

We introduce the first nominees  
in our brand new FutureSpace  
Makers campaign

What will it take for  
the AfCFTA to deliver on  
all it promises?

2017 Pearl Awards  
Best print magazine:  
editorial (B2B)



# MiNDSPACE

ENRICH YOUR THINKING



OLDMUTUAL



## THE OVER-65 SEGMENT IS THE FASTEST GROWING IN THE COUNTRY \*

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\*Economists.co.za

**B**ridging the gap always sounds so easy, as if it's a hop, skip and a jump to the next, hopefully better, point. In real life, it requires a little more effort than that, but it is never an impossible ask.

Right now, there are several gaps to be bridged – there's the one between the old way of doing things and the new way, which young people around the world are showing us; there's the gap between how we work and how we will be working in the

the youth of today aren't like we were and criticising them for being less disciplined, less committed, fails to recognise that they are the exact opposite – they are *more* of everything – because their world is much more competitive than ever, and because they are the ones who will bear the full brunt of climate change.

Perhaps it means that we no longer need a rigid bridge to cross a gap, but rather a more nimble, flexible approach, as we are seeing with the MBA. Course content used to be pretty straightforward and it was the go-to qualification for those who wanted to move from a cubicle to a C-suite. On page 28 we explore how this degree is changing to stay in step with the times.

Both of these – working for a better world and taking a more flexible but no less committed approach – come together in the fight for our rhinos' survival by people like South Africa's all-women (and one man) anti-poaching unit, the Black Mambas. Just this year, they received the Resilience Through Cultural Diversity Award at the African Resilience Summit.

To see exactly what

they are up against, turn to page 40 for our feature by the makers of the award-winning documentary *Stroop*.

Whether it's Gen Z facing an incredibly risky future or our rhinos facing even more imminent danger, it's vital to keep raising awareness of the issues that ultimately affect us all. After all, staying informed is the surest way to close the gap between good intentions and good practices.

**So, without further ado, happy reading!**

**Gugu-Lisa Zwane-Johnson**  
**Editor**



Well done to the entire MiNDSPACE team for winning the SA Publication Forum award for the Best External Magazine (category C) for 2019.

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Fourth Industrial Revolution; and there's the gap between wishing for a better world and getting out there, getting your hands dirty and making a better world happen.

This issue of MiNDSPACE is dedicated to everyone who falls in the latter category. On page 18, you will meet a few nominees in our new FutureSpace Makers campaign, who all have one thing in common: a commitment to building a better future.

'It's a brave new world', our cover story on page 12, looks at the divide between the world as it is and the world Gen Z wants to make possible. As Wits professor Ruksana Osman says, complaining that





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lifeSPACE



4 ON OUR RADAR

What's on our reading list this month, plus a roundup of events for your work and play diary.

6 THE A TO ZZZ OF SLEEP

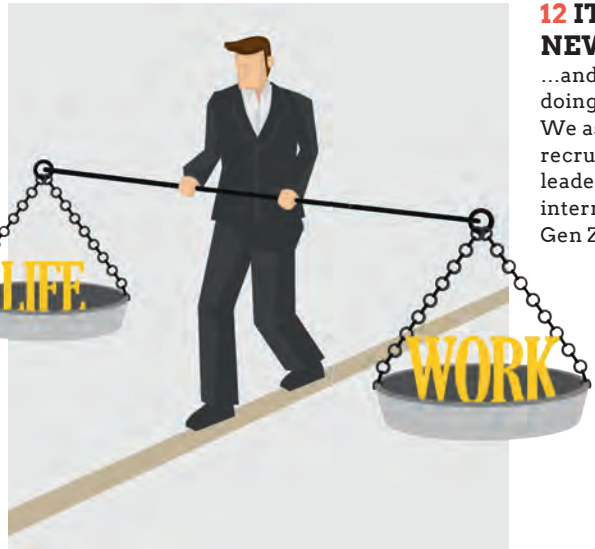
There's a lot to be said for getting a good night's rest. Here's the research to prove it.

thoughtSPACE

10

10 WHAT DETERMINES THE IDEAL WORKING WEEK?

Is the four-day working week feasible in a local context? We look at a few uniquely South African socioeconomic factors that come into play.



12 IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD...

...and centennials are doing it for themselves. We asked an academic, recruiter, business leader and an 18-year-old intern how best to meet Gen Z at least halfway.

wealthSPACE

18

18 NEW: FUTURES SPACE MAKERS

Meet the first nominees in this exciting campaign.

22 AfCFTA

What can we expect from the African Continental Free Trade Agreement?



yourSPACE

28

28 HOW RELEVANT IS THE MBA?

The growing demand for creative thinking has many wondering about the value of the MBA. We look at a few changes both in the supply and demand.

30 LOOKING FORWARD

What do companies and their leaders need to perform at their best? Ian Russell, author of *The Other End of the Telescope*, shares his thinking with us.



expertSPACE



34

34 A WINNING RETIREMENT PLAN

Old Mutual's team won a prestigious international contest thanks to their smoothed bonus expertise.

36 ONTRACK™: A CASE STUDY

Six months after its launch, OnTrack™ is already helping employers and employees.

37 THE FUTURE OF WORK IS HERE

Old Mutual Corporate Consultants GM Malusi Ndlovu shares his insights on the modern workplace.



legacySPACE

40 THE WAR FOR OUR RHINO

We get a personal take on the plight of our rhino from the filmmakers behind the award-winning documentary *Stroop*.

44 LAST THOUGHT

We challenged Tom Eaton to go plastic-free for a week...



**Cover artwork:**  
Studio Kronk  
[@studiokronk](https://www.instagram.com/studiokronk)



# On our radar

## On our watch list



### Lagos Book & Art Festival

**4-10 NOVEMBER, LAGOS**

Dubbed 'the biggest picnic in Africa', the Lagos Book & Art Festival ([lagosbookartfestival.org](http://lagosbookartfestival.org)) will be held for the 21st time in the home country of celebrated writers such as Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In addition to hosting talks and workshops, the festival will focus on literacy, with over 2 000 children expected to attend painting, writing, drama and poetry workshops.

### AfricArena

**11 & 12 NOVEMBER, CAPE TOWN**

The five finalists in the SA Startup Nation Challenge will compete at this year's AfricArena ([africarena.com](http://africarena.com)), which raised investment of over \$2 million for startups in 2018. Now that the R1.4 billion SA SME Fund is on board, the stakes are even higher. Plus, the winner of the Old Mutual Startup Challenge will be announced at the event. Speakers include 'entrepreneurship activist' Matsi Modise, fintech innovator Iyinoluwa Aboyeji, and Vizibiliti Insight's Courtney Bentley.

### Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in Africa

**23 & 24 JANUARY 2020, NAIROBI**

The third interdisciplinary Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in Africa ([afrialliance.org/events](http://afrialliance.org/events)) will bring together researchers, business, development and aid agencies, scholars and the UN, WHO and UNESCO to discuss Africa's future in a (climate) changing world. More specifically, it will focus on the growing incidence of diseases like malaria, as well as social, economic and political problems caused by droughts and floods.

## TIME OUT

### Soweto Marathon

**3 November**

42.833 kilometres. That's the distance runners will cover as they pass Soweto landmarks such as Vilakazi Street and the Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum in this year's Soweto Marathon ([sowetomarathon.com](http://sowetomarathon.com)). Although entries have closed for the race sponsored by Old Mutual, everyone is invited to come and cheer on the 40 000 participants.

### AMPD Studios

Since Old Mutual launched this state-of-the-art studio in Joburg's Newtown Junction, it has hosted Masterclasses and Hero Conversations with stars such as Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Thandiswa Mazwai and J'Something. (Tune in to the monthly live broadcasts on Metro FM.) The aim is to equip young musicians with the musical, entrepreneurial and financial tools to make it in the industry. To stay in the loop, follow Old Mutual SA #AMPDStudios on Facebook and Instagram.

## On our reading list

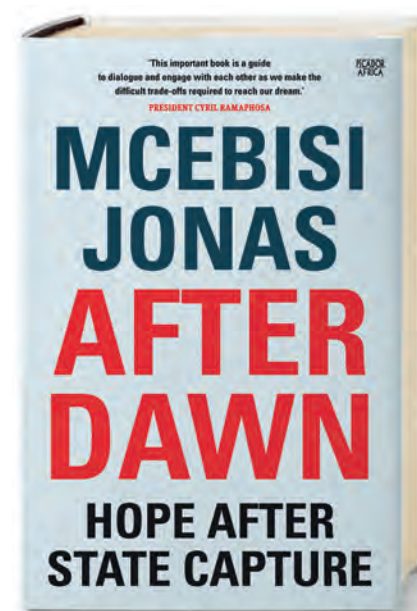
### SO YOU WANT TO BUILD A STARTUP? by Matthew Buckland (NB Publishers)

Chances are you've heard of Matthew Buckland, either as the founder of Burn Media Group and Creative Spark (which he later sold to M&C Saatchi Abel) or the award-winning 20FourLabs he set up at News24. Even if you haven't, his deeply personal memoir/start-up handbook is like a conversation with a friend. Buckland worked on this book right up to his death after being diagnosed with cancer, and it is a truthful and inspiring account of his journey, warts and all, from burnout to buyout and back again.



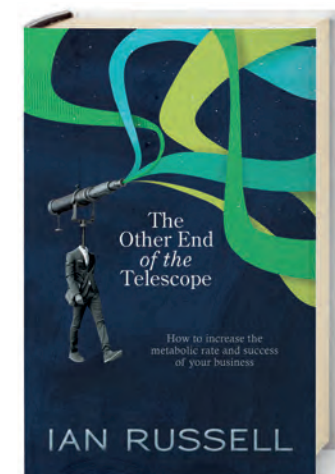
### AFTER DAWN – HOPE AFTER STATE CAPTURE by Mcebisi Jonas (Picador Africa)

Former Deputy Finance Minister Mcebisi Jonas, and now Chair of MTN, served under Finance Ministers Nhlanhla Nene and Pravin Gordhan, giving him front-row insights into South Africa's state-capture saga. In *After Dawn*, he first highlights the systemic problems that have brought South Africa to this political and economic point, and then provides, as Bruce Whitfield has said, a blueprint for getting our stalled economy going again.



### THE OTHER END OF THE TELESCOPE by Ian Russell (Tracey McDonald Publishers)

After learning all about gaskets at Ford and being put in charge of buying the company's performance engines, Ian Russell joined Barclays PLC in the UK before moving to South Africa. Russell's most recent corporate role was as CEO at BCX, Telkom's IT services business, before opting out of the C-suite. In *The Other End of the Telescope*, he introduces ideas such as 'organisational cholesterol' and quotes everyone from Marcel Proust to Mike Oldfield – if you've ever been in charge of a project or a number of people, you will relate. All royalties will be donated to Christel House South Africa, a school that uses education to lift children out of poverty. Turn to page 30 for our interview with Ian Russell.



### Working with communities to combat poaching

The Black Mambas, which comprises 35 women and one man, has been combatting poaching in South Africa since 2013. Based in the Balule Private Nature Reserve inside the Kruger National Park, they do their work without guns. Rather, the team live in the communities that harbour poachers and work with them to foster pride in and respect for wildlife. In addition to patrols and tracking, they engage with 1 300 learners at schools in the area every week. To support this crack unit, visit [blackmambas.org/donate.html](http://blackmambas.org/donate.html).

