

Homemade body lotions

Salmi Kaulinge is an energetic young entrepreneur who is experimenting with indigenous oils from the northern parts of the country.

She told *Sister* she was using the extracted oil from a small seed, that almost has the same shape and size as a pumpkin seed, in the production of body lotions sold at various shops in Katutura and few other towns.

The oil from this particular seed and many others are traditionally used by the people of the northern areas. But, she added, to extract oil is hard work and a woman may spend a whole day of labour to extract one litre of oil. The seeds must be gathered in the veld, then stamped, cooked and slowly filtered to get the pure oil base.

When asked about the availability of technology to reduce the workload and help the women to produce more oil, Salmi said she was looking at a machine used by women in Zimbabwe to extract oil from peanuts.

"This might be an appropriate machine and it would be good if we could buy two of these machines to be tested and used by the women up north."

"I will show you another oil



Salmi Kaulinge sitting in front of an artwork depicting the liberation struggle.

which is especially good for the hair. It is used by the Bushmen people. Unfortunately the oil has a strong smell and may, for this reason, not be preferred by townspeople. We can of course add perfume to the oil and it will still be a natural product locally made."

Apart from the women who provide the oil, six women are involved in mixing and bottling the lotions at Salmi's house. Three women in Katutura are selling the lotions on commission basis, another two in the surrounding areas of Windhoek and another woman in

Ondangua.

Salmi said the project was still in its initial stages and changes were being made to the lotions according to sales. "For example, we found that the lotion bottled in a black bottle with a golden label sells better than the pink one in a white bottle. We are also trying to be innovative with petroleum jellie to compete with other manufacturers. We are adding a bit of colour to the jellie and hope people will like it more than the colourless ones."

When asked about profits out of the sales, Salmi said it was still going slow because these were new products and many people didn't know of them. She added that promotion and advertising of the products on a larger scale were in the pipeline as soon as funding allowed for this. A couple of donor agencies were very positive about the prospects of the project because it was generating some income for women, because it was making use of natural indigenous substances, and because it will possibly bring appropriate technology to rural women that will make their workload lighter.

So, remember, next time you see a hand or body lotion with a label saying it is natural and Namibian, try it out!



On local market