

Narrative Interim Report

The report must describe in detail how the project has progressed and the results achieved so far, and must describe how the project funds have been used for the planned activities. The total length should not exceed 15 pages.

BMZ Project number:	6815
Project country:	South Africa
Project title:	Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change (CbCCA) to build resilience
Organisation:	Mahlathini Development Foundation (MDF)
Project duration:	01.10.2022 bis 31.08.2025
Period:	August-October 2024

1. General Information

The CbCCA project is based on working with Climate resilient Agriculture (CRA) learning groups of smallholder participants. These groups are set up at a village level across three provinces: KZN, EC and Limpopo. They work on an annual cyclical planning and review process for implementation of CRA practices (Field cropping, homestead food production and livestock management) – which are supported through training, mentoring and implementation support. The intention is to support both existing learning groups in the three provinces to deepen their implementation and to initiate new learning groups.



Figure 1: Map of SODI-CbCCA villages across EC, KZN and Limpopo

CRA learning group members also undertake a range of other associated activities according to their need, meaning that not all groups undertake the same activities:

- Setting up and running village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), with membership from the CRA learning groups and beyond, for savings and small loans for consumption smoothing and productive activities.
- Enterprise development and local marketing committees and groups, mostly to run the joint monthly produce markets in nearby towns, but also includes egg and broiler production and sales, livestock auctions and more formal market contracts.
- Water access and management through water committees linked to local governance structures, for planning and implementing integrated water management activities and
- Livestock committees, for development of conservation agreements for rangeland management and local livestock auctions.

Quarterly project reports outline the training, field-based activities undertaken with the CRA learning groups and their progress related to economic empowerment (VSLAs, marketing etc.). Information on activities related to the innovation and multistakeholder platforms is also to be included in summary form. Integrated water and natural resources management activities are more discreet in nature and will be reported on as progress is made. This also applies to the development of evidence-based indicators and the monitoring and evaluation handbook development.

1.1. Project Description / Project Objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic, global economic downturns and internal political and economic instability have exacerbated the already significant negative impact of climate change on smallholder farmer communities in South Africa. Unemployment is very high (60-80%), with very low incomes primarily through social grants (around R2000/month per household of 4-5 members). Smallholders need to find ways to provide for a sustainable livelihood for themselves through farming and resource use in their villages. The climate resilient agriculture practices have been piloted and have been shown to significantly improve both livelihoods and social agency and now needs to be deepened and expanded.

The project objectives and outputs are summarized in the small table below.

Overall objective (impact)	Communities have improved their livelihoods and their capacity to adapt to climate change and have strengthened their resilience climate change risks and shocks	
Project outputs/objectives	O1	<i>Capacity is developed for creation of and strengthening institutional frameworks and mechanisms for including proven multi-benefit approaches that promote collective action and coherent Community based Climate Change Adaptation (CbCCA) implementation.</i>
	O2	<i>The farmer level decision support system for implementation of CRA is upscaled in eastern SA.</i>
	O3	<i>Appropriate frameworks for monitoring and evaluation of environmental benefits and agro-ecosystem resilience are developed at multiple scales</i>
	O4	<i>Improvement of water and natural resources management and governance through community ownership</i>

1.2. Source of Information

Each activity set within the project has a focused monitoring and evaluation process, to encompass the range of environmental, agricultural, economic and social indicators used for reporting. Monitoring forms include for example the CCA baselines, crop and garden monitoring, poultry production monitoring and fodder supplementation monitoring. Databases are collated for the monthly VSLA (village savings and loan associations) records and monthly market stall sales and incomes. Seasonal reviews for each learning groups consist of focus

group discussions and individual interviews. Resilience snapshots and participatory impact assessments provide more summative evaluative content.

In addition, the provincial field team leaders (Betty Maimela and Mazwi Dlamini) provide monthly reports on training and implementation undertaken with the CRA learning groups. Photographs are included in these summaries and attendance registers are available. All interns are expected to provide monthly field work reports (for SODI – Sphumelelo Mbhele) and reports for events, workshops and meetings are submitted.

Erna Kruger uses these reports and databases to compile the SODI quarterly reports for the organization. Financial reports re compiled jointly by Erna Kruger and Sarika Ramsewak.

2. Project Status

Overall Objective (Impact): Communities are empowered to adapt to climate change and their resilience is strengthened.

Project Objective (Outcome):	Indicator		
	Base value (quantitative & qualitative) <i>Equivalent to proposal</i>	Target value (Quantitative & qualitative) <i>Equivalent to proposal</i>	Achievements (quantitative & qualitative)
Smallholder families in 3 provinces in South Africa apply climate-adapted agricultural practices and diversify their income opportunities in order to stabilize food security in the long term.	As part of an MDF pilot project, 345 smallholder farmers have gained initial experience with local agricultural practices for climate change adaptation. There is currently no coherent regional or local system for climate-adapted agriculture by smallholder farmers. So far, 9 community-based village savings and loan associations have been established by MDF	2,625 beneficiaries of smallholder farming families and 75 stakeholders in 3 provinces are organized in Communities of Practice (CoP) and implement at least 3 practices for climate-adapted agriculture according to developed standards. 18 villages are organized by the project in their own village savings groups	249 participants, of whom 107 are in new learning groups. (1 424 beneficiaries) 3 practices 20 stakeholders: across meso and macro level CoPs 18 VSLAs of which 5 are new

Project Goals (Output)	Indicators		
	Base value (quantitative & qualitative) <i>Equivalent to proposal</i>	Target value (Quantitative & qualitative) <i>Equivalent to proposal</i>	Achievements (quantitative & qualitative)
1. Communities of Practice (CoP) are established at different levels and practices for climate-resilient agriculture are applied sustainably.	1.1 Learning groups (18) at local village level have gained initial experience with approaches to sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.	1.1 CoP at local and regional level are implemented and operational: - 27 CoP / Learning groups for climate-resilient agriculture are established at village level for community-based climate change adaptation (CbCCA)	26 CoPs of which 8 are new. -Mahhehle and Mariathal(SKZN) and Sophaya and Madeira (Limpopo), eMadakaneni and eMahlathini (Bergville), Nchodu and Ned (Eastern Cape) 4 regional CoPs

	<p>1.2 Currently, smallholders are supported by 2 government organisations (ROs) and 2 non-governmental organisations (NGOs)</p>	<p>- 3 regional CoP with representatives from the local CoP are established in clusters as innovation platforms for exchange, planning and development</p> <p>- 3 regional multi-stakeholder platforms (ROs and NGOs) for strategy development, policy interactions, coherent planning and awareness raising are established</p> <p>1.2 In the project regions, 6 ROs and 6 NGOs support smallholder farmers through learning and financing opportunities. From planning to implementation, they are involved in community-based adaptation to climate change activities.</p>	<p>-Conservation Agriculture: Farmers' Open day Bgvl (5 villages Bgvl, 3 villages Midlands)-existing (in association with ASSET Research) -Mametja-Sekororo Participatory guarantee system (3 villages) – existing with SAOSO - Bgvl marketing cluster (5 villages)- newly established -Ozwathini: Calf rearing group (5 villages)- newly established</p> <p>4 multistakeholder platforms - uThukela catchment partnership (Northern Drakensberg Collaborative) -newly established catchment stewardship with WWF (quarterly meetings) - Adaptation network – national network - member – in capacity development working group with Flanders Government (3-4 meetings/year) -PGS SA – Organic participatory guarantee system South Africa – South African Organic Sector Organisation (2 meetings) -Conservation Agriculture forum – national (1 per annum)</p> <p>6 NGOs: Institute of Natural Resources (KZN), Association for Water and Rural Development (Limpopo), Environmental and Social Solutions (Eastern Cape),Lima Rural Development Foundation (KZN), Sociotech (Gauteng), Wildlands Conservation Trust (KZN)</p> <p>3 ROs: University of KwaZulu Natal (learning and funding in socio ecological mapping and adaptive planning), World Wildlife Fund -WWF (learning and funding support in water stewardship in Bergville KZN), Water Research Commission- WRC (learning and funding support in all sites and including also Giyani in Limpopo – through dissemination of farmer decision support project</p>
<p>2. A decision support tool that takes into account climate-resilient agricultural practices will be further developed and applied by smallholder farmers.</p>	<p>2.1 There are no specific criteria for the local assessment of climate-resilient production systems.</p> <p>2.2 So far, there are no standardized and target group-oriented approaches for climate-resilient agriculture for the project regions.</p> <p>2.3 120 smallholder farmers have developed an understanding of</p>	<p>2.1 Indicators for monitoring and evaluating the impact of specific agricultural practices for adaptation to climate change have been identified together with smallholder farmers.</p> <p>2.2. A handbook has been developed and made available as a standard framework for use as "open source" for users at various levels (in digital and printed form).</p> <p>2.3 A total of 300 smallholder farmers independently use the decision support tool for climate-resilient</p>	<p>-MoU development with PMERL specialist Karen Kotschy. Review of indicators and resilience snapshots initiated. - Livelihoods surveys designed and administered. (Nqe Dlamini) – research into VSLA contribution to livelihoods – to feed into the overall M&E framework – to develop best bet indicator set</p> <p>-Not done yet – to be initiated in 2024</p> <p>524 smallholder farmers of whom 173 are in new learning groups have used the DSS to implement practices and review and plan their activities – facilitated but not independent</p>

	how to use a decision support tool for climate-resilient farming practices	agricultural practices to implement community-based adaptation to climate change	
3. Community-based water management will be institutionalised and sustainably improved.	3.1 At municipal level, there are insufficiently functioning structures for sustainable water management. 3.2 Communities have only limited access to water	3.1. Six communities have been institutionalized and have a sustainable structure (e.g. Committee on Water Management) 3.2 Three community-based approaches to sustainable water management have been developed.	5 communities: Ezibomvini (9), Vimbukhalo (35), Stulwane(87) (Bergville), Nkau (18), Ned (50) (Eastern Cape) have been institutionalized, sustainable structures in 2 villages only (Constitutions, committee, do have meetings, problem solving, or deal with maintenance issues) 3 Community-based approaches: Limpopo (Turkey, Sedawa), Limpopo (Giyani) and Bergville (Stulwane, Ezibomvini Vimbukhalo)... in association with WRC – approaches have been outlined and proposed- working with water institutions to get some recognition. – policy and strategy development at regional and national level.

2.1. Explanations in the event of deviations from planning

Issues: Limpopo, Matatiele – drought- major water shortages -zero implementation

Fodder supplementation in winter:.....

