Urban Agriculture Discussion and Site Visit #2 (Broadleaze Farm)

Date: 13th December 2013

Venue: Broadleaze Farm

Attendance: Robert Fincham, Samantha Govender, Irene Dugmore, Ncwaka Madlalose, Mfundo Mahalase, Rob Symonds, Mak, Judy Stuart, Don Blacklaw, Patsy Blacklaw, Monique Salomon, Tom van der Poel, Philisiwe Ngwane, Nkholo Dlamini, Brain Karlsen, Sheperd Kazunga, Phumla Dlamini


1. Recap from the last workshop
   - MIDI’s agriculture conference held in 2009 (under the leadership of Monique Salomon) was the start of MIDI’s passion for urban agriculture and organic farming
   - Interested in what was happening in the PMB region regarding urban agriculture
   - Forum ‘emerges organically’, Platform for sharing
   - Importance of the food value chain (markets); reaching the markets is something the collective can assist in

2. The forum and its impact
   - How do we start making the forum a movement? A collective that increasingly supports the work done by the individuals and organisations present. How can the collective grow teeth to make an impact? As a group what are we focused on? Large/ Small scale farming?

3. Supporting local small scale farmers
   - MIDI’s Supermarket Study 2010: looked at the role of supermarkets. It was found that franchise supermarkets source food from a range of places but not necessarily local. The systems in which the supermarkets operate restrict their ability to support local farmers. Spar supermarkets have the ability to source locally as they are individually owned stores BUT now the systems are becoming stricter and therefore restricting farmer’s direct access to markets
   - The key to accessing the markets (by local farmers) is to be consistent. Potential solution: small farmers can link to a commercial farmer (who can supply on a regular basis). The commercial farmer can take the produce from the small scale farmers therefore ensuring that the co-operative is consistent. Access to the markets is a huge issue BUT producing quality produce is a challenge

4. Speciality nodes (maximising available resources)
   - Centres of innovation/ nodes where various individuals/ organisations can learn (knowledge base)
   - Need to maximise the resources that the various nodes have. Mobile workshops that goes into communities and fix tractors, etc. Develop the idea of a seed library
   - Organic gardens in the Richmond area. A single household were a farmer is producing food for his household and a surplus (R500p/month). He was also keen to teach the other households in the area for R500p/month. Another farmer in Colenso. They need to be trained to produce the right...
quality of produce. Lots of vacant land in the area which was given to potential farmers. There are
global packsheds that are willing to work with communities and enter into commercial markets

- Community Works Programme: good quality initiatives from the use of these funds
- Farmyard Organics: looking to help school gardens. With regards to school gardens; schools close
  for long periods of time during the course of the year and the gardens are neglected
- Tunnels: these are very hi tech, funded projects which usually end in failure when funding is over.
  Around Natal, you can see the number of derelict tunnels. Similarly hydroponic systems failed. Training
  is therefore essential. Lilly of the Valley is an example of the working tunnels
- France (CBO): communal area for gardening. Give away to individual vulnerable households
  (orphans, sickly, etc). Don’t have money to buy seeds. Local municipality assists sometimes. Seeds: BESG
  are looking at seeds that can reproduce. How can you continually have seeds available? The Midlands
  Organic Growers Association also has a seed problem. Broadleaze wants to set up a seed library
  (collection of seeds and lend out). Also the idea is to mass produce seeds, but not for a profit. Idea
  of having policy that protects seeds from genetic modification. African Centre for Crop Improvement
  (UKZN) also producing seeds for different climatic conditions

5. Youth and agriculture
   - Look at young people coming into the programme. Example the LEGACY programme in
     Edendale. The challenge lies in making urban agriculture look ‘sexy’ among youth. There are
     many opportunities along the value chain in which young people can get involved. Training
     and creating enthusiasm is essential is solving the problem (Future Farmers Model)
   - MIDI/PCH Project: make sure child participation is a key feature in the process

6. General (Concluding remarks)
   - Learnt the value of mushrooms
   - “No one knows everything, no one knows nothing.” Monique Salomon
   - “Like the gardener, the leader must take responsibility for what he cultivates.” Nelson Mandela
   - Twitter account: #urbanagPMB @MIDIPMB
   - Website: www.midi.org.za
   - Facebook: MIDI - Msunduzi Innovation and Development Institute

7. Site Visit
   - Rob Symonds took the forum on a tour of his farm, showcasing the different farm plots, ways
     of organic farming as well as his packaging site

Date of next meeting: 12th Feb ’14, Venue: Dambuza, Child Welfare Soup Kitchen, Time: 9- 11 am