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SOUTH AFRICANS 2015

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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ●



In 2006 the *Mail & Guardian*, then under the editorship of Ferial Haffajee, released the first edition of *Young South Africans*, featuring 100 notable South Africans under the age of 35.

Since then the publication has evolved, from the early days when the names shifted from year to year but familiar faces seemed to repeat on a regular basis to the no-repeats rule that we currently use. The numbers have also varied, from 100 in the first edition to 300 in 2009 and now to 200. The style of the profiles has evolved from short and sharp biographies to slightly more personal and in-depth profiles of people on the list. The categories have also changed but for the past few years it has had a settled on a list of 10 categories that allow us to select a cross-section of exceptional young South Africans.

This year regular readers of *Young South Africans* will spot two new categories. The first is a look back at some of the people who have featured in Young South Africans over the past nine editions, in an Alumnus section. People like Trevor Noah (2010), Julius Malema (2009, 2010), Lauren Beukes (2009), Michael Jordaan (2008) and Bryan Habana (2007), among others, are just a few of the around 2000 people who have made the list in the past nine editions.

The second new section is what we call Rising Stars. Each year we get nominations for young people who are still at school but who don't make the main list, mainly because they lack the experience of others on the list. This does not diminish the magnitude of their achievements and so we created a category just for them this year.

Each year we put out a call for nominations and this year we have been impressed with the quality of nominations coming from the public, telling us, once again, how much the readers of the *M&G* value the *Young South Africans* project.

The *M&G* is especially proud of this project, because over the years we have profiled people who have gone on to achieve amazing things and this year's list is no different.

We have artists, lawyers, scientists and environmental activists, we have people driving education forward as well as those pushing the boundaries of health and technology, sometimes simultaneously. Not all of these people are living in South Africa and not all of them originally came from South Africa, but they all have a strong belief in the future of this country.

At the same time as working on this edition we have gone back and loaded the past nine editions into a new site 200YSA.mg.co.za. Here you will find every profile we have published in the past nine years as well as the 2015 edition. (They are published as they appeared in the newspaper at the time. Any errors in the original profiles will not have been corrected even if they were corrected on the web at the time. Errors can be reported to benk@mg.co.za — please include the link and the requested correction.)

In addition to finding the profiles for this year online, you can download the entire publication for your tablet from the Apple App Store or the Google Play store for free (search for "200 Young South Africans").

We live in a time when publishing is at a crossroads where the influence of print is waning and digital channels are growing in influence. Young South Africans is no exception to this and future editions will embrace digital channels more effectively, but there is one thing that will not change. We will continue to seek out and highlight amazing young South Africans and give our readers a look at the people who are making a difference and driving the country forward.

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Photos

Photographs were sourced directly from the individuals featured in 200 Young South Africans. Every effort has been made to identify and credit the photographers but this has not always been possible. Any oversight should be brought to the attention of Ben Kelly on BenK@mg.co.za and will be corrected online.

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How we select the M&G 200 Young South Africans

Every year in January we open up nominations for Young South Africans. These nominations are online and we promote the call for nominations through adverts, in print, online and through our social media channels.

This year we received almost 2000 nominations for the publication.

Once nominations close we go through the list, eliminating duplicates and shortlisting potential candidates.

The shortlists are vetted by the M&G's section heads and we select between 12 and 25 candidates per category.

Our team of writers then contact the selected candidates and we write profiles based on these interviews.

If you know someone who we should profile in 2016 make a note and nominate them when entries open in January next year.



Download this edition to your iPad or Android tablet. Search "200 Young South Africans" in your app store to download it.



Acknowledgements

The *Mail & Guardian* would like to thank the companies that have helped us to make the 10th issue of *Young South Africans* possible. They are:

- City of Johannesburg (Main sponsor)
- Crawford Schools (Rising Star section sponsor)
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- KayaFM (marketing partner and Media & Film section sponsor)
- Medshield (Health section sponsor)
- Momentum (Education section sponsor)
- Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Alumni section sponsor)
- Place in the Sun (Wine at the 200 Young South Africans event)



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PLACE IN THE SUN
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About Place in the Sun wines

The idea of paying something forward has probably been with humankind since our very beginning. The Greeks wrote plays about it, believing it was the best way to do "a deal of good with a little money". It has also entered popular culture, our movies and music. Simply put, the idea refers to the concept that if someone gives you something, rather than pay it back, you should pay it forward, passing on the good, so that still more people may benefit from it.

At this point you may be asking yourself what any of this has to do with wine.

Alvercia Juries (25) has lived her entire life on a farm in the Devon Valley near Stellenbosch. She comes from a community of 250 farmworkers on two farms there, Waterkloof and Fransmanskraal, supplying grapes for the production of Place in the Sun wines and for which the brand pays a premium.

At the end of this year she will be the first person from her community to graduate from university. For the past few years Juries has been working towards a degree in nursing at the University of the Western Cape. She chose to pursue a career in nursing as she has a strong desire to help others. To the team behind Place in the Sun wines, this attitude perfectly captures the spirit of "pay it forward". You see, Juries' studies were funded by the premiums paid by Place in the Sun. And now our one good deed will help countless more people through her.

This has been made possible through Fairtrade, a global organisation. Fairtrade ensures that a premium is paid for the fruit used to make Place in the Sun and this money is channelled back into the community for various programmes decided on by a farmworker's trust.

Juries' is just one of many success stories of the programme, but the efforts do not end there. Apart from financial contributions to school and university studies, the premiums fund sporting, recreational, health and nutritional schemes for the community. It is about upliftment and empowerment.

Two other young people are already following in Juries' footsteps. Her sister Chandré and Cameron Goeieman are also pursuing tertiary studies. They have enrolled for diploma courses at Boland College in Stellenbosch.

Place in the Sun is exceptionally proud of these young achievers and how they have seized the opportunities presented to them through the Fairtrade-accredited brand. At the end of the day this is why this wine was created: to give back.

Produced by the team behind the critically acclaimed Zonnebloem wines, Place in the Sun is a brand that stands for enthusiastic spirit and optimism. This is reflected in the bright, lively and smooth drinking wines that make up the range. And while this charitable spirit is rare in the business world, when you speak to Zonnebloem cellarmaster Deon Boshoff, you understand why these wines are so important to the Zonnebloem team.

Boshoff, the son of a farmworker, rose to cellarmaster at Zonnebloem through hard work and talent, but he never forgets where he came from. Place in the Sun is a chance for Boshoff and his team to give back, to provide opportunities for others to follow in his footsteps.

Juries is living proof of the good that a program like this can achieve. As she goes forth into the world armed with an education and a will to help others in the same way she was helped, the process of paying forward continues. She beautifully embodies the values of generosity behind the Fairtrade concept. Her successes are her own and a result of her iron will and dedication, but her achievements wouldn't have been possible without a helping hand from Place in the Sun.

If you would like to support the community of Fransmanskraal and Waterkloof Farms, it is as simple as purchasing a bottle of Place in the Sun. The five wines in the range are available at selected stockists. The ripe, flavourful Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz retail for around R52 each, while the crisp and elegant unwooded Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc are on offer for around R42. There has never been a simpler, easier or more enjoyable way to give, and as we have seen, a little giving can go a long way.

About The Johannesburg Youth Orchestra Company

The Johannesburg Youth Orchestra Company (JYOC) was established in Johannesburg in 1998 as an NGO with tax exemption.

Operating in Soweto, Johannesburg, Evaton and Sebokeng, the JYOC responds to the needs of the youth in all communities by providing a centre of musical excellence in orchestral training and a meeting place for over 600 young people with musical aspirations. The JYOC's teacher training and mentorship programme equips young adults to find work in the music and education sectors.

The value of music training is undeniable: children who learn music have an advantage over their peers in terms of emotional, intellectual, cognitive skills and abilities.

Through giving young people opportunities to learn, create and participate in music making, the JYOC builds people's internal capacity to reach their potential. The JYOC's mission is to:

- Develop youth through excellent music tuition, while promoting social, personal and artistic growth.
- Create opportunities of choice through top-level music education and training for youth from all communities
- Build community relationships through joint participation in music initiatives.
- Offer skills development to young adults for music-related career opportunities.

The JYOC boasts no fewer than 10 graded ensembles and orchestras providing orchestral training to children and youth of all ages and levels of competence.

Children and youth from over 50 schools are represented in the various groups. All the ensembles are regularly invited to perform at a variety of events in and around Johannesburg.

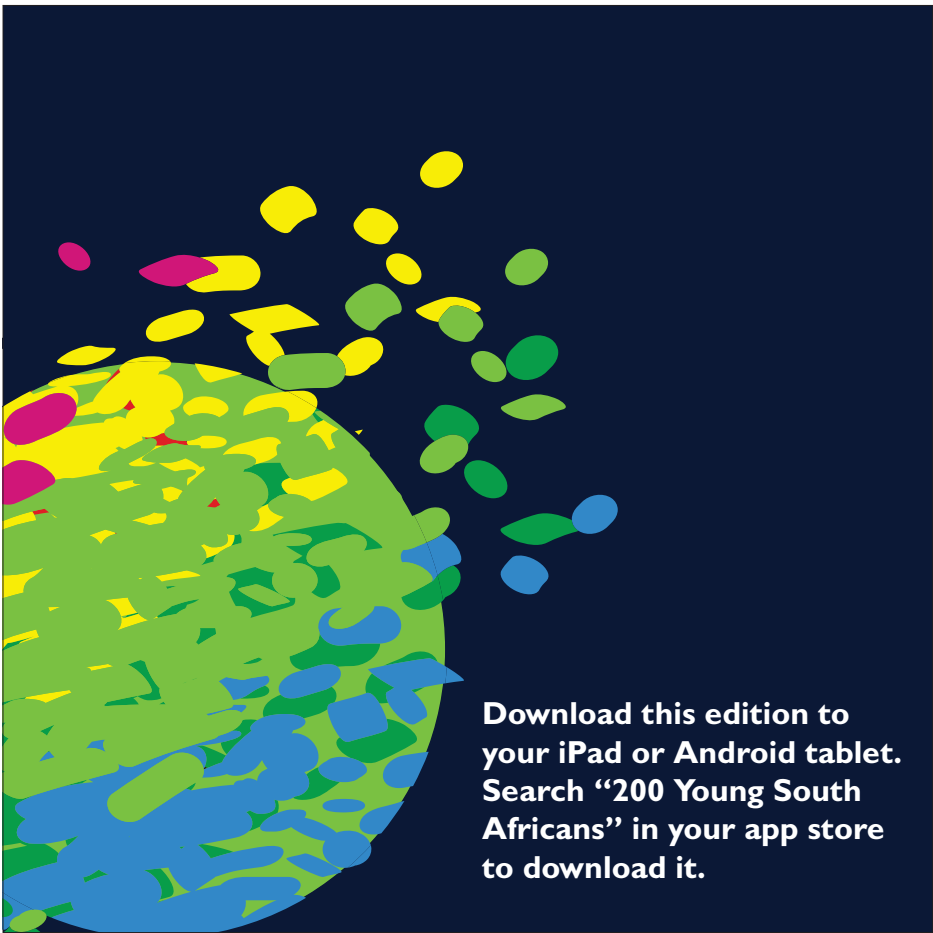
Auditions are held annually in September/October for placement into any of the orchestras and ensembles.

The groups are:

- Beginner Winds
- Beginner Strings
- Foundation Winds
- Foundation Strings
- Symphonic Wind Band
- Johannesburg Youth Orchestra
- Johannesburg Youth Jazz Ensemble
- Chamber Winds
- Percussion Ensemble

The Symphonic Wind Band is one of the JYOC's senior ensembles and is conducted by Etienne Mecloen. It consists of 50 musicians aged between 12 and 25 years. The Johannesburg Symphonic Wind Band was formed in 1990. Their repertoire consists of a variety of popular, big band and symphonic music. This group of young musicians has reached a high level of competence and performs at various venues in and around Johannesburg

All woodwind, brass and percussion players who have achieved a Grade 6 level and above are welcome to audition to join this group, which provided the entertainment during Young South Africans' 10th anniversary celebrations.





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LAUREN BEUKES

Author

Twitter: @laurenbeukes

Internationally acclaimed South African writer Lauren Beukes credits journalism for her writing style. "It allowed me to be curious about the world, to ask people difficult questions, to develop an eye for detail and an ear for dialogue and a better understanding of the complexities of people," she says from Amsterdam, where she is on a winding tour through Europe to promote her latest book *Broken Monsters*.

Before Beukes became a best-selling author of award-winning fiction that dabbles in the realms of peculiarity, crime, horror and science fiction, the Johannesburg-born writer contributed to publications such as *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle*, and was a recipient of the Vodacom Journalist of the Year award. "I wouldn't be the writer I am if I didn't come from a journalism background and I use all my skills in my novel research, visiting locations and interviewing locals to get a personal perspective on the cities I write about, from Johannesburg to Detroit."

NRP's Michael Schaub writes in a review of *Broken Monsters*: "Beukes is an insanely gifted horror writer, and her descriptions of the crime scenes and the accompanying chalk-outlined 'ghost doors' are profoundly terrifying." Beukes's debut novel *Moxyland* — a thriller set in near-future Cape Town, which is run by an oppressive government — received a nomination for the South African *Sunday Times* Fiction prize, and its e-book earned the Cape Town-based author a spot on the *Top 200 Young South Africans* list in 2009. Describing what she went through during that year, she says: "I had a new baby daughter, got my first international book deal and was writing *Zoo City* at night, while working by day at an animation company, writing TV scripts for cartoons. So I was worried and happy about all those things. I was excited to have finally realised my dream of writing novels, but I wished there was a way I could do it fulltime."

“I use all my skills in my novel research, visiting locations and interviewing locals to get a personal perspective on the cities I write about, from Johannesburg to Detroit.”

With the release of *Zoo City* the following year, which came after signing a two-book deal (for *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*), Beukes's career catapulted internationally, allowing her the chance to live out her dreams of becoming a full-time writer. The book was awarded several prizes, including Britain's science-fiction prize and the Arthur C Clarke award in 2011, and will be adapted into a movie after local producer Helena Spring acquired the film rights to the book. Beukes then wrote *The Shining Girls*; last year Leonardo DiCaprio's production company, Appian Way, decided to adapt it into a series for the small screen. Beukes also writes comics at times, such as for US's Vertigo comic series, and she directed the 2011 documentary *Glitterboys & Ganglands* on Miss Gay Western Cape.

As she tours the world, signing and reading passages of her work to adoring fans and rubbing shoulders with other famous authors, Beukes says she still enjoys doing everyday things, like relaxing on home ground with a book. "The Book Lounge in Cape Town is my favourite bookstore in the world," she says. "I prefer paper, but read a lot of manuscripts on my Kindle; and my six-year-old is super into audiobooks. She listens to Greek myths when she goes to sleep. They're more gruesome than I remember."

When asked what we can expect from the author in future, she responds, "More strange, interesting books, more cool creative collaborations, including a comic I'm co-writing with Joey Hi-Fi, aka Dale Halvorsen. And hopefully some kids' books."

Asked for a word of advice for the YSA nominees, she says: "Be cheeky — ask for what you want. But don't be an assbat." — Stefanie Jason



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

LIRA (LERATO MOLAPO)

Singer

Twitter: @Miss_LIRA

Singer Lira stepped onto the music scene 11 ago. In that time, the Daveytown-born musician says she's accomplished a number of the goals she's out for herself. "It's been a remarkable journey; I've learnt so much and had amazing experiences along the way," she says.

Her career highlights include winning several South African Music Awards and being named a *Top 200 YSA*. "My most cherished memories have been performing for Barack Obama's second inauguration in 2012, meeting and performing for Oprah Winfrey in 2008 and 2009, performing at sold-out, arena-sized concerts for my fans in South Africa as well in other parts of the African continent."

Born Lerato Molapo, Lira has come a long way since her R&B debut song *All My Love* hit local TV screens and radio stations. Prior to the release of the song and eponymous album in 2003, her mixture of sweet and commanding vocals caught the attention of king of kwaito and producer Arthur Mafokate, who signed her to his stable, 999 Music.

"I learnt a lot about the operational functioning of the small independent label while I was at 999 Music. I observed the many facets and functions of different departments, how they work together to create a star. I also asked lots of questions for clarity and researched whatever seemed unclear or undisclosed," she says.

She signed to Sony Music Africa in 2006, largely due to her work ethic. "I had become incredibly professional, marketable and always willing to put in the work. I began exploring expanding my career internationally." She released the multiple-award winning album *Feel Good* and in 2010 performed at the Fifa World Cup kick-off concert alongside Alicia Keys and Shakira. In the same year she was also part of former South African president Nelson Mandela's 92nd birthday celebrations.

With her blend of Afro-pop, jazz and R&B, Lira's first two albums at Sony went platinum and her concert DVD, *Live In Concert: A Celebration*, went triple-platinum.

"I've been an independent artist and I've learnt accountability, responsibility, commitment, excellence, professionalism and due process through all my experiences." Today, Lira has launched albums in the US, Italy and Thailand, has been nominated for international awards such as a BET award in 2012 and has done many international tours. Her acting debut was in Antonio Falduto's *The Italian Consul* in 2011.

In 2013 Lira's memoirs were published, titled *Lira: Making Her Story*. Reviewing the book at the time, the *Dispatch Live* writes that the usually guarded Lira opens up in her memoirs and "tackles, at length, abandonment issues with her biological father, and even gives us a glimpse of what her wedding vows might have read like in a gushing dedication to her husband Robin Kohl".

But the book is not the only glimpse into her life. "Following the release of my debut album [*Rise Again*] in the US, I'm about to release a seven-part TV series called *Dreamchaser*, which shows my experience of touring the USA and marketing the album." She is about to complete her sixth studio album, due for release later this year.

As she works on completing her sixth studio album, due for release later this year, I ask Lira what advice she would give to her younger self. "Relax. Everything you will go through will be of great value and will serve you in your journey, trust yourself and your inner guidance. Avoid comparing yourself to anyone else. Love and accept yourself as you," she says. — Stefanie Jason



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



REUBEN RIFFEL

Chef

Twitter: @ReubenRiffel

"It's an interesting one really," top chef Reuben Riffel (42) says on how his humble beginnings in his hometown Franschhoek in the Western Cape influenced his work ethos. "Sometimes it feels that I'm driven to work hard due to my fear of failure. I've seen it too many times growing up."

Riffel grew up in the town's then "coloured" designated neighbourhood of Groendal during apartheid. From witnessing hardships, he says: "One develops a drive to lift yourself out of that type of life; a drive that just intensifies the more you grow."

Coming from a large family, where his grandmother, mother and aunt all cooked, Reuben began to understand how food brings people together. He told the *Daily Maverick* that he acquired his palate from his mother, who worked in restaurants in Franschhoek. "She used to bring home quite a bit of off-cuts and stuff that was left over. This was usually on Sundays, so I started to taste the delicious little things coming back from the buffet. Even something like potato gratin ... I had never tasted anything like that in my life before."

This blended history of hardship, home cooking and high-end cuisine is what has made Riffel what he is today: one of the country's most famous chefs, with a wealth of accolades and achievements under his belt.

"We all have pride in our heritage. Food plays a big part in that. Discovering new customs and trying out different tastes is always exciting," he told *AFKinsider.com*.

His appreciation of South African food is clear in the many cookbooks he has authored, which include *Braai* — *Reuben on Fire* and *Reuben Cooks Local*. His culinary training began in the kitchens of Racine bistro at the Chamonix wine estate, where he rose from waiter to head chef and finessed his understanding of and skills in traditional French cooking.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Reuben's Restaurant in Franschhoek opened in 2004, followed by the One&Only hotel at the V&A Waterfront and Paternoster's Abalone Hotel. "I've been at the One & Only now for four years and we are still going strong," says Riffel. "It's an amazing group of people and a lot of exciting things have come from them."

He is busy working on a new book and cooking show, which will be the product of the recent partnership with Samsung Electronics South Africa. The show will add to

Riffel's many TV appearance — he was part of *Masterchef SA*'s judging panel last year, and was on celebrity US TV personality Martha Stewart's cooking show.

He has also featured in *Time* magazine and won awards such as Restaurant of the Year and Chef of the Year in 2004, but says he's still got "a loooong bucket list" of things he wants to achieve. Speaking about his highlights over the years, he says: "Opening my own restaurant in my hometown will always rate highly, and at the One&Only hotel.

While being part of *Masterchef SA* has been a big highlight, obviously."

Asked what advice he would give to this year's 200 YSA nominees, Riffel says: "Believe in yourself and don't always buy into your own hype, stay grounded and stay realistic."

The father of two adds that he would tell a younger him to "learn to play that guitar your dad gave you and pay more attention at school, especially in the maths class". — *Stefanie Jason*

MICHAEL JORDAAN

Venture capitalist

Twitter: @MichaelJordaan

Michael Jordaan is not your average banker. Promoted to chief executive of one of the big four banks at the unlikely age of 30, Jordaan took this vote of faith in his abilities to heart and turned FNB into the most innovative bank in South Africa.

Along the way, FNB won a host of awards for innovation and led the banking field for years, launching a superb banking app years before the competition followed. When Jordaan stepped down at the end of 2013, FNB was adding 100 000 customers a month.

In an age of investment bank scandals and recession where bankers have been vilified, this unusual, unorthodox banker from Stellenbosch turned this stereotype on its head. Smart, dashing, humble and quick-witted, Jordaan quickly became more than just a banker. He became a role model for the modern-day leader of a large organisation.

Just as Twitter was emerging as a mass market phenomenon in 2010, Jordaan became the public face of a bank experiencing a renaissance not only as a financial institution — it was also being gushed about on social media. Jordaan took to this Twitter fame with aplomb. He replied directly to irate customers, soothed them with his unforced humour, and like everything else he does, imbued it with his trademark humility. Jordaan has 86 445 followers, the kind of Twitter celebrity usually reserved for top actors and DJs.

He was the golden boy of FNB, working his way and his magic through a range of divisions before landing the top job. After starting out at Deutsche Bank in Hamburg and Frankfurt, he returned to South Africa and FNB's sister company, Rand Merchant Bank. He was soon made head of Origin Bank, a merchant bank aimed at individuals. Then he took over the dysfunctional HomeLoans division, turning it into a R400-million profit maker. His next gig — as head of rewards service eBucks.com, which he grew from a sideline idea into a 500 000 customer-strong loyal base — arguably set him up for the job as FNB's leader. At eBucks he worked with his successor Jacques Celliers, who as continued his innovative reworking of the bank, honing what would become the bank's tech-savvy internet offerings, as well as its now iconic loyalty service.

Jordaan, who has a PhD in Banking Supervision, split his time between his Joburg offices (where he notably drove a hybrid Toyota Prius) during the week and his vineyard home in Stellenbosch, where his three daughters live and where his architect-turned-winemaker wife Rose has produced world-class wines. The farm Bartenney was bought by his grandfather in 1952 but was later sold by his father. Jordaan bought it back in 2006 and, like the bank, rejuvenated it.

When asked what the three things he's most proud of are, Jordaan says "creating an empowering culture in a traditional bank, winning the award for the world's most innovative bank, and knowing when to quit a corporate career".

But, since he's left the bank to run his own venture capital fund, he is most proud of "making risky investments in a range of start-ups".

Through this, he is still thinking big. "Montegray Capital and Angelhub Ventures support entrepreneurs by providing capital, strategy and opening doors," he says. "We're excited about new technologies that can do things 10 times better than traditional businesses, often with completely new business models."

From his base in Stellenbosch — he and his wife own a converted bank that houses a restaurant, a range of artisanal food makers and a Bartenney wine bar — Jordaan has tapped into the rich vein of innovation that flows in the Western Cape town; it is becoming renowned for its tech start-ups. From messaging service Mxit (of which he is chairman) to SnapScan (a smartphone payment app acquired by Standard Bank) Stellenbosch has emerged as a counterpoint to Cape Town for the crown of South Africa's Silicon Valley. Jordaan, as ever, is at the epicentre of this development with his investment funds, providing early investment to tech start-ups.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

But he still says the best thing that ever happened to him was "becoming a father; nothing can prepare you for the immediate love you feel for your kids".

Asked what his one suggestion would be to make South Africa a better place, Jordaan says: "Privatise a whole range of underperforming state assets, and invest the proceeds in education."

Always with his eye on the future. — *Toby Shapshak*



VUYO JACK

Co-founder, Empowerdex

Twitter: @vuyojack

Vuyo Jack, also known as “Mr Empowerment”, is presently acting director general for the department of arts and culture, providing strategic leadership towards achievement of the department's vision of an arts, culture and heritage sector that contributes to social cohesion, nation building and economic empowerment.

His advice to young people is profound, saying they need to always remember that they have a “unique light”.

“We must never allow anyone to interfere in our light,” he stresses. “It gives us purpose and invention. Darkness cannot be inherent without interfering with light. Every individual will know what their light is. It points towards our career and the company we keep in terms of our friends and relationships. We must surround ourselves with the right people and avoid those who dim the light. If we reflect on the life of Steve Jobs, for example, he was presented with numerous challenges in his life, but he did not allow these to interfere with his goals and objectives. He followed his intuition and his inner light.”

Jack further explains that light brings creativity, fuels the imagination and emphasises — as Albert Einstein did — that imagination is more important than knowledge, but says that most people lose sight of their imagination, which is the vital foundation for economic growth.

“This might sound esoteric, but using our imaginations is actually a practical thing that prevents us from doing the same old thing all the time. Have the courage and conviction to go against the grain and think out of the box.

“Never lose your individuality,” he continues. “I will never be a Bill Gates, but I am Vuyo Jack. I am me.”

In the first *Young 200* survey where Jack was profiled, he says it was good for him in terms of receiving mentoring requests, some of which resulted in people starting their own businesses, and it did raise his visibility.

“The survey really reaches out to young people and they will refer to profiles which inspire them.”

Jack was adviser to the government on the architecture of the black empowerment laws and codes and is the co-founder of Empowerdex, an advisory and verification company that aligns South African businesses across all sectors to codes of good practice for broad-based black economic empowerment. Its primary aim is accelerating economic development in Africa through the use of innovative financing mechanisms.

In 2003, Jack was appointed to the BEE Task Team to advise the minister of trade and industry on BEE legislation and the BEE guidelines to help companies implement BEE in a sustainable manner. He is also on the dti's Advisory Council on the creation of black industrialists.

From 2004 to 2009 he was appointed adviser to the minister of minerals and energy on BEE in the liquid fuel industry. He also compiled a 10-year review of BEE for the Office of the President in the publication *Ten Year Review of Democracy*.

A chartered accountant, Jack lectured Financial Accounting at Wits' School of Accountancy and was a member for the Continuing Professional Development Committee of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants for six years. He was a visiting professor at the University of the Free State School of Management and also lectured financial and managerial accounting at St Sithians for University of Cambridge accounting modules.

In March 2009 Jack was chosen as one of the Young Global Leaders (2009) by the World Economic

Forum in Davos, Switzerland and in the same year was one of the founding members of the investment company, CapAfrica, which focuses on opportunities in the logistics sectors and private equity investments. One of CapAfrica's landmark investments was in DB Schenker South Africa, in which they acquired a 25.1% shareholding.

In September 2008 he started a think-tank called Africa Empowered as platform for businesses to contribute to the economic development of Africa and to engage with people at grassroots level.

Jack describes himself as a “passionate, creative and economic warrior.” He is a known fan of author and philosopher Paulo Coelho and is a player of classical and jazz music, active practitioner of tai-chi and lover of reading, dancing and travelling.

Jack has authored two books, *Broad-Based BEE: The Complete Guide*, and *Make BEE work for you*, a manual for small businesses. In 2010 Vuyo co-wrote the musical *Ilizwe* with Ingrid Wylde, which uses South African music classics as a key driver to the story. The show was also staged in Cape Town in 2013 for the Africa Meeting of the World Economic Forum, and was a resounding success. The musical was recently staged at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in July 2015. — *Rebecca Haynes*



PHOTO: BRENTON GEACH

JUDITH FEBRUARY

Senior research associate, ISS

Twitter: @judith_february

Judith February is a senior research associate at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and is affiliated to the University of Cape Town's Graduate School for Development Policy and Practice.

When profiled in *M&G 200 Young* in 2009, February was head of the Institute for Democracy in Africa's (Idasa) South African governance programme, a position she held for nine years until 2012. Thereafter she was executive director of the democracy and governance programme at the HSRC.

“This survey is such an interesting and innovative idea,” says February. “It certainly makes one think more broadly about the role we have as individuals and within society. It also allows us the luxury to look back, but also ahead to the future. At the time I was featured in *200 Young*, I was already on a trajectory and sticking rather resolutely to my career path. My advice to young people is that always following one's “due north” is probably the most important thing. Remain faithful to your compass.

“It is also vital to exploit all your talents. Sometimes one has latent talents and until you try and see what they are, you will never know they exist.” February also advises to use every experience, in a professional sense. “Make the most of everything you do,” she stresses. “Often we land up doing something we did not actually understand the significance of until after we experienced it.

“Be creative about building relationships in order to open new doors. I have spent a large part of my career building relationships and trying to learn from those.”

February is also an independent, non-executive director of Coronation Fund Managers, which is “different to my day job, but offers a unique lens into the way in which a growing, successful South African company operates”.

“I studied at the University of Cape Town to be a lawyer and practised law for five years before realising I wanted to do something different, which was broadly, to make some difference in public life, be it through writing or research, no matter how small that contribution might be.”

From June 2000, February headed the Idasa governance programme. Her role involved monitoring the performance of South Africa's political institutions, with a focus on government, including corruption and its impact on governance, parliamentary oversight and institutional design.

“While with Idasa, I had lots of freedom to explore research interests and to write, and I used this to the fullest extent. I will always be deeply grateful for those 12 years. They were fulfilling, opened my mind to many possibilities and I was very fortunate to have colleagues of great intellect from whom I learnt much about politics and governance.

“You need to see yourself as part of a whole, as part of a society that is in deep turmoil at the moment. In our patch, we must garden it as well as we can. “Political analysis using radio and television affords the opportunity to have one's voice heard and to contribute to the debate. I am fortunate that I am able to do that regularly. We must use the means at our disposal to contribute to the debate on ways to deal with our socioeconomic challenges and to speak truth to power, if necessary.”

A regular media commentator on South African politics, February has been listed in the *Financial Mail's Little Black Book of 300 black professionals* and in the *MTN/Mail and Guardian 100 women in South Africa*, released in August 2010.

For about 10 years, February's column *Between the Lines* appeared in the *Cape Times* and she is the co-editor with Neeta Misra-Dexter of *Testing democracy: Which Way is South Africa Going?* February continues to write political commentary for a number of publications, including *Eyewitness News*, *Die Burger*, and *Daily Maverick*.

She served on an ad hoc panel chaired by Pregs Govender to evaluate the effectiveness of South Africa's Parliament in 2009, and in the same year was awarded a summer fellowship at the Freeman Spogli Institute for Democracy Development and the Rule of Law at Stanford University, California. In 2012, she was awarded a Spring Reagan-Fascell Fellowship at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington DC, where she spent six months.

“It might sound quirky but I was a Latin major at university, hence my absolute love of the classics, so I might have put Virgil's *Aeneid* down as a favourite book,” concludes February. — *Rebecca Haynes*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



MMUSI MAIMANE

DA leader **Twitter:** @MmusiMaimane

At 34, Mmusi Maimane is the youngest leader of the official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance. He was named Mmusi (it means a governor in Setswana) by his paternal grandmother, but though his political star has risen fast in the past five years, Maimane says he avoids putting himself under pressure to live up to the meaning of his name.

With the party having enjoyed 23% of the national vote in the 2014 elections, Maimane carries the hopes of more than four million voters who chose South Africa's second biggest party. Having joined the DA only in 2010, Maimane rose through the ranks from being a DA caucus leader in Johannesburg to being elected one of the deputy federal chairpersons, national spokesperson and then the DA parliamentary leader in 2014. He became the youngest and the first black African leader of the DA in May this year.

Maimane's entrance to politics was by "sheer accident", he says. "I was involved in a nongovernmental organisation that gives people food. Then I saw a grandmother digging a pit toilet for herself and I said 'this cannot be happening'. I had to do something to contribute positively."

Maimane holds a degree in psychology, a master's degree in public administration (majoring in macroeconomics) and a second master's in theology. Though he is an ordained pastor at Liberty Church in Roodepoort, Maimane considers his Christianity to be "deeply personal" and "I do not believe that South Africa should be a religious state. South Africa is governed by the Constitution and I am a defender of our country's Constitution. My faith guides me when I take decisions, but I don't expect other people to also believe in that."

Leading the DA does come with pressures of meeting certain expectations says Maimane, but these are stresses



PHOTO: DAVID HARRISON

he expected from the very beginning. He believes it is better to lead when one is still young, because "you can keep going, you push hard and you can straddle between the young and the old". There are some disadvantages though. "The risk is that when I reach 50 I might have reached the end of my political life. But also when you're a young leader your kids are still young and there are a lot of demands on you."

The former lecturer at the Gordon Institute of Business Science believes the role of young people in South African politics is "absolutely vital". We have the advantage of living in a post-apartheid South Africa. Yes, we also feel the impact of apartheid, but our response should be a proactive one.

We've got a benefit of getting an education that is better than what our parents got." Maimane says young people's role should not be reduced to voting delegates into parties.

Young Members of Parliament contribute positively to that sphere of government, according to Maimane, who says the youth day debate that took place in June was a good example, when young MPs played a major role in giving direction about where the country should go. "Young MPs are faring well given the opportunity. Our national spokespeople have primarily been young people and [are] doing well."

Maimane's belief in the youth helping to build the country's future has seen him working with several nongovern-

mental organisations that focus primarily on youth and rural development, as well as HIV and Aids.

Lack of jobs tops the list of the greatest challenges for South Africa's youth that Maimane wishes could be overcome soon. The country's unemployment rate stands at 35%, and 66% of those without jobs are young people.

"Our education system does not offer them opportunities. In addition to being unemployed, sometimes they are unemployable," says Maimane.

His advice to 2015 nominees: "It is within all of us to make South Africa the country that we want. Young people must contribute to the development of this country." — *Mmanaledi Mataboge*

JULIUS MALEMA

EFF leader **Twitter:** @Julius_S_Malema

Julius Malema is one of the youngest leaders to have survived the trials and tribulations of South African politics. From the time that he began leading the Congress of South African Students to heading up the third-biggest political party in Parliament, Malema has become a household name.

He founded the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in 2013 — less than a year before the country's general elections — and managed to win 25 seats in the National Assembly, far more than some parties have managed in more than a decade.

This former ANC Youth League president is popular for both the right and wrong reasons. Malema has been called a stubborn, populist leader who is careless with words and divides the country along racial lines. In a biography on Malema, *An Inconvenient Youth: Julius Malema and the 'New' ANC*, Fiona Forde describes him as having "a physical temper to match his vicious tongue." He was expelled from the ANC in 2012 after about two years of being on the wrong side of the party's leadership, mainly because of his outspokenness and expression of different views to that of the organisation. His former ally President Jacob Zuma, who is now his main adversary, once called him a leader in the making and a future president.

The 34-year-old believes it's the nature of the political game. He has been charged with fraud and money-laundering and he has faced at least three assault charges. In May this year the South African Revenue Service withdrew a court application to have Malema sequestered. A successful sequestration would have threatened his MP position.

Though many young people envy his political success, particularly his EFF achievements, Malema said it's been a tough journey. "If I knew, I wouldn't have accepted this position. If you were to ask me to form a new political party



PHOTO: DELWYN VERASAMY

tomorrow I wouldn't agree," he said. "It's not an easy thing. You're young and you have to form a political party that will accommodate people from all walks of life. Some come with their cultures and they want to impose themselves on you using their age. 'Also, running around across the country setting up a party without resources is not nice. You've got a problem of age, allegations of tax evasion and the burden of being expelled from where you came from [the ANC]."

Malema has realised from working as an MP that the country can be run well together, despite people belonging to opposing parties. Though what South Africans usually see on television is a heated confrontation between the ruling ANC and opposition parties, Malema said it's not all that bad: "Sometimes they are amenable to persuasion."

Malema serves on Parliament's portfolio committee on mineral resources and is a parliamentary representative on the Judicial Service Commission, which recommends the appointment of judges to the superior courts.

Topping his agenda is transformation of the economy, which he believes will be achieved through the nationalisation of mines and redistribution of land without compensation. Creating an equal society will lead to the country's prosperity, he said. But because of his views and bluntness — some would add arrogance — Malema has lost many political friends along the way.

In his ANC Youth League days, his leadership fought for what they called "generational mix" in an effort to force older leaders to allow young people to also hold positions of influ-

ence in the ruling party.

His advice to 2015 nominees: "You have to establish the purpose of your existence and decide whether you want to live to achieve that mission. If you don't achieve that mission you're betraying yourself, because you've made a commitment to yourself."

Malema holds a diploma in youth development from Unisa and is studying towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications and African languages with the same university. He was chosen as 2014 *Daily Maverick* South African Person of the Year. In 2011 *Forbes* magazine named him as one of the 10 most powerful young men in Africa. He has certainly proved that young people are capable of leading. — *Mmanaledi Mataboge*



BUTI MANAMELA

Deputy minister in the Presidency

Twitter: @ButiManamela

Over the years since Buti Manamela was featured in the *Mail & Guardian's 200 Young South Africans*, he has matured into a role model for many young people and in effect represents the aspirations of youth due to a government portfolio he leads. Manamela is deputy minister in the presidency for planning, monitoring and evaluation as well as youth and administration. The 36-year-old spent five years as an ANC Member of Parliament before he was tasked with a bigger responsibility in the current government administration.

"The experience I have acquired as a youth activist comes in handy, but serving in this portfolio meant that I had to listen a lot and read a lot," he said. "I also had to know what other government departments are doing on youth policy, because I need to co-ordinate that."

Manamela rose up political ranks after he was chosen as national secretary of the SACP's youth wing, the Young Communist League in 2003. He held the position for 11 years, until last year. In Parliament Manamela served on the ANC's strategy committee that does the overall planning of the governing party's work in the National Assembly. He also chaired the special projects committee, which oversaw planning for the 91st birthday celebrations of the late Nelson Mandela and organised the South African Chapter of "67 minutes of volunteering" to honour the political icon.

Manamela serves on the Limpopo ANC's provincial executive committee and the SACP's central committee.

He has toned down the image of a carefree, firebrand youth leader he once was to that of a mature diplomat to suit his new responsibilities, but he often returns to his old, radical self during parliamentary debates. It's because the Parliament platform requires that, he tells the *M&G*.

What keeps Manamela grounded? "You do not lose anything by being humble. Humility does not cost a cent. No matter how much you are in a rush, it always helps to stop and listen to people."

He acknowledges that the biggest challenge for young South Africans is unemployment. In June this year his portfolio received a new report that shows unemployment among youth keeps increasing. Part of providing solutions for Manamela is "getting young people, especially black Africans, interested in running small, medium and micro enterprises. Not your short-term lucky tenders, but sustainable businesses". South Africa could have a better future if young people began realising that "there is no greater freedom than the power to change things".

Though he is part of its administration, Manamela is not shy to admit that the State fails young entrepreneurs, whose businesses often collapse because they are not paid on time for services rendered to government departments.

Manamela however believes the youth should shoulder at least a portion of the blame for the way things have turned



PHOTO: MADELENE CRONJE

“
Young people no longer want to be [merely] represented, they want to express their own views
”

in the country. "In the past 21 years we seem to be shifting responsibilities to government and our elders. We are in a way disempowering ourselves."

Some of the examples he wishes young people could emulate include the decision by the Wits University Students Representative Council to raise funds to pay fees for their fellow struggling students, and the constructive manner in which UCT students campaigned for the statue of Cecil Rhodes to be removed from campus. "They could have easily burned down the campuses, but they did not. They knew that with rights come responsibilities," he said.

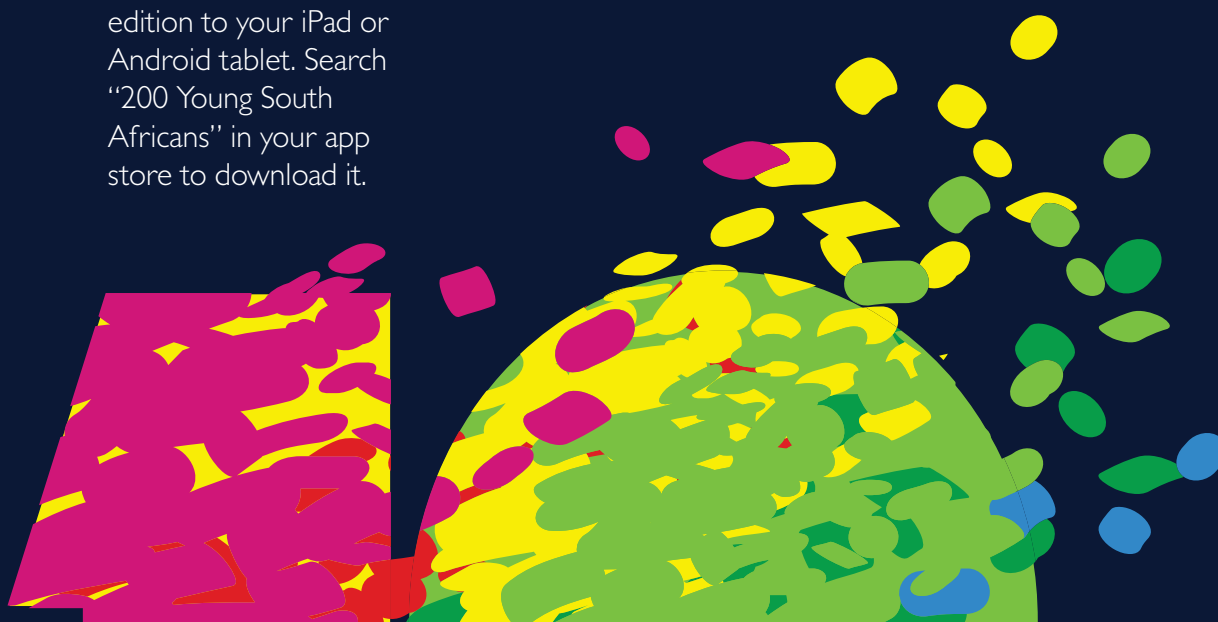
The growing representation of young people in government positions is something Manamela values, because he believes "young people no longer want to be [merely]

represented, they want to express their own views". And this shows in Parliament. "Both in a funny and serious way, Parliament has become lively," he says. "We hope it will remain that way."

In his deputy minister position, Manamela has learnt that he serves all young people, regardless of their political party choices. "Contrary to what I had expected, it's young people from different political parties who have come to me and said 'we want this and that'. We can play all the politics we want in Parliament, but when it comes to servicing young people we don't see political affiliation."

Manamela holds a postgraduate diploma in management from the Wits School of Governance. — *Mmanaledi Mataboge*

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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS • ALUMNI



PHOTO: BYRON KEULEMANS

TREVOR NOAH

Comedian

Twitter: @Trevornoah

It's hard to believe that only five years ago the comedian who featured in the pages of the *Mail & Guardian's Young South Africans* supplement, would be this famous today (and this unreachable!). For Soweto born-funnyman Trevor Noah says the sudden promotion to replace the host of one of the US's biggest satirical news show, the *Daily Show*, surprised him and millions around the world. When asked by local talk radio presenter Redi Tlhabi in June if he knew that he was nominated as Jon Stewart's replacement, Noah replied "No!" The news came straight out of the blue.

"Even if you looked on my website, I had tour dates ready ... I had no clue, no clue whatsoever," he says. "And what was your reaction?", Tlhabi enquired. "I first kept quiet ... and I had to sit for a moment to take it all in." But Noah's arrival on the entertainment scene didn't commence on March 30, when Comedy Central announced he would be hosting the *Daily Show*.

In his early days, Noah starred on soapie *Isidingo* in the early 2000s and performed stand-up on top South African comedian David Kau's *The Black Only Comedy Show*. He presented his own shows like *The Daywalker* in 2009 and *Crazy Normal* two years later. The 2012 South African Comics' Choice Award for Comic of the Year winner has also opened for celebrities like Canadian comic Russel Peters.

Noah — whose routine includes poking fun at politicians and being born to a black South African, Xhosa mother and white, Swiss father during apartheid — returned to his home country after the *Daily Show* announcement to present his latest offering: *Lost in Translation* at Montecasino, Johannesburg. The new show is billed as being a monumental one as he readies to take the seat at the *Daily Show* in September.

"Stand-up comedy is my life, it's how I got ... to the *Daily Show*," he tells Tlhabi. Noah made his US debut in 2012 when he featured as a comic on late-night talk shows like the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno and *Late Night with David Letterman*. This made him the first South African comic to appear on both shows. In December 2014 Noah joined the *Daily Show* as a correspondent.

Since the March news, which made headlines globally, the 31-year-old has appeared rubbing shoulders with the likes of Oscar-winning actor Lupita Nyong'o and renowned musician John Legend, as well as being linked to controversy. Noah got into trouble for past tweets earlier this year, as many labelled him sexist and anti-semitic, to which he responded on Twitter: "To reduce my views to a handful of jokes that didn't land is not a true reflection of my character, nor my evolution as a comedian."

Despite reaching superstardom, Noah attempts to stay humble. "Every job I do is a big job for me. This is another step in that world of big jobs for me. I understand the prestige and the position of the show, so I appreciate it and I don't take it for granted," he told Tlhabi. He imparted the following advice: "You're gonna go crazy trying to figure out what people will try and say about you in life, don't ever worry about that. Do your thing; just keep doing your thing."

"At the end of the day, the cream rises to the top. You get to where you are because of hard work, you can't hide that." — Stefanie Jason

* Noah did not make himself available for an interview

REDI TLHABI

Talk show presenter

Twitter: @RediTlhabi

There aren't many South Africans who haven't heard of South African journalist, producer and television presenter Redi Tlhabi (née Direko). Tlhabi has become a staple for regular talk show radio listeners and news and analysis television watchers over the years. Her outgoing personality coupled with her natural talent as a journalist and show host have made her something of a media icon in the country.

Tlhabi was nominated for the *Mail & Guardian's 200 Young South Africans* in 2010, at a time when she was already making waves as a television and radio current affairs show host. Tlhabi reflects on her 2010 nomination, saying, "It's always great to receive validation from peers. It is an important acknowledgement that serves as encouragement to keep working, harder, smarter and making an impact."

"I have always had goals and clear ideas about how to pursue them ... the nomination was a positive affirmation, and affirmation always has a positive impact on an individual."

Tlhabi has been a radio and TV journalist since the mid-nineties, and has come a long way since starting out at *Network Radio News*. She has hosted a variety of local news programs on SABC News, SABC Africa and the eNews channel. Tlhabi presented SABC3's premiere current affairs show, *News Hour*, which was replaced with *Interface*. Between 2006 and 2008 she presented the legal rights daytime talk show *Rights & Recourse* on SABC3. Tlhabi co-anchored the primetime news bulletin on eNCA's 24-hour news program with Jeremy Maggs in 2008 — the first year of the channel's existence. She began hosting her own talk show *Redi* on DSTV's Mzansi Magic channel in 2010. It was the first locally produced show to air on the channel.

Since her nomination Tlhabi's career has gone from strength to strength. Notably she has ventured into international television, with appearances on Sky TV, the BBC and Aljazeera, where she now hosts her own television program *South2North*.

She currently holds the coveted breakfast show spot on 702 and 567 CapeTalk — 9am to midday every weekday. The show is distinctly interactive, giving listeners free reign to select topics of national importance they wish to discuss. Tlhabi facilitates intelligent debate; she is well-informed, opinionated yet open and is able to guide conversations with ease. She's not afraid to speak truth to power, interviewing some of the biggest public figures in the country. Her talk show is extremely popular because she appeals to South Africans of all cultures and classes.

Tlhabi is also an accomplished writer, over the years writing comment, analysis and weekly columns for the likes of the *Sowetan*, *Fairlady* and the *Sunday Times*.

Another major achievement since her 2010 nomination has been the publication of her book *Endings and Beginnings: A Story of Healing*, which won the 2013 Sunday Times Alan Paton Award. Her debut details the uncomfortably close friendship she formed with a much older neighbourhood gangster when she was 11 years old. Tlhabi unpacks their relationship within the larger context of a South African society beset by gender violence.

Tlhabi was born in Orlando East, Soweto in 1978. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in communications at RAU (now the University of Johannesburg), majoring in Politics and English. She went on to do her honours in English. She is currently working towards her master's on Salmon Rushdie, within the English faculty at UJ.

Tlhabi's schedule is full to the brim, and she says exercise is one of the things that keeps her sane. She is an avid runner, having run the Comrades and Two Oceans marathons several times. She also says she likes to read extensively.

Looking back at the last five years, Tlhabi's career has blossomed and new developments every year carve her a bigger space in the South African media landscape. It's hard to imagine where she'll be another five years from now, but it seems certain she is only destined for success — something her 2010 YSA nomination foresaw. For the future generations and the youth, Tlhabi says: "Stay curious, positive and align your work to a greater purpose. You will make a bigger and unforgettable impact if you live for something bigger than yourself."

For her the 200 YSA project is worthwhile "because it is very important for South Africans to know and see young people who are exerting their potential and changing the world. We have a myriad of problems and it is crucial that we also communicate our successes so that future generations can strive for excellence". — Lauren Clifford-Holmes



PHOTO: WILLIE VISSER



VINNY LINGHAM

Tech entrepreneur

Twitter: @VinnyLingham

Vinny Lingham is one of South Africa's best tech entrepreneurs. But, as cruel fate would have it, he was born into the same era as Elon Musk and Mark Shuttleworth. Unfortunately it's like being a wicketkeeper in the age of Mark Boucher.

But Lingham is a remarkable entrepreneur in his own right, and South Africa has as much reason to be proud of him. Known for being down-to-earth and self-deprecating despite his numerous successes, Lingham is a geek icon. Last year he became the "wise Silicon Valley returning successful businessman" in the entrepreneur reality TV show, *Dragon's Den*.

Like Musk and Shuttleworth, Lingham is no one-hit wonder. His latest company is the third major "exit", as selling a tech start-up is known. In start-up circles Lingham, who often returns to Cape Town — he studied at the University of Cape Town — is treated like a god. He handles this fame with the kind of easy self-confidence that belies the fortitude and the hard years of slog and debt that it took to build up his companies.

"I'm most proud of building Gyft; it's really an awesome product," he says. "I'm also proud of achieving a large exit (Gyft) in a short space of time (two years from start to exit) and for building three tech companies from my bedroom (literally!)"

His recent highlights were meeting entrepreneurial legend Richard Branson, appearing on *Dragon's Den* and "launching Gyft Block — a Bitcoin-based protocol for gift cards".

At just 24, Lingham founded both his first successful company (Clicks2Customers) and its holding company (incuBeta). Clicks2Customers "drove more than \$100-million in annual paid-for search marketing for its clients".

At 28 he started a new website-building company called SynthaSite but it was renamed Yola when it relocated to San Francisco and received a \$25-million investment from Johann Rupert's Reinet Fund. It received over \$30-million in funding in total, and has tens of millions of customers.

As that venture matured, Lingham, who now lives in San Francisco with his wife and son, moved from chief executive to the board and cast his eye around for new opportunities.

This was when he noticed what a mess traditional loyalty cards were. "There isn't an inbox for gift cards," he told me at the South by South West conference in Austin, Texas in 2013. "We want to build an inbox for gift cards."

And he did, calling it Gyft. When he sold the two-year-old company in August 2014, it was for a whopping \$54-million to US-based payments company First Data.

"Gyft sells prepaid and gift cards to hundreds of stores around the USA," he explains. "Instead of buying a plastic gift card, we issue digital ones, including Apple iTunes, Amazon, Gap, etc. I'm excited about it because it opens up a world of new opportunities to innovate around the world of prepaid finance and we're going to take this model global."

And yet, he says what he's most proud of is "finding a way to balance work and family life, and being a good husband and father. Some things in life are more important than work!"

Along the way he was named as one of South Africa's 35 men of influence under 35 by *GQ* and Yola was selected by *Business Week* as 19th of the top 50 global start-ups, both in 2009.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

It's fitting that the East London-born Lingham has become a household name after his debut last year on the South African version of *Dragon's Den*, where would-be entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to older entrepreneurs to secure investment. He's been there, done that. And come back as a bona fide tech entrepreneur who took one company to Silicon Valley, made it fly, and then started another one that has been equally successful.

Lingham invested R5-million in 10 companies in the first season through his investment fund, Newtown Partners. He has remained an active investor and advisor to a range of tech start-ups, including Quirk, Runway Sale, ChessCube, Personera, SkyRove, SweepSouth and SAFlorist.

Then there is his role in co-founding (with Justin Stanford) the Silicon Cape initiative, which is aiming to replicate the fertile innovative and investment culture of Silicon Valley.

If there is one investor who knows the hard path of building a business and succeeding against the odds, it is Vinny Lingham — a man as irrepressibly optimistic as he is irrepressible. — *Toby Shapshak*

MAKASHULE GANA

DA MP and shadow minister of human settlements

Twitter: @Makashule

At 31, Makashule Gana has served the Democratic Alliance in more positions than many politicians do in their entire careers. The current shadow minister of human settlements in Parliament became an MP last year.

In 2012, at the age of just 28, he was elected one of the three deputy federal chairpersons of the DA.

"I've become a better person and better politician," he says of the time he served in that position. But he admits that it wasn't easy. "You must go out there and make things happen. It [the deputy federal chairperson position] taught me courage. Unfortunately elections happened ... it's politics."

He joined the DA in 2002 and became active in its student movement Daso. He rose through the ranks and was elected DA Youth leader in 2010, a position he held until 2013. Gana has also served as a councillor in the City of Johannesburg.

Being featured in the *Mail & Guardian's 200 Young South Africans* contributed positively to his career, says Gana. "People started to notice me. I got invites to address gatherings of young people. You stand out among your peers and people listen when you speak."

He used such opportunities to "continue to broaden my thinking around issues of leadership. I also created networks I wouldn't ordinarily have".

He describes himself as "a shy village boy" but his political acumen hides that well. Gana says his approach to life is to always face its challenges head-on.

"Once I decide to do something I go for it. I'm not the type that's fearful or gets threatened easily. I don't assume failure before I try something out."

This was proven in how he challenged veteran DA politician Athol Trollip for the federal chairperson position this year. Though he lost the contest, Gana said he was not going to "shy away from a contest or responsibility".

His current position in human settlements has created an



PHOTO: OUPA NKOSI

opportunity for him to "in a small way, make a difference, by holding the ministry and the department accountable. That has been eye-opening".

Gana cites establishing the DA's political school with fellow leader Khume Ramulifho as one of his political career highlights.

The main objective of this school is to teach DA values, principles and policies as well as improve the party's interaction with young people. Three years after its establishment in

Gauteng, Gana is now taking this school to other provinces. The DA is yet to adopt the concept formally at a national level, but more provinces are asking Gana and Ramulifho to share the lessons. "People are seeing the benefits," says Gana.

"I don't wait for people to tell me what to do and I don't outsource my ideas. If a province invites me, I go. We get people to donate money to the political school and that money is normally used for travelling. If there is no money

I use my own."

In addition to Gauteng the provinces KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Western Cape and Mpumalanga have also bought into the idea of the DA's political school.

Gana holds a BSc degree in mathematics and a post-graduate diploma in management from Wits Business School. He has the following advice for 2015 nominees: "You must never be scared of failure or see it as the end of the world." — *Mmanaledi Mataboge*

MTN SA Foundation, the corporate social investment vehicle of MTN SA, was established in 2001. The foundation is driven by the operator's core belief that access to information and communication is key to economic development. It harnesses the company's leading innovations in telecommunications to drive community upliftment.

In 2014, just as MTN SA celebrated 20 years of providing its customer with access to a world-class cellular network, voice and data services, MTN SA Foundation used the same innovations and technology to uplift communities for self-reliance in this new bold digital world.

The Foundation focus areas of intervention are in Education, Health, Entrepreneurship and a range of projects that are deemed special projects.

Due to the continued challenges that South Africa faces in delivering quality education, interventions in education remain the core of the socio-economic development and investment strategy. One of the Foundation's flagship projects is the school connectivity programme. This programme is geared at educating and equipping the educator to be equipped to educate a 21st century technostudent. To date the MTN SA Foundation can account for a total roll out of over 300 computer laboratories throughout SA. As of 2014 a concerted effort in driving connectivity in schools for learners with special needs was made; thereby delivering connectivity, specialised equipment and software to several schools for persons with special needs.

The MTN SA Foundation strives to intervene in areas where the need is greatest and seeing the joy displayed by beneficiaries as their needs are addressed and their lives improved makes the purpose of "connecting communities for self-reliance in this bold new digital world" come to life.

The MTN SA Foundation will continue to use technology to drive knowledge dissemination and sharing as the results speak for themselves:

In 2013 the top matric student nationally came from the MTN project school and in 2014, in the schools with special needs, the top student was in one of our schools and they all attributed their success to the access to information.

The Education platform will remain the flagship offering of the MTN SA Foundation. It offers programmes reflective of the new strategic direction and approach of the Foundation as encapsulated in the Strategic Plan for 2013-2016.

The Education Platform is comprised of the following five (5) main programmes:

1. Training "New World Teachers in Training Colleges" in ICT
2. MTN e-Learning for New World Teachers and Learners (in service /at schools)
3. Digitisation of Learning Materials in collaboration with Dept. of Education
4. In partnership with MTN Business provide Graduate Bursaries
5. Training and Support for Maths, Science and Language Literacy

These programmes are geared towards enabling and equipping learners and educators thereby improving the quality of education in South African and in the long run improve the economic wellbeing of the South African.



MTN Foundation





PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES

BRYAN HABANA

Rugby player

Twitter: @bryanhabana

When Bryan Habana was included in the 2010 Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans supplement he was a 26-year-old newlywed. Unusually for one so young, however, he had already achieved almost everything the game of rugby has to offer. In 2007 alone, he won the World Cup with the Springboks, the Super 14 with the Bulls and the International Rugby Board Player of the Year Award.

2009 was also a pretty stellar year for the boy from Benoni. The Bulls won the Super 14 again, while the Springboks won a three-test series against the British and Irish Lions and then went on to claim the Tri-Nations title. At the end of the year Habana was capped by The Barbarians, the most exclusive invitation side in the world. He rewarded the selectors by scoring a hat-trick of tries in a win against the All Blacks.

In 2010, apparently with no new worlds to conquer, he ended his five-year association with the Bulls and moved to Cape Town. It was the beginning of a new chapter in Habana's life, one that would include a second World Cup campaign with the Springboks, a move to play rugby in France. The M&G asked him about how his life has changed since 2010, beginning with that polarising move from "Fortress Loftus" to Newlands.

"It was a very tough decision to make. Obviously having experienced so much success with the Bulls and the North/South rivalry being so intense, it was frowned upon by many, but in the same vein [the move was] embraced by so many down in Cape Town. I felt that I needed a change of scenery; that I needed to get out of my comfort zone and also share my experiences of success with the Bulls to hopefully develop youngsters in a different environment. "Despite eventually losing to the Bulls in the final of Super Rugby in 2010, I felt I'd contributed to the Stormers being in the final for the first time ever. There were some setbacks and disappointments to follow, but those just made me a stronger rugby player and person. "It was obviously a massive privilege to have featured in the [M&G] article, but I had some goals set out for myself even before then. A lot has gone on in my life since 2010; there have been many highs and a couple of lows along the way, but I'd encourage young people to write down their goals and come up with a plan of how to achieve them. Surround yourself with people you can trust and who help pursue those goals and then continue working hard to achieve them, even when you encounter some setbacks."

