

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



ebenezer
matobo

NOTE FROM THE TEAM



In 2024, we witnessed God's faithful provision through the growth of our staff team, a deepening of community engagement and through agricultural developments at Ebenezer Matobo.

Our staff team has flourished in numerous ways this year. It has been particularly encouraging to see team members completing academic degree while others have demonstrated remarkable growth in their coaching abilities and spiritual walks. A highlight of the year was supporting the Khoza family as they transitioned to Ebenezer Kazungula, extending our impact beyond our immediate community. We were also delighted to welcome Kyle Mathieson to oversee our production. Another blessing was sending the Nyams' on a well-deserved 3-month sabbatical to reconnect with family in the UK.

One of our focuses in 2024 was helping apprentices to connect with local churches, something which had declined as a result of the pandemic lockdowns. This year, all apprentices have visited the 3 main churches close to Ebenezer and chosen one to attend and become involved with. This has also led to closer connections among the churches, particularly noticeable in the combined services we have had this year, including a

joyous baptismal service at the Ebenezer dam.

As we have worked to ensure apprentices engage with local churches, Ebenezer's role in the local community continued to deepen and expand in meaningful ways in 2024. Hosting an eye clinic brought much-needed care to many community members, while our collaboration with others in running a soccer club at a local school fostered positive relationships and brought a lot of joy and encouragement to many youngsters.

On the production front, our cropping operations grew with us securing our first full contract for butternut seed production. The pivot irrigation system is now fully operational, efficiently producing maize fodder for our dairy operations.

As we look toward 2025, we are filled with joy and anticipation for the continued growth and improvements ahead. There are always areas for development, but we move forward with grateful hearts for God's grace that has been evident throughout 2024. Our journey of discipleship, community service, and agricultural excellence continues with renewed purpose and enthusiasm.

Renée Cunningham, Team Lead

In June 2024 we celebrated the graduation of 35 Advanced apprentices and 54 Intermediate apprentices.

The year ended with a total of 89 apprentices on site, 29 in our second year Advanced Course and 60 first years who in October graduated from the 3-month Foundation Course into the 9-month Intermediate Course.

Second year Kwazumdali says:

“One of the things I cherish most about my time at Ebenezer is the sense of community. We live as one big family, learning and growing together. This environment has taught me the importance of love and acceptance, as the Bible clearly states that we should not discriminate but embrace one another.”

First year Nyasha says:

“Adapting to the physical demands of farm work took time and effort. However, I learned to embrace these challenges as opportunities for growth. Through my experiences at Ebenezer, I have learned to live in harmony with others and have gained confidence over the months.”

Second year Abigail says:

“Since joining Ebenezer, I have learned so much about myself and gained confidence in making decisions independently of my family. This journey of self-discovery has been significant. I have come to understand both my strengths and weaknesses, something I had not fully grasped before. My spiritual life has also flourished during my time here.”

(Abigail pictured right)



APPRENTICES

TRAINING



We have been working hard this year to see greater integration between our classroom training and the coaching that happens in our productive learning areas (PLAs) where apprentices are practically implementing their learning as well as learning the practical and technical skills involved in cropping, poultry and dairy. Part of this greater integration has been the development of production journals where apprentices are now recording their production progress against targets, writing reflections on what they are observing in their productive areas and evaluating their progress and production.

Another development in 2024 was the introduction of extra-curricular clubs. With

clubs varying from Woodwork to Dance to Entrepreneurship and plenty more in between, our apprentices enjoyed this opportunity to extend their knowledge, interests, skills and hobbies.

2024 has been an exciting year in terms of the speedy development and accessibility of Artificial Intelligence and we at Ebenezer Matobo are determined not to be left behind! 2024 has also been the first year in which we have been able to secure affordable and reliable internet on site, providing our training team with the perfect opportunity to begin to explore how AI may be able to assist both trainers and apprentices. We are becoming familiar with some excellent AI tools and we look forward to utilising these more in 2025.

Discipleship permeates all areas at Ebenezer, from everyday conversations to intentional programs and carefully prepared Bible lessons. This year we made some adaptations to our daily devotions, in order to encourage greater variety, independence, and leadership opportunities for our apprentices in how they choose to connect with God daily. This includes time set aside for personal alone time with God, weekly dorm devotions led by second year apprentices, and times for sharing and prayer in family groups. We have also established a weekly time of connecting in small groups, with one staff member meeting with the same 4 or 5 apprentices every week. This shift away from a daily “altogether” devotion has been a very positive development and is better preparing our apprentices for life beyond Ebenezer where they will be responsible for establishing and maintaining their own rhythm of prayer, reflection and Bible study.

