



**BOOSTUP**

# STARTUPS

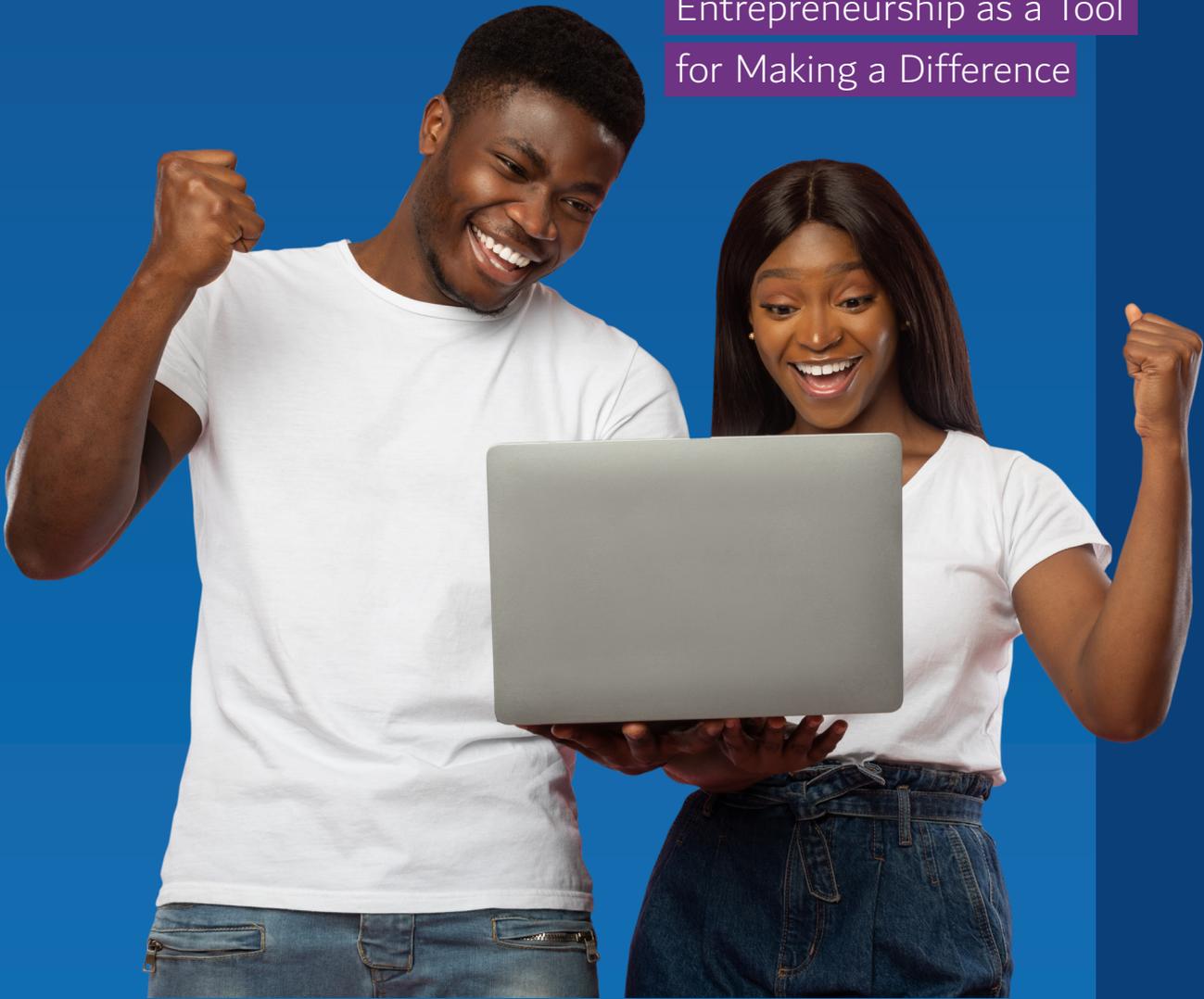
AS  
THE  
NEW

# SUPERHEROES



Vol.4

Entrepreneurship as a Tool  
for Making a Difference





**BOOSTUP**

**STARTUPS**

AS  
THE  
NEW

**SUPERHEROES**

Vol.4

SUPPORTED BY



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme (SAIS 2) acknowledges all the startups mentioned in this publication for the work they do to address societal challenges in Southern Africa through innovative solutions.

Thank you to:

Nerro Dankie Ndongo (Canopus Interconnections), Moses and Rodgers Mbaga (ExamNet), Godfrey Gervas Kilimwomeshi (Fundi App), Hendrix Bundabunda (Hendrecyclers), Nathan Tshamba (Imait Technology), Nonhlanhla Cynthia Mhlongo (Khwezi Innovations), Edzai C. Zvobwo (MathsGee), Dr June Jeremiah (MCS Security), Portia Mavhungu (PRD Logical Solutions (Pty) Ltd), Lucas Mohaswa (Reslocate), and David Ndongo Mbudhi (Tetranologie Mobility).

SAIS 2 would also like to thank the Southern Africa Innovation Collective (formerly SAIS 2 Connected Hubs) members who co-organised the BOOST UP startup support programme in 2021: Botswana Innovation Hub; Nest Hubs; These Hands GSSE; the National Commission on Science, Research, and Technology; GEN Namibia; the Technology Innovation Agency; mLab Southern Africa; Setup a Startup; the Tanzania Commission on Science and Technology; Buni Hub; the National Technology Business Centre; WEAC; and BongoHive.

A special thanks goes to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland; the Governments of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia; and the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for making SAIS 2 possible.

SAIS 2 would like to acknowledge the invaluable training, sponsorships, support, and advice provided by the following during the BOOST UP 2021 Bootcamp:

The Accelerated Growth for MSMEs in Zambia (AGS) Programme, Think Africa, Ambitious.Africa, Siili Solutions, Norders, Headai, Furturice, Sampo Accelerator, Courage Ventures Funds, Hanken Business Lab, Academic Work, Aalto Startup Center, Breaks Finland, Startup Sauna, Gubbe, Peter Vesterbacka, Business Finland, Funzi, NewCo Helsinki, and Droppe.

The BOOST UP 2021 Bootcamp and final pitch event would have been impossible without all of the organisations mentioned above, but especially AGS, Ambitious.Africa, and Think Africa. Despite challenges that occurred as a result of COVID-19, the final pitch event could be held live as a Slush side event in Helsinki, Finland. Over 500 people attended on-site and online, with the event bringing together startups, investors, and other ecosystem players from across Africa, Finland, and the rest of the world.

SAIS 2 would also like to acknowledge the creative work done by Clara Mupopiwa-Schnack in designing this publication and Philip Chris Kemp for the language edits.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Startups as the New Superheroes Vol 4

**Author:** Misha Gericke  
**Editor:** Philip Chris Kemp  
**Layout and Design:** Clara Mupopiwa-Schnack, Isack Mvula Kapembe  
**Contact Person:** info@saisprogramme.org



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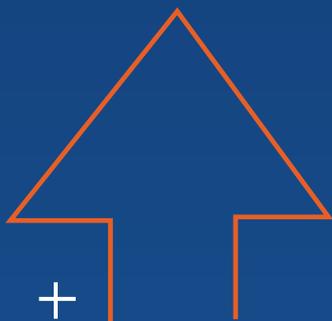
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# INTRODUCTION



Now, more than ever, Africa and the rest of the world need innovative startups to address the challenges currently facing us today. Their work is crucial if we are to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and the entrepreneurs behind these startups can make a massive, positive impact on society – especially in countries such as those comprising SADC.

At the Southern Africa Innovation Support (SAIS 2) Programme and the Southern Africa Innovation Collective (SAIC), we believe inspirational role models are vital to growing strong, flourishing startup ecosystems. This publication serves this purpose, and follows the first three volumes of Startups as the New Superheroes, which were published in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

In this volume, we present 11 startups that formed the BOOST UP 2021 cohort, all role models and thought leaders in startup entrepreneurship. Their experiences and the knowledge they have to share can be highly valuable when building new businesses and startup ecosystems, and

can serve as a guide for new entrepreneurs trying to find their way forward. SAIS 2 is therefore proud to showcase these 11 startup role models, all using technology to address societal challenges in Southern Africa: Canopus Interconnections, ExamNet, Fundi App, Hendrecyclers, Imit Technology, Khwezi Innovations, MathsGee, MCS Security, PRD Logical Solutions (Pty) Ltd, Reslocate, and Tetranolgie Mobility.

