

MMILENG

ISSUE 2 OF 2021

Welcome to Our Road Network

BIG INTERVIEW

Board's Social & Ethics
Committee Member
Annique Moloisi

Road Well Travelled
**SHUDUFHADZO
MUSIDA**
Ha-Vhangani to World

**LIMPOPO
INVESTMENT
CONFERENCE**
a boost to the economy

MAPATE
Flood-Resistant
Bridge at
Dzindi River

**COMPETENCE
+ SINCERITY**
ON BRAND ISSUE
SHOWCASING THE BRAND RAL



RAL

ROADS AGENCY

LIMPOPO

TOGETHER FOR BETTER ROADS

We connect Limpopo

Providing quality and sustainable provincial road infrastructure network for the economic development of LIMPOPO PROVINCE.



RAL

ROADS AGENCY

LIMPOPO

TOGETHER FOR BETTER ROADS

ral.co.za



INTRODUCING...

NEW RAL LOGO

RAL



ROADS AGENCY LIMPOPO
Together for better roads

1994

South Africa's First Democratic
Government (of National Unity)
Established

1999

Company
Established

2000

Company
Starts
Operations

2001

Company
First Logo
Adopted



IT'S HERE...

NEW RAL LOGO

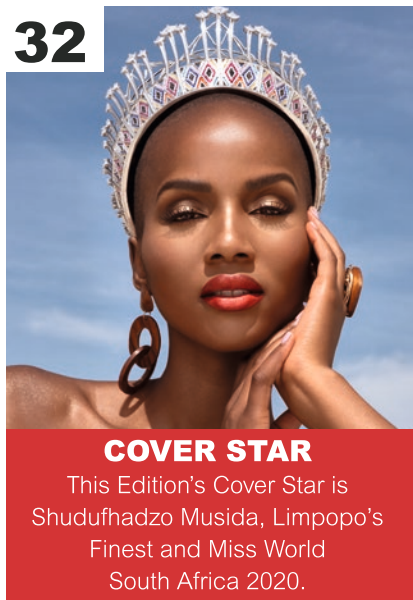


2020
Company
Second Logo
Adopted



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FEEL THE RAL BRAND. TOUCH THE PASSION. SEE OUR COMMITMENT.

At Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), we are deep in a rebranding transition. *Mmileng*, the official quarterly magazine of RAL, is a key tool in communicating this rebrand process, and this edition is thus a nuanced showcase of our brand essence in more ways than one.

In our lead story, yours truly takes a Q&A on this branding subject, on how the refreshed RAL will bring our most valued stakeholders closer to the Agency and its road infrastructure work. This segues into the next highlight from this edition, a Stakeholder Engagement feature on page 22, on how RAL's Stakeholder Relations and Community Development, as a support unit to our flagship projects team, passionately strives to build mutually beneficial relationships with communities.

On page 14, *Inside RAL*, we feature a cohort of highly qualified interns and talented trainee learners from our latest internship intake. *RAL Cares*, page 36, focuses of the human interest element on one of the group members.

For our regular RAL at Work project feature, page 26, we profile the recently completed reconstruction of a previously flood-damaged bridge in the village of Mapate in the Vhembe District.

“RAL IS DEEP IN A REBRANDING TRANSITION. AND THIS EDITION IS A NUANCED SHOWCASE OF OUR BRAND ESSENCE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.”

You can scan the QR Code on our popular vox pop page *Mintirho Ya Vulavula*, page 25, to watch and hear first-hand feedback from community members and road users benefiting from this successfully completed project.

QR Codes are part of our digitisation strategy to bring visuals to some of our stories in *Mmileng*. They have been well received, and *Mintirho Ya Vulavula* is now a permanent fixture on the RAL Youtube and Facebook accounts, also accessible from every *Mmileng* edition going forward via a QR Code scan.



Dr Maropeng Manyathela
RAL Head of Communications

Still on the social media beat, our interactive RAL Twitter account at @RoadsAgency is nearing the 10 000 followers milestone, and we encourage everyone to follow the account and set notifications on to get immediate updates on the road infrastructure updates

for Limpopo Province from the horse's mouth.

We have indeed put out a great edition of *Mmileng* for you.

Covering it is Shudufhadzo Musida, Miss South Africa 2020, who will represent the country at the Miss World pageant at the end of the year.

Turn to her profile interview on page 32

to get to know one of the favourites for the coveted blue crown before the crowning moment.

In the coming editions, we will also look at tweaking our content mix, and piloting the translation of a few pages into Sesotho sa Leboa, Tshivenda or Xitsonga for *Mmileng* print edition, all this to make your favourite publication more readable considering the make up of Limpopo as a province.

In the meantime, enjoy this read.

We Connect Limpopo...

Today, Limpopo boasts a good road infrastructure because we are creating and designing modern bridges and roads, making transportation of people and goods reliable and opening access to the rest of Africa.

Making it all happen...

ral.co.za



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RAL AT THE FOREFRONT OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TOWARDS ECONOMIC STABILITY

In his recent update on the country's efforts towards curbing the Covid-19 pandemic and accelerating the rebuilding of the South African economy, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa placed infrastructure as a critical enabler to South Africa's ailing economy.

In line with President Ramaphosa's call to place infrastructure at the top of SA's economic agenda, Roads Agency Limpopo's mission, 'to provide quality and sustainable provincial road infrastructure network for the economic development of Limpopo Province' provides a roadmap for the province to continue to contribute meaningfully towards achieving this goal.

As outlined in its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, RAL has, for the past few months been implementing several preventative maintenance and upgrading (gravel to tar) projects to advance the goals Limpopo Provincial Government has set for itself to improve the lives of its residents.

The Agency currently has 14 flood-damaged projects under construction, 11 upgrading projects underway and 11 maintenance projects under construction throughout the province, with projects such as the Bridge 6237/2020 on road D3724 in Mapate village having been recently completed.

Since the bridge was repaired, community members have gained the much-needed access to healthcare, schools and other services for the first time in eight years. We certainly uphold our core values of reliability, teamwork and commitment in the execution of our mandate.

RAL, through the implementation of its road infrastructure projects and in amplifying the SA government's empowerment initiative, continues to create job opportunities in communities where the construction of these projects is being undertaken.

The local Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) and labourers' empowerment programmes are RAL's pillars to support government's efforts for economic development.



MR GABRIEL MALULEKE
RAL Chief Executive Officer

30% of all of the total contract value on all upgrading projects and 10% on maintenance projects are set aside for the empowerment of local SMMEs and labourers. These initiatives have contributed immensely towards local economic development and what is often referred to as the rural economy.

“THE LOCAL SMALL, MEDIUM AND MICRO ENTERPRISE (SMME) AND LABOURERS’ EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES ARE RAL’S PILLARS TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT’S EFFORTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT”

RAL's drive to contribute to the empowerment undertakings made by SA's government continues to add immense value to the Limpopo Province. With the current challenges of Covid-19, the Agency has been stretched in terms of skills and the required workforce. RAL is doing everything within its available resources to train and attract the required expertise of engineers and project managers.



COMPETENCE



The new RAL logo as seen on the corporate magazine, PPE, and promotional and stationery items.

A BRAND NEW RAL

In March 2021, Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) started a rebranding exercise to enhance the Agency’s reputation and improve the outdated logo taint. Mmileng editor, and RAL Head of Communications, Maropeng

Manyathela, the custodian of the brand RAL, explains the rationale behind this bold move that resulted in a deliberate brand personality, repositioning, and a new logo, the second since the Agency was established in 1999.

Why was there a need to alter the RAL logo, and what approach was followed resulting in the current logo?

When we conducted our most recent brand audit, some of the findings that came out of it, especially about the



Maropeng Manyathela, RAL Head of Communications.

More than being considerate to the ever-changing technological developments, the new logo has a cleaner, firm look and feel, bolder and modern design elements enhancing its ability to stand out and project a professional brand. It is also simplified to have the abbreviated name of the organisation stand-alone more determined without any enhanced motifs or graphic effects as seen in the previous corporate identity.

