

First Nation News

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Launching jewel of the Cederberg

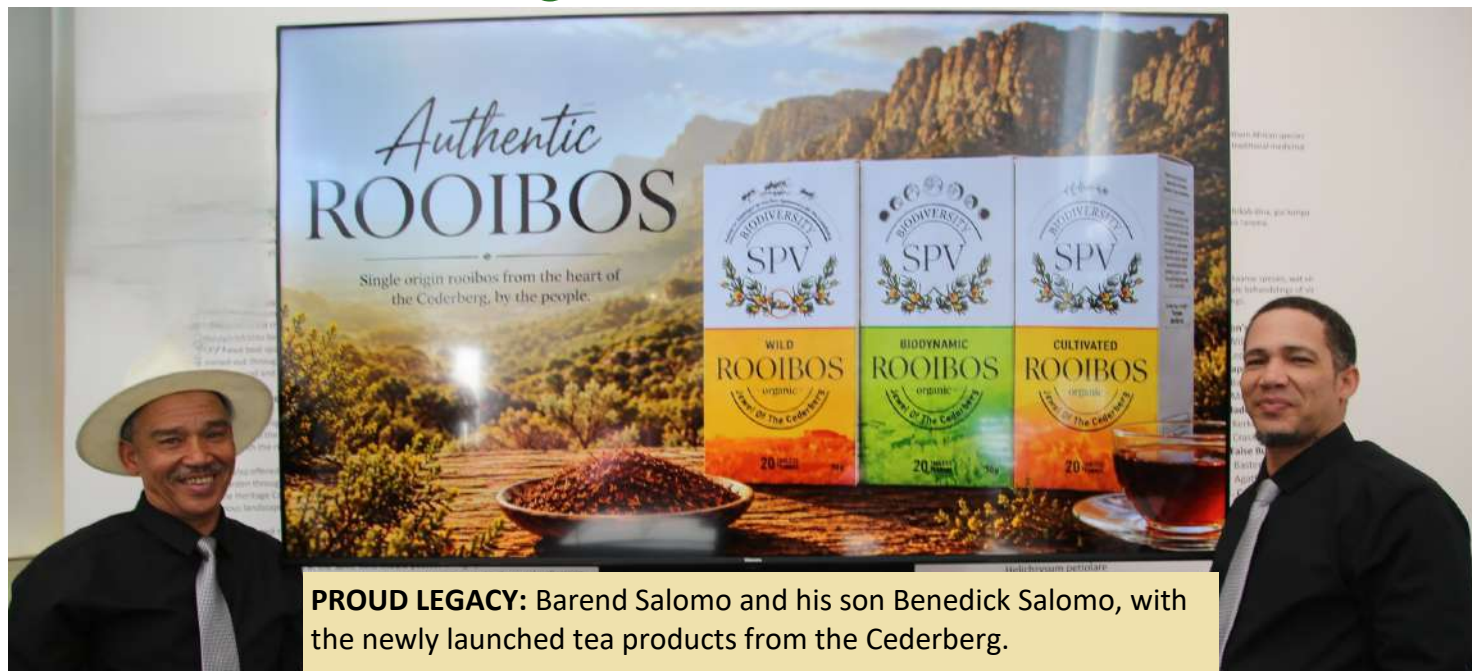
ZENZILE KHOISAN

The Jewel of the Cederberg, a new brand of Rooibos tea, produced by the descendants of the very first people who preserved and protected the knowledge associated with this versatile plant, has just been launched. The resounding refrain of a full brass band heralded new tea offerings of the Biodiversity Special Purpose Vehicle at the First Nations Heritage Centre in Observatory, Cape Town on Saturday 1 August.

This Special Purpose Vehicle, with the launch of three tea offerings, Biodiversity SPV Wild Rooibos, Biodiversity SPV Biodynamic Rooibos and Biodiversity SPV Cultivated Rooibos, now aims to assert economic sovereignty, by bringing to market their own Rooibos product offerings which is grown, processed and organically produced with the highest biodiversity standards, by the true knowledge holders.

The launch was addressed respectively by four Khoikhoi leaders, Barend Salomo, Stanley Peterson, Johannes Maarman and Frans Kraalshoek, who have been at the forefront of the fight to restore the knowledge holder rights of the Rooibos plant to the Khoikhoi people.

This Wupperthal and Cederberg single origin, 100% pure product, responsibly harvested and produced, marks the entry of the Khoikhoi people who are the recognised knowledge holders, as a strong new



PROUD LEGACY: Barend Salomo and his son Benedick Salomo, with the newly launched tea products from the Cederberg.

participant in the broad value chain of the lucrative Rooibos industry.

Rooibos is endemic to the Cederberg where the Khoikhoi ancestors have for centuries harvested this plant growing wild on the slopes of the ancient mountain range, protected and preserved the traditional knowledge associated with its uses.

"This is our knowledge, from our own people who have preserved the secrets of this plant for a very long time," stated Barend Salomo, chairperson of the Biodiversity SPV Rooibos, a Khoikhoi native son of the Cederberg.

Salomo's family roots are deeply embedded over centuries in Wupperthal, internationally recognised as the geographic epicentre of this much

sought after versatile beneficial plant.

Salomo provided the keynote speech at the launch, where he proudly unveiled three varieties of organic Rooibos teas that had been harvested from wild plants on the Cederberg slopes or carefully and meticulously cultivated from the same wild plant seed that his own ancestors had engaged with for centuries.

"Today is a historic day after there had been negotiations about the recognition of our traditional knowledge about the Rooibos plant and our benefit sharing with the Khoikhoi indigenous people of our country.

"Today we are experiencing the second step, a historic event in the history of the world, as we are now building capacity for our own people

with our own product through the establishment of our business arm, which has been made possible through the Rooibos Biodiversity Trust Holdings and the Rooibos Biodiversity Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)," Salomo stated.

The SPV chairperson then explained that through these economic upliftment instruments it is now possible to unveil the first set of products, three boxes of Rooibos tea, each with its own stories drawn from narratives that had been handed down by the Khoikhoi ancestors.

This, Salomo explained, is because "for the first time we are thinking together, hoping together and praying together for the welfare of our people".

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Striking a rock

From the Editor's pen



ZENZILE KHOISAN

August is officially Women's Month in South Africa, when people pay homage to the women of our nation.

We celebrate them for their contributions, both to our democracy and, through sacrifice and service, to the resistance against colonialism and apartheid which dispossessed and oppressed the majority.

The main event of this month, focusing on women's rights, gender equality and gender-based violence, is Women's Day on 9 August, when we mark the 1956 march of 20,000 women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest oppressive apartheid pass laws.

Women of all races, led by iconic leaders like Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, converged on Pretoria to oppose discriminatory laws forcing black South Africans to carry passbooks and restricting their free movement.

At the Union Buildings, the women stood in silence for 30 minutes outside then Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom's office and left petitions containing thousands of signatures collected from women across the country.

This protest gave birth to the feminist and anti-apartheid slogan: "Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo" (You strike a woman, you strike a rock). 9 August was also set aside by the United Nations as a day of solidarity with the world's indigenous peoples.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1994, marking the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, held in Geneva on 9 August 1982.

The day was intended to raise global knowledge about the rights, needs and protection of indigenous populations, honouring their heritage, cultural contributions, languages and traditional knowledge across more than 5,000 distinct indigenous groups.

It further acknowledges the role indigenous communities play in protecting the environment and global biodiversity. It is estimated that approximately 476 million people form part of 5,000 groups, including about 6% of the world's poorest and most severely marginalized peoples.

The world body has advanced the cause of recognising, protecting and advancing indigenous peoples through its United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ratified in September 2007 by almost all member nations, including South Africa.

Our call, in Women's Month, is for SA to live up to the promises in its internationally celebrated Constitution and truly step up its responsibilities to protect, advance and empower the women of our country.

Likewise, we call on the government to act with integrity and honour the commitments it made when, 19 years ago, it ratified UNDRIP and committed to recognising the Khoi and San, the foundational indigenous people of our country.



A JOYFUL OCCASION: The Wupperthal brass band heralded the unveiling of the new tea products.



Launching jewel of the Cederberg

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"For too long others have built industries on our traditional knowledge, to the detriment of our people and the time has now arrived for us to develop our own industries with our own product," Salomo stressed.

He said the idea of building a formidable business had emerged from within the Khoikhoi Peoples Rooibos Biodiversity Trust as part of its vision of building self-reliance and sustainability.

Salomo proudly declared the Cederberg is the "Kingdom of the Khoikhoi" and, while expressing his gratitude to the Rooibos industry for their innovation noted that "Rooibos is more than a tea" to the Khoikhoi people.

In their historical development path with the plant, he said the ancestors made wide use of the plant "as an herbal infusion".

"This was and still is one our products in the 'Pharmacy of the Cederberg Mountains', the healing hand of Mother Nature".

"That is why we launch our products today, the Rooibos under the brand of Biodiversity SPV, as the Jewel of the Cederberg," Salomo added.

Stanley Peterson, chairperson of the Rooibos Biodiversity Trust Holdings paid tribute to SPV chair Salomo and his fellow director Chantal

Revell for their unrelenting efforts to make the vision of the SPV a reality.

He noted that the decision to create the SPV was to ensure sustainability of the Access and Benefit Sharing process that "should bring benefits directly to the people".

"We have proven that we have not slaughtered the cow that gives us milk, but creates a vehicle through which we can build our people by giving them the benefits of the traditional knowledge of our ancestors," Peterson stated.

Johannes Maarman, chairperson of the Khoikhoi Peoples Rooibos Biodiversity Trust explained that many detractors had accused the KPRBT of not acting in the interests of the beneficiaries but that they had "persevered" to overcome all the obstacles.

Frans Kraalshoek, treasurer of the KPRBT explained that the launch of the Biodiversity SPV demonstrates that the Khoikhoi people can uplift themselves and act in their own interests.

He said that there are many of our young who pass matric with very good grades but were denied access to higher learning.

Kraalshoek recounted how disturbing it is to "take a taxi and travel out of a place such as Michells Plain" (on the Cape Flats) and grasp the reality that so many people have been denied opportunities, are unemployed and have been left behind.

Restoring & Rebuilding communities

ABRAHAMSKIEWITZ does extensive work in the area of land restitution on behalf of affected communities. We also developed extensive experience in broad human rights and public interest litigation.

