

# PASSION

AN AWCA MAGAZINE | 2023 ISSUE



## FOR YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- \*Quiet Quitting
- \*Do Millennials Have It Tough?
- \*Private Equity & Your Business

## MEET OUR 2023 RECOGNITION AWARDS RECIPIENTS



## 2023 WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE IRENE CHARNLEY

“My greatest goal is to mentor as many young women as possible...”



**AIH CAPITAL**  
(PTY) LTD

**A STEP TOWARDS  
FINANCIAL FREEDOM,  
OPPORTUNITY AND THE  
SHAPING OF INDUSTRIES.**



# WHAT A JOURNEY WE HAD PUTTING TOGETHER THE 2023 ISSUE OF PASSION MAGAZINE!

**EDITOR (HEAD OF PR AND MARKETING):** THULAGANYO SECHOARO

**CONSULTING EDITOR:** KEMONG MOPEDI | **MANAGING EDITOR:** MICARLA HART

**DESIGNER:** SIZAKELE MADLALA | **PHOTOGRAPHERS:** NTEBALENG TWALA AND HOEK SWARATLHE

**CONTRIBUTORS:** FHATUWANI MANAGA, SELAPENG MALEDIMO, MARUMO MASEMOLA, LINDA MOTEA, NTHEPE MASWINYANENG, TIEHO MALEKE, KHANYISA PHIKA, LANGA MADONKO, TALENT MTHIYANE, PABALLO PHIRI, MOTHATHE SEWELO, LORNA NTULI, THANDEKA DLUDLA, THINA TEMBANI, CAROLINE MAAKA, GAVRAL SPEELMAN, TAFADZWA MAKOMBE, NTEBALENG TWALA

**PROOFREADERS:** MANDISA ZWANE, THANDEKA DLUDLA, REFILWE LIKOTSI, ZAMANGUNI GUMEDE, DANKIE MOKWENA, TUMI MOKGOKO, THINA TEMBANI, PHUMZILE SIGASA, NOMTHA MAKHOSANA

**AWCA OFFICE MANAGER:** GUGU MTHONTI | **AWCA OPERATIONS MANAGER:** JUDITH MNISI |  
**AWCA FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR:** PHUMELELE ZULU



@awca\_sa



AWCA SA



African  
Women Chartered  
Accountants



@awca\_sa



AWCA SA



PRINTING: INTERACTIVE WEB WORKS | 10 JUNCTION ROAD, BRAMLEY, 2090

# IN THE 2023 ISSUE...



**20**  
**THE NEXT PHASE**  
**OF THE AWCA**

56  
**COVER**  
Irene  
Charnley



16

The 2023  
Bursary  
Recipients

**06 President's Message** | **09 AWCA Board Members** | **12 President's Awards**

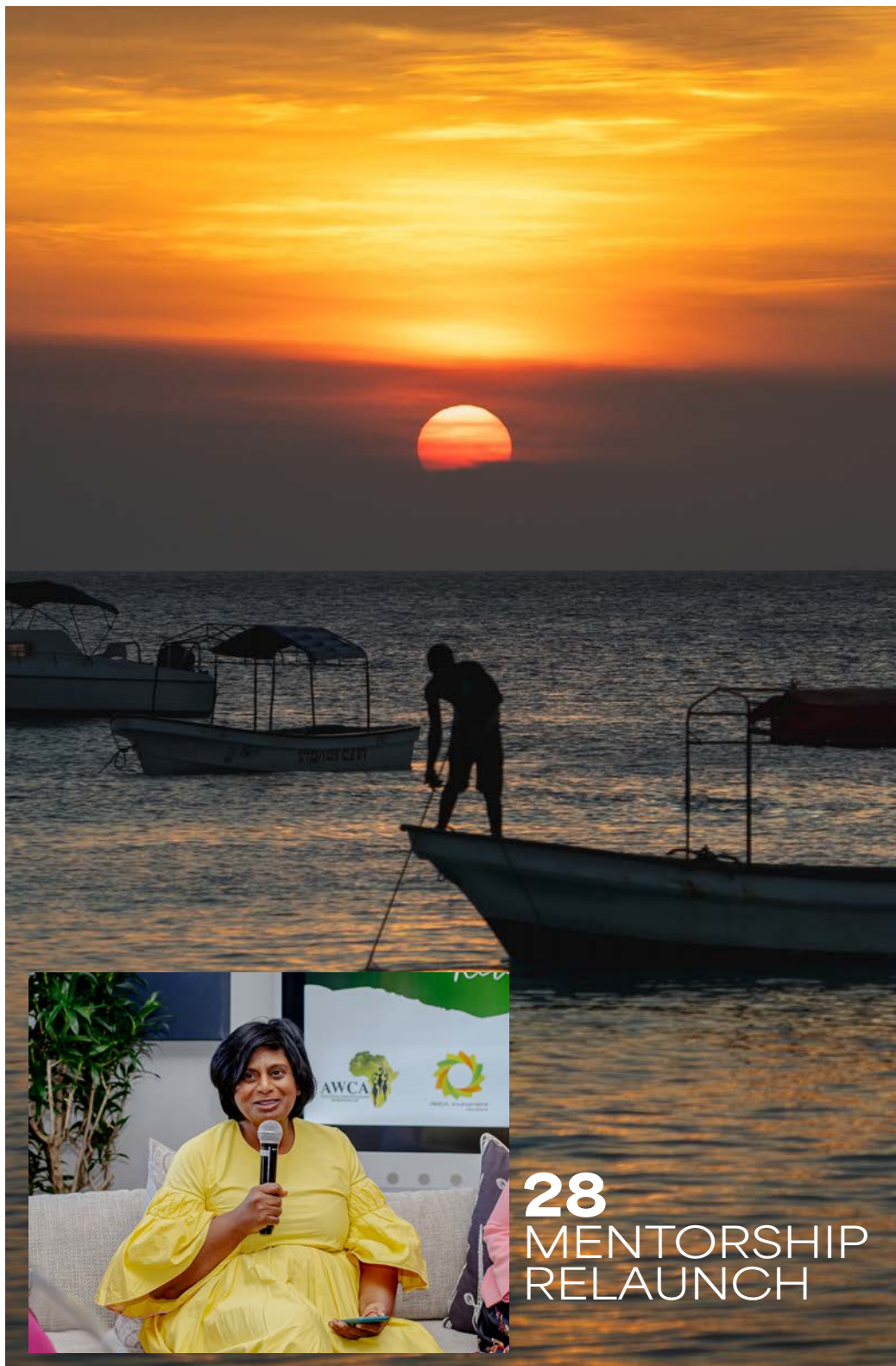
**16 Bursary Recipients** | **20 AWCA 20th Anniversary Celebration** | **24 Stakeholders' Breakfast**

**26 Entrepreneurs' Meet-and-Greet** | **28 Mentorship Relaunch** | **30 APC Workshop** | **32 Career Lift-Off**

**34 Power Spaces CT** | **36 Power Spaces JHB** | **38 Financial Empowerment Workshop** | **40 Fordham: A Helping Hand**

**42 Fordham University Experience** | **44 CA of the Future** | **48 SA's Economic Outlook**

**48 Private Equity and Your Business**



## 74 AN EXODUS OF CA TALENT



## 28 MENTORSHIP RELAUNCH

**52 Gender Mainstreaming Insights** | 54 Empowering Women In Leadership

**56 Cover Story: Irene Charnley** | 62 Recognition Awards 2023 | **70 From Corporate to Entrepreneurship**

72 15 Years of AIH | **74 An Exodus of CA Talent** | 76 Leading Different Generations | **78 A Silent Exit**

82 Normalising Fertility Challenges | **84 Purpose Through Influencing** | 86 Books That Will Shape Your Thinking

**90 A City For Your Every Need** | 96 Why Me-Ilenials? | **98 Side Hustle**



---

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“At 21, there is definitely a clarion call for the AWCA to do things differently while remaining true to its three-tier strategy of ‘Identify’, ‘Nurture’ and ‘Lead’.”

I am quite certain that many of us reading this issue of *Passion Magazine* have experienced a traditional 21st birthday party where parents, brimming with pride, would hand over a key to their child. Often accompanied by a speech on how the key must be used responsibly to unlock the doors of adulthood, this tradition dates back to a time when 21-year-olds were considered mature enough to own their own homes — thereby assuming a senior position in the family.

Times have obviously changed. New Age 21-year-olds are either at the tail end of their first degree or knee-deep in establishing their careers. As I pen this President's note to commemorate 21 years of the AWCA, I too am filled with pride at the goals our dynamic organisation has ticked off its bucket list. To be leading the AWCA as it continues to thrive in its second decade is not a responsibility that I take for granted. I remain eternally grateful to have been entrusted with this colossal responsibility by the remarkable board members that I work alongside.

At 21, there is definitely a clarion call for the AWCA to do things differently while remaining true to its three-tier strategy of ‘Identify’, ‘Nurture’ and ‘Lead’. Through our 21st anniversary theme, ‘Moving to Mastery: Unlocking Passion, Potential and Purpose’ we hope to inspire a new attitude among the Generation Z cohort (individuals born between 1996 and 2010), colloquially known as Zoomers.

The pipeline of African female CAs(SA) is becoming more and more challenging to grow. Sadly, students and trainees, alike, are still not passing in droves. We strongly believe that generational attributes have much to do with the declining pass rate. Gen Z, for instance, does not relate to hardships. They probably think to themselves: ‘If articles are difficult and we are not getting the kind of jobs we were hoping for, why should we even stay to become CAs(SA)?’

A stagnant pipeline is one of our biggest frustrations as an organisation. For this reason, and for the benefit of our prestigious profession, we aim to ramp up our efforts in unlocking Gen Z's passion, potential and purpose. One thing is for certain, we need to take our cue from this generation, find ways of remaining relevant and be open to the fact that there are generations that operate differently to the plans set out by the current leadership of the AWCA. We cannot afford to give up on Gen Z because they are our future members and leaders.

Speaking of staying relevant, ‘CA of the Future’ is a buzz

phrase currently doing the rounds in our profession. On page 44, Mohau Motholo unpacks the ‘CA of the Future’ succinctly when he says, ‘The ‘CA of the Future’ will be a dynamic professional equipped with a diverse skill set and a deep understanding of technology, data analytics and strategic advisory.’ Post-covid, we live in an AI world where technology takes care of almost everything. As an organisation, we are committed to grooming both our qualified and trainee CAs to move with the ever-changing times. We are all geared up and excited about running programmes that will ensure that the ‘CA of the Future’ shows up fully and performs to the best of their abilities. The reintroduction of AWCA initiatives such as Power Spaces — previously known as Power Tea — aims to help address those personal factors that often deter us from our main career goals. We also relaunched our Mentorship Programme with the hope that trainees will lean in on the support it offers.

Our 2023 Woman of Substance Irene Charnley is a former unionist-turned-businesswoman whom I have the pleasure of serving under at the International Women's Forum of South Africa (IWFSA). To say that Irene is a remarkable leader would be woefully inadequate. As the President of the IWFSA, Irene is the very embodiment of ‘Lift As You Rise’, a motto that is close to our hearts at AWCA. When we speak of a Woman of Substance, we are speaking of someone whose work is consistently impactful. Get acquainted with Irene's extensive empowerment efforts on page 56.

In closing, I would like to thank our various stakeholders who are always eager to dig deep into their pockets to help us advance our missions. We appreciate both your monetary and non-monetary donations that enable us to pour into the AWCA Bursary Fund, fund our initiatives as well as successfully manage our office. May you never tire of answering our knocks on your doors.

I would also like to acknowledge the team responsible for running our office, Judith Mnisi (Operations Manager), Gugu Mthonti (Office Manager) and Phumelele Zulu (Finance Administrator). We appreciate and thank you for all your efforts.

21 years on and the AWCA is still beyond inspired to guide as many young African females as possible. Here's to embracing a new season. Long may you exist AWCA!

**Buhle Hanise, AWCA President**

# Decades of experience. Evolved security.

[www.proteacoin.co.za](http://www.proteacoin.co.za)



# 2023 AWCA BOARD MEMBERS

Meet the dynamic leaders, new and old, who help steer the AWCA to greater heights.



## **BUHLE HANISE CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Chief Operating Officer, BDO Business Restructuring

**Board Designation:** President

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** By supporting and holding the various AWCA portfolios accountable, while we tick off those goals that will advance the organisation.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** Congratulations AWCA on reaching this momentous milestone. You are now a fully-fledged organisation that is ready to take on the world. You are ready for adulthood and are set to achieve greater, and better, things in the next 21 years.



## **Thina Tembani CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Executive Business Assistant in the office of the COOs: Investment Banking and Client Groups, Rand Merchant Bank

**Board Designation:** Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Fundraising Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** Creating value for our members and stakeholders through sustainable partnerships.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** Keep going, your biggest achievements are yet to come.



## **PUMLA MOLOPE CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Associate Director, Value Capital Partners (VCP)

**Board Designation:** Deputy President

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** By continuing to be the second-in-command to the President as we both drive the mission and vision of the AWCA.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** The AWCA has evolved through leadership changes and challenges, but has stayed true to itself. Lifting as we rise and staying the course under the guidance of the three-tier strategy of Identify, Nurture and Lead. The organisation is officially a young adult and will continue being that 'big sister' holding members' hands through their CA journey.



## **Tumi Mokgoko CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Senior Manager, Digital Consulting, KPMG Services

**Board Designation:** Head of Professional Development Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** By continuing to unlock access to the Chartered Accountancy profession and the access the qualification offers in participating in changing global dynamics.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** Your unwavering commitment to Identifying, Nurturing and Leading has touched the lives of so many individuals, bringing hope, empowerment and opportunities to those who need them most.



**Lorna Ntuli CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Dealmaker: Infrastructure, Industrial Development Corporation

**Board Designation:** Head of Entrepreneurs' Forum Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** By becoming a central platform for Black female entrepreneurs, providing them with the necessary resources and support to foster growth and continuous learning. We recognise the significance of entrepreneurship in driving economic development and innovation. By cultivating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, we aim to empower individuals to turn their ideas into successful ventures. Through our committee's initiatives, we aspire to build a community that nurtures and inspires aspiring entrepreneurs, fostering their personal and professional growth and enabling them to make a meaningful impact in their respective industries and beyond.

**What advice would you give to your 21-year-old self?** The possibilities are boundless, waiting for you to discover and seize them. Remember, above all else, to always believe in yourself. Throughout life, you will encounter hardships and challenges that may test your resolve, but it is in these moments that your character will truly be forged.



**Zamanguni Gumede CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal

**Board Designation:** Executive Director, Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) Subcommittee

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** By customising the various initiatives to cater to the needs of current and potential members of the KZN region and, subsequently, grow AWCA's presence.

**What advice would you give to your 21-year-old self?** You are doing exceptionally well. Keep exploring your potential and keep moving ahead at your pace. It is, after all, your journey!



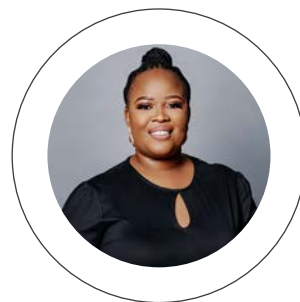
**Thulaganyo Sechoaro CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Senior Manager: Commercial Banking, Standard Bank

**Board Designation:** Head of Marketing and PR Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** The portfolio contributes to the sustainability of the organisation by creating brand awareness, promotion of AWCA initiatives and amplifying AWCA's cause and mission. This is critical for fundraising, encouraging membership, engaging volunteers as well as driving transformation within the profession.

**What advice would you give to your 21-year-old self?** Explore and discover as many new things as you can. Do not limit yourself, allow yourself to evolve and become whoever you want to be.



**Mmabatho Hantise CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Associate Director SaT: Transaction Diligence, Ernst & Young

**Board Designation:** Head of Professional Development: Power Spaces Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** The portfolio will continue to work with market leaders across various industries and sectors to assist African women in building networks and relationships that will create a lasting impact in their lives through indirect and direct mentorship opportunities as well as various engagements and panels that they are exposed to.

**What advice would you give to your 21-year-old self?** Do not let success be defined for you. Continue believing that you will achieve anything that you put your mind to. Remember to also have fun in the process and express your love and gratitude.



**Dankie Mokwena CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Future Leader: General Manager, Imperial

**Board Designation:** Head of Student Chapters

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** The Student Chapter portfolio talks to our Identify pillar. Through the Student Chapters, we are able to reach high school learners from various backgrounds and provide information about the CA profession. The Student Chapters act as support for CA students through initiatives such as mental wellness, information sessions around training offices and different career paths for CAs, outreach programmes and various other initiatives that have real impact not only on the membership base but also society at large.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** The AWCA will always be relevant because it's a reminder of how important sisterhood is. It's a message of hope for many young African women and a pillar women know they can lean on. We just need to continue showing up as our best selves regardless of the changing times.



**THANDEKA DLUDLA CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** SME Business Manager, Old Mutual  
**Board Designation:** Head of the President and Deputy President's Office Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** By increasing visibility and the value of AWCA amongst our stakeholders, particularly in the nurture tier and amongst strategic partners that we can collaborate with in a shared vision of driving the advancement of African Women Chartered Accountants. We also aim to expand the AWCA's national footprint by onboarding different regions and making the organisation more accessible to accountants – both aspiring and established.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** A 21st birthday usually signifies independence and the obtaining of a key to unlock doors in a new chapter. As the AWCA turns 21, I am excited to see the unlocking of initiatives, partnerships and strategies that will see the AWCA grow into an even greater value-adding organisation.



**Refilwe Likotsi CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Financial Business Analyst, PPC Africa  
**AWCA Board Designation:** Head of Leadership Academy Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** Through self-mastery. You cannot become, or be a leader to others without mastery of self. The Leadership Academy plans to position itself to equip members who are pivoting into managerial and senior positions with skills and tools to sharpen their leadership aptitude.

**What advice would you give to your 21-year-old self?** Failure is part of the journey to success. Learn from your failures and most notably, learn to not repeat them again. Secondly, surround yourself with a great "Advisory Board" for your life, a great group of mentors, a good coach and someone you trust to be a sounding board for all your bold and crazy ideas.



**Lesedi Diseko CA(SA)**

**Job Title:** Financial Accountant, Johannesburg Stock Exchange

**Board Designation:** Head of Bursary Portfolio

**How does your portfolio plan to advance the AWCA's mission going forward?** The Bursaries Portfolio will continue to oversee and monitor the bursary recipients' selection process and ensure that the bursars are adequately supported on their academic journey. The portfolio plans to collaborate with several of the internal, and external, constituencies who share a common goal of getting the African girl child across the academic finish line.

**Your message to the AWCA on its 21st anniversary?** May this new season be one of growth and unlocking potential in all of those who are involved in making the AWCA what it is. I would like to congratulate the founding and existing members, the office support team and Board members on a successful tenure. The foundation has been laid with the utmost grit and resilience and ours is to take the baton and take the organisation to the next level.

**21  
YEARS OF  
THE AWCA**

**AS WE CONTINUE  
MOVING TO MASTERY...**



*Congratulations AWCA on reaching this milestone.  
You are a fully-fledged organisation that is ready to take on the world.  
You are ready for adulthood and will achieve greater and better  
things in the next 21 years. — Buhle Hanise*

# PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

As an organisation, our success rests on the selfless efforts of our subcommittee members who — while juggling their nine-to-fives — still find time to help implement the AWCA's mission and values. **Our endless gratitude to these 2023 recipients.**



**Talent Mthiyane,**  
**Professional Development Subcommittee**

Talent has been an active member of this subcommittee since 2019. She is instrumental in the initiatives catering to trainee accountants of the AWCA, most notably the 2019 Career Lift-Off event, where she largely contributed to the framework of a well-received initiative that allowed for trainees to interact and engage with professionals from different career streams.

As part of her portfolio, Talent also applies her creativity in assisting with the subcommittee's digital marketing assets, often adding elements and ideas that come to life through the various marketing tools and networks employed by AWCA. As a qualified Chartered Accountant, Talent also actively keeps her finger on the pulse and relays any matters related to trainees and their development through scanning social media platforms.

Talent also actively assisted in the organisation and execution of the 2022 APC Workshop. A proud ambassador of the AWCA, she continues to provide impactful inputs to events that cater to the upliftment and support of trainee accountants. — **Nominated by Tumi Mokgoko**

**Mandisa Zwane,**  
**Marketing and PR Subcommittee**

Mandisa has been serving on the Marketing and PR subcommittee since 2019. She is instrumental in putting together ideas and articles for *Passion Magazine* — the 2019, 2021 and 2022 editions respectively. She is also passionate about the continuous maintenance of the AWCA website. Her passion has also seen her contribute to other subcommittees such as Stakeholder Engagements, Entrepreneurs' Forum and the Women of Substance conference. As recognition of her commitment to the organisation, Mandisa was recently appointed to lead the Database subcommittee.

Mandisa is known for introducing fresh, strategic thinking to AWCA initiatives. She is creative, hardworking, consistently delivers on assigned projects and is always on the lookout for ways in which the AWCA can stay relevant and impactful. As a qualified Chartered Accountant and Head of the Accounting Sector Division at one of the top four banks, she demonstrates a thorough understanding of the accounting industry — its needs, trends and opportunities for CAs(SA). An irrefutable asset, Mandisa continues to grow with the organisation. — **Nominated by Thulaganyo Sechoaro**





**Micarla Hart,  
Marketing and PR Subcommittee**

Over the years, Micarla has been assisting in various subcommittees and recently joined the marketing and PR subcommittee where she coordinates the compilation of the annual *Passion Magazine*. A dedicated member of the AWCA, Micarla takes pride in giving back. She was instrumental in the successful completion of the 20th Anniversary edition of *Passion Magazine* as well as the relaunch of the AWCA website. As part of her portfolio, Micarla constantly has her ear on the ground and provides valuable input from AWCA members. She constantly challenges the AWCA leadership to think outside the box, explore new ways of connecting with members and strive to always make a meaningful impact.

— **Nominated by Thulaganyo Sechoaro**

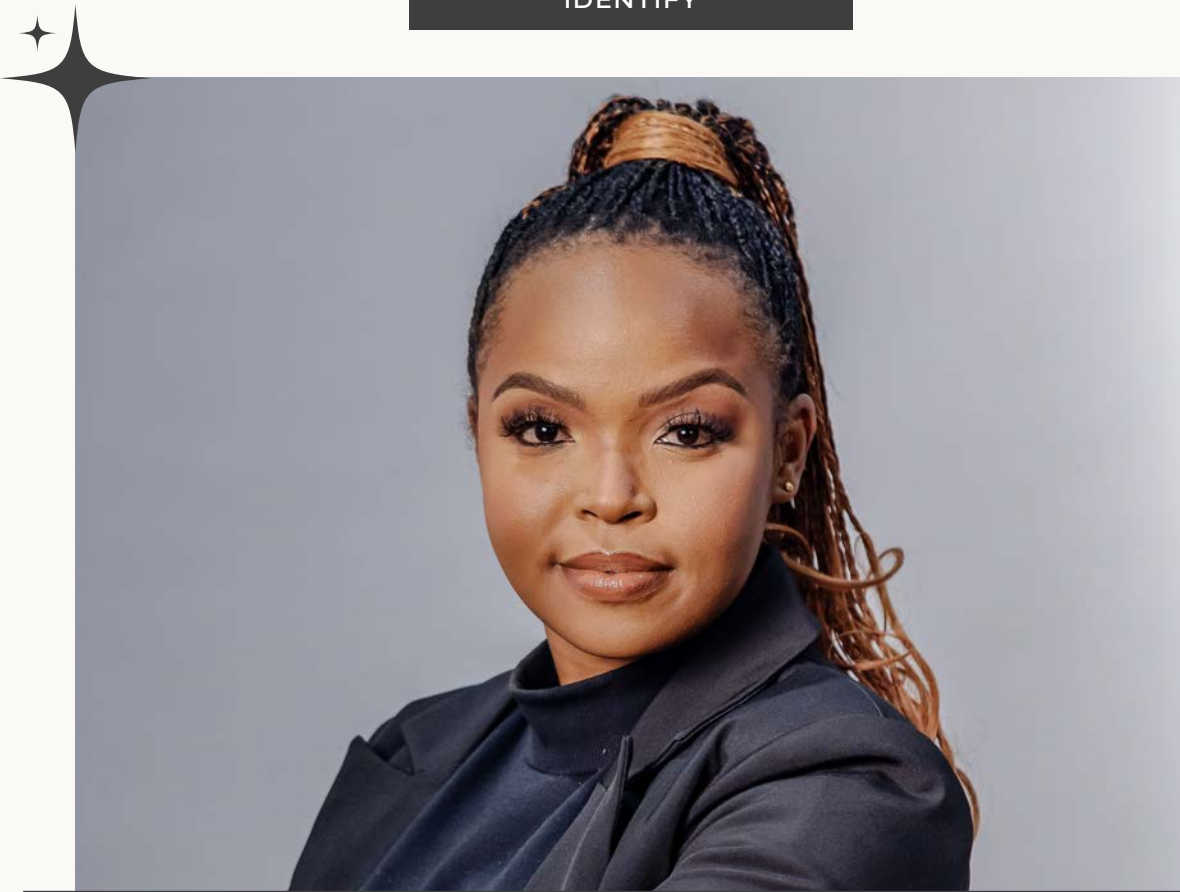


**Tieho Maleke and Selapeng Maledimo, Marketing and PR Subcommittee**

Tieho and Selapeng joined the marketing and PR subcommittee in 2022. Within that short period, they spearheaded the launch of the AWCA Mentorship Campaign. They have further demonstrated their commitment to the AWCA by contributing to other projects within the marketing and PR portfolio, while also running and tending to the demands of the AWCA Mentorship Campaign. They participate in all AWCA events willingly and approach all responsibilities assigned to them with much excitement and tenacity. — **Nominated by Thulaganyo Sechoaro**



**Our sincerest gratitude** goes out to all  
**AWCA members** who serve on  
the various subcommittees. **Your passion and  
selfless efforts keep us going.**



# THE 2023 BURSARY RECIPIENTS

The AWCA Bursary Fund prides itself on helping to increase the pipeline of Black female CAs(SA). Meet the three young women whose academic journey we are supporting this year.

The 21st Anniversary of any organisation signifies the start of a new phase, and is known to symbolise the preparedness of an organisation in unlocking its future. In line with the AWCA's Anniversary theme of 'Dream. Dare. Deliver: Unlocking Potential, Passion and Purpose', our Bursary Fund continues to strive to identify talent and fund the selected students through their Postgraduate of Diploma in Accounting (PDGA). It is a qualification that prepares students for the Initial Test of Competence (ITC) set by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA).

In adjusting to the new phase that the organisation is entering into, we have formed new relations to take the Bursary Fund to new heights. In 2023, we established relationships with Milpark Education and Omega Academy. Both organisations are instrumental to the success of the students at their attempt at the PGDA.

## BIGGER AND BETTER

Milpark Education is the first and, only, fully online SAICA-accredited PGDA which prides itself in representing a new way of qualifying as a CA(SA), with a special focus on guidance, support, flexibility and interaction. The adapted model by Milpark Education features flexible learning that fits around the lives of the students, which is pivotal in ensuring that students are successful in their attempt. The relationship with Milpark Education ensures that the selected African women bursary recipients do not face the barrier to entry so often

caused by financial constraints, therefore ensuring that no student with potential is left behind.

Omega Academy, on the other hand, is an organisation that was established to ensure the empowerment and success of learners facing various challenges in navigating their academics. Omega Academy's mission, 'to ensure that educational content is made practical and delivered with a purpose to achieve success for each individual candidate enrolled in the programme', resonated with the AWCA. We share a common mission of ensuring that the bursary recipients are successful in their respective journeys.

## PAYING IT FORWARD

The Bursary Fund continues to rely on the generous contributions made by members of the AWCA, various stakeholders as well as friends of the AWCA. We appreciate all contributions made to date and everyone to continue digging deeper in their pockets so we can continue to 'Identify', 'Nurture' and 'Lead' the next generation of African Women Chartered Accountants.

"I've always believed that when you educate a girl, you empower a nation," said Queen Rania of Jordan once. With that, may we continue to educate and fulfill the dreams of many young, African women who will someday be formidable CAs(SA) and leaders. — **Lesedi Diseko, Head of the AWCA's Bursary Fund Portfolio**



**Ranzo Annah  
Keitumetse Modiba**

Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting,  
4th Year

**When did the AWCA start funding you?**  
In 2023

**How has the funding benefitted you?**

Before the bursary funding from the AWCA, I had to depend on my father financially as he is the only one with a source of income. This had started straining him financially because I have other siblings whom he needed to take care of. By virtue of being an AWCA bursar, we also received mentors — a huge benefit as CTA is a really difficult course. It is quite uplifting to have someone to guide and motivate you through it all.

**How do you hope to give back to the profession once you qualify?**

I would like to give back to the AWCA sisterhood by becoming one of the mentors dedicated to their bursary recipients. Furthermore, I plan to donate as much as possible to assist future accounting students. I, for one, know how stressful having insufficient funds towards education can be.



