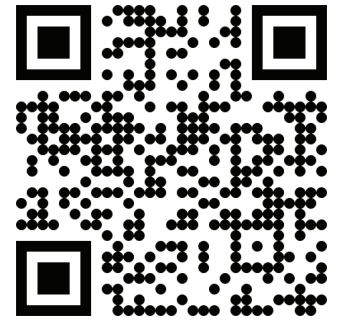


Vuk'uzenzele



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APRIL EDITION 1 - 2026

Black entrepreneurs thrive under 30 years of democracy



Director for Business Development and co-owner of JA Engineering, Mbulelo Nkasana.



Image: Tendai Gonese

Image: Supplied

More Matshediso

South Africa's celebration of 30 years of constitutional democracy and the attainment of freedom is more than a historical milestone; it is a tangible reality lived and appreciated by many citizens, including the owners of JA Engineering.

As the nation observes Freedom Month in April, the success of this

Gauteng-based firm serves as a testament to the transformative power of liberation.

Established in 1987 by Jerry Alexandra, JA Engineering is now owned by a consortium of black South Africans—a transition that would have been nearly impossible under the restrictive laws of the past.

Today, the company specialises in providing advanced engineering

solutions tailored for the coal mining industry, proving that local black-owned enterprises can lead in highly technical sectors.

Speaking to *Vuk'uzenzele* in an interview, the company's Director for Business Development, Mbulelo Nkasana, said freedom was worth

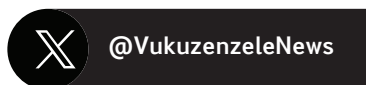
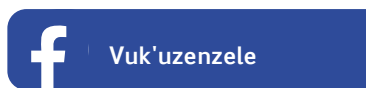
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fighting for because it allows local entrepreneurs to dream and to put their dreams into action so that they can create opportunities for themselves and their communities.

"We value the gains that have been made through the attainment of freedom and democracy," he explained. "We believe that black entrepreneurs are better off today than they were during apartheid because we are now able to create jobs locally and do business internationally."

The journey to ownership was a significant milestone for Nkasana and his partners, Matimba Mahange, and two other members of their consortium.

This move was made possible through the support of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), which provided the necessary funding to acquire the business and enable its growth.

JA Engineering has become a vital player in the South African economy, employing over 300 people. Its impact extends beyond its own payroll, as the firm collaborates with local suppliers for the parts needed to manufacture its machines, thereby fostering a broader ecosystem of job creation.

The company supplies comprehensive underground mining solutions, including continuous miners, shuttle cars, roof bolters, and feeder breakers.

"Coal is the bedrock of our economy. Most of the energy sector relies on coal, which is mined by our customers. It is important to showcase that black South African entrepreneurs can support the growth of our modern economy," he said.

Trading on the global stage

Under its new leadership, JA Engineering has expanded its reach significantly. Previously, the company's international footprint was limited primarily to Australia. Today, it participates in the global economy through platforms such as the Southern African Deve-



Image: Supplied

lopment Community, the Group of Twenty, and the BRICS expanded bloc, which is an influential intergovernmental organisation comprising 10 major emerging and developing economies—Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt,

Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"It is important that South Africa maintains the bilateral and multilateral relations it has with other countries," Nkasana said.

He highlighted that India is set to open approximately

160 new underground mining sections.

Being fellow BRICS members ensures that South Africa and India can exchange expertise and support in the coal mining space.

The company now successfully supplies products to customers across India and Europe.

Industry engagement and future skills

The company remains active in critical industry forums, participating in the Mining Indaba in both 2025 and 2026.

"There is clear alignment in the importance of preserving the mining industry because the industry ensures that companies such as ours remain sustainable.

The Mining Indaba is a platform where we get to engage with governments, our current and potential

customers, and it is also an environment where important issues such as skills development and funding are discussed to help businesses in the mining sector grow.

It allows us to showcase our business offerings as well," he said.

Furthermore, JA Engineering recently participated in the 2026 Proudly South African Buy Local Summit and Expo to enhance its brand awareness.

To ensure a legacy of technical expertise, the company provides internships to engineering students within the provinces where it operates, bridging the gap between academic learning and industrial application. @

JA Engineering
can be reached at
www.jae.co.za

Did you know?

The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) provides funding support to meet developmental goals in industrial sectors.

For more information, visit:
www.idc.co.za.

