



THE SRCC TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING KEY COMPONENTS:

- **Ownership**
- **Participation**
- **Education**
- **Community Upliftment**

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SRCC's

Transformation

Times

VOLUME 8

JULY 2017

Siyaphambile Farm : A huge transformation success story in the Sundays River Valley

27 farm workers are today even prouder owners of a 117 ha farm which they purchased a few years ago. The workers are members and beneficiaries of the Sundays River Farming Trust, established in 2007, which consists of four farming entities, named Willowtree, Siyathemba, Glengrove and Sophumelela. The farms were purchased by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) under the PLAS (Proactive Land Acquisition Scheme) and the Sundays River Citrus Company (SRCC) concluded a management agreement with DRDLR to assist with the management of this farming operation. In terms of this management agreement, SRCC became responsible for the day to day support of the management of the farms, together with the identification, training and mentorship of successful black farm workers, managers and owners.

The original permanent farm workers on the four farms were identified as the beneficiaries of the project with the ultimate aim being to settle and develop the beneficiaries as commercial black farmers on their own land—the existing farm workers on these farms at the time received preference in this process. SRCC actively manages the training and development of these emerging farmers and tailors its programs to the individual.

In 2009 full ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) facilitation for SRFT was established and training commenced on a daily basis, which has enabled the workers to improve their levels of training and in turn to uplift their social conditions. The four Farm Managers are part of the SRFT Management Committee, which makes management decisions and recommendations for approval by the SRFT Trustees.

The original four farms, which are being leased by the SRFT, still belong to the government (DRDLR) and, although provision was made for the future transfer of this farm land to the beneficiaries, the Department has to date refused to facilitate this. As a result, five years after establishment, SRFT bought the 117 hectares of land, now known as Siyaphambile, in Addo for R11 000 000.00. R7 million rand of their own funds were utilized by the emerging farmers, saved up from production of approximately one million export cartons of citrus to date. The remaining R4 million was loaned from the SRCC.



Siyaphambile Farm (continues)

The full development of Siyaphambile Farm is now complete and the 27 beneficiaries are justifiably bursting with pride at their achievement! The development was divided into 3 phases, of which phase 1 was planted in 2014, phase 2 was completed in 2015 and phase 3 was finished towards the end of 2016. The required infrastructure has also been added over this period, including building of a pumphouse and dam, irrigation pipes installed, installation of power points, building of a shed, offices and farm management accommodation. The picking of the first harvest at Siyaphambile was done by the beneficiaries, in orchard no. 1 of Phase 1, as an informal ceremony to mark this important event during the 2016 season. Siyaphambile has come a long way from its humble beginnings to the growing success it is today.

(below) Phase 3



(right) Phase 2



(right) Phase 1



A new bobcat was bought for Siyaphambile and was used for the first time with the first harvest in 2016 (as seen below right)



As seen below, the house of the Assistant Farm Manager is in process of being built alongside the orchards of Phase 3.



SRCC / IKAMVA LETHU CITRUS EMPOWERMENT PROJECT...

“The unique and exciting citrus grower / farm worker empowerment project - citrus farmers in the SRV to invest R210m for their and their farm workers’ benefit”

This extremely exciting and unique citrus empowerment project, which is the perfect example of **inclusive growth**, is making steady albeit fairly slow progress. The main reason for this is the fact that the Environmental Impact Assessment is underway but, by its nature, is a time-consuming process, which, if all moves ahead according to plan, will be completed and approved around April 2018. Until then, work on the farm may not commence.

The phrase “eating an elephant can only be done in bite-sized chunks” comes to mind when considering the vast scope of this project. In the planning process these chunks have obviously all been identified and scheduled but the serious development work on the farm, which is expected to take at least 5 years, unfortunately cannot commence until the EIA approval has been granted. In the meantime the legal, governance and structural matters are being finalized relative to the formation of the company and trusts involved. A group of 22 citrus farmers, along with their farm workers estimated to number around 300 in total, will participate in the project. The group met recently to confirm their participation and connected a Steering Committee which will now drive the project forward. These 22 citrus farmers will contribute over a period of 6 years, an amount of R210 million in total, which will be used for the establishment of at least 700 hectares of citrus orchards, together with the required infrastructure and equipment to operate a world-class citrus farming enterprise.



As previously explained, each citrus farmer participant will establish a trust in which he and his farm workers are the beneficiaries and each farmer/worker trust will have taken up a share in the farming company for which the R210 million in total will be contributed. Participation by the SRCC Packhouse Workers and the future Ikamva Lethu permanent farm workers is also provided for in the shareholding. The future farming business is therefore planned to be of a significant size in order to ensure benefit to around 400 previously disadvantaged beneficiaries and will also provide job opportunities for a further 800 people.