**Puseletso Ntsepa  
Segabutla**

Postgraduate Diploma in Applied  
Accounting Sciences, NQF Level 8

**When did the AWCA start funding you?**  
In 2023

**How has the funding benefitted you?**

The funding has benefited me with the support that the organisation provides to us students. The mentorship programme, which forms part of the Bursary Fund, guides us on this journey of becoming CAs(SA). Moreover, we are provided with emotional support as CTA can be both exhausting and overwhelming. The subscription to extra classes through Omega Academy helps us tackle our academic weaknesses, which in turn helps us perform better.

**How do you hope to give back to the profession once you qualify?**

After qualifying, I would like to become a mentor to aspiring CAs, mentoring them on the new CA2025 programme, and being available to offer them any kind of support that they may need.



**Lieketseng Sekoati**

Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting  
Sciences, 4th Year

**When did the AWCA start funding you?**  
In 2023

**How has the funding benefitted you?**

The bursary took away the financial stress of having to pay for my tuition. It also afforded me the opportunity to have a mentor, something I never had during my undergraduate studies. Being guided by someone who has walked in the same shoes, who fully understands what I am going through, adds a lot of value. Having someone to reach out to for support and advice is priceless.

**How do you hope to give back to the profession once you qualify?**

My one wish is to run a programme where qualified CAs(SA), as well as students studying towards the profession, take visit different high schools to shed light on this journey. Many learners are still sitting on the assumption that becoming a CA takes three years of studying — when, in fact, it is a seven-year journey. This realisation can take an emotional toll on some students. I know this because I experienced it. I would also relish the opportunity to become a mentor to first year students.



**“I’ve always believed that  
when you educate a girl, you  
empower a nation...”**

# Spreading The AWCA GOSPEL

**Dankie Mokwena CA(SA)**, Head of the AWCA's Student Chapters Portfolio, on how this campus body will carry the organisations's mandate going forward.

Plus, a closer look at what some of the Student Chapters have been up to.



## THE AWCA'S PRIDE

Firstly, the Student Chapters serve as a valuable source of information for learners. They engage with numerous schools, particularly those in underprivileged areas and those surrounding their respective universities. The Student Chapters provide information about university applications, entry requirements at different universities, and sometimes even offer tutoring assistance. By disseminating information about the Chartered Accountancy profession, they contribute immensely to raising awareness and generating interest among potential candidates.

Secondly, the Student Chapters provide support to students at university level. Run by students themselves, these Chapters possess firsthand knowledge of the challenges and obstacles that students face on their academic journey. By acting as an information hub, they organise events such as 'CAs and Beyond', where they discuss various career paths. They also conduct sessions on mental health, addressing topics such as anxiety, depression and exam techniques. In addition, they take pride in organising and partaking in outreach programmes and other initiatives. All these efforts align with the mission and vision of the AWCA, ensuring that its objectives are fostered from the grass-roots level.

## TO THE FUTURE...AND BEYOND

By leveraging the reach of the Student Chapters, the AWCA can extend its influence to a larger audience. With Student Chapters established at institutions of higher learning in Pretoria, Johannesburg, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, the organisation can directly connect with young people. Strengthening the connection between the Student Chapters and students enhances the AWCA's 'Identify' pillar, and maintains its relevance and vibrancy.

The Student Chapters, amongst many other initiatives, keep the AWCA grounded and firmly focused on its purpose. The 'Identify' pillar of the organisation acts as a reminder of why the AWCA exists in the first place, and represents the foundation for achieving the broader goal of increasing representation of African women in the Chartered Accountancy profession.

The student chapters of the AWCA are instrumental in driving the future of the organisation. By prioritising student-focused initiatives, mental wellness, and pushing the boundaries of what CAs(SA) can accomplish, these chapters contribute to the growth and evolution of the profession. They embody the future of the AWCA, serving as a catalyst to attract more individuals to the profession and ensuring continued support and advancement within the accounting field." — **Dankie Mokwena, Head of the AWCA's Student Chapters Portfolio**

## WORD FROM THE STUDENT CHAPTERS



### UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG (UKZN PMB) CAMPUS

"After the challenging and most life-changing past couple of years, AWCA UKZN-PMB has, like every other society, been restricted from operating as usual. From a large and active membership body to a small and bounded group, our decrease in numbers has not stopped us from accelerating the mother body's vision.

In August 2022, our former executive members, with the help of AWCA KwaZulu Natal subcommittee member Siphumelele Dlungwane hosted an information session for Grade 11 female learners at Russell High School, in Pietermaritzburg. We also hosted an online 'Coffee Date Series' that was open to PMB and Westville members. The online platform aims to connect Student Chapters members with successful Black female CAs(SA).

We are finally back campus full time, and the newly appointed executive body has been hard at work on a recruitment drive. We are aiming to have fully re-established and created enough awareness to successfully register and

MILPARK  
EDUCATION



incorporating



ca•connect



The **1<sup>st</sup>** & **ONLY**  
**SAICA** accredited  
**ONLINE PATH** to  
**CA(SA)**

**Apply & Enrol**

Our approach  
prioritises **SUPPORT**,  
**FLEXIBILITY**, &  
interaction to  
accommodate **BUSY**  
**SCHEDULES &**  
**LIFESTYLES**



[www.caconnect.co.za](http://www.caconnect.co.za)



be recognised by UKZN next year.

For the remainder of the year, the executive body plans to physically go out and recruit more members

We also have school visits, Mental Health Fridays, a Women's Day event and examination preparation sessions — accompanied by exam care packages — planned. Each activity will either serve the community or AWCA members, which is an important element of our vision." — **Phiwokuhle Mjokovana, Chairperson**



#### UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA (UP)

"On 8 August 2022, we celebrated Women's Day by visiting Peas In A Pod, a safety home for abused girls. We provided lunch for the 12 young ladies and delivered boxes of sanitary pads and toiletries, mainly donated by our members. On 14 October 2022, we hosted an event that included a picnic to celebrate a successful first semester, an annual General Meeting and the voting in of the new committee and an exam motivation talk with a guest speaker.

On 21 March 2023, we held a Sandwich drive at Louis Botha Kinderhuis, where we fed approximately 85 children at the

home. On 11 May 2023, we hosted an information session where we invited a graduate recruiter — who provided tips on improving employability — and five CAs(SA)s who shared valuable insights on the different opportunities that exist beyond auditing.

On 19 May 2023, we visited the Mamelodi High School matric class to educate them on the Chartered Accountancy profession. We were joined by a Specialist Senior Student Advisor from UP who provided guidance on the application process.

The UP Student Chapter plans to host events that will add value to each member's student journey. Being students ourselves, we believe that there is a glaring gap in the knowledge on the different opportunities within the CA profession post university. Through our events, we plan to bridge this gap. And through our campus activities, we hope to create a sisterhood and primary networking platform for our members."



#### WITS UNIVERSITY

"In 2022, the then Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi indicated the decline of learners enrolled in Maths and Accounting had declined from

35 000 in 2008 to 14 700. These stats propelled us to visit a school each year to conscientise learners about the Chartered Accountant profession, assist them with university applications and reignite learners' passion for Mathematics and Accountancy. We visited KwaBhekilanga Secondary School in Alexandra in September 2022.

This is the school our Chapter has adopted and is currently working with. Through our partnership with SAICA, we hope to rope in more professional bodies to increase the number of learners interested in the CA profession. Our presentation on what it takes to become a CA(SA) evoked much curiosity from the learners. Our Chapter members who had tagged along on this school visit each spoke about their schooling journey, their matric and university experience and why they chose to study towards being CAs. Every story was unique and inspired the learners to see the endless possibilities provided by the profession.

Learners were gifted with AWCA branded lanyards and pens. We also shared a QR code that they could scan to access a list of bursary funds — these included the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and a Wits Prospectus." — **Mbalenhle Mhlango, Chairperson**



WIPHOLD

We are a proudly black women-owned investment company focussed on acquiring and building strategic investments in key sectors of the economy from mining and agriculture to cement manufacturing and financial services. Our philosophy is to focus on investments that offer value and returns which we can use to drive our broad-based empowerment initiatives. Today we add meaning and bring hope to more than 200 000 beneficiaries.

Business UNUSUAL





# *The Next Phase of* THE AWCA

The AWCA 20th Anniversary, celebrated with its annual conference by day and a fundraising banquet in the evening, was fitting of an organisation that consistently strives to further the transformation and gender equality agendas in the accountancy profession. **By Kemong Mopedi**



By far one of the biggest networking events on our calendar, the AWCA's 20th Anniversary was a grand gathering of some of South Africa's sharpest minds in corporate, politics, academia and the advocacy spaces. Under the theme 'Moving to Mastery: Dream, Dare, Deliver', both the conference and gala dinner served as an indelible walk down memory lane, as well as a commemoration of the strides the AWCA has made, and those it is yet to make in uplifting more and more young Black females who wish to make a formidable mark for themselves in the Chartered Accountancy profession.



Held in Sun City on 5 August 2022, the conference was marked by captivating discussions, held under various panels and themes, by panellists such as Alupheli Sithebe, Bongive Beja-Ntsiko, Yolanda Cuba, Boniswa Madikizela, Robert Zwane, Lucretia Khumalo and facilitated by Noluthando Mthonti, with the keynote address delivered by Tryphosa Ramano and closing remarks by Lucratia Mathe.

All in all, attendees walked away inspired by the day's events — and encouraged the AWCA to continue embracing its purpose.



## AN EVENING SHIFT

Then came the moment to celebrate excellence at the magnificent gala dinner. With proceedings led by Noleen Maholwana-Sangqu, and the welcome address delivered by AWCA President Buhle Hanise, a celebratory mood filled every corner of the room. The AWCA Luminary Awards — aimed at honouring the 20 stakeholders and various other friends of the AWCA — were handed out to the deserving recipients. As per tradition, selected members of the AWCA's various subcommittees were honoured with a President's Award for their selfless dedication to the organisation's cause.

Founding members Zodwa Manase, who delivered a nostalgic speech on the history of the AWCA, and Sindi Mabaso-Koyana, who gave an inspiring keynote address left guests with some much-needed food for thought. Guests were all in agreement that the highlight of the evening was former members of the AWCA and the current board ascending the stage to cut the cake, while dancing away to Two Tons O' Fun's *Just Us*. It was, indeed, a moment no image could ever fully capture — and also a reminder that the AWCA had much to celebrate.

"History only has space for outstanding people. Let history remember you as outstanding," said said the remarkable Yolanda Cuba during her closing remarks at the conference earlier that morning. And with that, we hope that history will remember the AWCA for doing its bit to help advance the transformation and gender equality agendas in our lifetime.



# THE NEXT PHASE OF THE AWCA



MEET TAFADZWA,  
A CA(SA) AND  
PASSIONATE COACH  
WHO **EMPOWERS**  
**INDIVIDUALS TO**  
**TRANSFORM THEIR**  
**LIVES AND UNLOCK**  
**THEIR GREATEST**  
**POTENTIAL.**

TAFADZWA MAKOMBE, CA(SA)  
FOUNDER: ELEVATE  
TRANSFORMATION COACHING  
**DIFFERENCE MAKER**



For any organisation to operate efficiently, it needs skilled, committed individuals who are continuously developing themselves with the purpose of positively contributing to business performance.

As the founder of Elevate Transformation Coaching, Tafadzwa believes that it takes all aspects of an individual working in harmony to function optimally. She has helped thousands of people transcend their limiting beliefs and realise their best potential, working with individuals to help them reach their professional ambitions. She also works with organisations to help them improve teamwork in order to achieve their goals.

Tafadzwa has helped over 5000 people to transform their lives through her coaching programmes and has provided additional support and techniques through her self-published book, "Learn. Unlearn. Relearn".

**Partner with a CA(SA). Partner with a difference maker.**



# 2023

## *Stakeholders'*

### BREAKFAST

This event, aimed at unpacking the AWCA theme 'Moving to Mastery: Dream, Dare, Deliver', was a resounding success with stakeholders and other guests.

**By Nthepe Maswinyaneng**



The AWCA's Stakeholders' Breakfast, held on 17 March, was an inspiring event that brought together the AWCA's current and potential stakeholders to engage under the theme 'Moving to Mastery: Dream, Dare, Deliver'. The theme was aimed at mapping out ways in which the organisation can continue to make an impact that will encourage and assist women to overcome challenges in the accounting profession and work together to create a better future.

#### A WARM AWCA WELCOME

In true AWCA style, the ambience at the breakfast was welcoming, with a live band serenading attendees in the background. Guests were treated to a breakfast spread, while networking and connecting with other like-minded women. Speakers included AWCA President Buhle Hanise, and various board members who also delivered inspiring speeches and a presentation on the importance of the AWCA's existence, increasing the Black female CA(SA) pipeline, continuing to empower qualified CAs(SA) and shared her own experiences.

Other notable moments from the breakfast included the networking session, and hearing various testimonials from women who shared on the AWCA's impact in their lives, both from a mentorship and financial assistance perspective.



## A VIEW FROM BELOW

For aspiring CAs(SA) in attendance, it provided many with a realistic view of the profession and that, although the journey is tough, there are organisations available to help make the journey easier — even from a mental-health point of view.

Other noteworthy takeaways from the breakfast were the importance of allyship and collaboration. Many attendees noted the value of providing support to students, professionals and ensuring that a bridge is always being built for every shortcoming women might face, connecting with other women and building a supportive community. The breakfast also highlighted the need for continued advocacy for women's rights and growth within the accounting profession.

Overall, the Stakeholders' Breakfast was a delightful celebration of what the AWCA has, and is yet to, achieved and a call to action for progress as the organisation continues to 'Dream, Dare, Deliver'.

//

Other **noteworthy takeaways** from the breakfast were the **importance of allyship and collaboration.**"





## ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM

# Meet-And-Greet

This event had one purpose in mind – to create and accelerate business connections for entrepreneurs who are members and friends of the AWCA.

By Lorna Ntuli CA(SA)

**“To become an entrepreneur, you must be determined and ambitious. Motivation is a social or psychological call-to-action or an innate drive for success – success requires motivation.” – Unknown**

The Entrepreneurs' Forum hosted a meet-and-greet earlier this year, its first event of 2023. The main segment of the event was formatted around a speed dating series where the esteemed speakers were given an opportunity, in an intimate setting, to share their wisdom on matters pertaining to the fundamental building blocks of entrepreneurship through their varied lenses. The session was facilitated by the Entrepreneurs' Forum's very own subcommittee member, Thandeka Dlodla, who is an SME Business manager. The speakers, who represented capital providers and funders, charmed the crowd with their knowledge, experience and wit. Living up to its namesake, the entrepreneurs in attendance were dazzled by the speakers, as evidenced by their engaging and probing questions.

### A MATTER OF FINANCE

Following a very important and passionate campaign about the importance of personal finances delivered by the event's sponsors, Allan Gray, the speakers took turns at the podium. First up was Naomi Mtshali, Regional Manager of the Gauteng regional office of the IDC. Mtshali shared her experiences in allocating capital to SMMEs by relaying key tenets of a successful funding application, and the various funding instruments available to entrepreneurs — from senior debt

instruments, equity instruments to mezzanine instruments. Most saliently, Mtshali spoke at length about SME-Connect, an initiative by the Industrial Development Corporation that serves as a “strategic collaboration model used to expand and deepen industrial development in the small industrial business segment through leveraging the skills, balance sheets, resources, networks and influence of all partner entities to develop and grow SMEs through facilitating access to markets; access to appropriate and timely finance and focused business and technical support.”

### VENTURE CAPITAL

Next up was Philani Mzila, who represented the Venture Capital faction of the funder's ecosystem. Mzila shared the following insights about what makes a ‘venture backable’:

- A strong team with technical proficiency that can actually sell the idea;
- It is important that the business achieves regional dominance and not be a single country player.
- The product and/or technology needs to be compelling to customers and integrate into their everyday lives. The product also needs to be high-quality, solve a problem and make life easier for customers.
- In an ultra-competitive environment, what gives the venture and product a competitive advantage over existing products/services?
- The venture needs to have developed, or should be able to develop key partnerships that can be leveraged as distribution channels.

Mzila piqued the crowd's interest by sharing that the success of the venture is determined by the business' ability to return (to the venture capitalists) the value of the entire fund. The third speaker, speaking to the Private Equity (PE) theme and duly representing the ACWA's investment vehicle, Precious Mqguba gracefully delivered insights about the world of Private Equity. The attendees learned about the various segments of Private Equity in South Africa and the dominance of the mid-market space; about the fundamental investment philosophy of 'backing the right jockey', which is a popular idiom in PE highlighting the importance of supporting and working alongside the right management team; and about the rigorous due diligence processes that inform investment decisions.

## ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The final speaker, Sibusiso Nkosi, regaled the crowd with his wit and spoke to the journey, mechanics and politics of Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) funding in South Africa. Having spent many years, and being somewhat of a pundit for the programme, Nkosi stressed the importance of entrepreneurs needing to understand how ESD works as a way to benefit from the initiative. He went on to encourage attendees, as a collective, to stand together and ensure that ESD is impactful. Nkosi believes that SMMEs need to be active participants in the ESD framework and not just beneficiaries of incubation programmes. Finally, he urged the AWCA, as an impactful association, to anchor its members because Chartered Accountants have the requisite skills and knowledge to assist SMMEs on finance-heavy projects.

The crowd responded fervently to all the speakers, with hands constantly held up to ask incisive questions. To lend the event

more enthusiastic vigour, the 'Speed Networking' session was followed by 'elevator pitches', delivered by a handful of charged-up entrepreneurs from the crowd who took to the microphone for one minute to eagerly outline and sell their business and/or products.

To conclude the evening, the attendees and speakers moved to another room for a general networking session. The spirit of the 'Speed Networking' session carried well into this part of the evening, as the crowd passionately mingled. Business cards and LinkedIn profiles were exchanged, and with that, the purpose of the gathering was fulfilled.

## KEY LESSONS

Following the success of the event, the Entrepreneurs' Forum was encouraged by AWCA Deputy President, Pumla Molope, who had earlier given a delightful opening address, to continue the path of organising and hosting such events as a way to continuously engage and support entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurs' Forum believes in the importance of enterprising as way to effect social change. To be successful, entrepreneurs need support from various structures and stakeholders and through this first of many events, the Entrepreneurs' Forum is reinforcing its support. A key theme that came up during the 'Speed Networking' session was that alongside capital, entrepreneurs need access to markets.

In heeding the call of the Deputy President, the Entrepreneurship Forum hopes to explore this theme, and many others, in the future and continue the work of bridging the gap of information and knowledge for its members and friends in the entrepreneurial landscape.



# Mentorship Relaunch

The AWCA Mentorship Programme is back and better than before, reports **Selapeng Maledimo CA(SA)**.



Held in partnership with AIH, Duke Corporate Education and Cisco, the AWCA Mentorship Programme relaunch took place on 20 May 2023 at the Duke Corporate Education (Duke CE) offices in Bryanston. In attendance were the mentors and mentees selected to participate in the AWCA's newly relaunched Mentorship Campaign, AWCA board and subcommittee members, as well as Duke CE and AIH guests. The event was held to revive what was previously known as The Mentorship Circle. The Mentorship Programme is aimed at supporting aspiring and qualified CAs(SA) throughout the different levels of their respective careers.

## BALL ROLLING

Charmaine Houvet, the MC, kicked off the proceedings by reminding attendees of the importance of celebrating one another, followed by a presentation highlighting the background of the initial Mentorship Circle which was established around 2016/2017. The presentation included a notable quote by Wendy Luhabe which read, "Stand in your power".

This quote was a reminder of the power women possess, and how they should be unapologetic about it. Houvet also shared a Biblical anecdote, another great reminder to the attendees that if women are intentional about working together, they can break boundaries and effect any necessary changes for generations to come. Houvet's last key message was, "Stay in your power and be known for your name".

AWCA President Buhle welcomed the attendees, emphasising that women need each other and should always have each other's backs. Hanise made special mention of the great work done by AWCA over the years and thanked AIH for their continued support. Her advice was that mentorship does not always have to be formal, and that mentees should remain open-minded and take guidance from those who have walked the journey before them. Also worth noting was that mentees need to show up for themselves, drive the mentorship process and ensure that they develop themselves, while lifting others as they rise.



## WORDS OF WISDOM

Shamla Chetty, Duke Corporate Education CEO, reminded the attendees that building on current foundations is still acceptable, and that they do not always have to rebuild. Chetty reiterated that sisterhood is about being present and creating hope for our country. Her key pointers were:

Embrace who you are; you are the project and the most powerful asset — and you are always a work in progress; forge connections and lift as you rise because success is not yours alone; embrace resilience and challenges; lastly, have hope, stay inspired and be yourself.

Tsholofelo Molefe, Executive Director: Group Chief Financial Officer at MTN, delivered her keynote speech with tremendous wit and verve, keeping the audience begging for more. She shared her life and career journey, detailing how her different experiences have led her to where she is currently. She noted the importance of taking opportunities outside one's studied career path in order to broaden one's horizon in preparation for potential future roles and becoming a well-rounded leader.

She also reminded the mentees about the importance of having either a sponsor, a mentor or a coach. Where leadership is concerned, Molefe noted that leaders should always act beyond reproach, act with integrity and surround themselves with the right people. "Go with your intuition and don't settle for less," she emphasised. This lesson, in particular, saved Molefe's career when she found herself in an unfavourable position once. "Had I not always acted with integrity, I could have lost my whole career when this incident occurred. A great leader is not afraid to work with people who are more knowledgeable than they are. They should never be intimidated by team members who are better than them as a company's interests should always come first," she shared.

On the question of what mentorship looks like? Molefe answered with her personal favourite quote, "Far better it is to dare mighty things..."



## A WRAP

Tasked with delivering the vote of thanks, Sindi Mabaso-Koyana thanked all stakeholders involved as well as the attendees for showing up for themselves. Echoing the sentiments shared by all the speakers, Mabaso-Koyana reminded attendees that we can all make an impact where we are. "Shine where you are, influence where you are," she enthused.

The event then transcended to the next phase, the speed-networking session facilitated by myself (Selapeng Maledimo) and Tieho Maleke. The attendees on one side of the table were required to move up a chair every three minutes to allow for a more meaningful networking experience. The networking sessions allowed members to meet people they had previously seen at AWCA events but had never interacted with. Thuli Sechoaro, the Head of AWCA's Marketing and PR Portfolio, expressed her gratitude to all attendees and also thanked the subcommittee team that made the event a success.

## MENTEE FEEDBACK

"Before attending the relaunch, I assumed we would meet up with our mentors and that it would end there. Seeing a panel of successful professional women who are doing amazingly in their careers telling us about where the mentorship idea came from was a welcome surprise. They touched on the importance of paying it forward, reiterating that they, too, did not get to the top on their own — and that they owe much of how they turned out to

people they met on their careers paths who advocated for them. As a result of that discussion, I am also motivated to pay it forward and I am almost certain that everyone in attendance shared the same sentiments.

This is how we will grow a base of phenomenal women in the workplace, especially in C-suite positions. I had often heard that women are over-mentored, yet under-sponsored. It was refreshing to hear how well the panellists acknowledged each other's greatness. I look forward to building meaningful relationships with our mentors." — **Marumo Masemola (Mentee)**

"As a starting point, I have never had a mentor outside of my immediate employment that would assist me in navigating my career journey. With that said, I am very excited about the relaunch of the AWCA's Mentorship Programme. Mentorship within AWCA is pivotal to the two pillars of our strategy and that is to identify and nurture women leaders. Through the mentorship programme, I am able to access coaching, mentorship and sponsorship opportunities from great women leaders.

The speed networking activity was really a fun element to add to "break the ice" between the mentees and mentors. This networking opportunity allowed everyone an opportunity to interact with someone that they had never met before. Overall, the Mentorship Programme relaunch was a success and I am really thrilled to be a part of it."

— **Nokuzola Morata (Mentee)**



# APC PREPARATION WORKSHOP 2022

**Talent Mthiyane CA(SA)**, a member of the Professional Development Subcommittee, summarises the success that was the 15th APC workshop.

One of the AWCA's strategic pillars is to 'Nurture' aspiring CAs(SA) through programmes such as the Annual Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) Preparation Workshop. The 2022 edition of this workshop was the first in-person event since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Simply explained, the APC is a case study exam that requires candidates to research and plan how they would respond to real-life tasks. In doing so, they are essentially required to demonstrate their professional competence. The workshop aims to give candidates insight on how to identify technical key points, improve their exam technique and how to mentally prepare for the assessment.

## ANNUAL TRADITION

The APC Preparation Workshop has grown to become one of the AWCA's flagship programmes for candidates seeking that 'last push' before the final hurdle. The workshop brings together an APC board course lecturer, a marker as well as a past candidate who has repeated, then later passed the exam. Each speaker is briefed to touch on different areas of the exam and the preparation required. Held in collaboration with Deloitte South Africa, the 2022 workshop saw a positive turnout, while provision in the form of an online link was made for candidates outside of Gauteng.

Kicking off the session was Morepe Ncalo, an APT lecturer who is also an empire at SAICA's APC marking sessions. Ncalo spoke at length about the approach and strategy that candidates should adopt when preparing for the exam. Urging the

candidates to read critically and use their research skills, she emphasised the need to understand what you know and do not know, as well as ensuring that their research addresses the problem identified in the case study. The rest of her presentation focused on time management, especially during the pre-release period — how to go about compiling your file as well as what sets apart a competent candidate from a borderline competent (BC) or limited competent (LC) candidate." Ncalo also encouraged candidates to be intentional about how they perform their research and not to follow a 'divide and conquer' approach to their research.

**The APC Dos and Don'ts** — how to handle curveballs and move from an LC or BC to a competent, were the key themes covered by the second speaker Andile Nkosi. An Associate Director at PWC, and a seasoned APC exam marker, Nkosi emphasized the importance of preparation, time management, understanding the link between your research, the information on the day as well as the required. Her practical guidelines included how to plan and document your response using the right professional language, ensuring that your answers have both coverage and depth, while encouraging candidates to be deliberate in answering every question in the exam. She also addressed the topic of Ethics, which based on the questions from the audience, is a sore point for a lot of APC candidates. She encouraged candidates to stick to the facts and remain objective, express a professional opinion and back it up with an Act or legislature.

The session culminated with a motivational segment from



Andisa Ngcobo, a past APC candidate who conquered the APC exam on her third attempt. Armed with a brilliant slide deck and an energy to match, Ngcobo took the candidates through what she believed were her challenges during the first two unsuccessful attempts — and what changed when she finally passed the exam. “Just because you are brilliant at your job does not mean that you will pass the APC exam,” she highlighted. She also encouraged candidates to be honest with themselves about the amount of work they had put in, emphasising that group work was meant to only enhance one’s knowledge. “Taking ownership of your preparation is important. I know everything that is in my file because I prepared it”, she said. Mental health throughout the preparation stage as well as during the exam was another key theme in Ngcobo’s presentation. She provided practical examples of how she took care of her mental health and urged each candidate to find what works for them.

The Q&A after each speaker, as well as at the very end of the session, was also an opportunity for candidates to obtain some last minute advice and have their burning questions answered.

The AWCA would like to extend its deepest gratitude to Deloitte South Africa, whose generosity enabled our organisation to make an impact and contribute to the development of future African female Chartered Accountants. We would also like to thank the amazing guest speakers for sacrificing their time, the candidates for taking time away from their preparations and trusting us with the process, as well as those involved in organising the event.





# CAREER LIFT-OFF 2022

**Paballo Phiri CA(SA)**, a member of the Professional Development Sub-Committee, rounds up the events of the 2022 Career Lift-Off workshop.

You deserve to be here! Occasionally, we all need that gentle reminder that we deserve to be in whatever space that we find ourselves occupying.

The 4th Annual Career Lift-Off was a great success and a resounding reminder to trainees and qualified CAs(SA), alike, that we deserve to be here. After two years of hosting the Career Lift Off virtually, due to the global pandemic, the AWCA Professional Development Sub-Committee hosted an in-person session at the SAICA Offices in Illovo on 29 October last year.

## THE GOAL

The objective of the Career Lift-Off workshop is to display the various career paths available to trainee accountants upon completion of their SAICA training contracts. This initiative emerged following an observation that the majority of newly qualified CAs(SA) had limited knowledge about the various career options available to them. Definitely worth noting in 2022 was that the event attracted not only trainees, but qualified CAs(SA) looking to delve deeper into what career paths are available. Always remember that the option to change course is always there for you to explore.

## KICK OFF

The session was kick-started by Kefilwe Pitsie CA(SA), currently the Head of Finance: Client Coverage CHNW Division at Standard Bank. Some of the key insights she shared were the importance of showing up consistently, something she

said stood her in good stead throughout her career. Kefilwe's bubbly and infectious personality made her relatable with the audience. She shared pointers on how to best take care of one's mental health while also striving to show up as the best version of yourself. Often when we cast our eyes to our future careers, we work towards that future while (at times) neglecting our present selves. The truth of the matter is that, in order for one's career to take off and soar, it is imperative that our mental health be continuously tended to.

Cyprian Teffo CA(SA), a fond friend of the AWCA and Executive Head in Finance and Operations at the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, cited that in everything one does in their career, one should remain cognizant that they are always being watched. This point brought to the fore the subject of brand legacy and the type of reputation you want associated with you. Teffo emphasised the importance of establishing, as well as maintaining, a network in the accounting profession. Having started his career at Discovery, he learnt that failure and acknowledging your shortcomings can be pivotal in your career as these setbacks propel you to become a better version of yourself.

