

IN THE
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MASDT
MOBILE AGRI SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING (NPC)



Success Story

INKWHEZI VEGETABLE AND POULTRY CO-OPERATION

The Inkwezi Vegetable and Poultry Co-operative was established after a struggling family in the Skhwahlane settlement, in the Nkomazi area of Mpumalanga, decided to join forces to start a farming co-operative. They agreed that they needed the skills and knowledge in order to create a meaningful and sustainable venture to alleviate their poverty. The farming venture started with a mere 2 hectares of land.

It was then when that they approached MASDT during 2010 and were included in the Incubation programme that same year. In those days Mr Inocent Makuwaza was appointed as the Business Development Officer for the project, and under his guidance and supervision the co-op flourished. After Mr Makuwaza received his promotion to Business Development Manager, new-comer Thutati Tshobole took over the management of the project and both him and Mr Makuwaza are still hailed as heroes in the community.

Through MASDT's services they submitted a great proposal and subsequently received an amount of R2.3m from the National Development Agency. These funds were used to erect a world class standard pack house as well as cold room facilities. The farm could also afford to employ 67 permanent employees, making it one of the biggest employers in the area and therefore a huge economic boost for the poor rural area. MASDT acquired a secure market for their produce and today they still provide to local Pick & Pays and Spar Supermarkets.

The project successfully graduated in 2014 and was considered a MASDT success story even back then. During 2015 the SABC visited the farm for the first time to include them in a documentary about farming in South Africa.

The farm has gone from strength to strength and with the sound business management training they received from MASDT, they managed to save enough money to acquire more land, expanding their farm to just over 47 hectares in 2016. At the moment these fields are being prepared for more crops to be planted in 2017.

The Minister of the Department for social services - Ms Bathabile Dlamini - informed Inkwezi that she personally wanted to do the official handover of the infrastructure to show her appreciation to the farm's role in the community. The handover was scheduled to take place at the end of October and great excitement obviously followed this and a lavish affair was planned for this special honour.

Over 600 delegates, community members and other interested parties were invited to the special event including important benefactors like the Rural Development Fund, SASSA, AgriSETA and MASDT. The event even sparked the interest of the SABC once again and journalists and camera men were on scene to document the event for the daily news.

It was a typical sweltering day in the Nkomazi valley and patrons started arriving at 11:00. The big white tent could be seen from afar and as the MASDT team approached, the feeling of joyous excitement became increasingly tangible. A great feat lay before us complete with tribal Swazi dancers entertaining the guests in the tent and in typical fashion, the guests were generously catered for while being entertained.

INKWHEZI VEGETABLE AND POULTRY CO-OPERATION CONTINUE...



Inkwezi's Chairperson - Mrs Makhosazane Sambo - met up with us and had the following to say: "It was because of MASDT's intensive Incubation programme and guidance that Inkwezi is where it is today. We will always have the highest regard for the company and therefore they will always be treated with the greatest respect by us. It is natural that we would invite MASDT to share in this milestone with us."

After a more than sufficient lunch the minister arrived amidst great fanfare to cut the ribbon at the entrance of the pack house. She was taken on a guided tour of the facilities and was especially impressed by the cold room inside the pack house. Mrs Dlamini congratulated the farm on the outstanding quality of the produce and even took some home with her.

Inkwezi is one of the many success stories that MASDT has produced and a shining example of what can be achieved with the right mindset and guidance. MASDT wishes Inkwezi Vegetable and Poultry Co-operative only the best for the future, but we are confident that they would not necessarily need it if they carry on the good work they are doing.

INKOMAZI GRADUATION AND INFORMATION DAY



It is graduation time at MASDT and this time five clients from the Nkomazi region were awarded graduation certificates for completing the intensive 3 year Incubation programme. The day was scheduled for the 27th of October in the Tonga Department of Agriculture's hall. It was decided to couple it with a comprehensive technical workshop in both Animal - and Plant Production in order for all the clients in the area to benefit from the event. Seeing others graduate also incites inspiration to the projects still under incubation. A total of 29 clients attended the event.

Business Development Officer, Collen Mashigo, kick-started the proceedings with heart warming welcome and introduced the stakeholders from Lima and Seda who were to deliver their respective presentations to the packed hall.

Mr Sibusiso Fakude from Lima introduced the clients to their various services, ranging from grant/loan offers to possible market linkages while Mr Musi Masango from Seda reminded them about Seda's ongoing support services through their branch in Malelane, stressing the importance of proper business registration and the compilation of a sound business plan. Businesses still struggling with business Management were urged to approach Seda for their training offered in this regard.