At the end of 2013 Habana made a move overseas, joining French giants Toulon. He had become such a fixture in the Springbok side since his 2004 debut, however, that there was never a chance that national coach Heyneke Meyer would leave him out. For the last two years Habana has been part of the "foreign legion", alongside such players as Francois Louw, Ruan Pienaar and Fourie du Preez, who campaign overseas but return to play for the Springboks.

"For me personally, [moving to France was] an opportunity to ... experience something completely foreign and play alongside some of the legends of the game. Being in a place where you can't speak the language, yet you have to function, places a massive pressure on you. It forces you to cope, and your family as well. Being exposed to many different cultures and circumstances also helps you mature to a certain extent. "I think that rugby is becoming more and more a global sport and that we will see a lot more movement of top class players all over the world. I'm a firm believer that if you're good enough, it shouldn't matter where in the world you play."

On Father's Day last year, Habana's wife Janine gave birth to their first son, Timothy Jacob. The proud father had scored two tries for the Boks against Wales the previous day, but was at the hospital in time for the birth. Now 32, the end of Habana's exceptional career is on the horizon, however distant that may appear in a World Cup year such as this. He has to think about life outside the game and what he will and won't miss.

"Rugby teaches many things that could be assimilated to becoming successful in business after retiring, such as coping under pressure, working in a team environment, discipline, hard work and communication skills. Although I have tried to put a couple of things in place for when I eventually retire, I am not too sure exactly what I'll be doing. I'll miss the camaraderie, the joys and moments you get to experience with a band of brothers, the friendships, the privilege of playing for your country and carrying the hopes of a nation. I definitely won't miss living out of a suitcase and the jet lag." — Andy Capastagnio

NATALIE DU TOIT

Swimmer and social media manager

Twitter: @Natsdutoit

A few years ago Paralympian gold medallist Natalie du Toit typically spent at least eight hours a day in the pool. Between this, eating and sleeping she had time for little else — it was her full-time job.

But unlike more conventional vocations, a career as a professional athlete has a short shelf life.

She retired from competitive swimming after the 2012 London Paralympics, where she won three gold and one silver medal, but the global sporting icon told the world she had no idea "what comes next". And she really didn't.

For 12 spectacular years her sole focus was swimming and when that stopped, she suddenly had to "find something else I'm good at".

"It was challenging entering the job market 10 years older than what most people do," she says. "I'm like a 31-year-old in a 21-year-old's shoes."

However, having overcome the serious setback of a leg amputation in her teens to go on to become one of the most successful disabled athletes of all time, Du Toit is used to challenges and hard work.

Currently employed at a large reputation management firm, she has chosen social media management as her new "nine-to-five".

"There was nothing more I could actually achieve in the pool that I hadn't already, but now it's totally different. I'm challenged so much every day and I can't believe how much I'm learning," she says.

An unforeseen consequence of her single-minded determination and work ethic, Du Toit's one regret is not paying enough attention to her personal life.

"When I was swimming, I used to put everything off because I was training or competing and when I wasn't, I had to rest so that I could train and compete again — it was a chain reaction," she says. "I lost a lot of friends and people in my life because I always said 'no'."

To others in a similar position she says, "Keep it short, but don't miss that dinner with a friend."

With 15 Paralympic and eight Commonwealth Games medals under her belt, Du Toit has achieved more than most, but this ambitious young South African is far from complacent.

"My dream is still the same: to be successful. For me that means to keep learning, to make a difference and to get to the top — just in a different way." — Amy Green

“

There was nothing more I could actually achieve in the pool that I hadn't already, but now it's totally different. I'm challenged so much every day and I can't believe how much I'm learning.

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PHOTO: DUIF DUTOIT



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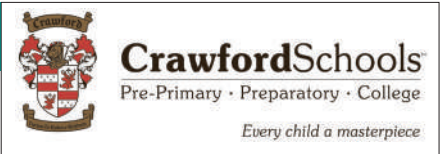


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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● RISING STARS



LUKHONA BUTSHINGI

Community leader

Lukhona Butshingi is a grade eleven pupil at Isolomzi Secondary School in Kentani, a rural village in the Eastern Cape. In the last few years, three of his schoolmates have been killed in faction fighting. When one of them was hacked to death by a fellow learner, Butshingi was devastated. He decided to channel his emotions into something positive. With a group of friends, he participated in the Youth Citizens Action Programme (Y-CAP), which was founded six years ago by Empowervate Trust with the aim of empowering young people to be active citizens. As part of the programme, teams of learners identify challenges in their schools and communities and then take action to combat them, following a step-by-step Y-CAP project management guide. They then enter district, provincial and national level competitions run in partnership with the department of basic education.

Unsurprisingly, Butshingi's team chose to focus on finding ways to combat faction fighting within their community, and got the local chief to assist them. They also enlisted the help of a Community Policing Forum to confiscate weapons. In the 10 months since launching their project, no new cases of faction-based violence have been reported. Although he is not used to public speaking, Butshingi presented the project at the provincial Eastern Cape event, where his team won. "I was ecstatic — I felt like I have provided a good example for my younger brothers and sisters." He worked hard on his public speaking skills and presented the project more confidently at the national championships, where his team was placed fourth out of nine provinces. "I practised a lot and I always had a dream of being a public speaker, and this gave me an opportunity to live my dream."

Butshingi has other dreams too — he'd like to become a chemical engineer, travel the world and help people in need. There is a shortage of teachers at school, but still he gets 70% in most subjects and visits a learning centre daily after school to learn how to use computers. With his positive attitude to life, he seems to be well on his way to realising his dreams. — Fatima Asmal



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SIZWE MTHEMBU

Hockey player

In grade eight, Sizwe Mthembu's school hockey coach asked him to be the team goalkeeper. "In the beginning I didn't really enjoy it — the fans never really worry about the goalkeeper," he admits. But with time that changed. Mthembu's talent saw him being chosen, first for the Southern Gauteng U17A hockey team, then for the U18A Southern Gauteng indoor hockey team. But the cherry on the top was when he was recently called up to train with the South African national hockey squad.

"I was chosen to train with them to get a feeling of what it's like at that level," he says. "At first it was very challenging, because it was my first time training on that level, but I learnt a lot — the guys were very welcoming and I got major experience from the older guys and their stories."

Mthembu (18) has never had it easy. His mother passed away when he was three-months-old, and he lost his father when he was in grade three, after which his aunt, then his siblings looked after him.

"I think that it was challenging, but I didn't want it to be an excuse for why I couldn't do things — my brother tried to give me an opportunity to do what every other kid could do and that motivated me not to let my circumstances bring me down."



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

When he was in grade 10, his best friend moved to Johannesburg to take up a scholarship at Beaulieu College, and told the coach there about Mthembu — who was then summoned for a training session, and awarded a scholarship for grade 11. Now in his matric year, Mthembu hopes to complete a degree in investing or marketing manage-

ment, before giving hockey his complete attention. Not that hockey is far from his mind: "We go to the provincial tournament in July — that's where the SA U18 a side is chosen — I'm going to try my best to make that side, then hopefully train with the U21s, then hopefully make the U21 World Cup qualifiers next year." — Fatima Asmal



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

EMILY BURGER

Author

Emily Burger has been writing from the moment she could lift a pen. "I remember making books from coloured paper and drawing pictures in crayon beside the wonky handwriting so that I could read my stories to my younger brother," she says.

As she grew older the stories she wrote became longer and more detailed. It therefore seemed inevitable that she would someday write a novel. But that "someday" has come sooner expected. Burger's debut novel, *Thieves of Greatness*, will be released by US-based Ravenwood Publishers in July this year. Not bad for a 17-year-old who's still in matric!

Burger admits that she wasn't expecting to be published so soon. Her manuscript was rejected by many publishers, but she continued submitting it for consideration: "I had nothing to lose ... I remember one night, after receiving yet another polite but depressing rejection, I sat on my bed and I said to God: 'Here. Have my book. It's yours. Do whatever you want with it, and I know that whatever happens next it's your will'. After that I had peace that God would take care of it. So I continued submitting and then a few months later it all paid off and I got accepted. Really, I view this whole thing as a gift from God and I feel so blessed."

The message behind *Thieves of Greatness* is about finding the greatness that lies within you and overcoming your fears and doubts, because these, says Burger, rob you of achieving your dreams. Interestingly, the characters are historical figures she has turned into children. "I wanted to use these characters depicted as children to show that everyone starts out small with big dreams, and that everyone has fears and doubts about achieving them, but that if you believe in yourself you have the ability to reach your dreams and find your unique greatness," she says.

Burger plans to study towards a degree before pursuing a career in the media. And of course, she'll be always be writing and hopes to publish many more books in the future. — Fatima Asmal

BOKAMOSO MOLALE

Inventor

Last year, Bokamoso Molale and Tami Hoza, two grade 10 learners at Simon's Town High School, had to come up with an idea for the 3M/Hip2B2 SA Young Innovator of the Year competition, in which grade 10 learners from 100 schools across South Africa participate.

At first they struggled to come up with crazy ideas. But lying in his bed at their hostel one night, Molale had a "light bulb" moment: "I was thinking 'Tomorrow morning we'll have to shower in cold water again.' So I thought 'Why not come up with a shower head that would allow us to shower in hot water at the hostel?' That's how the idea came about."

The pair went on to design the Hot Nozzle, a portable, battery-operated shower attachment which disperses cold water through an internal heating element in just under six minutes, saving time and energy, and went on to win second prize in the competition.

Molale (17) is currently the top student in Grade 11 at both Simon's Town High School and the Lawhill Maritime Centre, which provides grade 10, 11 and 12 learners with specialised knowledge and maritime skills. He's also the captain of the chess team, chairperson of the representative council of learners and learner representative on the school governing body.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

"I like to be the best in everything that I do," he says. "If you want to be the best, you need to be a leader — I try everything that's available to me."

Molale hails from Welkom. He and Hoza were introduced to Lawhill by a young man who was studying there at the time, and they successfully applied for scholarships to do maritime studies.

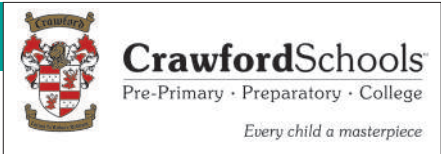
"It's quite challenging and interesting — a lot of people

are not aware of what's happening in the maritime world," he says.

But he admits that he's still confused about what career path to pursue: "That's the bad part of being good at everything. You can do so many things, you don't know what to do — I think I'll join the financial side of the maritime industry, but my other option is to go into the health industry." — Fatima Asmal



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ANDA AUGUST

Aspiring world traveller

Anda August loves Tata Nelson Madiba and believes that without him, she wouldn't be here. "Tata Madiba inspires me in more ways than one and I've learnt a lot from him," she says. "I've learnt that the moment of enlightenment is when one's dreams of possibilities become images of probabilities."

This year in April, August (17) became the first member of her family to travel overseas — and this was also thanks to Madiba! She and Ntando Tshinava, her schoolmate at the Mandela School of Science & Technology, in Mvezo in the Eastern Cape, travelled to the International Mandela School in Berlin as part of a Siemens school exchange initiative. But before that they — together with other learners — had to make two rounds of presentations to a judging panel. One of the presentations was on the topic "Madiba's Legacy". They also went through an interview process before being selected. August describes the Berlin experience as "AMAZING". "It was the probably the best time of my life," she enthuses. "I've learnt a lot, but most importantly I've learnt that perfect courage is to do without witnesses what one is capable of doing before the whole world. Yes, it was my first trip overseas, but definitely not my last."

At school, August is in the "A+" class, due to her outstanding academic performances. Last year she was one of 10 learners selected for the Siemens One World Leadership programme. She's also a member of the school drama and public speaking clubs, and is the ambassador of the school. She recently visited Parliament in Cape Town, a guest of Minister of Telecommunications and Postal services Siyabonga Cwele, who liked a speech she delivered and invited her to attend his budget vote. The future certainly looks bright for her! — *Fatima Asmal*

NTANDO TSHINAVA

Aspiring agriculturist

Ntando Tshinava (18) doesn't merely want to be an agriculturalist. He wants to be the best agriculturalist in the country. If his track record is anything to go by, this dream is well within his grasp. Tshinava is the head boy of the Mandela School of Science & Technology, in Mvezo in the Eastern Cape. He is also in the grade 11 "A class" due to his outstanding academic standing. He plays soccer for the school, and is part of its leadership programme. He recently travelled to Berlin in Germany with his schoolmate Anda August, as part of a Siemens school exchange initiative, after the two of them impressed judges with their presentations about Madiba's legacy and about where they see their school five years from now.

"It was really an awesome trip going to Berlin, it was exciting. I learnt a lot from the people there, especially from the host family who accommodated me," he says. "I learnt how to show love and humanity to another person, because this is what they gave me and I really appreciated that."

Although the teachers and principal at his school mentored Tshinava and August while they were conducting research for their presentations, talking about Madiba was something that came easily to them, as he's close to their hearts. "First of all, I love Madiba, secondly I believe that everyone has unconditional love for him, though some have never seen or spoken with him. I love and respect the icon of the world. What inspires me most about him is that whatever he did, he did it with love and passion, because he knew what is right and wrong. He knew that we might be different, but we are all one." — *Fatima Asmal*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

IJAAZ SAYED

Social entrepreneur and nutritionist

"How can you learn when you are not healthy?" is a question that Ijaaz Sayed has often asked himself. Ijaaz feels that South Africa needs young, educated and highly motivated individuals to take it forward. But he recognised that this will not be possible as long as child malnutrition remains a problem, and decided to become part of the solution.

Sayed teamed up with two fellow learners at the Cape Academy of Maths, Science and Technology, Bonolo Matjila and Zene Morton, who had the same aim and together they formed Paragon Protein, which is aimed at using the high protein superfood spirulina to combat child malnutrition. They are experimenting with using spirulina to create a range of low-cost products (like smoothies, spread and salad dressing) to sell to the lower income market, thereby making it more accessible.

They also hope to use the money they make from sales to make spirulina starter packs that they can give to township schools, while teaching them how to grow their own spirulina. Last year the team entered their idea into Innovate SA, a competition which gives high school learners the opportunity to solve local challenges by providing them with funding and support to make their ideas a reality. They won R10 000 and have since taught children at a school in Khayelitsha how to grow spirulina in a pilot project.

"It was only fair that all people had access to a super-food that could drastically benefit them. The fact that spirulina is very high in protein is not all that makes it special, it also has high levels of the required micronutrients that a child needs such as potassium, magnesium and iron. Spirulina is very expensive though, and our innovation is to make it accessible to those who really need it," says Sayed.

These days, Sayed has very little free time — he is writing his matric while training as a private pilot on a bursary. Still, he spends whatever time he has to spare on Paragon Protein. — *Fatima Asmal*

YOLANDA NKALA

App developer and social entrepreneur

Seeing hardship depresses some people, but for Yolanda Nkala it inspires innovation. "I get inspiration from the hardships that I witness," she says. "I long to see change and I see a solution in each and every problem — my desire to innovate comes from all the negatives which I want to transform into positives."

Nkala (17) submitted not one, but four entries to the Innovate SA 2014 challenge (a competition which gives high school learners the opportunity to solve local challenges by providing them with funding and support to make their ideas a reality), two of which were picked. One of these projects is an education app, which helps scholars connect with their teachers, friends and parents while they study.

"I felt it was important to develop an educational app which was going to be unique in a way that students would interact with teachers and parents, and would also be part of the child's academic life because the level of education in South Africa is amazingly low and needs improvement," she says. "Many students would really appreciate the extra help, and teachers who are passionate will have the ability to assist. The parents have the responsibility to ensure that students are studying and to find out how the child is performing via the app."

The other entry was "Transport Revolution" which won the prize for being "Most Innovative" — this project is aimed at allow Capetonians to pay for train tickets by loading credit onto a card using prepaid airtime, so they don't miss their trains if paper tickets run out, and it may reduce the number of muggings in ticket queues.

How does Nkala come up with these brilliant ideas? "I identify all the problems that I see," she explains. "I then try by all means to think of solutions. Nothing is impossible — I believe and trust in myself. Everyone can come up with brilliant ideas, but an idea without an action is just a hallucination." She has a clear 10-year goal for herself: "I will own businesses, including an innovative company focusing on the youth of the country, helping them to implement positive change." — *Fatima Asmal*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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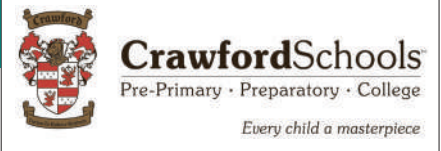


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

RICHARD SELEMOGO

Student leader

Richard Selemogo always dreamed of a good education. However, he was orphaned when he was 12 years old, and the aunt and uncle who looked after him had limited finances.

So when a teacher at his school in a rural area of North West province told him about an organisation called Raise the Children (RTC) which focuses on making high quality education accessible to orphans, he jumped at the opportunity. In fact, he travelled 70km from the rural area in which he lives for an interview with RTC. But it was worth it. Two months later he received the exciting news that he had been selected as an RTC scholar and would have the opportunity to go to a decent high school in Pretoria, on a scholarship that included boarding. "I was very, very happy — I was over the moon," he says.

Selemogo made the most of the opportunity and was a student council member there as well as a hostel prefect. This year he was moved to Tiger Kloof School (which is closer to home), where he works hard towards realising his dream of someday working in international relations.

He's part of the choir, plays sport, and is part of a group which hands out food parcels to disadvantaged children. Within RTC, Selemogo has also been elected head of the scholars' committee.

If his parents were alive they would be excited and very proud of him, he says. "I have siblings but they have not been able to go to school because of financial reasons. I'm the only child who has made it to grade 11." — *Fatima Asmal*

JORDAN LE CLOS

Swimmer

Think London Olympics 2012. Think Chad le Clos. Think Tokyo Olympics 2020. Think Jordan le Clos. It must be hard living in the shadow of an Olympic swimming sensation, but Jordan (17) is up for the challenge.

In primary school he played rugby, cricket, soccer and hockey, but he dropped all of them in favour of focusing on his swimming. Describing a typical day in his life, he says: "I

wake up and go to training for two hours, then go to school until 2pm, then straight back to training for another two hours, then I go home and do some school work."

His hard work has paid off: at the main event of the Midmar Mile this year, he impressed, coming fourth with a time of 00:18:10 (Chad Ho, who won for the sixth time in succession, clocked 00:17:04). Jordan is a grade 11 learner at Westville Boys High School, a top swimming school which Chad also attended. He started swimming at the age of eight and has since accumulated an array of medals.

In 2013 he participated in his first international tournament, as part of the 12-member Seagulls Swimming

Club team competing in the Irish National Championships in Dublin, and took home four medals, finishing second in the U15 200m and 100m butterfly as well as in the 100m breaststroke, and he won bronze in the 200m breaststroke.

The future looks bright for Jordan, who is forthright about the fact that he wants to make the 2020 Olympics South African swimming squad.

How does being Chad's younger brother figure in this equation?

"Chad helps me as he is such an inspiration, and he always talks to me and gives me advice," he says. "My setback is the fact that I have huge shoes to fill if I want to follow in his footsteps." — *Fatima Asmal*



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PHOTO: SUPPLIED

JACQUES BLOM

Technology entrepreneur

When Jacques Blom was five years old he played around with an old Nokia phone, changing its welcome message to "Just Keep Swimming" (one of Dory's lines in *Finding Nemo*). "It was brilliant being able to work with such a small, mobile device," he recalls. From then on Blom was hooked. At just 14, he created iStyla, a Facebook colour changer, which attracted 80 000 users. "The idea popped into my mind after seeing apps which promised you a pink-themed Facebook. These apps turned out to be scams, as they were only after your personal information. I saw a desire for a 'pink Facebook theme', so I decided to create a Facebook colour changer that actually worked," he explains.

Shortly thereafter, Blom caught the attention of Permot Valia, a prominent British venture capitalist, who decided to invest in him after hearing him speak about iStyla at an event in Cape Town.

These days Blom (17) runs React Technology in partnership with Sanjiv Ranchod, a school friend. They have recently wrapped up an app for one of the biggest publishing houses in South Africa and are currently working on another app for a New York-based client.

Blom has also just released SA's first smartwatch, which he sells via an online shopping site. "This is my first attempt at a physical product business, and it's going very well!"

With so much going for him, does he even need to go to school? "Although school does take up quite a bit of my time, I have come to the conclusion that I should rather play it safe and complete my schooling career," he says.

However, there'll be no university for him. "Tertiary education is important for some professions and some areas of business, but it does not benefit most tech entrepreneurs. The only way we can learn is by throwing ourselves to the wolves and learning from experience. Experience is key in the worlds of tech and entrepreneurship — your scars teach you things no book ever can." — *Fatima Asmal*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KELEBOGILE SEDIANE

Peer mentor

The ability to lead by example and gain other people's trust — this is what leadership means to 17-year-old Kelebogile Sediane. This is one of the reasons why, as a young orphan, she started a peer mentorship project in her home village Dipudi, which provides young people with a platform to express their feelings — without being judged.

"I started it because of my observations of the mentality that young people have towards themselves," she explains. "They lack support and the freedom to express their mistakes and disappointments, which leads to lack of growth and change. I aim to create relationships that are filled with trust and comfort."

In 2012, Sediane was awarded a scholarship by Raise the Children (RTC), an international nongovernmental organisation based in South Africa that identifies orphans with leadership potential and provides them with private education and mentorship. She's now in grade 12 at Edendale Independent School.

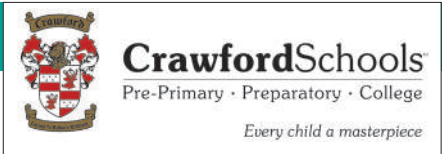
This year, she was selected to be a participant in Spirit of Youth, a leadership course offered by the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science. Kelebogile is no stranger to leadership roles. In primary school she was elected hostel room prefect. She was also a class prefect, and is part of Edendale's student council.

"Now I intend to grow my passion for leadership, by letting it be tested through trials, disappointment and good times," she says. "The reason why I am passionate about youth leadership is that there is a lot that I learn about myself and the world around me. I get to meet new challenges that test my character and prompt me to look at the world around me critically.

"It also changes my perspective and mentality on certain issues. I get to grow into the independent world. This is what I think the youth needs in order for our country to have a better tomorrow. Leadership prunes me to be open-minded about the things that matter. It has revealed to me that it is not about the authority you have, but about the authority made complete by love, that changes and influences everything." — *Fatima Asmal*



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HEIDI BOTTCHER

Social scientist and aspiring psychiatrist

Since becoming a teenager, Heidi Bottcher (14) has wondered what attracts boys to girls, and whether there's a significant difference between what boys find attractive in girls and what girls think boys find attractive in them. So, last year, she decided to answer the question by conducting a study which entailed background reading on the subject, carrying out a rigorous survey in which 399 teenagers participated, and undertaking an intensive analysis of the data she collected.

What she found was what she expected. "Confidence and humour are more important than a nice body to the average boy across all age groups," she states in her abstract. "63% of teenage girls believe that looks are more important to boys than personality. This is clearly not true. 72% of boys value a great personality more highly than good looks."

Bottcher entered the study into the Eskom Cape Town Expo for Young Scientists and was awarded with a gold medal. She was also selected to represent the region at the Eskom Expo International Science Fair. There she was awarded a silver medal and was selected to represent South Africa at the Taiwan International Science Fair, held earlier this year.

"Three judges came to my table and I had to explain my hypothesis, method and results very carefully to make sure that they knew I understood my own project and that I was confident in my results and interpretation," she explains. She clearly impressed the judges because she walked away with a silver medal and won the best in category award — a first for a South African school learner. "I didn't expect to go through to the next round and be selected to represent South Africa, and I was absolutely ecstatic when I was chosen. I feel appreciated for my hard work and glad that the girls who have read my project have a different view on what boys really want. No more strenuous 'make-upping' in the mornings," she says.

Apart from a keen interest in social sciences and human interaction, Bottcher is also passionate about cross country running and the arts. She's featuring in her school's musical production this year, and spends a lot of time perfecting her ballet. She's also an actress. When she finishes school, she hopes to work as a psychiatrist, specialising in working with children. — *Fatima Asmal*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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ASHLEY MAGUTSHWA

Ballet dancer

When Ashley Ntando Magutshwa was in grade two he was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). His mother enrolled him at Sparrow Foundation School, where the teachers focus on the subjects learners like. But it was after school hours that his true love was discovered.

"It's a funny story actually," he admits. "Sparrow Foundation school had extra classes after school that we had to attend, so I would follow my cousin to her ballet class. The then ballet teacher and my mentor, Candice Osbourne, made me take part instead of sitting there watching the girls. My cousin Kimberly didn't like it much and soon after she quit, but for some reason I stayed."

Magutshwa's love for ballet grew, and he didn't pay attention to the boys who sometimes made fun of him because he was the only boy in the ballet class. Now in grade eight, he is schooling at the National School of the Arts (NSA) in Johannesburg, majoring in dance and drama. "I love it here because ever since those days in Candice's class, I knew

that all I wanted to do with my life is dance," he says.

He has featured in a few productions but two of the highlights for him were *The Nutcracker*, an Mzansi Ballet production that ran at the Joburg Theatre from 2010 to 2013, and *Cinderella* (2013) at the State Theatre in Pretoria.

Magutshwa recently started a class where he teaches children from his neighbourhood the basics of ballet. He dreams of someday being the principal dancer in a big production, but for now his goal is to get into the Julliard School for the Performing Arts in New York for his tertiary education.

"I pray that God gives me opportunities to travel all over the world and meet incredible people who love ballet like me," says Magutshwa. "I would like to let children in townships know that there is more to life than just growing up and getting a job. You can follow your heart and do something that makes you happy and if that thing happens to be doing nails, just follow your heart." — *Fatima Asmal*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ANELILE MHLANGENI

Athlete

In 2014, for the first time in its history, a learner from Memel Primary School in the Free State qualified for the South African Schools National Athletics Championships, which were held in Cape Town. Little Anelile Mhlange (who was 10 years old at the time) didn't place anywhere, but it didn't matter.

What mattered is that in spite of training on a municipal field she shared with cows, she got there.

What mattered is that, in spite of the fact that she shared this field with soccer teams, and trained amid broken bottles and overgrown grass, she got there. What mattered is that when little Mhlange returned to Memel after venturing out for the first time ever in her life, she could give each of her classmates a cup of beach sand, so they could feel the texture thereof, just as she had!

Mhlange's talent for long jump and the 80m sprint was discovered by Beth Henkle, an American volunteer who visited her school as part of SheWInS (Sports Helping to Empower Women in South Africa), a nongovernmental organisation set up 10 years ago to improve the lives of primary school girls living in Memel-Zamani.

"When I started coaching her, she was much smaller than her competition," says Henkle. "This didn't seem to affect the standings, however, as she continued to win regardless of her competitors' height advantages. I can only imagine how far she'll go as she gets older and stronger."

In long jump, Mhlange has jumped four times her own height — 4.04m, 4.10m and 4.15m, impressive distances for a child her age.

Mhlange wants to use her talent to get a good education. And she can go far, says Henkle. "Anelile's love of running translates into a drive to improve each time she steps onto the track for practice or competition. This deep need she has to run and jump is why you can see her smile huge smiles on the track as well as cry.

"In the moment of competing, she is invested 100% in the joy of running/jumping. This love is her potential. In my opinion, the best and most successful athletes are those who love what they do, and Anelile is a perfect example of that." — *Fatima Asmal*



NILE ADAMS-DUMA

Artist

Nile Adams-Duma sold his first painting at the age of seven. On a family trip to Sun City he showed a drawing he did of a chameleon to the proprietors of the Hartebeespoort Dam Gallery, and they duly bought it for R5.

But his mum believes that his love for art started long before that, when she started taking him as a three-month-old baby to stained glass galleries in the United States, where he was born. She recalls that at that age, he was already fascinated by colourful art.

"I love art because it gives me the means to express myself and build on my creativity," he says. The St Michael's Anglican Church in Bryanston recently commissioned him to do the illustrations for their prayer book for children. "I felt I could do it, and I wanted to put all my effort into making very good illustrations," he says. "Some illustrations I had to redo six or seven times."

Now Adams-Duma plans to showcase 10 of his paintings — a combination of musical instruments, animals and abstract work — at a solo exhibition, which is currently in its planning stages. The fifteen-year-old, who is currently in grade eight, is multi-talented. He is into writing, plays the guitar and composes music. He has also in the past self-published homemade comics, which he sold to learners and staff at his school.

"I have a few comic ideas I'd like to publish. The combination of words and drawing comes easily to me. At the moment I just want to make drawings," he says. "I want go as far as life can take me — I'll never stop. I hope my art skills will get better and better as I grow." — *Fatima Asmal*



200 YSA – JAN SCANNELL

Braai master

Twitter: @janbraai

When you think about the world of culture, a braai might not instantly spring to mind.

Jan Scannell would be sorely disappointed. While braais might not be particularly highbrow, they are an important part of our heritage and a proudly South African culture well worth promoting, he believes.

Scannell (34), known as “Jan Braai” in some circles, heads the National Braai Day initiative, a nonprofit movement aiming to unite all 50 million South Africans around fires on September 24 each year. He’s well qualified, and jokes that he holds two MBAs – a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Cape Town and his Masters in Braai Activities from the university of life.

Scannell was a chartered accountant until he turned braais into a full-time job. He has written two braai books and is the coproducer and presenter of a kykNET TV show on South African history called *Jan Braai vir Erfenis* (Jan Braais for Heritage) in which he travels across Southern Africa to various heritage points and fires up a braai with the locals. The show, in its 6th season, broadcasts weekly from July to December each year.

Scannell says the first democratic government created National Heritage Day for South Africans to celebrate their rich and diverse history, and one thing we all like to do is sit around a fire with family and friends and prepare food together. “The idea of National Braai Day is to support the ideals of National Heritage Day and enhance it on a practical level,” says Scannell. “To get all South Africans to actively take part and unite around fires with their loved ones and others. Thanksgiving in America and St Patrick’s Day in Ireland are reference points for the impact the day can achieve.”

Scannell enlisted Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the patron. Tutu said: “What Jan Scannell had in mind with the Braai Day initiative is nurturing and embracing a common South African culture, which is shared across all races and genders.” — *Lesley Stones*

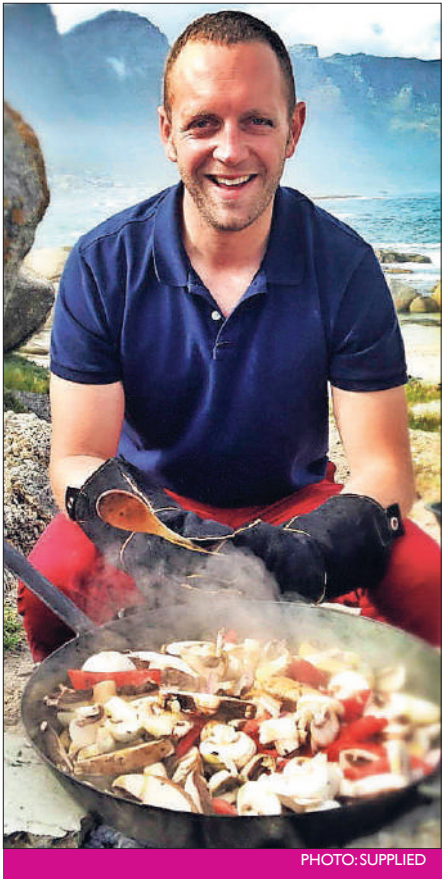


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

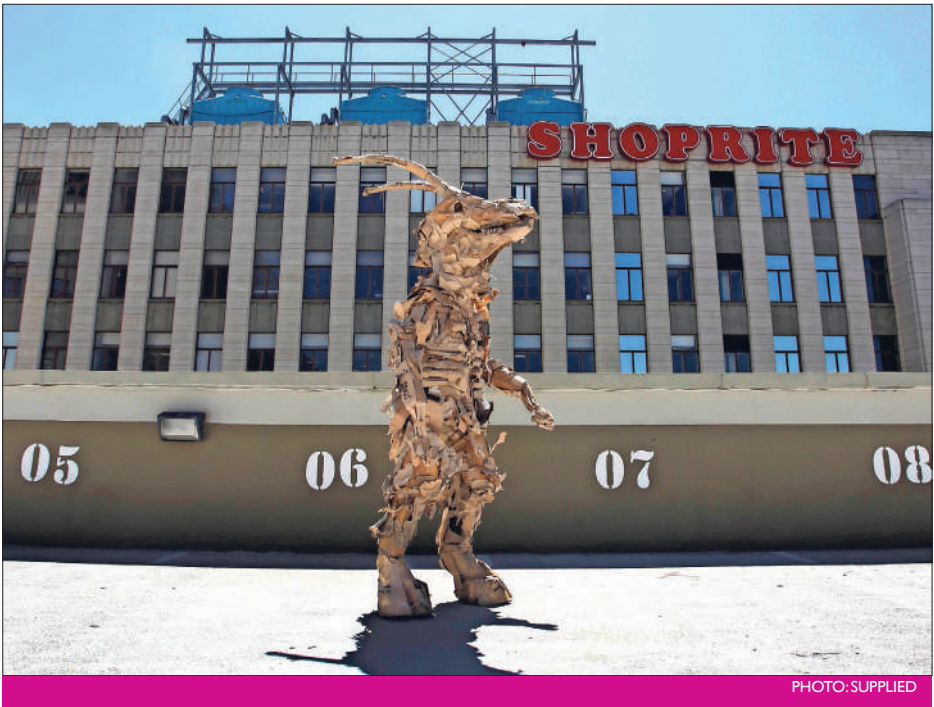


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

FRANCOIS KNOETZE

Artist

Twitter: @FrancoisKnoetze

The limited reach of art galleries was what pushed sculptor Francois Knoetze to take to the streets with his artworks.

Not just displaying his work, but wearing it, because some of Knoetze’s creations are full-length suits made of litter that he dons and walks around in. If you see a man dressed in shining metal or garish green plastic coming towards you, it’s probably Knoetze.

“I spent a lot of time making sculptures and got a bit frustrated with galleries and the fact that my art was only being seen by a very select few audience members,” he says. “I wanted to get it out into the real world to people who weren’t expecting to come across artwork in spaces that they weren’t expecting it.”

Knoetze’s art elicits a mixed response, from fear to people being very enthusiastic and wanting to interact. He likes his walkabouts in suits of litter to be open to interpretation, while his more mainstream works tackle his message more clearly. He works exclusively with garbage and discarded objects; his main theme is showing how rubbish can be transformed and reused.

“As a child I learned to value seemingly useless objects from watching my grandfather repairing broken appliances, toys and furniture,” he says. “I use reclaimed waste material as an artistic medium through which to explore the dirty underbelly of consumption.” Artistic intervention can turn used items into stories of the people and places they have been in contact with, he says.

His current focus is five trash-man suits called “Cape Mongo” — mongo being 1960s New York slang for a discarded object that has been repurposed.

He has created films about Cape Mongo that have screened at festivals in the US, Germany and London and featured at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival. He also exhibits at group shows and has designed sets and puppets for theatre productions, including shows at Cape Town’s Artscape. — *Lesley Stones*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ADRIAN “DIFF” VAN WYK

Performance poet

Twitter: @addifferent

“Poetry exists whether you write it or not. Poets are just the ones taking note,” says performance poet Adrian “Diff” Van Wyk.

It’s true. His poetry tells of everyday activities, drawing attention to social issues and politics that might otherwise go unchallenged.

“A lot of my subjects are about where we are at the moment, where I am personally, and political instances that move me, like my poem about the Limpopo book scandal,” he says.

“The negative things are important and we need to highlight them, but our poetic community can sometimes get stuck in the negative, so I like to write about things that make me happy like my mother’s cooking or the first time I fell in love. My poems might bring about happy memories for other people and happiness is something we don’t celebrate enough. Sometimes happiness can push us through to make the changes and challenge the negatives.”

Van Wyk, (26), is studying for his master’s degree in history at Stellenbosch University. In 2011 he established The InZync Poetry Sessions, a monthly platform for live literature that he curates.

Last year a collaboration he led between InZync and London’s Roundhouse Theatre saw British poets perform in South Africa. This year he will perform in the United Kingdom through the collaboration.

He appears at numerous poetry and book festivals, and featured on the *Versus Poetry* CD as part of an event that honoured satirical cartoonist Zapiro.

He also lived in China for three years as an international student, and found that the experience helped to develop his writing skills.

“I’m a full-time poet, full-time student and a full-time organiser of the poetry sessions. I do everything with very little sleep,” he jokes. “I don’t know what the future holds but I firmly believe that what I love — which is history, poetry, music and art — will guide me in a positive direction.” — *Lesley Stones*

Author and speaker

Twitter: @Mallyzn

The message that Malibongwe Xaba puts in his advertising materials is simple but striking: “Just because I grew up in a disadvantaged community doesn’t mean that I am disadvantaged.”

At 28, Xaba is an author, an inspirational speaker and a One Young World Ambassador who has spoken onstage in Ireland alongside Bob Geldof and Kofi Annan, the former United Nations secretary general.

Xaba’s father left the family in Lindelani near Durban when he was two years old. He got involved in community projects, and his life changed when he wrote a book on a Blackberry, a finger-straining performance that won him national publicity and sales on *Amazon.com*.

His book, *All Things Are Possible*, aims to help people identify their abilities, create opportunities and live a life of purpose.

“In 2012 I didn’t have access to a computer but I wanted to write a book. So I took my Blackberry and started writing my story,” he says. “When I wrote the book it wasn’t because I had achieved something big, but I had achieved a few things. So I looked at what I had been through and the challenges of coming from a township.

“I was trying to make young people realise that regardless of what situation you come from you can still make it. If I can write a book with a Blackberry phone, what is stopping you from [realising] your vision?” he asks.

He is now setting up a publishing company after struggling to get his own book published, and he works with charities, touring schools and careers exhibitions to inspire students. He is achieving his target of addressing at least 20 000 pupils each year, urging kids to believe in themselves and speaking of self-love, possibilities and positive expectations.

Other goals are to be recognised globally as one of the best speakers to come out of Africa’s townships, and to open a youth centre. — *Lesley Stones*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● ARTS AND CULTURE 200



PHOTO BY MARTIN MÜLLER

LESEGO SEMENYA

Chef and businessman

Twitter: @lesdachef

It's an awful pun, but Lesego Semenya is a chef with his finger in many pies.

At just 33 he is a private caterer, a businessman developing a line in kitchen accessories, a TV favourite and a Tweeter of hot cooking tips.

Soweto-born Semenya was once contemplating a career in marketing, and now uses those skills to promote his brand, LesDaChef, which celebrates gourmet food without the usual snobbery.

He qualified from the Prue Leith Chef's Academy with a Grande Diploma in Food and Wine and five other international diplomas in wine and patisserie, which landed him a job at Joburg's Westcliff Hotel.

In 2010 he entered a pie competition run by the British High Commission. His pie, based on a township kota (chips and sausage in a loaf of bread, like a bunny chow) was named the official pie for visiting British football fans during the Fifa World Cup.

The award enabled Semenya to work in a Michelin star restaurant in London. He later worked at Richard Branson's game reserve in Sabi Sands, but after 18 months he resigned to launch his many-pronged business.

While working at the remote luxury game lodge he realised that people are obsessed with chef's aprons. "At the game lodge guests always asked for my apron, so instead of giving them away I've now started selling them," he says.

Semenya appeared on TV during the Cricket World Cup showing viewers how to make great meals in five minutes. He now offers exclusive catering and cooking lessons for posh clients in their own homes. He has also been commissioned to write a book about his life and his recipes.

"The book is a fusion between my journey as a normal guy in corporate South Africa, who suddenly became a chef and discovered that custard isn't from a powder and stock isn't made from a cube," he says. "It's about sharing my journey and upskilling people in the kitchen." — Lesley Stones

SAME MDLULI

Art historian

Web: nac.org.za

Art historian Same Mdluli is the person you need to accompany you around a local art gallery. Where you see just paintings, she sees the history of how black artists have evolved and their role in either shaping or reflecting the lives of South Africa's black people. Mdluli studied fine arts and arts and culture management at Wits University, then earned a PhD in Art History. In between she worked as a primary school art teacher and an assistant at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg. She is now a scholar in the arts, specifically in African art.

Examining the conditions under which black "rural" artists in South Africa were featured in major national exhibitions during the 1980s raises questions about the place of those artists and the role of art in the lives of black people in South Africa's cultural landscape, she says. Her thesis explored the role of exhibitions in bringing rural artists to the attention of the contemporary world — and why most of them have since slipped away from the mainstream.

In 2012 Mdluli was selected to join the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles for the Summer Research Academy. In 2013 she was invited to the Diversitas Summer School in Germany, where international PhD students work on topics in the field of critical diversity studies. Last year she travelled to Paris as a guest researcher at the Institut National d'histoire de l'art.

She was recently appointed as an advisory member for visual art for the National Arts Council, placing upon her an enormous responsibility to contribute in a meaningful way toward the lives of many, she says.

Mdluli still paints herself, but is now discovering that writing about art is a more useful tool with which to articulate her ideas: "My arts writing has gradually extended into writing about other expressive modes such as jazz and contemporary dance." — Lesley Stones



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

HAYLEIGH EVANS

Theatre owner Twitter: @POPArthJB

Don't tell Hayleigh Evans that theatre is dying.

It's very much alive in her small PopART Theatre in the Maboneng Precinct in downtown Johannesburg. Every week there are odd and interesting theatrical experiences, and every Sunday there's a comedy night where young hopefuls can take the stage between more established comics.

Evans (29) opened POPArt in 2011 with fellow graduate Orly Shapiro to create and develop new content and audiences. POPArt has hosted more than 200 new works and drawn a fresh audience by hosting theatre in a small, casual venue.

She has now branched out into producing shows, rather than just hosting them, which means making the financial commitment to take a good idea and actually get it onto stage. Then the shows tour other venues across the country. "We have run the numbers, and if the show works, the numbers work," she says.

Evans was originally on stage herself rather than behind it. She graduated in Performing for Screen and Stage from Afda and landed some acting roles, but soon became more interested in the production side.

She first helped to develop the Maboneng Precinct as its brand and cultural manager and then opened the theatre there.

"We decided to launch POPArt as a result of our frustration with not being able to find our place as emerging artists in the theatre industry. We wanted to create a far more



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

accessible platform for emerging and established artists to work together," she says. "We held a couple of sessions with our peers to assess what was lacking in the industry and didn't waste too much time in getting it off the ground," she says. "It's going incredibly well."

Launching the production company is a huge step and a new phase of growth, she says. "We will look at doing four shows a year and putting them on the road." She will seek corporate funding and arts grants where possible, to share the cost of bringing new shows to life. — Lesley Stones



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

HLENGIWE VILAKATI

Art gallery owner and social entrepreneur

Twitter: @hlengiwev

Turning your home into an art gallery is a serious commitment to your work, and that's what Hlengiwe Vilakati made when she opened Jo Anke Gallery. It took her a while because there were no art grants to help convert the house, or to help her procure artworks to display there. Now her initiative is giving young and unknown local artists the chance to have their work hung, promoted and sold in a real gallery, which displays modern art that bends towards social and political commentary.

"It's all self-funded, so I have been doing it over time by fixing my place up and changing and refurbishing it," she says. "Now I'm focusing on creating a market by establishing and promoting young South African artists."

Her latest exhibition comprised about 25 works; the previous one had 30 pieces on display. "I like to do group shows so I can include as many artists as I can," she says. That's also better for potential customers, as they can see a variety of styles rather than take a chance on coming to see just one person's work.

Vilakati prefers people to make appointments, so she can show them around and talk about the different pieces and the individual artists.

She has just hosted a financial literacy workshop for young artists, to help them become more money savvy and see how schemes like tax rebates can help them. "It was very important for me when I learned about tax rebates, being a small business, and it's crucial for the development of young business people. But it's not covered at any level of our education, including university, and it's a missing link to develop the creative sector. I'm not trying to turn creatives into financial gurus, but to help them become sustainable."

Before opening her own gallery, Vilakati studied marketing and worked as an advertising executive. For three years she taught at Vega, the Brand Leadership School and Imagination Labs, and was also the project manager for youth development at the JHB Artfair. — Lesley Stones



PHOTO BY KARL SCHOEMAKER

WARREN PETERSEN

Tattooist

Twitter: @Baked_Ink

Warren Petersen believes there is nothing downmarket about tattoos. While some people may think it's not an art form, it actually requires more skill than painting on canvas.

Not only do you need to understand line and form, colour and perspective, you also have to apply hygiene standards, and execute all that on moving bodies with different skin types and textures.

"Many fine art-based tattooists have entered the industry and increased the skills through their understanding of line and colour, so tattooing has reached a technical point where it can be perceived as fine art," Petersen says. "That's pushing tattooing into a whole different place. It's a very exciting time because nobody really knows how far it's going to go."

Petersen has a degree in Fine Art Illustration, and his paintings have sold at local and international galleries. Market demands led him into graphic design rather than fine art, and moving to Johannesburg rekindled his curiosity in tattoos.

"Tattooing is something I fell into, it wasn't a conscious decision," he says. "But I have always been fascinated by it. I remember asking my dad if I could be a tattoo artist and he said 'get that out of your head' but I still did it."

After a two-year tattooing apprenticeship he returned to Cape Town, where he spent last year setting up his studio, More Than Hype.

"It's in Gardens in the beautiful Model Villa, which is a heritage site built in the 1800s. It used to be a gallery so I have space for my paintings and my tattooing," he says.

Displaying his paintings next to the tattoo studio has proved inspirational to clients uncertain of which design to choose. "I have had people coming in and asking me to tattoo my paintings on them!" he says.

This year Petersen won his first international award for the best large black and grey female piece at the Sydney Tattoo Arts Convention. — Lesley Stones

PIETER JACOBS

Chief executive: Arts and Culture Trust

Web: www.act.org.za

It's important for the head of an arts funding organisation to have an artistic background himself, to understand the pains and problems of the industry.

This makes Pieter Jacobs well suited for his job as chief executive of the Arts & Culture Trust (ACT), an independent agency that funds individual artists and arts and culture organisations.

Jacobs is a playwright and actor, but far prefers being out of the limelight and in administration. "Performing is where my journey started, but I enjoy the creation of a work a lot more than the actual production of it. It's far more rewarding to be in the development side of the creative process," he says.

"I'm so passionate about my work, because as an actor I wouldn't be able to have the impact I can here. I understand how the industry works, so I have a lot of sympathy for practitioners and I am able to support people's endeavours."

Jacobs won a scholarship in 1998 to study performing arts, then joined a touring repertory group and appeared in the television drama *Song vir Katryn*. In 2012 he took his one-man show *F.A.T.* to the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

Bringing more money into the arts is naturally one of his goals. "I don't like to talk about fundraising, I like to talk about resources planning, which is a whole range of things, of which fundraising is one," he says. "There will obviously never be enough funds to support everything, and South Africa is in a dilemma because we are not very good at identifying the kind of things that will be sustainable."

Government museums and theatres are given enough



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

cash to operate but not to plan programmes, so they also compete for private support, says Jacobs.

Organisations should not be afraid to support the arts, he says, because it will offer them access to knowledge and competencies that can be used to achieve many things within social and corporate communities. — Lesley Stones

BRIAN KENT MCKECHNIE

Architect and heritage advisor

Web: activate.co.za

Architect Brian Kent McKechnie is a Joburger who loves the mining city's gritty history. His passion is to preserve the rich architectural and cultural heritage of the inner city while creating urban regeneration.

He has designed and implemented mixed-use redevelopments in the CBD for private investors and government agencies, drawing much-needed investment to the city centre.

McKechnie played a key role in protecting the art deco Anstey's building, which was built in 1935 and has been declared a heritage site. McKechnie is a trustee on the Anstey's Preservation Trust and the lead architect in its restoration. It now features an art exhibition space, a library for children and an unusual venue for rooftop events.

McKechnie says he sees the inner city as a rich melting pot of past and present, with a history, people and beauty worth preserving and growing. His infectious passion for his city has produced real and meaningful change, partly through the many roles he serves in the architectural community. He sits on the advisory committee to the Gauteng MEC for arts and culture and serves on the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority. He chairs the Gauteng Institute for Architects Heritage Committee, is a director of the Retail Improvement District, and sits on the board of Egoli Heritage Foundation.

McKechnie has written for various magazines and directed their architectural city shoots, and was a contributing writer for the book *Architectural Conservation in South Africa*.

He laid the groundwork for his career with his master's dissertation, which focused on conserving the remaining historical fabric of downtown Johannesburg. In a Tedx Cities Talk in 2013 he described the city's appeal as lying in her raw authenticity, grit and spirit. — Lesley Stones

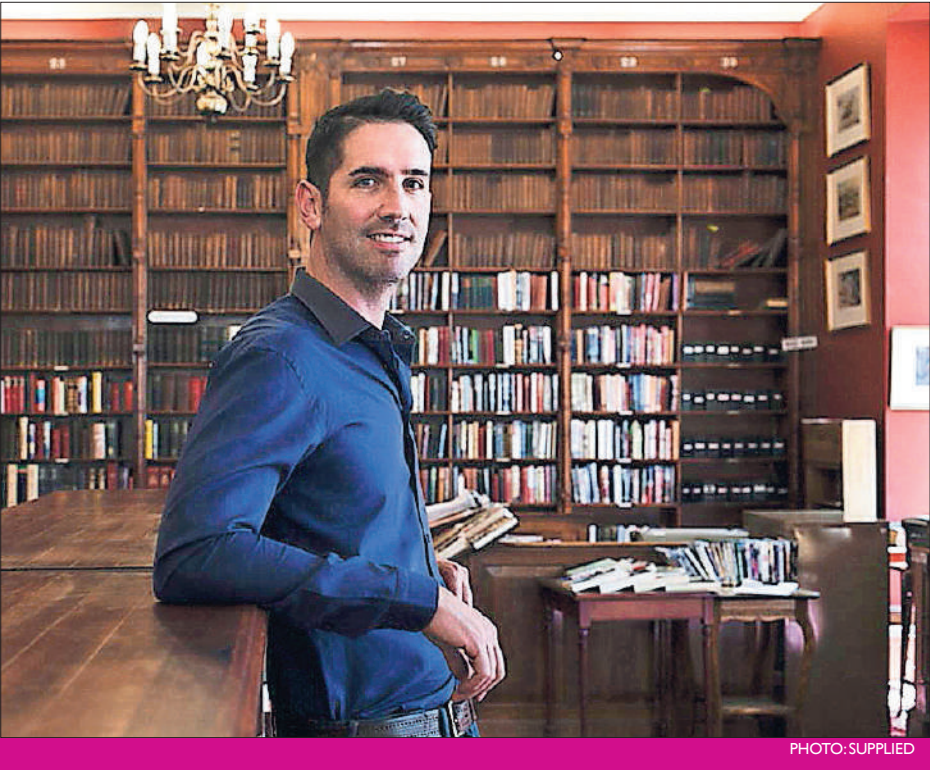


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SONWABISO NGCOWA

Author and motivational speaker

Twitter: @SonwabisoNgcowa

Author and motivational speaker Sonwabiso Ngcowa tells powerful stories to force young people to reconsider important issues such as gender violence, homophobia, abuse and xenophobia.

He believes it is vital for heterosexual men to speak out against gender violence and inequality, and tackles sticky issues in his writing to provoke conversation among township youths.

His first novel, *In Search of Happiness*, is a story about a schoolgirl who finds love with another girl. He has used the book to give talks at human rights youth workshops run by the Holocaust Centre in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban and at the FunDza Literacy Trust.

Ngcowa (31) matriculated from Fish Hoek Senior High School but was unsure of what he wanted to do next. "I was lost, confused and scared," he says. After working at a few menial jobs, he asked a former teacher for guidance, and together they completed an application for Ngcowa to study Business Management and Processes at Cape College. He graduated two years later with a diploma and landed a job at the Standard Bank.

"Five years later I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to write and study further," he says. He resigned but went through tough months of wondering if he had done the right thing.

Then he was introduced to Dr Lutz van Dijk, a German-Dutch writer working in South Africa who began to mentor him. Ngcowa's first story was published online by FunDza Literacy Trust in 2011; other stories have been published by Cover2Cover Books and Oxford University Press.

After Dr van Dijk translated *In Search of Happiness* into German, Ngcowa travelled to Germany to give 27 readings.

He is now completing an honours degree in anthropology. "I know will write more and will get more education; I am approaching the future with a smile." — Lesley Stones



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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● ARTS AND CULTURE 200



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MICHAEL THEMBA

Actor

Twitter: @MichaelRif

Acting can be a cruelly sporadic career: you're the hottest star in town one month and the next, you're struggling for a role in the chorus line.

Actor Michael Riff Themba is currently having a down period, after literally flying high as Peter Pan in the annual Joburg Theatre pantomime last year.

But he's not sitting around moping — he is writing a musical to create his own opportunities. Themba won't say what his musical is about, but he plans to show his script to potential collaborators to add their skills to his. "I can't do it on my own; I'm not an island, so I want to work with other people," he says.

He has also gone into the interior design business with a friend. "My passion is acting, but I also have a partnership in an interior design company and I'm trying to get into real estate," he says. "I'm trying other avenues because acting isn't bringing in enough money. That's how this industry is — you need to do something else on the side to keep yourself afloat, because auditions don't come all the time and you're not on stage every day."

He started acting as a child, appearing in the TV programmes *Kideo* and *Funfani Nathi*. Later he earned a National Diploma in Musical Theatre from Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) where he appeared in a few musicals as part of his training. He taught himself to play the piano and learned musical direction, allowing him to direct and orchestrate TUT's interpretation of *Sarafina: in Black and White*.

Since turning professional he has appeared in *Starlight Express*, *The Colored Museum*, *Monty Python's Spamalot* and starred in *Peter Pan*. As a singer he has been involved in concerts for the 67 Blankets for Nelson Mandela Day campaign, and has MC'd corporate functions.

Now, while he waits for the next role, he is a partner in DNX Interiors, handling administration but hoping to do more with his eye for detail, design and fashion. "It's something I'm trying out, and I'm actually quite enjoying it." — Lesley Stones

SIPHIWE NGWENYA

Artist and art tour operator

Twitter: @mabonengarts and @artstownship

When artist Siphiwe Ngwenya was struggling to find a venue willing to display his work, he set up an impromptu exhibition in the yards around his home in Alexandra. It was a brilliant idea, spawning two business ventures, a collection of 80 home art galleries in six townships and some much-needed income for budding artists.

Ngwenya then founded Maboneng Township Arts Experience to run annual exhibitions of home-based art galleries in townships around Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The company also helps other entrepreneurs set up township events of their own to tie in with the tours. About 80 homes are turned into galleries when the festivals are staged. It was named one of the top 32 public art projects in the world by the International Public Arts Awards 2015.

The biggest success has been in Langa near Cape Town, where art tours are run daily and tourists can book online to be guided around home art galleries. The business is providing some income for the artists, while the company itself makes money from ticket sales.

Ngwenya would like to see the tours become more regular in Alexandra too, once he has the funds and capacity to implement that.

To create a more full-time business, Ngwenya has formed Arts Township International (ATI) in partnership with Cape Town company iKapa Dance Theatre. ATI is working to create an ecosystem of "home innovation labs" to create a broader township experience for visitors and stimulate economic growth.

Ngwenya's ideas have earned him a place in the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellowship awards, part of President Barack Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. Ngwenya will spend six weeks at Northwestern University in Illinois doing leadership training, networking and skills building, followed by a Presidential Summit in Washington. "It's a course for 500 young people from Africa to go to different universities to learn about entrepreneurship and business leadership." — Lesley Stones



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

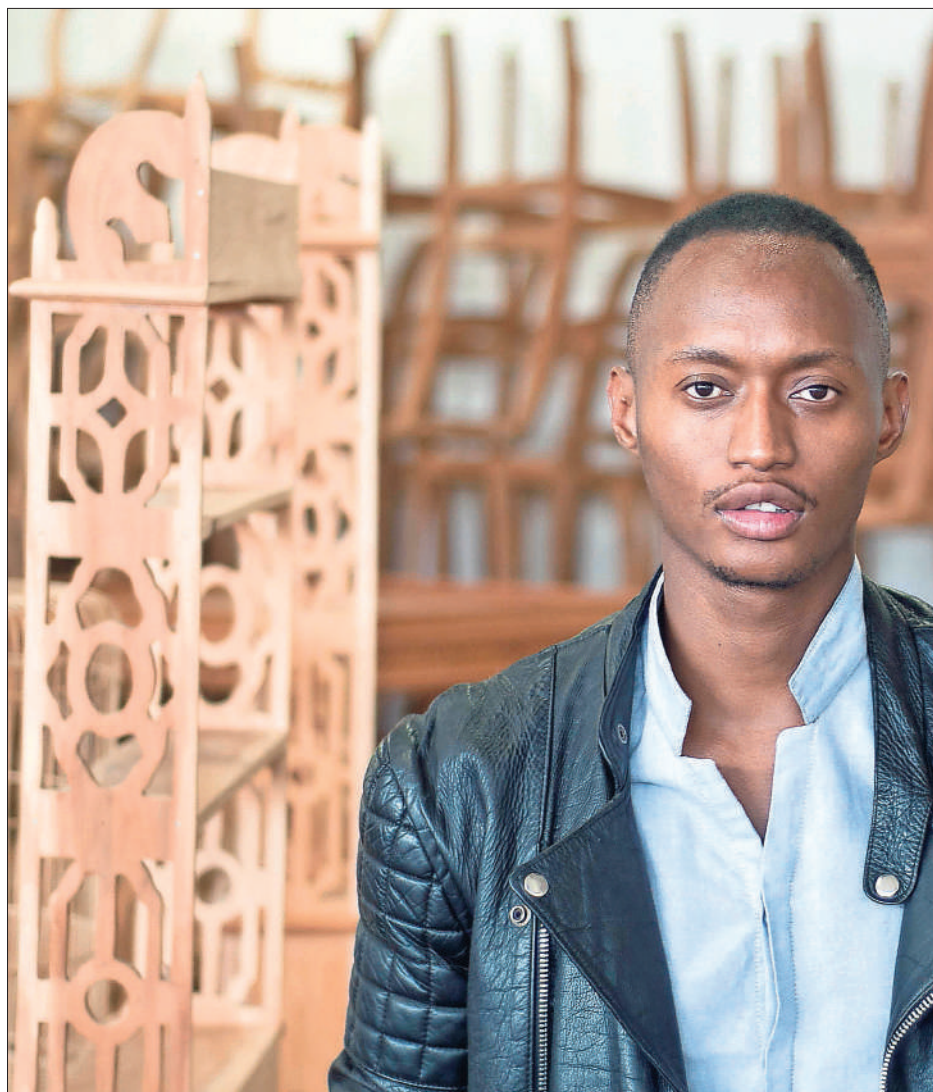


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DONALD NXUMALO

Interior designer

Twitter: @designerDony

Not long ago, interior designer Donald Nxumalo was struggling to pay for his fourth year of study at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

Now he has clients in Zimbabwe and Kenya and is about to fly to London to decorate an apartment there. He's also one of the preferred interior designers recommended to property buyers in the swanky new Steyn City development.

As just 26, Nxumalo is well on his way to becoming hot property in his chosen niche. Yet he isn't taking any of it for granted, and is determined to put in the hard work to back up his flair and skill.

"In my fourth year at TUT my parents said they couldn't afford to pay for that year so I had to make a plan," he says. "So I started a business. I started going to Ethiopian and Chinese shops and offered to [re-]design the shop for them for a fee. I can't believe I got away with it, but I managed to pay my fees that year."

After graduating he was employed for 18 months before branching out on his own, and discovering challenges such as cash flows. Then he entered the SABC3 *Win A Home* competition, which challenged interior designers to meet Steyn City's promise of creating a parkland paradise.

First he reached the top 10, then he became one of four finalists who appeared in the show for six weeks and won R50 000 each. It was welcome news as he was broke at the time.

