

2020 VOLUME 1

# VOICES

MME MAPOTSANE HLOPHO  
– THE ROSEHIP COMPANY

In 2019 we closed an investment in The Rosehip Company (TRC), an organic rosehip processor based in the Maluti Mountains of Lesotho. This investment aligns with our broader strategy of backing a diversified group of healthy food companies with strong export channels (to de-risk against local currency devaluations), vertical supply chain integration, competitive supply “moats,” low production costs, and aligned with rising consumer demand. TRC produces almost 50% of the world’s organic rosehip in one of the poorest countries on earth where annual GDP is <\$1,000/capita and the unemployment rate is 28%. The rosehip is used for cosmetics (skincare), herbal tea and equine supplements and employs local villagers to take ownership of the harvest. TRC employs over 4,000 people (primarily women), each of whom supports approximately eight people; thus over 32,000 are financially supported. The “voice” below is that of TRC and, more importantly, one of its employees.

**Mme Mapotsane Hlopho (53) is one of nearly 3,500 harvesters who hand pick our rosehip every season. Since the investment from 1K Africa, the number of harvesters has increased to 4,500 and is expected to continue to increase as global distribution expands.**

Mme - a respectful way to address an older woman in Sesotho.

Like many women in Masemouse village, Mme Mapotsane is the sole provider for her three children and five grandchildren. Life in the Maluti mountains can be harsh. Poverty and disease are ongoing problems, and Mme Mapotsane has lost two children to HIV/AIDS. There is no electricity, and running water is at the other end of a long walk each day. Still, singing and dancing always brightens Mme Mapotsane’s day.

The Basotho people take pride in their livestock and donkeys. Goats and cattle roam the hills and ravines. At night, villagers gather wood and animal droppings to cook over open fires, often wrapped in “Seana Morena”, the Basotho name for the bright, intricately woven traditional blankets that are unique to the kingdom of Lesotho. When she is not working, Mme Mapotsane likes to listen to the radio to stay on top of current affairs or work in her vegetable garden with her childhood best friend.

Since she joined the Rosehip family, Mme Mapotsane has seen her eldest son finish his schooling and provided food and clothes for the rest of her family. As soon as the next harvesting season starts, she will be able to pay the school fees needed for her grandchild to begin high school. She works with very little supervision, and has developed an indestructible sense of purpose. The satisfaction of fulfilling the ancient instinct of providing for one’s family has been rekindled in her soul.



## Q&A

WITH MME MAPOTSANE HLOPHO

**How long have you been working for the Rosehip Company?** I have been working for The Rosehip Company since 2008.

**What do you do when you’re not harvesting rosehip?** When I’m not harvesting rosehip, I tend to my fields.

**How have you benefited from working in the harvest?** I get a very big benefit from harvesting rosehip. I can buy food. I can pay for my grandchildren to attend school.

**What training did you receive?** The training I received for harvesting rosehip was to always wash my hands and use very clean bags because the rosehip is food. I also learned that I need to take care of personal

**What challenges does your community face?** The challenge we face when it’s dry is that we’re actually starving. So we wait until the rosehip is ready to harvest, and then we can go on with life again.

The Rosehip Company thrives because of the commitment of people like Mme Mapotsane. We greatly value our harvester’s work and commit to providing a healthy and economically sustainable future for them and their families. **The Rosehip Company Team**