



Andisa Ndlovu



Sisonke Mawonga



Lwandile Makhasi



Nompumelelo Mncube



Relebohile Chabeli



Kabelo Kossam Ndlovu



Siviwe Mngovu



Zoë Tobie

TAI Extended Studies

GRADUATES'

STORIES



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn



Student Peer
Mentoring Programme
TROJAN ACADEMIC INITIATIVE



Zoë Tobie

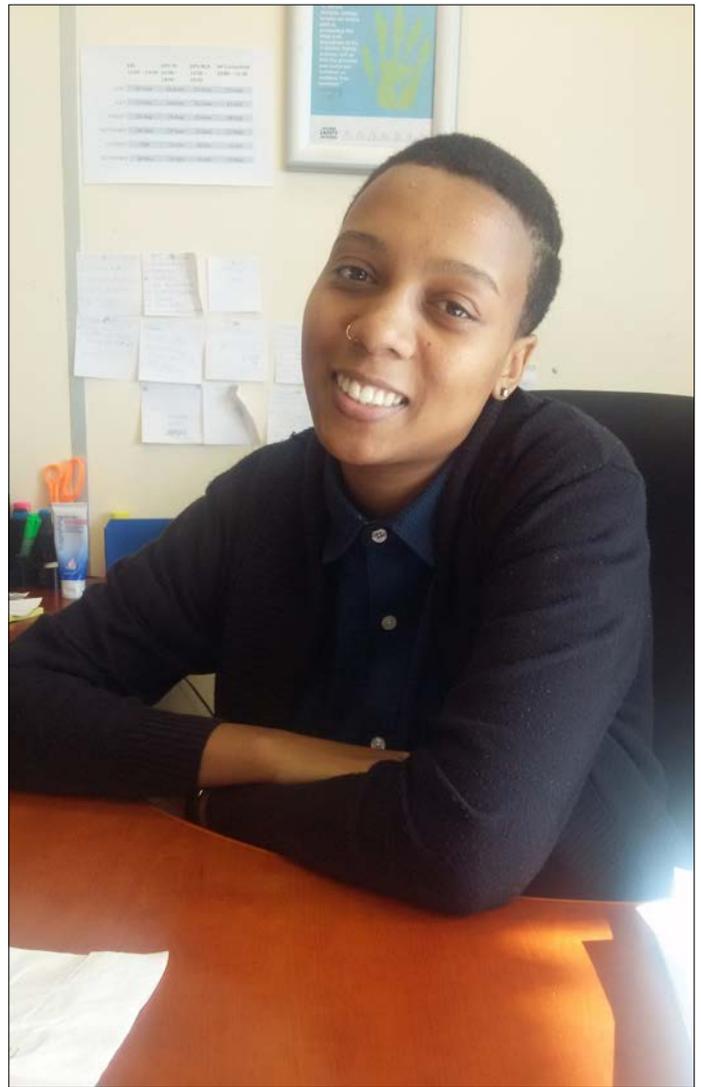
Growing, together

Zoë Tobie enrolled at Rhodes University to expand her horizons. From a young age, Zoë's parents instilled in her a passion for hard work in the pursuit of goals. In the Extended Humanities Programme at Rhodes University, Zoë found room for personal and professional growth, as well as the opportunity to 'give back'.

Zoë, who hails from Cape Town, read for a Bachelor of Social Sciences between 2012 and 2015, triple majoring in Anthropology, Organisational Psychology and Industrial Sociology. During her first and second years of study, she worked part-time at the Sunflower Hospice Shop "to give back to the Grahamstown community".

This community work, coupled with Zoë's participation in the Extended Studies TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme, paved the way for her receiving the **Judy Orpen Memorial Award** in 2012. This award honours the life and accomplishments of Ms Judy Orpen, a talented and vibrant Rhodes student who was working towards her Masters in Anthropology when she passed away unexpectedly in 2010. Her family created the award to recognise and support young people with the same passion for living as Judy.

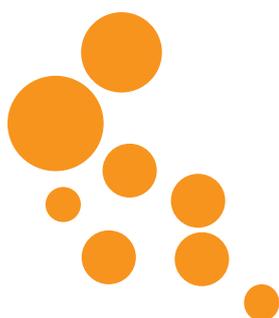
In order to be considered for the award, students need to demonstrate



strong involvement in academic and community life, including the TAI Programme. For Zoë, the programme was a rewarding time for her to grow and to see her peers and mentees do the same. "It was amazing watching young adults who had been unsure of a lot of things become so confident," she says.

