

Koaile Monaheng: Lesotho's first FORBES AFRICA 30 Under 30 Lister

April 13, 2023 - Maseru, Lesotho - Khantša Energy Associate Director, Mr. Koaile Monaheng was named as one of the 'FORBES AFRICA 30 Under 30' Class of 2023. The magazine has identified 30 of the continent's brightest and most prospective game-changers under the age of 30.

Khantša's Senior Principal, Mr. Kevin Kwinana described the achievement as "an immense honour of recognition from a prestigious organisation such as Forbes Africa. Khantša is privileged and burdened by the need to provide renewable energy to as many people as possible who find themselves locked out of accessing the 20th century's greatest invention, electricity," Kevin stated.

The major highlights of this recognition are two-fold; firstly, Koaile Monaheng is the first Mosotho to be identified on the Forbes Africa list, and secondly, he is one of the cover stars of the class of 2023 alongside fellow recipients, Ms. Khethokuhle 'Kay Yarms' Ngonyama (South Africa), Dr. Wedu Tose Somolekae (Botswana), Ms. Oluwabusayo Victoria Abiri (Nigeria) and Mr. Mutethia Mbaabu (Kenya). View the full list [here](#).

Under the theme 'self-made', this coveted ninth annual edition of the FORBES AFRICA 30 Under 30 list recognizes young Africa's achievement in starting from scratch to build businesses and brands that are totally solutions-oriented. Koaile is a living testament that "*Motho ke motho, ka batho*", a value which we live by here at Khantša.

During his tenure at Just Share, Power Shift Africa, and the African Climate & Development Initiative (ACDI), amplifying the voices of Africans in climate change and environmental issues has been at the forefront of his work. Mr. Monaheng took up the role of 'Climate Change and Sustainable Development consultant' at Khantša during a historic pandemic year where he provided research, knowledge and capacity development services to the team before ascending to the role of Associate Director in 2022. As soon as lockdown restrictions were eased, he joined our Operations Director, Dennis Labuschagne on site visits around Lesotho. Instantaneously, Koaile fully immersed himself in the process.

According to Dennis, Koaile's principles are enshrined in Maya Angelo's quote: "do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better". He constantly gives his best effort and makes it a point to learn something new in the process. We regard communities as the experts to our indigenous knowledge model as they are the closest entities to the issues that we are tackling," the 2022, *Mail and Guardian Greening the Future* recipient said.

Khantša Energy's co-founder and CEO, Mrs. Reitumetse Tsekelo-Labuschagne admired Koaile's strategic direction and ambition in the contribution of Khantša's 'Light up Lesotho' strategy; which is driven by our value of *Botho* - a sense of being and belonging, in our project development and implementation.

“When Koaile and I started working together, I fell in love with his passion; the fire and determination he put into everything, especially work. To have our very own make it on Forbes is not only a dream come true but validation that the work we’re doing is on the right path,” Reitumetse recalled.

Khantša Energy has done a lot of work in community engagement and social responsibility over our 5 year existence. This has formed part and parcel of our DNA - it is who we are as Basotho. A central principle we instilled in our team was to embody an ancient practice of hospitality; offering your house to a guest and an evening meal without the slightest thought that you are doing anything extraordinary. Hence, this award gives us the opportunity to shine a light on our philanthropic work, which has by far been largely private until now.

One of Khantša Energy’s advisors, Maloba Tshehla described Koaile's listing on the Forbes 30 Under 30 as testament to the rise of Lesotho youth in self-determining their future. “Not only this, but the role of sustainable development, technology and specifically Renewable Energy technologies in spearheading the re-imagining of this future. As Basotho and young Africans, the world over in fact should be incredibly proud of this. An indelible mark has been made. Now to continue the hard, necessary, meaningful work ahead,” remarked Tshehla.

Koaile’s achievements as an entrepreneur, consultant and leader, span far across numerous local, regional and international platforms such the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation, Lesotho National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), the Embassy of Italy, the British High Commission, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP), YOUNGO, Conference of Youth (COY), Qatar Fund for Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Youth4Climate, U7+ Alliance of World Universities, Greenpeace MENA, Northwestern University, Future Energy Show Africa, South African Association of Political Studies (SAAPS), and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) to name a few.

By embracing the untapped potential of youth from Least Developed Countries, Koaile regards himself strategically placed to be resilient, innovative, agile and adaptable by disrupting ecosystems designed to hold young people back. Upon receiving the Forbes Africa accolade, he quoted Canadian poet Rupi Kuar, “dear young African, for all the tables that refused to seat you, build new ones and pull up a seat for everyone who arrives after you.”

With that sense of community, we at Khantša Energy pride ourselves with the achievements of Mr. Monaheng and will continue our relentless mission to provide renewable energy to the Basotho Highlands through co-creating sustainability interventions that take the lead from indigenous societies.