

Vuk'uzenzele

Produced by: Government Communication & Information System (GCIS)

August 2022 Edition 2

Community organisations help women break free of abuse

Gabisile Ngcobo

After years of fearing for her life, a Free State woman escaped her abusive partner – thanks to the support she received from a community organisation.

"He was verbally abusive and said he would kill me," Dieketseng Manyokho recalls.

The 32-year-old mother from Thaba 'Nchu is one of many South African women who have endured gender-based violence (GBV) at the hands of the men they love.

Even though she knew she deserved better, Manyokho could not leave her boyfriend because she was jobless and financially dependent on him. "I had to tolerate all the pain and him crushing my spirit so that I could put food on the table."

With no one to turn to, she

stayed in the destructive relationship.

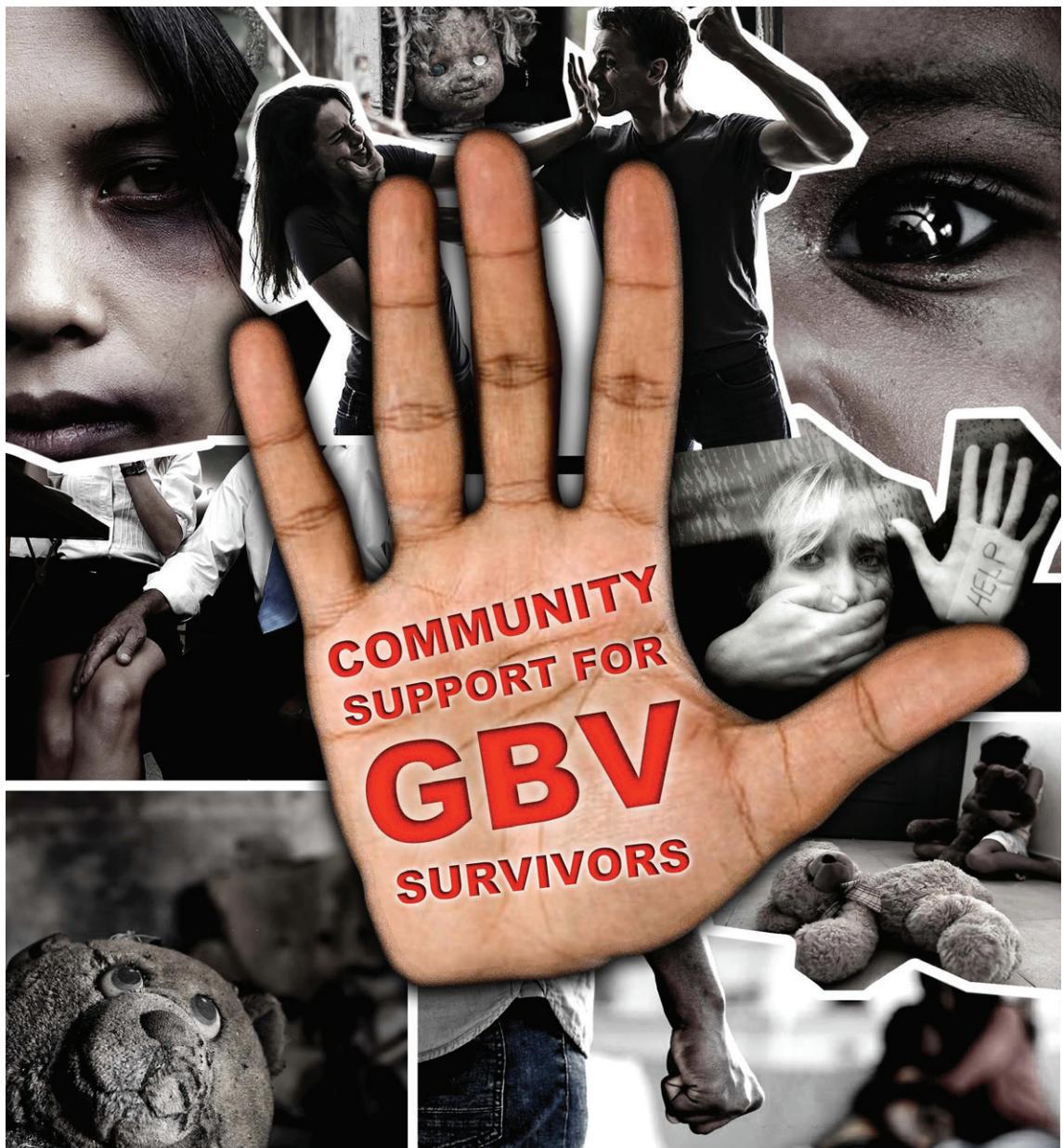
"I often wondered what would become of me because he always said he was going to kill me and that he had people watching my every move," she says.

In 2020, desperate to break free, she finally reached out to a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Batho Ba Lerato Advice Centre, for help.

"The centre was able to arrange counselling for me, help me get a protection order and apply for child maintenance. They taught me how to be a woman who can stand on her own feet."

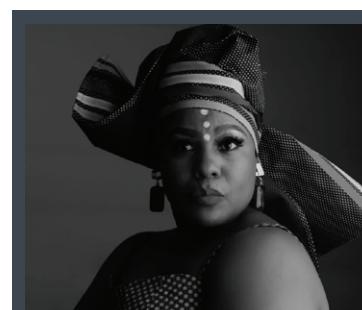
Manyokho believes the centre gave her a new lease on life and she is starting to feel like herself again after enduring three years of abuse.

Cont. in page 2



Bursary opportunities for young people

Page 6



From victim to GBV prevention advocate

Page 9



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From page 1

She already has a job lined up for her at the organisation after she finishes a security guard course that they are paying for.

"My life has changed. I no longer cry myself to sleep or worry about his threats. I feel empowered and proud to be a survivor of abuse."

Manyokho now uses her voice to encourage other women to speak up and seek help.

