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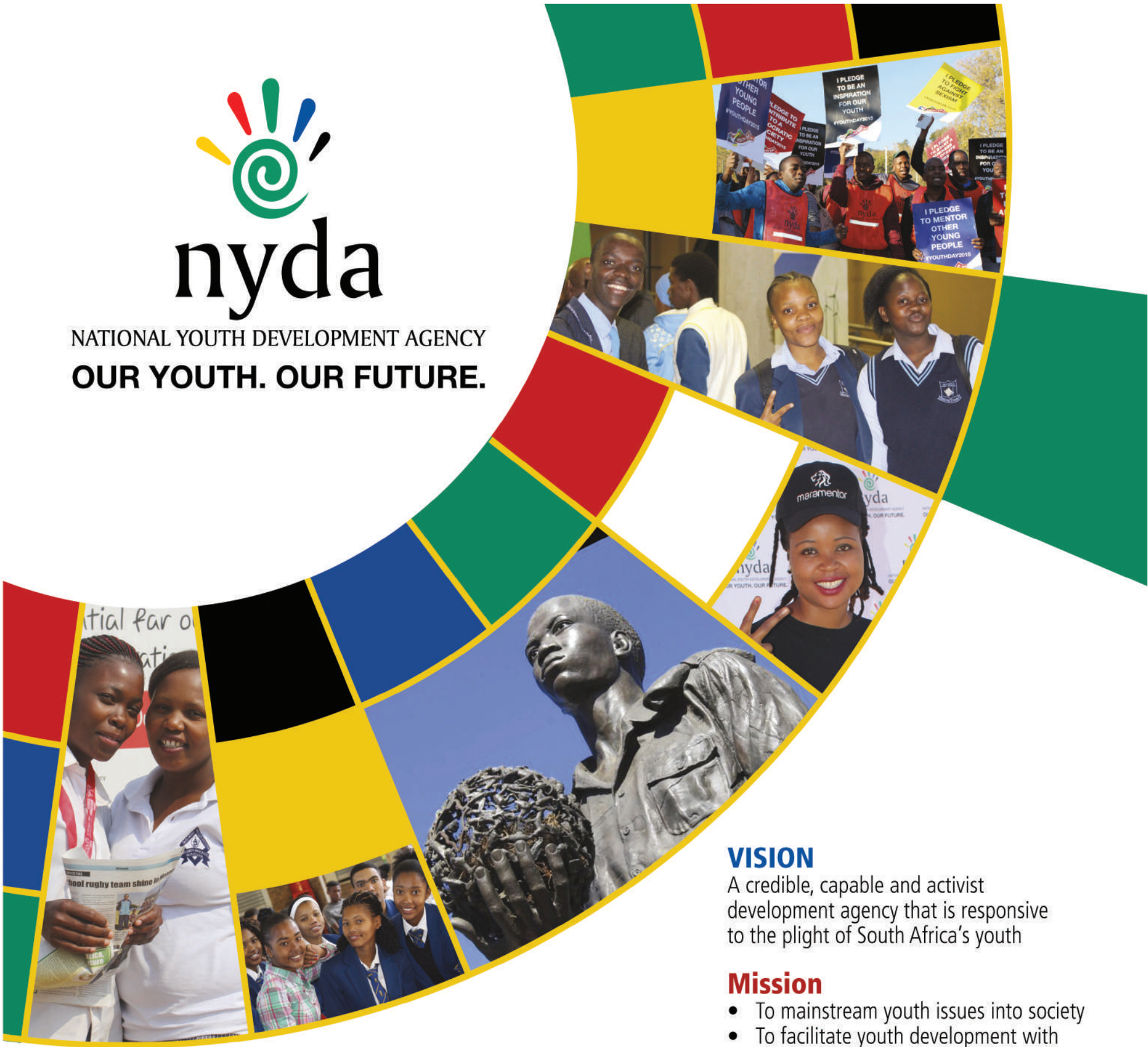


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NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.



VISION

A credible, capable and activist development agency that is responsive to the plight of South Africa's youth

Mission

- To mainstream youth issues into society
- To facilitate youth development with all sectors of society

Values

- Integrity and Honesty
- Excellence
- Respect and Humility
- Professionalism
- Accessibility

200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS

FOREWORD

As a publisher of news, the *Mail & Guardian* seeks to probe the underbelly of our world. We delve into that part of our reality that enrages us, the parts that frighten us, and all too often, we find ourselves uncovering the parts that leave us wringing our hands in despair. Every day we discover new parts of ourselves that are broken. We find the potential of women and children thwarted by an insidious violence that does not let up. In the course of gathering the news, and telling the story of our world, we find the ruins of what we could be as a people, the detritus of who we could be as a world.

And indeed if we are to be asked what is holding us back, then we have answers aplenty. But all our answers are really questions. And often, our task as the chroniclers of news is just to ask the questions. We remain, however, committed to the act of telling the news as an act of truth telling in the service of a more just world.

But our task is not limited to probing the brokenness of who we are.

Over the last year, we have exposed schools in Johannesburg without electricity, we have carried the tragic story of yet another child dying in the pit latrine of a school, and we have continued to publish the depth of the horrors of sexual violence. We tell these stories to hold the most powerful in our society to account, to ensure that justice may be done. Because a country in which so many people continue to eke out an existence with no real opportunity to lift themselves outside of the margins of formal society, is a country writhing in silent anguish.

But amidst the anguish, there is space too to recognise the people who continue to delight us.

And so, the project of highlighting 200 young South Africans every year is particularly important to the M&G. It is an effort to celebrate the young people we believe encompass the potential of humanity to

leave the world better than what we found it. In recognising these 200 young South Africans, we are marvelling at the ability of human beings to transcend impediments, to build, to believe, to be.

Congratulations to the 200 young people listed here. We've chosen you because you are a guiding light for South Africa. In your youth, we find a unique resilience. We look forward to seeing what more you are going to do.



Khadija Patel

Editor-in-chief, The *Mail & Guardian*

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How we choose the 200 Young South Africans

Every year in January we open up nominations for Young South Africans online on mg.co.za. This year we received around 2 500 nominations.

Once nominations close we go through the list thoroughly short-listing potential candidates. We select candidates for each category.

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

If you know someone we should profile in 2019, be sure to nominate them when entries open in January next year.

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Photographs were sourced directly from the individuals featured. Every effort has been made to identify and credit the photographers but this has not always been possible. Any oversight should be brought to our attention via 200young@mg.co.za and it will be corrected online.

EVENTS

Mahlodi Makate

EKURHULENI PAGES

Charles Molele

Masina places youth development on the top of the city's agenda

'We are an unashamedly pro-poor government'

Charles Molele

The executive mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni Mzwandile Masina is no stranger to youth activism. He joined the Congress of South African Students at the tender age of 16, in reaction to the oppressive language policies introduced by the apartheid regime. Masina later progressed into the African National Congress Youth League, where he rose up the ranks to ultimately lead the organisation as national convenor. He does not believe that issues affecting the youth should be considered as an afterthought; they must form the basis of all policy decisions made by government.

Speaking at this year's Ekurhuleni Youth Summit, Masina said: "It is absolutely imperative that Ekurhuleni unlocks the potential of the City's demographic dividend. The entire municipality must become preoccupied with developing the youth to be creative and productive citizens of the future. We cannot relegate matters facing the youth to a once-a-year summit; conversations around youth unemployment, skills development and gender-based violence must be ongoing."

This principle also underpins the work of the Ekurhuleni city manager, Dr Imogen Mashazi. As city manager, she is responsible for implementing and overseeing policies crafted by the city council including day-to-day management responsibilities that include financial planning, allocating physical resources and staff management. She is passionate about issues facing the youth and women.

Delivering a keynote address at a Take a Girl Child to Work Day event on May 31, Mashazi bemoaned the high level of gender-based violence in our society and called for the empowerment of women in general.

"While progress is evident in certain areas, we however continue to see numerous shocking incidents of the girl child being murdered and abused in recent times. The latest incident being that of the two Vryburg school girls who were murdered at a school hostel," said Mashazi.

"Our society continues to see girl child having to fend off rapists, child pregnancy, HIV and Aids and heading families as children. This must come to an end and it all starts with great initiatives like [Take a Girl Child to Work Day]."

Meanwhile, the executive mayor has heeded the call made by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the State of the Nation Address at the beginning of the year, "Now is the time to lend a hand, now is the time for each of us to say 'send me', thuma mina". Upon assuming office in 2016, Masina has swiftly moved to implement measures that support youth development in the City of Ekurhuleni. He began by increasing the Mayoral Bursary Fund from R10-million to R100-million annually, with an intention to double this amount and go beyond R250-million by 2021.

Masina said: "We need to empower the youth of Ekurhuleni with the tools build a better future. Education will allow the youth in the City an opportunity to become more employable and capacitate with the prerequisite skills to start their own businesses. Every child who is deserved and capable should be granted the opportunity to further their education."

To date, we can report that the City of Ekurhuleni has been able to assist 1 757 students in their pursuit of academic qualifications during 2017-2018. As we continue to sustain the current bursary holders, we have also resolved to award an additional 500 new bursaries to academically deserving students out of the 2 802 bursary applicants that met the qualifying criteria."



Executive Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni Mzwandile Masina. Picture: Supplied

Masina went on to support youth empowerment by pronouncing that R12-billion of set-asides must go towards youth-owned companies. To date over 1 722 companies have benefited from the youth set-asides. The executive mayor launched the project Mintirho ya Vulavula ("deeds speak"), which focuses on youth, women, people with disabilities and learner contractors. Over R1-billion has been budgeted for this project, in the hopes to accelerate the upliftment of these vulnerable groups.

In order to co-ordinate and monitor youth development throughout the City, Masina set up the Youth Directorate within his office and tasked it to develop a localised Integrated Youth Development Strategy for the City. The strategy is binding on all departments and senior managers in those departments. Mashazi said, "The City intends to have cross-cutting indicators for senior managers wherein youth development projects will be part of senior managers' performance areas."

"The Youth Directorate is a unit within my office, that is run by youth, for the youth. It is important to introduce young people into leadership positions at a very early stage. I am constantly energised after engaging with the youth unit. They bring fresh ideas to the municipality and safeguard the interests of young people."

Masina believes the most important initiative being undertaken by his administration is the establishment of the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Sciences and Technology. In just under a year, the City has successfully held a university symposium with various stakeholders to gather insight on recommendations for the university. The City has also identified a location for the university to be built and a university advisory council is in the final stages of being set up.

"We can no longer refer to the Fourth Industrial Revolution as a looming disruptor; it is here, and urgent steps need to be taken by government in order to mitigate the adverse effects of technological developments. Automation and Artificial Intelligence are massive threats to job losses in the near future. The Ekurhuleni University of Applied Sciences and Technology will seek to provide the youth with relevant skills for the jobs of the future. We are glad to announce that the minister of higher education

has acknowledged the City's request for the establishment of a university in Ekurhuleni and has subsequently assigned officials to work with the City to realise this vision.

It will provide the youth of Ekurhuleni with the opportunity to lead the country as the first to enrol in such a university. "Our planning process towards the establishment of such a university will equip youth with a unique skill set that is currently associated with advanced countries such as Japan, China, South Korea and the United States which are leading in the areas of science, technology and robotics," said Masina.

The combination of these interventions are

in line with the mayor's vision of a pro-poor government. Continued efforts will be made to stop the cycle of poverty in the City. "Our role as an ANC-led government is to change the material conditions of the people of the City. We are unashamedly a pro-poor government. We will utilise education and government spending in order to radically transform the economic structure of the local economy."

Prior to his election as the executive mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni, Masina was the deputy minister of trade and industry, where he spearheaded the formation of the Black Industrialist Policy, which was tabled in Parliament.



Ekurhuleni City Manager Dr Imogen Mashazi. Picture: Supplied

Mayor appoints youth to advocate for young people



Young people at the Ekurhuleni Youth Economic Summit. The summit tackled important issues that affect young people. Picture: Supplied

The city is passionate about youth development

Charles Molele

The Ekurhuleni executive mayor Mzwandile Masina has established a youth directorate to deal with youth issues especially difficulties faced by young people, such as lack of financial aid, youth development and economic opportunities. The division is headed by Advocate Modise Koetle.

The city hosted various youth programmes since the beginning of June. Koetle told the *Mail & Guardian*. "This is why the city has taken a keen interest in youth issues. We are passionate about youth leadership and development."

The city is passionate about advancing youth development and social justice for all and is committed to advancing youth economic development in the City of Ekurhuleni through the implementation of youth policies, and advocating for youth empowerment initiatives.

As divisional head in the office of the mayor, Koetle is responsible for co-ordinating and planning work around the four pillars: mainstreaming youth development, social transformation, skills development and economic transformation.

The youth directorate is responsible for strategically leading, co-ordinating, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the mainstreaming of youth development in policies, programmes and plans of City of Ekurhuleni and other sectors of society by co-ordinating and overseeing the implementation of integrated and mainstreamed youth development programmes in the City.

Reporting directly to the executive mayor, the youth directorate also motivates for the provision of resources, budget and strategic and technical support in the implementation of the mainstreamed youth development programmes.

The youth directorate also manages relevant partnerships at a local, provincial and national level with government structures, NGOs, community-based organisation and other role players whose service is youth focused.

"In Ekurhuleni, most perpetrators of crime are youth, and

most victims are also youth. The city is working on various interventions through arts and culture and various social cohesion programmes to respond to these social ills," said Masina.

The objective of social transformation responds to the social needs of youth and the importance of them participating fully in society and communities in which they live. This shall form part of building social cohesion, national unity and harmony. Interventions in terms of this objective will focus on building the social capital and youth networks; strengthening their identity, building their self-esteem, developing a sense of belonging and nurturing a shared value system. Statistics from the City of Ekurhuleni Youth Report, notes that 66% of respondents did not take part in either community projects or responsibility campaigns, 70% did not participate in environmental awareness campaigns and cleaning. Only 19% participated in Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes. Social cohesion activities include community service, civic participation, volunteering, increased participation in civil society processes such as the development of Ekurhuleni's IDP, involvement in ward committees and re-integration of youth into communities.

The municipal administration will implement the National Drug Master Plan this month to intervene in the scourge of substance abuse in Ekurhuleni. Masina said every township in Ekurhuleni will also soon have an anti-substance abuse centre where young addicts can easily check themselves in and out without encountering any problems.

The summit, will witness the signing of the Youth Accord social impact between the City of Ekurhuleni and specific corporate businesses where youth development initiatives will be mainstreamed. The Youth Accord will establish a project management unit to facilitate the agreements and financial aspects contained therein.

During the Youth Summit held at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg the City plans to focus on economic transformation of the region through business opportunities for the youth.

The summit, will witness the signing of the Youth Accord social impact between the City of Ekurhuleni and specific corporate businesses where youth development initiatives will be mainstreamed. The Youth Accord will establish a project management unit to facilitate the agreements and financial aspects contained therein.

The City of Ekurhuleni has set aside R1-billion for youth empowerment through the Mintirho ya Vulavula Community Empowerment Programme, which will assist local SMMEs owned by women, young people and people with disabilities.

In addition, the city has launched the EPWP Vukuphile Phase 3 Learner Contractor Programme, which incorporates contractors, and we help skill them to deal with triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment at grassroots level. This approach enabled the City to leverage its budget spent to stimulate the transfer of skills and empower local communities in a manner that enhances their productive capabilities and to eventually become fully-fledged construction companies.

The City is also planning to train youth to supply services to the municipality and encourage business networking. Masina further said the aim is to empower young people to make use of economic avenues provided by the municipality in an effort to meet their entrepreneurial goals.

Later this month, the City of Ekurhuleni will launch the Youth Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, aimed at capacitating and equipping young entrepreneurs and training unemployed young people in entrepreneurship.

The youth and economic transformation objective responds to the need to change the economic status of youth by ensuring that youth are empowered to participate in mainstream economic development activities, as an essential national process aimed at eradicating poverty and meeting the economic needs of youth.

All interventions in terms of this objective will focus on promoting employment, raising incomes, removing barriers that constrain youth participation in the labour market and attain other 'youth-centred' economic development outcomes. All three spheres of South Africa's government have implemented a wide range of initiatives to grow the economy generally and ensure the participation of youth in the mainstream economy in particular.



City of Ekurhuleni's MMC of Finance Doctor Nkosindiphile Xhakaza. Picture: Supplied

Local opportunities for the youth in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The City of Ekurhuleni plans to open a university that prepares students for today's world

Charles Molele

Young people must equip themselves with the requisite technological skills and educational opportunities in order to survive in our rapidly changing world.

The City of Ekurhuleni's MMC of Finance Doctor Nkosindiphile Xhakaza made this call during a youth lecture held at the Nigel town hall, which examined local opportunities for the youth in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Xhakaza said the onset of the digital age has meant that certain forms of work are disappearing from the industrial scene and new kinds of jobs are emerging, particularly in Ekurhuleni.

Frequently described as the manufacturing centre of South Africa, the Ekurhuleni municipal region, according to research, accounts for at least a quarter of Gauteng's entire economic output, with more than 41 000 enterprises supplying a variety of goods and services across more than 8 000 industries.

"In order not to be victims of these changes, all of us suddenly have the unavoidable need to learn competencies in information and communications technology. The ability to use a computer, to be able to search the internet, effectively use social media and understand internet languages have all become necessities, as opposed to luxuries," said Xhakaza.

He said the City of Ekurhuleni is investing in education in order to equip the youth with the requisite technological skills. The City, according to Xhakaza, has since 2016 increased

bursary funding from R10-million to R100-million. He said the City would like to more than double the amount and increase it to R250-million by 2020.

Xhakaza added that the metro was also working towards the establishment of a University of Ekurhuleni, which will specialise in applied sciences and technology and essentially emerge as a university of the future — a path-breaker for other universities in the country.

"This will provide the youth of Ekurhuleni with the opportunity to lead the country as the first students to enrol at such a university. Our planning process points towards a university that will give them a skills set that is associated with advanced countries such as Japan, China, South Korea and the United States that are leading in the areas of science, technology, robotics and artificial intelligence," said Xhakaza.

"This investment of millions becomes meaningful when we have a youth that takes education very seriously. It needs all of us to work towards encouraging every one of our young people to place a high premium on the value of education and actually take it up on themselves to pursue it.

"We envision a city of the future in which transport services, logistics, manufacturing, storage capabilities, information services and trade services are increasingly mechanised and improved by artificial intelligence"

"The impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will prove that it is necessary for everyone to develop their competencies through education. The opportunities that will come to life with the gradual growth of our Aerotropolis City demand that we improve our capabilities through education as both future employees in a smart city environment and future investors in smart technologies."

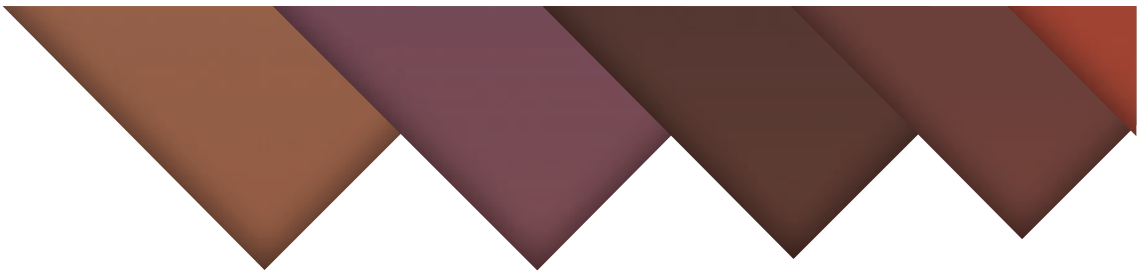
Xhakaza said as part of the region's strategy to develop an Airport City, or the Aerotropolis, the administration was focusing on developing it into a smart city; this meant a city with its productivity rooted in digitisation, information technology, robotics and naturally steeped in artificial intelligence.

"We envision a city of the future in which transport services, logistics, manufacturing, storage capabilities, information services and trade services are increasingly mechanised and improved by artificial intelligence," said the MMC.

"All of this provides an opportunity that you as the youth of the city have to exploit to maximum effect. There is a great scope for investment in technologies that must be led by you. Digitisation involves a great deal of investment in fibre optics to improve connectivity, and the creation of smart apps that can be used in smartphones to produce and share information about the city among its residents."

Xhakaza said the youth of Ekurhuleni must "wake up and smell the coffee" because they are growing up in a city with immense opportunities. He said the City of Ekurhuleni has a strong, established manufacturing base characterised by mining, heavy manufacturing, light industry and fast-moving consumer goods, thus forming an important part of Gauteng's Transformation, Modernisation and Re-Industrialisation programme.

"This lecture is to inform you about what you can do to compete and position our City for growth and development. The ball is in your court as the youth. You are leading your own revolution. We care; we were students in the 1970s. We were young. This is your time to take up the baton and move the country forward."



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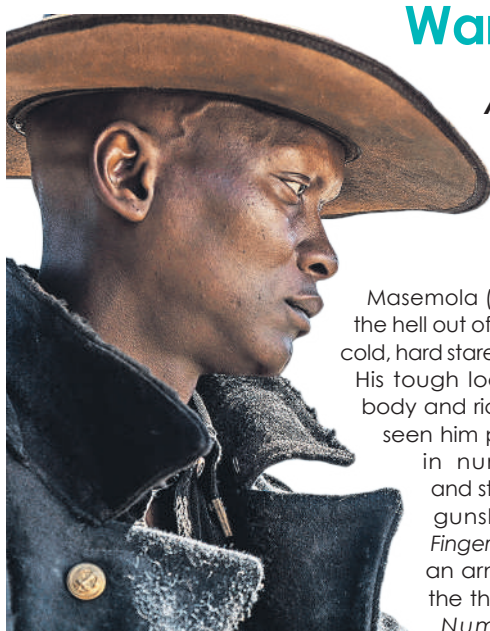


Photo: Be-Phat Motel Films

Warren Masemola (35)

Actor

Twitter: @warrenmasemola

Actor Warren Masemola (35) can scare the hell out of you with just a cold, hard stare.

His tough looks, muscular body and rich voice have seen him play the villain in numerous films and stage plays: the gunslinger in *Five Fingers for Marseilles*, an armed robber in the thrilling *iNumber Number* and a warlord in the play

When Swallows Cry, which earned him a Best Actor nomination in the Naledi Theatre Awards.

He can sing, dance and act in five different languages, and his talent will inevitably take him to Hollywood.

That Masemola looks tough just proves what a great actor he is, because underneath he's a really nice guy who prefers inspiring roles, where he can encourage people to think differently about those we might simply stereotype.

"I don't believe I'm only made to play a bad guy, and it's too much of a comfort zone to know that people love you for one dimension when I know I can stretch myself further than they [can] imagine," he says.

His favourite role so far is as MaFred in SABC 1's drama, *Tjovitjo*, which won him a Best Actor award in the South African Film and Television Awards — his third Safta so far. MaFred is a pantsula dance group leader who encourages kids to use their passion for dance to get off the streets and create a better future for

themselves.

"MaFred is my favourite character because he advocates love, and if we love enough we can reach out to each other and touch lives in a positive way. I want to bring [about] change in the world, and with my talent being acting, people will get to know what I stand for, and it's all love," he says.

Masemola grew up in Soshanguve and was a great street dancer as a kid. He studied dance at Moving into Dance and drama at the Market Theatre Laboratory. He's performed in children's theatre, spent three years touring Europe with choreographer Robyn Orlin, and appeared in TV shows *Ses'Top La*, *Saints and Sinners*, *Scandal!*, *Intersexions*, *Ayeye* and *Ring of Lies*.

His place in the global spotlight is looking bright, with two of his films well received at last year's Toronto International Film Festival. One of them, *The Number*, will be our next chance to see him on the big screen.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Supplied

Vus'umuzi Phakathi (32)

Executive director, Current State Presentations

Instagram: @vusumuzi_phakathi

The idea of poetry being an actual career seems laughable in a country where the vast majority of performing artists are struggling to get by. And poetry is more of a niche market than most. Which means Vus'umuzi Phakathi has set himself a serious challenge in aiming to make poetry a paid profession.

"I aim to build a stable and sustainable poetry industry," he says. "There are talented and skilled poets who sit behind call centre desks because there is no industry where they can live off their work. I look forward to the day a child can say, 'I want to be a professional poet when I grow up,' and their parents won't discourage them because it's an actual industry to work in."

To do that, poets must treat themselves as a brand, and understand that they are making the decision to start a business.

Phakathi has worked as a poet for 13 years and receives feedback from people telling him how much his work has affected them. Some say it saved them from suicide, saved their marriage or helped them find their own purpose. "I write and perform because it keeps me alive, and it has proven to give those that receive it life as well," he says.

He has performed at numerous festivals and events, toured southern Africa and represented South Africa at the Individual World Poetry Slam in Washington. His discography includes *The Abandoned Archive Of Romeo The Poet*, *The Testament Of The Poet* and *A Second With God*. *The Testament Of The Poet* won him the Best Poet prize at the 5th SABC Crown Gospel Awards.

Much of his focus is now on business. He co-founded Current State Presentations (CSP) to run free workshops in partnership with Joburg Theatre Youth Development, teaching novice poets from disadvantaged communities how to write, perform and run a business. Through CSP he has also facilitated workshops in high schools and in Botswana and Swaziland.

"For the past three years I have focused more on the business side of the arts than on performing, because of the need to build a stable and sustainable poetry industry where poets can make a comfortable living out of their art."

— Lesley Stones

Sphumelele Sibeko (33)

Head of Reality & Entertainment, M-Net

Twitter: @sphumesibeko



Photo: Kuhle Sibeko

Fans of TV shows like *Date My Family*, *Utatakho* and *Yobe* have Sphumelele Sibeko to thank for helping to develop and bring these much-loved productions to life on M-Net.

Sibeko is the head of Reality & Entertainment at M-Net, and it's her job to source and develop local content for channels like Mzansi Magic, 1 Magic and Channel O, working alongside her team of commissioning editors.

"This environment is so much fun," she says. "Every day we work with producers and talent across the country to create and source the best entertainment for our audiences. What's been important for me is that we give our people a voice. A voice that's varied, that's dynamic, that is funny, that is heartbreaking, that is full of learnings, that has character. A voice that moves people," she says.

Sibeko initially studied marketing, attaining a marketing degree from Wits University then working at Unilever for three years. But itchy feet and bigger ambitions took her to New York to pursue her love of entertainment. She enrolled at the New York Film Academy and studied a diploma in producing for film and television. It was a life-changing experience. "It made this world that I had dreamt of for so many years so real, and allowed me to start figuring out the business of the arts which I was always very interested in."

After New York she moved to Cape Town and worked at Penguin Films in various capacities. "I would do anything, from being an assistant director on set to developing concepts to directing documentaries to pitching to broadcasters. It was a challenging and amazing time and it gave me a really great foundation in the local TV and film world," she says.

Her marketing experience gave her an understanding of audiences, which served her well for a move to M-Net's Mzansi Magic in 2014 as a commissioning editor. She was promoted to head of Reality & Entertainment for local channels in 2015.

"In the future I want to tell more stories, in more ways, to more people. I want to share our great stories with the world," she says.

Sibeko also wants to build the industry more directly by focusing on upskilling and transforming the sector to include more people able to create and run South Africa's entertainment business.

— Lesley Stones

Sipumzo Lucwaba (33)

Musician, director and composer

Twitter & Instagram: @ThatXhosaGuy

Watching Disney musicals like *Aladdin* and *The Lion King* steered Sipumzo Lucwaba towards his career choice.

"I've always had a passion for musicals, even before I knew what musical theatre was," he says. "Songs such as *Prince Ali*, *Friend Like Me*, and *Be Prepared* have always had a place in my heart."

Lucwaba turned that childhood passion into his future, starting by teaching himself the bass guitar to help out at church singalongs. He went on to study at Wits University and was trained in his craft by musicians such as Carlo Mombelli, Malcolm Nay, Jonathan Crossley and Bryan Schimmel. Even before he completed his degree in music he had been cast to play the bass in the professional shows *Dreamgirls* and *Dirty Dancing*, and his love affair with musicals flourished.

Since then he has played in *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Cabaret* and *Funny Girl* produced by the Fugard Theatre, and has joined the crew in the annual Janice Honeyman pantomimes for *Peter Pan* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

He has also worked as the musical director for local artist KB Motsilanyane, toured locally and abroad with singer/songwriter Sabelo Mthembu, and has played as a studio musician for various other artists.

Lucwaba not only plays music, he also arranges it, and has carried out transcriptions and arrangements for various corporate events including Jacaranda Pops, Skouspel 2013 and the South African Music Awards celebration in 2013.

In 2015 he began working with the respected composer and musical director Charl Johan Lingenfelder, and became the musical director of the Fugard Theatre's revival of the Todd Matshikiza classic, *King Kong*. The show played in Cape Town and Johannesburg to rave reviews and his work on the production earned Lucwaba and Lingenfelder a joint nomination for Best Musical Director in the Naledi Theatre Awards.

"In future I really hope to create more local musical theatre. As a nation we definitely have the talent, but it would be great if we could get the belief we need from producers and other financial stakeholders," Lucwaba says.

"Building great musical theatre is a very expensive and time-consuming endeavour, but if there's one thing I've learnt through being part of the *King Kong* creative team, it's that it's worth it."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Daniel Rutland Manners



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Arts & Entertainment



Photo: Rosanna Heydenrych

Amy Heydenrych (34)

Author

Twitter & Instagram: @AmyHeydenrych

Writer Amy Heydenrych describes herself as "a midwife of ideas." Her short stories and poems have been published in anthologies including *Brittle Paper*, *The Kalahari Review* and *Short Sharp Stories*, and her debut thriller, *Shame On You*, was published this year. The novel unpacks the impact of public shaming, and is the first in a two-book deal with international publishers Bonnier Zaffre. She has also been shortlisted twice for the Miles Morland African Writing Scholarship.

"I worked at being a writer for many years, and it took years of perseverance to finally get an international publishing deal," she says. "The process has taught me that the dream is not actually 'getting published,' but becoming the best writer I can be. I am hoping that my path as an author will inspire fellow young South Africans to persevere in their writing careers, and to see that with hard work and patience, absolutely anything is possible."

Heydenrych runs her own company, called Story, where she blogs to promote female and South African authors, as she's a fierce champion of local fiction.

When she isn't working on her own ideas, Heydenrych is a ghostwriter for

other people who have a story to tell but don't have the right words to do it well. She also works with fiction writers to refine the first drafts of their manuscripts and prepare them for pitching.

"I have learned so much about writing and editing through my process of being published, and I hope to share my skills with aspiring young South African writers. Whether one is a writer or a reader, I believe that stories hold immense power to teach, engage and drive empathy," she says.

She ghost writes material for companies too. "I take the ideas of a business owner or individual and bring them into the world using words that will resonate with readers, using my skill as a writer to help people express themselves," she says. While creative and corporate writing may seem an unlikely marriage, Heydenrych believes they are complementary.

"My fiction side allows me to look at projects from a fresh, creative perspective and my corporate training ensures I apply a strong structure to everything I write or edit. Ultimately, all written content needs to reach its audience using a tone and language that resonates with them."

— Lesley Stones

Keamogetswe (Kea) Moeketsane (33)

Producer, South African State Theatre

Twitter: @KeamogetsweMa

If people can't afford to go to the theatre, you must take the theatre to them.

That's the idea that drove Keamogetswe Moeketsane to run a community theatre initiative that was so successful she was invited to England to help launch a similar programme there.

At the moment, though, her job is to produce shows that will grow audiences for the South African State Theatre, Africa's biggest theatre. Moeketsane was recently appointed as the theatre's first ever female producer, responsible for the financial and managerial functions of the productions and the venue, and for hiring writers, directors, designers, composers, choreographer and sometimes the performers too.

Her triumph in taking theatre to the people came in 2015 when she produced the Home Theatre Festival for the State Theatre.

"My biggest dream is to tell authentic African stories, and nothing brings me greater joy than creating access to the arts to previously disadvantaged communities," she says. "We visited 30 homes in 30 townships and suburbs in Tshwane, with 30 actors and 30 filmmakers. The initiative was so successful that I was invited to the Theatre Royal East in Stratford to work as part of their Home Theatre team."

Moeketsane studied film at Tshwane University of Technology and her

first professional acting role was in *Romeo & Juliet* in 2008. She's appeared in several TV shows and has written and performed in industrial theatre campaigns for a variety of companies.

Her directing debut was *Sorry Wrong Number* for the National Arts Festival, and she co-wrote and directed *Forgiveness* in 2014, a play adapted from a Greek tragedy.

She also runs her own non-profit company, CUT Solutions, to use theatre as a tool for empowerment. She takes educational plays to schools to spark discussions and hopefully find solutions to issues such as HIV, teenage pregnancy and sugar daddies ("blessers").

CUT Solutions has produced shows for clients including the City of Tshwane and the South African Responsible Gambling Board.

In 2017 she and some partners opened Tshwane Playhouse, an arts centre in Mamelodi to host music, dance, theatre and spoken word performances.

"It attracted a lot of young people and kept children off the streets, but due to lack of funds it was unsustainable. But I believe with a concerted effort we will succeed, and I still conduct drama workshops in Mamelodi."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Lordwick Rakgoale



Photo: Esti Strydom

Angel Campey (35)

Stand-up comedian and comedy writer

Twitter & Instagram: @YesReallyAngel

Comedy is the purest platform for freedom of speech, with comedians given loads of leeway to speak their minds, says Angel Campey.

She's a stand-up comedian, presents a comedy-centric radio show on Smile 90.4FM each Sunday, and is one of the writers for the award-winning TV comedy ZANews *Puppet Nation*. She's played in New York and Montreal, and performed the two comedy shows *Yes, Really Angel* and *Devil's Advocate* at the National Arts Festival. A career highlight was being chosen by Nigerian comedian Basketmouth to perform in his show *Lords of The Ribs* to 4 000 people in Lagos in October 2017.

She first ventured onto stage in 2011 and reached the finals of the Joe Parker Comedy Showdown competition, then went on to become a regular on Comedy Central's *Kings and Queens of Comedy*.

Campey likes to joke about the complicated political

dynamics of white privilege from the perspective of a woman who grew up during the pivotal changes in South Africa.

"I find the material that really lands and resonates is when I start talking about my politics and my opinion on my race — and my family stories. It's very vulnerable comedy because it's pure and honest, and if the crowd rejects it, they aren't rejecting my opinions on something easy like airplane food, they're rejecting my core opinions.

"But it's also a platform that can influence social change, and I address things like our privilege and the legacy of apartheid, and perhaps start a conversation in people's minds about things they hadn't thought of a certain way before," she says.

"Comedy is one of the last pure bastions of freedom of speech, and I get away with saying things that many other creatives would be hung out to dry for. So it's my responsibility as a South African to push that limit."

The result, she hopes, will be a meeting of minds around shared laughter. "I hope to keep using my personal observations and life stories to facilitate difficult conversations from the safety of laughter and joy," she says.

"It's a truly humbling and joyful thing to be able to reach so many people, cross culturally and internationally with laughter. Being a comedian has shown me how similar we all are, no matter where we are from."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Simon Diener

Jade Bowers (30)

Theatre director, producer and designer, UJ and Jade Bowers Design & Management

Twitter: @jadeherself

Helping people to tell their stories and letting them discover hidden talents is what drives Jade Bowers to produce great stage shows.

As the production manager for UJ Arts & Culture at the University of Johannesburg she has helped the students to create some memorable shows, though there is no formal drama department.

"I'm hoping to do a musical with UJ students next year with a cast of about 50, a choir and a band. All the students we work with are accounting, science and business students

who are doing this in their spare time, and they just want it so much. There's a passion that you can't deny," she says.

Her talent earned her the 2016 Standard Bank Young Artist for Theatre award, and she was named one of South Africa's Young Achievers by The Presidency as part of the 2016 Youth Day Celebrations. Other accolades include the 2014 Arts and Culture Trust ImpACT Award for Theatre, a Naledi Award for Best Director, and two Standard Bank Ovation Awards.

In addition to working at UJ she runs her own production company, Jade Bowers Design & Management, which directs, designs and production manages for the stage.

Her current show is *Jungfrau*, adapted from a short story by Mary Watson. Bowers was commissioned to create the show for the TheaterFormen Festival in Germany, where it made its debut in June. She then brought it to this year's National Arts Festival as part of the main programme and to the Con Cowan Theatre in Johannesburg.

"The story is about a family in Cape Town with family secrets and the morality of what is seen in public and what is seen in private," Bowers says. "The kind of work I do is really about sharing stories about coloured people's identities in South Africa at this time. I love working with people who have never seen their stories on stage or never had the opportunity to perform in this type of story."

Her firm foundation in stagecraft was formed at the University of Cape Town, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Drama and Sociology, and at Wits University, where she gained an honours degree focusing on directing and design for the stage.

— Lesley Stones

200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Arts & Entertainment



Photo: Samelwa Mahlaba

Nas Hoosen (30)

Writer, comic creator and illustrator

Social media: @naswho

Pixar's *Up* is Nas Hoosen's favourite animation. The film explores the anxiety of getting old, regret, and the realisation that life does not always go as we planned it.

"The first 10 minutes of the movie make you cry. I know animated movies generally get written off, but there is just so much to them."

It is therefore no surprise that according to him, the main ingredient to any good story is the feelings it elicits, more than the ideas it seeks to communicate. "Stories remind us that feelings and a sense of vulnerability matter."

Hoosen was a finalist in a Disney/Triggerfish Story Lab screenwriting program, which gave him the rare opportunity to be behind the scenes at Disney and Pixar Animation in Los Angeles, where he was given an opportunity to further hone his craft with the biggest and most influential names in the international film industry.

Hoosen has been writing since he was very young. When he was reading comics as a child he had no idea this could be something he could do professionally.

To date, his illustrations have been published in Phumlani Pikoli's collection of short stories *The Fatuous State of Severity*, and he has given talks on comics and visual storytelling at various art spaces in South Africa.

He is in residency as a comics artist at the Arteles Centre in Finland.

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Russell Scott

Nick Mulgrew (28)

Writer and publisher

Twitter: @NichMulgrew

Literature in South Africa is an exciting space, but it's fundamentally broken for several reasons, says author and publisher Nick Mulgrew.

Many flaws were caused by apartheid, and others are caused by literary professionals accepting the status quo and not pushing boundaries. To help change the face of South African literature, Mulgrew founded a publishing house, uHlanga, to focus on new, experimental and classic works of Southern African poetry.

"To make sure that people can see themselves on the bookshelf. To make sure that all forms of literature — poetry, in my case — can be accessible and appreciated," he says. "I do all of the commissioning, most of the editing, and all of the design for all our collections."

In the past year it has published 10 books, including *Collective Amnesia*, a debut collection of poetry from Koleka Putuma.

Mulgrew himself holds a Thomas Pringle Award for Short Fiction and a National Arts Festival Short Sharp Stories Award. His collections of short stories are *Stations*, *The First Law of Sadness* and *The Myth Of This Is That We're All In This Together*, his first poetry collection.

His stories are a blend of comedy and despair set in South Africa's dingiest suburbs, with killer eagles, tattoo removal parlours, punk guitarist-auditors, turtle sanctuaries, plane crashes,



Photo: Chris de Beer

amateur pornographers and biltong-makers. *The First Law of Sadness* was named one of the books of the year by the Sunday Times last year.

He started out in journalism, but finds fiction a much richer field. "The truth isn't stranger than fiction — at its best, fiction should be stranger. Otherwise, what's the point?" he asks. "My fiction explores the intimate and personal ways that South African society — and white South African society in particular — operates."

It's important, though, that this writing doesn't seem polemic but is readable, well-written and engages with society in an oblique way, he says. "That's something a lot of young

South African writers are having trouble with balancing. Life is political, and literature is political inherently. But politics can't lead the story. The story must lead the politics," he says.

Next in his pipeline is a novel set between South Africa and New Zealand, where he lived for a while when he was younger.

He is also the fiction editor for the literary magazine, *Prufrock*, which he co-founded, and head of communications for PEN South Africa, an organisation representing writers of the world, defending free expression and encouraging literature.

— Lesley Stones

Sechaba Gqeba (30)

TV presenter

Twitter: @Sechaba_G

Listeners familiar with the voice of Sechaba Gqeba are enjoying the visuals as well, as this popular radio presenter has now switched over to TV.

Gqeba has been hosting the female-friendly show *Motswako* on SABC 2 since April. "I thoroughly enjoy hosting this talk show, which primarily focuses on telling the phenomenal stories of women from all walks of life," she says. "It definitely is an important voice for women, and to be at the forefront of a show of its kind is humbling. I've always been passionate about women and the issues that they face, so the opportunity came at the perfect time."

The move saw her give up her weekday show on Kfm, which she had presented for three years. "I'm taking a short break. I would like to focus on TV and my speaking commitments before finding a new home on radio," she says. Radio will always be her first love, but after 10 years in the industry she believed it was important to transition and develop new skills.

Gqeba is also a voice-over artist for companies such as Woolworths, Audi and Engen and she MCs various functions, with her list including Cape Town Carnival and Mariah Carey's Sweet Sweet Fantasy Tour.

She describes herself as a small town girl with big city ambitions who discovered her love for radio on a field trip to the National Arts Festival, where she was selected for a radio workshop.

Her career began in community radio, and a bigger break came through a radio talent show on Highveld 94.7, which catapulted her into commercial radio. After reading the news on SAfm and Radio 2000, her ambition drove her to create her own show, and the opportunity came with Kaya FM.

Motswako addresses pertinent issues such as female empowerment and women's leadership, with a strong focus on informing while entertaining. "What attracted me to the show is the vision behind *Motswako*. It provides women with a platform to unapologetically speak their truth, and propels them to shed light on matters that women can relate to. The vision and purpose of the show truly speak to who I am and represent my passion for uplifting women."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Ashley Irvin Robertson

Thabisa Mjo (30)

Founder and head designer, Mash.T Design Studio

Twitter: @MashTDesign

Young designer Thabisa Mjo has a huge success on her hands as the creator of the 2018 Most Beautiful Object in South Africa.

The annual award presented by the Design Indaba was won by her enormous light fitting, a stunning 10kg creation that drips from the ceiling in a colourful cascade called Tutu 2.0.

"It's big, and the size definitely adds to the wow factor. I love it because it is bold, beautiful and unapologetic." This partly reflects her own personality. "I'm unapologetic about being who I am and doing the kind of work that I think will

benefit people in my sphere of influence. That's what I constantly aspire to be," she says. Tutu 2.0 was influenced by the Xibelani skirts worn by Tsonga women, which remind her of a tutu. Her creation also won her the Nando's Hot Young Designer title; she has supplied 50 of the light fittings to Nando's outlets across the world, made by crafters at the Boitumelo Project in Hillbrow.

Her designs incorporate traditional African materials into cool but playful creations. "As much as I want to make pieces that have an African look and feel, I'm inspired by global trends," she says. Her Pieces of Me light fittings use rich colours and bold prints that "feel like home", with clean lines in a nod to global trends. "What makes the collection special is that sweet spot where my two worlds meet — a Western approach to design with an African spirit to anchor it."

Her furniture collection A Place at the Table

pays tribute to the resourcefulness, innovation and cultural influence of her grandmother. Like the Mojo Chair, which is perfect for small living spaces with its foldable backrest so it can be used as a stool or a side table. Presents from Joburg is a tableware collection inspired by the city skyline, with salt and pepper shakers shaped like Ponte and Sentech towers.

Her furniture and décor have won other awards including the 2017 Future Found Award by the Design Foundation, and she's exhibited at 100% Design UK in London and the Maison&Objet exhibition in Paris.

"My focus in 2018 is to develop a line of super-affordable home furnishings. The pieces need to be multi-functional, durable and beautiful. Stuff that will make my customers' home live, in a way that only clever design does."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Supplied

A Tribe Called Story (23-26)

Film Production company

Twitter: @AlutaQ, @mbalizethu_zulu Instagram: @themba_the_neorealist

A Tribe Called Story is a production company started by three filmmakers: Aluta Qupa, Mbalizethu Zulu and Themba Mfebe.

They met as interns in M-Net's Magic in Motion Academy in 2015 and decided to start their own business after participating in a MultiChoice Enterprise Development Start-Up Bootcamp, where they excelled in a challenge to identify innovative solutions for digital content.

The trio aims to create content for and about young South Africans by telling stories of their generation. So far they have produced three commissioned movies for prime-time broadcast on Mzansi Magic: *Moratuwa*, *Umqhele* and *Unkosikazi Wokuqala*, which were all well-received by audiences. They believe the depth and quality of their work rivals that of far more experienced and better resourced filmmakers, and that their skills coupled with their grit, passion and impact will lead to major success. To pay forward the opportunities, they hire young filmmakers to work on their projects, rather than use the industry's old hands.

Qupa (25) had previously worked for different production houses including Bomb Shelter, Ferguson Films and Urban Brew, and was nurtured by some of the finest creatives in the industry. "I always wanted to start my own production company but that was a goal I thought I would only be able to achieve after 10 years of experience," she says.

"This initiative has been life-altering. I have grown as a person, as a creative and as an entrepreneur. I went from trying to find a job to being determined to create jobs for others. My passion is to tell our African stories. Having the ability to educate, entertain and influence society and make a difference gives me quite an adrenalin rush."

Mfebe (26) created a short film in 2015 that won awards at the Durban International Film Festival, Shnit, Short & Sweet Film Festival and Black Filmmakers Film Festival. After graduating from the M-Net Academy, he joined the directing team at Muvhango, which attracts millions of viewers each night. He has been responsible for the artistic vision for the films produced by the Tribe, and while he largely focuses on directing and writing, he is equally proficient in camera and post-production work. Zulu (23) has written for the award-winning soapie *Isibaya* and has been nominated for two South African Film and Television Awards.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Robyn Davie Photography

Yusrah Bardien (31)

Audience engagement strategist, Market Theatre Foundation

Twitter: @ybardien

The dual focus of Yusrah Bardien's job is to put more burns on theatre seats and use the arts to help shape a better society.

By ensuring young people are spellbound by the magic of the stage, Bardien can help make live shows a viable and thriving business. She believes young audiences will also benefit from having their horizons broadened by the arts.

As the audience engagement strategist at the Market Theatre Foundation, she is developing audience programmes that allow two-way engagement with patrons. In less than a year, she has organised two conferences with international partners and instigated a conversation programme called Let's Talk Ideas, which values input from the audience as much as it does from experts. The programme has covered topics like the choice of shows for the theatre's three stages.

She has set up her own consultancy, Creative Fix, to support arts companies and individuals in pursuit of a more effective industry, and has presented at national and international conferences on audience development and the arts in South Africa.

She is interested in how arts education and exposure to different forms of culture can be used to stimulate younger people. "One of the best by-products of the arts is teaching key practical and critical thinking skills through play, and people who participate in the arts have been able to apply the discipline and thinking patterns successfully in different fields of work," she says. "Too many life-changing, brilliant, and beautiful creative products offer solutions to current and future problems in society, expressed in an accessible way — yet go unnoticed. Yet when politics goes into crisis, society turns to its poets, musicians or writers for guidance."

"We have a responsibility to future generations to build a world where a creative approach is the norm, not the exception."

Bardien was previously the marketing manager for ASSITEJ SA, an umbrella body for children's theatre. She has worked on many theatre festivals and international arts exchange projects including France-South Africa Seasons and SA-UK Seasons.

She was also privileged to be involved in managing the artist programmes at Nelson Mandela's state and Qunu funerals, and at Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's funeral.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Victor Dlamini

vangile gantsho (34)

Poet

Twitter: @Vangi22

Truthful and hard-hitting poet and cultural activist vangile gantsho has participated in poetry events and festivals around Africa and internationally. "I prefer to write my name lower case as part of my small-girl revolution," she says.

She released her debut poetry collection *undressing in front of the window* in 2015, followed by *red cotton* this year. Her new collection was published by Impepho Press, which she co-founded as a pan-African publishing house to tell stories that celebrate both the fragility and resilience of the human experience.

"We believe in championing brave, particularly feminist, voices committed to literary excellence," gantsho says. Her work has also been published in several literary publications, and she has produced shows such as *Katz Cum out to Play*, The State Theatre's *Night of the Poets*, and *Human4Human*.

She identifies as a womxn, spelt with an x to break the patriarchy of being tied to men and to denote gender fluidity and inclusivity. "I believe black womxn are powerful and dangerous. And I think the world should be grateful that we are still so full of love. That against the odds, we are alive and loving ... is a miracle," she says.

As an activist, she began No Camp Chairs Poetry Picnics (NCCPP) on the lawns of Union Buildings, which lasted from 2011 until 2016. "We wanted to speak to our president. We invited him to come listen to us but he never came. NCCPP became the most popular and one of the longest-running poetry movements in Tshwane," she says.

Ten years ago gantsho decided to pursue poetry full-time, initially supporting herself by waitressing and working in a call centre in between travelling the world to perform. Her audience so far has included four former African heads of state and a sultan. Now she makes a living by teaching poetry, performing, editing and running workshops.

"Poetry has been a lifeline for me, and opened me up to so many different opportunities. It is also how I was led towards finding the language to understand my calling."

She believes her calling is to be a traditional healer, and moved to the Eastern Cape to focus on her spiritual training. "I started poetry healing workshops before I knew I was a healer. I wanted to focus on how poetry saves lives. On how we could use writing as a medium of healing."

— Lesley Stones

Zamansele Nsele (32)

Art History lecturer, University of Johannesburg

Instagram: @ms.nsele

Art historian and lecturer Zamansele Nsele has been an avid reader and scholar since the day her mother enrolled her into pre-school at age four.

Now 32, she is an expert in the history of art and is beginning to lecture on the subject around the world. She can be found at the University of Johannesburg as a lecturer at the faculty of art, design and architecture. She has just completed her PhD dissertation in art history & visual culture, addressing post-apartheid nostalgia in contemporary art.

There are still very few black female scholars in African art history, so the contribution of this young black female scholar promises an exciting future for the field.

How apartheid influenced art or was represented in it is a subject close to her heart. "I was born in Pietermaritzburg in 1986, when legalised apartheid was taking its last breath," she says. "I am proud to say I am a first-generation university graduate. For the five years that I have been lecturing I have successfully supervised 16 honours and master's students, whilst balancing my own research and writing my doctoral dissertation."

She now plans to convert her dissertation into a book. "This is an important step because there have been virtually no art books single-authored by black female art historians in South Africa," she says. "I am planning to fill this gap as I believe it is important for students to be exposed to black women who are producers of knowledge in my field."

Nsele has presented her work at Vanderbilt and Rutgers Universities in the USA, the University of East Anglia in the UK and the University of Ghana in Accra. She was also a guest speaker at the Museum Dialogues Conference hosted by the University of Namibia and the Goethe Institute.