Zoë says that all of these experiences are helping to build her career today. She currently works as an **Employee Relations Intern** at **Transnet** in **Cape Town**, where she is responsible for assisting with disciplinary matters. "My [job] is very people-oriented," she says. "Understanding people and their experiences is key to being successful in Labour Relations."

Going forward, Zoë plans to expand her knowledge in the field, and is looking into completing a postgraduate qualification in Dispute Management, as well as Law.



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Nompumelelo Mncube

Building a sense of community

When **Nompumelelo Mncube** moved from her hometown of Pietermaritzburg to the metropolis of Cape Town in high school, she found it difficult to adjust. The language and cultural barriers were alienating, she says, and almost jeopardised her plans of pursuing a university degree.

Nompumelelo was required to repeat three of her Matric subjects to boost her prospects of being offered a place at a university, but her hard work was rewarded with an acceptance letter from the Humanities Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes. And there, she finally felt a sense of belonging. "I felt welcomed – and it was like a whole new world had opened up for me," says Nompumelelo.

In her first year, Nompumelelo was a mentee in the TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme, and she says that this experience helped her to feel accepted and even loved at Rhodes. "It made life easier for me and helped me to adapt to the new culture quickly," she says.

Nompumelelo reflected this sense of community outside of study hours, participating in choirs, volunteering at local children's homes, and making an effort to assist people who came knocking at her door. "Sometimes we ignore people, but they really need us," says Nompumelelo. "I always think, let me just help."

Her spirit of empathy and compassion was honoured with the **Judy Orpen Memorial Award** in 2011. The award celebrates a first year student who is purposefully and enthusiastically involved in various aspects of community life.

Nompumelelo graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, triple majoring in Journalism and Media Studies, Drama and isiXhosa, and she fell in love with education. Now 25 years old, Nompumelelo is a **Teacher at Meridian College in Limpopo**, where she works with Grade 5 learners and is on track to completing her Postgraduate Certificate in Education.



"Sometimes we ignore people, but they really need us," says Nompumelelo. "I always think, let me just help."

Andisa Ndlovu

The sky's (not) the limit

At 16, **Andisa Ndlovu** matriculated and attempted to pursue her dream of joining the army and becoming a pilot. She was barred from enlisting owing to her young age, but this opened an unexpected door which ultimately led her to pursuit of a career in journalism. Andisa, who grew up in Bizana in the Eastern Cape, joined the Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes University in 2006.

The programme, particularly its Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring programme, left a positive impression on this high flyer. "I think it was the best thing for me," she says. Andisa, who was a mentee in her first year and a mentor in her second, expresses gratitude for the programme's guidance and support, which helped her navigate university. "It helped me adjust between high school and university. As a young girl coming to Rhodes, you're not very familiar with your environment or sure of what it is you're doing. [TAI] gave me the ABC's."

Andisa achieved her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2009, majoring in Journalism and Media Studies as well as Politics and International Studies. She then obtained her Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management the following year.

Andisa currently works as a **Bulletin Producer** for **eNCA News**. "[Producing is] a technical position," she says, explaining her day-to-day responsibilities. "I upload what the bulletin looks like on TV. I work on all the words that you see running on screen, all the video footage, the scripts for the evening news, and I make sure that everything is timed correctly."

The key to her professional success, she notes, was a significant figure in the TAI Programme. "My mentor helped me build up confidence, and that is the one thing [you need] when you work in media, or people will walk all over you," explains Andisa.

Andisa's confidence has given her the ability to engage in vital networking, which has resulted in the successful production of news. Highlights in Andisa's journalism career include coverage of major political moments such as the ANC Congress in 2016, and the EFF's first election manifesto. From here, for Andisa, the sky is certainly not the limit.



