

impact ²⁰²⁶ report



south african
urban food and
farming trust

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our vision and mission



The SA Urban Food and Farming Trust envisions resilient urban communities flourishing through food and farming.



In South Africa, extreme inequality, the legacy of apartheid and the climate crisis make most residents socially, ecologically and economically fragile.

OUR MISSION is to strengthen marginalised urban communities through food and farming, supporting communities in arriving at their own form of negotiated resilience.

OUR GOALS are to increase social cohesion within and between communities, improve household food and nutrition security, conserve and protect urban natural ecosystems, empower communities with collective agency, and humanise and enrich built urban environments.

We are on track to strengthen the resilience and improve the well-being of over one million marginalised urban residents in South Africa in the next ten years.



kurt ackermann



When I reflect on the past year, what gives me the greatest sense of hope is not simply the growth in our programmes, but the people whose vision, courage, and determination continue to shape them. Across Cape Town, and increasingly through connections with partners in other African cities, I have seen how farmers, traders, entrepreneurs, knowledge holders, and young leaders are creating practical solutions to some of our most pressing challenges.

Today, more than 1,500 farmers are part of the Agrihub network. Most are women. Together they are producing food, generating income, strengthening social ties, and building forms of resilience that extend far beyond agriculture, or even food. What continues to inspire me most is that these spaces are becoming centres of local leadership and collective agency.

Young farmer **Sibulele Plaatjie** represents this spirit. One of the youngest members of the Langa Agrihub, she is building a future in hydroponic farming and agro-processing while opening new possibilities for other young women. Her story reminds us that opportunity often begins with curiosity, persistence, and the confidence to believe that something different is possible.

Transformation is also taking place in unexpected places. Reflecting on her work with the Langa Waste Diversion Project, Pamela Nontshinga says, "The project has changed the way I think about waste and about myself. I see myself as a leader and role model in the community, and I want to continue creating positive change wherever I can."

Her words speak to something we see repeatedly: when people are trusted and supported, they discover capacities that extend well beyond any single project.

An important part of this journey is the role played by **Oranjezicht City Farm**. Over many years, the farm has become a site of innovation, learning, and knowledge generation, demonstrating how agroecological practices can strengthen both people and ecosystems in urban contexts. It serves not only as a productive urban farm, but as a place where new approaches are tested, skills are developed, and communities reconnect with the land and with one another. Through the expertise of its team, Oranjezicht City Farm continues to provide invaluable technical support, mentorship, and inspiration to Agrihub farmers across Cape Town, helping translate practical experience into stronger and more resilient community-led food systems.

I am equally encouraged by leaders such as **Nomalanga Linda Ruiters**, whose work reminds us that the future of African food systems depends not only on innovation, but also on preserving and renewing the knowledge that has sustained communities for generations. As she reflected after Food Indaba 2025, "Indigenous plants have a vital role in South Africa's future food system."

Behind these stories is an exceptional team whose expertise is matched by patience, humility, and a deep commitment to partnership. From the farm managers and field workers who support farmers day-to-day, to the programme

staff, researchers, communicators, and convenors who connect local practice with broader systems change, our team brings together a rare combination of technical capability and long-term commitment. Over many years, we have earned the trust of communities that have too often experienced broken promises and short-term interventions. That trust remains our greatest asset. It is the foundation that allows practical, community-led solutions to take root and grow.



Our experience has taught us that meaningful influence begins with meaningful practice. The ideas we contribute to national and international conversations are grounded in the realities of farms, markets, kitchens, and neighbourhoods. Through the Agrihubs, the learning generated at Oranjezicht City Farm, Food Indaba, AfriFOODlinks, and our growing network of partners across Africa, we are learning alongside others and helping to ensure that African experiences and perspectives help shape the future of food systems globally.

The years ahead will bring continued uncertainty. Yet they also bring tremendous opportunity. We see the potential to deepen and scale farmer-led Agrihubs, strengthen circular local economies, support a new generation of green leaders, advance urban agroecological practice, and develop practical responses to climate change that are rooted in community realities. Above all, we see communities that are ready not simply to adapt to the future, but to help shape it.

our programmes



south african
urban food and
farming trust

SUMMARY



the agrihub initiative

Agrihub Initiative

The Agrihub Initiative is a city-scale programme that shows how locally governed food systems can strengthen urban resilience and equity. Established in 2022, it supports small-scale farmers with community food gardens in four marginalised communities in Cape Town. The model combines production, training, storage, market access, and social infrastructure.



AfriFOODlinks

AfriFOODlinks is a pan-African and European collaboration across 65 cities working to improve food security and urban sustainability, transforming urban food systems through community-led innovation. In Cape Town, one of the project's five Hub Cities, SAUFFT is improving local food environments through physical change and social innovation, using ethnographic research to document, illuminate, and amplify community voices, supporting entrepreneurship by developing and testing innovative financing models, and supporting Food Dialogues across five African cities.

Environmental Entrepreneur Support Initiative (EESI)

Since 2019, SAUFFT has run the Environmental Entrepreneur Support Initiative (EESI) in partnership with the Mauerberger Foundation and the University of Cape Town's Global Risk Governance Programme. The programme identifies and builds grassroots entrepreneurial capacity from local community contexts to address challenges caused by anthropogenic change, with each annual focus designed to strengthen leadership and community resilience. The upcoming project cycle will see the introduction of pocket food forests in marginalised communities, working in partnership with existing networks of urban food growers to improve yields for farmers while cooling urban areas and providing other benefits for climate change adaptation.



