



IMPACTING LIVES THROUGH **FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY** (Climate smart agriculture for resilient livelihoods)

Supplement

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(CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE FOR RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS)

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CEOs remarks

OUR focus is on mobilizing people for development and constructive use of water resources to stimulate food security, poverty alleviation and social invigoration

Chief Executive Officer Samson Sithole.



in disadvantaged parts of the country. This is a mandate we have proudly and successfully delivered on since inception of the enterprise in 1999.

Our portfolio has since risen to eleven (11) ESWADE implemented projects, and the Smallholder Market Led Project (SMLP) is one of these eleven projects under our auspice. I hasten to express heartfelt appreciation to the international donor community, and expressly, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) which has financed the SMLP at a value of SZL 244.1 million and the Global Environment

Facility (GEF) for co-financing an additional SZL 104 million under the Climate-Smart Agriculture for Resilient Livelihoods (CSARL) which enables the SMLP to expand its outreach and increase its focus on sustainable land and water management through climate smart agriculture. The SMLP/CSARL is implemented across 37 chiefdoms in the rain fed Middleveld draft and Lowveld areas of the Lubombo, Shiselweni and Manzini Regions targeting poor smallholder farmers that are food-deficient and living at a subsistence level; and economically active and able to sell surplus production.

The SMLP strives to contribute to national poverty reduction by enhancing food and nutrition security and incomes among smallholder producer families through diversified agricultural

production and market linkages. As an organisation we would like to thank all partners and stakeholders for the continued collaboration. The collaborations have resulted in the creation and strengthening of sustainable relations through the signing of Memorandums of Understanding with strategic stakeholders/partners. Our partners include the public sector, private sector as well as Non-Government Organisations which are but not limited to; National Maize Corporation, Bulembu Honey, NAMBoard Mashayinkonjane, Eswatini Kitchen, Small Enterprises Development Company, United Nations Development Programme, Youth Enterprise Fund, Land Use planning and Development Department within the MoA, Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, University

of Eswatini, UNESWA.

We owe the success of the project to the Ministry of Agriculture, for having both led and collaborated with us on key deliverables under the various project components such as Land Rehabilitation, Water Harvesting and Food and Nutrition.

...As an organisation we would like to thank all partners and stakeholders for the continued collaboration...

“Out of adversity comes opportunity”

The aforementioned comes from a quote by celebrated polymath Benjamin Franklin, and is how Lynn Kota, National Project Director for ESWADE’s Smallholder Market-Led Project (SMLP) describes the project’s birth...



Ferro cement tanks assist households with water for domestic use and watering nutrition gardens for home consumption and selling surplus to neighbours.

therefore thought we were taking them for a ride,” she explains.

Getting people to unlearn farming practices they have used their whole lives is no easy feat to achieve, therefore Kota highlights the significance of training sessions conducted at the project’s initiation.

“As I mentioned, it was quite a tall order, but the ‘lead farmers’ method training has worked perfectly. This meant training the large group first, and then hand-picking what we termed ‘lead farmers’ based on their experience, passion and other factors.

These ‘lead farmers’ were then tasked with the responsibility of assisting other farmers in their communities, and this has proven to work wonders.”

In the trainings, ESWADE introduced the farmers to climate smart agricultural systems such as per-

maculture and conservation agriculture, both of which are based on crop diversity, resilience, natural productivity, and sustainability.

“Permaculture requires minimal resources since it uses available resources. We provided farmers with start-up inputs to grow a wide variety of vegetables and herbs,” she explains.

“Conservation Agriculture on the other hand manages the agro-ecosystem for improved and sustained agricultural productivity, enhanced food nutrition and income security while preserving and restoring the resource base and biodiversity.

It comprises three principles; minimum soil disturbance, intercropping and crop rotation, as well as permanent soil cover,” she elucidates.

