



# MOVING OUR YOUTH FORWARD

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Batataise programme learners at the handover of the garden prepared during Phase 1

SABI has joined forces with Batataise Youth Development, a non-profit organisation based in Gauteng, to train unemployed matriculants from three municipalities in Gauteng in the basics of landscaping and irrigation. The project is funded by the Gauteng Department of Health and Social Development and undertaken in collaboration with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

Batataise means “to guide” and the need for skills in these particular fields were identified following the successful development of vegetable gardens at Gauteng Government hospitals to produce fresh vegetables for the hospital kitchens. The department recognised that equipping unemployed youths from the largely urban municipalities with skills, could empower the communities with the necessary skills to establish successful gardens not only for food production but also for ornamental and beautification purposes.

## IRRIGATION SKILLS

The program consists of 5 groups of learners being trained over the next 8 months, each group receiving 4 weeks of combined theoretical and practical training to

develop the skills that will help them to obtain work in either the horticultural or agricultural sectors.

## THE PROGRAM COVERS:

- The role and requirements of water in plants;
- The basic principles of garden lay-out and plant selection;
- The selection and installation of irrigation emitters and pipes in gardens and landscaped areas;
- The application of irrigation water to landscaped areas,
- Planting procedures;
- Pruning and shaping;
- Applying fertilisers;
- Managing pests, weeds and diseases.

## CREATING A GARDEN

The launch of the projected was slightly disrupted by the public sector strike and the first phase of the programme took place at the ARC-Institute for Agricultural Engineering, instead of at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. As part of the programme, an actual garden



Potential learners receiving information on the programme during the Orientation day



Learners discussing the new garden lay-out at the ARC-IAE



Learners pruning and shaping the trees in the garden





Before...



During...




After...

was created and irrigation systems installed by the learners so that they can obtain new skills. With the first phase taking place at the ARC-IAE, the opportunity was used to upgrade a part of the garden at the Institute around the outdoor entertainment area. It also coincided with the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Institute and the new garden was opened with a small function attended by the ARC staff and Batataise learners.

### EMPLOYMENT

A very important component of the training is to help learners who have completed the course successfully to find employment in the irrigation, landscaping or agricultural sector. Learners can enter the irrigation, landscaping and agricultural sectors with the basic training that has been provided, but should ideally continue with

further studies in the direction that interests them most. As all learners on the course have completed Matric with mathematics, tertiary training is a possibility.

A number of the learners have also expressed an interest in becoming more involved in agricultural irrigation, and SABI company members or other interested parties are welcome to contact SABI technical executive officer Isobel van der Stoep on [isobel@sabi.co.za](mailto:isobel@sabi.co.za) if they are looking for new young staff members for their businesses who already have some background in irrigation and for whom references can be provided. 

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