A core part of this work is focussed on managing conflict and building relationships between affected communities and business entities operating within and around these communities.



CHARLES ABRAHAMS



021 914 4842



info@ak.law.za

Krotoa – a Tragic Tale

RON MARTIN

The story of our tragic heroine is one that resonates with every woman on the Cape Flats today; the story of having to navigate the rigours of a society catagorised by non-acceptance, false patriarchy, violence and abuse.

This is the path of life walked by the brown girl-child 352 years after the death of our mother, a girl brought into the house of the first colonial commander, forced to shed her indigenous values in favour of a borrowed culture forced upon her, forever condemning her to a life of sadness and despair.

Today, seven generations later, our girls still walk a similar path. Let history teach us.

The tragedy starts shortly after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in April 1652. Krotoa, then ten years old, accompanies her uncle and the Ammaqua (aka Gorinhacona) and Gorinhaiqua on the occasions where first trade commences, with Autshumato as intermediary, with the Dutch during the spring of 1652.

In 1654, Maria van Riebeeck requested the services of Krotoa (12) as a baby-sitter for her son.

Autshumato had fallen into disfavour with Van Riebeeck and two new interpreters are employed at the fort, namely Khaik Ana Ma Koukoa, called ‘Claes Das’ by the Dutch, and Nommoa, renamed Doman (“voice”), because of his ability to pick up the Dutch language so quickly.

In the meantime Krotoa’s own ability to speak Dutch improves, due to daily conversations with Maria.

They exchange information regarding their different beliefs, traditions and customs, discovering differences and similarities. Maria also teaches her to read and write, but especially about the Christian faith.

On 1 January 1656, Krotoa is raped by a drunk soldier, reputedly a visiting Frenchman, at the fort. While Van Riebeeck turns a deaf ear because “it’s New Year”, it’s Maria that urges him to punish the perpetrator.

Krotoa runs away, tears her European clothes along the way and angrily

vows back home that she’ll never return to the fort.

For the next while she spends time with her sister and brother-in-law, Oedesoa of the Cochoqua Tribe near Saldanha Bay, who urges her to return to the fort as they had intended to begin trade with the Dutch in the absence of Nommoa, who had been sent to Batavia to train as interpreter.

She reluctantly returns and soon after, upon the arrest of Autshumato early in 1658, becomes Van Riebeeck’s chief interpreter. Doman soon returns from Batavia and a bitter rivalry then ensues between the two.

With the outbreak of the First Khoe-Dutch War from 1659, Krotoa remains in the fort, being the only interlocutor in absence of the imprisoned Autshumato and Nommoa.

Nommoa had left the service of the VOC to take up arms against the Dutch for the wanton theft of the traditional grazing land held by the Khoe through their tradition of stewardship, transferring its “ownership” through the application of the maritime Terra Nullius legal prescript.

Accused by Nommoa of being a “traitor” and “advocate for the Dutch”, Krotoa becomes increasingly isolated from her people while not being fully accepted in Dutch society.

With the Peninsula tribes embroiled in a war of attrition and far from her extended family within the Cochoqua, who remain neutral during this first conflict, she enters into a state of depression, often contemplating suicide.

She confides this in Kleyn (little) Eva, a slave girl-child also in the home of the Van Riebeecks, but also sought solace in the buzz of alcohol consumption, of which there was a ready abundance at the fort.

Around this time, a dapper young ship surgeon Pieter van Meerhof arrived at the Cape aboard the Prinses Roijaele who, reputedly, falls in love with Krotoa.

This provides a semblance of respite for her position as her world had changed dramatically and her own importance to the Dutch had reached its peak.

She needed to become more rooted or face a dejected future. They be-

came lovers and had their first son, Jacobus, in 1660.

They agitated for marriage, and Jan van Riebeeck granted permission for this before he was transferred to Batavia in 1662.

She was baptised as Eva and they were married in the old Groote Kerk. Her daughter Pieterella was born later that same year.

Krotoa had just managed to secure a new anchor for her precarious existence in early Cape Society.

With van Riebeeck gone, the van Meerhofs were an embarrassment at the Fort, so Pieter was made the overseer of Robben Island and the family retreated to an isolated life on the island which now served as a prison or place of banishment.

Here, for three years, she lead a lonely life looking after her children, drinking and seeking out the few banished Khoi prisoners with whom she socialised.

Often she and Pieter would fight over her neglect of the kids and drunken dance sessions on the beach with her people.

Remember, during this period, our heroine was only still in her twenties. Van Meerhof was a soldier and medic and thus the Robben Island stint was something of a slap in the face.

After three years he got a break that he seized with enthusiasm. He was, after all, an explorer who had travelled on behalf of the VOC to Namaqualand and now he got an opportunity to go on a slaving expedition to Madagascar. He jumped at it.

It was to be his last chance at anything. Pieter was killed in a skirmish at Antongil Bay in Madagascar in 1667.

Mrs Eva van Meerhof was now the widow van Meerhof.

She was a broken woman, totally messed up by the schizophrenic life that she had lead. The Council of Justice ordered that her neglected children be taken away from her and put into the care of the Church.

Krotoa had become a drunk, abused



herself and was abused by all. She was sent to Robben Island again, now as a prisoner, but later returned to the mainland.

This continued over and over again. She fell pregnant a number of times by different men and each time her infants were taken from her into care.

This tragic founding mother of modern South Africa and early diplomat died at the age of 31 on 29 July 1674.

She is the early ancestral mother of many modern families, across the “colour” line, but this legacy is not readily acknowledged except by those of us who celebrate her memory and use her tragic story to educate our young people about strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

During Heritage Month in 2025, a statue honouring her contribution to our diverse history was unveiled on Robben Island, along with that of her uncle and fellow early diplomat, Autshumato.

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Paying tribute to extraordinary heroines

Each year in August, South Africa celebrates Women’s Month, honouring the remarkable women whose courage, resilience and determination have helped shape our nation’s history.

With this collection of women, also displayed on the Wall of Heroes in the First Nations Heritage Centre at Riverlands, Observatory, we pay tribute to extraordinary heroines whose lives and legacies continue to inspire us.

They include cultural custodians,

educators, activists, artists, writers, musicians and community leaders who have preserved heritage, challenged injustice and strengthened the social fabric of our country.

From safeguarding the rich oral traditions of the Khoi-San to advancing human rights, promoting education and enriching South Africa’s artistic and cultural landscape, these women have made invaluable contributions.

Some stood at the forefront of the struggle for freedom, while others quietly transformed their communities through wisdom, compassion and service. As we commemorate Women’s Month, we celebrate not only their individual achievements but also the enduring spirit of all South African women who continue to build stronger, more inclusive communities.

May their stories inspire us to honour the past, embrace our diverse cultural heritage and empower future generations to lead with courage, dignity and purpose.



Krotoa: Interpreter, diplomat

Krotoa (1643–1674), also known as Eva, is one of the most significant and complex figures in our history. She became fluent in Dutch while living in the household of Jan van Riebeeck. Her exceptional linguistic abilities enabled her to serve as an interpreter, translator and cultural intermediary between the Khoi people and the Dutch settlers during the earliest years of colonial settlement.

Krotoa played a vital diplomatic role, facilitating communication and negotiations at a time of growing conflict. Despite her unique position between two different worlds, her life was marked by personal hardship and the devastating impact of colonial expansion. After her husband died she experienced increasing isolation and was eventually banished to Robben Island, where she died. Today, she remains a powerful and enduring heroine.

Sarah Baartman: Victim of Colonial Exploitation

Sarah Baartman (c. 1789–1815) is one of our most enduring symbols of resilience in the face of colonial exploitation and racial injustice. Born among the Khoi in the Eastern Cape, she was taken to Europe in the early 19th century and exhibited as a curiosity because of her physical appearance.

Her treatment reflected the dehumanising attitudes of colonialism, where African people were often stripped of their dignity and treated as objects of entertainment and scientific study.

Although Sarah endured unimaginable hardship, her legacy has become one of courage and resistance. Her story has inspired generations to confront racism, sexism and the lasting effects of colonial oppression. Following years of international campaigning, her remains were returned to SA in 2002, where she was finally laid to rest with dignity.



Ouma Magdalena: Cultural Custodian

Ouma Magdalena is remembered as a respected cultural custodian whose life was dedicated to preserving the traditions, customs and knowledge of her community. Through storytelling, traditional practices and the passing on of ancestral wisdom, she helped ensure that generations of young people remained connected to their heritage during periods of rapid social and political change.

She served as a trusted source of advice, encouraged respect for cultural values and promoted unity among communities. Her knowledge of oral history and traditional customs made her an invaluable knowledge holder. She reminds us that heritage is also preserved in the memories, stories and teachings shared by dedicated elders.

Ouma !Una Rooi: San elder, oral historian

Ouma !Una Rooi is one of the respected San elders who dedicated her life to preserving the rich oral traditions, language and cultural heritage. Through storytelling, songs and personal memories, she safeguarded knowledge that had been passed from one generation to the next over centuries, ensuring that the voices of the San people would not be forgotten.

As an oral historian, she understood that stories preserve identity, history, values and connections to the land. Her willingness to share her experiences with researchers, educators and younger community members contributed significantly to the documentation and recognition of San heritage in South Africa.



Ouma Lena Jantjies: Elder, Healer

Ouma Lena Jantjies was a respected elder and traditional healer whose wisdom and compassion touched many lives. As a community leader and healer, she drew upon generations of indigenous knowledge to care for the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of those around her. Her understanding of medicinal plants, traditional healing practices and community customs was passed down through countless generations. Beyond her role as a healer, Ouma Lena was a trusted advisor, teaching younger generations the importance of caring for one another and living in harmony with nature.

Maria Marais: Cultural Custodian

Maria Marais devoted much of her life to safeguarding the cultural traditions and historical memory of her people.

Recognised as a cultural custodian, she played an important role in preserving oral histories, family lineages, traditional practices and community values that might otherwise have been lost. Maria encouraged younger people to appreciate their roots and develop pride in their heritage. Her dedication helped strengthen community bonds and ensured that valuable traditions continued to be practised and respected.



