

## REPORT

—South Africa

BELOW—Capespan is involved in numerous local CSR programmes



## A decade of social commitment

CAPE TOWN—There is a need for commercially competing companies to join forces to achieve meaningful social economic development in production areas.

by Fred Meintjes

**S**outh African fresh produce leader Capespan is celebrating a decade of local social investment, and the company shows no sign of slowing as it continues to champion its Blue Hand strategy. “Building relationships has been the cornerstone of Capespan’s Blue Hand social investment strategy since 2008 and these are woven into various collaboration partnerships,” says Ansonette van der Merwe, Capespan’s CSR manager.

These partnerships have been key to establishing sustainable and impactful socio-economic development for communities during the past decade, while simultaneously strengthening the company’s best-practice knowledge in the corporate socio-economic investment and development field.

Van der Merwe says collaboration between commercial business, local government, non-profit organisations and beneficiaries is possibly the best technique used to fast-track meaningful community socio-economic development in the fresh produce industry. Yet at the same time it is also one of the greatest challenges.

“Commercially competing companies have to trust their CSR partners, focus on common goals and courageously align their goals to establish a successful partnership. This includes the pooling of resources, which

unlocks a wider range of socio-economic development opportunities and ensures commitment to longer-term participation in joint corporate social investment and sustainability projects.”

The Capespan CSR ‘Blue Hand – we care’ logo is visible at various locations in the Eastern Cape including pre-schools accommodating up to 150 children, occupational primary healthcare and community HIV and Aids programmes, as well as extensive community education and skills development projects. In the Western Cape, collaborative educational development programmes and the provision of extensive community sport and recreation development facilities are among the examples of the support given to farmer communities.

The longest running Blue Hand initiatives are found in the Northern Cape, where Capespan’s nine farms and surrounding communities in this primarily table grape production area benefit from a number of youth skills development, sport and cultural projects.

In addition to this, an extensive Early Child Development programme, which includes facilitator training and mentoring support, as well as a Primary and Occupational Healthcare-Partnership programme, operate throughout the year.

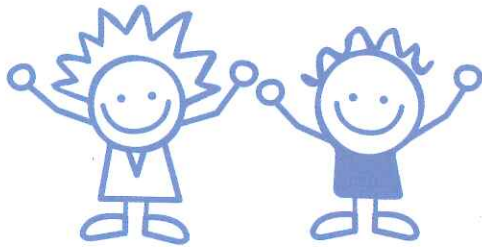
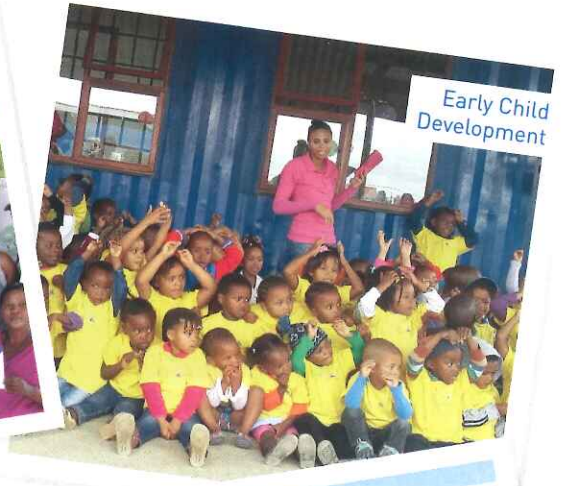
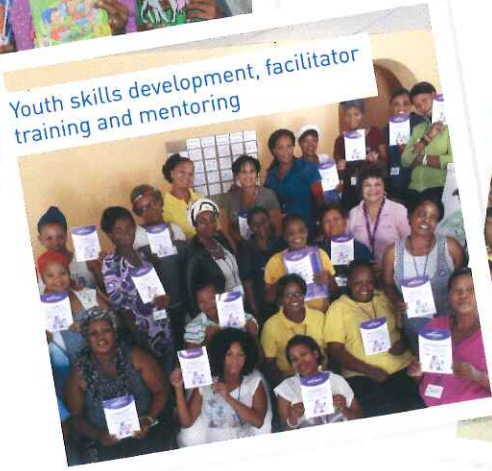
In Namibia, meanwhile, the Blue

Hand is also celebrating its ten-year partnership with the Namibia Grape Company – together they funded construction of community pre-schools, primary school classrooms, training and healthcare centres, in addition to community sport development events and vegetable gardens, which were recently developed at three schools. Since 2010 bursaries have been granted to more than 70 secondary school learners annually.

It is estimated that Capespan’s Blue Hand initiatives directly improve quality of life for more than 5,000 beneficiaries a year. “We aim to ensure that Blue Hand CSR initiatives are underpinned by research and best-practice principles and carefully selected by means of continuous engagement with local beneficiary communities or stakeholders and proper needs analyses,” van der Merwe continues.

However, she warns that socio-economic development is not contained in a list of static strategic goals and similarly outcomes should not be expected to fit neatly into a calendar year. “We have found that developmental programmes and initiatives have to be adjusted according to the actual development of beneficiary communities and their ability to take on responsibility for determining their own solutions to socio-economic problems and development required.” **E**

# CELEBRATING A DECADE OF CARING



Capespan **Blue Hand** improves quality of life for needy communities working and living in export fruit production areas where the company operates.

We have learned that sustainable socio-economic development requires more than monetary donations only. Blue Hand initiatives focus on establishing a bigger variety of community and skills development opportunities.

[www.capespan.com](http://www.capespan.com)



**CAESPAN**  
we deliver



**CAESPAN** |  we care