

#IAmAnEducationChampion

MARCH 2026 | ISSUE #33

MAGAZINE

The Strong
Female Lead

International
Women's
Day Issue

Inika-May Wessels
Masters Green and
Glucose

Graduation Season
Fashion with House of
Fabrosanz

What it takes to be a
Ceramicist

Is Gap Year still a
popular choice for
matriculants



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CONTENT FEATURES

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CAMPUSCONNECT

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Health and Wellness: Healthy Snacks for Straight-A Students

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RSCE2026 Dates



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to download this current issue

DIARISE THESE EVENTS

OPEN BOOK YOUTH FESTIVAL CAPE TOWN

The Open Book Youth Fest is running until 23 March across Cape Town, offering a massive lineup of panels and workshops designed to turn your storytelling passion into a real-world career. Whether you are a budding poet or a future publisher, these sessions are built to help you bridge the gap between "just a hobby" and a full-time creative hustle.

MZANSI YOUNG FARMERS INDABA

Modern agriculture is no longer just about the soil; it is becoming the playground for Africa's most ambitious young entrepreneurs and tech innovators. The Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba will be hosted in Pretoria from 9–10 April 2026, bringing together nearly 2,000 agri-gamechangers to rewrite the rules of the food industry.

This isn't your traditional farming meeting—it's a high-energy movement where you can dive into masterclasses on agri-tech, climate resilience, and securing that critical startup finance. If you are an emerging producer or a rural changemaker, this is your chance to grab early bird tickets for R580 and connect with the mentors who can help scale your agribusiness to a continental level.

The poster features a green background with a stylized white and red leaf logo on the left. The text 'MZANSI YOUNG FARMERS INDABA' is prominently displayed in white, with 'POWERED BY FOOD FOR MZANSI' in smaller white text below it. A dark green banner at the bottom contains the event details: 'WHEN: 1-2 APRIL 2025' and 'WHERE: LAVENDER KONTREI MARKET, PRETORIA'. An orange 'BUY NOW!' button is located in the bottom right corner of the banner.

MZANSI YOUNG FARMERS INDABA
POWERED BY FOOD FOR MZANSI

WHEN: 1-2 APRIL 2025
WHERE: LAVENDER KONTREI MARKET, PRETORIA

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THE COMPLETE SOUTH AFRICAN CAREERS GUIDE



IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Career Planet™



Your journey to your **IDEAL CAREER**. From grade 10 subject choices to your matric finals. Your pathway to university, TVET college and other tertiary possibilities. Your personality match to your career choices. **EVERYTHING** you need to prepare for **A FULFILLING FUTURE IN THE WORKPLACE**.



Review: The Complete South African Careers Guide

Publisher: Bright Eyes Publishers

In Association With: Career Planet™

Target Audience: Grade 9–12 Learners, School Leavers, and Graduates

Overview: A Roadmap to the Future
In a country facing a challenging job market and high youth unemployment, The Complete South African Careers Guide serves as more than just a magazine; it is a vital navigational tool.

Its vibrant, icon-heavy cover (featuring everything from medical professionals and engineers to chefs and artisans) immediately signals its inclusive approach: every career path is valued, and every learner can find a place within its pages.

Key Features & Content

The guide is strategically structured to follow the chronological journey of a South African student:

Foundation Phase (Grade 10 Subject Choices): It addresses the "fork in the road" for Grade 9 students, explaining how subject choices impact future university or TVET college entrance.

Pathways to Tertiary Education: It demystifies the difference between University and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) colleges, providing clarity on different qualification levels.

The Psychological Edge: One of the guide's strongest points is its focus on personality matching. Instead of just listing jobs, it encourages readers to align their inherent strengths and passions with specific career fields.

GAP YEAR OR GO NOW

READER'S VIEW

Why matriculants are pressing pause before pressing play on their future. The decision after matric has never been more complex. Many learners celebrate passing Grade 12 while simultaneously facing tough choices about what comes next. University acceptance letters arrive for some, waiting-list notifications for others, and silence for many still navigating late applications. In a generation shaped by rising education costs, global opportunities, and career uncertainty, the gap year has returned as a serious option rather than a backup plan. For today's youth, the real question is no longer if they study, but when?

UNIVERSITY SPACES ARE STILL COMPETITIVE

Access to tertiary education remains highly competitive. Public universities continue receiving far more applications than available first-year spaces each year, leaving many qualified matriculants on waiting lists despite meeting minimum requirements. Colleges and TVET institutions absorb some demand, yet placement delays create uncertainty during the first months of the academic year. While thousands secure admission immediately, many students spend weeks refreshing application portals and exploring alternatives.



