

## Green Economy

Even though the Western Cape managed to avoid “Day Zero” of the water shortage crisis due to the drought in 2019, the two community projects in Ottery and Mitchell’s Plain grew by using adaptable planting and irrigation methods that were resilient in the times of drought. Despite the ongoing drought and subsequent water crisis, at least 2 community projects sustained their efforts and are progressing well beyond our expectations. The Greenlight Garden (Ottery) partnered with researchers from the University of Berlin and the Urban Agricultural Research Farmer’s Organisation, which used this project for their research while in the Western Cape. They took soil samples and discussed the different methods of composting and planting. The results of the research were shared with Greenlight as well as other emerging small farmers in the surrounding areas at the beginning of July 2018. Later in the year The Greenlight project was invited by the University of Berlin, in Germany, to do a presentation on “Small Scale Urban Agriculture” at the University from the 15 – 20 December 2018. The founder of Greenlight fostered many new networks and has subsequently been invited to attend another session in Kenya and the USA. The Greenlight Organic Gardens (Ottery) joined other local urban gardens where they shared knowledge and skills. A partnership with the Department of Agriculture secured training and networking capabilities. Other than organic gardening, the project broadened its outreach. A nutrition programme, a soccer club and the use of the library for after school activities increased youth participation and have caught the interest of parents and community leaders. The University of Maryland in The USA, also sent an intern for 6 months to assist the Greenlight to test their soil and using organic matter in his gardens. A partnership with the Department of Social Development secured more garden implements and seedlings for the project. The project also acquired their own chickens and rabbits to assist with compost manufacturing. This is a symbiotic relationship, as the animals fed from the garden and in turn the manure is fed back to enrich the soil. The soccer project was renamed to Ottery Future Stars and more assistance was forthcoming from other men in the community.

In the community of Mitchell’s Plain, the WW Jacobs Organic garden has expanded and diversified into growing indigenous plants and flowers for the local market. They participated in an Open Street Day community event which opened up a new marketing experience for the small enterprise. The group is a member of the Mitchell’s Plain Chamber of Commerce and participates in the broader market and related events. Recently, they launched a recycling initiative and trained youth of Delft (Ithemba Women’s peer learning) on how to utilize recycled containers as planters. WW Jacobs garden has been recognized as a small business in the urban agricultural space and was offered a market space to sell their goods over weekends. They hosted a number of events: a Women’s wellbeing event using plants and fruits for skincare as well as herbal teas; celebrated National Garden Day by hosting a few home garden owners in a practical planting workshop; and exhibited their plants and vegetables seedlings at the 4th Africa Women’s Innovation & Entrepreneurs Forum at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

The project in the Delft Community, Masithembele, started a food garden to assist with the sustainability of their feeding project for their afterschool and holiday programmes. They have received seedlings and implements from the Department of Social Development and SEED. WW Jacobs Gardens is assisting them with the maintenance of the garden.

