

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
ENGAGEMENT WITH
AGRARIAN REFORM FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN, BIOWATCH, TCOE &
TSHINTSHA AMAKHAYA ALLIANCE
ON BEHALF OF AGROECOLOGY PRACTITIONERS & ADVOCATES

14 March 2023
Parliament, Cape Town



- ▶ Tshintsha Amakhaya is a national alliance of NGOs working in solidarity with social movements to advance land, water and food justice. The alliance was established in 2010.
- ▶ The Alliance currently includes the following NGOs: the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), Border Rural Committee (BRC), Farmer Support Group (FSG), Legal Resources Centre (LRC), NKUZI Development Association, Support Centre for Land Change (SCLC), Surplus People Project (SPP), Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), Transkei Land Service Organisation (TRALSO) and Women of Farms Project (WFP).

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PURPOSE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Correspondence sent to the Portfolio Committee (PC) by agroecology practitioners and advocates led by African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), Agrarian Reform for Food Sovereignty Campaign (FSC), Biowatch, Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG), Surplus People Project (SPP), Tshintsha Amakhaya (TA) endorsed by 58 organisations on the 02 December 2022.
- ▶ The concern of the organisations was the under-expenditure of R1.3 billion for the 2021/22 financial year by Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) as it was reported to the Committee on the 11 October 2022.
- ▶ As organisations we are here to echo the concerns of the PC because of the plight and pressing challenges faced by small farmers and rural communities
- ▶ We also want to present the alternatives to address the challenges of agrarian communities through agroecological (sustainable, just and socially equitable) food systems

STATE OF AFFAIRS FOR AGRARIAN COMMUNITIES

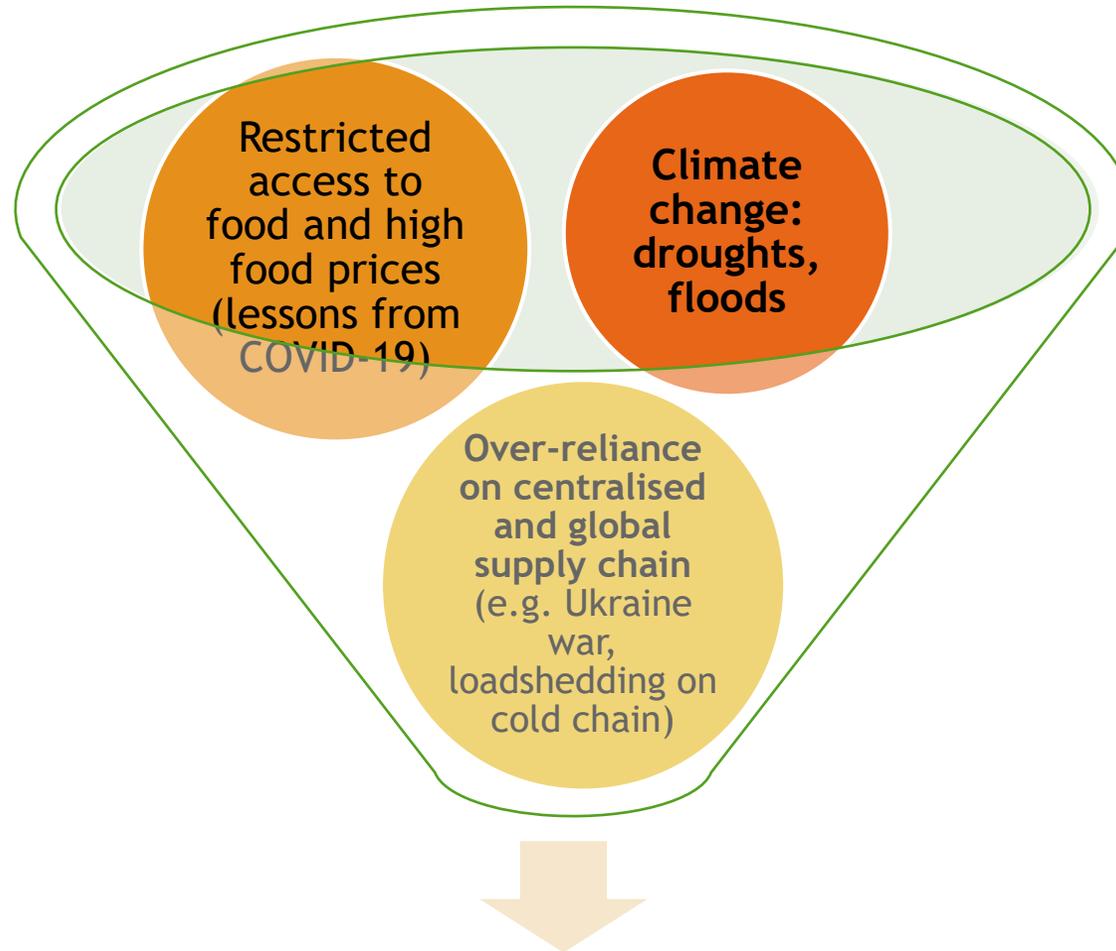
Stats SA 2021 General Household Survey indicates that more than 3 million households produce some food