GrowSA

SAUFFT is part of GrowSA, a green economy partnership that works to unlock human potential in South Africa's grassroots green economy by investing in catalytic people within catalytic projects. The programme provides training, education, mentoring, and support for people working in gardens, kitchens, hubs, and markets, while also helping establish and strengthen the links between them.



oranjezicht city farm

Oranjezicht City Farm (OZCF)

Established in 2012, Oranjezicht City Farm is a 0.25-hectare community food garden on a heritage site on the slopes of Table Mountain. It runs educational programmes for all ages, and serves as a site for innovation through volunteer programmes, produce box schemes, allotment rentals, composting, raised-bed design, food forestry, community events, and water-wise gardening practices.



Food Indaba

Food Indaba is an annual programme of talks and events focused on South Africa's food system. It brings together food growers, academics, activists, writers, nutritionists, policymakers, and food lovers to engage with key issues connected to the food we eat. Through dialogue and collaboration, Food Indaba creates opportunities to learn, connect, and work towards a more sustainable, just, and resilient food future.



the year in impact

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

FY2026 was a year in which SAUFFT’s work continued to grow in scale while deepening its investment in community leadership, collaboration and shared learning.

Across farms, markets, neighbourhoods and wider African networks, these five highlights offer a snapshot of that progress.



1,532 farmers connected through Cape Town’s Agrihubs

The Agrihub network supported **1,532 farmers** across **238 farms** in **Langa, Gugulethu, Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha**. Together, farmers produced more than **64 tonnes** of fresh produce, generating approximately **R1.17 million** in sales, while new infrastructure and stronger farmer leadership continued to develop across the network.



Informal food environments transformed

In **Langa**, AfriFOODlinks helped turn waste, infrastructure and enterprise challenges into opportunities for practical change. More than **400 tonnes** of accumulated waste were cleared from Smiley Market, over **31 tonnes** of organic waste were diverted from landfill, and **44 informal food businesses** were supported to formalise.



Learning shared across five African cities

SAUFFT’s experience of creating inclusive spaces for food-system dialogue travelled beyond Cape Town. During the year, **Food Dialogues** were held in **Tunis, Ouagadougou, Cape Town, Mbale and Kisumu**, strengthening local collaboration and enabling communities, practitioners and policymakers to learn from one another across different African contexts.



Five years of growing people and possibilities

GrowSA marked its fifth cohort, bringing five years of sustained investment in grassroots leadership, entrepreneurship and the green economy. Since its inception, the programme has supported more than **40 social entrepreneurs** and community changemakers, building skills, confidence, relationships and pathways for people working across Cape Town’s food system.



Food Indaba expands its reach

Food Indaba 2025 brought together nearly **600 participants** across **19 events**, up from approximately **435 participants** in 2024. Around **1,750 hours** of engagement were recorded, while more than **60 media** stories extended conversations from the programme to an estimated global audience of **122 million** people.



our theory of change

SUMMARY

The Challenge

Food insecurity in Cape Town and other cities is driven by inequality, weak governance, and poor infrastructure. Marginalised communities face unemployment, limited land and services, and growing climate risks.

Strategy

We support the growth of farmer-led Agrihubs that strengthen livelihoods and food access, enable collective input buying and shared market access, connect farmers, traders, and community kitchens, foster partnerships with communities, researchers, and government, and serve as a hub for learning and innovation in urban agroecology through the Oranjezicht City Farm.



What We Do

We expand Agrihubs, provide training in agroecology, agro-processing, nutrition and governance, invest in small-scale infrastructure, partner on research and participatory data systems, and advocate for change in urban food policy.

Outcomes

The outcomes achieved include better nutrition, stronger social cohesion, increased income and skills, greater civic participation, and enhanced climate resilience.

Vision 2035

A network of community-driven Agrihubs giving urban communities control over their food systems.

agrihub initiative



SUMMARY

The Agrihub Initiative

The Agrihub Initiative continued to strengthen community-led urban food systems across Cape Town, supporting **1,532 farmers** across **238 farms** in Langa, Gugulethu, Mitchells Plain, and Khayelitsha. By January 2026, farmers had collectively produced more than **64 tonnes** of fresh produce, with a cumulative harvest value exceeding **R1.3 million** and sales reaching more than **R1.16 million**.

A major milestone during the year was the continued development of Agrihub infrastructure. Gugulethu officially opened its new Agrihub facility in October 2025, while Mitchell’s Plain established an operational centre as construction neared completion.

In Khayelitsha, farmers participated in the installation of a new shade-net tunnel, gaining valuable maintenance and repair skills in the process.

The initiative also demonstrated the growing power of community leadership. In Gugulethu, farmers revived the traditional practice of Ilima, working collectively to support one another’s gardens.

In Langa, farmer Mzi Mashicila expanded his herbal tea enterprise, creating new income opportunities by connecting urban farming, local food culture, and tourism.

A key lesson from the year was that strong communities emerge when farmers are empowered to lead. By strengthening local governance and creating spaces for collaboration, the Agrihubs continued to evolve beyond food production, becoming platforms for civic participation, local innovation, and community resilience.

This growing impact was recognised in November 2025 when **Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis** visited the Langa Agrihub, highlighting its contribution to urban food security and inclusive urban development.



the agrihub
initiative



agrihub initiative



KEY FIGURES

Cumulative figures since the programme's inception

3 Major Infrastructure Milestones Achieved



Khayelitsha Hub Production
Supplied **64,115 kg** of certified organic vegetables to the Cape Town food system.