These startups are the BOOST UP 2021 national finalists, and participated in the BOOST UP Scale Up incubation programme before attending a live bootcamp in Helsinki, Finland. The bootcamp ended with the BOOST UP 2021

Final Pitch Competition, which took place during a side event of Slush, the world's biggest startup and entrepreneurship event. Over 150 people attended the event in Helsinki, with a further 480 people watching online.

We hope these startups' stories will serve as an inspiration and a learning tool for other early-stage entrepreneurs or people curious about becoming an entrepreneur. The startups' experiences can also provide insight to funders, sponsors, and policymakers on the challenges faced by early-stage startups in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.

# ABOUT



## THE SOUTHERN AFRICA INNOVATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme (SAIS 2) is a regional initiative that supports the growth of new businesses. This is done by strengthening innovation ecosystems and promoting cross-border collaboration between innovation role players in Southern Africa. SAIS 2 focuses on early-stage enterprises and young entrepreneurs, connecting innovation ecosystems, and promoting innovations serving socially or economically disadvantaged people. SAIS 2 is supported by the Government of Finland in partnership with the ministries responsible for science, technology, and innovation in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia as well as the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).



THE SOUTHERN AFRICA INNOVATION COLLECTIVE

## ABOUT THE SOUTHERN AFRICA INNOVATION COLLECTIVE

The Southern Africa Innovation Collective (SAIC) is a network of organisations assisting innovators and entrepreneurs across Southern Africa. Originally founded as the Connected Hubs by the Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme in 2017, it serves as a community promoting learning and cross-border cooperation in five SADC countries.

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# CANOPUS INTER-CONNECTIONS



## SECTOR

Smart City Infrastructure

## SDG



## COUNTRY

Namibia



**Nerro Dankie**

**Nendongo**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

We have noticed that currently, only 30% of Africa's population has access to internet services. In response, we're using community networks to help close the digital divide, ensure social inclusion, and equal opportunities for all by making internet access a utility.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

When I was in my first year in university, I always had access to internet, but my colleagues did not. They would call me between classes to go and set up a hotspot for them, but then I thought I could sell this service to them and there is a market for it.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

It was quite a journey to build a team. At first, my team was made up of guys who were not active in the field, but then I had a meeting with one of the big investment companies. This was still at the initial stages of my company, and they told me, "If something happens to you, you do not have anyone who can keep the company going in your absence because the other guys have no skills in IT." I took that advice and went looking for the right people. My search was based on two aspects: culture and technology.

I know Mr Benhard Hamata from the Namibia University of Science and Technology, when he was studying for his Bachelor's Degree

in Network Administration. I told him about the business idea and he immediately understood because of his background in building internet infrastructure for organisations. He covered the technological aspect.

For culture, I reached out to a friend of mine, Mr Malakia Kapembe. He studied industrial psychology at the University of Namibia. My pitch to him was focused on company culture and how we must build one that would create a unique identity. He understood the mission and jumped on the bandwagon right away.

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

We are operating in the ICT industry in Namibia. There is a lot of innovation taking place in equipment production, but current

# INTERCON

business models aren't innovating. We built an innovative business model, where each stakeholder has a unique yet interconnected role within a mutually beneficial ecosystem.

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

There are a lot of support thanks to organisations like NCRST. I am also part of an incubator called the Namibia Business Innovation Institute (NBII). So, the opportunities are there, provided you make the effort to remain aware of new opportunities as they arise. When I started out, I did not know about any of these opportunities, but once I started speaking to the organisations, I realised that they really are helping startups to grow.

## WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

The skills I've gained mainly helped me to become more of a business-focused person. Because we are active in a technology-focused business, it is easy to get stuck on the tech side, but as the leader of the team, it was necessary for me to gain all the skills needed to successfully run the business side of Canopus Interconnections. So, the training I've received has definitely taught me how to be a leader of the business rather than only concentrating on the product.

## WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?

They love what we do and see the need. They tend to say, "Work fast and deliver fast, and you will have it." The demand is there and players in the industry are keeping an eye on opportunities. We are playing a game of big man vs time. That is the kind of feedback we usually get from clients and partners.

## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?

Money. We come from Africa and unfortunately, the financial support for startups focusing on internet technology is scarce. Investors for some reason see internet infrastructure as a want, not a need, but now the world is shifting. Now, we are working to make people realise that it's a need, not a want. The reverse is an old way of thinking. Access to a high-quality internet connection should be a human right on our continent.

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?

I would take the cab any time of the day. I've done well and worked in retail, so selling water to a well is very easy to me. For that reason, I think if I got in the cab with the millionaire, I could leave it with a million by the time we reach our destination.

“  
Everyone can tell you how to do it, but they never did it. So just keep going, even if not everyone believes in what you are doing.  
”

## WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?

Currently, we're about to start our biggest project to date in Namibia in partnership with the local authority in Keetmanshoop. We are their leading guys for their smart city project, so that will be where we'll be focusing for now. We will also be doing installations for four properties owned by a multinational company, which means our schedule will be quite hectic until late 2022.

## IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?

I'm looking to have investors as we enter the IoT side of the business. We want someone who is passionate about the digital space and improving people's lives. For us, Canopus Interconnections is not just about providing internet connectivity. We want to see people



monetise and educate themselves using the internet as a tool to do so. That is why we need someone who understands this space, so that we don't need to explain ourselves and every aspect of the technology. We can just discuss the business part of things.

**WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

Follow your passion; be honest and everything will fall in place. Everyone can tell you how to do it, but they've never done it. So, just keep going, even if not everyone believes in what you are doing. Just persevere.

# EXAMNET



SDG



SECTOR

EdTech

COUNTRY

Tanzania



Moses  
Mbaga

## WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

In Tanzania and Africa in general, we find there is a lack of learning resources that students can access. We believe that they need access to these resources to improve their education, knowledge, and problem-solving skills.

## WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

Back in 2019, when I was still in primary school. It was a great idea, and I was willing to pursue it. My friends and I were experiencing this challenge in accessing tests and learning resources to help us do better in our school exams. I thought that, if I could make a way for my friends to get access to those resources, it would be a great and massive idea, not only in Tanzania but also in the rest of Africa.

## HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

Initially, it was just me. I developed the prototype alone, but then, gradually, after I've gone to various educational stakeholders and government institutions, I was able to gather vital people to my team. We gained access to teachers, marketing specialists, and business development managers. In short, the team has grown gradually, but we now have a winning team.

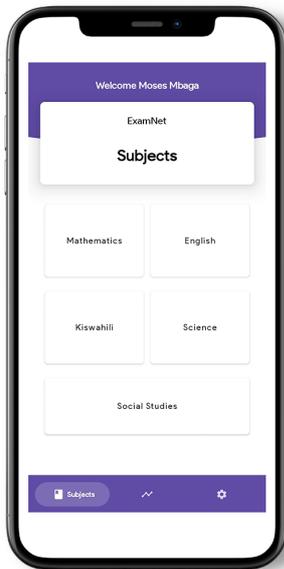
## WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

We are based in Tanzania, which is divided into primarily urban and rural areas. We can deliver our service across all those areas, and the learning resources are available in both English and Swahili, so anyone in any school can gain access to the app as long as they have an internet connection.

“ In Tanzania and Africa in general, we find that there's a lack of learning resources that students can access. ”

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

The government is trying its best to help startups. For instance, COSTECH is under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, and it has been a close partner institution with us. We have been working together for the past two or three years and we have been able to create a solid partnership so that we can help ExamNet grow.



### WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?

In Tanzania and the rest of Africa too, there is a challenge of a lack of access to internet. Since our platform is only online, some of the users aren't able to gain access to the learning content. Another challenge is that African parents do not really understand that students can access educational content through their mobile phones or laptops, so they stay committed to this belief that you go to school for your education and that's it. As time goes, we will be able to address these challenges and find solutions so that the use of the app can become more widespread.

### WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

I've learnt a lot. Starting off, I had no idea about how to grow a business or even how to start one, but gradually, I've been able to gain a lot of knowledge and insights from many people. So, I still have a long way to go because I'm still young, but I've gained a lot through this journey.

### WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?

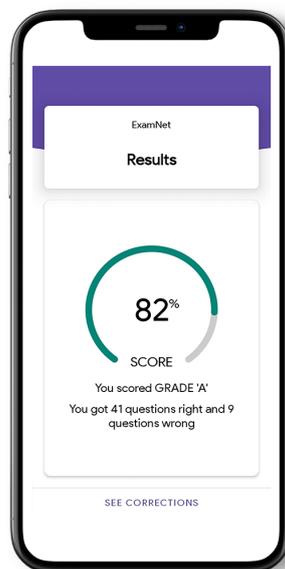
The feedback I've received has been quite positive. We have been doing surveys and online feedback forms, and almost all of them came back with valuable feedback. Although there are critics out there, we also took their feedback positively by applying the comments that made sense. So, it has all been generally good feedback and we hope to improve based on the feedback we've received.

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?

I think it would be events because we normally have annual innovation and tech events that are organised by the government. People who could be vital in the educational and innovation ecosystems might be attending, so these events can really help to increase your network.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?

In the next few years, my plans for ExamNet are mainly around improving it since it's a startup, so we need to constantly improve by gaining and implementing user feedback. Starting in 2022, we also plan to start charging our users so we're looking forward to generating income in the new year.

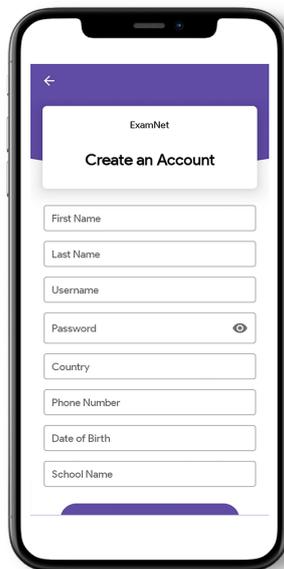
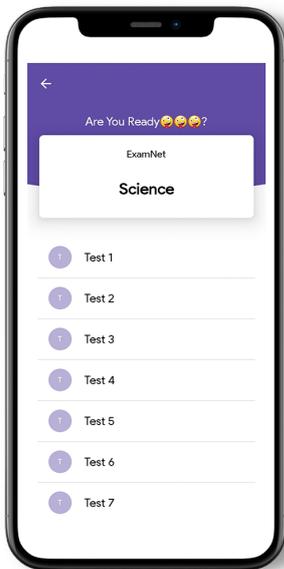
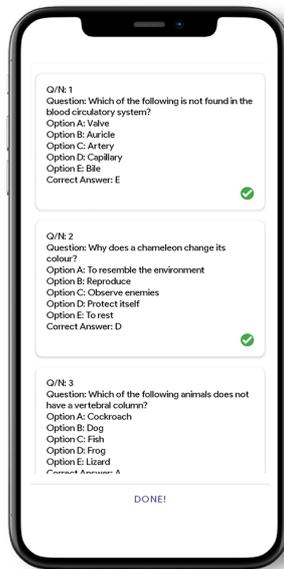


### IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?

We haven't secured any investments yet, but I'm looking forward to maybe securing some angel investors soon. It will be hard to secure investment from venture capitalists because of us not generating an income yet. But we are trying to pitch and win angel investors over because they are willing to take the risk of investing in smaller or early-stage startups that haven't started generating revenues. Right now, that is our target.

## WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?

The advice I like to share is “The sky is the limit”. Several accelerators, events, or programmes I’ve signed for ended up disqualifying me because of my age (15 at the time of the interview), but that just motivated me to keep going. And some of them did accept me as a participant. Many of them can’t believe how young I am because of all the things I’ve learnt. So, just push for opportunities and the sky’s the limit when it comes to what you can achieve.



# FUNDI APP



## SECTOR

Professional Services

## SDG



## COUNTRY

Tanzania



**Godfrey Gervas**

**Kilimwomeshi**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

We are solving the problem of a lack of access to decent work, which many young Africans across the continent are facing. To us, this is important because we understand that young people are the power of our nations. If we empower them with jobs and the opportunity to generate an income, we can reduce another problem that Africa is facing, which is poverty.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

That was back in 2019. I was doing research on challenges facing young people in Africa and I found out that a lack of access to decent work is one of the major problems facing young people in different countries across Africa.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

When I originated the idea, I started to share it with people who are close to me. I really believe in relationships and understanding each other, so I wanted to take on this challenge with people I could trust and people who believe in what we can build. It was hard in the beginning, but I managed to convince a few of my friends to believe in my idea.

One of them is called Paolo. When I shared my idea with him, he was working in Rwanda. He was not even in Tanzania. So, I told him what I want to do and the vision of Fundi App and what it can do for the young people in Africa. It was hard for him to jump on it. He asked for some time to think about it, but just

one day, he called me and said, "You know what? I'm going to quit my job and take the next flight back to Tanzania and we're going to do this. Win or fail."

After that, Paolo and I were pushing this along, and then another friend of ours, Christopher, joined us. He believed in what we are doing and he wanted to be part of it. Before, we were collaborating with him as a freelancer. He was helping us with the development and then we pay him. But then he said, "You know what? You guys don't have money, but you have the vision. So, I don't want your small money. I don't want you to pay me. I just want to see this into existence."

That's how our founding team came together, and now it's not just the three of us anymore. We're about ten people, now.

## WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

Right now, we're focusing on dealing with handymen. These are people who are often forgotten in our society. They're not our certified professionals or graduate degree holders. We are dealing with people who have small skills like plumbers, electricians, and so on. What we're doing is to connect these people with jobs, especially with companies. There are many construction projects in Africa, but also, we have mining, we have renewable energy picking up. We have satellite TV installation jobs. There are a lot of opportunities for these people, but there was not a good way to match the opportunities to the workers. This is why we are dealing with the handyman market in Africa.

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

We do get support from the government. COSTECH especially is working extremely hard in providing support to Tanzanian startups. Much of the time, the type of support we get is in the form of COSTECH opening doors to opportunities such those coming from international programmes like BOOST UP. So, through COSTECH, we are getting connected to many opportunities, but as members of the startup community, we are pushing them to create a good entrepreneurship environment. Things like good policy to enable what we are doing. It's a journey and a learning curve, both for us startups and for the government, because startups are quite a new phenomenon in Africa and so we're all learning by doing.



## WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

Before, I was just a marketing and business development guy, but now I know a lot. I know about software, servers, management... It's been a learning curve for me, but it's also a place for me to grow. If you would have met me in 2019, I was such a different person from who I am now. Was it worth it? Yes. Would I have done it again? Definitely yes.

## WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?

In terms of users, I would go first with our B2B clients, which are companies making up about 60% of our revenue. The feedback we're getting from them is "How can we improve the skills of these handymen so that they can perform much better." But also, we need to look at the system. How can we bring our system up to an international level? For example, one of the companies we're working with in Tanzania is an American renewable energy company operating in Africa. They have a top-notch platform back in the US and they like what we

are doing. They like the kinds of handymen we're providing for them, but they're pushing us to build an international-standard product, where our service providers are more skilled than what is generally acceptable across Africa.

## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?

I can actually say the largest challenge we faced was the mindset, especially in our B2C clients. These are the homeowners, so this is usually one person to another. These clients are used to the traditional way of finding a handyman: just going up the street and seeing who the next handyman will be. Now, we must try to make a mindset shift in our clients, saying, "You can get good, affordable service just using your phone." It is hard, but once a person tries the app, they get hooked.



### **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?**

Attending events is one of the best ways to meet people, but online platforms and communities for startups, meeting ecosystem facilitators and investors are just as valuable. I think most startups are bootstrapping and we just have to look at every single possible way to connect us to the next person who can be part of our journey. So, I cannot say go this way. All I can say is go in any direction where you can meet anybody.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?**

We have already validated our proof of concept. If it can work in Dar es Salaam, it can work in Nairobi and Johannesburg or Lagos. So, we want to become the most trusted informal sector freelancing platform across Africa. Our plan is to scale up as we already have our proof of concept. We're looking into going into Southern Africa first as we're part of that region and we see a big opportunity there. We're specifically looking at expanding into countries like Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, and even Johannesburg, South Africa.