Funding for GBVF organisations

Batho Ba Lerato Advice Centre Programme Manager Lerato Moeng says NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) cannot survive without funding.

Her organisation received a R300 000 grant from the almost R100 million allocated from the Criminal

Assets Recovery Account (CARA) fund to organisations that help victims of GBV and other crimes.

Batho Ba Lerato, which opened its doors in 2000, provides counselling and legal advice for GBV survivors and support groups for caregivers of people with mental and physical disabilities. The centre also provides emergency shelter for women and children and caters for child-headed households; people affected by HIV and Aids; and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual community.

According to Moeng, women often do not know where to go when their partners abuse them, while many withdraw cases at police stations because they depend on the men financially.

She says that is why Batho Ba Lerato prioritises GBV cases, even though the lack of funding is a challenge.

Moeng says that sometimes there are no funds to help the women who have received care and counselling get the skills and help they need to provide for themselves and their children.

The R300 000 was a blessing, she says. "Before that funding, we couldn't even go out to communities or train and talk to men and women about GBV issues," she says, adding that more people are visiting their centre after outreach workshops were held in the community.

They are now collaborating with the University of Free State's Law Clinic, which is helping finalise 25 divorce cases free of charge.

She says she cannot wait

to see the organisation grow to serve more people in the Thaba 'Nchu community. "We need to be able to sustain ourselves and train more survivors for them to stand on their own."

Mentoring and funding for NGOs

The Department of Social Development allocated R90 million in funding to CSOs that were selected to implement GBV and femicide programmes in communities across all provinces in 2021. A further R5 million was allocated for a mentorship programme for emerging CSOs.

The National Development Agency (NDA) was appointed to implement the programme.

By April 2022, the NDA has paid around R67 million to CSOs; 296 received just over R40 million in the

first round of payments, and nearly R27 million was paid to 189 organisations in the second round. Second-round payments are only made once the CSOs have met certain conditions to ensure they properly carry out GBV services.

For more information about the NDA, call **011 018 5500** or visit www.nda.org.za.

- If you are a victim of abuse, call the GBV command centre at **0800 428 428** or send (PLEASE CALL ME) to ***120* 7867#**
- If you need assistance from Batho Ba Lerato, call **073 406 8284**.

Halala Banyana Banyana



■ President Cyril Ramaphosa with the Banyana Banyana team Captain Refiloe Jane who lead the team to victory in Morocco.



■ President Cyril Ramaphosa with the Banyana Banyana team at the Union Buildings where government contributed R5,8 million to the team following their victory at the 2022 WAFCON finals that took place at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Morocco.



government
communications

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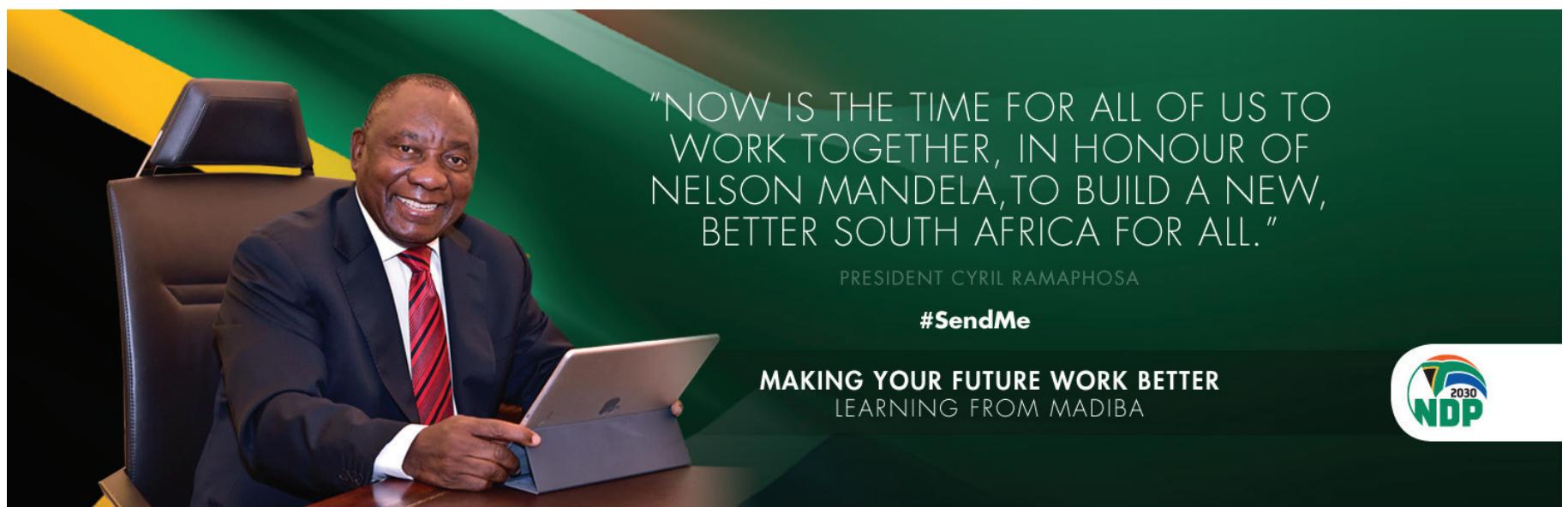
is published by Government Communications (GCIS)

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Printed by:
RISING SUN PRINTERS
For laboratory service

Distributed by:

ON THE DOT



We must act now and together to end violence against women

It has been a tragic start to Women's Month.

We are once more confronted with the dark and ugly side of our society.

Last month, a group of men and women shooting a music video at a disused mine near Krugersdorp were attacked by armed assailants who gang raped eight of the women.

These horrible acts of brutality are an affront to the right of women and girls to live and work in freedom and safety.

While they pursue the suspects in this crime, the South African Police Service must also pay immediate attention to the concerns of the community of West Village, where the incident occurred, who say they are under siege from armed gangs in the area.

