



WAITROSE FOUNDATION SOUTHERN AFRICA

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT AND IGNITING MOTIVATION

Foreword by Beth Wakeling

As an importer and supplier of fresh fruit for Waitrose we are reliant on those who grow, pick and pack our produce. Since its launch in 2005, the Waitrose Foundation has helped us connect with our growers on a deeper level. Our growers can be confident that their fruit will reach Waitrose shelves, supporting a shared commitment to exceptional quality. In return, we pledge to give back - creating an initiative where the entire supply chain works together to prove that business can be good.

I firmly believe that supporting young people is essential to the long-term success of the Foundation, which has already played a significant role in nurturing their growth and potential. Through bursaries, vocational guidance and the YearBeyond programme to name a few, these schemes have been fundamental in upskilling and addressing unemployment challenges.

I was inspired by the panel conversation that was held at the Foundation's 20th Year Anniversary Conference. It reminded us of one of the core principles of the Foundation: listening first. It was invaluable to hear about the initiatives they feel would benefit the youth, suggestions such as mentoring and career days to develop them both professionally and personally.

Youth is a strategic priority outlined in our 5-year plan, with a goal that by 2030 youth beneficiaries will be central to the Foundation's impact. As a Steering Group we are committed to providing scalable initiatives that will equip the youth with pathways to sustainable livelihoods, whilst contributing and engaging with local communities. Above all, we want the next generation to feel inspired and hopeful about what the future holds.

Commercial Manager, Primafruit Ltd & Steering Group Member

WELCOME TO THE HALF WAY MARK!

Winter is here and for some it means a time of rest and for others it is peak harvest season. We're halfway through 2026 and still firmly rooted in our purpose and ready for what comes next.

This is an opportunity to pause with gratitude, and step forward with renewed intention for the rest of the year!





Global Update - Implementing Partner Feature

Oxfam is an international organisation working with partners to end poverty in more than 70 countries worldwide. Its programmes focus on sustainable livelihoods, gender justice and climate resilience, while also responding to humanitarian crises with internationally recognised expertise in water and sanitation – earning the affectionate nickname, 'plumbers without borders'.

Having worked in Senegal since 1981, Oxfam supports communities to build more resilient futures through sustainable livelihoods, improved sanitation, climate adaptation and stronger local governance. In The Gambia, Oxfam works alongside its long-standing partner, United for Development (UD), whose team has collaborated with the Waitrose Foundation and farms for many years.

Across **Senegal** and **The Gambia**, communities continue to face significant challenges, including poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and the growing impacts of climate change. Women and young people are particularly affected. Oxfam works with local partners to strengthen livelihoods by supporting families to grow food, helping entrepreneurs develop small businesses, improving access to digital financial services and building the capacity of local organisations to create lasting change.

The first project approved through the Waitrose Foundation will complete essential infrastructure at a local high school and middle school near a farm in northern Senegal, including the construction of a boundary wall, the furnishing of two classrooms and the provision of additional learning materials. Oxfam's first Worker Voice project will also strengthen a nearby local health centre by supplying much-needed medical equipment and essential medicines, improving healthcare services for workers and the wider community. Together, these initiatives demonstrate the positive impact already being achieved through the Waitrose Foundation partnership, with workers helping to shape investments that respond directly to the needs of their communities.

"The most incredible thing is to see the money that workers help to generate through the farms be reinvested in impactful community projects, and that the workers themselves get to decide how it's spent. And it's really exciting for us to connect with other parts of the Waitrose Foundation and discover what other countries are doing and what they've learned through their experience too!" **Holly Welsh: Private Sector Partnerships Manager | Funding & Strategic Partnerships | Oxfam, Great Britain**



Worker Voice Projects

Steward Pedzi is the Human Resources Manager at **Palmlife Farm** in **Zimbabwe** and serves as Project Coordinator for the farm's Social Development Committee. In this role, he supports the implementation of the farm's social development initiatives funded through the Waitrose Foundation, ensuring that projects deliver sustainable benefits for workers and their families.

Born and raised within the local community, Steward has continuously invested in his own development, building the skills and expertise needed to contribute meaningfully to both Palmlife Farm and the wider worker community. He is passionate about sustainable community development and it is evident in his support of projects that improve livelihoods and create opportunities for future generations.