### **IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?**

We are still looking for investors and we are currently raising our pre-seed round of funding. We are currently looking for about USD

120,000. As for my ideal investor, I'm looking for an impact investor because Fundi App is an impact product. But we're also looking for an active investor. We do not want someone who just puts in the money and then sits in the Bahamas drinking something, but we want someone who can be part of our journey. We must also still learn a great deal, so we want someone from whom we can learn. Perhaps they can learn from us too, and we can grow together. That's the kind of investor I would really like to have on the journey with us.

### **WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

First, they should just believe in what they're building. They should believe they can do something great. They can be part of a momentous change. If they keep this belief in mind, and they keep sticking to what they are doing, it can work. It can be tough in the beginning, but that should not be a reason for a startup entrepreneur to stop.

I would also like to advise them not to sit down and wait for someone to come along before they can start. They should just start and then meet people who can be part of their journey along the way.



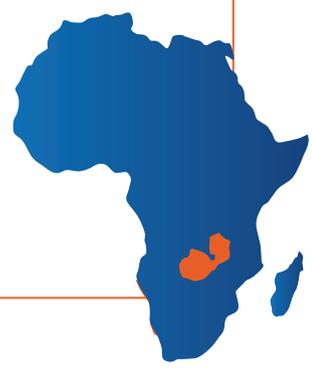
# HENDRE- CYCLERS



**SECTOR**  
Recycling and  
Circular Economy



**COUNTRY**  
Zambia



**Hendrix  
Bundabunda**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

Our startup is designed to deal with the problem of electronic waste in Zambia. There is a lot of electronic waste accumulating in Zambia as well as many other African countries because most of them have not yet launched any initiatives to take care of this problem. So that was what we wanted to deal with.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

Towards the end of 2020, after we had engaged a number of partners including the government, we did

the research and realised there is actually a lot of opportunity in recycling electronic waste. Over 95% of electronic waste is recyclable, so we quickly realised that this is a huge opportunity that we could tackle.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

I'm currently a student, so from my interactions with a number of other students, I was able to figure out which ones have an interest in climate change or any other environmental concerns. That allowed for us to sit down together and figure out what we wanted to do to address these challenges.



The biggest challenge for us has been the financial requirements to start.

In fact, I am an environmental engineer as well, so already I was part of a network of individuals (both lecturers and fellow students) with the type of knowledge I was looking for.

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

This is a huge market opportunity. The global electronic waste industry was valued at USD 57 billion in 2019. In Africa, it was valued at about USD 4 billion. What makes this opportunity even bigger in Africa is that not much has yet been done to address this market gap.

### WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

In Zambia, with the coming of the new government, two ministries have been brought on board to provide support. The first is the Ministry of Technology and Science and the second is the Ministry of Green Economy. These two are providing us with both financial and technical support. We recently managed to get ZMW 100,000 (about USD 6,200) from the Ministry of Technology and Science, and we are still engaging the Ministry of Green Economy, so there are both technical and financial support opportunities available that we are going to explore.

### WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

We have learnt so much along the way, and had many partners come in to support. SAIS 2 is one amongst many others. We have received technical support that has helped us to think further and to be able to look at many more opportunities that we can explore. At first, we were only looking at electronic waste in Zambia, but engaging with different partners have made us realise that we can



“ This is a huge market opportunity. The global electronic waste industry was valued at USD 57 billion in 2019. ”

address the issue of electronic waste in the entire Southern African region.

### WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?

Even though we haven't yet begun with full operations, there has been a lot of positive feedback. The only challenge we've had so far has been with getting off the ground to officially launch because of COVID-19. We are also engaging another company that is working

with electronic waste, and there are many opportunities that I'm sure we will explore when we get together.

### WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?

The biggest challenge for us has been the financial requirements to start. If we can get the right finance to buy equipment, then we can start production to make a profit.

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?

With the coming of the new Ministry of Technology and Science, there have been a lot of events that were set up to give us an opportunity to meet different startups and investors. These events have made us realise that there's actually money from our country that can give us the opportunity to be able to start. For example, through the Ministry of Technology and Science, we've had breakfast meetings set up for us with ministry representatives and possible investors. I think if those go on,

they will continue to open up new opportunities as we would be able to meet with those who would be able to help us with any kind of support that we need.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?**

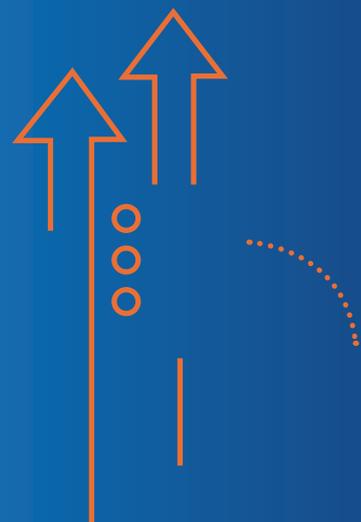
Over the past year, we've been able to raise about USD 10,000. So, in 2022, we will start production. We are starting off renting equipment from the Copperbelt University, but that will allow us to get started by recycling gold. With the revenues we'll generate, we'll be able to buy more equipment that we can use to extract other minerals such as silver, palladium, etc.

### **IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?**

Our ideal investor would probably be the government. If we can bring the government on board, even the policies that would be set up would be in favour of us conducting our operations. For example, one of the major challenges we've had is being able to draw information about electronic waste in Zambia like where it is generated and where it goes. Having investment from the government would also mean that they would have to play a bigger part to set up policies that would determine how electronic waste moves around the country. We could then control it and properly recycle it.

### **WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

I've come to believe, especially after this year, that the world is full of opportunities. Despite the challenges that come from COVID-19, there were still many opportunities that we could make use of. So, there will be challenges, but don't stop. Keep pushing, and opportunities will eventually come your way.



# IMAIT TECHNOLOGY



IMAIT TECH

## SECTOR

AgTech

## SDG



## COUNTRY

Botswana



**Nathan  
Tshamba**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

We're trying to improve the transparency of the beef value chain. Especially in the African market, farmers cannot provide traceability for their beef from their farms to consumers' plates, which has a big impact on the value of their products. Here in Botswana, most of the beef farmers are exporting to the European market, but the buyers in Europe expect a level of traceability that most of the farmers currently aren't capable of. Most of the farmers don't have the knowledge or know-how needed to record or monitor what

happens to their cattle on their farm. As a result, they can't provide important data on the health status of the beef, and it then either gets rejected for export to the European Union, or consumers in the market choose not to purchase it.

Our product solves this by providing a way for farmers, even those who can't read or write, to monitor and record data for their herds, allowing them to provide high-quality, traceable beef to markets around the world.

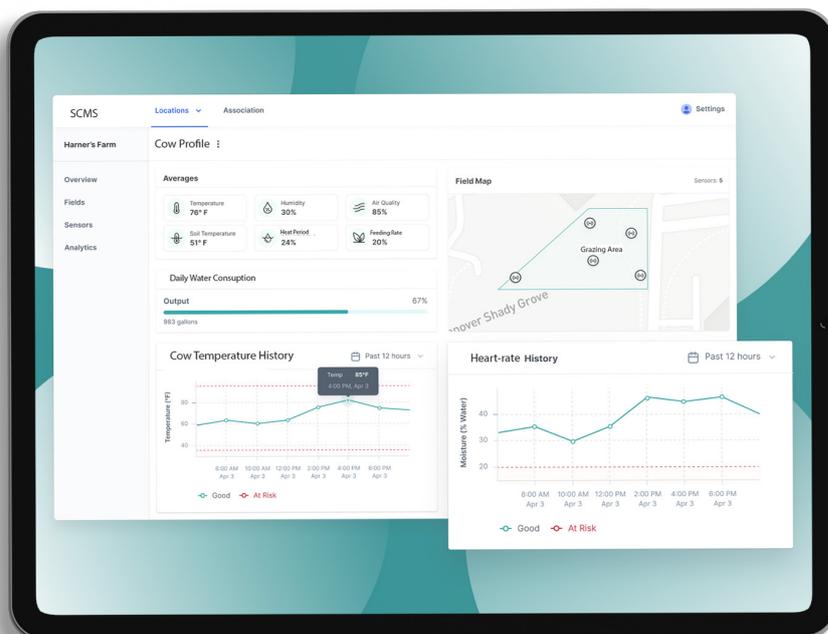
The system is automated, which means that the farmer only needs to implement it on their farm. They don't need to worry about the

day-to-day work of recording and analysing data. The system takes care of that for them and provides updates in the form of notifications.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

My journey started in my first year at university. In fact, ImaIt Technology started as a university project. When I started, I didn't know how to create what I had in mind. It took me a year to write a proposal for what I wanted to achieve.