But they



The Ngololweni community has benefitted from a dam and also washing basins that they use for laundry purposes.

still had to safeguard against the farmers having huge expectations, and in this respect, ESWADE advised them to maintain their expectations regarding their produce, as the impression was that the produce from the new-farm methods would only be suitable for home consumption and ensuring self-sufficiency in each farmer’s household.

“You would be shocked however, to learn that even though the intention was to primarily farm for home consumption, a lot of the farmers are now making an income from selling their surplus to neighbors or community members with businesses, she adds”.

Another part of the project is livestock production, where farmers have been empowered on the production of livestock for commercial purposes.

“I’m always quite delighted when speaking about the project because I get to look back and reflect at the work we have done and how much the project has impacted lives,” she remarks with a sparkle of excitement in her eyes.

The value chain is divided into two components, the livestock production which is mainly indigenous chickens, goats, and beekeeping, and then there is sustainable that primarily looks at horticulture and the legumes value chain. ESWADE made sure to spend a significant number of resources as a startup, teaching the farmers new methods to use in raising livestock

to ensure a better and commercially viable products as well.

“It was vital to start by making the farmers understand that even though there was a huge market for indigenous chickens that we were pushing them to tap into, there was a need for this to be done in modern ways.

This was also the case with the goats where we enlightened farmers on the fact that the Nguni breed wasn’t ideal for commercial purposes since it takes too long to mature resulting in gaps in its production. In this regard farmers become unable to supply constantly.

This therefore meant there was a need for cross breeding with exotic species such as the Boar goat, she further explains.

Another very important aspect in ensuring success of the project has been ESWADE’s emphasis on it being market-led, meaning every product is required to have an existing and confirmed market from the word go.

“This is where partnerships come in handy,” she mentions.

“Trust me, there’s a lot of power in working together, and this is something I urge most Non-Governmental (NGOs) and companies to realise, especially those that have the goal of improving lives of the underprivileged. Working in isolation is honestly to our detriment, we can do better together,” she says.



Lynn Kota, National Project Director for ESWADE’s Smallholder Market-Led Project (SMLP)



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ABOUT 27 MILLION SPENT

About E27m spent by the ESWADE on land rehabilitation and infrastructure

Ndinda community benefits from SZL 9.2m on land rehabilitation

It is within the mandate of the ESWADE to alleviate poverty in rural communities. The ESWADE has supported beneficiaries with land restoration initiatives, construction and rehabilitation of earth dams and support of infrastructure amounting to about 27 million.

For a very long time the Sikhunyane lands under Nceka chiefdom were badly eroded and affected by large gulleys. It was a sorry sight to the community as they watched their land being washed away, silting the Mhlathuzane river that feeds about 12000 households. Also, the community was about to lose their loved ones as the community cemetery was also affected by the soil erosion.

“Celiwe Mabuza, secretary of the Erosion Control Goup mentions how they never thought they would be able to reuse their lands. “We would watch helplessly after the rains how the soils continued to be eroded and we were afraid our loved ones would be washed away at a point in time. This is why we are very grateful to the ESWADE because they came in the year 2017 and we have been able to minimise the rate of soil erosion. They did not only buy us expensive materials but they also taught us on how we can further prevent the damage, she says”. This project has cost in the range of SZL 6million and we are very grateful for being assisted with such a huge intervention.

“As a community we have been taught on how to use gabion baskets and stones to rehabilitate degraded lands. The project encourages beneficiaries to also contribute by providing available resources and thus the community was told to gather stones. “Realising they were not enough, the project then bought and delivered them to the various sites we were working in says Mabuza”. It was a cumbersome exercise that required manpower that also saw both male and female work on this. Also, they would leave their daily chores in their various households to commit to the restoration exercise. “We were trained on social cohesion and I am happy to report that this brought unity because we are able to understand the different team dynamics”. “We were all aimed at one goal, that is restoration of our lands and as a result we would come together each morning and work till the afternoon. Looking back today, it is amazing to see how the vegetation has been restored, we never thought we would be able to plant on these soils ever again she continues”.