### Help save the rhino

With so many worthy bodies out there, it's difficult to know where to donate. We asked Susan Scott and Bonné de Bod, the award-winning filmmakers of *Stroop*, who also wrote the compelling account of the plight of our rhinos on page 40, for their suggestions.

- **The NSPCA** ([nspca.co.za](http://nspca.co.za)) Wildlife Protection Unit works predominantly with poaching survivors and rhino orphans.
- **Saving The Survivors** ([savingthesurvivors.org](http://savingthesurvivors.org)) treats rhinos and other animals that survive poaching attacks.
- **Tokkie Botes** of Flying for Freedom SA ([fffsa.org.za](http://fffsa.org.za)) flies SANParks vets, SAPS investigators and forensics teams all over Kruger National Park in his helicopter, relying on donations to pay for fuel.

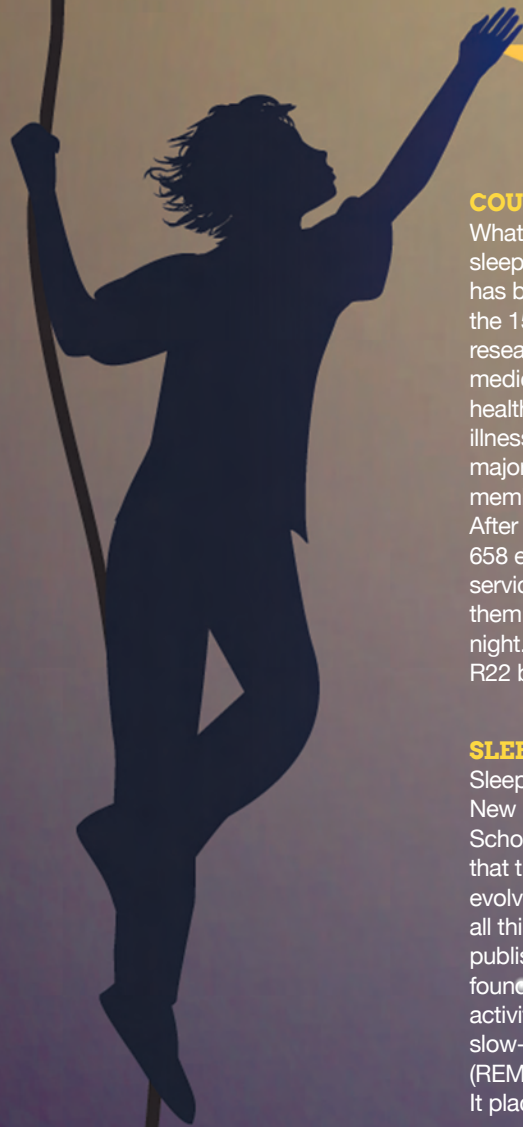


# The A to Z of sleep

South Africans need to give it a rest. Experts from the Wits Sleep Lab in Johannesburg to the Constantia Sleep Centre in the Cape agree that, as a country, we're not getting the sleep we need. Lack of sleep is linked to workplace issues like absenteeism, lack of productivity, poor work performance and on-the-job accidents – and that's before you start counting the cost to individual health.

New research by Charles King, an MBA student at the University of Stellenbosch Business School, found that insufficient sleep – that's an average of fewer than seven hours a night – increases the risk of developing major depression by 22%, coronary artery disease by 73%, type 2 diabetes by 18% and colorectal cancer by 50%.

And that's just the beginning. One of the most alarming findings in King's study was that getting fewer than six hours' sleep for just one night is equivalent to two totally sleepless nights in its impact on cognitive performance. So, one late night followed by an early morning can impair your memory and concentration, and make it more likely that you'll make risky decisions.



## COUNT THE COST

What's the cost of a bad night's sleep? King says insufficient sleep has been directly linked with seven of the 15 leading causes of death. His research measured how much one medical-aid scheme could save on healthcare, particularly on treating illnesses where inadequate sleep is a major risk factor, if its 25- to 40-year-old members simply got a full night's rest. After monitoring the sleeping habits of 658 employees of a national financial services group, he found that 64% of them slept fewer than seven hours a night. The bottom line? An estimated R22 billion in medical-aid payouts.

## SLEEP WITH THE FISHES

Sleep. Whose idea was it, anyway? New research from Stanford University School of Medicine in the US suggests that the basics of sleep may have evolved 450 million years ago in, of all things, zebrafish. The research, published this July in the journal *Nature*, found that sleeping zebrafish show brain activity that is similar to both the deep slow-wave sleep and rapid eye moment (REM) sleep found in mammals like us. It places the origins of sleep 150 million years earlier than scientists previously thought – and as study author Louis C. Leung put it: 'These signatures [of sleep] really have important functions – even though we may not know what they are – that have survived hundreds of millions of years of evolution.'

## SET THE TEMPERATURE

Next time you're battling to get a good night's sleep, check your room temperature. Dr Christopher Winter, a medical director at the US's Charlottesville Neurology and Sleep Medicine, believes the optimal temperature range sits between 15°C and 19°C. Go any lower than 12°C or higher than 23°C, and you'll have a restless night. Winter's findings are supported by a study published by North China Electric Power University that found that temperature has a significant effect on sleep calmness, difficulty in falling asleep, sleep satisfaction, and sleep adequateness.

## SKIP THE SNOOZE BUTTON

Hey, Rip Van Winkle! Too much of a good thing could also kill you. Research published in December 2018 in the *European Heart Journal* found that sleeping too much may be just as bad for you as sleeping too little. A study that examined the sleeping habits of more than 116 000 people aged between 35 and 70 over the course of eight years found that subjects who regularly slept eight to nine hours a night were 5% more likely to die prematurely or develop cardiovascular disease than those who got six to eight hours. And the more you snooze, the more you lose: for those who slept nine to 10 hours, the likelihood was as high as 17%; and for those who slept more than 10 hours a night, it shot up to 41%. Study lead Chuangshi Wang concluded: 'Our study shows that the optimal duration of estimated sleep is six to eight hours per day for adults.'

## CRY YOURSELF TO SLEEP

Are you a natural night owl? Another piece of new research has identified a mutation in the CRY1 gene, which helps govern circadian rhythm (the natural 24-hour sleep-wake cycle in all living things). This newly discovered mutation makes the human body clock run slower, thereby contributing to delayed sleep phase disorder (DSPD). Typically, people fall asleep around midnight and wake around 8am; for people with DSPD, that sleep clock runs from 3am to noon. In a nine-to-five world, the effects can be massively harmful. 'There are definite correlations between this late sleep pattern and a variety of secondary diseases, not all of which we understand,' said study author Alina Patke of Rockefeller University, New York City. She also found that people who exhibit 'this night-owl behaviour' are more likely to suffer from depression, heart disease, diabetes and obesity. **M**

## BEDTIME READING

Reading in bed, whether it's a Scandinavian crime thriller or a guidebook on meditation (as long as it's not on a screen), helps us to relax and increases the chances of a good night's sleep. Cognitive neuropsychologist Dr David Lewis from the University of Sussex found that reading reduces stress by 68% in just six minutes, making it more effective than listening to music (61%), drinking tea or coffee (54%) or taking a walk (42%).

**Looking forward to a long, lazy retirement?** A 2018 Human Sciences Research Council study found that 3.5% of South African 15- to 24-year-olds suffer from insomnia, and – alarmingly – 20.5% of people who are 65 years and older.

TEXT: MARK VAN DIJK. PHOTOGRAPH: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES





Is the four-day  
working week a one-  
size-fits-all solution?  
**p10**

Gen Z is taking over  
from millennials.  
What does that mean  
for employers?  
**p12**

‘It’s the younger  
generation who  
will take us  
where we want  
to go in terms of  
seeking new ideas  
and innovation.’

– Busi Mavuso, CEO, Business  
Leadership South Africa

PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

# thoughtSPACE

Must-read opinions  
and topical debates



# What determines the ideal working week?

Visit [oldmutual.co.za/mindspace](http://oldmutual.co.za/mindspace) and subscribe to our newsletter to receive more articles like this.



ILLUSTRATION: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

A FOUR-DAY WORKING WEEK IS OFTEN TOUTED AT WORKSHOPS AND IN THE MEDIA, BUT IN SOUTH AFRICA THERE IS MORE TO CONSIDER THAN WORK-LIFE BALANCE.

*By Tonja Blom*

**INVARIABLY, THE FIRST POINTS RAISED** when the 'ideal' working week is discussed are work-life balance for employees on the one hand, and productivity and economic benefit on the other.

Yet other questions spring to mind: ideal working week based on what? How many hours does someone spend at work? How many hours are spent productively working? Is there a reason why they feel safer at work than at home?

Simplistically, think of the equation as a scale, with the organisation and economy on the one side, and the individual employee on the other. The balancing point will represent the worker's work environment where employee and employer connect. On the

organisation's side of the scale will be factors such as economic and business growth, optimal productivity, competitiveness, cost-effectiveness, governance and social awareness. On the employee's side will be personal wellness, job security, safety, fairness, transparency, meaningful work, work-life balance and social life. If one of these factors should change, the scale will tip one way or the other.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENARIO

South Africa has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption per capita in the world – 9.3 litres per person in 2016, according to the World Health Organization – and the country is plagued by shockingly high levels of domestic violence. One in five South Africans is on antidepressants and/

**When considering work hours and conditions, we have to acknowledge the whole being: mental, emotional, spiritual and physical.**



Dr Tonja Blom has a doctorate in Business Leadership and is a Master's HR Professional. Through her company, The Change Well, she helps businesses, teams and individuals to work towards sustainable transformation.

or anti-anxiety medication. We suffer from high rates of traumatisation with a high prevalence of mental disorders (such as anxiety disorder, mood disorder, lack of impulse control and alcohol and drug abuse). The typical South African household has only one parent. Household debt is very high at 71.9% of disposable income.

Add to this the reality that almost all formally employed workers own a smartphone and browse the web and connect to social media several times a day, a habit that has created a misunderstanding of the term 'friends'. If our primary connection to our 'friends' happens without looking up and tuning in to facial expressions, tone of voice and our surroundings, we invariably become alienated. These are not the warm, real relationships that are integral to healthy coping and social support systems.

Employees who have little, if any, support structures or coping mechanisms will struggle to concentrate and focus on their tasks. As a result, their teams, the organisation and, ultimately, society will struggle. Optimal functioning and productivity then become unlikely.

This chain reaction illustrates why, when considering work hours and conditions, we have to acknowledge the whole being: mental, emotional, spiritual and physical.

South Africa, however, has poor economic growth

and our unemployment rate is approaching 30%. There are fears of climate change and water shortages. Service-delivery protests and xenophobia are common. We need more opportunities to engage more people in the formal economy.

## IS A FOUR-DAY WORKING WEEK THE ANSWER?

Perhaps. Perhaps implementing half-day jobs (job sharing) is another option. Focusing on sustainable social-responsibility projects from within the organisation could be another.

If a four-day working week does not create an imbalance between the priorities of the employer and employee, then yes, let us explore it. If a longer working week will create a better balance, given the bigger picture, then maybe that is the answer.

If the idea is to give employees more time at home, let us explore our social-support structures and how to use such time towards purposeful relationship building. If time at home causes anxiety and depression, highlights an employee's lack of social support, and increases time spent on social media, I urge you to ask instead how we can enhance our wellbeing, regardless of how much time we spend at work.