She writes regularly about African art for *The Journalist* and has been published in *Elle Decoration*, the *Journal of African and Asian Studies* and various other magazines. "In my writing, I strive to connect art practice to current national questions. For instance, my latest article is on landscape art and the land question," she says. She lists a career highlight as dining with Professor Hortense Spillers, an intellectual giant in black feminist thought. "As a young scholar I consider myself privileged to have shared my research ideas with her."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Faith Dowelani (33)

Quantity surveyor, salon owner and mentor

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Tshavhudi-house-of-beauty-172273244807/>

Faith Dowelani has an unusual mix of professional interests, being both a quantity surveyor and a beauty salon owner.

As a quantity surveyor she's worked for the company MLC and lectured in the subject at the University of Venda. On the beauty side, her Tshavhudi House of Beauty employs four full-time and three part-time employees in Thohoyandou in Limpopo.

But neither of those are what qualifies her as an unsung hero. That comes from her work in mentoring young girls to uplift her rural community.

"In my spare time I mentor a group of girls between 12 and 22 years old. They meet on Saturday in a girls' school that teaches moral regeneration and cultural dances. I help them by being an elder sister, supporting them financially and emotionally," Dowelani says.

"Being a mentor has made me a better person. I spend time with the girls teaching them the importance of education and self-love. A mentor is like a guardian angel: someone who offers a helping hand, an ear to listen and a guiding voice to those who aspire to do and be better."

Dowelani also mentors through the South African Breweries 18+ Be the Mentor programme. It's an initiative that encourages young adults to help teenagers make positive life choices, including staying away from alcohol and other toxic substances and situations. She hopes that by providing enjoyable and meaningful activities for youngsters in Thohoyandou, she can help to steer them away from poor life choices.

The girls have also taught her some lessons,

she says. One of them taught her that no obstacle is too big to overcome. "One mentee lost her mom recently and she was stronger than I could ever have been. She showed me that she could pick up the pieces and make the best of her situation."

She hopes her mentees will grow to be successful, educated women who go on to make their own mark in the community.

For herself, she plans to grow her salon into a hub of well-being and expand it into a one-stop bridal shop.

She is also honing her qualifications and wants to return to teaching one day. "I have a gift. I would love to go back to that space once I have completed my MSc in property development and management and done a PhD."

— Lesley Stones

Gontse Sekhitla (30)

Head of Risk Product Development, Liberty (Corporate)

Gontse Sekhitla believes that every organisation needs an actuary, whether they know it or not. He says it was the best career choice he could have made for himself, because it allows him to understand business through the lens of economics, accounting and statistics.

Sekhitla's high school years at Potchefstroom Boys "felt like a perpetual sleepover with your friends, and despite the periodic bullying it was a pleasurable experience". Boarding school allowed him to thrive academically, as he was

forced to study and found himself excelling because there was not anything else to do. His first professional job as an actuarial analyst at Alexander Forbes exposed him to the world of employee benefits and the impact of pension funds on families and by the time he left he was a key account person on a number of accounts.

Today, he is in a challenging and rewarding senior management role at Liberty (Corporate) where he is tasked with understanding how a product house works and then articulating customer experiences that match the organisation's customer value propositions.

"Some of the misconceptions that people have about actuaries is that they are boring and bad communicators. Most of the young ones I know are actually knowledgeable about other stuff as well. We are not just number-crunchers, we are value providers."

On choosing a career, he says: "A lot of young people in South Africa go to university not knowing what they want to study. Mentorship is therefore important, because it takes more than brains to be an actuary; you need tenacity and the ability to fail forward."

Sekhitla is excited about being a young person today. "The future is being shaped right now. AI and machine learning are developments that are going to disrupt the space that I work in. The world is changing, and it is beautiful to witness."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Itumeleng Mothibeli (34)

Director of Asset Management, Vukile Property Fund

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Growing up in eight of the country's nine provinces has given Itumeleng Mothibeli solid exposure and insight into to all that South Africa has to offer. It was a graduate programme at Old Mutual that introduced him to the world of property, and he has never looked back.

Under the mentorship of investment heavyweights such as Ben Kodisang, Mothibeli has been able to carve out a space for himself in the property world. He is passionate about how infrastructure drives development and how development drives growth, and is committed to using brick and mortar as a tool to break the barriers to trade that still exist on the African continent.

His executive management role at Vukile Property Investments means that he is accountable for the overall strategic direction, operations and performance of the fund's South African and Namibian property portfolio, which comprises 47 properties valued at R16-billion.

Mothibeli believes in the transformative potential of responsible investing.

"I don't think the property industry in South Africa has really thought about making a difference in the context of still being able to make money, because in a market that is overly saturated with malls, responsible investing must include building schools and clinics as well."

As a young man in South Africa today, the possibilities of digitisation excite him. "Young people have ideas that are being discussed in real time and technology has enlarged that conversation. What we must ensure however, is that these ideas are converted into concrete action, as the only way is to chip away."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Kutlwano Hutamo (34)

Director, Washesha Online

Twitter: @washesha_grocer

Kutlwano Hutamo's love for learning and education one of the reasons why she is a successful entrepreneur. She has an MBA from GIBS business school, an MSc in veterinary sciences as well as a BSc honours in genetics. However, her path to success has not been an easy one.

"I am the first in my family to go to university, and the first time I saw my mother cry, actually, was when I matriculated. My mom was so overcome with emotion because I had had so many challenges that year and I still managed to pass with flying colours."

Hutamo, a solitary creature by heart, grew up wanting to be a lab scientist. After enrolling for chemical engineering on the advice of a career counsellor, she quickly converted to biological sciences after seeing that the engineering course was full of physics and calculus courses — not biology. This saw her gain work experience and pursue a law degree and an MBA before finally taking the entrepreneurial leap.

"Washesha" means to hurry up and to have a sense of urgency, and it is the ethos behind this term that informs how the organisation prioritises the customer above everything else. Hutamo is deliberate about using black suppliers for her business, as she believes that the inclusion of black people in value chains that previously excluded them in is a matter of social justice.

"Entrepreneurship is about learning new stuff everyday, learning about health and safety standards, about machinery, about people management."

Although optimistic about the potential of young people to go out and create opportunities, she admits that the position of women in our society is troubling. "Reading the news as a woman is depressing. Women are not safe in the streets, and in some cases, they are not safe in the house. The mental work of always having to fight for visibility as a woman can be draining."

There is no doubt that Washesha will continue to garner a following of loyal clients who keep coming back due to the exceptional product offering and customer experience.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Supplied



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Business & Entrepreneurship

Lethabo Mokoena (27)

Founder, Walk Fresh

Twitter: @Lethab_oFresh

Lethabo Mokoena is a young entrepreneur who is playing a role in changing the unemployment situation in his home surroundings of Daveyton, Ekurhuleni. It was after he returned home from completing a degree in Corporate Communication at the University of Johannesburg in 2015 that he realised the importance of building at home first. "I came back and even though I had changed, things had stayed the same. My peers were jobless, and they would spend their days at street corners, young and going to waste. That's when I decided to start the business and asked the people around me if they would join me."

Sneaker culture is an institution in South Africa, and people are often sensitive about mistreating their valued shoes.

"If you think about it, using a washing machine or hard bristles to clean your shoes is very damaging, and a lot of people do not like these methods. At Walk Fresh we hand wash them, because we understand their delicacy, and we understand the cultural attachment that our clients have to their



Photo: Dudu Dube

shoes, be they sneakers or suede or leather shoes."

Walk Fresh is a sneaker-cleaning and shoe-care start-up, which hand washes your precious shoes, while also offering deliveries as well.

Demand is steadily growing, and in addition to the flagship store in Daveyton that also serves as a workspace for young entrepreneurs, Walk Fresh drop-off points can be found at laundromats in Edenvale, Fourways and Randburg, and another store will be opening soon in Durban.

The 27-year-old entrepreneur collaborated with brands such as Kiwi, J&B, Nike and a number of local youth brands in his township in an effort to deliberately plough back into the township economy.

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Tony Mabaso (33)

Founder, Alex Art Market

Twitter: @umoyafashions, @tonymabaso

"With the passion that I have for my community and the love I have for craftwork, I don't think I will create jobs for everyone, but I will spark the mind of the individuals who can create more jobs in my community to alleviate poverty," says Tony Mabaso, founder of Alex Art Market and Alex Fashion Week.

He was born in Alexandra and raised by his grandmother, who taught him how to design clothing; later he was given an opportunity in South Africa's high profile television and theatre shows. "I understand the challenges that are faced by my community and the reality of lack of skills; and even those who do have skills, of producing products; and those who don't have a platform, to showcase their products. That dream led to the establishment of Alex Art Market," he says.

The Alex Art Market was established in 2016 by Mabaso and his business partner Lungelwa Mlithshane, who both work in the TV, film and theatre industries. Mabaso is responsible for the daily running of the place, fundraising, creating marketing opportunities, upskilling creative SMMEs that are housed at the market, and finding opportunities for those SMMEs by linking them with government agencies and the private sector. He works with 10 creative SMMEs that employ more than 120 people.

Alexandra is one of the poorest townships in Johannesburg and is situated next to Sandton, the biggest economic hub in Africa. "Alexandra has been a bucket market, where money comes in at the end of the month, but by the 15th it's gone back to the rich neighbourhood and is being spent in malls around Johannesburg, where people get charged high costs having to use transportation to access those places, which doesn't benefit our community. So, we created the Alex Art Market space to convince our community create more jobs and attract tourists, as well contribute to our GDP," he says.

"It's good to know there are individuals who don't leave the township but rather strive to make it a better place for the upcoming youth as well."

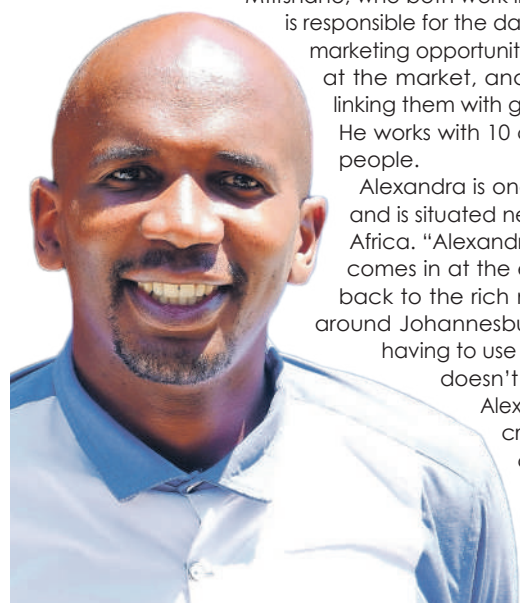


Photo: Ellen Radikebekwa

— Rumana Akoob

Sibu Mabena (26)

Founder, Duma Collective, a subsidiary of Mbuduma Communications

Twitter & Instagram: @sibumabena

Waiting for her mom to fetch her from school at 5pm each day opened a world of possibilities for Sibu Mabena; she followed her friends to dance class. By age 10 she had already competed in a dance competition in Germany. She later joined dance crews and choreographed shows for major events.

She now works behind the scenes on some of the biggest hip-hop concerts South Africa has ever seen. After having competed with major dance crews she started creative consulting.

"I've been that person that's just like, 'Give me a chance to work and I will show you what I can do, then we'll take it from there'. This is how I got to work on the Fill Up series."

Mabena has managed to build a career around her passions — dance, social media, events and talent management.

She founded Duma Collective while doing a Bachelor in Political Sciences and International Relations at the University of Pretoria. She has worked on Cassper Nyovest's Fill Up The Dome, Fill Up Orlando Stadium and Fill Up FNB Stadium. Natasha Tshahane, Luthando Shosha, Reason, K.O., Solo & The BETR Gang, The Muffinz, Sne Mbatha and DotCom are all managed by her agency.

Mabena's creative agency employs seven people. She says "sacrifice or compromise while being diplomatic" is how she gets the job done. "To be of service, one needs to understand that at times, you have to do something you don't like, because it serves the greater good."

Mabena says that young people need to remember that, "it is cool to work hard! It is cool to sacrifice now to gain later".

What Mabena puts out on social media is the final product, but the work it takes to get there is hard. "I've gone from picking up cases of cool drink and water into dressing rooms to serving Raphael Saadiq a cup of tea on stage. Working hard is worth it, because every rand you get to spend has been earned."



Photo: Sthe Ngcobo

— Rumana Akoob

Matthew Butler-Adam (30)

Management consultant, Bain and Company

Twitter: @mattwillba33

Matthew Butler-Adam has always had a bias towards broadness. Being the child of teachers meant exposure to a solid work ethic from a young age and that influenced his determination to do well in his own studies, because he wanted to impress his parents.

He credits the Politics, Philosophy and Economics degree he did at the University of Cape Town with giving him the necessary grounding to think about resources, power and politics in a thoughtful and informed way, while also honing his passion for debating.

After UCT Butler-Adam went on to complete master's degrees at Oxford and Harvard universities.

"Oxford was a very strong academic environment; my peers and I found ourselves grappling with challenging topics within and beyond the classroom, and it was something that was natural to us as opposed to being geeky behaviour.

"My Harvard experience, on the other hand, despite being academically rigorous, was more professionalised. Here I learned about soft skills and networking — the types of skills that are important but aren't necessarily taught in the classroom."

Today Butler-Adam is a management consultant at a leading firm, working on variety of projects in South Africa, Zambia and Botswana. One of his most memorable projects includes being part of a team that reworked the HR systems of an organisation with the aim of making the employee wellness experience more central to how the organisation conducts business.

For him, good management consulting is about being able to tie one's personal motivation with positive societal growth.

"This means putting away short-term goals and gains for the sustainability of the business, so that 20 years from now you can look back at the work that you did and be assured that it was beneficial to those that needed it ... it's not an easy balance, but value creation is crucial."

Butler-Adam feels that that as South Africans, optimism about the future we want must be balanced by the necessary scepticism and vigilance required to hold people to account, both privately and publicly.

"We have the fundamentals in place, but there must be a constant questioning of what equal opportunity means, for instance, especially because privilege is not always easily

identifiable. We must be willing to have the hard conversations."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Supplied



Rivo Mhlari (23)

Co-founder and chief executive, Rikatec (PTY) Limited

Twitter: @Rivo_Mhlari

A diversity in South Africa is what inspires Rivo Mhlari, founder of Rikatec, a vehicle information management systems company. He hopes to become a leader in technology in Africa and to be at the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The entrepreneur, who hails from Phalaborwa in Limpopo, graduated from the University of Cape Town with an honours in Business Science, specialising in finance and accounting in 2016. From a young age Mhlari says he was interested in business; he wanted to become a chartered accountant until his third year of university for the sole purpose of being credible in his field. Mhlari then worked as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company before pursuing his dream at Rikatec full time.

Mhlari started Rikatec in his first year of university. His company's vision is to leverage Artificial Intelligence and Big Data to become the dominant player in the Internet of Things. Through machine learning, Rikatec detects trends within different vehicle detection systems to improve prediction of vehicle longevity, assist in determining insurance and warranty premiums, fleet management and in enhancing the resale value of motor vehicles, among others.

Mhlari says entrepreneurship is liberation. "Both economically and socially, I became an entrepreneur because I wanted to make an impactful change in my country and continent, through innovation, job creation and socioeconomic enhancement. I became an entrepreneur because I didn't want to be boxed into a certain career; I wanted to make a difference through being ambitious and innovative."

He says it is important for young people to see what he does because it is not traditional. "I believe this is where the world is going and young people in Africa need to be a part of this, so that Africa can rise as an innovative continent and not just be adapting to the rest of the world."

— Rumana Akoob



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Luca Barausse

Sisa Ntlango (34)

Partner, Deloitte

Twitter: @Dezetman

In anyone's life, it is important to have role models. An opportunity to share one's successes and failures sometimes is a great learning opportunity for other aspiring young persons," says Sisa Ntlango, who was appointed as the first black director by Deloitte in the Eastern Cape and is one of the youngest in his profession.

Ntlango is from KwaBodweni Village in Lusikisiki, rural Eastern Cape, where he attended schools with limited resources.

He graduated in 2004 from the University of Port Elizabeth with a Bachelor of Commerce and then went to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where he earned a Certificate of Theory in Accounting.

Ntlango chose to remain in the Eastern Cape for many years, despite the urge many accountants have to migrate to cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town. "I was born here; there will always be a desire to make a difference in the community that raised me."

He is the public sector leader of the firm, overseeing the regions of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, and seeks to form and maintain partnerships with local government where the skills of the accountancy profession are mostly needed.

The highlight of his achievements, he says, is having risen above the odds to become an inspiration for many gifted young people who also hail from seriously disadvantaged backgrounds and see no future for themselves.

Ntlango says he is driven by a desire to positively contribute to his clients and community through his professional expertise. Helping his clients achieve their goals and make the desired societal impact they seek to achieve is what he aims for.

— Rumana Akoob



Photo: Supplied

Muhammad Taher Khan (34)

Managing director, Zero Point Energy

Twitter: @mtk007

Saying that Muhammad Taher Khan is an overachiever is simply an understatement. He cut his teeth at Sasol as part of an engineering graduate programme that exposed him to opportunities in solar and the need for organisations that promote entrepreneurship and the electrifying of Africa. Currently, he is the managing director of Zero Point Energy, an engineering organisation that has completed over 20 private and public sector projects. It is one of only a few successful Level 1 BBBEE and youth-owned green energy contractors.

He graduated cum laude from Wits University in Electrical Engineering did a master's in Engineering Management. He attributes his academic success to his predisposition to doing everything in the most meticulous manner possible.

His PhD thesis focused on Eskom's structural issues, with his results indicating that Eskom is operating as a monopoly where there is too much centralised control, among other issues.

Khan is optimistic about the future and his place in it: "It's a beautiful time to be a black educated engineer in this space, because it is relatively new — the growth potential is huge if you are geared to seize the opportunities. I am not deterred by the bottlenecks and the ageism, because there is power in proving people wrong with your abilities and your achievements."

Rural electrification is immensely rewarding to him because he can see its transformative effect for himself. "People tell me that they now don't have to go to bed at sunset because they have lighting. I never thought I would fulfil people's lives in this way. It really makes the journey and the vision more valuable."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Supplied

Nathaniel Japhtha (31)

Entrepreneur, mentor and advocate for social change

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pro226africa/>

There have been a number of experiences that defined Nathaniel Japhtha's upbringing and his outlook on life. He came from humble beginnings and was the first in his family to go to university and earn an accounting qualification. Despite being a smart and hardworking young man, he admits that he would not have gotten as far as he did have it not been for the people around him, who spoke potential into his life.

"I am really close with my mom, and my dad was something of a silent motivator to me because he was a rugby player who was not allowed to play rugby for his country of birth during apartheid. Despite this, he was disciplined and focused, and I brought that into my personal life."

Today, Japhtha uses the transformative power of sports and education to harness the growth and potential of young kids in the Western Cape. He founded Pro 226 Africa, an organisation active on the Cape Flats that tackles social and education problems by linking corporate individuals and university students to under-performing schools.

It also links young people to decisionmakers in the corporate world, training and upskilling young people to develop skills that will allow them to compete in the job market, find future study opportunities and develop national and international collaborations through sports diplomacy. Japhtha's dream is to build a big arena for basketball and netball in Cape Town.

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

THE HEART OF MADIBA'S LEGACY AND VALUES: NELSON MANDELA MUSEUM



2018 marks the years in which Mama Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu and Tata Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela would have turned 100 years old. The World-over would be celebrating the Centennial year of Madiba with euphoria programmes.

A companion of OR Tambo, people of the world agree that Nelson Mandela was a colossal figure. His universal significance was engraved by the United Nations when it declared 18 July the Nelson Mandela International Day. The Nelson Mandela Museum is at the epicentre of documenting, preserving and disseminating the values that made Nelson Mandela.

Located in Mthatha, Nelson Mandela Museum was officially opened on 11 February 2000 by the former President Nelson Mandela as a legacy project under the auspices of the Department of Arts and Culture. The multi-node Nelson Mandela Museum captures the hearts and minds of the people from all corners of the world.

This must-see attraction is situated at the heartland of the abaThembu nation in Mthatha, where Nelson Mandela began his long journey, viewed rolling hills of Qunu during his last days and laid to rest on the hillside overlooking his home in Qunu.

Nelson Mandela Museum operates in two campuses namely; Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre in Qunu which is an interactive educational centre that runs structured youth programmes embedded in Nelson Mandela's values, and Bhunga Building in town (Mthatha) which exhibits Nelson Mandela's gifts dubbed as "Gifts of the Nation", "Mandela and Luthuli in Conversation" exhibition and the "Meaning of Mandela".

The humble beginnings of Madiba's footprints in Qunu boasts visible ruins of a school where he got the name 'Nelson' on his first day, the church where he was Christened, the gigantic sliding stone that continue to define his roots, the

family grave site and Madiba's final resting place located at his residential home. Nelson Mandela's footprints are centred around the Nelson Mandela Museum Youth and Heritage Centre in Qunu, a place built to host youth programming aimed at inspiring youth through values of Human Rights, Justice, Freedom, Peace and Prosperity for all.

The Nelson Mandela Museum Youth and Heritage Centre in Qunu is now opened only for Wedding ceremonies, birthday functions, corporate events, and Conferencing. The Youth Centre will be open until the end December 2018, with renovation works expected to start in January 2019.

In advancing its programme of connecting museums and communities; Nelson Mandela Museum has mobile exhibitions like "Dear Mr. Mandela...Dear Mrs Parks: Children's Letters", "Parenting a Nation Exhibition" dedicated to Tata Walter and mama Albertina Sisulu, the "Mandela and Luthuli in Conversation", and the "With Love for Madiba" Exhibitions. These exhibitions are loaned to various interested museums, libraries and Thusong centres within South Africa for a period of six months.

In honour of Nelson Mandela's Centenary, Nelson Mandela Museum hosts a number of activities in South Africa, North America, Africa and Europe. The Museum's Centenary programming focusses on youth and leadership training programmes, conferences, exhibitions, and sporting activities. The Mandela Fridays powered by Madiba Mobile will facilitate discussions between students on sites associated with Nelson Mandela.

Centenary programming would further confirm Nelson Mandela Museum as a getaway to the Eastern Cape's major attractions and popular resorts.

Direct flights between Mthatha Airport and O. R. Tambo International Airports are available daily. Flights connecting East London from major South African Airports are available. Mthatha is 235km away from East London. The museum is close to accommodation establishments.

Contact Us:

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For more information on Centenary Plan, visit the Museum website: www.nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za. For your contribution send email to ongezwa@nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za





Philisiwe Precious Nduli (32)

Head of technical marketing, Discovery Insure

Twitter: @philisiwenduli

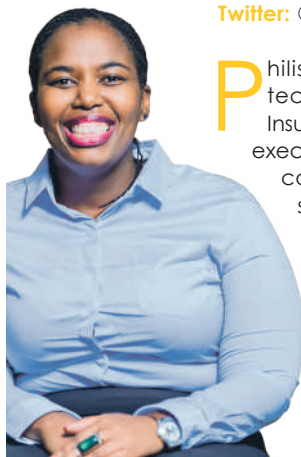


Photo: Supplied

Philisiwe Precious Nduli is head of technical marketing at Discovery Insure, reporting directly to the chief executive. In this role, she is a point of contact for internal and external stakeholders, while also working to create new business propositions for the organisation.

She completed an MBA from the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business on a scholarship from the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

An actuary by profession, Nduli

loves her job as it gives her the opportunity to engage with a number of people while also opening her up to the deep analytical work that underpins her actuarial studies.

"The thing I enjoy most about my job is the different interactions with various people, but also the impact that we are able to make. I recently saw my comments on hijackings that I had given to a different publication in English featured in *Isolezwe*, which means it was able to reach more people and help people to be safer on the roads."

In the same way that Discovery Vitality motivates people to make better health choices, so too does Discovery Insure use telematics and behavioural economics to incentivise South Africans to improve their driving, and this has garnered positive results when it comes to the accident severity and intensity cited in insurance claims.

As a young South African woman who has worked extremely

hard and has been fortunate to make a success out of her life, Nduli is very proud of her achievements and how they allow her to have a big influence on society. However, she reflects that a lot of work still has to be done, as the general unemployment rate speaks to the many barriers to entry that still exist for the majority of young South Africans.

"From a gender perspective, women are still often not seen as good enough or smart enough, and this can be limiting."

South Africa has one of the highest road accident rates in the world, and for Nduli, if we are to rectify this, change will need to begin with the man and the woman in the mirror. "There is also a cultural element to the way in which we interact on the road. We are an aggressive society and we need to be kinder with each other and not just do what we think is acceptable."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Thulisile Volwana (26)

Chief operating officer, Tuse

Twitter: @thulisilevolwan



Photo: Sabelo Sibanda

Thulisile Volwana is the co-founder of Tuse — a company that has developed technology to allow people to communicate in places where there is no signal. Innovation and "new ways of improving the way we currently work" are what drives her.

Volwana's company is the first African company to be selected to be part the Founders Space tech accelerator — the number one accelerator in Silicon Valley for foreign-based startups, according to Forbes magazine.

In 2012, Volwana graduated at Nelson Mandela University, where she studied economics, finance and finance management. The year after that she co-founded Millbug, Africa's first solar-powered WiFi only tablet.

In 2015 she co-founded the technology company Tuse Applications with Sabelo Sibanda. The firm has developed a solution that allows people to communicate in places with no signal through the creation of wireless mesh networks. The company developed an app that allows users to make secure voice and video calls.

The Flood Sensor will alert you of a threatening flood, a rapid temperature rise or linkages to these. The business was started due to her experience with poor connectivity while attending high school in a small town called Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape.

"I want to connect the unconnected; the internet enables us to reach the world," she says.

As the Eastern Cape has a dire lack of infrastructure, Volwana has chosen to work and stay in the province.

"There is a need to change people's lives and growing up in similar circumstances, I want to provide services to give me better insight into the things they need," she says.

Volwana was selected as one of the 10 most disruptive startups in the world at the 2016 Global Technology Symposium in San Francisco and was a finalist in the SAB Social Innovation Awards during the same year.

She says she is passionate about building communities through the products Tuse creates, because there is a need for their technology. "Connectivity is intermittent on the African continent."

— Rumana Akoob

Zaza Motha (34)

Founder and director, POUT MOVEMENT and POUT magazine

Twitter & Instagram: @zazamotha

At the tender age of seven, Zaza Motha witnessed the death of her mother; an ordeal that, till this day, motivates Motha (34) to speak out against injustice. "She was shot in our house while she was on the phone. I remember that I wanted to tell the world my story. Tell the world about the injustice that I felt. That moment shaped my life and how I saw the world, and influenced my decision to become a journalist so I could tell the world my story."

This award-winning journalist is the founder and director of POUT MOVEMENT; a self-empowerment movement for young women that publishes POUT MAGAZINE. Her work with POUT MOVEMENT earned her the 2018 Gauteng Premier's Youth Excellence Award in the Economic Development & Entrepreneurship category. Motha — who has freelanced for some of South Africa's biggest publications (*Sunday Times*, *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian*) — has significant experience in research, intelligence gathering, interview techniques, and compilation and presentation of information and findings, skills she continues to draw on through her entrepreneurial pursuits.

Among her many achievements, this budding entrepreneur says two stand out for her. The first being selected as one of the top two journalism students from the Tshwane University of Technology to study in the Netherlands. "That experience of staying overseas contributed to my paradigm shift; that of living in a safe space where there was quality of life," she says. The second achievement she notes is being selected as a Milead Fellow by the Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa. "Representing South Africa, I was part of 25 young women across the globe who demonstrated promising leadership and commitment in shaping Africa's future. We also received training in Ghana, where we were exposed to a myriad of issues that African women face. This made me more focused in terms of the role I can play on the continent."

Motha was nominated by The Media Online as one of the young South Africans under the age of 30 making strides in the media industry for 2010. She also won the Caxton Excellence Award for Best Food Feature (2011)

while working for Food & Home Entertaining magazine.

— Simphiwe Rens



Photo: Gerald Ntsimane

Zakhona Ndlovu (33)

Senior manager B-BBEE, MultiChoice South Africa

Twitter: @ZakhonaNdlovu

Zakhona Ndlovu joined the Multichoice Group in 2014 as the group's BBEE senior manager. As the group's leader for transformation, she also heads the group's Enterprise and Supplier Development portfolio. She helped develop a number of Enterprise Supplier Development programmes, including the ICT start-up boot camp, which gives young black entrepreneurs the opportunity to gain invaluable business knowledge, receive mentorship and coaching, access to finance and the market.

In this role, she's gone on to design classroom-based skills development programmes, mentorship and coaching. "I fell in love with enterprise development when I experienced first-hand the joy of doing work that changes lives in a substantial and tangible manner," she says about her passion for working in the transformation sector.

Although she came into this role by chance, she's quick to admit that she's adamant about doing her best at realising South Africa's vast potential. "It's way past the time that our potential became a reality," she adds.

Ndlovu says that in her line of work she often hears people in corporate spaces complain about how ineffective BBEE is. "Like any other policy it is not perfect; however, it's important that corporates remember that they are the

ones responsible for implementation, not the government."

Having completed an LLB from the University of Pretoria, an MBA from GIBS, a diploma in Insolvency Law and Practice from the University of Pretoria and a postgrad diploma in Compliance Management from the University of Johannesburg, Ndlovu believes that university helped her truly see the depth and impact of social inequality, and how education can go a long way to starting to bridge some of those gaps.

She is a force to be reckoned with. She strongly believes in people's potential and takes the effort to develop and nourish the potential she sees in others. Since she's joined MultiChoice, the company has since achieved a BBEE Level 1 certification and won the Oliver Empowerment Awards for Top empowered enterprise and supplier development for three years in a row (2016, 2017 and 2018) — which is a big achievement for her, the company and the transformation project in South Africa.

Ndlovu describes the real highlight of her career as "watching young black filmmakers coming into their own and proudly walking the courses they have charted for themselves".

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Thembaethu Mfebe



Ntombi Mekgwe, speaker of the Gauteng provincial legislature fighting for the rights of women and children

Charles Molele

As a political activist, youth challenges such as unemployment, substance abuse and the prevalence of the drug nyaope in townships are close to the heart of Ntombi Mekgwe, speaker of the Gauteng provincial legislature (GPL).

Mekgwe, who was thrust into politics at an early age, believes that young people today can also drive change and provide innovative solutions to the challenges they face, in the same way the youth of Soweto did in 1976.

These issues include youth unemployment, the proposed minimum wage, the proposed land reform legislation, data costs, youth development, and the voter registration drive.

According to the latest government statistics, young people accounted for 52-64% of the working age population, but are under-represented in employment, accounting for only 42-49% of the employed. The youth unemployment rate in South Africa averaged 51.61% from 2013 until 2017, reaching an all-time high of 55% in the second quarter of 2017 and a record low of 48.8% in the fourth quarter of 2014.

"Young people face many challenges today, but they must stand their ground and concentrate on important issues such as education. Education opens doors and opportunities," said Mekgwe.

In an interview with the *Mail & Guardian*, she said the GPL is set to hold the Youth Sector Parliament and Seminar in the month of June to debate the challenges facing youth today.

The Youth Sector Parliament and Seminar, Mekgwe said, was meant to build and strengthen the existing partnership between the GPL and organised youth formations, youths in tertiary institutions, the Independent Electoral Office and Home Affairs.

"The Youth Sector Parliament and the Seminar is part of exposing what is happening in the actual Parliament to young people and students. We are revealing what is happening in the legislature so they can debate issues themselves, because they are in the driving seat of this change. It is clear that much remains to be done to ensure that youth are provided with opportunities in order to flourish and come up with new, innovative solutions to their problems," said Mekgwe.

"Even though factors accounting for youth unemployment has been discussed ad nauseum, to enable the 2018 GPL Youth Sector Parliament to come up with concrete resolutions that will contribute to resolving socioeconomic ills generated by youth unemployment, it is necessary to look closely at the scourge and contributing narratives permutating this scourge of youth unemployment."

Last month, Mekgwe visited the Tshwane University of Technology and conducted a workshop on the four mandates (public participation, law making, oversight and corporative governance) of GPL, including legislature's petition process. During the workshop, said Mekgwe, students also debated issues of free and decolonised education in South Africa, student funding, safety on campuses, rape and gender-based violence and job opportunities.

"They also raised deep concerns about the way MPs are conducting themselves in Parliament nowadays, shouting and often hurling insults," said Mekgwe.

Born in the township of Duduza in the East Rand, a scene of violent bus and rent boycotts in the 1980s, Mekgwe has taken

up senior leadership roles in politics from a young age.

She joined the Congress of the South African Students in 1983 and campaigned with fellow pupils against corporal punishment, while a student at Inkomazi High School in Komatipoort, Mpumalanga, where her parents sent her to escape the internecine violence in the Reef.

During the State of Emergency, as violent protests and fierce resistance continued against the state in the 1980s, Mekgwe was detained for her underground activities as part of the Basil February Unit of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and for furthering the aims of the ANC.

Mekgwe became mayor of Greater Nigel, in Ekurhuleni, at the age of 30, before the towns were amalgamated and became the City of Ekurhuleni. She later took up several leadership roles, such as the mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni and several provincial MEC roles, before she became the speaker of the GPL in 2014.

"I grew up in a poor community in Duduza, where I still live today. I see poverty every day; I see young people facing the same problems we faced when we were young. Although a lot has changed — there is electricity, running water and recreational facilities being built — there are still some challenges that the youth continue to face as well as new changes such as unemployment, lack of financial resources and health issues," she said in a recent interview.

Mekgwe continues to work with young people in her hometown. "I am currently working a lot with young people in Duduza. We were able to elect three young ANC members as ward councillors in Duduza. Young people are undermined. I am happy to hand over the baton to young people and give them the necessary support. When I was still mayor of Ekurhuleni, we also trained young people in ICT and engineering."

Mekgwe said the GPL will be conducting a voter registration outreach programme in June. "We will be engaged in civic education to teach young people what democracy all about. We also ensure that matriculants are able to register and have identity documents. When you apply for your ID, you must also register to vote and go through civic education to learn about the Electoral Act and the Independent Electoral Commission," said Mekgwe.

She added that the GPL has also partnered with facilitators in her parliamentary constituency trained by Wits University to conduct extra lessons on maths, science, accounting and ITC to grade 10,11 and 12 Learners in Soweto. "We are also engaged in a drive to fight substance abuse and the drug nyaope in the townships," said Mekgwe.

The GPL, according to Mekgwe, is also involved in anti-femicide programmes to create awareness around the scourge of gender-based violence in South Africa.

"We have established the



Men's Forum and invited councillors, and trained them to talk about femicide. Women are humans and need to be respected. You cannot wake up and beat up a person," said Mekgwe.

Mekgwe believes the government has done a lot to advance the lives of millions of South Africans, despite numerous challenges.

"It is encouraging to see solutions.

Children are getting food at schools, in the morning and during break time, which is something we didn't get growing up, but there are still issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment which motivate me to keep working towards contributing to eradicating those issues. We fought for our rights, people died fighting and I am motivated to keep working to protect this democracy."

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Ariane Nevin (30)

National prisons specialist, Sonke Gender Justice

Twitter: @ariane_nevin

For Ariane Nevin, engaging with social justice issues has been a long-standing passion. "I've always had a passion for social justice, particularly to address inequality, discrimination and stigma," she says. Nevin has developed a solid knowledge foundation within the legal fraternity; knowledge she draws from to participate in South Africa's betterment. She holds an LLM from the University of California, Los Angeles, and completed an LLB at UCT.

Nevin joined SECTION27 in 2013 as a Students for Law and Social Justice Fellow working on issues related to the right to education, including the Limpopo textbooks case, school infrastructure and sanitation cases and a guide for survivors of sexual violence at school.

"Through my involvement as a student activist in Students for Law and Social Justice, I learned about the power that the law has historically played in entrenching injustice, but also its potential to further social justice, and decided that the best way to go about combating inequality was to learn how to harness the law and, where necessary, to dismantle it."

Nevin has also worked on the Pollsmoor Prison overcrowding case, partnering with Lawyers for Human Rights, to eventually win a court victory against the government that led to a drastic reduction in overcrowding levels at Pollsmoor Remand Detention Facility. Her professional and academic pursuits have allowed her to work with vulnerable groups, particularly incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people. She credits Nikki Stein, Adila Hassim, Professor Tendayi Achiume, Marlise Richter and Emily Keehn as some of the women who have mentored and inspired her tremendously.

There are a number of things Nevin wishes to contribute towards to bring about change in South Africa's current state of affairs: an end to all the toxic gender norms, discrimination and stigma that lead to such high rates of physical and sexual violence in South Africa. "I'd want to break down the stigma against the hyper-marginalised — sex workers, incarcerated people, parolees and others — and include them in the conversations that affect them."

Currently working as the national prisons specialist at Sonke Gender Justice, Nevin is grateful that she can contribute in this sector. "I know of many people out there doing incredible work for the rights of incarcerated people who may never be recognised for that work. I've been honoured to work with them and learn from them: Thulani Ndlovu, Jerry Mbetane, Mzamo Sidelo, to name just a few."

In July 2018, Nevin joins the Constitutional Court as a judicial clerk.

— Simphiwe Rens



Photo: Gadeeja Abbas

B Camminga (34)

Postdoctoral Fellow, African Centre for Migration & Society, Wits University

Twitter: @obsqueer

B Camminga completed their undergraduate and honours degrees at Rhodes University in 2008, majoring in history and politics. Following this, they received a Chevening Scholarship to undertake an MA at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, University of Leeds, UK; and in 2012 were awarded a position as one of four Doctoral Fellows at the Institute for Humanities in Africa (HUMA) at the University of Cape Town.

Camminga situates their work at the intersection between transgender studies, queer studies and refugee and migration studies within Africa. Camminga's PhD in Sociology from UCT is entitled *Bodies over Borders and Borders over Bodies: The Gender Refugee and the Imagined South Africa*.

Camminga's research focuses on knowledge production and concepts of the everyday in relation to the needs of transgender and gender-transgressive asylum seekers from across Africa. In particular, they say: "I am interested in how transgender and gender-transgressive identity functions in South Africa and how asylum seekers come to access the country in order to find a perceived/hoped for notion of freedom and safety within the country's borders."

What is most interesting in these times and in Camminga's work is the question of what it means to be gendered and sexed within this context, particularly in relation to the available rights and protections, not forgetting the global flow of information and human rights norms.

Camminga joined the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand as a postdoctoral researcher in 2018. Camminga's research interests in rights, migration, asylum and diaspora as they relate to transgender people from the African continent make them an invaluable contribution to ensuring the human rights of the trans community are not infringed upon.

They continue to explore themes related to the bureaucratisation of gender in relation to transgender bodies and asylum regimes globally; possibilities for mobility and migration of transgender identified people from across and within the African region, and the history of trans phenomena in South Africa.

They publish in journals regularly and a recent book project, *Beyond the Mountain: Queer Life in Africa's 'Gay Capital'*, with Dr Zethu Matebeni, explores the conflicting iterations of race, sex, gender and sexuality that mark the City of Cape Town.

— Sifiso Buthelezi



Photo: Mattias Sköld/NAI

Carol Mohlala (29)

Media and communications manager, Lawyers for Human Rights

Twitter: @CarolLZA

Carol Mohlala successfully utilises the influential power in the art of communication to engage with various social justice issues, including those affecting the LGBTI and other vulnerable communities. This media studies and industrial sociology graduate is a writer, editor and communications strategist who also studied financial journalism through the Gordon Institute of Business Studies. Mohlala's passion for media and communication sees her using her skills to drive her continued commitment to the effective communication of key messages to the most vulnerable in society. This work lends itself to the betterment of the communities Mohlala serves through her efforts within the NGO sector as well as her current role as media and communications manager for Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR).

In her role at LHR, Mohlala has been instrumental in communicating and facilitating debates around the Hate Crimes Bill and offering training to individuals in the NGO sector on effective media strategies and enhancing their understanding of the best tools to use in the media. Mohlala also offers commentary on broadcasting regulations, ethics and policies in South Africa.

Her biggest motivation is her late mother who instilled a strong sense of community in her. "Even though she had very little, she always wanted us to dream big. She pushed us to study but at the same time always reminded us to stay grounded. That even with education, or a job, we were part of a community and needed to give back," says Mohlala. She hopes that anyone crossing paths with her remembers her strong belief in others, the fact that she never lets talent go unnoticed, and her openness to offering advice to the betterment of those she interacts with.

Currently serving her second term as a public representative on the panel of adjudicators at the Press Council, Mohlala has also played a noteworthy role in previous positions held within Media Monitoring Africa and the Save Our SABC (SOS) Coalition — civil society pressure groups that contribute towards highlighting marginalised voices.

Her active role in South Africa's civil society is driven by a life lesson that Carol holds dearly: "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (a person is a person through other people). "No matter how educated you are or the car you drive or your position at work you can never survive on earth on your own. You are part of a community and you need to nurture those circles."

— Simphiwe Rens



Photo: Supplied

Farhana Parker (30)

Social entrepreneur, The Social Makeover

Twitter: @FarhanaParker

Farhana Parker's qualifications paint a picture of her passion and commitment towards the development of her fellow citizens. Parker is a master's candidate in Inclusive Innovation at the UCT Graduate School of Business, and holds a social work degree and three postgraduate qualifications in psychology, social policy and management and social innovation management.

These qualifications have been pivotal in laying the foundation for her to actively tackle issues of inequality and social injustice. "Our world is extremely unequal and unfair, and we see it every day in different situations. The gap between the rich and the poor, and the poor services and treatment based on one's status, are disheartening realities that keep me up at night," she says.

"This has encouraged me to pursue my master's in Inclusive Innovation to enable me to do more in-depth research and make a contribution to addressing this complex challenge both on a local and global scale."

Parker founded The Social Makeover, an enterprise with a special focus on the rights, development and advancement of women. Her passion for women's issues and their empowerment has compelled her to make a difference, as she strongly believes in the important role women play in empowering communities. The Social Makeover enterprise has been instrumental in fostering an environment wherein Parker can effectively pursue and commit to a career of meaning and valuable social impact, serving and affirming the humanity of as many people as she can.

Parker's work within South Africa's civil society has seen her serving the most vulnerable communities as a social worker, and working as an executive support officer and special projects manager to the minister for social development, leading key projects (such as Youth Cafés) in the Western Cape. These valuable contributions to civil society are what drive her to continue her efforts towards the betterment of the communities she serves.

If anyone who has crossed paths with her forgets her name, she hopes they will remember her as a woman who actively and selflessly serves humanity with great passion, authenticity and humility. A woman who possesses the ability to positively influence and inspire others to live to their potential. Above all else, Parker strives to ensure that her knowledge and expertise are used to positively and progressively impact social and transformational processes in the world.

— Simphiwe Rens



Photo: Tassy B



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Photo: Andrew Levy

Gilbert Pooley (34)

Managing director, Umuzi

Twitter: @gilbertpooley

Gilbert Pooley is the managing director of Umuzi in downtown Johannesburg. The academy contributes greatly in providing youngsters a year of training that renders them work-place-ready for jobs in advertising, photography and videography, coding and data analysis.

Pooley says South Africa's overlooked talent is his motivation. "We think of our reported six million unemployed youth with shame and disgrace. For South Africa's hard-working income tax payers, there's a handy narrative that the plague of matric failures and unemployment is a lost cause; its victims destined to tend gardens, wash dishes and fill tanks. We blame the government and assume it's their mess to fix. The truth is, there are millions of young, industrious, talented, entrepreneurial self-starters who are systematically excluded from the economy due to massive inequalities of access."

Recruits at Umuzi are paid a stipend and work 9am to 5pm to get them used to real work. Many are university dropouts who were bright but couldn't pay the fees. Umuzi Academy — sponsored by companies who offer work experience — trains these youngsters, and more than 80% of the recruits get full-time jobs after completing the programme.

"I'm most proud of our Umuzi community of black creatives, directors,

designers, consultants, strategists and coders transforming the tech and creative industry. There's nothing more rewarding than seeing their lives and careers take off," says Pooley, who is positive about the professional development and future of young South Africans despite his concerns about the country's current public education system.

"Thankfully, there is hope. Through my Umuzi experience, I've learned that unemployed and under-valued young people are able to help themselves. They can become independent, innovative value creators if they have access to high-quality learning, and high-value careers. We've seen hundreds of previously unemployed, but talented, young people blossom in just one year on Umuzi's Creative Tech programme. Today, they work at some of the top employers in the country, changing the narrative and securing their future, their families' and hopefully our nation's."

Describing himself as empathetic and curious, Pooley says he realises that past advantage counts less every day. "How much you know, or what you own is becoming irrelevant. How present you are and how fast you're learning are the contemporary value levers. Thankfully this advantages talented young people, even if they are currently unemployed."

— Simphiwe Rens

Lesego Ndala (29)

Monitoring and evaluation specialist, Tshikululu Social Investments

Twitter: @LeggoBloc

Lesego Ndala is the Beyoncé of social impact. From as far back as he can remember, he has always been a person who wanted to do more with his time. After spending his gap year in the UK, he enrolled for a BA in International Relations and Politics at Wits. It was here that he gravitated towards volunteering as a pastime.

"When I was a student I found myself working on a volunteering project in Bushbuckridge that had failed dismally. That project exposed me to the consequences of failed development and I wanted to know what a successful development project looks like."

To date, Ndala has worked on social impact projects with the Wits Volunteer Programme, the Ikamva Youth Volunteering programme, Enke! Make your Mark, and more recently, Tshikululu Social Investments.

Cumulatively, this exposed him to a variety of leadership approaches, taught him monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and most importantly, reiterated the fact that he is exactly where he needs to be. He is now a monitoring and evaluation specialist at Tshikululu Social Investments, which involves developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for clients in the renewable energy, health and education sectors.

"Social impact matters to me because of the reality of social injustice that we all experience each day; people are losing out on opportunities to learn more and build themselves because they do not have the knowledge and the adaptive literacies to take part in various activities."

Despite this, he is excited about the transformative potential of his visibility and representation as a black man in the monitoring and evaluation space. "This is the youngest you will ever be, and even if it is hard, there is hope at the end of the tunnel. If you put in the work, you will succeed. Nobody plans to be a role model, but if you can be a role model for others, do so."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Supplied

Lwazi Mtshiyo (35)

Senior political organiser, Ndifuna Ukwazi

Twitter: @lwazimtshiyo

Human rights lawyer, researcher and community activist Lwazi Mtshiyo hails from the small village of Corana near Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. Perhaps that's where his love of rural South Africa and other rural parts of the world he has had the privilege of visiting comes from.

With eight years of experience in civil society and public interest litigation representing marginalised communities on issues such as housing and land, basic services, the right to protest and informal traders' rights, Mtshiyo has been active in South Africa's social justice scene.

While he worked for the Socio-Economic Rights Institute, Mtshiyo was involved in key constitutional cases such as the *Dladla* case on the right to housing for the evicted. In the Marikana case, Mtshiyo was also one of the legal representatives for the families of the victims of the Marikana massacre in civil claims against the state.

The Fees Must Fall movement was a struggle close to his heart and he supported it wholeheartedly. When Mtshiyo and his sisters were at university they experienced the same challenges with fees. Mtshiyo provided legal representation to arrested students during the protests in Johannesburg. "Fees Must Fall was clear indication that we have a very strong youth that will lead this country to greater things," Mtshiyo says.

Today, Mtshiyo is a senior political organiser for Cape Town-based land and housing rights organisation Ndifuna Ukwazi. Mtshiyo's understanding of the land question also comes from the work he previously did with shack dwellers' movement Abahlali BaseMjondolo in KwaZulu Natal — for whom he has the greatest respect.

With the recent debates around land expropriation going around, Mtshiyo has his hands full. He says the long struggle fighting for land and housing rights has been disappointing and taxing.

"When we embarked on the current democratic dispensation none of us ever imagined that our black people would engage in such tussles with government on the fulfilment of its basic constitutional obligations. Housing and land are basic needs that human beings need to lead a decent and meaningful life."

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Zecharia Mashele

Wandisa Phama (29)

Acting deputy director, Centre for Applied Legal Studies

Instagram: @Wandisa.Phama

Wandisa Phama has always loved the idea of law. Growing up in the small town of Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape, Phama became frustrated at how rural communities in small towns face lack of access to water, poor schools and high levels of unemployment. She wanted to use the law to search for solutions to these.

She is now an attorney and acting deputy director at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (Cals), where she heads the business and human rights programme.

"I don't know how to translate the feeling of what it's like to work as an acting deputy director at Cals at this age; it is nothing shy of a blessing," she says. For Phama to be in a leadership position at Cals while it is undergoing a leadership transition is exhilarating, proving that there's always been black, capable people who can lead public interest organisations.

On holding big business accountable for human rights violations, she says power over others should be kept in check. Phama was actively involved in supporting the Fees Must Fall protests and sits on the steering committee of the Right2Protest Project.

Assisting protesting students was a given for her. "I have known what it's been like to sit outside the fence of better opportunities that education can provide due to lack of funds. I have known what it's like to be sued by a powerful university for outstanding fees. I saw myself in the students I represented. I saw my mother in the parents arrested in Brixton, and I studied law to be available for a time such as Fees Must Fall," she says.

Sitting on the Right2Protest steering committee is important to Phama, because she says in an unequal society like ours, a space for dissent is important for those who are unheard.

Phama is loud and bubbly. She loves to laugh, even through tough times. Losing her mother to cancer and her father a month later at 26, she has spent the last few years trying to recover and learn from her experiences. In honour of her mother who lived life fully and loved humanity, she intends to live life with similar zeal. As for her career, she will continue to practise and teach law in various capacities and will be working towards a PhD in the next few years to come. International human rights organisations may be on the cards too.

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Lee-Anne Bruce

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Pamela Mondliwa (32)



Photo: Sean McSweeney

Senior researcher, Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development and Acacia Economics

Twitter: @nqojela

A second-year microeconomics course sparked senior economist Pamela Mondliwa's interest in economics. Today she works as a senior economist at the Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development (CCRED) at the University of Johannesburg and is a member of premier David Makhura's Economic Advisory Panel.

"Economics provides a lens to reflect on the world and understand the different incentives that drive various outcomes," she says. "It is an important tool that can be used to drive policies that will result in better outcomes."

Between 2009 and 2013 Mondliwa worked as an economist for the Competition Commission in its policy and research division. She dealt with complex mergers, cartels and abuse of dominance cases.

Competition authorities guard against firms colluding or abusing their market positions to charge prices above competitive levels and/or engage in conduct that excludes rivals. This impacts the ordinary person on the ground, as anti-competitive conduct can lead to high prices for consumers, less choice and poorer products and services.

