

LIP 2022



THE POWER OF PERSPECTIVE

Casting the lens on constructive solutions

A letter from the editor



WILLIAM BREDERODE
Editor-in-Chief

The screensaver on my phone is an image known as the 'Pale Blue Dot', which was taken by the Voyager 1 space probe on 14 February 1990. Six billion kilometres away from Earth, as Voyager 1 cascaded out of the solar system, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) turned the camera on the probe around to take one last picture of Earth.

The Earth hardly occupies a pixel in the image and could easily be overlooked.

"Consider again that dot – that's home, that's here, that's us," said

Carl Sagan, the revered American astronomer, about the "mode of dust, suspended in a sunbeam".

I suppose I picked this image as my screensaver because I find it liberating. If, from a certain perspective, the earth is reducible to a speck of light, then the daily problems of my life are not so much resolved, but rather dissolved. By reminding myself of my cosmic insignificance, I am better able to concentrate on what matters. An interesting strategy, I know. This is the value of a change in perspective: seeing things in a new light may change what shimmers.

For this year's edition of *LIP*, the journalism honours class of 2022 hopes to showcase the power of perspective by broadening the conventional lens used when dealing with important socio-economic issues in our country.

On 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, we have chosen to reshape traditional media narratives and to tell the stories of people and organisations that have leveraged a fresh perspective to positively impact the world and their communities. By telling these stories, we hope to contribute to making the pale blue dot just a little bit brighter.



▲ After a six billion kilometre journey, the Voyager 1 space probe turned its camera on Earth to capture the 'Pale Blue Dot'.



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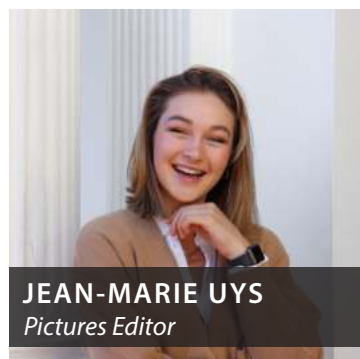
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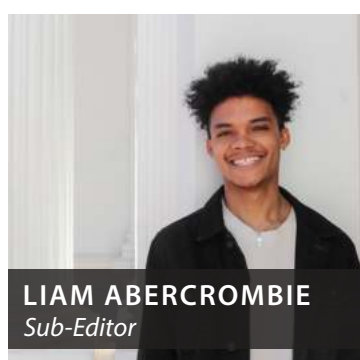
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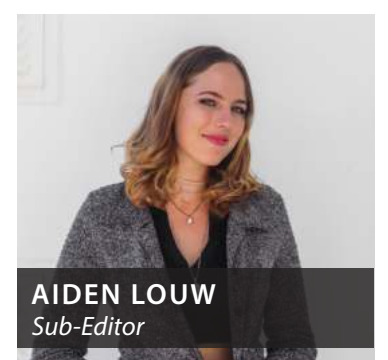
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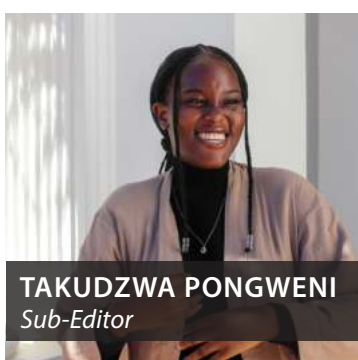
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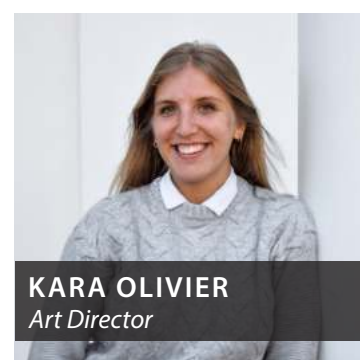
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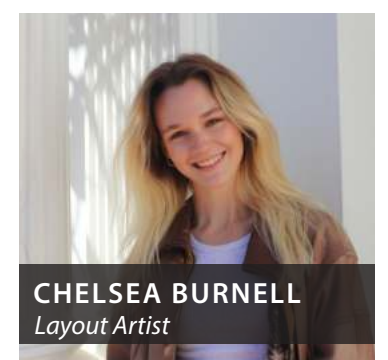
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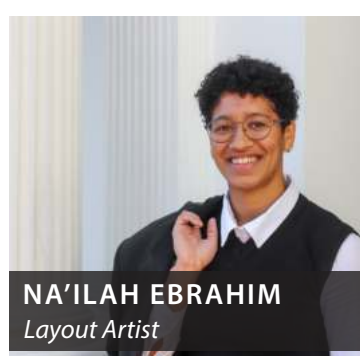
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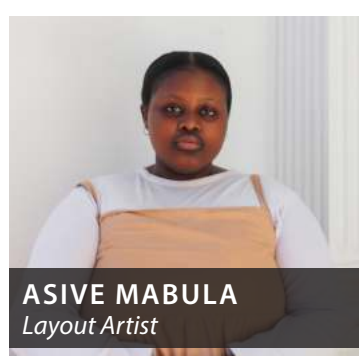
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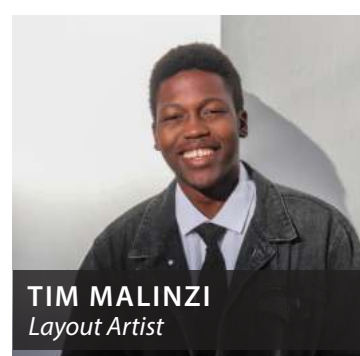
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WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Anneli Groenewald
Heléne Booyens
Dr Gerda Engelbrecht
Elizabeth Newman
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Reframing the news constructively

The necessity of a new narrative

On 1 March, a peaceful demonstration was held on Stellenbosch University's campus in solidarity with Ukraine, following the country's invasion by Russia. **GRAPHIC: LIP team**

William Brederode and Karla van der Merwe

News globally nowadays has become “excessively problem-focused” with the apparent good intentions of allowing readers to keep those in power accountable and respond to societal issues. It becomes counterproductive, however, when the news media as a whole has its focus on what is going wrong rather than providing readers with news on progress and potential solutions. This was according to Sean Wood, the chief executive officer of Positive News Magazine, a publication committed to good journalism about good things, according to their official website.

“Excessive negativity can lead to people feeling overwhelmed, powerless, apathetic, as well as feeling ‘compassion fatigue,’” said Wood. “So, a wider slice of the truth is needed – not just reporting the problem, but positive responses to it too.”

‘If it bleeds, it leads’

A slant towards the negative affects not only readers, but also the coverage of news, according to a 2019 study by Stuart Soroka, Patrick Fournier, and Lilach Nir. “The importance of negativity biases for news is relatively clear. Negativity biases affect news selection, and thus also news production, as well as citizens’ attitudes about current affairs,”

wrote Soroka, Fournier and Nir in their article.

When news coverage on South African current affairs is primarily negative, it creates the perception that nothing is happening in terms of progress in the country, according to Stuart Pennington, the CEO of South Africa – The Good News, which is an independent, apolitical organisation that aims to source and publish positive news about South Africa.

“When people know what the facts are, they begin to see the world differently,” said Pennington.

Carissa Drury, head of content at Ginkgo Agency, which created the Beautiful News publication, added that although it is not practical to shy away from negative news or pretend that it does not exist, she can understand why “people may want to switch off the news entirely” when considering the stress and anxiety it can cause.

She added, however, that people also gravitate towards negative news. “‘If it bleeds, it leads’ type of sensationalist reporting is so effective because of our inherent negative bias,” said Drury.

“[Humans are] hardwired to look for threats to our survival, so alarming negative headlines grab our attention. News and media brands want our attention be-

cause that supports their business models. So, the news ends up focusing on the worst of what’s happening,” said Wood.

He further explained that readers are realising the “harmful impact” it has on them, which leads to them “choosing to reduce their news consumption and find positive alternatives”.

“I think more mindful news consumption is a growing element, among others, of how people are looking to manage their wellbeing,” said Wood.

“For something to be newsworthy doesn’t mean it has to be about something gruesome or depressing.”

Our shield against despair

Drury describes the work of Beautiful News as aiming “to show [their audience] that people are inherently made for goodness”.

“Our motto is ‘Reframing our world’, and so many of our stories

are a reframing of something negative,” said Drury. She continued to explain that while “one feel-good story in a sea of bad news” will not change people’s perspective, “if [they] are consistently shown a world of positivity, [they will] start to believe that positive change is possible and that [they] can be part of it”.

Research done on the Positive News Magazine’s audience indicated that their stories “improve people’s mood, help them become aware of progress that is happening and possibilities for change, and help them to feel that their own actions matter and can make a difference”, according to Wood.

Showcasing the best in us

Publications typically publish spoof or joke articles on April Fools Day, but this year News24 had other plans. The largest news publisher in the country turned 1 April into ‘Good News Day’ by asking every journalist at the company to write a story about “those people who keep South Africa together”. This was according to Adriaan Basson, editor-in-chief at News24.

“As a team we just said, ‘How do we do something that just highlights the good in South Africa?’ Because there’s still an enormous amount of good people doing good projects, keeping things together, feeding their communities, [...] educating the poor, making sure the wheels are turning,”

said Basson.

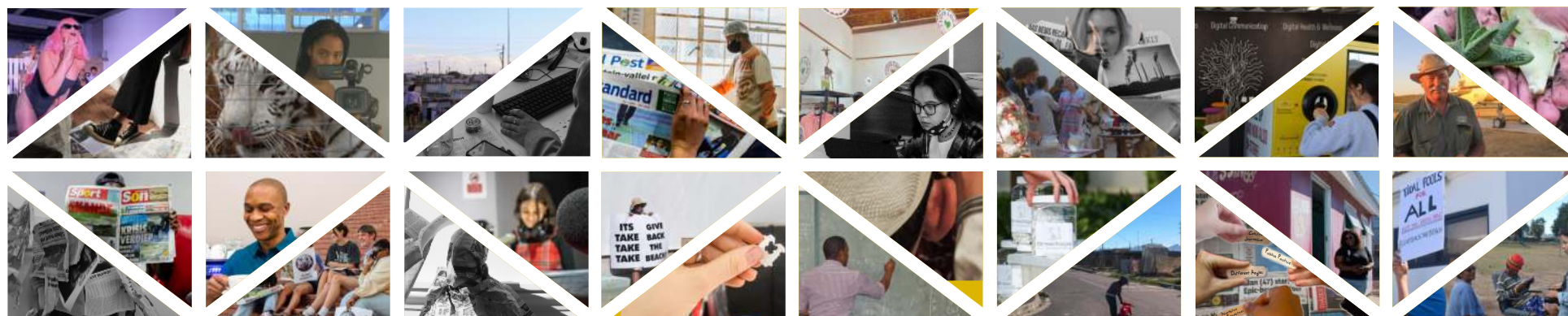
While News24’s usual news coverage includes stories on topics such as corruption and crime, which are important to cover to protect those affected by wrongdoing, Basson explained that “newsworthiness is much broader than that”.

“For something to be newsworthy doesn’t mean it has to be about something gruesome or depressing,” said Basson, who added that writing from a different perspective challenged the notion that ‘if it bleeds it leads’.

Basson said that while it is important for News24 to continue writing critically, discussions are ongoing to try and infuse the normal day news agenda with stories about the people who “keep this country going, that keep it ticking and the wheels greased”.

Wood echoed this sentiment and explained that occasionally taking on a more positive focus is “not about sugar-coating anything or ignoring negative facts”, but rather acknowledging the newsworthiness of stories that prioritise progress and solutions.

“It’s simply about combining journalistic skills with a solution-focused mindset and seeking out those positive angles so that the facts can be reported in a way that empowers people instead of potentially having a negative impact on their wellbeing and worldview.”



PHOTOS: The LIP team | GRAPHIC: Jamie Venter

Digitale joernalistiek

Die veld lê braak vir gemeenskapskoerante

Karla van der Merwe

Vanjaar se Unesco-Wêreldpersvryheidsdag-tema, “Journalism under digital siege”, fokus op die invloed wat die digitale wêreld op joernalistiek het. Volgens Unesco, kyk hulle onder meer na die wyse waarop algoritmes en kunsmatige intelligensie (KI) joernalistiek beïnvloed.

Hoewel baie plaaslike gemeenskapskoerante eers onlangs begin het om hul vlerke na die digitale wêreld te spreid, het hierdie ontwikkelinge tog reeds ’n invloed op hoe die koerante te werk gaan. Só sê Marlene Jordaan, hoofredakteur by die Worcester Standard.

Die arm man se prokureur
Gemeenskapskoerante se rol

is uniek, het Jordaan gesê. “As ek byvoorbeeld aanlyn gaan soek oor Zuma of Poetin, dan is daar miljoene stories,” het sy verduidelik.

“Maar as ek gaan soek na tannie Sannie se grootste pampoepoen in Worcester, dan gaan daar net een storie opkom. En dít is óns storie,” het Jordaan gesê.

“Ons inhoud is op die gemeenskap gefokus en het dus ’n direkte impak op die lewens van diegene in die gemeenskap,” het Earl September, die aanlynredakteur van *Son*, gesê. September het dié koerant as ’n streekskoerant beskryf.

Volgens Lise Beyers, hoofredakteur van die *Paarl Post*, is ’n gemeenskapskoerant “die arm man se prokureur”.

“Die ou op straat ... as hy byvoorbeeld by die supermark

’n liter suur melk gaan koop en hy kom by die huis en skink daai melk en dis suur in sy koffie, gaan hy nie terug na die bestuurder van die winkel nie,” het Beyers gesê. “Hy kom klop aan die *Paarl Post* se deur en kom kla daar.”

Die opkoms van KI

KI help *Son* om stories waarin lesers belangstel, uit te ken en sodoende temas van belang vir die koerant te identifiseer, het September verduidelik.

Hulle gebruik dan daardie temas om soortgelyke stories in ander gemeenskappe te identifiseer.

“Ons joernaliste is elke dag fisies in hierdie verskillende gemeenskappe om stories te cover en dikwels is daar ook lesers in ander dele van die land wat in



Gemeenskapskoerante is belangrike entiteite binne hulle gegewe gemeenskappe en dien dikwels as ’n mondstuk vir diegene wat daarin woon. **FOTO: Karla van der Merwe**

hierdie stories belangstel,” het September gesê.

Algoritmes help ook vir Jordaan om te bepaal watter tipe stories in ’n bepaalde week die gewildste is. Sy sal dié stories dan op sosiale media deel gedurende tye wanneer haar lesers, volgens Facebook-data, aanlyn is.

“Die nadeel daarvan is dat dit jou aanhou stook in ’n sekere patroon in,” het sy gesê. “Ek probeer ook om ’n paar keer teenproduktief teen [die algoritme se voorstelle] te deel sodat ek kan kyk of ek nie ’n ander demografie ’n bietjie kan ontwikkel nie.”

Onderontginde geleenthede

Jordaan meen dat daar ongelooflike ruimte is vir gemeenskapsjoernalistiek op aanlyn- en sosiale media, en dat dit ’n onderontginde geleentheid is. “Netwerk24 het byvoorbeeld vir ons die geleentheid gegee om ons *hyperlocal content* op hulle tuisblad te sit,” het sy gesê. Hier-

die stories is egter dikwels “heel onderaan die blad” weggesteek.

“Dit lê heel onder by die [terme en voorwaardes], en ek dink dit is ’n verskriklike geleentheid wat hulle mis, want daar is nuus wat hulle lesers op sou *click* wat hulle andersins nooit sou gesien het nie.”

Jordaan, Beyers en September is dit eens dat ’n groot persentasie van hulle lesersbasis nie noodwendig toegang tot aanlynplatforms het nie. Dit is onder meer omdat Suid-Afrika, en veral die meer plattelandse areas, dikwels data-arm is. Volgens Jordaan en Beyers beteken dit dat hulle publikasies dus nog baie op drukformate fokus en voor betaalmure beskikbaar is.

“Ons gemeenskap is nie verskriklik gretig om agter ’n betaalmuur van Netwerk24 te moet gaan nie,” het Beyers gesê. “Hulle sal eerder die stories op Facebook wil sien as om op ’n nuuswebwerf in te gaan om daai stories te lees.”



“’n Groot deel van die *Standard* [se lesersbasis], veral die jonger lesers, lees nog die koerant,” het Marlene Jordaan, hoofredakteur van die Worcester Standard gesê. **FOTO: Karla van der Merwe**

Community news told from the ‘GroundUp’

Nakishka Skriker

There are significant gaps in the South African media industry in its representation of marginalised communities, according to media expert Sisanda Nkoala, an academic at Cape Peninsula University of Technology’s (CPUT) media department.

