



WAITROSE FOUNDATION SOUTHERN AFRICA

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS

Foreword by Russell Crowe

The **Waitrose Foundation** is deep rooted in the core values of the **John Lewis Partnership**. Through the work we have been doing together we have improved livelihoods since 2005 and we very much look forward to meeting up in October to celebrate our huge 20th anniversary milestone.

I have personally been involved with the Foundation for the past 5 years, and it's been an honour to Chair the Steering Group for the past 2 years. Seeing the growth from small beginnings we have expanded the reach of the Foundation in South Africa to more than 560 farms in total. Ensuring we give back to all the farms and their communities that we rely on to grow, pick and pack our fantastic fresh produce is distinctly Partnership and part of our DNA.

The farm worker committees are crucial in deciding how best to spend the funds and improve livelihoods as well as local communities. From education, health, sports facilities, personal development and much more, the Foundation has supported thousands of people over the years and we are immensely proud to be in this together, and when we all work together we succeed as one team.

In our Waitrose shops and online we will be celebrating 20 years of Foundation in August, through showcasing a wide selection of products with lots of marketing and media activity to raise awareness and make it easier for our customers to 'do good'. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment, let's make 2025 our biggest and best year yet!

Russell Crowe is the Waitrose Foundation Southern Africa's Steering Group Chairman and Trading Manager Fruit and Horticulture at Waitrose.

WELCOME TO THE SECOND EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER!

We are extremely thankful to have received so much positive feedback on our March 2025 newsletter.

We appreciate everyone who took the time to let us know what they found very useful and uplifting in our articles.

We will continue to share information that will serve as a source of inspiration and delight for all our stakeholders. Join us as we continue to focus on our special **20th Anniversary Celebration Year!**





Earlier this year, members of our **Farm Support Team** journeyed to **Zambia and Zimbabwe** - two countries central to the Waitrose Foundation's footprint in **Southern Africa**. The purpose of the trip was to develop a deeper understanding of the day-to-day realities faced by farmworkers and their communities, and to strengthen the partnerships that make our shared impact possible.

Shared Challenges, Shared Hope: Our team identified a number of common challenges that communities face across both countries, particularly in the areas of education, access to healthcare, clean water, and youth development. Yet, amid the difficulties, we also encountered stories of innovation, resilience, and hope.

Education and Youth Development: In many areas, overcrowded primary schools and the remoteness of secondary schools pose a significant barrier to education - especially for girls, who may need to leave home and live with distant relatives to continue their studies. These situations increase vulnerability to social issues such as teenage pregnancy. Encouragingly, local efforts to invest in education are gaining ground. In one community, a grower took the initiative to build a new library and additional classroom space. Across every school we visited, the value placed on learning was unmistakable, seen in the passion of educators and the discipline and pride of the learners themselves.

Water and Food Security: Water scarcity remains a major challenge, particularly during the dry season. Families often walk long distances to collect water, and some boreholes run dry before day's end. Reliable access to water enables the cultivation of home gardens, improving both nutrition and income opportunities - making this a critical area for future projects.

Healthcare and Maternal Health: Healthcare infrastructure is often limited, with clinics lacking basic medication and maternal care resources. The absence of sanitary products for women and girls disrupts education and work routines, compelling some to use alternatives like toilet paper to manage daily life. In Zambia, preventable diseases like malaria continue to affect families, further underscoring the need for health education and mosquito net distribution.

Social and Economic Empowerment: There is a growing emphasis on equipping youth and families with skills in financial literacy, conflict resolution, and leadership. Sport also emerged as a unifying force with significant potential for youth development. The concept of training community coaches was particularly emphasised, sparking discussions around sport as a platform for empowerment. We also witnessed meaningful progress on gender equity - one memorable moment being a woman confidently operating a tractor, exemplifying women's increasing participation in agriculture.

