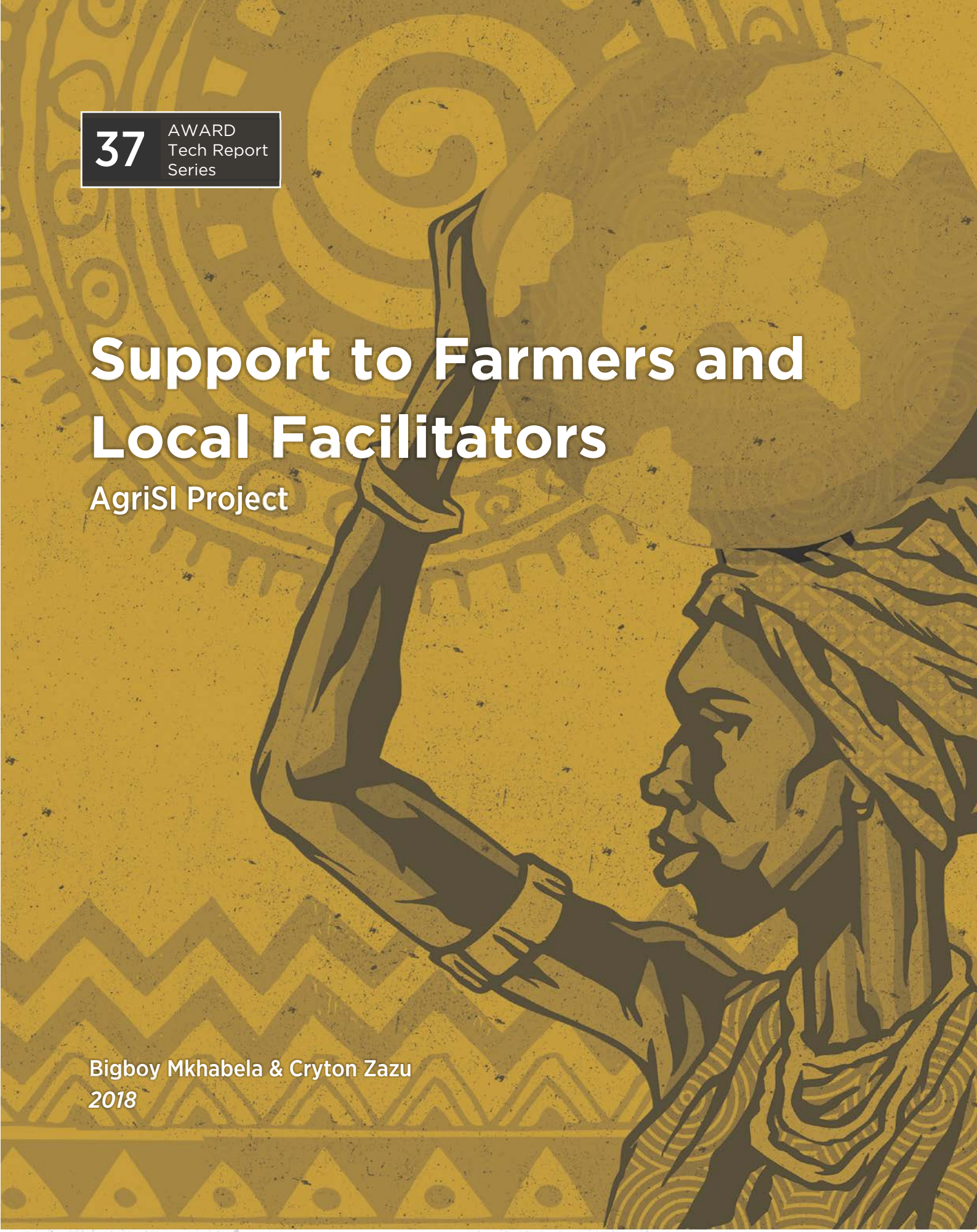
37 AWARD Tech Report Series

Support to Farmers and Local Facilitators

AgriSI Project



Bigboy Mkhabela & Cryton Zazu

2018

award

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE | SOUTHERN AFRICA

USAID: RESILIENCE IN THE LIMPOPO BASIN PROGRAM (RESILIM) – OLIFANTS

Acknowledgements

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Group photo with stakeholders who visited farmers in the Middle Olifants

Introduction

Bigboy Mkhabela (AWARD), Cryton Zazu (AWARD), Jacob Mohlala (HUB), Prince (youth farmer from Motetema) and Peter Tsokela (Cluster leader from Motetema /Tafel Kop) toured Middle Olifant (Motetema and Lebowakgomo) to visit farmers who are practicing Climate Smart Agroecology.

