

TRAVERSING LIMINALITY

MAY 2023 | ISSUE 3

AFRICA DAY SPECIAL ISSUE

WITH GUEST
EDITOR
NOMFANELO
KOTA

TRAVERSING
LIMINALITY
IN AFRICA

09

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EXPATS AND
THE DIASPORA

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FROM OUR GUEST EDITORIAL

NOMFANELO KOTA | GUEST EDITOR

Nomfanelo Kota is former diplomat and communicator now in the private sector



It gives me great joy to share in the vibrant energies of nine young African women profiled in this year's Africa Day edition. At a time when the world is dealing with a convergence of crises, **here is a cohort of young women Ambassadors who epitomize what it means to be an African in 2023. Their optimism, boundless and limitless opportunities for Africa far outweigh the many negative connotations that are often associated with the continent.** It is in the sense of pride that runs across all their stories about a continent that is full of potential, diverse, dynamic, culturally – rich and iconic, with warm caring people imbued with a spirit of Ubuntu in how they relate to others.

Popular culture and Africa's representation features prominently in many of the stories told. There is a sense of service portrayed throughout the rich stories, about making our continent brighter, through good deeds that change perceptions. I particularly found interesting the contributions from **Kgongoane Judith Molamo**, a young chartered accountant based in the Republic of Ireland and **Philadi September**, young professional based in London who have made the world their home. This talks to migration patterns that are changing and tell a much positive story of what it means to be an African in today's world through navigating issues of the value Africa brings to the world.

Having lived and served as a diplomat in the United Nations in New York a decade ago, **I can fully see these nine dynamic African women playing remarkable roles in many international organizations hoisting the African flag high as citizens of the world.** The future of the continent lies within the heartbeats of these courageous women featured in this edition. Nelson Mandela once said that 'to this day we continue to lose some of the best amongst ourselves because the lights in the developed world shine brighter'

In the stories featured in this edition, Madiba would have been proud of the barriers broken by Fauzia Naomi in Kenya and the hopes **Bohlokoa Mpholle Ts'ehlo** has for her country's prosperity, the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, that we have not lost the light and the struggle continues albeit in different forms.

Happy Africa Day!



BEING AFRICAN IN 2023

BY NDAMONA NAKALEMO (NAMIBIA)

Personally, being African in 2023 means so much more than just identifying with a particular continent. It means being a part of a rich and diverse culture that is full of history, traditions, and a dynamic way of life. It means being part of an exclusive VIP club that everyone wants access to but can't. It means being a trendsetter, an icon, and possessing the power and wealth to create significant changes and make a difference in the world.

One of the most significant ways in which being African in 2023 means being a trendsetter is through the continued evolution of African culture. With a growing global influence, we're becoming synonymous with creativity and innovation, which is shown through various industries, e.g., music, fashion and even art. African music, for instance, has taken the world by storm, with genres such as Afrobeats and Amapiano becoming more and more popular. African fashion has also been on the rise, with designers like Thebe Magugu creating some of the most breathtaking and unique pieces the world has ever seen.

Being African in 2023 also means being iconic. African icons have had a tremendous impact on global culture and continue to inspire generations. From political leaders such as Nelson Mandela, to entertainment moguls like Lupita Nyong'o, to sports stars such as Didier Drogba, African icons continue to shape the world we live in. Their stories, their achievements, and their legacies have paved the way for future generations like me and continue to inspire millions across the globe.

In addition to being **trendsetters and iconic figures, being African in 2023 also means having the potential to be wealthy and powerful.** With the continent's rapidly growing economy and increasing focus on entrepreneurship, we are beginning to realize their full potential in the world of business. The number of successful African entrepreneurs and business leaders continues to grow, with many of them becoming billionaires (future billionaire here!) and wielding significant power and influence in their respective fields.

In conclusion, being African in 2023 means **being a part of a vibrant, dynamic, and diverse culture.** It means being a trendsetter, an icon, and having the potential to be wealthy and powerful. However, it also comes with the responsibility to address the challenges faced by the continent and work towards creating a brighter future for Africa.