The Rise of the Modern Gap Year

Instead of staying at home, over the years matriculants would intentionally structure their year through internships, short courses, volunteering, or entrepreneurial projects. Social media exposure to global lifestyles has shifted perceptions, making personal growth and skills development just as valuable as immediate academic enrolment. Parents and educators are also becoming more open to planned breaks when they include measurable goals. A well-planned pause is now viewed as preparation rather than procrastination.



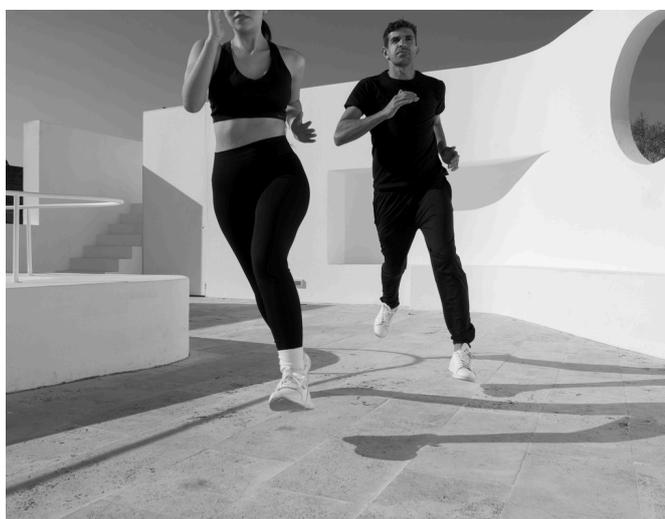
Gap Year Opportunities

International gap year programmes are gaining popularity among school leavers. Local recruitment agencies report growing interest from matriculants seeking work opportunities in Europe, the United States, and parts of Asia while earning an income and experiencing new cultures. These programmes allow young people to travel, improve language skills, and gain independence before committing to long-term studies. However, contracts, visa rules, and emotional readiness remain important considerations before signing up. For many students, the world has become their first classroom.



Plan B Generation

Students placed on university waiting lists often combine part-time work, online learning, or short certifications while hoping for placement later in the year. This hybrid approach reflects a generation unwilling to stay idle while opportunities unfold. Career Guidance counsellors are also encouraging learners to develop multiple pathways instead of relying on a single acceptance outcome.



Is A Gap Year the Right Move?

The success of a gap year depends on intention. It is highly recommended to set clear goals such as gaining work experience, saving money, improving marks for re-application, or exploring career interests through exposure. Without structure, matriculants risk losing academic momentum and motivation to return to study. With planning, however, the year can build maturity, confidence, and clearer career direction. The difference lies between escaping decisions and preparing for them.



The Future Belongs To Flexible Thinkers

Whether entering university immediately, waiting for admission, enrolling in colleges, or travelling abroad, matriculants need to be aware that career success is no longer a straight line but a series of informed choices shaped by experience and opportunity. In the end, the smartest move is not rushing forward — it is moving forward with purpose.



GRADUATION SEASON 2026 LOOKS FROM LECTURE HALL TO OFFICE

FOR THE NEW GRADUATE, THE TRANSITION FROM THE LECTURE HALL TO THE BOARDROOM IS MORE THAN A CHANGE OF SCENERY—IT IS A TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY. IN THIS FASHION FEATURE, WE SHOWCASE HOW LOCAL POWERHOUSE HOUSE OF FABROSANZ IS REDEFINING SOUTH AFRICAN WORKWEAR THROUGH THEIR "OFFICE OPULENCE" COLLECTION.

THE GREY OFFICE POWER DRESS



This look captures refined professionalism through a structured grey pleated dress — a signature example of Fabrosanz’s “Office Opulence” philosophy, where elegance meets executive readiness.

THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT "DRESSING THE PART"; IT'S ABOUT COMMANDING THE ROOM WITH A BLEND OF CONTEMPORARY TAILORING AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. HERE IS OUR REVIEW OF THE FIVE ESSENTIAL LOOKS EVERY GRADUATE NEEDS TO BUILD A POWERHOUSE PROFESSIONAL WARDROBE.

TAILORED MONOCHROME POWER SET



This outfit reflects the evolving identity of Gen-Z professionals: confident, polished, and fashion-aware. A fitted black top with wide-leg tailored pants embodies modern corporate minimalism.

SOFT FEMININE POWER DRESSING



This look blends softness with ambition — a satin blouse paired with a fitted midi skirt, creating a graceful yet strategic professional aesthetic.

