



## Farewell Mpho Pauline Ndebele



SEPTEMBER 1977- MAY 2018

### STATEMENT ON THE PASSING AWAY OF THE ADA DIRECTOR FOR PROGRAMMES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of our Director of Programmes and International Relations, Ms. Mpho Pauline Ndebele.

**Mpho passed away on Wednesday, 17th May 2018.**

The Chief Executive Officer of ADA Mr Kudakwashe Dube states that:

'Mpho was in the forefront of campaigning for a Protocol to the African Charter for Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Protocol). She led campaigns that resulted in the adoption of the Protocol by the African Union Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 29 January 2018'.

At the time of Mpho's death, through her efforts and those of her team at ADA, the disability movement in Africa, African Union and its organs and support from our partners CBM/ European Union, Mpho worked on a programme entitled Alliance for Rights – Africa towards Disability Inclusion (ARADI). She cooperated and work with African institutions such as the African Union Commission (AUC) based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the Pan African Parliament (PAP) based in Midrand, South Africa; the African Court based in Arusha Tanzania, and African Commission for Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) based in

Banjul, The Gambia.

She also worked with several African governments, Pan Africa Disability Federations (PADFs), Youth Civil Society Organisations, ADA's Network of Parliamentarians and a similar network of Journalists on campaigns for the adoption of the Protocol and the development of a Model Disability Law (MDL) to cover and protect the Human Rights of all persons with disability on the continent.

She will be sadly missed by colleagues at the ADA Headquarters, our partners, political structures as well as persons with diverse disabilities with whom she worked.

ADA would like to thank you for all for the messages of condolences, support and prayers at this difficult time.

Mpho was laid to rest on Saturday, 26th May 2018 near her parents' home in Brits, Pretoria, South Africa.

***May Your Soul Rest in Peace. Robala Ka Kgotso Mme.  
You will be sadly missed.***

Africa Disability Alliance (ADA)



# Biography: Mpho Pauline Ndebele

An activist at heart, Mpho Ndebele was the Director of Programme and International Relations at the African Disability Alliance, a disability-led technical agency deriving its mandate from the human rights movement of organisations of persons with disabilities that constitute its membership, at the time of her untimely passing.

This was after working as a Director of Community Upliftment, Programmes and Projects for the National Department of Energy (2013-2017). Her role at the Department was to manage the identification, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of and on programmes/projects focused on the Upliftment and empowerment of disadvantage/vulnerable groups (women, youth, people with disabilities and children) in the Energy sector.

She was previously the Deputy Director, Disability Management in the Department of Trade and Industry (2008-2013). Her main role then was to ensure a successful integration of persons with disabilities in the dti and to facilitate proper implementation and monitoring of the dti's disability mainstreaming programme as advanced by the Codes of Good Practice on disability promulgated by the Department of Labour.

Prior to this appointment she was the Assistant Director Special programmes and Transformation Services Section for the Department of Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga(2003-2008). Here she was responsible for the co-ordination and management of the following Programmes, Transformation, Disability, Gender, Employee Assistance Programme, Youth and Children.

Mpho also worked as a Sign Language Interpreter for the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in the Office of the Premier (1999-2003). As a child of Deaf Parents (CODA) she is a constant user of SASL and her exposure to South African Sign Language is from her parents and Deaf Community.

Mpho trained as a Sign Language Interpreter at the University of the Free State and also held a Post graduate Diploma in Disability Studies from University of Cape Town and Postgraduate Certificate in Executive Leadership (NQF 8) from Vaal University of Technology and did her mini thesis on "Employment Equity in Practice" a study of the dti's achievement of



Mpho (in red) with colleagues at the recent CBD Africa Conference in Lusaka

the minimum 2% target on employment of People with Disabilities. She also held a Programme and Project Management Certificate from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Furthermore, she was part of the nine authors of RainFire: Women in leadership in South Africa book that was published by Desmond Tutu Peace Trust in Cape Town, on 30 September 2005, with her short story on 'Talking Hands' and her poem 'Grandmother'.

Over the years she participated in a number of forums nationally and internationally.

- The United Nations General Assembly Beijing +5 (Women with Disabilities Forum) in 2000 in New York, USA
- Batho Pele Learning Network in Mmabatho, North West Province 2005
- Study tour on Labour organizations in Dubai and India – New Delhi – May 2005
- United Nations Global Forum on Re-inventing Government – Seoul, South Korea – June 2005
- Regional Industrial Relations Association Conference in Mauritius –December 2005
- International Industrial Relations Association Congress in Lima Peru, 01 – 15 September 2006
- Study Tour on Best practices in Brazil, Sao Paulo, 16 – 30 September 2006
- National University of Ireland – Summer School on International Law of Persons with Disabilities, 2012
- Member of the dti Disability Forum, Gender Forum and Transformation Committee representing the dti in Disability Machinery of Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities

May her soul rest in peace.

“  
The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.  
”  
HELEN KELLER  
ACTIVIST AND AUTHOR



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# TESTIMONIALS

Mpho Ndebele: The disability sector will be poorer, we lost a champion that was not hesitant to speak out and stand out for the cause of all disabilities even for us parents and our children. We will miss that smile that lighten and brighten the room and that strong walk when you entered the room. We thank God, your parents for blessing us with such a beautiful human being. You will forever be in our hearts.....

FROM US AS PARENTS: DISABLED CHILDREN’S ACTION GROUP (DICAG).

“I met Mpho once in a surprise party, I got an opportunity to actually speak to her and I was like WOW what a free soul, loving and full of life this lady is. I thank God we met; she left a mark in my life.”

- Nonhlanhla Nyovane

“Mpho was excited and passionate as usual about issues of disability raising the importance of looking at the African protocol they have just developed at ADA.”

- Lieketseng Ned

“My name is Eddie Tsubella. I’m currently working for DeafNET as Sign Language and Communication Officer I’m a Coda I started interpreting In the early 2000 Sign language interpreting was not my field- I used to interpret for my friends who are Deaf in our community. I was not exposed to professional interpretation Some of the seasoned interpreters would gossip about my lack of experience Mpho encouraged me to focus on my career as an interpreter and to never mind naysayers. She was always giving good advice to African children. I gained a lot from her.”

## World Haemophilia Day : 17 April

### Replacement therapy at young age can avert disability among patients



By Dr Naresh Gupta

Once considered as a ‘royal’ disease because of its association with the family of Queen Victoria, haemophilia is a blood disorder which mostly affects men. The clotting factors are either very low or completely absent in people with haemophilia (PwH). People with severe haemophilia can bleed for days or weeks from even minor injuries or can even bleed spontaneously. People in absence of adequate treatment often live with severe disabilities.

#### What is haemophilia?

In medical terms, haemophilia is a hereditary disorder of blood coagulation due to decreased levels or lack of clotting factors which results in profuse bleeding into joints, muscles or internal organs, either spontaneously or as a result of accidental or surgical trauma. The number of bleeding episodes may vary depending on the severity of the condition which is based on the level of residual clotting factors present in blood. By regular replacement therapy with clotting factors, the number of bleeding episodes can be reduced to the maximum possible extent.

#### Outcome of haemophilia

The lack of clotting factors causes profuse bleeding into joints, muscles or internal organs from injuries, sometimes even spontaneously. Because of repetitive bleeding in the joints, people with haemophilia tend to become progressively disabled. Our research in five developing countries namely India, South Africa, Algeria, Morocco and Oman revealed over 70% musculoskeletal disabilities in people with haemophilia.

With about 100,000 estimated patients, India has large burden of PwH. The progressive nature of the disabilities compels PwH in India to discontinue their education and remain unemployed. This is in stark contrast to other countries where the disability rates are much lower and PwH even participate in contact and adventure sports.

#### Caring for haemophilia

India has such high proportion of haemophilia-caused disability because most PwH are treated through on-demand therapy which means giving factors if and when there is a bleed. This on-demand therapy is like extinguishing a fire after the house has almost burned down.

The alternative is called ‘replacement therapy’ or ‘prophylaxis’ therapy, which involves giving clotting factors regularly to prevent anticipated bleeding. If started at a young age, it can avert and/or halt the progression of joint disease and hence prevent disability among PwH.

A few centres across India have instituted pilot prophylaxis programmes in recent times with limited, but very encouraging results. These centres prove that such programmes can be run effectively even in India. The next steps is to take prophylaxis to PwH in India.

#### The right way to treat haemophilia

Treatment options like third generation recombinant clotting factors will further this cause as the newer agents are stable at room temperature and can be dispensed to patients at their convenience at a centre near their home. This ‘home therapy’ will allow better compliance to regular therapy as well as decreasing the total consumption of clotting factors.

#### Time for action on haemophilia

On a larger societal level, it is encouraging to note that haemophilia is now listed in ‘The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016’. The provisions of the Act make it incumbent upon “the appropriate governments to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others.” This includes educational, financial and societal support as required such as accessibility to public buildings.

(The author is director-professor and treating doctor - Department of Medicine - at Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, New Delhi)



# The need-to-know about ADHD medication abuse

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) stimulants are prescribed by medical professionals to improve concentration, memory and motivation to complete tasks. Without treatment, ADHD symptoms (inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity) can have an adverse impact on one's social interactions and functioning in the school and work environment.

When taken as prescribed, ADHD stimulants are safe and effective. With an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan, individuals with ADHD can face and overcome the challenges of modern life and live fulfilling lives. However, the misuse of stimulants by ADHD and non-ADHD children and adults has increased drastically over recent years. This is due to misconceptions and a lack of knowledge regarding the associated risks and potentially dangerous consequences.

ADHD stimulants are commonly believed to give short bursts of enhanced concentration and academic or work performance. Reports reveal the occasional recreational use of stimulants by school children but most who misuse ADHD medication rely on it in high-pressure situations such as exams and working on big projects to improve multitasking, memory and performance. But to maintain this unsustainable level of efficiency, increased dosages and rates of use are often required. It is crucial to understand the dangers of stimulant abuse and the impact thereof on the brain.

## The effects and risks of ADHD stimulant abuse

Research shows that ADHD is caused in part by chemical imbalances in the brain and structural differences in grey matter – a core component of the central nervous system. Grey matter is responsible for memory, executive functions, impulse control, emotions and speech. Likewise, dopamine and norepinephrine levels have an impact on concentration, memory, problem solving, decision making, motivation, impulse control, emotions and social behaviour.

