



science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SAASTA

South African Agency for Science
and Technology Advancement

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Project Leader: Prof Anna Margaretha Opperman

Academic Disciplines: Nutrition, Consumer Science, Food Science and Technology and Business

Project Description

The CPUT project seeks to empower subsistence fisher women of the Weskusmandjie cooperative to produce, identify and market safe food products through a participatory research approach and therefore, contribute to poverty relief, job creation and zero hunger. The Weskusmandjie (West Coast Basket hereafter referred to as Weskusmandjie) cooperative united women from the West Coast fishing community to address their economic needs and aspirations through a jointly owned community enterprise. They produce home-made food items, which are sold directly to community members but also via a digital platform for fishery product marketing.

Project Description Continued

Unfortunately, the survival rate of cooperatives in South Africa (SA) has been dismal. Poor education and business training of cooperative members contribute to this problem as training is often generalised and unrelated to the product or service being offered. Retraining rarely takes place to address the cooperative's values, principles and policies that govern its success. As cooperatives are further faced by economic challenges brought on by pandemics such as Covid-19 as well as droughts, floods and other weather hazards, they are often unable to adapt. To prevent the Weskusmandjie from heading in the same direction as other South African cooperatives it is proposed that they receive training on food product and business development to ensure business sustainability and adaptability while simultaneously contributing to poverty alleviation and job creation as contextualised within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Objectives

- For Weskusmandjie to contribute towards poverty reduction and unemployment in South Africa, aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), its future needs to be guaranteed Therefore the aim of this project is to augment the Weskusmandjie members' (1) training and execution of new product development and (2) business skills development to ensure business sustainability and adaptability, contributing towards poverty alleviation and job creation facilitated through an inclusive community-based research project.
- To achieve aim (1) (training and new product development) within the Science Shop model the following objectives are proposed that addresses (1a) training, (1b) cooperative participation and (1c) research.

Research questions

- **Based on the literature reviewed the following research questions are posed:**
- **Training and execution of new product development (objective 1)**
 1. How effective has the training provided to the Weskusmandjie been to enhance members' skills and knowledge of product development, food safety and the identification of potential products for future business sustainability?
 2. Which novel mussel-based products will meet the need of the Weskusmandjie taking into consideration their current socio-economic challenges and resource constraints?

Research questions Continued

- **Based on the literature reviewed the following research questions are posed:**
- **Business skills development training (objective 2)**
 - How effective is the business development training of the Weskusmanjie in:
 - a. understanding current and future consumer markets
 - b. application of social media in the cooperative context?
 - What are consumers' perceptions and use of products from the West Coast?
 - Are consumers willing to purchase locally produced products produced by the Weskusmandjie?
 - What is the EO of Weskusmandjie members?

Project Team Roles and Responsibilities

Suné HenningLead
-Co-investigator
-Co-supervisor

Elizabeth Kempen
-Co-investigator
-Supervisor
-Project coordinator
-Researcher

