

# MATUMA LETSOALO FOREWORD



It gives us great pleasure to end off what has been an eventful year by presenting our 100 South African Shining Stars for 2023. Compiling this list is always an inspiring exercise.

Now in its 5th year, the 100 SA Shining Stars initiative celebrates young ambassadors from all corners of the country to demonstrate that, even at a time of despondency due to high youth unemployment and many other challenges, there is talent, energy, drive, hunger, and ambition among South Africa's youth.

This list comprises of dreamers, thinkers but most importantly doers. They span across sports and recreation, arts & culture, business, transport and logistics and youth development and activism. Some have already made a mark in their chosen field globally.

One of the areas in which this cohort has made an impact is around Aids awareness and prevention. This is important to note in the month when we mark World Aids Day. They serve as a reminder that Aids is another pandemic that we have overcome. One we have now lived with for over 40 years. The activist and practitioners featured here give us hope that we can overcome.

If the generation that helped deliver the 1994 breakthrough gave us political freedom, then every generation since, but especially this one, has the responsibility to liberate us, and themselves, economically.

It is gratifying to see that many on this list are involved in connecting the youth to educational and economic opportunity: From helping young people apply to university and colleges, to equipping them with work readiness and offering entrepreneurship training, these are all important to helping give the youth a foothold in the world of work. But giving the youth a stake in the economy remains a daunting task.

According to the Afrobarometer survey released in August this year, 54 % of those between the ages of 18 to 34 do not have jobs. Their biggest obstacles to finding jobs are a lack of skills and experience, as well as the stagnation or decline of sectors from mining to manufacturing.

Our youth, particularly those being celebrated today, recognise that their competition and many solutions to the unemployment crisis are global in nature. The latest dimension to the debate is the advent of artificial intelligence and machine learning, which impacts on the kind of jobs young people will be searching for in the next three to five years. Young people are best placed to lead the debate on the kind of policies needed to navigate the challenging economic landscape they face.

As South Africa prepares to celebrate 30 years of democracy next year, it is worth noting that the young ambassadors on this list, by virtue of its criteria, were born on the cusp of or during democracy. Next year's celebration offers an opportunity to reflect on the achievement of the past three decades as well as missed opportunities in the areas of political, economic, and social and technological change. It also offers us an opportunity to map the way forward towards the next thirty years.

A key part in determining the evolution of our democracy is who we put in charge to run it politically. We trust that all our Shining Stars are registered to vote, and we hope that they will use next year's election to determine who, in their view, is best placed to respond to their needs and those of broader society. We trust that you do the same.

Our cohort this year, as with other years, offers us an encouraging way forward to show us that our country and its future are in safe hands. They bring their talents to bear, most times at a cost of their volunteered time and energy, to make their communities better.

We are grateful for their effort, selflessness, and dedication. They offer us a guide to the path that our country must follow over the next thirty years to be a successful, prosperous democracy.

They are the beacons of our democracy.

*Letsoalo is the Chairman of Inside Education Foundation*



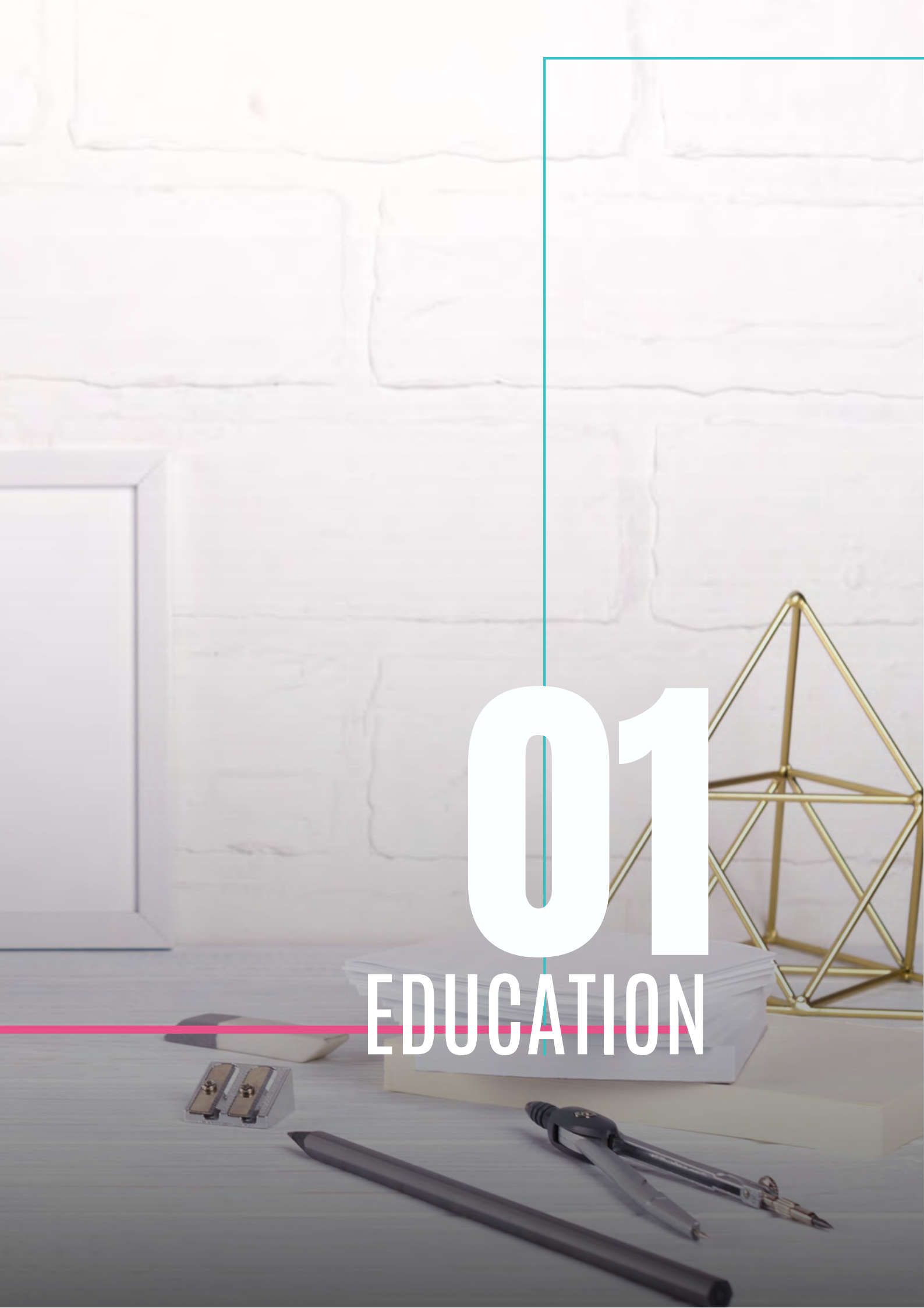
# Our Partners



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A desk setup with a white brick wall background. On the desk, there is a gold pyramid, a stack of papers, a pencil sharpener, a pencil, and a compass. The text "01 EDUCATION" is overlaid on the image.

# 01

## EDUCATION

# CLERAH SETHOLE



Clerah Sethole is Lead Director at the non-profit organisation, the Exclusively Inclusive Foundation, which raises awareness about various types of learning disabilities and how to approach and treat them in ways that do not undermine the confidence of the affected children.

A common disability the foundation focuses on is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). A child with ADHD has differences in brain development and brain activity that affect attention, the ability to sit still, and self-control. (Celebrities diagnosed with ADHD include singer Solange Knowles, gymnast Simone Biles and record producer Justin Timberlake).

Another area of concern is dyslexia, a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words. (Famous people who were dyslexic include scientist Albert Einstein, businessman Richard Branson and actor Whoopi Goldberg).

The Exclusively Inclusive Foundation, based in Rand West City, Gauteng, trains educators in creating inclusive classrooms using a special curriculum that they have developed and created.

"What we do has been a game changer in the education space especially in black communities," says Clerah. "We have been able to ensure that children with learning disabilities have a voice and that they are recognised in the education space not for their disabilities but for what they have potential in."

# GOMOLEMO NKOSI



Gomolemo Nkosi is the founder and project manager of Nimble Playful Learning Institute, a non-profit organisation that offers learning tools and services tailored for young children. The Institute offers extracurricular educational services and products to bridge the gaps in the South African education system. Its focus areas are financial, social, emotional, agricultural and leadership education for children aged five to six in the Early Childhood Development sector and seven to 12-year-olds in the Foundation Phase.

The institution also hosts educational excursions for children through what they call the Nimble Explorer programme, which is aimed at giving children opportunities and exposure to emotional education, agricultural education, social skills, financial education, leadership skills and creative arts.

In her role as the institute's project manager, Gomolemo is responsible for concept development, stakeholder liaison, resource management and general administration. She is completing her Bachelor of Business Administration degree at the University of South Africa and his versatile skill

set means his responsibilities at the institute also encompass marketing, finance and other relevant administrative tasks.



# JESSICA RONAASEN



Jessica Ronaasen from Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape is the national programmes leader at the Do More Foundation and an accomplished social worker and researcher with expertise in Early Childhood Development (ECD), non-profit management and community development.

As an ECD specialist, she has developed training programmes and manuals for the United Nations Children's Fund and the National Department of Health, focusing on nutrition guidelines for preschools in underprivileged communities.

Jessica has a PhD from Stellenbosch University, where she studied the essential management competencies of ECD principals, and has published several peer-reviewed articles, contributing to South African knowledge in ECD, education and social work. She is a Mandela Rhodes Scholar and the host of the podcast "Relate Your Research". Her dedication to building local communities, ECD, early learning, and promoting learning within organisations and schools has earned her accolades such as the National Development Agency ECD Award and the National Development Agency Youth Award. Jessica's unwavering commitment and passion for community development have made a profound impact, making her a true achiever who is making a positive impact on children and communities nationwide through her work in nutrition support, parenting programmes and early learning resources, all funded through corporate social investment initiatives.

# KAGISO WALTER RANGAKA



Kagiso Rangaka is a young social entrepreneur who has committed his efforts and skills to revolutionising the education sector through his company, DrLetMeTalkEdu (Pty) Ltd, and a non-profit organisation, Book World.

The two organisations are committed to combatting the literacy crisis among Grade 4 learners in South Africa by using the Early Childhood Literacy Development Programme LU-THE-BOOK-LOVER to actively promote early literacy development and reduce illiteracy in the Bojanala District in North West Province.

Kagiso and his team organise Literature Camps and Literature Clubs for learners in Bojanala and the programmes have thus far donated more than 500 books to children and established 11 Literature Clubs in Early Childhood Development centres in the Rustenburg area. One of the major projects Kagiso has implemented is the Marothodi Heritage Festival, a book-driven project designed to promote a culture of reading among the youth.

# KHUMBULANI CELE



**K**humbulani Cele, a foundation phase educator from Umlalazi in KwaZulu-Natal with specialised knowledge in learning disabilities - is the founder of Yours and Mine Inclusive Organisation that mobilises testing for learning disabilities, ensuring that affected children receive the necessary support to grow in confidence and thrive academically.

The project also seeks to provide tailored career choices and guidance to empower these children to explore their full potential to contribute meaningfully to society.

Moreover, Khumbulani and his organisation are committed to establishing a strong and supportive community of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and professionals, to foster an inclusive and nurturing learning environment.

The educational material on learning disabilities, which Yours and Mine offers to both parents and teachers, undoubtedly raises awareness and promotes a deeper understanding of learning disabilities. The tools and resources provided by the project are also instrumental in assisting teachers and parents to be effective in supporting children with learning disabilities. Also, Khumbulani's initiative to conduct research on teachers' understanding and misconceptions about learning disabilities showcases his commitment to evidence-based interventions and continuous improvement in the education system.

The awareness programs in schools and communities further exemplify his dedication to fostering empathy and exclusivity for children with learning disabilities.



# LUTHANDO MOLEFE



Luthando Molefe has outdone himself in transforming education for sustainable learning and futures as required by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Luthando is a Lecturer and PhD candidate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education. His research interests include self-reflexive methodologies (self-study, narrative inquiry and autoethnography), arts-based research, teacher development, professional learning, mentoring and rural education.

He holds many accolades in the areas of academic excellence, community engagement and leadership skills/roles which are the pillars he is mostly passionate about. He was named as one of the Top 10 Outstanding Young Persons in South Africa in the category: Academic Leadership and/or Accomplishment by the Junior Chamber International South Africa for 2021. Molefe was selected for his outstanding and exceptional work in academic excellence, community outreach and leadership in the various roles he performs.

He also became one of the UKZN's Top 40 Most Inspiring Students for the 2017, 2018 and 2019/20 academic years and made history in 2021 by being named the only Black student at UKZN's School of Education to achieve a summa cum laude ("with the highest praise") pass in the Bachelor of Education Honours programme.

# LUVALAN PILLAY



**L**uvalan Pillay, from Chatsworth in KwaZulu-Natal, is the Founder and CEO of Exclusively Inclusive, a registered non-profit education organisation, which aims to assist teachers and parents who have children with ADHD, Dyslexia or Dyscalculia.

Luvalan, who studied at the University of South Africa, works with another Education Shining Star, Clerah Sethole, who acts as the lead director for the organisation in Randfontein, Gauteng.

