



# KWAKHA INDVODZA

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December/January Newsletter

# Executive Director's Foreword

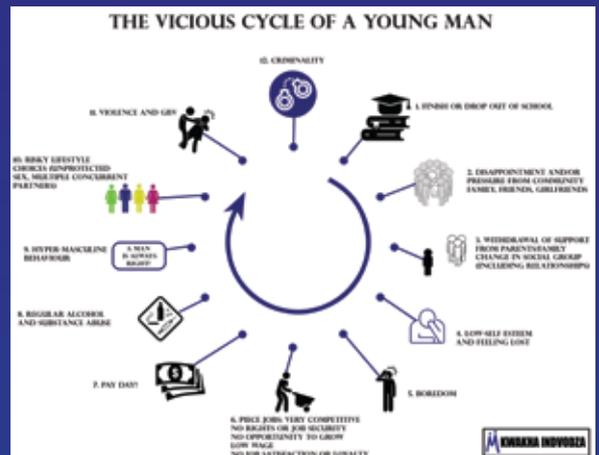
Swazi masculinity, like all masculinities expects the impossible. It is a social paradox. Understanding this contradiction lies at the heart of our understanding of gender dynamics. That's why all KI trainings, corporate and community, start with unpacking this "gender box". When we ask participants to imagine society's "typical man" (as if such a thing exists), we always get one of two responses. Men are expected to be both rural, agriculturally-minded traditionalists, who are involved in community-politics, own and raise cattle and provide for their families, as well as suit-wearing, sedan-driving businessmen, who live in modern, sub-urban housing and holiday in South Africa.

It is impossible to be both of these men at the same time, and even very difficult to be both of these men in one lifetime. If left unchecked and unexplored, this contradiction can lead to feelings of inadequacy, failure and social exclusion, especially amongst young men who lack mentorship and guidance in navigating these stereotypes. Nowhere is this more applicable than within society's expectations of men as breadwinners. From a young age, adolescent men and boys report feeling society's pressure to provide for their current and future families, to live in both the pastoral idyll of the rural areas and to be business magnates in Mbabane or Manzini; to be good with their hands and to be the boss in the boardroom.

It is for this reason that KI has always held financial independence as one of its key pillars. They say "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach". At KI, we believe that it is through his pocket.

In a country like Eswatini, economic strengthening programmes are vital to strengthen the holistic development of the country at large. There has been compelling evidence which speaks to the links between economic capacity and education, health, violence and social protection. But in a country currently experiencing "fiscal crisis", where 63% of the population live on less than 2USD (SZL 30) per day, the task ahead of us seems overwhelming. Where do we start? Our work within KI's Financial Independence pillar focusses on the most vulnerable within our niche target demographic: out of work, out of school young

men. Having finished or dropped out of school, and currently unemployed, these emajaha risk falling into what we have called the "Vicious Cycle", where social pressures and expectations coupled with a lack of formal opportunities lead to poor health and social outcomes. Unfortunately, it is a well-trodden path and one that we try to steer as many young people, men and women, away from walking.



The impact of these programmes is undeniable. As you can read in this issue, to-date KI has engaged over 500 young men and has seen 400 graduate through the SEIG programme.

But our programmes are a small step towards our desired destination of an economically prosperous Eswatini. We need to be working towards addressing these challenges at the national and structural levels, as well as at the individual and community level. As a country, we must be creating a job market that can meet the demand of its youth, provide training and both formal and informal opportunities to entry-level employees and create work environments which promote personal and professional development. And lastly, we need to look ahead, towards the new opportunities technology and our changing world will offer in a decade or two. What job will a young liSwati born today do in 2040? How will he serve, and benefit from, this economy? Whilst our programmes answer the questions of now, we also need programmes to being to ask (and answer) these questions of then.

Happy reading. As always, if you want any further information, please do reach out to me and I'll be happy to talk more.

# TRAINING BEYOND HARD SKILLS

Youth unemployment is a pressing development challenge faced by many countries including Eswatini. Prolonged unemployment is conducive to higher levels of poverty and can lead to social unrest. Kwakha Indvodza, through its Social Entrepreneurship Income Generation (SEIG) Project funded by the Solon Foundation, launched a youth empowerment programme- 'Lean2Earn' that welcomes young men aged 18 to 29 from across the country –for an intensive year long programme.

