



# **BUSINESS PLAN**

**ISSACHAR PROJECTS FOUNDATION**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Poverty

Poverty according to Concern Worldwide, is a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also access to services.

### Poverty in South Africa

A report released by STATS SA (Statistics South Africa) in august 2017, "Poverty trends in South Africa," show that poverty levels increased from 53,2% in 2011 to 55,5% in 2015. These figures are based on the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) of R992 per person per month in 2015. These figures indicate that a staggering 30,4 million South Africans were living in poverty in 2015. Factors which have contributed to this are according to the report, weak economic growth, continuing high unemployment levels, lower commodity prices, higher consumer prices (especially for energy and food), lower investment levels, greater household dependency on credit, and policy uncertainty. These factors have resulted in more South Africans being pushed further into poverty.

A report released by the world bank, overcoming poverty and inequality in South Africa list a number of factors that contribute to poverty:

- ∞ High unemployment rate,
- ∞ Racial and gender inequalities,
- ∞ Mismatch between labour demand and labour supply,
- ∞ Location,
- ∞ Labour market institutions,
- ∞ Inadequate growth of Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs).

## 1.2 Community Gardens: An Answer to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

The statistics that have been sited from different sources regarding global poverty and in particular South Africa is staggeringly high. These statistics show that the need to alleviate (extreme) poverty is dire. We, as Issachar project feel a need, which stems from our Christian beliefs, to change the lives of the most vulnerable in society. We feel that we are able to play a role in the alleviation of poverty in the townships of South Africa and in particular the Western Cape.



## 2. Mission

The mission of Issachar Projects is the establishment of community gardens in the townships of Cape Town. The primary aim of establishing these gardens is contribute to the alleviation of poverty and assist in the creation of food security for the most vulnerable and underprivileged in these communities. Our other aims are set out in § 2.2.

## 3. Philosophy & Goals

### 3.1 Philosophy

The Issachar project is set up with Christian values at its core. Honesty, integrity and running the projects based on biblical principles will be the pillars of our projects. In other words what we say and do must reflect these principles. To make sure that these principles are upheld at all times we will have Christian coaches on board to whom we will be accountable.

### 3.2 Goals

#### 3.2.1 Short Term Goals

The goal of Issachar Projects in establishing community gardens is to improve the quality of life of the those living in poverty in the townships. We aim to do this by:

- ∞ Providing fresh, healthy vegetables and fruit for community use and for sale,
- ∞ Improving the landscape of the township by creating green space,
- ∞ Creating a sense of pride and empowerment in the community,
- ∞ Encouraging less reliance on the state and more reliance on what can be achieved as a community, but also on an individual level,
- ∞ Providing starter food garden kits,
- ∞ Implementing educational programmes regarding
  - Establishment of home gardens,
  - Diet and health (nutrition),
  - Healthy (low budget) cooking,
  - Environmental stewardship and sustainability,
  - Budgeting.
  
- ∞ Improving the health of the vulnerable specifically children and the elderly,
- ∞ Instilling awareness of the food cycle,
- ∞ Building skills and create jobs,
- ∞ Reducing food waste,
- ∞ Reducing the carbon footprint.

### 3.2.2 Long Term Goals

#### Activity Centre

The Activity Centre will provide for the following:

Food Garden  
Skills Development Centre  
Workshops pertaining to gardening  
Safe spaces for children and teenagers  
Space for activities for the elderly

## 4. Financing

The community gardens will mainly be financed by funding through the foundation, Issachar Projects and will solicit funding from the businesses, private individuals and the City of Cape Town.

Furthermore, part of the profit generated by the social business, Designed Inc which has been set up by the founders of the Issachar Projects will also be used to fund the community gardens.

The finances are used as follows:

- ∞ Salary gardeners,
- ∞ Maintenance,
- ∞ Materials such as compost, fertilizer, nutrients, seeds, seedlings, etc.,
- ∞ Other operational costs.

The financial overview for each year is published on the website of the foundation, [www.issacharprojects.org](http://www.issacharprojects.org) The financial overview gives an account of how the funds received are managed.



