

The Village Market Africa triumphs in Food Lover's Seeds of Change initiative

The Village Market Africa is the winner of Food Lover's Market's Seeds of Change Supplier Development Partnership, an [initiative launched in February](#) to create an opportunity for social enterprises to join the fresh produce retailer's network as a supplier.



Food Lover's Market CEO Brian Coppin with TVMA founder Mmabatho Portia Morudi

The initiative attracted 839 entries, and the winner's announcement was made on 16 April 2021 following a four-day boot camp with the top ten applicants at Makers Landing. As the successful applicant, TVMA will now become a supplier to Food Lover's Market.

The Village Market Africa (TVMA) is a social enterprise established out of a need to address the decreasing bee populations. It aims to combat rural poverty through establishing bee initiatives in remote African villages – linking conservation of natural resources, rural producer initiatives and markets.

Says Siglinda Losch, sustainability manager for the Food Lover's Market Group, "A huge congratulations to Mmabatho Portia Morudi from The Village Market Africa, who impressed the panel with her well thought out and cohesive business pitch. The other nine applicants were also very impressive, and the high standard of applications reflects the great mix of social enterprises across South Africa who are focused on building a sustainable society and economy."



Food Lover's on the lookout for social enterprises to join supplier network

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Empowering communities through sustainable beekeeping

The Village Market wowed the Seeds of Change Supplier Development Partnership panel with a presentation that celebrated the finest raw honey produce, as well as the social impact of Morudi's beekeeping business – designed to breathe new life into a community in need of socio-economic and environmental solutions.

South Africa has a short supply of good quality honey and bees are endangered, threatening food security globally. Advocating for sustainable beekeeping practices also has the dual benefit of improving the lives of rural farmers through bee pollination. Together with ERP.ngo, bee sanctuaries are set up in remote rural communities across Southern Africa to protect bees, improve livelihoods, mitigate human and elephant conflict and assist farmers with crop pollination – improving their crops and yields.

Says Morudi, co-founder of The Village Market Africa, “We entered the competition believing at the heart of our business model we are passionate about the environment and changing lives. We have been searching for a partner to grow this impact, and it was exciting to find an opportunity with a company that shared these values and ideals.

“Considering the number of applications Food Lovers Market received and the calibre of businesses that applied, as well as the amazing impact and quality of their products, it is humbling to come out on top. For us it means we get to drive even more impact in the remotest of villages by simply complementing their knowledge and skill with training, coaching, and supporting communities to be self-sufficient and in harmony with their environment.”

Macro view of retail landscape

The four-day boot camp exposed the top 10 applicants to a macro view of the global and South African retail landscape, including trends, challenges and opportunities within the sector. During this time they had face-to-face workshops offering guidance, mentorship and necessary skills to market their business.

On the fifth day, the top 10 businesses pitched to the Food Lover’s Market panel.

The panel consisted of Brian Coppin (chief executive officer of Food Lover’s Market Holdings), Travis Coppin (managing executive - marketing and buying), Andrew Millson (group HR and sustainability executive), Lisa Currey (managing director of Hamiltons Advertising) and Stephen van Vuuren (general manager for Ambient Buying).

Commenting on the boot camp, Morudi says, “It was something special to listen to entrepreneurs such as Moses Lebofa from Moses Coffee, Lisa Currey from Hamiltons Advertising and Jules Harris from The Real Food Factory. I loved hearing about how they started their businesses. I went away thinking - it is possible.”

Losch comments, “We are so honoured to have been able to work with – and celebrate – these remarkable businesses and the social impact they make in the communities they serve. It speaks directly to the core values of Food Lovers Market. Their dedication to social impact and change, quality, innovation and partnership is critical to achieving a more sustainable economy. We are so proud to be part of their world and being able to support these enterprises through the Seeds of

Change Development Partnership.”



Mbrudi pitching to the panel

The Seeds of Change Development Partnership, a Food Lover's Market Earth Lovers initiative, was facilitated by the Social Enterprise Academy (SEA), which is a specialist learning and development organisation supporting social change organisations in South Africa.

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