

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, YOUTH, CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OVERSIGHT VISIT HELD 04 NOVEMBER 2015 (DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND ADMINISTRATION)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mpumalanga Legislature is duly vested with a mandate to maintain oversight of provincial executive authority and any organ of state and all provincial executive authority including provincial organs of state are accountable to it in compliance with section 114 of the constitution. The legislature is independent and performs its functions impartially without prejudice enshrining the rule of law.

In terms of Standing Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature 2013, the **Select Committee on Women, Youth, Children, and People with Disabilities** (the committee), is established in terms of Rule 135 (h) and has powers to conduct oversight on transversal issues affecting designated groups. The Committee is composed of a multiparty representation and is empowered to develop mechanisms to conduct oversight over provincial departments and public institutions.

The select committee is vested with the power to monitor, investigate and enquire into and make recommendations concerning any organ of state or constitutional body regarding transversal and transformation matters to ensure a province free from gender discrimination and inequalities in promotion of the Bill Of Rights.

The committee in accordance with Rule 119 may summon any person to appear before it to give evidence on oath/ affirmation, or to produce documents and permit oral evidence. The committee may compel an institution or a person to comply with summon subject to the rules and orders or a provincial legislation.

The Legislature seeks to establish whether provincial government delivers services effectively and efficiently within the respective local municipality areas.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

The following were the objectives for oversight visit to the Cooperatives funded by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration):

- To assess the effective and efficient utilization of government funding and resources
- To determine the impact made by the department on the improvement of quality of life to vulnerable groups in the province.
- To assess the implementation of policies by the department that seeks to improve the quality of life.

3. METHOD OF WORK

The Committee invited the department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration as per the programme of the Legislature and quarterly target of the committee to oversight visit conducted 04 November 2015. Furthermore the committee considered and adopted the report 17 November 2015

4. PRESENTATION MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND ADMINISTRATION.

The Department took members of the committee through the presentation on funded project and assisted by the department as follows:

4.1 AMOGELANG POULTRY PROJECT

Background

The committee noted that Amogelang was established in 2007 by seven (7) beneficiaries who include four (4) women; one living with disabilities and three (3) men doing broiler production. Furthermore, the committee noted that the project was originally organized by 2 professional teachers who were helping the community with the aim of creating jobs and alleviate poverty. The project used to produce 2000 chicken before the number decreased dramatically due to market related challenges.

The following were challenges raised by the cooperative:

- The access road is sandy and has a negative impact on the customers.
- A poultry infrastructure was damaged by storms three (3) years ago.
- High mortality rate of chickens.
- No office to work from, toilets, change rooms and disposal facilities.
- There is no protective clothing, sprays and medicine to prevent infection which leads to chickens dying at the early stage of life.
- Market still a challenge as chickens spend 2months in poultry house.
- Water supply pose a challenge as the tank currently used has leaks.

- They had a challenge of paying high electricity bills, and were assisted by ESKOM through the installation of prepaid system that resulted in the reduction of monthly payments.

The committee welcomed the presentation and appreciated the good work done by the department in providing support to the project.

The committee sought clarity on measures that are in place to enable the department to intervene in addressing the challenges raised by the cooperative. They also noted that the Agricultural Advisor frequently visits the project to provide advice where necessary. It was also indicated that the issue of the road has been escalated to the municipality. Furthermore, the fundamental factor on the high mortality rate of chicken was as a result of poor infrastructure and noted that the water tank has been provided and will be delivered to the project soon.

The committee noted that it will not help to fix the damaged structure, and the best way would be to reconstruct due the sandy soil that might cause cracks in the walls. The department further indicated that they do not provide for protective clothing, but the cooperatives should purchase that from their funds.

The committee checked as to whether the management committee is functional, and whether they do have a banking account, and a market. Furthermore, whether they do have monthly profits, funding, and how do they ensure accountability. In response the committee noted that there is a committee in place that handles finances and they currently do not have any monthly funding or donations. There is no formal market the only market they have is individual clients from the community and vendors.

The committee noted that there were two professional teachers who initiated the projects and checked whether they are still involved in assisting the project, and as to whether there is transport for their production. In response the department indicated that the two teachers have since relocated from the area and the project does not have its own transport.

The committee wanted to know if there is any form of training provided by the department and whether the business plan does cater for the maintenance plan in relation to disasters. In response the department indicated that continuous training is provided as there is upcoming training scheduled for the end of November 2015. Further, the business plan is in place and will be made available to the committee. Funding only caters for infrastructure excluding maintenance.

The committee further noted the issue of vegetable farming with the challenges of the water supply which makes it difficult to plough vegetables. The department further indicated that the project has been identified as one (1) of the Masibuyele Emasimini which is set to start next week and they will benefit.

