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Beyond the UCT ecosystem

Partnering is key to successfully transferring ideas from one context to another. For UCT, it's essential to testing the merit of academic theory in the wider world. The university's entrepreneurship ecosystem has been strengthened by its partnerships, extending its influence and bolstering its relevance. This section looks at the two different examples, which have helped entire constituencies benefit from an initiative.

The first partnership is between the educational institution and a foundation established out of the entrepreneurial success story in the food and clothing industry. This example looks at the way the Raymond Ackerman Foundation operates to build value for communities – through funds, vision and purpose – establishing an organisation that makes entrepreneurial learning accessible to those outside of the university. What has been consolidated in partnership with UCT is being implemented independently in partnership with other universities.

The second partnership examined is that of Phaphama SEDI, a student-led programme that brings together several socially oriented initiatives by linking senior Commerce Faculty

students with start-ups and businesses outside UCT. This partnership between students and entrepreneurs has proved mutually beneficial; it gives township businesses access to cutting-edge business know-how and networks and it allows commerce students first-hand experience of real-world businesses operations, expanding their minds beyond the set curricula.

Through these initiatives, it's clear that UCT operates as an innovation hub. Attracting the cream of Africa's scholars to study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the university allows them a chance to integrate disciplinary learning with opportunities to access entrepreneurial support and resources, channelling their passion and commitment to develop ideas that build value both within and beyond South Africa.

The author of the final contribution has come full circle – from starting off as an under-graduate at UCT and being forced to complete her studies elsewhere, to returning to build entrepreneurship as a strong pillar of the institution, leaving a legacy that reinforces UCT's Afrikan footprint.





(Photo credit: KapskÅ©_mÃ_sto, Cape Town a Bo-Kaap - JiÅnÃ Afrika - panoramio)



Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurship at UCT

Siphokazi Mngxunyeni

Siphokazi Mngxunyeni is the Raymond Ackerman Academy Manager, this includes co-ordinating the Academy's strategic direction and oversight of policy implementation.

Poor socio-economic conditions are often at the heart of why young people don't complete matric or study post-matric, and the Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurship and Personal Development at the UCT Graduate School of Business (RAA at UCT) recognises this reality. The Academy aims to develop a culture of entrepreneurship among young people in communities outside the university setting and provide business management skills to enable them to start, grow and sustain their own enterprises.

Many of the Academy's students see it as a second chance at a better future for themselves, their families and communities, as they are under pressure to start contributing to the household income and livelihood of the family. RAA at UCT endeavours to assist its entrepreneurs to gain access to sustainable livelihoods and to continue assisting both students and alumni to obtain meaningful employment, secure self-employment or further education and training opportunities, so as to financially support themselves and improve their communities.

<https://www.ackermanacademy.co.za/>

Target market, recruitment and enrolment strategy

RAA at UCT targets youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years who have not had an opportunity to complete matric or study post-matric. The programme makes use of media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, UCT GSB website, email and WhatsApp to recruit and communicate with students. The campaign also reaches out to churches and youth programmes such as the Bertha Centre Pathways and the Western Cape Government Youth Programme. The Academy is working on building working relationships with MASICORP, SILULO and CAN Gardens to extend its reach.

The programme was launched in 2005 with a maximum capacity of 30 students per semester cohort. A total of 663 students completed the entrepreneurship programme in the past 15 years, until 2021. Figure 1 shows the number of students by cohort since 2006.



As seen in figure 5, in line with the easing of the COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, the Academy showed signs of recovery in terms of numbers by July 2021, as people found ways to cope with the pandemic.

The Programme

RAA at UCT has two offerings: one full-time six-month business skills training programme each semester, and a ten-month Graduate Support Services (GESS) programme for its alumni.

The six-month business skills training programme

This programme requires daily classroom attendance from 09h00 to 16h30. Pre COVID-19, the course was attended full-time on campus. During the pandemic, the course migrated to entirely online. While many students who are admitted will participate in full, some don't, or they drop out due to family obligations, employment or offers to study further.

