

JALA PEO NEWSLETTER

PLANT THE SEED

ISSUE 7

TERM 4, 2021

"What good is an idea if it remains an idea? Try. Experiment. Iterate. Fail. Try again. Change the world." - **Simon Sinek**

LETTER FROM THE STEERCOM



Ashley Manuels - Project Coordinator
JET Education Services

Shine, everybody shine!



COVID-19. Corona. Jabs. Delta. Lambda. Family meetings. Curfew. Lockdown. All words and terms that we have heard so many times and should be used to by now. Some of us have "COVID-fatigue" and some don't even bother to abide by the rules. Whatever your take on this is, there is no doubt that it has affected you directly and or indirectly. Some of us lost loved ones during this time of turmoil, some are in the hospital right now, whilst some of us are blessed to be asymptomatic or still negative. One thing we need to acknowledge is, the Corona virus is real and can be deadly if we don't mask up, regularly wash and sanitize our hands and keep a safe distance between ourselves. Our hearts, thoughts and prayers are with those that experienced the sad side of this pandemic.

So, with all the doom and gloom happening around us, we can easily slip into a hole of darkness and never recover. Should we still bother to punt progress or even dare to **'vuka ngaphezukwezimo***? The answer is a simple and resounding YES. Why? When you walk barefoot in the soil, your soul feels grounded. When you realize that the seedling you planted is finally sprouting, you know that life is precious and worth nurturing. When you take care of your crops that are growing amidst harsh conditions, you should know that your green fingers will feed and nourish a family thus serving your community. And when you finally harvest your crop, just know that you can accomplish greater things and **'vuka ngaphezukwezimo*!**

In this period of adversity, let us not forget that food is life. It is the bodily fuel that we need so desperately to survive. It is our essence of life. Don't stop planting, don't stop nurturing and don't stop sharing your green wealth with those around you and those less fortunate because why? We **'vukangaphezu kwezimo*!** Take care and stay safe.

Sidenote for non-Zulu speakers:

**vuka ngaphezu kwezimo means rise above circumstances*

Profile : Sunet Anderson

Provincial Coordinator, West Coast District

Sunet Anderson is a wife, mom and nature lover and values meaningful living. She graduated from the University of Free State with a BA (Law) degree, which she followed up with a Higher Diploma in Education and a Diploma in Remedial Teaching. She loves how she can incorporate her experience in teaching, project management and Human Resources field with her passion and personal interest in health and wellness. Sunet finds the Jala Peo Initiative an avenue where she can channel her skills, experience and passion to be part of a greater movement that impacts the wellness and future of children in her local community. Engaging in relationships with stakeholders harnesses one of her natural strengths.



IN THIS ISSUE

INDIGENOUS GREEN WEALTH

- Letter from the Steercom
- Profile of Provincial Coordinator: Sunet Anderson
- News from the Provinces
- Curriculum Integration
- A view from the Garden



NEWS FROM THE VHEMBE DISTRICT

PROMOTING INDIGENOUS PRIDE AND HEALTHY HABITS IN LIMPOPO



Dr Ronald Mudimeli

Limpopo Provincial Coordinator

ronald@jet.org.za

South Africa is home to over 19 500 different indigenous plant species (Rampedi, 2010*). Limpopo is known as an indigenous species-rich province. Its people use a variety of parts and organs of plants including seeds, barks, leaves, tubers and nuts as food. Mageu, Marula and Sorghum beer are the commonly known commercial beverages made in the province. According to Street and Prinsloo (2012**) about 80% of the South African population prefer indigenous plants for medicine. During the COVID-19 pandemic, community members are over harvesting the indigenous plants especially herbs for the purpose of steaming therapy to prevent and treat Corona virus. Continued overharvesting is one of the primary threats to biodiversity which may lead to extinction of useful species.

Below: The PC and Service Provider at Mamali PS measuring size of the nursery



Indigenous herbs nursery just completed at Konanani primary

To counter overharvesting of nutritional, cultural and medicinal indigenous plants, the Jala Peo team in Limpopo have adopted the Value Chain Resource Center model. The model seeks to identify schools that will serve as both conservation and learning centers in every circuit. One school will keep the indigenous herbaceous plants and the other will keep the indigenous trees.

Konanani primary school was nominated to be the center of indigenous herbaceous plants for the Sibasa circuit in the Vhembe East District. The school will further promote the processing of herbaceous plants into useful products such as medicine, food and cultural herbs. The Limpopo Sibasa District Forum has just completed the erection of approximately 100m² nursery. This will be used for propagating the herbaceous plants. The Forum has also purchased the initial seedlings for the nursery.