THE MODERN EXECUTIVE



This look is for the graduate who isn't afraid to redefine "corporate chic" with a touch of avant-garde silhouette.

BOARDROOM BOUND



Nothing says "Education Champion" like a look that commands respect the moment you walk into a room. This look balances classic menswear motifs with feminine grace. This isn't your average shirt dress; it's crafted from a premium pinstripe suiting fabric that provides structure and "Office Opulence."

HOW INIKA-MAY WESSELS MASTERS THE GREEN AND THE GLUCOSE

At just 14 years old, Inika-May Wessels doesn't just play the game—she manages it. Whether she is calculating the break on a challenging putt at the Bloemfontein's Schoemanpark Golf Club or monitoring her blood glucose levels during a high-stakes exam, the Grade 8 Hoerskool Sentraal learner operates with a level of precision that would intimidate most adults.

In an exclusive sit-down for our #IAmAnEducationChampion stories of resilience series, Inika-May opens up about carrying a sporting legacy, living with Type 1 diabetes, and her ambitious "triple-threat" future in medicine, law, and professional golf.



BY THULISA MANGCOTYWA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIZA WESSELS

A Legacy in the Making

Golf isn't just a hobby for Inika-May; it's a family heartbeat. Her late father, Peter Wessels, was a Springbok golfer—a prestigious national honour in South Africa. "I was inspired by him," she shares softly. "He passed away, so I wanted to carry on with the family legacy. I decided I really want to play golf."

After picking up a club at age eight and turning serious about the sport three years later, she is already a force to be reckoned with. But the road to the pro leagues is paved with a grueling schedule. While many teens spend their afternoons on social media, Inika-May is a master of the calendar for everything.

Her Weekly Grind:

Monday, Thursday, Friday: Golf practice and school leagues.
Tuesday, Wednesday: Netball.
Weekends: National tournaments (often traveling to places outside Bloemfontein).
Daily: Academic study from 18:00 to 21:00.

The Silent Competitor

Behind the effortless swing is a constant, invisible battle. Diagnosed at three and a half after a life-threatening coma, Inika-May has spent over a decade navigating the complexities of insulin, diet, and sensors.

"It's hard to control because you never know what's going to happen," she explains. She wears a glucose sensor—which some younger kids jokingly mistake for "robot parts"—and must occasionally inject insulin or eat sugar mid-class.

While she admits to being embarrassed about her condition as a younger child, she has reached a point of profound acceptance. "I think if you're a diabetic, you need to appreciate it about you being you. God gave it to me for a reason... maybe to inspire people who have a disability to show them they can do something."

Visions of 2026 and Beyond

Inika-May isn't just aiming for the Top 10 academically this year; she is already looking toward University of Stellenbosch for her tertiary education. Her career goals are as diverse as they are determined:

1. Medicine: "I want to figure out how to solve diabetes."
2. Law: She envisions herself as a family guide lawyer, using technology (her favourite subject) to modernize the field.
3. Pro Golf: Following in her father's footsteps to the highest level.
4. Agriculture: A secret passion for farming in the Free State.

To anyone feeling held back by illness, loss, or circumstance, Inika-May offers a perspective wise beyond her 14 years. "Because you have a challenge doesn't mean it's the final challenge. You can change that challenge into something successful. Don't be shy about it... show people that we are powerful."

As she heads off to her next tournament, one thing is clear: Inika-May Wessels isn't just playing for herself. She is playing for her father, for every child with a chronic illness, and for a future where no obstacle is too high to clear.



INIKA-MAY IS CURRENTLY SEEKING SPONSORS TO SUPPORT HER JOURNEY TO THE PRO-GOLFING RANKS. IF YOU OR YOUR ORGANIZATION WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT A DRIVEN, HIGH-ACHIEVING YOUNG ATHLETE, REACH OUT TO THE #IAMANEDUCATIONCHAMPION EDITORIAL TEAM.*

SLAY THE GLOBAL CULINARY STAGE BY ENTERING S PELLEGRINO YOUNG CHEF ACADEMY COMPETITION

BY NEO MOROKANE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY S PELLEGRINO



If you think a chef's life is just peeling potatoes, you've clearly missed the memo on the S. Pellegrino Young Chef Academy. This isn't just a cooking contest; it's a high-stakes arena where the next generation of culinary icons is forged through fire and flavour.

Entering this competition means stepping out of the local tuck shop mindset and into a world where your "signature dish" is your business card. For South African students, this is the ultimate gap-closer between a classroom in Bloemfontein or Jozi and the Michelin-starred kitchens of Milan. You aren't just learning to cook; you are learning to lead, innovate, and disrupt an entire industry.