Farms in the network
238



Harvest value
R1,3 million



Sales generated
R1,3 million

Activity Rate
63% average farm activity rate



Farmer's supported
1,532 farmers supported, of whom approximately **62,5%** are women.



agrihub initiative

STORIES OF IMPACT

In the heart of Langa, **Sibulele Plaatjie** is redefining what farming looks like for young women in her community.

Raised in a single-parent household in Langa, Sibulele knew she needed a way to generate income, and she wanted to do it in a way that aligned with her desire to live healthier. Growing her own food became both a practical solution and a personal commitment. Hydroponic gardening, in particular, offered a smart, space-efficient way to do both.

Her inspiration came from **Akhona Gxuluwe**, farm manager at Kenilworth Rooftop Farm, where she volunteered and saw firsthand that her vision was possible.

That experience shifted farming from an idea to a real pathway. Today, lettuce is her focus, a reliable, year-round crop that thrives in hydroponic systems. At home, she searches online for opportunities and funding. In the garden, she maintains her system by hand and learns constantly through conversations with fellow growers.

Her journey to the Langa Agrihub began with curiosity. She walked past a hydroponic system she admired, stepped inside, and kept coming back until she connected with Lwando and learned about the Agrihub. She has been part of it ever since.

For her, it's a space of shared learning and steady growth. Through the Agrihub's network and workshops, including agro-processing training where she learned to make jam, chutney and dried fruit, Sibulele is expanding her skills beyond production and thinking about value addition. Resources, funding and space remain challenges.

But when she believes in something, she goes after it and trusts she will figure it out along the way. As one of the youngest members of the Agrihub, Sibulele is breaking stereotypes and paving the way for other young women in agriculture. Her goal is clear: formal training, stronger market access, scaling her production, and building a self-sustaining farming business. Her impact is not only in what she grows, but in what she represents – possibility.

“Now I can make money,
and at the same time eat all the
vitamins and minerals I need
because I grow them myself.”

— Liziwe Stofile – Agrihub Farmer



SUMMARY

Between 2025 and 2026, AfriFOODlinks demonstrated how community-led innovation, collaboration and practical experimentation can strengthen urban food systems in Cape Town.

Supporting more inclusive and resilient food economies

Working primarily in Langa and Bellville, SAUFFT supported informal food traders through improvements to trading infra-structure, business formalisation, waste management and participatory research. The work focused on creating healthier, safer and more resilient food environments while recognising informal traders as essential contributors to the social, cultural and economic life of the city.

In Langa, a major milestone was the transformation of the Smiley Market site. More than 400 tons of accumulated waste were cleared, creating a foundation for new infrastructure, while more than 31 tons of organic waste were diverted from landfill through the Langa Organic Waste Diversion partnership. The project also supported 44 traders to formally register their businesses and secure Certificates of Acceptability, creating new opportunities for growth and greater recognition within the local economy.

The project continued to test practical and affordable innovations to improve trading conditions and livelihoods. New solar lighting systems, custom-designed Burro Ovens, waste-to-resource initiatives and prototype market stalls demonstrated how targeted interventions can improve safety, reduce operating costs and create opportunities to increase income. In Bellville, traders adapted and improved stall designs to better serve their customers, while in Langa, traders gained access to essential compliance and safety equipment.

A key lesson from this work was that meaningful infrastructure begins with trust. By working alongside traders, local government and community organisations, AfriFOODlinks demonstrated the value of collaborative approaches to strengthening food systems.

This work received further recognition in November 2025 when Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis visited the Langa interventions and endorsed the project's innovative approach to urban food systems development.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT



31,237 kg
of organic waste diverted from landfill



400 tonnes
of waste removed from
Smiley Market



2
solar lighting and
infrastructure pilots
implemented



100
household organic waste
collection programmes
integrated



44 businesses
formally registered



R132,850
in revenue recorded
across **80 trading days**



R4000
average monthly
waste-to-resource income



1 mayoral visit and
official endorsement

INSIGHTS

Telling the stories of Cape Town's food system

AfriFOODlinks also created space for Cape Town's food system to be understood through the lived experiences of the people who shape it.

In November 2025, the project's ethnography and storytelling work concluded with a collection of long-form stories documenting the knowledge, challenges and aspirations of diverse food system actors. The stories include:

Smiley Market: Documenting the history, culture and economic significance of one of Cape Town's important informal meat markets.

Janda Brothers: Tracing the journey of two young men who leave a farming village in the Eastern Cape in search of opportunity in Cape Town. Their journey leads not to stability in formal employment, but to a small community garden where they begin to rebuild a sense of purpose and belonging. The story is written in both isiXhosa and English.

Rory Bester: Exploring how experiences of living on the margins shaped a way of seeing the world through kitchens, food and everyday domestic practices as forms of cultural archive and knowledge. Through his work as an art historian and curator, Bester reframes cooking, recipes and memory as critical tools for understanding society beyond formal academic and policy frameworks.

Ellen Smith: Examining Ellen's personal and professional relationship with food as a site of care, memory and community connection, and how everyday practices such as cooking, sharing and storytelling can hold history and shape social belonging.

Luyanda Mapeyi: Following a young urban farmer using food growing and recycling initiatives to address hunger and create opportunities in his community.

Faith Sotondoshe: Exploring Faith's lived experience and relationship to food, community and survival, and how food becomes a site of dignity, care and resilience in everyday life.

In 2026, these ethnographies are being developed into a public-facing book that will share these insights with a broader audience and contribute to ongoing conversations about food system transformation in Africa.



