BOTSDIVA OFFERS ADVICE

INFERTILITY: DON’T WAIT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE

RAMATLAPENG TAKES OVER

RISING TO THE TOP

POLOKO MASITARA
There will come a time in every parent’s life when they can no longer be there to protect and provide for their children. Members need assurance that the benefits they will leave behind for their dependants and beneficiaries will be protected in the unfortunate event of their death.

The Alexander Forbes Trust (Botswana) was established in 2002 with a few pension funds utilising the services of the Trust, with only two employees at the time. The Trust currently holds funds for over 73 pension funds with a total of 6466 sub-trusts as at 30 June 2019, with eight full-time employees which are responsible for the administration of the funds, excluding support staff.

In this regard, all Pension Funds administered by Alexander Forbes Financial Services Botswana are able to use the services of The Alexander Forbes Trust (Botswana). This is the largest registered umbrella Trust Fund in Botswana.

The Alexander Forbes Trust services include but not limited to:

- **A separate trust account is set up for each beneficiary.** The trust provides protection against irresponsible misuse of the minor’s funds.
- **Independent and professional trustees** share the financial responsibility of the minor with the natural/legal guardian.
- **Regular maintenance payments** are made to beneficiaries or their guardians/caregivers according to the needs of the minor child after a proper needs analysis.
- **Ad-hoc payments can be made** for other needs such as school fees, medical costs, clothing and other necessities.
- **Annual benefit statements** of the trust account are provided to the beneficiary/guardian. These are also available on request throughout the year.
- **Objective investment management** in order to meet the child’s income and capital needs properly.
- **The capital is invested professionally** according to the unique circumstances of each beneficiary to ensure maximum protection and growth.

We strive to help secure the financial well-being of thousands of beneficiaries of deceased members of retirement funds and group life schemes.

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Which are the best places for technological innovation? If you had to pick a place, Botswana wouldn’t be your first choice. You’ll probably think of Japan with its high tech cars. Or you might think of Silicon Valley; home to Google, Amazon and most of the world’s biggest tech platforms and app’s. However, COVID-19 has more than any development accelerated the importance of innovation in the way we do things in Botswana.

It has transformed our lives during the past three months. We have seen the eruption of e-shopping, e-health etc. That instinct to improve our country should continue.

As women, we are naturally visionaries. We can take advantage of the transformation and take our companies to the next level of leadership through presenting carefully constructed strategies on adopting new technologies.

This month issue of The Patriot Woman portrays women as such: visionaries, innovators!

Our contributors share best practices and insight about using technology and innovative practices to grow businesses. We caught up with Ratang Icho-Molebatsi, Finance Director at BancABC Botswana who believes in creating new opportunities and strengthening the existing. Considering the current market conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ratang Icho-Molebatsi talks about their commitment to digital transformation which she believes will lead to the bank continued success and growing market share. In a special feature this month, Poloko Masitara, CEO, Alexander Forbes Botswana tells of her experience in this year’s challenges thus far. She talks about how through her leadership they have navigated against impacts of COVID-19, where she is taking the company and her life outside work.

Malebogo Von Rudloff, the woman behind Heavenly Cakes, talks about business under lockdown. One would expect business to have gone down during the lockdown but she tells a different story. She reveals how she was astounded by the amount of business she got during the period. She shared some healthy winter warmer recipes for you to try – I might even be inspired to get in the kitchen myself for these yummy dishes.

And as always we have our regular round-ups of news from fashion, beauty and wellbeing plus more to read. Have a beautiful read. Remember to wash your hands, mask-UP and avoid crowds!

Boikanyo Neo Mudongo
The banking sector is currently going through a digital transformation due to a shift in customer expectations as well as more advanced technological capabilities being available to the industry.

BancABC understands the need to implement a robust digital strategy to fulfil its mission of becoming the preferred banking partner of the people of Botswana.

With the aid of new financial technology or “fintech”, BancABC aims to expand banking services to more people and make banking hassle-free and accessible. Last year, we began implementing our “Changing for You” strategy, which embodied our commitment to addressing the shifting ways that clients interact with BancABC’s services and the quality of service provided from our various access points. A significant aspect of this strategy involved improving on the existing digital and transactional banking platforms, while also increasing physical presence points. The year 2019 was earmarked as the year for transformation for us at BancABC as we launched a new transactional banking platform for our business clients.

The BancOnline platform is a state-of-the-art digital platform, tailor-designed for improving the digital banking experience for Commercial Banking customers.

The platform enables businesses to perform various transactions such as funds transfers, cross border payments, salaries payments as well as other business related transactions. BancOnline ensures that business account holders can manage their accounts more conveniently and efficiently as they can access the...
platform 24/7 from any location.

The BancOnline platform enables growth in transactional volumes for BancABC, as it allows for increased straight-through processing of transactions, thereby improving service to clients.

This platform is essential because it enables BancABC to become a primary banking solutions provider for most Corporate and Business Banking clients, this includes SMEs.

Earlier this year, we redesigned the bank’s Retail mobile banking platform, SaruMoney; which is available both as an app and via the dial string *117#. The platform has increased security features, which allows customers to perform a range of banking transactions, ensuring the safe, accessible, reliable, and universal movement of funds.

The launch of these platforms is a vital part of BancABC’s digital strategy, as it signals our transition to digital delivery as a primary engagement channel for our clients. Our strong focus on improving our digital capabilities has also allowed us to continue to provide our clients with the necessary banking services in the face of the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

At BancABC, we also pride ourselves on our ability to form strategic partnerships with key stakeholders. Our competitive Prepaid Card proposition led to BancABC being selected as the partner of choice to the Government of Botswana, which resulted in the launch of the Pula Card in 2018.

The Pula Card enables holders to withdraw cash or transact across all Visa ATMs and point of sale machines worldwide, thus improving service delivery and providing access to payments anytime, anywhere without having to travel long distances or wait in long queues.

Over the last 10 years, innovation and a customer-centric approach have been at the heart of BancABC, which is why we remain focused on inventing and reinventing financial solutions that empower our customers to fulfil their dreams at every stage of their life’s journey by augmenting our customer value proposition, improving customer experience and offering relevant and accessible products, through digital capabilities.

Considering the current market conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we firmly believe that our commitment to digital transformation will lead to BancABC’s continued success and growing market share as we take up our place as a full-service bank that serves individual retail clients, SMEs and all the way up to large corporates.
Wars have been fought over the centuries and one lesson derived from the aftermath is that the wars come at a great cost to both rivals, the conqueror or the conquered. Giuseppe Maria Garibaldi, an Italian general, patriot and republican who contributed to the Italian unification and the creation of the Kingdom of Italy once told troops that – “I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor food; I offer only hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country with his heart and not merely his lips, follow me.”

Sacrificing their lives for the survival of their fellow countrymen are inspirational women who have taken the Hippocratic Oath, one of the most widely known of Greek medical texts that require a new physician to swear, by a number of healing gods, to uphold specific ethical standards.

Thato Masebo is a Corporate Wellness Consultant at Premier Health & Wellness Solutions, former Principal Registered Nurse at Ministry of Health since 2016 and now employed by Len Med Health-Bokamoso Private Hospital. Masebo explains that she declined a job offer from Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital in April.

“Nursing corona patients in isolation meant I would be away from my family for six months at a time and being a new mother with other pressing personal commitments so I had to decline the offer,” she states regrettably, more so that the renumeration was good.

Speaking on behalf of all women frontline workers of the impact the pandemic has on this demographic, Masebo said the pandemic presents women with the issues of gender equity in their homes. “Most global reports state that the covid-19 lockdowns and quarantines have hit women more than men and more women are burned out at work and at home,” she states, encouraging all women in the field to always channel their fear into positive energy, focus on the good, the inspiring and the necessary.

Despite the pressures of work – be it working erratic hours and being absent from home most days – Masebo finds delight in the trust that her patients and their families have on her. “The internet has, of late, been filled with admiration and honour towards health care workers. Ironically in the past decades or centuries, most of the applause has been given to the rich, popular and powerful,” she states matter-of-factly. She continues that not much noise was made about the profession until the pandemic and she strongly believes the encouraging words being said about the profession give health care workers, her included, the fire to step up and show up for work.

“We truly appreciate that they recognise us as heroes in this battle. My hope is that the new-found appreciation continues to grow as our nations continue the fight the pandemic and ultimately triumph over it,” she enthuses. “Pray and love,” is her message to fellow health care workers and the communities. She continues that there is no better way to manage a situation that one cannot control than by lifting everything up to God.

“Pray and seek peace and calmness amidst the great storm,” she attests, after all it is how she deals with the pressures exerted by the pandemic on her and her family as well as perhaps many frontline workers and their families. “All the best to all women as we navigate our roles as mothers to protect, give assurance and love our families at this difficult time,” she says, hopefully.
U.N. Women estimates that globally in the past 12 months, 243 million women and girls aged 15–49 years were subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner. As a result of the lockdowns imposed to stop the spread of COVID-19, emerging data show that such violence has intensified. In France, for example, reports of domestic violence have increased by 30% since the lockdown started on 17 March, and in Argentina emergency calls about domestic violence have increased by 25% since its lockdown started on 20 March. Many other countries have reported such increases.

In Botswana the Minister of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs, Annah Mokgethi said recently: “During this period of extreme social distancing, I have noted that the level of Gender Based Violence (GBV) has increased as reflected by 31 cases of defilement and 22 cases of rape reported since 23rd March to 5th April 2020.

It is important to emphasise that these statistics are simply tip of an iceberg as reports from various GBV Service Providers have not been recorded. Gender Based Violence is the most prevalent human rights violation in the world, including Botswana.

Noting the escalating cases of defilement, it is my plea that as parents, we must equip adolescents with tools and expertise to grasp the root causes of violence in their communities; to coach and involve their peers and communities to prevent such violence; and to learn about where to access support if violence is experienced”.

She declared this when receiving a donation of sanitary pads from members of Seraleng Botswana Democratic Group.

Recently, the Odnoklassniki social network, known as OK, hosted a broadcast for experts and others to discuss how to survive lockdown and avoid family conflict and gender-based violence. The broadcast was seen by 1.7 million OK network users across Eastern Europe and central Asia.

“I live in Kyrgyzstan,” Ulzisuren Jamstran, a representative of UN Women in Kyrgyzstan, said. “Here, according to the government, the level of domestic violence increased by 65%. We see an increase in aggression against women and children in Kyrgyzstan. We see an increase in suicides among children, even young children.”

Dina Smailova, the founder of the #DontBeSilentKZ nongovernmental organisation, addressed female survivors of violence. “When we are silent, we allow these crimes to multiply. I urge women not to be silent. Our movement is expanding; we are active not only in Kazakhstan, but also in other countries of central Asia and beyond.”

The broadcast highlighted successful experiences around the world in responding to gender-based violence. The example in Spain, where women in danger can visit pharmacies and use a code word to alert staff that they need help, was praised. The role of the private sector was also shown to be important—since many shelters are not open at present, hotels are stepping in and providing shelter, either for free or at a minimal cost.