In about two years the vegetation was showing great signs of recovery. “We have been able to plant fruit trees, indigenous trees and mucuna beans which is another benefit that aids in food nutrition and feed for our livestock” she adds.

“The project has also taught us to adapt to climate change by using renewable energy. A solar powered irrigation system is used to irrigate the site. We have tanks that store a capacity of 40000 litres, she adds”. The land restoration has also doubled as a project that feeds our families and brings in extra income. We cannot wait for the first sale of our banana and papaya harvest. Also, we have been able to plant butternut that we will sell commercially to NAMBoard and other markets. We sing our praises to the ESWADE for helping us achieve this, she ends her conversation.

Not only was the Nceka Chiefdom affected

ANOTHER community that has seen similar effects of soil erosion is the Ndinda Community under Ntondozi Inkhundla. Some parts of the community are still affected by severely degraded lands and huge gulleys.

In one part of the community where the ESWADE is working, community members could not cross to the other section of the community such that makeshift logs were used as a bridge which proved to be very dangerous. The gulleys were severe such that gabion installation alone could not have been achieved and also human labour would have been intensive and expensive in terms of the material required. Also, the recovery rate of the land on the other hand would have been very low. The SMLP engaged a contractor for the restoration works and this has proven to be effective in the reshaping of the gulley and erection of retaining structures along the channel and grassing of the area. Community members have been capacitated with technical skills because they worked very closely with the contractor. The reshaping of the gulley has allowed for rehabilitation using biological means and currently grass, fruit and indigenous trees are being planted to bring back the vegetation on the land. Furthermore, the area has been fenced off to allow for regrowth. Mandla Mkhathshwa who is the community liaison appreciates what has been received by the community. He goes on to mention that the rains that fell in November disrupted the operations whilst works were still in progress. This took a step back in the recovery that had already been made. The gulleys became more visible once again but we are grateful that the ESWADE has made means to make sure that a contractor is re-engaged to work on the damage, he concludes.



Deep gulleys prevented Ndinda residents from crossing to another section and ended up using this makeshift structure



The newly constructed cross bridge that is now used by the residents.



Degraded lands at Sikhunyane section in the Lubombo region



Vegetation has been restored and the community has planted fruit trees that include the banana plants.

by soil erosion but the dam that was used to feed and irrigate a community garden that comprises 45 hectares was not well fully utilized and the dam was not properly maintained. Farmers had ceased their operations due to lack of understanding of its value and potential of the infrastructure to change their livelihoods. ESWADE then embarked on a holistic approach to revive the project by addressing social, technical and financial aspects of the project. The group was trained on social cohesion to address the conflicts

that engulfed the project. The group was then registered as a business entity that now operates as a business making it possible to have access to loans to enable working on their project. Technical issues were attended to which included construction of a silt trap, pressure breaking tank, spillway rehabilitation, diversion weir and other accessories at the headworks that would improve the water storage and distribution to the downstream and portable water filtration systems narrates Bhekisisa Mkhonta, Project Engineer”.

“ESWADE has trained some members of the community to form an operations committee responsible for the dam maintenance. These are the Downstream Water User Group and the Dams Committee that have been put in place that to ensure sustainability and prolong the dam’s new outlet which was constructed with proper filters to prevent clogging Mkhonta elaborates”.

Operations committee Chairman, Sifiso Dlamini said people from the community claimed that the previous off-channel storage

had not been useful to the farmers for over a decade as the outlet was blocked and therefore, water could not be obtained. “ESWADE has then assisted with the construction of a new dam outlet with proper filters to prevent the clogging and therefore our duty as a committee is to maintain the dam by repairing any issues pertaining to the dam structure, cleaning up spillways by keeping grass and brush as well as picking up any litter or debris surrounding the dam to reduce downstream pollution along rivers and streams,” Dlamini continues to explain.