BEING AFRICAN IN 2023

BY SINDILE MVUBU | ESWATINI

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To some it speaks to the land of 54 nations and countless opportunities. To date, as a child of the African soil, we can participate freely and have our voices heard. As African we can access opportunities even beyond our African borders

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Africa, the land of hope and dreams, overwhelmed with a past that is full of struggles and pain, but at the end of the day, filled with so much excitement of the unknown and diversity. Being an African means different things to many. To some people, it means unity, limitlessness, peace, diversity, etc. To some it speaks to the land of 54 nations and countless opportunities. To date, as a child of the African soil, we can participate freely and have our voices heard. As African we can access opportunities even beyond our African borders, **talking about the likes of many including Thuso Mbedu, Lupita Nyong'o, Madam Ngozi Okonjo Iweala-the first woman Director General at the World Trade Organizations.**

However, to some people, it's still a struggle, such as racially profiled, being bounded by the racial stereotypes created by certain societies. The struggle of not knowing where your next meal will come from or what the future holds. This breaks some, but it also strengthens others. Moreover, it means hope and pride to others. **Hope that things will eventually get better because there's evidence of other Africans who are doing good and making it big in other parts of the world,** the Nomzamo Mbatha's, Mohammed Salah's, Davido's, the list is endless. It also means pride, in the sense that one immediately reposts a video that is talking about how a group of children from Uganda who are dancers, known as Ghetto Kids got a golden buzzer on Britain's Got Talent, because you feel like this story is closer to home.

On the other hand, it means being constantly afraid, #AmINext. The rising issues we have as Africans that are weighing heavily on us, the gender-based violence, injustice, human trafficking, poverty, and the countless health issues facing the less fortunate. There is also the intangible part of fear, the failures, depression, the unknown, abandonment, and even career path. Above all, **there is so much beauty in being an African, the support Africans give each other is remarkable, in times of tragedies,** when a church member has lost a loved one, and in times of joy, when a community member's daughter is getting married and the ladies pull an all-nighter in the kitchen whilst cooking.

There is strength, power, and boldness in being an African in the current years.

OUR AFRICA: OUR LESOTHO

BY BOHLOKOA MPHOLLE TS'EHLO

I am Bohlokoa Mpholle Ts'ehlo, aged 32. Married, with one handsome son. I was born and raised in the lowlands of a small, beautiful country in Africa called Lesotho. As part of the Traversing Liminality 2022 Cohort (currently Alumni), I am thankful for the opportunity to share my background with the entire community, internationally. I have lived in this peaceful country my whole life, in a village that is in the capital city of Lesotho called Maseru.

Lesotho is known to be a beautiful country with a beautiful scenery of Mountains and has a lot of mineral resources like diamonds, historic sites, which makes it a good place for tourists attraction and we also pride ourselves with being the friendliest country towards other people. Growing up a young Mosotho girl in Lesotho has been nothing but a blessing, as I come from humble beginnings. I was raised by my mother who is a single parent. She worked very hard for her children to have a brighter future. Just like other kids I did my primary level education, went to high school and completed. By virtue of being a Mosotho, the country gave me the opportunity to further my studies at university where I did a Bachelors' degree in BCom Accounting. It is with the greatest gratitude that I stand here as a proud Mosotho woman who really appreciates this lifetime opportunity which my mother could not afford.

What makes Lesotho more attractive and interesting is that, **in Africa it is the only country that is completely inside another country. It is enclosed by South Africa.**



This beautiful/wonderful/ historic country has about 10 districts and each one has its own unique interesting history. I have visited a couple of these districts but I have had a great experience in Mokhotlong district.

This place has plenty of tourist attractions. Mokhotlong is one of the highest districts as Lesotho lies at an average elevation of 2161 meters above sea level and is therefore one of the highest countries in the world. The highest mountain peak (Thabana Ntlenyana) is 3,482 meters in the whole world. There is Sani Mountain Lodge, it is said to be the Highest Pub in Africa and we also have the famous diamond mine, Lets'eng.