GroundUp is a not-for-profit news publication which aims to address these gaps, through its coverage of human rights stories in South Africa, according to Nathan Geffen, editor of GroundUp.

The donor-funded publication was founded by Geffen, who aimed to address the need for coverage of human rights issues at its outset in 2012.

Ten years later, he believes GroundUp has met this goal, but the work to address these issues has not ended. Geffen expressed concern that currently “the state is highly incapable of delivering all that it is supposed to”. This leads to a failure to uphold constitutional rights and it is this “lack of capability” that needs to be addressed, said Geffen.

Reject the “single narrative”
“Everyday things that people go through that are often overlooked [are] captured in the way that GroundUp’s stories [are] told,” said Masego Mafata, a freelance writer for GroundUp.

Another GroundUp freelancer, Raymond Joseph, expressed similar sentiments, stating that the publication is filling a very important gap in the reporting of social justice issues.

Joseph identified townships as areas which are particularly underrepresented in the media, especially in terms of positive coverage.

Nkoala echoed this view, claiming that “[news] reports tend to employ a single narrative” about townships and lower-income communities, exacerbating stereotypes around these communities and their inhabitants.

Many of these stories are largely negative and emphasise the challenges faced by community members, explained Nkoala.

Community media

Mafata identified accountability as a key factor in addressing the human rights issues that affect marginalised communities.

“Quite a few of the stories that we do are about failure to uphold constitutional rights [...] part of our job is to ensure that people who fail to uphold those rights are held accountable,” stated Mafata.

Coverage of human rights issues has improved in the time that GroundUp has been around, noted Geffen. “I’d like to take some credit for that – that the kind of reporting we have done



Townships are particularly underrepresented areas in the media, according to Raymond Joseph, a freelance writer for GroundUp, a not-for-profit news agency.

PHOTO: Jamie Venter

“The legal threats don’t give us sleepless nights.”

has rubbed off onto other news publications.”

CPUT’s Nkoala shares a similar view, identifying the publication as “a model, particularly for community media, on how to keep the voices of the community central”.

Corruption unearthed

In 2021, the South African National Editors’ Forum (SANEF) announced Geffen and Joseph as joint winners of the Nat Nakasa Award for Community Media for their work at GroundUp. This is according to the SANEF website, which recognises GroundUp

as a “sterling example of good community journalism in action”, noting the publication’s coverage on the national lotteries scandal as exemplary.

GroundUp’s #DodgyLottery series explores corruption and incompetence involving National Lotteries Commission projects, according to an article written by Joseph on the GroundUp website in 2019.

Fikile Mbalula, the minister of transport, has demanded a R2 million apology from Joseph and Mafata, and the Daily Maverick, according to an article on the website published in December 2021.

The article explained that Mbalula’s lawyers issued a letter claiming an article in the #DodgyLottery series, written by Joseph and Mafata and republished by the Daily Maverick, made “wrongful and defamatory” allegations. “The legal threats don’t give us sleepless nights,” said Geffen. Although they incur legal costs, he explained that these threats result in a greater willingness for people to support the publication through donations.

The GroundUp website specifies that much of its funding comes from institutional donors. However, the website encourages more of their readers to make donations, as they do not generate money through adverts or subscriptions.

Incubating the entrepreneurial spirit

Chelsea Burnell

In South Africa, over 70% of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) fail within the first five to seven years of their creation, according to researcher Bernard Bushe.

SMMEs are important among national strategic priorities in the wake of many economic hardships including unemployment and poverty, according to Bushe.

“Employment opportunities, contribution to gross domestic product, and tax on profit” are among the advantages of creating businesses, said Goosain Solomon, a lecturer at Stellenbosch University’s department of business management, in written correspondence with *LIP*.

The key to success

Start-up businesses face several barriers to success, said Dirk Jonker, an entrepreneurship PhD candidate at the Swiss-based Monarch School of Business.

The reality of small business management is that business owners need to decide whether to persevere or pivot based on early signs of success, said Jonker. “This is the choice to keep on going or change your

product or service.”

Important factors that may influence that decision are a business’ access to resources, ability to network and willingness to embrace change, said Jonker. Solomon said that the focus should be on creating quality businesses that can overcome these challenges. SMME survival is also supported by incubation hubs which “grow with the entrepreneur” rather than dishing out money, according to Bushe.

A space to create

CoCreate Hub in Stellenbosch offers a space for local SMMEs to develop quality businesses that are sustainable in the long term, said Sue Walker, manager at the CoCreate Hub.

CoCreate is a community centre started by the Ranyaka non-profit organisation. It allows entrepreneurs to operate a business in central Stellenbosch when they would not previously be able to due to high rental fees in the area. This is according to Sonya Olivier, the marketing manager at Ranyaka.

“The hub is part of a comprehensive [and] holistic business-building program that is part of a larger national initiative to grow resilient, strong, thriving com-

munities”, explained Olivier.

The 41 businesses which currently operate out of the CoCreate Hub are not required to pay rental fees, but are rather charged commission on items sold at the hub, said Olivier. She said that structuring the relationship between the hub and the entrepreneur in this way eliminates the barrier of costly rental fees in central Stellenbosch.

“There are a lot of innovative souls under this roof.”

“Many of the entrepreneurs at the CoCreate Hub had to pivot due to the Covid-19 pandemic” as their businesses needed to diversify product and service offerings in order to remain profitable in a new economic climate, said Olivier.

“There are a lot of innovative souls under this roof,” she stated.

One of the entrepreneurs operating in this space is Mhlangi Ngcobo, the owner of Coffee MM, and one of the first entrepreneurs to start working from the hub. Ngcobo launched



▲ Gaga Bout Koffie is one of the coffee-focused businesses operating out of the CoCreate Hub based in Victoria Street, Stellenbosch. Onke Mbelwa, (left) is the maintenance manager of the CoCreate Hub, and Prince Thulani Ndhlovu, is the newest barista working at Gaga Bout Koffie. **PHOTO: Chelsea Burnell**

this coffee roastery business in 2017, operating out of his garage. Ranyaka sponsored his studies at the Small Business Academy in 2020 and, after participating in Ranyaka’s Building Business program, they felt that his coffee products could work at CoCreate Hub.

“Having the resources that are supplied here [at CoCreate Hub] has helped my business tremendously,” stated Ngcobo. He said that having the overhead costs

of electricity and water covered, offered him “peace of mind and ensured financial success”, creating a platform for his business to grow.

According to Ngcobo, the entrepreneurs at CoCreate Hub share their expertise with each other and collaborations between businesses and products are formed.

Ngcobo is set to open another coffee shop in Somerset West this year.



Sustainability one pot plant at a time

Andrea de Lilly

South Africa’s agricultural sector is currently dominated by commercial farming practices and operations that are not environmentally friendly or sustainable.

This is according to Erna Curry, communications coordinator of the Environmental Monitoring Group.

The sector’s “core intent and operation degrades the natural resources of soil, water and air”, explained Curry, via written correspondence with *LIP*.

Finding a solution

Current propagation techniques, such as the use of heated beds, are quite energy-intensive

and can lead to water wastage, according to Tristan Kruger, a member of the horticultural team at the Stellenbosch University (SU) botanical gardens. He added that water wastage is also of concern with propagation. Developing new propagation techniques is important, Kruger said.

Jancke van Wyk, a fourth-year BScAgric plant and soil science student at SU, told *LIP* that she aims to be the person to discover and develop these techniques.

In 2021, Van Wyk launched Bosch Flora, an environmentally conscious business selling succulent plants, after noticing a need for more environmentally friendly propagation techniques in the agricultural industry.

Low-cost sustainability

“I hope to create a production system that is more environment-friendly by using more bio-products and less wasteful production techniques,” said Van Wyk.

To ensure her production system remains as environmentally friendly and low-cost as possible, Van Wyk adopted various sustainable production techniques.

“I collect rainwater and don’t use any herbicides. I also create my own soil mix by collecting soil from farms [where] succulents will thrive,” said Van Wyk.

She also collects plastic bottles and repurposes them to create humidity chambers, which promotes the root growth of her

“I believe reusing single-use plastic, or lowering plastic use should be one of our main goals as a society. So I enjoy incorporating recycling practices into what I do,” said Jancke van Wyk, owner of Bosch Flora. **PHOTO: Andrea de Lilly**



▲ Jancke van Wyk, the owner of Bosch Flora, started her business selling succulent plants in 2021. **PHOTO: Andrea de Lilly**

propagated leaves.

“I believe reusing single-use plastic, or lowering plastic use, should be one of our main goals as a society, so I enjoy incorporating recycling practices into what I do,” said Van Wyk.

Following your passions

As a student studying plant and soil science, Van Wyk realised that much of the theoretical knowledge from her degree could be implemented into her business, such as “creating the correct soil mix for succulent growth, [using] the [correct] amount of water and practical propagation techniques”.

Bosch Flora has received a considerable amount of support from the Stellenbosch student community, according to Van Wyk, who added that she has been overwhelmed by the number of orders and has sold

out on numerous occasions.

“Although my business is still in the very early stages of development, I hope it inspires others to follow their passions. I hope to improve the lives of people in the future and share my knowledge with others,” added Van Wyk.

The future of Bosch Flora

Jancke van Wyk’s vision for Bosch Flora includes expanding and creating more job opportunities for women in the agricultural industry. It is her desire to hire and upskill women through the knowledge she has gained from her degree, said Van Wyk. She wants to teach employees how to propagate plants, about pest management, and when to water plants.

Volwasse ongeletterdheid onder die loep

Nazley Wilschutt

“Ouderdom behoort nie in enige iemand se pad te staan as jy jou droom wil bereik nie. Ek was die oudste in die klas.”

Dit is die woorde van die 49-jarige Anna Jacobs. Verlede jaar was Jacobs die toppresterder by die Forest Heights Gemeenskapsleersentrum in Eersterivier. Dié leersentrum vorm deel van ’n drastiese ingrypingsinisiatief deur die regering en nie-regerings-entiteite om ’n verskil in die ongeletterdheidsyfer onder volwassenes te maak.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse volwasse ongeletterdheidsyfer (van diegene 20 jaar oud en ouer) het die afgelope nege jaar aansienlik gedaal, volgens David Diale, hoofdirekteur van onderwys, opleiding, ontwikkeling en assessering by die departement van hoër onderwys en opleiding. “Tussen 2009 en 2018 was daar ’n beduidende afname van 7% in die ongeletterdheidsyfer van volwassenes,” het hy gesê. Volgens Diale dui Statistieke Suid-Afrika se 2020-opname vir algemene huishoudings aan dat die ongeletterdheidsyfer onder volwassenes in Suid-Afrika tans 12,1% is.

Dit beteken dat 4,4 miljoen volwassenes steeds ongeletterd is, volgens ’n feiteblad oor die Suid-Afrikaanse ongeletterdheidsyfer van die departement van hoër onderwys en opleiding.

Volgens dié feiteblad, is dit belangrik om onderskeid te tref tussen ongeletterdheid onder mans en vroue. In vergelyking met

Mosambiek, waar die ongeletterdheidsyfer 27,4% vir mans en 49,7% vir vroue is, is Suid-Afrika se ongeletterdheidsyfer aansienlik laer, met ’n syfer van 12,3% vir mans en 13,5% vir vroue.

Luidens onlangse statistieke van Unesco aangaande ongeletterdheid, is daar minstens 774 miljoen volwassenes in die wêreld wat nie oor die basiese geletterdheidsvaardighede beskik nie.

“Ten spyte van die daling in [Suid-Afrika se] ongeletterdheidsyfer onder volwassenes, is daar egter verskeie faktore wat ’n invloed het op dié syfers,” het Diale gesê.

Volgens hom het die Oos-Kaap die hoogste ongeletterdheidsyfer onder volwassenes in die land.

“Mense besef dat hulle nou ’n tweede, of selfs derde, kans het op opvoeding wat hulle in staat stel om hul drome te bereik.”

Bydraende faktore

Diale het gesê dit is belangrik dat mense die noodsaaklikheid van opvoeding verstaan, maar dat hulle die faktore wat ’n invloed het op die ongeletterd-

heidsyfer onder volwassenes, ook in ag moet neem.

“Die land se apartheidsgeskiedenis het steeds ’n impak op die pogings wat aangewend word om ongeletterdheid onder volwassenes uit te roei. Nog ’n faktor is die gebrek aan nodige hulpbronne in plekke waar ongeletterdheid en armoede seëvier,” het hy gesê.

Volgens Diale kan die skoolstelsel as een van dié faktore beskou word. Ingrypings is egter wel in plek gestel om bestaande struikelblokke te probeer oorkom, en sodoende gehalte-aanderwys te verskaf, het hy gesê. Een van hierdie ingrypings sluit die hersiene Kurrikulum- en Assesseringsbeleidverklaring (KABV, oftewel CAPS) in wat deur die departement van basiese onderwys gedoen is.

Alhoewel ingrypings en strategieë in plek gestel is om volwasse ongeletterdheid in Suid-Afrika te takel, het Diale gesê dat die fondse en hulpbronne wat aan geletterdheidsprogramme vir volwassenes toegeken word, steeds onvoldoende is. “Die totale bedrag wat aan [dit] toegeken word is R2,37 miljard. Hierdie bedrag is vir alle gemeenskapsopvoedings- en -opleidingsprogramme,” het Diale per e-pos aan LIP gesê.

Hy sê die grootste deel van die totale begroting, R2,05 miljard, is vir dosente se salarisse uiteen gesit.

“Verskeie strategieë is in plek gestel om vaardighede aan ongeletterde volwassenes sowel as nie-skoolgaande jeugdige te verskaf. Gemeenskapsonderrig en -opleidingskolleges (CET-



Heinrich Vermeulen, ’n graad 12-leerder by die gemeenskapsleersentrum in Eersterivier, is in die Engelse klas besig met die formaat van ’n dagboekinskrif. FOTO: Nazley Wilschutt

kolleges) is tans besig met hul voorbereiding vir die aanbied van vaardighedsprogramme,” het hy gesê.

Diale het verduidelik dat sulke programme dit ten doel het om aan jeugdige en volwassenes die vaardighede te leer wat tot hul indiensneming kan lei, of hulle kan aanmoedig om hul eie besighede te begin.

Gemeenskapsleersentrum vir volwassenes

“Buiten om volwassenes op te voed, wou ons ook die vlak van geletterdheidsprobleme onder volwassenes en diegene wat die skool verlaat het, verlaag,” het Desmond Engelbrecht, wat al 14 jaar lank ’n fasiliteerder by die Forest Heights Gemeenskapsleersentrum is, gesê.

“Ons wou die jeug emansipeer en opvoed om sodoende vir hulle ’n toekoms, hoop en ’n droom te verskaf. Ons wil ook verseker dat ons hulle met die nodige vaardighede toerus om te kan skryf en lees.”

Engels eerste addisionele taal, wiskunde geletterdheid en geskiedenis is van die eerste vakke wat by die sentrum aangebied word, het Engelbrecht gesê. Nadat studente hierdie vakke voltooi het, kan hulle die res van hulle gekose vakke ook voltooi “ten einde hul matrieksertifikaat te kan ontvang”.

Die hoofdoel van die sentrum, volgens Engelbrecht, is om die ongeletterdheidsvlak onder volwassenes sowel as jeugdige uit te wis.

“Die klem word daarop gelê om volwassenes en jeugdige te

bemagtig met opvoeding,” het hy gesê. “Ons het skoonmakers gehad wat by die hospitaal in Eersterivier gewerk het en by die sentrum aangesluit het. Hulle het verpleegsters geword. Ons het studente gehad wat onderwysers geword het en onlangs ’n student wat tans besig is om binne die ekonomiese veld te studeer.”

“Mense besef dat hulle nou ’n tweede, of selfs derde, kans het op opvoeding wat hulle in staat stel om hul drome te bereik,” het Engelbrecht gesê.

Oud maar nog nie koud

Jacobs het verlede jaar haar vlak 4, wat gelykstaande aan graad 11 is, suksesvol voltooi. Haar vakke het Afrikaans, wiskunde, lewensoriëntering, reis en toerisme, en aanvullende gesondheidsorg behels.

