



# SAB FOUNDATION

**IMPACT REPORT**

Compiled for the period **January 2015** to **March 2023**

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**01**

**ABOUT  
THIS  
REPORT**

**THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS REPORT IS TO MONITOR AND ILLUSTRATE COMPREHENSIVELY THE IMPACT GENERATED BY THE SAB FOUNDATION'S INITIATIVES THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED FROM 2015 UNTIL MARCH 2023.**

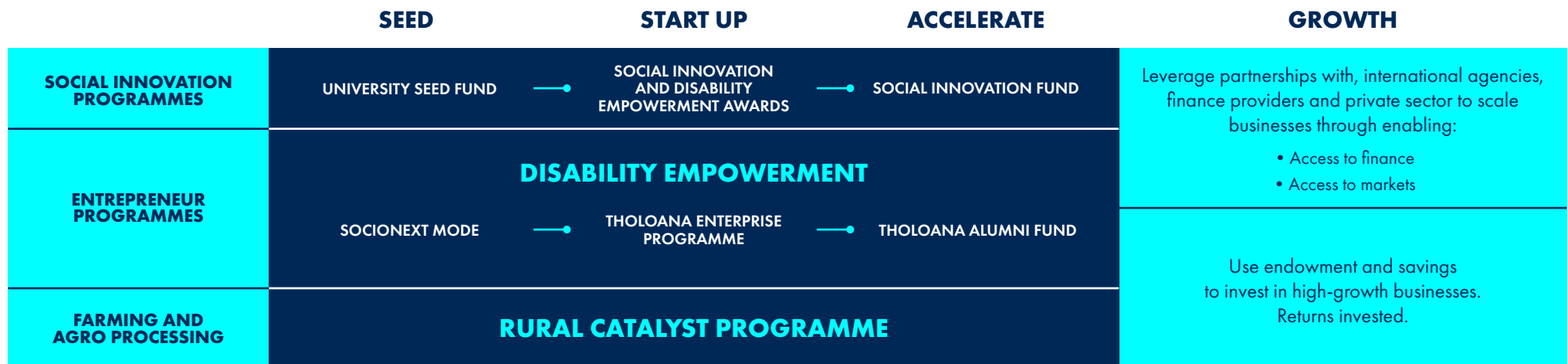
This constitutes a critical aspect of our commitment to annual impact evaluation and reporting. Based on the input collected from participants of SAB Foundation's programmes, this report highlights advancements in revenue generation, job creation and business skills. Furthermore, it also examines instances of social and environmental impact. This report provides a summary of the SAB Foundation's entrepreneurial programmes and the impact achieved in relation to achieving these strategic objectives. In-depth impact studies on the Tholoana Enterprise and Social Innovation Programmes are also released by the SAB Foundation.

TO ACCESS THESE STUDIES, PLEASE GO TO OUR WEBSITE:  
<https://www.sabfoundation.co.za/impact>

**"We are grateful to be a recipient of the SAB Foundation Disability Empowerment Awards and we believe the approach it has taken aligns well with the disability call for inclusive development and growth. We can only encourage the SAB Foundation to continue to empower other potential and deserving entrepreneurs."**

**– Disability Empowerment Awards participant.**

**SAB FOUNDATION'S STRATEGY IS GRAPHICALLY REPRESENTED AS FOLLOWS FROM 2020 - 2023**



**GOALS:** Increase turnover, jobs, social impact, through leadership. **KEY BENEFICIARY GROUPS:** Women, youth, people in rural areas, persons with disabilities.



# 02

## A NOTE FROM BRIDGIT EVANS

**MEASURING THE IMPACT OF OUR PROGRAMMES CONTINUES TO BE A CORE FOCUS OF THE FOUNDATION. IT NOT ONLY DEMONSTRATES TRANSPARENCY AND ALLOWS US TO ANALYSE AND COMPARE AGAINST PREVIOUS YEARS, BUT ALSO LETS US INTERROGATE THE FINDINGS TO ADAPT AND BUILD WHAT WE DO, RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING AND GROWING NEEDS OF ENTREPRENEURS IN OUR COUNTRY.**

This year, the results show that the entrepreneurs within our ecosystem have been faced with many challenges.

A recent Global Gender Gap Report 2023 stated that it will take 132 years to bridge the gender gap at our current pace. It reminds us how important it is that women are a key beneficiary group of ours and strengthens our belief that empowering them helps to reduce this gap.

Our findings this year show that we have invested over R157 million across all programmes, into over 4 000 women entrepreneurs and women-led micro-enterprises.

The devastating impact of load shedding on businesses in South Africa cannot be overstated and there was no exception for the entrepreneurs that we support, whether that be from loss of business or by having to invest in costly back up power supply.

Our report shows that many of our entrepreneurs were able to use their grant funding to source alternative power solutions and this allowed them to continue operations as normal, generating an income and providing job security for their employees.

We share encouraging news as well. We see that entrepreneurs have largely recovered after the damaging years of the pandemic, where many had to let go of their employees, or halt or pivot their businesses. Our combined annual turnover figures showed a sharp drop off in 2020, small indications of recovery in 2021 and then a return in 2022 to numbers that are higher than before the pandemic.

Despite this, although jobs continue to be created, the numbers are not as high as we would like. South Africa, as a whole, has placed a lot of hope on small businesses and entrepreneurs to create the jobs of the future, and perhaps this is the case.

We have found, however, that there is a lot of work needed to prepare them for future investment and scaling, and this will be no quick or easy fix. Insights such as this drive the development of our programmes, which is why financing of entrepreneurs forms a cornerstone of our future strategy.

Despite the often-negative news, I am, as always, impressed with the resilience shown by entrepreneurs who build businesses and create jobs, often in the face of what sometimes seem like unsurmountable challenges.

Our report shows a 90% business survival rate over five years and that entrepreneurs have had a combined revenue growth of half a billion Rand. This is certainly something to celebrate.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

**Bridgit Evans,**  
Executive Director, SAB Foundation



*Bridgit Evans, Executive Director, SAB Foundation*

# 03

## INTRODUCING THE SAB FOUNDATION

**ESTABLISHED IN 2010, THE SAB FOUNDATION IS A RECIPIENT OF FUNDS FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN BREWERIES ZENZELE SCHEME, AIMED AT BROADENING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK INDIVIDUALS.**

It operates as an independent trust and its governance resides with a board comprising notable South African businesspersons along with executives from the parent company.

The foundation strives to fulfil its objective through the provision of funding for small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises, in order to contribute to the economic and social empowerment of historically disadvantaged persons.

This is done primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) by means of entrepreneurship development and with a priority focus on providing opportunities within small, medium and micro-sized enterprises for women, the youth, people in the rural areas, as well as persons with disabilities.

**“So far we are happy with how the programme is being conducted, from the application process to the on-site visits, the awarding, training, and mentorship. It is truly remarkable the amount of work put in place to ensure that our projects are a success.”**

**– Social Innovation Awards participant.**







### 3.1 THE SAB FOUNDATION'S OVERALL IMPACT FROM ALL PROGRAMMES

## AS AT MARCH 2023

The **SAB Foundation** has **invested** over **R563 million** to support **6 422 entities**. Of this, **R339 million** is in grant funding, **R183 million** in business development support, and **R40 million** in interest-free loans – **R9 million** has been repaid to date.

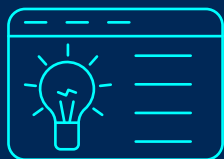
### OF THE 6 422 ENTITIES SUPPORTED



**3 139**  
fall under rural  
micro-enterprises



**304**  
fall under social  
innovation programmes



**2 979**  
fall under entrepreneurship  
programmes



**90%**  
businesses are  
operational<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of 6 422 entities that we have supported, we have been able to track 5 975 entities. Of those who responded to our annual surveys, 90% reported that they were still operational.

### OF THE R563 MILLION INVESTED



**R339 million**  
grant funding



















**R183 million**  
business support

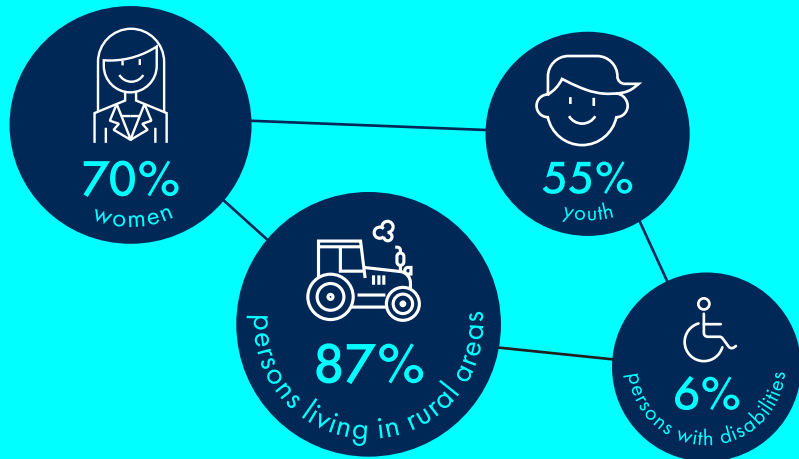


**R40 million**  
interest free loans

### BUSINESS SECTORS SUPPORTED INCLUDE

 Transportation	 Logistics	 Housing	 FMCG
 Financial services	 Human rights	 Accommodation	 Environment
 Community	 Education	 Healthcare	 Agriculture
 Education	 Chef training	 IT	 Services