2.2. Status of implementation

The table below is taken from the project agreement. A column has been included on the right in Table 1 below, outlining the quantities and activities involved for greater clarity.

Table 1: SODI high level work plan and budgeting per activity

<i>SODI Work plan and Budgeting</i>										
<i>Measures & Activities</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>			<i>2024</i>			<i>2025</i>		<i>Activities and quantities</i>
1. Implementation of Communities of Practice (CoP)										
<i>Introductory workshops for learning groups (LG) at village level in 3 provinces</i>	x			x	x		x			9X 1day intro meetings
<i>LG operation; Roles, responsibilities, visions and planning: Workshops for 9 LGs in 3 provinces.</i>		x	x				x	x		9x1 day visioning and action plans
<i>Training on capacity development for climate-resilient production systems</i>			x	x		x	x	x	x	3x1day training in CRA for 9 groups (R17 500/month)

<i>Cyclical implementation of the LG at village level: implementation and mentoring for climate-adapted agriculture for 27 learning groups at village level; development of local marketing initiatives (3) and local food security initiatives (creation of value chains, seed banks, etc.); Community-based management measures for natural resources</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			27 Learning groups in total - 9 per province (3 new). (67 days@R200/day, thus 10days/ LF/month x 6-7LFs (R13 551/month)
<i>Entrepreneurial support for food security: village savings and loan associations as well as local marketing support and development</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Printing of savings books (Zulu, Pedi), 24 days@R200/day, thus 4days/LF/monthx6 LFs and/or paying for marketing costs (R7 968/month)
<i>Cyclical implementation of innovation platforms and multi-stakeholder networks; Implementation and capacity building for innovation (3) and multi-stakeholder platforms (3); Meetings and exchange visits</i>				x					x			x	1-2 events/year: farmers day, x visit, Multi stakeholder meeting, (R8 400/event)
2. Development of an M&E toolbox and a manual													
<i>Development of M&E tools and indicators</i>			x		x		x		x				Materials for M&E, Software for e surveys (R19 460/year)
<i>Development of the Handbook on Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change</i>										x	x	x	
<i>Regular M&E of MDF together with smallholders</i>		x		x		x		x		x	x	x	
<i>Seasonal evaluation by learning groups at village level</i>				x		x		x		x	x	x	36 Resilience snapshots per year (min)
<i>Participatory assessments improved climate resilience for a selection of village-level learning groups</i>				x		x		x		x	x	x	3 PIA's per year (Min)
3. Sustainable water management													
<i>Establishment and implementation of institutional structures such as water management committees</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
<i>Development of three concepts for sustainable access to water</i>				x				x		x	x	x	
Investment		2022	2023	2024									
Amount per person													
<i>Tunnels</i>	<i>R5 463,00</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>30</i>									
<i>Poultry</i>	<i>R2 021,00</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>45</i>									
<i>Seed (CA, veg) and poultry feed</i>	<i>R1 815,00</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>45</i>									

To further outline the activities, annual targets and actuals have been outlined in Table 2. This table will be updated quarterly.

Table 2: Targets and actuals for project activities: July 2024

	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	2022	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024	2025	2025
No CCA Intro w/s	2	2	5	5	2	2		
No CCA Planning w/s	2	2	5	5	2	2		
Training days (demos)	6	10	12	22	12	12		

No of LGs	18	23	23	25	27	26	27	
No of participants - monitoring			108	220	108	109	108	
Platforms (3 Ips, 3 Multi stakeholders)	2	2	6	6	6	4	6	
Cross visits				3		2		
No CCA prioritization planning sessions	2		8	8	8	6	18	
No CCA review sessions	2	12	8	8	8	6	18	
No CCA re-planning sessions	2	12	8	7	8	5	18	
VSLAs (360 participants, 18 VSLAs)			18	18	18	18	18	
Water access scenarios (min 2)			1	4	1	1:Gobizembe (Midlands)	1	
Livestock agreements (Min 3)			1	1:Ozwathini	1	1-Willows (Limpopo)	1	
Local facilitator days (6-9), total 114 days each			38	Isaac Malatji Phumla Nyembezi Jerida Popela	38	38 Limpopo: I Malatji, J Poplea, M Mogofe, P Thobejane,	38	
Tunnels	5		35	40	30	27		
Poultry	10		45	28 broilers, 17 layers	45	71 Boschvelders- EC (26), Bgvl (11), Limpopo (22), Midlands (12)		
Seed (CA, veg), poultry feed	10		45	Seed – 50 (seed/seedlings vegetable production) Poultry feed - 45	45	Vegetable Seed – 160 – Vegetable Seed – Limpopo (180), Matatiele (107), Midlands (100) Poultry feed _71		

This information is further outlined according to the measures and activities, with dates and descriptions of activities provided in Table 3. Again, this table is to be updated quarterly.

Table 3: Description of measures and activities with dates and areas outlined: Nov 2023-Oct2024

Please add specific activities with dates and no of participants in the relevant activity columns

Description	Date	Activity
Establishing learning groups at village level	2022/11/25, 12/09 2022/11/15, 11/29, 2023/02/07 2023/02/09 2023/01/18 2023/03/27 2023/06/15, 07/07	Limpopo: Sophaya SKZN: Mahhehle -CCA workshop x 2 days, Bergville: Eqeleni EC: Ned, Nkau Limpopo: Madeira KZN Midlands: Ndlaveleni, Montobello, Noodsberg, Inkuleleko primary school
Training and mentoring for climate resilient agriculture	2022/12/02 2022/10/26 2022/10/08-14 2022/11/23,24,29 2022/02/10 2022/02/27, 03/28 2022/03/08, 03/17, 03/28 2022/03/15 2023/03/07,08 2023/03/29,30 2023/03/24,27,30 2023/04/, 2023/05, 2023/06	Midlands: Ozwathini contouring workshop SKZN: Mahhehle – tower gardens EC-Matatiele: Drip irrigation workshops in 5 villages SKZN: CA demonstration workshops in 3 villages SKZN: Plainhill Drip irrigation training Limpopo: Sofaya trench beds SKZN: Mahhehle tower gardens, poultry production, trench beds SKZN: Mariathal gardens and experimentation Bgvl: Madakaneni, Mahlathini – gardening training EC: Ned, Nchodu poultry production EC: Nec, Nchodu, Mzongwana- Pest and disease control

	<p>2023/04/21,25, 05/26, 06/08</p> <p>2023/04/19,20 2023/06/22 2023/08/07,08,10</p> <p>2023/09/19 2023/10/16-19</p> <p>2023/11/13-17</p> <p>2023/12/04 2023/12/14</p> <p>2024/02/23 2024/03/22</p> <p>2024/05/28 04/07/2024 05/07/2024 08/07/2024 10/07/2024 16/08/2024 11/09/2024 25/09/2024</p>	<p>Limpopo and KZN: trench bed training with assembling of tunnels for 45 households across 8 villages, including distribution of seedlings, mixed cropping and mulching learning inputs and drip irrigation</p> <p>Limpopo: Willows, Sedawa, Mametja Sophaya. Bergville-Matwetha, Emadakaneni – Natural Pest and Disease control</p> <p>Bergville, SKZN: Poultry production: eMadakaeneni, Mjwetha, Mariathal, Mahhehle, Centocow</p> <p>EC: Ned, Nkau, Rashule, Nchodu- Soil and water conservation</p> <p>Matatiele: Multipurpose chicken production and cage construction (Ned(13), Rashule(22), Nchodu(23)</p> <p>Matatiele: Nchodu -Value Adding training (32)</p> <p>Limpopo: Boschvelder feeding and management training x 5 villages (50 participants)</p> <p>Limpopo (30): CA demonstrations and farmer level experimentation: intercropping cover crops</p> <p>-Midlands: Gobizembe Youth group- seedling production training</p> <p>-Limpopo: Sofaya(10) , Madeira and Willows (16) CA training and demos</p> <p>-Limpopo: advanced nutrition workshop x 5 villages</p> <p>-SKZN: gardening refresher workshops (Centocow, Mahhehle, Mariathal, Ngongonini)</p> <p>-Matatiele (EC) nutrition workshops x 4 villages</p> <p>Poultry training-Ndlaveleni</p> <p>VSLA meeting+ delivery of boschvelders-Ozwathini</p> <p>Calf rearing meeting (farmer centre finalization)-Ozwathini</p> <p>Progress meeting-Gobizembe</p> <p>Seedling production Youth group, Gobizembe</p> <p>Pest and disease training Mayizekanye</p> <p>Seedling production training Ozwathini</p>
<p>Cyclical implementation through mentoring for capacity development for LG at local level</p>	<p>2022/08/16,17,18,19,30 2022/10/16 2022/11/21-24</p> <p>2023/01/24-30 ONGOING</p> <p>2023/10/03-06</p> <p>2023/11/05-12/15</p> <p>2023/11/30-2024/02/28</p> <p>2024/ 03/ 30</p> <p>2024/07/08</p> <p>11/07/2024 16/07/2024 17/07/2024 31/07/2024 23/08/2024 26/08/2024 14/10/2024</p>	<p>CCA review and planning workshops</p> <p>-Bergville: CA review and planning (5)</p> <p>-Midlands: CA review and planning (3)</p> <p>-Limpopo: CCA review and planning (4)</p> <p>CCA prioritization of practices</p> <p>-Matatiele: 5 villages (Ned, Nchodu, Rahsule, Nkau, Mzongwana)</p> <p>-All areas: garden monitoring, poultry support, tunnel and drip kit installations, VSLAs monthly meetings, CA production and monitoring</p> <p>KZN-Bergville Boschvelder chicken delivery and maintenance mentoring for 45 participants</p> <p>KZN: Bergville_CA farmer experimentation planting for 124 participants, incl cover crops awa collaboration with Forge Agri to Fodder Beet trials and Zylem SA for new Maize variety trials</p> <p>Midlands: Seedling nursery project initiation for youth group in Gobizembe (11 members)</p> <p>-KZN,EC and Limpopo – 2nd round micro tunnel introduction and deliveries (x30 tunnels)</p> <p>-KZN ,EC and Limpopo- 2nd round of multipurpose chicken delivery, training and mentoring, including introduction of incubators for local breeding</p> <p>-VSLA meeting- Ozwathini</p> <p>PIA meeting-Ozwathini</p> <p>Purchasing and decanting of farmer centre stock-Ozwathini</p> <p>Monitoring of tower gardens and chickens in Ndlaveleni</p> <p>Nursery monitoring-Gobizembe</p> <p>Purchasing and decanting of farmer centre stock</p> <p>Purchasing of farmer centre stock and decanting</p>
	<p>Ongoing - Monthly Jan-December 2023</p> <p>July-Sept 2023</p> <p>Ongoing- Monthly</p>	<p>Market days: monthly farmers markets</p> <p>-Midlands: Bamshela (Ozwathini)</p> <p>-SKZN: Creighton (Centocow)</p> <p>-Ubuhlebezwe LED Ixopo flea market</p> <p>- Bergville: Bergville town</p> <p>Market exploration workshops</p> <p>-Midlands: Mayizekanye, Gobizembe</p> <p>-EC_Ned-Nchodu market day in Matatiele</p> <p>-SKZN: Mariathal</p> <p>PGS follow-up w/s Limpopo</p> <p>SKZN: Mahhehle</p> <p>VSLA meetings and share outs</p> <p>-Bergville (18)</p> <p>-SKZN: Ngongonini (2), Centocow (4)</p>

