



# PELICAN NEWS

Blue Skies Newsletter | January 2020 | Issue 161 | [www.blueskies.com](http://www.blueskies.com)

## Blue Skies calls on UK Government to support more value-added products made in Africa

Baroness Elizabeth Sugg, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, visited the Blue Skies fresh-cut fruit facility in Corby this month.

The visit came ahead of the UK-Africa Investment Summit, which was hosted by the UK Prime Minister on the 20th of January and was attended by Heads of State from across Africa and Blue Skies Chairman, Anthony Pile.

The Minister was accompanied by the Member of Parliament for Corby, Tom Pursglove. They were given an introduction to the business by Founder and Chairman, Anthony Pile, who emphasized the need for more businesses like Blue Skies that were prepared to set up operations that processed the finished 'value-added' products in Africa. In this way, businesses would be able to help create more opportunities for employment, skills development and technology transfer, and return more profits to the countries that produced much of the raw materials.

During the visit, the Minister was introduced to staff at Blue Skies UK and spoke with representatives of the company's facilities in Ghana and Senegal over a live video link.



Baroness Sugg is pictured centre with Tom Pursglove (right) and Hugh Pile (left)



## Blue Skies signs Reggie Yates

Blue Skies have signed British actor, television presenter and radio DJ, Reggie Yates as its Brand Ambassador. Reggie is well known in the UK having worked for the BBC in numerous radio and television programmes.

Reggie was born in the UK to Ghanaian parents. CEO, Hugh Pile, said "Reggie is a fantastic fit for our brand and loves everything we stand for. He is both a Londoner and a true Ghanaian and his excitement to join our mission was palpable. We can't wait to see what we're able to achieve together in 2020 to help accelerate the Blue Skies branded journey".

Of late, Reggie has presented a series of impressive award-winning documentaries as he has visited numerous countries (including South Africa and Ghana) to explore social, environmental and political themes. His Instagram boasts an impressive 310k followers, and he is currently working on a number of further acting, writing and directing duties.

## INSIDE THIS MONTH:

- P2** A message from our new CEO, Hugh Pile
- P3** It's Training & Education month in our Blueprint monthly campaign
- P4** An update on the latest activities from the Blue Skies Foundation

# A message from our new CEO, Hugh Pile



It is a privilege and an honour to be taking the role of CEO at this exciting time for the business.

My first duty is to thank you all for your exceptional efforts, passion and commitment in 2019. It has been a rocky year, with a difficult UK political & economic climate combining with the arrival of numerous challenges at our sites. But – as always – Blue Skies fights on, and this is entirely because of you all. We are blessed in having a family who are dedicated and driven to succeed, but who always act with integrity and respect. If we always protect this, we will always thrive.

Second, I must take a moment to pass a sincere ‘thank you’ to our indomitable and remarkable leader, Anthony. Put simply, without Anthony, Blue Skies would have failed years ago. So much of what we see in him is in our culture: our inquisitive minds, our “never give up” mindset, our open & trusting attitudes and our passion for results. To reassure you all, I can confirm that Anthony, whilst he relinquishes the title of CEO, will still be as active as ever as our Chairman. He will continue to visit sites, problem-solve urgent issues and also look to address longer term strategic challenges. And of course we must also thank Anthony’s rock and foundation – Jenny – for all that she has given us, and wish her every possible happiness in her retirement.

So, looking to 2020, we anticipate a really exciting year ahead: continued growth in existing customers and some new ones as well; new market entries in places like the USA and the Middle East; yet more focus behind our Blueprint, new categories launched; new people joining our family; accelerated growth in local markets; exciting technical tests and trials, and much much more.

Together, we can achieve the seemingly impossible... and as Walt Disney once said, “it’s kind of fun to do the impossible”



## New facilities take shape in South Africa

Construction work is progressing well on new facilities to expand capacity at Blue Skies South Africa. The project will enable Blue Skies to optimise its ‘Fresh from Harvest’ offer, ensuring more fruit can be cut as close as possible to where it is harvested.

## GlobalGap Success for Blue Skies Egypt

Congratulations to Blue Skies Egypt who successfully passed an unannounced GlobalGap audit this month. The team are pictured below following the audit.



## Blue Skies attends Africa Investment Summit 2020

This month Blue Skies attended a number of events around the UK Africa Investment Summit in London. The event was organised to highlight the benefits of trade between the UK & the African continent, and to specifically highlight the opportunities for UK companies to invest in agricultural and processing opportunities within the region. Data presented at the conference highlighted the huge growth opportunities becoming available due to continued population growth, rising levels of income, and urbanisation, and the fact that many African countries are now seeking investment within the agricultural area as well as value added production.

Blue Skies was used as an example of a British business that has developed local businesses in many countries utilising excellent local resources, staff and transport links. There were delegations from Ghana, Egypt, Senegal and Cote d’Ivoire attending along with a large number of Development Organisations and Financial investment companies.

George Hutton is pictured second from left participating in discussions during the conference.

## Blue Skies Egypt achieve ISO 22000



This month, Blue Skies Juice in Egypt successfully achieved ISO 22000 certification. ISO 22000 is a standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization dealing with food safety. Well done to Ekramy and his team (pictured) on this excellent result.

## Blue Skies at Food & Drink Expo

Blue Skies will be exhibiting its ice-cream at the Food and Drink Expo at the NEC in Birmingham on the 30 March to the 1st of April. Come and see us at stand CC261!

# BLUEPRINT 2020

## MONTHLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE



Our January theme is...  
**Training and Education**

### The Facts

- The Blue Skies strategy is to Grow, to Diversify and to make a sustainable Profit.
- To realise this strategy, all our people must have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to achieve clearly defined objectives.
- We must also support the next generation to ensure we have the talent, skills and passion to take our industry forward.