Another discipleship focus for 2024 has been helping apprentices to connect with local churches, something which had declined as a result of the pandemic lockdowns. As well as as putting structures in place to help apprentices transition from visiting church to becoming part of a church, we have been working with them to reflect on what it means to be part of a local church, where they might see God at work through their local church and where he might be inviting them to participate. This involves a mind shift from thinking only in terms of service ministries to “sign-up” for, to being more aware of where God is at work in our community and what individual invitation he is extending to us to be part of what he is doing.



DISCIPLESHIP

DAIRY



Our dairy had an average of 40 milking cows in production throughout 2024, producing an average of 16.3 litres of milk per cow per day.

In total, we produced 240,438 litres of milk, of which 201,045 litres were sold. Our main customer continues to be Dairibord processors and we received good reports from them throughout the year concerning the quality of our milk.

Our dairy herd also produced, 36 calves in 2024, 19 males and 17 females. New calves in the herd should lead to increased milk production in the future.

In 2024, our dairy team focused on increasing and improving our silage production. By the end of the year, our maize yields per hectare had improved, as had our standard of silage production. We are looking forward to seeing the results of these improvements in 2025.

Two members of the dairy team had the opportunity to complete a course on Artificial Insemination. This was a timely development for our dairy, following the injury of our bull. By the end of the year, our team members were using their new skills and this is another area where we will see results in 2025.

CROPPING

In 2024, our cropping teams planted a total of 49 hectares and harvested a total of 23 hectares (with harvests continuing into 2025).

Particularly successful crops this year have been butternut and watermelon. With a butternut harvest target set at 22 tons per hectare, our cropping coach Denmore did an incredible job with his team of apprentices, achieving 25 tons per hectare. Across the hectares of butternut planted, this resulted in 61,137k g harvested above target!

The watermelon harvest target was set at 6,000 heads per hectare, but again our cropping teams excelled, hitting double the target with 12,000 heads produced per hectare.

In October, we welcomed a new Farm Manager, Kyle, to Ebenezer. Having Kyle on site has had a positive impact on all of our production areas. In cropping, Kyle has done a great job ensuring our pivot irrigation is maximising its potential. We appreciate his expertise, innovation and drive to see our irrigated land produce more crops.

Another exciting cropping development this year has been a growing partnership between Ebenezer Matobo and Avanos Seeds. Avanos contracted us for a seed trial during which we planted multiple vegetable varieties for seed, with positive results. From this starting point, Avanos has been training two of our graduates in technical seed production and working with Ebenezer to see butternut seed grown in the Matobo area. In 2025, we look forward to seeing both Ebenezer and local Outgrowers growing butternut seed for Avanos!



POULTRY



In 2024, our apprentices farmed 5 batches of broilers. A total of 51,828 birds were placed with 44,627 being sent for slaughter. Broiler production went well for the majority of the year, with a consistently low mortality and an average profit of 34 cents per bird.

However, towards the end of the year, we farmed one disastrous batch during which we lost 3,500 birds. This was a painful experience for our poultry coaches and apprentices, reversing a lot of the good results from their hard work throughout previous batches. These situations always provide a lot of learning, not just in poultry management but in character, determination and grit!

We had two flocks of layer birds on site during 2024, between them producing a total of 2,653,484 eggs. A flock of 10,000 placed in our largest house struggled to hit target lay-rates and the overall results from this flock were disappointing. A smaller flock of 3,571 birds hit an average lay-rate of 82% throughout the year. We were pleased to see this flock producing eggs at a profitable rate despite a higher than anticipated mortality.

A particular highlight for staff and apprentices this year, was a visit from some poultry experts via the International Egg Foundation, an organisation working to see egg consumption increased globally. Everyone on site benefitted from training delivered by two international poultry experts, with a smaller group enjoying a detailed question and answer session around layer rearing. Our poultry coaches also appreciated feedback on our on-the-ground operations.

