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BLACK BUSINESS QUARTERLY

Lekau Sehoana

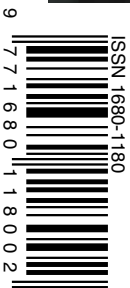
Founder and CEO
of Drip Footwear

SOUTH AFRICA'S PREMIER
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LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE
SECOND QUARTER 2021

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CONTENTS

- 16 **WOMEN**
BECOMING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS A RISING GLOBAL TREND, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE FAIRER SEX... AND SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN ARE TAKING THE LEAD
- 22 **JOHANNA MAKGALEMELE**
A SHINING EXAMPLE OF HOW PUTTING POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS INTO THE WORLD COULD BRING BUCKETS LOADS OF SUCCESS
- 30 **NIMEE DHULOO**
SHE IS A BUSINESS COACH, MENTOR AND AUTHOR WITH A DEEP PASSION FOR LIFE, FOR LEARNING AND FOR SEIZING EVERY MOMENT
- 39 **B-BBEE**
BROAD-BASED TRUSTS OWNERSHIP STATUS IS NO LONGER HANGING IN THE BALANCE
- 40 **JOB CREATION**
CHECK OUT THE FINDINGS OF THE FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS JOB CREATORS SURVEY
- 48 **MUTODA MAHAMBA**
WHAT DO YOU CALL A MAN WHO COMES UP WITH A SHORT-TERM INSURANCE CONCEPT THAT GIVES YOU BACK 50%, EVEN IF YOU HAVE CLAIMED?
- 52 **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
NIZENANDE MACHI, CO-FOUNDER OF LUCHA LUNAKO, TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT RESHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH
- 58 **AFRICA**
COVID-19 HAS BROUGHT WITH IT EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS. BUT HOW SHOULD THEY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE TO HELP SPUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY?



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CONTENTS

60 **TECHNOLOGY**

THE POWER TO OVERCOME OUR TRANSFORMATION HURDLES AND MAP OUT A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR SA'S ECONOMY LIES WITHIN STEM EDUCATION

64 **AGRICULTURE**

A BRILLIANT EXAMPLE OF TRANSFORMATION; SHOWCASING COLLABORATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

68 **MIND MATTERS**

RESILIENCE: THE KEY TO BUILD STRENGTH OF CHARACTER AND CREATE THE ABILITY TO MANAGE THE CURVEBALLS BEING THROWN OUR WAY

70 **TREND**

CREATING A COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM, AN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODEL AND PROCESS OF RETAIL THAT WILL BENEFIT YOUNG BLACK BUSINESS PEOPLE

74 **YOUR MONEY**

NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC BUSINESS CYCLE: WHY NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME TO ACCESS FUNDING

76 **MOTORING**

THE NEW BMW 128TI: THE BRAND'S FIRST-EVER FRONT-WHEEL-DRIVE PERFORMANCE CAR TICKS ALL THE BOXES

78 **LITERATURE**

THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS READER HAS HIT THE SHELVES AND WE PUBLISH MASEGO PANYANE'S INTERVIEW WITH YOUTH ACTIVIST ZULAIKHA PATEL

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Basing my Editor's note on the contents of the magazine is one of the biggest no-no's for me. I find it extremely boring and not exactly entertaining to tell you what will eventually become obvious. Therefore I never chat about the contents here. For that, we kindly present you with the content pages.

However, I'm making this issue the exception to the rule and I will talk to you (still very much against the grain) about how this issue came about and let you in on a few interesting revelations that I have made by editing this publication, this issue in particular.

The inspiration for deviating and breaking my rule, was the amazing efforts made by our loyal contributors, coupled with the super-awesome commitment from those of you who agreed to participate in the issue and had a solid hand in producing such outstanding content and by doing that, helped this magazine to play a part in highlighting issues around transformation. I always enjoy editing the final copy, and seeing how the magazine comes together towards the end of the cycle, but this issue was really special.

As I worked on the copy, I was not just inspired by what knowledge and insights people have delivered, but I was also blown away by the great efforts being made across the board by black businesses, especially female-owned, to boost transformation across the various sectors.

Theming an issue according to the time of year or events on the horizon, is also something that I try and steer clear from. When we started out planning this issue, we ditched the idea to tie it into Youth Month (June) and Women's Month (August). We decided not to conform to the norm, and in true Cape Media style, do things differently.

However, as the issue unfolded, it became clear that a large amount of the content naturally and completely unintended, highlighted the voices of the youth and women, beautifully illustrating and celebrating their transformation journeys in this competitive business world. To me this is an indication that somehow, we are on the right track and somehow there is a natural procession (for the lack of another word) in South Africa's journey to completely level the playing fields.

Yes, as several people have correctly indicated, our transformation journey is still a young one, and much still needs to be done to transform the entire population to equality. But these beautiful success stories, and there are so many more of them, confirm that, despite the perceived slow pace of transformation, we cannot deny the fact that many of our people from previously disadvantaged groups have indeed progressed by leaps and bounds.

What has also become very obvious for me over the past year working on this publication, is the incredible commitment from black business people and companies to pay it forward. I also find the selfless need and desire to help transformation along and better the lives of our fellow black people, be it colleagues, employees, or the communities in which we work and live, refreshing and impressive. This also comes across very strongly in this issue.

And then, I have some interesting news from my side: The time has come for me to embrace new challenges in my life and explore other avenues, so this will be my last issue as editor of *BBQ* magazine.

As I embark on my own transformation journey, I wish you all the best with yours! Stay well, stay safe, stay healthy! Until our paths cross again...

Lindsay

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U n i v e r s i t y o f K e n y a

Just Drip it!

Sixteen years of blood, sweat and tears, many failures and a hunger for success is what encouraged the founder of Drip Footwear to create a sneaker brand inspired by ordinary South Africans in the townships





During one of the worst crises faced by the apparel industry in decades, the sneaker market is one of the success stories of 2020. For African entrepreneurs this market has presented enormous opportunities to leverage. In the global market sneakers are taking market dominance in the footwear category.

It is forecasted that this market will be worth US\$ 95 billion by 2025. The footwear segment in South Africa alone is expected to reach US\$ 594 million by then. It is not rocket science to figure out why this market has seen such a boom. Keeping in mind brands like Nike and Adidas, it is hard not to notice the correlation in the growth of the athleisure market and the sneaker

phenomenon. The fact that a growing number of consumers are interested in an active lifestyle is doing wonders for turning sportswear into everyday wear. Add to this the fact that sneakers are an easy entryway into the athleisure market, and you have a recipe for success.

Globally, streetwear culture is on the rise. African consumers lean towards streetwear because it's comfortable and lightweight, perfect for the continent's hot climate. For the younger market it is mostly about cachet, or being respected by peers.

Lekau Sehoana, founder and CEO of Drip Footwear, was not shy to enter this booming market, and he admits he is not even halfway to where he aspires to be. Entering the market in 2019, Drip is the

fastest growing shoe brand on the continent. During the first year Drip opened three stores. By the time the brand turns two in July, it will have a lucky thirteen stores. Sehoana recalls what it felt like to receive the first shipment of Drip sneakers from the factory. "I have never seen so many shoes in my life, and they were all mine!"

Drip sneakers are inspired by South Africans in the townships who walk a lot. In all the designs a knit mesh is used as it is light and breathable. Although it seems



like Drip's success happened at the stroke of lightning, it is all but true. It is the product of sixteen years of blood, sweat and tears, many failures and a hunger for success.

Lekau's dream was driven by poverty and his disadvantaged background became the foundation and driving force in building the Drip empire. A rag to riches story? Definitely.

The thirty-two-year-old refers to himself as "just a township boy from Ivory Park" who had a township dream. Growing up

dirt poor, Sehoana always tried to find ways to make a little extra money to support his family. He says hustling is in his blood, and he could never quite shake the entrepreneurial spirit.

The year is 2003: the young Sehoana was in his first year of high school. It was civvies day, and with nothing but tatters and old shoes to wear, he decided to make his own outfit. This was an existential moment for him: "Luckily my grandmother taught me how to sew. I created my whole

outfit from pieces of old denim, including the shoes which I sew together using denim and polyurethane. People loved my shoes, and for the rest of my high school career I made clothes for others. I developed a love for fashion, and making shoes."

Sehoana was conscious about being different from an early age. "Thinking of those days still brings up a lot of emotions. My mom was single. She and my dad got divorced when I was only two. We then moved from Limpopo to Ivory Park





More about the man behind Drip

When you are not working, where will find you?

Working (whether at the office or at home). I know it sounds boring, but that's what I do.

What is the most valuable possession you own?

My business!

How are your friends likely to describe you?

Ingenious.

What was your best personal investment ever?

Reading, reading, reading. I had enough time one hands when I was younger to read loads of books and magazines. This is how I've learned about poverty, how to overcome it, and what entrepreneurship really is.

How do you navigate work-play balance?

This is still really difficult for me and I am not yet successful at the balancing act.

Why is the word independence important to you?

Because I've been kept captured by the monster of poverty for too long.

On a scale of 1 to 10—how drip are you?

Eleven.

As for movies, do you prefer comedies, thrillers or action?

None, really. I love documentaries and true stories. It keeps me going.

What are you currently reading?

Building a story brand: clarify your message so customers will listen, by Donald Miller.

What is your favourite saying?

To him whom much is given, much is required.

township in Midrand. We had no electricity, and our clothes always wreaked of paraffin. The shack we stayed in was very small and my mom and sister slept on the bed, while I slept on the floor with my two brothers. Coming back from school I used to be laughed at because of this. No one actually came to visit me after school, except a few people who accepted me and my circumstances. I usually just kept to myself in the afternoons, because I was tired of being the laughing stock."

Between that civvies day sneaker and the first Drip sneaker lies a 16-year gap, during which Sehoana hustled with various ideas for businesses. Although his poultry and cleaning business brought home a little money, it wasn't the success he had hoped for. Something was missing, but Sehoana could not quite put a finger on it, and he decided to study civil engineering, a far cry from designing footwear, but he felt he had to have a degree in order to enter the employment market.

In 2015 he entered the economy with his first 'real' job in the construction business. Yet, the dream to fly solo and be his

own boss never left him. "I spent hours doing research and reading up on people like Khanye West, brand guru Thebe Ikalafeng and gaining inspiration from South African media personalities such as DJ S'bu, Sizwe Dhlomo and American



Entering the market in 2019, Drip is the fastest growing shoe brand on the continent

rapper Jay-Z. But it was the story of Nike's founders, Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight, that again ignited my old love for fashion and I just knew it: my business was going to be sneakers," says Sehoana. "That's me, that's who I am. A sneaker kind of guy."

He sees himself as a self-taught entrepreneur who trusts his gut and research. And



perhaps that is also what sets him apart from other entrepreneurs. He says, "I don't have a mentor. I trust my intuition."

In 2018 Drip Footwear was registered even before Sehoana had a design idea for the shoe. "It was the first step in building my brand. And from there, everything else fell in place," he says.

At first the name Drip didn't go down well with everybody. Sehoana's close friends, with whom he shares ideas, felt it reminded them of hospital drips. Ironically it was this negative connection that persuaded Sehoana to stay with Drip. He explains, "When my friends spoke about the negative connotation, I immediately knew I should keep the name, but that I had a mission to build a positive connection with the name," he says. Drip is also township slang for cool, fashionable or swag.

Starting a business from scratch can be a frightening affair and he admits that one of his biggest fears was to not succeed. Most of his old school friends already had successful careers by the time Sehoana started to build his brand, and the thought of failing again was daunting. However, Sehoana's motto in business is let's move, because without action there cannot be any results.

"There were days I was scared of failing. That is why I did so much research. I played with the thought of going with loafers and a more formal shoe, but when I stood back, I realised there is just so much more to offer in the sneaker market. You can do so much more," he says.

His vision is to establish Drip Corporation and expand the brand to include sports



Sehoana's top tips for young entrepreneurs interested in becoming entrepreneurs

- Do get a lawyer to help you understand all business legalities and contracts.
- Invest in an accountant to handle your money matters.
- Do pay your taxes.
- Take ownership of your brand. No-one else will do it for you.
- If you do not know how to do something, ask for help.
- Don't post about your competition on social media.

shoes and attire. Being a bit of a visionary, Sehoana says, "I don't want to be a brand that starts off and disappears after a while. I want to create more and go deeper."

He feels that his own story is one of the reasons for Drip's success. It is a story a lot of South Africans can relate to. Before Drip even had one shoe to sell, Sehoana's own story was already trending on social media. During the first few months Sehoana and



Sehoana's top tips for creating your own brand

- Do something that you believe in. Running a business takes up a lot of time. The only way to be satisfied is to do something you truly believe in.
- Do thorough research about your product and your market.
- Focus on your product's function and work around that when you develop your brand. Keep it as simple as possible for marketing purposes.
- When opening stores, or finding outlets for your product, keep in mind where your customers are located.
- Invest in the people you work with. They are the foundation and the future of your company.

Drip had to overcome tough challenges. The company is self-funded. When he started out, Sehoana insisted on pre-orders to raise capital, enough to make 600 sneakers, to get the business established. "Cash Flow versus growth has been a huge issue, but was soon ironed out as demand started to exceed supply. Instead of looking for investors or approaching a financial institution for a loan, I made a deal with the factory to produce more sneakers, enabling me to pay later." This worked well for Drip and the factory in Durban produces two hundred thousand pairs three times a year (for now).

Another challenge has been the huge amount of red tape from government that entrepreneurs face when starting a business.

"They don't make it very easy for one to start up your own business. This can be disheartening and break you before you even start. Also, not enough is done to promote young, black entrepreneurs. It is swim or

sink for most of us, because government and big businesses don't have our backs."

According to Sehoana, business started with the online store, which worked a charm during lockdown and propelled



**He emphasises
the fact that he
employs young
people, as they
are the future**

growth into bricks-and-mortar stores. Pop-up stores were created to test the market, and demand saw them opening the first physical store on 27 June in Pretoria, during lockdown.

He emphasises the fact that he employs young people, as they are the future. Drip

10 Things about Drip you did not know

- The first 600 pairs were all pink. It sold out within two weeks.
- Sehoana did not have his own pair of Drip sneakers until 2 December 2019. The reason being, that the factory only had moulds for sizes 3 to 7, and once he had the capital, he could do bigger sizes (it costs a pretty penny to open a new sole mold).
- By December 2019 Drip grossed over R1,2 million.
- Sehoana now wears nothing but Drip on his feet.
- The first logo looked like a smiley face, but Sehoana changed it to the trendy well-known "D" just before going into production for the first time.
- Yellow and red are the most popular Drip sneaker colours, therefore the shoe boxes are red and the delivery vans are yellow.
- The first woman to rock a pair of Drips was media personality Kuli Roberts.
- Other names considered for the company were Azania and Ivory.
- The first shoes' soles were made of silicone, which cracks fast, and was quickly replaced with a better quality material.
- Unlike Nike, who only uses its swoosh on its shoes, Drip's whole name is printed on the shoe so that people can relate to the brand.

already employs 80 people, of which the oldest is 37 years old. He handpicks his employees, looking for creativity, self-drive, a zest for life and heaps of energy.

"I am not looking for years of experience. In fact, a lot of my employees did not have any experience when they started out at Drip. They had a dream and they had a drive to succeed. And this is where

we as a business can play a vital role in the transformation space in South Africa. Young, black companies should realise the importance of youth development. These young people, with or without experience and tertiary education, are the ones who are going to build our economy. We create opportunities and gain experience as we learn and grow together.

"Our brand is a reminder to dream big and never give up. From there our slogan, the township dream. No matter how big we get, we will never forget what made us. We want to remind people that even the dreams they dream as township dwellers are valid, and they can create a brand that is of quality, competing with multi-million dollar brands on the market. We will never forget our township connection.

"Drip radiates creativity. And that is what sets it apart from competitors. The flowing lines, the vibrant colours. We decided to go with a lot of colour, because that is how I see South Africans. They love colour. We are colourful people," Sehoana told *BBQ*.

What's next on the menu for Sehoana? A vacation, he says. He admits that he has been pouring all his energy into building his brand, and that someone close to him recently advised him to take some time off and rest his mind and body, in order for him to take his business to the next level... **BBQ**



Be bold, be brave

Becoming an entrepreneur is a rising global trend, especially among the fairer sex... and South African women are taking the lead

The findings of the second edition of the Veuve Clicquot International Women Entrepreneurship Barometer shed a fascinating light on the state of entrepreneurship in South Africa – the country with the highest level of women entrepreneurship among all 17 countries measured. Indeed, entrepreneurship is more the rule than the exception with more than half of South African women surveyed (54%) considering themselves entrepreneurs.

The majority of women (82%) and men (87%) who are not currently entrepreneurs, are interested in becoming one ... a trend that is rising. Interestingly, women entrepreneurship has increased since the 2018 study (more than 11%), yet mostly in lower revenue sectors. Additionally, more women (more than 12%) and men (more than 9%) aspire to entrepreneurship in a country with very high levels of entrepreneurship already.

The Veuve Clicquot Barometer, which was conducted as the Covid crisis exerted pressure on global cultures and economies, updated the status of women entrepreneurs across the world and has provided the community with a rare tool: a true understanding of the state of female entrepreneurship. Led by dynamic entrepreneur Rapelang Rabana, the Bold Conversations by Veuve Clicquot experience (which took place at the Four Seasons The Westcliff Hotel in Johannesburg, where 50 women entrepreneurs gathered face to face and a further 600 women joined via live streaming) saw passionate conversation as two panels of business leaders unpacked and discussed the findings of this latest study.

Bold Conversations aims to embolden successive generations of audacious female leaders in South Africa. Passionate conversation around the findings took



Amanda Dambuza, founder of Uyandiswa

place in two panels of business leaders including Amanda Dambuza (founder of Uyandiswa), Adriana Marais (founder of Proudly Human), Erik Kruger (founder of Modern Breed), Matsi Modise (founder of Furaha Afrika Holdings), Mzamo Masito (chief marketing officer at Google Africa), Nomndeni Mdakhi (founder of Agenda Women), Nthabi Taukobong (founding member and MD of Ditau Interiors) and Dr Theo Mothoa-Frendo (founder of Uso Skincare).

Bold Conversations is a platform which provides women entrepreneurs around the world with the opportunity to openly discuss the state of women entrepreneurship, identify common prejudices, mental and structural barriers to be overcome and how to get beyond them. The aim is to break down preconceptions, remove structural and societal barriers and provide support and training to enable women to move forward in their entrepreneurial journeys. The study, which was conducted across 17 countries in 2020, has provided important



After all, who besides yourself can be in charge of your destiny?

data around women in the entrepreneurship space, critical to unpack and discuss if we wish to advance women entrepreneurs around the globe.

Following the event, Dambuza said the barometer has provided the community with a rare tool: a true understanding of the state of women entrepreneurship.

Speaking about how the findings and discussion relate to her own inspiring entrepreneurial journey, she says the big thing is that it is largely harder for women to pursue their ambition whilst meeting the demanding needs of their families.

"This boils down to the traditional notion of roles in the family setting. If we openly



Matsi Modise, founder of Furaha Afrika Holdings

challenge the preconceptions that caring for a family is a woman's job, then we are well on our way to making progress. We as women also have to challenge our own mental models of what women can and cannot do. In our own homes we should drive towards a reality where caring for the family is not only a woman's job. We should also be seeking more integration and a

mutually beneficial relationship between our work and family," she says.

Nomdeni Madakhi added: "The meaning of work-life balance is very different for men and women. When you ask women about this they think of family and cooking and men don't necessarily think of these aspects. One of the things we've done at Agenda Women is to do away with the



Nomndeni Mdakhi, founder of Agenda Women

word balance and use the word harmony and a strong focus on self-care. And in this way, I have fallen in love with my journey."

Leveraging opportunity in times of crisis and the impact on leadership

In the long run, we have seen how the Covid-19 pandemic has created a more cautious-yet-determined group of entrepreneurs who are optimistic about new opportunities. And according to the study findings, more than half of male and female

entrepreneurs (57% respectively) have realised new opportunities, created by the post-Covid recovery.

Which brings us to two big questions: Do women feel more professionally bold now than before the pandemic? And how did navigating the challenges build them as leaders?

"I guess when you have had a near-death experience, you are more inclined to pursue your dreams with conviction. Your perspective of life changes. I resonate with

this result of the barometer study because even I had to boldly adapt to changing circumstances."

She had to start thinking about the long-term longevity of the business, which meant tough calls but calls that were what her business needed to survive and to continue creating jobs.

"I had to trim down costs where necessary. I also felt bold enough to explore and invest in industries that I had not considered before; industries that I believe will withstand shocks and play a critical role in the ecosystem."