Exclusively Inclusive aims to revolutionise Special Needs Education in South Africa and beyond with an easy-to-use app that will provide educators and parents with the necessary skills to help learners with ADHD, Dyslexia or Dyscalculia.

In a post on his LinkedIn account, Luvalan, a News 24 Young Nelson Mandela Recipient in 2018, says he was inspired to develop the app to help teachers and parents better understand children with neurological disorders by a young boy with ADHD: "God bless you always, Jaiden," he wrote, "and may you grow up to be the remarkable child that you are. ADHD is your superpower and through you, many children's lives will change!" Luvalan says: "Many children with ADHD are taken out of normal schooling environments to be homeschooled only because teachers lack knowledge on assisting children with special needs."

# OCTAVIA MASIPA



Octavia Masipa is an educator at Tjitjila Secondary School in Mogalakwena, Limpopo, and an award-winning author and publisher of books selected and recommended for schools and libraries by the Gauteng Department of Education and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture.

Her books include *Well of Wellness*, *Ntsiki* and *Ntswaki*, *Architecture of Faith*, *Obedience & Restoration*, *The Harvest Worker*, and *The Portrait of God's Mercy*. Octavia uses her books in the classroom to encourage her learners to believe in themselves.

Her promotion of reading culture has helped boost the confidence of her learners who have improved their ability to read and write in both Sepedi and English.

Octavia, who completed her BA degree at Wits in 2018 and her honours degree in publishing studies in 2019, has established a publishing company called Manare Publishers to publish her books and those of other writers because she believes learning should not end in the classroom but be a lifelong activity.

She told the Daily Sun: "I love writing books for adults because I get to think beyond my age. That often challenges me to depend on God for wisdom and to address concepts that adults will see as meaningful to turn their lives around."



# SIPHAKEME NJABULO MTHABELA



Siphakeme Njabulo Mthabela has dedicated himself to ensuring that learners from township and rural schools have equal opportunities in education by offering extra classes and tutorials to help students master their desired outcomes.

He is a qualified teacher of English as a Second Language, and as the Academic Officer at Student Express South Africa, a non-profit organisation focused on providing quality education and bridging the gap between the education sectors, Siphakeme has actively contributed to the advancement of education in South Africa.

He served as a student volunteer at the University of the Free State's Institute of Reconciliation and Social Justice, working towards creating a socially just and inclusive university through institutional change, high-impact practices and advocacy.

Beyond academia, Siphakeme is dedicated to community engagement and leadership through his membership in various organisations and structures, including the prestigious Golden Key International Honour Society, which reflects his commitment to excellence and academic achievement.

Siphakeme received the Peer Mentor Award from the University of the Free State and the Professor Jeff Johnston Study Abroad Scholarship among other prestigious awards. He is also a member of the Jakes Gerwel Fellowship, T4 Education, Young African Leaders Initiative Network, and the VirtualX Academy.

# TONNY MENGWAI



Tonny Mengwai started work in a rural school in Polokwane, Limpopo, where the learners were taught using chalk, chalkboard and textbooks.

Tonny initiated the integration of information communication technology (ICT) into learning and teaching across all grades and subjects. A month after his appointment, he facilitated a donation from Telkom of laptops, projectors and screens for each class.

When it was apparent that no one at the school knew how to use the new gadgets, he took it upon himself to train all the 12 educators on how to learn and teach using the ICT methods.

In his teaching, he would use applications such as “Learn English Lab”, to develop his learners’ reading, speaking, and writing skills. The “PhET” app was also used for his science classes to make them interesting and to expose learners to experiments.

He created a computer lab and started training the learners on how to use computers for their after-school lives, teaching them subjects such as coding and robotics. Fortunately, Telkom donated extra laptops and his work became easier.

Tonny, who started off as a teacher, ended up lifting the whole community and kept learners off the streets by educating them and keeping them busy.

# TSHAAMANO MABUBA



Tshaamano Mabuba whose name means “the wise one” in TshiVenda is a 20-year-old entrepreneur from Madombidzha in Limpopo and the founder of Buddy Learning – a venture that seeks to alleviate the growing problem of youth unemployment in South Africa.

Buddy Learning provides a space where the youth can market their skills and earn an income. In this way, the youth are also gradually integrated into the labour market. Youth from poor communities can tutor school subjects and teach skills like how to play an instrument or a sport and also impart their knowledge about acting, make-up artistry, clothes making etc. Once hired, a portion of the income is ploughed back into the tutors’ communities by way of free tutorials.

The venture currently employs 45 tutors who are making a huge impact nationally and Tshaamano’s vision is to reach 100 clients and to have the tutors, 60% of whom are from poverty-stricken rural areas, fully employed.

A percentage of the proceeds from the tutors’ fees is donated to the Sun lower Dream Foundation, which donates stationery to schools in poverty-stricken areas.



# TSHEPO SECHELE



**T**shepo Sechele, a young educator from the dusty streets of Bophelong in the Vaal, is so passionate about education that he started a literacy programme at one of the primary schools in the township in 2016.

His initiative was aimed at eradicating the high rate of illiteracy, particularly for Grade 4 learners. Tshepo has also initiated programmes that are aimed at empowering and educating communities about the importance of education and their participation in the democratic processes of our country.

He graduated with Honours in Education Management and Leadership from North-West University after gaining his Postgraduate Certificate in Education in Secondary Education and Teaching earlier from the same institution.

He also has a Bachelor of Technology degree in Business Administration and Management from the Vaal University of Technology and a National Diploma in Auditing and Internal Auditing from the same institution.

Tshepo benefitted from his volunteer training with enke: Make Your Mark. This Sandton-based youth development organisation inspires and supports young South Africans taking action on the country's most urgent social issues. His business, Sechele Facilitation and Training, provides tutorial services and academic support for learners from primary to tertiary levels.



02

PHILANTHROPY

# BOKANG RAPATSA



**B**okang Rapatsa, whose areas of interest are education and community development, is the founder of Bokang's Learning Academy in Moletji Makgodu, Limpopo.

Bokang realised there was a need for an after-school facility in her area after she noticed that many learners went to school without having done their homework. The reasons were varied, including parents who did not have enough education themselves to assist their kids and other family problems. Bokang's Learning Academy helps children from Grade R to Grade 8 with all school subjects.

At aftercare, learners get social, emotional and cognitive support aimed at enhancing their academic development.

Attention is paid to reducing risky behaviour among learners and promoting good health and physical well-being in a safe and supportive environment for the children. Over and above assisting learners with their homework, the academy extends its services to all other school-related reading and writing projects.

The establishment of Bokang's Learning Academy helped take children off the streets and now many of them spend most of their free time at the centre, even on weekends and during school holidays.

Elders, caregivers and parents who are unable to help their children with schoolwork are grateful for Bokang's enterprising initiative.



# BRIDGET MOEMA



**B**ridget Moema is an educator, life coach and author, whose personal mantra is “I teach to inspire”.

Her book, *Being Refined: The Seed of Hope*, is also the name of the organisation she has been running for the past six years which provides school shoes to disadvantaged learners in rural areas. When handing out the shoes, she implores the children to continue learning and believing in their dreams.

Bridget also heads a self-help network programme for women to generate useful ideas, particularly regarding job opportunities, that are shared among the members. Bridget is seized with the need to tackle the myriad social ills bedevilling the country and has seen it fit to take the boy child by the hand in a campaign to eradicate gender-based violence at its embryonic stage. The boy child is key in the drive to fight the scourge of GBV and to that end, she hosts an annual Gentlemen’s Seminar. Bridget continues to respond to the need for the rehabilitation of communities by expanding the programmes of her organisation.

# CHALOTTE MORORISENG MALEKA



Charlotte Mororiseng Maleka, who hails from Saulsville, west of Pretoria, is a survivor of gender-based violence (GBV) and uses that traumatic experience to help other young women avoid falling victim to violent men through her organisation, the Tshenolo Foundation. Victims of GBV, once identified, are referred to help centres.

The Gauteng Department of Health also lends a hand in this initiative that is needed in many communities reeling under the scourge of GBV and femicide. The Foundation does other commendable work in needy communities, including running health campaigns in townships and involving elderly people in healthy lifestyle exercise regimens.

It often hands out fruit and vegetables to the attendees and gets supplies of these because of its collaboration with the Joburg Market. The Foundation also runs programmes to give bread on a daily basis to homeless people in Rosettenville in southern Johannesburg.

When it is not dealing with health issues directly, the Tshenolo Foundation hosts seminars on substance abuse. This year, Charlotte was a delegate at the National Substance Abuse Summit at the Birchwood Hotel in Ekurhuleni.

# CHERYL NTHABELENG MOFOKENG



**C**heryl Nthabeleng Mofokeng, from Qwa-Qwa in the Free State, is a Mechanical Engineering graduate from the University of Pretoria.

In 2020, she joined a clean-up campaign in her community of Ha-Rankopane that was organised by youths who wanted to clear illegal dumping sites and turn them into vegetable gardens.

Nthabeleng organised young women to clean a dumping site near a school and the campaign was registered as Qwakanda, a non-profit company of which she is the treasurer.

The #90Minutes for Qwa-Qwa Clean Up Campaign attracted an international climate change initiative called the Gigatone Challenge.

Nthabeleng was appointed team leader for Team Qwa-Qwa, which prevented 37 tonnes of carbon emissions while helping over 100 households with food. Through her leadership, the team hired 14 permanent staff and created temporary employment by collecting organic waste that would otherwise go to landfills and turning it into compost.

Qwakanda has partnered with the local mall to host monthly clean-up campaigns that involve the youth in exchange for R250 food vouchers. Nthabeleng has also struck a deal with a leading cellular network company to build zero-emissions bicycle trailers to collect organic waste from households, businesses and illegal dumping sites to turn it into compost.



# JULIA LEMEKWANE



Through her work as Executive Director of the Manenzhe Foundation, Julia Lemekwane has been able to reach out and touch the lives of members of her community to good effect.

She is a “catalyst for positive change in our community”, say those who have witnessed the impact of the work she does, including empowering the youth with upskilling initiatives and lending support to vulnerable individuals and families. Julia is a hands-on leader who is not afraid of getting her hands dirty. As a result, her example has led to a more inclusive society where the marginalised are appreciated. Beneficiaries of her work say: “Her genuine compassion and empathy have fostered a sense of trust and belonging within the community” and “her selflessness, creativity, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of society have left an indelible mark on our community.”

Julia is changing lives for the better and her work for the Manenzhe Foundation has given hope to the hopeless, offered a helping hand to the disadvantaged, and empowered countless individuals to dream big. Her writing has had the same positive impact on the community as her physical effort. She raises topical issues that would otherwise have been left untold.

# KHULISO EXCELLENT MUVHANGO



**K**huliso Excellent Muvhango is a social entrepreneur, community builder and philanthropist. He is the founder and CEO of a youth and educational start-up called Muvex ICT which donates educational aids like tablets to learners, and also school uniforms and shoes.

A wing of the organisation called Muvex – based in Makhado, Louis Trichardt, Limpopo – drills boreholes for communities in all nine provinces.

Muvex has drilled boreholes to service more than 2,000 families in the Vhembe district in Venda.

In 2021, during Women's Month in August, Khuliso donated 44,000 sanitary towels to non-profit organisations (NPOs) and women's groups in Limpopo.

One of the beneficiaries of Khuliso's work is the AtlegangBana Foundation (ABF), an NPO based in Dobsonville, Soweto, which was established in 2015.

ABF strives to uplift the community with a particular emphasis on helping primary learners navigate their school journey successfully.

The organisation holds that education is crucial in making South Africa a winning nation and values the importance of nurturing schoolchildren and guiding them towards a better future.

ABF believes that "when our learners succeed, it creates a ripple effect that's felt in families, schools, and communities".

# PORTIA KARLSEN



It is a no-brainer that Portia Karlsen should be so passionate about the welfare of children and giving back to them – she was abandoned when she was only six months old and adopted at the age of two.

Her life story drives her to ensure equal access to education for children in rural areas. She mixes her passion for community development with her legal training and is adamant that “children have the right to education and we have the responsibility to ensure they have access to that right”.

Portia studied political science and law with the goal of eventually becoming an advocate, specialising in children’s affairs. After graduating, she entered the NGO sector, focusing on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and has since established 152 Early Learning Centres countrywide.

Through her work, many children who couldn’t access ECD centres because they were too far from home or difficult to reach in rainy weather, are now able to access them and are given the opportunity to excel like children in more developed areas,

Portia’s ultimate goal is to ensure that there are fully functioning ECD centres in all rural areas in need.



# SIYABULELA SOPHI



**S**iyabulela Sophi is a 33-year-old PhD candidate who is passionate about youth entrepreneurship and development. He established MK Originals, a clothing manufacturing company in Makhaza, Khayelitsha, in the Western Cape.

The company promotes local creativity and provides job opportunities for young people. It is seen as a vehicle to create unity among locals and to ensure economic growth in the community. MK Originals runs a boutique in Makhaza, where the broader community and tourists can sample the local aesthetics.

A business strategy expert, Siyabulela also founded Siyabulela Strategies Inc., a multifaceted management consulting firm that helps young people build legally compliant business entities. Once started, many of these businesses are used by the founders to hone their skills in such areas as business strategy, marketing and planning, among others.

Siyabulela Strategies Inc. is alive to the tribulations of unemployment and hopes to play a major role in the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem as a solution to youth unemployment in Khayelitsha.