## THE PATH TO THE TOP

Next was the Management Consulting and Investment Management segment of the workshop. Here, we were joined by Tshenolo Mametja, a Deals Manager at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), and Kgalalelo Mokhutsane, a Senior Investment Analyst at the National Empowerment Fund (NEF). Mametja shared that while it is good to fight for one's



career, being in constant fight or flight mode can wear one down and negatively impact one's career and mental health. One other lesson she drove home was for professionals to be unapologetic in ensuring that their values align with those of the organisation they work for.

Mokhutsane's key takeaway was that trainees should remember that there is always room for rebranding and redirecting. "There is power in agility and do not be afraid to explore new avenues. If you want to study further, have an action plan and implement it. Do not study for the sake of studying. The intention needs to be clear from the onset and know how you are going to use that qualification in advancing your career," she advised. Mokhutsane's point highlighted the core purpose of the Career Lift-Off workshop. And that is, once trainees reach their third year of articles or qualify, they ask: "Where to from here?". The speakers highlighted the importance of creating and maintaining the relationships with those around you.

Katleho Makopo, an Executive CA(SA) and General Finance Recruitment Consultant, also a friend of the AWCA emphasised the importance of personal branding and authenticity. "It is important for one to differentiate themselves from the rest of the crowd during their articles, put your hand up when you can and be visible," she urged. Katleho also touched on the importance of having a CV that sets you apart from the rest, adding, "Be proud of your professional achievements and ensure that they are the first thing that potential employees see when they look at your CV."



## TOP TIER INSPIRATION

SAICA has done an incredible job by having initiatives such as the SAICA Top 35 Under 35, where they recognise and celebrate CAs(SA) that are making strides in their respective career journeys. Such initiatives serve as inspiration for trainees to someday be nominated. Therefore, we were thrilled to be joined by three former SAICA Top 35 Under 35 finalists on the day. Tafadwza Makombe, Head of Talent at the Accounting and Financial Advisory and 2021 Top 35 Under 35 finalist, who admitted to having a passion for empowering people. She channelled her focus to helping others develop themselves, which led to her becoming a life coach and even an author. "It is okay to start a new path even when it has never been done before," she shared.



Millycent Mashele CA (SA), a Director and Audit Partner at AfricaRAS, a 2020 SAICA 35 Under 35 finalist and Founding Director at The Legacy Centre, emphasised that the awkward moments in one's career can be instrumental in shaping a new career path. "The process of self-actualisation is crucial in your career and equally important is allowing things to happen organically. Do not force it because it will come," said Mashele.

Mojalefa Mosala, a 2020 SAICA 35 Under 35 finalist, currently a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, was the final speaker of the day. Mosala challenged attendees to look inwards and identify what fuels their passion. "The biggest lesson in life is choosing a career that fuels your passion and serves as the driving force that will keep you going each day," he said.





# A Mile In Her Corporate Heels

In partnership with Futuregrowth, the Cape Town AWCA office hosted the first Power Spaces of 2022, an event that dissected some of the challenges women still face in corporate today. **By Gavral Speelman**



'A Mile In Her Corporate Heels' is a fitting metaphor for what it can sometimes feel like to be a woman in corporate. A woman wearing heels from 9am to 5pm comes with some level of discomfort — it may make us less sturdy and prone to accidentally tripping and falling.

However, with all the challenges women face, the most pertinent question to ask today is: How do we move past the hurdles so that adversities no longer evoke feelings of failure, but instead present opportunities for women to elevate, as well as display their confidence and power. We are certain about one thing — we are definitely strutting our way to the top! Power Spaces (previously referred to as Power Tea) aims to bring industry leaders from various sectors together to engage in informative and lively discussions on the challenges and successes women experience in the corporate world.

## TO BEGIN WITH

On 8 October 2022, AWCA hosted a Power Space event aptly titled 'A Mile In Her Corporate Heels' in partnership with Futuregrowth — at the Vineyard Hotel in Cape Town. The panellists were Mary-Anne Musekiwa, Coronation CFO, Daphne Botha, Portfolio Manager and Head of Risk Management at



Futuregrowth, and Bongiwe Ntuli, The Foschini Group CFO. Kefilwe Pitsie CA(SA) was the moderator.

The calibre and choice of panellists was truly unmatched. During the discussions, the panellists were unapologetically vulnerable and answered questions about overcoming their own hardships with much vigour and honesty. Although the panellists currently hold positions of power in their respective fields, they admitted that it was not always easy. However, they all exemplified grit and endurance — and above all else they stressed the importance of giving back.

The three key themes that were highlighted were around developing one's self-belief, navigating the hardships women face in the corporate world and lastly paying it forward.

## UNWAVERING BELIEF

When taking on a challenge, "Be naïve! Boldly believe in yourself!" said Mary- Anne Musekiwa. "The first step to conquering hurdles is knowing your worth and believing that you are capable," added Musekiwa. When doubt creeps in, Bongiwe Ntuli shared that she immediately squashes the negative thoughts. "I leave no room for negativity and do not let any negative thoughts fester," reiterated Ntuli. Research has shown that reciting positive affirmations daily can be instrumental in keeping the mind healthy.

It is important to note that believing in yourself does not mean refusing help or to learn from others. Part of believing in yourself comes with being comfortable enough to ask questions and to ask for guidance from the people around you. Also equally important is understanding that it does not take away from your ability to do the job. Another tip to building self-belief is ensuring that you have the necessary support around you. Surround yourself with individuals that will provide you with perspective and good guidance. For example, you can have a mentor that helps you navigate the ups and downs of work, a life coach that helps you achieve your goals, a therapist that helps you understand your feelings and provides you with coping skills.

## THE SACRIFICES

No role in corporate comes easy regardless of the position held. To cope, it is important to ensure that you always have a goal that you are working towards — and that the goal aligns with your passion. This strategy, agreed the panellists, makes the sacrifices worth it in the end. That said, it is important to distinguish if the sacrifice is constructive or destructive. Often, the initial view is that there is no such thing as good pain and that pain in its very nature hurts, and should therefore always be viewed in a negative light. However, even though constructive pain is uncomfortable, it promotes healing. The panellists advised the importance of identifying pain that will benefit you and make you stronger versus pain that does no good for your overall well-being.

## POWER SPACES IN CORPORATE

Do not wait for a movement to take place at work. Instead, be the very change you wish to see in the world. Be intentional about investing in women in the workplace. The responsibility does not only lie with the women who hold top positions but with everyone. "It is up to each person to take another person along," said Daphne Botha. This rings true because so often, we think there needs to be a formal plan in place — when in reality, it is the small moments that can build an individual up. Something as small as providing a junior colleague the opportunity to lead a meeting or providing positive feedback when good work has been submitted.

There were so many more pearls of wisdom shared at 'A Mile In Her Corporate Heels' that left attendees feeling inspired and rejuvenated. And therein lies the importance of Power Spaces. We need more events of this nature that help nurture future leaders and provide women with opportunities to engage with like-minded individuals who have walked the journey they are yet to embark on. The aim? To ensure that the concept of 'women in the corporate world' is not regarded as the road less traveled in the years to come.



# NAVIGATING THE CORPORATE JUNGLE GYM

The Johannesburg installment of the Power Spaces event, in partnership with RMB, was a lesson-filled gathering geared at empowering attendees with the necessary skills to navigate corporate.



Though the Johannesburg Power Spaces event took place midweek, it still attracted a good turnout of professionals eager to learn fresh insights on how to navigate their corporate careers. Hosted at the RMB offices in Sandton, guests were treated to tapas and cocktails, while feasting their eyes on the captivating artwork.

The evening was nothing short of empowering as many women are still trying to find their feet professionally. The resounding reminder from almost all the panellists was to dust ourselves off — and give those monkey bars another try — right after falling off the corporate jungle gym.

## ORDER OF THE EVENING

Buhle Hanise (President of AWCA) welcomed the guests and thanked RMB for sponsoring the event, and being a huge advocate for platforms such as the AWCA that empower and inspire women aspiring to become future leaders.

Head of Corporate Client Group Nana Phiri, speaking on behalf of RMB, set the tone by giving an account of her experience of the corporate jungle gym. Stepping into a leadership position at RMB while nine months pregnant was no small feat, she shared.



Our renowned facilitator Mpho Mookapele, Chief Executive Officer of The Energy and Water Sector Education Training Authority, introduced the topic at hand by elaborating on what the Power Spaces seeks to achieve. At their core, the Power Spaces events seek to empower, enlighten, and create meaningful networks of mentorship for AWCA members.

The panel comprised of women in leadership, who have either moved laterally in the careers or gone into spaces that were not necessarily their conventional career path. In their various anecdotes, the panellists showcased that sometimes, when access to the swing is limited in the jungle gym, there is always the option to try a slide or the monkey bars instead.

The panellists:

- **Mary Vilakazi:** Chief Operating Officer of FirstRand Limited
- **Nompumelelo Mokou:** Managing Director of Dimension Data, Southern Africa
- **Zama Khanyile:** Divisional Executive for Venture Capital and Corporate Finance at the National Empowerment Fund and former President of the AWCA

A few questions were posed: How does one reach the monkey bars if they are not tall enough? How do you get to the monkey bar when there is a big obstacle in front of you? How do you play in the jungle gym and still flourish?

## IN HINDSIGHT

With each speaker sharing their unique experience of their journey in corporate, we were reminded of the importance of acknowledging one's achievements and reflecting authentically on the highs and the lows.

Vilakazi kicked off the conversation by sharing an overview of her career journey. She started out in corporate, then stepped out of corporate to pursue entrepreneurship, and later went back to corporate. "At times you need to try new areas of the jungle gym – as you will never know how good you are at sliding down the slide if you never try it. Taking risks is all part of building networks that will help you navigate the corporate jungle gym," explained Vilakazi.

Mokou expanded on building networks, using a 'coffee date' metaphor. Coffee dates, she said, are how she pivoted from not just being an old-fashioned numbers CA(SA), but actually heading up one of the biggest IT companies in the world. Her strategy is to have strategic coffee dates with various leaders within her organisation. "You never know who is listening and ready to help you accelerate your career," she advised. She also explored the risk avenue as an entrepreneur. Risks present opportunities, and had she not taken any, she would not have experienced the uniqueness of the corporate jungle gym.

Khanyile had to learn how to speak up when she realised that silence was not always golden in the corporate jungle gym. Making her voice heard, she believes, became an enriching experience that led to many doors of opportunity opening for her. Organisations such as the AWCA helped to build strategic networks and access to strategic leadership platforms within the NEF, she shared.

The conversation also veered towards work-life balance, which then led to a whole new discussion about the best time to have children, as an executive versus the junior years – and the effects thereof on one's career progression. This is certainly one topic that we as the Power Spaces Portfolio have earmarked for revisiting someday.

## WHAT WE KNOW NOW

Below is a summary of the key takeaways from the Navigating the Corporate Jungle Gym session:

- Sometimes, career risks masquerade as an opportunity to try your hand at something new.
- A change in career direction should never be perceived as failure or lead to disappointment. Sometimes, it simply requires that you change the game in the playground.
- Speaking up is pivotal for career growth, and so is setting up something as simple as a coffee date with an influential leader within the organisation. These two combined could just accelerate your career growth.

AWCA Deputy President Pumla Molope concluded this event by honouring our panellists and facilitator for openly sharing their experiences.

ALLAN GRAY  
LONG-TERM INVESTINGThe best  
invest  
take

# Financial Empowerment WORKSHOP

Financial literacy is often assumed when it comes to accountants. For this reason, we saw it fit to ensure that our members have the right knowledge and skills in managing their own finance and wealth creation for their own benefit — and that of future generations.

**By Thandeka Dlodla CA(SA)**

The inaugural AWCA Financial Literacy Workshop was first conceptualised and held in 2018, in collaboration with Allan Gray. The concept was premised on the need for a platform where professionals could come together and receive expert tips and engage in conversations that would supplement the positive actions required for financial education and wellness.

This Financial Literacy Workshop forms part of the AWCA's 'Nurture' tier, which aims to empower and equip young accountants, those still studying and those busy with their training contracts with the appropriate professional and personal tools to navigate their careers while making sound economic decisions. In a consistent show of support for this initiative, guests were hosted by Allan Gray at their Rosebank offices on 22 October last year. Re-branded as the Empowerment Workshop, the event took place in-person for the first time in over two years and attendees managed to get some much-needed interactions.

## INTRODUCING THE PANEL

The workshop was an interactive session comprising three passionate female panellists from different spheres, who all shared the common goal of addressing the need to raise awareness around financial literacy. The esteemed panellists included Emmanuela Da Graca, Client Relationship Manager at Allan Gray, Sphume Dlungwane CA(SA) Accounting and Auditing Lecturer at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (also popularly known as "Your Financial Friend" on social media platforms), and lastly Sinikiwe Ngcobo CA(SA), a financial wellness enthusiast and Youtuber who works in the financial services sector by day. The panel discussion was facilitated by the AWCA Professional Development's very own subcommittee member, Thandeka Dlodla who works within the Small to Medium Enterprise market, and shares the excitement of most when it comes to different ways of making money.

## TWO SIDES OF A COIN

It is common knowledge that practising financial wellness and exercising

financial freedom is easier said than done given the high costs of living, family responsibilities, the societal pressure to live a 'soft life', lifestyle inflation and difficulties in making additional streams of income. However, the panellists' conversations showed that it is certainly not impossible. Financial empowerment is well within reach for everyone.

The panellists delivered nuggets of wisdom around the importance of financial wellbeing. Ngcobo kicked off the discussion by relaying her own anecdotes of making financial mistakes — and having no one to speak to in that regard. She imparted knowledge around the various ways to manage debt, referencing the 'Avalanche' method, where big debts are attacked first versus the 'Snowball' method where one first starts with the debts that are easier to get rid of. When it came to assets and self-sustenance of, for example, properties, Ngcobo touched on the considerations one should factor in when evaluating the implications thereof — such as understanding property vacancy rates. Much as there is 'good' debt,



over-leveraging or being too exposed to risk can be costly if not well thought through.

### LESSONS ABOUND

Emmanuella Da Graca mentioned the need to be more honest with oneself and being in the driver's seat of your own financial future. "Give your money purpose and start telling your money where to go", were some of the powerful thoughts shared by Da Graca. She proceeded to share more insights on key financial products everyone should think of, including retirement savings, investments and funeral products. On the topic of investing, Da Graca delved into investor behaviour and how one should respond as an investor. One can grow their assets in the long term by investing in assets that have inflation-beating returns, as opposed to simply utilising savings accounts.

Dlungwane, also an AWCA Kwa-Zulu Natal subcommittee member, gave

the audience some food for thought when she transported them back to years when they were between the ages of four and eight. "It is during these formative years when money stories are formed," she said. This was a real eye-opener to the audience as they reflected on when their relationship with money first started.

Dlungwane highlighted that where there is an unhealthy relationship with money, it is important to confront the issue, list it, address it and write down your money goals and budget. This message, in particular, inspired the audience to take accountability for their own finances and make financial decisions that align to their financial positions. Dlungwane highlighted the importance of knowing your 'why'. "Understanding this often prevents the need to make unnecessary purchases or hopping onto investments and financial products you don't understand," explained Dlungwane.

### TAKEAWAYS

The robust discussions were evident in the room, with audience members both within and outside of the accounting profession raising their hands to either share their stories, ask for financial guidance or clarify their understanding and new learnings.

What was meant to be a short Q&A session turned into a rich conversation, with AWCA President Buhle Hanise also sharing her personal finance stories and learnings. The audience joined in on volunteering their own advice and learnings. A great and informative morning was had, and hopefully a lasting impact made. Through the promotion of financial literacy, the objective of the day was achieved. And we as the AWCA Professional Development Portfolio live for such moments.





# THE FORDHAM EXPERIENCE

**Caroline Maaka CA(SA)** shares why her recent participation in the Fordham Emerging Markets and Country Risk Analysis Exchange Programme was a character-building experience.

Being part of the Fordham Emerging Markets and Country Risk Analysis Exchange Programme was more than just a trip to the US but, undoubtedly, a life-changing experience for me. Having just passed the SAICA APC in 2022, it was the opportune time to step outside my comfort zone and welcome growth.

From day one, the learning opportunities were plenty. The best part was getting a glimpse of corporate culture in the US and the many opportunities available for young professionals in the investment and finance fields.

## THE CONCRETE JUNGLE EXPERIENCE

Following AWCA's rigorous interview and selection process, I was fortunate to receive funding for airfare, tuition and meals from the organisation.

The first phase of the programme was held at the Rosehill Campus in the Bronx, New York. Along with the rest of my South African peers, we were housed at Tierney Hall for five weeks. Upon arrival, we were welcomed by the South African-born programme facilitator Professor Booi Themeli, who currently teaches at Fordham University.

The most enjoyable part of my stay at the Rosehill Campus, apart from the academic activities, was partaking in the summer Fordham Rams, a welcome event for new students, as well as attending the famous Fordham Jubilee, a reunion for all Fordham alumni.

Our two focus modules at the Rosehill campus were Advanced Financial Management and Political Risk. The latter was an entirely new experience for me as I only came from an accounting and finance background at the time. At the end of the Political Risk module, we each had to select a country for our Country Risk Analysis research and presentation. I went with Botswana, which turned out to be the best decision as it gave me insights on the political, economic and social landscape of the country.

Outside classroom hours, we experienced New York and the enormous international corporations on Wall Street. Our very first trip outside New York was to Boston Massachusetts where we got to tour the prestigious Harvard University. Our second out-of-town trip was to Washington DC. Our first stop in DC was the IMF and the World Bank, where we got to experience and learn about the development goals in place for the African continent, initiated by Africans for Africa.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

The South African leg of the programme took place at the University of Pretoria in August 2022, with a special focus on the last module, Emerging Markets led by Professor Henry Schwalbenberg.

At the end of the course, we had to present our portfolio investment prospects on the country (Emerging Market) of our choice. This meant looking at the country's macro-economic performance, exchange rate stability, and finally the stock market outlook for the country/economy. This hands-on way of learning about emerging markets through research was another favourite part of the programme for me.

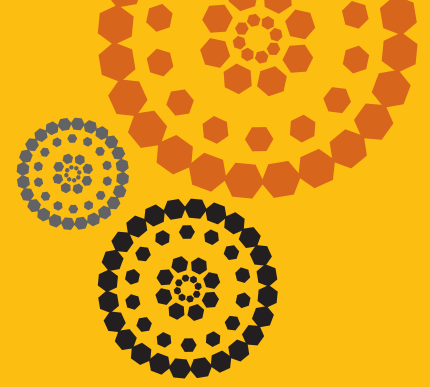
Corporate site visits included the Independent Development Corporation, Public Investment Corporation, Reserve Bank, Johannesburg Stock Exchange, National Economic Development and Labour Council, BRICS, and The National Treasury. Through these visits we got to learn about each of the corporation's contribution to our emerging market economy and to also give our American peers a taste of corporate South Africa.

## WHY PURSUE THIS PROGRAMME?

Outside the academic and corporate exposure, it is an amazing cultural exchange programme and networking platform to immerse yourself in. You are guaranteed to come back a better version of yourself. Above all, the experience taught me that anything is truly possible!



# PwC – A community of solvers coming together to make a difference



## Africa Firm Leadership



Shirley Machaba



Vicki Myburgh



Taruna Naidoo



Bolanle Adekoya



Corlia Volschenk



Alinah Motaung

## South Market Leadership



Shirley Machaba



Vicki Myburgh



Taruna Naidoo



Marcia Mokone



Corlia Volschenk



Alinah Motaung



Mbai Rashamuse



Hannelie Gilmour

**41%** of the South African partner cohort are ACI.

**57%** of the Southern Africa Leadership team are female.



# A Helping Hand

**Refilwe Likotsi CA(SA)**, Head of the AWCA's Leadership Academy Portfolio, on the importance of sponsoring the coveted Fordham University and University of Pretoria exchange programme.



After the signing of the collaboration agreement in 2008, the University of Pretoria and Fordham University established an exchange programme that allows academically gifted, but (sometimes) financially disadvantaged, South African students to visit New York City to obtain an Advanced Certificate in Emerging Financial Markets and Country Risk Analysis qualification. The same programme allows Fordham University students to visit and study in South Africa as part of their graduate studies.

Each year, a maximum of 20 to 25 South African students take part in the New York component of the programme, which the AWCA has been fortunate enough to participate in through a memorandum of understanding with Fordham University. Through this MOU, signed back in 2013, the AWCA nominates suitable candidates to partake in the exchange programme.

The programme offers students the opportunity to develop the political, economic, and financial analytical skills needed to evaluate the potential risks and rewards associated with the dynamic and volatile financial markets of Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe.

Throughout the six-week period of the programme, students must satisfactorily complete the following three courses: Political Risk Analysis and Strategic Financial Management, both taught in New York. The Emerging Markets component of the short course is taught in Pretoria over two weeks.

During their New York stay, the South African students are exposed to the various analytical tools needed to analyse emerging financial markets as well as the economic, financial and political risks associated with these markets. For these students, a special emphasis is placed on the analysis of an emerging economy.

In addition to their regular academic training, the South African students get the opportunity to visit and interact with policymakers and business leaders from various government and financial institutions in New York, Washington DC and in South Africa as part of their studies.

Some of the institutions visited in previous years have included The International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, Moody's, Bloomberg, Merrill Lynch, Standard Bank, the Public Investment Corporation of South Africa, the South African Reserve Bank and the National Economic Development and

Labour Council, to name a few.

In previous years, a number of the candidates who represented AWCA on the programme have used this opportunity as a stepping stone to propel their careers in public finance policy drafting and reviewing, as well as financial investments and asset management. Two of the candidates have gone on to pursue their postgraduate studies in Development Finance.

Each year, Fordham University allocates two slots on this programme to the AWCA. Deserving students, identified through a rigorous selection process that includes a final panel interview, have unfortunately been unable to attend in recent years. As vast as the demand and interest is from our members, many miss out on this opportunity solely based on them lacking the financial means to fund their tuition fee, travel costs and stipend.

We would like to appeal to any sponsors, current and potential stakeholders to consider funding our AWCA members for this prestigious course. This, as they endeavour to propel their careers through a unique opportunity that provides both academic and industry exposure.



Mpumi Madisa  
Bidvest Group - CEO

Akona Mastau  
Bidvest Services SA - CEO



# Women Leadership

Diversity of our leadership team and employee base remains key and fundamental to our long-term success and sustainability.

On 8 March 2019, Mpumi Madisa became CEO-designate of Bidvest Group, the first black and african female to be appointed CEO of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange top 40 company, seen as signalling a new advancement in gender transformation in business in South Africa. Mpumi had been with the business since 2003 having held several key and strategic leadership roles. She has steered the Group through its most challenging period of the covid pandemic and managed to achieve double-digit growth, a phenomenal achievement.

Continuing with our agenda of diversity within our leadership and throughout the organisation Bidvest appointed Akona Mastau in April 2022 as CEO for Bidvest Services SA one of the largest divisions within the Bidvest Group and Bidvest Protea Coin forms part of this division.

We recognise that it's not only the appointment but also the retention of black women in leadership that is very important. This year the Group partnered

with Black Management Forum and rolled out the Women's Empowered Desk. The programme focuses on the ongoing development and progression of women in leadership. It will provide opportunities, platforms, and networks for our own executives to access and participate in. The objective of this programme is to provide its female members with a platform to build a community of informed and empowered leaders and make a meaningful contribution to transforming corporate SA.

## Bidvest / SAICA Programme

This programme was initially launched in March 2022 and was rolled out in this financial year. Bidvest has partnered with the SA Institute of Chartered Accountants ( SAICA) on this initiative and will deploy 12 interns across the Group where they will gain work and practical experience in the workplace. The programme runs over 12 months and is aligned to a structured programme jointly with designed by both the business and SAICA.

## Executive Development Programme

Bidvest also has an executive development programme that is available

to the Group Exco as well as the divisional CFO's . The purpose of the programme is to provide support and guidance to the Exco members on a very holistic basis that covers both personal and professional aspects of their lives. The programme is by no means academic but completely customised to suit the specific needs of the individual . This year we intentionally nominated women executives to attend the programme .

## Bidvest Supplier Diversity Programme

This financial year we introduce an exciting initiative where we have brought onto the programme our SMME's. There are 47 participants on the programme. The purpose of the programme is to provide entrepreneurs with development plans that will assist them to scale their businesses and access opportunities. The programme was run in conjunction with Wits Business School, on a customized Entrepreneurial Masterclass Certificate Programme. 50% of the entrepreneurs are black women who run successful businesses.



# CA OF THE FUTURE

SAICA Chairman **Vincent Motholo CA(SA)** unpacks the evolving role of Chartered Accountants. **By Selapeng Maledimo CA(SA)**

**To address the essential skill sets for the 'CA of the Future', the framework lists the following competency types:**

#### **Professional values and attitudes**

- Ethics, values and attitude
- Citizenship values and attitudes
- Lifelong learning values and attitudes

#### **Enabling competencies**

- Business acumen
- Decision-making acumen
- Relational acumen
- Digital acumen

#### **Technical competencies, value creation, and process**

- Strategy and governance to create sustainable values
- Stewardship of capitals, business processes, and risk management
- Decision-making to increase, decrease, and transform capitals
- Reporting on value creations
- Tax governance and compliance
- Assurance-related services

Furthermore, to support skill development for the 'CA of the Future', SAICA provides various programmes and forms of support to foster skill development.

#### **These include:**

##### **Partnership with academic institutions**

\* The University of the Witwatersrand online Chief Value Officer Programme, developed in collaboration with the Wits School of Accountancy, it focuses on integrated reporting, integrated thinking and sustainable development.

\* University of Johannesburg (UJ) Online Short Learning Programmes, developed with the UJ School of Accountancy to equip accountants with the necessary skills to navigate the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

#### **Technical training and ethics development**

- Negotiated discounted rates for technical training courses
- SAICA Tech Talks to enhance technical competence
- Collaboration with the Special Investigating Unit in developing forensic accounting skills

#### **Collaboration with business schools**

SAICA aims to collaborate with esteemed business schools to develop specialised programmes that upskill the 'CA of the Future' SAICA also recognises the unique challenges faced by women and is committed to addressing these. As part of their Women's Month initiative, SAICA organises tailored seminars and events to bring attention to these issues.

They aim to establish regular engagements on this topic and encourage the participation of both women and men, considering that the majority of men hold influential and decision-making roles within organisations.

Motholo's insights provide a compelling glimpse into the future of Chartered Accountancy and the forces driving its transformation. The 'CA of the Future' will be a dynamic professional equipped with a diverse skill set and a deep understanding of technology, data analytics and strategic advisory. As we conclude our exploration, it is essential to acknowledge the pivotal role that ongoing learning, adaptability and embracing technological advancements play in shaping the CA profession.

The future demands a commitment to continuous professional development, staying abreast of industry trends and honing the skills necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

In an era of evolving business landscapes and rapid technological advancements, the role of Chartered Accountants has undergone a profound transformation. As traditional practices adapt to the digital age, it becomes crucial to explore the 'CA of the Future' concept, and understand the factors behind the need for this evolution.

Defining the 'CA of the Future', SAICA Chairman Vincent Motholo highlighted the importance of lifelong learning in defining this concept. He emphasised that members and associates must take responsibility for remaining relevant in their roles through continuous learning initiatives.

SAICA's strategic intent revolves around contributing to sustainable economies by developing responsible and ethical leaders. To achieve this, SAICA has established the 'CA of the Future' framework, which is aimed at nurturing the professional growth of newly qualified CAs(SA) and monitoring all its members and affiliates to ensure their continued readiness for the future.

The 'CA of the Future' framework is subject to ongoing revisions to align with changes in the business environment and the evolving accounting and auditing landscape.

# A RATHER BLEAK PICTURE

**Khanyisa Phika**, an economist with Alexander Forbes Investments, sheds some light on South Africa's economic outlook and how investors can cope in this challenging economic environment.

South Africa has endured structural growth challenges over the last decades with real GDP averaging 1.1% per annum, relative to its emerging market peers with an average annual growth of 4.1%. More so, GDP per capita has sharply declined by 4.6%, meaning that South Africans are poorer than they were ten years ago. Economic growth is a key aspect for development. In fact, South Africa ought to be growing by at least 3% per annum to double per capita incomes in a generation.

On the back of weaker consumer and investment activity due to high interest rates, the global economy is expected to moderate significantly below trend in 2023. The rebound in subsequent years is expected to be modest, meaning that conditions are likely to remain uncertain despite the optimism that comes with China's economic reopening. Economic activity remains vulnerable to the regional banking sector stresses, the ongoing geopolitical tensions, with the Russia-Ukraine war fueling the volatility and uncertainty for commodity prices and global economic activity. Furthermore, with the disinflation trend remaining bumpy across the world, central banks will forge ahead and tighten monetary policy to bring inflation back to preferred targets. However, we are nearing the interest rate hiking cycle peak, particularly in the U.S., with rate cuts dependent on inflation outcomes relative to expectations.