Sy meen dat die klasse aanvanklik baie moeilik was, maar het verduidelik dat sy gou aangepas het en dit toe makliker geword het. “Dit het moeilik gegaan vir my omdat ek ’n huisvrou is. Ek moes na my huishouding omsien het. Daarna moet ek met my boeke sit, maar ek het deurgedruk,” het sy gesê.

Jacobs het gesê sy beoog om haar vlak 5, gelykstaande aan matriek, oor twee jaar te voltooi.

Sy glo dat ’n goeie ondersteuningstelsel noodsaaklik is vir sukses.

“Diegene wat dink dat hulle dit nie gaan maak nie: Wel, ek het dit gemaak met die hulp van die onderwysers, my familie en my buurvrou. As jy ’n goeie support system het, kan jy enige iets bereik,” het sy gesê.



Die graad 12-leerders van die Forest Heights Gemeenskapsleersentrum in Eersterivier sit en luister na Shaun Booyen, die wiskunde geletterdheidsonderwyser. FOTO: Nazley Wilschutt

Moulding future digital citizens

Joel Ontong and Tamia Retief

To elevate digital literacy among the youth and local communities, a Jamestown based foundation is helping to build digital hubs in various Western Cape schools. This is according to Nadine Farao, head of sales, marketing and fundraising at the Mido Foundation.

The Mido Foundation was founded in 2018, said Farao, who added that these hubs help to prepare students for future work environments and to make them “digital citizens”.

Digital literacy rates in South Africa are low, primarily due to a lack of access to computers, as only approximately 10% of South Africans have computers in their homes. This is according to a report done in 2020 by Amy Sokolow of Northwestern University.

The foundation provides different types of training to make students and school staff more capable of navigating computers and online spaces, according to Farao.

Members of the community are employed as hub coordinators,

who are enlisted to help students with using the digital hub’s resources.

Cracking the code

A digital hub was established in Lückhoff High School in October 2020. The hub is important in providing students with educational resources to gain digital literacy, according to Sherine Barends, deputy-principal at Lückhoff High School.

“We are sending the students into a digital world. You cannot just send a child out [after matriculating] with only books and

paper – then you aren’t preparing them for a realistic future,” said Barends.

The hub is always bustling with students, according to Mary-Ann van der Merwe, the hub coordinator at Lückhoff High School.

“The students run to the hub during breaktime and teachers can also book the hub for the technology, especially to do their online tests,” added Van der Merwe.

Barends said that she felt good about the initiative and that it is “a step into the future” for the staff and students at the school.



Lückhoff High School’s digital hub was founded in October 2020 to improve student’s digital literacy, according to Sherine Barends, deputy-principal at Lückhoff High School. PHOTO: JOEL ONTONG

Teaching tomorrow's teachers, today

A lesson in solving South Africa's education crisis

Bianke Neethling

South Africa's education system faces a number of challenges, amongst which the crises of teacher supply, demand and quality are particularly critical.

This is according to Prof Chika Sehoole, dean of the University of Pretoria's faculty of education. "For an educational system to function normally, we need a sufficient supply of well-qualified teachers," Sehoole told *LIP* via written communication.

An education crisis

Sehoole referred to a recent study undertaken by Prof Servaas van der Berg from Stellenbosch University (SU) which projected that, by 2025, the demand for new teachers will be 39 500 and by 2030, approximately 52 000. "Currently, universities are not producing those kinds of numbers," stated Sehoole.

The weight of this crisis was echoed by Prof Mbulungeni Madiba, dean of SU's faculty of education, who listed the "triple challenges" South Africa's education system faces as poverty, inequality and unemployment. "Concomitant to these challenges

is the problem of equity of access and success," he said, mentioning the country's notably high drop-out rates as an example.

One of Madiba's proposed solutions to these crises is "to train more teachers to meet the ever-increasing demand due to retirement [and] investment in education infrastructure."

“For an educational system to function normally, we need a sufficient supply of well qualified teachers.”

Finding solutions

The Jakes Gerwel Fellowship (JGF) is a university scholarship programme that provides a noteworthy solution to South Africa's education crisis by focusing their efforts on "[positioning] teaching as an aspirational career and teachers as the solution to South Africa's education sector".

This is according to Kaya Nyati, head of strategic

communications for JGF. The organisation offers "a full university scholarship that provides extensive mentoring and leadership development to top learners to help them become expert teachers, educational leaders and social entrepreneurs", Nyati told *LIP* via written communication.

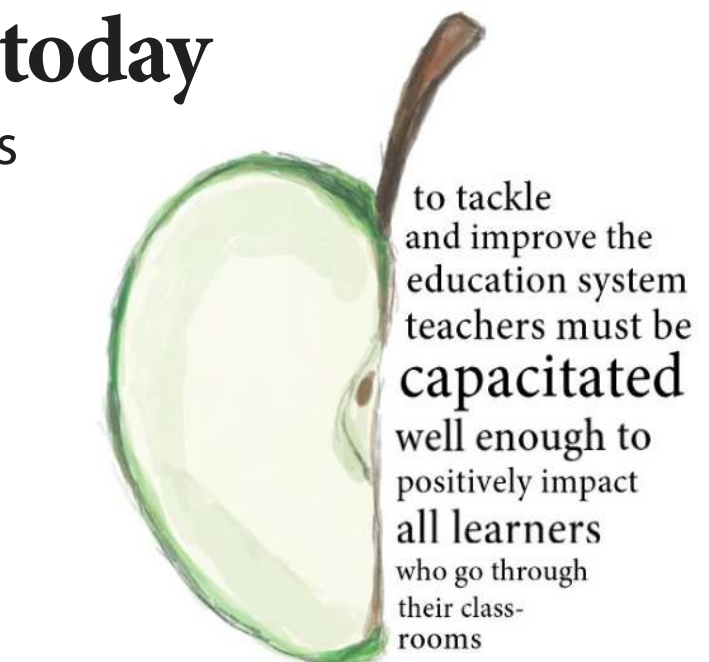
A catalyst for change

JGF's choice to focus its efforts on educators stems from its belief that "the educator is a constant in the education system, as opposed to the learner, who will leave the system at the end of her/his school career", explained Nyati.

"For this reason, [JGF believes] that to tackle and improve the education system, teachers must be capacitated well enough to positively impact all learners who go through their classrooms."

Sehoole commended JGF's efforts by stating that the fellowship "is [...] identifying talented young people, mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds and [granting] them access to quality training and support in some of these critical scarce skills subjects".

JGF's first cohort of graduates entered the workforce in 2022 and, according to Nyati, three



Quoted above is Kaya Nyati, head of strategic communications for the Jakes Gerwel Fellowship. "Well trained educators are the main ingredient in the improvement of learner outcomes," said Nyati. **GRAPHIC: Jessica Hillier**

out of 40 newly qualified JGF educators are "already heading up subject departments in their schools". Nyati believes that "this is an indication of the confidence school leadership has in the quality of [JGF's] graduates and their potential in the education system".

One such fellow who entered the field of teaching this year is 22-year-old Wandile Nzuza, who currently works at a school in Cape Town, where he teaches

English and history.

Nzuza identified differences in how he, a JGF fellow, and some educators who were not a part of this programme view education.

"[JGF fellows] make the focus 'education as a tool for self-actualisation', meaning that we see the quality delivery of education to students as the primary means through which we can impact the sad state of affairs South African education finds itself [in]."

University application #feesmustfall

Asive Mabula

Sixteen of South Africa's 26 public universities require an application fee if you are not registered at the university at the time of application.

This is based on information available on each public university's website.

Although university application fees were required for administrative purposes, they still remain a barrier to higher education access, said Yonela Tukwayo, Walter Sisulu University (WSU) spokesperson.

“... some might see an application fee of R200 as a negligible cost, for poor homes it is a lot of money.”

WSU is based in the Eastern Cape, where a lot of the students come from underprivileged high schools and application fees are a cost many cannot afford, explained Tukwayo.

"Although some might see an application fee of R200 as a negligible cost, for poor homes it is a lot of money. Doing away with application fees might reduce the barrier to [university] entry for many," said Tukwayo.

R0 application fee

"WSU used to print 100 000 applications for distribution by student recruitment officers across the Eastern Cape," explained Tukwayo.

"The university had to store these application forms for a number of years at off-site facilities for audit purposes. These activities were a considerable cost for the university, hence an application fee was charged," said Tukwayo. "When WSU moved to a 100% online application system, there was no longer a need to recover costs and hence the university no longer charges application fees," said Tukwayo.

On 1 February, Blade Ndzimande, minister of higher education, science and innovation, stated during a media briefing at the Government Communication Information System in Pretoria that first-time university enrolments were estimated at 208 299 nationally in 2022.

Universities such as Stellenbosch University (SU), University of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand and Rhodes University still have application fees. However, some universities have come up with solutions to make education more accessible.

The option to waiver

SU's website states that, if you are an applicant from quintile one to four schools, you are not required to pay for an application fee.

According to the department of education's website, these quintile one to four schools are the poorest 80% of schools in the country and do not require



Over half of South African public universities require application fees if you are not already registered, according to information available on each public university's website.

PHOTO: Jean-Marie Uys

application fees from students.

Martin Viljoen, SU spokesperson, explained that "any additional socio-economic or financial circumstances [that] can be motivated", can result in an application fee being waived if students have financial challenges. These motivations can be sent to the client service centre.

A brighter future

IkamvaYouth has 17 branches nationally, with six in the Western Cape. This organisation seeks to tutor, mentor, offer life skills workshops and assist with money for application fees to students in low-income areas. This is according to Zamile Hlongwana, Gugulethu branch

“Doing away with application fees might reduce the barrier to [university] entry for many.”

coordinator for IkamvaYouth. "The organisation was founded in 2003 in Khayelitsha by Joy Olivier and Makhosi Gogwana as a small tutoring space to assist learners who needed extra classes and provide extra resources that are not available in township schools," explained Hlongwana.

IkamvaYouth has branches in underprivileged communities, and because of this, some of those schools fall under quintiles one to four.

"We allocate R100 to each learner, and usually not all learners require assistance with applications. In the case [that] they do, we meet the parent(s) halfway," said Hlongwana.

Surfing the tides for mental health strides

Téa Bell

South Africa is facing a youth mental health crisis, fueled by income disparity, exposure to violence and high levels of substance abuse. This is according to Dr Stella Mokitimi, an expert in South Africa's child and adolescent mental health (CAMH) policy. The cycle is unlikely to break unless youth-focused mental health interventions are made more accessible to vulnerable communities, Mokitimi told *LIP*.

SA's youth mental health crisis

"With children who come from environments where there are higher rates of crime, substance use, and abuse, it's not unlikely that we would see them exhibiting complex behavioural problems that lead to crime and violence in our society," said Mokitimi regarding the social and economic stakes of failing to address the problem of CAMH disorders.

Mokitimi explained that parents of children with behavioural issues need to dedicate more time to that child to affect vocational performance and financial independence.

"That becomes a huge problem. It perpetuates poverty and, economically, adds a burden to the government, who needs to provide grants for these families and for these children," said Mokitimi.

Mokitimi highlighted that children who need it the most, are not afforded adequate access to mental health care. About 80% of South Africans do not have access to private health insurance and are dependent on state-funded services.

This is according to a 2022 article published by Mokitimi, Marguerite Schneider and Petrus de Vries in the *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* journal.

"There is a lack of human resources and capacity for governments to provide these services," said Mokitimi, adding that only three government-funded CAMH specialty facilities

exist in the Western Cape.

According to the latest statistics collected for the 2022 article, the overall prevalence of CAMH disorders is estimated to be at 17% in the Western Cape, explained Mokitimi. She added that this figure likely understates the scale of the problem because it does not factor in infant mental health disorders, autism spectrum disorders, and certain neurodevelopmental disorders.

Due to inadequate state provision of CAMH care, Mokitimi emphasised that non-profit organisations (NPO) and non-governmental organisations (NGO) dedicated to providing such services are "adding great value" in solving SA's youth mental health crisis.

Learning to ride the riptide

The community-driven NGO, Waves for Change, provides unique solutions for at-risk youth from impoverished communities through surf therapy, according to Tim Conibear, who co-founded the Cape Town-based NGO in 2011 with his friend, Apish Tshetsha.

Tshetsha, who was born and raised in Masiphumelele township, would go to Muizenburg beach with Conibear on weekends to surf. Conibear explained that their weekly tradition soon grew into a small surf club as kids from Tshetsha's community began to tag along.

"One of the reasons that the children came was obviously because they wanted to surf and have fun, but they also started talking about this sense of freedom that it brought them," recalled Conibear. "They had this escape and it provided a respite from the stress that they faced [at home]."

Waves for Change has since grown into an organisation with five hubs across the country, providing specialised mental health interventions to over 2 000 children a week, said Conibear.

"We combine the physical activity of surfing with what we call a psychosocial curriculum that teaches children skills and behaviours to cope with stress

and regulate their emotional responses," explained Conibear.

Therapy programmes delivered by the NGO are designed with mental healthcare experts from tertiary institutions across the world, including the University of Cape Town, King's College London and the University of Sterling, according to Tania Majavie, relationship manager at Waves for Change.

However, Majavie believes that what sets Waves for Change apart is not the scale of its impact, the high success rates of interventions, or its ties to tertiary institutions, but that the organisation is community-driven and self-sustaining.

"The surf coaches who deliver the therapy sessions have either come through the programme themselves or have grown up in similar communities to the children," said Majavie.

For kids who come from communities where mental health is stigmatised, "being able to speak to a coach who comes from the same background, who really understands what they are going through and can help them with, say, a coping mechanism – I think that is impactful and valuable beyond any measure we could take", emphasised Majavie.

Passing on the surfboard

Mokitimi highlighted that a major constraint to the provision of therapeutic interventions is that "there is no recognition of CAMH as a specialty area, so we are not able to attract human resources and add to the pool of clinicians and therapists".

Conibear explained that Waves for Change offers unemployed South Africans, between 18 and 24, a two-year paid placement with the organisation. "They get trained to serve as coaches, life-guards and lay counsellors, and, of course, it's these coaches that provide the programmes to the children," said Conibear.

According to Majavie, it is "the most rewarding thing" for them when children from Waves for Change go on to become coaches and mental health champions in their own communities.

'See smoke and fly'

New fire-fighting initiative cuts red tape



A Quick Reaction Force 'Huey' releases water from a 'bambi bucket' attached to the helicopter to douse a fire in the Cape Winelands Region. "We have gone to 16 proper fires and we have not lost a single home or farm," said Mark Jackson, owner and operator at Leading Edge Aviation. **PHOTO: Supplied/Dale Nortje**

William Brederode and Jamie Venter

A newly established private fire-fighting initiative, operating from the Stellenbosch Aerodrome, has shown an impressive fire-fighting capability by eliminating bureaucracy, thereby allowing for significantly faster response times.

This is according to Mark Jackson, owner and operator of Leading Edge Aviation, the helicopter service provider for The Winelands Fire Protection Agency (WLFPA), which launched the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) initiative in 2021, with funding from six private insurance companies.

The private funding model has allowed for pilots to "see smoke and fly", said Jackson.

"In high weather conditions, minutes matter," said Dale Nortje, manager at WLFPA, adding that while other fire-fighting initiatives usually have upwards of half-hour response times, the QRF team can be in the air five minutes after a reported fire.