Minnie Barends: Khoi Women’s Rights activist

Minnie Barendse is celebrated as a courageous advocate for the rights, recognition and empowerment of Khoi women. Throughout her years of activism, she worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the important role indigenous women have played in preserving culture, sustaining families and strengthening their communities despite centuries of marginalisation and discrimination.

Her advocacy focused on promoting equality, cultural pride and the recognition of Khoi identity within SA’s broader social and political landscape.



Joyce Katz: Community builder, educator

Joyce Katz is recognised for her lifelong commitment to learning and community development, and she has had a lasting impact on countless individuals.

She believed that knowledge and education is one of the most powerful tools for empowering people and creating opportunities, particularly for young people who faced social and economic challenges.

Her work as mentor and community advocate encouraged learners to believe in their abilities and to pursue knowledge as a pathway to a brighter future.



Matty Cairncross: Cultural custodian, Educator



Matty Cairncross is remembered as an educator and cultural custodian, who embraced indigenous heritage and community identity. She gave voice to the experiences, struggles and aspirations of her people, ensuring that their stories would continue to be heard and appreciated by future generations.

Her creative expression reflected a deep respect for history, language and cultural traditions. She demonstrated how literature can become a powerful tool for education, healing and social awareness.

She actively supported efforts to preserve oral traditions and cultural practices, recognising that every story shared strengthens the collective memory of a community.

Coline Williams: Revolutionary fighter and Martyr



Coline Williams was a courageous revolutionary whose commitment to justice and freedom led her to become an active participant in SA's struggle against apartheid.

Motivated by a profound belief in equality and human dignity, she dedicated herself to challenging an unjust political system, despite the considerable personal risks involved.

Her willingness to sacrifice her own safety for the liberation of others reflects extraordinary courage and unwavering conviction. Like many young activists of her generation, Coline believed that future generations deserved to live in a democratic society where all people would enjoy equal rights and opportunities regardless of race or background.

Blanche La Guma: Activist, Thinker, Organiser



Blanche La Guma was a dedicated political activist, community organiser and intellectual whose work helped strengthen the struggle against apartheid and social injustice.

She believed that lasting change could only be achieved through organised community action, political education and the empowerment of ordinary people.

She worked alongside fellow activists to promote equality, human dignity and democratic ideals. She contributed to important discussions about justice, education and social transformation. Her approach to activism reflected her belief that ideas and action must work together to create meaningful and lasting change, and shape a fairer society.

Cissie Gool: Political Leader, Social Trailblazer



Zainunnisa "Cissie" Gool was an influential political leader and a pioneering advocate for social justice.

The daughter of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, she inherited a strong commitment to public service and devoted her life to challenging racial discrimination, poverty and inequality.

As the first woman elected to the Cape Town City Council, she broke significant barriers and became a powerful voice for marginalised communities. She was known for her fearless leadership, exceptional public speaking and unwavering commitment to the rights of working-class people. She played an important role in organisations that opposed segregation and discriminatory legislation.

Ouma Grietjie : Nama Riel Performer , Folk Artist



Ouma Grietjie is remembered as a treasured Nama Riel performer and folk artist whose passion for traditional music and dance helped preserve one of South Africa's oldest cultural art forms.

Through her performances and community involvement, she kept alive the rhythms, songs and dances that have long been central to Nama cultural identity, ensuring that younger generations could experience and appreciate this rich heritage.

She recognised that music and dance are expressions of history, identity and belonging. Her performances brought communities together during celebrations, cultural festivals and educational events, creating opportunities for people of all ages to learn about Nama traditions.

Harleen Sassman: Heritage Advocate



Harleen Sassman devoted her life to the promotion of South Africa's diverse cultural heritage.

She has worked tirelessly to encourage appreciation for indigenous history, traditions and identity, helping community members better understand the importance of preserving the stories and achievements of those who came before them.

As a heritage advocate, she had supported initiatives that document local history, celebrate cultural diversity and encourage meaningful dialogue between generations.

She believed that understanding the past enables communities to build a stronger and more inclusive future.

Dulcie September: Anti-Apartheid Activist



Dulcie September was one of SA's most courageous anti-apartheid activists whose unwavering commitment to justice extended far beyond the country's borders.

Born in Cape Town, she became politically active at a young age and joined the struggle against apartheid through the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA).

Her activism led to her imprisonment under apartheid laws before she was eventually forced into exile. While living abroad, Dulcie continued her work as a representative of the ANC in France, where she tirelessly campaigned to expose the injustices of apartheid and mobilise international support for sanctions against the SA South African government.

Zuraya Abass: Community Leader, Revolutionary



Zuraya Abass was a committed community leader whose dedication to justice and equality made her an influential figure during SA's liberation struggle.

She encouraged community participation, promoting education and supporting initiatives that challenged discrimination and inequality.

As a revolutionary she believed that social transformation required both courage and compassion.

She worked to unite people across communities, encouraging cooperation and collective action in pursuit of democracy. Her leadership inspired many, particularly women and young people, to become active participants in shaping their own futures and advocating for the rights of others.

Bessie Head: Novelist, Short Story Writer



Bessie Head is internationally acclaimed as one of Africa's most important literary voices. Born in Pietermaritzburg during apartheid, she experienced hardship, discrimination and displacement from an early age.

These experiences profoundly shaped her writing, which explored themes of identity, belonging, race, humanity and resilience. Later settling in Botswana, she produced novels and short stories that earned worldwide recognition for their compassion and psychological depth.

Among her best-known works are *When Rain Clouds Gather*, *Maru* and *A Question of Power*.

Through her writings she challenged prejudice while celebrating the dignity, complexity and strength of ordinary people.

Sathima Bea Benjamin: Jazz Vocalist, Composer



Sathima Bea Benjamin was one of South Africa's most celebrated jazz vocalists, whose remarkable voice captivated audiences across the world.

Born in Cape Town, she rose to international prominence during a time when apartheid severely restricted opportunities for South African artists. Together with her husband, renowned pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, she brought South African jazz to global audiences while remaining deeply connected to the country's musical traditions.

Beyond her artistic achievements, she served as a cultural ambassador whose music reflected hope, resilience and the universal language of human connection.

150 jaar van Afrikaans: Betekenis vir KhoiSan-gemeenskappe

KAPT. AARON MESSELAAR
LEIER VAN DIE GRIQUA KONINKLIKE HUIS

Die viering van 150 jaar van Afrikaans bied 'n geleentheid om nie slegs die ontwikkeling van die taal te herdenk nie, maar ook om die historiese bydraes van die verskillende gemeenskappe wat aan die vorming daarvan deelgeneem het, te erken. Onder hierdie gemeenskappe neem die Khoi- en San-volke 'n besondere plek in. Afrikaans het nie in isolasie ontstaan nie, maar het ontwikkel deur eeue van kontak, uitruiling en samelewing tussen Europese setlaars, slawegemeenskappe, ander Afrika-gemeenskappe en die inheemse Khoi- en San-bevolkings van Suider-Afrika. Vir die Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe is die herdenking van 150 jaar van Afrikaans nie bloot 'n viering van 'n taal nie; dit is ook 'n erkenning van hul historiese rol as mede-bouers van een van Suid-Afrika se belangrikste tale. Die geskiedenis van Afrikaans is onafskeidbaar verweef met die geskiedenis van die eerste inwoners van die land. **Die Khoi- en San-bydrae tot die ontstaan van Afrikaans** Navorsing toon dat die vroeë vorme van Afrikaans reeds vanaf die 17de eeu ontwikkel het deur kontak tussen Nederlandse setlaars, slawegemeenskappe en die Khoi-bevolking aan die Kaap. Die behoefte aan kommunikasie tussen verskillende taalgroepe het gelei tot die ontstaan van nuwe taalvorme wat met verloop van tyd ontwikkel het tot wat vandag as Afrikaans bekend staan. Die Khoi was die eerste gemeenskappe met wie die Europese setlaars gereeld in aanraking gekom het. Hierdie kontak het nie net handel en ekonomiese uitruiling behels nie, maar ook kulturele en linguistiese wisselwerking. Gevolglik het die tale van die Khoi 'n merkbare invloed op die woordeskat en karakter van Afrikaans uitgeoefen. Die invloed van die Khoi- en San-tale is ook sigbaar in talle plekname regoor Suid-Afrika. Name soos Karoo, Kamiesberg, Keimoes, Gamtoos, Outeniqua en Namaqualand dra steeds die taalspore van die eerste inwoners van die land. Hierdie plekname dien as lewende monumente van die historiese teenwoordigheid van die Khoi- en San-volke en herinner Suid-Afrikaners daaraan dat die land se kulturele en taalkundige landskap reeds lank voor koloniale vestiging gevorm is. Vir baie Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe het Afrikaans oor geslagte heen die primêre taal van kommunikasie geword. Dit het die medium geword waardeur familiegeskiedenis, volksverhale, liedere, gebruike en kulturele kennis



van een geslag na die volgende oorgedra is. Hoewel baie oorspronklike Khoi- en San-tale as gevolg van kolonialisme, grondverlies en kulturele assimilasie onder druk gekom het, het Afrikaans vir baie gemeenskappe 'n belangrike draer van identiteit geword. Dit het die gemeenskappe in staat gestel om hul verhale, herinneringe en kulturele waardes te bewaar.



Hierdie werklikheid het egter ook 'n dubbele betekenis. Terwyl Afrikaans vir baie Khoi- en San-mense 'n taal van identiteit geword het, herinner dit terselfdertyd aan die verlies van verskeie oorspronklike inheemse tale wat eens wyd in Suider-Afrika gepraat is. **Afrikaans as 'n Taal van Veelvuldige Oorspronge** Die herdenking van 150 jaar van Afrikaans bied die geleentheid om die oorsprong van die taal opnuut te beskou. Moderne navorsing beklemtoon dat Afrikaans nie die produk van een enkele volk of kultuur is nie. Dit is die resultaat van eeue se kontak tussen verskillende gemeenskappe aan die Kaap en in Suidelike Afrika. Afrikaans dra die invloede van Nederlands, Khoi, San, slawegemeenskappe uit Asië en Afrika, asook ander plaaslike gemeenskappe. Die taal is daarom 'n unieke Suid-Afrikaanse skepping wat in Afrika gevorm is. Vir die Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe bevestig hierdie geskiedenis hul rol as mede-skeppers van Afrikaans. Die taal dra steeds die spore van hul teenwoordigheid in sy woordeskat, plekname, uitdrukkings en kulturele geheue.