Siyabulela is a solutions-driven entrepreneur who is dedicated to youth development. He also founded Future Masters FC, a football team in Makhaza. Players get help to further their studies and to apply for bursaries and university or college enrolment.

# THABANG MABUZA



Thabang Mabuza is an accomplished social entrepreneur with a proven track record displayed by his positive impact on the lives of over 60,000 individuals. Imbued with a strong passion for empowering others, Thabang has spearheaded several successful socio-economic development initiatives.

Notably, he has organised career expos in collaboration with established business organisations such as Kellogg's SA, Microsoft, Vodacom and Ekurhuleni East College, which created opportunities for aspiring professionals to connect with leading industry players.

His dedication to fostering innovation and growth is exemplified through the Festival of Ideas. In this pioneering pitching programme, SMEs from across the country present their work to industry leaders and decision-makers, leading to economic development and business advancement.

Furthermore, he has championed the BlackStarz Cup, a sports development campaign that provides previously disadvantaged learners with exposure to cricket and volleyball. This initiative, backed by prominent partners including the Gambling Board, Kellogg's SA, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and provincial departments of sport and recreation, has contributed to fostering talent and nurturing potential in the youth.

Thabang's unwavering commitment to social change and his entrepreneurial vision have earned him prestigious accolades and recognition, making him a driving force for positive transformation.



03

BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



# BRUCE DUBE



**B**ruce Dube, 35, is the Managing Director of Nine80 Digital, a digital publishing business that has since its inception reached over 70 million African youths.

Bruce entered the digital publishing space in 2010 after founding Youth Village South Africa, a portal that connects young people to knowledge sources that can help them achieve their full potential.

He created Youth Village with the aim of facilitating better access to information centred on youth development matters such as education, employment, entrepreneurship, and health.

His company owns numerous digital media platforms ranging from youth portals, e-commerce sites, reference sites, classifieds platforms, gaming sites, video platforms, online magazines, and more in countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe.

Some of the biggest youth platforms that Bruce owns include Youth Village, SA Hip Hop Mag, StartUp Mag, DISKI365, Kasi Lyrics, The Yanos, and more.

These platforms cater to the diverse interests of African youth and have gained a large following because of their engaging and relevant content.

Bruce says when people are presented with obstacles, they tend to drown in them while he finds opportunities and lessons from the challenges he encounters in life.

# JERRY TJALE



Jerry Tjale, an active TikTokker, was involved with the founding of Bokamoso Global Solutions, a customer-centric company based in Mbombela, Mpumalanga, dedicated to innovation, exemplary service, helpful product knowledge and corporate responsibility.

Jerry has made a meaningful contribution in relation to skills development in the agricultural sector. His company trains and equips more than 200 people a year.

This year he launched the Bokamoso Farmers Academy which is fully funded by Bokamoso Global Solutions. Together with AGRSeta, Bokamoso aims to help its students and clients develop their capability, capacity, productivity, and performance.

It offers a variety of training services within the scope of agricultural vocational training and mentorship, including accredited short courses in plant production, livestock or animal production, financial literacy, safety and mechanisation.

Bokamoso says it is not a general IT company but a strategy company that has leveraged its experience in IT to become an Innovation Technology Specialist.

It draws its business philosophy from an identified need for people from humble beginnings to “dust off their doubts and hone their capabilities towards self-development” and says it focuses on the effective management of projects involving the economic empowerment of others by creating suitable job opportunities.

# KHANYISILE MOLABA



**K**hanyisile Molaba, 29, is an entrepreneur, digital strategist and media specialist who boasts a wealth of experience in the communications industry, having worked as a news reporter, digital editor and television, radio and print producer.

She founded Dynasty Brandworx, a 100% African youth-led PR, Marketing and Creative Communications business that was voted one of South Africa's most gender-empowered companies by Standard Bank and Topco Media in 2021.

Khanyisile is a mentor on the All4Youth Sub-Saharan Africa programme, a collaborative alliance spearheaded by various multinational companies to create and implement empowerment-based programmes for youth in Africa.

She serves on the Media and Communications Committee of the Women's Empowerment Network of South Africa and was recently named an Unsung Hero by Sunday World and African Bank to honour her fight against youth unemployment and digital illiteracy in South Africa and the continent.

Khanyisile is supported by The Graça Machel Trust's Women Creating Wealth Programme through its partnerships with the Visa Foundation and the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority, Future Females and Edelman Africa as well as The Academy for Women Entrepreneurs; an initiative by the US Mission and the Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum.



# KHAYA BURWANA



**K**haya Burwana, the founder of Hatch of Oak Poultry Farming, aims to expand his business and distribute chickens and eggs to big retail stores after he won first prize in the City of Cape Town's #Youth-StartCT Entrepreneurial Challenge.

Khaya, from Mandalay, near Mitchells Plain, won R30,000 for his small-scale poultry farming business that he started in 2019. His first goal was to use the money to double his production capacity. Khanyisile is a mentor on the All4Youth Sub-Saharan Africa programme, a collaborative alliance spearheaded by various multinational companies to create and implement empowerment-based programmes for youth in Africa.

Currently, his farm produces 2,000 chickens per cycle and an average of 9,000 eggs a month.

"In the next three months or so we want to produce over 10 000 chickens. We have about 300-layer chickens that produce eggs. So we want to have about 3,000 layer chickens in the long term so that we can produce more in bulk," Khaya told IOL.

After expanding the business, Khaya is planning to employ more young people to add to the two permanent jobs he has created so far.

His medium- and long-term plan is to set up a slaughterhouse and to do his own packaging and branding so that he can supply bigger retail stores with frozen chickens, not just the informal traders he is currently supplying.

# LINDOKUHLE ZULU



Lindokuhle Zulu, a social entrepreneur with four years of experience in the social service industry, is the co-founder of the Unity and Interaction Foundation, a registered non-profit that uses art and education to develop the skills of over 200 young people aged seven to 30 in KwaZulu-Natal every year.

Lindokuhle is a graduate of the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) with a Diploma in Marketing. He received recognition from MUT's vice-chancellor in 2022 for his excellence in assisting rural learners to access higher institutions of learning.

He represents MUT as a member of the national Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Studentpreneurs Community of Practice, held the position of an executive member of MUT's Sports Union and is the current assistant residence officer of the institution.

Lindokuhle recently participated in the internal rounds of the EDHE Intervarsity competition, which saw the Unity and Interaction Foundation being the only winner in the social impact business category. He represented MUT in the regional rounds against other KZN universities in October and was among the delegates representing South Africa in the Future Leaders Model United Nations in Istanbul, Turkey.

# MARCIA RAMODIKE



**M**arcia Ramodike, 26, from Lenyenye in Limpopo, is the founder, director, editor and head writer of the book publishing company Evelyn50.

She recognised her passion at an early age and persevered with dedication despite facing numerous challenges. “We have to pick ourselves up and fly away to new places where we can focus on being a brand new person,” she says.

Marcia lost her mother at the age of 17 and had to care for her two younger siblings after a relative first took them in only to kick them out again after stealing their inheritance.

At 20, she wrote her first book, sold it and used the proceeds to take care of her siblings. Today she has published over 18 books including a best-seller.

Marcia holds a degree in Forensic Science and Technology and is a mentor to numerous aspiring authors.

Her unwavering commitment to her work has earned her several commendations, such as being named one of the *Mail & Guardian's* 200 Young South Africans in 2023, one of the 100 Young Mandelas of the Future 2023, and *Sunday World's* Heroic Women 2023 awards.

Evelyn50 aims to deliver outstanding results across three key business areas: branding, ghostwriting and digital marketing.



# MATIMBA MAKARINGE



**M**atimba Makaringe is an entrepreneur, motivational speaker and gender activist who uses her life story at every women's empowerment platform she attends to remind women that it is their responsibility to care for themselves and rise against all the odds.

She hails from Nkowankowa, a small township in Tzaneen, Limpopo, and is a passionate advocate for mental health awareness, motivating and encouraging women to be independent and to get out of unhealthy environments, including toxic relationships.

Matimba was badly burnt by a burst hot water bottle in 2016 and also suffered a miscarriage. These traumatic incidents had a positive upside in that they led to the creation of her business, Courageous Cosmetics, which grew its income by 150% in a short space of time and created four new jobs.

She also runs The Sistapreneur network to help young women running

informal businesses formalise their businesses by offering mentorships and coaching.

Matimba is a Business Woman winner in the *Mail & Guardian's* Power of Women Awards 2023 and a 2021 Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum alumna. She was also nominated for The Noble Woman Resilient Woman of the Year 2021 and for the 2022 Manufacturing Founder of the Year awards.

# MIKE SKOSANA



Mike Skosana is a passionate professional youth development advocate from Mpumalanga and founder of the Vivace Youth Centre, a community youth organisation that helps young people develop career training and practical skills.

The centre aims to reduce crime rates, drug and substance abuse, and gender-based violence by creating community awareness about the issues and safe spaces to discuss them.

Mike, who has more than 15 years' experience as a youth development advocate and social entrepreneur, is currently studying Life Coaching with The Transcendence Life Coaching Institute based in the US.

He is also the co-founder of Crystal MG Trading and Projects, which focuses on providing digital educational training for children at Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. The training will help them in their careers and future generations will also benefit from spin-offs of the training the youngsters receive.

Crystal MG Trading and Projects aims to enhance traditional ECD educational methodologies by integrating computer science as part of a comprehensive educational offering in partnership with owners of licensed ECD centres.

He recently expanded the programmes to other grades where he teaches end-user computing and introduces students from rural communities to robotics, virtual reality, and other exciting technological advances..

# MLONDOLZI MOKOENA



**M**londolzi Mokoena is dedicated, passionate, hardworking and always seeking new challenges in growing his business and ensuring that young black upcoming writers benefit from their creativity and talent.

The founder and managing director of Asante Books Publishers – a Johannesburg-based publishing and printing company that is forward-thinking and innovative in its approach – Mlondolzi believes in empowering young creatives who have the potential to grow. He represents MUT as a member of the national Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Studentpreneurs Community of Practice, held the position of an executive member of MUT's Sports Union and is the current assistant residence officer of the institution.

His passion for literature in the form of storytelling and book publishing has grown significantly through his work with a number of young authors who have a passion for becoming published authors.

Almost 80% of the books Asante Books publishes are written by young black people who bring an African context to their writings and who genuinely understand and are passionate about literature.

The company provides world-class online distribution services to all types of authors and posters, flyers, book covers and other marketing material is designed by industry-leading experts.

In 2022, Mlondolzi won a competition for youth entrepreneurship sponsored by Absa Bank. This year he has been nominated for the Founder of the Year Africa Award 2023 and Top 40 under 40 South African Awards 2023.



# NEO CHOLO



Neo Cholo, 18, from Mamelodi, Pretoria, wrote *The Journey* when he was 15 – a book about how a young boy tackles depression and comes out stronger, and which stresses the importance of communication in families.

The book won him the Best Journalist/Writer 2021 by Pheli Awards and he was also nominated as Best Teenage Author by The Book Behind Awards for 2021.

“I lost my dad when I was nine,” says Neo, “and, through the journey of life, I had to lose myself to gain myself and be the Neo Cholo that I am today.”

Neo’s mother and grandmother provided him with a solid upbringing and ensured that he was supported in everything he put his mind to.

The young entrepreneur has established a development programme

called the Neo Youth Empowerment Programme to help the youth gain skills in agriculture, digital marketing and public relations.

The budding businessman currently has four ventures under his sleeve: selling his books, a public relations and marketing services company, a female sanitary pads business, and a clothing brand.

Neo is also the chairperson and founder of Teens with Vision, a non-profit that provides social assistance to indigent families and individuals.

# NOLUTHANDO MNGUNI



Noluthando Mnguni is a young hardworking entrepreneur based in uMzimkhulu, a rural area on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, and her commitment to uplifting the poor and contributing towards economic growth in the area is commendable.

A trailblazer in her own right, Noluthando is the director of Mankho In-vestment Group Pty Ltd. She runs several businesses in her community that have employed more than 12 young people from her village, and the sustainable jobs she has created have been able to put bread on the table of many families.

She is an unstoppable and multi-talented film director, with over 11 awards and 14 nominations in her career. She believes that it's an achievement every time a film gets finished and finds a home with an audience which resonates with it..

Noluthando, who has a Bachelor of Arts in Community Development degree from the University of South Africa and a Diploma in Marketing from the IMM Graduate School of Marketing, is also the founder of a non-profit organisation called Bright Future Leaders. This NPO has assisted young learners in applying for university placements and has helped many of them with registration for university entry.

A white computer keyboard is positioned in the upper left. A teal stethoscope with a silver chest piece is placed on the right side of the keyboard. Below the keyboard, a clipboard with a brown cover and a silver clip is visible. A hand with light-colored nail polish is holding a black pen, poised to write on the clipboard. A vertical red line runs down the center of the image, passing through the text.

# 04

## HEALTH



# ANELE SISWANA



Anele Siswana is a registered Clinical Psychologist with a Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology from Rhodes University and a B Psych (Counselling) from Nelson Mandela University.

He is the director of Indigo Wellness & Consulting Services and is in full-time private practice at the Grayston Wellness & Medical Centre in Sandton, offering a wide range of psychotherapeutic services for individuals (adolescents and adults), couples, pre- and post-marital counselling, family therapy, group therapy and trauma debriefing.

