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ROOTED TOGETHER

A reflection of our passion for the communities we serve



TOP STORIES

AGRO FORESTRY AND FOOD SECURITY

SAFCOL plays a pivotal role in uplifting the rural communities where it operates by aligning its development efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its own mission to foster sustainable economic transformation within the forestry sector. **Read more on page 3.**

WOMEN IN FORESTRY

SIHLE SIVE TRADING CC | THE EXTRAORDINARY TRADING AND CONSTRUCTION PTY (Ltd) AND RALLY BUSINESS CONSULTING PTY (Ltd)

Recognising the challenges faced by rural communities, SAFCOL has introduced agroforestry initiatives South Africa. These initiatives provide access to land, agricultural implements, and skills development aimed at improving both food production and income generation. **Read more on page 5.**

G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025



EDITORS' NOTE

I'm delighted to introduce you to Rooted Together, SAFCOL's very own community newsletter!

You might be wondering—what is Rooted Together? It's more than just a newsletter. It's a trusted space where we share the inspiring stories of collaboration, growth, and impact between SAFCOL and the communities we serve.

Published bi-annually, Rooted Together is your window into the meaningful work happening on the ground—stories that reflect our deep-rooted passion for people and partnerships.

To our valued communities: you asked for it, and we listened. This newsletter is tailored especially for you—to keep you informed, inspired, and connected.

Wishing you a pleasant read.

Warm regards,
Nokuthula

POULTRY FARMING
with Sindawonye Agricultural Cooperative

Sindawonye Agricultural Cooperative is a community-driven agricultural initiative based in Mapheleni, Palmridge area under the Mtubatuba Local Municipality.

This rural community, like many others in South Africa, faces deep socio-economic challenges, including high unemployment and limited access to economic opportunities. I

n response, the Mapheleni community identified poultry farming as a practical and sustainable way to empower locals—particularly youth and women—through job creation and skills development.

Starting small businesses in rural areas, especially in agriculture, plays a vital role in addressing poverty, reducing rural-to-urban migration, and promoting food security.

Poultry farming, in particular, is an accessible and high-impact business that can thrive even with limited resources. It offers a quick turnaround time, consistent demand, and opportunities for income generation at both small and commercial scales.

The Sindawonye poultry project, which currently focuses on broilers (meat production), has already created employment for 15 beneficiaries from the Mapheleni community. The cooperative plans to expand into layer farming (egg production) in the near future to further diversify income and meet the nutritional needs of the local population.

The primary market served is the local community, where chicken meat is sold at affordable prices. The project's long-term goal is to penetrate the broader commercial market within the Mtubatuba area, supplying eggs and poultry meat to retailers, B&Bs, hotels, and hospitals.

This expansion has the potential to significantly boost local economic development and enhance community self-reliance.

SAFCOL supported the cooperative by providing a poultry structure, day-old chicks, and feed—demonstrating the power of partnerships in driving inclusive rural development.

This project is a prime example of how small-scale agricultural enterprises can transform communities, promote entrepreneurship, and contribute meaningfully to South Africa's rural economy.

Rooted in Sustainability

Promoting Food Security and Livelihoods Through Agroforestry







SAFCOL plays a pivotal role in uplifting the rural communities where it operates by aligning its development efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its own mission to foster sustainable economic transformation within the forestry sector.

A key focus of SAFCOL's community initiatives is Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. Through targeted programs that promote food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agricultural practices, SAFCOL is actively contributing to the global effort to end hunger and build resilient rural economies.

In response to the persistent challenges faced by rural communities, SAFCOL has rolled out impactful agroforestry initiatives across Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo Provinces, bringing together environmental stewardship, food security, and economic empowerment.

By encouraging the cultivation of vegetables and high-demand crops such as groundnuts, SAFCOL is helping communities combat hunger while building sustainable livelihoods.

In Limpopo Province, launched a dedicated agroforestry project focused on the cultivation of groundnuts and jugo beans—nutritious, locally favored crops that offer strong market potential. This initiative is creating income streams for rural households while promoting healthier diets.

