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CONTENTS

Overview	1
Umthombo Youth Development Foundation (UYDF) Healthcare professionals for deep rural areas	8
Roland Greaver Leadership Foundation (RGLF) Supporting new generations of black chartered accountants for South Africa	13
Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP) Funding finance-stressed students for high-demand careers	16
National Business Initiative (NBI) Pathway to plumbing for young South Africans	20
GreenMatter Addressing the environmental leadership gap	25
ExploreAI Academy Fast track to data science and data engineering careers	30
DSI/NRF SARCHI Chairs initiative	35
Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé Programme	42

Overview

Nedbank Group launched the Eyethu Community Trust on 7 June 2005, with the aim of contributing to alleviating poverty and increasing access to educational and economic opportunities, as well as supporting the financially-stressed and disadvantaged people, focusing on black South Africans. This enables people to pursue sustainable livelihoods, economic opportunities and leadership roles, and realise their potential in life. Trust funding is in the form of dividends received through Nedbank Group Limited shares held by the Trust, subject to Nedbank Group declaring dividends, with 85% of the funds granted to black beneficiaries.

TEACH South Africa

70% of TEACH SA ambassadors become full-time teachers.

Eyethu has supported TEACH SA since 2019, and funds are contributed to science, technology, English and mathematics (STEM) graduate recruitment, training, and support.

‘One of our greatest successes is that 70% of STEM graduates who enrol for our programme become full-time teachers or stay in the education sector after completing our 2-year teacher training programme,’ says Chief Executive Officer of TEACH, Sedibeng Ngubane.

There is a dire need for quality teachers in South Africa’s basic education sector, particularly in the STEM subjects. To proactively assist and partner with the Department of Education in addressing this, TEACH SA recruits, trains, places, and supports exceptional young STEM graduates in its 2-year teacher training programme, which includes teaching, leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills while they are in the classroom.

are performing badly in townships and rural areas across the country. These graduates are called ‘ambassadors’ as they are change agents of quality education.

‘Although ambassadors are highly qualified, the pedagogy of education is a very specific skill that they acquire in these 2 years, including obtaining their Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE),’ Ngubane explains. ‘They make such an important contribution to education in our country, and the more support we get for the programme, the more teachers we can put into the system. As statistics show, many basic-education teachers are over 55 and will retire in the next 5 years, and our universities are not producing teachers at the rate we need.’

As of January 2023, South Africa’s institutions of higher education graduated 15 000 new teachers per year, which is below the mark of 25 000 teachers required to maintain an effective teacher-pupil ratio in classrooms.

Through its programme, TEACH SA effectively achieves skills development, as well as youth and graduate employment, both significant gaps in the South African economy. Therefore, the organisation makes a powerful contribution to the future of the country.

Ambassadors of quality education

TEACH SA was co-founded by Dr Mothomang Diaho, Richard Masemola and Dr Futhi Mtoba in 2009, and over the past 14 years, placed graduates in non-fee-paying schools that



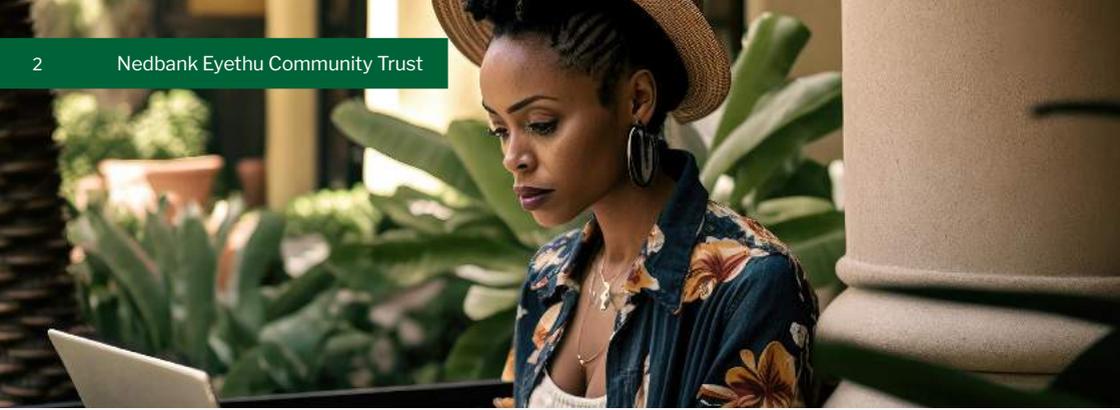
Dr Mothomang Diaho



Richard Masemola



Dr Futhi Mtoba



Ngubane explains:

‘Many young people are unsure about what they want to do after graduating, and we have a 2-year agreement with them to join our programme to become qualified teachers. During the 2-year programme, they become passionate about teaching, hence the high retention rate of 70% who choose teaching as their profession.

Over the years we have operated in all 9 provinces, and we have a Memorandum of Understanding with the DBE to place our ambassadors. Since 2019, we have placed 735 ambassadors in 416 schools countrywide, and we have reached and positively impacted the lives of at least 320 000 learners. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) pays the ambassadors’ salaries.

Of the 30% of ambassadors who do not continue teaching after the 2-year programme, many go into the corporate sector or start their own businesses. Some work in the corporate sector for a few years but then return to teaching and the education sector. Others teach in a range of countries, including the United States, China, South Korea, and the United Arab Emirates.

TEACH SA also encourages ambassadors to undertake legacy initiatives during their tenure at schools, such as debating societies, chess clubs and school choirs.’



45 graduates placed as ambassadors in 2023

Given the DBE’s paid postings at 30 under-resourced schools in 15 districts across Gauteng, 45 STEM graduates were recruited as ambassadors in 2023. In 2023, which is year 1 of their programme, they will reach 2 250 learners and will double this by the end of year 2. All ambassadors are university graduates, most of them having BSc degrees, while 11 have honours degrees. The gender demographics are 58% female and 42% male.

Most of the current ambassadors are busy with their PGCEs, as encouraged by TEACH. A further 5 who completed their PGCEs were given permanent postings by the DBE at the beginning of 2023.

In other years the focus has been on other provinces, depending on where the demand was. In 2015/16, for example, 60 ambassadors were placed in schools in the Eastern Cape.

In 2024/25 TEACH SA will place ambassadors in KwaZulu-Natal, the North West and Limpopo.

Contributing to the teaching profession since 2009

TEACH SA is a non-profit organisation committed to enhancing the quality of education for every child in the country, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, and their motto is ‘Our future needs you.’

No child gets left behind

Co-founder Dr Mothomang Diaho: ‘In summary, our vision is that no child gets left behind. A child’s socioeconomic background should not determine their trajectory in life. That is why we go to our universities and do career expos to recruit graduates and, through TEACH SA, prepare them pedagogically for the classroom. Over the 2 years TEACH SA also provides an ongoing support programme for the ambassadors.’

320 000 learners

Co-founder Mr Richard Masemola: ‘What became of the 320 000 learners since TEACH SA started in 2009? We track these learners over time and today, because of the impact that the ambassadors programme has had on their lives, some of them are first-generation university graduates and postgraduates while other are working. Some of them have chosen to become teachers and have since become principals and school administrators. What is clear is that the widely held myth that black graduates are not interested in becoming teachers is just that, a myth. When they are well supported, as our ambassadors are, they are very interested in teaching.’

Teaching awards

Several alumni have received awards over the years.

Siphiwe Sibanyoni received the 2016 National Teaching Award from the National Level for Excellence in Science Teaching. He was appointed Deputy Principal at Cedar Secondary school in Sasolburg in 2022 and is currently pursuing his PhD in natural sciences education.

Mzwandile Andries Nduku was recently appointed Deputy Principal of Leretletse-Lesedi Secondary School in Ottosdal, North West, after coming second in the National Teacher’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (FET) in 2023.



Ambassadors choose teaching careers

The TEACH SA experience has a significant impact on ambassadors' lives, in both their personal and professional capacities.

Ambassador Mandisa Bidi

Mandisa Bidi graduated with a BSc degree in mathematics and statistics in 2011 and an honours in statistics in 2012, both from the University of Limpopo's Medunsa Campus, and obtained her PGCE in 2022.

'I went to a township school in Orlando East, Soweto, where there was a shortage of teachers who were experts in maths. I was fortunate to be sponsored to attend extra maths classes through a Star Schools initiative at Wits University.

I first heard about TEACH SA when they held a career expo at the university and decided to join. For the first years of my career I wanted to give back to communities like mine that don't have good maths teachers. I have always been passionate about maths education and, while at university, I joined an organisation that gave extra lessons to Grade 12 learners from the Ga-Rankua area.

'I applied to TEACH SA and went for all the interviews. I also wrote tests where you had to get 80% to be selected as an ambassador. I was accepted, and in 2014 I was placed at Ubuhlebethu Combined School in the rural village of Siyabuswa in Mpumalanga, where learners were getting very low marks for maths and science. When I arrived there the learners were so excited about getting a TEACH SA ambassador. I then did a baseline

assessment of their level and identified a huge gap between their level at Grade 9 and the level required for Grade 12 content.

I taught Grade 9 and Grade 12 classes for 3 years, and came up with a bridging programme, which was a great success. One of them got 90% in the final exams, and he went on to study engineering. Another one graduated with a BSc, while another studied electrical engineering. I'm still mentoring her, as she is now in the 3rd year of her Bachelor of Education degree through UNISA. These are just 3 examples. I continue to receive letters from learners at that school, thanking TEACH SA for sending me there to teach them and enabling them to excel in their chosen careers.'

In 2017 Bidi left teaching and joined Standard Bank's Africa region as a consultant and business process analyst.

'While I was with the bank I did my PGCE part-time and completed it in 2022. I enjoyed my time at the bank and performed well, but it felt like something was missing. I wanted to do more for communities and that propelled me to go back to the classroom.

Now I'm back in the classroom at a school in Ivory Park in Midrand, teaching maths to Grades 9 and 10. I'm currently also incorporating qualities like focus, honesty, integrity, creativity, and kindness in my teaching, and the learners are responding well. There was stealing and violence when I arrived, and it is wonderful to see the change.'



Mandisa Bidi



Ambassador Itumeleng Makgoale

Itumeleng Makgoale graduated with a BSc in 2012, an honours in geoinformatics in 2013 from the University of Pretoria and obtained his PGCE in 2019.

