

DAILY MAVERICK

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Meet the YES Top 35 Under
35 - the trailblazers
redefining opportunity and
growth in South Africa

Economic growth starts with getting young people working

By **Ravi Naidoo**, CEO of the Youth Employment Service (YES)

South Africans too often talk about youth employment through the lens of charity. It is framed as part of corporate social investment and social risks, and is often placed in the 'nice to have' column. But youth employment is not a social responsibility. The development of young talent is in reality a critical determinant of South Africa's long-run economic growth.

Youth employment, properly understood, belongs in the same conversation as network infrastructure, trade and interest rates – the conversation about what drives GDP growth, productivity and fiscal sustainability.

To build long-term growth, South Africa needs to have its young people gaining structured work experience inside functioning businesses, because that is where the concrete knowledge and intellectual property transfer happens.

A graduate who spends a year inside a company does not just earn a wage. They learn how production is organised, how a supply chain moves and how a business runs. That knowledge might not reflect on a company's balance sheet, but it is every bit as real an asset as land or capital. It is the know-how South Africa will need as sectors from manufacturing to green energy try to reposition themselves for where the economy is going next.

This is also why sequencing is crucial. In an environment where there are far more applicants than opportunities, the most effective placements are the ones that put the most capable, most motivated young people through first. These are the young people most likely to start businesses, become suppliers and go on to pull others up behind them. Development must be sequenced deliberately, not necessarily distributed evenly.

Then there is the economics of the alternative. South Africa spends about R514-billion a year on education. This is among the highest shares of GDP anywhere, for the weakest

outcomes. As important as our spending on education and skills development is, without young people quickly moving on to their first jobs, the value of whatever they learned in the classroom quickly degrades.

A qualification that sits unused for a year or two depreciates, like a vehicle left parked and undriven. Fast, structured entry into work experience is what protects the return on all that spending, rather than requiring more of it.

It is even more important now, as AI reshapes exactly the kind of entry-level, white-collar work that young people have traditionally used to get a foot in the door. AI is beginning to cause entry-level job displacement, and this is more reason to get people into real workplace experience while that door is still open.

Turning youth employment into economic growth

We need to ensure that our approach to 'jobs programmes' reinforces our approach to achieving faster economic growth. After all, between 2003 and 2007, when the economy grew at about 4.5% a year, unemployment fell from 31% to 22% – proof, if any was needed, that the fastest route to jobs is economic growth itself.

There are immediate ways to simultaneously boost youth jobs and economic growth, all of which require little to no new government spending at all.

A specific labour dispensation for under-25s, as countries like Spain and Chile have introduced, would lower the risk of a first hire without touching existing workers' protections. And the roughly R25-billion spent annually through Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas), which currently produce a fraction of the jobs they should, could instead fund guaranteed placements for every Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduate, matched one-for-one with private sector employers.

This has the potential to double youth work placements without a single new rand from the fiscus.

A lower tax rate for smaller firms that employ young people would make it materially easier for them to hire. After all, the National Development Plan (NDP) concluded that small businesses would have to be the ones to create 90% of all new jobs. Larger companies are expected to automate their existing human labour, but we should not simply let them do so just because the technology enables it.

South Africa must also find ways to protect entry-level jobs from AI displacement. Although there is still an argument that we will see AI augmentation and not displacement, it is undeniable that entry-level jobs such as customer service, software

development and administration are already being displaced. One option is to protect certain roles, as South Africa did by outlawing self-service in petrol stations, thereby saving 140,000 jobs.

The final shift must happen in the boardroom. Every company operates under a social licence, and in a country with South Africa's youth unemployment numbers, that licence must include a credible response to the young people not yet in the room.

South Africa has led this kind of thinking before. It produced the world's earliest socially responsible investment funds and gave it the King Code on corporate governance. Structural youth unemployment is the next problem in that same tradition. But, this is a problem our country can solve. We have both the need and the credibility to lead again. **DM**





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Anele Sibamba builds a procurement career from a first break and creates opportunities for others

Anele Sibamba grew up in Carolina, Mpumalanga, with her parents, sisters and older brother. Both her parents were educators, and school was taken seriously at home, along with church, sport and the ordinary freedom of childhood. She competed in cross-country for Mpumalanga in primary school and later played soccer in high school.

Her final year at the University of Johannesburg brought one of the hardest periods of her life, when her father died two weeks before her June examinations. She was grieving, but still had to finish her qualification. She passed and went on to study towards an Advanced Diploma in Transport Management, where she was later recognised as a top academic achiever.

Her interest in supply chain management began with transport management, but university showed her how sourcing, procurement, inventory and logistics fit together, broadening the field she wanted to understand.

Even with the qualifications, work did not come immediately. Sibamba had the theory but not the experience employers wanted. Her first real opening came through YES at Barron Trading, where she joined the logistics department as an After-Sales Clerk Intern. She learned how the warehouse worked, used an enterprise resource planning system and saw how different parts



ANELE SIBAMBA

of a business connect. "If that door had not opened, I honestly don't know where I would be today," she says.

She later joined McDonald's SA in supply chain management, where she managed five key suppliers supporting more than 400 restaurants. From there, she moved into group procurement at Discovery Limited.

Today, Sibamba works as a Commodity Buyer. Her days can include sourcing work,

supplier engagements, negotiations, spend analysis, benchmarking and more. She says one of her proudest achievements is how quickly she moved from learning the basics as an intern to being trusted with a group-level commodity portfolio.

Her academic development has continued alongside her career. She has completed a BCom Honours in Supply Chain Management through MANCOSA and taken part in programmes including McKinsey Forward, Amazon Web Services South Africa and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport South Africa Mentorship Masterclass.

Sibamba is also deliberate about sharing what she has learned. She speaks to students and young people about careers, mentorship and routes into supply chain and procurement management that are not always visible from school or university.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has made her look back at her first opportunity differently. She says she never treated the programme as temporary work. "I took one YES and transformed it into a career, a platform and a responsibility to lift others."

For Sibamba, that responsibility is personal. She wants young people from small towns to know that an internship can be more than a line on a CV, especially when it gives them the first chance to prove what they can do. **DM**

Aphiwokuhle Moyo turns an unexpected academic detour into a flourishing career in photography

Aphiwokuhle Moyo grew up in Port Shepstone on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast, close to the sea and in schools where music and performing arts were part of everyday life. Her parents supported the activities she wanted to try, although she did not yet imagine art becoming her future.

Long before she thought of photography as a career, Moyo was already taking pictures. At her grandmother's house, she would use her phone to photograph sunsets and the landscape around her. When she later applied to study photography at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), she went back to those same images and used them as references for her portfolio.

The route there was not straightforward. In matric, she received conditional offers to study Operations Management and Human Resources Management at the DUT, but her final results did not meet the entry requirements. She spent the following year trying to work out what to do next. She applied to the DUT again and put photography down as one of her options. She started the course in 2018 and completed her Diploma in Photography in 2020.

Her lecturers helped her understand the technical side of photography and develop the skills to create the images she wanted.

Moyo founded Behindthelens in 2018 while still studying. What began with photogra-



APHIWOKUHLÉ MOYO

phy has since expanded into videography, content creation, albums, canvases and creative workshops for young people. She says much of the growth came from taking on work, learning what clients needed and reinvesting in the business.

Her YES experience came later, through a placement sponsored by JCDecaux South Africa and hosted by the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She

worked as an intern and Emerging Arts Manager and completed the programme in 2023.

In 2026, she opened her own photography studio. A typical day now can include a shoot, editing, creating content, replying to clients and handling quotations, invoices and receipts.

Additionally, she is building the workshop side of Behindthelens. Interest has come from people beyond Port Shepstone, including other parts of KwaZulu-Natal and other provinces, and she wants to expand the training while creating paid opportunities for participants where possible.

Her next ambitions include keeping the existing business sustainable and eventually opening branches in Durban and Gauteng, where she already sees demand from clients.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist is especially meaningful for Moyo, because so much of her career grew from a route she had not planned. Missing out on her first university choices once felt like failure, but photography gave that year a different meaning. She wants young people from smaller towns to see that creative work can become a serious business, even when the first plan falls away. **DM**

Atang Ramabele turns invasive wattle into a growing rural business

Atang Ramabele's childhood was spent between Matatiele, Eastern Cape, and several parts of Johannesburg, Gauteng. His parents' work was not always stable, so the family moved often.

By the time he reached high school, he had changed schools more than once and learned to adjust to new places. He spent time in Soweto and central Johannesburg before returning to Matatiele for part of high school.

After matric, Ramabele studied IT Essentials and Cisco networking at Central Johannesburg TVET College while working part-time as a stock counter. He later completed Microsoft server training, but when he returned to Matatiele in 2018, his career took an unexpected turn.

In 2019, an internship with Environmental and Rural Solutions exposed him to landscape restoration and the clearing of invasive black and silver wattle. He learned how the unwanted biomass could be turned into charcoal, and saw first-hand what dense wattle growth was doing to grazing land and water resources around rural Matatiele. During the programme, he also helped to supervise 50 people working across five teams.

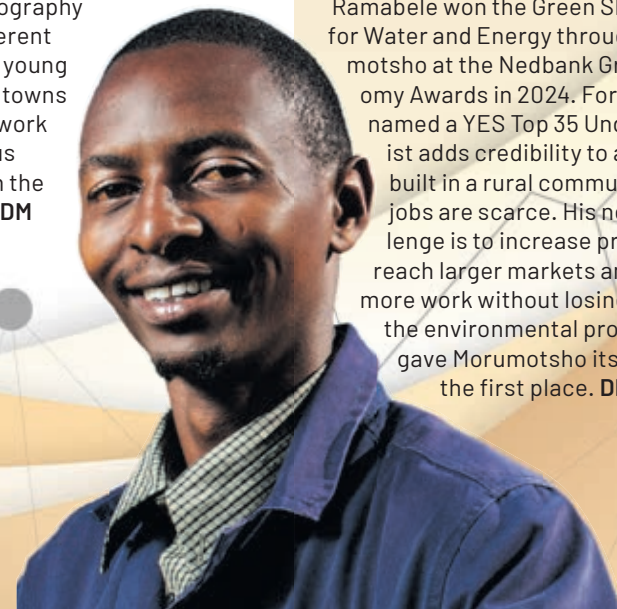
That experience helped Ramabele to start Morumotsho Charcoal Production in 2020. The business clears invasive wattle and turns it into green artisanal charcoal. At the same time, he studied through Unisa and balanced the demands of the business with his responsibilities as a family breadwinner.

In 2021, Ramabele joined the YES programme through Conservation South Africa. Ford South Africa (Manufacturing) sponsored his placement, and he worked at Morumotsho as a kiln operator and herbicide applicator.

Morumotsho now develops products such as briquettes and biochar while continuing to clear invaded land. Ramabele says the restoration work has helped return land to livestock grazing and contributes to water conservation.

Morumotsho currently employs eight people. Through a Social Employment Fund partnership with Avo Vision, the business has also hired 14 people from Nchodu and Nkasele villages, near Matatiele, to clear invasive vegetation and produce charcoal. In 2025, Future Discovery Training Academy, under Morumotsho, trained 60 participants in forest-related courses.