In the village of Ngodini (Mayflower), Mpumalanga Province, SAFCOL supported the formation of the Dudulani Agricultural Cooperative. This cooperative grows a variety of vegetables and supplies them to local supermarkets and households—enhancing food access and stimulating local economic activity.

While, in KwaZulu-Natal: Mtubatuba village, SAFCOL helped establish the Sidlasonke Agricultural Cooperative, which also produces a diverse range of vegetables. These are distributed to nearby communities and retailers, reinforcing local food systems and supporting small-scale farmers.

These projects are more than just farming initiatives and access to land, they are community empowerment programmes that promote self-sufficiency, reduce poverty, and enhance food security.

Through agroforestry, SAFCOL is not only greening the landscape but also planting the seeds of lasting economic and social change.

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FURNITURE MAKING
Youth Owned Enterprises



Sinikiwe Ithuba and Lifalethu NT Primary Cooperatives are made up of a group of young people from the Umjindini area.

These cooperatives we established following a furniture manufacturing learnership offered by SAFCOL. The name Sinikiwe Ithuba means "We have been given an opportunity," while Lifalethu translates to "Our inheritance"—both names reflecting a deep sense of purpose and hope for the future.

The cooperatives were formed to improve the members' livelihoods and to create sustainable employment opportunities for themselves and their communities.

The group is composed of individuals who have received formal technical training through our Learning and Development programme. In addition to earning a certificate in furniture manufacturing, they bring a diverse range of complementary skills to their

Despite the high levels of unemployment in their community, these young entrepreneurs have taken proactive steps by launching a business that not only creates jobs but also facilitates the transfer of valuable furniture manufacturing skills.

Their initiative is contributing meaningfully to rural economic development and serves as a model for youth-led enterprise in underserved areas.

During their learnership, the group's strong interest in entrepreneurship led them to pursue additional training through the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). This training equipped them with the knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial mindset needed to start, manage, and grow their own business.

Upon completing the programme, they took the initiative to register their cooperatives and applied for an NYDA startup grant to launch their furniture manufacturing venture.

With support from SAFCOL, and through a memorandum of understanding with key business development institutions, the cooperatives received assistance in navigating the grant application process.

As a result, they successfully secured furniture-making tools and equipment from the NYDA, while the Small Enterprise Finance Development Agency (SEFDA) provided promotional materials to help market their products.

The furniture manufacturing industry, known for being labour-intensive, holds significant potential for job creation and skills development in rural areas. Each cooperative consists of 13 members, with 70% being black women—a powerful representation in a field traditionally dominated by men.

These women are not only actively involved in the production process but are also helping to reshape gender roles within the industry.

This initiative stands as a testament to what can be achieved when skills development, enterprise support, and youth empowerment come together to drive meaningful change.





In a country where youth unemployment remains critically high, particularly in rural areas, creating meaningful opportunities for young people is not just important—it's essential.

Empowering youth through skills development and entrepreneurship is a powerful way to break the cycle of poverty and unlock long-term economic potential.

SAFCOL's Skills Development Exit Programme is designed with this vision in mind. The programme equips young, aspiring entrepreneurs with practical, hands-on skills and comprehensive business support, enabling them to start and grow their own enterprises.

By bridging the gap between training and real-world application, SAFCOL is helping to cultivate a new generation of self-reliant, job-creating leaders in rural communities.

One inspiring example of youth-driven innovation is Amsterdam Furniture Making and Repair (AFMAR)—a dynamic furniture manufacturing business based in the rural town of Amsterdam, Mpumalanga.

In a community where job opportunities are scarce and unemployment is high, AFMAR stands out as a beacon of hope and economic potential.

Recognizing the urgent need for skills development in the area, SAFCOL, in partnership with the Joint Community Forum (JCF), launched a targeted initiative to empower local youth.

The goal was clear: create sustainable employment by equipping young people with practical skills in furniture making and business management, and providing them with the tools and support needed to succeed.

