



Annual Report March 2014 to February 2015

Director's Report

The 2014 year was a very exciting one for the Zimele team as we threw our weight into rolling out the Zimele programme in line with the support for this offered by the Office of the KZN Premier. We reached out to an additional 22 communities across KZN, and were delighted with the response from these enthusiastic new beneficiaries. Our programmes were met with open arms, and it was inspirational to see the many people we were able to make contact with during this time.

I am pleased to announce that we have met all our goals and I am immensely proud of the Zimele team for this. We have managed to reach an amazing 8 000 people during the past year in the SHG programme, 800 farmers, 140 crafters and more than 400 businesses. Our various programmes are producing excellent results. We have seen smiling faces where once there were people and communities without hope, without a vision for the future. We have changed people's lives beyond all expectations – theirs and ours – which is all we can pray for.

As we looked towards the new financial year, things did seem bleak. The international economic climate had come under even more pressure and people were having to tighten their already tightened belts even more. Globally, available funding for causes and charities has become more limited.

Most alarming, Africa has fallen off the donor radar. The poor people of southern Africa are yesterday's news.

But giving up is simply not an option. Resilience has become our war cry on the rocky economic battleground. There is too much at stake for us to turn our backs on the successes that we have fought so hard and long to

“Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.”

African saying

achieve. There have been tough times before and there will be again. Together, with faith in our God, our team, our beneficiaries and the goodness and worthiness of what we are achieving, we are setting new goals.

A very sincere thank you to those who are always there for us: our global family of loyal donors, supporters and believers, and especially those people who travel so far to hold our hands in person. You make what we do every day worthwhile. Your passion and commitment to Zimele and its programme recipients uplift us.

With you at our side, we never face a problem alone. You are our strength. Thank you for being there ... always.

Rosetta Stander
Director



Self Help Group Report

During the past year, the Self Help Group (SHG) programme activities were expanded through the upscale and roll-out of the programme to all eleven districts of KZN. This process entailed the expansion of Zimele resources to cope with the wider areas and significantly increased numbers of people to be reached. In total, 22 new communities were selected and Zimele employed ten Field Trainers and promoted one Community Facilitator to manage the additional work.

The upscale programme was for two years, and sadly, towards the end of 2014, we had to slowly withdraw from selected districts. We believe that we have left behind 6 000 women who are able to continue with their weekly savings, thus providing them with a steady cash flow. These women have been empowered in so many ways, perhaps most significantly, in financial literacy and the importance of keeping records. The formation of the Clusters was brought forward to provide sustainability to SHG structures in communities that would be impacted by Zimele's withdrawal.

Training: Three planning workshops instead of one were conducted by Zimele to co-ordinate the implementation of various Zimele programmes and to lessen the over-loading of beneficiaries with training and meetings.

At the beginning of 2015, Zimele and its programme beneficiaries in uMgungundlovu-Swayimane, uThukela-Winterton, and uMkhanyakude-Mtubatuba, conducted annual activity planning workshops. For each community, CLAs (and the sole Federation of Swayimane) presented annual activity plans. Zimele teams worked with the groups to consolidate the plans into one calendar for each community.



Above: Calculating the savings



Above: Collecting firewood and returning from the shop

Events: In this reporting period Zimele's oldest Cluster, Thembanani, which was formed in 2008, complied with its NPO registration requirements with the Department of Social Development. For the first time, the Cluster was able to hold a well-supported Annual General Meeting, obtain an audited Financial Report, and submit its report to the Department of Social Development.

Conclusion: During this year, the SHG programme has continued to strive towards achieving significant change for its beneficiaries in KwaZulu-Natal. These improvements include:

- ◆ Improved personal development and savings for almost 8 000 beneficiaries;
- ◆ Improved production and processing of craft/farm produce and tourism services;
- ◆ Improved understanding of business and marketing of crafts and other products.