	April-June 2024 May-July 2024	-Midlands: Ozwathini (6) Limpopo: (7) -Youth Dialogues – Limpopo (Sedawa, Turkey, Willows, Madeira) -Income diversification individual interviews - all areas (x12)
Income diversification and economic empowerment of local farmers (LG at local level)	Ongoing - Monthly July-October 2024 02/08/2024 03/09/2024 Ongoing- Monthly July-Oct 2024 12/08/2024 and 07/10/2024	Market days: monthly farmers markets -Midlands: Bamshela (Ozwathini) -Ozwathini Market Day -Ozwathini Matket day VSLA meetings and share outs -Savings meetings Ozwathini (7) -Share out meetings Ozwathini (1) Farmer centre meetings – Ozwathini Midlands
Implementation and capacity development for innovation (3) and multi-stakeholder platforms (3)	2022/11/18 2022/11/10 2022/12/01 2023/02/23 2023/02/28 2023/03/08,09 2023/03/89,29, May-July 2023 2023/03/30, 06/02 2023/04/26 2023/05/09 2023/07/10-15 2023/08/18 2023/08/29 2023/08/30 2023/09/04 2023/09/08 2023/09/13 2023/09/22-24 2023/08/23, and 09/27 2023/07-12 2024/03/12,20 2024/07/08-12 2024/08/07 2024/08/08	-SKZN: Centocow P&D control cross visit and learning workshop -uThukela water source forum: Visioning and action planning – Bergville -Adaptation Network AGM -Regenerative Agric farmers’ day in Bergville incl Asset research, uThukela Water Source Forum, uThukela Development Agency -Adaptation Network: CCA financing dialogue -SANBI_gender mainstreaming dialogue -WRC-ESS: Bglv Ezibomvini, Stulwane – resource management mapping and planning Bergillve:Stulwnae weekly community resource management workdays -Okahlamba LED forum -Farmers X visit between Bulwer (supported by the INRO and Bergville around CRA, fodder and restoration -PGS-SA: market training input: Online training Session 5 -Giyani Local Scale Climate resilience Project: Introduction of CCA model and local water governance options. -World Vision: CCA workshops for women cooperatives and LED project (60 participants) -Giyani Climate resilience project: Input into WRC reference group meeting -KZN DARD_ Okahlamba Agricultural Show: display and talk ACDI: Dialogue on community adaptation and resilience (Stellenbosch) Food systems article for newsletter WWF-Business Network meeting (SAPPI Durban)- presentation Joint Bergville learning group local marketing review session Gcumisa_multistakeholder innovation meeting – with the INR, ~60 participants (value adding, stokvels and local marketing Food systems dialogue: online event Uthukela water source forum: Core team meeting and Multistakeholder field visit around community resource conservation in Stulwane (BgvI) -LIMA -Social Employment Fund: Training for work teams and employed youth in nutrition, value adding, climate change adaptation and agroecological gardening practices including soil and water conservation in 7 areas: Zululand, SKZN, Lichtenburg, Sekororo, Musina and Blouberg (140 participants trained). Northern Drakensberg collaborative (NDC) multistakeholder meeting in Bergville (55 participants) Adaptation network (AN) – colloquium CT- vulnerability assessments and MERL for CCA AN_SANBI EbA farm – Global Climate Fund proposal discussion (24 participants) NDC -Farmers x visit from Hlatikhulu to Bergville-Endangered wildlife Trust, WWF, SEAON, INR (45 participants)
Indicator development for evidence-based indicators, M&E and handbook development	2023/01/30- 02/03 2023/02/02 2023/01/18 2023/01/18	Limpopo: Focus Group discussions for VSLA and microfinance for the rural poor x 3 (Turkey, Worcester, Santeng) Garden monitoring: -SKZN: Plainhill -EC: 5 villages CA monitoring -EC:5 villages

	<p>2023/02/20 March-May 2023 June 2023 2023/10/16-20, 11/13-16 2024/02/26 May-July 2024</p> <p>31/05/2024, 07, 12, 18/07/2024 31/07/2024</p>	<p>-KZN: Bergville -30, Midlands 15, SKZN 15 -All areas: Poultry production list -All areas: Livelihoods survey for farmgate sales and asset accumulation -M&E resilience indicator development team meeting and process with Karen Kotschy -Design of framework -Development of individual interviews and Participatory impact assessment outlines for testing. Interviewing of 120 participants across KZN, EC and Limpopo and running of 10 PIA workshops - Initiate development of analysis platform and dashboards for Climate resilience impact assessments - Garden Monitoring Ndlaveleni</p>
Implementation of sustainable water management	<p>2023/01/03-02/03 2023/03/07 2023/03/25, 06/15 2023/04/25, 06/01, 02, 06/14. 2023/07/26-28, 09/14, 10/09-14, 11/06-10, 12/05-15, 2024/01/21-02/02</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>KZN: Bergville: Stulwane – Conflict man and upgrading spring protection. EC: Nkau: Water walk and meetings for spring protection and reticulation. KZN: Bgvl Stulwane_ Engineer visits (Alain Marechal) for scenario development and follow up planning meetings with community. Set up committee, work parties and start on quotes and budget outline KZN: Bgvl Vimbukhalo: Governance of communal borehole water supply KZN: Bgvl Stulwane_ Engineer visits (Alain Marechal) for scenario development and follow up planning meetings with community. Set up committee, work parties and start on quotes and budget outline. Work on scheme initiated. Final implementation of scheme. Gobizembe water access discussions</p>
Organisational & capacity development	<p>2022/11/17 2022/12/05 2023/02/13 2023/02/09, 02/16 2023/03/06 2023/03/13 2023/04/17 2023/05/26 2023/06/12 2023/07/04 2023/10/09 2023/10/16 2023/10/17 2024/02/26 – ONGOING 2024/10/24</p>	<p>-MDF AGM and organisational capacity development workshop -Mentoring and planning with new finance officer to implement SODI financial reporting system - Internal short learning event for rainfall and runoff results, as well as soil fertility and Organic carbon - Mentoring in CCA workshop implementation. Temakholo from Midlands assisted Bergville team -Team session on gender mainstreaming - UKZN- Ecological mapping and use of resource planning – Bgvl team -VSLAs review and discussion re group based rules, BLF updates - Nutrient analysis for livestock fodder options: facilitated by Brigid Letty from the INR -Small business development support planning and Livelihoods survey -MDF AGM and organisational capacity development workshop Conservation agriculture participatory research outcomes and presentation for CA forum with interns and staff - Training plan development with interns - M&E frameworks discussion with Karen Kotschy and team members -Financial team: Introduction to online Sage platform - First Aid training for 6 staff members</p>

NOTE: Temakholo Mathebula has registered for an M.Phil at University of Western Cape (Jan2024). Three interns (Sphume Mbhele, Hlengiwe Hlongwane and Nqobile Mbokazi) are in the process of completing a postgraduate certificate in Water resources management and training through Rhodes University -Amanzi for Food programme.

Below short narrative summaries are provided for some of the activities undertaken.

Written by Temakholo Mathebula and Noxolo Sibiyi

1.2.2 CCA training: learning and demonstrations

Trainings undertaken between July 2024 to October 2024 include the following:

Area	Villages	Dates	Themes	No of participants
Midlands	Ozwathini, Gobizembe, Mayizekanye, Ndlaveleni	04/07/2024 (postponed) 08/07/2024 10/07/2024 16/07/2024	Poultry training Calf rearing meeting (farmer centre finalization) Progress meeting PIA meeting	6, 13, 15 13, 16
Midlands	Ozwathini	05/07/2024 11/07/2024	VSLA meeting+ delivery of boschvelders VSLA meeting	18,13
Midlands	Ozwathini, Gobizembe, Mayizekanye	07/08/2024 12/08/2024 16/08/2024 20/08/2024 23/08/2024 28/08/2024	Meeting with youth group Meeting with youth group Seedling production Progress meeting in Mayizekanye + Boschvelder deliveries Prolinova meeting- presentations of innovations	6, 3, 5 About 15-20, 2,
Midlands	Gobizembe, Ndlaveleni	26/08/2024 04/09/2024 31/07/2024	Nursery monitoring Gobizembe boschvelder monitoring Monitoring of nursery, tower gardens, and boschvelder	5, 2 5, households, 13
Midlands	Gobizembe	08/08/2024	Cross visit to Bergville with gobizembe farmers	3
Midlands	Ozwathini	17/07/2024 02/08/2024 14/08/2024 30/08/2024 03/09/2024	Purchasing and decanting of farmer centre stock Market Day Farmer centre meeting + savings Purchasing and decanting of farmer centre stock Market day	5, 4, 10 & 18, 15, 3
Midlands	Mayizekanye	11/09/2024	Pest and disease training	20
Midlands	Ozwathini, Gobizembe Mayizekanye	06/09/2024 13/09/2024 23/09/2024 25/09/2024	Vsla meeting Prolinova committee meeting Farmer centre meeting with Bab Dlamini Seedling production training (postponed)	18, , 9, 8
EC, Matatiele	Nchodu, Ned, Rhashule	07/06/2024	Tunnel x 14 delivery	
Limpopo	Turkey	05/07/2024	VSLA share-outs, two groups	19, 19
EC, Matatiele	Nchodu	11/07/2024	VSLA training workshop	19
Limpopo	Madeira	07/08/2024	VSLA share-out	19
Limpopo	The Willows, Madeira, Turkey and Worcester, Mulalani	13/08/2024, 14/08/2024, 15/08/2024, 16/08/2024	Livestock Protein Block workshops	12, 44, 22, 12

Limpopo	Mulalani + The Willows	18/09/2024	Livestock integration and conservation agreement discussion	26
Limpopo	Madeira, +Sofaya	25/09/2024	Potato seed distribution	14
Limpopo	Madeira	07/10/2024	VSLA training workshop	18
EC, Matatiele	Nchodu	21/10/2024	Seedling production workshop and seed distribution	21

1.2.3 Cyclical implementation

The focus for this period has been introduction of multipurpose chickens (Boschvelders), establishment of a farmer centre in Ozwathini and continuation of climate resilient practices support through workshops . Other activities in this cycle include monthly savings meetings and meetings around water resource management. Below is a detailed description of activities primarily in the Midlands and also including Southern KZN, Limpopo and Eastern Cape.