Ramabele won the Green SME Award for Water and Energy through Morumotsho at the Nedbank Green Economy Awards in 2024. For him, being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist adds credibility to a business built in a rural community where jobs are scarce. His next challenge is to increase production, reach larger markets and create more work without losing sight of the environmental problem that gave Morumotsho its purpose in the first place. **DM**



ATANG RAMABELE

Ayanda Tinyane shifts her marketing career into high gear

Ayanda Tinyane grew up in Johannesburg, Gauteng, in a close-knit family that emphasised respect, hard work and financial independence. She was encouraged to think ambitiously about what she wanted to do, but her first years of building a career still came with uncertainty about where she would fit in.

Tinyane studied strategic corporate communications because she knew she wanted to work in communications and marketing. The industry she would eventually make her home in, however, presented itself to her through her first real break.

She joined the YES programme at Volkswagen Group Africa and was placed at Volkswagen-Audi South Africa as a Junior Brand Dealer Consultant: Marketing Intern, working with Audi South Africa. The role introduced her to the automotive industry and gave her a chance to apply what she had studied in a business environment.

“I realised that communications, marketing and the automotive industry could come together in a way that genuinely excited me,” she says.

That first placement also showed her how much of automotive marketing happens beyond advertising. She worked with dealer marketing, brand standards and campaign material, contributed to internal and external publications and gained experience that supports work across the dealer network.

Her career has continued in the automotive industry, and Tinyane is now PR & Brand Coordinator at BAIC South Africa. Her work involves supporting dealers, reviewing marketing plans and claims, and helping to keep brand activity aligned across the network. She has also worked on national dealer artwork campaigns, supported fleet coordination for global summits and participated in vehicle launches.

Tinyane says one of the harder parts of her early career was learning how to speak up and prove herself in a competitive environment. There were periods of self-doubt and frustration, and she relied heavily on advice from family, friends, mentors and colleagues.

She also credits colleagues with teaching her to ask questions without embarrassment and to accept that mistakes are part of learning.

Her family and faith remain important sources of support. She is also motivated by seeing young South Africans create opportunities for themselves in difficult circumstances.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist carries particular weight because YES gave Tinyane her first automotive opportunity. She hopes the recognition encourages more companies to invest in young talent and persuades more young people to take chances on opportunities that may not look significant at first.

From the outside, she says, a career can look much more orderly than it felt while it was happening. Tinyane is still learning, taking opportunities as they come and building on the decision to say YES to an industry she had not originally planned to enter. **DM**



AYANDA TINYANE

Banthatile Tselana turns setbacks into stepping stones and finds her place in business analysis

Banthatile Tselana grew up in Mahwelereng Zone 1 in Limpopo, in a household where business was part of everyday life. Her grandmother ran a spaza shop, and Tselana helped with customers, cash, stock and keeping the shop in order.

At the time, it was simply part of growing up. Looking back, she can see how much she learned about responsibility, service and paying attention to how things work.

Her first career plan was very different. Tselana wanted to study television and film production at AFDA, the School for the Creative Economy. When it was time to register, however, she changed her mind and chose IT instead. She wanted a qualification that could open more than one door.

Financial constraints led to two gap years at university, stretching a three-year degree over five years. After graduating, she still did not know which part of IT suited her best.

Her first internship came through YES at Siemens Healthineers when she was 27. She joined as a Junior IT Professional and says the experience gave her a foothold in the industry. In 2023, she received both a Customer Service Work Ownership and the Trainee of the Year awards.

When her time with YES ended, she entered a 12-month programme focused on business analysis. It was the first time she had properly encountered the field.



BANTHATILE TSELANA

The work made sense to her. Business analysis brought together process thinking, problem-solving and an understanding of how different parts of an organisation connect. She began using LinkedIn to learn from people already working in the field, and supplemented what she learned with

short courses. Because she had started out without mentors in IT, the LinkedIn conversations gave her a clearer sense of the qualifications and experience employers were looking for.

She later joined Discovery as a Business Analyst Intern and progressed to Junior Business Analyst within 10 months.

Her current work includes preparing requirement specifications, supporting user acceptance testing and assisting with release activities after solutions are deployed. She has worked with tools and systems including PL/SQL, Jira, Confluence and Paradigm.

LinkedIn has become an important part of her career. Tselana shares what she has learned about early-career development, setbacks and building skills, and in 2026 she was ranked among South Africa’s top 10 female LinkedIn creators.

That visibility can make her career look smoother than it was.

“I only secured my first internship through the YES programme at 27, and my second at 30,” she says.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has made that long route feel especially significant. She hopes the recognition will help her to take on bigger challenges while showing younger professionals that progress does not have to happen on the timeline they expected. **DM**

Bonga Madlala puts his best foot forward and turns a sneaker problem into a growing business

Bonga Madlala grew up in Benoni, Gauteng, with both his parents. His father is a medical doctor, and for years Madlala assumed he would follow the same path.

That changed when he chose finance in matric and later completed a finance degree. Entrepreneurship started to feel like a more natural fit than medicine.

His first professional break came through YES in 2020, when he joined Monocle Solutions as a Business Analyst. The role gave him workplace experience in a structured consulting environment. Monocle retained him after the programme and, around the same time, he also received early-stage business funding through the Entrepreneurship Development Trust programme run alongside YES.

The idea that became Kick Fix Shoe Laundry had been sitting with him for years. Madlala is a sneakerhead and, while living in Benoni, he found himself travelling to the north of Johannesburg whenever he wanted his shoes properly cleaned.

He kept thinking others on the East Rand had the same problem. After roughly three years of considering the idea, he finally acted on it.

Kick Fix now operates two branches in Benoni, and Madlala says both reached profitability within six months of opening. A shopping centre owner has approached him about becoming a tenant in a new centre, which could give the business its third outlet in less than three years.

His days are spread across the practical and strategic sides of running the company. He works on marketing, brand growth and long-term planning, while ensuring the two existing branches run smoothly.

Much of what he has learned has come from trial and error. His finance studies gave him useful principles, but the day-to-day reality of building Kick Fix has required constant adjustment.

“What I have built is a reality I keep having to fight for and maintain,” he says.

Madlala married last year and says the family he is building has changed how he thinks about responsibility and the future. Kick Fix’s growth gives him another reason to keep going when the difficult days arrive.



BONGA MADLALA

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has brought Madlala back to where part of the journey began. He entered YES looking for experience and received support that helped him to keep building. Today, he is running a business that creates work for other people.

He hopes the recognition brings new funding, partnerships and room to expand Kick Fix further, but he is wary of treating any milestone as proof that the hard part is over. For him, keeping the business moving is still daily work. **DM**

Chevon Mia steps away from football into corporate life

Chevon Mia grew up in Mayfair, Gauteng, where children played sport in the streets and parents knew one another well. He remembers different cultures, religions and traditions being part of everyday life. Money was often tight at home, and Mia took on different jobs while growing up to earn money and contribute where he could. Football was a serious part of his life. After matric, he played for Moroka Swallows' Under-21 side and considered going into the sport professionally. He eventually chose university instead, after long conversations with his parents. At Rhodes University, he completed a Bachelor of Arts with majors in human kinetics and ergonomics, psychology and anthropology, followed by an Honours degree in Human Kinetics and Ergonomics. In his final year, Mia was selected for GradStar South Africa and later named



CHEVON MIA

among its Top 10 students in 2020. One of the companies represented through the programme was Epiroc South Africa. After university, Mia joined Epiroc South Africa in safety, health, environment and quality (SHEQ). His early career there included a YES placement as a SHEQ Intern, sponsored and hosted by Epiroc South Africa. He remained with the company and later moved through a learnership and a Customer Care Representative role. Mia is now Regional Order Management Lead at Epiroc South Africa. His work covers orders handled across South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. He oversees new orders, reviews completed transactions that need correction, works with teams locally and internationally, and leads projects across different parts of the business. He says the variety suits him. Because Epiroc is headquartered in Sweden, his work also involves coordinating with colleagues outside southern Africa. Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist is especially meaningful to Mia because YES formed part of his early years at Epiroc. He hopes younger employees and YES participants understand how much can grow from an initial opportunity. DM

Dineo Ndaba overcomes her shyness and seizes an unexpected opportunity to forge a bold career in digital communications

Dineo Ndaba grew up in Doornkop, Gauteng, as the eldest of five siblings. She remembers learning early to take responsibility at home. Limited resources were part of daily life, and she became determined to make the most of opportunities when they appeared. She spent time unemployed and found the uncertainty difficult. She was also naturally quiet and uncomfortable in unfamiliar, crowded spaces, which made it hard to put herself forward professionally. Ndaba joined youth@WORK through YES as an Administrative Assistant, with CoCre8 Technology Solutions sponsoring the placement. Soon, her Director asked her to start helping with youth facilitation. It was a big change. Ndaba was not naturally comfortable speaking in front of groups, but the more sessions she took part in, the more she realised she could hold her own in the room. That experience opened another door inside youth@WORK. Ndaba began helping the social media team, learning much of the work by doing it. Over time, she added social media management, graphic design, branding and data analytics to the work she could take on. Ndaba was retained permanently after completing YES and is now Digital Communications Coordinator at youth@WORK. She also manages digital marketing training for alumni through youth@WORK's



DINEO NDABA

partnership with Learnio. Her interest in digital work has moved beyond her day job. She founded Intelli-Assistant, where she helps entrepreneurs to develop visual identities and digital materials. Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has made her think about how different she is from the person who first joined the programme. People now see her as someone who is comfortable facilitating, coordinating projects and speaking publicly. She hopes the recognition helps more young people to see that confidence does not have to come before opportunity. DM

Edzani Mudau turns an opportunity into a future in health tech

Edzani Mudau grew up in Venda in northern Limpopo, where his family and community shaped much of his outlook. He learned early that progress does not always happen as quickly as you would like, and that sometimes the only option is to keep learning and looking for a way forward. Early in his career, Mudau was doing exactly that. He wanted more than a job, but did not yet have a clear picture of the career he wanted to build. He began taking courses and pursuing certifications while looking for practical experience. In October 2023, he joined Alchemy Health Technologies through the YES programme. He could have regarded the placement as a temporary chance to gain experience. Instead, he began asking questions, paying

attention to how the company operated and shouldering more responsibility. His work gradually shifted from customer and operational responsibilities to health-care technology, business applications, data and AI. As his interest in the field grew, he built his technical knowledge through Microsoft certifications covering Power Platform, Power BI, AI and Azure. Much of his growth came from learning on the job rather than relying on formal study alone. "I think people can look at the certifications, the job title and the projects I have worked on, and assume that I always knew what I wanted to do. I did not," he says. "A lot of my journey has been figuring things out as I went along." Alchemy retained him after his time with YES ended and, in February 2026, Mudau became an Operations Associate: Business Applications, Data & AI. One experience he is particularly proud of was representing Alchemy at the Afro Tech Festival. There, he helped demonstrate an electronic medical record solution and an end-to-end patient journey incorporating AI. Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist carries particular significance because YES was where his career began. He hopes the recognition will bring further opportunities, but he is equally clear that he is still building. "Your first opportunity does not have to be your destination," he says. DM



