of this newsletter.



Sindekile Primary (left) first position winner of the Fezile Dabi Gardening Competition and Boitlamo Primary (right), which came in second position

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# News from the Western Cape

SUNET ANDERSON, WEST COAST DISTRICT COORDINATOR

## WEST COAST AQUAPONICS PROJECT

One of the major challenges facing the West Coast district is a low average annual rainfall of 150 mm, compounded by an ongoing three-year drought and maximum summer temperatures above 40°C. To assist with gardening in this area of low rainfall and reduce reliance on municipal water, in addition to equipping schools with tanks for rainwater collection the Jala Peo project has introduced methods of water-wise gardening. The West Coast Forum has invested in equipment such as water tanks and shade nets, training for gardeners on water-wise methods such as mulching, drip irrigation, and aquaponic vegetable gardening. Aquaponics systems include fish, a growth medium and vegetable plants, and require only 10% of the water normally required to produce the same amount of vegetables.

To date, aquaponics projects have been installed at four pilot schools: Koekenaap Primary, St. Boniface Primary, Naastdrift Primary and Nieuwoudt Primary. The systems were installed by Powerponics, which specialises in aquaponic and hydroponic systems for disadvantaged communities. Powerponics provided the labour, while the Forum made funds available for the system materials and Stellenbosch University, also a Forum member, provided training to pilot school gardeners and staff as well as other Forum members. A fifth school, Steilhoogte Primary, is currently building a larger scale system. The university will now mentor and guide schools in successful management of the systems. If schools can continue to successfully manage systems after being mentored, aquaponics systems will be a very valuable tool to save water and introduce learners to new and exciting technology. It offers opportunities for lower-cost growing and the sale of fish as an additional product. Aquaponics systems can further be integrated in the curriculum with training on, amongst many other things, ecosystems.



Experimental aquaponic system piloted by Naastdrift Primary in the West Coast District

If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.

LOREN EISELEY

# News from the Free State

NELLY KOMAPE, FEZILE DABI DISTRICT COORDINATOR

## FEZILE DABI JALA PEO SCHOOL FOOD GARDENING COMPETITION AWARDS

This quarter, the Fezile Dabi Forum together with the Rotary Club and Ntsu Hardware sponsored a School Food and Nutrition Garden Competition in order to assess the progress of schools participating in the Jala Peo Initiative. Nine schools took part in the competition and were judged by a panel consisting of Forum members from the Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Road Safety, the Department of Education, the Vredefort Rotary Club, a member of the School Governing Body Forum, and the principal of Weiveld Agricultural School. Schools were judged on criteria such as innovation and creativity in gardening, water conservation and learner engagement in the garden.

Schools were invited to an awards ceremony on 18 October 2019. The function was attended by the principal, school governing body chair, project champion, gardeners and two learners from each school. Other attendees included Dr Moeletsi, the Circuit Manager from the Department of Education; Ms Jowie Mochela, the Executive Mayor of Ngwathe Municipality; German exchange students; and local pastors.

The competition was won by Sindekile Primary School, with an overall score of 64%. The school received a certificate, trophy and R2 500 worth of gardening tools. Boitlamo Secondary School placed a close second, with a score of 63.8%, and received a certificate and trophy as well as R1 500 worth of gardening tools. Third place was taken by Tataiso Primary School with 61.8%, which received a certificate, trophy and R1 000 worth of gardening tools. The event was featured in a local newspaper.

The gardening competition will inspire these schools to continue their efforts to create sustainable food gardens which teach learners about important topics such as food production, nutrition and sustainability.

# News from Limpopo

DR RONALD MUDIMELI, VHEMBE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

## TEACHER EXCURSION: WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Water is one of the fundamental resources for School Food and Nutrition Gardens. South Africa is classified as water-scarce, with an average annual rainfall of 464mm, compared to a world average of 860mm. Various foundations that work with water are calling for South Africans to use water sparingly. However, many South Africans still waste a lot of water and few schools participate in water-saving techniques such as water harvesting or reusing grey water. If water waste is not curbed, the country may face serious water shortages, affecting both daily life and the ability to produce crops. As such, water conservation is one of the topics the Jala Peo Initiative stresses with communities, schools and learners.