"Each week we had a design challenge like the bedroom challenge and the bathroom challenge, and viewers got to vote for their favourite designer and a panel of judges from the industry also voted," says Nxumalo.

As the overall winner Nxumalo didn't win the home itself, but his prize was much more valuable, he says, as being a preferred designer for Steyn City has elevated him into an upper class market that he may never have reached alone. — Lesley Stones



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

GALI MALEBO

Theatre practitioner and designer

Twitter: @gali_hope

A moment spent watching deaf students on her university campus provided Gali Malebo with an unexpected future.

As she watched them talking animatedly in sign language, the theatre practitioner suddenly decided to explore theatre for the deaf. That moment has already changed her life — and the lives of others — and is taking her around the world as a blossoming expert on the craft.

Malebo (30) has worked at a theatre for the deaf in Washington, presented her research in Athens and will address the European Conference on Language Learning in the United Kingdom in July.

"It started as a moment of observation when I walked past some deaf students and it just clicked that I hadn't seen any deaf performers. It was the moment when I became inquisitive and started researching sign language and fell in love with the idea of producing deaf theatre," she says. "Until then I was just a normal artist envisioning myself on the big screen, until I came across that group using their hands and facial expressions, and I loved everything about it."

Malebo became fluent in sign language and launched EL-Deaf Theatre Productions. She has now produced four shows including *Signerella*, a sign language twist on *Cinderella*. "It was really well received and because people knew the story those who are not fluent in sign language could follow it," she says.

Initially her idea was to produce shows with deaf actors for deaf audiences, but it has grown to integrate hearing actors and to play for both deaf and hearing audiences. Sometimes the shows have a voice-over to keep audiences abreast of what the sign language actors are saying.

For her master's degree in Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of the Free State, Malebo is exploring deaf theatre techniques to improve English literacy among deaf students. Sign language has a different structure to spoken English, so a deaf person's writing tends to feature words in the wrong order, she says.

This is groundbreaking research, which is why she is in demand to present her work around the world. — Lesley Stones



MKHULULI MABIJA

Librettist

Facebook: [mkhululi.mabija](#)

Mkhululi Mabija (29) has a most unusual job. He is a librettist, a person who writes the words for operas.

It's unusual because not many people write operas any more, and very few of them are under 30. He is currently adapting Athol Fugard's novel *Tsotsi* into a musical, in partnership with Cape Town Opera and composer Zwai Bala. He is also writing an opera with Zolani Mahola, the lead singer of Freshly Ground, with her in mind as his leading lady.

Mabija graduated in Musical Theatre Performance from Tshwane University of Technology, then won a bursary to study Musical Theatre Writing at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

"That's the only place in the world that teaches you how to write musicals," he says. "The professors are people who have been working professionally with their shows on Broadway, so we can go and see their work then come back to class. While I was there I started liking how classical works are written, and there are some new works coming out that are very interesting, so that's how my love of opera started."

During his time there, he became the youngest adjunct professor at New York University and taught South African Culture Through History, Art and Media.

He has since written several operas and musicals and won three awards. *Bessie: The Blue-Eyed Xhosa*, which he wrote with Angelique Mouyis, will be staged by Cape Town Opera this year.

Mkhululi says he gets his ideas for stories partly from being an avid reader and partly from South Africa's rich history of stories that have not yet been told.

He believes there is a big audience for opera, but knows it is important to cultivate younger fans to keep the craft alive.

Mkhululi was born in Kimberley and has a part-time teaching job there. "Instead of teachers teaching art subjects, we as the artists come in and teach those subjects," he says. "The kids get a better picture and it helps to create the next audience, because we start moulding young minds." — *Lesley Stones*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MARTHINUS FERREIRA

Chef

Twitter: [@dwchef](#)

There is good news for anyone who has unsuccessfully tried to book a table at one of finest restaurants in Johannesburg, dw eleven-13.

Chef Marthinus Ferreira is planning to open another one next year, probably followed by another tapas bar and a cook book. "I'm expanding my empire," he jokes.

Ferreira (34) is the darling of Joburg's fine dining scene, and he's happy to capitalise on that.

But success didn't come easily. When he opened dw eleven-13 in June 2009 he had sleepless nights wondering if more than handful of guests would ever stroll in. "I have never been so scared in my life as when I opened dw," he remembers.

He followed that by opening The Grazing Room next door, serving tapas in a less formal atmosphere. Now the venues are fully booked four to five weeks in advance.

"We don't have enough quality restaurants in Joburg and it doesn't seem like anybody else wants to open anything [good]. So let me be the one who makes another great restaurant," he says.

He will own the new venture in partnership with a chef de cuisine (an executive chef). "I won't be running it, but I'll have my fingers in everything like the cuisine it serves, the wine list and the decor to make sure it's perfect, and maybe I'll spend three nights a week at each restaurant," he says.

Ferreira admits he has had to tone down his creations, however, which were once gloriously experimental. "We have stopped all the funny foams and jellies because we are trying to make food more accessible to more people. My food is still very fancy, but we have taken away all the oohs and aaahs that made the dish look prettier. People were almost intimidated by it," he says.

"Cooking more simply is harder, so I have sourced the most amazing beef, pork and chicken and really good, fresh vegetables to serve with beautiful sauces. So now it's a lot more recognisable and we are busier than we have ever been in the last six years." — *Lesley Stones*



PHOTO: MAGGIEVAN RHYN

INGA GUBEKA

Decor product designer

Web: [indalodecor.com](#)

After brief flirtations with graphic and interior design at university, Inga Gubeka found that what he really wanted to do was make beautiful products. In 2013, he established Indalo Décor in Cape Town and set to work on a wooden bag range. It was showcased at the Design Indaba that year and had folk at Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Cape Town and Africa Fashion Week oohing and aahing.

Gubeka makes a variety of lifestyle décor products and accessories, from clocks and lamps to belts, using wood and leather. The plywood bags are his bestsellers — even models Alek Wek and Candice Swanepoel have been spotted wearing them.

"Next year I'm planning on taking the brand international, the time has come," the 26-year-old entrepreneur says confidently. He'll be showcasing Indalo products at international fashion shows and trade expos, a major feat for a brand that is just two years old.

Born in the Eastern Cape and raised in Durban by his grandfather, Gubeka is advocates the local design industry. "South Africa has something special due our diversity, rich culture and history. There is so much inspiration that can influence our creative ability. This industry is important because it involves manufacturing, which leads to job creation for young people and also teaches them skills."

He believes that education and training is vital if you wish to be successful in this field. He received his at the Cape Town Cape Craft and Design Institute, which helps young designers develop new products and teaches them business management and marketing skills.

"Of course, people need to have a love and passion for design before opting for it as a career," says Gubeka. That may sound like a cliché, but it's exactly that philosophy which got him out of a mundane desk job and onto South Africa's design scene. He's in his element here. — *Qudsiya Karim*



PHOTO:



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SUNNYBOY MANDLA MOTAU

Dancer and choreographer

Instagram: [@sanzastanza](#)

Sunnyboy Mandla Motau (29) has worked in the arts industry for the past 16 years, eight of which have been dedicated to dance — creating it, choreographing it and teaching it. *Man-Longing*, his acclaimed piece on the sinister world of human trafficking, featured at the National Arts Festival.

Motau began his dance career training in traditional dance with the Plumule Theatre Group in Alexandra Township, where he grew up. "Young people need to realise that dance is right at their doorstep. So much of it happens in the townships. It is where most dance careers begin."

In 2008 he joined the renowned dance company, Moving into Dance Mophatong (MIDM), and soon made a name for himself on the national and global stage.

Motau performed at the Fifa World Cup 2010 kick-off concert and in Robyn Orlin's *Beauty remained for just a minute then returned gently to her starting position* in 2012, which toured France, Australia, Germany, Canada and London.

His latest choreography, *Fight, flight, feathers and f**kers*, was voted one of the top three works at Dance Umbrella 2015 and will open at the University of Johannesburg's Con Cowan Theatre in August. He was also nominated for a Naledi Theatre Award earlier this year.

In addition to his onstage projects, Motau has embarked on a mission to make dance more visible in his community and educate young people about career opportunities in the industry. He teaches afrofusion dance technique and theory at MIDM and runs open dance classes and workshops for schoolchildren in Alexandra.

"Dance is a brilliant career choice, because to get to do what you love and you get paid for it too. You get to keep fit, you tour the world, and connect with different people and cultures. And you achieve discipline, respect and commitment." — *Qudsiya Karim*



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● ARTS AND CULTURE 200



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

TREVOR STUURMAN

Fashion photographer

Twitter: @TrevorStuurman

Snap-happy and fashion forward, Trevor Stuurman is the next big thing in fashion and photography. He has a grasp of trends and styles that few ever possess, much less understand, and his abilities behind the lens have earned him respect and recognition. In 2012 he won the Elle Style Reporter title and he recently completed the documentary *Ubuhle Besintu* that follows the journey of knitwear designer Laduma Ngxokolo, which he co-directed with Kathrin Ratzek.

"Fashion has always been part of my life and I cannot remember a time I didn't love it, so it was a very natural process to get into this industry," he says. "At the time I was also studying film and I believe that both fashion and film are narrative based, so it was a natural fit for me."

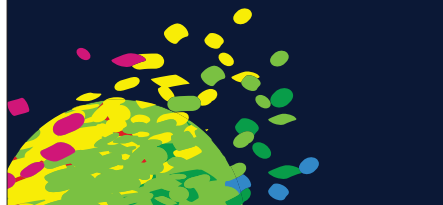
Stuurman tells stories through these two mediums, using them to transport people to other times, spaces and lives. He has worked on fashion magazines such as *Grazia* and *Glamour*, he is the 2015 Autumn Winter face of Woolworths and he has also styled a few music videos for the likes of Spoke Mathambo.

"I am inspired by everyday struggles and it is always about overcoming them," says Stuurman. "I am also inspired by my home town of Kimberley. It's a small town and this teaches you to become really resourceful and to make the most out of what you have, and this has allowed me to see the bigger picture and to remember where I come from."

The next big thing on Stuurman's radar is a film he released called *Ayanda and the Mechanic*. Currently it is being screened at the Cannes Film Festival, a remarkable achievement indeed.

"It's to be released in South Africa in August," says Stuurman. "It is really exciting and I am really pleased with how it has all worked out. I think South Africa's style is fun and varied and this makes us unique and interesting. We have achieved so much as a country. I am only 22 and just looking at who I am and what I can do, I believe that South Africa is far ahead and people should be proud of who we are. Sure, things can improve, but let's recognise how great we are today." — Tamsin Oxford

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MALOTI MOTHABI

Fashion entrepreneur

Twitter: @Strato_Africa

Maloti Mothobi is the founder and creative director of Strato, a streetwear brand with a focus on men's apparel. Born and raised in Cape Town, she graduated with a degree in fashion from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in 2004.

She then worked as a retail buyer at Foschini Group for two years, where she learnt the business dynamics of the industry — and noticed a gap in the market. "I realised we didn't have our own street apparel in South Africa. Brands on the market then were all international, and that inspired me to launch a proudly African brand."

Born in 2006, Strato — South African slang for street — combines influences from sport and fashion to create apparel with street cred. It's not just hoodies and track pants though; trendy golfers, chinos and cardigans are also part of the range.

Mothobi decided to put Strato on hold for a bit while she took up a post as marketing liaison at the Cape Town Fashion Council and completed her honours in fashion, majoring in marketing.

After graduating in 2010, and armed with a new set of skills and experience, Mothobi revived her brand. She



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

opened the Strato concept store on Long Street in 2011, a stall at the V&A waterfront and an online store. A concept store opens its doors in the Johannesburg CBD this July.

Strato apparel has been showcased at the Design Indaba and Cape Town Fashion Week over several seasons. They can also be found on the pages of local and international magazines, including *Le Cap* and the 2013/14 French edition of the Louis Vuitton City Guide.

In 2014, Strato was named the winner in the manufacturing category of the Eskom Business Investment Competition Awards. Mothobi considers this her biggest achievement to date, and it's what prompted her to expand her company. She recently launched a manufacturing subsidiary called StyleKontrol, which supplies T-shirts, promotional clothing, garment digital printing and embroidery to corporates. — Qudsiya Karim

ATANG TSHIKARE

Illustrator, surface designer and entrepreneur

Twitter: @AtangTshikare

Illustrator and surface designer Atang Tshikare is frequently described as one of South Africa's hottest young talents. With his tools of choice — pencils, markers and paint — and an enviable imagination, he transforms sneakers, clothes, bicycles and furniture into art.

Tshikare was born and raised in Bloemfontein. He studied graphic design and spent two years in the UK before moving to Cape Town in 2009 and taking up art full-time. In 2012, he launched Zabalazaa Designs, an independent studio specialising in surface design and illustration.

Tshikare distinguishes between his artistic and entrepreneurial sides: "I've divided myself into two. Atang is the lone artist who spearheads new experiments by learning and creating ... I push the envelope and take charge. Zabalazaa is the business side of me, where I, along with a team, make Atang's ideas consumable for the market."

Tshikare has successfully established Zabalazaa as a reputable brand with an impressive client base that includes Adidas Originals, JWT Marketing, Belvedere Vodka and *Chimurenga* magazine. He's exhibited his work locally and abroad, at Design Miami, Design Days Dubai, New York,

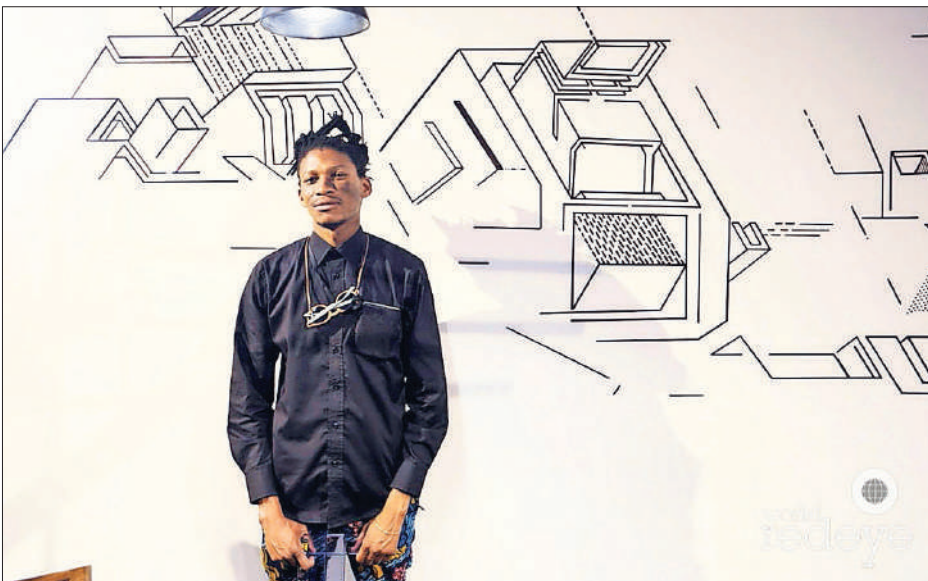


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Vienna, Germany and Switzerland. In 2013, he scooped the Future Found Design award from Southern Guild.

Tshikare is currently a mentor at the Ubuntu Academy in Cape Town, and is passionate about the possibilities that his industry offers to youth. "Design is a fusion of logic and imagination and if you can learn how to put these two together you will always have amazing results. The more well-known and popular design becomes, the easier people will be able to create their own jobs, food, and get educated.

Because this industry thrives on creativity, people can learn how to make solutions where there is no money or formal education."

His next project is personal. Tshikare is collaborating with his illustrator father, Mogorosi Motshumi, on an autobiographical graphic novel. "My dad is hand-drawing his life story on A3 paper, quite a daunting commitment. I am helping him raise funds to get it published. It's a new journey for both of us." — Qudsiya Karim

DAVID TSHABALALA

Designer, illustrator and entrepreneur

Twitter: @Slaying Goliath

David Tshabalala's love for illustration started in primary school. He'd be indoors drawing Pokemon on his sketchpad while his friends played soccer outside. "As a black kid, my parents assumed this was just a passing phase and that I'd end up being a lawyer or teacher. Little did they know that I had an insatiable hunger to create for myself and others."

Tshabalala went on to study graphic design at the Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein and graduated in 2010. Job-hunting led him to Johannesburg, where he bagged his first design project with Thesis Lifestyle.

Now 26, Tshabalala is an accomplished designer, illustrator and co-owner of Sukechi, a design collective with an online store. Their most recent range includes canvas bags, T-shirts, badges, stickers and fridge magnets. "My style is pop, fun and refreshing. I'm influenced by 90s-era fashion and bright colours set against a blank canvas. I'm not boxed in by certain mediums and I'm constantly reinventing my technique," he says.

Tshabalala was a finalist on the reality TV show *Creative Union* in 2013, where he learnt the ropes of entrepreneurship from established mentors. Last year he was chosen as an Emerging Creative at Design Indaba, a feat trumped by his nomination for the 2015 Bookmarks Awards in the Best Young Gun category.

He is currently busy with the second series of Run The World, a portrait-a-day project in which he illustrates 31 South African women during Women's Month. The "Instabition", which features on Instagram only, has become an annual project due to its popularity.

"The need to make a difference in my community using my craft keeps me going," Tshabalala says. "I'm scared to be normal and settle for being ordinary. I want to be an influencer and I realise the huge responsibility that comes with that." — Qudsiya Karim



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



LEE GRANT

Group chief executive, Brand Serve Group

Web: www.brandserve.co.za

From humble beginnings, Lee Grant now runs a multimillion-rand business empire — but the road to success has not been easy.

Grant started climbing the entrepreneurial ladder at the age of eight by selling watermelon slices. As a child he lived for a period in Firlands Children's Home in Johannesburg. "I'd buy watermelons for around R2 and sell them per slice. The kids laughed at me and called me 'melon boy'. I didn't care — I laughed as I took their money."

He is now the chief executive of Leeegra, a field marketing and promotions company engaged in sales, merchandising, promotions, product development and strategy.

"We help to mobilise workforces to create positive experiences at store-level to help brands connect with consumers. In the 15 years we've been in business, we've gone from nothing to becoming a leading industry player in our field."

Leeegra has a national footprint, covering all sectors of retail from fast-moving consumer goods to banking, and encompassing a range of blue-chip clients and multinationals.

"In 2014 I established the Brand Serve Group to bring together all my businesses in one unified vision. It comprises a number of well-established specialist companies that cover an array of disciplines."

Grant said he started the business with his wife while they were R15 000 in debt.

"The journey has not always been smooth. There have been many setbacks and near-disasters, but I managed to bounce back."

In 2011 Grant decided to take a sabbatical. Following a change in business strategy while he was away, the company went from an annual turnover of R50-million to a R1-million monthly loss.

But he says he refocused and went aggressively after new business. "In a year, we rescued Leeegra without losing staff, then bought another distressed business and rescued that too. Amazingly, today we are more strongly positioned than ever."

"In business, change is the only constant. How you manage change and challenges makes you either an entrepreneur, or bankrupt. Once again, I learnt more about myself in that time than ever before. I would not change a thing." — *Tabelo Timse*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NTOMBENHLE KHATHWANE

Chief executive, AfroBotanics

Twitter: [@Ntombenhlek](https://twitter.com/Ntombenhlek)

In 2010 Ntombenhle Khathwane resigned from her high-powered government job in Mpumalanga and took her first step towards her goal — building a continental hair care brand.

Five years later, her brainchild AfroBotanics manufactures hair care products using African botanical oils. The range will soon be available at Game stores, Sweet Penny and Head To Toe.

"I was advised against quitting my job before my company was up and running, but I believe to make it in business it has to be all or nothing," she says.

Khathwane admits she knew nothing about business when she started, but decided to move into an easy field because of her interest in her own hair.

"I have experimented with my hair, but it tended to fall out. I came to realise that I didn't understand the science of my hair," she explains.

Khathwane went to the United States to research hair brands and thought about importing products from there. But as an Afro-optimist she decided to build a continental brand.

"We are always quick to bring in and be loyal to brands that don't add value to the African economy," she said

The mother of two says starting your own business is not easy, and even after several years she is still learning. The financial aspect is the most challenging, she says.

"I put my pension into the business, but quickly ran out of money. I had not thought through my distribution channels, how to market and get the products out to the consumer. Getting into retail is extra, extra hard. So I've learnt as I go, and I am still learning."

Among her achievements she lists being the winner of Pitch and Polish Business Competition in 2010. She was last year's runner-up in the SABC business competition Think Big, winning R1-million in prize money.

Last year she was also awarded the Archbishop Tutu Oxford University Leadership Fellowship. — *Tabelo Timse*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

TYRONE MOODLEY

Chief executive, Midbrook Lane

Twitter: [@tyronemoodley](https://twitter.com/tyronemoodley)

At a young age, Tyrone Moodley tried his hand at many sports but mastered none. So he started selling sweets and trading marbles, X-men cards and Lego.

Now 29, Moodley is the chief executive of Midbrook Lane and one of the youngest serving board members of a JSE-listed company.

"I still have the X-men cards to this day," he says. "It's a great reminder of where it all started."

Midbrook Lane is an investment company that puts money into both private and public companies, with the aim of holding the investments over a minimum period of 10 years.

Moodley says the firm, which he started with partner Sean Riskowitz, follows a value philosophy based on an understanding of how businesses work and why they are often attractive investments.

"We look for quality companies that have some sort of competitive advantage, and where that advantage has durability."

"Unlike traditional investment managers or unit trusts, we have a very concentrated portfolio of companies that we invest in, no more than 10. In the early days we had just R35 000 of investable capital; today that figure is edging towards R1-billion."

"We only want to allocate capital to our best ideas and avoid unnecessary diversification. Our risk mitigation comes not from spreading our investments over 100 companies, but rather knowing more than anyone else about the seven we own."

Moodley and Riskowitz started off using the "three Fs" — family, friends and "anyone foolish enough to invest with us".

"At the age of 21 it's very difficult to convince others that you practise what you preach — having long-term horizons, looking for quality management teams and being able to have a somewhat contrarian view to traditional finance. But we persevered," says Moodley. "Being part of a team helped us to pick one another up when we hit obstacles and we became overnight experts in fields that were at first alien." — *Tabelo Timse*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KATE LAING

Principal, Pegasys Strategy

Twitter: [@Kate_Laing](https://twitter.com/Kate_Laing)

Kate Laing says that nothing motivates her more than waking up in the morning and making a tangible difference, being effective and solving problems. Luckily, her job gives her with the opportunity to do all three.

With an MSc in economics from University College London, Laing works for Pegasys Strategy, a company that provides strategic consultancy services to government in managing public assets, such as transport.

Her primary role is supporting local decision-makers in the implementation of integrated public transport networks, such as the Rea Vaya or MyCiti.

"People often associate this with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), but it is less about the big, shiny infrastructure and more about finding ways to make public transport operate better for South Africans," she says.

Laing always knew she wanted to work with key decision-makers and to make a difference to society.

She explains that the average South African spends twice the global average on travel. A typical low-income household can spend up to 40% of its monthly income on transport, and more than a fifth of South Africans walk because they cannot afford transport at all.

The spatial disconnects established during apartheid continue to perpetuate inequalities in South Africa today: her current role is helping government in solving this problem.

Last year Laing and her partner took a trip overland to Nairobi, using only public transport.

The aim was to gain insight into cities in southern and eastern Africa that are experiencing rapid spatial change, rising income levels and shifts in relative affluence and opportunity.

"We took a taxi from Park Station; we rode with 20 people in a sedan car in Malawi; we hitch-hiked on trucks in Mozambique; we rode an ancient communist-era train in Tanzania; and we had a hair-raising journey in a 'matatu' [minibus] on the edge of the Rift Valley in Kenya," she said.

"The experience provided inspiring examples of dynamic innovation and entrepreneurialism. We also witnessed the essential role government plays in providing leadership amid change." — *Tabelo Timse*



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IAN RODNEY

Group general manager,
Cerebra

Twitter: @ianrodney

From 12 successful years in the hospitality industry to group general manager of one of South Africa's leading social media communications providers, Ian Rodney has experienced and optimised a wealth of opportunities.

Accountable in the 50-person agency for finance, human resources, operations, team and client management, Rodney (34) is involved in all facets of the business, from campaign ideation, creative strategy and insights to training, production and sales.

Rodney believes innovative work is his greatest challenge and his inspiration. This, he says, is threefold.

"Firstly, having to deliver work for clients in an industry that is based on creativity and is continually evolving and changing.

"Secondly, creating systems, procedures and structures that provide the agency [with] the ability to change, adjust, grow, scale, reinvent itself, and change again to keep up with the industry, remain relevant, stay ahead of competition and continue to add value to clients.

"Lastly, I love the work that goes into building a company where people actually want to work. Building a company that we want to work at is not something we want to force, but rather something you need to keep front of mind to maintain an amazing culture, attract top talent and keep passionate creatives inspired."

It is this culture, team, continuous opportunities for growth and learning and love for the business that keeps Ian inspired.

"I also have a hunger to try new things. This has seen me kayak in the Atlantic, swim with Great Whites, micro-light over Victoria Falls, body-board the Zambezi, snorkel in Lake Malawi, canoe the Ozark, hike the Grand Canyon, drive route 66, quad bike in the Namib, mountain bike in the Alps, travel by elephant, ride horses with Navaho and hot air balloon over the Kruger."

Rodney's motto in life is that the measure for his own success should be the success he helps others to achieve.

"I have high standards and hold others to high account. I'm passionate about training, mentorship and helping people to grow personally and professionally. I strive to give more than I have taken and leave a place better than I found it." — Linda Duke

NEO RAMAPHAKELA

Chief executive, Seriti sa Basotho

Twitter: @NeoRamaphakela

Neo Ramaphakela (31) started building his multimillion-rand business empire with R100 in his pocket and his most valuable skill — an ability to spot a business opportunity. His construction company, Seriti sa Basotho, which he started in 2011, grew from a gate-making company to one of the fastest-growing facility management firms in South Africa.

"Basically, we look after every aspect of your facility, from general maintenance to electrical work and plumbing."

After two failed business ventures, because he says he lacked business acumen, Ramaphakela needed a plan. While he was walking through a new housing development on the East Rand, he noticed that many houses lacked gates.

He proudly explains how he went to various townships and took pictures of gates with his cellphone. He then approached metalworkers he saw on a street corner and formed a partnership.

"I then approached my first client and convinced him to give me a deposit. I bought the material and took it to those guys on the corner. The rest is history."

When people moved into the new houses, he realised that they needed various services, including building and tiling, so he expanded into construction. "I managed to master the industry with a set of skills. I became the go-to guy," he says.

To expand his business, he recently acquired a company that fabricates aluminium windows and doors, Alufature. Ramaphakela says his dream is to inspire young people, especially from the townships, to become entrepreneurs.

Last year, he co-founded the BEE Consortium Company, a social enterprise aimed at empowering young businessmen. The consortium's first activity is called "Be Empowerment", a three-day motivational programme for the youth in how to be successful.

"There is so much clutter out there in terms of how to be successful — people are talking tenders, using connections, funding and all that. We say: use the resources around you, start small, and keep it simple."

Ramaphakela says he is now looking at the agricultural sector. He has taken the first step of starting a piggery, which he and a partner have registered as Mora Farming. — *Tabelo Timse*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ITUMELENG PHAKE

Chief executive, Zenzele Fitness Group

Twitter: @AzaiahTp

Itumeleng Phake believes that if you want to make things happen, you have to take the bull by the horns. That is why he named his fitness solution business Zenzele, which means "do it yourself" in isiZulu and isiXhosa.

Because he has always been an avid sportsperson and has always wanted to become an entrepreneur, Phake left

his job at the Rand Merchant Bank, where he worked for seven years as a banker, and followed his passion.

"It took me five years to work on this business. To launch the Zenzele Fitness Group I drew inspiration from my experience in banking, finance and being active in the wellness and health space."



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Phake has never looked back; thanks to his strong financial background he was able to raise start-up capital of R9-million in one year. The company delivers turnkey fitness and wellness solutions for corporate and government clients. Zenzele designs, furnishes, outfits, operates and manages wellness and fitness facilities. Phake says it goes beyond offering simple gyms.

"Through our top-of-the-line technology and equipment we are able to meaningfully track all activity in our facilities."

The company was initially funded by the Awethu Project — a funding institution for would-be entrepreneurs — and a bank loan. Phake now employs 21 full-time qualified staff and the company is now turning over R350 000 a month.

Although he did not have much business experience when he started out, Phake has been invited to be a guest speaker on entrepreneurship at the prestigious Gordon Institute of Business Science. He also served as a former junior board member for FNB Wealth Management.

From a young age Phake said he always knew that he wanted to be his own boss and run a successful business.

"My mother was a huge inspiration for me. She encouraged me to take a leap of faith and to start up this business."

— *Tabelo Timse*

BONOLO RAMOKHELE

Co-chief executive officer,
Leofortis Group

Twitter: @BonoloRamokhele

Bonolo Ramokhele loves the women in his life; he is thankful for the persistence of his mother and grandmother, who always "made things happen" and put him through good schools in Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape, despite of their limited finances. A graduate of Wits, Ramokhele is a qualified chartered accountant, having completed his articles at Deloitte & Touche. He says he "always knew" he wanted to be a businessman. In Sterkspruit, where he grew up, the owner of the largest house was a businessman, and he became determined to be one too. Accounting, he says, equipped him for business. After lecturing at Unisa briefly, he and his partners used their savings to set up their company.

Ramokhele is the co-chief executive officer of Leofortis Group. It does property development, outdoor advertising and fibre optic cables for telecommunications, among its many activities.

With 22 employees, Leofortis Group is busy on one its biggest projects yet — the construction of a university residence for 2 000 students at the University of Venda in



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Limpopo, worth about R257-million.

For a growing company, he says the key is reinvesting profits — something that is not easy but "we try and are doing well". The Leofortis Group operates out of Sandton in Johannesburg.

Ramokhele is chair of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers (Johannesburg hub). He is also an active member of the ANC in Gauteng. He however quickly distinguishes his business as being separate from his party involvement. He sees himself playing a more active role in politics in about

20 years, and hopes to have built a solid business by then.

Ramokhele believes the biggest hurdle ahead for Africa is a growing young population that is unable to find jobs. He says the solution is value-addition and education, so that there can be job creation. A practical pan-Africanist, he believes in getting things done. At age 28, Bonolo says he spends much time nurturing Leofortis Group — a typical work day starts at 9am and does not end until 10pm. He is one to watch in both the business and political spaces. — *Teldah Mawarire*



STEPHEN SCRIMGEOUR

Social entrepreneur

Twitter: @yesgoodsir

Doing good is good for business. This is the message that sustainable energy champion Stephen Scrimgeour emphasises to businesses he works with, delivering energy-efficient solutions that add value to their bottom line.

As a teenager Scrimgeour had a fascination for buildings and the way people interact with their environment. He would spend hours sketching notional floor plans, landscape designs and fictional cities.

After studying, he joined a sustainable development firm, where he learned about the complex interdependencies that exist between people, the spaces we occupy and the natural resources we consume to keep everything running.

In 2008, aged 21, Scrimgeour co-founded a firm that focused not only on these issues but on how businesses can have more positive and equitable impact in their practices — not only in the buildings they use, but in the broader environment and society in which they operate.

"I started out creating efficient buildings that used alternative technology, conserved energy and recycled water, so I understood the theory of integrated systems design. I began to wonder how the rationale could be used to create more resilient relationships between business, the environment and society at large.

"It was during a conference in Istanbul in 2013 that I was first introduced to some really exceptional ideas and technologies being deployed in other developing countries.

"Our focus as a company then shifted to guiding impactful investment in social enterprises. We design models that, on the surface, tackle familiar challenges like enterprise and supplier development or reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This makes them easily digestible at a board level.

"Dig a bit deeper, and the core of what we do involves redirecting the flow of value into local, under-served and often, hard-to-reach markets. We do this by deploying clever technology and tapping into the abundantly rich intellectual resources available in corporate and academic communities.

"Where once businesses treated these issues as compliance risks, they have begun to see that positive action, and the lack thereof, impacts the balance sheet." — *Linda Dove*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MOGAU SESHONE

Chief executive, The Lazy Makoti

Twitter: @thelazymakoti

Mogau Seshoene (26) was born and raised in Turfloop Mankweng township in Limpopo. She is the eldest daughter of a pastor and a teacher. "I had a really great upbringing, with the loving family in a really quaint neighbourhood," says Seshoene.

She is the founder and chief executive of The Lazy Makoti, which was formed after she gave cooking lessons to a friend who was struggling to learn to produce South African dishes. That friend later recommended her services to a few other people, so "I decided to actually register the business and turn the idea into my livelihood".

By then she was working fulltime in the finance sector and had to make a decision that would change her life forever. She finally quit her job and began to channel all her energies towards breathing life into her business. "I'm very passionate about women empowerment and entrepreneurship. And I enjoy being creative in the kitchen," she says.

At present, The Lazy Makoti do house calls and cooking lessons for small groups, as well as selling branded kitchen accessories through pop-up stores and online. The charismatic Seshoene is pregnant with ideas. She plans to expand the merchandise line and find premises for her business so her growing clientele can easily excess her services. She's also working on a national cookbook. Her hard work has won her several awards: The Lean Jump Business Incubation powered by SABKickStart, Edge Growth and The Hook Up Dinner.

The meticulous Seshoene is not oblivious of the challenges that start-up businesses are faced with. Capital flow, unexpected expenditure and competing with major retailers can be detrimental. When asked how government can assist, she responds: "I think government can start by really looking at the structure of its business funding institutions. I feel it's almost impossible to access funding through them, speaking from my own experience anyway. There should also be more support to offer a bridge between being a small to becoming a medium enterprise".

She also thinks that the idea of entrepreneurship should be introduced earlier in the education system. "We should be raising kids who want to grow up to create jobs, as opposed to finding them. We should be careful of creating a welfare state with a culture of expecting handouts," warns Seshoene. — *Oupa Nkosi*



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PHOTO: SUPPLIED

CHRISTINE STRUTT

Intellectual property lawyer

Twitter: @christinestrutt

Intellectual property law is Christine Strutt's area of expertise, her main driver being a healthy belief that things could be better.

Striving for constant improvement, together with great curiosity, is what made Christine fall in love with the liberty, resourcefulness and engagement enabled by the internet and its related technologies.

Aged just 31, Christine is the youngest equity partner at Von Seidels, a modern law firm specialising in internet protocol and technology law. She set up and manages the section of the firm dealing with trademarks, copyright and internet related matters.

Christine believes the concept of an equal society is not realistic, but the possibility of a society that offers equal opportunity is. She says the internet is the best tool we have to fight ignorance, enable discourse and facilitate equal access and freedom of choice.

After school, she was given the opportunity to work alongside self-starters and idealists on various projects, and naturally gravitated towards intellectual property. It's an area not restricted to any particular field of invention, but rather one that acknowledges and protects the intangible efforts of individuals and groups while fostering innovation for the benefit of society.

Projects she worked on included the Brightest Young Minds initiative in South Africa and Australia, a short internship with the Shuttleworth Foundation, ad hoc involvement with projects like Gold Peer Education (and its grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), and travelling with and learning from pioneers like Hugh Evans (Global Poverty Project).

Christine is a frequent speaker on internet protocol and business development, most recently at the SA Innovation Summit and the UStart Conference 2014. — *Linda Dove*

ASIEF SULEMAN

Continuous improvement head, Stanlib

Twitter: @asifsuleman58

Do what you can with what you have, instead of waiting for the right time or for opportunity to come your way. That's how Asief Suleman approaches life. His love for interacting with people, together with good business and technical acumen makes his position as head of the Centre of Continuous Improvement at Stanlib the perfect fit.

Asief (33) has been with the company his whole working life thus far — a full 15 years, and is considered by his work colleagues to be "passion and dedication personified".

Firmly of the belief that you can only know what you are capable of when you're challenged beyond what you think your capabilities are, Asief says his role heading up Continuous Improvement is to extend those boundaries and provide a platform that helps people develop.

Asief believes that to succeed in life we should have a thirst of knowledge, be eager to learn and not afraid to teach. Be a master of your craft, be passionate about it, and success will follow.

"Driving behaviour is one of my greatest challenges. As a leader it's important to understand the mind-set of those you lead, and to know where their strengths and passions lie. A person only achieves excellence through a desire for excellence, and for me, it's always my end objective," he says.

Asief doesn't consider what he does for a living "work", as work is exhausting.

"It's important to find joy in your labour, otherwise you will never realise your full potential. I love what I do, I love solving problems; it is part of my nature. I love leading and empowering people with skills and knowledge. For me there is nothing better than knowing I have made a difference in someone's life and given them something that can never be taken away from them." — *Linda Dove*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● BUSINESS AND LAW



PHOTO: DELWYN VERASAMY

ZIMKHITHA ZATHU

Manager in the office of the CFO, PPC

Linkedin: Zimkhitha Zathu (CA) SA

It's not hard to describe Zimkhitha Zathu: The song *Happy* by Pharrell Williams does it all.

If you have stereotypes about what accountants should be, Zathu will dismantle them without saying much. It's clear she has a love for humanities — her favourite subject at school was history, which she still "indulges in" from time to time. But accounting got the better of her.

She loves people who innovate in the arts field — "creatives" is what she calls them. If given R100-million for a dream project, she would start a chain store of craft and history shops.

Zathu says that many folklore stories that her she grew up loving are unrecorded and getting lost, as they are no longer being passed from one generation to the other. She would like to see them put safely in books so that her eight-year-old daughter may be able to enjoy them and pass onto the next generation too.

Born the first child in a family of three, she schooled in the Eastern Cape and went to the University of Cape Town. After one year she moved to Wits in Johannesburg, and after completing her BComm she moved just down the road from Wits to complete her articles, qualifying in 2007.

The Industrial Development Corporation was next and after four years she landed up at PPC, where at just age 31, she is the manager in the office of the chief financial officer.

She loves PPC but says it was difficult breaking into the cement world, where young black women have to work twice as hard to prove their ability.

Zathu is a member of the African Women Chartered Accountants Forum, where she mentors young people and is herself mentored. The forum identifies promising young women in schools and universities and motivates them to study accounting by raising funds and supplying textbooks, among its many activities.

Zathu is a genuinely down-to-earth person. What would she save in a fire in her house? A scarf given to her by her grandmother. — *Teldah Mawarire*

LUCAS ADAMS

Design entrepreneur

Twitter: @lucasradams

Capetonian design entrepreneur Lucas Adams sees himself as a peddler of goods, although the wares he sells are somewhat alternative. Adams and business partner Talya Goldberg run Nifty250, a social printing tech start-up that is effectively an online print studio, enabling users to login, choose their favourite Instagram photos, and have the prints couriered to their door.

Big business also makes use of the service, hiring images for events and brand activations. In 2014, Nifty250 did 70 social printing events for big name brands, including SABMiller and Mr Price. Adams (27) says he's been doing creative stuff his whole life, always with a business slant. His entrepreneurial passion goes back to the school playground, where he used to sell pancakes to his schoolmates for R2.

"My pancakes were a hit and would always sell out. One day I was faced with the tricky scenario of two people wanting the last pancake. Neither would back down. So I sold half the pancake to each of them, splitting the price and



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

adding a small mark-up for the admin."

Adams is driven by the creativity of entrepreneurship and the thrill of capturing the imagination of his audience. He says striving to fill a niche in a specific market is tough, but worth it. "Knowing that every ounce of effort is an investment into something larger than myself has to be the greatest

reason to push. Anyone with ownership in what they are doing is bound to be more productive and dedicated to reach for excellence. "When you work for yourself, new obstacles and issues present themselves every day, and the only thing that counts is how you measure up and respond to these challenges." — *Linda Doke*

NURINA ALLY

Executive director, Equal Education Centre

Twitter: @EElawcentre

A luta continua — the struggle continues. This is the motto of Nurina Ally, senior associate in the public law division at a renowned firm of attorneys, and newly appointed executive director of the Equal Education Law Centre.

Highly qualified for her 30 years, Ally graduated top of her class in law at Wits, has a master's degree in African studies (with distinction) from the University of Edinburgh, and is studying for her master's in International Human Rights Law through Oxford. Ally maintains she did not necessarily choose her career direction, but that rather she was influenced by events and people, and as things moved along, she moved with them.

"I specialise in constitutional and administrative law, which includes the review of public decision-making, regulatory advice and procurement law. I advise the private and public sector in various regulated industries, such as ports, petroleum, energy, transport, education and healthcare.

"My work is significantly rewarding, particularly in relation to large infrastructure projects, such as advising the department of energy on procurement programmes in respect of baseload generation capacity, and local government on projects relating to public transport planning."

Over the years Ally has been involved in a number of civil society initiatives. She was one of the founding members of Boycott Divestment Sanction South Africa, and a founder of the Hillbrow Community Advice Office, providing basic legal advice for free to the Hillbrow community. She co-authored an article on black consciousness, and is involved on a pro-bono basis with an ongoing court case to make political party funding more transparent.

Ally says being young, non-white and female is her greatest professional challenge. "The legal profession is an exceptionally difficult space to navigate for women in general — young and non-white women in particular. There are stereotypes and ceilings that you continuously have to push against. It is going to be long, tiring process to see progress in material ways." — *Linda Doke*

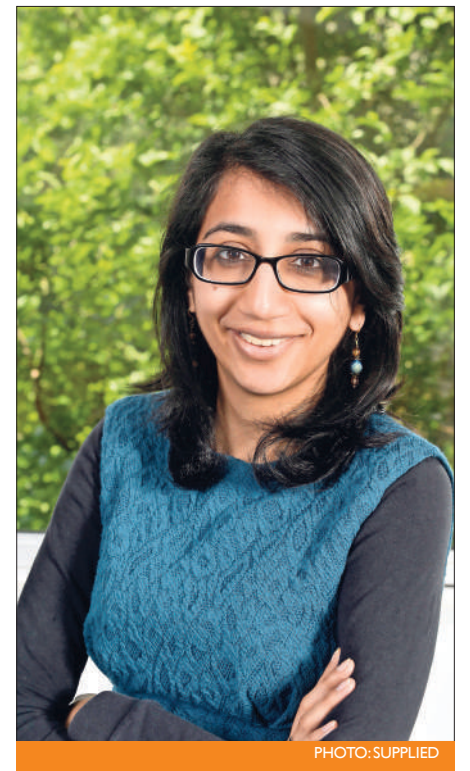


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

EILEEN CARTER

Senior legal manager, SA Human Rights Commission

Twitter: @eileenizette

Championing equality and fighting for the rights of vulnerable groups are what drive Eileen Carter as a senior legal officer at the South African Human Rights Commission in Limpopo, where she investigates allegations of human rights violations.

With a master's degree (with distinction) in comparative child law, Carter spent the first two years of her career with the national department of justice and constitutional development, working in the chief directorate of vulnerable groups, focusing on children's rights.

In 2012, Carter represented the department at the International Expert Consultation to Address Harmful Practices against Children, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she delivered a presentation on the efficacy of South Africa's children's courts.

Since a teenager, Carter was determined to play a role in building a society that would far removed from the abnormal and repulsive society she experienced under apartheid.

"We need to build a society where children are equal and not called names as a result of their race, or their disability;



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

a society where we don't have authorities trying to convince our children to fear each other based on their differences.

"This realisation made me stick to the human rights discourse, as there is much work to be done. But we need all hands on deck, and that is why calling racism to order is so important."

Carter (31) faces an ongoing work challenge: "Being a white woman representing largely rural black complainants, I have to work extra hard to gain the confidence of my clients

in discrimination and racism matters. These are people who have suffered at the hands of people with skin colour similar to mine. However, once the trust is established, it is also my greatest victory against stereotyping."

Carter believes education is the most powerful weapon we have to change the world.

"We all need to learn more — more about our subject areas, more about ourselves, and more about each other." — *Linda Doke*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

TOBELA GQABU

Principal officer, South African Marine Safety Authority **Web:** samsa.org.za

Tobela Gqabu's job description as a principal officer is to do statutory surveys which look at safety factors, ship security and prevention of oil pollution on ships that enter South African waters. The soft-spoken but energetic Gqabu (32) works for the South African Maritime Safety Authority (Samsa). Its headquarters are in Pretoria but Gqabu's offices are based in East London.

Gqabu comes from humble beginnings. He grew up in the remote village of Ngcobo, outside Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. His grandparents had to raise him as his parents were working thousands of kilometres away from home. "Life was not easy," says Gqabu. Despite the hardship he managed to earn himself a Safmarine bursary to complete his schooling at Lawhill. The company partnered with the school to fund and provide accommodation to pupils interested in studying a maritime studies programme. He had no idea where the journey was taking him, because even the subjects he did — marine economics, nautical science — were new to him. Nevertheless, he managed to pull through and pass his matric in 2002.

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology was next on his list. He acquired a national higher diploma in maritime studies in 2006. He became the Lawhill Maritime Centre's first student to qualify as an International qualified Master Mariner. He got eight distinctions in his nine subjects and was selected out of many students to do training at UNICORN, and became the navigating officer after his term. Gqabu says: "I never thought that I would go that far."

In 2012 he obtained his Class 1 Certificate of Competence with Oil & Chemical Endorsement. He then joined Samsa for more career development. He started as a ship surveyor and examiner and now he holds a position as a principal officer. He is a sport fanatic, going to gym regularly, but is not much of a reader; it's very rare for him to finish a book. "I tried *Long Walk to Freedom* but could not get through all the pages," giggles Gqabu. — *Oupa Nkosi*

ALEXANDRA FITZGERALD

Supreme clerk to the chief justice of the Constitutional Court **Twitter:** [@alexff84](https://twitter.com/alexff84)

Alexandra Fitzgerald is considered by her peers as someone who will be heading up a generation of black female game-changers in the legal industry — they are going to change South Africa for the better. Specialising in constitutional law, Fitzgerald is the supreme clerk to Chief Justice Moegeong Moegeong at the Constitutional Court and the leader of his team of law researchers.

"I am in love with the Constitution and, by extension, its physical manifestation, the Constitutional Court of South Africa. The Constitution is the due North of legal practice in South Africa, a constant and unwavering standard of legal excellence and permissibility. I am also keenly aware of the limitations of the Constitution. It is a poor defence against the bitter cold of South African winters. Corrupt officials do not cower in its presence. It does not protect women in dark alleys from strangers.

"No matter how short we fall of the standard of legal and social engagement to which we aspire, the constitutional standard does not waver. The procedural and substantive provisions of our Constitution and the precedents of our Constitutional Court trickle down, and in doing so infuse our society with the constitutional values to which we aspire. It is this transformational project with which I am truly in love and that has set me on the path I have chosen."

Fitzgerald (30) says three things keep her strong and inspired: diligence, activism and her determination to make a change in South Africa.

"My work ethic and sense of self-discipline developed at an early age. Activism is in my veins. My parents were both anti-apartheid activists and my great-grandmother was Mary Fitzgerald, a political activist and one of the first female trade unionists in South Africa. Finally, while South Africa is an amazing place, the status quo leaves a lot to be desired. The appalling incidents of sexual violence, the inequality of opportunity, the plight of the vulnerable and marginalised and corruption are just some of the issues which keep me up at night. And while I'm up, I may as well get some work done!" — *Linda Doke*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

LAUREN EDWARDS

Co-founder, Voicemap

Twitter: [@myvoiceapp](https://twitter.com/myvoiceapp)

A fascination for stories and the way we tell them is what entrepreneur Lauren Edwards says planted the seed for a business venture that is growing across major cities around the world.

Edwards (27) is the co-founder of Voicemap, a start-up that that make audio walking tours more accessible by using smartphones with GPS technology.

Edwards describes VoiceMap as a platform for location-aware audio, in two parts.

The first part is a publishing tool, which allows people from

all over the world to create their own location-aware audio tours. The second is a smartphone app that allows users to download these walking tours and listen to them.

"The apps link stories to locations. They're designed for minimal interaction — users just press start and then put their phones away, and while they walk they can focus on their surroundings and the story."

Based in Cape Town, VoiceMap is growing fast, with tours available in a growing list of cities across six continents including London, Bangkok, Sydney, Washington DC, Berlin, San Francisco, Buenos Aires and Beijing.

"The media industry is transforming at an astoundingly rapid rate, and now is the time to explore new ways of communicating. What we're doing has an almost old-fashioned obsession with the story, but we use the latest technology to allow the stories to be both told and heard. It's a new and exciting medium, with immense scope. So far, we have fictional walks, street art tours, musical soundscapes and historical walks, and this is just the beginning."

Edwards says it's incredibly hard to start a business. "Everyone tells you it's difficult, but it's something you can't fully understand until you've done it. The only thing that'll keep you strong and inspired is to love what you do, and to truly believe in the ethos and vision. VoiceMap's goals are the same as my goals, and if that wasn't the case it would be a lot more difficult."

Being a woman in the male-dominated tech start-up industry is a challenge Lauren faces daily, but she says she has lots of support. — *Linda Doke*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KGANYA KGARE

Emerging market economist

Twitter: [@Kganya](https://twitter.com/Kganya)

The calm and articulate 30-year-old Kganya Kgare is not shy about his ambitions, and is not apologetic about this: "I'm a young, ambitious South African who has big visions for his continent." Kgare managed to transform himself from being unemployed to an emerging market economist.

Raised by a single mother in Soweto, Kgare faced many challenges but never gave up. His matric results were too low to afford him entry to a university. He had an opportunity to study an Engineering Bridging course, but he messed things up and found himself unemployed.

During this time Kgare discovered there lay within him a dormant passion for trading. He began reading, watching and listening to financial media platforms. "I could not understand it, but it was fascinating for me." After a while his interest grew more to a point where he began dummy trading. "That's where I got my practical experience, and realised I was good at it."

He landed a job as a call centre agent at Standard Bank and, while working, perfected his trading. "I felt like I was a genius!" He finally resigned and went to work in property. He worked as an estate agent selling properties, but the market soured and he left. He took a part-time property course at Unisa after realising that he knew little about the market. Through hard work his marks improved, and was accepted at the University of Johannesburg to study towards a BCom.

Kgare approached Stanlib to persuade them to fund his university fees, but the company refused because of his low results. He worked harder, but still his results were not up to the company's standards. After several visits the company eventually granted him a bursary that covered his travelling allowance, fees and textbooks.

His will and tenacity resulted in him completing his BCom in economics and econometrics (cum laude) and he followed that with an honours in Investment Management. He has completed a DFA level II and is currently studying towards a CFA level III.

He joined Stanlib in 2012 and worked in the direct property investments franchise sector as an investment analyst. He now researches and analyses economic trends in emerging economies.

He shared a stage with some of the top property brains in the world when he was a keynote speaker at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors African 2015 Summit. — *Oupa Nkosi*



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● CIVIL SOCIETY

MARCELA GUERRERO CASAS

Cyclist and social activist

Twitter: @OpenStreetsCT

The irony of modern cities is that the bigger they get and the closer people live to each other, the less they interact and step out of their comfort zones. Marcela Guerrero Casas, co-founder and managing director of Open Streets, is working hard to change just that.

Open Streets is about transforming how city streets are perceived, utilised and experienced, by creating car-free streets for a few hours at a time, and inviting diverse people to come together and creatively use the space. The concept is inspired by a 41-year-old movement started in Bogotá, Colombia, where Casas grew up. Every Sunday 120km of Bogotá's streets are turned into pedestrian areas where people can socialise, take part in recreational activities, and support local businesses.

Arriving in Cape Town in 2010, Casas was struck by the deep cultural, racial and class divisions in the city. Being an avid cyclist, she also lamented the lack of car-free streets and soon found many others who felt the same way. "It became clear the concept of Open Streets would resonate strongly in this city," explains Casas.

Establishing the movement in the Mother City in 2012, Casas and her co-founders joined more than 400 cities around the world that have developed similar programmes. So far there have been Open Street days in Observatory, Salt River, Langa and Bree Street in the CBD.

Casas admits that at first they faced scepticism that this would be just another hipster event, but she says: "There is a much deeper agenda to the initiative ... I think the Langa event helped people see it differently. Many outsiders came to the township for the first time. It was about opening networks and lines of communication ... and about supporting local economies."

Casas and her team are currently in discussions with City of Cape Town officials to find ways to reduce costs and enable more communities to have Open Streets events. She dreams of helping local groups to start Open Streets in other South African cities, and further up in Africa.

What does her ideal city look like? "A city where people smile at each other and recognise the humanity in each other ... I really think that can happen if streets are more people-friendly." — *Lauren Clifford-Holmes*



PHOTO: DAVID MALAN



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NOMZAMO ZONDO

Director of litigation, Seri

Twitter: @Nomzamo_Zondo

As the director of litigation at the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (Seri), Nomzamo Zondo has worked on some of the biggest socioeconomic and human rights issues in the country.

Primarily Zondo's work involves defending communities from eviction, securing the rights of informal traders and working with people from informal settlements that need upgrading. Zondo was part of Seri's team that facilitated legal representation for the families of the deceased miners during the Marikana commission of inquiry.

"Very early in my life, I decided that I would fight against social injustice. I decided to study law because I believed that it could assist in balancing the scales of social justice ... I will continue as long as children live in buildings that are not safe for human habitation and people go to sleep hungry," says Zondo.

Zondo has been active at grassroots level, and was arrested while defending inner city informal traders in 2013. This came after police ignored a Constitutional Court order where Seri had interdicted the City of Johannesburg from unlawfully confiscating traders' goods and removing them from their trading spaces. While defending the traders, Zondo was arrested and charged with public violence.

"The state's unwillingness to engage with the poor infuriates me," says Zondo. "It is unacceptable that state departments remain at the forefront of socioeconomic rights violations and lack empathy for those who are at the receiving end."

However she feels hopeful that change is before us, particularly given the increase in active citizens. "I am motivated when I see a lot of people standing up, people taking an interest in what's happening. This shift in awareness is part of working towards a solution."

For Zondo her work as an attorney is a real calling. "I think it's the potential to change people's lives and the possibility that the law gives us to ensure that people's dignity is protected that motivates me," she says. — *Lauren Clifford-Holmes*

SIHLE TSHABALALA

Founder, Brothers For All (B4All)

Twitter: @sihlethsha

Sihle Tshabalala's story is one of powerful transformation: from convict and prison gang member to a motivated man running an organisation which is changing the lives of inmates and ex-convicts.

Tshabalala (32) got involved in petty crime as a high school student in Langa, Cape Town. Finding himself jobless after matric, Tshabalala moved on to heavy crime. He was 19 years old when he was arrested for armed robbery, which landed him in Pollsmoor prison for four years, awaiting trial. He joined the 26s gang and started smuggling marijuana with the help of prison officials on his payroll.

In October 2005 Tshabalala was sentenced to 13 years in prison. "That's when my life changed. I stopped smuggling because I realised I was still going to be in prison for at least the next seven years. I needed to get my life together." Tshabalala was transferred to Brandvlei Maximum Security Prison, where he left the prison gangs.

"I've always been a go-getter and am hungry to learn, but I used it for the wrong thing — crime. I knew I needed to re-direct that energy," he says. Tshabalala joined the Group of Hope, a project run by Brandvlei inmates, which works with gender advocacy groups, does HIV and Aids related



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

work and offers skills development. "The GOH project helped in unlocking my potential."

When Tshabalala was released from prison in 2013 he decided he wanted to keep helping others. He and his co-founders wanted to start something that could change lives for the better by creating high value job skills. And so Brothers For All (B4All) was born: an organisation which trains youth in computer programming — specifically coding.

They operate in and outside of prisons, teaching people how to build mobile applications, websites, blogs and themes using a range of different coding languages. Training is facilitated via free online platforms and mentors.

"I believe with deep conviction that B4All can end the cycle of poverty and crime by offering technology skills to youth at risk, offenders and ex-offenders," says Tshabalala. "In the Western Cape alone there are 23 000 unfilled programming posts, so there is a huge demand. Work comes to you, you can do it from home and you will earn a decent salary."

Tshabalala is offering hope; hope of a better life and a real alternative to crime. He knows it's possible. — *Lauren Clifford-Holmes*

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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● CIVIL SOCIETY



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PIP WHEATON

Founder, enke: Make Your Mark

Twitter: @PipWheaton

Pip Wheaton is the founder of enke: Make Your Mark, a youth development organisation that inspires, trains and supports young people as they take action on the most urgent social issues in their communities. It has taken only six years for the organisation to gain both local and international recognition, largely due to Wheaton's sterling work.

"I was in Durban, working in schools, when I first got inspired by the power of young people to lead social change," says Wheaton. "I was told that youth apathy was a big issue, but I kept meeting learners who were really fired up, some were actually really angry; all were passionate about what change they wanted to see in their communities."

Wheaton realised that if young people were given the space to dream big, they came up with powerful ideas. This led to her developing enke: Make Your Mark. It has continued to grow and make an impressive difference to the youth it engages with. For her efforts, Wheaton received an Ashoka Fellowship, a global award that recognises innovative social entrepreneurs.

"I started enke: Make Your Mark in 2009 with two friends and never imagined it would grow to be everything that it is today. Founding and building the organisation is something I am incredibly proud of, but I think my greatest achievement was actually deciding to resign," she says. "I think our new chief executive, Rufaro Mudimu, is the most passionate advocate for youth-led social change I've ever met."

She left the organisation in March and was offered a short-term opportunity with the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The role explores how non-profit organisations can build new ways of becoming financially sustainable. For Wheaton it is another chance to explore making a difference in South Africa and bringing about positive change.

"South Africa is in a really special situation right now as there are huge numbers of innovative ideas being launched and new ways of doing things that are at the global cutting edge in fields like education, social finance and health," she adds. "Even with huge constraints at a national level, there are amazing things happening."

Wheaton finds working in this sector to be both challenging and rewarding; for her it is more than a career choice, it is a mind-set. "Just asking the questions about how your work can be done in a way that has positive social returns, not just financial returns, can shift the way that big business operates." As she explores new horizons it is very likely that she will continue to appear on the South African radar regularly.

"I am inspired by all the adventures, large and small, that can show up each day, and by the amazing people in my life, especially my mother: human beings who make me laugh and challenge me with big ideas," says Wheaton. "There are some great new opportunities on the horizon, but for now I am enjoying the exhilarating discomfort of not knowing what will come next." — Tamsin Oxford

KATE STEGEMAN

Researcher, Good Governance Africa

Twitter: @katescurious

The career trajectory of ebullient Cape Town-born Kate Stegeman (33) has been scenic, fuelled by her many passions. With an abiding interest in East Africa and enthusiasm to get under the skin of xenophobia, Stegeman, who is of Dutch extraction and holds degrees from Rhodes University and the University of London, is a researcher at Good Governance Africa, a research and advocacy organisation that works to improve government performance on the continent. She also does volunteer work for Right2Know and she's so in love with Africa, she's tattooed its outline on her wrist.

Before studying, she briefly temped at the *Guardian* newspaper in London, an experience which arguably sowed her career's seeds. Her degree followed, and her passions for politics, journalism and debate took hold. In her third year at university, she was offered a TV job in *The Big Question*, a current affairs programme with a moral angle and a debating background. She then worked on *Rights and Recourse*, a legal TV programme. Her coverage of the 2008 xenophobic outbreaks in South Africa fuelled her master's degree at London University, where her research embraced conflict and development, focusing on the collide of ethnicity and politicised violence.

After doing producing stints on *The Big Debate* for eNCA, Radio 702 and Médecins sans Frontières, and freelance gigs for the *Daily Maverick* and others, she returned to Cape Town, where she encountered Right2Know.

Returning to Johannesburg, she started work at Good Governance Africa in 2014. This think-tank-meets-nongovernmental organisation produces a quarterly journal called *Africa in Fact*. The focus is quantitative, offering insight into African statistics.