"We do not have to wait for the fire service to activate us," said Nortje, claiming that most other aerial fire-fighting initiatives have chains of command where permission is required to respond. The QRF team makes an

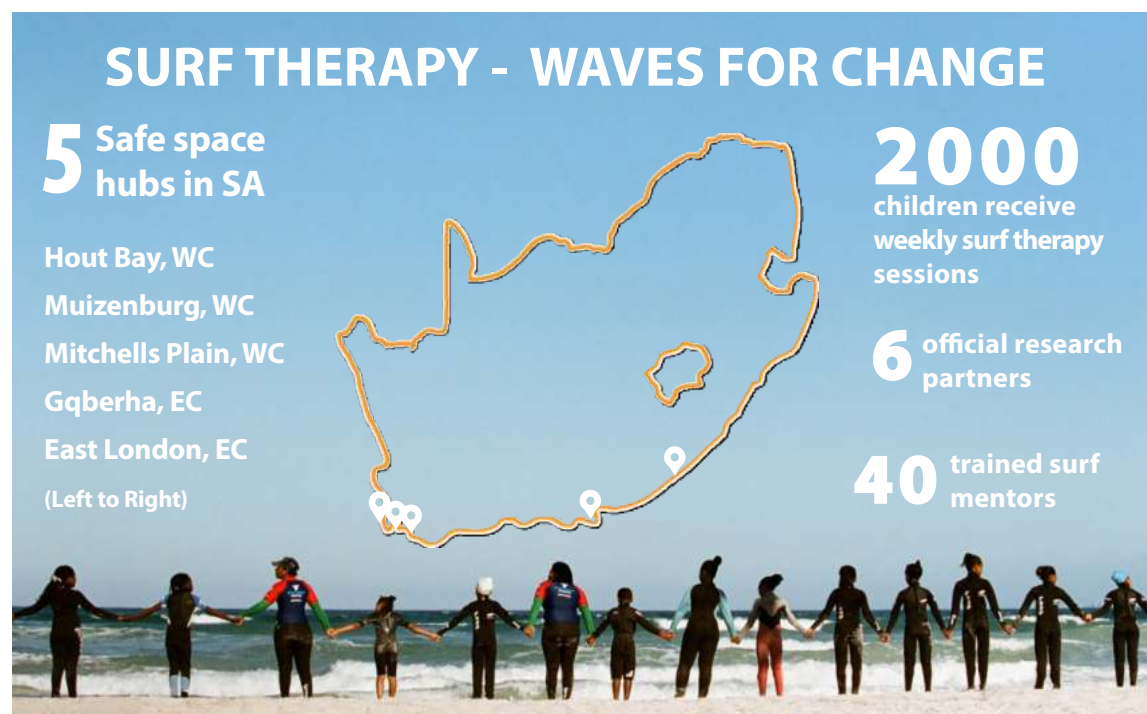
evaluation based on WhatsApp communication as to whether a fire is a threat to life and property, and responds immediately, according to Nortje.

“In high weather conditions, minutes matter.”

Miles Japhet, chairperson of Lombard Insurance, one of the insurance companies funding the project, said that it would make sense to scale the initiative after initial reports have shown that the project saved R50m in property value based on a conservative estimate, while only costing R5m to run.

"We have gone to 16 proper fires and we have not lost a single home or farm," said Jackson.

"A lot of properties are insured; we are not sure by who, [but] it makes sense for us as an industry to give it a go," said Japhet, who attributes the success of the initiative to "more trust and less bureaucracy" in the private sector.



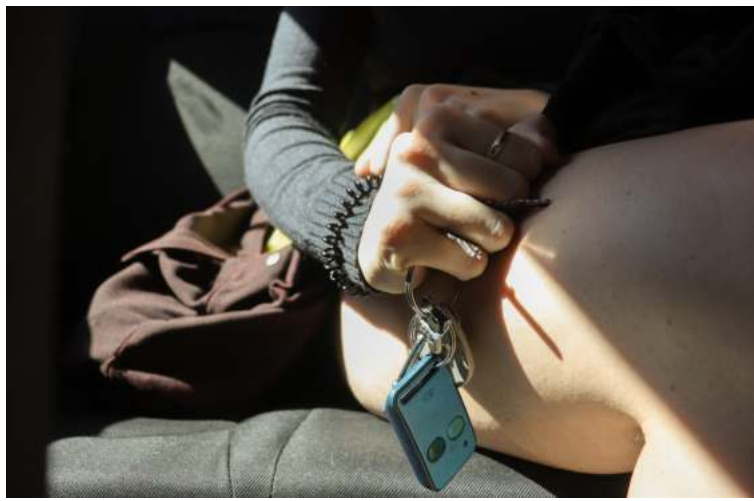
Waves for Change provides surf therapy to youth from impoverished areas, according to Tim Conibear, co-founder of the non-governmental organisation.

PHOTO: Supplied/Waves for Change | GRAPHIC: Téa Bell



Mark Jackson is the owner and operator of Leading Edge Aviation, the helicopter service provider for the Winelands Fire Protection Agency. **PHOTO: Jamie Venter**

Getting from A to B safely



▲ A Change.org petition was launched against Bolt on 27 February for not adequately vetting or verifying their drivers. On the date of going to print, the petition had received over 133 000 signatures. **PHOTO: Aiden Louw**

Aiden Louw

Many women and queer people have reported that they feel unsafe whilst using public transport in South Africa, claimed Seth Gilbert, who started his own transport service, Seth's Rides, in response to this issue. Similarly to Seth's Rides, the company She-Cab provides safe transport services specifically for women.

Fear and discomfort

"Our women [...] endure enough fear and trauma living in the rape capital of the world. We would hope that our trips home would not be traumatic either," said Bulelwa Adonis, spokesperson for Women for Change, a non-profit organisation (NPO)

that advocates for the protection of the constitutional rights of women and children in South Africa.

The NPO has taken a stance against the popular e-hailing service Bolt and has recorded "countless stories [...] from victims and survivors of assault from Bolt [drivers]", according to Adonis.

In response to recent backlash against the company, Bolt released an open letter to the South African public on its Instagram page on 15 March wherein it stated that it "kicked off engagements with gender-based violence (GBV) stakeholders to identify suitable additional training for drivers that use [their] platform".

"I never felt safe taking Bolt.

So, I don't use it anymore," said Cyvonne Nel, a previous customer who felt uncomfortable around Bolt drivers. She claimed that many Bolt drivers would arrive in cars that were not registered with the company.

"I've had it before when I get clocked by Uber drivers [...] they are all nice and lovely and personable to me when they think I am a woman, and then I speak a little and when they hear my voice, they ice me out. Like, full death stares in the rear-view mirror to the point where I start texting people to check in on me," shared a non-binary person who goes by 'L'.

“... death stares in the rear-view mirror to the point where I start texting people to check in on me.

It's about the journey

"During the pandemic, there was a stage where only one or two people were allowed in an Uber and friends [who are] women/queer told me they didn't feel comfortable," said Seth Gilbert on what motivated him to start his own transport service in October 2020.

"I try and be as accommodating as possible, as I too have

experienced that unsafe feeling in an Uber and really don't want others in that situation if I can help," added Gilbert.

She-Cab is also a Stellenbosch-based transportation service. A She-Cab employee, who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons, explained that the company was created "for women by women", to ensure their safe travels in light of the prevalence of GBV-incidents in South Africa.

The service began in November 2020 and employs nine drivers. The same anonymous source claimed that there has been a

“I never felt safe taking Bolt. So, I don't use it anymore.

huge demand for their services but that they have experienced challenges surrounding the availability of female drivers. The service operates from 04:00 to 21:00, according to the company. They planned on expanding to transport larger groups of women soon.



▲ Many women and queer people have reported that they feel unsafe whilst using public transport in South Africa. **PHOTO: Aiden Louw**

Re-shaping infrastructure for social change

Kara Olivier

A Khayelitsha-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) is challenging conventional approaches to formalising self-built structures in townships to assist Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) and crèches in overcoming inadequate infrastructure. This is according to Ben Khuma, general manager at Ikhayalami.

The battle to get registered

"Historically, in many of the informal settlements there is such an unequal access to quality ECD centres," said Marion Wagner, director of Breadline Africa, a Cape Town-based non-profit organisation. Wagner explained that many ECD centres in informal townships are battling with inadequate infrastructure – one of the requirements to get registered with the department of basic education.

"There are a lot of requirements, of which infrastructure is only one, but it is probably the hardest and most expensive one for [ECDs] to meet," said Wagner.

Registered ECDs receive R17 per day five days a week, for every child that attends the institution, according to Wagner. Obtaining this grant is an important step for ECD centres to become sustainable businesses, provide proper nutritional

meals and high-quality education, said Wagner.

According to a statement issued by the department of basic education on 7 February 2019, the responsibility for the funding, registering, monitoring and support of the ECD sector was set to be moved from the department of social development to the department of basic education. This move took place on 1 April 2022.

"We are worried that [the two departments'] strategies differ and that this will cause problems for the ECD centres," said Nomsa Thomas, principal of Blessings Educare Centre in Delft, Cape Town. Blessings Educare Centre is currently waiting for the approval of its registration from the department of basic education.

Change starts at a young age

Zanne Kriek, educational psychologist and founding partner of Kiddies Academy, stressed the importance of proper facilities in informal schools, stating that "this is where problems can be identified early and social upliftment can begin". Kiddies Academy opened their first township school in Soshanguve, Pretoria, in 2015.

"Classrooms and how they look are utterly important. It has a big impact on the development and success of a crèche," said Kriek. The first six years of a child's development are vital in determining their chances of making



▲ "The majority of [South Africans] can expect to live in informal settlements for the next 20 to 30 years," said Ben Khuma, general manager at Ikhayalami in Khayelitsha. Nomsa Thomas (above), principal of Blessings Educare Centre in Delft, Cape Town, received one of Ikhayalami's prototype classrooms in 2020. **PHOTO: Kara Olivier**

“They come home and they share their stories and education with their own parents and families.

it through primary and secondary school, stated Wagner.

Khuma explained that the communities ultimately become benefactors of the children's development. "They come home and they share their stories and education with their own parents and families."

A lasting impact

Ikhayalami upgrades shelters, community infrastructure and educational facilities through re-blocking and structural upgrading programs, rather than depending on the government

to provide formal structures, according to Khuma.

Ikhayalami provides quality building materials, planning assistance and construction support to ECDs and crèches housed in self-built structures to aid with the registration process, according to Khuma.

"Our prototype is friendly to the informal settlement environment. It is quick and easy to build," said Khuma, who explained that the upgraded structures are more fire-resistant and less expensive than bricks and have a longer shelf life than corrugated iron.

"This classroom will be here for ages," said Thomas, who was a beneficiary of Ikhayalami's upgrading program in 2020.

"This prototype used a light-weight steel structure placed on top of raised padded concrete foundations. This mitigates the effects of flooding. After that the walls are constructed using three layer-oriented strand boards and fiber cement panels," said Gloria Pavita, project manager at Ikhayalami. Pavita explained that the structure can be disassembled and moved according to the beneficiary's needs.

Community engagement is critical to the success of programs in informal settlements, said Khuma. "There are [informal leadership] structures that exist. If you don't recognise that – the chances are very strong that your [initiative] will fail," said Khuma.

The power of bread bags and tags

Tamara Wicomb

Plastics like bread bags and tags might look like rubbish to everyday consumers, but initiatives such as ReBag.ReUse and Bread Tags for Wheelchairs are using recycling to create new items and minimise the amount of plastics found in landfills. This is according to Regine le Roux, founder of ReBag.ReUse, and Sanet van As, a participant in the Bread Tags for Wheelchairs campaign.

“Every-one can contribute bread tags towards funding a wheelchair”

Dumping the problem

“Landfills are old and we are running out of space in South Africa on landfill sites. We are also contaminating [the] earth with

landfill sites,” said John de Wet, environmental sustainability manager at Stellenbosch University (SU).

It has become very important to reuse and recycle in order to divert away from filling our landfills, stated De Wet. Recycling initiatives can help reduce carbon emissions, added De Wet.

From tags to wheels

Bread Tags for Wheelchairs is an organisation that collects and sells bread tags, then uses the profit to purchase and donate wheelchairs to people with mobility issues. This is according to their website, which explains that the organisation’s founder, Mary Honeybun, began the initiative because she wanted to find an environmentally sustainable way to provide wheelchairs to those in need.

Bread Tags for Wheelchairs requires the collection of “170kg [of bread tags] from communities to be able to donate a wheelchair to a needy individual”, according to Van As. The tags are recycled and used to make soft plastic seedling trays used at nurseries, she said.

“Everyone can contribute bread tags towards funding a wheelchair to make a massive difference by providing mobility to somebody,” said Lorna Norris, who has been running the organisation since 2015.

‘Such a blessing’

“The wheelchair has been such a great help and it came at the right time,” said Jane Jonathan, whose grandson, Luke, has Cerebral palsy, and received a wheelchair after outgrowing his pram.

“The help Lorna provided has been such a blessing,” she said. Luke is able to do more things now that he has mobility, said Jonathan.

“I would encourage all to collect [tags and bottle caps] as it makes a difference and you don’t know the impact,” said Jonathan.

Putting bread on the table

ReBag.ReUse is an initiative started in Hout Bay with a team of nine women who cut and crochet bread bags into shopping bags, explained Le Roux.

Something as simple as a bread bag has the power to put bread on the table for someone else,



Recycling plastics evokes “psychological benefits”, said Charles Muller, board member of the South African Plastics Recycling Organisation. PHOTO: Aiden Louw

added Le Roux. ReBag.ReUse supports the local community. But the durability of the bags also means that they can be reused, so the initiative also prevents plastic from ending up in a landfill, she said.

“The extra money that I make from ReBag.ReUse is really a blessing, since I can buy bread, milk and even electricity,” said

Jane Hoffman, a crocheter who forms part of the initiative.

A change in perspective is needed with regards to ideas about waste, by moving away from “thinking it is okay to use single-use plastic continuously, as long as I recycle it”, said Amelia Pretorius, communications manager of the Sustainability Institute based in Stellenbosch.

Opvoeding agter tralies



Jean-Marie Uys

In ’n 2015-studie is daar bevind dat 82% van Suid-Afrikaanse gevangenes reeksoortreders is wat in die tronksisteem bly. Dit is volgens Betzi Pierce van die Nasionale Instituut vir die voorkoming van Misdad en die Rehabilitasie van Oortreders (NSSB).

Die RAND Corporation, ’n internasionale navorsings-organisasie sonder winsoogmerk wat help om oplossings vir openbare beleidsuitdagings te ontwikkel, het in ’n 2013-studie bevind dat rehabilitasieprogramme wat gevangenes in verbinding met die wyer gemeenskap bring, “veral effektief is” om die hoeveelheid individue wat weer verval in misdad, te verminder. Sulke rehabilitasieprogramme sluit volgens die studie tersiêre opvoedingsprogramme en programme met reïntegrasie-komponente ná vrystelling in.

Brandvlei-gevangenis

’n Projek wat hierdie probleem probeer oplos, is Ubuntu Learning Community (ULC). ULC het ontstaan as ’n vennootskap tussen die Brandvlei-gevangenisinrigting buite Worcester, en universiteits-gemeenskappe wat kortkursusse inspan om ’n interaktiewe en diverse leeromgewing te skep vir sowel gevangenes as universiteitsstudente.

Dit is volgens dr Mary Nel, ’n dosent in kriminele reg aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US), asook die stigter en bestuurder van ULC. ULC se kursus is op 21 April in persoon hervat nadat dit in 2019 laas in persoon aangebied is.

“Die US is die eerste [universiteit] om [so ’n program] te loods,” het Nel gesê. Volgens haar word die bepaalde kursus deur sowel die US en die Nasionale Kwalifikasieraamwerk (NKR), as ’n vlak 6-kwalifikasie, erken.

Studente wat deelgeneem het aan die kursus is hier besig om voor te berei vir ’n skynverhoor tydens hul regslesing in 2019. FOTO: Verskaf/Mary Nel

Die klasse is divers met ’n verskeidenheid van studente wat gewoonlik 30 lede vanuit die Brandvlei-gevangenis, sowel as universiteitsgemeenskappe insluit, het Nel verduidelik. “Ons kan in dialoog tree en leer met en by mekaar, maak nie saak wat ons perspektiewe [is] nie,” het Nel gesê. Ongeveer 17 klasse word aangebied deur US-kundiges in regsleer, ekonomiese wetenskappe, Engelse literatuur en geskiedenis en sal vanjaar vanaf April tot Oktober duur, volgens Nel.

Versigtig optimisties

Die aangehoues het aanvanklik oor die program getwyfel, het Awande Mshotana, ’n

gevangene wat die kursus al vantevore geneem het, gesê in ’n video-opname wat Nel met LIP gedeel het. “Ons skeptisisme het vanuit vorige ervarings ontstaan omdat vennootskapsinisiatiewe gewoonlik nie uitdraai soos wat dit oorspronklik aan ons aangebied word nie,” het Mshotana in die opname gesê. “ULC het egter na ’n uitsondering gelyk.”

Dilon Sewkumar, ’n gewese Brandvlei-gevangene en ’n ULC-gegraderde, is van mening dat tronkgebaseerde rehabilitasieprogramme oneffektief is, maar dat programme soos die ULC-kursus ’n verandering in perspektief en lewenskoers meebring. “Dit kan jou hele lewe verander [en] ook help met die reïntegrasie van diegene wat nes almal anders ook ’n storie het om te vertel,” het Sewkumar gesê.