The role of networking and mentorship in a digital business environment

The barometer found that 90% of women and 90% of men agree: mentorship is key for anyone who aspires to entrepreneurship. Wantrepreneurs (92%) and entrepreneurs (92%) surveyed confirm this belief.

According to the barometer findings 90% of women entrepreneurs agreed that a network of other women entrepreneurs is essential for women who want to become entrepreneurs and have support throughout the process of building their business. The vast majority of entrepreneurs (of both sexes) are making the impact of the crisis (on communication with their networks) work in their favor, by employing digital and electronic communications methods.

In total, 70% of the participating entrepreneurs and 60% of wantrepreneurs agreed that they are in contact with their peers, colleagues, mentors and professional network more now than ever before, thanks to electronic communication methods.

Dambuza says she had never had a formal mentor, although she did take advice from her husband's best friend, who would advise her on some of the business transactions she would embark on. He helped her understand how to structure her businesses.

"I am a mentor to many women entrepreneurs, as I believe I have amassed many valuable lessons over a long period of time. It is time consuming though and due to capacity constraints, I no longer

DID YOU KNOW?

Madame Clicquot's story is one of boldness, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and she is known as one of the world's first international businesswomen. But how exactly did her legacy set the stage for the brand's support of women entrepreneurship, to this day?

Madame Clicquot is what we would today call #GOALS!! She was bold, audacious, determined and tenacious. She was ambitious and never let the obstacles along the way deter her from achieving her dreams. In 1805, at just 27 years of age, she took over the House of Veuve Clicquot from her husband upon his death at a time when women were not allowed to work nor hold a bank account.

She persisted in spite of the monumental challenges she faced. She pioneered so many innovations that have become the hallmark of champagne houses the world over. She was behind the first blended rosé champagne as well as the riddling table which led to crystal clear champagne.

She was also behind the first recorded vintage champagne. She pushed to break every boundary and that kind of audacity inspires women entrepreneurs immensely. We don't even have half of the obstacles she had, yet she was able to revolutionise an industry. It is with this backdrop that Veuve Clicquot continues to support, mentor, train and enable women entrepreneurs. It's authentically embedded into the house's DNA.

take on additional one on one mentees any more. In order to remain accessible and helpful, I created Vastly Sage on YouTube where I provide mentorship. People can access the channel on demand from anywhere in the world. I couple this with a talk show (on the same channel) where I invite amazing guests to tackle worthy and often hard topics, which we then unpack. The idea is to provide practical solutions which viewers can integrate into their everyday life to improve and transform their lives. Access is free and I encourage people to subscribe and get notified when new content is uploaded.

"Once a year I also host an event, an uplifting brunch that supports all of these efforts and gives us an environment where we can have open discussion and get inspired by people who have walked different paths. It is a ticketed event in its second year and it has proven to be a huge success with people travelling from all over the country who want to be part of an inspiring, educational and entertaining platform.

"There is huge interest from other countries as well however due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, plans have been impacted. The future remains possible," she told BBQ, and added that she lives to mentor.

"I am blessed to also learn from many people around me and I never believe you need a mentor to push on with your goals



Dr Theo Mothoa-Frendo, founder of Uso Skincare



Femme facts from the barometer

- » South Africa has the highest level of women entrepreneurship among all 17 countries measured and 54% of South African women surveyed consider themselves entrepreneurs.
- » 90% of South African women entrepreneurs believe that in order to succeed, they need the support of a network of women entrepreneurs.
- » South African women remain resolute and bold in business: South Africa's aspiring women entrepreneurs are facing the Covid crisis with increased determination and an eye toward the future. 59% of women entrepreneurs report growing more confident in their business dealings, and 63% say they're more professionally bold than before the crisis.
- » Women increasingly choose entrepreneurship for financial reasons: 31% of women and 28% of men rate money as the top benefit of being an entrepreneur and it's on the rise.
- » 60% of women feel that it is much harder for a woman than a man to balance work and family life as an entrepreneur (55% of men agree), as they face an age-old problem; balancing work with their other full-time job: caring for their family; yet women entrepreneurs and wantrepreneurs are determined to achieve this balance.
- » More than half of women (and only 32% of men) believe that it is riskier for women to build a business and believe that the risks of entrepreneurship outweigh the benefits, but start a business regardless.

but it helps to have someone who can be empathetic to your journey and help you with clarity of vision. You still have to hold yourself accountable."

Dr Mothoa-Frendo and Modise agreed, and added that in terms of mentorship, Bold Conversations did exactly that; connected entrepreneurs with wantrepreneurs to support the growth of this very network.

While most women consider mentors to be an elite business person with whom they should share a formal relationship, the reality is that there are people with whom we are in contact daily (be it neighbours, family members, or fellow school moms) who may be able to shed light on the specific challenges one is experiencing.

"Help can also come from authors or global entrepreneurs who have shared their struggles; after all, with the wealth of information available online, it is more than likely that you will find information from someone who has gone through a similar battle," says Dr Mothoa-Frendo.

Masito added: "I have learnt that every entrepreneur needs three people on their

business journeys: an influential person of power who speaks about you and your business, a mentor who speaks to you about your business and finally, someone who speaks with you, within your business."

The importance of resilience and the ability to adapt in the new age

Women increasingly say they are the ones in control of their professional destiny (more than 3% to 96% according to the Veuve Clicquot Barometer), fewer report feeling undeserving of the professional situation (less than 6%), attribute their professional success to luck (less than 9%) or feel unappreciated for their leadership skills (less than 5%).

Sharing her thoughts and experiences on this topic, and how she has adapted her own business over time to feel more in control of her professional destiny, Dambuza says nothing says 'I am in control of my professional destiny' more than being an entrepreneur.

"Your reward and recognition is directly correlated to your own efforts. You own your time and can decide how to use it

which allows flexibility to prioritise the things most important to you. You set your own agenda and nothing could be more empowering. Leaving a corporate job more than seven years ago was most certainly the first step towards owning my destiny."

"I also made sure I set my business up in such a way that it can continue to operate even when I am not around so I hired good people who can self-manage.

"It sure can be depressing to have a business that consumes you and is fully dependent on you. From the onset my aim was to own my destiny and entrepreneurship journey. Whilst challenging, it has given me exactly the space I needed to drive an agenda determined by myself. This way I am clear about the direction my life is taking. My independence is everything to me," she says.

Notably, what made the difference, opined panelists taking part in the discussion, are the realisations brought about by the pandemic, including the fact that one cannot rely on anyone else to make one's dreams and ambitions come true and



We as women also have to challenge our own mental models of what women can and cannot do

remain resilient. "After all, who besides yourself can be in charge of your destiny," Matsi Modise pointed out.

Adriana Marias, meanwhile, observed that Africans have a natural resilience, accustomed as we are to finding solutions while operating in resource-constrained environments. This has helped to hone our spirit of innovation. **BBQ**

Lisa Witepski and Lucienne van Pul



With much flair, darling

Travel guru Johanna Makgalemele is a shining example of how putting positive affirmations into the world could bring buckets loads of success

She's known as a fierce businesswoman, international motivational speaker and an entrepreneur who has certainly blazed a trail in the corporate travel industry. And based on her opulent Instagram feed, one would even go as far as calling her a trendsetter. But Travel with Flair Group CEO, Johanna Makgalemele, says she's anything but a trendsetter. "I'm a girl who grew up on the dusty streets of Soweto and am blessed to be in a position where I can create opportunities for others. Some of my staff have been with me for double-digit years, and many of them are women," she says.

Corporate travel management service, Travel with Flair, was founded in 1996 with three people and one office in Pretoria, but 25 years later, the company has offices in Joburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town, plus a staff complement of over 800 people, of which 86% are women. "I have made a concerted effort to make sure that I bring women into the business. Women are very loyal. If they can grow with you, if their families are looked after and if they are not stagnant – they will stay with you and support you at all costs."

It is clear that, for Makgalemele, creating spaces for women to thrive is a big priority. But does she think South Africa is doing enough to support women in the workplace? "I think a lot more can be done. Hence, there are still a lot of conferences taking place so we can discuss how we can get the gender parity scale just right. I have to commend the government, though, for initiating gender parity policies and female empowerment policies. On the corporate side, however, the struggle is still very real for women. More stringent measures need to be put in place so that companies can be held accountable."

Although she's now flying South Africa's flag high in the luxury travel sphere, accounting graduate Makgalemele made her bones doing her articles at KPMG before venturing into the world of entrepreneurship. And while making the move from accounting to travelling seemed uncanny, she admits that the travel industry found her and she was able to meet partners, Robert Wilke and Tibor Zsadanyi, who shared her values and vision for business.

"It was a true meeting of minds," she says. The success of the business opened many doors and Makgalemele was later

invited to sit on the Global Tourism Board Association of Corporate Travel Executives where she represented the Middle East and Africa; the first African to do so.

Things were looking good and growth and expansion became commonplace, but no one was prepared for Covid-19. The travel industry was gravely affected, but Makgalemele says she was lucky enough to keep the doors open.

"I think this is where the accountant in me kicked in. We were able to look at non-negotiables and other expenses on our income statement and negotiate with stakeholders where needed," she explains.

"You need to be able to keep on top of your expenses, even when things are going well. And when you're working with companies, corporations (and even banks), ultimately, there's a human being on the other side of the table. If you are brave enough to ask for help, you will get it."

As a motivational speaker who shared a stage with the likes of Richard Branson, 50 Cent and Calvin Klein, Makgalemele admits that finding one's purpose and working hard at it is the secret to success. A quote that she's adopted to her day-to-day reads:





30 seconds with... Johanna Makgalemele

What's the first thing you do when you wake up?

I brush my teeth! Doesn't everyone? I don't check my phone until I've brushed my teeth and had coffee, even though many may think I check my phone first.

How would close friends describe your personality?

Ha-ha-ha, they'd say I'm the one who glows. The one who captures the attention of many when she enters the room, or that I have the most infectious personality and I look like I never have a sad day. Well, I say, happiness is a choice. You choose how you react to challenges and I choose to be happy and that's what keeps me forever young.

I wouldn't leave the house without...

a lick of lipstick, my phone and my credit card! My dad always told me that wherever you go, always make sure you can pay your way.

What was the last book you read?

I love reading biographies. I think the last one I read was *Losing My Virginity: How I Survived, Had Fun, and Made a Fortune Doing Business My Way* by Richard Branson. I find him very fascinating and I had the privilege of being mentored by him in parts of my business journey.

What is your favourite item of clothing?

My bodycon dresses, they shape my figure nicely.

Food you cannot give up?

Sushi darling! Especially from Willoughby & Co. I've not had better sushi anywhere else in the world. Nobody can beat Willoughby's sushi.

If I was stuck on an island...

who would I rather be stuck with? Come on, everyone knows—it has to be Bassie (Basetsana Kumalo: business woman and former Miss South Africa). My darling sister! The kids will be my responsibility, so with my sister it'll be a shared responsibility and we'll have a great time and not even feel the time passing.

"To find a career to which you're adapted to by nature and then to work hard at it is about as near a formula for success and happiness as the world provides." The same goes for finding suitable mentors.

"I don't have one particular mentor. I believe that as you grow in your career or as a person, different people play various roles in that specific part of your life. When I started this travel venture, I admired Richard Branson because of his fearless nature. He taught me to be a fearless leader and also to trust people when I travelled abroad. This helped me in my development as a businesswoman and my travels. It allowed me to fully experience all the places I went

to, explore the cultures and the people fully by going off the beaten track."

She beams with passion as she delves deeper into how she grew her business. But does someone with such a sunny disposition have a breaking point?

"I am a very positive person," she laughs. "But I certainly have no bandwidth for people who don't tell the truth. My kids can attest to that. I always tell them to tell the truth at all costs. Even at work, I tell my staff that if they have messed up, to tell me the whole truth, so that I can go and eat humble pie on their behalf. Never tell me a fib and have me find out the real story at the meeting."

Makgalemele prides herself as being a servant leader. "The worst business advice I received was that as a leader you need to be hard on your staff and they need to hear you so that they can work hard. But what I have realised while growing my business is that a servant leader gets far better results and support from staff. If you choose to hide in your glass tower, you will get nothing from your staff. If you carry yourself well and show that you are also part of the team, they will work hard for you whether you're there or not."

She admits, the best business advice she received was from her father. "It is such a simple thing, but my father taught me the

Achievements

- » 2007: Winner of the SA Tourism Award (Best Travel Agency)
- » 2012: Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Award (Johanna Makgalemele)
- » 2014: ASATA I Diners Club Awards (Exceptional Commitment to the Travel Industry – Johanna Makgalemele)
- » 2015: World Travel Awards (Africa's Leading Business Travel Agency)
- » 2017: Oliver Top Empowerment Business of the Year Award
- » 2017: Businesswoman of South Africa's Businesswoman of the Year Award (Entrepreneur category)
- » 2017: World Travel Awards (South Africa's Leading Travel Management Company Award)
- » 2018: World Travel Awards (South Africa's Leading Travel Management Company Award)
- » 2019: World Travel Awards (South Africa's Leading Travel Management Company Award)
- » 2020: World Travel Awards (South Africa's Leading Travel Management Company Award)

value of hard work. And now, after 25 years of growing my business, I can truly say that hard work and putting in the time and effort does pay off." Makgalemele adds that her father made her realise that failure was always going to be a part of the process, but you have to pick yourself up and you still burn the midnight oil no matter what. "At the end of it all, good things will always come your way." **BBQ**

Melissa Ndlovu



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Restoring dignity

Presenting lifestyle living in townships—at affordable prices

In recent years investors have realized the benefits of pooling their resources to access better investment opportunities. With this in mind, business accountant **Lebogang Lebepe** started his journey to introduce change to the people – bringing lifestyle living apartments to (and around) the townships at affordable prices.

The *Social Property Entrepreneur* started Bizz House, a Venture Capital company, in 2017, specializing in the grouping of investors to pool their individual funds and invest in rental property developments. He says Bizz House is a passionate business built on the model that sees upliftment for all its stakeholders.

According to Lebepe, many investors do not individually have the capital, time nor expertise required to invest in property development projects, therefore Bizz House has developed a platform, creating opportunities for all types of investors to benefit from the growth and rental income which provide for capital growth better than inflation and at low risk.

“Some people have the money, but not the time. Some have the time and money, but don’t have the right knowledge and expertise to invest successfully in property.



More about ... Lebogang Lebepe

Bizz House’s Founder and CEO is a visionary leader with a deeply rooted childhood that drove his desires to have a proper roof over his family’s head to making decent housing options accessible for all other families and individuals. This mere drive is what led to the inception of Bizz House.

Lebepe, a business accountant by profession, is a man of many hats. He is an entrepreneur, property investor, motivational speaker, distinguished board member on several boards and holds four qualifications, of which the highest is an Honours Degree in Taxation.

Lebogang Lebepe

**BIZZ HOUSE**

#Success_is_inevitable

Some have the knowledge and the money, but don't have the time. Some people just want to create passive income and wealth through property investment," he says.

Bizz House focusses on solving two problems:

- It is designed to solve the accommodation problem, thus restoring black people's dignity by offering them a secure lifestyle and comfortable and affordable rental accommodation.
- It provides access to the property investment market, particularly the property development market by making it easier for all types of investors to be able to invest in property by offering them fractional ownership at the fraction of the cost.

Bizz House is a 100% young, dynamic, black-owned and empowered company that advocates socio-economic transformation and sustainable development initiatives, thus ensuring uplifting and benefit to communities. The company advocates socio-economic transformation and sustainable development initiatives, thus ensuring uplifting the previously disadvantaged.

"We are focussing on a market between the low-end and the medium- to high-end groups. The majority of people are looking for a dignified place to live in. Our typical clients include students, young professionals, professionals, families, business owners, as well as corporate clients.

"Bizz House is breaking the barrier to entry into property investment, especially into property development. Property development is a very capital intensive market to break into, and the majority of

people can't afford. We have made it possible for people to own a fraction of the property at the fraction of the cost. One doesn't need to have millions to invest in a development that costs millions to develop. From as little as R50 000 people are able to invest in our properties and own a portion of the property they have invested in," Lebepe says.

One such project the company is currently developing, is Prestige Park in Tembisa. The development has 24/7 security surveillance, secured parking, an entertainment area, DSTV plug-and-play connection, fibre connection, backup power, a firefighting system and laundry services.

"In terms of doing our bit for transformation in South Africa, we continually tailor our solutions to give our stakeholders a more premium, yet suitable platform to invest and live in.

"This is important in our journey to ensure that the majority of people have dignified places to live in."

"With our slogan 'Success is inevitable', these spoils see potential investors have a stake within the varied property portfolios that Bizz House works towards attaining and co-manage, with its stakeholders.

"And in this light, my vision is for Bizz House to become a leader in the property development industry, providing luxury secure accommodation at affordable prices, especially in the diverse areas in which it continues to recognize a niche market. Our vision at Bizz House sees a common growth and security through a share value with all our stakeholders as we have simplified property ownership and management in our tailored IP," according to Lebepe.

What sets Bizz House apart from its competitors? Lebepe says that this unique solution that the company brings to the market at an affordable price, and the fact that it prides itself in compliance to quality, health and safety standards and other related pieces of legislation, makes Bizz House unique. "We apply specialist expertise in relevant areas to ensure that standards and values are achieved," Lebepe concludes. **BBQ**

How exactly does it work?

1. *We buy*
Bizz House finds the deals, negotiates the purchase and develops the property.
2. *You invest*
Investors become partners in the actual real estate.
3. *We develop and collect rents*
Our portfolio of properties generates monthly rental payments from our creditworthy tenants.
4. *You get paid*
We pay out cash distributions monthly to you, the investor.

What types of properties?

Bizz House invests in the following kinds of properties:

- » Township freestanding properties
- » Township apartment units
- » Low-cost estates
- » Apartments / duplex / clusters
- » Suburban free-standing property
- » Commercial and retail units



Living on purpose

Nimee Dhuloo is a business coach, mentor and author with a deep passion for life, for learning and for seizing every moment

Nimee Dhuloo has led many organisations to create healthy workplaces, align business and individual values and generate a culture of inclusivity and aspiration. Through her professional exposures, Dhuloo has led many individuals, guiding them through personal crises, showing them the importance of vision and direction in their lives and working with them to craft workable and practical strategies to get their lives on track. She is an advocate for self-leadership and this is a common theme that is prevalent in all her teachings.

In an exclusive interview, *BBQ* Editor, Lindsay King, introduces you to your very own personal business coach: meet the phenomenal Nimee Dhuloo.

Who is Nimee Dhuloo?

I am a woman who believes in life and who has an enormous passion and faith for the future. I am also a single mom for 17 years now and I have two beautiful daughters whom I refer to as the sunshine and rainbow of my life. I am a great believer in growing and nurturing others, as I believe everyone has a unique and amazing talent to offer this world.

Can you tell us a bit about your formative years?

I was born in Lenasia, Johannesburg. That's where I spent my growing years and also

attended Lenasia High School, where I matriculated with exemption.

Where and when did you start your career, what challenges did you encounter at the beginning of your working life, and how did you overcome them?

I started working straight after school as I could not afford to go to university or study at that time. I started my career as a clerical worker, studying part-time and worked my way up the ladder to become an executive member. Working in the 80's was very challenging. It was my first exposure to the working world and the harsh realities of racial discrimination. I was fortunate to meet amazing people who supported me through those times and after more than 30 years, we remain the best of friends.

When did your interest in HR start?

It all started when I realised that I could be a catalyst for change. I wanted to use my voice and my knowledge to create a platform for empowerment and learning and moved into a training and development role which eventually evolved into an HR role.

What exactly does your job entail?

HR plays a pivotal role in business strategy development and alignment to the people strategy of an organisation. There has to be alignment between the heart and the mind and HR is the foundational function that is responsible for defining the people

blueprint, the people principles and enabling the leadership to effectively integrate the business strategy, values and delivery. In an average day, I will have

- provided strategic input at a board level,
- provided strategic input at an executive level,
- managed and lead a team of professionals,
- crafted new strategies to keep up with a changing business landscape,
- built relationships with my clients,
- coached,
- counselled, and
- pushed my teams to achieve excellence.

What was your biggest achievement to date?

I would say at a personal level, being able to watch my kids grow into amazing, successful human beings with a very deep love for making a positive difference to the lives of others. At a professional level, it's the creation of my consulting firm and having managed many mergers and acquisitions across South Africa, Africa and the world at large. It has really enriched my contribution.

And your biggest failure?

I don't believe in failures. I believe in lessons. One of my biggest lessons has been taking ownership of your business. Whilst you may employ the right people to help you and foster an environment of empowerment and career advancement,

you need to stay connected to everything your business is doing. So as much as delegation is important, accountability is even much more important.

You own a successful consulting firm. From a leadership point of view, what would you say are the key ingredients in creating and establishing a successful black business in South Africa?