The broadcast was part of a joint initiative of the UNAIDS regional office for eastern Europe and central Asia, the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education and OK, in partnership with the regional office of UN Women for eastern Europe and central Asia.

[The Patriot Woman, unaids.org]
Mixing journalism with trade unionism might not be an easy task for most. It is different with the ever smiling Portia Tendani Nkani. She has achieved a seamless balance between the two; answering both callings with aplomb and great drive. Nkani holds the position of Secretary for Gender and Women’s Affairs in one Botswana’s renowned trade federations, Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU), and is one of decorated female journalists in local private press.

“Lol! It is quite a task. My Monday to Friday I am just basically doing my core duties of being a Journalist at Sunday Standard and The Telegraph, and then as and when the need arises for me to be somewhere on BOFEPUSU assignments, the Federation leadership communicates with my Employer to seek for my release and the same applies to BOMAWU leadership when I am needed on similar assignments,” Portia revealed about keeping the balance between media and BOFEPUSU assignments.

She uses her time after work to clear off any extra load that she may have from the Union’s offices. She also sits in the Minimum Wage Advisory Board as a member as well as Health and Wellness Committee of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Productivity.

Nkani also serves as a Board Member for The Broadcasters Trade Union (TBO), heading a portfolio of Marketing and Sponsorships. Not surprising as a unionist her career highlight has something to with winning a fight over workers’ rights. This came after she was retrenched by her former employer and she had to approach the courts to fight for her welfare together with few a colleagues at the time and successfully they won battle. “Otherwise, my 12 years of experience has been quite a fascinating journey, with highs and lows – no regrets after all,” buttressed Nkani, a lady who is on a mission to accomplish much.

At BOFEPUSU

As Secretary for Gender and Women’s Affairs, Nkani is tasked with providing leadership to the gender and women’s affairs committee, chairing the meetings of the gender committee and such other duties as may be assigned by General Congress and Central Committee. Working for a trade federation of BOFEPUSU’s calibre comes with the joys and big responsibility but Nkani is devoted to deliver duties at hand.

"BOFEPUSU is a brand and being associated with such brands comes with huge responsibilities as well. I don’t come in as Portia the individual but Portia as part of the brand that represents the people being the working class across the country, representing different types of genders from different societies and different backgrounds, who are members from different affiliates of brand BOFEPUSU,” Nkani underscored sharing the responsibility that comes with her office. Her experience in unionism from Botswana Media Allied Workers Union (BOMAWU) where she is the Treasurer General was instrumental in securing her a role in BOFEPUSU leadership.

BOMAWU is affiliated to BOFEPUSU and according to Nkani, she got nominated and endorsed by the BOFEPUSU Affiliates for the Secretary for Gender and Women’s Affairs Portfolio in 2018. “And this became the first time in the history of BOFEPUSU to have women representation in the Central Executive Committee, it has always been an all men’s committee. I got elected with the other two women within CEC who are also heading to Occupational Health and the Youth, Sports and Culture Portfolios respectively,” Nkani buttressed oozing with confidence.

Plans Halted

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the plans that Nkani had lined-up. “For instance, some of the key issues that we had aimed to address through various platforms and events were on Gender Based Violence which continues to be the captain problem in our society. We had a calendar of events on various interventions. But, now that the lockdowns are over and businesses have resumed, we are now reworking on our calendar plan for the year,” she said.

The Gender office, she said, is also working with the Federation’s office of Research and Information to come up with position papers on issues of gender disparities and women inclusion; children’s and child position papers on these human rights to guide them going forward and have a clear position for their ensuring that they not subjected to any abuse.
At the age of 31, she made history by being the youngest Associate Professor since the establishment of the University of Botswana. Prof Mogomotsi holds BA (Economics) from the University of Botswana, Bcom Hons (Economics) from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, Mecon from Rhodes University, South Africa. Further, she holds Master of Financial Management from Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, India and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from North West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa.

The 31-year-old female Motswana Doctor (Aerospace Medicine Specialist- Botswana Defence Force) also has a Degree in teaching Russian Language- pursued alongside studying medicine in Russian language (2007-2014). She joined military training as the first ever fully qualified female doctor registered with Botswana Health Professions council (2015). She has attended Flight surgeon course- UP in collaboration with South African Military Health Services and University of Cambridge UK (2017). She is the first Motswana Doctor to ever pursue and hold a Master’s degree in Aerospace Medicine. She is a member of the international Aerospace Medicine Association (AsMA) and Southern African Aviation Medicine Association (SAAsMA).

ASPIRATIONS: To utilise my networks abroad to pioneer and found a Centre of Excellence in Aviation Medicine Botswana, contributing to health and air-safety to the aviation industry locally and world-wide. MESSAGE: Anything is possible, navigate those obstacles and you will see.

“A remarkable cottage garden of African beauty, the sound of my name is an extension and growth of elegant qualities and charm. I am self-assured with integrity that sets a foundation of pride and human significance. I am vibrant, outgoing, self-motivated and a sufficient young lady. I am confident with burgeoning leadership qualities. I accept the true contradictions of my own nature that leads others to misjudge me. I am intellectually capable, emotionally stable and physically enable with a lot to live for. I refrain myself from the paralyzing effect of wealth and privilege. My white ocean of loyalty dissolves all criticism and talks of unfaithful gestures. I am constant with a soft beam of satisfaction on my face that places a solid path wherever i go.” – Kgosi says of herself. #CONGRATULATIONS!
RISING TO THE TOP
The love for numbers not only shaped Poloko Masitara’s growth but set her up for a highly fulfilling career culminating with her appointment as CEO of Alexander Forbes Botswana.

“I won’t just have a job; I’ll have a calling. I’ll challenge myself every day. When I get knocked down, I’ll get back up. I may not be the smartest person in the room, but I will strive to be the grittiest” – this is an inspirational quote that Poloko Masitara draws out from the book “Grit: The power of passion and perseverance” by Angela Duckworth.

This is one of the books that Masitara is currently reading and quite profoundly the kind that would have one smarting up from a mishap to fight once more until they win.

Key part of the message from this book, Masitara declares – it is not just talent that helps some people thrive, rather a blend of passion and persistence which amounts to “grit”. This is as much a lesson to others and embodiment of what has made Masitara to pursue her dreams without pausing.

From an early age, she was a Maths whizz-kid. The more she worked on the numbers, the more she fell in love with them.

“I was very good in Maths from a young age and I enjoyed it as well. As I got older, the love grew and I gained so much pleasure from solving complex Maths problems, hence the decision to pursue a career in Accounting was an easy one. Alexander Forbes was always one of the organisations that I wanted to work for as I built up my career hence when an opportunity presented itself, I went for it,” she declares.

**CAREER**

In her second year at the University of Botswana, she was awarded the best Second Year Motswana Bachelor of Accountancy Student Award, sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers. “That is when my journey with the Audit...”
my internship with PwC at Year 3 and when I completed my Degree, they took me on as a Trainee Accountant. This is where my Accounting career started. Whilst at PwC, I enrolled and completed my professional qualification, ACCA and obtained invaluable experience required in the Accounting field, through my exposure to varying industries and clientele, as an Auditor. I was with the firm for six years,” says Masitara.

She is a proud holder of Bachelor of Accountancy (BAcc) from the University of Botswana; Association of Chartered Accountants (ACCA); Certificate of Proficiency – Short Term (COP).

She joined Alexander Forbes Risk Services – then a subsidiary of Alexander Forbes Botswana Group, that specialised in Insurance Broking services – in 2010 as Finance and Administration Manager. A few months later, she was promoted to Assistant General Manager – Finance and Administration – a position she held until December 2011. Her rise to the top continued.

“In January 2012, I joined Alexander Forbes Financial Services as the Financial Controller until December 2018 when I was promoted to Managing Director for Alexander Forbes Financial Services and CEO for the Group, having acted in the position for eight months,” she says.

Alexander Forbes position

Her road map for the company that has operated in Botswana for over 20 years is well spelt out.

“Our vision is to be the advisor of choice for clients in securing their financial well-being for a lifetime. We therefore provide solutions to clients that are tailored to their specific needs depending on the point they are at in their life journey, whether it is a fresh graduate, a young career man/woman, planning for retirement and post retirement. We also take care of your beneficiaries in the unfortunate event of your departure from this world, through our Alexander Forbes Trust, ensuring that they receive the best care,” Masitara declares.

Alexander Forbes Botswana, she says, has grown from a staff complement of five with three retirement Funds under its administration to a staff complement of 85 currently and 24 retirement Funds, including an Umbrella Fund with over 160 participants.

“We have under our employ the best trained employees that are dedicated to servicing our clients, which has differentiated us from our competitors as we continue to provide best advice and service to our clients,” she enthuses.

The financial sector has faced headwinds in recent years – yet Alexander Forbes has continued to thrive. This she attributes to a strong foundation and international presence of the Group that has enabled them to have access to a wide range of expertise which has aided the local operation to be innovative in solutions brought to market.

This, she says, has solidified our presence in the market, enabling us to continue being “the trusted partner” by our clients. “Our focus going forward is to enhance our advice led model and provide holistic solutions to clients as we assist them accumulate, grow and protect their wealth. This means offering more than just Retirement solutions. The next growth for the organisation is in the retail space, focusing on Individual members over and above our traditional corporates,” she says.

In five years, she would want to have an Alexander Forbes that would have expanded its core business of consulting, administration and actuarial to leverage synergies and scale opportunities, focus on client retention, growth in new business and product diversification as well as create a digital and diversified organisation.

Critical to achieving their mission would also be to enhance the AF Online offering, a platform focused at providing
clients with digital access to their benefits and offering Financial planning tools, while also launching a new customer centric system that is aimed at enhancing administration platform; maximise on system capabilities and automation to improve efficiency.

COVID-19 IMPACT
Alexander Forbes, like other companies, has had to contend with the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. They quickly reviewed their business operations to ensure that they mitigate effects of the pandemic while continuing to offer efficient service to their customers.

“Following COVID-19 being declared a world emergency in January 2020, we reviewed our Business Continuity Matrix (BCM) plans to ensure that we are able to continue servicing our clients adequately. By the time this was declared a pandemic by WHO in March 2020, followed by the country lockdown on the 3rd of April 2020, we were ready as a business to continue servicing our clients remotely. Connecting with our clients visually has been paramount and we have been able to attend to their needs using platforms such as MS Teams, Skype and BlueJeans,” she declares.

INCLUSIVENESS
She hails her organisation as an equal opportunity establishment where all employees have a chance to grow professionally. “Women are given equal opportunities to compete for progression and recognition in the organisation and our policies guard against any discrimination towards women and vulnerable groups,” Masitara assures. But how easy was it for her to rise in the often male-dominated work place?

“The main challenge that I had to overcome in my career was competing equally on the back of raising a family as a woman.

When your male counterparts retire at the end of the day to a home cooked meal, as women we have to prepare that meal and tend to the children and still have the energy to deliver at work the following day. I managed all this through the support of my husband who is actively involved in the raising of our children,” she answers.