"I love this work because the authorities are working to level the playing field," she says. Besides this, Mondliwa was also part of the team that designed the "Fast Track Settlement Programme" which led to the commission settling the construction cartel cases, including the bid-rigging of the 2010 world cup stadia.

Mondliwa is committed to a restructuring of the economy to allow for economic transformation and creating an inclusive economic system. Competition policy is a critical part of efforts to change the structure of the economy.

Addressing entrenched economic power and creating opportunities in the face of barriers to entry requires a much wider package of measures. Her research for the CCRED is about understanding these measures.

Mondliwa is currently focusing on questions related to South Africa's structural change and industrial development. South Africa has de-industrialised prematurely and this poses a number of challenges for creating employment and increasing incomes. She hopes to continue to contribute to the discussions on what it will take to re-industrialise so the economy can be more inclusive. Over time she would like to transition to implementation of interventions that can bring about change for the economy.

"I have always been driven to make a difference," Mondliwa says. "My journey is evidence that opportunities can change one's path, and I would like to contribute to ensuring that opportunities are available to all South Africans."

— Shaazia Ebrahim

Malebo Sephodi (34)

Writer and activist

Twitter: @malebosephodi

"My work has always been about trying to fight for social justice," says activist and writer Malebo Sephodi. Her fierceness, proclivity to stand up for what she believes in and grace have earned her the title of "Lioness", but she describes herself as an African feminist because she says she is steeped in her identity as an African woman.

Among her many pursuits, Sephodi runs a safe space for black women, where they can just be, called Lady Leader. The name is a play on words: "lady" comes from a certain behaviour imposed on women to follow decorum and "leader" is a title ladies were never meant to hold.

Lady Leader hosts a group of women — academics, community workers and entrepreneurs — who Sephodi mentors to become their best selves. It is a space for activists to take care of themselves, to be at peace and to cultivate joy. It has evolved over time, and was called Soul Ova until 2013.

Sephodi started Soul Ova in 2005 in response to gender-based violence. This was partly

to deal with her own demons, and partly because she wanted to help those who had survived it. Soul Ova was a counselling organisation and support group that worked with shelters, dealing with cases of abuse nationwide. In an attempt to understand why men abused women, Sephodi tried to incorporate men into her counselling. She worked on a project at the Leeuwkop Maximum Correctional Centre to address the issue of violent masculinities in South Africa and held mentorship groups for boys.

In 2017 Sephodi published her book *Miss Behave*. It examines issues of power through the lens of a black woman in South Africa grappling with intersectionality, patriarchy, race, class, sexuality and gender — with gender being one of the most important elements in the book. "When we are conditioned to think gender is binary, we become quite prejudiced to anyone that does not conform to what our ideas of gender are," Sephodi says. This births all kinds of prejudice, including sexism and homophobia.

Sephodi says the most important thing about her book is its accessibility: the way it explains political issues and concepts, particularly feminism, in accessible language. Sephodi says this is significant, because academic language often excludes and alienates certain groups of people.

The book challenges society's deep-seated beliefs about what it means to be



Photo: TC Maila

an obedient woman. It's a reflection on Sephodi's journey in misbehaviour that renounces the societal expectations imposed upon black women.

— Shaazia Ebrahim

Michael Marchant (29)

Researcher: Investigations and Advocacy, Open Secrets

Twitter: @MikeMarchant13

The private sector's complicity in human rights violations often go unaccounted for in the broader discourse of corruption and human rights. "It is the possibility to challenge this impunity, and make life a little more uncomfortable for the powerful, that I love about our work," says Michael Marchant.

As a researcher at Open Secrets, a nonprofit that promotes private sector accountability for economic crimes and human rights violations in Southern Africa, Marchant is interested in how power and politics is organised and the impact this has on the world.

Powerful corporations, as much as governments, should be criticised and held accountable for corruption and failures at the expense of human rights, Marchant says.

He was the lead researcher for the book



Photo: Charlotte Scott

Apartheid Guns and Money, which he says was an eye-opening process. The book helps dispel the myth that apartheid South Africa was an isolated pariah state, revealing that it was enmeshed in powerful, conservative global networks that supported

the regime with money and weapons, even while publicly criticising it.

Apartheid Guns and Money shuts down the argument that corruption arrived in South Africa with democracy — the racist subtext that corruption is a problem of black government — revealing the scale of corruption of the apartheid government. It shows that to really understand corruption and economic crime, we need to uncover the networks of the powerful that profit from injustice. Marchant hopes South Africans can use this book as a basis to pursue accountability for apartheid's accomplices.

Active in the Right2Know Campaign, Marchant believes information is a crucial basis for power. "It is no surprise that governments acting contrary to the interests of their people seek so actively to control information and to limit transparency," he says. This is why access to information remains an important struggle in the context of our democracy.

Marchant is studying toward an LLB degree. In the future, he hopes to continue to work on investigations and cases that break new ground in bringing corporations and private actors complicit in human rights violations to book.

— Shaazia Ebrahim

Paul Jozua Steyn (31)

Founder and chairman, Paul Steyn Foundation

Twitter: @paulsteynfoundation

Paul Steyn has walked thousands of kilometres to create awareness and show other amputees, and the general public, the mobility that a prosthetic leg provides an amputee. In the process, he has raised thousands of rands to assist disadvantaged amputees.

Optimistic, compassionate and driven, Steyn is committed to making a difference in the lives of other amputees.

After an accident at school at the age of 13, Steyn's right leg was amputated and he had to use crutches to get around. When he was 16 someone donated a prosthetic leg to him. In college he was elected to the Student Representative Council with the portfolio of community involvement, which ignited in him a passion for community work. These experiences led him to devote his life to community work and start the Paul Steyn Foundation.

"I believe in paying it forward," Steyn says.

At first Steyn did shorter walks, mainly in the Western Cape. Then in August 2015, he walked for nearly 7 000km over a period of 15 months through all nine South African provinces. Through his walks, Steyn experienced the country in its diversity, both in its nature and in its people. "No matter where you are, be it in the dry Northern Cape, the lush Garden Route or the rolling grasslands of the highveld, walking through it, there is always something of beauty to be found," he says. Everywhere he went people were interested and interesting, helpful and hospitable. It taught him never to judge anyone by the way they look.

Walking long distances for long periods of time is not easy, but Steyn's faith in God and his belief in his mission motivates him to keep going. During his walks, problems with a recurring abscess behind the knee of his stump meant he had to stay over in some places for longer than scheduled to have it treated.

During tough times his main motivation is the difference he has made in other people's lives. It never occurred to him to give up. When Steyn sets himself a goal, he is determined to complete it.

As for his plans for the future, Steyn says: "I hope we can expand the foundation to be able to assist every person that applies, and qualifies, for help in the future. I would like to



Photo: Mari Pearman for PJ's Image Labs

see the Paul Steyn Foundation as the foremost organisation working with, and on behalf of, amputees in South Africa and Africa."

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Saily Brown (23)

Youth advocate, South African Youth Positive (Y+ SA)

Twitter: @saily_brown

When Saily Brown first found out about her HIV status at 14, she felt confused and ashamed.

Growing up in the small town of Itsoeng in the North West, where speaking about sex and HIV is taboo, Brown's knowledge of the virus was scant. She thought she was surely going to die soon, and believed you could only get HIV if you slept around and "lived recklessly".

Brown was born with HIV. When she discovered this, she was angry. Angry at the virus, angry with her late parents and angry with her siblings, because she was the only one of her siblings born with HIV.

She only disclosed her status publicly at age 18, when her health started deteriorating and she knew she had to begin antiretroviral treatment.

Fed up with it all, Brown wrote an angry post on Facebook titled An Open Letter to HIV. The post she wrote for her own personal healing resonated with a number of young people, who saw their story in hers and drew strength and inspiration from it. After that, she decided to be more open about her status and used social media to educate people about living with HIV.

Brown recently achieved her dream of launching her own YouTube channel, *Saily Brown*, which she uses as a platform for her HIV activism.

Today the 23-year-old activist works as a youth advocate at South African Youth Positive, a network advocating for the rights and needs of young people living with HIV. She hosts workshops encouraging the youth to speak openly, dispel illusions and break the stigma around the virus.

Brown hopes people will be easier on those living with HIV and that HIV-positive people will be able to forgive and accept themselves.

Brown calls herself an activist in all aspects of life and is all about equality. Her main objective is to change the narrative of how the story of a person living with HIV ends. Living with HIV is not easy. Besides the social stigma, there is no cure for it and treatments have to be adhered to religiously. But Brown perseveres. "If I can use my story and my personal journey with HIV to help other people to deal with theirs, then it's going to be okay."

— Shaazia Ebrahim

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Tinashe Njanji (34)

Coordinator, People's Health Movement South Africa

Twitter: @Tinashenjanji

Zimbabwean-born social justice and human rights activist and educator Tinashe Njanji has worked extensively to campaign against xenophobia since 2008, when xenophobic violence swept across the country.

Along with other activists, journalists and religious leaders among others, Njanji helped respond to the spate of hateful xenophobic attacks. Njanji advocated for better government and police protection for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

He says xenophobia angers him as it's an injustice done only to black non-South Africans who happen to be Africans, and not white non-South Africans.

"We need to welcome and accept everyone as an equal human being and be reminded that during the struggles of liberation we helped each other in fighting for freedom. We housed each other and called each other comrades, brothers and sisters, not labels and name calling that happens today," he says.

Those who instigate xenophobia must be held accountable to the law, Njanji says. He encourages the public to come out strongly condemning xenophobic incidents whenever they happen, just like how people come out on issues such as race and women abuse.

Njanji has been fighting for social justice since he was completing his tertiary studies back home in Zimbabwe. He has over 10 years of experience in community mobilisation and working with grassroots organisations across South Africa. His work extends beyond campaigning against xenophobia and he is involved in a number of civil societies that promote social justice.

Njanji was among the founding activists that formed the Right2Know



Photo: Nandipha Njanji

Campaign and served as national administrator in previous work with the organisation.

Currently the coordinator of People's Health Movement South Africa (PHM SA), Njanji works tirelessly to ensure better health care provision for poor people in southern Africa. Besides project management and the coordination of the national PHM SA office, he runs community workshops and training mainly in disadvantaged communities.

In the future, Njanji dreams of becoming a popular educator who works effectively at the community level to address the social determinants of health — and the social and health issues people face on a daily basis.

— Shaazia Ebrahim

Siboniso Ernest Thusi (23)

Activist

Twitter: @SboThusi



Photo: Mthobisi Thusi

Members of the Fees Must Fall movement are familiar with the dejection and ire that South African students experience at tertiary institutions that fail them. Sbo Thusi is no exception.

Hailing from a disadvantaged background, Thusi studied office management and technology at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Like many, Thusi struggled to pay his fees and relied on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to do so.

After a some glitches in the application process, NSFAS only paid his fees for 2015 and not the previous two years. On the day of his graduation, Thusi received a statement of debt for about R65 000 instead of a qualification.

"When I realised that even though I was allowed to attend the graduation ceremony, I wasn't going to get a certificate as proof that I'm a graduate like anyone else; that really killed me. I felt like the three years was a waste of time," Thusi says. His parents could not afford to settle his debt, he couldn't borrow the money and without a qualification his chances of finding work were slim.

Thusi realised being angry at the system was not going to help him move forward. "Sitting at home was not going to bring [about] any change. Taking a stand and showing the university management and NSFAS that they

failed us was the only option to get our fees paid," he says.

In 2016 Thusi rallied other students whose fees were unpaid and started a petition to force NSFAS and DUT to settle their fees and release their qualifications. The online petition, called *Hand Over Our Certificates DUT* was ultimately a success, and NSFAS paid the outstanding bursary money to DUT. Thusi was able to complete an internship with the KwaZulu-Natal department of transport, and other students have been able to apply for and obtain jobs.

Thusi says institutions should always be held accountable if they don't fulfil their promises, because people depend on these promises.

Thusi describes himself as "a simple guy who loves people a lot". He believes everyone should be treated fairly regardless of who they are and where they come from. Now that he has overcome the student debt hurdle, Thusi wants to secure a job for himself. Next, he wants to solve youth unemployment, and his dream is to own a business to create job opportunities for graduates and other South Africans.

"I desperately want to be at the forefront of creating jobs for the youth, as we all know that youth is the future of this beautiful nation of ours."

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Supplied

Lesego Tlhwale (32)

Media advocacy officer, Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT)

Twitter & Instagram: @lesegotlhwale

"The art of communication is the language of leadership." Author James Humes's words capture what Lesego Tlhwale has achieved in her life thus far: remarkable leadership through the art of communication. This journalism graduate, who is reading towards a qualification in Communication Science, is the media advocacy officer at the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (Sweat). This role allows Tlhwale to use communication and media to raise awareness about the human rights of sex workers and advocate for the decriminalisation of sex work in South Africa. She is unapologetic in her activism for the issues of women, especially black queer women.

"South Africa is a country with many problems. However, the one thing that I would change is the level of femicide happening in the country. We cannot live in a country where women and children are [being] killed at an alarming rate. I want our government to take the issues seriously, and put in place resources to curb the violence," says Tlhwale.

Her commitment towards communication for social change was nurtured during her tenure as a journalist working for *Behind the Mask* — a human rights media nonprofit

— which documented human rights violations against the LGBTIQ community in Africa. Tlhwale's reporting focused on LGBTIQ stories, through which she spoke out against homophobia.

A major motivation for her to continue doing the work she does stems from witnessing people who go through life being abused, violated and discriminated against, rising above all the hostility and standing up for their rights, even though the circumstances are not in their favour. "I'm talking about black, queer women who live in townships, and have to deal with homophobes and toxic masculinity. Those who had to bury their friends and lovers who were raped and killed because of expressing who they are," says Tlhwale.

She has been selected to participate in the civil leadership track at the 2018 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. "The selection to the Mandela Washington fellowship is by far my biggest achievement and I hope to use the connection and knowledge which I will gain to improve my level of activism and push me to do more to change the realities of black, queer women in South Africa."

— Simphiwe Rens

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Alude Mahali (31)

Research specialist, Human Sciences Research Council

Instagram: @aludemahali

Knowing that each day she knows more than the day before is the inspirational force that drives Alude Mahali, research specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in its Human and Social Development Programme.

With a doctorate in cultural studies from the University of Cape Town, Mahali aims to support and create opportunities for all people, particularly those from marginalised communities, to meaningfully participate in educational, social, political

and civic life.

Through her work, she provides tangible insights into how education-related policies and programmes can be improved to better meet the needs of people, including the roles that gender, class and race play in affecting how people tackle development challenges.

Mahali's most innovative work has been her role as co-principal investigator and project manager of a five-year study entitled *Race, Education and Emancipation*. The study followed a cohort of students from eight South African universities between 2013 and 2017, portraying their struggles, actions they took to change their circumstances and the institutions they attended. The data collected covered structural impediments to success including finances, institutional racism, feeling unwelcome, language problems, hunger, and issues of intersecting social and sexual identities, such as being female, gay, or having too much freedom.

From the study, Alude produced the documentary *Ready or Not! Black Students' Experiences of South African Universities*.

"The stories told in the documentary provide a living, breathing understanding of what it means to go through the South African university system — accessing, starting, staying, passing, stopping, swapping, returning, finishing, graduating and working," says Mahali.

"The usefulness of *Ready or Not!* will depend on the film's potential to prompt reflection in students, learners, parents, teachers, lecturers, government departments, policymakers, university administrators and faith-based institutions about alternative ways of being and operating that yield different results. The documentary raises questions about elements of educational policy and practices, while revelling in the successes of young people who beat the odds," says Mahali.

She pinpoints two main challenges in her area of work. The first is that the shifting landscape of higher education in South Africa is both exciting and precarious. The second is the importance of being sensitive to and respectful of the people who give researchers insight and access to their lives.

"I strive to ensure participants speak for themselves. They let us into their lives and even into their homes for extended periods. They give us access to their health status, personal information, children and families. There is tremendous responsibility on us to ensure their voices are not only heard, but never misrepresented."

— Linda Doke

Dawie Bornman (31)

Senior lecturer, researcher and postgraduate supervisor in the Department of Business Management, University of Pretoria

Instagram: @dawiebornman

"Don't die with your music still inside you" is the motto that motivates Dawie Bornman to "think bigger, and never stop pursuing" his dreams.

As senior lecturer, researcher and post-graduate supervisor in the department of business management at the University of Pretoria, Dawie teaches Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises (SMME) development projects at the Mamelodi Business Clinic and the South African Creative Industries Council (SACII) which structured to empower, develop and build a framework that covers all topics critical to establish, manage and grow a small business.

With a doctorate in communications management, Bornman uses his teaching to introduce unique creative methods for learning integration through music, visual arts, movement-based techniques and illustrations. He believes conveying a message in ways that are "outside the box" sparks inspiration in others and helps transfer academic information into practical understanding.

"I challenge myself by thinking and designing different approaches to my teaching that takes students out of their comfort zones and makes them realise they are capable of far more than they realised," says Dawie.

"This approach, along with trans-disciplinary integration — such as bringing practical creative arts into pure academic situations — helps me foster newfound appreciation into aspects which students previously would have viewed as dull. Teaching and learning remains professional, but becomes fun, for



Photo: Bernard Brand

me and for the students."

Dawie has been a guest lecturer at various international universities, including Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences in Austria and Karel de Grote University College in Belgium, focusing on business leadership and entrepreneurship in emerging markets — specifically South Africa.

"These experiences keep me on the forefront of what is being focused on in academia on an international level. I'm constantly finding aspects I can then back to integrate into my teaching and learning approaches in the South African landscape."

Dawie also collaborates with Smart Global Training Academy and Biz Skills, assisting school pupils and teachers with professional development aligned with the South African Council for Educators.

"The project gives me better understanding of what is currently going on in the school system, and prepares me for when a new generation learner becomes a student at higher education level."

— Linda Doke



Photo: Ikamva LeAfrika Education Foundation

Amanda Charles (24)

Founder of Ikamva LeAfrika Education Foundation

Twitter: @IkamvaLeAfrika_

High school science teacher Amanda Charles has a deep-rooted passion for learning and for helping others to reach beyond their barriers. While studying to become a teacher in the Eastern Cape, Charles investigated the idea of language being a barrier to learning, particularly in the sciences, where poor comprehension of English impacts on learning the subject matter.

At just 21, she founded the Ikamva LeAfrika Education Foundation (The Future of Africa), a literacy improvement programme that teaches science and academic English from grades seven to 12, creating access to science education for girls of colour, an under-represented sector in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) sector.

"Comprehension of English as an academic language is pivotal for success at post-school level, and in science. As well as science literacy, I help girls improve their comprehension of basic scientific concepts and practical components, and teach them essential practical skills required for a university laboratory setting. I believe these three elements are the most crucial for success in the

sciences," says Charles.

Making science concepts more relevant to learners' lives is something she believes to be pivotal. She says much of the content found in textbooks does not speak to the lived realities of learners, and scientific concepts are not explained in ways that children can relate to.

"I'm in the business of making science fun and easy to understand, so I focus some of my work on helping science teachers make their content easy to comprehend by restructuring small things such as examples and experiments, using everyday items learners can find in their homes."

Running the project has not been easy, and Charles is constantly faced with the challenges of insufficient resources and funding. But her learners keep her inspired. She says their commitment to the project and determination to improve has kept her going through the most difficult times.

"It is imperative for me that the next generation of women of colour get to see themselves being represented in science textbooks. To do that, they need access to spaces that allow for them to rewrite the content. That space is the academic space. They also need to be taught science by women of colour, as a means of breaking stereotypes surrounding women of colour and their ability to be in scientific spaces. Representation is very important, and getting young girls to see themselves in the space of science is crucial for their performance in the scientific field."

— Linda Doke

Dr Preya Pillay (29)

Lecturer in Curriculum Studies and Social Justice Education, University of the Free State

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/preya.pillay.71?ref=br_rs

"Social justice is my passion. Every project I get involved in has to be about empowering people and challenging assumptions about race and gender," says Dr Preya Pillay. "Gender transformation is important for social cohesion and social justice to the perceived 'others'."

Pillay is based at the University of Free State, where she lectures curriculum studies and social justice education. Her research interest is school curricula, specifically commerce textbooks, to unveil ideologies of about how instructional materials shape representations of sexuality and gender.

In her downtime she presents seminal talks in rural schools around the Free State on issues of social justice and empowerment.

Pillay studied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, completing a Bachelor of Education in 2010. She subsequently did an honours and master's in education. In 2014 she was granted the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences Doctoral scholarship. Pillay's PhD examined the constructions of gender in business studies textbooks used in four Southern African countries, revealing that management and entrepreneurship is scripted almost exclusively in favour of men.

"Gender norms embedded in patriarchy continue to be reproduced through exclusion and choices of inclusion. Thus a move towards a gender inclusive curriculum continues to remain a pipe dream."

During the three years of her PhD studies she presented her research at various conferences, both internationally and locally. Last year she also presented a paper from her PhD at the world's largest education research conference — American Education Research



Photo: Supplied

Association — in Texas, USA. She has also been invited to the Georg Arnholt International Summer School, which will take place in July in Braunschweig, Germany.

Her pedagogy is informed by a quest for commerce education which is socially just and more relevant. "My research argues that as teachers committed to educating students, we need to learn more about how instructional materials shape representations of sexuality and gender. Through insistent deconstruction of the norms that structure practice and belief, critical discourse analysis offers perspectives from which commerce educators and textbook writers can question assumptions embedded in textbooks."

— Rumana Akoob



Dr Hangwelani Hope Magidimisha (33)

Senior lecturer and academic leader, Planning and Housing, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hangwelani.c.mudau>

Dr Hangwelani Hope Magidimisha is the first black South African woman to achieve a PhD in regional planning from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). With a host of peer-reviewed publications to her name — the latest a book published this year on migration in southern Africa — Magidimisha was a PhD researcher at the Human Sciences and Research Council before moving to UKZN, where she teaches and supervises master's and PhD students and continues her research.

Magidimisha's administrative competency saw her being appointed as a senior lecturer and academic leader for the housing and town planning cluster, as well as a member of the university Senate and Institutional Forum. She is also a council member of the South African Council for Planners and a committee member of the KZN Planning Tribunal. This caught the attention of the international community, specifically the International Society of City and Regional Planning, which appointed her to direct the first workshop for Young Professional Planners in South Africa in 2016.

"In my field, innovation is often seen as the ability to create value for use by others, and this has been my strategy when reaching out to others. One of my innovative interventions focuses on ways to enable a greater number of students to complete their master's degree programmes in a relative short period of time, while still in keeping with university regulations," explains Magidimisha.

To achieve this, she introduced the concept of group supervision, an innovative strategy which heavily relies on group support mechanisms, learning by doing, experience sharing and moral support though under the strict guidance of the supervisor.

"The approach of group supervision removed the element of solitude among students, and helped to boost their morale. The eventual graduation of many students in a relative short space of time was enough testimony to the success of this intervention measure."

— Linda Doke



Photo: Colourise Studio

Hleze Kunju (32)

Lecturer, Rhodes University

Twitter: @HlezeKunju

Struggling because one is not allowed to study in one's mother tongue is an issue faced by thousands of young South Africans every year. Restricted to using only English when he enrolled at Rhodes University, Hleze Kunju felt like an outsider in his own province — bereft of his isiXhosa language, he considered himself without culture and identity.

Kunju is now a lecturer at that very university, teaching creative writing and facilitating choir workshops. He wrote the first isiXhosa PhD thesis at Rhodes University, and received The Most Outstanding PhD Thesis Award by the African Language Association of Southern Africa.

A speaker, lecturer, researcher, author, actor, poet and musician, Kunju is motivated to help others who find themselves with the same linguistic challenges he faced as a first-year university student.

"I must be there to make sure that their journey at university is better than mine," he says.

With his isiXhosa PhD thesis, he put an end to the myth that African languages are not advanced enough to be used in academia.

"In my experience, creative writing and academic writing work very closely together. The reason why I can use isiXhosa as an academic language is because I read a lot of isiXhosa creative works and have learned various ways of using the language. If

school learners are not reading enough creative literature they will struggle to engage and produce academic literature at university level. I encourage and supervise creative writing students. The more academic and creative literature we have, the better for the future of African languages.

"Contrary to popular belief, by writing in African languages, we are able to reach more African people than when we write in English. IsiXhosa is the second-biggest language in South Africa after isiZulu. IsiXhosa is also used in Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Zambia. The only aspect lacking is proper distribution of isiXhosa literature."

Kunju believes the marginalisation of African languages is one of South Africa's big challenges.

"About 80% of the Eastern Cape's population are isiXhosa mother tongue speakers, yet this is not reflected in schools, libraries, bookstores or education institutions. Even tombstones of people who never spoke English in their lives are inscribed in English 'rest in peace'."

Kunju tells his students: "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." He believes it is our responsibility to produce African knowledge in African languages.

— Linda Doke



Photo: Lwando Ntenda

Kgothatso Shai (32)

Acting HOD: Cultural and Political Studies, University of Limpopo

Limpopo born and bred Kgothatso Shai bases his teaching and writing upon what he refers to as the alternative African-centred perspective, to ensure it has positive reflection for Africa in terms of policy theory and practice.

As a senior lecturer in political science at the University of Limpopo, Shai uses his university classroom teaching to test the credibility, reliability and trustworthiness of the findings of his decolonial African studies. He also provides various media platforms with commentary to shape the ongoing public and policy discourse about topical issues in African politics and international affairs.

Shai's philosophy behind his dedication to teaching is far-reaching.

"For the past decade, I have been conducting scientific research on African politics and international relations.

As a trained social scientist, I have come to appreciate the marginalisation of genuine African voices in political science and other cognate academic disciplines. This epistemic injustice has resulted in the superimposition of ideas, theories and philosophies that are rooted within the Westernised or Eurocentric worldview.

"Consequently, much of the existing body of knowledge is a byproduct of transversal errors. Researching African problems using foreign tools and standards has a dangerous potential to produce scholarship without progressive consequences. For this reason, I foreground my scientific publications on the alternative African-centred perspective to ensure that they can have positive consequences for Africa in terms of policy theory and practice."

Shai remains motivated and inspired by his students and the determination of his late grandmother.

"The cauldron of testimonies of my students at the Universities of Limpopo and Venda keeps me going. Equally, I draw strength from the compliments by my colleagues in South African Association of Political Studies, South African Association of Public Administration and Management and beyond.

"But the fighting spirit of my late grandmother, Mafiri Lewele, completes me. She did not receive a formal education, but always wished me distinctive success in my studies. She was also determined in her responsibility to impart her invaluable knowledge of the fundamentals of African value systems and indigenous knowledge systems."

— Linda Doke

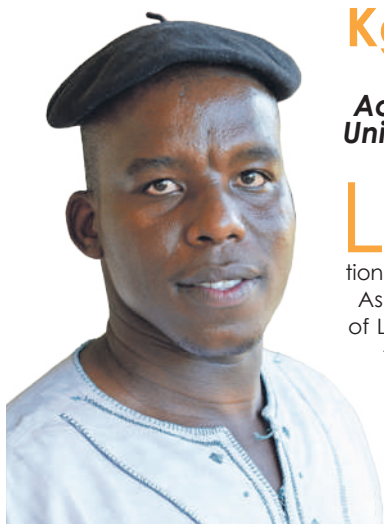


Photo: Stephen Collett



Photo: Wendy Landau

Lethu Kapueja (34)

Centre manager, DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development

Twitter: @ProvostKhay

human development.

Passionate about social justice, inspired by truth, and challenged by greatness, he sees his work in the education and training sector neatly placed in an environment that is dynamic and flourishing.

"Working within a higher education and training environment, my primary role is to support the researchers in the centre by easing their pursuit of research grants and research projects," says Kapueja.

"I ensure that research funds are used in accordance with international best practice. I also promote research through creative ways of communicating it to academic communities and the general public. This endeavour promotes the knowledge as well as the knowledge producer and the profile of the centre and funders."

The programme also sees Kapueja promoting capacity development of people from previously disadvantaged groups.

"Such development helps to build South Africa's capacity to generate knowledge that is relevant locally yet competitive globally. It is also a task that brings me great pleasure, seeing the various possibilities these groups, in particular black women, are afforded through our direct involvement."

— Linda Doke

With the world moving towards using knowledge, innovation and inventions as critical drivers of economic growth and development, there is an increasing need for competitiveness in knowledge generation.

As centre manager for the Department of Science and Technology-National Research Foundation (DST-NRF) Centre of Excellence in Human Development at Wits University, Lethu Kapueja believes it is important to maintain indispensable skills to conduct and manage research activities and put in place institutional support structures that increase competitiveness amongst researchers.

Kapueja, who leads a team that supports the centre's director in building a thriving and robust research culture, has been an active member of the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (Sarima) since 2014, and is involved in the development of Sarima's Professional Competency Framework.

The centre functions as a hub for research collaboration and funding on all aspects of



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Education

Dr Lisa Otto (30)

Senior researcher and lecturer,
University of Johannesburg

Twitter: @drlisaotto

Working on under-explored issues critical to domestic and global agendas is just part of a normal working day for Dr Lisa Otto. Just 30 and with a doctorate in political studies, Otto is a senior researcher and lecturer of maritime security. With a special interest in piracy and maritime crime, she forms part of a small body of researchers and scholars globally who work in this emerging and multi-disciplinary field; an even smaller portion of which are women, and smaller yet, women from Africa and the developing world.

"When I started my PhD, there wasn't much research being done on piracy on Africa's west coast. My study set out to examine the evolution for this phenomenon and led to the development of a dataset and typology of maritime crime there," says Otto.

Her work took her to the University of Greenwich for visiting research, and later the International Maritime Organisation (the United Nations maritime agency) where she had observer status and made use of its resource centre.

"After completing my doctorate, I joined Coventry University where I taught on the world's only master's in maritime security, the perfect place to put my expertise to use."

Having spent years abroad, Otto missed South Africa and wanted to put her unique skill set to work here. She returned in 2017 and joined the University of Johannesburg, where she now teaches at postgraduate



Photo: Troy Otto

level and continues her research.

"I am inspired by my teaching, my research and my students. It is a wonderful feeling to be able to help them on their academic and professional journeys, and fulfilling to think that in doing so, I have made even a small difference. It motivates me to keep doing the work I do, and to be as good an example as I can be. In everything I do, I strive to tread lightly, act with kindness, and to be of service."

— Linda Doke

Metji Makgoba (28)

PhD Commonwealth Scholar,
Cardiff University

Instagram: @metji99

Metji Makgoba is an educator who seeks to contribute to South Africa's transformation agenda by helping train the next generation of critical thinkers in intellectual and enterprise skills so they can use their agency to fight for justice in society.

Currently on a scholarship to pursue a doctorate in corporate social investment in the mining industry at Cardiff University, Makgoba lectures communication and media studies at the University of Limpopo.

Inspired by a passion for social justice, his research looks into corporate power, policy, rhetoric and the influence of language in the corporate sector on political agendas.

"I strive to empower my students by teaching them how to notice the nuances of language-in-action as a tool for power used by people to bolster their arguments or those in power to persuade and manufacture consent," says Makgoba.

Born in a rural village in Limpopo, he was raised by his strict Xhosa mother who taught him the importance of reading newspapers and listening to current affairs programmes, despite her not having a formal education. As a result, he loves reading books and articles that broaden his knowledge and challenge his beliefs and ideological frameworks.

Makgoba maintains his work is informed by the philosophy of ubuntu.



Photo: John Schrauwen

"An attitude of diligence and compassion often encourages students to follow suit. I believe that my research, which is critical in nature, epitomises the spirit of ubuntu by critiquing the actions of the powerful with the aim of encouraging accountability. Critiquing people's actions to promote justice and fairness is rooted in the idea of ubuntu."

"My teaching is student-centred: I consider and understand how the cultural identities of students affects their learning. I think about how I can use their cultural experience and background to enhance their learning, and I believe that working hard with humility to empower students with the best education could go far in developing society."

— Linda Doke

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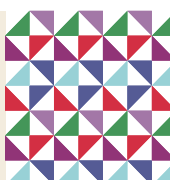


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Photo: Frieda van der Walt

Mzwendaba Jizani (33)

Maths and sciences tutor, South Cape College

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mzwendaba.jizani>

Working hard to better oneself ultimately benefits the community as a whole. This is Mzwendaba Jizani's determined approach to life, and it has seen him progress steadily through his schooling years in the township of Kwanonqaba near Mossel Bay, to become a science and physical science tutor of grades 10, 11 and 12 learners, and a maths tutor for levels N1 to N3.

Jizani prides himself as a mentor for learners who are of an age where responsible role models are critical for their education. He is also a judge at the Eskom Science Expo for Young Scientists.

"As well as tutoring, I provide career guidance to pupils within the Stem [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] fields, and over the past 10 years I have seen more and more learners

from the Kwanonqaba community studying further and taking up Stem-related careers," says Jizani.

Motivated by his learners' hunger to learn and their eagerness to succeed, as well as the encouragement and motivation of his community and the parents of the learners, Jizani is driven to give of his best, for the good of all.

Funding is the greatest challenge in his work, particularly for winter schools, and for after-school programmes where food is needed for the learners.

"I believe everyone is born with a purpose, and that we need to find that purpose so together we can better our communities. Every student I meet has something positive to offer in the community, and it's my task, with that student, to find it."

— Linda Doke

Ndumiso Ngidi (31)

Human geography lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Twitter: @NduSpudieboy

Human geography lecturer Ndumiso Ngidi's passion for social justice education and transformative education has been largely influenced by specific experiences and events in his life. Losing his mother to a heart condition when he was just 12 months old, and his father to an HIV-related illness when he was seven, Ngidi grew up an orphan, separated from his siblings and raised by various relatives and neighbours.

During this time, Ngidi experienced much abuse and neglect, including being raped by a family friend. These traumas sparked an interest in reading and education.

Throughout his schooling, Ngidi felt there was a mismatch between what was taught and his life experiences, and it was only in his second year of university that he experienced a breakthrough in his learning.

"The subject was a psychology course that focused on violence, abuse and trauma. It was in those classes that for the first time in my life I was able to speak about my experiences, because the lecturer allowed a form of teaching and learning where we as students could contribute meaningfully to the subject matter and feel validated by sharing our experiences. My postgraduate work followed the steps of that psychology course."

Ngidi began his work within the field of HIV and gender-based violence, working with groups of secondary school learners and university students. He developed innovative methodologies for teaching and learning, as well as research

that relied on the collaborative contributions by him and his students, whom he regards as co-educators. He also works with township and rural communities, and particularly with vulnerable learners, trying to understand and address social injustices to which young people are exposed.

"I consider myself a transformative educator and visual researcher. I believe in teaching that fosters collaborative learning and empowers students to think creatively and critically. My teaching is rooted in participatory methodologies, encouraging students to be critical thinkers, participatory and active learners, and to seek alternative possibilities. In my teaching methods I have designed programmes that focus on creating safe spaces where students' beliefs, experiences and attitudes are not only validated but further re-evaluated.

"I want my students to graduate not only able to answer established questions, but asking critical questions about their relationship with the spaces they occupy. I have therefore introduced participatory visual methodologies — such as photovoice, participatory drawing, cellphilm, digital storytelling and collage — for students to unleash their voices in critically understanding the production of violent space."

Among numerous awards over the past few years, in 2018 Ngidi won the World Bank and Sexual Violence Research Initiative Award in the Development Marketplace for Innovation on Gender-based Violence Prevention.

— Linda Doke



Photo: Dr Adrian Nel

Nicole de Wet (34)

HOD and senior lecturer; Department of Demography & Population Studies, Wits University

Demography lecturer Nicole de Wet teaches a scarce skill to social science students who want to learn statistics and quantitative research methods.

"Most of the people in my classes are bachelor of arts students who believe that they need to be super-smart to do statistics. I teach them that there is nothing to fear and that everyone can do statistics. I introduce the subject by showing how it relates to social science topics including HIV and Aids and teenage pregnancy, so my students see how stats apply to existing population issues. When students can relate to issues, they tend to learn concepts quicker, and be able to apply the tools to other problems," she says.

Having obtained her PhD in demography and population studies and now with 31 published journal articles to her name, De Wet has successfully supervised 28 master's students to completion.

"I teach students from diverse backgrounds, so I never assume prior knowledge of the subject — I teach everyone from the beginning. With students who have never done mathematics or any other quantitative science, I draw on my own work and the work of students before them as inspiration. Students respond positively to seeing the work of their peers — it gives them confidence that they can do

the same."

De Wet also holds career development workshops throughout the year, teaching students how to conduct oral presentations at conferences, write journal papers, and do peer reviews for journals.

"These are skills that are not taught in any formal curricula, yet which are fundamental to our goal of producing world-class graduates. "For my postgraduate students, I include them in research work that I am doing, and work with them to publish and attend conferences."

De Wet's research interest is adolescent health and development. Topics include risky sexual behaviours (including transactional sex, lack of consistent condom use and multiple sexual partners), causes of death (including suicide), perceptions and attitudes toward risky and exploratory behaviours, and disease prevalence among young people. This work is both regionally and globally relevant.

"Teaching, supervision, mentoring and sharing my own experience with students makes me a better researcher, because I need to know all the new developments in the field in order to be a better lecturer."

— Linda Doke



Photo: Genevieve De Wet



Odwa Magabuko (29)

Intern, SKA/SARAO

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SKA-Robotics-Program-NC-728382630657647/>

The most amazing thing about robotics is that the only limiting factor for the kids is their imagination," says Odwa Magabuko, who moved to the Karoo two years ago to start a robotics programme with primary and high school children and their teachers.

He obtained a national diploma in Information Technology from Unisa and in 2016 joined the Square Kilometre Array South African schools programme as part of a National Research Foundation/South African Agency for Science and Technology internship. He moved from his home in Port St Johns to the Karoo, "where life was very lonely at first, but with the determination to change lives I knew I was here for a purpose, and that helped me to adjust to my new surroundings".

Loneliness was not the only problem faced by Magabuko when he moved to the Karoo; the community he works in is riddled with substance abuse, which he finds challenging. "One of the ways in which we are trying to change the situation is to expose more kids to robotics, so that at least they have more time spent in something that impacts them positively, rather than being on the streets and being exposed to substance abuse," he says.

Magabuko established the robotics in education schools programme as a Square Kilometre Array/South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SKA/SARAO) intern. The programme is aimed at inspiring young people's interest in science,



Photo: Mel Massyn

technology, maths and engineering through fun activities, mainly centred on building and programming robots.

In 2016, Magabuko coached a team of three learners to the national finals of the World Robotics Olympiad competition. During the same year, he coached a team that received a special award for strategy at the Cape Town leg of the First Lego League competition. Last year, another one of Magabuko's teams made it to the national finals of the World Robot Olympiad Association competition.

"Learning robotics helps educators bridge the skills gap; it equips students with 21st century skills vital for future career success, and boosts the labour market and the skills needs of SKA/SARAO as the project grows."

— Rumana Akoob

Nomkhosi Luthuli (28)

Lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business & Leadership

I am driven by wanting to inspire others and by being impactful. I want to know that through my work, I am really adding value and bringing about change not just to myself, but also to the next person and ultimately, society," says Nomkhosi Hlengiwe Luthuli, the youngest female academic in the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Graduate School of Business & Leadership.

Luthuli has a bachelors and master's degree from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), an honours from the University of Cape Town and recently passed a PhD with the Graduate School of Business & Leadership. She teaches Integrative Local Economic Development Research at postgraduate diploma level.

Her PhD is entitled, "A Conceptualisation and Enactment of Regional Economic Development Through the Analysis of the Durban Aerotropolis in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa". It seeks to build on regional economic development theory through providing an account of how planning for big infrastructure projects and strategic investments such as the aerotropolis and special economic zones relies on the foundational intricacies of strategic spatial planning, multi-pronged governance dynamics, cluster and agglomeration economics as well as co-ordinated investments for regional marketing.

She has recently been nominated to represent UKZN in the area of "Urbanisation and cities in the 21st century" on the South



Photo: Nokubonga Nomasiko Jele

Africa-Sweden University Forum, which will run between 2018 and 2020.

Luthuli says she is driven by breaking boundaries and changing beliefs on how things should be in society. "I want to change the perception that aviation and planning for airport cities is a man's terrain, and I hope to consistently challenge the generalisation that academia is for old people. I know for sure that a determined mind excels whether male or female, young or old in any space of influence, and that there's no sector too male-dominated and barrier of entry too great for me to break through and do the best I possibly can," she says.

Young black people should join the academy to drive the transformation and decolonisation agenda, Luthuli says. "As a young black woman, I teach and lecture at a university to address the educational injustices that are spoken about as issues of the past, when they in fact still prevail today."

— Rumana Akoob

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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Education



Paballo Chauke (27)

Training and outreach co-ordinator, H3ABioNet-Pan African Bioinformatics Network for H3Africa

Twitter: @withpaballo

A self-confessed professional troublemaker, Paballo Chauke says he "grew up in conditions of squalor that made me hungry for success and opportunities to change my life and those around me". Chauke now works in bioinformatics and is passionate about climate change and development in Africa.

Chauke obtained an undergraduate degree and honours in Environmental and Geographical Sciences and Sociology from the University of Cape Town (UCT). In 2016 he did an MSc in Biodiversity, Conservation and Management at the University of Oxford in the UK. Throughout his studies he assumed many leadership roles and volunteer positions.

He now works as a training and outreach co-ordinator, at H3ABioNet-Pan African Bioinformatics Network for H3Africa. He also supervises, mentors and guest lecture at the School of International Training.

He was recently employed as a co-ordinator of the education portfolio for the African Climate and Development Initiative, where he assisted in consolidating, co-ordinating and managing its portfolio of courses and training programs, internships, fellowships and scholarships.

Chauke says his mother's fighting spirit made him who he is today. He is the youngest of three children and the first and



Photo: Verena Ras

only one to graduate in his family. "I had too many challenges navigating university, as no one in my family had the social, cultural and financial capital to navigate those exclusionary spaces. I am an unrelenting individual, hence I was able to come out at the end a conqueror, and continue to conquer."

"There is an urgent need to develop a new generation of researchers, practitioners and decision-makers who are equipped with the necessary skills and experience to tackle climate change, because ultimately it will affect the marginalised Africans more than anyone else," says Chauke.

In his second year at UCT he was taught by a black lecturer, Professor Maano Ramutsindela, who motivated Chauke to get the first of 10 medals while studying. "Every bone in my being knows that seeing that black man hold the space and excel at his job, really is the main reason I was pushed and believed that I too matter, that I too can be and am excellent."

— Rumana Akoob

Piroshin Moodley (30)

Child rights and education specialist, Hope is Education International

Coming from a family of teachers gave Piroshin Moodley the ability to see the importance of quality education as a "most basic human right". This insight has lead him to work in child rights and education among some of the world's most marginalised children.

Moodley has an undergraduate degree in anthropology from Rhodes University. He became the head of curriculum at the Unesco Global Peace Village in South Korea, where he worked on developing content on peace, values-based education and global citizenship for students of all ages. He then did a master's in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action at the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po, France. As part of his degree he worked with Save the Children South Africa on a nationwide child protection campaign to curb violence against children in schools.

He then moved to Northern Uganda, where he works on a child rights and education project with Hope is Education International. Moodley's organisation works to build and revitalise the education system in Northern Uganda's village schools. The region has experienced one of the most brutal humanitarian crises worldwide, including mass human rights violations, torture, rape and the abduction of thousands of children.

Moodley's team works with educators to improve teaching skills and curriculum development. The team is developing programmes to sensitise the community



Photo: Hye Kyoung

about the rights of children, prevention of early childhood marriage and child labour, the importance of keeping girl children in schools and childhood nutrition.

"By focusing on transferable skills, training and self-development we aim to create a generation of first-class educators, each of whom had the potential to transform the lives of thousands of children. While it is simplistic to say that education is a way out of poverty, it is certainly a solid first step," he says.

Moodley said it always surprised him that South Africa allocated a higher proportion of its annual budget to basic education than most middle-income countries, and yet the South African education system is consistently ranked as one of the poorest worldwide.

"I think this speaks to a system which focuses more on rote learning and memorisation to produce measurable results, rather than a system which teaches our children how to be compassionate, actively engaged individuals who are part of a global citizenship."

— Rumana Akoob

Simpihiwe Madlanga (32)

Science communicator

Twitter: @SYM_Madlanga

Serial student and proponent of continuous learning, Simphiwe Madlanga believes a great education not only trains the mind but helps people make informed decisions, improving the odds for positive outcomes in their lives.

As a geologist working for the National Research Foundation as a science communicator at an astronomy and space geodesy research facility, Madlanga is passionate about outreach, and works with schools, youth and educator workshops for teachers needing support with natural science.

"The more I study and experience, the more I want to share my learning, and help others grow and develop," says Madlanga.

"Leveraging my science training with creativity, I provide practical, innovative and impactful demonstrations that give teachers and learners a better understanding of scientific concepts."

Madlanga believes strongly in demystifying the complexities of science, particularly radio astronomy, and provides motivational insights and career guidance to aspiring young scientists. "I believe people struggle with science concepts only because things seem too abstract for them. I strive to personalise things, and to demonstrate the power of science by linking it to normal, everyday experiences in the world around us. Many 'a-ha' moments happen when one is able to highlight the relevance of science by linking it to a layperson's direct realm of experience."

Madlanga says his greatest challenge is maintaining a balance between adhering to the school curriculum and enhancing learners' experiences by providing a broader approach to learning.

"Our work needs to complement that of the department of basic education, yet not be limited by prescribed textbooks. When teaching, I challenge myself to be creative,

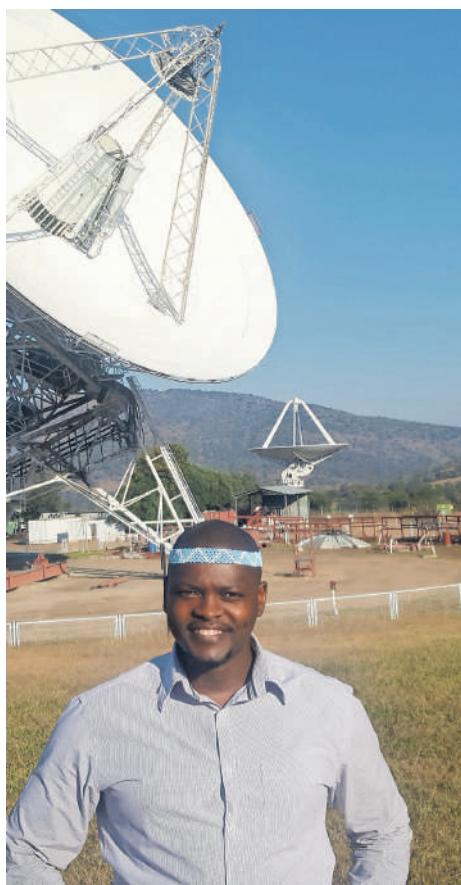


Photo: Tony Bheki Dlamini

and [am] constantly improving best practice by finding new ways to engage the public when communicating about science.

"I am where I am in life because of people who helped me along the way, supported me and my aspirations, even made decisions on my behalf when I was too young to make my own – all for my benefit. I respect the privilege of being able to proudly declare that I will always be a lifelong learner because of the solid foundation I received early in life," says Madlanga.

"I remind myself often that 'people are your success', and I aspire to live that through my endeavours to help as many people as I can. Being educated, I have an even greater responsibility to those who have less."

— Linda Doke

Taahira Goolam Hoosen (27)

Lecturer, Health Sciences Education, University of Cape Town

Instagram: @taahira_moola

Beyond the textbook: teaching and empowering, one person at a time. This is the motto health sciences lecturer Taahira Goolam Hoosen lives and works by, whose calling merges teaching and learning with community development to create positive implications for society.

With degrees in human genetics, biology and haematology, it was during her time between honours and master's that Goolam Hoosen discovered her true academic love was development — assisting students and staff to acquire the appropriate academic discourse required in the health sciences for their success and degree completion.

"Acquiring academic literacy is not always formally taught at university. My work explores disciplinary ways to do so, within a decolonised context in the health sciences," she explains.

"My approach to teaching students evokes a sense of self-agency within a social justice framework. It is about equipping students with the knowledge and writing practices that can enable their success, as they are an enforcer of that success and I am merely the mediator."

Goolam Hoosen maintains that the key to success is about being ever curious and challenging, and asking the "why" that advocates higher order thinking and learning.

Her work does not end in the classroom. She is also the chief executive of The Humanitarians, a nonprofit organisation which aims to create a sustainable society through health, education, sports, and research.

"What I love about our innovative work at The Humanitarians is that we are not about working in isolation but rather in collaboration with others towards the same goal. Aligned with my teaching philosophy and passion, our organisation focuses on empowerment which is aimed towards eradicating poverty rather than fuelling it."



Photo: Supplied

In 2017, the organisation distributed more than 20 000 books to children in underprivileged settings and schools across Cape Town as part of a drive to increase youth literacy levels.

Goolam Hoosen grapples with not being able to do more or help more people, but she has realised that assisting one person can have a ripple effect.

"I'm blessed to have people in my life who share my values and vision. While we have access to higher education, it is the academic support and development which is key to supporting our students towards success and ultimately towards the completion of their studies. The need is great, and that is why collaboration is so vital to our making a difference."

— Linda Doke



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YOUTH MONTH

As we celebrate Youth Month, the Vaal University of Technology wishes to acknowledge and share the wonderful talent that we have abounding in our university. Our mission is to produce employable graduates who can make an impact in society and one of our core values is “excellence”. We recognise and we salute the youth of 1976. It was only through their efforts, struggle and courage that many of us are able to enjoy the many freedoms we experience today. The following VUT students and alumni are nothing short of excellence and greatness, and we salute them for representing the Vaal University of Technology, everywhere they go!



Chef Tshepang Mabe (28)

Chef Tshepang Mabe specialises in consumer education where she takes her teachings to the masses at food trade shows such as Hostex, Good food and wine, Info Chef, Fire and Feast as well as many other community entrepreneur Expo's, food markets and events.

With a National Diploma in Hospitality Management from VUT, Chef Tshepang is an accredited assessor and moderator who has worked in multiple training and development programs facilitated by the National Department of tourism. These programmes are designed to equip and develop the youth and young chefs in the industry. She has trained industry professionals', food lovers, chef trainees, business owners and township caterers. She does a lot of work with the youth where she imparts knowledge about the culinary industry and plants the seeds of entrepreneurship which she believes is one of the solutions for the high youth unemployment rate in our country. Chef Tshepang represents brands such as Excella edible oils, Lucky star, Lamb and Mutton SA. She's often described by her peers as an influential, trend setter and a vigorous leader who is passionate about continuous training and development especially individuals from the disadvantaged communities. Most of the people who attend her live food demonstrations find them mind stimulating and very educational as she teaches instrumental fundamentals such as the importance of nutrition, hygiene health and safety, food costing, business management and recipe development.