I do believe that you must know what services and value you want to offer. You must be able to articulate it well so that people have a deep sense of trust in your capability and your delivery. You must also be able to differentiate your service offerings. It is also a process of effective planning with a strong focus on capability building so that you are not working for your business, but on your business. You need a good team of professionals that you can constantly bounce ideas off of so that you engender new perspectives. You must also be disciplined in the way in which you cost and structure your fees and your

income so that you always have reserves. It is important to remember the reason why you started your own business.

Can you please tell us what your biggest strengths are.

I think I am an integrator and I can identify a risk even before someone knows there's one. I have great foresight and strong relationship skills. I can manage multiple projects at the same time and I have the ability to lead a team that will deliver much more value for me than I could ever have expected.

And your weaknesses?

I work at a very fast pace, making it difficult for some people to keep up with me. I often need to slow down so that I don't burn people or myself out.

Looking at transformation in the HR space: have we made big enough strides?

I would like to answer this question in twofold. I believe we have made some

progress in some industries but certainly not all. I still think that there is a lot we can do to introduce formalised programmes that will help build leadership and management capacity and capability as I do believe that this is where our gaps are at a transformational level.

If we can close this gap, we will boost people into higher earning brackets and by doing that, we influence the quality of their lives.

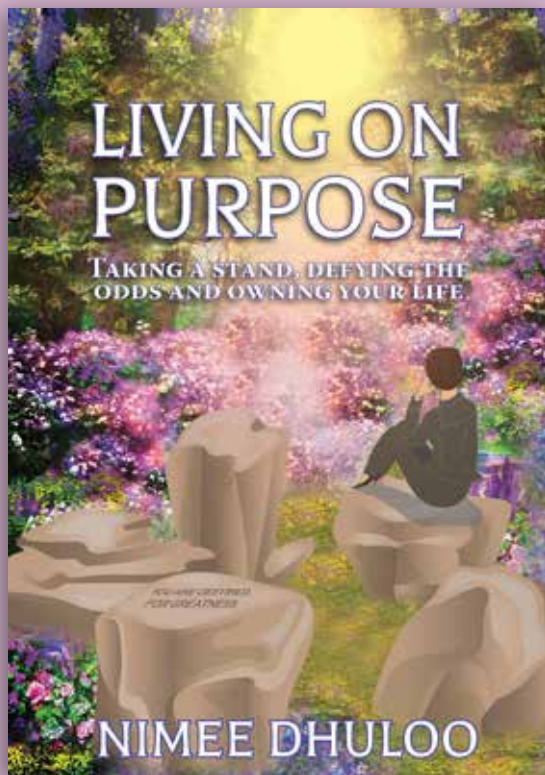
Have we achieved enough success?

There are a few great success stories, but we cannot count them if they do not serve the wider country and the majority of its people.

What is the single biggest enemy of transformation in your field?

Fear. I believe that people are fearful of transformation simply because they are yet to understand the value of its purpose. We are often focussed on defining what transformation is rather than what the purpose of it is. Transformation speaks to our





Do you have control over your life and where it is going? Are you being engulfed by the changes and challenges coming your way? Is life passing you by in manic moments of chaos and confusion? Are you showing up the way you need to in order to relish this gift called Life?

Personal success starts with the way in which we view ourselves. We need to develop a focused vision of where we are going and the passion and will to get there. Life doesn't always hand us what we want. The challenge is to become a master of our collective experiences and not the slave of its consequences.

World class organisations have perfected the art of vision, mission and strategy through masterful leadership and calculated plans. This book shows you how, by following these basic and simple principles, you can learn how to apply them in your own life. It gifts you with four golden nuggets: knowledge and mastery, the non-negotiable attitude to create a life of self fulfilment, all of



Nimee Dhuloo is a woman who has spent the years of her life, working hard for life. She has worked in various industries and has generated a lot of wealth through her business.

guiding them through personal vision and direction in their lives and practical strategies to achieve self-leadership and their own teachings.



About the book

The book provides readers with guidelines on how to rise to the challenges we face daily in our professional and personal lives. A unique adaptation of successful business principles guides us in a personal context, where we find purpose, vision and direction in our lives. The book pushes us to recognise our value at a holistic level and create a roadmap for our future which we own and purposefully manage. Living on Purpose prepares you to embrace life with determination, intention and purpose. Are you ready to get real with yourself?

In this book you will learn how to:

- » Defy the boundaries we place on ourselves.
- » Understand the success levers and how to use them in transforming your life.
- » Show up to take the lead in your life.
- » School up in understanding the relationship between vision, purpose and values.
- » Step up and give your life gravitas.
- » Suit up to define and accentuate your brand.
- » Stand up and own your life, all of it!
- » Strive for magic by awakening the giant inside of you.
- » Shift the dial and create a life of meaning, purpose and contribution.
- » Step up to a standard of excellence.
- » Speak your truth and craft a life you can be proud of.

Living on Purpose retails at R415 and the journal is R220 and can be ordered online at www.nimeedhuloo.co.za/product/living-on-purpose/ or on her Instagram store under Nimeedhuloo. As a combo deal, you can buy the book and the journal for R550.

At home with Nimee

- » Her favourite food? Falafel
- » Does she prefer coffee or tea? Coffee
- » What is her best holiday destination ever? Bali
- » What is Nimee's favourite leisure activity? Snorkeling
- » What can she not live without? Her journal
- » SUV, saloon or roadster? SUV
- » Which does she prefer best: gardening, cooking or home DIY? Home DIY
- » Movies, series or documentaries? Documentaries
- » What is her ideal style of entertaining? House party
- » Her best app ever? Pinterest

values and only if we understand that, do we change behaviour.

What guides you when you have to make important business decisions?

Facts, precedents and my own personal values and principles.

In your opinion, what are the five biggest qualities of a 21st century business leader?

These would include resilience, self-leadership, humility, personal excellence and change activism.

What is your motto in life?

I don't ask for anything that I am not prepared to give. I make every day count because I believe in putting my best foot forward. This is your show, whether anyone buys a ticket to it or not, you must strive to give your best performance.

Which leaders, both locally and internationally, have most influenced your life?

- Madiba, without a doubt in my mind, is first and foremost a leader and I had the absolute privilege to meet him once in my lifetime.
- Gary Taylor (former HR Director Medscheme), who mentored me in my HR role.
- Sagie Pillay (former CEO of NHLS), who mentored my in understanding Public Health
- Charmaine Mabuza (CEO of Zamani Holdings), who I look up to as a remarkable female leader who is well ahead of her time.
- Michelle Obama
- Martin Luther King BBQ

Lindsay King





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IZITHELO STRATEGIC PARTNERS is a B-BBEE level 1 contributor, majority black women owned entity established by a qualified and experienced inspirational entrepreneurs to help businesses, communities and the public sector find effective and sustainable solutions for transformation and economic development in South Africa.

We help client's lead transformational change, create new organisational compliance models, and capture value from their compliance strategies through efficient planning and a visionary approach.

Employers offering leadership programmes to persons living with disabilities can claim up to R60 000.00 for the initiation of the learnership, and an other R60 000.00 when the programme concludes from the South African Revenue Service.

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- NC - BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SERVICES - NQF LEVEL 3
- FETC - BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SERVICES - NQF LEVEL 4
- NC - NEW VENTURE CREATION - NQF 2 (SMME)
- FETC - NEW VENTURE CREATION - NQF 4 (SMME)
- NC - MIXED FARMING - NQF
- NC - IT END USER COMPUTING - NQF 3
- NC - GENERIC MANAGEMENT - NQF 3
- FETC - GENERIC MANAGEMENT - NQF 4
- NC - GENERIC MANAGEMENT - NQF 5
- GETC - BUSINESS PRACTICE - NQF 1 (SMME)
- FETC - PROJECT MANAGEMENT - NQF 4
- NC - HYGIENE AND CLEANING - NQF 1
- NC - IT SYSTEM SUPPORT - NQF 5
- NC - IT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT - NQF 5
- NC - GENERAL SECURITY PRACTICE - NQF 3



Izithelo Strategic Partners

Tight lines

In the fishing industry, women empowerment and sustainability goes hand in hand. Two phenomenal female executives of Africa's largest fishing and commercial cold storage company, the Oceana Group, enlightens us.

Although women have globally always played an important part of the fishing industry, and still remain a large and integral part of the seafood supply chain, they have historically been underrepresented in decision-making roles.

However, we have it from good authority, that this picture is rapidly changing and

in recent years women are increasingly occupying senior leadership roles in the fishing sector, as well stepping into specialised roles traditionally seen as the preserve of men. Together with the new breed of women in leadership positions comes a stronger focus on sustainability in the industry.

Jillian Marais (Group Executive for Compliance and Risk) and Zodwa Velleman (Group Executive for Corporate and Regulatory Affairs) at the Oceana Group (Africa's largest fishing and commercial cold storage company), gives us the inside scoop regarding the position of women, sustainability in the fishing industry and the Oceana Group's contribution to transformation in the fishing industry.

Zodwa Velleman
(Group Executive for Corporate and Regulatory Affairs)

How have the roles of women in your industry changed?

According to a 2018 UN Food and Agriculture Organization report, women

make up half the global workforce in fishing economies, from fish production, processing, to distribution. The fishing industry simply would not be what it is today without the contribution of women, many at the coalface of operations. Their roles, their efforts, and deep knowledge, insight and experience were not always recognised and this translated into limited opportunities and inequality in wages. But this is changing as our world evolves to recognise the important contribution of women at all levels in the fishing industry. At Oceana, women play a critical leadership role across all areas and regions of our business and are indisputably a very large part of what makes the Oceana Group a successful listed entity.

What is the Oceana Group doing to promote gender equity in the fishing industry?

Those who succeed in life have a duty and responsibility to help others to succeed—the Lift as you Rise philosophy — and that is



Zodwa Velleman
(Group Executive for Corporate and Regulatory Affairs)

what we believe at Oceana. As we shift the landscape in terms of gender equality, representation and participation, we are committed to nurturing, developing and

bringing through the next generation of women leaders. We continually invest in our people and last year spent over R60 million on skills development, and we will continue to identify and invest in our people, particularly women. Our investment in skills development also finds expression in the Oceana Maritime Academy in Hout Bay, Cape Town. It is a state-of-the-art facility that offers world-class, accredited and industry relevant maritime skills and training, with a particular focus on empowering small-scale fishers, women and youth. The academy was started with an initial R40 million investment and Oceana will invest R35 million a year on fishing sector skills and training.

Can you tell us about the importance of diversity and inclusion at Oceana?

Today, successful businesses and organisations understand that diversity brings inclusion, which strengthens the fabric of that organisation, and in turn brings greater unity and sustainability, and ultimately success. There are many more female leaders than even just a decade ago, but as with any transformation it is a journey, and we cannot yet say that we have truly arrived. We have seen and reaped the rewards of having highly qualified and exceptional women in leadership roles across the organisation. We will always remember the contributions and sacrifices of women leaders in the struggle for equality and the journey to equality continues. We will continue to play our part in this struggle.

What are the biggest challenges for ambitious women in the fishing industry and what can be done to overcome them?

Opportunity is probably the biggest challenge, as it is in most sectors. The fishing industry presents arguably a greater challenge due to the limited and slow turnover in staff as it is very sector specific and therefore people tend to remain with companies for lengthy periods of time. Businesses must be intentional about recognising talent and ambition, and couple this with relevant skills and experiential

training, and they must open up the doors of opportunity for women and other under-represented groupings to step through. We talk about the fishing industry, but if we look at a more macro picture of the maritime industry and the opportunities as envisaged within the oceans economy, then there are myriad opportunities present there. Here, we are talking about aquaculture, eco-tourism, renewable energy, and marine biotechnology which offer tremendous opportunities for sustainable expansion. Again, training and skills development, which Oceana is committed to, will play an important role in furthering the role of women in this critical economy as put forward in the South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP).

Are there any specific projects you would like to highlight?

For South African Women's Month 2020, we held a virtual celebration and we launched a special commemorative book to celebrate the women leaders in Oceana. The book recounts the stories, histories, struggles and achievements of 24 female executives and business leaders. The book formed part of meaningful efforts to "recognise, honour and celebrate" the women leaders of Oceana and to hold them up as examples to other women in the organisation, in the broader fishing industry, as well as to the girl child looking for role models. As Oceana Group CEO Imraan Soomra said: "It is imperative that all organisations have women in leadership positions, sitting around boardroom tables, and making critical and defining business decisions."

Does any specific woman who excelled come to mind?

Our very own Thembele Taboshe became the third black South African woman seafarer to obtain the Master Mariner qualification, which means she is licenced to command a vessel of any size, anywhere in the world. Today, she has stepped from the decks to the boardroom and is the Safety, Health and Environmental Executive at Blue Continent Products, a subsidiary of the Oceana Group.

**Jillian Marais
(Group Executive for
Compliance and Risk)**

Can you please tell us more about your company's views on supporting and promoting sustainable fishing?

Sustainability is a central tenet of our strategic approach in terms of our core business of catching and processing fish, as well as ensuring food security in the form of nutritious meals daily for millions of people. Oceana's commitment also stretches to providing much-needed sustainable employment to thousands of people, many of whom live in deeply economically deprived areas. Our key commitments are clearly stated and lived up to each day to ensure the sustainable and ethical use of our marine resources to preserve our oceans for this, as well as future generations, and to translate this into meaningful and broad-based socio-economic benefits.

What is Oceana's single biggest contribution to sustainability in the space in which it operates?

Oceana's commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues underpins all we do, and our approach is integrated to ensure our impact is as holistic as possible. Our key commitments are to the sustainable and ethical use of our marine resources to preserve our oceans for future generations; the preservation of jobs and the promotion of sustainable employment; contributing to food security; and inclusive growth and shared prosperity. We believe that any company that is afforded the right to fish must prove their tangible commitment to converting these rights into broad-based social and economic benefits while ensuring that this is always done in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Our global procurement strategy means we have been able to secure and continue operations through importing pilchards from other fisheries across the world, thus allowing local stocks to recover to sustainable levels while procuring products from areas where fish populations are not at risk.



Jillian Marais
(Group Executive for Compliance and Risk)

Sustainability forms a large part of your company's group strategy and social purpose. Can you please tell us more about this?

Oceana is a founding member of the Responsible Fisheries Alliance (RFA), a partnership with WWF-South Africa, BirdLife South Africa, and others in the fishing industry to advance an ecosystems-based approach to fisheries management and to promote responsible fishing practices and a deep understanding of the significance of the marine ecosystems in sustainability and long-term societal value creation. Oceana is also a member of FishSA, the industry body that holds members accountable for sustainable, responsible, and ethical fishing practices to protect the integrity of the marine ecosystem. This value system extends to our commitment to our people and their livelihoods, as well vulnerable sectors of our society, including traditional fishing communities, which lie close to our heart. As a Group, we recognise the numerous opportunities the oceans economy offers beyond traditional industries such as fishing

and maritime transport, to include increased tourism and eco-tourism activities, renewable energy, and marine biotechnology. We believe a diversified and sustainable oceans economy has the potential to meet the economic and social needs of vulnerable coastal communities, especially the small-scale fishing (SSF) sector. We are committed to helping grow this economy to the benefit of all, through the sustainable development and the responsible harvesting and preservation of marine resources. We also launched the Oceana Empowerment Trust (OET) in 2006 to unlock and convert the value of harvesting fishing rights into shared, broad-based value for our eligible black South African

employees. The Trust vested this year and almost R1 billion in value were accrued for over 2 400 OET beneficiaries, allowing them to become financially empowered. This speaks to our stated commitment to positively impact lives.

The Oceana Group provides additional focussed support through various CSI initiatives. Why is this such an important part of your strategy?

We live in a region where food security is perilous for millions every day and this has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a major food producer, we have a moral duty to support the very real fight against hunger and malnutrition. At Oceana, we base our actions on the philosophy that those of us who live above the breadline have a responsibility to those who live below it. Therefore, we work in close partnership with relief and community organisations such as Rise Against Hunger, the Peninsula School Feeding Association, Gift of the Givers, FoodForward SA, and

other organisations such as FishSA to counter the growing threat of hunger in communities all over South Africa.

What is Oceana doing to promote responsible stewardship of the marine environment and how are you mitigating your onshore impacts?

Oceana is fully committed to protecting the integrity of the marine ecosystems and resources in all the regions in which we operate. As one of the founding members of the RFA, Oceana is committed to sustainability in terms of ensuring fish species are sourced from sustainable fisheries, that staff adhere to responsible fishing practices, that all efforts are made to minimise the impact on endangered, threatened, protected and vulnerable species, and that accurate fisheries data and records are kept for all fishing operations. We condemn any and all illegal and harmful fishing practices and are committed to working to ensure our oceans are protected and fished sustainably for this, as well as future generations.

In 2020 you focussed on delivering value in terms of three societal goals linked to food security and marine resources: Can you please tell us about this achievement?

Oceana aims to help address hunger through the provision of nutritious and an affordable supply of food in line with Goal 2 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which commits us to ending hunger, achieving food security, improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. We continue to enhance our operational efficiencies and innovate so that we can increase our cost-effective contribution to food security through the provision of low-cost protein. Oceana is committed to fishing responsibly and sustainably and what we catch and how we catch is as important to us as providing food security. Lastly, we are very cognisant of the impact on the climate and how such pressures directly impact our operations, and we collaborate broadly to mitigate our own impact on the environment. BBQ

Passive shareholding?

Broad-based trusts ownership status is no longer hanging in the balance

Trade, Industry & Competition Minister, Ebrahim Patel, commented in February that broad-based ownership schemes were genuine broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE), a position at odds with the B-BBEE Commission's stance at the time. Black ownership schemes reacted to the statement by calling on Minister Patel to provide urgent written clarity on the matter. On 18 May, Minister Patel provided that clarity by way of a gazetted practice note.

Ownership schemes or trusts are a highly popular type of black empowerment vehicle, utilised by a third of all major B-BBEE transactions. However, B-BBEE Commissioner, Zodwa Ntuli, has remained sceptical of the model. Her concern with trusts, broad-based ownership schemes and employee share ownership programmes has been that they lean towards 'passive' shareholding, meaning that there are no specific black individuals able to drive transformation in the company. She also stated that there is little certainty around whether broad-based ownership really benefits the intended recipients.

The gazetted practice note issued by Minister Patel now provides both guidance to regulators and clarity in the market in terms of the treatment of broad-based empowerment vehicles.

It highlights the fact that government policy has always been to promote broad-based empowerment, including the facilitation of ownership by groupings of designated persons through vehicles such as cooperatives, women's investment vehicles, youth empowerment structures, trade union investment vehicles and community welfare projects.

No individual participant naming required in broad-based ownership schemes

The practice note seeks to clarify the point that a defined class of black beneficiaries satisfies the ownership provisions under the B-BBEE Codes. This means that Employment Ownership Schemes (ESOPs) or worker ownership schemes which provide a benefit for a large proportion or all of the current and future black workers of the firm; or broad-based schemes which provide a benefit for certain designated groups, can satisfy the ownership provisions under the B-BBEE Codes.

The rules for broad-based ownership schemes, employee share ownership programmes and for trusts contained in the codes determine that the constitution of these schemes must define the participants and the proportion of their claim to receive distributions. However, in terms of the codes, the use of a 'defined class of natural person' satisfies the requirement for identification.

This option to use a 'defined class of natural person' as participants when structuring a broad-based ownership scheme (BBOS), ESOP or trust, as opposed to a written record of names of participants, was expressly provided for

in the codes in furtherance of the objectives of the act. Broad-based and meaningful ownership in the economy by black people, communities and workers, are often best served through this mechanism of identifying a natural class of persons to benefit from the scheme as opposed to a list of individuals with vested rights against the income and capital of the scheme. Other juristic persons such as non-profit companies also utilise this mechanism from time to time.



Evon Jeewan, a Corporate Finance Principal at investment bank Bravura

In the course of the discussion, broader policy questions have arisen on ways to further strengthen broad-based empowerment vehicles like ESOPs, including through measures to encourage participation of worker nominees on company boards. Challenges with existing schemes will also need to be addressed.

The minister writes that these issues are beyond the scope and intention of the practice note, and a panel will be appointed to provide a report on ways to address these areas. The main goal, for South Africa's future, is to ensure that broad-based ownership provides significant opportunities to strengthen the transformation of the economy. **BBQ**

*Evon Jeewan
(Corporate Finance Principal at Bravura investment bank)*

Green shoots

Check out the findings of the first South African Women Entrepreneurs Job Creators Survey

The first South African Women Entrepreneurs Job Creators Survey report that was released last week, provides key insights into the pivotal role women entrepreneurs play as job creators in South Africa.