Business Development Officer, Thulati Tshobole addressed the crowd next with his presentation on the requirements for successful vegetable production. The presentation consisted of a comprehensive discussion about soil drainage factors and its subsequent influence on vegetable production, different irrigation methods, seed temperature requirements and mixing and storing of chemicals.

Advice was given regarding soil analysis for proper fertilizing administration while other important issues like how to work out your employees needed per hectare were raised and discussed. Thulati reminded clients to procure proper implements and infrastructure according to their production needs.

Thakgang Maleka, one of MASDT's Business Support Admin Clerks, conducted the discussion on Animal Production, focusing mainly on poultry, which most of the clients in the area farm with. Thakgang covered the following topics:

- Brooding systems - the light and temperature requirements for chicks.
- Drinking and feeding - the rate at which drinkers were placed and feeding ratios of chicks.
- Nutrition - Water quality and type of feeds to sustain proper production.
- Bio Security - Measures that farmers need to implement to reduce mortalities for better production.

After this technical workshop the graduating clients were each presented with their certificates. MASDT wishes these clients all the best with their endeavours!

BADPLAAS GRADUATION DAY

A graduation day was held for the three clients who graduated the 3 year Incubation programme in the Badplaas area of Mpumalanga on November the 10th. The event was hosted at the Steynsdorp Community Hall and 18 clients attended the event, which was coupled with a technical information day. Business Development Officer, Collen Mashigo, welcomed the attendees and explained the purpose of the day to them. Melody Chiume, one of MASDT's Business Support Admin Clerks, then explained the way forward to the graduates, which included the monitoring process presented by MASDT.

Business Development Officer, Thulati Thobole conducted a technical workshop on Basic plant nutrition, covering important factors such as the primary nutrients - Potassium, Phosphorus and Nitrogen and their function in plant production as well as the deviancy and toxicity symptoms of these nutrients. Wilson Nkosi, another Business Development Officer, further discussed the secondary nutrients like Copper, Iron and Zinc and their impact on various crops.

MASDT's expert on Animal production - BDO Wilson Nkosi, carried out a short presentation about all the requirements needed for a successful animal production farmer and provided the clients with information about various suppliers in the area. He reminded them about the technical assistance provided by MASDT and urged clients to contact MASDT with any problems they might be facing. The graduation commenced and each graduating client was presented with a certificate for completing the gruelling Incubation programme successfully.



BUSHBUCKRIDGE GRADUATION

Bushbuckridge lies on the border of Mpumalanga and the Northern Province and is a collective name for a vast rural area that covers 1 587.56 square kilometres in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality of the Ehlanzeni District. It is a densely populated area and therefore no surprise that it is an area with the largest amount of clients for MASDT.

The Bushbuckridge graduation day was held at the Acornhoek's Love Life Centre on the 17th of November and a whopping 48 clients attended to support their graduating counterparts and to sit in on the technical workshop presentations hosted by MASDT.

MASDT's Business Support Admin Clerk, Busi Milazi, played hostess - a first for her - and from the feedback from both MASDT personnel and the clients attending, it sounds like she did a splendid job, as if she is a professional doing it for years. Business Development Officer, Thulati Tshobole presented the Plant Production workshop under the theme - Requirements for successful vegetable production and discussed the following topics:

- * Availability of land
- * Availability of a permanent water source
- * Importance of soil sampling
- * Importance of irrigation systems
- * Importance of fixed infrastructure

The clients all responded positively and some mentioned that they have had problems with some of the topics, so it was good to hear some solutions.



Thakgang Maleka presented the topic regarding Animal Production, in particular bio-security concerning poultry. She discussed various types of disinfectants that can be used in brooding houses as well as the importance of restricting visitors in the chicken houses. Chicken mortalities are a real struggle for most poultry farmers and she informed the clients of the correct procedure to dispose of them. She stressed the importance of keeping a clean chicken house as well as clean equipment to ensure the health of the fowl. Other interesting topics, like recordkeeping, were also discussed.

When the workshop concluded the graduation commenced and certificates were presented to six projects that successfully completed the Incubation programme. The graduates were as follows;

- * Glenunga Small Farm (Plant production)
- * Plough and Feathers (Plant production)
- * Phutaditsaba (Animal production)
- * Hitira Hi Vukela (Animal production)
- * MK Townel (Animal production)