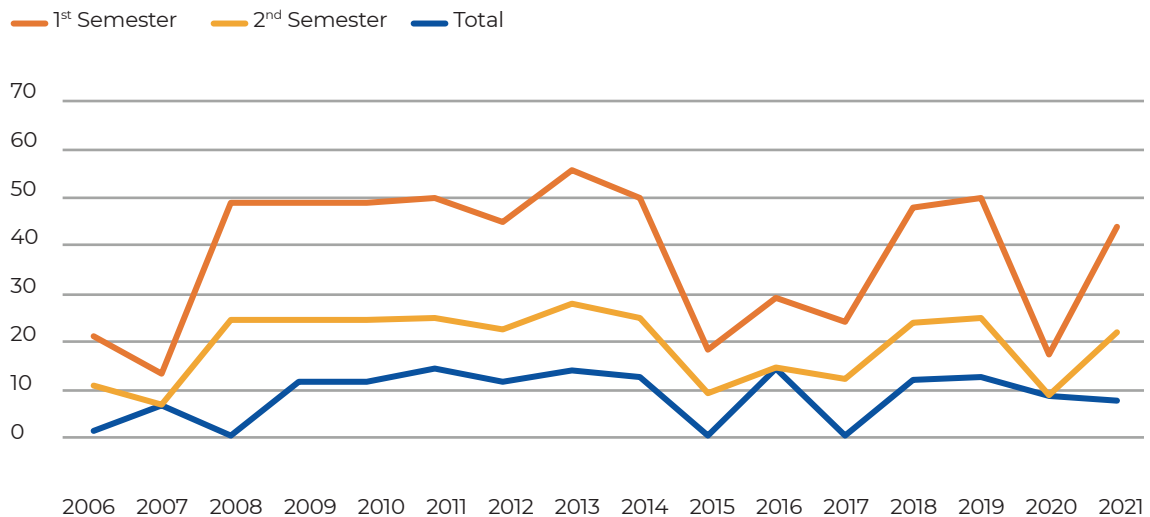
The programme kicks off with design thinking with the UCT's d-School Afrika, and concludes with business plan presentations as the end product. It is structured in such a way that the students are equipped with components to

build a business plan, and it is assessed in a way that enables them to apply the learnings to their actual business ideas as the programme progresses. Its structure and level of delivery are informed by the level of education and needs of the students. To enhance the quality and relevance of the programme for today's changing business world, four new courses have recently been added to its curriculum:

- Collaboration with ENSAfrica to teach Company Law for compliance with government legislation and protection of intellectual property rights.
- Sustainable agribusiness for community gardens models, food security and nutrition.
- Technology for business to enable entrepreneurs to take advantage of digital tools to transform their businesses to enhance their products and services and build lasting relationship with their customers.
- Collaboration with One Love Foundation to teach RAA students to value and sustain positive relationships, countering gender-based violence and building more tolerant, respectful and peaceful communities.

Students are supported in terms of need of devices, data and travel when required. The R500 economic support eases the financial burden on the students so they can focus on succeeding in their studies.

Figure 5: UCT RAA students from 2010 – 2021



“Many of the Academy’s students see it as a second chance at a better future for themselves, their families and communities.”