Top line findings from the report indicate a deep commitment to job creation among South Africa's women entrepreneurs, with 90% reporting that job creation was an important consideration in starting their business. In addition, despite all the challenges and setbacks of the past year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the survey reveals 'green shoots' of optimism in terms of future job creation.

The majority of respondents anticipate that their businesses will recover from the impact of Covid-19 within two years; they anticipate growth in revenues, and are either actively recruiting new staff now or planning for new, near-term hires. The survey was undertaken by Lionesses of Africa, a network of over 1,3 million women entrepreneurs across the African continent, in partnership with New York University, and in collaboration with Absa.

The South African Women Entrepreneurs Job Creators Survey data was collected online from 913 women entrepreneurs in South Africa between November 23, 2020, and April 28, 2021, and informed by a further 150 qualitative interviews of women entrepreneurs during the same period. Participants were recruited through the Lionesses of Africa network, to represent a wide range of business types, sizes and sectors.

The survey was an opportunity for South Africa's women entrepreneurs to share their experiences with job creation and how Covid-19 affected it and revenue



Bongiwé Gangeni, Deputy CE of Absa Retail and Business Bank

generation. Respondents also shared their post-Covid-19 outlook for their businesses and their experiences with accessing government assistance programs and external financing during the pandemic.

The survey provides valuable insights into both solo entrepreneurs who are creating jobs for themselves and those entrepreneurs with employees. The employing women entrepreneurs who participated have on average, 29 employees, whereas the 'typical' or median entrepreneur employed five staff, while the top 1% had a thousand or more employees.

The majority of companies with employees hired their first employee early in the life of their business, 67% within the first year. This would indicate that women entrepreneurs are not only creating jobs, but doing so in the very early stage of their company's life-cycle.

In terms of future hiring plans, among the entrepreneurs who employ staff, over a third considered current staffing levels to be inadequate for their needs and 41% were actively recruiting.

Of those who were hiring, 73% reported that they were hiring to help meet demand, 12% to bring additional skills into the business, and 12% were hiring, or rehiring, to replace employees who had left or were let go.

Speaking about the report findings, Lionesses of Africa founder, Melanie Hawken, said: "What is encouraging about our survey findings is that there is real self-belief on the part of women entrepreneurs in their ability to create jobs, and that remains one of the key drivers of their motivation to build sustainable businesses. Women entrepreneurs have job creation in their DNA. Another stand-out finding from the report was how these women fought to protect jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic. More than two-thirds either reduce their own salaries or stop paying themselves a salary altogether in order to look after their staff first. Women entrepreneurs are committed to both creating and retaining jobs."

Bongiwe Gangeni, Deputy CE of Absa Retail and Business Bank, said the Job

Interesting findings

- » The survey adhered to the most rigorous standards for instrument development and protecting the privacy of survey respondents.
- » The survey was an opportunity for South Africa's women entrepreneurs to share their experiences with job creation and how Covid-19 affected it and revenue generation.
- » Respondents also shared their post-Covid-19 outlook for their businesses and their experiences with accessing government assistance programs and external financing during the pandemic.
- » The survey included South African women entrepreneurs from all nine provinces. Sizable shares of the study respondents were from Gauteng, the Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. Findings from all nine provinces were included when reporting aggregate measures, but the Northern Cape was excluded when reporting disaggregated results at the province-level, due to the small number of respondents from that province.
- » The respondents, who lead a wide range of business types, represent a range of ages and education levels. Those who lead companies that have employees are older, on average. The majority of respondents have at least a bachelor's degree and about one in five have completed a graduate degree.
- » The survey provides insights into business ventures founded by South African women entrepreneurs, over the course of their careers. For a third of the respondents (35%), their current business is the only business they have founded, while the remaining two-thirds have founded two or more business ventures. There were no significant differences in the number of prior businesses founded, by business type or respondent age.
- » The women entrepreneurs responding to the survey lead enterprises while managing family responsibilities. 76% have children in their home.
- » About half of South Africa's women entrepreneurs surveyed also reported that among their motivations for starting their own businesses was the opportunity to create a job for their family members; about half considered creating jobs for family members to be a "very important" or "important" motivation. Even more important than creating jobs for members of their family, women entrepreneurs reported that creating jobs for others in their communities was a strong motivation for starting their businesses; 84% responded that this was a "very important" or "important" motivation.
- » South Africa's women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to human-capital development. Among the entrepreneurs surveyed who employ staff, 80% reported having provided employee training in the past 12 months. Much of the employee training was in the form of on-the-job training within the company (79%), but 16% reported that they also make use of outside companies for staff training.
- » A number of respondents reported uncertainty about the future of their businesses in the wake of Covid-19; 17% responded that they were unable to judge whether or when their businesses would recover. Solo entrepreneurs and partners indicated somewhat greater uncertainty about their futures than employers did.

Creators Survey highlights the significant role women entrepreneurs play to create jobs and support the economy. "Absa is proud to be partnering with Lionesses of Africa and to play our part to support

women entrepreneurs to achieve their full potential by meeting their needs holistically through our wide range of innovative products and services and enterprise development programmes," she added.

South African Women Entrepreneurs Job Creators Survey



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY



June 2021

Lioness Data
Insights



Other interesting findings from the survey indicated that women-owned businesses with a digital presence demonstrated greater resilience during Covid-19. Those that made the majority of their sales through an app or online marketplace were less likely to be affected by Covid-19 and had more optimistic projections about their future revenues. Expectations surrounding future hiring also varied

substantially between women leading companies with majority digital sales compared to those without.

When asked what their expectations are regarding jobs in their company over the next 12 months, 35% of women leading businesses that make the majority of their sales through an app or online marketplace responded that they expected jobs to increase a lot, compared with only 22% of women who were not embracing digital sales.

While the discussion above focusses on South Africa's women entrepreneurs who have employees, solo entrepreneurs and those in partnerships that do not have employees should not be overlooked; these women-led businesses also bolster the labour market in significant ways. 85% of South Africa's women entrepreneurs in non-employing partnerships and 78% of solo entrepreneurs reported that they hire or work with other self-employed freelancers or independent contractors. The majority of these women have growth in their plans: 79% of those in partnerships and 69% of solo entrepreneurs plan to make full-time hires at some point in the future, while 91% and 80%, respectively, reported that they plan to grow and scale their business.

Across all business types, South Africa's women entrepreneurs expressed optimism

Numbers

- » 50% of the surveyed women entrepreneurs lead businesses with no partners and no employees.
- » 17% of the women entrepreneurs lead businesses that include partners but no other employees.
- » 33% lead businesses that include employees other than owners and partners.
- » 66% have launched more than one business over the course of their career.
- » 74% noted that, as a business owner, job creation is very important to them. Dedication to job creation was consistent across business type, size, and age of respondent. About three-quarters reported that creating a job for themselves was a "very important" consideration in starting their businesses; this was also consistent across respondent characteristics.
- » 25% of employers considered soft skills to be the single most important attribute when making a hiring decision.

about their revenue outlook for 2021, with 76% of respondents expecting to increase their revenues.

Women entrepreneurs were similarly optimistic about the timeline for their businesses to recover from the impact of the pandemic, with the vast majority expecting to recover within two years. Both of these factors indicate green shoots for recovery and job creation in both the short- and medium-term.

Overall, South Africa's women entrepreneurs report a strong dedication to their communities and see a role for themselves and other women entrepreneurs in creating jobs. Their motivations in launching their business enterprises reflect their interests in supporting themselves and their families as well as their commitment to uplifting others. **BBQ**

To download a copy of the South African Women Entrepreneurs Job Creators Survey report, go to www.lionessesofafrica.com

The impact of Covid-19

According to the South African Women Entrepreneurs Job Creators Survey South Africa's women entrepreneurs who are employers made several changes to their staffing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Over a half (58%) froze new hires, 41% reduced staff hours and wages, and a half laid off staff (22% laid off staff permanently and 26% temporarily).

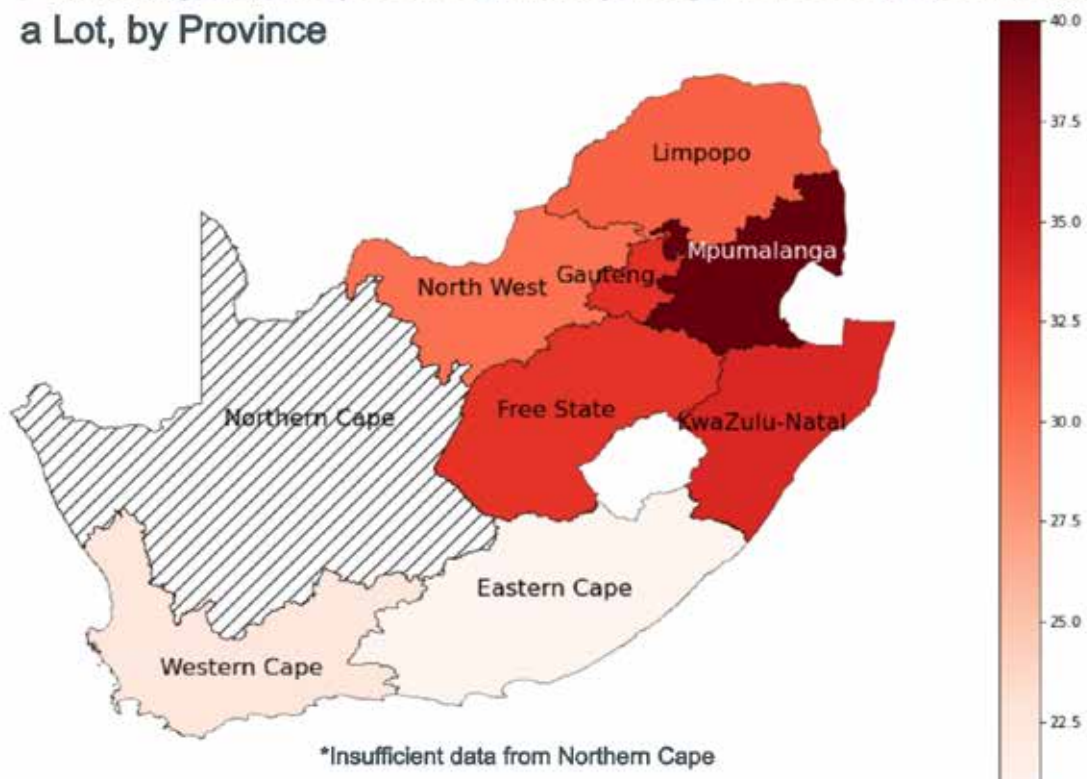
Covid-19 responses also affected the salaries that women entrepreneurs themselves received, with more than two-thirds reporting that they had either reduced their own salaries or stopped paying a salary to themselves.

The survey indicates that more than half the companies (54%) reported that their staffing plans have been delayed or have become less ambitious with Covid-19. A quarter reported no change in plans, and 14% reported staffing plans that are now more ambitious than they would have been in the absence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

More than half the companies (54%) reported that their staffing plans have been delayed or have become less ambitious with Covid-19. A quarter reported no change in plans, and 14% reported staffing plans that are now more ambitious than they would have been in the absence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The vast majority of women entrepreneurs experienced revenue losses as a result of Covid-19, with roughly a half reporting that the revenue impacts were extremely negative. Women entrepreneurs who are employers were most likely to report that Covid-19 negatively affected their revenues (82%), followed by solo entrepreneurs (77%) and partners (71%). A minority of women entrepreneurs (13%) experienced revenue growth during Covid-19.

Percentage of Respondents Anticipating Revenues to Increase a Lot, by Province



Making a huge impact

How the Novare South Africa Impact Fund will target financial returns, and seek to attain measurable social impact during the devastating Covid-19 pandemic

The launch of the Novare SA Impact Investment Fund is quintessential to help South Africa and its people recover from the devastating social and economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Benedict Mongalo, MD of the Novare SA Impact Investment Fund (a fully-owned subsidiary of Novare Holdings) is excited about this new introduction. In this issue he passionately talks to BBQ, about, among others, how the new fund will impact the South African investment scene.

Can you please tell us what exactly an impact fund is, and what sets it apart from a normal private equity fund?

One of the main differences between an impact investment fund and a private equity fund lies in its primary goal. By pure definition, the primary goal of a private equity fund is to maximise financial returns. The primary goal of an impact investment fund, however, is to generate optimal ROI and achieve measurable, positive impact on both the environment and our society. A normal private equity fund could, for example, invest in a transaction that yields positive financial returns, but delivers no social or environmental returns. An impact fund on the other hand, has the dual objectives of achieving both financial and social and environmental returns.

Is this Novare's first impact fund?

It is important to clarify this upfront: Historically, Novare has raised numerous private equity funds. Even though we have

not labelled them as 'impact funds' per se, 'making an impact' has always been central to any of Novare Holdings' investment strategies. As a result, our various investment funds have, over the years, been making significant positive impacts on the African continent. These results are measured and reported to our investors on an ongoing basis. The main variance is that 'making a positive impact' will be one of the strategic drivers of this new impact investment fund.

Is there a financial trade-off in this process?

Contrary to popular belief, there is absolutely no financial trade-off in such an impact investment fund. It simply means that the predetermined KPIs allocate equal weighting to the return-seeking objectives and the impact-generating objectives of the fund.

How will the impact projects be selected?

The impact projects of this fund will be strategically earmarked to help drive and support the priorities of South Africa's economic blueprint, our National Development

Plan. In particular, these projects will address some of the most critical targeted sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and economic infrastructure.

How will the success of this fund be measured?

Apart from its financial performance, the success of the fund will also be measured by the social and environmental returns generated. These metrics will be in line with three selected key pillars of the United Nations' sustainable development goals: They are:

- poverty eradication and inequality,
- environmental sustainability, and
- creating of sustainable economic infrastructure.

What strategic approach will your team follow to ensure the fund's success?

The three cornerstones to help achieve the objectives of our strategy for this impact investment fund are: utilising a blended investment approach, ensuring a strong deal pipeline and leveraging the strength of a multidisciplinary team.

Key objectives

The Novare SA Impact Investment Fund has been purposefully structured to effectively address four key objectives. It...

- aims to consistently generate outstanding financial returns;
- wants to predominantly invest in socio-economic and environmental impact projects in South Africa. (However, it also wants to invest around 25% of the available funds within the Southern African Development Community region. The idea with this, is to help to support regional integration and possible expansion for our investee companies.) And finally;
- it aims to place great focus on helping to counteract the effects of the current economic downturn through proactive initiatives such as job creation.



Benedict Mongalo, MD of the Novare SA Impact Investment Fund

What other factors have an impact?

The fund's vintage year is marked by a highly volatile economic environment and corporate distress in various sectors. However, a major plus is that there is an abundance of good assets available at ultra-attractive prices. All indicators therefore point to a substantial influx of investment capital and sufficient reasons to have a positive outlook.

Who should ideally invest in this impact fund?

We have no doubt that the Novare SA Impact Investment Fund is ideally poised to become an investment-of-choice for both institutional investors as well as high-net-worth individuals. And especially by those

who are inspired to invest responsibly by gaining optimal financial yields, while making a difference for our societies and our planet.

What is the higher purpose of this impact fund?

There is a finding in the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Report that specifically caught our eye, which is yet another confirmation that our higher purpose for this impact fund is right on point. Their study shows that 68% of people believe that business must step in to fix societal problems. Looking at that, it becomes very clear that in this current Covid-19 landscape, the world has one burning question: "How is your business going to help us to rebuild as a society

NOVARE[®]

More about... Novare SA's multidisciplinary fund management team

The Novare SA Impact Investment Fund will be driven by a uniquely diverse team, consisting of veterans in both impact and privately negotiated investments. The team also comprise transactors; specialists in environmental, social and governance; and technical professionals such as engineers. On top of that, the team has the full and unconditional support of the well-established back office of Novare Holdings. In terms of achievements, it is worth noting that collectively, the team has extensive experience in the unlisted investment space. Novare as a group has also raised and invested no less than two successful private equity funds which were largely deployed in greenfield projects.

and as a people?" The Novare SA Impact Investment Fund has been developed with exactly that question in mind.

What is the conclusion you wish for us to draw from this introduction of this new fund?

As investors, and as an investor community, we have a unique opportunity to collectively invest our money where it counts most. The Novare SA Impact Investment Fund is an enabler for this, which has the potential to create a win-win for all involved. You can help us grow your own money, whilst solving some of the most critical issues for mankind, and for Mother Nature. We invite you to go to www.novare.com to start investing today. **BBQ**

Lindsay King

Digital revolution

Is your company embarking on its digital transformation journey? Here is why Sybrin SA should be your provider of choice.

Globally, digital transformation is recognised as a critical aspect of business. Given the many challenges businesses are facing in South Africa, the need for more rapid transformation, and the Covid-19 spanner in the works, digital transformation may just be the key to unlock the door to economic freedom for both the country and South Africa's business community.

Karabo Moloko, CEO of Sybrin SA, a leading global provider of solutions for the financial services, insurance, and telecommunications industries, defines digital transformation as the process of shifting your organisation from a legacy approach to new ways of working and thinking using digital, social, mobile, and emerging technologies. When done right, she says, it affects all areas of a business; fundamentally changing its operations, how its employees work, as well as how it delivers value to its customers, partners, and stakeholders.

Sound expert advice

Moloko says when businesses, especially SMMES, choose a digital transformation provider, they have to keep the following in mind:

- » Have a journey mindset: Digital transformation is incremental, therefore you want someone that is willing to put skin in the game and go the long road with you.
- » Put the customer and client first: Digital transformation programmes are often tough because you are changing the way people think and act. You need a partner that is flexible and not stuck on their processes.
- » Choose a partner with an organisational footprint that can complement your aspirations: One reason our clients choose us as a partner, is our African footprint and growth in other regions. Our technology and our understanding of those markets makes it easier.
- » Seek a partner with strong technical capability: The partner must have a strong technological focus, operational scalability, workforce models, and working prototypes. This includes a skilled workforce and industry expertise.



Karabo Moloko, CEO

In an exclusive interview with BBQ, she says it is important to note that digital transformation is not just about adopting new technology, it also entails significantly changing how organisations think. It requires organisations to change leadership, think differently, experiment with new business models, find new revenue streams, and get comfortable with change—and this is the hardest part to get right.

And this is exactly what her company is excellent at doing. The Sybrin Technology Stack, combined with its highly skilled team, provides an expertise and framework for rapid digital transformation journeys.

Founded in 1991 by Steve Prowse and Simon Dix in Zimbabwe, Sybrin later relocated its headquarters to Johannesburg. With offices in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Mozambique as well as satellite support staff in various other countries to support its customer base, Sybrin boasts an extensive African footprint.

"Our goal is to transform businesses into the agile, digital, and intelligent enterprises of tomorrow. Everything we deliver is based



on our specialist first-hand knowledge of complex solutions complemented by more than 30 years of industry experience.

"Digital transformation has become the vehicle for organisations to reinvent themselves, be enterprising, remain relevant, and drive efficiencies in this highly competitive global market. Covid-19 exposed vulnerable business models, destroying the luxury companies that thought they had to delay embarking on a digital transformation journey," according to Moloko.

And, she says, if ever there was a time to embrace digital transformation, it is now, as beyond managing to stay afloat in the midst of the pandemic, digital transformation provides organisations with many benefits.

These include higher employee productivity by making processes much more efficient; better user-experience as it eliminates friction points in their customer journeys; increased business revenue, faster and better decision making derived from analytical tools and real-time business insights; and agility and innovation to ensure they stay ahead.

Moloko says without digital transformation, it is only a matter of time until organisations that have not embraced the concept, will cease to exist.

"Digital transformation should be a top priority for Africa's leaders in business and governments. Building a digital future is crucial if the continent is to become globally competitive, take its place in the 21st century, and create a compelling future for the generations to come. With limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, high levels of poverty, and an increasingly young population, Africa must turn to digital solutions to accelerate and leapfrog.

"Companies play a critical role through digital innovation by creating access to cheaper, more efficient services that many citizens had no way of accessing. Through that innovation, digital services are becoming cheaper and improving the lives of our people. Through mobile payments I can now for example send money to my Gogo in the village, she can access it instantly and buy vegetables from the small-scale farm close to her, all without going to an ATM or handling cash. Digital innovation is enabling social justice and speeding up a long-standing transformation agenda," the CEO says.

With today's disruptive technologies accelerating the pace for digital transformation, customers' expectations are heavily influenced and constantly evolving, demanding effortless interactions anytime, anywhere. To remain one step ahead, Sybrin has a dedicated innovations team immersed in research, experimenting with new technologies, and developing leading-edge solutions. Digital technologies are changing very quickly, and the company has, for example, not stopped investing in Nitro (its low-code platform) to ensure that it can compete with the best.