AFMAR is more than just a business—it's a testament to what can be achieved when young people are given the opportunity to lead, create, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Today, Amsterdam Furniture Making and Repair (AFMAR) stands as a proud testament to the power of vision, resilience, and youth-driven innovation.

Born from a commitment to skills development and entrepreneurship, AFMAR has grown into a thriving business that embodies self-reliance and local craftsmanship.

The company currently employs seven skilled artisans and produces a diverse range of handcrafted furniture and homeware items—including TV stands, chopping boards, coffee tables, wooden trays, and cupboards. Each piece reflects a high standard of craftsmanship and a growing pride in locally made, quality products.

AFMAR's short-term goals include expanding its customer base, enhancing profitability, and securing long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead, the business is committed to recruiting and mentoring more young artisans and designers from surrounding communities—ensuring that its growth also fuels broader community development.

This approach not only strengthens the business but also creates a ripple effect of empowerment, as valuable skills are transferred and new opportunities are created for others.

Through initiatives like AFMAR, SAFCOL continues to demonstrate its commitment to rural economic development—by upskilling local communities and supporting young people to become job creators, not just job seekers.

Motivated by the lack of opportunities, the group pursued the furniture manufacturing venture as a means contribute to poverty alleviation.

The cooperatives specialize in producing contemporary furniture for household use, including kitchen cupboards, chest drawers, and wooden baskets.

During their practical demonstrations, local restaurants expressed interest in their wooden trays, highlighting the market potential of their products.
To remain competitive, the cooperatives aim to diversify their product range and align with current trends and designs, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of their target market.



WOMEN IN FORESTRY

SIHLE SIVE TRADING CC | THE EXTRAORDINARY TRADING AND CONSTRUCTION PTY (Ltd) AND RALLY BUSINESS CONSULTING PTY (Ltd)

The South African forestry sector has long been male-dominated, but women are steadily reshaping the landscape through resilience, expertise, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Among the shining examples of this transformation are Sihle Sive Trading CC, The Extra Ordinary Trading and Construction Pty (Ltd)and Rally Business Consulting (Pty) Ltd, three 100% black women-owned forestry contracting companies based in Mpumalanga.

Specialising in silviculture—the science and practice of forest cultivation—these companies operate at various SAFCOL plantations, playing a critical role in planting, tending, and maintaining sustainable forests. Together, they employ over 800 local communities , contributing meaningfully to rural job creation and community upliftment.

Their journey is a testament to the progress made by black women in forestry. Starting as Exempt Micro Enterprises (EMEs), these entrepreneurs have grown their businesses into Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSEs) through hard work, dedication, and their deep passion for the sector.

Key to their growth has been the support provided by SAFCOL's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme, which offers tools, training, mentorship, and access to opportunities.

With this support, The Extraordinary, Sihle Sive and Rally Business Consulting have expanded their operations and even secured contracts with other companies in the broader forestry industry—demonstrating their competitiveness and capability.

Beyond their own success, these pioneering companies are now giving back by mentoring other black women-owned forestry businesses, further multiplying the impact of transformation.

Their story is not only one of business growth but also of leadership, empowerment, and trailblazing progress in an industry that is beginning to reflect the diversity of South Africa's talent and potential.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH AGRIBUSINESS

The Story of Mambiteni Cooperative

Founded in 2017 by a group of passionate beekeepers from the Marite area in Mpumalanga, the Mambiteni Beekeeping Primary Cooperative has grown into a thriving enterprise rooted in sustainability and community upliftment.

The cooperative focuses on three core activities: beekeeping, honey extraction, and leasing bee hives to local farmers to enhance crop pollination.

Comprising five dedicated members—two of whom are women—the cooperative has made remarkable strides with the support of SAFCOL and a generous contribution from the Mineworkers Development Agency (MDA).

Thanks to this backing, Mambiteni expanded its hive count from 90 to an impressive 250.