It was also a learning visit for one of our Partner projects in Mopani and from Ehlanzeni Bushbuckridge region. Our partners were introduced to the farmers and were taken for tours through their gardens.

The main focus of the visit was to:

- Track changes and challenges in the communities since previous growing season,
- To create a vibrant network between, farmers, donors & implementers,
- Sharing experiences with farmers across the provinces,
- Encourage interaction between farmers,
- Creating a robust network for farmers and stakeholder practising Climate Smart Agroecology.

The purpose was to monitoring the progress, challenges & successes of the farmers.

Farmer drying tomatoes given by ZZ2 for seeds

Mma Cossa showcasing her produce to the visitors

The Cossa’s blooming greens

Motetema

Julious Cossa

Mr Julious Cossa (Cluster leader in Motetema) and his wife, are utilizing a 1 hector field provided by the Motetema Community Clinic. The produce provides nutritious food for patients in the clinic and they also sell some of the produce to the local community. Mr Cossa recently employed his cousin to help in the garden. Their daughter is also being drawn into farming and the profit of her sales are banked for her.

Mr Cossa would love to learn more about water harvesting techniques like drip irrigation and how to create a reputable nursery to sell products to the Agroecology team at a discounted price.

The farmer has a variety of crops ranging from tomatoes, cabbage, spinach, potatoes, beetroot, beans and onions. He also farms with broiler chicken which he sells locally and use the chicken manure in his garden.

Farmer collecting water at a nearby river for irrigation

Prince in his spinach garden

Cryton demonstrates how Prince irrigates his garden

Prince

Prince is a very dedicated young farmer who profoundly loves farming. He has a big plot in Motetema where he planted spinach for self-consumption and for selling. His garden is however not properly fenced and livestock are grazing on his crop.

The farmer has interest in farming but needs lots of support from Ukuvuna about Permaculture. Water is in abundance as his field is adjacent to a stream that provide fresh water into his garden, however he does not have a water tank or means to irrigate properly while saving water. He mainly manually irrigates his crops which take most of his time since he doesn't mulch nor practice any Climate Smart Agriculture methods.

Prince's daily duties include:

- Farm maintenance
- Irrigating and harvesting for selling
- Assisting other local farmers into negotiating with i.e. Shoprite, Pick and Pay and other local shops.
- Teaching locals on how to farm sustainable in their gardens and he also said he works with government department and locals.
- Collecting fire wood and sell them for income purposes

Prince complained about lack of support from Government and local stakeholders especially to the youth. Funders are mostly focused on well established companies.

Youth farmers in Motetema showcasing their garden and their poorly planted carrot crops.

Youth Field in Motetema

These are FET college students doing some training in farming. They have tried farming with carrots on an open area next to the school. The crops are planted poorly and are in a dire state. The college needs assistance on how to train and educate the youth about farming, specifically with Climate Smart Agroecology to introduce mulching, intercropping and to make use of compost or manure in their garden field.

The youth acknowledge that young people are interested in creating their own employment. Farming is one of the key industries for self-employment, and are mostly associated with dirt and needs lots of capital to start. The youth also expressed interest in how to be trained in successful farming techniques and how to access the market with their harvest.

Tower garden

Mr Mashabela showing Cryton his selfmade watertank from salvage material

Spinach bought from the youth in Tafelkop

Youth farmers showing us their vegetables garden

Tafelkop

Youth in Tafelkop

Two brothers and their cousin are working together to create a better, healthier life for them and the community through gardening. The field they are currently using belongs to their neighbour and they pay rent by means of produce from their gardens. Their target market are local schools, crèches, pensioners and the local community. The youth don't get any support from government nor NGO's. Their farming knowledge is self-taught. Each member of the group has a garden in their backyard as well as livestock ranging from chickens, ducks and pigs. Water is the biggest challenge as they are buying water for R1 per 25L.

