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Coding For Change: Township Youth Building A Digital Future

As Youth Month wraps up, it's fitting that we turn our focus toward youth development and equipping young people for tomorrow's economy. Across South African townships, technology is emerging as a powerful equaliser, offering pathways out of poverty and toward opportunity.

Unemployment among South Africans aged 15 to 34 is a staggering 46%, meanwhile, the demand for digital skills continues to explode: artificial intelligence employment has surged nearly 182% since 2019, with cloud computing and cybersecurity roles growing rapidly (*Source: itweb.co.za*). Organisations like Microsoft aim to train a million South Africans in AI and cyber skills by 2026 (*reuters.com*), but a gap remains between high-level programmes and grassroots youth in under-resourced areas.

Game changers in townships

Non profit Ghetto Heroes Tech Innovation runs weekend workshops like Code Tembisa, introducing basic to intermediate coding to boys and girls without charging fees. They've taught coding to over 1,000 learners and are expanding via smartphone-accessible content (*Source: builtinafrica.io*). Similarly, Africa Inspired Foundation, backed by Zaio Institute, aims to train 10,000 rural youth in digital skills, coding, cloud computing and cybersecurity, offering guaranteed remote job placements after graduation.

In Mamelodi, Kasi Digital, founded by Arnold Sigauque, is developing 1,000 software developers by 2025 through mobile



and web development workshops (*Source: brandsouthafrica.com*). Meanwhile, Ming Coding, in partnership with SAAYC in Daveyton, teaches cloud, graphic design and network administration to youth for only R100, offering recognised certifications even without tertiary entrance (*Source: itweb.co.za*).

Each initiative follows a clear formula: teach practical skills, issue certificates, and help youth secure work, even remotely.

Upskilling guidelines for youth

Young people eager to join the digital economy should take these steps:

1. **Choose a clear pathway:** Learn web or app development, data analytics, cloud services or cybersecurity, areas with strong demand.
2. **Start with free platforms:** Use resources like freeCodeCamp, Scratch, or Digify Africa, which provide structured learning without cost.
3. **Gain certificates:** Enrol in accredited courses such as Microsoft, CompTIA, or ZAIO's vocational offerings.
4. **Build a portfolio:** Complete real projects, apps, websites, or school solutions, and share them on GitHub to showcase your work.

5. **Explore remote work:** Websites like Fiverr or Upwork provide freelance opportunities. Zaio ensures rural learners can access remote roles.

What to watch for next

- **AI & cybersecurity growth:** Microsoft and Collective X are sponsoring training initiatives in these sectors.
- **Smart townships:** Fibre initiatives like Fibertime are enhancing township connectivity by offering pay as you go broadband.
- **Employer-sponsored learning:** Collective X is allocating R50 million to co-fund digital training tied to real job placements.

Why it matters

These initiatives do more than teach skills. They counteract youth unemployment by providing digital literacy, job-readiness and hope. The future really is in your hands and now is the time to secure the bag.

As Youth Month concludes, the challenge is clear: South Africa needs scalable township coding clubs offering free access, devices, mentorship and connectivity, tightly linked to real job opportunities. That's why, as the country pushes toward digital inclusion by 2030, township youth who start building software today may lead us into tomorrow. For Siphos and countless others, learning to code isn't just a skill, it's a lifeline and a statement: the future is theirs to build.

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Barbershop Talks: Why Men Need Safe Spaces Too



Spaces where men feel safe to speak from the heart are sprouting up in the most unexpected places: barbershops, taverns, pubs, and local sports clubs. These informal “wellness hubs” are transforming our understanding of what it means to be strong, showing that emotional vulnerability is a form of courage.

Barbershops: more than just a haircut

Barbershops (formal and informal) have long served as community hubs, but today they’re evolving into unofficial therapy rooms. Many barbers note how clients open up about life’s stresses during a trim or shave. Barbershop settings offer the privacy and trust that help men speak freely and honestly about their mental health. The evolution of barbershops to include nail grooming services.

The Men’s Foundation SA acknowledges this trend, training barbers to open conversations on mental wellness, suicide prevention, and prostate health. Now, these spaces are incorporating services like manicures and pedicures, inspired by grooming lounges such as Sorbet Man, as a form of therapy or self-care. They offer men’s manicures, pedicures, waxing, facials and more. Sorbet Man fosters a modern self-care environment built around inclusivity and emotional openness (Source: www.sorbet.co.za).

By offering nail services, barbershop centres remove stigma around male grooming. As clients relax into hand and foot treatments, conversations, often with playful banter, flow more openly. This setting encourages men to voice stress, worries or personal thoughts they might otherwise hide. In this hybrid of barber, beauty, and wellness, vulnerability finds a natural invitation.

These spaces are slowly dismantling outdated “unwritten rules” that true men only come for haircuts. Instead, men learn to “buff and shine” as a normal expression of self-care that improves mental health, not just vanity (Source: www.sorbet.co.za).

Taverns and pubs: where male bonds are built Township taverns and pubs have traditionally been male-dominated. In these spaces, men share drinks, jokes, and worries, often around topics seldom discussed openly.

Programmes like HeForShe Taverns leverage this social dynamic to tackle gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV. Through facilitated group discussions, they foster community unity and redefine taverns as hubs for respectful dialogue and social change (Source: www.heforshe.org).

These male-centric spaces naturally encourage candid discussions, though facilitators must carefully balance open conversations with the influence of alcohol.

Sports clubs: kick-off for emotional growth

While often seen as breeding grounds for athletic performance, local rugby or soccer clubs are quietly evolving to meet emotional and mental needs. Community coaches are now holding “talking circles” where young men discuss identity, trauma, financial pressure, and aspirations, providing a gentle guide toward emotional maturity.

In a country grappling with youth unemployment, substance abuse, and rising GBV, these informal check-ins are often the first line of defence. Especially in townships, coaches can offer care and mentorship where formal mental health services are thinly spread.

Breaking the silence: why these spaces matter

- Men face daunting statistics: South African men are statistically more likely to die by suicide and from chronic illnesses like prostate cancer, yet seldom seek help.
- Cultural norms silence conversation: Traditional expectations of stoicism deter many men from expressing emotional pain.
- Informal settings reduce stigma: Trusted environments, like barbershops and taverns, act as gateways to emotional openness and professional help.