In order to learn about water sources, conservation techniques and related topics, educators and principals together with Sibasa Forum members from the Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education and Thulamela Municipality participated in an excursion to the Riverside Nursery in Musina and the Mapungubwe Heritage Site.

At Riverside Nursery, delegates learned about indigenous plants and water conservation techniques, effective usage of borehole water resources, water quality control machines and the use of shades in temperature control for a variety of crops. At Mapungubwe Heritage Site, delegates received lectures on water resources in South Africa, the value of wetlands and the rehabilitation of the Mapungubwe wetland sites. The delegates then visited the Mapungubwe wetland rehabilitation sites. Educators and officials were enthused and educated by the excursion.

The garden is a mirror of the heart

Unknown

"We are highly inspired,"  
Mr Silas Rambau of Makwarela Primary School said after participating in the excursion.

"We now see the value of conserving the little water we have and the value of protecting our wetlands. We will surely impart this lesson to our learners."

(Mr Silas Rambau, Principal at Makwarela Primary School)



Educators from Limpopo at the Mapungubwe Wetland Rehabilitation Centre

## Waterwise Tips

- Verify that your school environment is leak-free, as many schools have hidden water leaks.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers.
- Check toilet tanks for leaks. Check the toilets for worn out, corroded or bent parts. These are easily replaceable, relatively inexpensive and readily available.

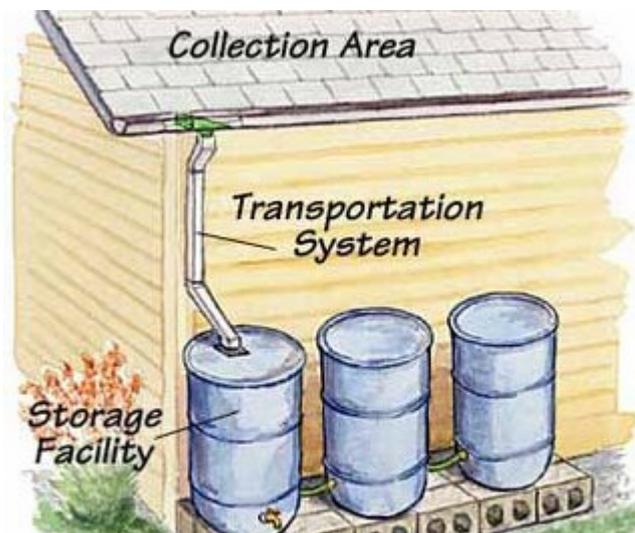


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# Curriculum Integration Resources

MR MICHAEL GAMA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION IN SCHOOLS; NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME, DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

## RAINWATER HARVESTING FOR SCHOOLS



Water is an integral part of our lives and is necessary for hygiene, nutrition and a healthy/clean environment. Lack of water can cause famine especially in rural areas, where people depend on food gardening for their livelihood. Many communities and schools across the country face water shortages, which is the main reason why food gardens are not sustainable.

Rainwater harvesting is one of the most promising water conservation techniques in the face of climate change, increasing water scarcity and escalating demand. Ironically, during rainy days, a significant amount of rainwater runs off land surfaces unutilised.

An opportunity exists for augmentation of water supplies to enhance food production and other uses such as sanitation and hygiene to effectively contribute towards the wellbeing of learners. This in turn saves the school from high water bills and further equips learners with better understanding on how to harness environmental goods and services.

**How much water will my school collect?**

**It depends on the collection area and the amount of rainfall received.**

**Example:**

**If 5mm of rain (0.005m) is received over 60m x 10m block, then:**

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vol} &= l \times b \times h \\ &= 60\text{m} \times 10\text{m} \times 0.005\text{m} \\ &= 3\text{m}^3 \\ &\text{or } 3000 \text{ litres} \end{aligned}$$

**Suppose the school has 4 blocks of 60m x 10m then the total collected will be 4 x 3m<sup>3</sup> = 12m<sup>3</sup>**

**How much water will be collected by the school over a one-year period if the average annual rainfall for the area is 450mm?**



**Rainwater tanks provide a renewable supply of natural, soft, clear and odourless water without harming the environment.**



Jala Peo is an initiative of

