

## WOMEN'S DAY EVENT HIGHLIGHTS COURAGE AND WELLNESS

By Surprise Mhlongo

Nelson Mandela University commemorated Women's Day on 10 August with an impactful women's empowerment event, exploring themes of courage and wellness. Hosted at the North Campus Conference Centre, the event was a collaboration between Student Governance & Development's 'LeadHer' and 'Ebuhlanti' programmes, by two well-known and powerful speakers.

LeadHer, driving accelerated women's empowerment, and Ebuhlanti, fostering ethical male leadership, shared a stage to champion gender equality and societal integrity. Under the banner "Courage as a Catalyst: Dismantling Vulnerability, Empowering Women", Dr Muki Moeng, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Teaching and Learning, condemned injustice, sparking discussions on courageous transformational leadership.

She recounted the 2015/2016 'Fees Must Fall' protests, showcasing how transformative leadership can counter bias. Dr M.M Tebelele, a medical doctor, stressed wellness's significance – highlighting mental health's ties to vulnerability and gender-based violence, and underscored the impact of substance abuse.

These dialogues both worked in tandem, and resonated deeply, prompting reflections on societal roles. Dr Moeng's engagement with female students on courage's nuances



echoed, much like Dr Tebelele's insights into mental health.

The impact of this event is undeniable, encourage positive change through courage, empathy and wellness awareness. It nurtures a community striving for equality and integrity. The Women's Day event at Nelson Mandela University is a beacon of hope and progress, and showcased the potential for courage, empathy and wellness awareness to drive societal change.

The impact of an event of this magnitude, extends far beyond its immediate duration, as it nurtures a community actively striving for equality, integrity and positive transformation.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the sixth edition of MadibazNews! Freshly, post-Women's Day celebration, we would like to spotlight all the wonderful ladies that keep things running – from every student, to our Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sibongile Muthwa!

Thank you for joining us for yet another jam-packed edition of variety. Sadly, this edition, we greet our former Editor-in-Chief Ashley Malepe, and thank him for his brief services to the team, but on a lighter note, we welcome former members, Surprise Mhlongo and Hlengiwe Phiri back to the team, as News and Lifestyle & Entertainment editors respectively.

We also extend a warm welcome to Phelisa Mkendlana, a former member, and now the Deputy Lifestyle & Entertainment Editor, as well as new journalists. In short, keep an eye out on our future editions!. This edition, we highlight student issues, how the brain works, and our recent #Reasons2BeProud with our various sports teams, amongst other awesome articles.

MadibazNews would like to wish students all the best with the rest of the academic year, and remind everyone to take care of themselves – you cannot be the best if you are not feeling the best. Do make use of our on-campus health and mental health assistant centres.

As always, look after yourself and enjoy the edition! We have more coming soon. Don't forget to follow all our social media accounts to stay up to date!

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE UNFUNDED STUDENTS



Image Source: Freepik.com

By Naledi Masilela

**Every year, hundreds of thousand of students funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) leave their homes in pursuit of education and success. This year, like all the others, was no exception.**

This year, the scheme implemented a new system of allowance distribution, which faced significant backlash from students. During this transition, over 800 Nelson Mandela University students had their funding revoked. On 10 June 2023, NSFAS released a statement acknowledging that these defunded students had been wrongly funded due to the exceeding of the household income (over R350 000 per annum). They also acknowledged the possibility of other students being wrongfully defunded, and assured that they were working to rectify the error.

This crisis left students stranded, especially those who had already returned home for the holidays, and could not afford to come back. Some students are even facing eviction from their accommodations, forcing them to either return home or seek inconvenient living arrangements while working on the side, to cover expenses. Basic needs have become unaffordable for some students, leading them to rely on food parcels, or even go without proper meals for days.

An anonymous final-year student expressed their anguish, stating "I cried myself to sleep for a week after being defunded in the middle of the year. NSFAS claimed that my household earns more than R350, 000 per annum, but my mother, the person I depend on, doesn't earn more than R5000. This has taken a toll on my mental health, as I worry about where I will sleep and what I will eat in a city where I don't know anyone."