Freedom Month:

In 2026, South Africa celebrates the 30th anniversary of its Constitution alongside Freedom Month in April, a period that commemorates the 1994 transition to democracy by honouring liberation heroes and the supreme law that continues to guarantee human rights and unity for all citizens today.

Record investment pledges a turning point for South Africa's economy

Dikeledi Molobela

South Africa has entered a new phase of growth, with the country securing the highest-ever investment commitments at the 2026 South Africa Investment Conference (SAIC).

The SAIC is an event where the government invites local and international businesses to pledge money toward specific projects that will grow the economy and create new jobs.

Closing the conference in Sandton recently, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the scale of pledges both in value and number of projects, marks a significant milestone since the launch of the investment drive in 2018.

"The cumulative value of the pledges made at this



conference is the highest we have achieved since the first South Africa Investment Conference. It is also the highest number of projects.

"Much of this is domestic capital, demonstrating the strong and growing confidence of South African investors in our own economy," the President said.

The large share of the commitments from domestic investors was complemented by a sharp rise in foreign direct in-

vestment and participation from development finance institutions.

President Ramaphosa said the breadth of investments across all nine provinces demonstrates that growth is no longer concentrated but increasingly distributed across the country's economic landscape.

Major announcements included a R10.4 billion investment by Toyota in KwaZulu-Natal to support the automotive sector's

energy transition, while Sasol committed R60 billion to modernising operations in Mpumalanga and the Free State.

Mulilo, a South Africa-based global company specialising in green energy production, also announced a bold commitment of nearly R15 billion, signalling a decisive vote of confidence in South Africa's economic trajectory and energy future.

Other investments span mining, renewable energy, infrastructure and global business services including projects expected to create thousands of jobs, such as Teleperformance's R145 million investment set to generate 2,600 employment opportunities.

"These investments span all nine provinces, affirming their potential as engine rooms of growth," President

Ramaphosa said.

Beyond the figures, the President highlighted South Africa's structural advantages, including a sophisticated financial sector, advanced infrastructure, abundant renewable energy resources and a youthful population.

He also underscored the importance of the country's constitutional democracy, noting that the rule of law remains a cornerstone for investor confidence.

"South Africa's investment case is not in doubt, and the reform agenda has proven to be consistent and measurable," he said.

However, the President cautioned that while sentiment has improved, the country must now translate commitments into tangible economic activity.

"As we leave this confe-

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rence, let us carry forward the momentum. This is just the start – we still have much farther to go. Let us turn commitments into projects on the ground and translate plans into progress," he said. @



SA's Investment Prospects Buoyed by Economic Recovery

This week we will be welcoming delegates from more than 50 countries to the sixth South Africa Investment Conference (SAIC) in Sandton, Gauteng.

Since its inception in 2018, the SAIC has grown to become a premier global forum for showcasing the attractiveness of investment opportunities in our country to domestic and international investors.