It is famous for its large, top quality diamonds and it is the highest mine in the world. **The beautiful surroundings of Mokhotlong offer loads of activities and attractions inspired by nature.** There is a place called Afriski where tourists from different parts of the world come to visit and play with snow every year and get the opportunity to experience Lesotho's Maluti Mountains. To all the tourists who are wishing to visit the Mountain Kingdom, I am vouching for it. Lesotho has something for every traveler, I am hopeful that one day Lesotho can have the right autonomy, thrive and become one of the developed countries with the most stable economy in the world.

MY LIFE IN KENYA: FAUZIA NAOMI

The beauty of Africa is found in its diversity. Not only is Africa diverse in cultures and languages, but in how women in particular experience Africa. In this article Fauzia Naomi from Kenya shares her experience of Africa in terms of career opportunities, personal life, and economical participation.

BY NOMBUSO MATHABELA



Naomi explains that the experience of being a woman in Kenya greatly varies depending of factors such as culture, religion, socio-economic status and geographical location. Just like most African countries, women in Kenya face challenges such as gender inequality, discrimination, gender base violence and even limited access to education. However “women in Kenya have made significant progress in recent years in breaking barriers and gaining more rights and opportunities” said Naomi. She explains that there is active work being done by women initiatives and the Kenyan government to bring about gender equality.

The economic development of women is at the forefront. **The empowerment of economic development for women comes in the form of entrepreneurship, microfinance, and access to credit and capital.** The participation of women in the economy pool is vital in alleviating gender inequality. Affirmative action and laws that promote equal opportunities have propelled women in Kenya to establish themselves in their careers and climb the corporate ladder like never before. **There are great career women in Kenya such as Fiona Osiro, dominating a male-dominated industry of engineering only at the age of 26 years. As one of the most developed countries in East Africa, Kenya is making its way to achieving gender equality,** as expressed by Naomi.

Naomi’s experience in her personal life as a woman in Kenya, she has had to work on defying societal expectations, cultural norms and traditional gender roles to live her best life. ‘The women need to manage the household’ expectations still exist, however, dreams and ambitions push Kenyan women to break all boundaries and defy all limiting thoughts and prejudice.

Being a woman in Africa particularly Kenya according to Naomi’s experience is challenging due to the oppressive roots of African countries towards women. However, she is experiencing the uprooting of those roots where women are fighting for their rights actively with the aid of the government. **She is looking up to women in Kenya who have broken and continue to break barriers for the upcoming generations of women.** I am Fauzia Naomi and this is my authentic experience of Kenya.

TRAVERSING LIMINALITY ACROSS AFRICA

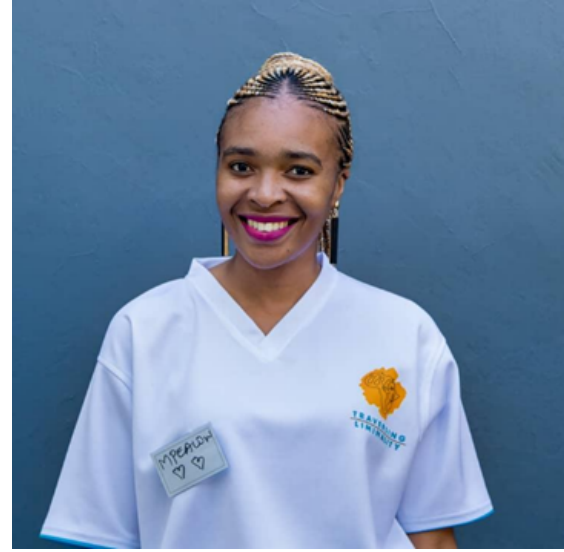
Explore all the places where Traversing Liminality has a cohort and alumni. Go visit and connect with fellow Traversers! **How many flags do you know?**

Traversing Liminality is a pan-Africanist organisation connecting women across the continent and it is growing. Cohort representation includes eSwatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Togo, Benin, South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.