Her ongoing involvement with Right2Know is her driving force. "It has taught me so much about being in the world," she says. Stegeman is off to Kabul soon, to join Médecins sans Frontières. — Robyn Sassen



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ZEENAT SUJEE

Lawyer, Centre for Applied Legal Studies

Twitter: @zeenatsujee

It wasn't easy on several levels for attorney Zeenat Sujee — who was born and raised in a conservative Muslim household — to study law, and human rights law, at that. She was discouraged by her close community, who claimed that this was not the kind of thing Muslim women pursue. But the first professional woman in her family was encouraged by two uncles, who had had active anti-apartheid voices and who recognised that their "reserved" young niece had potential.

She works for the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (Cals) at Wits, where she specialises in housing and other basic services for impoverished communities.

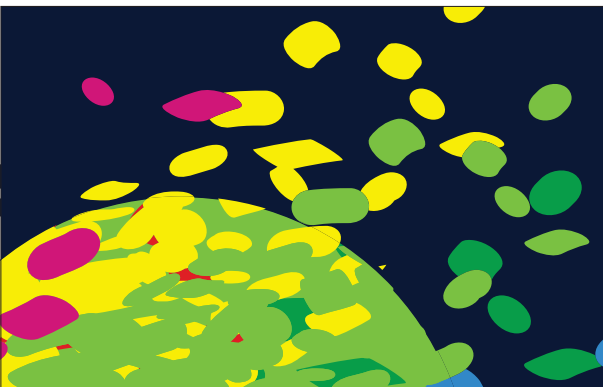
She has instituted several community initiatives aimed at outreach and education and has fostered a partnership with the Jamiatul Ulama in Johannesburg, with the aim of progressing Muslim women's rights. After matriculating at Lenasia Secondary School in 2001, she completed her LLB degree at Wits in 2006. After completing her Articles, she was employed by the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), where she was exposed to working with socioeconomic rights, housing, gender-related matters, and environmental and refugee law.

Appointed an attorney at the LRC, she worked predominantly with land matters, housing and gender-related issues. In 2009, she became interested in Muslim marriages and the assisting of women in abusive domestic situations, and has been proactive in persuading the conservative powers that be to relook the situation of Muslim women.

After three years at the LRC, she moved to Cals to spearhead a basic services initiative. Now 31, she says she has faced many challenges but reaped many rewards working with communities and implementing change. — Robyn Sassen



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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● CIVIL SOCIETY

GREGORY SOLIK

Founder, My Vote Counts

Twitter: @gregorysolik

Gregory Solik (30), the founder and chairperson of the My Vote Counts campaign, which calls for greater transparency in party funding, is busy completing his pupillage at the Cape Bar on a full time basis.

He loves law and political activism, and says economic history, religion and social justice are his primary interests.

A son of devout, Catholic, working class parents — his father, a fitter and turner, was a refugee from World War II-torn Europe — Solik and his three siblings are the first generation of his family to graduate from university.

His parents' commitment to education and social justice influenced him and his siblings profoundly.

After graduating with an LLB degree from the University of Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal-born Solik did his Articles with a law firm in Johannesburg. He studied further in Melbourne, Australia, on a scholarship.

Returning to Johannesburg, he shifted from corporate law to working at the Constitutional Court, where he worked on prominent social issues alongside activists such as Barbara Hogan and Zackie Achmat on the Ndifuna Ukwazi (dare to know) project.

Solik worked in civil society between 2012 and 2014. Considering himself a "recovering lawyer" three years ago, today he calls himself a "recovering activist". Clearly the two areas vie consistently for his focus and energy.

Recently, arguably because of Solik's persistence and leadership, My Vote Counts has gained the attention of the Constitutional Court. The organisation strives to address corruption by political lobbying and party accountability through legal reform. — Robyn Sassen



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

BUSI MTABANE

Communications manager, Right2know

Twitter: @Feminist_Busi

The foundation for Busi Mtabane's freedom of information activism was laid when she was a community journalist at Bush Radio in Cape Town, and during her upbringing in a settlement near Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape.

"Being raised in such a place, which is so isolated and where you have little access to information, you get to realise how valuable information is in terms of giving meaning and direction to people's lives, and allowing them to make informed choices," she says.

In 2007, Mtabane (34) graduated with a journalism degree from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. She's now the communications manager at Right2Know, a nongovernmental organisation that campaigns for citizens' rights to access information. Mtabane says she often "came into conflict" with figures of authority while at Bush Radio. She recalls a visit by a government minister to a clinic in Gugulethu.

"He was confronted by a lot of complaints from people: about queues, lack of access to medicines, and other issues. After his visit, I told him, 'You've seen what's happening here. Now what are you going to do about it?' He replied, 'We will address this issue.' I told him, 'But you've been saying the same thing for a long time. Nothing happens!'"

Mtabane says the minister's "people" then contacted Bush Radio "to say I'm anti-government and I must apologise for my behaviour. My bosses told me to apologise. I refused".

She says "free flow" of information is critical in South Africa, in the light of the country's apartheid past "when everything except falsehood was restricted and the truth was kept from the people". Mtabane adds: "Regretfully, there are some leaders now who seem hell-bent on following the apartheid blueprint. It is so sad."

She believes several "red flags" are challenging South Africa's democracy. "One is the looming Secrecy Bill. Another is internet censorship, where the Film and Publications Board is looking for broad powers to control everything that South Africans see on the internet. Personally I will fight these things with everything in me."

Mtabane dreams of owning a "pan-African" radio station in the future, "to keep people informed about African-related issues". — Mia Malan



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

VICTORIA BARRY

Fundraiser, Jumping Kids and student

Web: www.jumpingkids.org.za

In August last year, one of Victoria Barry's legs was amputated. The 20-year-old had earlier surprised friends and relatives by declining their offers to contribute towards the considerable cost of a prosthetic limb.

Her mother Nicole explained: "Victoria felt privileged that her dad was able to afford to buy her a prosthetic leg and realised that many children are not so blessed. She then decided that she wanted to raise money for the organisation Jumping Kids that provides prosthetic legs to children."

Within three months, Victoria had raised R253 000 for Jumping Kids by encouraging everyone she knew to donate through social media and by organising fundraisers at the nursery, primary and high schools she had attended.

In 2013 Victoria was diagnosed with cancer in one of her legs. Her promising rowing career came to an end; she lost her leg. She had been a South African Championships and Boat Race gold medallist and in matric was a member of the South African junior rowing team.

"It inevitably caused great turmoil in her life," her sister Ally says. "Through her journey of recovery, and the positive and aspiring outlooks of the children she met and continues to meet, who are also all amputees, she has been motivated to pursue her own physical goals as well as becoming a mentor."

Victoria continues to raise funds for Jumping Kids. She is now an ambassador for the organisation and a first-year student in English and Art at the University of Cape Town. — Mia Malan



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

PEARL PILLAY

Director, Youthlab

Twitter: @PearlPillay

Durban-born Pearl Pillay (23) says what drives her is her "unshakable belief" that young people are essential to South Africa's future prosperity.

She's a director of YouthLab, a Johannesburg-based think-tank that "aims to increase young people's understanding of and engagement in policy and socioeconomic issues that affect them".

"If we get them engaged in providing input into policy, we are laying a strong foundation for a stronger country," says Pillay.

She expects to complete her master's in politics at Wits University this year; earlier in 2015 she was awarded the prestigious Mandela Washington Fellowship, given to young Africans who excel in leadership in various spheres on the continent.

Pillay's YouthLab work involves lobbying policymakers and government ministers to consider the impact of their legislation on the youth, and to include young people's perspectives in such policies.

"Most policies aren't drafted with the youth in mind, and I'm trying in my small way to change this," she says.

Pillay cites an "obvious" example — the national youth policy. "When a draft was released a few months ago I saw that much of it hadn't been drafted with young people in mind," she says. "The narrative of the youth was not captured in the first draft."

Pillay and others pointed this out to government and this has resulted in the establishment of the presidential youth working group, which has given input into a reworked draft policy.

Pillay's also trying to get more private and public support for young entrepreneurs and for youth-led businesses.

"Everyone talks about how many young South Africans are unemployed but instead of just talking, let's support the youth to access the economy beyond the mere job market; let's all help foster a culture of entrepreneurship, not a culture of handouts."

Another of Pillay's many projects is to lobby "people of influence" in the health sector to make clinics "friendlier" towards young women trying to access contraception.

She's proud that her work at YouthLab has contributed towards the nongovernmental organisation being "respected and trusted by societal leaders as a true voice of South African youth". — Mia Malan



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



KAVISHA PILLAY

Activist, Corruption Watch

Twitter: @kavs_pillay

"I am a normal South African who happens to be extremely pissed off at you."

These words appear in one of Kavisha Pillay's frequent missives addressed to President Jacob Zuma.

But, as much as she insists she is, Pillay is not normal. Unlike most young citizens, the 23-year-old spends her time confronting “head on” what she considers to be the greatest threat to democracy in South Africa: corruption.

A digital communities manager and activist at the Corruption Watch nongovernmental organisation based in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, Pillay admits to being "plagued" by the numerous corruption scandals surrounding Zuma and his government.

"Nkandlagate, GuptaGate; it just doesn't end. My job is to keep people informed about what's happening around corruption in this country. Right now, there's unfortunately a lot to say," she says.

In 2012, the Lenasia-bred Pillay ("I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth," is another of her frequent quips) graduated from the University of Johannesburg with a journalism degree.

She says she's part of a generation of young South Africans who are angry at the state's failure to fight corruption; instead it has "created a platform" for it.

"As a result of Zuma's actions, we are going backwards as a country. Because of how he has acted, he has plunged a promising country into a deep moral crisis," Pillay maintains.

Her stance, and blogs critical of Zuma and other senior government officials, often draw the ire of her targets.

"I've never received any response from Zuma," she says, laughing. "But high-ranking ANC members have contacted Corruption Watch to tell them they should pay more attention to the kind of people they employ."

Pillay acknowledges she's unlikely to ever be on "good terms" with the present government. "As long as the ANC allows Zuma to be at the helm, things look bleak. We need a change of leadership. On the optimistic side, I meet so many young leaders out there who I believe can make major contributions towards turning South Africa around."

Maybe she's one of them? "I'm just normal," she replies. And still pissed off. — *Mia Malan*



SEKOETLANE PHAMODI

Activist

Twitter: @MrPhamodi

"Media freedom and public broadcast advocacy is really at the heart of helping people access justice — it's about access to crucial information that can change your life," says Sekoetlane Phamodi, the co-ordinator of the SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Coalition.

Phamodi was employed as the coalition's administrator in June 2012. In less than two years, he was promoted to leading the coalition's team.

His advocacy background dates back to his student years at Rhodes University, where he gained a strong reputation as a gender, race politics, queer rights and HIV activist.

He strongly believes South Africa should “reclaim ownership of the diluted public broadcaster, which is in effect a state broadcaster, that we currently have”.

Phamod's inspiration to become an activist dates back to his childhood years in the township of Daveyton on the East Rand, where he became intensely aware of the "two-world experience" of those with money and those without. When he was 10, his uncle, a migrant mine worker, died of HIV-related causes. "He died because his extended family was cash-strapped and could not provide him the medication and food he needed. But, importantly, also because of government's refusal at the time to provide antiretrovirals to people with HIV in the public sector. That got me thinking about what it means to live under such circumstances and how I could play a role in changing that."

BUSISO MOYO

Human rights advocate

Twitter: @HelardSA

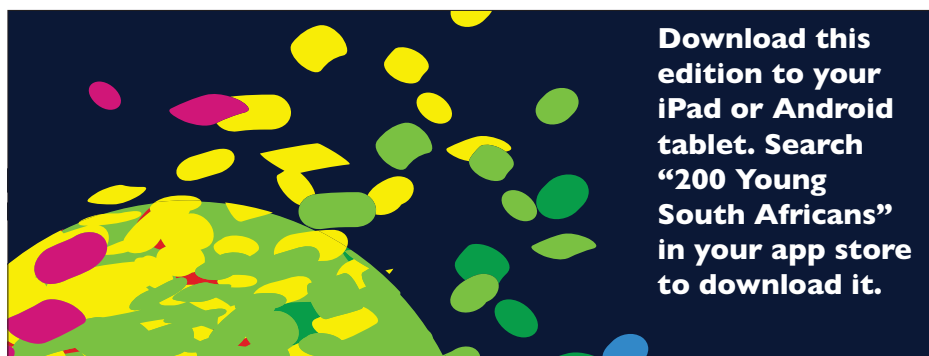
At 25, Busiso Moyo has gained a strong reputation as a human rights advocate, with colleagues describing him as an activist of "high level intellect with remarkable leadership qualities". He's the advocacy and campaigns officer at the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute in Johannesburg and has also worked at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC).

Moyo's engagement in human rights started in high school when he was selected as a member of the Johannesburg Junior City Council and chaired its welfare committee.

"I then made my way to Wits University where I was part of an international human rights exchange programme and I was exposed to a more hands-on approach. During that time I also interned at the SAHRC, where I was mentored by great minds such as Cameron Jacobs and Jody Kollapen," he says. Moyo holds degrees in politics, international relations and development studies and is currently studying towards a master's degree in human rights at Wits. He has a particular interest in food security. "Hunger is a form of slow violence. If someone is suffering from cancer you can see it and more or less come to their aid. But with hunger you can't do that, because it is hidden," he says.

In 10 years' time, Moyo would like to have helped to bring about significant change in the discourse about the right to food, social justice and socioeconomic rights.

"We also need to start addressing the land question in this country. It's been understated. When you give a man land, it solves a whole lot of problems — that person can rent out land, build his own house and engage in the market." — *Mia Malan*



Education is the silver bullet. Education is everything.

There is increasing acknowledgement that quality education has a vital role to play in the success and prosperity of future generations of South Africans. The road-map for long-term upliftment, the National Development Plan (NDP) includes education as a central component in creating a more equitable society and providing opportunities for all. Despite serious amounts of money being spent on education, (close to 20% of total budget expenditure and the biggest spend category) attention needs to be paid, wherever possible to improving the quality and standard of education.

Investment in quality education

Financial services company Momentum is particularly proud of its Momentum 2 Excellence (M2E) bursary programme. January 2015 saw the first intake of successful candidates. Two of Momentum's CSI focal areas are education and sports development, so the programme embodies the strategic intent of its corporate social investment. (Disability is Momentum's third CSI focus area)

The programme is distinctive as it relies on strong partnerships to maximise success.

Momentum, along with partners Cricket South Africa (CSA) and The MAD (Make A Difference) Foundation launched the sports motivated bursary programme last year. The programme offers successful applicants additional support in the form of practical help, life-skills training, academic support and a structured mentorship and leadership programme component.

CSA selects potential learners showing talent and The MAD Foundation, oversees and implements the programme. Momentum provides the funding for the bursaries.

The bursary programme is unique in the way that it balances cricket talent together with academic and leadership potential. Focus is placed on developing young talent holistically and creating the platform to succeed in both sports and school life.

The selection criterion includes a focus on cricket talent, academic merit and personal attributes. A cricket, leadership and academic mentorship programme in place from The MAD Foundation and CSA will contribute significantly to their success, especially with adapting to new surroundings and additional commitments. The bursary programme is available to girls too, and they are encouraged to apply.

The first intake comprised of five young men from around the country. They are from Oudtshoorn, East London, Queenstown, Cape Town and George. Three scholars will be staying at their existing schools and two have moved to CSA identified cricket schools with strong academic standing.

The non-profit organisation The MAD Foundation focuses on leadership development through education with an aim to identify academically talented scholars, who do not have the financial resources, and offer them support in the areas of education, leadership and life-skills development. They provide the expertise needed to offer this tailor-made programme.

Graeme Smith, Patron of the Momentum 2 Excellence Bursary Programme, says, "We are excited to have welcomed our first candidates for the 2015 intake and look forward to improving and enhancing their lives through the Momentum 2 Excellence programme. An opportunity

like this has the potential to change lives. Our hope is that, in years to come, the M2E candidates will feature in our top line-up; and if not in our national teams they will certainly still have the chance to excel in life with a quality education as their kick-off point. We believe that through developing the youth of South Africa, we are ultimately shaping the future leaders of our country."

Additional funds are contributed through the Cricket Sixes Invitational, a social sporting tournament which finds a way to give back to worthy causes while also providing a fun, business networking event. Cricket Sixes is presented by former captain Smith, Mark Boucher and Justin Kemp. The injection of Sixes funds raised means that a few more places will be available for talented boys or girls to receive quality education while developing their cricket talent.

"Momentum 2 Excellence is an innovative and unique partnership. Momentum, Cricket South Africa and MAD are passionate about education and the great sport of cricket. The M2E programme provides the opportunity for talented youngsters to excel in both areas. I have seen first-hand that sport is often more than just a game. It can transcend cultures and nationalities, unify a nation and teach you crucial life lessons to mould you into an individual that is both a team player and a leader. The cultivation of these youngsters cricket talent coupled with MAD developing these future leaders through the power of a great education will create a new generation of leaders for South Africa," said Francois Pienaar, Chairman of The MAD Foundation.

Corrie van Zyl, CSA General Manager: Cricket, said, "The CSA Pipeline has as one of its objectives the holistic development of cricket players. Education is a very important part of any person's life and CSA believes that "better people make better cricketers". It is for this reason that the Momentum 2 Excellence programme is near to our heart and we thank Momentum for sharing this vision with CSA and MAD for their expertise in monitoring the success of the players and guiding them through this important phase of their lives. This partnership will be of great benefit to every cricketer on this programme."

Application forms for the 2016 intake are available. Please keep in mind that there are selection criteria in place and these include academic aptitude, cricket talent, leadership attributes and financial need. Please visit www.madcharity.org for more details.

About The MAD Foundation (Make A Difference)

The MAD Foundation was founded in 2003 by Francois Pienaar. MAD focuses on leadership development through education with an aim to identify academically talented scholars who do not have the financial resources and offer them support in the areas of education, leadership and life-skills development.

Access to the best education is only the start, in partnership with professionals in the field of education, MAD has developed a comprehensive, meticulously-crafted and holistic Individual Education Programme, offering mentorship, leadership development, life-skills, career counselling, internship opportunities and technology. The MAD team consists of professional educators, psychologists, volunteers, mentors and staff members who focus on identifying, interviewing, monitoring, mentoring, supporting and encouraging every single individual who is selected to be a MAD scholar to help these learners reach their full potential as South Africa's future leaders.



momentum
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Please visit www.madcharity.org for more details.



AMANDA BLANKFIELD-KOSEFF

Founder and chief executive, Empowervate Trust

Twitter: @amands5

While growing up, Amanda Blankfield-Koseff (32) watched her entrepreneur parents run their own businesses. She saw the sacrifice and initiative it takes to get something new off the ground and it was this solid point of reference that helped her turn her dream into a non-profit organisation two years ago.

After completing a bachelor of communication degree through Bond University, Blankfield-Koseff became a door-to-door sales representative and worked at a website provider before joining non-profit organisation Afrika Tikkun as a marketing assistant. When she was promoted to marketing manager, she transformed a youth dialogue project into an action-based programme, called the Youth Citizens Action Programme (YCAP). In 2013 it became clear that YCAP had grown into a fully-fledged programme and was ready to spread its wings. With Afrika Tikkun's blessing, Blankfield-Koseff founded Empowervate Trust with YCAP as its core programme.

The youth development organisation has now been running for six years and trains pupils to become active citizens in their schools and communities. The programme has reached over 3 500 pupils in an average of 356 schools in every province and helps pupils build confidence and discover their talents while coming up with solutions to social, academic and environmental problems.

Blankfield-Koseff calls it a bottom-up approach: ask the pupils to identify problems and then brainstorm and implement solutions with the support of teachers, parents, local businesses and the media. The stress that comes with managing budgets and complex relationships with government, private sector and the personalities involved is all worth it, Amanda says, when she looks back at the remarkable projects she as founder and chief executive of Empowervate Trust has fostered.

From an anti-rape campaign in Kuruman, Northern Cape, to a homework support club in Grabouw, Western Cape, to an anti-faction-fighting campaign in Kentani, Eastern Cape, Amanda is constantly motivated by witnessing the extraordinary things that can happen when people are empowered to work together to help their schools and communities. — Victoria John



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NKULULEKO MALEPA

Founder and head, Tirogae

Twitter: @NkuliFuturist

Tapping into a network of resources and influential people makes realising change more effective, as Nkululeko Malepa, founder of youth organisation Tirogae, knows very well. He started building his network in high school, but back then he didn't know that one day he would be helping hundreds of pupils and school-leavers achieve their education dreams.

His first model of true selflessness came in the form of his mother, who has been running a daycare centre in Daveyton township since 1994 in buildings built by his father.

Malepa is studying towards a degree in information technology through Unisa; he is also the chief executive of an information technology company and a consultant for Africa Bank. On the weekends the 25-year-old runs nongovernmental organisation Tirogae in Daveyton.

In high school, Malepa was an avid participant in technology expos and innovation programs and eventually went on to work for Eskom in 2011 as a designer and facilitator of the Science Expo Preview Program, which helps pupils with their science projects. Malepa says the programme opened his eyes to educational opportunities for the youth in his community. He set about building a strong network with the people he met at Eskom and the water affairs department, which would later prove invaluable for Tirogae.

Malepa started the organisation with the help of young Daveyton community members and opened a library in Barcelona, a section of Daveyton, in 2011 with money from fundraisers and member contributions. The library, a first for Barcelona, is now the venue of a weekly programme that includes reading and storytelling classes; technology classes, youth empowerment sessions; extra lessons for xgrade eight to 12 pupils; career days, and help with bursary applications.

Tirogae has already produced over 40 prospective students and Malepa says it is going to keep breeding young, selfless leaders through inculcating the values of education and active citizenship. — Victoria John

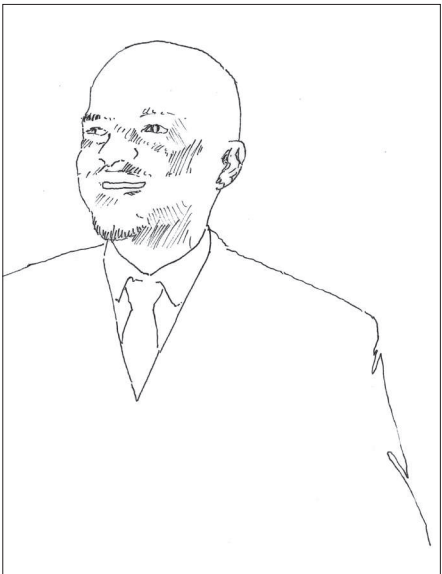


ILLUSTRATION: PAULO VICENTE



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

OLWAM MNQWAZI

Cipset researcher

Twitter: @olwamu

Olwam Mnqwazi does the kind of work that can't be quantified and is rarely recognised. Between the elaborate launches of youth development programmes by government and the signing up of thousands of students to higher education institutions, Olwam steps in to ensure no one gets left behind.

The 31-year-old has worked as a researcher for the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (Cipset) at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) for the last three years, focusing on youth unemployment and student leadership development.

Mnqwazi is infatuated with education. He grew up in King William's Town in the Eastern Cape and for two years he and his mother went to school together when she went back to school to get her matric. He was in grades four and five while she did grade 11 and matric. They both wore school uniforms and studied side-by-side. School became fun and education was put first.

He got his bachelor of arts in 2011 and served on the student representative council (SRC), eventually getting a job with Cipset. He is currently studying towards his honours in development studies. While serving as an SRC member he realised how little support SRCs had been functioning with. Now, one of his functions as a Cipset employee is to offer guidance and training to its members each year.

Outside of NMMU, Mnqwazi runs the Fundisa Primary Fund, of which he is a founding member. Since its inception in 2010 it has raised thousands for the development of primary school pupils in the Nelson Mandela Bay area, focusing on literacy and numeracy studies, basic career talks, teacher training workshops and school shoe drives.

Mnqwazi is doing the seemingly invisible tasks it takes in a university and community to help young people get into post-school education institutions and, once there, give them the support to become the best they can be. — Victoria John

ZANELE MABASO

Chief executive, the Young Social Entrepreneurs Academy

Twitter: @zanelemabaso23

Zanele Mabaso always knew that getting an education, especially in South Africa, is not easy. But she only discovered just how hard this quest is for millions of children when she had finished getting hers.

She studied marketing management at the Institute of Marketing Management and graduated in 2014. The 23-year-old is now the chief executive of the Young Social Entrepreneurs Academy (YSEA), which she founded in 2012.

The YSEA is a social enterprise that uses training workshops and capacity building to help unemployed school and tertiary education graduates create solutions to the socio-economic problems affecting them and other young people in South Africa.

YSEA also advocates for access to quality education for all, while empowering young people with adequate skills and inspiring them to start social ventures and projects aimed at uplifting communities.

Digital IMPACT! is one such project; it equips unemployed youth with soft skills and technical knowledge to perform online digital jobs for small enterprises. Mabaso discovered that teenage pregnancies, substance abuse and dropping out to look for jobs were some of barriers blocking children's access to education.

She realised that education was not the only intervention needed to uplift marginalised youth, so she started advocating for access to contraception, comprehensive sexual education and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights in 2013. Her work led her to taking on leadership roles at local, national and regional levels.

Among other positions, she is the Youth Representative of the UNFPA Safeguarding Young People Regional Program Steering Committee, which spans eight Southern African countries. She also sits on the Prenatal HIV Research Unit's Adolescents Advisory Board and the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute's Youth Community Advisory Board.

In between sitting on high-level consultative forums, and travelling the world to attend regional and international events, Mabaso says it is the grassroots projects started by the youth she has empowered through YSEA that really motivate her the most in her quest to see South Africa thrive. — Victoria John

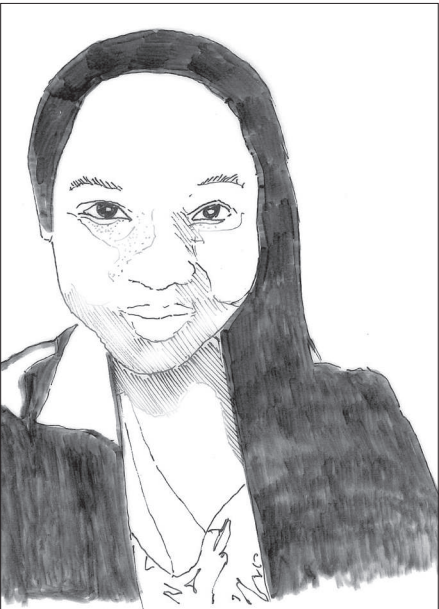


ILLUSTRATION: PAULO VICENTE



THINA MAQUBELA

Academic and lecturer, Rhodes University

Facebook: Thina Maqubela

When she graduated as a trained statistician with an undergraduate degree from the University of Cape Town and a master's degree from West Virginia University, Thina Maqubela (25) knew society expected her to move straight into an industry job.

But she decided to rather follow some important advice she was given during a job interview once: to be yourself, and with her love of education and statistics under her belt she grabbed a job she was offered by Ubuntu Education Fund in her home town of Port Elizabeth with both hands.

She had accumulated abundant experience in tutoring computer skills and maths to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds at the same organisation in 2010, and from tutoring statistics at West Virginia, so she was a natural candidate for the job of co-ordinating Ubuntu's Future Leaders Program.

In 2013 she returned to South Africa to run the program, preparing high school pupils socially and academically for university. In the first year her pupils achieved such a high matric pass rate that Maqubela was awarded the 2014 Business Women Association award under the Social Entrepreneurship category. At 24 she was the youngest winner of the awards, but this was, she explains, a mere manifestation of doing the work she loves.

In that same year began lecturing in the statistics department at Rhodes University, where she now balances teaching, research for her PhD, mentoring students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and giving motivational talks at events for pupils who come from the same poor background as her own.

She has navigated herself successfully through academics and employment and helping others to do the same, she says, is the most important thing she can do to help South Africa's youth. — Victoria John



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

TEBOHO MAPHAKISA

Co-founder, Learn and Give Education Foundation

Twitter: @iamthatguy__

Teboho Maphakisa has always been inspired by education and development and has used this passion to create something extraordinary. He co-founded the educational nongovernmental organisation Learn and Give Education Foundation, which supports high school pupils through mentorship and tutoring, and he has recently been nominated as the South African ambassador for the Bloodhound Supersonic Car project. The latter is an engineering endeavour designed to inspire children to study in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths.

"It all started when my peers and I brainstormed a couple of ideas on how we could give back to our former high school as a token of appreciation," says Maphakisa. "Instead of donating a once-off lump sum, we realised that the challenge is much bigger and so we created something that gives the learners of today the tools they need to cope after they have finished school."

Maphakisa is inspired by hope and the support of others, but like the rest of us he needs things to fuel his fire. "What keeps me going every day is coffee," he says. "I also draw a lot of inspiration from my mother who does a lot of community work, although I don't think I tell her that enough. South Africa is a beautiful place with so many talented young people, and I hope we all realise our potential in order to make a positive contribution to our country."

The foundation is self-funded and self-taught, as Maphakisa and his colleagues learn by trial and error. They constantly look for new partnerships to grow the organisation and their goal is to expand its footprint around the country.

"We would like to have our own academy that will develop character, leadership skills and shape learners to become outstanding individuals in their communities," says Maphakisa.

He believes that everyone, from the government to the business, has a social responsibility to build the country and the continent. It is a place that many people call home and so it is up to those who live here to make it a better place to live.

"People can get involved by starting small in their communities," he concludes. "It doesn't have to be where you come from, just do something wherever you live. Mentor a young person, start a book club or volunteer at a local organisation. A lot of young people are after the financial success but what most don't realise is that in order to be successful you need to find your passion and create a legacy from it, and eventually the money will come. It may not be today or tomorrow, but as Zig Ziglar says 'When you do more than you get paid for, eventually you'll be paid for more than you do.'" — Tamsin Oxford

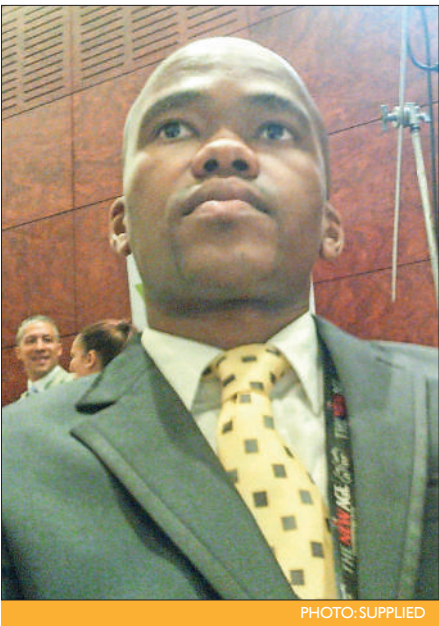


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MUKOVHE MASUTHA

Founder, Thusanani Foundation

Twitter: @Morris_Mukovhe

Mukovhe Masutha started the Thusanani Foundation in 2011 along with fellow youth activist Ntando James. He created the organisation while he was SRC president at the University of the Witwatersrand as he felt morally obliged to respond to the challenges facing rural and township youth.

"So many talented young South Africans living in rural and township areas either do not consider, or are unable to consider, institutions of higher education," says Masutha. "Also, many of those who make up the privileged few who can attend an institution of higher learning drop out without completing their studies. We felt that there was a mismatch between the skills our youth are pursuing and those that are critically required by our economy."

The Thusanani Foundation is a nongovernmental organisation aimed at bridging the widening educational and technological information gap between rural youth and their urban counterparts. The goal is to create equal opportunities for all and help transform the issues facing South African youth today.

"The bulk of our population is youth and this can be both a threat and an opportunity," says Masutha. "A younger population gives our country a competitive advantage in terms of productivity, but when the majority are unskilled and economically inactive they become a threat to everything we have built."

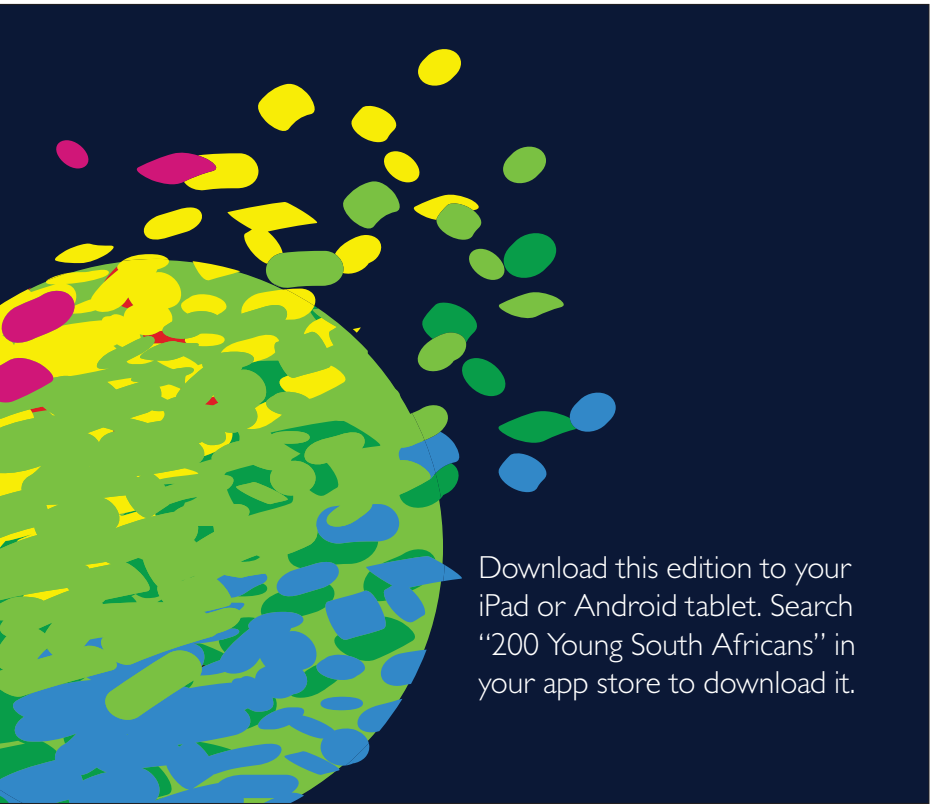
The foundation is planning an inaugural fundraising dinner to raise enough money to roll out the Rural/Township High School Learner Support programme to 300 high schools in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Free State.

"Since 2011, Thusanani has reached out to over 35 000 rural and township youth and enrolled 427 in Scarce Skills Programmes across 20 different universities," says Masutha. "We are also raising funds to enrol more youth into universities for the 2016 academic year. As things stand we have raised well over R5-million in bursaries from the Moshal Scholarship Programme and we need more South Africans to help us raise more money for our youth."

Masutha has just been accepted into the University of Bath for a PhD in higher education management, where he is developing a socioeconomic and political model to understand the factors behind high dropout rates and low graduation rates of financially aided students in South African universities. From a childhood in Mapate Village in Venda to the black-tie event raising over R160-million in bursaries for the Thusanani Foundation, Masutha has worked tirelessly to help others and change lives. He is an inspiration to all South African youth and looks set to be a transformative force in the education arena; he is now hunting down scholarships to help him pay for his studies in the United Kingdom. — Tamsin Oxford



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KGOMOTSO MOKOENA

Co-founder, SpreadLuv

Twitter: @Lovekgomsa

Kgomotso Mokoena is one of the founders of the SpreadLuv Movement, a Wits graduate in law, a labour law lecturer and the team leader for around 100 volunteers doing work across Gauteng. An impressive and driven woman, she is committed to making a difference every day.

"I am inspired by my faith and believe that this work is part of God's purpose for me on this Earth," says Mokoena. "I am also inspired by two very brave people who lived in exile fighting the evils of apartheid — my parents. I am constantly humbled by their sacrifice and the sacrifices made by all the people who gave up their lives to end apartheid."

SpreadLuv has recently piloted a new project at the University of Johannesburg called Conversations. The goal of this campaign is to provide social support to university students through a series of conversations that help them to cope with issues affecting their lives.

"We tackle concerns such as sex and relationships, personal financial management, and racism and other forms of discrimination," adds Mokoena. "I am really excited by this as I find that even though our tertiary institutions try to assist students in this regard, the programmes are not engaging them in the way that they should. I am hoping that this becomes an interesting and effective solution that the institutions are willing to try."

Mokoena believes that it is critical for South Africans to find ways to change the course of history through personal interaction. "Apartheid was ended, at least in part, by ordinary people working together and really engaging in the kind



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

of change that was necessary," she says. "Our people need a complete shift in mind-set and from our history I know that this is possible. The kind of work that SpreadLuv is focused on is how life can change through human interaction, and I think it is critical for our nation to popularise every person's ability to change the life of another by merely exchanging a few words."

Mokoena is a fellow of Brightest Young Minds as well as the Young African Leadership Initiative and in 2014 she was awarded the Inyathelo Award for Youth in Philanthropy. She has also recently been appointed to the board of directors of Charities Aid Foundation, South Africa.

"I believe that my greatest achievements are ongoing," she concludes. "Having the ability to work with, and hopefully guide the direction of so many young people is something I feel blessed by every day." — *Tamsin Oxford*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KAYIN SCHOLTZ

Manager, SAEP Impact Centre

Twitter: @_Forgetfull_

Kayin Scholtz has spent most of his young life providing mentorship and support to the South African youth. He completed a bachelor of social work at the University of Cape Town before joining the South African Education and Environment Project (SAEP) as a social worker and career guidance councillor. He now manages the organisation's Impact Centre, launched a career guidance pilot at five high schools, is handling a similar pilot for primary schools and holds the position of secretary on the board of Ubunye, an educational outreach programme. Scholtz has also worked with Ikamva Youth, found time to present at the Emasa (Education Management Association of South Africa) conference and still managed to organise numerous seminars and events that ignite discussion around the educational challenges facing South Africa.

"I've been working in the education sector for three years and inequality is both my inspiration and my greatest frustration, it is something I feel obliged to work against," says Scholtz. "It is something that makes me feel deeply uncomfortable and that unease is an important motivator for me. Growing up in South Africa I often felt that I wasn't able to participate in a defining moment of political freedom for this country, however the battles for economic, racial and gender equality are defining challenges I can still do something about."

Scholtz believes that South Africa has horrific rates of inequality, worse since the end of apartheid, and that the education system is failing millions of young people. "We do have some incredible people and organisations working to address this, but I think that education work is something that all South Africans need to take ownership of," he says. "I think it is the only thing we can do if we want to stop being afraid of or angry with one another. A lot of young people feel frustrated that they've inherited a country with significant cleavages which they had no role in creating."

For Scholtz, working in this sector has allowed him to feel connected and really make a difference. It has also seen him work tirelessly to create solutions and opportunities for others. "I helped to co-found TEDxUCT and I helped to develop and implement SAEP's mentoring programme that has now paired over 20 mentors with university students from under-resourced backgrounds," he concludes. "However, I think as a white, male, English-speaking South African who grew up in a middle class environment, my greatest achievement has been learning to listen and connect with others." — *Tamsin Oxford*

KOLAWOLE OLAJIDE

Co-founder of Funda

LinkedIn: pub/kolawole-olajide/79/980/513

Kolawole Olajide is extremely passionate about education and has used his abilities to follow his dream of bringing high quality education to all. After he had completed his studies in Information Systems Engineering he co-founded Funda, an organisation that develops technology for forward thinking institutions. Funda now is working with, among others, the Continuous Education Department at the University of Pretoria.

"The best way to improve the education system on this continent is to use data analytics to drive decisions in the learning environment," says Olajide. "Knowing that we don't need to build more physical classrooms makes me understand the impact that technology can have on this continent and this inspires me and keeps me going every day."

Funda has just partnered with ALU, a world-class tertiary institution offering undergraduate programs that are designed to develop Africa's future leaders. ALU believes that Africa's biggest untapped resource is its people, and is planning to build campuses across Africa over the next 50 years. The goal is to education three million young leaders who will go on to become the next presidents, chief executives, scientists and engineers.

"These are the people that will change Africa and as the CTO of Funda I am leading the technology team behind this mission," says Olajide. "I believe that this is the best way for me to achieve my goal of an educated Africa."

Olajide believes that people from all sectors of the economy should become active members of the learning ecosystem. "There is a correlation between the level of literacy and the level of economic growth on the continent," he says. "South Africa has provided an enabling environment for technology start-ups to effect change on the continent by creating business incubators and mentorship. I hope a lot of people take advantage of this going forward."

Olajide is focusing on using his technical skills to bring good quality education to people who may not have previously been able to afford it. His work with Funda has been globally recognised and some of the awards include Best Educational Product in Africa from IndiaAfrica, Best Emerging Business in the Western Cape and placing in the Top 13 Education Companies in Africa by Pearson.

"Funda has been one of the toughest challenges I've had to face in my life and when we won the award for the best education technology meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, it meant so much to me as it meant that we can solve our own problems as Africans." — *Tamsin Oxford*



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AWONKE TSHEFU

Scientist and founder of Science Centre

Twitter: @Tshefuawonke

Awonke Tshefu's grandmother raised him and paid for his education from her pension. After passing matric with four distinctions, Tshefu went on to get a BSc from the University of Fort Hare with 20 distinctions. He has represented South Africa in the UK and in Russia, and was awarded a Mandela Rhodes Scholarship in 2014. He has also helped to establish a science centre at Fort Hare to support schools in the Nkonkobe region, and is testimony that South Africa is indeed alive with possibility.

"I am the first member of my family to ever attend university and get a degree," says Tshefu. "I now hold a BSc with majors in chemistry and science, an honours degree in chemistry and I was elected the chairperson of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture. I worked with my mentor Phumezo Kwinana in establishing the science centre in Alice, the FOSST Discovery Centre; its primary goal is to bring science to the youth."

Tshefu believes that if a person is given an opportunity to receive an education, they will embrace it and use it to achieve their dreams. He grew up in an area where education was a rare thing: his grandmother was a cleaner and his grandfather a gardener.

"I hoped for something different and through education I was allowed to reach for it," he says. "Now, on the 18th of June, I will be flying out to meet President Obama, as I was selected to be a part of the Mandela Washington fellowship. I will spend six weeks at one of the US universities receiving intense mentorship on civic leadership, and I will attend a summit hosted by the president himself."

South Africa's future is only as promising as its people. Tshefu wants to give back and help the country to grow and change, overcoming the obstacles in its way.

"My grandmother, in spite of the fact that she had too many of her own dreams denied and destroyed, instilled in me the belief that I can have my own dreams and that I have the responsibility to make those dreams come true," he says. "She would sacrifice buying groceries so I could afford a maths textbook. She rose and fell with me on her back, and I owe the best in me to her." — *Tamsin Oxford*



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MALUSI NTOYAPI

Early literacy trainer and programmes support officer **Twitter:** @mntoyapi

Malusi Ntoyapi works at Praesa (the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) on the Nal'ibali reading for enjoyment campaign as an early literacy trainer and programmes support officer. As a committed activist he also runs a weekly reading club for children in his neighbourhood and plays a pivotal role in the youth programmes run by his church. Respected by his community and passionate about education, Ntoyapi is often described as tenacious and selfless.

"My childhood experiences and my first visit to the community reading club inspired me to do what I do now," says Ntoyapi. "When I was growing up I didn't have storybooks at home and the library was far away, but I loved reading so much. Now I would like all children from different walks of life to experience reading for enjoyment, have access to reading material and see literacy as a social practice."

Ntoyapi is currently working on a project through Praesa that ignites national conversations around literacy as a social practice that allows parents to reclaim their powers as the first teachers of their children. He is also planning on starting a programme that will allow the youth to engage with the Gogos and Mkhulus (grandmothers and grandfathers) and to grow the community reading club with other volunteers in his area.

"Literacy is a power that everyone needs to navigate around different worlds," he says. "The more people know about alternative ways of getting their children literate, the better our society will become. Social literacy practice gives adults and children a chance to bond, think and be creative. It allows them to develop social skills and language, and also builds confidence and allows people to give power to their voices."

One of Ntoyapi's biggest achievements was when he recently represented South Africa and Praesa in Sweden where Prize, a Praesa reading initiative, won the Alma award for reading promotion.

"Initiating a community reading club for children in my community and convincing others to get involved in different ways remains at the top of my achievements," he says. "Also, becoming a literacy trainer and implementing youth programmes that help young people access higher education is an enormous personal achievement for me." — *Tamsin Oxford*



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NATHAN ROBERTS

Founder, Everyday Heroes Club

LinkedIn: in/nathanrobertsct

Nathan Roberts is only 28 and already making waves in the education arena. His registered nongovernmental organisation Ikazi Youth: Everyday Heroes Club is transforming the lives of high school children in the Imizamo Yethu township in Hout Bay. The goal of this organisation is to inspire, connect and equip the youth, providing them with leadership and life skills along with educational support, empowering them to find a way out of poverty.

"In 2008 I started Sibanye Township Restaurant in Imizamo Yethu with my friend Randy Mcknight," says Roberts. "Rands couldn't read or write, but he had a dream of becoming a chef. Before he passed away from a disease that plagues our townships, he realised this dream and became the head chef in his own restaurant. After losing one of my best friends I decided to start Ikazi Youth: Everyday Heroes Club to create replicable, financially self-sustainable solutions to some of South Africa's toughest challenges."

Roberts is inspired by the untapped potential and dreams of the township youth but has seen how every day they are wasted, discarded or forgotten.

"Gangsterism, abuse and drug addiction are ripping our township communities apart and so many dreams are left to die," he says. "Our flagship project is the Everyday Heroes Club, an afterschool programme that provides academic support, life skills and leadership workshops and mentorship to township boys. We live in a nation that has no father and our youth are crying out for male role models who can mentor them, support them and encourage them to pursue their dreams."

In Roberts' view the youth of South Africa are incredibly inspirational with their tenacity, passion and drive. "The greatest challenge we need to overcome is our debilitating victim mentality," says Roberts. "Every young South African needs to realise that they are an everyday hero with the power inside them to change their lives for the better."

He believes that the South African education system is in ruins and that South Africans cannot rely on government to repair it. His passion is people; he thinks that ordinary citizens need to take action and do what they can to come up with innovative solutions to the problems this country faces. "Our next fight together as a nation of youth is not one of race or nationality, it is one against apathy and indifference," he concludes. "My dream is to see a Heroes club set up in every township across South Africa and I hope that people will help me to achieve this by getting involved and making a dream into a reality!" — *Tamsin Oxford*



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DRIVERS OF CHANGE





KERRY BOBBINS

Scientist, proponent of green infrastucture

Web: gcro.ac.za

Kerry Bobbins has always been fascinated by the functioning of the natural environment, especially how plants and animals create and support their own living environments. From an early age she realised that there were many lessons for humans to learn from natural systems, and that these had to be protected.

A child of the Eastern Cape, her thoughts on nature took her to Rhodes University for an MA in Science. While there she worked at the nongovernmental organisation LivingLands, where she helped restore degraded landscapes and promoted the relationship between humans and the environment. Making humans work with their landscapes — rather than outside of them — ends up being beneficial for both sides.

It was there she realised that one of the biggest obstacles to a healthy environment is the gap that lies between science and policy. Her focus is now firmly in that gap. In 2012 this took her to the Gauteng City-Region Observatory — a partnership between Wits and the provincial government. Working here, Bobbins grapples with problems and tries to make people see them as complex ecosystems that need to be managed properly.

This kind of green infrastructure thinking is still not mainstream and is not integrated into the planning of municipalities, which means Bobbins spends a great deal of time working to capacitate other bodies. Her main problem is that while the solutions to many poor infrastructure and environment issues exist, policymakers are often not aware of them, so continue with development as usual. Bobbins says she frequently takes courses to add to her research knowledge. Her green infrastructure philosophy seeps into her lifestyle; she does her best to make her balcony a healthy ecosystem by planting herbs and vegetables. She also upcycles furniture, and when she isn't working, she heads out into the city to visit one of Johannesburg's many inspiring niches. — *Sipho Kings*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

YOLANDI SCHOEMAN

Civil engineer and environmental manager

Web: eeiafrica

Environment has been integral to Schoeman's life for as long as she can remember. Her first degree was in nature conservation, which she then coupled with studies in civil engineering, a no-brainer in a world that needs fully-sustained ecosystems.

In 2006 she published an article in the *Brightest Young Minds* book, which looked at how you can create self-sustaining ecosystems in cities. Unable to study ecological engineering — because the degree did not exist in South Africa — she had to train herself.

She is now working through a DTech in civil engineering, and a PhD in environmental management. As if that's not enough, she is also completing a master's in integrated water resources management.

To gain experience in her relatively unknown sector, Schoeman has had to get a great deal of experience on the job, at SANParks, the CSIR and several engineering companies.

Driven by a need to learn as much about her surroundings as is possible, so that she can find different solutions to solve engineering challenges, she founded the Ecological Engineering Institute of Africa. The nonprofit seeks to bridge the gap between engineers and people working in the natural sciences. It is also trying to solve the problem Schoeman had, by creating tertiary courses in ecological engineering.

Believing in the impossible — and that time is not linear — she also founded Baoberry, a company which develops ecologically engineered solutions for problems. In 2015 she won the Green City Startup competition for creating a hybrid water treatment system for wetlands.

Her complete absorption in the field means she spends her spare time reading books about technology and sustainable sciences. In the rare times when she isn't planning her next project, Yolandi heads off to the bushveld with her husband and two children. There she continues working, examining how natural ecosystems solve problems that human technology is still struggling with, turning her holidays into fact-finding missions. — *Sipho Kings*



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DEAN MURUVEN

Head of water programme, World Wide Fund for Nature

Twitter: [@deanmuruv09](https://twitter.com/deanmuruv09)

Dean Muruven went to a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal where nature was abundant but there was little interaction with it. On a rare school excursion — to the Natal Sharks Board — a marine biologist, talking about the predators, fired his imagination. It was then that the plight of sharks hit him. Looking at pictures of them trapped and drowning in nets, he realised that while humans were responsible for the problem, they also had the power to save sharks.

Coming from an area where frequent water shortages meant tankers were often the only source for families, he mixed animal safety with his worries about water security. A BSc in Biological Science with a focus on water followed and then he began consulting for the World Wide Fund for Nature. He then worked his way to his current position as head of the nongovernmental organisation's programme on water source areas. This puts him in charge of trying to protect and preserve the places that yield and clean water such as wetlands. These vulnerable natural systems are critical for providing clean water, but continually get hammered by commercial development.

To get to universal water access, he believes in the power of collective action where government, civil society and citizens talk. Always wanting to learn more, he is reading towards his PhD in environmental science.

In his spare time, Muruven plays football and watches Manchester United from the comfort of his living room. After that he meditates, to escape from everything and keep his mind sharp. With the little time he has left over, Muruven absorbs books from all genres while trying to write his own. On tense days he plugs in his iPod and listens to Motown classics, or to something more modern such as Lupe Fiasco. — *Sipho Kings*



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ELLIOT CHISANGO

Founder, Donkeys 4 Development

Twitter: [@jknage](https://twitter.com/jknage)

In 2010 a 24-year-old Eliot Chisango arrived in South Africa to kick start his career in environmentalism. Despite a degree in environmental studies from Africa University, he says the socioeconomic situation of his home country Zimbabwe made it difficult for him to get a job.

The major turning point in his life came in the form of an internship with the nongovernmental organisation Planning, Education, Agriculture, Cooperatives and Environment Foundation in May that year. He now heads up the environmental portfolio of the organisation and, in this role, he founded an increasingly successful recycling buyback centre in rural Limpopo.

While researching the feasibility of the project he met five local women who were trying to make a living off the local dumpsite in Senwabarwana, part of the Blouberg local municipality in the Capricorn district of Limpopo.

"These ladies had no access to markets, no protective clothing and no shelter to protect them from the elements," he says. This sparked his interest in rural economic development and he made the five women the direct beneficiaries of the centre, which opened its doors in February last year.

He also founded the Donkeys 4 Development project, which encourages locals to use donkey carts to help them collect waste in the area, to sell at the buyback centre. Donkeys in the area are often abused and neglected and the project is also geared to address this.

Chisango is in the final year of his master's degree at Unisa; his thesis focuses on the potential of waste collection for rural development through the example of his Senwabarwana buyback centre, where 13 permanent jobs have already been created with "massive potential for more indirect jobs, especially for casual waste collectors".

He has especially strong feelings for the project after numerous failed attempts to access donor funding: "To most potential donors waste management was not 'sexy' enough, but this is an area where there is so much untapped environmental and economic potential for South Africa."

He encourages young Africans to dream big, "but always remember, be it in life or your career, you have to start off from somewhere". — *Amy Green*

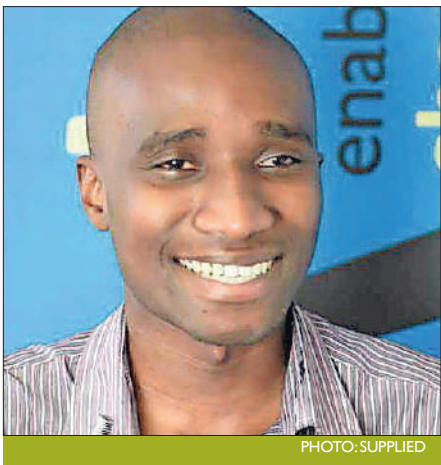


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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● ENVIRONMENT

DR BJÖRN BACKEBERG

Oceanographic researcher

Twitter: @backeb

For all the satellite imagery and global information available about the ocean, the true patterns of its currents and its responses to change are often shrouded in mystery. These are mysteries Dr Björn Backeberg, oceanographic researcher and co-director of the Nansen-Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research in the Department of Oceanography at the University of Cape Town, is working to understand. As possibly the only scholar in South Africa working in the area of ocean data assimilation with its significant importance for operational oceanography, Backeberg aims to ultimately develop a tool for use by the Weather Service and the department of environmental affairs to accurately predict ocean current behavior and responses to changing conditions.

Having initially set out to study business science in Cape Town, Backeberg quickly realised that his interest lay in the ocean. As a keen surfer and commercial diver, he wanted to work in a field related to the ocean. "But I was never very good at biology," he admits, "So I did not go in to marine biology, the more 'romantic' side of marine sciences."

Instead, his focus is on numerical modelling with the help of supercomputers, to understand the impacts of climate change and wind patterns on ocean currents. Among a number of papers he has written, in 2012 he co-authored an important article on climate change effects in the Indian Ocean and the Agulhas Current, in the prestigious international journal *Nature Climate Change*. His work is challenging, he says, because of the complexity and cost involved in gathering accurate data on the vast ocean. The most rewarding aspects of the work are occasional trips out to sea, and discovering that simulations have accurately predicted the real conditions. It's engaging work, he says: "There is still so much to be done. There are unbelievable mysteries in the ocean — every day you find something new."

In addition to developing models to help us better understand ocean currents, Backeberg hopes that his work will ultimately contribute to job creation for more oceanographic researchers. "It's an interesting field, but the career path in oceanography is not well developed in South Africa. Hopefully by developing the operational aspect of oceanography, we can create more opportunities for students to study the science and work in the marine sector of industry." — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: DANIELA GISI

ROBYN HUGO

Pollution and climate change lawyer

Twitter: @CentreEnvRights

When a self-confessed "Type triple-A personality" lawyer takes on big industrial enterprises to make them clean up their acts, the outcome is sure to be interesting. Unlike in the movies, however, there are not many big wins and neat endings in the battle for clean air — it is an ongoing, complex minefield of meticulous research with minor victories — but lawyer Robyn Hugo is not giving up.

As the Pollution and Climate Change Programme head at the non-profit Centre for Environmental Rights in Cape Town, Hugo is immersed in a number of challenges against environmental polluters.

"In addition to research, case work and litigation, the centre uses advocacy to achieve strategic change. So the work I get to do is very exciting and diverse, and includes: making submissions to portfolio committees, giving legal advice to individuals, communities and nongovernmental organisations, drafting papers for litigation, speaking to the media, attending court, making presentations to investors, commenting on draft legislation and authorisation processes, meeting with government and industry representatives, and participating in community meetings," she says.

Hugo's work has focused heavily on fighting industrial air pollution, particularly in the Mpumalanga highveld, an area dominated by coal mines, power stations and multiple other industrial facilities. Here, she notes, many poor communities suffer serious health impacts not only from industrial emissions, but also, since they do not have electricity, they are exposed to health risks in their own homes from burning coal for cooking and heating. It's estimated that about 2 200 South Africans die prematurely every year as a result of air pollution from coal-fired power stations, she says. Yet in a country beset by issues like power cuts, these devastating impacts do not receive the attention they should. "People should be more worried about air pollution — it is the world's biggest environmental health risk," says Hugo.

But there have been some important wins in the struggle for environmental justice. "A major highlight has been the case that our client, the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance (VEJA), won against an industry with historically-significant environmental impacts. At the end of 2014, the SCA handed down a hard-hitting judgement, ordering the facility to hand over an environmental document it [had] refused to provide VEJA for over a decade. This was a win not only for VEJA, but also for the public's right to access environmental records."

Every legal battle requires funding, collaboration with experts, extensive fact-finding and a great deal of time. There are numerous battles ahead, with no end in sight. "The workload is immense and it often feels like the odds are stacked against us, but I'm happy to say that I have found a job I love that allows me to contribute towards making the environmental right real," she says. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

PRUDENCE MAMBO

Postdoctoral research fellow

Web: innoventondcts.nmmu.ac.za

As a postdoctoral research fellow at the InnoVenton Institute for Chemical Technology Research at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Prudence Mambo has set herself some lofty goals. She aims to help catalyse the development of biological wastewater treatment processes to deliver long-term impacts such as sustainable access to clean water, sanitation, electricity and internet access for all.

It's quite a lot for algae to deliver, but Mambo is optimistic that the work she is engaged in will help turn an under-utilised resource into systems that change lives. Wastewater is largely ignored, and not a "sexy" area of science, Mambo agrees. "In fact, I did not consider this field until my doctoral supervisor, Professor Keith Cowan at Rhodes University, suggested I look into it. I had originally pictured myself working at something like the Centre for Disease Control in countries such as Congo. But I realised wastewater treatment has the potential to deliver usable water for irrigation, fertiliser and renewable energy, which in turn can take light, internet access and telecommunications to underserved rural areas and change lives."

Having grown up in Zimbabwe and moved to South Africa to complete her studies 10 years ago, Mambo says she has observed that rural communities are not necessarily impoverished. Their ethos of living in an environmentally friendly way and making good use of every resource can be brought into cities to make urban areas greener, she believes. "However, people in rural areas lack power, light and connectivity. If we can achieve a balance between more environmentally friendly systems and modern internet and power access for all, people will be empowered to improve their lives."

Mambo says: "I believe in science with a conscience, specifically the development of environmentally and economically sustainable water and energy solutions for global implementation. I am driven by the realisation that poverty is preventable and can be eliminated in future."

"I feel there is so much untapped human potential because of poverty in Africa, South America, Asia and beyond. So many potential scientists, doctors, lawyers and entrepreneurs are denied bright futures due to resource-strained circumstances. The developing world cannot thrive if the majority of the population is unable contribute to its betterment. I realise that my future goals are huge, but they say that if your dreams do not scare you, then they are not big enough." — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ESAKA LEBO MANTSHO

Environmental educator

Twitter: @RootsShootsSA

Most teenagers aren't generally willing to get their hands dirty or put in extra hours at school, but environmentalist Esaka Lebo Mantsho's environmental awareness and food garden programmes are changing mind-sets among Diepsloot's teens. His programmes at 10 schools in the Diepsloot and Lehae areas focus on raising environmental awareness among children aged 13 to 17. In some cases, children choose to start food gardens at their schools, while in others, the participants elect to run anti-litter and recycling campaigns, or plant trees. Mantsho says he has been amazed at their willingness to stay on after school to tend their gardens, and the enthusiasm they show for the programmes in general. "Many of these kids have a deep love of the environment, and an interest in becoming botanists or agriculturalists, but they lack the necessary information and resources. I would like to see environmental awareness classes included at all public schools from primary level," he says.