The Graduate Support Services (GESS) programme

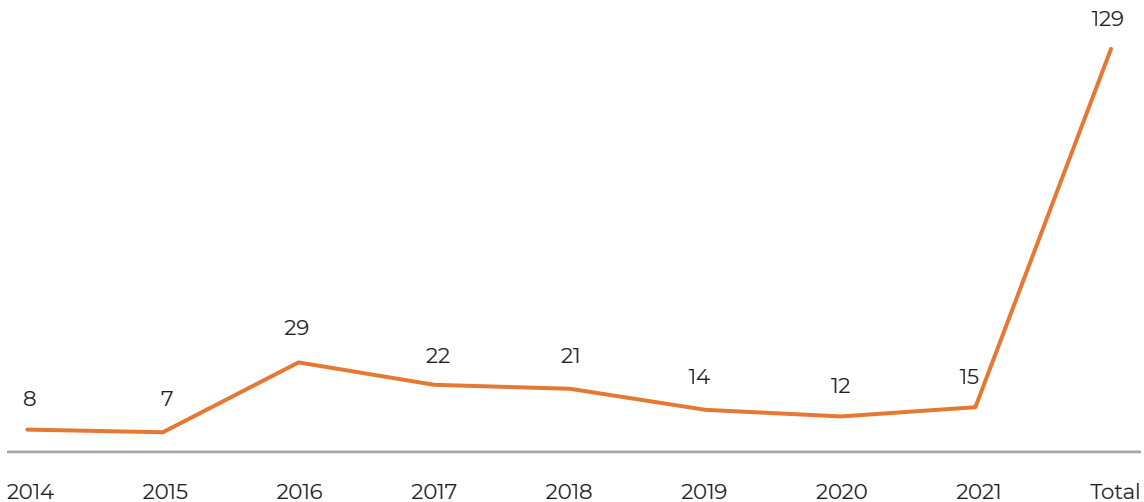
The objective of the GESS programme intends to provide practical entrepreneurial support for alumni of the six-month programme to help them develop their business ideas or existing businesses to the next level. It was launched in 2014 and since then the class size has varied between seven and 29 entrepreneurs. In total, 128 young entrepreneurs have gone through the GESS programme from inception to 2021. Sixty-four percent of the entrepreneurs in this cohort were women.

The GESS is built on partnership with third parties as operating partners. It is designed to provide the entrepreneurs with access to specialised entrepreneurial skills and training, business development and support services, and mentorship. It focusses on the two types

of entrepreneurs. First, it looks at those in the idea-stage who are not yet operational and still working on developing their business ideas. For these entrepreneurs, the programme focuses on validating the business offering; developing a clear business model; preparing a pitch presentation, and ultimately launching the business. The second group supported are entrepreneurs in the early stage, who have businesses that have shown early traction and are preparing for further growth. For this group, the programme assists with developing a growth strategy, preparing a pitch presentation and increasing value creation in the business.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the programme remained entirely online through Zoom, email and WhatsApp. As anticipated in 2020, this approach increased the feeling of belonging, and the experience of being with like-minded people and networking. High data costs and limited access to compatible devices continued to be a barrier to consistent active participation in the programme during this time. Although the programme offers wellness support for students, this is not always taken up. This includes a monthly stipend of R500 on submission of their monthly business progress report for business support ie data, airtime, travelling, stationery, etc.

Figure 6: Total number of GESS Entrepreneurs from 2014-2021



GESS 2021 Highlights

In addition to the core elements of the programme, students received practical support in a variety of ways. Examples of support received in 2021 include:

- Mapcon received financial support from this year’s operating partner in the form of angel investments to buy basic construction equipment.
- Thari Technologies received funding in the form of a soft loan from ACF to procure five laptops to grow his business.
- Two GESS NPOs, Okuhle Mosiuoa and Ishmaeel Karriem’s businesses were put down to receive capacity-building support from McMaster University, facilitated by the UCT GSB Solution Space.
- Impolo Wear, a GESS alumnus business, has started manufacturing RAA at UCT merchandise, with the intention to start supplying the GSB Merchandise Store.

In addition, RAA hosted its first Entrepreneurship Virtual Conference / Exhibition where 18 entrepreneurs showcased their businesses. The conference attracted participation from SARS, Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), National Youth Empowerment Fund (NYDA), RLABS and WESGRO, which is exciting for the future.

UCT GSB Merchandise Store

The GSB Merchandise Store continues to be run at UCT’s alumnus as a market opportunity for its entrepreneurs. With the assistance of the GSB Modular MBA Entrepreneurship Club and ENSAfrica, the Academy has initiated to use technology to make the store accessible to all UCT GSB students and alumni anywhere in the world by migrating it from a physical to an online platform.