Strength in Partnerships: One thing is clear: our local partners are the driving force behind much of the progress we witnessed. From workers to exporters to growers to community leaders, their commitment to sustainable development is inspiring.





Central Programmes address and strengthen socio-economic development, fostering leadership, youth development, wellness and economic empowerment, and are based on regional needs.

Strong Worker Committee leadership and regional networks are key factors for advancing the social development work of the Foundation, not only on individual farms but in regions where similar social challenges are experienced by groups of farms.

Recent training with committee chairpersons focused on orientation to changes within the Foundation, including the topic of Safeguarding in the arena of Social Development on farms. Other topics presented included Consolidation of Roles and Responsibilities of chairpersons (including basic Leadership Skills beyond project management) as well as Social Development Planning and Introduction to Social Systems. Feedback after the sessions confirmed that new knowledge was imparted, skills were sharpened, awareness of the important roles of worker committees increased and **regional networks** were established or strengthened.



Emerging Farmers inspire in the Eastern Cape

Meet 25 year old **Sigcine Manyonta**, born and bred in Fort Beaufort, a small town in the Eastern Cape. We spent time with Sigcine while on site visits in the region. Sigcine and her family are part of our Emerging Farmers Programme.

Sigcine attended the Winterberg Agricultural High School because of her early interest in agriculture. She soon realised that agriculture has different streams that she can choose from depending on her specific interests. She discovered that she had an interest in production as well as the flow of the produce post harvesting. She embarked on a Diploma in Logistics and secured an internship to gain practical experience in the exporting of citrus upon successful completion of the Diploma.

She is now working part-time at Oakdene Citrus, a family-owned citrus farm whilst studying towards an Advanced Diploma in Agricultural Management at the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha. What is truly inspiring about Sigcine's story is that along with her mom, she will eventually take over the reins on the farm while her dad provides technical support.

This is a fantastic example of great teamwork and planning for succession.



Community Voices

Resilience and Community Support at Saratoga

Pienie Baardman (age 50), is a former Worker Committee Chairperson and rugby player/referee from **Saratoga** Farm near **Robertson**. Pienie suffered a severe stroke on 3 March 2024 and was hospitalised for a total of six months, receiving intensive physiotherapy at three hospitals during that time. Since then he has been recovering well with the wonderful support of his family and community on Saratoga. To build up his strength, he uses the gym equipment in the Community Centre on the farm. The facility was upgraded with Waitrose Foundation funding.

Pienie enjoys encouraging others who have suffered similar setbacks, inspiring them to remain positive. He is passionate about his faith, his community and sport. A former provincial rugby player himself, Pienie is still very involved in sport on the farm, following the success of players as they advance from rural school teams to club level and beyond. While speaking to Pienie recently, it was clear that patience is important in recovery. He is still learning to write again. He can walk short distances without support and longer distances with a walking stick. He says: "With Jesus on my side, I have no fear. Without beautiful people around me at Saratoga and also at the Waitrose Foundation, I wouldn't have made it. At the right time the support came."



Productive teamwork at Kalos Farm in Ceres

The Worker Committee of **Kalos** farm in the Ceres district meets on a regular basis with their project Coordinator, **Mariaan Dirks**, to discuss matters of importance in their communities. Mariaan is also head of the crèche and with her four staff members are responsible for up to 50 kids. Mariaan works closely with the worker committee to do needs assessments and identify projects of value for the community. She handles the administrative processes relating to funding applications to the Waitrose Foundation.

"The fact that we don't have any financial worries relating to our projects is incredible. It allows us to truly 'live our dream'. The support from the Waitrose Foundation enables me to do my work effectively. The project funding application and administration process flows easily through established channels. In collaboration with the worker committee, the process works, and we never encounter obstacles. It is a clear path forward. In my capacity as Project Coordinator, I have a wide scope and can have a significant impact, doing what I enjoy."