EDZANI MUDAU

Kate Malale turns a setback into success in technology

Kate Malale grew up in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, with her parents and two brothers. Her mother was a nurse and the family lived in accommodation provided by the clinic where she worked. With few other children nearby, Malale spent much of her free time with her brothers, playing soccer and PlayStation. A computer her mother bought for the family became another fascination. Technology, however, was not where her career began. She studied surveying engineering and started working in that field before losing her job during the Covid-19 pandemic. Having invested in a profession she thought she would stay in, she found it difficult to start again. She began with an introductory Python course from Harvard. But, enjoying programming was one thing. Knowing how to turn it into a career was another. While searching online, she found a fully funded Full Stack Java Development programme run by Zaio and sponsored by Naspers. Her YES placement followed, sponsored by Sanofi-Aventis South Africa and hosted by Naspers, where she worked as a Data Analyst. "I did not have everything figured out when I started, but each opportunity helped me discover the next step," she says. Towards the end of her YES programme, another department at Naspers offered her a contract extension. At almost the same time, Absa offered her a Specialist Solutions Analyst role. Malale chose Absa because she wanted wider exposure to technology and systems, even though it meant stepping into less familiar territory. She is now a Specialist Solutions Analyst, spending her days understanding business requirements, working with different teams and helping turn those requirements into workable technology solutions. Malale received Absa's Innovation Instigator Award in 2024. She has also spoken at events and coached at a Tshwane University of Technology hackathon, and her career has attracted media coverage. Even so, these achievements do not tell the whole story. There were rejections and periods when the next opportunity did not arrive. Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist is especially meaningful because YES came so early in her technology career. Malale hopes her story reaches people who believe they have chosen the wrong path or fallen behind. She only found her way into technology after the career she planned was interrupted. DM



KATE MALALE



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Katleho Selwadi makes marketing her own, one step at a time

Katleho Selwadi spent her earliest years between Mapetla and Hammanskraal before moving to Johannesburg, all in Gauteng, to live with her parents. As a child, she did not have one obvious answer when adults asked what she wanted to become. At different times, she imagined studying law, becoming an actress or running a company like the character Karabo Moroka in *Generations*.

By matric, law was the plan. Her parents encouraged her to look again at what she was good at and she took their advice, although by her honours year she knew journalism was not where she wanted to stay.

She had strong writing skills and needed to work out where else they could take her. That led her towards communications and marketing internships.

Selwadi joined Ascendis Health through YES in a placement sponsored by Ascendis Management Services, working in marketing administration. There,

she began to see marketing as a career rather than simply another option attached to her qualification.

After YES, she volunteered at a start-up agency and was offered a Junior Account Manager role about a

month later. Over time, the job became increasingly unhealthy for her, to the point that she was losing weight, and feeling anxious and constantly upset. She eventually decided to leave, even though she did not have another job lined up.

About three weeks later, she joined

Primedia, which she describes as her first “adult job” and big professional break.

Her career has since taken her through agency, brand, PR and technology environments. She has worked with artists as a PR and brand manager and built experience in digital marketing, campaigns, content and customer engagement.

Selwadi is now Growth Marketing Manager at Altron Document Solutions and her work is centred on revenue growth. A day can include setting up campaign landing pages, reviewing paid advertising and performance data, briefing agencies, reporting back to stakeholders, and more.

In May, she helped deliver Altron’s first digitisation and AI customer event. She also leads brand-growth work, including Altron’s sponsorship of the South African Deaf Rugby Sevens team ahead of the World Deaf Rugby Sevens Championship in Tokyo. Internally, she leads the EPIC Starts With You rewards and recognition programme and sits on the Employee Equity Committee.

When people now ask what her talent is, her answer is simple: “My work ethic.”

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist is especially meaningful because her marketing career began with that YES placement. She sees the recognition as reassurance that she does not need to have every stage mapped out in advance.

Selwadi still describes herself as “a baby” in her field. She is just a few months into a new role, still learning and still deciding what the next part of her career could look like. **DM**



KATLEHO SELWADI

Khensani Baloyi builds a business without putting ambition on hold while embracing motherhood

Khensani Baloyi grew up in Ivory Park, Gauteng, as the youngest child in a family headed by her widowed mother. Her older brothers and sister carried much of the responsibility at home, and she grew up watching the sacrifices they all made to keep the family going.

Baloyi later studied Logistics Management at the University of Johannesburg, but finding a stable place in the working world was not straightforward.

Her YES experience came at Viking, in a placement sponsored by Viking BCT. Baloyi worked in cleaning and stock packing before completing the YES programme and later becoming a mother. When the programme ended, she did not move directly into another job. She chose to spend time raising her child rather than returning to formal work immediately. In 2023, she decided to start Khensi’s Bakery from home and began taking orders while learning the business.

Her family became her first customers. Church members ordered cakes and baked goods, and recommended her to others. Echodigital Agency later helped her establish the business online, register it and make it easier for customers to find through Google and social media.

Baloyi had to work out how to price her goods, manage orders and market the bakery while also looking after her child.

“Motherhood did not end my ambitions. It became part of my journey and gave me another reason to keep building,” she says.



KHENSANI BALOYI

Alongside the bakery, Baloyi’s professional work includes administration, client relations, quotations, proposals and day-to-day operations. Trinity FM has given her another outlet through content, listener engagement and community conversations. Those responsibilities sit alongside customer orders, baking, planning and marketing for Khensi’s.

She has also completed a dissertation through CFCI Bible College on the representation of black women in five-fold ministry, bringing together her academic work, faith and interest in women’s leader-

ship in the church.

Baloyi says one of the harder adjustments was accepting that her career would not follow the sequence she had expected. Becoming a mother meant stepping away from formal employment for a time, but it also pushed her into entrepreneurship and required her to learn skills she had never formally studied.

Her husband, child, family and church community remain important sources of support. She wants Khensi’s Bakery to keep growing while continuing the other work she has built around communication, service and faith.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist gives Baloyi a chance to reflect on how much has changed since her YES placement. She hopes the recognition brings new networks and opportunities, particularly for the bakery.

She also wants other young mothers to know that stepping away from formal work for a period does not mean giving up on a career. Even though her own plans changed, her ambition did not. **DM**

Kim Gouws turns an unexpected start into a fashion tech business

Kim Gouws was born in Cape Town and grew up in Pretoria as an only child. Her parents had demanding careers, so she often spent school holidays with extended family while they worked.

Gouws says that independence came early. She became used to keeping herself busy, solving small problems on her own and not waiting for someone else to tell her what to do.

Fashion was the first industry she imagined for herself. She studied in the field and initially thought journalism might be where she would end up. As that idea changed, she found herself without a clear picture of what came next.

The shift began through YES. Sponsored by SAS Institute and placed at WISI-Oi, Gouws joined the young start-up in a marketing and digital community role. There, she saw what entrepreneurship looks like when a business is still finding its shape.

“I didn’t start out with a plan to become a founder or be in tech,” she says.

WISI-Oi later evolved into Kloset Klub, and Gouws stayed with the business as her responsibilities grew. She is now Cofounder and Head of Operations and Seller Growth, involved in the day-to-day running of a resale platform that helps people earn income from clothing they no longer wear.

Her work ranges from seller support and customer issues to improving internal processes and driving growth. Kloset Klub has since grown to more than 320 active sellers, with almost 3,000 live listings and about 1,800 monthly users.

The business has also taken Gouws well beyond the start-up environment where she began. In September 2025, she represented Kloset Klub at the G20 in Cape Town. In 2026, she attended the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, and later travelled to São Paulo for the Americas Accelerator Alumni Summit, where Kloset Klub was the only South African start-up represented.

At the summit, Gouws hosted a master-class on lessons from building Kloset Klub and looking beyond the transaction itself to understand the wider infrastructure and ecosystem around a business.

The fact that she is building something that did not exist before is a part of what keeps her going. She is also conscious of how few examples she had, as a young woman, of people who looked like her in the spaces she wanted to enter.

Kloset Klub helps sellers earn from clothes they no longer wear while keeping garments in circulation for longer.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has brought Gouws back to the opportunity that first placed her inside a start-up. She hopes the recognition reminds other young people that an uncertain beginning is not a dead end, and that a career can change shape as you learn what you are capable of. **DM**



KIM GOUWS



Financial confidence starts with inclusion.

Sanlam invested **R196 million** in 2025 to advance **community initiatives**, expand **financial literacy**, and drive **inclusive economic growth** through sustained corporate social investments, supporting MSMEs with R5.6 billion in procurement.

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Lerato Ntloane helps children to bridge the digital divide

Lerato Ntloane grew up in a small township surrounded by family, where there was not always much to spare. Her mother once told her: "I give you God and school. I do not have anything else to give you."

Ntloane carried those words with her. As the eldest child, and also the first grandchild in the family to complete matric, she understood early that education was one of the few things she could build on for herself.

Her first career interest was accounting. Ntloane discovered it through economic and management sciences in Grade 9, chose the commerce stream in high school and later studied financial management, completing the course in record time.

An internship at a local school gave her a chance to put that training to use. When the internship ended, she stayed on as a volunteer because she wanted more experience.

She later completed a Higher Certificate in Accounting Sciences and began helping micro businesses with basic financial management and record-keeping.

Her career changed direction when she joined the YES programme as a facilitator, sponsored by a wireless infrastructure company operating in South Africa and hosted by the Click Foundation Trust.

Working in a computer lab introduced her to digital learning and gave her professional experience.

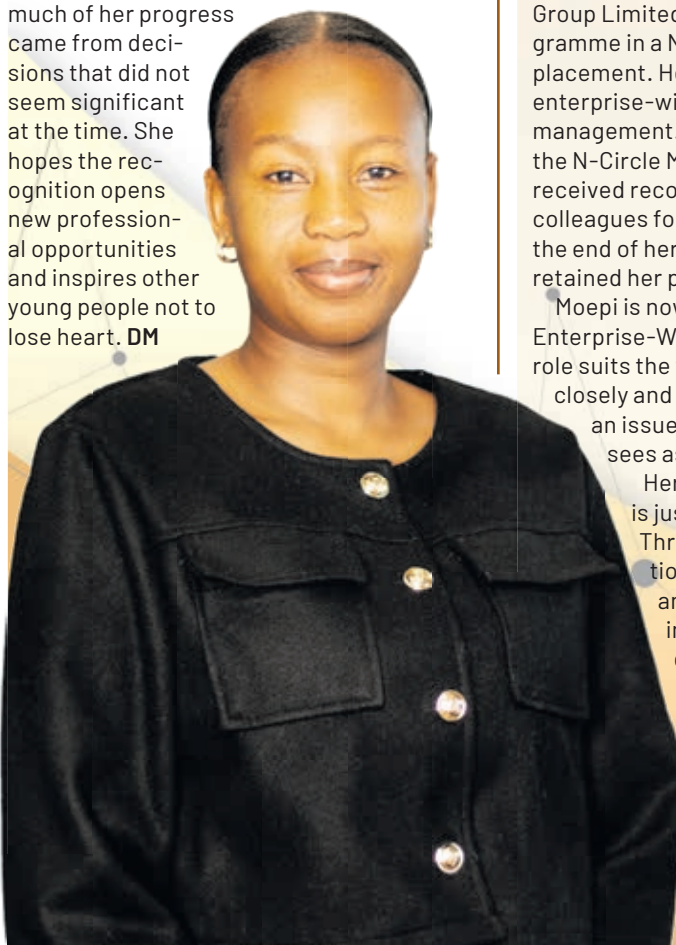
"The YES programme bridged the gap between education and employment for me," she says.

