

HEIFER NEWS

In partnership, achieving food security and poverty alleviation in rural communities

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Working with communities to end hunger and poverty in South Africa and care for the Earth

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Miss Moto's New Coat

By Claire Hawkridge, Resource Development Officer

Miss Moto lives in Nsikeneni Village, near Kokstad in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is a rural village, far from any urban centre, in the foothills of the Drakensberg. The landscape is beautiful – sweeping hills with fields of grass blowing in the chilly breeze, rivers sparkling through green vegetation. The landscape seems to go on forever. It is also cold in winter. People get sick, children shiver. Without a warm coat, it is hard to get by.

When Miss Moto first joined the Sukuma Farmer's Association, the group was just getting started. She received training on poultry management, vegetable production, basic financial management, the Heifer International Cornerstones® and a range of other skills she would need. Once she and the other members of the group were ready, they received chickens.

These chickens made such a difference in the lives of the project members and their families. Eggs provide a great source of high-quality protein, which is important to a healthy diet, especially for young children. Eggs can also be sold to earn a small income. That is what Miss Moto did.



Miss Moto with other participants of Passing on the Gift® ceremony in 2010

Through selling eggs, Miss Moto was able to earn enough money to buy herself a beautiful, warm coat for the winter, as well as cover other expenses.

She used the opportunity, skills and assets (livestock) provided by Heifer International South Africa to make her life better.

In 2009, Miss Moto took another step in her journey towards being a successful small farmer when she received three Boer goats.

Since then, she has been carefully raising her goats and on 9 June 2011 she was able to become one of the first members of the Sukuma Project to pass on goats to another needy family. All Heifer International South Africa project members agree, when they receive livestock, that they will pass on the equivalent of what they receive, usually in the form of the livestock's offspring, to another family. In this way the gift is passed on again and again and many more families in the community are helped than if only the original project families benefited.

Miss Moto is very happy. She plans to continue to raise goats and to keep improving her own life and the lives of other members of her community by selling goats and Passing on the Gift®. Her story is just one of many small farmers in Nsikeneni Village who are seeing ways to improve their lives and the lives of those around them by developing their small efforts into successful small farming businesses.

Miss Moto in her new coat (picture below)



Address

P.O. Box 1770
Hillcrest
3650

Telephone

+27 31 777 1374

Email

heifersa@heifer.org.za

Website

www.heifer.org.za

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Learners at Atholl Heights Primary School, Westville, KZN during Read a Thon

Heifer Celebrates Mandela Day

By Claire Hawkrigde, Resource Development Officer

18 July was Mandela Day, when thousands of people gave time and effort to help others in honour of Nelson Mandela. Heifer International South Africa found not one but two ways to celebrate the day.

Palesa Xulu, a psychology student from Durban, joined the Mandela Day Read to Feed Challenge and spent her 67 minutes reading to children at the Dalaxolo Lower Primary School. School principle, Mrs Dlamini was thrilled, "It is the first time we have Mandela Day but it is the day when everyone is doing something for the other. We have here only one volunteer and we are so excited about it. I hope we will be able to participate in Mandela Day next year and we will have more volunteers like Palesa."

On the same day at Michelins Village near Port Shepstone, members of the Sukuma Poultry Project came together to help each other plant their brand new fruit trees. They were joined by volunteers, Heifer staff members and four University of KwaZulu Natal students from the, who had recently completed a month-long internship in the village.

Mrs Eustina Mkhize spoke for many when she said: "I'm very excited about the trees. I am hoping to sell the fruit and to eat it with my children."

Project members still have a lot of work to do to produce fruit from the trees but helping each other plant them, with the assistance of the volunteers, was a great start for them and a great way to show

their Mandela Day spirit.

From the City to a Poor Rural Village

By Magdalena Wos, Resource Development Officer

On 8 June 2011, eight students from University of KwaZulu Natal decided to leave their comfortable city lives for one month and move to a village in a poverty stricken rural area to experience the challenges of everyday life that millions of South Africans face. They lived with families of Heifer International South Africa's Sukuma Poultry Project.

During the month, the students lived, worked and participated in everyday activities of the local community and assisted the project members in getting started with their small farming activities.

This life changing month for the students was a result of a partnership between the University of KwaZulu Natal and Heifer International South Africa with the goal of providing students with relevant, hands on experience for their studies and careers.

One of the students who moved to Mabheleni village is Lungile Jili, a 32 year old student in the final year of her degree in Environmental Science and Geography at the University of KwaZulu Natal. Time spent within the community was very different from her life in Pietermaritzburg. While staying with members of Sukuma Poultry Project, Lungile was living with Mrs. Mchunu.

She started her day early in the morning, just like the local women, by fetching water. Her daily routine was concentrated on planting vegetable seedlings, looking after vegetable gardens, training the community on environmental issues as well

as assisting students from the local high school in preparations for their final exams.

During that month, Lungile had an opportunity to see things with which rural people have to struggle every day but also experience moments of joy and happiness. With a smile on her face, she recalls being chased by geese and participating in local ceremonies with dancing and singing.

Asked about her opinion of Heifer International South Africa's Sukuma Project, she said, "I have enjoyed the experience of working with Heifer. I have seen how it has changed people's mindset of not lazing around but do something with their lives. If they can come together, plant vegetables and fruits and produce them adequately, they can survive rural life."

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who show their interest in our work and support Heifer International South Africa in its mission to end hunger and poverty in South Africa. Thank you for your donations as well as spreading the good word about the organisation. This enables Heifer International South Africa to assist more rural families on their way to become food secure and self sustainable. We hope that you will continue to support the mission of Heifer International South Africa in the future.

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