



Mdukatshani Rural Development Project **Annual Report 2014**



Contact details

Postal address:

Mdukatshani Rural Development
Trust
P.O. Box 795
Hilton
3245

Physical address:

Mdukatshani
Lorraine Farm
Weenen
3325

Mdukatshani Rural Development Trust No. IT757/2010/PMB
Public Benefit Organisation (PBO number 930001183)

Website: www.mdukatshani.com

E mail: khonya@yebo.co.za

Phone Cell: 0828569861

Phone Landline: 0333431905

Mdukatshani's Vision

To find and promote options for farmers in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal that improve their lives, their livelihoods, and their productivity, while using locally available resources wisely for long-term sustainability.

Mdukatshani's Mission

Increasing women and youth involvement in livestock and value-adding activities through prioritizing women-owned livestock and income-generating activities in order to create wealth for the poorest. Improving livestock productivity of farmers in Msinga by intervening in livestock health systems supporting local youth in enhancing value chains leading to commercialisation of local herds.

Trustees

Chair	Deborah Ewing
Treasurer	GG Alcock
	Eric Apelgren
	David Alcock
	Mkhosi Mchunu
	Khonzokwake Mvelase



The MRDP staff

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Mdukatshani

Mdukatshani is an NGO established in 1975 and based in the Msinga area of KwaZulu Natal. Mdukatshani has a long history of working in the Weenen/Msinga area on a variety of interventions, including land reform, legal aid and legal support, communal gardens, action research, organic farming and livestock support programs.

Its main programs are, a Home food security programs, targeting 5000 women headed households supporting chicken, goat and Nguni cattle production programs. Community Animal Health Worker(CAHW) program training 130 young volunteers in the area to support farmers' livestock health and production. A research support program where, through collaboration with academic and governmental. Departments we answer questions our farmers have. 200 youth at 4 schools learning about human and animal health as well as life skills. A craft project supporting over 150 crafters who work with beads grass and metal to create products for sale internationally and nationally.

Community Animal Health Workers

The Community Animal Health Worker program has been developed to train young people in the area to support local farmers in health care of their flocks and herds. Since September 2013 the Department of Rural Development has deployed 120 of these young people as volunteers receiving stipends at the 63 dip tanks in Msinga. They are jointly managed by Mdukatshani, the Department of Agriculture and Department of Rural Development. Mdukatshani has deployed 30 in areas not covered by these jointly managed ones. And these don't receive stipends.

They are working in the field assisting farmers in basic animal health and supporting Department of Agriculture officials. The full rollout of their tasks are awaiting final funding and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Mdukatshani and the Department Rural Development. Progress in getting the MOU finalised has taken three years of negotiations. We are looking at other funding sources to start piloting this CAHW program properly as they have been deployed but have not been given sufficient training or equipment to allow them to gain enough momentum to become independent at the end of the process.

There have been trainings of these CAHWs by Mdukatshani and Afrivet in this year. There is opportunity for the Department of Agriculture to supply them with state medicines though the details of how this will work has yet to be agreed upon.

A good practice guide on CAHWs as well as training materials, developed by Mdukatshani, are available on the organisation's website.



CAHWs in the Xulu homestead, Msinga

Msinga livestock census

The first task of the CAHWs was to conduct a comprehensive livestock census of the whole of Msinga so as to get a clear picture of the area and number of farmers and livestock they will be expected to service.

This results of this census is presented and downloadable on our website. This table below covers the overall numbers.

Area of Msinga	Number of dip tanks	Number of farmers interviewed	Total families in Msinga (census)	Number of cattle (average per family)	Number of goats (average per family)	Number of chickens (average per family)
2500 sq/klm	64	10 541	35 500	4.5	14.5	13.8

Chickens

The chicken vaccination program continues though it has been going for a long time (8 years in some areas). A challenge has been that farmers feel that Newcastle Disease is no longer a problem as it has been so long since they have seen an outbreak so they have dropped out of the program. A disease free period can soon give way to an outbreak and many deaths. Farmer groups have been approaching us to restart the program. We are getting CAHWs, where possible, to take over this program as some of the groups are growing.

Goat production handbook

A part of the Misereor program is to support production optimisation in local small holder goat herds so they get to a stage of commercialisation to generate income from goat herds.

A goat production handbook, with over 100 pages of information about the basics of keeping goats, goat commercialisation and marketing and value adding, is in the final stages and will be going to print in June 2015. This a joint effort between ourselves, Heifer International South Africa (Heifer), the Veterinary Department of Agriculture and the Department of Economic Affairs. The handbook is endorsed by the National Department of Agriculture. The longer term plan is to have it translated into Zulu and printed by the Department of Agriculture. Mdukatshani will make the book available as a free download on the organisation's website.

