

# Kasi Mobile - SA's first township-based mobile network provider



By Johannes Masiteng

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On 1 June, [Lemok Group](#) launched South Africa's first township-based mobile network provider, Kasi Mobile, following the launch of its Libra by Lemok smartphone late last year.

The group aims to provide access to data to all of South Africa's major cities, towns, townships as well as rural areas through the mobile network. Kasi Mobile operates as a data-only service provider, with packages powered by both Telkom and MTN.

Lebogang Mokubela, founder and chief executive officer of Lemok Group, shares more about Kasi Mobile, why he decided to launch the network and its positioning in the telecommunications sector.



Lebogang Mokubela, founder and chief executive officer of Lemok Group

## ■ **Why did you decide to launch a new business venture?**

My goal has always been to create the 'Bidvest of the townships,' forming a 'spider web' system of businesses that can trade within themselves. We launched a smartphone brand late last year called Libra By Lemok and naturally what goes with smartphones is access to data. So, we then looked to create Kasi Mobile with the vision of it becoming the first township-based mobile virtual network provider.

## ■ **Please tell us a bit about Kasi Mobile.**

Kasi Mobile is a data-only service provider. Our primary market is townships and rural areas. We're not limited to townships and rural areas though, as long as you have coverage (which you can check via our coverage map on our website [www.kasi.mobi](http://www.kasi.mobi)), then we can provide the service.

We chose townships and rural areas as our primary market because we believe internet connectivity opens you up to the world and its opportunities, and connected townships and rural areas will eventually expose young people to those opportunities. This has immense economic potential.

Our data packages are powered by Telkom and MTN.



**What services are you offering?**

We've launched with wireless LTE data services with the smallest package being R99 for 10GB+10GB, on a month-to-month basis, no contracts. Over and above the SIM-only deals, we will be selling both smartphones, Wi-Fi and Mi-Fi routers as once-off purchases, not on contract.

“ LTE data packages from as little as R4.95 per GB! View our packages 📶📶📶📶 <https://t.co/7G88XmIPP7>  
[pic.twitter.com/hldGADP06h](https://pic.twitter.com/hldGADP06h)— Kasi Mobile (@KasiMobileSA) May 28, 2020 ”

We are working with a partner to make fibre available to townships and rural areas, which will further make internet connectivity accessible and affordable.

### ■ What sets Kasi Mobile apart from other mobile network providers?

First and foremost, it is our mandate to see townships and rural areas receiving internet connectivity. Secondly, we've digitised almost 70% of our operations to ensure data is provided at a very affordable rate. Our lowest package is charged at about R4.95 per GB.

“ Don't have fibre in your area? Get LTE wireless data in 6 simple steps:

1. Visit <https://t.co/7G88XmIP7>
2. Check coverage in your area
3. Choose between a sim only or sim+device package
4. Choose data plan
5. Make payment

6. Get your order delivered to you. [#KeDilo pic.twitter.com/IWpPiDjmEv](#)— Kasi Mobile (@KasiMobileSA) [June 1, 2020](#) ”

Because we understand that many of our people in townships and specifically rural areas may not have bank accounts, we are looking at alternative ways for them to pay for our services.

“ We are in talks with a retailer that has a significant footprint in townships and rural areas to make payments easier. ”

■ **The coronavirus outbreak and the nationwide lockdown has impacted many businesses. What impact will it have on Kasi Mobile, and how do you plan to navigate through this?**

The good thing for us is that we had to build our business during the lockdown and therefore we have ‘lockdown conditions’ embedded into our business model.

Apart from an array of issues, we have understood that it’ll take some time for the consumer to be financially secure hence we provide the convenience of month-to-month pricing, no contracts. We can even pause your service when you cannot pay.

■ **We are now on Level 3 lockdown and some restrictions have been relaxed. What measures have you put in place for your employees and customers receiving their packages?**

Because our operations are digitised, there is very little need for employees to be at the office. Only the logistics team frequent the office. Normal physical distancing, PPE and hygiene practices have been put in place at the office.

Secondly, we have partnered with a leading courier company to handle all our deliveries. They have also put in place stringent hygiene and protective measures for collecting, sorting and delivering of goods.

“ To help clear the delivery backlog, our CEO was doing a few deliveries personally.

More orders have been dispatched. Check your emails for tracking numbers.

Thank you [#KeDilo pic.twitter.com/6nzL2alPMG](#)— Kasi Mobile (@KasiMobileSA) [June 3, 2020](#) ”

■ **Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.**

My struggles are not unique. Every entrepreneur goes through the cash flow issues, employee politics, repossession of assets, etc.

“ My biggest highlight, thus far, has been the ability to launch my own smartphone. That will go down in history as my biggest accomplishment. ”

■ **What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?**

I always tell the few township entrepreneurs I mentor that, in my experience, you need three traits – The ability to brand and sell, unsurpassed work ethic and an understanding of your business and environment.

■ **What does the future of entrepreneurship, particularly in the townships, look like to you?**

Truthfully, these are exciting times. I believe the paradigm has shifted; township businesses are no longer just limited to catering, pubs and car washes. The other day I met a guy from Ivory Park who launched his own sneaker brand. He went from 300 units to a few thousand and now producing 10,000 units. He is hiring an additional 12 people and moving into a bigger warehouse. This is a township entrepreneur and that is the future of township businesses.

“ The truth is if you have been raised in a township you have the greatest advantages. You have an in-depth understanding of the market and its nuances, so you are not limited to stats and so-called research; You understand the

challenges of our people so you are capable of building products and services that truly speak to that ”

Lastly, you have access to a big audience. They may not have large disposable income but they make up for it with numbers.

■ **What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly in the telecommunications industry?**

As cliché as it sounds, focus on your customers. Profits are important but so is longevity. Build a brand that people can resonate with. Simplify your offering and lastly, digitise your operations.

■ **Where do you want to see Kasi Mobile in the next three years?**

Our goal is to be an independent mobile virtual network provider, plain and simple.

## ABOUT JOHANNES MASITENG

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