Later, I was lucky enough to win the Investor Challenge in Botswana after competing against 3,500 other students from the country. We were told to find a problem where we could improve people's lives by addressing the problem, and this was really when the idea became fully formed. In Botswana, 80% of people depend on cattle farming as their livelihood, so I realised that Imit Technology could have a significant impact on creating a more sustainable economy and could help to create more jobs by giving farmers access to lucrative markets that require traceability.



### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

Building a startup is a huge challenge. I met many people, and some of them even left along the way. As a startup does not generate revenue in the beginning, it can be difficult to find and keep the right people to help build the business. So, for the first year, we were personally funding the startup, and most of the people I started with did not want to work for free. This meant that a lot of people were quitting in the beginning. As time went on, though, I found the people who share the common goal with me, and I'm happy to say that now, we are a team of seven people working on the startup. I am also excited by the fact that about 80% of our company are women, and all of us are newly-graduated youths.

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

The AgriTech sector in Africa is still in its early development stages, and it's not yet well established. I feel like there are only few competitors

active in the sector. What is needed is for us to create a huge product that can compete at an international level, and the fact that we are amongst the only AgriTech players in our economy should not hinder us from competing beyond our borders. The market worldwide is estimated to be worth USD 4.7 billion, and it is estimated that it will grow by 14.7% year on year, so there is a huge market opportunity for us.

### WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

I want to use this opportunity to thank the Botswana Innovation Hub. They are the ones who made me who I am today as an entrepreneur. I first encountered BIH when I was at Limkonkwing University of Creative Technology, when I was invited for the final pitching of my final project. Thanks to them, my project went from being a school project to a company. I also want to thank our current president, Mr Mokgweetsi Masisi, who is really working hard to encourage the youth to become technology entrepreneurs. Overall,

the government is really playing a key role in supporting the tech industry in Botswana.

### WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

One thing that I've learnt is that when you want to create a product, it's important to do everything you can to make sure that you can get that product to your market. This means recruiting the right team to work on the product with you, and to help in developing the marketing and logistics required. This will create awareness amongst your buyers and allow them to access your product. You also need to know how to develop a strong project line so that you can complete the product to a high standard. And of course, you need to be able to network with potential investors so that you can raise capital for your company. Thanks to ongoing support, I have learnt all these skills, but the biggest overall lesson was to see how everything fit together to make a business successful.

BOOST UP was especially useful in giving me these and other skills that I can use as an entrepreneur, and I'm thankful for this. Before, I was worried about how I could find employment after finishing my degree, but the skills I have learnt gave me the confidence I need to work on my startup company, which means that one day, I can employ more people as well.

### **WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?**

They are really happy with the platform. Just before I went to Finland for BOOST UP, I received a call from one of our partners saying that we have been included in the BDC funding list, which may even open the way to accessing investment.

Also, I have been working with the farmers in Botswana, and they are really supporting this project. It is going to help them greatly. Many farmers are struggling because they're losing cattle to illnesses, theft, and so on, and the platform will help them prevent these kinds of losses because of the in-depth tracking it does. So, they are excited to provide feedback so that they can produce high-quality beef with our support.

### **WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?**

Normally, most people say that having a successful startup takes money. I also used to believe that, but it was wrong. Startup companies are not all about money. It's more important to have the right team. A startup's life depends on the effort you and your team

put into making it a success. For example, I was busy developing a complex product, which required building hardware with a web app that is powered by artificial intelligence, block-chain, and IoT technologies. We have hardware that communicates with a web app and USSD. Finding people who could help develop such a system was exceedingly difficult, especially when you don't have money. However, what that did was make me convince people to believe in what I was doing so they would work with me, and that ended up making the company stronger. Now we have a fully functional prototype that is ready for mass production at an industrial scale.

### **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?**

Events are the best as you get to meet many people, as opposed to one-on-one meetings with investors. It is rare to meet investors alone, and it is hard to convince them to set up a meeting with you. Through events, you can meet many people who could end up connecting you with things you need to make a success of your company. You also get to share experiences with the people you meet, which can play an important part in growing as an entrepreneur.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?**

By the end of 2022, we want to tag close to 1.2 million cattle to onboard their owners onto our platform.

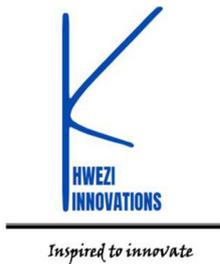
### **IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?**

We would go for Angel Investors. Angel Investors are people who will take a risk on early-stage enterprises like Imit Technology. I don't think investors such as VCs would be interested in investing before we're well established.

### **WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

I would say believe in yourselves. The sky is the limit. I started venturing into this project back in 2012, but back then I was alone, and I didn't have an entrepreneurial mindset yet. So, it took time for me to establish the company and get it to where it is today. It took me seven years to get to the point where I felt confident enough to take part in the 2019 Ceda University Challenge, and that was where I really got to change my project into a business. Had I not started to believe in myself to take on the challenge, I would not be anywhere near to where I am today. So, that is why I want to say believe in yourselves and what you're doing, even if it takes time to get where you want to be.

# KHWEZI INNOVATIONS



## SECTOR

Healthcare and Personal Protective Equipment

## SDG



## COUNTRY

South Africa



**Nonhlanhla Cynthia Mhlongo**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we realised that people were complaining about having to sanitise so often. The sanitisers were sometimes ineffective, and frequently caused skin irritations and dried out the skin. Using latex gloves as an alternative has led to a severe pollution problem since those gloves are being dumped after use, often ending up in rivers and oceans. So, Sinakekelo Buthelezi and I decided we should create something that would address these challenges.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

In 2020, I was unemployed and looking for a job – getting a job is difficult in South Africa, with or without a qualification. I realised that I should stop complaining about not having work and rather look for available opportunities because I always knew I was a born innovator. I used that to my advantage and shared this ProAct-Layer idea with a friend of mine, who is currently my project partner, Sinakekelo Buthelezi. We both agreed we could come up with new ideas and have them implemented in Africa.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

I started out as a solopreneur, but as soon as my company was registered, I always have partners that I work with on different projects. For this ProAct-Layer, I approached Sinakekelo Buthelezi and Nokwazi Mthethwa, who are both social entrepreneurs. We also had two more guys, who joined us along the journey and worked on our digital prototype development and other technical aspects.

“With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we realised that people were complaining about having to sanitise so often.”

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

We operate in a conditional environment, where we outsource professional help to certified laboratories, where qualified technicians and engineers work on our product. We visit labs and attend meetups with partners to give input and improve our product.

### WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

In South Africa, we have mLab, which was the hub that actually absorbed us and introduced us to BOOST UP. Through them, we were introduced to SAIS 2, SAIC, and TIA. So, we do have several opportunities for startups, entrepreneurs, and people interested in doing business in South Africa.

### WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

Quite a lot, actually. I've gained a lot of marketing skills. As an entrepreneur and innovator, I didn't really start out with many skills when it came to marketing myself

and sell my product. People these days live on social media, so I have found the lessons I've learnt around social media marketing especially valuable.

Because I am selling an innovative product, learning more about protecting intellectual property was extra important. I didn't know in the beginning whether I should register my product, and under what IP type exactly.

Finally, I've also learnt a lot more about collaborating with others, speaking to investors, and also about prototype development.

### WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?

We've mainly received positive feedback. We use the constructive feedback we get to go back to our developers and improve our product according to what our clients need.

### WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?

Funding. Even though most of what we've achieved is through pro bono support and seed funding, it is always a struggle to access funding as a startup.

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?

I think everything counts. Every chance you get to actually pitch your idea is a good thing to do. It doesn't matter if someone is a



billionaire, millionaire, or someone with a thousand rands to their name. If they're willing to listen to you and they're interested in what you're doing, they are a good platform because you don't know who they are connected to. That person might be the one who connects you to the resources you need as a startup. So, anything that gives you a chance to network with other people is worthwhile and you should try and engage at every opportunity.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?

Our main plans right now are to finish prototyping the Pro-Act Layer Glove Sanitiser so that it goes to the market.

### IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?

The plan was to approach the Department of Health in South Africa so that we could partner up with them and they could be the

ones who distribute the products across the country. We were also hoping to meet healthcare organisations at Slush, or perhaps by chance someone in the World Health Organisation. The idea was to pitch the Pro-Act Layer Glove Sanitiser to these organisations and find out how they could support us in maximising the product's efficacy and impact.

### **WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

I would tell them that support is there. Opportunities are available. Instead of using the internet for unnecessary things, we can use the internet to find opportunities because those opportunities are always there for us grab and have a platform to showcase our idea and skills.

Instead of complaining about unemployment and so on, how about we as entrepreneurs and innovators find opportunities, and also help other startups to gain access to what we've achieved?

“

Our main plans right now are to finish prototyping the Pro-Act Layer Glove Sanitiser so that it goes to the market.

”



# MATHSGEE



## SECTOR

EdTech

## SDG



## COUNTRY

South Africa



**Edzai C.  
Zvobwo**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

We are trying to improve access to learning opportunities, remote learning opportunities, and just-in-time support for students. The problem of the lack of access to education support was very pronounced because of COVID-19. Most kids did not have a way of learning and teachers didn't have a way to communicate with students, and this is the problem that we're looking into solving.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

When we launched MathsGee in March 2020, we had so much traffic – it was crazy! In fact, our server went down because we were not prepared for the traffic that

was coming through. People were asking questions or just searching for answers to questions. So, that was quite an experience for us to go through. We had to increase our capacity in the cloud because we saw there's a need for our app. Beyond searching on Google, these students need the answers, and that's what we provide.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

We are four co-founders: my friends and I. We've been together for many years in corporate. Then we have a group of about 40 tutors that we tap into on the basis of need.

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

We are in the EdTech space, which is basically the nexus of education and technology. We're trying to offer technology solutions for learning. Originally, we started off only looking at South Africa, but some of our concepts – especially in Mathematics and Science – are universal. So, we have people coming in from all over the world, especially Nigeria and Kenya. They're using our platforms quite a lot. In response, we've started customising our content for those markets. It's almost like validation for going into those markets, showing that it would work to enter them as well.

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?

There are quite a number of programmes, of which BOOST UP is one. Right now, doing this interview, we're in Finland to take part in BOOST UP Bootcamp and the Final Pitch Event. We went through a process of applying, pitching, and learning to get here. That's one of the many programmes available to South African startups. As for us, we've only been part of three of these programmes this year. One is BOOST UP, the other is run by the African Development Bank for South African startups, and the last one was external in Silicon Valley.

## WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?

The biggest skills that I learnt were to understand investors' mindsets – what they look for and how they think – and also how to tap into European markets as an African startup. How can you structure an entity so that you can gain access to funding opportunities in Europe for executing a business model back home? Those were the major lessons for me, and I really enjoyed it.

## WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?

We are constantly getting feedback because we have a survey that runs automatically on our platform for every user. We're seeing that people need just-in-time support and that is why they come to us. Those who come to our platform and find the

answers to our questions are very happy. We also see the ones who don't find what they need. They make it a point to tell us that they are not satisfied. We need to be able to meet people's queries at their point of need because that is why we exist, so all feedback is welcomed and implemented as far as possible.

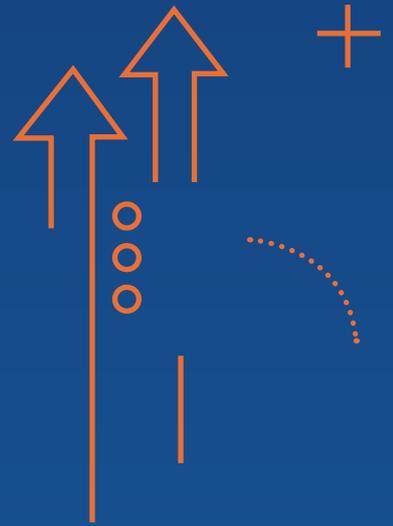
## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU HAD IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO THE MARKET?

First, it's difficult to categorise our product. We've taken a part of a learning management system, and ran with it. So, it's almost like a feature, and many people are not used to the product in that format. Trying to school our clients and partners about what we're trying to achieve took a lot of effort. It took a lot of work to convince people to use our app.

Then in general, funding is a challenge. We have bootstrapped up to this point and we don't have any funders yet. That is still something that we need to crack in terms of how we can get funding.

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?

For me, meet-ups have been amazing – both online and offline. I've seen informal settings where people just share their insights and experiences, and I think these are more beneficial than just sitting and listening to speakers and so on.





“ Our countries alone are small markets, so we must make sure that, whatever value we’re offering, we offer it across the continent and beyond. ”

South Africa, there’s an organisation called Injini. They appear very in tune with these kinds of things. They represent something that is good, but I have not really interacted enough with them to really be sure if we’d be a good fit. But otherwise, they seem to be on the right path.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?

Right now, we’re on a mission to try to give every child access to online learning. So, we’ve created content centrally and we want to get as many as 1,500 schools onto the platform by 2022, so that they can have their own learning management system. Perhaps they’ll graduate to bigger learning management systems, but the aim for us here is to get them from zero to one because they don’t have any support of this sort at present. So, this mission is for us to give these schools access and onboarding them into the digital world.

### WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?

I’ve seen that many entrepreneurs from Southern Africa like to think local. This is good, but I think they should think “glocal” – globally, but locally as well. They should test their offerings locally and make sure they work, and then find ways of expanding into other territories. Our countries alone are small markets, so we must make sure that, whatever value we’re offering, we offer it across the continent and beyond.

### IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?

Our ideal investor is someone who understands grassroots needs in terms of technology, digital transformation, and inclusivity. Someone who understands education as well, and understands that the return on investment in education isn’t necessarily the 10x, but that they would need to take a developmental approach. So, there might be other intangibles that might be part of the impact. In

# MCS SECURITY SOLUTIONS



## SECTOR

Cybersecurity

## SDG



## COUNTRY

Botswana



**Dr June  
Jeremiah**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

As digital transformation is now the main thing to empower businesses, cybersecurity solutions are crucial elements in ensuring the protection of all these digital assets. However, most of the organisations are facing challenges in implementing cybersecurity strategies. These may include the high cost of investment as well as the complexity of managing several cybersecurity solutions and the lack of understanding of cybersecurity risks. We are trying to address these challenges.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

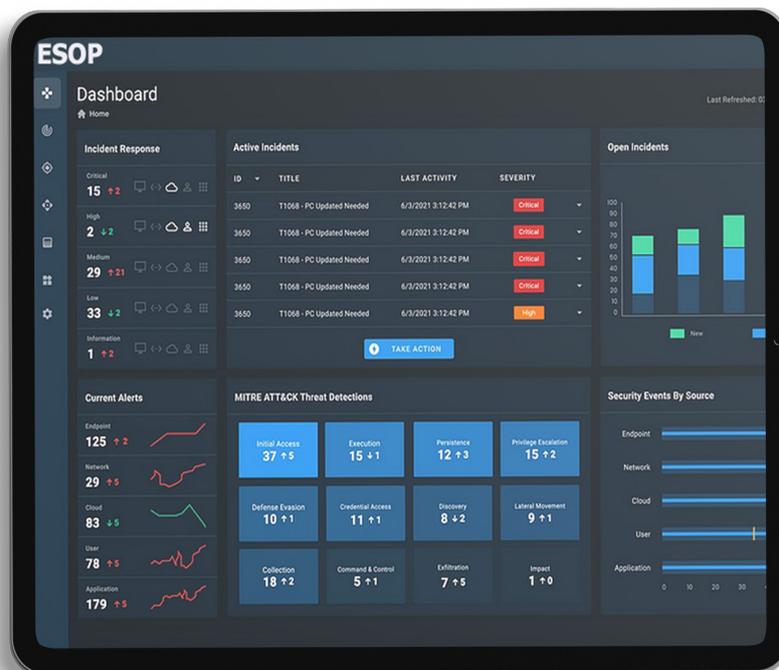
It started in 2010, when I first got certified as an ethical hacker. My job was to go in to organisations systems with their permission to identify vulnerabilities in their networks. Once we've identified these weaknesses, we would then patch them so that hackers can't access the networks in the future. Doing that made me realise this was a vast industry for me to tap into.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

Our team has grown quite well. Right now, we are working with eight people. It has been a learning curve for us because especially in Africa, there is a huge shortage of cybersecurity professionals. So, we are training and retaining the best team members to build our team as time goes on.