## 5. Benefits of Community Gardens

### 5.1 Community

Making use of empty plots which are often used as a dumping ground to create community gardens will change the landscape of the community and create pride in the community.

### 5.2 Environmental

Establishing gardens creates new ecosystem/microclimates which will promote pollination, reduce erosion, reduce greenhouse gases, etc.

Soil and compost heaps stimulate growth of bacteria and insects that are beneficial for the soil.



### 5.3 Economic development of community

The surplus crop is sold thus providing the gardeners with a small income. The aim is to stimulate the establishment of home gardens. The surplus from these gardens can also be sold at markets or to restaurants, deli's and supermarkets to supplement income or government grants.

### 5.4 Nutritional and health benefits

The crops grown provide the community with a source of nutritional foods and improve the overall health of the community. A healthy diet that includes fruit and vegetables can reduce the risk of cardio-vascular disease and diabetes. These diseases place a high burden on the healthcare system.

According to the WHO consuming a healthy diet and physical exercise are important contributors to reducing the burden of cardio-vascular disease and diabetes.

**In the Western Cape, 16% of women are malnourished, 16% anaemic, 5,7% have iron deficiency, 41% have a low vegetable intake**

Source: Don Pinnock

We also foresee the health benefits impacting the young and elderly. Increasing the nutritional value of the diet will also increase the ability of school-going children to concentrate on their studies which will further improve their chances of succeeding in life.

## 5.5 Improve food security

The crops yielded by the gardens ensure that residents are supplied with fresh, nutritious and organically grown produce. Part of the surplus will be donated to creches, soup kitchens, etc. In this way food security can be ensured for the vulnerable members of the community.



## 5.6 Provide a safe haven

Through the establishment of community gardens, we aim to provide a safe haven/environment for the members of the community especially for younger members who are at risk of getting involved in gangs and drug addiction.

## 5.7 Promote physical and mental health

The daily tasks that are carried out like planting, weeding, raking, and tidying around the garden increases the physical activity of the participants. Social interaction will also promote improved mental health. Actively participating in the community gardens can help relieve stress by taking the focus off the daily problems stemming from concerns related to financial, security and family issues.

**“Simply viewing a green space through a window can help people relax and reduce stress levels. Other evidence confirmed that the physical activity of gardening can improve mental wellbeing.”**

Source: The Guardian May 2019  
Green therapy: how gardening is helping to fight depression

## 5.8 Social interaction

Involvement in these community gardens creates an opportunity for community members to get to know each other which helps strengthen the social fabric of the community.

# 6. Challenges involved in Starting Community Gardens

## 6.1. Lack of local government and community support

The city of Cape Town has established poverty alleviation and reduction programs through the establishment of community gardens and have in these policies stated their desire to work together with non-profit organisations through assistance in the form of finances, expertise and other



resources. We therefore do not see this as a barrier to setting up the gardens. Also, the local government offers assistance in locating appropriate plots in the community for the establishment of community gardens.

Our research has shown that community co-operation with and participation in establishing and maintaining community gardens in other areas have been very positive.

## 6.2 Lack of start-up funds

The gardens will be funded through donations from businesses, individuals, the City of Cape Town, etc. Funding will also come from organisation's social business, Designed Inc once the business starts making sufficient profit to contribute to these projects.

Our fund-raising campaign will focus on:

- ∞ the many ways in which the communities in Lavender Hill will be positively impacted by these community gardens. The focus will also be on sustainability. The establishment of an edible garden at the Aged Centre in Lavender Hill this year will bear testament to the many benefits an edible garden.
- ∞ the dire need of safe spaces for children to play, educare centres (creches), centres for the elderly, indoor areas for smaller organisations in Lavender Hill to operate from, etc

## 6.3 Access to water and electricity

The gardens will be established on plots of land which will be leased from the city of Cape Town. The city of Cape Town will be responsible for the infrastructure as far as water and electricity supply is concerned. The gardens will also make as much use of bore hole water and rainwater collected in water barrels.

