

## SAB has announced finalists in its Urban Agriculture programme

Powered by SAB's flagship youth entrepreneurship programme, SAB KickStart, the Urban Agriculture programme, which aims to identify and invest hydroponic technology into high potential farming businesses, has announced nine finalists who will receive training and investment to grow their farming businesses.



The class of 2019/2020, the Urban Agriculture finalists, powered by SAB KickStart, with members of the SAB enterprise & supplier development and Made from Rural teams.

With Stats SA in October revealing that unemployment was at its highest level in 11 years, the programme aims to help create jobs through youth-owned farms. Black African women are the most vulnerable, facing an unemployment rate of 34.5%, compared to black men with an unemployment rate of 31.3%.

“We are happy that five out of the nine finalists are young black women,” said Phumzile Chifunyise, enterprise development manager, SAB and AB InBev Africa.

An Enterprise Development programme, SAB KickStart is aimed at youth entrepreneurs aged 18 and 35. The programme has been running since 1995 to develop, invest, and grow revenue-generating youth businesses in order to create jobs.

Now in its second year, the Urban Agriculture programme invests in high potential farming businesses, by advancing farming businesses with technology that will grow the businesses and create lasting employment.

“As an organisation that is embedded in agriculture, our intention is to attract young people to the sector by alleviating the high barriers to entry such as technical and operational resources.”

## **Finalists**

The finalists are:

- Lungi Robela (GP), owner of Robela Farm, which produces lettuce and cucumber
- Rinae Tshikangavhadzi (GP), owner of Woman In Action farm, which produces Kale, beans, spinach
- Khutso Njenga (GP), owner of Tech Farma, which currently produces cucumbers
- Vutlhari Chauke (GP), owner of VT Harvest, which currently produces peppers and tomatoes
- Katlego Meso (GP), owner of Katlego Malesa Farming, which currently produces peppers and tomatoes
- Nkanyiso Ngubane (KZN), owner of Dukathole Youth Farm, which currently produces cucumbers and baby marrows
- Welile Gumede (KZN), owner of Azowel Projects, which currently produces tomatoes
- Amanda Mpabanga (NW), owner of Mabogo Dinku Agricultural Co-Op which, currently produces spinach
- Siphamandla Bilitane (WC), owner of Crispy Crop, which currently produces tomatoes

“The finalists will complete a 15-month business development programme which provides technical and operational training, hydroponic infrastructure investment, industry-based mentorship, as well as market access,” said Chifunyise.

SAB has partnered with Made with Rural to help bring the programme to life and create sustainable jobs. “We are growing the presence of young farmers through the application of hydroponic technology to scale their business and link them to markets,” she said.

Leeko Makoene, CEO at Made with Rural, said the company had designed a youth agribusiness development programme that consisted of innovative elements to maximise resources and deliver measurable value “without compromising SAB’s investment mandate. From the way due diligence was conducted to the structure of the boot camp, infrastructure sourcing and capital optimisation, we have ensured every action benefits the farmer.”

After careful sourcing and due diligence process to select prospective participants, nine agripreneurs were identified for the programme. The programme started with a boot camp which kicked off on 21 October 2019 consisting of young farmers, many of whom are self-taught farmers and had not had any form of formal training.

The boot camp is not only classroom-based but also incorporates elements of on-the-job training led by industry experts, fireside masterclasses, fieldwork and site visits to established commercial farms.

The content further covered exposure to advanced seed care, seedling production, computerised irrigation and fertigation, fertilisation and soil management masterclasses conducted by subject matter experts. Following this will be a rollout of

infrastructure investment and business development support.

The finalists will complete the programme in December 2020.

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