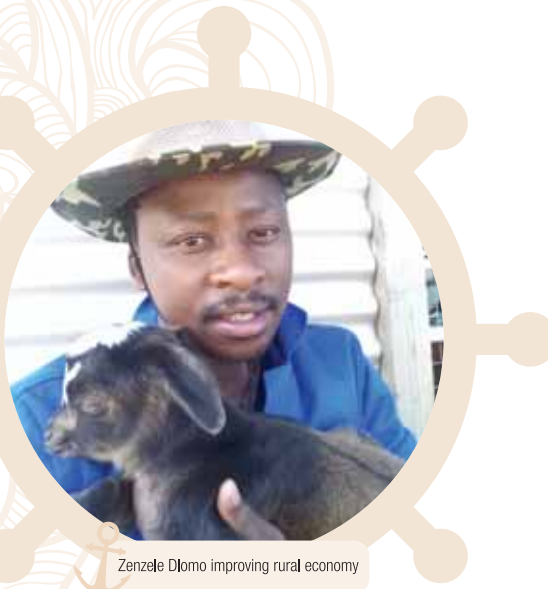


Zenzele's passion for agriculture outweighed three years of training

Zenzele Dlomo (28) applied at MUT to study for a diploma in Agriculture in 2008, but to his disappointment he was not admitted for his first choice. However this did not discourage him: he had done his research and knew that MUT was going to give him a strong foundation to pursue any career. Zenzele accepted MUT's offer of a place in the Public Finance and Accounting diploma, but he never lost sight of his passion - to learn more about agriculture so that one day he could contribute to the development of the rural economy through farming.

In his first year at MUT, Zenzele would go across to the Natural Sciences faculty to interact with agriculture students and lecturers to obtain basic information about career options and how he could transfer to agriculture after completing his accounting diploma. What may have looked like mere curiosity has contributed to a ten-year long farming career. In 2009 Zenzele opened a small goat farming business called Gayede Goat Project in his home village of eMakhabeleni in Kranskop. Juggling his studies and a business was never a challenge for Zenzele because he was driven by a passion for farming and was armed with plenty of research about the path he wanted to take.

"The business started very small, but the dream was too big for me to settle for what it was. Three years into the business I needed to move to a bigger farm which also required more financial injection. I was fortunate to get financial investment in 2013 from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). This funding enabled the dream to grow bigger and the business footprint to expand throughout KwaZulu-Natal," said Zenzele. His desire for the business to make a difference to the lives of rural communities was amongst the founding principles for the Gayede Goat Project. Local communities are now also benefiting through the Goat Investment Programme which provides an opportunity for them to breed goats on their own.



Zenzele Dlomo improving rural economy

"The Goat Investment Programme started in 2017 and is open to everyone who has the desire to be a goat farmer. Our members make monthly contributions for a period of twelve months, during which time we breed goats on their behalf. By the end of the year-long contract we give them ten goats to start their own goat farms. This programme makes it easier and more affordable to buy goats. Although the government is doing its best to invest in agriculture and farming, funding is very scarce; it is important that we also create opportunities and empower one another so that the rural economy improves," explains Zenzele.

This passionate young goat farmer says he "eats, lives and dreams goat". Although Gayede Goat Project is located in a deep rural setting, it is managed very professionally. It has a well-structured ten-year rolling plan and has established partnerships with other goat farmers to share knowledge and also ensure proper governance.



Zenzele's flock of goats

MUT programme offering is getting better and better. Year 2019 has seen the first cohort of students graduating with the inaugural Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resources and Management.



The pioneers! Some of the first students to graduate with a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resources and Management

As the saying goes,

"It takes a village to raise a child."

Graduates and willing friends of MUT are welcome to support the alumni donate-a-bench project or the alumni bursary fund.

Bank Account: 40-7755-0173
 Bank Name: ABSA
 Branch Code: ABSA Public Sector KZN 632005
 Account Name: Mangosuthu University of Technology
 Reference: 9263/60306 Alumni Relations

Contact: alumni@mut.ac.za / zama@mut.ac.za