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Lwandile Makhasi

Leading the way

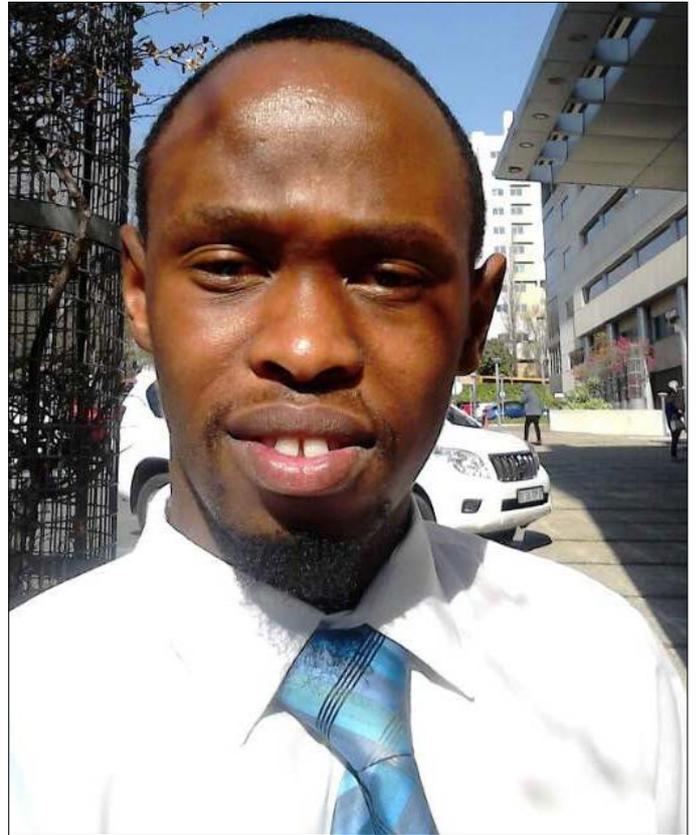
As the eldest of seven children, **Lwandile Makhasi** has always been well-acquainted with leadership roles, which have helped him to achieve his academic goals.

“My ambition was to obtain a university qualification,” he says. “It was inspired by some of my high school teachers, who taught me to dream big and work very hard to achieve those dreams.”

Hailing from Tsomo in the Eastern Cape, Lwandile serendipitously discovered Rhodes University through an alumnus. After reading several issues of the university publication, *Rhodos*, he was motivated to apply for a Bachelor of Science degree. Lwandile was accepted, however a financial obstacle meant that he could not take up his position.

A year later Lwandile received another chance to join the Extended Studies Programme. “I decided that I was going to use that opportunity to shine and put in all the hard work required to succeed,” he says.

Lwandile believes that the Extended Studies and its TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme effectively prepared him for his years at university, as well as the time beyond. “I was well equipped and informed about university life and how to make it a success,” he says. Having benefitted greatly from working with his mentor and fellow

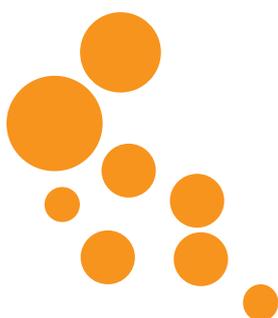


mentees in his first year at Rhodes, Lwandile was inspired to partner with a group of eight first year TAI Extended Studies students in his senior year.

Lwandile currently works as a **Business Analyst** at **Discovery Health Systems**, where his natural leadership abilities and strong work ethic continue to pay off. “My daily job can be summarised into four major areas of responsibility, namely: business analysis, systems production support, data configuration, and testing,” he says, explaining that his career is moving from strength to strength.

“I have two ‘star nomination’s, which is about colleagues acknowledging the effort I put into my work, [my] leadership skills and most importantly passion and ambition for what I do, which keeps me going,” he says.

Lwandile already has his next goal in sight – in the near future he is planning to venture into Data Science as a Machine Learning Specialist.



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Relebohile Chabeli

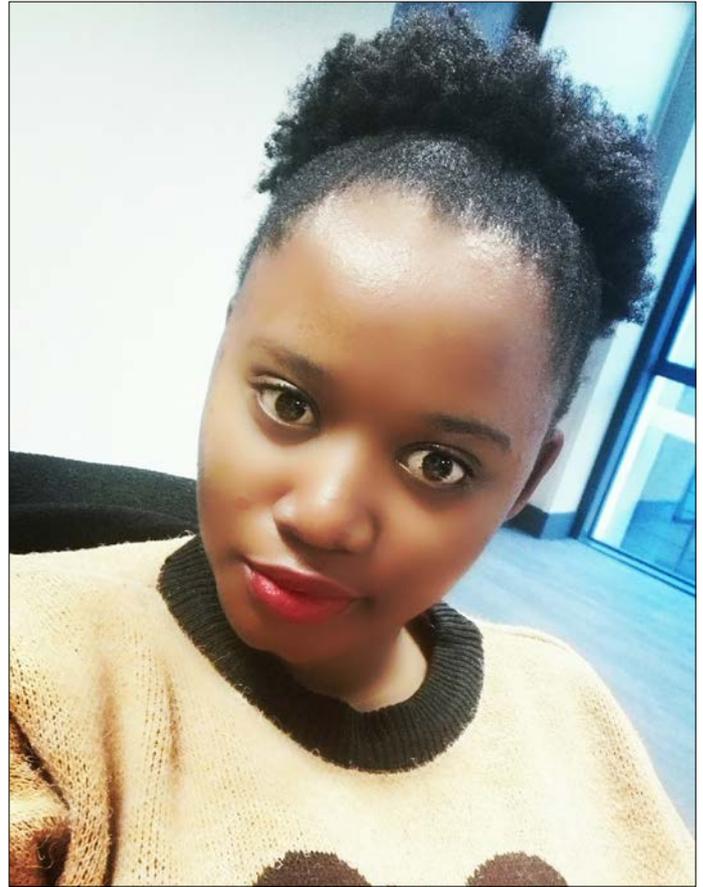
The science of success

Originally from the Free State, **Relebohile Chabeli** felt drawn to Rhodes University and applied to do a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Biochemistry and Microbiology. Despite not having studied Science subjects in high school, Relebohile's ambitions were not deterred, and she began her academic journey within the Extended Studies Programme.