As a woman in the professional world, you almost have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart to earn your place and be respected. This often leads to burn-out. It is therefore important to maintain a sound mind at all time and create the most needed balance between work and your personal life.

She advises female employees to always see themselves as equals to their male counterparts in the workplace. Work hard and earn your place, she declares, nothing is handed out on a silver platter. “The hardest battles are given to the strongest warriors; perseverance will see you through it all. Lastly, you can achieve all that you set your mind to, as long as you focus long enough on the goal and map strategies to achieve it.”

AT HOME
Hailing from Tlokweng village and raised by a single mother, she is the second born of four children. She spends her free time mostly with family as they are normally very busy during the week with work and school. “Weekends and holidays give us an opportunity to spend quality time together and catch up on what has been happening during the week. I also enjoy going for long walks and hiking which keeps the mind rejuvenated and alleviate the work pressures that come with the job. I am actively involved in charitable work through the Foundation that I co-Founded with my husband, Masitara Foundation, focusing on the needs of children and vulnerable groups,” she says.

Her most recent family vacation was to Cape Town, South Africa in December 2019. Her son had flown in from UK where he is currently studying, after two years of being away from home. This vacation, she says, is mostly memorable to the whole family as it gave them an opportunity to spend time together before lives changed post COVID-19 being declared a pandemic.

“I have been happily married to Robert Masitara, former Member of Parliament, for 18 years now and have been blessed with four children; three daughters and a son. My family is my greatest pride and Education is the cornerstone of our family with a Financial Analyst, a medical student, a final year Attorney and the youngest completing her Form four this year,” she declares happily.
AFINITAS APPOINTS MAKEPE TO THE BOARD

The Board of Directors of Afinitas Limited is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Lipalesa Makepe as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company. The appointment is effective 01 June 2020. Lipalesa is a finance executive with over 20 years’ post qualification experience within the financial services industry, 13 of which have been spent in senior executive roles within Barclays Bank of Botswana and Barclays Africa Group Limited; now Absa Bank Botswana and Absa Group respectively.

She is currently the Chief Financial Officer at Okavango Diamond Company. Over her career she has worked in audit, financial management and reporting, risk management offering strategic support to Board and Exco. She is a Chartered Accountant (BICA) and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA UK). She has held several Board memberships including listed entities.

The Board also informs the market that Dr. Keith Jefferis has stepped down as an Independent Non-executive Director in order to take up a position in the Government of Botswana. Dr. Jefferis has been a director of the Company since November 2016. He also chaired the Remuneration Committee as well as the Audit Committee. The Board of Afinitas greatly appreciate the role played by Dr. Jefferis in guiding the development of Afinitas over the years and wish him great success in his new role.

AFINITAS APPOINTS MAKEPE TO THE BOARD

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THE PATRIOT WOMAN | JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

RAMATLAPENG TAKES OVER

One of the most esteemed local professionals, Cecilia Ramatlapeng has taken over as Botswana Country Managing Partner at Deloitte. She assumed the office on June 1, 2020 following the retirement of Max Marinelli. Cecilia is the first female citizen partner in an international firm in Botswana and coupled with her extensive industry experience, serves some of the largest private and public entities in Botswana. During her time at Deloitte, Cecilia has developed a strong prevalent reputation in leading multifaceted audit and financial advisory assignments, served in various leadership roles and has championed the training and development of future accountants within the Firm, including the Graduate Recruitment and Learning functions of the Firm. She is currently also serving as a Council Member and the Vice President of the Botswana Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Responding to her appointment, Cecilia says, “Having spent my entire career at Deloitte, I am humbled to be given the opportunity to lead a dynamic group of people, who serve our clients with distinction each day. My focus will not only be to provide agile solutions to our clients in these transformative times, but to contribute substantially towards socio-economic development in Botswana and ensuring that talent development remains at the top of the business agenda.”

KENEWENDO JOINS CGD

Former Trade and Industry minister Bogolo Kenewendo has recently joined, Centre for Global Development (CGD) a think-tank based in Washington, D.C. and London that focuses on international development.

She joins as an expert and Non Resident fellow into the fold of world renowned economists and Economic Nobel Laureates like Abhijit Banerjee and Michael Kremer. Other notable fellows include Former President of Malawi HE Joyce Banda and Former Minister of Finance in Nigeria Mrs Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.”

Kenewendo’s areas of specialisation include financial sector development; poverty alleviation; industrial development policy; trade related issues; trade and investment policy; trade and investment regulatory frameworks; macroeconomic policy; public debt management; export development and trade policy, among others. Kenewendo has worked as a trade economist for the Government of Ghana and as an economic consultant at Econsult Botswana, a Gaborone-based think tank.
WHAT WOMEN REALLY WANT?  
A MAN WHO CARES!

A clean man who respects and cares about his partner helps to protect her from cervical cancer by getting circumcised.
LAME MODISE

“I believe in investing in both education and knowledge because their returns grow exponentially” states Professor Patricia Mogomotsi. She firmly believes that one should strive to wake up with determination to work towards something that will enhance their skills and knowledge. “A year without some level of progress towards a new degree or a new skill is a wasted year,” she declares.

With five degrees under her belt, which she amassed in a space of six years, Professor Mogomotsi, a mother to a 4-year-old son and wife to a supportive husband, states that she manages to achieve all her academic achievements through the support from her family and importantly, her husband whom she dated for 10 years before they got married in 2015.

It is these two entities in her life that make balancing work, studying and family life effortless for her to accomplish academic endeavors. “The balance is both natural and seamless. I leverage on the support from family, especially my husband. Fortunately he is an academic and a colleague and we co-author a lot of our papers. He understands my load and works hard to make it bearable,” she speaks of her doting husband of five years.

As an Associate Professor with the University of Botswana (UB) employed as a Natural Resources Economist, Professor Mogomotsi’s duties entail teaching, supervising both graduate and undergraduate students and conducting and publishing research within her field of study, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics. Some of her duties also include performing additional roles aligned to three types of service being community service, service to the profession and service to the university.

Professor Mogomotsi’s busy schedule sees her currently working on a diverse mix of projects. One of them being analysing the impacts of Covid-19 on nature-based tourism.

“We aim to propose viable models to help tourism businesses to cushion the impacts of Covid-19 and similar potential pandemics,” she shares. Another project that she is currently engaged in is aimed at assessing the impact of improper disposal of used car oil on the environment where she and her team are quantifying the costs of such improper disposal and suggest sustainable and environmentally friendly methods in collaboration with garage owners. Other projects include designing land-use management plans for different regions, revising the Okavango Delta Management Plan and analysing the socio-economic impact of climate change among others.

As a Natural Resources Economist, Mogomotsi’s field is broad ranging from land, air, soil, water to trees, wildlife and all things considered to be natural resources. She looks into the natural environment and policies designed to manage both the environment and natural resources and her inclination is towards tourism, water and lifestyle. “I prefer working on so many different things at a go to avoid monotony,” says the bright-eyed Professor who confesses to loving listening to music, binging on crime reality shows and reading novels in her spare time. Despite being a busy academic by all means, Professor Mogomotsi had a colourful childhood growing up in the mining community of Calternville, South Africa in her formative years.

“I started speaking four languages at a very young age and played a lot of casino with mine workers. I was a time-keeper before I learnt to play the game. I already knew how to read time by the age of 4-years or younger,” reveals the last born of six siblings, adding that it was then that she developed her passion for Mathematics and languages.

“From an early age, my father made me account for every mark I lost in a test,” she remembers, somberly letting it slip that he passed away when she was 9-years-old.

Her mother also valued education so much that she made the young Patricia vow to never drop out of school before obtaining a PhD. “I lost her just before my very first graduation and she was laid to rest on the day of my graduation. I am a product of my parent’s teachings and my sibling’s support,” she attests.

She started her academic journey at Molapowabojang Primary School, went to Itireleng Junior School, graduated to Lobatse Senior School and proceeded to the University of Botswana where she went on to complete her first degree in Bachelor of Arts (Economics) in 2011. The degrees kept piling up with a Bachelor of Commerce Honours (Economics) from Stellenbosch University in 2013, a Masters of Economics from Rhodes University in 2015, a Master of Financial Management from Amity University in 2016 and a PhD in Economics and Management Sciences from the University of Northwest in 2019 where she was, in March of the same year, offered a Golden Key from the Golden International Honour Society in recognition of outstanding academic achievement at North West University in Potchefstroom.

The Golden Key society recognises students in the top 15 percent of their respective degree programmes and provides international recognition for academic achievement.
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Here are some tips to make banking and transacting during the COVID-19 pandemic safe:

1. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is transmitted primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which become airborne when an infected person coughs or exhales. Social distancing is therefore strongly encouraged. Airborne transmission is considered the most common way for the virus to spread and there is a research that suggests one can potentially get the disease by touching an infected object or surface and then touching one’s mouth, nose or eyes.

The ability of this virus to live for so long outside of the human body reinforces the extreme hand hygiene and rigorous sanitisation of workspaces and public surfaces, encouraged by Government and health experts worldwide. What does this mean for banking? Do not panic; here are some tips to make banking and transacting during the COVID-19 pandemic safe:

2. **Cash is not King**

   Pay with your card as much as you can. You want to avoid touching cash as you do not know who handled the banknotes previously. Instances where you need to deal with cash by supporting your local small business or paying for transport services, make sure you keep a small bottle of hand sanitiser available to use both before and after handling cash.

3. **Transact digitally, anywhere, anytime**

   Almost all of our banking services are available and possible through online platforms and apps. We recommend registering for and using these self-service options if you are not already doing so. We currently offer fee reductions of 25% for all digital banking channels including Online Banking, Cellphone Banking, Stanbic Bank App, Enterprise Online Banking and Business Online. This offer ends on the 2nd of July 2020.

4. **Payment without using your card**

   If possible, keep your bank card in your wallet or purse and use cardless payment solutions such as e-commerce for online purchases and other cardless features. Remember to sterilise your phone too.

   There are ways to continue to bank during this period whilst at the same time protecting yourself and your loved ones. Make the most of non-physical banking or digital banking and remember that every effort helps. Together, we can beat COVID-19.

   *These tips are part of a financial literacy series by Stanbic Bank Botswana*
Banking During the Pandemic

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Please take us inside your professional journey – where did it all start?

MATHULA: My first job out of varsity was at First National Bank Botswana as a Temporary Assistant. After that, I joined Botswana Building Society (BBS) as a graduate trainee, and was later appointed as a Branch Manager. I then joined Standard Chartered Bank where I held several management positions including those of Customer Services and Sales Manager, Head of Sales Channels SME, Product Development Manager Secured Lending, Africa Regional Head for Home Loans and Car Loans and Head of Retail Lending for Botswana. Prior to joining Letshego, I worked for FNBB as Head of Home Loans and Retail Lending. I am currently the Head of Financial Inclusion for Letshego Financial Services Botswana.

What are your qualifications?


What influenced your decision to pursue this career?