Supporting the movement

- Expand training for barbers, tavern owners, and sports mentors to handle mental-health issues with sensitivity.
- Partner with NGOs such as SADAG, Men’s Foundation, and SANCA to create guided referral systems from grassroots gatherings to professional care.
- Spread awareness of the power of vulnerability, using Movember, Youth Month, and Men’s Health Month as platforms to share stories and highlight safe community spaces.
- In the end, when men bond over a cut, a kort, or a kickabout, they create more than moments, they form lifelines. In communities where formal care is scarce, these spaces can protect lives and nurture men’s emotional health, reminding us that true strength often begins when we speak up.

Business & Brotherhood: How Small Enterprises Are Changing Lives

As South Africa prepares to mark Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day on 27 June, it’s worth celebrating the growing number of male-owned township and rural enterprises that are not only creating jobs but also strengthening community bonds and resilience.

SMMEs as community anchors

South Africa’s 2.6 million SMMEs, over 90% of the country’s businesses, contribute significantly to GDP and employment. Township-driven SMMEs are hubs of local commerce, fostering entrepreneurship and uplifting families (Source: townshipeconomies.co.za). This township economy is underestimated; recent studies estimate its annual worth at around R100 billion. It is a powerhouse of innovation and resilience.

Building community through business

Male-led SMMEs are bridging economic gaps by offering relevant services and rooting profits back into their communities. Many work with business incubators and government programmes, such as the National Integrated Small Enterprise Development (NISED) strategy, to receive mentorship, funding, and skills training (Source: www.seda.org.za).

Recognition also plays a role. The presidential SMME awards recently honoured township and youth entrepreneurs who are driving a new wave of economic transformation (Source: www.dsbd.gov.za).

Challenges remain

Despite strong potential, considerable hurdles stand in the way. Limited access to finance, where only 5% of township MSMEs receive traditional loans, remains a major



barrier. Sustaining growth also depends on adopting technology, engaging staff, building partnerships, and responding to market needs.

Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day: A platform to propel change

This 27 June, MSME Day offers a moment to highlight the transformative potential of male-led small enterprises. It’s an opportunity for public-private partnerships, for financial institutions to improve funding models, and for communities to support local entrepreneurs whose success translates into job creation and social upliftment.

“Business and brotherhood” is reshaping township life, crafting opportunities from ordinary means, scaling enterprises from shipping containers to tech hubs, and forging local pride. Through this wave of local entrepreneurship, men are proving that small enterprises can wield outsized impact, redefining success, community and prosperity for the long term.

Supporting Fathers: Mental Health And Well-being Across Generations

The role of fatherhood carries deep emotional weight. For many dads, expectations to be providers and protectors collide with daily stressors such as unemployment, inequality, and the nation’s high crime rates. The result? Fathers often suppress their needs, leading to anxiety, depression, and emotional distance.

The silent burden of fatherhood

According to a 2021 report by Sonke Gender Justice and Stellenbosch University, nearly half of South African fathers admitted to feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past six months (Source: health-e.org.za). Many feel shame over not meeting cultural and financial expectations, struggles that affect not only them but the entire family. Evidence shows that father’s mental health directly influences maternal well-being, birth outcomes and children’s development.

Breaking the silence

Thankfully, attitudes are changing. Organisations such as Fathers In Africa, ManUp Mental Health, South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG), and Dad’s the Word offer father-focused counselling, peer support and mentoring, many online and accessible in different languages. Online platforms such as HeadsUpGuys, Kena Health, and October Health bridge the gap for fathers who cannot access in-person help. SMS forums, 24/7 hotlines, and tele-counselling services offer anonymity and round-the-clock access, key in communities where mental health is still taboo. These platforms play a vital role in normalising emotional care for men.

Overcoming deep-rooted barriers

Despite progress, fathers are still underserved within the mental health system. Formal health services in South Africa tend to prioritise women and children, meaning fathers often fall through the cracks. There is also a tendency among dads to internalise their struggles and avoid seeking help, reinforcing isolation.



Towards generational healing

Shifting norms around masculinity require that we encourage open dialogue in settings like churches, workplaces, sports clubs and barber chairs, places where men naturally relate. Community-driven initiatives must be expanded and backed by investment in father-inclusive mental programmes at clinics and schools. Encouraging men to complete paternity leave and attend antenatal appointments can reduce maternal depression, improve bonding, and further destigmatise help-seeking.

Father-specific support

- Fathers In Africa: Offers mentoring programmes; peer group counselling.
- ManUp Mental Health: Offers online forums and counselling for men.
- SADAG: Helplines, support groups and resources for fathers and families.
- Dad’s the Word: Offers guidance for new and expectant fathers.
- Izenzo Dad Care: Offers skills and resilience training for dads.

“Strong” doesn’t mean silent. It means speaking up, taking care of one’s own mind, and showing the next generation what it truly means to be a man. Supporting fathers changes lives, not just theirs, but everyone they care for. Let’s build a culture that celebrates this form of strength in all its dimensions.



Beyond The Bottle: Substance Abuse & Mental Health

Each year from 22-27 June, South Africa marks South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) Drug Awareness Week, shining a light on a growing crisis. Substance use and mental health often intertwine in a dangerous cycle, unresolved trauma frequently leading individuals toward addiction, and addiction exacerbating psychological distress.

Two sides of the same coin

In South Africa, substance abuse is alarmingly common: lifetime prevalence sits at approximately 13%, more than double the global average of 5% (*Source: healthmag.co.za*). Alcohol ranks highest, followed by tobacco and cannabis (dagga) (*Source: mentalhealthsa.org.za*). Young people often get involved early, experimental use beginning around age 10 and rising sharply among teenagers.

Meanwhile, around 30 % of South African adults experience a mental health condition in their lifetime, with many cases linked to trauma from violence and poverty to family breakdowns. For many, substance misuse becomes a coping strategy, a way to numb fear, pain or emotional wounds caused by PTSD, anxiety or depression.

The dual-diagnosis trap

Known as “dual diagnosis”, this combination complicates treatment. Research from UCT shows that individuals with conditions like schizophrenia or PTSD are more likely to misuse substances, and using drugs, in turn, deepens mental health problems. As SANCA explains, substance dependency often spirals into social and emotional isolation, worsening mental distress (*Source: mentalhealthsa.org.za*).

Spotting the signs

Warning signs include insomnia, impulsivity, mood swings, aggressive behaviour, frequent legal troubles, or even a shift to risky habits like gambling or overuse of caffeine. In youth



demographics, methamphetamine (including street drugs like nyaope) shows increasing treatment admission rates (*Source: samrc.ac.za*).

