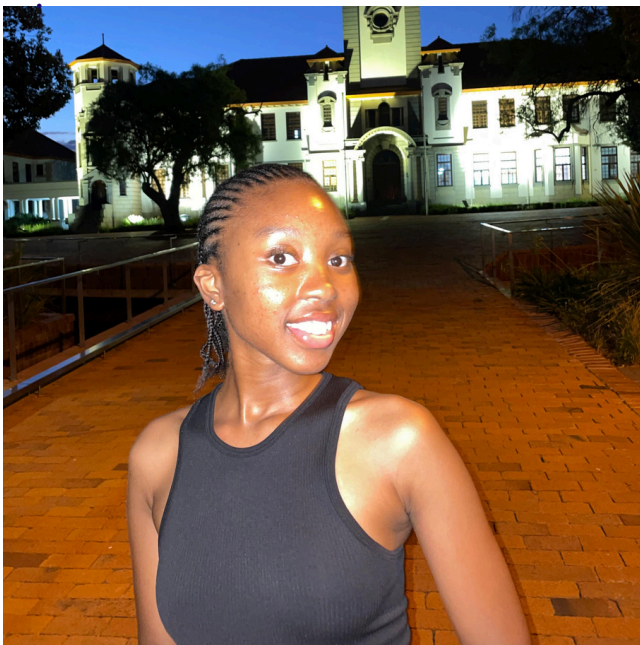


OVERCOMING LIMITS, EMBRACING GROWTH

Testimonial by Nalika Mlambo

At the heart of Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation lies the mission to uplift and empower young minds, shaping them into confident, goal-driven individuals ready to take on the world. One such inspiring story is that of Nalika Tinyiko Mlambo, whose journey of growth and self-belief is a testament to the transformative power of mentorship and support.



Background and Challenges

Born and raised in the village of Pankop, Nalika is the second child of Israel and Vicky Mlambo. Growing up alongside her siblings, Talia and Tino, she describes herself as an introvert who finds solace in the company of family. Despite her quiet nature, Nalika is a determined and hardworking individual, always striving for excellence in her academic and personal pursuits.

Before joining Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation, Nalika struggled with procrastination and self-doubt. Although she was not performing poorly in school, she lacked the confidence to believe in her full potential. When her school announced that the top ten learners would be selected to join the foundation's Girl in the Mirror program, she saw an opportunity to challenge herself and grow academically.

A Life-Changing Experience

Nalika became actively involved in the foundation's Girl in the Mirror mentorship program and participated in the sexual health drive. Through these initiatives, she was introduced to a supportive community that helped her understand herself better and develop effective study habits.

One of the most impactful moments in her journey was an activity where she and her peers explored their learning styles and personalities. This exercise helped her recognize her strengths and set personal academic goals. Although she had always disliked mathematics, her mentor encouraged her to push past her limits, and as a result, her grades improved. More importantly, she overcame her habit of last-minute studying, learning valuable time management skills that have since helped her academically.



Guidance, Mentorship, and Personal Growth

Nalika fondly recalls her relationship with her mentor, who provided unwavering support throughout her academic journey. From checking in on her during exams to guiding her through university applications, her mentor became a pillar of encouragement. She credits Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation for teaching her resilience, self-belief, and the importance of perseverance.

Her most cherished memory with the foundation is the very first session on April 20, 2024.

The day was filled with warmth and excitement, starting with a hearty breakfast and an engaging introduction by Ms. Ntombana, who outlined the foundation's mission. One activity that stood out to Nalika was the personal board exercise, where participants expressed their personalities using animals, fruits, and vegetables—a creative and eye-opening experience that left a lasting impact.

Looking Ahead: A Bright Future

Today, Nalika is pursuing a Bachelor of Social Science majoring in Psychology at the University of the Free State. She attributes much of her confidence and determination to the foundation, which helped her embrace challenges and take proactive steps toward achieving her dreams.

