



**NDA**

National  
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Agency

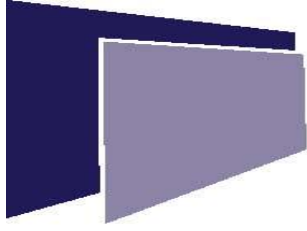


**WOMEN AND YOUTH AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE**

**CLOSE – OUT EVALUATION REPORT**

**MAY 2014**





**TSWELOPELE TT  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women and Youth Co-operative (WAYCO) was registered as a co-operative on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009. The Co-operative was funded an amount of **R657 000.00** by the NDA; the funding commenced beginning September 2012 for 12 months.

The purpose for the funding was overall to increasing the scales at which they produce fresh flowers and diversify into vegetables production targeting the local community and promoting the poverty eradication. Whilst their specific objectives were to contribute to poverty eradication by building sustainable livelihoods amongst their Co-operative members and job creation, increase current operations by 3 hectares thereby increasing productive output supplying the Spar and the local community with affordable fresh followers and vegetables on a continuous basis.

The purpose of this close-out evaluation assignment was to assess the extent to which the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative has achieved specified objectives as agreed at inception of the NDA funding, identify constrains and risks that could impede its success and sustainability, in that the NDA and the Co-operative can review their strategies to address any negative findings.

This close-out evaluation report conclusion and recommendations offers strategic and operational recommendations to both Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative and the National Development Agency moving forward.

### Major results:

- We noted during our onsite interview that agreed Co-operative activities have taken off and are 95% implemented and needs analysis were reflective of the community challenges poverty eradication, employment creation and there is buy-in from the local community.
- The Co-operative redirect part R100 000.00 meant for irrigation budget R100 to other activities without a written consent from the NDA, R67 000.00 was used for tomato production, electricity connection and building material.
- The Co-operative has a formal board which provides guidance to its activities, it has a robust Co-operative work plan indicating mile stones year to date, processes and policies to govern

human resources issues and working relations with the NDA Development Manager is effective and is more of an advisory and guidance role.

- Under budgeting of certain line items remains a major problem, Co-operative structure is incomplete and appropriate transport to deliver produce to market is a huge risk for this Co-operative.
- The Co-operative has also witnessed negative impact due to changing weather patterns, and suffered losses to the value of R100 000.00. The Co-operative products are not packaged, when they are delivered to the market, urgent packaging of produce is needed.
- Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative as a local initiative remain an appropriate intervention for poverty eradication and employment creation for participants from the local communities; once all the deliverables have been met the Co-operative is likely to meet all its set objectives.

**Major recommendations:**

- The National Development Agency needs to engage related stakeholders to form strategic joint venture funding to share their available resources and ensure a meaningful and sustainable impact on community funded Co-operatives for example the department of Agriculture to provide technical support in farming techniques and potential off takers of the Co-operative produce.
- As a matter of urgency the Co-operative needs to prioritize completion of the pack house and purchase packing machine, as packaging is very important for formal businesses who buy their produce in bulk.
- The Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative needs to consider training intervention in Co-operative Management to maximize productivity output and equal number male participants as there are currently more women participating in the co-operative.
- The Co-operative needs to consider rotational or integrated farming to ensure consistent income and overnight security to safe guard its equipment and produce.
- There is NDA needs to develop standardized structural plans for projects when structures such as office blocks, store rooms and poultry houses are funded. If the NDA develop generic standardized structural plans nationally this will translate in a saving, which the NDA would be able to fund more projects through these savings.

- The Co-operative tractor needs urgent repairs so that the co-operative can save R2000.00 a day whenever the Co-operative hires a tractor to prepare their lands before planting. The current estimated cost to repair their tractor is R10 000.00.

In conclusion the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative as a local initiative remain one of the most and appropriate interventions aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions and bringing the participants into the main stream economy.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The Women and Youth Co-operative (WAYCO) was registered as a co-operative on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

The Co-operative was funded an amount of R657 000.00 by the NDA; the funding commenced beginning September 2012 for 12 months. The purpose for the funding was overall to increasing the scale at which they produce fresh flowers and diversify into vegetables production targeting the local community and promote poverty eradication.

Whilst their specific objectives were to contribute to poverty eradication by building sustainable livelihoods among their Co-operative members and job creation, increase current operations by 3 hectares thereby increasing productive output supplying the Spar and the local community with affordable fresh followers and vegetables on a continuous basis.