Starting a conversation

For families and friends, addressing substance misuse requires care. Instead of confrontation, begin with empathy: “I’ve noticed you’ve been struggling, can we talk?” Encourage them to consult a healthcare provider or reach out to confidential helplines such as SANCA, SADAG or AA/NA groups. The SANCA helpline (0800 12 13 14) offers advice, referrals and aftercare support.

Available support structures

- **Rehabilitation and counselling:** SANCA chapters nationwide provide outpatient and inpatient treatment, including detox and therapy.

- **Dual-diagnosis care:** Facilities equipped to address both substance use and mental health issues are increasingly available.
- **Peer support groups:** Organisations like Alcoholics Narcotics Anonymous, temporary shelters, and community healing circles help individuals feel understood and less isolated.
- **Workplace & school-based programmes:** Education, early screening and resilience workshops can interrupt the cycle before it deepens.

During SANCA Drug Awareness Week, the message is clear: substance abuse and mental illness are linked, not separate. By confronting trauma and psychological distress head-on, we can prevent self-medication and support better outcomes.

Breaking The Silence Around Men’s Mental Health

Helplines available 24/7:

- Suicide Crisis: 0800 567 567
- Mental Health: 011 234 4837
- Substance Abuse Line: 0800 12 13 14
- WhatsApp chat:
- Cipla (076 882 2775), Maybelline
- BraveTogether (087 163 2030),
- Ke Moja (087 163 2025)
- inspirationhub.co.za

Lifeline South Africa

- National helpline: 0861 322 322 (available 24/7); offers confidential counselling.

Community clinics & local services

- Nearby public clinics (e.g. Dr Ivan Toms CDC, Tafelsig CDC) – many offer basic mental-health counselling or referrals
- Heal SA: Midrand & Katlehong support office helpline: 010 880 3334, WhatsApp 066 323 6869.
- Higher Health: Offers student-centred mental-health programmes on university campuses.

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Hazel Ntuli: The 17-Year-Old Actuary Breaking Barriers



Image source: Instagram/universityofpretoria

At just 17 years old, Mongiwa Hazel Ntuli has achieved what many aspire to but few accomplish at such a young age. She recently graduated with a degree in Actuarial Science from the University of Pretoria, making her one of the institution's youngest-ever graduates a remarkable feat that highlights her exceptional talent, determination, and focus.

Hazel's story is an inspiring example of breaking barriers in a demanding field. Actuarial Science, a discipline combining mathematics, statistics, and financial theory to assess risk, is known for its complexity and rigorous academic requirements. For Hazel to complete this degree before reaching adulthood is a testament to her extraordinary dedication.

How Hazel did it: tips for accelerated learning

Hazel's success did not come overnight. Here are some key strategies that helped her excel:

- **Set clear goals:** Hazel focused early on what she wanted to achieve, setting ambitious yet achievable targets.
- **Discipline and time management:** Balancing challenging coursework with personal life requires careful planning and consistent effort.

- **Seek support and mentorship:** Hazel credits her family, teachers, and mentors who encouraged and guided her throughout her journey.
- **Use active learning techniques:** Rather than passively reading, she engaged with the material through practice problems, discussions, and applying concepts.
- **Stay Curious and Resilient:** Facing tough subjects and setbacks, Hazel kept her curiosity alive and pushed through obstacles.

Resources for young achievers in South Africa

For other young people inspired by Hazel's story, here are some valuable resources and programmes to support accelerated learning and career development:

- **National Youth Development Agency (NYDA):** Offers bursaries, skills development, and mentorship opportunities for young South Africans.
- **University of Pretoria – Centre for Academic Development:** Provides support services such as tutoring, study skills workshops, and academic counselling.
- **Maths and science clubs and competitions:** Participating in organisations like the South African Mathematical Society (SAMS) can boost skills and motivation.
- **Online learning platforms:** Websites like Khan Academy, Coursera, and edX offer free courses to supplement formal education.
- **Young Professionals Network (YPN):** Connects young achievers with career guidance, internships, and networking opportunities.

Hazel Ntuli's achievement is not only a personal milestone but a beacon for young South Africans dreaming big. Her journey shows that with passion, perseverance, and the right support, age is no barrier to success. As she embarks on her career in actuarial science, Hazel stands poised to inspire a new generation to break barriers and redefine what is possible.

Careers Corner

Welcome to the Career Corner, your go-to space for discovering exciting and attainable jobs that you can explore as a side hustle or new career path. Whether you're seeking to earn extra income or embark on a fresh journey, this column aims to inspire your next move.

This edition, we are focusing on being a **freelance translator!**

You could earn money as a freelance translator, from the comfort of your home, using just your phone or a simple laptop.

With many companies, NGOs, websites, and even YouTubers needing their content in different languages, there's a growing demand for local language translators in South Africa. The best part? You don't need a degree or formal qualification to get started.

What does a freelance translator do?

A freelance translator converts text, audio or video content from one language to another. For example:

- Translating an English document into isiZulu.
- Subtitling a video from English into Sesotho.
- Translating WhatsApp messages or customer service replies for a local business.

What you need to start:

- Fluent in at least two languages (e.g. English + your home language)
- A smartphone or laptop
- Internet access
- WhatsApp, Gmail and Google Docs for communication and document sharing.

How much can you earn?

- Per word: R0.30 to R1.50 depending on the job.
- Per project: Small jobs can pay R200–R500; bigger jobs like website translations can earn R1,000–R5,000.
- Some international sites pay in dollars or euros, which is even better!

Where to find freelance translation jobs:

- **South African Platforms:** The South African Translators' Institute (SATI) – www.translators.org.za. You can register as a freelance translator here (free to view, small fee to list). Also try SABC. They are always looking for translators, especially for radio.
- **LinkedIn:** List "Freelance Translator" as your title and post that you offer translation in isiZulu, Sepedi, etc. Many companies search LinkedIn for freelancers.
- **WhatsApp and Facebook:** Join groups like Freelancers South Africa, Remote Jobs SA, or Translation Jobs Africa and post your services.
- **International Platforms:** Fiverr.com: Set up a free profile offering translation services. Upwork.com: Create an account and apply for jobs needing African language translations. ProZ.com: A global platform for translators (you can offer free or paid listings).