She was retained after completing the programme and now works as a Facilitator at Click Learning. She supports learners as they work through a literacy programme, and helps them use computers.

Her role has grown beyond her own lab, and she has helped other schools launch computer labs. Working with learners has shown her how differently children approach technology, particularly when some have had little access to computers.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has given her a chance to reflect on how much of her progress

came from decisions that did not seem significant at the time. She hopes the recognition opens new professional opportunities and inspires other young people not to lose heart. **DM**



LERATO NTLOANE



LESEGO MOEPI

Lezego Moepi finds that a quiet voice makes a powerful impact

Lezego Moepi grew up in Marapyane, Mpumalanga, as the ninth of 11 children. Education, curiosity and discussion were part of everyday family life.

She was usually one of the quietest people in the room. That followed her to university and later the workplace, where she sometimes wondered whether being reserved would count against her.

Over time, she found that she did not need to compete for airtime. Listening carefully, understanding the issue and speaking when she had something useful to add became her way of working.

"I learned how to become a person whose voice carries weight when she chooses to speak," she says.

After completing a BCom Honours in Economics at the University of the Witwatersrand and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the University of Pretoria, Moepi spent a difficult period applying for jobs and moving between internships. She says she submitted thousands of applications before one changed her career direction.

In July 2023, Moepi joined Nedbank Group Limited through the YES programme in a Nedbank-sponsored placement. Her work brought her into enterprise-wide and operational risk management. She was later selected for the N-Circle Mentorship Programme and received recognition from managers and colleagues for the quality of her work. At the end of her YES programme, Nedbank retained her permanently.

Moepi is now a Risk Analyst within Enterprise-Wide Risk Management. The role suits the way she works. Listening closely and taking time to understand an issue are not qualities she now sees as weaknesses.

Her work outside banking is just as important to her. Through the LQ Moepi Foundation, she works with learners and supports initiatives in education, community development and economic empowerment.

Moepi has also returned to YES as an alumna, speaking on panels and addressing learners. Being named a Top 35 Under 35 finalist now gives her another platform to talk about education, economic empowerment and access to opportunity. **DM**

Lorraine Malete charts an unconventional path into technology

Lorraine Malete grew up in Orange Farm, Gauteng, as the youngest of six children. Her mother worked in a factory and raised the family on her own. She had never had the chance to attend school herself, but made education a priority for her children.

Malete matriculated from Thetha Secondary School in 2016, but it took another three years before she received a university offer. When one finally came through in 2019, it was for hospitality management. It was not a field that particularly interested her, but after waiting that long she decided to take the opportunity.

By her final year, she knew she did not want to build her career in the field. Technology interested her, but she had no background in technology and little idea how to make the jump.

A five-day youth programme through Empower Works gave her an opening. She joined the entrepreneurship stream and, through the programme, accessed a digital-skills traineeship with ThinkTank. That experience led to an Amazon Web Services (AWS) Solutions Architect internship at Reliance Cloud through YES, sponsored by AWS South Africa.

After YES, Malete stayed at Reliance Cloud in a permanent Project Manager role. When the company later closed, she moved to LRMG, where she now works as a Project Coordinator.

She works with programme managers on project plans, meetings, statements of work, timelines and deliverables.

Malete sees the role as useful preparation for where she wants to go next. She is currently studying full-stack web development through Zaio Institute and wants to move into more technical project management.

She is also building Mama Root, a venture

exploring how technology could support African women through the stages of their health journey, from menstrual health to pregnancy, early motherhood and menopause.

Her career may look as though it has moved through unrelated fields, but she does not see it that way. Hospitality taught her about people and service. Cloud gave her technical exposure. Project coordination taught her how to bring people, information and deadlines together.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has given Malete another reason to keep pushing towards the career she wants. She hopes the recognition will bring new connections, particularly to help develop Mama Root and support her return to more technical work. **DM**



LORRAINE MALETE

Lungile Ngcobo finds her way back to her artistic passion

Lungile Ngcobo grew up in Bram Fischer-ville, Gauteng, in a close family. There were no artists in the family and, for a long time, she understood art more as an idea than as a possible career.

Her first serious entry into the arts came through photography. She studied at the Market Photo Workshop, where she began to see the camera as a way of thinking about expression and storytelling. Her interest later expanded into archives, which led her to study Archives and Records Management through Unisa.

There was also a period when she worked in corporate environments and in roles that were not closely connected to what she had studied. During that time, she stopped making art. "I know I am good at this, but is this what I actually want to do?" she remembers asking herself.

She began making art again and became more deliberate about developing her practice alongside work and study.

Earlier in her career, Ngcobo had joined the YES programme as a photographer at YUM Pizza Hut. The placement gave her another foothold in working life while she continued figuring out where her creative interests could lead.

Today, Ngcobo works in archives, sales and media at David Krut Workshop and as Media Officer at Occupying the Gallery. She is also studying towards an honours degree in Fine Art at the University of the Witwatersrand. On some days, classes come first, followed by work, and then time in the studio in the evening.

Mentorship has been important in helping

her navigate an industry she says can be difficult to understand from the outside. Artists Mary Sibande and Lawrence Lemaoana have both guided her. Working in a fine art print studio has also allowed her to observe how established artists develop ideas and sustain their practice.

One of Ngcobo's proudest milestones came when her work *The Maternal* was acquired by Iziko Museums of South Africa. She has also exhibited at the Cape Town Art Fair and FNB Art Joburg.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has reassured her that her work is being seen. She hopes the recognition will help her better understand the commercial side of a creative career, including entrepreneurship and freelancing. **DM**



LUNGILE NGCOBO

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Makhauta Tsemene overcomes self-doubt to achieve success

Makhauta Tsemene grew up in Ivory Park before her family moved to Clayville, both in Gauteng, when she was in Grade 7. She remembers a happy childhood surrounded by family.

For a while, Tsemene thought her future lay in healthcare. She applied to study nursing and was accepted into a private nursing school, but the institution closed before she completed her qualification.

Her route into marketing began with spending six months working in retail, selling cellphone accessories. She enjoyed the mix of sales, customers and presenting products in a way that caught attention.

When she spoke to a student adviser about studying further, marketing was one of the options suggested. She chose it and completed a Diploma in Marketing Management.

Her first marketing internship came through IIE Rosebank College. She later interned at Momentum Metropolitan Holdings.

Her YES placement was sponsored and hosted by Alpha Packaging South Africa, where she worked as a BEE Administrator.

Digital marketing became more central after a two-month internship at Chilli Media. Managing Director Cornelia Ellis continued mentoring her afterwards and later offered her a permanent position at the agency.

Today, Tsemene is a Social Media Manager at Chilli Media, creating and managing content in four countries for 14 automotive brands.

She knew very little about cars when she entered the automotive space, so she deliberately studied the vehicles, brands and



MAKHAUTA TSEMENE

markets she was working in.

She is also proud of completing a Bachelor of Business Administration in 2024, her second qualification, and of freelance work for Days of Yore, where her social media strategy contributed to leads and sales.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has made Tsemene stop and look back at a career that rarely felt certain while she was living it. She says there were many moments of fear, self-doubt and imposter syndrome. What changed was not the disappearance of those feelings, but her willingness to keep moving despite them. **DM**

Mpho Patane gives the next generation a helping hand

Mpho Patane grew up in Munsieville, Gauteng, with his mother and grandmother. One childhood memory still makes him laugh. After watching Kwaito try to publish a novel on *Skeem Saam*, he tried to write one of his own.

"I failed dismally," he says, but the memory stayed with him because it reminds him how ambitious he was even then.

After university, Patane joined Sage. He had originally interviewed for a Payroll Intern role, but the hiring manager thought transformation would suit him better and referred him for a position in that team.

That first role did not lead straight into stable employment. Patane later spent a period unemployed, which he found difficult after working hard to get through university and start his career. But, he used the time to keep developing his skills.

Opportunity arrived through YES at Johnson & Johnson Medical, where he joined as a Transformation Intern.

He says being trusted with real responsibilities helped him become more confident in his own judgement. He later contributed to the transformation strategy for the following financial year.

He completed the YES programme in February 2025 and remained with Johnson & Johnson Medical. His progression included a contract extension and a period as Executive Assistant and Office Manager before he moved permanently into his current role as Transformation Specialist in May 2026.

One part of his journey feels especially personal. Patane now leads the YES programme he once joined as a participant, implementing it for new cohorts, supporting young people entering corporate life and making their first months easier.

"Going from participant to the person running the programme is, honestly, the most heartwarming achievement of my career," he says.

Patane also wants to mentor graduates outside his own organisation. He remembers the people who coached him, vouched for him and put his name forward, and he wants to offer that support to others.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist gives him another platform to do that. **DM**



MPHO PATANE



MPHO SEKATI

Mpho Sekati brings farming and technology together

Mpho Sekati learnt some of his first business lessons without knowing it. At his grandparents' home in Tembisa, he watched his grandfather sell cold drinks and sometimes helped check the stock.

He grew up between Ivory Park, Mayibuye and Pumlango, all in Gauteng, and school did not always go according to plan. Sekati repeated Grade 3 and later Grade 11, finishing matric in 2014. For a while, he worked as a waiter and took on other jobs while trying to figure out where he fitted in.

Community work helped give him some direction. Around 2016, he joined Riendzo Development Centre in Ivory Park as an eco-guide.

In 2019, Sekati joined YES in a placement sponsored by Toyota South Africa and hosted by AFRIGRI, where he worked as an Agricultural Community Gardener Assistant. The experience gave him more exposure to farming, planting and community-based agricultural work.

In 2022, he travelled to the US through the Community Colleges Initiative Programme and studied agriculture and technology at Kirkwood Community College in Iowa. He returned to South Africa wanting to understand technology more deeply.

Sekati joined ALX to study Cloud Solutions Architecture and later ALX Ventures, where he further developed his business idea and finished in the top three in the final pitch.

Today, Sekati is Founder of Abuti Spinach, an agri-tech venture that uses digital tools to support small-scale farmers. Much of the coding behind his current products is self-taught.

His work has included AI-assisted agricultural support, food gardens, marketplaces and tools that use geospatial and farming data to help with planting and crop decisions. More than 30 farmers have been onboarded to the platform.

He also built Mdeko Veggie Wave, a township fresh-produce marketplace connecting buyers with informal vegetable traders. The project won the 2026 MTN MoMo Mini App Hackathon.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist comes after a decade of work across community development, agriculture and technology.