(15.3% in 2019 jumping to 17.5% in 2020 and 17.2% in 2021 due to COVID-19)

40,000 or so of these are large-scale commercial farmers

Remainder of farmers are homestead, small and medium scale

CONTEXT IMPACTING THE FOOD SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA



need for policies supporting food system transformation to support social justice & redress, economic fairness & participation, and environmental sustainability



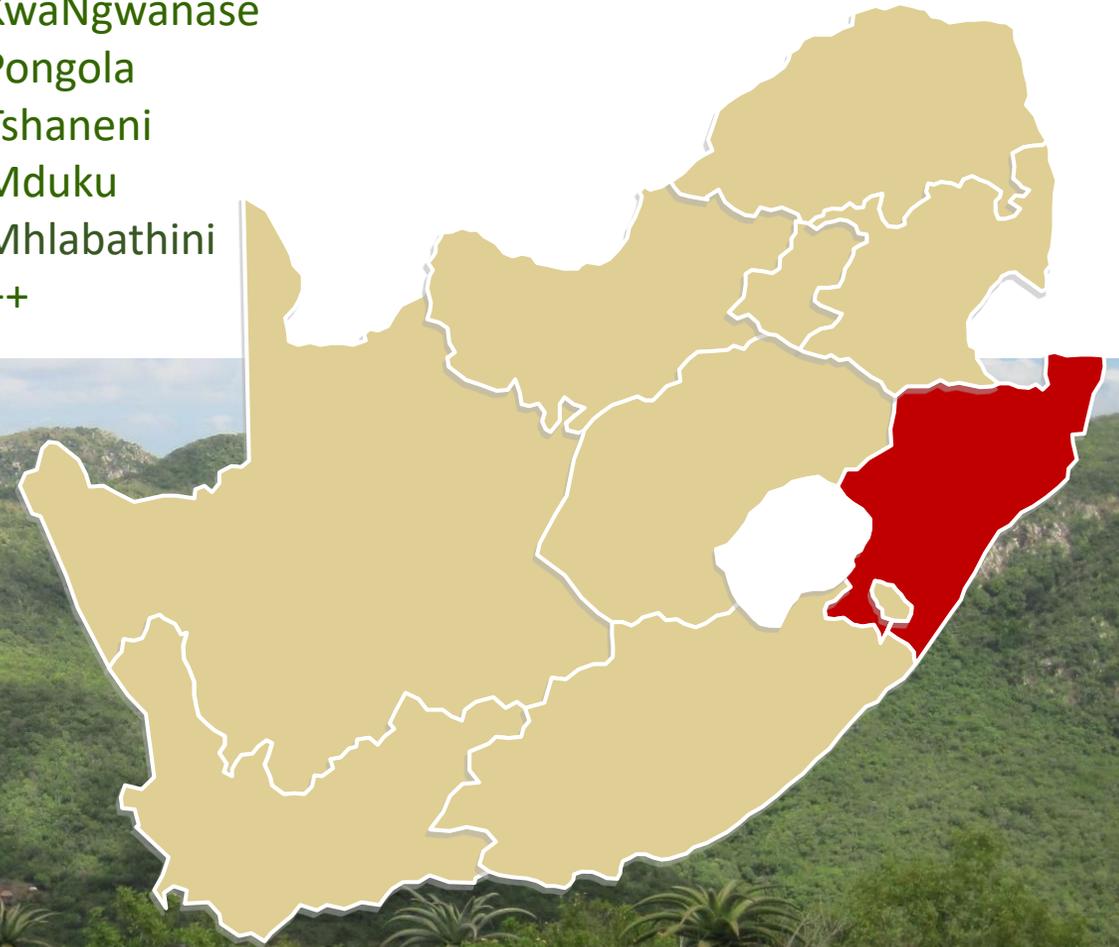
biowatch
SOUTH AFRICA

- **Biodiversity**
- **Social justice**
- **Food sovereignty**
- **Agroecology**

KwaZulu-Natal

We work with smallholder farmers focusing in northern KZN:

- Ingwavuma
- KwaHhohho
- KwaNgwanase
- Pongola
- Tshaneni
- Mduku