Anele is keenly interested in African healing systems and holistic psychological modalities and heals at multiple levels, incorporating both African Situated Psychology and African Practices. This allows him to operate from a space of indigenous practices and epistemological justice.

Anele also has a passion for teaching and public intellectual engagements, leadership and civil society participation and has presented numerous talks at initiatives launched by the National Department of Sport, Arts & Culture for the National Gender-Based Violence Symposium. He has also made multiple media appearances on Showmax, SABC News, Newsroom Afrika, Daily Thetha and Afternoon Express to name just a few.

He won the Board of Health Care Funders 2019 Young Achievers Award and was named one of the Mail & Guardian's top 200 Young South Africans in 2017.

# CAREL MASEMOLA



Carel Masemola is an optometry lecturer and a clinical supervisor at the University of the Free State who is passionate about helping people.

He is involved in the undergraduate training of aspiring optometrists and equipping them with the clinical skills that will assist in contributing to preventing eye problems and blindness in South Africa.

As part of his responsibility in the decentralised clinical training at the university, he is facilitating eye health programmes and rendering eye care services to rural communities by providing free comprehensive eye examinations, prescriptions for spectacles and treating various eye problems in association with non-governmental organisations and pri-vate donors.

He is also working collaboratively with health establishments in the Free State to provide services in the Xhariep district and expanding services to old age homes by delivering vision screening.

Carel is pursuing a PhD in public health and aims to develop a sus-tainable framework to guide eye health professionals in delivering eye health services in rural communities to reduce visual impairment in the country.

Carel continues to advocate for social justice, seeking to advance the values of human dignity and creating opportunities for the vulnerable population to receive decent eye care.

# DR AVUYILE MBANGATHA



**D**r Avuyile Mbangatha is a medical doctor and award-winning philanthropist from Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape with a passion for Public Health.

He holds a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery degree from the University of Stellenbosch, has completed his second-year medical internship and will soon gain his Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced HIV/TB Management.

"One of my biggest aspirations is to leave Clinical Medicine to focus on tackling socioeconomic issues that contribute to our burden of disease," he posted on his LinkedIn page earlier this year.

Avuyile served as the United Nations Change the World Model Ambassador and is currently the Theirworld Global Youth Ambassador, committed to promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

His work has primarily been focused on the mitigation and prevention of socio-economic problems as they have a cyclical effect on the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Avuyile's passion for Public Health stemmed from 2014 in Grade 11 when he developed a fertiliser that aimed to improve food security in rural communities.

In 2018, at the age of 20, he was recognised as one of the Mail & Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans and also won the News24 Mandela Young Leader award.



# DR EURIKA MOGANE-JONES



**D**r Erika Mogane-Jones, a multi-award-winning medical scientist, is the CEO and co-founder of Tharika M Health and Wellness Centre.

Eurika has a passion for neuroscience, and in 2020 she completed her certification in medical neuroscience at Duke University in the United States. She also holds a number of competency diplomas and certificates in sports medicine, nutrition and cognitive behavioural therapy.

Eurika started out as a humble office worker in the heart of Mbombela. "All I wanted was to work in the medical sector, but I couldn't find part-time employment or manage a loan," Eurika says. "On many occasions, I even had to walk the 30km to reach the medical campus because I couldn't afford the fare."

But her grit and determination to succeed against the odds eventually paid off. Eurika has represented the country at key platforms and this year she grabbed the 40 Under 40 Africa Awards Honorary Title in the Entrepreneurship Category.

She has also been awarded the Golden Key International Honor Society Award as an Undergraduate, an Honorary Alumni and as an Outstanding Member.

Eureka is a volunteer for the Cancer Association of South Africa and an Executive Committee Member of the South African Red Cross Society.

# DR MORATWE MASIMA



**D**r Moratwe Masima, a 26-year-old medical doctor who was one of 12 finalists in this year's Miss World South Africa, is currently completing her community service and postgraduate diploma in mental health at a public hospital in Johannesburg.

Moratwe obtained her MBCHB degree from Stellenbosch University in 2020 and has since paved the way for health education for the masses through her campaign "Your Health Your Dignity" where she champions women's mental and reproductive health.

The campaign consists of a group of doctoral-level psychologists and psychiatrists who, as a mental health collective, assist members by providing therapy, medication management, coaching, and more.

"I am a young woman who has chosen to dedicate her life and skills to be of service to her community and her country through my career," Moratwe told Daily Sun in August. "I believe that it is imperative that the focus is put back on good role models for the youth."

Moratwe has worked with organisations like the Dream Girls Academy, where she mentored girls from underprivileged areas with an interest in becoming doctors or going into the health sciences industry.

She has also collaborated with Marotholi Outreach, an organisation that provides healthcare services to communities through mobile clinics.

# DR ZOLELWA SIFUMBA



**D**r Zolelwa Sifumba has turned personal adversity into a crusade to benefit others.

She contracted Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis more than 10 years ago while working as a medical student in the wards of the GF Jooste Hospital in Mannenburg, Cape Town, and had to undergo gruelling TB treatment for about two years.

Since then, she has used her voice and story in the global fight against TB as an advocate and activist for the provision of tangible support systems for healthcare students and workers globally, including working with Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Zolelwa has also been a Clinical Research Fellow at the Africa Health Research Institute and is an HBNU Fogarty Global Health Fellow conducting research in tuberculosis,

She has spoken about the disease on national and international stages and appeared on various media platforms.

"I don't enjoy telling my story," Zolelwa admits. "It was a difficult time and public appearances are not easy for me. But I also know that my testimony has forced improvements in occupational safety for some healthcare workers, and I will continue to speak out for long as health-care workers are forced to work in hostile conditions."



# KARABO TLHATLOGI



Karabo Tlhatlogi has always been fascinated by the human body's incredible ability to heal and thrive.

"This passion has driven me to constantly educate myself about different aspects of health, from nutrition and exercise to mental health and preventive care," says Karabo.

"Whether it is volunteering at local health clinics, organising awareness campaigns, or conducting research, I have consistently sought opportunities to make a positive impact and promote health within my community.

"These experiences have not only allowed me to gain valuable knowledge and skills but have also reinforced my commitment to improving health outcomes for others."

Karabo believes young people have the power to drive change and innovation in health care. "I have a strong academic background in health-related fields and have dedicated my educational journey to studying biology, public health, and psychology. This academic foundation has equipped me with a solid knowledge base and the critical thinking skills necessary to understand complex health issues and contribute meaningful solutions."

Karabo holds a B.Soc.Sc in Nursing, an NQF level 8 Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Health Nursing, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Social and Behavioural Studies (HIV-AIDS), among other qualifications.

# KHATHUTSHELO MOTHABENE



**K**hathutshelo Mothabene is living proof that one's background does not determine one's destiny. Born and raised in the remote, virtually inaccessible village of Matavhela in Venda, she is currently completing her community service as a medical practitioner.

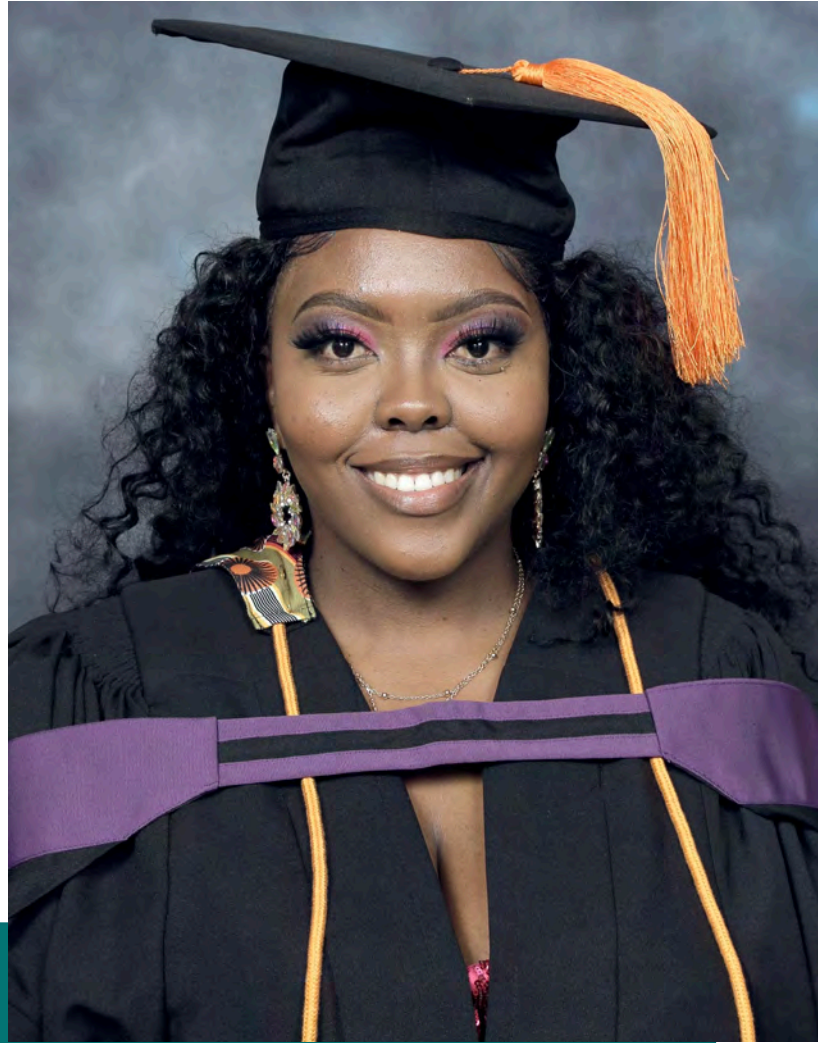
Khathutshelo began her schooling at Mufulwi Primary, then went to Matavhela Secondary and studied for her medical degree at Medusa. She plans to become a leading paediatrician one day who will help children, especially those in impoverished rural areas.

Khathutshelo is a motivational speaker who has made a few videos on YouTube. She talks about her background to inspire others with the central message that if she managed to become a medical doctor despite all the difficulties she faced growing up, children from remote rural villages can also be successful if they fight hard enough for it.

Child health care is her passion because, she says, healthy children learn better at school and have better prospects for their future careers, and she regularly visits schools to motivate youngsters by sharing her story.

"Life sometimes deals us heavy blows," she says in one of her videos, "but giving up is not a choice. Don't ever give up on your dreams, fight for what you want."

# MAMELLO MAKHANYA



**M**amello Makhanya, a qualified healthcare professional with a B.Cur nursing degree, is a philanthropist, humanitarian and motivational speaker.

She is the founder of The Born To Stand Foundation, a non-profit organisation that aims to elevate “the extraordinariness of women, children and the youth through four principles called: Motivation Galore, Mental Health Awareness, Making A Difference and Meaningful Associations”.

She also founded Lerato, a breast cancer awareness initiative in honour of her late mother.

Mamello has been making a difference in her community and country at large for a number of years and her accolades include the Vita Basadi: Outstanding Youth Philanthropist Award, Phenomenal Woman: Social Justice Award, Woman Of Wonder Award, Every Girl Has A Dream True Shine Award, Albertina Sisulu Award, JCI SA TOYP Honouree Award, among others.



# MOHAMED HOOSEN SULEMAN



Mohamed Hoosen Suleman is a passionate and dedicated youth healthcare advocate from Durban who has invested time and efforts to improve health outcomes in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

He is involved in multiple research projects, some of which are led by South Africa's leading scientists, to maximise patient outcomes and ultimately advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 of good health and well-being.

Mohamed's research contributions have been rewarded and recognised by the World Health Organisation and he now serves on the Editorial Board for the *International Journal of Medical Students* as Student Editor.

The journal said he "brings forward a critical mindset and an intellectual capability when reviewing research submissions" and can "think rationally and provide a unique perspective on systems and policies that govern health decisions by member states".

Mohamed led a team of youth activist volunteers to assist the Childhood Cancer Foundation of South Africa where affected children and their parents were educated and equipped with skills and knowledge to manage the disease.

Given that the elderly and those with comorbidities are vulnerable to diseases and ailments, Mohamed has also identified a need for health professionals to be more involved and interactive from a public health perspective.

# PAUL LETSATSI POTSANE



Paul Letsatsi Potsane has over nine years of experience in developing organisational work plans, strategies, operational plans, and research projects to achieve UNAIDS 90-90-90 and the Department of Health Strategic Objective for HIV and TB programmes.

His expertise lies in coordinating diverse teams and resources to achieve organisational objectives within the triple constraints of time, cost, and scope.

Paul holds a Bachelor of Nursing Science (B Cur I et A) degree, an MBA in Health Project Management and Leadership, a Master of Public Health degree and is currently a PhD student at the University of Johannesburg's School of Health Sciences.

He grew up in Soweto and one day he was admitted to the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital with food poisoning.

"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. His parents could not afford medical school fees, so he opted for nursing, his second choice.

Paul serves on the boards of the Muslim Aids Programme, the Johannesburg Council for People with Disabilities, and the Gauteng Nurses Leadership Forum. He received the Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans Award in 2018 and the Gauteng Premier's Award in 2019.

# SEBABATSO CONNIE TSAOANE



Sebatatso Connie Tsaoane, an academic, midwife and businesswoman, is the Founder and CEO of Black Women Arise Women's Health Foundation, a non-profit organisation that aims to improve the health of disadvantaged women and girls through advocacy and the promotion of their sexual reproductive health and rights.

