

Small businesses doing big things during lockdown

By [Terrena Rathanlall](#)

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South Africa is into the third month of lockdown and many entrepreneurs still don't know if they will be able to reopen their businesses when lockdown is over. However, this hasn't stopped them from opening their hearts and wallets to those in need.



Top (L to R): Euodia Naanyane-Bouwer, Hubert Puley and Loyiso Mfuku.

Bottom (L to R): Melun Jephta and Bright Hatswayo

Loyiso Mfuku, the owner of Khayelitsha Travel and Tours, is also known as the ambassador of Khayelitsha in Cape Town, a title he takes seriously. Ask him any question about the area and he will rattle off the best spots to visit, as well as what people need to know about life in the township.

Lockdown has been a difficult time for him: his business is still closed and his premises were burgled at the beginning of April. However, this has not stopped Mfuku from living up to his moniker.

Mfuku partnered with Ke Nako, an NGO owned by Mike Frantz, a Luxembourg businessman, to distribute money to needy families in Khayelitsha. Frantz raised more than R100,000 to support the most vulnerable families during the Covid-19 crisis and Mfuku distributed it.

However, Mfuku wanted to do more and empower people. These days you will find him knee-deep in compost urging people to join the green revolution. He selected 10 people to start an urban farming initiative with the Green Guerillas providing training. The course teaches people how to grow premium crops using organic methods which will help them feed their families, community and start their own business. In the future, the trainees will start their own community garden in Khayelitsha Ke NaKo will provide the necessary equipment and resources.



Loyiso Mfuku, owner of Khayelitsha Travel and Tours

Herbert Puley, the owner of Murishaan Enterprises, a bakery in Progress, Uppington, was moved by the number of hungry people he saw on his way to work every morning.

“Once a week I park my bakkie near a clinic and hand out loaves of bread to the hungry. I am glad that some families are being fed during this trying time. Eventually, I would like to give people a warm bowl of soup with their bread.

“People need to come together in these trying times. The government is doing its share, but this is a unique situation, and everyone must join in,” adds Herbert.

Food security is also close to **Melun Jephtha**’s heart. She is a professional natural scientist in Hawston and the owner of Ohana Environmental Consultants and Projects. Her mission is to protect the environment for future generations. She noticed two empty plots of land that were being used as dumping grounds and decided to do something about it.

So, she pitched the idea of turning it into food gardens. The community loved the idea and helped clear the vacant plots and prepare the beds for planting. The first garden, the Overstrand Care Centre Garden is on the premises of a hospice and the vegetables will be used to provide nutritious meals to the hospice patients.



Melun Jephtha, owner of Ohana Environmental Consultants and Projects



Herbert Ruley, owner of Murishaan Enterprises

Her second project, The Franklin Ohana Sustainability Garden, has received a small grant from the Table Mountain Fund. Now, members of the community, primarily women, will learn how to make their own compost, how to plant and grow their own food. These gardens will produce more than vegetables; they will create employment for locals, those working this land will become certified and this will help them find jobs in the urban farming sector.

Jephtha hopes that the abundance of produce will create a need for a farmer’s market in Hawston. These are vital projects, especially for an impoverished community with a high unemployment rate and where drug use among the youth is common. The food gardens will go a long way towards alleviating these social ills and the impact will be felt by generations to come.

When **Bright Hlatswayo** was growing up in the village of Phiva in Mpumalanga, the only forms of recreation were playing soccer on a dusty field and playing in the river, which they seldom did because his parents thought it was too dangerous.

Today, Hlatswayo, the owner of Stone Décor, is determined that the children in the village will have a better upbringing than he did. In 2014 he and a group of like-minded individuals started a Mandela Day movement and thereafter created an NGO, the Phiva Youth Empowerment Organisation. They painted a preschool, bought playground equipment and held a careers day to encourage children to dream big.



Bright Hlatswayo, owner of Stone Décor

Last year they obtained permission from a local chief to use a piece of land as a recreational park for children in the village. The community was so moved by the contributions that they gave the NGO an award. This year they are focusing on making a difference in the lives of those who have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and have lost their livelihoods. Bright is hoping other businesses join their initiative and make a real impact in their community.

Euodia Naanyane-Bouwer is the owner of Gracious Nubian. This social entrepreneur makes Beulah Reusable Sanitary Pads that are washable and environmentally friendly. She has spent lockdown actively campaigning to give 80 girls from the Nzame Public School in Bloemfontein access to a two-year supply of sanitary pads. To date, she has collected donations that will ensure 30 young girls will have peace of mind when they go back to school. She has also been using social media to create awareness.

Naanyane-Bouwer says: “Nzame Public School supports children from the poorest



neighbourhoods in Bloemfontein. Many people don't realise that if a girl does not have feminine hygiene products, the chances are high that their mothers, grandmothers and aunties don't have them as well. In many instances, these girls have to decide between buying a loaf of bread or buying a sanitary towel. I want to ensure they don't have to make that choice."

Euodia Naanyane-Bouwer, owner of
Gracious Nubian

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