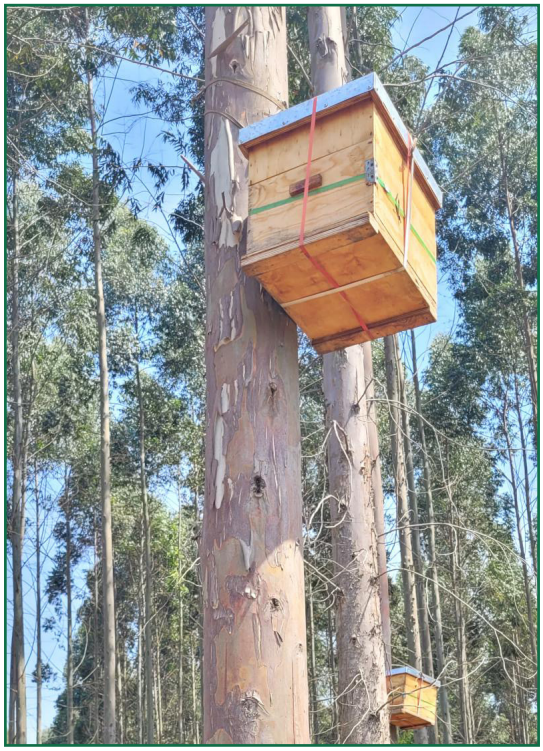
These hives are strategically positioned in eucalyptus plantations, where the rich flowering season from October to December provides an abundant nectar source.

This not only boosts honey yields but also supports the health and productivity of the bee colonies.

Beyond honey production, the cooperative is making a tangible impact on the local economy by employing seven community members. Their presence in the plantations also plays a crucial role in reducing timber theft and strengthening SAFCOL's relationship with surrounding communities.

To accelerate the growth and sustainability of the Mambiteni Beekeeping Primary Cooperative, SAFCOL extended targeted Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) support across several key areas:

- Skills Development: Members were trained in Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) to help them identify and manage risks during honey processing, ensuring the honey is safe for public consumption.
- Beekeeping Tools and Equipment: SAFCOL supplied essential tools, including honey extractors, protective bee suits, and smokers, to promote safety and efficiency in hive management and honey harvesting.
- Lumber Donation: SAFCOL donated timber from its sawmill, enabling the cooperative to manufacture its own bee hives. Thanks to in-house skills, members are able to construct these hives themselves.





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BUILDING HOPE AND EMPOWERMENT

Community Centres Transforming Lives in Mpumalanga





Bushbuckridge Multipurpose Centre

In the heart of rural Bushbuckridge, the Bushbuckridge Multipurpose Centre stands as a beacon of hope and development. Built by the South African Forestry Company Limited (SAFCOL) and managed under the Bushbuckridge Municipality, the centre was established to empower the local community—especially the youth—by providing a space for learning, growth, and collaboration.

The centre offers a wide range of services. Young people can participate in training programmes, receive career guidance, and develop skills that enhance their employability. Local entrepreneurs also benefit from business support services aimed at helping them grow and sustain their ventures. The facility includes a hall and private offices, creating a conducive environment for studying, workshops, and community learning.

Beyond education and business, the centre plays a vital role in uniting the community. It hosts events, health awareness sessions, and cultural celebrations, fostering a sense of pride and togetherness. Thanks to SAFCOL's investment, the Bushbuckridge Multipurpose Centre has become a symbol of opportunity and resilience for the people of Bushbuckridge.

Msogwaba Disability Centre

In the village of Msogwaba, near Mbombela in Mpumalanga, adults with disabilities now have a dedicated space where they can receive the support they deserve. Previously, they had to gather in borrowed or inadequate spaces. That changed when SAFCOL stepped in to build the Msogwaba Disability Centre, offering a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment.

The centre provides essential resources such as wheelchairs, walking aids, and skills development training. It also features meeting rooms where individuals can receive guidance, participate in activities, and connect with others. Designed with accessibility in mind, the building ensures that everyone can move around comfortably and with dignity.

SAFCOL collaborated closely with the local community to ensure the centre meets the specific needs of its users. Today, the Msogwaba Disability Centre serves as a second home for many adults with disabilities—a place where they can learn, grow, and feel a true sense of belonging. Families are proud, the community is stronger, and the centre stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved through partnership and compassion.

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