## 6.4 Safety issues

The foundation is aware of the safety issues involved in establishing community gardens in townships and will ensure that physical structures and other safety measures are in place to ensure that the gardens are secure.

Community support and co-operation will also be key to mitigating these safety issues.

## 6.5 Maintain consistency

Maintaining consistency as far as employees and motivation are concerned will be a challenge, but we will aim to offer sufficient incentives and understanding of the benefits of these community gardens to minimise this.

## 7. Establishing the Community Gardens

### 7.1 Land acquisition

The foundation will make use of the government's Urban agricultural policy to acquire land. The foundation will be looking to lease land from the city of Cape Town but will also look into the possibility of acquiring this land, since the establishment of the community gardens will be for the purpose of improving food security for the vulnerable in the communities, providing them with a source of income and creating jobs.

### 7.2 Infrastructure

The land will be acquired in areas where the basic infrastructure such as access to electricity, clean water, roads, fencing, irrigation systems, garbage disposal, etc is in place. We will be looking to acquire subsidies from the city of Cape Town for the costs related to water, electricity, etc. One of our long-term goals will be to set up solar panels.

### 7.3 Assessment of land

The land will be assessed to determine the

- ∞ impact (negative/positive) on the community
- ∞ Impact on the environment

An important assessment will be that of the soil quality to determine the suitability of the soil.

## 8. Pre-Start up Preparations

Before commencing with the community garden. We will access the opinion of the residents in order to ensure that we have the backing of the community. Thereafter the residents will be informed about the intentions of the organisation to set up community gardens. This will be communicated during formal meetings set up in churches, mosques or other common meeting places. We will also rely on news about the establishment of the gardens through word of mouth.

## 9 Start-up Community Garden

### 9.1 Garden design

The organisation will enlist the help of the department of agriculture and/or skilled professionals to design the garden. We will consider the needs of residents when designing the garden, so people will feel welcome and involved in the garden.

The community gardens will be fenced in to protect the garden from animal and human intruders.

## 9.2 Infrastructure

- ∞ The garden will be designed to include the following (infrastructural) features:
- ∞ Pathways. Pathways will be designed to allow for easy access not only for the gardeners but also for visitors.
- ∞ Raised beds. This will allow gardeners who have some physical difficulties to be able to have access to the soil.
- ∞ Setting up hanging gardens, vertical gardens, and window/fence boxes
- ∞ Shaded areas and seating
- ∞ This will provide areas for the gardeners to take breaks, eat and connect with each other. This will also provide a place for the elderly and the disabled to sit and experience the garden.
- ∞ Shelter from rain
- ∞ Seating
- ∞ Shed/container for storing tools and other equipment.
- ∞ Indoor space for workshops
- ∞ Set up an area with a braai/stone oven. This can be used to give outdoor cooking workshops. This will also give the gardeners the facilities to cook using the produce from the garden.
- ∞ Water access
- ∞ Rain harvest containers
- ∞ A composting area
- ∞ Greenhouse



### 9.3 Sustainable Garden design

#### ∞ **Minimise fossil-fuelled tools**

We will where possible avoid using electrically or fossil-fuelled tools. We will set up solar panels and dig bore holes which will allow the gardens to be less reliant on the grid.

#### ∞ **Water conservation**

We will conserve water as follows:

- ∞ Rainwater will be harvested using rainwater tanks and by building Infiltration ditches (swales).
- ∞ Compost and organic material will be used to improve the ability of the soil to hold water.
- ∞ Reduce evaporation by using mulch and a dripper system to apply water under mulch so water can soak deeply into the soil.
- ∞ Use water retainable edging material for raised beds.
- ∞ Make use microclimates to situate plants to maximise water efficiency.
- ∞ Make use of grey water.

#### ∞ **Biodiversity**

We will identify, conserve and maintain the existing biodiversity.

We will as far as possible use plants that will provide food and shelter for native fauna.

### 9.4 Preparing the plot

Soil tests will be performed to ascertain the pH, and soil quality. This will determine what kind of vegetables, fruit and other plants, trees and shrubs will be suitable to plant.