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

It is really interesting because this is a continuous learning industry. New cyber threats keep surfacing



and each new threat is different from the one before. So that means that we must keep up with innovative technologies to combat any new cyber threats.

**WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?**

We are getting support from the government through organisations like the Botswana Innovation Hub. They are really helping us in terms of monetary and technical support. SAIS 2 is another organisation that has helped us a lot through training and access to networks during their BOOST UP programme.

**WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?**

I've learnt to become a leader who is focused on nurturing skills in cybersecurity. I want to make sure that most of the people in Botswana are aware of the risks and that they know what they are doing when they enter the cyber space.

**WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?**

Our clients are happy and satisfied with our service, and they now know how to protect themselves while they're online.

**WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?**

Trust is the main challenge that we are facing the cybersecurity, surveillance, and certification industry. As much as we are developing software, our clients are always wondering, "Is this software really safe to deploy in my network? Can it really protect my network from cybersecurity threats?" We address this challenge by following the ISO standards to ensure that we comply with the regulations.



Our clients are happy and satisfied with our service, and they now know how to protect themselves while they're online.

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?**

I would say that workshops would do the best job because I'm a person who believes in live sessions. Also, by being involved with innovation hub activities, one can pick up a lot of innovative ideas.

## WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?

I want to be a leader in the African cybersecurity industry. That's what I'm looking at for my company right now: building it up to be the leading cybersecurity provider in Africa.

## IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?

I'm looking for an investor who would invest financially, but who would also invest time to give us the direction we need to tap into new markets. Someone who would be contributing to the company's growth.

## WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?

The best thing to realise is that failure isn't the opposite of success. It's part of success. We have to be resilient and keep moving forward.



# PRD LOGICAL SOLUTIONS



## SECTOR

Healthcare  
and Medical  
Devices

## SDG



## COUNTRY

South  
Africa



**Portia  
Mavhungu**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

My company focuses primarily on people living with disabilities, specifically those who are wheelchair-bound. Our first innovation is called the Paratube. It is a retrofitted seat that can be installed as a portable toilet into any existing wheelchair and works with disposable, biodegradable bags to restore dignity to the user.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

In 2011, I had a major accident, and I was confined to a wheelchair as a result. I had broken my pelvis after falling down a three-story building. This experience sent me into a depression because I was suddenly reliant on my mother and grandmother to lift me off a wheelchair every time I needed to use the toilet.

I thought to myself, "I will be in this situation for a brief period of time, but what happens to people who are in this situation for the rest of their lives?"

And that's what made me come up with the idea for the Paratube.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

My team was built mainly around passion and resilience. We have had to turn down investors and potential partners many times because they didn't share our vision and mission. So, my team is purely based on social impact and the drive to make a difference and to bring a bit more equality to the world.

### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

PRD Logical Solutions focuses on bringing value to already-existing companies, so our innovation

“ PRD LogicalSolutions focuses on bringing value to already-existing companies, so our innovation actually brings value to our competitors. ”

brings value to our competitors. We also bring value to clients who don't have the capacity to have the necessary access to basic things that able-bodied people take for granted. Bathroom facilities are a good example of this, and getting access to such facilities without having to ask for help restores a sense of dignity and independence to differently-abled people.

### **WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?**

Before I contacted the Technology Innovation Agency, I was approached by a company that works with NASA and Walmart, which wanted me to pay a large amount of money. So, I approached all the governmental heads at the time for support. The Minister of Science and Technology at that time told me to contact TIA, and with their support, I received R1 million in grant funding. I have also received support in terms of marketing, refining my business model, IP Protection, and commercial funding from various companies and organisations.

### **WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?**

From IOTA, I did my directorship course. I now mentor many startups with the Technology Innovation Agency and Innovation Hub. The skills I've learnt centre around running a business, understanding what a business is, and understanding how to have a sustainable business.

### **WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?**

Since we are now on our second round of testing, the first request for feedback we made was to ask our clients how comfortable they found the seat. We also asked support workers like nurses, psychologists, paediatricians, and orthopaedic practitioners whether the mechanism would work for them. Overall, the feedback we've received in response is, "Wow! How did no one think of this before?" However, we also received feedback to customise the seat according to how it is used – for frail care and cerebral palsy patients as well. We also received feedback from the Austrian patent office that the mechanism we use in our product is the first of its kind in the world.

### **WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?**

A lot of us don't realise that, when we're working with such a product, it's a very touchy subject. So, the biggest challenges we've faced were in working with people who are

wheelchair-bound, who have been wheelchair-bound since birth, and who have found their independence already. The biggest challenge is to explain that the paratube should not be used daily. It can be used every day, but the aim is not to replace bathroom facilities. It's only there to provide access to facilities where there were no wheelchair-friendly facilities available before.

### **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?**

The best platform is to have resources rather than monetary income. Resources actually grow companies bigger and stronger, and a lot of companies hold that back. If one looks at the large companies out there. They didn't grow as a startup because they had a million Rand, but because of the resources and the people who believed in them, believed in the product, and were willing to go forward with them even when they were new on the scene.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?**

We're planning to launch in March 2022. Our five-year goal is to build the biggest medical manufacturing company in South Africa.



**IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?**

The United Nations or the World Health Organisation would make excellent strategic partners for us because of the 2030 Agenda being about inclusivity for people with disabilities.

**WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

There is no such thing as a stupid idea. Every idea means the most in the world because every day, we are innovators without even realising it. If you see something – anything – even if it's only in your small space or you only think it's a problem to you, it could be a problem to a thousand others. So develop something that could make a change so you can make a difference for others and not just yourself. Even small ideas can make a substantial difference.



# RESLOCATE



**reslocate**  
We've got a place for you.

## SECTOR

PropTech

## SDG



## COUNTRY

South Africa



**Lucas  
Mohaswa**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

We exist to address the critical issue of student accommodation in Africa and the rest of the world by being the “go-to guy” for finding relatively affordable, safe, secure, and decent accommodation for students.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

Surprisingly enough, the idea for Reslocate came to me in a dream. I woke up and decided to do some research. When found that there’s a market for my idea, I thought, “You know what? Let’s go for it”.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

We are a team of two co-founders, one business developer, and two business advisors. We’ve managed to balance our skillsets so that we don’t only do one thing. I have a CTO who is responsible for the technology and then we outsource our property investments and recruitment. I developed the whole business model, and then my nephew makes sure my vision becomes a reality. Then we roped in someone to do the marketing and branding for us.

“

We are active in the PropTech industry, which is a new sector in South Africa.

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### WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?

We are active in the PropTech industry, which is a new sector in South Africa. There few PropTech companies in the SA market, but I believe that PropTech will be the new FinTech. What FinTech is to the banking sector, PropTech will become for the real estate sector.

### **WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?**

To be honest, it's quite difficult. We've been bootstrapping a lot, and we haven't received any grant funding or any other type of funding. Currently, we're looking for seed funding to take us to the next level.

### **WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?**

The business training I've received has helped me a lot in formalising Reslocate. At one point, we thought that we're just messing around, but now, we see Reslocate as a business that can really dent the universe. We can challenge and compete with other players in the market.

### **WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?**

They really love it. They can't wait for next year when we start piloting. For them, it's all about the convenience, whether they are students or people who want to rent out accommodation.

### **WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?**

COVID-19 was a big challenge for us. We started Reslocate while we were still in some serious lock-down conditions in South Africa, which made piloting difficult as the students (part of our target market) had to stay home. Now, we're looking forward to the January/

February 2022 intake of students so we can start piloting the app. I'm looking forward to seeing how the app performs because we ended up using the extra time due to the lockdowns to polish our concept and the app, and to do some prior testing.

### **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?**

Events do work, but it depends on how social you are as a participant. In that sense, workshops might assist more because they bring together entrepreneurs at all stages to create new opportunities and share the lessons learnt along the way. Either way, I believe in bringing stakeholders together so that we can form our own ecosystems.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?**

Piloting, piloting, piloting. That's the critical next step on our path right now. We're working on the strategies for how we'll pilot next year, and we've set the goal of completing 100,000 transactions in the next 18 months. So, we're also preparing for our Series A funding round, which will come faster down the line than we thought due to the time spent on testing and piloting during the lock-down.