South Africa is not isolated from these macro factors of stagflation (a combination of high inflation and economic stagnation. Inflation drives prices up but purchasing power down.) According to the International Monetary Fund, Real GDP is expected to come in flat at 0.1% in 2023 and average below 2% over the medium term. The pessimistic prospects for the domestic economy reflect the persistent bouts of load-shedding with higher stages expected in the winter season and interest rates rising higher than originally anticipated.

Meanwhile, domestic headline inflation is still well above the South African Reserve Bank's broader 3% to 6% target,

significantly eroding the purchasing power of households. Of course, the Monetary Policy Committee is concerned about the elevation in inflation expectations and the currency weakness that emerged following the diplomatic fallout with the US.

Despite a weak economic environment, elevated inflation will cause the central bank to keep interest rates higher for longer. This will continue to weigh heavily on household disposable

incomes and constrain growth in consumer spending as mortgage loans, vehicle financing and unsecured loans rise significantly while wage growth remains subdued.

Despite the uncertainty of the looming 2024 National Elections, impact of Greylisting and vague foreign policy, there are some green shoots for the economy over the medium-term. Increased private sector participation in robust energy investment and faster power installations will reduce the gap in electricity demand relative to supply significantly in the near-term. According to Nersa, a little under 3000MW in generation capacity has been registered for the renewable energy project. More so, the government remains resolute to public-private partnerships to resolve logistics, water, and communications infrastructure.

According to Operation Vulindlela, the economic reforms have the potential to increase growth by an average 3.5% per annum. Given the ongoing idiosyncratic factors that impede growth, will we see better living standards, improved infrastructure, and better use of technology to fast-track development in the next 25 years? The next few years will be critical for development. How can investors

cope in this challenging economic environment? In periods of high uncertainty and volatility, investors ought to stay invested in diversified asset classes for optimal returns. Over the past decade, there has not been a single asset class that consistently offered the best return nor has there been one that consistently yielded the worst returns. Instead, good performance associated with one asset class usually offsets the underperformance of another.



# 15 YEARS OF UPLIFTING AND IMPACTING WOMEN THROUGH OUR INVESTMENT CHOICES

**2002** The NPO was founded **2008** The commercial arm formed with AWCA as a 10% beneficiary. Initial capital of R1.8m was raised by 60 women **2013** Acquired shareholding in Hollard **2016** Acquired shares in MTN South Africa **2018** Shareholding in Atlas 360 **2019** Finalization of Engen deal of R10m, AWCA received R9m for bursary trust **2020** AIH leads acquisition of 37% of Bidvest Protea Coin **2021** 1st close of R204m (1 March 2021) 2nd Close of R150m (13 October 2021) 3rd Close of R50m (31 March 2022) **2022** We acquired 21.2% of FutureGrowth shares & a 20% stake in GCR South Africa **2023** We are 15 years old!







# EVERYTHING **ENTREPRENEURS** NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **FUNDING** VIA **PRIVATE EQUITY**

Summit Africa Co-Founder and Investment Principal **Langa Madonko** on how entrepreneurs can utilise private equity to fund their businesses.

In 2022 alone, and in South Africa specifically, over 200 businesses received funding from the Southern African Venture Capital & Private Equity Association (SAVCA) member Private Equity houses. SAVCA, a non-profit industry organisation that represents over 200 Private Equity Houses in Southern Africa, conducts an annual survey on industry performance and practices.

Approximately 135 businesses who were funded by Venture Capital firms belonging to SAVCA participated in its surveys. Simply put, a significant number of businesses could have benefited from the capital invested by Private Equity (PE) and Venture Capital (VC) firms.

## QUICK RECAP

A private equity firm features a group of professionals with knowledge, skills and experience in investing in businesses — and helping them grow. They go into markets, gather resources from investors and invest on their behalf to deliver growth and other strategic outcomes discussed with the investors.

The investors have to, upfront, define the space in which they plan to invest and how they will approach these investments. They have to state whether they will invest in large companies with scale, or companies that need capital to grow in middle markets or small businesses that require capital and guidance to develop their product and share of the market. They then define the sectors of the economy they wish to invest in, and why they reckon those sectors will grow. They also define how they will invest, others outrightly buy out the existing owners because they foresee opportunities beyond

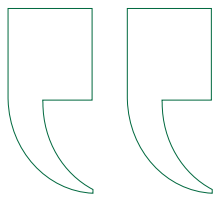
what was initially built and that the business is beyond the needs of the founders — and is mature enough for a new kind of leadership and strategic direction. PS: Most great founders build businesses for sale later.

Then some invest for control of the company where management and founders still have a share, but the largest share is with the PE firm, who feel they can drive change and growth by having sufficient votes on a board and influence with management. Then others want influence and may take smaller positions on the back of the companies they invest in, with an allowance to influence or make decisions in certain parts of the business.

## THE PRIVATE EQUITY MACHINE

Most entrepreneurs have become accustomed to receiving funds as a means of financing their businesses. They do this via a loan, but in some cases a business is not established enough or does not have enough revenue in its books to be able to borrow the capital needed. And in those cases, traditional financial institutions will reject their application. At this point, most entrepreneurs turn to the 3Fs (these being Fools, Friends and Family) to borrow money.

However, at some point, the business' needs become about more than just money. The business metamorphoses to needing a partner who can inject money, but also show how that money can be put to work — and how it can also attract other money in the form of debt or more investors. At times, you may want to grow the business beyond the market you initially played — such as other countries or continents — or you may want to ensure that you have enough equipment to



## **A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF BUSINESSES COULD HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE CAPITAL INVESTED BY PRIVATE EQUITY (PE) AND VENTURE CAPITAL (VC) FIRMS.**

produce the products needed in the volumes demanded by the market. This is usually the opportune time to look for a partner.

The difference between the bank and Private Equity is that the latter is what is referred to as 'patient capital'. If you took out a loan with a bank, a loan shark or friends and family, they will soon start asking about repayment. And it's usually not too long after they have lent you the money.

Private Equity Funds usually, however, have a ten-year period over which they can wait until they need to return their money to investors. These funds will stay the course with you and help you grow the business until it is bigger and better than how they found it. In most instances, they want to ensure that you are growing in double digits so they can make their returns for their investors.

At the end of the ten-year period, the PE firm and the owner can sell their position — and this could be to you (the owner) or someone more equipped to help the business grow further. In some instances, you can sell together and both sail off into a beautiful sunset with no battery in sight.

### **THE UPSIDE?**

Private Equity, however, isn't always smooth sailing. There are some tough conversations that come with the commitment from a private equity partner. It goes without saying that, just like in a marriage, in this partnership there is a need to give up control and let the partner who is best at something lead on that part.

It is usually hard for entrepreneurs to give up 'their baby' or even a segment of it — even if that is what is best. It is also true that for the PE Fund, this is strictly business and about making a profit — and that may come with some conflict on approach where, for instance, the entrepreneur may want

to focus on a more humane approach to doing business and the investor will constantly ask: "But how does that affect the bottom line?"

But more and more, PE funds are now agents for positive change. They drive transformation, diversity, inclusion and responsible environmental aspects. In Africa and developing markets, especially, a big part of why PE Funds succeed is through doing good and solving everyday problems with passionate entrepreneurs.

Before approaching a PE Fund, it is important to remember that as they conduct an analysis on your business, you too need to analyse them. Be clued up on what they invest in. For instance, it is futile to approach a fund that invests in water solutions with your fintech solution. If they do not understand the mandate, they definitely will not invest.

Also understand exactly where in the market they invest. If, for instance, you need R10 million and want to remain in the business, do not approach a Buyout Fund.

Also pay attention to their style of investing and look into what happened with other businesses that they previously invested in. For instance, you do not want to find yourself with an active investor when all you need is a fund that will simply pump funds into the business and let's you be.

In short, Private Equity is a good tool to help grow your business. Quick word of advice: be sure that it is exactly what your business needs and be ready for the long-term commitment.

Globally, Private Equity makes up about 30% of investments for large Pension and Institutional Investors — and is a multi-trillion dollar business, giving testament to its influence and good.





**Standard Bank**  
Private

# Unlock the benefits of Professional Banking

**As a professional, you're already ahead of the curve.** Now you can go even further – with a banking solution that celebrates your achievements, recognises your potential and matches your ambitions.

**Our Professional Banking Account** gives you access to a range of products and services that will help you manage your wealth and create the lifestyle you want.



**Search Standard Bank** to get in touch with one of our Private Bankers



## BANK EASILY

**Our digital banking solutions make it easy for you to bank on the go, where and when it suits you. Your account gives you:**

- Anytime access to your own personal banker and Private Banking team
- Black Credit Card at prime less 0.25%
- 24/7 Secure Money Management on the Standard Bank App
- Vehicle finance at up to prime less 1% with an extended repayment period of up to 84 months\*
- Up to 110% loan to value on your homeloan with a maximum purchase price of R1.8 million\*



## LIVE JOYFULLY

**Live your best life with our range of exclusive lifestyle and travel benefits, including:**

- Get rewarded for banking with us by joining UCount Rewards
- Your monthly account fee back in airtime when you join SB Mobile
- 12 Free visits per year to our OR Tambo Library Lounge / our Lanseria Fluent Lounge / any domestic Bidvest Lounge
- Up to 20% off Emirates flights and Free Automatic Basic Travel Insurance
- Fast and Easy Forex with Shift
- Free Wine of the Month Club Membership
- Lifestyle offers on the Mastercard® Buy 1 Get 1 App powered by Priceless Specials



## PLAN WISELY

**Liberty's Lifestyle Protector gives you security and peace of mind, with benefits designed to meet your needs as a professional:**

- Life Protection with a lump sum benefit
- Policy Protection that pays your premiums
- Wealth Creation Solutions and Secure Retirement Funding Options
- Loss of Income Protection, which covers you against the risk of losing your income through some form of disability or impairment
- Lifestyle Protection, which protects you financially in the event of a life-changing critical illness or disability



## INVEST SKILLFULLY

**While you change the world in your chosen profession, we're here to support you with:**

- Short- to medium term savings options with competitive rates and guaranteed returns
- R1000 start-up capital\* when you deposit R1000 or more into a new Online Share Trading account

**Enjoy all the benefits of Professional Banking for just R250 per month**





# 21 Gender Mainstreaming Insights

In her latest book, Business Engage's Chief Executive **Colleen Larsen** states a case for why gender mainstreaming will still dominate, and blow up on, the global stage. Below, we picked out some of our favourite insights from *Gender Matters: A Practical Response To The Slippery Ladder*.

01

"When we look at the population of South Africa, and the fact that women account for **52%** of that population, it becomes somewhat incongruous that we do not have that many women in decision-making positions in organisations."

02

"**Gender mainstreaming** cannot, by its very nature, be a revolution. The business society would naturally not allow that to happen. What women want is **Quevolution** (pronounced key-volution)."

03

"Quevolution is a term I coined to describe the pace of the gender mainstreaming we desire. Quevolution is a '**quick evolution**', a progressive and rapidly evolutionary way of changing perspectives towards gender mainstreaming."

04

"**Corporate Gender Intelligence** is the aptitude of an organisation to acknowledge the business case for gender mainstreaming and the ability to acquire and apply the necessary knowledge, skills and processes to harness such qualities."

05

**53%** of LGBTQI+ employees report hearing jokes about lesbian or gay people at least once in a while. A true indicator of company culture is what people say in the cafeteria.  
*Source: Ipid*

06

"**Vocal LGBTQI+ allies** play a critical role in promoting a mindset change and ensuring that discriminatory 'office banter' is no longer tolerated."

07

"Female CEOs in Africa revolve around **4%** of the global average. At that percentage, there is no gainsaying when I state that African companies need to implement a stronger process of gender mainstreaming..."

08

"*"I think we should get more women involved in this gender mainstreaming because women have **emotional intelligence** and men do not!"* Statements such as the above are what has kept this conversation going on for far too long..."

09

"You cannot begin to see yourself as a leader in management if you do not have the confidence to step into that role. The 3C's **Confidence, Competition, Collaboration** (and **Competence**) are able to provide us with remarkable workplace capabilities."

COLLEEN LARSEN

# GENDER MATTERS

**A Practical Response to the Slippery Ladder**

10

"There is nothing like **'faking it until you make it'** corporate. If you do not have personal confidence when you walk into an office, your body language communicates it, your speech tells it and your eventual performance shows it. Being **confident** is evidently primal, instinctive."

11

"There are no shortcuts to climbing the corporate ladder and there are no easy ways to get up there. That is why it is called **the slippery ladder**. You will slip and you will fall; time and time again..."

12

"**Create a support structure** — men are good at doing this. They seek mentors and sponsors early in the corporate game and ride on the shoulders of these men as they grow and rise in their professional journey."

13

"Just as the 3C's are necessary requisites for climbing the corporate ladder, so too are the three 'ships'. **Mentorship, Sponsorship and Relationships** are essential in forging a successful career path..."

14

"Your ability to be resilient; your ability to become a **comeback woman** who never says die is what will set you apart from the rest, so to say. The only way to get to that corner office is to be persistent."

15

"Yes, getting that MBA is great and getting that working experience is even greater; but **know how to play the corporate game**. Not only do you need to learn how to network, but you should also learn to put yourself forward for certain jobs."

16

"For a long time **women's empowerment** and gender mainstreaming have been addressed as 'women's issues'; perceived by corporates as **CSI programmes**, and so women need to become more proactive in marketing and branding themselves in order to be taken seriously."

17

"It is not true that women are averse to **competition**. Rather they would prefer to **collaborate** and pull various resources together for a greater good than to disrupt the system through a competitive challenge. We would rather collaborate and bring balance and harmony..."

18

"I have met many women who have said, 'I wish I was the CEO or the COO or the Chair of the Board, or even a Minister,' and when they got the position, they realised it was not as fulfilling as they thought. Sometimes all we see is the money and the perks when what we really want is a **fulfilling job**."

19

"Hoping that someone will notice you and promote you is much like the proverbial patient dog waiting for the fattest bone: It does not happen anymore. My advice for your women and their career is: **'Back yourself!'**"

20

"**Personal branding** is especially important for women in a world where glass ceilings are being shattered everyday. The issue of personal branding remains more topical for female entrepreneurs, as women still have to self-define themselves in the world of gender stereotypes and leadership gap."

21

"**Do not wait until you think you are ready**. Many women want to be 100% ready to take on the job before they are prepared to put their hand up and say: 'Have a look at me!'" Gail Kelly, former Wespac CEO

**Colleen Larsen** is an expert in the field of gender and a leading voice for the sustainable advancement of women in the corporate and entrepreneurial spaces. She is the founder of Business Engage, a pioneering organisation driving gender mainstreaming in the private sector across Africa. In her latest book, Larsen shares practical pointers to guide women on their journey to success. **Gender Matters**, R275, is available for purchase at [colleen-larsen.com](http://colleen-larsen.com).

# *Empowering Women* IN LEADERSHIP

**Mothathe Sewelo CA(SA)** shares the insights she gained from a transformative experience with the IWFSA and Duke Corporate Education.

In the fast-paced world of business, strong leadership skills and a deep understanding of diverse topics are essential for success. In 2022, I had the incredible opportunity to take part in the IWFSA/DukeCE Women in Executive Leadership Development Programme, now renamed the FASSET Women Legacy Programme. This course included a global immersion, which turned out to be one of the highlights of my year, providing me with invaluable experiences and knowledge around areas such as board leadership, people management, personal branding and a few others. Below are some of the key takeaways I walked away with.

## **A World Of Learning And Inspiration**

On the global immersion, the leadership course took us on a whirlwind journey of discovery in the vibrant city-state of Singapore. From attending the live Formula 1 race to engaging with the South African ambassador on existing trade opportunities for South Africans, the experience was nothing short of awe-inspiring. We also had the privilege of interacting with brilliant minds in the Fintech space, gleaned insights into the latest trends and innovations shaping the financial industry. Additionally, we delved into the efficient governance system of Singapore, a country that has experienced remarkable growth in recent years.

## **Unveiling The Inner Workings Of Government And Ngos**

One of the most fascinating aspects of the programme was our visit to prominent financial institutions, including the Monetary Authority of Singapore. This allowed us to gain firsthand insights into the efficient regulatory landscape, which promoted competition and enhanced investment into the country. Personally, I got to understand the pivotal role that NGOs play in supporting the government in achieving national objectives. Witnessing the collaboration between these entities left me with an indelible impression and reinforced the importance of public-private partnerships in driving sustainable development.

## **The Power Of Collective Wisdom**

While the programme provided exceptional learning opportunities, the connections forged with fellow participants were what truly elevated the experience. I had the privilege of meeting phenomenal women from diverse backgrounds and industries, each with their own unique perspectives and experiences. This vibrant network of like-minded women became a source of inspiration and support, fostering an environment where we could learn and grow together. The bonds we formed during the course will undoubtedly live beyond the programme, fuelling our collective mission to effect positive change in our respective spheres.

## **Board Leadership**

One of the core areas covered by the Women In Leadership course was board leadership. We delved into the intricacies of corporate governance, exploring the responsibilities of board members and the dynamics of effective decision-making. Through role play and interactive discussions, we honed our abilities to analyse complex business scenarios and offer strategic guidance. The course provided key takeaways into the role of diversity on boards and the need for inclusive leadership practices, which are critical for driving innovation and sustainable growth.

## **People Management**

A leader's success is intrinsically tied to their ability to manage and inspire their team. The course dedicated considerable attention to people management, equipping us with tools and techniques to build high-performing teams, along with understanding the labour law. We explored various leadership styles, delved into effective communication strategies, and learned how to leverage diversity to foster an inclusive and collaborative work environment. Through real-world case studies and practical exercises, we gained a deeper understanding of the nuances of managing and motivating individuals with diverse backgrounds and skill sets.





*The bonds we formed during the course will undoubtedly live beyond the programme, fuelling our collective mission to effect positive change in our respective spheres.*

### Self-Branding

In the age of personal branding, it is crucial for leaders to understand how to create a lasting impact by presenting themselves authentically. The course emphasised the importance of self-awareness and personal branding, helping us define our leadership identity and align to our values and goals. We explored techniques for effective storytelling, enhancing our executive presence, and leveraging digital platforms to amplify our voice and influence. This module empowered us to articulate our unique value proposition and build a strong personal brand that resonates with stakeholders and inspires others.

### Action Learning

As part of the programme, we were tasked with action learning plans on topics of societal relevance. My group's focus was on integrating entrepreneurship into the South African schooling curriculum, recognising the potential of equipping young minds with the skills and mindset needed for future success. We conducted in-depth research, engaged with educational experts, and developed a comprehensive plan to advocate for the incorporation of entrepreneurship education in schools. This hands-on experience allowed us to apply the concepts and frameworks learned during the course to address a real-world challenge, fostering our ability to drive meaningful change in our communities.

### What I Know Now

Participating in the women in leadership course enriched both my professional and personal growth. From the immersive learning opportunities to the connections forged with inspiring women leaders, the programme provided me with a global perspective and equipped me with essential skills and knowledge. The course's emphasis on board leadership, people management, personal branding and the action learning plan amongst others enabled me to develop a holistic understanding of leadership, and empowered me to make a positive impact in my sphere of influence. As I reflect on this remarkable journey, I am filled with gratitude for organisations such as the International Women's Forum of South Africa and African Women Chartered Accountants' investment in our development as change-makers as well as their continued commitment to paying it forward in the spirit of empowering women in leadership.



## LESSONS FROM SINGAPORE

"The exclusive and accredited IWFSA/DukeCE Women in Executive Leadership Development Programme focuses on cultivating future-oriented skills, specifically tailored to the rapidly evolving landscape of work and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Its primary objective is to empower and expedite the growth of ethical female leaders capable of tackling intricate challenges in the 21st century.

One of the most unforgettable highlights of this programme was an immersive workshop held in Singapore. This exceptional experience offered valuable insights into the efficient systems and practices of a country that has achieved remarkable success. Singapore's impressively low unemployment rate of less than 2% showcased the effectiveness of their strategies. Furthermore, the Singaporean approach to leveraging digitisation and promoting innovation was truly fascinating.

I found great resonance with several topics such as people management, effective board leadership, strategy in the digital era, and future-oriented operation management. These areas align closely with the concept of the 'CA of the Future'. Witnessing Singapore's approach further solidified the connections between the programme's teachings and the qualities required in the ever-changing professional landscape. Moreover, the immersion in Singapore revealed their commendable emphasis on nurturing entrepreneurship from an early age, supported by appropriate channels and government involvement. Implementing similar initiatives in South Africa could significantly reduce unemployment rates and provide a substantial boost to the economy.

Overall, this programme has equipped me with invaluable skill sets, enabling me to grow into a more effective leader. As a testament to its impact, I was recently appointed to my first role as a Non-Executive Director. The FASSET Women Legacy Programme has been instrumental in propelling my professional journey. I am deeply grateful for the transformative experiences and opportunities it has provided." — **Selapeng Maledimo CA(SA)**

**\*Interested in the FASSET Women's Legacy Programme? Express your interest by emailing your CV to [angie.naidoo@dukece.com](mailto:angie.naidoo@dukece.com) or [henry.nolan@dukece.com](mailto:henry.nolan@dukece.com)**





# THE WORLD AT HER FEET

**Businesswoman, social entrepreneur and IWFSA President Irene Charnley is an inspiration to say the very least. With a business CV that has made her a force to be reckoned with, and a palpable purpose to lift others as she rises, Irene is more than deserving of being bestowed with the title: AWCA 2023 Woman of Substance.**

---

Irene Charnley has built a remarkable career. A former unionist-turned-businesswoman and social entrepreneur, she co-founded Smile Telecoms, a pan African telecoms operator in three African countries. Smile was the first operator to successfully roll out and operationalise a broadband network infrastructure using 800MHz spectrum. She is currently the Independent Chairperson of Gibela Rail, the largest passenger train manufacturer in South Africa for Prasa.

Under her leadership as the reigning second term President of the International Women's Forum South Africa (IWFSA) — part of IWF — a global organisation with more than 7 800 accomplished and diverse women (from more than 33 nations across six continents) that advances women's leadership across careers, cultures and continents — the IWFSA FASSET Women Legacy Programme was launched. The programme aims to develop a thousand women professionals in executive and middle management in the finance sector, through structured leadership training with Duke University's Duke Corporate Education over three years.



**The 2023 AWCA Woman of Substance award is a cherished validation of my journey, and an inspiration to carry on with my work...**

“To date 65 women have successfully completed the IWFS FASSET Women Legacy Programme, while 420 women are currently participating,” shares Irene. She adds: “In partnership with WDB Investment Holdings, we have also secured funding to roll out the catalytic strategy that advocates for gender equality, pay parity and women economic empowerment. The partnership is in the process of developing gender specific legislative changes to BBBEE and EEA, and looking at gender-specific legislation.”

Irene also helped establish a private sector-led Gender-Based Violence Response Fund, raising commitments of R120 million in cash and in kind, from private sector companies and philanthropic organisations. An independent board of directors was established and pro-bono services from a number of professional organisations secured.

Once a key negotiator for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Irene helped to achieve improved wages and better working and living conditions for thousands of Black mineworkers in chrome, coal, and diamond mines in the early 90s. She also helped to establish the first Provident Fund for Black mineworkers, and successfully advocated for 50% employee representation on Retirement Fund boards, which ultimately resulted in regulation.

In business, as a social entrepreneur, lead negotiator, and executive director, Irene helped transform Johnnic Industrial Corporation (JIC) — the majority shareholder of MCell/MTN at the time — from an industrial conglomerate into a focused media and telecommunications group. These transactions, she says, led to the reverse listing of MTN and created great value for shareholders, following the unbundling of Johnnic shares to its shareholders. “It was here that I spearheaded one of the early Broad Based Black Empowerment Schemes in South Africa, the Ikageng Scheme. The scheme enjoyed participation from 32 000 ordinary South Africans who received 400% return on their initial deposit,” enthuses Irene.

History will remember Irene for many more achievements. As chairman of MCell and then executive director of MTN, Irene was instrumental in transforming the MTN group into one of the most pre-eminent telecoms operators in the Middle East and African region, through several license and company acquisitions. “I led the management and staff buy-in of a significant shareholding in MTN, an entrepreneurial initiative, independent of MTN, which saw 3 200 MTN employees benefit from the structure at the time.”

One value underpins Irene’s extensive achievements. And it is one that also drives the AWCA: To lift others as she, too, rises.

## What five words best summarise your career journey to date – and why?

**Impactful.** As a seasoned businesswoman and social entrepreneur, I have been privileged to work with others in making an impact in multiple areas of our society.

**Empowering.** From my role as a trade unionist to my role in business, I have sought to transform organisations and businesses by empowering marginalised individuals — particularly in auditing, legal and fund investment management — ensuring that they secured senior positions and that Black-owned companies, especially start-ups or medium-sized businesses were provided with real business opportunities through procurement contracts that resulted in growing their businesses. We set specific targets to achieve employment equity targets at General Manager levels of 40% to 50%, linked to performance bonuses, which successfully resulted in targets being met. I have ensured that Black men and women were targeted and recruited for Board, CEO, MD and executive positions in respective businesses.

I have targeted procurement spend on Black- and women-owned businesses. Achieving empowerment for Black men and women has always been an integral part of my day-to-day business.

**Resilient.** Like many women of Africa, I have faced formidable challenges and obstacles in my life and career. Raised by my 22-year-old widowed mother, along with two siblings, I had a humble childhood. She was my guiding light and I am forever grateful to her.

In my business career, in a society that discriminated against and oppressed women and people of colour, I have learned to persevere, adapt and stand up for myself, and others, in the face of adversity. I have learned to focus on the “how” of resolving issues, rather than fixating on the “why”. I am always positive and passionate about what I am doing, and take great pleasure and reward from sharing my passion and optimism with others.

**Influential.** I have been fortunate to serve in a variety of leadership positions — to lead successful negotiations, and to play a significant role in shaping the telecommunications sector across Africa. Beyond my own career achievements, I have sought to promote the success of other women, and to empower them with clear, practical, and meaningful examples of “Lifting As You Rise”.

**Integrity.** To me, integrity means being capable of being relied on. It means doing what I say I will do. It means being respectful to everyone, irrespective of who they are. It means being trustworthy and setting a good example for others to follow.

## Are there any leaders who inspired your career journey?

I have been inspired, supported, and moulded by many leaders on my journey. They include Wendy Lucas Bull and Jeff



Van Rooyen in my early days in business, great mentors in the labour movement such as Ntate James Motlatsi and President Cyril Ramaphosa, Sheikh Mohammed Sharbatly when I founded a business. Mama Albertina Sisulu and Jessie Duarte in politics, and of course Mam Zanele Mbeki, who inspired me to always do more for women.

## How do you feel about being honoured with the 2023 AWCA Woman of Substance award – and what does this achievement mean to you?

I am honoured, grateful, humbled and thrilled. Throughout my career journey, I have been led by my strong commitment to entrepreneurship, leadership and empowering others, particularly women.

The 2023 AWCA Woman of Substance award is a cherished validation of my journey, and an inspiration to carry on with my work, both in the business world and in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment. The award inspires me to go even further and do even more to foster an inclusive and empowering environment for women to thrive and succeed.

## What social causes are closest to you?

Mentoring the next generation of women leaders, the achievement of gender equality and pay parity, and supporting and caring for the elderly are just some of the causes that are near and dear to me.

## A Letter To All You Phenomenal Women

"Women, so the old saying goes, hold up half the sky. But when I lift my gaze to the stars, I realise that the quote only tells half the story. Because us women do not do things by halves.

We are mothers, partners, carers, providers, teachers, leaders, learners, explorers, workers, activists, mentors, role models. We shift by instinct from one role to another, whether at home, in the boardroom, on the production line, in the laboratory, in the classroom, or in the corridors of power.

We contain within us multitudes of promise and possibility. We dream about making the world a better place, and we nurture our dreams into reality daily.

And more than anything, in holding up the heavens, we uplift and inspire each other. We are all, each and every one of us, Women of Substance.

I believe, and I have seen for myself so often over the years, that the women of this country are women of courage, fortitude, resilience, determination, compassion, vision, and strength of character.

To this day, I find myself moved and energised by the example of the Women's March of 1956, when women from across the spectrum of our society marched to the Union Buildings, chanting "*Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo!* (You strike a woman, you strike a rock)".

Women stood side by side with men in the struggle against apartheid, and they went on to play a leading role in the transition to democracy. They were the rock on which our free nation was built.

In their honour we must continue to build, not just as political leaders but as entrepreneurs, business owners, scientists, social workers, artists, engineers and more.

Because we are women, because we have substance, because we have worked hard, because we have sacrificed, because we have raised ourselves up, we will succeed.

And in succeeding, we will blaze the trail for others to follow in our footsteps, and to lead the way to tomorrow.

Let us continue to raise our voices, to raise our spirits, to raise the hope that together we can overcome the challenges that confront us, and seize the opportunities that await us.

We are the hands that reach out, we are the shoulders that lift, we are the stars that hold up the sky. From one Woman of Substance to all Women of Substance, I salute you!"

*With love and admiration,*  
**IreneC**



### Who is Irene Charnley outside of work?

I am, and always will be, Irene Charnley — whether at work, at home or anywhere else. I am wholly and authentically me. What you see is what you get. I have no masks or other personalities. I am a wife, a mother of three adult children, a pillar of support for extended family and close friends, a mentor to all the women in our family. And a cook of great stews and steaks, too.

