
SEWING PROJECT REPORT APRIL 2020 / MARCH 2023

INTRODUCTION

The APD Mpumalanga initiated a sewing programme to empower 30 young persons with different disabilities with the sewing skills with the aim of enable them to be self-reliant. The learners will be split into three groups of ten learners per group to be trained for the period of ten weeks. The stipend of R1500.00 will be paid to each learner for transport fares. After completing the course each group will register the cooperative, find a workshop and identify the product. Each group will be given five sewing machines and the sewing material as a starter kit to start the business. The group will be monitored by the APD Mpumalanga SSPs for the period of twelve months until they are on their feet. Surette Braack the founder of the Lowveld Sewing Academy was appointed to train the learners. The training was as follows:

OCTOBER 2022

On the 3rd of October 2022 the 10 candidates for the sewing project attended the project assessment. Out of ten candidates that attended the assessment, six has passed the assessment while other four failed the assessment. The social worker and the facilitator agreed that the social worker will recruit four candidates to fill the space so that the group can consist of ten members which is criteria for the sewing group.

The candidates were assessed based on four activities that are as follows;

- To insert a tread into the needle
- To hand stitch in a piece of a cloth
- To insert the tread in the needle on the machine
- To make a stitch in a piece of cloth using the machine.

The social worker will recruit more candidates. The facilitator and the social worker arrange that the new candidates must arrive early at 08:00 for assessment before the class start because the class will start at 09:00 in the morning.

On the 10th of October 2022 6 learners for the sewing project attended the first day of training. Four candidates were recruited for assessment before the class start. Due to the assessment criteria one candidate fail the assessment. The training started at 09:00 to 12:00. On this day the learners got their sewing machines and connected them, learners were given sewing kits and they were trained on how to use the machine, using different stitches on the small material.

The ground rules were set as follows, learners need to be in the class at 09:00 in the morning, learners are not allowed to answer their cell phones during the session. It was communicated that if a person is sick or absent he/she must send the apology to the facilitator. The training sessions will be on Mondays and Tuesdays.

On the 12 October 2022 all the nine learners were present for the training day two. The attendance register was signed and the breakfast was serve to the learners. The training started at 09:00. The

learners were given the measurement tapes, they started to cut the fabrics using the measuring tape. Using the cutting skill learners started to cut and sew mini bags as part of the day activities. During the session the facilitator gave the group a new identity conveying that the group is a “thunga” tribe.

All the parties had agreed that next week on the 17th October 2022 the group will continue to the 3rd activity where each group member is expected to start the real bag from the beginning until the end. The facilitator and the social worker agreed that they recruit four candidates for the project to be assessed on Monday at 08:00 in the morning because the group has nine members instead of ten members.

On the 17th October 2022 nine learners attended the training session. Four new candidates were assessed for the sewing group. Three candidates passed the assessment while one candidate failed the process. Due to the fact that the group needed one member to become ten. The facilitator communicated with the social worker that the two candidates that passed the assessment should be kept for the next group. The learners were given sewing material to sew bags. Each learner started with ironing the material. The group was divided into two where-by one group started with sewing of the stripes for the bag while other group members started with sewing of the bag.

On the 19th October 2022 ten learners attended the training session. The facilitator added another assistant facilitator Martiana Brits to assist the new learner that joined the group on the 17th of October 2022 to keep-up with the groups work. Learners were given a paper with a zig-zag pattern to sew on it.

The purpose of the activity was to train learners on how turn the stitches without removing the fabric from the machine. The group proceeded with sewing of the bags and the strings. The facilitator gave each learner an x-ray that is used to measure the crease while ironing the fabric. Nine learners finished their bags while the new student did not manage to finish the bag. The facilitator and the group agreed that the next session that will be on the 24 October 2022, the group will cut the shirts patterns as part of the process to make shirts. Group members were allowed to take their bags home to show their families and bring the bags back on the 24th of October 2022.

On the 24th of October 2022 the group participated in the sewing competition. The competition was about sewing speed. Each group member was given a task to sew a circle in a piece of paper in preparation of sewing the t-shirts sleeves for the following training session. Neil Du Toit won the competition, he was the first one to finish the activity.