Relebohile reflects on the valuable skills she gained through the support of the Extended Studies Programme and its TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme, of which she was a part. "It really helped me in terms of my time management," she says. "It taught me to work in groups, because a lot of the work we had to do [was] a team effort. And it taught me perseverance, because Science was a brand new thing for me."

She understood that the Extended Studies Programme was a stepping stone towards her goals, and created an open-ended mantra to motivate herself: "When I get into mainstream..." Relebohile's persistence culminated in a BSc degree in Environmental Science in 2014. She went on to achieve an LLB in 2016.

Relebohile has since begun her career as an **Intern** in the International Climate Change Relations and Negotiations Division at



the **Department of Environmental Affairs** in **Pretoria**. Relebohile explains how she currently uses her combined knowledge in the workplace. "My daily job entails me looking at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and how to implement these international pieces of equipment domestically," she says. "I look at climate change [treaties] and how we as South Africa [can] aim to reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere and live greener."

Relebohile has set her sights on the international arena. "The bigger picture for me is to become a United Nations Ambassador for International Human Rights, with a mix of Environmental Law. I don't even know if there is a position like that in the UN but we'll find it, we'll create it," she says, without a trace of doubt. *When she gets into the UN...*



"It taught me to work in groups, because a lot of the work we had to do [was] a team effort. And it taught me perseverance, because Science was a brand new thing for me."

Kabelo Kossam Ndlovu

Building a platform for the youth

Extended Studies TAI graduate **Kabelo Kossam Ndlovu** works as a Technology Advisory Consultant at KPMG in Johannesburg, where he assists with multiple IT audits. Kabelo graduated in 2017 with his Honours in Management, after completing a Bachelor of Commerce in Information Systems and Management.



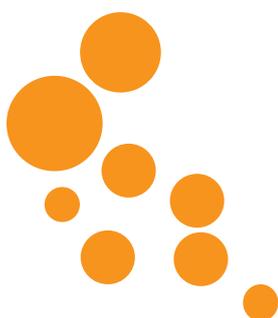
Originally from Limpopo, Kabelo was involved in the TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme as a first year mentee, and later, as a mentor. “When I came to Rhodes as a first year, there were many questions that I had in terms of the type of environment Rhodes was and the type of people that were there,” he says. “What the TAI Programme did for me was to create a network of people who were more than willing to help and guide. The people I met during my TAI affiliation days really had a huge influence on my success at Rhodes.”

Being a mentor was Kabelo’s favourite part of the TAI experience. “I really enjoyed interacting with first years and seeing how nervous and eager they were,” he reflects. “I got to develop some good personal

relationships with my mentees. I still follow up on them on social media and it is always amazing to see how far they have come.”

One day Kabelo hopes to form his own company, one that could “inspire young people to be creative.” He explains, “I want to foster a place of growth and equal opportunity.” Beyond that, he wishes to get involved in community engagement work in the future, mentoring young people and providing them with a platform to access opportunities. Life since graduation has been different to what he expected, but “in a very good way,” he says. “I am learning something new from every project that I find myself in.”

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Sisonke Mawonga

We are all here to learn

Sisonke Mawonga has come full circle. After being a student in the Humanities Extended Studies Programme, she now holds the position of **Commerce Lecturer** within the **Extended Studies Unit** at Rhodes in **Grahamstown**.

