

STREET LEGACY

NEWSLETTER 2025/06

IMPACT STORIES



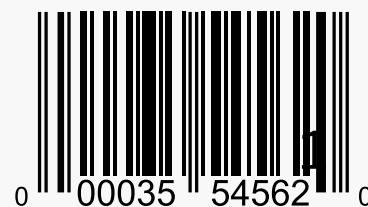
TOWNSHIP ECONOMY



SMART HUSTLING

**MEET LOCAL
ENTREPRENEURS
MAKING AN
IMPACT**

**GET TO KNOW
THE FOUNDER
AND THE STORY
BEHIND US**



YOUTH EDITION

CHAMPIONING BACKBONES OF OUR ECONOMY

One Story at a Time

Welcome to the youth edition of The Street Legacy Foundation (SLF) newsletter our vibrant platform dedicated to promoting and redefining entrepreneurship among studentpreneurs, informal traders, and township entrepreneurs. Too often, the hardworking individuals behind our street markets and township ventures go unrecognized. Yet, they are the backbone of our economy. This edition, launched during Youth Month, to celebrates "Youth in Entrepreneurship" by sharing real, inspiring stories of young trailblazers in farming, education, photography, media, and social impact. As SLF founder Awethu Magobongo reminds us, entrepreneurship is not always about flashy innovations it is also found in the everyday hustle, in the resilience of selling on the street, and in the courage to keep going despite the odds.

I hope you enjoy our stories
Sincerely,
Nokuthaba Zikhali
Editor

Editor's Note



Nokuthaba Zikhali is a passionate scholar and trailblazer in the field of development studies. She holds a Bachelor's, Honours, and Master's degree from the University of Zululand, where her academic excellence laid a strong foundation for her research journey. Currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Mpumalanga, Nokuthaba continues to make her mark through consistent academic publishing and impactful research, proving herself as a rising voice in South Africa's academic landscape.



Awethu Magobongo

Founder

The Story Behind Street Legacy Foundation

“I founded The Street Legacy Foundation (SLF) out of a deep conviction a response to what I saw and felt within our townships and marketplaces. Day after day, I watched informal traders, street vendors, studentpreneurs, and township-based business owners hustling hard to survive, yet constantly overlooked by the very same systems meant to support entrepreneurship. These individuals are the lifeblood of our economy, yet they remain invisible in policy spaces, under-supported by funding structures, and undervalued in conversations about innovation and growth. What struck me the most was not just the struggle but the potential. The ideas, the discipline, the street-smart strategies, and the raw entrepreneurial energy that fills our communities were unmatched. But too many of these entrepreneurs operate without mentorship, without a platform, without recognition.

I realized what they needed was not charity it was access. Access to visibility, knowledge, tools, networks, and opportunities. That is where Street Legacy Foundation was born not just as an organization, but as a movement. A movement that documents, celebrates, and connects. At the heart of what we do is storytelling profiling the journeys of youth in business and township entrepreneurs to humanize their hustle, shift mindsets, and attract the attention, respect, and support they deserve.

These stories do not just inspire they challenge stereotypes, influence policy, and connect local entrepreneurs to broader markets and investors.

But storytelling is only one part. We also work to provide practical support offering access to digital tools, mentorship, training, market exposure, and strategic partnerships. Our goal is to build an ecosystem where township entrepreneurs are not seen as "informal" or "on the margins," but as legitimate drivers of inclusive economic growth.

Through SLF, I want to create a space where the kid selling kotas on the corner, the young woman growing vegetables in her backyard, and the student running a brand on campus, all feel seen, heard, and supported. This is what street legacy is about. A future where no one's hustle goes unnoticed, and every effort has the chance to grow into something greater.”



Abednizer Masilela

Meet Abednizer Innocent Masilela: Empowering Youth Through Education and Innovation
Abednizer Innocent Masilela is a visionary social entrepreneur, educator, and community builder from Pienaar kaMsogwaba, Nelspruit. At just 30 years old, he is transforming youth education and empowerment in South Africa.

He Holds an Honours Degree in Business Management and currently pursuing a Master's from the University of Mpumalanga, his mission began with a desire to help young people in his community, particularly those needing a second chance to pass matric. In 2017, he founded Star School Matric Rewrite and Tutoring Centre, now known as Ehlanzeni Star School, located in Nelspruit and soon expanding to Plaston with a new Skills Development Centre.