Group members were given a task to measure each other for the shirt that will be sew on the 26 October 2022. The learner that was behind with her work managed to sew and finished the bag. The social worker informed the facilitator about one learner who conveyed that she was not feeling well. However, the learner managed to concentrate and finish her daily activities.

On the 26 of October 2022 the group attended their six-day sewing training. The group started with the cutting of the shirt patterns for the collar, the sleeves and the body. The group further continue with using the patterns to cut the fabric. Each group member marked their patterns their names and sizes. One of the student lost her patterns. All the students assisted to look for the lost patterns, however the patterns were found under the fabric that the particular student was using. The group then proceeded with the second activity where-by the group members were given the task to paste different patterns into the doll. The purpose was to check if the learners can identify different patterns. The facilitator conveyed that on Monday all the group members will be given the new measurements tapes that are in Celsius because for now they have the tape that is in centimetres.

On the 31st of October 2022 the learners attended the training. The social work supervisor, the social worker and the trainees attended a short meeting regarding the feedback on the trainee’s request that they need the sewing machines to be allocated to each learner rather than the group. The social work supervisor reminded the trainees about the purpose of the sewing project and clarify the use of

APD Mpumalanga transport. Trainees were given the opportunity to ask question by the social work supervisor, but nobody asked the question. On this training day the trainees managed to finish cutting all the shirt patterns, including the collar, the body and the sleeves.

NOVEMBER 2022

On the 2nd of November 2022 the group attended training day eight. Due to load shedding the adapted to the situation and started the session with the trainees' hand stitching the shirts patterns together. The session took only three hours. The team agreed that on 7th of November 2022 the group will add one hour to the session to catch-up for the hour that they lost.

On the 7th of November 2022 the first group attended the training day nine. Breakfast was served to the group. The group started the day by pinning the pieces of patterns together and sew them together. The group had managed to sew the whole body of the shirt excluding the sleeves of the shirt. The social worker announces to the group that the group will have a meeting at twelve after the group had finished the session.

After the session the group, the social workers. The social work supervisor and the director attended the meeting at the Mbombela office boardroom. The purpose of the meeting was that the director wanted to know the progress of the group and to give clarity to any questions that the trainees may have pertaining the sewing training and the future of the sewing project.

On the 14 of November 2022 the team started the day with breakfast and signing of the register. The trainees continued to stitch the shirt together. During the session most of the students were doing the mistakes, however when the facilitator insists that they should start again, they were angry and demotivated. The social worker intervened by encouraging the group members and sensitize with them about their vision as a group.

On the 16th November 2022 the team started the day with breakfast and signing of the register. One student Innocent Manyike sent his apologies to attend a family funeral. Before the session four students notify the social worker that they had flu. The later information was communicated to the facilitator, and together with the group decided to knock-off early at eleven. The trainees continued to stitch the shirt together. Some of the members did manage to complete the stitching of the shirt together while others are still behind.

On the 21st of November 2022 ten group members attended the sewing training. The group members managed to finish the shirt. They were train on how to open sew button holes using the machine elements for buttons. Another activity is when the group was thought on how to open the buttons holes on the piece of a material.

On the 22 November 2022 the team usually starts with breakfast before the class, but on this day there was no bread to provide for the group. It was because the facilitator has swap the sewing training days from Wednesday to Tuesday. However, the social worker communicated with the facilitator regarding the matter, the facilitator then went to the shop and bought bread for the group. It was then when the food was prepared for the group to have breakfast. One of the student Goodman Moyane was absent and sent his apology via WhatsApp. Most of the group members managed to finish their shirts while other were still behind. Other members were given a homework to take their shirts home and finish sewing-in the buttons, except for one student Danisile Mathebula who has not finish the shirt.

On the 28 of November 2022 the students started with eating breakfast and signing of the attendance register. All the group members manage to finish their shirts. The group members were given the opportunity to wear their shirts and they were taken photos wearing them. One student who has a physical disability which is his right arm being deformed. He saw a ladies' shirt, which the social worker

wore it as a model for him. The team agreed to add one hour to the next sessions so that they can cover the last day which is supposed to be the 14th of December 2022 to the 12 of December 2022

After the session the group has a meeting with the social worker. The group administrator conveyed to the group to submit the relevant documents to him via WhatsApp so that he can register the cooperative.