Rapists have no place in our society. We call upon communities to work with the police to ensure that these criminals are apprehended and prosecuted. Our communities must not shelter criminals in their midst.

There is always someone in our communities who knows something, who heard something or who even witnessed something. The problem is many of us choose to keep quiet because the perpetrator is a friend, a partner or a colleague. Or we are



just afraid and fear victimisation. It is important to remember that all tip-offs received by the SAPS Crime Stop contact centre are treated confidentiality.

I call on anyone who has information about this crime to report it to the authorities so the perpetrators can be arrested.

Given the size of this problem in our country, it is no longer possible to avoid responsibility for reporting sex crimes.

According to a new legal provision that has come into effect, in addition to our moral obligation, we all now have a legal duty to report to authorities

when we have knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion that a sexual offence has been committed against a vulnerable person. It is now a crime not to report such a sexual offence.

This is part of one of three laws that I signed earlier this year that strengthen the fight against gender-based violence and offer greater support and protection to survivors.

Among other things, the laws expand the scope of the National Register of Sex Offenders, strengthen the vetting process, and introduce additional cate-

gories of sex offences.

Processes are underway to put these laws into effect. These include training of prosecutors and magistrates, issuing directives on bail to all SAPS officials, and revising charge sheets to include the newly created offences.

We are determined that all these building blocks are in place so that our law enforcement authorities and courts can investigate and prosecute gender-based violence more effectively.

Gender-based violence and femicide is a deep-rooted societal problem.

It is not enough for perpetrators to be apprehended, tried, convicted and sentenced.

We must work together to address the drivers of gender-based violence in our communities, including patriarchal attitudes and practices.

Eradicating gender-based violence demands that we act together as a people.

This means promoting positive attitudes around gender equality in our communities, at our places of worship and in our own homes. As men, we should demonstrate our intolerance to sexism, patriarchy and gender-based violence in how we treat our partners, colleagues, mothers, sisters and daughters.

Whether as individuals, organisations, businesses or employers, we must be part of the national effort in every way we can, whether volunteering at a shelter, supporting community policing forums or joining awareness campaigns in our schools.

Just as gender-based violence is all of society's problem, it is all of society's responsibility to bring it to a decisive end.

We have made a start, but as the terrible crimes in Krugersdorp remind us, we need to do much more and we need to act with greater urgency and purpose. **V**

Become a GirlBoss and the CEO of your life

Allison Cooper

GirlBoss SA is offering females between the ages of 16 and 25 an opportunity to train, be mentored and go through practical job-shadowing to be fully equipped to start their own network and pop-up business.

Launched in 2018, GirlBoss is part of the AfroBotanics Group, which produces various beauty and eco-friendly hygiene products.

The Group was invited by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) to showcase its brands at the first Black Industrialists and Exporters Conference that was held at the Sandton Convention Centre recently.

In his opening remarks, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the conference was held to recognise and celebrate the successes of the Black Industrialists Programme, which aims to secure greater diversity in ownership and control in the economy and promote emerging enterprises to drive inclusive industrialisation.

"Over the past six years, the dtic, Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), National Empowerment Fund and other agencies have supported approximately 900 black industrialists. Over the past 11 years, black enterprises have been supported to the value of R55 billion," he added.

Estimates by the IDC suggest that the programme's socio-economic returns have been even more far-reaching, including supporting and creating 55 000 jobs and adding over R160 billion to South Africa's gross domestic product, said President Ramaphosa, who visited the AfroBotanics stand and promised to visit its factory in future.



■ President Cyril Ramaphosa with Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel at the Black Industrialists and Exporters Conference.

"I have always understood that women's roles are important and that being a girl child does not mean you are less than anyone."



■ AfroBotanics COO Kweku Ntim with CEO Ntombenhlile Khathwane.

"We were humbled to share our vision with President Ramaphosa for a collaborative South Africa wherein everyone has equal access to opportunities, and we are keen on being part of the process of South Africa moving from an emerging market to a newly industrialised one. To do this, we need to have an economy where everyone is able to actively participate," says GirlBoss's Managing Director Syndi Anikwa Khathwane.

Empowering girls
GirlBoss South Africa is a female-centric empowerment platform that produces hair and body care products using natural ingredients that are locally and regionally sourced.

"Our core mission is to



provide information to girls that will empower the way they see themselves and the world around them," says Khathwane.

"Our inspiration came from the fact that we were raised by amazing women. My sister Ntombenhlile Khathwane, the founder and CEO of AfroBotanics, and I have always understood that women's roles are important and that being a girl child does not mean you are less than anyone else," she adds.

GirlBoss is constantly looking for ways to tap into the community to ensure empowerment, and conducts community work through various partnerships, including with the Sunrise Academy.

It also launched the Sebenza Girl Campaign in July. "The campaign heeds the President's call to goal-set through youth unemployment

and aims to assist GirlBosses to increase employment equity while actively participating in boosting the economy," Khathwane explains.

"They will achieve this through a self-awareness process, followed by strategic workshops to arm them with tools needed to goal-set through unemployment by accessing a network and pop-up business opportunities from GirlBoss and other stakeholders," she adds.

Become a GirlBoss

Young women can become part of the GirlBoss community by formalising themselves into groups of 30 to 50 participants and then contacting their closest Thusong Service Centre, which GirlBoss works with.

"If a group shows resilience and has a free venue for us to conduct our ignition camps from, we will be there," Khathwane explains.

Women who are unable to form a group can reach out to GirlBoss on social media (@girlbosssa) or send an email to info@girlboss.co.za. "We will ensure they get to be part of a group in their vicinity," says Khathwane.

Since 2018, over 1 200 women have been assisted through GirlBoss Summits, over 800 have taken part in the GirlBoss and Sunrise Academy Ignition Camps, and over 50 000 have been reached via social media, says Khathwane.