"The achievements are recent. The work is not," he says. **DM**

Mpho Lukhele goes from waiting for work to helping others find it

Growing up in Orange Farm, Gauteng, one of Mpho Lukhele's earliest memories is of her mother teaching her to write her name. She was six and had not attended preschool. When she later received her first school certificate, she remembers feeling proud.

At her brother's graduation from the University of the Witwatersrand, she decided her family would one day return to the same venue for her.

Her first career ambition was journalism and broadcasting. She received a merit award from the university's Journalism School and secured an internship opportu-

nity with CNBC Africa, but financial pressure forced her to deregister from her studies.

What followed was a long period of unemployment. Lukhele joined a work-readiness programme through Afrika Tikkun Services in 2022, took short-term work and completed a plumbing programme. She later worked at a property business and an internet café.

In December 2023, Lukhele joined Nestlé Nespresso through YES as a Human Resources Learner. Nestlé South Africa sponsored the placement, giving her the first real chance to start building a career in Human Resources (HR).

Her supervisor, Pratna Singh, taught and encouraged her while she found her feet.

Lukhele supported recruitment, employee administration and other HR processes, and says she began to understand how much a hiring or onboarding process can affect someone waiting for an opportunity.

Her career has continued in HR. She has also become involved in mentoring through All4Youth Sub-Saharan Africa and in career development initiatives aimed at young people. This work is personal. Lukhele knows what it is like to spend years with opportunities lying out of reach. She has taken that experience into career guidance, CV support, work-readiness discussions and community radio conversations about employment.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist is significant because YES was part of the opening she had been waiting for. Lukhele describes the recognition as "a warm hug". "I was once the young person waiting for a door to open," she says. Today, she helps other people find their own doors. **DM**



MPHO LUKHELE

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MUSA MHELEMBE

Musa Mhelembe builds the bridges his communities need

Musa Mhelembe grew up in the Johannesburg CBD, Gauteng, where crime, drugs and alcohol were part of the environment around him. He remembers staying alert on the way home and watching other boys his age drop out of school or get pulled into trouble.

Mhelembe found another place to put his energy. As a teenager, he volunteered in community programmes and discovered that he enjoyed being useful to others.

When he was in Grade 7, he saw children and young people marching for children's rights as part of a Lutheran Foundation programme called Kids Week. He signed up the next day, and went from participant to leader and later coordinator.

That interest in community work stayed with him. He went on to establish The Ubusha Foundation before joining YES, building the organisation around support for children, women and young people.

He gained his YES experience through Nedbank Group, where he worked as a Commercial Banking Service Manager, and is now CEO of The Ubusha Foundation. Much of his time goes into meetings, programme planning, partnership development and funding applications.

One of the foundation's current projects is George Mudau Imbewu Yethu in Mulenzhe, Limpopo. The initiative uses hydroponic farming to help young women develop food production and livelihood skills in an area where water access is a persistent concern.

Securing support remains a challenge, with repeated rejections and uncertain progress. Mhelembe credits George Mudau, Musanda Tshililo Ramovha, the local council and the Mulenzhe community with helping the project move forwards.

Mhelembe wants young people to see active citizenship as something practical, and he believes that community work requires people who are willing to step up when something needs doing.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has strengthened that commitment. Mhelembe says the recognition makes him want to reach more marginalised communities and create more opportunities for young people and women.

He is under no illusion that the work is easy. Funding can disappear, applications can fail and projects can stall. "Where there is no bridge, we build a bridge and become the bridge," he says. **DM**

Nosiphiwe Tyhaliti turns a Grade 10 subject choice into a laboratory career investigating the science behind medicines

Nosiphiwe Tyhaliti did not expect physical sciences to shape her career. In Grade 10, her father suggested she add it alongside accounting to keep her options open. She was nervous about changing subjects, but soon found herself drawn to physics and, especially, chemistry.

Tyhaliti is originally from Tlokoeng and grew up in Nqanqarhu, both in Eastern Cape. Her schooling took her from Nqanqarhu to Mthatha, also in Eastern Cape, and back again, which meant adjusting to new teachers, classmates and environments.

Chemistry gave her something she wanted to pursue further. She studied analytical chemistry at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, completing her diploma in 2019 and advanced diploma in 2020. Laboratory work confirmed that she enjoyed the investigative side of the field.

After university, Tyhaliti spent months applying for work. She eventually joined YES in a placement sponsored by Rymco t/a Anchor Yeast, a division of Lallemand, working as a Clerk Administrator. She completed the programme in 2022. Although the role was outside the laboratory, it was her first real introduction to the workplace and gave her practical experience in professional communication and working with people in a business setting.

After YES, she returned to laboratory work at Faircape, first as a Laboratory Assistant and later as a Laboratory Technician. Tyhaliti now works as a Laboratory Analyst at Hersol Manufacturing Laboratories in the pharmaceutical industry.

Her work focuses on quality control. She tests raw materials against specifications before they are released into manufacturing, checking documentation, confirming identity and analysing content using laboratory techniques. When a result falls outside the expected range, she has to investigate whether the issue lies with the material, the method or the test itself.

Tyhaliti says entering pharmaceuticals without direct experience has stretched her, requiring her to learn new instruments and approaches, and to trust her own judgement.

There is still plenty she wants to learn in chemistry. For now, Tyhaliti is interested in seeing how far the field can take her. **DM**



NOSIPHIWE TYHALITI

Obey Majole follows his childhood passion for technology

Obey Majole grew up in Welverdiend, Mpu-malanga, where clean water, electricity and other basic resources were not always reliable. He was raised by his grandmother and remembers school and soccer filling much of his childhood.

His interest in technology started at home. As a child, Majole would take apart his grandmother's electronic devices, confidently promising to fix them. Later, his mother bought him a Pentium 1 computer with 512MB of memory, deepening his curiosity about how things work.

Although he passed matric with admission to a bachelor's degree, Majole was unhappy with his results and chose to rewrite Grade 12, earning distinctions and more options.

He went on to study at Tshwane University of Technology, focusing on automation and intelligent industrial systems. A mentor, Saselani Khosa, helped him understand the different areas within IT and encouraged him to also do short online courses.

Majole graduated in 2021. His next step came through YES at Apex Real Time Solutions, which both sponsored and hosted his placement as a Junior Software Engineer.

That experience gave Majole a better understanding of how businesses use technology, while also giving him the confidence to pursue an idea of his own. He is now Founder and Director of Fove, providing web development, multimedia design, IT support, and more.

Majole wants to grow the business into a company that can eventually create jobs while helping smaller businesses use technology more effectively.

His daughter, Olerato, is one of the people he thinks about when the uncertainty of entrepreneurship becomes difficult. He is also motivated by seeing clients use systems he has created.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist gives Majole another marker of how far he has travelled from Welverdiend, but he does not present the business as finished. There are still late nights, rejected proposals and decisions made without knowing exactly how they will turn out. For now, he is focused on building Fove one client and one solution at a time. **DM**

Pebetse Magolego grows an epoxy business in Limpopo

Pebetse Magolego grew up in Riverside, Limpopo. She attended Jane Furse Comprehensive School and remembers leaving home at about 6am and returning at about 5pm.

Money was often tight, and her parents separated when she was still in primary school. In 2012, Magolego finished matric and, at her brother's suggestion, enrolled for N1 Electrical Engineering. The course wasn't a good fit and she failed her first trimester before returning home.

In 2014, she went back to college and chose financial management, which was closer to the commercial subjects she had enjoyed at school. She completed her N6, although her working life would eventually move in several directions.

Magolego began working as a facilitator in her early twenties. From 2019 to 2021, she worked with loveLife Trust in Limpopo, leading workshops and public dialogues on sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention, teenage pregnancy, and more.

Her YES placement came through Edunova, sponsored by Johnson Matthey, where she worked as an ITE Administrator in the Sekhukhune District.

The idea behind her current business had started years earlier. Magolego disliked tiled floors because of the lines between the tiles. In 2014 or 2015, she came across 3D epoxy flooring on Facebook and was fascinated by the possibility of creating a smooth poured finish.

She registered PebSy in 2023. In February 2024, the National Youth Development Agency approved R27,000 in funding for materials. Magolego bought them from Epoxy Empourium in Isando and asked the supplier to train her. They spent two days taking her through measurement, preparation and application, at no cost. From there, she learned by doing the work herself.

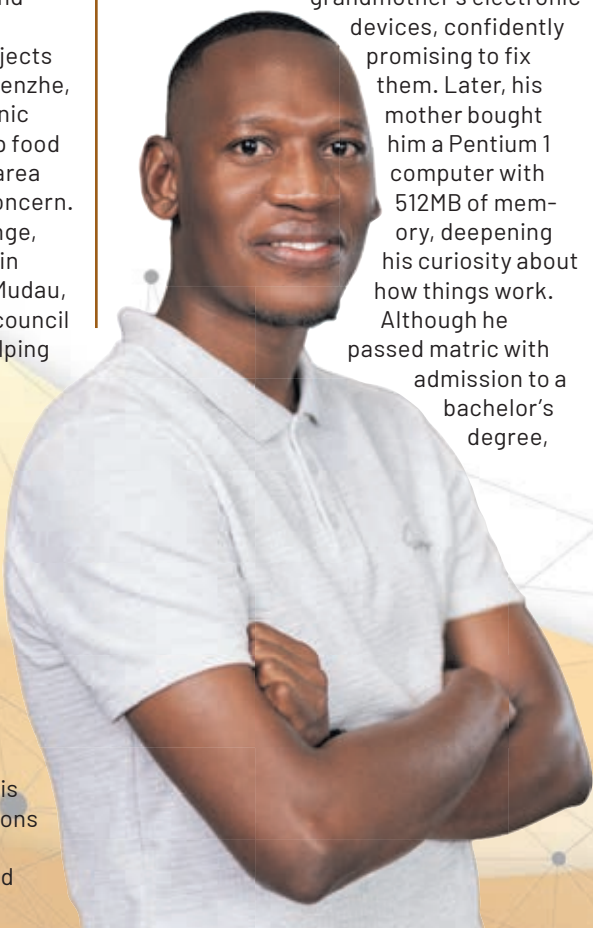
Today, Magolego is Director of PebSy, which produces epoxy floors, tables and countertops.

She also teaches unemployed women in her community and brings in extra help when larger jobs come through.

From October 2023 to December 2025, Magolego also worked as Community Liaison Officer on a R56-million high school construction project.

Magolego became a mother when she was young and says providing for her two children is one of the main reasons she keeps building her business.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist carries extra weight because she applied before and was not selected. She applied again when entries reopened and made the list this time. **DM**



OBEY MAJOLE



PEBETSE MAGOLEGO

Remoneilwe Diale makes big things happen in the events industry after university plans fall apart



REMONEILWE DIALE

Remoneilwe Diale grew up in Polokwane, Limpopo, with her parents and two sisters. She remembers a home that was busy, warm and closely connected to the people around it. Her interest in events started there, in small ways, from setting a table to rearranging cushions until a room looked the way she imagined it should.