Where necessary raised beds will be installed

### 9.5 Build and Install Garden Infrastructure

Once the garden design is complete and the plot cleared, the necessary infrastructure will be installed. This will include fencing, gates, laying pathways, installing raised beds, composting bins, garden shed, rain barrels, seating, toilet and wash facilities, etc. We will employ the skills (carpentry, paving, etc) of members of the community to set up the infrastructure.

We will make use of natural/sustainable/recycled material for these structures. We will not be using used car tyres with food plants since they have the potential to leach toxins

The garden layout will be set up with “lean” principles in mind. This will reduce the amount of time needed to carry out the various tasks.

### 9.6 Planting and seeding the garden

The types of vegetables, herbs and fruits that will be cultivated will be decided upon together with relevant stakeholders. The focus when making these decisions will be on the needs of the community, nutritional value, suitability of the crops for the soil type and weather conditions, etc.

Apart from vegetables, herbs and fruit trees, flowering plants and (edible) shrubs will be planted to improve the aesthetics. Both seeds and transplants will be used.

We will use locally adapted and non-hybrid seeds. We will allow plants to go to seed to replenish seed supply and to attract insects

## 9.7 Types of crops grown

Crops that will be grown will have a high nutritional value like for example:

Vegetables:		Fruit:	Herbs :
Tomatoes,	Onions	Strawberries	Oregano
Bell peppers	Potatoes	Blueberries	Coriander
Cucumber	Green beans	Gooseberries	Thyme
Cauliflower	Garlic	Passion fruit	Chives
Broccoli	Lettuce	<b>Trees:</b>	Rosemary
Cabbage	Courgette	Figs/ Apple /pear	Basil
Pumpkin	Leeks	Lemon/lime/orange	Mint

## 9.8 Garden maintenance

Maintenance of the garden will be an integral part of the daily tasks. The daily rosters that will be drawn up will include maintenance of the gardens. Apart from the necessary maintenance, keeping the gardens clean and tidy will be of equal importance. Maintenance to the garden will include:

- ∞ Watering the garden
- ∞ Weeding
- ∞ Raking and sweeping
- ∞ Managing the compost bin
- ∞ Maintaining fixed structures such as garden sheds, fencing, etc
- ∞ Fertilising using the garden's own compost heap
- ∞ Pest control – no herbicides or pesticides will be used, only natural products. We will also make use of other natural means of pest control such as predatory insects to keep pest populations in check.

## 10. Garden rules and guidelines

The foundation will together with relevant stakeholders set up rules and guidelines for those directly involved in the gardens. The rules, guidelines and procedures will include:

- ∞ Health and safety aspects
- ∞ Social aspects
- ∞ Co-operation
- ∞ Code of conduct
- ∞ Gardening procedures
- ∞ Daily activities
- ∞ Competencies and responsibilities
- ∞ Division of (daily)tasks
- ∞ Records of activities
- ∞ Setting up of rosters

## 11. Harvesting and Crop Distribution

The crop will be distributed amongst soup kitchens, the gardeners and the vulnerable in the community (children, elderly, single moms, etc). As the garden grows the surplus will be brought to market or sold to restaurants, delis, etc. The proceeds will be put back into the gardens or other community projects.



## 12. Evaluating Garden Projects

The gardening projects will be evaluated periodically using set criteria in order to improve all aspects of the gardens and the conditions of the employees.

The outcome of the evaluations will be available to all stakeholders.

## 13. Safety and Security

The gardens will be fenced in and other security measures such as cameras, electrical fencing put in place.

We will furthermore involve as much people as possible to be the eyes and ears. We will also set up a WhatsApp group, so members of the community and management will be informed of any security issues.

