



Retrenched Ntabankulu mom looking to start own shoe brand

Skills training courses completely changed Zanele Dlamini's outlook

SIKHO NTSJOBANE

When Zanele Dlamini was retrenched from her job as a merchandiser and field marketer at a distillery at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, she tried in vain to find another job.

She remained unemployed for almost two years, and eventually gave up looking for work.

But after attending a series of skills training workshops in September, her ambition has been reignited and she now dreams of launching her own shoe brand one day.

The 32-year-old mother of three from Mbangweni village, in rural Ntabankulu, is on her way to become a self-made entrepreneur.

She has been chosen to undergo training with the Turkish Co-operation and Co-ordination Agency to enhance her business skills.

The week-long training course takes place in Johannesburg from Monday and runs until Friday.

It all started when Dlamini saw a post on social media by one of her neighbours about skills development training being offered in the Ntabankulu area in September.

The post included an online poster of AmaMpondo royal Princess Stella Ndabeni Sigcau II, one of the organisers of the annual AmaMpondo Heritage and Cultural Festival.

"I phoned and attended the training," Dlamini told the Dispatch this week.

"I learnt there about how to make juice but when I got there I found out I was interested in learning everything.

"I ended up undergoing training on many things, including juice making, meat processing, shoe making and making your own detergents."

Sigcau said the skills development initiative was launched on September 6 under the banner of the AmaMpondo Heritage Foundation,



ZANELE DLAMINI

which she founded.

She said scores of women and young people from the AmaMpondo kingdom, ranging from Mbizana and Ntabankulu to Lusikisiki and eMaXesibeni, received training as part of the initiative.

"The main purpose of the training is to empower women and youth, fight poverty, unemployment, encourage entrepreneurship to eliminate dependency, including financial dependency, which at times led women to become victims of gender-based violence, especially in rural areas."

Dlamini said after graduating in public management from the Esayidi TVET College in Kokstad in 2010, she worked as a merchandiser and field marketer for a whisky distiller until she lost her job a decade later.

"After being unemployed for a long time, I discovered that there was a lot I could do with my hands. So I started baking and selling

cakes," she said.

The young woman would also occasionally help design dresses for her mother, Nobuhle Funzo, who was a dab hand with a sewing machine.

Later, Funzo mentored her daughter in the art of sewing dresses.

And now that she has managed to learn about making shoes, she wants to one day have her own shoe brand.

"I want to show that even a black woman from a remote area like ours can own her own shoe label."

Dlamini, who is passionate about fine shoes, said she had no idea that a few weeks after undergoing training in shoe making she would be thinking of starting a brand of her own.

She hopes the training she will get from the Turkish agency will come in handy in sourcing funding to set up and grow her shoe business.

The agency is responsible for the bulk of Turkey's official development assistance to developing countries, with a particular focus on Turkic and African countries and communities.

AFRICAN LIBERATION HERITAGE INDABA

Date: 13th and 14th of October 2022
Time: 10h00
Venue: ICC, East London, South Africa

AFRICAN LIBERATION HERITAGE INDABA

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FREEDOM SMELLS GOOD: Former president Jacob Zuma's brief prison stint sparked the rioting and looting in KwaZulu-Natal that spread to parts of Gauteng over 10 days last year. Picture: FELIX DLANGAMANDLA

Jacob Zuma officially free, says correctional services

Former president Jacob Zuma has been released from the correctional services system on expiry of his contempt of court sentence on Friday.

Zuma was sentenced last year to 15 months imprisonment by the Constitutional Court after he breached its order that he should honour a summons to appear at the state capture inquiry.

He was admitted at the Estcourt Correctional Centre in KwaZulu-Natal in July 2021. After serving less than two months, he was granted medical parole by Arthur Fraser, former national commissioner of correctional services.

The department said: "Medical parole placement meant Mr Zuma was to serve the remainder of his sentence under Kranskop Community Corrections."

It said Zuma had complied with the conditions as set out during his placement.

"All administrative processes have been concluded and the sentence expiry date [October 7 2022] marks the end of him serving his sentence under community corrections."

His brief prison stint sparked the rioting and looting in KwaZulu-Natal that spread to parts of Gauteng over 10 days last year.

Zuma's legal battles are ongoing as he fights prosecution on charges of racketeering, corruption, money laundering and fraud relating to the arms deal.

He is accused of receiving about R4m via his former financial adviser Schabir Shaik to assist Thales to secure defence contracts. Shaik was convicted in 2005 but was released on medical parole in 2009.

The trial has been on hold while Zuma heads to various courts in his attempt to oust the main prosecutor, Billy Downer, from the case. — **Times-LIVE**