

Civil Society Organisations Skills Enhancement and Excellence Development (CSO SEED) project

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING EVENT

Report on the Local Stakeholder Field Visit in eMangwaneni



Prepared by: Athabile Dlamini and Mfundo Myende



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To create local awareness about the work that the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) is doing in the upper uMkhomazi Catchment to increase the resilience of local communities, the funds from the CSO SEED project were used to take various stakeholders to visit activities in two project sites, eMangwaneni and Impendle.

eMangwaneni

Our community-based citizen scientists led this engagement, where local stakeholders were taken through the restoration sites in Amangwane Traditional Authority, specifically Duma Donga. This work intrigued officials from Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma (NDZ) Municipality seeing that it created many employment opportunities for the local community, but more especially because the intervention seemed to be working!



Figure 1: Visitors visiting some of the first restoration work undertaken within the uMkhomazi Catchment by the INR with funding from Umgeni Water, Duma Donga at eMangwaneni.

Dr Thabo Makhubedu talked the group through the nappies experiment being implemented with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) with funding from the United Kingdom government and explained how disposable nappies could potentially be used as a source of nutrients and improved water holding capacity to grow Napier fodder. This experiment addresses the issue of poor solid waste management in the community while providing food for cows. He went on to further explain that other common crops could also potentially be planted in the same manner, but as expected, this raised concerns about how healthy or safe the crops would be to eat.



Figure 2: Visitors visiting the nappies trial where napier fodder is being grown on top of trenches filled with used disposable nappies.

Sthembiso Hlongwane, a very dedicated and involved community member, pioneered a very important conversation about spring rehabilitation within communities. The group was happy to learn that the community worked hard to achieve the common goal of restoring and rehabilitating the spring that feeds many families. This work is being funded through the Climate Change Champions project that is being funded by the European Union.



Figure 3: Local resident and climate change champion, Sithembiso Hlongwane explaining what has been done to improve the supply of water to the community by upgrading the system that takes water from a series of natural springs..

Impendle

While the group in Amangwane marvels at the admirable work being done in the community, the other group in Impendle is enjoying the amazing view of the rangelands that are being restored and rested through the Herding for Health (H4H) project which is funded by TASK via Meat Naturally Pty. Local dip tank committee members shared insight on the importance of livestock and rangeland grazing management.



Figure 4: Dip tank committees explain to visitors about the activities being undertaken at Nzinga through the Herding for Health project.

Our community-based citizen scientists also led this engagement, where local stakeholders were taken through the restoration sites in Impendle, specifically Qutshini.



Figure 5: Citizen scientists explained to the visitors about the restoration activities being undertaken at Qutshini.

Joint reflection session and conservation agriculture visit

After the captivating presentations of the various work being done in the catchment, the two groups from Amangwane and Impendle were welcomed into the lovely home of the Induna of Ntwasahlobo for the last presentation about Conservation Agriculture (CA). The Induna shared his experience practising CA thus far and expressed his gratitude for the many things he learned. The citizen scientists further explained to our group of local stakeholders what CA's aim is, its principles, and its importance.



Figure 6: Discussions about conservation agriculture at the home of the Induna at Ntwasahlobo.



Figure 7: Discussions about sustaining the interventions.

This particular session evoked a lot of thoughts and opinions among the group about how the sustainability of this work can be achieved.

Questions and answers related to the field day:

- Who went where:
 - Local stakeholders from 3 uMkhomazi project sites, including Impendle, Bulwer, Ntwasahlobo, Municipality, Traditional authorities, local entrepreneurs, farmers, citizen scientists and INR staff. They went to all three project sites.
- When did they go:
 - 25th of May 2023
- How did they get there and back? Was it adequate?
 - 2 taxis were organised for them to move around the sites
- How long did it take to get there?
 - The field visit was scheduled to begin at 09:00 to end at 15:30
- How long did you spend there?
 - The field visit was scheduled to begin at 09:00 to end at 15:30
- Did you stay overnight? If so, where and was it adequate?
 - No
- Who did the group meet with?
 - The field visit involved the interaction of local stakeholders
- What was expected - i.e. why did the group go and what was communicated to the group about what they were going to do the exchange visit for?
 - The tour aimed for local stakeholders to witness the restoration intervention that the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) is implementing in the catchment. One of the expectations was to get the stakeholders to talk about possible ways to sustain the work, collaborate and how the work can be embedded within the communities.
- Was this expectation met? What were the key learnings?
 - The expectation was met
 - Key learnings included:
 - Restoration & H4H has links towards restoration sustainability – H4H has a more prolonged investment in the community
 - The impact of the intervention has improved the rangelands. There are fewer wildfires, and the calving rate almost doubled in the past seasons.
 - Dealing with local stakeholders is a challenge. There are various social and political dynamics involved.
 - Legume disease management
 - Disposable nappies can be used to plant fodder and vetiver- this is a trial experiment achieved through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

- Department officials suggested that people should work together to increase their chances of getting funding and support from the government.
 - A member of the traditional authority shared that community members are welcome to ask for land for planting should they require it.
 - A farmer shared the importance of relaying crops for sustainable crop yield.
 - Local stakeholders are not punctual.
 - It was a learning opportunity for the INR team that will help to prepare better approaches for similar engagements in the future.
- Did the groups learn from each other or was it just a one-way learning?
 - The groups learnt from each other.
 - Would you do this activity again? Motivate your answer - i.e. why or why not
 - Yes. To strengthen relationships with local stakeholders and the broader community. It is essential to involve the community in the work being implemented in their area.
 - What would you change if you did it again?
 - Visit one project site.
 - Any other comments, notes or suggestions?
 - We had more people than we anticipated- this slightly affected our catering arrangements.
 - There were delays at some points of the programme, but the participants showed interest and patience.
 - It was an ambitious event to implement, but the organising team showed resilience, leading to its success.