GirlBoss's products are available at Dischem and Pick n Pay.

For more information about GirlBoss, email info@girlboss.co.za and connect on social media @girlbosssa.



Making farming fashionable

Kgaogelo Letsebe

The Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is on a mission to make agriculture fashionable. The department recently hosted the Youth in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (YAFF) Awards that attracted about 200 young farmers from the region.

The YAFF Awards was introduced by the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to groom 2 500 youth-owned enterprises countrywide every year.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Free State MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Thembeni Nxangisa said this was a turning point for youngsters to take farming seriously and to contribute enormously to the food security of the country.

"The Provincial Department of Agriculture and



Tebello Yvonne Mokoena of Masela Lefika Farming in the Free State.

Rural Development has also made great strides in attracting young people to take advantage of career opportunities within the sector. This will also shift the mindsets of young people from being job seekers to creating a platform for them to become creators of employment," said Nxangisa.

Inspired youth

Tebello Yvonne Mokoena (27) of Masela Lefika Farming in Fouriesburg, Mashaeng, is one such exemplary young farmer. Mokoena won R50 000 for her cooperative as one of the recipients of the MEC Special Award and R10 000 as a second runner-up for best sub-

sistance farmer.

Mokoena and her three male partners started farming vegetables in a backyard in 2019. "In 2020, we were allowed to use four hectares of municipal land. We expanded our organic farming crop, which includes cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, beetroot, green beans,

pumpkin, spinach, green peppers and chillies."

She says the YAFF programme helped Masela Lefika Farming with knowledge and working tools. "The department also gave us a R2 500 voucher in 2021 and a R5 500 voucher earlier this year to help us acquire tools and products for the farm."

Mokoena says they aim to employ youth in their area in the coming seasons. "Through youth employment, we will be able to help build the economy and minimise food insecurity. We dream of supplying our herbs and canned food internationally."

For more information on youth opportunities, visit www.ard.fs.gov.za, call 051 861 8432 or email hodofficemanager@dard.gov.za.

Lebohang masters the poultry market

Owen Mgadi

While many women in poultry farming are struggling to access markets to supply their chickens, Lebohang Dhludhlu (32) has mastered network marketing for her business.

Having started as a part-time reseller of chickens, Dhludhlu, from Gert Sibande in Mpumalanga, decided to start her broiler chicken farming in 2020.

Dhludhlu is a qualified electrical engineer and runs her poultry business on the side. She has managed to create job opportunities for 64 women who are reselling her processed chickens.

Reflecting on her journey, Dhludhlu says she used to buy chickens from a local farmer and process them



Lebohang Dhludhlu has built a strong market for the broiler chickens she produces on her farm. She advises other women in poultry to take marketing seriously to succeed in farming.

herself. She realised that there was a demand for chicken and decided to register her company, Nkanyezi Farming. As her customers grew, she had difficulties

with the supplier, which prompted her to pursue poultry farming.

"While I was selling, I was not getting a fair share as my supplier would determine

the price. I did not have enough space and expertise to grow my broilers. Having many customers motivated me because I knew if I grew my own chickens, it would be easy to sell them and open opportunities for others," she says.

She was offered a lifeline in 2020 when the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture released relief grants for farmers who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

She received R50 000 and was able to purchase 700 chicks and feed. Dhludhlu constructed her own broiler house on land she obtained from the local chief. She has more than 3 500 broilers, a staff of five people, as well as a marketing network of 64 women to whom she delivers her processed and packaged chickens.

"Our model is to identify resellers. Even if they do not have money to start, we give them stock and they pay later. The model empowers other people while growing the business. I receive orders way in advance and I cannot meet the demand," she explains.

She advises other women in poultry to take marketing seriously, especially on social media, which is cost effective.

"Treat your customers professionally. Word of mouth is a very powerful tool. There is no point in growing beautiful chickens without a market," Dhludhlu says.

For more information about Nkanyezi Farming, visit www.nkanyezfarming.co.za.

Bursary opportunities for young people

Kgaogelo Letsebe

Sonia Malinga (23) from Piet Retief in Mpumalanga says being a Shoprite Group bursary recipient has ensured a promising future for her.

Malinga received the bursary from the South African retailer in 2018. She applied for the bursary after finishing high school at Hoërskool Piet Retief.

"Growing up, I initially wanted to be a doctor, but later I started exploring other options. I read about supply chain and logistics management and was almost instantly attracted to it. I remember I used to sit and watch the trucks drive in and out of my hometown and wonder who was ensuring that



Sonia Malinga completed her BCom Honours degree in Logistics Management after securing a Shoprite Group bursary.

the quality and quantity of goods were correct and that they arrived at the correct delivery point. That's when I found my passion," says Malinga.

Malinga obtained a BCom Honours degree in Logistics Management at the University of Johan-

nesburg and started her career with Shoprite as a distribution centre trainee manager in February 2021. She was recently promoted to store replenishment analyst.

Being part of the Shoprite Group has broadened Malinga's knowledge of

the retail industry. "It has taught me even more about logistics management and enabled me to continuously develop my skills and advance in my career," she says.

How to apply

Applications for the Shoprite Group's all-inclusive bursary programme are open for the 2023 academic year. The bursary ranges from R45 000 to R70 000 per annum, based on the field of study and institution.

It includes tuition fees,

books, on-campus accommoda-

tions and work back agreements.

Basic entry needs include being a South African citizen, having completed matric/grade 12 and not being older than 27 years.

Bursaries are available in the following fields

of study and applicants should be in their particular year of study at the time of their application:

- Pharmacy (first, second, third and fourth year)
- Retail business management (first, second and third year)
- Accounting (second, third and fourth year)
- E-commerce: UI design (second and third year)
- Food sciences (second, third and fourth year)
- Information technology (second and third year)
- Logistics and supply chain (third and fourth year). 