There still remain more questions than answers. Perhaps the most important challenge at this stage of the debate is how to find balance for all parties involved. **M**



# It's a brave new world

A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ABOUT TO ENTER THE WORKFORCE. HOW CAN SCHOOLS PREPARE THEM, AND HOW CAN BUSINESSES RECRUIT – AND RETAIN – THEM? AND, IN AN ECONOMY WHERE MOST OF THEM ARE UNLIKELY TO FIND JOBS, DO THE OLD MODELS EVEN MATTER?

*By Mark van Dijk*

**T**HE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT. This year's graduates and school-leavers (born between roughly 1995 and 2005, and collectively known as Gen Z, or centennials) have a noticeably different world view to the previous generation. Whereas millennials (born between 1980 and 1995) are labelled self-centred, entitled, idealist, creative and dependent, Gen Z is self-aware, persistent, realist, innovative and self-reliant. At least, that's according to a World Economic Forum (WEF) study.

There's been a lot of talk about centennials recently, partly because they're about to enter the workforce, and mostly because they now account for 2.47 billion of Planet Earth's 7.7 billion inhabitants. While they are different (at least on paper) to millennials, centennials are really just extensions of the same tribe, says Ronen Aires, CEO of Student Village and a man who works with young people all day every day. 'You're dealing with an iteration. Millennials and centennials are not worlds apart. Previous generations, from Gen X (born between 1965 – 1979) to millennials, were galaxies apart.'

Centennials, then, will behave much as one would expect them to. They love their mobile devices,

they live on social media (specifically Instagram and YouTube, not Facebook where their parents are), they're emotionally sensitive and socially aware. They're #woke, and they can't understand why the rest of us aren't.

They're also inheriting an enormous mess. Statistics SA's Quarterly Labour Force Survey, published in July 2019, highlighted South Africa's crippling jobs crisis. Unemployment affects the youth especially: 39.5% of unemployed people are first-time jobseekers, while a mind-blowing 69.1% of young people under the age of 24 are unemployed.

Just as well, then, that centennials are so persistent, as the WEF says, and self-reliant. They have to be. They've grown up with a smartphone in their hand, and they've seen their parents battle through the fallout of the 2008 global financial crisis and South Africa's 'Lost Decade' of state capture. They know the mess we've left them, and they have clear ideas as to how to fix it.

As a result, those businesses that want to recruit and include them, and the society that is trying to educate them, need to understand them better.

And, most of all, they need to change their tactics.



## HOW UNIVERSITIES SHOULD EDUCATE THEM

*Professor Ruksana Osman, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand*

**'IN SOME RESPECTS, YOUNG PEOPLE HAVEN'T CHANGED** much over the generations, but their environment has. Yet people who haven't recognised this often say, "The youngsters of today aren't like we were. They're less disciplined, less committed, less of everything." In fact, they are *more* of everything because their environment is so competitive and ever-changing.

'When students leave university, they cannot be unemployable. They have to develop the skills and flexibility that will drive businesses to employ them. For that to happen, universities must always know what employers are looking for, and what the latest developments in the workplace are.

'But those developments are unpredictable, and the changes are so rapid and so disruptive that they happen every three, six, nine months. How can a three-year degree keep pace with that? It's not going to be about the content we teach any more; it's going to be about the skills, attitudes and approaches we develop in our students. You'll need the content, but the bigger role universities can play is to teach adaptability, flexibility and agility.

'Universities have to rethink the existing degree structure. Is it still appropriate, or are there other ways of doing it? Internationally, employers are starting to question the

whole idea of degrees and credentials, and are looking at personal attributes instead.

'In South Africa, because of our history, a degree is still extremely important and gives you access to so many places. I don't think we can throw out the old degree structure, but we can begin to think about joint degrees, where students have the option to combine science and humanities subjects to see what's possible. For example, Wits offers a postgraduate degree in data science to both humanities and science students.

'Those who work in artificial intelligence (AI) now realise that they'd better work with people who do cognitive science and neuroscience. It's those kinds of collaborations that will enable our students to keep ahead of the curve.

'But that curve – by which I mean the workplace – is changing so rapidly that you can't possibly package something and believe that it will completely prepare a student for it. It's not going to be like that. The future of work doesn't just reside in how our students are prepared at university, or how basic education is delivered. It's also about how business does its work.

'That's why we need a holistic conversation about the future. It can't just be education speaking in an echo chamber, or business speaking in an echo chamber. Universities and businesses need to talk to each other.'





## HOW RECRUITERS CAN ATTRACT THEM

Ronen Aires, CEO, Student Village

**‘WHENEVER GRADUATE RECRUITERS SAY,** “We have to connect more with millennials”, my retort is: “Why? Do you have a problem with your junior management?” Because that’s where millennials are. They’re not coming up on the horizon. They are already here. So who’s next?

‘Centennials are like millennials 2.0. You’re not dealing with a totally different kind of person. It’s more like a software upgrade. Some aspects of that upgrade may suit you, some may not. Centennials are finely tuned emotional instruments. They live in a digital world, where the currency is emotion and drama and hype. It can be inconvenient for managers, but the world does need more of it.

‘Connection is incredibly important for them. Hanging out isn’t physical any more, and that’s important to know. It means graduate recruiters don’t have to fly around the country. Sure, you can have key people in key areas, but the rest can be done digitally, including follow-up interviews. At the same time, this generation is high-tech, high-touch. You can use tech in marketing and in communication, but half of their decision

**‘Young people want security and opportunity, but this business of having a nine-to-five job is probably the unsexiest thing in the world at the moment.’**

will be made based on physical contact.

‘Remember, a centennial’s feed is their reality. In terms of marketing, if you’re not in their feed, you don’t exist. You have to find your way into their social media feeds. Once you’re there, stories are a great way to market to them. It’s about saying, for example, “When I was a graduate, I never dreamt that I would be managing a portfolio of R2 billion after two years,” rather than “Join our company – we’re amazing!”

‘They want to connect with you; they want to see themselves in you. You

are the best projection of their dreams. That’s why businesses need to use young professionals to connect with young talent. They get one another. It’s the best way to make young candidates think, “Hmm, I can see myself working here.” If you bring grey-haired guys in grey suits to a campus or recruiting event... Yes, they have their place, but you need your young people to really push it over the line. They’re the ones who can ask and answer the right questions.

‘Even then, the notion of what having a job means is changing. On the one hand, young people want security and opportunity, but this business of having a nine-to-five job is probably the unsexiest thing in the world at the moment.

‘Centennials see themselves as influencers, and not just on social media, and they want to be entrepreneurs. We’ve seen this in the industry, and through our own research at Student Village. For today’s graduates, one of the most desired employers is Me, Myself & I. Working for yourself and starting a business has gone from not being on the map at all to suddenly being in the top five. A couple of years ago, it was “I want to work for Google” and “I want to work for Facebook.” Now it’s more, “Actually, I’d rather work for me. I want my own hustle.”



## WHY BUSINESSES SHOULD INCLUDE THEM

Busi Mavuso, CEO, Business Leadership South Africa

**‘IF SOUTH AFRICA WERE ANY OTHER COUNTRY,** we would have declared a state of emergency. We simply cannot have a graduate unemployment rate of 55%. It is the ultimate recipe for disaster. Our economy has not grown by more than 1% year-on-year since 2013. What are the contributors to this low-growth environment? Where are the growth opportunities?

‘Many of the world’s top companies by market cap operate in the tech space. Apple, Microsoft, Google, Amazon... They’re run by a tech-savvy, IT-driven generation. Yet, if you walk into most boardrooms in corporate South Africa, this is not the generation you see.

‘The reality is that our ageing workforce is not au fait with where the world is going, or how to best position businesses for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Businesses have to transform. For the longest time, South African business leadership has had a face, and that face has been white and male. That is gradually changing, and we need to engage with that.

‘We don’t have a choice. South Africa has an open economy and we’re not only competing with one another inside the country, we’re also competing with the rest of the world. If you want to survive and be sustainable as a business, 4IR is the route you have to take.

‘You need new thinking. You need innovation. You

need to engage with these issues from a different perspective, and you need to provide young people with an environment in your company that fosters their creativity. They understand the language of technology better than previous generations. They don’t even have to read an instruction manual; digital technology is second nature to them.

‘What has brought us to where we are – as a world, as a country and as businesses – is not what is going to take us into this new frontier. We have to accept that. Again, look at the tech giants: their leaders don’t wear suits and ties. Those are things of the past. Their employees sit on bean bags and at hot desks. The old structures are no longer there. Some of the greatest innovations and initiatives at these companies don’t come from executive level.

‘If your business is not moving in that direction, you’re dying. To prevent that, you have to keep up with the times, and the times are telling us to look at the average age of the people who are running those global pacesetters. Look at Alibaba. Look at Facebook. Jack Ma was in his mid-30s when he co-founded Alibaba. Mark Zuckerberg is still only 35.

‘It’s this younger generation who will take us where we want to go in terms of seeking new ideas and innovation, and showing us how business ought to be done in the era of 4IR.’



## WHAT WE WISH YOU KNEW

Jadene van Neel, Intern, Earthchild Project

**‘I WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE.** Every day, I worry about my own future, and about the decisions young people are going to make. There are so many negative influences around, and it’s really worrisome. I’m worried about gangsterism in my community, and about the economy of the country. There are not a lot of jobs or opportunities available, and sometimes I think the younger kids in my art classes need more motivation to take the few opportunities that are available, and to improve their economic stability so that they can have a better future.

‘I’m 18 and I work as an intern at Earthchild Project, an NPO, where I teach extramural art to Grade 3 learners at the school in Lavender Hill. I also teach yoga, which – together with environmental studies – are compulsory subjects. I’ve been a part of Earthchild for basically my whole life, since I was in Grade 4 in 2010.

To be honest, I didn’t know what I wanted to do as a career, and thought that an internship at Earthchild would be a great platform for me to find myself and become a better person.

‘After my internship, I’m interested in going into the hospitality industry. I’d like to work on a cruise ship perhaps, and see more of the world, but I’m extremely happy at

Earthchild. The kids make it a blast. Obviously it’s not always fun and games, and there are difficult days, but we adapt to unpleasant situations and try to make the most of them.

‘A lot of kids in my community don’t value the importance of education and, because I’m basically on the same level as the kids at the school – I grew up here, in Lavender Hill, near Cape Town – I want to show them that being at Earthchild can change where your life is going. I want them to see me as proof of what EarthChild can do.

‘Climate change is really important to me. We have a yoga pledge: “Respect all people, animals and the earth.” Earth is our future. If there’s no Earth, there’s no us. No littering, no dumping, reducing your carbon footprint, planting trees... these are things we really try to instil in the kids to show them that they can be the change.

‘The older generation doesn’t always understand my generation. We have big dreams. We want to become photographers, DJs, YouTubers... and they keep saying, “Get a proper, stable career! Get a job that will really make you money!” For us, it’s not all about the money. It’s more about the experience. We want to travel. We want to meet new people. We don’t – or, at least, I don’t – want to work in an office from nine to five. I just don’t see my life going in that direction at all.’ **M**

### GEN NEXT?

What can we expect from the graduating class of 2025? They don’t yet have a collective name, but they already have a global spokesperson. Swedish activist Greta Thunberg (born 2003) has been protesting against climate change since she was 15, leading school strikes, speaking at Davos and earning a Nobel Prize nomination along the way. She inspired tens of thousands of South African teens – including 17-year-old Ruby Sampson and 11-year-old Yola Mgogwana – to march on Parliament this year, which suggests that the post-centennials will be a generation of engaged and outspoken citizens. As Ronen Aires says, ‘If you want to know what the 18-year-old market will look like in five years’ time, look at today’s 13-year-olds.’



