

Ten years and 4.5 million kilometers for Shoprite's Mobile Soup Kitchens

In the 10 years since the Shoprite Group launched its first Mobile Soup Kitchen, the fleet has driven 4.5-million kilometres into the furthestmost corners of the country, serving more than 30-million meals to vulnerable communities in the process.

A team of almost 80 employees manage a 5-day a week national serving schedule for the 19 fully equipped Mobile Soup Kitchens.

Responding to requests from schools, care centres and communities impacted by natural disasters, the Mobile Soup Kitchens are despatched to provide immediate hunger relief in communities.

Realising that the approach was necessary but not sustainable, the Group implemented a programme which would ultimately enable communities to feed themselves.

Through partnerships with organisations such as Food and Trees for Africa, Urban Harvest and Food Forward South Africa, the Group has been establishing sustainable food gardens and income generating community projects at organisations across South Africa where its Mobile Soup Kitchens once served.

Greenlands Primary School in Bishop Lavis, Cape Town and the Wathint' Abafazi crèche in Bethelsdorp, Eastern Cape, are just two of the numerous sustainable projects that have already stemmed from the Mobile Soup Kitchen initiative. In addition to supplying daily feeding programmes with fresh produce, the gardens also help with fundraising and skills transfers whilst the Shoprite stores in these areas take ownership of the community projects so that they continue to thrive.

To close the loop, many of these organisations also have access to the retailer's Surplus Food Programme. In the last financial year alone, the Shoprite Group made R108 million of surplus food available to hundreds of verified non-profit organisations for distribution to thousands of people every day.

What is today an extensive hunger relief programme all started with the Group's Mobile Soup Kitchens a decade ago, and the communities served by Africa's largest food retailer will continue to be at the heart of its ongoing efforts to tackle hunger.

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Photo 1: Darryl Goliath (Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchen Driver) and Khanya Wellington

Photo 2: Darryl Goliath (Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchen Driver), Alejandre and Thylon Johnson, Esmeralda Essex (Public Relations Officer)

Photo 3: Amid the severe Cape Storm in June 2017, Shoprite's Mobile Soup Kitchen served residents of Wesbank, outside Cape Town, a warm cup of soup.