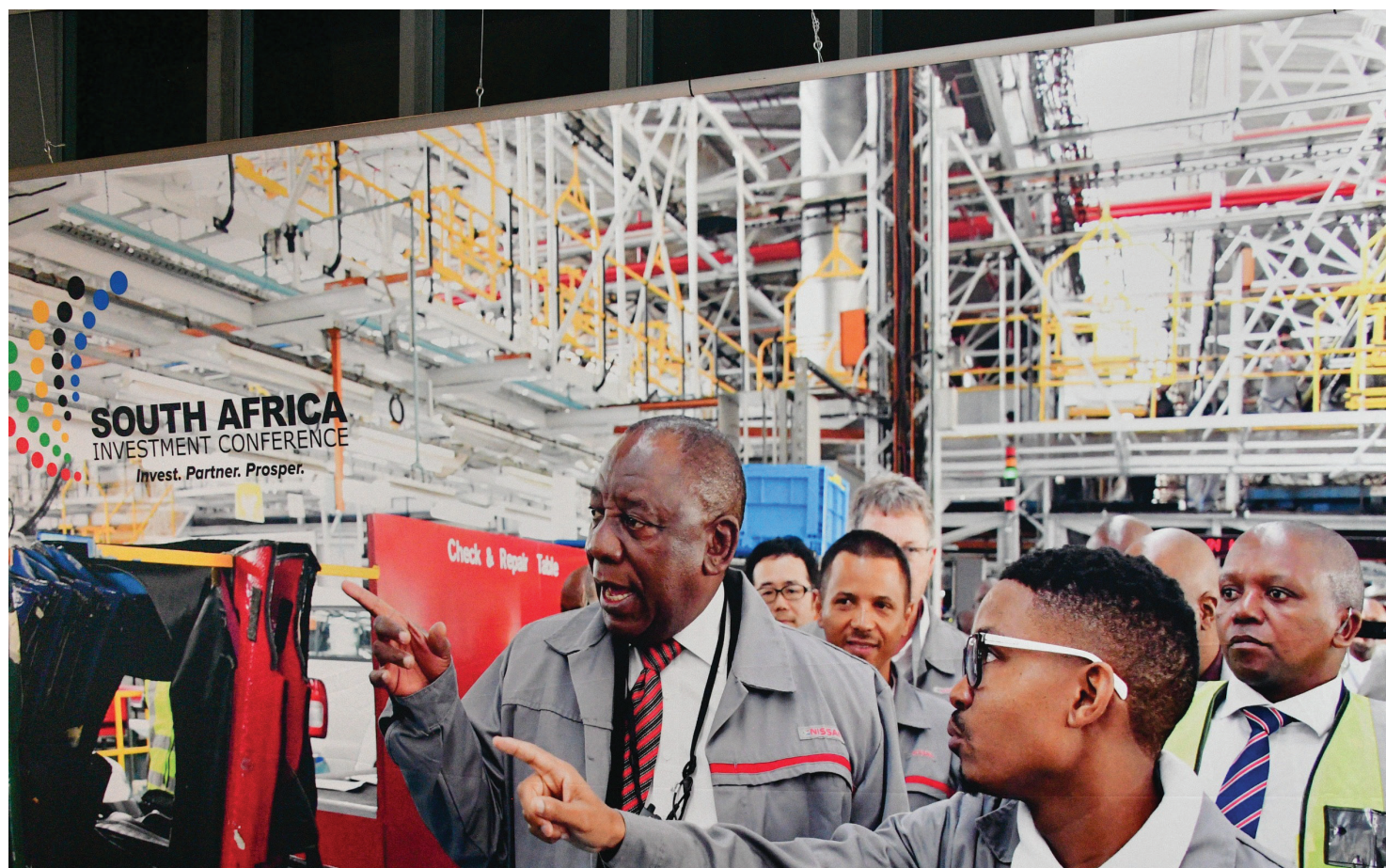
Investment conferences play a key role in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) as high profile platforms that connect international investors with local opportunities. They also facilitate strong partnerships by bringing together governments, business, banks and development finance institutions.

As investors look to destinations that have demonstrated resilience in the face of increasingly volatile global financial conditions, South Africa presents a favourable proposition.

We are Africa's largest economy with a diversified industrial base. Since we began our first R1,2 trillion investment mobilisation drive in 2018, we have secured investment pledges in mining, healthcare, automotive, food and beverage and others, reflecting the sophistication of our economy.

South Africa is also the leading destination for renewable energy investment on the continent, with these investments making up a considerable share of the total pledges made at previous conferences.

We have a sound policy and regulatory environment, offering certainty to investors at a time when we are just one of many emerging markets across the globe vying for capital.



“By showcasing the progress and durability of the reform agenda, our goal is to grow the pool of inward investment from businesses and countries.”

We are also a gateway for businesses looking to set up or expand their operations in Africa.

Through this conference, as well as the five preceding ones, we will be seeking to build even greater confidence in our country as an investment destination, and to demonstrate our commitment to structural reform, policy certainty and policy execution.

The green shoots of economic recovery we are experiencing further bolster our position.

The macroeconomic outlook has improved. We experienced four consecutive quarters of growth by the end of 2025, national debt has stabilized and more jobs are being created. Last year, our sovereign

rating was upgraded for the first time in 17 years, and we were removed from the Financial Action Task Force grey list.

The structural reform agenda being driven through Operation Vulindlela has unlocked progress in electricity, freight logistics, water, telecommunications, and the visa system.

We have brought loadshedding to an end and are creating a new, competitive electricity market that will ensure energy security and attract investment.

The country's logistics sector is being rapidly modernised, and we are enabling private investment in port and rail operations.

Among the projects for which we have initiated a Private Sector Participation

(PSP) process are the Ngqura Manganese Export Corridor in the Eastern Cape and the Richards Bay Dry Bulk Terminal in Kwa-Zulu-Natal.

Last year we also signed a 25-year concession for the Durban Container Terminal Pier 2, representing R11 billion in private investment.

A system for third-party access to the freight rail network is in place and 41 freight rail slots have been allocated to private companies.

