

Qondeni Ngcobo small-scale tree farmer



“Forestry has changed my life – I went from living in a mud hut to building this homestead” – Qondeni Ngcobo

Qondeni Ngcobo is a small scale tree farmer from Sokhulu, Zululand, who has built a livelihood around forestry, supporting her family and inspiring those around her.

Mondi Zimele has played a vital role in her success – supplying seedlings, providing a market for her timber and offering technical support and guidance.

“In 1983, I saw people in the community planting trees and I believed it was a good opportunity,” remembers Qondeni. “So I went to the induna and made a request for land.”

First harvest

She got the land, planted her trees and harvested her first crop seven years later, selling the timber to the Mondri Khulanathi depot.

With further assistance from Mondri, she now has 15 ha of planted eucalyptus, a thriving vegetable garden and a beautiful homestead.

Mondi Zimele supplies her with seedlings and Khulanathi Forestry (which became an independent entity in 2006) provides technical support.

Mondi Zimele also engages with the growers through regular field days and focus groups.



“My secret is planting the right species for the right conditions.”

Qondeni’s trees are strong and healthy, they are planted in perfect rows and there’s not a weed in sight.

Qondeni hires four people during planting season and up to eight people for harvesting. She supervises the operation herself.

“I would advise my neighbours to go into forestry,” she says. “It takes hard work and a lot of patience, but the rewards are worth the wait.”



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