It is anticipated that the newly established indigenous nurseries will serve the following purposes:

- Act as resource centres for the benefit of other schools and the neighboring communities
- Help to engage parents and the community with learners and educators to deliberate on issues relating to indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and indigenous plants.
- To integrate the school with institutions of higher learning such as the universities, FETs and Colleges with respect to botanical topical issues such as nomenclature.
- Assist learners and educators to conduct practical lessons relating to botanical themes in various learning areas such as Agriculture, Life sciences and Natural sciences.
- To inspire the love and care for plants and the environment all the participating stakeholders.
- The school is able to process the produce into useful products.
- To supplement school funds



Some of the trees purchased from Khumbe nursery



The PC with Mamali Primary School SGB

*Rampedi, I.T. (2010) *Indigenous plants in the Limpopo province: Potential for their commercial beverage production*, University of South Africa, Pretoria, <<http://hdl.handle.net/10500/4109>>

**Street, R. A., & Prinsloo, G. (2012). *Commercially Important Medicinal Plants of South Africa: A Review*. *Journal of Chemistry*, 2013, 205048. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2013/205048>

NEWS FROM THE FEZILE DABI DISTRICT

INCREASE IN STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT



Nelly Komape - Free State Provincial Coordinator
nelly@jet.org.za

An additional stakeholder has been onboarded in Fezile Dabi Schools - Reel Gardening. The organization has partnered with Shoprite's Act for Change and has donated 130 "Household Food Garden" boxes of seeds for homestead learners.

The boxes have 12 envelopes, one to be planted each month, marked from January to December. There is a variety of seeds including broccoli, carrots, beetroot, spring onions, cabbage, spinach, lettuce, morogo, radishes, rocket, green pepper, tomatoes, peas, green beans and chillies. Each type of seeds comes with four varieties.

The boxes will be distributed by the PC and Shoprite representatives to learners at Jala Peo schools and 7 hostels within the Fezile Dabi District.

The donation will encourage the learners, together with their parents, to establish their home gardens encourage self-sustainability. It also encourages other stakeholders to become actively involved in the Initiative.



Boxes of seeds for home stead learners



NEWS FROM THE WEST COAST DISTRICT

GARDEN IN A BOX



Sunet Anderson - West Coast Provincial Coordinator
sunet@jet.org.za

Household gardens in the West Coast were given a strong boost when Reel Gardening provided school community members with 250 sponsored garden boxes. Each box contains a year's worth of seed for a household of four as well as fertilizer and a watering spout to use on a recycled 2 litre cooldrink bottle. The first 150 boxes to school community households were distributed April and July 2021.

The Jala Peo Initiative further collaborated with the James House project that identified 80 households from Vredendal North and Vergenoeg Primary Schools that are involved in their programme. James House supports these homestead gardeners with their two community champions visiting gardens on a regular basis.

The rest of the boxes were distributed to 10 other schools as per lists of households provided by the schools and are supported by gardeners and their school staff. The primary schools are Booyensdal, Steilhoogte, Koekenaap, Trawal, Nuwefontein, Rietpoort, Bitterfontein, St. Boniface, Ebenhaeser, and Lutzville.

Parents receiving the boxes were trained on how to use the contents to start their homestead garden. The Jala Peo initiative further arranged a week-long trainingsponsored by the Department of Agriculture for 13 of the parents from the James House programme on soil preparation and vegetable production.



Left:Parents from Nuwefontein Primary being trained on using the garden boxes

Right:Community members receiving practical training sponsored by Department of Agriculture



CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

EDIBLE INDIGENOUS PLANTS & FLOWERS

Edible indigenous plants offer a great way to eat well. They are also relatively easy to grow and care for. The Botanical Society of South Africa encourages the wise use of indigenous plants in southern Africa. Below are some great examples of indigenous plants that you can easily grow and harvest in your very own garden for medicinal remedies and exciting culinary experiences.



Carpobrotus edulis (Sour figs, above) The succulent leaves of the sour fig are excellent for any skin problems like sunburn, bee and blue bottle stings, spider bites, rashes, cold sores and insect bites. Chew on the leaves for relief from a sore throat. The ripe fruits and dried fruits are used for the delicious, sweet and salty, tamarind-like tasting juicy seed centre. Use them to make jams, chutneys and sauces. The pink flowers produce a sweeter-tasting fruit than the yellow flowers. This fast-growing succulent groundcover flowers from August to October, the large flowers starting yellow and turning pink with age. It is widespread in the south western Cape. It is used as a pioneer plant to hold banks and exposed sand, and is a good fire retardant.



Tulbaghia violacea (Wild garlic, left) This whole plant has culinary uses. The flowers can be used in salads and as a garnish, and the leaves used like chives. The roots have a very pungent garlic flavour (use sparingly) and can be used like normal garlic – they are great in stews and roasts. The leaves can also be used as an insect repellent, and a soup made from the roots or leaves is good for coughs and colds. In fact, the plant has similar medicinal properties to normal garlic.

This excellent border plant has bluish green leaves up to 25cm in length, and flowers profusely if watered through the summer months with attractive mauve flowers. It is easy to grow and is reported to keep moles away. It occurs naturally along the south coast.



Grain sorghum (right) is produced in the Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, North West, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces. Sorghum meal is mainly used for making porridge, unleavened bread, cookies, cakes, couscous and malted beverage. Parched seeds are used as coffee substitute. Sorghum is also an important animal feed.

Common names: **Grain sorghum**, Mabele, Amazimba, Amabele

A VIEW FROM THE GARDEN



Left to right: Garden at Lutzville Primary School, West Coast District; school garden in Limpopo; homestead garden in Free State

Jala Peo is an initiative of