We have implemented reforms to the visa regime to attract new skills and promote tourism. These include operationalising the Remote Work Visa, introducing a Trusted Employer Scheme to support major

gible, brick-and-mortar projects that are creating jobs for our people.

Last year I opened the Platreef Mine in Mokopane in Limpopo that is positioned to play a leading role in the production of sought-after critical minerals for the energy transition.

This facility that employs more than 2 000 workers from the local community and is partly owned by a community trust, emanated from a R2,8 billion investment pledge by Ivanhoe Mines at the South Africa Investment Conference in 2022.

Last year I also visited the BMW plant in Rosslyn in Tshwane where the automotive giant has invested R4,2 billion for electrification of its only plant on the continent that will be producing the BMW X3 Plug-in Hybrid electric vehicle. This was also an investment pledged at the SAIC.

By showcasing our unique and favourable proposition as an investment destination of choice, we have set ourselves the goal of mobilising R2 trillion in new investments by 2028.

As we strive to achieve growth that creates jobs for our people, this next phase will move from pledges towards implementation.

This year's investment conference stands at the crossroads of opportunity and ambition.

The clear message we will be delivering is that we remain committed to staying the course on fiscal discipline, to accelerating the momentum of the reform agenda – and to leveraging investment to build an economy that is inclusive, transformed and that benefits all. 🇷🇵

*This message was first published on 30 March 2026

Mar 2026 2nd edition

A victory for identity: Khoi and San names registered

Written by Sihle Manda

For many South Africans, a name is a simple matter of identity. But for members of the Khoikhoi and San communities, having their indigenous names officially recognised has long been a challenge.

Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Leon Schreiber, recently handed over the first Smart Identity Document (ID) produced by his department and the Government Printing Works that records a Khoikhoi and San traditional names. The development followed recent upgrades to departmental information technology systems.

Among the first beneficiaries of this change is Leslie Jansen from the Cape Flats.

"My community is the Khoikhoi community," Jansen said, describing her roots and connection to her cultural heritage.



Letter

Dear Vuk'uzenzele

I was so encouraged to read the article in the March issue of Vuk'uzenzele, whereby members of the Khoikhoi and San communities have their indigenous names officially recognised.

As an ex-teacher, it reminded me of a poem by Magoleng wa Selepe that I taught my students, which led to many discussions about the dignity of our names, which reflect our identities. Thank you for publishing good news too.

My Name

Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa
Look what they have done to my name.....
the wonderful name of my great-great-grandmother

Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa
The burly bureaucrat was surprised
What he heard was music to his ears
'Wat is daai, se nou weer?'
'I am from Chief Daluxo Velayigodle of emalu podweni
And my name is Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.'

Messia, help me !

My name is simple
And yet so meaningful
But to this man it is trash.....
He gives me a name
Convenient enough to answer his whim.....
I end up being Maria.....
I.....

Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa

Kind regards
Deana Steyn

Reply

Dear Deana,
Thank you so much for your heartfelt letter and for sharing the poignant

poem "My Name" by Magoleng wa Selepe. It is truly heartening to hear from our readers, especially when our articles spark such meaningful reflections on our shared history and identity.

Your perspective as an educator adds a special layer of depth to this conversation. The story of the Khoikhoi and San communities reclaiming their indigenous names is indeed "good news," as it represents a vital step in restoring the dignity that Magoleng wa Selepe so eloquently writes about.

As we enter April, we find ourselves in a particularly reflective time. This Freedom Month carries even greater weight as South Africa celebrates 30 years of our Constitution.

Your letter serves as a beautiful reminder of why we cherish these constitutional rights—specifically the right to one's culture, language, and the inherent dignity of being recognised for who we truly are. We value your readership and your commitment to keeping these important discussions alive. It is contributions like yours that help us celebrate how far we have come in three decades of democracy.

Kind regards,
Vuk'uzenzele

Letter

Dear Vuk'uzenzele,

Could you please advise me on how to book an appointment to apply for my Identity Document?

From Mandla Prince

Reply

Dear Mandla,

Thank you for writing to Vuk'uzenzele, to book an appointment for your Smart ID card, please follow the practical steps below to use the Branch Appointment Booking System (BABS). This system allows you to schedule your visit in advance, significantly reducing waiting times.

