

Land degradation and poor land management practices are estimated to cost the country billions of Rands per year as a consequence of reduced production, loss of soil and soil nutrients, pollution of rivers, poor water quality, flooding and premature siltation of dams, amongst other impacts. Although this loss can be expressed in monetary terms it is the impact on rural livelihoods and especially on the rural poor where the impact is the greatest. With 40% of the South Africa population living in rural areas, and most of these people in part, if not fully, dependent on the natural environment for their livelihoods, these impacts are extremely important to the South African economy and rural development.

In response to perceived widespread land degradation, especially within the previous homeland areas and a realisation that legislation alone cannot ensure sound natural resource management, the National Department of Agriculture, together with its provincial counterparts, has established a National LandCare Programme and a National LandCare Movement in 1998 to combat land degradation and enhance natural resource management. LandCare is a community based natural resource management programme of the national Department of Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, implemented by all nine provinces. The goal of LandCare in South Africa is to : optimize productivity and sustainability of natural resources resulting in greater productivity. LandCare in South Africa has the following objectives: Provide a framework for individuals, community organizations, the public sector and private sector through partnerships to optimize productivity and sustainability of the natural resources through management, protection and rehabilitation, Develop the capacity and skills of land users through education knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing, information provision, and participatory interaction for better access to and management of resources, Support institutional building at all levels of governance for improved communication, networking, financial and other support services, Empower all people to take responsibility for the care of the environment through knowledge and understanding, Ensure as far as is practicable that resources are used at a rate within their capacity for renewal, Maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of natural systems, Minimize or avoid risks that lead to irreversible damage and Maintain Biodiversity. LandCare has four thematic areas: Soil Care, water Care, Veld care and Junior LandCare.

Soil Care:

The LandCare program have spent lot of millions over the years combating soil degradation in rural areas of our country with the aim of recovering and rehabilitating the degraded areas for optimization of productivity that while lead to greater productivity, food security in this area, job creation and better quality of life. In last year alone the LandCare program have spent more than 15 million combat soil degradation in nine provinces of the country which is a drop in the ocean considering the level of soil degradation in Provinces such as Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.



VeldCare:

The program spent millions every year addressing issues of bush encroachment, division of grazing camps, alien species control and fencing both arable and grazing camps



Water care:

The program spent millions every year removing alien species in the dams and rehabilitating wetlands and rivers.

JuniorCare:

In the financial year 2012/13 the LandCare programme through the junior LandCare has managed to create 1211 number of jobs for the youth of South Africa especially in rural areas through the implementation of different labour intensive LandCare Projects such as gabion construction, alien plant removal, fencing construction and rehabilitation of wetlands in the Provinces. Junior LandCare also managed to transfer skills to 12280 number of youth through implantation different trainings such as Project management, chain saw operation, gabion construction and others which are conducted by credible service providers in a project level. These trainings have help number of young people to secure jobs and some of them have become services providers in different Department. Junior LandCare has managed to create 100 number of school gardens and provide jojo tanks and drip irrigation systems in South African school, to help school to deal with problems of kind's malnutrition and to contribute towards schools feeding scheme.