- Mhlabathini
- ++



Biowatch is also part of a 15 partner **Seed & Knowledge Initiative** sharing learnings in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe

BACKGROUND ON AGROECOLOGY

What is Agroecology?

Approach for a 'just transition' of our food system that manifests as:

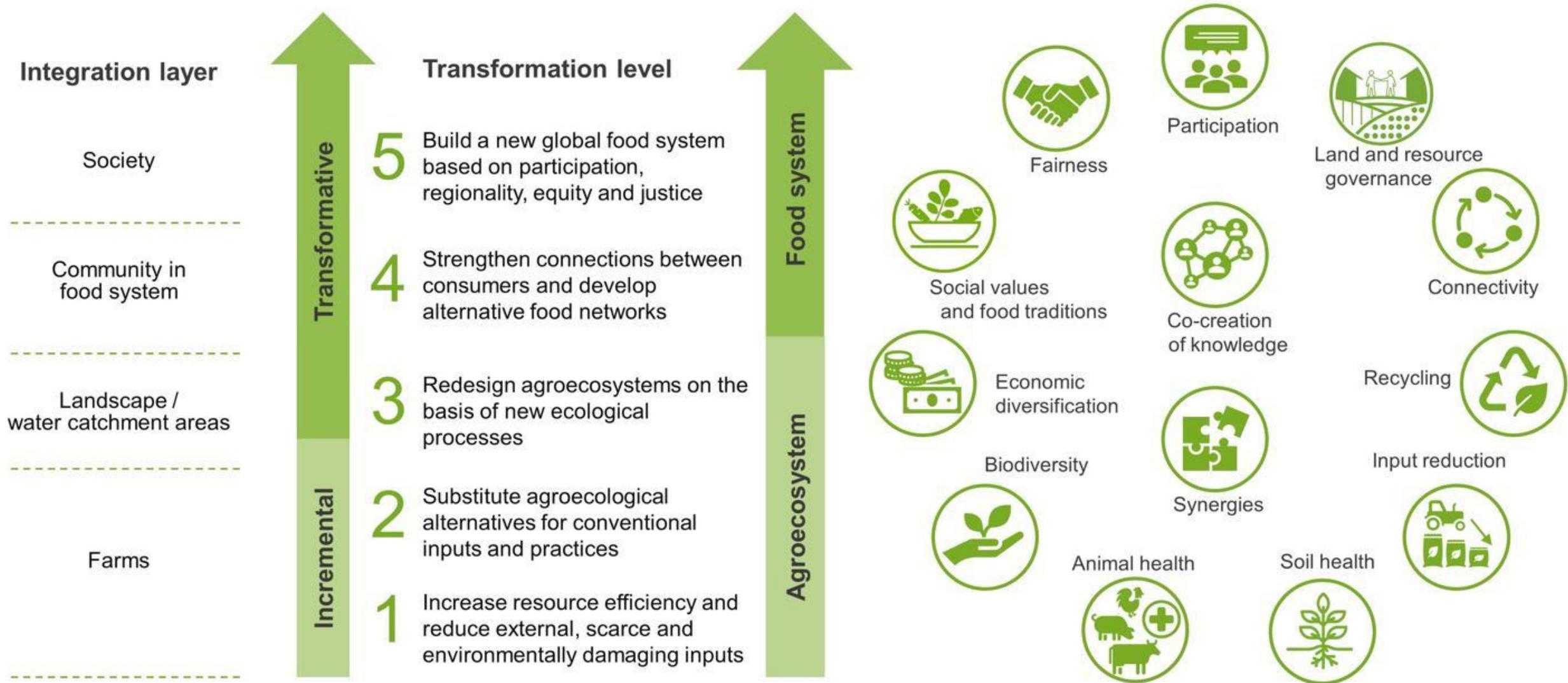
- context specific food production & harvesting **practices** learning from nature
- a transdisciplinary **science**
(including traditional and other ways of knowing/traditional knowledge systems)
- a **movement** for the transformation to ecologically sustainable, just and socially equitable food systems within which people can exercise choice over what they eat and how and where it is produced.

