Interview: Poppy

1. Date: 2021-02-24
2. Time: 11 am

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| Hello, I am Zakes Hlatshwayo, I am a PhD candidate doing an academic study on: Emerging black farmers’ practices and state support to them: a study of three government Agriparks in South Africa. This study will explore the practices of emerging black farmers and their successes and challenges in three selected areas where Agriparks exist. Thank you for your willingness to participate. We are interested to understand your role and experience. Information will be used only for academic and research purposes. You do not have to give your name if you don’t want to and can decline to answer any question. I appreciate your assistance and request you provide as much information as possible to help me understand your work.  The research study has been approved by the University of Pretoria’s Research Ethics Committee. Your privacy and confidentiality will be secured. No direct reference will be made to you, I will use a pseudonym, codes and categories to keep information about you confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage. You are not required to use your name, do not write your name on any of the documents. The data will be kept for 15 years in a password protected format and used for University of Pretoria research only.  For the purpose of this research I will use semi-structured questions, with your permission I will record the interview and take notes. The interview will not be longer than 50 minutes. Hopefully, the information will help policymakers, practitioners, officials and managers to make informed decisions on such programmes in the future. | | | |
| RQ1: What is your name? Poppy  RQ2: Where do you live? Rooiwaal, I’m married with four children.  RQ3: What is your highest level of qualification? Below matric  RQ4: Gender: Female  RQ5: Age: 40  Do you farm? I’m a fresh produce farmer (horticulture).   * What do you farm? Spinach, Pepper-bells, carrots, kale pumpkins and tomatoes. * When did you start? I started in the early 1990’s. * How did you start? I always kept a small backyard garden. * Why did you start? To feed my family, which substituted buying of vegetables. | | | |
| RQ6: Where is the land located? | | Agripark | The land I’m now farming is located in Rooiwaal Agripark, it is just outside of Pretoria. I started here around 2015. Spinach, Pepper-bells, carrots, kale and tomatoes |
| RQ7: How long have you been farming here? | | +5year | The size is about 1-hecatre covered by a net, I sometimes get more temporary land when other farmers abscond. |
| RQ8: I’m part of a cooperative that registered to farm, the initial size of the group has shrunk as other members left (She is not sure about the initial number). There is now only five of them, all women. | | | |
| RQ9: How did you get access to the land? | |  | The size is about 2 hectares covered by a net, I sometimes get more temporary land when other farmers abscond. The size is about 2 hectares covered by a net, I sometimes get more temporary land when other farmers abscond.  Did not apply for the land. I was offered by DRDLR to use the land after winning awards for Best Backyard Farmer,1997, and Clean Environment,2012. It’s a farmer incubation program, has a 3-year contract and then move to a private farm. |
| RQ10: Do you own the land? | | Do not own the land. | The land is owned by the local municipality, the farming project is supported by the Department of Agriculture. |
| Poppy is farming with members of the Faranani cooperative registered in 2018. They do not own the land but have a signed contract with the Department of rural development. The contract has long since expired but has not been extended, they are uncertain about the long-term use. The dates are unknown. | | | |
| RQ11: Where did you learn to farm? | |  | My family always farmed back in Limpopo, had family fields, and used spaces in the yard to farm. |
| RQ12: Have you received any training on farming? | | Yes. | In 2018, together with other farmers received training from the agriculture SETA. I was paid a stipend during training. |
| Poppy was part of the group that received training from the agriculture SETA, it was for one month only. | | | |
| RQ13: What are the sources of your livelihoods? | |  | My husband is employed. I generate income from the sale of fresh produce. |
| RQ14: How do you support your family? | |  | husband’s salary and my income from the farm help the family to cope. |
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| RQ15: What forms of labour/equipment do you use? | Mainly manual labor, hoes, spades shovels and other self-made equipment. I sometimes employ addition labor, mostly foreigners. I use the immigrant mainly to clear the land when it is overgrown with weeds and grass. | | |
| RQ16: What other forms of support do you get? | Mainly from members of the cooperative. Sometimes we hire local people on a short-term. | | |
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| RQ17: When did you get involved in the Agripark? | I started farming here in 2015. | | |
| RQ18: Where did you hear about the Agripark? | I was invited by officials from department of agriculture to come and farm here. I did not know about Agriparks. | | |
| I was invited in recognition of my backyard garden and community garden I started. The criteria here are that you should be a self-started farmer to be incubated here. None of my family members farm here. | | | |
| RQ19: What actual support have you received from the Agripark. | |  | The shaded net land that I farm, free borehole water, various seedlings, extension support services. Security. I stay on the onsite house for free. I don’t pay for any of these services. |
| RQ20: Other services | |  | Logistic, access to markets and technology, all of these she learned from fellow farmers. |
| RQ21: What improvement has been brought? | |  | Inputs such as vegetable seedling and extension services have a cost-benefit, it is a saving. The quality and quantity of the product is good the outer fencing is secure from theft, and there is security control at the gate all this contributes to a safe space. |
| RQ22: Do you sell any of your produce? | | Yes. | I sell the bulk of my produce at the Tshwane market, small traders who come here, and bakkie off-takes who buy and sell to others. I also sell directly to the community in Soshanguve. |
| RQ23: When did you start selling? | |  | I started selling during my backyard garden times, I expanded to the Tshwane market when I came to the Agripark.  I sell on a cash basis, with no credit. It is a safe and best way to do business. |
| RQ24: Have you been involved in planning meetings and deciding on priorities? | |  | There are monthly progress meetings on what is happening here. These are mainly management meetings.  We are supposed to submit our business plans and financers, very *little* feedback from officials.  Not on the future vision and plans. The overall management and planning are done by managers.  It would be best to know about the future of Agripark.  The communication is insufficient. |
| RQ25: What concerns and issues have arisen concerning the Agripark? How have they been resolved? | |  | Safety and security of the Agripark and storage of produce.  There is a need for stalls and tables for displaying our produce, freezer, and storage facilities. We are still waiting on these. |
| RQ26: In what way can Agriparks be improved, any suggestions? | |  | To have three-year contracts to give us time to grow as produces. Help us find our own land with state support. It is difficult to succeed without state support.  The support is sufficient to keep us here, not to be private. Agriculture land is expensive so are inputs and other services.  We need more hydroponic tunnels, outside farming is no good during winter.  More youth and women should be brought on board. |
| RQ27: Have you been impacted by Covid-19? | | Yes. | The hard lockdown forced us to stay at home, we lost produce and money. We were not given time to harvest any of our products. We lost income.  On our return, it was handwork to prepare the soil to plant.  We had to buy our own protective clothing and sanitizer. |
| Covid-19 relief fund | |  | The department has applied on our behalf, still waiting. |
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| Have benefited from working youth? | | Yes. | Youth from college come to work with us as part of their studies, we benefit from their knowledge and they from our experience it reciprocal. |
| Are there any other issues you would like me to look into? | |  | Talk to the other farmers to get their views |
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Notes: A dedicated group of women who are committed to expanding their business if given land and support. Although they have won awards and gained recognition they are still unable to get loans from the banks. After several attempts, with assistance from a consultant, they are still unable to get funds. They argue that the private banks are untransformed and against landless poor women, they want the government to intervene.