”

I believe, and I have seen for myself so often over the years, that the women of this country are women of courage, fortitude, resilience, determination, compassion, vision, and strength of character.

**Amidst a chock-a-block schedule, what honestly holds you together?**

I am held together by faith, hope and clarity of purpose. I know what needs to be done, and I know how to find and apply the best ways of doing it. I also rely on the experience, expertise, and goodwill of others who help me on my way.

In anything and everything I do, I am never alone. So many have gone before me, and so many stand alongside me on my personal and professional journeys.

**What is the one thing you wish you knew at age 21?**

That in spite of how difficult life was for so many people in South Africa, in the worst and most oppressive days of apartheid, the day would dawn when we would be free at last to determine our own future and strive as one to make our dreams come true.

**What social ill would you like to see disappear forever?**

I am an eternal optimist and idealist. I would like to live in a world where there were no social ills at all. But we can only hope to achieve that if we fight against gender inequality, gender-based violence, poverty, discrimination and racism.

I would like to see a more inclusive and equitable society where women can fully participate, contribute and succeed without facing systemic barriers or discrimination. I would like to live in a world where all individuals, regardless of their gender and race, have the freedom and opportunity to pursue their aspirations and reach their full potential. But we have to fight. We have to stand up for what we believe in. We have to work together to make a difference. The power to change the world is in our hands!



# Cream Of The Crop

Allow us to take our hats off to the 2023 Recognition Awards recipients. These remarkable women continue to shatter glass ceilings and achieve the unimaginable in their respective careers.

**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?** The CA(SA) journey is one that provides a comprehensive body of work, allowing for flexibility and strategic direction in various business models. The current social and economic climate is affected by various elements that link directly and indirectly to business, the profession is therefore positioned to allow for thinking that benefits both the business and the public it serves. With the CA(SA) qualification encompassing expertise in the financial and business arenas, it gives birth to a mind that will be able to respond or comprehend the internal contributing elements of a business' operations and how these need to be supported and communicated to the stakeholders they affect. The qualification also represents what the current organisational landscape requires from a skills point of view — being multifaceted is a highly rated benefit for every organisation.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?** Leading with a clear direction is very key — a direction that details the intention of the business, while understanding the necessity to contribute positively to the community at large. A successful leader in this climate must be willing to consult for better understanding, lead with both heart and mind, and possess the willingness to receive feedback from various stakeholders towards the improvement of the direction envisioned.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?** Building synergy between the private and public sectors holds considerable potential. The private sector working in a silo, or seeing public sector interventions as legislative activities, creates an unnecessary tension that may be a blockage in some areas. The private sector has an important advisory role to play and the opening of doors needed to fill gaps. Partnering, between the private and public sectors, has always resulted in double the achievements and

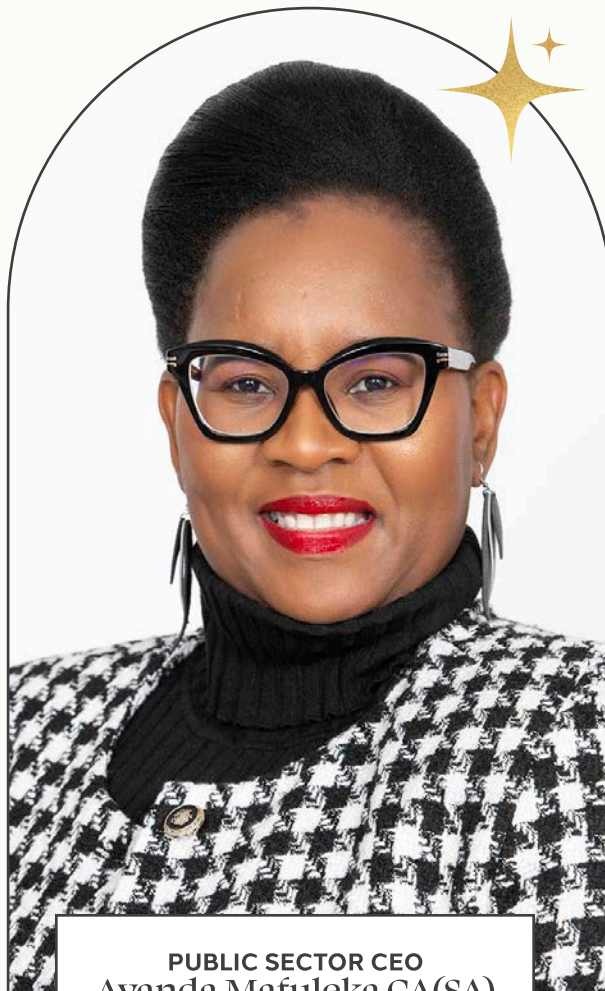
partnership. Ensuring skills interventions align with the needs of the global economy, while prioritising the local context is another. In other words, our interventions should account on how locally developed skills can be retained locally so as to pour back into our economy. This creates a competitive advantage for South Africa, instead of training for deployment for the benefit of the global context.

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?**

There is no particular leader that can ever be mentioned in isolation as having displayed all the traits I have found valuable during my tenure as a CEO, and in my other leadership roles. I learn through my interactions and exposure to people at various leadership levels. The greatest insights are sometimes discovered where we least expect them. The key takeaway from my interactions with other leaders is how we all have our own unique ways of displaying the same leadership characteristics that have brought us to the positions we now occupy. Our respective journeys into academia and our social skills are all geared towards a common goal, but are all expressed and undertaken differently.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?** This may come as a surprise to many, but placing myself at the forefront of FASSET's stakeholder engagements has been a very intriguing experience for me. It has not always been my strongest point, however fostering partnerships, consulting for the betterment of our strategic focus and going where double the impact could

be achieved — all while learning about my own strengths — has been intentional. As part of my stakeholder engagement performance areas, I have also had to face my fear of public speaking. Tackling this fear has been clear proof that instead of fearing the unknown, all we need to do is simply trust ourselves during the process.



**PUBLIC SECTOR CEO  
Ayanda Mafuleka CA(SA)  
CEO: FASSET**



**PRIVATE SECTOR CEO**  
**Sharmila Chetty**  
**CEO: DUKE CORPORATE**  
**EDUCATION**



**Mrs Zanele Mbeki serves not only as my mentor and role model, but is also a formidable advocate for feminism, women's rights and empowerment. It is an honour to regard her as a maternal figure."**

**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?** As an organisation, the African Women Chartered Accountants (AWCA) plays a pivotal role in propelling the advancement of women within the accounting profession. Their primary mission is to dismantle barriers, advocate for gender equality, and deliver robust support and mentorship for women endeavouring to thrive in accounting careers. AWCA acts as a change agent for these women to express their concerns and perspectives, thus cultivating a sense of community.

Their rigorous research remains ahead of industry trends and the influence of artificial intelligence on accounting roles, empowers its members with the critical expertise and skills to adapt to these global shifts. I am inspired by how AWCA encourages collaborative interaction and knowledge exchange through a series of networking events and conferences, all aimed at fostering the professional upliftment of women accountants. AWCA emboldens women, bolsters their professional growth, and readies them for the prospective landscape of the accounting sector.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?** Given the present scenario in South Africa, typified by corruption, a deficit in ethical leadership, heightened youth unemployment, an absence of transformation and gender equality, and prevalent poverty, it is critical that Chartered Accountants serve as leaders of critical traits and competencies that underscore integrity, visionary leadership, ethical conduct, effective communication, empathy, collaboration, resilience, courage and a focus on sustainability and social impact.

I would also add strategic thinking, result-driven decision-making, astute financial management and an unwavering commitment to education aimed at alleviating unemployment. A leader with these attributes is well-equipped to galvanise positive transformation, nurture inclusive growth, and steer the nation towards a balance of ethical leadership, youth development and entrepreneurial spirit.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?** Chartered Accountants are uniquely positioned to spearhead meaningful transformation within our nation, and their voices must be heard. Their financial acumen, combined with an unwavering commitment to integrity, can stimulate significant progress within organisations and broader society.

They enhance transparency, accountability, and economic growth by establishing robust financial frameworks, detecting fraud, and attracting investments. CAs(SA) mentor aspiring accountants, assist with tax reforms, integrate sustainable practices, embrace technology, promote ethical behavior and ensure transparency in social impact investments.

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?** Mrs Zanele Mbeki serves not only as my mentor and role model, but is also a formidable advocate for feminism, women's rights and empowerment. It is an honour to regard her as a maternal figure. She epitomises the nurturing attributes a young woman needs to grow into a formidable leader: affection, support, and a consistent presence during life's trials and triumphs.

My late mother's active involvement in community organisations, including supporting the elderly, organising food drives, and improving education, taught me the value of empathy, kindness, and giving back. Her legacy of demonstrating the profound impact of small acts of kindness continues to inspire me to make a positive difference and uplift those in need.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?** Scaling Mount Kenya and sailing were both exhilarating experiences that stretched my boundaries, offered unique perspectives, generated enduring memories, and facilitated personal growth. These journeys challenged my resilience as I grappled with exhaustion and transcended my perceived limitations. When fatigue set in, I discovered the depth of my strength and determination, persevering through challenges that seemed insurmountable.

These adventures humbled me, as I received guidance and support from fellow climbers who generously shared their knowledge and expertise, fostering a sense of community and facilitating my growth along the way.



**Having ethical leadership qualities is even more important for leaders in the Public Sector, a sector that is already perceived to be embroiled in corruption.**



**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?**

Most CAs(SA) are at the forefront of organisations and in a position to influence strategies that can address the country's structural economic fault lines. The fault lines are deep and pervasive. Our quest to end the interlinked challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment remains a daunting task. This is because the economic outlook, including at a global level, remains constrained. The economic woes are exacerbated by loadshedding, geo-political conflict and climate change, among others. So as CAs(SA), we are highly valued for our versatile skills and creative lateral thinking. Therefore, we are best placed to bring a positive contribution to society. It is imperative that our knowledge and skills are enhanced on a continuous basis in order to contribute to these societal challenges.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?**

Ethical leadership is anchored on good governance, ethics and ensuring social responsibility. Successful leaders have aligned themselves quite early in life to a set of principles. Having ethical leadership qualities is even more important for leaders in the Public Sector, a sector that is already perceived to be embroiled in corruption. Ethical values also demand that leaders should not only have a high level of integrity, but be competent in what they do, too. We also need more leaders who are visionaries. It is important to think big and ahead, but to also communicate that vision to followers to allow them to take ownership of this vision. According to Proverbs 29: 18, "Where there is no vision, people perish".



**PUBLIC SECTOR CFO  
Pretty Makukule CA(SA)  
CFO: DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?**

The world is changing rapidly and so is our society. We have to embrace technology and ensure we remain competitive economically. Our country has some of the best plans and strategies in the world, but our implementation lags behind. I would increase the rate of effectiveness and change. We know what is wrong, let us fix it! Where can we partner with the private sector to enlist skills we need?

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?**

Nelson Mandela remains a global unifying symbol. We need to learn from his skills and how unity of purpose was achieved during his years as President. His leadership is also informed by the need to engage the private sector on their social responsibility duties to enhance our society.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?**

It was in the earlier years when we used to balance the balance sheet manually. Several attempts later and it was still not balancing. I then decided to jog for 10km with the notes in the backpack. I stopped at every 1 kilometre and did the recalculations until I finished my race.



**PRIVATE SECTOR CFO**  
**Thobeka Ntshiza CA(SA)**  
**CFO: AVIS SOUTH AFRICA**

**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?** The bedrock of managing any economy and society is through the ability to manage its finances, mitigate risks and develop and execute on strategies for the future. CAs are trained in critical thinking, and understand complex operational and financial models, which gives them a broad understanding of organisations, the economy and the environment in which they operate. This provides a unique view of social and economic challenges.

**These skills are versatile and adaptable to business and problems in society. Beyond the technical accounting knowledge CAs can be harnessed in society to assist to :**

- Manage risk through advising and identifying financial and non-financial risks inherent in society. Develop mitigating controls for the risk identified.
- An advisory role on financial, economy related matters and best practices in areas of finances and governance. They can also advise on balancing the short term and long-term opportunity costs of deploying finances and making investment decisions. This is applicable in all spheres of public and private sectors.
- CAs can advise on strategy, forecasting and execution by influencing priorities and where to direct resources.
- Agility - A mindset of continuous learning which ensures we can adapt to change. Environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) must no longer be a one-man responsibility, it must be integral to our organisations' operations and strategy. Our profession has a role to play in leading this stance.
- For many years, ESG related activities were viewed as 'other' costs an organisation chose to incur, and not an investment. The landscape has changed. Today, ESG performance may have a direct impact on your ability to build a strong brand and reputation, attract investors and customers and recruit the best talent. In our reporting, in our conversations these elements must be educated to the organisation.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?**

It has been established that "the world's most valuable resource is no longer oil, but richer data...". The world is changing faster than ever and creating exponentially more data (richer), leaving companies to continue experiencing uncertainty within their business. As a leader, understand what data you have, clean it, mine it and use it as an empowering tool

to inform decision making. Data can tell us an organisation's strengths and weaknesses, especially in the current economic climate and provide rich learnings against which future decisions could be made. Secondly, leaders today are required to have more soft rather than hard skills. This means honest leadership that has integrity and no room for corruption, visibly leading by example, values and high morals.

A leader that communicates clearly and genuinely cares for all stakeholders (community, employees, etc). Covid- 19 has changed the emotional landscape of employees who are still dealing with loss, grief, and the economic fallout. Employees are under immense pressure in their personal and professional lives. We need to be conscious of the needs of our staff and ability to create safe spaces for the teams to thrive.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?** Our organisations must have a balanced focus on financial and non-financial performance. We must all be proactive on ESG, supporting cleaner environments and healthier communities. Public and private sector institutions, together with NGOs and foundations, need to partner to unlock economic growth and stimulate employment demands. We will not be stable for as long as our country grapples with a youth unemployment rate of 60%. We should encourage entrepreneurship and support youth led businesses to curb unemployment.

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?** Mr Dominic Sewela, Group CEO of Barloworld Limited. I witnessed "intentional leadership" under his leadership. He was purposeful in his actions (achieving transformation targets, strategy direction and execution), clear about the organisational goals and purposes, communicated openly and regularly with the business, leading with compassion and stretching his team to defy limits.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?** Undoubtedly the unbundling of Avis Group of companies from Barloworld, and the successful listing of Zeda Limited on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The biggest task was the raising of stand-alone debt funding packages for the business, going to the financial institutions to sell a business profile and a management team that was yet to prove itself as an independent entity — that was no small feat. I was pleased to have raised over R7 billion during the process.



**AUDIT PARTNER OF THE YEAR**  
**Rachel Nkgodi CA(SA)**  
**PARTNER: FINANCIAL SERVICES**  
**AUDIT, DELOITTE**

“A leader in the South African context should exhibit the following traits: integrity, empathy, excellence, resilience and adaptability.”

**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?** Our role is our continued stewardship role over ensuring good governance and a standard of excellence in each of our respective spheres of influence. Even more importantly, we should be a profession that keeps up with the challenges in the world and make a meaningful impact around social, governance, environmental and ethical issues. We should endeavour to guard the brand, not for sake of the four letters but really guard what these letters stand for: Excellence, due care and competence and integrity. In each sphere that we occupy, let us always be a voice of consciousness that ensures that different angles pertaining to issues and opportunities are explored in terms of how they impact society as a whole.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?** A leader in the South African context should exhibit the following traits: integrity, empathy, excellence, resilience and adaptability.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?** Appoint the right leadership to the appropriate spaces and shorten the span of authority for effective and efficient decision making and execution. I would also create a clear accountability framework and enforcement structures, as well as invest in food security both for local sustenance, job creation and export prospects. Lastly, I would strengthen our academic institutions to ensure global competitiveness and create opportunities for the youth country.

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?** Throughout my life, I have looked up to so many people. I love history and have read about fascinating people that walked the earth and the impact they made. I look out for people's character and have been fortunate to locate it in many people I have encountered — be it my teachers, community leaders, peers, leaders in organisations, presidents and those fascinating people I continue to read about in the pages of history. I always look for two things specifically — the triumph of the human spirit and the confidence in who one is created to be!

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?** I have allowed myself to always do different things. I have also had the courage to take up difficult roles that stretched me and provided me with the latitude and altitude to grow as an individual, and to make a meaningful impact. My current role as a Financial Services Audit Leader is my most adventurous to date.

**LEADING ENTREPRENEUR**  
**Ndiambani Magadagela CA(SA)**  
**CEO: EVERLECTRIC**



**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?**

The current social and economic climate requires a different way of thinking for CAs(SA). Gone are the days when our responsibilities in the business arena ended at providing professional and financial services. CAs(SA) now have the responsibility to help the nation in financial and economic-related actions. We are to be involved in boosting the country's economic growth. This means that, now more than ever, we have to be innovative about bringing new products to the economy and to be more deliberate about job creation and skills transfer. Our roles in society require a certain level of diligence and ethics, and most importantly being deliberate about lifting others as we rise.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?**

We need radical leaders who are not afraid to step out of their comfort zones. Leaders who are not just committed to the same, old ways of doing things but are open to innovation and are willing to support such innovations with resources and skills. Leaders must be brave enough to venture into the unknown, with the end goal being to make a significant difference. We need leaders who have strong ethics and integrity.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?**

It is a well-known fact that SMMEs contribute to economic development in various ways: by creating employment for the growing rural and urban labour force,

providing desirable sustainability and innovation in the economy as a whole. If we are to make a difference in our economy, we should support SMMEs. If I had to change anything, it would be to be more deliberate about incubating and funding SMMEs. With all the interventions that have been put in place, we are still faced with the fact that less than 5% of Venture Capital funding went to women in the recent years past.

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?**

While I admire different traits in different leaders, I will have to say that the one leader who left a lasting impression on me is my late father, Mr Ephraim Nengovhela. He showed bravery by stepping out of his comfort zone as a health inspector to becoming a successful entrepreneur under very difficult conditions during the apartheid regime. He taught himself all that he knew about business. He was a problem solver and was acutely committed to empowering others.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?**

I came to learn that a career is not a ladder, but rather a jungle gym. That, it is no longer just about rising in an organisation but also being deliberate about taking up roles that help you to acquire a basket of skills that gives you an edge. When I was in a comfortable corporate position with growth prospects, I ventured into the world of entrepreneurship. The move was nerve-wracking, but it was the most adventurous thing I had ever done in my career. The journey has been so rewarding because not only am I building from the bottom up, but I also get to lift others as I go along.

”

**We need radical leaders who are not afraid to step out of their comfort zones. Leaders who are not just committed to the same, old ways of doing things but are open to innovation and are willing to support such innovations with resources and skills.**

”



**TAX PARTNER OF THE YEAR**  
**Kabelo Malapela CA(SA)**  
**BUSINESS TAX LEADER: DELOITTE**

**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?** In the current social and economic climate, coupled with scandals and corruption, the CA brand has been tarnished by the actions of a minority. It is now more important than ever for CAs to come forward and step up in their roles to maintain the integrity and value of the brand. This requires unquestionable excellence and integrity in everything that we do, to uphold the standards and further strengthen the profession.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?** A leader needs three key traits to navigate this volatile climate, namely, adaptability, resilience and empathy. Adaptability to be able to adjust in the ever-changing environment, course-correct and pivot when necessary; resilience to stay the course and not give up when things get tough and empathy to ensure that they do not leave their team behind in the process.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?** Our country is at a tipping point, and the decisions that we make now will determine whether we have a positive future — leaving a legacy for the next generation, or spiral downwards as a country. Some of the things I would change include restructuring the social grant system so that it not only focuses on helping people when they are at their most vulnerable, but is geared at getting the affected people back on their feet so that they are able, and equipped, to sustain themselves in the long term. This will go hand in hand with creating an environment that nurtures and supports real entrepreneurship as a means of driving the much-needed economic growth.

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?** I tend to identify with leaders whose character and story I know intimately. So, I would have to say my mother, a retired matron who spent her career at the Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. She is, in my mind, the embodiment of servant leadership.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?**

I would have to highlight two examples here. The one being to leave the comfortable, Big Four environment for two and half years to join a small firm to start up a tax practice. Through this experience, I learnt a lot about myself and my ability to survive and focus on my goals. The other, which is closer to my heart, was going to culinary school and studying to become a chef, while still managing the demands of a tax partner portfolio.



**A leader needs three key traits to navigate this volatile climate, namely, adaptability, resilience and empathy.**



**We need leaders that  
are visionaries, fearless  
in the face of  
uncertainty and who  
are willing to make  
unpopular decisions for  
the greater good.**



**What do you believe is the role of CAs(SA) in the current social and economic climate?** The role of a CA(SA) in our country's social and economic climate is to be aware and responsive to the needs of those with the least access and privilege, and to be changemakers in the spaces that they occupy. I am encouraged by the developments in sustainability reporting, we are finally recognising that pursuit of profit at any cost does not result in sustainable growth and development. Accountants get opportunities to sit at decision-making tables, and we should do our part to consciously contribute to building an inclusive, equal and sustainable society.

**In your opinion, what traits and skills should a leader exhibit to navigate the current climate our country finds itself in?** South Africa is long overdue for some radical transformation in its leadership structures. We need leaders that are visionaries, fearless in the face of uncertainty and who are willing to make unpopular decisions for the greater good.

**What are some of the things you would change to ensure that South Africa has a positive future going forward?**

Without a doubt, free access to quality education for all South Africans (young and old) would be a top priority. Education is the single biggest lever we can pull to completely change the trajectory of this country. I do not believe that quality education should be a privilege enjoyed by those who can afford it — it is a basic human right.



**ACADEMIA TRAILBLAZER**  
**Nokuthula Mokgele CA(SA)**  
**SENIOR LECTURER**  
**IN TAXATION, UNISA**

**Which leader — young or old, alive or late — do you look up to?** I admire leaders, such as former President Nelson Mandela, that can bring people together for a common cause. I also admire the strategic leadership this country enjoyed during former President Thabo Mbeki's tenure. I try to not live my life 'looking up' to people, in case I miss the good stuff happening in my life. However, I can say that the single human who has directly and indirectly shaped who I am today is my mother, and I admire her values and resilience.

**What is the most adventurous thing you have done in your career?**

I have pivoted my career a lot, and I jokingly refer to not necessarily climbing the 'corporate ladder' but rather exploring the corporate jungle gym. The most daring thing I did was that soon after qualifying I discarded the 5 year career plan which included working in corporate for a while, getting international exposure and then becoming a lecturer when I retire. About two years after qualifying, I applied for a lecturing position and discovered my passion for education, training, knowledge and research.



# FROM CORPORATE TO BUSINESS

**Palesa Hlabahlaba CA(SA)**, Founder and CEO of RPH Consulting (Pty) Ltd, left corporate in pursuit of a career that was in alignment with her passions. Below, she details out how her leap of faith into entrepreneurship has turned out.

## Talk us through your career journey to date.

I graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in 2014 with a Bachelor in Accounting Science degree, as well as a Higher Diploma in Accounting Science. I then joined the Standard Bank Graduate programme in 2015, where I was among 15 graduates selected across the country to be part of the Chartered Accountants training programme. Upon completing my training, I joined the Wealth and Investment Finance Department as a Finance Manager responsible for financial reporting and insights for the executives heading the client coverage business units for the three major regions in South Africa. I started out as a junior manager, and was promoted to a middle manager in less than a year.

In 2020, just before lockdown, I was presented with an opportunity to take up the role of a Business Manager to the Head of Client Coverage South Africa,

later Head of Wealth and Investment South Africa. We were responsible for the formation and implementation of the high-net worth client strategy for the entire Wealth and Investment South Africa business. This was the role that granted me exposure to the key elements required for building a successful business. It truly developed my business acumen and leadership skills. After much consideration, I decided to leave the bank in 2022 to pursue my business ventures.

## What does RPH Consulting (Pty) Ltd do?

It is a professional services company that provides accounting, taxation and business advisory services to SMMEs and individuals. We are currently a 100% black- and female-owned company. Our main objective is to partner with our clients by providing services that address their unique needs, thus creating more capacity for businesses to focus on strategy execution and the achievement of company objectives.

We focus on developing the financial acumen of our clients to enable better decision-making that leads to their business achieving growth and scalability. We aim to be a part of the great African story of building sustainable businesses that contribute to the economic growth of our continent. We are confident about the future of Africa and its people.

## What inspired the career leap into entrepreneurship?

When we look at our country, although we have many problems, we also have many people trying to bring solutions. I grew up seeing a lot of South African entrepreneurs starting and running small businesses in the form of selling goods, spaza shops, funeral parlours, etc. Decades later, most of these businesses are still operating at the same scale. Then there is a large portion of younger entrepreneurs that have been bold enough to start businesses. However, statistics tell us that 70-80% of these often fail within the

first 5 years, according to an article on News24. This is said to be higher than anywhere else in the world.

When we start unpacking the reasons behind the failure, we realise that at the core of it, business owners are not equipped with the tools required to succeed. Core to any business is understanding your numbers; how the business is performing, cash flow management, managing risk and making decisions that align to business objectives. To achieve growth and scale, businesses need an accountant dedicated to partnering with the business owner as they navigate business challenges. As a qualified Chartered Accountant, I wanted to be that partner. I did not want to sit on the sidelines watching businesses fail when I could play a role in helping them succeed. I also understood that I, too, wanted to run a successful business that would outlive my existence.

### **What plans did you put in place prior to transitioning to entrepreneurship?**

I personally apply faith from a spiritual perspective — the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. My planning was therefore very limited. When everything was pointing me in the direction of taking this leap, the very first thing I did was to pray about this decision. To convince myself to be more comfortable with the idea, I had about three months' worth of savings that would enable me to leave corporate. I would then use those few months to establish the business, then look for another corporate role that would be flexible enough to enable me to run the business part time. I suddenly had a different conviction the minute I left my previous employment — I found myself actually pursuing business full time. Grace has sustained since.

### **How are you feeling now, almost a year since establishing RPH Consulting (Pty) Ltd?**

I am very content and at peace with this decision. In this short journey, I have met like-minded people pursuing similar, or different, interests with the goal of achieving great success. My mind has been exposed to a different level of possibilities and I am allowing myself to constantly push towards the things that make me uncomfortable, but are necessary to develop and achieve my goals and aspirations.

### **What are some of the highs and lows you have experienced since starting your business?**

The highs include getting something from a mere concept to actual

realisation. Seeing our logo on various platforms and items, hearing people talk about our company, receiving positive feedback from clients with further referrals is all fulfilling. I have also been privileged to come across many people who support our vision and partner with us on initiatives.

These have been other accountants that have been in the business longer, business advisory companies, accounting software partners and the likes. Partnering and collaborating has made this journey smoother. The lows would definitely be not receiving stable income for over a year. The excitement of payday has become a thing of the past [chuckles]. The consolation, however, is that I know this is only temporary. There will come a time when I have built a multi-million dollar company that we can all be proud of.

### **What lessons has entrepreneurship taught you?**

An entrepreneur that is starting out is both the vision bearer and the executor. This purely means that you will have to take on different roles in your business, depending on what is urgent and critical. I have had to upskill my IT skills and spent quite a lot of time on Google looking for "how-to" documents and videos. One of the key things I have had to do is be realistic with what my core strengths are. Where there is a developmental area, evaluate the cost versus the benefit of either going through the development process or completely outsourcing the skill. This has meant that I partner with other advisors on projects and attend regular training sessions where possible. You really do not need to know everything. If you are not the best person for the job, find someone that can assist you accordingly.

### **What advice would you give to someone considering the very same career transition?**

I would advise that they unpack the reasons motivating the transition. Big transitions such as going to start your own business, and leaving employment that offers various staff benefits, is not a decision you make purely out of emotions. Figure out what it is that you truly want to do and whether you can do it in the space that you are currently in — to the degree and extent that you wish, or whether you need to venture out into the wilderness. Entrepreneurship requires a lot of faith and resilience. Whichever way you define faith, make sure you have tons of it. Most importantly, do not forget to pray.

### **Would you ever consider going back to corporate?**

My main reason for leaving corporate was to provide a solution to a critical need in the business community and Africa as a whole. If I were to ever identify a need that requires me to be in corporate to provide the same solution, I would not hesitate to do so. I am not married to the how, but more so the why — the true intention and purpose behind every action.





Sindi Mabaso-Koyana, AWCA Investment Holdings (AIH) Chairperson

# 15

## YEARS OF UPLIFTMENT (THROUGH OUR INVESTMENT CHOICES)

Fifteen years later, AIH has grown from the seed that was planted in 2002 through the establishment of the African Women's Chartered Accountants (AWCA) Forum with the commitment to a successful future for women, into a mighty tree that has provided opportunities — showing resilience and dedication to the betterment of South Africa from the ground up.

It was the vision of the board of AWCA at the time, led by Sindi Mabaso-Koyana, that started this journey which encouraged Black women to invest, participating in a competitive landscape and rolling up their sleeves to transform the sector. This team of shareholders consisted mostly of young professional Chartered Accountants who understood the mission at hand; investing their

money into making significant strides towards gender equality and women's empowerment. And at R10 000 a share in 2008, it was no small feat but their commitment raised a seed capital of R1,8-million. Alongside these amazing women was Nations Capital Advisors, who provided us with key advisory services as well as a home base for our offices. Beja Attorneys also added value with the necessary legal support we required, for a while at no cost to AIH, as we embarked on this magnificent journey.