BACKGROUND ON AGROECOLOGY

Agroecology is guided by **Principles** addressing 3 core elements in the agenda for food system transformation:

Core element	CFS 13 principles
Environmental sustainability	Recycling, input reduction, soil health, animal health, biodiversity, land and natural resource governance, synergy
Social justice and redress	Co-creation of knowledge, social values and diets, participation
Economic fairness and participation	Economic diversification, fairness, connectivity

Transition towards sustainable food systems



RELEVANCE OF AGROECOLOGY IN CURRENT CONTEXT

The positive benefits of Agroecology include:

- Climate change adaptation & mitigation: embedded in methods and practices incl. soil fertility & water use efficiency on farms & at landscape levels; use of resilient seeds & breeds; avoids petrochemical inputs; localises food systems with less reliance on refrigeration and transport; reduces packaging, organic waste reduced & recycled.
- Improved food security & nutrition through fresh, diverse, healthy and affordable produce available locally.
- Builds self-sustaining and independent farming farmers.
- Creates safe, healthy and fair livelihoods for food producers.
- Maintains traditional knowledge, food, and agricultural diversity
- Maintains biodiversity and natural ecosystems and resources for coming generations.
- Resilience to global crises & shocks.

RELEVANCE OF AGROECOLOGY IN CURRENT CONTEXT

Agroecology is supported internationally:

- Arises from & supported by global social movements working on the ground
- 'Agriculture at a Crossroads' International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development in 2009
- FAO, CGIAR now have agroecology units and programmes
- The Committee on World Food Security HLPE Report on Agroecology & other innovative approaches in 2019 resulting in a policy recommendation
- 3 United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food have emphasised agroecology as the most viable approach to progress to global food and nutrition security
- Agroecology Coalition – AU, ECOWAS, 17 African governments have joined including Zimbabwe and Zambia

RELEVANCE OF AGROECOLOGY IN CURRENT CONTEXT

Agroecology responds to multiple dimensions of national policy:

- International treaties and agreements – including climate, land degradation, biodiversity, UNDROP Declaration on the rights of peasants, SDG2 and several other Sustainable Dev Goals
- National policies and programmes – Draft Producer Support Policy, the Draft Conservation Agriculture and Climate Smart Agriculture policies, biodiversity conservation and use, water, land redistribution and many others

However,

- there is no agroecology programme or pilot in SA to date
- the Agroecology Strategy process stalled