The Social Entrepreneurship Income Generation (SEIG) Project selects unemployed youths from underprivileged backgrounds to receive free training in business mentoring and skills development; (carpentry and welding). Last year the project had over 176 young men from across the Kingdom graduating from 'Learn2Earn' course each leaving with a new acquired skill in carpentry or welding. The (SEIG) skills development training aims to help the youth of Eswatini secure their livelihood by equipping them with quality training that will afford them financial independence.

Mpendulo Langwenya, who graduated from Siphocosini could not hide his joy when he was presented with his certificate. During an interview with the communications department he stated that he was happy to have been selected to be part of the training. "You know how hard it is to get a job nowadays. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn carpentry through Kwakha Indvodza's SEIG programme, this programme is great, it did not only give me a skill, it taught me CV writing, how to conduct myself during interviews and business planning."

Before the training, Mpendulo, who lives with his parents and three siblings, had taken up several jobs before being introduced to Kwakha Indvodza's 'Learn2Earn' course. "I was on and off jobs which was not sustainable. After graduating from carpentry, I told myself that this was my chance to make my own income. I used the presentation skills I learnt from the training to approach a local business man and request him to invest in my dream by donating carpentry equipment." Mpendulo added that he wanted to enhance his skills in carpentry before going into



*KI Lijaha Mpendulo Langwenya*

business which is why he is currently job shadowing local carpenters using his new equipment. With his new equipment Mpendulo has started to do some small carpentry projects in his community and he hopes to grow and do bigger projects in the future.

The training provided by the SEIG project goes beyond the hard skills related to carpentry; it also includes life skills. The learners are taught how to conduct themselves in interviews to maximise their chances of getting hired, as well as goal setting, emotional intelligence, business planning and entrepreneurship.

The project has achieved positive results through its interactive community based education, mentoring and employment readiness programmes. Of the young people who have been through the programme to date, some have found employment, and others have started their own businesses.

# KI Emajaha Testimonials



Jonathan Vilanculos- Makholweni Chapter – 21 years

Before Kwakha Indvodza I would have never thought that I would do carpentry. Having the carpentry training for the youth of my community was a great initiative especially because we were given a skill and a certificate. Going through this programme has given me and my friends a lot of hope. What I like about carpentry is that it is a business that one can get into easily.

Wandile Chunga - Makholweni Chapter - 25 years

Many young people in my community are unemployed and often because of this they start to get into bad habits. I am very happy about the work that Kwakha Indvodza is doing, being a part of the KI community helps keep us busy. I wish many of us would join. Kwakha Indvodza has not only mentored me but has given me a skill, this is a very big deal for me. I am empowered to start enhancing this skill by working for a local carpentry business then one day start my own business. What KI is doing is very important especially because unemployment among the youth is so high, we need many spaces that can empower the youth by giving them new skills / by enhancing their talents.



Sibusiso Mbonani-Siphofaneni Chapter - 26 Years

The entrepreneurship lessons from Kwakha Indvodza have encouraged me and other young men to be self starters. I am so grateful that the chapters are not only focused on mentoring and that they also aim to give us skills that we can use to make our lives better. I currently work as a security guard but I am not depending on that alone, I also bake muffins which I sell during the day-time before my shifts. Kwakha Indvodza has through their teachings motivated me and the guys to do other things that can bring us income, which is why we decided to start a cleaning product business. Being a part of the Siphofaneni chapter has changed my perspective on a lot of things.



# PARENT VISIT

Siphocosini a semi-rural community in the outskirts of Mbabane, is 5 km away from the city centre. Like many rural areas in the Kingdom, it is gripped with its fair share of socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, crime and poverty, which are perpetuated by HIV and AIDS and gender based violence.

Kwakha Indvodza, through its Litfuba Ngelakho Community Chapter project supported by UNFPA, launched a space that welcomes young men aged 15 to 29 from in or around the area – 5 days a week. The project has achieved positive results through an interactive male mentoring curriculum. On the 21st of September, the KI team had a sit down with Futhi Zwane, a parent of one of the chapter participants in Siphocosini (Mbongeni Shongwe's) who sang praises about Kwakha Indvodza and the impact that the Chapter has had on her son.

