

# IN THE news

April 2017



**MASDT**  
MOBILE AGRI SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING (NPC)

## PARLIAMENTARY VISIT



Every year the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform provide copious amounts of grant funding to agricultural projects to inject capital into their projects. These projects are carefully monitored and delegations sent out to assess and evaluate the application and appropriation of the funds.

This year a Parliamentary Portfolio Committee together with the President of the ACDP - Mr. Kenneth Meshoe - visited various of these funded projects in Mpumalanga on 30th March.

Some of the projects are in Incubation with MASDT and Business Development Manager, Inocent Makuwaza, accompanied Business Development Officers Lethabo Sekgobela and Wilson Nkosi to assist their projects during these evaluation visits.

They report that the delegation was extremely impressed by the quality of service that MASDT have provided the projects with and hailed them for their efforts. The Committee revealed that thus far the MASDT projects were by far the most organised and successful and they were overall pleased with the progress that these projects have made. MASDT always welcome such adulation, contented by the fact that they are adding an economic injection in the agricultural sector.

Parliamentary Portfolio Committee and President of the ACDP



## Shout out

Shout out to Thulati Tshobole for securing a loan for the Flagship Co-operative from Nkomazi with the LIMA Rural Development Foundation to assist the co-op in their poultry production! Flagship is an up and coming poultry Co-operative which was inducted in 2016. For the first quarter of 2017 the co-op made a turnover of R 99 700.00 for their chickens sold. Congratulations to Thulati and Flagship Co-op for a job well done!!

**well done**





## SUCCESS STORY - SIZABANTU YOUTH CO-OPERATIVE

Sizabantu Youth Co-operative is a primary co-operative that started when ten aspiring young farmers received 4 hectares of arable land in Block C within the Nkomazi Municipality from the Siboshwa Tribal Authority in 2011.

These young farmers only had the drive and technical knowhow that has been passed down to them for generations, and although they could sustain the farm, they struggled to make a profit.

The farm mainly produced vegetables such as cabbage, tomatoes, peppers and sweet potato but due to their lack of knowledge on cultivar selection, proper fertilization, plant protection, mechanization and business skills, they soon ran into trouble and their business suffered.

MASDT heard about the ambitious youths and their struggle and recruited the co-op in 2015 for the three year Incubation Programme. The programme was intense, but the farmers were eager to learn and drank in every drop of information passed onto them. They were put through various workshops, starting with Business Management and Record Keeping which is the basis of every successful business.

After gaining the knowledge and insight from the precious coaching and training, could the co-op make wiser decisions as to what would be the best production inputs and vision for their businesses. MASDT's Procurement Department could put them in contact with some of the best suppliers with the best prices. Sizabantu was also included in a mentorship program provided by MASDT through AgriSETA.

From the first day that Sizabantu's Business Development Officer - Thulati Tshobole - met the co-op members, he could feel the excitement over the fact that MASDT could help them to make their businesses grow. He says they showed promise from the start and were always eager to learn more and had so many questions! The members said they are now equipped and trained to know how to keep proper records as well as how to practice good management of income and expenditures and the importance thereof. They also know now how important it is to know who your market is and what they demand. It made them feel empowered.

MASDT secured seedlings from Sakata and helped them to compile effective production plans for each crop planted. The co-op went from strength to strength while the excitement of the prospect of success tangible in the air and before long the quality of the product increased and they could secure a better market for their produce.

Thulati secured a contract for Sizabantu through the local Spar group and local Ikhewzi markets. The co-op could now deliver produce of top quality for a better price and finally the business can look at the possibility of profits. How many businesses can say that only after one year? They have been supplied with world class training and market linkages and had grasped every opportunity with consummate delight. As a result the Sizabantu Youth Co-operative received the third prize from AgriSETA in the category for Best Performing Entrepreneur in 2016.

The co-op made a turnover of R200 370.00 during the 2015/2016 financial year and they have a consistent growth and production cycle. In fact, after almost two years in Incubation, the farm is running smoothly due to efforts invested by both Sizabantu and MASDT, that the farm is looking to explore the feasibility of poultry farming as well. We will keep the reader informed of this new venture!!

It is obvious that these ambitious youngsters are farmers at heart and are exploiting every opportunity that comes their way and they want to make even bigger strides in the agricultural sector. Watch out for Sizabantu Youth Co-op, because they are the farmers of the future!