Prescription stimulants provide mental stimulation to harmonise chemical imbalances. It enables individuals to focus on the task at hand with enhanced concentration and energy. However, the abuse thereof can result in a lack of concentration, sleep deprivation, depression, social anxiety, an inability to communicate effectively, a fast and irregular heart rate, high body temperature, psychosis, paranoia and hallucinations.

## Understanding the prescribed uses of ADHD medication

Modern-day school and workplace pressures are mounting. To keep up with life at breakneck speed, children and adults with or without ADHD are becoming overly reliant on coping mechanisms of all sorts, including ADHD stimulants. Explaining to a loved one with ADHD the importance of using medication as prescribed will go a long way in encouraging the responsible use of all sorts of stimulants and substances.

## Here's how you can encourage a healthy understanding and appropriate use of ADHD medication.

- No evaluation. No meds.
- A comprehensive evaluation and diagnosis by a licensed medical professional is essential before considering any form of ADHD medication. Reports show that some individuals exaggerate their symptoms to get a larger dosage to misuse or shared with non-ADHD individuals. Having an in-depth knowledge of ADHD symptoms and how it typically presents in a friend or family member will help you draw that fine line and accurately report the symptoms.
- Know what the fuss is about
- Learn all you can about the effects of ADHD stimulants on your children and adults as well as the effects and potential reasons for misuse. Equip loved ones with life management skills to rely on instead of medication when balancing academics, work and social activities. With the right practical resources, individuals with ADHD can improve their focus and organisation skills.
- Explain the risks of abuse
- Children and adults with undiagnosed ADHD often struggle with social interactions and may be more susceptible to peer pressure. The desire to fit in can be a strong incentive to misuse or share medication. Explain the impact of ADHD on the brain and the risks of misusing or sharing prescribed medication with non-ADHD individuals.
- Know the red flags of abuse
- Signs of treatment abuse can range from signs of anxiety, manic behaviour and dilated pupils to sleep deprivation and difficulty concentrating. If you suspect a loved one may be misusing, sharing or abusing stimulant medication, share your concerns with a medical professional.

Living with ADHD can be challenging. There is no room for the additional dangers of stimulant abuse. The importance of an accurate diagnosis and treatment usage can't be overstated. If you suspect that an adult loved one has ADHD, suggest this self-assessment to see if their symptoms are consistent with ADHD. For the assessment of children, consult a licensed medical professional.

With a holistic treatment plan, therapy and life management skills, children and adults with ADHD can manage everyday challenges and live successful lives.

Article submitted: Janssen Pharmaceutica



# Working with persons with schizophrenia and their families

## National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities in partnership with YANA (You are Not Alone)

SCHIZOPHRENIA can be a deeply distressing condition, both for persons with schizophrenia and for their families and other loved-ones.

However, an entity in Pretoria is doing great work with persons with schizophrenia, working with them and their families to understand the condition and develop coping mechanisms to deal with it. More than this, the YANA (You Are Not Alone) facility accommodates 57 persons with schizophrenia and provides psycho-social rehabilitation services for them.

YANA is involved again this year in the In Spite Of production at the Pierneef Theatre in Pretoria where persons who are working to overcome their disabilities take to the stage to perform and entertain an always packed auditorium. It's a warmly inspiring production that puts on show the courage needed to rise beyond life's challenges to live your best and most successful life.

Groups besides YANA traditionally participate in In Spite Of. Previously, they have included the Transoranje-school for children with hearing disabilities; Unica School for children with autism; Tiqwa School for children with learning disabilities; Pretoria school for learners with cerebral palsy, the Magalies School and the Stroke Support group. Items include singing, rap, dance, stand-up comedy, choir performances and motivational speeches.

In Spite Of is made possible by Cordis Trust, and has been since its inception in 2003. The Cordis (Greek for 'from the heart') Trust was founded in 2000.

YANA is one of the organisations that will benefit this year from Casual Day, an initiative of the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities. All proceeds of Casual Day stickers sold by the YANA community will be reinvested back into the organisation to enable it to continue its vital work.

At YANA persons with schizophrenia partake in a daily psycho-social programme that helps them grow in confidence and manage their condition. YANA's is a multi-professional programme that includes therapies and activities such as occupational therapy, sport, social functions and outings, food preparation, music, arts and crafts, and outreach to disadvantaged people and communities.

An important part of the organisation's task is also to support the family and friends of persons with schizophrenia. The YANA support group meets monthly. Besides being a great support system for its members, the support group works with YANA to address and eradicate the stigma attached to the illness, challenge misconceptions and educate everybody (especially those not affected by Schizophrenia) about the illness.

Story Submitted

For more information on YANA please contact Estelle at 012 330 1797, [estelle@yana1.co.za](mailto:estelle@yana1.co.za).

For more information on In Spite Of, contact Jopie at the Pierneef Theatre at 012 329 0709, [info@pierneefteater.co.za](mailto:info@pierneefteater.co.za)

**Karen Key** on Radio

The **DISABILITY** REPORT

...tune in every first Tuesday of the month @ 21h.05





# Lofob activist obtains PhD

Growing up in Grassy Park and being an activist for the League of Friends of the Blind (Lofob), Dr Armand Bam is well suited to his role as the current executive director of the organisation.

Bam recently obtained his PhD from the University of Cape Town.

From a young age he constantly questioned his role in bettering the community in his capacity as a young and able-bodied person.

Bam started his tertiary education at Stellenbosch University where he pursued his studies in the field of biokinetics.

He later went on to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business. Although he started his career as a biokineticist, where he managed corporate wellness programmes, he instead found his way back into the NGO sector, driven by his passion to advance the lives of those who are blind and visually impaired within his community. He served Lofob in various capacities, starting out as the wellness sport and recreational officer, a position he held on a voluntary basis for almost three years. Between 2010 and 2013 he held the position of manager of the Wellness and Independence Development Services programme.

At the end of 2013, Bam was appointed Lofob's executive director, a position he has been holding for almost five years. Prior to assuming this position, Bam completed his Master's Degree in Disability Studies at UCT.

He continued to excel academically and in his first year at the helm of Lofob took on the challenge of furthering his studies at UCT's Graduate School of Business, culminating in the awarding of the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Business Studies.

His thesis, titled "Embodying virtue in employment: exploring the employment experiences of people with disabilities", will further assist in developing not only Lofob's prospects of improving the employment opportunities of blind people, but also the broader disability community.

Bam is extremely passionate about the future of education for people with disabilities and has employed a number of strategies to ensure access to mainstream education opportunities for blind and visually impaired children, youth and adults. The field of education and employment of persons with disabilities has been his area of focus for the past five years.

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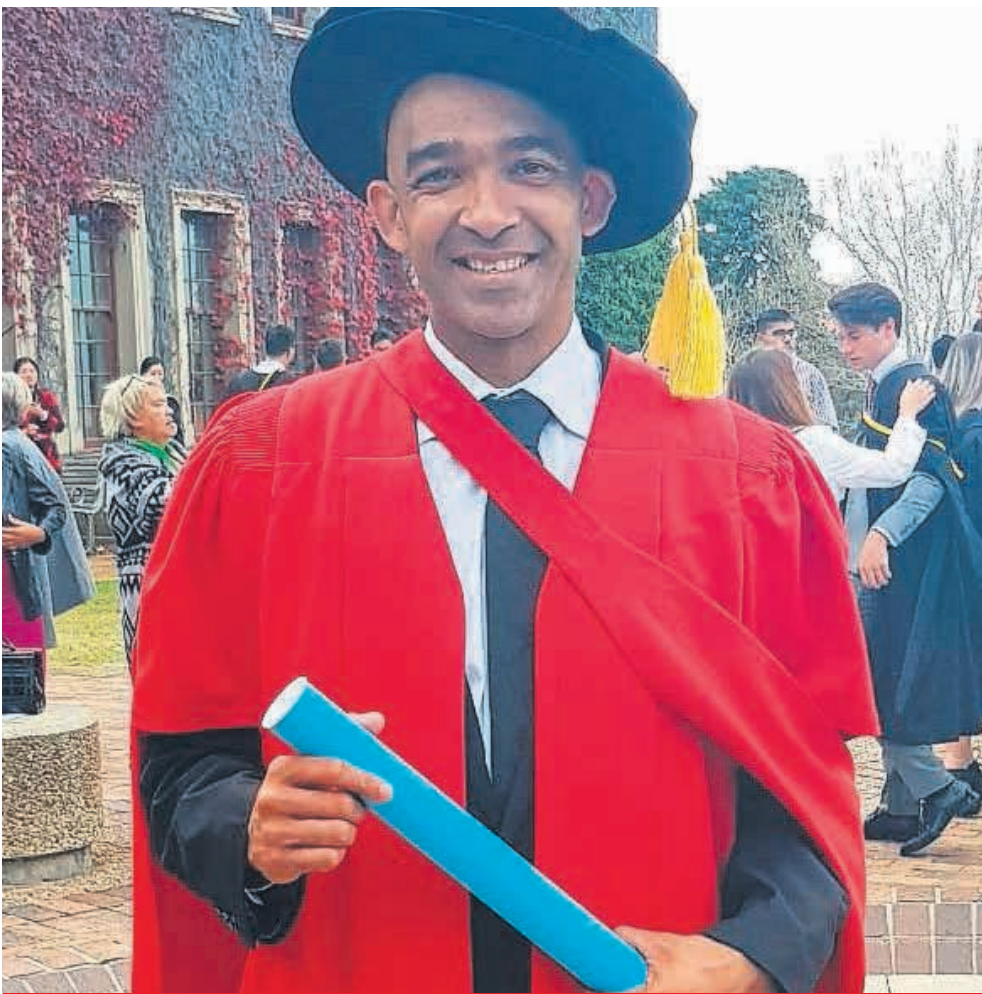
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"Under his excellent leadership, the organisation this year started a new chapter and received status as a training institution accredited with the Education Training and Development Practices (ETDP) Seta. Lofob is in the process of rolling out a National Diploma in Orientation and Mobility Practices (SAQA NQF Level 5). This will be followed by a range of exciting short courses to enhance the training and development of blind and visually impaired people," says Lofob spokesperson, Heidi Volkwyn.

Bam says that for decades, access to orientation and mobility training and services has been constricted and controlled.

"It was controlled by those who benefited from the unevenness of our country's historical past. According to our understanding there are just over 50 qualified orientation and mobility



Dr Bam

instructors nationally. There are approximately 1.4 million blind and visually impaired people in South Africa. We are proud to say that the time of restricted services has come to an end," says Bam.

