

European Union & The Kingdom of Eswatini



**Years Of
Partnership**



YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP





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Karsten Mecklenburg
EU Ambassador

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this booklet which intends to find a different approach to presenting the last 50 years of the partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Kingdom of Eswatini, which started in 1976 with the opening of our first Office in the country. The opening of an EU Office and the start of our bilateral partnership followed the entry into force in 1976 of the first “Lomé Convention” – a landmark partnership treaty between the European Economic Community (EEC) and 46 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries.

It focused on trade preferences—allowing most ACP products duty-free entry into the EEC (now the European Union) –and provided the basis for large volumes of financial and structural aid to support development in partner countries, including Eswatini. Supporting economic development and enabling economic operators, notably small enterprises, to benefit from economic and trade opportunities, supporting livelihoods and inclusiveness, has been and remains a cornerstone of our intervention.

Our support extends also to trade facilitation within the EU-SADC EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) – an agreement that celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2026 and the purpose of which has been to help improve trade relations between the EU and Eswatini by maximising private sector development and trade, which are significant economic drivers to lift people out of poverty. As such, the EPA helps deliver jobs and sustainable economic growth for Eswatini and the region. Since we first established our presence here in the Kingdom back in 1976, our support to Eswatini’s development initiatives has covered multiple areas. The EU has contributed billions of Emalangeni to many sectors, including the improved access to clean and potable water, free primary education, health, various agriculture value chains including sugar, infrastructure

development, strengthening of governance, democracy and human rights, institutional capacity building, etc. Our current intervention priority is on market driven and inclusive skills development for the younger generation, including notably the important sector of TVET. But the purpose of this booklet was not to provide a complete overview of our cooperation, nor to cover necessarily all intervention sectors over the past 50 years. We instead reached out to 50 emaSwati to tell their own story about the impact the EU and its action in the country had on them personally, their life, their community, their business.

My sincere gratitude goes to all those of our friends in the country who agreed to tell their story. For this last 50 years, the EU and Eswatini have enjoyed fruitful and trusted relations. As we celebrate this milestone, the EU is proud that it has been a reliable partner and supporter of Eswatini's development initiatives for this long period. Our achievements in the country are the results of a collective effort of the whole team of the EU Delegation, in close cooperation and coordination with the government, assisted by various local stakeholders and implementing partners.

Karsten Mecklenburg,
EU Ambassador



His Majesty King Mswati III meeting in May 1991 in Brussels with EU Commissioner for Development Cooperation Manuel Marin.



50 Years of Cooperation

Created in the aftermath of WWII by 6 countries, the European Union is today a unique economic and political union with 27 Member States. In 2012 the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to “transform most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace”. With a strong interest to share the perspective for prosperity and peace with its partners around the globe, the EU and its member states combined have become the biggest donor of development assistance in the world.

The EU is today a major political actor on the international scene, represented by a network of diplomatic representations to over 140 countries and international organisations – one of them located in Mbabane/ Eswatini. The European Union has been working in Eswatini for 50 years, with the aim of reducing and ultimately eradicating poverty through sustainable and inclusive growth, the progressive integration of Eswatini into the regional and world economies and trade, as well as the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Human capital development and education have been one of the cornerstones of this long-standing partnership. Thanks to EU grants, impressive achievements were obtained in terms of access and quality of free primary education in Eswatini, including curricula reforms. Many girls and boys have by now passed through the classrooms of schools like the Manzini Primary or Gilgal Primary, which could be set up and run thanks

to EU support. We have also built state-of-the-art infrastructure in certain vocational institutions in the country. Between 2009 and 2014, the EU contributed more than SZL 3 billion to support Eswatini’s development efforts, which has also included a substantial support to the development of its sugar industry. Furthermore, we have helped to build state-of-the-art roads and bridges in order to improve Eswatini’s infrastructure. An example of this is the iconic Siphofaneni bridge, affectionately named by the locals as the ‘banana bridge’.

Between 2014 and 2020, the EU spent another SZL 1 billion to support agriculture and social protection in the country. This included the building of small-and medium-sized earth dams around the country, support to livestock value chains and the construction of strategic cold-storage facilities in key areas for smallholder vegetable farmers. The EU has also helped to build water reservoirs to provide for example the people of Siphofaneni, Somntongo and Matsanjeni with access to clean drinking water.

In the health sector, we have provided mobile clinics around the country and supported key facilities such as the Mbabane government hospital and 14 maternity hospitals, funded training of nurses and caregivers, HIV prevention etc. We were also the first to help the country access COVID-19 vaccines back in 2021.



Funded by the European Union, Siphofaneni bridge connects communities, enhancing access to markets, schools, and essential services.



Over and above this, the EU is a major contributor to the Global Fund, under which Eswatini is also a beneficiary, which helps fight HIV, TB and malaria in the world. Furthermore, the EU works hand in hand with civil society where we have contributed millions of Euros to support the work of civil society organisations, particularly in the fields of social protection, inclusiveness, human rights and democracy. The EU is fully committed to help Eswatini achieve its developmental goals. For the period 2021-2027, the EU remains a key player in Eswatini's education sector and as regards job creation, contributing with EUR 27 million (SZL 540 million) through the Skills for Youth Employability, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment programme to provide inclusive and quality training in priority growth sectors for skills development and the creation of decent, green and digital jobs.

This flagship programme aims to transform the labour market by strengthening vocational education and training in order to provide young people with the skills required to meet the country's needs, with a particular focus on the economic empowerment and social inclusion of unemployed youth, women and other disadvantaged groups (people with disabilities, in rural areas, orphans, etc.).

The main action promotes a demand-driven technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system through the strengthening of market-oriented skills training and alliances with the private sector, and by empowering disadvantaged young people and women in vulnerable situations, aiming to support their employability and self-employment, and to enhance their economic empowerment and social inclusion. To complement the above, we are supporting the empowerment of disadvantaged youth and women in vulnerable situations through strengthening their employability, entrepreneurial and life skills, support their mental health and psychosocial support, and promote gender equality.

The EU Team



Opening of the Delegation in Mbabane

The first formal Office of the European Economic Community (EEC) – the predecessor to the European Union – in Eswatini (then Swaziland) was opened in Mbabane in 1976 as the “Delegation of the European Commission.”

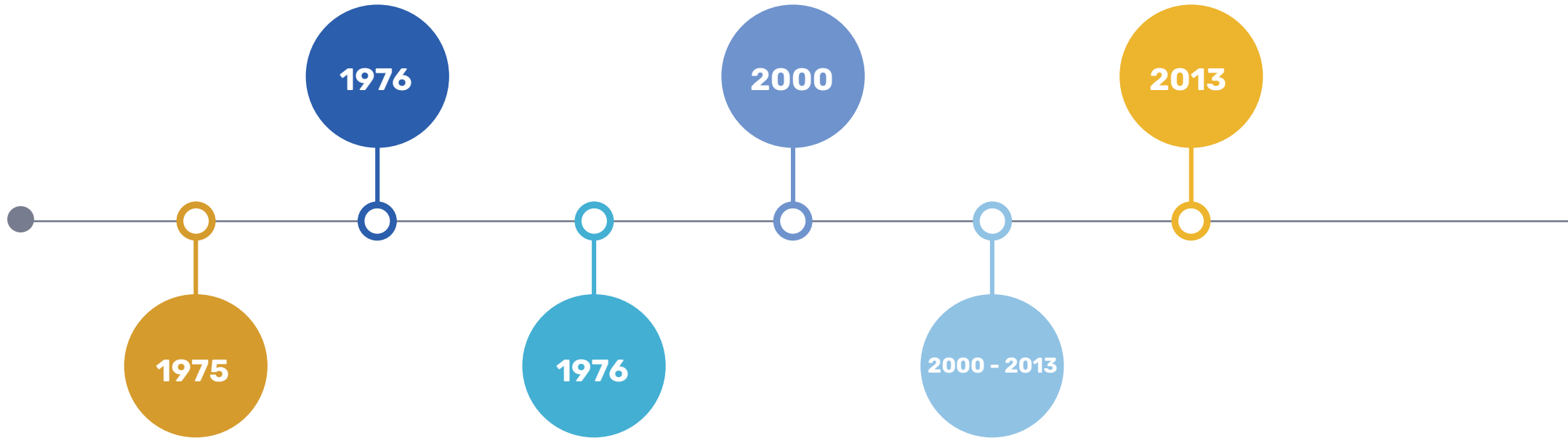
Cotonou Agreement : A new start

June 2000 in Cotonou, Benin
Signatories: 77 ACP States and 15 Member States of the European Union

The Cotonou Agreement replaced the Lomé Convention. It rests on four principles: equality of partners and ownership of development strategies, participation of non-state actors, political dialogue and mutual obligations, and differentiation. The most radical change concerned trade cooperation: the non-reciprocal trade preferences of Lomé were replaced by the perspective of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), based on reciprocity.