Registered university students with a 65% aggregate or higher are encouraged to apply by visiting the bursaries page on www.Shoprite-holdings.co.za or emailing bursary@shoprite.co.za before 31 August.

Owen Mngadi

Successful entrepreneur Siyanda Mthethwa (36) has responded to the escalating fuel costs that are crippling small, rural businesses and households in Eshowe, KwaZulu-Natal, by launching an online grocery business.

Established in 2020, Kuloola, which is derived from the Zulu word Kulula ('it's easy'), delivers groceries to the doorsteps of rural homes and spaza shops in Eshowe.

Kuloola operates through WhatsApp, SMS, Please Call Me and online. Grocery orders are packed and delivered by local third-party delivery agents within 24 hours, at a fee of R40, which is up to three times less than what customers typically pay for transport.

According to Mthethwa,

Online grocery delivery service takes Eshowe by storm



Online grocery business Kuloola is growing in Eshowe.

Picture supplied by Siyanda Mthethwa.

villagers had to travel more than 40km to town. Rural spaza shop owners, including his grandmother, were hard hit by the rising fuel costs as they stock twice a week.

In 2019, he bought a bakkie and started operating. His customer base incre-

ased, which prompted him to formalise it and seek funding.

"I received private funding of R1 million, which helped me to get three delivery vans and a small warehouse where we operate our call centre in Eshowe. The call cen-

tre is a critical component of our business because people do not have internet access here and they do not have airtime in most cases. They can simply send a 'Please Call Me' and we will respond," he says.

Kuloola has since added seven vans to its fleet and now employs 22 permanent employees. Mthethwa provides delivery services to over 2 000 customers each month, the majority of whom are owners of spaza shops.

Young people with smartphones also have opportunities to work as ambassadors to recruit customers from their villages and earn commis-

sion. Mthethwa says he is earmarking the next town, Empangeni, to offer the same services.

He says he has partnered with supermarkets that prepare orders instead of using his warehouse.

"After the July 2021 looting and persistent fuel hikes, the demand for our services has increased. There is now a demand for other items like appliances that we need to take into account," he says.

Mthethwa's plan is to grow the business across the province as a solution to escalating fuel costs. He also plans to add long-distance services from the city to rural areas.

For more information about Kuloola, visit www.kuloola.com.

Furniture manufacturing vital in job creation

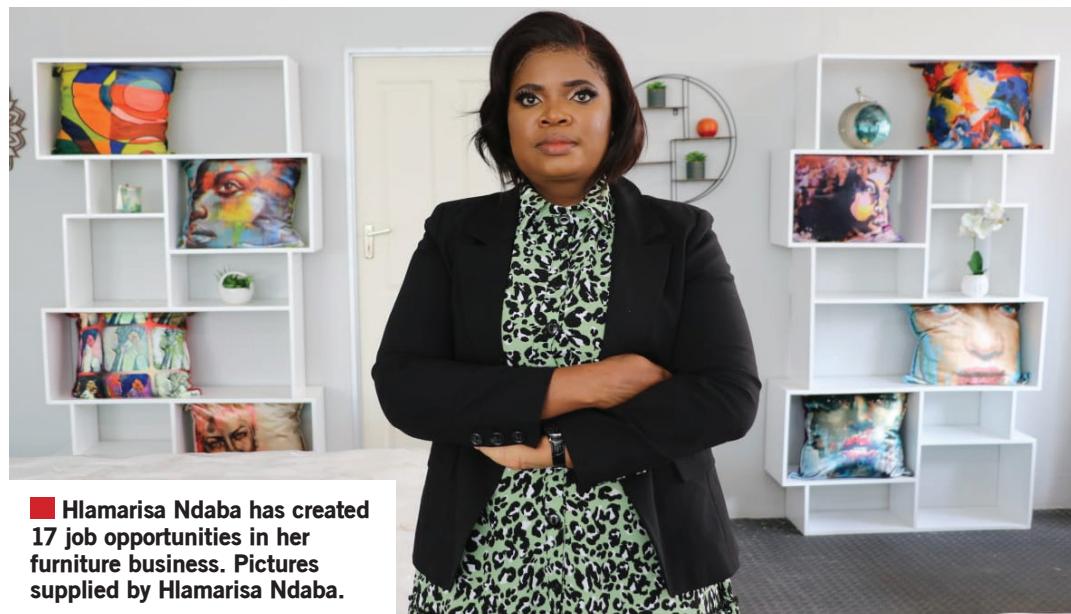
Owen Mngadi

ALimpopo lawyer has entered the custom-made furniture business to heed government's call for local production and buy local to create employment and maintain livelihoods after the COVID-19 lockdown.

Hlamarisa Ndaba (33) was among many who suffered during lockdown as her law firm could not provide an income. As a result, she used her savings to start her own furniture-manufacturing business, Precision Interiors, in Gauteng.

In September 2020, Ndaba started selling beds on the streets in various townships. Her business flourished after she began manufacturing custom furniture. Her range now includes beds, custom-made headboards, couches, tables and chairs.

She uses social media for



■ Hlamarisa Ndaba has created 17 job opportunities in her furniture business. Pictures supplied by Hlamarisa Ndaba.

advertising and recently launched a website with an e-commerce facility. E-commerce is the buying and selling of goods and services on the internet.

"With almost two years in business, Precision Interiors has created permanent employment for 17 people and has two shops in Johannesburg and Polokwane," she says.

The manufacturing sector

has been identified as key to respond to the surge of unemployment. Ndaba says her business has the potential to create even more employment as orders increase.

"Small businesses, particularly manufacturing, are the backbone of our economy... Small businesses are literally foot soldiers in eradicating poverty and creating employment," she

says.

At the Proudly SA Buy Local Summit and Expo held in March, President Cyril Ramaphosa said that the pandemic exposed the fragility of global supply chains and revealed the great capacity South Africa has for manufacturing.