Steps to book via BABS:

- 1. Visit the Website:** Go to the Department of Home Affairs website at www.home-affairs.gov.za.
- 2. Access BABS:** Select the Branch Appointment Booking System (BABS) link.
- 3. Authenticate:** Enter your ID number to verify your status.
- 4. Enter Details:** Fill in your personal information, including your full name and contact details.
- 5. Select Location:** Choose your preferred province, city, and specific Home Affairs branch.
- 6. Schedule:** Select an available date and time slot that suits you.
- 7. Confirm:** Review and confirm your booking. You will receive a notification, which you must present at the branch on the day of your appointment.

Other Available Options:

- **eHomeAffairs:** This online platform is dedicated to Smart ID and passport applications. It also allows you to book appointments at selected partner bank branches. You must first register an account at ehome.dha.gov.za.
- **Walk-in Service:** While booking in advance is highly recommended to avoid long queues, you may still visit Home Affairs offices as a walk-in client for ID and passport services.

Regards
Vuk'uzenzele

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Transnet has successfully cleared major backlogs at **Durban Port**

improving the flow of imports and exports.



How to access new financial services through Postbank



Over **1.4 million** people have already switched.

If you are still on the SASSA Gold Card, prepare to replace it this April and join **1.4 million people** already on the **Postbank Black Card**.

Terms and Conditions Apply

Postbank
Your Bank

More Matshediso

As South Africa marks Freedom Month, a time to reflect on the hard-won liberties and democratic progress of the nation, a significant milestone in economic empowerment has been reached. Postbank has officially registered as a licensed Financial Services Provider (FSP) with the Financial Sector Conduct Authority. This transition is more than just a regulatory update; it represents a deepening of the democratic promise by bringing essential financial tools to those previously excluded from the formal economy.

Postbank Chief Commercial Officer, Thamsanqa Cele, recently outlined to *Vuk'uzenzele* what this new status means for South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grant beneficiaries and the public on how the bank is simplifying financial security for the unbanked.

Opening an account is simple

One of the primary barriers to financial inclusion has often been the per-

ceived complexity of "banking". Cele is quick to dispel these concerns.

To open an individual account with Postbank, the requirements remain straightforward and compliant with the Financial Intelligence Centre Act (FICA). Prospective customers only need:

- **A valid Identity Document.**
- **Proof of residence.**
- **Completed account opening forms.**

For community-based financial structures such as stokvels and savings clubs, the process is equally accessible. Postbank requires the constitution of the savings group alongside the FICA documents of the account signatories typically the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.

"The process is smooth, and the account is active as soon as the required documentation is received," Cele explains.

He also noted that the bank is moving toward a digital-first future: "As part of our strategy, Postbank will soon introduce digital ways for enabling customers to open accounts on their mobile devices in the short run."

More financial products

The new FSP licence allows Postbank to evolve beyond traditional deposits. The bank is now legally authorised to offer a broader suite of financial products, including:

1. **Long-term insurance products**
2. **Long-term deposits.**
3. **Short-term deposits and financial advisory services.**

This expansion ensures that customers can manage their entire financial lifecycle—from daily transactions to long-term legacy planning under one roof.

Currently, millions of South Africans already entrust Postbank with a combined total of more than R10 billion in savings.

"This figure reflects something profound: real people, in real communities, making a deliberate choice to trust Postbank with their financial futures. We take that responsibility seriously," said Cele.

Why move from cash to banking?

For those who have managed their finances in cash for a lifetime, the

transition to a formal bank account can feel unnecessary or even overwhelming. However, Cele highlights three critical reasons why banking is a vital step toward personal financial freedom:

1. **Enhanced security**
Cash kept at home is vulnerable to theft, fire, or accidental loss. In contrast, money held in a regulated bank account is protected under South African law. Even in the unlikely event of institutional issues, your deposits are shielded by national regulations.
2. **Control and visibility**
A bank account provides a clear, permanent record of every transaction. This transparency makes budgeting far more effective, as it allows you to see exactly where your money goes. Unlike cash, which can "disappear" through small, untracked spends, an account gives you the data needed to plan for the future.
3. **Effective saving habits**
Physical cash is often "waiting to be spent." By

placing money in a savings account, you create a healthy psychological and physical separation between your daily spending and your future goals. This simple act is the foundation of long-term wealth building.

You contribute to your community's development

Informal cash economies limit the long-term growth of communities. When people and businesses use formal banking, local

economies strengthen. Money reaches businesses faster, employment grows, and communities become more resilient.

Choosing to bank is not just a personal decision – it is a contribution to your community.