Lots of work is being done on the ground but

- requires government support especially to navigate changing conditions caused by climate and other disruptions
- support for other approaches conflicts & undermines the efforts of producers

HOW AGROECOLOGY COMPARES TO OTHER APPROACHES

Stage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Type of farming system	Conventional tillage	Minimum or Reduced tillage	Conventional No tillage (Direct seeding equipment using tines). Production system lacks adequate soil cover and sound crop rotations.	Conventional Zero tillage (Direct seeding equipment using discs). Production system lacks adequate soil cover and sound crop rotations.	CA_{HEI} (NT using high quantities of external artificial inputs (i.e. fertiliser, herbicides, pesticides). Production system has adequate soil cover and sound crop rotations.	CA_{LEI} (NT using low quantities of external artificial inputs (i.e. fertiliser, herbicides, pesticides). Production system has above 80% soil cover and sound crop rotations.	Organic CA (NT using no external artificial inputs (i.e. fertiliser, herbicides, pesticides). Production system has adequate soil cover and sound crop rotations.
	Level of sustainability	Not sustainable					Increased sustainability

Figure 1: Typical crop production systems on a sustainability gradient (Adapted from Blignaut *et al* 2014).

Table 4 Comparison of different innovative approaches towards SFSS for FSN

Characteristic	Agroecological and related approaches					Sustainable intensification and related approaches			
	Agroecology	Organic Agriculture	Agroforestry	Pemaculture	Food sovereignty	Sustainable intensification	Climate smart agriculture	Nutrition sensitive agriculture	Sustainable food value chains
Resource efficiency									
Regenerative production, recycling and efficiency								No evidence	No evidence
Biodiversity, synergy and integration									
Resilience									
Economic diversification versus specialisation									
Climate adaptation and mitigation									
Social equity/responsibility									
Knowledge generation and technology transfer									
Human and social values: <i>Equity</i>									
Human and social values: <i>Labour versus capital intensification</i>									
Connectivity (value chains/circular economies) versus globalization									
Governance: rights, democratization and participation									

Note: The table uses the characteristics as defined in previous **Table 3**. The grey-scale intensity of the cells represents the evaluation of the HLPE based on the evidence about the approaches set out in this chapter and in Appendix 1. This gradient does not convey any value judgement, but simply locates where along a defined continuum each approach lies. The methodology is explicit and could be repeated by others or against different evidence bases resulting in different grey-scale intensity in the different cells.

Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE)

- national NGO working with small-scale producers (livestock and crops) and small-scale fishers
- Works with women in particular
- We lobby and advocate for access to resources and information - resources include land, water, seeds and equipment
- The organisation believes in using agroecology to attain food sovereignty



Our Call to government

- **We need a Champion! - an Agroecology Coordinator in DALRRD** for coordinated inter-departmental support in response to multiple dimensions of agroecology & to facilitate engagement with farmer & civil society organisations

Farmers and CSOs are active and ready to work in partnership with government to realise common objectives of environmental sustainability, social justice and redress, and economic participation and fairness by:

- Working together to develop a comprehensive joint strategy and programme on agroecology (noting 2013 Agroecology Strategy draft 8)
- Developing multi-actor agroecology pilot place-based initiatives
- Integrate international obligations, especially the UNDROP into national plans
- Working with the ARC on participatory longitudinal comparative studies based on a wide scope of indicators across all principles (we note their interest to engage following go-ahead from the Department)



Examples from our
experiences on the
ground

TCOE's Agroecology Hubs

- AE Hubs are a collective of climate resilient alternatives such as nurseries, seed banks, vermiculture, orchards, livestock production, aquaponics, bees in one place
- Currently we have 16 AE Hubs in total in the following provinces:
 - Western Cape- 4
 - Eastern Cape- 5
 - Free State- 2
 - Limpopo- 5
- We are in the process of establishing more hubs where we currently work, and in other provinces
- We request for resources in order to realise our vision

