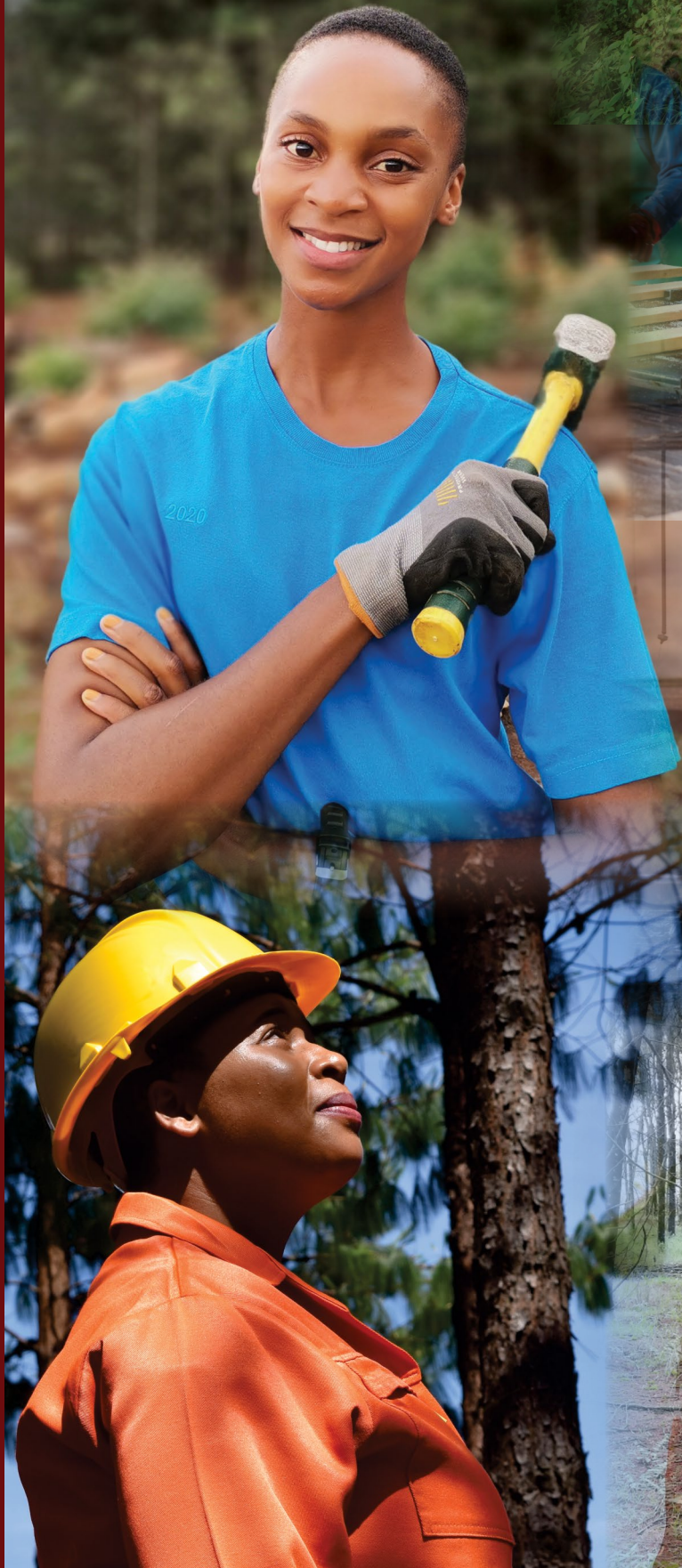




**SHE IS
FORESTRY**

SHE IS FORESTRY SA

2021/2022 – A YEAR OF FIRSTS



FOREWORD



**Makhosazana (Khosi)
Mavimbela**

Forestry: Embracing an Equality and Empowerment Mindset

**By SIF SA Co-ordinator: Makhosazana Mavimbela, Executive Director,
Forest Sector Charter Council**

The times have changed, we now live in a society where women are not only a majority but are becoming bolder in terms of career choices, self-sufficiency, independence and in pursuing their dreams. As such, we need to acknowledge that women are equally well equipped to do the jobs of their male counterparts and should be empowered both for their personal development and as role models for future generations.

In recent decades, the Forestry Sector has experienced a mindset shift with large numbers of women preferring Forestry over the other common and known careers. The participation of women, coupled with their reliability, resilience and capability has proven beyond doubt that women can occupy the jobs and career paths that were once dominated by men. As such, women are visibly present in every bit of the forestry value chain, you find women in nurseries, research, breeding, silviculture, harvesting, environmental management, fire protection, transport, board production, pulp & paper, sawmilling, pole treatment, charcoal and furniture production, academia to policy-making and the list goes on.

Their success is an accurate demonstration of how the sector has embraced and benefited from the skills and qualities women bring into the Industry and their efforts in diluting the conservative belief that it is still a male dominated sector. The fearless exploration of forestry career paths and business opportunities by younger generations of women is inspiring and should be celebrated. It must be nurtured and promoted by the 'trail blazing' generation of women who entered the industry when female participation was still rare and whose persistence and determination has opened the door for those who followed.

"She is Forestry SA" was born out of collaboration between the private and public sectors and I couldn't be prouder or more indebted of this initiative that gives women in the sector a voice and the space to continue to succeed. The "two women in forestry" webinars typify this, enabling some of the exceptional women from across our Sector to share their remarkable experiences and wisdom.

