

Novel contracts for workers

Some farmworkers in Limpopo are having their contracts of employment drawn out in comic form so that they can understand them. Most of the workers cannot read or write. The contracts use pictures to explain working terms of conditions to employees.

These world-first “comic contracts” were created by Cape Town attorney Robert du Rooy, who said the idea was borne out of frustration over how traditional contracts were being drafted, along with a desire to make a “positive contribution” to employer-employee relationships.

The contracts use pictures to explain working terms of conditions to employees, and 300 fruit-pickers at Indigo Fruit Growers have signed the agreement. Du Rooy believes that traditional text agreements have too many contradictions and are ambiguous.

He further pointed out to *Times Live*, that the way in which most traditional contracts are drafted and presented does not support a good relationship and that most employees don't read it. The comic contracts used by ClemenGold were presented at the International Contract Simplification Conference in Switzerland.

According to labour lawyer Michael Bagraim, while the idea was innovative, it failed as a legitimate legal document in its current form. He explains that contracts of employment are very particular documents and has to be in writing. Bagraim emphasizes that the particulars have to be controlled as in section 29 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

Kate Hlongo, Indigo compliance administrator, says the contracts were explained to employees, who said she received nothing but positive feedback from the workers.

By Farren Collins (Times Live)

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