As she looks to the future, Nalika remains committed to continuous growth and learning. She believes that the support she received from Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation has equipped her with the tools to navigate academic and personal challenges with confidence.

A Message of Encouragement

To other young girls considering joining the foundation, Nalika offers heartfelt advice: *"Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation is not just about mentoring; it helps you understand yourself, build confidence, and grow in ways you never imagined. It is a place where you are uplifted, supported, and guided towards success."*

Her story is a reminder that with the right support and determination, every young girl has the potential to shine. Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation continues to be a beacon of hope, shaping futures and making dreams a reality—one empowered young woman at a time.

A CELEBRATION OF GROWTH AND EXCELLENCE



The **Girl in the Mirror Mentorship Programme** has always been about more than just academic success—it's about self-discovery, perseverance, and empowerment. This year, the program introduced an exciting new tradition: **The Ziqhenye Awards**.

The word "Ziqhenye", meaning "Be Proud", perfectly encapsulates the spirit of these awards, which honor the resilience, achievements, and personal growth of young women who have embraced their journey of self-improvement.

The Ziqhenye Awards serve as a powerful reminder that every step toward success deserves to be celebrated. The event highlighted learners who demonstrated academic progress, personal transformation, and unwavering determination.

Among the evening's most memorable moments was the recognition of learners who overcame challenges, achieved academic milestones, and inspired others through their vision and tenacity.

Celebrating Our Winners

Most Inspiring Vision Board – **Boikhutso Tshabalala**

Awarded for creativity, clarity, and authenticity, Boikhutso's vision board stood out, featuring an inspiring quote:

"Never stop learning because life never stops teaching."

Tenacity "Underdog" Award – **Boikhutso Nkoane**

Recognizing exceptional perseverance in the face of challenges, this award honored a learner who remained committed to her goals despite the odds.

Most Improved Learner (Overall Achievement) – **Dikeledi Beauty Modise**

This award celebrated outstanding academic progress, showing that dedication leads to success.

Most Improved Learner (Subject Achievement)

- Third Place – **Itebogeng Faith Matome** (Mathematical Literacy)
- Second Place – **Dineo Mangwane** (Geography)
- First Place – **Boikhutso Tshabalala** (Mathematical Literacy)

Top 3 Achieving Learners (Overall Performance)

- Third Place – **Itebogeng Faith Matome**
- Second Place – **Matlhatsi Rabile Sebothoma**
- First Place – **Kamogelo Seakamela**

🏆 Mentor's Choice Award – **Thoriso Kgwele**

Voted by the Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation mentors, this award celebrated a learner who exemplified dedication, resilience, and academic excellence throughout the program.

The first-ever Ziqhenye Awards was an emotional and inspiring day, with heartfelt speeches, proud mentors, and learners beaming with confidence. Each award symbolized not only success but also the hard work, perseverance, and personal transformation that these young women have experienced.

With the success of this year's event, the Ziqhenye Awards will become an annual tradition, shining a spotlight on the remarkable young women of the Girl in the Mirror Mentorship Programme.

As we move forward, we remain committed to uplifting and empowering girls to dream big, overcome challenges, and continue shaping their futures with confidence and pride.



PHINDI SIGASA – A HEART FOR GIVING

At Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation, our strength lies in the people who dedicate their time and talents to creating a lasting impact. One such individual is Phindi Sigasa, our Executive Assistant, whose journey is rooted in a deep passion for giving back and uplifting others.

A Passion for Helping Others

Phindi's heart for charity began in 2018, when she started celebrating her birthdays by giving back. Each year, she and her friends would spend the day at Ethembeni Children's Home in Johannesburg, assisting with tasks like feeding, bathing, and playing with the children. The joy of making a difference fueled her commitment to service. Even when the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted these visits, she remained dedicated to her mission, focusing on supporting children within her own family. Her passion for helping others found a new home at Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation, where she joined after being invited by her sister, Ntombana. Knowing the foundation's vision aligned with her values, Phindi embraced the opportunity wholeheartedly.