The saying that goes "The most alluring thing a woman can have is confidence" and this has

proven beyond doubt by the energy and vigour expended by the fantastic and dedicated team of ladies that make up the Planning and Organising Committee (POC) and of course our visionary Directors. The integral role of Forestry South Africa's Norman Dlamini and Nathi Ndlela needs acknowledging, as their experience, guidance and support has been fundamental to the initiative success.

When I was given the permission by the Forest Sector Charter Council to champion this idea and the platform to lead this committee, the first thing that came to my mind was, "my confidence should be my courage". While the task ahead of us was daunting, not once did I doubt this team's

capabilities. I could not be more honoured to work with such a reliable and enthusiastic team of ladies and to have been part such a legacy.

As women in the sector, we deeply acknowledge the support that we have received from both the public and private sectors, as well as our male colleagues, more so towards women empowerment. We pledge to continue to make a positive change and leave a lasting legacy for future generations to come. Our everlasting wish is to continue to maintain our relationship with the entire Forest Sector and acknowledge the numerous sacrifices and contributions women in this Sector have made.



"She Is Forestry SA has surpassed all expectations and is an organisation that Forestry South Africa is proud to support and facilitate. Women play an integral role within our Sector, across all facets of the Forestry Industry and its value chain. Yet many outside the industry still perceive it as a career choice solely for men. As a Sector, it is our responsibility to dispel this misconception and the simplest way to do so is to acknowledge the contribution women are making to forestry. She Is Forestry SA provides a platform for this, celebrating the role women are playing to drive our Sector forwards and shining a light on the female forestry leaders of today who are the role models future generations can aspire to."

*- Norman Dlamini, FSA Director:
Business Development*



Norman Dlamini

SHE IS FORESTRY – OUR HOPES, DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS

A message from SIF SA Directors: Bathobile Ntshingila, Project Manager, Sappi-Khulisa, Irene Mathabela Irene Mathabela Deputy Director: Sector Liaison and Capacity Development, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and Julia Rees, Owner and Director Dargle Poles



“Women who support other women are confident, generous and visionaries”

- Mariela Badda

When asked why they were still willing to be Directors of She Is Forestry SA, Irene Mathabela response was simple, “I believed Mariela Badda when she said, ‘Women who support other women are confident, generous and visionaries’. It is what I aspire to, and I believe is a perfect reflection of what She Is Forestry SA aims to achieve.”

“I take my hat off to the She Is Forestry SA team that have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the vision is realised”, Bathobile Ntshingila continues, “I put my hand up because history is now, you need to be the change you want to see. She Is Forestry SA will remain relevant for generations to come. The women of today will be judged on their willingness to raise their hand and take on the responsibility of changing the lives of girls moving forwards.”

Julia Rees agrees, “She is Forestry SA is just as relevant now as it was when we started it two years ago at the height of COVID-19. We are still living with the uncertainty of a pandemic and the economic aftermath and the war in Ukraine has added to this. As a result, both businesses and individuals are feeling the economic and emotional strain. Women need support, inspiration and inclusion more than ever, if they are to find the strength to carry on making a positive impact on a daily basis. I am not sure our job will ever be done, but I hope it will evolve as women find their feet and their voice.”

It is the inclusivity of She Is Forestry SA that the Directors find most appealing. Irene explains, “there are many platforms designed for women of a certain calibre or status, there are very few that are designed for women from the ground level up and this is what sets She Is Forestry SA apart. We realise the value of all women in our sector, irrespective of your social status or position on the career ladder. It is an honour to be a director in a space where all women are equal and the focus is on lifting each other up.”

Historically, women - especially those of colour – have been excluded at all levels of the career ladder, especially from the decision-making positions. This is true of almost all Sectors. Thankfully our Sector has turned the corner and we are seeing women excel in every aspect of forestry.

“I am proud to be part of a Sector that supports an organisation like She Is Forestry SA and sees it as a game changer for bringing equality and hope to women. The industry's unanimous support of She Is Forestry SA illustrates how it places inclusivity high on its agenda and wants to give women a voice and promote their growth”, Irene continues.



Bathobile Ntshingila



Irene Mathabela



Julia Rees

When asked about the road map forward, the response from the Directors was clear, "it is imperative that we dispel the myth that forestry is a male career", Irene explains. This false notion is damaging our industry, as many of the brightest female minds are overlooking our industry as they don't see a future in it for them."

Julia agrees, "Forestry is an incredible industry with inspirational ladies and huge opportunities. We want women to thrive in this industry and see a future for themselves here. She Is Forestry SA provides the platform to do this, inspiring women and giving them hope."

All the Directors agree that the webinars have been an essential tool for showcasing both the calibre of women in our Sector and the career opportunities available to women. "Both webinars have exceeded all expectations and we will be forever grateful to the participants for sharing their stories and putting themselves forward as role models for future generations", Bathobile explains.

The active promotion of the opportunities forestry affords women, now needs to be rolled

out further. "We need to inculcate a culture that supports and proactively attracts women to the Forestry Industry and its value chains. I believe this starts in schools, where we need to dispel any misperceptions that forestry is not for women," Irene concludes.