At the end of 2022, her plans changed sharply. Her parents could no longer afford her tuition, and she had to withdraw from the university where she had hoped to complete her studies.

She did not immediately have a replacement plan. In the months that followed, she began thinking more seriously about events and décor. In late 2023, while completing the YES programme, she began building Eleven Eleven Events and registered the company the following year.

Diale's YES placement was sponsored by Babcock Africa Services and hosted by Ditebego Enterprises & Development, where she worked as a Gender Focal Person. She says the programme gave her structure when her original study plans fell away and introduced her to a working environment where she could gain practical experience.

Eleven Eleven Events developed alongside that experience. Diale built her décor and styling skills job by job, learning from client feedback. The business now handles

décor, styling and event concepts. Diale is also studying for a Diploma in Event Management at Boston City Campus.

Her career has expanded beyond private events. She is now Head of Programmes and Events at the National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC), where she plans programmes, coordinates stakeholders and manages events that bring together people from business, government and other sectors.

One recent project was NEXEC's National Health Sector Summit, which Diale planned and coordinated. Attendees included Aspen Pharma Group's Dr Stavros Nicolaou, Steve Biko Academic Hospital CEO Dr Lehlohonolo Makake-Mogoba and Acting Director-General Professor Nicholas Crisp from the National Department of Health.

Her days now move between client calls, venue visits, quotes and invoices for Eleven Eleven Events, and meetings with partners and stakeholders through NEXEC. She says that going back to study while running a business and leading national programmes is one of the decisions she is proudest of.

The business is still young, and Diale is careful not to present entrepreneurship as more settled than it is. She says she is still dealing with uncertain months, limited resources and the work of building something sustainable.

Having previously applied to YES but not having been selected, Diale's successful second application and its accompanying YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist status are especially meaningful. For Diale, the recognition is less about having arrived than about being given another reason to keep building. **DM**

S'negugu Hadebe returns to her roots in farming and builds a rural agribusiness

S'negugu Hadebe grew up between Ophuzane, a rural farming village, and Vryheid, both in KwaZulu-Natal, where she moved at age six to attend school. School holidays took her back to her grandmother, uKa Simelane, and to the fields, livestock and routines of subsistence farming.

Her grandmother taught by involving the children in the work. Hadebe learnt to care for animals, work the land and pay attention to the seasons long before she thought of agriculture as a career.

At university, she initially went in another direction. A late application to the University of the Free State placed her in a BSc stream. By her second year, after failing a physics module, she knew she was forcing herself through a course that did not fit. With guidance from an academic counsellor, she changed to psychology and sociology and went on to complete her BA with distinctions in her major subjects.

After graduating in 2018, Hadebe moved between home and short-term work. She began visiting the local agricultural office and farmers working on communal land, and was struck by both the amount of food being produced and how difficult it could be for rural farmers to find dependable markets.

That observation became the starting point for Imbewu Farmers. Before pursuing the business full-time, Hadebe joined the YES Programme in 2021. Johnson & Johnson Medical sponsored her placement, and she was hosted by Reach For A Dream, where she worked as a fundraiser. The programme also included entrepreneurship and venture-creation training.

"YES gave me exposure, experience and entrepreneurship training at a time when I was still finding my direction," she says.

After the programme, she was accepted into the Ignite Fellowship, which included a scholarship for a Postgraduate Diploma in Agribusiness.

She has continued learning through agricultural courses and programmes, including the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs and UCT Graduate School of Business Venture Launch Programme.

Today, she runs Imbewu Farmers while also consulting for other farmers and farms. Her work moves between growing vegetables and grains, developing markets, supporting farmers with production and helping them reach established buyers. For Hadebe, market access is as important as what happens in the field: a farmer can grow a good crop and still struggle if there is nowhere reliable to sell it.

She sees agriculture as a way to create jobs, strengthen rural livelihoods and build businesses around food production. It is also where she feels most connected to the lessons of her childhood.

"My journey into agriculture did not begin when I registered a business. It began in my grandmother's fields," she says.

She hopes that her being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist will help Imbewu Farmers find new partners and networks. **DM**

Renee Nenzhelele turns early disappointment into an opportunity to grow in her chosen field

Renee Nenzhelele grew up in Tembisa, Gauteng, with her mother, aunt and cousins. She remembers being the child who wanted to try almost everything. She competed in mathematics competitions, spelling bees, economics competitions, choir and pageants. If something looked interesting, she wanted to know what it was like to do it.

That curiosity became a lifesaver when her first study plan fell apart. Nenzhelele was not accepted into her preferred university and enrolled for environmental studies elsewhere. Within a year, she knew it was not for her.

Rather than continue with a course she did not enjoy, she researched other fields and eventually chose marketing.

She completed a BBA in Marketing at IIE Rosebank College and later a BCom Honours in Business Science at the University of the Witwatersrand, with a focus on marketing analytics.

Entering the workforce brought a different challenge. A qualification did not give her the experience employers wanted, and she had to work out how to position herself while still deciding where she wanted to specialise.

Her YES opportunity came through Youth@WORK, where she worked as a Marketing Intern in a placement sponsored by the Youth Employment Service. She completed the programme in April 2025 and was later employed permanently by Artist Proof Studio.

Today, Nenzhelele is a Customer and Donor Analyst at Artist Proof Studio. Her work covers customer and donor infor-



RENEE NENZHELELE

mation, CRM systems, reporting, partner and funder research, communications and stakeholder engagement. She has also supported projects that introduce the studio and its artists to new audiences.

Her interest in data grew out of wanting to understand more of what sits behind marketing decisions.

Nenzhelele is completing a Master of Applied Data Science at the University of Johannesburg, looking more closely at how customer behaviour and other information can help organisations make decisions.

Outside work, she is developing an idea for an employment, talent and opportunity ecosystem aimed at improving access to work opportunities in South Africa. It is still

in its early stages and comes partly from her own experience of trying to understand how education, skills and employment connect.

She also helps young people in her network with CVs, career choices and opportunities when she can.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has given Nenzhelele a chance to consider how different her career looks from the one she imagined after school. Environmental Studies lasted a year. Marketing became her chosen field.

Data is now becoming a bigger part of her work.

She does not feel she has everything figured out. For now, she continues to study, work and test where her combination of interests might take her next. **DM**



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TAKALANI MATSHUSA

Takalani Matshusa turns his creative passion into a growing media business

Takalani Matshusa grew up in Hamashau, Limpopo, where family, community and village life shaped much of his childhood. He remembers being taught to respect adults, work with others and enjoy the simple things around him.

His interest in the creative world started early. At school, he took part in drama, and that interest eventually took him to Pretoria's State Theatre and later to Cape Town, where he completed a BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts.

He began learning more about photography, videography and graphic design, and took on creative work before joining YES.

His YES placement was sponsored by Sanlam Life Insurance and hosted by the Youth Content Collective (YCC), where he worked as a Multimedia Content Creator in tourism. The role gave him more hands-on media experience. While completing the YES programme, he also used some of his income to invest in equipment for the studio he was already building.

Money was one of the biggest constraints. Matshusa did not have all the equipment he wanted, so he bought what he could over time while continuing to work and improve his skills. He later studied N6 Business Analysis, which helped him better understand the commercial side of running a company.

Eventually, he reached a point where he had to choose between employment and giving his business his full attention. Matshusa resigned from his job and later turned down a permanent employment offer.

Today, he runs Viable Media and Matshusa Media from Tembisa, Gauteng. His work spans photography, videography, graphic design, website development, branding, printing and digital content. A day can move from editing photographs or videos to preparing designs, writing website content, responding to clients and managing bookings and orders.

His portfolio has included work at the South African Voiceover Awards and content for DJ Sbu's podcast. He also creates part-time work for young people when projects allow.

He credits his mentor, Phumudzo Matodzi, with helping him to think more carefully about decisions and not treat rejection as the end of the road.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has given him a chance to reflect on the risk he took when he left employment. He wants young people from communities like Hamashau to see that creative work can become a serious career and business. **DM**

Thando Nkabinde builds a future through the electrical trade

Thando Nkabinde was born in Madadeni, KwaZulu-Natal, before moving to Johannesburg, Gauteng. Growing up, he did not have a clear idea of what his career would look like. He did know, though, that he wanted more options than what he could see around him.

His family taught him to work hard and stay grounded, but he took time to figure out his career. Before entering the electrical trade, he worked in retail and as an assistant mechanic.

One person who nudged him in a different direction was a supervisor from his time as a barista. The supervisor told Nkabinde he was still young and should think beyond a career in retail. The comment stayed with him.

Nkabinde went on to study electrical engineering and later joined BluLever Education, where he received trade training and practical experience. He found that electrical work suited the way he liked to think. Diagnosing a fault, tracing what had gone wrong and fixing it gave him the kind of practical challenge he enjoyed.

His YES placement was sponsored by BMW Group South Africa and hosted by 458 Performance, where he worked as an auto electrician. It gave him more time to do the work itself, troubleshoot electrical faults and learn how automotive systems behave outside the classroom.

That experience was followed by work across commercial, industrial and renewable-energy environments.

Nkabinde has built distribution boards, installed generators, change-over systems and solar installations, and mastered fault-finding. He was also recog-

nised as the best performer in electrical trade practicals for three consecutive years during his training.

What he values most is being able to take what he has learned in theory and use it to solve a problem in front of him.

"There isn't really a completely typical day in electrical work," he says.

Depending on the job, he could be tracing a fault, carrying out maintenance, testing an installation or working on a distribution board. Safety remains central to how he approaches the trade.

In December 2025, Nkabinde started TrustVolt Electrical Services, offering electrical installation, maintenance, fault-finding and renewable-energy support across residential, commercial and small-industrial work. The business is still young, but he wants it to grow into something that can eventually create work and training opportunities for other young people.

That ambition is closely tied to his own experience. He remembers what it felt like when someone else saw potential in him before he had fully worked out what he wanted to do.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has given Nkabinde a reason to look back at how much has changed since those early jobs and his first steps into the trade.

He hopes that the recognition encourages more young people to consider skilled trades as a serious career path. Nkabinde wants to keep improving as an electrician, grow TrustVolt and, if the business develops as he hopes, create work and training opportunities for other young people. **DM**



THANDO NKABINDE

THAPELO TLAILANA

Thapelo Tlailana breaks down barriers with innovation

Thapelo Tlailana grew up in Marulaneng, Limpopo. It was a supportive community, but money was tight and opportunities beyond school were limited. When he later started looking for work, even applying could become expensive once data, printing and transport were added in.

That experience stayed with him. He began paying attention to the small barriers that can decide whether someone ever gets an opportunity.

He had studied public management and governance because he wanted to contribute to rural development, initially imagining that work would happen in government.

His career took a different route when he joined Tshikululu Social Investments through YES in 2023 as an Administrative Intern. Tshikululu both sponsored and hosted the placement.

A neighbour, Oscar Matlala, also helped him make the move from Marulaneng to the University of Johannesburg, widening the opportunities he could see for himself.