MATHULA: Destiny. I had missed my opportunity for a sponsorship to study abroad. I then enrolled at the University of Botswana for a degree in Business Management, which helped to open many doors for me in the financial services industry.

Your career highs and lows

MATHULA: I am proud to work for Letshego, an indigenous company that has grown in leaps and bounds, with presence in 11 African countries. My other accomplishments include my appointment as Branch Manager at the tender age of 25 years. The other was being identified among the Top 10 Talent in Africa, which ultimately led to my appointment at the Global Product Group Team in a regional role based in Kenya and responsible for 8 markets in the region. I have had very few low points as I have always embraced my opportunities.

Discuss Letshego Botswana and your core mandate of ensuring financial inclusion?

MATHULA: My role at Letshego Botswana is to provide strategic direction and to identify business growth opportunities as well as cost effective channels for our customers. Financial inclusion is about providing relevant and accessible financial solutions and support to small businesses and individuals who have traditionally struggled to access formal financial services. Our aim is to provide the right solutions, through easily accessible channels, to help to improve lives for our customers and communities.

Is your vast experience in the retail banking space helping you to achieve your mandate?

MATHULA: I am now able to easily identify the financing gaps that exist in the market and particularly those that are valued by Batswana, some of who fall out of scope of existing stringent banking requirements. My experience in product development allows me to apply the right expertise to enhance Letshego’s Customer Value Propositions.

What are the new offerings that you have initiated since you took over your position?

MATHULA: We are doing exciting things at Letshego, especially in the Micro and Small Business space and will soon be rolling out a suite of value solutions for our MSE customers. We have implemented a robust digital transformation strategy that is driven...
by customer experience and access through our new and enhanced digital platforms. Last year we launched our Mobile App for use by our Direct Sales Agents, that has revolutionised our turnaround times. We now have online application Webforms, where individual customers and businesses can apply for loans at any time and from anywhere, by visiting https://appforms.letshego.com and a USSD loan lead platform *1848#. We have exciting developments in store and I invite you to watch this space over the next couple of months as we continue to deliver on our brand promise to improve lives for Batswana.

Are you winning in keeping impairment costs low?

MATHULA: Fortunately, we have a robust collection methodology in place. Despite that, the job market has recently been turbulent and obviously, this affects some customers’ ability to repay. We see an increase in requests to provide repayment holidays and restructure facilities, especially during these challenging times brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What policies or programmes do you have in place to ensure the advancement of women in your organisation?

MATHULA: As Letshego Botswana adopts an inclusive approach in extending the reach of its financial solutions to all communities, so do we adopt the same inclusive approach within our internal Letshego culture, providing all employees with equal and accessible opportunities to develop themselves, grow and achieve their individual and collective goals. This balance is evidenced with 53% of our Botswana management team being women.

How did you cope with the challenges that women often endure in their way to the top?

MATHULA: Being a woman in leadership is not easy. Finding ways to network with women who hold positions of influence helps. Fortunately, I have worked with men who are fair and supportive, where we grew a mutual and professional respect.

Your word to the girl-child who wants to excel in her vocation and grow into a leader – the dos and don’ts!

MATHULA: Anything is possible with hard work. Never stop being curious, never stop learning. Your background and gender should not act as a barrier but rather a source of motivation and diversity.

Always believe in yourself, even when no one else does. Know that you can get ahead without compromising your values. Hard work pays off and eventually, talent always finds a home.

How do you spend your time away from work?

MATHULA: I get bored easily so I dabble in any and everything. I was once a certified Zumba Instructor, before then I took up Fencing, but that was years ago. I am a mountain bike enthusiast and ride whenever I find time. I also quadbike for fun. For now, studying takes up much of my time.

Your favourite book & the one you are currently reading.

MATHULA: I enjoyed Robin Sharma’s Little Black Book for Stunning Success. I am currently reading John C Maxwell’s 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth. When I am pressed for time, I find that motivational podcasts really help to set the tone for the day.

Your favourite holiday destination

MATHULA: Being from Maun, the Okavango Delta is my backyard. Sadly, I have not frequented it as much as I would like. Outside Botswana, it is an unbreakable tie between Durban and Dubai. I love hot and wet climates.

Your Mentor?

MATHULA: I have two, Mrs Neo Bogatsu, the CEO at BIFM, who helps me navigate the corporate world. Ms Bonang Kwape, HR Director at FNBB who often assists me with relationship building and networking. These women provide me with strong guidance and support needed to be my best self.

Family

MATHULA: I am from a small family and the eldest grandchild in the Mathula clan. I have one younger sister.
Peo Porogo never doubts her abilities; an attribute she wishes for others. It is this trait that has seen her scale down one challenge after the other, propelling her to the top of her professional career.

Playing smart and proactive Peo Porogo has every reason to be proud of her swift professional growth. FNBB’s leading brand executive - Acting Marketing and Communications Director - has clearly projected her own personal brand well and those who work with her approve. She leads the Marketing and Communications and FNBB Foundation teams.

Her career in Marketing started at Orange Botswana where she served as Market Intelligence Executive – Research & Insights and Strategy. “My dedication and hard work spoke for me. I started having corporates call me to apply for roles and interviews. I have also been very intentional and deliberate about brands that I work for which helped set me up for my current role,” she says.

Along the way she had people that vouched for her capabilities and prodded her to continue to excel. You also need to have sponsors at every stage of career, she says, “someone who in a room would say I know Peo can do it, and I have a few of those people who have insured that I get to have a seat at the table”. She joined FNBB marketing and communications four years ago as a Marketing Manager and was elevated to her current position last year when the previous incumbent left.

HER TEAM

She runs a big team of mostly women in her department that includes, Marketing and Communications and FNBB Foundation and relishes the huge support they render to her. They endeavour daily to make her succeed. “The support my team has shown me since day one has been overwhelming, I remember how they called a meeting to pray with me the day I went for the interview,” recalls Porogo with a lingering sense of pride. With the ongoing lockdown, 80 per cent of her team is currently working from home.

Technology, she says, is making things work. “I must say it has been great, I have seen the team work harder than ever before. The biggest challenge has been not being able to see them and offer a hug where needed so I worry if I am doing enough to support them emotionally during this difficult time,” she says.

INCLUSIVITY

She sets her organisation as an example of inclusivity at the workplace. At FNBB, she says, people value each other’s differences. The bank has built an environment that values differences – where everyone’s views and contributions are given a platform. For both women and men, she says, the bank has adopted family-friendly policies that provide parents with the help they need to support their children’s early development.

The maternity leave has been increased from three months to four months to allow mothers to bond with their babies, she says, adding that after maternity, mothers are given a feeding hour every day for six months and there is also a 1-month paternal leave. The bank’s structure is dominated by women throughout all its levels.

“Our Executive Team is made up of 66% women, our Management team is 57% women and our overall staff complement is made of 65% female employees. The bank truly values the contribution that women make in the workplace and there is no glass ceiling in our organisation,” Porogo declares confidently. She has advice to women who are vying to rise to the top. “I read Lean In by Sheryl Sandberg years ago and in the book she says “Women need to shift from thinking ‘I’m not ready to do that’ to thinking ‘I want to do that and I’ll learn by doing it’. I think women are powerful, smart and capable,” she declares.

FNBB KEY PROJECTS

Porogo maintains that FNBB is driven by the desire to provide Help. “When we ask the question: ‘How can we help you – we are not asking a rhetorical question. I believe that we are truly a bank of Help, this is our brand promise,” she enthuses.

She cites how they have approached the Covid-19 pandemic; particularly in as far as their customers are concerned. “We have seen many of our customers and Batswana face countless difficulties and more especially financial troubles due to COVID-19 pandemic,” she says, a development that resulted with them donating P10 million towards Covid-19 relief initiatives, of which P5 million was donated to the government Covid-19 Relief Fund and the other P5 million invested directly in various community initiatives.

As part of their creative arts support, the bank has invested P1.5 million through an initiative dubbed Bodiragatsi Jwame, Lentswe Lame. “We launched a competition to help artists from various genres showcase their talent and creativity in helping fight the Covid-19 pandemic. The competition was open to citizens and covered comedy, music, visual arts, film making and fashion. We trust that this help will ease some of the current financial burdens that our local creative industry is facing and at the same time help fight the Covid-19 pandemic,” she adds.

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INNOVATIONS

As a customer centric bank, she says they have put the needs of their customers first in all that they do. She acclaims that they have pioneered digital banking locally.

“We have embedded innovation into our DNA as we continuously improve our digital solutions that make it possible for customers to perform various transactions and functions outside our branches, whenever and wherever,” she says. According to her, FNBB has among its many digital channels these three digital channels – Cellphone Banking, Online Banking and FNB Banking App – to help customers with convenient banking with continuous improvements of existing functionalities to meet customer demands. They have also introduced zero rating of the Banking App on all mobile networks, making the use of the App widely and freely accessible without the need for data bundles or internet.

“I am happy to share that in 2019, FNBB was awarded the Most Innovative Commercial bank in Botswana by Global Banking & Finance Publications Limited, a feat that demonstrates our passion and dedication to innovating and simplifying lives of our customers,” she says. To date, she says, over 92% of their transactions are taking place on their digital platforms and have over 300 000 customers registered and using cell phone banking.

The use of digital infrastructure has its own risk as cybercriminals are forever at work. Porogo, however, says they are not taking any chances with their customers’ accounts. The bank has invented additional security layers on all our digital platforms to guard against risks such as sim swapping, she says, adding that they have in place smart in contact for business, One Time Pin and biometric security on the FNB App as authentication methods.

“We are also safeguarding customer’s money by multi-layer verification along with customer behavioural tracking systems. Customer behavioural tracking systems allow the bank to quickly pick any suspicious activity on customer accounts, which is then quickly reported or confirmed with the customer, consequently averting any potential theft of fraud,” she assures.

INNOVATION COSTS

She concedes that innovation comes at a cost. But, she declares, we believe that our customers’ satisfaction is worth every Thebe. “We would love for our customers to move to the next level of banking with us, that’s why we invest money on our digital channels. The good thing is that we have spent so many years investing on the platforms and infrastructure, and now we just keep enhancing features on these platforms as customers’ demands and behaviour change”.

THE FUTURE

Having conquered her space locally, Porogo is now looking out to Africa.

“I have named my future plans: Destination Africa. It’s now time to export my skills to the Rest of Africa. Prior to Covid-19 I had just obtained a work permit to move to South Africa to work with Africa Marketing which includes Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania... hopefully the dream will still happen post Covid-19,” she declares hopefully.

OUTSIDE WORK

Porogo has a rich life outside work and entrenched goals she is striving to achieve. She ensures that she sees a new place every year. “My last favourite destination is Ibiza, Spain. It is hedonistic; one gets to walk around in a bikini and no shoes all day, we wore flip flops to the club. Definitely a place I will visit every now and then,” she declares fondly. She is an ardent reader of inspirational books as well. But there is one book that has won her over for its telling effect in making her bold. “There is a book I re-read every now again called The 50th Law on strategy and fearlessness written collaboratively by rapper 50 Cent and author Robert Greene. The book is a semi-autobiographical account detailing 50 Cent’s rise as both a young urban hustler and as an up-and-coming musician with lessons and anecdotes from historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln, Sun Tzu, Socrates, Napoleon, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin,” she reaffirms.