Delegation Upgraded to Formal Diplomatic Status

The entry into force of the new EU’s Lisbon Treaty and the subsequent creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS, operational in 2011) fundamentally transformed EU Delegations from cooperation and administrative offices into full-fledged diplomatic missions representing the European Union as a legal entity under international law. From a regionalised “Delegation of the European Commission”, the Office in Mbabane transformed in 2013 into a “Delegation of the European Union”, for the first time with a resident EU Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.



Birth of the Partnership: 1st Lomé Convention February 1975 in Lomé, Togo

Signatories: 46 ACP countries and 9 EEC (today EU) member states

Established a formal relationship between the ACP group (created in the same year by the Georgetown Agreement), including Eswatini, and the European Economic Community (today the European Union). A **European Development Fund (EDF)** was created in 1957. With the Lomé Convention, it evolved into the primary instrument for providing development aid to African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, initially in 5-year programming cycles. Eswatini benefited under EDFs Nr. 4 to 8 between 1975 and 2000.

Establishment of the ACP Secretariat in Brussels

Initially funded by the ACP Member States themselves, the secretariat soon found that arrears from some countries meant that a (successful) request for at least 50 per cent of its budget from the EDF was needed. (In April 2020, the ACP Group of States became the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States **OACPS**).

Support to Eswatini under 9th and 10th EDFs

The Kingdom has been benefiting during the 9th EDF (2000-2007) and the 10th EDF (2007-2013) under various thematic priorities and intervention areas, including governance, water & sanitation, health, energy as well as notably education – with a priority of support to the government plan to roll out free primary education by 2015. Many of the actions continued to be implemented well beyond 2013.

11th EDF : National Indicative Programme

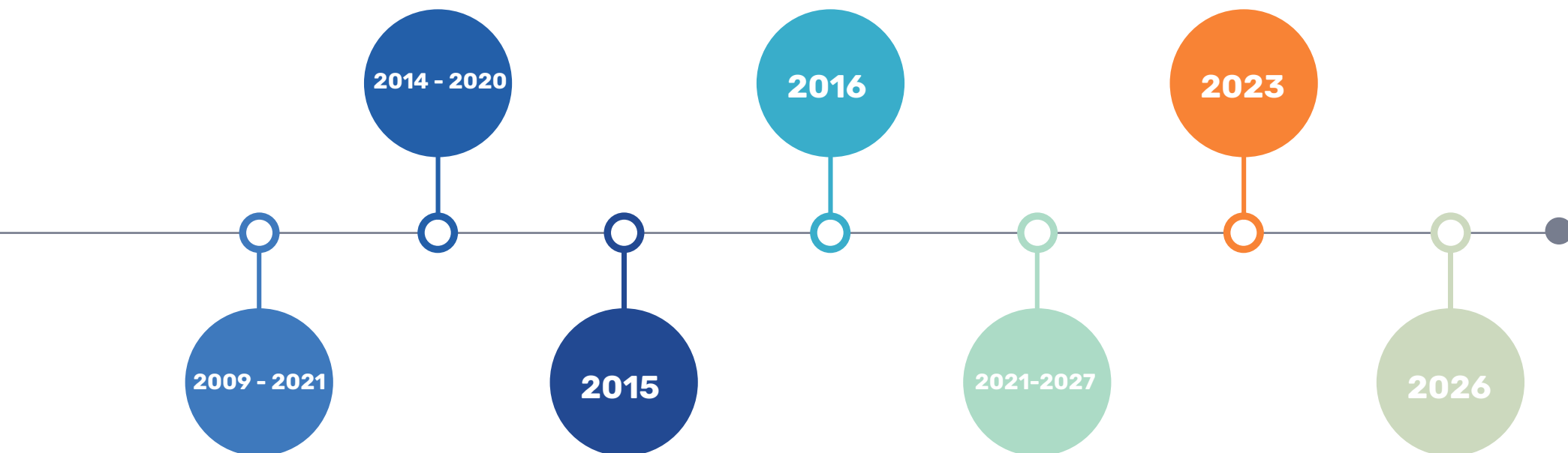
Cooperation under the 11th EDF (62M€) focused on two key areas: agricultural value chains and social protection. In addition, a large private sector development programme was launched to promote job creation, improve the business environment and investment climate through the promotion of public-private dialogue, as well as support to the implementation of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement, the country's transition to an export-based economy, and regional value-chains integration. Many of the actions continue to be implemented.

Ratification of the EU-SADC EPA

The landmark event in Cotonou-framework cooperation in 2016 was the finalisation of the Economic Partnership Agreement, ratified on 10 October 2016. Swaziland now benefits from duty-free, quota-free access to the European market.

Samoa Agreement

The Samoa Agreement was signed on 15 November 2023 in Apia, Samoa, succeeding the Cotonou Agreement. Signatories: 78 OACPS States and 27 EU Member States. It is built around six priorities: human rights, democracy and governance; peace and security; human and social development; and inclusive and sustainable growth.



EU support to Eswatini's Sugar sector

The European Union (EU) has supported Eswatini's sugar sector—a cornerstone of its economy—primarily through financial aid, technical assistance, training, as well as irrigation and transport infrastructure development, totalling over €120 million between 2009 and 2021. The EU support, under the Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries (AMSP), has been notably targeting smallholder farmers, improving sugarcane yields, alleviating poverty and improving livelihoods in sugar-producing rural areas.

MDG No. 2 Achieved with EU Support

2015 was considered a landmark year for EU-Eswatini cooperation: with EU support, the country achieved the UN's Millennium Development Goal No. 2 on universal primary education, with enrolment rates reaching 95% in the first year of primary school.

NDICI Instrument and New Indicative Programme

Under the EU's 2021-2027 budget, the EU funds most of its development programmes for ACP countries through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe (NDICI). The European Development Fund (EDF), previously funded through direct Member State contributions, ceased to exist from 2021. For 2021- 2027, the EU has allocated €40 million in grants to Eswatini, focused on human development and social inclusion.

Key initiatives include skills development, market-driven vocational training (TVET), youth/women empowerment, supporting small businesses, enhancing education and employability for vulnerable groups. Eswatini also benefits from regional and thematic programmes, including support for teacher training, cultural cooperation, and regional trade under the EU-SADC EPA.

50th Anniversary of EU-Eswatini Partnership

In summary, this fifty-year partnership has evolved from a non-reciprocal preferential trade arrangement (ACP-EU Lomé Convention) and a classic donor-recipient logic to a more demanding framework on governance and trade reciprocity (Cotonou/EPA/Samoa Agreements), with a strong focus on human development, youth and sustainability and a genuine mutual partnership. As a small landlocked country, Eswatini has benefited from financing in road infrastructure, water, education, health, social protection, and the sugar sector – the latter having been a specific focus of cooperation through large parts of those fifty years.

Sugar Support

Since the start of the EU-ACP Partnership in 1976, Eswatini's important sugar industry benefited tremendously from EU support: First, via unilateral EU trade preferences allowing the domestic sugar industry to sell almost half of its production until 2007 within the EU – for prices far above world market prices –. And Second, since the adaptation of the EU's internal sugar market scheme to WTO rules as of 2006 and in preparation for the EU-SADC reciprocal Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in 2016, by implementing between 2009 and 2021 a toolbox of direct support measures worth about €120 million (SZL 1.7 billion).