Key trends in digital transformation

- 1. All businesses are fast becoming digital businesses:** Organisations are under more and more pressure to use technology to create new value in business models, customer experiences, and the internal capabilities that support its core operations. If they don't, they won't survive.
- 2. Automation: Organisations are using automation to drive operational efficiency and improve business processes.** APIs are going to be key to drive automation and scale productivity.
- 3. Data Analytics: Organisations are investing in data analytics to transform customer experiences.** The value that can be extracted from the data for decision making will be dependent on the quality of the data that they fed it.
- 4. Cyber security and privacy:** As more and more customer data is processed, the role of cyber security and data privacy will significantly increase. Organisations must have robust processes and technology to protect their environments.

"That being said, we also want to stay connected to our customers' challenges, and fully appreciate their ever-changing landscapes. We conduct design thinking workshops and digital strategy engagements to ensure that our innovation remains relevant and can solve the true business problems.

Running a thriving business is hard, even more so now with the impact of Covid-19. As a digital transformation partner, we have a significant part to play to make that easy, efficient, and rewarding. Every day, we assist our clients to improve business processes that frustrated both their clients and employees, and now they are freed up to create real value that is a win-win for all. Technology removes complexity, improves customer experience, and results in shared value creation.

Sybrin is doing some great innovative work by using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to automate business processes. The company has just implemented a future forward solution for one of its clients, which highlights document recapture using AI, which will work as the process changes and then input changes by simply identifying the pattern changes, relearning and teaching itself to process the new input.

In conclusion, Moloko leaves us with some inspiration: "Strategy drives digital transformation, not technology. Now, more than ever, business leaders need to define strategy and inspire change – and seek strategic digital transformation partners that will create a digital roadmap to get them there." **BBQ**

Disrupt, inspire and save

Meet the genius who came up with a short-term insurance concept that gives you back 50%, even if you have claimed?

You cannot really afford me, but you also cannot not afford me. What am I? The answer to this riddle should be easy for most South Africans, as short-term insurance is the one thing that most of us can hardly afford to live without. And it's no secret that short-term insurance in South Africa is not exactly the cheapest item in the shopping trolley at the end of the month.

Over the years several innovative concepts have been introduced in the insurance industry to make short-term policies more attractive to the consumer. The most revolutionary of those, although today it is pretty much standard as part of most insurance policies, is the traditional 'no-claim cashback' models, which pay back part of the insurance premiums a customer has paid, but only when the customer has not claimed over a certain period, usually three years.

But what if there was a solution which allows customers to withdraw up to 50% of the Insurance Savings Account (ISA) every 12 months, regardless of whether the customer has claimed or not? That we would call revolutionary. It is a definite disruption to the short-term insurance industry.

The disruptor of this space is a man called Mutoda Mahamba, an actuarial analyst turned entrepreneur, and CEO of Solvency Insurance, who, after a career of more than 12 years working for several of South Africa's largest insurance companies, decided in 2018 to start his own insurtech, and by doing that, changed the face of short-term insurance forever.

According to Mahamba their new concept is a different approach to the

traditional idea of an insurance reward—one with the ability to dramatically alter a family's financial planning for the better.

"I wanted to change the narrative of short-term insurance and to find a better way of conducting insurance. People view insurance as a pseudo-investment, hence when they've not claimed for a long time, they become disillusioned with the idea of insurance and think of it as a self-enrichment mechanism for insurance companies."

He says what further distinguishes his concept from the rest is the fact that insurance companies invest the premiums collected from customers and earn investment returns on the premiums. The premium-paying customers however, do not participate in any of the investment returns made by insurance companies. With his new concept, the Insurance Savings Account (ISA) belongs to the customer

and earns interest on a monthly basis. And lastly, he says, he wanted to add more value to South African insurers by cutting out the co-payments (excess), which the majority of South Africans have to resort to loans or credit cards in the event they need to pay the excess for an insurance claim. Solvency customers can use the ISA to fund their excess.

How does it work?

The Solvency solution allows customers to allocate up to 45% of what could have been their monthly car and household premium, into an ISA. The decision on how much to allocate to the ISA is guided by the claims excess that the customer can afford to pay in the event of a claim. The ISA can be used to fund the excess in the event of a claim. But more importantly, up to 50% of the past ISA balance after 12 months,



can be withdrawn directly to the client bank account, regardless of whether a client has claimed or not. And lastly, if the client cancels the insurance policy, the full ISA is paid into their bank account.

Venda-born, Soweto-bred Mahamba started his career in 2006 at the age of 22 as an actuarial analyst at Alexander Forbes, where his work involved pension fund consulting as well as post-retirement pension valuations. Two years later he decided to specialise in short-term insurance as he wanted to understand how actuaries determine the premiums that customers pay for short-term insurance and he briefly joined a reinsurance company Hannover Re for a year.

Following that, Mahamba spent the next five years at Absa Insurance Company as pricing specialist for commercial insurance, a portfolio comprising commercial vehicles, property and agriculture. During his last year at Absa Insurance Company, he served in the office of the CEO as the executive assistant.

"After five years at Absa, I joined Momentum Short-term Insurance as the Head of Analytics. The joint venture between Momentum and Outsurance had come to an end; hence Outsurance would no longer support Momentum from an actuarial and analytics point of view. My role was to start the analytics function from scratch with a mandate to 'replicate' the Outsurance analytics machine. It was quite a daunting task because in my personal view, Outsurance was by far the best short-term insurance company in South Africa. But I relished the opportunity, and we did very well as a team.

"After three-and-a-half years at Momentum, I assumed the role of Head of Product: Africa for Momentum and Metropolitan Holdings, a role which led innovation and product development across short-term, life and health insurance. I operated in eight countries in East, West and Southern Africa. That role remained the highlights of my corporate career and prepared me for what was to come," he says.

When asked what made him start his own insurance business, Mahamba tells



Mutoda Mahamba: CEO and founder of Solvency Insurance

the real-life story about a woman who was insured for 26 years before she made her first claim. The insurer settled the claim. Then a few months later someone reared into her bumper, and she submitted a second claim. The insurer settled the second claim, but immediately issued the client a notice to cancel her cover because she was "high risk". She felt betrayed and hard-done because she felt that she deserved

better from the insurer, especially because she had not claimed in 26 years.

"Now she's not alone, because on average, 90% of insured customers will pay more insurance premiums than they will ever claim over a three-year period. As a result of that, I decided to create a model that enables customers to be rewarded through the ISA when they pay more premiums than they claim. More importantly,



as opposed to dictating the amount that customers get back, we decided that we should also give customers flexibility and control over how much they want to allocate to the ISA, up to 45%," he says.

New business

But starting a new business in our current economic climate, especially in the insurance sector, has its challenges and according to Mahamba, their biggest obstacle was finding an underwriter.

"We spent 18 months trying to find an underwriter and eventually found a

reputable underwriter in the form of New National Assurance Company, a reputable insurer that has been around for over 50 years, and is also backed by a large multinational reinsurer, to ensure that all valid claims are paid.

"Another major obstacle is to forgo a good salary. I was already in senior management and making a salary sacrifice was not easy because I have a family. Investors are not willing to fund salaries and they would say things like "Why don't you bootstrap or ask your family and friends to help you out?" Easier said than done in South

Africa with black tax, because as an African you are that uncle, that family member who is supporting your extended family. So it is hard to leave a well-paying job and pursue



Mahamba would like to leave behind a legacy where people are able to buy insurance not as a grudge purchase - in a world where insurers enable customers to achieve financial wellness

About his job

Mahamba's job involves... designing insurance products. It involves managing the team which comprises marketers, data scientists and software developers. Finally, it involves setting the strategic direction of the company and forming strategic partnerships that can help our business grow.

A typical day at the office for him ... begins with a scrum session with the team to look at the performance of the business from a sales point of view. He then also focusses on continuous improvement in terms of their marketing strategy and technology. This is likely to be followed by meetings with partners and potential partners.

He says the most exciting part of his job ... is to solve a problem and as a startup, there isn't a shortage of problems to solve. He is not easily fazed by challenges and relishes at the opportunity to solve one more challenge for a business – this, he says, is something that makes him feel alive. What would be your favourite part of you

The least favourite part of his job is ... seeing a lead that doesn't convert into a policy.

something that for the longest time does not pay the same amount of income that you were making in the corporate world," according to Mahamba.

But with hard work comes reward and his biggest success and breakthrough came

On a lighter note

What are your future plans, both personally and professionally?

Personally, I have a dream of summiting the highest mountain on each continent and writing a book one day. Professionally I want to see the Solvency model expanded to life insurance and banking.

Outside of the working world, who is Mutoda Mahamba?

I am married to my lovely wife, Lesego, the mother of our two children aged six and four. I play guitar, I love hiking and cycling and I'm an avid reader.

How would you describe your personality?

I am an extrovert and I love being around people, but I'm not really the life and soul of the party. I have a dry witty sense of humour. I am easy to get along with.

Who do are your biggest role models?

Thomas Sankara, the former president of the Burkina Faso. I am pan African and believe in African solutions for African people by Africans. Closer to home, I admire Adrian Gore. When you look at the business that he has built both locally and internationally, it is quite impressive.

What is your favourite quote?

"Everyone is guessing." I'd like to think that it is self-coined, otherwise please forgive my déjà vu and credit the owner of the quote.

What will you never wear?

Absolutely nothing; I have quite a broad range of taste when it comes to fashion.

Burgers or pizza?

Burgers!

From where do you draw your strength?

I draw my strength from believing and trusting in God, knowing that He guides my paths.

What are your hobbies?

I read quite a lot of diverse material – and when I have time, I run, cycle and go hiking.

in February 2020 when they sold their first policy. "Just seeing that 18 months of hard work came together when eventually somebody was willing to pay for our product was by far the biggest achievement. In mid-2020, during the thick of Covid-19, we got our second break and struck an underwriting partnership with New National Assurance Company."

On the subject of disrupting industry, going forward, he says we are going to see bots automating a lot of the repetitive work. Digitisation is already adding tremendous value to consumers. You can get a quote and sign-up your policies without any human involvement.

"I foresee digitisation of claims processes where you could potentially just take pictures of your crashed car and an algorithm will assess and approve your

claim. In the agriculture sector, drones are already being used to assess claims." According to Mahamba, these all point to the fact that technology and artificial intelligence will get involved increasingly in the insurance sector.

The CEO told *BBQ* that insurance penetration is too low in South Africa. For example, only one in three cars on the road are insured. People in the low income groups cannot afford insurance policies and it is his dream that, with innovation and the use of technology, they can make insurance more affordable and more inclusive.

An embodiment of transformation

"Our concept is an embodiment of transformation. We are a diverse team, from a gender point of view, and all our staff are from previously disadvantaged groups. I

am proud that our team comprises people from the township and former Bantustan homelands, people who did not attend well-resourced schools. But here we are, at the forefront of cutting-edge innovation.

Our business makes use of service providers from previously disadvantaged groups. From our IT contractors to our PR company, we endeavour to support the transformation agenda," he proudly announced.

Having come this far in such a short period of time, with both feet solid on the ground, and a burning desire to help improve the lives of others, Mahamba showcases compassion and leadership qualities of a true 21st century leader.

He describes himself as having an ENTJ (extraverted, intuitive, thinking and judging) Myers Briggs personality.

"When it comes to leadership, lean towards gathering information to construct a creative vision, but rarely hesitate for long before acting on them. I am decisive and love momentum and accomplishment. I am collaborative and I like to give my team members leeway in terms of implementing a solution. As long as we agree on the 'what', I'm not really pedantic on the 'how'; thus, I allow team members to implement solutions their way. I do, however, step in when I sense that things are heading in the wrong direction, but I only do that after I've given them a chance to do it themselves," he says.

Looking at the future, Mahamba would like to leave behind a legacy where people are able to buy insurance not as a grudge purchase in a world where insurers enable customers to achieve financial wellness.

"Personally, I'd like to eventually set up an accelerator programme to help other young entrepreneurs with their journeys. There aren't enough mentors, certainly in financial services, who've been down this journey.

"I really want to be that person that can help other entrepreneurs to also come onto this journey and make a success of it." **BBQ**

Peter Bongco

Youth have it

Nizenande Machi, co-founder and director of Lucha Lunako, takes a closer look at reshaping the development of South Africa's youth

South Africa has long been positioned as a beacon of hope on the African continent, particularly due to its transition to democracy from the draconian Apartheid period of the past, to being perceived as a relatively prosperous nation with a thriving economy. However, the country is gripped by high unemployment, amounting to a total of 32.5% in the last quarter of 2020, with youth joblessness (for those aged between 15 and 24) sitting at a total of 63.2%, and for those aged between 25 and 34 amounting to 41.2%. With this backdrop, the challenge of unemployment also means that the majority of South Africans are living below the poverty line, and income inequality remains high.

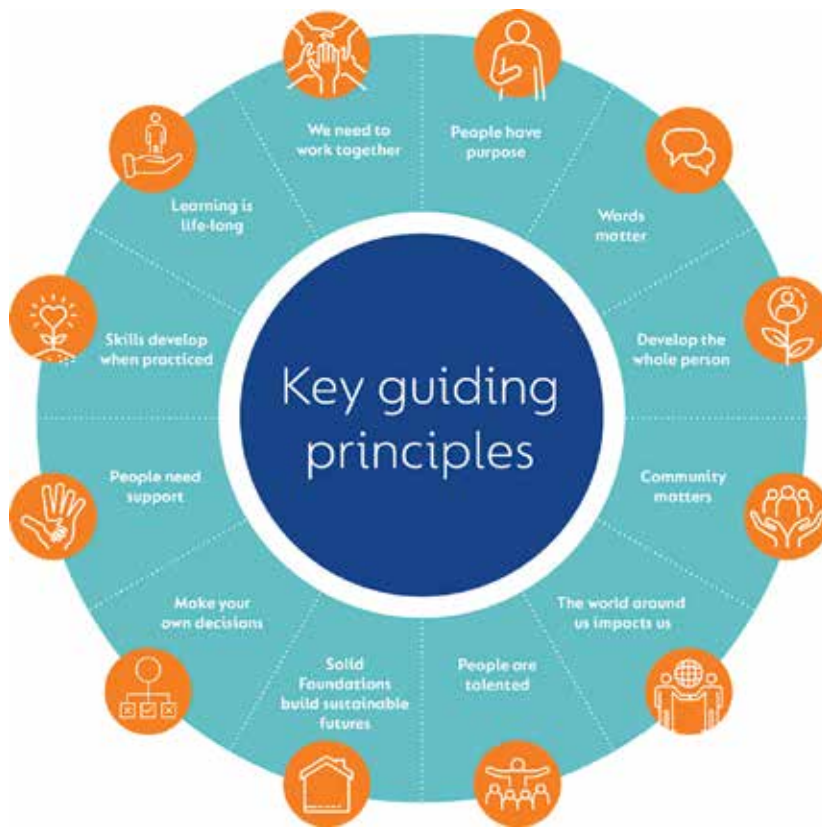
The coronavirus pandemic and the measures taken to curb its spread have been devastating in numerous ways. Many studies, including our Lucha Lunako 2020 Covid-19 survey, have found that the economic impact of the pandemic on the youth has been significant, many of whom have found themselves in greater debt, or without job prospects, study opportunities or internships in the wake of the pandemic. These challenges are faced daily and are the pressing issues at hand.

Despite this seemingly bleak overview, South Africa and its youth have remarkable potential to grow and thrive. The country has a large population of ambitious, vibrant and resilient young people. Our youth are

the emerging future of South Africa, and our team at our youth development Lucha Lunako are passionate about reshaping and repositioning the views regarding the development of youth. We have seen a pervasive problem in the youth development sector, where organisations that are working to assist the youth, often do not take the time to ask what the issues young people are facing, or do not create spaces for the youth to make substantive contributions to ideas and/or solutions. Ironically, however, there is under-representation of youth voices in leadership and operational structures within youth development organisations. And, while we are invited to join conversations, it is often a 'box-ticking' exercise because



Nizenande Machi, co-founder and director of Lucha Lunako



our voices are seldom acknowledged for the credence and value that they offer.

The Lucha Lunako team believes there is a significant difference between helping someone to discover what their agency is: what they already 'have', their power, capacity, gifting and calling; versus telling them that 'I am now going to give it to you'. We've noted that these complex power dynamics, that often position young people as continuous recipients of knowledge and development organisations as knowledge heads, are quite pervasive in the youth development sector and we want to turn this manner of developing youth 'on its head', so to speak.

The youth already 'have it', they have what it takes to shape their lives and future, they simply need to harness it. We also don't believe that the youth are a 'problem' to be solved for, they are the most accurate sources of truth about their own lived experiences, and therefore development programmes should be designed to unlock this potential.

The recently released Lucha Lunako Youth Development Report details a number of insights and key takeaways around how best to help prepare the local youth to succeed in the workplace. This report was developed after months of consultations with youth representatives, because we wanted to figure out a holistic way to support young people. Building from this framework, our current work now involves developing a curriculum that can be used to guide organisations working with young South Africans.

The Youth Development Reimagined Report also indicates that while significant efforts are being made within youth development to build workplace skills and simultaneously increase access to employment opportunities, the prospects for employment and building sustainable careers for youth remain disheartening. Ultimately, youth development employment and job creation outcomes and impacts are low, relative to the monetary and time investments being made in the sector.

Guiding principles

Nestled in the report are Lucha Lunako's guiding principles, which were underpinned by the belief that all people have an innate value and are talented. The organisation believes that if we say that youth are not a problem to be solved for, we needed to develop a framework that acknowledged that.

The report further found that the focus of many youth development organisations has been on providing youth with technical industry- and/or job-specific skills, workplace readiness and work experience, rather than looking at how young people are affected and shaped by poverty and inequality. These interventions often do not provide holistic, intentional, high-quality development and support in the building of human foundations.

To bridge this glaring youth development gap, the report recommends more active consideration of proven best practices to inform programme design and implementation. Youth development interventions need to be holistic and must be coupled with deliberate efforts to create clear pathways to decent sustainable work for young people.

In practice, youth must be exposed to career guidance practices and possibilities beyond their frame of reference; and different lenses must be applied to the challenge of job creation; as well as the potential demand for jobs in South Africa must be mapped out differently.

The report proposes a new framework that focuses on three core areas of development, which we refer to as human foundations, for youth. These refer respectively to an all-encompassing development framework that starts with relationship with self ('I'), then interpersonal relations with others ('You'), then the broader work and life context ('Youth'). Within this I, You and Youth framework there are three constructs:

- I have it (the development of the self).

- You have it (a mind-shift change to those around you).
- Youth have it (the greater context of those around you and at work).

The first step in the established youth development framework, is developing a sense of self and the belief in the self 'I have it'. The second component involves a sense of community and a conscious awareness of those around you i.e. 'You have it' and then lastly 'Youth have it' which focusses

on development in the work sphere and broader life context. The main objective of the 'I Have It' construct approach is to foster healthy relationships with self and others, understanding and appreciating others' feelings, understanding and appreciating others experiences within their frame of reference, civic contribution and awareness, and having and leveraging social capital.

The 'You Have It' construct is about shifting into community: places where one lives, plays and learns. We reflect on

questions such as: what does community mean and look like? Some of the things that we are looking at here are the concepts around bonding and belonging, the family structure, and the family concept. We are interested to discover, alongside the youth, how you begin to build knowledge around those concepts in a manner that is relevant and relatable to people's lived experiences. If you position family as people who are blood, can you then meaningfully make someone who is an orphan internalise this





BASA Scale-Up Seminar

as a working framework? So, these are the considerations that we were making and continue to make under the framework of 'You Have It', and challenge the general perspective and position about what an interpersonal, culturally aware and socially conscious person looks like.

The 'Youth Have It' element sees individuals embracing the broader local and global community contexts, which are critical to professional development and skills development for the youth. Within this category of local and global awareness and development, the ability to understand the world of work, to build workplace skills, form a connection with others in a team environment, and strengthen positive bonds and relationships with people in various contexts (in communities or in the workplace) is vital.

Apart from being important for a young person's development, this level of contextual immersion also enables, for instance, the youth to identify income-generating solutions to problems within a community and develop that idea into a viable, resilient business through which to employ

some of their peers. Ultimately, these three areas of development are the core elements for youth development beyond on-the-job training. These are the skills and attributes that truly equip the youth with the life skills they need to function and thrive in the current civic society and world of work.

Because our core belief is that 'the youth are not a problem to be solved for'; they already have what it takes to progressively transform their lives; youth therefore development programmes should be designed to unleash this potential.

This is our clarion call to you, the broad range of stakeholders within the youth development sector: expand the reach of your practices to be inclusive of the youth voice and perspective in the design of interventions; be relevant to the daily lived experiences of and challenges face by youth; and deeply challenge your preconceptions and conclusions about what young South Africans need in order to thrive. That will significantly shift the needle in the sector. **BBQ**

Nizenande Machi

Did you know?