Herwaardering van Geskiedenis Vir baie jare is die geskiedenis van Afrikaans hoofsaaklik vanuit 'n Europese perspektief vertel. Die viering van 150 jaar van Afrikaans bied nou die geleentheid om die bydraes van alle gemeenskappe wat aan die vorming van die taal deelgeneem het, te erken. Die erkenning van die Khoi- en San-bydrae is nie bloot 'n historiese oefening nie; dit is 'n daad van historiese geregtigheid. Dit herstel die plek van die eerste inwoners van Suid-Afrika binne die verhaal van een van die land se belangrikste tale. Hierdie erkenning bevorder ook 'n meer inklusiewe begrip van Afrikaans as 'n gedeelde erfenis wat aan al sy sprekers behoort. Vir die Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe bied die 150-jarige herdenking van Afrikaans ook 'n geleentheid om die

bewaring en herlewering van hul oorspronklike tale en kulture te bevorder. Afrikaans hoef nie as 'n teenstander van Khoi- en San-tale beskou te word nie, maar kan dien as 'n brug waardeur kennis oor inheemse geskiedenis, gebruike, tradisies en wêreldbeskouings aan toekomstige geslagte oorgedra word. Die uitdaging vir die toekoms is om Afrikaans te gebruik as 'n instrument van kulturele erkenning, terwyl daar terselfdertyd gewerk word aan die dokumentering, beskerming en herstel van die oorspronklike tale van die Khoi en San-volke. Die betekenis van 150 jaar van Afrikaans vir die Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe lê in die erkenning dat hulle mede-bouers van die taal was en steeds 'n integrale deel van sy geskiedenis vorm. Afrikaans is nie bloot die erfenis van een gemeenskap nie, maar die produk van eeue se kulturele ontmoeting tussen die mense van Suid-Afrika. Die teenwoordigheid van Khoi-leenwoorde soos abba, geitjie, eina, gogga en karos, sowel as die voortbestaan van talle Khoi-plekname, getuig van hierdie historiese bydrae. Die viering van 150 jaar van Afrikaans behoort daarom nie net die ontwikkeling van die taal te herdenk nie, maar ook die mense te eer wat gehelp het om dit te vorm. Vir die Khoi- en San-volke is hierdie herdenking 'n bevestiging dat hul stemme, tale en kulturele erfenis steeds voortleef in die taal wat miljoene Suid-Afrikaners vandag praat. Afrikaans is daarom nie slegs 'n taal van Suid-Afrika nie; dit is ook 'n taal van Afrika, gevorm op Afrika grond deur die bydraes van al sy mense.

Khoi-leenwoorde in Afrikaans

Bewyse van die Khoi-bydrae tot Afrikaans is die opname van talle Khoi-woorde in die taal. Hierdie woorde het deur kontak tussen die Khoi en vroeë Afrikaanssprekers deel van die alledaagse woordeskat geword. **Voorbeelde sluit in:**

- Abba – dra iemand op die rug.
- Geitjie – die klein akkedis wat algemeen in Suid-Afrika voorkom.
- Eina – 'n uitroep van pyn.
- Gogga – 'n insek of klein diertjie.
- Karos – 'n velkometers wat tradisioneel deur Khoi- en San-gemeenskappe gebruik is.

- Koedoe – die bekende wildsbok.
- Eland – een van die grootste wildsbokspesies in Suider-Afrika.
- Dagga – 'n woord van Khoi-oorsprong wat later algemeen in Afrikaans gebruik is.

Hierdie woorde verteenwoordig meer as bloot taalgebruik; hulle weerspieël die kennis, leefwyse en kulturele erfenis van die Khoi-volke. Hulle teenwoordigheid in Afrikaans bevestig dat die taal nie uitsluitlik uit Europese bronne ontwikkel het nie, maar ook gevorm is deur die tale van die oorspronklike inwoners van Suid-Afrika.



GEITJIE



GOGGA



DAGGA



ELAND

Groet altyd beleef en sê gangans

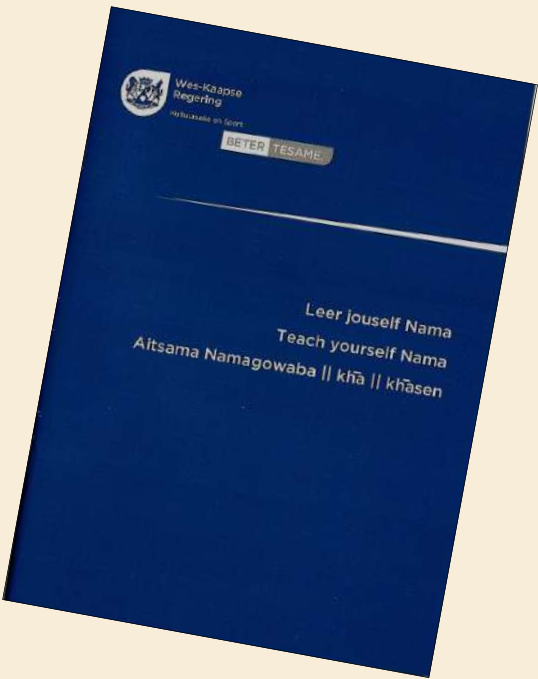
sedert kindsbeen leer ons ouers ons om asseblief en dankie te sê, en om mense hoflik te groet. “Ekskuus, verskoon my, ek is jammer” tel ook onder hoflikheidsfrases.

In vandag se taalles leer ons hoe om hoflik te wees in Nama, asook hoe om vrae te vrae of versoeke te rig in Nama.

Die les kom uit die boekie *Leer jouself Nama*, wat saamgestel is deur mnr. Pedro Dausab, bekende Nama-spreker en onderwyser.

Die boekie is daarop gemik om die leser in staat te stel om self die Nama-taal aan te leer.

Dit moet egter in gedagte gehou word dat die beste manier om ’n taal aan te leer, is om met die moedertaalsprekers van die taal te praat.



Daar is vier kenmerkende klapklanke in die Namataal en hulle word verteenwoordig deur die volgende tekens:

| || ! #

Die Dentale klapklank

Die klapklank word gemaak deur die breek van ’n geringe suiging wat veroorsaak word deur die voerpunt van die tong net agter die boonste voortande waar hulle die tandvleis raak, te plaas; neem (met albei lippe effens apart) dan die voerpunt van die tong weg van die tande af.

Die Palatale klapklank

Die klapklank word gemaak deur die breek van ’n geringe suiging, veroorsaak met die voorkant van die tong teen die verhemelte, waar dit afdraai na die boonste voortande.

In die breek van hierdie suiging word ’n skerp ondertoe beweging van die tong gemaak, terwyl die lippe effens van mekaar gehou word.

In die voortbring van hierdie klank is daar ’n skerp ondertoe beweging van die onderkakebeen te bespeur.

Die Sydelingse klapklank

Die klapklank word gemaak deur die breek van ’n suiging veroorsaak tussen een van die twee kante van die tong en die betrokke wang.

Die lippe en tande word effens apart gehou, wanneer hierdie klapklank gemaak word en die onderste kakebeen word nie op of af beweeg nie.

Die Alveolêre klapklank

Die klapklank word gemaak deur die breek van ’n suiging wat veroorsaak word deur die voerpunt van die tong tussen die voortande te sit en vinnig terug te trek; met albei lippe effens apart.

Die klapklank mag deur die volgende gevolg word:

- klinker
- deur g
- deur h
- deur n
- deur kh

Tsē !gâ || aeb ge (dit is middag)



AFRIKAANS	ENGELS	NAMA
Hoflikheidsfrases	Polite phrases	Gauxa
Verskoon my	Excuse me	Ūba te re
Dankie	Thank you	Gangans
Asseblief	Please	Toxoba
Ek is jammer	I am sorry	Hawio kai te re
Weer / herhaal	Pardon	Khawa
Dis reg so	That’s all right	#Hanu-a
Nie te danke	Don’t mention it	Tă mî
Ja	Yes	î
Nee	No	Hî-î
Dit maak nie saak nie	It doesn’t matter	Xū he hâ tama
Sê weer / ekskuus	I beg your pardon?	Khawa mî re?
Goed / Dis reg so	Good / That’s fine	!Gâ-a
Moenie bekommerd wees nie	Don’t worry	Tă ae

AFRIKAANS	ENGELS	NAMA
Tyd en datums	Time and dates	Aeb tsi dadomdi
Hoe laat is dit	What time is it?	Matikö aexa l go?
Dit is een uur	It is one o’clock	Gui- ĭr go
Dit is middag	It is midday	Tsē !gâ aeb ge
Dit is middernag	It is midnight	Tsuxub !gâb ge
Dis vroeg	It is early	!Oega i ge a
Dis laat	It is late	!Onkhao i ge a
Hoe laat begin dit?	What time does it start	Mâ ae ĭ ra tsoatsoa
Hoe laat maak dit klaar?	What time does it end?	Mâ ae ĭ ra toa
Gaan jy lank bly?	Are you staying long?	Gaxuse(t) s ta hâ?
Ek bly vir vier dae	I’m staying for four days	Haga tsēde ta ge ni hâ
Ek is ’n week al hier	I’ve been here for a week	Wekheba ta ge nēba go hâ i

PHENOMENAL WOMEN: From left is Lucille Manuel, Zaakirah Davids, Candice Ohlson, Janine Pienaar and Jody Pienaar. **PIC: ZENZILE KHOISAN**

5 women making strides in the world of logistics

ZENZILE KHOISAN

As South Africa celebrates Women's Month, the stories of women who are breaking barriers and reshaping traditionally male-dominated industries deserve recognition.

Across the business landscape, women continue to overcome historical obstacles, proving that determination, mentorship and opportunity can transform lives and industries.

One such example is Cape Town-based deliveries, transport and logistics company El Sheda, which is actively creating opportunities for women in a sector that has long remained inaccessible to many.

Through leadership, mentorship and skills development, five remarkable women are demonstrating that the logistics industry is no longer solely the preserve of men.

These five women are making critical interventions and overcoming

hurdles to grow and develop in this male-dominated business.

Leading the initiative is chartered accountant Candice Ohlson, whose vision extends beyond running a successful logistics company.

"Change can only come if we are proactive, focused in our approach to problem solving, and if we train, appropriately equip and create empowering environments in which our people can develop and flourish, irrespective of historical barriers," she said.