Adding to the challenges, the university has an outstanding 25% of student data that is yet to be sent to NSFAS, causing further delays in the disbursement of allowances. With the second semester having commenced, students are uncertain about their funding status. It is a rather unfortunate situation that reminds us of Nelson Mandela's profound statement "Education is the key to success". We uplift this quote and hope that this matter is resolved soon.

## UNVEILING THE HARSH REALITY FACED BY SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH



Image Source: Daily Maverick

By Ashley Malepe

In South Africa, a growing number of fresh, young graduates are grappling with the “nomayini” phenomenon, an Nguni term that encapsulates the prevailing struggle. This term refers to the undeniable pressure on graduates to accept any available job opportunity, irrespective of their field of study, to escape the clutches of poverty.

Recent statistics from Stats SA reveal a disheartening reality: the youth poverty rate hovers around 63% , while youth unemployment stands as a staggering 46.3%. Faced with these alarming figures, many South Africa graduates are compelled to abandon their dreams and aspirations, opting for any employment that offers financial respite. This predicament has raised a pertinent question: has pursuing higher education become obsolete in the face of immediate economic challenges?

Moreover, the flood of educated candidates into entry-level positions, has inadvertently marginalized those with only informal education backgrounds. The competition for jobs that traditionally did not necessitate formal education has intensified, leaving these individuals at a significant disadvantage. Tragically, this plight has prompted some financially privileged young individuals to seek greener pastures abroad. The allure of better prospects overseas, has led to an exodus of talent, further eroding the nation’s potential for growth.

As South Africa navigates the complex interplay between education, employment, and poverty, one must ponder: is there a way to break free from the “nomayini” phenomenon without compromising the pursuit of education, and thus offer its youth a brighter future?

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN A FAMILY

By Akahlulwa Radana

This month we celebrated National Women’s Month, and as we celebrate the day and the month revolving around it, we emphasize the vital roles that women play in their families, whether it be mother, wife, or in more modern times, leader of the household and breadwinner.

First, we will look at the role of a mother – arguably one of the most essential roles, what, with them raising the next generation and all, across civilizations women have been viewed historically as the primary nurturers of their families. A healthy maternal figure is important in a child’s life, because having a poor maternal figure, or the absence of a healthy one, can create a toxic home environment, along with trust issues that translate into adulthood.

When children are nurtured by a mother or prominent maternal figure, they learn to recognize kindness, and learn to love others in a healthy manner. This does, of course, not imply that men in a family do not exhibit this trait, however, it is just more common amongst women. The importance of mothers and maternal figures in children’s lives cannot be overstated.

Now, a woman who plays the role of a leader in the house, can also be a mother. Playing the role of a leader of a household is not easy, because maintaining a house can sometimes be taxing – all households have at least one person who cannot seem to pick up after themselves or put things back into place.



Image Source: Pexels.com

Women are known for handling household responsibilities, like delegating chores evenly, and being the peacemaker in times of conflict, and keeping the family united in uncertain times. If you are fortunate enough to have a positive female figure, I hope that you took the opportunity to show them your appreciation this past Women’s Day – hopefully by putting certain things back where they belong.

## A GUIDE TO MENTAL WELL-BEING ABROAD



Image Source: apolitical.com

By Ashley Malepe

**Emigrating, or living abroad, can be an exhilarating journey, offering fresh opportunities and experiences. However, it is important to recognize that this transition can also bring about stress and mental health challenges. Understanding what to expect, and how to manage these feelings, is crucial for a successful international venture.**

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that adjusting to a new culture, language, and environment, can be overwhelming. You can prepare by researching your destination, connecting with local communities, and maintaining open communication with loved ones back home. Establishing a support network can go a long way in easing the transition. You should expect feelings of homesickness and isolation initially – it is natural to miss familiar faces and surroundings.