'I grew up in Soweto and attended school at Moletsane Secondary School. We only had a good maths teacher in matric. Before that it was a struggle, and we had to push ourselves. I had good friends and we constantly pushed each other and had our own extra lessons at school where we presented to each other.

Initially I worked as a geologist for Eskom, but applied to TEACH SA, which I learnt about at university when they did a career exhibition. I liked what they represent – it's more than just a job. You feel you are doing something to help other people, and I wanted to use my maths skills to help.

In 2014 I was sent to Boaramelo Combined School in Jagersfontein in the Free State where I stayed for 9 years, teaching maths from Grades 4 to 12. When I arrived there the average for maths was 42% and I raised it to 85% for matric. More learners now choose maths in matric, and the learner numbers of both genders in maths surpasses maths literacy.

The first matric I taught who went to study further, Leonard Khomongoe, was offered a scholarship to study medicine in Russia, and he recently qualified as a doctor. He returned to Jagersfontein and is now busy converting his qualification to practice in South Africa. Several of the learners have gone on to study at tertiary level.

The impact on the learners' lives is just incredible. You not only work with the learners, but also with their families or with them at their homes. There are so much unemployment and many child-headed homes. I would help start small businesses, such as selling fruit and vegetables to help bring an income into those homes. I also did my PGCE while I was in Jagersfontein and completed it in 2019.'



Itumeleng Makgoale

In 2019 Itumeleng won the National Teacher's Award for mathematics

Itumeleng also started a school choir that participated in provincial-level competitions.

'In 2023 I moved to Gauteng where I am now teaching Grades 10, 11 and 12 at Emshugantambo Senior Secondary in Pimville, Soweto. Mr Masemola from TEACH SA recruited me to go there as the learners' maths marks needed serious improvement.

Looking back over the past decade, I went into teaching because of the challenges I had of not having good maths teachers at school. I thought I'd stay for only 2 years, but once you start changing lives inside and outside the classroom and experience the appreciation, you don't want to stop.'



Ambassador Luciel Morgan (nee Steele)

Luciel Steele graduated with a BCom in economics and finance in 2007, and with an honours in economics and finance in 2008 from Wits University. She completed her PGCE with TEACH SA in 2015 and graduated with an honours in education in 2017 from Stellenbosch University. She is now doing her master's in education part-time through Stellenbosch University.

Steele's journey with TEACH SA started in 2010, and she is now the Vice-Head of St Mary's DSG in Pretoria, appointed in 2021.

'I initially worked in corporate and investment banking at Standard Bank, which heightened my awareness of the gap in maths education in the country. I knew that most learners could never know about mergers and acquisitions or private equity without a maths degree, and they can never access university to do a maths degree if their schooling in the subject is poor.

I knew this from personal experience as I didn't come from a privileged background. I grew up in Ennerdale and matriculated from Mondeor High. It was 2 different worlds from Ennerdale to Mondeor, and it was an extremely difficult time. I wish I had done better in maths and had access to great maths teachers sooner.

This motivated me to join TEACH SA in 2010, and I was first placed at Thutopele High School in Katlehong, Johannesburg East, where I taught maths from Grades 8 to 12 for 2 years. I was then sent to Blinkklip Hoërskool in the Northern Cape, where I taught maths from Grades 8 to 10 for 1,5 years. I did my postgraduate certificate in

education during this time, followed by my honours in education, and am now busy with my master's. During my time at these schools I saw a significant increase in the number of learners, of all genders, who chose to do maths up to matric.

I then got married and lived in Houston Texas with my husband for a year in 2014 where I taught maths. They are well resourced there, and the lack of teachers is not an issue, but I strengthened my classroom management skills as they are far more rigorous than ours in South Africa. It was also an opportunity to learn about different cultures.

I returned in 2015 and joined the Nova Pioneer independent school network for 8 years in Ormonde, Johannesburg South.

I choose to work in education because more than anything. You realise the impact that people in the education space have on learners' lives. It is so rewarding to see the fruits of your investment, seeing young people progress and succeed, many from very difficult backgrounds.'



Luciel Morgan



TEACH SA school visit to East Bank High School in Alexandra, Gauteng

Left to right: Mr Modisana Mosiuoa, Head of stakeholder relations at TEACH SA; Mr Philips, Principal of East Bank High; Ambassador Sipelele Mdakane; Acting Head of Department for science, Mam Lekopa; Ambassador Sihle Nyandeni; Head of Department for Mathematics, Mr Potsane.



Aurora Girls High in Zola, Soweto, September 2023

Left to right: Mr Mukwevho (Deputy Principal); Nomsa Ngwenya (Ambassador); Mr Modisana Mosiuoa; Khanyisa Jack (Ambassador); Ms Simelani (Deputy Principal) and Mr Molozi (Principal)



Ambassador Mr Khanyisa Jack, in one of the classes that he teaches at Aurora Girls High in Zola, Soweto.



Mr Collen Bokgola, Ambassador at Masiqhakaze Secondary with his learners after a TEACH school visit in September 2023.



Ambassador Mandisa Bidi with her learners at Equisweni Secondary, in Ivory Park, Tembisa.



Students visiting the TEACH SA stand at the Wits University Career Fair where the recruitment team has an opportunity to meet and engage brilliant young people and potential future Ambassadors. The recruitment process forms a significant pillar of the TEACH SA programme with its ability to not only increase the organisation's visibility but also helps the TEACH SA team to gain insights into the experience and desires of current STEM students and soon-to-be graduates.



Umthombo Youth Development Foundation (UYDF) Healthcare professionals for deep rural areas

'I'm seeing generational poverty end for the first time in my life. It's inspiring.' – Gavin MacGregor, Director of the Umthombo Youth Development Foundation (UYDF) since 2008.

'The Nedbank Foundation and Eyethu Community Trust have supported UYDF since 2009, and the results are outstanding,' says MacGregor. 'I am continuously bowled over how well these students do, despite the majority coming from seriously under-resourced schools.'

The UYDF identifies, trains, and supports rural youth, roughly 50% young women and 50% young men, from non-fee-paying schools in rural northern KwaZulu-Natal, to study and qualify across the full range of healthcare professions. They then practise in their communities, thereby improving healthcare for the indigent rural populations in their home regions.

The UYDF model offers a long-term solution to the challenge of recruiting and retaining quality healthcare professionals in South Africa's rural areas.

The potential of learners from rural areas, when given the opportunity to study at university, is evident year on year. 'Even under the most difficult circumstances, the learners we select have found their way to achieve university passes with maths and sciences as required subjects. Even when they do not have maths teachers at their schools, they seek out teachers in other districts or get together and teach each other.'

Through its programme the UYDF is helping to address the immense shortage of committed healthcare professionals in rural communities.

Research has shown that healthcare professionals are more likely to live and work at a rural hospital if they grew up in a rural area, or if they were exposed to the realities of healthcare delivery in rural areas throughout the course of their university training. In that regard, in their June and December university vacations, students

work in hospitals in the rural communities from which they originate in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

'Prior to 2018 the UYDF had to fund the students comprehensively, but since 2018 all the students on our programme are receiving funding from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), aimed at students whose family income is below R350 000 a year,' says MacGregor. 'Most of the students we select come from families who do not earn anything close to this – most of the family members receive social grants, are unemployed, or do piece jobs. The UYDF tops up their food, books and travel allowance, and covers expenses specific to health sciences, such as uniforms, scrubs and stethoscopes. 'Throughout their university journey we hold them accountable and support them through our mentoring programme. We understand the stress they are under and from the moment they are selected by the UYDF, every student has regular structured meetings with their mentor, during which they talk about their emotional and academic progress, and address issues if they are failing or facing a personal problem.'

Many of the students fail their first tests at university and this affects them emotionally as they were generally the top performers in their schools. The jump to university is immense, but with guidance they quickly start improving and by June they are passing well.

The UYDF encourages students to aim for 65% or more for every test and exam, and many overshoot the mark. 'If they did not get 65%, we work out what went wrong and look at how they studied and managed their time,' says MacGregor. 'We encourage them to speak to their lecturer when they don't do well to discuss where they went wrong in the exam paper, and to learn from peers who are performing.'



They also discuss their social or emotional issues with the mentor, for example if their families are struggling and putting pressure on them to find a job.

The UYDF also holds life skills workshops with all the students, including developing their communication skills, their ability to listen and be innovative in the workplace, and their self-management skills to help them avoid detrimental behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, the risks of HIV/Aids, and unplanned pregnancy.

MacGregor explains: 'We engage students on these issues. With regard to pregnancy, for example, one student fell pregnant, had her baby, and still managed to pass her exams. However, we discuss the bigger picture with the students, which will help them get out of poverty and break the generational poverty cycle. We are supporting them because their families cannot support them, and if they have a baby, they are giving their family another mouth to feed when they cannot afford it. We try to help students in all areas to make good choices by helping them see the bigger picture.'

One of the conditions of UYDF support is that they return to work in their community or in other rural communities. Students completing a 4 year qualification work for 2 years, and those studying medicine work for 3 years, depending on whether they get employment at a rural facility.

'The feedback we get from hospitals is that they are such an asset. Some of the professionals stay on in their communities beyond the required period. Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, audiologists, social workers, nurses, and speech therapists generally stay the longest. Doctors are more mobile and some want to specialise, so they have to move to achieve this.'

Unfortunately, since 2017/18, the Department of Health has stated that it doesn't have the money to employ these graduates in hospitals in their areas, despite the dire shortage of healthcare professionals in South Africa and rural areas specifically. In these cases graduates need to find other options. 'Our work is to produce well-qualified, well-rounded healthcare professionals from the rural areas, and their dedication and results are inspiring for South Africa.'

Outstanding results

In 2022, out of the UYDF's cohort of 172 students, 158 passed all their subjects (92%), 3 failed one subject, but were promoted, giving a 94% progression rate. A total of 44 students completed their degrees, with 82% completing it in the minimum time, 6 required an additional year, and 2 required 2 additional years.

In 2023 the UYDF selected 58 new students who come from the uMkhanyakude, Zululand, and King Cetshwayo districts of northern KwaZulu-Natal. For 2023 the UYDF is supporting 193 students who are studying at 12 academic institutions. Of those 193 students, 127 are studying medicine.