He emphasised that local production is important as it encourages national pride in the goods, services and

products made on home soil.

"In the State of the Nation Address in February, I made a point of mentioning that my suit and shoes were made by local producers. I did so to draw attention to the quality of local goods and to the capability of local manufacturers, but also to encourage all South Africans to support the Proudly SA campaign. It supports the growth of small businesses and the expansion of larger firms. It creates employment and sustains livelihoods," the President said.

Ndaba attested to the President's sentiments.

"I wanted to take a risk with my savings to prove that it is a viable business and now I have something to show that will help to get funding to grow the business," she says.

To view and order Ndaba's furniture, visit <https://precision-interiors.co.za/>

Ursula Graaff

Anneeda Pekeur (33) from Montagu in the Western Cape is the proud mother of three-year-old Evan John. However, her journey to motherhood was not easy as Pekeur has stage 4 endometriosis, which makes it difficult to fall pregnant.

She had several surgeries and medical procedures and took various medications, but still did not get pregnant. Eventually, she and her husband ran out of money for the costly treatments and had to accept that Pekeur would not be able to carry their child. Instead of abandoning the idea of being a mom, Pekeur adopted little Evan.

"Endometriosis is found in 3-10% of women in their reproductive years, 30% of women with infertility and 30% of women with chronic

Sister support for endometriosis sufferers



■ Aneeda Pekeur championing awareness in endometriosis.

pelvic pain," says the national spokesperson for the Department of Health, Foster Mohale.

The disorder – which sees the tissues that line the inside of the uterus (womb) growing outside of the uterus – mostly affects ovaries or fallopian tubes.

Pekeur started Anneeda's Endo Outreach Project in 2015 because of how alone she felt when she was told she had endometriosis. She lost weight, had abdominal and joint pain, cramps, fatigue and heavy bleeding – and felt that no one understood what she was

going through. She wanted to help raise awareness about the condition and motivate other women to seek help and share their stories.

"They do not have to suffer alone and feel ashamed," she says.

In addition to her endometriosis support work, Pekeur wants to feed and uplift her community. At least once a month, she hands out care packages containing basic toiletries to those in need. Although she mostly funds this work herself, she says her family help when needed.

In the past three years, Pekeur has assisted over 75 women with care packages and knowledge on wom-

en's health and well-being.

Her message to women is to seek medical care and advice when they are worried about their health and to take care of themselves.

Common endometriosis symptoms:

- Painful periods
- Pain during intercourse
- Infertility
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Heavy bleeding during periods.

If you think you have endometriosis, visit your local clinic.

For more information about Anneeda's Endo Outreach Project, email saccoac@gmail.com or visit her personal Facebook page.

One person's waste is another person's meal ticket



Nomfundo Mkhaba uplifting her community through waste management.

Ursula Graaff

Nomfundo Mkhaba (35) from Umkomasia in KwaZulu-Natal co-founded Waste for Change in 2019 to encourage her community to adopt the three Rs: Reduce, Recycle and Reuse.

Through her organisation, Mkhaba wants to create a safe living environment by reducing the waste that ends up in rubbish dumps. She would like to see communities taking responsibility for the spaces they live in and keeping them clean.

Mkhaba started her recy-

cling journey after realising how many illegal dumpsites there were in her community. She decided to show people that waste can be used to make money.

Every Saturday, the organisation collects waste from illegal dumpsites in low-income communities and

separates things that can be recycled or reused, such as plastic and glass bottles, cans, paper and cardboard boxes.

Through this initiative, Mkhaba has been able to build and sustain relationships with the local municipality, community-based organisations, local schools and other stakeholders. She aims to get as many organisations and people as possible involved in her drive to educate the community about looking after their environment and to create training opportunities to show people how they can earn an income through waste.

The organisation currently has 30 litter pickers. Although it does not employ them permanently, they receive money from buy-back centres for the recyclable waste they collect.

Waste for Change has received support and 30

collection bags for recyclable plastic waste from the PET Recycling Company, a non-profit company that promotes plastics recycling and supports community organisations involved in recycling projects.

Mkhaba says Waste for Change has been able to assist 30 families with food parcels.

Her Women's Month message is: "Women for decades have worked the land, have nurtured nature and for that to continue to happen, we need solidarity among women."

To get hold of Nomfundo Mkhaba, email Waste for Change at wasteforchange@gmail.com or Nomfundo.Mkhaba@gmail.com

For more information on recycling, call the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment at **086 111 2468**, email sawic@environment.gov.za or visit www.dffe.gov.za or www.sawic.gov.za

Breastfeeding tonic helps new moms

Owen Mgadi

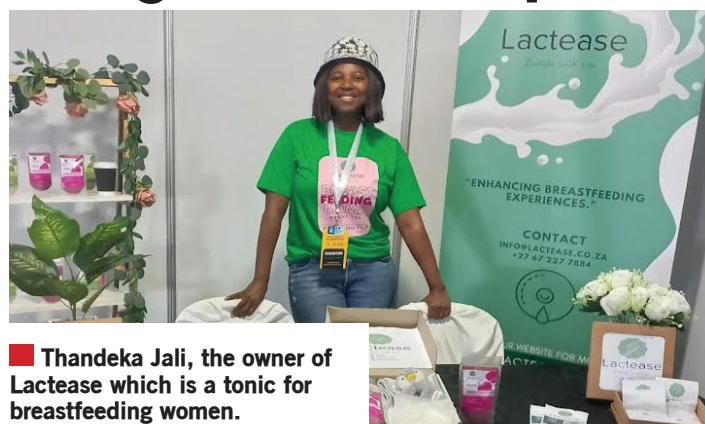
AKwaZulu-Natal mother has invented a tonic that enhances breast milk production.

Thandeka Jali is the owner of Lactease, which she founded in 2020 after extensive research to help women struggling to produce enough milk for breastfeeding.