Substance Abuse Mentoring Programme Impact

"I would like to express my gratitude to you and the Waitrose Foundation. I am honoured to be part of the Foundation. I'm grateful for the training that I had the opportunity to attend. I've learned a lot from the training. I'm so excited to announce that I have shared the moral harassment and sexual assault harassment information with many people, including the students. I am grateful for the opportunity to make a huge difference in people's lives.

The impact of the harassment prevention efforts is priceless. All the training made it easier for me to go out there and help others. I'm now able to create a safe, respectful environment to help our communities. Your dedication to addressing harassment issues is truly appreciated. Your support is so impactful in our community." - **Shared by one of the Programme Participants**



Lillyvale Akademie Crèche on **Lushof Farm** in Saron hosted a fun **Sports Day** on 28 March 2025. This was the first of its kind arranged by the crèche staff.

"This was an amazing event where we included our children and adults on the farm. Everyone had the opportunity to take part. Even the parents. Our farm manager even gave all the people from the farm off to participate and support the day."

Farm Manager **Rupert Erasmus** remarked: "This was one of the best days ever in the history of the crèche on Lushof. To have seen the unity between workers, kids and parents was amazing. Investing in our children is awesome. Also seeing the joy and excitement, cannot be described in words. And everybody took part, even our management team was challenged to a tug of war, which we lost!"

"Our children is the future. Lushof and the staff of Lillyvale Academy are dedicated and focused to making a difference by investing all we can into their lives. I'm looking forward to the growth and progress of the crèche. The people who are running with this project have hearts for children and I believe in time this will make a big difference in our community and the lives of children. We also want to thank the Waitrose Foundation for their trust and commitment to our projects." (Teacher **Louisa Engelbrecht**)

Feedback from **parents**: "Thank you for making this happen. My child is very happy and so am I."

"My child is full of joy and happiness. He wants to go to the crèche every day. Thank you."



Personal Impact story of quality aftercare: Emmerentia Sibiya

"Years ago the farm where I lived in the De Doorns area, received funding through the Waitrose Foundation and the decision was made to purchase four computers for the aftercare centre. I was still at school during that time and had an unplanned pregnancy. I didn't want to give up on my studies and I committed to attend the aftercare every day after school.

As a result, there was a significant improvement in my marks and I did really well, to such an extent that I was selected as top achiever in Grade 10 and received a trophy. From that point onwards, I was convinced that I can truly do better and achieve more. But if it wasn't for access to those computers and the time spent in aftercare, I would not have become who I am today. I could have become part of the unemployment statistics, but the quality care I received during that very significant time in my life as well as my school career, positively impacted my future and opportunities for employment." (Emmerentia now works in HR and Quality Control at Weltevrede Farm and is the Waitrose Foundation Project Coordinator.)



The Tutor Spot - Fulfilling a dream in Patensie

We recently visited growers in the Eastern Cape and, along with Neil Whelpton, Waitrose Partner and Citrus Buyer, and Barrie Dain from Prima Fruit, accompanied by Zarius van der Merwe from Kleinrivier farm, viewed 'The Tutor Spot'. The infrastructure is in place and they're starting Phase 2 of the project during which they will acquire resources such as computers and internet connectivity. Kleinrivier Boerdery is a third party grower of Grown4U in Patensie. Also present during this visit was Charles Wiehahn, Grown4U Area Manager (Gamtoos). **The Tutor Spot** is a project driven by worker voice funds as well as financial contributions by Hankey Packhouse and supported by the Patensie Municipality.

Hazel Booysen (26) manages the aftercare centre and she is fulfilling her dream of making a real impact. At the same time, she is honouring her Mom's dream of setting up a local soup kitchen. Through The Tutor Spot, the children are served nutritious meals and for Hazel it is also a way to fulfill her Mom's dream. She is an energetic young lady with a passion for her community and the lives of the children in her care. The facility was conceptualised five years ago and now it includes two classrooms, a kitchen and ablution facilities. It was launched in April this year, accommodating 30 children (ages 8 to 13). This project is well supported and protected by the surrounding community. When asked about the impact of this project on her life, Hazel says: "I want to encourage young people that dreams can come true. God sees everything. Keep believing."



