

Anglo American Platinum Partners With AfriGrow And The North West Department Of Education To Host The Garden Heroes Project Awards

Anglo American Platinum is proud to announce the culmination of its partnership with AfriGrow and the North West Department of Education on the Garden Heroes Project, an initiative focused on building sustainable food gardens in schools.

The 12-month project, which was launched in June 2016, nears its conclusion today with an awards and prize giving ceremony. The efforts of participating schools are celebrated and rewarded, with schools winning prizes in the following categories: level of production, community integration, learner involvement and water management.

The ceremony convened approximately 700 participants, comprising principals, School Governing Body members, educators and learners from the 102 participating schools.

The Garden Heroes Project involved the host communities and schools surrounding the Rustenburg Platinum mines in the North West province. Through the additional partnerships with the North West Department of Education and the Community Works Programme, many members of the surrounding communities were also involved in the schools' gardens.

Anglo American Platinum's partnership with AfriGrow reflects the company's commitment to community upliftment through the creation of opportunities for education, skills development and job creation. The gardens provide nutritious food to the school's feeding schemes, while also presenting income generation potential and skills development opportunities. The Garden Heroes Project was initiated as part of AfriGrow's AfriSchools Programme with the aim of encapsulating Nelson Mandela's vision for the National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which seeks to feed and educate students about nutrition at schools in disadvantaged communities.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Ted Muhajir, Head of Social Performance Anglo American Platinum, said: *"We are proud to have partnered with AfriGrow and government to support the Garden Heroes Project which has been a huge success across the participating schools. Anglo American Platinum is committed to meeting South Africa's transformation objectives and this project is a great example of an effective partnership to enhance the communities in which we operate. We congratulate the winners and look forward to the future success of AfriGrow's efforts to develop the smallholder farming industry."*

Quinton Naidoo, CEO of AfriGrow, said: *"It has been both an honour and a privilege to have worked with Anglo American Platinum, the North West Department of Education and participating schools. In a country where 1 in 14 million people go to bed hungry every night, and 1 in 6 children are malnourished, the need for more programmes like Garden Heroes is vital to ensuring a sustainable future for all South Africans. AfriGrow believes that effective social and economic development begins with listening to our people, and is followed by ensuring that our people are active participants in their own development. Garden Heroes is testament to this and its success is due to the commitment of all the partners involved and the fruits of their labour is seen both here as well as across all participating schools. Today we applaud the winners, the AfriSchools implementation team and celebrate the programmes' success by confirming our willingness to continue to work with all stakeholders in the region."*

As part of the project, a training curriculum, comic book and in-school posters were developed to educate participants on building sustainable gardens. The necessary tools, equipment and garden infrastructure was also provided to support the gardening activities. Schools were divided into six circuits according to location, and within each circuit, a champion school was selected by show of leadership in terms of production potential and learner and community involvement.