When the EU reformed its sugar policy in 2006, reducing the reference price by 36%, Eswatini was hit particularly hard. Whereas historically sugar cane cultivation was the preserve of large estates often owned by millers, plus a few more relatively wealthy, independent medium scale growers, in the past three decades the impressive expansion of the industry was supported by small-scale growers (SSGs) whose holdings varied in size but averaged 75 hectares. Already before 2006, however, many of these SSGs were struggling, as in southern Africa more generally. This was mainly due to rising input costs, particularly the costs of cane haulage to

mills, and also caused by erratic irrigation and farm management practices. To react to those challenges and to cushion the impact of its own sugar market reform, the EU set up the Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol countries (AMSP), with the goal of enhancing competitiveness, diversifying economic activity, and addressing social and environmental impacts. In the case of Eswatini, the EU support was clearly aligned with the relevant priorities of the National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) adopted by government and industry in 2006, including notably efficiency, productivity and the viability of smallholder farmers.

The EU support worth €120 million (SZL 1.7 billion) included NAS Coordination and focused upon enhancing the profitability (and in most cases the economic viability) of the Eswatini SSGs by enhancing transportation and irrigation infrastructure so as to reduce costs and enhance yields; both of those objectives were also being assisted by training initiatives supported by the EU. An external evaluation carried out in October 2021 found that the EU interventions in the sugar sector of Eswatini were comparatively very successful in the southern African context, with smallholder farmers as the main beneficiaries.

In addition to the iconic Siphofaneni bridge, the EU funded a second bridge and a new 43 km tar road linking Siphofaneni with St Philips for €47 million (SZL 658 million). The new road has been assisting numerous farmer companies in the region to lower transport costs to the mill, as well as improving bus routes for students going to school and the general public.



Enabling Education and Skills Development

EU support to strengthen education and skills development in Eswatini has aimed to help the country better meet national, regional and international development goals and ultimately help align education and training with labour market needs. EU support has been notably instrumental in reaching an almost full primary education coverage in the country. Through various interventions such as the Support to Education and Training (SET) and the Micro Projects, EU support in these areas focused on improving access,

quality and relevance of both general education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), particularly for young and vulnerable people. By fostering partnerships between government, training institutions, and the private sector, the EU support equipped learners with practical competencies that improved employability, entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods, contributing in turn to economic growth, poverty reduction, and the empowerment of Eswatini's youth.



Students at St Annes: Beneficiaries of the free primary education initiatives supported by the EU.



Mboni Dlamini

Eswatini Qualifications Authority Ministry of Education : Executive Secretary



Thanks to EU Support, participation at primary level increased remarkably, with the net enrolment ratio rising to between 98% and 99%. This represents a major milestone in expanding access to education. Importantly, the impact continues to be felt today. In terms of quality, the country is now implementing competency-based



education at primary school level, which is making a meaningful difference in learners' outcomes and skills development.

”



Zama Masuku

St Annes High School Grade 8 : Free Primary Education Beneficiary

“ I come from a community where access to education was not always guaranteed. Growing up, my family faced financial challenges, and there was a time when continuing school felt uncertain. However, through the Free Primary Education programme supported by EU, I was given an opportunity that changed my life. ”





Dr Musa Mokoena

VOCTIM : Former Principal



Before getting support from the EU, the college faced challenges such as limited infrastructure and outdated equipment, the Automotive Mechanics Department only concentrated in Motor Mechanics, and did not have the component of Vehicle Body Repairs and Spray Painting.



This made it difficult for students to gain the hands-on practical training that is essential in vocational education.

”





Mary-Ann Howard

EU Bushfire School Festival : Ambassador

“ Back in 2009 when I was in High School, I attended the EU bushfire schools festival. I came to understand that creative skills are not just a form of expression, they are a tool to address real challenges in our communities. Through music and art I have been able to build a sustainable livelihood, support my family and inspire other young people. ”



02

Supporting International Academic and Scientific Cooperation and Mobility

The EU supports international academic and scientific cooperation and mobility in Eswatini as part of its broader partnership with the country on human capital development, research capacity and global knowledge exchange. The Erasmus+ programme is the key instrument for EU support in this area, promoting mobility of students and lecturers from Eswatini to study in European universities for short-term exchanges or full degree programmes. European students can also come for exchange visits in Eswatini.

Further support in this area concerns capacity building for higher education, joint master's degrees and Intra-Africa academic mobility. Over the years, EU support has helped Eswatini improve the quality of higher education and research, strengthen innovation and scientific capacity, increase international exposure and skills development for students and lecturers and enhance regional and global integration of Eswatini's academic institutions.



Erasmus+ programme beneficiary
at UNESWA science lab.



Takitsi Dlamini

Erasmus : Funded Academic Stay in Sweden

“ What motivated me to pursue this opportunity was the willingness to gain international exposure, as well as to learn different ways of doing research. Young people are the future of the country, we appreciate the support we get from the EU which is in agreement with His Majesty’s vision that in one year Eswatini will be recognized as one of the developed countries in the world. ”





Wenzile Hlophe

Undergraduate Degree in Geographic Information Science : Erasmus - Poland

“ During my studies, I gained valuable knowledge and practical skills in surveying and spatial data analysis, in particular the ability to develop geospatial websites—an innovation I believe has strong potential to transform our economy, particularly within the environmental sector. I am committed to bringing this technology and expertise back home to Eswatini, where



I believe it can contribute to more efficient planning, improved environmental management, and data-driven decision-making. I am confident that with such tools, we will see significant positive changes in the near future. ”





Busiswa Dlamini

EU Youth Advisory Board : Chairperson

“ In November 2025, I received a fully funded opportunity to travel to Brussels, Belgium, where I participated in the Second Youth, Peace and Security Conference, supported by the EU. The conference focused on strengthening capacity in governance and advancing the youth, peace, and security agenda. I would like to commend the EU for demonstrating



leadership in meaningful youth engagement and for continuously creating platforms that empower young people to lead and contribute to global development agendas. ”





Hlengiwe Nkambule

EU Youth Advisory Board

“ I was awarded a scholarship to the Kingdom of Lesotho, where I participated in a youth exchange programme. One of the highlights was engaging with their innovation hub, which supports students in incubating their projects and preparing them for business opportunities once they have been successfully developed. This model of collaboration and innovation was truly inspiring and demonstrated the



power of investing in youth-driven solutions. We deeply appreciate the EU's continued support towards young emaSwati, particularly those of us working in youth advocacy. As we strive to empower others, it is equally important that we are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. "



03

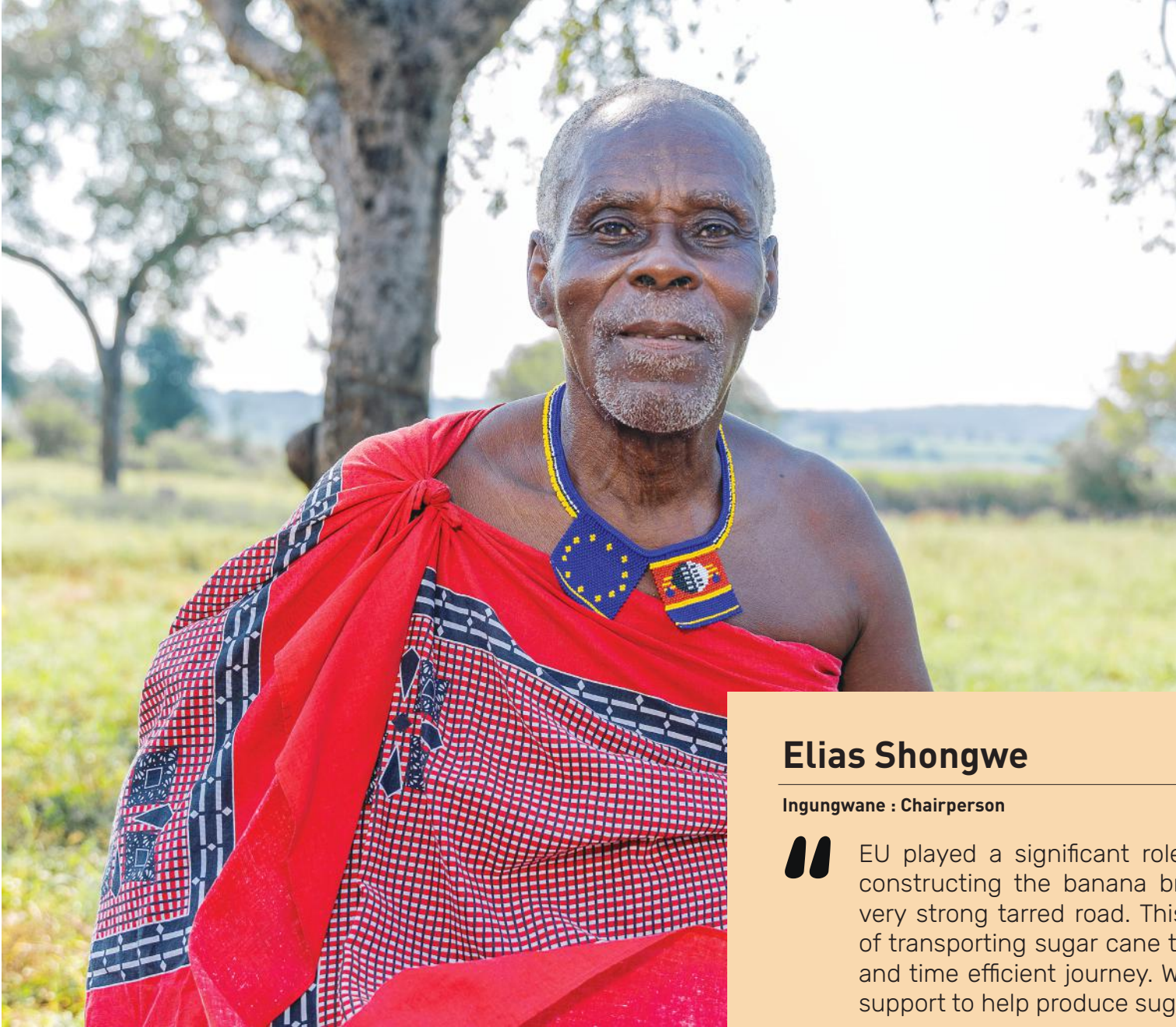
Supporting Sustainable Economic Development (infrastructure, agriculture, energy)