One of the worker committee's current priorities is the development of a new **Early Childhood Development Facility** near the farm. The project aims to provide a safe, nurturing environment where workers can leave their children with confidence, knowing they will receive quality care and preparation for their transition into primary school.

Recently, Steward worked alongside the Waitrose Foundation's Regional Manager, Emily Hendricks, to arrange a three-day **Social Development Training programme** for worker committee members in Harare. Reflecting on the experience, Steward remarked: *"It was delightful to hear from the participants and workers how they are beginning to understand the link between their diligence in the orchard and packhouse, the improvement of their livelihoods, and the sustainability of the social development projects, whilst being part of the supply chain to Waitrose."*

Dreammaker Fruits in **Porterville**, Western Cape, prioritises **Economic Empowerment** through an exciting **Community Sewing Project**.

The farm is situated in a remote and mountainous region, resulting in the workers and their families having limited access to general services, including shops and sewing services. A number of women on the farm showed an interest in starting a sewing club and were willing to improve their existing skills to manufacture basic clothing and other items such as curtains, pillow cases and clothing pegs bags.

Worker Voice funds were used to purchase sewing equipment such as scissors, needles, pins, tape measures and cutting boards. The ladies already have a designated space for their club to operate in as well as sewing machines. This project is an example of how women are empowered to work towards setting up a small business in order to manufacture and sell items to other families within the community. The aim is to reach a stage of development in the business where they can sell items for profit in order to expand and sustain the business.

The ladies recently visited, another Waitrose Foundation partner farm, Indigo Berries in Wellington, where a similar project is already established. They received valuable input and inspiration for their wonderful new venture.



"At **Kloovenburg** we're extremely grateful for the support we've received from the Waitrose Foundation. Thanks to the project funds, we could fulfill a dream which means so much to our workers, the youth, and children on the farm.

Due to the keen interest in **soccer**, the available funds were used for the improvement of our facilities. We bought a container which we're transforming into a locker room for our players. We also obtained a few stands for the comfort of our supporters who come to cheer on the team. They are very proud to be wearing their new kit!

Since the completion of this project, the positive impact is already evident. The soccer field is now a popular place for the community to gather. The young people are now spending their time in a positive, constructive way by participating in sport, learning new skills, and building healthy friendships. The facility is also a source of pride for the community as they have a place to gather and build a sense of togetherness.

We truly appreciate the way in which the Waitrose Foundation has invested back into our community. It has not only made a physical difference in terms of the upgrades, but also created new opportunities for people to come together and experience a positive impact in their lives. Thank you for believing in us and contributing to the wellbeing of our people. It bears fruit daily and we are truly grateful."

Kay-Louise Heynse, is the Chairperson of the Social Development Committee at **Kloovenburg Farm**, Riebeeck-Kasteel, Western Cape.



The **kiosk** on **De Keur farm** in the **Ceres** district continues to go from strength to strength, fulfilling an important role by providing a much-needed service to workers on the farm.

Geraldine Solomons currently manages the kiosk, which was established in November 2023 and is conveniently located in the packhouse, operating during working hours. Initially, the kiosk was used to prepare and serve meals to workers during overtime shifts. It has since expanded into a small retail facility offering a range of refreshments and convenience items.

The kiosk is a wonderful example of how Worker Voice projects can support economic empowerment at farm level. By creating opportunities for workers to manage and grow a small enterprise, the project helps foster entrepreneurial skills, business experience, and financial responsibility. Profits generated through sales are reinvested for the benefit of all workers, including the provision of treats such as soup and vetkoek, as well as comforting hot chocolate during the cold winter months.

Marvin Davids, Chairperson of the Social Development Committee at Rocklands farm (part of the De Keur Group), recently shared that the De Keur committee functions as a forum where workers can raise ideas, discuss needs, and work together closely to identify opportunities that contribute positively to the wellbeing of their communities.

Pictured with Geraldine and Marvin is Eleanor Louw, Waitrose Foundation Manager: Regional Farm Support.



A **water provision project** has brought great relief for the school and worker community at **Pico Fresh, Amajuba Farms, in Zambia.**

The aim of this project was to provide water security for the worker community and local school, by improving access to clean water contributing to improved hygiene and overall quality of life. The worker voice project funds were used to purchase six 5 000L Jo-Jo water tanks. These water tanks were installed at the school and at various centralised points in the community where people can draw water directly. The project targeted a total of 1,282 direct beneficiaries.