According to Ohlson, El Sheda's mission is to empower women within the logistics sector while helping them unlock their broader business potential.

"I mainly focus on ladies of colour because there has been a lack of representation in the industry.

"This business exists to empower young women to become business owners and to help each one realise the potential they have within themselves," she explained.

Her vision is to build partnerships with female-owned businesses while opening doors for more women to participate meaningfully throughout the logistics value chain, including at executive level.

"Our process is about commitment, growing together as one team, not only for El Sheda, but for women as a whole.

"We want women to gain visibility and access to networks that have traditionally excluded them."

Ohlson believes women should occupy leadership positions throughout the logistics industry, including boardrooms where women of colour remain underrepresented.

"This process teaches women skills they can pass on to others. By collaborating and sharing knowledge, with other woman, everyone grows together, and can be instrumental in helping other women grow."

She emphasised that building successful businesses requires patience, dedication and a shared vision, with

the ultimate goal of moving women beyond parcel delivery into the broader logistics and supply chain industry.

The El Sheda executive explained that the process of building and developing these enterprises was not reactive but rather a proactive and holistic process in which these enterprises are guided by a focussed plan geared toward collective growth and sustainability based on strong values and effective business principles.

According to Ohlson there is a definite need to expand the vistas, aspirations and theatre of operations within which business gets conducted, to build confidence throughout the entire team which will ensure the team have the capabilities to engage at all levels within the sectors within which they have become involved.

She made the point that the team had been established organically by engaging with women who already had businesses, but had not been exposed to the broader business environment or the wider scope of the sectors within which they were involved, including their possibilities for their own growth, as also how they could be instrumental in sharing their experience and growth with other women.

"I want our women to be involved in the bigger versions of logistics, meaning the big catalysts that have a lot of the international divisions, because when coming into a boardroom, you don't see women of colour being in charge.

"You basically see everything that is the opposite of women of colour entering these big boardrooms, and that gave me the idea that there is space for women of colour to step into this boardroom."



El Sheda Women are from left Janine Pienaar, Lucille Manuel, Candice Ohlson and Zaakirah Davids.

Women breaking through the glass ceiling

Exciting new chapter working in logistics



LUCILLE MANUEL

Joining El Sheda marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Lucille Manuel. Previously employed in retail, she had long known Candice Ohlson and admired her passion for uplifting others.

“Candice always tried to broaden someone’s horizons, particularly the people who are less fortunate and didn’t have the capabilities of studying further or did not have the funds to do so.

“When the opportunity came at El Sheda, Candice shared her vision with me. It inspired me, although entering a male-dominated logistics industry was initially quite intimidating.”

As her confidence grew, so did her enthusiasm. “It became exciting seeing women establish businesses, starting small and then growing.”

Manuel believes mentorship and exposure to new opportunities have

been central to her development.

“The biggest lesson has been seeing the empowerment of women, especially women of colour, because these opportunities simply weren’t available before.”

She said that this process, of directly observing how she and others had been uplifted because the process of mentorship, capacitation and exposure to the broader elements of an industry which women traditionally had not participated was an important learning curve.

“The main lesson of this is seeing the empowerment of women and also especially women of colour because the opportunities weren’t there before but also because there was now a person who was making this possible for women who could not be involved before,” Manuel added.

‘Found purpose and what I’m am good at’



ZAAKIRAH DAVIDS

Like many young people searching for direction, Zaakirah Davids moved from one job to another before joining El Sheda.

She is an example of the strength of the El Sheda corporate development initiative, which reflects the flexibility to work with those who are incorporated within its business operations, helping them to flourish within environments they are unfamiliar with.

She admits she initially knew nothing about logistics.

“After school, I was just bouncing from job to job, until Candice came to me last year in August and offered me a job at this company.”

At the start she did not have a clue about logistics, and she doubted herself.

I was very doubtful of myself, but with Candice alongside, I started

learning things and, for the first time in my life, I felt like I have a purpose and I am good at something which I’ve never felt before,” Davids recalled.

She stated that she had been exposed to an entirely new world which had greatly impact her perceptions of herself and her personal and professional development.

“That’s how I started here at this company. If you told me last year that I would be sitting here today, I would have told you, you’re crazy because I didn’t think that I had a purpose and I didn’t think I had it in me.

“I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunity because I never thought this was possible,” Davids added.

Delivering parcels with dignity and pride



JANINE PIENAAR

Redundancy became the catalyst for entrepreneurship for Janine Pienaar, owner of Lady JP Enterprises.

After losing her job when Liberty Health closed, a place where she was employed for almost seven years, she was encouraged by her brother to explore parcel deliveries.

She established Lady JP Enterprises and soon discovered that customers were often surprised to see a woman operating successfully in what has traditionally been viewed as a man’s industry.

“I’m a proudly female-owned business delivering parcels with dignity and pride. My purpose is ensuring every parcel reaches its destination safely and on time.”

It was quite novel, she stated, when she observed that people were “actually very amazed” at seeing a women being involved in “a male-dominant business.”

Pienaar credits Ohlson for encouraging her to think beyond delivery services.

Today her company has its own website and app, enabling it to integrate with e-commerce platforms and continue expanding its services.

She expressed gratitude to Candice Ohlson for urging her not to be complacent and to take advantage of opportunities in the industry.

“Candice constantly motivated me to take my business further.”

Pienaar stated that Ohlson is “a very great motivator, whose goal is to push and inspire women of colour to break through barriers and achieve because “it’s very difficult for women like us to get a seat in a boardroom.”

Privilege to work with women in corporate world



JODY PIENAAR

Fresh from completing her LLB degree at the University of the Western Cape, Jody Pienaar is gaining valuable corporate experience while awaiting the next stage of her legal career.

Jody is the daughter of Janine Pienaar and is waiting to become a candidate attorney or getting the necessary funds to further her studies.

In the mean time she is working as a driver and plugging into the operations of Lady JP, El Sheda and InXpress, another corporate entity associated with El Sheda.

She is hoping to gain experiences in the logistics sector, and working with the ladies in the logistics operations has given her a new perspective on women in business.

“I’ve had the privilege of working alongside inspirational women who don’t take no for an answer.”

She believes being surrounded by determined female leaders has

prepared her for the realities of the corporate world.

“It gives you confidence knowing there are women looking out for you and showing you what is possible.

“It’s actually mind-blowing to observe women who are very determined and it amps you up basically for the real world just to get that guidance from these women I have the privilege to work with.

“They have the knowledge, they have the aspirations, and the determination to strive in a corporate setting which is male dominant.

“It provides it a lot of comfort to me, knowing that there are women who has my back and my best interest at heart,” Jody Pienaar said.

Call for the appreciation of indigenous midwives on Indigenous Peoples Day

Across generations, Indigenous communities have preserved traditions that protect lives, strengthen families, and nurture the well-being of entire communities.

This year's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, celebrated every 9th of August, pays tribute to indigenous midwives with the theme:

“Honoring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being.”

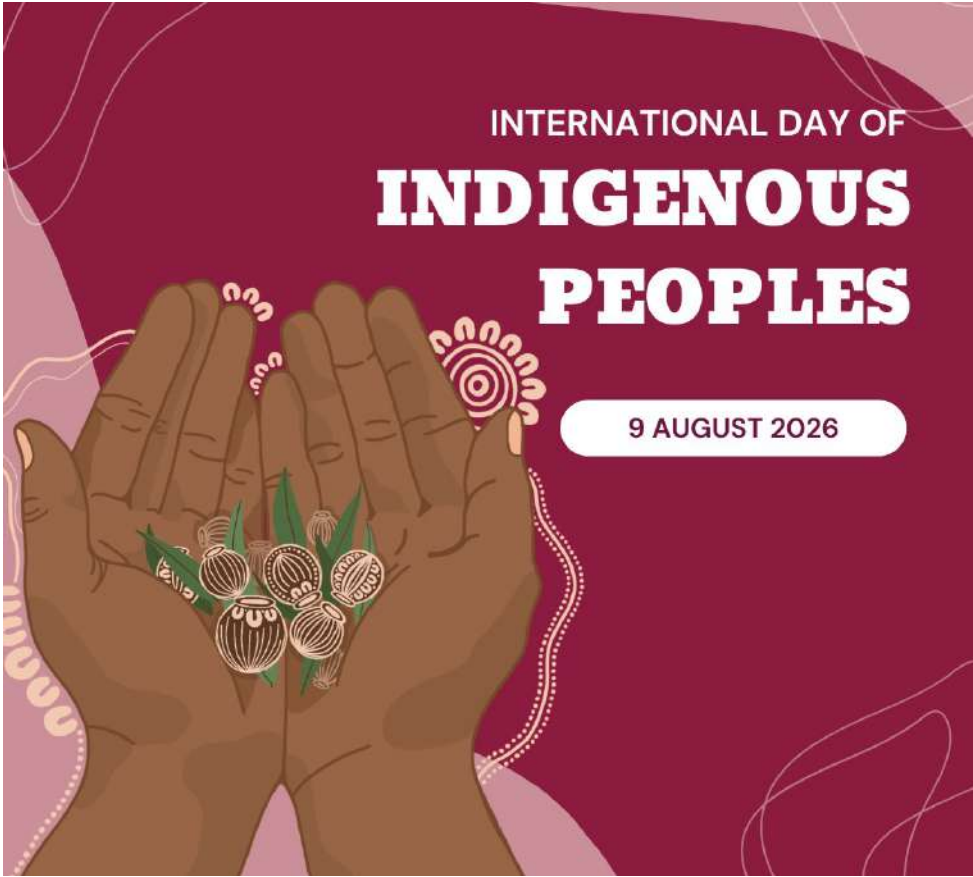
It is a call for greater appreciation of their role and efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge into health systems while respecting the rights and traditions of Indigenous Peoples.

For generations, Indigenous midwives have served as trusted caregivers, educators, and custodians of ancestral wisdom. Their work, in fact, extends far beyond childbirth, encompassing cultural practices, community health, emotional support, and the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next.

Despite their invaluable contributions, many indigenous midwives continue to face barriers, including: stigmatization, regulatory restrictions, exclusion, lack of recognition and even criminalization.