■ **What elements of the brand have been retained, and which were changed and why?**

The overall brand colour palette has been retained, thus ensuring an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary logo makeover. The aesthetics, our slogan, core values, vision and mission statements were also retained. As brand modernisation continuously evolves, certain elements of any corporate identity become a core component to its brand image to retain a sense of brand identity and culture.



“THE LOGO MUST COME TO BE RECOGNISED AS THAT OF AN ORGANISATION THAT DELIVERS ON ITS MANDATE.”

perceptions of our brand, were that the RAL brand was not “positioning the stature of the Agency” in accordance with the value it offers to the province. A brand repositioning strategy, anchoring on the brand personality traits of ‘Sincerity’ and ‘Competence’, was thus developed.

■ **When was this new logo adopted by the RAL Board of Directors?**

The current logo was formally adopted by the RAL Board in January 2021, marking 20 years from its first iteration.

■ **What are the standout differences between the first logo (2001-2021) and its successor (2021 -)?**

■ **How will this refreshed look drive RAL’s business strategy?**

The brand refresh, together with changes in other critical value-chain areas of the organisation, are an important part of RAL’s business strategy that is designed to ensure that RAL is a professional, well-run SOC (State-Owned Company) brand. It will also amplify our mission, ‘to provide quality and sustainable provincial road infrastructure network for the economic development of Limpopo Province’.

■ **How will this new logo help reposition the Agency in the eyes of the stakeholders it serves,**

especially the Limpopo in need of quality road infrastructure?

Over the years, RAL has been associated with a bad reputation and the new logo will go a long way in repositioning the Agency as a reliable service delivery agent and a professional organisation that delivers quality road infrastructure to the people of Limpopo.

■ **How will this rebranding exercise assist the Agency to communicate better with its internal and external stakeholders?**

In accordance with RAL’s slogan, “Together for better roads”, the overall brand refresh exercise has been driven



The new RAL brand has pride of place on the lift access between floors at the RAL offices.



Branding with the new RAL logo adorning a wall at RAL offices.

through consultation and this augurs well in terms of improved communication with all stakeholders. It is with intent to attach more or all ambassadorship of the brand to its stakeholders.

■ What does this logo say about the essence of the brand RAL and the culture of the Agency?

The logo projects modernity, precision, as well as efficiency, and is aligned with our brand essence of

‘We Connect Limpopo’, as can be seen in the ‘quick logo explainer’ at the bottom of page 40 of this *Mmileng* Issue 2 of 2021 edition.

■ How will the new leadership at the Agency leverage on this refreshed image to deliver on its mandate?

The new leadership has sought to change the fortunes of RAL, starting with a solid business strategy to guide the organisation as it transforms, to

ensure that it fulfils its mandate within the province. The refreshed brand identity, in essence, captures the positive changes happening within RAL.

■ When do you anticipate to have completed a rebrand on all your assets?

We have planned that by the end of the current 2021/22 financial year the rebranding exercise on all our assets would have been completed. Already, considerable work has been done in this regard internally. Externally, our website, social media accounts and some of the construction site billboards at new projects are bearing the new logo.

■ What do you wish for this logo to be recognised for in the years to come?

As part of RAL’s vision, of ‘contributing to the socio-economic development by connecting the people of Limpopo Province’, the logo must be seen as an enabling feature complimenting other critical elements of the organisation. The logo must come to be recognised as that of an organisation that delivers on its mandate. **im**

LIMPOPO TO GET AN INVESTMENT BOOST

Following the recently concluded two day virtual Limpopo Investment Conference, an investment commitment of R208 billion was made. Both investors and delegates made this pledge after observing the abundant opportunities that exist in three major sectors of the Limpopo economy, namely; mining, agriculture and tourism, as outlined by Limpopo Premier, Chupu Stanley Mathabatha.

On how the conference stands to benefit the Limpopo’s roads infrastructure, the Limpopo Provincial Head of Communications - Mr Nдавhe Ramakuela - elaborated that infrastructural challenges which include the roads network that falls under Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) could potentially be a thing of the past as a result of this planned injection into the province’s economy.

“A fraction of the investment will extend to infrastructural challenges in the province, including the development of the Limpopo roads network, since these key major sectors depend on roads for their regular processes,” he said.

The conference is part of the South African Investment Conference (SAIC) which was launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018. The main premise of SAIC is geared towards attracting domestic and foreign investments, amounting to R1.2 trillion in a space of 5 years.

The President addressed delegates and highlighted the importance of investors partnering with the province on its journey towards sustainable and inclusive development.

“Investment should contribute to the development of integrated industrial value chains that generate sufficient added value for the economy,” he said.

The Limpopo Investment Conference picked up where the Provincial Tourism Lekgotla left off a week prior to the conference, where the emphasis was on prioritising areas that can connect various aspects of the economy to trigger tourism

development. RAL continues to position itself as a reliable service delivery agent that can connect different players in the economy by delivering quality road infrastructure.

In his closing statement to mark the end of the conference, Premier Mathabatha reiterated the successful outcome of the conference, with key objectives addressed, further noting that, “The hosting of the inaugural Limpopo Investment Conference is a clear demonstration that our vision of transforming the economy for inclusive growth is well on course.” **m**







RAL

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Roads Agency Limpopo has given twenty-two (22) unemployed graduates and six (6) experiential learner trainees, pictured at their induction workshop, a 'foot in the door' in its 2021 Internship Programme intake.

RAL EQUIPS YOUNG GRADUATES WITH WORKPLACE SKILLS

As the rate of unemployment, especially among the youth, continues to rise, Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) has recruited twenty-two (22) graduates on a 24 months internship programme to prepare them for the work environment by equipping them with the necessary experience and skills in their respective fields.

In addition, the Agency has also adopted six experiential learner trainees, five in Engineering and one in Human Resources, from the Capricorn TVET College for them to acquire practical skills for 18

months as a requisite to complete their studies.

The recruitment of the 22 interns who were selected among 1 300 applicants will run for a period of two years from 1 June 2021 to 30 May 2023.

The interns have been placed in the Agency's four divisions, namely Corporate Services (2), Engineering (5), Finance (5) and Office of the CEO (10). Corporate Services is made of Human Resources and Facilities units while the Engineering division comprises of Operations, Land Use Management, and Planning and Design units. Finance, on the other hand, has Supply Chain Management,

Finance Reporting and Management Accountant, and Chief Financial Officer's Office as units.

In addition, the Office of the CEO comprises Legal, Company Secretariat, Communications, Environmental Management, Internal Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Governance, Risk and Compliance.

Moreover, six experiential learner trainees were given opportunities with five placed in the Engineering division and one in the Corporate Services (Human Resources) Division.

In welcoming the trainees, RAL's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Gabriel Maluleke said the trainees were joining a team that is determined to

serve Limpopo communities with road infrastructure services, further imploring that “when given a task, give it your all. That’s the expectation we have for you”.

The CEO also believes that empowering these interns will add great value to the province and the country in terms of skills development.

Tlou Gololo, who is one of the interns placed in the CEO’s office, hopes to have learnt the necessary skills of running the Office of the CEO without any supervision. “I would like to absorb as much practical knowledge that will enable me in the future to run any office without supervision.”

Another intern, Khuthadzo Mavhungu, said his expectation within the internship period is to learn more about the relevant laws applicable to environmental authorisation of the Agency’s projects. “I would also like to

“WHEN GIVEN A TASK, GIVE IT YOUR ALL. THAT’S THE EXPECTATION WE HAVE FOR YOU.”

learn more about the compliance and consultation processes that are undertaken during and after the completion of every road project.”

An experiential learner, Itumeleng Kekana, who is an engineering student at Capricorn TVET College – Seshego, said the experiential learning at RAL was a great opportunity for him to gain practical knowledge in his field. He said that

throughout the experiential learning period, he looks forward to supplementing his theoretical knowledge with practice, especially how to take appropriate measurements in the construction of roads, handling of tender documents, and how to execute surveys, among other tasks of a civil engineer.