Bathobile continues, "At the start, our dreams were big but our resources small. This year, we are in a unique scenario, as we have finances upfront and time on our side. This will make such a difference when it comes to organising and rolling out initiatives. Simple things, like facilitating maths and science at the five schools we are supporting with the provision of scientific calculators can now be placed at the top of our agenda."

While the Directors agree there is a lot still to do and She Is Forestry SA is only in its infancy, they are heartened by the progress it has made and proud of the impact it is having.



***"Individually, we are one drop;
Together we are an ocean"***

- Irene Mathabela



Neliswa Mjikwa



Morongoa Leseke

2021

A GREAT YEAR FOR WOMEN IN FORESTRY

By SIF SA Webinar Co-ordinator: **Katy Johnson**,
Communication and Promotions Consultant Forestry South Africa



Katy Johnson



SHE IS FORESTRY

WOMEN IN FORESTRY WEBINAR

Thursday 26 August 2021

Webinar Hosting Sponsor 

Webinar Sponsor



FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA™

Programme Sponsor



The second Women in Forestry Webinar was a watershed moment for She is Forestry SA organisers, with many expecting it would either make, or break, the initiative following the success of the 2020 Webinar hosted by NCT Forestry Agricultural Co-operative Ltd.

"The initial webinar was conceptualised, organised and rolled out within a month", explains She is Forestry SA Coordinator Khosi Mavimbela, FSCC. "A tiny team worked day and night, but the end result exceeded everyone's expectations. From this, She is Forestry SA was born and overnight, we became an organisation with a bank account, Directors and a Planning and Organising Committee (POC). While this had many benefits, it also created an expectation that any sequel to our first webinar would need to be bigger and better – the question was how?"

It was a question that caused a lot of head scratching and debate. The consensus was we needed to do something different. The

previous webinar had focused on looking back and documenting the, often difficult, journey of women into the industry. The second webinar needed to look forward, to present the industry as it is now - a fantastic opportunity for women looking for careers across many different paths.

"We have female Chainsaw Operators, Firefighters, Heavy Machinery Operators, Contractors, Foresters, Silviculture, Harvesting and Operation Managers, Nursery Supervisors, Heads of Research Departments, Junior and Senior Managers, C-suite and Executive Level Leaders. There is no position a woman cannot fill, if she has the commitment and passion needed to succeed in this industry. Indeed, women are not only filling positions, but they are also shaping the Sector as it tackles the issues of today and tries to find the solutions to the global challenges of the future", Khosi continues.

The webinar focused on the role of women in the Forestry Sector rather than solely gender, celebrating them as leaders in their respective

 SHE IS FORESTRY WOMEN IN FORESTRY WEBINAR			Women in Forestry Webinar Hosting Sponsor  FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA Webinar Sponsor  FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA 2021 Webinar Programme 26 August 2021 10h00 to 15h00		
Item	Description	Timing	Item	Description	Timing
WELCOME	Introducing the Webinar Format Webinar Host: Aiden Choles – Narrativelab Webinar Facilitator: Katy Johnson – Forestry South Africa	10h00	THEME TWO 	Sustainable Forestry Presentation: Louise van Wyk – Area Environmental Manager, Sappi Forests and Chairperson of FSA's Environmental Management Committee	11h50
				NCT Sponsored Video Break	
OPENING ADDRESS	Introducing the 2021 Women in Forestry Webinar Makhosazana Mavimbela – Executive Director, Forest Sector Charter Council (FSCC)	10h05	THEME THREE 	Entrepreneurism in Forestry Introduction: Marina Daniel – Owner, Sable Poles Presentation: Itumeleng Langeni – Chief Stakeholder Relations Officer, MTO Group Presentation: Thobi Mkhize , Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Mondi and Chairperson of FSA Land Committee	12h15
KEYNOTE SPEECH 	Message of Support On behalf of the Hon. Makhotsotso Soty (MP) Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Ms Pumeza Nodada – acting DDG, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Keynote Address Ms Felleng Yende – Chief Executive Officer, FP&M Seta PhD candidate: Public Sector Leadership, Management & 4IR Digital Technology	10h15		Forest Sector Charter Council sponsored Lunch Break	
			THEME FOUR 	Forestry: Investing in the Future Presentation: Dr Eija Laitinen – FOREST21 Project Coordinator Presentation: Dr Tatenda Mapeto – Lecturer, Nelson Mandela University	13h10
SHE IS FORESTRY	Introducing She is Forestry and the Directors Presentation: Bathobile Ntshingila – Project Manager, Sappi Forests Discussion Group: • Nelly Malatji – SIF Director • Irene Mathabala – Deputy Director: Sector Liaison and Capacity Development DFFE • Julia Rees – Owner/Director Dargle Poles Sappi Sponsored Video Break	10h35	THEME FIVE 	A Sector that is Driven by Innovation Presentation: Tamaryn Whittall-Steynberg – Panel Manufacturing Manager, PG Bison Presentation: Jane Molony – Executive Director PAMSA Dargle Poles sponsored Comfort Break	13h40
				Beating Burnout Jacqui Meyer – Life Coach for Women	14h15
THEME ONE 	An Industry for All Chairperson: Introduction: Mpho Lethoko – General Manager Communications, Sappi Southern Africa Discussion Panel: • Masechaba Chifunyise – Group Company Secretary, Merensky • Julia Rees – Owner/Director Dargle Poles • Busi Mnguni – FSA Small-scale Grower Representative and Executive Committee Chairperson Forestry South Africa Sponsored Comfort Break	11h10	MOTIVATIONAL TALK 	Introducing the 2022 She Is Forestry Awards Nondumiso Kheswa – Plantation Manager, SAFCOL	14h35
			FORESTRY AWARDS	Final Remarks Makhosazana Mavimbela – Executive Director, Forest Sector Charter Council (FSCC)	14h45
CLOSING					

fields and highlighting their role in shaping the future of forestry. It also provided a platform for promoting these women, showcasing their passion and dedication to the industry, and positioning them as role models for future generations of women looking to enter the industry.