Mantsho's own love of the environment emerged after he completed matric, and began working with volunteer organisations. "I did not have the funds for a tertiary education, so I began working with volunteer groups, helping kids with sport or homework," he explains. In 2008, he grew his first-ever food crop. "It felt amazing to harvest cabbage and potatoes I had grown myself," he recalls. This wonder is now imparted to schools through his work for the Jane Goodall Institute and the Roots & Shoots humanitarian and outreach programme. "Most of the kids taking part in the programmes have never grown anything in their lives. They thought food was only bought in shops. The food gardens empower and teach them, give them a sense of responsibility and increase their self-esteem," he says. Two of the participants have even gone on to advise their own families on better food gardening techniques at home. Mantsho hopes to extend the reach of the programmes, instilling his love of the earth to yet more teenagers. He also hopes to enrol for tertiary education in the fields of environmental science or horticulture sometime soon. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SIFISO NGOBESE

Founder, Abomakgereza waste recyclers **Twitter:** @ngobese_sifiso

Ever since deciding to make a go of the Abomakgereza ("recycling hustlers") project, Sifiso Ngobese has learned the virtue of patience and ingenuity. The project, which is rolling out industrially designed trolleys to South Africa's thousands of waste recyclers, is slowly gaining converts.

"People are starting to pay attention and they are understanding the role abomakgereza play in society," says Ngobese.

Ngobese, a former banker, first became interested in waste recyclers after striking up a conversation with a woman who was sorting through the trash outside his house in Soweto. He was moved by the woman's story and her circumstances and decided he had to do something to improve the conditions under which recyclers operated.

Ngobese has got funding from the Industrial Development Corporation for three years, beginning in 2015.

His idea was to solicit advertising for the trolleys and offer the recyclers a percentage of the profit. "The guys get a 10% share of ad profit," he says, "The other 90% goes back into the business to build more trolleys and to cover operational costs."

Considering the novelty of his idea — to get brands to advertise on the recyclers' trolleys — Ngobese was surprised when the brands didn't trip over themselves to get on board. The initial pilot phase was supported by brands such as Collect-A-Can, Nedbank and Red Bull. "Even the most green companies are reluctant about where they put their brands, so we had to offer them different alternatives."

Ngobese's Unconventional Media Solutions (UMS) designs and manufactures the trolleys and monitors the recyclers for quality control. "We have employed guys on the site to see whether the guys are cleaning their trolleys and they are contributing to a greener society and a greener environment," says Ngobese. "We've been rolling out training programmes for the guys before they get the gear."

In partnership with the Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa, UMS is offering waste management and entrepreneurial training to the recyclers.

The first rollout of 200 trolleys was in Gauteng province, and now Ngobese is in talks with municipalities in other provinces. — Kwanele Sosibo

LINCOLN MEYER

Conservation educationalist in youth sector/youth development

Twitter: @liboinc

For 26-year-old Lincoln Meyer the conventional "work-play" binary doesn't exist. Why? Because: "Conservation is a lifestyle and not a job." But the self-proclaimed "conservation ambassador" hadn't considered a life in environmentalism before he joined the Umzi Wethu project, a youth development academy established by the non-profit Wilderness Foundation.

He was selected as one of 11 young people to receive practical, conservation-related training in 2007. This, he says, completely changed his life. "Then I knew that I want to live a life dedicated to the protection of wild spaces, species and the development of people."

Growing up, Meyer faced many hardships. He was "born, bred and buttered" in the tiny town of Pearston in the Eastern Cape where his single, unemployed mother raised her two sons.

But he was ambitious and motivated from the start — qualities ill-fitted for Pearston, an "isolated and disadvantaged community" where "going to work on the farms was the norm".

He excelled in school but because of financial constraints he could not study further. Now, after nine years in conservation, Meyer has come full circle and is the project co-ordinator for Umzi Wethu. He is also a founding member of Coalition Wild, a publicity and networking initiative for young leaders in the environmental arena.

Essentially his focus lies in youth development, under the umbrella of conservation.

"I want to change the lives of young people in disadvantaged communities — my hometown of Pearston being the biggest priority — because I realised from my own life that the youth have a lot to offer, if given the right opportunities," he says.

Meyer aims to start a youth programme of his own in Pearston to help other "dreamers" like himself succeed against the odds. And he has chosen the environment as his platform — it's where he "learnt the difference between personality and ego".

"I wish to continue to do this all my life." — Amy Green



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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NTSAKO BALOYI

Environmental scientist and industry leader

Web: iaia.co.za

At the age of 32, Ntsako Baloyi will be the youngest president of the South African branch of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) since its inception in 1992. From August he will head the association in its work to "advance the art and science" of impact assessment, which serves to "anticipate, plan and manage the consequences of development with the aim of enhancing the quality of life for all".

In April 2016 he will represent Southern Africa at the IAIA's international conference to be held in Florence, Italy.

Interested in science from a young age, when Baloyi was in matric his "first instinct" was to become an engineer. But after a look at the university curriculum he decided to study something in the sciences with a "human element".

Baloyi, a scientist with a social conscience, is also the chief executive of Limpopo-based organisation the Xisasi Foundation, which implements community-specific and long-lasting development solutions in disadvantaged areas.

He has a BSc in Environmental Science and Chemistry, a BSc honours in Environmental Management, certificates in Project Management and Air Quality Management and is halfway through a master's degree in Project Management.

Two years ago he was accredited as a chartered environmentalist, the highest level of professional qualification for environmental practitioners. There are fewer than 20 chartered environmentalists in South Africa.

He is employed as an environmental assessment practitioner for SLR Consulting and does a lot of work in the country's mining sector, which, he says, is particularly challenging. "Trying to get buy-in from the sector and convince them that environmental management is just as crucial as production is difficult, to put it lightly," he says. "And it takes a strong environmentalist."

But this diligent scientist also has a fun side. He was featured in the local version of BBC Entertainment's reality show *Come Dine With Me* last year. "It is these kinds of challenges that drive me to push myself." — Amy Green

ZAID PHILANDER

Planet-friendly textile creator

Twitter: @iscreamandred

Zaid Philander's planet-friendly bag company, I Scream & Red, turns discarded vehicle seatbelts, fabric samples and upholstery into fashionable bags, while empowering its employees at the same time. The company is not a welfare organisation, he notes — it is an environmentally friendly, socially responsible and sustainable business with a firm focus on design. And the business is growing.

With a capacity of up to 150 bags a week and orders coming in from large organisations, I Scream & Red is starting to make a name for itself at major design shows and trade fairs around the country. Based in Cape Town, the company trains and equips its employees with compact sewing workstations in their homes, after which they take on workloads they can manage, and receive payment for each bag completed. They can also use the workstations to build their own businesses, which most of them do. Many of the employees are physically challenged, so working from home is particularly beneficial for them.

Philander grew up in Woodstock, Cape Town, at a time when the textile industry was thriving and many community members worked for big-name clothing manufacturers. "Every neighbour, aunty or relative was involved in sewing and working for the largest manufacturing names of the time. Sadly, once those large corporations started shutting down, thousands of people lost their jobs. Since then, I always had the idea of not only providing people with work, but providing them with a career where they could make something from start to finish and use their skills to provide for themselves," he says.

Philander's own interest in the textile industry developed as a child, when he learnt sewing skills from his older sister, much to the initial consternation of his father. "At the time, sewing was seen as women's work," he explains. Philander was given his own sewing machine at the tender age of 10, and set to work making simple clothing for friends and family. He was also a boy scout at the time, which increased his environmental awareness. Combining his love of nature and sewing skills was a natural progression, and while studying languages at UCT, he won an international contest run by the British Council, called Low Carbon Futures. Philander's entry, a dress made of paper and plastic, saw him flown to the UK and contributing a statement to the G8 +5 Environmental Summit in 2008. A short while later, he launched I Scream & Red.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The company's first raw materials were scrounged from scrapyards by Philander and his friends: "We looked like a bunch of gangsters: sneaking in and stripping wrecks," he recalls. Now materials are bought more formally and combined with recycled corporate materials, flags and other fabrics, as well as organic cotton and materials. With larger orders coming in, Philander aims to grow the team and bring to market a bigger range of exclusive, well-designed bags that ordinary people can afford. — Tracy Burrows

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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● ENVIRONMENT

KRISTI GARLAND

Environmental educator

Web: birdlife.org.za

Kristi Garland, Grasslands Environmental Education Project and centre manager at BirdLife South Africa, believes that with enough education people will stop seeing birding as "an old man's pastime", and young South Africans will become enthusiastic about bird conservation and habitat protection.

Garland has been engaging with children from pre-school through to high school level since 2008, developing and delivering education programmes such as the "Aviator" avian heritage programme and working with teachers to increase learners' understanding of birds. She also supports other BirdLife South Africa programmes such as Spring Alive Campaign with schools and bird clubs and the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa Eco-Schools Programme. She is based at the BirdLife South Africa Centre at Wakkerstroom in Mpumalanga, but works across South Africa's grassland biome to turn scientific research "lingo" into information that gets kids excited about birds and supplements national school curricula. This year alone, around 18 000 learners have been involved in BirdLife South Africa's Aviator Programme.

"The biggest challenges to South African birds are climate change, habitat destruction, the use of birds like vultures and eagles in traditional medicines, and exotic and pet birds breeding in the wild," she explains. "Getting children interested in birds increases general awareness and supports our conservation efforts. We see learners getting very enthusiastic about learning to identify different species, or monitoring birds and contributing their data to broader scientific research programmes."

Garland's own environmental awareness developed as the result of her growing up on a farm in KwaZulu-Natal. She studied nature conservation and went on to work as a marine environmental educator before joining BirdLife South Africa in 2008. She ranks as a high point in her life the moment she interacted with a Black Eagle at the Raptor Rehabilitation and Education Centre at Spier Wine Estate earlier this year.

In future, she hopes to see the avian heritage programme she developed go national, and birding become something everyone is interested in. "Once people understand the 'nuts and bolts' of the environment, they develop a greater desire to conserve it. I'd like to see schools, youth groups and community groups excited about birding and about protecting birds' natural habitats." — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KATE ROBEY

Hydrogeologist

Web: geoscience.org.za

Kate Robey's work for the Council for Geoscience (CGS) focuses on improving the utilisation of groundwater across South Africa. Groundwater is an under-utilised resource that is becoming increasingly important in South Africa, she says. Presently, up to 60% of South African towns depend solely or in part on groundwater, but there is a lack of knowledge and capacity in the sector, which often results in the groundwater supply schemes being poorly managed, Robey says.

Robey studied geology and completed her BSC and honours degrees at Rhodes University. During her first year of employment at the CGS working as a mapping geologist, she realised that she wanted her work to have a greater impact on communities. "I thought: 'I can investigate the age of a rock, but how would it really impact anyone? I rather wanted to see immediate impacts of my work that could improve the quality of lives.' In my work travels throughout South Africa, I saw what a difference water can make to a community, so I decided to change my focus to addressing groundwater issues."

Robey completed her master's degree in Hydrogeology at the University of the Free State, with her thesis focusing on tackling a groundwater supply problem experienced at Atlantis in the Western Cape. "For more than a decade the domestic water supply to the Atlantis community was solely groundwater. However, recently the groundwater's iron content was contributing to borehole clogging, which is threatening the sustainability of the water scheme to supply water." She investigated a technique for reducing and ultimately preventing clogging of the boreholes to improve the water supply. Her pilot study findings were extremely positive and there is support and plans for the implementation of a longer-term study.

This immediate impact and the potential for improving water quality and access to communities that desperately need it is a gratifying part of her work, she says. Robey has also been involved in monitoring groundwater resources for small-scale rooibos farmers, investigating the potential impacts on shallow groundwater resources due to shale gas exploitation in the Karoo, and the evaluating the quality of groundwater for Western and Northern Cape communities.

She is also keen to research providing solutions to communities in South Africa where the natural arsenic content in groundwater is a challenge to drinking water supply. "I want to continue researching and improving groundwater management, because this is such an important resource," she says. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SARAH WARIES

Shark conservationist

Twitter: [@SharkSpotters](https://twitter.com/SharkSpotters)

Environmentalist Sarah Waries, project manager of the City of Cape Town's Shark Spotters programme, has been working to conserve contentious species since her arrival in Cape Town 10 years ago. Her first environmental work in the region, as part of her Zoology honours, focused on the baboons in the Kommetjie area, and her focus later changed to Great White sharks. "Sharks and baboons are the most controversial animals we have in Cape Town — people love to love them and love to hate them. It seems that if there's an underdog, I'm out there for it," she says.

Waries joined the Shark Spotters programme in 2008, when it was four years old. At that stage, it was a relatively small community-driven project adopted by the City of Cape Town. The programme now employs 45 people working as shark spotters on eight beaches and managing a world-first shark exclusion net off Fish Hoek. Shark Spotters works to provide early shark warnings to recreational water users, and also plays a major role in shark conservation and educating the public about the environmental value of sharks.

False Bay boasts the world's largest aggregation of white sharks on the doorstep of a major city, with over 450 individual sharks identified off Cape Town over the past 10 years. Despite this white sharks are listed as vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and have been protected in South Africa since 1991.

While protecting this shark population is important, Shark Spotters also recognises the importance of safe bathing. The programme therefore strives to balance both priorities, working closely with local communities and businesses to ensure that people are able to use the water safely, without killing sharks. It has been phenomenally successful, and Waries plans to assess its measurable returns as part of her master's degree. "We have had interest from elsewhere in the world, and in fact, we've been invited to travel to Western Australia later this year to see whether a similar programme is viable in places along that coastline," she says.

In addition to managing Shark Spotters and their information centre at Muizenberg, Waries is also an active committee member of the Ocean View Association for Persons with Disabilities and has recently joined the Baboon Liaison Group as a community representative. She is also actively involved in social and environmental upliftment in Ocean View. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: DA KRUK

SHAUN CALLAGHAN

Environment/social activist

Facebook: [armysaints](https://www.facebook.com/armysaints)

Describing himself as an "instigator", Shaun Callaghan is driving positive change in his hometown of Amanzimtoti and other areas through Army Saints, a movement that rallies people to address social and environmental problems. Callaghan believes that if people pull together, they can solve any problem. This conviction has resulted in numerous successful projects run by Army Saints and supported by thousands of people over the past six years.

Callaghan, who initially set out to study marketing and psychology at UKZN in 2002, ended up walking out of his final exams determined to open a business. He now plays a large role in his parents' distribution company as well as running his own software development and web design firms, manned by employees he trained.

In addition to running his businesses, Callaghan has thrown himself into environmental and social activism, and pumps more than half of his income into worthy causes. "Maybe I will never be a millionaire, but then, I don't want to be," he says. "I'd rather be a semi-poor, average Joe and know that I made a difference."

The Army Saints was born out of an effort made by Callaghan and a friend to volunteer at the local SPCA. "But they didn't want help — they wanted money. We heard they were planning to hire a contractor to clear bush for new cages, though, and decided to do the job for them." They posted the bush clearing as an event on Facebook, and to their surprise, 32 people showed up to help. The job was done in two hours, saving the SPCA thousands of rands.

Callaghan realised many people were willing to help support good causes, but did not know how, or did not have money to donate. He began initiating other events. As the movement gained momentum, projects grew bigger and supporter numbers skyrocketed. The Army Saints network developed, advocating: "No Money. No Politics. No Religion". People contribute only goods and services, and no money changes hands. "Facebook was the revolution. Army Saints is the evolution," he says.

A key project saw hundreds of volunteers clearing water hyacinth that was clogging a 2km stretch of the Amanzimtoti River. It took months, with locals gathering every weekend to work, share ideas on cleanup strategies and provide food for the volunteers. The project succeeded, but Callaghan was distraught to discover a short while later that sewage was being pumped into the river, killing the fish. Volunteers went back, collected fish from the affected area and took them downstream to cleaner water. Now, they are looking at ways to eliminate litter from the waterway.

Many more social and environmental projects have been tackled locally and in neighbouring provinces, and yet more are in the pipeline. As inquiries come in about expanding the movement to other provinces, Callaghan says he believes a "new breed" of people is emerging, "people who want to help, who have solutions". All they need, he says, is an instigator to rally them together to drive change. — Tracy Burrows



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DR LOUWALLEN VOLMINK

Rural doctor

Twitter: @Vollas

At just four years of age Louwallen Volmink witnessed his grandfather — and guardian at the time — being fatally stabbed in the neck outside his home in the small town of Ladismith in the Klein Karoo. The ambulance failed to arrive and his grandfather bled to death.

"And that was when I knew I wanted to become a doctor," the 29-year-old says.

The first person in his family to attend university, becoming a doctor was not an easy feat for Volmink.

He started school in Robertson, two-and-a-half hours drive away from where he lived with his paternal grandmother Irene Lizwane, who looked after six children on a R400 state pension.

But he had to adjust to more than the geographical change — Lizwane spoke isiXhosa and lived in the township of Nkqubela, while his grandparents in Ladismith were coloured folk who spoke Afrikaans.

Volmink took this in his stride, however, and now speaks English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa fluently — a valuable skill for a Western Cape doctor, as he can speak to almost all of his patients in their mother-tongue.

Working tirelessly and diligently throughout school, often without the basics like school shoes, paid off: in 2006 he received the first provincial health department bursary allocated to a Stellenbosch University medical student from a rural background.

Although Volmink felt uncomfortable in the university environment — "I was a rural township boy who didn't think he'd pass" — he graduated in 2011 and returned to his roots in Robertson, where he did a year of community service.

He puts his success down to his unwavering patience, resilience and the fact that he is open-minded. "A lot of things drive me to do what I do: mainly, I love my job and I have always wanted to help people," he says.

His career goal is to further his studies and become a surgical specialist. He presently works at Montagu Hospital, 20 minutes' drive from Robertson, and lives with his wife and young son. "I'll raise my son in a rural town. And when he falls ill, I'll be his own personal doctor." — *Amy Green*

AILEEN HLONGOANE

Founder, Pledge A Pad

Twitter: @PledgeAPad

Aileen Hlongoane (26) is doing her articles in law, so how does she come to be in the company of achievers in the field of health?

As a University of Pretoria law student, Hlongoane, who grew up in Mpumalanga and KwaNdebele, was required to select a project, and she chose to volunteer at the Centre for the Study of Aids. "We went to orphanages every Friday, and there I learnt about the issues," she says. She discovered that while the children have food and shelter, there are huge gaps in what is provided for them.

"At first, I organised with others to buy toiletries for them, but it was bothering me: what do the girls do when they have their periods? I heard on the news that some girls end up missing as much as 60 days of school a year because they don't have pads."

Hlongoane called friends and mobilised church members to tackle this issue, and her cause has now become a campus-based society called Pledge A Pad, which fundraises and collects sanitary pads to give to underprivileged girls. It teaches them how to use them (Hlongoane points out that some girls have no older mentors to ask about such things) and about health and hygiene. The aim is not just to alleviate the stress of not having appropriate sanitary protection, but also to educate.

"We want to create awareness about their bodies so they know if something is wrong — for example, if a period goes on too long."

Hlongoane believes that providing sanitary pads to the girls has huge ramifications. "How can you be productive in class when you have to use newspaper or rags? Many girls miss their exams because they have their periods. And that means, perhaps, one less doctor, one less accountant, one less president in the future South Africa!" — *Mandi Smallhorne*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ALESHA SEWNATH

Scientist at Medical Research Council

Twitter: @alesha2312

"When I was a little girl I used to go with my mom to fetch her chronic medication. I told her I wanted to find a cure for all the diseases the babies had." KwaZulu-Natal-born Alesha Sewnath has stayed true to her childhood vision — she did a degree in biological sciences, focused on molecular biology, then did a master's in paediatrics, looking at metabolic outcomes in HIV-positive children. She's now a scientist with the South African Medical Research Council.

Alesha conducted one of the first studies in South Africa evaluating the performance of predictive equations, drawn from other countries, for use in children with HIV, and modified these equations; she set up and managed three phases of this study, which was part of a broader research network that focused on improved results in HIV and related infections, and reducing child mortality. "It is so rewarding to see the improvements," she says.

Her research took her out of the lab and into the community. "It gave me more understanding and compassion," she says, adding that she had face-to-face contact with the patients from whom she drew the blood, which she would then analyse.

"I then moved out of paediatrics to work with the Medicine Research Council's Gender and Health Research Unit on a wellness study in rape exposed women. The findings from this study will aid government in creating better services for women."

Alesha has presented on her research at a number of national and international conferences, and is now working towards a PhD in psychiatry, in which she'll be investigating telomere length as predictor of cardiovascular risk in rape



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

exposed women. Telomeres are amazing little things which repair damage to DNA; her interest is in establishing what's happening in the telomeres of women who have been subject to gender-based violence, and whether it's possible to use them to look into the future health of these women, with the objective of developing appropriate interventions.

"After the PhD, I want to focus on small children — there's not a lot of research on sexual violence and its metabolic impact in little children." — *Mandi Smallhorne*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR DANIELLE SMITH

Geneticist and researcher

twitter: @GeneticsD

Danielle Smith, a postdoctoral research fellow in the Division of Neurology, University of Cape Town, was turned on to genetics during a visit to Scifest while still a grade nine pupil in George, where she grew up. "It was the first time I became aware of genetics — I thought it was a really cool thing!"

From that beginning a really committed career grew. After a BSc at the University of Cape Town, Smith moved to medical school to do her honours in human genetics, followed by her master's and then PhD. She was initially researching breast cancer issues, but became aware of a group researching neurodegenerative diseases. "I'm fascinated by the brain and neurodegenerative diseases — so many of us know someone who is affected by one or the other," she says.

She soon became hooked on a relatively unknown disease, Spinocerebellar ataxia type 7, which has a high frequency in South Africa. In their late 30 and 40s, people with this condition develop ataxia (difficulties with movement like walking, and also with speaking) and slowly go blind.

"We have a unique population in South Africa, due to a founder effect," Smith explains. "We can see at a genetic level that all our patients are distantly related." A "founder" parent in the largely Xhosa population, who had a mutation, passed it on to his or her descendants, and because it strikes so late in life, after people have had their children, the mutation has survived."

While there's no real treatment as yet, identifying people with the disease is crucial to both learn more about the condition and to offer counselling (for example, on family planning) and support. Smith is working to establish a network of medical practitioners who will watch out for the symptoms and notify the research group, so that patients can be reached with targeted information.

This will be Smith's life for the foreseeable future: "I'm really passionate about research," she says. And she loves the work she's engaged in, because it combines clinical and lab work. "There are real people and real families behind the genetics." — *Mandi Smallhorne*



DR KGOMOTSO MOKGAPI

Sports doctor and wellness centre founder Twitter: @ADareWellness

Dr Kgomotso Mokgapi did not feel a calling to be a doctor; she fell into health by accident, as it were: “The truth is I loved studying, but when I looked at people who were working, they all seemed to be miserable, so I wanted to study for the longest time possible. It was that or be a lawyer, and my grandmother said lawyers lie for a living, so I went into medicine!”

In her third year, when students get to see patients for the first time, Mokgapi had an epiphany. Seeing the gratitude her very first patient felt, she thought, “Wow, and I get to be part of this!” Then a financial battle to continue her studies gave her a clear understanding that she really wanted to be a doctor.

A volunteer stint at the African Cup led to a role during the World Cup in 2010, and that steered her into the world of sports medicine, ultimately as team doctor for Banyana Banyana. Working with athletes gave her a sense of the value of preventative medicine.

This soon became a passion. “Our model of health care needs to change,” she says. “In obstetrics and gynae in the public sector, there’s great work being done, but it’s a little, too late. I saw a 23-year-old with cervical cancer, for example, who had been turned away earlier when she sought a Pap smear because she was too young.” A smear would have revealed the early stages of this eminently treatable cancer.

Mokgapi then founded the wellness centre African Dream to Acquire Real Empowerment, which focuses on women and is based in Mabopane. She’s still working on tweaking the model — as she points out, if you’re using screenings and education as preventative tools, you actually reduce the number of clinic visits per patient per year — success in health terms, but not necessarily in financial ones, so she is looking at other ways to make the project sustainable.

“I’ll be in the US for a while as a Mandela Washington Fellow, and will focus on business, entrepreneurship skills and civic leadership while there.” — *Mandi Smallhorne*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DUNCAN MOSETHLE

Dietician Website: www.kznhealth.gov.za/manguzi/dietetics_services.htm

The foundation on which health is built is food. “When you look at medical conditions, most of them are affected by food,” says Duncan Mosethle, a young dietician who has been a prime mover in dietary interventions that are changing the lives of poor people in his own catchment area — the desperately impoverished region served by Manguzi Hospital in northern KwaZulu-Natal — and across South Africa. He is now head of his department at the hospital.

Mosethle was top of his class studying nutrition at what was then Medunsa, but it was when he worked in the Eastern Cape that his interest in the impact of dietary interventions really began to grow. “You’re discovering cases of severe malnutrition, where the immune system is compromised, and the patient takes a long time to recover.” That’s what dieticians are taught, he says, to treat cases of acute malnourishment. But the approach should be to prevent rather than treat. “If you can catch these cases when it’s still moderate malnutrition, you get better patient outcomes. We need to be looking at nutrition throughout the prevention continuum.”

He started mixing his own dietary supplements, aimed at combatting some of the severe problems of malnutrition, trialling his supplements and developing protocols.

“We went out into the community to assist people earlier and used the supplements to push children back from acute malnourishment. I ended up being a national facilitator and training eight provinces.”

Mosethle has shown the impact of prevention interventions, and as a result, his budget and staff complement have grown and he’s been able to broaden his focus. He is now working with other departments, such as the departments of agriculture and social development, to tackle issues of malnutrition from the ground up — for example, starting food-growing projects with donated seed from the department of agriculture.

“It’s very rewarding to see the results,” he says. “Now we find the people themselves are bringing us ideas that will help.”

Mosethle has a natural talent for research and for sharing his ideas, so it’s not surprising to hear his future dreams: “I would love to be an academic and teach others.” — *Mandi Smallhorne*



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PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR NASTASSJA KOEN

Neurogenetics researcher Web: www.paediatrics.uct.ac.za/scah/dclhs

“Research in neurogenetics seemed to be a way in which I could make a real contribution to public healthcare,” says Dr Nastassja Koen, a 28-year-old doctor born and bred in Cape Town who is now a Clinical Research Fellow with the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, University of Cape Town.

As a young woman from a historically disadvantaged background herself, she has a drive to use her training and skills for the public benefit. “My principal interest is [in] an all-round healthier South Africa,” which is one of the reasons why she is a director of Yabonga, a nongovernmental institution that supports those infected and affected by HIV and Aids.

Koen is pursuing a PhD within the Drakenstein Child Health Study, a multi-year birth cohort study following 1 000 mother-child pairs, working with a team looking at maternal and child correlates of health. The women are recruited during pregnancy and will be followed until the index children are five years old. “Ultimately, we want to be able to design interventions during pregnancy which will have transgenerational impacts,” she says. At this point, it is not yet an interventional study, as the team is still in the data collection stage. However, the researchers have been able to assist the women through strong connections within the local public health sector, leading to referrals to appropriate levels of care. The study team has also developed an information leaflet about mental health and substance abuse counselling services, as well as other sources of help within the community, which, says Nastassja, the study participants have received with appreciation.

She became deeply engaged with this Western Cape community; some of its specific challenges reflect issues prevalent across a very unequal country.

“This is a highly traumatised population,” she says. “There’s a high level of intimate partner violence, and of substance abuse, especially of alcohol.” Maternal post-traumatic stress disorder has become the focus of her research — particularly its neurogenetic risk profile and transgenerational effects in this community.

What’s next for this young researcher? “In addition to continuing the work in the Drakenstein study, I would love to look more closely at neurogenetics in South Africa (and Africa) as a whole — we have a rich and fascinating genetic ancestry, which may even hold the key to some of our most common psychiatric disorders.” — *Mandi Smallhorne*

SUNTOSH PILLAY

Clinical psychologist and rights activist Twitter: @suntoshpillay

“I’ve always been interested in social issues and in people in general,” says Suntosh Pillay, a clinical psychologist at King Dinuzulu Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal. “But I’ve always been drawn to the macro level and how you can improve society as a whole.”

A high achiever, Pillay gained his MA in Social Science summa cum laude as a Mandela-Rhodes scholar in 2008 (he is currently a board director for the Mandela-Rhodes Community): “I love that phrase, Mandela-Rhodes,” he says. “It embodies all the paradoxes in our society.” Those paradoxes have driven him to engage with the formal structures in psychology, which are, he says, “busy decolonising themselves”. He is an executive member of the Division for Community and Social Psychology of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA). He is, he says, a “fan of using existing structures” to create change.

Pillay is currently completing a PhD, exploring the challenges that government hospitals are having in implementing national mental health policies.

“What drives me is the desire to work towards sustainable, systematic change,” he says. “That’s one of the reasons I work in a public hospital, where I see people every day who are going through really remarkable things.” He himself takes an activist role by engaging regularly with the media — he’s written over 100 articles in newspapers and online — and says that he sees mental health issues through a human



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

rights frame. This has also led to engagement with gender issues — Pillay is a member of the African LGBTI Human Rights Project, which aims to develop practice guidelines for psychologists working with gender and sexual diversity. “Sexual orientation is one of the last legislated forms of discrimination. My hope for an inclusive society is the bridge between my work as a psychologist and activism,” he says. “I would love to see more activist clinicians who work to sort out the underlying stuff, the socioeconomic determinants of health.” — *Mandi Smallhorne*



DR NOMATHEMBA CHANDIWANA

Programme advisor at Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute

Twitter: @Thembi_ZA

"I took the scenic route to medicine," says Dr Nomathemba Chandiwana, who is now programme advisor: child and adolescent health at the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (Wits RHI), and has been accepted as a 2015 Fellow of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa. Due to her parents' work, Nomathemba grew up in a number of different southern African countries. She excelled in the sciences, but rebelled against the pressure to become a doctor like her father. She worked as a health and public safety officer in London before embarking on a qualification in medicine. "I think I made a better doctor through coming to it later in life, having worked a bit and travelled."

She adds: "I think I went into medicine a bit idealistically, thinking we can make the world a better place."

And that's what her career in paediatrics has been dedicated to achieving. Nomathemba has made a transition from being a hospital doctor to doing research and policy work with Wits RHI, though she keeps her hand in by seeing patients twice a week.

Her focus has become a group of children infected with HIV before birth, but who made what is referred to as a "late progression" to Aids. "I'm particularly passionate about this group of kids, whom no-one expected to live; now they are old enough to be negotiating sex, having children and entering into relationships."

With a Masters in Public Health and currently working as a PhD candidate in Public Health, Nomathemba is a leading



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

researcher in her field, and takes a public health perspective — she intends to use her knowledge to strengthen South Africa's health system.

"The issues we have are not always due to the lack of warm bodies on the ground," she says. "Often, we're just not using our resources effectively. It's actually more affordable to give good value service." Her hope is to make this a reality in public health in the future. — *Mandi Smallhorne*



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YAMKELA NQWENISO

Youth HIV ambassador

Twitter: @GrassrootSoccer

Yamkela Nqweniso has just turned 15 years old but she already has five years of activism under her belt. She was born and lives in the Western Cape township of Khayelitsha, which is also where she became involved in the Football for Hope Centre, managed by the public health organisation Grassroots Soccer.

As a primary school pupil she joined the soccer programme and quickly found her place in the world of HIV awareness. Humble, the teenager says she "can't really play soccer". "I just try!"

But her focus lies in volunteering every day after school at the centre where she hosts discussions with her peers about how to protect themselves from HIV and the importance of getting tested. "Kids are interested in having fun, which is why playing soccer is so important — once they are there we can get them interested in knowing about HIV," she says.

Known on the pitch as "Yum Yum", she plays for the only all-girls soccer team in Khayelitsha: RV United. "Women are more at risk when it comes to HIV, that's why it's important to get girls involved early so that they have the knowledge and a chance to protect themselves," she says.

During the school holidays she also volunteers for Grassroots Soccer and recruits young people in the township to join the projects at the centre. "Young people are afraid to even talk about HIV and usually don't listen to lectures — that's why we need to speak openly among ourselves as the youth," she says.

When she "grows up" she would like to study journalism and work in the media or film industry, but for now she is content with being a "positive role model for young girls in Khayelitsha".

"If we all participate, if we all work together, I know that an HIV-free generation is possible. I hope that it happens while I'm still alive!" — *Amy Green*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

FRANS DE VILLIERS

Social entrepreneur

Twitter: @Franstasties

Early 2013 saw the first call for submissions to be included in Cape Town's 2014 World Design Capital status, awarded to cities using design as a tool for development.

Around the same time Frans de Villiers (33), a new father to a three-month-old baby, was retrenched from his advertising job and "got to experience the fear that so many South Africans face every day: without employment but with kids at home".

Although he found a job shortly afterwards it was this fear that sparked De Villiers' Thula Baba Box project, which became one of the 460 design projects featured in Cape Town last year.

Inspired by and based upon the 1938 Finnish invention, the Thula Baba Box is a survival kit for low-income mothers of infants. It contains essential items such as a blanket, nappies, health products, clothes and toys as well as educational health literature.

For decades the Finnish government has supplied their version to expectant mothers, which some say helped the country decrease its infant mortality rate — it is still one of the lowest in the world.

De Villiers hopes his South African version will have similar success. Initially backed by Action Hero Adventures, an angel fund that invests in innovate start-ups, the Thula Baba Box project now receives international funding from Broadreach Healthcare and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

The Western Cape department of health and Stellenbosch University's economic department are currently piloting the project, with the aim of supplying the box to low-income mothers in the province by 2016.

De Villiers has high ambitions for the product and hopes it will be a nation-wide staple by 2020.

The Thula Baba Box has garnered remarkable publicity for a start-up and has been featured in local and international media including BBC, Kyknet, The Times, Cape Argus, Die Burger, Huisgenoot, Cape Talk and RSG.

"While I think it's great that I did this with a non-medical background, I think it's more important that I'm a dad who did this. Men need to step up and get involved with helping children, especially in the early stages of development when they are most vulnerable." — *Amy Green*





DR JOSEPH RAIMONDO

Neuroscientist

Twitter: @JosephRaimondo

Dr Joseph Raimondo is a young neuroscientist who is pioneering neuroscience research in Africa.

Raimondo's passion for science and his obsession since a young boy with finding out how things work led to his intense curiosity about the brain, which he believes is the most enigmatic and exciting object in the universe. His awareness of his privileged background, together with a strong social conscience instilled in him by his parents, fuelled his desire to help enhance the lives of his fellow South Africans.

After completing his medical studies at the University of Cape Town, Raimondo (32) was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship which allowed him to pursue both a master's and doctorate in neuroscience at the University of Oxford. He then spent five years working in the world's leading neuroscience research institutes in the UK and Switzerland, before returning home in 2013 to establish cutting-edge neuroscience capacity in South Africa.

He started a research group and laboratory at the University of Cape Town, where he and his team build and utilise high-tech equipment to tackle locally relevant research questions about brain disease.

"A particular focus of our research is directed at understanding the changes that occur in the brain during the development of epilepsy. This debilitating condition is common in South Africa, with particularly devastating effects on poorer communities. In this country, the reasons people get epilepsy are often quite different from elsewhere in the world, so we're focusing on these understudied, local causes," says Raimondo.

He is humble about his achievements and admits science is really difficult. He says scientists can never guarantee they will discover anything useful, so persistence and keeping an open mind is important. He adds that often the weird, unexplainable observations often end up being the most exciting.

But it's obvious that his sense of humour and grasp on reality are solid. His motto in life is "life is unpredictable — always eat your pudding first". — *Linda Doke*

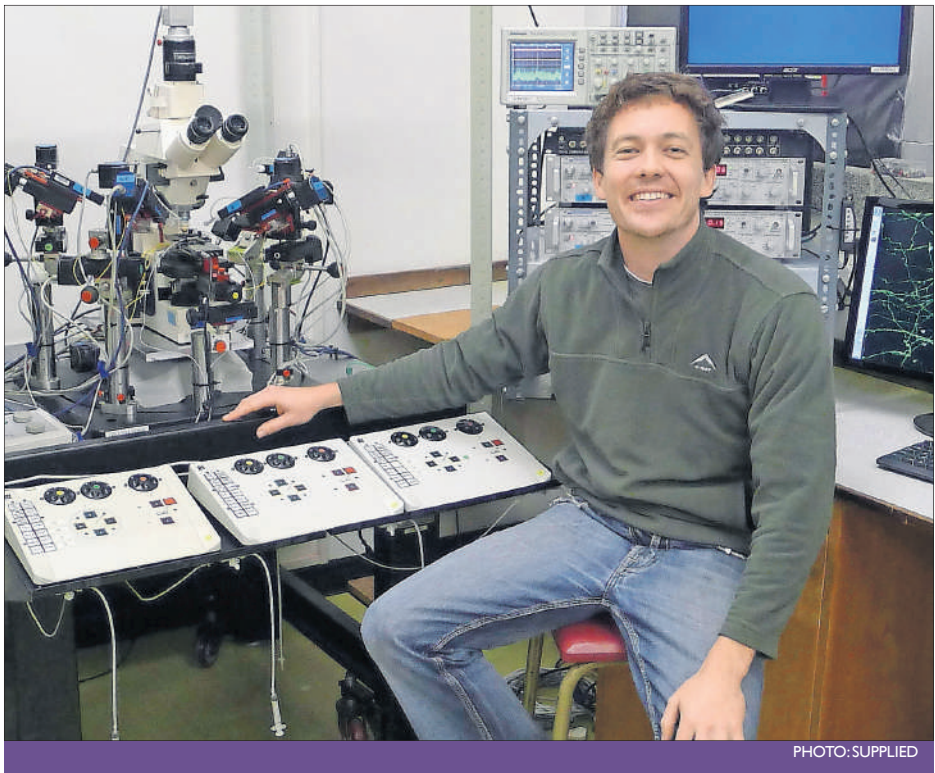


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PRIYANKA NAIDU

President, Students Health and Welfare Centre Organisation

Twitter: @Priyanka4092

During her second year at University of Cape Town Medical School, Priyanka Naidu had her first glimpse of the suffering, poverty and inequality in society when she went into a township with the Students Health and Welfare Centre Organisation (Shawco). That's when she knew she had found her calling.

"I realised then that I was desperate to be able to relieve some of that suffering and to make a difference where it really mattered. When I saw the great work Shawco does, I asked myself how could I possibly NOT join this inspirational organisation?"

Now in her sixth and final year of medical studies, Naidu (23) is president of Shawco, overseeing the activities of 12 different portfolios in the organisation.

Early in her involvement with Shawco she liaised with Médecins Sans Frontières (also known as Doctors Without Borders), an international, independent medical humanitarian organisation that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters and exclusion from health care.

Through this affiliation Naidu established Friends of Médecins Sans Frontières at UCT, a student support organisation that raises funds and awareness among students who might wish to pursue a career with MSF.

"Through my leadership positions in both Shawco and Friends of Médecins Sans Frontières, I have been incredibly privileged to have had experiences that have moulded



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

me into the person I am today. I was once on a Global Citizenship course, where my lecturer told us: 'Forget how you will cope, you were made to be resilient. The people you will help are resilient, and you should be humbled by their resilience. So take all your energy, and go and burn out!' That's exactly what I intend to do!" — *Linda Doke*

DR THATO MOSIDI

Tuberculosis activist

Twitter: @thatamosidi

After her own difficult experience battling extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) and hearing the stories of what other TB patients and survivors had been through, medical doctor Thato Mosidi (29) realised she had an important role to play in the treatment of and education about TB in South Africa.

Realising that she was one of the fortunate handful of people to have survived this almost incurable condition, she felt she had to speak out for TB sufferers and advocate for the eradication of TB.

Herself a victim of TB stigma after her occupationally-acquired TB, Modisi believed that by using her status as a patient and a doctor and by sharing her story publicly, she could start a social dialogue about the condition and help change how people view TB.

"South Africa has a very serious TB and HIV epidemic, and the combination of the two has created fear and misconceptions about the two conditions within our communities. The discrimination and stigma experienced by people with TB is one of the very powerful social determinants of disease that has contributed to the spread of the epidemic. "I believe if we start talking about it and educating people about the disease, we'll be well on the way to eradicating it," she says.

Modisi is a member of the South African National Aids Council's Global Fund Country Co-ordinating Mechanism, representing the TB community in civil society. The CCM raises funds to assist developing nations in responding to the challenges of HIV and Aids, tuberculosis and malaria.

She is also a member of nongovernmental organisation TB Proof, a voluntary group formed by doctors, health care workers and medical students who have personal experience of occupationally-acquired TB, particularly drug-resistant forms of the disease. The group seeks to



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

raise awareness about occupational, nosocomial (originating in hospital) and community-based TB transmission. It further educates health care workers and students on how to protect themselves from being infected with TB in the workplace.

"My greatest challenge is accepting that change will not happen overnight. We still have so much to do before we can rid the world of TB, and it will take hard work, many critical decisions and getting hands dirty to get the job done." — *Linda Doke*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR SARAH WHITEHEAD

Neuro-rehabilitation specialist

Twitter: @se_whitehead

Dr Sarah Whitehead is a person with a disability, not a disabled person. Her disability does not define her: she defines it. The mind-set and approach to life of this vibrant, energetic 29-year-old doctor is determined and compassionate, and she's a good example of someone who has not allowed life's challenges to knock her.

When Whitehead was 19, she was diagnosed with venous developmental anomaly, a vascular abnormality in her brain that left her with a spastic gait. Whitehead is a fighter, and rather than resigning herself to a life of "abnormality", she stood tall, pushing the limits of prejudices and making people re-evaluate their preconceived ideas about physical disability.

Always having wanted to work with people, and having seen how effective medical rehabilitation helped her, Whitehead's specialisation as a doctor is in acute neuro-rehabilitation, helping patients who have suffered strokes, paralysis due to spinal cord injuries and other conditions. She is the doctor in a multi-disciplinary team of nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and social workers, holistically helping patients return to as independent a life as their disabilities will allow.

Whitehead recently published a book about her story of overcoming the challenges she faced in her journey to qualify as a doctor and the prejudices and distorted perceptions society has towards people with disabilities.

"I hope that my story can act as a voice for anyone struggling with difference of any kind, whether it be their own difference or the acceptance and understanding of others' differences," says Whitehead.

Whitehead believes helping her patients keeps her strong. "I am privileged to witness time after time the power of the human spirit. Witnessing my patients' journeys puts my own journey into perspective. Knowing I can motivate and inspire my patients as a doctor who has overcome her own disability inspires me to work harder and keep going." — *Linda Doke*

KAYA FM WOULD LIKE TO **CONGRATULATE** ALL THE **NOMINEES** FOR THE 2015 **MAIL & GUARDIAN 200** **YOUNG** SOUTH AFRICANS

South Africa is a better country because of young people who strive for excellence in all industries and areas in which they are involved.

It has been proven time again that no young democracy and economy can grow sustainably without the involvement of its youth. Every single nominee in this year's 200 YSA represents the greatest potential that our young democracy has. They prove that all one needs to succeed is the determination and will to start.

Congratulations to all the nominees. May you find the strength to keep going and inspire others.



HOME OF THE AFROPOLITAN



DANIEL SNADDON

Animator, founder of Kunjanimation **Twitter:** @TriggerfishZA

Daniel Snaddon started working for Bugbox Animation in 2005, fresh out of college and ready for an adventure. He has always been drawn — pun intended — to animation and video games, and it made sense for him to pursue a career that tapped into these passions.

"The idea that there were other worlds that you could visit or play in was really exciting to me," says Snaddon. "However, as I got older I wanted to do something meaningful with my life and it became clear that escapism wasn't enough of a reason to dedicate myself to animation."

In search of meaning, Snaddon became heavily involved in growing the nongovernmental organisation Animation South Africa from the grassroots up, notably serving as the founder of Kunjanimation, South Africa's only international animation festival. "One of the festival's greatest successes was bringing out the prestigious Gobelins Animation School to do workshops. This has led to ongoing partnerships between them and the animation school in Cape Town," says Snaddon. "As a result, the quality jump we saw in last year's projects was fantastic, and we hired many graduates to work on the project I'm currently co-directing, *Stick Man*."

This will be the 4th in a series of BAFTA-winning short films based the work of *The Gruffalo* author Julia Donaldson. Produced by Magic Light Pictures in the United Kingdom and Triggerfish Animation Studios in Cape Town, *Stick Man* will air on the BBC at Christmas.

Snaddon is attached to direct *The Crash*, a feature animation written by his wife, Julia Smuts Louw. This project has been selected for the international Call for Projects at the prestigious Annecy Animation Festival in France. There is also *Kariba*, a 2D feature film concept developed by the



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Blue Forest Collective (a group of artists including Snaddon, Daniel Clarke, Jac Hamman and Charl Collocott), which will be presented at Annecy's special call for South African projects.

"I think it's important that the South African industry becomes better known, as it could be a massive source of employment and income for the country," says Snaddon. "I'm pleased to say that the government has recognised this and we're in constant dialogue with the department of trade and industry around initiatives to discover and develop new talent."

Among the most meaningful events in his career, Snaddon counts having had the opportunity to support and teach two animators who came from hard beginnings: Chris Ntuli and Sifiso Motaung.

"One of our clients at Bugbox brought us these two young guys from her building site where they were drawing comics in their spare time," he says. "They came every Friday from Daveyton to Bryanston to learn what they could, and today they are seasoned pros. I'm sure there are others out there like them — loads of talent, drive and ambition — they will change their lives through their art if we can create the right opportunities for them." — Tamsin Oxford

KUTLOANO 'DA KRUK' NHLAPO

Broadcaster, producer and DJ

Twitter: @dakruk

Kutloano Nhlapo has had an impressive career that includes time spent on UJ FM as the sports presenter for *Drive Time*, the co-host of the *Weekend Breakfast Show* and a saucy sex show called *The Dip*. He's now at YFM where he produces the drive time show and has been voted YFM's top producer for the *Flava in the Morning* breakfast show for three years running.

"I've been doing radio content production for four years, radio presenting for three years and mix DJ-ing for nine years, but I've been working in the mainstream broadcasting and media industry for six years now," says Nhlapo. "My role as radio content producer for one of the flagship shows on YFM comes with collecting content, dissecting it to its simplest form and feeding the listener this same content while providing a third side to each story."

Content production has captured Nhlapo's passion and inspires him to create something new and exciting every day. "South Africa is a very diverse and entertaining country with many opinion leaders and 'twelebs', and this makes my job really easy as I am invested in content and people."

Nhlapo loves what he does and this is evident in the success of his shows and the recognition he has received from others. He is still committed to great music, however, and 2015 has seen him take on the role of producer, presenter and DJ on *The Players Club* every Saturday from 9pm to 12am on YFM.

"I've also just released my first single called *Asiphuze* that received an overwhelming response; it trended in South Africa three times on Twitter and had over 8 000 downloads in the first 24 hours," he says. "I also mix music for my monthly download series *Nude Music* and as DJ Da Kruk I host a series of bi-annual events called All Black Everything. This series of events celebrates how far the young people of this country have come."

When asked what his greatest achievement has been so far, Nhlapo replies, "This has to be the fact that my hometowns of Daveyton and Ekurhuleni have recognised my success and celebrate me as one of their own." — Tamsin Oxford



PHOTO: DA KRUK

JOLYNN MINNAAR

Documentary filmmaker

Twitter: @jollynnminnaar

Jolynn Minnaar spent four years creating the in-depth documentary *Unearthed*. It examines the proposed fracking plans for the Karoo and was written, directed and shot by her alone. This solo endeavour won her critical acclaim and numerous awards, both locally and internationally, and underscored her commitment to making a difference in people's lives.

"*Unearthed* won the Sheffield Doc/Fest 2014 Green Award and the Tri Continental Human Rights Film Festival Best Film Audience Award," says Minnaar. "I also was awarded Glamour Woman of the Year 2014 as a Change Agent alongside Thuli Madonsela and have had the honour of speaking at two TEDx platforms."

Minnaar initially considered medicine, but soon realised that this was not the career for her; instead, it was the stories of the people around her that inspired her and made her realise that she needed to follow another path.

"I am inspired by everyday people working for a better tomorrow, I am so inspired by South Africa — her humble beauty, her resilience," says Minnaar. "It's about telling stories that matter, stories that challenge the narrative inequalities on our continent. I believe that more and more people are realising the power they have to effect change in their own small way. While there is so much to work toward, or fight for, these days, never before has a generation been more empowered to be a part of the good that's going on."

It is this spirit that's pushing Minnaar to achieve more, and she is now working on a project that looks back at reconciliation in South Africa.

"Every day it requires delicate, quiet understanding and profound respect," she says. "To work through these painful histories and to look at ourselves now, 20 years into our democracy, and take stock."

For Minnaar it is the messages she receives from people who see her work that keep her going and remind her that this is the right career for her.

"From marginalised First Nation communities in Canada to the rural people of the Karoo, if I am able to help just one person learn something new or encounter a character on a screen that makes them confront their place in the world, I think I would have succeeded," she concludes. — Tamsin Oxford



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

JULIA 'SUZELLE DIY' ANASTASOPOULOS

Designer, illustrator, DIYer and comedian

Twitter: @knole and @suzellediy

The YouTube series *SuzelleDIY* took South Africa by storm in 2014, launching the talented Julia Anastasopoulos into the public eye and even further into their hearts. Not only is the show funny and useful, but Anastasopoulos' talents have been revealed to extend beyond the screen and onto paper, with a very successful artistic career growing alongside the whacky DIY character.

"I come from a very creative family and have been drawing for as long as I can remember," says Anastasopoulos. "I found it again after I graduated as a means of balancing out a career in the performance world and I absolutely love doing both."

Fans of Suzelle will be delighted to know that there is plenty in store for the show and the future.

"We are planning to release the *SuzelleDIY* book towards the end of 2015, which has been a very exciting project and Suzelle will also be embarking on a few new DIY adventures soon," says Anastasopoulos. "In terms of illustrations, I am working on a few print commissions which I am thoroughly enjoying."

Anastasopoulos has an impressive creative track record that includes winning the 2008 Eskom Energy Efficient Lighting Design competition with a light she made from clothes pegs. She created four large printed murals for the Civic Micity bus station and, more recently, she did another for Thibault Square Station in Cape Town.

"I have also illustrated three children's books, which has always been one of my dreams, and I hope to do more books in the future," says Anastasopoulos. "I think that both *SuzelleDIY* and the Bus Station Artworks are two of my greatest achievements to date as they both pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me much better at my craft. I feel both have taught me so much about the importance of practice, the business side of art and the realisation that it is possible to make a career out of doing what you love." — Tamsin Oxford



AYANDA MAKAULA

Group public affairs manager, SABC

Instagram: [ayamakaula](#)

Ayanda Makaula is an impressive woman, with a heart of gold. Her passion for community service saw her resign her role at the SABC's second-biggest public broadcasting station, Umhlobo Wenene FM, to serve as a volunteer in the Vodacom Change the World Programme. There she worked for Disabled People South Africa as a marketing and public relations practitioner to help drive the nongovernmental organisation's advocacy campaigns and fundraising.

"I have a real zeal for making a positive contribution in moving this country forward," says Makaula. "When I go overseas and hear the admiration in other voices about what we have accomplished as a country and the extraordinary successes of South Africans, it inspires me."

Recently appointed as the group public affairs manager for the SABC, Makaula is now focused on cultivating and harnessing interactions with key stakeholders. It has also given her the opportunity to work on other projects close to her heart.

"This position has given me the opportunity to represent the organisation in the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Disability Forum, whose mandate is to share information and discuss common communication-related development and challenges facing persons with disabilities," adds Makaula. "This means I can continuously be involved in championing the issues of people with disabilities."

Makaula is deeply committed to volunteer work as she believes that this has an enormous impact on the health and well-being of communities in South Africa, and have a ripple effect across the world. "Shining the spotlight on volunteer work done by ordinary people is one of the most effective clarion calls to get more people involved in enriching their communities," says Makaula. "South Africa is endowed with a rich culture of ubuntu, and it is within this context that I believe South Africans find it easy to embrace volunteerism, as it has a strong connection to our values as a nation." — *Tamsin Oxford*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

PEARL BOSHOMANE

Editor, DailyPlanet.co.za

Twitter: [@pearlulla](#)

Pearl Boshomane is only 26 years old and already she has an impressive track record as a writer, journalist and creative talent.

She has worked as an editor at the Times Media Group and remains a highly sought after journalist for *TimesLive* and the *Times*. She has recently spread her wings to head up the successful *Daily Planet* as an editor, opinion-maker and trend leader.

"This is my fifth year as a journalist, although I was also involved in the school newspaper and magazines," says Boshomane. "I developed an interest in media when I was nine and it was in grade 10 that I decided to become a journalist. My English teacher, Miss Blom, marked one of my essays with a comment that read: 'You have a real talent for writing. Maybe consider this as a career?' That was the first time it dawned on me that I could write for a living."

Boshomane has a natural knack for the written word that's buoyed by her sense of adventure and endless curiosity; all fantastic traits for any journalist.

"I love the internet and its endless possibilities, there are so many stories you can come up with and so much material to work with," says Boshomane. "I am currently obsessed with *Daily Planet* — growing it, making it better and getting it out there."

The site is very much on trend with a little bit of fringe and dash of humour and daring. It's a dynamic lifestyle blog with plenty of colour, much of it provided by Boshomane.

"Journalism doesn't have to be serious all the time," she adds. "Yes, you have to get your facts straight, but you can also have fun with the work. It's one of the few industries where you can get paid to have fun. It won't give you riches, but your life will be rich with adventure." — *Tamsin Oxford*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NQOBILE SIBISI

Programme manager, Code for Africa

Twitter: [@buthelezi](#)

Passionate about the written word, innovation and ideas, Nqobile Sibisi is becoming a force to be reckoned with in the media industry. Currently the programme manager at Code for Africa, she works on the HacksHackers Africa network and is tasked with expanding it into a community of 30 000 members across 14 African countries.

"I have been working in this industry since 2008 and got into it because of my love for writing and news media," says Sibisi. "Something about telling stories and reflecting on the lived experiences of South Africa's majority felt urgent to me! As I grew in the industry I became conscious of the role of information communication technologies in information dissemination and accessibility. It has the tools that give the masses the ability to tell their stories, speak their truth and demand accountability."

Mentored by Craig Hammer of the World Bank Institute's Media Programme, Chris Kabwato of Highway Africa and Justin Arenstein of the International Centre of Journalists and Code For Africa, Sibisi is driven to succeed.

"These people are all leaders in the open data, open government and media sectors and I am extremely lucky to have [had] all three of them as my teachers," says Sibisi. "It is an inspiration to do my work at Code for Africa. I basically manage operations of the Open Data movement, scaling ideas that marry technology and journalism to build active citizenry."

Sibisi's father also inspired her; he told her about Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko and taught her the value of freedom and politics. She is driven by the desire to make a difference to the country and its cultures.

"When you grow up in a South African township with ample talent, intelligent and educated youth who are, sadly, unemployed in a nation that supposedly ought to have resources to hone skills and create opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment — but it is a nation riddled with corruption, inequality and a growing gap between the elite few and poor masses — then you are encouraged to use your platform to do whatever you can to bring about change," concludes Sibisi.

She is about to head up Code For Africa's new office in Cape Town and it is likely that this young South African will soon be making all the right kinds of waves there. — *Tamsin Oxford*

TECLA CIOLFI

Marketing manager, Deezer South Africa

Twitter: [@textonfire](#)

Tecla Ciolfi holds up a light to the phenomenal talent that makes up the South African music scene and shows the world that it is just incredible. She has written for a number of outlets such as Your LMG (Cape Town's live music guide) and has started events such as Tuesdays On Fire — a free gig that showcases local talent — and Jozi On Fire, a live-streamed event which gives local musicians the opportunity to reach new audiences.

"I've been involved in the South African music industry for around 10 years," says Ciolfi. "I am currently the marketing manager for Deezer South Africa (an app-based music service) and the editor and curator of *Texx and the City*, an entertainment website that focuses on South African music through reviews, interviews and event features."

Ciolfi believes that she is extremely lucky to be able to work with some of the most knowledgeable and passionate people in South Africa and Paris, as they push her to work harder and keep taking projects to the next level.

"I've just added Ghana and Tanzania to my Deezer editorial portfolio and get to travel a lot more through Africa, which has been something I've wanted to do for a long time now," says Ciolfi.

Her love of local music also shines through in everything that she does, and she is determined to make a difference.

"There's nothing really like the current musical climate here," she says. "We have artists that are paying homage to those that have paved the way for them by mixing old school sounds with fresh techniques and, in doing so, are spearheading new genres. Our artists are pioneering a sound and a space that's all their own."

Ciolfi thinks that there has never been a better time to be a South Africa with changes afoot and new things abounding.

"We're such a gorgeous mishmash of cultures and opinions," she says. "I pay my respect to the art being made by providing a platform through *Texx and the City* for artists, organisations and events to showcase their work. I grew the site from the ground up and it's been a long six-year process, but there's nothing more rewarding than seeing something you nurtured become a little monster." — *Tamsin Oxford*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



ROBYN KRIEL

Television journalist

Twitter: @robynkrielCNN

If you're looking for someone who reports the front lines the news everybody should hear, then look no further than Robyn Kriel. She's been working in television journalism for nine years and has already been credited by Michelle Obama for her courageous reporting, received the Edward R Murrow award for in-depth reporting and a David Burke award for Bravery in Journalism.

"My mum was a journalist in Zimbabwe and even though I don't think I intentionally meant to follow in her footsteps, journalism and broadcasting just came naturally to me," says Kriel. "My parents are both news junkies and I can't remember a single morning waking up at home without CNN, BBC or Sky News playing. Also I was born and raised in Bulawayo, where we have endured a crackdown on freedom of the press since about 2000."

This made Kriel recognise the importance of being a journalist, telling the truth and challenging the status quo. It is also a career choice that she loves and that allows her the opportunity to tell stories about Africa and its people; stories that need to be heard.

"I work with a lot of younger as well as older journalists who are very dedicated and passionate and that gives me strength, even though it can sometimes be strenuous," she says. "I've been really lucky to have had an exciting, adrenaline-filled career. Plus, when I began working for CNN I got to see the outpouring of pride from the people of my home countries of Zimbabwe and South Africa. Africans are always so proud when another African gets a chance to shine in the international arena."

Kriel worked with eNCA for six years and has recently landed a new job as a CNN correspondent based in East Africa and that is her focus for now. "It's a great career choice because it is the one job you can have where you get to experience everyone else's jobs," she concludes. "I have been on the front lines with US Marines in Afghanistan, watched wildlife officials in Kenya transport a drugged elephant, caught an air raid in South Sudan, ridden on a rickshaw taxi through Mogadishu and hidden with firefighters in Texas. You get to have a front row seat watching history unfold, and for someone who loves being the first to know everything, there is no better job." — *Tamsin Oxford*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SUNNI FABA

Director and storyteller

Twitter: @sunnifaba

Sunni Faba has directed over a dozen short films for DSTV and eTV, and works as a writer and developer on popular local television dramas *Ayeye* and *Isibiyi*. That's already an imposing résumé for a 25-year-old, but she's just getting started.

"When you're a storyteller you can't shut up, lock up or keep it quiet for long. It will find a way to come out and it will haunt and assault you until you are satisfying your passion," she says.

Faba is completing her honours degree in dramatic arts at Wits, where she majored in writing and directing. Her first job was as an intern director at M-Net's Magic's Factory in 2012. She has spent the last three years directing short films for the Mzansi Magic television channel.

"My passion for telling stories which are rich in language and representative of my people comes from my mother. When I was growing up, she wasn't satisfied with reading me typical fairy tales. She'd make up her own in Xhosa and act them out. She made me feel like my story was more interesting than Cinderella and that it deserves to be told."

Faba believes being part of the film industry in South Africa is a privilege, not a right. "We get to create the things people watch and read, the things they talk about the next morning while making coffee. Our work sits with you and your family every day as soon as you switch on the TV. There is power in that and we have to ensure that we don't abuse it or take it for granted."