Scan the QR Code to watch this Inside RAL.

MEET EXPERIENTIAL LEARNERS



Ms Lerato Chabangu (27)
Engineering - Capricorn TVET College:
Civil Engineering (N6)



Mr Itumeleng Kekana (27)
Engineering - Capricorn TVET College: Civil
Engineering (N6)



Ms Mpho Manthosi (31)
Engineering - Capricorn TVET College:
Civil Engineering (N6)



Ms Mmahunadi Maphatiane (26)
Engineering - Capricorn TVET College:
Civil Engineering (N6)



Mr Tshepho Mkwena (26)
Engineering - Capricorn TVET College:
Civil Engineering (N6)



Mr Mahlatsi Malebana (27)
Human Resources - Capricorn
TVET College: Human Resource
Management (N6)

MEET THE INTERNS



Ms Tlou Gololo (33)

CEO's Office - Capricorn TVET College:
National Diploma in Management Assistant



Ms Mantebane Mashiane (30)

CFO's Office - Capricorn TVET College:
National Diploma in Management Assistant



Mr Paseka Mpe (28)

Communications - University of
Johannesburg: Bachelor of Arts Honours
- Strategic Communication



Ms Mantepa Mothapo (30)

Company Secretariat - University of
Limpopo: Bachelor of Laws



Mr Khuthadzo Mavhungu (27)

Environmental Management - University of
Venda: Bachelor of Environmental
Sciences (Honours)



Mr Rhulani Nyalungu (26)

Environmental Management - University of
Venda: Bachelor of Environmental
Sciences (Honours)



Ms Hellen Letsoalo (26)

Finance - Tshwane University of
Technology: BTech in Cost and
Management Accounting



Ms Lerato Phaleng (25)

Finance - University of Limpopo: Bachelor
of Commerce in Accounting



Mr Katlego Ledwaba (31)

Governance, Risk and Compliance -
Tshwane University of Technology: National
Diploma in Internal Auditing



Ms Rebecca Seemela (33)

Governance, Risk and Compliance -
University of South Africa: Bachelor of
Commerce in Risk Management



Ms Basetsana Kgagara (25)

Human Resources - North-West University:
Bachelor of Arts Honours in Labour
Relations Management



Mr Eugene Mohlabja (27)

Human Resources - University of Limpopo:
Bachelor of Administration Honours in
Public Administration



Ms Kholofelo Molokoane (25)

Internal Audit - Tshwane University of
Technology: BTech in Internal Auditing



Mr Mahlatse Matswalela (24)

Land Use Management - Central University
of Technology: Bachelor of Technology in
Civil Engineering



Ms Iris Nemaxwi (26)

Legal Services - University of Limpopo:
Bachelor of Laws



Ms Kholofelo Dikgale (27)

Monitoring and Evaluation - University of
Limpopo: Bachelor of Development Studies
Honours in Planning and Management



Mr Wiseman Mathebula (31)

Operations - University of Johannesburg:
Bachelor of Engineering in Civil
Engineering (Honours)



Ms Lehlabile Tshoga (23)

Operations - Central University of
Technology: BTech in Civil Engineering



Mr Tshegofatso Kgaka (23)

Planning and Design - University of
Johannesburg: Bachelor of Engineering
Technology Honours - Civil Engineering



Mr Mohau Mamabolo (28)

Planning and Design - University of
Johannesburg: Bachelor of Engineering in
Civil Engineering (Honours)



Ms Beronice du Plessis (23)

Supply Chain Management - Rosebank
College: Bachelor of Business
Administration in Logistics and Supply
Chain Management



Ms Maureen Netshitavhadulu (25)

Supply Chain Management - Rosebank
College: Bachelor of Business
Administration in Logistics and Supply
Chain Management

Carrying out the mandate of the Parent

MERIT - WOMAN - SUBSTANCE

Anna 'Annique' Moloisi is currently serving on the Roads Agency Limpopo SOC Ltd Board of Directors as a representative for the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

In February 2021, Annique Moloisi was appointed on a three-year term to the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) Board of Directors by the Shareholder Representative, the MEC for the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI). She was appointed, in terms of section 12 (3) (aB) of the Limpopo Province Roads Agency Proprietary Limited and Provincial Roads Act 7 of 1998, as a representative of the LDPWRI on the RAL Board.

RAL is the agency attached to the LDPWRI, and its sole shareholder is the Limpopo Provincial Government.

"I am here to contribute towards enhancing RAL's slogan of 'Together for better roads'. My aim is to add value to the province of Limpopo by contributing to RAL's mission 'to provide quality and sustainable provincial road infrastructure network for the economic development of Limpopo Province' and realising our vision on 'contributing towards the economic development of the province'," says Ms Moloisi.

Since Ms Moloisi joined the Board, the Agency has completed three upgrading projects, from gravel to tarred surface standards.

Currently serving as a member of the Social and Ethics Committee of the Board, Ms Moloisi has an extremely important task of contributing towards RAL's delivery of road infrastructure, giving due consideration to the applicable ethical principles and enhancing the communications and public relations machinery of the Agency.

then years later in 2018 obtained a bachelor's degree in Public Administration and Honours in Public Administration, both from MANCOSA. In addition, she acquired several certificates through part-time studies, which include the Advanced Certificate in Education Studies (ACES) and Certificate in Human Resource Management with the University

"I AM HERE TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ENHANCING RAL'S SLOGAN OF 'TOGETHER FOR BETTER ROADS'."

She says as a Board Member she does not only need to understand RAL's role in the provincial government's service delivery agenda but also to possess the collaborative spirit needed for a Board to discharge its oversight duties.

Undoubtedly, Ms Moloisi ticks all the boxes as her experience as well as her educational achievements have prepared her to confidently execute her duties at this complex level.

She qualified as a teacher in 1993 at the Kwena Moloto College of Education, and

of South Africa (Unisa).

Her hunger to learn was born in her formative years when she started Grade 1 (then Sub A) at the age of four at Leshoane Primary School at Ga-Mamabolo in the Capricorn District of Limpopo. She then proceeded to Tshware Higher Primary School for her Standard 3 (now Grade 5) to Standard 5 (now Grade 7), being one of the top achievers at the time.

Despite losing her mother at the age of five, Ms Moloisi never gave up on her education. Her hard work was rewarded

Roads Agency Limpopo Board Member, also serving on the Social and Ethics Committee, Annique Moloisi.





when she was awarded a bursary from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa (ELCSA).

“My relatives were on my side to help me kick-start my career. I never felt neglected as an orphan, in fact I enjoyed being the centre of attention,” she recalls.

Asked about dealing with disappointment, Ms Moloisi narrated how unhappy she was with her initial matriculation (Grade 12) results as this had the potential to lower her chances of being awarded a bursary to study further.

The decision to rewrite her matric the following year enabled her to pass her National Senior Certificate with a matric exemption, and set her on a journey of consecutive wins.

She continued with this ‘can-do’ mindset throughout college as an Economics and English student at Kwena Moloto until she qualified as a teacher.

Her teaching career started with the dawn of the South African democracy in 1994, marking her as a true professional trailblazer. “I started my teaching career at Mamphoku Senior Secondary School, then popularly known as Ditenteng at Ga-Makgoba village in 1994. I was one of the first teachers to start at the school with the principal and six other teachers.”

She was redeployed to Mafoufale High School in 2000 due to the Rationalization and

Redeployment process but an opportunity came knocking again when the Head of Department for Languages and Commerce position became available at her previous school, Mamphoku, where she was appointed in November 2006.

This was the beginning of her leadership journey, which saw her joining the then Limpopo Department of Roads and Transport, RAL’s parent department at the time, as Manager for Special Programmes in 2007. She was pleasantly surprised by how she enjoyed being part of the management team, and from that point she never looked back.

As she diligently executed her duties, her excellence could not be ignored, and this led to her being appointed as the Acting Senior Manager for Waterberg District at the same department, and at a later stage she became the Senior Manager in the same district where she led teams that won a myriad of awards for excellence and innovation.