The foundation believes that "this often neglected and stigmatised aspect of black and disadvantaged women's health is cardinal in their empowerment. It has been proven that women are the backbones of our societies through the different paid and unpaid roles that they play. We therefore also believe that if you heal a woman, you heal a community and can therefore heal a nation."

Using her mobile clinic truck, Sebatatso visits marginalised communities mainly in rural areas where she offers women free medical screening and Pap smears to fight cervical cancer. She also provides post-natal care and counselling for new mothers and hosts events where she teaches women about the female reproductive system and creates a safe space where taboo topics can be discussed openly.

Sebatatso recently opened her own clinic and has joined forces with the Free State Department of Health and international stakeholders to ensure her work can reach as many women as possible.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a white baseball with red stitching, positioned on the right side of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. A thin blue vertical line runs down the left side of the page, and a thin blue horizontal line runs across the page just above the title.

**05**

**SPORT AND  
RECREATION**



# EMILY MATHOSA



Emily Mathosa is a netball coach with a rapidly growing reputation for making netball a vehicle for boys and girls to access opportunities, including studying at a university.

In 2023, her team Limpopo Baobabs, won the Telkom Netball League B division and won promotion to the A division. Emily has coached the SA Under19 team, with whom she won Gold Medals in 2021 and 2022.

She also won a silver medal at the Males National Netball Championships in 2023. She is also in the South African Under-18 Netball Fast Five team for the Youth Commonwealth Games to be hosted in Trinidad and Tobago. She has also been Head Coach of Capricorn Senior Males, winning a Gold medal at the Males National Championships in 2021.

Emily also won promotion for Capricorn Senior Males, another history-making feat, and is also assistant coach of the Tshwane Senior A team, who were silver medallists at the Spar National Championships.

# KEORAPETSE MASHIMO



**K**eorapetse Mashimo, a teacher by profession, is a boxing referee and coach who volunteers a lot of his time to keep community sports alive.

His passion for sports administration was evident as far back as 2017 when he was Chairperson of the North West University All Sports Council. He is also a sports organiser at Tshukudu High School where he is a teacher.

In July 2022, he was elected as the Secretary General of the North West Open Boxing Federation after having served the Federation as a Spokesperson for a five-year term.

Since becoming secretary general, he has managed to launch several new boxing clubs in the rural areas of the province.

For his efforts, the North West Department of Arts Culture Sports and Recreation awarded him the Sports Administrator of the Year accolade at the beginning of 2023. Subsequently, Mashimo was elected by various sporting codes to represent sports federations in the North West Sports Academy Commission.

# MANDLA MBOTHO



Mandla Mbotho is a 26-year-old Unisa law student who lives by the spirit of Ubuntu. He is the founder of Sports is Life Movement, which he runs through his non-profit - company - Sports Is Life.

Mandla's aim is to empower young children from disadvantaged areas such as the townships and rural villages and he uses hockey as his sporting code of choice to empower the youth.

When the North-West University hosted the Hockey Junior World Cup in 2022, he organised for learners from Promosa Primary and Promosa High School to attend the games, as a way of introducing learners to the sport.

Mandla's project managed to produce a provincial hockey player from Keagile Primary, a township school, within three months of its inception. Mandla has since managed to source a donation of hockey sticks and hold workshops for a cluster of schools in the North West.

In June, he was central to organising the Youth Day commemorations as he sees sports as a way of tackling social ills such as youth unemployment, crime, and teenage pregnancy.

Mandla is guided by the mantra: "I don't know how, but I know I will make it."



# MONTSHIOAGAE DITIRO



Montshioagae Ditiro has brought hope through chess to the community of Agisanang, Sannieshof, in the North West.

He is the former two-time chairperson of the North-West University chess club, the former secretary of sports at the university and the current deputy secretary of the Ngaka Modiri Molema Chess Association.

When Montshioagae arrived in Sannieshof to teach, he found a group of young people lacking the opportunity to express their talent in sports because of a lack of resources and exposure.

He then mobilised resources and started a chess team in 2022. His learners have since represented their district and, in 2023, five of his learners were selected to take part in the provincial selection in Potchefstroom.

A physical science teacher in his day job, Montshioagae has been elected as chairperson of North West school sports in the code of chess.

“Chess teaches you to have emotional intelligence, make the right decisions when under pressure, and have patience in life,” he says.

# SIPHAMANDLA MBHELE



Siphamandla Mbhele started a soccer team – 9 Gunners United – in Palmridge, Gauteng, and is the co-ounder of Smakade Productions, a film production and arts event company.

The team caters for players at the under-13 level right up to the senior level.

Siphamandla regularly organises soccer and netball tournaments for his community and surrounding areas and also conducts workshops in theatre, music, filming and visual art.



06

JUSTICE AND  
LAW



# COLONEL ATHLEND MATHE



Colonel Athlenda Mathe is the youngest-ever national spokesperson for the South African Police Services and is “very passionate about public service and bringing to life the eight Batho Pele principles through communicating about the nationwide successes of our men and women in blue”.

Athlenda holds a BA in Media Studies, a BA Honours Degree in Communication, a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration, and is currently completing the final year of her Master’s in Public Administration.

“My passion is in communicating the daily successes of our officers who work hard to trace and arrest dangerous criminals,” says Athlenda.

Described as a highly dedicated, passionate, committed and hardworking person, Athlenda is highly disciplined and respects her craft.

“I get encouraged and motivated to communicate more about the work of our members when I see and witness hardened criminals receive lengthy jail sentences and convictions for the crimes they have committed because of the work of our amazing men and women in blue,” Athlenda says.

# FLENCÉ MUNHLE KHOZA



A passion for criminal justice has seen Flenché Munhle acquire an LLB and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Nelson Mandela University.

Flenché believes that young people ought to learn and understand the intricacies, consequences and penalties of committing crimes such as crimen injuria and statutory rape as many of them end up behind bars and flush their futures down the drain because they fail to understand the impact on themselves and their communities of committing these crimes.

He taught law when visiting high schools across districts in the Eastern Cape as a way of opening dialogues and creating conversations about the criminal justice system to educate and empower the youth.

"I'm passionate about pursuing social justice," says Flenché, "and the use of legal education and public awareness to educate our people to achieve proactive justice."

He believes educating the youth about the law and the country's justice system could go a long way towards reducing the number of young people in correctional services centres.

# LUSANDA SIKHA KHANE



Lusanda Sikhakhane is a young male rights activist and Founder of the non-profit Les Foundation, which aims to raise awareness around the sexual molestation of young boys and men, to fight against it and to offer psychological assistance to those who have been sexually molested or abused.

The Durban University of Technology student wants to encourage men to speak out on this issue. "We want to achieve social justice for the victims," he says, "and ensure that the perpetrators face the law."

Lusanda was inspired to start the Les Foundation by a friend who took his life when he was a Grade 9 pupil "because he was molested sexually by his father and didn't know what to do".

The Les Foundation has a support group for victims where they can share their experiences and motivate one another.

"Victims need to know that they are not alone," says Lusanda. "We are here as your brothers to support you. Justice will be served and justice will prevail."

The Les Foundation was awarded a Global Recognition Award in May this year and Lusanda will be heading to Malaysia in August next year to speak about male sexual abuse through a United Nations programme.



# MOJALEFA GIBSON CHABALALA



**M**ojalefa Gibson Chabalala, 34, is a forward-thinking policeman who runs empowering youth programmes in the Free State to give hope and direction to youngsters long before they are tempted to engage in wayward behaviour that could bring them into conflict with the law.

For Mojalefa, prevention is better than cure. As a provincial youth co-ordinator at the South African Police Service, his mission is to guide youngsters to greatness and encourage them to become citizens who lead wholesome lives.

Mentorship and guidance are central to his progressive activities. Being young himself gives him a unique insight into the challenges the youth face and the aspirations they possess.

"I work hard to encourage the youth to stay away from crime and sub-stance abuse. I formulate programmes for the youth in the province where the SAPS comes to give lectures to young people about the im-portance of being good citizens who can take the Free State forward," says Mojalefa.

He has implemented a school safety programme in more than 1,000 schools by coordinating activities through junior commissioners. These include public speaking engagements on school crime-related matters such as sexual offences, the carrying of dangerous weapons, theft, gangsterism, substance abuse and many more..

# MUSA MACK



**M**usa Mack, 29 is a petitions analyst and policy committee member of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature. A master's candidate in public policy at Wits University, she believes democracy and good governance are important to reshape the lived experiences of South Africa's marginalised people.

She managed the Oversight and Accountability Project in the legislature to standardise reporting to Chapter 9 institutions and developed templates which enable the institutions to obtain holistic information on the executive authority's performance for in-depth scrutiny and monitoring. This work has greatly enabled the Portfolio Committees to strengthen their oversight functions.

Musa also helped develop the legislature's E-petitions portal that enables the public to submit service delivery complaints, suggestions and requests for intervention and resolution.

She was a judge for the Queens Commonwealth Essay Competition in 2021 and encourages young people to learn about Parliamentary processes to set them up as future leaders. This includes helping young people write speeches for model legislature Parliamentary debates.

Through the Citizen Responsibility Campaign, she contacted more than 5,000 first-time voters in Gauteng to encourage them to exercise their constitutional rights.

Musa is also working on an AI application to simplify legislative processes and make them more understandable and accessible to the public.

# PREVIN ASOKA VEDAN



**P**revin Asoka Vedan, an attorney and graduate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, has led and participated in many successful community projects to uplift and improve people's lives.

He is known for his advocacy of human rights and serving as the young-est elected Ward Councillor, at the age of 26, in Ethekewini Municipality for four years from 2018 until 2021, proudly serving the communities of Crossmoor, Shallcross, Moorton and Bottlebrush and overseeing many successful projects.

He is also among the South African Development Community's Top100 Young Leaders, a *News24* Mandela of the Future and a Springbok Scout

Among his sterling achievements, was reviving the Shallcross Youth Movement – a volunteer-based organisation that focuses on bringing together youth who have been negatively impacted by substance abuse and other social ills.

Previn also created job portals in Durban where school leavers and graduates can access vetted, legitimate work opportunities free of charge, enabling them to access job opportunities they would not otherwise have been aware of.

"Life's journey may be blurry at times, but the moments we choose to stand strong define us," says Previn, who was the victim of a violent robbery this year that has left him with a partial disability.





07

ENVIRONMENT

# HAROLD RIVOMBO



The link between urban planning and climate change might not be obvious for many people, but for Harold Rivombo it is the focal point of his work as a Town and Regional Planner.

“Developers are continuing to build housing far from areas of economic opportunity. This results in dependence on private cars which trigger so many carbon emissions into the atmosphere,” Harold says.

The 30-year-old is actively involved in projects pertaining to land development and preservation, and is invested in educating citizens about land, its various uses and the legal parameters governing its use.

In particular, Harold takes concern with how land that could be used for agriculture, tourism and other forms of development is often encroached upon by land grabbers who do not know any better.

One of his main career goals is to ensure that knowledge of land use and preservation is accessible to the ordinary people who are often left out of the conversation.

“We need to formulate policies that are relevant to people. [Let’s] speak their language, reach out, go to schools. People just don’t understand how to take care of land,” Harold says.

# KIM WILLIAMS



Youth sustainability activist Kim Williams has made it her mission to ensure that the most vulnerable communities in the Western Cape receive environmental justice.

Whether it is advocating for litter-free communities or educating people on the effects of climate change, Kim believes environmental knowledge should be made accessible to all.

The Cape Town native is the Executive Director of an NPO called Visions of Change South Africa, which runs regular environmental awareness campaigns and won this year's Mail & Guardian Greening the Future Award for Water and Oceans Initiatives.

The NPO's campaigns focus on areas such as water conservation, the dangers of plastic pollution as well as problematic human behaviour and its contribution towards climate change.

Kim's style of environmental activism focuses on redirecting people's day-to-day habits, by encouraging more mindful usage of natural resources.

Visions of Change hosts cleanups to which it invites youth, religious and community organisations to spend hours removing plastic waste from beaches. The organisation also hosts community cleanups in vulnerable areas where it educates and raises awareness on the effects of illegal dumping and littering.

Kim holds a Bachelor of Technology in Environmental Management degree from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and is a registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner.



# NALEDI MOETI



“Don’t be part of the problem, be part of the solution” – words of advice environmental activist Naledi Moeti often shares with the young people whom she guides towards forming eco-friendly habits.

Naledi, a final-year Honours Environmental Management student at Uni-sa, is from Dennilton in the Sekhukhune District of Limpopo, where littering and general negligence towards the environment is a troubling issue.

The 22-year-old is the Chairperson and Executive Director of Finance for the Dennilton Educational Movement, under which she has begun an environmental awareness campaign in local schools..

“Young people here are always saying: ‘There is already rubbish on the floor, so why should I care?’ They don’t know the importance of saving the planet,” Naledi says of the negligent attitude many Dennilton youths have towards caring for their environment.

For Naledi, teaching a girl how powerful she is, is a stepping stone to achieving gender equality. “I want the girl child to love and accept herself for who she is and to know that education is indeed the key to success.”