This drive and support are what has defined AIH through the years and enabled us to join an elite group of Black women-led investment companies which have emerged as powerful vehicles for driving economic growth, promoting diversity and empowering

women entrepreneurs. South Africa has undergone a profound transformation in the post-apartheid era and continues to strive for economic empowerment and social justice. Amidst this journey, the emergence of Black-owned women investment companies has been a significant milestone in catalysing positive change. Pioneering enterprises such as WIPHOLD, WDB and Nozala Investments have reshaped the economic landscape; empowering women and fostering inclusive growth. These trailblazers provided the motivation and mentorship for AIH to develop as deal-makers; making well-informed decisions that would lead to early investments in companies such as Atos, Reef Tankers, Foskor, Etana and later acquiring shares in Hollard, Bidvest Protea Coin, Global Credit Rating and MTN. By encouraging diversity in the decision-making process,

”

**It was the vision of the board of AWCA**  
at the time, led by Sindi Mabaso-Koyana, that started this  
journey which **encouraged Black women to invest**, participating  
in a competitive landscape and rolling up their sleeves to  
transform the sector.

AIH has incorporated a broader range of perspectives, leading to more informed and innovative investment strategies. This diversity not only enhances the overall performance of our investment portfolio but also reflects the changing demographics of South Africa, fostering greater social cohesion and unity. These interventions have been great opportunities for growth.

Over the years, AIH has grown with a multi-skilled team of tireless women, backing its every step forward with their expertise, their time and even their own money to provide the necessary capital to grow into the formidable industry player it is today. From our valued board members who never took a board fee but rather dedicated themselves to the mission of growing the fund, to our beloved support staff that has played a crucial role in the smooth functioning and success of the company. People like Zanele Msimang, who started out as an administrator supporting seven board directors in 2011 and has now advanced into the position of Group Finance and Compliance Manager. This is a direct demonstration of the value that AIH has poured into the lives of so many women.

AIH's deal execution was always challenged by its funding capacity. The Covid-19 pandemic has also undoubtedly posed significant challenges for businesses across various industries. However, it also created unique opportunities for fundraising in sectors like food security, financial services and technology. It was essential for our company to adapt and leverage the changing market dynamics, emphasising the importance of global human and business connectivity. AIH is conscious

of its responsibility and is committed to its role of being a catalyst in managing the digital divide.

It was during this time that we were able to raise R400 million, enabling us to launch our Private Equity firm, AIH Capital, and achieving half the capital targeted by our fund. This made it possible for us to execute an acquisition of 21.2% of FutureGrowth Asset Management. Through all this commercial success, AIH has stayed true to its origins of social impact. Our motivation for our existence has always been to provide support to the development of women in South Africa, which is why our partnerships have been valuable to us in ensuring that 10% of our profit goes to the African Women Chartered Accountants Forum; continuing to support women in their development within the industry while raising the bar in the development of quality leadership with integrity and vision through partnerships with Duke Corporate Education, The International Women's Forum (IWFS) and the FASSET programme.

Many times we have been questioned on the identity of our company. Others have wondered whether we were a charity because we centred development in the growth of our company, supporting young aspiring Chartered Accountants through the AWCA's Bursary Fund while providing mentorship and leadership development to professionals within the industry. We are proud to have AWCA as a strategic partner and are committed to continue being a part of the bigger vision which supports nation-building through the empowerment of women; leading by example and lifting others as we rise. We are a true commercial

entity as we continue to pursue significant investments with healthy returns. In the economic environment where private capital is in high demand and South African businesses requiring transformation as a business imperative, this places AIH and AIH Capital at a pinnacle point as we create a legacy group of profitable companies in our portfolio.

The journey over the last 15 years has not been easy, but it has brought about true contentment in who we are and who we are becoming. It has enabled us to develop talent that the country needs in moving it towards prosperity for all. AIH has set and pursued meaningful goals, overcome challenges, embraced learning and growth while finding a sense of purpose and contentment along the way. Our perseverance and resilience have enabled us to navigate through challenges and keep moving forward, embracing failures as learning opportunities for growth and improvement.

Our support system has shown how valuable it is to create meaningful connections, partnerships and collaborations that have impact not only to the bottom line of profitability but extending our success to other communities around the country. We have to be financially successful for us to drive our objective of financial inclusivity and financial independence of Black women. We are proud of this 15-year milestone, recognising and celebrating every woman that has been on this journey with us, playing their role in being a part of **Herstory** and in creating something better for our children and many generations to come. We salute you all, you are AIH and this achievement is yours!

**AWCA**  
HUMAN CAPITAL

  
**NATIONS CAPITAL**  
ADVISORS

**FUTUREGROWTH**  
ASSET MANAGEMENT

**ATLAS360**  
CORPORATE FINANCIAL SERVICES

**Reef**  
TANKERS  
Driven by Passion

**Atos**

**Holland**

**Bidvest**  
PROTEA COIN



**BEJA**  
ATTORNEYS INC.

**GCR**  
RATINGS

An Affiliate  
of Moody's  
Investors Service

**FOSKOR**

# An Exodus Of CA TALENT

With local talent leaving South African shores for greener pastures abroad, will we be left with a skills shortage crisis? **Fhatuwani Managa CA(SA)** spoke to a peer who made this international jump.



The South African Chartered Accountancy designation has become increasingly sought-after globally in recent years. The designation has garnered more attention since the 2008 recession and Covid-19 pandemic, with countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Bermuda, The Caribbean, Cayman Island and the United States recruiting SA talent to work remotely and or to emigrate with a work visa. With the salary package often enticing, the global experience on one's CV invites a new element of marketability in one's career. There has been a rise in the number of qualified CAs(SA) embracing these opportunities, resulting in a skills shortage in South Africa.

Vuyo Qhwesha CA(SA) recently took up an opportunity to work in the Cayman Islands. Born and raised in Lusikisiki, a small Eastern Cape town, Vuyo is an older brother to five siblings. His mother single-handedly raised all of them without any formal qualification or a decent job. The first in his family to ever set foot at the gates of an institution of higher learning, Vuyo believes his background has shaped the lens through which he views society and the world as whole. He shares his moves on moving abroad below.

## A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Vuyo is of the view that South Africa is not necessarily losing its CAs(SA) talent to international countries but we should, instead, see and pride ourselves as a hub that produces and exports this scarce skill to a global community.

"We should take this as an opportunity to increase the investment of producing more CAs(SA) who will be economically active participants. As a country, we should be proud that CAs(SA) have access to limitless opportunities abroad, in countries such as Canada, United Kingdom (UK), USA, Caribbean Islands, the Middle East as well as the rest of the African continent. This is fundamentally important for a country that has been, and is, facing high unemployment rates — especially for the youth and young professionals. The increase in demand of CAs both locally and internationally, should attract more brilliant, young minds to pursue Chartered Accountancy," says Vuyo.

## THE MAIN DRIVERS

Newly qualified CAs(SA) are attracted to international opportunities for reasons such as gaining exposure to global



VUYO QHWESHA CA(SA)

“My job has afforded me multiple opportunities to sit at the boardroom table with captains of industry, both in South Africa and abroad.” Through these opportunities, he has built a number of solid networks that he can now easily leverage.

markets and clients, better salary packages and benefits, quality of life in first world countries, low crime rates and improved security measures, low or/and no income taxes in some countries (e.g. Caribbean Islands), the ease of leisure travel across other continents, earning in stronger currencies (and spending in rands — amongst many others.

“The global exposure adds more weight to the CVs of those CAs(SA) who have plans of someday returning to South Africa for attractive mid- to senior level positions. Some CAs(SA), on the other hand, are looking for permanent greener pastures to start families and raise children in safer environments and stable economies around the world. This is more common in countries like the UK as our CAs(SA) become eligible for UK-citizen passports after about four years. Furthermore, the SAICA cross-border designation recognition, through several Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with other accounting bodies in different countries, opens up more opportunities for CAs(SA).”

## SECONDMENT VS LONG CONTRACT

Secondments usually take place over a shorter period, while a long contract may range anything from a year to a permanent offer. A secondment usually takes place when a newly qualified CA goes abroad for one busy season, mostly to work on very tight and inflexible schedules, with limited or very low learning experience and exposure taking place.

“In comparison to a long contract offering, a secondment arrangement does not add much value to one’s CV. A long contract affords CAs a wider range of learning and helps them mature on a professional level. Furthermore, a secondment does not come with longer visa or work permit access, which then limits flexibility to extend the contract or seek other job opportunities at the end of secondment,” advises Vuyo.

## WORK CULTURE ABROAD

It is important to note that there are more audit opportunities abroad than there are non-audit ones (banking, government, finances, etc.). “The auditing environment and culture is quite unique compared to other industries. It’s high-pressured and demanding space — no surprises there! This culture seems to be the same everywhere. However, in places such as the Caribbean Islands and the USA, the audit environment is

mostly seasonal. This means that a CA would be busy from January to May each year, and enjoy a two- to three-month breather before interim work commences. During this down-time, most CAs use this opportunity to explore the world, which further makes the international culture more attractive. In addition, working abroad grants CAs an opportunity to glean insights from different CAs from across the globe,” shares Vuyo.

## THE GREAT TREK HOME

As he matures from being a newly qualified CA(SA) to a year of post-qualification experience, Vuyo has come to the decision that his purpose is in South Africa — to uplift the previously disadvantaged youth with similar or worse off backgrounds than his. He notes that the process of becoming a CA(SA) sharpened his leadership abilities and interests. “I can now use this prestigious designation to unlock several doors for the poor population of our society,” he explains. How so? “My job has afforded me multiple opportunities to sit at the boardroom table with captains of industry, both in South Africa and abroad.” Through these opportunities, he has built a number of solid networks that he can now easily leverage. With various initiatives such as the online university applications that he has been submitting on behalf of rural high school learners since 2016, he believes that he is now better equipped to encourage more learners to pursue Chartered Accountancy. Vuyo further intends to pair these students with qualified CAs(SA) who are interested in paying it forward. “I believe that this programme of action will ensure that we do not only end at putting these students through university, but support them all the way to the finish line (including conquering APC board exam),” he says.

## PARTING SHOT

To up-and-coming CAs, Vuyo encourages going against the grain. What you might regret later is missing out on great opportunities as a result of following your peers’ decision or being paralysed by fear. It could be the fear of exploring global opportunities and growing professionally or the fear of being far removed from your loved ones. “Take that global opportunity to expand your horizon,” says Vuyo. “South Africa is waiting to receive a refined and sharper version of you, that understands global economic operations. Take that leap of faith and pursue once-in-a-lifetime career opportunities.”



# LEADING DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

We explore the various leadership styles required for leaders to cater to a multi-generation environment — especially in these times of embracing mental health, ever-changing AI and technology. How can leaders foster a harmonious and productive work environment?

**By Micarla Hart CA(SA) Additional Reporting: Paballo Phiri CA(SA)**

Picture Credit: August de Richelieu on Pexel.com

Millennials, GenZ, and Boomers seemingly have very little in common. But the one thing that binds the two generations together is employment. We share the same working spaces, often as equals — and at times as managers and subordinates. While corporations are diversified in terms of bringing people from different backgrounds and generations together in a common space, it also seems that corporate has not entirely diversified the types of leaders it has in place.

## A CALL FOR CHANGE

Leadership in today's workplace is a dynamic and evolving concept. Recognising and embracing the diversity of different generational groups is crucial to effective leadership. Baby Boomers, often seen as the traditionalists in the workplace, value loyalty, dedication, and respect for authority, requiring clear communication, setting clear goals that specifically recognise their experience and expertise with consistent feedback to reinforce their contributions.

Generation X employees are known for their independent and self-reliant nature, preferring leaders who empower them to take ownership of their work, allowing flexibility in how they achieve goals, leaning to a more results and outcomes-based approach rather than micro-management and demonstrating trust in their capabilities. Millennials, on the other hand, thrive

on purpose-driven work and seek leaders who inspire and align with their values. They benefit from environments which include transformational leadership, emphasising personal growth and meaningful contributions to society.

Generation Z, the youngest generation, values diversity, innovation and authenticity, requiring leaders to embrace a democratic leadership style, involving them in decision-making processes and valuing their input.

Each generation brings unique perspectives, experiences, and expectations to the table, making it essential for leaders to recognise and embrace these differences. Leaders who endeavour to understand the values, preferences, challenges and work styles of each generation will enable themselves to effectively tailor their approach, in creating a positive and productive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated. In today's diverse workforce, effective leaders understand that a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership is no longer sufficient.

## WHICH LEADER ARE YOU?

We dissect the different attributes in leaders to assist you in navigating and creating environments that promote and align benefits for all generations.

### Visionary Leaders

They possess a compelling and forward-thinking vision for the organisation's future, are able to communicate the vision clearly and inspire others to rally behind it. They encourage a culture of continuous improvement, embracing change to stay ahead in the environment. This provides the stability and clear direction required by the Boomers, Millennials will align to the vision through purpose and shared values, while still fostering innovation, continuous development required from the Generation Z.

### Agile Leaders

They are adaptable and responsive to rapidly changing business conditions. They are comfortable with ambiguity and capable of making informed decisions quickly, and support their teams to be flexible and creative in problem-solving. They also promote a culture of experimentation and risk-taking while learning from failures. This agility also extends to communication styles and methods with various generations groups, where Boomers prefer telephone calls or in-person interactions, Generation Y adapts to instant messaging.

### Inclusive Leaders

They value diversity and create an inclusive work environment where all employees feel heard. They also embrace various perspectives, backgrounds, gender conforming and experiences to drive innovation. These leaders foster a work culture and environment of belonging, a space of psychological safety and ensure equal opportunities for growth and advancement. They also encourage open dialogue and constructive feedback to enhance collaboration. This attribute is steadily becoming a sought-after quality in leaders in a diverse corporate environment in South Africa, given that mental health is steadily seen as a threat to sustainability as South Africa ranks low on the global mental health scale.

### Resilient Leaders

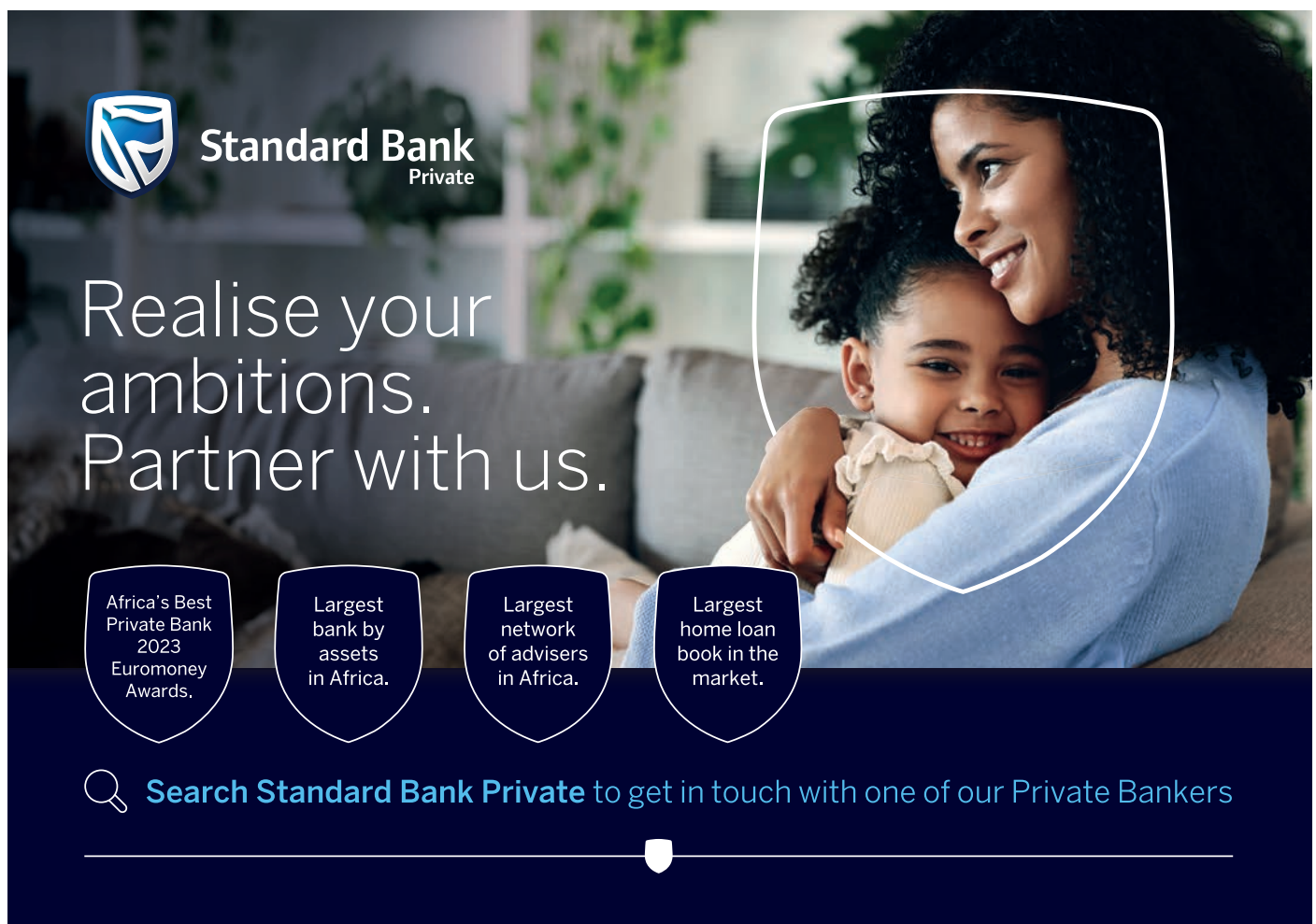
They maintain composure in times of uncertainty, exhibit strong emotional intelligence to support and empathise, while still being able to have powerful, courageous and uncomfortable conversations with their teams. Brene Brown in her book *Dare to Lead* describes courage requiring vulnerability. This exposure can lead to uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure. A resilient leader can demonstrate the ability to lean into this exposure and bounce back from the uncertainty, discomfort setbacks and learn from challenges. This creates an environment that fosters culture of trust and dependability.

### INVESTMENT IN LEADERSHIP

It is often said that employees do not leave good jobs, but they leave bad managers. Therefore investing in training and coaching for leaders to adopt styles that promote value for all generations becomes a no brainer.

Adopting a flexible leadership style that considers the needs of Boomers right through to Generation Y, fosters a harmonious work culture that maximises the potential of a multi-generational workforce. By embracing diversity and driving collaboration, leaders can build cohesive teams that are better equipped to tackle challenges and achieve organisational success in the ever-changing landscape of the modern workplace.

The workplace is not exclusively segmented by generational cohorts especially within a multi-cultural nation such as South Africa. Adaptive leadership, where leaders recognise and blend distinctive styles to suit the unique dynamics of their team works best. Therefore, a blend of these leadership attributes and continuous development can be effective in fostering collaboration and mutual respect.



**Standard Bank Private**

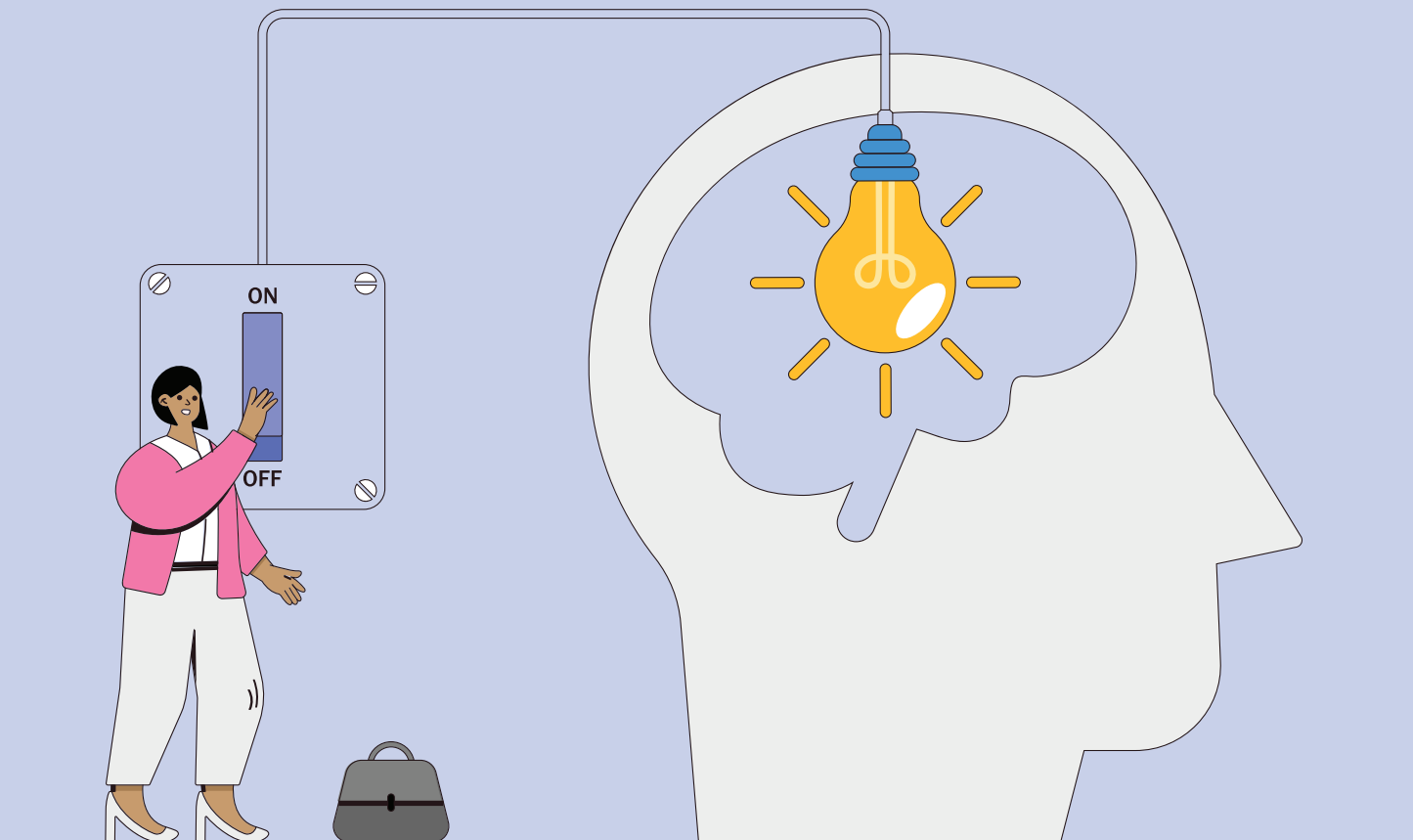
Realise your ambitions.  
Partner with us.

- Africa's Best Private Bank 2023 Euromoney Awards.
- Largest bank by assets in Africa.
- Largest network of advisers in Africa.
- Largest home loan book in the market.

 **Search Standard Bank Private** to get in touch with one of our Private Bankers

# A SILENT EXIT!

Quiet quitting, a phenomenon where employees switch off mentally in order to cope with an emotionally draining work environment, is more common than we let on. **Ntebaleng Twala CA(SA)** and **Thulaganyo Sechoaro CA(SA)** unpack it in detail.



**Quiet quitting, also known as a silent resignation, refers to an employee removing their effort and dedication from their position without explicitly expressing their unhappiness or plan to leave.**

The concept of quiet quitting is well captured in a popular video (3 million views to be exact!) by tiktoker @zkchillin as a situation in which an employee does the bare minimum of what is required of them. A typical example would be an employee that starts work at 9am and ends off at 5pm sharp, without any overtime or going the extra mile. Multimedia journalist Alena Botros aptly describes it as a phenomenon where employees continue to execute their jobs while rejecting the corporate hustle culture that too often leads to burnout. Definition clear enough? Quiet quitting has become more common in recent times, perhaps due to how the modern day workforce and employees' expectations have evolved. Previously, people in traditional work contexts were more likely to work more than the minimum 40 hours per week to meet deadlines. This was regarded as 'engaged behaviour'. And if an employee was dissatisfied with their working conditions, they would openly quit from their positions to pursue better prospects.

## An Evolution

However, as the workplace evolves, so do employees' attitudes towards their jobs and working conditions. The growth of remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic, shifting attitudes regarding work-life balance, and rising job insecurity have all encouraged the emergence of quiet quitting. "I believe that what prompts quiet quitting is not just dissatisfaction, but also the belief that even if concerns are voiced, not much will change," explains \*Tebogo Maunatla, a team leader at one of the big four banks. She adds: "An employee will be perceived as undedicated, and be victimised for quitting quietly."

Prior to quietly quitting, \*Lerato investigated a few alternatives such as reaching out to other teams for collaboration and cross-skilling. But owing to time restrictions, and a lack of support from her current team, she was unable to do so. "Management's lack of flexibility and support left me feeling disappointed and without any coping strategy other than focusing on essential deliverables and delegating chores to my team," she shares.

According to registered industrial psychologist Sendry Moralo, there may be a variety of reasons why a once dedicated employee opts to quit discreetly. While it may point to a dire culture problem within a corporation, this is not always the case. Here are a few other culprits responsible for quiet quitting:

**Burnout** can be caused by chronic stress, an excessive workload, or a lack of life-work balance. Emotionally and physically drained employees may choose to quit quietly — and they sometimes do this unconsciously.

**Lack of growth** can lead to an employee feeling stagnant and seeing few to no options for career advancement or personal development.

**Disengagement** often arises when an employee loses interest over time owing to a lack of motivation, a sense of being underpaid or underappreciated — or a misalignment between their values and the culture of the company in question. Quitting quietly in such instances may be a way of disengaging without causing disruption.

**Personal reasons** including family obligations, health concerns and many others may cause employees to quit quietly.

**A toxic work environment** includes harassment, bullying, discrimination or a hostile culture, and can cause an employee to leave discreetly to avoid more conflict or negative experiences.

## Cause For Concern

While quitting quietly does not always imply a serious problem, it can suggest underlying concerns in the workplace or personal circumstances.

To avoid valued employees from quietly leaving without addressing core problems, employers must build an environment that encourages open communication, supports employee well-being, and resolves concerns.

Life coach Vumile Msweli believes that quiet quitting can often lead to a cascade of unforeseen consequences. "Company culture can be disrupted when employees choose to silently slip away, and talent lost," she weighs in. That said, Msweli advocates for transparent communication no matter how tough the circumstances.

"The absence of open dialogue and failure to communicate the reasons behind one's silent departure can leave colleagues and superiors in a state of bewilderment and confusion. This will not only hinder the organisation's ability to address underlying issues, but also create a sense of lingering dissatisfaction within the team," she says.

Moreover, she explains, the act of quitting quietly can result in missed opportunities for knowledge transfer, constructive feedback and potential reintegration into the professional network.

**50%**  
**Percentage of**  
**the US workforce that**  
**is quitting quietly.** The  
study also noted that 18% of  
the workforce is actively  
disengaged, and that  
engagement levels among  
employees under 35 have  
decreased.  
**Between 2019 and**  
**2022, the percentage**  
**of engaged employees**  
**under 35 dropped**  
**by 4%.**



## Read On If You Are A Leader

A few pointers on how leaders can help create a supportive environment where employees feel heard.



### Establish an environment that promotes free expression.

To achieve this, leaders must acknowledge the complexities of human connections and cultivate an environment that values genuine dialogue and spontaneous interactions.



### Foster a psychologically secure atmosphere.

Employees should feel free to express their concerns and share ideas without fear of consequence or criticism. Setting up regular feedback channels, such as team meetings, one-on-one conversations or anonymous suggestion boxes, can provide employees with several options to voice their ideas and contribute to the company's overall progress.



### Act on the feedback received from employees.

By taking this feedback to mind, leaders can establish a culture that supports open communication and discourages thoughts of quitting quietly. Exit interviews, specifically, can provide important insights into potential areas for change within the company.

## Saving A Sinking Boat

To gain a fair chance of retaining talent and minimising quiet quitting, Moralo usually advises managers and companies to promote life-work balance through flexible work arrangements, remote work options and wellness programmes. But, how can this be achieved in a corporate culture that only glorifies mental health wellness on paper, and not in actual practice?

"Employees who are continuously valued and supported by their managers are less inclined to leave their jobs quietly," says Moralo. And the onus is on managers and leaders to set a good example of supportive behaviour, open communication and a commitment to employee well-being, he adds. "Leaders should help employees realise how their jobs contribute to the overall company goals, developing a sense of purpose and involvement," he says. In addition, companies should provide counselling services to employees so that they can address any psychological concerns they may be suffering.

## Prioritise Self

\*Tebogo once considered quitting without plan B but unfortunately, the odds were stacked against her. Despite discussions about reshaping her work schedule with her employer, she has received little assistance. While her manager has attempted to help by alerting her of other opportunities within the company, her workload remains sky-high.

As far as lessons go, Lerato warns against overextending yourself in a work setting. "Most times, it just leads to additional responsibility and no compensation," she says, adding that one must never put personal development and well-being on the back burner due to a heavy workload. The cycle, she warns, will never end and there will never be enough time because work never stops.