Her latest project is a documentary that explores the vulnerable South African identity. It's a new form of storytelling for her, but she's confident that she will make a success of it. We are too. — *Qudsiya Karim*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MZOXOLO JOJWANA

Programming manager, executive, agent of (viable) change

Twitter: @MzoJojwana

As Radio 702's programming manager and the youngest member of the senior management team there, Mzoxolo Jojwana would like to affect positive change in South Africa. But he points out that change can't be driven without a commercially viable platform. His role is to balance commercial interests and impact.

Jojwana grew up in Queenstown in the Eastern Cape, where children aspired to be teachers, nurses or doctors. "We didn't have much career guidance, so I did not realise what career options existed. My parents are both educators, though, and they were adamant that education is crucial."

He enrolled at the then Peninsula Technikon to study graphic design, without having any idea of what it entailed. "It was the first thing I was accepted for, but I didn't know anything about design. I couldn't even draw a stick figure," he says. Fortunately, the journalism department was located nearby and sparked his interest. He completed his studies there, and went on to work as a content writer for a travel agent after graduation in 2003. He later joined Cape Talk and became a producer, moving up through the ranks and relocating to Johannesburg, where he is now works for Radio 702.

Mzoxolo was named one of the top 40 most powerful and influential people under the age of 40 by *The Media Online*. He won Best Talk Producer of the Year at the MTN Radio Awards in 2010 and recently completed Programming for Management Development at Gibbs. "My parents are big believers in ongoing education," says Jojwana. "I like to think my father is quietly proud of what I have achieved so far."



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Jojwana believes that despite the changes brought about in media by the internet, radio remains an important platform in South Africa. "Our listeners have an intensely personal relationship with their programmes. They contribute a great deal to the content direction, so it's a partnership, it empowers listeners. The secret of our success is that we tap into the heart and soul of the country and talk about what listeners want to talk about."

By integrating a digital component and looking to potential partnerships with digital and mobile stakeholders in future, Jojwana wants to keep the station innovative and relevant, and a viable platform for sponsors. "I enjoy our ability to affect positive change — this is one of my main objectives in my own life. But obviously, we work in a commercial environment, so if you don't make the money, you can't make a difference. So my job is to keep this a business with a soul." — *Tracy Burrows*

MICHAEL THANDUKWAZI HLATSHWAYO

Managing director, executive producer

Twitter: @big_MIKE_ayooaba

Executive producer and head of Black & White Productions, Michael Hlatshwayo has never merely "watched" TV. He recalls that even as a teenager growing up in Barberton in Mpumalanga, he watched TV with an interest in how shows were produced, rather than just following the storyline. This led to his studying film and TV production at City Varsity, and co-founding his production company while still at university. Now, he cannot watch any video content without analysing the lighting, direction and audio quality. Aiming to help improve the quality of film and TV content in southern Africa, Hlatshwayo not only pushes the limits through his own production house, he also mentors up-and-coming filmmakers and producers.

"There is no shortage of talent in South Africa," he says. "We work with many young filmmakers, many freelancers who come up with winning scripts and extremely innovative ideas." Many aspirant filmmakers look to Hlatshwayo for guidance, asking for help refining concepts and building up projects. "I enjoy playing the role of a mentor. I know the value of getting mentorship and the role it can play in developing a creative person," he says. His willingness to share his knowledge has extended to a number of projects, such as working with Princess Sikhanyiso Dlamini of Swaziland and Swaziland's ministry of information, communications and technology, where he contributed to the policy-making forum drafting the kingdom's film and new media policy.

With a long list of achievements to his name, including representing Johannesburg youth at the African Youth Charter Dialogue hosted by Zayrah Africa and the National Youth Development Agency, making the SMAA Finalists list and winning the title of Social Media Hero of the Year in Africa in Lagos this year, Hlatshwayo is not resting on his laurels.

"I want to focus more on uplifting communities, specifically young people," he says. "In the longer term, I see myself running a high-end TV channel, focusing on winning content. Digital will play a growing role in programming, and I want to drive digital programming innovation." — *Tracy Burrows*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



JODY HENDRICKS

Sports reporter, producer

Twitter: @Jodyhendricks

Sports commentator, TV analyst and RSG sports presenter and talk show producer Jody Hendricks is living a dream that started at age 14, when he heard Mark Gilman on radio and decided he too wanted to be on air. "I knew I'd be on radio one day — I just didn't know how," he says. At his home in Strand, near Cape Town, Hendricks told his family of this goal. "My mother has always been supportive, but my grandmother urged me to forget the idea and focus on getting a 'real job' one day," he says.

He went on to study journalism at CPUT, graduating in 2005. During his time as a student, he also got his first radio show at MFM 92.6 community radio in Stellenbosch. Despite her initial reservations, his grandmother was the first listener to tune in, Hendricks says.

His journey to RSG, where he now produces the morning news and current affairs show *Praat Saam* alongside presenter Lynette Francis and covers a number of sports events, was not always an easy one. "It took years. Sometimes it was tough, and there were sacrifices and failures along the way. My family and friends have seen me at my worst — hustling for jobs and battling — and they have always been supportive," he says.

As a student, his in-service training was with Tshwelopele Productions in Cape Town. As a production assistant for *Top Billing*, he had opportunities to meet a number of celebrities like the Black Eyed Peas, which he counts as a career highlight. After graduating, Hendricks worked as an editorial assistant and later a staff writer at *Men's Health* magazine. In 2008 he became part of a Rotary Exchange programme that saw him travel to Germany for a month of travel and job exposure that significantly broadened his horizons. Back in South Africa, Hendricks worked as a freelancer, landing a temporary position as a freelance writer for Fifa ahead of the 2010 World Cup. He later moved to Cape Talk radio, where he worked as a producer for two years. His move to RSG's studios in Johannesburg in 2013 saw him starting as a sports reporter and quickly expanding his portfolio. "Now I have opportunities to work in all the areas I love — radio, sports, music and news. It's been a long road, but I'm exactly where I [always] wanted to be," he says. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NICK HAMMAN

Radio presenter

Twitter: @nick_hamman

As one of the youngest presenters ever to host the nationally syndicated prime time morning show on 5FM, 24-year-old Nick Hamman has moved unusually quickly into what many would see as a dream job. A lot of this progress is due to carefully focused personal branding and a conscious decision to follow his passion, he says.

"At school, I didn't necessarily dream of working in radio, but I was passionate about music, drama, English, history and debate. These interests tied up neatly into radio. Once I knew what direction I wanted to head in, I had to establish my identity and make sure the right people saw and heard me. When you decide to do something like radio, you know the odds are stacked against you. You have to be the best or you won't get the opportunity. So I decided to commit to it and create my brand reflecting what I'm passionate about — music, politics, South Africa and the youth."

His radio career began in 2011, while he was studying politics and philosophy at Stellenbosch University. As presenter of the afternoon drive show at student station MFM 92.6, he was named winner of the Good Hope FM campus DJ search in 2012 and went on to host the weekend breakfast show on Good Hope FM. In 2014, aged only 23, he got the call from 5FM offering him the prime time morning slot, where he has since earned a loyal following.

Hamman's approach to life and career has been shaped by seeing that dreams can fail, people can end up stuck in dead-end jobs, and success isn't guaranteed, but it's worth following your dream. A good friend introduced him to Dr Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go*, which has special meaning for him. Ultimately, he says: "There is always a chance of failure. But the choice you need to make is: would you rather fail doing something you hate or something you love?"

Hamman uses his platform to address the youth — a generation he feels is misunderstood and currently at a tipping point. "It's unfortunate that there seems to be a dismissive culture in terms of the youth's role in driving the country forward," he says. This is a theme he aims to explore more in future, through increasing participation in TV work and possibly also by writing books. "I want to tell stories and start the conversation," he says, adding he'd be happy to find himself writing books in a cottage in the mountains someday. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: APERTUREPLUS

BUSISIWE GUMEDE

Radio anchor, columnist

Twitter: @Busisiwe_G

As senior anchor at YFM's *Current Affairs Show* and author of the *Youth Chat* column in *The Sowetan* newspaper, Busi Gumede (24) is passionate about bringing South Africa's youth into the national dialogue. Having grown up in Alexandra township, she saw first-hand how easily young people can become disillusioned and excluded. Now, she says, her mission is to give youths a voice and help them participate in politics to shape their future.

Gumede's radio career started in grade 10, when she took it upon herself to seek news experience at Alex FM radio station. "I have always been passionate about journalism, and I knew I needed experience. So I just went in and asked for an opportunity to work on the station. They let me read headlines for around six months until they trusted me to read whole news bulletins," she says. She worked as a reporter at Alex FM throughout the rest of her school and university career. After studying journalism at UJ, Gumede then talked her way into an interview with the editor at YFM, where she landed a job. She spearheaded the station's elections show, and later moved on to anchor the current affairs show. Gumede also served as an ambassador of the South African Breweries #YouDecide campaign to generate awareness about the danger of underage drinking, and is a regular speaker at conferences and televised debates.

Radio remains her first love, she says, due to its ability to reach and empower everyone. "Certainly, young people use the internet and social media, and TV is a good medium to reach many people. But the fact is that many people can't afford TV. They might not have ready access to the internet — the gap between the haves and have-nots is still painfully wide in South Africa. But radio reaches everyone."

Through the platform, Gumede seeks to inform the youth, help expose them to the "broader picture" and give them opportunities to voice their concerns and ambitions. South Africa's youth focus on issues like unemployment, inequality and BEE, she says. "Interestingly, I also hear from many who want nothing more than an equal opportunity to make things happen for themselves. But they are frustrated by a lack of funds for education, a lack of opportunity to see the world outside of the township." — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NKULULEKO LEGEND MANQELE

TV and film visionary

Twitter: @LegendManCool

With several years in TV and film production and an award-winning short film behind him, Legend Manqele is capitalising on the new approach to visual entertainment.

Manqele grew up in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, discovering a love for drama in high school. With little knowledge about the broad spectrum of possible careers in the film and TV sector, he envisaged a career in acting.

After matriculating, he spent some months working in retail to save up for a small video camera to enhance his acting skills.

Then on a whim, he travelled by bus to visit friends in Johannesburg for the weekend, hoping to discover more about the world of broadcasting. "During a school tour to Johannesburg, we had passed the SABC. I hoped to go back there and sit in the audience while they recorded a show, just to see how things worked," he says.

A show was being recorded at Urban Brew's facilities in Randburg. The young Manqele ended up in the audience, and met the Urban Brew producers, who offered to show him around and offered him the opportunity to work as an intern.

Two weeks later, on his birthday on May 12, he was presented with a permanent employment contract. "They made me a production assistant at YoTV. I had to Google what a production assistant was! That was the ultimate birthday gift from the universe, and I seized the opportunity with both hands." Director and producer Lara Cunha took him under her wing, helping to shape his career over the next few years. They later worked together on the multiple award-winning film *Child*.

In February this year, Manqele launched his own production house, Coup, with four employees and a handful of high profile clients. He sees the role of visual media changing, with more discerning audiences and more demanding sponsors. In the internet age, film, TV and even radio are merging, and Manqele aims to produce next generation programming appropriate for this new environment. He also hopes to collaborate more with international and pan-African production houses in future. — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: MIKE TURNER PHOTOGRAPHY

MAHLATSE GALLENS

Political editor, SABC

Twitter: @hlatseentle

As deputy political editor at the SABC covering major African news, Mahlatse Gallens has seen her share of devastation. "The worst story I ever covered was the Haitian earthquake of 2010. I had never seen so many bodies," she recalls. She has reported from the field across Africa, covering events such as the elections in Zimbabwe and the fall of the M23 rebels in DRC. She has produced in-depth reports on child soldiers and mass rape. But the story she is most proud of, she says, was on sanitary towels. "I did a piece on how girls in Kenya were forced to miss school because they could not afford sanitary towels. When I got back to South Africa, I wondered if girls here had similar problems. They did. We heard horror stories of girls having to use rags and newspaper, suffering humiliation and embarrassment. We decided to call on *PM Live* listeners to donate sanitary towels to schools, and the programme escalated. People began fundraising, and the government promised to support the provision of sanitary towels. It's good to see that informing the public can make a real difference," she says.

Gallens has come a long way from Seshego, Polokwane, where she grew up. Her first taste of broadcasting came as a schoolgirl, when she was interviewed on radio about a school trip to the Kruger National Park. "I was so excited about being there. The immediacy of radio, and the fact that people could interact with you from everywhere, was very appealing."

She went on to study journalism at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, graduating in 1999. She later also completed her BTech Journalism at Tshwane University of Technology. "During my diploma course, I was placed as an intern at the SABC in Auckland Park. I was 18 turning 19 at the time, and was overwhelmed by the place. Walking through those huge doors was both scary and exciting," she says. Simply finding her feet in a big world was a challenge at the time, she adds. On one of her early assignments, she was sent to Soweto and became so hopelessly lost that it required two hours and the help of the entire newsroom for her to find her way back to the SABC offices!



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

She has since crisscrossed Africa and has a number of awards and many important assignments under her belt. "Now, the continent seems so small," she reflects. "Once you start travelling, you realise how easy it is to move from one place to another."

With radio still her first love, Gallens plans to continue informing the public through this medium, but aims to increase her focus on training aspirant journalists in future. — Tracy Burrows

DANE DODDS

Filmmaker, creative

Twitter: @DaneDodds_

At the age of only 20, Dane Dodds has come a long way from the farm in Uniondale where he grew up. He is already making a name for himself as an innovative filmmaker, artist and all-round creative.

In fact, when asked whether his title should be artist, filmmaker or something else, he responds: "My colleagues and I have recently started a production company called Sirius Tales. We believe that the story is essential and that the way in which we should tell the story is defined by its nature. We experiment with different ways of telling stories, for example film and audio, but also art, photography, sculpture and live events. I would consider myself to be an artist and filmmaker, but in this day and age I believe the terms flow together anyway. Technology has made the clearly defined categories outdated. So maybe 'something else'."

Now based in Hout Bay, Dodds is exploring the creative possibilities of a variety of media. His interest in filmmaking was sparked at a tender age, he says. "When I was five, I was making short *Action Man* movies with my mom's old video camera. I remember my dad filming me trying to fly and then showing me myself on the TV. That really got my mind going." In recent years, he has honed his skills through a one-year residency with Fly on the Wall, where he learnt from director Bryan Little, and through spending a month



PHOTO: BRYAN LITTLE

with his Sami reindeer herder friend in the mountains of Sweden, documenting their lives. Among the highlights of his filmmaking career to date were writing and directing Dookoom's *Larney Jou Poes* music video and working with street artist Faith47 on a film which will be released soon.

Dodds is also set to stage his first solo exhibition, titled 1994, later this year alongside the NUFF film festival in Tromsø, Norway. "My exhibition is very much about South Africa and my experience growing up as what we call

a "born free" in this beautifully messed up country. I think foreigners are fascinated by the questions that arise from our painful history and complex society. Being born the same year as South Africa's democracy provides an interesting body of work as we both grow," he says.

Dodds will keep exploring and pushing boundaries in future, with his ambitions including: "To make a feature film on the moon, build this place I dream about most days and to keep creating sensitively." — Tracy Burrows

KRIYA GANGIAH

Infotainment professional and IT security auditor, Deloitte

Twitter: @kriyag

With a degree in information science from the University of Pretoria, a second degree in multimedia almost complete, and nine years' experience in the media and entertainment industry, 26-year-old Kriya Gangiah is positioning herself to be at the forefront of future media trends.

Pretoria-based Gangiah is a producer and co-presenter of Jacaranda FM's weekly lifestyle show *The Lounge*. In this role, she gathers and packages video and audio content, presents the show and interacts with the audience on social media. She has also worked as a presenter at Tuks FM and ETV's *CRAZ-E* youth programme, as a producer and presenter and Ballz visual radio's *The Business* show, and in advertising campaigns and the movie *The Race-ist*.

As if this was not enough, Gangiah also commutes to Johannesburg daily for her "day job" as an IT security auditor for Deloitte in Johannesburg.

While her experience in IT, multimedia, social media, radio and TV may seem varied, Gangiah believes these fields will eventually converge to shape the media of the future. "Media in five years' time will be a beast," she says. "It will be amazing: integrated TV, radio, online and social media. Radio and digital are already starting to merge, multimedia is integral to online and social media, and traditional print publications are turning their focus to digital media."

Digital media offers immediacy, personal relevance and new levels of interactivity, she says. "Now and in future, people want things done quickly, they want to know what's happening right now. And they will want to interact via digital channels even more. Even now, much of our traffic to the show comes from online, and most of our listener interactions come via social media." These trends will continue to grow, she says. Ten years from now, she sees herself having used her extensive multimedia experience to open her own, niche digital media company.

Working a full day job and every week night could be draining, but Gangiah thrives on being mentally challenged and stimulated. If she ever has free time, she switches off the technology and gets creative. "I'm a DIY freak," she says. "I love making things. Recently, my dad and I made a chandelier out of Consol jars. I made my own headboard too, and planters for the garden. And I bake." — Tracy Burrows

NOMAKHOMAZI DYOSUPU-DEWAVARIN

Filmmaker, chief executive

Website: www.oneblood.co.za

Proving that it is possible to balance a fulfilling career and home life, filmmaker Nomakhomazi Dyosupu-Dewavarin (34) runs a busy production and events company from her home base in Port Elizabeth, where she is raising a toddler and preparing for the arrival of her second child.

The founder of One Blood productions spent several years directing advertising and TV productions in Cape Town and Johannesburg before deciding in 2009 that she needed to slow down somewhat. With awards such as the M-Net Edit award for the Best Film in 2006 and the International MTV One World award for the Best PSA in 2005 under her belt, she felt that the pace of life in major metros was making it difficult to focus on her craft. "Working in the advertising industry and living in Johannesburg was stressful. As a female director in the ad industry, you feel you must constantly prove yourself on all fronts, which interferes with your creativity. Port Elizabeth was my home town, so when an opportunity arose for me to move back there to launch a film and TV office for the municipality, I took it," she says. Public sector pace proved a little slower than what she had hoped for, so Dyosupu-Dewavarin launched her own production company. One of her early productions was a documentary on deposed Libyan leader



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Muammar Gaddafi for SABC 1. She has since completed a significant body of work, ranging from adverts and music videos, to a documentary on young people using art as a medium of expression. She collaborates with industry players across the country, much of the time online. "I work with people on Skype, and Dropbox is my friend. When I have to travel, I plan my trips very carefully. It is possible to retain your network while working from home," she says.

"I am passionate about creativity, and I would like to drive more opportunities for creatives to remain in Port Elizabeth," she says. "I'm a self-taught filmmaker, and my dream comes in steps. I want to build on what I have achieved so far and produce a short film next, then a feature film. I'd also like to help create a film industry in Port Elizabeth, where young people can be trained to create content and tell South Africa's untold stories." — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

LYNSEY CHUTEL

Journalist

Twitter: @lynseychutel

As a Southern African correspondent for Associated Press, Lynsey Chutel is doing everything she set out to do as a teen — write, and work in international relations. “I’ve always wanted to write,” says Chutel, “But my mom felt that if I set out to be an author, I’d starve to death. So journalism seemed the best way to write and still stand a chance of earning a living.” She studied both journalism and international relations, completing her master’s in journalism at Columbia University in the US, and her master’s in international relations at Wits. Her first job in news came through the International Emmy-nominated news satire programme, *Late Nite News with Loyiso Gola*. In 2011, she was appointed as a newsgatherer at eNCA, later moving up to the role of producer at eNCA’s *Africa 360*. Here, she had opportunities to travel to a number of African countries and produced features reflecting realities in Africa. She was also part of team of four women directors who produced a documentary on rape in South Africa — from the male perspective.

At first, says Chutel, she had to adapt to a steep learning curve. “I learnt a lot about getting a story out quickly, feeding the newsroom monster. I also learnt to become more tenacious, more of a pest, and to put forward ideas. At foreign correspondent classes at Columbia, I had the idea of being some kind of swashbuckling foreign correspondent. But often, it’s really quite a practical exercise. You have to find stories in the ordinary.” Chutel joined AP as a reporter for the Southern Africa bureau in 2014.

She still feels her international relations focus comes into play in this role. “I try to imagine I’m writing news for someone sitting in Wisconsin, which seems very far away and foreign. I try to keep people interested in the South African story after the death of Nelson Mandela. I try to communicate South Africa’s reality without being cynical.” Chutel believes there is cause for optimism about South Africa’s future, particularly if one looks at the attitudes and aspirations of the country’s youth. Her interest in the youth extends to working with Youth Lab and co-founding the Starting Block Project, which tries to prepare children for university in Eldorado Park, where Chutel grew up. — Tracy Burrows

NONKULULEKO BRITTON-MASEKELA

Digital content specialist

Twitter: @mmegods

Nonkululeko Britton-Masekela believes stories can drive change, a conviction she is living out through her work in digital media and with development organisations.

Now digital content producer/curator at Radio 702, Britton-Masekela has worked in media for over 10 years. Her first taste of media was in publishing: she was an intern at *City Press* while studying journalism at UJ. She went on to produce web content for Ster Kinekor, then worked as a freelancer, delivering lifestyle reports and online content for Metro FM before narrowing her focus to the digital realm. In 2009, she became digital content manager for *Who’s Who SA*, later moving to FNB and most recently, Primedia. “At university, I wrote a research paper on how online would affect print. The key finding was that print should open up to the world of online, to carry over the conversation. At that point, online media was still quite a new field. In fact, the first time I used a PC was during my first year at university,” she says. She now believes the internet offers the most powerful platform to communicate, interact and affect change.

As a “digital immigrant” rather than a “digital native”, Britton-Masekela owns five connected devices, but switches them off for family time, and she still uses a paper notepad to write notes. She believes the younger generation are the true digital natives, and works to use digital media to help empower and develop local youths. Working with a number of community projects including Digital Curiosity, Britton-Masekela seeks to help youths use digital media to interrogate issues, tell their stories and gain access to the world beyond their own communities. “I want to help them learn new skills, dig deeper and dream bigger,” she says. Her involvement and mentorship prompted one of the youths she works with to nominate her as one of *Mail & Guardian’s YSA 200* this year.

Britton-Masekela says stories are her biggest motivator, and she wants to write a book at some stage. “I am inspired by stories of courage, culture and wisdom, and stories the youth tell of how they see the world. My husband, children and family play an integral role in reminding me of MY story and my dreams.” — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SIMON ALLISON

Journalist

Twitter: @simonallison

Having grown up in countries across the Middle East, and studied law and politics at Rhodes University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, Simon Allison (28) is well placed to travel Africa reporting on politics and human rights issues. As the Daily Maverick’s Africa correspondent, doubling as a writer and researcher for the Institute for Security Studies and Good Governance Africa, Allison believes he now has his dream job.

His entry to the post was a little unorthodox. Allison had been working as a researcher for the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in the UK when the Egyptian revolution broke out in 2011. “I had lived in Egypt for three years, so I saw the Egypt story as my chance to move into journalism. I got on the phone to Phillip de Wet at the Daily Maverick, which had made a huge impression on me while I was a student. I asked if they would like me to cover the Egypt story for them. He said they would, but they couldn’t pay me. Nor were there any job openings available there in the foreseeable future.” Allison went ahead anyway and started filing reports to the Maverick from Cairo. A short while later, the Daily Maverick founder and editor Branko Brkic told Allison there would be a spot for him on the team once funding became available.

Allison is now the Maverick’s senior African reporter, selecting issues to cover from across the continent, and occasionally travelling around Africa to report from the scene. “My long-term goal is to build a more comprehensive Africa section, because there is still not enough coverage of the phenomenal news coming out of Africa.”

Allison would like to tap into the pool of African journalism expertise more, arranging for translators to help bring their reports to a South African audience. “The local audience’s interest in pan-African issues is definitely growing. We see it in the way they interact with our news. And the government and South African business already know that Africa is their future. We need to pay more attention to it.” — Tracy Burrows



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MUHAMMAD SHEIK

Current affairs journalist, presenter

Twitter: @sheiky09

Muhammad Sheik (24), current affairs journalist and presenter at Lotus FM’s *News Break*, has been fascinated with politicians since he first saw them on TV as a child.

At only 24, Sheik has already amassed over three years’ solid experience in political and current affairs reporting. “I’ve had a wild ride in the past few years. I have attended major events like the 2013 budget speech — which was my first time visiting Parliament — and Nelson Mandela’s memorial service. I’ve interacted with so many high profile political and economic leaders. Sometimes I find myself thinking ‘I’m actually here — I’ve actually done it.’”

Sheik did not set out to become a journalist. “I’ve always loved reading, and I often submitted opinion pieces to local newspapers when I was younger, but my first love was politics. I remember watching Mangosuthu Buthelezi on TV and being amazed by his rhetoric.” What impressed him most, he says, was the fact that these were the people who made the decisions that really mattered.

Sheik went on to study political science at UKZN, graduating early in 2011; he obtained honours in political science in 2012 and is currently completing his master’s in political communication at UKZN. When he accepted a job in retail sales after graduation, it proved to be his ticket to a career in journalism.

“One evening an elderly gentleman came in to the store looking for formal shoes. He was having trouble with the laces, so I helped him try them on and we got talking about politics. I was very impressed with his great knowledge. Apparently, he felt the same way about mine. He told me he was a senior producer at SABC radio news in Durban and asked if I would be interested in a job there. Of course, I sent off my CV. A few weeks later, I received a call from the senior producer who is now my boss.”

Sheik sees himself moving into politics in the long term. “I would love to grace the halls of Parliament. If the DA can get a black leader, who knows — perhaps I could be president one day.” — Tracy Burrows



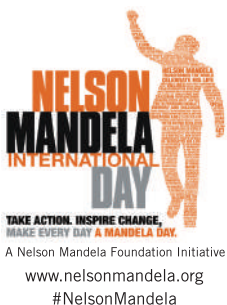
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ZAYD EBRAHIM

Head of Joburg Metro's Caring Cities Initiative

Twitter: @zaydebrahim

In 1993 the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* film was released. But unlike other children, Zayd Ebrahim was captured by the unfolding drama following the assassination of Chris Hani. The nation teetered on the brink of a violent collapse, and the seven-year-old started down his path of political awareness.

Following his deep desire to understand the workings of the world around him, Ebrahim became involved in the politics of the post-apartheid South Africa. His parents drove this awakening, encouraging him to read, ask questions and explore. This love for reading stayed with him, and no genre of writing is safe from his voracious appetite.

In the 1990s this was a critical advantage, as it allowed him to open up a world of study. This led to his current job, where he is responsible for long-term strategy development of the City of Johannesburg. It entails some level of dreaming — looking at what cities of the future should look like and attempting to ensure those ideas are implemented in decisions taken today.

Johannesburg provides a tremendous platform for this, because many of its systems are inefficient and people struggle with simple things such as urban mobility. But the amount of energy around Ebrahim means these problems are being overcome. He is driving the metro's Caring Cities Initiative, which sees Johannesburg teaming up with other large cities to create development models that cater to the needs of citizens.

He got his grounding in this sort of thinking when he worked on the City's Growth and Development Strategy outreach process in 2011. This involved asking residents what they wanted from their city, and adding their thoughts to its future planning.

To take this thinking to other countries, Ebrahim also helped develop the City's new international relations strategy. At the heart of all this work is a need to delve into the unknown in order to change the world.

All of this would however be impossible without his wife and family providing a sounding board for his plans, and support. At home with them he unwinds by looking up at the stars, and listening to Coldplay — he is their self-declared biggest fan. — *Sipho Kings*

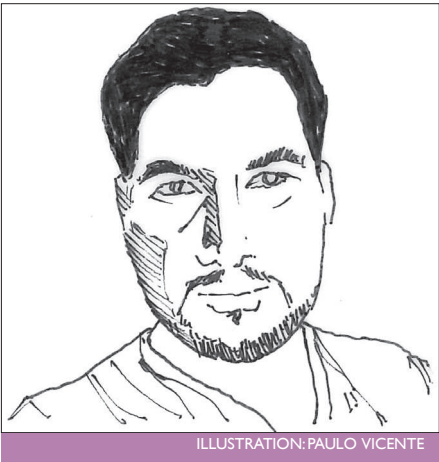


ILLUSTRATION: PAULO VICENTE

NTAKUSENI RAZWIEDANI

Student leader, Sasco, UFS

Twitter: @ntakuraz

Ntakuseni Razwiedani started life as an outsider. Forced to study at a reformed Christian school, the only school in his area, he found himself constantly questioning the rules that other students took as rote. This ensured he was treated differently, and made him immediately conscious of the discriminative norms that underpin many social structures.

Looking at this from the outside as he grew up, Razwiedani has been driven to become a firm believer that the inequality that has become the status quo of society needs to be changed, and this will require a revolution. Reading Karl Marx, Mao Zedong and Sun Tzu has hardened his resolve for the need for policies that do not disenfranchise the majority of women and young black people. Bob Marley tunes often accompany this reading, in the background.

With a historical framework for his revolution drawn from his reading, Razwiedani is starting with a focus on education. Emancipation will only come from everyone having access to quality, free education in order to compete fairly. Students with a good education will then be able to compete with those from privileged backgrounds and get senior positions, from which they can make their companies and society more inclusive. As microcosms of society, he sees higher education institutions as the best place to start ripples that will then extend out into society at large. Razwiedani is a student leader in the South African Students' Congress at the University of the Free State, where he is studying towards an MCom in Business Management. For a while he headed the university's SRC portfolio for Dialogue and Association. This meant many long discussions with his peers and older leaders in movements such as the ANC.

In his spare time Razwiedani absorbs news and documentaries in order to get a firm understanding of what is wrong with the geopolitical world order. When he graduates he will be part of a new generation of student leaders who will be taking over the reins of government — driving societal change from inside the halls of power. — *Sipho Kings*

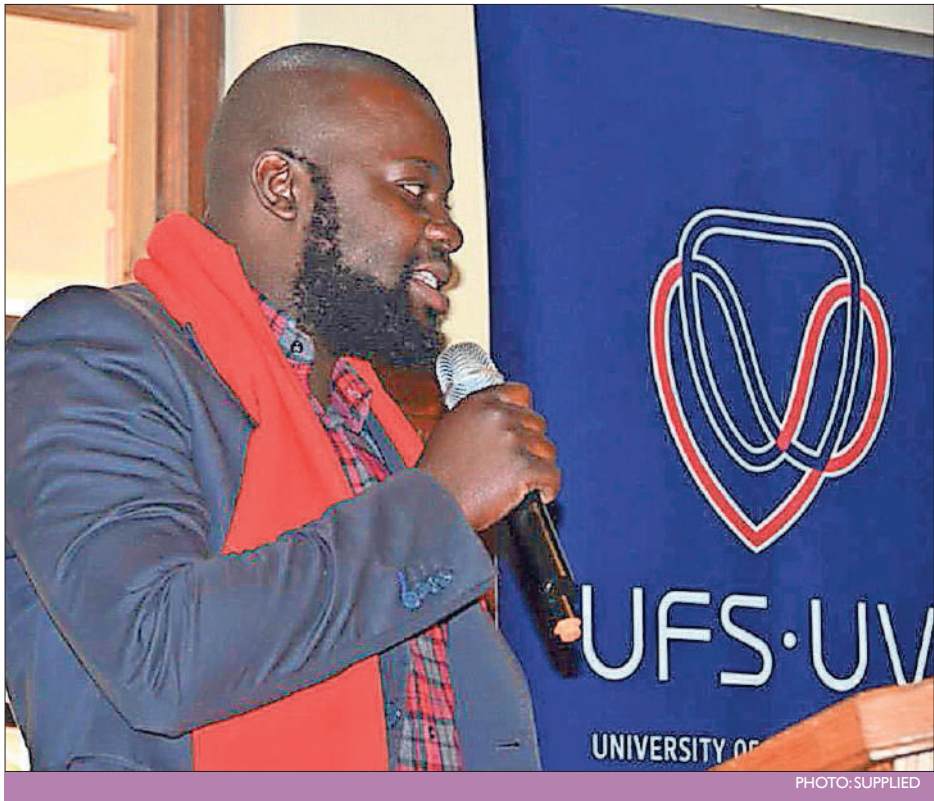


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

RONALD ISAACS

Branch manager, the Small Enterprise Development Agency and ANCYL campaigner

Web: www.seda.org.za

Ronald Isaacs jumped into political activism in high school. Angry that children from upper class homes were treated better — and those from less affluent homes were actively discriminated against — he began asking why this was the status quo. He was reprimanded and his parents were called in to explain his "foreign" behaviour.

Following his matriculation he attended Peninsula Technikon and completed a diploma in human resources development. In 2000 he joined the South African Students Congress and in 2004 he joined the ANCYL, starting a life of formal political engagement with inequality.

This got him a job at the Small Enterprise Development Agency, where he took over as manager for the ZF Mgcawu branch. The position means he works as an agent for social change, by giving hopeful business owners small loans to get them started. This often proves to be the catalyst for local development—where one business can support many families and create more jobs.

Outside of work, he is instrumental in rebuilding the structures of the Youth League so that it can become an effective player in local development. His particular focus is on making education fashionable so that young people are excited to learn and equip themselves with the skills they need to forge a new society.

To get his mind into the right place Isaacs recently took up jogging, which has turned out to be surprisingly fun. Exercise extends into his work at the United Rugby Football Club. As its manager, he tries to use sport to bridge the divide between different race groups. He is a strong believer in the power of sport as a way to get people talking, and to release societal pressures in a peaceful manner.

The next step is to combine his various jobs and begin studying administrative and constitutional law, which will help him work with the ANC to move the country forward. Planning for this involves relaxing with some R&B playing. But Isaacs' ultimate goal is to become a lecturer in law, so that he can grow the next generation of leaders. — *Sipho Kings*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MARIKE GROENEWALD

Executive director of development, learning and training, DA

Twitter: @marikegr

Marike Groenewald is the DA's executive director of development, learning and training. To those she works with, guides and mentors, she epitomises the type of young leader that South Africa needs for a bright, successful future: she's dynamic, innovative, driven, creative and committed to personal development.

With a master's degree in law from Stellenbosch, where she was the vice-chair of the university's Student Representative Council and on the organising committee for Brightest Young Minds, Marike has a deep understanding of the importance of people and leadership development.

She is responsible for the content, design and delivery of the DA Young Leaders Programme (YLP), an initiative hailed by political parties around the world as the gold standard in political development. According to Marike, the YLP is not only a skills development course; it's an intensive 12-month programme committed to developing the leadership and self-awareness of participants.

"In 2014 I had the privilege of co-facilitating a 12-day seminar for young leaders from 24 nations at the International Academy of Leadership in Germany. It showed me what incredible things happen when likeminded individuals think together on collective issues — it's powerful. It is my passion to create the circumstances that enable this level of thinking."

Marike (32) is inspired by the idea of freedom, and the dream of a South Africa where everyone can live the life they choose to live, and be themselves completely.

"My motto is love is wherever you are, be all there. We live in a world that is conditioning us to be response-driven, always connected, constantly interrupted individuals with very limited attention spans. This way of being in the world does not enable our best thinking. If we cannot think for



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ourselves or with others, we are unable to respond to the complex challenges of our time with the depth and innovation required.

"My work centres on the individual's ability to develop their own self-awareness and mindfulness, so as to be able to respond with clarity and authenticity." — *Linda Doke*



MALAIKA WA AZANIA

Political analyst and author Twitter: @MalaikaWaAzania

Twenty-one years after the dawn of our democracy, many people are still living in poverty. Author Malaika wa Azania (23) tackles hard-hitting issues of race and freedom, at a time when the country as a whole is questioning what freedom really means.

wa Azania says *Memoirs of a Born Free: Reflections on the Rainbow Nation* is about a black child's journey through a South Africa where white teachings serve to stifle blacks' humanity.

After travelling through the SADC region, the self-proclaimed Africanist and feminist says she found herself questioning the new South Africa.

"It was shortly before the 2014 general elections, where I was voting for the very first time," she says. "I came back troubled by the struggles that African youth is facing post-independence, and how all these struggles are rooted in the legacy of white supremacy and indecisive leadership on the part of our political leaders."

The young author wrote her book as a letter to the African National Congress, problematising the idea that black youth born post-1994 are a "born-free generation".

Many "born-frees" chose not to acknowledge the impact of colonialism on the continent. This is a non-negotiable element that wa Azania believes still haunts the new dispensation in more ways than one.

"The structural inequalities, the diseases, poverty and unemployment that have a black face, are all evidence of the beastly nature of the colonial legacy. But Africa has not always been this miserable," she says.

Growing up in a township, wa Azania says she was inspired by her mother who raised her while facing many challenges as a single mother from a working class background. She lives by the Setswana proverb *O se bone lenong go rakalala godimo, fatshe ke ga lona*, which means "One must never become arrogant when you reach the top, for you can always go back to the bottom".

Says the author: "I am a typical township child from a poor family, who might have never gotten far in life. I got to be where I am because along the way, I came across people who believed in me and invested in my development. So I cannot, now that I've been given a lifeline, disregard those who need the chances I've been given."

wa Azania is also the founder of Pen and Azanian Revolution, a company that provides writing, editing and transcribing services. — *Sebatso Mosamo*



PHOTO: PAUL GREENWAY

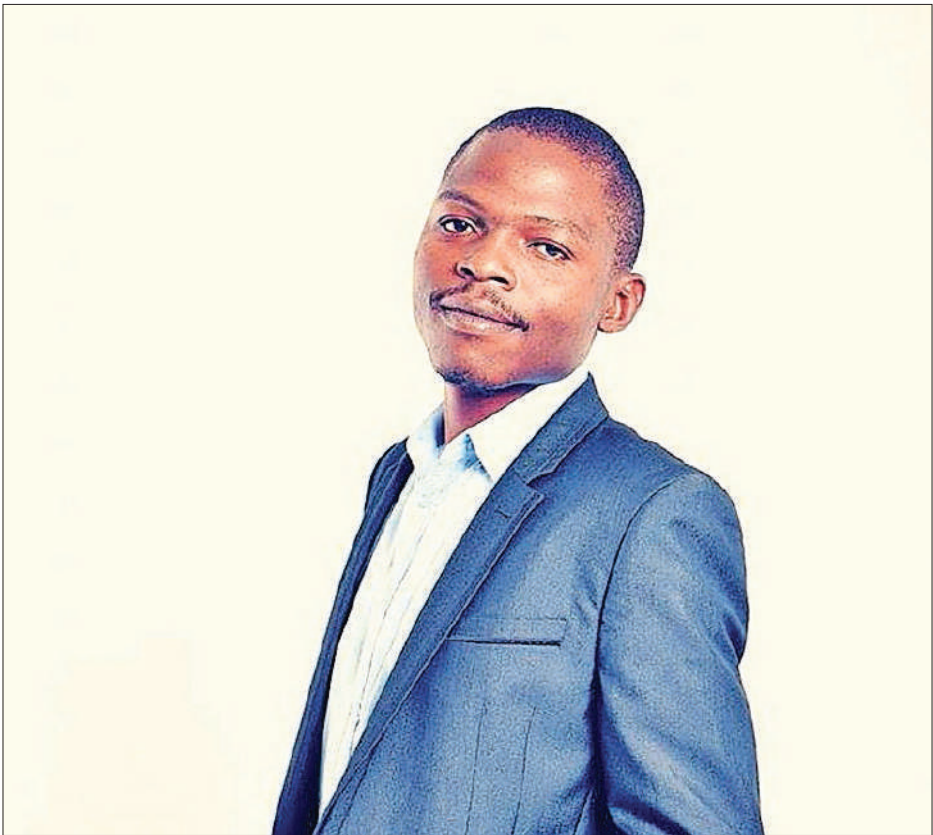


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

PAPIKIE MOHALE

Samwu spokesperson Twitter: @mohalepapike

The son of a union shop steward raised in a working class family, Papike Mohale had an idea of the direction his life and career would take when he decided to pursue a bachelor of arts degree, instead of becoming an engineer like his father had hoped.

As a triple major student in politics, international relations and media studies at Wits, Mohale was an active participant in student politics. His activism paved the way for his recruitment into Cosatu while completing his undergraduate degree.

"My appointed at Cosatu is one that I would coin 'when opportunity meets preparation'. I have always been a student activist, coupled with my love for international and current affairs," says Mohale.

Through hard work dedication and diligence, he worked his way up through the ranks very quickly. "I was noticed by my current employer, who believed I would be of greater use to them and municipal workers if I was to head the communications unit, given my multifaceted approach to my work and qualification."

He attributes his success to making the best of the situation you are in by using the resources available to you to the best of your ability.

At the age of 25, he became the youngest communicator in politics when he was appointed as the national spokesperson for the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) in 2014.

"The mammoth task for me has been to maintain constant and accurate flow of internal and external information, especially in the first months of my appointment at Samwu when the union was facing serious challenges, which we have been able to work through with colleagues."

While politics comes with the job, Mohale says he prefers to leave the politicking to the politicians, and focuses his attention on providing technical support for the movement.

"The South African labour movement is undoubtedly on its knees and at its weakest point, given the current politics within Cosatu and the alliance, politics which have managed to trickle through to unions." He says serious work needs to be done to attract the youth if the unions are to survive. — *Sebatso Mosamo*

ZAAKIR MAYET

Chairman, Media Review Network Twitter: @ZA_mayet

Encourage good, forbid evil, protect the poor and defenceless, and strive for justice. These four pillars provide the structure on which attorney Zaakir Mayet lives his life, determined to speak out for the rights of those without a voice.

Equipped with enormous determination and a degree in law from Wits, Mayet (25) is chairman of the Media Review Network (MRN), a South African based internationally recognised nongovernmental organisation that strives to dispel the myths of Islamophobia and promote the ideals of justice and human rights.

Raised in a home where the issues of justice and injustice were much-spoken topics around the dinner table, Zaakir has always had a keen interest in human rights and debating political issues. The atrocities and injustices that Israel metes on the people of Gaza triggered him to put his legal skills to action to fight for justice, not only for the Palestinians, but to combat other injustices.

"As chairman of the MRN, I utilise my understanding of

domestic and international human rights law to challenge Islamophobic content within the media. Other issues like the conflict in Syria and its geopolitical implications, the US war on terror and the legalities of drone warfare are also topics I've worked on," says Mayet. "The MRN articulates voices that are often silenced by mainstream propaganda. Our job is to critically engage and rationally present viewpoints that articulate justice for an often-silenced population. A perfect example of this is the Palestinian issue."

Booker prize-winning author Arundhati Roy once said: "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."

Mayet says: "That challenge is ever-present; we are all obliged to change this status quo. The demonising of Muslims in the Western world is a classic example of this. It is our duty to address this misconception and expose the underlying issues that underpin these topics." — *Linda Doke*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

ESETHU HASANE

Spokesperson for minister of sports and recreation **Twitter:** @esethuhasane

Spokesperson for Minister of Sports and Recreation Fikile Mbalula, Esethu Hasane grew up knowing the importance of not settling for the hand that's dealt to you, and striving to break the bounds of economic limitation to achieve better things.

Hasane (23) grew up in a rural village where most of the people were unemployed, and there were few means of survival, mostly through government grants. The schools, clinics and hospitals were basic and the services they offered minimal. Raised by a single, unemployed mother, Hasane's biggest motivation was to see her stop struggling to provide for him and his siblings. Hasane was one of the few in his district to get into university. He chose to study politics and media as his majors, so he would be equipped to contribute to the public service.

"My intention was to one day be able to give the public service a more human face to benefit the poor. My personal experience of a poor, rural village contributed immensely to the career path I've chosen. Knowing that millions of South Africans are struggling, being in the public service allows me to be at the forefront of making their lives better," says Hasane.

"My mother remains my pillar of strength. I wake up every day knowing that I have her to support, as well as my siblings who I am assisting through university. My weakening would mean them dropping out and continuing the poverty cycle." — Linda Doke



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PHOTO: SUPPLIED

VUYO YEKANI

Western Cape provincial chairperson, Young Communist League

Twitter: @VuyoYekani

Born in the small Karoo town of Richmond in the Northern Cape Vuyo Yekani's flame of activism was kindled after he moved to Katlegong, west of Johannesburg. It didn't flame into life until he moved to the Western Cape in 2008 as a BCom student.

As a BCom student he became a member of the South African Students' Congress (Sasco), the ANC Youth League and the Young Communist League (YCL), which was the beginning of his journey into politics.

He is currently the provincial chairperson of the Young Communist League and the provincial co-ordinator of the South African Youth Council in the Western Cape.

"Both my parents have always played a leadership role and contributed immensely to my own leadership development. They were also well versed with political developments during my childhood and teenage years," he says.

Since his political activism was sparked during his student day, Yekani says he always acknowledged the importance of education and training in our quest for the betterment of the lives of young people and the broader society.

"Among all its campaigns, education, training and literacy have taken a centre stage in the Young Communist League. Even in Sasco at some point, I was entrusted with a responsibility as an education and transformation officer."

Asked about the importance of youth politics in the current landscape, Yekani says: "Seeing ourselves as our own liberators, seized with finding solutions that would be responsive to our plight." He adds that young activists should claim their rightful place in politics in order to address the challenges facing the youth today to avoid future generations finding themselves confronted with the same issues.

Having worked in the ANC, Yekani says the current leadership's successes must not go without acknowledgment, adding that "we sing a different tune when it comes to the majority's socioeconomic conditions".

"Government needs to move with speed and effect change in the lives of those who cannot attest to the attainment of freedom due to circumstances under which they continue to live. What must also be seen from the Governing party are concerted efforts aimed uprooting corruption and maladministration, as they bedevil our gains." — Sebatso Mosamo



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ALBERTINA BARLOW

Private secretary to the minister of public works **Twitter:** @AlbertinaBarlow

From her father's experience in exile in Kenya, Albertina Barlow learnt a very important lesson: there is no future without education.

Now the right-hand to Minister of Public Works Thulas Nxesi, Barlow (29) describes her childhood as a "myriad of rainbows and stormy clouds".

Having to adjust to life back home after being in exile was a difficult transition for Barlow, but she managed to complete her matric at a mere 16 years old, and she now has a master's in development studies.

Barlow's day involves juggling the tight schedule of Nxesi and pursuing all efforts to "make his life easier". She dubs her tenure at the public works department as "revealing", as she sees first-hand what it means to make an active difference in people's lives though initiatives such as those in the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Besides managing a very tricky diary, she also has to assist the minister perform his duties, which leaves little room for anything else — save perhaps reading a good book. She is kept on her toes as a constantly changing government landscape forces her to dedicate her life to her job.

In a family of accountants, she describes herself as the "black sheep" for pursuing a completely different career path. Barlow's five-year plan includes completing her PhD in development studies, focusing on acid mine drainage in the Vaal area.

She has high hopes for South Africa, but says she is not that naïve to believe that all is well and good. Her vision for this country is one where every individual receives quality education and where our borders are not stumbling blocks for Africa's economic development. — Qaanitah Hunter

NICK BENSON

Digital communications manager, economic development department

Twitter: @NickBensonZA

Nick Benson thrives on innovation and his forte is all things digital. As the digital communications manager for the economic development department, his responsibility, simply put, is that whatever happens to the department's digital platforms rests on his shoulders.

His job is to advance digital in government and assist those whose thumbs may not be from the internet era.

Benson (33) started at the department in 2011 as a deputy director and led the digital team for the much-celebrated 2014 Presidential Youth Indaba.

It was one of his biggest challenges, he says, to afford over 1 000 youth from across the country direct contact with business leaders, chief executives, ministers and the president.

Benson says his experience of co-founding nongovernmental organisation Ideally My Africa pretty much ruined things for him — now everything he does has to have some impact.

He thrives on thinking about the future and the exciting prospects a digital future could bring.

In the mid 2000s, Benson worked on Ideally My Africa that became a platform for ideas brokerage, where they connect someone who has the drive and ideas with someone who knows what to do. The organisation is premised on the ideal of "African solutions to African problems" and that only South Africans can solve their own problems.

In an ideal country, Benson would want to see broadband fibre in every South African home and secure wi-fi on public transport systems.

On a deeper level, Benson said people should not only know how to use Twitter, but understand how to use all digital channels. In government, he believes that a digital strategy should be integrated into all service delivery.

In Benson's ideal world digital is the medium for not only a better South Africa, but for a transparent and open government. — Qaanitah Hunter



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



ZAMANDLOVU NDLOVU

Communications specialist, National Planning Commission

Twitter: @JoziGoddess

Zamandlovu Ndlovu is a regular columnist, a director at the Youth Lab and a communications specialist with the National Planning Commission.

She fulfills her roles with the cognisance that youth, especially 2008, have struggled to have productive livelihoods in this economy.

She says initially, being a columnist was "something I did aside from work, but now it's about a bigger purpose and that is trying to get young people to live fuller lives in South Africa".

Of the Youth Lab, Ndlovu said she started that to maximise the impact of the volunteering work she was involved in. "Before I used to teach Saturday classes, like maths and computer classes," she says. "There were great intentions but not enough impact. Now I'm doing something where the impact is not direct but could lead to proper change. We've had public engagements around the National Youth Policy, for instance. What I've discovered is that if you create a constructive space, eventually people see it as worthwhile and something that can lead to a fundamental change in youth experiences."

Ndlovu says what gave her the edge for the position at the National Planning Commission was that she showed initiative in not only being interested in policy but in policy engagement.

Chosen as part of the youngsters series in 2014, Ndlovu published *A Bad Black's Manifesto*, which she says was "an opportunity for me to put my life into a timeline of opinions. I had time to think through everything."

Ndlovu says in some respects, her experience of being published in South Africa was a disappointment. "There is this expectation that there's no market for young readers. Next time I'll try a more scientific approach about where are young people when they read. Exactly where are they reading from? I think we're still stuck on the traditional approach to publishing."

Ndlovu feels that at many points during the marketing of the book series "we found ourselves gravitating towards the old spaces, being reviewed by the same old reviewers. We should think harder about where we go [with this]". She is supportive of debates around altering the infrastructure of publishing in this country. — *Kwanele Sosibo*



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PHOTO: SUPPLIED

PATSON MALISA

SA youth representative at the UN

Twitter: @patsonmalisa

Patson Malisa's deep desire to serve humanity was inspired by his school history teacher, whose passion set him on a quest to contribute to the shaping of philosophies governing leadership and integrity.

Just 23 years old, Patson has multiple roles on local and international platforms as an advocate for the advancement of the youth in sustainable development. He is on the Organisation of African Youth's Continental Executive Committee, and is South Africa's country officer for the Network of African Youth for Development. Patson is also the chairperson for South Africa at the International Youth Council, where he represents the country at the Youth Assembly at the United Nations, which is designed to mobilise global youth towards joint efforts in achieving the UN's Global Development Agenda.

In this role he has been a delegate at the World Conference on Youth, held in Sri Lanka, and has been chair of Rapporteurs and Negotiations for the Outcome Document at the 2014 High Level Youth Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Development Goals hosted by the UN.

"All of these platforms strive for the advancement of the youth voice in South Africa with regards to development," says Patson. "The opportunity I've been given to represent the young people of South Africa on platforms where there has been no previous representation drives me to work harder, and to always produce my best. Serving our country is an honour and a privilege."

Patson considers the greatest challenge in this field is being able to see the opportunities to make things better.

"Obstacles often cripple development advocates, who become cynical and apathetic in their answers to the challenges that face us in our quest to better people's lives. However, the ones who realise the opportunities to give and improve the lives of people are the ones who end up leaving a legacy in the realms of politics and diplomacy." — *Linda Dove*



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GEORGE MICHALAKIS

Member, National Council of Provinces

Twitter: @gmachalakis

At 27, George Michalakakis is the youngest member in the National Council of Provinces since it was established in 1997. He sits on a few portfolio committees and on the council of defence. His primary responsibility, however, is the security cluster.

The dream to be a parliamentarian is one Michalakakis, an advocate, has harboured since he was entering his teenage years.

"My dad always reminds me that when I was in Standard Four and we were holidaying in Cape Town, I took a photo of Parliament and stuck it in my desk," says Michalakakis. "I'd point at one window and say, 'One day that will be my office.'"

Michalakakis grew up in Winburg in the Free State and says although he was too small to understand what apartheid was, he lived through the legacy and the transformation that followed it. "In 1995 when I was in grade one, the school was all white and by the time I matriculated, I was the only white male in the school, and one of only four white students," he remembers. "A lot of people were not comfortable about it in a small town, but by matric you understand that it should have happened a lot earlier."

Michalakakis' entrance into politics happened at the University of the Free State where he was the chief whip of the DA's campus branch.

He is also a product of the party's Young Leaders Programme in which handpicked DA members are offered intense political training for a year. "It's quite daunting when they expose you to that," he says.

He counts provincial DA leaders such as Patricia Kopane and Annelie Lotriet as among his mentors.

Michalakakis says his youth serves him well as an MP and politician, because the majority of the people in the electorate are young people and he can associate with them in a way that older people struggle with.

"I'm a DA youth leader in the Free State province and I get the opportunity to engage with young people a lot." — *Kwanele Sosibo*



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MPHO LEKGOATHI

Senior scientist, Necsa

Twitter: @MphoLekgoathi2

Mpho Lekgoathi (30) never knew his grandfather. The legacy of this former teacher, however, lives on through the books he left behind. "Many of these were science books, and I especially enjoyed the chemistry ones."

These served as valuable resources while he was at high school in Zebediela in Limpopo, and inspired him to study chemistry at the Tshwane University of Technology. Recently the thesis of this PhD student in chemical technology received the nod at the University of Pretoria.

Lekgoathi, a vibrational spectroscopy expert, hopes to leave a similar legacy for his two sons. "I'd like to be remembered as someone who laid a foundation for many breakthroughs on which other scientists could build."

As senior scientist at the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (Necsa), he has steadily been making his mark — perhaps because his attitude to life is that nothing is impossible. His PhD research is based on a challenge put to him as part of his research and development work at Necsa. He is also member of the South African Chemical Institute and holds professional level membership of the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions.

"Sometimes cellphones or laptops discharge more quickly, overheat or even explode, often because of the poor quality of the electrolyte components used in the lithium ion battery," he says. His research team developed a patented process to produce purer battery electrolyte components. It ensures that fewer impurities end up in the electrolyte solvent. Lekgoathi was also part of the South African team that in 2013 provided the first ever evidence of a certain comet striking the earth eons of years ago. He analysed a diamond-bearing piece of rock found in the Libyan Desert and helped prove it's a fragment from space. Lekgoathi often leaves his laboratory desk to serve as mentor and frequently ventures into the boardroom. He is a founding member of Necsovate, an initiative that promotes innovation within Necsa. He is also a committee member of the National Science and Technology Forum Science Councils, and is the deputy chairperson of Necsa's branch of the South African Young Nuclear Professionals. — *Engela Duvenhage*

PROFESSOR NKQUBELA RUXWANA

ICT professor

LinkedIn: nkqubela-ruxwana

When Professor Nkqubela Ruxwana (32) bid a career in telecommunications farewell in favour of academia, his friends and brothers had a heart-to-heart with him to make sure his decision was properly thought through.

He stuck to his guns. "At the time I was 29 years old, and was the youngest associate professor in information and communication technology at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)." Ruxwana had worked for Vodacom, Telkom, Nedbank and the department of trade and industry before returning to his alma mater.

His is a life of almost miraculous interventions and turning points, but he also remembers how lonely his student years sometimes were, and how at times he could have done with a supportive hand to help him.

This "pay it forward" kind of guy wants to make a difference in the lives of the postgraduate students with whom he works. Other than his formal academic responsibilities at TUT, he also mentors students, provides free extra lectures and financially supports five students from the Eastern Cape district of Qumbu that he hails from.

His childhood dream was to be a medical doctor. Because of the lengthy and financially sapping studies it would have involved, he was persuaded to go into nursing. When eventually he found himself in TUT's registration queue, a friend-of-a-friend persuaded him to opt for engineering. The acquaintance added that not many people pass the course, which was just the challenge Ruxwana needed. He set out to prove he could do it — and much more. "This was despite the fact that at the time I was a little scared of a computer mouse."

Hard work and perseverance paid off. He obtained his PhD in information technology when he was 26, and is still the only person from his village with a doctorate. A scholar at heart, he also holds a Master of Business Leadership from Unisa, and has followed a Senior Leadership Programme at Wits. His interest in medical matters has not waned; his research niche is the use of health informatics and e-health applications, particularly in rural areas. — *Engela Duvenhage*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

HABIB NOORBHAI

Biokineticist and lecturer

Website: www.habibnoorbhai.com

If it's a stats-driven, informed opinion you're looking for about the world's greatest cricketers, then Habib Noorbhai's your man. This 26-year old biokineticist is currently researching cricket batting for his PhD in Exercise Science at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

Noorbhai believes that raw talent and the ability to play a less technically correct and more unorthodox game is what places one batsman above another. "Yes, skill can be honed through coaching, but if a boy doesn't have inherent, non-coached talent, chances are slim that he'll make it into the top ranks," is the opinion of this high performance and strength conditioning coach.

A back injury at high school changed Noorbhai from a cricketer into a sport and health researcher. He has since studied sport psychology and biokinetics at the Universities of Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal respectively, and last year received his MPhil in biokinetics from UCT.

In between his studies and duties as a lecturer at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Noorbhai is working with Professor Tim Noakes and Russell Woolmer (son of the late cricketing great Bob Woolmer) on their new cricket bat. The endeavour forms part of his consultancy at Cricket Science (Pty) Ltd. "The bat will be used during training sessions to teach young cricketers how to score runs more efficiently," explains Noorbhai, who has also worked with international teams such as the Yorkshire Cricket Club and the South Australian Redbacks.

This motivational speaker is Health24's voluntary fitness expert and the author of nine peer-reviewed articles; he has presented papers in countries such as Australia, Spain and Brazil. Last month he spoke on the evolution of cricket in the modern era at the International Conference on Sports Science and Technology in London.

To define Noorbhai as being "just a cricket scientist" would be a mistake. In 2013, he was voted as one of the top 100 Brightest Young Minds in South Africa. He's also a humanitarian at heart, whose life motto is: "The ink of a scholar and the heart of a volunteer are holier than the blood of a martyr". He is the founder and director of the nongovernmental organisation The Humanitarians. Its outreach drives in the Cape communities focus on health, education, sustainability and exercise. — *Engela Duvenhage*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR CHARLES COPLEY

Astrophysicist

Twitter: @Charles_Copley

Square Kilometre Array (SKA) astrophysicist Dr Charles Copley already has quite a bit of experience when it comes to giving new life to redundant pieces of metal.

He's a member of the SKA's AVN team (which stands for African Very Long Baseline Interferometry) by which a network of radio telescopes will be established in African partner countries. The idea is to refit and upscale redundant telecommunications dishes. The hardware is there — it's now up to engineers, technicians and physicists in countries like Ghana, Zambia, Botswana, Mauritius and South Africa to work out precisely how to do it.

The project is more than the hardware to him, as he is particularly interested in evidence that show how megascience projects such as the SKA create systemic social change and redefine people's lives.

Copley's hands-on relationship with radio telescopes started during his MSc years at Rhodes University. He developed an improved pointing model of the 26m HartRAO telescope at Hartebeestpoort that took the temperature of the structure into account.

"I then had a bit of time left over on my masters," this recipient of numerous awards remembers matter-of-factly. "The dream of bringing the SKA to South Africa was then still far off on the horizon."

His then supervisor Professor Justin Jonas (now associate director for science and engineering of South Africa's SKA programme) asked that he start development of an antenna control system, transforming an old Telkom dish into a telescope for the C-Band (5GHz) All Sky Survey (C-BASS).

This led to Copley reading for his DPhil in astrophysics at Oxford University. There he built the southern C-BASS receiver with the help of experts from the US, the UK, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. The 7.6m dish was installed at the SKA site near Carnarvon last year.

