

Research-led approach

Earlier this year, we conducted an extensive social mapping analysis in eight of our host communities to understand the community needs and assets, identify stakeholders and formalise the relationships required as part of enabling our NGOs to establish proper governance processes.

Based on this, we co-created real impact programmes with the community NGOs to address the challenges on the ground.

An early example is a partnership with Food and Trees for Africa (FTFA) where we are rolling out a programme called Eduplant, which teaches permaculture in schools and communities and creates opportunities for people to start microfarming enterprises and community food gardens. The vision is to stimulate these partners to become viable NGOs, even business enterprises, while also supporting the community.

Our socioeconomic development strategy is still in its early stages, but already we are seeing encouraging progress. We are fortunate to work with amazing partners who share our vision. It is not only about providing food security, but also about stimulating economic activity — primarily in the food space.

For each programme developed, we build an exit strategy to ensure our NGO partners become self-sufficient and enable us to move on and reach more communities. As much as possible, we will try and build pathways for our beneficiaries into Tiger Brands supply chain and business networks. For example, it is possible that the herbs, which can be grown at our NGO partner community farms and microfarming enterprises, can be procured by Tiger Brands as well as our retail partners.

We believe this approach of empowering communities through skills, network and market access will make them less reliant on government and corporate partners over time. Ultimately, we would like to see community enterprises reaching a stage of self-reliance where we can phase ourselves out of the relationship.

At present, Tiger Brands has relationships with 20 NGOs across South Africa, through which we reach 30 000 families and 4 000 university students on a monthly basis, impacting the lives of more than 100 000 people. We foresee our community enterprise approach stimulating economic activity and reaching even more families.

We dream of seeing at least one individual in every household who has been capacitated become economically active; this would mean one less family receiving a food hamper and one more family becoming food secure.

There will always be a need for food donations to support extremely vulnerable groups or in the immediate aftermath of natural disasters. So, we will continue responding to calls for support in these instances.

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Community enterprise development requires a deeper commitment from corporates — and more financial resources — than a simple donation. But such an investment builds longer-lasting social impact by giving NGOs the tools to be more self-sufficient and by creating empowered communities that can do more.

In the words of the well-known proverb, we are teaching people to fish. ■

Nozicelo Ngcobo (4th from left) with her team