The group are innovative and they have welded their own water storage tanks and tower gardens. They have a variety of crops which includes spinach, tomatoes, chilies and maize. The youth does not have any background on Smart Climate Agroecology. Mr Mashabela, a group Leader, expressed his view that input from Ukuvuna to assist the youth in expanding their knowledge on better farming techniques is urgently needed.

Joel’s neatly maintained garden

An earthworm, which is an indicator of good soil is shown to farmer

Joel explaining his garden concept to the stakeholders

The gardens consist of herbs, vegetables and fruit trees

Joel’s catfish fishpond

We toured the villages of Monsterlus & Lebowakgomo to introduce our partners, **A Spring of Hope, LIMA, Choice Trust, Holani Homebased Care.**

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Track changes and challenges in the communities since last growing season
- Observing what farmers are doing differently and perhaps implement them in relevant other projects.
- To encourage interest and conservation on Smart Climate Agroecology models amongst stakeholders

Monsterlus

Joel Mahlangu

We visited Mr Joel Mahlangu. He is a very innovative, multi-skilled and Smart Climate Technology farmer who has incorporated different types of farming styles in his garden which ranges from trees, herbs, wetland plants as well as catfish ponds. His garden is nicely designed and well maintained. Joel is also a Cluster leader of Monsterlus and has made seeds bank to avoid buying seeds yearly.

The following are some of the crops incorporated in his garden:

- Ponds with catfish for diversity
- Strawberries
- Garlic
- Pigeon pea
- Banner grass
- Onion
- Thyme
- Tomatoes
- Rosemary
- Mint
- Wild Dagga
- Chilies
- Basil
- Curly
- Aloe etc.
- He also keeps earthworms for fertility purposes and as fish bait.

His produce are used for self-consumption and are also sold to the local community.

Ann showing some of her crops

Lebowakgomo

Anna Molala

We visited Anna Molala in Lebowakgoma, a cluster leader. Her garden was intercropped with variety of crops and they looked very healthy.

Her garden provides the following benefits:

- Herbs are used for eating, their medicinal properties and some for pest control /repellent.
- Tobacco are used for pest control, creating soil fertility and as source of income
- Earth worms are for soil fertility purposes
- Veggies are for self-consumption and as a source of income
- Doves and chickens are for self-consumption as well as to create manure for gardens
- Lucerne are grown for chicken food, to add nitrogen and to work as mulch.

Anna Expressed that water shortage in the village is severe and it hinders farming for backyard garners. Municipal workers open the water only once a week. She said further that the last good rain they had in the village was in December 2017. “I want to drill a borehole so that I will have less water problems and concentrate more on farming. This should be done before the end of 2018. Working with farmers in my community is a passion, but some of them think that somehow I profit from their hard work, even those that I have trained”

Johannes showing us his produce of tomatoes which he sells to the local community

Johannes planted sunflowers as decoy for birds to feed on, instead of his crops

Johannes Matsaung

Johannes is a very hardworking farmer. He has a borehole which he uses for drinking and for household needs. His freshly irrigated green lawn is also an indication that he has a good water source. His garden is well utilised and he has a variety of different crops which includes tomatoes, spinach, herbs, fruit trees etc. It is used for self-consumption and are sold to the local market as well as the local Spaza shop and the community at large. The farmer also planted sunflowers as a decoy for birds to feed on instead of his crops.

Jacob and Oupa, youth farmers from Makweng. They have good crops, but no mulch and the maize suffer from Streak virus disease.