The second Women in Forestry webinar was opened by FSCC Executive Director Khosi Mavimbela, Acting DGG Pumeza Nodada – who gave the message of support on behalf of the Honorable Makhotsotso Soty, Deputy Minister of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) – and FP&M Seta's Sylvia Tsunke who gave the key note message on behalf of CEO Dr Felleng Yende. Three powerful women, all of whom talked to the integral role women have in the industry and the need to promote more to ensure future generations of women see the Forestry Sector as a preferred career path.

The floor was then open to the Directors of She is Forestry, Bathobile Ntshingila, Nelly Malatji,



"It is really encouraging to see corporate companies including communities in the real business and facilitating real community development and poverty alleviation"

- Nontethelelo Ramantswana

Julia Rees and Irene Mathabala who provided an impassioned discussion on the need for a Non-Profit Organisation aimed at raising the profile of women, before laying out its vision and objectives.

The main body of the webinar consisted of five themes, starting with the Merensky sponsored discussion panel hosted by Sappi's Mpho Lethoko entitled "An Industry for All". The panel included corporate representative Masechaba



“These initiatives and social impact programmes are super inspiring and exciting. The future is indeed looking bright and hopeful”

- Zimbili Sibiya

Chifunyise from Merensky, family-run business owner Julia Rees from Dargle Poles and small-scale grower representative & FSA Executive Committee Chairperson Mama Busi Mnguni. The ladies discussed the role of women in different scales of forestry operations and the interconnected nature of the forestry sector, which makes collaboration paramount.

This was followed by the Sappi sponsored theme “Sustainable Forestry” presentation by the Chairperson of FSA's Environmental Management Committee Louise van Wyk. Louise spoke about what sustainability meant in a forestry context and the interconnected nature of environmental, social and economic sustainability. She also spoke about the need

Theme four, “Forestry – investing in the future” was sponsored by Sawmilling South Africa and involved presentations by Dr Eija Laitinen, Head of the Forest21 Programme and Dr Tatenda Mapeto, Lecturer at Nelson Mandela University (NMU). Both women discussed how forestry graduates needed to be problem-solvers rather than job seekers; that this needed a new, student centred approach to forestry education, to develop climate-smart, entrepreneurial minded graduates.



“One of the best things about the Forestry Sector is the support and creation of opportunities for the adjacent communities, especially women”

- Hellen Silwane

for a bottom-up approach when looking at sustainability going forward and the challenges the industry faces.

“Entrepreneurism in Forestry” was the third theme sponsored by Sabie Poles and hosted by their owner Marina Daniel. The theme included presentations by Itumeleng Langeni from MTO and Thobi Mkhize from Mondi, who showcased some of the entrepreneurial based projects currently underway in the communities that neighbour forestry landholdings. This theme saw the greatest audience interaction, with numerous audience members voicing their support and pride for these initiatives.



“This project is a game changer in forestry education”

- Irene Mathabela

The final, SAWPA sponsored, theme “A Sector that is Driven by Innovation” included presentations by PG Bison's Tamaryn Whittall-Steynberg and PAMSA Executive Director Jane Molony, both of whom spoke about the innovation happening along the forest products value chain and how sustainable wood will really lead to a sustainable world.

The Webinar was concluded with a motivational talk by Burnout to Brilliance life coach Jacqui Meyer, whose presentation looked at the warning signs and remedies for burnout and whose words hit home to many of the women participating.

Khosi explains, “We wanted to give something back to the women already making such a huge mark on our industry. As women, we understand the delicate balance between work and family

Speakers

Programme Sponsor 



Hon. Makhotso Sotyu (MP)
Deputy Minister of Forestry,
Fisheries and
the Environment



Katy Johnson
Forestry South Africa,
Communication Consultant



Makhosazana Mavimbela
Executive Director,
Forest Sector Charter
Council (FSCC)



Felling Yende
Chief Executive Officer,
FP&M Seta
PhD candidate: Public Sector
Leadership, Management &
4IR Digital Technology



Bathobile Ntshingila
Project Manager,
Sappi Forests



Nelly Malatji
SIF Director



Irene Mathabela
Deputy Director: Sector
Liaison and Capacity
Development, DFFE



Julia Rees
Owner/Director,
Dargle Poles



Mpho Lethoko
General Manager
Communications,
Sappi Southern Africa



Masechaba Chifunyise
Group Company
Secretary, Merensky



Busi Mnguni
FSA Small-scale Grower
Representative and
Executive Committee
Chairperson



Louise van Wyk
Area Environmental
Manager, Sappi Forests
and Chairperson of
FSA's Environmental
Management Committee