Agriculture, infrastructure development and the energy sector have prominently featured in EU interventions in Eswatini. Our agriculture programmes – with specific focus on sugar cane, horticulture and livestock sectors – have greatly contributed to positive economic opportunities for communities in Eswatini. With interventions centered around land development for irrigated agriculture, market finding and business development, EU interventions have intertwined to result in a positive contribution towards household income, and by extension economic development. Programmes such as the Accompanying Measures for the Sugar Protocol (AMSP), the

High Value Crop and Horticulture Project, the Swaziland Agriculture Development Programme, Water Harvesting, Small and Medium Dams Project as well as the Livestock Value Chain Development Project have all greatly contributed towards sustained economic growth. A major improvement for sugar farmers and cooperatives had been the EU-funded construction of the Siphofaneni Bridge and St Philips Road, assisting numerous farmer companies in the region to lower transport costs to the mill, as well as improving bus routes for students going to school, as well as improving life in general for the communities around.



Siphofaneni Bridge financed by the EU.



Elias Shongwe

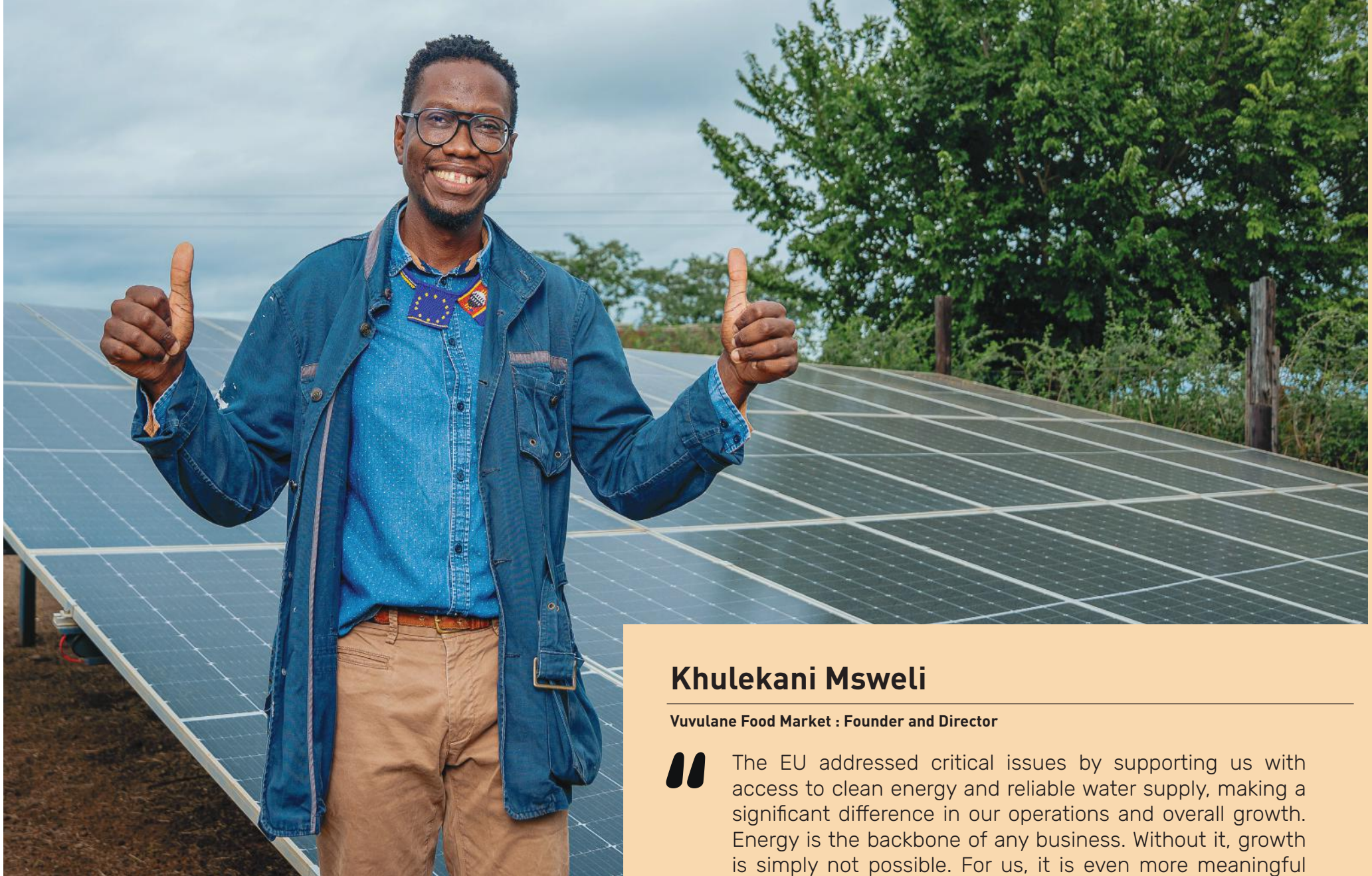
Ingungwane : Chairperson

“

EU played a significant role in this community, by constructing the banana bridge and contracting a very strong tarred road. This has made the process of transporting sugar cane to the big mills a smooth and time efficient journey. We also received financial support to help produce sugarcane.

”