UYDF graduates

Menzi Mabilisa – pharmacist intern

'I grew up in Pongola, Kwa-Shoba area, in northern KwaZulu-Natal, and was raised by my grandmother. She was a teacher at a primary school and the breadwinner in our household of 8 people. I attended Dingukwazi High School. Fortunately, I had good maths and science teachers.

I am the first person in my family to get a degree, and it is because of Umthombo that I saw my dream of being a pharmacist becoming a reality at Tshwane University of Technology (my grandmother could not afford university fees).

Umthombo had a great impact on my life. I had challenges along the journey of completing my degree. I failed some modules, but Umthombo gave me another chance and found a tutor for me for extra classes in subjects I was struggling with. They also assisted me psychologically, as I had a baby who passed on when I was doing my second year. This affected me deeply, and Umthombo sent sis Ntombi to come and check on me and help me cope with the trauma I experienced.

Umthombo became my second family, where I was able to talk about my stress and personal issues, while they continued supporting me financially and academically. It was a great day when I graduated in 2022, and I am now a pharmacist intern at 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria.

I am dealing with different kinds of patients, many suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because they are soldiers. Since I experienced PTSD when my baby passed on, I can help them. I normally advise non-pharmacological treatment like talking to a psychologist, as it is easy to become dependent on high-schedule medication. The hospital has solidified my knowledge of medicines because you deal with chronic and acute medicines, and a wide range of people from all walks of life.'



Menzi Mabilisa



Themba Manzini – dietician

'Many poor people don't understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy food. I see a family of 5 buy 5 litres of cooking oil and finish it within a month – 1 litre per person – as they fry everything to improve the taste. We have a wave of type 2 diabetes mellitus in this area, as people don't realise the impact of eating foods with a high sugar content. We visit local clinics and talk about diabetes, risk factors for a heart attack, hypertension and more.

I teach my patients to save money by buying the right food and eating only what their body requires, with food groups in balance. Cost-effective eating includes legumes, vegetables, and even peanuts that are grown locally. Poor people don't mind what food or how much food they take in. All they want is to feel full. That is what a poverty mindset does.'



Themba Manzini

Nokwenele Buthelezi – medical student

'I grew up in Ceza in the Zululand District Municipality and attended Ngono Secondary School where I was fortunate to have good maths and science teachers. I was raised by my parents in a family of 11, and neither of them have formal employment. My mom hustled by selling vetkoeks, and we are now living on their old-age pension.

I'm doing my MBChB at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University in Pretoria. I chose this profession because I want to help people and save lives. Umthombo plays an important role in my life because I can do my degree without worrying where to get money, food, and other things I need for my degree. Last year was a struggle as I was funded by NSFAS, which was not enough to cover everything.

Being at university is like entering the adult stage of your life because you must now learn to be independent and discipline yourself. Once I have graduated, my priority will be to help my parents and family, help people back to health, save lives, and ensure that my patients are always in good hands.'



Nokwenele Buthelezi



Andiswa Zondo – pharmacy student

'I grew up in rural KwaCeza, Ulundi, but attended boarding school at Mathunjwa Secondary School in Vryheid, where I had the best maths and science teachers. My father sent me there because he noticed my potential. My father worked at Howden's in Johannesburg and, although he was not rich, he tried by all means to provide me with a good education. Unfortunately, he is now unemployed.

As a child I was raised by my grandmother, and we bought groceries monthly. By the end of each month most items would be finished,, but I can proudly say I never went to bed hungry. With KwaCeza being a deep rural area, I think we got electricity only in 2014, and we still fetch water from the river.

There are 9 people in my household, excluding those who are hustling outside home. I will be the first to graduate from university. Even though other members of my family didn't get a chance to go to university, they all know the importance of education.

I found out about Umthombo from my classmates and I'm now studying pharmacy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It was a great opportunity to receive this funding because NSFAS does not cover everything. I had to buy medical equipment and Umthombo was there for me. Being a student and receiving financial assistance takes the weight off your shoulders, and the Umthombo mentorship is the best. Having someone to guide you is incredible. Being at university is not easy, but I am pushing to achieve my dream of graduating and helping to improve healthcare in my rural home area.'



Andiswa Zondo



Roland Greaver Leadership Foundation (RGLF) Supporting new generations of black chartered accountants for South Africa

‘Being a CA myself and coming from a disadvantaged background, I was determined to make a difference to my circumstances and subsequently assist other South Africans from working-class backgrounds to become CAs and empower themselves.’ – Roland Greaver, founder and head of the RGLF.

The RGLF provides scholarships for historically disadvantaged, financially stressed black South African learners, predominantly from the greater Cape Town area, who want to become CAs. They study at the University of Cape Town, the University of the Western Cape, or Stellenbosch University. Additionally, the foundation provides mentoring and support through a variety of programmes to develop strong leaders.

‘We want them to distinguish themselves at the highest level in the private or public sectors,’ Greaver explains. ‘Our aim is to contribute to the transformation of the accounting profession.’

The foundation has an intake of approximately 15 students every second year, with Eyethu as one of their largest funders. They run a radio campaign over several weeks with one of Cape Town’s leading radio stations, during which they talk about the CA profession and the foundation. Many of their applications are received this way.

‘There is a shortage of black CAs at board and senior executive levels of private and state-owned enterprises’ says Greaver, who, in addition to his hands-on leadership role in the RGLF, is a founder member and CEO of Camissa Asset Management.

‘When I matriculated in the 1980s there were very few opportunities for black people to obtain suitable qualifications and occupy senior positions in business. My parents were working-class people and had to provide for 6 siblings in a subeconomic community, south-west of Johannesburg,’ Greaver explains.

‘Today there are many young people with similar backgrounds. I was fortunate that I was self-driven and determined to break the cycle of poverty and empower my family. What helped tremendously is that there were people who believed in me, and that inspired me to work hard to achieve my dream of obtaining a great qualification and taking up leadership positions in various companies’, Greaver concludes.

The primary aim of establishing the RGLF was to help young people from poor or troubled backgrounds, and students generally referred to as ‘the missing middle’. These are students from families who earn more than the R350 000 threshold that qualifies for NSFAS, but who do not earn enough to cover university costs. The RGLF has recruited several candidates from top-performing feeder schools in Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha.



Strict admission criteria

The foundation has strict admission criteria and is only for students studying in the CA stream. Students applying to the RGLF need to motivate why they should qualify for a scholarship. Greaver says: 'We try and identify top academic achievers because the journey to become a CA is tough and the dropout rate is high. Students need to consistently perform well during their undergraduate years, which will build a solid foundation to succeed at postgraduate and final qualifying exam levels.'



Roland Greaver

Greaver personally meets with each student

Greaver personally meets with each student and if they do not pass any of their tests or mid-year exams in any of their subjects, he gets them to write a strategy on how they will achieve a pass mark for the year-end exam. The RGLF also has self-development and leadership workshops on Saturdays, and it is compulsory for all students to participate.

Greaver explains that some of the workshops are based on the material of world-renowned psychologist and neuroscientist Dr Caroline Leaf, who teaches how to optimise one's mind to succeed. The foundation has worked extensively with the students on emotional intelligence, mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-development.

One-on-one and family counselling

'We use some of our funding from Eyethu to contract therapists with lots of experience in working with young people to do one-on-one counselling with the students and family therapy where needed' says Greaver. Traumatic domestic circumstances are a major inhibitor of performance, and the foundation therefore follows a holistic approach to enable its candidates to manage difficult situations.

The foundation's longer-term vision is for its alumni to become tutors, mentors, and leaders who help other students to succeed. 'The ultimate aim is to instil, within each of our alumni, the desire to contribute to their communities and launch similar initiatives as the RGLF through their own leadership foundations,' says Greaver. 'The RFLF would like to create a legacy by creating a 'gearing effect of excellence' through the development of young people who go on to uplift and develop the lives of others.'

The RGLF network

The RGLF has a powerful network of diverse professionals who assist with the mentoring and coaching programme. The trustees support the 'paying it forward' aims of the foundation by giving back their knowledge, experience, and skills through workshops and coaching sessions.

RGLF graduate Bongela Manzi

Graduated with a BCom accounting and postgraduate diploma in accounting (PGDA) from the University of Cape Town (UCT) at the end of 2021, and he is now doing his articles at PwC.

'I am originally from Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape, but my family moved to Philippi in Cape Town, where I matriculated from Sinethemba Secondary School. I was fortunate to have a great accounting teacher.

My mother is a community care worker and my stepfather is a painter. They did not have the means to send me to university, so I applied for a number of bursaries, and was approved for NSFAS funding when I heard that I had been accepted by the RGLF. I was so happy about this, as the funding and support is at another level, and I am really inspired by what Mr Greaver achieved in his own life.

The motivational and leadership workshops, as well as the talks with Mr Greaver helped me a lot. When I first started at UCT I didn't know if I would achieve what is required. I started believing in my potential and it gave me the drive to graduate, which I did. In 2022 I worked as an academic trainee assistant lecturer at UCT as I love teaching and the academic space, but I also wanted to work for one of the Big Four accounting firms – PwC, Deloitte, EY and KPMG.

I am now in Johannesburg with PwC, doing my second year of articles and working in the technology, media, and telecommunication division with major clients. I work really hard, but I enjoy it and I often think about my discussions with Mr Greaver about discipline, which have played a key role in motivating me. You have to keep at it, even though you don't always see instant results.'

RGLF student – Saarah Jeffery BSc finance accounting – UCT

'I'm in my third year at UCT and my family lives in Crawford, Cape Town. My dad was originally from Mitchells Plain and my mom

from Steenberg, and they both worked very hard to get us to where we are now. They have a woodworking business, doing joinery and shopfitting.

I went to Wynberg Girls High and did my matric during Covid-19, so I made sure I pass well to qualify for my degree. I couldn't apply for NSFAS as my family's income is above the threshold. Yet they are not in a position to pay for university fees, and I was really stressed about finances. I had to take out a loan to pay for my first-year studies.

My dad heard about the RGLF on the local Heart FM radio station. He sent me a voice note saying that I must apply and that one of the requirements is being a black African. While I was applying, I thought this was just what I was looking for as it would assist me with more than funding. It was a holistic development programme that could help me on my CA journey, which is really tough.