## ENTREPRENEUR DEMOGRAPHICS

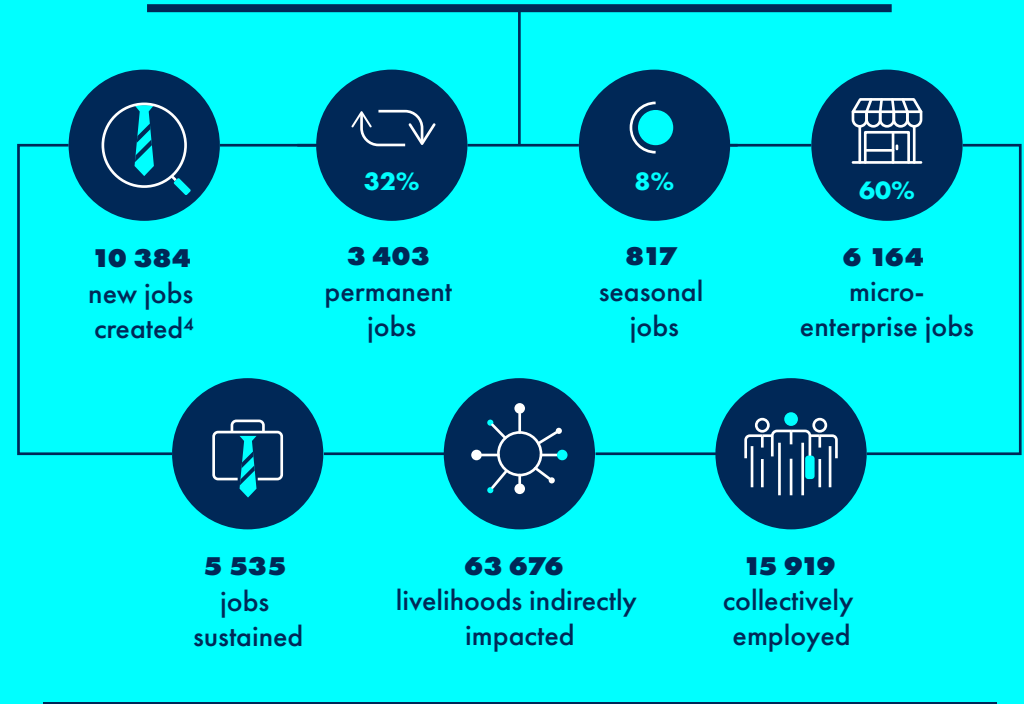


## NATIONAL FOOTPRINT



## JOB CREATION AND TURNOVER<sup>2</sup>

Combined annual turnover of entrepreneurs across all programmes increased from **R512 million** at inception to **R1.1 billion**, resulting in a turnover increase of **96%**<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>2</sup> Our impact data is collected for five consecutive years. Therefore, the SAB Foundation notes that some of the entrepreneurs received support from other donors and/or stakeholders during the five-year period and would like to acknowledge their contribution to this overall impact.

<sup>3</sup> Since 2022 the collective annual turnover includes that of our farming and agro-processing rural micro-enterprises which have been previously excluded in previous reports.

<sup>4</sup> The jump in the number of new jobs created as compared to our previous report is a result of the jobs created by rural micro-enterprises which have been excluded in our previous reports.



In South Africa, there exists a considerable burden of dependence upon those who earn an income. Every individual who is able to sustain themselves and their livelihoods are responsible for supporting at least three other individuals financially. This responsibility extends to family and people in their communities. As evidenced in data from 2021, the ratio of dependent people as a percentage of the working age population accounts for 53%<sup>5</sup>.

This means that these income sources not only support business owners, but also provide financial support to those around them. The impact of this has a ripple effect way beyond what we can capture or measure.

With an estimated four individuals benefiting from each of the 15 919 people employed by its entrepreneurs within our ecosystem, figures indicate that 63 676 livelihoods have been indirectly positively impacted.

Our programmes are structured to provide multifaceted interventions. As such, the scope and reach of their indirect impact beyond job creation, turnover and direct socio-economic deliverables have yet to be quantified.

<sup>5</sup> The Global Economy.com [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/South-Africa/Age\\_dependency\\_ratio/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/South-Africa/Age_dependency_ratio/)



“Since 2017 when I entered the Social Innovation Awards, I was blown away by the professional manner in each and every aspect handled by professional staff who supported me in everything. The SAB Foundation has opened so many doors for new and upcoming entrepreneurs of whom had many success stories and for that, we salute and thank you”

– **Disability Empowerment Awards participant.**

“While working with Tanner, we were challenged to think critically about our impact metrics. The engagement has helped us to define a new culture of ensuring that everything we do must be well measured. Although we are not fully there, the mental shift has been a critical starting point for us.”

– **Social Innovation Fund participant.**





# 04

## SAB FOUNDATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMMES

**THE SAB FOUNDATION HOLDS THE CONVICTION THAT CULTIVATING A BURGEONING NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS IS ESSENTIAL TO FOSTERING FLOURISHING BUSINESSES GEARED TOWARDS GENERATING VALUE AND SUSTAINABILITY, WITH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES BEING A NATURAL AND CRITICAL BY-PRODUCT.**

We identify and support approximately 100 passionate and driven entrepreneurs and 300 start-ups per annum. These individuals are singled out for a unique partnership with the foundation, one that lasts for years, but which begins with many months of intensive collaboration toward scaling their businesses.

To achieve this ambitious goal, the foundation relies on multiple cutting-edge programmes designed specifically to accelerate entrepreneurial success. The first approach utilises rapid start-up courses in conjunction with industry leaders SocioNext and MODE. This targets those without gainful employment by providing them valuable and practical knowledge to start businesses that close service delivery gaps in their communities. Through our flagship Tholoana Enterprise Programme, renowned across South Africa as top-tier business development training, ground-breaking change occurs within the Tholoana Enterprise Alumni Fund. This bolsters each graduate's chances at long-term prosperity, whilst ensuring continued impact beyond graduation day itself.

Although we do consider businesses from urban centres, we strongly focus on collaborating with enterprises situated far beyond metropolitan areas. This approach is primarily designed to provide support for rural entrepreneurs in sync with our mission, whilst tapping into a lack of backing available for enterprises located outside major cities. Our entrepreneurship programmes are overwhelmingly directed towards these underrepresented regions, comprising an impressive 90%.

**“The SAB Foundation Funding has helped us unlock potential international funding and partnerships who are looking forward to working with us due to the traction and milestones the SAB Foundation funding has allowed us to achieve.”**

**– Social Innovation Fund participant.**

#### 4.1 THE THOLOANA ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

The Tholoana Enterprise Programme stands tall as a flagship initiative that demonstrates exceptional commitment to rural enterprises and businesses operating beyond the mainstream supply chain.

Although the primary objective is to facilitate these entities in gaining access to established corporate systems, the programme also enables them to offer much-needed services and products across otherwise isolated geographic regions. It is inspiring to witness how such ventures have blossomed under this mentorship, while simultaneously contributing towards significant social advancement within their respective spheres.

Between 2011 and 2015, our Tholoana Enterprise Programme Alumni Fund granted financial support to a total of 197 entrepreneurs. Due to impact measurement only commencing in 2015, insufficient data is available for assessing this fund's influence accurately.

Nevertheless, D.B. Tlou, a University of Johannesburg student conducting her master's research dissertation, included information regarding this fund up until the end of 2015 within her report.

As per the findings of this study, an overwhelming 98% of participants attested to the fact that the fund had a significant and sustained impact on ensuring their businesses survival. In addition, a staggering 84% acknowledged how beneficial it was in terms of augmenting their workforce size with moderate to major efficacy.

Additionally, approximately nine out of ten respondents (89%) credited this fund for bolstering profits within their enterprises by quite some margin; whilst 87% lauded its effectivity towards increasing revenue generation.

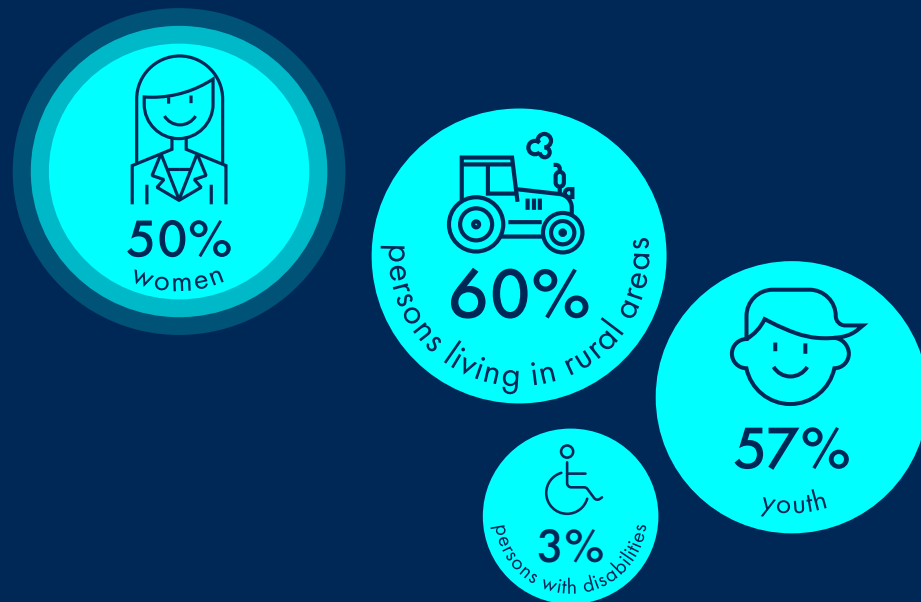


#### 4.1.1 THOLOANA ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME IMPACT

Over **R244.2 million** in grant funding, interest-free loans and business development support has been deployed to support **602 entrepreneurs**.