Goat commercialisation

A further step to supporting production efforts by the farmers is to get a marketing system going where we can have a regular outlet for surplus stock which will provide cash to invest further in their livelihoods and their flocks.

To this end we had two large goat auctions in Msinga in 2013 to set the idea of what sales could be and what prices farmers could expect. The first auction sold 630 goats; the second 1450. This also triggered the Department of Rural Development to build a permanent auction yard near Tugela Ferry for future goat sales.

This was launched to much fanfare by President Jacob Zuma when he visited Msinga in November 2014.



The Msinga auction yard



President Zuma hands over the 'keys' to the auction site to Mr Hlope of the livestock association, Minister Nkwinti looks on.

We have since made contact with Mr Sydney Bongani Sibisi, a trained African auctioneer, who we plan to use to have monthly auctions in the 5 traditional authority areas in Msinga to see if the regular availability of sales sites can trigger a change of behaviour in community farmers.

To start this process we were fortunate to get an order of 900 goats that were needed for a project in Bochum in Northern Limpopo, from Heifer. This was also a fortunate move as Msinga has had a serious drought and livestock losses this winter and spring seem inevitable.

The auction yard is expected to be used for larger goat sales once the market has been established. In the meantime the livestock association has decided to also allow cattle farmers to sell excess livestock before the expected drought related deaths this winter. A cattle auction was held at the auction site in April 2015 with over 200 cattle being presented and 167 being sold.



The Nguni bull with Msinga farmer's cattle

The Nguni Project

Our project with Ngunis has been going for over six years and is seen as the only sustainable one supported by the state to get Nguni breeds back into community areas. Farmers bring their best cows to the bull that is housed at a local kraal on the project site. They pay a herder a goat per farmer to be able to bring up to five cows in a breeding year. The bull is donated by the state from bulls they want to cycle off their experimental farms and usually is seen as a cull animal.

The latest bull had 24 calves attributed to him before he sickened and died over December 2014. The Department of Agriculture is interested in offering us another one under the same system. The farmers and Mdukatshani are looking at the possibilities of this.

Collaborations

In the last three years we have been in an informal partnership with Heifer International South Africa as the only other NGO focused on livestock in the province. We are under discussions to draw up an MOU so as to formalise these ongoing collaborations.

We are currently in extended discussions with Department of Rural Development and separately the Msinga Livestock Association on drawing up agreements to formalise our collaboration and work in the field.

A part of our work with Heifer is around Mdukatshani training up people for Heifer's CAHW program which is in Nkandla (KZN), Bochum (Limpopo) and Matatiele (Eastern Cape). In the longer term we plan to train their trainers.

We are also in the advanced stages of setting up an innovation platform around goats. An innovation platform pulls together, into a semi-formal think tank, interest groups including state, academics, NGOs and stake holders like farmers and buyers. They meet regularly to look at research, agree on needs and answers around goat value chains, and on joint lobbying around possible solutions. The first meeting is set up for July 2015.

Further, we have a proposal to the Department of Rural Development where we would run a twinned project on goats at Msinga and Nkandla around commercialisation.

Mozambique visit

A long planned visit to see goat value chains in Mozambique under a project run by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) went ahead in September 2014. The Director and Project Manager from Mdukatshani went with the CEO and Program Director of Heifer. Although the systems of goat ownership marketing and sales are very different in Mozambique, many lessons and ideas were exchanged.

Mozambique sells goats for meat as no commercial market exists for goats for ancestral sacrifice. In South Africa there is absolutely no goat meat market although it has been tried by a number of NGOs and academic institutions.