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Ngololweni residents benefit from SZL12.5m dam construction

ANOTHER community that has seen to provide downstream irrigation for farmers under the Ngololweni Chiefdom, the ESWADE has constructed an earth dam worth E12.5 million.

The completed and fully functional dam has been constructed on a 40 hectares wetland which has resulted in improved ecosystems services and availability of water for multiple uses. Ngololweni residents now benefit in water for domestic and livestock use,



11 ha gravity fed sprinkler irrigation system for crop production, washing

basins, livestock drinking troughs and water to use for their dip tank which is accessed by five chiefdoms.

“Other benefits include the harvest of different grasses such as likhwane, incoboza, lihlonga, lutindzi and imphepho to name others that are harvested from the wetland. Mrs Ntombifuthi Dlamini, Bucopho for Sandleni Inkhundla explains how this has been beneficial to women in the community because they are now able to provide for their families through the harvesting of the flora species

that include. This has also given the women to showcase their skills in the arts industry as they are now able to produce products such as baskets, mats and other items that are then sold in the city centre, she elucidated.

“Over and above that, there’s also been increased ecosystem benefits because for the first time, we now see species such as ducks, owls, rabbits and birds which have found habitat in the project site,” added chairperson of the dams committee Mr. Sibusiso Dlamini.

LIVESTOCK

Understanding the market-led aspect (successful value chains)



The Nceka community has a chicken shed where community members are rearing indigenous chickens for commercial purposes.

THE ESWADE uses the availability of confirmed markets as a driver for promoting smallholder production for household nutrition and sale of marketable surplus.

The project’s goal is to contribute to national poverty reduction, with the development objective being the enhancement of food and nutrition security and incomes among smallholder producer families through diversified agricultural production and market linkages.

Intervention areas follow a clear value chain development approach

that includes all players from production through to processing, services and marketing.

The farmers are assisted in increasing their farm productivity and production through access to irrigation, inputs, training and access to services. They then sell their surplus production to wholesalers to increase income.

Along the selected value chains, employment opportunities are created for young people and the activities are tailored to the capacities of smallholders, including women and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

Vulingcondvo farmers co-operative

THIS is a co-operative located in the Sithobela community that was formed in 2018 after being remodelled from a cattle community scheme which was established by some residents of the area since 1992. It comprises 63 members and 15 of them are women. They produce livestock for commercial purposes.

Deputy chairperson Nhlanhla Msibi narrates, “the importance of group dynamics is a crucial element when you want to operate as a group. ESWADE taught us on social cohesion in order for us to learn and understand one another as previously our scheme did not perform well due to conflicts that emanated from within the group.” After the training we were taught on the production of cross breeding using the Boar goat breed because it matures faster and is meatier than the traditional Nguni goats. The project also supported us with two breeding bucks and taught us on proper management of this breed since it is prone to diseases and therefore is delicate and cannot easily adapt to humid and dry temperatures”. Msibi continues to mention that once the cross breeding is done the goats mature faster, easily adapt to harsh climatic conditions and they are meatier. He further said ESWADE sought markets and helped them to tap into those markets ensuring that the standards and requirements demanded by the markets were fully met.

“We also have been taught on how to construct a good modern kraal to house the goats preventing them from wet weather conditions. The construction of the kraal did not cost much as we used available resources such as logs that were cut from our farm. Goats thrive



The Vulingcondvo Association cross breeds the indigenous goats and the boar goat for commercial use.



The Khethokuhle Youth group rears and breeds stock for sale.

when they are housed in kraals as the droppings fall onto the ground protecting their hooves from attracting diseases. This further allows for us to collect and use the manure as compost for the Mucuna beans that we have been taught to grow to supplement feed and nutrition to minimise the ever-escalating feed costs.

ESWADE also supports us with the identification of markets and also ensures that the market demands in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness are met. The major market that is supplied is Mashayinkonjane, but also other butcheries in Nhlanguano are supplied.