### 13.1 Health and safety policy

We will develop a health and safety policy that will be periodically revised. The health and safety policy will include the following:

- ∞ Perform a health and safety risk analysis
- ∞ Criteria for periodic inspections of the garden and follow up of non-conformities
- ∞ Training first-aiders
- ∞ Provision of information regarding health and safety
- ∞ Instructions on what to do in case of an accident. Registration and investigation of accidents. Provide incident/accident forms.
- ∞ Safety procedures regarding using and storing chemicals. We will however minimise the use of chemicals
- ∞ The use of protective gear – hats, sunscreen, boots, gloves, etc,
- ∞ Keeping pathways and walkways safe –clear of obstacles.
- ∞ Carrying and moving heavy objects
- ∞ Use of garden tools
- ∞ Proper storage of tools
- ∞ Managing compost heaps so they do not attract vermin.
- ∞ Minimise the use of poisons and pesticides by practising good organic management.



## 13.2 Insurance

The organisation will take out an employer liability insurance to cover personal injury as well as site insurance to cover theft, vandalism, fire, etc. An all risks policy to cover the community garden property against fire, flood, theft and any other specified risk will be taken out.

As the garden grows and the visitor numbers grow, the organisation will take out public liability insurance.

## 14. Short Term and Long-Term Goals

### 14.1 Setting up workshops

The goals will be aimed at empowering the community to improve their food security, learn skills and improve their diet.

We will be providing workshop and training for the following:

- ∞ Basic gardening skills
  - ∞ Management skills as well as mediation and conflict resolution skills
  - ∞ Establishing gardens on own or rented property
- We will assist community members in establishing their own gardens at home  
Not only vegetables and fruit but also flowers – improve the community

- ∞ Healthy cooking

The organisation intends to enlist the help of a dietician and chef to run workshops to teach community members about the importance of a healthy and nutritious diet. We will, to a large extent use the fruit, vegetables and herbs produced by the garden to produce easy, inexpensive nutritious meals. Our aim will be to involve schools in these workshops so that they understand the benefits of a healthy diet as well as the connection between a healthy diet and better performance at school.

- ∞ Baking

Teaching community members to bake their own bread will improve the food security for a large part of the community. We will have a stone oven on the premises so that members of the community who do not have the facilities (oven) to bake their own bread will be able to bring the prepared bread dough to the community garden to have it baked off.



∞ Making preserves

We will use some of the surplus fruits like berries and figs to make jams. We will also use vegetables to make preserves such as pickled cucumbers, onions, sun dried tomatoes, etc. These preserves will be sold to local stores/deli's or restaurants and for consumption by the community. We will train those involved in the gardens and interested members of the community to do this.



∞ **Produce seedlings**

The garden will produce its own seeds and seedlings which will cut costs regarding seed acquisition. The garden will also provide seedlings to residents who wish to start their own gardens

∞ Budgeting

The members of the community will be taught how to manage their finances which will also assist in the alleviation of poverty.

∞ Setting up sustainable projects

▪ Green houses

Green houses will allow the gardens to produce crops in and out of season

▪ Solar panels

▪ Bee-keeping

## 14.2 Opening the gardens to the public

We will open up the gardens and run programs for old age homes, creches, schools, We will also Invite local residents, businesses and community groups, Non-gardening activities will also be set up, such as art projects and open day

## 14.3 Establishment of co-operatives

A long-term goal would be to assist community members to set up their own co-operatives. This will provide them with the opportunity to put the skills learned to setting up an own business with other community members.

## 15. Other Projects

Although the main thrust of the Issachar project will be the establishment of community gardens, we will set up or be involved in other community project in the townships. Other projects that we would like to set up are.

### 15.1 Support ministries in the community

We have built relationships with local ministries and have seen the amazing work they are doing to improve the lives of members of the community especially the children. We have seen the need for finances and other resources and would like to set up a fund for these ministries.

### 15.2 Educational projects

We would like to improve the lives of the youth in the community by providing them with the funding needed to pursue secondary and tertiary education.

Furthermore we would like to set up or help set up educational programs for youth and adults to help them better their chances at finding gainful employment or equip them set up their own business

### 15.3 Micro financing

We will look to helping community members who need money to start up a small business with small loans so they are able to improve their lives and contribute to society.

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