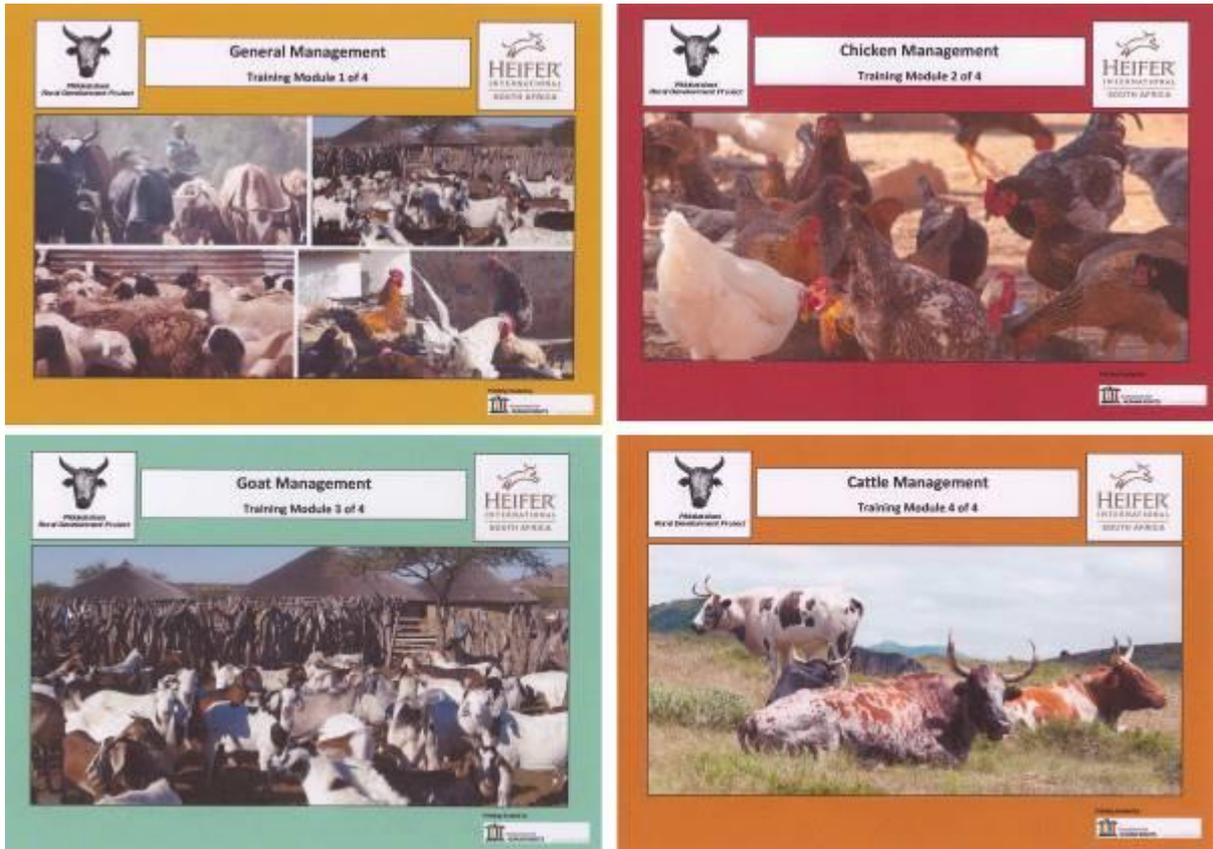
The dialogue between the three organisations around goat commercialisation have continued after the visit.



The formal and informal goat meat market in Mozambique

Materials development

Our primary collaboration which is part of our extension and networking support to farmers and the Department of Agriculture is livestock health books that we have created and printed together with the Department of Agriculture. Research into use of the materials has made us realise that although people are trained before the farmers are given the books they battle to use them to further train farmers as they seem text heavy. We have used an idea from Mozambique to create a picture training module on the various animal health issues to show at trainings with farmers to trigger discussions and learnings. These training modules correspond to the various livestock health books that we've developed. These are completed and Heifer has secured funding for a first print of these to support our staff and state officials in training.



The four training modules

The second collaboration area is around making blocks for feeding goat mothers and kids through the winters so as to reduce kid mortalities which is the biggest problem inhibiting increased flock productivity.

We had approached Voermol the largest animal feed producer to collaborate on a product but they are unable to scale anything less than 25 kilograms.

We nonetheless got their senior scientist, Dr Francois van der Vyver to assist us with technical issues around block making.

After many recipes worked out with Department of Agriculture scientists and Heifer we have come to a formula that we feel would be suitable so as to increase goat nutrition and be simple enough to be mixed and made by hand by local youth from readily available ingredients and sold to farmers.



MRDP staff measure out and mix the first block recipe

The first batches of these blocks are being mixed by MRDP staff and made into bricks. A pilot with goat farmers in Nkandla, Msinga, Owen Sithole research station and Cedara research station is being initiated. The results will be brought back to a joint working group to discuss any necessary modifications.

Schools

The Mdukatshani Project supports local schools in teaching basic human and animal health so as to promote healthy living and empower children to support parents in animal herd health decisions. We focus on the children who spend the most time with livestock, grades 4-6. A book has been produced as a curriculum for teachers and staff to teach learners. This work has been carried by the Peace Corps Volunteers for the last three years.