Tlailana was retained after the programme and now works there as a Social Impact Analyst. His role involves managing projects, working with implementing partners and communities, and looking at what social investment programmes are actually achieving. He is especially interested in whether funding changes something for the people it is meant to support.

His first manager, Bertha Phohlela, played an important role in that development. Tlailana says she trusted him with work that stretched him.

Alongside his job, Tlailana started Tswe-lopele Synergy Solutions while working through a YES learning module. At first, the company was a contingency plan in case formal employment did not materialise. It later became the vehicle through which he began developing his own technology-based solutions.

One of those is RÉCIR, a mobile-first circular-economy platform that connects informal waste reclaimers, households, businesses and corporate producers. In 2026, the platform won the CIPC Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Impact Award.

Tlailana is also completing a Master of Public Administration through Unisa, building on the BA Honours in Public Management and Governance he completed at the University of Johannesburg in 2024.

His interest in access remains personal. While job hunting, he discovered YouthSA and applied for opportunities without spending money on data. It was a small thing, but it changed how he thought about technology and exclusion.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has made him think again about what happens after someone is given an opportunity.

Tlailana entered Tshikululu as an intern and has since built a career in social investment, continued studying and started developing ventures of his own.

He wants his story to show the value of what happens after the first door opens. **DM**

Thato Mamabolo charts her own path in cloud technology

Thato Mamabolo grew up in Hammanskraal, Gauteng, when mobile phones and technology took up far less of a child's day. She remembers walking outside, finding other children in the street and playing while neighbours kept an eye on everyone.

Technology only entered her life much later. Mamabolo already had an interest in development, but she did not know much about cloud engineering until a friend told her about an opportunity through YES.

She applied and joined a placement sponsored by Amazon Web Services (AWS) South Africa and hosted by Disruptor, working as a Graduate Cloud and DevOps Engineer. The programme involved studying, writing exams, working towards certifications and getting practical experience with cloud technology.

Mamabolo enjoyed figuring things out. She could start with something unfamiliar, work through the technical details and gradually understand how it fitted into a larger system.

She later became an AWS Certified Solutions Architect and continued learning through practical work and self-study. More recently, she was accepted into the AWS SheBuilds Mentorship programme, which gave her access to a mentor further along the same career path.

Today, Mamabolo is a Cloud Engineer at Alpha Insure. Her job covers the infrastructure that applications and digital services run on, including security, reliability, access, monitoring, automation and cost.

She is particularly proud of being trusted with much of the cloud engineering function

in her IT department. It carries responsibility, but has also made asking questions and admitting when she does not know something a normal part of how she works.

That was not always easy. Mamabolo says working in technical environments where men are often in the majority sometimes made her feel she needed to prove herself. She has become more comfortable with not having every answer and focuses instead on being prepared and willing to learn.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist has taken her back to an opportunity she first heard about through a friend.

"There was a time when I could only imagine myself being where I am today," she says. **DM**



THATO MAMABOLO



VALECIA SAMBO

Valecia Sambo creates a new pipeline for women in plumbing

Valecia Sambo grew up in Mpumalanga and moved to Johannesburg, Gauteng, to complete high school. She was one of six children raised by her mother after losing her father when she was seven. He ran a business building swimming pools and doing paving, but Sambo's own route into a trade came much later and was not what she had planned.

She initially studied mechanical engineering. During a period of unemployment, she joined a plumbing learnership and was placed with a plumbing business, where she began learning the trade. She later qualified in plumbing and decided to build something of her own rather than look for another job.

Sambo joined YES in 2022 in a placement sponsored by Cataler South Africa and hosted by Zakhe, where she worked as a Plumbing Assistant. Around that time, she registered Daily Sambo Services and began figuring out what it took to run a business.

She had to find customers, manage money, price work and make decisions while still developing her technical skills. Entrepreneurship programmes, mentors and practical experience filled some of those gaps.

Today, Daily Sambo Services provides a full range of plumbing work. Sambo's ambitions have also expanded beyond the day-to-day business.

Sambo started PlumHer Academy in 2025 to help young women gain plumbing skills. She is now working towards accreditation for the academy, with TechnoServe helping to provide personal protective equipment and meet other accreditation requirements. She is also developing FlowGuard, a water-management innovation.

She recently completed Wits Business School's Crucible Technopreneurship Programme. Other support has helped her test

and build different parts of the business. Orange Corners funded a pilot of her first backup water system, while Allan Gray Makers has supported her development as an entrepreneur.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist is especially meaningful because it was Sambo's third application. She hopes the recognition brings greater visibility to Daily Sambo Services, PlumHer Academy and FlowGuard. **DM**

Witness Rambani builds a career in executive education

Witness Rambani grew up in Soweto, Gauteng, in a community that exposed him to different people and cultures from an early age. He remembers childhood as fun and fairly free, with room to explore his creativity without straying too far beyond the boundaries set at home.

One of the harder lessons came later. He says he spent years trying to become comfortable in his own skin and would sometimes overcompensate. Finding his own voice took time, both personally and professionally.

His first experience of higher education came through work integrated learning at Jeppe College of Commerce & Computer Studies. What was meant to be three months in student support and engagement gave him an unexpected interest in the sector.

He returned through YES at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), which sponsored and hosted his placement. He joined as a Trainee Administrator and began learning the practical side of programme delivery, client service and working with participants in executive education.

The experience also brought him closer to the operational side of executive education, from programme logistics and administration to relationships.

Three colleagues, Mathabo Khoadi, Pertunia Lebopo and Prince Seshabela, became important mentors.

After YES, he stayed at GIBS as a Programme Advisor before moving briefly to Eduvos. He is now a Senior Programme Advisor at Regenesys Corporate Education.

His days are split between meetings with internal and external clients, individual client calls, and lead-generation work, particularly on LinkedIn and Meta.

In 2023, Rambani entered the Rémy Martin Producers competition for emerging music producers and reached the top three. He was disqualified on the day of the final because a sample used in his song had not been cleared but, despite the disappointment, he says reaching that stage changed how he saw himself. It reminded him that he was capable of competing at a high level, and he began taking that confidence into other parts of his life and work.

Today, Rambani helps organisations develop leadership capacity through his work at Regenesys. Back in Soweto, he also serves as Youth Coordinator at his church.

Being named a YES Top 35 Under 35 finalist reinforces a belief Rambani has worked hard to grow into. He believes people have to back themselves before anyone else can, and hopes his recognition encourages others to take their ambitions seriously. **DM**



WITNESS RAMBANI

Tiffany Hoods turns opportunity into a career of helping others

Tiffany Hoods grew up in Eldorado Park, Gauteng, in a close-knit family where church and community were part of everyday life. She remembers a happy childhood, but one experience changed how she looked at difficult circumstances.

Her mother became seriously ill, and for a time Hoods felt as though the stability she had always known was disappearing. Watching her mother recover taught her that fear does not have to decide what happens next. It is a lesson she has carried into her own working life.

After matriculating at 17, Hoods gained her first work experience in retail before moving into the insurance industry. She also completed a Higher Certificate in Human Resources.

Her career began to take shape when she joined the YES programme through Telesure Investment Holdings. As a young consultant entering a corporate environment, she had to learn quickly what was expected of her, from accountability and time management to communicating with different people and handling feedback.

The experience helped her build confidence, discipline, and a clearer understanding of how she wanted to work. After completing the programme, she was absorbed into the business.

She went on to build experience across customer service, sales and claims. She worked in service and customer retention, spent time as a Claims Voice Consultant and later moved into proactive outbound services. In November 2024, she made the move into learning and development.

Hoods had always wanted to become a teacher. Facilitation gave her a different way to pursue that interest. Today, she

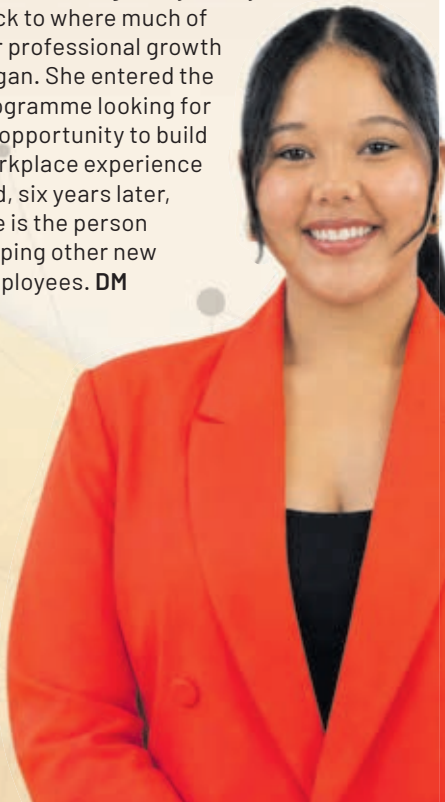
works as a facilitator at Telesure Investment Holdings, supporting new employees in the A&G Australia environment.

Her days involve far more than presenting training material. She helps new employees understand the business, monitors their progress and works with them when they need additional support.

What she enjoys most is watching someone she helped train become confident in their role and perform well.

Being named among the YES Top 35 Under 35 brings the journey

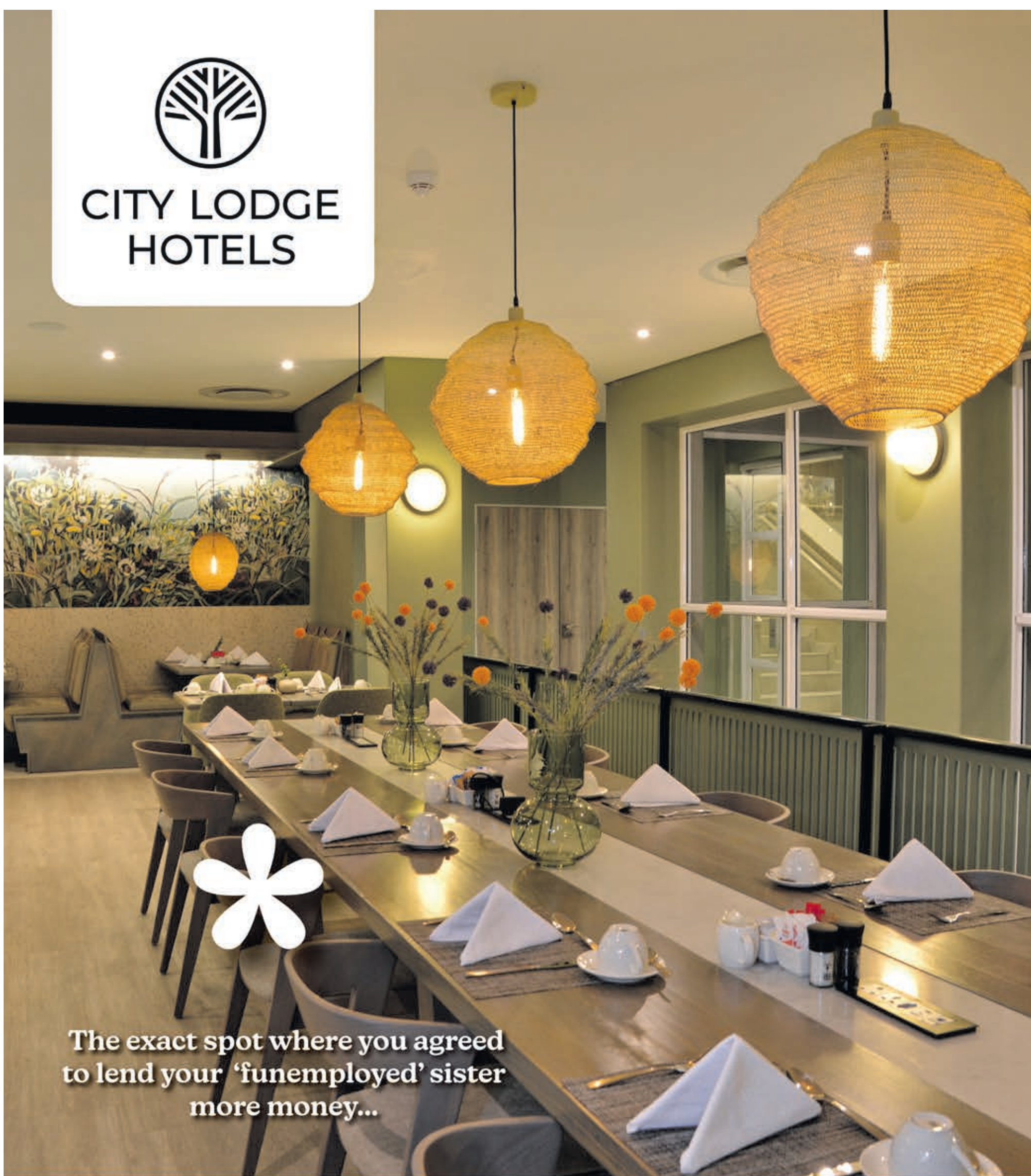
back to where much of her professional growth began. She entered the programme looking for an opportunity to build workplace experience and, six years later, she is the person helping other new employees. **DM**