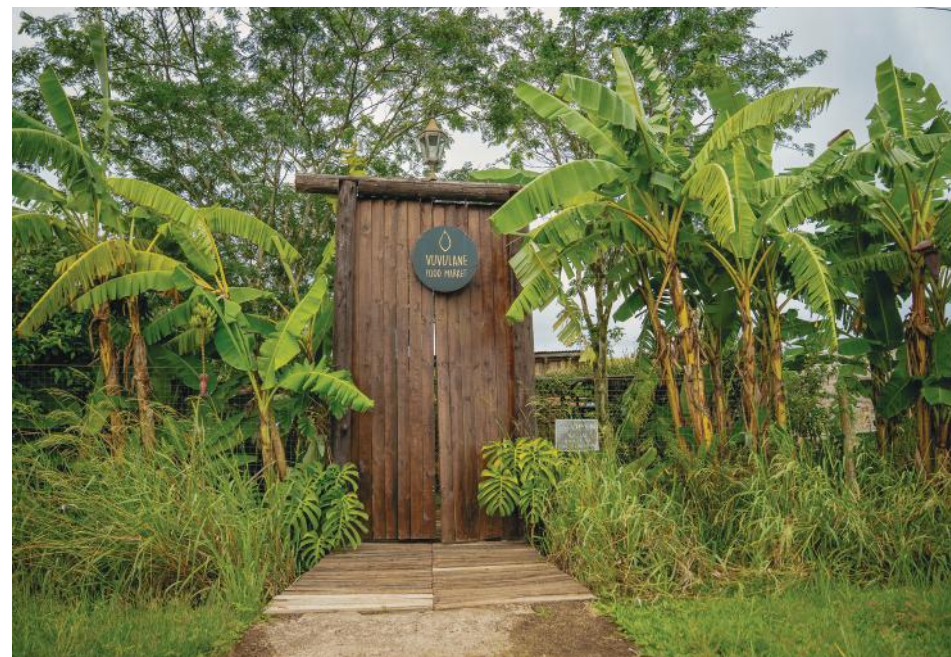




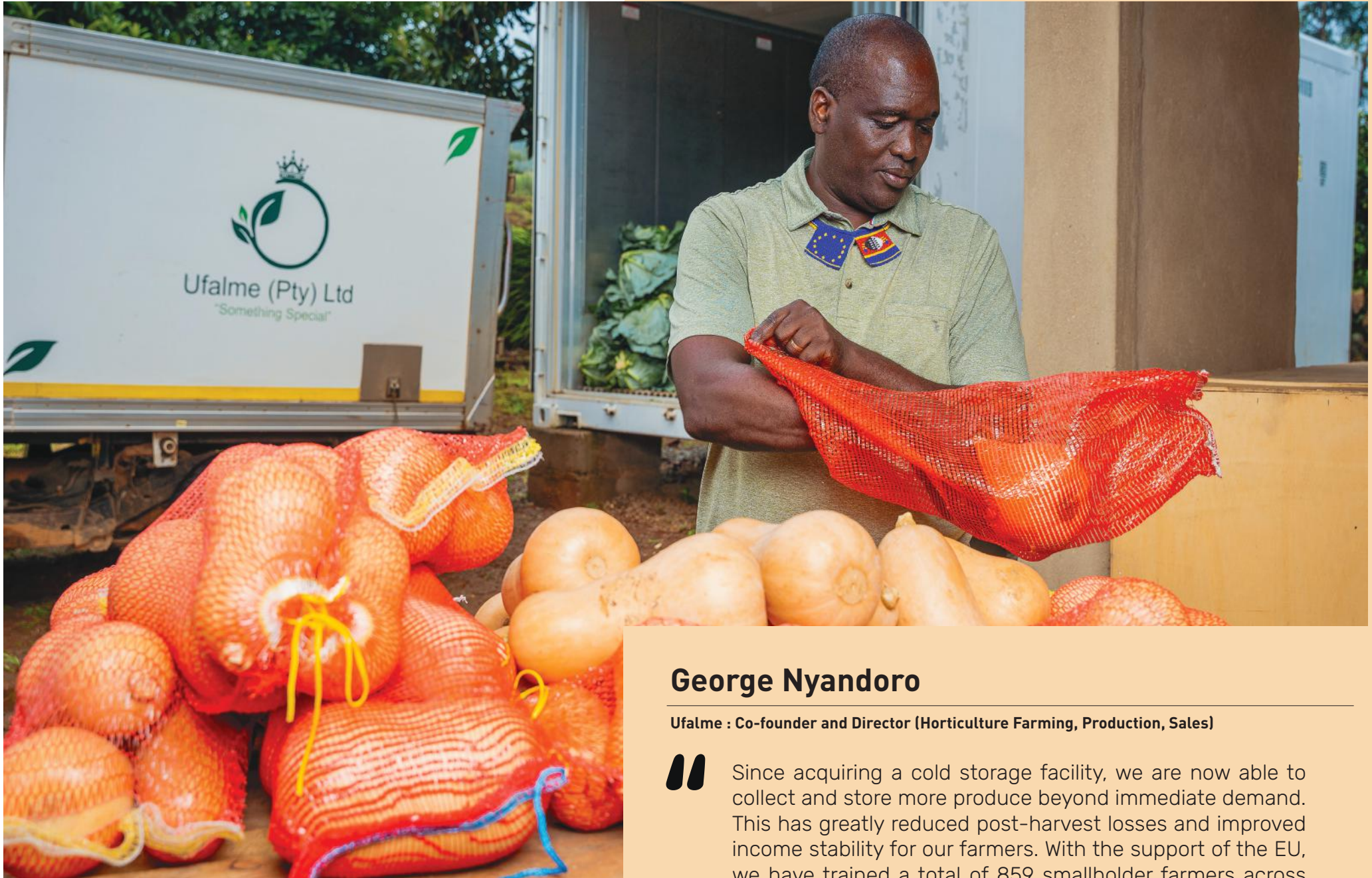
Khulekani Msweli

Vuvulane Food Market : Founder and Director

“ The EU addressed critical issues by supporting us with access to clean energy and reliable water supply, making a significant difference in our operations and overall growth. Energy is the backbone of any business. Without it, growth is simply not possible. For us, it is even more meaningful because the energy we now use is green, clean, and aligned



with our values as an environmentally conscious business. Access to clean water has also been vital, ensuring that we can maintain proper hygiene and deliver safe, high-quality food to our customers. ”



George Nyandoro

Ufalme : Co-founder and Director (Horticulture Farming, Production, Sales)

“ Since acquiring a cold storage facility, we are now able to collect and store more produce beyond immediate demand. This has greatly reduced post-harvest losses and improved income stability for our farmers. With the support of the EU, we have trained a total of 859 smallholder farmers across the country, gaining improved quality and consistency of the



produce being supplied. Over the past four years, this progress has contributed to a remarkable shift in the market. On more than six occasions, national marketing authorities have been able to cancel import permits for certain fruits and vegetables due to sufficient local supply. This is a strong indication that Eswatini is moving towards greater self-sufficiency in food production.

”



Sibusiso Mbingo

Microprojects Programme : Director

“ We are proud of the significant achievements made through the support of the EU in Eswatini, with a deep reach into rural communities across the country. Between 1988 and 2007, numerous impactful projects were implemented, resulting in substantial improvements in school infrastructure, livestock management, and access to clean, potable water. These



initiatives have left a lasting legacy. Even today, across the country, one can still see the distinctive yellow signboards marking EU-supported projects. The strong foundation and continued relevance of the Microprojects Programme today are, in many ways, a result of this enduring EU footprint in our communities.

”



Mfanzile Dzimba

Chairperson Umbombo Wendlovu : A Smallholder Sugar Cooperative in The Lubombo Region

“ The EU supported this project from its early stages, helping to build it from the ground up to where it stands today. EU contribution has played a vital role in improving the lives of our community members and strengthening our local economy. Today, the project has grown significantly, with



346 members directly benefiting from its operations, and over 300 employees gaining livelihoods through the initiative. ”





Lungile Mhlanga

Umbombo Wendlovu : Employee

“ Before this farm we faced a lot of challenges as a community, we could not afford to take our children to school. Back then as mothers and wives we were not allowed to get jobs or work far away from your homestead, because one had the responsibility of looking after the children always. Today, we



are proud to have graduates, we have built beautiful homes, going to bed without a meal is a thing of the past. We really appreciate EU for supporting this farm in our community and making it as big as it is now. Our community is more like an urban place than a rural area.

”



04

Facilitating Entrepreneurship

The EU supports the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) across various sectors of the Eswatini economy. Sectors such as horticulture, creative arts and crafts as well as creative tourism have greatly benefitted from EU support through programmes such as the Support to Job Creation and the Investment Climate for Eswatini. The programmes have reached to MSMEs that have a direct impact on many citizens who have

embraced entrepreneurship for livelihoods support and economic growth. The EU contribution towards building capacity to the MSMEs, incorporating improvements on productivity and production, have not only strengthened these MSMEs, but it has had a far-reaching benefit towards increasing business revenues and reaching more reliable markets.



Ngwenya Glass factory



Sharon Venancio

Vuna Africa : Co-Founder

“ Through the EU funded support, we were able to work closely with local artisans, combining traditional craft techniques with modern design to produce unique, contemporary pieces. The programme also gave us the opportunity to showcase our work on global platforms, allowing us to gain valuable



exposure and insight into how our products perform in international markets. Through the support of the EU, we gained access to education, mentorship, and strong networks, all of which have been instrumental in our growth as a business.