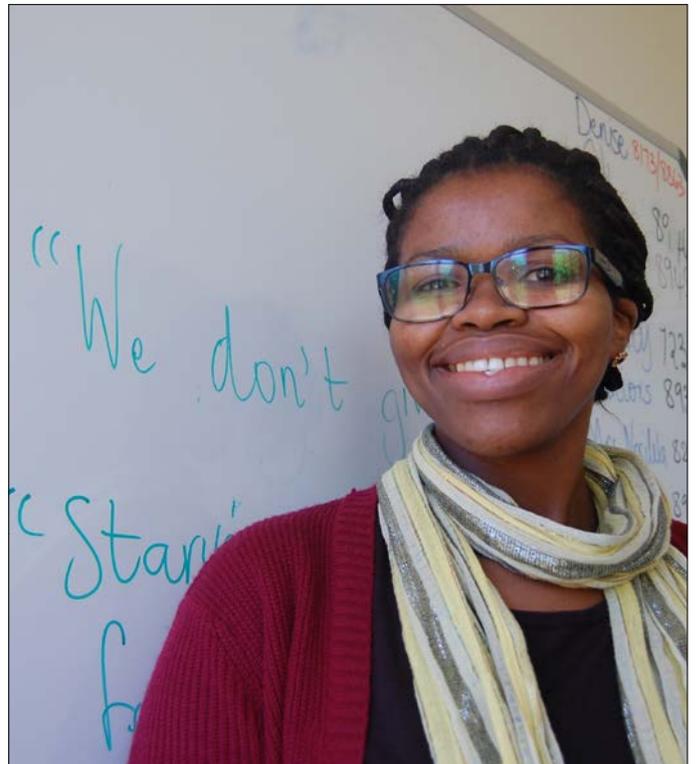
Reflecting on her student days, Sisonke shares, “I was very happy that I was in Extended Studies rather than in mainstream; I don’t think I would have survived otherwise. It’s a very intimate space, and the lecturers are amazing. You have access to your lecturers anytime, you have access to your peers. It’s very nice because of the support system that you get.”

Sisonke, who hails from Queenstown in the Eastern Cape, has been a permanent part of this support system since 2015, serving as a Language Specialist in Writing and Academic Literacy. Prior to that, she experienced the role of both mentee and mentor in the TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme.

Sisonke graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Sociology and African Languages in 2012. She completed a joint Honours in African Languages and Sociology and then graduated a third time in 2015, with a Masters in African Languages. Now working on her PhD, Sisonke is researching “How students can use their own languages to facilitate learning”.

When she is not juggling her time between teaching and research, Sisonke enjoys reading up on how the ‘normal’ education system can be improved. She always wanted to be a teacher, but not at primary or secondary school level, and is glad she has found her home in the Extended Studies Unit. “One of the values here is that it is not a top-down approach; there is a more reciprocal relationship within the Unit,” she explains. “This is a better way of learning, because you sort of disempower yourself as a lecturer so that the students can be empowered.”

The Extended Studies and TAI Programme provide not only learning support, but a sense of community. “We are a family,” Sisonke says, smiling. “We are all here to learn.”



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Siviwe Mnqovu

Gratitude on a daily basis

Hailing from the small farming town of Komga in the Eastern Cape, **Siviwe Mnqovu** describes himself as being “one of the fortunate ones to make it in a challenging environment like the township.”

Following a gap year after Matric, Siviwe applied to Rhodes and was welcomed into Commerce Extended Studies and its TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme.

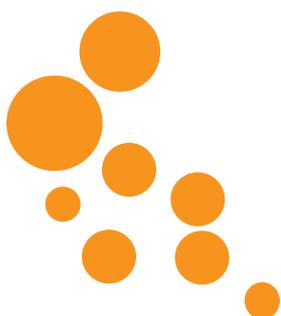
“Joining the programme was a blessing for me, as it gave me enough time to settle and adjust to the environment,” he says. “It offered me opportunities to understand myself and my surroundings. It gave me the necessary support and foundation for what I would like to believe was a successful academic career.”

In 2014, Siviwe earned his Bachelor of Commerce, with Information Systems and Economics as majors, and in 2015 he obtained his Honours in Information Systems. He currently works as a **Business Analyst** in **Johannesburg**, where he focuses on “solving business problems by bridging the gap between IT and business.”



The values instilled in him by the Extended Studies Programme and the TAI have helped him in his career today, mainly through learning to be proactive and take ownership of what he does. Above all, however, is gratitude. “Gratitude is rooted in the programme,” he says, “and gratitude is a motto I live by on a daily basis.”

When he is not working, Siviwe is exploring his new home, Johannesburg, or having “a run-around for soccer, even though it is not as competitive as back in the varsity days.” Looking towards the future, Siviwe plans to build a stable career and improve his skills in order to start his own consulting business, one that will “facilitate the technology age in South Africa...and Africa as whole.”



“Gratitude is rooted in the programme,” he says, “and gratitude is a motto I live by on a daily basis.”



2003 – 2017

Learning Guidance Commitment Collaboration Accomplishment
Responsibility Fulfilment Honesty Tolerance Challenge Resilience
Tenacity Balance Trust Thought Action Growth Inspiration

Celebrating 14 Years Of Mentoring Excellence at Rhodes