Meet the first  
Futurespace Makers  
nominated by  
our contributors.  
*p18*

A single continental  
market for goods and  
services in Africa –  
can the AfCFTA work?  
*p22*

‘Imagine where our  
country would be if  
our children grew  
up believing that  
they can be and can  
do anything they  
set their minds to.’

– Nthabi Sibanda,  
PUO Educational Books

PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

# wealthSPACE

Bold business insights  
and strategies for success



# Meet our FutureSpace makers

WHEN WE ASKED OUR MINDSPACE CONTRIBUTORS AND THOUGHT LEADERS TO NOMINATE THE PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE THEM FOR OUR BRAND-NEW SERIES, WE WERE ASTONISHED BY THE CREATIVE, SMART, RESOURCEFUL SOUTH AFRICANS WHO ARE CHANGING THE WORLD IN EXCITING WAYS.



## EDUCATION

**Nominee:** Nthabi Sibanda of Puo Books

**Nominated by:** Gugu-Lisa Zwane-Johnson

*When Nthabi Sibanda began looking for storybooks for her own children, it soon became clear that there aren't many storybooks available in African languages. Puo, which publishes children's books in all 11 South African languages, therefore came about because she wanted her children to know their own languages, Sesotho and isiNdebele. (Instagram @lulaandlebo)*

**Why the name Puo?**  
'Puo means language in Sesotho. Language, culture and, in turn, identity are inextricably linked. Imagine how impactful it would be if young children had a flood of books to choose from that they can relate to and in which they can see themselves. Imagine where our country would be if we were more deliberate about teaching children to read for meaning through books that tell "their" stories; if children grew up believing that they can be and can do anything they set their minds to.'

## Have your goals changed in any way through the years?

'Our goal has always been to create stories that tell of Africa's heritage. There is no shortage of such stories, but the question is how to make them accessible and incorporate them seamlessly in our children's day-to-day lives. We continue to deliver books and mobile libraries to schools that do not have access to storybooks, and helping to create a reading culture at those schools. As always, our goal is to get more books to more children. #GiveBooksChangeLives'

## Why are you so passionate about children's books and teaching children to read in their mother tongue?

'For the majority of children in the country, the only access to books is at school. But only 7% of our schools have functional libraries and 58% of homes do not have a single leisure book, which means books and reading are not part of most of their lives. When they do have access, the books often don't resonate with them and could perpetuate a culture of non-reading by inadvertently telling children that they don't matter enough to be represented in a book. It all contributes to the fact that 80% of Grade 4s cannot read for meaning.'

## What do you consider a sign of Puo's success?

'When I see a child's excitement upon seeing characters that look like them on the cover of our Lula & Lebo books. Or when I see a child like the little girl who came to a book reading with a copy of one of our books that had a drink stain on the cover and a page that had been sellotaped – it had been read!'

## TECH, AI AND ROBOTICS

**Nominee:** Ellen Fischat of Story Room and Common Good First

**Nominated by:** Miriam Mannak

*Ellen Fischat has spent most of her working life developing and incubating startups, including as MD of Silicon Cape and founder of innovation consultancy Innocircle. Her current focus is Story Room, a platform that enables the transfer of ideas, skills and resources between tech startups and large corporates. While living and working in the Netherlands, Fischat acted as interpreter between funders and recipients, a 'connector of people'. She says, 'I understand how to connect the dots, fill in gaps and establish mutually beneficial relationships.' (commongoodfirst.com)*

## Where does your passion for entrepreneurship come from?

'I believe it stems from my days as a social worker. Social workers operate in difficult situations and are always under-resourced, and I love finding solutions for challenges. Now, I'd like to think that I contribute towards building job creators



rather than better jobseekers. Entrepreneurship is a way of doing that.

'I strive to see a tangible impact and positive change in the projects I undertake, to contribute in a meaningful way to socioeconomic change for the benefit of society in general, rather than a privileged few, and to see a more diverse group of decision-makers at the table.'

## Social entrepreneurs often have one foot in the tech space, or vice versa. Why do you think this is?

'I think "technopreneurs" understand the concept of technology for good. They want their solutions to be used by a larger group of people, rather than a few. They know that technology is only as good as the people it serves. Social entrepreneurs know that technology can scale solutions and increase the impact of the outcomes.'

## Is there anything that surprises you about South Africa's social entrepreneurs?

'I am always blown away by their powerful and innovative solutions. They display incredible resilience, competency and drive. We tend to think that the rest of the world knows better or is better, but we underplay the significance of our work.'







‘We tend to think that the rest of the world knows better or is better, but we underplay the importance and significance of our work.’  
– Ellen Fischat

SUSTAINABILITY

**Nominees:** Yongama Skweyiya and Francois Bezuidenhout of Pimville Gin

**Nominated by:** Professor Johan Fourie

*Cradock-born-and-raised Yongama Skweyiya arrived at gin-making by way of a BCom in Entrepreneurship and two previous ventures, while Francois Bezuidenhout is a descendant of Wijnand Leenders, the first person to make wine at the Cape in the Company’s Gardens. The two met at Stellenbosch University and Pimville Gin flowed from there, bagging the Trophy for the Best Distilled Gin at the 2019 Old Mutual Trophy Spirits Show – barely six months after its commercial launch. (pimvillegin.com)*

**What made you decide on gin, and particularly on organic gin?**  
‘The gin market made sense because it offered really great opportunities to

effectively position a brand, serve a niche market and have a globally appealing product made with local ingredients. Together, this allows one to be competitive in the market with a product that is unique.’

Are the botanicals in Pimville Gin really organic?

‘All our botanicals are organic. Just after you’ve added ice, you will see that the gin becomes cloudy as it goes cold. This is because of the natural oils of the marula, baobab and wild ginger we use. We also source from small growers as much as we can.’

Given your enthusiastic following on social media and your win at the Old Mutual Spirits Awards, why do you still need to crowdfund?

‘Winning the trophy has been major. It has broken down doors we have been knocking on for the past few months. It has solidified our partnerships with our retail and hospitality partners and, more importantly, it has proven what Francois and I have been advocating since day one: Pimville Gin is the best gin in South Africa.

‘We initially crowdfunded – this is not our first round – to be able to create the brand and product. Now we are doing it because we are ready to solidify our national footprint and increase our presence in the retail space. At the same time, we want to continue to service our hospitality and lifestyle market in the townships. Then comes finding new markets abroad.

‘This round will enable us to sponsor children in need at a Pimville primary school and set up a bursary for one matriculant to study logistics/marketing after school before stepping into a job at Pimville Drinks Co.’

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Nominee:** Gugu Mthaba of KZN GAP

**Nominated by:** GG Alcock

*‘This is an extraordinary project’ says GG Alcock of the KZN Goat Agribusiness Project (GAP) founded by Mdukatshani, an NGO, in the Weenen/Msinga area.*

*GAP works to improve home food security and lift subsistence farmers, especially women and youth, out of poverty by improving goat productivity. Launched almost a decade ago, its success has prompted the Department of Agriculture and European Union to invest in GAP to help them reach their goals: to double indigenous goat production, develop 7 000 female commercial farmers, create 620 youth jobs and 270 microbusinesses, and generate R100 million in extra value from goat herds. In October 2018, they had a total of 4 152 participating farmers (2 642 women, 994 men and 462 youth). (gapkzn.co.za)*

How can goats specifically help to uplift women and young people?

‘Most African households own goats, which often are under the women’s control. Yet funders often focus on cattle, which are owned and tended by the men. This excludes women and does not help to solve the power imbalance. Also, there is a huge demand for goats in South Africa; we import over a million a year. GAP works with indigenous breeds that multiply quickly and can survive harsh conditions so that we can supply more and more goats locally.’

‘Learning is a two-way process. It’s just a matter of being humble.’  
– Gugu Mthaba

What makes you happy when it comes to what you do?

‘Seeing the shift in farmers’ mindsets, especially the women’s. They now look at goats as a means of generating an income to the extent that they have begun to invest in goat husbandry.’

What has working so closely with small-scale and subsistence farmers taught you?

‘That learning is a two-way process. Farmers have a lot of knowledge and you can learn a lot from them. It’s just a matter of being humble and giving them the respect they deserve.’

And your long-term plans/hopes for the project?

‘The project currently runs in five districts. My vision is to see it grow across South Africa so that we can stop importing goats, and to eventually export to countries like Saudi Arabia.

‘I also want to continue working to engage and involve more young people in goat farming.’

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY

**Nominee:** Sibongile Gumbi of iVacBio

**Nominated by:** Wendy Luhabe

*When nominating Sibongile Gumbi of iVacBio, Wendy Luhabe wrote, ‘Sibongile is breaking new ground by building a biologics company that develops and commercialises plant-derived animal vaccines. Livestock equals wealth for the many people in Africa who depend on vaccines to protect this wealth and manage the risk of epidemics that can wipe out a herd in an instant.’ (linkedin.com/company/ivacbio)*

Why did plant-based vaccines make sense to you?

‘Using plants as “factories” for making vaccines is an exciting emerging field in the biomanufacturing space. Plants are prolific protein producers, which makes antigen development simpler and more affordable. Existing production technologies rely on fermentation processes, which require huge investment in terms of buildings and equipment. Plant-based processes have been proven to be four to five times less expensive.’

What were your goals when you initially founded iVacBio, and are they still the same?

‘My goals are captured in our vision, which is to build a world-class biopharmaceutical company. My personal goal is to realise this by harnessing technology, accessing the best minds in business and



exploiting the most viable financial and commercial opportunities.’

Where to from here?

‘As a startup, iVacBio is making great progress and in 2017 we became the first, and only, company in Africa to be awarded funding from GALVmed, The Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines, to develop a vaccine for ovine brucellosis, a disease found in sheep.

‘Through our partnerships with South African R&D institutions, we will continue to develop iVacBio’s intellectual property and product pipeline for South African and international markets.’ **M**

To nominate someone as a MiNDSPACE FutureSpace Maker, please email [mindspace@oldmutual.com](mailto:mindspace@oldmutual.com)

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ALL AFRICA'S 54 COUNTRIES  
HAVE SIGNED THE AfCFTA,  
THE GROUND-BREAKING  
AGREEMENT TO TURN THE  
CONTINENT INTO ONE LARGE  
TRADING BLOC. WHAT NEXT?