"We have access to clean water for drinking, and it prevents water borne diseases. The distance to the water has been reduced. Previously we had to walk a long distance to draw water in a stream. Water is available all the time and it is helping us to do house chores in a shorter time. Thank you for the development you brought to our community. As a community we are very happy." (Gloria Sambwa, Amajuba Farm Worker)



Vreeland Farm, which exports through CoreFruit, hosted First Steps Parenting Skills Training, presented by the Koue Bokkeveld Training Centre, to give parents practical guidance in raising their children.

The programme helped parents look beyond discipline alone by reflecting on healthy authority, each child's stage of development, and the value of family routines, conversation and play. These practical steps encouraged parents to respond more effectively, build stronger relationships and support positive behaviour from an early age. "Healthy families are the foundation of strong individuals and communities, and every parent carries both the responsibility and the God-given potential to grow into the building of that foundation." (Kotie Pieters, First Steps Programme Facilitator)





Young people are inspired and encouraged through our **Youth Personal and Professional Development Programme**. In Hoedspruit in the **Limpopo Province**, training takes place on **Ambrosia farm** (exporter: Driscolls) and is facilitated by **Akani Preciah Vuma**, who is responsible for implementing the Youth Programme in this region. She supports young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) to confidently navigate their personal and professional journeys. A group of 22 youth signed up for the programme which runs over thirty weeks. The training takes place at a facility which was established (in part) with Worker Voice funds. During the month of May, six sessions were held and the youth were encouraged to participate in all activities which included self-awareness, resilience, and employability, enabling participants to transition into further education and training, and be better prepared for the workplace.

Some of the challenges the participants listed that they are facing as youth, include: stress, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, a lack of funds to apply to formal education and training institutions (limiting their growth and employability), peer pressure and crime. The impact of this programme was evident through the feedback received from participants. We are so encouraged by the way in which these enthusiastic young people are experiencing the sessions.

"It enhanced my skills and has uplifted my abilities." | "It improved my speaking skills along with my confidence." | "It defeated my fear of talking in front of my fellow classmates." | "I'm confident. I'm not shy as before. I can speak freely without judgment." | "It inspired me to always look for an open door." | "To have more knowledge in your life - to realise that time is money." | "I'm confident and I'm able to stand in front of others." | "Self-confidence - to feel free when meeting others." | "I gained more knowledge so that I can apply for a job." | "I now know the meaning of my life and I don't want it to be wasted." | "It gave me hope and confidence." | "It boosted my self-esteem and confidence."

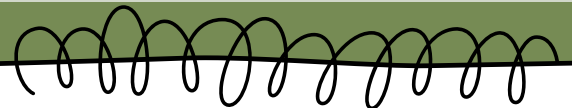
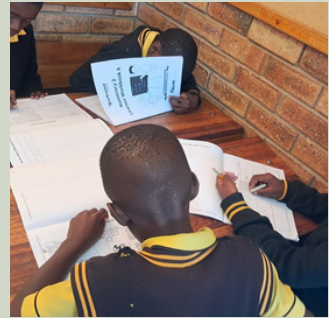


YearBeyond launched an exciting new chapter in Humansdorp in the **Eastern Cape**, in March this year with an initial intake of 26 **YeBoneers**. Through service and training opportunities, YearBeyond empowers young people to develop their potential, build valuable skills, and prepare for future career pathways. Each YeBoneer is paired with a Mentor who supports them throughout their year of service. Mentors play a vital role in developing participants' personal and professional skills while providing psychosocial support, study guidance, and career development assistance. The Waitrose Foundation is one of the implementing partners of the YearBeyond programme in South Africa.

The group's mentor, **Noxolo Thomas**, a registered social worker, works closely with the YeBoneers as they deliver the **Catch Up Programme (CUP)** at 6 schools near Hankey, Patensie, and Kouga. Following a number of unforeseen setbacks that affected 4 participants, the programme currently has 22 enrolled YeBoneers, all aged between 18 and 25. The CUP partners with low- and no-fee public schools to help Grade 3 and 4 learners close foundational literacy and numeracy gaps. Serving as Academic Tutors, the YeBoneers spend approximately two hours, twice a week, at their assigned schools, supporting learners to improve their numeracy and literacy.

