

Jala Peo

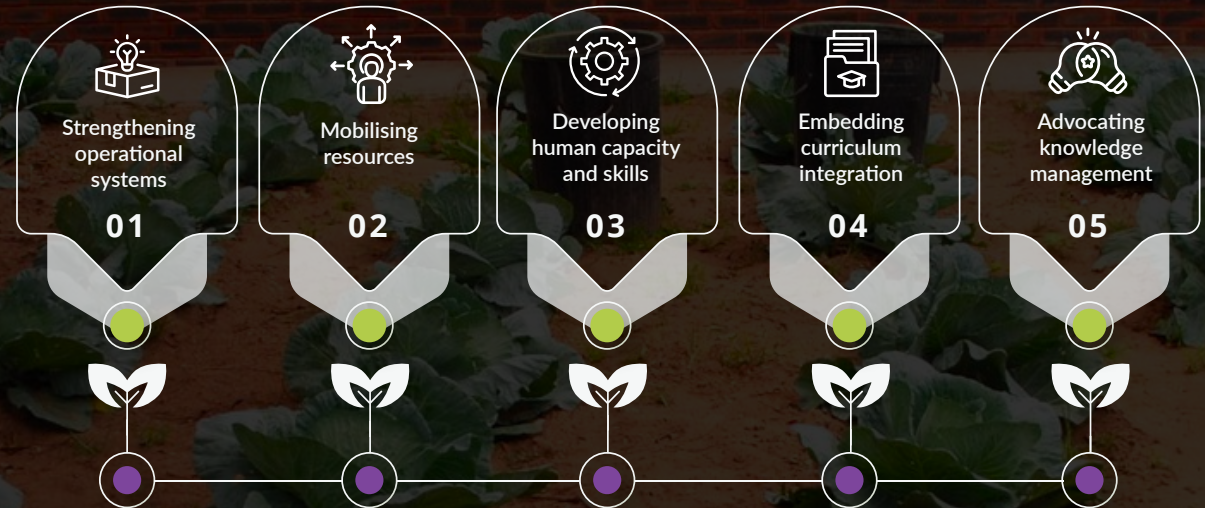
A collective impact initiative in South Africa

JET Education Service was commissioned by the National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE) to conduct and implement a pilot project in the John Taolo Gaetsewe district in the Northern Cape. The pilot aimed to test and refine a collaborative model focussing on the coordination and cohesion of identified funders, government entities and NGOs who have a vested interest in improving collective learner outcomes. This second thought piece focuses on a successfully implemented collective impact initiative in South Africa, the Jala Peo Initiative.

Overview

- A vehicle for the National School Nutrition Programme, the Jala Peo Initiative (JPI) focused on establishing and sustaining School Food and Nutrition Gardens (SFNGs) by mobilising resources already within the community through a District Forum.
- The JPI was modelled as a collective impact initiative with a firm understanding of the common agenda to establish SFNGs in schools, develop shared measurement frameworks to monitor progress of the Initiative, participate in mutually reinforcing activities across and within District Forums in support of the Initiative, and practise open communication and knowledge sharing.
- The National Steering Committee was the overall governance structure for the JPI at the national level with the DBE as the project owner, the WesBank Fund and later the FirstRand Foundation as the funder, Tshikululu Social Investments and JET Education Services as the managing agent.
- JPI was implemented across 86 schools in three provinces—Limpopo, Free State, and Western Cape. A District Forum in each of the three provinces was supported by a Project Coordinator. These Forums were multi-stakeholder partnerships which worked to better deliver on mandates related to SFNGs.

