

Fairtrade, Floods and Family: Raisin Production in Eksteenskui



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Introducing our Project

‘Ethical Production in South Africa: Advancing a Cultural Economy Approach’,
funded by the Leverhulme Trust

Case studies:

- Sustainable wild flower harvesting on the Agulhas Plain.
- Eksteenskuil Agricultural Co-operative, Fairtrade raisin producers



Key Research Questions

- What ethical schemes and policies are involved in each supply chain
- Whose values are represented in each of the supply chains?
- Are concerns about environmental conservation converging or competing with socio- economic development in ethical supply chains?

Aims of Presentation

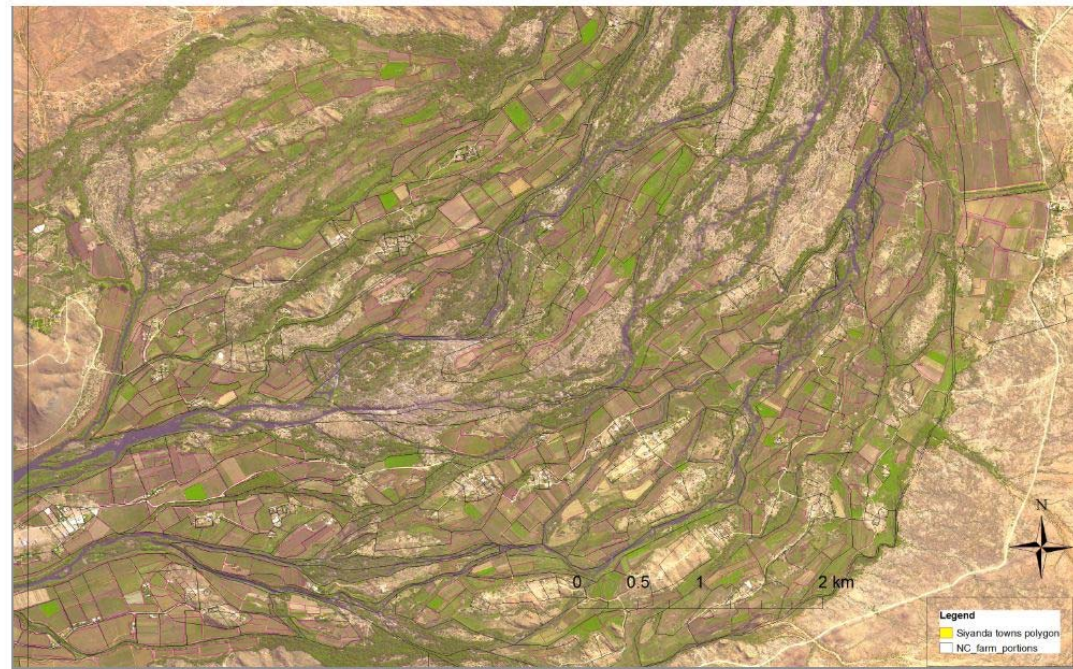
- Talk about the impacts of the recent floods on Eksteenskuil
- Talk about the community and family life as seen through the eyes of women

Eksteenskuil's Biography 1

Location

- In the Lower Orange River, Northern Cape
- 21 small islands, categorised into 3 broader groups.
- Approximately 600 ha under production
- Despite small distances, many areas are remote.

GIS – Plan view of Eksteenskuil



Eksteenskuil's Biography 2

Population

- Largely a Coloured community
- 'Community' created via an apartheid-era resettlement scheme post-WW2
- Approx 600 people



Economy

- Dominated by irrigation-fed farming
- Grape production very important, but also other crops
- Productivity relatively low
- Significant socio-economic divisions



Eksteenskuil's Biography 3

Traidcraft and Fairtrade

- Relationship with Traidcraft of 15+ years, purchase of raisins and developmental support
- FLO Certified in 2003
- Co-operative formed in December 2006
- Fairtrade has provided a stable market for producers and Premium has supported various projects
- However, Co-op has under-performed and has not maximised opportunities available to it



