

Nkosinathi Farming Co-Operative Cala, Eastern Cape



Profile 2007



Nala – Partners were invited to Nkosinathi's Co-op meeting on 11 May in Cala, EC to review status of business development activities and to assess support needed for 2007.

On 12 May we visited four farms which had done especially well to review their set up.



Co-Op meetings:

Regular bi-monthly meetings are conducted; sometimes small group meetings take place to review potential funding opportunities.

Planting / Harvest during 2006:

The member farmers planted the following vegetables: pumpkin, butternut, potatoes, spinach, Millie's, herbs, beetroot, onions and cabbage.

Zameka & Claude:



This farm used 3 ha during 2006 to plant potatoes, cabbage, beetroot and Millie's.

The harvest provided for self use; extra capacity of 100 bags of potatoes, as well as beetroot and onions were sold through a farm stall and to the local hospital. Additionally, this farm has livestock such as sheep. Both farmers have full time jobs (nurse and teacher). They are set to leave their jobs and concentrate full time on farming if funding can be provided.



The Reverend:



This farmer also planted 3 ha with a variety of vegetables such as spinach, cabbage, beetroot, Millie's. Extra harvest was sold through a farm stall and a small cafe. Additionally, the Reverend sells milk from his cattle to dairy farms.



Joella:



Two ha of land were used for vegetable planting such as Millie's, herbs and potatoes. The harvest was small as a drought destroyed the potatoes.

Emperus:



On about 3 ha potatoes, Millie's, butternut and tomatoes were grown. Butternut and potatoes turned out best and extra capacity was sold to friends and neighbors.

Ihlumelo:



Two ha were used to grow potatoes, spinach, carrots, onions, pumpkins and Millie's. Pumpkins turned out well and extra capacity was sold to local/regional caterers, local hotel and neighbors.



Several additional Co-Op members who were present who will be profiled in our next update.

Fundraising Activities:



A number of fundraising activities took place, meetings were held and proposals submitted:

- Local municipality proposal for the mandatory school feeding program. After months of negotiating, Nkosinathi was told that the program is on hold to due mis- management of government funding
- Proposals were submitted to the dti co-op funding initiative. After months of waiting, Nala met with the dti to find out that here too funding was on hold for review of potential mismanagement of funds.
- Meetings were held with the National Development Association (NDA) and a proposal for capacity building submitted; no response yet
- Meetings took place with the premier of the EC and promises were made

The regional agricultural Department promised funding for much needed fencing to commence in 2008. A meeting was held with Sibaya Development in Mthata; follow up needed: Mr. Nqoko, 083 566 -897

Support Requirements:

Nkosinathi urgently needs the following business support:

Fundraising and business management:

- Qualified project manager who will manage the fundraising and partnering activities. At present, the Coop chairwoman and secretary handle these activities; their efforts need to be augmented by a dynamic, driven business oriented project manager
- The co-Op needs an office (space available) with computer and communication equipment. Nala partners promised a computer and printer for 3 Quarter 2007
- Stationary is needed as well for which funding needs to be provided
- A representative from LED visited and urged Co-Ops in the Region to form strategic alliances to compete with big established farms



Farming support urgently needed:

- Fencing as soon as possible; some farms have improvised fences
- Water supply and irrigation pipes are the most important need at this time; some farms have boreholes and need pumps; some are close to a river and pumps plus pipes are needed
- Tractor repair or purchase of used tractor to be shared is also urgently needed as well as farming equipment. Much needed are seeds and fertilizer.

Marketing support needed:

- The co-Op had relied on being a major supplier for the mandatory school feeding program which was stalled.
- New marketing strategies need to be developed, exploring regional food retailers, institutions such as hospitals and government origination who provide meals for employees;
- With roper support, national food chains could be approached
- Bio fuel vegetable production and feed for chicken farming could be explored
- We still believe that the Co-Op should explore organic farming

Next Steps:

Barbara Manata from Mawethu Developers in Mt. Frere invited Nkosinathi to the kick – off meeting in Mt. Frere. Since then Mawethu has visited Nkosinathi and discussed sharing contacts, resources and collaborating on the chicken project.

Nala - Partners will deliver office equipment in July and conduct a business planning session and fundraising planning

Nkosinathi will search for a proper business / project manager