Deborah our Chairwoman and the Nkasini school club on a camp in Weenen game reserve



The Bambanani club members discussing the uses of livestock

Peace Corps

Our latest Peace Corp Volunteer, who replaced Kathleen Newell, is Rachel Anady. She will be working with children on the Animal Health Promotion School Clubs at three neighbouring schools. She will also be working with woman farmer groups on a HIV/Aids and gender health groups.



Rachel Anady with women farmers

Research

Mdukatshani continues to support researchers who want to work in Msinga on issues that dovetail either with our research or our farmers' issues.

Currently we are supporting the following researchers:

- Manqayi Kraai who is doing a doctorate on social interactions of goat herds and feeding patterns relating to this.
- Brigid Letty who is doing doctorate research looking at goat systems related to nutrition and health dynamics.
- Isaiah Mahlangu who is doing research for a masters looking at animal identification systems in communal cattle herds.

We continue to work with the Centre for Law and Society based at University of Cape Town on their Pathways Project that is looking at traditional justice systems and their role and issues in a new South Africa.

Craft Project

The Mdukatshani Craft Project is housed in its own legal entity for tax purposes (Mdukatshani Bead and Welfare Trust No IT755/2010/PMB) but it shares resources and trustees with the Mdukatshani Rural Development Project.



The crafts continue to generate work for the crafters in the project although the focus has been more towards copper bowls and bangles than the traditional beads.

A new trustee is being sought to help support the thinking into marketing and sales as many of the crafters don't have enough work.



Some examples of Mdukatshani craft

Funding and finances

Mdukatshani signed a new 3 year funding agreement with Misereor that commences in August 2014. A portion of this funding has to be raised locally. This process is currently underway although local funding does seem to be drying up and the National Development Agency, our previous funding partner, is closing down and thus phasing out.

Mdukatshani has a six monthly audit as required with EU funding through our main funder Misereor. We have had unqualified audits since before the commencement of the project 10 years ago. Our auditors continue to be Cornelius and Saville, based in Pinetown KZN.

Mdukatshani Board

The Mdukatshani Board continues to meet and support the organisation in decision making and direction. The board is currently a member short with the passing away of Cos Desmond. The recruitment of a new board member has been slow with potential candidates making themselves available then withdrawing their availability. Mdukatshani plans to have recruited a new board member with an expertise in craft and sales by August 2015.

Mdukatshani land

Mdukatshani owns a farm of 2500 hectares that was purchased by Anglo American Group Chairman's Fund in 1975. This farm is home to 56 families and the project offices. The community together with Mdukatshani have agreed to a division of the farm into three pieces with two pieces going to the Mthembu and Mchunu residents and neighbours respectively. This would leave the project with about 200 hectares to carry on project activities. The Minister of Rural Development is currently handling the transfer of the Mchunu piece of land. The Mthembu piece is yet to be surveyed by the Ladysmith office of Land Affairs.

Any moneys received from the sale will be transferred to an account to gather interest and be a reserve fund to maintain the remaining property, while plans are developed for its use and or further investment.

Events and community

We had a new round of local government elections. As the project buildings are used as a voting station this means we have to be away from the buildings for about a week.



The Ncunjana voting station is the prefabricated school

Gangendlovu Mchunu, the Mchunu traditional authority, on whose tribal land we do a lot of our work, took an official wife to have the next heir of the Mchunu tribe. There was much celebration, pomp and ceremony.



Gangendlovu Mchunu and Thenjiwe Radebe

Mbekwa Majozi, staff member, farmer, mentor, Nguni breeder and community leader died in April 2015. He had been working for or with Mdukatshani for more than 25 years. He was employed by Mdukatshani as a general worker in the late 80s. He was then the joint Ncunjaan representative on the farm committee in the 90s. He was one of the first farmers we started experimenting with on chicken production and vaccination. He was one of the farmers who accompanied us approaching the Department of Agriculture for a Nguni bull. He worked with AFRA trying to prevent the eviction of residents on neighbouring farms. When they lost this struggle, he was at the forefront of getting this community brought back to the land through a land claim. He was chairman of the school governing body. He was a man who really loved all his livestock and animals, especially his dogs.



Mbekwa Majozi 1950 -2015

Bhekekaya Choncho, Chairman of the Msinga Livestock Association and initiator of the CAHW program and goat auctions, died suddenly in June 2014. He was a main motivator of the Mdukatshani Project linking to the livestock association and meeting with ministers and the president to make the case for Msinga and goats. His leadership and goodwill is sorely missed.



Bekehaya Choncho