

Economic growth

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Effective transformation requires partnerships with like-minded private sector stakeholders. The CGA Grower Development Company (GDC) has partnered with Coca Cola Beverages SA (CCBSA) Mintirho Foundation to fund training targeted at 100 black citrus growers who will attend an "Introduction to Citrus Business Management" course.

The Foundation was formed to promote the development of historically disadvantaged farmers and small suppliers of inputs in the CCBSA value chain, through the funding of sustainable businesses. The training programme is designed to empower growers with the requisite skills to run their enterprises efficiently. It covers a wide range of aspects, from production systems, handling and control of stock, human resources, basic finances and marketing.

The target group for the programme was new entrants into the industry, including young people from enterprises that are already operational to participate, as well as growers who had been identified as requiring skills in this area. Lack of business management skills has been identified as one of the leading limiting factors among most black citrus growers, hence the need to broaden access to this course. In an ideal world, growers are supposed to enrol in a programme of this nature as soon as they acquire their farms. However, in practice this is not possible, due to the lengthy processes of the land transfer system.

The plan was to train two people per farm across 50 farms. This would then encourage these enterprises to include young people for the purposes of succession which is at the heart of the industry and earlier this year the industry released a publication

entitled *Stories of succession in the citrus industry*. Furthermore, empowering the youth is seen as a vehicle to ensure that new technologies are adopted at farm level. Scholastic articles indicate that older people are less likely to adopt new sustainable practices and often rely on their indigenous knowledge to manage their farms.

The training was rolled out across five provinces and 91 people from 57 farming enterprises from Limpopo (34), Eastern Cape (26), KwaZulu Natal (13), North West (10) and Mpumalanga (10). The group comprised 60 men, 31 women and 33 youth. The number of youth involved in the citrus industry is quite encouraging, which can also be attributed to the capacity development programmes that are run by the Citrus Academy. The increase in women's

participation indicates a shift in cultural ideologies whereby women cannot own land or be involved in decision making on farms. The heterogeneous nature of the group brought a lot of benefit during the training, as it allowed for mutual knowledge transfer. The attendance of a representative from the CCBSA at some of the venues was also encouraging, since the farmers were inquisitive about the work of the Foundation.

As the CGA GDC, we look forward to more partnerships of this nature unlocking the potential of the industry and the sector at large. ❀

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sportsman. Although now in his second year at University studying for his B. Comm. degree, he currently plays rugby for the Sharks under 19's as well as the Curry Cup squad.

"Our children make us proud," says Eric. "Our farm has created a platform from which they can become involved in agriculture on several levels, however one must be passionate and dedicated in order to be successful at farming, as it is not easy.

"Looking into the future I would encourage them to look at agriculture as a sector with opportunities for them to develop their careers. It is my dream to expand my farming operation, so there are more farming opportunities for them in the future. If they are not interested in the production part of agriculture, the export supply chain also offers many good career options that they could consider." ❀