How to market yourself:

- Create a simple WhatsApp Business profile: List your services, prices, and availability.
- Offer your translation services to:
- Local spaza shop owners for menus or posters
- Taxi associations for public signage or commuter information
- NGOs working in education, health or gender
- Ask satisfied clients to send you a short review/testimonial to build credibility.

Free learning resources (no degree needed)

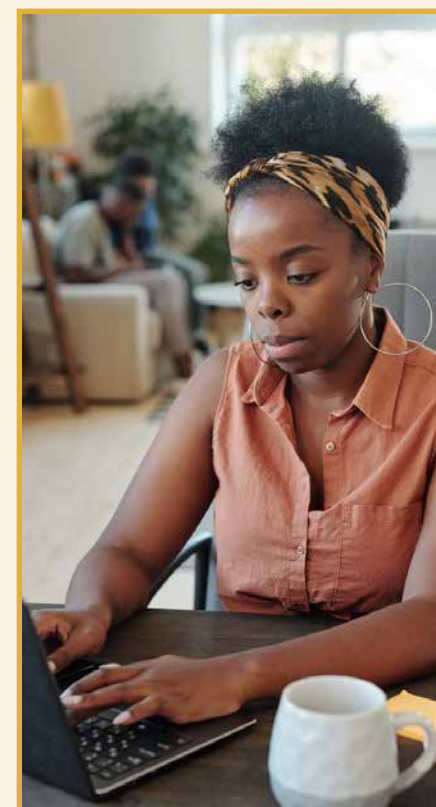
- YouTube: Search: "How to become a freelance translator"
- Coursera or Alison.com: Free beginner courses in translation, grammar, and freelancing
- SATI's Guide to Translation: Available on www.translators.org.za

Real talk

You don't have to wait for a fancy job title to earn. If you can read and write your home language well, that's already a powerful tool. Translation allows you to work remotely, set your own hours, and even work for international clients.

Next step?

Start by translating a short story or news article into your home language, and share it with friends or online as your sample work. That's your CV!



When Men Speak Up: The Role of Men in Ending GBV

The initiative #JusticeForOlerato has been trending strongly on social media, bringing much-needed attention to the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa. While the conversations are loud and urgent, one question remains: Where are the men in these crucial discussions?

It is important to acknowledge that men, too, can be victims of GBV. However, statistics consistently show that women and children are disproportionately affected and remain the most vulnerable. The harsh reality is that in South Africa, one of the highest rates of GBV globally, women bear the brunt of this violence.

Ending GBV is not a women's issue alone, it requires men to actively participate in changing mindsets and behaviours. Organisations like Sonke Gender Justice have been at the forefront of this work, encouraging men to reflect on harmful norms and become allies in the fight against violence.

Why men's voices matter

Men often hold influential roles in families, communities, and workplaces. When men challenge toxic masculinity and speak out against violence, they help dismantle the culture that normalises abuse. Silence or indifference only allows violence to continue unchecked.

Sonke Gender Justice emphasises the importance of men redefining what it means to "be a man" promoting respect, equality, and non-violence as core values. This transformation is essential to building safer communities.

How men can actively challenge GBV

Listen and learn: Men should educate themselves about GBV, understand survivors' experiences, and recognise the signs of abuse. Awareness is the first step to empathy and action.

Speak out against abuse: Whether in social circles, workplaces, or online, men can challenge sexist jokes, harmful language, and violent



behaviour. Being an active bystander sends a strong message that GBV is unacceptable.

Model respectful relationships: Demonstrating equality, consent, and respect in personal relationships sets a positive example for others.

Support survivors: Believing and supporting survivors is vital. Men can offer practical help, encourage access to services, and fight stigma.

Engage in self-reflection: Men must examine their own attitudes and behaviours, seeking to unlearn patriarchal conditioning and embrace healthier masculinity.

Where to Get Help: Anger Management, Therapy & Men's Programmes Near You
For men committed to change, several resources offer support:

- **Sonke Gender Justice:** Visit www.genderjustice.org.za or call 011 339 3589 for information on programmes engaging men in preventing violence.
- **South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG):** Toll-free helpline: 0800 12 13 14.

- **MenEngage South Africa:** Contact via email: info@menengagesa.org or visit www.menengagesa.org for men's support groups and workshops.
- **Anger Management Programmes:** Many community health centres and private therapists offer courses. Inquire at your local clinic or counselling centre.
- **National Shelter Movement of South Africa:** Offers support and information about GBV shelters and services: 011 484 4554.

Ending GBV requires all of us to do our part. For too long, men's silence has allowed violence to thrive unchecked. It is time for men to become allies, advocates, and active agents of change.

By speaking up, supporting survivors, and challenging harmful norms, men can help build a safer, more equitable South Africa, where justice for Olerato and many others is not just a hashtag, but a reality.

Asambeni Taxi Times encourages all men in our communities to step forward and be part of the solution.

Asambeni Taxi Times: Driving Change, One Family At A Time

In the hum and bustle of South Africa’s taxi ranks, a quiet revolution is taking place, and it’s printed in bold headlines. Asambeni Taxi Times (ATT), launched in March 2025, began with a modest print run of 35,000 copies per month. Just two months later, it had scaled to over 100,000 copies per edition, distributed bi-monthly across Gauteng.

This phenomenal growth has not only cemented ATT as one of South Africa’s biggest independent newspapers, but it has also changed the lives of many families, each one playing a part in bringing this community-powered paper to life.

Powered by the people

ATT’s expansion isn’t driven by algorithms or celebrity news cycles, it’s powered by everyday South Africans. From school leavers to street vendors, the people behind ATT’s distribution network have found a lifeline through this platform.

Over 100 families now have a steady source of income, and many have become trusted news-bearers in their neighbourhoods. What started as a local publication has turned into a movement of dignity and empowerment, bringing both economic opportunity and meaningful content to the communities that need it most.

Partnership with purpose: SBCC’s impact

A key driver of ATT’s grassroots reach is its partnership with Sithuthukisa Bonke Crisis Centre (SBCC). Based in Lotus Gardens, this non-profit has been working since 2008 to tackle issues like substance abuse, school dropouts, and teenage pregnancy.

SBCC supports ATT’s distribution while continuing its core mission: providing rehabilitation, skills development, and youth outreach. Through this partnership, ATT doesn’t just reach readers, it activates change agents at community level.

“This partnership goes beyond paper,” says Abel Pega, founder of SBCC. “Together, we’re putting tools, stories, and hope into people’s hands, especially our youth.”