After serving for nine years, the department was reconfigured into two departments, namely the LDPWRI and the sister department, the Limpopo Department of Transport and Community Safety, with her remaining with the former.

Her journey at LDPWRI has been a long and fruitful one, built on hard work and adorned with victories.

In as much as she is a hard worker, she surrounds herself with positivity by taking time out to enjoy real-life documentaries.

“I am self-motivated and find fulfilment in sharing positive life experiences,” she says.

Her stance on the competence of women in different sectors has always been clear even when she stepped into her role as one of the non-executive board members on the RAL Board dominated by women.

“I am highly motivated by the fact that the RAL Board is dominated by women. This is evidence enough that women are capable and can at times even work twice as hard when given a chance to do so,” she says firmly, beaming with pride.

Ms Moloisi is multi-faceted and brings passion to every role in her life and she serves each role with pride. **m**

Moloisi would like to see projects currently under construction across the five district municipalities of Limpopop Province completed on time.



SINCERITY



Roads Agency Limpopo, through its SRCD unit, has found a balance between observing Covid-19 protocols and remaining at the coalface of stakeholder engagements towards effective service delivery.

WIN-WIN BUILDING MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES

Stakeholder engagement is central to the Roads Agency Limpopo’s business strategy for the successful implementation of its mandate. This is best encapsulated by RAL’s tagline, ‘together for better roads’, as derived from its corporate value of ‘teamwork’.

Community meetings, at the coalface and deep in the far flung rural villages of Limpopo Province, are the DNA of the Agency’s stakeholder engagement strategy, making it one of the most effective, personal and sincere in the country.

The importance of this is further underlined by the fact that the unit vested with RAL’s stakeholder engagement strategy, the Stakeholder Relations and Community Development (SRCD), is under the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, one of the four divisions at the Agency.

As such, as per RAL reporting structure, the Senior Manager for SRCD reports directly to the CEO.

The other three divisions on the Agency’s divisional/functional structure are Corporate Services, Finance and the flagship Engineering division.

According to Mavis Mashashane, the acting Senior Manager for SRCD, the SRCD unit is the basic unit providing support services to Engineering division from the planning to execution and completion stages of the project.

The seamless coaction between the two has been vital to the success of projects, allowing them to be completed on time and on budget.

“The SRCD has two subunits, namely Stakeholder Relations, and Social and Institutional Development (SID). Both of these subunits deal with stakeholders at different stages of the project life cycle.

“Stakeholder Relations scope of work is limited to stakeholders before the implementation of projects, while the SID subunit scope of work, on the other hand, is limited to stakeholders in projects that are currently running,” says Ms Mashashane.

RAL has indentified two key categories of stakeholders in road infrastructure related matters:

- Stakeholders in projects that are currently running (SID), and
- Stakeholders who are requesting new upgrades, rehabilitation or maintenance of their roads (Stakeholder Relations).

“Engagements with these stakeholders (for new upgrades, rehabilitation or maintenance) often require high-level intervention and commitment at a political level, with the municipalities, Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI) or Office of the

Premier, or as far up as national government roped in for community engagement events,” says Ms Mashashane.

RAL is responsible for the implementation of upgrading, from gravel to tarred surface standards, and preventative (rehabilitation and resurfacing) maintenance projects on provincial roads while Routine Road Maintenance (RRM) falls within the purview of the LDPWRI.

RRM consists of ongoing upkeep of the road and road reserves. This includes grading and regravelling, patching potholes, grass cutting, repairing damaged guard rails hit by cars, fixing road signs, cleaning and clearing storm water culverts, removing carcasses and clearing the road after traffic accidents.

Due to the complex demographics and landscape of Limpopo province, RAL’s strategy has identified typical stakeholders in RAL projects to include local municipalities (including ward councillors), traditional authorities, development forums, business forums, taxi associations, Project Steering Committees (PSCs) and Community Liaison Officers (CLOs).

Interestingly, Limpopo is the fifth largest of South Africa’s nine provinces in both area and population size. And the rural nature of the province also makes it the most ethnically diverse and complex province in the country, with three paramount traditional leaders (second only to the Eastern Cape), and over two-hundred senior traditional leaders (third only to KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape), making the Agency’s strategy to tread carefully on the cultural sensitivities and mutual respect if it is to gain widespread approval and collaboration.

According to Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), traditional leaders offer meaningful and valuable input to government and legislature on the development initiatives aimed at solving the socio-economic challenges facing rural communities.

The local government tier in Limpopo, with five districts, twenty-two local municipalities and over five hundred wards, are regular partners identified in RAL’s stakeholder analysis as needing permanent consultation.

It is at ward and municipality level that

“THE SRCD UNIT ENSURES THAT STAKEHOLDERS ARE EFFECTIVELY INVOLVED IN PROJECT DECISIONS AND EXECUTION THROUGHOUT THE LIFE CYCLE OF A ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT.”

communities need to get involved and participate in the public consultation process on the drafting and prioritisation, and review of services in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), such as requests for clinics, electrification and street lights, schools, roads, water and sanitation, etc.

Road infrastructure, which, together with jobs and water, has been in the top three service delivery demands in the province for the last five years, is prioritised and implemented at local municipal level if owned by municipalities, or forwarded to relevant districts for consolidation for those road assets owned by either RAL or SANRAL.

The scope of work for SID social

ownership matters related to affected properties (structures, fences, maize/mieli fields) and facilitation of access to borrow pits (consent letters); recruitment and appointment, and capacity building of CLOs and creating opportunities and training for local labourers and SMMEs,” says Ms Mashashane.

Regular monthly PSC meetings and continuous support, facilitation of conflict resolutions and monitoring of implementation of agreements, and project evaluation are key to sustaining teamwork and relationships or to anticipate and keep opposition to projects in check.

“Key is to resolve project related matters that would otherwise result in budget




RAL’s Head of SRCD (acting), Mavis Mashashane, flanked by Mabjalwa Modjadji (left) for SID and Stakeholder Relations’ Makhitha Chesane.

facilitation is divided into three phases, namely planning and mobilisation, implementation and monitoring, and completion and hand over.