”



Zandile Mabaso

Scoops N Giggles : Co-Founder

“ One of our biggest challenges was education, helping customers understand the difference between artisanal desserts and mass-produced brands. Since receiving EU support, we have grown significantly, both in our craft and as a business. Today, we are proud to be creating



employment opportunities, especially for young people in our community. EU support has not only provided mentorship, but it has given us a blueprint to elevate our work to international standards. ”



Junior Du Pont

Eswatini Coffee : Operations and Production Manager

“

We have been able to expand from a single nursery to three nurseries, with the capacity to produce over 60,000 coffee seedlings. EU support went beyond infrastructure, they facilitated the testing of our coffee by taking samples to European countries for cupping and grading. This gave us valuable insight into the quality of our product



and how it compares on an international level. In addition, we were given opportunities to attend various expos, where we learned how the global coffee industry operates, what to do, what to avoid, and how to continuously improve our craft.

”



Bafanabethu Gina

Favorite Design Studio : Founder



I entered the EU Win A Car competition, where participants were required to submit a video explaining why they needed a vehicle and how it would support their business growth. I was fortunate to be selected as the winner. Receiving the vehicle has made a significant difference. It has helped me overcome many of the



challenges I previously faced. I am now able to move more efficiently, meet clients on time, attend trade shows, and showcase my work with greater ease. This has greatly improved how I operate and grow my business.





Sibusiso Mhlanga

Ngwenya Glass : Production Manager



We would like to sincerely thank the EU for the support they have provided over the years. Their contribution has helped strengthen our operations and open up opportunities for growth. We hope the EU will continue to support businesses like ours and others across Eswatini, as this partnership plays an important role in empowering local industries and communities.



We also receive a number of visitors, including partners, unions, and potential investors who come to learn about our work and explore opportunities for collaboration. These engagements help us grow and expand our trade over time.



05

Supporting International Trade, Investment and Regional Integration

Through programmes such as the Support to the Implementation of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement, the EU in Eswatini has greatly contributed towards unlocking key constraints to competitiveness by improving the policy and regulatory framework. The regulatory framework is what is required for private sector development, and through the development of selected value chains and it also supports the enablement of a public-private platform for improving the country's national competitiveness.

Since the establishment of the EU-SADC EPA in 2016, and even before that, the EU has supported Eswatini to increase competitiveness in international and regional trade for sugar, beef, citrus and other commodities. This support was anchored on robust support for MSMEs involved in production of commodity value chains and institutional support to investment and trade focused public entities.

Black Mamba Chilli products.



Black Mamba™

Africa's Tastiest Hot Sauces



Crafted in Eswatini. Southern Africa



Black Mamba™

Africa's Tastiest Hot Sauces



Crafted in Eswatini. Southern Africa



Black Mamba™

Africa's Tastiest Hot Sauces



Crafted in Eswatini. Southern Africa



Claudia Castellanos

Black Mamba Chili : CEO



Through the market investment fund from the EU, we managed to get our first equipment and food safety certification. We have been involved in programmes supporting market access, trade shows and knowledge of international trade markets. We are very grateful about



all the support we have received; we believe the EU is filling very important gaps we need for development. //



Nontobeko Nhleko

Black Mamba Chili : Employee

“

Working at Black Mamba has been wonderful, I now have a steady income, I am able to plan for my future and provide for my family. It gives me joy to know that what we produce here is not only enjoyed by local people but also people around the world as well. Thank you to the EU for always lending a hand to local businesses.

”





Richard Freemantle

Tintsaba

“

With support from the EU, we've been able to grow our business beyond local markets and reach international customers. This has helped us improve our products, create jobs for local artisans, especially women, and share our culture with the world.

”





KEY INVESTMENT SECTORS

Agribusiness

ICT

Energy & Mining

Manufacturing & value addition

Tourism

Sibani Mngomezulu

EIPA : Chief Executive Officer



Our institution was established in 1998 with the support of the EU, and to this day, the EU remains a key development partner. Their continued funding and technical assistance have played a critical role in strengthening EIPA and enabling us to attract investment into the Kingdom of Eswatini, ultimately contributing to job creation



and economic growth. EU support has enabled participation in international trade exhibitions, including platforms in cities such as Paris. These opportunities have given Eswatini products valuable global exposure, while also encouraging local producers to enhance quality and competitiveness to meet international standards.



Business One Stop Shop in Mbabane

06

Supporting Health Sector Development and Social Protection

The EU has been a long-standing partner of Eswatini in providing significant support to the health sector, particularly in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic in alignment with the country's national health strategies and global commitments. EU's assistance focused on strengthening health systems, improving access to quality healthcare services and reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS.

By combining financial assistance through support to the Global Fund, technical expertise and policy dialogue, the EU continues to assist Eswatini in moving towards universal health coverage and elimination of HIV/AIDS as a public health threat. On social protection, the EU has supported the government of Eswatini in

strengthening systems that reduce poverty, protect vulnerable groups and improve resilience amongst the population. Working mainly with the Deputy Prime Minister's office "The Development of Social Protection System Programme" in Eswatini aimed at developing an effective and operational comprehensive national social protection system.

By providing a higher level of social security and access to essential services, the poor and vulnerable will live their lives free from hardship and indignity, to better manage shocks, and to overcome poverty and vulnerability.



Eswatini STI Lab in Mbabane Blood Bank.



Zanele Cindzi

Nurse/Midwife



I was fortunate to be part of the EU-supported HAPAC programme. At that time, HIV stigma was high and access to care was limited. Through this partnership, more people were able to test, access treatment, and live healthier lives. It also reached vulnerable groups and helped reduce stigma in our communities.



We are truly grateful to the EU for their long-standing support and the positive impact it has had on HIV services in Eswatini.





Gugu Maphalala

Chief Laboratory Technologist



Through EU support, we were capacitated in South Africa at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases. This training significantly strengthened our technical skills and knowledge in laboratory science. The capacity building greatly benefited the country, as we were able to return and implement surveillance



projects targeting pathogens responsible for sexually transmitted infections. This improved our ability to detect, monitor, and respond to STI-related health challenges. //



Dr Erastor Ngonyani

Mbabane Maternity : Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist



Before the EU's support, our maternity unit faced serious challenges—poor infrastructure, limited privacy, and outdated equipment. With the EU's renovation and modern equipment, we've seen a major improvement in maternal and new-born health outcomes.



We sincerely thank the EU and encourage continued support to further strengthen our healthcare system.



07

Supporting Empowerment of Women and Youth

Empowering women, youth, and marginalised groups is a cornerstone of equitable and sustainable development in Eswatini. The EU supports these groups by fostering inclusive dialogue among government, civil society, and business stakeholders in order to create a more participatory and representative development process. The empowerment of women and girls and their full

participation in society is vital for achieving gender equality and broader societal progress. The EU, in collaboration with CSOs, has helped their voices be heard in shaping policies and programmes. Indeed, CSOs are key in promoting social inclusion, pluralism, and civic engagement towards a more resilient and inclusive future for all Eswatini citizens.





Tweedy Ndzinisa

Eco Harmony : Secretary



Eco-Harmony was founded to address the growing challenge of waste and the opportunity it presents, especially in addressing youth unemployment by turning waste into value. With support from the EU, through the Youth Empowerment Fund, we are implementing a project called Eco-Innovate Matsapha. This initiative



has helped us raise awareness about environmental and waste management issues in Eswatini. It has also created opportunities to connect young people with key stakeholders, including the EU, the Eswatini Environmental Authority, and government institutions.

”



Sizwe Dlamini

Manzini Municipality : Acting Chief Executive Officer



On behalf of the municipality, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the EU for their continued support. The EU funded project has created a platform for engaging young people and community groups to share ideas, discuss challenges, and actively participate in shaping the kind of support they need.



We have also established a small studio for podcasting, where young people can express themselves, discuss social and economic issues, and amplify their voices. We now have a business hub that provides access to the internet, workspace, and essential resources. We also warmly congratulate the EU on celebrating 50 years of partnership in Eswatini. Their contribution has made a meaningful impact in advancing community development and empowering our people.