## **2. EVALUATION AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this close-out evaluation assignment was to assess the extent to which the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative has achieved specified objectives as agreed at inception of the NDA funding, identify constrains and risks that could impede the success and sustainability of the Co-operative, in that the NDA and the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative can review their strategies to address any negative findings.

This close-out evaluation report conclusion and recommendations offers strategic and operational recommendations to both Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative and the National Development Agency moving forward to becoming a sustainable Co-operative.

### **3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

This evaluation used a combination of approaches in evaluating the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative performance: interviews with the board members of the Co-operative using an interview guide questions informed by the NDA Terms of reference and factually observe activities.

The interview involved the review of the Co-operative grant application form to confirm deliverables, funding contract to confirm duration and contract period, implementation report to determine process used in the implementation and Development Manager monitoring reports to determine whether agreed objectives have been met and the various challenges experienced by the Co-operative during the implementation of this Co-operative.

### **4. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION**

#### **4.1 Co-operative Preparation and design**

The local authorities, traditional leaders and have been very instrumental in the conceptualization of this Co-operative; they allocated the Co-operative land from where the Co-operative operates from. The Co-operative activities are well described and geared to address the existing social community challenges and create sustainable employment for a limited number local of community members.

The Co-operative activities are well integrated with other participating stakeholders in the Co-operative like MASDT and the Department of Social Development and are supported by the traditional authority to address social challenges faced by the local community.

#### **4.2 Relevance of the Co-operative**

We noted during our onsite interview that agreed Co-operative activities have taken off and are work in progress, whilst 95% of the activities have been implemented the Co-operative. The needs analyses of the Co-operative activities are reflective of the community's current challenges poverty eradication efforts and creating sustainable employment for the local community. The stakeholders like MASDT have provided training in tomato production and have



assisted with market linkage, whilst the Department of Social Development has funded fencing of the Co-operative site and part funded the irrigation system at the Co-operative.

The Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative is well design and strategically located to cater for the needs of the local communities. The Co-operative initiatives remain an appropriate poverty eradication initiative and employment creation intervention for the local community.

#### **4.3 Governance**

The Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative has a board committee that oversees the Co-operative daily activities which is augmented by monthly meetings which serves to evaluate extend of implementation of set Co-operative activities. We found evidence that the management committee members have been trained in Financial Management and Corporate Governance; the Co-operative is well managed and has a robust Co-operative work plan which indicates achieved mile stones, whilst the relationship with the NDA Development Manager is effective and more of an advisory and guidance role.

During our onsite observation and interview we noted that meetings were held monthly and minutes of meeting are on record. The Co-operative and bank reconciliations were properly filed and the Co-operative members are up to date with activities of the Co-operative.

#### **4.4 Effectiveness**

During our site visit and interviews the Co-operative board members and two of the workers, we noted some of the deliverable was partly implemented e.g.:

- Help alleviate poverty by building of sustainable livelihoods among project members and employees through job creation.
- Expand the operation by 3 additional hectares to the 0.5ha that is being currently utilized.
- Supply the community and the local business e.g. Spar and Florists with vegetables and flowers on a continuous basis.
- Continuously capacitate the coop members for ongoing improvements of the business.

Our observation is that the Co-operative management committees is very motivated and have taken individual ownership of the Co-operative activities which each one is responsible for, the inconsistent pay out of salaries remains a major risk for this Co-operative.

#### **4.5 Impact**

During the period under review, the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative had successfully created 9 additional jobs plus the original 5 board members.

The Co-operative members who have benefited from the training interventions are now better placed to effectively management the Co-operative activities in vegetable farming and Financial Management. The other indicators that were used to measure impact, beside those laid out in the contract were:

- The increase in the number of off takers of the Co-operative products.
- Income generated from Co-operative activities on a month to month basis and the Co-operatives ability to pay salaries to its members.
- The ability of the Co-operative to continuously meet its operational expenses

The impact of the Co-operative activities were noted in the confidence of board members who were trained, we also noted that vegetable production has commenced with some products planted in the two tunnels and others outside: Beans, Onions, Sweet potatoes, lettuce, and cabbages.

