



200 Young South Africans Environment



HLENGIWE RADEBE (29)

Sustainable Urban Energy Advisor



Twenty-nine-year-old sustainable urban energy advisor Hlengiwe Radebe is completely focused on how this country, and this world, can do better in leading the clean life.

Born and educated in Johannesburg, she currently works at Energy Africa, a Cape Town-based nongovernmental organisation working with urban municipalities to promote the development of a low carbon, clean energy economy in southern Africa. The organisation works with local government around sustainable energy and alternative energy approaches for low income communities, including project implementation of municipal and small business energy services partnerships.

Alongside a passion for change and sustainability and strong process management skills, Radebe's talents lie in building relationships, whether amongst officials or community members.

Beginning her journey towards a career centred around the natural environment, she completed courses such as ecology, environment and conservation, earth and atmospheric science, climate and society and environmental governance, comprising her BSc at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Hers was a quest to better understand how South African society might address increasing environmental challenges. Realising the need for extensive collaboration in environmental responses in this country, Radebe continued to pursue an MSc in interdisciplinary global change studies.

She joined Sustainable Energy Africa as an intern under the South African branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature, in its environmental leaders graduate programme and worked on projects exploring sustainable, energy-efficient options in urban centres, supporting the



Photo: Marole Mathabatha

transition to sustainable energy through strategy development, implementation and knowledge exchange, as well the reduction of energy poverty in low-income cities through clean, affordable solutions.

In one of the projects Radebe has driven, women were assisted in establishing businesses in the production and sale of hotboxes for cooking: alleviating energy poverty in their communities with a simple, effective, and convenient tool that saves a substantial amount of cooking energy, frees up women's time and enables them to engage in other activities.

Her current projects include working with key South African metros to develop bylaws that will ensure that new buildings have a net zero carbon rating, and working with secondary cities and metros on policy and processes for promoting and supporting the installation of small-scale, embedded generation options - including the sale of excess energy to the municipality.

Concerned with the transfer of knowledge and a sense of responsibility around environmental affairs, Radebe works with the Applied Centre for Climate and Earth Systems Science, at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to coordinate the annual Habitable Planet workshops for high school and university students to explore career paths enabling them to shape the change that they envision for their planet.

- Cayleigh Bright

JACK-VINCENT RADMORE (29)

Energy Programme Manager, GreenCape



Jack-Vincent Radmore is a driven and energetic leader, passionate about the green economy and uncompromising in his aim to provide energy to those who need it most.

With a background in business sciences and finance and a master's degree in economic and sustainable development, Radmore leads the energy programme at green economy development agency GreenCape. He is responsible for managing the strategic direction of the company's renewable energy-related activities in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa.

Radmore plays an advisory role to key local, provincial and national government entities. The GreenCape energy programme works at the interface between business, government and academia, identifying and removing barriers to economically viable renewable energy and energy efficiency interventions.

Under Radmore's leadership, key areas of work have included rooftop photovoltaic systems and other renewables, smart grids and metering, municipal revenue reform, future utility planning and electric mobility. On a macro scale, his efforts focus on the growth of the South African renewable energy market; the development of an international business-to-business matchmaking programme in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia; South African smart grids and smart metering; South African municipal revenue



Photo: Supplied

reform; future utility planning; and low income electrification.

Each intervention is aimed at creating equal and unhindered access for all South Africans to an open, technically sound, socially inclusive and commercially resilient energy economy.

For his work Radmore was recognised as the 2017/18 South Africa National Youth Energy Leader of the year.

Radmore believes opportunity, empathy, faith and impact are the key drivers behind his inspiration to make a meaningful impact in the lives of South Africans.

"Combining energy innovations with informal settlement upgrading gives us the opportunity to help with eradicating some of the unnecessary challenges faced by energy-poor South Africans," he says. - Linda Doke

Matome Kapa comes from a small village in Limpopo, Ga-Modjadji, which he says most people know for the Rain Queen. Growing up, he learnt a lot about the environment and ecosystems at school, which sparked his interest in the field.