4.1.1 Findings

After the deliberations, the Committee made the following findings:

- 1) The committee welcome the good job done by the department in ensuring the functionality of the cooperative, though there are still challenges and a room for improvement.
- 2) There is a lack of involvement of young people on a daily basis for skills transfer, and a need to intensify their relations with the local Councillor and CDW.
- 3) Access road towards the cooperative is sandy, not user-friendly which has a negative impact on customers.
- 4) The poultry infrastructure that was damaged by storms three years ago still not in use.
- 5) There is high mortality rate of chickens with no formal market.

4.1.2 Recommendations

- 1) The Department and the management committee must continue ensuring that the project is sustainable and improve quality by working together seeking advises from other counterparts.
- 2) The cooperative must involve the young people in all the daily duties for skills transfer and sustainability and further intensify the relationship with the local Councillor and CDW in ensuring that they advocate on their behalf as and when they encounter challenges.
- 3) The cooperative board members must engage the municipality and business people or contractors around the area to assist in grading the road to be user-friendly.
- 4) There must be an involvement of department of public works on the infrastructure as indicated that it will be costly to fix and that it be temporarily rearranged into offices, toilets, change rooms and disposal facilities.
- 5) The department must assist in reduction of the mortality rate of chickens and engage the department of Economic Development in developing a business plan and marketing strategies to ensure sustainability of the cooperative.

4.2 DIKGABO YOUTH PROJECTS

Background

The committee noted that Dikgabo co-op started in 2007 situated in Lefisoane in Dr J.S Moroka Municipality comprises of Seven (7) members, Six (6) females and One (1) male registered and operating on 8 hectares under dry land producing maize and planning to produce vegetables on 2ha area. The committee noted that members were managing the project with their own funding until 2012/13 when they benefited from Masibuyele Emasimini intervention, through production inputs and mechanization they planted maize.

The project indicated the following challenges:

- There's no water for vegetables farming.
- They do not having enough funds to work on their land.
- The fencing has dilapidated.
- There is lack of mechanization.

The committee noted that the project received advisory services from the department and members will be assisted this financial year through mechanization by Masibuyele Emasimini programme as it has done before. Furthermore, the committee welcome the initiative made by the department in assisting with the dilapidating fence and noted that it is not fully fenced but the portion will be covered by the end of the week as the responsibility lies with the cooperative to complete as the department only makes provision.

The committee raised a concern on the whereabouts of other members and the level of commitment by young people in farming and noted that they were not present due to grants collection day but they are committed and attend all the meetings. Furthermore, the committee noted the unavailability of other members in the project frequently with the fact that nothing is taking place due to drought.

The committee raised a serious challenge faced by cooperatives whereby there is fighting which leads to projects being dysfunctional and appreciated that this project there has not experienced any infightings. Further, the committee raised concern regarding the method used by department in giving out tractors. Some tractors ended up being owned by individuals who failed to assist other cooperatives, which led to nonproduction and non-accountability of tractors. The committee welcome the initiative by the MEC in introducing a system that will assist in the allocation of tractors.

The committee further sought clarity on plans that are in place to address the water crises. It was noted that the department has identified the project to receive boreholes through Masibuyele Emasimini initiative. The committee indicated that projects of this nature should not only benefits family members but the community at large and appreciated the work done by the youth in ensuring success of the project and their involvement in agriculture.

4.2.1 FINDINGS

After the deliberations, the Committee made the following findings:

- 1) The committee welcome the commitment by the department and the cooperative members in ensuring the functionality of the cooperative and room for improvement need to be considered.
- 2) There is no enough water within the project as no rain and this is a crisis for the whole country.
- 3) Members of the comparative are not fully involved in the project frequently because there is nothing happening in the project due to drought.
- 4) Nominal Involvement of the local Councillor, CDW and other departments e.g. Economic Development needs to be improved in assisting with business plans and the market.

4.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The Department and the management must continue to ensure sustainability and involve other departments for intervention and guidance.
- 2) For the purpose of vegetable farming the department must continue with borehole drilling for sustainability and encouraging youth involvement in farming.
- 3) Members should be frequently involved as unavailability can lead to conflict of interest by the community and be looked at as a family project.
- 4) The cooperative must involvement the local Councillor, Community worker and the Department of Economic Development so that they assist with information and business plan for market.

4.3 NTETENG HLE AGRIC AND TOURISM CO-OPERATIVE

Background

The committee noted that it was incepted in 2005 in the form of ownership through land restitution programme which benefitted 400 families. The project has different types of initiatives such as animal and crop production and has 23 beneficiaries which include eleven (11) males, five (5) females and about five (5) young people currently not having any people with disabilities. They were also assisted by the Department of Rural Development by putting up the 20km fencing, four (4) drinking troughs, 1borehole and two (2) Jojo tanks.

The co-operative raised the following challenges:

- The lily flower plants which are not good for the animals
- Access Bridge to address issues of soil erosion.
- There are no facilities for dipping cows.