In addition to their work in schools, the YeBoneers participate in weekly Future Fit sessions facilitated by Noxolo every Friday. These sessions provide a safe space for discussing challenges, exploring personal and career development opportunities, strengthening life skills, and planning for the week ahead.

Noxolo recently attended training in Cape Town, where she found the presentations and peer learning opportunities very inspiring. She particularly valued the DISC Personality Assessment, which provided her with a deeper understanding of individual personality styles. This added another practical tool to her mentoring toolkit. Regular visits to schools allow Noxolo to observe the YeBoneers in action and witness the positive impact they are making in the lives of learners. Seeing their confidence grow and their passion for service come alive is one of the most rewarding aspects of her role. Noxolo is also deeply appreciative of the support she receives from her team in East London, as well as from Roderick, Eleanor, and Sue-Ellen, whose guidance and encouragement continue to strengthen her work.



As part of our **Central Programmes**, the WFSA awards bursaries annually to selected individuals from farming communities within the Waitrose supply chain in South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The **Bursary Application** process for our 2027 intake will be announced in July. Please keep an eye on our channels for the details.

Inspirational Stories for Youth Month

Jae-Dee Swarts (22) went from YeBoneer to being aftercare facilitator **at Verdun Learning Centre** (near **Prince Alfred Hamlet**) since July 2025. She was studying Educare at Boland College and had to complete a certain number of practical work hours. The **YearBeyond** opportunity came up and she enrolled for the 2024 service year in the Ceres area. She stayed with the programme until it became evident that the requirements for her practical work went beyond the scope of the programme. She was approached by the principal of a creche in Bella Vista (Ceres) to work there as she was already known in the area as one of the YeBoneers in the local community. Jae-Dee then completed the required number of hours for her qualification and is grateful for all the assistance she's received from Mareé Lambrechts, Human Resources



Manager at Verdun Farm. Jae-Dee had a very positive experience during her time as YeBoneer. She grew in confidence and her ability to build trust with the kids. The programme laid an important foundation for her work at Verdun. Jae-Dee works with 25 children from Grade R to 7 (ages 7 - 13) during the afternoons, assisting them with homework and the CAMI programme. She enjoys fulfilling a supporting role for the school teachers and they recognise and value her work with the kids at the centre.

YearBeyond offers a wonderful opportunity for youth and Jae-Dee experienced it first hand. To the youth she'll say: *"It is not always about the money. It is also about your impact on the lives of the kids you work with in your local community during the service year. Your impact spills over to their families as they share about what they've learnt. It is an opportunity for personal and career growth, but also giving hope to children who are often at risk and going through many challenges. I had to work hard to get to where I'm now. But it is possible. Stay focused and determined. Remain hopeful. The kids look up to you."*



The **Resilient Men in Agriculture** workshop, held in May, brought a group of men together from four partner farms in Grabouw. We spoke to **Ralph Plaatjies** who serves on the Social Development Committee at Dennegeur farm. Ralph was struck by how impactful the workshop was, and that the content is especially important for **young men and young fathers**. He shared how it's often difficult for men to admit their mistakes and apologise to their families. During the workshop the facilitators made it clear how important it is to be humble and listen before responding. They explained three phases in controlling one's anger. The attack, freeze, and safe modes were explained and that it's vital to think before speaking. Mastering this skill and understanding why it is essential to effective leadership, and respectful and clear communication, also impact relationships in the workplace. The workshop offered a safe space for men to share their challenges. The practical exercises brought the workshop's key messages across: To listen intently with genuine compassion and without judgement; to communicate with clarity; the power of teamwork, and the unique value of each person. The workshop was a clear win for all!