According to the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs (DESA), “Indigenous Peoples face significant

On 23 December 1994, the UN General Assembly decided, in its resolution 49/214, that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People shall be observed on 9 August every year. The date marks the first meeting, in 1982, of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations.



and persistent health inequities.

“Evidence indicates that Indigenous women and adolescent girls experience poorer maternal health outcomes than non-Indigenous Peoples, including lower access to essential services and, in some contexts, substantially higher maternal mortality.

Such disparities are closely linked to structural barriers, including discrimination, geographic isolation, the limited availability of culturally appropriate services, and the insufficient recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems within formal health frameworks.”

The Salesians Sisters, in different parts of the world, are committed to promoting and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially those of girls and women, ensuring that their voices are heard and their rights are respected.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples provides an opportunity for governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and individuals to reflect on the challenges Indigenous Peoples continue to face and to support initiatives that promote equality, cultural preservation, quality healthcare, education, meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and inclusion.

Together, let us celebrate the wisdom, resilience, and invaluable contributions of Indigenous Peoples while reaffirming our shared responsibility to protect their rights, cultures, and future generation by safeguarding life and well-being.

Source: <https://iimageneva.org/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples-2026>

7 Eye-opening Facts for International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

On International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL reflects on the terrifying levels of racism, land grabbing, forced development and deadly violence still facing tribal peoples.

Stephen Corry, Director of Survival International says: “Tribal societies are not shadows of Western civilization or failed attempts to emulate it. Far from being “primitive” or “brutal savages,” tribal peoples often put the community before the individual, share and exchange possessions rather than amass personal wealth, and embrace gender equality. Tribal societies are our contemporaries and a vitally important part of humankind’s diversity. Where their rights are respected, they continue to thrive.”

1. “If I take over, there won’t be even one more centimeter of Indigenous land.” said Jair Bolsonaro, a leading candidate in Brazil’s presidential elections, taking place this October. There are over 100 uncontacted tribes in Brazil, more than anywhere else on Earth, and all of them face catastrophe unless their land is protected.

2. In the name of so-called “conservation”, the Baka tribe in Congo Republic and Cameroon are forbidden from entering much of their ancestral forests, which they have nurtured and depended on for generations. They are terrorised by anti-poaching squads, funded by WWF, if they dare to enter. Yet tribal peoples are the best conservationists and guardians of the natural world, and 80% of our planet’s biodiversity is found in tribal territories.



Without access to the forests, elders report that they cannot teach their children the traditional skills, such as collecting honey, hunting, herbal medicine.

3. The suicide rate of Guarani-Kaiowa is among the highest in the world. Young people under the age of 30 account for 85% of the suicides; the youngest was a child of just 9 years old.

‘The Guarani are committing suicide because we have no land,’ said a Guarani woman. Known as the “forest people”, they live in parts of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. They face severe land loss, poverty, and violent conflicts with local agribusiness as they fight to reclaim ancestral territories

Ranchers have occupied the Guarani’s land and their gunmen are violently attacking her tribe’s communities. Tribal lands give them food, housing, medicines, clothing and a sense of identity and belonging.

4. In Malaysia in 2015, five Orang Asli children died after they ran away from their boarding school, terrified of beatings from staff. Instead of looking for them, the authorities charged the parents with hiding the children and did not start the search for two weeks.

When it finally began, they forbade the families from taking part and sent soldiers to hunt for the terrified children. The school’s response to the tragedy was to build a better fence.

5. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is too often ignored to suit the interest of government and big business. In one example from 2018 the German government admitted that indigenous peoples in Africa are “massively discriminated against” but concluded that “public demands” for the implementation of their rights could lead to conflicts.

6. Australia enjoys one of the highest life expectancies of any country in the world: 82.5 years. But life expectancy for Aboriginal people is over 10 years lower than that of the non-Indigenous population. Tribal peoples who control their own land are healthier with a far better quality of life than tribes who’ve been evicted from their lands.

7. Human safaris. Tour operators on India’s Andaman Islands are selling “human safaris” to the reserve of the Jarawa tribe. Tourists travel along a road through the Jarawa’s forest, trying to “spot” members of the tribe like animals in a safari park. In 2002 India’s Supreme Court ordered the closure of the illegal road through the Jarawa’s land, but it has remained open.



Celebrating the Keepers of Life: KIWIA Honours Midwives in August

CHIEF MARY JANSEN
Founder and Chairperson,
Khoe-San Indigenous Women in
Action (KIWIA)



The month of August is a special time of reflection and celebration for Khoe-San Indigenous Women in Action (KIWIA). We proudly commemorate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on 9 August and South Africa's National Women's Day, when we remember that day in 1956, when 20,000 women of all races marched to the Union buildings in Pretoria. They gathered to protest against the oppressive Apartheid pass laws. As indigenous peoples we remember this day because the Khoi San also were forced to carry passes introduced by Jan Van Riebeeck to control their movement in Cape Town and elsewhere in 1653. Later enslaved people were also forced to carry passes by the Colonialists since 1709. August is also dedicated to recognising the invaluable contribution of midwives and the rich Indigenous knowledge they have preserved across generations. Midwifery is far more than a profession, it is a calling rooted in compassion, service, courage and respect for life. For Indigenous communities, midwives have long been the custodians of traditional knowledge surrounding pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. Their wisdom, passed down through generations, continues to support women through natural and holistic approaches to pregnancy and birth.

Traditional Indigenous midwifery embraces the use of medicinal herbs, natural oils and time-honoured practices that promote healthy pregnancies and safe childbirth. These methods have enabled countless women to experience low-risk pregnancies while strengthening the bond between mother, child and community. One example is waterbirth, a practice that uses warm water to encourage relaxation, reduce stress, ease labour pains and assist with the natural birth process.



MARIA AFRIKA

Another is homebirth, which, when appropriate for a healthy, full-term pregnancy and supported by an experienced midwife with emergency plans in place, offers families a deeply

personal and culturally meaningful birthing experience. For Indigenous peoples, birth extends beyond the arrival of a child. The placenta and umbilical cord hold profound cultural and spiritual significance. The tradition of burying the umbilical cord – in Afrikaans die naelstring – connects the newborn to the earth, honours ancestral roots and symbolises a lifelong sense of belonging. Many Indigenous communities also plant a tree at the burial site, representing the child's growth and enduring relationship with nature. As Khoi and San people, our history of forced removals from our ancestral lands has disrupted many of these sacred traditions. Yet our cultural practices remain a powerful source of healing, identity and resilience. By preserving and celebrating traditional midwifery, we continue to restore connections that colonialism sought to break. This celebration is also deeply personal. My great-grandmother, Maria Afrika, served as a respected midwife in the Genadendal area during the early 20th century. I was named after her (Mary being the English version). Her dedication to caring for mothers and babies, long before the conveniences of modern technology, inspired generations that followed. My great grandmother as a traditional knowledge holder, passed on her gift to me. This is how I still hold on to where my Naelstring was buried. Part of my Professional training in Health, I have conducted in Ghana, and Kwazulu-Natal on traditional Health practices. As KIWIA marks its 21st anniversary this year, the organisation continues

to advocate for the recognition and preservation of Indigenous knowledge systems alongside the celebration of Women's Month and the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Let us also pay tribute to the midwives who have quietly sustained families, preserved Indigenous knowledge and safeguarded generations of life. We salute every midwife – past and present – for their unwavering commitment, compassion and service. We honour your role as protectors of life, custodians of culture and champions of healthy communities. Your legacy continues to inspire hope and strengthen future generations.

About KIWIA

Khoe-San Indigenous Women in Action (KIWIA) is a South African non-profit organisation committed to empowering Indigenous women, preserving Khoi and San cultural heritage, and promoting Indigenous knowledge systems. Established in 2005, KIWIA celebrates its 21st anniversary in 2026. Through advocacy, education and community engagement, the organisation promotes:

- the rights of Indigenous peoples;
- honours traditional knowledge, and
- supports initiatives that strengthen the health, well-being and cultural identity of Indigenous communities.

A network for spiritual, social and economic collaborative initiatives of the Foundation Nation of Southern Africa

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Land se eerste nasie ly

Hieronder is 'n foto van 'n wonderlike rots-tekening in die Cederberge, wat bewys dat n  t ons hier aan die suidpunt van Afrika geleef het – vir derduisende jare. Die afgelope tyd is onwettige vreemdelinge op busse gesit.

Maar ons wat hier hoort, word deur magtige olifante in kantore soos onwettige vreemdelinge behandel.

Ons, die eerste nasie, ly! Ek was bevoorreg om in die Wes-Kaapse Premier se Komitee vir Eretoekennings te dien; was voorsitter van die Wes-Kaapse Kultuur-kommissie; en raadslid van die nasionale Kommissie vir die beskerming en bevordering van Kultuur, Godsdiens, en Taal.

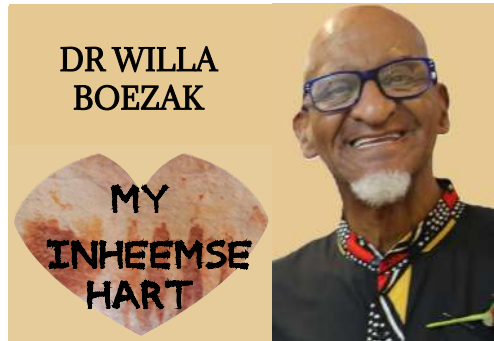
Ons, as Khoi-San, is Suid-Afrika se eerste kultuur-gemeenskap.

Ek moes in die Wes-Kaapse parlement gaan verslag doen oor finansi  le uitgawes, en dit het vir my duidelik geword dat daar baie meer begrip is vir sport, as vir kultuur.

Dis nie regverdig dat daardie twee sake onder een dak gesit word nie, want daar is 'n groot verskil tussen tasbare en ontasbare dinge.

Wanneer amptenare besluit oor begrotings vir gebeure soos groot sport byeenkomste, gryp hulle 'n calculator, en 'n instrument bepaal die som.

Sport is tasbaar. Kultuur is



heeltemal anders, want dit het te make met ontasbare dinge, soos die herstel van trots binne in die siel van 'n nasie; blydskap oor erfenis; trane wanneer ons staan by grafte soos Kinderl  ; die warmte wat ons ervaar wanneer ons deur die bloed stap by ons deurgangsrites – die !N  u. Omdat baie min amptenare, as hekbewaarders, verstaan wat die waarde van ontasbare dinge is, gee hulle ook min daarvoor, en tien keer meer vir sport.