One of Naledi’s proudest achievements is appearing on the popular South African television drama series, Gomora. “I really love acting, but it’s always good to have a backup plan,” she says.

# PAUL SHOVHOTE



Paul Shovhote is a 31 year old Marketing Grad from Modimolle he has been heading the charge in Modimolle to introduce white paper charcoal to schools in the community White paper

charcoal is made from all the used white paper that the schools no longer have a use for , these papers are then turned into charcoal which schools can then use again to cook in their feeding scheme.

it emits 86 percent less harmful gasses than firewood and 90 percent less than methane, a magnificent way to reduce our carbon footprint.

He is passionate about food security, and environmental issues and has been at the helm of the SEF program in Modimolle which deals with greening ,food security and nutrition.

# TUELO MOTLOBA



Tuelo Motloba was studying Agronomy at North-West University in Mahikeng when he realised there were growing concerns about food security among his peers.

The 31-year-old realised he had the tools and the knowledge to change the situation for many struggling students and, in 2021, he began work-ing with fellow Agronomy students and the university administrators to start food gardens at two campus residences.


Tuelo and his team began planting vegetables and the harvested crops drastically reduced the food costs for many struggling students. The team also planted fruit trees and vines for nourishment and to provide shade and protection.

Tuelo now works as a research assistant at the University of Pretoria, where he has continued his passion for crop production and food secu-rity by starting a vegetable garden at the institution.

He says his greatest joy has been to see students who benefitted from the campus food gardens begin to implement their new-found knowl-edge in their communities.

“There have been so many testimonies from students who went back to their communities and shared their knowledge. Some have even gone back and started food gardens there. The project has had a ripple effect on so many communities.”



The background is an abstract composition. The top half is a light pink color, and the bottom half is a teal color. A thin red line runs vertically down the right side of the image. A horizontal teal line runs across the middle of the image, passing behind the text.

08

ARTS AND  
CULTURE

# AFIKA YOSE



Afika Yose, is a pioneer and a poet in the fields of arts and culture and has been running an arts centre in Cradock, Eastern Cape, without any financial support from the government.

The Black Panther Centre falls under the Izakhono Organisation, whose motto is to aid young people to be community builders and role models.

Afika's passion for the advancement of arts and culture finds fulfilment in watching young people from his community improve and rise beyond the social challenges that they are subjected to.

"I've been trying to get money for my organisation but all I can say is that those who believe and wait, get what they desire," says Afika.

"Being an artist and a community leader is not an easy path to take, but I was able to overcome everything I told myself I couldn't achieve".

"I'm currently engaged with schools. I own my resources, and my objective is to see the Cradock community improve, particularly in terms of arts and culture development."

# BRUNETTE LUMKA MLAMBO



**B**runette Lumkah Mlambo is the founder and CEO of Durban-based The Fun House, a young media, entertainment, and digital content creation hub offering bespoke artistic concepts and strategic brand development services for up-and-coming artists and businesses.

Born and raised in Vryheid in KwaZulu-Natal, Brunette started off by hosting small dance events when she was a teenager and has grown to become a top hip-hop artist who is passionate about lifestyle and oral tradition.

Brunette has been chosen as the Durban Youth Ambassador and Digital Content Curator for the New Orleans South Africa Connection cultural exchange – a programme that has been endorsed by Latoya Cantrell, the mayor of New Orleans, whom she met when she was invited to the city in February 2023.

Brunette's innovative approach has transformed the way many businesses operate and has also created economic growth and cultural enrichment in the arts and culture sector. She has developed numerous brands and created jobs, empowering individuals with creative talents and growing businesses around the world.

She has dedicated her career to nurturing and empowering other aspiring artists and has been instrumental in helping to revolutionise the music industry by creating innovative business programmes and implementing effective brand development strategies.



# EMILY NKATEKO MABASA



Emily Nkateko Mabasa is an inspiring and motivated poet, dancer, choreographer, fashion designer, motivational speaker and model.

Emily was born with cerebral palsy, a condition that affects movement and coordination, but she has never let it hold her back and her love for dancing and children made her want to achieve more and inspire change.

This self-styled “cerebral palsy warrior” established the non-profit organisation, Phoenix Alexandra, in 2020, with the aim of creating a secure and inclusive society for youth through informal educational, arts and cultural activities.

The organisation works with children aged six to seventeen and young adults who are willing to commit to their own growth, nourish their potential and a positive body image, and learn to value kindness and hard work.

Emily is a Gold Award holder for the President’s Awards in South Africa, won an award from Valhalla Arts as ‘Role Model’ in 2017, and a Sunday World Unsung Hero 2023 award.

“It’s a real struggle, having to prove that I am more than my disability,” Emily says. “I wish that people understood that individuals living with disabilities just want to be treated fairly and that I am no different from anyone else.”

# GOITSEONE MOTANG



**G**oitseone Prediction Motang, 24, better known as Prediction 99 SA, is an actor, model, hip-hop choreographer, dancer, singer, MC and event host who is set to appear in two new Netflix series soon and seems destined for great things in the international arena.

Goitseone, who hails from Zeerust in North West, began sharing his talents in 2012 when his music career started. He was inspired by Christopher Maurice Brown of the US to start dancing in 2018 and says he found his love of acting through dance.

He acts in popular South African soap operas such as Generations: The Legacy on SABC 1, Muvhango on SABC 2, and The Estate on SABC 3.

Goitseone is also set to appear in a new Netflix series alongside Ama Qamata from Blood & Water and Mamarumo Morokane from Scandal.

“Nothing allows me to express how I feel as much as acting,” says Goit-seone, “and it is acting that will allow me to achieve my goals.”

# KARABO MOGANE



Karabo Mogane, 32, is an academic and educator passionate about using the musical arts to empower young people and build community cohesion. Her research and teachings focus on music methodology, arts and culture, music education, and musical arts productions.

Karabo, who holds a Doctor of Music degree and is based at the University of Pretoria, serves as an advisory board member for the National Arts Council of South Africa and is a transformation, diversity and inclusion officer at St Benedict's College.

Her studies have helped her acquire a comprehensive foundation in musical arts principles and music education. She teaches children from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing weekly music and drama lessons at the Tsa Lapeng Music initiative in Hammanskraal and at an orphanage in Mabopane.

Her students are taught the violin, viola, and theory of music and are enrolled for graded music exams. She also teaches the recorder to children in her hometown, Soshanguve.

"Not only do I teach creative arts to my children, but also I get the rare opportunity to instil values in them such as discipline, manners, honesty and self-acceptance," says Karabo, who was named one of the *Mail & Guardian's* 200 Young South Africans in 2022.



# REJOICE KGABO LEGODI



At a time of regular load-shedding, Kgabo Legodi uses Sunbox Cinema's solar-powered kits to show free movies even in remote areas.

Sunbox Cinema equips young people in Africa with the professional skills, knowledge and confidence they need to share life-changing stories with others and in so doing, shape their own stories.

The organisation trains under-resourced young people to become ambassadors so they can conduct free solar-powered mobile cinema screenings and free podcasts. These media interventions spark audience debate, which are enhanced by partner organisations using the screenings as platforms for community engagement.

Through a community mapping process, Sunbox Cinema's ambassadors like Kgabo show compelling films that resonate with the audiences' own experiences, values and aspirations.

Kgabo collaborates with communities, local civil society organisations and community-led advocacy initiatives to fill the information and engagement gap and uses the platform to help facilitate difficult dialogues and to educate communities on matters concerning public health, mental health, climate change, nature conservation, agriculture and entrepreneurship.

She has shown films at most schools in Limpopo, including those in rural areas which don't have electricity, and also teaches entrepreneurship to learners. Kgabo's work was recognised internationally when she show-cased her venture in Berlin, Germany

# KGANYA MOGASHOA



**K**ganya Mogashoa, founder of Koranges Art (Pty) Ltd, is a self-taught multidisciplinary artist who primarily creates mixed media and oil portraits. Her artwork is inspired by people in and around her life, her journey with God, her momentous life events, and the desire to resolve social ills closely related to women and mental health.

Born in 1994, Kganya studied Interior Design at the University of Johan-nesburg (2013–2016), obtaining her BTech Honours degree. She quit her full-time job in 2019 to pursue her passion for visual art.

Koranges Art paintings are being translated into stationery supplies and corporate gifting packages, which will highlight educational messages about how people should respond to their mental health in healthy ways.

Kganya was chosen for the South African State Theatre Incubator Pro-gramme and in March this year the theatre hosted her exhibition “She-roes Rands Herstory”, which was documented on SABC Morning Live and eNCA.

The exhibition honoured and narrated the stories of women such as Charlotte Maxexe and Lillian Ngoyi and each piece was an interpretation of one of the women on a banknote or coin and called attention to the underrepresentation of women at all levels of decision-making.

# LERATO PHAKOE



Lerato Phakoe has achieved a lot at a young age, including publishing three books – *The Kindness Paid With Pain, For the Sake Of Living* (a collection of poems) and a second edition of *The Kindness Paid With Pain* – all before she turned 21.

The non-profit Lerato Phakoe Foundation, which she registered as a teenager, plays a vital role in empowering the community through do-nations of food parcels, toiletries for young women, books for primary school learners as well as school uniforms and stationery.

At the age of 20, Lerato became the director of her own company, *Vivi-fied Blazon*, which helps writers and other creatives to market their work and also started the *VEEBEE* online magazine, which celebrates posi-tive stories of creatives in our society.

Lerato founded the *Teach-a-Child-to-Read* initiative to fight against the high rate of illiteracy in the country. Her dedication won her the *Vita Basadi Award* from the Gauteng provincial legislature and she was run-ner-up in the *MIA Creative Award* in the *Book of the Year* category.

“I want my peers to see that it is possible to achieve whatever they want to achieve,” says Lerato, who is pursuing her studies in education at North-West University.



# LUTENDO EVENS MUGAGADELI



Lutendo Evens Mugagadeli aka Vendaboy Poet, is a 33-year-old poet, praise singer and recording artist from Ha-Nthabalala, a small village in Limpopo.

Lutendo, one of the Mail & Guardian's 200 Young South Africans in 2022, has six studio albums under his belt, is a brand ambassador for Sun International's Meropa Casino in Polokwane, and the official praise poet of Thovhele Gole Musiiwa Mphaphuli.

Vendaboy Poet describes himself as "a custodian of Venda heritage, an addict of Venda regalia and a product of poverty". He can recite poetry in six languages, often over a hip-hop, jazz, soul or reggae soundtrack.

In 2018 he released the single Muphuresidente, dedicated to Cyril Ramaphosa, which led to his proudest moment so far when he performed the poem for the president on a flight from Durban to Johannesburg.

Lutendo has won several awards for traditional music and performed at events across the country. He has also made regular appearances on various radio stations.

"If I want to see change I have to be part of it, and I must make that choice every day, both in big moments and in small choices," says Lu-tendo, who is a Human Resource Management graduate from Central Johannesburg College.

# MZAMO KUNENE



Mzamo Kunene, the Artistic Director of Mzamo Art Creative in East London, is uplifting the youth in the area through dance. "Training as a dancer not only shaped my career but also helped me to learn discipline," he says. "I love dancing. I believe in dance."

As a young man growing up in a township where everyone is expected to have a particular job or career, Mzamo chose to be a dancer – a career choice that was very difficult for his family to accept.

However, Mzamo was determined to do everything necessary to prove he could succeed as a dancer. After training and performing professionally, Mzamo returned to the township to give the young ones the opportunity he didn't have when he was their age.

Mzamo, who is also an apprentice dance teacher for the Sonwa Saku-ba Institute for the Performing Arts, has been working on producing works featuring children from the township and putting them on the national stage.

This year he took 13 youths to the National Art Festival in Makhanda and they won the Standard Bank Ovation Award. In August he took the same young crew to Durban to perform in one of his productions.

# TLOTLISANG MHLAMBISO



Tlotlisang David Mhlambiso is a 23-year-old Bachelor of Education final-year student at the University of the Free State who has published a poetry collection, *Ukuphuma Kwelanga*, and a short story collection, *A Journey Worth the Ride*.

The books, launched at the Amazwi South African Museum for Literature in Makhanda, Eastern Cape, during the National Arts Festival can be found at the museum and in local libraries.

Four of his books – *Zizinto Zobomi*, *Phind' ubhale*, *Down the Memory Lane* and *Hamba Siba Lwam* – are to be released in 2024

Tlotlisang, whose motto is “Let’s Make Education Fashionable Through Reading and Writing”, has also co-authored *Tsoho: The Awakening*, *Sol Plaatje European Union Poetry Anthology Vol XI*, *A World Gone Mad*, *The Golden Selection Poetry*, *iCAN Vol. 3* and *Ikhambi Literary Journal Vol. 2*.

An award-winning essayist, Tlotlisanga has been honoured and acknowledged by the National Youth Development Agency as a National Trailblazer in the Education Sector for the year 2023.

The University of the Free State has also recognised him as the Student of the Year 2023 for elevating the values of innovation, excellence as well as impact and the global footprint of the work he is doing in the African narrative space.



# YOLANDA ZONDI



Yolanda Zondi, 33, is an entrepreneur, visual artist and the founder of the award-winning digital media production company, Yolanda Zondi Productions. The company specialises in film and TV production, website and social media design, and presentations.

Yolanda Zondi Productions does location scouting for international and national film producers, and brands and markets South Africa, especially KwaZulu-Natal, as a tourist destination and a visual stage for the world.