As commissioning scientist, Dr Copley is first putting it through its paces before any serious science is done. Together with its northern twin telescope in California, it will map the brightness and orientation of radio waves (called polarisation) of the whole radio sky on a specific frequency. This will greatly improve measurements of the Cosmic Microwave Background, the oldest light in the universe. — *Engela Duvenhage*

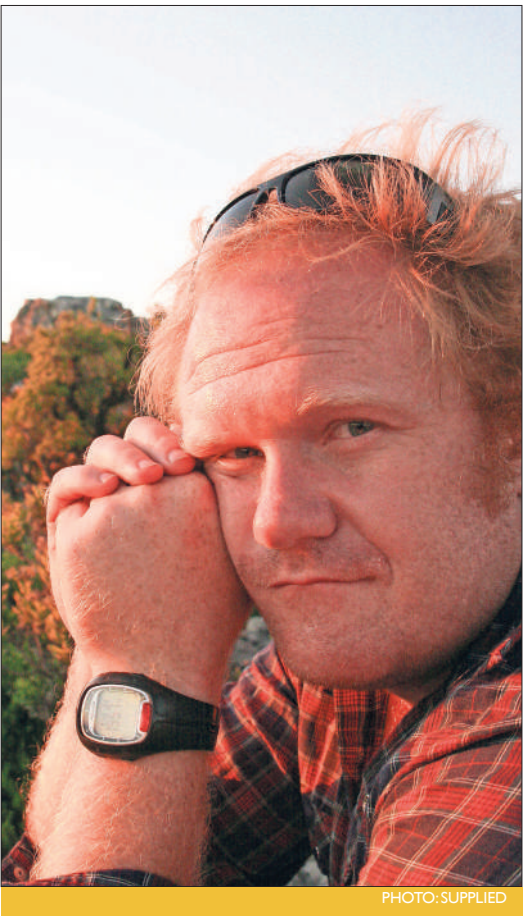


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RUHANN STEYN

Heliospheric physicist

Twitter: @Ruhann

Ruhann Steyn missed his first wedding anniversary in January, for the sake of science. "To be more precise, I was on kitchen duty all day scrubbing pots in Antarctica," reminisces this 25-year-old MSc student from North West University's Centre for Space Research.

He visited South Africa's SANAE IV base to install a magnetometer that monitors fluctuations in the earth's magnetic field. It's used to predict possible electromagnetic interferences and sunbursts that influence electricity provision, internet traffic and broadcasts.

The visit was like a dream come true, though he missed out on 10 weeks' worth of morning walks with his dogs and dance instructor wife. The walks clear his mind for the day's work ahead, which entails thinking about a much hotter part of the universe than Antarctica: the sun.

As a heliospheric physicist Steyn knows much about the magnetic bubble around the sun. He is developing a more general model to solve some of the limitations in the three currently used to understand the sun's magnetic powers. His, among other things, takes into account latitude changes as one moves across the sun. His work under the guidance of Professor Adri Burger is possible thanks to a bursary from the South African National Space Agency.

Steyn likes expanding his horizons. As a University of Pretoria undergraduate he completed an extra module in weather forecasting, and created online podcasts to help first-years with their tutorials and test work. He recently qualified as an amateur radio operator.

Science often gives him "toe-curling moments". At high school, he entered science expos and challenges, and even drew up plans for a personal air vehicle to solve traffic problems. These ideas literally took him places. Thanks to an honourable mention in Nasa's aeronautics student competition in 2006, he was invited to Houston in Texas to attend the American space agency's International Space School Foundation programme.

This year he is giving back by returning to Houston as mentor to high school pupils from across the globe and is lecturing about his work. Luckily he is a guy who eloquently and plainly conveys scientific concepts, despite the difficulty of his subject matter. — *Engela Duvenage*

PREVIN NAICKER

Biochemist

Web: www.csir.ac.za

Previn Naicker (24) is gifted with the ability to simplify complexity and to come up with creative solutions. Naicker matriculated in 2005 at the age of 14 thanks to an accelerated school programme for gifted students. In grade six, he was offered a scholarship to Star College in Westville (Durban) where he and several other pupils underwent an accelerated learning programme.

He graduated in biochemistry last year — as Wits' youngest PhD graduate.

"My major influencing factor for my study and career choices so far has been my curiosity about complex health issues and my desire to help solve socioeconomic problems. I wanted to look at pathogens (disease causing organisms) in more detail. "By the end of high school I was captivated by human biology and the complexity of life," says Naicker. "I did not know what I wanted to specialise in but I knew I wanted to discover more, and through that solve health problems in society."

He completed a BSc Biomedical Science degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and pursued an honours degree in Medical Biochemistry there. After taking a gap year he enrolled for his master's degree, which was later converted to a PhD in protein biochemistry and structural biology at the School of Molecular and Cell Biology at Wits.

What is his advice for others pursuing a science career path? "Familiarise yourself with all the industries you may be interested in. Research the relevant topics in detail and try to shadow or seek advice from people who are actively working in the industry. Also understand that if a topic is receiving global attention it may not be receiving the same attention locally, which will have an impact on job prospects, so try and understand the local market as well. Find out what skills are truly required in that industry and if there are gaps in the industry to inform your decision on what to study. Think wisely before you commit to studies in a specific field. However, don't be afraid to change career paths if you have reconsidered it, as all your life experiences will assist you in the long run."

At the moment Naicker is in the "early stages" of a post-doctoral degree and works for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, looking at ways to improve diagnostics and vaccine implementation for livestock diseases like foot-and-mouth. "This work potentially has a huge impact socially as well as economically for lots of people, including small-scale farmers and large corporations." He says he would like to work in research diagnostics in the future, looking at parasite-borne diseases in animals.

— *Jorisna Bonthuys*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

AARTI PANDAY

Aeronautical engineer

Twitter: @aarti_panday

Aarti Panday (33), originally from Pietermaritzburg, comes from a long line of priests and community stalwarts. "I was brought up to take social responsibility and accountability very seriously."

This approach to life also forms the basis of her philosophy of engineering and handling her technology investment portfolio. At the Technology Innovation Agency she drives technology development and innovation, exploitation of South African intellectual property, and sourcing and management of high quality technology investments. "My technical skills and background are now very useful when I have to make calls on funding applications and portfolio management within advanced manufacturing."

Panday describes herself as "a kind of pre-venture capitalist when it comes to technology development". She oversees a portfolio of investments valued at about R50-million and sits on various government advisory steering committees, which influence national policies on aerospace and on issues of transformation. After completing her BSc Eng (Aeronautical) degree at Wits in 2004, Panday has been both a full-time postgraduate student and a full-time employee at various organisations. She also completed GDE (Mech) and MSc (Eng) degrees.

Her research focus includes flight dynamics and control for unmanned aerial vehicles, blending traditional control theories with concepts from the world of artificial intelligence. "I am currently completing a PhD in the same area, exploring the use of artificial intelligence in aircraft control in much more detail than I did with the MSc."

Panday was involved in significant projects in the local aerospace industry, including Denel's Rooivalk attack helicopter. She was also a thermal analyst at the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (Pty) Ltd and as certification engineer at the South African Civil Aviation Authority. Although "she makes planes and other things fly better", she ironically hates flying herself.

"My activities in the aerospace and defence sector have spanned across fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft, manned and unmanned aircraft, concept design to production, civil and defence, large transport aircraft and small recreational aircraft. I have also been involved in aircraft approval and pure technical work, from regulatory compliance through to funding.

"I like expressing ideas on paper, including the language of equations. Who said engineers can't be creative? It takes a creative mind to fully develop a design, turning the abstract into something tangible." — *Jorisna Bonthuys*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

LAUREN SCHROEDER

Paleoanthropologist

Twitter: @ms_lotti

Lauren Schroeder's (29) journey into the mysteries of evolution and the deep past all started with a set of "innocent looking" dinosaur books that her parents bought her.

"I knew from a very young age that I wanted to become a scientist. I even have proof that I had an early calling. At the age of nine I wrote down the following: 'I want to be a famous archaeologist. To get there I know I have to work hard.'"

Schroeder, born and raised in Cape Town, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town and is now immersed in the field of palaeo-anthropology. "I am fascinated by questions about where we come from and what it means to be human. We are still trying to unravel the mysteries of our deep human past."

Schroeder is currently finalising her PhD titled "The evolution and diversification of Pleistocene Homo". Her thesis explores the transitional period from *Australopith* (a now extinct genus of hominids) to early *Homo* (the genus of hominids that includes modern humans and species closely related to them) at about two million years ago.

"This period is important as it marks the emergence of our genus *Homo*; the beginning of our humanness." Her work focuses broadly on the differences between skulls and teeth among these early hominids.

"Human evolution is not a linear process and the human family tree is really, well, bushy," explains Schroeder. "We are slowly piecing together the puzzle. My contribution (to this puzzle) is exploring the evolutionary processes, such as natural selection and genetic drift, which have shaped the diversity in our lineage."

She is involved in both the Malapa and Rising Star projects (two important hominid bearing cave systems in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site in Gauteng), run by Wits. She is part of the research team studying the recent fossil discoveries, including *Australopithecus sediba*.

"I am immensely fortunate to be working in this field. Unravelling questions about our origins adds an additional layer to our rich African identity and heritage."

Schroeder has authored a number of publications and has presented her research at numerous international conferences. She is also the recipient of several scholarships and a prestigious Baldwin Fellowship from the Leakey Foundation.

In September, she starts working as a post-doctoral research associate at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She plans to return to South Africa to fulfil her other passion, which is to teach young South Africans. Raised by working class parents, Schroeder believes science offers great opportunities for anyone allowing themselves to dream big. "Skeletons from our human ancestors present an exquisite puzzle to someone interested in the sciences, as well as the philosophical questions of life." Her advice to learners and budding researchers is "never stop questioning!" — *Jorisna Bonthuys*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



SHAGITA GOUNDEN

Software engineer

Facebook: Shagita Gounden

Shagita Gounden (31) is an accomplished computer engineer who is contributing to South Africa in a big way — by opening up a large window into the universe.

Gounden, originally from Pretoria, is one of the engineers working on the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope. The SKA will be the largest radio telescope ever built, and one of the biggest pieces of scientific infrastructure on Earth.

"It is a dream for any engineer to be working on something this big," she says. "The scale of the SKA project is just unheard of."

As a signal analyst for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Cape Town, Gounden is part of a team that is positioning South Africa as a global leader in various fields of science, including astronomy and cosmology. "I have had a couple of geeky 'oh wow' moments along the way, including the day I saw the first dish on site."

Gounden believes the SKA will enable scientists to answer at least some of the questions about the origins of universe and life. Working on the first phase of the SKA — which will incorporate South Africa's 64-dish MeerKAT telescope — is from an engineering point of view "exceptionally rewarding".

"This project will go beyond SKA. It is the first time that we are dealing with data on this scale, for the country and the world."

Gounden completed her BEng with honours in computer engineering at the University of Pretoria. Before being appointed by the CSIR she worked at Eskom and Siemens, providing software solutions for complex problems.

"Investment in science, and getting the youth involved and interested in science, is an investment into the economy," she says.

"Our country is in desperate need of more science and math outreach programmes, especially aimed at young women."

When she is not working, she runs marathons and half-marathons. She is also a qualified yoga instructor. — Jorisna Bonthuys



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR LUNGILE SITOLE

Postdoctoral Fellow — University of Johannesburg

Facebook: sithole

Dr Lungile Sitole (30) has made it her life's work to tackle diseases through robust science and citizens' outreach programmes. Born and raised in Johannesburg, she comes from a politically active family. Now she is engaging in a struggle of another kind — the struggle to tackle the crisis of HIV infection and its impact on society.

Sitole is involved in research to try and unlock new methods for monitoring HIV disease progression and individual responses to treatment. She recently completed her PhD in Biochemistry at the University of Pretoria.

"We need to tackle HIV on all fronts. That includes having more effective medicine, developing reliable prognostic tools and also speaking out about it."

Sitole is researching the use of "metabonomics" in detecting and identifying HIV-induced metabolite changes. Metabonomics measures the changes that occur in an individual's metabolism in response to external stimuli, such as diseases or drugs. More specifically, it is the "systematic study of the unique chemical fingerprints that specific cellular processes leave behind". In addition to immunological complications, HIV infection and its treatment are known for inducing metabolic disorders such as insulin resistance, lipodystrophy (fat redistribution), and cardiovascular complications.

There is currently no agreement on the best method for monitoring and diagnosing these complications, nor are there reliable biomarkers serving as indicators of HIV disease progression and treatment response. The identification of novel viral and treatment specific biomarkers will therefore contribute significantly to HIV and Aids disease management.

In her research, Sitole makes use of different spectroscopic techniques (that measure the interaction of matter and electromagnetic radiation) to detect global metabolic



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

signatures associated with infection and treatment. These "signatures" or fingerprints are what HIV leaves behind in an individual's metabolism. "This work will enable the detection and identification of metabolites (substances produced that are necessary for metabolism) that could be developed into potential biomarkers of disease progression and treatment success or failure."

Sitole says her interest in science was ignited as a grade 10 pupil when she lost her grandmother to lung cancer. "I wanted to understand the 'how and why'."

Sitole completed her MSc (cum laude) in organic chemistry at Jackson State University's School of Science, Engineering and Technology in 2009. Before tackling her PhD she worked as a researcher for the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Sitole, who is passionate about science outreach programmes, says she would like to enter the field of science communication. "We need to bridge the gap between scientists and politicians, get better policies and improve society's understanding of science without creating false hope." — Jorisna Bonthuys



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

RENE NAIDOO

Electrical engineer

Twitter: @Reneanddion

There is a social connection between engineers and the communities they serve. This is the belief of Rene Naidoo (23), a final year Electrical Engineering student at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). She is project managing a solar system engineering project designed for a rural community in Limpopo involving students, lecturers and researchers from her university. This is the first community engagement project of its kind taken on by the Electrical and electronic engineering department of UJ.

Naidoo, who is studying towards an "unofficial" master's degree in system engineering and design, helped design and implement an off-grid photovoltaic system for the Gwakwani settlement in Limpopo.

"The project focused more on the system engineering aspects involving the implementation of solar technology in rural areas," says Naidoo. "The system has enabled the villagers to pump water, charge their cellphones and even switch their lights on. The system can be remotely monitored from campus."

Naidoo is currently also developing a framework that any engineer can apply when implementing their project in rural systems. "Engineers are creating long-term opportunities in communities," says Naidoo. "You cannot just build something and leave it behind without thinking about how people will interact with it."

Gwakwani, described as a "forgotten village" by villagers, faces several engineering issues, including a scarcity of fresh water and inadequate means to pump it. "For me, our community engagement project in Gwakwani is a microcosm of the realities engineers face in the real world. "Engineering is, after all, also about people. I love everything about this project, including the off-grid solar technology used. It only outputs good."

Naidoo received the third place for best final-year project in her department in 2014. She also received the university's Samsung trophy for the best community engagement project in a student's final year. — Jorisna Bonthuys

ANNA HAW

Veterinary scientist

Twitter: @anna_j_haw

If you want to know how to avoid being charged by an agitated rhino during a wildlife capture, ask Anna Haw (30). She does, after all, get to hang with rhinos (and other big mammals) for a living.

Haw, originally from Cape Town, is emerging as one of South Africa's leading wildlife research veterinarians. She is involved in the capture, immobilisation and surgery of a variety of free-ranging wild animals, including rhinos.

"It is difficult to explain that feeling when you get to work on a wild animal and feel its breath on your skin," she says. "It makes my blood boil seeing a [rhino] carcass left behind [by poachers]."

This seasoned trail runner is passionately committed to wildlife conservation and ecology in Southern Africa. With a veterinary degree from the University of Edinburgh (with distinction) and an MSc degree in veterinary tropical diseases from the University of Pretoria (also with distinction), Haw is on a quest to improve wildlife conservation.

"We need to integrate animal, human and environmental health to establish productive, healthy ecosystems and communities," says Haw. "Veterinary science is critical in building resilient communities and landscapes in our region."

She is currently in the final year of her PhD in physiology at Wits in the wildlife conservation physiology section of the Brain Function Research Group in the School of Physiology.

Haw is part of a multidisciplinary research group that focuses on how large animals are able to adapt and cope, as climatic conditions get hotter and drier. "Previously, animals may have been able to migrate to more favourable climates as conditions changed, but today, that is no longer possible. The erection of fences and human encroachment on wilderness areas prevents the natural movement of many wild animals."

As part of her PhD studies, Haw worked with SANParks veterinarians in the Kruger National Park to improve the immobilisation protocol of the white rhinoceros. Haw is working on ways to prevent the side effects of opioid medicines used to immobilise rhinos and other big herbivores during relocation and treatment efforts. This insight is providing a crucial clinical advance for the welfare of our threatened rhinos.

Haw, also employed full-time as a research officer at Wits, advocates alternative livestock management strategies on farms that have traditionally killed wild carnivores (jackal, caracal and leopard) as a means to protect their livestock. "I am really interested in the challenges that occur at the human-livestock-wildlife interface," she says. Haw has worked with farmers to train livestock guarding dogs, helping to protect wild carnivores and vulnerable livestock in the Karoo. She has also been the driving force behind a recent rabies vaccine campaign for village dogs in Zimbabwe near a wildlife conservancy.

"I believe more should be done to ensure that wildlife becomes an asset rather than hindrance to rural communities. Ultimately my long-term goal is to make a positive impact at the human-livestock-wildlife interface, finding real and workable solutions."

"I am not only interested in protecting one species but protecting the whole ecosystem. Humans are part of that ecosystem too." — Jorisna Bonthuys



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



DANNY DAY

MD, QCF Design

Twitter: @dislekcia

Did you know that a South African game called Desktop Dungeons won the Award for Excellence in Design at the Independent Games Festival in San Francisco back in 2011, beating Minecraft?

Meet Danny Day, the head of QCF Design, a committee member of MakeGames SA and a guy that simply enjoys making video games.

"I think games are a valuable cultural art form that can apply to an entire spectrum of human meaning, from entertainment to abnegation to education to confrontation. I've always been trying to make games and now I have enough resources and experience to continuously question my skills at doing so," says Day.

Desktop Dungeons released on PC, Mac and Linux in 2013 and QCF Design recently released the game on iOS and Android tablets but prior to that, the company built games for Nokia, the World Bank Institute, various advertising clients and random game competitions.

"When I was growing up I'd collect reasons why I couldn't be a game designer: I didn't know C++, I lived in the wrong country, I didn't have the correct degree, I wasn't artistic enough, I wasn't technical enough to write hardcore game engines ... I'd try to address some of those, by teaching myself C++ during school holidays, but the real issue was my attitude," says Day.

"One day, working in a job that I'd taken because it felt as close to game development as I was likely to get, a friend finally convinced me to just start using a tool called Game Maker and actually make things. It turns out that the way you become a game developer is you just start making them; nobody needs to give you permission or say you're qualified enough. You just have to keep trying to make them."

Today, Day gets his inspiration from conversations with his friends, some of whom happen to be among the best game designers in the world. He's also been lucky enough to meet personal heroes and game industry legends like Brenda and John Romera, Chris Delay, Jason Kapalka and Jane McGonigal.

"I think that it's hard not to be constantly inspired by what's happening around you, it's strange to not be inundated with novel combinations of ideas. If you're having a hard time finding that, switch your environment to one that helps you do so effortlessly."

— Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

GREGORY MOUNTFORD

Embedded systems integration specialist, MultiChoice

Twitter: @sk44p

If Gregory Mountford was born a century or so earlier, you'd probably have labelled him an inventor; he is a guy who loves taking things apart and putting them back together to make something better.

Growing up in Carrington Heights, Durban, Mountford started out his career at Altech UEC, later working at a niche army-oriented company called Natcom as a lead designer.

"Working in the military environment exposes an engineer to a wide array of different characters and personalities, with many very interesting and exciting (yet confidential) encounters and experiences. But the job showed me the work I would come to love: systems engineering," says Mountford.

After Natcom, Mountford was headhunted by MultiChoice in 2010. A five-man development team charged to "fake the internet" quickly grew to over 200 in three years, working with vendor teams from Holland, France, England, India and China.

"My job was always the most fun: as the requirements developed and the hardware changed, it fell to me to bring up the new decoder hardware and define the processes for development and system integration. I took great pride in my build systems and processes; trying to make the developers, testers and other system integrators' lives easier."

But it's at MultiChoice that Mountford released what would rightly become 2014's Product of the Year, the DSTv Explorer.

"My business passion is all about customer service. To me, everything centres around this. My master's thesis was on how doing the system design right (with the right focus and review) in the beginning can ensure better customer service overall," Mountford says. "It's systems-engineering with a customer-service twist; a mindset shift that we achieved with the Explora — even though we didn't originally start out that way, we took a big step back in the middle and approached the project in an entirely new way."

For now, Mountford is focused on getting ready for the South African analogue switch-off, while supporting the terrestrial broadcasting company, GOtv. — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ANTONY SEEFF

Chief executive, Tariffic

Twitter: @antseeff

Antony Seeff is someone who could actually change the world. Introducing technology that can empower consumers to see through a very complicated market, he wants to save time and money. Simply put, Seeff is an entrepreneur with a passion for leadership, disruptive technologies, and creative expression — he thrives on being challenged.

"My current passion lies in disrupting the cellular industry in South Africa, which I get to accomplish through my role as chief executive of Tariffic. It uses groundbreaking technology to empower cellphone users to find the best network, package, and bundles based on how they use their phones," says Seeff. "We're shaking up the market, saving companies (and soon consumers!) millions of rands, and changing the way people go about finding a new contract."

Seeff has worn many career hats, from working in the hedge fund space in New York (at The Blackstone Group) to niche financial services locally, his experience and expertise includes business development, software engineering, process engineering and optimisation, corporate finance, investor and media relations, marketing and internal communication, competitive analysis, and BBEE.

An electrical engineer by qualification, Seeff has applied his engineering skills to the corporate environment. His goal is to keep the Tariffic staff motivated by creating an open, growing culture in an office that everyone wants to come to every day.

"This environment is lots of fun, but it is also characterised by a drive for continuous education, continuous improvement, having a culture of doing the right thing, not taking ourselves too seriously, having clear and open communication, constantly innovating, being obsessed with our customers, and a strong sense of family amongst the team."

Soon Tariffic will have a consumer offering, which means that anyone will be able to go to the site, upload their cellphone bills, and find the best packages for them.

"It's been an incredible, fun journey so far. Looking back, it seems the ingredients have been: a bit of formal education; tons of informal training from working with some incredible business leaders; having a passion for disruption, technology, and business leadership, mixed together with a drive to forge my own destiny and fulfil my potential. This is sprinkled together with a lot of luck and plenty of blessings from G-d." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MIXO FORTUNE NGOVENI

Founder and chief executive, Geekulcha

Twitter: @4otune, @geekulcha

It's not easy to box Mixo Fortune Ngoveni. He's a tech entrepreneur, but also a mobile ninja, connector, social media geek, member of TEDx Pretoria and the founder of Geekulcha, a like-minded community that connects students with opportunities.

Ngoveni was given an opportunity to represent his institution, Tshwane University of Technology, at the Microsoft Imagine Cup in 2011. The following year Microsoft selected Ngoveni as one of six Microsoft Student Partners in the country.

"My role was to link the students in my institution with Microsoft and Microsoft technologies. Through this exposure I spotted a gap between the students and the ICT industry. Students were not exposed to the ICT world so I created Geekulcha, to be the geek community that connects the students with opportunities. Credit should also be given to the Geekulcha team. They have played a vital role in getting Geekulcha to where it is."

Ngoveni is inspired by South Africa and the people he encounters. He is a man driven by challenge.

"The satisfaction that one gets after succeeding in something deemed impossible or difficult is priceless. When you overcome challenges you feel like Superman and want more and more. I am inspired by people who are able to make something of their lives from nothing, and by people who never give up no matter what kind of challenges they face."

Why tech? Ngoveni believes that you also can't ignore the fact that technology is cool and that geeks will be the rockstars of tomorrow.

"I am fascinated by technology and its possibilities. There is so much that can be done through technology to better the lives of many people and to make things much easier. Through technology we are able to learn much faster and gain access to information. That all excites me. I wanted to be in such a space where we can take the little that we have, through the knowledge that we have, and make something useful through technology." — Tiana Cline



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

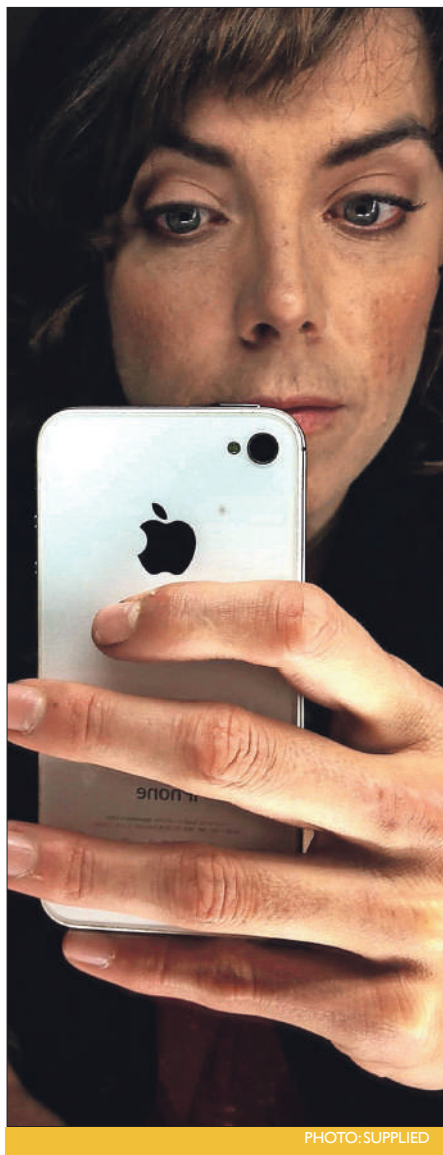


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KELSEY WIENS

Creative Commons public lead for South Africa **Twitter:** @bella_velo

Five years ago Kelsey Wiens rode her bike into South Africa and decided to stay. As a Canadian living in Cape Town, Wiens is passionate about how Open Knowledge can be used. Not just as a vast resource of information for Africa, but also as a means to share knowledge of Africa with the rest of the planet.

Wiens is the Creative Commons public lead for South Africa, and she is constantly looking for opportunities to make more things open. She's trying to make the IP, South Africa BBQ, CC pun "CC-BRAAI-SA" a thing.

"I like to think of the world as a giant puzzle and I love to put together pieces that don't know of each other or didn't know how well they match. My favourite thing is to introduce people to each other for business or pleasure. I'm responsible for at least two successful 'bromances' in Cape Town. I'm really fortunate because Creative Commons sits on the edge of tech; I get to have coffee with a lot of interesting people, and at least once a week I'm blown away by interesting people and projects happening in South Africa."

Last year, Wiens wrote a program with Obami on Creative Commons for Kids. (You can find her podcasting about this and other African IP issues at For the Love of Open on OKcast.org or at Seed.) She is also launching Open Textbooks for Africa to reduce the cost of textbooks for university students and to help instructors adapt textbooks precisely to their course needs.

Wiens believes if you're bored here, you're not trying hard enough: "My heart hurts for people who say to me that there is nothing inspiring about South Africa. I always think how lucky I am to get to meet so many individuals doing amazing things for education, for tech, for their country."

"There isn't any lack of drive here. From the Lavender Hill kid who uses Bozza to share his music, to Siyavula, which has helped South Africa become the only open licensed textbook enforced by a national education department, from the makers' culture with 3D printing... Let's stop copying Silicon Valley and innovate our challenge. That's a conversation I'm interested in having." — *Tiana Cline*

NADAV OSSENDRYVER

Veterinary scientist

At 15, animal aficionado Nadav Ossendryver developed a website for crowd-sourcing wildlife sightings in the Kruger National Park. Three years later, Ossendryver has over 200 000 people in his social media community and one of the top-viewed YouTube channels in South Africa.

"I built up social media platforms for people who are just as addicted to wildlife as I am, to share their sightings and experiences — live," says Ossendryver, talking about his website, *LatestSightings.com*. The popular site is a platform for visitors who are in the Kruger — be they rangers or tourists — to report the animals and events that they are seeing live. They report their location, time and sighting to Latest Sightings, which in turn broadcasts these "tings" (a reported sighting) over to various media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and smartphone apps).

"We are currently developing an improved app that will cache sightings when visitors are not within signal area, and then report the sightings when they reach signal, place sightings on map according to geolocations, and automatically update sightings across the media," he adds.

Through his safari-savvy community, Ossendryver contributes toward numerous research projects (such as the Wild Dog Project, the Ground Hornbill Project and the the Leopard Identification Project) as well as towards EWT special projects, like road-kill awareness.

After the floods in the Kruger in 2013, he arranged a relief

effort to help affected Kruger staff, which raised R100 000 and 1 000kg food, bedding and clothing.

"I make a huge effort to develop strong relationships with tour operators, rangers and honorary rangers as they are the regular people in the park, making their contributions that much more reliable. I also maintain a relationship with my regular followers, making them feel that they are part of a vibrant community."



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Twitter & Instagram: @LatestKruger

Ossendryver's goal is to expand worldwide and make the data he collects more readily available to various research projects, conservation efforts and academic institutions.

"Through visitors sharing their sightings on the app, they are now becoming citizen scientists. Instead of having one researcher out in the field, we suddenly have thousands. This has led to a dramatic increase in valuable data for various research projects in the national parks." — *Tiana Cline*

JACO BEZUIDENHOUT

Director, MTG Conservation Services

Twitter: @jacobjez

If you've ever pondered the notion of robots ruling the world, Jaco Bezuidenhout is the guy to ask. A Maker (a term popular in the open hardware and hardware hacking electronics community to describe those who like to create things in their spare time, often electronic, often with their own hands), creative, trainer and entrepreneur, Bezuidenhout, with the help of House4Hack, started his first company at the age of 21. Called Xrobotix, it focuses on educating high-school students using Intel's Arduino electronics platform. And at 22, with his business partner Harry Pretorius, Bezuidenhout created M!nd The Gap (MTG) Group, an innovation company that develops products and systems in various industries.

"I am working very hard and I barely get any sleep, but I love every moment!" exclaims Bezuidenhout. "Currently I mainly help students with projects by day, present training courses by night and in any free time, develop products and systems for MTG Group. Here we create solutions for the fight against rhino poaching. In the MTN Mind2Machine Challenge I also provide technical support to the contestants. I'm helping Intel with training and support on their hardware."

Finding creative solutions to difficult problems is where Bezuidenhout shines, and that is what being a Maker is all about. "I believe that my maker path started in my first year of Engineering. At completion of the module, I decided to give this 'Arduino' platform a try and that year I developed my own GPS autopilot for a radio-controlled aeroplane, using the Arduino UNO. It wasn't very stable, but it worked!" Today, Bezuidenhout presents courses at the University of Pretoria in MakerSpace@UP. His passion lies in the love of training and educating students while promoting innovation. He also likes that he gets a front-row seat in seeing what awesome ideas students come up with.

"My aim for the MakerSpace@UP is to create an ecosystem of students sharing and transferring knowledge from one to another; students understanding the meaning of innovation and where it can have a big impact on societies. I would like to promote entrepreneurship and see great start-ups arising from the MakerSpace@UP through cross-pollination of disciplines and knowledge sharing." — *Tiana Cline*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

BEN MYRES

African game evangelist, developer, curator and head, MakeGamesSA

Twitter: @Ben_Myres

"I am interested in how games function as art; interactive systems; machines for learning; as a storytelling medium; and just how they contain that thing called 'fun'," says Ben Myres, the head of MakeGames SA (MGSA). Myres is also a local game developer and the curator behind local festivals such as Games for Change and A MAZE.

MGSA is the South African association of game developers and is the industry body (as recognised by the South African government) of local game development. And Myres is well known in the South African game industry, with good reason.

"I pitched up to every community meetup and every game development session I could find. Soon I knew everyone in the Johannesburg game development community. Within a year-and-a-bit I was running the Joburg community evening and the social media for Make Games South Africa... because of this networking I have had internships, mentorships, job offers, training, advice and feedback on my games from internationally successful game developers."

Early in 2014, Myres was elected onto the MGSA committee by a vote split across Johannesburg and Cape Town. And at A MAZE 2014, because he knew the industry so well, he was asked to co-curate some of the South African games and talks. Acquiring prominence is one thing, but the development of skills is something else entirely, and it's something Myres still struggles with today.

"The actual practical elements are unambiguous when written down: if you want to be good at making games, make a lot of games. If you want to be surrounded and inspired by people, help create that community. If you want African games to be globally renowned, as an African, make great games and help others make them too."

Myres has made about 100 games and prototypes in the past three-and-a-half years. Only around 20 have ever been given to players. Three have been exhibited and one has had international press coverage, but not one has been released commercially.

"How I got where I am today is because I showed up. Both physically to events and mentally to practice game making. And I show up because I love what I do." — *Tiana Cline*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



ARTHUR WADE ANDERSON

Founder, GOT-GAME

Twitter: GoT_Ga3E

Arthur Wade Anderson is an introvert, a dreamer and a dad who loves to tinker with new ideas, especially in the digital space. Anderson's journey into social entrepreneurship began by helping a friend create community gym. Later, along with some like-minded techies and artists, he founded GOT-GAME, a startup focused on the education and economic inclusion of people in underserved communities. "As a founder, my vision remains steadfast and linked to providing access and enabling resources to the youth who deserve a chance at creating their self-defined prosperous futures on this continent," says Anderson.

As a child, he was always encouraged to follow the road less travelled, advice he believes gave him access to a wonderful journey of hope and an aspiration to do better and challenge the status quo. "It fuelled me to take my game from the Cape Flats to the United States, where I studied and worked for seven years within the Fortune 500 environment. I have surpassed my 10 000 hours, retained a sharp focus on my goals, tried various approaches and took on the positive attitude that if I was to fail, I would fail forward," he says. "People have commented that I have become very lucky with business but those who know me will attest that I continue to work long after my competitors have gone to bed. I constantly work at improving the client GOT-GAME experience as it important for me to ensure that everyone, including our beneficiaries, realise the benefits of our association."

Through GOT-GAME, Anderson has managed to show off Africa's enormous talent, something that often gets overlooked due to lack of access, training and exposure. His greatest ambition is to uncover some of the world's greatest minds and transform the current experiences of South Africa's rural dwellers.

"South Africa is a country abundant in opportunity for those who dare to dream. We have overcome adversity as a nation and we have a wonderful foundation from which to grow. Our strategy is to help our youth seek self-actualisation, to unleash their potential and look in the mirror confidently and affirm to themselves and others by reciting 'I GOT-GAME'." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

NONHLANHLA MASINA

Co-founder and chief development officer, African School for Excellence

Twitter: @nonhlanhlamasin

You might already know the inspiring story of Nonhlanhla Masina, and how she walked 8km each day to attend Buhlebemfundo High School. Or how she developed a passion for science, and began teaching courses in maths, chemistry, and biology to her fellow high school students while in Grade 11.

"I grew up seeing a lot of inexplicable injustice and misunderstanding. My quest was to rebel and 'make it out' and not fit in the predetermined boxes people had. My interest in history and its impact on society has been a journey to try and understand myself in relation to the world. This perhaps also speaks to my views on education because in large part, a lot of what we do, we do implicitly," says Masina, who co-founded the African School for Excellence (ASE).

She was selected as one of just 20 young women in South Africa to receive a prestigious Carnegie Bale women scholarship at the University of Witwatersrand. Today, Masina holds a BSc in molecular and cell biology, a BSc (honours) in biochemistry, and is currently pursuing her master's in pharmaceuticals, all through Wits.

"My upbringing instilled a lot of resilience; even in what others would deem a hopeless situation, I was groomed to draw strength from within and smile in the face of adversity, which informs my optimism and constant willingness to push."

Through ASE, Masina is trying to address the injustice imposed by social inequalities that are, she says, reinforced by South Africa's dual education system. Not only is ASE affordable, it offers high quality education that enables people to become economically active.

"I love my community; I care deeply for our kids and their parents. I will deem myself a successful when they succeed. Our scholars remind me a lot of me and my friends, growing up in Tsakane. Their aspirations and ambition drive me to keep putting my best foot forward and continue rising after each fall. For young people to fully engage and be capable of driving that change, we need to alter how we educate them and stop systematically disempowering them through our schooling system. African School for Excellence is important for shifting that discourse — our kids are capable of greatness, so let's have a closer look at how we are defining and shaping the teaching and learning landscape." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KIRSTY SHARMAN

Digital marketer

Twitter: @KirstyCarrot

Once described as "bottled lightning", Kirsty Sharman is a digital marketer, entrepreneur and networker in one. Not only does she run *Webfluent.com* — an online platform that connects brands with social influencers globally — she heads up one of the largest networking tech events for women in Africa, the Girl Geek Dinners.

"I'm crazy about all things digital," explains Sharman, "I read constantly, mostly online tech and marketing blogs. Digital trends move faster than you can read them, so dedicating time to keeping up to date is essential."

Sharman also owns an e-store, *GeeksDoingStuff.com*. She used her own cash to start up a community and grow it into an online business. "I always tell people that the best way to learn about something is to spend your own money doing it."

And although Sharman does have a degree in multimedia design from Greenside Design Centre, her skills are mainly self-taught.

"For as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated by the internet and the things it can help regular people achieve. I was determined to build a career in digital — I spent hours online upskilling myself in media, social media, coding and planning to name a few tactics. Most of my online media skills can be credited to many hours of YouTube tutorials though. Some people credit their careers to the university of life ... I'm just grateful for Google."

In February 2015, Webfluent merged with Retromedia an online media-buying agency that Sharman co-founded. She calls her this "first step towards full-time entrepreneurship".

The two companies combine two of the most powerful elements of digital space today — influencer marketing and media buying. "We've grown from two people to 14 in just under a year, and are extremely proud to be working with some of the biggest brands in Africa."

"Watching other entrepreneurs around me build businesses out of nothing inspires me every day. I make a constant effort to surround myself with people who are doing things that I want to be doing in five years, to keep me motivated and inspired." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR YASEEN KHAN

Co-founder and director, The Open Medicine Project

Twitter: @TOMP_SA

"I believe that technology has an enormous role to play, and that it can unlock solutions to problems we thought were never possible, and create opportunities we never dreamt of," says Dr Yaseen Khan, a medical doctor who also happens to be the co-founder and director of The Open Medicine Project.

Khan holds an MBChB from Stellenbosch University (SU). Having completed his internship at the challenging GF Jooste Hospital in Cape Town, he took a keen interest in Emergency Medicine and the role of evidence-based medicine in healthcare. This has led him to pursue an MSc in clinical epidemiology at SU, and successfully complete a diploma in primary emergency care.

But Khan is also committed to bridging the gap between healthcare workers and technology by looking at innovative ways to facilitate and capacitate healthcare workers in a clinical context, ultimately resulting in improved patient care.

"I'm passionate about technology and healthcare. I see technology as simply the use of the tools we have around us to improve our condition. Particularly in our setting, where we have significant healthcare challenges."

With Dr Mohammed Dalwaai, Khan started a non-profit mobile health initiative called The Open Medicine Project, which essentially seeks to empower South African healthcare workers through mobile technology.

The Open Medicine project has produced a number of leading medical apps and has reached over 50 000 healthcare providers globally through its mobile technology.

"I have been a doctor for most of my career and what drives me predominantly and internally is the need to improve care for patients. I am also passionate about finding real barriers to patient care, and seeing how we can break through those barriers with technology."

Khan may have been selected as a Laureate University, International Youth Foundation Foundation Global Fellow for 2015, but he says the best part of his job is meeting other doctors and nurses in South Africa and hearing that they are using the apps Open Medicine produce, and that they love them.

He is committed to innovation in healthcare and believes that technology will continue to have a profound impact on patient care in the developing world.

"I am very excited to be involved in an initiative to bring advanced painless diagnostic technology to the South African market. Through Thinta Diagnostics, we will bring painless finger probe testing of anaemia, or haemoglobin, in a novel device for the South African health system." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



KOBUS EHLERS

Head of FireID Payments, SnapScan

Twitter: @kobusehlers

One of the most interesting things about Kobus Ehlers — today associated with changing the local mobile payment space — is that he is an academic. With a master's in philosophy looking specifically at sensemaking and agile development in large corporates, Ehlers now runs FireID, the company behind SnapScan, with finesse or dare we say, agility?

"I am really interested in that intersection where people and technology meet. I think we live in an extremely exciting time where the world is changing faster than ever before. I count myself lucky to be part of the generation grappling with building an entirely different world and using the latest science of technology for that," says Ehlers. "Specifically, I am very excited about employing technology in new and innovative ways to solve real, everyday problems."

Ehlers took an unconventional route by exchanging a very traditional job as a lecturer for a fast paced (and risky!) one at FireID. "Having this freedom to take the risk and tackle hard problems was the result of being surrounded by a great group of friends embarking on this adventure together."

After five years lecturing at Stellenbosch University, Ehlers decided to rejoin some friends who were changing FireID into a technology incubator in Stellenbosch. "We started a number of companies in the group and got to experience the real start-up life. Eventually I moved to FireID Payments and, more recently, started SnapScan as a product in that company."

For Ehlers, the challenge is about solving problems that really matter to people, and he's also extremely excited by the possibilities that technology offers. Ehlers understood that one day people would use their phones to make payments. He believes that mobile payments can enable hundreds of thousands of small merchants to start participating in the formal economy.

"What excited us was that you could use technology to improve one of the key human activities — paying for goods and services. This would make payments faster, safer and more convenient for everyone. Even more importantly, it allowed hundreds of thousands of small shop owners to start accepting electronic payments — something they had never previously imagined."

— Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KAYLI VEE LEVITAN

Owner of the Street Store, Food-Blog.co.za

Twitter: @KayliVee

Kayli Vee Levitan is a Durbanite, living in Cape Town. (So yes, she says "faaish" instead of "fish".) She works in advertising by day, is a foodblogger by night, and runs a charity between it all.

A copywriter at M&C Saatchi Abel, Levitan and her colleague, Max Pazak, founded The Street Store last year. It is the world's first rent-free, premises-free, free "pop-up clothing store" for the homeless, found entirely on the street and stocked by donations.

"We decided to go open-source with the idea, because homelessness is not just a South African issue. We've since had over 200 Street Stores pop up globally, clothing an estimated 200 000 homeless people," adds Levitan. "I love helping people; advertising met charity in the form of The Street Store." Levitan also co-owns The Foodblog Group, which runs in Cape Town, Durban and Joburg.

"It sounds bizarre, but waitressing taught me how to speak to people; foodblogging (and the events that come with it) taught me to be comfortable in any situation; and advertising taught me how to pick up on interesting insights. These three things combined have made me who I am."

Levitan sees advertising as a problem-solving industry, a place where she can find creative, insightful solutions to her clients' problems. So why not use those skills to try make the world a better place? "I had to overcome the fear that The Street Store would never work, just by trying. It's changed the way that I approach things — worrying will get you nowhere."

Continuously inspired by the people around her and their experience, Levitan has managed to pick up what she calls "little insights" from others. For her, it is the things you may never have realised yourself that allow you to create something different, something new, something meaningful.

"Every year, through M&C Saatchi Abel, I try and tackle a different segment of society in need in South Africa. I've worked with Dementia SA and the Women's Hope, Education and Training Trust, and now The Haven Night Shelter. Who knows, what's next? But I am excited to figure it out." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

EVAN GREENWOOD

Founder, Free Lives

Twitter: @CodeOfTheVoid, @Free_Lives

Evan Greenwood has built a career based on giving back the joy he experienced growing up playing video games. As a designer and the founder of Free Lives — the studio behind the most commercially successful South African video game yet — Greenwood is living his dream.

After high school, Greenwood studied multimedia design at City Varsity, a course he took almost entirely due to the fact that in the third semester of the second year, there was a project where students built a video game.

"For a time I gave up everything in my life except building video games and practicing building video games," says Greenwood. "The sacrifice paid off, and video games have now taken me around the world to meet all of my heroes. I have zero regrets, but I'm glad that I lead a fuller existence now."

Greenwood is among a wave of brilliant local game developers who are building a reputation for South Africa internationally. He has been flown to America and Germany to give talks on game development and adjudicate on awards. In 2014 he participated in Johannesburg's TEDx, advocating for games that improve the lives of those that play them.

"I love the exchange of ideas and values, I'm curious about nearly everything, but the act of creating experiences for other people, and how they in turn receive those experiences, is what fascinates me most," he says.

Broforce, something that started out as a parody, has helped to put both Greenwood and Free Lives on the map. It's a game that wears its cultural heritage on its sleeve, the content drawing heavily on 90s video game culture and action movies of the same period.

"Broforce has certainly changed my life, and I expect had a great impact of all of those who have worked on it. The success of the game has taken us places and given us opportunities we dreamed of before, but had no idea of how to achieve." — Tiana Cline

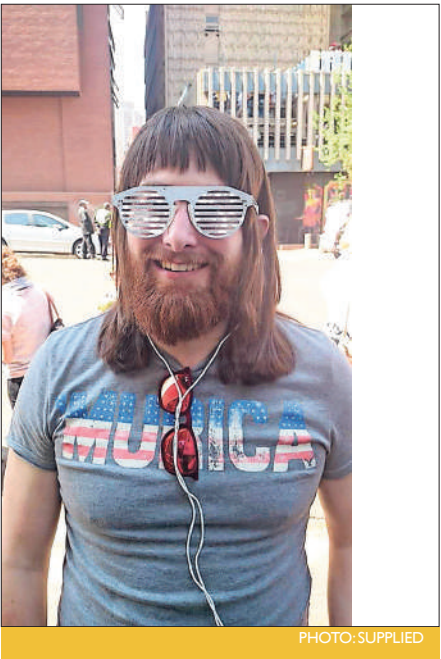


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

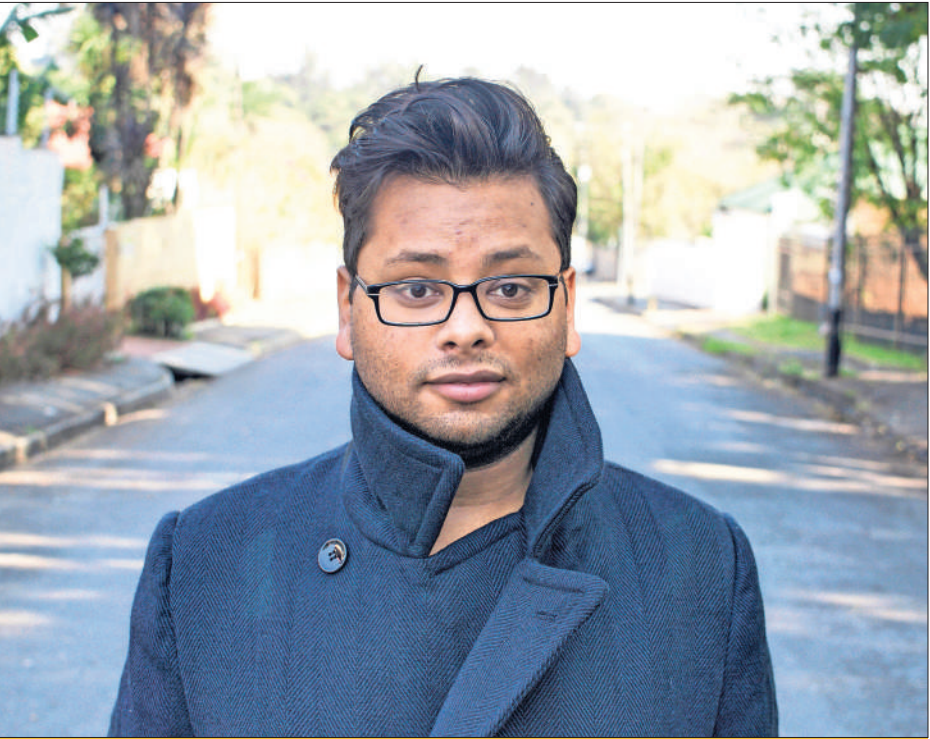


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KEENAN HARDRUTH

Digital media analyst and Social Media Marketer of the Year 2015

Twitter: @KeenyKeenz

Before he turned 16, Keenan Hardruth had interviewed Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and the chairperson of Unicef. By 23, he was a key organiser and facilitator in the 5th World Summit On Media for Children held in Johannesburg, while also working on the University of Johannesburg's campus newspaper and hosting a current affairs show on UJFM.

It was only much later that Hardruth took the leap into the (then) burgeoning social media world as a junior online reputation manager at Cerebra.

"I then took a jump across to the social media industry, taking a pay-cut to get the chance to start at the bottom, learn and work my way up. After two years as an ORM co-ordinator, I was made head of Online Reputation Management, which later evolved into head of Insights," says Hardruth.

"After publishing industry reports, building a team, and being on the management team at one of the continent's best agencies, I decided to take on a new challenge at Don't Look Down and extend my vocabulary and experiences to merge the worlds of broadcast and digital through insights lead marketing."

Working up the ranks, Hardruth is now the senior media analyst at Don't Look Down, working closely with the M-Net and DStv digital ecosystem. His fresh approach to insights lead marketing and social media research saw him winning the Social Media Marketer of the Year for 2015 at the iAB Bookmark awards.

"Being the first Insights-focused person to win the award was affirmation that I was focusing on the right elements in my career, and that the industry was changing to recognise the value of insights lead marketing. To be recognised and elevated in that way by industry figures — people I considered mentors and teachers and international judges — was a huge accomplishment for me." — Tiana Cline



MJ KHAN

Group online media manager, Sasol

Twitter: @concerningmj

MJ Khan spends his days weaving digital communication threads at Sasol, the world's largest producer of synthetic fuels. He is responsible for social media communication across the 37 countries that Sasol operates in.

"I knew I wanted to be in communications early on in my schooling; I co-wrote and self-published (photo-copied) a compendium of short stories and 'un-motivational' stories in grade six," laughs Khan.

It's hard to box Khan — he's a Public Relations Institute of South Africa accredited chartered public relations practitioner, an award-winning strategist, a public speaker and gamer. He once headed the social media department at Quirk, working on a variety of accounts for local and international clients. He has also worked at Ogilvy and Mather and TBWA Hunt Lascaris, developing strategies for over 50 international brands.

If anything, Khan is an academic: "I have spent a decade lecturing media studies, journalism, advertising and public relations at various institutions across South Africa, including the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Rosebank College, Triple A and Wits," he says.

Khan has developed course material for over 19 tertiary institutions, but he was recently lauded at the Cape Epic Awards for #SasolEpicWomen, a digitally-led integrated campaign that increased the coverage of the women's category.

"We believe that transformation can only happen from the inside out. Through our Women Empowerment Strategy, we're continually striving to encourage greater female representation, support and recognition across all facets of our organisation," says Khan.

"From our Women in Mining programme, to the launch of our Female Fuel Distribution Officer learnership programme and driving academy, we're continually finding ways to challenge the status quo and push the boundaries to empower epic women for epic success."

Khan strongly believes that now, more than ever, is the time to invest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

"Sasol has a proud history of innovation in science and technology, and it's an honour to communicate the value of STEM, especially on intimate platforms like Twitter and Youtube." — Tiana Cline



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

DR CLAIRE LEE

Particle physicist, CERN

Twitter: @claire_lee

Claire Lee is someone who enjoys experimental high-energy physics and in particular, collider-based experiments such as ATLAS, and the South African-born (and educated) particle physicist is now based at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, Switzerland.

A recent University of Johannesburg (UJ) PhD graduate, Lee's work was on the development and performance of an algorithm used to calculate the amount of missing transverse energy (ETmiss) in collisions.

"I guess I was lucky growing up with fantastic parents, who always let me believe I could do anything I wanted to do in life, and never prejudiced me against things like science and maths," says Lee.

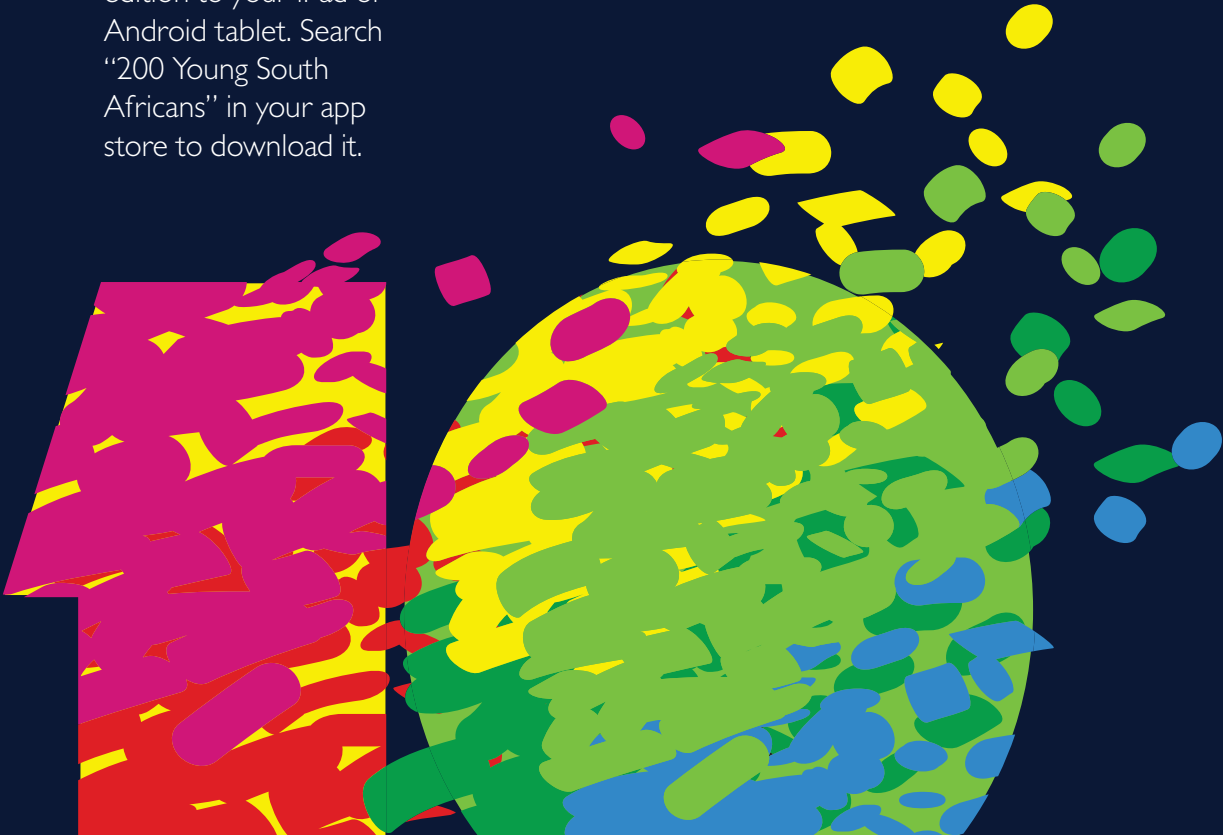
"I was also really lucky to end up with a wonderful supervisor, Professor Simon Connell, with whom I worked for both my MSc and PhD, and who gave me the opportunities to travel overseas and work on different experiments worldwide. After some encouragement from Dr Ketevi Assamagan from Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) who was visiting South Africa in 2007, we visited CERN in 2008 and met with people from ATLAS to discuss South Africa getting involved in the experiment."

Lee worked in conjunction with BNL for two years, after which South Africa (UJ and Wits) became official members of ATLAS. She then started a joint position with UJ and Academia Sinica, which allowed her to be stationed at CERN and work directly on the experiment.

"I love the fact that we are trying to understand the most fundamental pieces of the universe, and all that that entails. We have to build these enormous, complex machines in order to probe smaller and smaller, and it's like a never-ending treasure hunt with many little and big rewards all along the way."

Lee believes that science is not something that only the "elite" do behind closed doors; it should be shared among everyone who is interested. "Science is something that every single one of us is born with: a natural curiosity to understand the universe, and I believe that everyone should be able to access this." — Tiana Cline

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MARISKE STRAUSS

Cyclist (MTB)

Twitter: @StraussMariske

Born in Cape Town in 1991, Mariske Strauss has been steadily making a name for herself in the professional mountain biking circuit, both locally and abroad. With her family consisting of cycling enthusiasts and her father a provincial rider, it was almost inevitable that Strauss would find the the sport irresistible.

While she enjoyed a host of sports growing up, cycling was always her passion. And thanks to the support she received from her parents, Strauss attracted the attention of the MTN Energade professional team in 2009.

"Joining MTN was a key moment, as it gave me the platform to experience professional cycling at its best. The two years I spent with the team was great," she says.

In 2011, Strauss went to the United States to study and compete in the US Collegiate cycling circuit, an experience she admits was initially quite intimidating. "It was very challenging balancing studying and racing, not to mention living in a different country. But it really helped me get to know myself and gain significant racing experience. My time there also opened my eyes to the kind of support base that exists in America for cyclists."

She was signed by the Orange Monkey professional team in 2013 (subsequently renamed Novus OMX) and has since gone from strength to strength. In fact, Strauss is a South African champion across cycling disciplines and aims to qualify for the Rio Olympic Games next year. "One of the lessons I have learnt is that young people need to follow their dreams. It is important to never have regrets and grab all the opportunities that come your way. The old saying that 'nothing worth having is easy to accomplish' rings true. For me, the support I have received from my family, friends, and team have contributed significantly to where I am today." — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: ANNA BUICK

CORNEL FREDERICKS

Athlete (hurdles)

Twitter: @cefredricks

Think 400m hurdles and odds are your thoughts likely turn to local lad Llewellyn Herbert, who won an Olympic bronze medal in 2000 and set five national records over the distance. However, Worcester-born Cornel Fredericks aims to top that — he wants to be known as one of the top athletes in the event. Given that he finished last season ranked number two in the world, he might not have that long to wait.

While an Achilles heel injury saw him miss out on defending his title at the SA Athletics Championships held in April in Stellenbosch, Fredericks is targeting the World Championships in Beijing in August as the perfect springboard. Even though his best championship result was fifth place in 2011, his new coach Nico van Heerden believes that he is one of the best. "Over the hurdles he is so fast, and there is no difference if he jumps with the left or the right leg," he said in an interview earlier this year.

In his career to date, the 25-year-old has already won gold and silver at the African Championships and also has a Diamond League meeting win under the belt. In fact, 2014 was one of his best; he became the first South African athlete to win gold medals at the Commonwealth Games, the African Championships, and the Continental Cup in the same year.

He has also spent a lot of time at the High Performance Centre in Pretoria to get back to his running best form for August. And though he did not medal at the Olympics in 2012, there is always Rio next year to qualify for as part of his plans.

Should the next two seasons progress well, Fredericks may well become the 400m hurdling sensation of the continent. — Iwan Pienaar

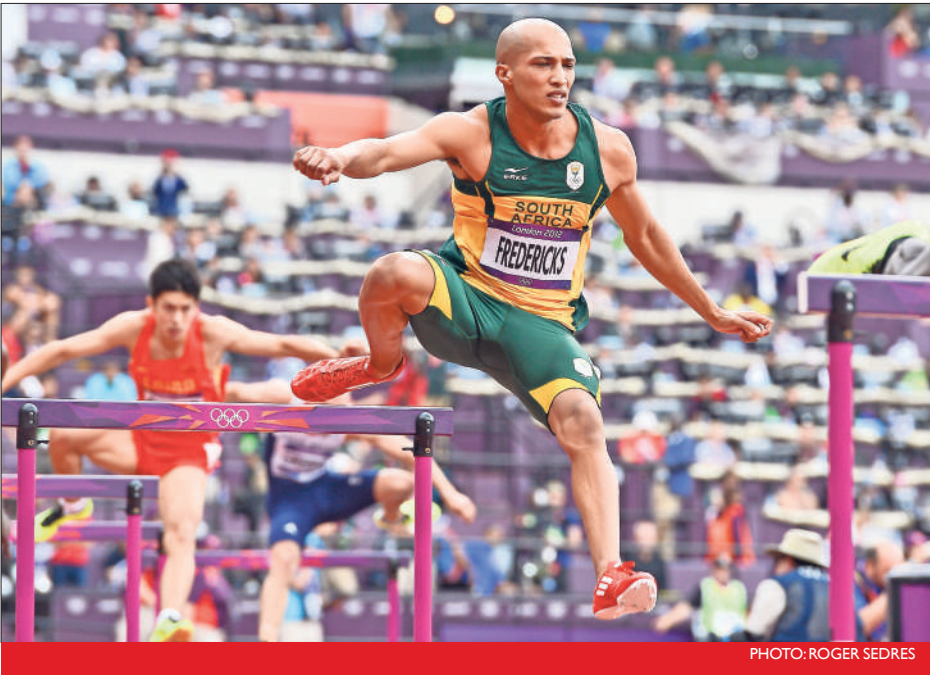


PHOTO: ROGER SEDRES

RIVALDO COETZEE

Footballer

Twitter: @rivaldocee

One might be forgiven for thinking that Rivaldo Coetzee is still finding his way in life and figuring out what he wants to do. Yet, Coetzee has all but entrenched himself in the national football squad. He became the youngest player ever to represent the country just a few days shy of his 18th birthday at the end of last year. Coetzee plies his trade as a defender for Ajax Cape Town and has understandably set the local footballing scene on fire.