- No administration block and toilet facilities.
- There is no electricity due to lack of administration blocks as per Eskom prescript.
- There is a need for road infrastructure as customers are not able to reach the project easy.
- The project has no transport as a result young people and women are not able to come to the projects on daily basis due to distance.
- The drinking troughs need to be renovated.
- The project needs a Management program .e.g.; dipping program, vaccination program, record keeping and proper Handling of facilities.
- The management program which include weighing pigs, vaccination, feeding is also not available and lead to mortality and drop in production.

The committee noted the challenges and sought clarity on criterion used to identify the youth to be allocated in the different programmes and noted that there is no specific criterion used, as it is a personal choice and advised that there should be a criterion used for skills development. Furthermore the committee noted that there will be no balance in terms of skills transfer if people are allocated to programmes by their own choice.

Furthermore, the committee sought clarity on the mechanism used in sharing the profit by beneficiaries and plans that are in place to address the challenge of the lily flowers. In response, the committee noted that the project has not yet generated any income but it has a treasurer. The committee advised that the project should address the non-compliance status by ensuring people with disabilities are considered.

The committee noted the involvement of eighteen (18) youth and sought clarity on whether they are furthering their studies so that they can acquire knowledge and skills to sustain the cooperative.

4.3.1 FINDINGS

After the deliberations, the Committee made the following findings:

- 1) There is no infrastructure within the cooperative which includes administration, office and a toilet facility that makes it difficult to operate.
- 2) No proper business plan that will assist in seeking assistance and findings.
- 3) The youth within the cooperative is not furthering their studies for future sustainability and professionalize their skills gained in the cooperative.
- 4) The cooperative does not involve the youth in all skills provided by the cooperative as one focuses where he/she is voluntary placed.

4.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The cooperative must engage municipality on the toilets facilities and access roads for intervention.
- 2) The cooperative must further engage department of Economic Development for the development of a business plan and provide information on marketing strategies for funding.
- 3) The department must encourages the youth to further their studies by assisting in seeking bursaries from relevant department to acquire professional skills as per their daily duties.
- 4) Cooperative management must involve all the youth in different fields done daily for skills transfer.

4.4 MAROTA FARM EGGS

Background

The committee noted that Marota Farm Eggs is situated at Kameelpoort village; Dr J.S Moroka Municipality which is an initiative of Ms Nape Kindy Marota founded in 2003 and was financed by Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affair through CASP grants in 2010. The grant covered infrastructural development of (2 layer houses, of the capacity of 2000 chickens per house an Ablution facilities (office with toilets), 1 borehole drilled and equipped, Equipment's (Cages) and project fenced),..

The farmer managed to use one house with 700 chickens to sustain the project and was able to finance the production inputs from her housed budget and has since produced more eggs. To date the project is doing other farming enterprises such as cattle, goats, pigs and 2 hectors of maize production. Currently the project has a herd of 4 cattle started with 1 cow, sold 5 cattle, goats started with 3 ewes now has 12 sold 24 and pigs started at 3 sows and 1 boar now had 12 sold 13.

The committee noted that the project has already shown impact to the community in the sense that community members are buying eggs for their families at lower costs and the youth and one head man from the community volunteered in assisting the farmer by collecting and cleaning of eggs after school. The small and cracked eggs remaining are given to the poorer families within the community.

The following challenges have been identified:

- The project does not have a market.
- Water is a challenge as the project does not have machine for drilling.
- Part of the infrastructure collapsed due to poor workmanship.

The committee congratulated Ms Marota for winning the Female Farmer of the Year award as she was representing the province in KwaZulu-Natal and further applauded the department in providing guidance and support ensuring that she became the best female farmer.

Noting that Ms Rota as the co-owner running the project very well the committee wanted to know how young people assist as indicated in the background and noted that they are collecting and cleaning the eggs after schooling.

The committee noted the collapsed infrastructure due to poor workmanship and the department indicated that they will escalate to the Project Management Unit owing the fact that Ms Marota indicated that R222.000 was left in the construction but due to the prescript in terms PFMA at the end of financial year money left is returned to Treasury.

4.4.1 FINDINGS

After the deliberations, the Committee made the following findings:

- 1) The committee welcomes the commitment by the department in ensuring that the female farmer cooperative is well resourced on infrastructure and there's a room for improvement.
- 2) There is no involvement of other women and youth for skills transfer and sustainability of the project.
- 3) There is a part of the building that collapse due to poor workmanship.

4.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The Department must continue to monitor and provide guidance in sustaining and improving the life and status of women.
- 2) The department must encourage involvement of other women and youth for skills transfer and sustainability of the project for future purpose.
- 3) The department must ensure the part of the wall that collapsed due to poor workmanship is fixed.

5 CONCLUSION

The Chairperson extended her appreciation to Members of the Committee, the management of the projects visited, departmental officials, and the support staff of the Legislature for their participation during this oversight visit to the Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration in enhancing the oversight role of the Legislature.

The Committee tables this report to the House for adoption with its recommendations and progress to be provided to the committee.



HON BV NKUNA (MPL)

**CHAIRPERSON: SELECT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN,
YOUTH, CHILDREN, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

02/12/2015
DATE