He adds that Lofob has, throughout its existence, sought to pioneer new avenues to ensure their clients are able to live improved lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

"We do not wait for things to change – we make the change. I am most proud of the fact that we are able to offer people an opportunity to gain a qualification within their disability," says Bam.

Lofob celebrates 85 years of service this year and prides itself on the many achievements over the years, notably the role played in the establishment of early childhood development services in the country and the development of blind women's empowerment programmes.

"Furthermore, Lofob was a voice for the disadvantaged community, which put the organisation at the forefront of the struggle to eradicate racism and correct the segregated structure long before apartheid was abolished. Lofob received international recognition for the work done and had a voice at the United Nations and was instrumental in contributing to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," concludes Volkwyn.

News24



Ntombizodwa Chiya graduates from UKZN by Abhi Indrarajan.

# Blind student proves nothing is impossible as she graduates from UKZN

Durban - A blind student has proven that not even disability can stop one from succeeding in life.

Ntombizodwa Chiya graduated with an Honours in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on Tuesday.

"Most people who are blind, don't consider themselves on the same level as able-bodied people. This thinking must stop. We are capable of so much, our loss of sight should not stop us from achieving our dreams. Blind people should educate themselves, and not see themselves as burdens," said Chiya.

Chiya was born blind like her father, aunts and her partially sighted nephew, the university said in a statement.

"Although Chiya never had sight, it did not deter her from studying for her degree. She says she owes much of her success to hard work, perseverance, strong will and determination.

She lost both her parents at a young age but was excited that her sister was able to see her graduate with her postgraduate degree.

"Her research looks at language discrimination in KwaZulu-Natal schools. She found that pupils who came from homes where both English and the mother-tongue language was spoken, tend to mix up their languages resulting in poor academic performance," the statement read.

In her research, Chiya suggests that mother-tongue languages such as isiZulu be selected as a medium of instruction and teaching in KwaZulu-Natal schools to enable pupils to perform well.

Chiya encountered many challenges while she was doing her research and had to rely mainly on electronic means for research purposes, such as e-books.

"She relied on her own software application on her computer which read out parts of journal articles and information for her to hear and type out. She touch-typed her entire thesis but used editing services to make corrections to grammar, punctuation and formatting.

"Chiya hopes to one day use the knowledge she gained from her research and personal experiences, to establish an NGO (non-governmental organisation) that advocates for blind people and helps raise awareness around disability issues and the impact it has on the psyche of disabled people," the university said.

Chiya encouraged other students with disabilities to follow their dreams.

"Strive for your best. Focus on yourself," said Chiya who is currently completing her Masters in Education.

SIBONGILE MASHABA  
IOL



# “Communication makes me fly high



Motivational speaking at Acornhoek in Mpumalanga.



Constance Ntuli



Constance with two FOFA friends, Carla van Nieuwenhuis and Lebogang Sehaku.

Just because I cannot speak does not mean I do not have anything to say. I am a person who uses a communication device to have my say after losing my voice when I fell sick at a young age.

At the age of 11 years, almost every child dreams of having fun and playing every day. Illness that has a life-long implication is just never part of the plot. For me, at the age of 11, my world took a stand still. It felt like my whole world ended. I lost my voice mysteriously.

All I know is that I bought chips from a school street vendor and ate them as I was on my way going home. As I got home, I told my mother that I had a sore throat. She took me to the doctor who performed the normal doctor’s check-up. Then he injected me and gave me medicine to take.

I took my medicine that evening as well and went to bed. Next morning I woke up, my voice was gone and I could not move my body like a person who just had a stroke. For that whole year, my parents took me to different places to get help to regain my speech, but even today, it is unknown what happened to my voice.

Eventually, someone recommended Kalafong Hospital in Attridgeville. That is where I met a person who made a change in my life. She told us there was hope and there was a way for me to finish school and make a life for myself.

At the same hospital, I met a speech-language therapist who assisted me to regain the use of my legs, left hand side and some sounds to try to get my speech back. When she saw that I was making progress enough to go to school, she enrolled me at a special school called Pretoria School for Children with Cerebral Palsy.

It did not take me long to adjust at the new school and I started doing Grade 5. I remained there until Grade 9, which is the highest grade offered by that school. After that, I was enrolled at another school for children with disabilities called New Hope School, where I completed my matric.

In both schools, I was involved in sports - I was even in the first team. I did catering theory as my career option - because I wanted to be a chef.

After completing my matric, I went to TNC College because I wanted to add a few subjects to my Matric certificate.

For almost a year, I was at home, doing nothing. One day I received t a call from the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication at the University of Pretoria, inviting me to their yearly FOFA empowerment week (fofa is a Sesotho word that means to fly).

During this week they invite young adults from all over the country who have significant communication disabilities to come to Pretoria, and teach speech impaired young adults to

effectively use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies to unlock their potential and to become more than what they think they are able to accomplish. The FOFA week is hosted every year for young adults with little or no functional speech and attend with their personal assistants.

This is where I was empowered to dream and to have goals and opportunities in life. I was introduced to high-tech communication devices that had voice outputs. Before the FOFA week I was only using a pen and paper to communicate or I would sit the entire day and wait for my nieces to come back from school, so that I could send them to the tuck shop.

I had a very low self-esteem and I was scared of other kids laughing at me when I went out on the streets – therefore I never attempted going to the shops on my own. It was very hard to face life before I had a communication device. Without it, I had to go with every decision that someone else made for me, and I could not really argue with anyone because at the end of the day I relied on that person to help me with getting through life.

Little did I know about the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative- a place that was there to help a person like me to use a communication device. I have learnt so much since I have my AAC device - I go everywhere on my own now and I rely on myself to make my own decisions.

Since January 2013, I have been employed at the Centre for AAC and so far, I have been doing a lot of advocacy work and raising awareness about AAC. I get invited as well to other places to give talks about my life as AAC user and the positive feedback I get is inspiring to do even more.

I have also become a mentor to people with and without disability. As part of my advocacy work, I have the opportunity to make the public aware of persons using AAC. Many people do not know that they are people with communication disabilities who are using different AAC techniques and strategies to communicate. I am one of them and it is not easy to spot a person who is using this method of communication, unless you approach a person with difficulties to communicate and then you start a conversation. When I take out my device and try to join an interaction, some people get offended and think that I am rude because they do not understand how the device works.

With my AAC device, I have had the opportunity to travel to many places including Zimbabwe, where I gave my very first international speech. I featured in Drum magazine as an inspirational story and then my story was even told on National television – all this highlighting that I was a conqueror who made it above all odds. In my life, I never dreamt that I would be able to achieve all of this, and fly so high! “

## Vodacom launches SMS Emergency Service for the Deaf

Vodacom has announced the launch of the SMS Emergency Service for Deaf, hearing and speech impaired customers in South Africa. The Vodacom 082 112 SMS Emergency Service is free and provided for Vodacom Prepaid, Contract and Top Up customers who are Deaf, hearing and speech impaired.

The new Vodacom 082 112 SMS Emergency Service now provides Deaf and hearing impaired customers with the option to request emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance services by sending an SMS to 082 112. In order to use this new service, Deaf and hearing impaired customers need only register their details by sending an SMS to 082 112.

Karen Smit, Vodacom Principal Specialist for Specific Needs, says that this latest initiative continues on Vodacom’s promise to provide peace of mind for Deaf and hearing impaired persons. “We are confident that this initiative will assist in promoting the ability to communicate for Deaf and hearing impaired customers through digital inclusion as they can now request help should they experience an emergency situation”. Vodacom is committed to adding value and we are excited to be able to offer this service to some of our more vulnerable customers.

Vodacom has been providing accessible products and services to customers with disabilities since 2004. The Specific Needs division has received a number of accolades including the Change Agents and Disability Champion amongst South Africans Award at the Human Rights Summit from the Disability Alliance (SADA). This award recognises Vodacom for being fully engaged and innovative in the process of accessible and affordable ICT in South Africa.

As part of the group’s CARE initiative and inclusion strategy, Vodacom has over the years developed a number of products and revamped its service models to cater for the disability and elderly segment of the market. Some of the targeted products and specialists services offered on the network include; a device repair priority process, easy to use devices with a big keypad and inclusive design smartphones. The device repair priority process enables disabled customers to have their devices repaired in a shorter period of time. The phones



with a big keypad cater for the elderly and allows them to easily see the keypad and words when typing. A large range of inclusive design electronic devices have built-in text-to-speech software that makes them accessible to visually impaired persons.

Another innovation is the HearZA app which was developed in partnership with the University of Pretoria. HearZA is a smartphone-based national hearing test app. The app helps with early detection of hearing problems which is essential in mitigating possible hearing losses. Vodacom further meets the needs of Deaf and hearing impaired customers by providing them with special contract phone deals that consist of data and SMS, without minutes.

Edited by Fundisiwe Maseko  
IT NEWS





# Social Worker with no arms crowdfunds for her independence

Tinyiko Gwambe (22) originally from Tshilamba, a small town in Limpopo was born with no arms.

From a young age she was determined not be held back by her disability and saw her challenges as an opportunity to push herself further and to live her life to the fullest as God intended.

“I had to learn early on not play the blame game and accept myself for being born this way. I had to realize that with being disabled, my obstacles would oftentimes be greater than those of able-bodied individuals. So I pushed myself to do more, I found gratitude in exceeding people’s expectations of me and through scripture found the confidence to chase my dreams” - says Gwambe

When her mom passed at the age of 15, Tiny was removed from her loving aunt, Josephine Makhado who had dedicated her life to raising her and was let down by the constant changing of caregivers sent to look after her and negligent

social workers who sent her to live with her father, who had taken her mother’s other sister as his partner shortly after her mom’s passing.

“The social workers kept changing and did not have the experience to take care of me. They did not understand my needs. For instance, they would get a caregiver who did not even know how to carry me. The painful truth is, sometimes I would go a day without eating. It was difficult dealing with the loss of my mom and dealing with complicated family dynamics. I felt that no one was looking out for me and I felt really alone” says Gwambe

In the two years Tinyiko spent without her aunt, she found her purpose and decided to become a social worker to help others in her situation and provide the care and stability she craved growing up.