Deel van die probleem is persepsies. Suid-Afrikaners het grootgeword met die koloniale idee dat onse kultuur is heidens, barbaars,



en onbeskaaf. Hulle dink: Hoe kan ons d  arvoor geld mors? Dit maak nie vir hulle saak dat Pres. Nelson Mandela, met Khoi-San bloed in sy are, 27 jaar gelede al 'n nasionale raad in die lewe geroep het, om saam met die regering te werk vir ons erkenning nie.

Dis ironies, want dis dieselfde tydperk dat hy gevange gehou was, met die grootste deel daarvan op Robbeneiland, die tronk van ons land se eerste politieke gevangene, Autshumato.

Eksel self was al in 'n tronksel aangehou weens politieke aktivisme, en weet hoe dit voel. Khoi- en San aktiviste het van die begin af opgestaan teen koloniale onreg.

- Voorbeelde hiervan is:
- Noma  -Doman teen die Hollanders;
 - A.A.S. le Fleur I teen die Engelse;
 - Dawid Stuurman;
 - en selfs ons kinders in 1985 teen apartheid, waarvoor hulle nie net in die tronk

gesmyt was nie, maar doodgeskiet is.

Die vraag is: bestaan apartheid nog steeds?

Vandag, in sogenaamde demokratiese Suid-Afrika, word ons deur onsimpatieke amptenare gevange gehou, sodat ons nie ons kultuur kan bevorder nie, iets wat belowe word in die Konstitusie, Wet 106 van 1996 – op papier.

Hekwagters met vooroordele hou ons opsetlik weg van belastingbetalers se geld, so asof ons nie s  lf belasting betaal nie?

Nie 'n enkele Khoi-San leier of gemeenskap is al in ons land amptelik erken nie, en intussen het Oom Dawid Kruiper, Johannes Kraalshoek, Ellie Cloete, Josiah Katz, Abraham Esau, dr. William Langeveldt, en vele ander, gesterf sonder om ware vryheid te proe.

Ons dank die Allerhoogste dat vir die eerste keer 'n Minister aangestel is, wat verstaan hoe ons voel, en die waarde van kulturele identiteit besef.

Dawid vra in Psalm 137:4: "Hoe kan my volk liedere tot eer van God sing in 'n vreemde land?"

Wel, dis veel erger in 'n land waar ons inheems is, maar behandel word soos vreemdelinge.

Die mense dink mos dat omdat ons rieldans, is ons gelukkig.

Dis hulle persepsie, maar die waarheid is: ons ly!

Hoekom?

THE FIRST NATION IS SUFFERING

This wonderful petroglyph (above) in the Cederberg mountains proves that only we have lived here at the southern tip of Africa – for thousands of years.

Lately, illegal foreigners have been put on buses. But we, who were born here, are treated like illegal foreigners by powerful elephants in offices.

We, the first nation, are suffering! I was privileged to serve on the Western Cape Premier's Honorary Awards Committee; was chairman of the Western Cape Cultural Commission; and board member of the national Commission for the protection and promotion of Culture, Religion and Language.

We, as Khoi-San, are South Africa's first cultural community. I had to go to the Western Cape Parliament to report on financial expenditure, and it became clear to me that there is much more understanding for sport than for culture.

It is not fair that those two matters are put under one roof, because there is a big difference between tangible and intangible things.

When officials decide on budgets for events such as major sporting events, they grab a calculator, and an instrument determines the sum.

Sport is tangible. Culture is completely different, because it has to do with intangible things, such as the restoration of pride within the soul of a nation; joy

over inheritance; tears when we stand at graves like Kinderl  ; the warmth we experience when we walk through the blood at our rites of passage – the !N  u.

Because very few officials, as gatekeepers, understand the value of intangible things, they also give little to them, and ten times more to sports.

Part of the problem is perceptions. South Africans grew up with the colonial idea that our culture is pagan, uncivilised, and barbaric.

They think: How can we waste money on that? It does not matter to them that Pres. Nelson Mandela, with Khoi-San blood in his veins, already called a national council into existence 27 years ago, to work with the government for our recognition.

It's ironic, because it's the same period that he was imprisoned, with most of it on Robben Island, the prison of our country's first political prisoner, Autshumato.

I myself have been detained in a prison cell for political activism, and know how that feels. Khoi and San activists rose up against colonial injustice from the beginning.

- Some examples are:
- Noma  -Doman against the Dutch;
 - A.A.S. le Fleur I against the English;
 - Dawid Stuurman; and
 - even our children in 1985 against apartheid, for

which they were not only thrown in prison, but shot dead.

The question is: does apartheid still exist?

Today, in so-called democratic South Africa, we are held captive by unsympathetic gatekeepers, so that we cannot promote our culture, something that is promised in the Constitution, Act 106 of 1996 – on paper.

Officials with prejudices deliberately keep us away from taxpayers' money, as if we don't pay taxes ourselves?

Not a single Khoi-San leader or community has yet been officially recognised in our country, and meanwhile Oom Dawid Kruiper, Johannes Kraalshoek, Ellie Cloete, Josiah Katz, Abraham Esau, dr. William Langeveldt, and many others, died without tasting true freedom.

We thank the Most High that for the first time a Minister has been appointed, who understands how we feel, and realises the value of cultural identity.

David asks in Psalm 137: 4: "How can my people sing songs to the glory of God in a foreign land?"

Well, it's much worse in a country where we are indigenous, but are treated like foreigners.

People think that because we dance the riel, we are happy. That's their perception, but the truth is: we suffer! **Why?**

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

Article 23

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

Article 24

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.

2. Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of this right.

Article 25

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 26

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 27

States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples’ laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.

Article 28

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.

2. Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation

On 9 August we celebrate International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, an annual event to protect indigenous rights and celebrate their contributions to humanity. This year many indigenous peoples will reflect on what progress has been made since the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was ratified by the UN in New York in September 2007.

shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status or of monetary compensation or other appropriate redress.

Article 29

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.

3. States shall also take effective measures to ensure, as needed, that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring the health of indigenous peoples, as developed and implemented by the peoples affected by such materials, are duly implemented.

Article 30

1. Military activities shall not take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples, unless justified by a relevant public interest or otherwise freely agreed with or requested by the indigenous peoples concerned.

2. States shall undertake effective consultations with the indigenous peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, prior to using their lands or territories for military activities.

Article 31

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures. This includes human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

2. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognise and protect the exercise of these rights.

Article 32

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources,

particularly in connection with the development, utilisation or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

Article 33

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.

Article 34

Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Article 35

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the responsibilities of individuals to their communities.

Article 36

1. Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.

2. States, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take effective measures to facilitate the exercise and ensure the implementation of this right.

Article 37

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

2. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as diminishing or eliminating the rights of indigenous peoples contained in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

Article 38

States in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to achieve the ends of this Declaration.

Article 39

Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.

Article 40

Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights. Such a decision shall give due consideration to the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the indigenous peoples concerned and international human rights.

Article 41

The organs and specialised agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organisations shall contribute to the full realisation of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilisation, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

Article 42

The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialised agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.

Article 43

The rights recognised herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Article 44

All the rights and freedoms recognised herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals.

Article 45

Nothing in this Declaration may be construed as diminishing or extinguishing the rights indigenous peoples have now or may acquire in the future.

Article 46

1. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.

2. In the exercise of the rights enunciated in the present Declaration, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all shall be respected. The exercise of the rights in this Declaration shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law and in accordance with international human rights obligations. Any such limitations shall be non-discriminatory and strictly necessary solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for meeting the just and most compelling requirements of a democratic society.

3. The provisions set forth in this Declaration shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith

KRUIE, PLANTE VIR VERLIGTING VAN WINTERKWALE

Lank voordat moderne medisyne beskikbaar was, het die Khoi en San vir eeue ’n diepgaande kennis van plante, kruie en ander natuurlike hulpbronne in hul omgewing ontwikkel. Hul leefwyse het hulle voortdurend in noue kontak met die veld, berge en ander natuurlike landskappe gebring, waar hulle geleer het om verskillende plante se eienskappe te herken en te benut. Hierdie kennis, wat mondelings van een geslag na die volgende oorgedra is, het onder meer ingesluit hoe sekere plante gebruik kon word om algemene winterkwale

en ongemak te verlig. Vandag kan hierdie tradisionele kennis ons help om verligting te bring van verkoues, griep, ’n toe neus of bors, of ’n seer keel. Sommige kruie kan help om ’n geïrriteerde keel te kalmeer, terwyl ander tradisioneel gebruik word om asemhaling te vergemaklik of die liggaam se natuurlike weerstand te ondersteun. Van wilde knoffel, wilde roosmaryn, bloublom salie, Olienhout, wilde als en suurvly, hierdie natuurlike plante kan op verskillende maniere aangewend word,

byvoorbeeld in warm tee, aftreksels, stoombehandelings of as deel van alledaagse kosse. Dit is net enkele kruie en plante wat tradisioneel gebruik is vir die verligting van winterkwale, daar is talle ander, wat ons kan gebruik, danksy ons voorouers se eeue oue kennis met hierdie plante. Hou egter in gedagte dat tradisionele gebruike nie noodwendig bewys dat ’n plant ’n siekte kan genees nie, dit is meestal vir die verligting van simptome. Ernstige of aanhoudende simptome vereis mediese advies.



Afrikaanse salie / Bloublomsalie

Vir verkoue; griep; hoesbuie; seerkeel; hoofpyn; koors.
Aanwysings: Gooi 1 koppie kookwater oor 1 eetlepel vars (gekapte) blare en laat trek. Bedek die koppie en laat dit vir 10 tot 15 minute trek sodat al die olies vrygestel word. Gooi deur sif en laat afkoel en drink loutwarm. Vir seerkeel gooi sout of ’n bietjie suurlemoen sap by en gorrel vir sowat 30 sekondes. Moenie sluk nie. Voeg heuning of suurlemoen by as die kruiesmaak vir jou te sterk is.



