Interview: Pabalo

1. Date: 2021-03-04
2. Time: 12 noon

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| Hello, I am Zakes Hlatshwayo, a candidate at UP, conducting a study on emerging black farmers’ practices and state support to them, the study is conducted in three provinces. This study aims to understand emerging black farmer practices and how they are supported by the state. Thank you for your willingness to participate. I am interested in understanding your farming practices and experience and the support you receive. 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 us 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? Pabalo  RQ2: Where do you live? Westonaria, single and unemployed  RQ3: What is your highest level of qualification? Matric  RQ4: Gender: Male  RQ5: Age: 30 | | | |
| RQ6: Do you have another job? | | No |  |
| RQ7: How long have you been on this farm? | | 1 ½ year | Since 2019 |
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| RQ8: Where do you farm? | | Westernaria Agripark | 1. 0 square meters |
| RQ9: What do you grow? | | High-value crop | spinach tomatoes, pepper bells, lettuce, and kale. |
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| RQ10: How many hectares do you farm? | |  | 500 square meters |
| RQ11: How did you obtain this land, and under what tenure? | |  | I saw an advertisement on the department’s webpage, I applied for the vacancy. I’m here for three years. |
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| RQ12: Have you always produced and sold the same products? | | Yes | I produce and sell the same crops; the volumes vary according to yield. |
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| RQ13: How did you start farming? | I started producing in the family backyard garden. | | |
| RQ14: How did you learn about this opportunity? | I listen to the radio on farming and agriculture, I started reading and talking to other farmers in the township. | | |
| RQ15: Where did you obtain the capital? | I used my own money and later earnings from sales. I often get money from my father who is a pensioner. | | |
| RQ16: How many people are employed, temporary/full-time? | Seasonal support from friends,2 at any particular time. | | |
| RQ17: What are your main inputs? | Seedlings, water, pesticides, fertilizers, and transport hire. I use whatever income I have to scale up my farming, it is very labour-intensive. | | |
| RQ18: Where do you get your inputs from? Mainly from the Agripark, but sometimes I buy my own. I think there is a need for the Agriparks to look at other inputs that are more sustainable, most of the corporations who sell to us are white-owned. They don’t seem to want to help, more they sell at inflated prices.  RQ19: How can Agripark be improved to support emerging black farmers? We need to be supported to get out of the Agripark and make space for others to come in. For that, the Agriparks need to find land to move us to, but that is not possible outside the framework of land redistribution. The various components of the Agripark structures, research and development, and market access, are not in place and they are critical for our development. It goes back to political commitment, funds, and collaboration between the various sectors involved.  How can Agripark be improved to provide support and service? We direct involvement of the state as the driver of change, that is what happened under apartheid. Why is our state hesitant to drive change and reform, you can’t leave change to markets that are controlled by white people to lead. The state must make sure that we have resources to change the agriculture landscape, as apartheid inequality is still with us.  RQ20: Where do you sell? Community stalls, bakkie off-takers, door-to-door. I use crates and boxes, there is no branding. | | | |
| RQ21: What do you supply? | |  | spinach tomatoes, pepper bells, lettuce, and kale. |
| * How often? | |  | Twice a week |
| * How did you get the market? | |  | Buyers come here, I go to the streets of Lebanon. |
| * Are produce collected or delivered? | |  | Some sales are collected, I do sell in the streets, I take a taxi or walk depending on the size. |
| * What quantity or value of each crop produced? * What market works best, and why? | |  | It varies on the seedling, the value depends on the quality, and all are not stable. I’m not complaining much given the constraint under which I operate.  Hawkers and communities, pay better prices than retailers. I sell in affordable bundles to the community and the evaluations are not the same. |
| * What could be done to make markets work better? | |  | If markets were decentralized and were given facilities onsite things would be cheaper and better. The state will decide the value and subsidize it. |
| * Have you sold elsewhere before, if so, where? | | No |  |
| * Are you part of an organization or association? No. I collaborate with fellow farmers here. * Do you have any other collaboration, individual or group? Yes, Lebanon Mines Lab helps community farmers. | | | |
| * Has then been any changes in your farming? | |  | Input costs are higher, casual labor is expensive. |
| * Did you hear about Covid-19 and how did you hear about it? * How did Covid 19 affect you? * How did you respond to the government’s lockdown? * How did you hear about the government’s response and how did you benefit? | |  | From radio news, government announcement, and from Agripark management.  Lack of income, high costs, and poor nutrition. I lost a harvest due to the lockdown. No estimate.  Remained home and relied on backyard farming.  I did not apply for or receive a Covid grant. |
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Notes: Works alone. Works hard on a dry patch of land, not an immediate water source. Complaints about poor management responses and support to farmers.

Determined and resolute, he, more often than not, walks 15 km, one way, to and from the farm.

The security fence is broken and people steal, some farmers have organized their own security.

Covid-19: Feel insecure about the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on their farming, families, and general well-being.

General, like in all other Agriparks farmers believe there is great potential if government commit resources and training, especially in the local municipality. A recurring chorus, though people complain, there is a sense that things could be done better.