For her staying power she draws inspiration from various people be it for professional or personal challenges. “I am one of youngest people in my Ex-co team so you can imagine the amount of wisdom I am surrounded with on a daily basis. I also have a group of friends who I seek guidance from,” she says.
**A PASSION FOR SERVICE**

**Mpho Samuel, G4S’ National Customer Service Manager, oozes nothing but passion for her work. She takes us inside her world**

**Discuss your role and how you reached this pinnacle**

**Samuel:** I joined G4S Botswana in 2018 with the aim to introduce a culture of customer centricity. The role is the first of its kind in Africa and I am excited for G4S Botswana to be pioneering a change in G4S Africa. The role is very dynamic and challenging and each day comes with multiple challenges. For many years the industry has focused on providing security without necessarily appreciating the service aspect of it.

Customer needs have changed over the years and the customer of today expects much more from a security provider and this is where my expertise comes in. I am a product of the University of Botswana with a qualification in Business Administration (Marketing).

I stumbled on the world of customer service support in 2007. As a marketing graduate I had thought that I would have a career in Advertising but the doors that opened for me were in customer service.

I was blessed enough to get my first job at Mascom Wireless three months before my graduation. I started off as a customer service officer working closely with the call centre. This is where I fell in love with the world of customer centricity. I continued my stay with Mascom as Customer Service Trainer.

I am a person who is not afraid to try new things, especially career-wise. In 2012, I got an opportunity to try out a different industry.

I took up a role with Botswana Housing Corporation doing customer service at the call centre. Many people have a perception that Parastatals are not customer centric so I was excited to venture into that world and make a meaningful contribution. In 2014, I got an opportunity to work at DHL Express as a Head of Customer Service.

This was quite a leap career-wise and it introduced me to Management. Working for a multi-national such as DHL was a big step. The standards set for customer service there are quite high and the role is very challenging. Despite this, I had a very successful time at DHL Express with my team getting position three in DHL Sub Saharan Africa in 2015. In 2016, I led my Team to position one in DHL Sub Saharan Africa Customer Excellence Awards. I also had the courage to submit an entry into the International Stevie Awards where my Team received a Bronze award in 2015 and in 2016. I also received a bronze award for Contact Centre Manager of the Year in 2017.

**What key projects are you currently working on?**

**Samuel:** As a business G4S Botswana has a very clear strategy that encompasses Customer Centricity. As part of that strategy, we are working towards being accessible to our customers 24 hours a day in terms of service provisioning across all our business lines. We are working on technological solutions that will see our customers not needing to leave the
comfort of their homes to access all our services.

What are the lessons for G4S in the COVID-19 era?

SAMUEL: COVID-19 has brought forward a new normal which is not a bad thing. G4S Botswana with a staffing complement of close to 3000 people has been able to stay ahead in the fight against the COVID-19. Prior to having confirmed cases in Botswana we had adopted work place protocols.

These elaborate plans were not only for our Valued Staff but also for our customers who needed assurance that they had a security partner who was well prepared. The most important thing for G4S in this fight is early preparation and consistency in following protocols. COVID-19 has cemented the importance of having robust business continuity plans. It is also a time to explore technological advancements and offer online services.

These are the focus areas for G4S Botswana and our customers will soon get to experience this. Technological innovation is in our strategy 2020-2025.

We are working on projects that will see G4S leading the industry. We are working on solutions for all business lines that will improve our efficiency and in turn our service to our customers.

What advice do you have for those ladies striving to break through the barrier?

SAMUEL: There is a shift in our country and we are beginning to see strong women leading some of the biggest companies in Botswana. There is really nothing that is stopping women from achieving their dreams. They just have to be willing to work hard and be confident enough to raise their hand in the boardroom.

What inclusive policies does G4S have in place, particularly to advance women?

SAMUEL: G4S is an equal opportunity employer. This is part of our strategy and is evidenced by the rising numbers of women at all levels in the employ of the company.

Your future goals

SAMUEL: I plan on leading a large company like G4S one day and I am excited to be on this journey. I believe I have the necessary drive and passion to achieve this dream someday soon. There is no limit to what I can achieve.

Favourite holiday destination

SAMUEL: Mauritius has always been my favourite and I cannot wait to visit the place again. Another place high on my wish list is the Okavango Delta. I would love to have a view of it from a helicopter. I am sure God will bless me enough to visit the place very soon.

Who’s your mentor?

SAMUEL: I look to a few people for various reasons for example, for my walk with the Lord, for my career as well as family. They are all very passionate people, very strong willed and also very successful in their different areas. There is no single blueprint for my life that I am following but I hope that as they continue to support me, they will see bits and pieces of their influences in me.
MAVIS KOOGOTSITSE: SATUCC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

JUST

KEEPS

RISING
E nchanting Mavis Anna Koogotsitse’s hospitable and sincere demeanor is one outstanding character mannerism she possesses. Born in 1973 in Molepolole, the 47-year-old gorgeous labour activist holds a very influential position of Executive Secretary for SATUCC, a regional umbrella of workers organisations mandated to represent the interests of workers and influence regional integration policies in the Southern African Development Region (SADC). She is the first Motswana to hold that position.

During my induction into Mavis’s world at a conference hall at Regent Hotel in Gaborone, it came to my view that above all the calm demeanor she exhibits, her level of diplomacy and proficiency also makes her a winner.

THE SECRETARIAT

The obligations of her office based in Gaborone include facilitating capacity building for the 22 trade union federations that SATUCC represents in 14 SADC countries with a combined membership of over five million working men and women. Koogotsitse’s role is to ensure that affiliates of SATUCC have the necessary support and skills needed to participate in social dialogue and to collectively bargain for decent work and social protection for all sectors of workers. “Our office facilitates capacity building for unions affiliated to be able to engage in Social Dialogue. This means enabling unions to effectively take part in the tripartite negotiations which includes trade unions, government and employers. SATUCC also has a seat in the regional structures that influence policy decisions and we are part of the Troika that comprises SADC Ministers of Employment and Labour, Employers and Trade Unions, for this to be possible institutional capacity must be strengthened in order to serve affiliates and remain relevant as the voice of workers in the sub-region,” buttressed Koogotsitse. At continental level – the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Africa – SATUCC is an ex-officio member of executive council by the virtue of being a sub-regional organization. It further makes inputs into what goes into final discussions of what goes into International Labour Organisation (ILC) conference that is held every year in Geneva. “We make submissions on labour rights violations and this entails that every year we check and monitor what is happening in all the countries that we represent and produce a report that details compliance or none thereof by governments with obligations arising out of legal requirements and practice in respect of Conventions and Recommendations (ratified or not) to the ILC,” she said; highlighting that trade union work is not easy but requires passion for one to succeed.

CHALLENGES

To Koogotsitse, labour union politics need a very hard working individual who is very principled, and driven by service above self as most times one finds themselves having to sacrifice time and other resources to ensure that there is smooth coordination of activities. She revealed that the challenges they encounter as the regional mouth piece for workers in SADC is that there is no good harmonisation of policies as each country has its own Labour laws, some unions are strong while others are weak and do not have capacity to engage, while some governments have no respect for social partners and SATUCC cannot dictate what should happen in countries but only play an advisory role. “This variation in employment policies is cumbersome but as SATUCC what we try is to advice the national centers so as to ensure that regulations conform to suggested international standards. We have setup a network of researchers in Southern Africa for example and the whole idea behind this is to make our work a bit easier by consolidating a common regional position to inform regional and national policies,” she added. Moreover, she singled out the aspect of diverse languages across the region as a barrier to her office’s efforts to coordinate trade unions smoothly, citing that Portuguese-speaking nations of Mozambique and Angola as well as DR Congo, Comoros and Madagascar who speak French and often this requires the engagement of interpreters in their work.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

“Having been less than a year in the office of a large organization like SATUCC, my observation is that this comes with a huge responsibility and needs a lot of focus. I came in a period when SATUCC was going into a new transition of having to develop a new strategy as the old one has elapsed and then COVID-19 happened which forced us to switch gears and priorities completely since a human crisis such as the one we are faced with calls for solidarity and unity of purpose and therefore it is crucial to come up with a coordinated approach and be proactive in coming up with measures of how to mitigate for the most vulnerable in our communities. This has created a new normal and that there might be a need to continue to work remotely even post COVID 19.” Koogotsitse said.

Oozing with confidence, Koogotsitse is adamant that she is going to be rebuilding the union, noting that her successes in the unions she served before will also motivate her to win, again. Instead of limiting her ability, she admires working in a predominantly male led union such as SATUCC, highlighting that it is not easy for a woman to acquire high leadership position in the union. “I am very ready to conquer against all odds. I am not just the first Motswana woman to occupy this position but more significantly I am the first ever woman to hold it since 1983, a time when SATUCC was established. I must admit this noble achievement to me is a special highlight of my career,” she added. Consequently, Koogotsitse encourages other women who are union activists not to limit themselves but to strive for higher positions, adding that SATUCC is led mostly by men hence women need to rise and ascend the leadership ladder.

UNION JOURNEY

She possesses an avalanche of trade union experience with her passion for the calling traceable to the early 1990s at University of Botswana (UB) Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), where she was influential in addressing unfavorable working conditions and salary disparities then. Koogotsitse – a mother to one daughter – said she was a member of NASU and formed part of the bargaining team on the issues of salary disparity gaps between the academic and non-academic staff within university at the time.

She was appointed by the Vice Chancellor to be part of the University Wide Working Group that spearheaded the restructuring exercise and pay structure. In 2001 she served as the Deputy General Secretary for Botswana Power Corporation Workers Union and later on become SG. She was also involved in the restructuring and transformation of BPC where as the chief negotiator she bargained for better salaries and benefits for employees. Koogotsitse’s encounter with SATUCC began in 2010 where she previously worked as Gender and HIV AIDS coordinator.

With her composure, experience and eloquence Mavis Anna Koogotsitse is well prepared to deliver on her mandate as the Executive Secretary of Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC). Writes BAKANG TIRO
WE MUST RISE, BE LEADERS TOO!

BAKANG TIRO

Financial management and administration although often a challenging task for office bearers in diverse organisations, for Lebogang Keabetswe it is an inspiring responsibility. As professional banker by expertise, Keabetswe is one of the few women serving in the executive leadership of Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU). She is the organisation’s Treasurer.

Her earnest passion for a liberated worker saw her serving previously as the Secretary General of Botswana Bank Employees Union (BOBEU) before being voted in 2018 as Treasurer for BFTU.

FINANCE PRINCIPAL

She is tasked with developing, planning budget and ensuring adherence to set financial policies and enforce accountability for every single Thebe budgeted for. In addition, she oversees the budget proposals made through the Finance Committee which is part of the General Council; a duty she says ensure there is no money misappropriation.