Reïntegrasie en rehabilitasie

Nel het verduidelik dat ULC hul missie verbreed deur, benewens onderrig, ook te fokus op die reïntegrasie van gevangenes in die gemeenskap na hul vrylating. Verder beoog die program om gemeenskapsontwikkelingsprogramme te bevorder wat die stigma rondom gevangenes sal

afbreek en oplossings sal beraam rondom alternatiewe korrektiewe veldtogte as tronkstraf, het Nel gesê.

“Tot en met verlede jaar was ons reïntegrasieprogram niks watwonders nie, omdat ons nie fondse daarvoor gehad het nie,” het Nel verduidelik.

“Die program het [vanjaar] ’n toelaag van [Bard College] in New York ontvang wat die ontwikkeling van die reïntegrasie-program sal bevorder, asook beurse sal bied aan vrygelatenes asook gevangenes om deur UNISA te studeer,” het Nel gesê.

Sy het verduidelik dat ULC aanhou om diegene wat die kursus voltooi het, te ondersteun deur ’n WhatsApp-groep waar “mense meelewing [kan] betuig en praat oor hul ervarings”.

Caitlin Kleynhans het gesê dat ULC haar die geleentheid gebied het om ’n klaskamer te deel met individue wat nie andersins in so ’n spatie sou saamkom nie.

Kleynhans is ’n oud-student aan die US wat in 2019 die ULC-kursus voltooi het. Sy is tans die algemene administrateur van ULC “[n] Mens besef hoe merkwaardig sommige van hierdie mense regtig is.”

“Ons kan in dialoog tree en leer met en by mekaar, maak nie saak wat ons perspektiewe [is] nie



Vogueing forward

Ballroom as a queer safe space

Connor Cogill

The ballroom scene acts as a safe space for queer people, often rejected or endangered by society, to come together and compete for prizes and bragging rights, said Rori Bingham, father of House of le Cap. The scene is still small and fledgling in South Africa, said Bingham, but it is growing steadily.

House of le Cap, based in Cape Town, is Africa's first ballroom house, and was formed by the late Kirvan Fortuin in 2017, according to Bingham.

The scene was first created by trans people of colour in New York City in the 1920s, said Bingham. Queer people would arrange themselves into "houses" with a "mother" or "father" figure to guide them, and these houses would compete against each other in various categories in a competition called a "ball", explained Bingham.

In the South African ballroom scene, queer people are "making this our own and putting a twist on it", according to Lelo Meslani, founder of Vogue Nights Jozi. "The crowd is diverse as well; a true reflection of our community."

Queering inhibition

According to a 2019 study on the realities of violence, mental health and access to healthcare related to sexual orientation and gender identity in South Africa, 79% of participants had experienced verbal harassment due to their sexual and/or gender identity. A total of 61% of participants had experienced physical violence, 48%

of participants were survivors of sexual violence, and 61% of participants felt that the violence they had experienced was directly tied to their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The study, conducted by Alex Müller, Kristen Daskilewicz and The Southern and East African Research Collective On Health, drew the conclusion that LGBTI people are more likely to experience verbal harassment, and physical and sexual violence than other members of society.

“The world is still very straight and dangerous for some of us to navigate

“The world is still very straight and dangerous for some of us to navigate and exist in,” said Bingham.

This, according to Bingham, is why spaces such as those provided by the ballroom scene are important for queer people in South Africa.

Liam Jackson, a genderqueer person, described their first ballroom experience in Cape Town as one of feeling safe and “uninhibited”.

“You’re not thinking about who’s looking at you. You’re not

thinking about whether you’re standing correctly or presenting correctly. It’s just so liberating,” said Jackson.

People now have a better general understanding of what ballroom is, explained Meslani, who started Vogue Nights Jozi in 2018 as a means to carve out more space for queer people in the nightlife scene.

“I don’t think a lot of queer people get to really express themselves in ways they would want to normally, and there’s an opportunity to do so at a space like Vogue Nights,” said Meslani.

Bigger and better ballroom

The ballroom scene is not without its challenges, according to Bingham. “I think the biggest challenge we face currently is to get the queer community to fully understand ballroom and have them pay respect to all things that come with ballroom culture.”

Brands and corporations are now looking to misrepresent and capitalise on the culture of ballroom without consulting or giving credit to its pioneers, said Bingham.

However, “the future is bright for ballroom,” said Meslani, who is hoping to see more international engagement with the South African ballroom scene soon.

Bingham echoed this sentiment, stating that “the future of the ballroom scene, I hope, will be one that brings about many opportunities for queer people to do bigger and better things”.

“I see us being recognized by the international ballroom scene and going over to compete in international balls,” said Bingham.

CATEGORIES OF BALLROOM

FACE

is all about the beauty of a contestant’s face, using gestures to frame and show it off to the judges.



VOGUE FEMME

is based on “old way” performance and contains the original vogue elements.



SEX SIREN

is all about sex appeal.



RUNWAY

sees contestants strut down the runway like fashion models.

Some of the categories traditional to any ballroom space are vogue femme, runway, face and sex siren, according to Lelo Meslani, founder of Vogue Nights Jozi. **INFOGRAPHIC: Connor Cogill**

Trigger Warning: This article mentions queerphobia, verbal harassment and sexual and physical violence.



Cheshire V, host of an Edition Events Spectrum ball hosted on 11 September 2021, delivers a speech on the legacy of Kewpie, a former drag queen and hairdresser from District Six. **PHOTO: Connor Cogill**



“To host ballroom here in South Africa is imperative if we hope to merge the different queer communities that exist within our cities. Our queer spaces as it is at the moment are quite small and few,” according to Rori Bingham, father of House of le Cap. **PHOTO: Connor Cogill**



Pictured is Berlin Williams, a member of House of le Cap, at an Edition Events Spectrum ball hosted on 11 September 2021. **PHOTO: Connor Cogill**

Ligte. Kameras. Feeste is terug!

Micaleb Lawrence

Die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), wat van 29 Maart tot 3 April plaasgevind het, is een van verskeie feeste wat vanjaar weer begin het om optredes in persoon aan te bied. Dit is volgens Stephren Saayman, ’n draaiboekskrywer en akteur wat by vanjaar se KKNK betrokke was.

Vertonings in teaters is vir ’n geruime tyd grootliks gestaak weens die Covid-19-pandemie, het Saayman gesê.

Hoewel daar geleentheid was om virtueel op te tree, het dit beteken dat akteurs in

aparte ruimtes moes optree terwyl gehore dit aanlyn moes stroom, het Talitta Jameson, ’n honneursstudent aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US) wat die rol van Michaela in *Ek, Eva* by vanjaar se KKNK vertolk het, gesê.

“Ek was gelukkig genoeg om gedurende die inperkings-tydperk te kon optree,” het Jameson gesê. “Ek moes wel ’n masker dra en kon glad nie noue kontak met my mede-akteurs hê nie.”

Verwagtinge oorskry

“Gedurende die inperkings-tydperk was dit vir my moeilik omdat my kreatiwiteit nie van die

papier af direk na die verhoog kon vloei nie,” het Saayman gesê.

Die Suidoosterfees, nog ’n kunstefees wat weer regstreekse optredes aangebied het, het gedurende die inperkings-tydperk gehore vermaak met programme soos *Die Klaskamer*.

Gehore, in groepe van tien per optrede, kon dié produksies bywoon. Dit is volgens Robyn September, ’n assistent by die Suidoosterfees.

“Ons het daarin geslaag om die Covid-19-maatreëls te gehoorsaam deur repetisies in verskillende areas te hê en *site-specific* optredes te hou,” het September gesê.



Die akteurs in *Ek, Eva*, ’n produksie wat deur Stephren Saayman geskryf en geredigeer is, het vanjaar in persoon by die KKNK opgetree. Van links na regs: Lindzay Naidoo, Robyn September, Melanie Scholtz en Talitta Jameson. **FOTO: Verskaf/Ugan Daniels**



Ramadaan: A time of empathy, reflection and sacrifice

Na'ilah Ebrahim

“It is a month of sharing. Sharing what you have on your table [...] of your wealth,” Islamic scholar, Moulana Hassiem Cassiem, told *LIP* at the start of Ramadaan earlier this year. “Sharing even if you can't give a person a food parcel or a plate of food. At least share with them a date so that you know that quality of sharing is part of being a Muslim.”

The ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar, Ramadaan, is a month where Muslims are known to fast from sunrise to sunset. However, the practices of Ramadaan and its purpose in Islam go beyond abstaining from eating, drinking and intimacy during the daytime, according to Cassiem.

Ramadaan teaches Muslims many lessons, Cassiem explained. One is to have empathy for those who are less fortunate or poorer than oneself by acknowledging one's own riches and blessings in life. By developing such empathy, Cassiem explained that the person will now make an “extra effort” to aid somebody in breaking their own fast and hunger. This can include something as small as a date, a glass of water or a glass of milk.

Ramadaan and its practices also promote charity within the

Islamic faith. At the end of the month, Muslims are encouraged to pay *fitrah*, a donation to a particular charity of their choosing for the day of Eid (the celebration of Muslim people to mark the end of fasting and Ramadaan). Through such donations, one is able to make sure that no person is hungry on the day of celebration, added Cassiem.

Muslims are also encouraged to feed a person each day that they are unable to fast during the month of Ramadaan, according to Cassiem.

Cassiem described Ramadaan as a month for the inner cleansing of the soul and the body, and sacrificing in order to bring Muslims nearer to their Creator. “Ramadaan is also a time to reflect on the past year [and] what you have achieved, what you have not achieved: spiritually, financially and morally,” he stated.

Lending a helping hand

During the month of Ramadaan, “a month of giving”, Muslim Hands, an international agency and non-governmental organisation (NGO), reaches out to communities and needy individuals, as people and donors are more charitable during the month. This is according to Imraan Roomaney, the fundraising

manager of Muslim Hands.

As an organisation that relies solely on the generosity of donors, Muslim Hands' vision is to tackle the issue of hunger by providing local communities with food and making sure they become self-sufficient. “We try to cover as many areas as possible within Cape Town and even nationally,” stated Roomaney.

Other initiatives run by Muslim Hands include a skills training programme where the organisation provides the youth with employable skills.

By sponsoring the payment of various college courses, the youth are able to receive accreditation and qualifications within fields such as security and plumbing, according to Roomaney.

The intention of the organisation is to reach as many Muslims as possible to ensure that they have meals when breaking their fast. “We are providing Ramadaan packs in about four different provinces this year,” stated Roomaney. *Fitrah* parcels would also be distributed so that thousands of people can receive grocery hampers to celebrate the day of Eid, he added.

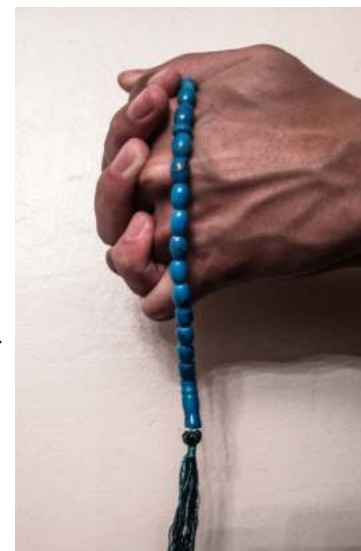
Each year, Muslim Hands aims to ensure that initiatives run during Ramadaan are more successful than the previous year, according to Roomaney.

◀ Ramadaan is about the closeness to your Creator after sacrificing anything only because the Creator commanded it. One has to be God-conscious the entire day. This is according to Islamic scholar, Moulana Hassiem Cassiem.

PHOTO: Na'ilah Ebrahim

Muslims are encouraged to give charity during the month of Ramadaan, even if it is as small as a date, a glass of water or a glass of milk, according to Islamic scholar, Moulana Hassiem Cassiem.

PHOTO: Na'ilah Ebrahim



▲ Muslim Hands' focus as a charitable organisation is not only to assist Muslims. Imraan Roomaney, the fundraising manager of Muslim Hands, says that when anyone is in need, the organisation will assist: No matter one's religion, race or creed.

PHOTO: Na'ilah Ebrahim

'An oasis' for the needy

As an NGO that feeds anyone in need, Nakhlistan used the month of Ramadaan to distribute dates so that Muslims were able to break their fast and to provide soup ingredients to people within communities. The organisation used alms donated by Muslims to fund their soup kitchen. This was according

to Nakhlistan public relations officer, Fatima Allie.

Nakhlistan started off in 1984 with two small pots of food for needy neighbours. Now, 38 years later, the organisation aimed to cook a total of 179 130 litre pots of food to feed over 90 000 needy individuals on the day of Eid, said Allie in written correspondence with *LIP*.

Cycling through life from a safe space

Aiden Louw

Once a weekend at 4:30am, Nicolaas Mulder hops on his bicycle for a 14km long journey. He typically travels from his home in Onder Papegaaiberg to Jonkershoek Nature Reserve and back. This has been his routine for the past 23 years, and it is paying off.

Mulder, who has been a resident of Horizon House in Stellenbosch for more than two decades, recently competed in his 15th Cape Town Cycle Tour.

Horizon House offers holistic care to people with primary intellectual disabilities (PWID). “Socialising, sports and outdoor

activities form an important part of the residents' daily lives,” said Elzbie van Wyk, Horizon House's development manager.

Residents at Horizon House follow a daily program which creates structure. The program includes “mealtimes, [...] therapeutic work areas, resting time, and recreation”, according to Van Wyk. A therapeutic team oversees this program “to ensure the optimal development of each individual and the acquisition of necessary life skills”, she added.

Greater awareness needed

Broader Stellenbosch is “highly unfamiliar with [PWIDs]”,

said Van Wyk, who added that people often fear interaction or avoid individuals with primary intellectual disabilities. Not many people know about Horizon House, and members of the public often mistake it for an old-age home, she said.

PWID's often experience exploitation as well as physical, verbal, sexual and financial abuse in society, said Van Wyk. Horizon House offers a safe space where their needs are taken care of, and where, according to Van Wyk, they are “precious”.

A cyclist with a purpose

Mulder, who in his 23 years of cycling has never had a

cycling-related injury, loves to assist fellow cyclers in need along his journey – whether that be offering a sip of water or helping to fix something. “That's my purpose,” said Mulder.

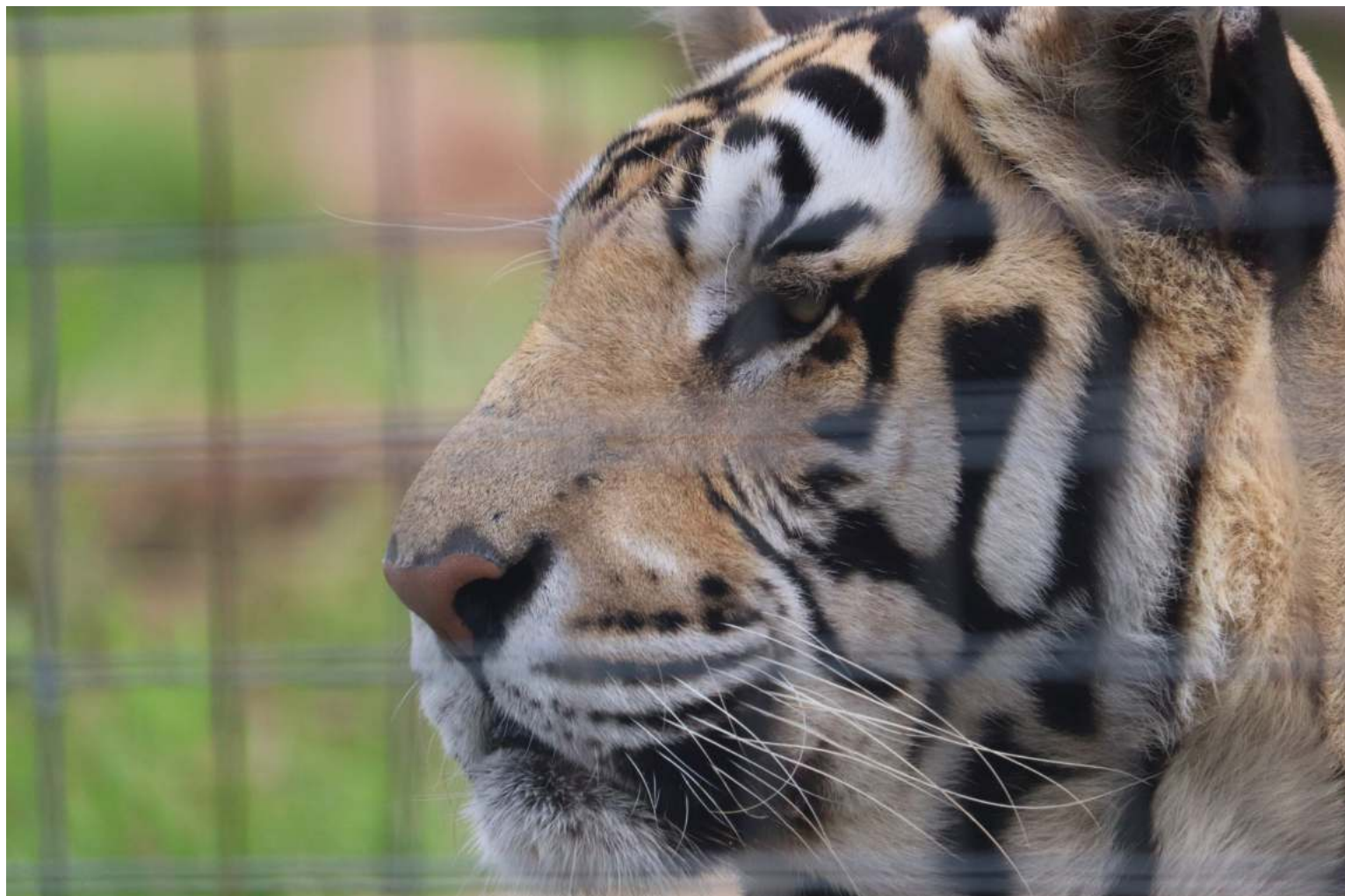
In 2019, Mulder's bicycle was stolen. Horizon House raised money to buy him a new one: A bright red Giant 29-er, which he continues to use.

