

Khayelitsha couple turns dumpsite into community garden

By [Vincent Lali](#)

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A couple in Level Two informal settlement in Khayelitsha, Cape Town is growing vegetables on a small plot next to their home to feed their family and a local soup kitchen. They say they cleared the area that had once been used as a dump site.



Khayelitsha residents Xolani Mbokodi and his wife Vuyokazi Vapi showing off their vegetable garden. Photo: Vincent Lali

Turning a dumpsite into a food garden

Xolani Mbokodi and his wife Vuyokazi Vapi live with their five children. They moved to the informal settlement in 2020 with many other occupiers who said they could no longer afford to pay rent due to the Covid-19 hard lockdown.

Unable to find permanent jobs, the couple started growing spinach, covo, onion, beetroot and potato. They sell bunches of their vegetables for R10 to residents who can afford it. Mbokodi, who now works as a security guard in Stellenbosch, said they use the little they make from selling their produce to buy food and pay for transport to school for the children.

Vapi, who is unemployed, wakes up at 5am daily to tend to the garden. Mbokodi joins his wife in the garden as soon as he returns from night shifts. "It feels good to plant veggies and watch them grow," said Vapi.



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They want to get a larger plot to grow more produce. Vapi said she teaches aspiring home gardeners how to make seed beds and gives them seeds to plant. “I visit the new gardeners to check how their gardens come along and explain to them how to look after germinating seeds,” she said.

The City of Cape Town’s Mayoral Committee Member for urban management, Alderman Grant Twigg, urged home gardeners to approach their sub-council leaders or call 021 444 8307 for advice.

Daniel Johnson, spokesperson for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, said the department also had a programme to support households wanting to grow produce at home.

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