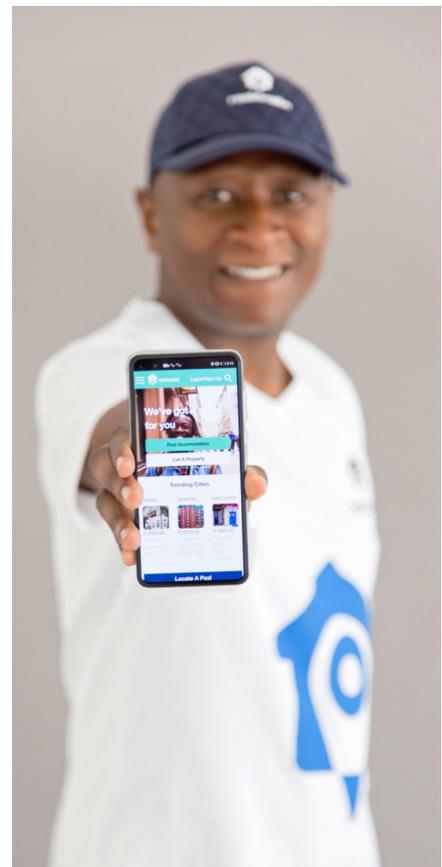
### **IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/ WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?**

I'm hoping to reach strategic partners. Yes, money is important, but it's not the only thing. I want

access. I want social capital. I want people who will take us further, people who believe in us and our team, and who will open doors for us. Those things are the most important to me.

### **WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?**

Start where you are with what you have. The thing of always wanting money and always looking for money... It's distracting entrepreneurs and hampering our creativity. Sometimes, we don't even need the money, but rather the things I mentioned earlier, like access. For someone to say, "Here is an opportunity you need. Run with it." So, start off where you are with what you have and let the market run its course.





# TETRANOLOGIE



## SECTOR

Micromobility,  
Sports and  
Leisure

## SDG



## COUNTRY

Namibia



**David Ndongo  
Mbudhi**

### WHICH PROBLEM DOES YOUR STARTUP LOOK TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

Our startup looks to address the accidents that happen due to the increase of micromobility in congested cities. We have seen that more people are turning to micromobility to get around, but because bicyclists and the like often aren't visible to motorists, this increase has led to an increase in road accidents, which tend to be fatal for cyclists. This is becoming quite a big problem, which we decided to address with a helmet that comes with lights for extra visibility and to ensure communication between cyclists and motorists.

### WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE INDEED ONTO SOMETHING BIG?

When we started with this in December 2019, we were doing a lot of research and saw there is a trend especially in Europe to tackle climate change. Global warming is a global problem, and consumers are becoming more aware of it. So, with more people deciding to cycle as part of their daily lives, we saw there was a need for our product. We're also starting to see places like our capital city, Windhoek, building cycling lanes to allow for students to cycle to university. Seeing all these trends reassured us that we're on the right track, and that the market is coming to Africa as well.

### HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM AND HOW HAS YOUR TEAM GROWN DURING YOUR STARTUP JOURNEY?

I was alone in the beginning, but then I realised working alone wasn't benefitting me much. That made me decide to approach a close friend that I've known for more than seven years. We started working together, and then I got another close friend, one I've known for the past 14 years, to join us. With time, we increased from three to six team members in the beginning of 2021. The way we built up our team allowed us to onboard various people with specific areas of expertise. Some are transport engineers whilst others focus on financials. One of our team members has



a background of several years in retail. I have the micromobility background and product development experience. Together, all of us make an extraordinarily strong team.

### **WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR STARTUP OPERATING IN?**

To be honest, the micromobility industry in Africa isn't really developed. There aren't a lot of competitors here, and we want for there to be greater competition. Currently, the industry is mostly active in congested cities, for example in Eastern and Western Africa. In those regions, people mostly rely on small motorcycles, and they mostly don't pay attention to helmet laws. So, I feel like the market is untapped in Africa, and that gives us the upper hand to penetrate and grab market share.

In Europe, on the other hand, the industry is well established but growing. Competing in the European market from here in Namibia will get us to sell products quicker because we don't need to convince people that our helmet is necessary. People in Europe are already familiar with this type of product. In Africa, penetrating the market will be a matter of educating our customers on the importance of safety equipment when cycling or motorcycling.

That's also why we're giving our helmet a "cool factor". It's easier to convince people to buy something when they think it looks good to wear.

### **WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY FOR STARTUPS LIKE YOURS?**

I can say that there are educational-type support systems like accelerators and incubators. Through those, we have gained a great deal of knowledge – especially through the BOOST UP programme. BOOST UP has taught me a lot and I met many incredible people, mentors from NCRST and SAIS 2. Everyone has just been incredible and us getting to access the ecosystem in Finland was absolutely amazing.

People like to jump to funding as a form of support and, yes, funding is important, but I would say that support in the form of training and access to opportunities go a long way. But I also think that, to make the most of the opportunities available to us, we need to attempt to establish strong relationships within our local entrepreneurship networks.

### **WHAT SKILLS DID YOU GAIN DURING TRAINING, MENTORING, AND OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES ALONG YOUR JOURNEY?**

What I've learnt during this journey is how to pitch to an audience. The pitches that I did in the past weren't at the same level quality-wise as the pitches I've made during BOOST UP. I also appreciated being put on the spot without slides because we're all used to having the slides while pitching. Practicing pitches without those slides is challenging, but also amazing because it builds up your courage. It is a challenge, but where there are challenges, there is also growth.

And that is probably the biggest advantage I have gained from the training. I have grown as a person and an entrepreneur because of the challenging training I have experienced.

### **WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR FROM YOUR CLIENTS AND END USERS OR PARTNERS?**

We're currently busy rolling out the first operating prototypes to end users for user testing, so we will only have feedback and reviews once the roll-out is complete. That said, the feedback we've received from potential clients when we show them what they're doing is that they are very interested in buying the helmet once it hits the market.

## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN BRINGING YOUR PRODUCT TO MARKET?

We've had to face quite a few challenges. Our strategy is to first enter the European market before expanding into Africa, and we knew from the start that we would need to establish a platform or join platforms like the one provided by BOOST UP to make an entrance into Europe. I'll always be thankful for BOOST UP because of the people I have been able to reach because of it.

The other major challenge we experienced was around getting together the financing to put out the first working prototypes. We had a lot of people who believed in the idea, but they didn't have the money available to assist us, and few people are willing to gamble their money at the prototype stage. Despite this, we've made it, and we're almost at the point where the prototypes are ready.

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST PLATFORM TO NETWORK IN YOUR LOCAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM? AN EVENT, A MEETING, SHARING A CAB WITH A MILLIONAIRE?

Startup events are the best places to network, I believe. Unfortunately, though, I have not been able to attend many such events. Most of them only happen in Windhoek, and I live about 700 km away. So, I see these events happening, and I know they are immensely helpful, but I can't make it to many of them. It's a pity.



## WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR STARTUP?

Mostly, we want to start entering the market with what we have and where we are. We need to fully validate our product so we can be market-fit and so we can make sure that we get rid of all the small problems and hiccups we're encountering. It's time to get the helmet out there, so that's the biggest plan we have for the future.

## IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS OR HAVE SECURED SOME, WHO IS/WAS YOUR IDEAL INVESTOR? WHO DID YOU HOPE WAS IN YOUR AUDIENCE WHEN YOU WERE PITCHING AND WHY?

At this time, we have not yet raised any funds. I'm hoping that, when we pitch, someone in the micromobility industry or who has a passion for hardware will hear us. Most investors seem to be more interested in software, and although we do have an app that enables the controller and the helmet to pair, that isn't the main part of our business. So, we really, really hope to one day connect with someone passionate about the micromobility industry, who understands the importance of providing such products to the market.

“

When you start, don't give up. Don't ever feel that your idea isn't worth taking out there.

”

## WHAT CAN YOU PASS ON TO ENTREPRENEURS AND FOUNDERS LIKE YOURSELF WHO NEED SUPPORT?

When you start, don't give up. Don't ever feel that your idea isn't worth taking out there. You may be rejected, but that doesn't mean that you are a failure. Rejection is part of the process. It only strengthens you. It does not mean that it's the end. Someone will come along and notice what you're doing. You just keep doing what you're doing. You might not win any competitions, but there's always someone in the audience who is watching and waiting. keep doing what you're doing. You might not win any competitions, but there's always someone in the audience who is watching and waiting.

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