You can combat this by staying engaged in local activities, making friends, and maintaining virtual connections with family and friends. Balancing work and leisure is vital; take time to explore and enjoy your new surroundings. Recent stories of students and young professionals struggling with mental health issues while abroad, emphasize the significance of mental well-being. It is essential to monitor your mental health, and seek help if needed. Many countries offer counseling services and support networks for expatriates.

In some instances, financial strain may lead to young individuals requesting donations for return tickets due to mental health challenges. While this is a difficult situation, it highlights the importance of adequate financial planning before and during your time abroad. Remember, living abroad is a journey filled with ups and downs. By anticipating challenges, building a support system, and prioritizing mental health, you can embark on a successful and enriching experience.

## ESTEEMED SABC PRODUCER SANELISIWE DYUSHA

By Bantu Ndiki

**“I remember the excitement I had; I did not even attend my class. I had to attend my dream job that has not yet landed,”**

Sanelisiwe Dyusha is one of the individuals working behind the radio content of SABC Umhlobo Wenene FM, based in Gqeberha. Born in King Williams Town, Sanelisiwe completed her education at Noxolo Primary School, and then followed through to Thembaletu Higher Primary School. It was then, that her passion for radio bloomed.

Heavily influenced by the surrounding environment she was raised in, her grandfather was one of her biggest influencers, having loved radio so much, that they were all compelled to listen to Umhlobo Wenene FM news and radio dramas. He was so strict, that he did not tolerate any noise during that time.

By the time she moved on to tertiary education at Fort Hare University, Sanelisiwe knew that she wanted to study Communications. She completed her studies and pursued a postgraduate Honors Degree in Corporate Communications at Nelson Mandela University. She then secured a role in a drama “Dimbaza Hope” on TruFM, and shortly after, progressed to a voice-over artist for documentaries. Her exceptional work was praised on Facebook comments and listener reviews.

Sanelisiwe Dyusha’s narration of stories fueled her desire for more. She had interactions with renowned figures like the legendary former SABC news reader, Noxolo Grootboom, who provided her with even more inspiration. When she eventually

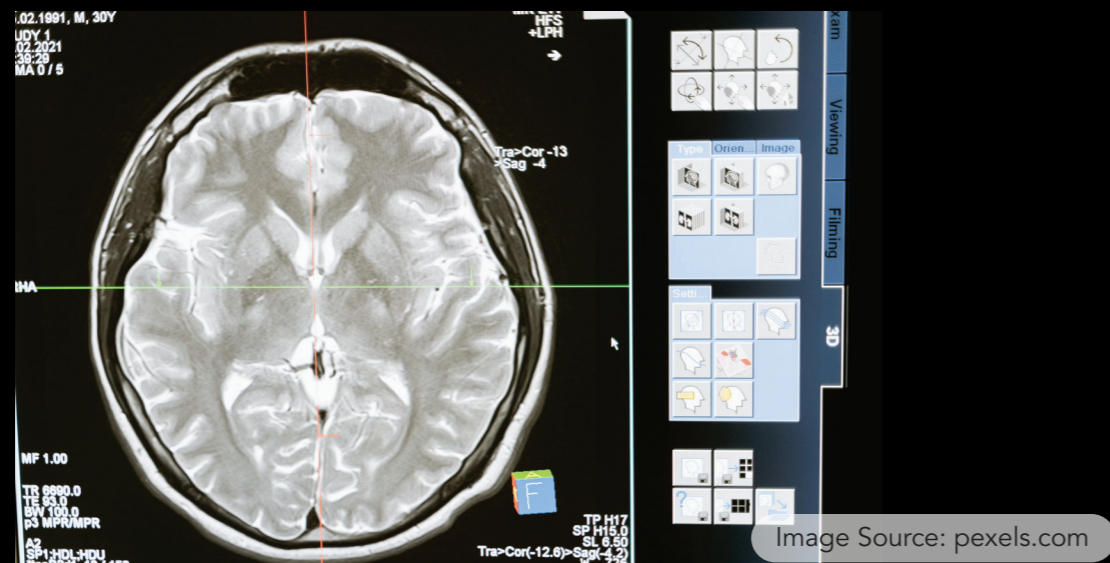


Image Source: Supplied

assumed the role of producer, she had been nominated for numerous achievements within the different departments she had worked in. Like many other youths embarking on the journey of employment, she underwent a similar path, until she secured a role producing an educational programme with Umhlobo Wenene FM – a dream come true.