The company also films conferences, and corporate and political events, and does professional portraits, training programmes and private shoots.

Yolanda has collaborated with the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission on various projects and worked with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research on outreach programmes to educate young people

She collaborated with the SABC as a director of photography for a segment of The Water Diary, an educational show that aims to educate South Africans on water conservation, careers in the water industry and the business of water delivery.

Yolanda is also one of the youngest advisory board members at the Durban University of Technology where she helps students find creative digital solutions to problems and helps the Arts and Design Faculty keep updated on technology.



09

SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY

# ASANDA NGCOBO



Asanda Ngcobo is the co-founder of Ecolie Technology, an online learning platform that helps high school learners prepare for their exams. He launched it in 2023 after he struggled with preparing for his matric exams.

The tool collates video tutorials on Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Computer Skills and places them on one easy-to-access platform.

"I had a problem when I was in high school where we couldn't find a physics teacher who could connect to us, so I would look to YouTube to find material," Ngcobo says. "But I ended up spending more time looking for videos than I did studying."

The 27-year-old believes this tedious search for tutorial videos led to him performing poorer than he had anticipated.

Not wanting any other learners to go through his experience, the Ecolie platform also provides interactive questions and answers in addition to the tutorial videos. While the platform was created in KwaZulu-Natal, its main users have been in Tshwane, Gauteng, mainly because of the free access to Wi-Fi in that municipality.

Ngcobo has now partnered with the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education to develop Coding and Robotics study material for learners.



# DR EDITH PHALANE



**D**r Edith Phalane is currently a Research Manager/Specialist Scientist at the South African Medical Research Council in the field of cardiovascular disease and HIV.

Her work focuses on improving the understanding of and response to epidemics such as HIV and AIDS as well as pandemics such as COVID-19.

She has successfully co-supervised multiple Public Health students at the University of Johannesburg, including 30 Master's students and nine PhD students.

In her capacity as Research Manager, Phalane manages multi-year, multi-million rand inter-disciplinary research projects.

Outside of her research work, Phalane also conducts various community engagement activities, where she advocates for the implementation of science to solve the real-life problems of ordinary people.

Phalane also actively participates in mentoring primary and secondary learners to participate in science fairs such as the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists.

# DR EDWARD NKADIMENG



**D**r Edward Nkadimeng is a young, accomplished researcher and innovator specialising in the field of particle physics and technology. The 30-year-old is currently employed as a researcher at the National Research Foundation's iThemba LABS.

One of his biggest passions is advocating for increased investment in research from the government and the private sector, saying collaborative efforts between government entities and the private sector will enhance opportunities in underserved areas.

He envisions a world where every individual can participate in the wonders of the digital age and advocates for increased access to technology and digital literacy to make this happen.

Nkadimeng is involved in nurturing the next generation of scientific minds by guiding students from all academic levels at Wits University. He also co-supervises postgraduate students at the institution, further cementing his role as a guiding force for future leaders.

# MMAPULA LESAILANE



As a young girl, Mmapula Lesailane was always curious about how flowers got their colours and why different types of fruit grew in different seasons. Then she fell in love with science when she realised it could provide the answers.

Now, at 28, Mmapula is a qualified scientist who runs an Agri-science company in Limpopo, Mater Pluviam Holdings, and finds ways of implementing scientific solutions to support communities and individuals in the agriculture sector.

Born and raised in the farming town of Tzaneen in Limpopo, Mmapula found herself introduced to a whole new world of agriculture in Stellenbosch, Western Cape, where she was studying towards her Master's degree in Agricultural Science.

"Having spent so much time in Stellenbosch I was amazed when I saw how people were applying science in their farming," says Mmapula. "I knew then that I had to take this knowledge back home, so that we can one day see black people from Tzaneen having labs on their farms and using science to solve their problems".

Mmapula's ultimate goal is to help more young scientists discover ways of monetizing their research and applying their knowledge to solve everyday problems in various sectors, including agriculture.



# PABALLO MOSALA



Paballo Mosala thought her multiple unsuccessful attempts at gaining entry into medical school would dash her dreams of helping people. What she didn't know was that the rejections would lead her down a different, but equally impactful path of medical research.

Paballo holds a PhD in Clinical Sciences and Immunology from the University of Cape Town, where she conducted her research focusing on 'Immune responses to SARS-CoV-2 infection and vaccines'.

She also mentors high school learners from disadvantaged backgrounds through the Ikamva Youth programme, an organisation that aims to enable disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty through education and/or employment.

The 31-year-old says her initial attempts at becoming a medical doctor were partially sparked by the belief that one should either become a doctor, an engineer or an accountant as a sign of success.

"I realised there was so much more to life than being a doctor. I became aware of other interests that I have. I still wanted to play a role in people's lives, even though I couldn't be in the forefront. I still wanted to play a role in the life expectancy of people," Mosala says.

# ZIME NXUMALO



When a setback forced Zime Nxumalo's family to sell their home, the 20-year-old saw first-hand how complicated the real estate sales process was and the tech student took it upon herself to develop an innovative tool that would make the process less frustrating.

She founded Zime Wezwe Creatives, a software development company that facilitates transparency within the real estate transaction process, through the use of blockchain technology (an advanced database mechanism that allows transparent information sharing within a network).

Through this technology, all stakeholders have the opportunity to audit activities in real-time, which reduces costs and speeds up the overall process.

Zime taught herself about blockchain technology using online short courses, and her work has sparked a curriculum change at the Durban University of Technology, where she studied towards a Bachelor's degree in Information and Communications Technology.

The faculty has called on her to formulate a curriculum for a masterclass on blockchain, which she taught to her peers – and “that institutional shift is something I hadn't expected,” she adds.

Most notably, Nxumalo has also delivered a lecture on blockchain technology to Master's level students at the Northpark University of Chicago in the United States.

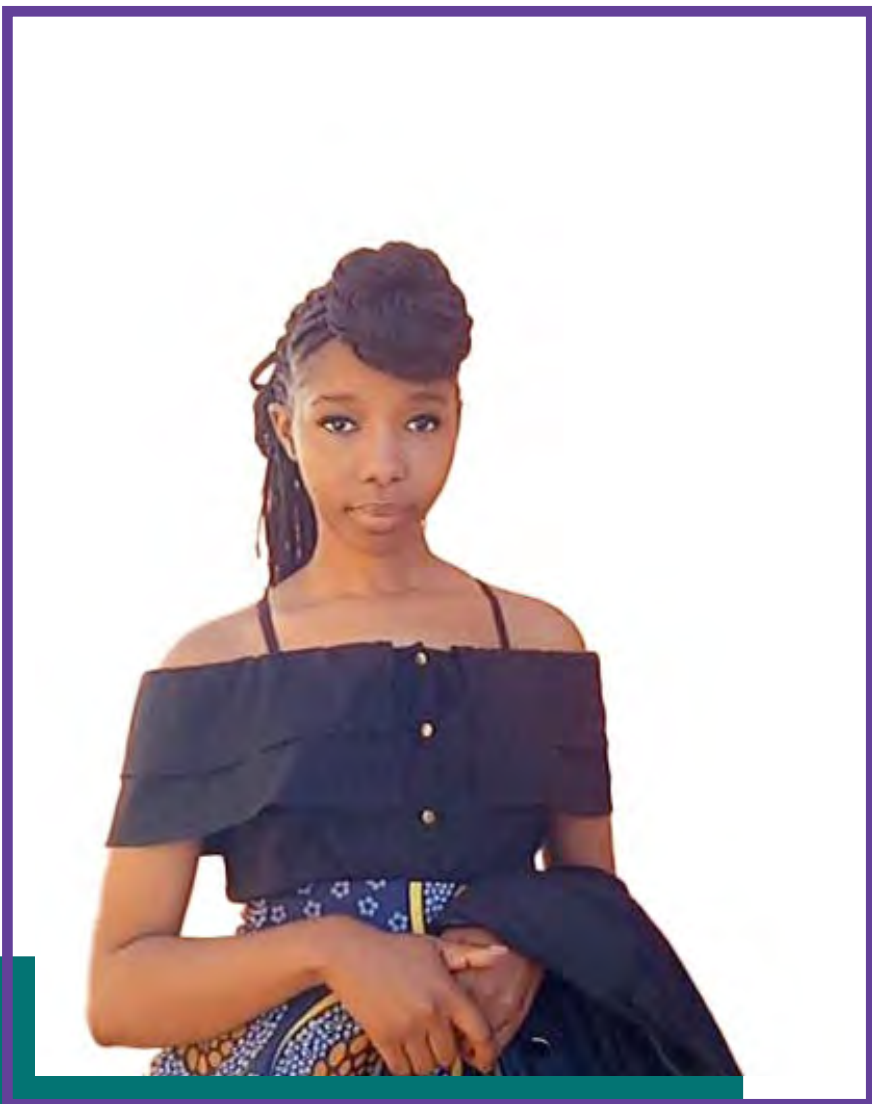
A row of five wooden chess pawns of different heights, arranged from left to right. The pawns are light-colored wood with a smooth finish. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of light blue and white. A thin blue vertical line runs down the right side of the image, and a thin blue horizontal line runs across the middle, intersecting the text.

# 10

CIVIL SOCIETY  
AND YOUTH



# ANELISA MATEBESE



Anelisa Matebese is the head of the TWYST Foundation. TWYST – Transforming Women and Youth in Social Trends – consists of skilled personnel aiming to build shelters for orphans and homeless people among other good works.

“We strive to encourage youth and the elderly to participate in our social awareness programmes and to live with a ‘healthy lifestyle’ perspective,” says TWYST. “Our aim is to empower vulnerable women, children, youth and the community at large, enhancing their abilities by using holistic approaches, linking them to available resources and striving to take accountability for bringing back dignity in our communities.”

The foundation runs the following programmes: Gender-based violence, Rehabilitation Treatment, Skills Development, Bringing Back the Dignity of the Girl/Boy Child, Home Based Care (Food Parcels), Feeding Schemes (Soup Kitchen) and a Clothing Bank.

Anelisa has motivated the youth to not sit and wait for opportunities but to start creating their own, encouraging their peers to do the same and fighting to build a generation that is free of poverty. A good motivational speaker, Anelisa is often invited by churches and other community or-organisations as a guest speaker.

# ASONELE MELAPI



Asonle Melapi is the founder and chairperson of the Nokwanda Patocka Foundation, which is named after her sister, who was a victim of femicide. The foundation is dedicated to helping victims of Gender-Based Violence and their families.

Asonle runs youth and community empowerment programmes for women to capacitate them so they can be independent and have better options.

The foundation advocates for the rights of vulnerable women, attends court cases and assists victims with the legal process and in knowing their rights.

Asonle believes in the rehabilitation of perpetrators and assists young boys and men in getting the help they need..

She is also the regional secretary of the Women's Sector Council, the Eastern Cape head for the Baphi Abafazi Movement, the Youth Chamber Council committee member, IEDF National Executive Provincial Chairperson, National GBV Ambassador for the South African Police Service, Spiritual Crime Prevention Committee member and The Herald Nelson Mandela University Citizen of the Year Award Winner for her role in advocating against GBV in her province and nationally.

# ATHENKOSI FANI



Athenkosi Fani is a 26-year-old LGBTQI activist and civil society ambassador who is now in his final year studying public relations at Walter Sisulu University. The university has named him as an “Ambassa-dor” for his outstanding work in upholding its values and ideals.

Athenkosi, who hails from Reeston in East London, knew he was gay from childhood, and so did others: he was mercilessly assaulted in children’s homes and elsewhere for much of his life.

“I was born gay,” says Fani, “and I am proudly gay. However, this has not been easy. It has been a journey that took me many years.”

Rather than bend to the attacks, Fani became an activist for LGBTQI communities. In 2020, he formed the Boniswa LGBTQI Foundation and launched the LGBTQIRISE campaign to create awareness about the rights and challenges faced by LGBTQI people. It was at university, where Fani’s advocacy for LGBTQI rights took shape and gained momentum—and he came to fully realise the extent of the discrimination and violent attacks suffered by the LGBTQI community.

Despite continued physical, political, and emotional harassment, Fani continues to give motivational talks, train youth on leadership and sensitivity, and organise LGBTQI sports tournaments and awareness campaigns.



# BASETSANA HAPPY PITSO



**B**asetsana Happy Pitso is a youth leader, an advocate for human rights and a climate activist. Born and raised in Alexandra township, Johannesburg, she became passionate about social justice after witnessing the struggles faced by those living in her poverty-stricken community.

Basetsana began volunteering at Amnesty International South Africa where she helped organise campaigns for the eradication of pit toilets. She then became a member of the Digital Disruptors – a youth programme fighting against Gender-Based Violence using social media platforms.

She spread her reach nationally when she became a youth committee member for the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and African Climate Alliance (ACA), where she organised community outreach campaigns, workshops, and projects to address social issues at large.

She was a 2022/23 National Focal points person for SAIIA under the thematic area of Inclusive Societies and a 2022/23 ambassador for climate change at ACA. Her activism also influenced her career choice and she is studying Archaeology and Anthropology with International Politics as a sub-major at Unisa.

Basetsana is the recipient of the Emerging Leader Award for 2022 and recently received a certificate from the Young African Leaders Initiative under the Public Management and Governance track from Cohort 22.