#### **4.6 Sustainability**

The training has been provided in the following areas; Financial Management, Co-operative Governance, Crop production level 2 and Mixed Farming level 2 good governance. The Co-operative is not yet paying regular salaries to its members, as these are only paid as at when there is sufficient income to pay salaries, which might have negative impact on the Co-operative long term survival as participant might leave the Co-operative for employment with consistent monthly income.

The Co-operative production output has commenced, there is a huge market and demand for their produce, if the Co-operative can continuously improve on the quality of their produce and save money as at when there is an income is going to be very sustainable in the short term.

Our general observation is that there is no security over night at the Co-operative site, there is a risk of losing equipment and produce through theft. The target market is the local community and formalization of off takers agreements with formal businesses needs urgent attention.

#### **4.7 Financial Management**

During the review of the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative implementation plan it is evident the Co-operative adhered to most of its budget line items; we note deviation on the purchase of irrigation equipment and there was no evidence that the NDA gave permission to redirect part of these funds. The late release of funds by the NDA is a major impediment for the Co-operative achieving all its set objectives due to price escalations at the time the funds are released by the NDA.

During December 2013, the Co-operative suffered damages from floods to their tomatoes and cabbages which the Co-operative had anticipated to generate an income of about R100 000.00 during their harvest in January 2014, resulting in come loss due to damages suffered. The Co-operative is recovering from the December 2014 loss, at the time of our review the Co-operative had R3 600.00 balance in their bank account.

The Co-operative is expecting incomes from various produce which were in production at the time of our review: the co-operative was busy harvesting beans with an estimate income of R95 000.00, and income from onions, sweet potatoes, lettuce and cabbages is estimated at R125 000.00 when harvesting commences in September 2014.

Our observation is that the Co-operative does not have a consistent income, but has a rather seasonal income which might be unsustainable in the long run. The Co-operative needs to consider rotational planting or integrated produce to ensure consistent income thorough out the year.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The local authorities, traditional leaders and have been very instrumental in the conceptualization of this Co-operative; they allocated the Co-operative land from where the Co-operative operates from. The Co-operative activities are well described and geared to address the existing social community challenges and create sustainable employment for a limited number local of community members.

We noted during our onsite interview that agreed Co-operative activities as at inception of the NDA funding have commenced and are 95% implemented the Co-operative analysis of the community are reflective of the community current challenges poverty eradication and employment creation.

The Co-operative has a formal board which provides guidance to its activities; it has a robust Co-operative work plan which indicates different mile stones, processes and policies to govern human resources issues. The working relationship with the NDA Development Manager is effective and is more of an advisory and guidance role. The Co-operative holds monthly meetings and minutes of meeting are on record, bank reconciliations were properly filed and the Co-operative plan was displayed for everyone to see progress made to date.

During the period under review, 9 additional jobs had been created and board members have been trained in Financial Management, Corporate Governance, Crop production and Mixed Farming level 2.

The Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative as a local initiative remain an appropriate intervention for poverty eradication and job creation for participants from the local communities; once all the pending completion activities have been completed the Co-operative has the potential of becoming a sustainable Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Lessons Learned

- The design of the Co-operative strategic intents are all well thought, but come short of critical interventions to ensure participants are appropriately skilled in Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative Management.
- Under budgeting of certain activities, shortage of finances to complete the structure and appropriate transport to deliver produce to market poses a huge risk for this Co-operative.
- We note that thorough planning and adherence to work schedule is pivotal to successfully implement Co-operative activities.
- The community stakeholders' awareness of the Co-operative and the traditional authority buy in to the Co-operative activities has had a positive impact to ensure the long term sustainability and ongoing support of this Co-operative.

### 6.2 Recommendations

- The National Development Agency needs to engage related stakeholders to form strategic joint venture funding to share their available resources and ensure a meaningful and sustainable impact on community funded Co-operatives for example the department of Agriculture to provide technical support in farming techniques and potential off takers of the Co-operative produce.
- As a matter of urgency the Co-operative needs to prioritize completion of the pack house and purchase packing machine, as packaging is very important for formal businesses who buy their produce in bulk.
- The Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative needs to consider training intervention in Co-operative Management to maximize productivity output and equal number male participants as there are currently more women participating in the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative.
- The Co-operative needs to consider rotational or integrated farming to ensure consistent income and overnight security to safe guard its equipment and produce.

