



The new paving sponsored by Kwanza Sands Minerals (PTY.) LTD has given the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence a face-lift.

KWANZA SANDS MINERALS SPONSORS EXTENSIONS TO INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN URBAN AGRICULTURE

An important achievement for Mhani Gingi during 2019 was the laying of further pathways for wheelchairs through sponsorship from Kwanza Sands Minerals (PTY.) LTD, formerly Consul Glass, as well as extensions to facilities at the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence to install a container for food processing operations.

“Work on the much-needed paving commenced on 1 August and it has given the Centre of Excellence a facelift,” said Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi. Along with the paving has been re-arrangement of wooden sheds to provide space to install the hoped-for 12m-by-3m customised steel container to house agri-processing activities which Mhani Gingi began this year.

Promoting inclusivity

Other innovations showcased at the Centre of Excellence which allow people with physical disabilities to participate in urban food gardening include vertical gardens made from recycled materials.

“We are eternally grateful for our sponsors such as Kwanza Sands Minerals (PTY.) LTD. as well as Landorf Nursery, whose assistance helps us in our mission to alleviate poverty amongst vulnerable groups and communities through food production and providing skills to promote independent income generation,” Masebenza said.



In line with Phase 4 of development of the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence, cultivation of the wonder plant spekboom, *Portulacaria afra*, which contributes to combating climate change, was introduced during 2019. The group of gardeners with physical disabilities from Uitsig Community crafted the containers for the succulents from recycled materials and sold them at December markets in Cape Town.



Founding Director
Lillian Masebenza

CONTACT DETAILS

Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network:
Mhani Gingi Founding Director: Lillian Masebenza
Mobile: +27 (0)82 465 4687 Office: +27 (0)21 531 8577
Email: lillian@mhanigingi.com
Address: Old Mutual Business Park, Jan Smuts Drive,
Pinelands 7405, Cape Town, South Africa
Website: www.mhanigingi.com



Vuyiseka Tekwana working at the vertical garden for wheelchair users.

Season's Greetings



Gardener Sakhe Ntzimkulu of Mhani Gingi Nursery prepares plants for sale at December food and craft markets.

Honourable Minister of Social Development Ms. Lindiwe Zulu visits Mhani Gingi to showcase the 'sustainable livelihoods' approach

A highlight of the year for Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network was when the Honourable Minister of Social Development, Ms. Lindiwe Zulu, visited the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence, on the day of her Budget Vote on 11 July 2019.

The Honourable Minister Zulu identified Mhani Gingi for the site tour to celebrate and showcase the sustainable livelihoods approach practised by Mhani Gingi. Sustainable livelihoods formed the theme of the Minister's Budget Speech. Her entourage included MECs for Social Development, a representative from the United Nations, and officials from her department.

The dignitaries toured Mhani Gingi's facilities at the Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence, which include the Mhani Gingi Organic Herb and Vegetable Seedling Nursery and the Restoring Dignity Liquid Soap Producing Enterprise project for survivors of domestic violence. There are also innovations to include people with disabilities in urban agriculture.

Sustainable Livelihoods approach

The Honourable Minister Zulu's Budget Vote Speech was delivered in the National Parliament. In her Budget Speech delivered the following week on 25 July, the Honourable Minister explained the theme, 'Working Together to Empower Communities for Sustainable Livelihoods'.

“Sustainable livelihoods is about creating a conducive environment for individuals, families and communities to enhance their capabilities and sustain themselves now and in the future. This will be fully achieved when every South African is able to reach their full potential,” she said.

“The Honourable Minister Zulu's visit was very special for us because it was validation of Mhani Gingi's Sustainable Livelihoods approach, which is rooted not only in our National Development Plan but also in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also, her visit was the first of two ministerial visits to Mhani Gingi in one year,” said Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi.

Other highlights of the year for the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence included extensions to the wheelchair-friendly pathways sponsored by Kwanza Sands Minerals (PTY.) LTD, formerly Consul Glass.

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WoW! Champions attend Healthy Plant-Based Cooking Course

On 4 — 8 February 2019 two members of the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network attended a Healthy Plant-Based Cooking Course for Wellness Champions of the Western Cape Government's WoW! (WesternCape on Wellness) programme.

The five-day course attended by 16 champions from Cape Town communities focused on the health, environmental, global and economic benefits of healthy plant-based eating. Mhani Gingi nurserywoman, Vuyiseka Tekwana, and Founding Director, Lillian Masebenza, represented the organisation.