Apart from cycling, Mulder works in Horizon House's maintenance team. When he sat down to chat with *LIP*, he had just returned from working in Horizon House's orchards.

When asked who his biggest supporter is, Mulder pointed to Van Wyk: “This lady right here.”



▲ Nicolaas Mulder competed in his 15th Cape Town Cycle Tour in March. PHOTO: Supplied/Elzbie van Wyk



“The issue is that all big cat trade is interconnected,” said Locke. The same breeding and trading trends are seen in four big cat species in South Africa, including tiger, lion, jaguar and leopard, said the Four Paws’ *The Year of the Tiger?* report. **PHOTO: Jamie Venter**

“South Africa is the world’s biggest exporter of live tigers and tiger parts.”

SA: King of illegal tiger trade

Jamie Venter

South Africa is the world’s biggest exporter of live tigers and tiger parts due to the inadequate regulation of private tiger ownership, private breeding and the commercial trade of large exotic cats. This is according to the *The Year of the Tiger?* report, released by the international animal welfare organisation Four Paws on 1 February.

“Tigers are commercially traded from South Africa in really high numbers, and a number of them are intensively captively bred,” said Sarah Locke, head of programs at Four Paws and co-author of the report. A total of 452 tigers and tiger parts were legally exported between 2011 and 2020, but there are hundreds of private facilities in South Africa (SA) breeding big cats like tiger, lion, leopard and jaguar, stated the report.

Demand in the legal and illegal big cat trade is driven primarily by countries in South-East Asia,

such as China, Vietnam and Thailand, where their body parts are viewed as luxury items or used as traditional medicines, stated *The Year of the Tiger?* report.

“It’s been a problem for a long time; we have all these laws in place but the regulations aren’t working,” said Smaragda Louw, director of Ban Animal Trading (BAT), an animal rights organisation. The enforcement of exotic animal ownership regulations and recordkeeping differs between provinces, said Locke. For example, *The Year of the Tiger?* report shows that in 2019, Cape Nature recorded the import of four Bengal tigers from Gauteng, but there were no records of this trade from the Gauteng department of agriculture and rural development.

Tarcia Eiman, a representative from Cape Nature, confirmed that they are aware of the Four Paws report and that there are “quite a few big cats currently kept in captivity” in the Western Cape. *The Year of the Tiger?*

report requested that each South African province provide the number of tigers residing in their borders. Cape Nature noted the ownership of 18 tigers in their jurisdiction. The Western Cape was one of only three provinces that provided records prior to the release of the report in February.

“The lack of adequate regulation of the legal trade of tigers is creating opportunities for illegal trade and demand for breeding in South Africa,” said Locke.

At these breeding facilities, animals are often intensively bred in confined spaces, claimed Locke. She explained that, because these facilities are commercial entities, they don’t necessarily have animal welfare at the forefront.

More than one way to regulate a cat

“We really need tighter regulation of private possession of big cats as pets in South Africa,” said Locke. One of the most common questions she is asked is if she

can assist in safeguarding the welfare of tigers in backyards, but “that is the government’s responsibility”, she said.

“We are trying to work with the government and engage with them to start implementing the current laws and regulating sanctuaries,” said Locke. Four Paws believes a national audit is one of the first things the government must do, added Locke. “We want an audit of all these facilities and an understanding of the welfare of the animals within them.”

“South Africa needs to crack down on illegal possession [of big cats] and make sure animals don’t enter illegal wildlife trade markets,” said Locke.

Louw argued that regulation is not going far enough. “From BAT’s perspective, we have to push for a ban on the trade of tigers and big cats completely,” said Louw. “I don’t know how the government would be able to regulate this or do a yearly audit and check in on all the places that have tigers or look at all the individuals who keep tigers in backyards,” added Louw. “The way forward is for it to be stopped.”

This sentiment was echoed by Four Paws’ report as well. “The only way to prevent further decline in wild populations and give relevant enforcement authorities a chance to tackle illegal trade and trafficking is to

end the commercial breeding for trade in all big cats,” stated the report.

Both Locke and Louw welcomed the new legislation recommended by the minister of forestry, fishery and the environment (DFFE), Barbara Creecy in May of 2021, which will ban captive lion breeding, but said it should be expanded to include all big cats. “I would like to see this legislation expanded and for the current big cat facilities to turn into true sanctuaries,” said Locke.

Albi Modise, DFFE spokesperson, explained via written correspondence with *LIP* that any proposed expansion of the recommended ban of captive lion breeding to other big cat species will be informed by research reports on the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros.

While the recommendation does not specifically refer to tigers, “a policy objective on international trade in biodiversity is included”, said Modise. “The overall objectives of the Policy Position are to end irresponsible, unethical and unsustainable practices,” said Modise, adding that the hope is to “reposition SA as a leader in conservation”.

Keep an eye on the tigers

“For us in the field of conservation, we know about these issues but part of the problem is that not enough people know or are speaking up about it,” said Louw. She added that there is a need “for ordinary South Africans to say, ‘I saw this and I want something to be done’”.

“You have to constantly think about the way we interact with big cats, especially in South Africa, and how that might influence something greater,” said Locke. “Even if these facilities call themselves sanctuaries, before taking your kids for cub petting, consider if there is a conservation benefit to that animal being kept in captivity.” *LIP reached out to Wildlife Ranching South Africa but they were unavailable for comment by the time of going to print.*



Despite tigers being an endangered species, the hunting and killing of these big cats is permitted in all nine provinces in South Africa, according to the Four Paws’ *The Year of the Tiger?* report. **PHOTO: Jamie Venter**

Three out of every four tigers world wide live in captivity, according to the Four Paws’ *The Year of the Tiger?* report. **GRAPHIC: Kara Olivier**



Diving deep to tackle plastic pollution

Tamia Retief

South Africa is currently facing a huge challenge with waste management and as a result, massive amounts of plastic and litter end up in our oceans, according to Professor Peter Ryan, director of the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology at the University of Cape Town.

Ryan is a member of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) and has collaborated with other researchers in developing the seminal work relating to beach litter on South Africa's coastline.

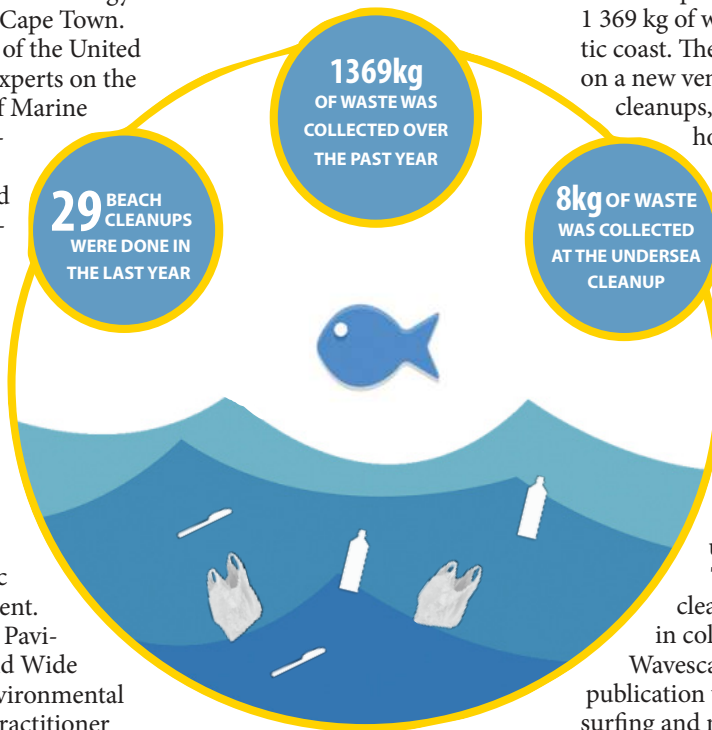
Approximately 107 000 ton of plastic waste was found in South African oceans and rivers in 2021, primarily due to plastic waste mismanagement. This is according to Pavitray Pillay, the World Wide Fund for Nature environmental behaviour change practitioner and Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative manager.

According to Ryan, much of the litter that ends up sinking to ocean floors is made from plastics that sink – this includes disposable eating utensils and other food-related containers and straws. Undersea cleanups are necessary to get these items, as

they threaten marine life in the ocean, according to Green Fin's blog on cleanups.

Plunging into TBCO clean-ups

The Beach Co-Op (TBCO) is a women-led initiative, with a focus on cleaning up local beaches and fighting plastic pollution



In the past year, The Beach Co-Op (TBCO) has held 29 clean-ups and collected 1 369 kg of waste. At the undersea cleanup held in early March, TBCO and their volunteers collected 8 kg of litter.

GRAPHIC: Tamia Retief

along the coast.

The organisation started as a group of volunteers working along the shores of Muizenberg's Surfers Corner in 2015, and has shifted its focus to fostering "ocean communities that care", according to its website.

In the past year, TBCO has held 29 cleanups and collected 1 369 kg of waste along the Atlantic coast. They have now set out on a new venture of undersea cleanups, having recently hosted their first one at Jagar's Walk in Fish Hoek, according to Aaniyah Omaidien, founder and director of TBCO.

According to Dr Ffion Atkins, co-founder and director of TBCO, they had a group of 43 volunteers and collected over 8 kg of litter at the undersea cleanup.

The undersea cleanup was held in collaboration with Wavescape, a coastal lifestyle publication with a focus on surfing and marine forecasts. The undersea cleanup was part of the Wavescape Surf and Ocean Festival, which ran from 1 to 11 March, mentioned Shani Judes, festival director at Wavescape.

The littering epidemic

The idea for this location came from Lisa Beasley, a local cold water free-diver and photogra-



Approximately 43 people, including members of The Beach Co-Op, Wavescape and volunteers, participated in the underwater cleanup in early March. **PHOTO: Supplied/Steven Benjamin**

pher, according to Atkins.

"It was literally like swimming through spaghetti," said Beasley on the amount of litter she found in the ocean. Beasley stated that most of the litter were items used for fishing and plastic.

Based on the statistics posted on TBCO's Instagram page regarding the waste collected at the undersea clean-up, 2 kg of this litter consisted of lead sinkers, fishing line and plastic packets. The last two items form part of what TBCO calls #DirtyDozenCleanup items.

On their website, TBCO lists some of the "most common items found on our beaches and rocky shores" as straws, cigarette lighters, water bottles, cooldrink

bottles, bottle lids, chip packets, sweet wrappers, earbuds, lollipop sticks and fishing line.

The greater problem

Ryan acknowledged the positive impact initiatives like TBCO have on South African beaches but said that in order to address the "epidemic of litter" at a large scale, more social responsibility from the public and broader governmental response from municipalities on waste management are needed.

According to Ryan, plastic pollution is only one of "a suite of environmental threats that we currently face, and it is relatively minor compared to some other threats, such as climate change".

One person's waste, another's wealth

William Brederode

A South African recycling company has married the goals of financial independence and environmental sustainability by operating a service that allows people to convert recyclables into holdings on the stock market.

This is according to Justin Needham, the director of Imagined Earth, who founded the company in 2015.

Needham said that the company "wanted to find a way to empower the local recycling community".

Imagined Earth is able to remunerate recyclers when they deposit certain recyclable materials into reverse vending machines (RVMs) owned by the company, said Needham.

Compensation is determined based on the weight and value of material that is placed into an RVM, he said. Money is then loaded onto a virtual wallet accessible on the Imagined Earth application, which can be exchanged for money on the EasyEquities stock brokerage platform, explained Needham.

Imagined Earth's other partners include Spar, Woolworths, Pick n Pay, certain airtime providers and Shell, said Needham, who added that partner companies provide sites for the RVMs to operate and cash-out options.

Waste worries

Recycling is, however, not a silver bullet for the problem of waste management in South Africa, said Brendon Jewaskiewitz, president of the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa. The institute aims to implement an integrated approach to waste management by "build[ing] bridges between the private sector and the public sector".

Jewaskiewitz explained how recycling adds an extra layer of cost to an object, as it would need to be collected, transported and processed before it could be reused. South Africa currently sends over 90% of its waste to landfills, said Jewaskiewitz, who added that research and development from the private sector is crucial to develop innovative solutions to remove the extra layer of cost from the recycling process.

"Waste can become a commodity," said Jewaskiewitz, who welcomed the private sector's approach of finding ways to receive a return on investment for recycling initiatives.

Green wallet in a green world

The Imagined Earth and EasyEquities partnership is leveraging the perspective that waste can be a commodity, in order to democratise access to the stock market and



An Imagined Earth reverse vending machine stationed at a Shell garage in Rondebosch is operational and available for members of the public to deposit recycling, which can be exchanged for rewards, including money on the EasyEquities stock brokerage platform. **PHOTO: William Brederode**

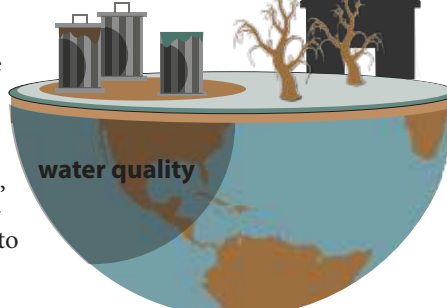
“In essence, for your recycling, you get to be able to invest for free.”

air quality

informal sector

land contamination

water quality



The key impacts of improper waste management according to a 2018 *South Africa: State of Waste Report* published by the department of environmental affairs.

GRAPHIC: Jean-Marie Uys

work toward environmental sustainability, according to Carel Nolte, chief marketing officer at EasyEquities.

"In essence, for your recycling, you get to be able to invest for free," said Nolte about the project. "Investing should be accessible to everybody and is for the betterment of yourself and the community."

The EasyEquities platform allows for fractional share investing, which means there is no minimum amount of money that a person has to invest in a holding, according to the EasyEquities official website.

Needham said that while most of the current user base have moved small amounts of money from their Imagined Earth wallet into the EasyEquities platform,

one user earned R1 400 from their recycling, which they moved into their investment account.

Nolte said that the initiative has proved its business concept and will look to expand beyond the 50 machines that have been operational in areas such as Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town.

Nolte believes that the initiative could be representative of a wider movement channelling the power of financial markets for environmental initiatives.

"[EasyEquities doesn't] want to control anything – we want to empower our community, and if the community says they want more green investment opportunities, then they'll start the revolution for that," said Nolte.



◀ Cait Pansegrouw, acclaimed South African producer and casting director, believes consumers can help open up the South African entertainment industry.

Pictured is the late Mary Twala in *This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection*, a film co-produced by Pansegrouw.

PHOTO: Supplied/Cait Pansegrouw

“One too many times we’ve seen the same stuff and the same actors over and over again

Opening up the entertainment industry

Takudzwa Pongweni

The South African entertainment industry is overflowing with new talent ready for their big break, but the exclusionary nature of the industry has made it challenging for new talents to successfully break through, said Cait Pansegrouw, a South African producer and casting director. “Money dictates a lot of the creative choices, including casting. Your cast directly influences a project’s commercial viability, so the idea is to have a bankable cast. It is a formula that works,” explained Pansegrouw.

