

# Partnership helps female farmers, youth bridge the unemployment gap

The growing global population remains a challenge for food security - soon, farmers might not be able to produce enough food to support everyone, resulting in people competing for limited food stocks.



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Monsanto SA, through its partnership initiative with Khulisa Social Solutions, is focused on empowering farmers with smart solutions to yield better harvests while using resources more efficiently.

## Helping communities thrive

Khulisa is a non-profit company that provides long-term sustainable social solutions to vulnerabilities and inequalities which impede communities' ability to thrive. Founded in 1997, the company focuses on empowering South African communities, especially young children, women, and youth, to unlock their potential and develop skills towards a sustainable future.

"We are an organisation that strives to address the casual factors of why communities fail to thrive through grass root level engagements, innovative interventions and key collaborations with multiple stakeholders. We leverage investments and experiences from our

partners to solve complex problems facing our country," said Tine Cornillie, Khulisa senior programme manager.

## Bridging the unemployment gap

In 2016, Monsanto and Khulisa implemented the Global Giveback Circle (GGBC) to bridge the gap between unemployed youth and work opportunities through job readiness programmes, experiential learning programmes and employment opportunities.

A total of 120 post matric girls, aged 25 from Amajuba district, Newcastle, were recruited into the programme. The girls were provided with critical skills such as basic computer training, financial literacy and career guidance to empower them for future opportunities. They were also each assigned a mentor to guide them and provide support through the programme.

"A pilot programme was completed in 2015 with 37 girls and then Monsanto joined us in 2016. For 2017 we have a follow-up of the 120 girls, with 28 focusing on farming - livestock and crop farming" said Tine.

As the girls' interest in farming grew and with quite a few interested in setting up cooperatives, Khulisa decided to seek additional opportunities and with the support of the Monsanto Fund, enrolled 28 girls at Buhle Farmers Academy.

## Exit opportunities the biggest challenge

However, not all is without challenges. According to Tine, the biggest challenge to the GGBC programme is finding exit opportunities for the girls after completing the programme due to scarce job opportunities and sometimes matric results are insufficient to get bursaries.

The programme is only the first of many that Monsanto is looking to support in aid of many young women in rural areas who are constantly faced with challenges, including poverty, unemployment, family obligations, early pregnancy, violence, drug addiction and alcoholism.

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