Floods 2011

- Heavy rainfall in the catchment of the Orange River from late December 2010
- Two flood peaks in the Eksteenskuil area: mid January and early February
- River height reached over 7 metres, discharge levels over 6,000 Cumecs.
- First major flood since 1988 – a '20' year flood but timings dreadful for farmers
- Accompanied by heavy summer rains – double the *annual* rainfall fell in 2 months

February 2011 – OR at Upington



October 2010 – OR at Upington



The Scale of the Floods

The bridge at Ikaia, October 2010



The bridge at Ikaia, mid-January 2011



Augrabies Falls, October 2010



Augrabies Falls, March 2011



Impacts of floods for EAC: Crop Damage

Extreme damage to vines



Vine roots exposed



Rampant weed growth



New vines washed away



Impacts of floods for EAC: Farm Damage

Lucerne crops will need replanting



Rains hampered drying, lowering quality



Collapsed irrigation channel



Embankments have been damaged



Impacts of floods for EAC: Infrastructure

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Electricity lines down on North Island



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This road was impassable for weeks



Impacts of floods for EAC

Farmers and workers were unable to access fields



People were stranded for weeks



Makeshift bridge repairs



Moving raisins by any means possible



Impacts on Productivity and Income

- Choice Grade raisin production 2011 = 200 tonnes (50% below average).
- However price above average.
- 20% of raisins sold to non-Fairtrade processor!
- Big fall in available Premium for EAC



Responses to the floods

- Farmers complained of lack of information and communication
- National flood relief fund of R80 million
- Letter written by EAC to Northern Cape government requesting assistance.



Aid arriving via 'Gift of the Givers Foundation', backed by corporate donors including BP and Unilever. Deliveries were made to Keimoes and some islands in Eksteenskuil.

The floods and everyday life: 米莉〔女子名〕's story

- Family support and hired labour during floods
- Life on Middle Island: relative wealth and status
- The Women's Group and community life



N.b. the identities of the individuals have been removed for reasons of privacy

The floods and everyday life: 米莉〔女子名〕's story (cont.)

- “In the past, the whole community went to one church and they used to have choir competitions and things like that. It used to be a joyful time when people from all islands got together. There is one church on Middle Island that still does events like that. It is lessening, but it used to be very popular in the past”.
- An ‘entrepreneurial spirit’
- Hopes for her children



The floods and everyday life: 洛蕾塔[女子名's story

- A childhood on North Island:
“There was no time for play, we had to work. Maybe there were children who did not have to work after school, maybe their circumstances were different and their fathers could afford to pay people, but I had to come home from school and work”.
- Domestic work: a labour of love
- “When the warning came for the second flood, we all had to jump in and save as much as possible. Everybody in the family was affected by the losses”.



The floods and everyday life: 洛蕾塔[女子名]'s story (cont.)

- Illness and poor medical support during floods
- “In 1988 they received medication and pills for the water. This time we have not received anything like that. I used up all my airtime to phone the municipality, the hospital, just to get some support”.
- Ideas for a clinic or library on North Island
- “I have such a lot of dreams, but they won't come true”.



Conclusions (1)

Differential impact of floods:

- All islands affected; North Island most badly affected.
- Damage to roads worst on South and North islands.
- Damage to vines and other crops worst on North Island.
- Rates of illness highest amongst those with no access to clean water and medicines.
- Resilience and community spirit in evidence.



Conclusions (2)

Suggested Longer-term Flood Planning Measures: government

- Establishment of a disaster planning committee or advisory board at Municipality level to ensure effective access for Eksteenskuil residents to information and advice in the event of future floods.
- Effective management by the Department of Water Affairs of reservoir levels in advance of predicted floods.

Suggested Longer-term Flood Planning Measures: EAC

- Better advice on planting new vines.
- Development of a Disaster Management Plan for EAC to reduce impacts of natural hazards.
- Establishment of an emergency relief fund by EAC to provide support for its members in the event of future disasters.

Any questions?