- There is NDA needs to develop standardized structural plans for projects when structures such as office blocks, store rooms and poultry houses are funded. If the NDA develop generic standardized structural plans nationally this will translate in a saving, which the NDA would be able to fund more projects through these savings.
- The Co-operative tractor needs urgent repairs so that the co-operative can save R2000.00 a day whenever the Co-operative hires a tractor to prepare their lands before planting. The current estimated cost to repair their tractor is R10 000.00.

## 7. REFERENCES

- Agreement between the NDA and the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative Environmental
- Baseline study
- Due diligence
- NDA interim reports
- Grant Application: Proposal Document by the Woman and Youth Agricultural Co-operative to the NDA
- Interview notes

## 8. APPENDIXES

### 8.1 ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Interview with the following was conducted:

NAME	POSITION	CONTACT DETAILS
Sazi Ntiwane	Chairperson	07273100163
Collins Sizwane	Deputy Chairperson	00829673015
Florence Gwemu	Secretary	0795342958
Chazile Ngcane	Deputy Secretary	0791841465
Christina Ntiwane	Production Manager	0828488430

### 8.2 ANNEXURE B: EVALAUTION QUESTIONNAIRE

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CLOSE-OUT EVALAUTION QUESTIONNAIRE

TYPE OF CO-OPERATIVE	
LEGAL FORM	
LOCATION	
BENEFICIARIES (TYPE & NO.)	
BUDGET / FUNDS DISBURSED TO DATE	
TIMEFRAME	

### **Co-operative activities**

1. How did you spend NDA grant:
2. What activities were carried out and how they have progressed?
3. What problems/hindrances did the organization/program encounter?
4. If training was offered how many people participated and in what were they trained?
5. Are registers kept of participants who received training and are there any follow up post training?

### **Co-operative Preparation and design**

1. What was the intended purpose/objective of the Co-operative?
2. Who was involved in the Co-operative planning and design?
3. Would you change anything if you were to design a similar Co-operative in the future?
4. Were there other financial inputs that funded the same or similar objectives in this Co-operative? Explain
5. Do you think the activities were practical and clearly described?

### **Co-operative Results**

1. Were the goals met?
2. Has the organization met the objectives as laid out set out in the NDA contract?
3. Will the Co-operative meet all requirements of the NDA grants by the completion of the grant period?

### **Relevance**

1. Why was this Co-operative relevant to the target beneficiaries?
2. Did the Co-operative respond to beneficiary needs? Explain
3. Do you think that the objectives and activities are still relevant?

### **Effectiveness**

1. Please explain the extent to which the Co-operative activities have contributed towards meeting the Co-operative aim / purpose. Have the expected results been achieved?
2. What challenges were / are being encountered in achieving the objectives
3. Were beneficiaries' livelihoods improved by the Co-operative?



### **Co-operative Impact**

1. Beneficiaries - who were they? Did they change from the group identified during the assessment? Provide details of their age, gender and race?
2. How did the beneficiaries benefit from activities?
3. With which skills, information or competencies did they arrive at the programme with and with what did they leave?
4. Did the Co-operative need amount of people attend, were they more or less, what were reason for this? Will the future program be affected by the number of people who attended this program?
5. What indicators were used to measure impact, beside those laid out in the contract?
6. What was the general effect on the organization, in which operating numbers did they change the lives of people –capacity change?

### **Sustainability**

1. Do you currently expect to continue this program after the end of this grant? If so does your organization have in place commitment from the appropriate sources?
2. Has your organization managed to attract other funding since it received NDA grant?
3. Have any commitments for future funding been received by your organization for any of its programme? Any new funding
4. Have the organization with whom you have been networking been of assistance to you to develop your programme - in what way? E.g. improve services?

### **Financial Review**

1. Has the grant been sufficient to complete your work?
2. Has the organization financial policy control changed in any way since assessment visit?
3. How has the NDA grant facilitated activities of organization i.e. work carried out – comment on general efficiency and effectiveness?

### **General**

1. Did you implement all planned activities and produce required outputs?
2. Is the Co-operative successful or unsuccessful?
3. What lessons can be learned from the Co-operative implemented phases?

**SERVICE PROVIDER**

**Name: Tswelopele TT Management Consulting**

**Date: -----**

**Signature -----**

**NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**Name: Senior Manager M&E**

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