

"I am Nonhle Magwanyana. I am 25 years old and a participant in the Empowering Rural Youth in Agriculture project with HPSA and Mdukatshani (Goat Agribusiness Project)." #Iamproudtoserve.

"I come from Elangeni is near Muden in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. I have a son who is 8 years old and I live at home with five family members."

"Through this project and the stipends I made during the time I worked, starting in 2022, I was able to start my own business selling food at Muden Combined School in Muden. I sell a variety of things ranging from sandwiches, hotdogs, popcorn, chips to cool drinks and fruit."

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.

Nonhle told us, "I started this business at the beginning of the year in 2023 when the school year started. For a long time, I wanted to start something but I didn't have any money, so I saved money every time I got paid my monthly stipend that I got from this project."

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.

When asked what she learned during the project, Nonhle replied, "I learned to work other people, I gain confidence about working with others and especially working with livestock."

"Apart from starting my own business, I was able to help my mother pay for groceries when I was earning a stipend as I was the only one working in the household. I was paid local transport costs to get my son to school and back. I was able to buy clothes for my son and myself. There were so many things I was able to do! I even saved R400 a month. This is what I used to help me start this business."

"There are some challenges in my business. Learners at the school are always complaining about prices and they want to pay on credit. They even steal sometimes if I don't watch closely."

"I buy my supplies from Greytown and then figure out my profit. I generally can sell about R600 a day at the school and when there is left over fresh food, I take it to the closest town and sell the rest and get another R300 or so. I almost always sell everything. I will keep expanding my business, maybe into hot foods like vetkoek. The teachers have said they would buy it."

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 Nonhle have already used the stipend and knowledge and skills gained to transition into their own businesses or other opportunities.