Knowledge Hub - Behind the Scenes

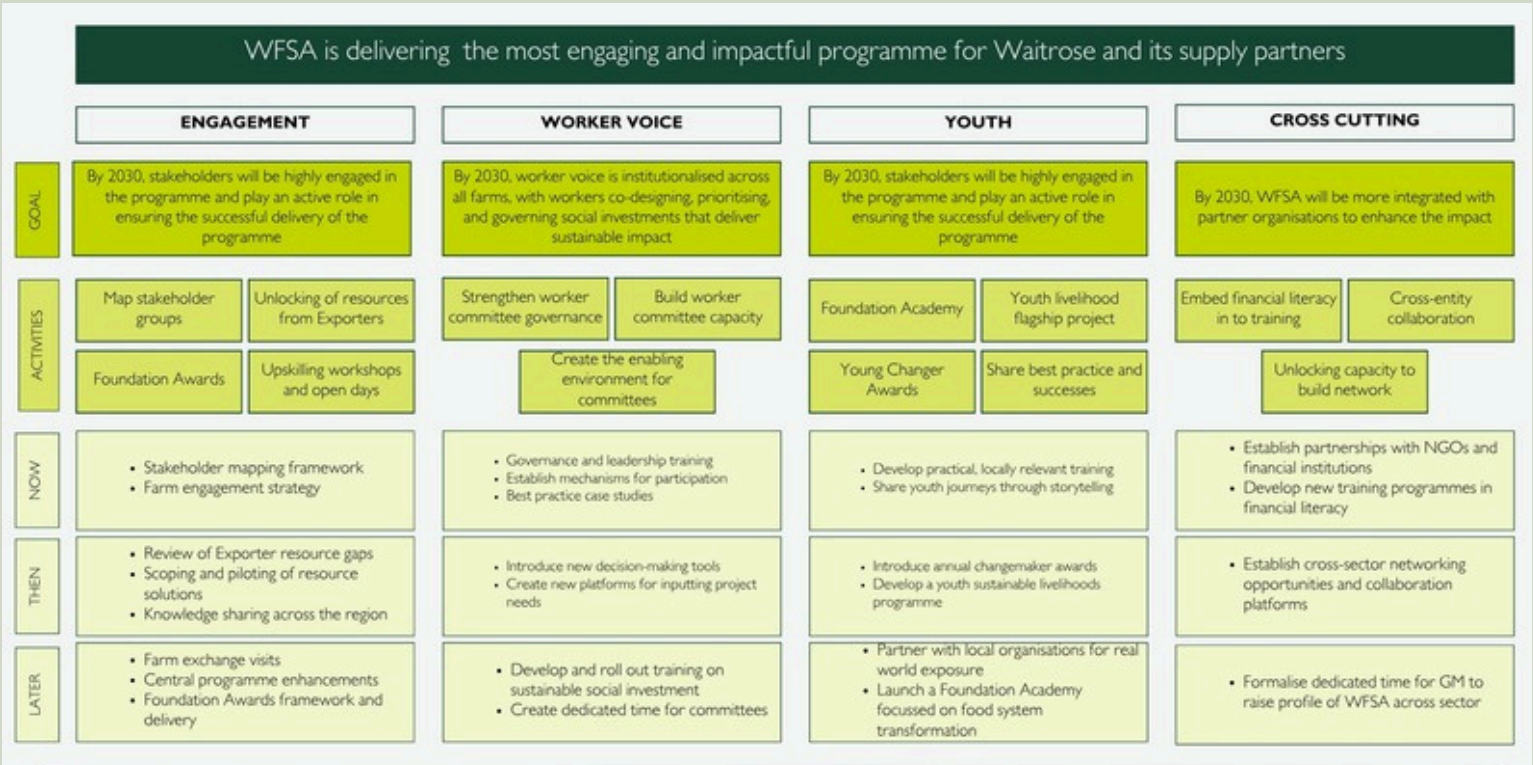
Building a Stronger Foundation for the Future

While much of the Waitrose Foundation's work is seen through the projects delivered on farms and in communities, there is also important work taking place behind the scenes to ensure the Foundation continues to evolve and deliver meaningful impact. Over the past few months, the Waitrose Foundation Southern Africa's Steering Group and Board of Directors have developed a five-year strategic roadmap that will guide the Foundation's future direction. The roadmap was informed by evidence from past evaluations and engagement with farm workers, farms and exporters.

The roadmap focuses on three strategic priorities: strengthening the exporter and farm engagement, protecting and embedding the worker voice, and future-proofing the Foundation for long-term impact.

Through practical initiatives, strengthened partnerships and ongoing investment in people and processes, these priorities will help maximise programme impact while supporting a sustainable and resilient supply chain.

The infographic below provides a snapshot of the Foundation's strategic priorities and the key activities that will be rolled out over the next five years.



Waitrose Foundation Southern Africa

2025 Impact Assessment

The WFSA "Worker Voice" model is improving the well-being of farm worker communities through participatory community-led solutions.