Overall achievements to date include:

- ◆ Accumulative membership: **7884**
- ◆ Total number of Self Help Groups (SHGs): **726**
- ◆ Total number of Cluster Level Associations (CLAs): **32**
- ◆ Total number of Federations: **1**
- ◆ Total amount saved to date: **R2 309 062.00**
- ◆ Number of loans: **9813**
- ◆ Pre-schools/crèches formed: **32**
- ◆ Orphaned and vulnerable children programmes: **4**
- ◆ Home-based care programmes: **3**
- ◆ Libraries: **2**
- ◆ Computer school: **1**



Craft Report

Training and product development

During this period, the Craft programme trained 130 women in three districts, Winterton, Swayimane and Mtubatuba, with the women completing over 26 new market-ready products. We continued using the “train the trainer” method, with one or two leaders from each group being trained to teach the rest of the group. We welcomed Phillipa Haskins who has become our Product Developer and trainer, creating a stunning array of products. She is a natural at training.

We’ve made a strategic decision to train at various levels because as new women join the Craft programme there is an uneven standard of skills within groups. This training also ensures women increase their level of independence, and in Level 3, they learn the principles of starting their own craft business. The levels include:

Level 1 – Basic Skills Training

Level 2 – Production Training

Level 3 – Specialist Training

Winterton

In 2014 the crafters of Winterton made a range of quality products: a Christmas wreath and a doorstep chicken, a small coin purse, a set of fridge magnets and a handbag with Shwe Shwe scallops. These products have proved to be popular, especially our lovely doorstep chicken and the handbags.

Swayimane

In Swayimane there are now five groups of crafters. During 2014 we had a conflict in one group between members and the group split into two. This solution has been very successful and both groups are now thriving. The smaller group has attracted several new members.

The groups have made some lovely new, innovative products, thanks to the skills of our new Product Developer and Trainer. There is a new set of notebooks combining Shwe Shwe and twill (in large and small sizes), more gorgeous handbags, a tissue holder and iPad cover. We made Easter decorations for our Fair Trade buyers as the celebration of Easter is more significant in countries like Germany and Austria. Some of these products have been positively received and orders have been placed.

Mtubatuba

The three groups of crafters in the area are doing well, despite the physical distance from us. As an area they pose special challenges as it is difficult to get materials to them and difficult for them to return finished products. Transport costs are high, both for us and for them. Craft skills are certainly increasing in this area and the crafters have made stunning oven gloves, lovely little hair clips and business-card holders.

School holiday workshops

Again we held workshops with all craft groups in the July and October school holidays. Zimele supports the workshops with funding but the women arrange everything, ensuring that 195 rural children had meaningful social interaction and fun in the holidays, something they don’t often get.

Craft and marketing shows

The crafters attended the following shows to assist them in developing their business skills:

- ◆ Royal Show, May 23–June 1
- ◆ Fair Trade Week, May 4–10
- ◆ Ladysmith Show, May 15–18

TRADE SHOWS:

- ◆ Design Indaba, Cape Town, February 27–March 2
- ◆ SARCEA, Johannesburg, August 21–24

MARKETS:

- ◆ Garden Show, Pietermaritzburg, September 19–21
- ◆ Hope Market, Umhlanga (Durban), November 1
- ◆ Nottingham Road Market, November 15
- ◆ Wartburg Christmas Market, November 29
- ◆ Tatham Art Gallery Market, Pietermaritzburg, November 29–30

SALES FOR 2014

Total sales of craft for the period were R636 894.00 and the amount paid to crafters was R501 466.00. Sales for the year were extremely pleasing, with our highest selling item our small angel, which sold 2 733 items.

Julia Buss

Co-ordinator: Craft Programme



New Enterprise Development Report

Over this period, the Enterprise team has extended themselves and the beneficiaries in response to the communities' needs at the various levels of business skills and marketing training.

Marketing workshops with Agriculture in Swayimane, Winterton and Mtubatuba: As volume and potential for sales has increased in the Agriculture programme, so training has been vital in educating beneficiaries on how to get their fresh produce to customers. Zimele's Agriculture and Enterprise teams jointly held marketing workshops to help farmers understand the process of selling produce commercially.