"I had a background in infant nutrition after I worked for a non-government organisation dealing with early childhood development. I resigned in 2020 to focus on this business full time," Jali said.

Jali is optimistic that Lactease will help women who experience problems with breastfeeding.

She explains that after she gave birth in 2015, she struggled to produce



Thandeka Jali, the owner of Lactease which is a tonic for breastfeeding women.

enough breast milk and tried different methods with advice from fellow mothers, none of which were effective or sustainable.

She began looking for solutions and approached the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), which provides financial and non-financial support to innovators and inventors.

She experimented with mixtures of various herbs, searching for formulas online. The TIA provided

funding for trials and laboratory testing to ensure that her tonic was suitable for breastfeeding women to consume.

"While some herbs that were recommended by other mothers were effective, we could not get it right. We eventually got the right combination in 2020," Jali says.

Her tonic is organic, with no preservatives, and includes apple, blackthorn berry, black current and vitamin

C. Jali emphasises that this is not a treatment for any disease. The tonic is easy to use. It is mixed with water and drunk 10 to 15 minutes before breastfeeding.

Jali runs her business online and has clients across the country. Her aim is to recruit other women to work as distributors, especially in areas where online shopping is prevalent, to empower other women.

She says women have so much power, but need confidence.

"We need to work together; there are many businesses that we, as women, can do without support, but we need to support each other. Beauty industries and healthy products are mainly consumed by us. We need to realise that potential and start doing things differently," Jali says.

Did you know?

- Breastfeeding Awareness Week is celebrated in the first week of August to support and promote breastfeeding, which improves babies' health.
- Breast milk is easily digested by babies. It has a perfect mix of vitamins, protein and fat, giving babies the best nutrition to help them grow.
- You can visit your nearest healthcare centre to receive support and information about breastfeeding.

For more information about the TIA, visit www.tia.org.za.

For more information about Thandeka Jali and Lactease, visit www.lactease.co.za.

From victim to GBV prevention advocate

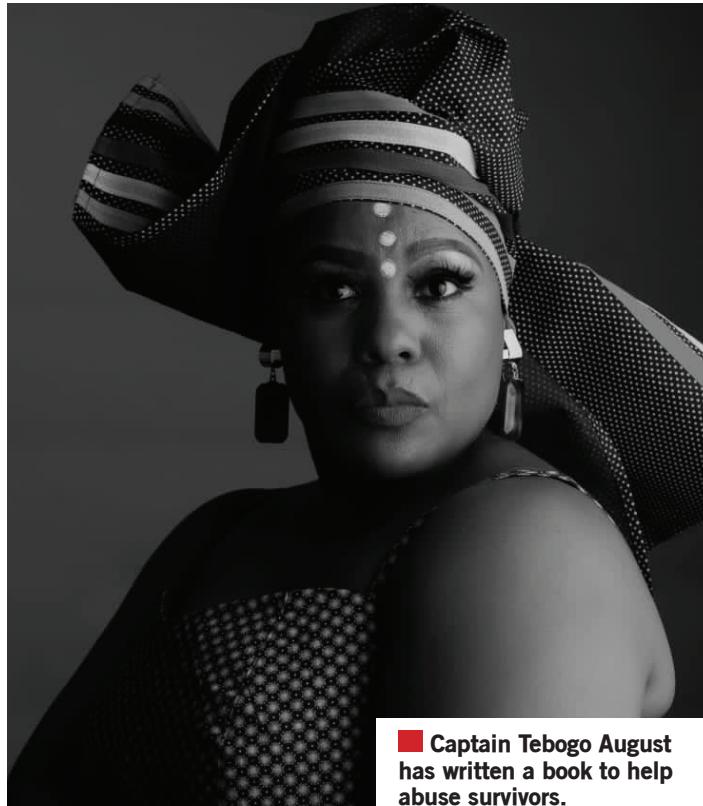
Kgaogelo Letsebe

Not only did Captain Tebogo August (37) from Lephengville in Hammanskraal survive being sexually abused at a young age, but she has gone on to write an inspirational book encouraging other survivors to take back their power.

August, who is a military journalist at the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), says being raped at the age of six by a close family member robbed her of her childhood.

She says the rape left her permanently scarred and marginalised.

"With my childhood came disillusionment, exhaustion, isolation and the loss of hope."



Captain Tebogo August has written a book to help abuse survivors.

She was fortunate enough to secure a bursary to study journalism at Bad Oldesloe University in Germany.

Following her studies, she secured her job with the SANDF and found solace in writing. This led to her

telling her story in a newly released book called *No Longer Wearing the Victim Badge*.

"In the book, I cover topics like bullying at school, step-parenting and abuse, teachers who knew best and daddy issues. It is a boundary-pushing book. I had to acknowledge that all of who I am is indeed who I am – I hurt, I battle with my inner rage and instead of asking 'Why me?', I forgave and reconciled so that I could free my heart from all that hate."

She believes that gender-based violence (GBV) needs to be urgently addressed in South Africa. "I have discovered on my travels that in a room of 10 women, six will have been raped. Yet despite the staggering commonality

of this pain, the conversation remains taboo, riddled with unwarranted pain and shame, and perpetuating a cycle of solitary mourning."

She says men need to be more vocal in fighting GBV because while women are most often the victims, 'the consequences impact all of us'. "We need to destigmatise discussions surrounding GBV."

Women who are being abused must speak out, she says, and survivors must think about going to therapy, which she says helped change her life. **V**

For more information about Captain Tebogo August, contact her at **072 610 5349**.

If you require help with GBV or suspect that someone is being abused, call the GBV hotline at **0800 428 428** or send a please call me to ***120* 7867#**

Motor mechanic revs up students' dreams

Owen Mngadi

A mechanic from Umlazi Township in Durban has been successful in getting his workshop accredited to offer in-service training to artisan students from technical vocational education and training (TVET) colleges to complete their studies.