On The 30th of November 2022 the students started with eating breakfast and signing of the attendance register. Three students were absent and send their apologies. The group members joined the four piece of the short together, starting with joining of the front piece and later the back piece. The group agreed that on the 5th of December 2022 they should start sewing the shorts. The group members were not happy due to the fact that they waiting for their salaries and they were complaining of being broke. Most of the learners were tired and they kept making mistakes and they have to repeat what they have done.

The APD Mpumalanga office donated seven 10 kg bags of instant porridge to the learners who were present at the sewing training.

DECEMBER 2022

On the 5th of December 2022 the group started with signing of the register and ate breakfast. Two student were absent. One is Smangaliso Mokgale who reported that he did not have transport fares to travel to class. Another student is Innocent Manyike who reported that his wheelchair is broken. The group sew in the elastic on the waist of the shorts. The group managed to finish the short except for one student and the two that were absent during the training.

On the 7th of December 2022 the group started with signing of the attendance register. All the students were present at the training session. The group proceeded to finish the shorts, while the students who were absent on the previous training were given the opportunity to catch up on the activities that were done on the day that they were absent from class.. The students were facilitated on how to cut the skirt pattern since during the course they were facilitated on cutting the pattern for the shirt and the short. The facilitator promised to buy the cake for the two students who celebrated their birthdays during the course of the two months training.

On the 12 of December 2022 the group started with the signing of the register and ate breakfast. All the students were present at the training session. It was the last day of the training as the result the APD Mpumalanga had prepared lunch for the learners to celebrate farewell to the learners. The facilitator conducted the short course regarding theory on different fabrics. Some of the students were able to model their products while others conveyed that it was cold and raining so they won't be able to wear shorts. Innocent Manyike who is paraplegic was not comfortable to wear a short, however he brought his aunt to model his pant. After the session there was a farewell celebration were by all APD Mpumalanga staff attended. The facilitator, the director, social worker and the learner Smangaliso Mokgale offered the message of support. The facilitator Surrate brought the cake for the students who celebrated their birthdays during the course of the training. The group pictures were taken and the celebration ended with one learner performing rap music for the audience.

JANUARY 2023

On the 16th of January 2023 the social worker contacted Matsulu office to ask for more names for the sewing project. The SSPs decided to recruit more learners because in the previous group the social worker recruited less candidates only to find that more candidates failed the assessments, it ended up hindering the sewing project to start on time. On the 18th of January 2023 the social worker contacted all 20 sewing candidates to invite them to the screening on the 25 of January 2023.

On the 25th of January 2023 twenty sewing candidates attended screening for the sewing project: second group. Only fifteen candidates passed the screening while five candidates failed the screening.

The fifteen candidates that have passed the screening were told to come for the assessment on the 27 January 2023.

On the 27 of January 2023 the fourteen second group candidates attended the sewing assessment because one candidate did not pitch due to miscommunication between the candidate and the parent. Ten candidates passed the assessment while four candidates failed the assessments. After the assessment the group had a meeting with the director, supervisor and the social worker. The director explained the purpose of the group. The memorandum of understanding was explained and the group was given time to think about it before signing them.

FEBRUARY 2023

On the 1st of February 2023 ten learners attended the first day of sewing training. The training started at 09:00 to 12:00. The learners introduced themselves to the group as well as the facilitator and the assistant facilitator. On this day the learners got their sewing machines and connected them, learners were given sewing kits and they were trained on how to use the machine, using different stitches on the small material. The learners were given ten minutes' break. The learners asked to go see what is happening at the APD Mpumalanga factory. The seamstress Gugu Modlane facilitated the learners by showing them how industrial machines work and different types of sewing machines.

On the 6 of February 2023 the group attended the second day of training. Before the class start learners were given banking details forms to fill at home and bring them back on the next session. The first activity of the day was to teach the learners how to cut different types of fabrics and paste them to the file to show the salvage of the fabric. The second activity was the identification of different patterns and how to do measurements. On the 08th of February 2023 the group attended the third day training. Breakfast was served to the students. Before the class starts some of the group members submitted the banking details forms while others did not submit due to the mistakes that they done on the forms. The learners were given three forms to correct the mistakes and submit them on the 13th of February 2023. One of the group member requested that the transport pick one beneficiary that is a wheelchair user at home when it is raining. The SSPs communicated with the transport owner about the issue, the owner agreed. The learners were given fabrics to sew the bag. Learners were taught on how to cut the patterns for the bags.