Business training: We held strategic planning workshops with the crafters to help the groups understand their rules/regulations and the role of leadership structures. We also conducted business training workshops. Crafters received training in "Selling at Markets" before the women attended markets for experience in selling their products.

Shows/trade fairs: In addition to business training, practical experience is a key part of learning. We took our SME training participants to trade shows during the year, with one significant show in each of the three districts where training had taken place. Crafters, farmers and entrepreneurs were trained through workshops and encouraged to attend. The main shows included: Ladysmith Show (Winterton crafters, 15-18 May); Dolosfees, Richards Bay (Mtubatuba crafters, 1-3 May); Royal Show, Pietermaritzburg (23 May-6 June); Hope Market, Umhlanga (31 May); Wartburg Christmas Show (29 November).

Mentoring and capacity building, Imbokodo Computer School: In February the school's founder/mentor Paul Tomlinson came to visit. Much time was spent in growing the capacity of the governing body of Cluster representatives and now Imbokodo has its own bank account and representatives are mentored in setting up an accounting system. Teachers are designing an advanced ICDL or International Computer Driver's Licence training course for all past graduates. Terry Heaviside and his Computers for Africa team came and carried out repairs and maintenance. Imbokodo's role in the Swayimane community is vital for graduates of the 3-month (ICDL) course, assisting people with employment potential.

Guesthouses: Owner of KaLanga Guesthouse, Thanda Phakathi, formalised her business into a co-op and completed studies in food and beverage management. Thuthukani MaSwazi Guesthouse hosted many Zimele visitors and through marketing grew their client base to include at least 50% independent guests.

Visiting groups: Several international donors visited, with firm bonds formed. Thirty Swayimane youths had an inspirational experience with Canadian-based Across U Hub, which specialises in camps aiming to give direction to youths with fewer opportunities. For Children representatives again visited us to see the work being accomplished, especially with orphaned children, while Zimele USA sent a team that focuses on fundraising in the USA.

Bakers: Taking the Bake for Profit training to the Winterton community jump-started baking enterprises and these women now have the ability to generate an income. Even though some participants did not have electricity, they resourcefully built an 'oven' using a galvanised wash basin and a piece of corrugated iron. Six women received training and are now equipped with skills to run sustainable baking businesses.

Libraries: Our Swayimane and Mtubatuba communities are setting up book libraries, while Thembanani OVC runs a toy and book library, enabling children to learn while at play as well as improving their reading.

Crèches: Much time was dedicated to working with the governing bodies in building capacity for successful crèches. The community must understand that this is an early childhood development centre and not simply a safe place to leave a child. Governing bodies were trained on their roles and the impact they need to have on the child's preparations for school. In forming these social enterprises, the communities needed intensive training on how to make sure these crèches are sustainable and not reliant on external funding.

A busy year always sets a high standard for the year ahead. Our long-term communities have reached the point of maximising both their social and business enterprises and we look forward to the continuing journey ahead.

Kim McCall
Enterprise Developer



Agriculture Report

South African rural communities are facing agricultural land shortages, lack of infrastructure development, and lack of access to finance, so women farmers are facing double challenges: land deprivation from our Apartheid past and traditional/culturally-based land deprivation. After the successes of last year's Agricultural Programme, now communities expect even more.

In-house training: Rural farmers face many challenges, including growing crops without knowing the nature/state of the soil they plant on; the quality of planting material; pests and crop disease management; water shortages requiring a balance between watering plants and personal needs; harvesting and post-harvesting; and adding value to agricultural products to make them marketable and prevent losses. Our Farmer Field School (FFS) curriculum aims to address all of these. So far, 42 training sessions have been conducted with 248 Farmer Support Groups in all three districts by Zimele field trainers.