Mordecai Ndlovu (28)

Mordecai Ndlovu is a VUT student currently studying towards his B-Tech in Business Administration under the faculty of Management Sciences.

A founder of the first business student structure called Young People in Business Initiative (YPIBI) which was established in his first year. With a strong passion for volunteerism, youth development and student advocacy in the focus of youth entrepreneurship, Mordecai has rallied the discussion of making Universities more entrepreneurial since his entry on campus in 2014. He is the campaign leader of Africa Youth Entrepreneurship Day (AYED) and co-founder of Booki App a mobile application that is undergoing incubation at Tshimologong Precinct, sponsored by JP Morgan. Mordecai Ndlovu participated alongside young people across Africa in the Africa Youth Entrepreneurship Video Petition. This petition includes South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, Congo, Zimbabwe and many other Africa countries. During Youth Month they want to take in 1000 youth video petitions, with the belief that by being an AYED Ambassador in your community you are fostering positive change. AYED's outcome is to spread awareness of youth unemployment and youth entrepreneurship to be advocated by youth across the continent.



Bonginkosi Ndlovu (26)

Bonginkosi Ndhlovu is a former VUT SRC Chairperson at the Ekurhuleni Campus. He is still associated with VUT as a guest lecturer for Personal Selling.

Bonginkosi is currently the President for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region for Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship. He works at Halewood International as a Brand Developer. He attended the Obama Youth Project in America and worked closely with the VUT Marketing Department under the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Ekurhuleni Campus. He says that VUT has helped instill the strong leadership qualities he possess today. He is of the view that Africa is for young people to serve, and not for Africa to serve young people

DID YOU KNOW?

VUT is hosting the National Science Week from 30 July to 4 August 2018 at the Southern Gauteng Science and Technology Park, Sebokeng

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Nicole Loser (30)

Attorney, Centre for Environmental Rights

Twitter: @nicloser

Considered one of the leading experts in public interest climate law, 30-year-old Nicole Loser was at the forefront of a number of key environmental justice battles.

An easy-going person, Loser has a strong sense of justice and was instrumental in the landmark victory in the case around the impact of a proposed coal-fired power station in Thabametsi, Limpopo.

The Thabametsi case is South Africa's first climate change litigation, important because it recognises the significance of climate change and its impacts.

Her team will return to court to challenge the power station and government again, but they are confident that they have a strong case.

"We know that fighting back, even against powerful corporate forces and government, is worth it," she says.

Loser says fighting new proposed coal plants is crucial in the fight to slow down climate change and protect the environment and human health from the devastating impacts of burning coal.

"It is crucial that we all urgently start thinking more about how climate change will impact us, and how decisions around energy sources — and even the financing of those sources — contribute to climate change," Loser says.

On a volunteering trip through South America and Asia, Loser was inspired by the environmental activism in South America, because like in South Africa, activists fight fiercely for social and environmental justice.

Globally, cases to hold institutions accountable for not doing enough to mitigate the harms of climate change and for the damages caused through their contributions to climate change are gaining momentum. The number of these cases is expected to grow, both internationally and in South Africa, as climate change impacts increase in severity and the urgency to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions escalates.

Loser hopes to continue working on environmental and social justice issues to advance environmental justice in South Africa. "I hope that through my work I can help to ensure a just and clean energy future and a healthy and climate change resilient environment for South Africa. I believe in the importance of conserving and protecting Africa's wildlife and wilderness areas, and I hope in some way to advance and support that cause — something which is very close to my heart."

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Centre for Environmental Rights

Ernest Mulibana (30)

Deputy director, Department of Environmental Affairs

Twitter: @ErnestMulibana

Ernest Mulibana is a deputy director at the department of environmental affairs, dealing with media and communications. He is responsible for developing strategies to educate South Africans about their constitutional rights and to mobilise their participation in ensuring the protection of our environment. Mulibana knows the role of public communication and he plays a critical part in ensuring the right message is delivered.

"The environment portfolio is entrusted to ensure that every South African has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and wellbeing," explains Mulibana.

"My main responsibility is to coordinate engagements between the national department of environmental affairs and members of the media. In promoting the work of the department and galvanising people of South Africa to embrace environmental protection while sustainably using the country's natural resources, the message needs to be clearly communicated through media engagement, stakeholder relations and social media."

Currently pursuing an MPhil in communication at the University of Pretoria, Mulibana is able to convert complex environmental matters into formats that are accessible to the right audiences. He understands the importance of engaging communities in environmental matters which have an impact on them.

Mulibana regards his greatest challenge as convincing all South Africans to do something to take care of the environment in which they live.

"There are people who, despite so much work to educate them about the importance of a clean environment for their health and protection, continue to litter and engage in activities that degrade the environment. People need to change their behaviour. They already know that properly disposing of their waste is the right thing to do. They already know that littering degrades the environment, yet our streets and public spaces are filthy."

Mulibana's work environment requires him to be flexible, innovative and proactive. The motto he lives by — "it can be done!" — is inspired by the life experiences he endured, growing up in a poor rural village in Limpopo.

"My philosophy is based on the premise that when one has the right mind, attitude and the burning desire, success is bound to be a reality, irrespective of circumstances."

— Linda Duke



Photo: Zibuse Ndlovu

Lillian Maboya (26)

Environmental change enthusiast

Twitter: @GreenLILLO

Lillian Maboya has always been passionate about environmental conservation and involving young people in combatting climate change. At just 14, she founded a robust environmental club in her home province of Limpopo called GENC, pioneering the innovation of green technology that addresses the impact of climate change in rural areas, and doing door-to-door workshops on climate change awareness.

In 2009, Maboya was awarded a scholarship to join the African Leadership Academy, where she emerged with the Sani Prize — the most prestigious award given to the graduating student whose tireless effort, innovative solutions, lofty ideals and commitment to excellence serve to further the mission, vision and values of the academy.

"My environmental work has centred around developing green technology devices that are suitable for rural dwellers to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change, particularly in agriculture. Currently, I am actively involved in research that is applying field work and laboratory techniques to understand the long-term implications of climate change in southern Africa," says Maboya.

Her work on climate change response strategies have reached local, provincial and international levels. In Zambia she worked with Pestalozzi Education Centre to redesign the Rocket Stove Project, which she introduced to three rural schools in the Limpopo Province that still relied on firewood to cook food for students. In Diepsloot, Johannesburg, she ran the Grow Green Itsuseng Community project that helped to feed 150 household through vegetable gardens that were grown in 200 earthboxes. The project worked with unemployed youth and elderly community members and helped to provide food and a means of income.

"When I moved to Cape Town for my university studies, I co-founded a social business called Grow-up Gardens with a fellow scholar from the Allan Gray Orbis



Photo credit: Alexander Sokolovs

Foundation. Grow-Up Gardens manufactured and sold portable vertical gardens that helped people in cities where there is hardly space to grow food gardens. The project was awarded runner-up for Best Student Enterprise in the 2014 Western Cape Province Premier Entrepreneurship Awards."

Maboya says she gets her inspiration from the life of the late Kenyan environmental political activist and Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, whose tireless work proved the environmental cause affects the livelihood of everyone, so we should all be environmentally active.

"Mama Wangari was jailed, beaten, and sacrificed a large part of her life fighting for environmental justice and became the first African woman to receive a Nobel Peace Prize. She is an example of someone who had to sacrifice her freedom to create a better life for herself and her community."

— Linda Duke

Kimon de Greef (30)

Freelance journalist

Twitter: @kimondegreef

Kimon de Greef is a freelance journalist who writes stories that situate conservation challenges in their wider social and economic context. In his work, he often tackles difficult topics, deeply probing the crux of the issue at stake.

With a particular interest in covering illicit resource trades, de Greef has been published internationally in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *National Geographic* and *Al Jazeera*, while locally he contributes regularly to *GroundUp News*.

De Greef was drawn to journalism when studying conservation biology at the University of Cape Town. His approach to stories is often from the perspective of those who are burdened by legacies of economic exclusion and are trying to make a living on the fringes of society, including illicit diamond dealers, donkey skin smugglers, marijuana farmers and mountain muggers.

"I believe preserving the environment is impossible without social and environmental justice, and I hope that through storytelling it's possible to shift and widen people's perspectives," he says.

De Greef focuses on reporting human stories that are seldom covered.

"I see a great need in SA for factual storytelling that helps plant in the mind of a reader some kernel of new understanding: what life is like for other people, why they do what they do or how they came to be there. In the realm of conservation, with such wide gulfs of experience separating people in this country, this work is particularly relevant. We live both in a biodiversity hotspot and the least equal society on earth, and the desire for environmental stewardship is often at odds with social and environmental justice. How do we bridge these gaps? I believe reporting can help broaden the conversation."

De Greef believes his work helps demonstrate how the beneficiaries of South Africa's unequal past — predominantly white people — are complicit in illicit trades that are easy to condemn.

"It is a peculiar and troublesome aspect of South African life that most people living here exist on the margins of society. Their voices, while numerically dominant, are largely absent from the public record, and that is a massive problem. Poaching, illicit mining, marijuana farming, all stories I've covered, are logical responses to South Africa's inequality and resource abundance."

— Linda Duke



Photo: Jenny Willis



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Environment

Christine Reddell (30)

Attorney and acting head of the Corporate Accountability and Transparency Programme, Centre for Environmental Rights

Twitter: @Christine_Red

It is said we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children. As an attorney and acting head of the Corporate Accountability and Transparency Programme at the Centre for Environmental Rights (CER), Christine Reddell is a dedicated advocate for environmental justice who lives and works by this motto.

The CER is a non-profit organisation of activist lawyers who help communities and civil society organisations in South Africa realise the constitutional right to a healthy environment by advocating and litigating for environmental justice.

Reddell is one of South Africa's leading access to information experts, and has submitted, tracked and analysed hundreds of requests under the Promotion of Access to Information Act, resulting in the release of large amounts of information essential for protecting the right of all South Africans to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing.

She is also part of the team that produces the centre's full disclosure reports, which expose the truth about violations of environmental laws by many of the country's JSE-listed companies, and misrepresentations of environmental impacts to their shareholders.

Many companies pollute the environment and routinely break the conditions of their various environmental licences — or simply fail to obtain the licences they need. With minimal monitoring of these licences by government and the fact that companies that fail to comply are rarely prosecuted, companies get away with a poor attitude towards environmental compliance.

Christine works to expose corporate failures to comply with environmental laws and to raise awareness around the risks of non-compliance.

"These include risks to taxpayers, such as where the state has to cover the costs of rehabilitating

the environment, risks to investors where companies operate unsustainably and without regard for the liabilities associated with non-compliance and risks to communities where their health and wellbeing is severely affected by polluting industries," says Reddell.

In the three years that she's been an attorney at the CER, she has seen the work of her team have a direct, positive impact on South Africa's legal system.

"I've been able to help people who are directly affected by polluting industries. Witnessing this change, and having a positive impact on people's lives and the environment, will always inspire and motivate me."

Reddell is currently being sued for defamation by a mining company for statements she made at a University of Cape Town lecture about the company's compliance with environmental laws. She is vigorously defending her right to freedom of expression and academic freedom.

— Linda Doke



Photo: Centre for Environmental Rights



Mpho Ndaba (24)

Chairperson of the campaigns subcommittee, SOS Coalition

Twitter: @manofcolor_

Since he was a young boy, Mpho Ndaba has been an advocate for social justice. Like so many black South Africans, Mpho grew up in a financially impoverished situation, and knows first-hand what it feels like to go to bed hungry.

Relying on government aid as a student at Wits University, Ndaba studied International Relations and Media Studies, followed by an honours degree in development studies at UCT. In 2015 Ndaba joined the Wits Global Citizenship programme, which introduced him to environmentalism and the South African climate justice movement.

He joined 350 Africa as a student volunteer and organiser, playing an instrumental role in the divestment campaigns that were being carried out by the organisation, particularly the Break Free From Fossil Fuels campaign, aimed at financial institutions financing new coal-powered power stations.

"As a media and environmental activist, I have been involved in areas of

public media policy, education and climate policy in South Africa," says Ndaba.

"I currently form part of SOS Coalition's legal advocacy subcommittee, focusing at advancing efficient and independent public media. As the Western Cape convener for the organisation, my mandate is to bring young people into the area of media policy and advocacy, enabling an environment in which public policy can be alternatively be formulated and implemented."

Ndaba also produces and hosts *Free Media, Free Minds*, an upcoming television show on Cape Town TV, focused on advancing the principles of media freedom, freedom of speech and access to information.

This year, he was awarded the Andrew Mellon Mays Scholarship to form part of the UCT Centre for Environmental Humanities South, researching the Anthropocene in the Global South.

"As an MPhil fellow, my work is around issues around food policy and food systems in South Africa and the Global South, advancing the southern development discourses and ways of being."

Ndaba explains how through narrative essay writing, his work is also centred around the construction of space and place in post-1994 South Africa. "Coming from a working-class background in the township, I draw from my own experiences as a bisexual man, interrogating how spaces are received and constructed from a class point of view. The colonial apartheid history of South Africa and my difficult upbringing as a bisexual man have led me to advance an alternative way of being in the world, where marginalised people should be free to determine their path. Whether poor, black or queer, we should all be able to inform policymakers of the kind of policy direction we want."

— Linda Doke



Photo: Makhudu Masofa

Nasreen Khan (31)

Conservation officer on Aride Island, Island Conservation Society

Twitter: @pteraphora

"I am a proudly South African fierce environmental steward, always up for an adventure to the mountaintops or ocean depths," says conservation officer Nasreen Khan.

Khan lives with nine other people on a conservation island reserve in the Seychelles run by the Island Conservation Society and is tasked to look after its biodiversity. She works with animals like seabirds, turtles and seals to produce scientific data to assist in preserving endangered species and fragile island ecosystems.

Inspired by adventurers in her parents' vintage *National Geographic* and *Readers Digest* magazines and the 1990s animation *Captain Planet*, Khan dreamed of a career in marine biology. Her school guidance counsellor told her she had no direction in life and wondered how she would survive on a career "looking at fish".

Khan's parents, anti-apartheid activists from Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, nudged her toward conservation and environmental activism and she later joined Greenpeace.

As an eco-activist coordinating the Greenpeace urban group between 2012 and early 2016, she focused on all types of enviro-education and training, particularly on becoming energy autonomous with solar power.

As part of the team at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, she researched mercury in fish and helped educate South Africans on the safe meal limits for weekly fish consumption.

Khan has also been on numerous life-changing expeditions. She spent time at the South African scientific research station on Marion Island, an uninhabited island located in the sub-Antarctic. Along with 19 other people she spent over a year isolated from the rest of the world to collect data in extremely harsh conditions.

"The elements and the land chisel you down to your very core, and flaunt your worst fears in front of you," Khan says. She collected valuable data and worked with killer whales, elephant seals, fur seals and endangered seabirds. Given the opportunity to name two killer whales, Khan named them Ayesha, from *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and Shah Khan, after the Bengal tiger from *The Jungle Book*. Those also happen to be the names of her parents.

Aboard the South African ship, *Mama Afrika*, her last expedition was to the Antarctic marginal ice zone where she worked for BirdLife South Africa and the department of environmental affairs oceans and coasts department to monitor and classify seabirds and mammals at sea, toward the end of the Southern Ocean.

There are many more eco-adventures in Khan's future — she dreams of finding her place in this world and contributing to protecting biodiversity wherever she can.

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Supplied

Sam Smout (32)

Waste sector desk analyst, Green Cape

Port Elizabeth-born Sam Smout has been at Green Cape for about two years, a nonprofit organisation established in 2010 and funded by the Western Cape government that aims to create a green economy in the Western Cape by reducing the city's carbon footprint.

His work is primarily centred around promoting the diversion of thousands of tonnes of waste away from landfills, ensuring that green businesses connect and build good relationships in the waste sector, and remaining a source of knowledge on how businesses can continue to support one another.

Smout believes waste consciousness still needs to be better understood and promoted by South Africans, as from a public perspective, it is still rooted in convenience rather than an environmental and a biological necessity that we all have a social responsibility to prioritise.

He shares these sentiments when it comes to the

private sector as well. Profit in that space continues to be the main driver of waste consciousness; if it is cheaper for an organisation to send waste to landfills they will often utilise that option instead of considering and committing to alternative waste management strategies.

Smout is passionate about the environment and ensuring that waste is seen as a resource and shifting the ways that society thinks about managing its consumption.

To Smout, being a young person in South Africa in 2018 comes with a number of challenges and opportunities, such as being able to dedicate one's life to making a difference in incremental ways, and also being able to exist in an era where technology and new discoveries are shaping our future as we speak.

"People are going to Mars, and I am interested in what the powerhouses of the future in Africa and the world will look like. This is an exciting time to be alive."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Sarisha Maharaj (34)

Associate, International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Twitter: @sashiemaharaj

Sarisha Maharaj works in the Energy and Water Advisory Services team at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector investment arm of the World Bank Group.

She works with governments and companies to change policies and laws, improve how firms conduct business, and bring more affordable, safer and modern energy and water services to impoverished communities. It was her time spent at Awethu Project that opened her up to issues of power and energy access. One of the most memorable projects she has worked on so far was the Lighting Africa Project, which has helped communities move away from harmful methods of generating heat and light such as kerosene. This allowed women to start businesses because they did not have to collect firewood from faraway places.

"Through the work we do, I see us as being the modern-day superheroes of the world. Effecting change in emerging markets that are often fraught with issues such as political and economic instability is incredibly challenging, and requires

patience, innovation and diplomacy — but when it does happen, it is inspiring! Seeing the effect our work has on people's lives definitely makes me feel passionate about what I do."

Having been recently selected to be a Climate Ambassador for the Global Youth Climate Network, she has more of a platform to raise awareness around climate related issues.

Maharaj is affirmed by how cohesive we are as a nation and our capacity to affect change together on things that matter to us. If she was to change anything about South Africa, it would be the pace at which change takes place. "For so many people access to basic services and education are privileges, when they should be basic human rights. For these people, reading at night and refrigerating food are luxuries they don't know. This simply has to change — urgently."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Supplied

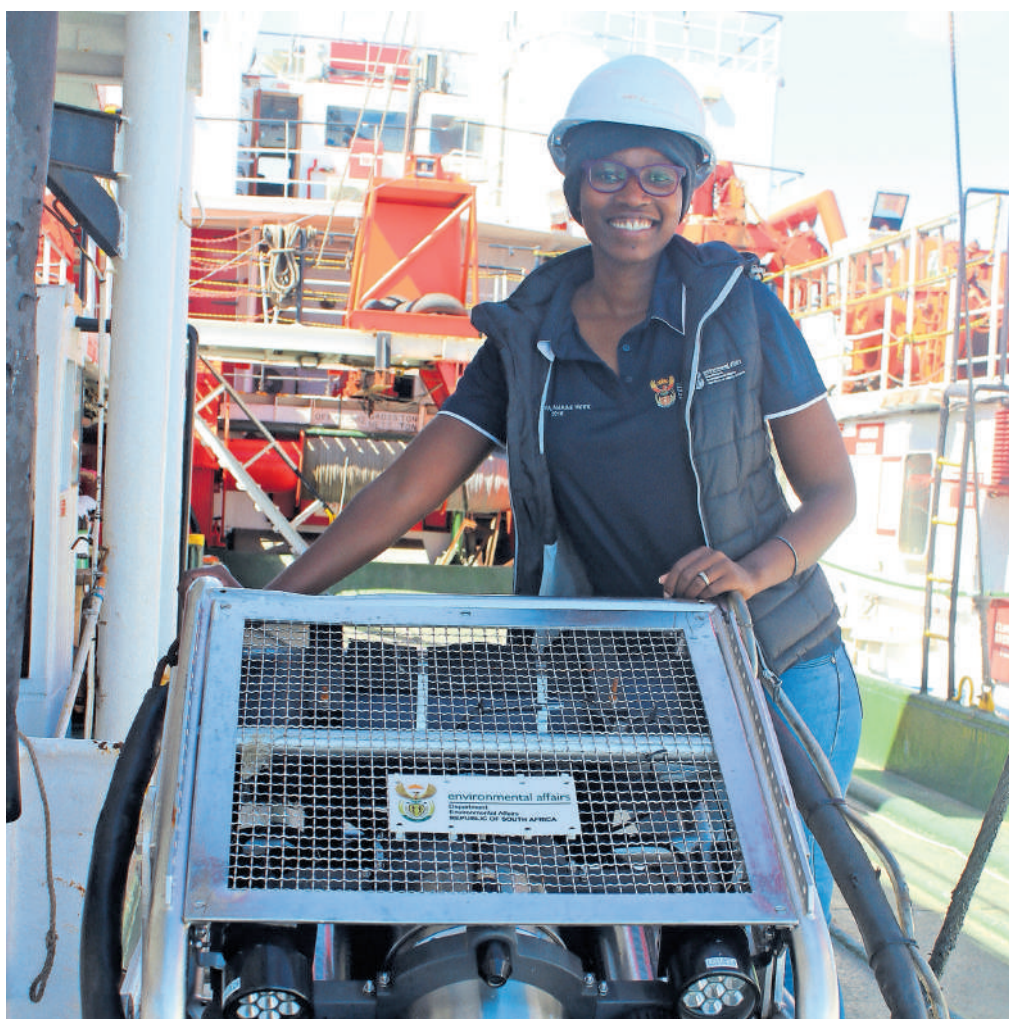


Photo: Gaopelelwa Moroane

Zoleka Filander (30)

Offshore benthic ecologist, Department of Environmental Affairs

Twitter: @coral_carer

As a black girl from the rural, landlocked town of Kokstad in KwaZulu-Natal, marine biology was not a career path Zoleka Filander thought she would follow. But she was always interested in science. This love of science led Filander to marine biology and in her work as a benthic ecologist, she plays an integral role in ensuring the conservation and management of ocean resources.

Filander believes marine conservation is crucial. "The ecological health of the environment is of paramount importance to our existence and survival. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to take care of the environment that provides us with so many services," she says.

While completing an honours degree in Marine Biology at Walter Sisulu University, Filander became particularly passionate about marine resource management. She interacted with a rural coastal community, whose dependence on marine resources and misunderstanding of marine protected areas was something she understood as she came from a similar background. She realised that marine

resource management could resolve complex societal issues through a science-policy interface. Filander wanted to use science to advise policymakers and be the voice for communities to help them better understand the importance of marine protected areas and marine spatial planning.

Filander is also working on her PhD in marine spatial planning, with research centred around classifying deep-water coral taxonomy to show how fundamental science can be translated into marine spatial planning. She hopes that her research will help her be the voice of rural coastal communities at a national level.

As a black woman in a field dominated by white people and men, Filander's career trajectory has not been smooth. As the only black female diver in her research unit and one of three black female scientists at the department of environmental affairs who have led a scientific expedition, Filander is a pioneer in her field. With half the opportunity, she has had to work 10 times as hard. But she says it's all worth it.

"I hope I am cutting a path through for those black females who follow me, so that hopefully they don't have to face the same obstacles I did."

— Shaazia Ebrahim

*There is
no delight
in owning
anything
unshared.*

-Lucius Annaues Seneca

Congratulations to all the Film
and Media category winners
for sharing your stage.

SABC
The stage is yours





Photo: Mokheithi Siganunu

Boipelo Molwela (27)

Producer, Audio Militia and founder, Kalakuta Republik

Twitter: @b_molwela

As a producer at the Audio Militia music agency, Boipelo Molwela says she gets paid to think. "Being a producer involves attending briefings, bringing deliverables to fruition and seeing them run wild on television and other platforms," she says.

She's a qualified sound engineer who graduated from the Academy of Sound Engineering. She went on to become a certified operator and instructor in Pro Tools equipment, and became the academy's youngest lecturer to teach it.

But despite early mixing successes, Molwela realised that a life behind the sound desk was

not for her. "Years of dissecting and mixing audio as well as a stint as a Pro Tools lecturer have armed me with the kind of inside knowledge that comes in handy," she says. She now works as a producer at Audio Militia where she manages the recording and mixing of music sessions, jingles, voice-overs and other audio input from idea to execution, with her keen eye and ear for design helping her craft catchy-sounding content. She is also the founder of Kalakuta Republik, her own audio company.

"My office often feels like a playground because we literally get paid to come up with ideas," she says. "As a creative professional I consistently need to be on the ball, and as a result a lot of my work habits have spilled over into the rest of my life."

She's also intrigued by the idea that being methodical and thoughtful can be fun. "As a person suffering from a short attention span, it really has taken me years to get to a point where I can apply my skill set diligently and consistently."

Being a black, female sound engineer and producer is a rarity, and there were no role models to encourage her to follow that path. "I want to be a part of changing that," she says.

In the future she wants to use her skills to offer a boutique service because she believes that what she offers as a producer and a creative will not be easy for others to replicate.

She also wants to see more of the world. "I am extremely attracted to the idea of becoming a digital nomad, having a skill set that allows me to travel extensively and work in between."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Paul Hunt

Cait Pansegrouw (29)

Film producer and co-owner, Urucu Media

Instagram: @cait_panties

When you watch a movie you might think how perfect the actors are for their role, but do you ever think about the person who actually cast them?

For the excellent but controversial movie *Inxeba*, that person was Cait Pansegrouw, the casting director and producer. Pansegrouw

is proud of having stood up to intimidation as a tiny but vocal minority tried to have the film that was set in an initiation school banned. They lost, and the movie that had already won 28 international awards and been shortlisted for an Oscar returned to local cinemas.

"*Inxeba* was both the hardest and the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life. It was an incredibly intense experience," she says. "I was exposed to blatant homophobia, hate speech, death threats, intimidation, deeply entrenched patriarchal systems and unlawful reclassification and censorship. It was, at times, painful and disturbing. But this was also a story of hope, bravery and tenacity. I was propelled into a space which introduced me to profoundly inspiring people; particularly human rights activists and LGBTQIA members, advocates and activists."

The film sparked passionate, challenging and uncomfortable conversations that she believes are very necessary for this country. "I feel immensely fortunate to have been part of something I so fiercely believe in and continue to be proud of. I look forward to creating more provocative films with strong and audacious cinematic voices," she says.

She's doing that as the co-owner of Urucu Media with Elias Ribeiro. Together they have produced numerous short films, a documentary and five feature films in six years. Their work is often audacious and challenges the status quo, because they believe cinema is a powerful tool to drive social change.

Pansegrouw's favourite part of the job is working with directors and guiding them to bring the stories to life. "It takes years to make a film, so you enter into a very intense relationship with your directors over a long period. I really believe in the power of art; it has the ability to challenge the status quo, encourage introspection and dialogue and inspire empathy," she says.

Urucu's projects have attracted funding from the World Cinema Fund and Creative Europe, and been licensed to broadcasters including Netflix, HBO and MNET. The company also runs Realness, a screenwriters' residency for emerging African voices.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Supplied

Dr Rofhiwa Mukhudwana (34)

Communication Science lecturer, Unisa

Twitter: @RofhiwaF

Improving the way that government departments communicate is Dr Rofhiwa Mukhudwana's passion.

She's a senior lecturer at the department of communication science at the University of South Africa (Unisa), and was the head of media studies before going on sabbatical to research a book she is planning to write on communication strategies.

Mukhudwana is passionate about government and political communication, decolonial studies, foreign policy and black feminism. As an intellectual, she's also a champion of the power of education, and supervises PhD and master's students on government communication and on the intersections between media, decoloniality and black feminism.

There is a plethora of literature about how to apply communication management models used by the private sector to the

public sector, but very little acknowledgement of how different the public sector actually is, she says. Rarely has a study evaluated the impact of those differences on the practice of government communication. Mukhudwana sought to fill this gap, and her PhD thesis explored how the unique environment of the public sector influences the practice of communication management by government departments. She found that the negative aspects were reduced when that communication became strategic, ethical and professional, and her study led to the development of a framework for the practice of government communication.

She says her biggest regret is that after completing her own master's at 23, she never thought of studying further. "I only completed my PhD at 32 because of a lack of direction and mentorship, thinking PhDs and professorships were the domains of old

white men and fewer older black people," she says. "I appreciate seeing young academics entering the industry and excelling."

But that requires great teachers, she believes. "I remember little from the content taught in class. All I remember is the excitement, the discussions and interactions with classmates and lecturers. Teaching is not only about content, but about inciting interest for knowledge about the discipline, the subject, topic and its case studies," she says. "Whether the student is in class or in cyberspace, they must be motivated to learn."

Her future goals are to attain professorship and expand her knowledge on issues of blackness, media, communication, government and Black-African feminism. She'd also like to see a centre established to specialise in government communication research.

— Lesley Stones

Greig Cameron (32)

Writer and director, Triggerfish Animation Studios

Twitter: @greigcameron

As a kid, Greig Cameron watched a LOT of cartoons. "I watched even more as a teen and began to suspect there was a problem. By the time I was in my twenties and still binge-watching children's television, I figured I either needed an intervention or to make a career out of it," he jokes.

So he did, and today Cameron is writing and directing animation for Triggerfish, Africa's most prestigious animation studio. Triggerfish created two of the country's biggest box office successes, *Adventures in Zambezia* and *Khumba*, and Cameron has been chosen to direct its third feature film, *Seal Team*.

"It's a story about a young seal off the coast of Cape Town, who forms a military team to fight sharks. It's going to be jam-packed full of humour, action and heart. *Finding Nemo* meets *The A-Team*," he explains, with the sort of humour that will no doubt swim throughout the production.

His career began as a staff writer on South Africa's first locally-produced half-hour cartoon, *Urbo: the Adventures of Pax Afrika*. Then he wrote and directed 45 episodes of *Supa Strikas*, about the world's best soccer team, and wrote 60 issues of the comic.

"Like many South Africans, I grew up reading the comic, so helping the TV show reach hundreds of countries and successfully compete with *Star Wars* and *Marvel* shows was a big moment for my career," he says.

More recently he was head writer on a series of shorts called *Moosebox*, commissioned by Nickelodeon, and for *Munki and Trunk*, also picked up by the network. "While I was by no means the main creative player in these two projects, they're both great signs that South African content is sought after and can succeed in an international market," he says.

While others in the industry yearn for Hollywood, Cameron wants to stay here and strengthen the local talent pool.



Photo: Mark Allnutt

"If I get to carry on making silly 'toons I'll be a happy man. For anyone working in film and TV Hollywood has a big pull, but being able to stay here and help our industry grow into an international heavy hitter would be first prize," he says. "Animation is very labour intensive, requires hundreds of skilled jobs, and if I can make silly gags and help contribute towards a large, sustainable industry I'd be extremely happy."

— Lesley Stones



Jessie Zinn (24)

Filmmaker and director

Twitter: @jessiezinn

Jessie Zinn was a performance-oriented child who could always be found jumping off tables and chasing butterflies. Cape Town's Baxter theatre foregrounded her childhood years because as the child of a theatre journalist, she accompanied her mom as she went around reviewing plays and interviewing the thespians who brought them to life.

However, it never occurred to her young mind that she too could be a director, because those seemed to be roles usually occupied by men. Being born in 1994 means that Jessie is a "democracy baby" and it is the limits and the possibilities of this reality that continues to occupy her mind, and her work.

"As born-frees, we are really doing the most —

we are looking around at this context that we have inherited, and we are noticing things that have not been noticed before and we are saying: 'Hey, I want to talk about this.' We are using our context to speak about the things that matter to us. It is a fortunate time to be a woman in this space."

The University of Cape Town graduate's films have been screened at Visions Du Reel, Encounters, and Durban International Film Festival. Her most recent short film *Can I Please Go to the Bathroom?* was a Sundance Ignite finalist and won the second prize of the Youth Jury Award at the Encounters Documentary Film Festival.

The film explores how menstrual periods are just one of many rites of passage that influence women to modulate and curate their bodies in some shape or form. "When you are on your period, beyond being made to feel embarrassed about it, you are distracted by how you always have to look behind you, and I wanted to explore what that means for young girls."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Linda Mnisi (24)

Journalist, Soweto TV

Twitter: @Linda_Mnisi

Giving a voice to the voiceless and holding people in power accountable are the twin reasons why Linda Mnisi loves his job as a journalist.

"Part of what we do is to be a voice for the voiceless and protect our communities by exposing ills that plague them, without fear or favour," he says.

It would be a failure and mediocre journalism if his reporting did not benefit those on the ground, he believes. But that won't happen, because 24-year-old Mnisi is already an award winner who scooped the 2017 Mail & Guardian Community Media Journalist of the Year award in the Township Entrepreneurship Awards category.

He's currently a news reporter on his home turf at Soweto TV, the country's biggest community television station.

He started his career four years ago when he was studying for a business management diploma and volunteered at a nongovernmental organisation that takes care of orphaned children living with HIV/AIDS. He joined the dynamic Indian community radio station, Lenz FM 93.6, as a host on the Drive Time show.

As an ambitious, talented and hardworking young man, he was hired as an intern by Soweto TV, as one of only three selected from 50 applicants. He proved worthy of the choice by winning the journalism award after just five months on the job.

"Working in a community-based newsroom birthed my love for human interest stories. These are the narratives of ordinary South Africans who bear the brunt of the decisions of self-interest often made by prominent South Africans," he says. "These are the narratives of those who have lived in squalor for years, and against all odds, come out victorious. These stories are a reminder to me of who I am and where I come from."

While he loves to focus on human interest stories, he is equally at home reporting on political news or light-hearted stories.

Mnisi has his career path mapped out, first planning to extend his radio experience by becoming a news anchor, then working on national TV news and then branching into producing and directing. Ultimately his goal is to become an international correspondent for a global media house, particularly if that lets him report from African countries plagued by poverty and injustice.

— Lesley Stones

Lusanda Mgoduka (33)

Producer and director, Five Star Media

Twitter: @Lusandamgoduka

A dearth of black female role models in the film industry meant Lusanda Mgoduka had to go to Los Angeles to realise what could be achieved.

Mgoduka wanted to be a director, but she was afraid that breaking into the field would be impossible, so she majored in production while studying for a degree in Motion Picture Medium at Afda.

"I secretly wanted to direct, but was scared I would not be able to make a living to support myself. At the time, I had never met a black director in the commercials and advertising space," she says.

Switching her focus led to several successful years as a freelance production manager and producer, working on films including *Machine Gun Preacher* for Hollywood; *Skyf*, a South African film; and *10 Days in Sun City*, a Nollywood movie.

But her real passion still lay in directing, and when she joined Five Star Media as a partner this year she turned towards that goal. A business trip to Los Angeles was the catalyst. There she discovered Women In Motion Pictures, a group of women with the cheeky and entirely inappropriate acronym Wimps, who work to create more opportunities for women.

Mgoduka is now setting up Women In Motion Pictures South Africa (Wimps SA), with help from her American role models and Kirsty Galliard, a partner at Five Star Media.

"This group aims to be a huge support to the women in our industry and hopefully it won't be as hard for up-and-coming filmmakers as it was for me," she says. "The toughness made my skin thick though, and I am grateful. The industry is changing and black directors are working, but we still only have three black female directors in this space. It's a difficult industry to infiltrate, but with the right support and mindset, anything is possible."

She has now directed a few commercials for Five Star Media and is trying to raise funds to direct a film, a Xhosa love story. "Most of us get into directing with the hope of winning an Oscar one day. That would be awesome, but I would love to make a great film that Africans love and speak about for decades to come. I want to tell beautiful stories that make people think, love and laugh."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Zane Tilizane



Sikelelwa Geya Mdingi (35)

Manager, Global Health Strategies

Twitter: @SikiGeyaMdingi

An adventurous spirit and no fear of trying something new have guided Sikelelwa Geya Mdingi's career choices over the past 13 years.

She has worked in an array of media roles, starting at the SABC as intern on news and current affairs show *Special Assignment*. She spent four years with the public broadcaster, rising through the ranks to become a producer on the investigative show *Cutting Edge*. Mdingi then moved into TV production at Engage Entertainment,

and learned a lot about content production, script writing, directing and dealing with, sometimes difficult, talent.

At 28 she joined the media department at Nelson Mandela University, teaching journalism and media modules. "I loved seeing students growing in the craft, it was highly rewarding," she says. "I loved it when my students got that 'aha' moment when they realised they could actually be great journalists." A number of students she taught are now rising stars in print and broadcast journalism, and many attribute their success to her dedicated mentorship.

To many people, Mdingi's face is familiar from her four years with the broadcaster eNCA. "Every day you got a front row seat to witness the history of our country unfolding, but at the same time helping bring South Africans into the moment. Covering the Fees Must Fall protests and the Esidimeni tragedy remain experiences I'll never forget," she says.

"My favourite assignments were human interest stories. I was always in awe of how people allowed us into their pain, difficulties,

and very emotive moments, and I understood the responsibility of conveying those moments to rest of South Africa. But most importantly when South Africans rose to the occasion, offering helping hands — that for me was everything. Or even getting government to move, giving a glimmer of hope to those seeking answers, I found that more fulfilling."

She is now the manager for Global Health Strategies, using her experience in journalism to raise awareness of reproductive health issues such as access to safe abortions.

Her goal is to make women understand that South Africa has one of the greatest sexual reproductive laws, the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act, and it's their right to access this service without the fear of stigma, guilt and shaming. "If we make even one or two women realise they don't have to go to that backstreet abortion, then the work is done," she says.

— Lesley Stones

Photo: Felix Dlangamandla



Photo: Paul Botes

Zandile Tisani (32)

Write and director, *Arcade Content*

Twitter: @zanditee

Filmmaker Zandile Tisani is likely to upset a few people by creating work that examines life from a black female point of view. And she'll probably be very happy if her movies have you squirming with embarrassment and laughing at the same time.

Like her short film *Heroes*, a dark comedy that explores a white community's reaction to a black family moving into the neighbourhood in 1994. It was shot in Bryanston and Westdene and is based on the true story of her own family first moving to a posher suburb of Port Elizabeth and later discovering the neighbours had held a meeting to discuss how the community felt about a black family moving in. *Heroes* was filmed after Tisani was one of 10 female

filmmakers to win a grant from the National Film and Video Foundation to help bring their ideas to fruition.

Storytelling is a creative way of ordering her thoughts and preoccupations, she says, and it's really important to her that black women feel free to comment on whatever they would like to. "I believe you need to really put yourself on the line," she says.

Tisane focuses on screenwriting but has a broader background in fine art, styling and photography. Her understanding of how to construct a narrative is tied to a commitment to wow audiences with powerful imagery, she says. It's obviously working, because Design Indaba has praised her for vibrant and powerful imagery that strikes a chord with audiences.

For the web series, *People You May Know*, she wrote the script and directed and starred in it. The series reflects her interest in character-driven stories that are constructed to express the various urban African identities that give Jo'burg its shape. The series was an official selection at Series Mania Paris 2017 and won her the OneX Pitch Deal at the New York Television Festival.

She also directed Zaki Ibrahim's *Go Widdit* music video, and has made two short Jo'burg-based documentaries, *Highlands* and *Style Diary: Yeoville*, which showcase the strong sense of place in all her work. *Highlands* was produced as part of the Encounters Documentary Film Festival Laboratory.

Tisane joined Arcade Content last year, where she films advertising and branded content for clients including Standard Bank, Castle Lite, Kotex and Superbalist.

— Lesley Stones

Masi Mdingane (32)

Programmes manager, *Trufm*

Twitter & Instagram: @masimdingane

As the programmes manager at radio station Trufm, Masi Mdingane gets the chance to spark debates and help shape public opinion.

"What I like about my job is the ability to shape society through on-air engagement and insightful, thought-provoking content," he says. "This requires me to constantly have my ear to the ground and be on the lookout for the latest trends. I am moved by the power of radio and its ability to reach a large number of people, playing a role in shaping their understanding of different concepts."

He also enjoys unearthing and coaching new talent for the station, ensuring that it has a consistent sound, and keeps up with trends on how audiences consume content. He carries the responsibility for growing the audience of this Eastern Cape-based channel — and he's been doing that very successfully. "Since I joined the station, there has been a spike in audience growth from as low as 118 000 to 220 000 currently," he says.

As well as helping the people in his team improve their skills, he is also a fan of continuous learning for himself so that he can grow his career.

"I am working towards being a force to be reckoned with in the media industry as a media strategist, focusing on managing talent, programming strategy implementation and innovation.

Mdingane was born in the Eastern Cape and graduated from Rhodes University with a BComm in Management & information Systems and a Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management.

He has been in the radio industry since 2004, gaining experience in radio programming, radio station management and sales and advertising. He first job was at Rhodes Music Radio, where he became the deputy station manager. He then moved to join 5FM as its music compiler, before switching to Trufm in 2015. There he's discovered that his passion not only lies in managing and

training talent and guiding the content production, but also in marketing and branding the station and promoting it through social media.

On the side, he was a panellist on the Liberty Radio Awards this year, where he judged the community and campus radio submissions, and he was a judge for the Metro FM Music Awards in 2012 and 2013.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Sbongiseni Witbooi



Photo: Supplied

Mogapi Monnakgotla (29)

Founder, *The Idiot's Guide To Gaming*

Twitter & Instagram: @_superdav

Turning gaming into a serious business is the goal of Mogapi David Monnakgotla, known to YouTube viewers as "Super Dave".

He's been a gamer since his primary school days, and now at 29 he has his own YouTube channel where he broadcasts a video series called *Gaming In My Mama's House*.

"I started my website, www.theidiotsguidetogaming.co.za back when blogging was the in thing. There were a number of blogs about fashion, food and photography but no one was playing in the technology or gaming space," he says. "I only knew one gaming publication, a magazine titled NAG, so I started my own blog. I got my friends and colleagues to check it out and most people

liked it."

His postings piqued the interest of the radio station YFM, and he was invited to present a gaming feature that aired every Sunday night. When that ended its run, he got the opportunity to be the gaming guy on a youth lifestyle show called *Frenzy* on eTV, which aired every Tuesday.

"I was part of that show for a number of years and it was a great experience for me. I learned so much about what goes into a television show," he says.

Monnakgotla left the show last year and started producing his own videos for his YouTube channel, where he reviews video games, chats about the latest news and evangelises about how much fun gaming is. He's now back on YFM as a guest on the station's flagship show YFM Mornings with DJ AnkleTap.

"Youth from Gauteng can hear the hottest news, reviews and interviews from the gaming world every Wednesday morning at 6:50am," he says.

"Gaming is definitely the next big thing here in South Africa, with companies jumping left, right and centre trying to get their hands on this hobby that's turned into a huge revenue stream for some. I want to be part of that action, not only from a content creation point of view but by creating a platform that's sustainable and that gives others an opportunity to get into the industry," he says.

"Whether it's on radio, TV, the internet or social media, the aim is to be a 'game changer' in the industry. I'm building my own gaming media empire."

— Lesley Stones



Reginald Witbooi (29)

Reporter, SABC

Twitter: @WitbooiReggie



Photo: Kevin Brandt

When Reginald Witbooi isn't examining rivers to report on pollution he might be in the Karoo covering the progress of the world-leading SKA (Square Kilometre Array) radio telescope.

Witbooi is a radio and TV journalist for the SABC, and has won several awards for his reporting. "I was appointed as a radio journalist four years ago, but I'm also doing TV journalism. I don't compare the two with each other, as long as the story is being told," he says.

"I write stories because I believe everyone has a voice — but we as journalists need to boost those voices. The stories I love to cover are human interest stories, and it's in my pen, notebook and technology that I get to call officials to account."

Last year he won an SAB Environmental Award

in the radio category for a pollution story, after Upington residents complained that sewage was flowing into the Orange River.

"I travelled 400km to cover this piece, to visit the site and get first-hand accounts," he says. "The residents didn't lie, and the fact that their local municipality admitted to the problem, but didn't do anything for quite some time, baffled me. People are consuming water from the river."

He also won the Southern African Development Community Award in the radio category last year.

Witbooi comes from a modest background in George in the Western Cape; his mother was a domestic worker and his father was a cleaner at a high school. His parents made ends meet to provide for him and his other five siblings, but he was the only one in his family to go to university. He holds a BA in Communications from the University of the Western Cape, then went on to study journalism at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

In his spare time, Witbooi does voluntary work for Caritas, a nongovernmental organisation that helps abused women and children. His desire to help was sparked through his work, when he covered a story in 2016 about a six-year-old who was brutally killed when he tried to protect his mother from a possible rapist.

"I enjoy volunteering because I believe nongovernmental organisations need more hands, and a lot of events are taking place. Also, I am seeing daily how women and children are being abused, and enough is just enough," he says.

— Lesley Stones

Ntombenhle Shezi (28)

Assistant editor, ELLE Decoration and ELLE South Africa

Instagram: @ntombenhleshezi

As a young girl, Ntombenhle Shezi always had her head stuck in a magazine. Then she started writing letters to the editors, and was thrilled when they got published. Now at 28 she's the assistant editor of two glossy titles, *ELLE South Africa* and *ELLE Decoration*.

"Magazines have always been part of my life and imagination — growing up I collected every title I could get my hands on," she says. "In my teens I was reading everything from *True Love* to *Drum*, *Seventeen* to *ELLE*. Growing up in Soweto I remember going to what is now the Rosa Parks library, which was sponsored by the US embassy and had international titles like *Vanity Fair*, *National Geographic*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Fortune Magazine* and *Vogue*. I spent all my time there reading these titles."

Studying literature and history at Wits University opened up a world of amazing black writers. "It also really affirmed me as a black person, and my time there still informs a lot of my own work to this day. My life's work is about amplifying the stories of people who have been, and continue to be, marginalised; that is, black stories. I see that manifesting in my work and strongly believe that even if I were not working in the magazine industry, that would be my life's mission," she says.

Her first experience in putting together a magazine and learning how publishing works came from her time as an intern for *Livify Africa's Live Mag*. That led to a job at the British Council, working on its newly introduced art programme, *Connect ZA*.

Shezi worked for several other respected publications before joining *ELLE*, where her role is to produce relevant and interesting content for both the print and digital platforms. "The work sees me constantly engaging with content and conversations around contemporary art and culture, fashion, deco and design, while pushing boundaries around content creation and tapping into the zeitgeists of our times," she says.

Her career highlights so far include covering the Cannes Film Festival and interviewing fashion designers Carol Lim and Humberto Leon of KENZO in New York. She's also particularly proud of *ELLE's* March edition, a design and technology issue that explored how artists bring futurism and technology into their work. "The issue challenges what is traditionally seen in women's magazines in South Africa."

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Marvin Sinclair

Sumeya Gasa (25)

Investigative journalist, Wits Justice Project

Twitter & Instagram: @kiam_sumeya

Journalist Sumeya Gasa is an expert in the new skills needed to disseminate information in our multimedia world.

She combines the arts of writing, documentary filmmaking and researching to create award-winning multimedia news stories.

Born in Durban, she moved to Johannesburg to study performance and visual arts at Wits University, majoring in film & television, arts management and psychology.

That earned her a job as a multimedia journalist with *News24*, and later with *Chronicle*, the multimedia partner to the online site *The Daily Maverick*.

At *Chronicle*, Gasa and her colleagues produced the investigative multimedia feature *Casualties of Cola*, which won a CNN Africa Journalist Award in the Ecobank Economics category, the Vodacom Journalist of the Year Regional Online Award and third prize at the Taco Kuiper Awards.

Her next personal goal was to pursue a master's in Digital Arts and Interactive Media at Wits; her research saw her investigating the impact of gentrification on generations of displaced families. She spent a year in Cape Town investigating the land policies that inform Cape Town's spatial injustice, and followed the lives of four families who had been displaced during apartheid and faced the same fate decades later due to urban gentrification.

Their stories inspired Gasa to return to Johannesburg to shed light on the disastrous effects gentrification is having on some people's

lives and the generational legacy of displacement. To do that she is using technology to create interactive audio-visual stories about the gentrification of Johannesburg.

In her day job, Gasa is an investigative journalist and multimedia producer at the Wits Justice Project. She also teaches a writing course at the Market Photo Workshop, and teaches video editing at Wits School of Film and Television. In her spare time, she mentors a number of budding filmmakers and digital artists.

Gasa is committed to advocating for social justice through her creative work and research, and her work appears in influential publications including *The Daily Maverick*, *News24* and the Socio Economics Rights Institute's media.

For her PhD, she intends to study the art of participatory filmmaking. Her goal is to develop a high school curriculum to give learners the necessary tools to tell their own stories. She also hopes to establish an educational centre for young people to gain multimedia skills and take control over their narratives.

— Lesley Stones



Photo: Shaun Swinger



Vian Roos (28)

Art Director, *Farmer's Weekly*

Twitter & Instagram: @vianroos

Vian Roos was raised in the agricultural town of Bethlehem in the Free State. In 2011 he completed a BA in Graphic Design at The Design School and at the tender age of 24 he was appointed art director at *Farmer's Weekly*, South Africa's oldest magazine, two years after joining the organisation.

His job involves liaising with journalists on developing stories and then creating a framework around which the visuals can further strengthen the story. This is in a context where changes in magazine audience consumption patterns have meant that media workers need to be more deliberate in striking a solid balance between content and the visuals. The 105th-year issue of the publication saw Roos switch things up from a design perspective.

"It was time for us to innovate on our digital and print offerings and keep track of our competitors, while retaining readership in a situation where people do not easily adapt to change."

His approach to photography places emphasis on being present — especially during the unnoticed moments — and that has allowed him to explore his deep fascination with clouds.

"I like looking up into the sky and just snapping. A cloud is as it is in that moment; you see it, you snap it and you cannot recreate it."

As a young person in South Africa, Roos is sometimes frustrated at the rigidity and ageism which young people's ideas are often met with. Travel has transformed him and his outlook, but this country continues to warm his heart. "Every place has its problems, but there is something about

this place; South Africa is definitely more fun than anywhere else."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Shaun Swingler



Photo: Teagan Smith Photography

Zoë Brown (28)

Presenter, *SABC's Expresso* show

Twitter: @zbzoebrown

Zoë Brown is the shining new star who greets early risers with a sharp and bright smile on SABC's popular *Expresso* show. Every weekday morning from 6am, she's bringing the wake-up vibes to sleepy South Africans. Brown also joins Carl Wastie and Barron Hufkie on the Kfm drive show, *Flash Drive*, one of the station's most listened-to shows. Her trajectory has been impressive; she's moved from Miss SA Teen Pageant Princess in 2007 to campus radio host at Stellenbosch University to where she is today.

"The media industry has always fascinated me," says Brown. "I often joke when I say that I stumbled into my career by chance, but that's more or less how I ended up on the *Expresso* morning show and Kfm 94.5 *Flash Drive* show. It was a series of small steps and listening to that voice in my head which brought me to where I am today."

Brown's story is as interesting as her career portfolio. She juggled life as a student and graveyard radio host for many years, finally surrendering her campus radio role at MFM 92.6 to focus more closely on her honours degree. Life, it seemed, had other plans because two months later she received a call from Kfm asking her to come in for an interview.