Of these entrepreneurs, **197** are from the Tholoana Alumni Fund, which ran from **2011** to **2015**, and **405** are from the current Tholoana Enterprise Programme.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS



#### JOB CREATION AND TURNOVER:

Of the **602** entrepreneurs supported, we tracked **405** from nine cohorts between **2015** and **March 2023**. The following is their impact.



**3 129** jobs sustained.



**1 395** new jobs created.



**45%** job growth.



**4 524** collectively employed.



**18 096** livelihoods indirectly impacted.



**87%** turnover increase from **R254 to R475 million**.



**40%** decrease in average levels of poverty.<sup>6</sup>



**45%** increase in business knowledge and skills.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The Lived Poverty Index measures several different indicators, including shelter, clean water, nutrition, electricity, cash income, medical treatment, fuel to cook and money to send children to school. Average levels of lived poverty decreased by 40% from inception to 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Average overall increase of 45% in business knowledge and skills amongst entrepreneurs from inception to 2022.

## 4.2 THOLOANA ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME ALUMNI FUND

The results of our annual surveys have illuminated a vexing issue: access to further funding poses a significant challenge for our programme's beneficiaries. However, we refused to let this dilemma remain unsolved and took action in the form of launching an innovative solution, the Tholoana Enterprise Programme Alumni Fund, in 2019.

This pioneering fund provides eligible alumni with grants as well as interest-free loans, based on selective criteria that they must fulfil. Our objective is multifaceted: utilising the growth funds at hand, we not only strive to elevating participants' turnover, but also to create job opportunities.

*"With the support from the SAB Foundation I have been able to implement systems to ensure better cash flow monitoring."*

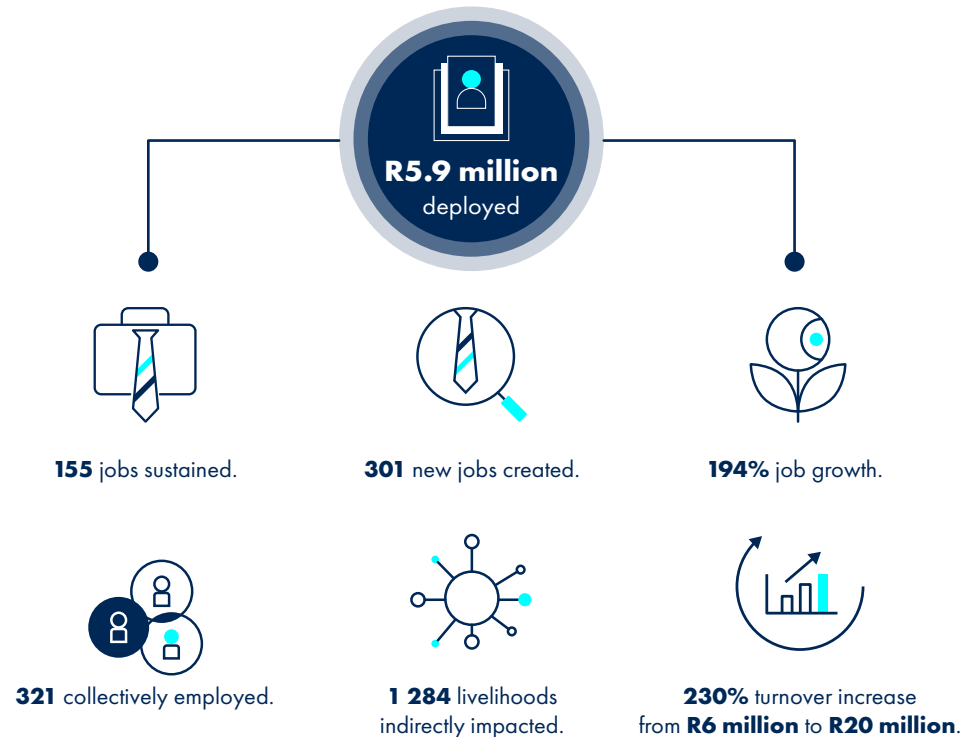
**– Tholoana Enterprise Programme participant.**

### WHAT WE FUND:

- **Deal financing** – Funding to assist entrepreneurs access cash flow to fulfil a new contract deal that will help accelerate their growth.
- **Growth financing** – Funding to assist entrepreneurs with expansion and scaling plans.
- **Equipment financing for growth** – Helping entrepreneurs to access capital to purchase equipment that will help accelerate their growth.

#### 4.2.1 THOLOANA ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME ALUMNI FUND IMPACT:

Over **R7.5 million** has been deployed to support **17 Tholoana Enterprise Programme alumni**, of which **60%** are women.





### 4.3 SOCIONEXT

The SAB Foundation collaborates with SocioNext to organise week-long acceleration programmes in peri-urban and rural areas aimed at unemployed individuals.

These workshops equip participants with the essential abilities and self-assurance needed for establishing a business within their community.

As part of the programme, attendees collaborate to create business proposals whilst also performing market research, making sales pitches and presenting to potential investors.

The SAB Foundation crew visited three different locales where participants developed inspiring ideas, coupled with significant personal development in just seven days.

SocioNext maintains communication with past attendees and has found that just 23% are without employment after finishing the workshop. Conversely, 51% continue to operate their business initiated during the programme, 18% are employed and 8% are pursuing educational opportunities.

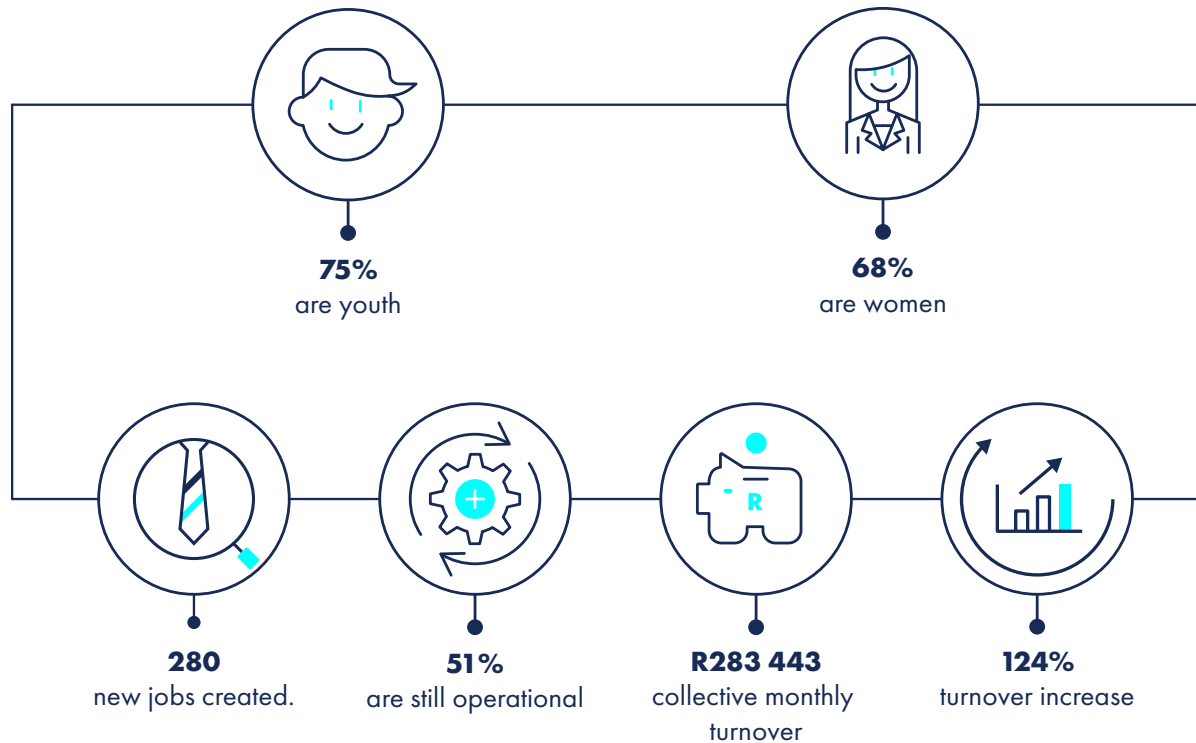
The SAB Foundation's primary objective is to cultivate a thriving network of individuals that will serve as a pipeline for the Tholoana Enterprise Programme. To date, five people have graduated.



#### 4.3.1 SOCIONEXT IMPACT

As at March 2023:

Over **R23.2 million** has been deployed to support **2 179 entrepreneurs**. Of these entrepreneurs:



“The SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards are so important for South Africa. They are very professionally run and bring together incredible projects and people, providing several levels of support for the innovators. Since I won an award in 2018, I have watched the subsequent award ceremonies and the very impressive projects and people that have been part of the awards.”

– **Social Innovation Awards participant.**



# 05

## SAB FOUNDATION SOCIAL INNOVATION PROGRAMMES

### **OUR DEFINITION OF SOCIAL INNOVATION REFERS TO UTILISING BUSINESS STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING SOCIETAL ISSUES.**

We advocate this approach as we believe innovative solutions are necessary for tackling social challenges efficiently and on a large scale. Similar to our work with entrepreneurship, we strive to foster a significant number of socially driven innovators at universities by providing extended support services for exceptionally committed individuals or groups engaged in pioneering efforts within their communities.

