**Jabulile’s Interview notes**

**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date: 28 October 2020 – present

Location: Online

Interviewer: Makhanana Malungane

1. **PERSONAL INFORMATIONS**

Name/pseudonym: Jabulile

Age: 32

Sex: Female

Highest Level of Education: Undergrad degree, CPM

Role in agro-food system: Farmer

Do you have other occupations? Project manager, mining

How long have you been involved in the business? Since 2018

1. **FARMER**

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| 8) | Where do you farm? | Tzaneen, Nwamitwa along Ka-Joppie |
| 9) | What do you grow? Which of these are your main products? | * Tomatoes * Okra * Spinach * Cabbage * Broiler chickens * Butternut * Baby marrow * Brinjals * Soya beans * Chillies * Groundnuts |
| 10) | How many hectares do you farm on? | 4 out of 10 hectares |
| 11) | How did you obtain this land and under what tenure arrangements? | My parents bought it during the earlier 80s and rented a section out to a farmer until I took over the lease in 2018. The land falls under Hosi Nwa’Mitwa |
| 12) | Have you always produced and sold the same thing? | Yes. |
| 13) | How did you start farming? How did you learn the business? Where did you obtain the capital? | Farming has always been a part of my family. When I was younger, I spent all my free time at the farm – every school holiday to work on the farm I enjoyed it a lot but never considered it as something I could do full-time.  I funded the business through my full-time job in the mining industry |
| 14) | How many people are employed full-time and how many casual or seasonal workers? | 5 full-time employees. I hire causal workers during harvesting and planting season at a daily rate. |
| 15) | What are your main inputs | - Tractor  - Irrigation systems  - Pesticides  - Herbicides  - Water  - Electricity  - Packaging online  - Dishwashing liquid  - Stinkbugs  - Blister beetles  - Aphids  . |
| 16) | Where do you obtain your inputs? | * VBS in Letsitele, or Tzaneen * Neighbouring farms * Inhouse, such as cow and broiler manure * Local supermarkets * Online |
| 17) | Where do you sell, which markets, to who? | * The mama’s selling in the street * Bakkie trader * Chilli makers based in Tembisa * Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market * Box traders |
| 18) | What do you supply? | * Tomatoes * Okra * Spinach * Cabbage * Broiler chickens * Butternut * Baby marrow * Brinjals * Soya beans * Chillies |
| 19) | How often? | We have regular orders. Generally, every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday because I work in Johannesburg. |
| 20) | How did you get/find your market? | I did some market-related demand to select the crops I want to grow. I thought that could sell in conventional markets around Tzaneen, but it was had to get into the market. Only the mama’s who sell along the street were buying from me.  But I found my current market after failing miserably at Joburg |
| 21) | Are produce sold collected or delivered? | I do local deliveries and some of the chilli deliveries for the Tembisa mama’s the rest I put on the truck at the local pick-up point in Leysdorp or Ofcalaco. |
| 22) | What quantity or value of each crop/produce sold? | It depends on the market. But I have a benchmark that I want to sell for. I generally use the Department of Agriculture and international futures on I app I have on my phone. |
| 23) | Which markets are working best for you? | My chilli mamas and the informal traders. The JFPM is not always as reliable. |
| 24) | What could be improved to make markets work better for you? | Realtime data on the price fluctuations at Joburg market |
| 25) | Have you sold elsewhere before? | No |
| 26) | Are you part of any association or organisations | Not really. But my neighbouring farmers are part of the network. |
| 27) | Do you have any collaborations? | Yes. With neighbouring farms. We help each other out and share advice |
| 28) | Since this time last year, has there been any changes in your farming, and if so what changes and when and if there was a change what caused the changes? | 1. **What do you grow?**   Yes. I added okra to the crops I sell   1. **The availability and prices you buy inputs for?**   Yes. It was hard to find packaging especially locally   1. **The sources and prices you pay?**   Yes. Because of the shortages locally I had to go had to source some stuff online and in Joburg   1. **What do you sell?**   Yes. Okra   1. **The prices you sell for**.   Yes. Price changes a lot, but I try not to change the prices for my cash crops specifically for my local mama’s. I would lose a lot of my liquid marked   1. **In the cost of doing business.**   Yes. Distribution since now I have to pay upfront   1. **The quantity sold.**   Yes. I sold fewer cabbages and okra because of the bad rain in January 2021   1. **Customers**   Yes. A constant contract for Okra   1. **Suppliers?**   Yes. I started to buy online   1. **People you collaborate with.**   No.   1. **The number of workers?**   No   1. **The government regulations or taxes or other government interventions**?   Yes. We started making deliveries directly to the local client in order to minimize the spread of the virus   1. **Space where you sell?**   No   1. How you travel to sell produce or to get inputs or to get inputs and the transport used?   Yes. We sanitize the packaging and ensure we meet all hygiene protocol   1. **What has the biggest impact of Covid-19 on your farming? (Short & long term)**   Covid has grown my business, especially for Okra. It helped my business scale quite a lot. My business would have not grown this much pre-Covid. Because of Covid, working from home, I was able to have to strategize and invest more time in the business whilst still doing my full-time work.   1. **What are the impacts of the lockdown on your farming, including the markets you supply?**   I did not see much of an impact. Things remained the same. The business just grew from strength to strength during covid   1. **Have there been any other changes (outside the farming) impacts in your life from Covid?**   Yes. I lost my dad to covid in January 2021 |