The programme consisted of a variety of presenters on health-related topics as well as practical cooking lessons. These were delivered at the Private Hotel School of the Capsicum Culinary Studio in Salt River, Cape Town.

The WoW! programme includes 'health champions' from the community and community-based organisations who help to promote healthy, active lifestyles. After the Train-the-Trainer course, each WoW! Wellness Champion was required to train at least 10 other people from their community group.

This resulted in a follow-up in which Mhani Gingi trained 20 people from Uitsig Community, Ravensmead, to implement knowledge gained from the workshop. The group of people with physical disabilities from Uitsig Community are partners of Mhani Gingi.

“The workshop was very helpful to add value to the gardening produce from Mhani Gingi's community gardening activities and also links to our own healthy lifestyle efforts which include the goal of promoting healthy nutrition,” said Masebenza.

ORIBI Village ‘changemakers’ work on a more sustainable food system

Mhani Gingi participated in the pilot ORIBI Village Food System Incubation Programme designed to support social entrepreneurs and innovators who are working towards a sustainable and equitable food system.

ORIBI Village together with The Southern Africa Food Lab created the tailor-made incubation programme delivered over the past nine months, for 'changemakers' who are committed to creating a more productive, efficient, inclusive and sustainable food system. According to the website, difficulties facing the South African food system arise from questions such as availability, access, affordability, and the quality of food.

Mhani Gingi's Lillian Masebenza was a winner of the First Edition of the ORIBI Dinner for Change on 26 June 2019. The incubation programme held the Closing Event on 12 November 2019 at Food Jams in Salt River, Cape Town. The changemakers themselves supplied the ethically and locally sourced food that was enjoyed.



The group of gardeners from Uitsig Community with the Honourable Minister of Health of the Western Cape Government, Dr. Nomafrrench Mbombo.

Western Cape Minister of Health participates in urban gardening

On 2 September 2019, the Honourable Minister of Health of the Western Cape Government, Dr. Nomafrrench Mbombo, visited the Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence which promotes healthy lifestyles in alignment with the WesternCape on Wellness (WoW!) programme of the Department of Health in the province.

“We introduced the Honourable Minister to the group of people with disabilities from Uitsig Community and their team leader, Vanessa Baadjies, who maintain food gardens at the Uitsig Community Hall surroundings and at the Uitsig Primary School. Also present were those who garden at Bloulei School for Learners with Special Needs (LSN) in Retreat, accompanied by their principal, Cordelia Romes,” said Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi.

“Tabisa Mahlathi, Mhani Gingi Project Co-ordinator who also manages the Centre of Excellence, demonstrated the correct way of planting vegetable and herb seedlings — in which the Honourable Minister participated. We also showcased how the Mhani Gingi space is wheelchair-friendly and the Uitsig group could work on the hanging gardens while sitting in their wheelchairs.

“This planting session was followed by stretching exercises led by Dr Frederick Marais, Deputy Director: Increasing Wellness at the Western Cape Government Department of Health, and his group,” said Masebenza.

Department of Agriculture provides training in agri-processing

Members of the vegetable gardening team and the Organic Herb and Seedling Nursery situated at the Mhani Gingi Centre of Social Entrepreneurial Excellence in Athlone attended training in agri-processing delivered by Gareth Williams of the Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute Centre from 27 — 29 May 2019.

The training delivered at the Head Office of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture at Elsenburg was attended by Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network; Tabisa Mahlathi, Co-ordinator of the Flagship Programme; and Vuyiseka Tekwana and Nomawabo Damsese from the Mhani Gingi Nursery.

The Mhani Gingi team learned how to make yoghurt, chutney, cheese, apple juice and jam. They also baked bread — including classic French baguette loaves — and mastered how to grind herbs and spinach leaves to powder.

The training was “extremely beneficial” and Mhani Gingi's plans to implement agri-processing of the produce of its vegetable gardens are already at an advanced stage, said Masebenza. Once Mhani Gingi has acquired a tailor-made steel container for the food processing facility at Mhani Gingi Centre for Social Entrepreneurial Excellence, the training centre at Elsenburg will provide mobile services to deliver the produce.



Vuyiseka Tekwana (left) and Nomawabo Damsese from the Mhani Gingi Organic Herb and Seedling Nursery mastering the skill of making cheese. Honourable Minister of Health of the Western Cape Government, Dr. Nomafrrench Mbombo (in the WoW! t-shirt) on her visit to Mhani Gingi.