Marina Daniel
Owner, Sabie Poles



Itumeleng Langeni
Chief Stakeholder
Relations Officer,
MTO Group



Thobi Mkhize
Head of Stakeholder
Engagement, Mondi and
Chairperson of FSA Land
Committee



Dr Eija Laitinen
FOREST21 Project
Coordinator



Dr Tatenda Mapeto
Lecturer, Nelson Mandela
University



Tamaryn Whittal-Steynberg
Panel Manufacturing
Manager, PG Bison



Jane Molony
Executive Director,
PAMSA



Jacqui Meyer
Life Coach for Women



Nondumiso Kheswa
Plantation Manager,
SAFCOL

life. We also understand the pressure to work harder, to stay later, to ensure your voice is heard and the impact this is having – particularly on women. Burnout is a global issue and a very real problem for many women (and men), we felt it was important to highlight this impact it can have and how small changes – including spotting the warning signs – can have," Katy explains.

In total, 226 unique logins signed into the webinar, although attendance is expected to be higher as many people logged in from a single computer. This included members of the forestry industry and its value chain, industry associations and institutions, forestry students and government representatives.

"The webinar raised over R100 000, which like last year, will be distributed to underprivileged schools in each of the forestry provinces. This is a significant amount more than was raised last year, as support for this important initiative grows. We are eternally grateful for the support of our sponsors, the Forest Sector Charter Council, FP&M Seta, Forestry South

Africa, Sappi, Mondi, NCT Forestry and all the theme sponsors previously mentioned. Their generosity not only made the webinar possible, but it has also meant "She is Forestry SA" can support future generations of women from the communities that neighbour our plantations", explains Julia Rees, She Is Forestry SA Director and Treasurer.



*"Thank you, I am inspired
by all the women that are within our
industry and making a difference,
in education and small to large
businesses, each and every day!"*

- Tamaryn Whittal-Steynberg

2021

SMALL STEPS MAKE BIG DIFFERENCES

By SIF SA Director and Treasurer: Julia Rees, Owner and
Director Dargle Poles



Julia Rees



*"Through SIF's donations the Grade 12 class
of 2021 improved their mathematics performance from 36% to a
remarkable 84.4%. You truly made a difference to the school, and we will
forever be grateful"*

– Mr. SJ Nkosi, Principal: Chief Funwako Secondary School

During the drama that always unfolds ahead of any webinar, I remember asking Katy and Khosi, "why do we do this to ourselves". Their answer was simple, "we do it to make a difference; if we can improve the life on a single individual - be it a woman already in forestry, one wishing to join our organisation or a child that benefits from the funds we raise – it will all be worth it."

Their belief that the SIF webinar could and would be a catalyst for change was realised shortly afterwards, when five schools – one in each forestry province – were gifted by She Is Forestry SA Casio calculators, face masks and gardening tools.

"2021 was a very successful year, thanks to the valuable donation of 194 masks and 32 Casio scientific calculators from She is Forestry SA, garden tools and bags from SAFCOL. Through SIF's donations the Grade 12 class of 2021 improved their mathematics performance from

36% to a remarkable 84.4%. You truly made a difference to the school, and we will forever be grateful." – Mr. SJ Nkosi, Principal: Chief Funwako Secondary School.

While it brings us immense pride to know the funds raised from our first webinar had such a huge impact on the mathematical performance of the Grade 12 class. It is also heart breaking that something many of us take for granted, like a calculator, could have such a big impact on the grades of these children and ultimately their future. For me, it reconfirmed my commitment to the cause, and it is just one illustration of the difference women in forestry can make when they come together.

"The Management, Staff and SGBs of Mnceba Senior Secondary School wishes to pass on their sincerest appreciation for the donation made by "She is Forestry SA" in 2021. Our school received 30 Casio scientific calculators together with



“Our learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds and this donation made a significant impact on their attitude towards mathematics”

Mr. S.H. Majozi, Principal: Mnceba Senior Secondary School

98 She is Forestry SA branded masks, garden tools and trees. The donations could not come at a more perfect time. Our learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds and this donation made a significant impact on their attitude towards mathematics. Their performances in the subject have improved, which will have a positive impact on their future careers”, Mr. S.H. Majozi, Principal: Mnceba Senior Secondary School.

The 2020 webinar raised in total R70 000.00, which was distributed across five schools and brought 120 calculators, around 660 masks and 30 garden tools.

“Our school faces numerous challenges in adequately addressing the pupil's needs. The donation of 32 Casio calculators and 180 She is Forestry SA branded masks from She is Forestry SA will definitely improve and without a doubt positively influence our pupil's academic performance. My school has been privileged to receiving such a donation at such a critical time and will forever be beholden to SIF. My prayer, is for our pupils to make SIF proud and for more organisations to emulate the commendable work of She is Forestry SA in investing in the future of our younger generation.” – Mr. Z. Blaai, Principal: Concordia School.

For 2021 we set our sights higher, offering up more ways in which forestry companies could sponsor the SIF webinar. We were overjoyed when Forestry South Africa came on board as the Webinar Sponsor and the Forest Sector Charter Council (FSCC) sponsored the webinar hosting and Lunch Break. Sappi and NCT Forest generously offered to come on board as Video

Break sponsors, with Mondi sponsoring the programme. We are also immensely grateful for our seven sponsors of the Webinar Themes: FP&M Seta, Merensky, Sappi, Sabie Poles, Sawmilling South Africa, SAWPA and SAFCOL.