Olienhout

’n Kruiemiddel teen verkoues, griep, koors en seer keel danksy anti-mikrobiiese eienskappe.
Aanwysings: Gebruik sowat 8 blare ge droog en gekrummel per koppie. Giet 250 ml kookwater direk oor die blare. Bedek en laat trek vir 10 tot 15 minute. Gooi deur ’n sif en drink. Die tee het ’n natuurlike, effens bitter, smaak. Voeg heuning, suurlemoen of kruisement by om dit te versag.



Wilde Knoffel

Hierdie veeldsyde plant het antibakteriese, en swamdodende eienskappe, en is ook ’n anti-oksident wat die selle beskerm.
Aanwysings: Kneus of kap die blare en die bol van een plant fyn sodat die aktiewe bestanddele vrygestel kan word. Plaas in a beker en gooi 1 koppie kookwater oor. Bedek en laat vir 10 minute trek. Sif deur ’n fyn sif en drink as tee. Voeg heuning by om die sterk knoffelgeur te versag. Drink ’n klein koppie 3 keer per dag.



Wilde Roosmaryn/ Kapokbos

Vir hoesbuie, verkoues, griep; om van slym ontslae te raak. Dit het antivirale en antiseptiese olies om virusse en bakterieë in die lugweë te beveg.
Aanwysings: As kruietee: Trek ’n paar vars of gedroogde blaartjies in kookwater vir ’n ligte tee om hoes, ’n toe bors en keelseer te verlig. Vir toe neus en sinusse: Gooi kookwater oor ’n handvol blare in ’n bak. Plaas ’n handdoek oor jou kop en asem die stoom in.



Wilde als

’n Wilde als is ’n struik met blare wat ’n sterk, aangename reuk afgee. Dit word vir verskeidenheid van kwale gebruik – veral verkoue, griep, hoes, maagpyn.
Aanwysing: Gebruik 3 tot 4 vars bare (of halwe teelepel gedroogde blare) per koppie kookwater. Laat vir 5 tot 10 minute trek. Sif en drink. Die tee is baie bitter, voeg heuning of suurlemoen by vir smaak. Die blare kan saam met knoffel en suiker gekook word om ’n hoesstroop te maak. Drink net 1 tot 2 koppies per dag vir ’n kort tydperk.



Suurvly (Ghoena-vy)

Die suurvly is ’n kragtige kruidende plant met groot geel of pers blomme wat ontwikkel tot eetbare vrugte. Help met seerkeel, mond-infeksies, tandpyn en selfs pynlike mangels.
Aanwysing: Was ’n vars blaar deeglik skoon. Sny ’n klein stukkie af en kou dit stadig. Sluk slegs die sap in en spoeg die oorblywende veselagtige blaarvleis uit. Die plant kan ook gebruik word vir sonbrand, ligte brandwonde, skrape, ekseem, muskietbyte en bloublasie-steke.



Konfetti bos

Vir die verligting van die simptome van verkoue en griep, om die senuwees te kalmeer en vir die versterking van die immuunstelsel.
Aanwysings: Gebruik 1 eetlepel vars blare en stingeltoppe (of 1 teelepel droë kruie) per koppie kookwater. Plaas die blare in ’n koppie of teepot. Gooi kookwater oor en bedek met ’n piering of deksel om te verhoed dat die olies deur die stoom ontsnap. Laat vir 5 tot 10 minute trek en sif. Drink 1 tot 2 koppies per dag met bietjie heuning vir smaak.



Nasturtium/Kappertjie

Ryk aan Vit C en natuurlike antibiotiese en antivirale eienskappe. Die mostertolies in die blare help om lugweë oop te maak, slym te verdun en kieme te beveg.
Aanwysings: Kou 1 tot 2 vars blare drie keer per dag sodra jy voel jy word siek. Vir ’n krappertige of seerkeel kan jy selfs elke uur een blaar kou. Vir tee, kap ’n handvol vars blare en blomme fyn. Gooi kookwater oor en laat vir 10–15 minute trek. Sif en drink dit as ’n tee saam met heuning en suurlemoen om hoes en toe bors te verlig.



Role of Indigenous women in enhancing food security

By **JECINTA PIERRA NYARUAL**, farmer and freelance journalist covering food systems with a focus on women’s perspectives.

In many parts of East Africa, farmers are expressing uncertainty, especially after the flooding that hit Kenya in April 2024. The agricultural economy in Kenya employs 40 percent of the general population and 70 percent of the rural population.

Indigenous knowledge systems are reemerging as crucial frameworks for addressing food security challenges and preserving fragile ecosystems, especially due to the erratic weather patterns that are affecting established seasonal crop cycles.

These time-tested practices, developed over centuries of careful observation and adaptation, offer sustainable alternatives to conventional agricultural methods that often deplete resources and contribute to environmental degradation. For Indigenous communities worldwide, knowledge about the environment is not merely academic; it is a basic survival skill. As Monicah Yator, an agro-pastoralist and founder of the Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative (IWGI), explains, “Within our community, we have a deep understanding of water conservation. During recent droughts, these time-tested methods have been essential for ensuring we have at least some harvest when others around us have lost everything.”

In practice, Indigenous science differs fundamentally from Western scientific approaches.

While Western science often separates humans from nature and centres on formalised experimental verification, Indigenous knowledge systems view humans as an integral part of ecosystems and build understanding through generations of observation and practice.

This holistic approach creates resilient food systems that work with natural processes rather than against or around them.

Both systems observe and verify, but through different methodological lenses and relationships with the natural world.

Weather Forecasting by Reading Nature’s Signs

Weather patterns are an important part of rain-fed agriculture. Without proper timing, crop quality and quantity can be affected. One of the most remarkable aspects of Indigenous knowledge is the ability to predict weather patterns through the observation of natural indicators.

In many communities, including Yator’s, people “rely on observing nature for weather prediction... the behaviour of certain birds, the flowering of specific trees, and even the direction of the wind.”

These bioindicators have guided agricultural planning for generations. The communication of these observations represents a sophisticated form of scientific knowledge transfer that occurs primarily through demonstration, apprenticeship, and oral tradition rather than formal documentation.

Community elders observe shifts in patterns and communicate these changes to younger generations through structured teaching moments. Across Africa, insects serve as important weather forecasters. Termites become notably active before rainfall, cutting grass and collecting food, a signal that humans, perhaps, should gather provisions before the rains come.

The behaviour of cicadas indicates temperature patterns; their continuous “screaming” during hot weather signals drought conditions, and when they begin to quiet down, it indicates imminent rain.

Large swarms of white butterflies flying from west to east and returning westward signal approaching rainfall. Bee activity also serves as an indicator.

If you notice bees building their hives, it suggests that it is about to be a good rainy season, while fewer bees might indicate drought.

Some of these indicators vary by region and ecosystem. What serves as a drought indicator in Tanzania might signal something entirely different in Kenya or Zimbabwe, highlighting how Indigenous knowledge is specifically adapted

to local tribes and conditions.

As Yator notes, however, “with the changing climate, these indicators are becoming less predictable,” creating new challenges for communities that have traditionally relied on them.

Water Management and Conservation Indigenous communities have developed sophisticated water management systems adapted to local conditions.

Yator describes how her community uses “micro-catchments” or “zai pits”, or small depressions strategically placed to harvest rainwater and direct it to crops.

These simple but effective techniques have proven invaluable in arid and semi-arid regions where every drop of water matters.

In addition to these catchments, terracing prevents soil erosion in hilly terrain, preserving both soil and water resources. These practices don’t require expensive equipment or external inputs, making them accessible to communities without resources.

More importantly, they work with the natural landscape rather than imposing artificial systems that may disrupt ecological balances.

In Baringo County, Kenya, Indigenous women of the Pokot community have refined traditional water harvesting techniques called “korir.”

Female farmers dig strategically placed shallow trenches along contour lines of sloped land, reinforcing them with stones and Indigenous drought-resistant grasses.

During rainfall, these structures slow water flow, allowing greater soil absorption and reducing erosion.

During the 2022 drought season, a women’s cooperative in the Tangelbei area used these methods and documented an increase in crop yields compared to neighboring plots without water harvesting systems.

Women elders teach techniques for measuring slope gradients using traditional tools made from local materials, communicating precise engineering knowledge through hands-on demonstration rather than written manuals.

Seed saving practices

Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of Indigenous farming communities is the preservation of agrobiodiversity through seed saving practices.

“We preserve seeds from Indigenous crops by drying them carefully in the sun and storing them in airtight containers, often mixed with specific ash or certain leaves to protect them from pests. We also have community seed banks where we share and exchange different seeds,” Yator explains.

In Gilgil, Nakuru County, a collective of women locally maintains a sophisticated seed preservation system for drought-resistant crop varieties. These women have specialised knowledge of over sixty varieties of crops including beans, millet, sorghum, cowpeas, and Indigenous vegetables, each adapted to specific microclimates.

Their preservation methods include coating seeds with specific botanical preparations (a mixture of dried and powdered neem leaves, wood ash from particular Indigenous trees, and certain clay soils) that prevent pest infestation without chemical inputs.

During each harvest, these women select seeds based on complex criteria, including drought resistance, early maturity, pest resistance, and nutritional value. Their communication system includes specialised vocabulary for describing seed characteristics that don’t exist in English or Swahili, requiring distinct preservation of their native language to maintain this knowledge.

The seed guardians host seasonal “seed story” sessions where they share the history and properties of each variety with younger women, embedding technical agricultural information within cultural narratives that aid memory retention. This integration of botanical science with cultural practices represents a form of scientific communication that preserves not just the seeds themselves but the contextual knowledge required to cultivate them successfully.

Women document germination rates, growth patterns, and yield data through oral and physical record-keeping systems that have proven accurate when compared with other informal conventional agricultural measurements.

These community seed banks serve as living libraries of local genetic diversity, protecting varieties that have adapted to local conditions over centuries. Unlike commercial seed systems that promote genetic uniformity, Indigenous seed systems celebrate variety as a form of resilience.

Different crops and varieties thrive under different conditions, some do better in dry years, others in wet years, some resist certain pests while others tolerate poor soils.

The crops that have proven most resilient during recent droughts in Yator’s community are “drought-resistant varieties of sorghum, millet, and certain types of beans.”

These traditional crops, adapted to local conditions through generations of selection, often outperform varieties introduced by seed companies when environmental stresses increase.

They represent not just food sources but reservoirs of genetic traits that may become increasingly valuable as climate conditions shift.