“I noticed how disabled individuals in the rural areas were affected by poor education, leaving them to rely on social grants which barely cover daily expenses or seek unskilled

jobs. I also felt that my needs were overlooked growing up and that I got lost in the system and decided that I would be a part of the solution and empower others regardless of their disability” says Gwambe

In 2015, Tinyiko reunited with her aunt in Pretoria and began studying for her Social work degree (BSW) at the University of Pretoria, as a straight A student, she looks forward to tackling her Masters degree next year.

The only obstacle Tinyiko faces now is mobility: currently she relies on her sister or boyfriend to make it to lectures, when they are unable to assist, she relies on public transport which can be unpredictable and often problematic.

Hoping to raise enough funds for a specialized vehicle imported from the UK, a campaign has been created on donations based crowdfunding platform BackaBuddy to appeal to the public to support her in becoming more independent and to empower her when she is placed into her first job as a social worker.

“Being a social worker often requires a lot of traveling and field work. To do my job more effectively and even make it to lectures for the time being, I will need to rely myself. Once this obstacle is overcome, I will be able to utilize my skill set and serve my community to the best of my ability. I really hope the public will support my BackaBuddy campaign” says Gwambe

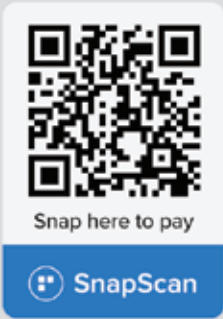
The campaign went live on 4 April 2018 and has thus far raised R7 309.40 with contributions from 22 donors towards the target of R350 000.

Support Tiny in raising funds for her specialized vehicle by donating here:

<https://www.backabuddy.co.za/raising-money-for-a-special-car>  
Also, you can kindly make use of this Snapscan code for donations:

About Backabuddy

- A proudly South African crowdfunding platform where individuals have the opportunity to raise funds for causes they feel passionate about.
- BackaBuddy has raised over R69.79 million for various charities, individuals and causes across South Africa.
- Website: <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BackabuddySA/>



# ‘Black, queer, disabled and brilliant’: Activist hopes to make history in space

Eddie Ndopu wasn’t expected to live past 5 years old. Now, the 27-year-old South African hopes to be the first person with a disability to travel to space.

Eddie Ndopu describes himself as “black, queer, disabled and brilliant.”

“I embody all of the identities that position me at a disadvantage in society,” he told NBC News. “But I am turning that on its head.”

By the end of the year, the 27-year-old South African hopes to become the first person with a disability to go to space.

When Ndopu was 2 years old, he was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), an incurable condition that causes progressive muscle degeneration and weakness. His prognosis was devastating: His family was initially told he would not live beyond the age of 5.

But a tenacious Ndopu said it wasn’t long before he was able to “outstrip and outlive all expectations,” both academically and medically. He attributes this in part due to his mother, whom he said never gave up on him or stopped fighting for him.

“I embody all of the identities that position me at a disadvantage in society ... but I am turning that on its head.”

Ndopu said when he was 7 years old and living in Namibia (he moved to neighbouring South Africa when he was 10), his mom came home to find him sitting in front of the television staring despondently at a blank screen. “She held my head in her hands and begged me to tell her what was wrong,” Ndopu recalled. “Finally, I told her all I wanted was to go to school.”

Despite inclusive education laws, growing up disabled in southern Africa meant a mainstream education was never guaranteed. In fact, a 2017 United Nations report revealed that even today, 90 percent of disabled children in developing countries never see the inside of a classroom.

But Ndopu said his mom is a “fearless warrior” who knocked on “every door” until finally he was accepted to a small elementary school on the outskirts of his hometown.

Ndopu has so far outlived his prognosis by more than two decades, and last year he became the first African with a disability to graduate from Britain’s prestigious University of Oxford. The disability-rights activist, who admits he has a weakness for lipstick and fashion, said he is “a living manifestation of possibility.”

Now Ndopu, whose disease has left him unable to walk, has set himself a new “audacious” goal: to become the first person with a disability to go to space. Backed by the United Nations, he hopes to deliver “the speech of [his] life,” championing disability rights from a space shuttle to the UN’s New York headquarters this December.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, a South African lawmaker and the executive director of UN Women, told NBC News if Ndopu attains his goal, it would be “a powerful symbol to demonstrate that people with disabilities can break barriers.”

“By reaching space,” she added, “it clearly demonstrates that determined disabled people, in an enabling environment, can excel like anyone else.”

People with disabilities are the largest minority group in the world, but Ndopu said they are also the most “neglected and invisible.” He sees space travel as breaking the ultimate barrier — literally defying gravity.

“I want to give credence to the idea of leaving nobody behind,” he said, adding that he hopes his advocacy will galvanize world leaders to close the access gap for people with disabilities. “I am not just talking about ramps, braille and sign language,” Ndopu said. “This is also about giving people with disabilities access to things like joy, love and intimacy.”

It’s a cause he is willing to die for. Space travel is dangerous, and Ndopu’s condition will leave him especially vulnerable to health complications.

“There is a very real risk that I may not survive the voyage ... but I am willing to take that chance, because this is a mission that is bigger than myself,” he said defiantly. “I am not scared of the launch into space; I am scared of what will happen if I don’t see this through.”

Over the next few months, Ndopu will work with New York-based Spinal Muscular Atrophy specialists to undergo cutting-edge therapies to prepare for his journey.

Ndopu’s supervising physician, Gaurav Shah M.D., CEO of fortuitously named Rocket Pharma, is confident health risks can be mitigated.

“There is always risk of death with space travel due to unforeseen reasons, but given that Eddie has robust, intact, independent respiration, and that respiration is unlikely to be affected by the pull or lack of gravity, the risk is low,” Dr. Shah told NBC News.

Ndopu said he takes courage from the late Stephen Hawking, who suffered from Lou Gehrig’s disease. In 2017, the world renowned theoretical physicist was offered a free ride to space by Virgin Galactic founder Sir Richard Branson. However, Hawking died before he was able to achieve this lifelong dream.

“Professor Hawking had already started zero-gravity training, and he was in his 70s!” Ndopu marvelled.

Working with ONE, an advocacy organization founded by musician and philanthropist Bono, Ndopu hopes to secure his ticket to space by the end of the year. He said first choice would be acquiring a rocket from South African-born SpaceX founder Elon Musk.

“We are in the process of pitching my vision to [Musk],” said Ndopu, who hopes to have a one-on-one meeting with the technology mogul in the coming weeks.

Source: NBC News



Ndopu with his friends at the University of Oxford.



Eddie Ndopu Johannesburg.



Ndopu on the Mauritius beach.



# Disablism – an extra burden for South Africa’s most vulnerable children



Johannesburg, 27 June 2018: Dignity is a basic human right. A violation thereof cuts us at our human core. This should motivate us to protect the right to dignity of not only ourselves, but of every person. Yet, according to the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities in South Africa (NCPD), protecting the dignity of South Africa’s children with disabilities is not currently very high on the national agenda.

According to UNICEF, “children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups of children, experiencing widespread violations of their rights.” In developing countries, like South Africa, where poverty and inequality are serious problems, children with disabilities are even more vulnerable.

Therina Wentzel, National Director of the NCPD, says that childhood disability is a neglected and serious national problem. “Disablism describes the discrimination and prejudice that persons with disabilities face,” she says. “In South Africa, disablism robs many children of their most basic rights. The term needs to be heard and understood in the same manner as sexism and racism. Just as there is a need for education and awareness around racism and sexism, and confrontation of these injustices, so we need to make people aware of disablism and confront instances of it in society.”

UNICEF puts it like this: “Too often, children with disabilities are defined and judged by what they lack rather than what they have. Their exclusion and invisibility serve to render them uniquely vulnerable, denying them respect for their dignity, their individuality, even their right to life itself.”

She notes that NCPD is becoming increasingly concerned about the non-provisioning for children with disabilities in the South African childcare and protection system. “A good example is the non-provisioning of assistive devices and nappies by the National Department of Health. Assistive devices are part of primary healthcare and the Constitution obligates the government to provide them,” she says. “And yet, when NCPD ran a nationwide poll, we found that all provinces reported under provisioning of assistive devices by the government health care system, resulting in at least hundreds of persons with disabilities having to go without them.”

She says that the consequences of having to go without these essential devices are tragic, severely impacting on the quality of life of persons with disabilities. “A simple example is nappies,” she says. “Toilet hygiene and health are a fundamental base of human dignity that many people take for granted, but in South Africa, we know that countless children have to use unsafe pit toilets. And people agree that this is wrong and needs to change. What many don’t consider, however, is that children with disabilities also lack access to basic toilet hygiene. Many are unable to take care of their own toilet needs, and so they require nappies on an ongoing basis. Nappies are expensive and often children’s carers struggle to afford them. Children end up wet or soiled, which undermines their dignity and can comprise their health and well-being. Many of these children with disabilities are living in extreme poverty or social isolation, which are both results and causes of disablism, and their story is not being told.”

NCPD campaigns to raise funds for nappies through its Nappy Run™ initiative, as well as promoting awareness of the effects of disablism on children with disabilities.

“Disablism results in societal barriers that exclude persons with disabilities from facilities, services and structures, as well as social, cultural, religious and recreational opportunities,” says Wentzel. “For children with disabilities, who are already a particularly vulnerable group, this results in an additional burden.”

She notes that the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2015, explicitly commits to creating “a non-sexist, discrimination-free, equitable and inclusive society that protects and develops the human potential of its children, a society for all where persons with disabilities enjoy the same rights



Wand Karen Smit

## The Artscape Women’s Humanity Arts Festival 2018



The Artscape Women’s Humanity Arts Festival is heading for its 12th celebration this year with Humanity as the central theme, runs from 1 - 18 August at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town. The festival focuses on humanity, women and disability.

The objective of the festival is to provide a space and a platform for grassroots communities, women from all walks of life and persons with disabilities the opportunity to be celebrated.

On stage, take a trip down memory lane with the colorful Divalicious Dames with drag mime artists Ramsay Davids and Martin Neethling. Bollywood Enchanted will showcase Taare dancers alongside other guest artists, as they bring to life the fabled themes of hope, love and resilience while staying true to all that

Bollywood rhythm, colour and vibrancy.

The Absolutely Fabulous Drag Show, back by popular demand with Odidiva Mfenyana as the MC, drag divas Vida Fantabisher, SA’s Got Talent 2016 runner-up Manila von Teez, Kat Gilardi, Jayde Kay Johnson and Angel Lalamore of gay cabaret 3D trio fame, music maestro Camillo Lomard and Basil Appollis holding the whip.

