

Capacitation of Subsistence Farmers to Enhance Good Quality and Sufficient Produce

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Introduction and Objective

The overall objective of the change project was to assist / capacitate existing subsistence farmers with respect to meeting safety, quality and quantity standards in relation to their existing farming activities. In this manner beneficiaries would have obtained the necessary skills to potentially grow their subsistence farming operation into a profitable operation, particularly should hydroponic farming opportunities materialise within the region through other governmental organisation interventions.



Two small co-operatives had been identified to benefit from the necessary capacity building and mentorship programme, namely Umkhazane and B-South. Primary challenges identified by the two co-operatives included a shortage of water, the inability to obtain credit from banking institutions along with their inability to produce the quality and quantity of produce required for local markets. Although the municipality had assisted with the provision of water in the form of water tanks, the primary objective of the change project was to provide the necessary capacitation that will seek to contribute to an enhanced ability to produce the quality and quantity of produce required for local markets.



Target Group and Method

Participants/Stakeholders	Method
Ulundi Internal Departments ie Local Economic Development	Established Core team to implement project and developed project scope, participated in all workshops, committed to implementing project and sustaining project by providing budget and on -going support.
External Government Departments ie Departments of Agriculture	Formed part of Core Team and assisted to scope project and combine budgets for specific project activities ie training, workshops, facilitat ion etc
Ward Councillors	Participation in all workshops in the ward rel evant to the project
Farming co-operatives, Umkhazane and B_South	Participation in workshops



Results

- Members of the farming co-operatives from Umkhazane and B-South were trained with respect to the following:
 - Food safety standards.
 - Food quality standards.
 - Food quantity standards.
- Women farmers from the co-operatives were identified as primary beneficiaries to the project.
- The concepts of soil quality and conserving nutrients was encompassed within the training scheme of meeting safety, quality and quantity standards.

Impact

Subsistence agriculture can play an important role in reducing the vulnerability of rural and urban food-insecure households, improving livelihoods, and helping to mitigate high food price inflation. There is a need to significantly increase the productivity of subsistence agriculture and ensure long-term food security. This can be achieved by encouraging farmers to pursue sustainable intensification of production through the use of improved inputs.



Increased productivity will reduce pressure on marginal lands, as the intensification of cultivated land will reduce pressure to crop fragile marginal lands. There is a need to determine methods of identifying cost-effective ways to improve access to inputs by, among other things, improving delivery, and assisting farmers to earn cash to purchase inputs and invest in infrastructure, thereby improving food security.



Conclusions

Selected local subsistence farmers within the Ulundi municipality have received valuable knowledge and skills so as to improve on the quality and quantity of their production.

The potential to service community and local markets with local produce has been enhanced. All relevant stakeholders contributed to the formulation and implementation of the project.

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For further information

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