Through initiatives such as our prestigious Social Innovation and Disability Empowerment Awards and Social Innovation Fund programmes, we enable job creation alongside sustainable social transformation that can effect positive change on an unprecedented level. The SAB Foundation seeks out innovative solutions, services, commercial plans and methods that specifically tackle the difficulties encountered by underprivileged and/or low-income women, youth, persons with disabilities or those living in rural areas.



## 5.1 SOCIAL INNOVATION AWARDS

This programme is focused on the prototype and start-up phase. Awards range from R200 000 to R1.3 million, alongside business development support and tailored mentoring to assist with venture growth.

### Judging criteria:

#### ORIGINALITY

How innovative is the solution, and is it a significantly new business model, technology, product, service or production method?

#### SOCIAL IMPACT

Can the innovation solve a serious social problem that affects the SAB Foundation's target groups?

#### VIABILITY

To what extent is the innovation or solution commercially viable, to ensure its sustainability?

#### JOB CREATION

Is there potential for the creation of direct and indirect sustainable jobs currently or in the future?

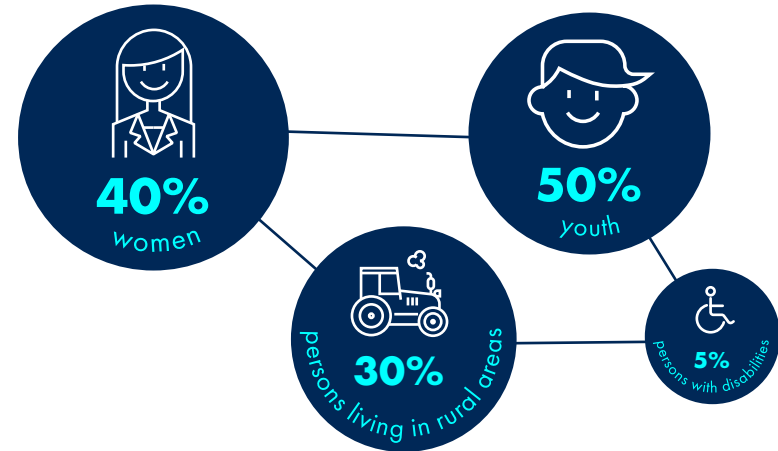
### 5.1.1 SOCIAL INNOVATION AWARDS IMPACT

Over **R68.7million** has been deployed in grant funding and business support to date, to support **174** social innovators.

These innovators concentrate on addressing social issues in a variety of sectors, including housing, healthcare, education, disability services, energy provision and conservation efforts; water supply and sanitation initiatives; community safety measures as well as agricultural sustainability practices.

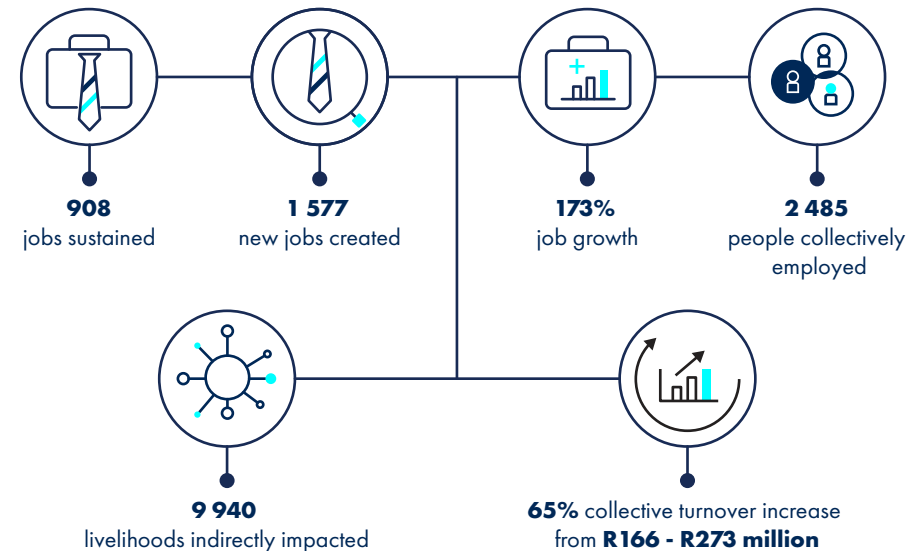
Furthermore, they also focus on recycling projects to reduce waste output, along with financial inclusion programmes that aim at increasing access to finances across the population.

### DEMOGRAPHICS:



### JOB CREATION AND TURNOVER:

#### As at March 2023:





## 5.2 SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND AND ACCELERATOR

The SAB Foundation established the Social Innovation Fund in 2017, an accelerator and funding initiative for previous winners of the Social Innovation and Disability Empowerment Awards.

Our goal is to provide social innovators access to additional financial resources, as well as to a business acceleration programme that will help their organisations expand. The fund was established in response to there being a national ‘missing middle’ of growth phase funders for social innovation in South Africa.

Our objective is to help social innovators tackle obstacles such as identifying and reaching target markets, devising a clear revenue generation model with a financial plan and strategic direction, and obtaining essential capital for growth.

Through the fund, we hope to make an impact that will inspire other organisations to provide funding in support of this crucial work. Ultimately, our goal is to prepare social innovators who are attractive prospects for commercial investors for funding, once they complete the programme.

Positive feedback from early-stage finance providers, including the South African Venture Capital Association, demonstrates that this approach proves effective.

### 5.2.1 SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND AND ACCELERATOR IMPACT

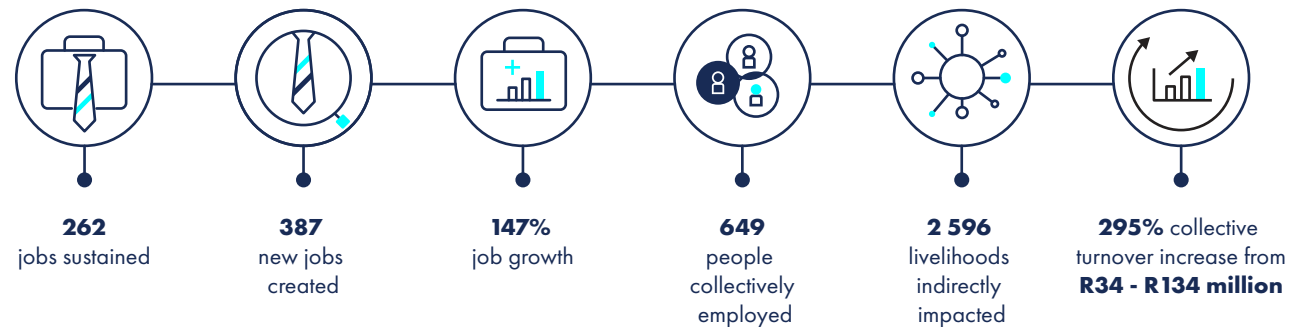
Over **R45.6 million** has been deployed to support **48 social innovation and disability empowerment alumni** from the following sectors, amongst others: health and medical, recycling, manufacturing, education, and the environment.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS:



#### JOB CREATION AND TURNOVER:

As at March 2023:



### 5.3 FESTIVAL OF IDEAS (FOI)

Since 2015, the SAB Foundation has partnered with the Gordon Institute of Business Science in hosting an annual competition, coaching, and training event for social entrepreneurs called the FOI.

The festival offers an avenue for exhibiting viable businesses and innovative business concepts that promote social or environmental objectives towards creating a positive impact. Emerging socially responsible entrepreneurs have the chance to present their exceptional ventures or ideas before a panel of experts, vying for mentorship opportunities and start-up funding.

**During the recent FOI, three businesses were recognised and awarded as stated below:**

#### FIRST PLACE: LEGAL STANDPOINT

An app-centred legal tech start-up working to democratise legal education and services. The app functions as a learning platform and legal marketplace to help South Africans understand the law better and connect with affordable legal services at the touch of a button.

#### SECOND PLACE: TAFARA FOUNDATION

A foundation which prioritises waste tyre recycling and generating employment opportunities while preserving the environment through circular economy practices. Through their efforts, tyres are gathered, and processed into varying rubber crumb sizes to be used in constructing roadways with rubberised asphalt, as well as athletic tracks and other products.

#### THIRD PLACE: QUICKIN WASH

A carwash that operates without water and which exclusively utilises eco-friendly cleaning products to clean cars.







#### **5.4 ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION (EDHE) PROGRAMME**

The aim of the EDHE programme is to identify and support exceptional student entrepreneurs studying at South Africa's 26 public universities.

Through intervarsity competitions, budding innovators have a platform to present their business proposals during the ideation phase. Simultaneously showcasing entrepreneurial potential while nurturing promising future leaders within businesses, this initiative allows participating universities to display how they support growth-seeking start-up aspirations.

**The competition consists of four categories namely:**

1. Business ideas
2. Existing business: tech
3. Existing business: social impact
4. Existing business: general

The SAB Foundation has supported the EDHE programme social impact category since 2019 investing over R200 000 in eight studentpreneurs.

Through our support, EDHE has introduced a mentorship pilot programme consisting of a minimum of four one-on-one mentorship sessions and a monthly group session for the winners.