OTHER NEWS



2024 saw us bidding a bittersweet farewell to staff team members, Brilliant and Sithabiso Khoza, as they left Ebenezer Matobo with their daughters Keren and Joanna, to join the Ebenezer Kazungula team in Zambia. Brilliant and Sithabiso were some of the first apprentices to join Ebenezer back in 2007! Following their graduation, the couple were married and in time joined our staff team. For the past number of years, they have been an integral part of our training team. While it was sad for us to say goodbye, it has been wonderful to see the great blessing the Khozas have been to Ebenezer Kazungula, especially with their depth of experience and expertise. With the Khozas move, our Ebenezer family continues to consolidate across borders and it is a joy to see our teams working together towards a shared vision in our different regions.

A 2024 highlight for our staff team was a staff day away in July. It was good to take time to enjoy a day together in the Matopos, a beautiful area surrounding Ebenezer. As well as spotting giraffe, enjoying bush walks and sharing a huge feast, we enjoyed time to reflect personally and corporately on our Ebenezer journey thus far and looking ahead. It was a refreshing time, physically and spiritually, with some excellent prayer activities focused on the Holy Spirit, who he is to us and how he is speaking to us.

Exciting connections were made this year with church leaders who hope to establish an Ebenezer in Malawi! As well as hosting interested organisations to Ebenezer Matobo, team leader Renée also visited the churches in Malawi this year to further explore the possibilities there.

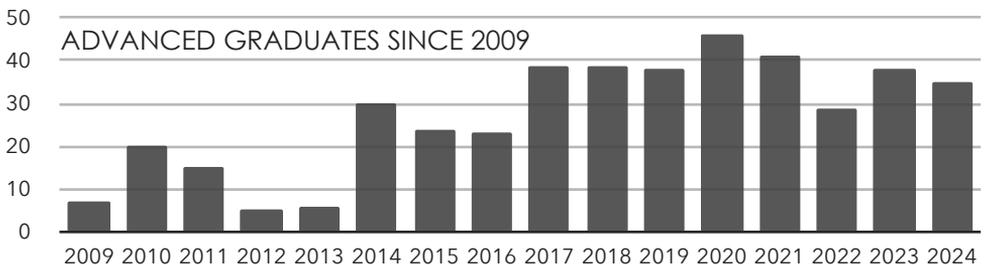
GRADUATES



In June we graduated 89 apprentices: 54 from our year-long Intermediate Course and 35 from our 2-year Advanced Course. We were grateful to the many parents and family members who came to celebrate the achievements of our graduates. As always, their joy and pride brought a celebratory atmosphere. We also appreciated our Board being represented by Board Chair Bishop Patson Netha. We

were glad to welcome Chancellor Rev Dr Pandasvika as our guest of honour, who encouraged and challenged our graduates as they step into the next season of their lives, beyond Ebenezer!

Of our 35 Advanced Graduates, by October 2024 over 75% had found employment or started running their own enterprises.



GRADUATES



In 2024 we have been growing strong connections with Avanos Seeds who have been working with us to trial the growing of a variety of seeds. We were delighted to see this connection open up an opportunity for 2 Ebenezer graduates to join Avanos for a technical internship gaining specialised training and experience in seed production. In August, graduates Tendai and Lucky travelled to Harare for a 5-month internship.

Lucky said of the experience: *"We worked on the ground like everyone else at the farm, but made it our aim to learn more. What we enjoyed is that we were treated as trainees, giving us a chance to learn. Coming from Ebenezer helped me, as I was familiar with many of the farming methods; at the same I enjoyed learning some new methods. I also appreciated how Ebenezer taught us to communicate and give feedback positively, this made it easier with our supervisors."*

Lucky and Tendai excelled in their internship and we are thrilled that in 2025 they will be returning to live on site at Ebenezer to undertake roles with Avanos as Field Officers with local butternut outgrower farmers, offering support and technical support for these farmers as they grow seed for Avanos.

Even more than their growth in agricultural expertise, we love seeing how these graduates have grown in their faith and character. As Lucky says, *"Being at Ebenezer brought so much growth in my life and I can say I now have a sense of direction about my life. I'm now a full-time Christian, meaning to say my relationship with God is no longer in church or in people's eyes. I make sure that every decision I take in my life, it involves God, and I have learned to pray about everything, absolutely everything."*

CONTACT US:

ebenezeratc@gmail.com

www.ebenezerafrica.org

facebook.com/ebenezeratc



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