Round 2 boschvelders..

Midlands Progress Narrative: Boschvelders in Ozwathini and Gobizembe

This narrative provides an update on the progress of Boschvelders in the Midlands area, specifically in the villages of Gobizembe and Ozwathini. Monitoring was conducted for both the older and newer rounds of Boschvelders across 12 households. Below is a summary of the Boschvelder orders for the Midlands in 2024.

MIDLANDS BOSCHVELDER ORDERS (DELIVERED 05 JULY 2024)					
Area	Farmer	Age	Gender	Total	Amount
Ozwathini	Thembeni Mkhize	4 weeks	mixed	10	R600.00
	Foco Zondi	4 weeks	mixed	10	R600.00
	Gogo Chamane	4 weeks	mixed	10	R600.00
	Mrs Gwamanda	4 weeks	mixed	10	R600.00
	Mrs Hlophe	22 weeks	hens	10	R1,700.00
	Mrs Dube	18 weeks	2 hens and 1 rooster	3	R420.00
	Mrs Bhengu	18 weeks	2 hens and 1 rooster	3	R420.00
	Mayizekanye	Mrs Nxusa	8 weeks	8 hens and 2 roosters	10
Mrs Thombi Shandu		18 weeks	hens	20	R3,000.00
Gobizembe	Mrs Gasa	4 weeks	mixed	10	R600.00
	Mrs Mpeli	8 weeks	hens	5	R450.00
	Mrs Mbatha	8 weeks	hens	5	R450.00
			Total	106	R10,490.00

Midlands Monitored Households (August/September)

Name of the village	Farmer's name	Recent/older round	Number of boschvelders currently available	Mortality rate	Type of feed for the chickens
Gobizembe	Elliot Zuma	Older round	39 (27 hens, 12 rosters)	7	Layer mash + yellow maize

	Thandazile Mthonsi	Recent round	4 (5 hens)	1	Layer mash
	Mam Zuma	Recent and older round	11 (7 hens 5 roosters)	12	Yellow maize, greens, layer mash
	Mam Gasas	Recent round	9 (6 hens 3 roosters)	1	Layer mash
	Mam Mahlaba	Recent round	5 (5 hens)	0	Layer mash
	Bab Zondi (youth group)	Older round	9 (4 hens, 5 roosters)	1	Layer mash + greens
	Mbuyiselo (youth group)	Older and recent round	25 (17 hens, 8 roosters)	0	Layer mash + yellow maize
	Teddy (youth group)	Older round	12 (8 hens, 4 roosters)	0	Layer mash+ greens
Ozwathini	Mam Xulu	Older round	38 (28 hens, 10 roosters)	10	Layer mash + maize
	Mam Hlophe	Recent round	10 (10 hens)	0	Layer mash
	Mam Dube	Recent round	3 (2 hens 1 rooster)	0	Layer mash
	Gogo Mkhize	Recent round	19 (13 hens, 6 roosters)	1	Layer mash.

Farmers reported that the main causes of mortality among their chickens included cold weather conditions, predation by household dogs, and some instances where the cause was unclear—healthy chicks would be found dead the next morning. To address mortality, farmers prepare aloe water for their chicks, a traditional remedy used by older generations to relieve stress. Most of the participants have managed to breed and bulk up their small flocks, which they started with either 5 or 10 birds. This is very encouraging, as being able to increase and manage own flocks has been one of the primary intentions of introducing multi-purpose chickens to the farmers.

Case Study: Martina Xulu (Matina Xulu):

Mam Xulu received her Boschvelders in 2022 when they were four weeks old. Since then, she has successfully reproduced her chickens six times—twice naturally and four times using an incubator. She noted that the incubated chicks showed greater fertility than those reproduced naturally, though load shedding posed challenges.

To incubate her eggs, Mam Xulu collaborates with a neighbouring farmer, Bab Ngcobo. They have an agreement where she provides him with 45 eggs, and he keeps 15 of the chicks produced. She does not pay him for this service.

In her first two rounds of natural reproduction, Mam Xulu produced 11 and 12 chicks, respectively. During her third round, she experimented with incubation, yielding 15 chicks from 45 eggs. However, only 8 of these chicks survived due to cold weather conditions. In the fourth round, she again incubated and received 15 chicks, with 13 surviving, again due to cold weather.





Unfortunately, during the fifth round, all chicks were lost to predation by dogs in Bab Ngcobo's household. In her most recent round, Mam Xulu received 7 chicks, all of which survived, though she remains uncertain about the cause of mortality for one chick.

Mam Xulu manages two chicken houses: one for older chickens (5 roosters and 15 hens) and another for younger chickens (5 roosters and 13 hens). She feeds her chickens a mixture of yellow maize and layer mash at a ratio of 1 kg per day, divided equally between the two houses.

The first three rounds of her chickens are currently laying eggs, which she consumes and sells to neighbours. She reported that her hens have been consistently laying eggs without issue. Mam Xulu plans to resell some chickens to her neighbours, as Boschvelders are a rare breed, while retaining enough for her household to ensure a steady supply of eggs, given their increasing market value.

SKZN Mahehle Boschvelder summary

A total of 199 Boschveld breed chickens have been delivered in the village for the year, this is made up of 78 eight-week-old hens, 119 twenty-two-week-old hens and two roosters. Poultry stock was delivered in two batches where we first received the younger ones with the slightly older ones coming later and much closer to point of lay.

The Boschveld breed is firstly an alternative to the poor supply of Lohmann brown and Hy-line brown layer breeds we have supplied in the past. This is a multipurpose breed for both meat and eggs that is also hardy with more resistance to infections and diseases. Furthermore, this breed resembles traditional chickens but with better laying capacity and tastes more like traditional chickens that people are used to. They also can survive on whatever little is offered to them but can lay big eggs when fed properly. So, in this way farmers have some relief and flexibility in providing laying mash that is bought from suppliers in town.



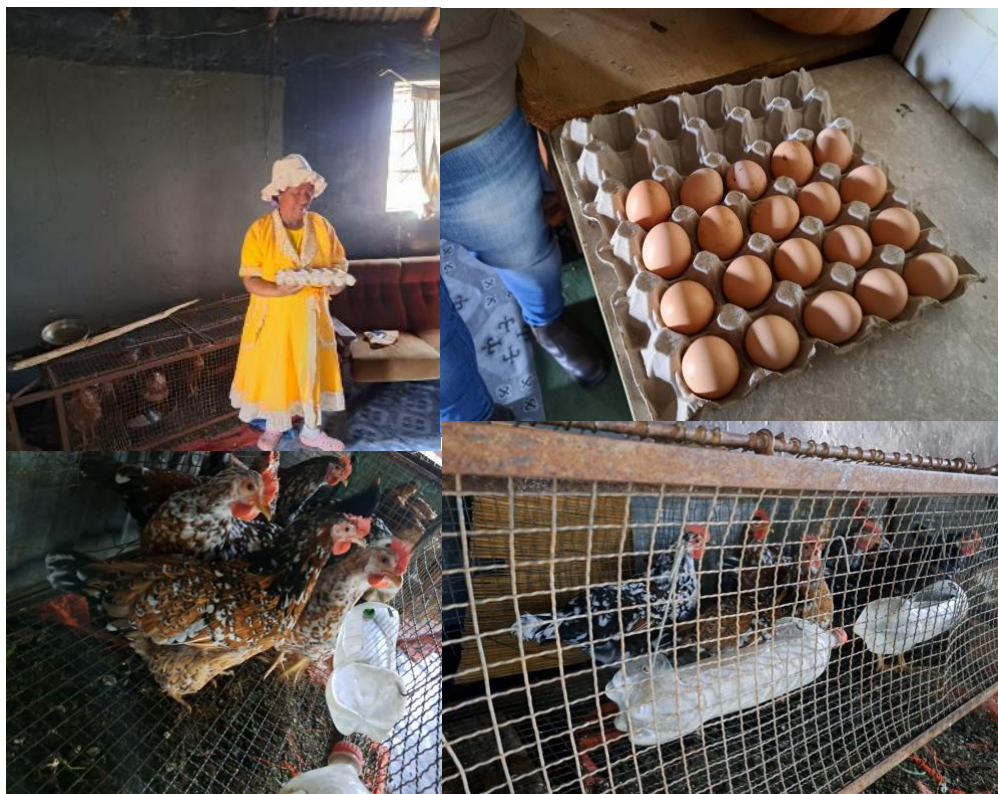


Figure: Zodwa with her eggs from her flock of birds

Table: Boschvelder delivery 2024

Name	22-week-old	MDF contribution	8-week-old	MDF contribution	Roosters
Khaliphile	5	5			
Sebenzani Mlitwa			5	5	
Philie Radebe			20	5	
Nomusa Linda	4	4			1
Millicent Zondi	5	5			
Nomali Tenza	3	3			1
Lucia Mfene	7	5			
Jabulile Chiya	4	4			
Zola Mkhize			5	5	
Zodwa Ndaba	5	5	3		
Doris Nkandi	5	5			
Antone	5				
Elizabeth Mdladla	4	4			
Lungile Gema			20		
Khulumokwakhe Dlamini	25	5			
TOTAL	72	45	53	25	2

Midlands Progress Narrative:

Youth Group Nursery

The youth group currently consists of 8 members, and its activities include growing and keeping Boschvelders, maintaining tower gardens, and managing a collective nursery. This narrative provides an update on the progress of the youth group's third planting round in the nursery.

Before planting, meetings were held to establish rules and reorganize the committee, as some members had left for various reasons, including job opportunities and returning to school. These meetings also focused on planning and preparing for the nursery planting day. This preparation involved collecting funds from group participants to purchase necessary inputs, compiling a list of required materials, and determining the types and quantities of seedlings for the nursery trays and seedling beds.