Considering quitting quietly? Moralo recommends keeping your head down, completing your main objectives and working smarter (not harder) to free up some well-deserved breathing time. Furthermore, Lerato advises reaching out to people you trust for help — and searching for new employment. "Most importantly, take time off to cleanse your mind. It is important to look after yourself so you can make it to the other side," she concludes. **\*Not real name**



## BEFORE YOU THROW IN THE TOWEL...

Here's what to consider before quitting

### Your mental and emotional health.

It is important to prioritise these two aspects before making any big decisions. If your job is causing you significant stress, it may be time to toy around with the idea of leaving.

### Your future career goals.

Will quitting your current job drive you further away from, or bring you closer to, your career goals? Will it negatively impact your CV or future job prospects?

### What's your plan B?

Are there any alternatives to leaving? Can you talk to your boss or HR about your concerns? Is there a possibility of transitioning to a different role or department within the company? Exploring these options can help you make a more informed decision.

### Consider your financial situation.

Do you have the means to support yourself if you quit without another job lined up? Ensure that you have enough savings to cover your expenses until your next job comes along.

# Illuminate Your Space with Organic Delights from Myoli Products



In an era where self-care and holistic well-being are key, finding products that bring tranquillity, rejuvenation, while still offering a touch of elegance can be a transformative experience.

Myoli Products, a health and beauty online store, is bringing a collection of organic health and beauty products that are designed to radiate light and serenity into your everyday life. They offer handcrafted candles and diffusers that are meticulously curated to ignite your senses and illuminate your space with their gentle glow and captivating aromas.

The secret is behind the name Myoli - meaning Joy in Xhosa - which has been the brand's mission of bringing joy into the living and work spaces of many of its customers. Set to unveil the radiance within, customers can immerse themselves in the warm glow of the Myoli creations, while letting their senses dance with joy from the gentle enchantment of the fragrances.

## Myoli candles - the artistry of soy wax:

*With a commitment to providing the finest quality products, the Myoli range of candles are created using soy wax for the well-being of their customers. Unlike conventional paraffin-based candles, their soy wax creations are crafted from organic, sustainable ingredients that are kind to their users and the environment. Infused with the purest essential oils, the candles emit fragrances that captivate the senses and promote a serene ambience in any room. Customers can choose between sandalwood, eucalyptus and tea tree, as well as coffee and vanilla scents. The quality of the candles is not the only unique feature; the collections have real human names – Khumo, Buhle, Phila and Thando – which adds a personal touch to the creations.*

## Myoli diffusers - captivating fragrances that ignite the senses:

Their signature collection features an array of fragrances inspired by the bountiful wonders of nature. From soothing French lavender and cinnamon and vanilla to invigorating sandalwood and musk and lemongrass and ginger, the scents are carefully chosen to uplift spirits, enhance relaxation, and create an enchanting atmosphere. With each inhale, the gentle aromas transport you to a world of tranquillity and bliss.

## Indulge in the luxurious experience of handcrafted delights:

The Myoli candles and diffusers are designed to elevate your self-care rituals, invigorate your living spaces, and help you unwind after a long day. Made by female creatives, the owners pour their creativity and expertise into every piece, ensuring that the final product is a masterpiece.

Whether you choose a delicately scented candle or a sleek diffuser, rest assured that each unique creation is lovingly handcrafted to perfection so you can indulge in aroma luxury. As a cherry on top, customers have the option to refill their candles and diffuser jars for 20% less than the cost of their order.

Visit the Myoli Instagram page to explore the exquisite collection of handmade soy wax candles and diffusers and transform your environment into a haven of serenity and sophistication.

Instagram: @myolicandles

Website: COMING SOON



# Normalising Fertility Challenges...

...And egg freezing, too!

With scores of women preferring to delay motherhood until much later, we investigate what fertility options they can explore later on.

**By Thulaganyo Sechoaro (CA)SA and  
Fhatuwani Managa (CA)SA**

Women are constantly reminded of their ticking biological clock and pressured to start a family before it's 'too late', according to societal standards that is. Whether in pursuit of career goals or trying to be on par with their male counterparts, financial reasons, work-life balance, lack of support or maternity leave woes, more and more women are opting to delay starting a family for various reasons. A late start, however, *sometimes* comes with fertility challenges.

"Discovering that one cannot have a child can be a devastating event. Experiencing infertility takes a physical and psychological toll on the infertile individual, as well as their partner," explain ob-gyn and fertility specialist Dr Khathu Mukhudwani and Dr Rendani Tshikosi, a fertility specialist.

Infertility, according to Dr Mukhudwani and Dr Tshikosi, is the inability achieve pregnancy within 12 months of unprotected sexual intercourse in women below the age of 35 or within six months in women older than 35 years.

As infertility is still considered a taboo subject, many keep their infertility a secret. "The stigmatisation of infertility and the need to keep infertility a secret further contribute to the lack of support a career women can experience," warn Dr Mukhudwani and Dr Tshikosi. This means they do not get the support that they might need from others. Infertility could possibly be related to the notion that infertility has largely been found to be a social construct.

## A SUBTLE WAR

Maternity leave is a key consideration for women thinking of starting a family. Per the South African Labour Act, the onus is on each company to decide whether or not to provide paid or partially paid maternity leave — which often puts added financial pressures on families.

In other instances women fear that taking leave may set them back in their careers, and that they could potentially miss out on opportunities for a promotion. Women, in some cases, are subtly perceived as less committed to their jobs when compared to their childless counterparts.

In some high-pressure work environments, some mothers pay the high price of losing their jobs altogether. In addition, women may feel that taking time off for maternity leave may place them at the risk of missing out on important projects, networking opportunities, or skill-building that could help them.

## DOS AND DON'T'S OF SUPPORTING WOMEN UNDERGOING FERTILITY TREATMENTS

**01**

Do not ask about the cause for fertility challenges.

**02**

Never ask why they do not have children yet.

**03**

Do not provide unsolicited advice or assume anything.

**04**

Respect their privacy

**05**

Lend a listening ear and censor yourself.

**06**

Understand how badly it may hurt, emotionally, for them.

Fortunately, there are several options available for those career women who choose to delay starting a family.

- **Egg freezing**, also known as oocyte cryopreservation, is a process in which a woman's ovaries' eggs (oocytes) are extracted, frozen, and stored. This allows women to preserve their fertility and increase their chances of having a healthy pregnancy;
- **Adoption**: Adoption is another option for women who may not want to or cannot conceive a child biologically. Adoption can be a fulfilling way to build a family and provide a loving home for a child in need;
- **Surrogacy**: Women who are unable to carry a child may consider surrogacy, in which a surrogate carries the pregnancy for them. Visit [surrogacyagreements.co.za](http://surrogacyagreements.co.za) for more details.

Silicon Valley has made significant investments in fertility technology, with over 240 apps related to fertility available on Google Play. Apps such as Glow and Kindara allow users to track and monitor menstrual cycles, and ovulation, thus empowering women when it comes to their reproductive health. Recently, technology companies have ventured into investing in reproductive health. Investors are investing millions of dollars into egg freezing and IVF clinics. Egg freezing has gained popularity in recent years as women aim to preserve their fertility and take control of their reproductive future.

### EGG FREEZING

\*Ofentse Pule first heard of egg freezing from her older colleague who advised women under 35, with no kids, to freeze their eggs. It became a clear option years later when a close friend of hers struggled to find viable eggs to freeze at the age of 41. At 33 with no prospects of a solid relationship, Ofentse decided to freeze her eggs. "More than anything, I did not want the pressure of starting a family due to a ticking biological clock," she shares.

When she introduced the idea of egg freezing to her partner, he was supportive, and her mother and aunt thought it was a wise choice. While some friends were surprised, others were triggered to evaluate their own family planning prospects. Financially, she was fortunate to have enough funds/savings

to pay for the medication and procedure.

"Professional career women suffering from infertility, or those seeking to freeze their eggs for future fertility require a lot of support from their spouses, family, employers and especially from their reproductive medicine specialist and fertility counsellors," explain Dr Mukhudwani and Dr Tshikosi. Employee wellness should also include support and understanding from employers as these women navigate a balance between their demanding careers and having children, add the two doctors.

The experience has changed Ofentse's life as she no longer worries about when she will start a family. "Not everyone needs to freeze their eggs, but it does ease the pressure of settling down and hopefully buys you an option to still have children should you be on the wrong side of the biological clock in future," says Ofentse..

### CASE STUDY

\*Karabo Makutulela froze her eggs at age 32, as a form of future insurance and to take away the potential guilt of having chosen to focus on self and work during the "child-bearing" years. Karabo admits that the process of egg freezing is not cheap, and she had to save up for the procedure and yearly egg storage fees. However, for peace of mind it was worth it.

Karabo had to stop taking contraceptives for two months to ensure that her body was in its most natural state before the process. The injections made her bloated and moody towards the end. In some instances the injection site got a bit red. However, Karabo feels that the procedure itself was not painful, just a bit uncomfortable towards the end as the body prepared for the egg extraction.

Karabo says that the experience has given her a sense of liberation and control over her reproductive system. Just like Ofentse, she no longer feels under pressure to live up to societal norms to have a baby. She advises young ladies who are considering egg freezing to be clear on why they are doing it. Ask your gynae or fertility specialist questions, and do not worry about being a nuisance. "The hormones are self-administered, so if one is afraid of needles, get someone who can help with the injections, says Karabo. **\*Not real name**

### FAQS ABOUT EGG FREEZING

#### 01. Are All Women Eligible To Freeze Their Eggs?

Women who have not been medically diagnosed as unable to conceive and who have not gone through menopause can potentially freeze their eggs

**Source:** Mediclinic Hub

#### 02. What Is The Cost Of Egg Freezing?

IVF and egg freezing cost between R25,000 and R40,000 per cycle. **Source:** Mediclinic hub

#### 03.Does medical aid cover egg freezing?

Majority of medical does not cover egg freezing. However, Discovery Medical Scheme offers coverage for fertility treatments. The coverage is limited and subject to strict conditions for a select number of clients. The fertilitycover is only for the Comprehensive Plan.

#### 04. At what age should women consider egg freezing?

Egg freezing is most effective when done at a younger age, ideally between 27 and 34, as the yield of healthy eggs decreases over time. Women in their mid-to-late 30s or early 40s can still benefit from freezing eggs but may need multiple cycles to increase their chances of achieving a healthy pregnancy due to lower egg quality. (sources extend fertility)



# Purpose Through INFLUENCING

Considering moonlighting as an influencer? Keep the best practices below in mind to get the most out of your future (side) career. **By Thina Tembani CA(SA)**

The history of influencing can be traced back to ancient times, when charismatic and persuasive individuals held significant power and influence within their immediate communities. Throughout history, leaders, politicians, philosophers and scholars have used their various abilities to sway others' opinions and actions for various purposes.

In more recent times, the evolution of social media has elevated our ability to connect, educate, influence or sell to global audiences. Many use the various social media platforms available as a means of self-expression, as well as to curate content on topics and themes they are passionate about. Those who create content for these platforms have coined the titles "influencer", "content creator" or "digital creator". They have even gone as far as establishing lucrative careers from these trends through partnering with big brands to promote products or services.

As the influencer trend continues to gain momentum, CAs(SA) too have not been left behind. Leveraging LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, CAs(SA) use these platforms to showcase their thought leadership and promote their personal brands.

**Here are some of the ways in which social media can elevate one's personal brand:**

#### **Establishing a professional presence:**

Social media platforms provide a space to showcase your skills, expertise and

accomplishments. By creating a strong bio or profile, using professional photos and highlighting one's achievements and qualifications, you can establish a professional presence that reflects your personal brand.

#### **Sharing valuable content:**

By consistently sharing valuable and relevant content through posts, articles or videos, you can position yourself as an expert in your field. This helps solidify your personal brand and gain credibility among your audience. To further establish your expertise, engage with comments, respond to enquiries and participate in industry discussions

#### **Building a network:**

Social media allows you to connect and engage with a wide range of individuals. By strategically networking and engaging with others in your industry or related fields, you can expand your professional network, build relationships and increase your brand exposure.

#### **Showcasing your work:**

Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube provide visual artists, designers, photographers and creators with the opportunity to showcase their work and portfolio. Sharing your creative projects, or case studies, can help potential clients or employers understand your capabilities and style, thereby reinforcing your personal brand.

#### **Personal storytelling:**

Social media enables you to share your personal story, values and experiences,

which can help humanise your brand. By authentically sharing aspects of your life and career journey, you can create emotional connections with your audience, making your personal brand more relatable.

#### **Collaborations and partnerships:**

Utilising social media, you can identify potential collaborations or partnerships with other influencers, brands or professionals. These collaborations can provide mutual benefit, expand your reach and enhance your personal brand.

**Sphume Dlungwane, a Kwa-Zulu Natal subcommittee member, shares her experiences as a financial wellness content creator. Sphume's Instagram account aims to create candid dialogues on all matters related to sound financial practices. We are certain that her nuggets of wisdom, below, will enlighten any professional who wishes to promote their personal brand, or launch a career in social media content creation.**

**What inspired you to become an influencer?** I was inspired to start a community that normalises talking about every facet of personal finance. Being influential in the online space is about making a positive impact in your community. Money is often seen as a taboo subject, and no one ever wants to discuss it openly, even though money forms such an integral part of our lives. There is a lot of shame and guilt that still clouds our relationship with money.



I wanted to start a platform that seeks to adopt a healthy money mindset, establish a healthy relationship with money and build financial knowledge. When we are knowledgeable about our finances, we become confident — and when we are confident, we can make smart personal finance decisions that enable us to afford a life of our dreams.

**How do you juggle your 9-to-5 with influencing?** When it comes to content creation, I have learned that small and consistent habits have helped build my audience. I found that the more consistent I was with the quality of content I posted, the more trust I built with my audience — which helped position me as a reliable source of finance-related information.

I plan my content well ahead of time. Each month I have a personal finance theme which is planned for, and scheduled in advance. I am lucky to work with an agency that ensures that all the content is posted timeously on social media platforms. Life sometimes gets in the way, and planning ahead ensures that the content is still published in accordance with the monthly schedule.

**How difficult was it to crack it into this industry?** To crack it in the content creation industry, I would advise that you define your niche. Also craft a strategy that is in alignment with your goals. The strategy will assist you in creating relevant content which, in turn, will help build your audience while also assisting you to reach your goals.



**By authentically** sharing aspects of your life and career journey, you can **create emotional connections** with your audience, **making your personal brand more relatable.**



Follow @SphumeDlungwane (also known as Your Financial Friend) on Instagram.

**What are some of the campaigns that you've worked on previously?** I have previously been invited to speaking engagements such as the Johannesburg leg of the FutureFemales event. FutureFemales is a platform that encourages and supports entrepreneurs in growing their businesses. I have partnered with the University of Witwatersrand and hosted the Industry Readiness Workshop under the theme "Financial Management and Investment".

I have worked with SAICA Enterprise Development, under the programme Financial Excellence in SMEs. The programme aims to improve SMEs' financial management systems and to help them create effective operations and achieve business sustainability.

**What tips would you share with other CAs(SA) trying to crack it into the world of influencing?** Discover what your niche is and start creating content that directly speaks to your audience. There is never a perfect time to start your online content creation journey, start with where you are and with what you have, and remain consistent with showing up online. Be clear on why you are showing up online and what your goal is with the audience you are building.

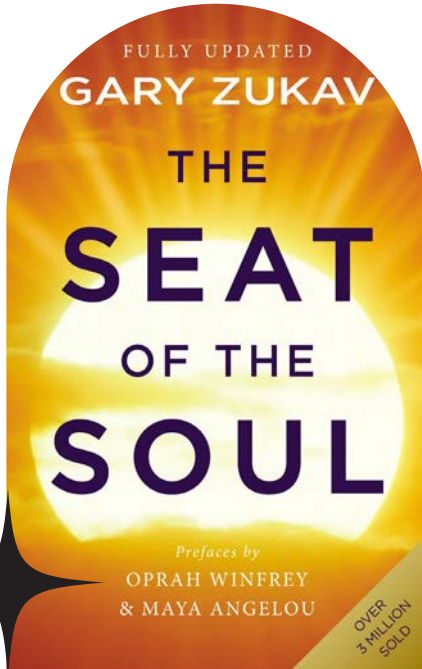
Be patient with the growth that comes with being on social media, it does not happen overnight, you have to invest in it with your time and money.

**Would you change anything about the content creation world as it stands?** I would not change anything about the world of content creation. It is a beautiful space that has not only allowed me to learn, but to also connect with individuals I would not have ordinarily met.

It is important to be intentional with the accounts you follow. Follow accounts that will enrich you while scrolling through social media, or accounts that will help you reach a better version of yourself.

# 21 Books That Will Shape Your Thinking For Good

In celebration of 21 years of the AWCA, we have curated a list of books that will successfully usher you into the next phase of your life.



## ***The Seat of the Soul* by Gary Zukav**

In this moving account of how humans sign a spiritual bond the minute they land on earth, the author takes readers on a journey that nudges them in the direction of evolving from understanding power as the ability to manipulate into acknowledging power as the alignment of the personality with the soul, also known as authentic power.

**Expect:** To walk away with a better understanding of how human interactions are formed at a far deeper level.



## ***Things My Mother Left Me With* by Pulane Mpondo**

A poignant and heartfelt collection of personal essays that delves into the intricacies of mother-daughter relationships, loss and self. Mpondo's introspective storytelling and raw vulnerability create a cherished connection with readers as she explores themes of love, grief, and healing.

**Expect:** A very personal and emotionally resonant journey that navigates the complexities of family dynamics and the lasting impact of a mother's presence, absence and legacy. This book is a beautiful tribute to the universal experiences of love and loss, offering solace and insight for anyone who has experienced the profound impact of a mother's influence.



**A compelling narrative that will leave you motivated to create positive change in your own life and the communities around you.**

## ***The Light We Carry* by Michelle Obama**

A transformative and empowering book that explores the complexities of shame and how it affects our lives. With her unique blend of research, personal anecdotes, and insightful analysis, Brown delves into the pervasive nature of shame, its detrimental impact on self-worth, and the healing power of vulnerability.

**Expect:** An eye-opening and compassionate look at shame's grip on our lives, coupled with practical strategies for cultivating resilience, self-acceptance, and empathy.

## Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself

How to Lose Your Mind and Create a New One



Dr. Joe Dispenza

The best-selling author of *Evolve Your Brain*

### **Breaking The Habit of Being Yourself** by Dr Joe Dispenza

A thought-provoking and transformative guide to understanding and reshaping our habitual patterns of thinking and behaviour. With a combination of neuroscience, psychology, and spirituality, Dr Dispenza provides practical tools and exercises to break free from self-limiting beliefs and create a new reality.

**Expect:** To dive into the fascinating science behind the mind-body connection, learn how to rewire your brain, and discover the power of meditation and visualisation techniques to create profound personal change. This book offers a roadmap to transform your life and unleash your true potential.

### **Atomic Habits** by James Clear

An exceptional guide that unravels the secrets of building and sustaining effective habits. Clear provides practical strategies backed by scientific research, emphasising the power of modest, incremental changes for long-term success.

**Expect:** A transformative journey that looks into the psychology of habit formation, the significance of environment and mindset, and actionable techniques for flouting bad habits and building positive ones.

### INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER **Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results**

# Atomic Habits

An Easy & Proven Way  
to Build Good Habits  
& Break Bad Ones

OVER  
1 MILLION  
COPIES  
SOLD

**James Clear**

**A transformative  
journey that looks into  
the psychology of  
habit formation**

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



"This book will change lives!" —ELIZABETH GILBERT, author of *Big Magic*

### **Everything is Figureoutable** by Marie Forleo

An empowering and practical book that sparks a can-do attitude and pushes readers to tackle any challenge head-on. Forleo shares personal stories, insightful wisdom, and actionable strategies to help readers overcome self-doubt and create a life they truly desire.

**Expect:** A mix of motivational pep talks, mindset shifts, and practical exercises that will empower you to face obstacles with resilience and creativity. A powerful reminder that with the right mindset, anything is indeed figureoutable.

**This book will motivate you to take advantage  
of the early hours of the day, releasing your full  
potential, and create a fulfilling and winning life**

### **The 5am Club** by Robin Sharma

A practical guide that encourages readers to hold the power of early mornings for personal growth and productivity. Through an engaging fictional narrative, Sharma introduces a set of principles and rituals designed to transform the way we take on our lives.

**Expect:** A compelling blend of inspiring storytelling, actionable strategies, and self-improvement techniques aimed at maximising productivity, cultivating a positive mindset, and achieving personal excellence.

### **You Are a Badass** by Jen Sincero

A lively self-help book that encourages readers to embrace their inner power and live a life they love. Sincero's no-nonsense writing style and relatable anecdotes make this book an engaging read.

**Expect:** A combination of practical advice, mindset shifts, and exercises aimed at breaking you free from self-limiting beliefs and creating a life filled with abundance and accomplishment. Plus, Sincero's charismatic and humorous approach will inspire you to unleash your full potential.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# YOU are a BADASS

HOW TO STOP DOUBTING  
YOUR GREATNESS  
AND START LIVING AN  
AWESOME LIFE

JEN SINCERO

THE #1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE MONK WHO SOLD HIS FERRARI*

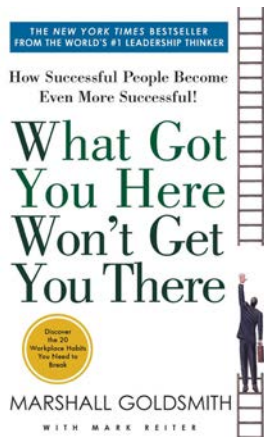
**ROBIN SHARMA**

15 MILLION BOOKS SOLD WORLDWIDE



**OWN YOUR MORNING  
ELEVATE YOUR LIFE**

"Robin Sharma's books are helping people all over the world  
lead great lives!" —PAULO COELHO



### **What Got You Here, Won't Get You There by Marshall Goldsmith**

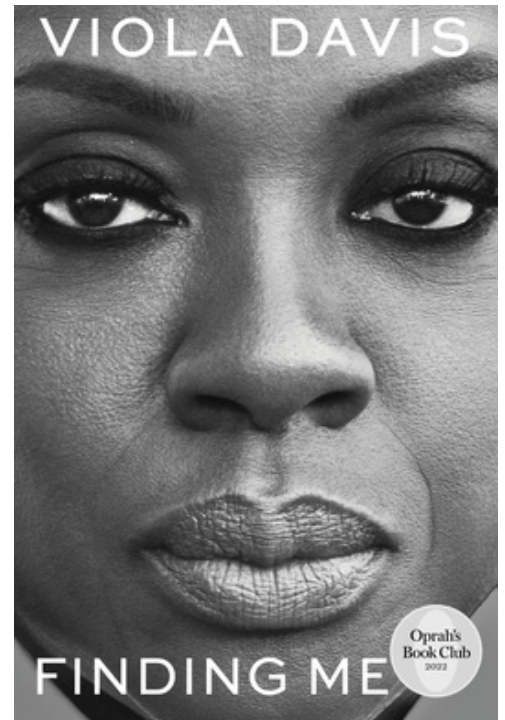
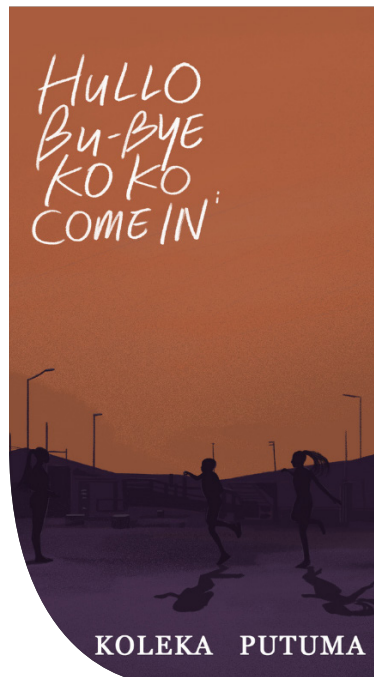
A must-read for anyone seeking to reach new heights in their career and personal development. Both gripping and insightful, the book challenges conventional wisdom on career success. Goldsmith, a renowned executive coach, delves into the common behaviours and habits that hinder personal and professional growth. With real-life examples and practical strategies, he provides invaluable guidance on transcending self-sabotaging tendencies and developing effective leadership skills.

**Expect:** To gain a deeper understanding of how our own behaviours can hinder our progress, and learn actionable techniques to improve interpersonal relationships, communication, and self-awareness.

### **Hallo Koko Bu-Bye Come In by Koleka Putuma**

An emotionally charged poetry collection that explores themes of identity, love, and societal issues. Putuma's words have a raw power, creating a deep connection with her readers as they navigate the complexities of race, gender, and history. Through evocative language and vivid imagery, the poems invite introspection and are thought-provoking too, while also addressing the very urgent need for social change.

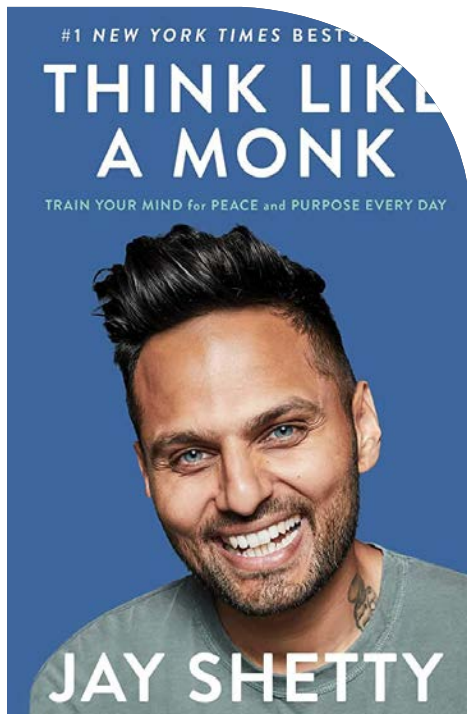
**Expect:** A profound and lyrical journey that challenges conventions. author's immense talent and passion for storytelling.



### **Finding Me by Viola Davis**

A captivating memoir that chronicles the remarkable journey of the highly praised actress. Davis' meditative storytelling delves deep into her struggles as a child, experiences with poverty and racism, and her Hollywood rise to success. With raw vulnerability, she explores themes of identity, self-worth, and the importance of finding one's voice.

**Expect:** A powerful tale that celebrates perseverance, and the transformative power of embracing one's true self. Davis's weighty insights make her story a must-read for fans and anyone seeking motivation.

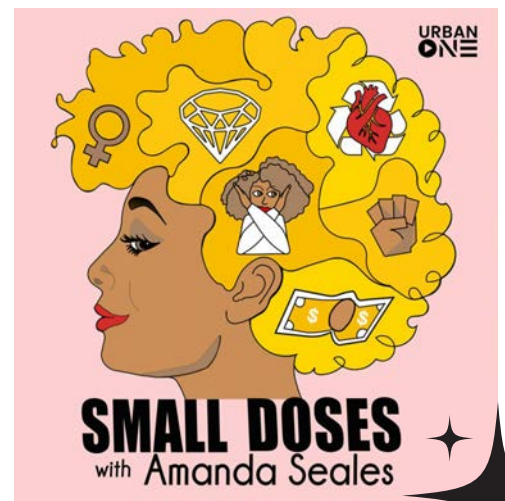


**A reminder that by adopting a monk's mindset, we can cultivate a life of joy, compassion and meaning**

### **Small Doses by Amanda Seales**

A daring collection of essays that takes on a range of topics with wit, wisdom, and honesty. Seales, a comedian and cultural commentator, bravely dives into subjects such as race, relationships, and self-worth, providing thought-provoking insights and challenging societal norms.

**Expect:** A refreshing blend of hilarity, personal anecdotes, and prickly social commentary that will make you laugh, reflect, and perhaps even reevaluate your own perspectives. A potent dose of truth and inspiration!



### **Think Like a Monk by Jay Shetty**

This book blends ancient wisdom with practical advice for modern living. Shetty, a former monk, shares his experiences and teachings, guiding readers towards finding inner peace, purpose, and fulfillment.

**Expect:** A blend of inspiring stories, mindfulness practices, and thought-provoking reflections that encourage introspection and personal growth. Shetty's relatable writing style and anecdotes make the book accessible and engaging for readers from different backgrounds. A reminder that by adopting a monk-like mindset, we can cultivate a life of joy, compassion and meaning.

### **The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle**

A transformative exploration of spirituality and mindfulness, Tolle invites readers to free themselves from the chains of the past and future, and embrace living in the present moment as the doorway to true peace and enlightenment.

**Expect:** A deep dive into the nature of consciousness, ego, and the power of being still. Tolle's teachings present practical guidance on silencing the mind, cultivating awareness, and experiencing a profound change in consciousness.

This book is a powerful reminder of the transformative power of living in the present and finding inner peace in the midst of life's challenges.



### **The Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert**

An exploration of creativity and the pursuit of a fulfilling creative life, Gilbert's lively writing style and personal anecdotes captivate readers, while her insightful advice pushes them to embrace their inherent creativity and overcome the fears and challenges that often hinder artistic expression.