The co-operative also has a youth project trading under the name Khethokuhle which solely focuses on the breeding of boar goats. ESWADE supported us with a start-up of 23 breeding stock

and a structure to house them as well as a water tank.

“We learnt that the boar goats are in demand. One must acknowledge that we had challenges when we started due to climatic conditions since the Lubombo region has harsh and high temperatures and we couldn’t even bring other livestock from afar to breed because they would die since they wouldn’t be able to adapt, said Deputy Chairperson Mphilisi Khumalo.

“The unemployment rate is alarming and as young people, we had to think out of the box. We learn every day as there may be challenges that emerge daily, but thanks to the continuous guidance we receive from ESWADE officers, we hope to grow and eventually employ other young people,” he ended his conversation.

Magele youth bee-keeping



THE Magele Youth Group is a result of the MTN collaboration that was formed in 2019 during the 21 days of yello care.

Chairman of the group, Simiso Dlamini

says, “We were not the only ones that had benefited from the partnership, it was us and four others from different chiefdoms. ESWADE has also partnered with the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) and

Small Enterprises and Development Company SEDCO and we have benefitted from a honey processing plant and operation space.

“They wanted to support the best performing youth group out of the five

and we came out tops, hence we have received the machine as a start-up to our business.

Dlamini goes on to mention that currently, the group comprises 13 members and they are now registered as a co-operative. He also explains that they have begun the processes of engaging local retail chain shops such as OK and PicknPay.

“Recently, ESWADE also made it possible for me to attend a life-changing workshop in Zimbabwe where I learnt about the importance and opportunity of honey by-products in particular from the beeswax,” said Dlamini excitedly.

There are four major by-products of the honey-making process, namely; beeswax, pollen, royal jelly, and propolis.

“Beeswax is produced in the bee’s

body as the nectar is transforming into honey. At the workshop, I couldn’t believe my eyes when I was taught about how it can help make candles, lip balms and even soaps.

I came back and have shared the information with the members of the team and this is what we have set our sights to now,” he said.

“We share responsibilities as to our capabilities, from marketing to the actual bee-keeping and we believe that if we continue being dedicated, not even the sky is the limit.

We really appreciate ESWADE for giving us a purpose as young people because these are tough times in the economy where employment opportunities are very scarce,” said Nelisiwe Ntshangase one of the six female members.



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CHIEFDOM DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



COMMERCIALISATION OF AGRICULTURE



Members of Ngololweni preparing to plant indigenous trees to mitigate the impacts of climate change

The Cooperative farms 14 hectares of land and earns a living through commercial sales

Potatoes that have been harvested and ready for collection by NAMBoard.



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COMMERCIALISATION OF SMALL STOCK



WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



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Strong support from traditional leaders is key

SUCCESSFUL implementation is achieved when communities get support from their Traditional Authorities. The Ngobolweni community has already started implementing their CDP and Chief Dambuza Lukhele is proof that support is key.

In his own words he says, “The CDP is the greatest achievement of our community because it outlines basic development projects with challenging timelines, which is something vital since there have been a number of hindrances towards development in our area before, that were left unattended because such an instrument was non-existent.

My sincere appreciation goes to ESWADE for bringing hope and innovation to our community because this area boasts of a rich cultural history that can create eco-tourism opportunities which can immensely benefit the community he concludes.”

Paulos Dlamini the CDC



Ngoloweni residents planting indigenous trees to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

chairman narrates that to date about 370 households are benefitting from potable water supply through the installation of a new water supply scheme. He explains how they have been capacitated on development issues.

He had this to say, “Once we were elected into the CDC, we were taken for a workshop which was quite an eye-opener for us because it taught us different things, from how to work together harmoniously to the basic

CDC chairman Paulos Dlamini appreciated that their CDP assists them in implementing their aspirations that are documented in the plan.

executions of each one’s duty.

