

# SOUTH AFRICA



## Phakamani Siyephambili

The mission of Phakamani Siyephambili is to advance agroecology and food sovereignty by enabling agroecological producers to use their local and indigenous knowledge to produce an abundant supply of nutrient rich organic produce, and advance their socio-economic, political and ecological interests to achieve greater equity.

### Map

The initiative is located in the rural Sarah Baartman municipal district in the west of the Eastern Cape Province, home to the Xhosa people. Livelihoods of the people are highly dependent on agriculture, either as farmers or agricultural labourers. For centuries most land has been privately owned by European settler and their descendants. Landlessness is common amongst farm workers and farm dwellers living on these large commercial farms. The national programme of land reform has made only slight progress toward redressing this imbalance and poverty and insecurity are rife. The drought-prone territory receives summer rainfall.



### Context

Poverty in the territory is associated with limited livelihood options, unemployment, low wages, poor labour standards, and precarious employment. Tenure insecurity is common amongst farm dwellers. Commercial agriculture is focused on animal husbandry and monocultural horticulture. In contrast, participants in the initiative practice mixed farming, producing both horticultural and animal husbandry products.







## Description

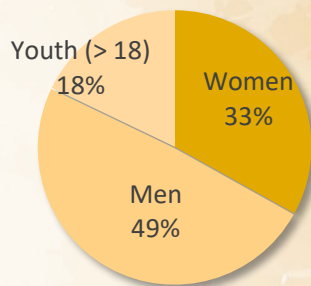
The initiative was launched in **2013**. At the end of 2019, the initiative included 783 members across three municipalities and 13 geographical areas in the Sarah Baartman district. The initiative operates **across 100 farming/food production systems** involving small-sale farmers, who **accessed land** through the government's various land reform strategies, farm workers and dwellers who live and work on commercial farmland, school gardens, township and informal garden and vegetable plots.

After receiving **training in agroecological farming practices**, women micro-food producers came together and united with the main aim of producing and marketing food, as well as **collectively saving money**. Women engaged the local municipality to access land that they plan to use co-operatively for food production.

In 2019, through the East Cape Agricultural Research Project (ECARP), a considerable number of **children were incorporated into the initiative** : 130 school children from 6 schools in Grahamstown were trained in agroecological farming practices.



783 members



## Trajectory

2013 :  
Founding of Phakamani  
Siyephambili

2015:  
Training in agroecological  
methods

2018:  
Farmer awarded for her use of  
agroecological farming  
methods

2019:  
207 producers market  
their products





## Results and benefits



Members using organic methods demonstrate and report more **efficient water use**, greater **resilience of crops in dry periods** and **reduced input costs**. Agroecology is improving quality and quantities of produce at all scales of production. Mrs Khamana received training from ECARP on agro-ecological farming practices. Due to this training, in 2018, she entered a competition that was hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. She was runner up in the competition and was **awarded recognition for her use of agroecological farming methods** she learnt from ECARP's training and extension services.

Livelihoods and quality of the lives of members and their families have improved, including enhanced food security, housing and education. They also invested in farm improvements, enhanced livestock nutrition and health. For instance, in 2019, **207 small-scale farmers and micro-food producers marketed agroecological produce in local markets, earning an income of R628 478.**



Members **exchange knowledge, open-pollinated seeds** and share **income, farming implements** and **produce**. Social capital, self-esteem, agency, resilience and capabilities essential to secure land, produce food and sustain agroecology have all been developed.