In total, R109 300.00 was raised, and we are currently in talks with the schools as to how the money can be best spent.



SIF SA POC Member, Busi Mguni, Forestry South Africa Executive Committee Chairperson, handing out SIF SA donations to Phindizwe High School in KwaZulu-Natal

"It would be nice if we could buy something that could benefit multiple classes of students with the money the 2021 webinar raised. Projectors were suggested by one school, and we would like to see if we could roll this out across all five", explains Khosi Mavimbela, FSCC Executive Director and SIF Co-ordinator.

We are now gearing up for the 2022 SIF webinar and hope to continue the trend and raise even more money for these disadvantaged schools.

In Michelle Obama's autobiography she talks about her choice to focus on a single school as the First Lady and make a lasting impact there, before rolling it out further. It is an approach we intend to take too. There is so much need in our communities that it would be easy to overstretch ourselves whilst trying to help everyone. It simply would not be possible, and the lasting impact would be negligible. Instead, the Department of Education helped us identify one school in each province which really needed our help, and we intend to make a lasting difference to these schools, their staff and most importantly the learners.

If you would like to help us realise this dream, we are looking for this year's webinar sponsors.

FSA have already committed to sponsoring the webinar and FSCC will once more sponsor its hosting. If your company or business would like to come on board as a sponsor, we have

numerous sponsorship openings available including sponsorship of the:

- Five Themes
- Lunch Break
- The Programme
- Three Videos
- Two Comfort Break

Once again, we would like to thank everyone who has got involved with the She Is Forestry SA Webinar and helped us raise so much money for five very deserving schools. She Is Forestry SA was always intended to be an instrument of change, while raising money is just one of the ways our organisation is intent on making a difference, it is something we are committed to and passionate about and with the support of our Sector, nothing feels impossible.

"On behalf of everyone at the school, we wish to express our genuine thanks to She is Forestry SA. The COVID-19 pandemic made learning difficult and affected the performance of our learners. In 2021, we were privileged to have received 23 Casio scientific calculators, 124 She is Forestry SA branded masks, vegetable seedlings and garden tools. This donation to our school is a true reflection of She is Forestry SA's consideration of the challenges our learners face especially those from the most disadvantaged communities. This donation will make a positive impact to our learners particularly those that are taking mathematics as a subject of choice", – Mr. Mashapa N.F, Principal: Mangoako Secondary School.



*"My school has been privileged to receiving
such a donation at such a critical time and will
forever be beholden to SIF."*

- Mr. Z. Blaai, Principal: Concordia School

2021

GROWING ENTREPRENEURS

By SIF SA POC Members: Itumeleng Langeni, Chief Stakeholder Relations MTO Group and Thobi Mkhize, Head: Stakeholder Engagement, Mondi Forests



"She is Forestry SA supports forestry entrepreneurial projects that create jobs and alleviate poverty in rural environments where there is massive unemployment and poverty"
- Thobi Mkhize

The Gates Foundation has campaigned tirelessly for decades on Gender Equality, commissioning countless studies that have illustrated the positive impact women entering the workforce have on a country's economy. This is also true for the economies of rural communities where the positive impact of female employment is perhaps greatest, due to the high levels of unemployment and poverty. Two people who have first-hand experience of the impact projects that facilitate female employment and entrepreneurialism are, She Is Forestry SA POC members, Itumeleng Langeni, MTO Group: Chief Stakeholder Relations Officer, and Thobi Mkhize, Mondi: Head of Stakeholder Engagement.

"In the rural communities we work with a high proportion of women are the head of their households, either through being widowed or because of becoming the carer of orphaned grandchildren. These women need to provide for their families, they don't want to be reliant on pensions or handouts, they want to seize



Itumeleng Langeni



Thobi Mkhize

any opportunity to generate their own income. Through creating an income, these women do not just put food on the table and acquire new skills, they become self-sufficient, and this restores their dignity" explains Itumeleng.

It is a sentiment that is echoed by Thobi, "Forestry entrepreneurial projects provide individuals and communities with income that they would not normally have. This income helps them satisfy their basic needs like food or fund essential activities such as schooling. This additional income is especially important in single-parent households. We have projects where 80% of those involved are female and the majority are single parents. Given the history of land dispossession and limited land ownership by women, projects that provide them free access to land unleashes the latent potential in women who have a truncated history of activity in agriculture."



Growing groundnuts into entrepreneurial endeavours

MTO Group – Case Study Box

MTO offered 92 unemployed women from the 'Game' Village in White River, the opportunity of becoming self-sufficient by opening 37 hectares of forestry land to them, to plant groundnuts between the rows of trees in their young planted compartments.

"Initially, the women planted for their own consumption, ensuring food security for circa 460 family members. In 2021, to ensure the project's sustainability we supported the women by registering the project into various co-ops and sought a market for them to start generating an income from their groundnuts. In March of this year, they started harvesting their groundnuts to supply a peanut butter manufacturing company in Pretoria, Kalinda Trading," Itumeleng explained.

It doesn't stop there, the women are now being trained in business and financial management skills and MTO will release more land to them to expand their farming operations, now that they have secured a sustainable market. They also have a long-term plan to become peanut butter producers by partnering with the company they are currently supplying their nuts to.