Real stories, real people

ATT’s pages are filled with stories that reflect the lived experiences of taxi commuters; parents, gogos, learners, hustlers, and hopefuls. From township gardening heroes to practical wellness tips and budget-friendly school holiday activities, ATT is community journalism at its best.

Every edition is crafted to uplift, inform, and spark conversation. And for readers, it’s not just something to pass the time on a ride, it’s a mirror of their world and a map to something better.



Female-owned. Youth-driven. Proudly local.

ATT is a 100% black female-owned publication, committed to creating opportunities for women and youth. As it grows, so too does its impact, especially among young people who are trained and empowered to manage distribution, marketing, and logistics.

The result? A publication that is as much about economic inclusion as it is about editorial content.

The road ahead

Asambeni Taxi Times is more than a newspaper. It’s a symbol of what’s possible when communities write their own stories, distribute



their own media, and invest in their own people.

In just a few weeks, we have gone from 35,000 to over 100,000 copies, from one idea to a national force, and from a taxi rank conversation starter to a movement that moves minds and households.

Get in touch

Want to support or be featured in Asambeni Taxi Times? Visit www.asambenitaxitimes.co.za or email stories@asambenitimes.co.za.

Together with partners like SBCC and the families who make every edition possible, we’re not just going, we’re going further, together.

Seven Stars Foundation: Building A Legacy of Hope Through Sports, Arts And Culture

In the heart of Atteridgeville, a township often misrepresented by its challenges rather than its triumphs, a movement is quietly changing lives, one kick, one beat, and one dream at a time. The Seven Stars Foundation, founded on 15 November 2018, has become a beacon of hope for local youth, using sport, art, and culture to steer them away from crime, teenage pregnancy, and the bleakness of idleness.

A homegrown vision

Based in Atteridgeville Extension 7, the Foundation operates from Phuthaditshaba Primary School, where dusty playgrounds double as dance stages and soccer pitches transform into training grounds for tomorrow’s legends. At the helm is Coach Lucas Mananyetso, a local visionary determined to craft a legacy rooted not only in talent, but in community upliftment.

“Our vision,” says Coach Lucas, “is to create our own legacy, a Seven Stars legacy, where young people build their futures through sport, art, and culture.”

Sport as a shield

Central to the Foundation’s work is its robust soccer programme, led by the Mananyetso Football League (MFL). The street soccer initiative comprises eight teams across multiple divisions, catering to boys aged under 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19, as well as a dedicated girls’ soccer team for ages 14–18. These aren’t just after-school activities; they are lifelines.

“Many of our kids come from homes affected by poverty and social issues. Sport keeps them focused, disciplined, and hopeful,” says Coach Lucas.

Beyond the ball

But Seven Stars is more than just soccer. The Foundation nurtures talent across various disciplines, dancing, singing, netball, weightlifting, and with plans to expand into rugby. Artists and dancers are encouraged to shine just as brightly as athletes, proving that every kind of talent deserves a platform. All beginners are welcome, no prior experience needed, just a willingness to learn and a desire to grow.



Creating a platform for expression

Seven Stars is also working on launching its own community newspaper, Seven Stars Legacy; Sport, Art and Culture Magazine. It will spotlight local talent, community stories, and achievements, giving young people a platform to share their voices and build media literacy skills.

Changing the narrative

While many initiatives come and go, Seven Stars has earned a place in the hearts of Atteridgeville residents by staying true to its roots and its people. It is not just a foundation, it’s a movement, redefining what’s possible for township youth.

Get involved

To learn more about how to support or join the Seven Stars Foundation, contact Coach Lucas Mananyetso directly on 079 011 4011. Whether you’re an aspiring athlete, dancer, singer, or a community member eager to help, there’s a place for you under the Seven Stars banner.

Brotherhood & Budgets: Why More Men Are Turning To Stokvels

In South Africa, stokvels have long been seen as female-led savings groups, until now. Over the past few years, an increasing number of men are joining, founding, and even pioneering new stokvel models that reflect fresh ambitions and changing attitudes.

A shift in gendered traditions

Historically, women made up around 57% of stokvel members, mostly focusing on groceries, funerals, and birthday funds (*Source: brandsouthafrica.com*). But investment-style stokvels, those aimed at property, vehicles, or business ventures, now attract a slight male majority (53%).

Today’s men are no longer interested only in the basics. They’re using stokvels to pool resources for “big-boy toys” like generators, solar panels, cars, even residential stands. These groups are re-imagining stokvels as tools for financial empowerment.

Brotherhood, discipline and mutual aid

A prime example is the Sihlangene Social Club in Vosloorus, formed in 2018 by unemployed men who banded together after a friend’s bereavement. They contribute R400 monthly and now support families during funerals, donate wheelchairs and groceries, and hold each other accountable. Sipiwe Khuzwayo, the club’s spokesperson, emphasises that it’s “not just about money, it’s about brotherhood.” Members act as mentors, combining support with financial discipline. Since managing their own funds (rather than using a service provider), the group has grown to 35 strong and can pay out burial grants of R20 000 (*Source: sowetanlive.co.za*).

Learning money sense

As stokvels become investment-friendly, they also become classrooms in financial literacy.

Partnerships with banks enable groups to open formal accounts that earn interest and reduce risk. Digital platforms like Stokfella are also emerging, offering online management tools that resonate with younger, tech-savvy men (*Source: smartaboutmoney.co.za*).

Community-level banking

With over 11 million members in around 820,000 groups, stokvels funnel about R50 billion annually into grassroots economies (*Source: citizen.co.za*). For men who are wary of conventional banks, stokvels offer a more accessible, lower-fee alternative, without compromising on structure or returns.

Smart financial anchors

Men are increasingly using stokvels for key life goals, school fees, lobola, housing, household appliances. Close-knit programming means crisis planning and reliable support during difficult times.

Risks and safeguards

Despite the benefits, there are pitfalls. Fraud and pyramid schemes have been reported. Men are advised to ensure their stokvel is registered with the National Stokvel Association of South Africa (NASASA) and follows transparent governance models (*Source: moneymagazine.co.za*).

The future of men and stokvels

Stokvels are being reinvented (by men) into formidable tools for community upliftment and personal growth. They’re shaking off stereotypes, embracing modern finance, and building solidarity across South Africa’s diverse landscape. For men seeking not just a safety net but a launchpad, stokvels offer both communal strength and strategic financial backing.