Youth in Lebowakgomo

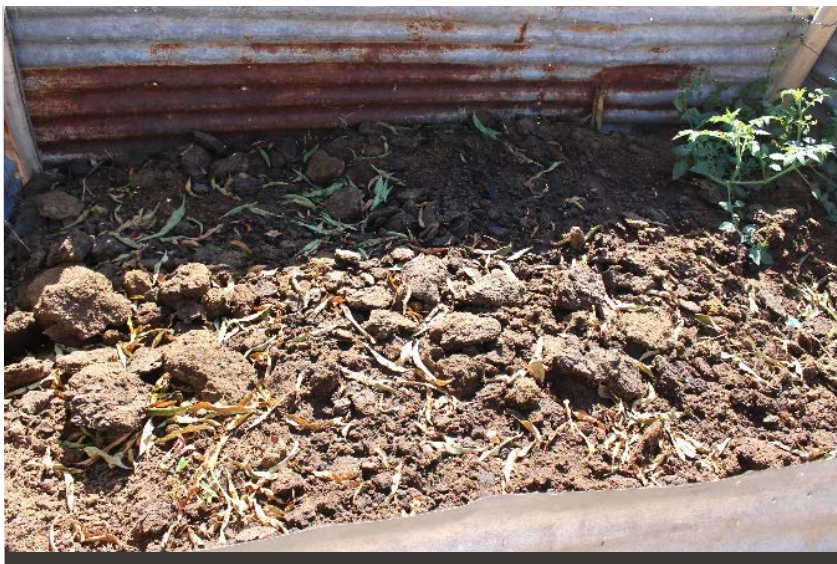
They need help in terms of permaculture principals and ideas in their field. Their field is well taken care of and they have a borehole to water their garden. They have lots of potential as upcoming farmers, but need lots of support from different spheres of organisations such as the government and NGOs. They want to expand their field into a profitable business, but need more knowledge about Climate Smart Agroecology, markets and importance of Agriculture in South Africa.

Tomatoes growing very well

Midan showing her harvest of water lemon which they give to animals and also eat for nutritional purposes

Butterbeans and legumes in the garden

Liquid manure from animals to reduce weed growing in the garden and increase yield



Animal manure for building soil fertility in the garden

Midan R Kekane

Midan is a Cluster leader. She is the Headmaster of Dithabaneg Creche and a dedicated and productive farmer. When you enter her property, you are greeted with a pile of cattle manure at the gate to be used in her garden. She makes uses of the manure to build soil fertility and liquid manure to reduce weed growing in her garden and to increase the yield. Her variety and lush crops are well maintained and has multiple uses.

Some of the crops in her garden includes brinjals/eggplant, tomatoes, butterbeans, spinach and watermelons

Reflections & Outcomes

What practices are farmers experimenting with?

- Trying different types of herbs for spice and as medicinal purposes
- Crop diversification for most of the farmers, excepts for the youth
- Alley cropping and companion planting
- Rainwater harvesting tanks, some even created their own tanks to address water issues
- Farmers are experimenting on new crops in all the villages
- Some farmers have mulched in their fields
- Seed banking for crop preservation and no need to buy seed the following season
- More interest from the youth, especially in Motetema and Lebowakgomo into Smart Climate Agroecology training
- Liquid manure system to deal with manure challenges
- Experimenting with crops they are not used to.

What areas need improvement or troubleshooting

- Mulching is a big challenge for farmers, even other local facilitators are not practising it
- There is a need to experiment with biological pest control methods
- Diversification of livelihoods practices is not yet at their full potential (e.g. bee keeping can be experimented with)
- Small livestock like rabbits and traditional chicken needs to be up scaled
- Garden designs
- Funding and marketing of their produce
- Livelihoods diversification options lacks in most of the farmers
- Grey water training are needed to assist the farmers, especially the youth who are interested in farming
- Water availability is a big problem, as some farmers need to buy water to irrigate crops and for self-consumption.

AWARD is a non-profit organisation specialising in participatory, research-based project implementation. Their work addresses issues of sustainability, inequity and poverty by building natural-resource management competence and supporting sustainable livelihoods. One of their current projects, supported by USAID, focuses on the Olifants River and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems to sustain livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment.

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About USAID: RESILIM-O

USAID: RESILIM-O focuses on the Olifants River Basin and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems that support livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment. The 5-year programme, involving the South African and Mozambican portions of the Olifants catchment, is being implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) and is funded by USAID Southern Africa.

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