To deliver on these responsibilities, Keabetswe also monitors that members pay their monthly subscriptions which are a source of revenue that keeps the federation to be financial afloat.

“Dealing with money for any organisation is not a simple task but yet interesting as you are the one who can enrich or make the entity bankrupt. Being the treasurer for BFTU is thrilling to me because of the support from the Finance Committee and Constitutional Executive. The only money we get is from subscriptions by members; hence need to utilise it very well,” she declared. According to the visionary Keabetswe, one of BFTU’s biggest strategic pillars is that of diversifying sources of income plus financial inclusion and in this case, this could stabilise monthly fee subscriptions. Her banking career has been mainly spent in one bank, spanning over ten (10) years at Absa Bank of Botswana Limited formerly known as Barclays bank.

“I spend a considerable amount of time within the operations space, having worked in loans or credit operations, cards, securities and monitoring and control,” revealed a delighted Keabetswe.

COVID-19 COLD

As a financially self-sustaining federation, BFTU like any other entity is feeling the economic hardships brought by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The mammoth challenge, she said, is that of inconsistency of members in paying the monthly subscriptions. This is the time when her banking experience would be put to test so to find alternative or sustainable means to keep revenue afloat as their affiliated workers are financially affected. “The challenge that I mostly encounter on normal periods is failure to contribute the subscription payments. With the COVID-19 pandemic it is going to be worse because we rely on the subscription money to run the daily activities of the federation. So, cash flow crisis is going to be a mammoth challenge, she said, is that of inconsistency of members in paying the monthly subscriptions. This is the time when her banking experience would be put to test so to find alternative or sustainable means to keep revenue afloat as their affiliated workers are financially affected.”

She attributed her success to the women friendly work environment that BFTU offers and the support from the male leadership, maintaining that the federation has good gender balance policy. This, she insisted, is signaled by two positions of deputy presidents currently held by women.

QUITE GRATIFIED

She is quite impressed with how things have turned out to her during her unionism journey from BOBEU to BFTU; noting that she prefers working behind scenes thus keeping low profile.

“I am happy that I have managed to hold critical positions both in my banking career and at unions’ level. I served two terms as BOBEU Secretary General and now as treasurer at BFTU. I don’t like to be on a spotlight hence yet I don’t have aspirations to be at high level position of presidency,” she stated, emphasizing that she will continue to be hardworking at all the times.

She, however, is still worried about the low interest of women in contesting for leadership positions in unions, saying she cannot blame men for continuing to lead in expense of women. According to Keabetswe, women in most instances do not endorse or support others who would have shown interest to run for leadership positions, urging women to learn to collaborate. "The numbers of women in unions surpass those of men. Our fellow women must always believe in themselves and aim high at all times. Being a stalwart unionist takes time and sacrifices and maybe this is what women sometimes fear but we must rise and be leaders too,” she buttressed.

The books she is currently reading are ‘Becoming’ by Michelle Obama and ‘Bassie: My Journey of Hope’ by Basetsana Khumalo. She spends her spare time with her family.
ACCOMPLISHED SCIENTIST CUM UNIONIST

Sarah Dibe, Botswana Vaccine Institute’s (BVI) Quality Controller Supervisor, boosts of a colourful career as a research scientist spanning a period of 15 years. The 60 year-old Dibe took over as Quality Control Supervisor at BVI in 2013. Her role is to supervise control quality of vaccines in accordance with the International standards (in line with OIE standards).

A cheerful and welcoming Dibe prides herself as a cut throat scientist who is not focusing on Science career alone but is also interested in issues affecting the workers hence being unionist.

SCIENCE VS UNIONISM

The Serowe-born scientist was too quick to point out that it is not usual that scientists and politics mix but for her both science and trade union politics is what makes her an accomplished woman. She currently serves as focal person that is advocating for the Migrant Workers through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa, a big Pan- African Trade Organisation in lieu of 56 trade unions federation affiliated to ITUC-Africa and representing 15 million workers). Dibe is also a stalwart of the local Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) having served at Executive leadership position as National Secretary for Women from 2011 to 2015; and appointed organising Chairperson for the federation during this period.

In 2016 she became the vice president for the federation, a position rarely held by women. “People have found it abnormal for a scientist of repute like me to be also interested in labour unions politics but these are two career paths that I cannot separate anytime soon. I love my job in the field of science and I love to advocate for workers’ welfare as it affects me too,” she said.

With ITUC-Africa being her focal point she ensures that welfare issues for migrant workers both in Botswana and across Africa at large are prioritised to safeguard them against exploitation.

She has been at ITUC-Africa since 2018 and has represented migrant workers that are both documented and undocumented, which has challenged and shaped her character as an advocate.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a lot of challenges for the workers and for me it is a test of my character for liberating the migrant workers during tough times such as this. Most of the migrant workers were left stranded with no food hence I had to ensure they survive,” she said.

She indicated that being a unionist is not about being radical at all the times but it is also a path through which one gains knowledge about rights of the workers. The duty of unions, she said, is to take the watchdog function so that the economy doesn’t fall as workers are crucial in economy.

“In tripartite route, workers are the core drivers of the economy and there will be no direction or economy without workers. It’s no longer about fighting as it has been the idea,” Dibe insisted.

SCIENTIST ON MISSION

Without doubt Dibe is a big catch for her employer – BVI – based on the level of knowledge she possesses in her field. The mother of three (two daughters and one son) is aiming higher in her career – she is quick to point out that women also have the same ability to match men in the specialised sciences.

“I am supervising the control of production process of the vaccines from the beginning to an end product. This entails more thrill analysis to monitor if the vaccines produced from the labs do conform to the international standards. I work in male dominated path but I prosper;” Dibe said, adding that she balance her roles at BVI and at the union on a daily basis. Dibe believes that she is a scientist on mission to accomplish a lot in her career, noting that she has so far contributed immensely by introducing new elements such as the usage of Standard Operating Procedures and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) at BVI.

WOMAN STRENGTH

The highlight of her career came when she was nominated by the Botswana Academy of Science (BAS) to represent them in Dar eslaam, an academy that comprises of researchers and scientists that hold high credentials such PhD holders and Professors.

“My nomination by BAS to represent them is great achievement since I don’t hold qualifications that are normally required for one to be inducted in BAS. I represented Botswana in 2018 Tanzania during the Academy of Science for Africa and focused on how science will adopt SDGs,” Dibe highlighted.

** being appointed by his excellency into the Presidential Task Team to formulate vision 2036. The cornerstone of her success, she revealed, is the demonstration of the woman strength. She doesn’t limit herself to the opportunities that arise in science environment. “I am a courageous and very hard working woman and therefore nothing can impede against the woman strength trait that is my pillar for success. As one among leading women scientists that are shining in this field, we demonstrate that science is also a career for women,” she said. Dibe urged women not to limit themselves to certain visions or careers, adding that science is very exciting but needs more focus. She also drills other women geniuses from overseas too.
To MARTHA TINNY MOLEMA – the 1st Deputy President of the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) – ‘unionism is about standing for workers’ and human rights.’ A unionist for almost her entire professional life, Molema ranks among the most successful women trade unionists in Botswana. The Kanye born-woman was first elected as the 1st Deputy Vice President of BFTU in 2018. She has not shied away from declaring interest in running for the Presidency of the Federation. Armed with a 2002 Masters of Education Degree from University of Botswana (UB), the outspoken unionist insists that she has a role to teach and sensitise people on workers’ and human rights.

UNIONISM ROOTS

Her motivation to indulge in unionism dates back to her days in South Africa where she was born during the apartheid era, where she witnessed violations of workers’ and human rights first hand. This led her to become an activist as a student at University of Botswana (UB), the outspoken unionist insists that she has a role to teach and sensitise people on workers’ and human rights.

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UNIONISM ROOTS

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I became a shopsteward for some time and later rose to the position of Publicity and Education Secretary at Trainers and Allied Workers Union of Botswana (TAWU) gaining vast backing and training from TAWU men,” she said. She singled out men such as Cdes; Allen Keitseng, Edward Tswayne and Setso Ntsuke. The people who inspired me to stand for union leadership are the likes of Cdes; Sophistou Nthobatsang, Leonard Muthetho, Basima Basima and Sir-Wonder Masebola at Association of Botswana Tertiary Lecturers (ABOTEL) now TAWU. Her headship journey within BFTU ranks began in 2011 when she was elected Women’s Wing Chairperson, focusing on training women on issues such as Gender Based Violence, unionism, labour rights and others, for empowerment.

ITUC AFRICA

Molema’s election to the BFTU powerful position of 1st Deputy President that she currently occupies, was revolutionary and has opened more doors for her. She also serves as the Deputy President of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Africa and will serve in its General Council from 2019 to 2023. “BFTU has undoubtedly contributed to my growth as it widened my scope on labour rights and dispute mediation processes. I have been serving as an assessor in the Industrial Court since 2012. With the experiences I gained at the court, I fully support the need for an Industrial Court of Appeal in Botswana,” she said. BFTU, has been pushing for the setting up of the Industrial Court of Appeal but lack of financial resources has been used as an excuse not to do it. But I believe we can always have it ad hoc. With her level of zeal and enthusiasm, Molema is adamant that she can be the president of ITUC Africa, highlighting that she is a hard worker who never limits herself despite being a woman and the fact that the positions have always been held by men. ITUC Africa, she said, boasts of 17 million members, 101 affiliated Trade Union centres from 51 African countries and she finds no reason not to be proud to serve it.

BFTU SUPPORT

Doubling as 1st Deputy President of BFTU and ITUC Africa are her career highlights and attributes the success in executing her mandates to her supportive male counterparts within the two organisations. The Tonota College of Education-based educator and mother to three – two girls and one boy, said the level of support that males are displaying to the women in leadership positions at BFTU is very amazing. She singled out the former BFTU Secretary General Mr Gadzani Mhotsha and the current Mr Thusang Butale, for being a pillar to women in unionism and leadership. “Our men in the unions are making things easier for us. They are very supportive, I always get motivated by the young Secretary General Cde Thusang Butale, who never stops emphasising the fact that knowledge is power and with knowledge nothing can stand in your way to greater heights.” Said the delighted Molema. She has learned a lot from various Labour organisations such as Educational International (EI), Southern African Women in Education Network (SAWEN), International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Molema buttressed that BFTU aims to among others empower women and the youth on leadership and emerging issues. She urged women who want to take leadership positions and to learn to support other women who vie for them, regretting that women scarcely support others. She relaxes by spending time with her family, which she describes as lovely and supportive. She also reads a lot on political, workers and human rights issues; goes to church and listens to music.
“You can’t solve a problem on the same level that it was created. You have to rise above it to the next level.” These are the words of Albert Einstein, the 1921 Physics Nobel Prize best known to the general public for his mass–energy equivalence formula $E = mc^2$, which has been dubbed “the world’s most famous equation.”

Solving problems in the modern world is a local company, Bulb World with their revolutionary Ultra Violet (UVC) Lights that promise to exterminate disease causing pathogens especially viruses including the Corona Virus Covid-19 that currently has the world on panic mode.