The S. Pellegrino Academy pairs young visionaries with the world's most decorated "Big Chefs" to refine their craft. This 1-on-1 coaching is the "cheat code" to career longevity, teaching you that a restaurant is a business, a brand, and a legacy all rolled into one. It's about more than the recipe—it's about the resilience required to stand at the top of the food chain.

The competition puts a massive spotlight on social responsibility and environmental impact. Today's industry leaders aren't just looking for someone who can sear a steak; they want visionaries who understand food security and sustainable sourcing. By joining this movement, you're proving that South African youth are ready to feed the world while protecting the planet.

Whether you are currently at a TVET college or a specialized culinary school, the path to the podium starts with a single, bold ingredient. Don't just follow the recipe of life—write your own.



OUT & ABOUT

WHERE

Schoemanpark Golf Club
Bloemfontein



HIGHLIGHTS

ECA raised more than R300 000 during the Golf day activities for Autism SA



SPONSORS

Major Sponsors included, amongst others, Voltex and there were ten exhibitors on the day





Healthy Snacks Options for Straight-A Students

"Uncovering the Essentials for Smart, Healthy Brain."

Between long lectures and late-night study sessions, what you grab to eat defines how you perform. Swapping that oily packet of crisps for a handful of roasted nuts or a piece of fruit isn't just about "being healthy"; it's about giving your brain the premium fuel it needs to stay sharp. In the fast-paced world of a varsity life, the right snack is the difference between a mid-day crash and a productivity win.

1. Biltong

Forget the expensive imported protein bars that taste like chalk when you can lean into a local favourite. Biltong is packed with iron and essential amino acids, making it the perfect snack for athletes and busy students alike. Just be sure to opt for the leaner cuts to keep your heart game strong while you get those gains.

2. Nuts and seeds

Walnuts, almonds, and pumpkin seeds are loaded with Omega-3 fatty acids, which are like high-speed internet for your neurons. A small bag in your backpack can help you cruise through a double-period math class without your energy dipping. They provide a steady release of energy, ensuring you don't get those "hangry" jitters halfway through the day.

3. Fresh fruit

Instead of reaching for an energy drink filled with chemicals, grab an apple, a banana, or a handful of grapes. These snacks come wrapped in fibre, which slow-releases sugar into your bloodstream so you don't experience a massive "sugar crash" twenty minutes later. Plus, the Vitamin C boost will keep your skin looking fresh and your immune system ready to fight off campus flu.

4. Popcorn

If you are a "volume eater" who likes to munch while watching a movie or revising, air-popped popcorn is your best friend. It is high in fibre and incredibly low in calories, provided you skip the heavy butter and excessive salt. It's the most affordable way to keep your mouth busy and your stomach satisfied.

The R150 Student Snack Hack

Walking into a supermarket with R150 might feel like a mission impossible, but with the right tactics, you can stock up for the week. Skip the flashy brands and head straight for the house-brand staples to get the most for your buck. By focusing on whole foods that fill you up, you ensure your brain stays powered

A Day in the Life of a Ceramicist

Global superstar Andile Dyalvane started just like many of his industry peers, molding clay oxen by the river in the Eastern Cape. He didn't know then that the earth he played with would become a world-class career. "I didn't know being a Ceramicist could be a career because no one was making objects out of clay around me," says Dyalvane.

Today, his work celebrates Xhosa culture on a global stage, proving that your roots are your superpower. Like him, Zizipho Poswa uses her craft to tell stories of African womanhood, scaling up from "hand-sized pinch pots" to massive sculptures that command the room.

The Business of Clay

This industry requires a Ceramicist to be half-artist and half-entrepreneur to enjoy creative economy. "Pottery is a wonderful journey... you lose your inhibitions and let out your inner person," notes Cape Town professional Amelia Jacobs. But remember: while the "inner person" creates the art, the



the "business person" handles the invoices.

What to Study and Where?

Most South African universities offer specialized paths within their Visual Arts or Fine Arts departments. You'll learn everything from the chemistry of glazes to the history of African pottery.

* Bachelor of Visual Arts (BVA) in Ceramics: Nelson Mandela University (NMU) is the go-to institution for this, offering a dedicated three-year degree followed by an Honours year.

