

Shoprite's 15 years of fighting hunger in Southern Africa

It's been 15 years since the first Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchen trucks set out on a journey to combat hunger in South Africa. The programme that started in 2007 with just three trucks serving Gauteng and the North West province, has grown into a fleet of 32 trucks serving all provinces.

Since inception the Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchens have served almost 55 million meals to vulnerable communities – covering every corner of the country, including neighbouring countries Zambia, Angola and Namibia – and travelled nearly 10 million kilometres.

Supported by Mars, PepsiCo, Tiger Brands, Fuso and UD Trucks, the Mobile Soup Kitchens have also created employment for over 80 employees who are passionate about the communities they serve.

"The Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchens have become a beacon of hope in many communities where we're warmly welcomed when we arrive," says driver Dion Raboroko, the very first employee. "We serve on average a thousand cups of soup a day and the demand keeps growing. Often, we provide beneficiaries with their only warm nutritious meal of the day."

"The children are always excited when they see Shoprite, because then they know it is lunch time. Their generosity however stretches beyond just regularly feeding our children: this year Christmas came early when they surprised us with a festive season party. We're very grateful for their ongoing support," says Thapelo Lesufi, Manager at the Thuthukani Care Centre.

"With the regular visits from the Mobile Soup Kitchen since 2008, we've been able to help more children. They are so appreciative of a warm meal, their faces light up. Shoprite has been supporting us for more than 20 years and it puts my mind at ease knowing we can depend on them when help is needed," adds Regina Sekgobela, founder of the [Bulamahlo](#) Home & Day Care Centre in Tembisa.

The team is also often among the first responders when disaster disrupts community life and provides immediate hunger relief to disaster-struck areas.

With approximately [1 in 10 South Africans going hungry every day](#), hunger relief and food security are at the core of Africa's largest food retailer's corporate social investment programmes.

The Shoprite Group's extensive hunger relief programme started with the Mobile Soup Kitchens 15 years ago, and today also includes surplus food donations and community food gardens.

Through its Act For Change programme, the Group:

- served more than 5.2 million hot meals through its Mobile Soup Kitchens in the past year;

- supported more than 500 beneficiary organisations with surplus food donations to the value of R157 million, enabling them to serve more than 46 million meals;
- supports more than 180 community food gardens and over 3 500 home gardens, which impacts almost 53 000 beneficiaries. In the past year, more than 2 700 community members were trained in sustainable food gardening, assisting them to grow nutritious and organic food. A harvest of more than 31 500kg was produced, providing almost 100 000 meals;
- and partners with 107 Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres to ensure 7 151 children receive nutritionally balanced meals.

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