



### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Sylvia, getting her hands dirty in the water sector**

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According to Mrs Sylvia Malindi, the Project leader of Sedibeng Sa Bophelo Organic Farming, "Women's month is a month where women around the world should be appreciated, respected and acknowledged for the legacy of the freedom that they had fought for".

Mrs Malindi is 59 years old and resides in Sebokeng, Zone 12. She is a founder and chairperson of Sedibeng Sa Bophelo Organic Farming, which started operating in 2004. Currently the project has 19 women and 5 males.

Sedibeng Sa Bophelo Organic Farming operate in the areas of Sebokeng and deals with vegetable production, River cleaning, recycling, and controlling soil erosion.

"I am a woman who is not afraid of challenges and I consider myself as an inspiration to upcoming entrepreneurs who encounter struggles before they can reach their goals", said Malindi.

Some of the project objectives are poverty alleviation and environmental awareness through growing organic foods; to develop local farmer's market production system and to become a youth training centre.

"We provide food, herbs and seedlings from the gardens to Schools, Homes for persons with disabilities and Supermarkets in the community. We also transfer our skills and knowledge to members of the community to help fight poverty", added Project Manager.

Malindi said that they have practiced many ways to save water and to keep a long life of their crops by doing soil sandwich and permaculture. They also store rain water during rainy seasons for crop watering, use drip irrigation in the tunnels and the project does not use any chemicals in the garden to ensure good health of the community.

"We have adopted Sonder River that is between Sonder water and Kanana and removed littered substances such as papers, plastics, bottles, stones and weeds that blocked the river from flowing beautifully", said Malindi.

"Some of our challenges is lack of enough tunnels to protect our crops from global warming and to increase the lifespan of our crops; shortage of irrigation system on open field and lack of resources", added Malindi.

The project also has great achievements and that includes; in 2011, winning the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in women in water sector award from the Department of Water and Sanitation; won Agribusiness women of the year award from Gauteng Department of Agriculture and rural development and also awarded Nestle community nutrition award certificate.



## water & sanitation

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“As the Project leader, I am inspired by Mrs Matshepo Khumalo from Limpopo province who has drastically transformed my perception towards life and she spent her life fighting poverty and malnutrition in rural areas in some parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces”, said smiling Malindi.

Her message to the community of Sedibeng is that “Everything can fade away but there is nothing that can take away your education, wisdom and intelligence”. She would like to encourage the community to support the project.

In conclusion, Malindi said “I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Water and Sanitation for the support and award they gave us, we hope the Department continue to work with us to fight poverty in our community”, concluded Malindi.

**Emmah Maluleke**