The following committee members were elected:

- Teddy: Chairperson
- Bab Zondi: Treasurer
- Sphesihle: Secretary

The group decided to plant the following seeds in their nursery:

- Spinach (4 trays)
- Onions (2 trays)
- Cabbage (2 trays)
- Beetroot (2 trays)
- Chinese cabbage (3 trays)
- Chillies (2 trays)
- Green lettuce (2 trays)
- Red lettuce (1 tray)

The nursery has three small seedling beds, and the group agreed to plant spinach, cabbages, and a mixture of beetroot, Chinese cabbage, and lettuce in the respective beds. They also decided to purchase the seedlings for the seed beds to minimize transplant shock, preferring to sell the seedlings grown in trays directly to customers.

Planting took place on August 16, 2024, and all agreed-upon seeds were planted. A roster for irrigation and maintenance was created and the members have been keeping to the roster, as the nursery is collectively managed by the group.

Monitoring of the seedling nursery occurred on August 23, 2024, revealing an 80% germination rate, with Chinese cabbage yet to germinate. A second monitoring took place on August 30, 2024, showing approximately 95% germination overall, with healthy growth rates for the seedlings. The group has the intentions of selling their seedlings to the community and is maintaining accurate records of all sales to prevent confusion and conflict.



Farmer Centre Progress report

***Date:** [23 September 2024], **Location:** [Ozwathini], **Facilitator:** [Nqe Dlamini and Noxolo Sibiyi], **Recorder:** [Tema]

Attendees: P Ngcobo, S Sikhakhane, Alice Cele, Mrs Thembi Mkhize, Siya Khuzwayo, Mrs Hlongwa, Mrs Ngubane Bab Dlamini, Bab Maphumulo

Welcome and Introduction

P Ngcobo welcomed all members and explained the background of the Farmer Centre, emphasizing its purpose to provide affordable agricultural inputs to the community.

Key Discussion Points

1. **Purpose of the Farmer Centre:** Bab Dlamini clarified that the main purpose is to sell agricultural inputs to the community at affordable prices.
2. **Current Status:** The Farmer Centre is still in the pilot phase, exploring product demand. Members are encouraged to make monthly contributions to build capital for inputs.
3. **Financial Contributions:** What will contributions be used for? Do members expect returns on contributions? The group expressed a desire to make money and emphasized the importance of transparency regarding benefits from the Farmer Centre.

4. **Operational Management:** Questions regarding the management of the Farmer Centre included: Will customers buy products, and how is this determined? Do members possess the necessary knowledge and skills? Is there sufficient funding to start and operate? Are expected profits realistic and sustainable?
5. **Membership Structure:** Current membership stands at twelve. The group agreed to keep membership at this level to avoid complications, with any new members being screened by the existing group.
6. **Defining Member Benefits:** Each member was tasked with writing out how they will benefit from the Farmer Centre. The importance of defining benefits to ensure long-term sustainability was emphasized. Examples of potential benefits: (Discounts for regular payments, priority purchasing rights, diversified product offerings to maintain operations during off-peak seasons, equal dividends based on profits, eligibility for government assistance for full-time members).
7. **Profit Distribution:** The group must agree on a specific timeframe for profit distribution and the percentage of dividends. This is still to be finalized
8. **Incentives for Services:** there was a discussion on how to fairly compensate members providing services, whether through cash or alternative incentives. Members need to meet and discuss these incentives and how they will be rolled out.
9. **Operational Plan:** Agreement needed on operating days for the Farmer Centre, which will not open every day initially.
10. **Marketing Strategies:** Emphasis on utilizing multiple marketing platforms, including social media (Facebook, WhatsApp), to reach a broader audience.
11. **Location and Logistics:** The Farmer Centre will serve four villages/households. Discussion on transportation of goods, emphasizing the need for upfront payment for transport services.

Homework Assignment: Members are encouraged to consider long-term goals for the Farmer Centre, keep regular records, and ask questions to foster clarity and understanding.

Questions from Farmers: Farmers expressed interest in diversifying their offerings. They were advised to focus on one product initially to ensure quality and stability before expanding.

Conclusion

The meeting highlighted the importance of clear communication, planning, and member engagement as foundational to the success of the Farmer Centre. Members are encouraged to reflect on their roles and contributions moving forward.

PEST AND DISEASE WORKSHOP-MAYIZEKANYE

****Date:** September 11, 2024, **Location:** The Dutch Church **Facilitator:** Sphumelelo Mbhele, MDF



Pests and diseases pose significant challenges to farmers, causing extensive damage to crops. While chemical solutions such as fungicides, insecticides, and bactericides provide quick relief, they are costly and can harm both human health and the environment. Mayizekanye farmers, facing persistent pest issues, requested a workshop with MDF to explore sustainable pest and disease management strategies. The objectives of the workshop were to identify common pests and diseases affecting local gardens, explore environmentally friendly methods of prevention and control and share knowledge about beneficial plants and animals in

the garden.

Pest and Disease Control Discussion: The workshop's discussion opened with an interactive session where farmers shared their experiences regarding pest and disease management in their gardens. The following key points emerged:

Farmers reported encountering a variety of pests, including:

- **Aphids:** Small insects that suck the sap from plants, causing wilting.
- **Cutworms:** Larvae that cut through the stems of young plants.
- **Beetles:** Known for damaging foliage and fruit.
- **Moles:** Burrowing animals that disrupt root systems.
- **Snails:** Gastropods that create holes in leaves.
- **Moths:** Particularly harmful to grains and leafy greens.
- **Stalk Borers:** Larvae that tunnel into plant stems, weakening them.

Current Practices

To manage these pests, farmers have implemented several control measures:

- **Chemical Solutions:** The use of a powdered chemical known as "blue death" was highlighted. While effective temporarily, pests often return after a few irrigation cycles, indicating a need for more sustainable options.
- **Wood Ash:** Sprinkling wood ash is utilized to deter moths and moles.
- **Zamlandela (Moth Balls):** These chemical pest repellents provide some level of control over moths and are reported to irritate moles due to their strong scent.

Disease Symptoms Noted

Farmers expressed concerns about various crop diseases, which manifested in the following ways:

- **Holes in Leaves:** Indicating pest damage.
- **Rotting Cabbages and Beans:** Suggestive of fungal infections or pest infestations.
- **Black Spots on Spinach:** Likely a sign of disease, possibly fungal or bacterial.
- **Wilting Leaves:** Often associated with pest damage or environmental stress.

Challenges Identified

Despite their efforts, farmers noted challenges in effectively controlling diseases. Many expressed uncertainty about identifying specific diseases and how to treat them. This points to a knowledge gap in recognizing symptoms and understanding organic or integrated pest management strategies.

Recommendations

To address these issues, the following strategies were recommended during the workshop:

1. **Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** Promote the use of IPM practices that combine biological, cultural, and mechanical solutions alongside minimal chemical use.
2. **Crop Rotation:** farmers were encouraged to rotate crops to disrupt pest life cycles and improve soil health.
3. **Companion Planting:** it was suggested that planting certain crops together may deter pests naturally and examples were given.
4. **Regular Monitoring:** Develop a routine for monitoring gardens to identify pest and disease issues early.

SEEDLING PRODUCTION TRAINING-MATATIELE

Seedling production and seed distribution in Matatiele, Nchodu Village. Twenty-one (21) participants were present for the workshop on the 21st of October 2024 with the aim to improve their learning on seedling production. The workshop looked at tips for seedling production: good, fresh seed, fertile, soft soil, shade and clean water. Next was seedling production in trays and on seed beds looking at steps on preparing tray growing medium and preparing a seedbed. The farmers got to understand that seeds are planted differently. Some seeds need to be directly planted, while others need to be made into seedlings for transplanting and other seeds can either be directly sown or planted into seedlings. The participants got to understand how to care for seedlings in the seedbed, how to transplant them and how to prepare the planting holes. After the seedling production discussion, the farmers received seeds to plant into seedlings on their seedbeds and compost basins. Seeds received include, swiss chard, kale, cabbage, coriander and beetroot.



Second round of tunnels

There were no new tunnel installations in the Natal Midlands in 2024. The last round of tunnels was completed in 2023 where 8 tunnels were installed in Mayizekanye.

Village Savings and Loans Association

Midlands VSLA Group Progress

The Syakhula group has officially entered their fourth year of savings after a successful shareout meeting in the first week of October. The group accumulated a total of R 156 727.40 in shares and interest paid in the 2023/24 savings cycle and celebrated a record increase in sharevalue from 23% in the previous cycles to 27.3 % in this cycle. When calculating individual dividends, the new share was rounded off to R 120 for ease of counting. The highest amount made by an individual member was R 15 240 and the lowest amount was R 2159.00. A total of R 390.40 remained in the box. The meeting proceedings ran smoothly and all members were satisfied with their dividends. Below is a table outlining the individual shareout values.

BOOK NUMBER	NUMBER OF SHARES	NEW SHARE VALUE	TOTAL DUE
1	120	R127.00	R15,240.00
2	120	R127.00	R15,240.00
3	97	R127.00	R12,319.00
4	39	R127.00	R4,953.00
5	34	R127.00	R4,318.00
6	28	R127.00	R3,556.00
7	53	R127.00	R6,731.00
8	98	R127.00	R12,446.00
9	120	R127.00	R15,240.00
10	49	R127.00	R6,223.00
11	89	R127.00	R11,303.00
12	22	R127.00	R2,794.00
13	74	R127.00	R9,398.00
14	20	R127.00	R2,540.00
15	18	R127.00	R2,286.00
16	17	R127.00	R2,159.00
17	113	R127.00	R14,351.00
18	120	R127.00	R15,240.00

Syakhula Savings Meeting-October 2024

The first meeting of the fourth savings cycle convened on the 16th of October 2024. The chairperson opened the discussion by welcoming all members and thereafter the committee was dissolved. Tema led a discussion on the selection of a new committee and the revision of the group constitution. The group unanimously agreed that the outgoing committee served them well and requested that they retain their positions, leading to their reinstatement. Thus, there were no changes in terms of group structure and committee. A total of R 13 100 was saved and loans taken amounted to R 12 400 leaving a balance of R 1090.40 in the box. There were discussions around opening a stokvel account where it was agreed that the group would make a decision once the bank representative has visited them. As it stands, the money box remains in possession of the box keeper in the group.



Siyakhanya Savings Group

The group convened on the 10th of October for their monthly savings where a total of R 6600.00 was bought in shares and a total of R 8 415.00 was paid out in loans. The 13 member group has been progressing well with no reported conflicts, meeting punctuality and very good member attendance. The closing balance now stands at R 27 218.50.