The Social Cohesion facilitation and Training for Transformation highlighted the importance of diversity to ensure that everyone’s interests are represented, and this is why we always meet to report everything back to members of the community.

We appreciate having the plan because it has harmonised and structured our aspirations. Through the CDP, we are now able to channel our focus to the right stakeholders and in also having timelines to our ambitious projects. We further appreciate the authorities of our area in particular Chief Dambuza who is always supportive in everything we do.”

Dlamini goes on to mention how they

have been able to successfully write a proposal to Micro Projects and receive assistance towards the construction of a secondary school. He narrates, “when ESWADE helped us to launch our CDP in 2018, we had already identified the need for a nearby school. During the launch, ESWADE had invited their crucial stakeholders to be a part of the launch and so had we as a community. It was during the launch that some people contributed in monetary terms for the establishment of the school and some made pledges. Our children travel more than 7 kilometres to reach secondary schools and this is quite dangerous more especially during the winter season because it gets dark soon”. He continued to say, armed with the skills

they received from the workshop, they sought the assistance of Micro Projects and to date they have successfully constructed the high school that has three classes, form 1 to form 3.

One other intervention that is currently being implemented is the indigenous forest. Dlamini mentions that ESWADE has taught them to promote beekeeping to fight climate change. He also explains how the youth was trained on beekeeping and appreciates that they are still in production to date. “We are also promoting forestation by the planting of indigenous trees. We have partnered with the Ministry of Forestry to assist us achieve this activity; he continues. He mentions that one of the aspirations outlined in their CDP is to have in place a tourist attraction adjacent to the Kholwane Mountain because of its history and beautiful caves. During this exercise, they were found working with the Ministry of Forestry, planting the indigenous trees. They had already identified a date to host the Minister for Tourism and Environment who was to officially mark the place and encourage a start towards the establishment of the tourist attraction.

On infrastructure development, proposed projects include roads maintenance, construction of new access roads, and construction of low-level bridges, household electrification, community hall, sports centre and a business centre.

Sustainable agriculture



Some members of the Nhletjeni Multi Purpose Cooperative.

ROBERT Mabundza, Sustainable Agriculture Manager had this to say, “A number of

farmers are growing and supplying local markets with fresh produce under the horticulture and leg-

umes value chain.

The ESWADE supports the farmers with production techniques to make sure that they comply with the quality and standards that are required by markets. The farmers are sup-

ported with Extension Officers who nurture them throughout the period until their crop is ready for harvest and sale, he says”. He goes on to mention that a number of farmers

are producing for NAMBoard, the Picknpay and Shoprite chain stores and other potential markets that have shown interest include Vegeworth and Fresh Mark, explains Mabundza. He further mentions that as the effects of climate change are being felt globally, the project has activities that drive soil conservation. He names the two interventions to be Conservation Agriculture and permaculture and highlights that these promote the growth of agricultural ecosystems in a self-sufficient and sustainable way. “This form of agriculture draws inspiration from nature to develop synergetic farming systems based on crop diversity, resilience, natural productivity, and sustainability. Both interventions promote minimum soil disturbance, maintenance of permanent soil cover, and diversification of plant species and therefore farmers are equipped with the skills to practice this farming methods, he says.” He goes on to mention that some farmers have succeeded in their farming activities and are able to produce for their households.



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Permaculture and conservation agriculture practices

...Right now, I have a garden that's farmed through permaculture and I also use conservative farming for my maize...

BONGEKILE Nkumane is a highly successful farmer that practices permaculture and Conservation Agriculture. She says "ESWADE found us struggling as farmers because of droughts.

For a long time, we only knew that it was impossible to have good produce without good rains, so when ESWADE approached us and taught us about these farming interventions called permaculture and conservative farming, we were mind-blown.