On the 13th of February 2023 the group attended the fourth day training. Breakfast was served to the students. The group continued with sewing of the bag. Three students managed to finish sewing the bags while other students were still behind. During the training the electricity went off at 11:00 due to load shedding, the facilitator adapted easily to the situation and decided to give students the task to measure each other for the pants sizes using the measuring tapes and the pants patterns. One student lost his pins. The social worker borrowed the pins at the factory for the student so that he can continue with the activity of the day. After a while the student pins were discovered in the class. The pins borrowed at the factory were sent back to Jenny the textile manager at APD Mpumalanga.

On the 15th of February 2023 the group attended the fifth day training. Breakfast was served to the students. All members managed to finish the bags. The learners were given fabrics to use for the pants. The group members were given pants patterns to cut in order to start sewing the pants. One of the student Michael made a mistake of cutting the hem of the pant, but the facilitator called all the group members to the cutting table where she demonstrated on how to correctly cut the pattern. She emphasized that the pattern should be cut on the outside not inside. The latter learner was advised to cut the other side, so that both sides are equal, however it was explained to him that his short will be a bit shorter than his classmates.

On the 20th of February 2023 the learners attended the six day of training. The training schedule was postponed from 09:00 -12:00 to 11:00-14:00 because of the electricity load shedding. The activity of the day was to hand stitch the pants patterns together. Due to electricity problems the facilitator

decided to assess the learners regarding the use of the machine. The facilitator and learners decided to cover the time wasted during load shedding by adding one hour to three hours' sessions starting on the next session that will be on the 22 February 2023.

The learners attended the meeting with the APD Mpumalanga management after class. Learners were probed about their relationship with the Masibambisane centre with the idea of the group working at the centre so long as they are looking for their own workshop. Most of the learners reported that they will like to start a cooperative for themselves and not collaborating with the centre due to conflicts between the centre management and beneficiaries.

The APD Mpumalanga management- conducted the follow-up on the case where there was a meeting with the Masibambisane centre manager and the committee. The findings were that the centre is malfunctioning as the result the environment is not conducive for the group to work at Masibambisane centre.

On the 22th of February 2023 the group attended the seven day of training. Breakfast was served to the students. The students continued to sew the pants, but they did not finish the pants. Due to electricity crises the group decided to stay after the class for 30 minutes to try to finish the product, even though they had extended the class duration from three hours to four hours to cover the time lost because of load shedding.

On the 27th of February 2023 the group attended the eighth day of training. Breakfast was served to the students. The learners had to continue to sew the pants. The second activity was to put elastic on the pants. The learners were given the homework on the previous day to bring any item of clothes that has a label. The purpose was to demonstrate to the group how the label works in terms of how much is the cotton percent on the fabric, how to set the iron according to the label.

MARCH 2023

Learners had finish to sew the pants. They have started to sew the shirts. It took the learners six days to sew the shirts. On the last day of the training the learners had the opportunity to model the clothes that they have made. Sewing certificates were given to the learners by the trainer.

APRIL 2023

Group 1

The first group Thunga Tribe PWD was given five singer sewing machines and two electrical plugs by the APD Mpumalanga management team and SSPs on the 26 April 2023. Some sewing material was donated as well so that the group can practice their skill since it's been a long time after attending the training. On the day two sewing machines and one electrical plug was donated to Dasha Centre for the beneficiaries who attended the training with group1 to use at the centre. The group members were very excited about the machines, even though afterwards they inquire about advanced machines because they have two members who were trained using the advanced machines. The clarification was provided by the by SSP regarding the advanced sewing machines.

Picture of the machine handover for group one below



Picture of the machines hand-over to Dasha Centre below



Group 2

The group have identified the workshop. The workshop needed some renovations since it was a storeroom. The APD Mpumalanga donated two 25 litres of enamel paint and painting materials to the group. The group cleaned and painted the workshop inside and outside. The toilet was fixed as well as making ramps for the place to be accessible. Sewing tables were installed using the pallets. It was communicated that the group members are waiting for their disability grants to donate for the

electrical cords so that they can install the electricity. Five singer sewing machines and two electrical plugs were handed-over to the group.