Image source: www.sowetanlive.co.za

Community Hero: One Woman's Mission To Feed Her Neighbourhood

In the heart of Eldorado Park, where unemployment and hunger weigh heavily on families, one woman's quiet compassion is making a powerful difference. Belinda Burgers, a part-time caterer with a calling to nurture the neighbourhood, has become a beacon of hope for many children and adults alike through her grassroots feeding initiative.

What is currently a simple act of kindness, sharing leftover food from her catering events, is destined to blossom into something much bigger. "When I have money, I feed the children whatever I can," Belinda shares humbly. But her generosity does not stop there; adults struggling to get by in these tough times also rely on her support.

Operating informally, Belinda has been collecting leftover meals after her free catering gigs and distributing them throughout the neighbourhood. Whenever the children see Belinda roaming around with a pot, they know that they are about to be taken care of.

But Belinda's mission doesn't end with just handing out meals. She envisions a more structured feeding scheme that runs multiple times a week to serve more people consistently. She is exploring the possibility of registering as a non-profit organisation, which would open doors for sponsorship and sustainable funding.

Belinda embodies the nurturing spirit our community desperately needs. Her work is not charity in the traditional sense; it is a lifeline that helps families survive and thrive amid economic hardship.

Her story is a powerful reminder that meaningful change often begins with one person's courage and commitment to their community. As Belinda takes steps to formalise and expand her feeding scheme, the entire neighbourhood watches with hope. Her vision

could soon bring much-needed nutrition and relief to those who need it most.

For anyone inspired by Belinda's efforts and wanting to start a feeding scheme in their own community, just like her, here are a few essential steps to consider:

- 1. Define your mission and objectives:** Clearly outline the purpose of your organisation, in this case, running a community feeding scheme to address food insecurity. This mission will guide all your activities and be critical for registration.
- 2. Choose a suitable legal structure:** Most feeding schemes register as Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) or Non-Profit Companies (NPCs). NPOs are simpler and registered with the Department of Social Development, while NPCs are registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC).
- 3. Form a founding committee:** Assemble a group of at least three members who will serve as the founding committee or board. These individuals will be responsible for governance, decision-making, and legal compliance.
- 4. Draft a Constitution or Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI):** Prepare a document detailing your organisation's purpose, governance structure, membership rules, and how decisions are made. This is essential for registration. (Think of this as a business plan).
- 5. Register with the Department of Social Development:** Submit your application to the NPO Directorate, including the completed registration form (Form NPO 1), your constitution, and details of the

founding members. Once approved, your organisation will receive an NPO registration number.

- 6. Open a dedicated bank account:** To ensure transparency and proper financial management, open a bank account in the NGO's name. This account will handle all donations, sponsorships, and expenses.
- 7. Apply for tax exemptions and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) status:** Register with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) for tax exemptions. If your feeding scheme qualifies as a Public Benefit Organisation, donations to you can be tax-deductible, which encourages sponsorships.
- 8. Comply with health and safety regulations:** Since you'll be handling and distributing food, ensure compliance with local health department regulations, including safe food preparation, storage, and hygiene standards.
- 9. Build partnerships and seek funding:** Approach local government, businesses, NGOs, and community groups for sponsorships, food donations, and volunteer support.
- 10. Keep records and submit annual reports:** As a registered NPO, you'll need to maintain accurate records of your activities and finances, and submit annual reports to the Department of Social Development.
- 11. Engage the community and promote your initiative:** Use local media, social platforms, and community meetings to raise awareness about your feeding scheme and encourage participation.

Belinda Burgers' story shows us that what starts with one person's kindness can grow into a structured, impactful organisation with the right



steps and determination. By formalising her initiative, she can secure ongoing support and continue to nourish her community for years to come.

Belinda's journey is proof that anyone can be a community hero. It starts with a single act of kindness and grows into a movement that nourishes bodies and hearts alike.

If you would also like to share your story with us, contact us on 063 696 0680.

Traditional Oxtail Stew

Serves 4–6 | Prep time: 20 min | Cook time: 3 hours

Ingredients

- 1 – 1.2 kg oxtail
- 80ml cake flour
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 45ml vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 20ml Worcestershire sauce
- 4 bay leaves
- 10ml ground cumin
- 15ml ground coriander
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 125ml red wine (Optional – use water as a replacement)
- 1.5 litres beef stock
- 5 Potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks or ready chopped sweet potato cubes
- 4 Carrots, peeled and cut in chunks



Image source: www.lavenderandlovelage.com

Method:

1. In a large mixing bowl, add flour, salt and pepper and coat the meat with the flour. Remove the meat from the flour and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large pot over high heat and sear the meat on all sides until browned. Do this in batches. Transfer the browned oxtail to a plate and set aside.
3. Saut the onion in the pot and cook until translucent and softened, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic, then stir in the browned oxtail meat and Worcestershire sauce.
4. Stir in bay leaves, spices, and cinnamon sticks. Pour in the wine (Or more water) and lower heat to medium.
5. Pour in the beef stock and stir to mix all ingredients together. Put the lid on the pot and simmer for about 2 hours and 30 minutes. Check the pot and add a little more stock as it cooks if needed.
6. Remove the lid and stir in the potatoes and carrots, then simmer for another 30 minutes.
7. Serve hot, topped with samp or pap.

Samp And Beans (Umngqusho)



Image source: www.wantedonline.co.za

Serves 4–6 | Prep time: 15 mins | Cook time: 2–3 hours

Traditional and delicious

Ingredients

- 500 g samp (cracked hominy corn), rinsed and soaked overnight
- 500 g sugar beans (or red kidney beans), rinsed and soaked overnight
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil or butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (optional)
- 1 potato, cubed
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 stock cube (vegetable, beef or chicken)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

1. Drain soaked samp and beans. Place them in a large pot, cover with water, bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 1½–2 hours until soft. Add water if needed.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil or butter in a separate pan. Fry onions and garlic until soft.
3. Stir in potato, tomato and stock cube. Cook for 5–7 minutes until the potato starts to soften.
4. Add this mix to the samp and beans, season well and simmer for another 30–45 minutes until everything is tender and creamy.
5. Serve hot.

No-Bake Milk Tart

Serves 6–8 | Prep time: 15 mins | Chill time: 2+ hours

Ingredients

- 200 g Tennis biscuits, crushed
- 80 g butter, melted
- 750 ml milk
- 2 tbsp cornflour
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Why it's ideal:

No oven needed, a fridge does the work.