I couldn't believe it when I was chosen. I was overjoyed and so grateful.

I got the scholarship from my second year, and it took a huge weight off my shoulders. I have been able to focus on my studies instead of constantly worrying about finances.

I really enjoy getting together for the workshops we have at the foundation, the motivational talks with Mr Greaver, the discussions about what the working world is like, and how to manage the stress of pursuing a chartered accounting degree and career. I go home inspired and believing in myself every time. Mr Greaver says we have the ability and that it's all about believing and applying ourselves. There is a strong support system to lean on, and I look forward to working in a large accounting firm or bank one day.'



Sarah Jeffery

Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP)

Funding finance-stressed students for high-demand careers



The ISFAP is a non-profit public-private partnership that demonstrates the positive work that can be done when government and the private sector collaborate. In this instance to solve an issue of national importance – the provision of fees for poor and middle-income or ‘missing middle’ students.

The ISFAP is helping fast-track South Africa's skills production for the 21st century by funding the costs of higher education for students from poor and ‘missing middle’ financial brackets who are studying towards a career in occupations of high demand (OHDs).

These are careers that have been identified as critical skills to the country's economic development by the Human Resources Development Council. Among others, these include actuaries, accountants, engineers, medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, prosthetists, orthodontists, professionals in business and financial scientists, data scientists, and computer scientists.

‘A growing number of families can no longer afford to cover university costs, and existing funding options simply do not match the need,’ says ISFAP's Head of Fundraising and Strategy, Shane Perrier.

At the same time there is already a NSFAS shortfall of several billion rands to fund over 700 000 students for the 2023 academic year, and South Africa cannot entertain a situation where government reallocates funds from critical areas, such as research or earmarked grants, to fund student fees.

Few safety nets in place

With few safety nets in place, unavoidable university fee increases, a shrinking economy and rising inflation, the vulnerability of poor and ‘missing middle’ students increases in our university sector.

‘The future is in the hands of our young people and if we don't empower them, we won't achieve economic growth,’ Perrier explains. And so, about 6 years ago, at the height of the Fees Must Fall (#FMF) movement, the private sector and government came together to see how the private sector can be part of the solution, as 80% of the young people in South Africa are employed through the private sector.

ISFAP launched in 2017

The ISFAP was then launched in 2017, which was its first year of funding bursaries for 690 students studying for degrees in OHD careers. All the students selected each year must achieve strong matric marks, and the selection process is rigorous.

‘Nedbank is one of our founding partners and the Banking Association of South Africa (BASA) is on our board as a founding member, together with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Association of Savings and Investment in South Africa, the First Rand Foundation and Business Leadership South Africa,’ says Perrier. ‘We heavily rely on funding from the private sector and trusts like Eyethu.

ISFAP's Chair, Sizwe Nxasana, who is a leading businessman and one of South Africa's first black CAs and an education champion, was instrumental in getting ISFAP off the ground. He is a co-founder of the Sifiso Learning Group, which promotes gender equality and the nurturing of every child and learners' full potential.



3 000 students funded from 2017 to 2023

ISFAP has funded over 3 000 students in OHD skills subjects in its first 6 years of operating from 2017 to 2023. It has raised over R1.65bn from the private and public sector towards this initiative.

‘Our staff at ISFAP is about 25 people and we operate on a fairly basic margin, with 85% of the generated funds going directly to students, 10% used for wraparound support, and 5% to administer the bursary,’ says Perrier.

We want to fund more students and get more funding as the demand we receive far exceeds our funding. We receive well over 20 000 applications every year, but we can fund only about 450 students annually, even though many of the applicants meet the household means testing requirement. We are growing our partnerships with more universities and other organisations.’

The means testing, in which Nedbank and BASA are involved, looks at the student’s household income. Households with an annual income of R350 000 and below are classified as ‘poor’, and households with an annual income of R350 to R600 000 are classified as ‘missing middle’.

Wraparound support

ISFAP provides wraparound support to all students as you cannot compare a student from an under-resourced public school in Soshanguve to a student from a private school in Sandton. In many of our township and rural schools there is a dire shortage of maths and science teachers, and you cannot expect even a high-performing matriculant from this environment to instantly perform at university level in a subject like actuarial science.

There is a high dropout percentage at university, particularly in STEM subjects, as students battle to acclimatise to maths and science at university level and the new environment.

Perrier explains that ISFAP addresses this by providing extra tutorials, mentorship, social support, life skills training, medical, and psycho-social support. ‘We help them become work ready as part of their wraparound support.’ This is over and above funding university fees in full, accommodation, books, meal stipends, as well as cash and transport allowances. Nedbank also assists with mentoring the students in finance management skills.

We have project managers on the ground at each faculty that we employ in the universities with whom we partner, namely the University of Pretoria, the University of Johannesburg and the UCT. They are like guardians and parents for these students who are sometimes from disadvantaged family backgrounds, including child-headed homes or homes where there is abuse. The project managers are constantly engaging with the students, and they understand the level of intervention and support required.'

Getting jobs

ISFAP's statistics show that 45% of the students who have graduated have jobs, 40% are studying further, and 15% have not found employment yet. Perrier says: 'We have an alumni team who check on these students, where they are and how they are doing, and we provide a marketplace for them to get offers. The shortage of jobs in the market remains a major issue, even in OHD professions. Entrepreneurialism is part of our work readiness mentorship and one of the options we present to our graduates, but it is tough for young people to start their own businesses in this economy.'

All 10 of the world's countries with the youngest populations are in Africa, with approximately 65% of the continent's citizens below the age of 35. Our continent has the benefit of young people's energy and ability to work, provided that opportunities for education and economic inclusion exist.

ISFAP students being funded through Eyethu

Sinothando Nkomphela (18) First year BCom Finance – University of Johannesburg

'I'm from Lady Frere and Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape. I matriculated from St James Senior Secondary School in Cofimvaba, where my dad works as a driver for the Department of Health. My mom works in a hairdressing salon in Lady Frere.

Fortunately, I had a good maths teacher, and I got a good university pass to study BCom Finance at the University of Johannesburg. But I had no funding. I had applied for funding from NSFAS and ISFAP because my family had no way of paying for my studies. When I heard that ISFAP had approved my application, I burst into tears as the stress of not knowing how to pay for my studies had been unbearable.

It was a huge move from home to Johannesburg, and my ISFAS mentor helped me to settle in and with some issues I had with a friend who was being dishonest.

I will be completing my first year in 2023, and I am doing well academically as I am achieving distinctions for my modules. I am so grateful to ISFAP and Nedbank for this funding. It is a lot of money, and it has lifted the financial stress off me so that I can focus on my academics. I am also grateful that my parents don't need to be stressed about my fees, and I'm doing my part by ensuring that I make good use of the bursary by doing my very best and achieving my goals.'



Sinothando Nkomphela

Tokelo Tsotetsi (20) First year BCom Financial Sciences – University of Pretoria

'I grew up in Heidelberg where I did my matric at Kgoro Ya Thuto Secondary School. We were fortunate to have good maths and science teachers, and I achieved a 70% average for matric and then applied to study at university.

My mother and father raised me. My father was a store man at a mine, but he was retrenched during Covid-19. My mother has her own catering business for weddings, and we now live in Soshanguve.

My parents could not afford to send me to university, and I was already enrolled at the University of Pretoria when I heard I had received ISFAP funding. I was so relieved. I was really stressing about how I was going to pay for my studies, and if I didn't get funding, I would have had to go back home.

I'm doing well academically. I have a 70% average and I work very hard, with many sleepless nights. It helps to be living in a residence on campus, as we have good wifi and presentations on various issues, such as mental health.

I have an ISFAP tutor who helps me with difficult subjects like statistics. She is in her third year studying the same degree as me, so she knows the work. When I am in third year, I will also tutor as it helps a lot.

In my career I want to major in taxation and be a tax consultant. I find it intriguing. Another career I would consider is a financial adviser. I am very grateful for the funding as without it, I would not have had the opportunity to be here.'



Tokelo Tsotetsi

Faatimah West (19) First year Business Science majoring in finance and accounting – UCT

'I grew up in Lansdowne Cape Town and matriculated from Rustenberg Girls High. My mom is an accounting clerk for a doctor and my dad is a business analyst. I got a good matric pass with 5 distinctions and got into UCT, hoping to become a CA.

My dad's work paid my registration fees, but I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't received the ISFAP bursary. It costs a lot to study at university, and my family is unable to cover this.

In some respects, transitioning to university was easy. At my high school we were always taught to manage our workload independently, but the amount of work was a big jump. It's so much more, and some subjects are difficult. In my first semester I passed all 5 courses. I had to adjust to a drop in the kind of marks I scored in matric, but after every test I see how I can improve. We have tutorials where I can ask what I did wrong.

I also have an ISFAP project manager at UCT who oversees the ISFAP students, and he has been very helpful. Whenever I have questions about my courses, he is there for me. The ISFAP opportunity is amazing, and I have to say that I love having my own laptop, which I use all the time.'



Faatimah West



National Business Initiative (NBI) Pathway to plumbing for young South Africans

‘Our engagement with the Institute of Plumbing South Africa (IOPSA) and research from the Trade and Industrial Policies Strategies revealed that most people working in the plumbing industry are unqualified, and the majority of these businesses are informal. This prompted us to focus on developing a new plumbing skills training programme to upskill existing workers and create a new learning pathway into the plumbing industry for young people.’ – Dr Anthony Gewer, Senior Programme Manager: Economic Inclusion for NBI



Dr Anthony Gewer

Initiated in 2017, the Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust is a key partner and incubator of NBI's plumbing programme in collaboration with IOPSA and the public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Eyethu initially funded the institutional capacity-building for the programme, and is now funding the delivery of training and the incubation of candidates into small and medium (SME) plumbing businesses.

The programme addresses the disconnect between TVET skills provision and skills demands in the workplace. The programme forms part of NBI's broader Installation, Repair and Maintenance (IRM) initiative to expand entry-level learning and employment opportunities for young TVET students across the industrial and green economy.

IOPSA has 8 000 registered plumbers, yet there are about 130 000 working in plumbing throughout South Africa. There is a significant quality issue because of the large number of plumbers without formal training and experience. One of the issues is that it is difficult to get into the plumbing industry, and qualifying as a plumber is expensive.