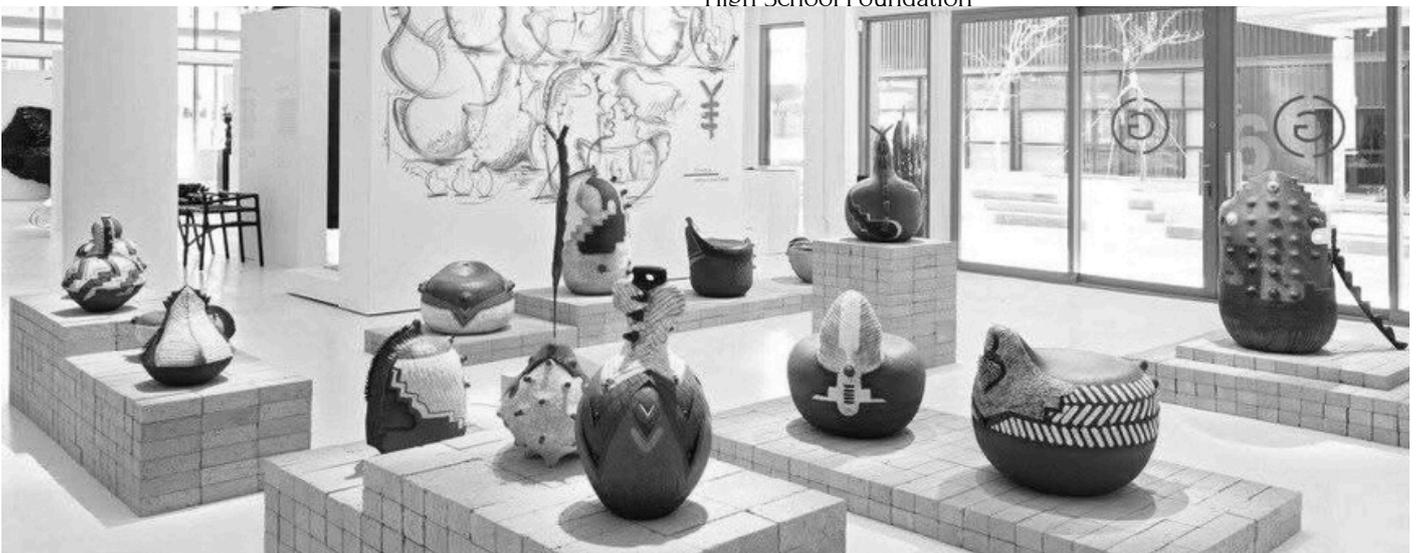
* Diploma in Fine and Applied Arts: Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) offers a career-focused diploma where you can major in Ceramics alongside another discipline like Glass or Fibre Arts.

* BA in Fine Art: The Michaelis School of Fine Art (UCT) and the University of Pretoria (UP) allow you to specialize in sculpture and ceramics as part of a broader Fine Arts degree.

* Diploma in Design and Studio Art: The Central University of Technology (CUT) provides a path for those looking to blend design thinking with hands-on craft.



High School Foundation



FROM THE CERAMICIST STUDIO



High School Foundation

You don't have to wait for tertiary to start building your portfolio; high school is the perfect time to nurture in your basics.

* Visual Arts & Design Subjects: Choose Visual Arts or Design as your Grade 10-12 electives. Focus on the "Three-Dimensional" modules.

* Specialized Schools: Institutions like the National School of the Arts (NSA) in Johannesburg or the PJ Olivier Art Centre in Stellenbosch offer intensive ceramic programmes for high schoolers.

* The Portfolio: Keep every piece you make. Most tertiary institutions require a portfolio of 10–15 artworks for admission, and high school projects are your starting point.

Short Courses and Private Studios

If you want to skill up quickly or specialize in a specific technique like Raku firing or wheel throwing, private studios are an alternative option.

* Kim Sacks School of Ceramics (Joburg): Famous for teaching both the technical how-to and the soul of clay.

* Ceramics Southern Africa: This is the national body for potters; they offer workshops, regional exhibitions, and mentorship opportunities that connect you with working pros.

* Community Centres: Many local mudrooms and studios offer 8-week intensives that focus on Production Pottery—the art of making many pieces quickly for sale.

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
ARE AVAILABLE LOCALLY
AND INTERNATIONALLY
FOR LEARNERS WHO
ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT
PLAYING WITH CLAY**

RISING STARS CAREER EXPO 2026



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Umlazi Durban

28 July 2026

11-13 August 2026

Contact Details: 072 910 9378

MARCH 2026

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**GRADUATION
SEASON
FASHION 2026**



**3RD YEAR CELEBRATION
EDITION**

INSPIRING BRIGHT YOUNG TALENT