### Blueprint Commitment

Blue Skies are committed to ensuring all our people have the necessary training and education needed to fulfil their roles to their full potential.

### What we've been doing...

- In Ghana, extensive training has been carried out on our values and culture. There has also been sessions on land acquisition and anti-discrimination (pictured top).
- In Egypt, training was carried out on LEAN manufacturing and machine operation, food safety (pictured bottom).
- In Brazil there was training on water usage and updating cleaning procedures to improve efficiency.
- The UK carried out further training on mindfulness
- And across the group, many people have been undergoing their annual development appraisal 'Together we

For more information, go to:  
[www.blueskies.com/blueprint2020](http://www.blueskies.com/blueprint2020)



## Become a Blueprint Champion



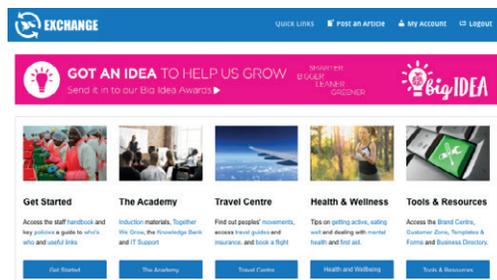
Have you or someone you know done something extraordinary to help us meet our Blueprint objectives or raise awareness of our monthly campaign?

If the answer is yes, you could be a winner at our Blueprint Awards!

This year we have more prizes up for grabs, so tell us what has been achieved by entering our awards at:

[www.blueskies.com/blueprintawards](http://www.blueskies.com/blueprintawards)

## Share the Knowledge



This month, Blue Skies launched a new intranet platform called 'Exchange'.

Exchange is an online portal designed to improve access to key information and policies, and provide a platform for knowledge sharing.

### How can we do better?

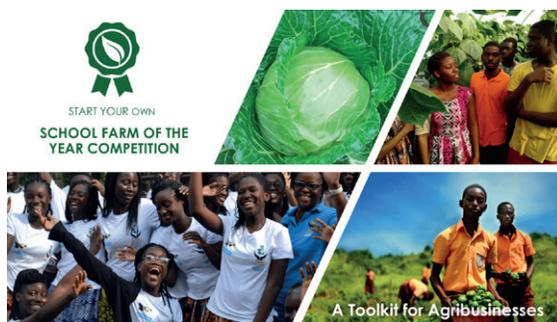
Send us your ideas for how we can do ever better to meet our Blueprint Commitments.

You can submit them at:  
<http://www.blueskies.com/ideas/>



# School Farm Toolkit Launched

FUTURE FRESH



The Blue Skies Foundation has launched a new Toolkit for agribusinesses to start their own School Farm of the Year Competition. Following the success of the initiative launched by Blue Skies in Ghana in 2015, the Toolkit provides detailed guidance for other organisations to replicate the model which is designed to encourage the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs. The toolkit can be downloaded from [www.blueskies.com/schoolfarm](http://www.blueskies.com/schoolfarm)



# FOUNDATION FOCUS

## AN UPDATE ON OUR LATEST PROJECTS

### Keeping track of over 100 projects...

A big part of the Foundation that is not often reported on, is the monitoring and evaluation process. With over 100 projects approved since 2009, it's a major undertaking to be able to know how every initiative is doing, and whether they are delivering on the original objectives. This is an important task in order to understand what is working well and where there is a need for improvement. We can then apply these learnings to our selection process to maximise impact and ensure sustainability of future projects.

To achieve this, Blue Skies Foundation conducts a comprehensive project assessment from March to May every year. Projects are assessed using evaluation forms (pictured top) against measurable objectives and the results are fed in to a Project Tracker (pictured bottom). In 2020, the Foundation will be assessing over 30 projects, with some dating back to our first year. Projects are selected for assessment based on how well they scored in previous reports, and when they were last visited.

## Introducing Sonya Orsini



A warm welcome to Sonya Orsini who has recently joined Blue Skies in Pitsford as our HR Advisor. In line with our desire to put yet more focus behind the support of our people, Sonya comes with a wealth of HR experience. She will be responsible for all of our core HR fundamentals (advisory, training, policies, administration, health and safety, TWGs and more) but we will also look to bring in a number of new HR approaches to help move our business further forward in this field.

## Revisiting Fotobi School



After celebrating ten years of the Foundation in 2019, we thought we would revisit some of the first projects we supported, to see how they were doing.

Fotobi School applied to the Foundation in 2009. At the time, students at the Junior High School were forced to study in unsafe, dilapidated buildings, and a shortage of space meant that some classes had to be taken under trees. The Blue Skies Foundation agreed to support the school, and in 2010 it constructed a new three classroom block, office and storeroom so that the teachers and students could have a safe, clean environment in which to learn.

When we last evaluated the school in 2017, we carried out a 'Most Significant Change' report, which applies a methodology to try and understand what had changed most for the community since when the project was provided. On that occasion we found that the new classroom block had helped to improve academic performance and discipline, but it had also significantly boosted the popularity of the school, so that a selection process needed to be introduced in order to control intake.

Fast forward to 2019, and it's a similar story. Despite the need for a fresh lick of paint, the classrooms are still in good shape and the raised profile of the school, which is now the second best performing in the district, continues to attract students from a wide area. The Head Teacher says "The provision of these classrooms was a life saver and has brought the community closer together". All the classrooms are currently in use and there are plans in the coming term to repaint the walls and fix new white boards. After almost ten years, it's great to see the project is continuing to make a real difference to this community.

## Gerald passes firefighting exam



Congratulations to Gerald Valkema on passing his final firefighting exam after two years of training. Gerald is a volunteer firefighter for his local town in the Netherlands.

## NEXT MONTH...

- It's Diversity and Equality month!
- We take a look at our new factory in Benin