Sanele Ndlovu (40), a qualified electrical engineer, was motivated to open his own workshop after experiencing difficulties in securing in-service training to complete his diploma at the Mangosuthu University of Technology. His workshop is called Saints Mechanic and Panelbeaters.

After three years of fruitlessly searching for in-service training, he was forced to relocate to Johannesburg where he secured training and was eventually employed as an electrical



Sanele Ndlovu has transformed his workshop, which he inherited from his father, into a certified workplace.

Picture supplied by Sanele Ndlovu.

engineer at various companies.

However, Ndlovu says the pain he endured while struggling to find in-service training haunted him throughout his career and he was determined to make a difference.

With a background in mechanics - as his father,

a taxi owner, operated an informal workshop in Umlazi - Ndlovu later switched to motor mechanics and transformed his father's workshop into an accredited workplace for artisans.

In 2019, he left his job and used his savings to renovate the workshop and purchase the tools and equipment

required to bring his workshop up to professional standards.

Ndlovu's workshop was recently accredited by The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA), one of the 21 sector education and training authorities established to promote skills development in South Africa.

The Department of Higher Education declared 2014 to 2024 'the decade of the artisan' to meet the demand for government's strategic infrastructure projects, which require around 30 000 new artisans each year.

Ndlovu's workshop will take four students per semester as it has four bays. The students will be paid a stipend funded by merSETA. He laments the fact that while there are many TVET colleges and universities of technology,

the platform for practical experience is still lacking, which discourages many young people from becoming artisans. "While I'm an electrical engineer, I have always worked in maintenance. I found it easy to deal with car mechanics. I wanted to come back and make a change in my township so that other students do not suffer the same pain."

Saints Mechanics and Panelbeaters offers basic vehicle maintenance, routine and major services, fault and breakdown diagnosis with the latest technology, engine overhaul and panel-beating among many services. **V**

Visit Merseta at <http://www.merseta.org.za> for funding and accreditation assistance.

Artist puts women's rights in the picture



Kganya Mogashoa is a young artist who highlights social ills affecting women through art.

More Matshediso

Women in male-dominated fields still experience unfair treatment and other forms of inequality, and this motivates Kganya Mogashoa (28) to fight for women's rights through her art.

As a full-time fine artist, Johannesburg-born Mogashoa says she is passionate about addressing the lack

of female representation in leadership positions and fighting the social ills that affect women.

"The art scene is still predominantly male; a lot of female artists don't get the recognition they deserve," she says.

However, she acknowledges that there has been progress in the art community recently, with more women artists getting invitations to important art

events.

In 2019, Mogashoa left her interior design job to follow her passion for fine art. She registered her company, Koranges Art, and currently works from a studio at Ellis House Art Building in Johannesburg.

In the first quarter of 2022, she was invited by the South African State Theatre to hold her first solo series 'Sheroes Rands', titled Women are the Architects of Society.

"The series highlighted various prestigious women in South Africa and around the world, including Winnie Mandela, Charlotte Maxeke and Lillian Ngoyi. I challenged the audience to think about the absence of women on our banknotes," she says.

She believes that these women deserve more than hospitals and streets being named after them.

"We drive past the street names every day, but we have little to no understanding of who they are, and the size of their achievements.

"My work invites the audience to think and evaluate what they believe and were taught about women," she says.

Her first big public art event was a live painting competition by Boundless City to revamp a park in Newtown during Women's Month in 2019. In the same month, she was appointed by the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History in Pretoria to live paint a portrait of Ellen Kuzwayo.

The Newtown Worker's Museum also selected one of her pieces as part of a project by Boundless City to revamp the Newtown Worker's Cottages. Recently, she was selected as one of the top 25 creatives across South Africa by Business and Arts South Africa from 2021 to date.

Her latest highlight was auctioning her artwork in April 2022 at the Stephan Welz & Company Emerging South African Artist Auction.

Although she did not have an opportunity to go to art school after completing her matric due to lack of funds, she graduated with a Diploma in Interior Design in 2016 and a BTech Honours Degree in Interior Design in 2017 from the University of Johannesburg. **V**

For more information about Kganya Mogashoa, visit her Facebook page @Koranges Art.

Shoemaker eager to walk a successful path

Ursula Graaff

Ike Lekgoro (36) learnt to work with his hands from a young age and used that knowledge to become a shoemaker who is well known for the quality of his work.

Lekgoro founded Tlotlego Handcrafts, which makes men's leather footwear, belts and wallets.

"I could not afford to go to university because of financial difficulties, so I decided to open a business," says Lekgoro.

He started small, selling his handcrafted products to in his community of Ga-Nchabeleng in Limpopo. Soon, his work drew the attention of the Fetakgomoga-Tubatse Municipality, which bought him a sewing machine.



Ike Lekgoro passionate about craft and working with his hands.

That was the start of bigger things to come.

When Lekgoro was 33, he received financial assistance from the Agency (NYDA).

"They helped me a lot, because, for a start-up business, it was not easy," he says.

Tlotlego Handcrafts has

two permanent staff and four part-time employees and mainly sells its goods through an online shop.

Lekgoro's passion for handcrafts stems from his father, who worked with his hands. "The [products] you create start from your mind and your heart, are

made with your hands. It's a good thing and that's why it's so important to me," says Lekgoro.

He says he hopes his success inspires the youth to open their own businesses and create employment, and would like to share his knowledge with others.

"The idea of business and the reality of it are different; it's difficult, but you need to be positive," says Lekgoro.

His dream is to own a factory so that he can produce more products at a time. **V**

For more information about Tlotlego Handcrafts visit www.tlotlegohand-craft.co.za

For more information on the NYDA, visit www.nyda.gov.za, call **087 158 6345 / 5738** or email info@nyda.gov.za. Applicants must be between 18 and 35 years old.