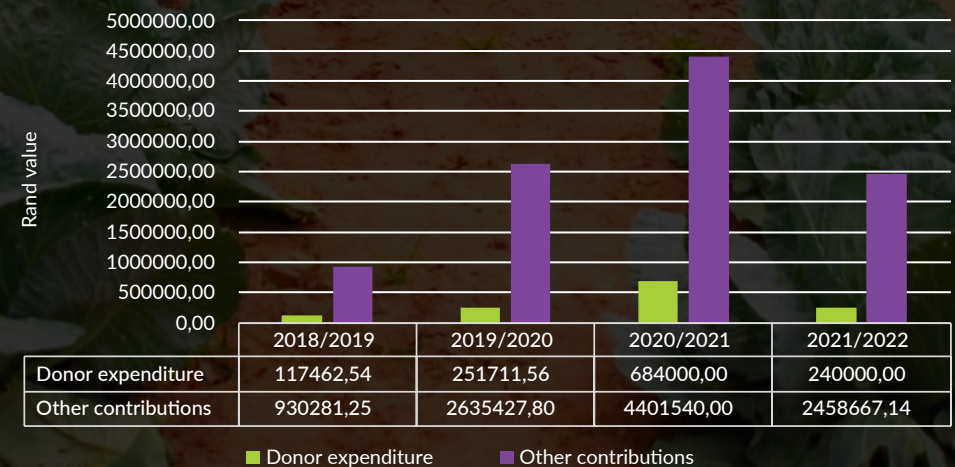
Objectives



Successes and lessons learned

- The core change-agents of the JPI were the three **multi-stakeholder District Forums**. Chaired by a Provincial Education Department district official, and supported by a dedicated Project Coordinator appointed by JET, each Forum worked together collaboratively to unlock assets and resources that already existed within their district.
- Substantial **resource mobilisation** through the District Forums (see graph)

Total contributions over pilot (2018-2022)





Successes and lessons learned (continued)

- One of the greatest successes of the JPI was the establishment of functional and flourishing SFNGs producing a variety of crops in 95% of schools by the conclusion of the pilot. At baseline, only 1% of schools were practising curriculum integration, and by the conclusion of the pilot in June 2022, 35% of schools were using the SFNG as a curriculum resource. Produce from the gardens were also used to supplement NSNP meals.
- Infrastructure improvements have had a strong influence on the higher scores of gardens. In 2019, about 30% of schools struggled to improve due to persistent infrastructure (water and other needs) and gardener challenges. These challenges were resolved in almost all schools at the end of the pilot, with a key lesson being consistent access to water and a dedicated gardener to aid the success of the SFNG. Infrastructure assets were procured both through the WesBank Fund/FirstRand Foundation funding as well as Forum members.
- The homestead gardens programme was one of the key means to enhance the status of agriculture in the community and capacitate learners and their families regarding the value of home gardens and agriculture more broadly. By June 2022, there were more than 380 homestead established across the three provinces.
- One of the main objectives of the JPI was to design and demonstrate methods to integrate the SFNGs into curriculum delivery and thus the SFNGs were envisaged to be used as a curriculum delivery resource for meaningful and quality education. The West Coast District Forum championed the curriculum integration efforts by developing an interactive infographic for the foundation phase.
- Under the advocacy and knowledge management objective, SFNG and homestead garden competitions were held in all three Districts. Quarterly newsletters were published by the NSC as well and distributed amongst the schools and other stakeholders. A Facebook page dedicated to the JPI was established and videos showcasing the various SFNGs and also homestead gardens were curated and posted to YouTube.

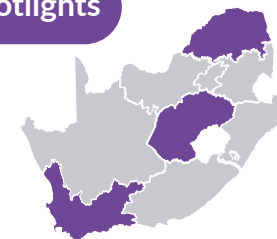


Challenges

- COVID-19 impacted on project implementation but District Forum flexibility and agility allowed for some activities to continue whilst funding was redirected towards other areas.
- A lack of Forum and school engagement in the Free State had resulted in slow progress of the Initiative in this province. After a client relationship specialist from JET was onboarded to assist with building and managing stakeholder relationships, senior stakeholders started showing a keen interest in supporting the Initiative.
- Although a long-term funding partner could not be secured in Limpopo once funding from the FirstRand Foundation ceased, the other two provinces successfully transitioned out of the pilot phase. Food and Trees for Africa continues to support some of the JPI schools in the Free State and Stellenbosch University and is supporting the West Coast Forum to date.
- The retirement of key DBE personnel without a clear, engaged replacement meant that the DBE was not as active in the management of the project as it ought to have been.



Provincial Spotlights



Free State: The Fezile Dabi District Forum leveraged the support of diverse stakeholders and provided employment for community members in the SFNGs. Food security was also improved as learners of some schools were provided with produce from the SFNGs to take home.

Limpopo: The value chain resource centre (VCRC) model was an innovation of the Vhembe East District Forum. Vegetable, medicinal plant and indigenous fruit tree nurseries and a soil science centre were established at four schools in the District.

Western Cape: The West Coast Forum spearheaded curriculum integration by developing an innovative infographic to give teachers a user-friendly tool to make going out into the garden for lessons achievable.

The importance of the outdoor classroom cannot be overstated. School gardens are effective resources to be used to teach key curriculum content effectively.

CAPS topics that can be linked to school gardens to encourage the use of the outdoor classroom. [Click on a topic for ideas and resources.](#)

	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3
Weather		What we need to live.	Healthy eating
Pets		Seasons	Insects
Plants & seeds		Healthy living	Life Cycles
Food		Animals	Pollution
Water		Creatures in water	Recycling – making compost
		Animal homes	Products & processes
		Soil	Animals & creatures that help us.
		People who help us.	