

# Unilever, FCDO & EY mark 10 years of collaboration, backing 10 enterprises in Southern Africa and reaching 1m+ lives

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, January 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, [TRANSFORM](#), an impact accelerator that supports visionary enterprises across Asia and Africa, celebrates 10 years of game-changing collaboration. Since its launch in 2015, the initiative has supported 10 enterprises in Southern Africa, reaching 1,065,792 lives, from business owners, to workers, customers and people in the wider community.

With TRANSFORM's support, these enterprises have generated tangible benefits for local communities and the environment, for example, since 2022:

- Over 6,000 customers benefitted from enterprise products and services
- 5,329 tonnes of waste diverted from landfills
- Additionally, over the past decade, the enterprises raised over R26.7mn\* (£1.2 million) in follow-on funding

Sithembile Sefako-Ngobese, Head of Communications, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Southern Africa and EWA at Unilever shares: "In Southern Africa, local entrepreneurs are delivering some of the most powerful solutions to global development challenges, from creating functional waste management systems to providing jobs and livelihoods. Embedded within the communities they serve, these innovators are uniquely positioned to create practical, context-driven approaches. Some of their solutions have also been embedded into Unilever's own supply chain, contributing to our sustainability goals on plastics and livelihoods through innovation, collaboration and lasting behaviour change."

--- Spotlight on enterprise projects ---

TRANSFORM has achieved significant results with enterprises on individual projects in Southern Africa. This includes collaborating with:

- GrooveTech to build durable, climate-resilient roads in South Africa using recycled plastic waste, while creating jobs for over 450 informal waste workers and establishing 37 buyback centres in townships and rural areas.
- Loowatt to install 500 waterless toilets for communities without sewers, converting waste into

biogas and fertiliser.

- Sonke to help South Africans from low-income backgrounds make cost savings of up to 60% and cut plastic waste by expanding access of automated refill stations for staple foods and household products.

- Smartfill to make food more affordable and reduce plastic pollution in Zambia and South Africa by installing 90 smart dispensers in 14 stores, reaching an estimated 200,000 consumers. Its model aims to reduce manufacturer costs, increase sales volumes, and create green economy employment in local communities.

--- Uniting industry leaders and government to transform lives ---

Led by Unilever, the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and EY, the initiative is a unique example of a long lasting public-private partnership - combining grant funding with the different skills, networks and resources of each organisation to help impact enterprises scale into thriving, self-sustaining businesses tackling global development challenges. The programme has been running for the past decade and has:

- Supported over 140 impact enterprises worldwide, reaching over 19 million lives – growing from 10 million in 2023, almost doubling its impact in just two years.

- Seen 750 employees from EY and Unilever sharing their business knowledge to help enterprises unlock their potential.

- Hosted seven regionally led challenges, since 2023, to find new enterprises. This put decision-making power into the hands of local colleagues from Unilever, EY and the British High Commission across East, West and Southern Africa, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Rod Wolfenden, EY Africa Clients and Industries Leader, shares: "With a strong 10-year track record, TRANSFORM's win-win model is an example of the incredible impact we can achieve by combining our strengths. Leveraging our EY people's skills, knowledge and networks, TRANSFORM provides tailored business support to scale inspiring social impact entrepreneurs, fostering innovation that has ripple effects across the ecosystem. TRANSFORM's combined support has helped validate these innovative ideas, enabling our enterprises across Southern Africa to raise over R26.7mn\* in follow-on funding and further scale their impactful solutions. We are proud to help create a better future for everyone, together."

Will Kirk

Forster Communications

[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/885157375>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.