The first phase of the project is the construction of the pipeline and dams required to provide water supply to the farm. The water licence for 675 ha of water was granted to the project last year so the planning and design of the water infrastructure is a priority in order that work thereon can commence as soon as the EIA approval has been obtained.

It is therefore easy to understand a measure of impatience relative to the progress on the project - the vision is clear and the plans are taking shape - but it is also obvious that all the boxes must be properly ticked before the serious development work gets underway.

There is no doubt that this project will become a flagship in the agricultural empowerment environment and all involved look forward to the realization of “Our Future” - the meaning of the Xhosa name of the farm - Ikamva Lethu

2017 Season Citrus Fruit Damage

A recent investigation of excessive fruit drop in the Sundays River valley during the 2016/17 season was undertaken by the Department of Horticultural Science. The findings are summarised as follow:

- ◆ In all evaluations, the consistent abnormal styler-end characteristics and subsequent development of large styler- and/or navel-end openings and fruit splitting appeared to be the primary cause of the severe premature fruit drop problem.
- ◆ Normal cultural practices were applied as with previous seasons, and no relationship could be found between commercial cultural practices of any kind and the level of fruit splitting intensity.
- ◆ It appears that abnormally high temperatures (40°C), low relative humidity ($\pm 8\%$) and relatively high wind speed (30 km/h) were recorded during flower initiation at the end of August and during full bloom on 26 September 2016 which caused the fruit styler to dry out and abscise prematurely.
- ◆ The majority of flowers in the SRV were exposed to the same extreme climatic conditions when they were fully open and this probably explains their increased susceptibility to split and eventually drop.
- ◆ The only other report of fruit splitting and fruit drop of such an extent in Southern Africa is that of Vincent Wager in 1939 for 'Washington' navel orchards in the Kat River valley. The conclusion of his investigation was that of extremely dry, warm and windy weather conditions during flowering time, which resulted in navel-end fruit splitting and secondary *Alternaria* infection.
- ◆ The current excessive fruit drop problem in the SRV appears to be related to similar conditions.
- ◆ Considering the early abscission of up to 80% of fruit in many affected orchards, extreme flowering intensity can be expected during return bloom in spring of 2017, if sufficient flower induction conditions occur during winter.



Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke

Enterprises : Glengrove Farm

A new loading zone has been built for storage of fruit and crates to improve handling and transportation, as pictured below. The farm manager's and the assistant farm manager's houses also received some maintenance and refurbishment. Recently established orchards are progressing very well as seen on the left.



Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises : Siyathemba Farm

At Siyathemba farm, a new hostel has been built for the seasonal pickers which can accommodate 18 people, as seen below and is now being used for the first time.



Below left —The eating area



Below right—The kitchen



Enterprises : Sophumelela Farm

New fences have been erected surrounding the workers' houses, as seen below left, for safety purposes . Road maintenance was also done and the entrance to Sophumelela was tidied up as seen below right.



Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises : Willowtree Farm

The existing dam on Willowtree has been expanded as well as deepened to double the water capacity.

A new store has been built including a sheltered loading zone alongside. Some maintenance was also done to improve the condition of the internal roads.

Dam expansions (below)



(Right)
New pipeline



(Right) New store



Business is ticking along at Luthando and although production volumes will be down on last year, the prospects for this season are still reasonably good. As with all farms, the navel crop suffered as a result of the excessive fruit drop previously mentioned but the lemon and Valencia varieties should deliver good crops.

Below is an example of wind and heat damage to some citrus trees on the farm and which can be seen all over the valley.



Mbuyiselo Plase (Pty) Ltd

At Mbuyiselo Plase, one of the beneficiaries, Ms. Vallerie du Toit, has started in a half-day position to provide support with the administrative duties at the Mbuyiselo office. She was also trained as an AET facilitator and will assist with the necessary training at Mbuyiselo. This is just another example of the excellent development and growth opportunities for the individual within these empowerment initiatives. Vallerie has progressed from being a farm worker on this farm many years ago to being responsible for assisting with the training and administration duties of the same farm of which she is now a co-owner.transformation and empowerment in action!!!!

Accreditation and Training



The GlobalGap External Audits for 2017 were again successfully completed. The Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Inspections took place at the discretion of the Department of Labour with regard to the dates and the farms that they selected for inspection. All farms have implemented Workers' Committee meetings as a SIZA Ethical Audits requirement and these meetings will be held 4 times per year.