”





Temphilo Vilakati

Siyaphambili Makhungutja



As a group of women we were more focused on producing one similar product and the cash flow was slow, but through trainings from ITC funded by the EU, we learnt about product development, we were able to diversify our product to sell to different customers including



international customers. We wish for more women in our community to join us to learn the skill, and make profits so they can feed their families.

”



Mantfombi Tikhulisile Bhembe

Manzini Women's Trade Hub : Member



I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the EU. Back then we used to sell 24 hours in a different location without shade, we slept using plastic bags, water was limited, tough rain and direct sunlight were our biggest enemy. Giving up was never an option for me, my family needed me. Today thanks to the EU, we have a place we can



call a business home at the Trade hub. There are toilets and showers, a place to sleep with beds, and most importantly shelter to sell our products, I have customers outside Eswatini now, the EU went far and beyond not only providing safe infrastructure but also providing business mentorships.

”



Khanyisile Kunene

Manzini Women's Trade Hub : Member



I specialize in making woven baskets and hats, I started this business while I had my son who was in high school, life was difficult, money was not enough as my products would be burnt and ruined by direct sunlight. However, despite those challenges I never gave up, my son is now working.



We started with 800 members and now we are about 1300+ members of the Trade hub, the organization is growing positively. Thank you so much, EU for wiping our tears away.

”



Jason Martin

Emaswati Skate

“ Skate boarding is the biggest tool for empowerment, encouragement, and never giving up, if it wasn't for the EU the dream to have the first ever skate boarding park in Eswatini would have never happened. ”





Supporting Governance and Civil Society Capacity Building

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are indispensable in advancing human rights, upholding the rule of law, and fostering democracy, accountability, and social stability. In Eswatini, a diverse yet fragmented civil society—encompassing non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), trade unions, and political groups—operates under often challenging conditions that constrain their ability to deliver essential services, advocate for rights, and promote inclusive development in line with the 2030 Agenda's

pledge to “leave no one behind”. This, in turn has led to weak internal governance, limited technical and financial management capacities, and leadership gaps. The shrinking civic space has also impeded resource mobilisation, even as demand for support in marginalised communities continues to grow. To address these challenges, the EU has increasingly supported CSOs to strengthen their capacity and impact to ensure civil society can fulfil its pivotal role in driving equitable and sustainable development in youth and women in Eswatini.



GCAMA MFATI WOMENS DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



WE SUPPORT WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
SOCIAL WELFARE IN ESWATINI THROUGH

- LEADERSHIP TRAINING
- ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
- COUNSELING



Co-funded by the European Union

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TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

Gcama Mfati Women's Development Network: Beneficiaries of the CSOs initiatives by the EU.

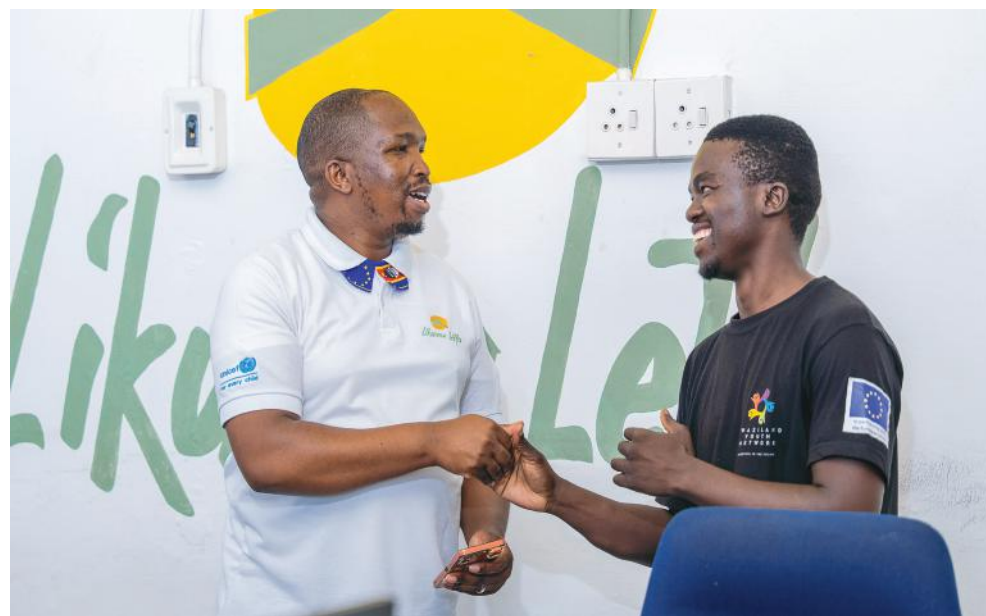


Banele Nkambule

Likusasa Letfu : Partnerships Development Manager



With support from the EU, we established a Youth Facility Centre for Employability, helping young people prepare for the world of work. Through the YES Project, in partnership with COSPE, we strengthened our capacity as career coaches and developed a digital stakeholder database to connect youth to opportunities.



We are also part of the Hlonipheka – Thriving for Dignity project, supporting survivors of gender-based violence and persons with disabilities. To the European Union, thank you for believing in youth as solution drivers.



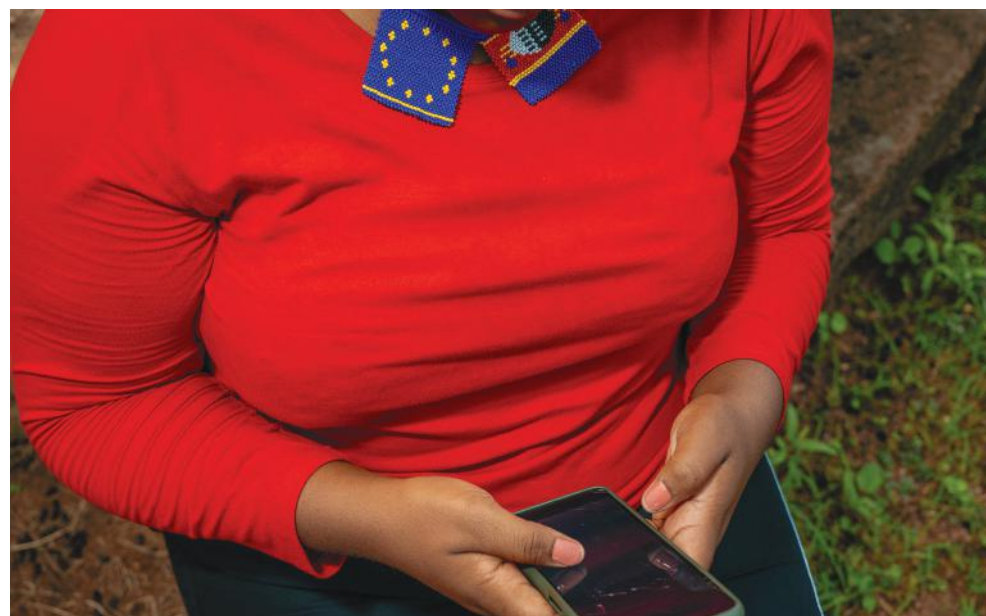
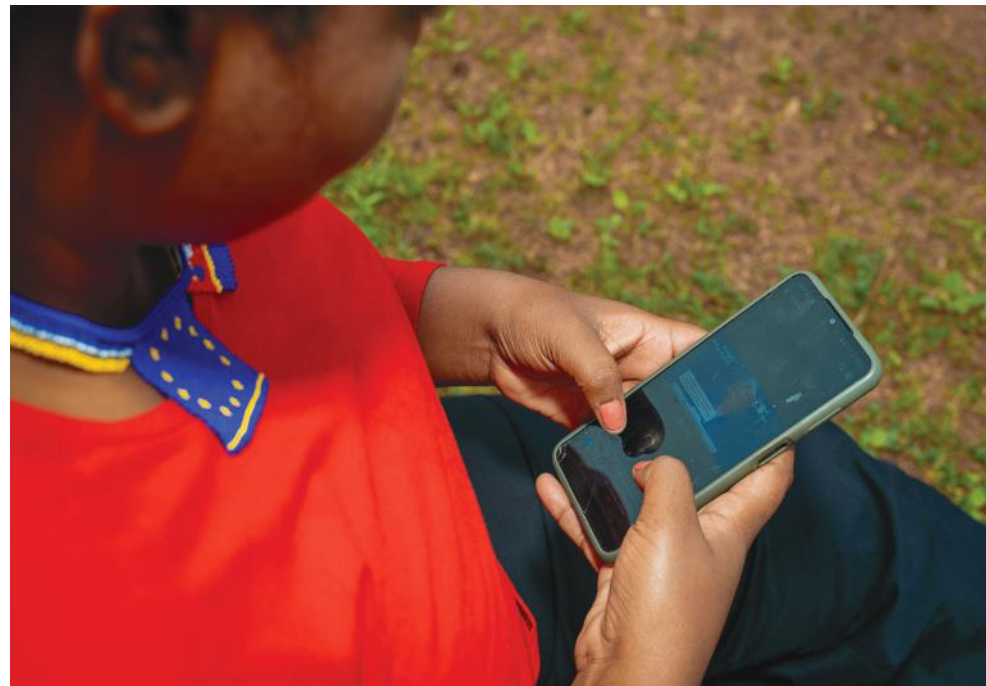