Exploring new ways to finance urban food enterprises

Working closely with project partner Oribi, SAUFFT is helping to develop and test innovative finance models suited to African urban contexts. The work considers businesses across the formal and informal economy and explores how different funders can combine their resources and strengths to support high-potential food-sector enterprises.

In July 2025, SAUFFT hosted a **Food Systems Financing Roundtable** at the Food Indaba, bringing together key financiers to engage directly with real-world challenges and explore innovative solutions. Testing and refining these approaches will continue through the remainder of the project.

Connecting African cities through Food Dialogues

Drawing on SAUFFT's experience of hosting Food Dialogues in Cape Town since 2014, the project supported four other African cities to develop and host their own local Food Dialogues. These events are designed to celebrate local food cultures while creating spaces for communities, practitioners, policymakers and other stakeholders to work towards food systems that are healthier, more sustainable and just.

During the year, Food Dialogues were hosted in **Tunis, Ouagadougou, Cape Town, Mbale and Kisumu**. SAUFFT supported and attended the 2025 Food Dialogue in Tunis in person, while also contributing its experience and learning to the wider network of participating cities.

Across the supported cities, the dialogues contributed to:

- Renewed collaboration to reduce food loss and waste
- Increased public awareness of key food-system issues
- Strengthened food rescue and redistribution efforts
- More holistic approaches to food safety commitments to building capacity for traceability
- Broader and more inclusive participation in food systems governance
- Recognition and celebration of marginalised food practices and cultures
- Stronger connections and a sense of belonging through inclusive and intergenerational activities
- New collaborations between municipalities and communities, and between chefs, artists, youth and experts
- Recognition of urban farmers as important stewards of city health
- Development of local strategic frameworks that integrate agriculture into urban land-use planning and position farms as productive green infrastructure
- Strengthened local expertise to support long-term, participatory food systems governance.

STORIES OF IMPACT

For **Pamela Nontshinga**, Operations Leader for the Langa Waste Diversion Project, the role has been a journey of learning, leadership, and community impact.

Born and raised in Langa and a mother of three, Pamela has worked in nursing and health and safety, but has always been driven by a desire to make a difference in her community. When she joined the project, she saw waste as something to be thrown away. Today, she understands its potential to create jobs, support farmers, and contribute to cleaner, healthier neighbourhoods.

Leading the project has challenged Pamela to navigate different personalities, manage conflicts, and guide a team towards a shared vision. With support from mentors and colleagues,

she has developed strong leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.

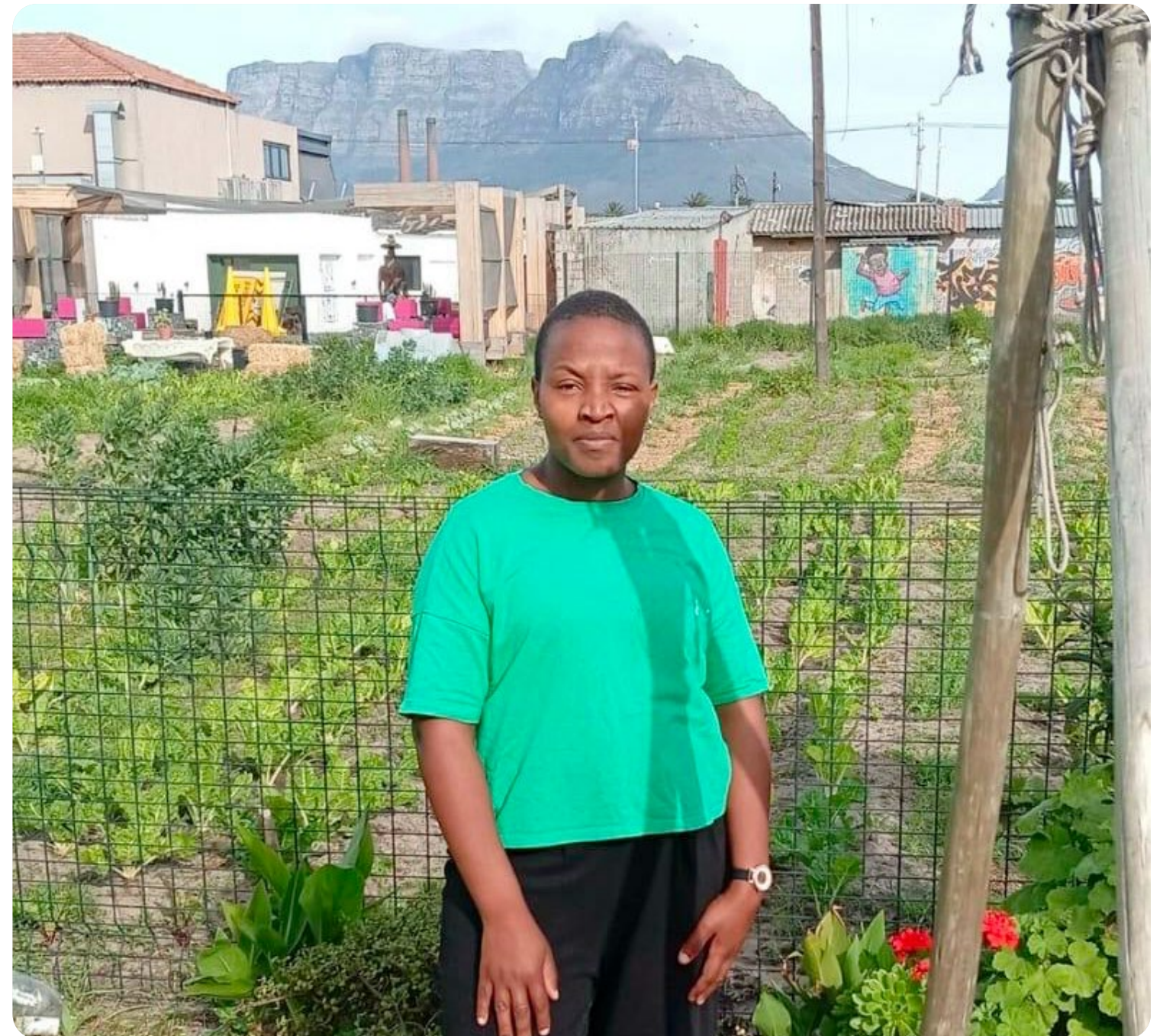
She has also witnessed a shift in the community. More residents are learning how to manage household waste responsibly, helping reduce pollution and improve local living conditions.