AET Training, assessment and exams are ongoing as learners progress in their various levels.

As Ms. Vallerie du Toit of Mbuyiselo Plase is a trained AET facilitator, it is planned to present AET training at Mbuyiselo Plase from the 1st of July 2017. The benefits of this would be to give more attention to each learner, there will be no transport costs for the staff and workers of Mbuyiselo, better attendance and hence improved production.

Clinics & Wellness Program



A farm clinic has been built at Mbuyiselo Plase with the support of Albert Heijn Foundation and Capespan funding. It is planned that the clinic will be in use from the 1st of July which will benefit the workers a great deal.

The Wellness Programmes will continue from August onwards on all the farms and the staff is busy at present with the necessary preparations. These programmes are proving to be hugely beneficial in terms of monitoring and improving the general health of the staff and employees on all the farms. This obviously filters through to the improvement in the general quality of life and to the results delivered on the farms.

SRCC FOUNDATION

School Bus



The SRCC Foundation Trust, together with other co-sponsors Engeli, PWC, Scribante Concrete, BLG Logistics, Chep, Sanparks and Tavcor recently purchased a school bus (as seen left) to be used by the schools in the Sundays River Valley.



The sole purpose of this bus, named “Kids on the Move”, is to be available for use by all under privileged schools in the SR Valley to transport their pupils to cultural and sporting events. There will be a cost attached to the use of the bus, as the driver, fuel and maintenance expenses will have to be covered but it will certainly provide a much-needed service to the local schools and children.

Bursary Scheme

An exciting bursary scheme is being designed and developed with the assistance of the SRCC HR Department in order to support and promote the tertiary education of local worthy matriculants. The objective is to identify 5 qualifying students who will then be awarded a bursary for 3 years of tertiary study at a relevant university. The bursaries for the 5 candidates will be made available in areas of study that are relevant to SRCC's business and in which benefit will be derived from the use of their services during and after completion of their studies. The students who are successful in obtaining their degrees, will be required to enrol for a graduate trainee programme at SRCC for a fixed contract period of 2 years. The priority areas of study have been identified as Marketing and Logistics, Business Operations, Agronomy and Engineering.

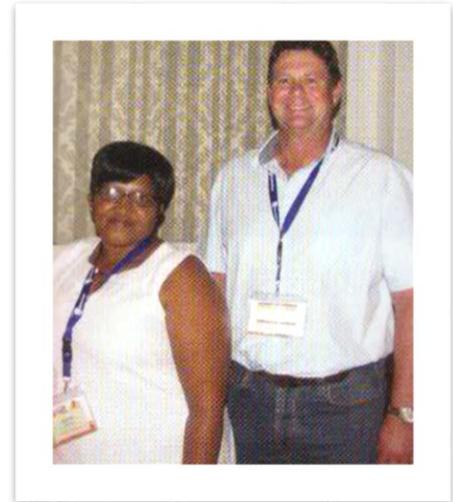
If sufficient funding can be raised, the intention in the longer term is to financially support 5 students in each year of study so that in any one year there will be 15 students who are preparing themselves for a career. This is indeed a worthy goal and the SRCC and SRCC Foundation management will be working hard to find the financial support with which to achieve this objective.

Recognition Award

At the Citrus Summit which was hosted by the Citrus Growers Association at the Boardwalk Complex in Port Elizabeth during March 2017, Ms. Buyiswa Ndyenga received her awards for the 2015 Top Entrepreneur in the categories of Export; Overall Winner; Provincial Top Entrepreneur: Export and Overall Winner at National Level. Ms. Ndyenga is the General Manager of SRFT/Sikhule Sonke Enterprises, which is currently the SRCC's largest empowerment farming enterprise and which is probably one of the most successful empowerment businesses in the country.



(left) Ms. Buyiswa Ndyenga



(right) Ms. Buyiswa Ndyenga with
Mr. Frikkie Olivier from SRCC

TIPS : USES FOR LEMONS

Ideas to indulge in and enjoy the winter lemon availability:

- Get baking and cooking: Lemon cake; lemon meringue pie; use with chicken dishes and fish.
- Refreshing drinks : home-made lemonade - G&T!!!!
- Oils & dressings: lemon-infused olive oil
- Cleaning: Freshen the fridge and remove odours
- Prevent certain vegetables from turning brown
- Disinfectant for fruit and vegetables
- As a beauty product
- For health purposes (early morning drink)
- Bleach for delicate fabrics
- As a polish (for chrome etc.)



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Photos courtesy of Rudi le Roux*