**At the 2022 competition, the three businesses below were awarded in the social impact category:**

**FIRST PLACE: ERANK PLAY**

An innovative and data-driven math game designed for Grade 8 - 9 learners, accessible through WhatsApp. The business aims to ignite a passion for learning mathematics and STEM subjects among students.

Through leveraging data-driven insights and gamification elements, eRank Play creates an engaging and interactive learning experience. The game fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills and mathematical proficiency, empowering learners to excel academically.

Having a focus on making learning enjoyable and accessible, eRank Play aims to inspire a new generation of learners to embrace the world of mathematics and pursue STEM subjects with enthusiasm and confidence.

**SECOND PLACE: ALLEN FARM AGRI**

A pioneering vegetable production cooperative that specialises in utilising abandoned backyard gardens and underutilised land spaces to cultivate a variety of fresh, high-quality vegetables.

Focusing on sustainability and community engagement, the business harnesses these resources to grow vegetables that are sold directly to local communities.

**THIRD PLACE: MAKIYELA RECYCLING**

An innovative recycling company that operates in two distinct segments: product and service. In the product segment, the company specialises in transforming discarded tires into a diverse range of furniture products. Having a global outlook, Makiyela Recycling strives to supply its innovative creations to customers worldwide.

Additionally, the business offers comprehensive recycling services to diverse clients, including lodges, hotels, bed and breakfasts, guesthouses, schools, parks, salons, tshisanyamas (barbecue joints), car washes, and many others.

Through tailored recycling solutions, the company plays an important role in supporting these businesses and establishments to adopt environmentally friendly practices.

**“Through working with my mentor assigned to me as part of the Tholoana Enterprise Programme, I was able to focus on improving the quality of my products and the management of my production processes. This engaging programme has really helped me grow and sustain my business. I can really see the difference.”**

**– Tholoana Enterprise Programme participant.**



# 06

## DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

**DESPITE POLICIES AND LEGISLATION AIMED AT PROMOTING THE INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT, THESE INDIVIDUALS STILL ENCOUNTER MARGINALISATION AND EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET ON A GLOBAL SCALE.**

In South Africa, where unemployment rates are generally high, those numbers skyrocket for persons with disabilities, reaching an estimated rate of over 90%, approaching nearly complete joblessness in rural areas.

At the core of everything SAB Foundation does lies a commitment to disability empowerment. We strive for inclusivity by providing equal opportunities in all training programmes, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not left behind. Recognising the scarcity of entrepreneurs with disabilities applying for our flagship programme, we began funding MODE. This is an exclusive entrepreneurial training initiative tailored towards building their business acumen and paving a path toward success.

Furthermore, as part of our efforts towards making society more accessible for persons with disabilities, we introduced the following and expanded our flagship programmes to include disability empowerment.

### **MEDUNSA ORGANISATION FOR DISABLED ENTREPRENEURS (MODE)**

MODE aims to develop an appropriate vocational rehabilitation model that ensures higher levels of psychosocial, medical, and economic levels of independence for persons with disabilities.

The primary focus of MODE in the past 24 years has been the preparation of potential entrepreneurs for self-employment and to encourage independence.

Its unique range of training and services deals with the complex nature of challenges experienced by persons with disabilities.

This holistic programme hosts a nine-module business training course, and once participants graduate, they are offered a start-up grant to start their income-generating micro ventures.

### **SOCIAL INNOVATION AWARDS DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT**

We find, support and scale social innovations which provide solutions for persons with disabilities through the Disability Empowerment Awards, born out of our Social Innovation Awards.

This category has equal prize money for winners and also includes intensive mentoring. In judging these awards, the innovation's business potential, life-change potential and scalability are considered.

### **THOLOANA ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT**

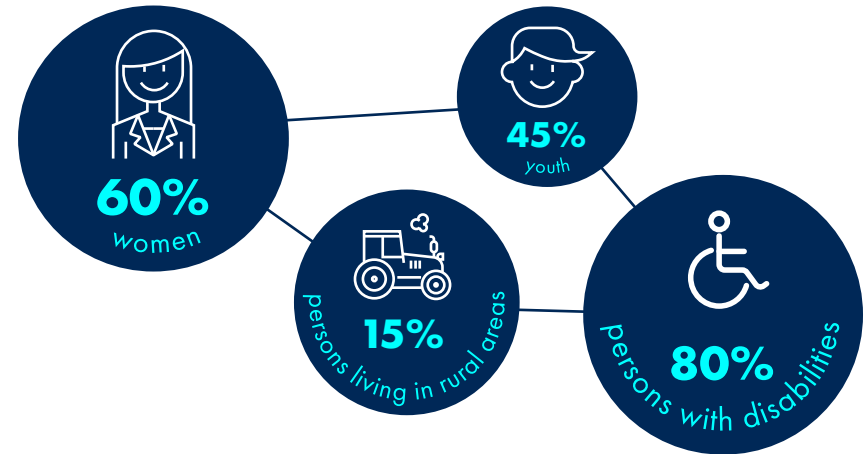
We find, support, and scale social enterprises whose work focuses on providing solutions for persons with disabilities and social enterprises which are run by persons with disabilities.

## 6.1 DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT IMPACT

Over **R46.3 million** in grant funding and business support has been deployed to support **240 entities**. Of these entrepreneurs, **195** are entrepreneurs with a disability and **45** are businesses that are improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities either through assistive technology or access to employment.

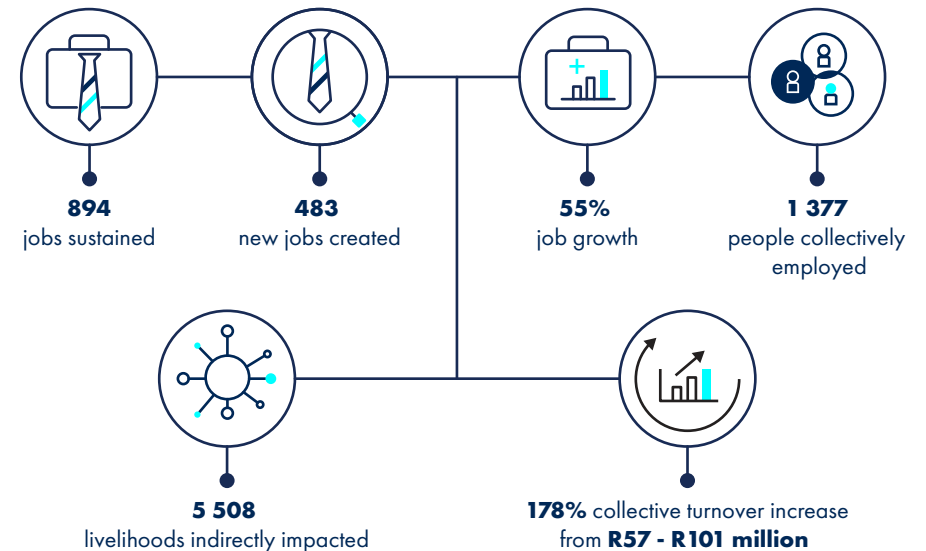


### DEMOGRAPHICS:



### JOB CREATION AND TURNOVER:

As at March 2023:



# 07

## FARMING AND AGRO PROCESSING: RURAL CATALYST AND MICRO ENTERPRISES

**TO EXPLORE INNOVATIVE METHODS OF GENERATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP, THE RURAL CATALYST PROGRAMME WAS ESTABLISHED.**

Its objective is to identify profitable business frameworks that can be scaled up or duplicated in different localities.

The following are some of the initiatives under this programme:

### QOBO QOBO ESSENTIAL OILS:

In conjunction with Qobo Qobo Essential Oils, the SAB Foundation established independent farmer units to grow rose geranium and rosemary in Keiskamahoek, Eastern Cape.



QOBO QOBO ESSENTIAL OILS:



## MADIMBO MACS AND MAC SWARM GROUP

We have invested in a macadamia farming venture that capitalises on the flourishing sector within the Venda area of Limpopo Province. The project, which involves Madimbo Macs and Mac Swarm Group, is led by an accomplished macadamia farmer who had the vision to create a learning and support system for many other small macadamia growers in the area.



MADIMBO MACS AND MAC SWARM GROUP

## PICK N PAY ENTERPRISE AND SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

This programme aims to provide emerging small farmers with tools, training, and mentorship to become successful and sustainable small-scale suppliers to the broader retail market. The SAB Foundation has contributed R5 million in partnership with Pick n Pay and the National Treasury Jobs Fund to support five emerging farmers to become Pick n Pay suppliers.



PICK N PAY ENTERPRISE AND SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES



## UBONGWA COTTON DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The SAB Foundation has provided funding for a community project to better the cotton production yield on the existing farms in the Jozini area. Achieved by looking at alternative ways of doing business to increase revenue and uplift the community standards of living and continuity of the already existing cotton farming.



UBONGWA COTTON DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

## SAVEACT

In conjunction with SaveAct, the SAB Foundation creates rural logistics channels for social innovation products through entrepreneurship and sets up small farming businesses in remote rural areas.