“The project has changed the way I think about waste and about myself,” says Pamela. “I see myself as a leader and role model in the community, and I want to continue creating positive change wherever I can.”

Through her work, Pamela is helping transform waste into opportunity while building a stronger, more sustainable Langa.

“The project has changed
the way I think about waste
and about myself”

— Pamela Nontshinga



SUMMARY

As Grow SA marked its fifth year through Cohort 5, the programme demonstrated how sustained investment in people can strengthen Cape Town’s green economy.

Built around sustainability, entrepreneurship, leadership, communication, and urban agriculture, Cohort 5 achieved a completion rate of seven out of eight participants. The cohort, made up of seven women and one man, reported growth in confidence, communication, sustainability knowledge, and entrepreneurial thinking, with coaching and personal development emerging as key components of the learning journey.

Over five years, Grow SA has shown that strengthening food systems starts with strengthening people. Participants gain skills, confidence, networks, and opportunities that help them grow projects, create livelihoods, and deepen their impact in their communities.

The programme has consistently nurtured entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, communication, and leadership while opening pathways that might otherwise remain inaccessible.

The five-year journey reflects steady growth and strong outcomes. The pilot cohort began with eight participants and six graduates, while subsequent cohorts achieved completion rates of 80–90%, with attendance increasing from 75% to 85%.

The programme has activated nearly 20 learning venues across Cape Town, engaged dozens of mentors and industry experts, created hundreds of income-generating opportunities, and supported initiatives spanning urban farming, food education, community kitchens, hospitality, environmental enterprises, and youth development.

A key lesson from five years of Grow SA is that lasting impact extends beyond technical skills. By combining practical learning with mentorship, exposure, and relationship-building, the programme has helped cultivate resilient leaders, stronger communities, and a more inclusive urban food system.



KEY FIGURES

Cumulative figures since the programme's inception



5 Cohorts completed

More than 40
social entrepreneurs and
community changemakers
supported



326
meals served throughout
the programme

Alumni Network
Established to support continued
learning and collaboration



20
learning venues activated
across Cape Town



80% – 90%
Consistent completion rate



Diverse projects
Supported Across Urban Farming,
Food Education, Hospitality,
Community Kitchens, Storytelling
and Environmental Enterprises



STORIES OF CHANGE

For Busisiwe “Busi” Majola, agriculture has always been more than a practice. It has been a lifelong fascination, shaped by childhood visits to rural areas, school projects, and a deep imagination of ecosystems where everything has a place. In 2019, that early love was reawakened with a new language: permaculture, sustainability, and regenerative farming.

As the founder of Bafo and Busi Organic Farming, Busi had already begun building her path in agroecology and community-based food systems. But joining Grow SA Cohort 5 gave her the chance to deepen that journey. She came into the programme wanting to connect with more permaculture farms, strengthen her knowledge of regenerative farming, and build the confidence to launch the products she had been envisioning.

For Busi, one of the most valuable parts of the programme was the personal development work. The sessions helped her connect the learning she was already doing elsewhere and gave her space to grow as a person, not only as a farmer and entrepreneur. “It transformed me,” she says, describing how the experience helped her become a better version of herself. The programme also strengthened her conviction to begin with what she has, rather than waiting for the perfect moment.

That shift has stayed with her. Today, Busi says she feels more confident in her path and more certain that her passion belongs in the marketplace. “I now believe

that there will always be an audience for my products,” she says. She has come to understand that her uniqueness is part of her strength: even when others sell similar products, she brings something distinctly her own.

Through Grow SA, Busi also found a community. She was exposed to a wider permaculture network and now sees that the people she has been seeking are already part of her world: like-minded growers, entrepreneurs, and customers who value what she offers. She has built lasting relationships with mentors and fellow alumni, and continues to draw on that support in her journey.

The impact of the programme is visible in the way she speaks, connects, and dreams. Busi now sees herself not only as a farmer, but as someone who informs, inspires, and attracts others through her passion. Her future plans reflect that vision. She hopes to become an influencer for the permaculture lifestyle, creating products that help people turn small spaces into “little perma havens” while learning to grow in sustainable ways.

For Busi, Grow SA was more than a learnership. It was a space that affirmed her calling, sharpened her confidence, and connected her to a movement that feels like home.



“there will always be an
audience for my products”

— Busisiwe Majola

oranjezicht city farm



SUMMARY

Between March 2025 and February 2026, **Oranjezicht City Farm** continued to demonstrate regenerative urban agriculture as a community-driven model for food system transformation in Cape Town. The farm operated as both a productive growing space and a learning environment, with volunteers, allotment holders, and visitors actively contributing to a more sustainable and connected local food system.