"This project's success, and the impact it has had, has made us passionate about expanding it to other areas in Mpumalanga. We are already engaging with the community involved and hope to roll it out very soon. Forestry provides so many opportunities, I would encourage individuals and communities to come forward with proposals that they feel would benefit themselves and their communities," urged Itumeleng.

Mondi – Case Study Box

In 2015 a small group of women from communities adjacent to Mondi's plantation approached Mondi with the idea to utilize the excess land between the rows in the planted compartments to plant groundnuts, Jugo, and dry beans. In seven years, what started as a great idea has grown to 280 members producing food for their families and local markets. The profits have enabled members to feed their families, send their children to school, and in some cases, renovate their homes.

"Project members have told us that this has changed their lives for the better, both in terms of poverty alleviation and social cohesion. Working as groups has increased the levels of interactions many of the women have within their communities," Thobi explains.

Being able to function as a business group has been key to the success of this project. The women formed a project committee to whom Mondi then hands over a recently harvested compartment ahead of planting. The women start planting in August, monthly meetings are held with Mondi, and progress is monitored. The crops are harvested eight months into the project and the compartment is handed back to Mondi, with the Project Committee moving on to another newly harvested pre-planting compartment.

The project has been a successful and Mondi is looking to roll it out to other interested communities. "Mondi has committed to making more land available for the project



given the high demand, which has only been exacerbated due to COVID-19. Going forward, more and more Mondi forestry cycle operations will now be aligned to the project. We are also looking; to split the project into two seasonal activities, dry beans between February and June and groundnuts/Jugo beans from August to February. This will ensure a continuous flow of income and jobs throughout the year. We also believe that the financial security of participants should be linked with income saving schemes through the Self Help Groups. Ultimately, the idea is to gradually commercialize the project by looking at exploring utilizing equipment to improve planting efficiency that will subsequently increase the scale," Thobi continues.

Entrepreneurial initiatives, like those of Mondi and MTO, are some of the pillars upon which She Is Forestry SA wants to build its foundations.

"Entrepreneurial opportunities provide an opening into our industry, an opportunity for individuals and communities to benefit from the low hanging fruit that we, as an industry, sometimes don't see. She is Forestry SA will play a critical role in facilitating this, providing access to the Sector through the networks that are formed within the organisation. They understand that women are the cornerstone of society, and that as an industry we need to address the misconception that forestry is a career that is only open to men and intercropping can co-exist within forestry as an alternative means of generating an income. They therefore play a

critical role in encouraging women into the Sector and highlighting the depth of opportunity the industry offers," Itumeleng continues.

Entrepreneurship should be encouraged from an early age and teaching it within schools is an area of interest for She Is Forestry SA. "In forestry, we are fortunate to have other things that we can use to create other items that we can sell to earn a living. I was inspired by the enthusiasm shown by the younger generation from the few primary schools that I visited where I showed them how to do beading, use grass to make bags, mats and much more. I am also appreciative of the She is Forestry SA initiative, serving as an enabler to expose and explore more in Forestry," remarked Busi, Mnguni, Small Scale Grower & chairperson of Forestry South Africa.

"It is important that we have organizations such as She is Forestry SA that are supporting women who want to elevate themselves out of poverty. We need to start encouraging them to look beyond the obvious, for instance, how they can move from raw to processed products to create more jobs and bring bigger incomes into their community. To help them look beyond our borders and utilise marketing channels like the Africa Free Trade arrangement to supply the much bigger SADC region. It sounds like a big step, but the opportunities do exist to develop these kinds of projects and enter huge markets. Organisations like She is Forestry SA will have a role in facilitating this," Thobi concludes.

2022

BRANCHING OUT FROM STRONG ROOTS

By SIF SA Webinar Co-ordinator: Katy Johnson, Communication and Promotions Consultant Forestry South Africa, and SIF SA Co-ordinator: Makhosazana Mavimbela, Executive Director, Forest Sector Charter Council



Katy Johnson



Makhosazana (Khosi) Mavimbela



"This year we wanted to shift the focus from raising awareness to giving something back to the women who have been our industry's trail blazers"

- Katy Johnson, Webinar Co-ordinator.

We are excited to announce that the theme of this year's Women in Forestry Webinar is, **'Be the Best You Can Be!'**

"The first two Women In Forestry Webinars focused on promoting women in the Sector and the work being done by them respectively. The aim, in part, was to dispel any preconceptions that forestry was a male-only industry; by promoting both the women who are taking the Sector forwards, and the many career opportunities available to them. This year we wanted to do something a little different, shifting the focus from raising awareness to giving something back to the women who have been our industry's trail blazers", explains Katy Johnson, Webinar Co-ordinator.

The focus of this year's webinar is to provide women within the industry, and those wishing to

join it, with career and life skills that will enable them to 'be the best they can be'.

"Learning is a lifelong experience. We all have the capacity to add new strings to our bows, to open our minds and horizons a little further. Investing time in personal development, whether that is the acquisition of new work or life skills, should be an essential part of everyone's career and adult journey. Sadly, it is often harder for women to realise this. Many working women are juggling career and family responsibilities in ways their male colleagues simply do not need to. As a result, they often have limited time available for any additional obligations and find themselves falling behind on their personal development. We thought this webinar could provide a platform to both acknowledge this, but also provide women with some 'tips and tricks' that might help them", explains Khosi Mavimbela, SIF Co-ordinator.