TOURING ESWATINI: MY IDEAL SPOT IN ESWATINI

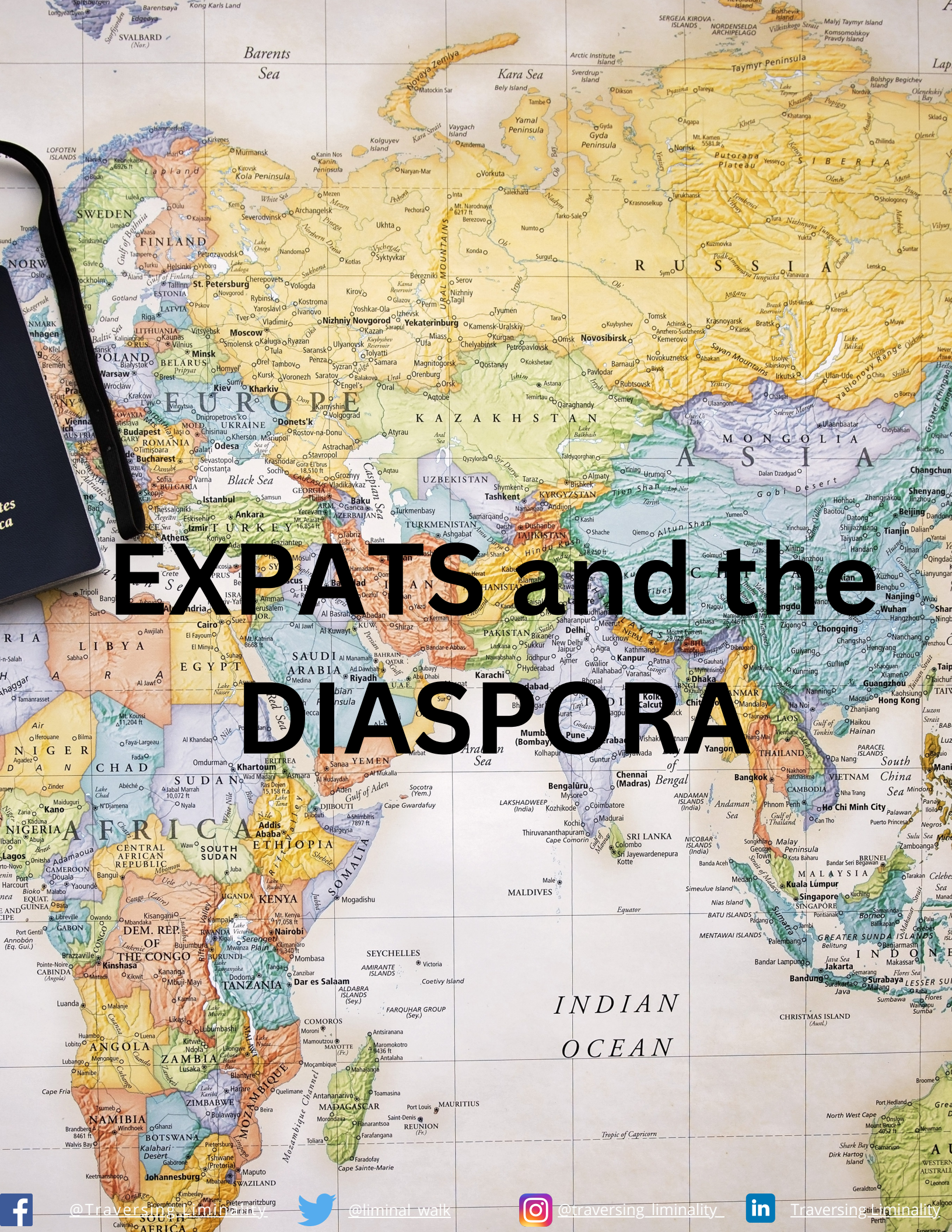
BY MPILWENHLE NHLABATSI



My ideal spot in Eswatini is **Mantenga Cultural Village**. It is situated in the Hhohho region around Ezulwini. Mantenga is a living museum of old traditions, representing a classical Swazi lifestyle during the 1850s. The building material is strictly traditional; poles, grass, reeds, leather stripes, earth and dried cow dung. The Cultural Village is a mini complex of 16 hits, each with its own specific purpose, kraals and byres for cattle and goats, reeds fence that serves as a windbreaker. **With the traditional artefacts on display, the village illustrates many facts of the ancient Swazi way of social, economic, and religious life.**