- » Lucha Lunako is a youth development lab that helps build pathways to decent work through partnership, collaboration and innovation.
- » The organisation provides scaled solutions to youth development in order to create and measure impact in the youth sector.
- » By identifying and engaging with how young people are affected by poverty and inequality at their root causes, Lucha Lunako provides a model for shifting youth mind-sets from surviving to thriving; and are able to build understanding around pathways to decent work.
- » Nizenande Machi, co-founder and director of Lucha Lunako, is a passionate youth development practitioner, and an experienced facilitator, coach and speaker with a demonstrated history of working in the human resources industry.
- » She is skilled in youth development, entrepreneurship, public speaking, facilitation, and management.
- » Machi boasts a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com.) degree focussed on Business Administration and Management from the University of Cape Town (UCT).

Creating meaningful impact

Optimising client resources while maximizing socio-economic impact

Over the past ten years Motopi Consulting has become a vehicle through which its employees, clients and partners can effect the change they would like to see in the world. The company's big hairy audacious goal is to help forge an economically inclusive South Africa, where corporate entities and communities can create thriving ecosystems and function optimally.

As of December 2020, Motopi Consulting has facilitated the investment of over R105 million in community development programmes and R24 million in SMMEs through enterprise and supplier development. The aim is to build on that and potentially double it over the next five to seven years.

Motopi Consulting's owner, BBQ Awards winner (in the Community Builder Category), Chief World Changer Lebogang Luvuno, talks to us about transformation and the importance of high-impact BBEE corporate social investment and community-impact marketing projects.

What exactly does Motopi Consulting do?

I can finally answer this question with clarity! We've been running for 10 years and have defined and redefined ourselves along the way.

Motopi is a 100% black woman-owned BBEE consultancy that partners with clients on their unique transformation journeys to craft and execute world-changing ideas.

Motopi Consulting by numbers

120	This many jobs were created.
130	Young people were provided with opportunities to enter the job market through learnerships.
935	Number of informal traders empowered with skills and tools to grow their businesses.
50	The percentage drive increases spend on skills development by this percentage per client.

This means identifying social ills and injustices in the world and doing whatever little or much we can to address these and assist our clients to do the same. We are not fixated on specific tools, but what we have in our hands currently are BBEE, CSI projects and community-impact marketing projects.

What sets Motopi Consulting apart from its competitors?

At Motopi, we understand that every client is unique and we are adamant to create bespoke strategies that align with client objectives and create impact that matches the existing values and heartbeat of that specific client. We also believe in going above and beyond for our clients.

We often find ourselves building friendships because numbers and targets aren't as much fun without true human connection!

We have learnt that if you focus on the right strategies and initiatives for the right reasons, the points will come.

How can companies like Motopi Consulting contribute to transformation in South Africa?

We can play a role by driving awareness and working knowledge of the BBEE Codes and other tools available to corporate South Africa to make a difference. We can foster true partnership between our clients, the communities they serve and the various government entities to drive transformation in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

How important is it to utilise transformation as a career development, retention and recruitment tool.

Transformation can play a pivotal role in employee engagement. People, especially the younger generation, are drawn to companies that act responsibly and engage with both their employees and communities. Prioritising transformation and communicating the company's efforts in this regard makes a company more attractive as a potential employer. Engaging employees



Why do you believe that collaboration is key for transformation?

This again comes down to sustainability and maximum impact. The challenges facing our country cannot be resolved by one company or one sector alone. We see collaboration as going beyond just public-private partnerships, but cutting across industries and other key stakeholders, including the communities themselves. Companies should be able to collaborate with their suppliers and or customers or clients to drive transformation. They should also be able to work with communities in a manner that empowers them to be the drivers of initiatives that will benefit them. If we are all working towards the same goal, it makes sense to do it together. The task of transforming South Africa's economy is something that will take a very long time. Therefore we need to work on it together to achieve long-term success.

What is your motto in business?

Believe there is good in the world. Be the good. It is very easy to get discouraged by the inequality, corruption and current day injustice.

Adopting cynical lenses, as justifiable as it may be, is not the most effective way to bring about innovative solutions and sustainable positive change. **BBQ**

in transformation initiatives and conversations, as well as empowering them with the knowledge and skills to contribute to transformation, can go a long way in supporting their career development objectives and retaining key talent.

We have seen quite a few companies driving initiatives such as sponsoring employees to work for NGOs or other community-based organisations for a period of time as a way of supporting the NGO while allowing the employee to hone a different set of skills. We encourage our clients to establish employee volunteer programmes to provide a platform for their staff to engage with communities—either physically or through skills transfer (which can be done virtually). All of this has to be done in an authentic and sustainable manner, as it could backfire if it isn't well thought out and supported. It also has to make business sense.

Why is it important for businesses to develop and implement high-impact BBBEE CSI and community-impact marketing projects?

The growth of any business is tied to the economic development and prosperity of its consumer base. Any company operating in South Africa is fighting for 'share of wallet' of consumers whose buying power is limited due to a range of socio-economic factors. Far too many of our citizens are unemployed and or depend on grants as their main source of income. This number has grown significantly due to the impact of Covid. In supporting communities

through BBBEE, CSI and other relevant initiatives, companies would not only be building goodwill with their stakeholders, government entities, their customers/clients, the community at large, current and future employees, but they will also be contributing to the prosperity of the country, which will in turn positively affect the company's potential for growth and sustainability.

Why is it important that businesses understand how the assets their company has access to can drive and support BBBEE projects?

To ensure maximum impact and sustainability, while managing the cost of BBBEE, a 'start with what you have' approach is always advisable. This is why it is important for companies to understand the codes and what kinds of contributions are allowable, so that they can utilise the resources they have to maximize their BBBEE efforts. We often find that companies are already implementing initiatives that could be included in their BBBEE claim, but they were not aware as they do not fully understand the codes.

Celebrating a decade

The Motopi Consulting team would like to extend a huge amount of gratitude to all entities, communities and individuals that it has had the privilege to work and walk with since the company's inception. The company is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year and the team is in awe of how far they have come. There is still so much work to be done in our country, but the Motopi team is committed to igniting the world changer in as many people as possible for as long as possible.

In a post-Covid world ...

The coronavirus pandemic has brought with it exciting opportunities for entrepreneurs. But how should entrepreneurs take advantage of these to help spur economic recovery?

Entrepreneurs are seen globally as essential to kickstart the global economic recovery. And Africa is no different. With youth unemployment at an all-time high, entrepreneurship will be among the most important pillars of recovery.

The World Bank predicted that economic growth in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region will fall to -3.3% in 2020, pushing the region into its first recession in 25 years. The World Bank also predicted that the pandemic could drive up to 40 million people into extreme poverty in Africa, erasing at least five years of progress in fighting poverty.

In South Africa, Stats SA recently announced that the local economy contracted 7% in 2020 due to the Covid-19-related national lockdown. While GDP grew by 6.3% in the last quarter of 2020 due to eased lockdown restrictions, the economy shed 2.2 million jobs.

The World Bank has made a couple of recommendations to help the region to recover, one of which is "a bold reform agenda that includes policies that create fiscal space, along with policies to speed up job creation", which talks to the need to prioritize policies that favor entrepreneurship and small business development, since these are recognized as crucial to the creation of more work opportunities.

The World Bank has estimated that South Africa has the highest rate of entrepreneurship in the world, with approximately 42% of the non-agricultural labour force classified as self-employed or employers.

However, the World Bank warned in 2019 that most entrepreneurs are unable to grow their businesses beyond small-scale subsistence operations, impeding their contribution to poverty reduction and shared prosperity.

This of course calls to attention the urgent need to support entrepreneurs and small businesses in order to ensure sustainable growth that can impactfully mitigate joblessness, especially in a post-Covid-19 future.

One organization, the Anzisha Prize (which is backed by Mastercard Foundation and African Leadership Academy) similarly to the World Bank, believes that small businesses are the engine of any growing economy. According to the Deputy Director of the Anzisha Prize, Melissa Mbazo, this sector of the economy is driven largely by innovative entrepreneurs.

"With a population characterized by a large number of young people, in Africa entrepreneurship is led by the youth, a feature that makes it distinct from other regions of the world.

"Although business success does not come easily, some very successful start-up enterprises on the continent were built by young people. This is encouraging and should, of course, inspire more young entrepreneurs to work even harder to succeed in business, helping the region to escape poverty and to overcome setbacks imposed upon us by the pandemic," she says.

One such entrepreneur is Kolawole Olajide, who moved from his home country Nigeria in 2009 to South Africa to further his university education at the

University of Cape Town. While studying, Kola established Funda, an online learning



management system that brings together necessary educational resources to make the lives of teachers, students, and parents a bit easier.

In the same period, Kola joined the Anzisha Prize Fellowship and has since gone on to establish several other successful businesses including BridgeLabs, and made it to the Forbes Africa 30 Under 30 most influential entrepreneurs in Africa.

"It is these stories about inspiring youth entrepreneurs that give us hope," says Mbazo, adding that many such entrepreneurs had the opportunity to fast-tracking



The World Bank has estimated that SA has the highest rate of entrepreneurship in the world

the growth of their businesses, by joining the Anzisha Prize Fellowship which helps young entrepreneurs scale their businesses to profitability and sustainability.

And, this year again, the Anzisha Prize is inviting entrepreneurs between the ages of 17 and 22 to apply for a chance to share the US\$100 000 prize money and an opportunity to join the 2021 Fellowship.

Entrepreneurs between the ages of 15 and 22 are encouraged to apply for the prize at anzishaprize.org/apply. 

Kabelo Mothoa



The STEM of the future

The power to overcome our transformation hurdles and map out a sustainable future for SA's economy lies within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education

It is a fact: careers of the future will be STEM-based. And a solid STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education system will be at the centre of the business universe. But sadly, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has recently reported a worrying shortage of scientists and engineers in South Africa.

To top that, The New York Academy of Sciences has projected that Sub-Saharan Africa will need a shocking 2.5 million more engineers to help address the continent's gravest development problems.

And we can no longer argue: South Africa urgently needs to develop home-grown STEM talent, as, according to the WEF, the country scores second to last for the quality of Africa's education systems. To rub more salt onto the wound, we have too few STEM experts to teach the next generation.

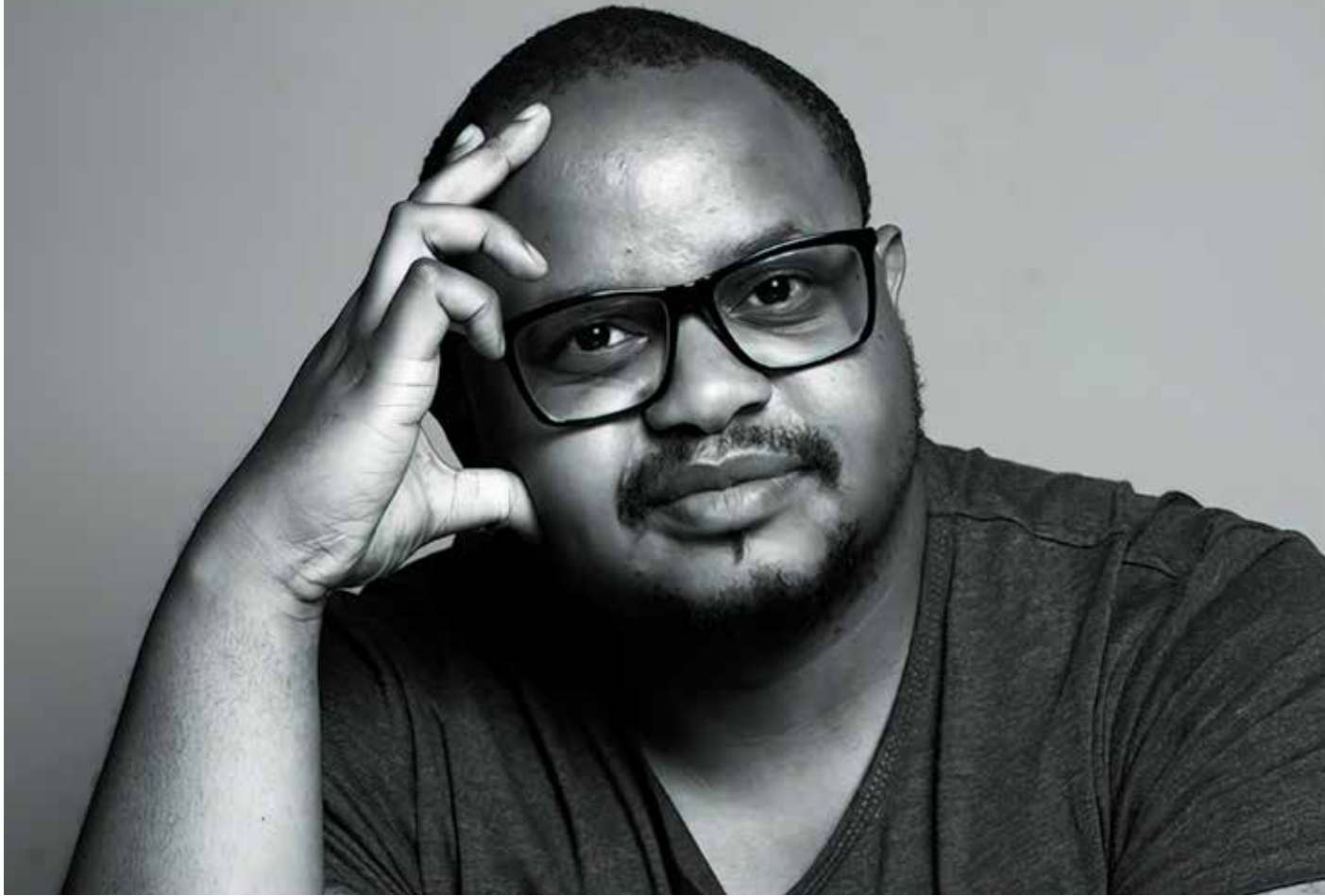
But all is not entirely lost, as today we proudly introduce to you a movement that has been pulling out all the stops to do their bit to promote STEM Education and passionately nurture the next generation from a grass roots level: it is called Geekulcha, driven by its co-founder and CEO, super-geek, Mixo Ngoveni.

BBQ caught up with Ngoveni, a huge tech fanatic who loves playing with technology and using it to find ways to better the lives of people. He believes that collaboration is the key to help develop tomorrow's tech and coding geniuses in South Africa.

Before we dive into the issue at hand (STEM education): You



Mixo Ngoveni, Founder of Geekulcha, accepts Hackathon prizes and components from Wesley Hood, STEM Education Specialist at RS Components SA



Mixo Ngoveni, Founder of Geekulcha

won the BBQ New Innovative Business Award in 2017. Can you please tell us what has been happening in your life since then?

Winning the award in 2017 was a great honour for us. A lot has happened with Geekulcha since then. We have expanded our project portfolio and have worked with a lot of local and international ICT companies, as well as academic and governmental institutions. We have also increased our national footprint by being present in all nine provinces. This has allowed us to do work with more locals, especially those in marginalised communities. We now have a strong presence in over 30 academic institutions nationwide that also include Tvet colleges. This is through our growing Geekulcha Student Societies (GKSS).

How has winning the BBQ Award impacted your business?

It strengthened our visibility within the tech and entrepreneurship space and put

us in contact with businesses and individuals that we wouldn't have connected with were it not for being recognised and accoladed by BBQ.

You are at the forefront of promoting STEM Education, among other things, within South Africa, Africa and globally with an emphasis of nurturing the next generation from a grass roots level. Please expand on this.

Geekulcha believes in a world where more young people are able to play within this growing tech driven world and to get this right one needs exposure and access to information and platforms to learn new things no matter your background or upbringing.

We also believe in introducing people to the world of technology at a younger age so that it doesn't become foreign to them when they reach tertiary level. One of our initiatives, Future Geekstars, focusses on

introducing young learners to the world of STEM so they can learn while solving real world problems.

South Africa's STEM crisis is of international concern. Are we making any headway at all?

We are definitely in a crisis and more work still needs to be done. It is however not all dark and gloomy. We are seeing more organisations playing their part in strengthening our STEM space locally. Young people are also showing interest especially in fields like IT and robotics. Some are even going as far as introducing themselves to the world of coding by teaching themselves

Why is it important for South African education departments to embrace STEM education?

The world is changing, things are going digital, we need more skilled engineers and scientists so that we can transform and improve the lives of South Africans through

Top 15 Young Geeks 2021

How does it work? During Youth Month, Geekulcha names and honours Top 15 Young Geeks in South Africa. These are the minds marking their stamp and playing a greater role in the Digital Revolution.

One gets nominated and selected to be on the list based on the work they have been doing within their communities and contributing to the SA tech ecosystem.

It starts off with a public nomination process, then the numbers are filtered down to 24 candidates. Public voting and assistance from a panel of judges helps the organisers identify the Top 15 finalists, who will then be announced on the 1st of June 2021.

the use of these skills. We can't do all this effectively if STEM is not embraced and strengthened.

Are the various role players doing enough to encourage the youth to venture into STEM careers?

There are organisations like RS Components who are playing their role in supporting young people venture into STEM by providing resources like electronic components and Pitops that can be used in educating young learners on STEM. Many others are also doing their part, but there is still lots of work that needs to be done, especially when it comes to including those that are from marginalised communities. We cannot leave them behind.

How do you see your work making an impact on transformation in the STEM sectors in the country in general?

Geekulcha has this thing of let's do what we can with what we have. This kind of attitude has helped us make progress and some of the results have helped attract more interests from other organisations that see the need in transforming this space. Part of the transformation will also happen when we get to see more young people having access. We are seeing great impact happening in the Northern Cape with our Northern Cape Developer Ecosystem that is bringing tech initiatives, programmes and awareness within the provinces. One of the

latest projects is called NCDev Academy and it exposes digital learning to remote areas within the Northern Cape.

Whose job is it to encourage young people to think STEM, anyway?

That role belongs to all of us, especially those of us who have access to information that is related to STEM. A simple sharing of an article, magazine, video or link that has STEM content is a good start. Exposing your children, siblings, local school students to your work environment if you're within the STEM sector also goes a long way.

What more can be done to boost STEM transformation?

More content and information needs to go into mainstream media. Support for rural schools needs to improve. Teachers need to also be educated and exposed to new and exciting ways of teaching. Organisations doing their part need to be provided with more support and resources. Theory about STEM should be balanced with practical education.

Do you have any bright ideas in terms of how the Government



and the private sector can collaborate to overcome the STEM crisis in South Africa?

For starters, they shouldn't work in isolation. As much as they have the resources and powers they should also include those small organisations that are already playing within. Part of the collaboration involves providing resources in the form of venues, labs, laptops, electronic components and money to support those that are already doing their part.



First virtual Geekulcha Hackathon

The recent 2021 Geekulcha Hackathon, a highlight in the African developer ecosystem, saw more than 100 coders, developers and programmers challenge each other in an online contest.

This year, the event went virtual, offering 'hackers' the chance to develop and code from the safety and comfort of their homes. Mixo Ngoveni, co-founder of Geekulcha, said for the first time ever, the hackathon took place over 42 hours with various challenges in to test the minds of participating computer coding enthusiasts.

"Due to lockdown regulations we were not able to host our usual events. This year, we decided to maximise the virtual event, and instead of one day, hackers had 42 hours to come up with solutions under one virtual roof. We also saw all nine provinces being represented," Ngoveni said.

These events have shed much needed light on coding, technology and innovation to not only the youth, but for everyone keen to learn something different. "Each event brings about something new, and we are truly humbled to be a part of this movement. We, in South Africa, have a lot to offer the world in terms of innovation and technology and all we need is support," he said.

This year, RS Components sponsored the prizes. Wesley Hood, STEM Education Specialist for RS Components, agrees, saying that these events truly add value to the youth of the country.

"We are passionate about education and nurturing the next generation of innovators. Events such as this hackathon, excites us, and we are proud to partner up with Geekulcha and look forward to future events where we can see South Africa's tech geniuses at work. The team at Geekulcha have been inspiring to watch grow and adapt over the last year. Although we miss being at their physical events, it was great to be part of the virtual panel of judges. The teams really showed off their skills and brought some innovative ideas to the table," he said.

This year's winner was Trevor Morethe, who came up with an idea to digitise street food vendors of South Africa with his Let Me Serve You (LMSY) mobile app. Morethe says his application will provide a platform where consumers can order food and discover street food vendors in their surrounding areas. "With my developed mobile app, I want to help street food vendors track orders, streamline their processes while assisting customers, like me, to save time when ordering food as well as provide information on nearby vendors. This will assist these micro-businesses and their customers step into the digital world," he said.