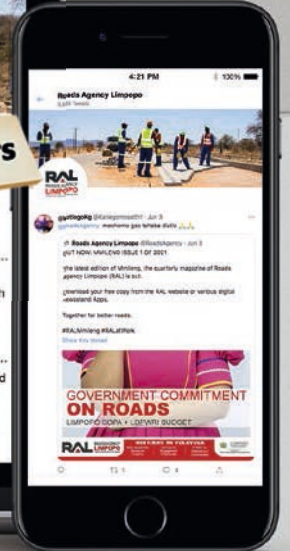
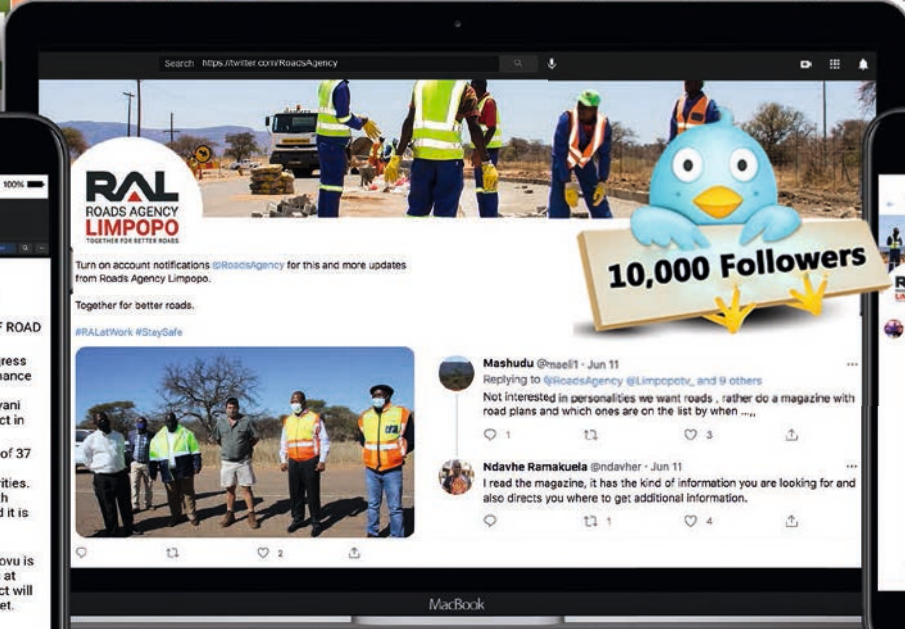
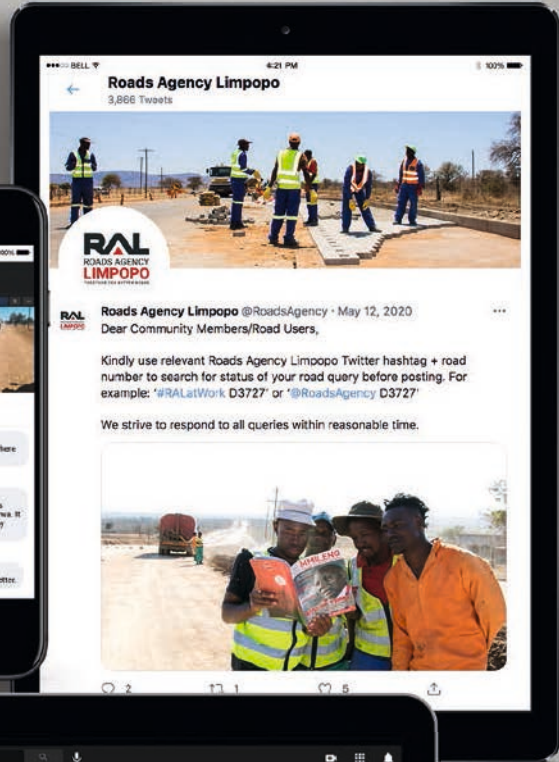
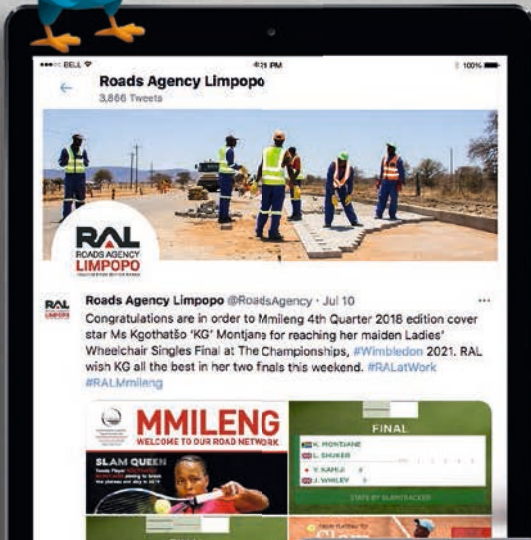
“Consultations with stakeholders in ongoing projects are based on project related activities such as presentation of approved scope of work, outlining of processes on PSC establishment and capacity building, attending to land

overruns with constructions being interrupted or stopped by protests or strikes.

“The SRCD unit ensures that stakeholders are effectively involved in project decisions and execution throughout the life cycle of a road infrastructure project, and to deal with conflicting or competing objectives among project stakeholders,” concludes Ms Mashashane. 

#RALatWork

Complaints and Compliments



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MINTIRHO YA VULAVULA

At the end of June 2021, Mmileng visited the village of Mapate within the Thulamela Local Municipality of the Vhembe District to hear first-hand feedback from community members and road users benefiting from the recently completed construction of Bridge 6237/2020 that links them to the outside world. Story on page 26.



“

Until now, to reach our school on the other side of the river in Lwamondo, we were walking on water pipes crossing the river, often clinging onto them for safety. Now that we have this bridge, we are able to go to school with ease and with little dust (during the dry season). We are grateful to the government, and RAL, for this bridge.

Mufunwa Mudau,
Learner (Makakavhale Secondary School, Lwamondo), from Mapate.

”



“

Before this bridge was rebuilt, many people lost their lives unnecessarily as ambulances couldn't access the village of Mapate to offer emergency medical services. For me, as a former paramedic (at Donald Fraser and Tshilidzini Hospitals, 2006-2018) who lives in the village, it was even more soul-destroying when we could not have access into Mapate to take patients to and from hospitals.

Rendani Masutha,
Community Member, from Mapate.

”



Scan the QR Code to watch this vox pop.



“

I started using this road (D3724) way before the bridge was washed away in 2013. Since then, it had been difficult for us to cross to the other side of the river. Thankfully, after the bridge was completed recently, and the road improved, we now drive with ease. This has also reduced our travel time between the bridge and our school down to a mere five minute's drive.

Mutshinyani Mulaudzi,
Educator (Mapate Primary School, Mapate), from Tsianda.

”



“

During the time this bridge was washed away, it was impossible for minibus taxis to drive across to and from Mapate to transport passengers. Residents of Mapate, including those who crossed the river for work - often leaving very early or knocking off very late, had to walk across on foot, using slippery boulders, to and from a safe taxi stop. This caused a lot of hardship and risked drowning.

Percy Ndou,
Taxi Driver (Vuwani Taxi Association), from Lwamondo.

”



ACROSS THE RIVER **MAPATE VILLAGE** FLOOD-DAMAGED BRIDGE REPAIRED



The engineering excellence on a newly built bridge at Dzindi River has assured the community of Mapate of a structure that will stand the test of time. Bridge 6237/2020 serves as a link for the village to the outside world.

Living up to our essence of ‘connecting the people of Limpopo’, Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) recently completed a replacement of a flood-damaged bridge on road D3724 in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province.

The project was for the construction of a higher bridge and surfacing of the

approaches at the Dzindi River, between the villages of Lwamondo and Mapate, within the Thulamela Local Municipality of the Vhembe District. Bridge 6237/2020 is on road D3724, which starts at the intersection with road P98/1 (Makhado to Thohoyandou) to Mapate to Phiphidi (road D5002).

The bridge was washed away by floods on 20 January 2013. Three other bridges on Dzindi River: two causeways (low-

level bridges) and Dzindi Bridge (on road R524, also known as Punda Maria Road) were not affected. Those floods, caused by ten days of downpours, also rampaged other parts of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Kruger National Park (Sabie River) going into the neighbouring Mozambique (Gaza Province).

Thulamela is prone to torrential floods during the December/January rainy season. In December 1999/January 2000,

the locality, which includes Mapate, was heavily hit by floods caused by the tropical cyclone Eline. Again this year, January 2021, tropical cyclone Eloise ravaged this central part of the district.

According to RAL Project Manager Shadrack Mukhuba, the scope of work on the project covered the construction of a 4 metre high and 62m long bridge, including the bituminous (tarred) surfacing of 760m of the approaches.

“The bridge is the link between the two villages (Lwamondo and Mapate), and it is the only link between Mapate and Thohoyandou during the rainy season.”

Approximately 240m of road D3724 towards the bridge has also been regavelled.

The eight years without a crossing had disrupted access for the rural community of about 2 800 households to healthcare facilities, government services and schooling such as at Lwamondo Clinic and Makakavhale Secondary School in Lwamondo village and Tshisahulu Clinic in Tshisahulu village.

Stuck between a rock and a hard place, at one stage, ingenious Mapate community members had to resort to building a makeshift footbridge out of durable bamboo poles and tolling at R2 (return) to bridge the gap, a plight covered passionately in the month after the floods by the late Sowetan photojournalist Eljar Mushiana (first three pictures on the collage to the right).



About 7 500 residents of Mapate now have improved access to the neighbouring village of Lwamondo and the economic hub of Thohoyandou after RAL successfully built a bridge in their village.

“THE BRIDGE IS THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO VILLAGES, AND IT IS THE ONLY LINK BETWEEN MAPATE AND THOHoyANDOU DURING THE RAINY SEASON.”