After a sensational sell-out debut at the National Arts Festival in 2016, Ruth First: 117 Days dramatizes her harrowing, 1963 arrest and detention under the notorious 90-day clause. First became the first white woman to be arrested under this act.

Around the Fire is a unique fusion of theatre, poetry and live music, a uniquely South African story unfolds. Four women with very different backgrounds, Mbali, Faiza, Amber, and Angel find themselves sharing a makeshift fire on a rainy Cape Town evening. Brought together by unexpected circumstances, they form a bond as fierce and temporary as the fire. Mbali, the homeless guardian of the fire, an Eastern Cape ‘refugee’, unravels the stories that brought them there while trying to make sense of her own place in a city that renders her invisible. Liefde is Rooi, an Afrikaans play written by 22-year-old Enrico Hartzenberg, it’s a story of victory in a ghetto community of Cape Town where there is no time for love. No time for regret, just time to survive. Directed by Lee-Ann van Rooi.

Artscape will host a variety of outstanding theatre productions, entrepreneurial workshops, health screenings, legal workshops, talks, exhibitions, a humanity walk and more.

Tickets for the festival’s productions are available from Computicket or Artscape Dial-A-Seat on 021 421 7695. Discounts are available for students, seniors and block bookings.

Visit [www.artscape.co.za](http://www.artscape.co.za) for more information.

### WAND Workshop

4th Celebration & Empowerment Workshop with teenage disabled girls from Special Schools hosted by WAND (Women’s Achievement Network for Disability)

**Date:** 2 August 2018  
**Time:** 09h00-13h00  
**Venue:** Opera Bar

WAND (Women’s Achievement Network for Disability) is an initiative whereby disabled women give back to teenage girls with disabilities. The initiative started in 2014 to focus on and promote the human rights of women and girls with disabilities. On 2 August 2018, the WAND team will host the 4th Annual Celebration & Empowerment Workshop for seventy disabled teenage girls between the ages of 13 and 18 years from various Special Needs Schools in the Cape Town area. We use this platform to demonstrate to disabled girls that they too can be successful and strive to live full lives, despite experiencing double barriers of gender and disability.

The aim of the workshop is to enable the girls to celebrate self-acceptance and to unlock their voices – for them to internalize that “as a girl with a disability, I have beauty and strength; I furthermore have the potential to develop and become a competent and confident learner, student, entrepreneur, friend, mother and career woman”.

The workshop is facilitated by two business women with disabilities, namely Karen Smit and Dr Marlene le Roux. The girls are given the opportunity to share their challenges, stories of hope, desires and dreams. By doing this they feel encouraged and motivated as they realize that celebrating themselves is the first step to a journey of achieving greatness. In doing this, the girls discover and start using their strengths which leads to increased confidence and motivation. This empowerment experience encourages these young girls to create purpose for their lives; motivating them to turn dreams into goals which will give them hope for the future to become the best they can be. #disABLEDgirlsarebeautifulandcapable

### About WAND (Women’s Achievement Network for Disability)

Business women with disabilities started the WAND (initiative in 2014 to focus on and promote the human rights of women and girls with disabilities in South Africa. We use this platform to demonstrate to disabled girls that they too can be successful and live full lives, despite experiencing double barrier challenges. During 2016 WAND won two Gender Mainstreaming Awards in recognition of the work being done with teenage disabled girls. We treasure our partnership with Artscape and we are honored that the WAND workshops forms part of their Annual Women’s Humanity Arts Festival.

Website: [www.wand.org.za](http://www.wand.org.za)



# Adversity spurs on gifted DJ Lloyd Babedi

Condemned to a life on crutches, Lloyd Babedi never wallowed in pity. The 31-year-old Alexandra DJ not only fo0year alone he donated more than 130 wheelchairs to destitute people living with disability. And this year the number already stands at 15 and his beneficiaries are from Pretoria and Alexandra. He plans to donate five more wheelchairs to others in Tembisa this month.

“I had a proper support structure in dealing with my disability but there are a lot of disabled people out there who have no one. I know what they are going through,” he said.

“Without a proper wheelchair you cannot go for job interviews. Some of these people simply need a hand up, not handouts to enable them to turn their lives around. It fulfils me to know that I help improve people’s lives,” he said.

Babedi said he had always dreamed of being in the entertainment industry from a young age, so it was no surprise he started an events company called Barkzz World.

Through the company, Babedi organises fundraising events to buy wheelchairs. He also uses money from his gigs and part of his salary to purchase wheelchairs.

Babedi wants to give away 130 wheelchairs again this year. He has been inundated with requests from all over the country since his first fundraising event in 2015.

Babedi, who also works as a call centre agent, said through motivational talks he also taught people that those who are disabled need more than equipment to move around but community support as well.

“We need to break the stigma around disabled people. It is sometimes hard to get donations because people do not see disability the way we see it.”

Barkzz, as he is known, was born with a C-shaped spine and when a back pain operation that went wrong left him paralysed he had to come to terms with the difficulties that disabled people go through.

“I grew up as a normal child but as I got older I started to experience severe back pain,” he said.

“When I was 16 I had an unsuccessful operation which left me in a wheelchair for two years. Eventually, through the help of physiotherapy, I was able to start using crutches.”

Babedi said though he believed God was punishing him at first, his father’s support made him realise that being disabled was a “mind-set”.

“Before the operation I loved going out and having fun. I lost my mother the same year I had the operation and I started to believe that I was being punished,” he said.

“I lost confidence in myself and I was embarrassed to be around people. Through all this my father became my biggest support structure.

“Through him I regained my confidence and accepted my disability. I changed my mind-set and started to believe that it was my purpose in life to experience both lives so I can help disabled people.

“I motivated myself into believing that it (disability) is not about being unable to do things but about finding alternatives.”

Story by Pertunia Mafokwane  
SowetanLive



## Breaking down the Stigma Associated with Disabilities

In previous years, the slow uptake of BEE policies has created a less than desirable result in our country’s transformation. Companies soon began to realise that policies were here to stay and today we see less resistance and more inclusion.

Beyond implementation, many companies have today allowed these policies to form part of its ‘bigger picture’. “We always say this, but BEE is not a target as much as it’s a competitive advantage,” says LFP Training’s Sales Manager, AJ Jordaan.

In times such as these and with great incentives to companies, are people with disabilities truly being incorporated into the system? “There is a cry now for more youths to be upskilled through the YES initiative but what we are finding is that, no matter how much incentive is provided to companies, the uptake of training disabled persons and later integrating them into the workplace is still not top of the priority list”.

As an accredited training provider, LFP Training specialises in the training of unemployed, disabled persons and deals with the lack of confidence and a want to be treated equally by disabled persons every day. “Gone are the days of disabled persons being viewed as ‘lesser people’. In some cultures, disability has been frowned on in the past but what we are finding is that disabled people are now even more driven and want to be educated and enabled; the barriers of disability must now be lifted, and empowerment must take place”.

“With a historical background such as that of South Africa, the promotion of Human Rights is key to both our economy and society. We cannot deny people with disability and we cannot limit them from

**“Globally, people with disabilities are marginalised and excluded from full participation in society.”**



enjoying equal opportunities, yet we don’t see enough companies embracing the upskilling of disabled persons as part of their bigger picture,” AJ continues.

“Providing disabled persons with access to education and later, access to the workplace will help improve the lives of some 3-million people”.

In a recent report, it was highlighted that the employment of disabled persons at various management and employee levels had decreased. AJ explains that the findings are disheartening, saying:

“Does this mean that we are failing disabled people and perhaps creating a stigma once again?”

AJ also notes that LFP Training has trained more than 4500 people in partnership with corporates. This once again begs the question of ‘where the rest are and how do we reach and enable them?’

“Our campuses not only provide training but also mentorship. When we welcome new learners to our campus we often start off with people who lack confidence and belief in themselves. When they leave, they are hungry for opportunities and sadly, not everyone has access to these,” says AJ.

By partaking in Skills Development initiatives aimed at upskilling disabled persons in partnership with LFP Training, clients are eligible for the Tax Rebate incentive of R120 000 per disabled learner.

Business Essentials is Africa’s premium networking and business directory.

## Children with ADHD: Bullied or bully?



Symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are unlikely to go unnoticed in a school environment. It can quickly earn your child the “different”, “difficult” or “disruptive” label and attract the attention of bullies. ADHD can inhibit your child’s understanding of social cues, which can have a negative impact on everyday conversations and social interactions. The exclusion from social circles only leads to heightened feelings of isolation and depression.

Bullying in schools can have a serious impact on your child’s participation and academic performance.

Over 3.2 million South African students are bullied yearly but more than 67% don’t speak up due to fear, shame, and doubt that parents or teachers can change their situation. Bullying is often directed at insecure and passive children who display physical weakness and poor social skills.

### Bullied or bully?

Whether brought on by ADHD tendencies or low self-esteem caused by the condition, research suggests that ADHD children are nearly 10 times more likely to attract the attention of bullies. They tend to avoid confrontation but when taunted by bullies, ADHD children often overreact emotionally. Unfortunately, the display of tears and anger or an impulsive retort to provocation usually adds fuel to the flame for a bully.

That said, recent research found that children with ADHD are almost four times more likely to bully other children without the condition. Likewise, this can be due to low self-esteem or could be in response to victimisation or feelings of depression.

The destructive impact of bullying

Bullying can be linked to lasting emotional, mental and physical health issues for both the bullied and the bully. If your child is bullied at school, he or she is likely to experience heightened levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness, poor sleeping and eating patterns, and decreased academic achievement - over and above ADHD symptoms.

On the other hand, if your ADHD child has become the playground bully, he or she is more likely to get into fights or partake in risky activities. Keep a close eye on school attendance as both the bullied and the bully are more likely to bunk school. Fortunately, there are many other ways to deal with bullying at opposite ends of this spectrum.

In addition to a holistic treatment plan and an active support group, the impact of ADHD in the school environment can be successfully managed. That means less attention from bullies and a memorable and carefree childhood.

For more information around the symptoms, impact and treatment of ADHD, visit MyADHD.co.za or My ADHD on Facebook.





# Thulamela mini library for the blind launched

The blind and visually impaired in Thulamela in Limpopo who for years could not access information due to the lack of resources, were on cloud nine recently as a new mini library, specifically designed for them, was launched.