*By Victor Kgomoewana*

# AfCFTA: the beginnings of a trade revolution

**T MIGHT TURN OUT**  
to be a major  
component of  
Rwandan President

Paul Kagame's legacy that will echo beyond his own country for many years to come that he brought the AU the closest it has ever been to realising cooperation among its members. During his tenure as chair of the African Union Commission, Kagame pushed for the continental body to finalise the framework to increase the volume of trade and investment among fellow African states. At the Kigali Summit on 10 May 2018, 27 African Union (AU) member states signed the historic African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

**THE LONG ROAD TO HERE**

This vision dates back over half a century to May 1963 when the AU, then called the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was founded by the independent states of Africa. Then followed the Lagos Plan of Action, adopted in 1980, to reduce reliance on the West. It was supposed to be achieved by means of intra-African trade. The intention was there, but the practical implementation proved more complex. As a result, many regional economic blocs were founded, including the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, which was the forerunner of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Abuja Treaty of 1991 led to the formation of the African Economic Community. This was meant to fast-track free trade with the help of free-trade areas, customs unions, a central African bank as well as a common currency union. Since then, the OAU

has morphed into the AU, sustaining talks about free trade and intra-African collaboration. However, it was only at its 2015 summit in Johannesburg that an agreement was reached to start negotiations towards realising the AfCFTA vision.

This July in Niamey, Niger, the agreement was finally ratified. This ushered in a new era in which two benefits can be expected of this new free-trade region. One of the overarching advantages expected is that small African countries will benefit from banding together with stronger states to create a market of 1.2 billion people. In business and trade, size matters. The reason China and India – both developing economies – can secure good deals is because they each present too big a market for anyone to ignore. Comprising over a billion people each, they leverage their muscle to negotiate better terms for themselves on the world stage.

The other benefit for African countries in the free-trade area is that it will allow them to plan their industrialisation jointly based on each country's unique advantages. For instance, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Nigeria are among the top four cocoa producers in the world. However, only by joining hands will they be able to build a robust chocolate industry, instead of exporting cocoa as an agricultural commodity to Switzerland and France, only to import the finished product at high prices.

Instead, they can then sell chocolate made in West Africa with West African cocoa to West Africans. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has 15 members with an



aggregate population of over 300 million, which is a huge market for chocolate – especially if all jobs, from the production of cocoa to the making and marketing of chocolate, are kept in the region. West Africans will have an incentive to buy local because of the economic spin-offs. Charity begins at home, even on trade and investment matters, which is the converse of the current economic reality in a fragmented Africa.

It is also easier to market something abroad if it is already doing well on home turf. Depending entirely on foreign markets is not sustainable, because it leaves one at the mercy of global turbulence. Right now, Africa is finding out how impactful a trade war between the US and China can be and how a slowdown in China's economic growth can dampen the international prices of mineral resources such as platinum.

So, if Africa can pull off this much-talked-about cross-continental free-trade agreement, we can officially call the 21st century Africa's time. Africa has been getting the short end of the world-trade stick for centuries, exporting commodities and importing expensive goods made from those same commodities. It has maintained a low per capita income, wearing the woeful mantle of being the 'richest place with the poorest race', to quote reggae icon Peter Tosh.



*Victor Kgomoewana is the Director of Africa is Open for Business and the author of the book with the same name. He is a public speaker and journalist, and consults on African business development. Kgomoewana is a former CEO of PPC Ntsika Fund, the enterprise development initiative of PPC Ltd.*

At the heart of this stark contradiction has been the inability of African countries to do business with each other: intra-African trade. Figures from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development peg this figure at 18% of total exports in 2016 – versus 59% and 69% for intra-Asian and intra-European exports, respectively.

This low level of trade among ourselves is Africa's undoing. Barriers include corruption, poor physical or policy infrastructure, and small-mindedness. It forces African states into parallel trade agreements with European Union countries, the US and the like, which continue to compromise Africa's interests. Unfortunately, most African states are too small, disorganised or weak to assert themselves against giants like China and India.

For example, the price of cobalt has dropped more than 50% since the beginning of 2019. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) accounts for nearly 60% of all cobalt produced in the world. Cobalt is used to make lithium-ion batteries, which go into smartphones like those made by Apple, Samsung and Huawei; tablets and even cars like Tesla. All these products cost exponentially more than cobalt. They are made elsewhere: China, South Korea, the US and Europe – far from the troubled DRC.

Africans, in their respective countries, buy smartphones and tablets from foreign-owned multinationals. Under the AfCFTA, Africa will be a market of over 1.2 billion people who are doing business with one another. Under the AfCFTA, Africa will be able to look at and correct economic anomalies of this nature.

**THE IMMEDIATE PROGNOSIS**

Will this all fall into place right away? Is the AfCFTA the magic wand that Africa has been waiting for?

That is a tempting outlook, but not realistic. The agreement took decades to actualise because of bread-and-butter issues in the individual member states. Africa's largest economy, Nigeria, gave the agreement the nod only in July, triggering what could be the continent's most pivotal moment since the first wave of independence in the mid-1950s. Nigeria had held back over concerns raised by local workers' unions, with whom President Muhammadu Buhari needed to confer as part of his AfCFTA readiness assessment.

It is tempting to be completely in favour of the AfCFTA, but countries still have to collect taxes to build infrastructure and deliver social services for their citizens. To this end, customs and duties are required. Forgoing them in the interest of free-trade agreements is only possible when the benefits of opting in outweigh the benefits of opting out. Its members are countries that are still run by politicians who are elected on the promise that they will look out for those who vote them into power. Nigeria, like most other African countries, had to assure voters that the move was not ill-advised.

Will the advantages of the AfCFTA filter down to Africa's citizens, though? Will individuals or the small businesses they own derive any benefits from their countries' participation in the free-trade area? There are conditions that have to be met for this to happen. They include making sure that all countries play by the same rules. The AfCFTA must find a way to hold

member states to the same standards regarding employment, wages, fiscal and monetary policies, infrastructure, movement of people across borders and industry protocols.

This necessitated, before the agreement could be finalised, several negotiations among member states. Some of the issues were competition policy, investment and intellectual property rights, trade-concession agreements and rules of origin. The last one was necessary because certain African countries manufacture goods on behalf of countries like China with materials that are not African.

Since both the letter and spirit of the AfCFTA are about promoting trade among African countries, it is crucial to industrialise Africa to ensure that only goods that are truly African receive preferential treatment under the agreement. There are Chinese, European or American companies that have companies in African countries to manufacture goods to sell under the AfCFTA without the necessary guarantees that the bulk of the inputs will benefit African countries. All such negotiations will be easier when Africa is bargaining as a single bloc, which the AfCFTA is likely to enable.

No overnight solutions and benefits can be expected, and more issues are sure to be tabled at the AU Assembly in January 2020, but the AfCFTA is a step in the right direction.

Not everything will be plain sailing, and the AfCFTA might seem counterintuitive, considering the way developed economies like the US and many European countries have been behaving lately. The trajectory being carved by the likes of US President



Donald Trump is that of placing national interests above multilateralism. The same trend is emerging in countries like Austria, judging by the profile of the politicians who are winning elections by exploiting the desperation arising out of stagnant economic growth. Foreign nationals have not been spared in South Africa either and shops owned by Somalis and others have been attacked by desperate South Africans who blame their economic hardship on others.

When unemployment rises and economies do not grow as fast as they should, it is human nature to look outwards for scapegoats. Liberalising markets to create the free-trade area as envisaged by the AfCFTA is likely to spark some tensions among even the member states of the AU, including the signatories of the AfCFTA.

Such temporary anxieties will certainly slow the implementation of the free-trade agreement somewhat, but won't stop it from becoming a reality.

Already, ECOWAS has adopted a single currency, the Eco, demonstrating how the 15 member states will all be speaking the same language of trade. The East African Community has a single visa for tourists underway. SADC, through its Banking Association, has harmonised its cross-border payment system. Several cross-border infrastructure projects, like the Chirundu one-stop border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, have been completed.

Africa is a cardinal player in the new global economic order. It is the new and last economic frontier of growth and development. If the AU can balance the industrialisation of its member states with trade liberalisation, align all its eight regional economic blocs with the priorities and pace of the agreement, protect intellectual property rights, foster innovation, build institutional capacity to execute key projects and resolve trade disputes, the ideal of a multibillion-dollar market is definitely within reach. **M**

**'Under the AfCFTA, Africa will be a market of over 1.2 billion people who are doing business with one another.'**

PHOTOS: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES AND SUPPLIED



The MBA: is it still  
worth the effort?  
**p28**

Five short, sharp pieces  
of advice for companies  
wanting to stay abreast  
of change.  
**p30**

**‘We should not  
be teaching about  
AI, and robotics  
per se, we should  
be learning from  
the past to see how  
technology has  
shaped the world.’**

**– Martin Butler, MBA programme  
head, University of Stellenbosch  
Business School**

# YoursPACE

Personal insights for  
your life and your career



# How relevant is

THE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE – THE WAY CAREERS ARE VIEWED, AND WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT AND NEED – HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY. IS IT STILL WORTH GETTING AN MBA?

By Sven Hugo

**L**ESS THAN A DECADE AGO an MBA was basically a prerequisite for earning a spot at the boardroom table. It opened doors and fast-tracked your climb up the corporate ladder; it demanded respect. But times have changed. The MBA hasn't so much lost its shine as its place in the sun, which can be attributed to dramatic changes in the business environment with the advent of technology, and other, newer fields of business studies.

'It is clear that the ever-changing world we operate in has helped shape the content and the options available at many business schools,' says Neo Selepe, Associate Director of Programme Delivery, Academic Programmes, at the Gordon Institute of Business (GIBS).

Already in 2006, the London School of Economics discontinued its MBA degree, and when

leading UK university King's College opened its business school in 2017, it opted to offer specialist master's degrees in subjects such as finance, management and digital management – but no MBA. The university had consulted employers and advisory groups, and found that companies wanted employees at an earlier stage in their career. 'They are looking for students who are very strategic in their thinking but are still malleable,' school dean Stephen Bach told the *Financial Times*.

'A variety of factors is undermining the value of the MBA programme, including the rising cost of tuition; competition from online MBA degrees, and shorter, more accessible courses; and even a drop in prestige,' says Professor Raphael Tabani Mpofu, Acting Executive Dean and CEO of Unisa's Graduate School of Business Leadership. 'Perhaps the most important [question] is its relevance in today's fast-changing, disruptive business environment.'

He believes that, while the MBA remains relevant, companies now operate in a fast-paced market 'driven by flux and disruptive force' and that 'the difference lies in the tools of business'.

Course content must keep up with the latest developments, which is about much more than technology and sustainability challenges, says Martin Butler, who heads up the MBA programme at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. 'The financial question is

## WHAT ABOUT UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES?

The announcement, in 2015, by EY (formerly Ernst & Young) in the UK that it would scrap degree requirements for new hires sparked worldwide interest. Truth be told, they weren't the first, and companies that don't require degrees include big names like Google, the Bank of America, Starbucks and Apple. But then again, Apple never required degrees for a job in coding or programming. After all, Steve Jobs didn't even have one.

It's important to read the fine print though. Yes, you can become a store or even a district manager at Starbucks without a degree, but not a financial analyst. The EY decision only applies to new hires in the UK, who then enter their in-house graduate programme. For now, it seems as if this is not a free-for-all, but a welcome move to open doors to applicants from all backgrounds.

how to fund technology investments; the operations question is how to make the supply chain sustainable; the leadership question is how to manage globally dispersed employees using technology to communicate and solve complex problems,' he explains. 'It is therefore not about blockchain, the Internet of Things, virtual reality and the like, but about their effect on all facets of business.'

'We should therefore not be teaching about AI, and robotics and fintech per se, we should be learning from the past to see how exponential growth in technology has shaped the world to prepare us for a completely new structuring of the workforce, institutions and economies. The real challenge is understanding what it will do to society, and how we will deal with healthcare, mining, financial services, transport and education in a world that is completely different.'

## KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

Master's degrees were originally designed to help companies to transform, to become more productive and profitable, and to add value for shareholders. This was done by giving managers an understanding of business and the skills to implement strategic decisions across all operations, Mpofu explains.

In the latter part of the 19th century, big businesses began expanding into new markets, and the MBA became a sought-after and premium-priced qualification.

Yet it seems that the MBA still has legs. In 2018, MBA applications in the Asia-Pacific region increased by 8.9%, and by 7.7% in Canada. At European institutions there was an increase of 3.2%.

So why the fuss over a degree in decline?

For one, it's a very clear indication of how the business world and the study thereof are changing. Moreover, it's an important study in how academic institutions are adapting to continue offering relevant and useful content.

'After the 2008 financial crisis, we saw a slight shift in focus, as business school

programmes began to incorporate and highlight corporate governance and ethics. Currently, we are seeing a wave of programmes aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution,' says Selepe. In South Africa, general management studies, such as the MBA, remain popular, but much greater focus is now placed on innovation and creative thinking and not only on critical thinking.

Globally, there has been a shift to specialised master's degrees, such as Master of Management (MM) and Master of Philosophy (Mphil). This is also the case in South Africa, says Jonathan Cook, co-founder of the African Management Initiative. 'They are appropriate for specialists, usually earlier in their careers. An MBA is best as an introduction to general management for those wanting to leave their specialist roles, and it is therefore best for students who already have work experience,' he explains.

Studies of ethics and social and environmental responsibility are becoming increasingly important, says Cook. And, obviously, so is the digital economy, 'both as a sector and as a tool'. There is also a bigger focus on personal development and leadership, he adds. 'Management and business practice are key for turning learnings into performance – things every employee should be engaged in, not just senior personnel.' **M**

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# the

# MBA?



# Looking forward: not backwards and sideways



SEASONED CEO IAN RUSSELL  
WANTED HIS FIRST BOOK  
TO BE ‘ABOUT REAL LIFE,  
REAL EXPERIENCE’, AND  
TO BE PRAGMATIC.

By Mandy Collins

**A** LOT IS WRITTEN ABOUT LEADERSHIP, sourcing talent and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in textbooks and in the press. But how do these topics play out in companies? That’s what Ian Russell wanted to tackle in *The Other End of the Telescope*. ‘There are many academic books about important things, but they’re not always accessible,’ says Russell. ‘I wanted to write a guidebook to help people in large organisations to get stuff done.’ Here, he briefly highlights five of the main points he discusses in his ‘guidebook’.

- 1. DIVERSITY**  
Most of the book was written by Russell himself, but it also includes essays by four other thought leaders: Rapelang Rabana, Richard Mulholland, Valter Adão and Happy Ntshingila. Russell explains the thinking behind this: ‘A recurrent theme is diversity. Other people can help you to think differently. They will challenge you and create a different dynamic. So I brought in other contributors – one of whom actually disagrees with me on 4IR – because it creates a different perspective.’ ‘It’s part of giving the reader the very diversity that I talk about.’

- 2. UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**  
One of his big themes is that the majority of people have an inherited, unconscious bias – a principle Russell calls ‘people like me like people like me’. ‘Your past influences how you make your decisions, and that can get in the way of making rational decisions – from investments to new markets, to the way you hire people. How do you consciously change? That runs through every part of the book,’ he explains.

- 3. ORGANISATIONAL CHOLESTEROL**  
People look backwards and sideways, but very few look forward, Russell points out. ‘So I talk about the notion of organisational cholesterol, and how it impedes good organisational health. The answer lies in a leaner operation and less hierarchy. Most head offices are only there to reinforce the hierarchy and enforce discipline, and to provide a space where people can talk to one another once in a while.’

- 4. PEOPLE ARE HUMAN BEINGS, NOT CAPITAL**  
‘Genuine long-term people investment strategies are surprisingly rare,’ Russell says. ‘Everyone talks about human capital like it’s an item on a balance sheet instead of human beings.’ ‘Even if you do see people as an asset,



## 5. HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO 4IR

In this short excerpt from *The Other End of the Telescope* (Tracey McDonald Publishers), Russell details what he believes our response should be: ‘Just as in Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, someone in the crowd needed to shout out: “but he isn’t wearing anything at all ...”, so someone actually has to stand up and say: “The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a load of old nonsense, dreamed up to create some convenient sales pitches and conference speeches.” ‘There is no Fourth Industrial Revolution. There was, however, a single defining moment and invention when computational power was released for the first time. And from that moment, 80 years ago, has come a torrent of ever faster and deeper innovation and change to our society. ‘The stopper will not and cannot be put back into the bottle that released this genie. Sorry, Ned [Ludd]. The WEF will not ever be able to control, map or think through how we change the trajectory of change. They may sell some more tickets, though. ‘It is us, every one of us, who is responsible for understanding this change and the implications it has for us, and our personal role and response to the developing world around us. Don’t ride the coat-tails of someone else’s 4IR thinking and lazy assumptions. Don’t get aimlessly sucked into the “Singularity” tide-pool, or the various “we’re all doomed and going to die” groups that still have allegiance to Ned Ludd and his mates. ‘Embrace the reality of our fast-changing, machine-led thinking world. It is here to stay. ‘Now think for yourself. Understand what is happening. Manage what is happening. Own your response to the changes and believe in that response. Stop reading the propaganda. Be you.’

what is your investment strategy? It has to be longer term than a year or two. Companies’ people strategies are rarely meaningful or effective, but if their human capital were properly unlocked, the opportunity would become massive.’ **M**

Visit [oldmutual.co.za/mindspace](https://oldmutual.co.za/mindspace) for more up-to-date reads on workplace trends and innovations.







How an Old Mutual  
team beat MIT in an  
international contest.  
**p34**

Proof that OnTrack™  
is doing what it was  
designed to do –  
helping members.  
**p36**

Connecting the dots  
between changes in  
the workplace and the  
retirement industry.  
**p37**

‘Smoothing  
will allow us  
to continue  
providing  
investors  
with a safe,  
rewarding  
investment  
strategy.’

– Clement Chinaka, Managing  
Director: Old Mutual Corporate

PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



# A world-beating retirement plan

OLD MUTUAL'S TEAM CAME OUT TOPS IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEST TO DEVISE AN OPTIMAL RETIREMENT INCOME PLAN FOR AMERICAN PUBLIC-SECTOR EMPLOYEES. WE SPOKE TO TEAM LEADER KIEYAM GAMIELDIEN.



**P**UBLIC-SECTOR PENSION funds in the United States are under severe pressure. There's an estimated \$5 trillion shortfall between current pension assets and expected future payments – and that gap is getting bigger. Meanwhile, South Africans are facing the reality of insufficient retirement income. As the 2019 Old Mutual Savings & Investment Monitor showed, all surveyed retirees were still working to supplement their income.

Another factor in this is the industry-wide transition from defined-benefit (DB) to defined-contribution (DC) pension plans. DB funds provide an income related to employees' pre-retirement salaries, but exposes employers to significant risk. DC funds, on the other hand, mitigate risk for employers but could mean an insufficient retirement income for employees.

Is it possible to develop a retirement plan that manages the risk for members better than a normal DC plan, while providing reasonable retirement benefits similar to those offered in a DB plan? In other words: is there a happy medium?

That was the question posed by the Golub Center for Finance and Policy (GCFP) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in a contest to find the optimal collective defined-contribution plan for public-sector employees. 'Our contest was about coming up with smart new designs that combine the best of both worlds for public pension plans: collective defined-contribution plan (CDCP) without the funding deficits of DB plans, but with lower operating costs and better risk management than DC plans,' said Bob Pozen, a senior lecturer at MIT Sloan School of Management, which also sponsored the contest.

## THE WINNING STRATEGY

A team led by Kieyam Gamiel dien, Old Mutual General Manager: Product Solutions, entered the prestigious

competition – and won. Their solution leveraged their expertise and experience in the retirement industry to combine dynamic asset-allocation strategies with the same risk-sharing principles on which the Old Mutual Smoothed Bonus portfolios are based.

'When Smoothed Bonus came under regulatory pressure in South Africa about three or four years ago, Old Mutual investigated other ways of reaching the desired investment returns,' Gamiel dien says. It made them take a broader look at Old Mutual's Smoothed Bonus investment book.

'We assessed various dynamic investment strategies and concluded that with-profit (or smoothed bonus) funds remained a good approach to sharing investment risk and potential longevity risk with members,' he says. 'That insight, combined with our investment experience and expertise gained on Old Mutual's Smoothed Bonus Funds, stood us in good stead – and was why we were quietly confident of winning the MIT competition.'

## PROVEN TRACK RECORD

The team also had half a century's worth of data to draw on. 'Because Old Mutual dominates the smoothed bonus space in South Africa, we became the proxy for that historical data,' Gamiel dien says. 'It was useful to be able to demonstrate that we've been managing smoothed bonus funds well for the past 50 years. Over that time we have seen the various cycles, seen alternative solutions, and seen how the smoothing approach holds up well in good and bad times.'

He adds that South Africa's current economy has really underlined this. 'If a pensioner is in a linked



**CLEMENT CHINAKA,**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR:  
OLD MUTUAL CORPORATE

## An innovative, safe and proven plan for the future

'Despite the difficulties in the South African economy, Old Mutual's Smoothed Bonus Funds have delivered superior returns over the past five years that were not only higher than those of most other balanced funds, but much less volatile, too.

This proves that smoothing is a very effective, powerful risk-management tool which enables investors to invest sufficiently in riskier growth assets that generate long-term real returns while protecting them against the short-term volatility associated with such investments.

While we have long known the value of the smoothed bonus approach, it is still gratifying to receive international recognition from an institution such as MIT. Winning the Golub Center for Finance and Policy competition is an exceptional achievement, and Old Mutual Corporate is proud of the team. The win is also an outside endorsement of Old Mutual's ability and products that provide customers with world-class solutions.

It further confirms what we've known since the inception of Old Mutual Smoothed Bonus Funds in 1967, and affirms our confidence that smoothing will allow us to continue providing investors with a safe, rewarding investment strategy in both the pre- and post-retirement space.'

fund with a fixed draw-down rate, their month-to-month experience would be quite volatile in a linked living annuity fund,' he says. 'With a smoothed bonus fund, though, their month-to-month experience would be fairly stable. So you can imagine that smoothed bonus funds are very popular with pensioners who have limited budgets and who cannot stomach the volatility.'

Although the competition entry was a theoretical submission, Gamiel dien and his team backed up their quantitative analysis with quite a bit of qualitative narrative. 'When we visited MIT, they were keen to understand more of the details,' says Gamiel dien, adding that the team members look forward

to sharing their expertise and findings on smoothed bonus funds on a global stage.

In the meantime, they are simply enjoying the moment. 'Smoothed bonus funds are core to what we manage for our customers on a daily basis, but this competition win is a big deal for us and for Old Mutual. The team wouldn't have been able to reach this solution if we hadn't worked at Old Mutual and been exposed to our own Smoothed Bonus book over the past five to six years,' says Gamiel dien.