The new bridge is providing improved access for the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) coming into Mapate from Tshilidzini Hospital in Shayandima.

Mapate does not have primary healthcare facilities, and has only two primary schools, Mapate and Muthundine, and just one high school, Tshilavhutume, which parents and learners do not prefer over schooling in neighbouring Lwamondo.

The river effectively serves as a border line between Mapate and Lwamondo, which are a mere kilometre apart.

Mapate, which means ‘to be squeezed/pressed in between’ in Tshivenda, is embedded amongst three mountains, namely Mapate, Duthuni and Lwamondo, and between two rivers, Dzindi and Lwandani, flowing from those mountains.

Access to transportation, for work and shopping purposes, and other government services in Thohoyandou was severely impacted during the rainy season.

An article, titled ‘The impact of and responses to flooding in Thulamela Municipality, Limpopo Province, South

Africa', authored by Agnes Musyoki, Reuben Thifhufhelwi and Florence M Murungweni that was published in *Jambá: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, Vol 8, No 8 (2016), on the flooding of December 2010/January 2011 found that "in order not to have to move, community members built levees and terraces, and only if this was not adequate, they would be willing to move to a place of safety".

In interviews conducted with community members of the surveyed villages of Maniini and Tshilungwi, 15km and 25km away from Mapate respectively, the study authors, led by Prof Musyoki of the University of Venda, also found that "communities did not support permanent relocation".

One respondent, a male livestock farmer, interviewed between June and August 2012, just seven to five months before the floods that washed away Bridge 6237/2020, was cited as saying, "We

moved here to have access to water for our livestock ... We are not prepared to relocate; we would rather evacuate during disaster times and come back".

The wetlands around the Dzindi River had also been the topic of a 2019 dissertation, 'Investigation of the impacts of land use activities on wetlands along Dzindi River', successfully submitted by Tinyiko Idah Neswiswi in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree 'Master of Science in Environmental Sciences with Hydrology and Geohydrology' at the North-West University.

The community has reiterated the need for RAL to surface 7.7 kilometre stretch on dirt road D3724 between the villages of Tshifulanani and Duthuni, at the ring road approach to join the paved road D5002, as it becomes dangerously slippery during the wet season and too dusty at other times – as such impairing vision.

This stretch is prioritised under the


Thulamela Local Municipality's 2020/21 – 2022/23 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) consolidated list. However, there is currently no funding allocated for the road. The road will be addressed as soon as funding is made available.

The construction of Bridge 6237/2020, though, was funded through the Provincial Road Maintenance Grant (PRMG) allocation to the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for the repair of infrastructure damaged by floods (disaster repairs).

PRMG, supplementary funds from the national Department of Transport, is mainly approved for maintenance of road infrastructure projects, such as roads and bridges, and not the construction of new ones.

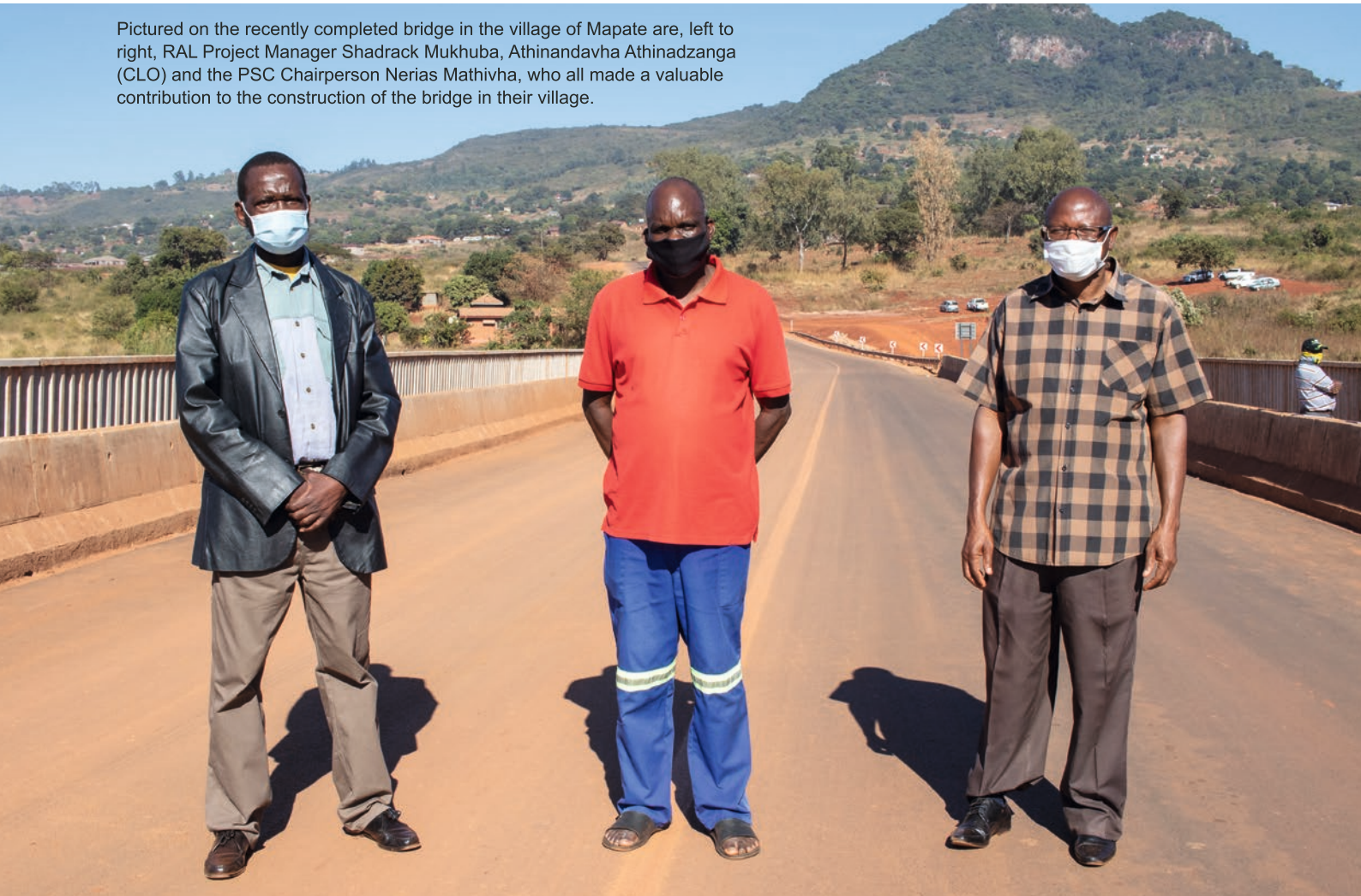
The project, which had an initial contract period of nine months, from August 2017 to May 2018, faced a myriad of challenges that delayed construction. Some of the delays were due to heavy rains, labour strikes (due to late payments), constant stoppages (due to militating factors against a borrow pit) by the Lwamondo traditional authority, and the unavailability of construction material locally.

However, the Agency took measures to mitigate the effects of the delays, including an approval for 'the contractor to outsource some of the works in order for him to finish the works successfully'. As a result, the long-overdue bridge, which is now engineered to withstand future natural disasters, was successfully completed on 11 June 2021, and has since been handed over to the community of Mapate.

The project, as in all RAL projects, had a job creation element to it. Just over R10.8 million of the contract amount was spent on the employment of local labourers and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the project area over the contract period. More on this on page 30, SMME Empowerment. 



Pictured on the recently completed bridge in the village of Mapate are, left to right, RAL Project Manager Shadrack Mukhuba, Athinandavha Athinadzanga (CLO) and the PSC Chairperson Nerias Mathivha, who all made a valuable contribution to the construction of the bridge in their village.



A TALE OF **TWO BRIDGES** A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Many a people have crossed Dzindi River at no less than three crossings of the stream to seek better opportunities across the river. For some it was a struggle and for others it was for the struggle. But either way, it was never a bridge too far.