During this period, OZCF strengthened its impact through food production, education, and soil regeneration. Volunteers supported daily farm operations, while allotment holders grew food for their households and communities, deepening local food resilience.

Expanded composting systems further advanced circular practices by diverting organic waste from landfill and restoring soil health.

Education and engagement remained central, with workshops and farm tours offering accessible learning opportunities in organic growing and regenerative practices. Increasing demand for vegetable boxes also reflected growing community trust in locally produced food, while supporting the farm’s financial sustainability.



“one of South Africa’s
top environmental
organisations”
— Treeshake



oranjezicht city farm



KEY FACTS 2026

50

Volunteers contributed to food production, composting, education, and community-building activities



A growing community of growers, volunteers, visitors, and customers supporting Cape Town’s local food



30%

growth in vegetable box sales, improving access to fresh local produce and strengthening sustainability

Increased compost production, diverting organic waste from landfill and improving soil health



20

farm tours hosted for local and international visitors



34

allotment holders actively growing food and strengthening community food resilience

12

Workshops hosted



oranjezicht city farm

oranjezicht city farm

STORIES OF CHANGE

Sabelo Kunene is a 30-year-old from Soweto, Emdeni in Johannesburg, whose interest in food systems began early through his mother's small organic garden, which often supported the household during times of need. With limited exposure to farming growing up, his pathway into agriculture emerged unexpectedly during a hiking conversation where he first heard about Oranjezicht City Farm (OZCF). He was drawn to the idea of an urban farm that grows food for community benefit while creating opportunities for young people.

Motivated to gain practical skills and explore a future in sustainable agriculture, Sabelo joined OZCF as an intern. His experience has been deeply formative, offering hands-on learning in planting, harvesting, composting, irrigation, pest management, and farm planning, alongside involvement in educational tours, children's workshops, and a community garden project in Riverton.

A highlight of his journey has been seeing food he helped grow reach community veggie boxes and local tables, making the impact of his work tangible. He also describes the farm environment, set against Table Mountain and surrounding peaks, as both inspiring and restorative.

Through the internship, Sabelo has developed technical skills and grown in confidence, teamwork, and leadership. More importantly, his understanding of food systems has shifted, and he now sees urban farming as central to food security and community resilience. Looking ahead, he hopes to continue in urban agriculture, grow his own farming initiative, and share skills with young people in his community, contributing to a more sustainable and just food system.

“Farming is never just one thing, it's science, patience, teamwork, and care.”

— Sabelo Kunene (OZCF Intern)



SUMMARY

In 2025, Food Indaba built on the momentum from the previous year. The two-week program, which explored the theme “Artificial Intelligence and the Food System,” brought together farmers, chefs, entrepreneurs, researchers, and community members to analyze how technology interacts with equity, agriculture, and nutrition through roughly 20 events held throughout the city.

Highlights included a full-day AI and Food Systems conference at Makers Landing (V&A Waterfront), where participants considered how AI, when trained on African data and values, could support fairer food distribution, improve nutrition, and strengthen support for local producers. The programme combined panel discussions, interactive sessions, and shared meals, creating space for cross-sector exchange and learning.

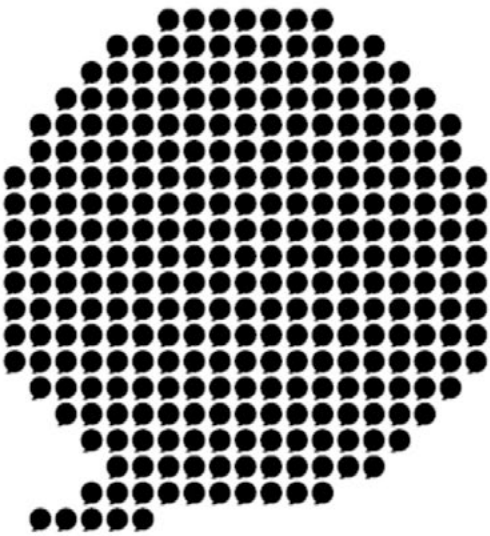
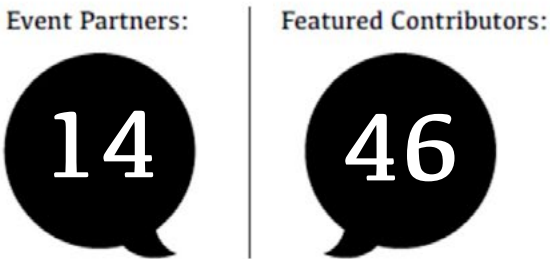
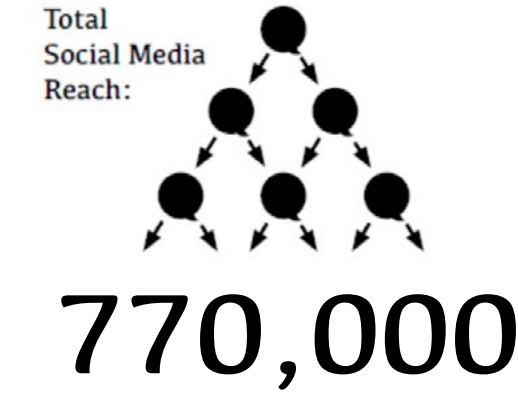
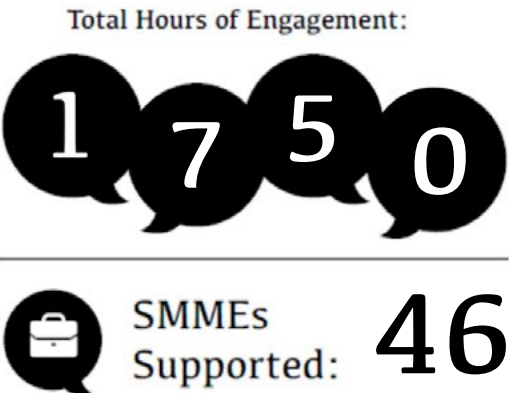
The scale and reach of Food Indaba 2025 increased significantly. Across 19 events over approximately 14 days, the programme recorded about 1,750 hours of engagement. Nearly 600 people attended in person across all sessions,