"At Postbank, we believe every South African deserves access to safe, dignified, and affordable financial services. Opening a Postbank account is free, straightforward, and it may be the most important financial step you take this year," concluded Cele. ☺

Did you know?

Postbank is targeting beneficiaries who are still using SASSA gold cards to switch to Postbank Black cards.

For enquiries, contact Postbank call centre on **0800 53 54 55**. In addition, SASSA gold card beneficiaries can dial: ***120*355#** on their mobile phones to locate any of the **240 points** of presence within retailers such as Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Boxer and Spar nationwide.

The rise of Ambesha Africa thanks to the NYDA

Jeanette Pamla

When Trudy Windy Mkansi moved from Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga, to start her furniture business a decade ago, she had no idea it would evolve into one of Gauteng's most recognisable lifestyle brands.

Today, her company, Ambesha Africa, exports bespoke pieces to neighbouring countries and is expanding into new provinces. The venture's success was catalysed by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

"I was on social media and saw a lady recommending this place," Mkansi recalls. "At first, I didn't believe the government could help someone like me. I thought you needed to 'know someone'."

Determined to test this theory, Mkansi applied at the NYDA branch in Braamfontein.

Instead, she proved herself wrong.

Mkansi visited the NYDA branch in Braamfontein and submitted all her documents in full, something she



Trudy Windy Mkansi (in black) pictured with her team at Ambesha Africa.

For more information about Ambesha Africa visit 061 588 0688 email Info@ambesha.co.za or visit www.ambeshaafrica.co.za Visit the NYDA website to check funding options: www.nyda.gov.za

said many young people overlook.

"I had my story, my vision, and every required document ready. Two months later, I was approved," she says. "It proved that as long as your paperwork is complete, you have a chance."

An initial R50,000 grant funded basic tools and materials, while a subsequent R114,000 provided the industrial machinery necessary to scale.

This equipment dramatically boosted production capacity, enabling the business to transition from a modest six-metre container to a 500 m² commercial space in Riversands.

The craft is deeply personal for Mkansi, who inherited the skill from her grandmother. "Handcrafting is our identity. Every piece we create carries our story," she explains.

Despite its current success, Ambesha Africa initially struggled to gain the trust of corporate clients. "We didn't have references, so we had to prove ourselves through quality and customer reviews," Mkansi remembers.

The company now employs 20 people, including four interns with plans to recruit more staff in administration and production. Over the next five years,



Mkansi intends to open multiple showrooms, with a particular focus on the Western Cape.

Her message to young South Africans is simple: "Ask for help. Don't be dis-

couraged by rejection. Know your story, prepare your documents, and keep going. If a girl from a rural village like me can do it, anyone can." 🌟

Local poultry project takes flight with NDA support



Lydia Malatjie (Chairperson) and Legau Dudu (Deputy Chairperson) are among the women leading the Dinalafase Primary Agricultural Cooperative in Maruleng Village—a poultry and vegetable project founded by seven women to tackle unemployment and uplift their community.

Jeanette Pamla

The opening of the National Development Agency (NDA) Sekhukhune satellite office has transformed support for rural groups who previously faced a long journey to Polokwane for assistance.

According to Gillian Mahange, NDA Limpopo Provincial Manager, the local presence has expedited government aid for cooperatives, Early Childhood Development

(ECD) centres, and community organisations. "Having an office in the district removes the barrier of long-distance travel," Mahange explains. "We are now able to reach more villages directly."

Among those benefiting is the Dinalafase Primary Agricultural Cooperative Limited, a women-led poultry and vegetable project in Maruleng Village.

Founded by seven women in response to high local unemployment, the group launched their venture after

local men encouraged them to pursue an initiative to improve their livelihoods.

Each woman contributed R50 from their children's social grants, and the men also donated R50 each.

With these small amounts, the cooperative officially started operating in 2013 with just 60 layer chickens.

The Sekhukhune office subsequently approved R170,325 in funding, enabling the cooperative to scale significantly. This investment financed 600 layer chickens, feed, medi-

cation, and essential equipment, including a generator. The generator proved vital after the cooperative's transformer was stolen, threatening their water supply.

Prior to this, water scarcity was a major bottleneck, with the women relying on expensive delivered water that stifled production. "With the NDA's help, we can now work faster and run the project properly," said cooperative member Lydia Malatjie.

Today, Dinalafase supplies eggs, broilers, and vegetables to Maruleng, local spaza shops, and schools.

Demand is currently outpacing supply, prompting plans to expand their land from one hectare to two. They also hope to apply for support for crop protection netting to reduce damage from heavy rains.

