Interview: Emma

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

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| Hello, I am Zakes Hlatshwayo, I am a Ph.D. 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? Emma  RQ2: Where do you live? Rooiwaal, I’m married with three children.  RQ3: What is your highest level of qualification? Below matric  RQ4: Gender: Female  RQ5: Age: 45  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 1990s. * How did you start? I always kept a small backyard garden. * Why did you start? To feed my family, which substituted buying 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 2 hectares 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 are now only five of them, all women. | | | |
| RQ9: How did you get access to the land? | |  | Emma works with Poppy who was offered the land by DRDLR following winning awards for the Best Backyard Farmer,1997, and Clean Environment,2012. |
| 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. |
| Emma 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? | |  | Originally from Limpopo, Venda came to Johannesburg with her husband. She always farmed as a child, helping her parents. In Rooiwaal, she started a small community garden by clearing a dumping site and planting tomatoes, cabbage, and spinach. She sold to the community and bakkie trades. |
| 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. I saw, what I was told was a mentor, he just looked around and said nothing. | | | |
| 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? | |  | My 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 additional labor, mostly foreigners. I use the immigrants mainly to clear the land when it is overgrown with weeds and grass. This happened after the Covid-19 lockdown. | | |
| 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 with Poppy by officials from the Department of Agriculture to come and farm here. I did not know about Agriparks. | | |
| The criteria in the Agripark is that you should be a self-started farmer to be incubated. None of her family members farm here. | | | |
| RQ19: What actual support have you received from Agripark? | |  | The shaded net land that I farm, free borehole water, various seedlings, and extension support services. Security. |
| RQ20: Other services | |  | Logistics, 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 are good the outer fencing is secure from theft, and there is security control at the gate all this contributes to a safe space. The Agripark is removed from residential areas, which makes it expensive to come here but safe to farm. |
| RQ22: Do you sell any of your products? | | 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 the Agripark planning meetings and decided on priorities? | |  | There are monthly progress meetings on what is happening here. These are mainly management meetings. We receive verbal reports from officials about what is happening  We submit our business plans and financers, very *little* feedback from officials.  Not on the future vision and plans.  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? | |  | Concern about the safety and security of the Agripark and storage of produce. Services such as inputs are often delivered late, forcing us to buy our own. No extension support services and training to improve our practices. We do not receive the kind of support promised at the beginning, like infrastructure, roads, and facilities like fridges and logistics. No information on markets and other development in the sector.  We would like to move onto our own land but all is quiet, there is no future planning for us.  We need stalls and tables for clearing and cleaning our produce, packages, and storage facilities. |
| RQ26: In what way can Agriparks be improved, any suggestions? | |  | A clear initiation program with clear inputs and outcomes for all those involved. In this way will know whether or not we are making progress, or moving to a new farm. We need to improve our farming practice if we are to compete in the open markets, grow the economy and create jobs. Involvement from the local municipality will help us to benefit from local planning processes.  There is a need for coordination with the private sector so that we can get loans to buy land and equipment. We can’t get loans we have applied for on several occasions, we are discriminated against as small-scale farmers. |
| RQ27: Did you hear about Covid-19 and how?  Have you been impacted by Covid-19? | | Yes. | I heard on the radio news and tv announcement, we also got a briefing from the management.  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. It was hard to feed the family without additional income. |
| Did you 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 national department of land and Agriculture to know what is the future of the small-scale farmers in the Agripark, we feel left out. |
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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.