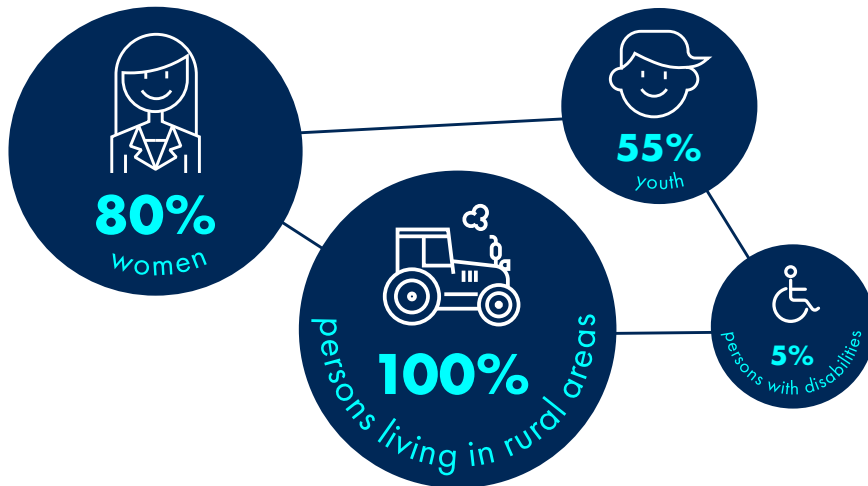


SAVEACT

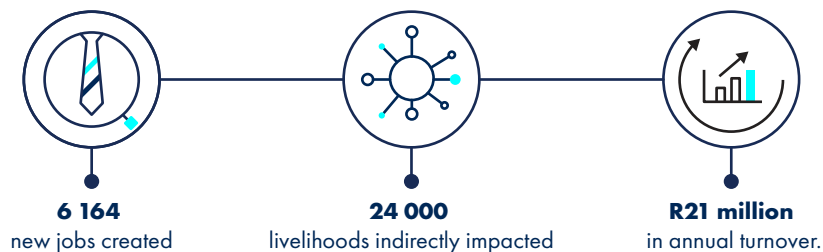
## 7.1 RURAL CATALYST AND MICRO ENTERPRISES IMPACT

Over **R71 million** has been deployed in funding and business support to date, to support **3 139 micro-enterprises** and entrepreneurs.

### DEMOGRAPHICS:



### JOB CREATION AND TURNOVER:



“Our biggest achievement was entering a new industry and creating our own market. We developed new product lines and value chains that were previously not explored. The work we have done whilst on the Tholoana Enterprise Programme has allowed us to become industry representative in terms of emerging farmers in aquaculture.”

– Tholoana Enterprise Programme participant.

“Through the support of the SAB Foundation, we managed to obtain new market access accreditation that allows us to penetrate the export market. The greatest part is that we have managed to open a store in our area where all our products will be sold.”

– Tholoana Enterprise Programme participant.

# 08

## CASE STUDIES

### SIKO REPUBLIK – JABULILE GWALA

**JABULILE GWALA, FOUNDER OF SIKO REPUBLIK, GREW UP IN KATLEHONG, GAUTENG. AFTER LOSING HER JOB IN 2017, JABULILE STARTED GOING TO THE GYM DAILY TO BOOST HER MENTAL HEALTH.**

While shopping for workout gear, she noticed a lack of African aesthetic options available. This presented an opportunity that aligned with her passion to promote inclusivity through active lifestyles. The Siko Republik brand officially launched on 28 November 2018.

“When I first started, my business was really struggling,” says Jabulile. “I was losing more money than I made. I lacked business evaluation processes, I did not understand costing and pricing and I was reliant on unreliable third-party suppliers, which resulted in orders being cancelled and damaged client relationships.”

In 2021, Jabulile then began her journey with the SAB Foundation, when her business received R200 000 in grant funding and mentorship support through the Thloana Enterprise Programme.

“Through this programme, I found that mentorship played a significant role as I could work with someone who was genuinely invested in developing my business and who could provide the necessary guidance for growth,” explains Jabulile.

With the support from the SAB Foundation, her business now operates out of a spacious working area in a safe industrial park. Jabulile has also expanded her team significantly and

increased her initial annual turnover of R500 000 by 500% within just one year of being part of the programme.

“The engaging workshops offered by the programme effectively broke down complex concepts, such as financial management, and were specifically tailored to suit my business needs,” she says.

“In addition to these benefits, participation in the Thloana Enterprise Programme facilitated successful applications with other organisations.”

One of the main challenges faced by the business was securing finance. Over the past four years, Jabulile has prioritised putting the success of the business above all else by expanding product offerings and intensifying marketing efforts. To increase monthly revenue, creative strategies have been deployed to ensure consistent sales.

Jabulile shares that she initially struggled to find suitable partners in the manufacturing industry but have since developed solid partnerships where all products are manufactured locally.

“We deliberately avoid imports to promote employment opportunities for South Africans.”



“We now design and manufacture our own clothing lines, including promotional merchandise for other brands, and we are expanding into corporate wear collaborations,” shares Jabulile. “One of our biggest achievements includes being the first local activewear brand to launch our own fitness events through the execution of Body Beat parties in Johannesburg and Durban, which attract new customers by allowing them to experience the product before purchasing.”

For three consecutive years, Jabulile and her team have participated in Switzerland’s renowned African Diaspora festival. They recently gained entry into the Pure London Trade Show, attracting over 11 000 buyers from all around the world.

“One of our biggest achievements includes being the first local activewear brand to launch our own fitness events through the Body Beat parties in Johannesburg and Durban, which attract new customers by allowing them to experience the product before purchasing.”

– Jabulile Gwala  
Siko Republik

Expanding further into business-to-business partnerships signifies continued growth and their recent collaborations include GAGASI FM and COSAFA which allowed them access to the intercontinental football industry. According to Jabulile, her projections indicate that by the end of this year she aims to achieve annual revenue that exceeds R5 million. This successful growth has allowed her to support her family and employ women from disadvantaged communities and women who have survived gender-based violence.





# BEE LOVED HONEY

## – LESEGO HOLZAPFEL

**LESEGO HOLZAPFEL, FOUNDER OF BEE LOVED HONEY, WAS RAISED IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE. AFTER COMPLETING HER HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES, SHE OBTAINED A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS. THEREAFTER SHE GRADUATED WITH A BACHELOR OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES FROM THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK.**

Through her dedication to empowering communities and promoting diversity and inclusion, she volunteered at a rural school in her home province. This experience enabled her to understand that a solution to eradicating poverty lay in access to education and innovative entrepreneurship.

In 2017 Lesego founded Bokamoso Impact Investments, a social enterprise that connects poverty-stricken areas with agricultural solutions, using educational incubation models. The business also addresses resource capacity by implementing commercial strategies and natural asset mobilisation. A subsidiary of the business, Bokamoso Foods, produces high quality food and beverage products that are exported worldwide.

“I wanted to create jobs and empower vulnerable South African communities,” says Lesego. “Our luxury honey brand, Bee Loved Honey, supports the local beekeeping industry in saving the honeybee population and promotes agricultural education.”

This sustainable bee keeping model creates job opportunities, reduces poverty amongst farmers, and enhances the competitiveness of honey production

nationally. It also improves productivity, supply and processing efficiency, quality control and supply chain co-ordination.

In 2021, Lesego embarked on her journey with the SAB Foundation and was chosen as a winner at the SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards in the same year.

The R200 000 in funding that was awarded enabled Lesego and her team to scale and support more farmers in the area and train 30 beneficiaries in beekeeping, providing each with 60 hives to boost the honey industry.

Prior to receiving support from the SAB Foundation, the business employed nine people. Currently, the business employs 17 people, and has grown its annual turnover significantly.

“We faced significant challenges when starting the business, such as finance, market access and export volumes,” shares Lesego. “We addressed these by establishing a dedicated honey brand that takes multiple approaches including training, fair pricing, quality control and targeting the high-end market.”





“We aim to create an entrepreneurial platform that integrates the impoverished rural communities into the mainstream economy,” continues Lesego. “By using resources that are already present in these communities, we can create jobs, generate new streams of income and offer skills development.”

Over the past two years the business has accomplished several significant milestones. Grant funding of R400 000 was secured from Barloworld and Mbeu, and it participated in the New York City Summer Fancy Foods Exhibition in June 2023.

Lesego was also recognised as a Tutu Fellow in 2019 and was listed on the Mail & Guardian top 200 Young South Africans. Her remarkable achievements also include being selected as Standard Bank Top Woman of the Year and receiving the prestigious Trail Blazer Presidential Award.

“My vision for the future is to address the scarcity of honey supply, as well as the low standards prevalent to an absence of global competition” explains Lesego. “We also seek improved co-ordination and regulations within the honey processor and bee keeping sectors.”

“It has been a great honour to be attached to the SAB Foundation. The impact that we are making in rural South Africa has been made possible by the foundation and the funding we have received. It is with humble gratitude that we say thank you.”

– Lesego Holzapfel  
 Founder and CEO of Bokamoso Impact Investments.





# SPOON MONEY

## – NICOLETTE SWARTZ

**FOUNDER OF SPOON MONEY, NICOLETTE SWARTZ, WAS BORN IN LUSIKISIKI, A TOWN IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE. DRIVEN BY HER STRONG INTEREST IN FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE IMPACT IT CAN HAVE ON ENHANCING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS, SHE ESTABLISHED HER BUSINESS IN 2017.**

With prior experience working as a marketer for insurance and asset management firms, she recognised an opportunity to assist low-income communities in obtaining greater benefits from conventional financing options.

Through its operations, Spoon Money aims to extend savings accounts and loan facilities that are specifically tailored towards informal micro-enterprises led by women who face challenges when seeking formal credit opportunities.

In 2019, Nicolette started her journey with the SAB Foundation after being declared a winner at the SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards. Her business was awarded R600 000 in funding, and she now continues to receive assistance from the SAB Foundation Social Innovation Fund. In 2022, Nicolette secured an additional grant of R670 000 for her venture from this fund.