"Most of us took that knowledge because most of the resources are found within our households and therefore implementation became an easy process. We began to grow gardens right in our yards. "Right now, I have a garden that's farmed through permaculture and I also use conservative farming for my maize, narrates Nkuna".

"I love the fact that I do not have to spend on input for cultivation, she says". "ESWADE has taught us to use available resources within our households. We collect grass, leaves from trees and any edible waste edible waste from the kitchen. We then dig a pit and throw everything in the pit and leave it to rot which makes compost



Conservation Agriculture minimises soil tillage and produces good yields.

she says".

The compost is then used as fertilizer in the gardens. Thereafter, plots are created and covered with dry grass to provide mulching. The mulching protects the soil and also helps retain water that penetrates to the roots. This then means the plots are not watered on a daily basis but once to twice in a week.

"I also love the fact that I do not need to buy fertilizer to grow the

vegetables because we have been taught to grow these vegetables using the organic approach, she says". She also goes on to highlight how they have been taught about the ill effects of fertilizer on the soil. Nkuna further makes mention that the gardens do not need expensive fencing as any makeshift that is strong and is able to prevent animals from entering the garden can be used. Another important factor is that they do not need to buy

pesticides but they create their own. She highlights that the reason why they grow herbs is because the strong smell chases away any pesticides that may want to attack their crops. She continues to mention that ESWADE has taught them to create their own home-made pesticides using strong smelling, bitter and hot plants e.g. cayenne pepper, aloe, herbs and lipia javanica (umsutane) leaves but is also quick to emphasize that this does not

kill the insects but chases them away from the produce.

"From this garden, I am able to feed myself and three beneficiaries. We also sell the surplus to our neighbours which helps in providing transport money for the young ones when they go to school".

She goes on to explain about Conservative Agriculture that it is less labour intensive but still stabilizes and protects the soil from breaking down since there's less tillage of the soil.

This means we save a lot from labour of conventional cropping and our soils remain healthier as conventional farming improves the quality of surface water reducing pollution from soil erosion.

Lastly, I cannot forget to mention that this type of farming is by no means a low output agriculture as my yields have increased over the years with reduced farming costs.

Also, I would like to thank ESWADE for the farming inputs, the knowledge and the constant monitoring and support. The garden has a fence because of them, and they also do give us seedlings, and for this I will forever be appreciative."

Earning a living through farming- Nhletjeni multi-purpose co-operative

THE Nhletjeni Multipurpose Cooperative initially had been working and producing as an association from 2009 till 2019.

Fakazile Nzima, the Secretary of the Cooperative explained that the business was not a profitable venture since there was no cohesion among the members as it was engulfed with a lot of personal issues causing them not to work together as a collective hence hindering progress.

"ESWADE then came into the picture in 2018 where they started building our capacity on an array of intervention areas. The starting point which was the most challenging part was training on social cohesion and conflict resolution. This enlightened us on how to work together as well as understand one another and be able to manage how proper conflict resolution can be achieved. This is where we were also encouraged to register and work as a cooperative instead of the association, and since then things have been looking up for us, she says".

"ESWADE has further provided us



Part of the 14 hectares that is used for farming by the Nhletjeni Multipurpose Cooperative.

with farming inputs, that include a very important and expensive aspect – an irrigation system that amounted to SZL 400,000 because Nhletjeni is not all plain land but there are hills and a bit of mountains. We must say without such support we would not be able to sustain our produce. We are therefore very appreciative of the fact that they regularly check up on us which keeps us motivated to apply all the teachings that we continue to receive and we want to keep reaching for the stars.

"We farm about 14 hectares of land, and we grow different crops, from

maize, legumes and sweet potatoes. We harvest three times annually and our major market is NAMBOARD, she says." While we have noted that finance access opportunities exist at Inkhundla level and in the region, ESWADE has also assisted us to lodge an application for financing through the Regional Development Fund. Such financing will enable us to have our own tractor for ease of land preparation and added income through provision of tractor services to the local community", Nzima explains.