'One of the biggest learnings for me was that we sometimes underestimate the level of expertise we have. It's important that we find avenues – like this MIT competition – to showcase it.' **M**

## OLD MUTUAL'S WINNING TEAM



**KIEYAM GAMIELDIEN**  
General Manager:  
Product Solutions



**FRED VAN DER VYVER**  
Product Actuary and Head  
of Guaranteed Solutions



**COENRAAD COETZER**  
Senior Actuarial  
Supervisor, Smoothed  
Bonus Development



**TINASHE CHATORA**  
Product Expert,  
Retail Protection  
Product Development  
and Pricing



**NIRAJ RIJHUMAL**  
Senior Actuarial  
Specialist, Investment  
Strategy



**MARVIN NAIR**  
Senior Actuarial  
Specialist, Smoothed  
Bonus Product  
Development





# Is OnTrack™ on track?

OLD MUTUAL CORPORATE CONSULTANTS' ONTRACK™ IS DESIGNED TO HELP RETIREMENT FUND BOARDS AND TRUSTEES TO IMPROVE MEMBERS' RETIREMENT OUTCOMES. IS IT WORKING?

By Mark van Dijk

**'VERY MUCH SO,'** says Andrew

Davison, Head of Advice: Old Mutual Corporate Consultants. 'OnTrack™ has been very well received. The strength of the tool is that it's so member-centric.' As he explains, 'It considers a fund from the members' point of view and informs a board how well it is doing with regard to getting the members to retirement with enough money.'

'MANCOs and retirement fund trustees previously had no way of telling whether

a fund was delivering for their members. Now OnTrack™ provides them with a scorecard that shows how effective their fund is in terms of delivering sound retirement outcomes for them.

'It therefore provides valuable insights about the fund's benefit design, and the choices made by members (if choice is available), and any members who may be "left behind". As a result, they can take action to ensure that the fund is optimally designed to benefit members rather than holding them back

from achieving their goals.'

While that might sound extreme, Davison warns that many fund members believe – wrongly – that merely belonging to a retirement fund is enough for a secure retirement. 'While it is not imperative for funds to provide members with a 70% replacement ratio, it is important that they reflect the realistic outcome members should expect when they retire so that they can plan better,' he says.

OnTrack™ also helps funds to identify which steps they should take to improve members'

retirement outcomes. 'In this way it encourages them to do better,' says Davison.

## ONTRACK™: A CASE STUDY

One of the companies where an OnTrack™ assessment was done, scored a rating of one out of a possible five. 'It is a security firm made up mostly of blue-collar workers, where take-home pay is a challenge. They had a retirement age of 60 and a very low retirement-contribution rate after risk and other costs. This meant that members could at best expect a pension of about 45% of their pre-retirement salaries.'

Based on their OnTrack™ analysis, the company took the bold step of raising its retirement age from 60 to 65. 'While some employees were disappointed about having to work an extra five years, most saw the advantages. This impactful change in the benefit structure will significantly improve their retirement outcomes. Although it will take time to manifest in terms of improved outcomes, their annual OnTrack™ assessment will show a gradual improvement, which will lead to a higher rating,' Davison says.

This is just one example of how OnTrack™ is already changing the conversation around retirement funds. 'It's no longer just about where or how you invest or how fast you're paying withdrawal claims or what administration issues you have,' says Davison. 'It's about whether you're delivering for your members. Are you helping them accumulate assets while they're still in your fund? If not, what do you need to change?'

'OnTrack™ has the potential to drive a better customer experience for retirement fund members.' **M**

ILLUSTRATION: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

# The future of work is here

JOBS, WAGES, SKILLS AND RETIREMENT, EVEN THE MAKEUP OF OUR WORKFORCE, IS CHANGING BEFORE OUR EYES. HOW WILL THIS AFFECT EMPLOYERS AND HOW ARE THEY SHAPING THE WORLD OF WORK?

By Malusi Ndlovu



## PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TO WORK AND RETIREMENT

has changed considerably in the last decade or two. Now, as former world heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman once said, 'It's not at what age I want to retire, it's at what income.' As this reality is dawning, people are increasingly saying: 'I need to work until I can afford to retire.'

Retirement age, and whether it's even relevant



After joining Old Mutual in 2015, Malusi Ndlovu was appointed General Manager of Old Mutual Corporate Consultants in June 2018. He is a qualified actuary, a fellow of the Actuarial Society of South Africa and a member of the Institute of Directors of Southern Africa.

today, is just one of many talking points that have emerged in the retirement space this year. At the heart of much of the conversation is the age at which people will retire in future.

Retirement age has already become random. Longevity has changed everything. People are generally still healthy at 65 and can continue adding value to their workplace. For Old Mutual's 2019 Savings & Investment Monitor, we spoke to a group of retirees who are still working in one capacity or another. More than 50% of them said it's less about the income and more about not sitting around and doing nothing after a lifetime of working. For employers, having three generations in your workforce means having to strike a delicate balance.

## THE UBER OF EVERYTHING

The 2019 Futures of Work in South Africa report released by the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) speaks at length about the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and its implications for this growing multigenerational workforce. One outflow is the gig economy, with

highly skilled, in-demand professionals working in Uber-like arrangements for different employers. As an employer, you will have to accommodate them so that you can tap into their skills set.

One the most interesting and far-reaching implications of the gig economy, however, is how it's changing the concept of income. Instead of a salary, someone may have several incomes from various sources. This makes it impossible to think of employee benefits in salary terms. A gig worker is not earning R20 000 a month. They're earning R2 000 on this project, R5 000 on that project, R3 000 as an influencer on Instagram, R2 000 from dog-walking...

## PORTFOLIO CAREERS

Living longer and having several jobs also mean multiple careers and moving not only from one job to another, but from one industry or field to another. Employers should allow for that flexibility and a big company could, for example, have a range of positions to accommodate a number of contractors, freelancers and project workers who come and go. The question then becomes: do we need a new C-suite role for a chief reskilling officer?

Reskilling is especially important in terms of 4IR that brings a high level of automation, particularly for repetitive jobs that are algorithmic in nature, and could result in mass unemployment. If automation is going to be a big outcome of 4IR, we will have to change employment contracts to include some support around reskilling. It will be critical to get the most value from people throughout their productive lifetime, and to ensure that they keep enjoying job satisfaction. **M**

ILLUSTRATION: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



The filmmakers  
behind the award-  
winning *Stroop* tell  
what it taught them.  
**p40**

Is it possible to  
go plastic-free?  
Our columnist  
gave it a try.  
**p42**

‘We need to keep  
the rhinos alive  
by keeping their  
story alive.’

– Susan Scott and Bonné de Bod,  
documentary filmmakers

# LegacySPACE

Thoughts on  
sustainability and  
business with purpose

PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



# The war for our rhino

FOR A FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S RHINO-  
POACHING INDUSTRY, WE TURNED TO THE FILMMAKERS  
BEHIND THE ACCLAIMED DOCUMENTARY *STROOP*.

*By Susan Scott and Bonné de Bod*

**R** HINO  
POACHING  
CRISIS.

We hear the words, groan inwardly and move on. The situation is pretty grim and there don't seem to be any readily available solutions, just a long, protracted war with dwindling numbers a guarantee.

This is an incredibly complex and multilayered issue that has taken us years to understand, but the web of layers isn't necessarily a negative. At our screenings at high schools and

universities across South Africa, young audience members approach us with positive angles on these layers. Law students studying to be magistrates say they now want to be state prosecutors. High-school students want to learn Chinese to be able to communicate at a diplomatic level to combat the crisis.

So, there is always hope. Our hope is that, after reading this, you'll be more prepared next time the topic of rhino poaching comes up. Or even better, that you'll be inspired to help in some way.

## THE SOURCE

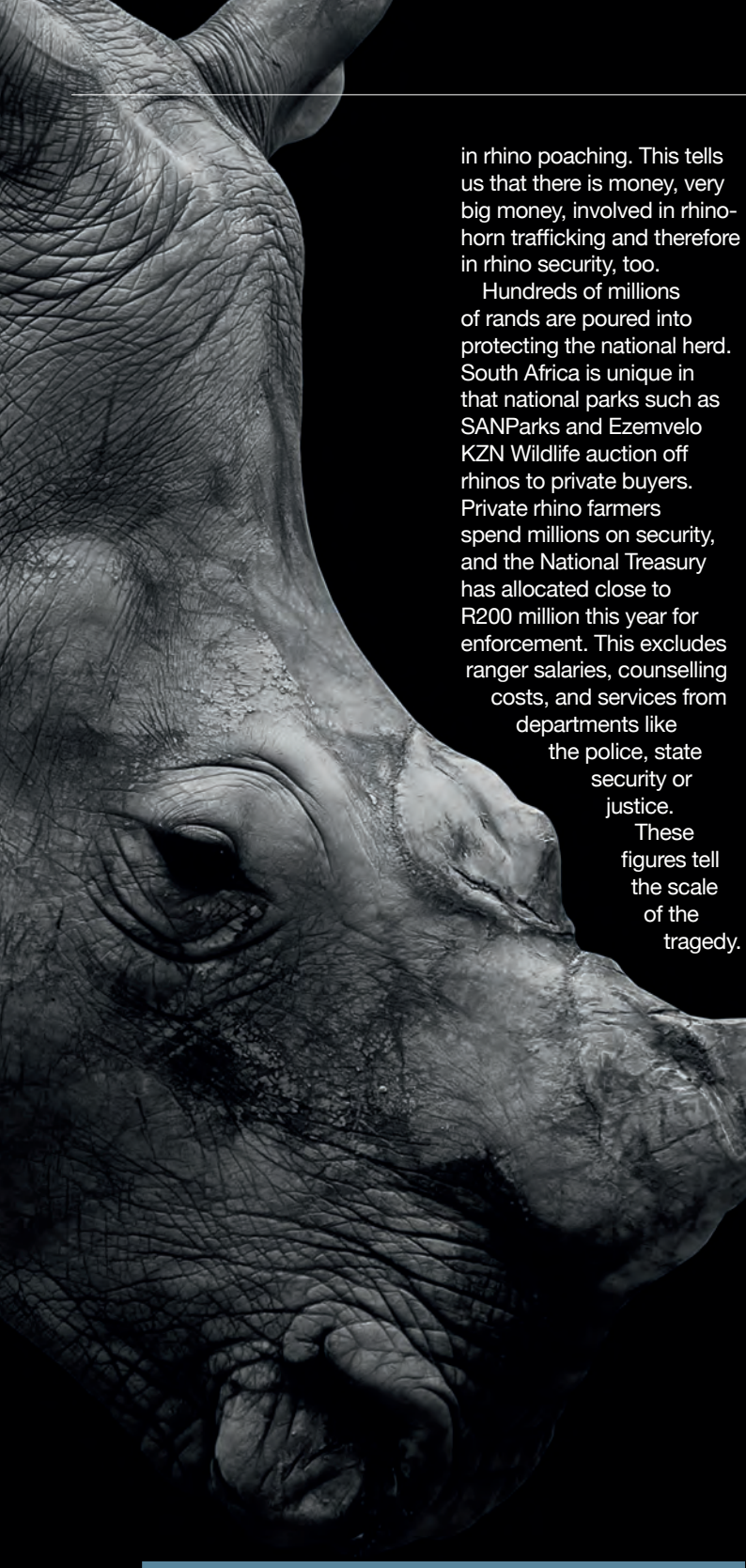
Any proper look at the poaching crisis must consider two things: where rhinos are sourced and where rhino products are in demand. Although some poaching is done in neighbouring countries, and in Kenya, India and Nepal, it's not to the same extent as in South Africa. In the early 1900s, some say as many as one million rhinos roamed Africa. While there is controversy over exactly how many remain, we can assume the number has been poached down

to around 2% and that somewhere between 20 000 to 25 000 survive on the continent. Two-thirds of the world's rhino population are in South Africa. It's therefore easy to see why our rhinos are targeted by international wildlife crime syndicates. Granted, the areas where rhinos are kept – national parks and wilderness areas – are hard to monitor, but without a doubt, the biggest enabler of wildlife crime is corruption. It has been startling to see policemen, pilots, farmers, lawyers, even rangers and vets, implicated

'Silent tracking dogs have been the best "technology" brought in. One dog in particular is responsible for over 150 arrests.'







in rhino poaching. This tells us that there is money, very big money, involved in rhino-horn trafficking and therefore in rhino security, too.