Southern KZN VSLA Group Progress (Groups that have opened Bank Accounts)

Siyakhula and Qedindlala Savings Groups

In Southern KZN, both the Siyakhula and Qedindlala groups demonstrated commendable progress in their savings initiatives. The emphasis on individual responsibility for record-keeping has fostered a sense of accountability among members, ensuring that everyone plays an active role in their financial management. As these groups continue to collaborate and learn, they are building a stronger foundation for financial literacy and empowerment within their community.

The Qedindlala group has successfully opened a stokvel account with FNB. In September, the members successfully saved R10,700 and received R32,002.50 in loan repayments, resulting in a total of R42,702.50 generated by the group. They then approved loans totalling R39,500, leaving a balance of R3,206.50 at the conclusion of the meeting. The group requested that the field staff deposit R3,200 into their stokvel account on the way back, retaining R6.50 in the box.



Adding members on the FNB App

The Qedindlala group has been thriving with their FNB stokvel account, bringing peace of mind to the box keeper since the account's inception. The establishment of the account has streamlined their savings process and fostered greater transparency.

Plan for Adding VSLA Members

Following the recent meeting, field staff planned to integrate VSLA members into the FNB app to ensure they receive timely bank notifications regarding the stokvel account. This step will enhance communication and keep all members informed about their savings and transactions.

To add members on the app you must go onto the stokvel account which the 3 trustees should have access too, then press manage members, where you'll have to enter the persons name, surname and cell phone number. The member being added needs a good reception and airtime to follow through the process. The member will receive an SMS of an invitation from which they'll have to dial *120*321# then select option 4 'stokvel' then follow prompts that will need the members ID number and bank information to which their share-out will be paid into. Once accepted the newly added members appear immediately on the app as a member and will receive SMS notifications when deposits are done.

Adding members must be done manually and it takes a bit of time as some members need assistance with the process. Due to time constraints, few members were added to the account and the plan was for the group to meet again for their savings meeting on the 7th of October 2024 and should bring their ID copies so that field staff can help add them to the stokvel account.



Umnothowethu Savings Group

Umnothowethu VLSA group is currently in its second cycle, having successfully conducted one share-out that divided the group into two. However, despite this experience, the group has faced significant challenges with record-keeping. The mistakes included inaccurate record keeping, discrepancies in balances, mismanagement of interest payments, absenteeism of committee members and incorrect loan calculations. Despite these record

keeping issues, the group has made great strides in understanding their financial operations through the assistance of MDF field staff. Given the complexity of the financial management involved, it's essential for the Umnothowethu VLSA group to have ongoing support and oversight to ensure:

- Continued accuracy in financial records.
- Proper tracking of shares and loan repayments.
- Regular reviews of interest calculations to prevent further discrepancies.

Umnothowethu VLSA group is on a path toward improvement, yet it remains crucial to closely monitor their activities to prevent any future mistakes that could affect both shareholding and the interest charged on loans. By reinforcing good financial practices and encouraging diligence in record-keeping, the group can enhance its overall financial health and sustainability.

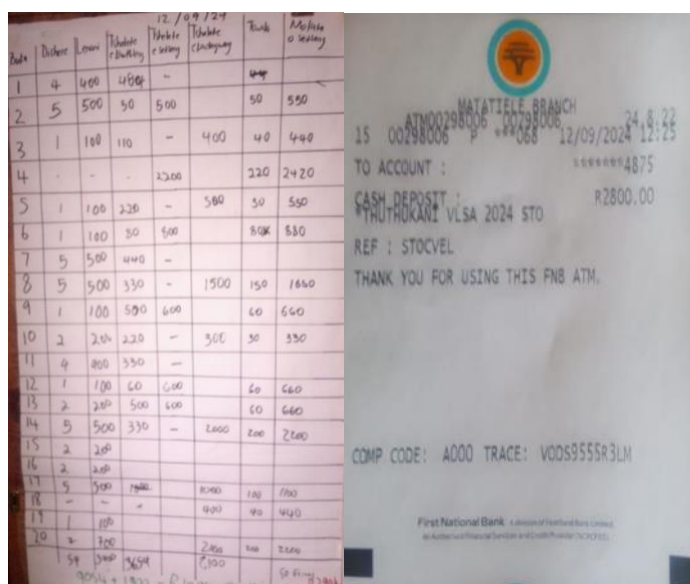
Centocow VLSA's

There are two group existing in Centocow which are Sizaneno and Senzakahle who are doing very well in terms of handling the VLSA administration in recording, counting interests and making transaction sheet are balanced. Both groups have 13 participants each, with Sizaneno being the oldest group of the two where Simon Dlamini is Chairperson and Senzakahle taking inspiration from Sizaneno. Majority of Senzakahle VLSA members are youth made up of young makoties below the age of 35 years and one male youth at the age of 27 years. The group is well organised and accurate in recording, calculations and handled the rest of the savings terms and conditions.

Thuthukani VLSA, Nchodu, Matatiele

The group is now in its third month of the cycle and the group couldn't be more than happy to be saving monies together for the betterment of their lives. In efforts to reduce risk of keeping large amount of cash in the cashbox with Nthuseng Makhonya; box keeper; who stays alone at her home; the group quickly jumped on the idea of a stokvel account.

On the 11th of September 2024, the three elected signatories; Phumla Nyembezi, Mme Mankasela and Nthuseng Makhonya; were at the Matatiele FNB branch early morning to open the group's account. Along with their ID's, proof of residence and personal NFB accounts, they spent a big part of the day at the branch. The account is named Thuthukani VLSA 2024 STOKVEL with Phumla having access to the FNB app on her smartphone. However, all three signatories are receiving SMS notification of all account related information. The rest of the members will be added manually through the app for notifications.



Savings summary

A total of 54 shares amounting to R5400 were bought, 13 members made R3654 paid back in loan repayments making a total of R9054 on the day, the grand total for the day was R11 004, including the R1900 balance in the box and R50 in fines. New loans issued on the day amounted to R8100 split among 8 members with R2000 and

R400 being the largest and smallest respectively, leaving R2904 in the box. This was deposited into the newly opened account with the slip to be put in the box in the next meeting scheduled for the 10th of October 2024 at a10:00.

Conclusion

An amount of R100 was deposited on the day of opening the account, from the R2900 left after the meeting, R2800 was deposited with the R100 to make it R2900 reimbursed to the member, the total bank balance in the account tallies up to R2900 as per records. The cashbox has R4 in coins as it couldn't be deposited.

VSLA summaries for all groups (EC, KZN and LIMPOPO)

Written by Noxolo Sibiyi

Monthly summaries for each VSLA is undertaken by the secretaries in the VSLA groups and confirmed and recorded by MDF field Staff. Noxolo Sibiyi, one of our interns undertakes the process of collecting and summarizing all this information. The savings records as of end July 2024 are shown in the figure below. The secretaries in the VSLA groups undertake monthly summaries for each VSLA, which are confirmed and recorded by MDF field Staff. Noxolo Sibiyi, one of our interns, collects and summarizes all this information. The savings records for October 2024 are shown in the table below.



VSLA summaries for all groups (EC, KZN and LIMPOPO) *Written by Noxolo Sibiya*

No.	Region	AREA	GROUP NAME	NO. OF PEOPLE	START Date	Last mth of records	# SHARES BOUGHT TODAY	VALUE OF SHARES (TODAY)	VALUE OF TOTAL SHARES	LOAN REPAID TODAY	NEW LOAN TAKEN	MONEY IN BOX	NEW BALANCE
1	Midlands	ozwathini	sikhulile	19	Oct-22	Oct-24	0	R0.00	R1,231.00	R5,086.00	R0.00	R156,727.00	R156,727.00
	Midlands	ozwathini	sikhulile	18	Oct-22	Oct-24	131	R13,100.00	R13,100.00	R0.00	R12,400.00	R1,090.40	R1,090.40
2	Midlands	ozwathini	siyakhaya	13	Apr-22	Oct-24	66	R6,600.00	R6,100.00	R8,415.00	R3,000.00	R27,218.50	R65,309.00
3	SKZN	ngongonini	mnothowethu	30	23-Feb	Oct-24	77	R7,700.00	R77,300.00	R11,540.00	R6,500.00	R82,340.00	R82,340.00
4	SKZN	Mahhehle	Qedindlala	26	Feb-23	Oct-24	96	R9,600.00	R68,300.00	R9,830.00	R8,000.00	R70,130.00	R70,130.00
5	SKZN	centocow	sizakahle	13	May-23	Oct-24	34	R6,800.00	R11,400.00	R7,842.00	R5,000.00	R14,242.00	R14,242.00
6	SKZN	centocow	sizaneno	13	May-23	Oct-24	27	R5,400.00	R11,100.00	R6,530.00	R3,500.00	R14,130.00	R14,130.00
7	Limpopo	Santeng	Rekakgona	13	Jan-23	Oct-24	48	R4,800.00	R13,000.00	R3,300.00	R2,500.00	R13,800.00	-
8	Limpopo	sedawa village	Kopano Ke matla	19	Jan-23	Oct-24	47	R4,700.00	R13,400.00	R6,700.00	R3,000.00	R17,100.00	-
9	Limpopo	Maderia village	Thusang	9	Jan-23	Oct-24	101	R10,100.00	R91,000.00	R23,310.00	R10,700.00	R96,508.00	R94,670.00
10	Limpopo	Maderia village	Hlalefang	18	22-Sep	24-Oct	151	R15,100.00	R33,300.00	R10,610.00	R22,200.00	R3,610.00	R35,890.00
11	Limpopo	worcester	Rutanang	19	Mar-23	Oct-24	33	R3,300.00	R71,700.00	R24,140.00	R17,700.00	R13,791.00	R68,055.00
12	Limpopo	the willows	Epopeng	19	Jul-20	Oct-24	48	R4,800.00	R69,200.00	R46,981.00	R42,100.00	R10,000.00	R77,997.00
13	Limpopo	Turkey village	Tswelapelo	19	Jul-20								-
14	Limpopo		kholofelo		Apr-24	Oct-24	25	R2,500.00	R22,900.00	R11,907.00	R14,430.00	R0.00	R39,506.00
15	Limpopo	Turkey village	refetse		Jul-24	Oct-24	110	R11,000.00	R42,000.00	R10,850.00	R14,000.00	R8,326.00	R36,096.00
16	Limpopo	Maderia village	hlakanang		24-Oct	Oct-24	51	R5,100.00	R5,100.00	R0.00	R3,200.00	R1,910.00	R5,100.00
	Eastern Cape	Nchodu Village	Thuthukani	13	24-Jul	Oct-24	54	R5,400.00		R3,654.00	R8,100.00	R2,904.00	R2,904.00
17	TOTAL			248			1099	R116,000.00	R550,131.00	R190,695.00	R176,330.00	R533,826.90	R764,186.40

Summary of savings for all MDF VSLA groups in Limpopo, Midlands and SKZN

A total of 248 participants across 16 VSLAs show an overall saving at the moment of just over R760 000 for the month of October, averaging a saving component of ~R3 081.00 per participant.