Malatjie encourages other women to start their own income-generating projects: "If you love the work and do it with a happy heart, you will succeed." 🌟

Faith-based support centre tackles poverty in Winterveld



The Lehaheng La Adullame Community Faith-Based Support Centre, in partnership with Tiger Brands, is encouraging communities to grow their own food as a means of tackling poverty.

More Matshediso

In the semi-rural community of Winterveld, Tshwane, the Lehaheng La Adullame Community Faith-Based Support Centre is spearheading the fight against poverty, food insecurity, and social instability.

Founded in 2019 by Community Development Practitioner Tshepang Mokoena, the Centre emerged from a direct need

to address social challenges facing local residents, including chronic unemployment and substance abuse.

"My objective has always been to transition our community from a reliance on donations toward sustainable self-sufficiency, through food production and skills development," Mokoena explains.

For the Centre, true food security extends beyond the provision of emergency

food parcels; it is about equipping families with the tools to produce their own nutritious food sustainably.

"True development happens when communities are empowered to provide for themselves," said Mokoena.

Despite significant financial constraints, the Centre has already supported over 120 vulnerable individuals.

While the lack of formal

funding has delayed the goal of creating permanent jobs, Mokoena is supported by a dedicated team of six volunteers striving to improve local circumstances. Beneficiaries are selected based on their level of need, with priority given to those facing the most severe social challenges.

The impact of this self-funded initiative has been significantly strengthened by Tiger Brands through its nutrition support programme. At the end of 2025, the company collaborated with the Centre to establish a communal food

garden that now helps with daily nutritional requirements of local residents.

Further practical support was provided through the donation of gas burners and bottles, effectively reducing the Centre's reliance on open-fire cooking.

This partnership has had a ripple effect across the region. More than 50 families in Winterveld have established home-based vegetable gardens after receiving 'Garden-in-a-Bucket' (GinB) kits.

These kits, distributed alongside food hampers at the Centre, were provided by Tiger Brands' implemen-

tation partner, Food & Trees for Africa (FTFA).

By fostering these home-based initiatives, the Centre is not only addressing immediate hunger but a culture of community members growing their own food within Winterveld.

"Our partnership with Tiger Brands has been a major milestone for our organisation because it helps us reach more vulnerable households. Through its support, we have increased our ability to address hunger and move towards a more sustainable community," he concluded. 🌱

For more information, contact Lehaheng La Adullame Community Faith-Based Support Centre on WhatsApp: 068 564 4873 or email: tshepang@lehahenglaadullame.co.za

Tiger Brands: visit www.tigerbrands.com

SRD grant helps entrepreneur revive her business

More Matshediso

For Phumeza Dolo of Gqeberha, the R350 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant, as it was and which has since increased to R370, was more than a survival subsidy; it was a strategic lifeline used to resuscitate her entrepreneurial dreams and reverse the hardships of unemployment.

Dolo is the founder of ISthebe Kitchenette (Pty) Ltd, a small-scale farming venture affectionately known to locals as *Isitya Sam*. The business specialises in growing healthy

food and natural herbs, including mint, fennel, sage, chamomile, and amaranth. Operating from her home, she has converted a room into a dedicated workshop for the drying, processing, and packaging of her specialist blends.

However, the success of *Isitya Sam* was born from the ashes of a previous venture.

Dolo's journey began in 2018 in Philippi, Western Cape. After receiving R150 from her mother for food, she boldly decided to invest the money into a business instead. She bought ingredients, pan-baked ten pies,

and sold them all within ten minutes.

This early spark led to an opportunity when she was awarded a scholarship for the Woolworths/Infinity Culinary Training Programme. Dolo excelled, graduating with distinctions and securing a job offer on her graduation day. Over the next four years, she honed her skills at several five-star hotels and restaurants.

In a daring move just one week before the COVID-19 lockdown, Dolo resigned from her executive chef role to launch a soup kitchen supported by Woolworths

and FoodForward SA.

Sadly, the impact of the pandemic forced the business to close in 2022. "Ultimately, I lost everything my bakery, the soup kitchen, and my home," she recalls.

Forced to return to her hometown of Gqeberha, Dolo used her SRD grant to pivot into agro-processing.

Her business now employs four people and represents a full-circle return to her culinary roots.

By processing her own crops, she adds significant value to her produce, ensuring that her current

Phumeza Dolo re-launched ISthebe Kitchenette (Pty) Ltd using the R350 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant.