"I knew that being part of the Kfm team would open doors for me, so during my honours year I presented the weekend overnight shows from midnight until

4am," she says. "I then made the decision to expand into TV, so I did a short TV presenting course after my degree and gave myself six months to get into the industry. I was told this was unrealistic, but I had my first day on TV exactly six months later."

For Brown, her career is incredibly important and she brings a wealth of passion, focus and determination to bear on achieving her dreams. In 2019 she plans on taking her career to yet another height by completing her master's.

Brown concludes. "I want to thank my parents for everything they've done. My father is my greatest role model — he is the reason I work as hard as I do — he never stopped and never gave up. One way or another he made sure I got to complete my honours degree without a student loan to my name. I hope by doing what I do, I make him proud."

— Tamsin Oxford

Zwelethu Radebe (29)

Commercials director, *Egg Films*

Twitter: @zwelethuradebe

Still in his twenties, Zwelethu Radebe has a large following among young African creatives hoping to make their mark in the film industry both as commercials directors/producers and filmmakers. Radebe has spent a busy four years directing commercials for both local and international agencies, shooting footage in nine countries across Africa and Europe for brands such as Castle Lager, Heineken, Mastercard, Orange and Playboy.

In 2017, he won a Silver Apex Award for Creative Effectiveness for Strongbow, as well as Best South African Short Film at the Durban, Jozi and Shniti film festivals and Best Short Film at Zanzibar International Film Festival for *The Hangman*, which has now won over 10 international awards. It's the story of Khetha, a black prison warder guarding black inmates in Pretoria Central Prison's gallows near the end of apartheid, whose job is further complicated when his estranged father is transferred to death row.

Radebe has a record of excellence, finishing top of his class throughout film school, allowing him to win numerous awards and the bursaries he needed to fund his studies. The trend continued at his first Loerie Awards, where, just months after graduating, he won a Student Silver from Ster-Kinekor for *Thato*. Since then, as a filmmaker, Zwelethu has won Best Short Film at the Jozi Film Festival, Best Film at Festival and Best International Drama at the Discover Film Festival in London. He has also won the Silver Main Jury Award and Gold Young Jury Award at

the Best of International Short Film Festival which took place at the mythical Lumiere brothers' Eden theatre, the oldest cinema in the world in La Ciotat, France. Most recently Radebe was nominated at the 12th SAFTA for Best South African Short Film and won Best Short Film at the Eko International Film Festival in Lagos, Nigeria.

The film bug bit Radebe quite early, and an obsession for telling stories through film saw him spend much of his youth behind the lens, recreating his favourite film scenes with nothing but an 8mm camcorder, his BMX and his younger brother as the actor.

"By the time I was cast as a caricature of cricket legend Lance 'Zulu' Klusener in a washing powder commercial, the film bug had its fangs in deep," he remembers fondly.

His future endeavours as a filmmaker are to be able to tell African stories that the continent can celebrate. His vision is to one day to become influential in the global film arena to give hope to other aspiring African filmmakers, by showing them that a lot more is possible.

— Sifiso Buthelezi



Photo: Paul Botes

**“The youth of today
are the leaders of
tomorrow.”**

-Nelson Mandela

In recognition of Youth Month, Gilead Sciences wishes South Africa's future leaders continued opportunities that empower and support their growth.

We are honoured to sponsor the 2018 Healthcare category for the 200 Young South Africans list. We wish these amazing innovators the greatest success as they work hard to improve South Africa and the world.



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1. <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/sourcing-management/health-products/antiretrovirals/>



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Health



Photo: Dual Reflexion Studio

Andile Mthombeni (25)

Research co-ordinator, Wits psychology department

Twitter: @andilethereader

I am an evolving, God-fearing, intellectual young woman, who is a product of mentorship," says Andile Mthombeni. Her job as a research co-ordinator came about as a result of mentorship.

In the second year of her undergraduate degree, Mthombeni attended a psychology seminar on research presented by her social psychology lecturer. After her fourth year, this lecturer offered her a job as a researcher at the African Gender Institute (AGI), which aims to empower young black women to become researchers working in sexual and reproductive health and rights in Southern Africa.

Before that Mthombeni was not even aware that research could be a career, but today she couldn't dream of a better vocation. "The project opened my eyes to how you can use research to change policies, how you can use research as an advocating tool to change people's lives," she says.

At the AGI, researchers at Wits University and a number of other universities in southern Africa embarked on a research project on sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning. Researchers interviewed students and staff about harassment in their respective campuses.

The participatory research method meant that researchers participated, which made the process quite difficult. However, the research highlighted the detrimental health consequences of gender-based violence against women.

Through the sexual harassment research, Mthombeni was selected

as part of the technical task team, led by the Higher Education and Training HIV/AIDS Programme, in response to sexual and gender-based violence in higher education. The team is currently drafting policy for higher education.

This research also allowed her to work with the Aids Accountability International research organisation on sexual orientation with the aim to destabilise heteronormativity, with academic and non-academic outputs that she co-ordinates.

Mthombeni says it is difficult to find African research about the LGBTQIA+ community, as there are hardly any African or African diaspora researchers working on this field, but they are aiming to change this.

Currently completing her master's in research psychology at Wits University and selected as the youngest black female board member for the South African National Aids Council, Mthombeni will have her hands full for the next three years. She wants to be involved in HIV policy research and decisionmaking, considering how many young black women are infected with HIV weekly.

She says the statistics indicate that something is very fractured in our society. She wants to immerse herself in HIV research and create change.

— Shaazia Ebrahim

Avuyile Mbangatha (20)

Third year medical student, Stellenbosch University

Twitter: @avee_mbangatha

Born in KwaZulu-Natal and raised in King William's Town, Eastern Cape, Avuyile Mbangatha grew up in a community where socioeconomic and health issues were rife. Since he was a young boy, Mbangatha has always been motivated to find innovative solutions to address these issues.

"I am an innovative, community-orientated and all-rounded individual who is driven by grit and the need to lead from the back and put people in front," Mbangatha says. It is his goal to use his expertise to help cultivate knowledge not just for himself, but for the people around him.

Mbangatha did just that in 2014 when he developed an award-winning fertiliser with the aim of enhancing nutrition and reducing poverty in rural settlements. He formulated a vermicompost solution (worm tea) as a substitute to conventional artificial fertilisers. The discovery that it was a natural pesticide and enhanced crop quality, growth and yield meant produce could be grown organically, reducing environmental issues triggered by artificial fertilisers.

The advantage of his fertiliser is its contribution to food security. An increase in crop yield increases food security and food security is a fundamental element of good nutrition. Improving food security in rural settlements helps reduce risks and susceptibility to lifestyle diseases and health conditions precipitated by malnourishment.

In 2016 Mbangatha represented South Africa at an international science fair in the United States as one of the world's 30 youngest innovators. When he returned, he realised the importance of being a change agent, and decided to study medicine, with the intention of venturing into public health to make a difference in communities — especially rural settlements.

"Medicine is a dynamic career field that requires intense sacrifices, patient-centredness, empathy and humanity," says Mbangatha, who is in his third year of study. "Medicine grants its practitioners the opportunity to integrate skills, knowledge and expertise to enhance South Africa's level of healthcare, service delivery and healthy systems," he adds.

At his university, Mbangatha works as a tutor and mentor. He believes that as society evolves, a decent education will empower young South Africans to optimise skill sets and competencies in different sectors and develop the country's economy.

Mbangatha dreams of a future serving as a rural doctor and pursuing a postgraduate degree in public health to improve healthcare access. He also wants to be involved in research initiatives that will advance community health and eradicate communicable and non-communicable disease outbreaks.

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Tom Groom

Buyani Mxolisi Phakathi (30)

Safety, health and environmental specialist, South African Airways Technical

Twitter: @MxohB

The most fulfilling part of Buyani Mxolisi Phakathi's day is when his South African Airways (SAA) Technical family go home safe and healthy after a long day's work. In his role as a safety, health and environmental specialist at SAA Technical, Phakathi shoulders the responsibility of ensuring that aircraft engineers and maintenance employees are working in a safe and healthy environment. "There are so many developments in my area of expertise and regulations keep changing so that even after a number of years in this job, my day-to-day work remains diverse and interesting," he says.

Not that his job comes without its challenges. When things go wrong, safety, health and environmental specialists can be prosecuted. They must ensure that they keep their skills up to date and never advise on anything they aren't entirely sure about. But Phakathi is up for the challenge. "This keeps on my toes and eager to learn every day," he says.

He grew up in the township of Umlazi and attended high school in the south Durban basin where there were many industries and refineries.

He was therefore an active participant in environmental projects at school, like pollution prevention and clean-up campaigns, which sparked his interest in environmental health and management. Before he moved to Johannesburg, he was involved in a school beautification project in the southern rural Durban area, which focused on rewarding rural primary schools for going the extra mile to clean up and beautify their properties. Through that journey he learnt the value of working together to effect positive change and create environmental health sustainability. Phakathi is currently completing his MBA and concurrently pursuing a master's in public health. Next on his to-do list is a PhD in leadership: "A PhD will enable me to look forward to being able to provide more interesting and valuable advice and research and development in the field of work I do. I believe that the more informed you are, the more empowered you are and the greater your chances of achieving success to make a significant contribution to new knowledge in business and area of expertise."

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Professor Bhengu



Itumeleng Tsatsi (26)

Lecturer, Occupational Therapy department, University of the Free State

Twitter: @TumiTsatsi

Growing up with her four siblings in a single-parent home in Lebowakgomo township, north of Polokwane, Itumeleng Tsatsi explored her creative side, making paper gift bags and clothes for dolls, which she sold. She once organised a beauty pageant, collecting R5 from each of her peers, buying prizes for the runners up and winners. "At the heart of all this, I found joy in bringing people together, helping them realise their potential. Even if it was not on TV, it was okay," she recalls. But in high school, she let go of her creative side, turning her focus to science.

In matric, she came second in her class and was recognised by the Limpopo province in its results ceremony. But to her dismay, she was unable to secure a place to study engineering at the only university she had applied to. She did a stint studying engineering at a college and decided it was not the field for her. It was during a gap year that she stumbled upon occupational therapy in a UCT prospectus and decided to job shadow an occupational therapist working at a psychiatric hospital. Intrigued by how the occupational therapist helped make other people's lives more meaningful, Tsatsi applied for admission into the UCT programme and was accepted. She had no intention, however, of working in the mental health field. "It was uncomfortable and challenging and I wanted nothing to do with it," she says. But this changed when she was forced to work at a Thabamooop Psychiatric Hospital

after completing her community service. "I soon realised that my attitude as a health professional towards mental health was contributing towards perpetuating the stigma and further marginalising mental health service users."

Tsatsi is now passionate about mental health and a lecturer in occupational therapy, specialising in psychiatry and community based education at the University of Free State. She is also an occupational therapy master's student at Stellenbosch University, conducting research into the experiences of long-term mental health care users who are living in Thabamooop Hospital's halfway house. She aims to use her findings to enhance the services provided by the halfway house to its residents. "We are all affected by mental illness, even if we have not personally experienced it. Let us be a country that is supportive of mental health care users and normalise it like any illness, in our office corridors and communities."



Photo: Supplied

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Supplied

Dr Julia Turner (31)

Medical advisor, Right to Care

Julia Turner first thought about becoming a doctor as a teenager when she encountered a man who had been attacked by an elephant during a trip to Zimbabwe. "I desperately wanted to help him but I didn't know how to," she says. "I hoped that (by becoming a doctor), the next time I was in a similar situation, I might be able to help the person in need." This is exactly what Turner is doing in her role as paediatric medical advisor at Right to Care, a nongovernmental organisation. She trains doctors, nurses, pharmacists and counsellors on how to treat children and teenagers with HIV (especially drug-resistant HIV) and how to help them with the psychosocial challenges they face like stigma and adherence to medication.

She also visits clinics and hospitals, assessing their health care systems and HIV management and helping them to improve in these departments where possible.

But that's not all. In 2016 when Right to Care was asked to support Zambia with its HIV programme, Turner assisted the country's ministry of health by assessing its paediatric and adolescent HIV

care in 21 hospitals and clinics and then advising them on how to improve. She is also involved in various other projects including researching an easier method of taking blood from children for HIV monitoring and a project with a pharmaceutical company which provides free third line HIV medication to other African countries for children and adolescents with drug-resistant HIV. This year she will be training doctors in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe as part of this project.

In the past, Turner has presented her research at the Zambian National HIV Conference as well as the USAID Best Practices for Paediatric HIV Conference in South Africa. She has also received a scholarship to present at the Global HIV Clinical Forum in Amsterdam later this year. Her goal is to remain in the public health field and look for innovative opportunities to improve the country's health care on a large scale. She is currently working towards attaining her master's in Public Health through UCT. "I have a huge amount of admiration for all the health care workers in our country — doctors, nurses and counsellors for example — as they are expected to know everything and work tirelessly in an overburdened, understaffed health system, often without any recognition other than being reprimanded or sued when they make a mistake."

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Supplied

Keaton Harris (23)

MBChB student, Stellenbosch University

Twitter: @KeatonHarris7

When Keaton Harris cried after finding out that he had not been accepted to study medicine, his mother (who is his best friend) had this to say to him: "One day you will see why God doesn't want you to study medicine now — but trust me when I say that one day you will." Her words proved prophetic. Harris studied pharmacy at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) instead and earned 24 distinctions during his degree. When he graduated — summa cum laude — he was named valedictorian, Top Pharmaceuticals

Student and Top All Rounder. He was also able to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor. Harris is currently studying medicine at Stellenbosch University.

But his has been a journey fraught with challenges. His mother, a single parent, struggled to make ends meet. Due to their financial circumstances, he had a preconceived idea that he was constantly being judged. He was forced to apply for financial aid at one stage and faced

financial exclusion during his second year. Luckily for him, the dean intervened and he was able to continue. He persevered, studying hard, and this paid off. Harris was awarded an Abe Bailey Travel Scholarship which saw him representing UWC on an all expenses paid trip to the United Kingdom in 2015 where he interacted with other young leaders from around the world. He is also one of 21 and the only South African out of 8 650 applicants who has been chosen for the Young Sustainable Impact 2018 intake. The project groups teams of three from around the world together and tasks them with solving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

These days Harris draws strength and inspiration from his past. Some day he'd like to establish a bursary fund for people who want to study medicine. "Having gone through the struggles of wondering whether there will be food on the table that night has sensitised me to the daily struggles that many South Africans face. We always need to remind ourselves that everyone is fighting their own personal battles — which we may know nothing of. Remaining open-minded and showing everyone you interact with respect and integrity are pillars that have stemmed from the experiences I have had in my childhood. These pillars I will take with me, along with a feeling of beneficence, as I traverse into my next journey."

— Fatima Asmal

Dr Boitumelo Phakathi (33)

Specialist surgeon and consultant, Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital Breast Unit

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/boitumelo.phakathi.1>

In 2014, Dr Boitumelo Phakathi was the youngest surgeon in the country at the age of 29.

"I was initially told I wasn't going to last longer than three months in surgery, a then male-dominated speciality," Phakathi says. Surpassing the expected period, and at that age, motivated her and reaffirmed that you can achieve anything the mind conceives despite the limitations set by those around you.

Being among few female surgeons at the time and overcoming the challenges of being a woman in a male-dominated field led Phakathi to realise the responsibility she had to ensure that female surgeons after her are supported and mentored to fast-track their success.

Which is why she started the Boitumelo Phakathi Foundation, which focuses on career advancement and career

development for youth in rural areas.

Born and raised in the North West village of Taung, Phakathi describes herself as a "humble, smart and ambitious young woman who has a steadfast faith in God of impossibilities".

The 33-year-old is in the process of completing her PhD in the molecular biology of breast cancer and HIV. She says breast cancer and HIV are both burning issues in women's health in our time but not a lot is understood and known about these two diseases — especially when they co-exist.

Beyond her PhD, Phakathi is working towards her professorship by improving her teaching profile, research and polishing up her leadership skills to prepare her for her ultimate goal of being a vice chancellor some day. She currently lectures, publishes and supervises master's students at Wits University.



Photo: Supplied

Among her numerous pursuits, Phakathi is also a wife and a mother. About keeping the balance, she says being able to prioritise, as difficult as it seems, and remembering the importance of placing God and family before her career has helped her a lot. The unwavering support and encouragement from her husband and her helper who helps take care of her children and home make it possible for her to pursue all that she is doing. She is also truly thankful for the tremendous support she receives from the hospital she works for.

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Jason A Gillman

Kim Buchholtz (35)

Physiotherapy lecturer, University of Cape Town

Twitter: @kimbphysio

At the age of just 26 Kim Buchholtz started a private physiotherapy practice in Plumstead, Cape Town. She completed a postgraduate certificate in Orthopaedic Manipulative Physiotherapy in the same year, following this up with a Master of Philosophy in Sports Physiotherapy in 2013 — this in spite of the fact that she was working full-time, running her practice and managing a medical centre with four tenants.

At around the same time, Buchholtz began assisting the University of Cape Town (UCT) with the supervision of students in clinics around the city, and lecturing on an ad hoc basis. It's difficult to believe that she wasn't even sure that she wanted to study physiotherapy to begin with.

"After taking a gap year in the UK, I decided to apply for physiotherapy and believed that if it was the right thing for me, then I would be accepted," she says. "I still wasn't 100% sure that it was what I wanted when I got accepted, but by my third year, when we were doing mostly clinical training, I was loving it."

Buchholtz grew up in a physically active family (her father completed 32 Argus Cycle Tours) and is a cyclist and runner herself. So it is no surprise that her focus soon turned to sports physiotherapy; and she has been the course

convener for a one-year postgraduate certificate in Sports Physiotherapy on behalf of the South African Society of Physiotherapy since 2014.

In the same year, she worked as a voluntary physiotherapist for the Australian blind cricket team during the T20 World Cup hosted in Cape Town, and was subsequently selected as their travelling head physiotherapist for the world cups in India in 2017 and in the United Arab Emirates this year.

"It was an amazing experience and it opened my eyes to how people with disability are able to perform at such a high level of sport," she says. Buchholtz began working as part-time lecturer at UCT in 2016 and decided to sell her practice earlier this year to focus on academics. She is concurrently working on her PhD, in which she is investigating the factors affecting injury in multi-stage mountain biking events.

"Moving into education has allowed me to help shape the future of the physiotherapists in South Africa and ensure that we are training competent, caring and well-balanced physiotherapists who can improve the quality of lives of people across South Africa," she says.

— Fatima Asmal

Michael Van Niekerk (28)

Medical doctor

Instagram: @Michaelvanniekerk

Michael van Niekerk is a committed advocate for health in South Africa and globally. He made the decision to become a doctor at a very young age, and by 16 he was an ambulance assistant, an opportunity that allowed him to experience death as a process and therefore mentally prepare himself for one of the most challenging aspects of being a doctor.

Van Niekerk has seen first-hand the effects of poverty on people's life chances, as well as how poverty impacts disease. His leadership potential was further honed by the University of the Free State's Leadership for Change Programme study abroad international programme, as it gives first-year students international exposure to top universities throughout the world,

with the aim of giving them the tools to experience models of integration across lines of culture, colour, and language and gender.

Van Niekerk is on the Samsa (South African Medical students Association) board of directors and has dedicated his time to activism in the medical space, often fighting for health and safety standards to be upheld in hospitals, pushing back against the bullying and intimidation of junior doctors and fighting against harsh working conditions that leave doctors overworked and with compromised cognitive functioning and personal health.

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

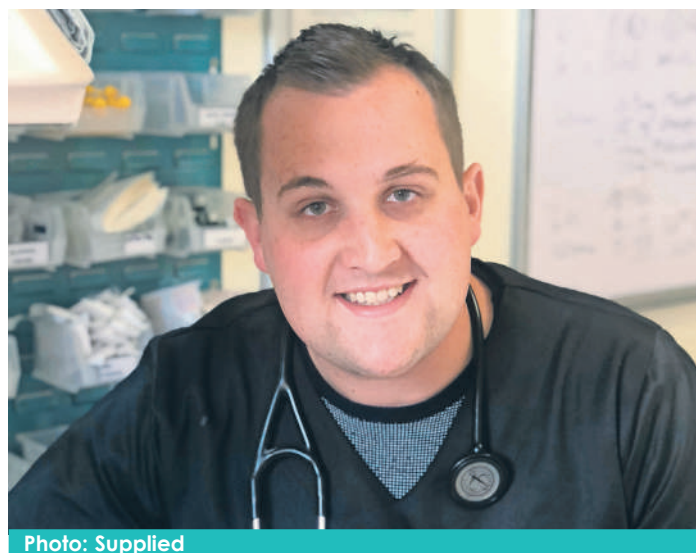


Photo: Supplied

Mvuwo Tshavhungwe (29)

PhD candidate in Neuroscience, University of Cape Town

Twitter: @mvuwoT

As a scientist, Mvuwo Tshavhungwe enjoys learning about old and new discoveries. "Scientific research enables me to contribute to the body of knowledge and trigger a rethink in an ancient disease that continues to kill many, especially in resource limited settings," she says.

Tshavhungwe is currently a PhD candidate in neuroscience at the University of Cape Town. She is researching paediatric tuberculous meningitis, the most lethal form of tuberculosis, which affects mainly children. Her research — which looks at the medication used to treat tuberculous meningitis in children and if enough is being delivered to the brain (where it is needed the most) — is being conducted under the wing of the Division of Neurosurgery at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. This, for her, is a dream come true.

Tshavhungwe lost her mother at the age of 14, and faced some financial difficulties thereafter. However, buoyed by the support of her family who encouraged her in her academic path, she forged ahead with pursuing her goals and snapped up a place she was offered on merit by the University of Limpopo. Medicine was her initial choice of profession but she has no regrets about opting for science instead.

"Medicine is a science and even though I do not have direct contact with the patient, research provides the platform to



Photo: Supplied

rethink patient treatment and help improve disease outcomes. I also trust that God, who orchestrates my life, will lead me to the next path."

She is passionate about serving deserving communities and volunteers her time to two projects: "Adopt a School," which provides grade eight and nine maths tutoring at a local school in Mowbray, Cape Town, and "Girls with Wings," which provides sanitary pads for homeless women.

Moving forward, she hopes to continue with her research, particularly in the clinical environment. "This gives me a sense of purpose — knowing that I can contribute to helping better patient treatment." Tshavhungwe has the following advice for historically disadvantaged young women who think they have no hope of creating a brighter future for themselves: "Do not limit yourselves based on your current situation or environment; work hard and doors of opportunity will open."

— Fatima Asmal

Dr Nandipha Magudumana (29)

Founder, Optimum Medical Solutions

Instagram: @nanzzee

"If you do what you love you will never have to work a day in your life," is the saying which inspired Dr Nandipha Magudumana to pursue a career in medical aesthetics.

"Medical aesthetics is a career path for people who are truly passionate about what they do, because you help people look and feel good about themselves," she explains. "Choosing a career where you can inspire confidence and happiness in others was what attracted me to this field."

Magudumana is the founder of Optimum Medical Aesthetics, a skincare and aesthetic clinic in Sandton that specialises in non-surgical treatments such as botox, hairline restoration and chemical peels. She also runs another business called VitaPush and co-owns Arum Holdings with two other women, focused on healthcare consultancy and IT services.

She grew up in Bizana, a small town in the Eastern Cape, and has wanted to be a doctor from the age of six. "My mother was in hospital for a while and I never understood the complexity of her condition at the time, and when I was around doctors I felt empowered, confident and fearless," she recalls.

After obtaining a BSc in Health Sciences from Wits University, she went on to study medicine, thereafter spending some time in the public health sphere. The transition from public health to entrepreneurship, while being a giant one, has helped enhance her personal



Photo: @photogeniustats

growth and inspire others to do the same. These days she is empowering hundreds of patients with confidence through her clinics.

"A lot of people lack the confidence to be their best selves because of minor or major physical attributes," she says. "Although aesthetic medicine procedures are typically elective, they provide solutions for these challenges and these procedures can significantly improve the quality of life, psychological wellbeing and the social functioning of a person." An NGO that provides healthcare and wellness programmes for the underprivileged is next on her agenda. "Nothing is more gratifying than helping others."

— Fatima Asmal



NYDA Chief Executive Officer Waseem Carrim is getting its finances back on track

Currently only 30 years old, Waseem Carrim is one of South Africa’s youngest-ever CEOs, bringing with him his belief in the current young generation. Carrim believes that our generation sees integration and globalisation not as threats but as opportunities for education, exploration, employment and exchange. This generation sees differences of pluralism and diversity not as a curse, but as a great gift. He believes that together as a nation we can achieve much change; he is confident the future is brighter than the past and that our best days are still ahead of us.

Long before he was appointed CEO of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) Carrim attended the University of Pretoria and received his BComm honours degree in Accounting Sciences in 2009. He began his career at the same university, spending a year as an academic article trainee, lecturing first to third-year students in accounting. He completed his article traineeship with KPMG and was admitted as a member of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (Saica) in 2013. Waseem also holds a master’s degree in Taxation from the University of Pretoria.

After completing his articles, Waseem joined KPMG’s department of professional practice, where he served as a specialist in public sector accounting and assurance matters and served on committees and initiatives related to the public sector. He also served on committees relating to social integration as well as driving transformation initiatives in the chartered accounting profession. He held a portfolio of audit clients, which he managed within the public sector space, one of which was the NYDA.

In 2016, he was named one of the Top 35 under-35 Chartered Accountants by Saica.

Carrim led the turnaround of the finance and supply chain management divisions that culminated in three clean audits and a fundamental reduction in irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

The NYDA has praised the CEO for the work he did turning around its finances. It said in a statement: “Mr Carrim has served as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for the NYDA since 2014. During this period, he has presided over the turnaround of the NYDA finances. The organisation has moved from a dire financial state to a viable one. Over the past three financial years, the NYDA has moved from an organisation characterised by wasteful and fruitless expenditure to the tune of R100-million to an organisation of clean audit opinion. In the last financial year, fruitless and wasteful expenditure amounted to R0.”

Chairperson Sifiso Mtsweni wants respect, teamwork and discipline to shine in the NYDA

Sifiso Tso Mtsweni was appointed by former President Jacob Zuma in May 2017 as the Executive Chairperson of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). Mtsweni is the third Chairperson of the NYDA. He has always been a youth activist and as a student, he was the President of the Student Representative Council at the then PE Technikon George campus and also led the South African Students Congress.

Mtsweni studied sports management, is a soccer enthusiast and owns a development soccer team. Mtsweni strongly believes that by getting the youth to participate in sports, they are learning life’s most valuable skills — discipline and teamwork.

Mtsweni serves on ANC Youth League national structures and ANC regional political structures.

He describes his leadership style as decisive, disciplined and honest. He uses his sporting background to get people to work as a team through his display of self-respect, respect for others and self-discipline.

Mtsweni admires those who inspire others with their own success. Mtsweni is inspired by Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu’s selflessness and courage during the 1976 uprising. He respects Nelson Mandela — the militant, radical freedom fighter who was willing to sacrifice everything in service of his vision of a better South Africa for all.



NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.



Motlatso Refilwe Rampedi (25)

PhD candidate (demography), Wits University

Twitter: @motlatso_ram2

Throughout her life Motlatso Rampedi has encountered young women who have had to delay their dreams of finishing school and seeking employment due to unplanned pregnancies. In fact, she herself was born when her mother was still a university student, but fortunately her grandmother took on the role of raising her.

Rampedi is also concerned about the fact that in unplanned pregnancies the mother-to-be is less likely to seek antenatal care, increasing the risk of a range of maternal and foetal complications. She has therefore made it her mission to empower young women with knowledge about the use of contraception.

While conducting research for her master's in Demography, she found that South African women do not use the methods of contraception which correspond with their childbearing intentions. This inspired her to initiate a project called "iLoveCondoms" which sees her conducting presentations about the various methods of contraception available, how to use them, their side effects, etc. These presentations also use storytelling and role play to demonstrate how young women can build their confidence to request family planning assistance at health centres and have discussions about contraception with their sexual partners.

"On several occasions, after these presentations,

the young women want to know more about whether the current contraceptive methods they are using are appropriate," she says. "This is encouraging because I am then able to refer them to health facilities, where they are better equipped to have conversations about contraception."

Until recently Rampedi worked as a health analyst at Genetic-Analytics, a Johannesburg-based consultancy firm, where her role included analysing evaluation outputs of health programmes in the sexual and reproductive health and HIV fields. She resigned earlier this year to pursue a PhD in Demography and Population Studies at Wits University. Unsurprisingly, her thesis is focused on understanding the determinants of contraception discontinuation among young women with recent disease diagnosis. She admits it is somewhat challenging discussing issues such as sex, contraception and pregnancy with women who are sometimes older than she is.

But this doesn't deter her from her goal: "Empowering young women about the use of contraception is an important way to ensure that women (particularly those in their adolescence) who want to avoid or delay pregnancy are able to do so, allowing them focus on other aspects of their life development," she says.

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Nicolette Comley-White (32)

Physiotherapy lecturer, Wits University

Nicolette Comley-White was drawn to the health sciences field, even as a child; she has always been fascinated by the idea of helping people to walk again after injury. Not surprisingly, she opted for physiotherapy as a career.

She is based at the physiotherapy department at Wits University, where she lectures undergraduate and postgraduate students. Last year her students nominated her for the best lecturer award in the faculty of health sciences, something she considers a great honour.

"I enjoy working with young adults as they are passionate and energetic and keep me on my toes," she says. "I work hard to make sure that I use my position as a lecturer to train and influence future health care providers to the best of my ability." Although she lectures in certain generic physiotherapy skills, her speciality is adult neurology, into which she has conducted extensive research. Comley-White has had the opportunity to present some of this research on local and international platforms and has also been published in various journals including the South African Journal of Physiotherapy.

She has worked clinically at public hospitals and continues to provide academic support and mentorship to clinicians and students working in the field of

neurology. She is busy with her PhD, the focus of which is the physical challenges experienced by adolescents infected with HIV. The study will explore the experiences of these individuals and assess the different areas in which they face challenges, for example, muscle strength, fatigue and pain. Based on her findings, she hopes to develop a model of care to propose holistic services for HIV infected adolescents.

A mother of two, Comley-White is also passionate about striking a healthy work-life balance. Together with her husband, she is active in the field of marriage preparation for engaged couples within her community. "We believe that a solid marriage helps to build stronger family units and thus positively influences the future generations of South Africa," she says. She hopes to complete her PhD in the next few years, thereby advancing herself as a lecturer, as well as a researcher, growing her portfolio of international conference presentations and article publications, and giving a global voice to the area of adolescents and HIV.

"I hope that the career that I build inspires my children to see the position that women can hold in science and research."

— Fatima Asmal

Nikhat Hoosen (34)

Researcher, Centre for Infectious Disease and Epidemiology Research, University of Cape Town

Twitter: @nikhat1

Nikhat Hoosen already holds three degrees — a BSc in Biological Sciences, a BSc honours in Biological Sciences and an MSc in Molecular Biology and Systematics — all from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She is currently completing a master's in Public Health, specialising in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Cape Town, after which she aims to head straight into her PhD.

Hoosen draws much of her strength from her childhood, during which she was surrounded by the strength and resilience of two women, her mother and her aunt. "Every day I watched them face and handle life's small and big hurdles by themselves and it taught me independence, self-sufficiency and that we are definitely not the weaker sex. Also that while we should take care to respect and treat others well, our validation does not come from others."

Hoosen went on to become the first person in her family to attain a bachelor's degree. She has worked at several leading South African research organisations including the Medical Research Council and the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa and is a researcher

at the Centre for Infectious Disease and Epidemiology Research at UCT. She is passionate about researching the maternal health of pregnant and postpartum women. For her MA and her future PhD she is looking at postpartum service provision; its adequacies and gaps.

"The mother's physical, emotional and mental needs at this time are critical but often get overlooked in the midst of the responsibilities of new parenthood," she says. "I want to see if we can find out what works, what doesn't and what can be improved for postpartum mothers."

She loves every minute of what she does. "I truly, truly learn more every day," she says. "Research is a mix of personal stories, hard science, medicine and that high school math everyone said I'd never use. You realise again and again patients have sometimes innovative ideas for their care based on their experiences — the key is that we need to listen to them — and then figure out how we can integrate what is needed and plausible into what exists to shape something better."

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Supplied



Dr Nirvana Morgan (34)

PhD student, lecturer, psychiatrist and researcher, Department of Psychiatry, Wits University

Growing up Dr Nirvana Morgan was very close to a person with a mental illness. This made her question why people with mental illnesses are stigmatised and also sparked an interest in psychiatry. After completing her medical degree at Wits University in 2007, she chose to specialise in the field.

Her focus has since turned to addiction psychiatry and the surge of nyaope use in South African townships. "During my psychiatry training I worked in a rehabilitation facility that treated people with addiction and mental illness," she explains. "During this time many of my preconceived ideas and judgements about addicts were challenged and I found the work incredibly rewarding. I also chose to focus on this area, as there is a dire need for more medical professionals in this field."

Last year Morgan was awarded the Cassandra Miller-Butterworth Fellowship, which allows her to investigate the current nyaope pandemic as a PhD student. For this she has conducted detailed assessments of 300 nyaope users as they entered rehabilitation facilities, and she is now following up on them three months and nine months after leaving treatment. She was also awarded a National Research Foundation Thuthuka grant that further supports her studies and allows for interdisciplinary collaboration.

She is the co-chair of an international Network of Early Career Addiction Medicine Professionals, which aims to empower and



Photo: Supplied

support early career professionals working in the field of addiction medicine. She has spoken at forums at the World Health Organisation — where she highlighted the challenges faced by health care professionals working in the field of addiction medicine in South Africa and the need for more training at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels — as well as in Abu Dhabi. Later this year, she will be speaking at the International Psychiatry Congresses in Egypt and Mexico.

The sky is the limit for Morgan, whose aim is to continue to fight for better prevention, care and treatment for those affected by addiction. She has the following advice for aspiring psychiatrists: "Psychiatrists have the privileged position of being allowed into people's inner world; respect this space and be inspired by it. Pursue your career with a hunger to see a better life for your patients."

— Fatima Asmal

Dr Nkateko Mnisi (28)

National Council member, JUDASA

Twitter: @katsmnisi

Nkateko Mnisi chose to study medicine because of her passion for working with people. "It allows me to interact with people from different walks of life — crossing barriers like age, race, gender and occupation. And it would also allow for me to make an invaluable impact on people's lives — because the power of healing through medicine is indescribable." However, while pursuing her two-year medical internship after graduating from the University of Cape Town a few years ago, she felt perturbed by the many flaws she noticed in the health system as well as the injustices she felt interns faced.

"I began to connect with my colleagues with regard to these issues and ways in which to address and possibly solve them," she says. After she proved instrumental in helping to resolve many of these issues, Mnisi was elected to represent doctors at her institution in the Junior Doctors Association of South Africa (Judasa). From there she progressed to representing her province, before finally becoming part of the Judasa National Council.

Some of the issues she is involved in addressing on behalf of junior doctors are: non-payments, non-placements and working and housing conditions. Her advocacy in this regard has involved finding solutions, strategising and taking the issues to the



Photo: Supplied

relevant structures, as well as directing colleagues to the relevant people within Judasa. Through Judasa Mnisi has also been involved in implementing various other projects aimed at improving healthcare services, including visiting rural and urban hospitals in Limpopo to document the prevailing conditions with the aim of helping to improve them.

Another project involves working with other organisations to provide career guidance and advice on pregnancy to teens. Together with her team, she also implemented a male medical circumcision drive in collaboration with different organisations and health institutions in Limpopo. This project afforded junior doctors an opportunity to learn about and be involved in providing safe, free circumcision services and health education to communities.

Mnisi is currently a medical officer at Mankweng Hospital. "I firmly believe that access to adequate healthcare is a right and not a privilege," she says.

— Fatima Asmal

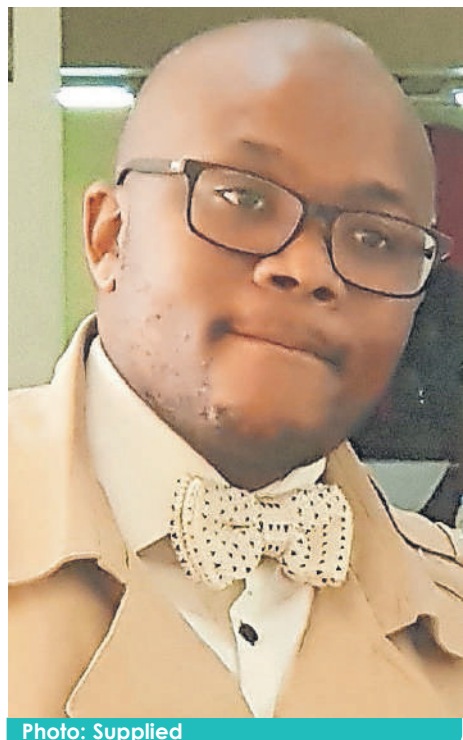


Photo: Supplied

Paul Letsatsi Potsane (30)

Provincial HIV prevention co-ordinator, Right to Care

Twitter: @PaulPotsane

During the days of Aids denialism, Paul Letsatsi Potsane watched his aunt suffer with HIV. "Being a black woman with no source of income, she could not access antiretroviral treatment from private pharmacies," he recalls. To Potsane his aunt represents the thousands of marginalised people who have limited access to the healthcare that they need. She was eventually able to access treatment and is still alive today. "I want marginalised people living with the virus to stay alive just like her," he says.

In his role as the head of the HIV prevention programme for Right to Care, a nongovernmental organisation, Paul is realising that ambition by creating and implementing strategies to increase access to HIV healthcare services for vulnerable and stigmatised groups such as sex workers and the LGBTIQ community. In the two years since he has occupied this position he has been able to reach patients who were previously unable to access healthcare services.

"Marginalised groups are people too, and they are more vulnerable to the virus because, for instance, the LGBTIQ community are discriminated against for their sexual orientation, and there are stigmas attached to their HIV status," he says. "Creating safe spaces for them to access HIV treatment and prevention tools like condoms

helps reduce the load on the health system and takes the country closer to reaching our zero infections [by] 2020 goals."

Potsane grew up in Soweto where the only role models he could aspire to emulate were musicians and soccer players — until a case of food poisoning saw him being admitted to the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. "There I was exposed to the health profession. The treatment and warmth that I received ignited a fire and love for being a doctor or nurse," he says. Nine family members depended on his parents' salaries, meaning that he could not afford medical school fees, and instead opted for nursing, his second choice.

He is the deputy regional secretary of the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa. In this role, he advocates for the rights of nurses and empowers them through organising and facilitating workshops that help enhance their skills. His aim is essentially to restore dignity to the image of the nursing profession. Potsane also holds an MBA in Leadership and Project Management, and is currently studying towards a master's in Public Health at the University of Johannesburg.

— Fatima Asmal

Sanele Lukhele (26)

Nurse and lecturer, University of Johannesburg

Twitter: @saniegambu

Nursing is in Sanele Lukhele's blood. Her grandmother is a retired theatre nurse. One of her aunts is a neonatal critical care nurse specialist and the other is a paediatric nurse. "It therefore did not come as a surprise when I decided that I would like to follow suit," she says. "I was very inspired by their passion for nursing and the stories they shared about their experiences of working with patients."

Lukhele recalls with great fondness the first Friday in 2012 when she finally went to care for patients as a trainee nurse. To her, the hospital felt just like home, and she passionately embraced her studies.

During her years as an undergraduate at the University of Pretoria she was involved in various leadership structures within the faculty of health sciences. In 2014 she was elected the first black chairperson of the nursing sciences house committee. A year later, she co-founded the South African Nursing Students' Association, a nonprofit organisation aimed at uniting nursing students across the country in order to improve the image of nursing in South Africa. The organisation also encourages research outputs from young nurses in order to implement evidence-based nursing practice and foster a culture of learning and continuous professional development amongst young nurses.

In the same year Lukhele was invited to join the Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society of Nursing, which is made up of 135 000 nurse leaders from around the world. She has just been selected to be Africa's sole representative in Sigma's Next Generation eight-member task force for the next two years. The task force will tackle the goal of promoting the recruitment, retention and engagement of new members who will serve as next generation leaders.

She was recently appointed as a lecturer in the University of Johannesburg's nursing department. She is simultaneously pursuing a master's degree in midwifery, her passion, via the University of Pretoria. "I love births," she says. "I love uniting healthy babies with their families. I love that moment of relief and excitement when a baby is born and we all shout joyfully 'Congratulations' to the mom and dad."

For Lukhele, nurses constitute the eyes, hands and feet of a multidisciplinary team: "When the hospital corridors are quiet and all the other professionals have left to go and be with their families, it is the nurse who stays behind and burns the midnight oil."

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Supplied



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Health

Dr Thandeka Ngcobo (25)

Doctor, Mafikeng Provincial Hospital

Twitter: DrTeedkfuze

Dr Thandeka Ngcobo is a medical intern doctor at Mafikeng Provincial Hospital, an executive board member at the Global Youth Efficiency Foundation, and a corporate affairs officer at Ngcobo Empire.

She hails from a small village called Hluthankungu in KwaZulu-Natal. She fought hard to achieve in spite of the difficulties life threw her way. Ngcobo wanted to be a doctor from a young age, but found out she was pregnant while still in her teens. She still managed to complete her matric the same year and achieve results that put her in the top 10 students for the region. She went to university and completed her first year, even though she gave birth that same year. With this level of determination it should come as little surprise that she achieved her qualification and became a vocal advocate for young girls and preventing teenage pregnancy.

"I lost my niece when she was only five; the doctors said there was nothing they could do," says Ngcobo. "This inspired me to achieve my dream of becoming a doctor. I felt that if I joined the medical field I could make a difference and improve the quality of healthcare, especially in rural areas."

Coming from a disadvantaged family and rural area meant that Ngcobo had to relocate from her village to a school in a Durban township. When she found out she was pregnant it never crossed her mind to give up.

"I was so disappointed in myself and had no idea how I would face my family, who had sacrificed and invested so much in me," she says. "Giving up was not an option."



Photo: Donrxbil

As much as my mother was disappointed about the pregnancy, she was more worried about what would happen to my studies at medical school. I remember her asking me whether pregnant students were even allowed to study medicine. She agreed to look after my baby while I went back to carry on with my studies."

Ngcobo's mother is her heroine. She could have told her to stay home and raise her daughter, but instead she gave Ngcobo the chance to thrive. And thrive she did. Today she is set to specialise in paediatrics to ensure the children of South Africa are cared for.

— Tamsin Oxford

Stephanie Redinger (29)

Occupational therapist, MA student and author

Twitter: @Steph_Redinger

Stephanie Redinger is a postgraduate student studying her master's in Medical Science in Paediatrics at the University of Witwatersrand. What makes her stand out, however, is that she was the lead author on the publication of a journal article — an outstanding achievement for a master's student. Passionate about her research and maternal perinatal mental health and child development, Redinger is a force for change in South Africa.

"I began my career as an occupational therapist at a hospital in rural KwaZulu-Natal in 2013," says Redinger. "I realised it was important for me to work in the helping professions and, as a young white South African, I felt a deep sense of responsibility to commit to a life of service to those less fortunate than I am. I saw mothers and babies in very vulnerable states and began to search for other ways to influence their care in South Africa."

In 2015, Redinger met Dr Tamsen Rochat, a research director at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) presenting research on interventions for mothers with antenatal depression, and she told Redinger to get in touch if she ever wanted to work in research. In 2016, Redinger did just that.

"By June I had registered for a master's in Medical Science in Paediatrics, focused on antenatal mental health, with Dr Rochat as my mentor and supervisor. I also applied for and was granted a master's scholarship from the Centre of Excellence in Human Development," she says. "In late 2016 I successfully applied for my first grant with Dr Rochat for funding to evaluate participants' perceptions of the integration of HIV services



Photo: Supplied

and the Care for Child Development (CCD) intervention in Malawi. We were awarded the grant."

In 2017 Redinger published her first author publication using her master's research results in the Journal of the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease, and was selected to present a paper at the 2017 DOHaD World Congress in Rotterdam. She also successfully applied for a junior researcher role in the Human and Social Science Research Programme at the HSRC.

— Tamsin Oxford

Stephanie de Rapper (30)

Lecturer, department of pharmacy and pharmacology, Wits University

Twitter: @RapperStephanie

Stephanie de Rapper is an academic at the department of pharmacy and pharmacology at Wits and has a reputation for hard work and inspiring others. She co-developed an initiative known as INVEST — a pharmacy career mentorship programme that exposes undergraduate students to different career choices. She also won the Faculty Mentorship Award 2017, joined the Young Pharmacists Group of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa as a member of the steering committee, and targets young girls in underprivileged societies to achieve their potential. It's a mouthful, but then so is her commitment to changing the lives of others through her career.

"During my undergraduate studies I was afforded the opportunity to do research under the supervision of a leading female academic, Professor Sandy van Vuuren," says de Rapper. "It was one of those 'stars have aligned' opportunities that I will always be grateful for. I completed my master's in 2013, then went on to join the University of the Witwatersrand and registered for my PhD."

In the years de Rapper has been in academia she has presented at a number of conferences, including the most recent conference hosted in Bonn, Germany, in which she presented on the concepts of synergy among natural products. She has published in peer-reviewed journals and continues to aim to improve on her understanding of natural products and their collective traditional use.

"I have a deep and profound love for my profession and all those who work



Photo: Sandy van Vuuren

within it. In my final undergraduate year, I was awarded the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa Southern Gauteng Branch Award for commitment to the profession," she says. "On returning to the university in the capacity of staff rather than student, I hoped that I would inspire my students to feel the same immense love and dedication to the promotion of pharmacy. In order to cement this, my colleague, Rubina Shaikh, and I developed INVEST."

For de Rapper it is her students, the profession, academic research and the promotion of all three that are her greatest joy. She is constantly inspired by her career choice and the opportunities she has to use her career to help others achieve their own professional dreams.

— Tamsin Oxford

Simphiwe Zanele Mthimunya (28)

Phlebotomist

Twitter: @Barbiemthimunya

Simphiwe Zanele Mthimunya is a phlebotomist who has already been recognised in her field as excelling in her line of work and her commitment. She was the first black woman to receive the award for Excellence in Phlebotomy by the Society of Medical Technologists in South Africa (SMLTSA) Congress, and is set to be a guest speaker at the SMLTSA conferences until 2020.

"I specialise in blood collections for laboratory testing and pathology," says Mthimunya. "I believe that women are more than capable of building our own empires, we can change the world. I am not only a qualified phlebotomist and Unisa psychology student, but a businesswoman — I own my own beauty bar in Port Elizabeth called Glamspot Emporium."

Mthimunya plans to open up her own psychology practice while simultaneously franchising her business and opening an education foundation that will cater for at least 100 students. Her simple goal? To be as influential as possible.

"The best method for achieving success is to believe in yourself," she says. "It was hard at first and I didn't know how I was going to make it, but thanks to self-trust and self-belief, I managed to beat the odds. Life is challenging and hard, but it hasn't stopped me from chasing my dreams."

After completing her studies Mthimunya realised that there was a need to help and empower other people who wanted to achieve their dreams. She met with a team who shared her vision, but finding funding was close to impossible. Undeterred, she has instead created Role Model Luncheons that are self-funded, but motivate and inspire people to take control of their lives.

"The little you have can make a huge

difference to someone else; in the past three years we've helped four people further their careers, and 80% of those who've attended our luncheons are now successful business owners," she concludes. "You don't need to be a millionaire to make change a reality."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: RSP Photography

The Hogan Lovells logo is displayed in a green square. It consists of the words "Hogan" and "Lovells" stacked vertically in a black, serif typeface.

Hogan
Lovells

A large, stylized graphic of a white envelope is shown, tilted diagonally. The top flap of the envelope is open, revealing a purple interior. The purple surface is decorated with numerous black stars of varying sizes. A string of small, warm-white lights is draped across the top of the stars. The envelope is set against a background of overlapping white and green geometric shapes.

Rising Star

At Hogan Lovells, we nurture young talent
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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Justice & Law

Bryce Wray (30)

Law researcher and clerk, Constitutional Court

Twitter: @BryceWray

Bryce Wray completed his legal undergraduate studies at Wits University before working for six years at Hogan Lovells, a large commercial law firm, where he was promoted to senior associate. There, he worked in the commercial litigation team specialising in large-scale commercial disputes where he took the lead in many matters and assisted the lead partner on some disputes. As a senior associate, he was tasked with supervising candidate attorneys and associates. He knew that as a white male South African in an already unequal patriarchal industry the role came with the responsibility to help transform and change attitudes and perspectives to make the industry more equal. He took very seriously the task of instilling in junior lawyers the attitude that every member of the team is instrumental in finding legal solutions for the client, that all views and team members are equally valuable and that being a junior lawyer carries just as much responsibility to provide clients with the means to access to justice as a senior lawyer.

He was a consistent volunteer of the Teddy Bear Clinic Court Preparation Programme — an initiative where lawyers from Hogan Lovells assist child victims of sexual assault to prepare and give evidence



Photo: Brynne Guthrie

in court against perpetrators of the sexual assault. It was here he realised his responsibility to use the privileges he has been afforded to assist South Africa to transform by helping those who still feel the effects of oppression that plagued this country for so long.

At this stage in his career, he began pondering where to pursue his studies, and within a year he was awarded a Chevening Scholarship to study human rights in Scotland. He says the UK is grappling with human rights law in many different ways and he was enlightened by being in such an environment and learning from various professionals, NGOs and academics. While at Hogan Lovells he was also involved in administrative, constitutional, media and access to information disputes. By the time he left, a public law and media practice was starting to grow bigger in the firm, which is something he's particularly proud of. This is why he decided to complete his dissertation looking at the protection of journalistic sources in the digital age, a study that involved a comparative analysis of threats and protections in the UK and South Africa.

Wray is currently clerking at the Constitutional Court for Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo. "Working at the Constitutional Court with the judges and other clerks is an incredible and life-changing experience," he says. Although he's achieved a lot for someone his age, Bryce is just getting started. When he is finished at the Constitutional Court he plans on joining the Bar to investigate and plead cases on behalf of those who are confronted with human rights injustices in South Africa.

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: TumboScott

Deborah Mutemwa (27)

Director and co-founder, TumboScott

Instagram:
@iamdeborahmt

Deborah Mutemwa is the director and cofounder of an all-black, female- and youth-owned corporate and commercial legal consultancy which provides legal services to companies and individuals with a particular focus on small, medium and micro enterprises. After completing her LLB at the University of Johannesburg and LLM (which she passed with distinction) in business and human rights she joined Webber Wentzel, where she was the chairperson of the leadership network corporate social investment committee. In this role, she led a team that spearheaded Webber Wentzel entering into an agreement with the South

African Institute of Chartered Accountants (Saica) enterprise development programme, in terms of which candidate attorneys from the firm would give free legal training classes to entrepreneurs in Saica's programme. She also has a diploma from the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute with a focus on the African political economy.