Mantenga Cultural Village enables visitors from all over the world as well as Swazis from all corners of the country to visit and maintain a positive interest **in the Swazi Cultural heritage, including language, customs and practices, rituals, dance, music, folklore, arts and crafts.** After the official opening by King Mswati III, it was named “**Ligugu LeMaSwati**” meaning “**The pride of the people**”. On entry the village team, often wearing traditional clothing, warmly welcomes tourists. The standard Swazi greeting to the family is “Yebo Nkhosi”. The village life is vibrant and energetic, the welcoming team will not only talk on how they’re used on how the hits and traditional items are made but also how they’re used. For example, you can try your hand at grinding maize and plaiting mountain grass and join in the Swazi song and dance. The experience at the cultural village is both informative and memorable- a taste of true Swazi hospitality.





EXPATS and the DIASPORA

INDIAN
OCEAN



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AFRICAN IN 2023

BY: KGONGOANE JUDITH MOLAMO CA(SA)
COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE: REPUBLIC OF
IRELAND

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AFRICAN IN 2023,
FOR ME, AS AN EXPAT LIVING IN IRELAND.

Dumelang (hello in Sepedi)

Ke nna kgongoane, ke nna kgaetšedi le rakgadi ya masegana.

Ke nna lekgarebe ya mopedi.

Ke nna morwedi 'a Baropodi.

Re bina bata se bogale , nkwe masesane, sare o mpona wa re ke katse.

(My Sepedi clan names and praises)

As Mopedi, born and bred in the villages of Limpopo province, I have always carried the pride of my people with me. Our values, and our way of life, I find myself cherishing them more and more with age and with the privilege of travelling the world. My friends would often make fun of me and say Judith will “in my culture” and/or “in my country” you to death. I wasn’t aware of how much I loved sharing my roots, every chance I got... until they pointed it out. Living in Europe has made me more patriotic about South Africa and more optimistic about Africa and its full potential.

Being an African means knowing who you are, where you are from and where you belong, who your people are, your culture and your lineage. What a privilege that is, to be able to trace your lineage. To know that you have a culture that you will share with generations to come. Being an African means, it does not matter where you come from, you can still become your ancestor’s wildest dreams.

Africa, kgole ke mo re tšwago (we came far) and we still have a long way to go, but so is everyone else. I would like to encourage us to celebrate our victories, we certainly have done many things right in our lifetime. Go to any country, you will find Africans, being entrepreneurial, adaptable (but not losing who they are, their culture and beliefs), joyful, unbreakable and shaping communities and societies that they are involved in.

One of the evils that were ever done to us, as Africans, was to convince us that somehow we are less than... because as you travel, interact and work with people from all walks of life, see where they live and come from, you realise that us being convinced that we are less than is the biggest lie ever told. There is no way. Each country, continent and society have their shortfalls, ours aren’t worse, they are just that, shortfalls, like everybody else’s. For example, our banking system is one of the strongest in the world. Our Chartered Accountants and Medical doctors are golden, Africa itself is beautiful, our weather is to die for, value for money in (South) Africa goes a long long way... If I start mentioning things, I am going to have to consider writing a novel called Africa and her glory.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AFRICAN IN 2023 AS AN EXPAT LIVING IN IRELAND

BY: KGONGOANE JUDITH MOLAMO CA(SA)
COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE: REPUBLIC OF
IRELAND

I often joke and tell my friends that I need to have a one-on-one with the person who came up with the rating systems for countries, like saying a country is a first-world country or third world, I would like to understand and challenge some of the inputs that go into that decision making.

One of the many many things I miss being away from home is our spirit of ubuntu, sounds cliché, but trust me, once you leave this beautiful country of ours, it will hit you. I miss having a mother in all the elders I meet, knowing that even though they have never met me before, I am their daughter. I miss striking up a conversation with a stranger in different languages somehow, in the true South African way, we understand each other and get along. It is such a rare and unique (South) African thing, that you don't see the magnitude of it until it is out of reach.

