At Fresh Life Produce we are committed to showing the world that there is an alternative to the thinking that we need to have a few large-scale producers to feed households and entire cities. We passionately believe that we all can become our own “mini” producers that collectively work together to fight the growing food production challenge in a sustainable and resource efficient manner. We have developed an Africanised growing system called the *African Grower* and with this new technology and our deployment models we hope to achieve our vision and mission.

**Our VISION** is to become the *African leaders* in creating networks of Home Farmers and support them through *Agricultural Entrepreneurs* (“Agripreneurs”) working from Support Hubs.

**Our MISSION** is to focus this dream on various urban and non-urban, under-serviced communities of Africa and to achieve it by following **3 crucial steps**:

1. Establish “Support Hubs” that will act as central bases of support for the Agripreneurs. These Hubs act as demonstrators to the community of the *African Grower* Technology’s capabilities and focus on *multiple revenue streams* to ensure financial sustainability;
2. Successful Hubs enable the establishment of *Home Farming Networks*. The Hubs use and distribute the *African Grower System* to deliver nutrition and food security products and services to the “base-of-the-pyramid” (BoP). They also enable *networks of Home Farmers* to produce these products for own consumption as well as possible surplus production;
3. **Fresh Life Produce** will support these hubs and networks with *“back-office” services and tools* to enable broad export and import channels for products and services from and to these communities.

**Step1: Establish Support Hubs for Agripreneurs**

Fresh Life Produce (FLP) leads the establishment of Support Hubs at key points – like clinics - in communities. These points have a healthy stream of potential clients and safety for the equipment and activities based there. Home Farming Hubs use African Grower *Pop-Up Greenhouses* to act as demonstrators to the community of the *African Grower* technology’s capabilities. FLP will train capable and willing youth members of communities to become Agripreneurs so that they can use the Hubs as central bases of operations and establish *Home Farming Networks* in their spheres of influence. The Hubs are to become financially sustainable through *multiple revenue streams*.

Establishing a Hub starts by identifying the right location and the right individuals from the community to become successful Agripreneurs. **Some of the income streams** that we help the Hub to establish:

- Selling Fresh Produce to surrounding community’s;
- Selling the African Grower to surrounding community;
- Selling seedlings and plant-care materials;
- Building a network of Home Farmers; buying the produce back from them and selling a bulk product into more formal markets; and
- Adding value to the base produce with a bakery or factory to sell a more profitable product.

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**Step 2: Decentralised Home Farming and distribution of the “African Grower System”**

The approach to *enable people to grow their own vegetables* is referred to by us as *“decentralised home farming”*. Each “African Grower” is therefore an individual’s responsibility and the beginning of an enterprise opportunity. These *African Growers* are unique in that they:

- can be located on a *small space at home*;
- *addresses nutrition needs* as a starting point; and
- create *economic opportunity* when scaled.

**The African Grower and its Advantages**

Fresh Life Produce has created a *vertical, sustainable growing system* which is a space-saving device that consists of multiple growing ‘pods’ stacked on top of one another. The stack is suspended from any appropriate fixture making it pest resilient. It can be located at home to address nutrition needs, and when scaled, can create economic opportunity. The features of this *Africanised vertical growing system* are:

- Needs *no running water* or *electricity* in its basic application;
- Saves *space* (up to 100 plants /square meter)
- Saves *water* (10% of the water used in soil)
- Saves *physical effort* (no bending and feeding)
- Saves *time* (grow faster than in soil)
- Saves *money* (re-usable)
- Saves the *environment* (uses re-cycled plastic)
- Is *versatile* (in different configurations) – starting with one "pod";
- Is *pest resilient* because it is suspended in the air; and
- Can use “grey water” from a bath or shower

Our *technology deployment* and *model refinement* to date:

- 80 Households equipped and trained on the Cape Flats and a further *100 households* contracted and in process;
- 2 “Pop-up Greenhouses” on *military bases*;
- 1 “Pop-up Greenhouse” at a *rural school in Mpumalanga*; and
- 1 Functional *Support Hub* (Sakhulwazi) in Philippe (Cape Town).

**Step 3: Support these Hubs and networks with “back-office” services and tools**

Fresh Life Produce realized that *spatialized and accurate data* is crucial in monitoring and supporting these “Decentralized Home Farmers”. FLP, in partnership with REEDISA (our technology partner), developed a *mobile app and back office software* that allows us to accurately track where each of the home growers are and what they are growing. The Agripreneurs *collect data on site* which feeds into our *data warehouse* which *enables real-time* (and actionable) *reporting* and ongoing analysis.

**The Way Forward**

1. Partnering with the Western Cape Department of Health to identify key clinics in communities to convert into *home farming hubs* in order to bring in an element of preventative care. It will also act as a demonstrator to the community of the *African Grower Technology*.
2. Training local youth to become *Agripreneurs* to:
   a. manage and maintain the *home farming hubs*;
   b. tapping into the market that visits the clinics on a daily base to sell fresh produce; and
   c. distribute the *African Growers* into the community to create their own *Decentralised Home Farming Networks* with the help of our *back-office support*.
3. Connecting these *Decentralised Home Farming Networks* to larger markets; and
4. *Expand the learning* from the Western Cape to the rest of *Africa and the World*.

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