#OpenUpTheIndustry gained popularity in April 2016 when numerous social media users utilised the hashtag to convey their frustrations that the same South African celebrities seemed to be occupying all spaces in the entertainment industry, making it difficult for new faces to break in. This is according to Nicole Coetzee, who graduated in 2021 from

AFDA, an educational institution specialising in film and performance. Coetzee said that the hashtag has helped spark conversations around the entertainment industry in South Africa and is slowly leading to change.

Unearthing new talent

Pansegrouw owns the production company Uruco Media with her business partner Elias Ribeiro. When it comes to #OpenUpTheIndustry, Pansegrouw believes she does her part as she takes an unconventional approach – combining acting giants with less established actors.

Inxeba - The Wound was Pansegrouw’s first casting on a feature film level. “It was there that I really discovered my interest in unearthing new talent and mixing new talent with more experienced, trained professionals,” she explained. Pansegrouw cast established actor Bongile Mantsai alongside newcomers Niza Jay Ncoyini and Nakhane.

“The point is for me to dig for

“The point is for me to dig for those diamonds.



▲ “It’s super hard to be different in an industry that is so tight,” said Naleli Seseli, who graduated from AFDA in 2021.

PHOTO: Takudzwa Pongweni

those diamonds. It has been beautiful to witness the young people I cast for *Inxeba* blossom from that experience and how they have become incredible figures in the entertainment industry,” said Pansegrouw.

Dreaming for inclusivity

Valencia Joshua is an acclaimed filmmaker who founded her own production company, The Dream Lab Productions, in 2015.

The production company aims to empower women to join the South African entertainment industry by employing “as many female and underprivileged up-and-coming filmmakers as possible,” said Joshua.

Joshua explained that The Dream Lab Productions “offers opportunities for internships, scholarships and training, and these are always paid opportunities.”

Joshua believes the entertainment industry in South Africa is big enough to accommodate everyone. “I think the veterans

are important because they have paved the way [...] but there also is a space and a need for fresh faces all the time,” said Joshua.

A graduate’s perspective

One of those fresh faces is Naleli Seseli, a 21-year-old actress, editor, director and writer who recently graduated from AFDA. “I am still navigating my way into the industry – it’s not easy and it is a bit scary,” said Seseli.

While there may be a need for fresh faces, establishing oneself is still difficult. Seseli explained that the entertainment industry is restricted, with the same individuals being chosen for roles frequently.

“One too many times we’ve seen the same stuff and the same actors over and over again, and it seems like the different and new ideas are not given the limelight,” said Seseli.

She explained that she shares casting calls and information about new local projects on her Instagram to allow new artists to have access to opportunities.

NFTs for Africa: Art meets technology

Joel Ontong

A Stellenbosch-based company is providing an online platform for African artists to sell and distribute their artworks via non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

African NFT was founded in late 2021 with the aim of bringing Africa into the NFT space, according to Tristan Bell, CEO and co-founder of African NFT.

African NFT acts as a marketplace for African digital art, said Jesko Hoffman, chairman and co-founder of African NFT. Artworks can be viewed through virtual galleries, according to Katherine Hunter, creative director of African NFT.

The company “handpicked [their first] team of 11 artists from various countries in Africa to express what Africa means to them,” said Hoffman.

The company focuses on African artists, because many “are not given the necessary exposure on digital platforms,” and the company wants to address this problem, explained Hoffman.

The first collection

The start-up company’s first

project, titled “The Big 5 NFT Collection”, is a collection of artworks inspired by the African big five animals, said Bell.

According to the African NFT website, the project launch date was in May, after this edition of *LIP* had gone to print. The company’s website also stated that they will donate a portion of their earnings to the International Rhino Foundation (IRF), an NPO focused on protecting rhinos.

“NFTs are new to wildlife conservation, but we are hopeful it gives new ways for people to gain awareness and get involved,” said Christopher Whitlatch, IRF communications director.

NFTs and Art

“[NFTs cause] artists to start thinking digital, which is where the world is going these days,” explained Hunter, who is also one of the main artists for the company.

The art industry has been significantly disrupted by NFTs, said Dr Alastair Meredith, senior art specialist at Strauss & Co, in email correspondence with *LIP*. “Not only do the [NFT] works fall into a new visual and exhibition genre entirely, but the related

“[African artists] are not given the necessary exposure on digital platforms.

trading mechanics are novel,” said Meredith.

NFTs have broadened the art market and attracted a younger demographic of buyers, but only time will tell if the market has longevity, added Meredith.

The future of NFTs

African NFT is aware of the criticism surrounding NFTs, mainly of the environmental impact and questions of their utility, according to Bell.

“The future of NFTs [lies in] the digital ownership of unique items”, such as cross-platform video game items, said Petri Redelinghuys, trader, and the founder of Herenya Capital Advi-

sors, about the utility of NFTs.

Bell explained that he understands why some hesitancy to buy NFTs may persist, making reference to cryptocurrency-related scams. “There is no reason to feel sceptical about [NFTs],” he said. Bell believes people should be open to the idea of buying NFTs and urges potential buyers to do research to feel capable when dealing with NFTs.



▲ The first collection by African NFT, based in Stellenbosch, is inspired by the big five. This is according to Tristan Bell, CEO and co-founder of African NFT.

PHOTO: Supplied/African NFT | GRAPHIC: Joel Ontong

What are NFTs?

Non-fungible tokens, or NFTs, are unique and not interchangeable with another one. They can vary in value, function and what they represent, according to Petri Redelinghuys, founder of Herenya Capital Advisors.

Digital Assets

NFTs are digital assets, meaning they are valuable items for their owners. NFTs are unlike shares of a business, since shares of a business can be identical. Items such as artworks can be attached to an NFT. An NFT is not the item itself, but a digital proof of ownership of the item, according to Redelinghuys.

Blockchain Technology

Blockchain technology is a system where all cryptocurrency transactions, including the purchase of NFTs, are recorded for public viewing that automatically prevents duplication, but counterfeit NFTs still exist, said Damian Lloyd, cryptocurrency researcher at the University of Queensland via email correspondence.

Environmental Impact

The computational processes required to run blockchain technology, can require massive amounts of energy. This can create a large carbon-footprint, according to Lloyd.

Where there's wine, there's a way

Dominique Fuchs

The rate of transformation in the wine industry is lagging far behind other industries, according to Paul Siguqa, the first black man to own a wine farm in the Franschhoek valley. There is a misconception that “only certain people drink wine,” said Siguqa. He noted, however, that “it is not fair that black people are the biggest consumers of wine but are not adequately represented in the wine industry”.

Currently, only 3% of wine products in South Africa are produced by black-owned businesses, according to Phil Bowes, manager of enterprise development at Vinpro, a non-profit company that represents South African wine producers, industry

“It is crucial that there should not be a wine farm without transformation

stakeholders and cellars. Bowes told *LIP* that South Africa's vineyards and wineries remain predominantly white-owned.

“There is a significant increase in black businesses that sell wine,” said Bowes. He stated that, despite this increase, there is still a long way to go to increase representation in the wine industry.

Bowes highlighted the importance of transformation in the wine industry, as “It is crucial that there should not be a wine farm without transformation,” he said.

Bringing wine to Khayelitsha

One business that is contributing to change in the industry, is Khayelitsha's Finest Wines

(KFW). This enterprise was established by Lindile Nzaba in 2018 after he identified a gap in the market for high-quality and affordable wines in the Khayelitsha community where he resides. This is according to Nzaba, whose idea for KFW has been fermenting since 2016.

“KFW is a brand that people from the townships can resonate with. It's unique because of its authenticity [and potential] to disrupt the industry,” Nzaba said.

He told *LIP* that KFW celebrates community, uplifts townships in the hospitality industry, and creates a bridge between passionate winemakers and marginalised groups.

“KFW is changing the Khayelitsha community, as it is the first brand of wine from [the township],” said Nompumelelo Nxazonke, owner of Mpumies Place in Khayelitsha, a stockist of the wine brand.

According to Ewan Mackenzie, a wine négociant for KFW, they have the “opportunity to showcase different styles of wine, experiment with unique cultivars, or put them together to make a badass blend” for people in the Khayelitsha community and beyond.

KFW sources their wines from a variety of wineries. KFW's wine sources are subject to change and they are currently working “hand

in hand” with Saxenburg Wine Estate for their red wines, and The Fledge & Co. for their white wine blends, mentioned Nzaba. KFW also exports its wine to the international market, according to Mackenzie.

“We cherish our support in New York and Hong Kong and would love to spread the word further,” he said.

“This brand is shouting out positivity through the good spirit of entrepreneurs, who work so hard to try and better the situation in the community we call home,” added Nzaba.



Statistics about representation in the South African wine industry. Information supplied by Phil Bowes, manager of enterprise development at Vinpro. GRAPHIC: Karla van der Merwe



Lindile Nzaba established Khayelitsha's Finest Wines in 2018. His favourite wine is a traditional Cabernet Franc that travels well. PHOTO: Supplied/Wines of South Africa website

Cleaning your plate

Confronting South African food waste bite-by-bite

Jessica Hillier

Approximately 20% of the South African population has inadequate access to food, with 9.3 million South Africans currently experiencing acute food insecurity. This is despite an estimated 10.3 million ton of food and beverage being wasted per year. This is according to the most recent statistics provided by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) at the end of 2021.

The deterioration of the country's food security has hastened due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has hindered food distribution and caused further unemployment and economic decline, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Additionally, their research shows that one in every four children in South Africa experience food security-related struggles.

“Food waste on a global level is just diabolical,” said Hanneke van Linge, the founder and

director-in-chief of Nosh Food Rescue, a non-profit organisation tackling food waste in Johannesburg. “There's enough food out there to feed anybody who's hungry, but our systems don't allow for that food to be utilised.”

In spite of these statistics, South African organisations, such as Shiloh Food and Sobae, have shown that there are ways in which unconsumed food can be repurposed to mitigate waste and alleviate food insecurity.

Feeding the community

Brackenfell-based community outreach organisation, Shiloh, was established in 1995, according to their managing director, Estelle Veldman. Their sub-branch, Shiloh Food, was one of the first bulk food production charity organisations in South Africa.

Veldman explained that Shiloh's outreach is not limited to Brackenfell but spans across the Western Cape, recently entering the Eastern Cape as well. Shiloh Food currently produces

40 000 to 60 000 nutrient-packed meals per month for people in need. Each meal is sold for R4.50 to cover production costs where produce donations are not sufficient to meet demand, according to Veldman. Often-times the costs are covered by corporate or individual donors.

“Shiloh provides this community with so much more than just food. These children leave with self-confidence, and I am so incredibly grateful that these little ones can go home in the evenings with full tummies,” said Elsabé Marais, an active volunteer at Hoby Educare, a crèche in Green Park, Mfuleni, which receives meal donations from Shiloh.

“We approach farms, local retailers and shops, and they donate fresh produce that is

“One in every four children in South Africa experience food security-related struggles

Shiloh Food employees, like Precious Tsiga, pack nutritious meals for children in need, according to Estelle Veldman, managing director at Shiloh Food. PHOTO: Jessica Hillier



Bernie van Wyk is a Shiloh Food employee who helps to prepare the meals that are handed out to communities in need. PHOTO: Jessica Hillier

deemed unmarketable and would otherwise go to waste. Carrots with two legs, wobbly, slightly-wilted cabbages; the works. Food that is perfectly fine to consume but just isn't pretty enough to be on the market,” explained Veldman.

Regarding the quality of the meals, Veldman maintained that Shiloh is not a soup kitchen; the team carefully considers the nutritious value of the meals, but also prioritises taste and variety, cooking meals, such as curries, vetkoek and stews.

“If I wouldn't eat it, nobody should. If it's not good enough for me, it's not good enough for anyone,” said Veldman. “We have to make sure these children not only have access to proper nutrition, but also that it's an enjoyable experience for them.”

Shiloh's motto is “community in action”. They are passionate about children, breaking down the stigma associated with families needing help, preserving their dignity and upholding the Constitution, which asserts that there is no excuse for a child to ever go hungry, said Veldman.

A fruitful solution

Sobae has been producing sweet sorbets from produce on the verge of expiration since 2019, according to founders Thato Mbongeni Masondo and Thula Ndema. They explained that they source their produce from the fruit and vegetable market in Johannesburg, and from Nosh Food Rescue. “Sometimes we even receive fruits from our clients who have fruit trees in their homes,” they added. The fight against food waste is central to Sobae. “We buy ripe fruit from street vendors and, while we produce our sorbets, we do not have any waste. We compost the peels and seeds to Victoria Yards, and some seeds we plant in our garden. We always tell our customers to return plastic cups and spoons for reuse,” explained Ndema.



Blind golf in SA finding success on the greens



▲ Johan Kotze, president of the South African Blind Golf Association, is lined up by a local caddie before playing a stroke during a round of golf. PHOTO: Supplied/SABGA

Cody Hansen

People may be under the impression that it is vital to have good eyesight to play golf, but that is not the case. Through the help of their sighted guides, blind and visually impaired golfers all across the country can enjoy the game and the benefits it provides. This is according to the South African Blind Golf Association (SABGA). “The main aim is to get blind people out of the house, playing a sport and competing – not just having the attitude of ‘I’m blind and I can’t do anything,’” said Johan Kotze, president of the SABGA. The SABGA is a non-profit organisation that provides an opportunity for blind and visually impaired people to play compe-

titive golf, and highlights that golf is accessible to all.

“Golf is a brilliant sport in terms of allowing people of massively different ages, differentials and abilities to compete. What I’ve really enjoyed through blind golf is the ability to compete on a relatively level footing against people with a similar challenge in the sport,” said Garrett Slattery, honorary treasurer of the SABGA.

“The main aim is to get blind people out of the house, playing a sport and competing

The organisation travels nationwide to promote interest in the game amongst blind and visually impaired people in South Africa (SA).

“In Afrikaans we say: ‘If the *gogga* bites, then it’s over’. [Golf] is such a wonderful game, and it’s almost addictive. We believe sport is very important for everyone, even if you are visually impaired or blind,” said Kotze.

Hitting the fairway

“Nobody who is a golfing member [of the SABGA] can see where their golf ball goes, so we’re always dependent on a sighted guide,” said Slattery.

Slattery explained that the guide provides the visual information that a blind or visually impaired golfer needs in order to play golf, such as where the hazards are and the kind of shot that is required.

“The *gogga* bit me and I’ve never looked back

“It really works best as a total partnership between player and guide – when the guide is familiar with the player’s abilities and the player can trust the information given by the guide,” said Slattery.

When the golf bug bites

Slattery, who won the 2014 Blind Golf World Championship in the B2 category, said that the greatest pleasure he gets from golf is the personal challenge. “When I go out on a course, I’m not necessarily competing against everyone else that’s out there – I’m competing against myself,”

said Slattery.

Kotze, a former blind cricketer for SA, took up blind golf after hearing about it from some friends. “The *gogga* bit me and I’ve never looked back. The good thing about golf is that there’s no age limit. I know of people that play golf who are into their 90s,” said Kotze.

Events on the course

The 2022 SA Blind Golf Open took place at the end of March at Milnerton Golf Club in Cape Town. “It was very successful. We had 11 or 12 players [who] participated in the SA Open,” said Ernst Conradie, a committee member of the SABGA.

Conradie added that there were two international players in the field.

The SABGA also hosted the country’s first-ever blind inter-provincial tournament at the beginning of April, according to multiple sources. The three teams who competed were Cape Province, Gauteng North and Ekurhuleni. Slattery vividly recalled chipping in on the final hole of the tournament from a penalty area to give Cape Province the victory by one stroke.

The SABGA plans to host the Blind Golf World Championship at Milnerton Golf Club in Cape Town next year, according to Kotze.

PLAYING CATEGORIES

Visually impaired golfers are classified into one of three categories for competition play, according to their sight category.



The B1 category is for people who are totally blind



The B2 category is for people with a visual acuity of less than 2/60



The B3 category is for people with a visual acuity of less than 6/60



If someone has a visual acuity of 2/60, it means that at two metres they will be able to see what a fully sighted person sees from 60 metres away.