Following the famous saying “The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible.” by Arthur C. Clarke, Bulb World has discovered its calling in light of the current call by Government for action to sterilize and disinfect surroundings.

“The Bulb World has ventured beyond just illumination by introducing germicidal units which incorporate UVC light for disinfection purposes into its product range,” explains 27-year-old Lebogang Moyo, Production Manager at Bulb World.

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology graduate in Energy Engineering continues that the products are used for disinfection of surfaces and air spaces to minimise the spread of a range of pathogens including viruses and bacteria. Her interests are also aligned with decarbonised innovative solutions in response to climate action.

The ambitious Moyo, who has been with the company for three months, continues to explain that the units are designed with a safety factor in mind as the lights are specifically sealed off within the unit. “Air is sucked into the unit, disinfected over the light and then disinfected air is circulated out into the room. They are safe to use even with children around,” she declares.

Despite UVC being a new technology in fighting an invisible enemy, Moyo is confident that the product is viable and attests to a steadily growing keen interest in the adoption of the UVC units. “The hospitality sector is one of the many that has shown tremendous interest on the lighting units with Avani Hotel being the first to procure these units from us,” she states, excitedly noting that the expectation is that more players are expected to join in the procurement bandwagon.

Questioned on the general uptake of the lighting units by the Moyo said the response has been positive overall and they are hopeful that there will soon be a greater uptake. UVC light can be used as an inactivating agent for disease carrying viruses and ultimately reduce the ability to cross infect.

“Currently worldwide it has been integrated into everyday life to return a sense of ‘normal’ to operations and is being used together with other measures put in place to, as far as possible, reduce the spread of the Covid-19,” she says.
Writing as a creative art, has always been a daunting undertaking for many except for 31-year-old Botho Lejowa who has taken to writing like a baby to formula milk. The Tlokweng-born woman whose love for the pen began during her early years at Maruapula School where she did her secondary education after graduating from Lesedi Primary School in Gaborone, is the recent winner of the African Writers Trust Publishing Grant 2020.

She reveals how she won and explores the excitement the opportunity presents for her vocation as a publishing Author.

**WINNING THE PRIZE**

Lejowa states that the funds that come with winning the prize will enable her to expand her vocation in the field. “The platform the African Writers Trust has given me through this win is immense and I will forever be grateful for having the opportunity to grow my network in the African literary circles,” she beams, adding that the Seed fund basically means that she will not be...
working on anything new as of now because getting the book published is going to be a full time job for some time.

“Another huge benefit of the win is that I have gained a lot recognition in the writing community in Africa, something, which is evidently important in my journey of becoming one of Africa’s memorable writers,” she says.

Lejowa’s journey to clinching the organisation’s funding began with a call for applications for its Publishing Fellowship Programme 2020, which she applied to and was accepted as a fellow.

She proceeded to attend the week long programme in Uganda in the company of 11 other fellows from across Africa. The attendees were then invited to apply for the seed fund to publish their projects, a difficult process that she remembers taking to heart and ending up getting awarded the ultimate prize, money to publish her latest book titled “Meetings with Death”. “It was a really tough application and I was up against some incredible writers from different African countries. It was not an easy win at all but I won. I don’t take that for granted,” she remembers vividly.

THE WINNING SCRIPT

Lejowa says “Meetings with Death” is a piece inspired by African traditional belief systems. She explains that Africans’ relationships with spirituality and their ancestry peaked her interest as well as the general belief in the realness of premonitions. The book also explores the phenomenon of superstitions in the context of the African traditional belief system. “I deeply thought about that and that is how the book came about,” she states.

BOTHO AND LITERATURE

Her unwavering love for literature grew from a passion of reading early on. “Everywhere I go, I have a novel on hand,” she adds. The avid reader is also thankful for technology that makes her read her books on her phone screen instead of lugging around a book everywhere she goes. “Thank God for e-books because I get them on my phone,” she chuckles, stating that she is inspired by many writers of varying genres. Fantasy Authors Jaquelin Carey and Karen Marie Moning are at the top of her list as their “characters are very compelling and Carey’s world building is unmatched. I am also a huge fan of Warsan Shire poetry, she is amazing!” she swoons.

“Meetings with Death” is not Lejowa’s first book. She has another fantasy novel that she published in 2015 titled “Leah: A Seer’s Legend” that propelled her writing into the public domain. Apart from being an Author, Lejowa is also the Founder of ‘Write Me Free’.

A Group focused on developing writers in Botswana that started through a self-facilitated bi-annual workshop in 2018. The Group had to stop the workshops due to the eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and resort to operating as a private group on Facebook.

“My hope is to have ‘Write Me Free’ become a Trust that can develop the writing skills in Botswana as well as provide financial assistance to writers. I believe that assistance from the government would go a long in helping to achieve this,” she dreams, adding in the same breath that “Write Me Free is my heart baby. It has the potential to have such a huge impact on talent development in Botswana and I am super focused on making that happen,” she promises.

GROWING UP

Despite being on her way to becoming a force to reckon with in the literary space, Lejowa had harboured dreams of becoming successful in the mainstream professions such as being a Lawyer or venturing into business.

She holds a Bachelor of Business Commerce in Management and Marketing from Monarch University in South Africa from where she enrolled into a culinary school. “I have been working in the marketing space for seven years and I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing at associate level. Writing was always a spare time thing. A self-therapy sessions kinda deal,” she reminisces.
Confectioneries are but some of the little things in life that can cheer any human being up. But the gloom of the advent of the Covid-19 virus pandemic seems to have wiped even the slightest glimmer of happiness that even a decadent delectable cake or sweet can promise. A maestro in the art of making any occasion memorable through her creatively crafted cakes, Malebogo von Rudloff, owner and head baker at Heavenly Cakes BW speaks of the hardships and lessons learnt in running a small business during a national crisis, this with regards to the recently lifted ban on trade following the announcement of the Corona Virus as a pandemic.

TRADING BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER LOCKDOWN

Rudloff shares that the cake season eased with the ending of the festive season and business tends to slow down for the beginning of the year through to March meaning there is very little revenue coming into the business. “Baking cakes is a seasonal business and I was making enough but it was quite slow,” she says speaking of the months right before the national lockdown was declared following the Covid-19 pandemic. One would expect business to have gone down during the lockdown but she tells a different story. She was actually making a respectable revenue and even had to at one point restock her shelves and cabinets as she had anticipated very little business and therefore under-stocked.

She reveals how she was astounded by the amount of business she got during the period. “It was a huge surprise for me that business picked up the way it did. I believe it owes to the fact that I make comfort food and people employed my services to bridge the gap between them, their families and friends as I got delivery orders for birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions,” she says.
Getting out of lockdown did however bring about another unexpected twist. Business simply fizzled out and trickled in again. The expectation was that since lockdown restrictions to trade had been lifted, business would continue to boom. That was not the case. Surprisingly, the business did better during lockdown. “It goes to show that people will always need to eat even during a tragedy,” she says amazedly.

THE SECRET

Rudloff attributes her lockdown business boom to her customers, who she said came to her because she inculcates professionalism and great customer relations. “Maintain consistency and hold yourself to a high standard of workmanship and first and foremost, take care of your clients as they will take care of you when you need them the most,” she advises fellow entrepreneurs.

One of the other lessons she has learnt from the advent of the Corona Virus pandemic is that there are alternative ways to operate a small business instead of the traditional; renting an office space and operating from there. She realised that working from home is more convenient and cost effective for a small enterprise like hers. “I have realised that I do not necessarily need to have a brick and mortar building to run my business from as I can do my business fully online,” she reckons.

Despite her realisations about how she can operate her business, she believes that existing small businesses need extensive assistance in the form of mentorship, financial advisory because more often than not, someone is going into business because of passion without much technical know-how on running a successful business. She resolutely believes that empowering entrepreneurs with the technical skill set to run small enterprises instead of just giving them money could go a long way in ensuring small businesses grow and scale up.
Plain yogurt contains some of nearly every nutrient that your body needs. It’s known to contain a lot of calcium, a mineral necessary for healthy teeth and bones. Just one cup provides 49% of your daily calcium needs. It is also high in B vitamins, particularly vitamin B12 and riboflavin, both of which may protect against heart disease and certain neural tube birth defects. One cup also provides 38% of your daily need for phosphorus, 12% for magnesium and 18% for potassium. These minerals are essential for several biological processes, such as regulating blood pressure, metabolism and bone health. One nutrient that yogurt does not contain naturally is vitamin D, but it is commonly fortified with it. Vitamin D promotes bone and immune system health and may reduce the risk of some diseases, including heart disease and depression.

HIGH IN PROTEIN
It provides an impressive amount of protein, with about 12 grams per 200 grams. This is great as protein has been shown to support metabolism by increasing your energy expenditure, or the number of calories that you burn throughout the day. Getting enough protein is also important for appetite regulation, as it increases the production of hormones that signal fullness. It may automatically reduce the number of calories you consume overall, which is beneficial for weight control.

DIGESTIVE HEALTH BENEFITS
Some types of yogurt contain live bacteria, or probiotics, that were either a part of the starter culture or added after pasteurization. To ensure your yogurt contains effective probiotics, look for one that contains live, active cultures and they should be listed on the label. Some types of probiotics found in yogurt, such as Bifidobacteria and Lactobacillus, have been shown to lessen the uncomfortable symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), which is a common disorder that affects the colon. This healthful type of bacteria lives in the gut, urinary tract, and the vagina without irritating these areas. It is believed that using yogurt containing good bacteria restores a healthful yeast balance in the vagina.

Strengthen the immune system
Consuming yogurt that contains probiotics on a regular basis may strengthen the immune system and reduce one’s likelihood of contracting an illness. Probiotics have been shown to reduce inflammation, which is linked to several health conditions ranging from viral infections to gut disorders. Research shows that in some instances, probiotics may also help reduce the incidence, duration and severity of the common cold and the immune boosting properties of yogurt are partly due to its magnesium, selenium and zinc, are trace minerals known for the role they play in immune system health.

IT MAY BENEFIT HEART HEALTH
Yogurt’s fat content is one of the reasons why its healthiness is often controversial. It contains mostly saturated fat, with a small amount of monounsaturated fatty acids. Saturated fat was previously believed to cause heart disease, but current research shows that this isn’t the case. Nevertheless, fat-free and low-fat varieties of yogurt are still popular. There is no clear evidence that the fat in yogurt is harmful to your health. In fact, it may benefit heart health. Regardless of its fat content, yogurt appears to benefit heart health by increasing “good” HDL cholesterol and reducing blood pressure.

Promote weight management
Yogurt has several properties that may help with weight management. It is high in protein, which works with calcium to increase levels of appetite-reducing hormones like peptide YY and GLP-1.