Through 7 Community Chapters, Kwakha Indvodza offers transformative third spaces in semi-rural communities across Eswatini. The community chapters offer fun, innovative activities that follow a 15-session curriculum. This curriculum is centered on financial independence, male health and social responsibility and is designed to mentor young Swazi men, affectionately known as emajaha, into respectful and responsible adults.

"Before the introduction of Kwakha indvodza many of our boys would loiter around the shops aimlessly and would get into bad habits." expressed Zwane. Make Zwane explained that there were many cases of crime and alcohol abuse in her community adding that Kwakha Indvodza has given her



*Mbongeni Shongwe and his mother Futhi Zwane*

and other parents peace of mind, knowing that their children are in a safe space that encourages positive and constructive attitudes, behaviours and knowledge rather than loitering around at the local shops and picking up bad habits.

"The boys in the chapter have all become my children. I often come to the chapter after work just to see what the young people are doing, it always pleases me to get here and experience warm and respectful teenagers and young adults. To see these young people engage in hand craft activities, being taught about financial independence and sexual health away from street corners really gives a parent hope about their future" she said.

Not only does Kwakha Indvodza keep these young men off the streets but KI is also teaching them vital lessons about health, responsibility and being respectful citizens. In a bid to end the wave of crime and violence through the implementation of community chapters, it pleases KI to receive such positive feedback from parents of participants. By December 2019, the project aims to have engaged 200 young men increased their knowledge on Gender, HIV Prevention and Entrepreneurship.

# Kwakha Indvodza partners with the African Union

In December 2019, Kwakha Indvodza partnered with the African Union Commission's (AUC) Youth Division for the 2019 African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AUYVC) pre-deployment training, hosted in Cairo, Egypt. The AU-YVC is a continental development programme that recruits, trains and deploys youth volunteers, to work in any of the 55 AU Member States. The AU Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC) is the largest volunteer program in Africa established in 2010 and has been hosted in over 5 countries since its inception.

AU-YVC promotes volunteering to deepen the status of young people in Africa as key participants in the delivery of Africa's human development targets and goals. It brings together young professionals to share skills, knowledge, creativity and learning to build a more integrated Continent and by implication strengthen Africa's relevance in today's globalized world.



*KI team facilitating sessions in Cairo, Egypt*

In the 2019 edition of the AUYVC Pre-Deployment Training, 200 young African were selected for the programme and invited to attend the 15-day pre-deployment training which is designed to equip them with the necessary knowledge, insight and skills before they embark on their 12 month of deployment. In previous editions of the AUYVC training, sessions focusing on gender, privilege or sexual consent were largely absent from the training's programme. In an effort to address this gap, the AUC's Youth Division leveraged on Kwakha Indvodza's expertise to ensure that youth volunteers are sensitised on the practical elements of gender relations, roles and identity.

Kwakha Indvodza, through training sessions called 'Tubonge' ('Let's Talk' in Kiswahili) incorporated gender awareness and encouraged participants to open up effective communication channels between the different sexes while introducing mutual understanding and respect during all interactions.. The topics covered during the training were; The Gender Box: African expectations of gender, privilege, power and sexual consent.

# Programs In Action



*Mathendele Emajaha captured with products they made during the skills development training.*



*Emajaha during their consent session at the Lihawu Camp 5.*



*Lijaha making a point during our Mahwalala site visit by UNICEF's Nathalie Daries.*



*Group photo with UNICEF's Nathalie Daries after a site visit.*



*Products produced by Siphofaneni emajaha after their skills development trainings.*



*Emajaha during a play based on GBV at Siphocosini.*



*Emajaha during the Siphocosini Community Health Day depicting a play based on GBV*



*Social Strengthening Manager stresses a point during the Mathendele skills development graduation day.*



*KI Staff strike a pose during our office back to school day*

# Our Partners in this issue

Kwakha Indvodza is funded by a number of bilateral, governmental and grant making organisations. The stories and projects featured in this issue are supported by the following partners.



**The Solon Foundation**

## Upcoming

- KI Column returns in the Times of Eswatini*
- Smart Life Choices Careers Fair 28 February*
- Lihawu Male Mentoring Camps 14-16Feb, 13-15March*
- International Women's Day 8 March*
- TB Day 24 March*



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