In 2017, she went on to Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr where she worked in public law and litigation before joining the Constitutional Court, clerking under Justice Khampepe. She also worked with the Women's Empowerment Network of South Africa (Wenosa) and handled its sponsorship portfolio, sourcing funding and spaces for Wenosa's workshop for women in business as well as resources like sanitary pads for annual girls' school visits by Wenosa.

After working at top legal commercial firms and then doing a life-changing stint at the Constitutional Court, Mutemwa developed a passion for business and human rights and how the two can work together to create a better life for ordinary South Africans. This is how she founded TumboScott. Through TumboScott she seeks to use her legal experience and expertise to reach big and small clients alike and level the playing field by giving small businesses access to high quality legal services to give them a competitive advantage in operating within the legal commercial landscape. "My biggest struggle was finding a seat at tables of relevance, where my presence is welcomed, my intelligence seen as valid and my contributions valued," she says. But she's found sponsors and mentors who are willing and able to invite young women like her to tables of relevance.

— Welcome Lishivha

Anjuli Maistry (31)

Senior attorney, Centre for Child Law

Twitter: @anjulileila

Having always been guided by a strong sense of what is fair and just from a young age, Anjuli Maistry has gone to become one of South Africa's most valuable lawyers whose efforts are geared towards the most vulnerable members of our society and the future of our country — children.

After spending seven years working closely with refugees, advising and assisting them on breaches of their rights in South Africa (which included complaints related to hate speech, birth registration, statelessness and social services) she knew for sure that human rights was the sector she would be applying her legal expertise to. "My early experiences of consulting with refugees, evictees and land claimants confirmed my commitment to driving social change and justice in South Africa," she says.

Currently working at the Centre for Child Law, she has previously worked for Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), Women's Legal Centre and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). She completed her articles at the LRC where she trained under lawyers with extensive experience in constitutional rights litigation.

Whilst working at LHR, Maistry focussed on refugee rights and environmental rights. As an environmental rights lawyer, she worked to ensure respect for the rights of communities affected by mining, which included access to water and clean air. At the SAHRC, she investigated complaints of human rights violations by members of the public.

At the Centre for Child Law she plans to continue work that addresses the legal loopholes that prevent the disadvantaged access to documentation and education. She's currently litigating strategically to ensure that children's constitutional rights are protected and promoted.

Like many young women, Maistry says it has always been difficult to have her voice or ideas heard, but pressing against this has made her more assertive. She feels very strongly about using human rights as a vehicle to make the lives of others better. "It is only the accident of birth that means I am the one assisting rather than being assisted," she says. The human rights sector has changed her life far more than it has of those whose cases she's been involved in solving.

She has a sizeable book collection which she enjoys reading from in her spare time. She also enjoys eating out at different Johannesburg restaurants or when traveling, which she also enjoys.

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Thomas Reisenberger



Photo: Dominique Sindayiganza

Dr Joel Modiri (26)

Lecturer, Department of Jurisprudence, University of Pretoria

Twitter: @iLuvUJuju

At the age of just 26, Joel Malesela Modiri has obtained a PhD in law and is a lecturer in the department of jurisprudence at the University of Pretoria. He has over 15 publications in academic journals under his name. He has edited books and delivered papers internationally and nationally.

He serves on the Section 11 Equality Committee of the South African Human Rights Commission and was selected as an Inaugural Fellow for the Atlantic Fellowship for Racial Equity (housed at Columbia University, New York, and the Nelson Mandela Foundation) and is regularly voted by students as Best Lecturer.

His doctoral thesis examined the philosophy of Black Consciousness that Steve Biko articulated in his life and writings which represents a political philosophy of justice and a critical approach to law and jurisprudence. He teaches jurisprudence and legal philosophy at the University of Pretoria where he is among one of the first scholars to introduce critical race theory in the university. "My work has had to contend not only with the conceptual and demographic whiteness of

the legal academy but also with conservative and liberal insistences on colour-blindness, race denialism and blatant racism," he says. This underpins his desire to see the legal academy contemplate possibilities for liberation, decolonisation and historical justice in South Africa and beyond.

Amid the challenges of introducing ideas of Black Consciousness in a legal academy that's also steeped in a culture of whiteness, Modiri has also had to overcome the racism present in his day-to-day life. "Like all Black people, I regularly encounter racial condescension and have to deal with largely untransformed institutional spaces.

Like all young people, the pressure to be the best or the first at something can weigh heavily on one's self-esteem. Building community and collaborating with comrades and friends has been my way of making sure that both the habitual racism of South Africa and the unrealistic expectations of quick success do not become debilitating and demoralising," he says.

While in school, Modiri participated in debating and public speaking and took an interest in world history and politics. His dream of being a hotshot lawyer quickly gave way to his intellectual interests in legal and political theory where's now excited to be teaching.

"What I find both challenging and exciting about working in higher education today is the responsibility of delivering bold, conscientious and educated citizens who can make a positive difference to our society and to the world."

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Supplied

Itumeleng Mukhovha (29)

Associate, Baker & McKenzie International

Itumeleng Mukhovha is a corporate attorney in Baker & McKenzie International's mergers and acquisitions practice group in Johannesburg. Her practice areas include mergers and acquisitions, private equity, corporate reorganisations and restructurings and mining transactions. She's currently volunteering at the pro bono office at the Johannesburg high court where she helps solve South Africa's developmental challenges by promoting constitutional values and facilitating access to justice for disadvantaged and indigent members of society. In

her spare time she also tutors primary school learners from disadvantaged schools in Khatlehong.

She is a member of the Baker & McKenzie bursary committee, a role that speaks dearly to her passion for education widening access to it. "I am passionate about education and access to justice because I believe that effective access to justice is the most basic human right in South Africa's legal system because it ... guarantees people the constitutional rights which are accorded to every member of our society".

She obtained her LLB and LLM degrees from the University of Johannesburg and has gone on to complete short courses like the African Political Economy: The African Economic challenge from the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute, a short course certificate on construction law from BCA Training and a short course certificate on public international law from the Hague Academy of International Law, Netherlands.

She's completed a number of research fellowship programmes at various international institutions, including Pembroke College, Cambridge University and the Hague Academy of International Law. "My formal education and training experiences, both locally and internationally, have opened up new opportunities for me," she says. Mukhovha has managed to maintain a highly demanding career while pursuing volunteering activities and active involvement in nonprofit and community-based initiatives in an attempt to provide solutions to some of the economic challenges facing South Africa.

— Welcome Lishivha

Kayaletu Tshiki (28)

Lecturer, Fort Hare University

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/khaya-tshiki-a5b6a636/>

Growing up, Kayaletu Tshiki was constantly chased away from school for not paying school fees or not having the full school uniform. While in school, he began to work as a gardener to raise enough money and help with school necessities such as stationery and uniforms. "For me the biggest struggle was access to resources, especially coming from a poor background. I knew I had to work three times more than my peer born on the other side of town to access university," which he did. Currently lecturing law at the University of Fort Hare, Tshiki graduated from the University of Sussex in 2014 with an LLM (cum laude) after being awarded the Mandela Scholarship. After completing his LLM, he established his own law firm, Tshiki and Associates, where he is a director.

Through his firm, he's been able to develop the skills of new graduates and offer employment to the youth. Tshiki has dedicated his legal career to serving poor communities to access law and justice. Starting from his days as a candidate attorney at the Rhodes University law clinic where he was part of a team advocating for the rights of the marginalised groups — ranging from the aged, abused women, farm workers and vulnerable employees who were exploited by their employers — to the work he's currently doing with his own law firm. The firm has partnerships with several NGOs in the Eastern Cape which they provide pro bono legal services to in certain public interest cases. The firm also provides free legal training on constitutional rights, wills and estate planning.

Tshiki is part of a team that founded the Entrepreneur In Me network which creates a platform for young entrepreneurs by connecting them with established business leaders and potential funders. He also co-founded Future Shapers, a youth-led career planning and guidance initiative for students in public schools. He was chosen as a Mandela Washington Fellow for 2017 and is a member of Discovery Legal Service Company, a legal insurance company providing tailor-made insurances solutions for low-income earners within the Eastern Cape. "My continued sense of discomfort on issues pertaining to lack of access to resources is the fuel that has ignited in me the fire to do something about my condition, my community and ultimately my country."

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Supplied

Jason Olifant (34)

Senior legal counsel, MultiChoice

Twitter: @JasonC100

Jason works as senior legal counsel at MultiChoice where he oversees the drafting and negotiating of contracts across the entire business. He considers this an exciting part of his daily job, given the volatile nature of the technological sector he's in. Among other things, he deals with litigation, assists with compliance within the group and works with outside counsel on specialised matters related to the South African arm of the business. "There are a few challenges when negotiating with multinationals from other countries who are hard set against terms that are important to us, but the daily highlights outweigh those because the experience that comes with the constant learning is invaluable," he says.

He has two LLM degrees — one in labour law and another in commercial law, both obtained from the University of Johannesburg where he also completed his LLB and Higher Diploma in Tax Law. He's had the opportunity of walking the graduation stage twice in one ceremony: when he completed his LLM in labour law and his higher diploma, in record time and at the same time. He recently completed his PMD at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and has been accepted for an MBA.

"I don't think I would have the same free, expressive, open and analytical mindset had I not studied as far as I have," he says of his education, which he considers a "good foundation". His previous work experience includes Dimension Data, Schindlers Attorneys and the University of Johannesburg.

One of his biggest challenges is constantly having to prove himself and his worth in his industry and winning the respect of older, more seasoned counterparts. Some of his daily struggles as a lawyer include constant expectations to perform miracles in a short amount of time and the long hours — challenges he overcomes by ensuring to deliver excellence, always. It's these challenges that keep him growing, moving forward and gaining more knowledge.

Having never had a mentor or seeing the need for one growing up, Olifant has now realised the importance of having someone to talk to and discuss ideas with.

As a result, he's now a dedicated mentor in the MultiChoice graduate programme. "We are all still learning but it is a duty to share what you know to make it easier for those who still have to go through it."

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Sean Brand

Khuraisha Patel (25)

Senior researcher, Open Secrets

Khuraisha Patel is a human rights lawyer and legal researcher at the non-profit organisation Open Secrets. Open Secrets is an NGO that uses investigation, strategic litigation and advocacy to promote private sector accountability for human rights violations. Patel conducts legal research on, strategises around and uses legal and quasi-legal interventions to operationalise investigations on historic and contemporary domestic and transnational corporate economic crimes.

Before joining the organisation, she worked on research and litigation in areas of business and human rights, gender and access to information as a candidate attorney at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (Cals). She considers her involvement in South African social grant cases during her tenure at Cals great learning curves and worthwhile moments that have contributed to domestic jurisprudence and bettering the lives of many disenfranchised people.

Patel holds a LLB and an LLM from the University of Pretoria, specialising in human rights and democratisation in Africa. In 2015, she was an intern at the Refugee Law Project (RLP) at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. While there, she provided legal assistance to refugees and unaccompanied minors seeking asylum and resettlement. "The staff and clients at RLP have taught me the value of deferring to lived experience, the resilience and agency of people whose lives the system tries to reduce to a collection of papers and the importance of infusing kindness into your work," she says. It is an experience which emboldened her passion to engage with the law while using it to pursue justice.

Today, Patel continues to use the law to defend human rights at Open Secrets, where she is part of a legal project that tests the boundaries of an international legal mechanisms for corporate accountability that simultaneously compels alleged contributors to apartheid to confront the continuing harm arising from their conduct.

— Welcome Lishivha

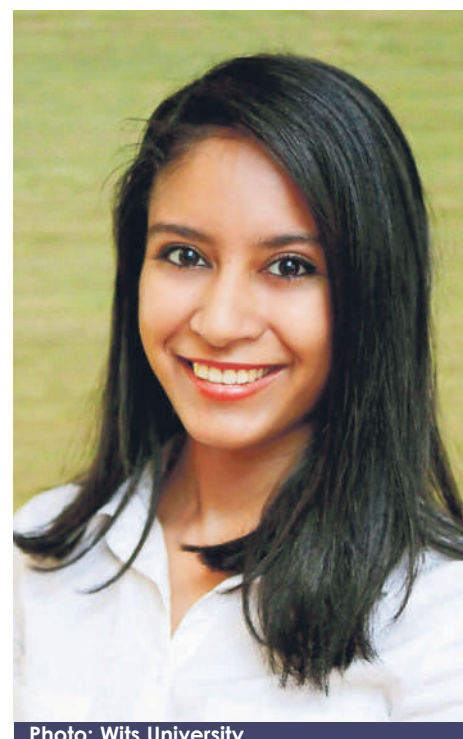


Photo: Wits University



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Justice & Law



Photo: Supplied

Letlhogonolo Mokgoroane (26)

**Policy and advocacy fellow,
Sonke Gender Justice**

Twitter: @mr_mokgoroane

Letlhogonolo Mokgoroane just completed his master's in law from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He earned his LLB from Stellenbosch University in 2013, serving as a tutor and an on-campus residence academic mentor. He made it to Stellenbosch through the "recruitment camp" programme, which was an initiative by the Centre for Prospective Students that chose top Black students around the country and recruited them to study at Stellenbosch. When he started at Stellenbosch he, along with other students in the programme, felt out of place. They all came together and through many conversations about their experiences, they drafted a document that would be the template for the First Generation camp. Today the First Generation camp continues to play a role in ensuring that first-generation university students are equipped with the necessary skills to survive and succeed at university.

Since then, Mokgoroane has completed his articles and was appointed as an associate at Bowmans in Johannesburg. He went on to clerk for Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga at the Constitutional Court before pursuing his studies at UCLA.

He will be working at Sonke Gender Justice from June 2018, where he will use his knowledge and experience with queer theory, Black feminist theory and critical race theory to challenge a system that continues to plague the marginalised bodies of queer people and Black womxn.

As an avid reader, Mokgoroane would read books and spend hours talking about them with his friend Dr Alma. They would go to book launches and bombard the authors with questions and in April 2017 they started *The Cheeky Natives*, a literary podcast that reviews arts and literature of black authors and creative people, which he says has been well received. "It has changed my worldview to become even more unapologetic and intentional in celebrating Black art and Black people," he says. Mokgoroane loves theatre, hiking, jazz, art and for him, twerking "is an act of revolution and self-care".

— Welcome Lishivha

Mokone Finger (26)

Associate, Clyde & Co South Africa

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mokone-finger-98905144/>

Born in the small town of Qwaqwa in the Free State and raised by his two older brothers after his mother passed away, Mokone Finger graduated with a law degree from the University of the Free State with a speciality in medical law.

At varsity, he was involved in public interest initiatives through the Golden Key International Honour Society (a society for top performing students) and for those efforts, was selected to participate in the Top 100 Brightest Young

Lauren Kohn Goldschmidt (35)

**Senior lecturer at UCT,
co-founder and director of
SALegalAdvice.com and expert
legal consultant**

Twitter: @SouthAfricanLegalAdvice

Lauren Kohn Goldschmidt is an admitted attorney, a business owner, a creative thinker and mother of two. She founded a legal advice website and is an expert legal consultant, a PhD candidate at Leiden University and a senior lecturer in public law at UCT.

Her enthusiasm for law and compassion for those on the margins of society inspired her to start her own company, SA Legal Advice which seeks to make legal services more affordable, accessible and expedient for the public through an online platform with well-qualified attorneys. "The idea for the business had its inception in 2013 when my husband and I (both lawyers) felt frustrated at the fact that much of what we do does not help the people who need it most given the structural constraints of how the legal fraternity operates," she says. They established the company after much frustration with the legal fraternity selling time at exorbitant rates to the relatively small portion of the population who can afford it. "I love knowing that my legal know-how is reaching the so-called 'man on the street' at the click of a button," she says.

Being the first in her immediate family to enjoy the benefit of tertiary education, she completed all three of her degrees on scholarships and



Photo: Andrew Goldschmidt

strongly values education. An article flowing from her thesis was published in the 2013 edition of the South African Law Journal which she considers a career highlight.

After completing her LLM, she took up a teaching position at the UCT law faculty in constitutional and administrative law, where she enjoys generous student support, demonstrated by her nomination for a UCT Distinguished Teacher Award. "I truly come alive when I teach. I don't take for granted what it means to inspire future lawyers, politicians, judges, thought leaders and activists of our country. I

wake up excited every day to do what I do," she says.

Although she loves what she does and is constantly in high spirits, she has also endured difficult challenges such as seeing her mother through cancer and losing her father in 2017 on the day of her baby shower. She says it's these challenges that inspire her to keep pushing. As a woman in an industry that is still dominated by men, she is also a strong believer in the importance of women's solidarity in striving to shatter glass ceilings.

— Welcome Lishivha

Liesl Muller (31)

**Attorney and head of the
Statelessness Project, Lawyers
for Human Rights**

Twitter: @lieslmul

Liesl Muller heads the Statelessness Project at Lawyers for Human Rights, one of the only projects of its kind in South Africa and the region. The project is geared towards helping people without a nationality and therefore without legal identity before the law to obtain recognition of their human rights. Stateless people are people who are not recognised as a citizen in any country in the world, a plight Muller considers one of the most horrific human rights abuses of our time as it is key to accessing every other human right. She has driven strategic litigation about changing laws which continue to entrench statelessness. She has also contributed to countless submissions to various national and regional bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review and the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. "One of my favourite moments was when my client got her birth certificate after months of legal battles and was able to go back to school in grade one — she is very intelligent," she says.

The work she does has been instrumental in attempting to combat statelessness in



Photo: Darell Lourens

South Africa. She's presented cases to the UN Committee on the Rights on the Child (CRC) and to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. She's also had her work used in reports by the CRC, the UN Human Rights Council and the high-level panel chaired by former president Kgalema Motlanthe.

She has produced films about her clients' circumstances as well as written and produced publications which highlight their circumstances and how to resolve the legal issues which prevent them from accessing a nationality.

She has also conducted extensive training to the Legal Aid board, South African Human Rights Commission, department of social development and the department of basic education on access to nationality. "One of the things I find most challenging about this field of work is when I am dealing with clients who are at the absolute end of their rope with no hope left, often suicidal. But I've constantly had to pull myself out of it to try again and continue fighting for my clients without losing steam," she says.

— Welcome Lishivha

Minds Summit.

Today he works as an associate at Clyde & Co in Johannesburg and outside of his day job, he's dedicated some of his time to educating law students from universities around the country on the importance of legal education and how the law can be incorporated into everyday life to deal with social ills of our country.

His primary areas of expertise include insurance law and reinsurance, corporate insurance and policy coverage, insurance litigation with a speciality in professional indemnity, commercial law, general litigation, medical law, health care, personal injury and medical negligence.

He is a co-director at Sinako We Can Movement, an initiative founded and co-directed by his friend Sinako Bomela. Through this initiative, they seek to teach and demystify the Constitutional Court's role in broader society through guided tours and

talks from various professionals including attorneys, legal advisors and judges. "I believe that whilst we grow and develop as people and professionals, it is important to impart legal knowledge, to train and to inspire other South Africans throughout our own journeys and successes," he says.

He is also involved in a fundraising project for cataract surgery and optometry-related care for the community of Lenasia South which was motivated by the need for specialised eye care for disadvantaged communities.

Some of his career highlights so far include writing academic and market-awareness articles for clients and publications. He is continuously involved in legal education and development, including attending the medico-legal summit hosted by health minister Aaron Motsoaledi.

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Liane Kim Photography



Photo: Lwandile Simoni

Nkcubeko Mbambisa (30)

Director, Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Inc.

Twitter: @nsm_qhuden

At only 30 years old, Nkcubeko Mbambisa is one of the youngest black Africans to hold the position of director of the top law firm Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr. His role as director means he is concerned with the continued success and sustenance of the business as a whole: becoming more involved in management decisions, procuring and securing workflow so that the business continues to generate profit. This is in addition to his role as a lawyer which involves the day-to-day management of client relations and producing quality work for clients.

Although he considers being appointed a director a huge achievement, he considers the level of work that he does now

to be a bigger achievement and believes there's so much more to learn.

His technical know-how means he works on the most complex transactions and cases with relative ease. Through achieving the expert technical knowledge in his competitive line of work, he's earned the appreciation and admiration of fellow colleagues and clients.

After being admitted as an attorney in 2012, it took him just six years to achieve the pinnacle of directorship which he considers a natural progression because he enjoys what he does and "giving it my all comes easily". It was being eager to learn and take on the most complex challenges that honed his skills and earned him respect amongst his colleagues.

He completed his LLB degree in 2010 at the University of the Western Cape. Coming from the Eastern Cape and having a rural upbringing and education, his hard work and dedication have set him apart in the legal field in a very short space of time.

— Welcome Lishiva

Nozipho Dlali (33)

Founder and managing director, Nozipho Dlali Attorneys

Twitter: @NoziphoDlali1

Raised in the small town of Fort Beaufort in the Eastern Cape, Nozipho Dlali set out to make a difference to the world. Today she's a human rights advocate running her own legal practice, Nozipho Dlali Attorneys. She worked for the Consumer Protection Office in the Free State for six years, offering pro bono legal services to the poor and the marginalised, she was instrumental in drafting the initial draft bill for the Free State Unfair Business Practice Act, and represented South Africa as a Junior Chamber International Peace is Possible Director in 2017. It was in her latter role that she represented the country at the World Peace Summit in Sarawak, Malaysia and participated in the formation of the Young People's Proclamation and Peace.

When asked what inspires her, Dlali says, "During orange picking season, scholars had to stop schooling and harvest. This was my first exposure to gross injustice and inequalities, that we still face in our country, and I knew then that I wanted to be a lawyer. I felt this was the only platform I could use to address these injustices."

Dlali studied her LLB at the University of the Free State and then moved to the provincial Consumer Protection Office. She also joined a nonprofit organisation, Junior Chamber International South Africa as a director of the Peace is Possible Campaign.

This is when she realised the responsibility she had as an individual towards the realisation of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

"I realised what role I needed to play if we wanted to create the world we wanted to live in by 2030," she says. "I formed Nozipho Dlali Attorneys where our core vision is to eradicate social injustices and inequalities by making legal services accessible to those who normally wouldn't have access. I believe that the only way that can happen is if partnerships are formed between government, section 9 institutions, the business sector and civil society."

Today, Dlali is changing the world one human being at a time, but tomorrow she is one of 700 young South African leaders set to participate in the Mandela Washington Fellowship in the United States.

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Ayanda Makhanya Photography



Photo: Supplied

Sagwadi Mabunda (25)

PhD candidate, University of the Western Cape

Twitter and Instagram: @260Dee1

Sagwadi Mabunda is a 25-year-old third year PhD candidate at UWC, currently working on the South African Cybercrimes Bill. She has a master's in International Criminal Justice and is working hard to build a career around the prevention of cybercrime. Her goal is to provide African governments with advice and support around effective legislation and policies around cybercrime, starting with cyber money laundering.

"My journey is anchored in curiosity," says Mabunda. "It began with a fascination with the inner workings of the criminal mind and has led to a dedication to academic research. I did my LLB at Wits and moved to UWC to do my LLM in 2015. I was one of 12 master's candidates in my class and I was both the youngest and only South African candidate. I was awarded a full DAAD Scholarship to complete the master's programme."

By the time she hit 23, Mabunda had enrolled for her PhD and started building an impressive list of achievements. She published in the Oxford Journal Statute Law Review in 2017, presented and published a paper at the IST-Africa Conference in Namibia, and has another icABCD conference coming up in August 2018. She attended the Siracusa International Institute Specialised Course in Italy and was one of only five African participants.

She's grateful to her parents for supporting her lofty ambitions.

"My parents are really important to me, but I must give special credit to my dad, Calvin Mabunda," she says. "He instilled in me the love of knowledge and stopped his own PhD midway to take care of us. So my PhD journey is picking up the mantle and making the dream real for us both."

— Tamsin Oxford

Sasha Stevenson (34)

Attorney and head of health, SECTION27

Twitter: @SJDSStevenson

Sasha Stevenson is a young human rights lawyer who works under incredible pressure to help those who are vulnerable. She was deeply involved in the Life Esidimeni case for more than four years where she worked tirelessly to help others. While that is an impressive achievement on its own, she has also been a researcher for the late Chief Justice Pius Langa at the Constitutional Court and worked for the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court.

"When I was at school the Constitution was new and the first cases coming out of the Constitutional Court — *S v Makwanyane* about the death penalty, *Grootboom v Government of RSA* about the right to housing — these

cases showed what it meant to live in a constitutional democracy," says Stevenson. "It was inspiring and made me want to study law and use it to realise human rights."

Stevenson studied law and politics at Rhodes University and did her articles at Bowmans. Halfway through her articles she worked as a clerk of the Constitutional Court. It was a dream come true for her.

"It was the year when four of the first cohort of judges, including the Chief Justice, were retiring and the court roll was full of socio-economic rights cases," says Stevenson. "Then, after my articles, I worked in the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court to explore international law before heading to the University of Cambridge to study for a Master of Laws degree."

Today, Stevenson works with SECTION27 in a role she loves. It allows her to use the law in creative ways to solve problems affecting the most vulnerable people in society. She is an activist, organiser, researcher, spokesperson, advisor and lawyer every day.

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Thys Dullaart



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Sentebale Makara (32)

Senior associate, Dispute Resolution, Webber Wentzel

Twitter: @smakara9

Sentebale Makara is an impressive young lawyer with a sterling reputation and career. He started his career at Webber Wentzel as a candidate attorney in 2012 and has, since then, been promoted to senior associate, advocated landmark cases that have developed South Africa's jurisprudence for the better, worked tirelessly with nonprofit organisations to promote the democratisation of law in South Africa and fought internationally for human rights. Makara has also mentored young people in Webber Wentzel and the greater community and lectures at Wits University.

"There was a time in my schooling that I was made to believe that I would never amount to anything but another township statistic," says Makara. "My mother broke her back to ensure my fees were paid — she had promised my father before he passed that she would ensure I got a good education. It is her belief in me that keeps me going in a very competitive and goal-driven environment." In spite of the setbacks presented by his school, Makara studied law at the University of the Western Cape using a diploma in Criminal Law and Justice that he'd achieved to compensate for his high school subjects. He then studied a LLM in Dispute Resolution at the University of Missouri where he also qualified as a mediator.

"When I came back to South Africa I joined Webber Wentzel and today I am a senior associate in the dispute resolution practice group," concludes Makara. "I have met many remarkable people on my journey and my most humbling role has been as a member of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers."

Makara has been involved in some impressive cases over the past few years and shows no signs of slowing down his meteoric rise. His goals for the future include earning his seat as a partner and ranked lawyer and effecting change across the country.

— Tamsin Oxford

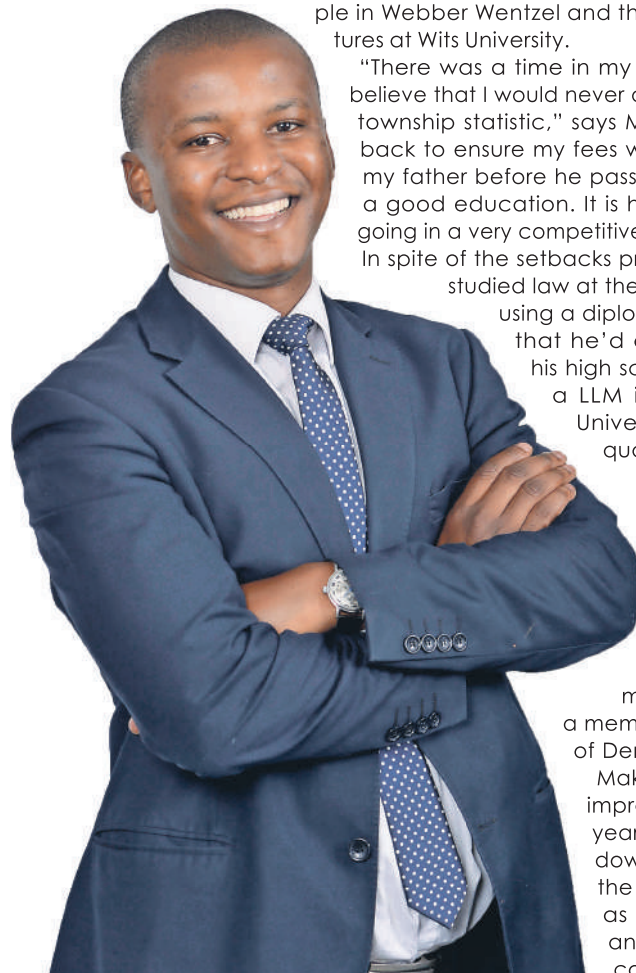


Photo: Craig Owen

Tladi Marumo (32)

Director, Marumo at Law Advisory and Good Law Foundation

Twitter: @Tladi_Marumo

Tladi Marumo has always been such a force of nature that back in grade seven his peers knew that he would one day become a lawyer committed to social change. At the age of 28 he was awarded the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship and was appointed as a lecturer at Rhodes University.

His work with the Legal Resources Centre in Grahamstown led to his being awarded the prestigious US Fulbright Scholarship that allowed him to pursue his research as a doctor of Judicial Science at the University of Notre Dame. By the age of 30 he was director of the Good Law Foundation with judge Mervyn King and remains one of South Africa's brightest legal minds.

"I grew up in Sharpeville during the politically volatile, transitional period of the late 1980s and early 1990s," says Marumo. "During this time, the exclusion of black children from schools in the Vaal area meant my skin colour disqualified me from admission."

My mother, a persistent and resilient single parent and teacher in Sharpeville, asserted my pre-constitutional right to a decent education by relentlessly petitioning the South African Catholic Church's educational administration."

Thanks to his mother's efforts, Marumo gained entrance to an independent school in Vanderbijlpark which is where he encountered what Patrick Noonan, a revolutionary Irish Catholic priest, describes as the "spirituality of justice and peace".

"This period and the subsequent negotiations towards constitutional democracy demonstrated the contrasting powers of the law to me," he says. "The law can be an instrument for oppression or social change."

The quote that forms the guiding principle of Marumo's life is from Professor Toni Morrison: "Work and think at the top of my form, that I stand on moral ground but know that ground must be shored up by mercy, that the world is before me and I need not take it or leave it as it was when I came in."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Karen Urbani

Thabo Ngilande (33)

General counsel and head of legal, 3M South Africa

Thabo Ngilande is only 33 years old, but he already has numerous degrees to his name. A practising lawyer as the general counsel for a multinational science company, he has degrees in chemistry, law and environmental sciences and is currently studying his PhD in commercial law at the University of Cape Town. He also obtained his first master's at the age of 21.

"My career unfolded in an amazing and unexpected way," says Ngilande. "I have supportive friends and family who believe in me and their presence inspired my career choices and what I do. I now have five degrees in both law and science, a beautiful wife and kids and I am following a journey full of challenges, fun, accountability and rewards."

Ngilande is inspired by the former Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Sandile Ngcobo — whom he had an opportunity to work with. As Ngilande's first boss, he gave him a solid legal foundation and inspired a deep love for the legal profession.

"When I look back at my days at the Constitutional Court I always remember the high-profile and fascinating cases I worked on," says Ngilande. "My other mentor is Professor Corlia Van Heerden from the department of mercantile law at the University of Pretoria. She's an amazing and inspiring academic who made me realise how fantastic academia is."

Today, Ngilande is focused on becoming more involved in academic work and making a difference by helping young South Africans reach their potential. He would also like to see himself one day sitting on the bench as a judge of the Competition Appeal Court.

"I specialise in competition law, corporate commercial, contracts, environmental law, mergers & acquisitions and intellectual property & trademarks," says Ngilande. "I also have Thabo the Scientist who focuses on environmental chemistry and research exclusive around global warming issues such as climate change."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Supplied

Zakeera Docrat (27)

Doctoral student in African languages, Rhodes University

Twitter: @zakeera_d

Zakeera Docrat is only 27 years old yet she has a list of qualifications and academic achievements that most people only achieve much later in life. She was awarded her African language studies honours degree cum laude in 2014 and received full academic colours. This was followed by an LLB degree, an MA degree in African Language Studies (cum laude) in 2017 and she is now working towards her PhD in African languages (forensic linguistics/ language and law) under the auspices of the NRF SARChI Chair in the Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education.

She has presented 13 conference papers globally, attended the International Forensic Linguistics Conference in Portugal with two papers later published and had an academic journal article and two chapters published in a book. Her editorial skills also extend to the *Mail & Guardian*, *Daily Dispatch*, *City Press* and *The Conversation*.

It seems language is in her blood. "I grew up in a home where my family were fully conversant in isiXhosa, the language of my birthplace and home, the Eastern Cape," she says. "To this day there is a passion and excitement that ignites inside of me when I speak isiXhosa. It's an incredible feeling and privilege to be able to communicate in an African language."

By learning isiXhosa at the Diocesan School for Girls, Grahamstown from which I matriculated, there was an emphasis placed on the power of language in bringing people together and achieving social cohesion — and with the learning of a language you gain a culture."

Docrat continues to be inspired by language and the power it has in changing people's lives. She believes that languages have the power to contribute to the transformational agenda and is part of transformation.

"I unapologetically believe that language plays a central role in the legal system and that African language speakers are treated unfairly in comparison to English mother tongue speakers given that court proceedings take place in English and if you are not fully conversant in English you are reliant on the legal system's interpretation services," she says. "We need to ensure that legal practitioners and judicial officers are competent in the official languages of the province in which they practice."

I firmly believe it is possible. The Canadian legal model of the province of New Brunswick provides an example of linguistic inclusion and where language is seen as a resource and a right rather than a problem."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Stephen Penny



City of Johannesburg Bursaries, Internships and Learnerships:

The City of Johannesburg provides skills development opportunities to not only its employees but also to residents of the municipality. The following opportunities are available to young people in Johannesburg: Bursaries, Internships, and Learnerships.

Bursary Scheme:

Financial assistance is provided to young people of Johannesburg to enable them to further their studies at any South African tertiary institution. The scheme funds undergraduate studies to the tune of R25 000 per annum. Advertisements for bursaries are placed in national newspapers, community newspapers and at Customer Service Centres during the months of September\ October each year.

Below are areas the City has prioritised to receive funding:

Logistics/ Ambulance/ Emergency	Information Technology
Archives Management	Local Government /Science
Built Environment (Architecture, Construction Management, Quantity Surveying, Town & Regional Planning	Logistics
Monitoring & Evaluation	Commerce
Nature Conservation	Community Service (Disaster Management)
Production & Operations Management	Economic Management Science
Political Science	Engineering (All Fields)
Property Evaluation	Environmental Health
Real Estate or Property Management	Environmental Management
Transportation Modelling	Finance (Accounting, Auditing, Entrepreneurship/ Small Business Management, Supply Chain Management, Treasury)
Fire Technology	Quality Assurance
Geo-Informatics	

Documents required when applying for the bursary scheme include:

- Certified Copy of ID
- Proof of Residence
- Academic results

The bursary covers fees and stationary.

Internships:

The City offers various internship programmes to the youths of Johannesburg. An internship is on the job training or experiential learning provided to graduates. The City provides two types of internships, namely: undergraduate and graduate internship programmes.

Undergraduate internships are aimed at those students, mostly from FET Colleges, who need practical training before they can be awarded their qualifications. To qualify, students should be studying towards a qualification that requires them to undertake workplace experiential learning as a requirement to fulfil their Curriculum.

Graduate internships are provided to youths who have already graduated but cannot find employment because of lack of experience. The maximum duration for both internship programmes is 18 months.

The City as an equal opportunity employer specifically encourages students with a disability to take up internship opportunities. Interested students\youth should submit the following documents at the 6th Floor of the Metro Centre, B-Block at 158 Civic Boulevard, Braamfontein:

- Work Integrated Plan (Logbook)
- Letter from the institution indicating the discipline in which the intern must be trained
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Latest Academic Record
- Certified copy of ID

Only successful candidates will be contacted.

Learnerships:

A learnership is a Vocational Education and Training Programme that combines theory and practice, culminating in a qualification that is registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

The Learnerships target matriculants who are yet to obtain higher education qualifications. The aim is to train them so they can be employable in future. Learnerships are advertised in newspapers when available.

Documents required for Learnerships include:

- Grade 12 Certificate
- Proof of Residence
- ID Copy

Whom to contact:

Bursary Scheme:	Internships:	Learnerships:
Billy Baloyi 011 407 6979 billyb@joburg.org.za	Marie Hendrickse 011 407 6821 mariehe@joburg.org.za	Violet Hlapo 011 407 6853 violeth@joburg.org.za



Fortune Mlungisi Mkhabela, CIA, CCSA (34)

Group chief risk officer, South African Nuclear Energy Corporation

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/fortune-mkhabela-cia-ccsa-7189b87b/>

Fortune Mkhabela has come a very long way since growing up in Pienaar KaMsogwaba outside Nelspruit. He possesses a wealth of experience across politics, senior management positions and faith-based organisations. He wears many hats: In addition to being the chief risk officer of the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation, he is also an audit committee member of the department of planning, monitoring and evaluation (Presidency), chairperson of the Risk Management Committee at Govan Mbeki Municipality, and an audit committee member of Gauteng Central Athletics.

He serves as an assistant pastor at the Apostolic Faith Mission Bethesda (Msogwaba) and is the founder of the Movement of Baptism and Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, he is completing his MBA with the University of Reading, UK.

Mkhabela has also spent a fair amount of time in student politics, having served as deputy president of the Student Representative Council at Wits in 2007. During his term, he was part of the group that protested against the privatisation of residences and proposed fees and worked with university management to agree to a third meal for all students on the National Student

Financial Aid Scheme. He was also previously treasurer of the South African Students Congress, Johannesburg Region, and a member of both ANC and ANC Youth League structures.

He is driven to not only do his best for himself but also to constantly work to uplift others. "Being from a very poor family background, having experienced poverty and hopelessness from birth, has made me to work throughout my life to defeat poverty and to create opportunities for others to succeed," he says.

Mkhabela draws strength from his faith, which led him to start the Movement of Baptism and Outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the aim of helping to teach Christians about the centrality of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian faith.

"I am inspired by Chief Albert Luthuli, who was a president of the ANC and also a servant of Jesus Christ. President Luthuli was a man of integrity, humble and shaped vision, and his love for his people was unmatched. He was willing to put down his life for South Africa to be a better country for everyone who lives in it."

— Aisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Palesa Mabula



Photo: Lesego Mokae

Freddy Sonakile (28)

Advocate and legal advisor, North West Provincial Legislature

Twitter: @Fregolicious

Freddy Sonakile is a legal advisor at the North West provincial legislature, and is key in providing legal advice to its members. After completing his degree in law at North West University, he became admitted as an advocate of the high court. He then joined the legislature when he was 24. "It is through my work that provincial laws are made by the lawmakers/members of the provincial legislature (MPLs)," says Sonakile. "The process of law-making involves the drafting of Bills, engaging the public and a lot of advocacy programmes popularising Bills. These are the laws that impact on the lives of ordinary South Africans, the poor and the marginalised."

Sonakile says that every day is a learning process for him. "I get to interact with the people from the deep rural communities and small dorps of the North West and solicit their views on Bills that will later have an impact on their lives. This process gives them a voice on the Bills that later become law."

One of the laws Sonakile has been part of drafting is the North West Biodiversity Management Act, which deals with the management and conservation of the North West biophysical environment and protected

areas. The Act was drafted in line with International agreements on the preservation and sustainable exploitation of biodiversity. "It brings so much joy in my life knowing that years from now future generations will understand the importance of protecting biodiversity and will utilise this important piece of legislation to ensure that our biodiversity is preserved."

Sonakile was raised by a single mother, who remains his inspiration. "My mother is the epitome of resilience. She has seen enough things in her life that could break anyone, but she never gave up. She taught me not to give up and the power of trying again." Having this kind of spirit has led to him also doing motivational talks at local schools, encouraging young people. "I was only 24 when I joined the legislature as a legal advisor, I was the youngest, not only in the division but in the entire institution, and it was not easy. I have learnt that there will always be pessimists and people who will doubt you but with a good enough dosage of dedication, it's possible."

— Aisha Dadi Patel

Itumeleng Mafatshe (29)

Deputy director: research and data analysis, Gauteng office of the premier

Twitter: @itumafatshe

Itumeleng Mafatshe is a senior researcher, policy analyst and the deputy director: research and data analysis in the office of the premier in Gauteng.

With a keen focus in a number of areas of study, including climate change, sustainable development, food security, agriculture, energy, gender, and politics, Mafatshe holds two master's degrees: in political studies from Wits University, and in climate change, agriculture and food security from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

She received the latter as a recipient of the Kader Asmal Fellowship for South African Students in Ireland. She is also a former graduate research fellow of the International Livestock Research Institute in Kenya, and has held multiple student leadership positions both locally and abroad.

In the premier's office, Mafatshe plays a key role in the implementation of Nfirhisano, a community outreach flagship programme that creates a platform for Gauteng residents to interact with senior public servants. This programme has had an impact on how issues of service delivery are addressed from local to provincial government level. Additionally, her research in places such as

Kenya has contributed to policy-making processes there.

"I am driven by the desire to serve others, and live my life in a way that is beneficial not only to me but also to those that are around me, in particular those that tend to be deemed as voiceless and marginalised," says Mafatshe. "I am passionate about women's development and in everything I do I commit myself to bring to the centre a gender perspective."

Mafatshe is clear about what changes she believes need to take place in order to make South Africa better. "At the core of a South Africa that is underpinned by the values of freedom, equality, non-racialism, non-sexism and a respect for the beliefs and opinions of others, is the ability to respond to this generation's most pressing challenge of increasing climate change and urbanisation," she says. "In this regard, I hope for a future where all South Africans are able to adapt to the pressures of food insecurity, health, and access to natural resources that come with the variability of our environment."

— Aisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Risenga Thomas Chauke



Photo: Debbie Molefe

Kgosi Motšoane (29)

Strategic partnerships and knowledge generation official, Tisa Divisional Executive Management Unit, Department of Trade and Industry

Kgosi Motšoane is a passionate public servant, working to forge closer ties with the rest of the African continent. He works for Trade and Investment South Africa (Tisa) under the deputy director general. He was part of the founding team for the Trade Invest Africa (TIA) initiative of the department of trade and industry which aims to promote outward investments and value-added exports into the rest of Africa as a means of increasing the levels of intra-Africa trade.

"A career highlight for me has to be getting the rare opportunity to be part of TIA's founding team, and being able to shape new ways of promoting South African businesses across the rest of Africa," says Motšoane.

He is well-qualified for this role, with degrees in international relations, political studies and development economics from Wits University; and experience in academia, civil society and the private sector. He is also a skilled public speaker and in his personal time, a writer.

For Motšoane, it's always been clear that his passions lie in developing Africa. "It becomes near impossible resist the allure that is encapsulated in Africa. Sure, there's a lot of work across all fields that still needs to be

done, but that's the magic of it. Everything I do in national government forms part of my life's work — that's why it interests me," he says.

He says "a career in government is a relational one," and this type of situation is something that motivates Motšoane. "I'm primarily inspired by my work family; it is not lost on me that the dynamic relationship we have, combined with how synchronised we are when there's a high-pressure situation, which comes every other week, everyone forgets their performance agreements and contracts and gets down to the work that needs to be done. That's rare."

Motšoane is passionate about the potential young people have to build the Africa of his dreams. "I want to live to see young people living in a country that allows them to fall and not stay down, that allows them to pursue whatever whim, wonder and perhaps calling they have. I hope that all those pursuits allow them to reach a point where their parents are able to say 'they're better off than where we were'."

— Aisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Young African Leaders Initiative

Russel Mulamula (33)

Board member, Roads Agency Limpopo

Twitter: @RusselMulamula

Russel Mulamula is the deputy director responsible for state-owned companies' governance and oversight within the Limpopo Provincial Treasury. He plays an advisory role in boards and audit committees of five provincial state-owned enterprises (SOEs). In his role, he monitors unwanted expenditure, performs analysis on delegation of authority and monitors public entities to ensure they comply with the legislature.

The highlight of his career in the public sector was in 2014 when he initiated and organised the first Limpopo Provincial Corporate Governance summit. The summit was aimed at discussing the state of corporate governance in the province. The event brought under one roof the speaker of the legislature, members of executive councils, municipal mayors, heads of departments, senior government officials, as well as board members, chief executives and chief financial officers of SOEs, to deliberate on the state of corporate governance and compliance in the province.

He took interest in corporate governance as an area of study and ended up completing a Certificate in Public Management and Leadership from Syracuse University. It was this course that made him realise that there was too much emphasis on private sector governance and not enough on the public sector — which our country can benefit significantly from improving. He strongly believes that the public sector could improve with more officials who specialise in corporate governance as a field of study to inform their practice, because it is the lack of understanding in the sector that results in poor corporate governance — which subsequently results in many failures in public service.

In 2014, Mulamula was selected as part of the Mandela-Washington Fellowship Programme and was subsequently voted as a board member for the Southern African Regional Advisory Board for Mandela Fellows. He is a member of the Institute of Directors in Southern Africa and he was part of the working group participants for content development of the King IV Report on corporate governance. He holds a postgraduate diploma in business administration and is now a final-year student of master's in Business Leadership at the University of South Africa. In his spare time, Mulamula enjoys running and plans to run his first 42km marathon in November this year.

— Welcome Lishivha

Luyanda Mfeka (30)

Director, mayoral communications, City of Johannesburg

Twitter: @Lu_Mfeka

Luyanda Mfeka, spokesperson for Johannesburg mayor Herman Mashaba says people are at the core of his work. "This isn't communication for its own sake. It's about ensuring that there is continuous accountability from government to residents. The most important part of the work I do is ensuring that communities have a means of connecting with their elected representatives within the executive arm of local government."

As the director of all mayoral communications, Mfeka says that his role "is far from being a walk in the park". He co-ordinates all communication on behalf of the mayor, his latest in a string of roles he has played in local government structures.

After studying law and journalism at Rhodes University, Mfeka became involved with the Democratic Alliance (DA) in a bid to launch a political career. His first official party role was as the DA's senior legislative researcher,

where he was responsible for establishing and managing the party's internal legislative advisory unit in Parliament. He then served as spokesperson to Western Cape health MEC, Dr Nomafrrench Mbombo, and served as a member of Lindiwe Mazibuko's team during her term as parliamentary leader of the DA and the official leader of the opposition in Parliament.

Raised by his grandparents, Mfeka holds the meaning of community close to his heart. "Ultimately, what gets me up in the morning is knowing that the work which I am fortunate to be a part of, has real meaning to the lives of people within the City. "We're trying to bring positive changes to the lived realities of communities throughout the City. I like to believe that what does keep me going is my genuine interest in the wellbeing of others. Serving people is at the heart of what we do."

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Enoch Lehung

Saki Annah Mokgadinyane (31)

Head of department: governance, compliance, risk and strategy management, CCMA

Instagram: @ms_mokgadinyane

From a very young age, Annah Mokgadinyane wanted to be involved in government and politics in order to make a meaningful contribution to the development of South Africa. She is the head of the governance, compliance, risk and strategy (GCRS) department of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

"Nothing gives me greater pride than when the organisation I work for delivers its constitutional mandate optimally, to the satisfaction of its intended beneficiaries," says Mokgadinyane. "At the CCMA currently, every time my team and I develop a new GCRS framework, introduce new systems and processes, or convene a successful conference, it is always with the aim of supporting and assisting the organisation achieve greater service delivery results and achieve its developmental goals in the labour market."

Mokgadinyane was one of the team leaders who conceptualised and delivered the Inaugural CCMA Conference, held in September 2017, and the CCMA Inaugural Labour Conference, held in March 2018. Jointly, these events attracted more than 1 000 key stakeholders in the labour market to discuss pertinent labour market issues. Mokgadinyane's research work, which advocated for incremental housing as a means for accelerating housing

delivery, has been considered during processes of national human settlements policy development and by public entities in the human settlements space.

She holds a master's in Public Management from the Tshwane University of Technology, and is pursuing her MBA at the Gordon Institute of Business Science. She is inspired, in particular, by Carol Bouwer and Khanyi Mkhize. "To me, these ladies epitomise #BlackGirlMagic. They are passionate and dedicated to their crafts, hardworking women who represent courage, what it means to break new ground and succeed against all odds. My mother inspires me a great deal also: she is love, beauty, strength, resilience, grace and humility personified."

She is passionate about the youth, and youth empowerment. "Prosperity can only be achieved through an empowered youth, empowered through education, training and opportunities," she says. "We need to be empowered to be ground-breakers, innovators, and job creators, actively and positively contributing to the economic development of South Africa. I am youth. And as youth ... we don't want handouts, we want empowerment opportunities!"

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: CCMA



Sindisiwe Ndlovu (33)

Protocol officer, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Art, Culture, Sport and Recreation

Sindisiwe Ndlovu has been involved in regional political structures since 2003, when she was 19 years old. A member of the Young Communist League, she is the personal assistant for the MEC of sports, art, culture and recreation in KwaZulu-Natal Bongile Nomusa Sithole-Moloi, as well as a provincial executive committee member of the ANC Youth League in KwaZulu-Natal.

Ndlovu is passionate about community life. "I do not have a child of my own, but I play a role in helping many of the children in my extended family, especially those who no longer have parents," she says. "In our community I have worked with different youth organisations, both political and non-political." Ndlovu's line of work enables her to move around KwaZulu-Natal, where she interacts with many different community stakeholders.

Passionate about politics, Ndlovu is inspired by struggle hero greats. "The people who have inspired me most are Mam' Albertina Sisulu and Mam' Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. I have learnt a lot from these women politically and socially. They have proven that you can be any person you wish to be," she says. "They have shown that

your age, background and political challenges do not hinder any progress you want to achieve in life. They were also able to maintain their homes and keep them warm regardless of the situation that was happening to them. They managed to raise their children and also participate in the struggle to fight apartheid."

Ndlovu is also inspired by her boss, MEC Sithole-Moloi. "Getting a chance to work with her made me to understand the lives of people who went to exile, and their passion for this country. She is a wife, mother, ANC PEC member, member of parliament and an MEC, but she always finds a way of balancing all these roles that are entrusted to her with a smile."

Her ultimate dream is to see a South Africa that is safe for women and children, with equality in healthcare and education. "We need to have a South Africa where schools and hospitals can have same facilities, regardless of the area and the status of the school, so that there will be no class barriers in our communities," she says.

— Aisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Emotions studio – Midrand

Sanda Siphosakhe Luthuli (28)

Senior market analyst, Airports Company South Africa

Twitter: @sandmanluther

Sanda Siphosakhe Luthuli is passionate about making sure he uses his skills to ensure economic inclusion is realised. Luthuli holds a MCom in Economics from the University of Johannesburg. As senior market analyst at Airports Company South Africa, he is responsible for market and country risk analysis in the rest of Africa and emerging markets.

Previously, he was an industrial analyst at Eskom Holdings, where he worked on the multibillion rand expansion programme of Eskom. He was also part of Transnet Capital, tasked with implementing the Market Demand Strategy infrastructure programme to unlock the mineral economic belt of South Africa.

As part of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, he has actively assisted in projects resolving severe infrastructure challenges. "I have been fortunate to have assisted on projects that have seen communities receive electricity for the first time in 24 years, roads being built in areas previously inaccessible to ambulances and water delivery to communities that have shared water sources with livestock for decades."

He has also worked with various industries to increase the designation of components, to aid and support locally manufactured products to enter

global value chains. "In my current role, I guide investment decisions by ensuring that economic, project and environmental risks are understood and factored into decisionmaking, thereby preserving shareholder value."

He is a member of the Institute of Risk Management South Africa, and previously served on the Risk Committee of Economic Development. He believes that state owned enterprises are critical in ensuring that structural economic reform happens, and that poor governance at state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is eroding the promise of the developmental state.

"As a developmental economist, I have always understood the complementary roles of the private and public sectors; the public sector is tasked with securing market certainty to enable private enterprise to flourish, incidentally creating jobs and deepening economic gains," he says.

Luthuli says that he draws his inspiration from his grandmother. "Her faith is her pillar, and she always amazes me with her strength of character, conviction to her values, and permanence of positivity about the future of South Africa. She reminds me that every day is an opportunity to bring about change."

— Aisha Dadi Patel

Sherylee Moonsamy (31)

CFO, Johannesburg Development Agency

Instagram: @sherylee_moonsamy

Sherylee Moonsamy manages a capital budget of almost R2-billion per year as chief financial officer at the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), the area-based development agency of the City of Johannesburg.

After joining the JDA in 2009 as an accountant, she was promoted in 2012 to finance manager. Under this banner, Moonsamy led an integrated process to improve the JDA's financial, risk, procurement management and governance practices to shift the annual audit opinion from unqualified to clean. In 2016 she was appointed acting CFO. Moonsamy heads up a finance team of majority black women and serves as a mentor and role model for many professionals across ages and disciplines in the urban development sector.

Projects that Moonsamy's team have played a part in implementing include construction of the Rea Vaya stations and busways; the pedestrian and cycling route that connects Alex to Sandton; clinics, parks, and community centres in neighbourhoods including Noordgesig, Westdene, Jeppe, and Rosettenville; and the new international transit interchange near Park Station.

"The JDA plays a significant role in the City of

Johannesburg, and knowing I am a part of the force that delivers on these projects creates a certain accountability and responsibility that is different from being in the private sector," says Moonsamy. "I have a role to play in ensuring that the JDA is always steered in the right direction and away from the usual negative connotations that are associated with the public sector."

Moonsamy, who is inspired by the women in her family and their constant encouragement, says that young people need to dream big and realise their power, no matter what field they are in.

"As an accountant there is very little that we feel we can do to make a real-world impact, however, being a part of an organisation like the JDA allows me to feel like I support a bigger cause," says Moonsamy. "The JDA has implemented hundreds of development projects all across Johannesburg in areas such as Diepsloot, Orlando, Nancefield, Jabulani and Alexandra, to name a few. Besides just the impact these projects have in the areas that they are in, they also have a significant impact for each and every individual in those communities."

— Aisha Dadi Patel



Photo: JDA

Tlhologelo Collen Malatji (25)

Convener, ANCYL Ekurhuleni Regional Task Team

Political activist Tlhologelo Collen Malatji has dedicated his time and energy into campaigning for positive change and advancing the cause of those who are marginalised in society, especially the youth.

"My background in teenage activism from the age of 12 has really opened my eyes up to the inequalities of society," says Malatji. He holds a number of leadership accolades under his belt, including former national president of Congress of South African Students (Cosas) and former strategic advisor to Gauteng MEC of Education, Panyaza Lesufi. At only 16 years old, he was the Bavumile Vilakazi ANCYL zonal secretary.

Malatji is passionate about advancing the cause for free education. He has spent a considerable amount of time advocating for more access to education. "I am inspired by the growth and the development of the township child," he says.

As the regional secretary of Cosas Ekurhuleni in 2008, he was part of a collective which led a protest that yielded bursaries worth R100-million for young people in Ekurhuleni to further their studies at higher learning institutions. During his term as Cosas national president, he also headed a campaign to promote students' access to technology called One Student One iPad.

Malatji says that young people need to draw on the lessons of the greats who came before us, and not forget how much power they have politically. "I am inspired by the great Thomas Sankara, Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki. Young people must never be comfortable in societies that are not enhancing their growth and development. They must continue to fight for their inclusivity in decisions that govern society."

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: NK Moloi

Zukiswa Nee-Wang (32)

Gauteng provincial campaign director, Democratic Alliance

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/zukiswa.neewhang>

Zukiswa Nee-Wang began her political career in 2017 as a provincial campaign director for the Democratic Alliance in Gauteng. In addition to that, she also has a passion for early childhood development (ECD), a passion which has driven her to serve as the head of Future Nations Schools as well as working on various ECD projects.

In both roles — head of Future Nations and provincial campaign director — she's been the youngest in her team, leading a team of individuals older and more experienced than her, an experience she says was both challenging and exciting.

As a leader, her approach is to make sure that her team has the resources and the right environment to flourish and she strives to motivate them to achieve their personal best. As ECD project manager at Cotlands, Nee-Wang was responsible for forming strategic partnerships with government officials, community leaders and nonprofit organisations across the country with the purpose of developing models and improving efforts aimed at raising access to non-centre based ECD programmes.

Her qualifications include a Bachelor of Social Sciences from the University of Pretoria, a postgraduate diploma in Management from the Wits School of Governance and a national diploma in Early Childhood Development from Montessori Teacher Training Centre.

Nee-Wang had a life-threatening battle with cancer. She was diagnosed with triple negative

breast cancer, the most aggressive and the hardest to treat on her 30th birthday. "For once in my life, I had no control over an outcome," she says about the experience. She went through 20 rounds of the strongest chemo cocktail, a double mastectomy and reconstruction.

"I lost my hair and aged overnight," she says, looking back to that process. Her optimistic approach towards life, although hard to keep up at the time, kept her going. After having gone through her journey, she now no longer fears failure, hardships or pain. "Instead of fearing them, I now embrace them. I am not intimidated by challenges, disorientation and moments of sheer panic, and I've grown 100% confident in who I am as a person, warts and all."

She is now running a personal campaign to raise funds for Cansa and to bring awareness to the KwaZulu-Natal oncology crises. The campaign is called #GrabABoob and through it, she is hoping to bring the message of breast cancer awareness and prevention to the youth, and creating an opportunity to raise funds and help those who can't afford cancer treatment. "I run for those who will never get to the finishing line. I run for those who are fighting for their life," she says heartily.

She's recently been appointed to lead the DA campaign for the next election of the premier in Gauteng in 2019. She considers this appointment a highlight in her career and is gearing up to work hard and rise to the occasion.

— Welcome Lishivha



Photo: Jackie Van Berg

Zuko Ludwe Makaula (29)

Assistant director: training logistics, National School of Government

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ludwemakaula/>

Zuko Ludwe Makaula is an assistant director in training logistics at the National School of Government (NSG). The NSG's legal mandate is to provide and facilitate education, training and development in the public service. In his current role, Makaula contributes towards building a skilled and professional public service to support, among other responsibilities, the National Development Plan's call of building a capable state to play a developmental and transformative role.

The training programmes that Makaula is responsible for include Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Service, Advanced Management Development Programme and Diversity Management. "The transformation that training programmes that the NSG delivers provide great impact in the improvement of service delivery in the South African public service," he says.

Makaula holds an honours in Industrial Psychology and a postgraduate diploma in Business Management from Walter Sisulu University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal respectively. He is completing a Master of Commerce in Business Management at Johannesburg Business School while working.

"I am inspired by anyone who demonstrates qualities such as perseverance, grit and hard working towards

achieving what they are passionate about. For me, these qualities contribute towards the successful achievement of one's goals," he says.

Prior to his current role, Makaula did a stint at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, where he was a senior programme co-ordinator in the doctoral programme. He has also been a fieldworker supervisor at the Human Sciences Research Council. Makaula has presented a number of papers in conference proceedings, including at the 5th International School of Public Management and Administration Conference at the University of Pretoria, and the 2nd National Qualifications Framework research conference.

Makaula's passion is in training and development and he continuously mentors and assists young people from his rural areas to gain access in higher education. "I'm driven by the need to make a difference, hence I regularly advise and assist young people about accessing institutions of higher learning, especially from my home town of Lusikisiki," says Makaula. "I'm also committed to lifelong learning as I continuously develop myself."

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Peter Skhosana

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Telkom



Apiwe Hotele (26)

Technology commercialisation specialist at Sarao, founder of the Enlighten tutoring app and the iMbasa programme

Apiwe Hotele joined the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (Sarao) in 2015 as a junior science processing developer, and is now permanently employed there as a technology commercialisation specialist. Hotele holds a BSc in Computer Science and Biochemistry cum laude from the University of Fort Hare and a master's in Computer Engineering from the University of Cape Town (UCT).

Hotele is passionate about science education as well as about creating awareness of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) industry; she wants to motivate students from previously disadvantaged communities to pursue careers in maths and science. Most of her programmes and initiatives are centered around Stem. In 2016 Hotele represented women in science at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers UCT branch, where she initiated #BreakingTheStereotype, an annual event focused on motivating young women engineers studying at the institution.

"Women are often underrepresented in the fields of engineering, both in academia and in the profession of engineering. A lot of them in this field are still unsure of whether they are suitable for this field, with some of them quitting and pursuing other careers. For this reason, we aim to create a platform where women engineers at UCT are able to interact with others in the industry through a panel discussion," says Hotele.

She is the Western Cape branch co-ordinator for the International Council of Systems Engineers South Africa and is one of the evaluators for the annual Greatest Young Systems Engineer of the Year Challenge, which fosters interest, insight and skills in systems engineering in young South African engineers.

She initiated the iMbasa internship programme together with the Science Data Processing Team at Sarao to motivate students from disadvantaged communities to pursue careers in maths and science and to provide academic and financial support to these students.

Hotele is also the founder of Enlighten, an online tutoring application that offers remote tutoring services to disadvantaged communities in maths and science for grades eight to 12. "After receiving amazing results from the iMbasa programme I wanted to expand and be able to reach rural areas. The best way to achieve this is through technology, hence the development of the app. There is so much potential in rural areas that needs equal opportunity and resources as urban areas. It is our responsibility as people who come from rural areas to give back to these communities and to ensure that there is growth," she says. The app is under development.

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Sinxolo Gcillishana



Photo: Kimberleigh Tommy

Aviwe Matiwane (31)

Research associate, Albany Museum and PhD candidate, Rhodes University

Twitter: @UdeMischa

Aviwe Matiwane is an Eastern Cape scientist with a great passion for palaeontology. Registered at Rhodes University as a PhD student in the botany department, she is doing her research at the Albany Museum in Grahamstown on plant fossils of the Permian Period (from over 250 million years ago).

Matiwane's work involves trying to solve a 200-year-old scientific problem: to determine the taxonomy of ancient fossil plants. "Species identification has proven to be subjective, inconsistent, and extremely challenging. My

work considers new approaches," says Matiwane. Her work also led her to be selected as one of the top 10 finalists in the 2016 FameLab competition, the annual science communication competition run by the British Council, the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement and Jive Media Africa.

Matiwane has a strong passion for science communication, education, outreach and women empowerment. "I love plants, both extant and extinct. Teaching younger people about my work and seeing their faces light up when I talk to them about fossils is the most rewarding thing to me," she says. "South Africa is world-renowned for its fossil heritage, and researchers from across the world come here to work on our fossils. Learning about the evolution of plants and getting to work with them in the lab on a daily basis, to try and solve difficult questions, keeps me going."

Matiwane is passionate about women in Stem (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). "Palaeontology in South Africa is historically a male-dominated field. However, it is slowly changing and I would like to see more women from diverse backgrounds entering the field and finding their ground," she says.

She is inspired by women palaeoscientists "who are leading experts in their fields, who do ground-breaking work; those who make sure that upcoming and young scientists have a voice and safe working spaces," and by the women in her family. "They have played a huge role in my life and shaping the person I am today and aspire to be in the future."

— Aaisha Dadi Patel

Bonisile Luthuli (27)

PhD student, Africa Health Research Institute

Twitter: @Boniluthuli

There are people who spend their lives changing the world for the better on the macro scale, and then there are people like Bonisile Luthuli who are changing it on the micro scale. Luthuli is studying her PhD in medical microbiology at the Africa Health Research Institute in Durban and her bodies of research are all focused on overcoming debilitating diseases.

Luthuli's master's saw her develop a microdialyser to quickly and effectively identify drug-resistant TB, a device that was so small and effective — it can perform up to 120 TB tests at a time — that it was patented and published in PLoS One. It was the first international patent filed for an integrated microfluidic device developed in Africa. Today, Luthuli is researching HIV-transmitted/founder viruses to help inform future prevention efforts aimed at eradicating HIV and Aids.

But her journey was not an easy one.

"We had no library and only a few books at school," says Luthuli.

"When I came to university to study biochemistry I had never touched a computer or looked down a microscope. But these things should never stop the commitment to achieve and believe in yourself."

Growing up in Nyanyadu, near Dundee, Luthuli saw how badly HIV and Aids affected people, many only a few years older dying from the disease. She knew that there was an urgent need to end the HIV epidemic and sought out a career path that would allow her to be a part of this mission.

"I plan to apply my intelligence, along with the knowledge and skills gained from my training, to implementing innovative approaches to end HIV and Aids," she says. "I would also like to solve other societal ills and provide opportunities for impoverished communities to increase quality of life, especially in rural settings."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Supplied

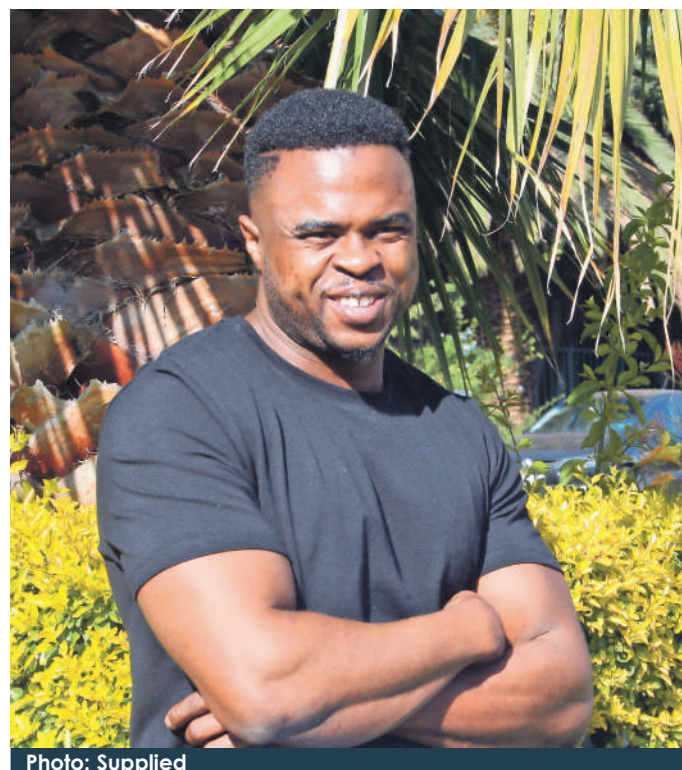


Photo: Supplied

Dr Busisani Lembede (29)

Lecturer, Wits University

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/busisani-lembede-0a788a36/>

It seems South Africa is packed full of intellectual talent; minds that are set to help change the world for the better and redefine the South African future. One of these minds belongs to Busisani Lembede, a PhD graduate and lecturer with six articles already published in peer reviewed journals. Lembede focuses his research on metabolic diseases, natural products that can prevent disease and animal nutrition.

"Growing up on the dusty roads of an informal settlement to the south of Johannesburg, I always dreamed of becoming a doctor or a pharmacist," says Lembede. "I missed the opportunity to study pharmacy so I then enrolled for a bachelor of health science which is where I discovered physiology and liked it. I then pursued my honours in physiology, went on to complete my master's of Science Medicine and my doctoral degree by 2017."

While he was studying for his master's, Lembede was appointed as an associate lecturer at Wits University's school of Physiology and was promoted to lecturer in 2017. His achievements are almost legendary, especially in light of the journey he undertook to get where he is.

"My late grandmother Alzina Lembede raised me —

she never had the opportunity to get any kind of formal education and sacrificed a lot for me," he says. "With the R1 100 monthly pension she received she always made sure I was well fed and able to go to school. I used to think she was too strict, but looking back I realise she saved me from a lot of bad influences that could have led to my demise."

Lembede's work ethic was also inspired by his mother who always did her best to provide for him when she could, selflessly. He is taking the legacy given him by his family into a busy future as he intends on growing his research footprint while trying to drive the commercialisation of research science.

"The profits generated from commercialising research science will be reinvested back into research and also be used to fund the training and development of more research-scientists in South Africa. In doing this I would be contributing to solving two pertinent issues; firstly the shortage of research funds and secondly the lack or inaccessibility of tertiary education funding."

— Tamsin Oxford



200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Science & Technology



Photo: Paul Greenway

Charles Faul (27)

Founder and chief executive, Akili Labs and NOOTRO

Twitter: @FaulFj

What do you get when you cross biotechnology with computer science? Charles Faul, a young entrepreneur, the founder of Akili Labs and NOOTRO and a master's student at the Biotechnology Innovation Centre at Rhodes University. He built the award-winning FieldLab — a low-cost lab-in-a-box that provides commonly used molecular biology tools in the field — and hopes that one day it will be used in remote areas globally, even in conflict zones.

"I looked towards the future and I saw two emerging fields that have the power to change the world: computer science and biotechnology," says Faul. "The combination is one of the industries that will revolutionise the world in ways never seen before, changing medical science, renewable energy and more. I decided to gain a working understanding of computer science and physics then combined it with a solid grounding in data handling and a specialisation in

biotechnology."

It was a long journey with a lot of hard work, but Faul has had incredible support from his family and academic supervisors. For him, his parents have always been supportive and encouraging, always helping him to achieve his vision. With this type of support network it's hardly surprising that Faul has big plans for the future.

"I want to grow and develop the technology we're working on and revolutionise medical diagnostics with a parallel aim of establishing an R&D [Research and Development] biotechnology firm in South Africa," he says. "I want to assist scientists in Africa with bringing solutions to real world problems into the market with a focus on what's needed, not what's wanted."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Phumla Ngobo

Dr Alveera Singh (34)

Postdoctoral research fellow, Africa Health Research Institute

AHRI (Africa Health Research Institute) and SANthe (Sub-Saharan African Network for TB/HIV Research Excellence) postdoctoral research fellow Alveera Singh is a young woman whose research on infectious diseases in South Africa is making its mark.

"I am passionate about research, especially in work that will help to develop new treatment strategies for infectious diseases such as TB and HIV," says Singh. "These terrible diseases remain a huge problem globally, and are decimating communities in South Africa. Through my education and training, I feel research is the best way I can use my energy in the fight against them."

Singh, who received her PhD in Applied Science from the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in 2016, always knew what her path was going to be. "For me, a scientific career was always on the cards. I knew early in life that I wanted to make a difference to the lives of people affected with infectious diseases," she says.

Her PhD research examines compounds in local medicinal plants that are able to kill different strains of the bacterium

that causes TB, highlights the value of traditional knowledge and provides potential new tools in the fight against this deadly pandemic. Singh's current research looks at understanding the role of certain immune cells during HIV infection, which she hopes will lead to the development of new treatment strategies.

Singh has secured funding support from esteemed organisations such as the National Research Foundation, the Technology Innovation Agency and SANthe. She has co-authored several peer-reviewed publications in international journals such as the *Journal of Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics*, *Tropical Biomedicine*, and the *African Journal of Biotechnology*. She has also been an invited speaker at numerous local and international conferences.

Her 10-year plan is to become a leader in HIV and TB basic scientific research and assist in training the next generation of South African scientists. "For me, education forms the backbone of a nation; good education would go a long way to ensuring the success of all South Africans."

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Supplied

Dr Lusiwe Kwezi (33)

Senior research scientist, CSIR

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lusisizwe-kwezi-pr-sci-nat-519a706/>

As a youngster, Lusiwe Kwezi was a reclusive child, and that gave him the chance to be inventive and imaginative. His childhood in the Eastern Cape was backgrounded by lots of books as his mom was an avid reader, while his dad was an English and natural sciences teacher.

"I have always had a natural inclination towards science and biology; they made sense in my brain. I actually had to fight the dominant and well-meaning expectation that I was going to be a doctor, with my grandmother prophesying to my grandfather that 'this young one will grow up to be a doctor and he will inject us with medicine when we are sick.'"

While studying biotechnology at the University of the Western Cape Kwezi had his outstanding honours project upgraded to a PhD without him having to do a master's degree. This was due to the massive academic impact of the work that he was doing on the science community.

At the CSIR, he is involved in making proteins for human health with the aim of developing local manufacturing processes so that they are made more cheaply. He is also involved in work that is exploring using South Africa's biodiversity to develop products that can be commercialised for human health and biotechnology.

Kwezi is also an academic supervisor and this role is continually teaching him the importance of transferable soft skills. "It is important to instil confidence in students that lets them know when they are doing brilliantly and when they can do better. Science is about trial and error and sometimes failure can be debilitating."

He is also excited at how brilliant South Africans are and the tenacity they have — not just in science, but across many industries.

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Christine de Kock (25)

Artificial Intelligence engineer, Media24

Instagram: @christinedekock

What do you do when you start your career as an Artificial Intelligence (AI) engineer at the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) and do research on the use of AI for astronomical discovery in terabyte scale data? You leave to study an MSc in Artificial Intelligence at the University of Edinburgh, graduate cum laude, and enter the media. This describes the impressive and stratospheric career path of Christine de Kock, who is now a data scientist and product owner for AI at Media24.

"In the final year of my studies at Stellenbosch University my lecturer, Professor James Bekker, introduced us to the emerging field of data science," says de Kock. "I can still remember the frisson of excitement I felt when reading industry case studies and realising that this way of thinking was growing traction as a discipline itself. I knew that this would be my future."

At the SKA de Kock worked on the search for pulsars — rapidly rotating neutron stars — using neural networks. It was a deep end swimming start for her as she barely knew anything about astronomy, but there were plenty of people keen to help. It inspired her to further her career and to follow her dream of being in media.

"My main focus at the moment is to productionise my master's dissertation for News24," says de Kock. "The wonderful thing about AI and data science is that it can be applied in pretty much any field. I've worked in the media and astronomy, but there are many other industries where cool things are happening such as in healthcare and agriculture. My plan for the future is simple — solve interesting problems using data."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Aletta Harrison



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200 YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS Science & Technology



Photo: Supplied

Dr Pradeep Kumar (34)

Senior lecturer, Wits University

Twitter: @PKumar_Wits

It was while at high school, participating in science fairs and mathematics olympiads that Dr Pradeep Kumar discovered his passions.

"One project I clearly remember involved the live food adulteration detection and presentation. I was really fascinated as to how chemicals and their mixtures can produce confirmatory results and how science could be applied to everyday life. This was the start to my growing interest in science and hence research. Twenty years later, I am still mixing chemicals and being fascinated every day," says the 34-year-old.

An internationally trained pharmacist, Kumar is a senior pharmaceuticals lecturer in Wits University's department of pharmacy and pharmacology as well as a neuro-regenerative medicine researcher at the Wits Advanced Drug Delivery Platform. Kumar's doctoral thesis — focused on engineering neural devices for spinal cord injury interventions — was awarded the Most Prestigious PhD Degree Award. He has also established a first-in-the-world computational analysis and programming algorithm for the design of drug delivery devices and polymeric architectures. For the advancement of his discipline, Kumar was awarded the prestigious Claude Leon Foundation merit award in 2018 and an African-German Network of Excellence in Science junior researcher grant, funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German education and research ministry in 2018. Earlier this year, Kumar also clinched the SPER Young Scientist Award at PST2018, Bangkok. He has also presented his research at reputed international conferences globally and is the recipient of the 2011 Elsevier's NanoToday and 2012 International Society of Developmental Neuroscience awards.

As for what drives him, Kumar says: "In one word: nature. I am always fascinated by how even the simplest of natural phenomenon is the result of complex arrangements and processes. My research involves the generation of bio-mimetic structures. I strive to replicate the structure and function of neuronal — brain and spinal cord — tissue in the lab using bioinspired platforms and 'natural' instincts. In four words, working with the best. I am really privileged to work with the best in the field at the Wits Advanced Drug Delivery Platform.

"True success," he adds, "can only be achieved through hard work and with support from those that matter in your life: family, friends and colleagues."

— Carl Collison

Dr Thulwaneng Mashifane (33)

Postdoctoral research fellow, South African Environmental Observation Network

Twitter: @Thulwaneng_

Dr Thulwaneng Mashifane studied for a PhD in Ocean and Atmosphere Science at UCT and graduated in 2017. His social media was flooded with congratulations, as he was the first black South African to obtain a PhD in this field. According to research, South Africa has tripled its black science PhD graduates over the last decade, and since 2013 has been graduating more black PhDs than white ones — a marked change from the situation under the apartheid regime.

But the academic space still needs further reform. Mashifane has been quoted for blaming the lack of funding as the reason most black academic candidates never complete their qualifications. Due to his determination and excellence, during his own PhD he received two prestigious fellowships, the German Academic Exchange Services and the UCT Science Faculty PhD Equity Fellowship.

Mashifane's PhD research used biogeochemical models to understand ocean biogeochemistry and the production of the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide, which has a global warming potential 265 to 310

times higher than that of carbon dioxide. He is one of the few experts in South Africa who has skills in biogeochemical modelling, and has transferred these skills to students as a tutor and teaching assistant at UCT.

His postdoctoral research applies high performance computing to advance biogeochemical modelling around the coast of South Africa and aid in exploring future climate change scenarios in these times of unpredictable weather patterns. Mashifane is actively involved in education outreach programmes at the South African Environmental Observation Network, where he frequently visits schools based in coastal fishing communities and participates in science camps to inspire and teach learners about the importance of the oceans around us.

He participates in international discovery research and capacity building cruises between Namibia, South Africa and Mauritius, where he contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

— Sifiso Buthelezi



Photo: Supplied

Dr Veve Dladla (28)

Research officer, Sugar Milling Research Institute

Twitter: @vearvearlicious

It takes a stack of determination and a ton of passion to emerge from a family of 21 children to become a scientist with a doctorate in chemical engineering, and that is exactly what Dr Vezekile "Veve" Dladla did. She managed to complete her matric in spite of the family falling on hard times and was selected as the first South African to participate in the James Madison University/University of KwaZulu-Natal exchange programme. This led to publication in a leading journal, an impressive achievement for one so young. She also engages in groundbreaking research and has managed to build a family, all in only 28 years.

"I've always been fascinated by science, especially chemistry," she says. "I had a fully funded opportunity to work as a research scholar at James Madison University in the USA where we did materials science research with fellow undergraduates. My curiosity remained unsated and so I got my PhD."

For Dladla, the journey wasn't easy. Coming from a polygamist family where

she was child number 20 of 21, her family didn't have much money and her father, the breadwinner, lost his job when she was 12. To fund her university application and acceptance fees, she had to apply for funds from her local church in Botha's Hill.

"I was able to obtain a Study Trust bursary to pay for part of my undergraduate studies and finally got a scholarship from the National Research Foundation to fund my postgraduate studies," she says. "My goal is to continue contributing to the development of a scientific body of knowledge and technologies that will improve the quality of chemically-processed daily use products such as sugar and paper."

Dladla is intent on helping take South Africa into the frontlines of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to empower more South Africans by transforming jobs and creating new opportunities. She's an inspiration for young women in South Africa who aspire to step into the sciences and change the world.

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Supplied

Grace Nomthandazo Ngubeni (28)

Associate lecturer and PhD candidate, Wits University

Twitter: @GraceNgubi

Grace Ngubeni is a bright young mind completing a PhD and changing the world for the better. She has studied a postgraduate degree at Rhodes University, published two scientific papers, and received numerous awards during her research career. She has also received the Professional Provident Society Scholarship and, during her MSc, received the department of science and technology Women In Science TATA Scholarship Award. She currently holds two prestigious scholarships — MERG and the NRF Scarce Skills Doctoral Scholarship and is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society.

"I was introduced to research in my third year of study," says Ngubeni. "I engaged in a year-long biochemistry research project and a semester-long chemistry research internship programme at Rhodes University. It was during the internship programme with the physical chemistry lab where my interest in scientific

research grew."

Her interest developed as she continued her BSc honours and master's studies at Rhodes and today she is currently pursuing her PhD at Wits University. Her research involves the synthesis and characterisation of semiconducting nanocrystals for the fabrication of solar cell devices — the production of renewable energy.

"Once I have qualified as a doctor of philosophy in chemistry I would like to continue teaching others in the sciences through research and lecturing," she says. "I also hope to build my professional career in a more defined speciality within chemistry and contribute towards knowledge through further research. My ultimate long-term goal is to team up with like-minded professionals to empower the next generation as this would pay it forward and create jobs in our country."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Michelle Reinhard, Hatch marketing

Innocentia Mahlangu (28)

Civil engineer and project manager, Hatch Africa

Twitter: @innocencemahla

Innocentia Mahlangu is a civil engineer who specialises in the design and implementation of railway infrastructure projects. In an environment dominated by men, she is one of very few female construction managers to have overseen the construction of a multimillion rand railway project. Her excellent performance on the project saw her recognised in national and international engineering publications and she received a Global Award of Recognition for construction excellence from Hatch Africa.

Mahlangu recently completed her master's in Civil Engineering specialising in project and construction management and intends to pursue a PhD in the future.

"A career in engineering wasn't my first choice and only appealed to me in matric," says Mahlangu. "I was fixated on creating model houses from cardboard boxes and once I learned about electricity, I fitted them with lights. The one day I found a bag of cement and

built a model house. I realised my true passion was in creating things."

Mahlangu combined this passion with her keen interest in science and design which then translated into civil engineering. Once she completed her degree at Wits University, she started work doing feasibility studies for railway infrastructure projects. Then she was given the opportunity to be resident engineer on a construction project.

"After a year I was appointed construction manager, at the age of 26, and I was responsible for managing a multi-disciplinary project," she says. "Then I was appointed as an area project and construction manager and completed an MSc degree in Civil Engineering at Wits University. My next plan is to sharpen my skills in project and construction management and further pursue my PhD while continuing with my master's research."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Melanie Elsworth

Jeshika Ramchund PrEng (32)

Senior engineer, Developments, Bosch Projects (Pty) Ltd

Twitter: @Jeshikarm

Jeshika Ramchund is a professional civil engineer with a BSc in civil engineering from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She is a member of the FIDIC (International Federation of Consulting Engineers) Young Professionals Forum (YPF) Steering Committee and is the chairperson of the GAMA (Group of African Member Associations of FIDIC) Young Professionals Forum. She has been chairperson of the YPF, a council and board member for several years and is committed to enhancing the roles of young professionals in the consulting engineering space.

"My dad worked in construction and exposed me to his world from a young age and I was fascinated by engineering drawings and specifications," says Ramchund. "What frustrated me was that at the construction stage, there wasn't room for many creative or functional changes. I then learned about the built environment and knew that this is what I wanted as a career."

Ramchund received a scholarship from the Construction Industry Education and Training Services for her studies and then took on a series of roles that allowed her to enhance her skills and reputation in the industry. Then she was given the opportunity to blend technical expertise with project management experience on a large water and sanitation project.

"I knew that my career would take a different path at this point," she says. "I have been at Bosch Projects for just over two years and gained a wealth of experience. On the academic front I would like to complete my master's degree in environmental engineering and then extend my studies to a PhD. I believe that professional excellence can only be achieved when practical experience and academia meet minds."

Ramchund has a passion for empowering women in the industry, helping them to grow and share their knowledge and experience with one another.

"In consulting engineering our challenges are different and we lack an accessible mechanism for women to converse on the successes and challenges faced, coping mechanisms and a safe space to share ideas. My aim is to create that space and encourage these conversations."

— Tamsin Oxford



Photo: Sibongo Simelane

Kgomotso Setlhapelo (33)

Chief engineer (telecommunications technology & support), Eskom

Twitter: @Bossie_410

Kgomotso Setlhapelo's upbringing has shaped the person he is today. When Krugersdorp Town School rejected him several times due to the quota system of the 1990s, he and his father, who had spent a period in exile under apartheid, challenged the school's reasoning that he did not have aptitude to progress there. When he eventually gained admission, he ended up receiving an award for academic diligence.

Later, when the University of Pretoria granted him acceptance into its electronic engineering programme, it was upon the condition that he completed his degree in the record time of four years, which he managed to accomplish.

Setlhapelo is a chief engineer at Eskom. His main role is to provide telecommunications leadership, solutions and support, particularly for optical and microwave radio communications. He is also involved in the development of technology solutions through compiling technology standards and specifications, technical evaluation of proposed technology, network design and engineering and link and/or network failure investigation.

He is also the chairperson of the Telecommunications Study Committee of Eskom's Steering Committee of Technologies, which provides operational telecommunications technology direction, solutions and standardisation for Eskom's present and future smart grid. He also serves on an operations investment committee, whose role is to grant investment approval for projects in Eskom telecommunications.

Outside of Eskom, he is a member of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineering (SAIEE) Council, the SAIEE Central Gauteng Centre Committee (SAIEE CGC) and is the newly elected chairperson of the SAIEE Electronics and Software section. Last year, he was awarded the 2017 SAIEE Keith Plowden Young Achiever of the Year award, due to his many contributions to the SAIEE CGC.

These included volunteering to lead the corporate social investment initiative of the centre, the main goal of which was to encourage learners at disadvantaged schools in Ekurhuleni to take up mathematics and science as subjects and electrical engineering as a profession.

In his free time, Setlhapelo provides tuition at no charge to mathematics and physical science high school learners in Ekurhuleni. "With the Fourth Industrial Revolution upon us, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem)-based skills and professions are a non-negotiable. To be competitive in the greater world economy, South Africa needs to increase the number of these scarce and critical skills," he says.

"It is incumbent on Stem practitioners to assist in reversing the systemic and systematic discriminatory legacy of apartheid that only gave opportunities, particularly in Stem, to the minority."

— Fatima Asmal



Photo: Supplied

Khanyisile Kgoadi (32)

Clinical science and immunology PhD student, UCT

Khanyisile Kgoadi wanted to be a medical doctor who finds a cure for HIV because there were, and still are, a lot of people in South Africa affected and infected by it.

"I am a very compassionate and empathetic person, and the stigma around HIV, and the narrative around it being a so-called death sentence made me interested in working towards restoring the dignity and the self-esteem of people with it."

Growing up in Mofolo South, Soweto, meant that she and her peers had limited exposure to the many paths that can lead one to be a scientist, but she finally realised that being a doctor is not the only way that one can work towards saving lives. Kgoadi's research interests are related to TB, meningitis and how bacteria are spread among people, as well as the gaps that exist in the diagnosis-to-treatment value chain.

South Africa has one of the highest TB rates in the world; people are still dying from it because TB preventative measures are not fully in place, and patients often develop resistance because they default on their medicines.

"As a young female scientist in a male-dominated world I have had to work harder, and I am proud of the opportunities that I have grabbed. I am involved in tutoring high school students in Gugulethu, black students who do not have teachers and are having their development slanted by conditions out of their control."

Through mentorship she hopes to instil a sense of confidence in her students, so that they do not think twice about applying to the best universities in the country and the world. Kgoadi hopes to open her own HIV/TB co-infection lab in South Africa someday soon.

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

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Lebogang Mahlare (30)

Fellow in infrastructure energy renewal, NYU Stern Business School

Twitter: @ladyelle_mhl

Mpumalanga-born Lebogang Mahlare is passionate about technology and its importance in African development. Her decision to do a master's in New York was influenced fundamentally by a desire for international exposure.

"As South Africans we are underexposed to other parts of the continent; my friend, who had studied overseas, had wonderful things to say about the study abroad experience."

Despite being a top maths scholar during her schooling, the decision to study engineering happened serendipitously. "I remember not being too sure what I wanted to study at varsity, so friend of mine and I put my three choices — law, engineering and actuarial sciences — into a hat. I literally picked engineering from a hat."

After completing her BSc degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Cape Town Mahlare applied to and

was accepted for an MSc programme in urban systems engineering at New York University on an Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Scholarship.

"My experience also reasserted to me that South Africa has strong institutions that can easily compete with NYU, because my formative years at UCT were solid enough to ensure that I could easily thrive in this new context. We are doing something right ko hae and we need to protect it and ensure it stays longer and can spread to more people. It's really just the difference of prestige."

She is also a director of a nongovernmental organisation called Women in Engineering, and her involvement in it is informed by how there continues to be a mental block for women in engineering when it comes to competing with men. "The Stem field requires a lot of transformation, and we need to understand why the sector needs

women and what that benefit could be. Ultimately, diversity fosters the best of what is achievable."

Mahlare recently worked at the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation where her research explored how renewable energy mini-grid technology can reduce energy poverty in Africa through electrifying rural communities.

She is excited about existing in an era where the passing of time has meant the redefinition of societal values. "I am motivated by the radical shift in the position of women, with campaigns ranging from #MeToo to the gender wage gap. It allows us to unpack our values, because women are now occupying and transforming these spaces."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Lungile Hlatshwayo (28)

Edison engineering programme candidate, General Electric

Instagram: @lungiez

Lungile Hlatshwayo is the first African in General Electric Transport to be in the Thomas Edison development programme. This opportunity did not just fall into her lap, but came about as a result of hard work, a proven track record of consistent excellence, and most importantly, a desire to chart her own development trajectory and join a global programme that before her, was out of reach to Africans.

Born, bred and buttered in Soweto, she recalls being an inventive and curious child who was reading newspapers by the age of six. Being one of the most hardworking children at her school exposed to opportunities to represent her school at debating

championships and education expos. She spent her grade 11 year in Australia on a study exchange programme, which she says was a most formative and life-changing experience.

"I remember being so nervous when I arrived, but by the time I had left I was in my element at that school; I had even taught everyone how to sing *Naba Abantu Bayasibiza!*" Hlatshwayo chose mechanical engineering as a university choice due to the diversity of options it opens up.

Today her engineering job entails working in the power space with turbines, testing their systems and coming up with concepts and designs. As a woman in Stem who finds herself outnumbered

in almost every space, she has had to learn not to take things personally and keep focused on the end goal.

"We rear women to grow up thinking that construction and mining is tough, where you go to interviews and are asked if you are willing to get your nails dirty, but no one asks men this question."

Despite this, she is excited about being a woman who gets to exist in 2018, in light of our heavy past as a nation. "I like the fact that we are very woke as a generation; I like that if I feel my skills are not being adequately utilised, I can speak up, ask for more and change things."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Madichaba Chelopo-Mgobozi (30)

PHD in Pharmaceutical Chemistry

Twitter: @Puty_4Science

As a child Madichaba Chelopo-Mgobozi used to think that the successful people in the world were the ones on TV. Despite the gendered nature of Stem fields, she easily gravitated towards biochemistry and did not let the fact that she was outnumbered deter her.

Chelopo-Mgobozi has just completed her PhD in Pharmaceutical Chemistry from the North-West University. Her PhD project involved the development of a nano-based drug delivery system, with the potential to improve current tuberculosis (TB) therapy.

As a recent mother, she contends that that workspaces need to be more compassionate to women, who should not have to choose between science and motherhood. "We need to create spaces that allow women to still be relevant in science after becoming mothers instead of them being made to feel like they are being penalised; their contracts are not renewed, and they are not adequately supported. Women are not intellectually disadvantaged."

Her deep-seated passion for mentorship is informed by the fact that she went to a public school that offered inadequate information about future study possibilities. Were it not for



Photo: Supplied

an expo that she attended when she was in high school, the notion of university would not have been within her reach.

"Young black South Africans need mentors more than anything else. Even as a young professional, I need mentorship as it is pivotal to my career growth."

In 2015 Chelopo-Mgobozi was part of the Next Generation Scientist programme held in Switzerland — an intensive capacity-building programme for students that creates lifelong connections and international exposure.

What is next for this warrior woman? "This is just the start; I have not arrived yet. I am currently exploring how I can create links between science and social entrepreneurship, so I can do socially engaged work. Science is about changing society, after all."

— Nomonde Ndwalaza

Matthew Westaway (26)

Co-founder and chief executive, Voyc.ai

Twitter: @mattwestaway

After completing a MSc in Engineering and the Advanced Programme in Design Thinking at the Hasso Plattner Institute at the University of Cape Town, Matthew Westaway is geared towards solution finding. In this world of AI and blockchain technology that few understand, it is encouraging to know there are those who have an in-depth knowledge of these systems and are creating solutions that have wide societal reach.

Westaway has been a core driver of many African-first innovations including The Hourglass project, a one-of-a-kind design piece that visually communicates company corporate social investment initiatives as well as tracking employee engagement and volunteerism; and Hello Baby 3D Prints, Africa's first ultrasound 3D printing service.

Westaway is chief executive of Voyc.ai. Together with Lethabo Motsoaledi, Westaway co-founded M&W Innovation Studio. At M&W, through applying design thinking methodology, they help companies transition towards customer-centricity and thrive in the ever-changing global paradigm. Westaway developed Africa's first ever multilingual compatible Artificial Intelligence algorithm, which automatically converts speech to text and extracts key topics through a breakthrough natural language processing algorithm.

"When working on our various client projects we would often spend many hours transcribing recorded conversations into text and thereafter synthesising the text to determine themes and insights ... This process frustrated us, and we looked at how we could use AI and machine learning to assist us be more productive and mitigate some of the biases ... So, we developed voyc.ai ("pronounced voice") — a SaaS (software as a service) solution to visualise and organise your conversations."

Voyc.ai is a core analytics tool and is now being used by other design thinkers and teams in corporate innovation and market research departments, as well as professionals such as journalists, lawyers and researchers who need a quick transcription of their conversations and want those conversations to be searchable.

Westaway's success in creating world-class algorithms has been through stressing the importance of applying the human centric-design methodology to build Artificial Intelligence technology that all people can use, not just experts. His desire is for everyone to have the superhuman power of obtaining insights from reams of unstructured data.

— Sifiso Buthelezi



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Nondumiso Mtshali

Mpho Mtsi (30)

Analyst, Tamela Holdings

Twitter: @mpho_xk

In these times of high unemployment among vulnerable groups, and as migration towards cities intensifies, there are those who see the potential that small business and rural communities can harness through entrepreneurship. Mpho Mtsi is an actuary by profession, with only one exam to be written this year to qualify as one of very few South African black female actuarial fellows today.

To bridge the investment skills and knowledge gap, Mtsi is empowering herself to empower communities — especially women. She is currently completing her Master of

Science in Global Finance as one of the youngest people accepted into the programme, based between Hong Kong, New York and Shanghai.

Mtsi has established herself as a consummate professional, now taking on the world of investments and being one of the few actuaries in this industry who encourages the growth

of local businesses, genuine and broad-based transformation as well as socially responsible investment practices.

She has mentored several young actuarial science graduates locally and globally while working to challenge the stereotypes and reservations international investors and professionals may have about Africa; having represented, worked with and been invited to speak for the Howard University/Maryland Sister State Women in Stem events at the Essence Festival in Durban, South Africa and the World Bank in Washington DC.

As the land debate moves towards expropriation and the question of food security, she has now embarked on farming projects in rural Eastern Cape in order to create investment opportunities, as well as allow those who own the land and little else to reclaim the dignity of being able to provide for their families. Mtsi is serious about utilising the organic knowledge of communities to revive the entrepreneurial spirit.

She continues to be recognised and supported globally for her efforts as she quietly establishes herself as an advocate for women in science, educational opportunities for Africans and the support of African entrepreneurs to effectively change the trajectory of this (human) resource-rich continent.

— Sifiso Buthelezi

Muthumuni Managa (30)

PhD candidate, Rhodes University

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/muthumuni-managa-a2443280/>

Growing up in the rural Venda village of Ha-Rabali, Muthumuni Managa says she “attended schools without science laboratories; in communities where cancer patients died more from lack of knowledge than cancer itself”.

But, she adds: “My ultimate influence, however, was when I personally became affected by cancer: my mother was diagnosed with cancer during my undergraduate studies. At that moment, I took a conscious decision to further my studies to PhD level, with cancer research as a focus.”

A Pearson Young Foundation Fellow, Managa holds an MSc degree and recently completed her research for a PhD in Chemistry at Rhodes University. Her accolades include the DST/MINTEK Annual NIC Awards (in 2012 and 2017) and the Lelona Fufu Prize. She is also the founder of Rhodes University’s Vhavenda Society, which she has chaired since 2014.

She is also the owner of Grahamstown’s Mu2’s Kitchen, a kasi-style restaurant which serves up affordable township cuisine. Her passion for community-building saw her scooping the 2010 and 2015 Rhodes Award for Community Engagement. She was also a laboratory manager at the Rhodes Centre for Nanotechnology Innovation from 2015 to 2017, and is currently mentoring honours and MSc students through their research.

“I grew up within a society challenged by a



Photo: Supplied

paucity of positive role models, where a girl child’s future meant pregnancy, dropout, and if lucky, an unstable marriage,” she says. “I vowed to myself that I was going to defy this, and become an agent of change.”

“Being a young scientist, many students look up to you since you are demystifying the stereotype that science is hard. Being involved in Scifest Africa as a workshop facilitator, I was humbled by primary and high school learners who approached me after my sessions and said, ‘I want to study science and bring change to my country.’ That, to me, is an indication that young learners from underprivileged backgrounds gain confidence by seeing me, and talking to them about something they previously thought was too far-reaching. As young South Africans we need to create opportunities for ourselves, and for others, work hard in driving the economy of this county in whichever career path we embark on. There is nothing impossible when you put your mind to it.”

— Carl Collison

Neil Thomas Stacey (31)

Postdoctoral researcher, Unisa

Twitter: @NeilTStacey

Neil Thomas Stacey sees his “distrust of authority and semblance of self-reliance” as essential ingredients to his success.

“Those are rare traits in academia, and surprisingly valuable,” says the 31-year-old. “Most scientists have a strong herd instinct, so a willingness to challenge the status quo and break new ground has led me to explore exciting new technologies and areas of research.”

“I was gifted with just enough stropiness to claim that major global industries are doing everything wrong and that I can do better, and I credit my success entirely to that.”

This stropiness has certainly come in handy, with the Unisa-based scientist making remarkable strides in solving some of mankind’s biggest problems.

Earlier this year he developed a technology that the *Financial Mail* described as having the potential to “reduce global water usage drastically”. Two of Stacey’s research articles, published in international scientific journals, have shown that more than 90% of the water used in agriculture is lost to evaporation. And since 70% of global water usage is for agriculture, those evaporative losses exceed all other forms of water usage put together.

Stacey’s proposed solution? To use carbon dioxide enrichment to decrease the flow of air needed to supply enough of the crucial carbon, thereby cutting down evaporation and potentially reducing water usage to a fraction of present levels.

In 2016, he was lead author of an article in the *Energy and Fuels* journal demonstrating



Photo: Natalia Ferrara of Bokeh Productions

a highly efficient new method of producing bioethanol for fuel use with energy savings of as much as 40% compared to conventional processes. Stacey also holds a patent on the technology at Wits University, and remains the technical representative for the project to commercialise it.

His latest line of research involves replacing the coal used in iron ore reduction with environmentally-friendly alternatives including biomass and waste plastics. He has been invited to speak on that technology at major international conferences and sees it as an important step in keeping waste plastic out of the environment.

As to what continues to drive him, the young scientist says: “I am mostly motivated by curiosity. I have a compulsion for figuring out how things work and solving problems. Being able to turn that curiosity to the purpose of fighting off our extinction is daunting, but also exhilarating.”

— Carl Collison

Neo Hutiri (30)

Founder, Technovera

Twitter: @Pelebox_SA

Coming from engineering background and having worked in an automation space has definitely influenced the kind of technologies that Technovera has developed,” says Neo Hutiri. “We are constantly asking questions on the role of technology and how it can help us shape some of the most challenging issues in healthcare.”

The company’s constant questioning led to it developing Pelebox Smart Lockers, a smart locker system that enables patients to collect their repeat chronic medication in under two minutes. It’s a welcome respite for patients usually burdened with having to wait hours in queues at public health facilities.

A University of Cape Town electrical engineering graduate, Hutiri worked as an automation engineer at ArcelorMittal SA before taking up an operations management role as a technical assistant to the company’s COO while simultaneously completing a master’s in engineering at Wits



Photo: Supplied

University. He later ventured into the technology startup ecosystem in Johannesburg and founded Technovera, a technology start-up developing smart solutions. He has a passion for nurturing the entrepreneurial culture, is always up for a challenge and is heavily invested in the development and adoption of smart technologies in the African healthcare space.

“My career has been great, from engineer to operations to social entrepreneurship. I feel that I have been able to walk a path that leverages my strengths to achieve social impact for my communities. The fact that we have used all the technical knowledge developed over years to come up with a solution that is simple and easy to use has been rewarding,” says the 30-year-old.

As to what his most rewarding moment thus far has been, Hutiri says, “When we finished installing the first locker in Mamelodi and we had the first patient using our invention. That look in the patient’s eyes when using the Pelebox Smart locker for the first time was one of the most rewarding moments of my journey.”

It is moments such as these that continue to drive Hutiri to excel and make a difference. “I am driven by my desire to contribute to shaping a future that I know is possible for Africans. I am driven by my curiosity and the power that lives within people to shape and create.”

— Carl Collison

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Photo: Supplied

Nicholas Tsila (31)

Explosive researcher, CSIR

Instagram & Twitter: @nttsila

in providing local and international clients world-class services in the challenging and unique field of explosive test and evaluation," Tsila says.

The work requires discipline and focus on detail to ensure that successful services are provided to support the development of safe products that will save lives and add value to clients. Dealing with experimental and advanced explosive devices means that safe working procedures and specialised training are imperative to create a secure working environment.

At work, Tsila is a member of the CSIR test team that conducts vehicle landmine protection validation in accordance with local and international test standards. As the only person with capability in this work in South Africa, Tsila and the team are recognised both locally (in the SANDF and defence industry) and internationally.

