

SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT FUND

Newsletter

Growing Impact Across Provinces: Highlights from the Programme

The programme continues to gain momentum across provinces, reaching more communities and creating meaningful opportunities for participants. From food production and environmental initiatives to digital skills development, participants are actively shaping solutions that strengthen local livelihoods.

As production increases and enterprise activities take root, the programme is supporting a shift from short-term opportunities to more sustainable, income-generating pathways.

In this issue, we share highlights of the progress made and the growing impact across programme sites.



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Strengthening Food Security Through Community Gardens

Food production continues to be a key driver of the programme, with notable progress across multiple provinces. Communities have been actively engaged in crop cultivation, the management of communal gardens, and the expansion of production systems that support both household consumption and income generation. To date, more than 125,000 units of vegetables have been produced, contributing directly to improved access to nutritious food within communities.

Seedling production has also played a critical role in sustaining agricultural activities, with over 300,000 seedlings cultivated and distributed across sites. This has strengthened the capacity of local gardens while also supporting emerging farmers and cooperative initiatives.



Multifunctional Agrinodes, particularly in Deelpan and Standerton, are continuing to evolve into productive hubs that integrate subsistence farming with market-oriented production. These sites are demonstrating how structured agricultural support can transition participants toward more commercially viable activities. At the same time, new areas such as Bothithong in the Northern Cape have been introduced, with interventions carefully adapted to local environmental conditions, including water scarcity.

Training remains a key component of this work, with over 1,700 participants having received agricultural training to improve productivity, strengthen technical skills, and support long-term sustainability.



SUPPORTING PATHWAYS BEYOND THE PROGRAMME

Participants are increasingly transitioning into more structured economic activities, with 24 cooperatives established to date. These cooperatives are supported through mentorship, training, and enterprise development initiatives, equipping members with the skills needed to operate effectively and access markets. The programme also recognises that participants have diverse aspirations, and therefore promotes multiple pathways, including entrepreneurship, employment, and further education. Encouragingly, 129 participants have already transitioned into improved employment opportunities, while others are pursuing further studies or developing their own enterprises. These outcomes reflect the growing emphasis on not only creating work opportunities, but also equipping participants with the tools and confidence to sustain livelihoods beyond the programme.





DRIVING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY ACTION

Environmental initiatives continue to gain traction, with strong participation from communities in greening and waste management activities. Through ongoing awareness campaigns and hands-on engagement, participants are playing an active role in maintaining cleaner and more sustainable environments.

To date, over 17,000 kilograms of waste have been collected, with a significant portion being recycled or repurposed into useful products such as eco-bricks and mats. These efforts are not only improving local environments but are also creating opportunities for innovation and small-scale enterprise development.

In addition, compost production is emerging as a valuable initiative, with more than 9.5 tonnes produced using organic waste materials. This compost is being used to support agricultural activities across sites, reducing reliance on external inputs and promoting more sustainable farming practices.



STORIES OF IMPACT



From Local Production to Market Success

In Deelpan, the SEF participants at Multifunctional Agrinode continue to demonstrate the potential of combining agricultural production with market access. Over the past quarter, SEF participants have successfully produced and sold more than 8 tonnes of chilli, generating significant revenue and reinforcing the viability of chilli as a high-value crop.

This progress has been supported by the development of processing infrastructure and the establishment of market linkages, enabling participants to engage in a more structured value chain. The agrinode is also creating both full-time and seasonal work opportunities, contributing to local economic activity while strengthening participants' skills in production, processing, and enterprise development.



STORIES OF IMPACT

Building Beyond the Stipend: How SEF Sparked Eva Malatji's Entrepreneurial Journey

Eva Malatji, a 44-year-old from Kwenamoloto in Limpopo, has seen her life take a meaningful turn through her participation in the Social Employment Fund Programme. What began as an opportunity to gain skills has since grown into something more, a pathway toward independence and self-reliance.

For Eva, access to opportunity had never come easily, especially at a stage in life where employment options feel limited. When she joined the programme, her focus was not on starting a business, but simply on learning, gaining skills, and making the most of the opportunity in front of her.



Over time, that began to change.

Through the consistency of a monthly stipend and the training she attended, Eva started to see new possibilities. The financial literacy training, in particular, played a key role in shaping her thinking. It gave her practical tools to manage money, save, and understand how even small amounts can be used to start something meaningful.

"The training showed me that you can start something with the little you have," she says. "You do not need a lot to begin. You just need to start."

With discipline and determination, Eva began saving a portion of her stipend each month. By January 2026, she had saved enough to open her own spaza shop in Seshego Zone 5, turning what started as a learning opportunity into a source of income.

"At my age, it is not easy to get opportunities," she reflects. "But through SEF, I realised what is possible when people are given a chance."

Today, her spaza shop sells snacks and everyday essentials, providing a steady income for her household and allowing her to meet her daily needs with greater stability.



Alongside her business, Eva has also developed a thriving backyard garden, where she grows spinach, beetroot, and onions. This not only supports her shop by providing fresh produce to sell, but also ensures that her family has access to nutritious food. "The garden does not only help me sell, it also feeds my family," she says.

Through these efforts, Eva has created a simple but effective system that connects small business with household resilience.

Her journey reflects a broader reality: when people are given access to opportunity, combined with the right skills and support, they are able to build sustainable solutions for themselves.

Looking ahead, Eva hopes to grow her business, expand her product offering, and continue building a more secure future for herself and her family.

IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

Participants Trained

2351

Received better
job opportunitites

129
Participants



Seedlings Produced

969,436



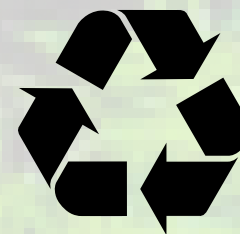
Seedlings Distributed

960,686



Seedlings Sold

130,500



Waste
Recycled

6012 tonnes



Trees
Planted
281

Vegetables Produced

126,263



Vegetables Donated

7,695



Vegetables Sold

22,168