Ngoveni concludes by saying that South Africa has to find creative and innovative ways to better its communities and address challenges using technology. The annual hackathon is one way of doing this.

Geekulcha has been creating and enabling platforms for innovation and creativity while exposing young talent and skills to the industry for opportunities. Can you please tell us about your successes in this regard?

We have, over the years, seen a lot of young people go through our initiatives and later land jobs within their chosen industry. Some have taken it a step further and started their own businesses through learning and exposure gained in our initiatives.

What can young South Africans do to achieve their dreams of a career in STEM?

They should develop an appetite for curiosity.

That will help them find ways of understanding why certain things work in certain ways. They should make platforms like social media to also be places of learning and discovering things within STEM.

And finally: can you tell us how a solid and reliable STEM sector would impact SA's future economy?

A strong and reliable STEM sector would definitely boost our future economy because we would have more locally capable people who can innovate and solve problems. The more innovations we have, the more we can export them to other countries and make profits from them while utilising them locally for boosting our economy and creating new sustainable jobs. **BBQ**

Thandi Mavela

Sweet as sugarcane

A brilliant example of transformation in agriculture; showcasing collaboration between Government and the private sector

Grown men and women wept. Their joy was overflowing. Never did they imagine that in their lifetime they would see their parched, bare land covered in thriving sugarcane crops which would ensure a better life for their families.

Three years ago, occupants of small plots of land leased from the Ngunyama Trust in rural Kwazulu-Natal South Coast struggled to eke out an existence. Their attempts at planting sugarcane and other crops had failed. They were mired in poverty. Life was an endless struggle with no hope for improvement.

Fortuitously, Illovo Sugar South Africa was at that time exploring ways in which to

increase the supply of cane to its mills. An under-supply of sugarcane into the South Coast mills necessitated action to be taken to re-establish sugarcane in the Small-Scale Grower (SSG) areas that were lying fallow and within close proximity to the affected mills. A sustainable development model was sought to ensure the future cane supply in the SSG areas.

Through its Small-Scale Grower Cane Development Project, the company partnered with the National Treasury's Jobs Fund in 2017 on a R127 million grant to plant 3 000 hectares of sugarcane on communal land over three seasons.

Operating under the Department of Trade & Industry, the Jobs Fund was launched in

June 2011 and an amount of R9 billion was set aside. The objective of the Jobs Fund is to co-finance projects by public, private and non-governmental organisations that will significantly contribute to job creation. This involves the use of public money to catalyse innovation and investment on behalf of a range of economic stakeholders in activities that contribute directly to enhanced employment creation in South Africa.

In partnership with the Jobs Fund, which provided 50% of the R127-million capital, Illovo launched the project stimulate life-changing activities in deep rural areas, create sustainable employment for black growers and their families, and provide training opportunities for rural households.



Thokozile Didiza, Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

The sugar manufacturer put up 15 % of the capital. The remaining 35% was taken as loans by the growers from MAFISA, with Illovo underwriting the debt.

The project used 119 local contractors, developed 1 704 growers, and empowered women growers and contractors in rural communities to grow their own cane.

This enterprise development initiative stimulated economic activity by creating direct employment and transferred valuable farming and business skills in rural households, estimated to receive R80-million in income annually by leveraging these built capabilities. The funds have already been used to pay for education, clothing, monthly expenses, transport and housing in the community.

The project has developed and empowered this community of people on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast by creating sustainable jobs and has visibly transformed the landscape from a sparse sugarcane crop to rolling green hills of healthy cane. The annual supply of sugarcane arising out of this project has also helped boost the cane throughput of Illovo's Sezela sugar mill by about 150 000 tons.

Illovo Sugar MD, Mamongae Mahlare says the Small-Scale Grower Cane Development Project is clear validation of the great potential that exists for partnerships between businesses and their host communities on the one hand, and government on the other, to reduce poverty and stimulate economic activity.

"We could not have achieved this level of success alone. The confidence of the Jobs Funds which met us halfway with concessional funding, and the support of other stakeholders including the SA Canegrowers Association and the South African Farmers Development Association, have been integral to this revolutionary project.

"The collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to bring a local system of innovation to life in just three years has resulted in 1 704 growers being given the opportunity to develop cane on their land."

Mahlare says the small-scale grower development project created direct jobs in rural communities while implementing



Mamongae Mahlare, MD: Illovo Sugar

socioeconomic and enterprise development initiatives and the transfer of valuable farming and business skills. By leveraging on the built capabilities and securing a spot in the Illovo Sugar value chain, communities will earn upwards of R80-million in income annually.

"Since the capacity to work the land resides within the communities in the form of the upskilled local contractors, there is a multiplier effect as this new money is spent

within the community and is catalytic to broader economic activity," she added.

Nomanesi Ngcobo who is today a proud small-scale grower said she took over the sugarcane-growing business from her late husband.

"When Illovo Sugar reached out to our community with this project, my husband's sugarcane that had been planted years before, was no longer growing. The project came at a crucial time for us because the



Nomanesi Ngcobo, small-scale sugarcane grower

eMalangeni area had run out of sugarcane and many growers were struggling.

"Sugarcane farming is our bread and butter. It allows us to pay for our children's education. This project by Illovo to empower us has been a miraculous experience. We are so grateful to Illovo for empowering us and enriching our lives.

"To be part of the cane grower's community as a black woman makes me happy, especially having come from an impoverished background."

Nomvula Shoji said farming and agriculture had always interested her.

"I remember asking my father how sugarcane is grown and it remained a passion of mine. After finishing school and university studies, I moved to Durban to work. In early 2018, I learnt about the Illovo Small Scale Grower Development Project and decided to return home and try my hand at being a contractor and grower.

"The training provided changed all of our perspectives about growing sugarcane as a viable business. The project helped us put protocols in place to ensure the sustainability of our businesses.

"This initiative also helped me to start and grow my own contracting business,

which supports other growers by planting and ratooning their lands. With this project, everything has been kept local and the money we make goes back into our community. I love what I do, and I am so grateful for the opportunity Illovo has given me to pursue my dreams," he says.

Gavin Massey, Small Scale Grower Field Manager for Illovo, said the aim of the project was to use home grown capability and aptitude to create viable and sustainable businesses for rural families while increasing the supply of cane to their mills.

He said after he ensured equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth; leveraging sugarcane as a catalyst for rural development; and ensuring a secure supply to the Illovo mills, the company committed to develop contiguous areas of tribal land to sugarcane whilst developing and empowering previously disadvantaged cane growers.

Challenges to be overcome included:

- how to introduce economic activity on communal land;
- the high cost of entry and lack of suitable, continuous funding; and
- lack of grower and service provider capability.

"The grant from the Jobs Fund was the chief driver of the Small-Scale Grower Cane Development Project which is now is clear validation of the great potential that exists for partnerships between businesses and their host communities on the one hand, and Government on the other, to reduce poverty and stimulate economic activity.

"The collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to bring a local system of innovation to life in just three years has resulted in 1 704 growers being given the opportunity to develop cane on their land," said Massey.

To celebrate the success of the Small-Scale Grower Cane Development Project and showcase the positive spin-offs, Illovo Sugar hosted an event that was attended by Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Thoko Zile Didiza, as well as stakeholder involved in the project.

Minister Didiza was visibly pleased after being taken on a site visit to the sugarcane fields to witness first-hand the development of cane on communal land by small-scale growers using a sustainable model of development aligned to the national transformation agenda. She said while the



Nomvula Shoji, small-scale sugarcane grower

contribution of black commercial farmers in the country's agricultural economy was still low, the Illovo model was a game changer.

"The low levels of inclusion call for serious intervention from both the Government and other stakeholders in driving inclusive growth.

"We need more public-spirited players like Illovo Sugar who are willing to work with Government in order to leverage our resources in the commercialisation of black farmers, while we ensure that we give meaningful support to those who are beneficiaries of land reform," she said after meeting with small-scale growers.

She also added that after recognising different challenges constraining the growth and development of commercial and emerging farmers in the country, the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP) had recommended the adoption of a 'Theory of Change' to train farmers and grow the agricultural sector in an inclusive manner.

The theory advocates for a co-existence of commercial and emerging farmers to promote the agricultural and food sectors on a new growth trajectory that can ultimately contribute to taking South Africa's economy

out of the 'Middle Income' trap. The conceptual framework for this Master Plan has been concluded, and the sector partners are to meet for consultation in June 2021. This Master Plan is complementary to the Poultry and Sugar Master Plans.

KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Sihle Zikala, said rural agriculture is a sure-fire solution for the eradication of the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the province. He was complimentary of Illovo for assisting farmers, especially those who are at a subsistence level and those who are at an emerging level, to earn a more prosperous livelihood.

"Government is always willing to partner with the private sector to assist all farmers in KwaZulu-Natal as a whole, especially those who are in rural areas, to contribute in the economic sector of agriculture.

Najwa Allie-Edries, head of the Jobs Fund, said building the capability of small-holder farmers must move beyond the debate about land ownership.

The imperative now is to find creative solutions to long-term access to land, while providing appropriate support to build sustainable new-era farmer capability, she said.

"In spite of significant growth potential in the agricultural sector, opportunities and benefits are not widespread. The sector is characterised by a huge capacity gap between commercial and smallholder or emerging farmers, placing the latter in a disadvantageous position in terms of accessing opportunities, markets and value chains.

"Robust and localised agriculture and agro-processing systems are crucial for food security, economic diversification and creating jobs. Hence, more than 30% of the Jobs Fund's portfolio of projects are implemented within the agricultural sector.

"Developing a sustainable sector means growing both the farm and the farmer and expanding the opportunities available to them. It can't be one or the other; the same level of effort put into crop development must also be put into the farmer and his or her business. Illovo Sugar must be commended for reducing barriers to entry for emerging farmers and addressing challenges that hamper their ability to grow sustainably," Allie-Edries concluded. **BBQ**

Tshepo Marumule

Keep on going ...

Resilience: the key to build strength of character and create the ability to manage the curveballs being thrown our way

The age of Covid-19 has tested all our belief systems, forcing us to reflect on our lives and how we are living it. It has also presented untold challenges, job losses, illness, and in many cases, death of loved ones. All this amidst the continued need to provide for our families, pay our bills, show up for work every day and continue to give our best.

This requires strength of character and the ability to manage the curveballs being thrown our way. Resilience is that factor that builds internal courage, that, despite what we feel and experience, we are able to bounce back, take control of our situation, lean into the resistance that it is creating in our lives and still be able to offer the best of who we are and what we do. This is a key teaching in my most recent book *Living on Purpose*.

Can resilience be learnt? Absolutely, resilience is the outcome of your experiences if you choose your experiences to be your lessons rather than your inhibitors. Resilience can be developed by reflecting on your thoughts, understanding your behaviours and taking concrete actions that allow you control over a situation in your life. The following seven 'tips' will hopefully help you along your journey to build and strengthen resilience.

1. Build confidence

One of the key ways in which to build resilience is to build confidence. Building confidence comes from building competence. When you know that you are capable of doing something, it sets you on a path of self-discovery, of freedom to develop yourself, to master your skills, to

bring the best of you to everything you do. Confidence is the foundational principle of building resilience. Learn everything you can about what you do. Make the time to understand every aspect of your role, your craft. When you master yourself, you have the confidence to teach, to lead and to direct. It brings a sense of certainty, a sense of self-sufficiency; you know that you can rely on yourself. This instills a deep sense of confidence in your journey ahead.



When we take ownership for the actions that others must own, we create an inferno within our own lives

2. Choose your battles

Not everyone's problems are yours to own and not everyone's problems are yours to solve. When we take ownership for the actions that others must own, we create an inferno within our own lives. Of course support is important, guiding and mentoring people is important but taking their problems away so you can own it, only tells them they are not capable. Instead, learn to recognize what is yours to own and what is yours to teach. Help and guide others so that you instill in them the resilience to cope with the bends of life. Solving every

problem for everyone doesn't create survivors, it creates victims.

3. Count your contribution, not your entitlement

When we focus our lives on what and where we can contribute, it instills in us a sense of purpose, of passion for living and for making a difference. It is in these moments that we craft a roadmap for others. They become inspired with our level of leadership, our ability to forge ahead, giving freely of us without expecting recognition or the accolades. When you love what you do and you do it passionately, the outcome is almost always rewarded in numerous ways.

4. Change your narrative

There is great power in the use of words. They create, attract and distribute energy. Every word has a connotation and every time we use a particular word, we create an image in our midst. That image can either be positive or negative. So we can see it as a challenge, we can see our failures as wounds or we can see it as healing processes. The words we use become the actions we take and the actions we take determine the outcome of our lives. So, change the narrative to one of power, of confidence, of trust and hope in the future.

5. Build support structures

No one can survive on their own. We all need someone we know we can rely on in times of difficulty. When you are experiencing a challenge in your life, seek counsel. Bottling up your emotions doesn't help resolve the problem, it just makes it



much more challenging and we only end up beating ourselves. It is good to get different perspectives, understand different ways in which you can handle a situation. When we are faced with a dilemma, it is sometimes difficult to see the various options available to us but when we share it with our support structure, we may find that it is not as daunting as we originally thought.

6. Become a change activist

The only guarantee that life can give us is that it will change, whether we are ready for that change or not. Change brings opportunity, excitement and self-growth, but only if we advance our thinking; if we are forward-looking and we are prepared to step into a world where possibilities are unlimited and freedom belongs to those who are prepared to rise above the uncertainty. The world is changing at a fast pace and the more we stay stuck in what was, the more we lose the beauty of creating what is possible. Be a change activist; constantly seek ways to

improve who you are, what you do, the contributions you make and the lives you touch. When you become a change activist



Building confidence comes from building competence

you own the change, the change doesn't own you. That's an important differentiator because you can either be a champion for the change or you can be a victim of that change.

7. Seize the day

Procrastination creates instability in our life and instability creates anxiety, which in turn creates stress, which in turn compromises

our well-being. Be clear about what you want to achieve and take decisive steps to craft a plan of action that allows you to achieve those goals. The more we put things off for tomorrow, the more we deny the genius within us. **BBQ**

Nimee Dhuloo

About the writer

Nimee Dhuloo is an inspiring personal and business coach, mentor and published author. She has provided specialist HR expertise to multi-national clients during her 30-year career. Her skills and competence have allowed her to deliver innovative solutions to workplace challenges.

Something homegrown

Creating a collaborative platform, an innovative business model and process of retail that will benefit black SMME's and young aspiring black business people

One of the biggest challenges for South African entrepreneurs, especially young black aspiring business people, are access to market, access to funds and access to ownership.

These have been major issues for consideration for many years, and bearing in mind that globally the small business sector is the backbone of emerging economies, bridging these issues are essential if they are to contribute in a meaningful way to our country's GDP.

The Portfolio Committee on Small Business Development (PCSBD) has confirmed that constrained and limited access

to markets for SMMEs and co-operatives is one of the key barriers to South Africa's attempts at growing the small enterprise sector. The complexity of sustainability standards was also identified as a factor preventing small enterprises from accessing the market, both private and public.

The committee stressed that the sector was generally unaware of what standards they needed to comply with, and how to implement them. Especially rural and township enterprises had no support mechanism to guide them through onerous procedures. Because of this, many brilliant ideas and



It is very crucial for black businesses to participate extensively in the economic activities as black people are the largest group of consumers



Siyanda Mhlahlo, co-founder of Pex Lifestyle and founder of the Homegrown Shandis concept

concepts have never left the drawing board and it has become essential for entrepreneurs to tackle their unique circumstances with a more out-of-the-box thinking approach in order to launch and keep tomorrow's big local brands afloat.

One such approach is the introduction of a new trend, aptly named and patented Homegrown Shandis, a collaborative platform; an innovative business model and process of retail. The model is collaboration-centred and addresses the three key challenges: access to market, access to funds and access to ownership.

Siyanda Mhlahlo, co-founder of the Pex Lifestyle brand and founder of the Homegrown Shandis concept, says this will be done through synergies shared among brands, and enterprises to ultimately optimise production, leverage skills and the labour force, drive costs down and give positive cash flow to enterprises to make other investments and cash reserves. All of this can then be replicated in all important business functions such as marketing, production, accounting and IT.

"The most important thing about this collaboration model is that those who subscribe to it understand its commitment to a certain cause and it is a long game. This is an existing idea of retail and we have refined it to fit our situation as marginalised start-ups or micro businesses as resources are the problem.

"Instead of doing the usual retail, we used strategic tools such as collaboration and leverage each other's skills and markets and all of these contributed to the positive output of the projects at hand that needed to be delivered to realise maximum returns," says Mhlahlo, who has, from a young age, been fascinated by the policies of localisation and the importance of local production and having access to factors of production but most importantly protectionism policies.

He says due to the high youth unemployment crisis, young South African entrepreneurs have no choice but to rely on themselves. "We need to fund, strengthen the value chain and create access to the market for local brands, while encouraging



30 seconds with Siyanda Mhlahlo

What would be your ultimate project?

Taking the HGS Playground Store National

What will be your next brilliant move?

Building a solid ecosystem for entrepreneurs

Why focus on co-operatives?

Because collaboration is the new innovation and there is a big need

What makes you smile?

Family, successful black stories, life in general

What makes you cry?

Inequalities and mistreatment of black people

What will you never compromise?

Family

Who was the greatest entrepreneur ever to walk the planet?

Steve Jobs

What would you ultimately want to achieve in life?

Building a culture of excellence in black communities



community based ownership." And he stresses the importance of boosting black business.

"It is very crucial for black businesses to participate extensively in the economic activities as black people are the largest group of consumers of goods and services rendered. Who better to serve this community well other than the black people themselves. This is a race that has been systematically excluded from participating in economic activities due to tools such as qualifications, huge capital, legalities and bureaucratic protocols.

"If the group of 20 year olds can start businesses, associations and leverage on the internet which is deconstructing the normal way of doing business, in ten years' time we will look back and say we laid a better foundation. For these reasons we must boost black businesses. This can be done through the mobilisation of the masses to buy from locals, especially black businesses. This is through the support of community members, friends and family. Hence, we included them in our Playground Store in the name of community based ownership. It is indeed up to us, but there are a lot of us who have raised our hands to serve and started working on plans now," says the savvy entrepreneur

Mhlahlo told *BBQ* that he realised the importance of ownership more than ever when, during the hard lockdown, he had to let go of the space he rented at a popular mall. This prompted the need for independence and forced him to boost their Homegrown Shandis model.

"What makes the Homegrown Shandis model special is that it is a collective effort and in Africa there is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. We apply the same



We are taking everyone to revive the township economy, because it is indeed up to us to make it happen. We are equally accountable and responsible for it

stance in our business model by involving everyone from community members whom we are serving and creating for, to have a stake of ownership. We are taking everyone to revive the township economy, because it is indeed up to us to make it happen. We are equally accountable and responsible for it."

In his mission to accomplish this goal, Mhlahlo joined forces with Lufuno Lisoga (owner of Ifreecan Timepieces) and Sicelo Mabuza (founder of the MamaKea shoe brand), to launch their Homegrown Shandis (HGS) Playground container store, which will sell Mhlahlo's Pex Lifestyle brand, Lisoga's watches and Mabuza's trendy shoes.

According to Mabuza, their products complement one another. "Lufuno is creating authentic time pieces that represent our African culture, just like our shoes and the Pex brand. Our customers can't even tell they are different brands. We became one. We decided to make items that complement one another, but at the

same time we are pushing each other to grow in that market."

Mabuza agrees and elaborates: "I have realised that 'WE' is better than 'I', so whenever we start to come as collectives, when we are in collectives, we are able to raise more money and target more challenges."

By cutting costs, their businesses are slowly growing and they're planning to take their collective for a walk beyond Johannesburg

They are currently operating online and selling via certain shops (BoxShop in Midrand and DZYNA in Newtown) but the plan is to reintroduce the container store concept and if all goes well, they plan to open shop in August. The ultimate plan is

to promote the container concept to other entrepreneurs as well and eventually end up with a container mall.

The Homegrown Shandis founders are still looking for more partners and community members to be part of the Playground Store project and invite them to contact them.

"There is a call for sustainable development across the world regarding evergreen projects and taking care of the environment. There is already a blueprint of what you call shipping container malls, but we are looking at lifestyle centres, because this narrative challenges us to evolve in how we live. The example of this is the Shanty Town Lifestyle in Midrand and the container shop has been pioneered by The BoxShop through creating access to marginalised youth-led brands in South Africa. We are taking it a step further to the advancement of the township economy through building such a development one container concept store at the time with the community members as stakeholders and owners. Black people love

recreational activities and togetherness, and we are creating such spaces.”