Method:

1. Combine crushed biscuits with melted butter; press into the base of a tart dish to form a crust.
2. Heat 600 ml of the milk in a saucepan until just simmering.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk remaining 150 ml milk with cornflour, sugar and beaten egg until smooth.
4. Quickly pour this mix into the hot milk, stirring continuously. Cook over low heat until thickened.
5. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla, then pour over the biscuit base. Dust with cinnamon.
6. Leave to cool, then chill for at least 2 hours.



Strong On The Inside: Changing the Way Men Think About Health



In South Africa, where masculine norms often discourage vulnerability, a quiet but powerful shift is taking place. More men are stepping up, speaking out, prioritising their well-being, and reshaping what strength looks like.

Breaking mental-health silence

As CEO Garron Gsell of the Men's Foundation SA puts it, "Toxic masculinity... tells men to prioritise toughness, stoicism, and dominance over their well-being". The consequences are stark: men here rank among the world's shortest-lived, with suicide claims significantly more male lives. On average, 17 out of 21 daily suicides are men. Organisations such as SADAG's 24/7 helpline are working to save lives, and campaigns like Movember (an annual campaign where men grow moustaches throughout November to raise awareness about men's health issues) and Men's Health Week aim to normalise asking for help and reduce stigma.

Regular check-ups: beyond "he'll be right"

Local urologists are urging men to recognise that regular screenings matter. Nationwide, South African men are more likely to wait until health issues become serious before seeking help, even with conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and certain cancers. Prostate cancer, for instance, claims more lives than breast cancer in this country. Alarming, only 22% of men have even heard of it before diagnosis (Source: www.yeswecare.co.za).

Medical experts now recommend annual checks for men aged 45 + (or 40 + with family history), including PSA tests and digital rectal exams, which can raise five-year survival to nearly 95% when caught early (Source: www.netcare.co.za).

Testicular awareness

Testicular cancer is most common in young men between 15–49. National Health Service (NHS) style self-examinations are simple steps that could save lives, yet many men overlook them, seeing self-exams as emasculating or unnecessary.

Rewriting masculinity through dialogue

Amidst growing awareness, men's mental health is finding a voice in unexpected places, barbershops, gyms, and sports clubs. These environments offer informal yet vital spaces where men feel safer opening up to peers. Movember's moustache movement and Men's Health Week serve as reminders that courage isn't just about physical feats, it's about seeking help and looking after our bodies and minds.

Changing attitudes, sharper results

Local data shows that by rejecting outdated

norms, men live longer and healthier lives. In 2009, South African life expectancy was 54 years, today it stands at 61, thanks in part to improved awareness and screening (Source: www.netcare.co.za). Prostate checks, testicular self-exams and honest conversations about mental wellness, these are not signs of weakness but acts of responsibility and resilience.

Ways men can take control:

- Book annual check-ups: Tests for blood pressure, cholesterol, prostate and testicular health.
- Perform monthly testicular self-exams: It's quick, private, and can save your life.
- Connect with support: Helplines like SADAG (0800 567 567) and SANCA are available, even in your home language.
- Foster male community spaces: Engage in group chats, sports groups, or barber-clinic chats to stay emotionally in tune.

Strong doesn't mean silent. In South Africa, men are stepping up, talking, checking and helping one another to live longer and more fulfilled lives. It's time we celebrate that as true strength.



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Celebrating Father Figures

Brain Teaser: Who's My Hero?

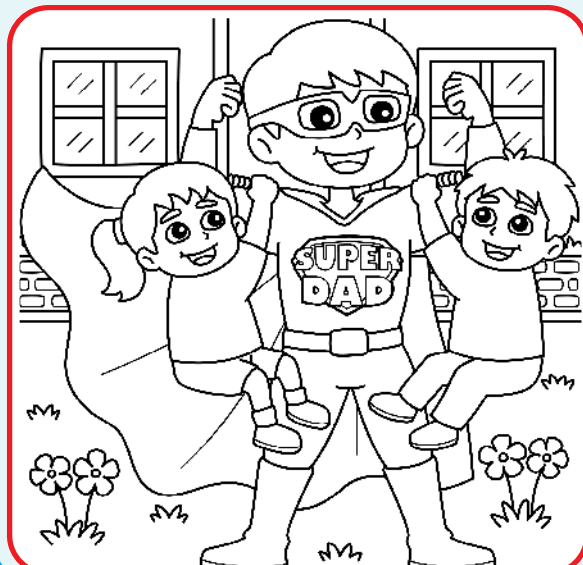
- I fix things when they break.
- I give the best hugs.
- I teach you how to ride a bike.
- I always cheer for you.

Who am I?

Answer: _____



Colour in picture



My Father Figure and Me

Fill in the blanks and tell us more about your hero!

My father figure's name is:

He is special because:

One thing I love doing with him:

I want to say:

Draw your father figure doing something fun!

It could be: Fixing a car. Braaiing. Playing soccer or watching TV with you

Word Search

Find and circle the words:

L O V E G H U G
A X B Q A D X K
K I N D W J C N
D A D E R B U N
H E R O C L M G
F U N X I A D O
P Z K T V D L V
R A L M S T E J

DAD • HUG • FUN • LOVE • HERO • KIND



Passion in The Township: Martin Moshaba's Mission To Revive Community Rugby



When Martin Moshaba, Cluster Manager at Blue Bulls Rugby Union, talks about rugby, his eyes light up. But when the conversation turns to township rugby, that passion turns into a fire; a fierce, unrelenting drive to transform the sport at grassroots level.

Rugby runs in his blood. If it didn't, he says, he would have walked away long ago. "The uphill battle has been real," Moshaba reflects, "but we stay because we believe in the players and in what rugby can become in our communities."

Moshaba's journey began at 25 when he stepped into the world of coaching. His commitment later saw him qualify as a referee. Since then, he's worn many hats in the game, but none more challenging, or fulfilling, than managing and supporting community clubs.

The real challenges

According to Moshaba, township clubs are buckling under three critical challenges:

- **Lack of proper facilities:** "We often don't have safe, accessible places to train or play."
- **Lack of support and volunteers:** "Keeping people committed to running clubs is difficult when they're expected to do it all for free."
- **Inadequate equipment and attire:** "We have talent, but we're sending players into matches unprepared and unequipped."