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SEDFA can be reached at www.sedfa.org.za

phase of business is built on a more sustainable and resilient foundation.

She also won second place and R30 000 at the Nelson Mandela University Standard Bank SME Exhibition and R10 000 for Best Young Producer at the

Department of Agriculture Show.

The Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA) has provided her business with marketing materials and branding. 🌱

Man With No Surname to capture Joburg Theatre audiences

Sihle Manda

Audiences at the Joburg Theatre can expect a deeply reflective theatrical experience as *Man With No Surname* takes to the stage, offering a powerful meditation on identity, memory and the moral complexities of contemporary South Africa.

Running from 27 March to 12 April 2026 at the Lesedi Theatre, the production combines evocative storytelling, music and compelling performances to explore belonging, responsibility and the fragile nature of the human spirit.

The Lesedi Theatre is located within the main Joburg Theatre Complex.

The production is described as “a gripping and emotionally layered theatrical work that delves into



the complexities of identity, morality and the enduring echoes of South Africa's political struggle.” Through its blend of artistic disciplines, the play invites the audience into a journey regarding the fragile nature of the human spirit.

At the centre of the story is Thabo, a respected doctor and former freedom fighter who once stood

firmly in the struggle for justice. Years later, his life is disrupted when the woman he loves becomes the victim of a sexual predator.

In confronting this tragedy, Thabo is forced to reckon with the ideals he once fought for, the choices he has made and the man he has become.

Opposite him is Moruti,

For more information about the play and ticket purchases visit www.joburgtheatre.com

a writer returning home after years of self-imposed exile in the United States. His journey is portrayed as a spiritual and emotional

homecoming, where he reconnects with memory and unresolved tensions while questioning his own identity and masculinity.

The conversations between the two men form the emotional backbone of the play, revealing how personal stories are inseparable from the broader national narrative.

The production is written by the renowned storyteller Mfundu Vundla, widely recognised for shaping South Africa's cultural landscape, and is directed by James Ngcobo.

The play features performances by Bonko Khoza and Pakamisa Zwedala, whose acting brings significant weight to the narrative.

Positioned as more than entertainment, *Man With No Surname* serves as a reflection on the evolving moral landscape of South Africa.

Ticket prices range from R150 - R300 p.p. 📍



More Matshediso

What began as a hobby making jewellery gradually evolved into a deeper calling for Mulayo Serakoana, who is using her talent to tell African stories and preserve South African heritage through beadwork.

Serakoana is the founder and chief creative officer of SereMhani Creations – a beaded art and home décor

brand rooted in African storytelling, cultural preservation and contemporary design.

The Pretoria-based business specialises in handcrafted pieces, including beaded coasters, placemats, jewellery and fine art.

“Each piece is intentionally designed to bridge tradition and modern living, transforming everyday objects into expressions of identity and heritage. At its

Mulayo Serakoana, owner of SereMhani Creations, believes beadwork is more than a fashion statement and can also be incorporated into art.



For more information
Email SereMhani Creations: seremhani@gmail.com
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074 478 6970

heart, SereMhani Creations is about elevating beadwork from craft to collectible art,” explained Serakoana.

Her craft tells stories of strength, beauty, resilience and the connection of African women. “Over time, I realised I wanted to do more

than create beautiful pieces; I wanted to tell stories and preserve heritage through my work,” she said.

In 2015, *Vuk'uzenzele* profiled Serakoana's work when the business was in its infancy. Back then, it focused solely on making

jewellery. Now that the business has expanded to include fine artworks, she said the shift was a natural progression of her artistic growth and purpose.

Serakoana further notes that beadwork is often undervalued, as many presume it is reserved only for traditional occasions or dismissed as a ‘cheap’ craft. For her, working with beads is an act of both preservation and redefinition.

SEDFA Limpopo Jewellery Incubator

While her business was still in its early stages, a friend

introduced her to the SEDFA Limpopo Jewellery Incubator, particularly as the business had originally been established in Limpopo.

She subsequently joined the programme, which equipped her with technical training in jewellery design and metalwork, as well as essential business development skills.

This training included product development, quality standards, pricing and understanding market requirements.

In addition, the programme provided mentorship and industry exposure, creating a structured environment that helped Serakoana transition from being self-taught to operating a more professional and sustainable business.

As a Proudly South African member, SereMhani Creations celebrates Freedom Month by honouring our national heritage through artistic excellence and empowering local craftsmanship. 📍