H. COVID-19 and COVID measures

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 103) | What do you know about government responses to Covid? | The government is trying to keep everyone alive while keeping the economy afloat. |
| 104) | How did you hear about Covid and the government responses to it? | I hear on the radio on my way to work, discussed it with a few co-worker and friends. In terms of responses, I heard them during family meeting and at work |
| 105) | How have these responses affected you? | The responses I have changed the way we conduct business especially at the beginning of the lockdown. We limited contact with our local clients and ensure that we followed social distancing protocols |
| 106) | How have Covid and Covid measures affected your household and reproductive work? Any effects on economic activities | Not much has changed. I am a single woman with no children |
| 107) | How have you responded to the changes brought by Covid? | I always wear a mask. When I have been out like to Joburg market I make sure to decontaminate myself by showering immediately when I get back. |
| 108) | Have you benefitted from any Covid related government or non-government support? If so, what support was received? | No |
| 109) | How have you responded to the changes imposed by the government? | 1. What did they do in response (probe any innovations, changes in equipment or technology)?   No   1. Participation in any associations? Has the role of that association changed?   No   1. Have you been part of or had any discussion with any government officials or leaders? If so with who/which level of government? Did you get any benefit or see any change from that discussion?   No. |
| 110) | Has there been any change since Covid in what you and your family eat? | Yes. Since my dad’s death, I have become more conscious of Covid and the non-medical things you can do to curb the virus. |

**27 October 2020 | 19:00pm**

Online

Jabulile is a female part-time farmer that works full-time as a project manager in the mining industry. She lives in Johannesburg during the workweek and spends her weekend at the farm near Nwamitwa in Tzaneen. Jabulile used her personal savings to lease a portion of the family farm, after turning 30 in 2018.

She used market-driven research to select the produce that she would grow on the farm. After trial and error, she was only able to take her produce to market in 2019 but she barely broke even because she was unable to meet quality standards at the Joburg market. It was then she realised that she could service fewer formal markets such as mamas on the street, township-based processors and households. Jabulile tweaked her business strategies and found markets to sell her produce to a group of ladies making chilli sauces in Tembisa, bakkie traders in the neighbouring villages and townships, fresh produce box delivery services and more. With this newfound strategy, Jabulile thought 2020 would be her year. The business scaled considerably in the first two months of 2020 requiring Jabulile to hire 5 full-time employees.

Similarly, when the lockdown started business took a dip particularly among her local clients such a Shisa Nyama, stokvels, and weddings. But demand picked up with her “mama’s” and the chilli order in Tembisa. From there business soared and people began asking if she produced Okra that comes from the Hibiscus Esculentus plant - which locals believed has healing properties that help to combat the virus. Jabulile started growing Okra because of increased demand in the area. Her first harvest was good and was able to pass Joburg market standards. Now Jabulile, As of March 2021, okra is the main income source for the farm.

Despite the upturn at the farm. Jabulile lost her father to Covid-19 during the second wave in January 2021. Jabulile did not take her father’s passing well and took a couple of weeks off to grieve.