Mhlahlo says it all comes down to SMMEs and creating a platform where SMMEs can work together sharing shop space and costs etc. “Collectively we have power and sharing a store, marketing capabilities, productions, logistics, financial information systems and markets makes good sense. It does not only translate to the bottom line, but it also restores confidence to the black community that black people can and do work together for mutual benefits without excluding the community with those benefits. My experience has allowed me to witness that it is faster, cheaper and there is little room for error, because there are many eyeballs on the projects and everyone wants what is best for them.

His passion for entrepreneurship and SMMEs in South Africa and have done an impressive amount to assist small businesses in marketing their businesses as well as supporting them personally. Mhlahlo says he has taken this stance to share, recommend, profile, document and distribute this content to the communities that need it the most, black communities.

“For me, it is about ensuring that all business from our communities are documented so that the next generation can have a blueprint and they can innovate using local references. It is all about building each other up and helping each other win, but most importantly for me is to demonstrate that we support and work together so that we can ask for the same support from the community.

“I want to contribute in a positive impactful manner to that sector and ensure that those who are marginalised are fully represented.

“I am not here or have that influential social capital that can change the SMME sector, but we have the communities that are free thinkers and like-minded to build it one container at a time through stokvels, community capital, leveraging community infrastructure, ecosystem, skills and ensuring that collaboration is at the centre of what we are working towards. There is a lot that micro’s and SMEs can contribute to the social ills of the township beyond employment,” says Mhlahlo, who is hell-bent on making a meaningful contribution towards doing business in

townships and ultimately help shape the township economy.

In order to achieve this, he says they will need to transfer skills through training and they will have to provide the youth with practical digital skills, especially in the retail sector, for the township economy to be competitive.

“We understand the culture and heritage first-hand and we can use that to our advantage, but we will also contribute to the employment and the development of the township, and create spaces that reflect us.

“We will also intentionally use the suppliers within the ecosystem of the black business community to indirectly increase production and service outputs that will contribute to employment indirectly.”

“We are coming for everything, we have identified the need in our communities to bring about convenience to the shoppers and to bring empowerment to ordinary community members who yearn for ownership and generational wealth,” Mhlahlo concludes. **BBQ**

Peter Newton



When business cycles

Navigating the pandemic business cycle: Why now is the right time to access funding

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently updated its global economic growth projections. The latest IMF World Economic Outlook anticipates a stronger recovery for the global economy this year. Global growth is now projected to reach 6% in 2021 and 4.4% in 2022 following the estimated historic -3.3% contraction in 2020. The group's updated forecast includes upwardly revised projections for South Africa, with growth expected to reach 3.1% in 2021 and 2% in 2022.

However, business activity will largely determine whether the country achieves these growth projections. Many businesses are still reeling from the lockdown's impact on cash flow and the sustained dip in consumer spending. Consumer confidence and household incomes remain at historically low levels due to the pandemic's economic impact, while record unemployment continues to rise.

Businesses that survived stringent lockdowns need to continually adapt to the shifting conditions and altered business cycles amid the 'new normal' as trading conditions, while substantially improved, continue to remain unpredictable and volatile. The knock-on effect means reduced consumption expenditure, which is a vital contributor to gross domestic product (GDP) growth, and continued constraints on cash flow, liquidity and working capital.

Businesses need access to capital to sustain them through this atypical business cycle, whether that is to improve cash flow, position them for growth during the recovery or buy inventory to meet rising consumer demand. Companies also need to de-risk their operations amid the potential for third and fourth infection waves

and a subsequent escalation in lockdown restrictions.

In these scenarios, certain industries will continue to struggle more than others due to the uneven recovery and sector-specific lockdown regulations. Without higher revenue and improved cash flow, the economic downturns will heap additional pressure on the cash conversion cycle.

As such, businesses must look for alternative sources of capital because they can no longer rely on internally generated cash. For most, external funding remains the only viable option to support and sustain their operations amid the pandemic.

Debt and alternative funding can be incredibly powerful tools to help businesses weather economic downturns. And accessing funding lines from a lending partner that understands the business and can offer guidance and advice provides businesses with a critical lifeline.

The right lending partner will ensure your business accesses the appropriate quantum of debt for the right purposes and will closely align fund flows and facilities to the working capital cycles in your business.

Yet, taking on debt amid the challenging operating environment may seem daunting. And business owners are often hesitant to approach their banks during challenging times. But it is generally beneficial to be forthright with your financial services partner. Businesses don't only want or need, a fair-weather bank. A trusted banking provider should help businesses through the tough times and the good.

And funding your company's working capital cycle through various forms of 'good' debt can provide the liquidity needed to generate additional revenue, unlock new growth or capitalise on evolving trading conditions. In fact, managed debt

can be one of the most cost-effective forms of financing available to a business.

The ideal solution is finding the right financial services partner – one that takes the time to understand your business and can right-size lending solutions and credit facilities or customises the products your business needs.

In this regard, many lenders are adapting their credit and risk models in response to these unprecedented market conditions to broaden funding accessibility, while doing so in a responsible manner.

While banks will scrutinise businesses more closely in this challenging economic environment, those that are still around after the last 12 months should consider themselves as strong candidates for business finance.

Banks will need to understand a business operation before, during and after the lockdown before granting credit. Lenders must also work with owners and management to understand forecasts and future growth prospects.

When assessing risk in this environment, lenders need to differentiate between the financial bump experienced during the pandemic and a structural deterioration in the financial viability of a business beyond the current situation.

These qualitative business insights can support the quantitative analysis of the company's financial statements relative to the basic underlying credit risk criteria regarding solvency and debt serviceability. This approach creates opportunities to provide tailored lending solutions for clients that address unique business challenges or cater to specific requirements based on their current position in their capital lifecycle.

And the ability to adapt lending solutions in line with a business's needs and



Itumeleng Merafe, Head of Sales for Investec for Business

requirements is critical. Understanding the changing landscape that customers face and having the agility and nimbleness to accommodate these shifting factors makes finding the appropriate lending partner in hard times extremely relevant.

However, providing access to funding and credit is only the first step in the bank-client relationship. Leveraging these funding lines effectively is the other important element. The right banking partner will offer guidance about how to deploy this capital into the business to realise the best return. Most institutional lenders also recognise the important role they play in rebuilding the economy and are working with their business clients during this challenging period to support the country's recovery efforts.

Allowing companies to access the right funding structures to access capital at the right stage in the pandemic-influenced business cycle will help them weather the current challenging operating environment and provide the support needed to grow in step with the post-pandemic economic recovery. And access to affordable capital instils confidence in business leaders, which

is vital for future business success. Business owners who remain positive through the tough times will have an advantage over their competitors during the recovery and will likely leap-frog businesses that remain mired in stagnant operations due to lack of funding.

Working with a lending partner will also help business owners to position their businesses favourably to meet pent-up consumer demand. Sentiment is everything and as vaccine rollouts and economic growth

boost consumer confidence, people will start spending more.

However, business owners must start their planning now to gear the business for these market changes. Therefore, questions every business owner should ask themselves today include:

- What business challenges do I face outside the pandemic and how can I better prepare to mitigate these risks?
- Am I sufficiently geared to respond to the structural changes in the economy and sustain my business in the new normal?
- How will my business pivot in response to new trends around remote working, e-commerce and the threat of future pandemics or other crises?

Now is the time to revisit and interrogate your capital structures and position the business for accelerated growth during the recovery. Work with your banking partner and take time out now to reflect. Use the opportunity to consider the next phase in your business and how the right-sized funding solution can support this growth.

Ultimately, businesses that deploy the right funding at optimal points in their business cycle can generate better turnover and, in turn, boost profitability. This will support growth, sustain and create jobs and contribute to increased GDP for the South African economy. And that, at the end of the day, benefits everyone. **BBQ**

Itumeleng Merafe

About the writer

Itumeleng Merafe, Head of Sales at Investec For Business, started his career as a retail treasury pricing consultant at Investec, selling cash investment products (fixed deposits, notice accounts and money market linked account) to individuals and small corporates. In 2009 he was appointed to lead a team of cash investment consultants who's primary responsibility was to retain and grow the retail deposits client base. He joined the Treasury Structuring team in 2011 as a consultant and was appointed as head of the team in 2015. Itumeleng holds a BCom degree in Economics and investment management Finance Executive Development Programme (cum laude) and ACI dealing certificate Masters in the management of finance and investments (cum laude). He is passionate about South Africa, literature, youth development and education.

In a league of its own

The new BMW 128ti: the brand's first-ever front-wheel-drive performance car ticks all the boxes

Stunning aggressive good looks are the hallmark of this new BMW 128ti launched in South Africa in March. The well-known kidney shaped grille is much larger and joined together, giving the car its aggressive appearance which has become the hallmark of all BMW's over the years. Although totally different to its predecessors it still has the iconic 'don't mess with me' look which the world has become accustomed to.

Fitted with specially tuned lowered M Sport suspension, a Torsen Limited-slip

differential, a bespoke steering application and exclusive front wheel drive, this sports model is designed for sheer driving pleasure.

The 18-inch Y-spoke light-alloy wheels are reserved exclusively for the BMW 128ti. Exclusive features on the inside and outside of the BMW 128ti give the car its distinctive appearance. A 'ti' badge ahead of the rear wheels in

a sporting red colour, gives the car a unique look that turns heads.

Standard specifications include extended Shadowline trim with black

Fast facts

- The BMW 128ti comes with a 265hp 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine. This power is sent to the front wheels through the same eight-speed automatic gearbox as the MINI Clubman JCW.
- Thanks to its simpler front-wheel-drive layout, the new 128ti is around 80kg lighter than the four-wheel drive M135i.
- The new 128ti accelerates from zero to 60mph in 6.1 seconds. That's 0.2 seconds faster than the new VW Golf GTI, which completes the same sprint in 6.3 seconds, but 1.3 seconds slower than the four-wheel-drive BMW M135i.

BMW 128ti specs

- Engine power in kW at 1/min: 180 /5,000-6,500
- Max. torque in Nm at 1/min: 380/1,500-4,400
- Acceleration 0-100 km/h in s: 6,3
- Fuel consumption, combined in l/100 km: 6.8



BMW kidney grille and black mirror caps, while the optional BMW Individual Shadowline headlights create a darker appearance, helped by the absence of various chrome trim elements.

The interior also contains a host of red accents, including a large race red surface in the backrests of the standard sport seats, the embroidered 'ti' badge in the central armrest and contrast stitching in the other armrests, door panels and instrument panels.

The steering wheel rim and airbag cover in the M Sport steering wheel also feature red stitching. When settling into the leather driver's seat one feels that this car needs to be driven. The firmer anti-roll bars taken

from the BMW M135i xDrive, as well as the stiffer springs and shock absorbers, provide excellent driving dynamics, whilst the two-litre motor with BMW Twin Power Turbo technology develops 180KW from 5000-6500 rpm and peak torque of 380 Nm from 1500-4500 rpm.

The eight-speed Steptronic Sport transmission accelerates the car to 100km in 6.3 seconds. Whether driving around the city or on the open road this car will not disappoint. The driving experience is amazing.

Once again BMW has introduced a car in a league of its own. Priced from R687 418, including VAT. **BBQ**

John Elford

The Black Consciousness Reader

The Black Consciousness Reader has hit the shelves. In this issue we publish Masego Panyane's interview with youth activist Zulaikha Patel.

Zulaikha Patel was recognised around the world for fighting discriminatory policies that still haunt many democratic, 'free', institutions. Now matriculated, the 18-year-old activist is more committed to black liberation than ever, telling Masego Panyane in an interview in the new edition of The Black Consciousness Reader that it is an ideology that can be used to tackle major challenges facing young people today.

Masego Panyane: It's been five years since you led schoolgirls in a demonstration against the racist hair policy at your school, Pretoria Girls High. You were 13 years old then with a proud afro, and showed a black power that echoed the might of the 1970s. Where are you now in your head?

Zulaikha Patel: Where I am currently in terms of issues of identity and decolonisation, I feel like the fire is burning even more, given the issues that we are facing currently as black people in South Africa. Also given what I have been through over the last few years, I have seen these issues intensify, but I have also seen the response I get for my resistance, which has been vicious victimisation and targeting. It has made the fire in me burn even more.

Was the protest that happened at your school in 2016 resolved?

It wasn't. The first problem is that we seem to have a problem holding a white minority

to account for their actions towards black people, and for the actions of their forefathers that they continue to benefit from. There was no accountability. As my academic career at the school drew to an end, as my matric year came to an end last year (2020), I was the only remaining member of that original protesting group. Every other member of the movement had graduated high school because I was the youngest one



We cannot have our futures dictated by those who won't be part of them

at the time. And four years down the line, I had not received a single apology from the school authorities. They were not held accountable for their actions, and what it became defined as, was that Karen (a popular nickname for a racist white woman) did not know what she did wrong, and I was the one that had to be in the position to educate Karen in what she was doing; that it was wrong.

The second problem was that white-owned media houses hijacked the narrative from those that started the movement. When we came out guns blazing, we said

this is an issue of addressing identity in this country, and, more than anything, the race politics within the space of education. This wasn't merely a hair issue. We did not want the issue to be watered down because we were addressing the fact that the most fundamental part of society, being basic education, remained heavily colonised and heavily attached to the legacy of apartheid. No-one heard us. As we know and understand, the government of South Africa continues to fail black people – in particular, young black people. They don't hear us out. Young black people have never been given a chance to speak for themselves. As I look back, I think I now understand why it is that the government is so hands-on with its agenda of excluding young black people and not listening to them. We as young people were never part of the negotiations. We don't know what they negotiated with FW de Klerk, and therefore all of their actions go with what they signed with De Klerk. They cannot go against what they bargained for with the oppressors at the time.

Power is not something that can be bargained for. Power is supposed to be taken. It cannot be that in a majority black country, we still don't set the policy, law and how our country will operate. And so what we saw was that the government took this issue, which snowballed globally into a massive movement, shoved it under the rug and moved on as if nothing happened. What then followed was that they became the accomplices of the institution



Masego Panyane (journalist)

when it came to targeting us. The targeting really intensified towards the end of 2016. It became so bad that we began to question things as 'Born Frees'. Are we really free? Is freedom really our reality if we are experiencing the same targeting which our forefathers experienced during apartheid?

Why was this intimidation necessary from the school authorities, when you were raising something that needed to be addressed?

I was part of something that was so massive. We resisted a system that has been around for centuries; that has been thriving for centuries. The system isn't broken. It is operating for those that built it, and it is operating for those it serves. What we essentially did was target that system and we pushed for its dismantling. When I, as

the oppressed, say I want justice and equity (not equality) directly to someone who is privileged and has been privileged their whole lives, they hear that and it sounds like a threat. You threaten their entire livelihood and existence because that is based on my disadvantage. Every single day, white people continue to get rich and thrive off the disadvantage of black people. They are not prepared to let go.

How has black consciousness served as a guide as you navigated those four years of high school?

You know, there were times when I really did crumble, and I just felt like the walls were caving in on me. To a certain extent, this then also becomes public humiliation because it raises the question to the people around you: 'Why are you always the one

that security is called for, that is escorted by armed security? What have you done?' When you are a young, black, outspoken woman who rejects the status quo and conformity, you become an outcast and people refuse to associate with you. So, you take on a lonely path. It became quite an extremely lonely path for me. But one thing that kept me going was black consciousness, and in particular the stories of women who built the Black Consciousness Movement. During my grade 10 year in 2018, which, I believe, was one of the hardest years for me, seeing as I faced so many issues at the time, I remember being told that "my presence incites violence", that I am "conspiring", and I was then removed off (school) property by security and a white man who's in authority at the school. That was humiliating.

If you are around people and they see you being escorted off by so many men who they see in authoritative positions, they start asking themselves, 'Are you actually a danger to society?' I held very close to me the story of mam' Ntsiki Biko (Steve Biko's widow), and over the years I grew very fond of her and I began to read about her more. Her story kept me going and it kept the fire burning in me; burning brighter than the fire that was burning around me. It navigated me through. Also the story of mam' Winnie (Madikizela-Mandela). Through the stories of these women, I was able to find parts of myself. They resonated so deeply with me. I idolised these women. I started understanding that my resistance will never be in vain. What we are doing now, is we are slowly but surely breaking down this machine of oppression.

There's still a major challenge to access to education for black children in South Africa. This is compounded by issues of youth drug abuse and youth unemployment. How do we use the ideology of black consciousness to confront these? Can this be done?

Definitely. Black consciousness is the only solution for us black people. Black consciousness allows us the opportunity to



Baldwin Ndaba (political journalist)

understand that as long as we're not mentally emancipated, there can never be true emancipation. That's what we're currently facing. A lot of these issues stem from the psychological enslavement of black people, and black consciousness addressed how (that mental slavery) results in these issues (being compounded).

If you address issues of race, you have to also address issues of class, and you can't leave out issues of gender. Oppression is multi-layered. That's why as a young black woman I find a home in the ideology of black consciousness.

It is something I embody as an everyday way of life and as an identity. I don't see myself identifying with anything outside of black consciousness.

What is your message to other young black women?

No one will hand power to us. So it's up to us to take that power and use every day of our lives to demand that power. We need to continue the struggle. We have to. We need to stand together because we are the majority and there is power in numbers. If we can stand together, we can overthrow this system of oppression.

As the majority, particularly being young, black and female, we cannot have our futures dictated to us by a male minority that every day perpetuates sexism and toxic masculinity, and does not stand against

gender-based violence in this country. We cannot have our futures dictated by them, and as young people, we cannot have our futures dictated by those who won't be part of them. **BBQ**

** This piece is published in BBQ as originally published by Jacana, but it has been slightly adapted to suit the style of this magazine.*



Paballo Thekiso (award-winning photographer)



Rabbie Serumula (digital journalist and poet)

The Black Consciousness Reader is now in stores in a fully revised and updated second edition. It was first published by Jacana in 2017, the year of the 40th anniversary of Steve Biko's murder, and is an essential collection of history, interviews and opinions about BC philosophy and practice. Written and compiled by political journalist Baldwin Ndaba, culture writer Therese Owen, journalist Masego Panyane, digital journalist and poet Rabbie Serumula and author and political analyst Janet Smith, the book is complemented by videography and photographs by award-winning photographer Paballo Thekiso.

The farce about ace

Turning things around in tough times

I have a particular mate from England, who has the most wicked sense of humour, in a dry, witty, typically English way. He has been calling me for a few weeks to go out for our regular drinks session, though he complains each time we meet these days since I became a teetotaler, because he figures drinking zero percent beer is a waste of good malt and a decent beer belly potentially.

In frustration at my constant unavailability over the past few weeks and as is his wont, with his magical sense of humour, he sent me this message, which is uber funny and also profoundly germane in light of recent events affecting the country: "Sorry pal, but you are suspended? Or am I suspended? Did you suspend me, or did I suspend you? Let me know, don't keep me in suspense."

Brilliant play on words and lank funny, but the message of his frustration was delivered and I finally agreed to do drinks with him at our new local pub. Oh, here's another thing about my mate: we constantly have to shift locals, because he can never last two months at one spot before getting barred. He is the type of fellow who takes the business of "the raising of the wrist", to quote Bruce's Philosopher's song sung by Monty Python, quite seriously. In his own words, "Mugsy, one must never eat on an empty stomach."

Anyway, over a couple of pints at our new local, we ran into a lady in her fifties who runs a black female-owned business that specialises in translation services for radio, TV and print ads, as well as voice over services, among other communications and marketing services. For a nominal fee of a couple of free pints, she told us the story of how Covid-19 has been excellent for her business, as she does translation into indigenous languages for TV, radio and print and with all the messaging around



Journalist Mugabe Ratshikuni is the Director of Content Development and Speech Writing for the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements. He is an activist with a passion for social justice and transformation. He writes for BBQ in his personal capacity.

Covid-19 over the past year or so of the lockdown, business has been booming and she has found herself even having to employ extra language specialists to beef up her team, as demand has been so high for their services.

She proceeded to remind us of a popular misquote from Nelson Mandela, about talking to people in their own languages and how this has been her best weapon in growing her business during this period: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."

My English mate retorted: "You see Mugsy, you lot have gotten everything arse about face, with all the farce about Ace, when you should be focussing on supporting and promoting legitimate entrepreneurs like this lady, who can help you turn the

economy around in a post Covid-19 world." I was laughing and crying at the same time, because, as a snobbish wordsmith myself, I appreciated the brilliant play on words, the not so subtle humour behind it, but also the naked truth that could easily be lost in the nonchalant humour.

Indeed, amidst the devastation of Covid-19 and the bloodbath for small businesses, there are good stories such as this lady's story, which gives one hope and provides a source of inspiration.

A story such as hers also shows the importance of carving a niche out for oneself, as a small business and not always looking to play in the usual spaces, competing with the usual suspects (not in the famous Kevin Spacey featuring movie manner of course). **BBQ**

Mugabe Ratshikuni



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