

LISEDI (RIFILWE) TUNNEL FARMING PROJECT



LOCATION: South of Lanseria Airport, South Africa.

TARGET GROUP: Lesedi (Rifilwe) community

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND.

Delloitte in partnership with the Lonehill Methodist Church (LMC) established a pilot farming project aimed at creating income generating opportunities within the vulnerable community of Lesedi (Rifilwe). In 2009, donated spinach seedlings were planted in black plastic bags with river sand and put into three newly erected greenhouse tunnels (also donated) and this marked the establishment of the Lesedi (Rifilwe) Tunnel Farming Project. The project provides hope to the hopeless and a stepping stone out of poverty. The aim of the project is to establish a generous community, who by working together manage their own future. Community participants are equipped to run their own business, market their goods and manage the full running of their farm.

The project is located South of Lanseria Airport, Johannesburg, on a plot donated to the Methodist Church by Mr Drummond. The residents are former farm workers, who worked for Mr Drummond, and their families. Upon his death the workers and their families continued to reside on the plot but were unable to continue income generating activities. The donation of land to the Methodist Church was a bid to serve the community that was facing enormous challenges that stemmed from unemployment caused by the owners passing away. True to its nature of constantly engaging underprivileged and marginalised communities in areas of hunger and poverty alleviation, the Methodist Church established several projects to combat these social vices, which include the Farming Project.

The Project is managed by the Rifilwe Methodist Church on behalf of the Lonehill Methodist Church and Dellote. It currently a staff complement of 5 volunteers who carry out the day to day activities of the project, which include "feeding" and weeding of the plants and marketing. "Feeding" of the plants, a it is called, is the process of mixing two special chemicals with water and then "feeding" the plants, by way of normal watering with the resultant mixture. Feeding is done thrice a day. Raw material which consist mainly of the two special chemical are still donated by Delloitte and Packaging is obtained intermittently from well wishers. The current crop has already reached harvesting stage in all tunnels. The market share is made up of the community and surrounding areas.

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LONEHILL METHODIST CHURCH
OUTREACH

Eventually the aim of the project is to multiply the number of tunnels and have individuals within the community own a tunnel or tunnels. At this stage, collectively the community will become a significant role player in market gardening for the Johannesburg metropolitan area as a whole. This dream will obviously be helped if the project had a delivery vehicle for distributing their produce and processing equipment for processed and packaged vegetables.



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