Not only did nominations validate her dream, but she also won a radio award for her show. Individuals like Sanelisiwe Dyusha, set an example and pave the way for other young, upcoming and responsible black individuals that our communities need.

## THE NEUROSCIENCE BEHIND ADDICTION



By Akahlulwa Radana

Addiction is an acute form of substance abuse, as well as an ongoing neurological condition that is greatly influenced by bio-social factors. This article will touch on the neuroscience behind addiction and technological advancements that will help us better understand the brain of an addicted individual.

Significant advancements in neuroscience studies, genealogy, and the creation of innovative technologies like brain imaging devices, that are used for the evaluation of human brain function, have enabled scientists' understanding of the issue of substance abuse to deepen. Such technological advancements have brought to light, the neurobiological mechanisms that determine the way biological and sociocultural circumstances impact resilience or vulnerability to addiction and use of drugs.

The identification of neural circuits damaged by addiction, like the circuits that regulate emotional processing and executive control, has provided clarification on the unusual behaviours displayed by individuals battling addiction along with potential targets for treatment. The most prominent unusual behaviour is when the individual has trouble in prioritizing actions with long-term benefits over actions that produce short-term benefits, and lack of control over these behaviours, which can lead to dire consequences.

Improvements in the understanding of brain development and the roles of environmental factors and genes on brain function, have set the foundation for the advancement of improved strategies for the prevention and treatment of addiction. As greater knowledge of the neurological, epigenetic, genetic and environmental factors that drive addiction is gained, researchers have been able to identify more targets for treatment and prevention. Technological advancements are allowing for an effective means of investigating addiction along with its origins. Therefore, it appears the future of substance abuse treatment is promising.

## HOW DOES THE BRAIN STORE MEMORIES?

By Akahlulwa Radana

The human memory plays an important role, both as the foundation for our identities, but more surprisingly, to keep us safe. "Do not put that egg in the microwave – it will explode!" So how does the human brain store memories, and where are they kept?

In simple terms, the brain changes its shape with each memory. This is possible through the synapses, which are the microscopic gaps between the brain cells. Neurons communicate with one another via an ingenious electrochemical mechanism. A shift in one cell's electrical charge, will cause the release of chemicals named neurotransmitters across synapses. The neuron on the other side of the gap then picks up neurotransmitters, which causes electrical changes.

Whenever a single neuron continuously activates another, their connection grows, making it easier for them to excite each other the next time. When the interaction between them becomes infrequent, their bond fades, and at times, they cease their communication outright. At the most rudimentary level, the brain may store memories by increasing the connections between neural networks. Where are the memories stored? Memories are stored in a variety of areas in the brain, the most essential area being the hippocampus. The hippocampus is crucial for the formation of the initial memory along with the transferring of memories from short-term to long-term storage.

Short-term memories are memories that last for a few seconds before fading away. For instance, you may recall the new Wi-Fi password the first time you enter it, however, unless you memorize it, the neural circuits that formed it, would stop activating, and the memory will be forgotten. The hippocampus will step in to strengthen the circuits when you are attempting to remember information, and then overtime, the longer-term memories will be moved to the neocortex.

And that is the gist of it, really! The stronger the bond between the neural circuits, the stronger the memory and the harder it becomes to forget the time you faceplanted in front of your crush! Honestly, it wouldn't kill your hippocampus to take a day off sometimes.