A total of 553 participants across 31 VSLAs (if the 15 VSLA groups from Bergville in KZN are also included) show an overall saving at the moment of just over R2million, averaging a saving component of ~R3 700 per participant.

Community based water management

GOBIZEMBE WATER ACCESS MEETING

The discussion focused on the current water access challenges faced by farmers in the community and explored potential solutions. Current water collection practices include rainwater Harvesting, farmers reported collecting rainwater in jojo tanks and drums. There has been consistent water supply from the municipality for the past three months. In times when taps run dry, farmers rely on local springs for water. Mr. Magubane mentioned a protected spring near his house that supplies water to the community. Mrs. Mahlaba identified another spring that is heavily polluted, raising health concerns. Mrs. Duma has a clean spring near her house which requires a tank for proper water storage. There is one borehole at Gobizembe Primary School. Farmers also receive water from water trucks, especially when alternative sources are unavailable. Mrs. Ngobese expressed difficulty in collecting water due to age and requested a jojo tank installation. The quality of water from some springs is questionable, impacting community health. There are reports of water pipes being cut and redirected to unauthorized locations. Some farmers are wary that involving the municipality might slow down progress or introduce less effective solutions.

In terms of proposed solutions, emphasis was placed on the importance of community involvement in identifying and implementing solutions. The need for a collaborative effort with the municipality and relevant stakeholders was highlighted. Conducting field visits to map water sources and assess their conditions is essential. A detailed plan should be drafted outlining interventions, resources required, and community contributions. Addressing the issue of alien invasive species is necessary to improve water availability. Rehabilitation of dongas is crucial to prevent erosion and protect water sources.

Way Forward :

1. Engagement with Authorities: MDF team to discuss water access programs with the municipality and Umgeni Water.
2. Follow-Up Meeting: Schedule a follow-up meeting to further discuss water sources and conduct mapping activities.
3. Strategy Development: Facilitate discussions on findings from the field visits and brainstorm additional strategies for improving water access.
- 4.

Conclusion

The discussion served as the foundation for ongoing conversations about water access in the community. The commitment of the group to invest in proposed solutions will be critical for the success of future initiatives. Collaboration with local authorities and stakeholders will also play a significant role in addressing the complex issues surrounding water availability.

Grazing management, Livestock intergration

Grazing management, Livestock Integration

On the week of the 13th of August 2024 to the 16th of August 2024, four villages in Limpopo attended a protein block workshop. The Willows, Madeira, Turkey and Worcester, and Mulalani. The workshops started with the practical demonstration of how to construct the protein block, sharing all the materials needed to be mixed and the quantity of each material. After constructing of the protein block field staff shared more information on the material used, and their function and benefit.



Protein blocks are useful when dry, when standing feed is abundant and low in protein/ there is little feed available for livestock like in Limpopo during winter season. They are supplements made for cattle/goats and sheep's who are on forage diets. Protein blocks can only maintain liveweight or control liveweight loss in breeders. MDF facilitated a practical demonstration of how farmers can make their own protein blocks as a group/individually during wintertime when there's no grass for livestock, farmers can supplement with protein block to maintain livestock weight. Protein block supplements veld grazing with natural and NPN-proteins, carbohydrates and minerals. It helps stimulates intake and veld utilisation by providing the correct balance of nutrients to the rumen microbes.

Constructing the protein block started with mixing the dry materials 16 x 2kg of Procon 33, 2 x 2kg of coarse salt, 7 x 2kg of maize meal, 4 x 2kg of whitewash. After thoroughly mixing the dry material, molasses was added as the wet ingredient to join the block together. The mixture was first mixed using a spade and then by hands before being shaped

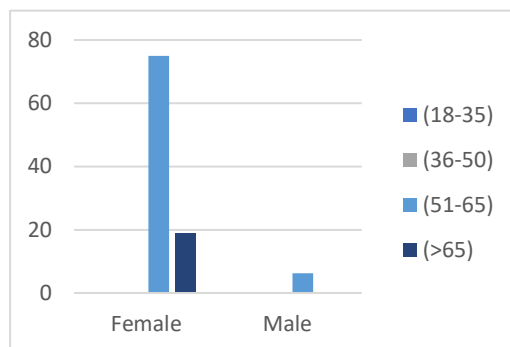


1.2.4 Indicator development, Monitoring and evaluation.

An important component of MDF work is cyclical monitoring and evaluation which helps the organisation to track the progress of set objectives for that particular project cycle. A total of 20 resilient snapshots were conducted in the Midlands in 2024. The snapshots form part of the yearly monitoring of implemented activities and also review changes over time. The interviews focused on group demographics, practices implemented, group collaborations and networks, mindsets towards climate change and income streams amongst others. This section will give a brief summary of the findings from the interviews.

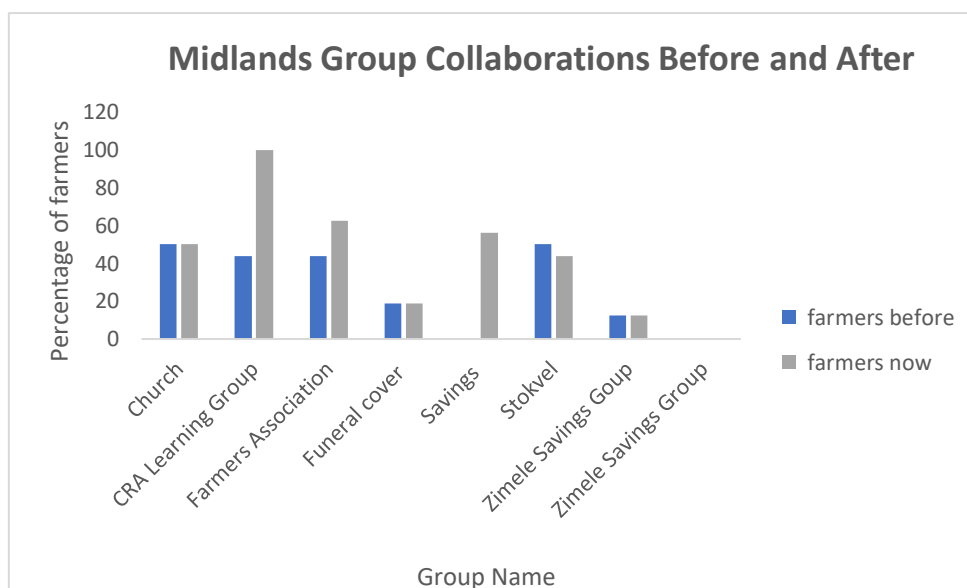
Group Demographics

The community groups established and affiliated with MDF are comprised of primarily of elderly women (51-65 and above) who survive on government grants, farming and remittances. There is a small percentage of men between the same age group who survive mainly on farming and government pensions. The organisation had also targeted the “missing middle”, these are individuals between the ages of 35 and who are unemployed but also do not qualify for government grants. Unfortunately, this group is largely absent. The graph below give a depiction of the households that were interviewed, which represent the overall group structure.



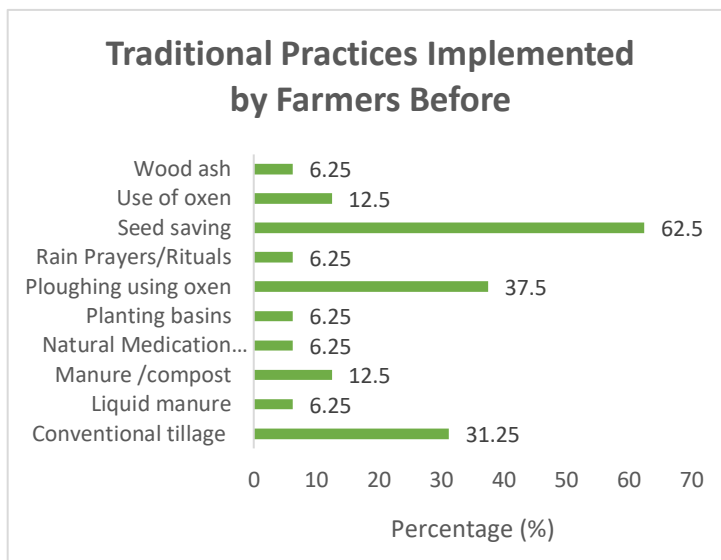
Community Networks

Collaboration is an integral part of communities as it enables the pooling of resources and facilitates knowledge dissemination and also promotes solidarity. Community groups such as churches, farming groups, funeral schemes and stokvels have been the backbone of communities for a long time. Through the facilitation of MDF, new CRA learning groups have been established which began with an official membership of around 43% of the farmers who attended workshops and meetings and has since grown to 100%, meaning that secondary participants have merged into the learning groups over time.



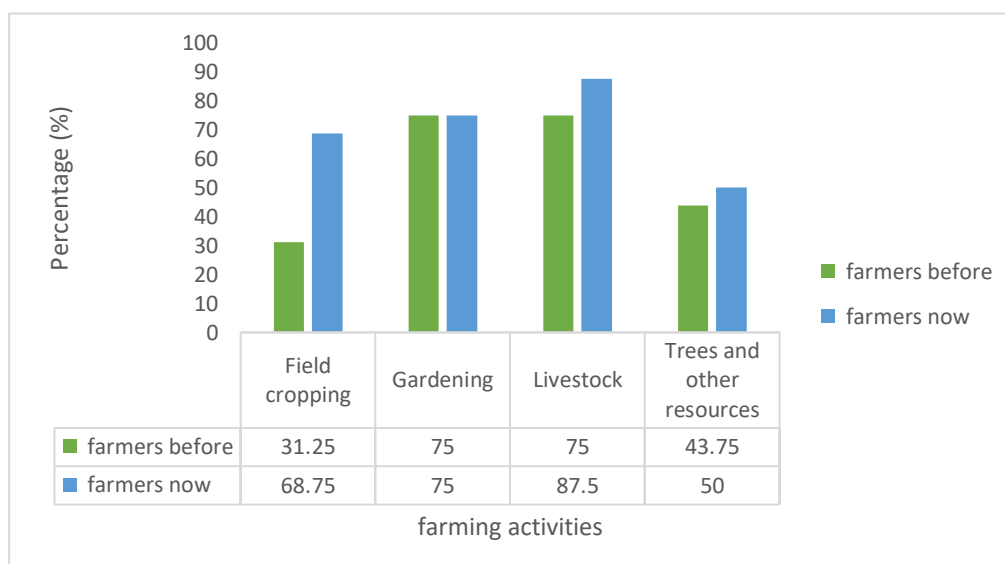
Traditional Practices

In terms of farming, the importance of indigenous knowledge cannot be emphasised enough. Although farming has been steadily declining due to climate change, farmers shared tradition practices they implemented which helped them cope in the past. The use of wood ash, manure, seed saving and planting basins have survived the test of time as many farmers still practice these albeit in varying degrees. Ocen drawn ploughing used to be an important part of traditional farming but has since dwindled significantly. Conventional tillage is another traditional practice which continues to be part of the smallholder farming system despite a steady decline in yields. The graph alongsideshows the farmer responses with regard to traditional practices commonly used before they were introduced to climate resilient agriculture.