However, he chose to study law at university, because people said he was "good at debating". After learning about environmental law, Kapa decided to become an environmental lawyer, combining the two things he enjoyed most.

He then realised there were two different career paths with regards to environmental law: he could work for the mining companies, or the mining-affected people. From his childhood love of the environment the choice was clear.

"While working at the Centre for Environmental Rights, I felt that rural connection, because a lot of the work was from communities in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. That work really spoke to me: to work with people who are facing these big companies and they have nothing. They are just defending their basic rights," he says.

From that point he started working with these communities. He was also instrumental in co-ordinating the Mining Affected Communities Network. Kapa realised he didn't just want to defend the communities but wanted to get actively involved through activist work.

He says initially it was very difficult to navigate the space between being a lawyer and an activist. However, by working with activists on the ground, he began to realise the times he had to be a lawyer and when he had to be an activist.

"I realised you sometimes won't be able to

MATOME KAPA (30)

Attorney and Head of Activism, Training & Support Project, Centre for Environmental Rights

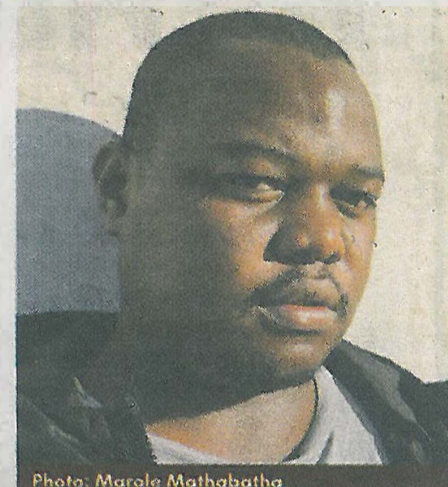


Photo: Marole Mathabatha

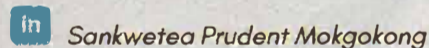
make any progress if you're just a lawyer."

He says the lessons he learnt from the activists on the ground allowed him in many cases to not just think about the immediate problem, but also how he could creatively solve the communities' issues in the long term.

"I was watching this case where Richard Spoor and his firm were doing the case for silicosis miners. What would be a great achievement for me would be to do something similar. Maybe not something that focuses on mineworkers but on the people living close to mines, whose health and wellbeing is being compromised. I want to represent those people." - Fatima Moosa

SANKWETE PRUDENT MOKGOKONG (30)

Research assistant, South African National Biodiversity Institute



When she saw an exhibition at the University of Pretoria on cholera during school, Sankwetea Prudent Mokgokong's interest was sparked in bacteria and the field of microbiology.

After completing her first degree in microbiology, she continued studying the field, going on to do an honours degree in the field, specialising in bacteria in water. While completing her master's degree, Mokgokong went to Marion Island to examine how bacteria is affected by climate change.

She is very passionate about her work on how bacterial changes can inform other decision-making processes. Marion Island is a pristine, unspoiled island with a climate similar to South Africa. Mokgokong says this helped improve the research she was conducting. She and her supervisor collected different soil samples to try and come up with solutions to the changes occurring in the island's bacteria.

Mokgokong has worked in many different sectors in her field, including working as a research intern with the department of science and technology and in the forensic department of the South African Police Service. She now works in conservation genetics.

"The main challenge is getting ethical clearance to work on a species. Most of our animal populations are facing extinction, but it's not easy to teach people how to conserve the species we have. Having to communicate with people and give them knowledge about our biodiversity is the most challenging part."



Photo: Supplied

Coming from rural Polokwane, Mokgokong says her passion for microbiology was only sparked when she was exposed to the field. So while she wants to grow in her own career, her main passion is "to expose the children in rural areas to science in general".

"I have realised that for each and every sector and department it's important to get young people involved. I believe in the integration of different departments. For example communication and health and science. Because a lot of students aren't exposed to that, we end up losing a lot of our diversity. If we get the youth involved from a very young age they will be able to better informed decisions than the people before us, who weren't able to." - Fatima Moosa