Picture of the machine handover to Group 2 below



Group 3

The eleven candidates who passed the screening interviews were assess where-by ten candidates were successful while one candidate failed the sewing assessment. The group consist of ten ladies The training will resume on the 3rd of May 20

MAY 2023

Group 1

On the 17 of May 2023 follow-up was conducted regarding the progress of the group. It was reported that members were still waiting for the company to be approved before they can start working. The SSP conducted follow-up to SEDA employee regarding the progress of the registration. He reported that Thunga Tribe application is approved he is now waiting for the certificate. The information was communicated to group. Group members indicated that now that the company is registered they will meet soon to start working.

Dasha Centre reported that Neil Du Toit is back at the centre after relocating to Skukuza to stay with his grandmother. It was indicated that Surrate Braack went to Dasha to remind the latter, Michael and Malaki who is the learner at Dasha who did not qualify to join the sewing group last year because he was under-age on how to use the machines. Because Malaki was identified as a perfect candidate to learn sewing skills. The principal indicated that quarterly reports will be compiled and send to the APD Mpumalanga's director.

GROUP 2

The Brand Ambassador Fashion has installed the electricity in the workshop. Follow-up was conducted to Mduduzi regarding the company registration, he indicated that one group member Alfred wanted to pull-out of the group in order to further his studies. The meeting with the group was conducted by the SSPs and the social work manager where it was reported that the latter will continue with the group, however he needs psychological support with his personal issues at home. It is reported that the group received the start-up material of seven rolls of sewing materials and one cutting table from APD Mpumalanga.

GROUP 3

On the 5th of May 2023 the third group attended the first day of sewing training. Before the training resume there were many stumbling blocks on the way. The two cables for the advanced machines were placed into the machines that were donated to Brand Ambassador Fashion by mistakes, but the SSP manage to collect them on time before the training resume. The second challenge was that one of the student was replaced because of the lack of commitment. The latter was absent for the first day of training and she did not send any apology until she was contacted by the SSP. One of the candidate who had previously passed the sewing assessment for the first group was contacted to replace the latter. One learner was admitted to the hospital due to sickness. Fortunately, she was released after two days and joined the group. The facilitator and her assistance were very helpful in terms of assisting the two learners that were behind to catch-up with the group. The group has successful finished the first product which is the shopping bag. So far the group has started with the second product which is the shirt. The group has already identified the workshop that is at Daantjie. The place belongs to one of the beneficiary who indicated that the group can use it for free until they get their own workshop. The pictures of the place will be sent to the SSP.

JUNE 2023

Group 1

Follow-up regarding the progress of the group since the machine handover was done where it was indicated that the electricity was cut off by the municipality. However, the centre manager Mr Moses Mlombo reported that they are busy with the municipality regarding the re-installation of the electricity. Meanwhile the group has done nothing with the machines due to the above mentioned challenge. Moses reported that he will update the SSP as soon as the electricity matter is resolved. The group members requested revision of one day regarding the use of the machines by Surrette or Thelma. Taking in consideration that it's been a while since the training.

Group 3

The group is in the middle of the training. Two products are being completed, now in the process of sewing the third product which is the last product. On the 7th of June 2023 Mduduzi Gumede assisted the group with the process of cooperative registration. Three potential workshops are being identified at kaDaantjie, White River and Kabokweni. The group will view the places and submit the pictures to the SSP.

JULY 2023

Group 1

On the 20th of July 2023 the Thunga Tribe was supposed to have a meeting with the facilitator and the SSP at Msogwaba Disability Centre with the purpose of providing revision on sewing skill and to be facilitated on how to clean and maintain the sewing machines. Upon arrival to the centre there was only one beneficiary at the gate. The chairperson was contacted regarding the aforementioned

problem he verbalised that the centre manager was not around Nelspruit with the keys. He communicated that the SSP postponed the meeting as he will arrange another meeting and inform the SSP. The message was conveyed to the facilitator and without other options the SSP had to contact the rest of the group who were still on the road to cancel the meeting and explain the key challenge. The team proceeded to the second group at Matsulu.