Change in Farming Activities

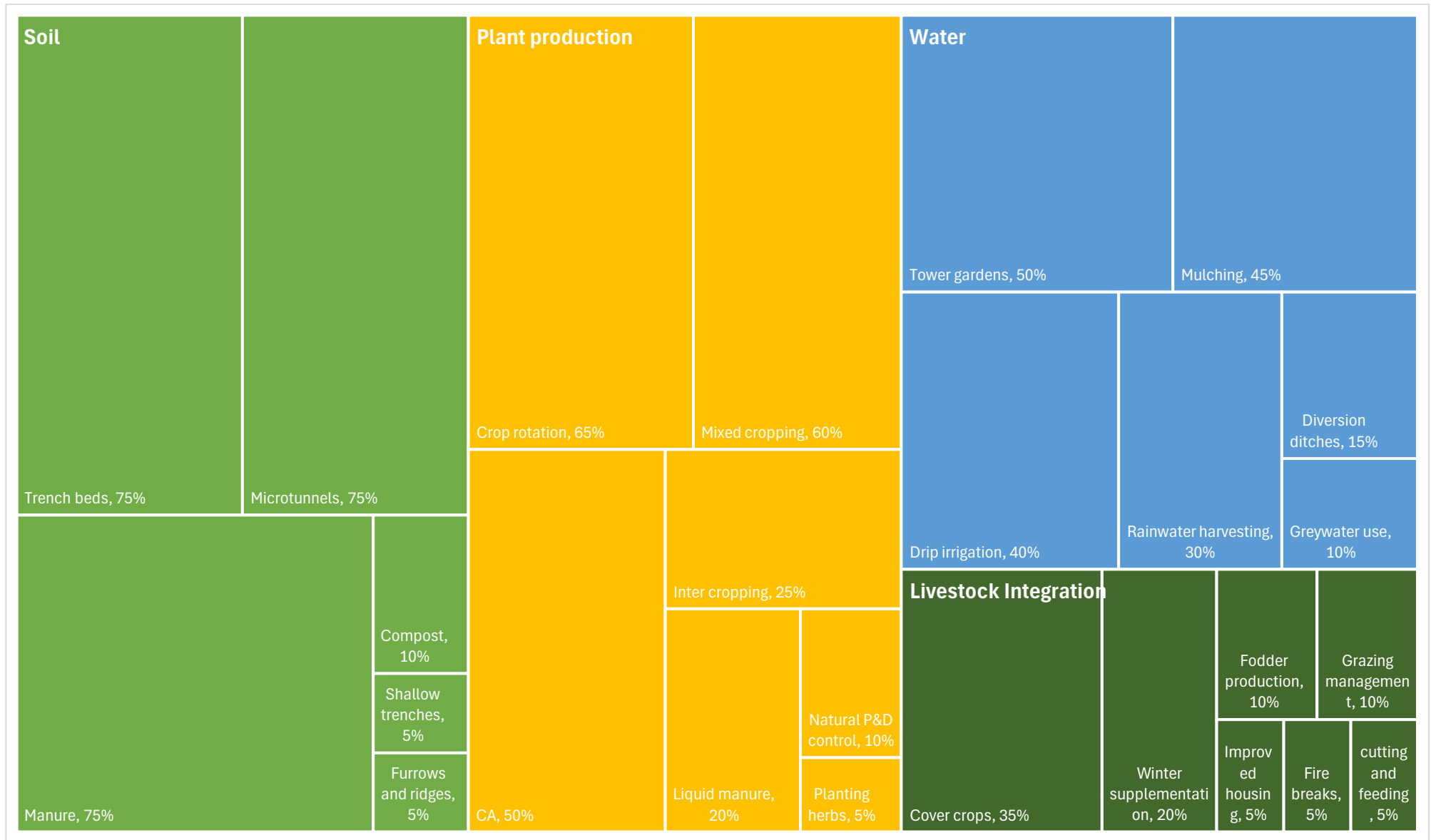
Farmers were asked about their farming activities before and after they were introduced to climate resilient agriculture. These activities were grouped into four main categories, namely field cropping, gardening, livestock and trees and other resources. There has been an increase in the percentage of farmers who practice field cropping, livestock and have planted fruit trees. However, the percentage of farmers involved in gardening has remained constant. The reason for this is that field crops in the Midlands are an important source of income and include a variety of crops such as beans, maize, amadumbe, sweet potatoes, and potatoes which save for maize, have a steady market. Although the number of farmers practicing field cropping in general has increased over the years, maize production has been on a steady decline due to unstable markets and the knockoff effects of COVID-19. Gardening is primarily for consumption smoothing, although farmers do sell to neighbours and at their monthly market stall (in Ozwathini). Livestock has increased primarily because of poultry, which includes layers, broilers and multipurpose chicken breeds which have become quite popular amongst farmers due to their quick turnover and they also provide a source of protein for the household.





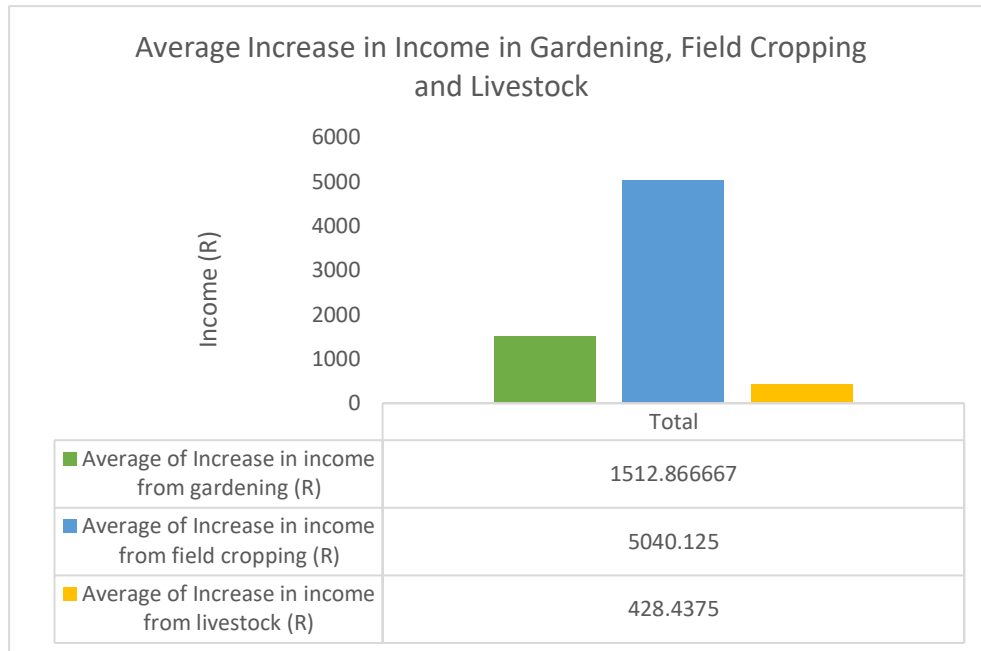
New CRA Practices Adopted by Farmers

Good agricultural practices that promote climate resilience remain at the heart of the work done by MDF in communities. As such, through weekly field visits and observations as well as discussions during interviews the team was able to determine which new practices were adopted by farmers. In terms of promoting soil health, the most prevalent practices were trenchbeds, micro tunnels and the use of manure. When it comes to plant production, mixed cropping, crop rotation and conservation agriculture were the most commonly applied practices. Water conservation practices most widely implemented included mulching, tower gardens, drip irrigation and diversion ditches. Livestock integration practices mainly included the planting of cover crops. Fodder production and winter supplementation.



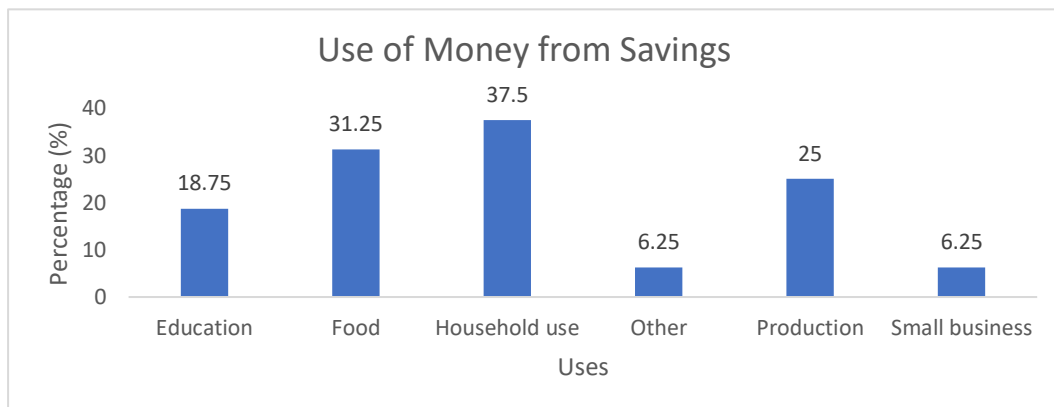
Income Generation

The resilient snapshots also helped to shed light on how the various farming activities translate into income. In terms of average income, gardening had an average increase in income of R 1512/annum, field cropping came to R 5040 and livestock had an average increase of R428/annum.



Use of Money from Savings

Savings group play a multifunctional role in the lives of farmers. Although they were established as a way to support farming activities they have come to serve other purposes such as education, food, household used and business activities.



The above graphs indicate significant increases in livelihood security for the smallholder farmers participating in the CRA implementation processes.