

- 1> In abandoned plots, with aliens or not, but no longer fertile (either inundated or not plant some useful indigenous plants
- 2> Or in areas where invaded with gum – can clear that – around homesteads – wants to remove and plant again... chopped down or clear stumps...
- 3> Training in propagation of indigenous multipurpose plants – Yes youth and interested parties, ,, -propagation starter pack... can buy them back....

## Ecosystem restoration along the flood plains \_Sokhulu

### 20 Aug2024

Attendance: Erna, Mazwi, Nqobile, Vusi and Thembekile (MDF & Wildtrust)

Community members from Amalala, Amanzamyama, Hloinyoka and Thongana ` 20 people (14 women ,6 men), including induna (Ehlanzeni Alpheus Masuku and Dumisana Mhlongo - Ehlawini

#### Introductions

Purpose: Introduction of team and purpose – talking about agriculture in general and then discuss options of planting with the environment.. sharing information... Colleagues sharing different information, including climate change...

We understand that you have been farming for a long time, we are here to discuss things that are chaining including climate change, to understand the problems we are facing, and discuss together potential options for improvement.

Please state which villages you are from:

Amanzanyama, Thongonya, Amalala (top and bottom) Holinyoka, Ehlaweni

Ehlanzeni: fields are waterlogged in this area, if not we would have more bananas, Now planting in smaller plots more uphill... There are determined farmers, productivity has declined, Planting sweet potatoes, but they'll just rot... There are lands that prepared now, just waiting for rain, but when it comes it causes waterlogging...this didn't happen in the past – Requesting that you will come see where we are planting to see these problems. Some farmers here have been making a good living from farming... (On example is a man who has farming for many years ,married, bought cattle, tractors, etc – but now a problem with RBM who closed the mouth and now that water is contaminating the fields. Used to seel as far as Durban sweet potatoes and amadumbe. Now farming is no longer able to farm and looking for work.. - we want to farm for food and income – want a solution to take water out from the fields.

Mazwi: Why is the production declining?

- Chemicals in the water from RBM is a problem, is affecting our productivity– we do have some waterlogging Emhlangeni , but this is another problem. Chemicals are dangerous even to us as humans...

- Extent of contamination? –people think it is all the fields.

- Where are the fields? All villages have fields – there are waterlogging issues in all the fields.

We are asking just to understand – Those lands are inheritance from great-great grandfathers and are passed on the families...

Mazwi: Also asking omama if they have land that they have that is theirs – women said yes, Can young and new people have access in the flood plains... In the past if someone came to live, they would go through the chief and he would be provided with a field. There is no longer land to give now, but people can talk to friends and relatives to give parts of their allocations. Usually, water will flow out and in and because it is closed, the chemicals have built up and is messing up the land...

Erna: How many people in each village farming? Everyone in this room....

Mazwi; Other issues, we understand now about RBM and then introduced the points of soil and climate change...and we also need to look at our practices and whether there are things we can do better to counteract the impact of CC and infertile soils. We understand how important those fields are to you?

*Can we have a few people, names and numbers to go and see their fields tomorrow? Just a few... Indunas will be having a meeting so won't be available, but you can continue with the field visit... Agreed to start at the opt end of the fields and then move along to the field representing the other viallges (Hloingyoka, Amanzanyama) and if there is time also to Amalala,*

*Community member: Would rather have a rep from each community to go to the visit, instead of others talking about plots belonging to different people... You should come to each area –*

*Some women are farming, but not in Emhlangeni – we farm bananas for example and we have trouble that crops that used to work is no longer growing – the area is waterlogged – can no longer farm in it...also an issue of distance*

*Woman 2 Coming from a place that is far, had to commute to this workshop. Were given a plot, (Holinyoka), garden in the village- being destroyed by cattle as fencing is no longer good – need help with that –*

*One man said you should get the water out and then you can do your research...*

Mazwi: Need details for the representtives for each viallge.:

There are fields are closer to Ehlanzeni and Ehlawini– we can just give them a time and meet people in the fields. – there is a lot to talk about. But you guys are scarce – you come and then you go away again..

There are also other fields

Some of the other villages are far from the plains....

*Erna: Suggested that we can also have meetings in each of the villages with farmers. And can differentiate betweenEmh and the farming/gardening happening at households or in communal gardens.*

- Lots of people who are farmers here, almost each and every household.
- There are many farmers who are not here and now we may have a dispute or conflict as they will ask why they were not invited.

Erna\_ input onclosure of mouth, issues in the landscape and working wih that.

Man: we have a lot of land please visit, want this place to go back to its earlier glory and water problems sorted out... the closing of the mouth really impacted negatively, compensate them... Who should compensate them? Those people who make plans – if you have access let them know that there is a lot of damage. Maybe they can come and help them here...

Farmer 2: we have a request can you please help us release water or open up the mouth to clear water from the fields, it been very long please help us with that.

Induna : I know that some of you came here late, but Mahlathini have specified that they will be only addressing agricultural activities in the fields which are in the flood plains, they would help with the mouth situation.

Erna: is there an issues of climate change have you noticed in the community.

Induna : Times have changed, back in the days summer used to be summer and winter would be winter but now we really don't understand what is actually happening, rains are scarce and temperatures are high and dominating the land.

Farmer 2 ( Women) : we no longer harvest, we now have frost which destroyed most of the produced, and we never had frost in this village or community.

Farmer 3 (Male) : we don't notice much in terms of climate change(temperature is not that high) and I think its because we are closer to the ocean.

Erna: Do you have water access? How do you get water?

Farmer 3 (Male): We have a lot of water in this community, natural water which we do not need and water which drink, we just need help with water in the field.

Erna: We understand the issue with

Farmer 5: We have issue with water access, we are tired with water from the water truck which are delivered to us to consume, we need boreholes please help us with boreholes

Erna : Do you have boreholes?

The house : Yes we do have

Erna: What have you noticed in the water level on that borehole

Farmer 6 (Male) : We don't have problem with water for consumption or household use but we need water for irrigation, please do not be confused. If you could help us with water for irrigation.

Farmer 7(Male) : Back in the days when were we still kids, we used to receive rain every weekends but that no longer happening, we also had a river which we used to drink but now it has turned green (Algae) so we no longer drink from it.

Farmer 8 (Woman) : Please let us stop talking or asking a lot of questions, let allow these visitors to talk about what they said they are here for and stop complicating things, they said they would like to go and visit the field sites let us allow them to do so.

Induna : Can we cut the meeting short and go to the villages or the fields

Farmer 9 (Male) : Is it possible for you(us) to entire field for all the villages, we should give them time to do that, as we would appreciate if they were to see everything in the field.

Erna: We appreciate the suggestion, we are not forcing anyone to do anything, but the farmers are to volunteer, if you feel like closing this meeting, we can do that, but also if there are farmers who are willing to stay and continue with the discussion can stay and we continue.

Erna and Mazwi: Briefly talking on a presentation on research conducted by SEON showing results or Data collected on climate change (Impacts which are showing up specifically on this area).

Mazwi: Alien Clearing might be seen as lot of work which it is, but those trees have a great impact on our lives in terms of our agricultural activities and our livelihoods we really need to pay attention more on alien invasive species and how to deal with them.

Erna: Some of the clearing will be happening through the YES youth group, we are aware that they have already started in some parts of the area.

Induna: thank you for coming to hear us and our issues. We have given you names of the representative. Please may I please ask if we will still go and visit the plots today?

Mazwi: yes the plots will be visited after this session.