up from approximately 435 in 2024, alongside dozens of local and international presenters. The programme also generated more than 60 media stories across print, television, radio, and online platforms, reaching an estimated 122 million people globally. Its social media channels reached approximately 770,000 people.

These figures reflect growing demand for accessible, city-wide dialogue on food systems change. Food Indaba 2025 was co-hosted by the SA Urban Food & Farming Trust and SOLVE@Waterfront, with support from the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security, AfriFOODlinks, and 14 partner organisations. The programme reinforced its role as a platform for convening diverse stakeholders and advancing more equitable, resilient, and innovative food systems in South Africa.



KEY FACTS 2024



STORIES OF CHANGE

Nomalanga Linda Ruiters has dedicated much of her work to preserving and sharing indigenous knowledge about food, plants, and wellbeing. Raised in a family of Traditional Herbalists, she grew up understanding plants not only as sources of food, but also as medicine, culture, and heritage. This foundation has shaped her journey as an urban farmer, educator, and advocate for indigenous food systems.

Through her involvement in Food Indaba 2025, Nomalanga had the opportunity to share this knowledge with a younger generation, helping children discover the value of indigenous African plants in an engaging and accessible way. Drawing on her deep understanding of local biodiversity, she introduced participants to plants such as rooibos, hibiscus, and mphepho, encouraging them to explore the stories, uses, and flavours connected to these species.

For Nomalanga, creating opportunities for young people to engage with indigenous knowledge is an important step towards building more resilient and sustainable food systems. “Introducing children to indigenous African plants through ice cream made learning exciting and approachable,” she reflected. “It showed them that our local plants can be fun, delicious, and part of everyday life.”

The experience reinforced the importance of finding new ways to pass on knowledge that has sustained communities for generations. Nomalanga was particularly encouraged by the children’s enthusiasm and curiosity. “I was inspired by their willingness to experiment,” she said. “They asked thoughtful questions and embraced unfamiliar flavours with open minds.”

Through these interactions, Nomalanga saw how experiential learning can spark interest in food, nature, and culture while helping young people understand the value of biodiversity. She believes that reconnecting people with indigenous plants is not only about preserving heritage, but also about creating healthier and more sustainable futures.

“The Food Indaba experience reinforced my belief that indigenous plants have a vital role in South Africa’s future food system,” she reflected. “They offer nutritional value, climate resilience, and cultural significance while creating opportunities for innovation and food security.”

Nomalanga’s long-term vision is for communities to reclaim their relationship with traditional food and healing practices. By sharing indigenous knowledge with younger generations, she is helping ensure that this wisdom continues to grow, adapt, and contribute to a food system rooted in both cultural heritage and ecological resilience.



collaboration & partnerships



We work through a diverse network of partners whose contributions align with our long-term vision of strengthening food and nutrition security in marginalised urban communities. These partnerships support the Agrihub Initiative and related programmes through infrastructure development, knowledge exchange, enterprise support, research collaboration, and community engagement.

Community-Based and Farmer Associations:

Partners such as Abalimi Bezekhaya, SCAGA, the Gugulethu Urban Food Forest Initiative, Oranjezicht City Farm, and Harvest of Hope expand grassroots farmer networks, share agricultural knowledge, and distribute produce. These cooperative, long-term, farmer-led relationships deepen community participation and strengthen farmer governance and ownership across the Agrihub network.

Civic and Social Sector Organisations:

Groups including the Masakhe Foundation, Ikhaya le Langa, WWF, and the DG Murray Trust support infrastructure, public engagement, and leadership development. Their involvement has enabled the establishment of Agrihubs in communities like Langa and Gugulethu, reducing input costs and increasing farmer incomes.

Academic and Research Institutions:

SAUFFT partners with the University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape, and the DSTI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security to support evidence-building, impact evaluation, and policy engagement. Collaborations include joint research, multi-stakeholder forums, and programme co-design, such as the EESI leadership programme and studies comparing urban agriculture models.

Pan-African and International Networks:

Through AfriFOODlinks, an EU-funded initiative, SAUFFT exchanges knowledge with cities, researchers, and civil society groups across Africa and Europe. This partnership informs Cape Town initiatives and strengthens engagement in informal food markets and city-level policy.

Enterprise and Innovation Support:

GrowSA, the Kenilworth Rooftop Farm initiative, and the Oribi Impact Incubator support early-stage food entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, building skills, creating income pathways, and testing scalable urban food production models.

Partnership Principles:

SAUFFT selects partners who share a commitment to community agency, practical innovation, and long-term well-being. Partnerships are guided by regular communication, joint planning, mutual accountability, transparency, and locally rooted action aligned with broader systems-change goals.

governance and leadership



Behind every programme, partnership and story in this report is the leadership and governance that enable SAUFFT to grow with purpose while remaining accountable to the communities we serve.

