

Case study: Food Security

Pensioner reaps the rewards of determination and perseverance

When people face major challenges in life, there are those who take a step back, consider their options, formulate and plan, and put everything they have into making a success of things. It is these people who Eskom most admires – and who benefit most from their CSI initiatives.

One such driven individual is pensioner Hlaleleni Louisa Buthelezi. She saw the lack of job opportunities and poverty in her community, but she also noted an abundance of land in the area, and decided to start the Ixhiba cooperative. She gathered a group of seven people together and they went to study how to start a cooperative at the local Umsunduzi Further Education and Training (FET) college.



When they completed the course, they formed a cooperative and registered it formally in June 2005.

In 2009, Eskom donated three hydroponic tunnels where the tomatoes are

planted. The tunnels protect the produce from severe weather conditions and pests and keeps in the moisture, which in turn makes the tomatoes grow faster and better.

Buthelezi says, “These tomatoes inside the hydroponic are like our children in the ICU that we have to take care of. When we get here in the mornings we have to check, scout and see who’s got a sad face and has their head lopsided, who looks hungry, who’s not feeling well and who looks thirsty. We are their mothers and fathers and have to feed them, give them water and medicine (fertilizer) if they are sick.”

Thanks to Eskom’s donation and the cooperative members’ dedication, the initiative has provided job opportunities for 24 young people who work at the site on a daily basis.

Buthelezi says: “Most people here don’t have jobs and are just sitting at home but I think this has inspired many of the people to get up and do something productive with their lives. This support we’ve received has made us stand out here in Imbali because even with all the challenges we’ve had over the years, nobody has ever seen this kind of thing here before.”

CEO of the Eskom Development Foundation, Haylene Liberty-Nel, says: “It is wonderful to see people like Buthelezi make the most of Eskom’s donations. It really makes the implementation of our corporate social investment (CSI) strategy so rewarding.”