Plans for the future

Taking advantage of the new opportunities presented by technology, RAA reshapes itself as a nationwide online programme. This is to enable it to reach a wider audience and maximise its impact. While the shift from face-to-face activities in Cape Town to online instructions marks the end of a remarkable chapter, the Director of the GSB, Dr Catherine Duggan noted that the UCT GSB remains committed to the goals of youth empowerment and social change embodied in the RAA programme. “We are extremely proud of our RAA alumni and we look forward to identifying new ways to collaborate with them, the Ackerman family and others who are similarly committed to supporting youth and entrepreneurship as a means to broad community development.”



Phaphama SEDI



Rowan Spazzoli and Catherine Gwynne-Evans

Rowan is one of the founders and current board members of Phaphama SEDI and Catherine is the 2022 Phaphama SEDI President.

Phaphama SEDI (Social Enterprise Development Initiative) is an initiative based within the Commerce Faculty that links commerce students with real-world entrepreneurs beyond the university – simultaneously extending the range of people benefiting from the academic project and providing opportunities for students to gain real-world experience interacting with clients.



Phaphama SEDI grew out of the realisation that socially driven student organisations could have a greater impact if, instead of operating in isolation, they worked with other similarly aligned organisations. In 2014, three different groups at UCT joined forces: Siyaya/SHAWCO, The Angel Fund and Enactus. The initiative's dynamic founding members – Viwe Dikoko, Thandwefike Radebe, Rowan Spazzoli, Jessica van Rensburg and Alexandra Swanepoel – wanted to create a social awakening that extended beyond the university campus, and hence Phaphama, an isiXhosa word meaning “to be alert” or “to rise”.

The programme supports small businesses in South Africa through training senior university students who are passionate about making societal change and eager for practical work

<https://phaphamasedi.co.za/>

experience with the local business community outside the university environment. These students are then connected with exceptional small and medium enterprises in Khayelitsha and Philippi that need support to meet their entrepreneurial goals. The programme imparts crucial business knowledge to entrepreneurs through a series of workshops; it aims to grow successful business, but also to nurture both entrepreneur and consultant. The dynamic exchange of skills runs both ways, linking the real world of business ownership with an academic approach to economics.

How it works

There are very few resources available and minimal support for entrepreneurs working



Current and past Phaphama SEDI presidents and board members: Rowan Spazzoli, Julia Hampton, Thandwefika Radebe, Pam Sneddon and Catherine Gwynne-Evans.

in the township economy. The entrepreneurs who join the Phaphama programme are typically looking for guidance for their financials and book-keeping, as well as branding and marketing. However, they also receive more tailored support from the student-consultant.

“The dynamic exchange of skills runs both ways, linking the real world of business ownership with an academic approach to economics.”

During the eight-month programme, consultants and entrepreneurs form strong bonds. The term “consultant” falls short of the role that student volunteers play: they become a friend, mentor, guide, graphic designer, financial advisor, researcher and, on some occasions, even a fundraiser for their entrepreneur. They

give so much of themselves to this programme, and all of this over and above their studies and commitments. In return, student consultants gain insight into the informal economy and its place in the economic landscape. They cultivate consulting skills and real-world problem-solving abilities, contributing to the lives of others in a tangible way.

Mid-way through the programme the participants also have the chance to compete for funding through the Lion’s Den programme. This pushes entrepreneurs to refine their ideas and practice communicating their offerings to a wider audience. Here they can identify their business’s strengths and weaknesses, how to foster growth and sustainability, and how to create valuable connections and networks.

To date, Phaphama has worked with over 100 small to medium enterprises and has supported over 300 student consultants.

