

NSUBANE GARDEN PROJECT PROPOSAL

Background Information

Nsubane is a small, rural community with a population of about 300 people located along the Lubombo Mountains in the southeastern corner of Swaziland in Southern Africa. This area of the country faces many challenges to development such drought, unemployment and the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS. With 38.6% of the population infected with HIV, Swaziland is losing the productive members of her communities, leaving behind numerous orphaned children.

Despite these hardships, there are residents determined to develop their communities. Sibane seNsubane (“The Light of Nsubane”) Market Association is one such group. Composed of ten members – nine of which are women – this group formed in April of 2001 in order to establish a marketplace in Nsubane. Currently they are selling basic foods, snacks and household supplies to the community.

Sibane seNsubane would like to start a garden project whereby vegetables could be grown and sold in local markets. The soil in this area is ideal for growing vegetables and the climate would allow year-round productivity, as there is no frost during the winter season. The biggest barrier to progress is water. Rains are not sufficient to maintain a garden and the existing borehole for water is government-owned and therefore cannot be used for agricultural purposes. Also, people of Nsubane have been unsuccessful in keeping individual gardens due to the high salt content of the water coming from the boreholes. Sibane seNsubane is requesting monetary assistance in obtaining a community-owned borehole, a drip-irrigation system with a water softener, and basic starting materials to implement their garden project (see attachment “Request for Assistance from Community”)

Project Plan

The community leaders have donated 1.84 hectares of land to Sibane seNsubane for this garden. The members of Sibane seNsubane plan to grow peanuts in the coming months in order to generate some starting income while waiting for funding to start work on the vegetable garden.

The irrigation scheme used will be a drip-irrigation system in order to best conserve water (see attachment “Nsubane Garden Diagram”). Water will be drawn from the community-owned borehole and pass through a water softener, then stored in two 10,000 liters tanks. From there it will be pumped into the system along a 75mm PVC mainline. There will be three

clusters on the mainline from which six blocks are to be supplied. For a single cluster there are two valves that supply water in two different directions. The drip lines will be placed 1.5m out of each other on the 40mm poly sub main. This system will allow group members to control which parts of the garden are watered, therefore minimizing water waste.

The plan for the garden is to divide half of the land into 10 portions. Each member will be responsible for tending his/her own plot and will keep all profits from selling the produce of this plot. The other half of the land will be a group plot in which each member must regularly work in order to keep their individual plot. The profits from this portion will go into the group fund to pay for maintenance costs and ensure against future problems.

The vegetables from the garden will be sold in the Nsubane market, serving members of the community and those from a neighboring community in South Africa who regularly come to Nsubane. Sibane seNsubane plans to advertise their produce in order to draw storeowners from nearby communities to stock their shops and markets from the Nsubane garden. Group members will also travel to the larger markets of Lavumisa and Nsoko to sell the produce. They feel this project will be successful if they are able to sell enough produce to maintain the garden and make a profit.

Unfortunately the start-up costs for this project are beyond the means of the community and members of Sibane seNsubane, however they are contributing the land and all labor such as plowing, planting, etc. which amounts to approximately 25% of the total project cost (see attachment "Nsubane Garden Budget"). Sibane seNsubane will also be responsible for maintenance and electricity fees.

Beneficiaries

As this is an income-generating project, the direct beneficiaries will be the ten members of Sibane seNsubane and their families (approximately 50 people). Indirectly the entire community will benefit, as they will have greater access to fresh produce at cheaper costs without the need to travel to larger markets. This will make it easier for people to obtain vitamins and nutrients important for maintaining a healthy immune system, which is crucial in this era of AIDS.

Once the project becomes established and the group members gain experience in growing and selling local vegetables, Sibane seNsubane will be able to pursue other gardening opportunities to increase their livelihoods. There are organizations in Swaziland that facilitate local farmers in growing vegetables for export. Having a supply of fresh, clean water and a good irrigation system open up doors to development that would otherwise be closed to this rural area. It is possible that after some years, Sibane seNsubane could expand to do a larger project, creating jobs in the community and really having an impact on the development of their own place.

Thank you for your time in considering this project proposal. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and will encourage and enable the people of Nsubane to rise above their hardships.