## FOUR SEASONS AND A DROUGHT



By Phuthego Precious Nthoke

**Our summers are becoming warmer, and our winters are dropping to freezing conditions, and flooding under. Over the years, the temperatures almost everywhere have been rapidly increasing, while in other areas, rapidly decreasing. We are quick to be distracted by our complaints about the weather, but do not stop to consider the source thereof.**

An Afrobarometer survey conducted by Preston Govindasamy, and Asafika Mpako, revealed that only about 49% of South Africans have heard of climate change. Climate change is something most of us overlook locally, until we start feeling the effects. The signs were there when we started recording record high temperatures of 50 degrees Celsius, and -10 degrees Celsius.

In 2017, a Climate Risk Profile was conducted for Southern Africa, and it was reported that the key climatic impacts will be on water, agriculture, ecosystems, energy and infrastructure. This is clearly seen as the Eastern Cape has been experiencing drought for some time, Gqeberha slowly approaching Day Zero. It is, however, not the only province suffering, with the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo feeling the dire effects.

The consequences of climate change are grim, and as years go by, the country continues to experience increased temperatures, unpredictable weather, and unpredictable levels of precipitation. The biggest contributor to climate change in South Africa, is CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as we are heavily reliant on coal, for the production of electricity.

There are ways to help reduce climate change, like saving energy at home, taking public transport, buying more electric vehicles, and most importantly, reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling. The effort may seem vain, but as more South Africans adopt these habits, the bigger chance we have at reversing the damage already done to our earth.

## THE BLACK PANTHER DOES NOT EXIST

By Phuthego Precious Nthoke

**When we reference Black Panther, we are not talking about Chadwick Boseman's character, T'Challa, in Marvel's cinematic masterpiece The Black Panther. Panther is a word used to categorize wild cats that fall under the group Panthera, as described by Lorenz Oken in 1868.**

The Panther group includes big cats like the lion (*Panthera Leo*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), tiger (*Panthera Tigris*) and leopard (*Panthera pardus*) due to the similarity in their cranial features. Some wild cats can experience melanism due to their recessive genes, the phenotype can result in them having a black coat or spots, this is more common in jaguars and leopards. Most people will classify cougars or pumas (mountain lions) in the Panthera group, which is incorrect, as they belong to the Puma genus and, unlike the cats in the Panthera group, who roar, these ones whisper, chirp and scream.

There is a 5 to 10% chance that these cats will have the recessive or dominant gene that causes the cat to possess the melanistic trait, but because lions, tigers and snow leopards are already considered vulnerable and endangered, the actual number of black panthers in the wild are extremely low and actual sightings are exceedingly rarer, especially in Africa. The most recent sighting of a black panther in Africa, was in Laikipia, Kenya, unfortunately without camera traps, back in 2019. To rephrase, the last sighting of a black panther was in 1909, which reminds us how volatile and ruthless mother nature can be.



## VALUABLE LESSONS FOR MADIBAZ RUGBY AT USSA

By Siyolise Gqongwana

After a taxing Varsity Shield campaign, Madibaz Rugby travelled to Durban, enroute to Varsity College, for this year's USSA tournament. The challenges were far from over for David Manuel's side, as they prepared to face stiff opposition in the form of North-West University, University of Pretoria, and the University of Free State – who all competed in this year's Varsity Cup.

“Never let your fears dictate your decisions” was the message from the coach, as they prepared to take on Varsity Cup champions, NWU Pukke on Day 1. Despite a laudable effort by Madibaz, Pukke displayed their superiority, and walked off the field as 52-5 victors.

Day 2 saw Madibaz go head-to-head with UP Tuks in a fiercely contested battle that ended in a narrow 21-10 loss. “We were highly motivated for the Tuks game.” said Madibaz loose forward, Avuyile Kwinana. “The coach told us he dreamt that we had won, he even remembered the final score from his dream – and that motivated everyone to get the result.”

The build-up was almost as intriguing as the game itself – with former Madibaz fullback, Kyle Cyster, being on the opposite side, after joining Tuks earlier this year. “We adjusted our gameplan because we knew his strengths and weaknesses.

We never gave him a moment to display his talents.” said Kwinana. However, there was no love lost between Cyster and former



Image Source: Madibaz Sport Instagram

teammates, as the fullback embraced his colleagues after the game. “Obviously, there's no friendships during the game, but afterwards, the brotherhood is reignited” Kwinana continued.