Bursary Opportunities

The Waitrose Foundation Southern Africa (WFSA) is pleased to announce the official opening of Bursary Applications for 2026, effective 1 July 2025. WFSA offers bursary opportunities to two current or prospective students enrolled at universities, as well as two current or prospective students attending TVET Colleges within South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Eligible applicants must either be permanent employees, children of current permanent employees, retired employees, or children under the legal guardianship of permanent employees affiliated with a grower that forms part of the Waitrose supply chain.

These bursary opportunities are available to Qualifying Applicants (QAs) who are either continuing their academic studies or have received provisional acceptance to pursue studies at an accredited university or TVET College in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Eligible fields of study include the following faculties:

Agrisciences | Education | Community Health and Social Sciences | Medicine and Health Sciences | Business Sciences, including disciplines such as commerce, industry, logistics, and retail

Please be advised that all applications are subject to review and deliberation by the Bursary Committee. The decision of the Committee is final. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications either directly or through Farm / Exporter Project Coordinators, where applicable.

Applicants may be invited to attend an interview, virtually or in person as part of the evaluation process, prior to the final approval of bursary awards.

All enquiries and application submissions must be directed to info@waitrosefoundation.org.za, addressed to the attention of the Bursary Officer. Completed applications must be submitted no later than 30 September 2025.



Memories Feature

"There are friends, there is family, and then there are friends who become family." This is how The **Komati Fruit Group** feels about the **Waitrose Foundation**. They have become friends - from the very first day in 2005 when we were the first to enroll in this remarkable programme. We realised that this was an incredible initiative, worth the effort and the bonds we formed along the way.

With this dynamic team, we've supported our communities, a nation marked by diversity, both in its landscapes and its people. Despite the challenges, we've made phenomenal efforts to foster sustainable development. These initiatives aim to address the root causes of poverty, provide education and skills training, improve healthcare and cultural awareness, ensure sustainability, amplify workers' voices, and empower communities, creating long-term positive change. These projects promote self-reliance by encouraging people to work together, ultimately driving economic independence.

The Waitrose Foundation's motto emphasises that development efforts must be *community-driven*, ensuring that local voices are heard, and solutions are tailored to each community's unique needs. Empowering individuals and fostering a culture of self-sufficiency are key to sustainable development. Through collective efforts of the Waitrose Foundation, The Komati Fruit Group, and the communities, we believe there is great potential to overcome challenges and build a brighter, more equitable future. Development in our communities is an ongoing journey - progress is being made through education, infrastructure, healthcare, and economic initiatives.

For true and lasting progress, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. This includes continued investment in infrastructure, education and skills development, healthcare, and economic opportunities, all supported by our combined efforts and guidance. If we had to highlight the most significant project, it would be impossible. Each initiative and every individual who has learned, developed, and grown through these programmes holds immense value.

Watching someone witness the first sprout of a leaf they've planted, cook their first meal, sewn their first item, or simply realise, "I can do this", that sense of self-worth and pride, keeps us humble. It inspires us to do more, give more, and to encourage new levels of achievement. It extends beyond individual households, touching families, spreading through entire communities. That's the joy we experience - witnessing the incredible impact of every initiative born from our partnership with the Waitrose Foundation. **(Louise Jones, Project Coordinator)**





Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The WF(SA) is committed to improving the livelihoods of farm workers and their families, while building strong communities and a sustainable supply chain. To ensure we stay true to this mission, WF(SA) introduced a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework that helps us track progress, learn from experience, and make better decisions. This framework gives us the tools to understand whether our projects are making a real difference, and if not, how we can do better.