Worker Voice

- Centering workers' voice
- Strengthening communities
- Building resilient futures



Partner Capacity Building

Key findings



of committee members reported increased knowledge and confidence after training

Enabled committees to:



Community Mapping



Strategic action planning



Infrastructure priorities

Impact



Shift from ad hoc engagement to strategic, community-led governance and development

Worker Voice Projects

Key findings

Tangible improvements across 4 themes

Health and Wellbeing



R700

Spent per month

=12%

of average monthly household income

Education and Training



Safer ECD and aftercare centres creating peace of mind for worker parents and communities

Water and Sanitation



Jo-jo tanks provide reliable water, improving hygiene and dignity

Environment and Energy



Solar lighting and loadshedding kits improve safety and enable studying.

Impact



- Medical expenses reduced
- Water access improved
- Safety at night improved
- Learning outcomes improved

Central Programmes

Key findings



Youth Development (YDP)

Of participants in employment or further study within 1 year



Wellness

Reduced substance abuse and growth of local counselling capacity



ICT

Digital hubs improve youth learning, but adult/worker access is limited by working hours.

Impact

Builds human capital and psychosocial resilience for economic participation



Synthesis of Evaluation Findings

Relevance rated

Very Good



5/5

Highest score across all OECD-DAC criteria

Alignment with WFSA



- Worker voice strengthens relevance, impact, and ownership.
- Partnerships and management buy-in enable sustained outcomes.
- Combined worker voice and central project deliver stronger impact.

Global Context



Relevant to global trends in ethical sourcing and climate-smart production, shifting focus from compliance to shared value and empowerment

National Alignment



Strong alignment with South Africa's NDP 2030 priorities: social protection, education, and rural development

Overall Conclusion



Scored 2-5 against OECD-DAC evaluation criteria - average 3.6/5

WFSA achieved a strong overall OECD-DAC rating of 3.6/5, with Relevance scoring highest at 5/5, demonstrating the programme's consistent alignment with worker priorities and its meaningful contribution to wellbeing and resilience. Efficiency and Sustainability scored lower, primarily due to administrative complexity, uneven engagement, and high worker turnover.

Overall, the evidence confirms that the WFSA Worker Voice model is an effective approach for improving livelihoods and supporting community resilience. Strategic priorities identified to strengthen future programming include deepening partner engagement, protecting the authenticity of the worker voice through inclusive participation and worker ownership, and positioning youth as a long-term driver of programme sustainability and impact.

Data Credibility

- This Assessment was conducted using mixed method during the 2025/26 cycle and focuses on selected farms in Limpopo and the Western Cape.
- 26 farms engaging a total of 152 participants, in Limpopo and the Western Cape.
- Focusing on interventions implemented between 2021 and 2025 project cycle



In Closing

As we mark **Youth Month**, I find myself reflecting on the resilience of young people in our farming communities. Today's youth face a world demanding adaptability, courage and hope. They are not only tomorrow's leaders, but they are also shaping our communities today. Seeing young people take responsibility on worker committees to strengthen worker voice, gives me hope.

That resilience has been especially visible in recent months, as many farming regions experienced devastating weather that severely impacted operations, crops and worker communities. I extend my sincere thoughts to every affected farm, worker, grower and partner. The Foundation responded where possible, supporting communities through immediate relief and standing beside partners. This difficult time reminded us that our strength lies in partnership.

It also brings to mind my own journey growing up in South Africa during a time of unequal opportunities. While much has changed, access remains unequal. Many rural young people still face barriers to opportunity, which is why we must work practically to open doors and remove those barriers. Moving into the year's second half, we remain focused, asking: How do our decisions today create stronger opportunities for the next generation? This question will guide our strategic focus over the next five years.

We are pleased to welcome our intern Thato Mpande, a Sustainable Development student at Stellenbosch University. Investing in youth means recognising their fresh perspectives, curiosity and energy.

To this end, I asked Thato to share inspiring words with young people in our farming communities. In his words: "If you look around, beyond your problems, you'll find opportunities for growth."

Listening to Thato, I am reminded that hope is found in possibility. Together, we help young people lift their gaze beyond problems into opportunity. Wishing you a safe, successful season ahead.

Faith Brown - General Manager

Worker Voice Project Applications are going digital! From the 1st of July, all Worker Voice funding applications must be submitted via the Electronic System. Applications will no longer be accepted by email. All the Project Coordinators with available funding have already received their system access details. Do you still need any assistance? Please make contact with your Farm Support Manager or System Administrative Support team.



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