Born in the Northern Cape town of Kakamas, he was named (by his father) after the Brazilian football star, who was playing for Barcelona at the time. He joined the Ajax Cape Town youth programme and made his senior team debut last season.

Such has been the strength of his performance that clubs like Kaizer Chiefs and Mamelodi Sundowns are already expressing interest. Even Ajax Amsterdam has been rumoured to want to sign the player. But Ajax Cape Town recently signing a five-year contract with Coetzee, so they are clearly not keen on letting him go any time soon.

Teammate Dominic Isaacs feels that Coetzee should persevere at the club before considering playing in Europe. The impressive thing is that he is still seen to be developing and improving his game with every match he plays. It is not often South Africans can get excited about really world-class young talent playing the beautiful game. But in Rivaldo Coetzee, there might just be the spark our national team needs to boost their performance on the international stage. — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: ANESH DEBIKY



PHOTO: ROGER SEDRES

LEZAAN JORDAAN

Athlete (shot put)

Web: athletics.org.za

Lezaan Jordaan (19) is the current South African U19 and senior women shot put titleholder. She represented South Africa at the 2014 World Junior Championships in Eugene, USA and placed eighth with a personal best of 16.15m. She was also selected for the South African senior team at the 2014 African Athletics Championships held in Marrakesh, where she secured a bronze medal.

"Even though I competed in shot put from an early age, by the time I reached Grade 7 I did not think I would pursue it. However, something just clicked for me and I discovered a love for the sport I did not know I had," says Jordaan.

She grew up in Krugersdorp and cites her family as instrumental in her career development. Now she is a second-year student at the University of Johannesburg, studying to become a teacher.

She rates her performances on the field last year as being her career highlight. In 2014, she placed first in the ASA SA Junior Championships the ASA Senior Championships, and the Student SA Championships last season.

But during these stellar performances she picked up an injury she has yet to recover from. "I hope to start competing again at the end of this year, but at least I have been able to concentrate more on my studies," she says.

Jordaan is targeting the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2020 as one of her dreams to achieve in the sport. And given how shot put athletes only really come into their prime in their late twenties and early thirties, there might be quite a few such achievements in her future. — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: LEE WARREN

DEAN ELGAR

Cricketer **Twitter:** @deanelgar

Left-hand batsman Dean Elgar (28) is expected to have a stellar 2015/2016 season.

Born in Welkom, Elgar was identified as a future Protea by many pundits following a 2005/2006 season which saw him named the 2005 South African Country Districts Player of the Year and leading South Africa to the ICC U19 World Championship in 2006.

Since then he has been a consistent performer in franchise cricket as an opening batsman in the domestic four-day competition, and as a middle-order all-rounder in limited overs cricket.

His consistent form paid off: he made the Test side to play Australia in Perth at the end of 2012 as an injury replacement for JP Duminy. Since stalwart Graeme Smith retired, Elgar has been a regular feature in the national side.

Plying his trade with the Nashua Titans for the past few seasons, Elgar is as soft-spoken and as humble as they come, but is known to be a bit of a joker off the field.

He says this is a way to bring a lighter side to the seriousness of cricket, but believes it needs to be “all business” when stepping out onto the oval.

His first time playing for the Proteas was quite daunting: “It was quite an overwhelming experience for me when I made my debut. To be sharing the park and the green and gold with many of my childhood heroes is something I am really proud to be doing.”

At the time of going to print Elgar had three centuries and three 50s already under his belt in the 15 tests he has played for his country. Even bigger things are expected when he joins the test squad for the Proteas’ tour to Bangladesh in July and August, and captains the 50-overs South Africa A side on its upcoming tour of India. In June, UK cricket club Surrey brought Elgar in as its overseas player for a 10-day spell. — Iwan Pienaar

RILEE ROSSOUW

Cricketer **Twitter:** @rileerr

While on tour with the South Africa A side in Australia in July and August last year, coach Vincent Barnes called Rilee Rossouw and Marchant de Lange to meet him in the reception area of the team hotel to discuss something.

“I immediately replied to his message saying if we did something wrong I was sorry, but did not really know for what. But when we met with him, he told both of us we were called up to join the Proteas. It was a fantastic moment. I was speechless, and very proud, standing there. When I first stepped on to the field (against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo later that month) there was so much excitement and adrenaline going through me. Now, I just don’t want to leave the team,” says Rossouw.

The 25-year-old Bloemfontein boy has gone through the traditional mills of cricket, playing for Grey College and being selected for South African Schools in 2006. Starting his professional career as a left-hand top-order batsman for the Free State in 2007, his debut season saw him make the South Africa U19 squad for the 2008 World Cup. Just two seasons on, in 2009/2010, Rossouw became the youngest South African to make 1 000 first class runs.

Unfortunately, his debut against Zimbabwe did not go according to plan, with the affable player scoring ducks in his first two innings. However, the selectors’ faith in him paid



PHOTO: LEE WARREN

off and he made a maiden century against the West Indies in South Africa later that season. Despite this, concerns were raised when he was selected for the World Cup earlier this year.

“I want to prove I can play at the highest level in one-day cricket. I have been working really hard to represent South Africa and I want to be successful for my country,” says Rossouw. — Iwan Pienaar

RYELAN HARDNICK

Cricketer **Twitter:** @isryelz

Busy with his second year of studying accounting at the University of Stellenbosch, talented sportsman Ryelan Hardnick says there is a need for balance in his life.

“While my sporting focus is on cricket, I want to qualify as a chartered accountant. So many young people dream of playing for a national side, but it is really difficult to achieve and the percentages are always going to work against you. Also, if something happens to you and you injure yourself then not having a degree to fall back on is disastrous,” he says.

As a keen hockey player and cricketer in school (receiving Border provincial colours in both) Hardnick learnt to find this balance at an early age.

“Knowing what you have to do and being focused on accomplishing it means that you can only blame yourself if you do not achieve it. I want to maintain my marks this year and push for a provincial spot next season. My immediate cricket focus is to play in the University Cricket Week in December and set the foundation there.”

For Hardnick, sport is a very humbling experience. “The one week you might be at the top of your game and the next at your lowest point. It really teaches you that you are never bigger than the sport. This applies to all areas of your life as well. I have also been fortunate that my parents have been instrumental in supporting me. They never forced me into a specific direction and allowed me to make my own choices.” — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: SUPPLIED



PHOTO: SAMSUNG STIEHL PHOTOGRAPHY

SONGEZO JIM

Cyclist **Twitter:** @SongezoJim

Born in Umtata in the Eastern Cape, Songezo Jim (24) moved to Cape Town to live with his aunt when he turned 14, following the tragic deaths of his parents within two years of one another.

It was purely by chance that he discovered his love for cycling after he watched the Cape Argus Cycle Tour stream past his aunt’s house.

Though he could not ride a bicycle, he joined the Velokhaya Life Cycling Academy, a non-profit organisation that uses cycling to provide young people from disadvantaged communities with the opportunities they need to turn their lives around.

A friend taught him and within a year’s time, he entered the Argus. He struggled to find his rhythm on a bike but persevered and won his first elite race at 17. He turned professional in 2013 and has not looked back since.

Jim finished fourth in La Tropicale Amissa Bongo in Gabon and in 2014 he was a key rider for MTN Qhubeka, protecting the team’s designated leader in stage races across Europe.

“Always be positive. Things happen that you have no influence over and you have to accept that you cannot change the situation. It’s no use feeling sorry for yourself; instead you have to realise that no matter what circumstances, we all have potential and we have to use the talents God gave us,” says Jim. — Iwan Pienaar



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● SPORT



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

BRENDEN CRAWFORD

Swimmer **Facebook:** brenden.crawford.33

Born in 1996 in Germiston, Central Gauteng Aquatics swimmer Brenden Crawford is focused on qualifying for the Olympics and representing South Africa on the highest stage.

"I went for swimming lessons at a young age because my parents were scared I would drown. The bug bit and I started swimming competitively from seven years old. While I enjoyed cricket and soccer at school, swimming was always where my passion was and my results showed me that I could really pursue this sport on a bigger stage," says Crawford.

Swimming also provided a great way to boost his confidence. "Currently, I am taking a gap year to really focus on my swimming and training. I want to see how far I can go in the sport. Thanks to my coach (Theo Verster), I am really confident in my abilities and focused on achieving my goals," he says.

Outside of swimming, he understands the importance of having something to fall back on. He wants to pursue a degree in business and is looking towards joining his father's plumbing business.

"Swimming at the nationals earlier this year was definitely one of my career highlights. I competed against the likes of Cameron (van der Burgh) which was amazing.

"If you want to become a professional swimmer and get sponsorship you have to be the best at what you do. It is not even a case of being in the top five. You have to be number one in South Africa. While I considered moving to the United States and swimming in the college circuit, I have a very close bond with my coach, who understands me and is brilliant at guiding me towards my targets."

For youngsters looking at finding their way in sport, he believes that they should always listen to their coach and grab the opportunities that come their way. — Iwan Pienaar

BERNADETTE COSTON

Field hockey player

Twitter: @berniecoston23

Doing a profile interview just a few hours before a Women's World League quarterfinal against England in Valencia, 25-year-old field hockey forward Bernadette Coston was the epitome of being cool, calm, and collected.

Born in Alberton, she matriculated in 2007 and is currently studying chiropractic at the University of Johannesburg.

"Despite my mother being a hockey coach, I never played it in primary school as they did not offer it as a sport. However, I really enjoyed it in high school as well as running in the 100m and 200m sprints. In matric, I had to choose between sprinting and hockey but in the end it was an easy decision to make," she says.

As a national senior woman's hockey player, a World Cup

participant and an Olympian (London 2012), she says it is tricky balancing her personal life, studying and competing internationally.

"I believe that the more you do, the more you get done. It is simply a matter of making it work and being prepared to sacrifice certain things to get where you are going.

"For all the girls and young ladies out there, you must never stop dreaming. For me, I would say you can never work hard enough for something. You always have to push yourself," says Coston.

Considering she wants to qualify as a doctor at the end of this year and make it to the Rio Olympics in 2016, she is not likely to ease off the pressure any time soon. — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

SIMBARASHE TEVERA

Karateka

Facebook: simba.tevera.9

Simbarashe (Simba) Tevera was a very unlikely karateka growing up. His mother took him for his first lesson in primary school to lose weight, but the sport did not grab him and he quit after that lesson. It was only much later that he would return to karate.

"When I got to high school, I started doing cross-country and played basketball and soccer. In grade 10, I went back to karate and joined a friend who was passionate about it. Initially, I did it for the fitness but when I arrived at university, I fell in love with its value system. Character, ethics, loyalty, and honour are all good qualities an individual should have," he says.

He joined the Wits All Styles Karate Club as a first-year student in 2012 and never looked back. At Wits, he is reading for a BA (honours) degree majoring in organisational psychology.

He has been the recipient of several academic awards, most notably the Mandela Rhodes Scholarship.

In three years of competing, he has won 20 medals (11 gold, six silver and three bronze) in tournaments ranging from the South African National Championships to the University Sports South Africa Tournament.

Earlier this year, he came back from an injury to compete in his first elite competition at national level, where he finished second in the kata division. After this he was



PHOTO: TOBIAS GINSBERG

selected for the South African national team to compete in the Africa Cup taking place in Johannesburg in September this year.

"Being selected for a national side has always been one of my dreams. The key to this has been to work hard and

make the necessary sacrifices. I feel that no person can reach the perfect balance. But if you work consistently hard every day and get into the habit of making the most out of the hours you have, then you will be successful. — Iwan Pienaar

VINCENT BREET

Rower

Twitter: @vinno_monty

At six-foot-three and 90-odd kilograms, Vincent Breet could easily be mistaken for a rugby player. Yet, this 22-year-old readily admits that he is too unco-ordinated to play traditional ball sports; instead, Breet has become one of the stars in the South African rowing team.

"I grew up in a family of water polo players and swimmers. But I did not enjoy the hours of lonely training those sports required. Instead, I happened to find rowing and really loved it," he says.

While in grade 11 at St Benedict's in Bedfordview, the decision to study overseas presented itself. After actively pursuing his options and doing the necessary research, Breet made the move to Harvard University in Massachusetts.

He is now in his third year of reading for a degree in biomechanical engineering, but has decided to put his studies on hold for a bit to train locally with Team SA and focus on qualifying for the Rio Olympics next year.

"Currently, I am running on a five-year plan which will hopefully culminate in South Africa qualifying for and winning a medal in Rio. After that, I want to return to Harvard and finish my studies. The reality is that there is no sustainable career in rowing," says Breet.

Despite this, he says that he would love to go to Oxford and Cambridge and compete in The Boat Race. Breet also



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

wants to give back to the sport and is looking for opportunities to develop underprivileged communities.

"South Africans have such an amazing genetic base with lots of potential for rowing, but people need to be made aware of it."

Last year, he made his debut in the senior racing team for South Africa and finished third in the World Rowing

Championships in Amsterdam.

"My advice for youngsters would be to put your head down and work even harder than you think it is necessary to accomplish your goals. Nobody is training less than you are and being successful. It does not happen overnight, so you need to be committed to chasing your dreams." — Iwan Pienaar



ITUMELENG KHUNE

Footballer **Twitter:** @iikhune_32_16

Bafana Bafana goalkeeper and former national team captain Itumeleng Khune (28) was the SA Sport Star of the Year for 2013. He is also the most capped goalkeeper for South Africa at 68 and counting.

The Kaizer Chiefs stalwart may soon be without a club. There have been numerous media reports about he and his teammate Mandla Masango reportedly demanding double their salary for the 2015/16 season, which the club deems unacceptable. Speculation is rife that Khune might sign for fierce rivals Orlando Pirates or Mamelodi Sundowns.

Born in Tshing, Ventersdorp in the North West province, Khune was one of six children. His father worked as a driver at a mine in Carletonville and also played amateur football as a striker. Football was not his first passion, as he loved cricket, but he decided on the beautiful game as a means to support his family.

Arriving at Chiefs for trials in 1999, he started his career as a defender, though he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps as a striker. Through hard work, Khune believed he would stand a better chance of playing professionally as a goalkeeper and he remodelled himself to suit the position. It paid off and he was promoted to the first team in 2004.

Khune admits that while he had a challenging background, it taught him responsibility from a young age. It also helps him appreciate his responsibility as a role model for youngsters.

"Whatever I am involved in, I attempt to do the right thing, because I realise the impact that my decisions can have on others."
— Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: ASHLEY VLOTMAN

MALCOLM MARX

Rugby player **Twitter:** @m_marxi2

In many ways, Lions hooker Malcolm Marx (21) is the traditional schoolboy rugby story. He started playing in Grade Five, went to King Edward School, received the U19 player of the year award at University of Johannesburg and at the Golden Lions Rugby Union and became the youngest Varsity Cup forward when he played as a 19-year old against U25 players.

The accolades do not stop there. Marx was named the 2013 Golden Lions Rugby Union U19 Forward Player of the Year and represented the Golden Lions in the U21 Curry Cup competition last year. He played in the IRB U20 Junior World Cup in 2014 but was injured after the first game.

"I am very grateful for all the opportunities I have had. Even just playing in the one match for the Baby Boks was a great honour and privilege," he says.

He is currently a full-time rugby player but wants to do a degree in the future as he feels it is important to have something to fall back on, especially with injuries being a factor in rugby.

"I was fortunate to play some Super Rugby earlier (against the Hurricanes and the Sharks) before going down to playing Vodacom Cup for the rest of the season. While we are on a break at the moment, I am looking forward to seeing what squad I am in for later this year and will hopefully play Currie Cup for the senior side," says Marx.

This might not seem that far-fetched as Lions coach Johan Ackermann believes Marx could become the next Bismarck du Plessis.

"While it is a great plaudit, I still have a lot of work to do. But I am taking it a game at a time while still focusing on my long-term goal of playing for the Springboks." — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: DEON VAN DER MERWE, GLRU



PHOTO: DEON VAN DER MERWE, GLRU

ALBERTUS 'KWAGGA' SMITH

Rugby player **Facebook:** albertuskwagga.smith

Watch any Sevens World Series tournament and odds are you will see at least a few people wearing a zebra outfit of some sort. This is a reference to the exploits of the young Blitz Bokke forward, Albertus "Kwagga" Smith.

He played an instrumental role in helping the team finish second in the overall standings and secure an automatic Olympic qualification to the Rio games next year.

Smith started playing rugby in grade one and loves the sport that runs close to the heart of his family. "I enjoyed all sports in school but really loved rugby and athletics. When I reached high school, I decided to focus solely on rugby but still did athletics (400m hurdles and 110m hurdles) for the speed and fitness aspects," says Smith.

After school, he was invited to join the Sevens Academy and juggled between playing Sevens and 15-man rugby at the Lions. Such has been the meteoric path of Smith that it is difficult to believe that he only played his first full season for the Blitz Bokke last year, and was in the side that won gold at the Commonwealth Games in Scotland.

"I have been blessed with amazing support from my family and my girlfriend's family. Playing Sevens rugby also sees us attracting fans from all over the world, especially in those places that do not see much of the traditional 15-man game," he says.

Recently, he received a Lions contract that will see him at the union until at least the end of 2016.

"I managed to get three caps for the Lions in Super Rugby this year but will likely only focus on the Currie Cup for them in 2016, as the preparations for the Olympics will happen during the Super Rugby season. However, after that I will evaluate my options and look at the 15-man game more closely." — Iwan Pienaar

LUBABALO 'TERA' MTEMBU

Rugby player **Twitter:** @teramtembu

It is difficult to imagine that talented Sharks 8th Man Lubabalo "Tera" Mtembu (24) used to only want to play cricket, skipping rugby practice at school. Fortunately for South African rugby, he was caught out in Grade Four and, as part of his school's sporting requirements, required to participate in a winter sport.

Such was his innate talent that he was spotted playing at the Kearsney Easter Rugby Festival at Dale College and offered a Sharks contract for their academy side shortly thereafter. In 2012, he joined the franchise.

Last season Mtembu was named as the first black captain of the Sharks Currie Cup rugby team. He has earned numerous Man of the Match awards and has always led from the front. Unfortunately an injury put paid to his season this year, but he is firmly focused on getting fit and back on the field for Super Rugby next year.

"I am getting back into studying next month and looking at pursuing something in business management. I am also passionate about coaching and will be doing some of that with schools this year. The injury has highlighted the importance of having a Plan B, because anything can happen to a player. It is also making me appreciate things that much more," he says.

Mtembu is still focused on becoming part of the national team, but is taking it one step at a time.

"People should never be scared to dream big. You never know what to expect in life. If you believe in yourself and your dream, then you have to go for it." — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO: HOWARD CLELAND, THE SHARKS



THABO MATLABA

Footballer

Twitter: @ThaboMatlaba8

Born in Tembisa, just north of Kempton Park on the East Rand in 1987, defender Thabo Matlaba has been a regular feature for Orlando Pirates at left-back since signing for the team in 2012. He spent his teenage career playing for M-Tigers before joining Free State Stars in 2010 in his first professional contract. In his debut season, he made 33 first team appearances and scored three goals to boot.

Matlaba, who is known for his pace and long-range shots, received his first call-up for Bafana Bafana in 2011 and has subsequently made seven appearances for the national side. He also has an international goal to his name.

Matlaba is committed to making the best of his career and understands that there are only so many opportunities for a footballer to make his or her name.

Asked how he balances a hectic domestic season with national team duties, Matlaba said it is all part of being a professional player. "I want to play football, so why should I complain about the workload?"

And with rumours rife that several clubs from Holland and Germany are interested in signing the young player, this workload may increase significantly.

Perhaps because of this, Pirates handed him a five-year deal in October last year, but added a buy-out clause should an international club be willing to make the necessary investment.

Irrespective of whether he will continue plying his trade in South Africa next season or further afield, Matlaba is definitely a talent to watch. — Iwan Pienaar



PHOTO:LUKE WALKER



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

TRAVIS JOHNSTON

Triathlete

Twitter: @trav13maverick

Triathlete Travis Johnston (30) did not embark on the usual training progression of a sportsman. Instead, this Pretoria Boys graduate got caught up in his studies, a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) in investment management, before joining asset management firm Stanlib. "I always wanted to go to the Olympics but life got in the way. It was important to have something to fall back on. People often forget that your shelf-life in sports is so short. To try and get a degree after you retire and then look for a job often means you are 10 years too late in terms of experience," he says.

However, this runner was fortunate in that his boss pushed him to compete in an iron man event, where he realised that he could have a future in the sport. So after spending a few years at Stanlib, he resigned to pursue his dreams of qualifying for the Olympic Games in Rio in 2016. "When I resigned, the company developed a flexible position for me where I could help employees with a wellness programme while still training and competing in the triathlon. This has been a fantastic relationship, between myself and Stanlib."

Johnston finished fourth at the ATU (African Triathlon Union) African Championships held in Egypt in May.

"It was a great experience but I would rate my first trip overseas, where I spent four months in Colorado and became the first South African to qualify for the 51510 Triathlon event there, as a career highlight. This was the first time I lined up against the world's best. It really was a dream come true to be able to compete against some of the triathletes I watched on television. Thanks to the support from my family, friends, and work, I can now really focus on making Olympic qualification a reality." — Iwan Pienaar

AKANI SIMBINE

Sprinter

Twitter: @AkaniSimbine

It's difficult to keep up with Akani Simbine's antics on the track. On the first of July this year he joined a select group of sprinters when he became only the second South African to break the 10-second barrier in the 100m, speeding to the finish line in a time of 9.99s in Slovenia. His achievement was overshadowed somewhat a few days later by fellow sprinter Henrico Bruinjies, who broke Simon Magakwe's 100m record of 9.98s, winning his heat at the Resisprint International Meeting in Switzerland in a time of 9.97s.

However, in true champion style, just four days later Simbine equalled Bruinjies' new national record in the final of the men's 100m at the World Student Games in South Korea. Earlier in the day Simbine had broken a 28-year-old World University record with his 10s time in the semi-finals. Shortly thereafter he posted on Facebook: "God has proven yet again that He is not done with me yet. Universiade Record, National Record, Seasons Best & Personal Best.... Blessings on blessings on blessings on blessing... Thank you yet again to every single person that has supported me through this journey. We stay chasing dreams! #teamSA #WSG #Adidas #100m #Gold #9.97 #blessed."

"I feel really happy to have achieved what I have so far," says the 21-year-old. "It's been coming and I'm just happy that I've finally broken ten seconds twice already. Things are going as planned which makes me happy."

All eyes will be on Simbine in August this year, when he competes in the International Association of Athletics Federations World Championships in Beijing.

But he is as calm and level-headed as ever.

"The focus hasn't changed," he says. "It's still keeping sub-ten consistently and getting the times down and getting into the final at the world championships later in August," he says. — Fatima Asmal



PHOTO:ADRIAN DENNIS



Youth upliftment in progress

In its capacity as the monitoring and evaluation structure for the implementation of youth programmes across the City of Johannesburg, the Youth Unit has been very proactive in keeping the fire burning across all council departments.

The City of Johannesburg's Youth Policy will give impetus to the youth development agenda and contains inherent commitments by the city, its youth and society at large on services that would have to be employed to ensure effective and efficient integration of youth development in the socio-economic mainstream.

Says Phemelo Kebinelang, head of the unit: "Ours is a council function located in the office of the executive mayor and falling under the office of the city manager.

"The unit is responsible for the mainstreaming, co-ordination, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes within this region and is positioned in the strategic department to ensure interaction and communication with all city's departments, municipal entities (MEs) and ultimately private sector on issues relating to youth development.

"This will ensure that all departments and ME's remain accountable and responsible in addressing youth development within the city."

Kebinelang says that the unit's focus is over three primary areas. The first one where there is very strong focus is on learnerships. Skills development and capacity building is a second, particularly in the information technology field.

Uplifting SMMEs

"We are doing intensive training on SAP, giving youth the minimum basics of IT in order to be able to leverage from their understanding and their qualifications. The city's IT infrastructure is SAP-based, so this also means we are developing a pool of talent from which we can draw resources, developing careers and career paths in City of Johannesburg departments."

The third area is uplifting and enabling small micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs), aligned closely with the National Youth Development Act (NYDA). In this area, the unit is facilitating basic management training for SMMEs on such issues as basic finance, administration, human

resources and other related areas. This is being done through various partners and sponsors, both in the public and private sectors.

"We need to help young entrepreneurs who have started their own companies to run their businesses on a day-to-day basis," explains Kebinelang.

Although the unit is a monitoring structure and not directly involved in the actual implementation of youth programmes, it has implemented a number of programmes working together with various departments and MEs within the city and also with external stakeholders.

These youth programmes implemented include and are not limited to the National Youth Service, the expanded public works programme (EPWP), internships, workplace experiential training, life skills workshops, boot camps for young entrepreneurs, campaigns on raising awareness on drugs and alcohol, distribution of books, career expos and exhibitions, allocation of bursaries, food gardening/resilience, dialogues and information sessions, prison tours, first aid training, learner driver training, clean-up campaigns, young women workshops and assistance in terms of access to job opportunities.

Closing the communication gap

Born and raised in Soweto, a township she describes as characterising huge suffering and great triumph is Phindile Dhlamini, whose company, Gracefully Consulting, partners with the city on different programmes, particularly within the townships.

"The city is definitely making progress with its programmes," she says. "The struggle now is closing the communication gap between the city and communities where access to information is limited.

"Our emphasis is being in touch with the municipalities, understanding their policies and projects, identifying key role players and taking this information into communities so they can use it to their benefit.

"As individuals, we also need to help them through demonstrating how they may apply their passion, abilities and skills in order to successfully take advantage of the opportunities that currently exist."



Phemelo Kebinelang



Phindile Dhlamini

Is it working?

There have been a number of success stories emanating from the programmes implemented by the City of Johannesburg Youth Unit. Some 750 young people were provided with different work experiences and experiential learning as part of its skills development programme and a total of 500 young people were trained on the city's SAP information technology systems, which skills will assist them to better position themselves when employment opportunities become available. Nine youth advisory centres have been established across the city's seven regions, bringing youth development programmes closer to where young people are and monthly, more than 1 000 young people visit these centres.

Making milestones

Volunteering his services to the City of Johannesburg to assist with youth and ultimately economic development is entrepreneur and author, Tshepang Mokgatla. This young live-wire coach and mentor studied at Wits Business School, however he dropped out before graduating, ascribing this to not having a clear plan for the future.

This has not stopped him becoming a multiple award-winner and contributor to uplifting Johannesburg's youth, consulting on programme and project management.

Explaining the rationale behind the work he does, Mokgatla says: "Learning from a textbook and learning from hands-on experience are two completely different things. I had to bridge the gap between the two and needed to gain practical exposure. Working with the city provided both the experience and recognition while also enabling me to build a foundation for myself."

Mokgatla established Be28 Movement offering success coaching, mentoring, inspirational and motivational oratory and consulting; the company won an award for the 'most innovative project for 2014' at the ACTIVATE change drivers showcase. Mokgatla himself has been listed as one of the top 20 inspirational youth in South Africa and is an official Gijima coach to Gijima interns and learners nationwide.

"Be28 is a movement that is driven by creating habits of success amongst communities and youth in particular," continues Mokgatla. "It is established on a belief that if an individual does something consistently for 28 days, it becomes a habit.

"We are surrounded by opportunity and it is vital for individuals to expose themselves to what is out there in the world. All too often people are too settled in the couch of entitlement, instead of preparing themselves to meet the opportunities that are out there.

"While the city still has a way to go in this arena, there have been some major milestones forward, particularly the investment in skills upliftment in SAP. The city is also making considerable investment in combatting drug abuse and its investment with SITA putting 60 learners through Wits Business School is another major milestone."

Putting policy in place

Since 2009, the City of Johannesburg has demonstrated its commitment to the youth development agenda through the adoption of its Youth Policy. This policy is an extension of and has grown since the original RDP plan, instigated in 1994. It provides clear guidelines and framework for effective youth engagement for city departments and municipal-owned entities and affords the city an important stage for learning and adopting effective youth development implementation models.

Youth refers to young people between the ages of 14 and 35 years and categories of youth encompass young men and women, disabled youth, youth in conflict with the law or ex-offenders, those not in employment, education and training, youth-headed households, vulnerable youth and those living and working on the streets.

Through reviews over the years, the city has evaluated the policy against set goals and has reframed objectives and priorities as necessary in the context of new challenges and opportunities.

Mainstreaming

It is said that the 2015-2020 City of Johannesburg Youth Policy will give impetus to the youth development agenda within the city, with this policy document containing inherent commitments by the city, its youth and society at large on interventions and services that have to be employed to ensure effective and efficient internal and external mainstreaming of youth development in the socioeconomic mainstream.

It also builds on provincial and national policy and programmatic interventions implemented for young people from 1994 to date and recommitments to escalating youth development issues to a level where all role-players in society, including the public, private and civil society sector make youth development their day-to-day business in order to take South Africa "to a future we all envisage."

In defining youth development, the National Youth Commission encapsulates all the relevant aspects as a process whereby young women and men are able to improve their skills, talents and abilities, as well as to extend their intellectual, physical and emotional capacities. It includes the opportunity for young women and men to express themselves and to live full lives in all social, cultural, economic and spiritual spheres, also engaging them as participants in decision-making processes.



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Taking care of interns is taking care of business

Managing Johannesburg’s roads infrastructure, with its burgeoning population, is an occupation that requires a team of people that is not just technically competent, but customer-oriented.

Pivotal to the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) portfolio is road safety and the energy required behind this, thus the agency’s Human Capital Development (HCD) department is passionate about the quality of its interns and internship programme.

JRA’s Bertha Peters-Scheepers, operations manager,

marketing and communications says: “All interns undergo an induction programme when they start working here and are assigned a mentor who provides on-the-job training. Both must complete monthly reports to inform HCD on the progress of their development plan.

Business etiquette

“All JRA employees are considered road ambassadors and are expected to use the JRA Find&Fix mobile application or any

other available electronic means to report problems seen on the roads they travel.” From business etiquette skills to practical on-the-job training in their different positions, interns also have the opportunity to receive internal and external training and are afforded the opportunity to compete for positions.

“We want to contribute towards South Africa’s development strategy,” continues Peters-Scheepers. “Employing young graduates gives them an opportunity to put skills learned in the classroom into practice in the real world. The majority of JRA

interns are either employed at the JRA, external contractors or at firms in Johannesburg.

“All candidates undergo a panel interview at the JRA before being placed as an intern or as a permanent employee. Usually the only interns who are not employed at the end of an internship are those who choose to further their studies.”

The JRA’s bursary scheme feeds into the internship scheme, also giving bursars the opportunity to work as vacation work students and interns w

The interns of 2015

Supporting the growth and development of Johannesburg by offering unemployed youth opportunities to receive structured workplace experience as learnerships, apprenticeships or internships might seem a noble thing to do, but the reciprocal value entities receive from these young people is immeasurable. Over and above the annual injection of youthful energy, there is commitment to make it work.

One of two interns in Human Capital Management (HCM), Walter Malaka, says he is a “passionate resident of Johannesburg and has its service interests at heart.

“I wanted to know more about municipal-owned entities and what the JRA is doing to enhance mobility.

“Human resources (HR) — my chosen career path, is dynamic, multi-disciplinary and the training and development of people is something that enthuses me.

“This internship has enhanced my skills and knowledge with respect to the different functions of HR. In June, I was seconded by my internship mentor to the office of the manager of the JRA.

“In this role, I have accrued the experience where I can now assist in my community in terms of sensitising them about the functions of the city, how to petition with respect to robots, speed bumps, stop signs and other important aspects pertaining to mobility management.”

The second intern in HCM is Masego Nakane who as a general assistant to her manager, has been given the room to work with initiative in her role.

“I mainly process training requirements and requisitions at the moment,” explains Nakane. “HR has been my passion from high school as I love working with people, helping and developing them.

“This opportunity has been significant for me; expanding my knowledge and deciding whether to be a generalist in this field or a specialist. It also has come at a time where I am the only person in my family who has a job, so this has really helped my family and our being able to stay on top of paying our accounts.”

Risk management intern Sibongile Moabi assists her two managers with creating and updating risk schedules. “I was battling to find work to further my career and when I saw this programme advertised, I immediately applied. It has given me work experience that I know will be beneficial later in terms of competing with others.

“I would really like to stay with the JRA and build on my experience. While risk management was not something I had initially considered, it has now turned into a real interest.”

Marketing and communication intern Josias Ace Moloi, has



Katlego Masita



Walter Malaka



Josias Moloi



Kelebogile Emily Mafa



Bridget Nelly Ndlovu



Masego Nakane



Unathi Umabitsela



Lebohang Mofokeng



Sibongile Moabi

worked his way up via bursaries and scholarships based on academic performance from his humble beginnings in a small village in Qwa-Qwa, Free State, growing up with an absentee father and an unskilled and uneducated mother.

“My passion for reading and communication started from a very young age and I would collect any reading material, no matter what. Marketing and communications is a title I have

calculated in my mind for as long as I can remember. Without it, no company can have good relationships with society, particularly relationships with the media.

“Working in public services has sharpened my communications skills and this internship has opened me up to every facet of communications.”

Kelebogile Mafa, another marketing and communications intern, could not contain her enthusiasm which has “always been about writing”.

“This opportunity has allowed me to be exposed to all types of communication.

“I struggled with English up until age nine, but with the encouragement of my teachers I found myself improving in something I never thought I would. This internship has helped me not to limit myself and exposed me to communication through different channels.”

Civil engineering intern in the planning department Unathi Mabitsela holds a national diploma from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and is currently completely a BTech in construction. From an academically-inclined family, she is the first engineer.

“I am working on road asset management systems and how it all works. I love this as a career path and I am looking at this being long-term and working towards a position of responsibility.”

Also in the planning department, civil engineering intern, Bridget Ndlovu, says one of the most important aspects of her internship is gaining exposure in the civil engineering world.

“That the JRA believes in giving back to society has given me the insight to go back to other students and share information, exposing them to all the different elements of civil engineering.”

Katlego Masita is studying electrical engineering and is in her third year with the UJ. Based in the Intelligent Transport Systems Department, she is working with monitoring systems to keep people moving on the roads.

“I chose to intern with the JRA because I am most interested in roads and traffic as my career and also because my in-service training requires me to engage with an appropriate company. I saw the advertisement, applied, accepted and here I am!”

Demonstrating the longevity of the JRA’s youth development programme, former HCM intern, Lebohang Mofokeng, is now the JRA assistant manager of human capital development and compliance.

“After graduating in 2006, I submitted my CV to the JRA which landed up in its CV bank. I am now in my eighth year here and the sky is still the limit.

“I believe the JRA has seen the passion in me, but it came naturally. My mentor always said we should never clock watch and this is something none of us do.”

53 Young JRA interns ...

A staggering 53 interns joined the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) at the beginning of 2015. What is even more incredible is that this number is down to 40 because 13 of them have now been employed by the JRA and some of its Gauteng contractors or JRA-affiliated contractors.

“Hopefully this number of interns getting permanent positions will increase,” says Mpho Kau, Acting Managing Director.

“We have partnerships with the universities of Johannesburg and Witwatersrand, and are benefitting from the relationship these entities have with the City of Johannesburg. We are also in the process of signing a service level agreement with UNISA. These partnerships mean that we advertise the positions we have for graduates with these institutions first.

“We employ many graduates, who all have to go through a thorough, full panel interview process,” she explains. “Our human resources managers, union representatives, management from responsible departments and external observers are all involved in this panel selection. From these interviews, we short list those candidates with the highest academic records, as well as good interpersonal skills.”



Bringing business development



While in many instances there is a general alignment between economic policy at the national, provincial and local government levels, work remains around co-ordination in policy implementation.

Similarly, while the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) policy has at least succeeded in stimulating corporate investment in skills and enterprise development, more co-ordination between private sector and public sector programmes in this space is desirable, especially with regards to enterprise development.

"While small business or enterprise development is frag-

mented and unco-ordinated, ironically the primary cause of this is recognition by institutions and organs of state that small business development is an important priority shared by all.

"As a result, almost every public and private sector entity has some kind of small business development programme or other," says Shaun Govender, chief executive of The Business Place, a not-for-profit organisation that serves as a gateway to services, information and business facilities required to assist new and existing entrepreneurs set up, grow and establish their businesses.

"Fragmentation hampers the overall effectiveness of

programmes and frustrates the intended beneficiaries of these programmes. It makes it more difficult and costly for entrepreneurs to access the help they need.

"The establishment of the Jozi SME Hub programme was in response to this fragmentation and aimed at bringing a broad range of small business development services under one roof.

Ecosystems

"Having taken that first step towards co-ordination and integration of the small business development ecosystem, there is now the opportunity to take this process further by

aligning and integrating this ecosystem into the broader economic development agenda championed by the City of Johannesburg.

"The state of the township economy within the City of Johannesburg can be characterised as being about how to create an inclusive and prosperous society in the face of the persistent challenges of high unemployment rates, a highly unequal society and relatively low economic growth.

"SMEs have an important role to play in the various ways they can facilitate township development and stimulate township economies. There are specific SME business development programmes aimed at growing key oppor-

What does the SMME Development and Support Directorate do?

Youth development should be viewed as a central process of a world class African city of the future and approached with the same vigour as all other processes of transformation. Development of young people must be aligned to the city's approach to addressing the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Enabling entrepreneurs to establish sustainable businesses through nourishing policies and programmes will contribute towards promoting social adjustment, social cohesion and economic emancipation.

Part of the Department of Economic Development of the City of Johannesburg, the SMME Development and Support Directorate is actively intervening in the city's economy to shape conditions for accelerated local economic growth and ensure that the benefits and opportunities are equitably spread to all SMMEs.

Jozi SME Hubs

The SMME Development and Support Directorate operates five Jozi SME hubs, the flagship being 58 Marshall Street in Marshalltown, which has since 1999 seen steady growth in feet through its door. It has assisted over 6 000 visitors since July 2014, around a third of which have been under the age of 35. Some 8 000 enterprises have had support from the hubs, and more than 20 000, if entrepreneurs are included.

Each centre offers a friendly, accessible walk-in environment where aspiring and existing entrepreneurs have access to information and support related to developing their small business.

There are a number of mentionable enterprises which have been assisted through the Jozi SME Hub, with businesses now up and running successfully.

Housing, education and training business Setsmol has been in operation since 2002 and business owner and founder Solly Molefe now employs 23 people. Ndzilofire, which specialises in fire protection services, has grown to 18 people since opening its doors in February 2011.

Landscaping business Thatego Landscapes has grown since 2002 and now employs 41 people. Travel Nation and New Age Construction employ five and seven people respectively.

SMMEs wishing to go to a hub in their area can reach them through the following contact details:

Johannesburg, Marshalltown 011 833 0340;
Alexandra, Motsweding Centre, 011 440 7887;
Soweto Empowerment Zone, A2/431 Old Putco Building, 011 989 8023/48;
Poortjie Community Centre, Corner Kubheita Street and Foreman Street; and
Diepsloot Riversands, 12 Incubation Drive.

On tap business services

Aspiring entrepreneurs or individuals running their own businesses and wanting to expand may now access services through the Jozi SME Hub entrepreneurial development programme. Hubs can assist in multiple ways. They can provide business information, referrals to co-location partners in the centres and opportunities through the supply chain linkages programme, training and workshops and networking sessions.

Entrepreneurs can now approach the funding facilitation and sector-specific incubation programmes, as well as request access to business space. A City of Johannesburg initiative, the city has appointed The Business Place, a non-profit company, as the city's implementing partner.

Multi-agency approach

Realistically, no single agency can provide all the business development services required by local businesses, hence the multi-agency approach taken by Jozi SME Hubs. Each agency determines the specific services that it offers and the Hub ensures that collectively, the mix of agencies located at the centres offers a comprehensive portfolio of services.

These services extend into assisting with business assessments and development plans, business management training seminars, legal, tax and accounting advice including company registration, tax compliance, auditing, subsidised managed workspaces with meeting rooms and wi-fi and assisting with product awareness and application assistance.

The Hub programme also identifies and provides practical responses to patterns that impact negatively on the growth potential of SMMEs in townships to prevent delaying the overall rate at which township transformation can be achieved.

"Patterns of SMME development will differ," explains Govender. "Those SMMEs concentrated in the city are formal, while those in the townships are largely informal. The latter category of SMMEs includes small farms and informal traders and township businesses. The secondary process to ensure optimised growth of SMMEs will involve integration between the formal and informal SMMEs." Informal SMMEs tend to market their goods and services in their own impoverished townships, which limits their growth potential and generates a relatively small tax base, which will have negligible effect on restructuring their economic base.

"The Jozi SME Hub programme will champion the rollout of the six sector-specific incubation programmes, targeting SMMEs from the surrounding townships.

"SMMEs in the formal sector have better prospects for growth and therefore also for creating jobs, accumulating assets and a skills base through use of technology. This also has a direct influence on their competitiveness, productivity, profit margin and overall business confidence and investment," stresses Govender.

Infrastructure

The implication of poor and unreliable infrastructure networks and poor levels of development for townships is that most investors, if faced with choosing a location, would probably elect to locate their SMME in the city, rather than a township. This has a negative impact on the SMME concentration in townships, reducing the likelihood of an effective local economic-base restructuring of townships, where infrastructure development is crucial.

Investec has been a significant champion of the programme, donating 58 Marshall Street, which The Business Place has converted into a multi-agency, one-stop-shop providing financial and non-financial support to small businesses.



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under one roof



tunity sectors of engineering, aviation, transport and logistics, agriculture, local manufacturing and tourism," says Govender

These programmes can also increase opportunities for residents to enter the formal economy as employees, entrepreneurs, investors, service providers or manufacturers.

The Jozi SME Hub programme is an integrated SME development intervention to restructure and consolidate the economic base of townships towards transforming their economic landscapes.

The programme aims to promote, encourage and support township development and renewal in the city through the

training of entrepreneurs that are located in and around townships, using innovative techniques that are designed to unlock the growth potential of SMMEs as a crucial starting point for any restructuring efforts.

Broad range of factors

The programme operates around identified opportunities, applying the vision of a small business development approach and perspective, rather than a stand-alone development process.

"One could say that although the development of small businesses is the desired outcome, this outcome can never

be achieved if the small businesses themselves are the only objects of intervention," continues Govender. "There are a broad range of other factors and economic spheres that have a direct bearing on whether or not small businesses have the opportunity to prosper.

"Other perspectives, such as sector development, spatial development and investment attraction also come into play, as do the actions of a broad range of economic players. In the end, real economic activities and development outcomes all have spatial, sectorial and investment dimensions and involve players of all sizes with a broad range of complementary agendas."

You are challenged!

Two challenges have been made regarding the upliftment of SMEs and the youth in particular. The "Green City" start-up challenge is implemented in partnership with the University of Johannesburg and its Resolution Circle (its hub for incubating small business), providing services to small businesses and helping its clients with product and process development. It has set up a fund for SMEs and startups in the green economy and thrown down the gauntlet for the most promising startups to come forward and compete for grants of up to R1-million from the city.

The ICT challenge fund is a similar initiative for SMEs and startups in ICT and is to encourage the most promising ICT startups to come forward and complete for grants of up to R250 000 from the city. This is implemented in partnership with Wits University and its Jo'burg Centre for Software Engineering (JCSE).

Tshimologong is a seSotho word meaning "new beginnings" and the Tshimologong Precinct is a new software hub in Braamfontein that will nurture the production and consumption of local ICT products and services. Dubbed the Tech-in-Braam project, under the leadership of Professor Barry Dwolatzky, director and chief executive of JCSE, this project is said to be the first step in developing a prosperous Braamfontein ICT cluster.

The cluster is intended to provide skills development opportunities, offering internships for unemployed graduates and training for school leavers. A number of training programmes are planned for the precinct, including a banking software skills academy, a hi-maturity software development unit and a games and digital content hub.

Finding JEDIs

In February this year, the City of Johannesburg announced its ambitious programme to put around 1 000 young people through internship programmes with IT companies in the hopes of both raising IT skills in the city and creating employment opportunities.

This Johannesburg Educating Digital Interns (JEDI) initiative, according to Rudy Mathang, MMC for economic development, is needed to keep Johannesburg competitive over the next few years and is part of the wider "smart city" programme to upgrade infrastructure and skills.

According to Mathang: "The World Bank recently said that ICT activity is twice as intensive in Johannesburg as in the rest of the country combined. We have a young population and a perfect environment for developing cutting-edge ICT products and services."

The first 250 interns have been selected from 600 applicants and have begun such programmes as network engineering, web design and fibre optic engineering with companies like IBM, FibreCo, Microsoft and Cisco. Interns choosing the network engineering course will obtain either Microsoft or Cisco credentials. The web design and development course will teach interns how to use HTML and CSS.

The fibre optics course includes fibre layout, splicing and testing and at the end of this, the certification validates an individual's ability to deploy optic communications. All students conclude the programme with personal development training to equip them with a foundation to either enter the corporate market or start their own businesses.

The students are predominantly from previously disadvantaged communities and 45% are young women. The city's investment in JEDIs is significant, not just financially but in terms of its potential to transform young lives.

Every quarter, 250 more people are added to the JEDI programme and the city will be using social media channels as recruitment tools, encouraging prospective learners to demonstrate why they should be chosen using Facebook and Twitter as the communication mediums.

These 10-month internships are split into two parts. The first part involves a four-month bootcamp, which focusses on general training and business skills. The balance of the six months contains on-the-job apprenticeships and in-service training within the city and some of the country's leading IT companies. As the initiative progresses, JEDIs are expected to spread out into their communities to show people how to access contracts, facilities, government services and information on state tenders.



Jozi@work

In 2014, the City of Johannesburg launched its Jozi@Work programme, intended to see R1.3-billion in-city contracting serviced by an estimated 1 750 new and existing community level co-operatives and enterprises, supporting 12 500 permanent livelihoods in the first year of the programme alone and a total of 40 000 new jobs servicing the city's spend across its nine sectors by the close of the current mayoral term.

This is one of the most profound ways the city is empowering its citizens and youth, with these SMEs serving such diverse needs as de-sludging of chemical toilets, separating and recycling waste as it arrives at city dumps, providing food to nutrition programmes, resurfacing and maintaining

roads and offering frontline support to water and power infrastructure. Residents are both suppliers as well as city customers — and transacting locally will make them better at being both. It will mean better value for money paid to the city and faster, more attentive service in return for money paid into the city through rates and service charges.

Using a supply chain process developed in consultation with the national treasury, the city sources community-based enterprises and co-ops through a network of bidders' briefings — the regional Jozi@work forums. Small, very small and micro concerns pitch for business with the city using a simple and streamlined process.

Work is spread as widely as possible and overseen by

a system of capability support agents, who provide professional oversight, mentoring, quality assurance as well as enable the enterprises given work to purchase raw materials and rent necessary equipment, recovering costs from monthly contract payments as milestones are met. In this way, a much wider range of poorer and middle class residents seeking to participate find lowered barriers to entry.

Workers gaining on-the-job experience on the work packages assigned through the system will also be able to build up their skills through an apprenticeship programme which will include digital learning at recreation centres and libraries after hours and on days off. The result will be a trade certification and a chance to take their expertise further.



Keeping the youth free

Safety in any major city is about common sense, information and awareness, and Johannesburg is no exception. Creating an environment of safety and security so that residents and businesses can live and operate free from crime, personal emergencies and disasters is central to all the objectives of public safety.

An integral element of its strategy is the pressing need to counsel and develop youth who have had or run the risk of brushes with the law. This underlines the need for the department's youth prison tour programme.

The central premise of this programme is that arranging prison visits for youth in communities, youth at schools or youth at risk or already in conflict with the law will deter them from future delinquency.

Deterrence is the foundation and public safety department officials feel strongly that realistic and often aggressive depictions of prison life will instil a fear of the consequences of incarceration and encourage safer communities.

According to Tebogo Morake, head of youth development for the JMPD, a large number of Johannesburg's youth live in difficult conditions that may lead to vulnerability and desperation.

"Young people continue to be perpetrators of crime and a threat to safety. Younger males are especially considered as being at more risk of being convicted across a spectrum of crimes — more than older males or females of any age group," says Morake.

School tours focus on schools that have the highest crime rates and encompass Egeneseni and Matabane Secondary Schools, Kaalfontein, Umgele and Ponelelope High Schools.

Visits to these schools are not just by the youth directorate, but include the participation of the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (Sanca) and the Saps Youth Desk.

Educating

"If we can discourage illegal behaviour and involvement in criminal activities amongst the youth and instil discipline and awareness, we steadily progress towards a city where life, property and lifestyle are safe and secure, so that residents and businesses can live and operate free of constant threat, and a by-product of this is attracting investment," continues Morake.

"We aim to educate the youth on how the economy is affected due to criminal activities, such as the taxes used to maintain prisoners which could be better spent on health-care or education, for example.

"By visiting a prison young people will be exposed to first-hand information and experience regarding the environment and conditions of prison life and that should dispel a lot of misleading information about prisons and prison life.

"We need to be educating youth about the normal social values and practices acceptable in our society and assist them to redirect their energies towards positive things in life, encouraging them to appreciate and acknowledge their freedom and space.

"Above all, we need to show youth the importance of loving and being loved, especially by their family and extended family," concludes Morake.

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Rolling out programmes

Public Safety Youth Focal Point has run some very successful programmes in collaboration with various stakeholders such as the departments of education, transport, correctional services, economic development and the Saps. They have involved municipalities, the offices of the MEC and the premier, the ANYCL, Sanca and the Youth Directorate.

June was a particularly busy month and it is estimated that the department engaged with 3 000 young people in a number of ways to try and establish how youth view safety within the city, what safety programmes they feel need be implemented, where there is collaboration and airing the public safety challenges they have. There was also emphasis on encouraging a crime- and drug-free society.

Post the launch of youth month, a dialogue with MMC Councillor Sello Lemao over safety within the city took place — also covering xenophobic attacks at the Rabie Ridge Community Hall. Rosebank College hosted a presentation on crime prevention, including information about dog unit searches, alcohol and drugs awareness and first aid. Voter education was presented at Nasrec and 300 youth were taken on a prison tour of Sun City Prison in support of the department's prison tour programme. Soweto hosted jobs and skills development training and substance abuse awareness. Their work did not end in June and July saw an exceptionally popular campaign keeping nearly 200 learners in the City of Johannesburg's Region D busy while learning new elements about safety, thanks to the JMPD's Schools Holiday Programme. Learners aged between eight and 18

converged into the Bapedi Hall in Meadowlands, Soweto, where they engaged in various activities such as life skills and sports. The week-long programme was supported by city entities and departments such as the Johannesburg Emergency Management Services and the department of community development, as well as nongovernmental organisations such as Grassroots Soccer and loveLife.

JMPD Officer Tshidiso Monareng said the aim of the programme was to remove learners from the streets and engage them in meaningful activities and aspects that would benefit them, including career guidance. "Region D is faced with many social challenges, including teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and a high school dropout rate," he explains. "With this programme we hope to mitigate these challenges and help to build stability in communities. Road safety forms an integral part of the programme and young children were taught such basics as how to cross the road."

Monareng said JMPD had also invited representatives of the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence to speak to the learners about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. It also invited ex-convicts to talk about their prison experiences to discourage learners from engaging in criminal activities. "Social workers were always on hand to assess whether there are learners who need social services," he said. Health Promoter Paul Lesu said the programme had received an "overwhelming response" from schools, adding that JMPD was already preparing for the September school holidays.

Mobilising Joburg's youth

Without driver's licences, many young people miss out on employment opportunities, with many matriculants also finding themselves in a situation where their families cannot afford the up to R6 000 it can cost to acquire a driver's licence.

It is concerning that an increasing number of young people who are fortunate enough to have access to a vehicle are driving illegally without licences and putting their lives, other motorists and pedestrians in danger.

Add to this the impact and costs of the increase of the number of road fatalities and ambulances dispatched on a daily basis.

In support of the youth development policy, Public Safety Youth Development Focal Point initiated the youth drivers' license programme, with 60 young Johannesburg residents participating.

"This programme will provide them with an additional skill that will make them more employable and it is our intention to uplift young people within our communities through ensuring that they are in possession of a valid driver's licence," explains Tebogo Morake, head of youth development for the JMPD.

"The initiative — at no cost to participants, also makes them more employable in the public safety department. The focus is currently on young people within public safety as volunteers and in non-permanent positions to be able to increase their chances of being employed," she concludes.



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS ● CITY OF JOHANNESBURG



Lufuno Maphagela, EMS youth development specialist

EMS bursaries developing emergency personnel

Emergency Management Services (EMS) piloted its youth development bursary programme in July 2012, its aim being to develop youth to address the dearth of skills in this essential field and capacitate communities with better resources.

The programme promotes emergency management services and assists students wishing to pursue a career in EMS or a related field such as fire technology, paramedic, emergency medical technician or disaster management.

After a rigorous selection process, accepted students started the programme at the beginning of 2013 and according to Lufuno Maphagela, EMS youth development specialist, the first group is anticipated to complete the course at the end of this year.

Bursaries are at negligible cost to the City of Johannesburg, tuition fees being funded directly to the tertiary institutions through the National Youth Development Agency. However, these bursaries would not have been possible without other sponsors, including Fire Riders, Vodacom, Swimming South Africa, Fleet Africa, J&H Protective Clothing, Sihlangene Security, Vuza Group, Clinix Tshepo Themba, and the City of Joburg corporate and shared services. Another vital group of external stakeholders is the media that participated. Buy-in from EMS personnel was the admission fees for 20 students, who were being sponsored by senior EMS managers.

Physical fitness

“Given that people place their lives in the hands of those first at the scene of an accident or medical emergency, strict criteria for bursaries in this field are in place, and candidates need a minimum of a matric certificate with a good

academic record with a minimum D symbol in mathematics and physical science,” stresses Maphagela.

Students wishing to secure a bursary should have a keen interest in this profession as a career and prior volunteering experience in the emergency environment is an added advantage. In an effort to promote women in the emergency management services (EMS) profession, preference may be given to women, however it is open to male and female under-privileged candidates residing in the City of Johannesburg between the ages of 16 and 35.

Physical fitness is extremely important as rescue work is by nature mentally and physically exhaustive and EMTs working at a rescue scene are expected to perform physical tasks for long periods without rest or relief.

Evaluations of applicant’s strength, stamina and swimming skills take place. During the process of the physical assessments, all candidates are closely monitored to assess essential teamwork and leadership abilities. In order for emergency care practitioners to be fully functional, they must possess a certain minimum strength, one example of which is requiring the strength to lift and carry an average adult male patient a distance of 100m.

Applicants also undergo two phobia tests to measure fear of heights (acrophobia) and fear of confined spaces (claustrophobia).

Mentorship

The stringent assessment process does not end with physical and academic ability and they are required to undergo interviews and literacy and numeracy tests, write a three-page essay on their community involvement to establish the level of insight the applicant has in terms of his chosen

profession as well as language and comprehension abilities.

At the end of the recruitment process, 25 students were selected to study towards a medical degree at the University of Johannesburg or a National Diploma in Fire Technology at Tshwane University of Technology. The programme was officially launched by the executive mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Parks Tau. A sound mentorship programme is in place for students.

The anticipated outcome at the end of this 2013 bursary programme is that students should hold an NQF Level 7, a three-year national diploma in fire technology and a four-year honours degree in emergency medical care. Indeed, the bachelor’s degree in emergency medical care is the longest and most extensive pre-hospital emergency medical

course in the world today.

“So far, it has been challenging, however some students are excelling with distinctions in their subjects,” continues Maphagela.

The search for the second intake of students for this bursary programme starts towards the end of this year and Maphagela says the same marketing process will be followed to create awareness, including roadshows, presentations to high schools and universities, advertisements in the media and publicity through the various community radio stations and forums.

“We will also use the lessons learnt from the first pilot programme to make the next programme an even greater success,” she concludes.

Tackling substance abuse

Empowering young people with information about substance abuse is just one of the ways the City of Johannesburg’s emergency management services (EMS) is adding value to youth development.

Says Lufuno Maphagela, EMS youth development specialist: “Many people still believe that drug abuse among our youth in South Africa is not as widespread as it is around the world. However, as far back as 2007, then Minister of Social Development, Dr Zola Skweyiya, indicated that South Africa had more than 235 000 problem drug users who cost the economy more than R10-billion a year. The impact was significant, with up to 12 million family members of drug users left facing financial difficulties.”

As the City’s Public Safety Department, Maphagela says both the EMS and JMPD are deeply aware of the growing problem of substance abuse, especially among the youth.

“Week after week we receive substance abuse related emergency calls and see numerous media reports on the extent of drug abuse amongst school children — which also leads to the trauma of police raids on some of the schools for those children who are clean.”

Maphagela says the problem manifests itself in many ways, not least teenagers succumbing to peer pressure to experiment with drugs and drug dealers selling drugs to vulnerable children and minors.

“Terribly concerning is that HIV is often transmitted via sharing of needles and drug abuse and criminals getting young girls addicted to heroin and using them as prostitutes,” stresses Maphagela.

“Drug and alcohol abuse affects the entire spectrum of our society, from our very affluent communities to the poorest of the poor,” she continues. Among the most commonly used drugs in Johannesburg are dagga, cocaine, nyaope, crack, codeine, ecstasy, heroin and mandrax. This extends to medicines and alcohol; the most abused are pain relievers, tranquilisers, cough mixtures and slimming tablets. Alcohol abuse is widespread.”

Maphagela says other substances abused include household products such as glue, spray cans, benzene and petrol fumes which can be extremely harmful, ultimately leading to death. She says the programmes they run, such as their annual public safety youth walk against substance abuse, are aimed at reducing substance abuse related calls within EMS and the Johannesburg Metro Police departments and supporting the City of Johannesburg’s youth development strategy.

“This strategy includes health promotion and positive interventions to reach young people involved in substance abuse or at risk of being drawn into the lifestyle as well as the growth and development strategy 2040 of creating safe, secure and resilient communities,” concludes Maphagela.

Learning from other countries

Every year the EMS and Public Safety departments run several youth development programmes and community campaigns. These include Youth Month in June, a Woman’s Awareness Month in August, its London youth development tour, prison tours, self-defence classes for young women and other health and safety awareness campaigns. In June this year, Lufuno Maphagela and Tebogo Morake were part of the youth exchange study tour in London, England. This tour brings together an exceptional group of young leaders from across the world to partake in an event intended to develop skills and knowledge in areas related to security, youth inclusion, international affairs and diplomacy.

“We learned so much from participating,” says Tebogo Morake. “We also made viable contacts with other private and government organisations which are running similar youth programmes. We were also able to see new technological developments in safety and crime control and have returned with the intention to filter through the developments that could really help us here.”

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