Her Role at Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation

As the Executive Assistant, Phindi plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation of the foundation's initiatives. A typical day for her involves:

- ✓ Researching, writing, and editing impactful stories
- ✓ Meeting deadlines and staying informed on current events
- ✓ Managing multiple tasks and adapting to changing priorities.

For Phindi, the most rewarding part of her job is telling stories that inspire and drive positive change. One of her most cherished moments at Mqhele was witnessing the joy of learners during the school shoes donation, a project that reaffirmed the power of collective giving.

Vision for the Future

Phindi envisions Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation growing into a leading organization in its field, expanding its reach, strengthening programs, and creating job opportunities for those in need. Her personal goal is to continue making a meaningful impact while growing professionally within the nonprofit sector.

Beyond the Office

When she's not working, Phindi enjoys:

- 📖 Reading
- 🎬 Watching movies & series
- 🌍 Traveling
- 🍰 Baking—especially experimenting with desserts!



Words of Wisdom

For those looking to make a difference in the nonprofit space, Phindi offers this advice:

- 💡 Be passionate, flexible, and open-minded.
- 💡 Embrace challenges, wear many hats, and stay driven by purpose.
- 💡 Empathy, strong communication, and adaptability are key to success.

Her motivation? Celebrating small wins, setting achievable goals, and prioritizing self-care.

Phindi's dedication is a reminder that every act of kindness, no matter how small, contributes to a greater impact. We're honored to have her as part of our Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation family!



MY Future Fest: Empowering Learners for a Brighter Tomorrow

Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation is proud to present **MY Future Fest 2025**, a groundbreaking career expo **exclusively for Grade 12 learners**! This year, we are partnering with **Tshimologo Outreach** to create a transformative career development experience that will equip learners with the tools and knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their futures.

MY Future Fest is more than just an event—it's a launchpad for future success. Over the course of three days, across three different venues, the expo will impact learners from **Nokaneng, Mmametlake, and Marapyane circuits**, ensuring **equal access to career guidance and opportunities**.

- ✓ Career guidance from industry experts
- ✓ University and bursary application support
- ✓ Networking opportunities with professionals and recruiters

✦ Event Details

- 📅 Dates: **April 15–17, 2025**
- 📍 Venues: **Schools within the Nokaneng, Mmametlake, and Marapyane circuits**
- 👤 Who Can Attend? **Grade 12 learners from participating schools**

✦ Why MY Future Fest Matters

The transition from high school to higher education or the workforce can be overwhelming. Many learners lack access to information about available career paths, financial aid, and university applications. By bringing this career expo directly to them, **MY Future Fest** ensures that every Grade 12 learner has the guidance they need to confidently take their next step.

We invite learners, educators, and industry professionals to be part of this transformative initiative. Whether through mentorship, sponsorship, or volunteering—your support can help shape the careers of future leaders.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MY COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS?

Donate

To ensure our initiatives are a success, we are relying on the generosity and support of donors like you.

Your contribution, no matter the amount, will directly contribute towards education initiatives (tutoring, school shoes, career expo) for learners in underprivileged communities.

Volunteer

We are looking for dedicated volunteers to sign up to assist with any of our initiatives to make a positive impact in the lives of the Young learners.

You could volunteer to:

- Be a mentor in our 10 month #girlinthemirror mentorship program
- Assist learners with applying to tertiary institutions and applying for bursaries
- Assist the foundation in collecting dignity packs from individuals, organisations and the community for the HealthyU campaign

Whether it's an inspiring story, a shout-out, educational books, or a personal or educational milestone you or a colleague have achieved – we'd love to hear about it and share your news to highlight the positive impact within our community

Email: info@mqheleyezizwe.com

Contact: 081 248 3250



www.mqheleyezizwe.com