The facility is part of the 28 new mini libraries for the blind launched countrywide. The launch is an initiative of National Libraries South Africa (NLSA) and the South African Library for the Blind (SALB) who together formed the Mzansi Mini-Library Project, to ensure all blind and visually impaired people across SA have access to their reading material free of charge.

The launch was officiated by Mr Collins Thovhakale, director of library services in Limpopo, Francois Hendrikz, CEO of the South African Library for the Blind and Dr Maisela Maepa, executive director, core programmes of the National Library of Africa. It was attended by many blind people and other stakeholders.

Ms Bele Netshiheni (50) of Thohoyandou, who became blind in 2012, expressed her appreciation towards the library and encouraged those in attendance not to give up on life because of their disability. She said she has been an educator for 23 years until her world fell apart in 2012.

“I lost my eye-sight, my marriage also broke up and I spent a lot of time in isolation lamenting about my life. It took courage to accept my situation and I told myself I should not just sit down as God had a purpose with my life and my condition,” she said.

She added that the new section of the library has helped her a lot. “My research proposal for a master’s degree has been approved by the Senate of the University of Venda, thanks to those involved in seeing to it that we have a facility of this nature. We feel accommodated and would urge others to make use of these resources made available especially for us,” she said.

Dr Maisela Maepa said that they still have a long way to go but are happy that they have started. He said he was also excited because of the positive feedback they were getting from the users of the mini libraries.

“We are now urging you to spread the good news about the new services and resources at this library. Guard jealously against the vandalization of these resources. When you are angry for services, please be rational and manage your anger and do not destroy these scarce and valuable resources,” said Maepa.

Elmon Tshikhudo | Zoutnet



# Quadriplegic man who defied doctors’ odds to paint a ‘can do’ picture

Cape Town - This quadriplegic man says he wants to show people with disabilities that they shouldn’t feel limited by their conditions.

Randall Wynkwart, 37, from Tafelsig in Mitchells Plain says for the upcoming Mandela Day next month, he plans to work in a restaurant as a waiter to raise awareness for the disabled.

Randall, who is a painter, became a quadriplegic when he was nine years old after he fell on his head in a freak accident at school.

He tried to jump over a gate but his pants got stuck and he fell on his head, injuring his spinal cord.

He was left paralysed from his shoulders down and doctors gave him six months to live, but he “defied the odds”.

“It took me years to accept my disability, and at the age of 17, I planned a suicide attempt,” he says.

“I was about to overdose myself with tablets and at that moment the song of Mariah Carey, Hero, started playing and I realised that I’m needed as a hero in society and my problems aren’t worth losing my life for.”

Randall gives art classes where he teaches kids to paint using their mouths like him.

He plans to spend his 67 minutes for Madiba by raising awareness for people with disabilities.

“I want to be a waiter and take people’s orders as a normal waiter does. I want to get a wooden board across my wheelchair with the menu on it and then take it to the kitchen or wherever it needs to go to. I want to show people with a disability that we, too, can have jobs in a normal workplace.”

The Daily Voice spoke to Grillfather restaurant owner, Shane Swiegelaar, who says he would love to accommodate Randall at his Wynberg branch as it is wheelchair friendly.

“We are more than happy to help Randall fulfil his 67 minutes for Mandela Day and we will pay him, and also triple the tips he gets on the day,” says Shane.

An ecstatic Randall said he would use the money to buy paint for his students.

Source: Daily Voice



# Tax refunds for people with disabilities in the workplace

ALEXANDRA – There is help for disabled people or parents of disabled children in claiming tax relief from SARS.

People with disabilities are eligible to claim their tax according to a local non-government organisation Let Us Assist.

This was evident with some of the testimonies from people who have benefited with the help from the organisation. “It is such a good thing that the big corporations in South Africa must, by law, employ people with disabilities,” said Gail Kamanga, a resident from Alexandra.

“However, there is no help for disabled people when it comes to claiming a tax credit from South African Revenue Services (SARS). It concerns me that there are so many people who do not know how and what to claim.”

There are many large expenses resulting from disabilities and nonmedical expenses which help disabled people lead a reasonable life, said Kamanga.

She works with Let us Assist which specialises in claiming tax refunds for people in the workplace with disabilities.

Manager of the organisation, Philippa Dissel, said it is evident from SARS statistics that many disabled people or parents of disabled children are not claiming tax relief. “There are reasons why this situation exists. Firstly, there are many disabled people who do not realise that they qualify for disability credits and then there are those who are claiming, but who are just not getting the full possible tax credit,” she said.

SARS regulations allow tax claims to be made retrospectively and people are also unaware of this fact, she added.

Nankie Manamodie who, as a child, was severely disabled by a discarded hand grenade, also testified about the joy of benefiting from Let Us Assist’s programme. “I have worked for many years and had no idea that this benefit was available to me.

“Can you imagine my absolute joy and surprise when R15 929 was deposited into my bank account by SARS! I could not believe it.”

She said Let us Assist only charged her a small commission of what she received, adding that if she gets nothing, neither do they.

The tax season starts on 1 July for submissions of your tax returns for March 2017 to February 2018.

Should you not have claimed in earlier years or think that you did not receive the full credit that you should have, for this year and previous years go to the website [www.letusassist.co.za](http://www.letusassist.co.za) or phone Gail Kamanga 082 048 2411.

Story by Thabo Jobo  
North Eastern Tribune





# Cadecom’s inclusive education programme working wonders in Phalombe

The Catholic Development Commission (Cadecom), one of the Catholic Church’s development arm in Malawi, initiated an education programme aimed at integrating children with disabilities into public schools rather than getting them into their special institutions.

Called ‘Inclusive Education’, the initiative is working wonders in Phalombe District where it is being practised in 21 schools which have special teachers in sign language, others teaching vision impaired kids and others with skills in teaching slow learners.

Also included in the programme is to encourage expectant mothers to seriously attend antenatal sessions where they are taught how kids sometimes are born with disabilities because there are certain procedures the mothers did not follow during pregnancy such as healthy dieting.

This project aims at preventing the development of and the early diagnosis of disabilities on the expectant mothers during antenatal sessions.

The programme is being executed in partnership with South Africa-based Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and its Education Programme Manager Velaphi Mamba paid a courtesy visit to Malawi and on Thursday, April 12, he was taken to Phalombe to sample for himself how the initiative is working.

Also involved in the programme are ministries of Education and Health as well as the Catholic University whose representatives, including Blantyre Diocese Vicar General — Reverend Father Boniface Tamani — were part of the delegation that visited three of such schools and Chiringa Health Centre maternity unit in the area of Senior Chiefs Nazombe and Chiwalo.

The delegation was taken through the antenatal sessions with the mothers as well as the teaching methods at Nazombe and Dindi primary schools and at Praise God Nursery School.

An interesting part is the Praise God Nursery School, which is administered by a nurse at Nambazo Health Centre, Judith Phameya, and it is offered for free at her home and she has over 200 eager kids.

She said she used to see kids just roaming about every morning as she went to work and that pained her a lot especially when she discovered that kids with disabilities were most affected, who were kept out of school by their parents.

“So, I mobilised the mothers and encouraged them that I will set up a school here at my home and that they should encourage their kids to come and learn,” she told the delegation.

“The parents’ response was overwhelmingly positive and we managed to have volunteer teachers as well. We approached Cadecom for assistance which we received in no time at all.”

At Dindi Primary School, the delegation were demonstrated how the community can utilise locally available food for their healthy nutrition as well as a theatre play that dwells on the prevention of home delivery of babies and the encouragement of testing for sexually transmitted infections to prevent the development of disabilities.

Mamba said he was profoundly impressed with what Cadecom is doing in Phalombe and that there are other aspects he has learnt from this visit that Osisa shall copy and introduce in other southern African countries.

“I am also very happy with the commitment that this project is receiving from ministries of Health and Education, whose representatives were part of this visit as well as the willingness from the chiefs and people of the communities, who are making sure the Inclusive Education project works,” he said.

Diocesan Cadecom secretary Mandinda Zungu said during a certain project they were doing in Phalombe between 2011 and 2016, they noticed that parents lock away their kids with disabilities when they go out, which to them they deemed as segregation simply because of their state of being.

“And also because there weren’t any schools that could cater for these kids’ needs. We decided to introduce the Inclusive Education project because the kids with disabilities need to actively interactive with the able bodied ones in order for them to learn quickly.

“We went around the district to sensitise the parents that no child with disability should be denied his or her right to education. We are very proud that the parents responded to our call when we set up disability friendly facilities at various schools.”

She said the challenge now is to sustain the project and the fortunate part is that they are being supported by the two ministries of education and health.

Duncan Mlanjila  
Nyasa Times



Leo Ngobeni

## Young, black and ‘disabled’ in corporate South Africa

By Kgomotso Meso

Professionals with disabilities are defying the odds stacked against them by challenging the status quo in the corporate sector, regarding the hurting and integration of people with disabilities in South Africa.

People with disabilities no longer settle for limited learnerships and/or work readiness programmes, but rather they apply for positions that are aligned with their academic qualifications.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that: “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation.” (www.Un.org/development/desa/disability).

Twenty-seven-year old Leo Ngobeni from Soshanguve, Pretoria, has been working at a Johannesburg branch of one of the big five banks since 2012, as a user experience and user interface designer, focusing on designing software that makes the usage easily understood by the user. He has osteogenesis imperfecta type 4.

When asked about his preparedness working in corporate and his concerns, Ngobeni said, “My biggest concern was if the team would accept me. Instead they (my team) were welcoming and friendly, because they know I got here because I am good at what I do.”

These sentiments were echoed by Lavela Mthulu, also 27, from Port Shepstone. “My main concern was whether they (work colleagues) were going to accept my condition and cater for it. Yes they made arrangements to accommodate my disability and as of the day when I joined (24 April 2014), the company managed to buy a big computer screen for me to use,” he said.

Mthulu works as a general office support clerk at a prestigious law firm’s Sandton office. He has hyperopia (farsightedness). Reasonable accommodation is one the factors that can affect the effectiveness of peoples with disabilities in the workplace.

“The company has a disability fund aimed at assisting people with disabilities, whether it might be in terms of transport to and fro home and work, finding them suitable accommodation,

providing assistive devices, etc,” said Ngobeni. “It is at an individual’s discretion the extent to which they need assistance, so based on my needs, I only needed assistance with transportation as I have a suitable place to stay and an electric wheelchair for mobility.”