After reporting the matter to the supervisor the SSP was advised to plan another meeting with Thunga Tribe that will be held at APD Mpumalanga offices on the 28th of July 2023 at 09:00. The meeting was held at APD Mpumalanga Mbombela offices on the 28 of July 2023 were only four beneficiaries attended while three were absent. Smangalisio Mokgale sent apology communicating that he has secured a temporally employment at Ermelo meanwhile the other two group members did send any apologies. The Mbombela management that is the Director, social work manager, social work supervisor and the social worker attended the meeting. It was discovered that so far the Thunga Tribe has done nothing with the machines and the materials donated to them. The reason being lack of commitment to other group members as one of the member Portia verbalised that some members do not attend the group meetings as a result of that it has been difficult for the group to proceed. The decision taken was that the group should look for the workshop in the area that is central to all the members which can be Pienaar or Daantjie. Meanwhile the machines will be fetched as it was reported that they are not bin the centre but at the private home of the centre manager, reason being that the group perceived the centre to not being a safety place for the machines due to high level of crime in the area. The group received their sewing certificates. It was decided that the social worker will contact Mduduzi Gumede regarding the information about co-operative registration

Group 2

It is reported that on the 10th of July 2023, Mr Bheki the chairperson of the Brand Ambassador contacted Thembelihle to inform her about an idea the team had, on how to market and to sell the Brand ambassador fashion's products. He mentioned that they want to take their bussiness to the people, where there is a lot of people like the Spar complex during social security grants pay days. The team requested to be assisted with the following items to make this marketing idea a reality.

- Gazebo
- 2 Foldable chairs
- 1 Foldable tables

The Brand Ambassador Fashion was visited on the 20th of July 2023 by the facilitator and the SSP for monitoring and to provide machine maintenance skills. The group has displayed the products that they have make outside on top of the door. Between the products displayed there were two navy blue uniform skirts that have two pleads. The facilitator took both the skirts and asked the group to came closer. She identified the mistakes on the skirts and provided training on how they should be made in the future. The group was oriented on how to sew a zip for both males and females. The facilitator demonstrated the skills on how to clean and maintain the machines. Each group member was given an opportunity to open, clean and to put back the machine elements. Some members were struggling to put back the elements, but the facilitator has emphasized that they need to be careful when they clean the machines because the machines are very sensitive they can break easily if one has force the element on it. One bottle of sewing machine oil was donated to the group by the facilitator. It was suggested that the group need to sew using a factory system where-by one person is responsible for one task like cutting, then one person to sew the product while another person insert the zip/pockets or buttons. The reason for this strategy will make one person to be perfect on what s/he does since they will be practising the same skill every day.

The last activity was to assess the workshop. The facilitator was impressed by the fact that the group has made sewing tables, cutting tables and weights for themselves. The facilitator had emphasized

that the group needs to fix something in order to comply in order to attract more customers. The recommendations are as follows:

- To install electrical cables on the wall because they are a health hazard if they are lying on the floor.
- To remove corrugated irons from the workshop
- To put more lights into the workshop or a double fluorescent light.
- To have big storage shelves for the materials. They can also use the shelves to barricade/divide the kitchen area from the workshop
- To have rails for their finish products
- To have 100 hangers for the clothes
- To have a mini fitting room for the clients when they are taking measurements

Picture of the group with their products



Group 3

On the 17th of July 2023 the SSP met with the group and SEDA employee to complete the registration of the co-operative. Seven group members were present while other three send apologies due to personal reasons, SEDA employee verbalised that he will conduct hoe visits for the members who send apologies. Thunga Zonke is been approved as the name of the group. Thunga Zonke does not have a workshop so far, however the members conveyed that they will view the place at Tekatakho Kabokweni industrials on the 8th of August 2023.

CONCLUSION

All the three groups are finish with the training. So far group one and three has to look for the workshop. Group 1 was given the sewing machines, however the machines were fetched until the group has mänge to get a workshop and willing to continue with the co-operative. Group 2 is doing well with their machines and they have already had a workshop.

Compiled by Annah Skhosana

NB. Only few pictures are attached because the system does not allow many pictures on the document.