‘The NBI's plumbing pathway is one of several initiatives we are pursuing to address the persistent and increasingly high levels of youth unemployment in South Africa,’ says Gewer, who has provided strategic and technical support to government, donors, the industry, and institutions for the past 20 years, looking at strengthening pathways for successful youth labour market transitions.

Transition to the labour market

Many young people today find it impossible to successfully transition to the labour market, thus joining the growing number of people in our society who remain marginalised and trapped in a negative cycle of exclusion from economic participation. This presents one of the greatest obstacles to achieving equitable and inclusive economic growth.

The NBI has since created multiple pathways into the plumbing industry, including upskilling people already working in plumbing and creating an entry point for young people through the TVET college dual training programme (integrated institutional and workplace training).



Plumbing training

12-month plumbing training

The TVET plumbing training is a 12-month programme, including 3 months at one of the colleges that offer it, and 9 months of practical training in a plumbing business.

The role of IOPSA is critical to provide quality assurance. As Gewer explains:

‘They lead the curriculum development, check whether the colleges’ programmes are up to scratch, oversee the assessment of the candidates during their 9-month internship, and conduct the final external assessment of the candidates before they can get their ‘Plumbing Hand’ certificate. This qualifies them to be registered with the Plumbing Industry Registration Board as technical operator practitioners. Traditionally, they could be registered only after 3 years of working in the plumbing industry, so we have fast-tracked this process.’

‘We haven’t had any candidates who haven’t performed, Gewer continues. ‘Our selection process is very rigorous, and we have an intensive interview process. We admit 30 black South African candidates for the 3-month training per college site about 3 times a year. They must be under the age of 35, with at least Grade 9 with literacy and numeracy and an interest in plumbing. ‘As part of the programme, we include self-awareness, behaviour change and work socialisation development, which contributes to our good programme completion rates.’

The NBI runs recruitment campaigns through social media, partners, TVET colleges, and the SAYouth.mobi online platform managed by Harambee, which has a database of about 3 million young people.

60% women plumbing trainees

An encouraging 60% of NBI's plumbing candidates are women. Gewer says lots of women want to be plumbers and NBI does 'Women in Plumbing' and 'Women in Trades' advocacy work. This has contributed to a culture shift in the plumbing industry, with plumbing businesses welcoming female employees as they often outperform the males. There are also a growing number of women-owned plumbing SMEs.

Once the candidates have completed their training and qualified as technical operators, they can be employed by the SME where they trained, or, if they have high potential as an entrepreneur, the NBI has a programme for this. All technical operators can continue training to become qualified plumbers. The technical operator is one level below a plumber, as plumbing is a 3-year qualification, which we are trying to reduce by a year if the candidate has qualified as a technical operator. They would then work for another 2 years as an apprentice to become a plumber.



NBI plumbing trainees



NBI plumbing trainees

Strong green economy foundation achieved with Eyethu

'The work that we achieved with Eyethu has led to a strong foundation for this programme, which we are currently delivering across 8 colleges and through the establishment of 8 small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) hubs within the colleges across South Africa,' says Gewer. 'We have been able to replicate the model in other industries, with a strong focus on green skills for the green economy, such as renewable energy.'

In 2018 the next phase of the partnership with Eyethu resulted in the implementation of a Solar Water Heating Installation and Maintenance Pilot Programme to train young people with plumbing skills in the installation and maintenance of solar water heaters. In 2019 the IRM initiative was introduced to expand the programme across multiple sites and industries.

'We are also training young people in the property maintenance industry, and gradually building on other skills like welding, using a similar model. All this has been built on Nedbank's funding of the initial plumbing pathway model', concludes Gewer.



Plumbers in training on NBI's plumbing programme

Tracer studies

Tracer studies conducted by JET Education Services on NBI's partnership model between the plumbing industry and TVET colleges show that the full potential of the model has not been realised yet. A number of issues must be addressed and refined to ensure the efficacy and replicability or scaling of the model.

Among others, these include the following:

- Ensuring the curriculum is properly structured and implemented, including the integration of theory and practice using the project-based methodology.
- Ensuring college facilitators are adequately equipped to deliver the curriculum.
- Ensuring effective communication channels between the college and employers so that there is a mutual awareness of student progress against the curriculum and proper monitoring of workplace learning.
- Giving structured mentorship training for supervisors in plumbing companies to equip them to work more effectively with candidates in terms of applying their knowledge and optimising the experience in the workplace.

These lessons have become the basis for the further roll-out of the plumbing programme, with the skills programme being registered and recognised by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations since 2021. In addition, the model will be

applied across other industries that offer entry-level opportunities and a pathway to trade.

The role of industry bodies, as exemplified by IOPSA in the plumbing industry, is a critical lever for aggregated demand, as well as a high-quality supply of skills. This requires industry bodies to take ownership of and drive the programme. The expansion of IRM pathways will have a fundamental effect on the transformation of relevant IRM industries and the realisation of large-scale employment for marginalised youth.

Economic inclusion to empower youth

The NBI initiative is a voluntary coalition of South African and multinational companies, working towards sustainable growth and development in South Africa, and shaping a sustainable future through responsible business actions, thereby demonstrating business action for sustainable growth.

The NBI's economic inclusion mandate is to develop and deliver programmes and initiatives aimed at empowering South African youth through skills development, youth employability, and SMME support.

NBI's Green Skills TVET plumbing programme

The NBI's Green Skills TVET plumbing programme expands opportunities for young people to enter the plumbing industry, gain employment, and work towards becoming fully qualified plumbers. The key objectives are to:

- unlock the demand for entry plumbing skills across plumbing enterprises in the form of 'technical operator practitioners';
- develop an appropriate and industry-recognised learning programme for TVET college students that aligns to in-demand technical operator skills, including a specialised focus on plumbing and solar;
- equip TVET colleges to deliver demand-led learning programmes and prepare candidates for entry into the workplace to receive further training on the job; and
- create meaningful employment and self-employment opportunities for TVET college graduates, which can also provide a pathway towards plumbing trade qualifications.

on their online jobs database. I decided to go for it and apply, and was accepted by the NBI.

'After the 3-month college training, I then did my practical with a company called Burgess Plumbing, and it was the best experience. I learnt everything about plumbing and the career it can build, and have been working as a plumber since. What I like about plumbing is that it is a necessity in each and every household, business and industry. It is also in line with civil engineering and construction, as it is very much part of infrastructure development.

Since 2020, I have been self-employed and I now do domestic, commercial, and industrial plumbing. I have regular customers and I get good word-of-mouth recommendations. While there are good and bad months, overall, my business is growing, and I use an app called Invoice Home as I am constantly looking for new clients.'

Swazi Nkosi (34) – plumber

'I'm from the East Rand, and I did my plumbing training through NBI in 2017. This was after I had completed my civil engineering studies at the Ekurhuleni East TVET College. I initially worked in construction, but the company closed down. I then worked as a waiter and bartender, until I got a call from Harambee, with whom I had registered for plumbing



GreenMatter Addressing the environmental leadership gap

As the population increases, our natural resources will continue to be put under escalating pressure. Professional management of our natural resources is vital and can be done only if we have qualified, skilled leaders in the sector, who can develop and implement appropriate actions and policies.

South Africa is rich in biodiversity, but our natural resources and ecosystems are rapidly declining because of human impact, such as habitat destruction and pollution, the infestation of alien invasive species, and climate change. These ecosystems underpin our social and economic well-being and therefore it is critical that we ensure they are managed sustainably.

Established in 2012, GreenMatter is a cause brand and non-profit initiative that addresses skills for biodiversity, environmental management, and the green economy. One focus of the organisation is on developing graduate leaders who will become the next generation of decision-makers, protecting the country's critical natural resources.

'In partnership with the Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust and other partners such as the Water Research Commission (WRC), we are helping to achieve this skills development through our 1-year leadership and professional development fellowship for honours, master's and PhD natural and environmental science postgraduate students. Our current emphasis is on the freshwater sustainability field,' says Executive Director of GreenMatter, Karen Vickers, who has an M.Sc. in conservation biology from UCT. She specialises in delivering transformative and nature-based science leadership programmes.

Quality freshwater is a priceless ecosystem service, and South Africa is currently experiencing severe water quality and quantity issues because of a number of issues, including governance failures, pollution, inefficient use, and wastage. It is

essential to address this because freshwater sustains all life on earth. Without it we cannot survive.

The students are on academic bursaries for their postgraduate studies, funded by a range of private and public organisations over the years, including Eyethu and the WRC. The 1-year GreenMatter fellowship takes place during their postgraduate studies.

'We offer a series of training to develop the leadership and professional skills they don't generally gain through the university system,' Vickers explains. 'Our programme includes courses on emotional intelligence, business etiquette, and communication, including how to speak with influence while being mindful of diversity and inclusion.' The programme is aligned to the Biodiversity Human Capital Development strategy, the Environmental Sector Skills Plan, and the Department of Science and Technology's Global Change Human Capital Development Strategy.

'What is critical about our fellowship is that, while undergraduate and postgraduate university degrees equip our young people with the academic and technical skills required, the world of work needs more. It needs individuals who are collaborative and critical system thinkers and problem solvers. Many graduates do not know how to deal with conflict, how to manage people, or how to market themselves to industry and develop their networks', says Vickers.

The fellowship focuses on sustainable leadership now and into the future. 'We embrace the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's



Education for Sustainable Development competency framework that speaks to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (education for sustainable development) and the competencies individuals need to contribute to sustainable development.'

GreenMatter advertises through the WRC database and each year they receive hundreds of applications from which they select the top postgraduates, based on their academic performance, leadership potential, career aspirations and the need to contribute to the transformation of the sector with increased numbers of women and black graduates.

Once they have completed their postgraduate degrees, some go into the private sector and do consulting work and others go into the public service through the WRC, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Others join non-profit conservation organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT).

GreenMatter is currently in the process of creating an alumni programme that will inspire its fellows to become mentors and ambassadors to other young students and fellows. Vickers says: 'We would also like to establish a way in which fellows who benefitted from Eyethu could contribute to other Eyethu projects, as this could be a highly beneficial and rewarding initiative to pursue for all parties involved.'