As a result, township rugby has endured nearly 30 years of missed opportunities. Countless players have played purely for passion, with little to no pathways into professional rugby. "We've come so far," he says, "but we have so little to show for the energy and investment in development."

Moshaba believes this is due to a lack of shared vision. "If you build without vision, you're just busy, not effective. We've had no clear policy-driven process to develop clubs, players, or administrators to the level they deserve."

Raw talent, rough conditions

Community clubs, he says, are filled with raw talent, but without proper coaching or structure, that talent rarely matures. "Players often go into matches unfit and underprepared. It's not their fault. It's the system around them."

The environment, he warns, is stifling. "A talented player's spirit can be broken when they're constantly surrounded by

poor management, low morale, and no real support. Many could thrive at wealthier clubs, they just need a chance."

Club leadership is another concern. "Often, people are selected to run clubs without the right skills or passion. Even those who are trained sometimes struggle to stay motivated. Volunteering isn't easy when there's little recognition or support."

What's holding back growth?

For Moshaba, the lack of growth stems from poor development pipelines. "There are no strong feeder systems from schools into clubs. Youth-level rugby is weak, or missing altogether, and the disconnect between schools and clubs is holding us back."

He emphasises the need for youth rugby initiatives that are independent of internal politics. "Whether or not clubs affiliate to youth bodies, there needs to be a structured, inclusive youth programme. Without it, we end up pushing underage players into senior teams. That's dangerous and demoralising."

Building pride, one club at a time

Despite the obstacles, Moshaba remains hopeful. His vision is rooted in community pride.

"I want clubs that reflect our communities, places of pride and identity, where players give their all, not just for glory, but for something bigger than themselves. They should have access to secure, supportive environments where they can train safely, grow as athletes, and develop as responsible citizens."

He sees community clubs as more than sports hubs. "They should be safe spaces, especially for youth, women, and the vulnerable. A good club can develop athletes and community leaders."

His dream is clear: rugby that uplifts, unites, and transforms. But it will take more than passion to get there. It will require investment, long-term strategy, and a commitment from both public and private sectors to believe in township rugby.

Want to support or get involved?

Contact your local rugby association or follow organisations like the Blue Bulls Rugby Union or SA Rugby for development initiatives in your area.



27-Year Wait Is Over, As Proteas Pen A New Chapter In Their Cricket History

Johannesburg: After 9722 days, the wait is over. The Proteas Men have secured the ICC World Test Championship at Lord's on Saturday, as they defeated Australia by five wickets, on day four of the Final.

It ended a 27-year wait for ICC success, as this was the first senior Men's trophy since the 1998 ICC Knockout victory.

In many ways, the victory by captain Temba Bavuma was not just for this generation, but for all those who have played their part in the Proteas jersey. Various former players were present at Lord's and shared in the delight of seeing their team on top of the world.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) Chief Executive Officer Pholetsi Moseki led the congratulations for the team, paying tribute to the team's character and all those who have supported them on the journey.

"I can't think of a team more deserving of this WTC Mace. This team has displayed remarkable tenacity and strength over the past two years," Moseki noted.

"This occasion holds immense significance in the world of sport and cricket. It is a tribute not only to the current squad, but also to those who paved the way before them."

Moseki also pointed out that this victory belonged to the team, legends, the people of south Africa and all those inspired to take up the game by this remarkable victory.

When Kyle Verreynne struck the winning runs, it sparked wild celebrations for the team and their strong showing of support at Lord's. A hallmark of all four days has been the distinctly South African flavour around the ground, with songs, flags and national jerseys prominent in the stands.

The team has also been overwhelmed by

constant messages of encouragement from back home, especially during a match where the momentum swung wildly over the first two days.

Australia was bowled out for 212 in the first innings, after Bavuma had invited them to bat. Kagiso Rabada's five for 51 earned him the distinction of being on both the home and away dressing-room Honours boards.

The Proteas were then bowled out for 138, with David Bedingham (45) and Bavuma (36) making key contributions in tough batting conditions.

That left the Proteas with a deficit of 74 runs, on a difficult pitch.

Lungi Ngidi, back in the team after injury, broke the game wide open with an inspired spell on the second evening, as he helped himself to three for 38, including the prize scalp of Steve Smith.

Bowling spearhead Rabada (four for 59) then completed a magnificent personal performance with the ball, but Australia's tail added crucial late runs to tally 207 in their second innings.

Man of the match Aiden Markram struck a majestic 136, marking his eighth Test century, and his fourth against Australia.

His six-and-a-half-hour marathon was the cornerstone of the success, and he was ably supported by Bavuma, who scored 66 from 134 balls. What made the captain's knock even more impressive was that he was hampered by a hamstring strain for most of his stay at the crease.

He and Markram put together a priceless stand of 147 in just over three hours, taking the Proteas to the brink of a new chapter of South African cricket history.

Both fell on the final morning, but the Proteas and an incredible display of support

away from home could not be denied a day to remember at the Home of Cricket.

CSA Director of National Teams and High Performance Enoch Nkwe commended the team for their unwavering commitment.

"This moment is a reminder that no dream is too distant, no challenge insurmountable and no legacy too heavy to carry forward," Nkwe saluted.

"I commend the unwavering commitment demonstrated by each player, both on and off the field. Reaching this milestone, coupled with remarkable key performances, will undoubtedly be etched into the history books," Nkwe added.

Indeed, it is an eighth consecutive Test victory for Bavuma and his team, notched on four different continents. It is a testament to their adaptability and character, and collective talents that have found a solution for every question thrown at them over the past two years of the WTC cycle.

That adaptability is emphasised by a look at each of the men in the squad for the WTC final. Every one of them had a telling contribution on the road to glory, each man earning their winning medal.

While breaking the ICC drought is justifiable cause for celebration, this team is determined to ensure that the road doesn't end with this final. Indeed, much like London buses, they are



keen to ensure that after the long wait for an ICC trophy, two arrive in quick succession.

The ICC ODI World Cup, to be hosted in South Africa, is now less than two years away. Many of the men who did duty on the road to Test glory also form the foundation of coach Shukri Conrad's white-ball plans.

For now, however, the squad will celebrate this breakthrough moment and then return home to South Africa on Wednesday at 09:25 SAST.

"The next time we see Shukri and his team, we will welcome them as the ICC World Test Champions!" Nkwe declared.

Before that welcome, the team may well have to pass through O.R Tambo International Airport customs, so that they can declare a rather significant piece of international history that they are bringing back into the country.

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