

'Levelling up' on quality education

 By [Leigh Andrews](#), issued by [SAICA](#)

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Bojane Segooa has a lifelong passion for education. Not only is she currently completing her Master's degree in Innovation, while working as a senior lecturer at Unisa's department of financial accounting, she also followed through on her dream of becoming a CA(SA), and has since been nominated by SAICA as one of its Top 35 Chartered Accountants under the age of 35, for her exceptional community development talent.

More impressive than this though, is what she does in her 'spare time'. She identified a need, honed her social entrepreneurship skills and LevelsApp was born. Here, she explains her commitment to the fourth UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Quality Education, and why it is so important to keep the momentum rolling by giving back as you achieve...

Ever noticed that the most accomplished people seem to add more accomplishments to their already glowing CVs, while the rest of us battle to shine at our 9-5? Bojane is one of that shiny set. She shares her knowledge and experience as a regular edu-tech conference speaker, and was an honouree at last year's launch of the 7 Percent Tribe Women Leadership Movement.

That's important to her, because like her award-winning innovation LevelsApp, the 7 Percent Tribe seeks to empower people as you were empowered, in democratising access to what she lists as: "education, professional opportunities and a powerful sisterhood like no other," because she strongly believes, "it is our collective responsibility to assist one another where we can and if we all pass the buck, we all fail."

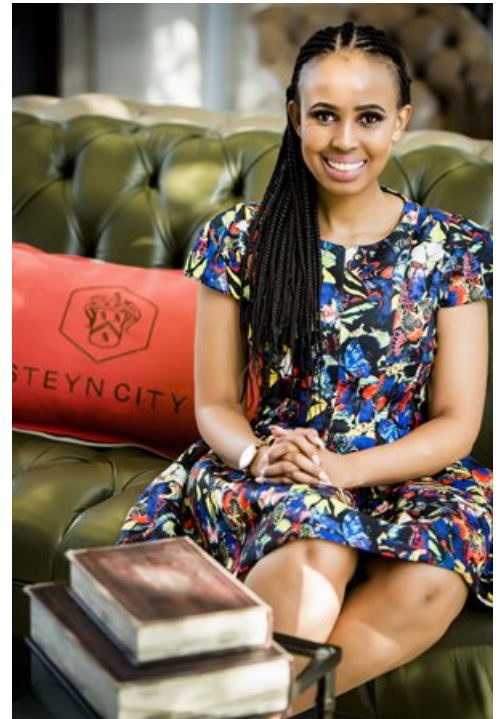
It's a sentiment that pops up often when chatting to Bojane, whose mantra is: "The more you do, the more you can do and the more you should do for others." While her finance specialist role is extremely technical, the humanity behind it means it is also about being able to give back. Doing so has made her cognisant of the needs of the greater community.

Clearing the vacuum of the educational future

Bojane has always lived this spirit. While at her previous corporate job, at the Mercedes-Benz SA head office, she wanted to do more, and so did pro-bono lecturing to previously disadvantaged students in and around Gauteng in accounting in her spare time. This experience sparked her to develop the LevelsApp, (an information portal that helps school-leaving learners from all walks of life access a simplified university degree selection and application platform for all SA universities). This after she saw first-hand, the need disadvantaged students, transitioning from basic to higher education, have for access to comparative, consolidated information on what to study and where to study it so as to make the right educational choices about their future.

Bojane decided this was a problem that needed to be corrected, so she started LevelsApp as a social experiment, providing access to that much-needed information. She created a basic comparison website, presented it to the intended target market of students she was teaching, and grew it from their appreciation of the solution.

Today, not only does Levelsapp assist learners at every level, but the name 'Levels' is also a colloquialism for a vast



improvement in circumstances, so it resonates in terms of 'levelling up'. After all, Bojane says education is an opportunity enabler – it influences everything and has a snowball effect as the more educated you are, the better decisions you make about your life.

Why every CA(SA) needs to do more

Of those daily challenges, Bojane says she is fortunate in that all of her work is intertwined and inter-related, so every time she contributes her own time towards empowering a young person, it has a positive impact on her job, the social cause app, and her sense of purpose. She is living proof of the importance of setting aside time to work towards fulfilling your personal passions.

Bojane admits her CA(SA) background fine-tuned her SDG passion of quality education as the training you go through to become a CA(SA) is so intense that you cannot help but refine, hone and develop your work ethic. That is why Bojane says CAs(SA) tend to take on bigger challenges in life once they have completed the designation – they find they have the capacity to do greater, to do more, and to push beyond limits they never knew existed.

It is about passion, and Bojane is completely passionate about youth development – that is what drives her, as well as her need to see social change.

But it is not easy. Bojane is often asked about her success as a social entrepreneur, to which she responds: "If you can spend four years working on a social cause with no sign of immediate remuneration for all that time and effort you've put in; if that's something you would still pursue in hindsight, that's what makes it a success."

Because while the app is revenue-generating, it has not yet made a profit. So how does it keep on levelling up?

The social responsibility circle

Well, LevelsApp is free for learners to use and operates as a teacher-training tool, as the team trains teachers on how to use the app through their own hardware. So cost for that initial point of contact, where the learner is introduced to the app and uploads their information, is borne by LevelsApp.

The next step is LevelsApp's clients. The CSI divisions of SA corporates fund the work, meaning they also meet their social responsibility targets. Some of those corporate funders go on to offer student bursaries, also marketed through the platform. This is complementary to the app's core purpose, as learners can now access information about furthering their studies, apply to the university of their choice, and access funding to make their higher education dreams a reality.

This brings the app full circle as a holistic career guidance solution, making that tricky transition from basic education to higher education seamless.

It is clearly proving effective, with over 1 000 Gauteng learners having already signed up to the platform. The app has also been listed on the Department of Science and Technology's Innovation Bridge as a way to simplify degree selection and application, and won the Department of Science and Technology's Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) research award in 2016. The app also placed as a finalist in the SADC region's Southern African Startup Awards 2018, which led to further funding. In 2019, Bojane was recognised by Unisa for her community work by Unisa in 2019 where she received the Chairperson of Council Award for Excellence, the highest honour for a Unisa staff member.

Level up: Make the circle bigger

She concludes, "It's imperative for every CA(SA) who has had the opportunity to access information and a level of personal development to do more and give back more. The CA(SA) designation opens so many doors for you that it's your imperative to open more doors – and keep them open, to train, give back, develop and grow. We need to do more for each other."

If Bojane's passion for the SDG of quality education has tickled your own need to act on those personal passions and work towards an SDG – remember her conviction that the more you do, the more you can do, and the more others will see what can be done.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.
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