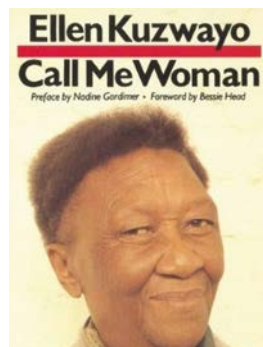
**Expect:** To be inspired, motivated, and guided on a transformative journey towards embracing your own creative potential.

**To be inspired, motivated, and guided on a transformative journey towards embracing your own creative potential.**

### **Call Me Woman by Ellen Kuzwayo**

A gripping memoir that shines a light on the experiences and struggles of women in South Africa during the apartheid era. Kuzwayo's powerful storytelling and poignant reflections offer a unique perspective on the intersections of race, gender, and social justice.

**Expect:** An intimate and inspiring narrative that explores themes of resilience, identity, and the fight for equality. Kuzwayo's voice is an empowering reminder of the might and determination of women in the face of adversity. This book is testament to how great storytelling can change and inspire generations to come.



### **Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman**

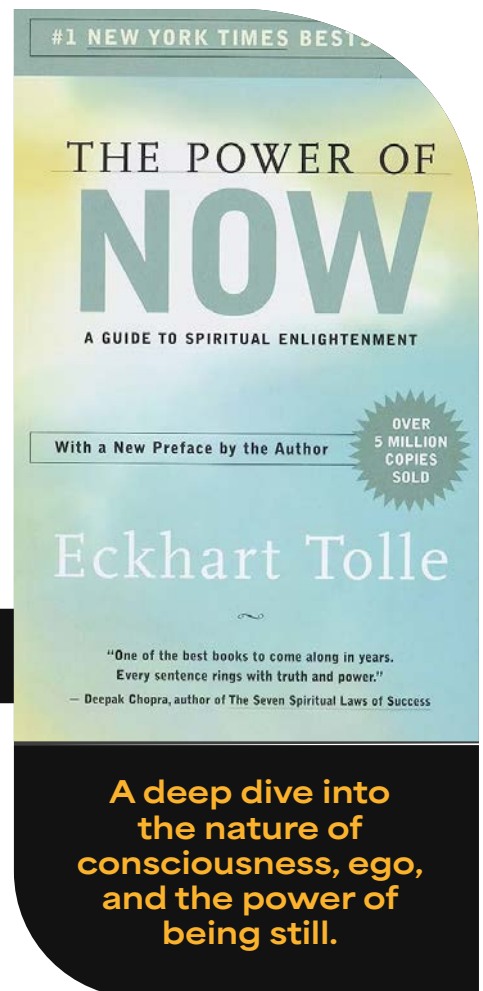
A groundbreaking exploration of the human mind's two systems of thinking: the intuitive and the rational. Kahneman, a Nobel laureate in economics, presents decades of research on cognitive biases, decision-making, and the complexities of human judgment.

**Expect:** A journey that challenges preconceived notions about how we think and make choices. From the impact of biases on our everyday lives to the influence of emotions on decision-making, this book offers valuable insights into the inner workings of our minds and the mechanisms that shape our behaviours.

### **The Mountain Is You by Brianna Wiest**

A soul-stirring book that points readers to a journey of self-discovery and personal transformation. Wiest explores the inner landscape of our emotions, fears, and self-limiting beliefs, offering profound insights and practical strategies to overcome them.

**Expect:** A deeply introspective exploration of your inner world, as Wiest explores topics such as self-acceptance, healing, and finding inner strength. Wiest provides a roadmap for embracing personal growth and reclaiming your power. This book is a powerful reminder that within us lies the strength to overcome any obstacle and find true fulfillment.



THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

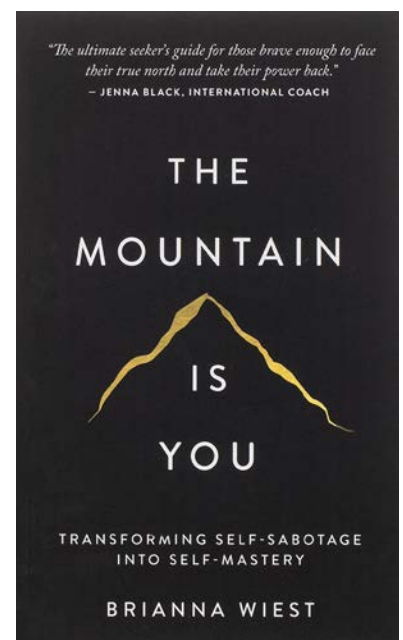
# THINKING, FAST AND SLOW

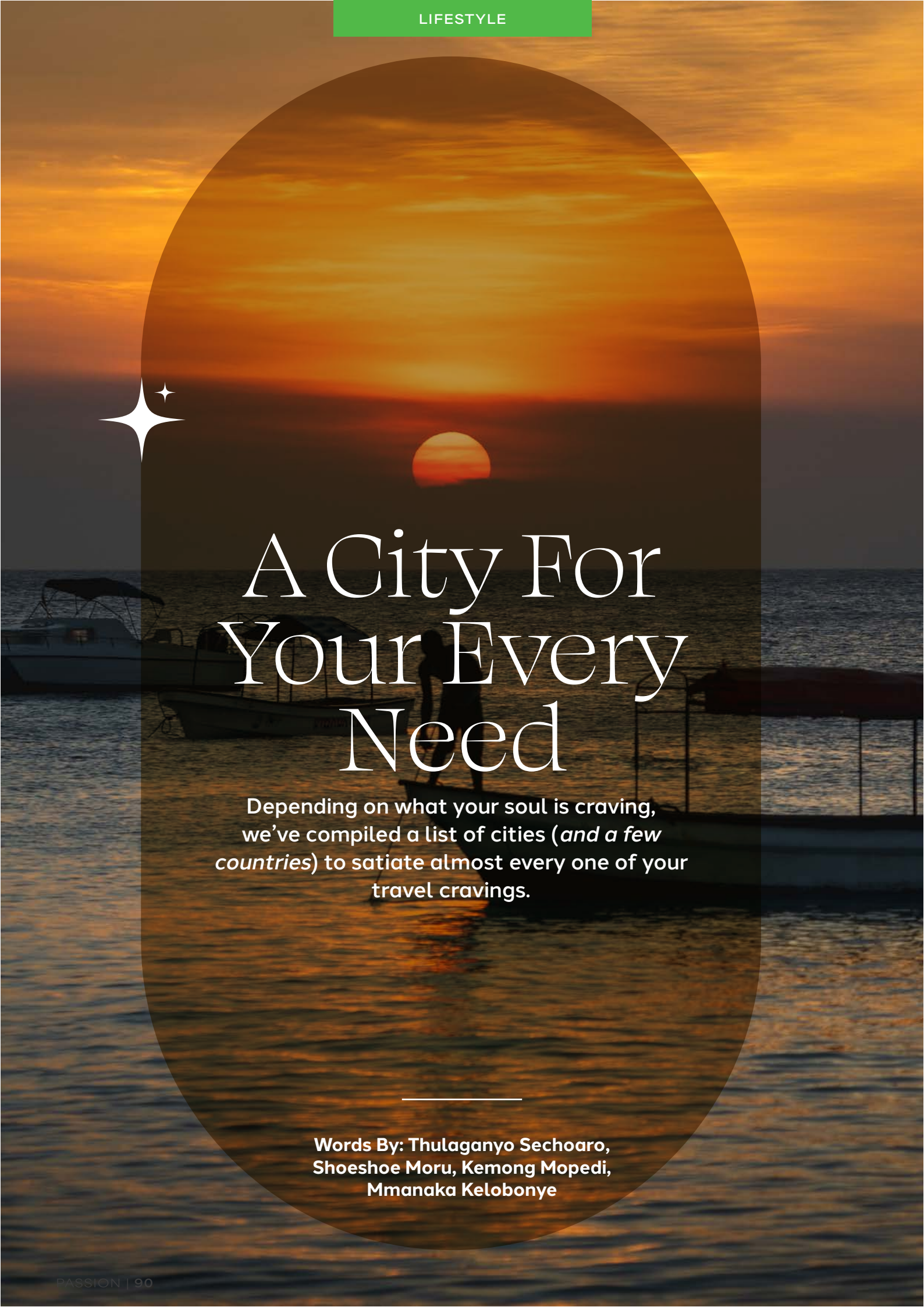


DANIEL  
KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

"[A] masterpiece . . . This is one of the greatest and most engaging collections of insights into the human mind I have read." —WILLIAM EASTERLY, *Financial Times*



A large, circular frame is centered on the page, containing a sunset scene. The sun is a bright orange circle on the horizon, with its light reflecting on the water. Several boats are visible in the water, and a person is standing on a pier in the foreground. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. A white starburst graphic is located on the left side of the circular frame.

# A City For Your Every Need

Depending on what your soul is craving,  
we've compiled a list of cities (*and a few  
countries*) to satiate almost every one of your  
travel cravings.

---

Words By: Thulaganyo Sechoaro,  
Shoeshoe Moru, Kemong Mopedi,  
Mmanaka Kelobonye

## FOR SOME RESTORATION

### Kamakura, Japan

Surrounded by beautiful nature, including forests, hills, and beaches, Kamakura's serene environment has been hailed as the Mecca of relaxation. Between the numerous Zen temples — Kenchoji, Engakuji, and Zuisenji — where you can meditate uninterrupted and the exceptional Japanese cuisine, hot springs and historical peace, Kamakura is a haven for those wishing to tap out.



**Lamu Island, Kenya**, beckons travellers with its enchanting blend of natural beauty, a laid-back way of life and history. Nestled in the tranquil waters of the Indian Ocean, this tranquil UNESCO Heritage site, with a fascinating fusion of Swahili, Arabic, Indian and European architecture is a paradise for those seeking for a slow pace away from the fast-paced world. Explore the wide range of wellness centres and pristine beaches on this carless wonder by foot, boat or donkey. Home to dolphins, turtles over 200 species of bird, Lamu is an absolute gem for those seeking relaxation. A journey to Lamu Island is an immersion in timeless charm, offering an authentic slice of coastal East Africa.



### East Sussex, England

Located south east of England, East Sussex is known for its jaw-droppingly beautiful countryside, coastal scenery and historic towns. Visitors can wander through picturesque villages, explore walking trails in tranquil gardens, woodlands and beaches. The area offers peaceful and luxurious accommodation, spas and hotels as well private cottages with a range of wellness activities from yoga to meditation to rejuvenate the mind. Discover the regal opulence of Brighton's Royal Pavilion, or roam the cobbled streets of Rye, all steeped in medieval allure.

## BEST PARTY SCENE

### London, UK

A melting pot of multicultural diversity, London is great for those wanting to explore the iconic capital of the United Kingdom. Whether you want to explore Buckingham Palace or the Tower of London this city has it all. For those who are looking at picking up the pace, London's night life has a lot to offer. There is a kaleidoscope of experiences to be enjoyed after dark, from the electric atmosphere of Soho's legendary clubs to the allure of Mayfair's exclusive bars, the options are boundless. Home to some of the best DJs, musicians and performers this city will not let you to sleep. Lose yourself in the rhythmic beats at Ministry of Sound or dance the night away in Shoreditch's trendy warehouses. Alternatively, you can enjoy cocktails atop The Shard or enjoy vintage elegance at the jazz bars in Covent Garden.



## BEST PARTY SCENE

### Kampala, Uganda

Discover the vibrant heart of East Africa in Kampala. As the sun sets, the city transforms and has a lot to offer for those at war with their sleep. Embrace the warm hospitality of the locals as you dance the night away at your chosen bar, nightclub, live music event or street party — there is something for everyone regardless of taste, age or social status. Kampala is known for its affordable night life, compared to other cities in East Africa. It's entertainment scene offers some of Africa's best music talents, producing a unique sound that blends traditional African rhythms with modern beat at many of the party spots. The cost of drinks and entrance fees to clubs and bars is relatively low, attracting both locals and tourists. Kampala has a relatively low crime rate and this makes partying in the city safe and enjoyable for everyone.



### Miami, USA

Miami is one of its most popular cities, famous for its sunny weather, pristine beaches, non-stop night life and art deco architecture. You want to be on South Beach enjoying the clear blue warm waters the ocean offers. You also want to make use of a tour bus as you will most likely be wearing your flip flops and a lovely sun hat while sipping on cocktails. And if not, you will at least want to preserve all your energy for some dance and song in the evening! Enjoy the Art Deco district, Little Havana and most importantly Coral Gables. You absolutely want to do some boat site-seeing of the most stunning luxury mansions owned by some of the most famous American superstars.



## THE MOST PICTURESQUE VIEWS

### Machu Picchu, Peru

For the adventurous souls, Peru has an awe-inspiring beauty that transcends the ordinary. This mesmerising land enchants travellers with its diverse landscapes, which include the UNESCO World Heritage site Machu Picchu, high up in the heavens of the Andes, Lake Titicaca- the highest navigable lake in the world, the Colca Canyon with its terraces farmland and rushing rivers below, and the Huascarán National Park. The country also boasts an amazing landscape, from the lush and expansive Amazon Rain Forest to the mystery-en-shrouded desert with its geoglyph Nazca Lines. Peru is also home to the former capital of the Incan Empire, Cusco City, which offers a unique blend of ancient architecture, colonial charm, and modern amenities, all set against a stunning Andean backdrop. Savour the vibrant culture, markets and mouth-watering cuisine that reflect centuries of history in this magical land.



HERE'S TO  
THE LEGENDS.



[www.nederburg.com](http://www.nederburg.com)



### Cape Town, South Africa

Nestle between the majestic Table Mountain and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, lies Cape Town with its unmatched allure. This breathtaking city on the tip of the African continent means it has stunning coastlines. The tip of the continent boasts having some of the continent's most valued properties, the most scenic views, from Lion's head one has a 360-degree views of Table Mountain, The Twelve Apostles and the Atlantic Ocean. The city also has Signal Hill provides panoramic views of the city and is a popular spot for watching sunsets, Robben Island which is known for being where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated and its waddling penguins, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden and Bo-Kaap - a colourful neighbourhood in the city centre with stunning views of Table Mountain and the city. Adrenaline seekers can find bliss in surf-worthy waves and shark cage diving. For the wine lovers there are the Cape Winelands for savouring world-class wines. Cape Town's natural wonders, rich heritage and warm hospitality make it an unforgettable destination.



### Amalfi Coast, Italy

The Amalfi Coast is a paradise waiting to be explored along the Italian coast boasting an exceptional natural beauty and millions of visitors annually. Located in Southern Italy, the coast stretches along the Tyrrhenian Sea, offering stunning views of the azure waters and rugged cliffs. This UNESCO Heritage site said to have the most breathtaking beauty with its fishing villages and notorious culinary delights. The combination of the striking scenery, crystal-clear waters, and traditional Italian culture make the Amalfi Coast a top pick for one of the world's most beautiful views and casts an enchanting spell on every traveller's heart.

## BEST BEACHES



### Zanzibar, Tanzania

Zanzibar, nestled in the Indian Ocean, has the most pristine, crystal-clear turquoise waters, breathtaking coral reefs, and miles of white sand. The captivating beauty of the beaches set the stage for idyllic relaxation. The Tropical climate, vibrant coral reefs and waters that are warm all year round. Zanzibar offers various activities for holiday-makers including scuba diving, snorkeling, sunbathing and swimming with world-class spa treatments and accommodations



### Nice, France

Nice beckons with its timeless elegance, Mediterranean charm and cleanliness. The beaches in Nice are maintained all year round, ensuring that it remains a top destination for loverstourists and locals alike. Stroll along the iconic Promenade des Anglais where sun-kissed beaches meet vibrant city life and enjoy plenty of shops, cafes and restaurants. Lose yourself in the enchanting Old Town, where colourful facades and lively markets enchant the senses and enjoy fresh seafood and delicate pastries. Marvel at artistic masterpieces in the Marc Chagall National Museum and Matisse's former residence. With its warm climate and fusion of French and Italian influences, Nice promises a captivating sojourn, leaving visitors couples longing for more.



### Bodrum, Turkey

Along the Aegean coastline, lies Bodrum with its captivating blend of history, beauty and coastal charm. Well-known for having the best beach clubs in the world, if you are looking for a relaxing day in the sun or an exciting night out, Bodrum will cater to your needs. Explore the ancient wonders of Bodrum Castle, a fortress that guards the harbour and houses the Museum of Underwater Archaeology. Bodrum town is the perfect shopping destination offering a wide range of designer stores and Turkish boutiques. However, be warned that the exchange rate of the Turkish Lira is one to one, and that Bodrum is pricier than other parts of Turkey. Either way, do not miss a chance to visit Bodrum Delight and get a taste of some authentic Turkish delights.

## WHERE THE RAND IS STILL STRONGER

### Bali, Indonesia

Never been a millionaire? Travelling to Bali will make you one. Bali, a province in Indonesia known as the land of the gods due to its sheer natural beauty of looming forested volcanic mountains, lush iconic terraced rice fields that exude peace and serenity, scenic day beach clubs and the most beautiful beaches and coral reefs I have been to. Rich in Asian culture with super friendly, warm, and welcoming people — many call it Paradise for a reason.

The best time to visit is between April and September, to avoid the rainy season. Accommodation options vary with hostels starting at around R300 per night while luxury hotels can cost upwards of R6 000 per night. There are also plenty of beautiful mid-range and budget hotels starting around R1 000 per night. Bali has thousands of eateries and street-food stalls selling tasty food for an average of R130 per meal. Higher-end up to fine dining at an average of R400 to R1000 per meal in restaurants found mostly in 5-star resorts. The cost of drinks varies from R15 to R80 per bottle for soft drinks and beer and ±R60 to R200 per glass for wines, cocktails, and spirits. Bali is an affordable holiday option when looking to enjoy a restful beach escape while and exploring Asian landscape and culture.



### Grand Baie and Port Louis, Mauritius

Lovers, the world over, love travelling to Mauritius because of how incredibly affordable and breathtakingly beautiful it is. The multicultural country does not only have the most pristine white beaches with turquoise water, cascading waterfalls, majestic mountains and lush inland forests has people of but it also has amazingly warm people of varying ethnicities. Mauritius has endless adventure activities for you and your significant other and children such as, hiking, scuba diving, zip-lining, snorkeling and even swimming with dolphins. The cuisine is flavourful and unique due to the mix of cultures. Travellers can enjoy the country's traditional dishes and various street food. Mauritius is a must for those that seek relaxation, meditation, outdoor activities and for the those that enjoy their cocktails whilst watching the sun set — at a steal of course.



### Lisbon, Portugal

This mesmerising gem, known to be among the most reasonable European cities beckons travellers with sun-kissed beaches along the Algarve coast, which invite surfers from all over the world as well as those that seek relaxation. Vibrant street art meets ancient landmarks like the Blem Tower in the cobbled streets of Lisbon for lovers to enjoy. Portugal has a range of accommodation options, including budget hotels, hostels and apartments. The cuisine is delicious and affordable with local dishes offering great value for money. Enjoy Porto's wine, sipping port in centuries-old cellars by the Douro River as you hold hands. Discover fairytale castles in Sintra's misty hills, and travel back in time in Evora's Roman ruins. Looking for an unforgettable journey filled with beauty and tradition? Then Portugal could be just for you!

**Images by** Anton Cherednichenko, Nick Andras Stefuca, Martyn Sanders, Pierre Blaché, Lina Kivaka , Huy Phan, Nikita Khandelwal, David Geib, Arnie Watkins, Dmitry Limonov, Ákos Helgert, Lucas Mota, Helena Jankovičová Kováčová, Michael Block, Silvia Trigo, Angel Valladares, Pixabay, Taryn Elliott , Dominik Ruhl, Andrew Harvard, Oleksandr Canary Islands, Agung Pandit Wiguna, Jannik Zürcher, Helena I, Jean-Baptiste Terrazzoni, Ferran Perez, Ashley Fontana, Alex Azabache, Oliver Sjöström on **Pexel.com**



# WHY ME-LENNIALS?

Between a throttled economy, a work culture that demands more of professionals and mounting adulting responsibilities, being a millennial in this day and age sometimes feels like a losing battle. **Linda Motea CA(SA)** interrogates why this generation craves peace of mind above all else.

Why Me-lennials? This is a question that dominates the thoughts of most millennials, myself included. Why? Because from where we are sitting, it appears that we always get the raw end of the stick. Born between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, the millennial generation has lived through periods of rapid technological advancements, economic fluctuations and shifting societal norms.

As a result, millennials face a unique set of challenges that often set them apart from previous generations. The first being the confusion around which era we belong to. We are almost, always, mistakenly categorised with high school learners and university students. Some authors claim that millennials, also referred to as Generation Y, are the children of baby boomers born between the years 1980 and 1995. Meaning the oldest millennial is 43 and the youngest 27.

## MIDLIFE STAGNANCY

A 'midlife crisis' is often described as an era in one's life, between the ages of 40 and 60, where a person interrogates accomplishments, relationships, careers and basic life trajectory. In modern times, the discussion around midlife crises is broadened to include the millennial generation — except, in true midlife crisis fashion, the bulk of our generation has not amassed enough money and material things to feed into the emotional demands of a midlife crisis. A study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that,

"Along with a decline in basic measures of life satisfaction, researchers found middle-age upticks in intense job strain, suicide, sleeping problems, alcohol dependence and extreme depression amongst millennials." Across the globe, millennials have had to endure momentous shifts in the economy, such as globalisation and the increase in the gap between the rich and poor, and the global financial crisis of 2008, plus the pending one. Many entered the job market during the aftermath of the financial crisis, which resulted in limited job opportunities and stagnant salary increases. Additionally, the rising cost of living, student loan debt, and the increasing difficulty of homeownership have made financial stability more elusive for this generation. Millennials often struggle to find stable employment, save for retirement, and achieve financial independence. Consequently, a mismatch between what one desires and what one actually attains seems evident. All of the above combined, explain the surge in job dissatisfaction, and a lack of enthusiasm, among millennials. As millennial social media users often describe the above scenarios: *Kuningi* (it's a lot)!

## THE STABILITY APPETITE

Millennials often experience a rapidly changing job market that is characterised by the gig economy, automation and technological disruptions. Therefore, millennials are more likely to switch careers more frequently than previous generations. While this offers flexibility and the potential for



ACROSS THE GLOBE, MILLENNIALS HAVE HAD TO  
ENDURE MOMENTOUS SHIFTS IN THE ECONOMY, SUCH  
AS GLOBALISATION AND THE INCREASE IN THE GAP  
BETWEEN THE RICH AND POOR, AND THE GLOBAL  
FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 2008, PLUS THE PENDING ONE.



personal growth, it also brings about challenges such as job insecurity, the need to constantly upskill, and the pressure to navigate an uncertain career path. Finding long-term stability and a sense of purpose in their professional lives has, so far, proven to be a significant struggle for millennials.

From a well-being perspective, millennials face unique mental health challenges due to a combination of factors. The hyper-connected nature of modern life, the pressures of social media (and the fact that more platforms are still being introduced!), as well as the constant exposure to current news and information can contribute to feelings of anxiety, stress and depression. Moreover, millennials are often juggling multiple responsibilities, including work, relationships, and financial burdens (hello Black Tax and keeping up with the Khumalos), which can take a toll on their overall well-being. The importance of self-care, seeking support and advocating for mental health awareness has become an urgent necessity for this generation.

#### ELUSIVE MUCH?

Perhaps the narrative around achieving a healthy work-life should be changed. How many professionals can successfully claim to have a semblance of work-life balance in their lives? How many of us can pursue our passions, maintain meaningful relationships, while also excelling in our careers? How many of us can claim to survive without being held together by therapy or life coaching? Many of us feel the pressure to constantly be available and connected due to technological advancements that blur the boundaries between work, personal life and downtime. This can lead to that much-dreaded monster 'burnout' plus a distorted sense of well-being. Often when professional millennials strive to prioritise their personal lives, it often comes in the form of being out and about while work deadlines wreak havoc at the back of their minds.

And this begs the question: Will we ever experience true downtime in our lifetime?

#### REDEFINING NORMS

On the other hand, millennials do not seem to be in much of a hurry to meet personal milestones such as marriage, parenting or homeownership. This delay is often a result of financial constraints, shifting societal values and a deep desire for self-discovery and exploring more of the world. However, when that dreaded, 'When are you getting married and starting a family?' question pops up for the umpteenth time at a family gathering, it can also leave some feeling inadequate and wishing to conform to societal expectations. But here is one thing we are at least getting right: we are redefining relationships, success and prioritising personal fulfillment over everything — much to the dismay of, and judgment from, older generations who do not fully appreciate our choices. Such discrepancies in judgment arise from the fact that our identities are ever-evolving. What previous generations regarded as forms of self-actualisation, millennials do not.

As the world treats materialism and financial wealth as identities and measures of success, millennials feel trapped as they struggle to attain either. Although millennials face a unique set of challenges that arise from the rapidly evolving world they inhabit, we are a resilient and adaptable bunch, known for our resourcefulness and ability to embrace change — albeit at a pace much slower than we wish to.

As we continue to navigate more challenges, may we be reminded that we are reshaping societal norms, advocating for our needs and forging new paths towards success and fulfillment. May we be remembered as the generation that fought hard to make the New Age adage '**peace of mind is the new success**' a reality!



The importance of  
self-care, seeking support  
and advocating for  
mental health awareness  
has become an urgent  
necessity for this  
generation.

# AN ADVOCATE FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

**Tafadzwa Makomba CA(SA)**, also a certified life coach, on why she is invested in helping others overcome their limiting beliefs.

**What drew you to the world of life coaching? And how did you get into it?** I have always had a passion for self-development and helping people achieve their goals. In April 2019, I went on a Life Coaching course that erased my limiting beliefs and helped me believe in myself again. I found the course powerful and wanted others to also experience the same effects of coaching – and how it helps you become the best version of yourself. So, in May 2019 I launched my own Life Coaching business called Elevate Transformation Coaching.

**How do you balance that with your nine-to-five?** I coach individuals and run group workshops on weekends. I also have contracted staff that I pay to assist with admin and the social media side of things.

**What has been your proudest achievement on this journey?** Writing and publishing my life transformation book titled *Learn Unlearn Relearn: How To Live The Life You Desire Through The Transformation Of Your Beliefs and Behaviours* in 2020, which has sold over 500 copies across South Africa, the USA and UK through Amazon.

**What types of concerns do your clients usually approach you with?** Most of my clients usually want to be assisted with how to overcome self-doubt, anxiety, self-sabotage and coaching on public speaking.

**With mental health care not as big a priority as it should be in corporate South Africa, what role can life coaching play in one's personal growth?** Life coaching is still a new profession in South Africa and not many people know about, or utilise, it. It is a very powerful tool for people and organisations to assist individuals to curb their limiting beliefs and release childhood traumas that have been holding them back from living their best lives and achieving their goals. Life coaching also equips individuals with the tools and skills to overcome anxiety without the use of medication. Life coaching also assists individuals to let go of negative emotions such as hurt, anger, sadness, fear and many others.

**What are some of the things that hold us back from growing? And how do we know when we have made progress?** Negative past experiences create limiting beliefs in our mind that are usually accompanied by a negative feeling. These limiting beliefs prevent us from pursuing our dreams. For example, a public speaking fear perhaps arises from a childhood incident where you made a speech in front of your class, messed up a few words, and had the whole class laugh in your face. Therefore, your fear is false. Progress only comes when you change your limiting belief into an empowering one, and then the fear-related emotions no longer dominate your thoughts when you think of speaking in public. Growth takes place when we start taking physical action to achieve our desired goals.



“Life coaching also **equips individuals** with the **tools and skills** to **overcome anxiety** without the use of medication.”

**What advice would you give to someone who wants to moonlight as a life coach?** Get your life coaching certification from an accredited academy then start coaching as many people as possible. The certification is all theory but the actual physical coaching is where you learn more and become a better coach. I would recommend coaching for free in the beginning until you are confident in your abilities — then start charging thereafter.

## Where To Study

The following reputable platforms offer life coaching courses.

- [Transformationcoachingacademy.co.za](https://transformationcoachingacademy.co.za)
- [Uct-online.getsmarter.com](https://uct-online.getsmarter.com)
- [Life-coach-training-sa.com](https://life-coach-training-sa.com)
- [Schooloflife.co.za](https://schooloflife.co.za)
- [Udemy.com](https://udemy.com)

Get in touch with Tafadzwa:  
[www.elevatetransformationcoaching.com](https://www.elevatetransformationcoaching.com)



\_elevatecoach



**Standard Bank**  
Private



# When professionals grow, Africa grows

Everything you do as a professional contributes to growth and transformation of this continent we call home. As Africa's leading private bank, we understand how much hard work and dedication it takes to succeed, and that's why you deserve a financial partner who works as hard as you do.

We are here to support you with products and services that will help you meet your personal and professional financial goals. From best-in-class banking solutions to exclusive lifestyle benefits and rewards, our offering celebrates your achievements, recognises your potential and matches your ambitions for the future. Search Standard Bank Private and partner with us today.



**Search Standard Bank Private** to get in touch with one of our Private Bankers





# 21

**YEARS OF AWCA**  
MOVING TO MASTERY:  
Unlocking passion, potential  
& purpose.