Your paragraph

The centre offers:
Matric Rewrite Programmes, tutoring Services, Accredited Computer Literacy Courses Learner's and Driver's Licence Assistance, Skills Training in Entrepreneurship, Hospitality, and Health

What sets the centre apart is its affordable, accessible, and tech-driven approach. A unique mobile learning app allows students, even in rural areas, to access quality education anytime. Since its launch, the school has helped over 1,000 learners obtain their National Senior Certificates, trained 200+ in computer literacy, helped 60+ youth gain driver's licences, and now employs 11 staff. It enrolls over 400 students annually, generating over R2.5 million in revenue with a 20% profit margin.

Abednizer's work has earned widespread recognition, including Mpumalanga Social Enterprise of the Year and a spot in the SAB Foundation Tholoana Programme. Despite challenges like fee non-payments and limited infrastructure, he is responded with resilience outsourcing debt collection, forming partnerships with Buscor, SAPPI, RCL Foods, and securing support from the UMP Centre for Entrepreneurship and SAB Foundation.

Driven by a deep belief in education as a tool to break generational poverty, Abednizer dreams of expanding Ehlanzeni Star School nationally, reaching thousands through multiple centres and a robust mobile platform.

"Start with what you have, where you are. Stay consistent, keep learning, and build a business that solves real problems."



Siyabonga Jele

Meet Siyabonga Jele: Visual Storyteller and Young Entrepreneur on the Rise. At just 22 years old, Siyabonga Jele is making waves as a third-year Bachelor of Development Studies student at the University of Mpumalanga and the Founder and Director of JB Creative Cinema, a fast-growing photography and media company.

Siya's entrepreneurial spirit began early, rooted in a belief that black youth can lead and innovate in underrepresented spaces. His passion for media took shape during a stint at a media company, where he gained clarity and direction for his future. Identifying a gap in the market for quality and accessible photography services, Siyabonga launched JB Creative Cinema not as a trend, but as a purposeful business.

Today, his company provides professional photography services for weddings, graduations, corporate events, and portraits. It employs three full-time staff and four part-time creatives, underscoring his commitment to job creation and youth empowerment. His work has attracted major clients, including the University of Mpumalanga and Standard Bank, showing that a youth-led brand can deliver excellence and earn credibility.

While JB Creative Cinema has experienced steady growth in revenue and services, Siya continues to navigate challenges such as limited resources, equipment shortages, and delayed client payments. Yet, his mindset remains unwavering viewing every challenge as a chance to grow.

Siyabonga Jele is more than a business owner; he is a change-maker using the lens of a camera to inspire, employ, and create impact. His company stands as a testament to what young people can achieve with vision, consistency, and courage.

"JB Creative Cinema is not just a business it's a movement," he says, reminding us that greatness often starts with a simple idea and the boldness to act.

"An idea will always remain an idea until it's executed."



Khensani Thela

Meet Khensani Thela: Innovator, Farmer, and Changemaker from Nkomazi. At just 29 years old, Khensani Thela is redefining agricultural entrepreneurship in the heart of Nkomazi. A proud daughter of the region, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Mpumalanga and is the founder of Khendo (Pty) Ltd, a fast-growing business born from her deep love for poultry.

Khensani started her journey in 2021, selling chicken broilers. But when rising feed costs threatened her business, she did not give up she innovated. In 2024, she began producing customized chicken feed, tailored to meet the nutritional needs of local farmers' chickens. This move not only reduced costs but also distinguished her brand by offering expert advice on reducing waste.

Today, Khensani operates a physical store in Mjejane, serving over 1,000 local farmers. Her feed is tested by SEDA and approved by SABS, affirming its high quality. She has already created employment for three young people, showing that her vision is about collective progress, not just personal success.

Like any entrepreneur, Khensani faces challenges particularly machine breakdowns that disrupt production. Still, she remains committed, driven by the desire to inspire her children and uplift her community.

Her message to young people is clear and powerful:

"Get up and do something. You cannot achieve anything by sitting down."

With every bag of feed she delivers and every farmer she empowers, Khensani Thela is proving that real change starts with passion, innovation, and purpose right in the heart of Nkomazi.

"Get up and do something. You cannot achieve anything by sitting down."



Siphesihle Shabalala

Meet Siphesihle Shabalala: Empowering Youth Through Innovation and Purpose

Siphesihle Shabalala is a visionary social entrepreneur tackling South Africa's youth unemployment crisis with bold ideas and grassroots action. As the founder of Unemployed & Unashamed, established in 2020, Siphesihle is empowering young people not through pity but through purpose, skills, and innovation.

Unemployed & Unashamed bridges the gap between education and economic opportunity by offering mobile digital skills, entrepreneurship training, and 4IR-focused business development. The enterprise challenges traditional job-seeking mindsets by encouraging youth to become creators of enterprise, not just job seekers.