Purpose & organising of Agroecology Hubs

- The purpose is to
 - create self-sustainable enterprises
 - serve as learning sites closer to where communities live providing training in different skills
 - assist in coordinating labour on peak periods such as planting, harvesting and marketing
- Each hub supports over 30 homestead gardens
- Hub management:
 - AE Hubs have a practitioner (reasonable experience in agroecology) and an intern (works under a practitioner)
 - A management committee composed of small-scale producers around the hub of which 50% should be women
 - The committee together with the practitioner and intern, plan the day to day activities of the hub

Marketing



Suurbraak Hub: Seedling production



Suurbraak Hub: aquaponics



Produce from the centre



Agrarian Reform for Food Sovereignty Campaign (FSC)



- The FSC was established in 2008 as a task team from different regions to address:
 - Land hunger
 - Food insecurity
 - Food powerlessness
 - Unsafe & damaged environments
 - Unsafe chemical industrial agriculture
 - Inadequate basic social services
- We work to realise agrarian transformation for food sovereignty through access to land, increased agroecological production, building a strong land & food movement, networking and policy engagement.

Nuweweplaas Village in the Cederberg mountains

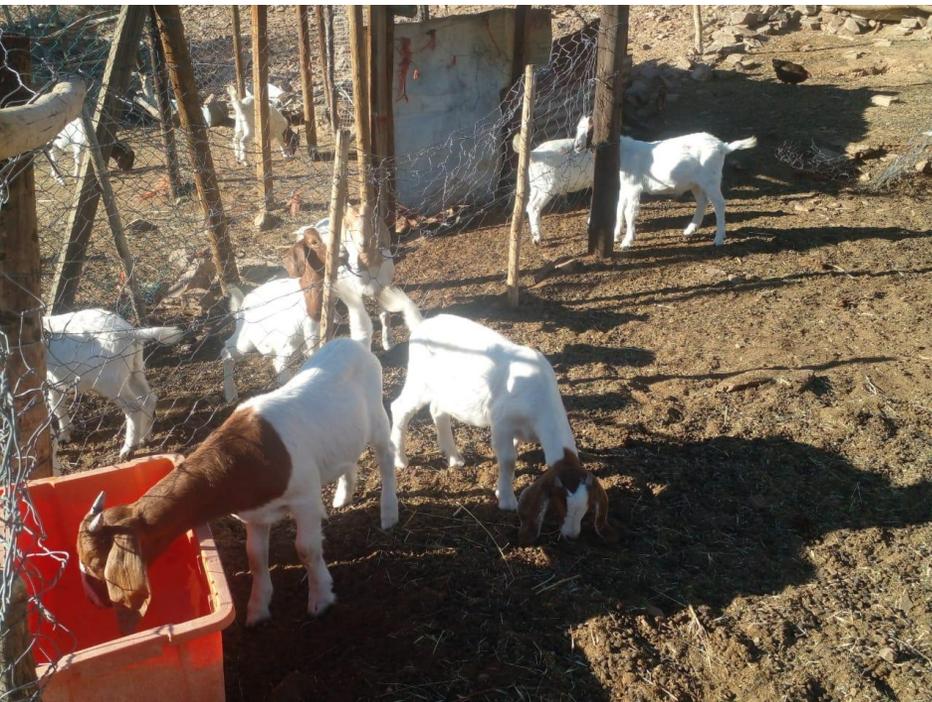


- 50 households
- Have been farming for 20 years, learnt from elders who have been living and farming in the same places
- Based on cultural and natural farming practices
- Diverse animal and crop farming



Production includes:

- Compost
- Crops & seedlings
- Livestock include Cattle, Goats, Sheep, Pigs and Geese
- Crops for livestock including lucerne and oats









Rooibos



Market days



Zimele Rural Women's Empowerment Organisation, in KwaHhohho, KZN







Household vegetable garden



Intercropped rain-fed fields



Household seed bank of farmer varieties within a farmer-led community seed system



Farmer-to
farmer
learning
&
demonstration