Eyethu is funding 60 fellowships in 2023/24

Eyethu funded 30 of the 52 postgraduates for the GreenMatter leadership and professional development fellowship in 2023, and will fund an additional 30 in 2024, or 60 over 2 years. The WRC is funding their postgraduate studies with support from their partners, including the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the Department of Science and Innovation, and the Energy & Water Sector Education Training Authority.

2016 to 2020

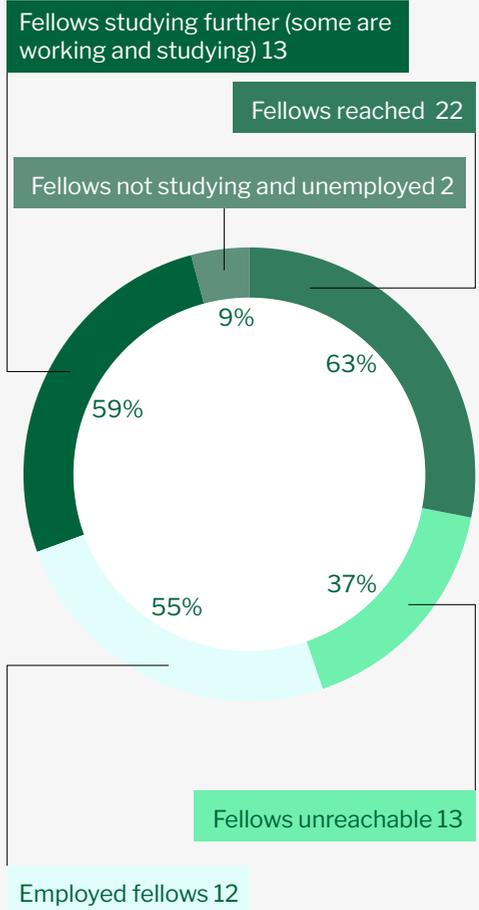
Between 2016 and 2020 Eyethu supported 35 GreenMatter fellows with bursary funding for their postgraduate degrees, as well as for their leadership and professional development fellowship.

Impact: 2016 to 2020 Track and Trace

In 2022 GreenMatter embarked on a tracing study to re-engage fellowship alumni who received support from Eyethu to determine how participation in the fellowship had impacted them and their career paths. A database of fellows who participated between 2016 and 2020 was created.

The results of the tracer study revealed that the fellowship programme had a huge positive impact on the 63% of alumni fellows whom GreenMatter managed to contact. Overall, 55% were employed in the environmental sector while 13% were pursuing further postgraduate studies. Several individuals were studying and working at the same time. Two of the students studying further were pursuing PhD degrees and 9 were pursuing master's degrees. Only 2 alumni were unemployed and not studying.

All the alumni said the fellowship had impacted their careers positively, boosted their confidence and networking abilities, and empowered them to engage professionally at conferences and across the sector. One said she is now employed specifically through networks built during the fellowship.



GreenMatter fellows

Buntu Fanteso Oxford University – PhD student in fresh- water

'I'm on a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford, in the second year of my PhD. I also did my master's here. Life here revolves around academia and interesting events. I've made good friends and expanded my professional network.

With my PhD I would like to continue working in freshwater research as that is where I can make the most impact. Look at how stressors like climate change and human activities impact freshwater ecosystems in South Africa.

I grew up in Mthatha and I have always been interested in nature. Living close to the rural areas and being close to nature, I could see that everything was changing., The indigenous forests were diminishing and the rivers where we would swim were heavily polluted. This motivated me to do a BSc in environmental studies for my undergraduate degree at Walter Sisulu University.

Financially it was tough, as I grew up with my mom and 4 siblings. My mom does piecework in the government Extended Public Works Programme, so I had to apply for bursaries and scholarships constantly. For my first and second years I was funded by NSFAS, and for my third year I had an Absa scholarship. For my honours at the University of Johannesburg I was funded by Green Matter, and my master's was funded by the National Research Foundation.

The GreenMatter fellowship helped me in so many ways. The workshops were very insightful, and they definitely advanced my personal and professional development. I started getting involved in community

projects and initiatives, learning about bodies like the Sothern African Institute for Environmental Assessment and connecting with professionals in my field. GreenMatter was inspiring and a stepping stone to where I am now.'



Buntu Fanteso

Siviwe Babane Master's in aquaculture – Rhodes University Master's in marine biology – University of KwaZulu-Natal

'I'm now with SANBI, working on the conservation of fish in Pretoria at the National Zoo. We do research and conservation programmes, as well as environmental educational programmes, and I feel like my dreams are being realised, one by one, one step at a time.

I've come a long way from my rural home in Idutywa in the Eastern Cape. I did my undergraduate BSc degree in biological sciences at Walter Sisulu University with the help of NSFAS funding, and my honours was funded by the National Research Foundation. I then went to Rhodes University, where my master's in aquaculture was funded by the

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. My second master's, this time in marine biology, was at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and funded by GreenMatter, both the academic and development fellowship side.

I researched abalone and threatened fish species, as well as coral reefs. Today, I'm a champion of environmental education, committed to teaching our young people about our incredible biodiversity and how we have to stop polluting our rivers, streams, beaches, and the communities where we live. I want to leave a mark for coming generations to see the impact our generation has made in addressing environmental and social issues.

GreenMatter was a catalyst in my personal and professional development. During workshops we learnt soft skills like verbal and written communication and networking skills, and how to engage with experts in the environmental and biodiversity

sector. GreenMatter would invite them to do workshops with us and there were opportunities for them to coach and mentor us. I also learnt about leadership, empathy, and self-awareness, as well as all the aspects of emotional intelligence, which I share with all my teams today.'



Siviwe Babane



GreenMatter Fellows gathering to engage in professional development activities

ExploreAI Academy

Fast track to data science and data engineering careers

Empowering young people in South Africa and across Africa with data science and data engineering skills is essential for them to take advantage of the vast employment opportunities this field, offers now and in the future.

ExploreAI is a cutting-edge global consultancy, AI solutions developer, and academy founded in 2016. It consults to global companies, solving complex problems and building data- and AI-driven software for utilities, banks, insurers, and telcos across the world.

'We use what we learn in the industry to update our academy's course content continuously so that we teach the most relevant skills,' says ExploreAI's partnerships and sales manager, David Labuschagne.

'Our academy breaks the traditional tertiary education model through our 1-year virtual learnership programme, which gives candidates a high-quality education that is in demand in the marketplace. We offer a full-time learnership that includes workplace experience, and a part-time learnership for people who are already employed.'

Real-world problem-solving

The academy teaches data analytics, data science, data engineering, machine learning, and related skills in an agile and project-based way. 'Our students are immersed in real-world problem-solving, which equip them for stable, well-paying careers in the current and future world of work,' Labuschagne explains. 'Over the past 7 years we've paved the way to thousands of jobs and developed a world-class curriculum across in-demand subjects.'

ExploreAI recruits countrywide and does a lot of marketing on social media. Alumni word-of-mouth marketing has also attracted large numbers of applicants. The admission process tests for aptitude in reasoning, literacy, and numeracy, but it does not require a tertiary qualification. This opens the

employment gates for many young people from all backgrounds, including graduates. 'We are breaking the mould that you have to have a BCom to work in these fields,' Labuschagne explains. 'I speak from personal experience, as I did the ExploreAI learnership with zero data background. I was a safari guide, and I decided to do the course because if you can work with data, the world is your oyster. Now I work full-time at ExploreAI in sales and partnerships.' On successfully completing the learnership graduates receive an NQF Level 5 national certificate in data science and information systems.



The ExploreAI Academy initially had a physical base in Cape Town but is now online



Partnership with Eyethu

ExploreAI's partnership with the Nedbank Eyethu Trust started in 2019 and is focused on training approximately 20 young South Africans, who are representative of the demographic with a 50/50 gender split, per year.

'Corporate sponsors like Nedbank, through the Eyethu Community Trust, provide invaluable support with regard to tuition and support, as well as internships, employment or both,' says Labuschagne.

'Our graduates can apply their skills to numerous areas across industry-wide sectors from agriculture to the banking sector, and everything in between. In the banking sector they work in a range of data analysis and data engineering portfolios, such as credit risk, insurance, investment banking, and understanding client behaviour in retail banking.'

Thrive Curriculum

The Thrive Curriculum comprises 20% of the learnership and includes soft skills and professional development, such as leadership skills, how to conduct yourself in the workplace, and how to deal with imposter syndrome.

One in three – academy graduate

'We assist graduates in whichever path they opt for: becoming an academy teacher, working for our consulting business, or working externally,' says Labuschagne. 'One out of three of ExploreAI's staff in 2022/23 is an academy graduate.'

ExploreAI employs about 265 data scientists, data engineers, software development and business analysts working on a variety of purpose-based problems, such as the management of wastewater and pollution in large cities like London and access to fibre networks in under-resourced areas.

80% employed

'By the end of 2024 we will have trained 25 000 people. We currently have about 7 000 students across Africa and as far as Cairo, of which about 1 000 are in South Africa. ExploreAI offers a life-changing opportunity to capable talented Africans, many of whom do not have access to university education. Within 6 months of graduating, more than 80% of our candidates are employed. There are numerous stories of how they progressed from earning next to nothing to a R400 000 salary per year', Labuschagne concludes.

ExploreAI Academy impacts 5 key areas:

Reducing youth unemployment

Close the skills gap with tech education to reduce record-high levels of youth unemployment.

Real-world learning environments

Disrupt education with accelerated time-to-application, simulated real-world learning environments and targeted skill provision aligned with market demands.

Innovative funding models

Improve access to education via innovative funding models – financing should not be a barrier to education.

Upskilling and reskilling

Provide upskilling and reskilling of corporate knowledge workers.

Training our workforce

Cultivate a world-class working culture for our own staff.

but when I got there they were recruiting for students to do a BSc in mathematical statistics. And since I was a top achiever in maths in my class at high school, I was drawn to it. I'm the first university graduate in my family. My parents never got a chance to study, and my dad passed away during Covid-19. My elder sister works at Toyota and helps support the family.

During my studies I fell in love with data science and learnt a lot during the ExploreAI year. I learned about data languages, solving data-related problems and building data models.