▲ The different categories blind and visually impaired golfers compete in during tournament play, according to the South African Blind Golf Association. GRAPHIC: Cody Hansen

South African soccer: A long way to go for today’s youth

Liam Abercrombie

The quality and development of youth soccer in South Africa continues to stagnate, due to the South African Football Association (SAFA) investing fewer resources into youth soccer than professional soccer, claimed Cayl Coetsee, soccer coach at Orlando Pirates Football Club (FC), director of Coerver Coaching South Africa and founder at Capital City FC, a new community club in Pretoria. “SAFA has not had a valid coaching course in a number of years now,” claimed Coetsee. “They have the [youth] D-License, which is a four-day course that targets teachers and volunteer coaches, but even then, the quality of instructors is not great, and the course is unstructured.”

A lack of quality coaching for players under the age of 15 has been the main issue for South African soccer, said Coetsee.

Many issues in South African soccer centre around development – younger soccer players are not taught the right techniques, and there is an issue with coaching, according to Evangelos Vellios, under-23 head coach and first team assistant coach at Stellenbosch FC.

“Coaches are not earning enough to develop youth players, so the better coaches all want to



work in the professional setup to make money,” Vellios explained. “Besides its commercial success, I think the Premier Soccer League (PSL) is the only positive thing in South African soccer because the sixteen clubs that find themselves in the league are investing adequate resources into youth leagues, such as the Multichoice Diski Challenge,” stated Coetsee.

Grassroots development

The youth lack the basic skills because it is not taught to them, said Juven Rittles, soccer and life skills coach at Unchain the Plain (UTP), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Mitchells Plain.

“Everybody watches TV and wants to be Ronaldo who scores

the goals, but don’t realise that you need midfielders and centre backs to do that,” Rittles added.

NGO’s such as UTP are able to teach kids more about sports and provide equipment for them to use. “We hand out free sporting equipment, and we make sure that the kids play all types of sports, not just soccer,” said Rittles. The Mitchells Plain Local Football Association (LFA) houses about 12 000 registered youth members ranging from 6-year-olds to 16-year-olds, Rittles added.

To ensure that young soccer players have higher chances of competing at a professional level, “SAFA needs to work closer with the PSL clubs and establish hubs across the country where

kids are given an opportunity to develop”, stated Vellios.

Development solutions

“Football is one of the major sports in our country and plays a significant [role] in our communities and [the] rest of the world,” stated the Mitchells Plain LFA website.

UTP, however, fights the notion that everyone should play soccer. “We’re into the holistic growth of the child,” stated Rittles. Children should play various sports to develop their minds and skills, which in turn will help them improve in the main sport they eventually focus on, Rittles added. LIP reached out to SAFA, but they were unavailable for comment at the time of going to print.

▲ A group of youths from Mitchells Plain, training with Unchain the Plain (UTP), a non-governmental organisation based in the area. PHOTO: Supplied/Juven Rittles

“Football is one of the major sports in our country and plays a significant [role] in our communities and [the] rest of the world.



▲ Many issues in South African soccer revolve around development, according to Evangelos Vellios, first team assistant coach at Stellenbosch Football Club. GRAPHIC: Jessica Hillier

Tackling concussions in rugby head-on



◀ Forward players are generally asked to take a lot more contact than backline players. Meihuizen recounts having 10 concussions throughout his career as a lock forward.

PHOTO: Supplied/
David Meihuizen

“It’s a contact sport. It’s going to be aggressive; it’s going to always be physical”

Tim Malinzi

A concussion can derail a rugby player’s livelihood if not handled seriously. Although there seem to be improvements in concussion protocols and awareness, some players and coaches think more can be done to minimise the issue.

The player’s story

David Meihuizen, a 24-year-old former rugby player for DHL Stormers and DHL Western Province, publicly announced his retirement from professional rugby on 15 March.

After suffering multiple concussions throughout his career, Meihuizen was warned by a neuropsychologist that continuing to play rugby at a professional level would have adverse long-term effects on his health.

“For me, my intelligence has always been something that I have valued [...] so these injuries were a concern to me because I didn’t want to lose that,” stated Meihuizen. “I went for tests and unfortunately got the bad news that if I continued [playing rugby] it would be to the detriment of my health, so I made the decision to retire.”

The tests Meihuizen referred to are head injury assessments (HIA). According to Meihuizen, HIA tests are conducted after a player suffers a concussion, to test whether or not they can return to playing. These assessments include memory tests, balance tests, and consultations with doctors, said Meihuizen.

zen. Failing the memory and balance tests results in a player not being cleared to play. However, according to Meihuizen, most people pass the memory and balance tests comfortably.

It’s up to the player

Meihuizen identified an issue with the doctor consultations aspect of HIA testing: “With the [doctor consultations], that is completely up to you. If you tell the doctor you’re fine and show no symptoms, then you’re basically cleared to play,” claimed Meihuizen. “A lot of players will rush this process because they’re [...] not really worried about it.”

Tom Bursey, a 22-year-old rugby player and former teammate of Meihuizen, echoed similar sentiments. “Players try and avoid being deemed concussed,” stated Bursey. “You’re playing for positions and it’s competitive. Unless it’s really bad, you always want to carry on playing.”

Bursey was cognisant of the fact that forward players are more likely to suffer a concussion compared to backline players. “Forwards take a lot more contact. For example, in a game [...] I average about three tackles. [Forwards] average between 10 and 20.” Bursey, who plays as a scrum half, has suffered one concussion in his career. Meihuizen, who played as a lock forward, recounts having 10 concussions.

“It’s a contact sport. It’s going to be aggressive; it’s going to always be physical [...] and the forwards are generally the ones who are more involved with the contact,” stated Meihuizen.

Through a coach’s eyes

“A concussion is a brain injury and there are lots of side effects if [coaches] don’t teach proper techniques and if we don’t have proper management systems with regards to that,” according to Wilbur Kraak, rugby coach and head of the division of sport science at Stellenbosch University (SU).

There can be serious long-term effects of concussions, including memory loss and dementia, if they are not handled correctly, stated Kraak.

He said that a change in “general gameplay” has increased the chances of players suffering a concussion.

“Rugby has become more contact dynamic,” stated Kraak. “The dynamic of the game has changed. The number of tackles and the number of breakdowns have increased [...] and that is where the majority of the injuries and concussions will happen.”

Kraak pointed out that there is a philosophy of defensive strategies overshadowing offensive strategies. “The latest trend is if your defence is organised and you can defend for 80 minutes, then your chance is higher of winning the game,” said Kraak. This, however,

results in players being willing to take more contact while defending, according to Kraak.

What can we do about it?

Simon de Waal, lecturer and sport scientist at SU, expressed optimism about the changing perceptions regarding concussions within the rugby community.

He credited the change in perspective to an increasing number of high-profile people and former players speaking openly about their experiences with concussions.

“People’s understanding of concussions is changing [...] and that’s a good thing. People are starting to take it more seriously. Do I think that we have done enough in this regard? Probably not,” stated De Waal.

“All people that participate in the game [...] can add value to ensure less injuries” and have the responsibility to ensure that protocols are being adhered to. This is according to Dante Rademeyer, referee manager for the Eastern Province Rugby Referees’ Society, with 42 years of refereeing experience.

Significant rule changes with regards to contact situations such as scrumming, tackling and rucking have been implemented over the years to minimise the occurrence of head injuries and protect players, added Rademeyer.

“You can’t just run into a ruck

regardless [for example]. You must use your arms to clean out,” said Rademeyer. “If you look at [rugby in] the 80s and 90s, it is now a totally different game.”

Access to education and awareness is crucial in changing the perception around concussions, according to De Waal. Additionally, De Waal acknowledged what he sees as improvements in concussion protocols.

“The protocols [...] are getting better and better in terms of allowing for concussion substitutions or doing proper concussion checks on the sideline, for example,” said De Waal.

In order to minimise the recurrence of concussions, De Waal believes that improvements in effective applications of protocols are essential.

“While [the protocols] are better on paper, [...] are they being applied? I think that’s where we’re still struggling a little bit,” stated De Waal.

In terms of medical solutions, Meihuizen noted that scrum caps and mouthguards are scientifically proven to reduce the risk of concussions.

Coaches play a “massive role” in reducing the number of concussions players get, said Kraak. He specifically noted the importance of practising safe tackling and rucking techniques. He urged coaches to adhere to protocols and do their part in protecting players.

“People are starting to take it more seriously. Do I think that we have done enough in this regard? Probably not.”

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Trouble concentrating ●

Headaches ●

Sensitivity to light ●

Nausea and vomiting ●

Sensitivity to noise ●

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

● Sleep disturbances

● Alzheimer’s disease

● Parkinson’s disease

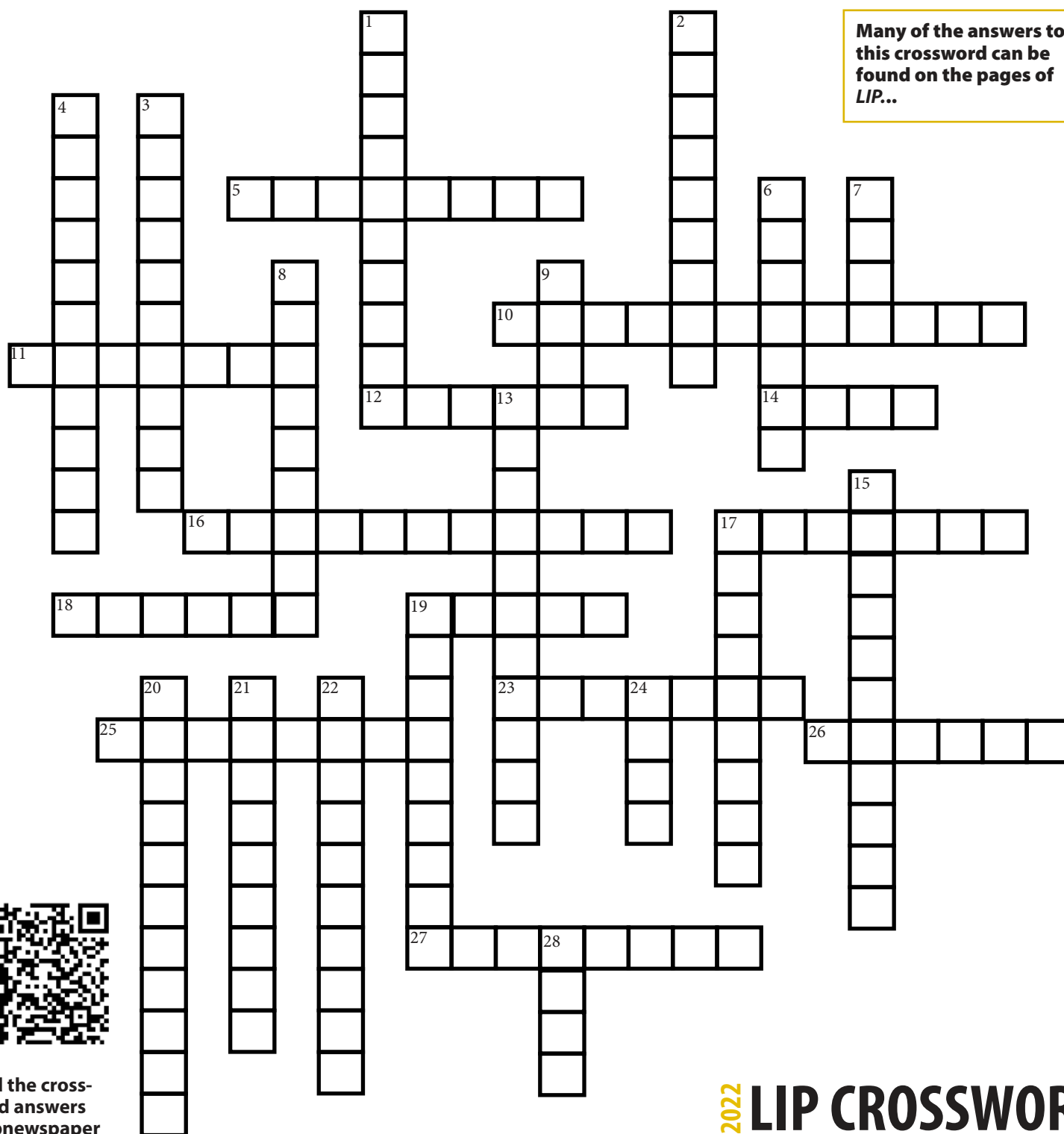
● Personality changes

● Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy



▲ The 24-year-old David Meihuizen was forced into an early retirement from professional rugby due to suffering multiple concussions. PHOTO: Tim Malinzi

▲ Concussions can lead to several neurological problems. Above are some of the common long and short-term effects of concussions, according to Dr John Kachoko, practitioner at Frere Hospital in East London. GRAPHIC: Tim Malinzi



Many of the answers to this crossword can be found on the pages of LIP...



Find the crossword answers @lipnewspaper

2022 LIP CROSSWORD
Compiled by Tim Malinzi

DOWN

- 1. Maybe cacti or aloes.
- 2. Prison in Worcester, South Africa.
- 3. Artist who won best album at the 2022 Grammys.
- 4. Largest township in the Western Cape, South Africa.
- 6. Waves for Change's sport.
- 7. Part red, part white (maybe a flower or beverage).
- 8. Golf club who hosted the 2022 SA Blind Golf Open.
- 9. Winner of best picture at the 2022 Academy Awards.
- 13. Entrepreneurial hangout in Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 15. The study of birds.

- 17. Surname of Ukrainian boxer and politician.
- 19. 2022 Masters winner.
- 20. Largest exporter of tigers and tiger parts in the world.
- 21. Converting waste into reusable material.
- 22. Joseph, first blind barista in South Africa.
- 24. Eben and Lood's position.
- 28. Educational institute for film and performance in South Africa.

ACROSS

- 5. Not-for-profit news publication in Cape Town.
- 10. Africa's first ballroom house.
- 11. Press Freedom Day 2022

- theme; "Journalism under ___ siege."
- 12. Uber alternative based in Stellenbosch.
- 14. Food wastage NGO in Joburg (maybe a chocolate bar).
- 16. Biological research and conservation institute at UCT.
- 17. Newspaper in Afrikaans.
- 18. Founded by Jeff Bezos.
- 19. Informal shelter.
- 23. Subject taught by Wandile Nzuza.
- 25. Unimpressed primate of the NFT world.
- 26. Sport coached by Cayl Coetsee.
- 27. Ninth month of the Islamic calendar.



SCAN THE BARCODE ABOVE TO LISTEN TO THE LIP 2022 ARTICLES IN AUDIO FORMAT OR SING ALONG WITH THE TEAM PLAYLIST ON YOUTUBE

Without fear

The LIP team

To commemorate the fact that LIP is being distributed on World Press Freedom Day, the journalism honours class of 2022 decided to honour journalists who were persecuted or harmed while exercising their inalienable right to free speech, and to recognise some of the seminal moments in the development of press freedom in South Africa. As representatives of the future of the profession, we vow to publish without fear or prejudice, to carry on defending press freedom against all who threaten it.

- ▶ 1993 World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly.
- 1994 Ken Oostebroek, famed photographer, was shot in crossfire while covering a gun battle in Thokoza.
- 1997 Ishmael Jalloh, a freelance reporter, was shot while covering the battle at Allen Town in Sierra Leone.
- 1999 Ricardo Gangeme, a 56-year-old editor, was fatally shot while parking his car in front of his home in Argentina.
- ▶ 2001 The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) raises concerns regarding press freedom in Southern Africa.
- 2002 Daniel Pearl, a correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, was kidnapped and killed in Pakistan.
- 2005 Hind Ismail, a 28-year-old Iraqi reporter, was kidnapped and fatally shot.
- ▶ 2009 Maguindanao massacre kills at least 34 journalists in the Philippines.
- 2012 Marie Colven, revered war correspondent, died in Homs after her makeshift media centre was bombed by the Syrian army.
- 2015 Micheal Tshela, a freelance photographer in South Africa, was fatally shot while covering a community protest in the Mothutlung.
- 2018 Jamal Khashoggi, a journalist and influential critic of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.
- 2019 ABC, Bloomberg, The Boston Globe, Fox News and Time join the 'Protect Press Freedom' campaign.
- 2021 Karima Brown, a renowned South African journalist, passed away due to Covid-19. She was one of many media professionals who lost their lives while working reporting during the worst of the pandemic.
- ▶ 2022 According to CPJ, 1395 journalists have been killed in the line of duty since 1993. The names above are but a few of the many.

This information was sourced from the Committee for Protecting Journalists' website.