# CHIARA TRACEY



Chiara Tracey, Managing Partner of The Empire Bus – a Youth Development and Empowerment initiative in Eldorado Park, Gauteng – says: “I have fought and still am fighting to see the youth of Eldos change for the better because as the youth we are the future leaders.”

The Empire Bus’s programmes include skills development, such as welding and work readiness training, and helping the youth to start their businesses to sustain themselves and their family members.

It recently hosted a Business Expo in Eldorado Park to showcase opportunities for the youth.

# JUBILEE RIVOMBO



Jubilee Rivombo, 25, identifies herself as a “soon-to-be philanthropist” who will actively engage with stakeholders for the betterment of our country.

Jubilee is the liaison officer for the National Child and Youth Care Workers’ Association, responsible for ensuring that youth forums run in all nine provinces.

She has a BA honours in psychology, a bachelor of social sciences majoring in psychology and criminology and a certificate in civic leadership.

The 25-year-old also has won numerous awards, including the 2022 Young Women Peacebuilders’ Award. She was also awarded for outstanding advocacy work by the Department of Social Development in 2018..

Jubilee has consulted on the National Development Plan, the National Action Plan and participated in the presidential pre-summit by the Department of Social Development on gender-based violence and femicide focal points in 2022.

Jubilee’s activism is recognised internationally as well. She is among the few young people representing South Africa in the Brazil, India, Russia, South Africa (BRICS) forum and often joins United Nations consultation meetings and Commonwealth forums representing South Africa and Africa.

In 2023, Jubilee became an alumni of the prestigious Young African-Leaders Initiative with other young African Leaders.



# KGAUGELO CHIRWA



Kgaugelo Chirwa, a qualified aircraft mechanic who is “very passionate” about aviation, is dedicated to uplifting her community in Soshanguve, outside Pretoria.

She visits schools to motivate learners, shares God’s word with them, and offers career guidance in aviation and other fields.

Kgaugelo also collects clothes and gives them to indigent individuals in need and has raised funds for community projects and prepared lunch for children at an orphanage.

Her podcast, Nothing is Impossible on Spotify, is about sharing knowledge and wisdom – spreading the “I can” message to the world. It is a platform where she shares advice, poems, quotes and interesting things she writes about.

“I am confident, spontaneous and love to travel,” says Kgaugelo, who believes that “enthusiasm is the steam that drives the engine.”

# MNOTHOWANDILE CELE



**M**nothowandile Cele is the Founder and CEO of the Clipped Wings Foundation in Port Elizabeth, which offers a holistic approach to victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence.

The former beauty queen, who hails from Soweto, is a multiple award-winning GBV survivor who is making her mark locally and internationally.

Mnothowandile lives by Oprah's notion that women should "Think like a queen [because] a queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another stepping stone to greatness."

A survivor of two separate incidents of sexual violence, Mnothowandile considers herself fortunate that the perpetrators in her case were among the 8,6% who end up convicted and sentenced. Her motivation is to improve the conviction rate of those responsible for GBV.

Mnothowandile is a nominee in the Standard Bank Top Women in Leadership awards and is recognised in the Forbes 30 under 30 list for community development.

She is currently a member of the Young International Arbitration Group under the London Court of International Arbitration, the Eastern Cape Provincial Deputy Chairperson of the Youth Crime Prevention Board, a qualified first responder for trauma victims at higher institutions, and a facilitator and coordinator at Nelson Mandela University where she is studying law.

# NICOLAS TINASHE MLAMBO



Nicolas Tinashe Mlambo, 22, is the co-founder and chairperson of Grind Club Motive Africa, a registered nonprofit organisation that helps grade 12 learners by bridging the gap between high school and university.

Learners get help with career guidance, college, university and bursary applications, as well as sharing knowledge that helps them with their studies.

Grind Club, which makes use of technology and social media to work with learners, has reached close to 2,000 of them from high schools around South Africa during its four years of operation.

The organisation also takes on university student volunteers each year, who develop marketable skills and experience which they can add to their CVs.

Nicolas has a BA in law from North-West University, participated in the Aspire Leader Programme at the Aspire Institute at Harvard University in the United States, and is a participant in the Young African Leadership Initiative.

As a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society for academic performance and student leadership, Nicolas says he is driven by an unwavering commitment to empowering young individuals to become the best versions of themselves and a deep-rooted passion for law, civil society and social justice.



# SAIDY BROWN



Saidy Brown is a 28-year-old HIV Activist who uses social media and her YouTube channel to de-stigmatise the condition and document her life experiences as a person living with HIV.

She says the work has played a huge role in her healing journey and has helped people see that there is life after an HIV diagnosis.

“I have made so many connections online, of people affected and infected by HIV, and it has been rewarding to see how sharing my story and journey has created a safe space in me for people living with HIV.”

She found out about her HIV status at 14 and began sharing her story as an 18-year-old in her hometown of Itsoseng in the North West – initially via her phone and her Facebook account.

Saidy, who was a part of the youth plenary at the 8th South African Aids Conference in Durban in 2017, says she is driven by a desire to change the story of how a person living with HIV is supposed to end.

“I live my life so loudly and boldly because I am not a victim of HIV, I am an HIV Victor.”



# SIPHESIHLE PERFECT NKOSI



Siphesihle Perfect Nkosi is a Social Entrepreneur, Early Childhood Development Practitioner and Children's Rights advocate, who is passionate about creating inclusive spaces through digital learning and promoting the culture of reading, writing and communicating in African languages.

He recognises his privilege in society and uses it to address issues of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) through the Generation G project, where he pushes for inclusive youth participation.

Siphesihle joined the #NOEXCUSE campaign and has successfully trained youngsters on the National Strategic Plan on GBVF and how they can use the tool to hold the government accountable if it fails to take action to tackle the GBVF problem.

He is also the Special Projects Coordinator for the Phakamani Young Minds Academy, a youth-led non-profit organisation providing academic

assistance, support and mentorship to learners throughout their schooling careers.

Its ultimate goal as an organisation is to produce prominent members of society and young people lifting themselves out of the cycle of poverty and into tertiary education and/or employment.

Perfect Nkosi is studying Family Engagement in Education through HarvardX because he believes that we need a holistic approach to support children during their educational careers.

# ZANELE MPUNGOSE



Zanele Mpungose, 28, is the founder of Seeds of Restoration Empowerment Projects (Sorep), a youth-led non-profit organisation that was established in 2013 in Madadeni, near Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal.

The organisation offers skills development and empowerment to young people through various mentorship programmes.

The organisation aims to mitigate the effects of unemployment, school dropouts and crime through dialogues, marches, welfare, sport and art.

The programmes have covered Covid-19 awareness, young men's and women's life skills, sports tournaments and soup kitchen drives, job application training and readiness as well as entrepreneurship.

Sorep has helped more than 80 families with food parcels and clothing, 70 students have been assisted with college and varsity applications while others were assisted with drug rehabilitation, returned to school after dropping out for learnerships.

"My love for the community developed at a very young age," says Mpungose. "I hate seeing someone suffer because they don't have something or someone. I know how it feels to be voiceless. What drives me is seeing the change and being the change."



11

POLITICS AND  
GOVERNANCE



# BOITUMELO MOLETE



**B**oitumelo Molete is in her element at the trade union federation COSATU where she can indulge her passion of being a voice of the voiceless. As the federation's Social Development Policy Coordinator, the bulk of her activism revolves around issues of climate justice, and youth and gender representation in the trade union movement.

Boitumelo has been in COSATU's Labour Research Unit since 2015 and has gathered extensive knowledge of the culture of trade unions, including the policies and practices that govern them.

She has represented workers' interests at key labour conferences and in bodies such as the Universal Basic Income Coalition, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy South, the Advisory Group Interim Committee and the Youth Advisory Group of the Green Jobs for Youth Pact.

Boitumelo has represented workers at international forums as well as at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP), and other UNFCCC Conferences.

She was a delegate at COP 26 and COP 27 for the International Trade Union Confederation.

Born and bred in Soweto, where her politics was sharpened, Boitumelo cares deeply about mitigating problematic issues that affect Africans, especially women and youth.

# DAVID KABWA



David Kabwa, a PhD candidate in International Relations with the Centre for Mediation in Africa at the University of Pretoria (UP), is a multi-award-winning national and continental role-player in youth affairs.

He was named a Top 200 Young South African by the Mail & Guardian and made a significant mark at UP. He was elected to chair a faculty house in his first year and later won the Faculty of Humanities Dean's Award.

David's body of work, like the awards he has garnered, is varied and extensive. He is the first-ever African to be elected as prime minister of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament, made up of 54 countries, and was elected for two consecutive terms as the president of UP's Student Representative Council, where he represented 60,000 students across seven campuses. He was the first UP SRC president to be re-elected for a second term.

David served two terms on the National General Council of the South African Union of Students and was also active in the Gauteng Youth Parliament. He is the president of Move, a newly formed youth-led political party that will contest the 2024 general election under the banner of Rise Mzansi.

# PUMELELE MAHLOMBE



**P**umelele Mahlombe is indefatigable. He has been doing selfless community work for 13 years now and, in 2021, at the age of 30, he was the youngest councillor in his rural municipality in the Eastern Cape.

His mission is to attract companies and NGOs to invest in his rural community and to create much-needed jobs in the process. He supports and helps small, medium and micro enterprises to grow and create more opportunities for locals through the Sakhisizwe Ward 8 Development Agency, which he formed to facilitate opportunities for development and investment rather than waiting for the government to deliver.

Pumelele monitors the impact of the work he does for the community by holding annual economic indabas. His goal is to create dynamic leaders who can help to economically develop rural communities.

In 2023, he registered more than 1,000 job-seekers for skilling and capacity building with the Department of Labour and Employment. He runs programmes targeting groups and individuals who are challenged by social ills, including joblessness. Every year he recognises game changers in these communities to train as community development ambassadors.

For a 32-year-old, this is commendable innings given the road he has yet to travel.



# THABISO DON MAHLAULA



It would appear that some political leaders develop naturally from their involvement in student politics. That is certainly the case with Thabiso

Don Mahlaula, who is the National Deputy Coordinator of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and the branch treasurer of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in Ward 75, Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria.

Thabiso started his politics at Sikhululekile High School as the sub-branch chairperson of COSAS at the age of 16. He became the Zonal Coordinator of Hammanskraal in 2019 and was co-opted onto the Regional Executive Committee in the same year.

In 2022, he was appointed Regional Co-ordinator to deliver a conference of scholars in the capital city. Thereafter, he was elected Regional Chairperson of COSAS's Greater Tshwane Region before moving to his current position as National Deputy Coordinator.

Thabiso's mandate is to deliver a national conference of COSAS. He is well-spoken and has endeared himself to the hearts of not just his learner community but the broader civic body as well. Thabiso says learners are well protected and served under his leadership – a point not exactly in dispute.

# VHAHANGWELE TSOTETSI



Vhahangwele Tsotetsi is a Political Science and International Relations graduate from the University of Johannesburg.

Vhahangwele has quickly emerged as a remarkable influencer in the field of political transformation and has worked with bodies like the United Nations Children's Fund. His area of speciality is analysing political data and helping organisations make good use of his research.

In 2021 he was a campaign manager for ActionSA during the local government elections, with his insights contributing immensely to the new party's success. Recognising the importance of engaging and involving the youth in democratic processes, Vhahangwele founded Project YouthSA in early 2022. The non-governmental initiative has significantly empowered youth participation in civic matters.

An advocate for international cooperation, Vhahangwele has contributed to dialogue between Europe and Africa while collaborating with the French Institute in South Africa and the French Embassy.

His insights and experiences have been featured in several publications. In 2023, Vhahangwele co-founded BaswaConnect, a student work readiness incubator. With a blend of political acumen, research expertise and a passion for empowering the youth, Vhahangwele stands as a catalyst for positive change in South African politics.

He was among the Mail & Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans in 2022.



# 12

TRANSPORT AND  
LOGISTICS



# SAMKELISIWE ZONDI



Samkelisiwe Zondi describes herself as a young, vibrant, black female CEO and Founder of Inkanyezi Luxury Travel. She was born and bred in Umlazi E Township in KwaZulu-Natal and believes she was born with an entrepreneurial streak.

She started selling jewellery at the age of 16 and has not looked back since then. Samekelisiwe ventured into the travel business as a way of empowering people as she believes that travelling broadens the mind.

She launched Inkanyezi Luxury Travel in 2021 by creating a promotional video on a trip to Cape Town, used that as advertising and ended up with a fully booked trip. She now runs Inkanyezi Luxury Travel out of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town using a hybrid work model.

She offers local and international tours and was recently nominated for the Sebenza Women Awards (Women in Tourism) for the Best Travel Agency. Her mantra is to help her customers “Enjoy the Soft Side of Life’ through the full spectrum of luxury travel.



# XOLANI ZULU



Xolani Zulu is a 23-year-old Gauteng motivational speaker, podcaster and entrepreneur. His entry into the transport and logistics sector is through the taxi industry. He operates four taxis through his family business, one of them as a driver.

Xolani regards himself as a game changer as he wants to make the industry customer-friendly and safe.

One of the innovations he has introduced is to operate the family's taxis around the clock. He and his colleagues are also developing an app that will allow commuters to access information about taxi ranks, routes and availability.