Steering the course

The programme is guided by six key principles, developed over the past eight years to tackle challenges, shifts and growth in size and scope. The programme aims to be:

- **Inclusive:** Designed to assist the committed entrepreneur, understanding and accounting for different personal histories, backgrounds, and identities.
- **Adaptable:** Avoiding a rigid “textbook-style” programme that isn’t applicable to all industries, locations and people. Entrepreneurs and consultants are encouraged to shift according to trends and shocks; consultants are pushed to think beyond frameworks.
- **Collaborative:** Encouraging cooperation between consultants, entrepreneurs, community and industry leaders and avoiding “lecture-style” learning.
- **Innovative:** Constantly evolving with research and data and fluidly implementing youth-driven ideas. The programme aims to find new and better ways of impacting the lives of student-consultants and entrepreneurs.
- **Sustainable:** As a visionary organisation, we see a future in other parts of the continent, and eventually the rest of the world. Embedded in our growth projection is a sustainable framework to uphold the organisation to its core values and standards.
- **Community-oriented:** Creating an atmosphere that encourages entrepreneurs and consultants to push themselves and to form lasting relationships. Going above and beyond the finances, we aim to create an open space that acknowledges and encourages compassionate connections across a range of identities.



Xolelwa Amanda Sifo of Melo's Cake Shop - presenting at a Phaphama SEDI session

Rising further

In true Phaphama fashion, the programme responded to the urgency of the moment in 2020, shifting its focus towards better understanding its network and providing key insights into the South African small business sector. To understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small businesses, research was conducted among Phaphama’s entrepreneurial network. The knowledge and insights provided through its survey and report were used by numerous South African organisations, prompting Phaphama to expand its offering to include a research aspect. Phaphama SEDI has expanded to Stellenbosch University, with the programme set to launch in 2023.

“Going above and beyond the finances, we aim to create an open space that acknowledges and encourages compassionate connections across a range of identities.”

The framework

The first half of the programme focuses on core business skills. Entrepreneurs attend sessions that look at every aspect of their business

plan, including marketing, financials, funding and growth. Sessions are held weekly during university term. Since COVID-19, the sessions work in a hybrid model, with half online sessions and half in-person. In addition to the online sessions, groups will often organise among themselves to meet up and work together in-person.

The second half of the programme is less structured and has more free sessions, where groups work on topics and issues among themselves. They have future-oriented focused sessions, in which they identify and set goals for the business, determined by what the entrepreneurs request after the first half of the programme.

Sessions typically involve an external presenter – whether that is a UCT lecturer, local business owner or life coach – and then break-out sessions where groups come together to discuss the topic presented, how it applies to their business and then develop a plan to incorporate the learnings into their everyday business. It has been wonderful to see how willing external presenters are to give of their time and expertise to the consultants and entrepreneurs.

Phaphama is strengthening the local economy in Cape Town – building up businesses and supporting people – creating new avenues to connect higher education to township communities so that they are better integrated and interlinked, where the flow of knowledge, energy and purpose runs both ways.



Phaphama SEDI Lion’s Den 2022 winners at Boxwood Property.



Entrepreneurship at UCT





Fail fast, fail up, fail forward

Dikatso Sephoti

“To build a successful business, you must start small and dream big. In the journey of entrepreneurship, tenacity of purpose is supreme.” – Aliko Dangote

The alignment of purpose and the fearless pursuit of a dream are what write the plot of our lives and, in my case, my entrepreneurial journey. Every story of success is embedded with resilience and failure along the way, and my story is no different – the highs and lows have fortified my resolve to build and support an African entrepreneurship ecosystem.

My first business failed at the tender age of 15. I was part of a group of eager teenagers who wanted to profit from the upcoming opportunities the 2010 FIFA World Cup would bring to South Africa. We started a business called the Travel and Tourism Association of South Africa (TATA-SA), hoping to showcase our small mining town of Carletonville, its gold mine (the deepest in the world) and its richness of diversity.

We raised funds from local business owners and had office space to work from; we were keen and resourceful and great at mobilising the community to support us. Despite our best efforts, the business

was not successful. I could see the value of the idea and it's crucial timing leveraging the World Cup, but I had to tussle with the reasons behind the disappointment: Why did the business fail?