At a bridge yet to be named, Bridge 6237/2020, a structure offered a right passage between the village of

Mapate and Lwamondo and Thohoyandou within the Thulamela Local Municipality in the Vhembe District.

Mapate, whose famous residents include future leader Mukovhe Masutha and the current Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) General Rudzani Maphwanya, was also the second home of Mapate Silver Stars, one-time Premier Soccer League club Platinum Stars, now in its current iteration of National First

Division outfit Cape Umoya United.

When the bridge was washed away by a natural disaster one fateful Sunday after church, the village was immediately cut off from accessing services.

The bane of the community also helped build bridges, with the now late Elijar Mushiana, a photojournalist from the village of Tshimbupfe outside Vuwani in the neighbouring Makhado Local Municipality, who was attached to the Sowetan newspaper's

Polokwane office being on the ground from the day the bridge was washed away (see collage on page 28).

The community that stuck together, through thick and thin, to build that stopgap bridge were back for the construction of a concrete bridge.

As the chair of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), Nerias Mathivha explains that two members were drawn from each of the four benefitting villages. For Mapate project, the eight-member PSC excluded the two ward councillors for the area, who as ex officio attended monthly meetings only from time to time.

A PSC is a necessary stakeholder for the successful implementation of RAL projects. It is established and capacitated at the planning and mobilisation phase and dissolved at the final project completion and handover phase.

An efficient PSC, established by RAL's Social and Institutional Development Unit, held regular monthly meetings and compiled reports, offering advice to and getting progress update reports from RAL Project Manager (see page 22).

Specific to the role of the PSC in the empowerment (employment and training) of local Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and labourers in the Mapate project, Mr Mathivha says members of the PSC met with the contractor through the social consultant to discuss labour requirements as per their contractual obligations.

"Meetings were arranged with community members from the benefitting villages of Mapate and Lwamondo's Belemu, Tshivhale and Lukau, and the policy and selection criterion was explained."

In terms of the policy, all service providers appointed by RAL for the construction of roads are required to employ local labourers and utilise the available services of local (SMMEs) as sub-contractors and suppliers. 30% of the total contract value on all upgrading projects (gravel to tar), must be spent on local SMME empowerment and 10% on local labourers. For all the maintenance projects, 10% is allocated for local

SMMEs and 5% for local labourers.

"Interested individuals were registered and the appointment of those selected was facilitated by the PSC with successful workers signing contracts, inducted and trained," explains Mr Mathivha, a retired teacher.

Rebecca Malatji, Project Manager at Muditambi Holdings, who was appointed to conduct skills development training for local labourers on the project, said one of the key objectives of the training was to empower local people through skills

Athinadzanga, will be issued with certificates.

"My training alongside labourers helped me, as the CLO, to understand what is expected of them on the project," said Mr Athinadzanga, whose appointment by the contractor was also on the recruitment drive and recommendation of the PSC.

"My role as the bridge between the community and labourers, and the contractor was made easy."

Thohoyandou-based Mashige Construction who were subcontracted

"MY ROLE AS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND LABOURERS, AND THE CONTRACTOR WAS MADE EASY."



Twenty-three community members were given a CETA-accredited on-the-job training on the Mapate bridge project, and will be issued with certificates.

transfer, and to equip the beneficiaries with construction knowledge.


"We conducted generic and technical skills development training for 23 local labourers," said Ms Malatji, whose company has provided training on two other RAL projects.

The labourers underwent the Construction Education and Training Authority-accredited on-the-job training, over four days, on the following focus areas; use and maintenance of small plant and equipment, construction of precast kerbs and concrete channels (V-drains), erection and maintenance of guardrails, and basic first-aid, and health and safety in the workplace (construction site).

Those twenty-three (23) community members, including Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Athinandavha

to supply ready-mix concrete on the project, were also roped in as part of mitigating factors for the contractor to finish the works successfully. Several locals also rented out their properties to accommodate out of town workers on the project.

All in all, the contractor made use of the available services from a total of 13 local SMMEs, as sub-contractors and suppliers of goods and services during the life of the project. In the process a total of 22 local labourers were employed by the contractor.

According to RAL Project Manager Shadrack Mukhuba, the contractual amounts that were earmarked in this regard translated to R1.7m for labour utilisation and R9.2m for the employment of local SMMEs. Please refer to graphic on page 29 for exact amounts. 

Blessing & Joy

ON ROAD TO

Queenship

OF THE WORLD

Shudufhadzo Abigail Musida, who shares a birthday with Nelson Mandela, will represent South Africa at the 70th Miss World Final in Oscar López Rivera's Puerto Rico. The pageant will crown a new Miss World 2021 on Thursday, 16 December 2021, a Day of Reconciliation in South Africa.

While she credits her village and her family for many of her core values as a person, Miss South Africa 2020, Shudufhadzo Musida, maintains that she learned her most important values from observing her maternal grandmother, Mbulaheni Musida, whose actions always spoke louder than words.

Just like her grandmother, Miss Musida wants her legacy to be that of actions over words.

"I'm not a woman of many words, but a woman of action," she explains.

"My grandmother is like most people in my family, we don't talk a lot at all. I learnt much of what I know from watching my grandmother in action. We are a people of very few words, but a lot of action."

Miss Musida was raised by her single mother, Thandi Mulaudzi, an estate agent now servicing suburbs in the Johannesburg North area. She has a younger sister, Zwonaka, whom she values greatly. Born in Ha-Vhangani and raised in Ha-Masia, neighbouring villages in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, Miss Musida says she can attest to the African

proverb that "It takes a village to raise a child", that was also vicariously demonstrated by her homecoming celebrations in November 2020.

She began her schooling at Vhangani Primary School just down the street from her grandfather Elias Musida's house.

In 2004, she then enrolled for Grade 2 at the Almighty Learning Centre, a school in Thohoyandou, where she only stayed for a year.

In December 2004, she moved on to Secunda, Mpumalanga to join her mother who worked in the province as an estate agent. In 2005, she was enrolled at Highveld Ridge Primary School where she completed her primary school education. At 14, Miss Musida then proceeded to Hoërskool Secunda in 2010 for her Grade 8 before relocating to Johannesburg, Gauteng in 2011, a few months into Grade 9 where she completed her high school education at Bryanston High School (2014).

After matric, Miss Musida took a gap year.

She started her paper chase in 2016, successfully completing a Bachelor of Social Sciences (BSocSci) degree (Philosophy, Politics and Economics)

with the University of Pretoria in 2019.

She recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in the field of International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Explaining how her modelling career began, Miss Musida says that this was initially just supposed to be a side hustle, so that she could make extra cash that would help her become independent.

She says it all started when she modelled for international publications, most notably Vogue Italia, when Selfie (by Celeste Arendse) and Rhara Nembhard launched their first La Loba Collection in January 2018, as Abigail Musida, and people admired her.

The beauty queen admits that after successful inroads into modelling, she somehow felt that the industry wasn't a good environment for her, and in 2019 decided to take a break from modelling.

"I decided that I don't want to do that anymore because it wasn't too great, it wasn't serving me emotionally and mentally. It was just a Western-dominated space where a woman that looks like me is considered non-proportional, where it's all about living by a measuring tape.

Shudufhadzo 'Shudu' Musida, Miss South Africa 2020, will represent the country at this year's Miss World 2021 in San Juan, Puerto Rico where she is the natural favourite for the coveted blue crown.

PERSONALITY

Musida, in the trademark brush hairstyle she has kept since 2015, believes the quality of roads in the province is not only benefitting local residents but provincial tourism as well.





Musida's life path is inspired by women from all walks of life who believe in "Black Girl Magic" and embrace the power of being.

become champions of women's rights, thought leaders and savvy career women who inspire other young South Africans to fulfil their potential, recognise their self-worth and their place in the world". To, "Face your power. Embrace your future".

On the day in history, when the future Miss South Africa was born at a clinic servicing Vhangani village, American singer dancer Michael Jackson, of *Heal the World* fame, visited South Africa, between his Brunei concert and the HIStory World Tour, to attend Nelson Mandela's private birthday party in Johannesburg where the late statesman celebrated his big day surrounded by children.