During FY2026, we continued to strengthen the organisation's governance as our work expanded in scale, complexity and reach. A significant milestone was the renewal of our Board through the appointment of three new Trustees.

Their appointment brings new perspectives and experience while supporting thoughtful succession and ensuring continuity in the stewardship of the Trust.

Throughout the year, our Board and leadership team worked closely together to strengthen strategic oversight, organisational learning and long-term planning.

As new opportunities emerged, this collaborative leadership helped SAUFFT respond with confidence while remaining grounded in our purpose, values and commitment to public benefit.

At its heart, governance is about stewardship. It creates the conditions in which trust can grow, thoughtful decisions can be made, and communities, partners and staff can have confidence that the organisation will remain true to its purpose over the long term.

As we look to the future, the continued strengthening of our governance and leadership provides a strong foundation for the next stage of SAUFFT's journey, helping ensure that we remain a trusted partner to the communities and organisations with whom we work.

looking ahead



As SAUFFT continues to grow, so too does the depth and integration of our work. What began as a series of interconnected programmes is increasingly being understood as three mutually reinforcing pillars: Oranjezicht City Farm, which serves as a living laboratory for agroecological learning and innovation; Food Indaba, which creates spaces for dialogue, collaboration and imagination; and an evolving community-led transformation platform that brings together livelihoods, enterprise development, research, climate resilience and systems change.

This strategic clarification reflects a growing recognition that lasting change requires more than individual projects. It requires connecting practical action, knowledge generation and collective learning in ways that strengthen people's capacity to shape their own futures.

The years ahead will see the conclusion of some important initiatives and the emergence of new ones, as SAUFFT continues to adapt and respond to changing opportunities and challenges. While specific programmes will evolve, our commitment to working alongside

communities to build more resilient and equitable urban food systems remains constant.

At the same time, the growing body of work reflected in this report is generating increasing interest and opening new opportunities for collaboration. SAUFFT is receiving growing recognition from leading international research institutions, networks and development partners, creating opportunities to contribute to important conversations on urban food systems, climate resilience, livelihoods and community-led transformation both in Africa and globally.

As we look ahead, we are excited by the possibilities that lie before us. The challenges facing cities are becoming more complex, but so too are the opportunities for innovation, partnership and collective action.

Guided by the lessons of the past and inspired by the communities we work alongside, SAUFFT continues its journey of growth and change with optimism, curiosity and a deep belief in the power of people to shape more just, resilient and flourishing urban futures.



how to get involved



At SA Urban Food & Farming Trust, we believe that building a fair, sustainable, and inclusive food system is a collective effort, and there are many ways you can be part of the movement.

Whether you're a farmer, organisation, researcher, student, policy maker, or simply someone who cares about where food comes from, we invite you to get involved. You can support our work by attending events like the Food Indaba, collaborating on programmes, or partnering with us through funding, research, or in-kind support.

We also welcome volunteers and interns who are eager to contribute to urban farming projects, storytelling, communications, or event coordination.

If you're part of a community organisation or social enterprise working in food, we encourage you to connect with us to explore collaboration opportunities through our programmes.

Visit www.fairfood.org.za to learn more about our work, sign up for updates, and see how your skills, network, or organisation can contribute.

Established in August 2014, the SAUFF Trust (Registered Trust IT20812/2014) is a nonprofit public benefit organisation (PBO 930052666) with Section 18a status from the SA Revenue Service (SARS), allowing it to issue certificates for tax deductions in return for donations received.

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Social Media Links:

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meet the team



south african
urban food and
farming trust

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12.



1. Kurt Ackermann
Chief Executive Officer,
South African Urban Food
& Farming Trust

2. Rirhandzu Marivate
Programme Manager,
South African Urban Food
& Farming Trust

3. Iain Harris
Event Project Manager,
Food Indaba and
Food Dialogues

4. Melanie Stewart
Farm Manager,
Oranjezicht City Farm

5. Thando Qabaka
Project Manager,
Agrihub Initiative

6. Lwando Sawule
Field Worker & data
wrangler,
Langa Agrihub

7. Josh Harding
Farm Maintenance and Driver,
Oranjezicht City Farm

8. Thandi Mancoba
Research, Communications
& Events Officer, South African
Urban Food & Farming Trust

9. Sam Maunders
Oranjezicht City Farm
Farm Admin Manager

10. Sindiswa Gxali
Oranjezicht City Farm
Grower

11. Sabelo Kunene
Oranjezicht City Farm
Intern

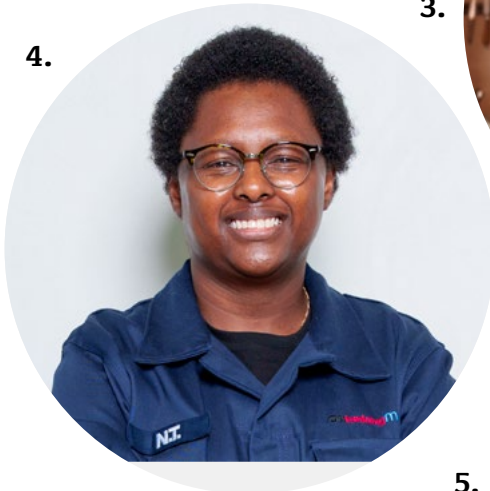
12. Nolutsha Pahlane
SAUFFT Intern

meet the trustees

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5.



1. Kurt Ackermann

2. Hadijah Nankanja

3. Miles Kubheka

4. Nonhlanhla Taylor

5. Sheryl Ozinsky

6. Miles Gad





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