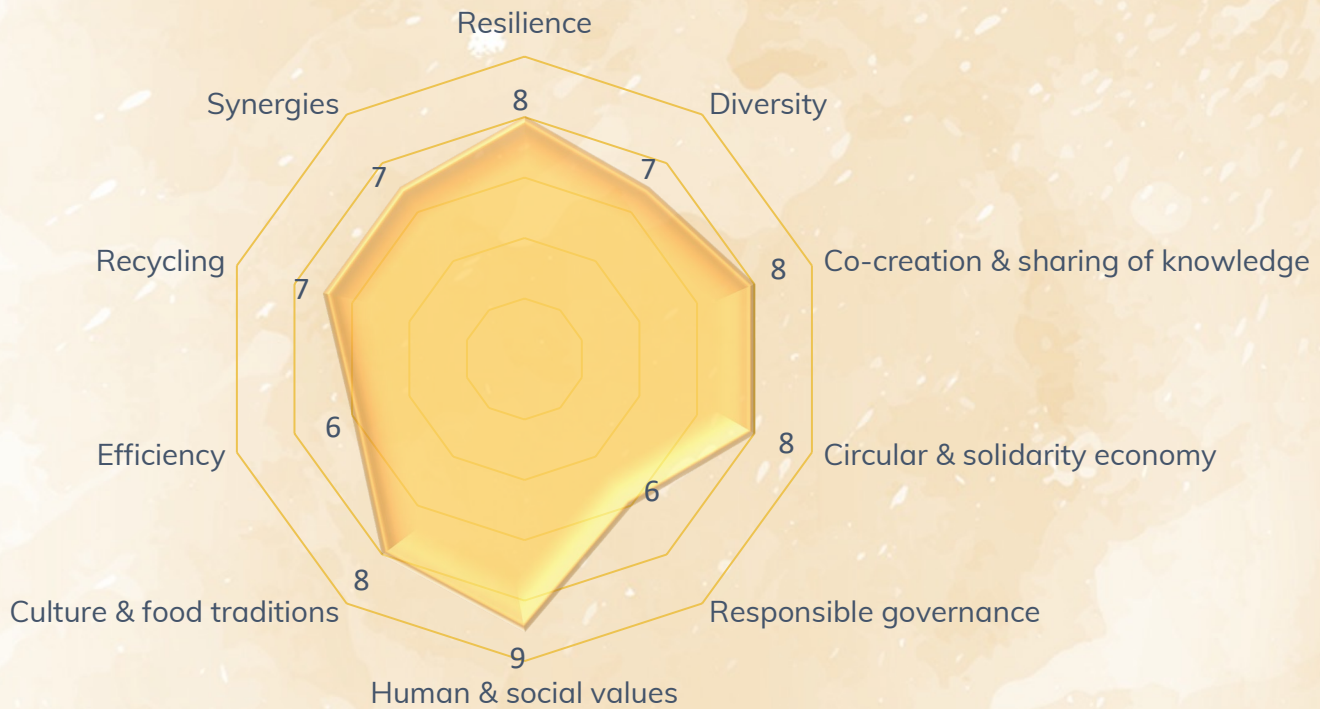
The biophysical, social and economic activities and interactions create **synergies that strengthen the local food systems** and make them **more productive** whilst sustaining ecosystem services such as healthy soils.



The initiative **connects producers and consumers**. Sales of agroecological produce take place at agri-hubs and vegetable stores. Realistic but fair pricing covers expenditures and returns a profit.



# Lessons learned and reflected FAO principles



## Resilience: 8

The resilience of the people and their communities is enhanced by strengthening solidarity, broadening cooperation and sharing knowledge and other resources. Sharing of food, seeds and implements with those who are in need it via donation or barter is a strong tradition.



## Human & social values: 9

The initiative is based upon common values including the pre-eminence of empowerment of especially women. Social well-being has been enhanced. Youth are also included and learn how to be more resilient.



## Diversity: 7

The initiative values diversity of food crops and supports the saving and sharing of open-pollinated seeds. The diversity of people, beliefs and knowledge systems is nurtured by the initiative. Food security and good nutrition are strong benefits of the initiative for the participants.



## Culture & food traditions: 8

The initiative supports healthy, diversified and culturally appropriate diets by enabling sharing of seed and produce from open-pollinated and health-giving crops and vegetables.



## Co-creation & sharing of knowledge: 8

Active sharing of knowledge between members of the initiative is strongly valued and actively practiced, including innovations that have been successfully implemented by individuals. The members value a range of forms of knowledge including traditional and scientific knowledge.



## Efficiency: 6

The farming systems of the participants demonstrate how to produce more while conserving water resources and creating and using on-farm sources of fertility. Labour is used more efficiently and low input costs bring financial benefits.



## Synergies: 7

The initiative promotes biophysical, social and economic activities and interactions in a number of ways that create synergies that strengthen the local food systems and make them more productive whilst sustaining ecosystem services such as healthy soils.



## Responsible governance: 6

The initiative is governed by informal structures and networks which include women support groups, seedbank networks, saving schemes and solidarity agri-hubs. Networks participants elect accountable executive structures.



## Recycling: 7

Rainwater is harvested and used by participants, reducing the costs of production and enhancing productivity at very low cost. Organic waste and manure is composted, and recycling of household consumables is practiced.



## Circular & solidarity economy: 8

The initiative connects producers and consumers, selling agroecological produce at fair prices. Producers also market to each other. Members give surplus produce to needy members of the community.

# Contacts and bibliography

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The Avaclim project aims to create the necessary conditions for the deployment of agroecology in arid areas.

For more information : [www.avaclim.org](http://www.avaclim.org)

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