Mthulu has had a similar experience at his workplace. “They do all in their power to be accommodative and always willing to assist persons with disabilities, even those who are wheelchair bound. The company does provide means of transport, they have not ignored any needs of disabled people,” he said.

Both Mthulu and Ngobeni found the recruitment process to be fair. “The interview was formal and concise. Induction process was very good for me as I was introduced to all teams that I was going to work with internally as well as all company policies and procedures as well as the values. With my company they treat everyone the same and there’s no special treatment for certain individuals because they believe that we are a family despite ones disability,” said Mthulu.

For Ngobeni, “It was smooth like any other interview. The key is to let people know and feel that you are approachable. As employees with disabilities we have to agree on being treated fairly like any other employee.

“The culture is great and it is changing depending on how involved people with disabilities are in making that change. I can’t speak for other people, however, everything I have has been tailored for my needs, and it is all about being vocal,” Ngobeni said.

Mthulu added, “They always promote collaboration and creating the best people and their culture towards disability has always been the same and there is awareness. I am highly motivated because the company does all it can to groom us, be it studying externally or growth within.”

Asked what advice he could give to a newly graduate with a disability looking into working in corporate, Ngobeni said, “A good attitude towards life and strong acceptance and understanding of self builds great self-confidence in what you can achieve despite your disability. It is entirely up to you to create the kind of life you want. Don’t be afraid to speak up because opportunities are not given, they are taken.”


“I would personally say that your disability should not limit your ability. Go out there to flourish and be the best you can be for your mark will always be visible,” Mthulu concluded.



Lavela Mthulu



# MONTJANE MOVES TO 6TH IN WORLD RANKINGS

South African World Singles Rankings: 

Women		Boys	
Previous	Current	Previous	Current
8	6 Kgothatso Montjane	9	19 Alwande Skhosana
43	48 Mariska Venter	29	32 Mpho Mhlongo
Men		Girls	
Previous	Current	Previous	Current
18	19 Evans Maripa	16	15 Nosipho Hlatswayo
203	349 Leon Els		
Quads			
Previous	Current		
6	6 Lucas Sithole		



Tuesday, 17 July 2018, Johannesburg, South Africa. – South Africa’s wheelchair tennis ace Kgothatso Montjane has moved up two places to 6th position in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) rankings released on Monday.

The 32-year-old Montjane had an incredible run on her debut at Wimbledon last week, where she made it to the semi-final before losing to Dutch world number 1 Diede de Groot. Montjane reached the semi-final round at The All England Lawn Tennis Club after edging out

former world number 6 Katharina Kruger from Germany last week Thursday.

The Limpopo-born star claimed an impressive 6-3 2-6 6-1 victory against the 28-year-old German enroute to the semi-final round.

The South African star started the season at No.8 in the ITF Rankings after two months of not competing earlier this year.



## APPLY FOR THE SAB FOUNDATION THOLOANA ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME 2018

Applications open 1 August and close midday 26 September 2018

The SAB Foundation Tholoana Enterprise Programme invests in businesses, with a priority on those that benefit or are run by women, the youth, people in rural areas or people with disabilities.

Entrepreneurs who show the most potential and commitment to grow their business and create jobs are selected to take part in our two-year business support programme that provides expert mentorship, skills development, access to markets, and strategic financial support. If you want to grow your small business, and are committed to learning and implementing proven strategies to enable success, this programme is for you.

- ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**
- The business is black-owned and managed.
  - The business has been operational for at least six months.
  - The business is headquartered and registered (if applicable), within the South African borders.
  - The business should be a going concern, commercially sustainable and viable.
  - The applicant is involved in the business’s daily operations and management on a full time basis, and is not employed by any other organisation.
  - The applicant has the skills and experience necessary for the type of business they are engaged in.



For more information and to apply visit [www.sabfoundation.co.za](http://www.sabfoundation.co.za)





## Summit connects disabled learners to potential employers

Hundreds of disabled learners had the opportunity to meet corporates seeking to employ people with disabilities at the recent SABC Disability Summit.

Hosted by the SABC Foundation, the summit aims to catalyse transformative change in the disability space by sharing lessons learnt, unpacking the latest B-BBEE legislative policies and their impact on businesses, identifying unique opportunities for collaboration and promoting corporate career prospects for South Africa's youth.

The event brought together 500 Grade 9-12 learners, 100 graduates and 150 entrepreneurs with disabilities, to engage one-on-one with some of South Africa's corporates, many of which are struggling to meet the disability requirements on the B-BBEE scorecard.

Disability 360 Campaign

In particular, the summit is aligned with the SABC Foundation's Disability 360 campaign, which aims to empower people with disabilities by providing ongoing information online and on the ground, in all 11 official languages.

"Being heard, respected and valued is a basic human right for all, and we hope that

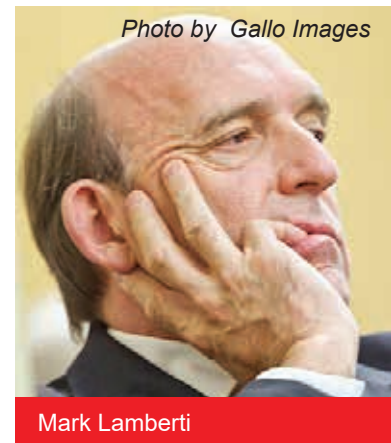
through initiatives such as Disability 360 and the SABC Disability Summit, we will support this right and pave the way for enhanced training and job opportunities for South Africans with disabilities," says Iris Cupido, CEO of the SABC Foundation.

The SABC Disability Summit, presented in partnership with Creative Space Media, represents the evolution of the Hope-Mandeville Disability Careers Expo, an event first launched in 2012 by Paddy Slattery, stemming from his work with public benefit organisation and Section 21 company Mandeville Disability Swimming.

"Having taken the expos as far as we could within our capacity limitations, the Hope-Mandeville team invited Creative Space Media to take over the organisation of the event with effect from this year. We believe the new management will help the event achieve its full potential for sophistication and growth. The move is already bearing fruit – Creative Space Media brought in the SABC as the primary sponsor of the event, and has upgraded the event to full conference status," Slattery says.

## Dismantling discrimination in the workplace

Photo by Gallo Images



Mark Lamberti

The ground-breaking court judgment that held Imperial Holdings Limited and its CEO Mark Lamberti jointly and severally liable for impairing the dignity of Associated Motor Holdings financial manager Adila Chowan provides much needed hope for victims of discrimination in the workplace.

The judgment highlights the challenges of eradicating systemic discrimination and inequalities in South Africa. The sad reality is that many victims of discrimination cannot afford to exercise their rights, as it is expensive to litigate while arbitration of discrimination disputes is only compulsory for certain categories of employees. This leaves many victims of discrimination in limbo making it difficult to break the pervasive cycle.

The fact that the Employment Equity Act limits compulsory arbitration of discrimination disputes does not preclude companies from developing policies to extend arbitration to all employees. However this is unlikely to happen, as many employers are well aware that the CCMA is cost effective and less cumbersome thus making it accessible to aggrieved employees.

Civil society in particular organisations that represent the interests of women, black people and people with disabilities need to focus more on nudging employers to change their attitudes towards compulsory arbitration of discrimination disputes for all employees. These organisations are key stakeholders that should be consulted by companies in line with the United Nations (UN) Global Compact that forms part of the regulations of the Companies Act. These regulations require listed and state owned companies to establish Social and Ethics Committees that are responsible for ensuring compliance with legislation such as the Employment Equity Act. The UN Global Compact encourages companies to adopt the Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines to report on issues such as discrimination in the workplace and how stakeholders are consulted to eradicate the scourge.

Workplace discrimination in South Africa is a matter of public interest as correctly pointed out in the court judgment against Imperial Holdings and its CEO. This means that listed and state owned companies are duty bound to consult stakeholders that represent the interests of race, gender and disability to eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace and to advance affirmative action. The Companies Act and its regulations provide leverage for civil society to compel companies to adopt alternative dispute resolution policy. Adoption of such policy would encourage employees who are weary of exposing discriminatory practices to be more open. Companies are more likely to consider adopting this kind of policy if there is pressure from civil society.

The Employment Equity Act also requires employers to develop policy and procedure for resolution of disputes about the implementation of equity plans. However this is not happening in many companies, as employers tend to use the standard grievance procedures that are often not conducive to the resolution of affirmative action grievances. The empowering

provisions in the Employment Equity Act and the Companies Act need to be tested by civil society as a matter of urgency.

The focus on development of this policy is not sufficient in itself, as the systematicness of the problem requires a shift from reductionist thinking where problem symptoms tend to be treated in isolation from the fundamental problem. It is therefore important to also consider the effectiveness of Employment Equity Committees established by employers to consult with employees when developing and implementing Equity Plans to achieve affirmative action targets. Evidence suggests that these committees are ineffective, which is one of the contributing factors to wanton violation of the equity act. Civil society depends on the effectiveness of these committees to ensure robust application of alternative dispute resolution policy.

The role played by the Department of Labour in enforcing the Employment Equity Act further requires intensified efforts by civil society to address the glaring shortcomings of its inspectorate. It is unacceptable that many companies continue to violate the Act in spite of the amendments that provide for fines linked to companies' turnover.

The failure to enforce the Act has enabled many companies to be more brazen in their disregard of affirmative action.

The Chowan judgment provides a window of opportunity for coalescing of stakeholders to build on the outcomes of the National Dialogue on Business and Human Rights that was recently convened by the South African Human Rights Commission. The Commission has rightfully included business and human rights as a crucial pillar in its strategic plan 2015 to 2020, which requires active citizenry for the strategy to be realized.

Evidence suggests that organisations that represent the interests of race, gender and disability are weary of litigating except for Solidarity and AfriForum that have developed effective litigation strategies to protect the interests of their constituency. It is therefore prudent for other interest groups to advance alternative dispute resolution to protect the interests of their constituencies that continue to be exposed to daily discriminatory practices in the workplace.

Sadly the conduct of some of the leaders in these organisations leaves much to be desired, as they tend to focus on self-interests. Many of them serve as directors in companies that are moving at a snail pace to implement the Employment Equity Act. It might be prudent for members of these organisations to consider electing leaders with track record in referral of discrimination disputes to the CCMA or Labour Courts. So far rhetoric seems to be the dominant criteria for selection of leaders in these organisations.

It will be foolhardy to assume that employers will learn from the court ruling against Imperial Holdings. There have been several court judgments on discrimination in the workplace and yet many employers still continue with the practice. The need for alternative dispute resolution to ensure accessible, cost effective and expeditious resolution of disputes is getting more and more palpable.