The line-up for the third Women in Forestry Webinar is still a work in progress, however, the organisational committee has confirmed the themes. These include:

- **Keynote address** by a motivational speaker on the importance of investing in yourself.



SHE IS FORESTRY AWARDS

- **Panel discussion – ‘Entering the industry, what are we looking for?’** Specifically pitched for graduates wanting to get one step ahead. The panel will include women from across the industry who are involved with recruitment.
- **Expert talk – ‘How to stand out from the crowd’** How to prepare the perfect CV and cover letter and what you should do to prepare for that big interview. This talk will be relevant to those at all stages of their career from new graduates to those striving for C-suite positions.
- **Industry talk – ‘Professional Approach’** Khosi Mavimbela discusses what is expected of those wanting to move up the managerial ladder, providing a great guide to the do's and don'ts.
- **Panel Talk – Joining the C-club** We speak to a panel of C-level (CEO, CFO, COO etc.) ladies about their career journey and what it takes to become part of the C-club.
- **Motivational Talk by Jacqui Meyer.** Following the success of her talk last year, we have asked Jacqui back to discuss why it is important to prioritise your work life balance.

The webinar will once again be sponsored by FSA, with FSCC sponsoring the webinar hosting. Letters will be going out shortly looking for talk and lunch break sponsors. If your company would be interested in becoming one of our sponsors please contact Julia Rees – julia@darglepoles.co.za or Katy Johnson – katylouise.johnson@gmail.com

"Forestry South Africa is proud to sponsor the Women In Forestry SA Webinar, we see gender equality and women empowerment as an important issue that the industry is committed to addressing. No longer can forestry be called a male-only industry, women are playing integral

roles across our sector helping to shape it and move the industry forward. Their dedication and passion needs to be acknowledged, as does the multitude of career opportunities the industry presents. The Women in Forestry Webinars provide the ideal opportunity for this. They also are a perfect platform for knowledge transfer and skill acquisition, which is why we are excited about the direction this third webinar is taking and are pleased to be on board as the sponsor", states Dr Ronald Heath, Forestry South Africa.

This year, She is Forestry hopes to add another aspect to the agenda with the first Women in Forestry Awards.

"The She Is Forestry SA committee headed by Nontethelelo Ramantswana identified early on the importance of celebrating the female role models in our industry and awarding those who are striving hard to enter it", Khosi explains. "The Awards will acknowledge the contribution made by women who have gone above and beyond in their service to our Sector, as well as the students who have exceeded all expectations in their dedication to their studies."

In April, letters will go out asking forestry companies to nominate a woman from their organisation who has gone above and beyond in her service to the industry. They will be asked to provide some information about the individual in question, alongside a commendation as to why she deserves the award. A similar letter will be sent to all five forestry institutions, asking them to nominate a student who stands out and write a commendation as to why they should be considered for the award.

All nominations will need to be submitted before the **31 May 2022**, submissions after this will not be eligible. A committee made up of the She Is Forestry Directors will then presides over the nominations and select the winner. All the nominees will be featured during the Webinar, with the Awards presented to the winners virtually.

2022

THE TEAM BEHIND THE DREAM



Bathobile Ntshingila



Neliswa Mjikwa

Directors

Chairlady: Bathobile Ntshingila, Project Manager, Sappi-Khulisa

Secretary General: Neliswa Mjikwa, Retired, former Deputy Director: Local and Institutional Development, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Treasurer: Julia Rees, Owner and Director Dargle Poles

Susan Morongoa Leseke, Chief Director: Forest Operations, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Irene Mathabela Deputy Director: Sector Liaison and Capacity Development, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment



Julia Rees



"The passion, commitment and dedication of the team behind She Is Forestry SA is inspiring, many of these women are balancing high-flying careers with busy family lives and yet they all make time for this initiative. I think that in itself is testament to the importance of She Is Forestry SA and the impact it is having both in terms of Gender Equality within the Forestry Sector, and in improving the lives and livelihoods of women living in forestry communities. As a member of the forestry industry, I am proud to be part of the She Is Forestry SA team and committed to helping organization to realise its goals."

- Nathi Ndlela, FSA Manager:
Business Development



Susan Morongoa Leseke



Irene Mathabela



Nathi Ndlela



**Makhosazana (Khosi)
Mavimbela**



Katy Johnson



Mpho Lethoko

POC

SIF Co-ordinator: Makhosazana Mavimbela, Executive Director, Forest Sector Charter Council

Webinar Co-ordinator: Katy Johnson, Communication and Promotions Consultant, Forestry South Africa



Thobi Mkhize



Pamela Naidoo

Mpho Lethoko, General Manager: Corporate Affairs, Sappi Southern Africa Ltd

Thobi Mkhize, Head: Stakeholder Engagement, Mondi Forests

Pamela Naidoo, Capacity Development Manager, South African Forestry Contractors Association NPC

Evidence Musiello, Researcher, Forest Sector Charter Council

Nicky Naidoo, Senior Office Administrator, South African Forestry Contractors Association NPC

Busi Mnguni, Small-Scale Grower and FSA Executive Committee Chairlady

Itumeleng Langeni, Chief Stakeholder Relations, MTO Group



Evidence Musiello



Itumeleng Langeni



Busi Mnguni



Nicky Naidoo



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