Hundreds of millions of rands are poured into protecting the national herd. South Africa is unique in that national parks such as SANParks and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife auction off rhinos to private buyers. Private rhino farmers spend millions on security, and the National Treasury has allocated close to R200 million this year for enforcement. This excludes ranger salaries, counselling costs, and services from departments like the police, state security or justice.

These figures tell the scale of the tragedy.

ABOUT STROOP

Susan Scott and Bonné de Bod spent four years making *Stroop – Journey into the Rhino Horn War*, despite being told that no-one would watch it because of ‘rhino fatigue’. Since its 2018 release, *Stroop* has won 24 international awards, including the Best of Festival award at the 2019 International Wildlife Film Festival and the 2018 Backsberg Encounters Audience Award at the SA International Documentary Festival. Watch *Stroop* on Showmax, download it from [stroop-film.com](http://stroop-film.com) or buy it at the Kruger – part of the proceeds will go to SANParks’ Honorary Rangers.

Rangers patrol in seven-day shifts without seeing their families. When they return, they are ostracised by their communities, as they are seen to be working against their poaching half-brothers, cousins or sons. Poaching pays well and nowhere is it clearer than in Skukuza’s courtroom. Poor first-time poachers use legal aid; seasoned experts have large defense teams and wear expensive brand names in the dock. Poaching is also dangerous: many of the accused appear with blown-off jaws, arms and legs. The gangs work in threes – runner, shooter and axe man – but sometimes only two arrive in court. This usually means that the third has been shot while returning to the park, perhaps to pay for his bail or fund his expensive lifestyle. And there are plenty of men waiting to take his place.

THE DEMAND

In Asia, the demand is insatiable. Ground-up rhino horn is believed to be a powerful medicine and is dispensed by TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) doctors in all Asian countries. Western disapproval and intergovernmental work have meant that horn is no longer available in Japan, South Korea or Thailand, but in closed communist countries like China and Vietnam, rhino-horn usage in TCM and as a status symbol remains huge. Ancient literature speaks of the horn being carved into ornate rice-wine cups that would neutralise any poison because of its supposed detoxifying effect. Even shavings are valued: small ziplock bags of rhino horn continue to be readily available in villages outside Hanoi for \$40. Rhino-horn bangles and rice-wine cups can go for as much as \$96 per gram. The horn is a status symbol for Asia’s elite. Whereas jade bracelets used to be the most expensive item one could own, the rarer rhino horn becomes, the more it is desired.

Vietnam, once one of the poorest nations on Earth, now has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It also has another growth rate that’s terrifying: cancer. In the 1970s, only two out of 100 000 Vietnamese had cancer. Every decade the number has grown and by 1996 there were six cases per 100 000. Ten years later, there were 173 – and the number is still growing. This exponential increase is hard to take in, especially for a population of 100 million. Put another way, every day 200 Vietnamese die from cancer, and double that number are diagnosed. Every single day. While Western medicine in the form of chemotherapy is used, rhino horn is a



Susan Scott is a Johannesburg-based filmmaker producing wildlife stories for broadcasters around the world. She has won, among others, three SAFTAs, four SAB Environmental Media Awards and a Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival award.

popular complementary treatment, as it’s believed to cleanse the body from toxic agents (due to air and water pollution) and the deadly chemotherapy drugs. The product – because that’s what rhino horn is in Asia – is therefore an expensive and sought-after commodity, and this health epidemic is the reason for the massive poaching increase since 2009.

Just last November, the Chinese government announced it would use rhino horn as an alternative treatment in state-run hospitals because of the belief in its efficacy. Nothing sends out a stronger signal that demand-reduction programmes in China and Vietnam are just not working.

WHAT TO DO?

It’s a socioeconomic crisis. The Kruger National Park has only 400 rangers, while the community of an estimated two million people living in the surrounding areas need their young men to find work – and the Hazyview, Bushbuckridge and Malelane syndicates provide that.

The park retaliates with technology. We can’t mention all of it for safety reasons, but there are thermal camera systems stretched along the horizon, balloons hovering overhead, and audio devices that beam aural abnormalities to an operations centre that can dispatch a ranger team on a helicopter within minutes. There used to be two SANParks helicopters; now there are five. Drones are used, but they are noisy and easily heard in the

quiet bush. Silent tracking dogs have proven the best ‘technology’. One dog in particular is responsible for over 150 arrests. In a world-first, his behaviour during contact has been used as testimony in court, leading to convictions.

Of course, money helps. Despite dwindling numbers, securing our rhino is becoming more costly, with newer technologies and an ever harder push by syndicates. Funding is also needed for orphaned calves and adult poaching survivors.

Ironically, rhinos breed well, especially free-ranging wild animals. But when pregnant or lactating cows, or any cows for that matter, are targeted and taken out of the system, breeding rates drop dramatically. This is what is called ‘collateral damage’. When combined with poaching, there’s a huge worry that we’re beyond the point of no return. Those on the ground are showing signs of desperation, as donors are starting to show signs of fatigue at the never-ending ask.

Some experts believe we should flood the market, others say we should release a sustained five tonnes a year until we have established a steady production line from farmed animals and natural deaths.

Should we? It’s hard to quantify an illegal trade, but it is estimated that the wildlife trafficking industry sits just below drugs and arms trafficking, at \$23 billion annually. That’s huge business, and the syndicates are not going

to allow it to be taken from them. CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, banned rhino-horn trade worldwide in 1977. It is legal inside South Africa, but despite plenty of available product (from farming and natural deaths), there is no market. Every time a horn is recovered in a seizure or from a crime scene or a natural death, it is locked away in the national stockpile, which is rumoured to be almost 30 tonnes. If trade were to be made legal internationally, our government would be sitting on rhino horn worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

We feel tangible change can be achieved by doing three things. Firstly, a culture of ethics needs to rise again. An attitude of ‘anything goes’ has permeated our entire society, even our police stations, ranger corps and courtrooms.

Government has a lot to do to turn this around, but the public must demand this change. The private sector can certainly help by loudly announcing that corruption has no place in its corridors. It’s a small thing, but it would help to undo what has seemingly become acceptable. Corruption is the single biggest enabler of wildlife crime – and that needs to change.

Secondly, the truly independent journalists and filmmakers who have no outlet for their stories need to be helped. We saw very few journalists in court in the four years we worked on *Stroop*, and when we did, it was a local community paper journalist who was there out of passion. Lastly, we need to grow awareness. Talking, on social media and in real-life conversations, is free. We need to keep the rhinos alive by keeping their story alive. **M**

THE NUMBERS

In 2018, the number of rhinos poached in South Africa dropped below 1 000 for the first time since 2012.



Source: SA Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

PHOTOS: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; UNSPLASH.COM AND SUPPLIED



Award-winning wildlife TV presenter Bonné de Bod has been with 50|50 for seven seasons and her series *Rhino Blog* is ranked as the most popular show on DStv’s *People’s Weather* channel. The four years spent filming *Stroop* on the ground and doing undercover work in Asia have given her an in-depth knowledge of rhino poaching.



# The Mariana Trench, at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean,

is a sickle-shaped plunge into the bottom of the world.

Few species haunt its lower abyss, almost 11 kilometres down in the crushing darkness. Fish seldom venture deeper than eight. Huge crustaceans inhabit the extreme universe beyond that point, armoured against the cold and the pressure. At its deepest point, however, the only life seems to consist of large amoebas and microbes.

It is, in other words, the most inaccessible place on Earth. It should be as untouched by humans as some distant asteroid beyond the solar system. And yet, when explorer Victor Vescovo piloted a submersible to its deepest part in May, and found himself 10 927 metres below sea level, he also found something else: a plastic bag and plastic sweet wrappers.

Plastic – our plastic – is everywhere. There is nowhere it hasn't touched. There is nowhere it isn't piling up. And it's no longer out of sight in a landfill or at the bottom of the ocean. Plastic is now inside our bodies, too. A study in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* estimates that we are consuming up to 52 000 tiny plastic particles every year, and breathing in another 20 000.

There is a somewhat despairing point of view that personal action, like refusing

# Plastic, plastic everywhere

PLASTIC-FREE JULY TAUGHT ME ONE THING – THAT IT'S IMPORTANT NOT TO BE THAT PERSON.

by Tom Eaton



Tom Eaton is one of South Africa's leading columnists and satirists. He has also published three novels and written award-winning television series.

plastic bags or straws, is largely pointless given the tsunami of pollution pumped out by vast multinationals that enjoy the protection of cynical governments.

Perhaps reducing the amount of plastic we use is merely palliative. But that bag in the Mariana Trench was used and discarded by one individual – maybe even me.

Which is why, when MiNDSPACE asked me to go plastic-free for one week, I eagerly agreed. It would be enlightening. It would be inspiring.

It would also be a complete failure.

Don't get me wrong. I definitely reduced the amount of plastic I used. I declined dozens of straws and bags and coffee-cup

caps. I drank non-fizzy water out of a glass bottle. I sniffed out unpackaged fruit and vegetables. I got my bread wrapped in brown paper and my meat wrapped in white.

But 100% plastic-free? Not even close. Because, of course, the world is made of plastic. I could seek out shops that sold (a few) unpackaged food items, but I had to drive to them in a car full of plastic, pay for them with debit cards made of plastic, and store them in fridges and freezers lined with plastic. Even this column, all about breaking free of the blasted stuff, was written on a plastic keyboard and sent to my editor through a plastic router.

Cutting down on plastic, I also discovered, is expensive: buying a glass jar of organic toothpaste soothes the conscience, but at over R100 a pop it's murder on a budget.

In the end it was just a week and all rather fun, but the economics and logistics of plastic are vast and terrifying. The global economy eats and breathes plastic. Billions of people rely on it to keep themselves fed, clothed and sheltered. Hundreds of millions cannot afford greener alternatives. It is more than a substance: it is part of the DNA of modernity. We can no more banish it than we can wish away money, cities or industrialised food supplies.

Until humanity finds a way to reinvent itself, however, we can strive for the small wins.

So, next time you see a picture of a mountain of plastic waste, or if that eco-brick you're making feels a little futile, just remember one simple truth: you cannot prevent the next shopping bag from sinking to the bottom of the Mariana Trench.

But you can make damned sure it's not yours. **M**

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\* Deloitte Millennial (Generation Y) Survey.



'I'd like to think that I contribute towards building  
job creators rather than better jobseekers.  
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— Ellen Fischat, founder of Story Room and Common Good First