“Before I received support from the SAB Foundation, my business was relatively underdeveloped and mainly focused on providing savings and loans to stokvel groups,” explains Nicolette. “However, since the involvement of the SAB Foundation, we have been able to refine our value proposition and mission statement. This has allowed me to concentrate our efforts more effectively.”

The funds provided by the SAB Foundation were instrumental in enabling the business to offer R600 000 worth of loans specifically targeted at women-run businesses. This initiative served as a successful pilot project for Spoon Money. Furthermore, the grants from the SAB Foundation also played a crucial role in helping Spoon Money survive during both the recent pandemic and its subsequent slow recovery period.





**“The support, both financial and non-financial, has been invaluable to Spoon Money’s very survival. The depth of gratitude is hard to express, but I hope the SAB Foundation team understands the far-reaching impact of the work they are doing.”**

**– Nicolette Swartz**  
Founder of Spoon Money

“I am so grateful for the unwavering support from my mentor, Anton Ressel, who has been an invaluable source of support with his expertise,” says Nicolette. “In addition, the Impact Amplifier not only helped us clarify our strategy, but also challenged our thinking while advocating for Spoon Money’s success.”

“Before receiving support from the SAB Foundation, our company had seven staff members which included agents and generated an annual revenue of R700 000,” she continues. “Since then, we have experienced a 39% growth in our annual turnover.”

Nicolette identified the clarification of the business’s mission and value proposition as a challenge they encountered. However, she acknowledged that mentors played a vital role in providing guidance and direction. Having largely been a sole founder, Nicolette recognised how this posed challenges due to limited input from other individuals. As a solution, she actively sought out mentorship opportunities and surrounded herself with fellow entrepreneurs to ensure continuous exposure to new ideas.

Additionally, the business faced difficulties recovering from the impact of the pandemic at an adequate pace. To address this issue, experimentation became necessary for them regarding different distribution channels, communication methods, and even product offerings.

“I believe that despite the difficulties faced by our business, we have achieved some notable milestones,” shares Nicolette. “One of these accomplishments is successfully trying out a new distribution channel with B2B2C, which has greatly benefited both the supported businesses and our own company’s stability and gradual growth.”

# GOLDEN REWARDS 1981

## – MAMPHO SOTSHONGAYE

**MAMPHO SOTSHONGAYE, FOUNDER OF GOLDEN REWARDS 1981, GREW UP IN A RURAL AREA NEAR PORT ST JOHNS THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE. AS A CHILD OF A WIDOWED PARENT, SHE FACED VARIOUS CHALLENGES, THAT INCLUDED HER ASSISTING IN RAISING HER SIBLINGS.**

At just 19 years old, she entered the field of Civil Engineering, a choice influenced by her own background where infrastructure was scarce and young girls were often pressured into marriage. Opting for this career path served not only as personal motivation, but also challenged disproving societal expectations that limited women's potential.

Mampho spent seven years working in the construction industry before pursuing her passion for change. With ambitions to empower other women, Mampho realised that accomplishing such goals would prove challenging within conventional employment structures. As a result, she started Golden Rewards 1981 in 2010 as a vehicle for initiating transformation and fostering positive change.

Located in Cape Town, the business specialises in road maintenance and vegetation upkeep. Inspired by her experiences in rural areas of the Western Cape and driven by a strong desire to improve road infrastructure while empowering local communities, she established the business as an avenue through which she could continue making valuable contributions.

In 2022, her affiliation with SAB Foundation commenced when she received grant funding of R250 000 and support from mentors through the Tholoana Enterprise Programme.

"Prior to joining the programme, we faced significant challenges in terms of proper structures and systems, whilst employing 85 individuals," explains Mampho. "After receiving support, we have been able to transform our operations remarkably."

"Presently the company employs a workforce of 132 people, which includes young professionals undergoing practical training in their respective fields," says Mampho. "Additionally, our annual turnover has grown by more than 55% since receiving assistance from this programme."

Mampho shares that the Tholoana Enterprise Programme has contributed greatly to the business. "It has assisted in establishing the necessary structures and processes we needed, and we have appointed a mentor for accountability and the expansion of our clientele," she continues.





Mampho faces difficulties due to being a woman in a male-dominated industry. "I constantly felt undermined and rejected, which affected my confidence. However, through having the right attitude I have become resilient and determined," she shares.

"Access to funding and advisory has also been problematic for my business growth," she continues. "Despite rejection from the industry, I have learned the skills of how to cope with challenges while remaining focused on my success."

Mampho and her business have achieved some notable achievements. In 2022, she graduated top of the class at the Gordon Institute of Business Science. She also received recognition for her achievements when she won the Womandla Stem Award for Engineering. Moreover, Mampho was a finalist for Women of the Year in the Big 5 Impact Construction Awards held in June 2023.

"I have ambitious plans for the future, which include attaining further qualifications through business studies," she says. "I also aim to expand our reach into other provinces, while investing in skills development programmes for my employees so that I can create opportunities specifically designed to support women in the industry."

**"Thank you for the platform and thank you for seeing value in me and my business. I wish that all SMMEs can have this kind of support."**

**– Mampho Sotshongaye**  
Founder of Golden Rewards 1981.





# ATLEGA FOR WOMEN

## – MATSHEGO MODUKA

**MATSHEGO BRENDA MODUKA WAS RAISED BY HER GRANDMOTHER IN BLOEMFONTEIN. AT 17 SHE COMPLETED MATRIC; AT 18 SHE BEGAN STUDYING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE BUT BECAME A TEENAGE MOTHER AND DROPPED OUT. HOWEVER, SOMEONE CONNECTED HER TO AN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ABET) JOB OPPORTUNITY, WHICH MARKED THE START OF HER JOURNEY IN TRAINING.**



"I started out as an ABET facilitator to a training specialist with NQF qualifications, and am currently furthering my studies," says Matshego. "I believe in paying it forward, which motivated me to start my own training company, Atlega for Women Projects Enterprise, for women who lack education and skills."

By empowering these women through employment or entrepreneurship, she aims to help them achieve economic independence and improve their households one person at a time.

Matshego's affiliation with the SAB Foundation began in 2021 when she became a part of the Tholoana Enterprise Programme. Through this programme, her business received R193 530 in grant funding, along with valuable mentorship.

"Prior to joining the Tholoana Enterprise Programme, the business operated out of a small office space located in Gqeberha and we managed at least five training projects," shares Matshego. "During that time, the business did not keep any business financial records nor was it compliant with SARS, COIDA, or UIF requirements."

According to Matshego, the company solely relied on government work, while Matshego worked as their only employee. However, since joining the Tholoana Enterprise Programme, their team now consists of 23 employees, which includes two permanent employees, 13 contract workers, and eight freelancers.

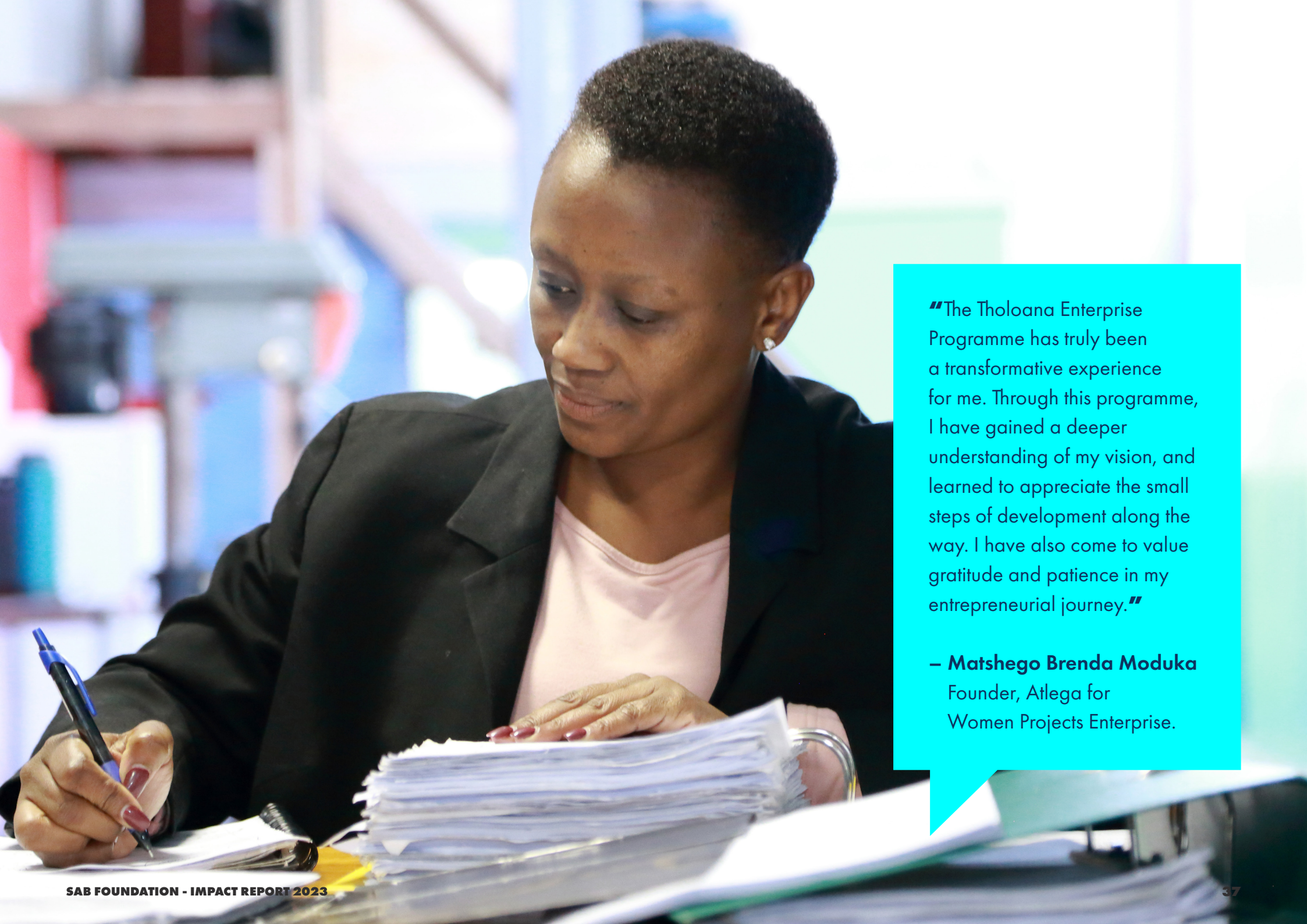
Additionally, the business acquired an expanded training centre where its training sessions are conducted more effectively.