In just five years, the organisation has impacted over 500 direct beneficiaries and collaborated with major stakeholders such as MTN, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), City of Mbombela, Mpumalanga Economic Development & Tourism, and Enactus.

It has played a key role in shaping Mpumalanga's Informal Sector Policy, and continues to grow its reach across the province.

Despite operating with only three permanent staff and ten volunteers, the enterprise has achieved national recognition. Still, challenges remain including refining its value proposition and navigating a fragmented funding landscape. What drives Siphesihle is a powerful belief in mindset transformation.

He says:

"Once you have a skill, you are a measure. Don't limit yourself to the labour market. There's more than one market."

Through his work, Siphesihle Shabalala is not just creating entrepreneurs he's reshaping the future of South Africa's youth, one empowered mind at a time.

"Unemployment is not the end, it's the beginning of innovation when youth choose to rise, build, and redefine their worth."



Fikile Mathebula

Meet Fikile Mathebula: Herbal Entrepreneur Turning Tradition into a Thriving Business
Fikile Mathebula, a 36-year-old entrepreneur from Pienaar, Mpumalanga, is the founder of Sasifi Mathebula Trading, a growing herbal products business supplying pharmacies and individual sellers across South Africa.

Fikile's entrepreneurial roots run deep. Inspired by her mother's small shop, she began selling fruits and vegetables as a child. Her passion for traditional healing also emerged early while still in school, she prepared herbal remedies using recycled bottles. Her mixtures gained popularity through word of mouth, with people from other provinces seeking her healing solutions.

A turning point came when she helped a colleague with a cancer wound, further motivating her to commit to her calling. In 2016, she officially registered Sasifi Mathebula Trading, funding it herself. Support followed from SEDA (product testing), the NYDA, and in 2023, funding from the Office of the Premier and a R250,000 SEFA equipment grant.

Despite setbacks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Fikile remained resilient. Instead of closing, she innovated and expanded, employing two people and building a growing network of resellers. Her dream is to take her herbal products to international markets, while continuing to uplift her community.

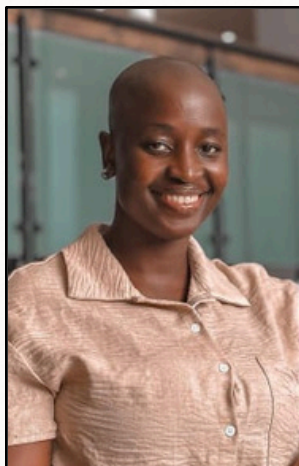
Her message to aspiring entrepreneurs:
"Be patient, have a vision, and never give up on your dreams—even when others don't believe in them."

Fikile's journey is a testament to the power of purpose, perseverance, and belief, showing that even in unrecognized industries, success is possible.

"A vision backed by patience and belief can turn even the smallest idea into a healing legacy."



Meet the Team



Nokuthaba Zikhali

Nokuthaba is a dedicated development practitioner with a strong academic background, holding a Bachelor's in Environmental Planning and Development, an Honours, and a Master's in Development Studies. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Development Studies at the University of Mpumalanga. Passionate about community empowerment and sustainability, Nokuthaba focuses on translating research into impactful strategies for rural and under-resourced communities.

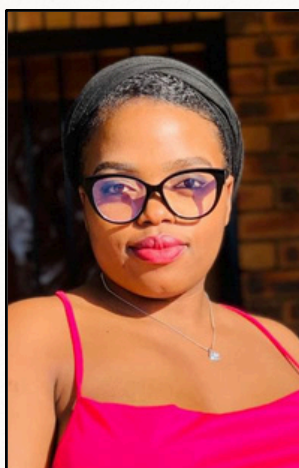
MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS



Ntuthuko Ntshiza

Ntuthuko holds a BCom in Economics and Entrepreneurship and is currently pursuing an Honours in Business Management. Driven by a passion for digital transformation and e-commerce, Ntuthuko focuses on empowering small businesses and promoting inclusive, innovative business practices. With both academic and practical experience, the goal is to help build resilient and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems in South Africa and beyond.

STRATEGIC
MANAGER



Nomhlekhabo Nkosi

Born and raised in the vibrant township of Ezinambeni, Witbank, Guluva is currently in her second year of a Bachelor of Arts degree. She is a multi-talented creative and communicator—working as a performing artist, master of ceremonies, public speaker, voice actor, and poet. With a sharp wit and entrepreneurial spirit, Culuva also runs several side ventures that showcase his versatility and hustle.

MARKETING OFFICER