The M&E Framework works by collecting and analysing information from projects delivered on farms (worker voice) and through central programmes. It allows us to listen to the voices of workers, committees, grower and exporter partners to see what's working, what's not, and why. This includes checking if children in crèches are learning well, if clinics on farms are helping families stay healthy, or if skills training is leading to real job opportunities. By using this information, WF(SA) can make sure funds are well spent and that everyone, especially those who grow, pick and pack for Waitrose benefits meaningfully from the Foundation's support.

For our partners in the Waitrose supply chain, including service providers, growers, exporters, and importers, the M&E Framework is an important tool. It strengthens trust, ensures accountability, and helps us all see the value of our joint investment. Most importantly, it makes sure that the worker voice remains at the heart of all programmes, guiding the way forward for more inclusive, transparent, and impactful development.



Information worth sharing

Psychometric Assessments are increasingly recognised as valuable tools in the educational landscape, particularly for Grade 9 learners in South Africa. This stage is critical as students prepare for their final years of schooling and begin making decisions about their future educational and career paths. The benefits of psychometric assessments for these learners can be understood through several key areas: academic performance, personal development, career guidance, and social-emotional well-being.

As Grade 9 learners in South Africa start to consider their future career paths, psychometric assessments can provide valuable insights that inform their decisions. These assessments can help students understand which career fields may be a good fit based on their skills, interests, and personality traits. By offering a clearer picture of potential career options, psychometric assessments can guide learners in choosing subjects that align with their future aspirations. This informed decision-making is crucial in a context where the job market is competitive, and aligning education with career goals can significantly impact future success.

A significant number of young people find themselves in a challenging position: they are neither employed, nor engaged in education or training. This status, often referred to as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training), poses serious implications for both individuals and society. Psychometric assessments can play a crucial role in addressing the needs of this demographic, offering insights and opportunities that can help bridge the gap to employment and personal development.

The Waitrose Foundation partnered with Talent Trending for the provisioning of Psychometric assessments for learners in Grade 9 to 12 and to Youth who are not employed, not in education and training (NEET). We have provided 156 youth and learners between Grade 9 to 12 with the opportunity to do their psychometric assessments. What should be in place:

- Internet access for approximately two hours
- Access to a device (smartphone, tablet, desktop or laptop)

Contact your Farm Support Manager for more information.



In Closing

This past quarter has been both inspiring and affirming. I had the opportunity to visit the UK, spending time with colleagues at Waitrose, the John Lewis Partnership, and several of our Importers. I also presented progress updates to the Waitrose Foundation Global Board. It was heartening to witness the genuine commitment across all partners to the ideals of the Foundation.

A personal highlight was visiting Waitrose stores and seeing our products - proudly bearing the Foundation logo - on the shelves. Knowing their origin is South Africa filled me with a sense of pride. It brought our model to life again: the fruit and wine on those shelves directly contribute to improving the livelihoods of farm worker communities in Southern Africa, and beyond.

This quarter also included insightful visits to other countries within our regional footprint: Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Meeting with worker committees and farm managers underscored the value of this partnership. I was deeply moved by the pride with which workers handle the fruit, knowing that their efforts generate tangible returns for their communities. It remains a powerful and dignified exchange.

As we look ahead and continue to celebrate our 20th anniversary year, we remain committed to deepening our impact. Thank you for your continued dedication to building stronger farm worker communities with us.

Faith Brown - General Manager



Help us Celebrate 20 Years of Impact!

Do you have any special memories or impact stories from the past 20 years of your involvement with the Waitrose Foundation that we can share? You're most welcome to make contact with us. We'd love to hear from you and share your special memories on our social media channels or newsletter.

Share your Projects Success Stories

We are always on the look-out for impactful projects that have truly changed the lives of our worker communities across Southern Africa. We welcome you to make contact with us to share the details of the projects you want to see highlighted in our next newsletter or social media posts, in order to be an inspiration for others who may wish to do the same on their farms and in their communities.



LET'S BE SOCIAL!

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