The final game against Varsity Cup semi-finalists, UFS Shimlas, ended in 58-19 loss for Manuel's side. Regardless of the tournament's results, it was not all doom and gloom for Madibaz. Kwinana, who was making his USSA debut, shared some of his highlights from his first experience at the tournament.

“We got to visit the Sharks' dressing room, which was special. And the dinner with the gents just sealed it because we got to improve our chemistry. It was just a great experience; I wouldn't exchange it for anything,” he concluded.

## A NEW DAWN FOR MADIBAZ HOCKEY



Image Source: Supplied

By Josh Matthews

**Mika Osman is thrilled to remain at the heart of the first team hockey side. The Madibaz striker believes something special is on the cards for the men's premier league team following a successful USSA tournament last month.**

According to Osman, the tournament could not have gotten off to a better start. Madibaz registered an outstanding 7-0 victory over Sol Plaatje University in their opening game on the 3rd of July. They then went on to beat their noisy neighbours, Rhodes University, and followed up with another victory against Tshwane University of Technology in the days succeeding their opening game. The road to USSA was not an easy one at all, with both the men's and women's teams putting in the hard yards in the months preceding the tournament. Osman makes mention of how a blend of both experienced and new arrivals in the team contributed to newfound camaraderie among teammates.

“Of course, with many debutants, including myself, we were bound to run into obstacles. But with the help of more seasoned players, we were able to adapt and take such obstacles in our stride,” said the Madibaz striker. The number 10 also expressed his praise and gratitude for the mastermind behind the new dawn within Madibaz Hockey. With the expertise of the National head coach, Cheslyn Gie, not only have results improved, but team morale and technical ability have indicated an ascension as well.

“Mr Gie has not only transformed my abilities on the AstroTurf, but as a professional and overall human being as well - by creating a firm foundation built upon respect,” says Osman. “Our swift adaptation to a fresh challenge has enabled us to achieve exciting results thus far.” The team concluded their tournament with a loss against a strong UWC outfit and clinched a one-all draw in a tight match up against UKZN. However, Gie's side remains fired up, as they continue to compete in the Eastern Province Hockey Federation premier league - with a much-anticipated trip to Rhodes University on August 13.

# CAMPUS SPORTS LEAGUE: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

By Aphiwe Bonga

The Campus Sports League dates back from 2020, after the Corona Virus outbreak. Its initial mission was to connect students outside the classroom, and reignite their passion for sports. It consists of three different sporting codes, all inclusive to both genders.

The rich assortment of teams in the football, rugby and netball leagues, battle is out every Sunday morning from 10 o'clock, on campus fields. "Our vision is to create a vibrancy on campus that is inclusive for all students. For me, seeing a healthy environment where students don't have to be cooped up indoors and studying 24/7 brings me joy.

We want students to come here, play sports, and meet people – instead of going out partying and drinking every weekend." - Hildah Dikhudu, Madibaz Sports Coordinator. The League has had a fresh jolt of technological reinvigoration this year with the launch of the online, MYSIFA, which has added extra professionalism to the tournaments.

With MYSIFA, players and coaches can now register formally for their respective teams, and their results are also recorded on the platform so spectators can keep up to date with the latest log standings, player profiles and upcoming fixtures.

Despite the perceived friendliness of the games, there cannot be competition without the potential of winning something when all is said and done. The Campus Sports League will award prizes to the top performers throughout the tournament. This includes



the top scorers, and the team and player of the tournament.

Though things seem to be going according to plan, Dikhudu feels that there are a few things that still need to be sharpened. "We still have a few challenges that we're still facing such as the late arrival of players, lack of sports kits, as well as a limited number of fields for football and rugby. Most importantly we need residence managers to be onboard to support the students."

Solomon Mahlangu residence currently dominates the standings in the football division, with 13 points. The Summerstrand Student Village leads the way in the netball with 10 points, while Claude Qavane dominates the rugby standings with 13 points.