IT MAY NOT BE FOR EVERYONE
Some people need to be cautious with their yogurt intake, as it may cause adverse effects, especially in those with lactose intolerance or a milk allergy. Lactose intolerance occurs when the body lacks lactase, the enzyme needed to break down lactose, which is the sugar found in milk. It leads to various digestive symptoms, such as abdominal pain and diarrhea, after consuming milk products. Also milk products contain casein and whey, which are proteins that some people are allergic to. In these cases, milk triggers a reaction that can range from hives and swelling to life-threatening anaphylaxis. It is best to avoid yogurt if you have a milk allergy. [Source: www.healthline.com]
Infertility is a complex process. Pregnancy is the result of a process that has many steps. To get pregnant: A woman’s body must release an egg from one of her ovaries (ovulation); A man’s sperm must join with the egg along the way (fertilization); The fertilized egg must go through a fallopian tube toward the uterus; The fertilized egg must attach to the inside of the uterus (implantation).

Infertility may result from a problem with any or several of these steps. For the pregnancy to continue to full term, the embryo must be healthy and the woman’s hormonal environment adequate for its development. When just one of these factors is impaired, infertility can result.

Treatment options
Not all couples who desire a pregnancy will achieve one spontaneously and some will need medical help to resolve underlying fertility problems. It is now estimated that more than 9 million babies have been born worldwide since the first IVF baby was born in 1978. Most assisted reproductive technology (ART) treatments take place in women aged between 30 and 39. The most common fertilization technique is ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection). Overall, ICSI accounts for around three-quarters of all treatments worldwide, and conventional IVF around one-quarter. Success rates from frozen embryo transfer are increasing, as are the number of frozen cycles. Vitrification, as an efficient cryopreservation technique, has improved the outcome of both embryo and oocyte (immature egg cell) freezing.

For more information, visit www.merckfertilityjourney.co.za #WorldInfertilityMonth #DontDelay #Merck
Being a parent in the 21st century can be a challenging role which requires the presence of both parents and could either impact a child negatively or positively based on how a child is brought up. Young parents Walter Marks and Patricia Motsumi have full time careers in the IT and engineering professions.

They are proud parents to a 16-months-old, baby Lloyd James. Parenthood to them is all about team work and grooming your child to be the next best. As first time parents Marks and Motsumi said although parenthood is challenging, they have welcomed and embraced the role. They are constantly adapting to their daily routines as working parents. “Parenthood has given us a reason to do more than we need to do. We have to think about Lloyd and the foundation we can provide for his life,” they said. As a father and generational wealth enabler, Marks ought to work hard for his child and also be exemplary to him; something that seems to be lacking in today’s generation due to absent fathers in most cases.

“It means that I have to groom the next best man after myself, so that he too can be a better father than I am to him,” he said. Meanwhile, Motsumi said being a mother has been one of the greatest blessings to receive and has brought up so much happiness in their life. She, however, said just like every other couple they too have experienced their own challenges with their main obstacle being the distance as they work and stay in two different towns. “Since pregnancy we encountered distance as a challenge in our relationship even though we spend time together whenever we are not engaged at work. We are constantly communicating issues that are of paramount importance in a relationship and also important for child grooming. Technology has made it easier for us, as we often do visual calls,” she said.

Motsumi also said whenever they spend time are together as a family, she and Marks take turns to look after their child. They have learned to work as part of “We and not I” as parents. She further advised women who often find themselves as single parents to do all that they can to take care of their children, as they are the only parent to those children and a gift from God.

Marks advised men to stop being a threat to their unborn babies’ health by causing stress to their partners during pregnancy as pregnancy is a journey for both the unborn baby and the expecting mother. He said men should think of themselves as enablers for a better tomorrow for their children because their role in their child life’s determines how far their child can go in life.
Nothing beats the cold, dry winter season in Botswana than a warm and tastier Setswana cuisine meal. If you enjoy eating delicious food and worried about excessive weight gain, worry not as Setswana cuisine is the best solution. The dishes are not only gratifying; they have been scientifically proven to be healthier as they contain more protein, fiber and less oil. From bogobe jwa lerotse, mophane worms, oxtail, steamed bread, pounded meat, lebelebele, lechotlhoo, serobe, koko ya Setswana and zengwe, there is plenty.

The Best Catering Services situated in White City along old Lobatse road is your plug as they specialise in preparing Setswana cuisine. The establishment with 16 customer-friendly employees does not only do they offer delicious meals worth your money they also rank among the best in service.

At the forefront of keeping the business afloat is Tlotlo Kgathwane – a former Insurance Broker and now entrepreneur who offers décor, catering services, cakes, florist and photographic services. She has now opted to selling only Setswana cuisine post Covid-19 pandemic. The business-minded Kgatlwane share tips on how to prepare the most common and sought after gratifying meals.

**LECHOTLHO**

As many often complain about the preps of cooking this mouthwatering meal the tip is:

- Soak the beans and the maize
- Boil the water and add them to cook in one pot
- Slow cooking at moderate heat with a pinch of salt to taste and ...

**BOGOBE JWA LEROTSE**

A trick to making this appetising meal:

- Gabela lerotse (cut lerotse) and cook it well in time two days prior to cooking
- Package it and preserve it in the fridge and use it once you want to cook
- Boil kgodu ya lerotse and add dry sorghum
- Cook at moderate heat while ensuring that you mix well to achieve that smooth texture
GET gorgeous!

Discover new ideas; how to apply makeup, achieve various make up looks, skin-care advice and the best beauty products to fill your cosmetic tote this winter season with THATO THOMAS of Kgarebe House of Beauty.
WATER PROOF MASCARA AND A GOOD BLACK EYE LINER
These are a necessity in order to enhance your beauty and make your eyes to stand pop, whether you opt for a sharp cat eye or smudgy. These two items will give your face life any time of the day and looks stunningly dramatic and pairs well with a dark winter wardrobe. Avoid those that contain a lot of oil as they budge a lot and might leave you looking like a zombie.

EYE SHADOW
Cooper, bronze and nude eye shadows will give you that powerful look this winter. The colours are suitable for that beautiful day and night look; if you don’t feel brave enough to apply these shades, deep purple and gray are beautiful alternatives.

STATEMENT BROWS
Another great way to rock a one piece make up look is by perking up your brows. When filled correctly your brows can really be a show stopper. Use long wear water proof brow gel or pencil.

PERFECT SHADE FOUNDATION AND CONCEALED
Pick up three foundations which you feel might colour match your shade and apply the three shades from your check, neck or forehead. The neck line is always the best area to match your shade. Apply from the cheek down the neck and wait for a minute if you are using a matte foundation as they tend to oxidize a bit. Since the cold weather leads to dry skin you don’t want to apply the face powder kind over a dried out skin. Rosy and pink blush will give you that desired warmth and punch to the skin.

LIPSTICK
One of the best ways to get a standout winter look is to play up your lip colour. Clear lip gloss maroon and burgundy lipstick are the must try lip trends this season. Dark lipstick will give you somewhat vampy but absolutely stunning on pale skin. With such a bold lip, there is no need to also make a statement with your eyes as you don’t want to overpower the look, keep your eye shadow minimal.
SKIN CARE TIPS DURING WINTER SEASON

As the seasons change and the weather gets colder, the skin on our body can become drier. To tackle this, many people end up changing their entire skin routine. Below are a few tips for winter skincare routine.

*MOISTURISE DAILY AND NIGHT
Cold conditions can strip skin of its natural moisture to make sure not to skip your skin care routine in the morning and at night. If you really don’t have the energy at the end of the day, find a moisturising make up remover that will do the job for you.

*DRINK PLENTY OF WATER
Don’t replace your eight glasses of water a day with tea. Make sure you stay hydrated in the winter months and your skin will thank you.

*USE LUKEWARM WATER
It is very tempting to go for hot showers when the temperature is dipping, but if you love your skin, avoid them. Instead use lukewarm water to shower and wash your face. Hot showers dry your skin quickly, and if you do not moisturise it immediately your skin can develop cracks.

*NEVER STOP MOISTURISING
If you notice your skin getting dry, or your make up getting cakey throughout the day keep a facial mist nearby to spray on a dose of hydration. Spray your face with a light mist of setting spray to help set the make-up and provide a little extra moisture.

*USE GOOD FACIAL OIL
In the summer you want to avoid oil based products but in the winter they will do your skin a lot of good.

*EXFOLIATE YOUR LIPS
Having a lip balm handy is great for chapped lips but sometimes it might not do the job. To exfoliate a flaky pout, use a clean toothbrush and gently exfoliate to remove dead skin. Apply the lip balm afterwards to lock in the moisture.
Veronica Brooks, affectionately known as BotsDiva, has highlighted the need for musicians to diversify their offerings on the back of Covid-19 pandemic which has left most of them economically ruined.

BotsDiva, who is now based in South Africa, is also an aspiring actress; she said most local musicians are talented and should utilise their talent to generate various sources of income.

“As musicians we should not sell our selves short. One thing that I have learned since relocating to South Africa is that diversity in the entertainment industry is vital and hence I have other businesses on the side such as fashion design in-order to survive, as one can become irrelevant quickly in the music industry,” she said.

Bots Diva is also the owner of the Veb-entertainment liquor restaurant in Mochudi and has a fashion design business.

She said prior to the Covid-19 pandemic her businesses were all doing well but she has now been forced to close down the liquor restaurant.

“About two weeks after lockdown was lifted and businesses started operations under restrictions which did not make business sense, I had to close down the business as the number of customers has reduced drastically and I had to pay employees, electricity which’s now costly. Customers were now buying from retail outlets or bottle stores because of competitive lower prices. The business is not profitable anymore,” she said.

The ever bubbly said because of Covid-19 she has had to shelve plans of going on a tour of Ethiopia, Ghana and Togo.

She has landed an acting role in Nollywood, Nigeria and plans are underway to producing her own TV show. BotsDiva recently released her new single and video dubbed Much love which was directed by a Nigerian Director Ugo.
Kootshepile Motseonageng is an entrepreneur and business owner of Berry Heart Creations & Berry Heart Safaris. She is a multi-award-winning artist, singer and poet. An experienced Social Media Influencer, Writer, Content Creator & Brand Ambassador seeking to leverage her creativity in Reality Television Showbiz, Social Media Branding and Marketing, and communications, where she can apply her knowledge and skills for continuous improvement.
STRUTTING IT:
A MODEL AT THE 2019 MASA FASHION SHOW
MODEL:
Thabang Mmolotsi is a professional model based in Johannesburg / Cape Town, South Africa
My man is circumcised
O Rotse Kepese

If you care about the man in your life, encourage him to get circumcised.
Getting your man circumcised will help prevent cervical cancer.

Minimal pain
Less risk of STIs
Reduces chance of getting HIV by 60%
Reduces risk of penile and cervical cancer
Improves hygiene of the penis
Less risk of STIs

Visit your nearest health facility and get circumcised for free today!
Remember to always use condoms correctly and consistently.
BancABC’s Premier
Online Corporate Banking Platform

We understand your focus is on sustainable business growth. That is why we have a platform to manage your transactions from anywhere, which allows you to view Real-time Balances, execute Bulk Payments and Collections, Manage Payroll as well as View and Download User Audit Trails.