Nomthantazo Kunene

Media Coordinator



I manage my community social media page, acting as a bridge between the community and the rest of the country, creating and sharing content that highlights community issues, successes, and opportunities. Through organisations supported by the EU that visit my community, I am able to encourage participation and ensure voices



especially those of youth, women, and marginalized groups are heard. Through social media I am able to raise awareness about Key issues like GBV, health, education, and environment.

”



Cebile Mamba

Luvatsi : Nhlambeni



I am a single mother of 2, For over 12 years, I have been working hard to support my family. In our community, organizations like Luvatsi and Gcama Mfati supported by the EU, came and began teaching us about our rights as women, children, and youth. Before that, many of us were not aware of these rights, through their support, we were



also encouraged to start small businesses. I was one of the women who took part in this opportunity, and it has made a big difference in my life. Today, many women in my community are working and supporting themselves. I have learned how to provide for my family without always depending on outside assistance. This opportunity has helped me see my value and my potential. It has empowered women and young people, and given us hope for a better future.

”





Delisile Mamba

Gcama Mfati : Coordinator



The funding and support from the EU have played a significant role in building the capacity of the women we serve. Through training and collaboration, rural women are now better equipped with the knowledge and skills to develop their initiatives and improve their livelihoods.



This support has given many women the confidence and tools to grow, lead, and create sustainable change within their communities. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the EU for their continued support.

”





Dlalile Kunene

Gcama Mfati : Beneficiary



I am a widow at Nhlambeni, Gcama Mfati has played a vital role in my life, I was broken and lost, the organization taught me my rights as a woman, how to be financially independent, I gained confidence in myself. Today I run a poultry business and a small mobile money



business in town, I am able to maintain my homestead, my children and grandchildren are able to go to bed without an empty stomach.



Supporting Vulnerable Groups and Inclusive Human Development

Human development is key for prosperous societies—but it only delivers real progress when it is inclusive. It must expand opportunities for people who face marginalisation and barriers, so that everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, can contribute to—and benefit from— economic and social growth.

EU supports inclusion of survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), addressing physical, emotional and psychological needs, while also creating pathways to rebuild lives—through psychosocial support,

and access to economic opportunities that foster resilience and independence. For children and persons with disabilities, EU has helped combat barriers, which are often not only physical, but social and institutional, providing tailored measures that are needed to ensure accessibility and equal participation.

EU's efforts are a shared endeavour of individuals, families, communities, civil society and public authorities—working together to ensure no one is left behind. Si kanye kanye



Makhosini Makhubu, CEO of the National association of the Deaf.



Xolile Mazibuko

SWAGAA : Case Management Coordinator



One of the key achievements has been the establishment of our toll-free hotline, funded through EU support. This line has been instrumental in providing immediate assistance to survivors, linking them to our various service points, including the Gender Response Unit. Through this, survivors are able to access coordinated care



and support when they need it most. We are truly grateful for the support received, as it has helped us reach more survivors and make a meaningful difference in their lives.





Simphiwe Sifundza

Zakitsi's Mother



A few weeks after giving birth to my baby girl, I discovered she had a problem with her foot, it was not straight, I had to continuously take her to the hospital for treatment and training. That did not last long as I ran out of money for hospital bills, Libumba supported by the EU



came to rescue, they are helping with my daughter's training and getting a special boot to wear. Today she is able to walk and run properly just like other toddlers.





Makhosini Makhubu

National Association of the Deaf



We are truly grateful to have received sports equipment from the EU. The support included a variety of items. It opened up new opportunities for us, including participating in international competitions. We had the privilege of traveling to Namibia, where we proudly won a trophy



National Association of the Deaf Eswatini



and medals. We are sincerely thankful to the EU for their continued support. It is making a meaningful impact in our lives and our community. ”



Celiwe Zwane

Bantwana

“

When I was in Form 4, I got pregnant and had to drop out, I thought my life was over, I saw my dream of becoming a doctor one day disappear in front of my eyes. Thank you to Bantwana through EU support that not only assisted with my school fees, but also helped boost my confidence of going back to school and working toward achieving my goals.

”





Welile Gama

GBV Survivor



The programme *Hlonipheka* became the light I truly needed, I gained valuable life skills, soft skills, and survival skills that reshaped my mindset and direction in life. It helped me realize that despite everything I had gone through; I still had the strength to rise again. I rediscovered my purpose and regained confidence in myself. I learned that I can still

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be the person I always dreamed of becoming. Today, I am proud to be running my own business, creating opportunities not only for myself but also contributing to my community. To the EU, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the support that made this journey possible. Your contribution has brought life to what once felt like a lifeless situation.

”



10

Supporting Community Development

Strengthening community-led development is essential for fostering sustainable growth and social equity in Eswatini. The EU supports grassroots initiatives that empower local communities—particularly women, youth, and marginalised groups—by working in partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs), local authorities, and the private sector. This collaborative approach ensures that development interventions are inclusive, responsive to local

needs, and driven by the communities they serve, advocating for inclusive policies that address poverty, inequality, and exclusion. The EU's support focuses on strengthening local capacity, enabling communities to design and implement their own development solutions. This includes improving access to resources, promoting good governance at the grassroots level, and encouraging public-private-civil society partnerships that drive sustainable change.

Sinothangemvelo women's group in Msunduzu Mbabane, showcasing their products crafted from recycled materials.





Chief Dlenye Bhembe

Community Chief : Mangcongco

“ We are happy to have clean water supply, the community members have been taught how to write business plans and manage businesses We appreciate the assistance from international partners like the EU, because we have the skills, but we lack the information and need assistance financially to grow and improve our livelihood. ”





Gciniwe Fakudze

Mbabane City Council : Chief Executive Officer

“

We celebrate the many lives changed, the partnerships that we've had and the impact that we can tangibly feel in our city. Through the partnership with the EU we saw the implementation of the waste minimization project, which focused on building capacity at household level, community level, and at city wide level.

”





Sibongile Dlamini

ECHO : Sigwe Constituency

“

The garden with EU support allows me to feed my family and earn my own money. The health of our family has improved thanks to the garden. I can sell some of the crops, which helps pay the children's school fees.

”





Mandisa Mncwati

Luvatsi Nkoyoyo

“ We wanted our kids and youth in our community to have a safe place, where they can socialize in a positive way, play games, and learn more about technology. Thank you to EU they taught us how to write a business plan, we formed a group of five women and applied for a seed grant supported by the EU, and our dreams came true. ”





Nsikelelo Dlamini

Acting Councillor and Town Engineer



Through our partnership with the EU, we identified gaps in youth and women empowerment and developed a Local Economic Development strategy. A key achievement is a youth recreational facility, managed by a youth cooperative, offering activities like volleyball and indoor games.



We also established an information center providing affordable IT services and business support for young people. These initiatives are empowering youth and strengthening our local economy.





Maxwell Simelane

Zula Lubombo Multipurpose Cooperative : Chairperson



Through support from the EU and our Siteki municipality, we now have the Sunrise Civic Centre, a safe space where youth and women engage in activities like aerobics, chess, darts, and volleyball. We also host the iRise Business Hub, supporting entrepreneurship through business planning, CV writing, and access to internet services for job



opportunities. This initiative has created a sense of belonging and empowered the community to be part of the solution, not the problem. ”

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Email: delegation-eswatini@eeas.europa.eu
Phone: (+268) 2404 2908 or 2404 2018