Tsila also assists the CSIR explosive manager in reviewing test plans from leading scientists and engineers to assist them in improving the safety of their designs. He has participated extensively in counter-terrorism research undertaken by the CSIR.

In the future, Tsila hopes to become a major player in the explosive effects research space and has ambitions to do his MSc in explosives with Cranfield University in the UK. Tsila will be presenting a paper he co-authored, titled Experimental Characterisation of the Effects of Three Different Explosives Using the Blast Test Device at the International Symposium on Military Aspects of Blast and Shock in September 2018 in the Netherlands.

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Supplied

Ntsako Mgiba (23)

Co-founder and CEO, Jonga Systems

Twitter: @mgibn95

for low income communities. We're targeting them specifically because for far too long affordability has been a major barrier for them accessing security so they're a largely underserved market. Through providing our product I hope that communities will become empowered to come together and form neighbourhood watches that protect themselves," he says.

Currently pursuing a master's degree in Computer Science at UCT as a Mandela Rhodes scholar, Mgiba clinched the first prize in numerous entrepreneurship challenges on- and off-campus. The Jonga team were winners in the 2017 edition of the Santam Safety Ideas competition and Mgiba recently shared this innovative South African product on the Web Summit stage in Lisbon, Portugal.

Mgiba's successes are, he says, driven by his passion for people.

"I would always be drawn towards leadership positions and take every opportunity that I could find that allowed me to interact with other people. I wanted to always find a way to bring those two passions together. Through running a social enterprise that uses technology to empower communities I've managed to find that balance," he says.

"What also drives me into action is knowing that there are people who are completely vulnerable to crime and that there is nothing they can do about it because current security solutions are too expensive. I believe this to be a great injustice as everyone has a right to safety and security."

— Carl Collison

Ntwanano Sipho Mapfumari (26)

Part-time lecturer and PhD candidate, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University

Twitter: @Mapfumari

A Kwame Nkrumah quote — "Those who would judge us merely by the heights we have achieved would do well to remember the depths from which we started" — is one Ntwanano Sipho Mapfumari keeps on his mind all the time.

At just 26, Mapfumari has reached some heady heights. Having completed his MSc in Biochemistry looking into the effects of geographical location on the phytochemical composition of the leaves of *senna italica* collected from four districts across Limpopo, he is now working on his PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences. Mapfumari is also the co-founder of the educational organization ThinkBig39 and the founder of the entertainment organisation SMU Got Talent and the Progressive African Socialist Students Organisation. In addition to being a part-time lecturer and mentor to postgraduate students, he is also an executive member of the SMU-Medunsa Alumni Association.

It is Mapfumari's humble roots, the "depths from which he came" which influenced where he is today.

"I grew up in the deep rural areas of Limpopo, so I used to spend a lot of time in the mountains, where I was herding goats. It was there that I got to notice that a lot of the indigenous knowledge practitioners used nature to treat their patients. Over time, I got to use a number of nature-based medicines. In 2007, I moved to Phalaborwa to stay with my uncle. There I got to a computer for the first time in 2008."

In 2009, he was a finalist in the national in the Eskom Science Expo for Young Scientists



Photo: Supplied

and participated in a leadership training programme put together by the Phalaborwa-based foundation, Protec.

"There I was taught that the best leaders are those who serve their community and leave an everlasting mark on the hearts of the people they serve."

Serving his community and leaving an indelible mark on the world is precisely what Mapfumari aims to do.

"From time immemorial, plants have been relied on for the treatment of different diseases and infections by different tribes across the continent and the globe as a whole. However, over time, with the advent of new technology, these are neglected and no longer trusted. My career aims to change this by bringing back trust of these natural sources of medication. Who knows, maybe the cure to cancer and HIV and AIDS is hiding there."

— Carl Collison

Phylis Makurunje (31)

PhD student, Wits University

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/phylis-makurunje-b598741a/

Looking back at her years growing up, Phylis Makurunje describes herself as "this odd girl who made wire cars".

"A lot of people around me took me so seriously that parents in my neighbourhood would come to my mother to ask for me to make wire cars for their kids. One day, I saw an older boy who had made a helicopter which rolled on wheels, and I said to myself, 'I want to make a helicopter too'. My career path since then did not take a straight line; I startlingly leaped back into my dream when I got the opportunity to study aerospace materials at the University of the Witwatersrand," says the 31-year-old.

A PhD candidate under the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Strong Materials at Wits University, Makurunje specialises in ultra-high temperature composites (UHTCs) for rockets and future hypersonic space aeroplanes which can travel across continents in just one hour. Two patent applications have been submitted for her inventions in the past year. In May 2017, she was awarded the Prof. S Luyckx award by Wits University for "making an outstanding contribution to the field of hard metals and powder metallurgy".

A passionate public speaker, Makurunje was also a finalist in the 2017 Famelab South Africa competition.

She has worked with renowned science communicators like Robert Inglis of Jive Media and Quentin Cooper of the British Broadcasting Corporation and was one of the guest speakers at the 2017 SAASTA (South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement) National Olympiad Awards ceremony. In August 2017 she was invited to participate in department of science



Photo: Supplied

and technology's dialogue with minister Naledi Pandor on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work.

Makurunje also sits on the President's Council of Student Advisors of the American Ceramic Society, and serves on the Space Generation Advisory Council. She has also been chosen as a delegate at the United Nations 21st session of the Committee on Sciences and Technology for Development focusing on space technologies and space security.

"A lot people think that outer space is all about exploration, walking on the moon and conquering Mars," she says. "But space technologies have a far-reaching impact in telecommunications, transportation, public health, food security and natural disaster preparedness. The future belongs to those who are leveraging space technologies to address the challenges in our communities."

— Carl Collison



Photo: Supplied

Pule Segale (32)

Civil engineer and construction site manager, Mainstream Renewable Power

Twitter: @PuleSegale

cities more inclusive. An alumnus of the Brightest Young Minds (BYM) organisation (after being selected as one of the 100 young leaders in Africa to attend the BYM summit in 2016) Segale has also been recognised as a Future Energy Leader by the World Energy Council and is part of the FEL-100 program that is designed to inspire, grow and develop the world's energy leaders of tomorrow.

"This was one of my proudest moments thus far," he says, adding that the recognition "has encouraged me to do more in the energy space".

Segale received the inaugural Youth Energy Leadership Award in 2017 from the South African National Energy Association and was nominated for the Outstanding Contribution Award (Youth Leader) in 2018 by African Utility Week. He holds a BSc in engineering and is completing an MSc in project management, both from the University of Cape Town.

"I am constantly challenging myself to better contribute to the society in which I live and would like to be a change agent as well as position myself as an advisor to the current officials in order to tackle the challenges related to energy poverty and economic development," he says, adding, "My primary aim is to improve the quality of life for ordinary people by providing access to clean, renewable energy."

— Carl Collison



Photo: Joffie Berkowitz

Ruby-Anne Birin (23)

Archaeologist and Optical Stimulated Luminescence Dating specialist, Wits University

Twitter: @Rubys_Travels

colonial farming in Africa. Stonewalled, terraced agricultural sites are significant because they speak to innovative approaches to farming and to long-term relationships with the land. This challenges perceived notions of African farming as unsustainable and constantly shifting.

Birin was also guide and coordinator of the education programmes at Wits University's Origins Centre which focuses on Southern African archaeology. She assisted in cataloguing the department's archaeological collection, including online digitising of the collections. Being accepted to Oxford University to read for a master's degree in Archaeology is, she says, one of the proudest moments of her life.

"Archaeology gives us the ability to understand the lives of everyday people in the past — not just the wealthy and elite," she says. "It can tell the story of people who did not write their histories. By doing this we give a voice to those who have been robbed of their rightful place in the history books. It problematises how we, as a society, changed and came to be. It allows for those whose stories have only been told by the victor to regain dignity. This is of great relevance in a country where so many people's stories have been forgotten, manipulated and politicised for personal and selfish gains."

— Carl Collison

Safiyyah Iqbal (27)

PhD candidate, Wits University

Twitter: @Safz_Rapunzel

Citing her parents as her main driving force, Safiyyah Iqbal says her proudest moment was, "seeing my parents smile as I graduated for my BSc, BSc honours and MSc" degrees. "They have always believed in my capabilities and as they have been my role models, they have always influenced me to always give my very best," she says.

Giving her very best has certainly seen the 27-year-old reaping the rewards. Currently a PhD student at the Wits University Evolutionary Studies Institute (ESI), Iqbal completed an undergraduate degree in 2012, majoring in animal, plant and environmental sciences.

"I then furthered my studies by completing my BSc honours in 2013 and MSc degree in 2014 in palaeontology at ESI, where my research was the first quantitative study on the forelimb of a non-mammalia form cynodont, *thrinaxodon liorhinus*. At present, I am finalising my PhD, which features a multidisciplinary approach that is the first in this field by combining palaeontology and mechanical engineering through emphasising the application of finite elements analyses in studying the functional morphology of fossils," she says.

Not only a regular participant at conferences (like the Imaging with Radiation: 1st South African Biennial Conference,

Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa's Biennial Meeting and the African Light Source conference and workshop held in Grenoble, France), Iqbal is also passionate about ESI's outreach programmes, Sci-Bono and Yebo Gogga. These programmes, she explains, "allow fellow scientists to be aware of the research that ESI provides in the day and age of new technologies".

Her hard work and passion are made remarkable given that, as she concedes, "my journey to where I am today was faced with life challenges".

But, adds the devout Muslim: "Having full faith and trust in The Almighty — as well as having a wonderful support system from my parents, friends, and colleagues — made each hurdle a lot easier to overcome."

And it is this support she is determined to keep paying forward.

"Through what I do, I want to demonstrate by leading an example. As a Muslim female scientist I hope to inspire and motivate other Muslims and females to never give up because of what society says and to persevere [for] their goals in life."

— Carl Collison



Photo: Supplied

Dr Sahba Nomvula Besharati (31)

Neuroscientist, Wits University and King's College London

LinkedIn: <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/sahba-besharati-82877723>

The passion I have from my work as a neuroscientist and for my family comes from the same source: my belief, as a Baha'i, that the main purpose of our lives is to be of service to others and work towards shaping an ever advancing society," says Dr Sahba Nomvula Besharati.

As to what piqued her interest in neuroscience, the South African of Iranian descent says: "Growing up, I would say I had a bit of an identity crisis. I am an 'Afro-Persian' as I like to call it, being born and raised in South Africa, but having Persian/Iranian parents. However, I also spent a portion of my childhood years in Canada, still having a strong Canadian accent. So I always found it difficult to really place myself among my peers. Then naturally when studying psychology, and later neuropsychology, the study of 'the self' — also called personality, identity depending what discipline you are coming from — and how our environment shapes our sense of self, immediately captivated my interest."

Besharati holds a postdoctoral fellowship in neuropsychology from Wits University's psychology department. Her PhD was funded by a Commonwealth Scholarship and was awarded jointly by the University

of Cape Town and the King's College in the UK in 2015. Her current research is on the social-cognitive and neuroanatomical basis of self-awareness in infancy and childhood.

In 2017 she initiated "Brain Matters", an interdisciplinary seminar series and collaboration of two research centres and two neuroscience societies presented by four South African academics and two international scholars. The final event in 2017 was an NRF-SAfm Science for Society lecture broadcast live on SAfm. The series has continued in 2018 with a lunchtime seminar and a one-day workshop on drawing the brain in order to understand neuroanatomy better.

"Academic interests aside, one of the main purposes of Brain Matters was to make the study of the brain accessible and interesting to the public. South Africa has one of the highest rates of neuropsychiatric disorders in the world. Everyone, regardless of their education can benefit from knowing a little more about the brain and how it shapes ourselves and society, as well as potential health implications."

— Carl Collison



Photo: Supplied



Simangele Mbali Msweli (24)

MSc candidate (biological sciences), University of KwaZulu-Natal

Twitter: @MsweliSimangele

Simangele Msweli is a science student who plays a role in translating science to a non-science audience and in using science to influence policy. Biodiversity, the initial interest of the young scientist, is not distributed evenly on Earth; it is richest in the tropics and around the equator. It is for this and other reasons that she aspires towards not only doing research in South Africa, but Africa at large, because the continent is such a rich biodiverse land mass and the various fauna and flora remain largely under described.

Msweli recently submitted her MSc in Biological Sciences (specialising in pollination biology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and will be registered for her PhD by July 1. She completed her honours degree cum laude and has received various international student awards that have allowed her to present work in Australia (2015), Uganda (2016), the United Kingdom and China (2017).

Growing up in the beautiful and biodiverse Mtubatuba region of KwaZulu-Natal made Msweli curious about her natural environment. Her fascination with changes in vegetation, wetlands and the landscape in general led to wanting to understand the causes of

those changes. In high school, she joined an environmental club. "This launched my career, as it exposed me to more environmental issues through excursions for wild dog tracking and sea turtle tours, among many other activities."

Msweli participates in environmental education initiatives in UKZN, where they create an environment to share science with primary and high school kids. An aspiring researcher and lecturer, she hosts community outreach programmes such as providing environmental education at the Happy Earth Festival and the Royal Show. An interest in policymaking led her to be a member of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network; she has participated in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in India (2012), Mexico (2016) and Canada (2017). She is a recent recipient of the UKZN Talent Excellence and Equity Acceleration Scholarship, which means the university will fund her PhD for the next three years and offer an academic post for research and lecturing for three years after its completion.

— Sifiso Buthelezi



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

It was an allergic reaction as a child that ignited Sindiswa Lukhele's passion for medicine and research.

"I came across an encyclopaedia in my mother's books that focused on different diseases and how to treat them. Following multiple doctors' appointments, I had to refer to the encyclopaedia to understand a doctor's diagnosis. As child I was fascinated by the pictures of diseases more than the actual treatment, which sparked an interest for me to explore on anything related to human health. It was only when I got to university that I was introduced to alternative medicine as a form of treatment against cancer, which led to an interest on drug discovery," says Lukhele.

A master's graduate and PhD candidate in clinical microbiology and infectious diseases at Wits University's respiratory and meningeal pathogens research unit, Lukhele is currently involved in a research study titled Genetic Characterization of Group B Streptococcus Among Colonizing and Invasive Disease Isolates in South Africa, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, UK.

She says this achievement is one of her

Sindiswa Lukhele (30)

PhD candidate, University of the Witwatersrand

Twitter: @LukheleSindiswa

proudest moments. "A surreal moment and a dream come true." The study aims to identify biomarkers associated with neonatal meningitis and sepsis within a Group B streptococcus genome. Her study has a potential to aid in maternal and neonatal vaccine development to save babies from dying and also reduce the number of stillbirths. She was motivated to pursue research in infectious diseases when her nephew was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis.

Lukhele is also involved in a project called Cannabis for Cancer. Adopted from her master's research, it aims to identify compounds of *cannabis sativa* that are effective against all types of cancer.

A published author who has supervised interns and a part-time master's student, she also mentors undergraduate students who wish to pursue research in their respective fields.

"Researchers play a huge role in society by sharing information that may benefit or affect society. I regard myself as a researcher whose aim is to create awareness on infectious diseases and the use of alternative medicine such as cannabis. I use social platforms to share information on what might impact society health wise and how it can improved. Currently there is no vaccine for Group B streptococcus invasive diseases. I would like to aid in the development of the vaccine to improve infant health in South Africa and across the borders."

— Carl Collison

Takunda Mambo (29)

Research lead, Trustlab Blockchain Innovation Studio

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/takundamambo/>

As a research and development lead for Trustlab Blockchain Innovation Studio, Takunda Mambo's role is centred around addressing the neglect that faces early childhood development (ECD) in South Africa. This done through a Unicef-backed project startup called Amply. TrustLab, aligned to the United Nations (UN) and using insights from Mambo, is looking to change this neglect of ECD and is already planning to implement its work in other developing countries.

The mandate involves evaluating opportunities for the use of Ethereum blockchain technology to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. TrustLab developed the IXO Protocol — the first of its kind globally — in response to the UN's call for data usage to improve development outcomes. As part of the company, he is currently implementing South Africa's first use case of blockchain technology to monitor early childhood development centre attendance, which will, in turn, be used to inform and aid government and donor funding disbursement to children most in need.

Mambo has an extensive background in several areas pertaining to sustainable development in the technology and social development spheres. He's a doctoral candidate at the University of Cape Town's Energy Research Centre, undertaking research on the use of mobile phone services to improve the livelihoods of underprivileged communities.

Rural communities are not privy to the



Photo: Prudence Mambo

service delivery that their city counterparts enjoy, but smartphone penetration and further exploration of access to data may present opportunities for innovation and alternative income streams. Additionally, Mambo is also applying his knowledge at Simanye, an organisation of individuals passionate about creating impact as well as driving profitable businesses; in an increasingly globalised world, finding intersecting points for business and community development is productive for both markets and communities.

Through their work, they develop integrated and inclusive strategies that help businesses grow while also finding ways to benefit customers, employees and the community along with the company.

— Sifiso Buthelezi



Photo: Wendy Landau

Sinethemba "Nombala" Makanya (31)

Science communicator and PhD student, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research

Twitter: @nombala_royale

Part of Sinethemba Makanya's journey has been undertaking training to practice as a traditional healer. It is this journey, she believes, that led her to enrol for a PhD in Medical Humanities at Wits in 2015 on the topic of demystifying traditional healing by writing it down as a theory and model. The importance of such an undertaking is often frowned upon by traditional gatekeepers, but such processes create an understanding of ancient African perspectives and knowledge that is transferred almost solely orally.

Makanya is doing her PhD at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research. Growing up in KwaZulu-Natal, amid many tales and myths, she completed her first degrees at UKZN. She then won a Fulbright Scholarship to complete a master's in Drama Therapy at New York University. In 2013 she joined the Drama for Life programme at Wits as a lecturer in applied drama and conducted applied drama interventions with communities via Themba Interactive, a Gauteng nongovernmental organisation.

She also taught acting and drama in education at the University of Pretoria.

The last eight months have seen her shine globally as a science communicator, giving three-minute talks on her research questions and initial findings. She is a recipient of the three-year doctoral bursary from the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development. In September 2017 she won the Centre of Excellence's Spark Talks completion for all their bursary holders. The centre nominated her as a participant in the 2018 Wits heats of Fame Lab, where she was the winner of the heat. The heat seeks to rid science of its jargon and make the information accessible to the public. In three minutes she covered a lot of ground about African knowledge, mental health, decolonising knowledge and the Life Esidimeni tragedy.

— Sifiso Buthelezi

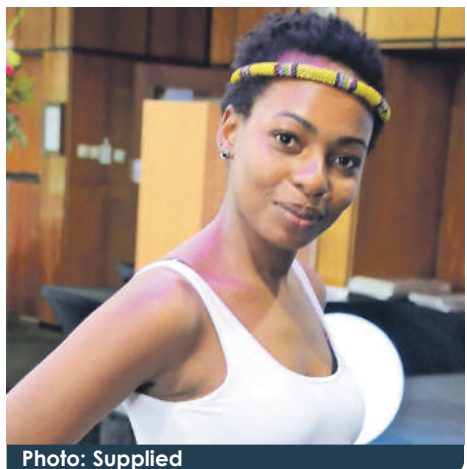


Photo: Supplied

Vusani Mandiwana (32)

PhD research scientist, CSIR

Instagram: @vusym

Vusani Mandiwana was born and raised in the rural village of Ha-Mandiwana, Nzhelele, Limpopo and is a PhD (Pharmaceutics) research candidate as well as being one of the youngest women deputy chairpersons of the Gauteng Alumni Chapter Committee for the University of Venda. She is involved in a project which addresses the shortfalls in the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer.

She mentors high school students who wish to pursue careers in the area of science, technology and engineering. Guiding people to become the best version of themselves is key to her work. She believes in honing the full individual and assists in improving the image of individuals to be aligned with their personal style and goals — she believes in matching the outside with the inside.

The passionate mom was nominated as one of the best MSc students for the CSIR-MSM

Excellence Awards in 2014 and prides herself on mirroring the characteristics she wants her sons to encompass one day.

The loss of her husband in a car accident four years turned her world upside down. Following his death she decided to live her life and not question her purpose after being stuck in a comfort zone. She started travelling, becoming involved in community projects, helping her children and is dedicating her energy to things that matter the most for her. Success, she has come to understand, is relative for everyone. Contentment and happiness while helping others is key for her, striking a balance with things she values most.

She is inspired by people who defy the norm and follow their passion despite the odds being stacked against them. This gives her hope when times are tough. She is also revived by walks in nature and by reading.

Mandiwana is working on her legacy to create a life coaching school where she wants to empower women of all ages. This will work hand-in-hand with her image consultancy, helping to build confidence in young South Africans.

— Leigh Wils

Dr Zamantungwa Khumalo (30)

Medical scientist, National Institute of Communicable Diseases

Twitter: @drshandapar

Dr Zamantungwa Khumalo is passionate about science, research, youth and rural development and is inspired by passionate, hard-working people who go the extra mile to assist others in their development.

She is a medical scientist at the National Institute of Communicable Diseases and holds a PhD in Veterinary Science from the University of Pretoria. Khumalo was awarded the Best PhD Student award from the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases and elected as a candidate for the prestigious Angela Davies-Russel Award in 2017 under the Parasitological Society of South Africa. She also serves as an external examiner of a master's student from the North-West University.

She is the founder and chairperson of I am a Future Leader Youth Development Programme, a non-profit organisation. It aims to improve the lives of others through educational development and leadership programmes specifically targeted at high school learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. She is also part of the Apprentices Women Leadership, which since 2016 has recognised top matric learners and community builders in Bergville.

Overcoming her own limitations and fully believing in herself is something she admits takes

time. Looking at past achievements and future goals help her stay on course when times are rough.

She aims to build a national career hub. Many young people do not know what career to choose or lack the tools and technology to realise it. Creating accessible opportunities for others is key for her. "The building will be built in a sense that all the entrances to the building represent the actual university. This is an idea I have in mind.

"Apart from my passions, what keeps me going is my five-year-old daughter Lubambo. She is the reason I want to do better in life and live a life that defies mediocrity."

— Leigh Wils



Photo: Supplied



Photo: Supplied

Yashodani Pillay (28)

PhD candidate, UKZN

Twitter: @Yash_P

Yashodani Pillay believes in the power of compassion and the constant desire to improve herself and those around her gives her purpose. She defines herself through her connection to others and how they impact each other. This became clear after personal circumstances solidified her decision to dedicate her life to the health and education sector.

The Durban-born leader is currently completing the final year of her PhD in

Medical Sciences with a specific focus on toxicology and molecular biology. "I really enjoy the innovation, discovery process and social impacts of science," she says.

She has worked with organisations in health and education for both government and international communities, including the United Nations Association for Human Values in 2012.

The experience helped her to better understand the specific needs and interventions required to tackle some of the most dire situations faced by many vulnerable people in society. It ultimately contributed to her interest in public health, the development of effective counteractive methods and the integral role of science and education in developing society as a whole.

She notes that some of her career highlights include presenting her work abroad, working with others and mentoring within the science and education sector. "Our lab has a strong culture of paying it forward in terms of training, support and helping others where you can, and I've learnt from and been able to share in this capacity."

Pillay admits that she stands on the shoulders of giants near and dear to her heart. Her mother and aunt serve as powerful female figures in her life, always pushing the boundaries of what is possible. Their accomplishments and dedication to social justice issues as well as their compassion influenced her from a young age.

Above all, she is a strong advocate of doing one's best. She believes one can never know what you can do if you don't give it your all.

— Leigh Wils

Dr Aletta Esterhuyse Millen (34)

Associate professor in Physiology, Wits University

Twitter: @AlettaMillen

Four years after obtaining her PhD, Dr Aletta Millen was promoted to associate professor in physiology at Wits University, and has established herself as a highly motivated and driven scientist. Millen has established a unique study in which she is elucidating the mechanisms whereby inflammation causes heart diseases, and thus improves the risk stratification and prevention of cardiovascular diseases in people with rheumatoid arthritis — a condition which is very hard to manage. "From a young age I was very intrigued with how the human body works, especially understanding the altered physiology in disease states," she says. "Being able to make a difference in the knowledge around non-communicable diseases in South Africa through my work is an added bonus."

After growing up in Rawsonville, a small town in the Breede River Valley in the Western Cape, Millen studied at Stellenbosch University until the end of her MSc degree in 2010, then she moved to Johannesburg. Millen is passionate about health and wellbeing and was active during her years at Stellenbosch in the university's

netball first team as well as in the provincial and regional netball team — "the netball equivalent of the Stormers rugby team."

Millen has received several competitive grants for her research, has numerous publications in international journals and is currently mentoring a number of students. Besides her professional career, she manages a household, raises a two-year-old daughter and actively participates in the management of her husband's biokinetics practice.

Millen is passionate about correcting disparities in health care in our country. "There need to be strategies to bridge the gap between state and private healthcare and the cost of healthcare (especially private healthcare), the way in which state-owned facilities are managed and the way in which these hospitals operate. I think educating people not only in healthcare but also healthcare management needs to be addressed."

— Aaisha Dadi Patel



Photo: Prof Richard Brooksbank



TO THE

FILM-MAKERS

GAME-PLAYERS

& BROADCAST BOFFINS

WE SALUTE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THIS YOUTH MONTH



Through our Youth Initiatives, young people are taking their future into their own hands by building a foundation for life-long success.





Adam Arnold Mkasi, aka Coach Ma-Ada (32)

Founder and head coach, Silky Stars Football Academy

Twitter: @Coachyanga

Adam Arnold Mkasi (aka Coach Ma-Ada) breathes football. His love for the game sees him sharing his expertise with everyone around him. He uses his passion for developing people through sport to persevere despite the odds against him.

Hailing from Ndhambi wa Dzumeri village in Giyani, Limpopo, his love for the game was honed at an early age playing football in the dusty streets. His brother Reddy Mkasi, also committed to the development of football in their community, allowed the young Adam to accompany him to such sessions from the age

Photo: Supplied

of four. His interest in understanding the game in its entirety became central to his passion and commitment for the game.

Through support from his English teacher Colly Chauke in high school, he started coaching the school's football team from the age of 15. Balancing the position of head coach and doing well in school stretched him a great deal as his love for football coaching continued to blossom. He progressed to coach the local community football club, the Dzumeri Real Zebras, in grade 10. Many of his teammates were older than him.

After completing matric, he moved to Gauteng to obtain football coaching qualifications and live his dream, a journey that had its many ups and downs.

While he attained his football coaching and administration course and sports management diploma, his team, the Alexandra Ladies Football Club, were promoted from the Absa Women's League to the Sasol Women's League. He got the opportunity to rub shoulders with professionals in the game and grow even further.

In 2011, he decided to start his own football academy, the Silky Stars Football Academy through which he continues to develop children's football skills. In 2016, he joined the SAPS as a police officer, and coached the Tshwane SAPS Academy, where he won the championship title. He then went onto to win the bronze medal as head coach a year later in the SAPS Women's National Championship.

Next up, he plans to develop football coaches, write his own manuals and create tutorial videos. He wants to build his legacy by creating a longstanding football academy to ensure the development of football and his people. Outward success is a mere reflection of the high standards he holds for himself. He says self-development is key in his success formula. "I want to beat my own records everyday as success is a battle between me, myself and I only."

— Leigh Wils

Bongiwe Msomi (30)

Netball player and captain, Proteas

Instagram: @bongiweomsomie

Bongiwe Msomi didn't have much say when she was elbowed into the netball world. It's something she's grateful for to this day.

Watching her neighbourhood friend from the sidelines, the then 16-year-old was asked to step into the court so they could have a full practice game. The next Monday, her soon-to-be coach and mentor, Sthembiso Mncwabe, insisted she come to training that day.

"I tried to get away from it," she says. "I was a bit intimidated with some of the girls as I had less knowledge and skills for the sport. Luckily we didn't really have much choices back then. If the teachers thought you were good in something, saw the talent in you, they would help you through it and you would just have to respect and trust them. I'm pleased he insisted I play and until today, he's still my mentor. I have huge respect for him."

Msomi would thrive on the court but it was just the beginning of her challenges off of it. She was given multiple opportunities in and around her home province of KwaZulu-Natal but struggled to grab them due to steep travelling fees. Shortly after beginning her studies at the Durban University of Technology she took on a job to support both her home and her netball career. "I still wonder how I



Photo: Scott Barbour/Getty Images

use to manage. But I did. Though all this, I still kept on training hard and made the teams that I never thought I would. Long story short, you can achieve anything if you put your mind into it. I truly believe that!"

Now the Proteas captain, she has put her ability on display around the world. At club level she has represented two teams in England's Netball Superleague — the Surrey Storm and Wasps Netball. She's currently playing her trade in Australia for the Adelaide Thunderbirds. On the international scene, Msomi is targeting a successful season with South Africa as they prepare to make an impact at the 2019 Netball World Championships.

Msomi promises there's far more to come, during and after her playing career. "It has always been my dream to have a successful netball academy," she reveals. "I love coaching and being part of the development of netball. It would be great to have a platform where I can educate (mainly about life skills and common issues around being a sportswoman), coach and share my knowledge with the girls while monitoring their progress. I have taken a few steps towards this and hopefully it will happen."

— Luke Feltham

Bongane Makhonjwa (27)

Founder, Spark Youth Alive Project

Bongane Makhonjwa is a community youth leader passionate about combining leadership and sports. His passion for youth development through sport is how he aims to impart leadership skills, improve business acumen and life skills, which he believes can help alleviate poverty, upskill others and create better opportunities for the youth in his community.

Born in Meadowlands, Soweto Zone 4, his family moved to Orange Farm in the south of Johannesburg where he and four siblings were raised by their mother after his father passed away in 1992. Growing up, the energetic and passionate young man dreamed of following in his grandmother's footsteps as she served as a leader in her community by fighting for workers union rights at the time. He wanted to lead the community just like she did.

After her passing in 2013, his cause was accelerated and his purpose solidified.

He joined Grassroots Soccer as a life skills coach. The move led to him being chosen as a Laureus Youth Empowerment through Sport (Yes) programme leader where he was promoted as a pioneer and mentor for new entrants.

A graduate pioneer of the Laureus Yes programme, in 2013 he was one of twelve youth coaches selected to attend a coaching and skills development exchange programme for basketball in the United States through the US department of sport, also attending the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation's annual project in Cape Town for two years.

Makhonjwa went onto to find the Spark Youth Alive project in 2014 and is chairman of the SAFA Orange Farm Local Football Association in which he is committed to improving the lives of South African youth through sporting activities.

An avid believer in self-development, he aims to absorb as much as he can to grow into the best version of himself and empower others around him to succeed too. "I believe I was sent to this world to learn as much as I can and use sport to empower people, as a tool to implement change and give hope, just as it did for me as a young youth leader growing up in a disadvantaged environment."

— Leigh Wils

Innocent Zikhali (27)

Full contact karate professional

Twitter: @zikhali_ras

Innocent Zikhali is a full contact karate professional who's also currently completing his BSc master's in Chemistry under the stream of nanomaterial sciences at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. Born in KwaZulu-Natal but raised in Lenasia South, he considers himself a renaissance man, currently solidifying his mark in the world.

Raised by his grandmother, who supported and raised him to be an independent individual, he was determined to be defined by his own standards he set for himself. Refusing to be labelled as a "shortsighted albino", he strives for academic excellence and continues to test his limits as a sportsman both physically and mentally.

His interest in karate stemmed from movies. He was not allowed to do outdoor sports due to his visual impairment and karate served as a means for him to exercise his physicality and strength. He says he is fortunate to be under the tutelage of Shihan Isaac "The African Tiger" Mashinini who has groomed Zikhali since his early 20s and helped him grow both professionally and personally.

To date, he has won the Matlosa tournament, placed second at the All African Tournament in 2016, and plans on competing in the World Tournament in Japan in 2019, eventually reaching the Olympics in 2020 and World Cup in 2021. He was sportsman of the 2016-2017 period at his university and holds a 6th degree black belt. He hopes to be a sensei one day.

One of his greatest challenges to date was participating in the karate world cup and taking the black belt grading test. He was the only African out of over 70 candidates. The experience itself reinforced the idea that he is not defined by his visual impairment or skin and that Africans are more than capable of competing on a world stage as equals. He went onto to rank 32nd in the world in his division and continues to strive for greater heights.

He believes a successful person is one who brings others along the journey as they strive to reach their goals. Kind people inspire him, as does the strength of the human spirit that never gives up. He realises the role he can play in inspiring others through his life story and hopes to do his best in all things. Serving people by doing his best, practising kindness and showing others it is possible if one works hard are the values he wants his life to encompass.

— Leigh Wils



Photo: Supplied



Lungi Ngidi (22)

Fast bowler, Proteas

Twitter: @NgidiLungi

The fall of India's last wicket in Centurion confirmed one of the greatest innings by South African on Test debut since readmission. Lungi Ngidi took six wickets for only 39 runs to achieve that feat, earning a total match score of 7/90 with an amazing strike rate of a wicket every 22.5 balls.

That man-of-the-match performance in January was vindication for a decision to dedicate his life to the sport. "I've always played cricket, but it wasn't my main focus at first," says the 22-year-old. "I was also a decent rugby player and I would get involved in swimming and athletics; I pretty much did it all. I only really started focusing on cricket in grade nine."

It was that sporting prowess that earned Ngidi a scholarship to the prestigious Hilton College in KwaZulu-Natal. He thrived in those formative years — his high school coach would later say that he always knew the precocious fast bowler was destined to make it big with the Proteas.

Yet to reach his prime, there is no limit to what Ngidi can achieve in the national set-up. Coming off the back of winning the Indian Premier League in his first season, another spectacular debut, the pacer is now fully focused on taking South Africa to the pinnacle of cricket in all formats of the game.

"I aim to stay in the national side and deliver big performances as consistently as I can. I'll prepare as best I can for upcoming tours and tournaments."

With the World Cup less than a year away, such enthusiasm will be a beautiful sound to coach Ottis Gibson. Alongside Kagiso Rabada, the Proteas now have two of the most promising fast bowlers in cricket and will have realistic hope that 2019 is the year they lose their unwanted reputation of choking under pressure.

"Listening, listening is a massive skill that helped me along the way; sometimes people think they know it all," Ngidi says of his journey to the big stage. "Listening to the information and advice that you get given is really important. You have to realise that everyone's path is different. It takes different times for different people to succeed and reach their goals."

— Luke Feltham

Mahlatse Lornah Magagane (20)

Netball player

Instagram: @lornahmahlatse

Mahlatse Lornah Magagane is an enthusiastic and talented netball player for Sefako Makgatho University's netball team while completing a degree in BSc physiotherapy.

Hailing from Ga-Mamabolo village in Limpopo, the second of four siblings believes sport is part of her makeup. Her family loves sports. Her father was a soccer coach and her mother still plays netball and continues to inspire her to this day.

Playing all kinds of sports growing up, Magagane soon realised excelling in netball was one of

her many talents. After completing matric, she decided to pursue playing netball while furthering herself academically, and is close to obtaining her degree in physiotherapy.

Photo: Supplied



Photo: Ashley Vlotman/Gallo Images

Michael Kumbirai (22)

Athlete and student

Twitter: @kumbby

Michael Kumbirai is professional rugby player for DHL Western Province as well as an economics and finance student at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He is committed to achieving his full potential as he faces both internal and external battles in pursuit of his version of greatness.

Making an impressive appearance for the Blue Bulls at the 2014 Craven Week, the young athlete was part of the SA Schools selection where he was selected for the U19 Baby Boks training camp in 2015 and was offered a position at the Western Province Rugby Institute in 2015. He was selected as Western Province U19 Forward of the Year that same year. Kumbirai has since solidified his role in the U21 Currie Cup and for the UCT Ikeys in their Varsity Cup campaign to date and continues to dominate in his position both on the field and personal capacity as well.

Suffering from three major career injuries, the experiences grounded him as he worked his way out of dark periods and began to realise the ebbs and flow of life and how each experience could potentially shape you. He therefore chooses to see the best in other people, knowing that the sides that others may view as negative are

circumstantial and last only for that moment.

Raised in South Africa, he is influenced by his Zimbabwean heritage and inspired by his parents who successfully navigated their journey from Zimbabwe to settle in South Africa and achieve their dreams. He also draws inspiration through music and sport. Sport inspires the drive in him to succeed in his career and fulfill his innate potential whilst music inspires his more soulful side.

Kumbirai's consideration and love for people continues to add to his success as a whole. "I've been told many times over that I'm too nice and that trait is not usually associated with those that excel in my field. I want to be able to maintain this trait and normalise it more within sports and the world in general with whatever influence I have."

He believes that the world needs more kindness and compassion with all the inequality that currently persists. "Helping others achieve their dreams will benefit the masses. This will lead to greater success over time." This is a lesson he has learnt through his involvement in team over his illustrious career thus far.

— Leigh Wils

Kgothatso Montjane (32)

World number 8 women's wheelchair tennis player, Wheelchair Tennis South Africa

Twitter: @Montjane_K

Limpopo-born Kgothatso Montjane is a wheelchair tennis player currently ranked number eight in the world in the women's division.

Born with a congenital deformity of one leg and hands, Montjane's other foot was amputated when she was just 12 years old. Despite her prosthetic leg, it wasn't long before she was winning trophies for ballroom and Latin-American dance.

At the age of 20, Montjane's tennis career took off after the Airports Company South Africa provided facilities for her to play wheelchair tennis in her community. The sport was introduced to her while she was at Helen Franz Special School in Bochum, Limpopo. When they noticed her affinity for the sport, Montjane's teachers at school encouraged her to take it up and represent the school in Johannesburg. She kept playing and fell in love with the sport, travelling to far flung corners of the world to compete.

From the Australian Open to the Japan Open, NEC Singles Masters, Doubles Masters, and the 2008, 2012, and 2016 Paralympics, Montjane has played in many tournaments around the world on the Wheelchair Tennis Tour. The Swiss Open is her favourite tournament.

Montjane remains unbeaten on domestic courts for nine years. "It is always a great feeling to remain at the top and witness your hard work pay off," she says. For Montjane, only hard work, dedication and passion keep her at the top of her game.

Besides her talent on the courts, Montjane started her own foundation to give back to her former school — the Helen Franz Special School — by providing sports facilities and equipment to help and give hope to people living with disabilities especially in disadvantaged communities.

Montjane also holds a BSc degree in Recreation and Leisure from the University of Venda.

The future is bright for Montjane who hopes to venture into more community sport and projects for people living with disabilities. But because she has to earn a living as well, Montjane aspires to become a successful businessperson.

Montjane wants to send a message to the world, especially to people living with disabilities, that they can be anything despite their disabilities.

— Shaazia Ebrahim



Photo: Reg Caldecott



Nompumelelo Ramatsoga (29)

Basketball coach, St Benedict's College and Business and Community Development associate, Cadre Plan

Twitter & Instagram: @numps14



Photo: Supplied

Nompumelelo Ramatsoga is a former basketball player-turned-coach. Her passion for the game and heart for young people see her as a community development consultant and aspiring sports psychologist who is breaking barriers in the male-dominated arena.

Ramatsoga fell in love with basketball at a young age and has been pursuing it ever since — eventually landing a two-year stint at Ohlone College in California and becoming the coast conference champions between 2007 and 2009. She went on to represent the Limpopo senior women's team from 2009-2012 and they won the National Championships in 2009 and 2012 and served as runners — up in 2010 and 2011.

She is breaking gender barriers in the world of

basketball as the only woman on a Basketball National League (BNL) coaching staff and as the assistant coach for Egoli Magic who won National Championships in 2015 and 2016. Floshe Ngwenya became her head coach at Egoli Magic and entrusted her to be part of his coaching staff. He continues to guide her to this day. Susan De Bruyn introduced her to basketball and her first coaching job. She was the first example of female leadership to coach men's basketball team and continues to inspire and guide her.

She has won the USSA National Championship as the assistant coach of the Wits Men's team in 2017 and is the head of basketball and First Team coach at St Benedict's College.

Making a positive impact in the lives of as many young people as possible through coaching basketball as well as through her community work. To date, she is the only woman to coach in the BNL. Inspiring young women to realise that they don't have to limit themselves in what they do with their lives and that they can do it all and have it all is a message she hopes to echo throughout her days.

She gets great joy from seeing the personal transformation of all the young players that she works with as they mature both in basketball and personally. She believes a successful person is someone who is fulfilling their purpose and someone who is willing to endure the tough times because they believe in what they are doing. Knowing she can use her work to make a positive impact in the lives of young people while defying social norms is what gets her through those tough times.

— Leigh Wils

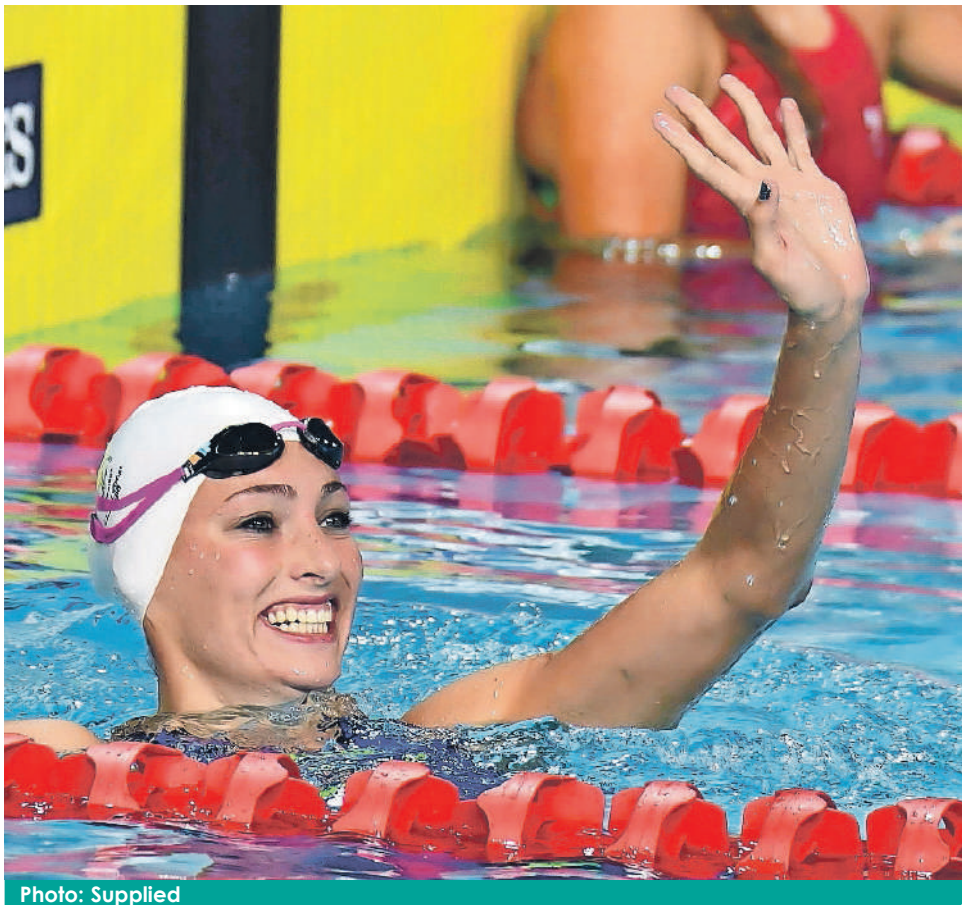


Photo: Supplied

Tatjana Schoenmaker (20)

Swimmer

Twitter: @TRSchoenmaker

Concerned for her safety around the house pool, the parents of a five-year-old Tatjana Schoenmaker taught their daughter how to handle herself in the water. Three years later she won a 25m butterfly race at a local gala and they instantly knew they had an obligation to help nurture her talent.

"You can't reach a high level with only a little amount of training," acknowledges Schoenmaker, who has been working to enhance her swimming ever since. That dedication escalated when she joined TuksSport High School and went from three-odd training sessions a week to eight. "Going to the sports school was the support I needed," she says. "Especially being away from home. I have a very good relationship with my coach and he has it with all his swimmers. It's really nice to be able to connect with your coach; if you're not it feels like you're never progressing."

That structure of support extended to this year's Commonwealth Games, where a large South African contingent travelled to Australian Gold Coast to take part. Having the whole team cheering from the side of the pool pushed Schoenmaker to remarkable heights. Three African records tumbled in the competition: all previously belonging to the legendary Penny Heyns.

Schoenmaker set an incredible 2:22.02 in the 200m breaststroke before sealing a time of 1:06.41 in the 100m version — winning gold for both. Remarkably, she joins Natalie Du Toit as the only other South African female swimmer to place first in the games.

"Winning the medals and having my parents in the stands was one of my proudest moments," she says. "I got very emotional with the national anthem. It was just such a proud moment to hear your name said and you're singing the national anthem with your parents right there with you. That was a big moment for me."

Thanks to the record times, Schoenmaker has become an instant sensation in a nation that has growing expectations for its athletes and swimmers. While she now has her eyes fixed on finishing a financial sciences degree at Tuks, there's one particular dream she will fight for in the coming months: "The ultimate goal would be to go race at the next Olympics in 2020. I only have two years to prepare."

— Luke Feltham

Tyler Hollingsworth (28)

Founder, Aspire Atlantic

Instagram: @tyler.tiggs

Tyler Hollingsworth is the co-founder of Aspire Atlantic which serves as an educational consultancy organisation that helps others fulfill their potential. His agency provides sporting academic scholarships and opportunities for young people who want to further themselves abroad.

He believes that South Africa has some of the world's best and smartest students. "When you are able to make these kids' dreams a reality and change their lives forever, that is the most gratifying experience imaginable."

Having grown up in Johannesburg, he was selected to attend football trials at Bolton Wanderers FC in the UK at the age of 16. Despite not being signed, he interacted with elite and professional players who inspired him to pursue a career abroad. After receiving a football scholarship in 2006 to the USA, he completed a BSc Finance degree at Gannon University. With two more years working in Pittsburgh for a national insurance company, he returned to South Africa in 2015 and started Aspire Atlantic agency. Opportunities such as these enabled him to secure a better future and he was determined to give back.

Working alongside inspired colleagues who are passionate and personally invested in each of their students inspires him greatly. He wants to continue to identify problems and create lasting solutions in the improvement of others' lives. His mother, Debbie Copeman also inspires him. Her tenacity and strength in raising children as a single mother while working on her own dreams helped to shape him as an individual too.

His journey continues to have its highs and lows. He is first to admit that self-confidence is something he continuously works on as he grows as an entrepreneur and leader. He believes that a lack of confidence is one of the biggest killers of ambition in society. Reading books by Dale Carnegie, Napoleon Hill and Gregory David Roberts, setting goals as well as learning to meditate and focus his thoughts helps him to pursue his dreams as he continues to help others.

Hollingsworth notes that lack of education is a key issue which continues to persist to this day. Aspire Atlantic will help people to go beyond their limitations.

"The world is a big place with so much potential, why not explore it and use your talents to take you there? Every day we help students pursue those opportunities, and we hope that they will use their newly acquired skills and put them to good use by coming back to South Africa and assist others."



Photo: Supplied

— Leigh Wils



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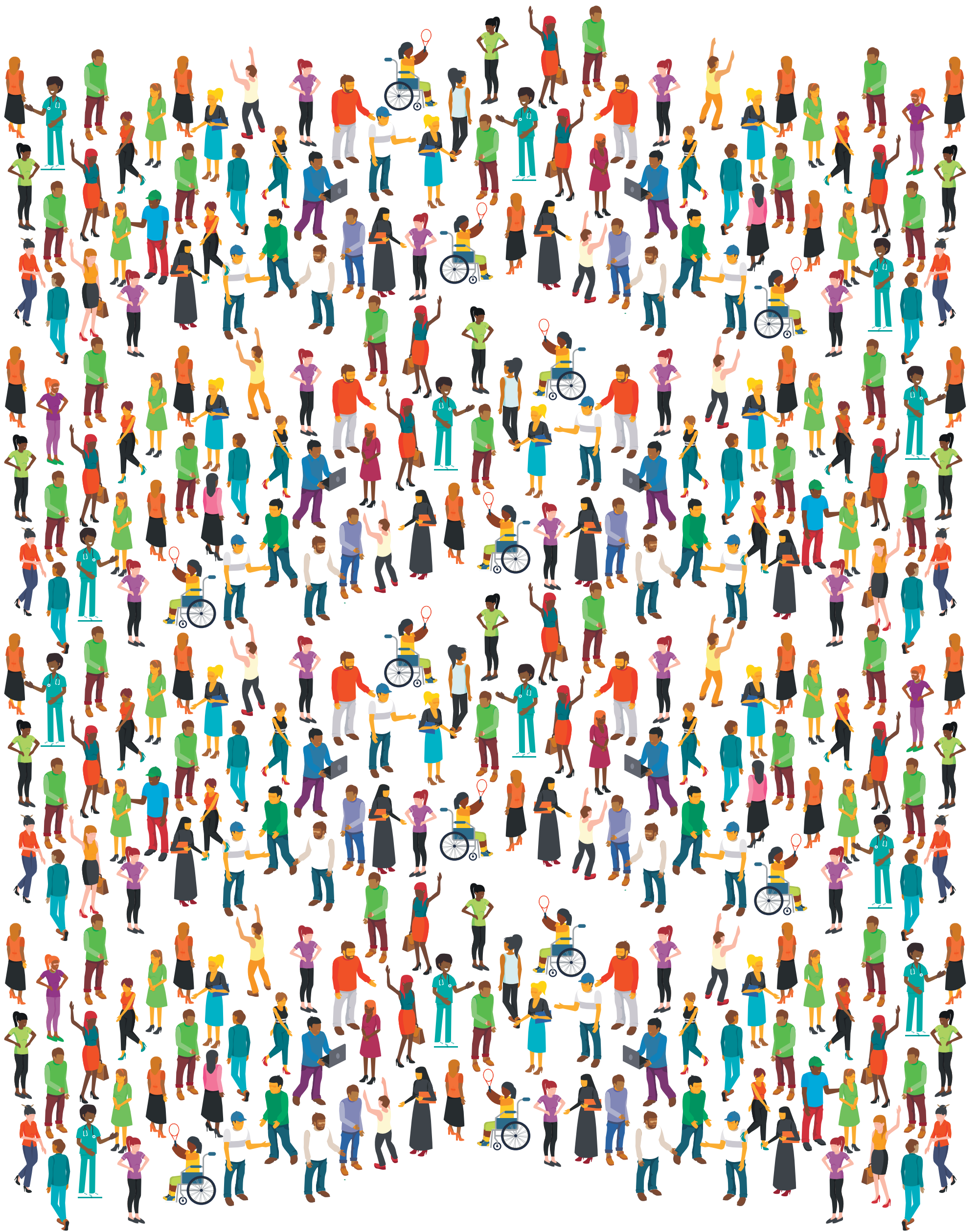
* University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP) - 2017



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