Formal training: A 5-day course on agro-ecological practices presented by Dovehouse Organics was conducted and followed up with 20 'leader' farmers who train other farmers (the "train-the-trainer" system). "Cross visits" facilitate farmer-to-farmer learning and are a great tool to enhance the transfer of knowledge and skills. Zimele arranged a cross visit in partnership with Biowatch South Africa, an organisation operating in the uMkhanyakude district which advocates using strict agro-ecological principles. Thirty farmers from the Clusters of Mtubatuba took part.

Community training: A number of community training days were held. Training on the importance of soil testing was presented in collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Soil Analytical Services Section. A total of 136 programme participants took part in training sessions in the uMgungundlovu, uThukela and uMkhanyakude districts.

Marketing workshop: Accessing markets and the marketing of agricultural produce remain challenges for small-scale farmers. Buyers are generally limited to local informal markets, not designed for farmers to maximise sales. Economies of scale, costing versus pricing, supply versus demand, and the prices farmers obtain in relation to these elements are barriers for individuals to sell to larger markets. Zimele's New Enterprise Development team presented a marketing workshop to show farmers how to increase their customers and maximise profits.

Soil and water conservation: With many rural communities experiencing limited access to clean water and loss of soils due to poor management, the importance of these issues has been heightened further. Zimele arranged training in partnership with Mahlathini Organics to look at assessing individual gardens and instituting relevant corrective measures.

Farmers' Days: Three Farmers' Days occurred in the past year: two in the uMkhanyakude district and another in uMgungundlovu district. A total of 425 farmers (90% women) and guests from various sectors of rural development and agriculture took part. These days serve as a great tool in facilitating the sharing of knowledge, finding solutions to common problems and creating linkages with reputable input suppliers.

Fencing: Farmers battle with cattle trampling and eating crops, inspiring the development of the Zimele fencing project. With the emphasis always on self-reliance, the project requires that farmers contribute towards the fencing costs. A total of 26 gardens have been fenced in Mtubatuba and Swayimane with Winterton next in line. So far, 14 farming groups from three clusters in Mtubatuba have benefited from this programme with a total of R125 083.25 spent and R56 687.63 recovered in payments from the farmers. Swayimane farmers have also profited with six individual gardens and three group gardens having been fenced, with costs totalling R58 909.99 and R30 455.00 paid back. The programme is a great success so far and is planned to continue in the uThukela district.

Agriculture programme in numbers:

- ◆ Seedlings distributed: **150 000**
- ◆ Seed potatoes distributed: **10 000** (10 tons)
- ◆ No. of trainings conducted in-house: **42**
- ◆ No. of Farmer Support Groups trained: **248**
- ◆ No. of trainings held, outsourced: **5**
- ◆ No. of participants trained, outsourced: **571**
- ◆ Overall number of farmers reached: **800**
- ◆ Gardens fenced: **22** (10 individual and 12 group)
- ◆ Water-related support: **2** (pumps and 2 tanks)
- ◆ Money borrowed for infrastructure developments: **R183 995.24**
- ◆ Money paid back: **R79 943.95**
- ◆ Money owed: **R12 053.67**

Michael Malinga
Co-ordinator: Agriculture Programme



Financial Report

Our income for 2014/2015 was R16 652 190, quite a sizeable increase from last year's R12 553 655, for which we are very grateful. It is incredibly fulfilling to see the many years of hard work starting to quite literally pay dividends and the support of our donors being justified. Our efforts are now rewarded with concrete proof of our different programmes' sustainability in the form of income being generated. This year, craft is not the only one of Zimele Community's programmes to be performing well.

Understandably, our expenditure has increased over this period as our infrastructure has expanded to cope with the roll-out campaign, along with higher costs for essentials such as vehicles and fuel, banking charges etc.



DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT for the year ended 28 February 2015

	2015	2014
	R	R
REVENUE	16 652 190	12 553 655
Grants, donations and project income	15 627 143	12 494 536
Interest received	85 255	43 257
Other income	939 792	15 862
EXPENDITURE	15 580 184	11 112 134
Office operational costs	2 435 375	1 687 544
Craft project	1 010 920	873 943
SHG project	10 071 780	6 437 958
Zimele Fair Trade	677 528	819 549
Agriculture	916 260	675 282
Enterprise Development	468 321	617 858
NET SURPLUS	1 072 006	1 441 521

In 'for profit' companies, a few hands can earn high profits. In 'not for profit' organisations or NPOs such as Zimele, it generally takes many hands to implement the various projects efficiently. Careful attention is essential to ensure that all spending is meaningful and effective to the maximum degree. The objective is that overhead costs do not exceed 15% of the annual turnover. I am extremely happy with what Zimele Community has achieved over this period with the resources at hand.

This was the last year of our contract with the Office of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal. We are proud to leave behind many more motivated, self-confident women who have a better understanding of financial literacy, have formed strong new friendships in their saving circles, and are now fulfilled individuals who feel differently about themselves, their communities, and the future.

In closing, may I express my sincere thanks as always to all our donors for their trust and their investment in Zimele and its beneficiaries. Also, grateful thanks to the Zimele Community personnel who consistently work with such passion and dedication to make it all happen and ensure the success of the various Zimele projects.

Rosetta Stander
Director



What is the Zimele Community?

Zimele is the Zulu word for “stand on their own feet”. Zimele Community was established in 2007 to assist people living in remote, impoverished communities of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is a faith-based, non-profit organisation that promotes and mentors those interested in starting sustainable self-help and women’s empowerment projects. Its founder and director, Rosetta Stander, was inspired to help women who have minimal resources, little education, and are burdened by poverty and the need to support extended households (often because of family members lost to HIV-AIDS).

The basis of Zimele’s programme is to help people reach their full potential and achieve their own ambitions and financial independence, rather than trapping them in a cycle of grant/aid dependence. Zimele is about “a hand up” rather than “a hand out”. Through Zimele Community, beneficiaries achieve self-discovery and fulfilment. They are shown how to form savings/Self Help Groups (SHG) to save a little money each month, sometimes just a few rands from government grants or pensions. By pooling member contributions, these cash reserves enable members to start their own small businesses according to individual strengths and resources.

These women discover inner strength and abilities that they didn’t believe existed within themselves. They share and uplift others in the groups and their community, aiming to improve the lives of those in need around them. They direct their focus towards the elderly, the ill, and most often the children, who are frequently orphaned and vulnerable. Crèches are formed, book and toy libraries set up, feeding schemes put in place. Through the Zimele programme, the microcosm of distant villages changes for the better forever.

The Zimele Community model

Phase 1: the Self Help Group (SHG)

In Phase 1, 10-20 women form a savings group and collect funding for individual micro-enterprises according to personal strengths and available resources.

Phase 2: Cluster Level Association (CLA)

Localised SHGs form a CLA with a minimum of two members from six to twelve SHGs. Clusters develop wider business opportunities and initiate social service projects.

Phase 3: Federation

Responsible for the independent overall management and development of SHGs and CLAs on a wider scale. The members negotiate with government and banks on behalf of their communities. Federations take over management of SHG and CLA programmes as part of Zimele’s long-term exit strategy from communities. The first South African Federation was launched in August 2014.

Our vision:

To confront the root causes of poverty and remove the barriers to economic self-sufficiency for women in South Africa’s rural communities.

Our mission:

To empower women with the skills, resources, and support networks to start businesses and social service projects to sustain themselves, their families and their communities.

Our promise to the women we help:

- ◆ We will try to understand your individual problems
- ◆ We will explore your needs
- ◆ We will identify your special skills and teach you new ones
- ◆ We will link you to others to give you the confidence to improve your life and the lives of those around you.

We promise our donors:

- ◆ We will explain our vision and our methodology
- ◆ We will clarify how you can help us to achieve our goals
- ◆ We will keep you informed of our progress
- ◆ We need you: your support, your enthusiasm, your passion that keep us focused. We love it when donor groups travel to see what we do and care enough to engage with the people and communities that they help to transform.

Contact us:

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