In addition to their employees, Atlega also welcomes several learners into their system for skills development and stipend opportunities. In the previous financial year alone, they successfully trained 344 individuals. Furthermore, by participating in the Tholoana Enterprise Programme, this business has experienced a remarkable growth of 187% in annual turnover.

"The Tholoana Enterprise Programme aided us in improving costing methods, accounting systems, networking capabilities, and pitching skills to attract private sector clients instead of solely relying on public sector projects," says Matshego.

The business faced a significant challenge with late payments from government projects, which severely affected its cash flow. However, Matshego has since implemented upfront payment requests to cover project costs. One recent accomplishment is Atlega's compliance with UIF, SARS, COIDA, and OHS requirements.

"Additionally, the business has expanded its network both nationally and in Africa as a whole," she reports. "We are currently engaged in training programs across the continent and are preparing for export readiness within two years to expand our training offerings across the continent."



“The Tholoana Enterprise Programme has truly been a transformative experience for me. Through this programme, I have gained a deeper understanding of my vision, and learned to appreciate the small steps of development along the way. I have also come to value gratitude and patience in my entrepreneurial journey.”

– **Matshego Brenda Moduka**  
Founder, Atlega for  
Women Projects Enterprise.



# KITCHEN360

## – HLALEFANG MZINGWANE

**HLALEFANG MZINGWANE WAS BORN IN ROUXVILLE AND HAD A CHALLENGING BUT INSPIRING CHILDHOOD. GROWING UP BEFORE DEMOCRACY IN OUR COUNTRY BROUGHT BOTH HAPPINESS AND DIFFICULTIES FOR HER. HER ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT SHOWED AT AN EARLY AGE, WHEN SHE SOLD BEEF BONES TO BUY TOYS, WHILE VOLUNTEERING AT HER PARENTS' SUCCESSFUL TUCK SHOP FUELED HER LOVE FOR BUSINESS.**

"On Sundays my mother cooked delicious meals that sparked my interest in cooking," shares Hlalefang. "My favourite was the famous seven-colour dish."

In 2017, she entered the catering industry and founded Kitchen360, now a multi-award-winning company specialising in food consulting, high-end catering services, and fast-food services.

"In 2019, I received R198 000 in funding and mentorship from the SAB Foundation through the Tholoana Enterprise Programme," she says. "Before joining the programme, my business faced financial challenges and I considered exploring a different business venture."

"Through attending the programme's workshops, I realised that my business lacked proper systems and processes," she states. "The programme gave me essential business skills and I discovered how my lack of knowledge held me back from success."

Hlalefang used the grant funding to purchase equipment and secure working capital for new premises, which improved her operations significantly. The business also underwent rebranding with support from the programme, gaining exposure through national press articles.

"One of the most valuable aspects of the programme was connecting with other entrepreneurs across the country" she says. "It allowed me to forge meaningful relationships and share insights and experiences."



Prior to receiving support from the Tholoana Enterprise Programme, the business had five employees and an annual turnover of just under R500 000. However, currently, the business employs 12 people, and has increased its annual turnover by 940%.

Due to challenges experienced during the pandemic, they pivoted their business. They sold cakes from home, held online baking classes, made manuals for start-ups, and offered ready-to-eat meals. This was a turning point that revealed untapped potential. Hlalefang and the business have also achieved notable milestones including winning contracts from SEDA; becoming Free State Chairperson for Women in the Culinary Division of the South African Chefs Association; and being chosen as Head Chef for Team South Africa at the Dubai FoodEXPO.

"These achievements demonstrate our commitment to excellence, innovation, and continuous growth," shares Hlalefang. "They serve as milestones in our journey and inspire us to strive for even greater accomplishments in the future."

"My dream is to inspire the African continent with innovative food solutions", she says. "My aim is to extend our operations to various regions, prioritising individuals who would greatly benefit from our services, and establishing strong connections with enterprise development agencies."

Moreover, Kitchen360 plans on venturing into niche areas within the catering industry. Through this diversification strategy and exploration of specialised sectors, they aspire to widen their influence while offering exceptional culinary experiences across different domains.



“Upon applying for the Tholoana Enterprise Programme, I had no idea of the multitude of benefits that awaited me. I am deeply grateful to all those involved in making me a more capable businesswoman, as well as for playing a pivotal role in revitalising my business.

I have found a supportive and nurturing family who has embraced me as one of their own. I proudly represent and advocate for the programme as its ambassador because I am a living testimony that it works!

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the visionary behind this programme for being an instrument in helping individuals like me.”

– **Hlalefang Mzingwane**  
Founder of Kitchen360.





# MINTOR CHAT-BASED SOLUTIONS

## – LEÀNNE VIVIERS

**LEÀNNE VIVIERS GREW UP IN A MIDDLE-CLASS ENVIRONMENT IN STELLENBOSCH IN THE WESTERN CAPE. AFTER OBTAINING HER ENGINEERING DEGREE, SHE PURSUED INTERNATIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE BY MOVING TO LONDON. HOWEVER, SHE FACED DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING A JOB DUE TO HER DEGREE NOT BEING RECOGNISED.**



“To make ends meet, I took on three jobs simultaneously at one point,” shares Leànne. “This first-hand experience of struggling at an entry-level position later served as inspiration when I established Mintor Chat-Based Solutions in 2015.”

Mintor provides chat-based solutions that integrate chatbot and AI technology into existing used and trusted applications, such as WhatsApp and existing HR systems. These tools facilitate the placement, development, and retention of digitally disconnected employees.

The business aims to impact the lives of millions of unemployed youth and underserved employees globally.

“Many unemployed youths lack career support and cannot afford the costs associated with applying for jobs” advises Leànne. “Businesses cannot find and identify the right-fit talent, hence, on average, 50% of new recruits leave within their first year.”

“Non-office-based workers are primarily from marginalised communities and lack access to computers or money to seek employment,” she continues. “Consequently, talented job seekers are excluded from the marketplace, and those who find a job do not receive adequate support to advance their careers and improve their living conditions.”

Leànne and her business partner’s journey with the SAB Foundation began in 2018 when her business won at the SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards and received R200 000 in funding. Facing challenges during the pandemic, the business was further assisted with a grant of R164 000 to ensure its survival and enable it to transition into a more scalable model.



Additional support came through an interest-free loan of R800 000 as well as another grant worth R400 000 from the SAB Foundation Social Innovation Fund. This ongoing assistance continues to provide valuable support for Leànné's business. Before receiving support, the business was in the early concept development phase of its jobseeker support tools. They now have a market-fit product for their whole HR support chat-based toolset, expanded internationally with five clients, and grown threefold in the past year.

"One major milestone achieved through the funding was transforming our minimum viable product into an automated platform that allowed the business to assist 10 times more unemployed jobseekers within just one month of launching," she says. "The funding enabled us to create marketing collateral that greatly improved brand recognition and generated new leads."

Over 150 000 people have been supported by Mintor. The business initially struggled to effectively match youth with jobs on a large scale. They successfully resolved this issue by implementing their chat-based recruitment system, which provided an accessible and affordable platform for both young people and businesses.

Currently, the company is facing another challenge: convincing HR leaders to embrace innovative technologies like theirs.

"By gaining more adoption of these advancements within HR departments, it could greatly enhance recruitment quality, as well as employee engagement and retention while reducing costs," says Leànné.

To tackle this hurdle head-on, the business is developing case studies that demonstrate positive outcomes from adopting new technology. They are also creating indicative return on investment calculators aimed at minimising risks associated with such changes. Lastly, they actively seek influencers in either the HR or tech industries who can aid them in accelerating growth within this emerging field of "AI-driven HR Tech".

Mintor has overcome numerous hurdles and made impressive strides. This year, they emerged as winners in the Society for Human Resources Management Labs global start-up track for Africa and the Middle East region, acknowledging their pioneering solutions that address issues faced by deskless workers. Leànné eagerly anticipates witnessing Mintor's expansion to positively



**"Our team is incredibly grateful to the SAB Foundation for all their support throughout some tough times. We would likely not have been here today if we did not have that support. Many thanks!"**

**– Leànné Viviers**  
Founder of Mintor Chat-based Solutions





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