I joined Nedbank in October 2022 after applying for a data scientist post that was advertised on LinkedIn and based at the head office in Rivonia Road, Sandton. It's a huge leap for a girl from a small place like Bizana, but I have friends from home in Johannesburg, and there are so many opportunities for me here in this City of Gold.

I also want to contribute as a career mentor to interns in the data sciences sector and reach out to learners in rural villages like mine so that they too can know about career opportunities in data science. Knowledge is a powerful weapon.'



Aphwe Madela

ExploreAI Alumni

Aphwe Madela – Nedbank data scientist

'I'm a business intelligence analyst at Nedbank thanks to my training with the ExploreAI Academy. I am from deep rural Bizana in the Eastern Cape, and I did my undergraduate degree at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) in 2020, majoring in mathematical statistics, followed by my honours in applied statistics at the University of Fort Hare. That's where I heard about ExploreAI from one of its alumni.

Where I grew up we didn't have much career exposure. We knew only about being a teacher, nurse, doctor, or policeman. When I arrived at WSU it was to enrol in nursing,

Caryn Pialat – senior data engineer at ExploreAI Mauritius PhD degree in bioinformatics from the University of Pretoria



Caryn Pialat

'I was doing postdoctoral research in bioinformatics when I heard about ExploreAI from colleagues in the same laboratory, who highly recommended the programme. It interested me and I wanted to make a change. So, I completed the ExploreAI programme in 2020, sponsored by Eyethu, for which I am most appreciative.

'It would have been difficult to do the ExploreAI programme full-time without earning an income, and it has opened so many doors for me. It's an exciting space and a massive expansion of my horizons, and it's incredible to know you are trained for the current and future world of work.

'I started working for ExploreAI from 2021. In May 2022 I moved to ExploreAI's office in Mauritius, and it's been a great adventure living here with my husband who works remotely for an IT company called Raging River.

'I worked in ExploreAI's water utility space for a year and a half. We work with Thames Water in the United Kingdom (UK), doing all sorts of data engineering [] from setting up data pipelines to developing applications to track pollution and blockages. Another project was to help green wastewater treatment works for Severn Trent in the UK to capture methane as an energy source. I'm now working on a telco project with a company called Bain to facilitate the laying of fibre in rural areas in the United States.

I also supervise ExploreAI interns in South Africa, but the beauty of this career is that they can be situated anywhere.'

Lizette Loubser – technical lead ExploreAI Pretoria Master's degree in bioinformatics from the University of Pretoria

'I did the ExploreAI programme in 2020 and an internship with Nedbank where I had a technical lead and mentor. Without the support from Eyethu I would not have achieved this.

I wanted to do the ExploreAI programme because it seemed like a natural extension of my master's. I knew about it from people in my research group. I love the data space, and I am now working for ExploreAI. I have a great team and the support of mentors within the company. We work on major projects like the one for Thames Water in the UK, where we monitor any sewage escape or blockages or other problems throughout its vast network.

For future ExploreAI students, I would say a background in maths and science as well as problem-solving and logical thinking skills will help. But people on the programme are from all sorts of backgrounds, and your success will depend on the work you are willing to put in. I had an analytical background but no data science background at all. ExploreAI empowers you with those skills.'



Lizette Loubser



DSI/NRF SARCHI Chairs initiative

Strengthening SA's international research and innovation competitiveness

'The Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust, in partnership with the National Research Foundation auspices of the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARCHI), has been supporting research chairs at various institutions of higher learning for a number of years. The Nedbank-SARCHI Chairs initiative gives priority to historically disadvantaged institutions and female chairholders, while constantly being mindful of excellence,' says Dr Nana Boaduo, Director of the National Research Foundation.

SARCHI's focus regarding which chairs to support is guided by national government imperatives that are aligned to the National Development Plan, which provides a blueprint for how the country needs to respond to its socioeconomic and developmental challenges. The focus was also influenced by scarce and critical skills in certain areas that Nedbank identified for the country.

The main objective of SARCHI is to strengthen and improve the research and innovation capacity of universities to produce high-quality postgraduate students as well as research and innovation outputs. This is realised through strategic partnerships to strengthen the country's international research and innovation competitiveness, while responding to social and economic challenges.

Nedbank has partnered with the NRF, which specialises in the implementation and management of the SARCHI to help strengthen the international competitiveness of South African universities. Nedbank, in collaboration with the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the NRF, has the following 3 Nedbank-sponsored SARCHI Chairs.



Dr Nana Boaduo



1. DSI NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Cardiometabolic Health

Seeking the causes of diabetes and cardiovascular disease

This research is focused on discovering early biomarkers of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and investigating the complex mechanisms that are causing the rapid increase of these diseases in South Africa, especially in the Western Cape.

'Non-communicable diseases are increasing rapidly in the world, particularly in South Africa and the rest of Africa. One of these diseases is type 2 diabetes. In South Africa the estimated incidence in 2010 was 4,5%, but it has risen to approximately 12,7% by 2019,' says the interim head of the DSI NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Cardiometabolic Health, Professor Glenda Davison from the Cardiometabolic Health Research Unit at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Nedbank Eyethu has funded the Chair since 2018.

'To understand the cause, we look to the rapid migration of people to our cities,' Davison explains. 'In South Africa today, almost 70% of people are living in urban areas with the associated changes in lifestyle, westernised diets, fast foods, smoking, alcohol and drug consumption, predisposing people to diabetes and cardiovascular issues, including hypertension and metabolic syndrome.'

Davison's team is researching a mixed ancestral population from Belville in the Western Cape, where the people are a mix of Khoisan, European and Xhosa ancestry, and have a high prevalence (28%) of cardiovascular and diabetes.

'Our recent research from this population has shown there are certain epigenetic factors like novel micro ribonucleic acid (RNA), which could play a role in the high prevalence of these diseases,' says Davison. These are some of the first studies that have evaluated the relationship between epigenetics, diabetes, and hypertension among people from Africa.

In another study they took plaque samples and found changes in the bacterial composition in the mouth. These were associated with diabetes and metabolic syndrome, and were influenced by factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity. The disruption in the bacterial populations could lead to systemic inflammation and render people vulnerable to cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

'We are aiming to look at environmental factors such as herbicides, fertilisers and microplastics in fish products eaten by this population group, and the effect this might have on cell metabolism,' says Davison.



Professor Glenda Davison at the International Society of Laboratory Hematology Congress

The Nedbank SARCHI Chair is currently funding 1 postdoctoral fellow. It also funded another 8 fellows from previous years who are now contributing to this research field. Three of the postdoctoral fellows were previously funded as PhD students by the Chair, and one of them is visually impaired. He suffers from keratoconus and had his cornea replaced, which resulted in significant loss of vision, but still completed his PhD through the Chair. The Chair sponsored him for his doctoral studies and the first year of his postdoctoral fellowship.

Since 2018 several master's (5) and PhD students (10) have graduated with funding from the Chair. The funding has also assisted employees to upgrade their qualifications and obtain NRF ratings by providing the necessary equipment and support.



Four postgraduate students (3 PhD and 1 Master's), attended the 2nd International ELLISRAS longitudinal and other non-communicable disease study in 2019. The event was hosted by the University of Limpopo in Polokwane, South Africa.

The World Health Organization has predicted an increase of 129% in non-communicable diseases in Africa by 2045 and invited researchers in Africa to investigate the reasons. The Cardiometabolic Health Research Unit rose to the challenge in 2013 under Professor Tandi Matsha, who was awarded the DSI-NRF Nedbank SARCHI Chair in Cardiometabolic Health in 2018 and headed it until 2022.



Students and staff from the Chair in Cardiometabolic Health working in the laboratory.

2. DSI-NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Substance Abuse and Population Mental Health



Impact of the street drug nyaope

South Africa is experiencing an increase in mental illness, with substance abuse as a major contributor. This research focused on the impact that the street drug nyaope has on mental, social, and physical health.

‘The extent to which nyaope use continues to spread throughout the country requires a public health investigation and response, the development of a prevention and management strategy, as well as the development of policy to mitigate its scourge, hence this research programme,’ says Professor Kebogile Mokwena, who heads the DSI-NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Substance Abuse and Population Mental Health at the Sefako Makgatho Health Science University (SMU). Nedbank Eyethu has funded the Chair since 2018.

The research programme investigates the hyper use of nyaope in the townships of Pretoria, including Ga-Rankuwa (where SMU is situated), Soshanguve, Hammanskraal, and Mabopane.

The programme spans over 5 years and consists of sub-studies, each focussing on a specific area led by a coprincipal investigator.

The main ingredient of nyaope is heroin, but it is a cocktail drug containing a several additives, such as paracetamol, HIV medication and phenobarbitone (a drug to treat epilepsy). Nyaope is a relatively cheap depressant and widely available on the streets. Users roll it into a cigarette mixed with cannabis or inject it as a liquid. They then walk and talk slowly, and many suffer severe complications like Hepatitis B and infections that can turn into gangrene, resulting in limb amputations.

Mokwena says: ‘Nyaope use is prevalent from the teenage years, with the number of female users increasing. People who have started using it in the early 2000s are now in their 40s, and they continue using. It is highly addictive and very difficult to rehabilitate nyaope users. The relapse rate is very high, and rehabilitation facilities are extremely limited across South Africa. Many nyaope users are unemployed and will steal to feed their habit.’



Professor Kebogile Mokwena who heads the DSI-NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Substance Abuse and Population Mental Health giving the keynote address at the international day for the prevention of substance abuse.

Children born to mothers who use nyaope

One of the significant sub-studies focuses on the impact nyaope has on the health of children born to mothers who use nyaope, a recently identified problem in paediatrics and child health.

The children are small, fail to thrive and have physical development challenges. Some also suffer from convulsions. 'We have doctoral students observing these children to track their development at 6, 12 and 18 months to see what happens to them and if they can catch up with their peers', says Mokwena.

Damage to the male reproductive system and gastro-intestinal tract

The Chair is also researching the impact nyaope has on the adult body. Findings have revealed that it may cause significant damage to the male reproductive system and gastro-intestinal tract. Users describe acute pain when they have not smoked it for a while. It is known as 'explosion', as their stomachs feel like they're exploding or that somebody is cutting their intestines with a knife.