There were many reasons, of course, but a significant one was our parents' expectations. They expected us to put our energy and focus into our end-of-year exams, to stand a better chance of getting into a top university. They didn't see entrepreneurship as a sure path. Our commitments towards TATA-SA dwindled as a result, eventually leading to its closure. My enthusiasm for entrepreneurship had been kindled, however, and with it my curiosity to better understand the shortcomings of the specific TATA-SA project, and to build something more resilient the next time around.

Abiding by the wishes of my parents, I was elected as the Head Girl for the Representative Council of Leaders at Carleton Jones High School in 2008 and applied myself rigorously to my studies.



As a result, I was able to qualify to study Actuarial Sciences at the University of Cape Town with the generous scholarship of the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust through Career Wise Bursary services.

In my second year of university, I experienced a setback that changed the course of my life. I fell ill, and the many medical specialist consultations and misdiagnoses affected my academic performance so badly that I could no longer continue with my studies at UCT. I was devastated, disappointed and embarrassed. The toughest part was working through the psychological pain of failure again and reconciling the new reality with my audacious dreams. I was fortunate enough to eventually receive the medical care I needed from a neurologist in Cape Town. In retrospect, this part of my journey was a blessing in disguise.

I moved back home and spent the six months of exclusion on physical recovery playing tennis. More importantly, I spent the time on psychological healing and subconscious mind reprogramming.

Eventually, I took up the task of reapplying for university and studying closer to home. I returned to university the following year to study a B.Comm at WITS, where I joined the Wits Student Business Society and was elected as Vice-Chairperson in 2012 and then Chairperson in 2013. With greater determination and alignment in my studies, I grew conscious of the role that I could play in society and of the elements that are essential for a business to be commercially viable. I graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand, joined Colgate-Palmolive on their graduate programme and was promoted twice in one year to an exclusively new position: Retail Marketing Analyst, as requested by the Head Quarters in New York. In my two years of employment, I drew strong lessons from travelling and working with 43 African countries in my portfolio.

Experience shaped my purpose and the nudging *why* questions continued to bother me: Why did my parents not see entrepreneurship as a career path? Why do African start-ups struggle? And, importantly, how can I make a difference within this sphere? I woke up one morning with conviction to further my studies in the field of entrepreneurship.

Wits Business School believed in my vision and accepted my application to read towards a Master of Management degree in Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation in 2016. I left Colgate-Palmolive in 2017, registered and immediately relaunched my business Dikatso (Pty) Ltd. with the vision to position myself as the pre-eminent support for entrepreneurial leaders and organisations.

Dikatso is my second name and translates as *offerings* or *gifts* in Setswana, my home language. Dikatso (Pty) Ltd works with organisations that aim to support and develop entrepreneurial leaders across the African continent, including Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, African Leadership University, NiaDelta, Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Cape Town, Perpetu8, Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation and the Brightest Young Minds, to name a few, impacting over 35 000 individuals.

Today, I find myself honoured to project lead the UCT entrepreneurship ecosystem alongside an incredible steering group – an opportunity that feels like a full-circle moment, from the time I first joined UCT as a student. It feels like a precious gift, wrapped with tough lessons on failure, sweet moments of success, hard work, disappointment, unmerited favour, perseverance, kindness, curiosity and the encouragement to never give up. Achieving this has not been without difficulty and adverse challenges; however, through alignment, support and the conviction of my dreams, it has allowed me to better appreciate the vice-chancellor's Vision 2030, which makes entrepreneurship a strategic focus.

The successes and failures of my journey have been anchored by the unwavering belief that we all have a role to play in society – no matter how small you start or how big your dreams. Our parents were right in believing the late Nelson Mandela when he said “education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world” – education has changed my world and has given me the voice to better support entrepreneurial leaders and organisations. My role to serve entrepreneurs is a daily reminder to never give up – and to journey with you as you keep nurturing your dreams.

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