TIFFANY HOODS



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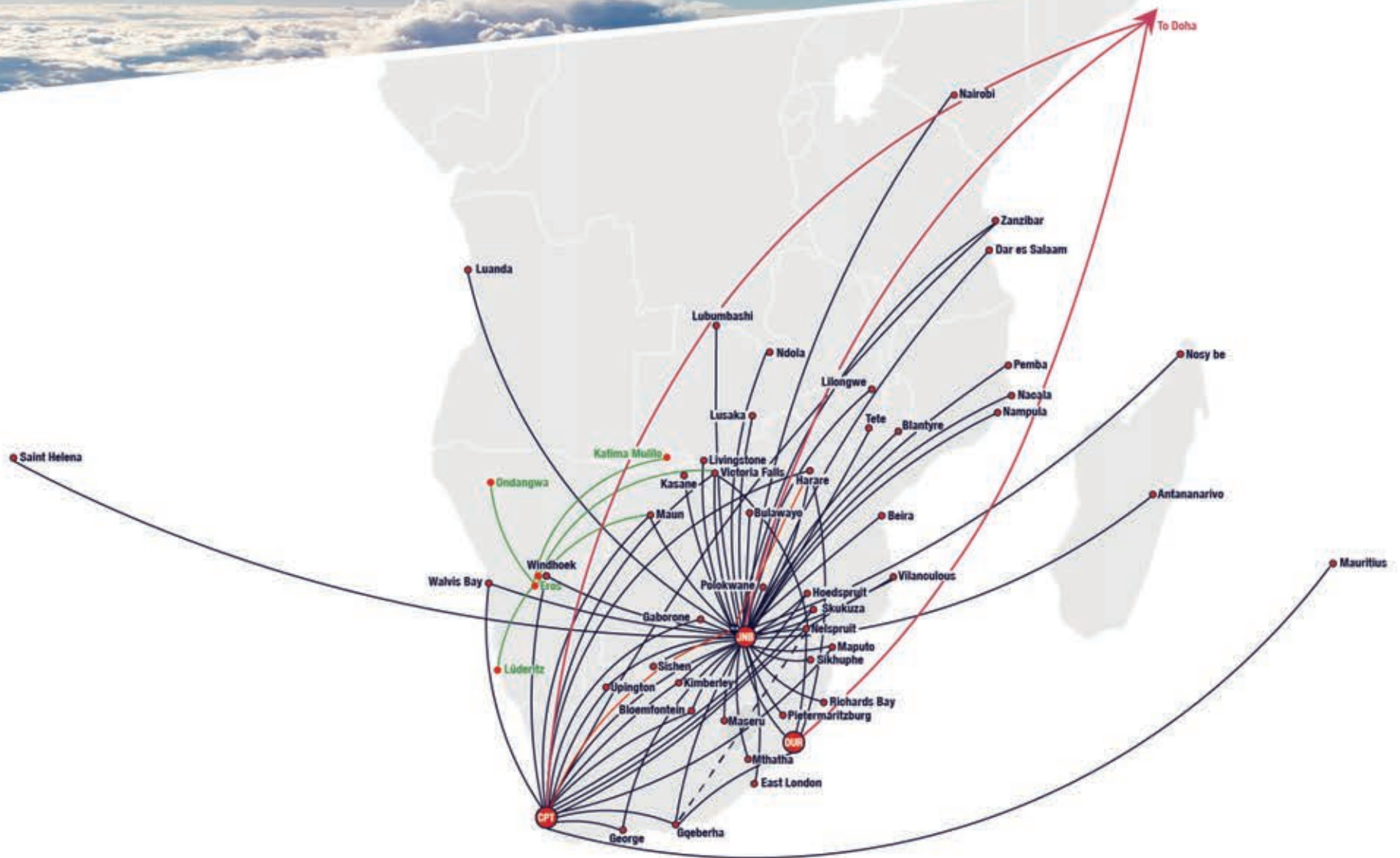
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Matric learners get extra help from AI tutors and maths clubs

New technology steps in to help those who cannot afford expensive private tuition. By **Takudzwa Pongweni**

A record 962,832 candidates are sitting for the 2026 National Senior Certificate exams, which began on 13 October and conclude on 26 November. For learners, the exams mark the culmination of a year's work. For many families, they also bring the question of how to find extra support when private tutoring is out of reach.

At a media briefing on 11 October, Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube said preparations for the examinations had been completed. This year's cohort comprises 815,051 full-time and 147,781 part-time candidates. The Department of Basic Education has established about 7,100 examination centres and more than 51,000 educators have been recruited to mark scripts.

Gwarube said provincial performance would be measured using a broader range of indicators. They included bachelor's passes and distinctions, learner retention, and participation and performance in gateway subjects such as mathematics, physical sciences, accounting and economics.

The aim, she said, was to help provinces compare their performance more meaningfully and identify where intervention was needed. The measure of success, then, would not be only how many learners passed, but whether provinces were improving literacy and numeracy, retaining learners and strengthening participation in key subjects.

Gwarube confirmed that the question papers had been set, moderated and quality-assured, and approved by Umalusi.

Free digital tools

Exam readiness involves more than examination centres and question papers. When a difficult concept will not click for a learner, extra help can make a difference. But private tuition remains out of reach for many families, with one-on-one lessons costing up to R750 an hour.

Free digital resources and community maths clubs offer learners other ways to get support. One option being offered to Grade



Andrew Barrett, executive director and cofounder of Olico Maths Education, a non-governmental organisation founded in 2008 that works to improve mathematics outcomes and bridge learning gaps for learners in low-income communities.

File photo: Supplied/Andrew Barrett



Pupils at Gardens Commercial High School in Cape Town write their English home language examination. File photo: Shelley Christians/The Times/Gallo Images

12 learners preparing for their final examinations is Saving Grace AI Tutor, which Charles Mukembe, the head of educational technology at Saving Grace Education, explained would be available free.

The platform, aligned with the Curriculum and Policy Statement, is designed to let learners ask questions, get explanations and follow up when they need more help. Rather than presenting only a fixed lesson or exercises, the tutor is built around conversation.

Learners can phrase questions in their own words and ask for clarification if an explanation does not make sense. The platform can also show concepts visually, another way of approaching topics that may be difficult to understand from text alone.

Mukembe said a digital tutor could not replicate everything a qualified teacher or human tutor provided, but free access could give learners another resource. The platform was intended to support educators, not replace them.

He urged learners to question explanations they did not understand and use AI alongside trusted resources.

Established open-access platforms such as Siyavula also provide structured revision in high-school mathematics and physical sciences. The platform offers free digital textbooks and an engine that marks answers and provides worked corrections. Its website is zero-rated on networks including MTN and Cell C, allowing learners to practise on a phone without using mobile data.

For learners who benefit from practising with others or getting help through a community programme, maths clubs offer another route to support.

Help with maths

Olico Maths Education has worked to build learners' mathematical skills and confidence since 2008. It began with after-school programmes in low-income communities, including Diepsloot, Alexandra and Khayelitsha. Its work has since expanded to include teacher support, partnerships with other organisations and collaboration with provincial education departments.

Describing the learners with whom Olico works, Andrew Barrett, its executive director and cofounder, said: "Most of them are

many, many years behind where they should be mathematically."

Olico developed its own online learning resources, designed to connect foundational concepts with grade-level mathematics. The open-access materials focus mainly on grades 7 to 9, with additional support for matric learners, as well as games and activities for younger children.

Olico runs in-person tutoring programmes at schools in the Western Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo. About 2,500 high school learners attend its tutoring centres, and about 4,500 primary school learners take part in after-school maths clubs.

Through games and other activities, the clubs aim to strengthen children's number sense and confidence. Olico's resources are also used by partner organisations running more than 1,800 maths clubs across the country, reaching about 28,000 learners.

Olico is approaching its 1,000th matric graduate. Barrett said that over the past decade, close to 60% of Olico's learners achieved a pass of at least 50% in pure mathematics, compared with an average of about 7% of learners in national

school quintiles 1 to 3. He said a pass at this level could help to open pathways to further study and funding opportunities, including the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Olico began support-

ing learners via WhatsApp. This work has grown into a free tutor bot for students in grades 7 to 12, combining structured learning pathways with homework support.

Learners can send a photo of a question and their attempt at answering it. The tutor can check their work and, if needed, guide them through the steps rather than simply giving them the answer.

Learners can register through Olico's online learning portal at learn.olico.org or message "Hi" to 0600 39 00 00 to connect with the maths hotline. The service operates from 2pm to 10pm seven days a week. **DM**



Minister of Basic Education Siviwe Gwarube attends a regional childcare conference on 4 May in Johannesburg. File photo: OJ Koloti/Gallo Images

Since its inception, the Youth Employment Service (YES) has created more than 240,000 work opportunities for young South Africans, helping businesses play a meaningful role in tackling youth unemployment and creating pathways into the world of work.

ByDesign Communications is proud to partner with YES, telling the stories behind the numbers and showcasing the real-world impact of youth employment. Together, we are positioning YES not only as a youth employment programme, but as a catalyst for meaningful economic participation, demonstrating what is possible when business invests in the potential of young South Africans.



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