



“My name is Nompumelelo Zondi. I am 28 years old and I am one of the 3000 youth who are part of the Empowering Rural Youth in Agriculture project with Mdukatshani and HPSA. I have been proud to serve my community for the past six months.”  
#Iamproudtoserve

“I live at Sampofu near Tugela Ferry in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. I have two children, a boy and a girl and live with my partner and family.”

Empowering Rural Youth in Agriculture Project is a partnership between Mdukatshani and HPSA, working in partnership as GAP, and funded and supported by partners such as the Jobs Fund and National Youth Development Agency. The project employed 3000 rural youth across 150 project sites in KwaZulu Natal starting in April 2022.

“I was recruited in April and started work in June 2022. I have learned a lot during my time

with the project about livestock and diseases and this gave me the idea to start my own business.”

The 3 000 youth received training in taking livestock census, animal health and animal nutrition. Then for 6 months they supported over 27 000 farmers across the 150 sites to increase their herd productivity. They focused on vulnerable households and spent many days cleaning kraals when they weren't focusing on helping the farmers with their livestock.

“I first used my stipend to start layer chicken business but I soon realised that I would not make a profit. With layers, there is very little profit because you have to feed them expensive laying mash. I had already invested in a chicken house. Then I got the idea to start a protein blockmaking business. I had already bought the chicken house so I am using the house for my blocks.”

The youth were trained on how to make homemade protein blocks for goats. These blocks are highly nutritious and can be made with ingredients locally available. They then made 54 000 blocks and, as part of the animal nutrition initiative, gave each farmer two blocks to help





supplement the more vulnerable goats in their herds. These one kg protein blocks are made of five simple ingredients- molasses, whitewash, high protein concentrate, salt and mealie meal. This gave Nompumelelo the idea to start her own business of making and selling blocks as she saw there was a huge demand for them with farmers. The instructions for making these blocks can be found on Goat Agribusiness Project (GAP) website at

<https://www.gapkzn.co.za/resources/goat%20block%205%2017%20brochure.pdf>.

“I started my blockmaking business in February 2023. So far, I have sold 118 blocks to farmers. I also sell at Tugela Ferry. It’s a busy place and where people buy groceries. I go around with my blocks selling by telling people the benefits of the blocks. I sell them for R20 each.”

“The stipend also helped me buy groceries and save R500 every month in a stokvel. At Christmas when we cashed out the stokvel I bought a new kitchen scheme. I also, then, bought the ingredients to get my blockmaking business going.”

“There are challenges with my small business. The main challenge is to get ingredients. The taxi drivers complain that the 50kg bags of salt and other ingredients are too heavy to load in taxis. Also, I don’t have a fixed place to sell. I try and sell at Tugela Ferry but when I sell in front of someone’s place the other vendor’s get jealous. It would be nice if I could find my own place. I also need to try and save up to buy my own blockmaker. I borrow the blockmaker from the project.”



The Empowering Youth in Agriculture project started in April 2022 and is coming to a close in March 2023. Over 3 000 youth participated and supported 27 000 farmers. During the time over their service they provided over 1 152 000 hours in the rural areas to some of the most vulnerable livestock farmers of KwaZulu Natal. Over 1 000 of the youth, like Nompumelelo have already used the stipend and knowledge and skills gained to transition into their own businesses or other opportunities.