- Isaac Matheta Swafo is a Non-Executive Director and chairman of Social and Ethics Committee at Communicare Social Housing Institution. He is an affirmative action litigant who completed a Masters dissertation on alternative dispute resolution of affirmative action disputes in 2017.





# Youth with Disabilities Resolve to Affirm their Identity

The Youth Day Disability Awareness Event that was held at the busy Soshanguve Crossing Mall on Saturday, 16 June 2018 attracted a throng of young persons with disabilities together with their abled-bodied counterparts.

The abiding objective of the event was for the youth disability sector to introspect and identify challenges that impede their active participation in social spaces and economic activities. “This was critical a departure from the conventional figure-pointing exercise, which favours blame-apportioning rather than the realistic introspective approach that we evangelize”, said Lucky Netshidzati, CEO of Rudzambilu Holdings, which was organizing the event.

An array of topics were ventilated on, from persons with disabilities building and projecting a positive image of themselves to being assertive, even amidst hostile social environs. Also encouraged were the acquisition of requisite entrepreneurial skills which would free youth with disabilities from economic dependency and assure them an equal share of the economic pie.

“I am aware of my physical inadequacies and limitations. I have come to accept myself the way I am. My plea to society in general and my abled-bodied peers is not to judge me based on my apparent limitations but to accept me as an equal, with a functioning brain, capabilities and skills”, passionately appealed Tssetsane Nkeletseng, a youth activist with a disability.

Also under focus was the dwindling financial support for learnerships for persons with disabilities which according to Pearl Makhubu, a disability specialist, “was a ticking time-bomb, which will ensure the demise of a skills base for this sector”.

Alex Malepane, an author, motivational speaker and disability activist called on government to take disability seriously and lamented how persons with disabilities are “particularly disadvantaged when it comes to accessing education, health care, banking and many other services”.

Malepane said avidly, “I would like to propose the following to the President of our country Hon. Cyril Ramaphosa; Health care services should be prioritised for people living with disability. In fact, persons with disabilities should access private care facilities for free.

Furthermore, it should be compulsory for any government meeting or community meeting to have a sign language interpreter and have information including programmes and other documents readily made to suit people with visual challenges”.

Commenting on the location of Disability within government’s structures, Malepane requested the President’s Office to “consider establishing a dedicated ministry for persons with disabilities”.

“Honourable President, have a dedicated day in the national calendar for persons with disabilities. If 7.5% (4.12 million) of the population are persons with disabilities, surely this calls for your attention” he further challenged.

“What is evident from what this event solicited is that there is urgent need for disability to feature prominently in all social, economic and developmental agenda and that persons with disabilities should not be excluded in intended discourses and interventions,” said Lucky Netshidzati.

Charting the way forward, he noted the importance of “rolling out this programme throughout the country to allow for further inter-and-intra societal dialogue, which should be practical and outcomes oriented”.

“I am pleading with parents or families not to hide persons with disabilities in their midst as this pervasive practice robs them of their self-esteem and negates their human rights”, he concluded.

By Edwin Rihlamvu

# UCT and partners develop test that diagnoses TB Meningitis within two hours

The University of Cape Town, in partnership with Antrum Biotech, have developed a new rapid test that is able to diagnose TB meningitis – a major cause of death in Southern Africa – within two hours. The test is currently undergoing validation to enter the global market.

Until now, diagnostic tests have not been as quick or as sensitive as they need to be. Finding a sensitive, rapid test for TB meningitis has been elusive, but thanks to BioFISA II funding and researchers at Antrum Biotech, one has been developed.

Professor Keertan Dheda, the director of the Centre for Lung Infection and Immunity at UCT, says: “Detection under the microscope only works 5% of the time. Smear microscopy is a very poor test.

“Another existing test for TB meningitis involves growing the bug in the lab in a culture, and there are problems with that too.”

This culture-based test has a sensitivity of only 60% to 70%, and it can take four to eight weeks to give a result. “By then most people would have died, or they would have developed severe disabilities due to the disease,” says Dheda.

The GeneXpert DNA detection test for TB is widely used in South Africa, but studies show that it is not sensitive enough to detect TB meningitis, but the test has limited sensitivity. “Although it is rapid in getting the answer on the same day, the problem is that it detects TB meningitis in only 50-60% of cases; we have a major unmet need for a more sensitive test,” says Dheda.

“Preliminary results from our studies show a vast improvement in sensitivity when compared to GeneXpert,” he says.

Khilona Radia, CEO of Antrum Biotech, says: “The accurate diagnosis of TB meningitis represents an unmet need in public health, with problems of missed diagnosis and misdiagnosis affecting health outcomes. The greatest need for the test is in populations with a high burden of TB and HIV; particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where the test will be evaluated and launched. The long-term goal of this project is to reduce global TB meningitis deaths.”

Two percent of TB cases, which are caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, develop into an infection of the membranes around the central nervous system (meninges). This TB meningitis can cause death or disability, especially in children, but is easily treatable if diagnosed early.

Funding from the BioFISA II programme has allowed researchers to develop the test further, and it is now undergoing a series of validation studies in southern African populations to pin down its sensitivity more accurately. This will include comparative sensitivity to GeneXpert.

Antrum Biotech and its partners plan continue with validation studies even after the test goes on sale in the near future.

“There will be even larger studies and studies by different groups of people in different parts of the world to confirm the results that we found in southern Africa,” Dheda says.

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department



# Comrades Marathon 2018

## Amputee Runner Completes Comrades Marathon with Crutches



The Comrades Marathon—a 56-mile ultra in South Africa that is held every June—is one of the toughest races in the world, and one man completed it on crutches Sunday when he couldn't use his running blade.

Xolani Luvuno, 33, was five hours into the race when the rest of the field started at 5:30 a.m. He had been granted additional time after a wound on his amputated right leg left him unable to utilize his running blade.

Race organizers granted him the additional time on the course, but said he would not be an official participant of the race because it would take longer than the 12-hour cutoff time.

But just like he had overcome a lot in his life just to make it to this race, Luvuno was there

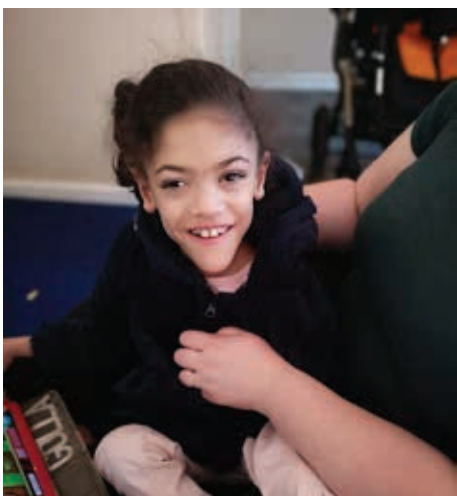
to overcome the course. He did just that when he crossed the line in 15 hours, 50 minutes.

According to news reports, the finish comes just two years after Luvuno was living under a bridge in the South African town of Pretoria. At the time, he was addicted to alcohol and nyaope, a drug cocktail common in South Africa derived from heroin.

In 2009, Luvuno was diagnosed with bone cancer and had his right leg amputated. It wasn't until 2016 when he was found by Hans Venter, an Irene businessman, who helped Luvuno turn his life around.

Source: News24

## 5 friends take on the Comrades Marathon for little girl with Cerebral Palsy



The friends from Johannesburg and Durban were inspired by the ethos of the 90 km ultra-marathon, affectionately known as the 'ultimate human race' which took place on the 10th of June 2018.

"We started to realize that the Comrades Marathon is genuinely about the human spirit and how people are pushed to do more than they believe is possible. So we started chatting about how we can use our experience to better someone else's life." – says Byron.

Nicky then introduced the runners to Isabella Beck (8) one of her promising students who she has been facilitating for the 2.5 years. Izzy is diagnosed with cerebral palsy, a congenital disorder of movement, muscle tone and coordination that affects 1 in 326 children in South Africa. Izzy experiences both physical and visual impairment, symptoms common with her condition, and relies on others to navigate her environment and interact with her peers.

"Due to her inability to communicate verbally she is restricted in answering questions in class, engaging/playing with her friends and cousins. It also prevents her being able to call for when she is hungry, sore or needs to go to the bathroom. Currently Izzy communicates with pictures and hand gestures." – says Byron

Anyone who meets Izzy describes a beaming personality, a smile that can melt hearts and an intelligence not to be underestimated.

"Izzy is just the sweetest girl. Her smile is no doubt the deal breaker, she laughs when people tell jokes and she enjoys listening to Wackhead Simpson, her personal favourite. She is so excited about life; often we complain about such small things and here you have a little girl who has so many restrictions and yet she never gives up" – says Byron.

Meeting Izzy at her uncle's home in Sandringham with her parents Liesle and Carl and older brother Ryder present, the runners were moved by the loving support she receives from her family and the commitment they all share in helping her to reach her full potential.

Hoping to assist Izzy and her family in a meaningful way, the runners set up a campaign on donations based crowdfunding platform, BackaBuddy to appeal to the public to help purchase Izzy a highly specialized eye tracker. The device operating on specific software will allow Izzy

to access her communication system through her eye movements and a selection of images and words that will generate a voice output on her command.

"This device will give Izzy a sense of independence and finally, she will have the 'voice' she has always longed for. She will finally be able to indicate when she is tired and needs a nap, she will be able to affectionately argue with her brother, as children do, she will be able to form friendships and tell her parents that she loves them" – says Byron

The campaign went live on the 14th of May and thus far raised R18 395.34 with contributions from 25 donors towards their goal of R60 000.

**Meet the runners:**  
Byron Leggett (32), Bryan Hellon (32), Teran Peyper (32), JP van Zittert (28), Greg Kilfoil (32), Craig Pike (32).

**Contribute to Izzy's eye tracker by donating here:**  
<https://www.backabuddy.co.za/comrades-for-izzy-campaign>

**For additional information and photos contact:**  
Zane Groenewald - BackaBuddy - Marketing/PR Officer  
082 602 0735 / [zane@backabuddy.co.za](mailto:zane@backabuddy.co.za)

**About Backabuddy**

- A proudly South African crowdfunding platform where individuals have the opportunity to raise funds for causes they feel passionate about.
- BackaBuddy has raised over R67 million for various charities, individuals and causes across South Africa.
- Website: <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BackabuddySA/>