Not only is she sharing a birthday with South Africa's first democratic president but this born-free was also born on the same day of the week as Mr Mandela.

This coincidental generosity and freedom loving personality match saw her partnering with the Angel Network 'to get food to those in need' for the 2021 Mandela Day.

"However, none of these issues can be achieved if the mind is not in the right place... if we're trying to achieve success in a society, we need to work on the mind, the powerhouse of the body," she says.

In February 2021, Miss Musida launched a live Monday evenings online mental health initiative called 'Mindful Mondays with Shudufhadzo', in partnership with the South African Depression and Anxiety Group, on the social media platform Instagram, where she invites experts to speak on a range of topics related to mental health.

The platform has since grown in reach, gaining commercial partners.

Miss Musida also took the opportunity of this *Mmileng* interview to express her gratitude to the Roads Agency Limpopo for their continuous work in ensuring that the network of roads leading to her home village in the Thulamela Local Municipality are safe to drive and travel on.

"A quality road network not only makes it easier to go home but for people from other provinces to visit and explore the beauty of Limpopo Province," she says.

Winning Miss South Africa pageant became a moment she describes as the culmination of her arduous planning and hard work that came together in great alignment with the stars to see one of her dreams come to realisation.

And that long road for Miss World South Africa 2020 will culminate in the land of a man dubbed 'Latin America's Nelson Mandela', from 21 November to 16 December 2021.

The Miss World Organisation's 'Beauty with a Purpose' charity campaign has become an important part of Miss World over the years. According to Miss Musida, this makes Miss World more than just a beauty pageant as it also focuses on the contestants' ability to change the world for the better.

She believes that her campaign to the Miss World pageant has been super-exciting so far, further noting that if she wins this prestigious competition, she intends to use the global platform to make the world a better place.

And there is not a reason in the world why stars will not align, for Shudu to find her magic. **m**

"A QUALITY ROAD NETWORK NOT ONLY MAKES IT EASIER TO GO HOME BUT FOR PEOPLE FROM OTHER PROVINCES TO VISIT AND EXPLORE THE BEAUTY OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE."

"It was not for me," she says.

Having been a victim of body-shaming bullying in primary school, Miss Musida had gotten to a point where she wanted to prioritise her mental health. She knew that she wanted to help others by raising awareness about mental health issues.

However, she needed a big platform to evoke the kind of change in the world she wished for. And that's when entering Miss SA, which has positioned itself as 'a leadership platform for ambitious young South African women', changed from just being an idea into a reality.

She says her entering Miss SA was also inspired by Miss Universe 2019, Zozibini Tunzi, who she describes as a confident speaker and advocate of 'fair representation'.

And this is what Miss SA platform aims for with their young women, that "they

A Thursday's child, for those believing in the alignment of stars, the day is said to signify 'good luck, fortune, and optimism and healing energy'.

As a young and educated black woman, the 25-year-old Miss Musida could have chosen any other popular issue or cause to focus on during her Miss SA reign, but she chose mental health awareness.

And mental health gained an importance and attention in the last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Incidentally, October, the month she was crowned Miss South Africa, is declared a Mental Awareness Month in South Africa.

"I chose mental health awareness because it's something that's not spoken about. So, I had to focus on something that felt personal to me - that felt true to me. I could have focused on any issue.

Mahlatsi Malebana is one of six experiential learner trainees given a practicum opportunity at Roads Agency Limpopo.



MEETING WITH **OPPORTUNITY** AT THE CROSSROADS

Having struggled for five years with no organisation willing to provide him with an opportunity for experiential learning for a period of 18 months required to complete his Human Resource Management studies, Mahlatsi Malebana says his placement at Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) has resuscitated his hope towards completing his studies.

Born in Mmotong wa Perekisi, Ga-Mokgokong in the Capricorn District of Limpopo, Mr

Malebana, an N6 Human Resource Management student at Capricorn TVET College - Senwabarwana campus – has been placed in RAL’s Human Resources (HR) unit for 18 months. See, Inside RAL, page 14.

The 27-year-old matriculated at Kgabo Senior Secondary School, Moletji in 2014 and proceeded to the Capricorn TVET College where he enrolled for Human Resource Management studies, to which the theory component was completed in 2016.

After completing the theoretical

part of his studies, Mr Malebana thought everything would just sail through towards getting work placement. However, he struggled for three years without any placement.

“I knocked at different companies where I was told that there was no space for me to practise what I had learned in the classroom,” he explains with a sad face.

Upon seeing that there was no breakthrough towards completing his studies due to lack of

Malebana hopes to finally complete his Human Resource Management qualification by the end of 2022.

placement to do his practicum, he looked for alternative ways of survival. He decided to train as a security guard in order to make ends meet.

“Fortunately, after completing the security training, I was employed by a private security company and I was stationed at RAL in 2019.”

He believes that being stationed at RAL was a blessing in disguise because this opened doors for him to get an opportunity to complete his studies.

“As a Security Officer, seeing RAL staff members coming to do their professional work on a daily basis, it motivated me to never give up on my dream of becoming an HR practitioner,” says an enthusiastic Mr Malebana, adding that he also developed a good relationship with some of these staff members.

Mr Malebana recalls that, seeing the hospitable character of the RAL HR team he felt encouraged to apply for his practicum.

“The professional environment at RAL motivated me and kept me going during the dark period of my life when I struggled to get placement. It also instilled me with the spirit of not giving up,” he explains.

Reminiscing about his breakthrough moment, Mr Malebana says he had to apply for placement together with other students seeking placement opportunities. Upon applying, they had to wait patiently for the outcome. He was eventually placed with five engineering trainees.

A visibly excited Mr Malebana says: “I was eventually called



and told the good news about the eminent beginning of my practicum on 1 June 2021 and it was like a dream, it was unbelievable.”

This prospect came with a price as Mr Malebana was required to leave his security job from which he got income to meet his needs.

“Leaving my job for school was a tough call to make. I had a serious discussion with my family and everyone was very supportive and understanding,” he recalls.

Mr Malebana says he will forever be thankful to RAL for the pivotal role they have played in his career path, which provides an opportunity for him to help people as an HR officer.

**“SEEING RAL STAFF ...
ON A DAILY BASIS
MOTIVATED ME TO
NEVER GIVE UP ON
MY DREAM.”**

“I’m somebody who wants to see people progressing in life. I have enjoyed helping people with anything within my means since I was young. But surprisingly when it was my turn to get help, I struggled for a long time. My desire to want to help people is something that made me to believe that I could be a good HR practitioner, hence this career path.”

Mr Malebana is looking forward to a successful 18 months training at RAL where he hopes to learn as much as possible towards being a good HR practitioner when he finally completes his studies, and is capped. **m**

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RAL

ROADS AGENCY
LIMPOPO
TOGETHER FOR BETTER ROADS

Quick Logo Explainer

Represent a road network (our core business), and the essence of RAL, connecting the people of Limpopo, and togetherness for bet-ter roads.

Different colour emphasise our area of responsibility and energy to serve.



Triangular symbol represents prioritising the hierarchy of needs. Use of a different colour, a solid pantone "red" in main logo variation signifies safety elements of the road in the same triangular shape.

The uppercase tagline emphasises our corporate value of teamwork.

RAL'S VALUES

The way we conduct ourselves and our business in pursuit of our vision and mission is underpinned and guided by the following corporate values:

ACCOUNTABILITY

We remain accountable to all our stakeholders and the environment

COMMITMENT

We are committed to delivering quality road infrastructure in the province with pride

DIVERSITY

We value and embrace diversity within the work context

EFFICIENCY

We will go the extra mile in serving our communities

EXCELLENCE

We strive to exceed expectations

RELIABILITY

We offer reliable, safe and economic road infrastructure

TRANSPARENCY

We are transparent in both our internal and external business processes

TEAMWORK

We work together for better roads



ROADS AGENCY
LIMPOPO
TOGETHER FOR BETTER ROADS

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