

PROJECT UPDATE

1 June 2021 to 30 January 2024

The COSDEF Agriculture Project was established in June 2021 at COSDEC Swakopmund as a joint venture between COSDEF and the Australian Charity, Towards a Better World. The overall aims of the project are to promote agriculture, strengthen food security, stimulate economic growth, and reduce waste.

This is achieved through facilitation of Agriculture training programs, an outreach program and on-site production of compost and fresh, locally grown, vegetables which are available for sale to the local market.

Key Elements

Construction of training and production facilities

- 1,400m² greenhouse (including extending it three times as demand increased);
- a hothouse for raising of seedlings;
- a new compost production area;
- several worm farms;
- a training and demonstration garden;
- a storeroom; and
- an office constructed out of recycled glass bottles

Agriculture Training and Community Outreach

- Our customised 6-week training course “How to Grow Your Own Vegetables” enables trainees to grow their own fresh vegetables, increase household income by selling any excess to increase the household income and/or set up commercial vegetable production at their farms throughout Namibia.
- During the course, trainees learn about soil preparation, making their own compost from food/garden waste, worm farming, seed raising, crop rotation, disease management, fertilising, garden maintenance and harvesting.
- Our Outreach program supports trainees, and community groups to set up vegetable gardens at their homes. This includes provision of support and materials such as tools, shade net, compost and seeds which are funded from the sale of vegetables by the Project and some donor grants.



Large scale compost production and worm farming

- Food waste is collected from restaurants/cafes and horse manure from the local stables, which is then turned into compost in around 3 weeks which ensures a reliable supply of quality compost is available for beneficiaries and the wider community as well as for our own gardens.
- Access to locally produced compost combined with knowledge from our courses has assisted many home gardeners to succeed where they were previously failing and overcome the challenge of growing plants in the poor quality soil of Swakopmund.
- Through our worm farms we also produce organic fertiliser in the form of vermi-compost (worm castings) and worm wee (liquid fertiliser).



Operation of a commercial vegetable garden

As part of the project, we established a commercial vegetable garden which provides much needed hands-on experience for the trainees, creates employment, and generates proceeds to enable the project to be financially independent.

Our dedicated team of gardeners, grow a wide range of vegetables including spinach, beetroot, radish, baby marrow, kohlrabi, basil, turnips and cucumbers. We regularly supply to various cafes and restaurants around town, Food Lovers Produce Market in Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, as well as direct sales to the public.



Outcomes

1. Over 200 people from the local community have received training and support which enabled them to establish their own home vegetable gardens.
 - An increase in people growing their own vegetables and more locally grown fresh produce making its way into the local market.
 - Knowledge sharing and peer support is regularly taking place through trainee cohorts, WhatsApp groups and return visits to our centre (most of this is driven by the community themselves as they reach out and network with others).
 - One group of graduates selected to setup their own gardening cooperative at the Urban Agriculture Project established by the Swakopmund Municipality.
2. Approximately 250 families, individuals and community groups have established their own backyard gardens as part of our Outreach program including residents at the Welwitschia Old Age Home, Stepping Stones Special Education School, churches and Public Schools.
3. The commercial garden produces over 200kg of vegetables each week including on average, 150kg of spinach, and 200 bunches of radish!
 - The funds generated from sales are used to fund the Project's overheads and other activities, enabling us to subsidise the cost of the training we provide.
 - The initial start-up capital provided by Towards a Better World has now been repaid through proceeds from the sales which means that the project is now able to operate sustainably without ongoing donor funds.
4. Our compost production facility diverts an estimated 10 ton of waste from landfill each month and provides a locally made solution to poor soil quality in the region.
5. The project has created employment for 7 staff (4 full-time and 3 part-time).

Further Information

For more information please contact:

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COSDEF AGRICULTURE PROJECT, SWAKOPMUND 2021-2024

BEFORE...



DURING...



AFTER...



Compost Production and worm farming...



The hothouse...



Office made from glass bottles