'We researched this with the Department of General Surgery, which revealed chronic and acute gastritis as well as infection,' Mokwena explains. 'We are now doing research with the Department of Nuclear Medicine to scan the brains of nyaope users to determine if there are any pathological changes. We are almost done with data collection, and preliminary findings show anatomical changes in the cerebella of nyaope users, with possible severe brain damage.'

This pervasive problem needs national intervention, but to date nothing has been done to address this. Nyaope abuse, like all substance abuse, requires a custom-made approach.



3. DSI-NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Energy Materials

Solar power – green hydrogen and clean water for all

The objective of this research is to make cheap and efficient photovoltaics that can offer solar power for all, diversify South Africa's energy mix, and improve the quality of our water.

'We are researching ways to provide clean energy in the form of green hydrogen, and to harness the power of the sun for renewable energy that is accessible to all people and, at the same time, protects the natural environment,' says Professor Nosipho Moloto, who heads the DSI-NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Energy Materials at Wits University, funded by Nedbank Eyethu since 2018. Eyethu has helped to fund bursaries, research equipment, and travel allowances for 37 postgraduate students.

Central to the Chair is human capital development through the funding and development of postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellowships, as well as strengthening the energy sector by partnering with SMEs.



Professor Nosipho Moloto heads the DSI-NRF Nedbank SARChI Chair in Energy Materials at Wits University

New materials for photovoltaics

'We pursue renewable solar energy through nanotechnology to make new materials for solar cells or photovoltaics that are cheaper than the current ones so that solar energy is not limited to the "haves". To reduce the price, we are focusing on cheaper and earth-abundant base metals such as copper and zinc that are synthesised using simpler methods instead of relying on scarce elements like lithium. Our target is also to use less-toxic materials in the photovoltaics, hence the use of zinc and copper.'

The research has reached a stage where patents have been filed in 6 international regions, including Europe, China and Japan, and a further patent is pending in the United States. 'What this means is that if any of these countries want to use or further develop our method, they must go through us,' Moloto explains. 'South Africa won't be using the method to build our own photovoltaic plants as we cannot compete with Germany and China at this stage, but we can collaborate.'

The Chair is also looking at using nanotechnology for environmental remediation, and it has a spinoff company that, among other things, helps small- and medium-sized companies that want to infuse nanotechnology into their business.

Green hydrogen

Green hydrogen is used to power electric cars and fuel cells to generate electricity. It is called 'green' because it is made using greener methods as opposed to fossil-fuel-based methods. 'We want to reduce the environmental impact of hydrogen production,' Moloto explains. 'In simple terms, we split the molecules in water, namely hydrogen and oxygen, and then release the oxygen into the air and capture the hydrogen. It's an energy-intensive exercise, and we use photovoltaics instead of coal-derived electricity to power the electrolyser to achieve this. By contrast, when coal is used for electricity, carbon dioxide is released into the air, adding to carbon emissions instead of reducing them. The team is at an advanced stage of this research, ready to embark on the commercialisation process.'

Moloto adds: 'We are also working on carbon capture from mines, where we catalyse the carbon and create a fuel-like methanol or methane for various applications such as cooking and heating our homes.'

Clean water for all

'We are developing photocatalysts that use sunlight to degrade contaminants in the water. The catalysts can also be used in industry, such as the textile industry, to treat water for re-use on site. We use a non-toxic and simple technology that everyone can use,' Moloto explains.

Another project the team is working on is with Mintek (South Africa's national mineral research organisation) regarding reverse osmosis membranes to desalinate water.

Moloto says their aim is to create spinoffs from this research that will lead to the commercialisation of the technology so that the public can use it.

Harnessing the power of the sun

The Energy Materials Chair looks at finding new materials for use in applications that harness the power of the sun. The Chair focuses on 3 areas of application, namely using nanomaterials as active layers in photovoltaics and as photocatalysts in hydrogen generation through water splitting, as well as photocatalysts that degrade organic contaminants to purify water.





Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé Programme

South Africa's new generation of winemakers

Since the inception of the Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé Programme in 2006, 34 protégés have completed the 3-year internship and 9 protégés, with women in the majority, are currently participating in the programme.

The beauty of this programme is that all the graduates either hold leading winemaking roles, have their own wine label, or are involved in the wine industry.

The Nedbank Foundation and Nedbank Eyethu has supported the Protégé Programme from 2006 to 2022, providing 50% of the funding, and 25% of the funding in 2023. The rest of the funds are raised by members of the Cape Winemakers Guild (CWG) and the people who buy their wines at the annual Nedbank CWG Development Trust Charity Auction. The Trust was established in 1999 to support social development through further education in the South African wine industry.

'All the protégés are graduates, predominantly from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, with either a BSc degree from Stellenbosch University or a BAgric degree from Elsenburg College, both in winemaking and viticulture. They must achieve at least a 60% pass rate and be focused on being a

winemaker,' says Louis Strydom, winemaker and managing director at Ernie Els Wines in Stellenbosch, who has headed the programme's board of directors since 2008.

Over the course of the 3-year programme, protégés develop into excellent winemakers with a depth of knowledge in green economy agriculture.



Louis Strydom

The art and science of winemaking

‘They learn the art and science of winemaking and develop their tasting skills by working alongside 3 CWG winemakers during the 3-year programme, spending a year with each winemaker,’ Strydom explains. ‘As mentors, the winemakers inspire protégés to strive for perfection and excellence in winemaking so that they, in turn, learn to produce award-winning wines. In their second year they make their own wine from vine to bottle, which is auctioned at the annual Nedbank CWG Auction, and the proceeds are reinvested in the Protégé Programme.’

International harvest in France

‘They also participate in an international harvest in their second year, where they are exposed to the international world of wine during a 2-month internship in France,’ says Strydom. ‘They are mainly placed in Burgundy, but they also travel to other winemaking regions in France to understand the different styles of wine and to improve their understanding of the international world of wine.’

In addition to winemaking, they participate in the following:

- Financial training to develop their ability to manage the financial aspects of their work and to think in terms of the financial impact of production decisions.
- A personal coaching programme to develop their self-awareness, confidence, and resilience in challenging situations, which are part of every winemaker’s career.
- Life skills training to enhance their self-management, networking, and communication skills, including public speaking, presenting themselves well in interviews, and holding their own in the wine environment.
- Marketing and sales training to expose them to consumer behaviour, market segmentation, and how best to present wines to the target audience.

‘With winemaking you need to be able to tell the story about how you made the wine, and I always say that, although protégés are all bright graduates, acquiring the soft skills is crucial in this industry.’

Project monitoring and evaluation

During their 3-year internship, protégés are:

- mentored by 3 members of the CWG;
- exposed to the different skills as well as a range of top wineries and vineyards, wine types, and winery roles; and
- prepared for a career in winemaking through facilitated interactions and networks within the industry.

During their internship they meet with the programme facilitator once a month for a coaching session and submit a progress report based on tasks fulfilled. The winemakers or viticulturists also meet with the programme facilitator once a month to review protégés’ progress.

Successful transformation in the wine industry

Successful transformation of the wine industry is critical to improving the socioeconomic climate in South Africa. The CWG is passionate about contributing to this change through cultivating and nurturing young winemakers of excellence. It is wonderful to see the support for this cause from the winemakers and the corporate and business partners. Strategic partnerships like the one with Eyethu are proactively supporting the growth of a rich and diverse culture in our wine industry. to review protégés’ progress.

Meet the protégés

Thabile Cele – second year (2021)

'I'm from KwaZulu-Natal, and being able to combine chemistry and nature, which is winemaking, is wonderful. I am from a strict Christian family for whom the drinking of alcohol is not permitted, and it was therefore difficult to explain why I was pursuing winemaking as a career. But once I have showed them the wine I'm making, and explained the skill required to do it, they said: 'Oh, okay. She is actually learning.'

Being part of the CWG Protégé Programme has been really amazing. I have a mentor who walks the journey with me, teaching me what to do and how to do it. When you have this kind of support, you feel like you fit in. And having the opportunity to work with the 'big fish' in the industry is the most amazing thing of all.

The programme also helps us learn how to deal with life's challenges, and how to evolve from being a student to becoming a professional. I am really proud of where I am now. This year I'm making a Riesling, which is the queen of white wines. The way you make it is how you express yourself through the wine. Nature is everything to me. I love nature and having a grape variety where you keep it as natural as possible without a lot of interventions in the cellar, expresses this love for nature.'



Thabile Cele

Meet Kyle Davids – second year (2021)

'I'm from Pniel in the Western Cape and started my wine journey at a restaurant where I learnt about wine. It really interested me, and it was then when I decided to study wine at Stellenbosch University. I gained the theoretical background at university and was then accepted into the Protégé Programme, which offered me an excellent practical platform where I have learnt a lot, including always having a backup plan.

I'm in my second year now and making my own wine. I chose a blend, as I love combining different cultivars, and I'm aiming to come up with the perfect product, in this case a Bordeaux-style blend. When people buy protégé wines at the auction they can be assured that a lot of effort and long hours have gone into it. We are dedicated to and have a passion for wine. Hashtag, buy for the future!

To meet more protégés, go to <https://www.capewinemakersguild.com/cwg-protége-programme/>.



Kyle Davids

Protégé Programme buddy project

In November 2020 the Protégé Programme launched a new buddy project to seek out potential future Protégé Programme candidates who are currently studying winemaking and viticulture at Stellenbosch University and Elsenburg College. The project involves students having a 'buddy' (who is a current or previous protégé) who provide collegiate support and excite their passion for winemaking. Each quarter the students and their protégé buddies get together at a CWG winemakers' farm where they do cellar and vineyard tours, have a wine-tasting by a CWG member, and enjoy dinner together.



Graduated protégé Banele Vakele now a winemaker at Savage Wines & Tembela Wines

Schoolgirl project – encouraging black females to study winemaking

In collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, the successful schoolgirl project was started in 2019. Twenty learners – all female – are sponsored by the CWG to travel from Limpopo, Pretoria and Johannesburg as well as local schools in the Western Cape to attend a 3day viticulture and oenology programme that is tailor-made to showcase career opportunities in the wine and agricultural sector.



The 2023 CWG Protégé Programme

**For more information
about Nedbank's approach
to sustainability visit
nedbank.co.za.**

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