One of my favourite things about being an African is how we treat our elders. Our duty towards parents and grandparents compares to none. I would urge us to (continue) telling and writing our own stories, from our perspective. Celebrate and cherish ourselves, our roots, and our uniqueness, and work towards shaping Africa into a better and better place for us and generations to come. And remember, lebelo a le na motloga pele (in a race, it doesn't matter who started first) anyone can still win. So, why not us?

THE PLACES AND THINGS I LOVE IN MY COUNTRY

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BY PHILADI SEPTEMBER

To some it speaks to the land of 54 nations and countless opportunities. To date, as a child of the African soil, we can participate freely and have our voices heard. As African we can access opportunities even beyond our African borders

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Bonjour, Ciao, Kon'nichiwa, Sawubona and Hello are just some of the many greetings you'll hear in and around the buzzing streets of London, England, one of the leading multicultural cities in the world. Albeit one of the smaller countries on the European continent, England has one of the largest cities in the United Kingdom (UK) by landmass and population and this shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon. Proving that dynamite truly does come in small packages, it is one of four countries in the UK, bordering Scotland and Wales with over one thousand small inland islands and one of the very few countries where English is spoken with a vastly different accent across the cities - providing an alternative form of navigation should you ever find yourself lost in the sauce of this melting pot. From Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and London, you are bound to encounter diversity, culture and continuous electricity (in more ways than one) that you may have never encountered otherwise.

As I approach 18 months of living in a different continent, country and city, I realise I have only just scratched the surface. Moving to a first-world country has unlocked personal and professional ambitions and opportunities that I previously thought were out of reach.

What do I love most about my newfound home you ask? The endless possibilities. Every weekend has meant exploring the life of a Londoner and how this looks as I establish myself as a local. This includes chasing tube trains, catching an occasional English Premier League game and mandatory monthly Bottomless Prosecco Brunches in my new home away home. **I've found pockets of home in London Borough Market, Amafest UK and Piano People which are reminiscent of former weekend favourites in the city of Johannesburg - Fourways Farmers Market, U'R and Homecoming Events** respectively. Almost every street and corner in the now, Land of the King is anchored by a local pub and an array of restaurants with cuisine ranging from Caribbean, Asian, African and so much more, you're truly spoilt for choice. Should you find yourself in town, you're likely to find me trying out a new spot - probably with a glass of Aperol Spritz, on a rooftop, marvelling at the city skyline.

THE PLACES AND THINGS I LOVE IN MY COUNTRY

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BY PHILADI SEPTEMBER

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With just under ten countries visited during my short time here, living in a centrally located country has unlocked the (boarding) gates of travel. It is a blessing I do not take for granted, to encounter a new city every two weeks or monthly - previously pasted on years and years of vision boards, Paris, Milan, Berlin and Rome are now a hop, skip and jump away. As my mom often asks, "Rea kae this week? (Where are we off to this week?)", living in London has meant exactly that - physically and metaphorically, going somewhere unknown, different and further away from the life I now realise, I was far too comfortable in.

Life in London has not only been an eye-opening experience for me but has shaped the lens I use for introspection to align and focus the woman **I am to the woman I want to be. My name is Philadi September, a proudly South African Black female professional living and working in the city of London and I hope this encourages you to take a leap of faith into uncharted territory**, whether it be moving across the globe, a change in career path or a taking up a hobby you've always admired but never tried - the possibilities are endless.



TRAVERSING LIMINALITY

TRAVERSING LIMINALITY ACROSS AFRICA

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BY DR LULU GWAGWA

As I was sitting there drinking from the wisdom and commitment of my fellow Africans, I felt safe to be myself. There was just this deep caring, nurturing and warm spirit in the room. I can't quite explain it really. I felt welcome, seen, and heard.

”



I am privileged to be a fellow of the Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI). This is a group of over 500 African leaders from South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Mozambique, Eswatini, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda, who believe that **the future of Africa is tightly linked to the development of high integrity, effective and enlightened leaders.** We met in Rwanda on the 4-7 May to exchange ideas, experiences, and lessons; recommit ourselves to the values of ALI; to reconnect, collaborate and network.

As I was sitting there drinking from the wisdom and commitment of my fellow Africans, I felt safe to be myself. There was just this **deep caring, nurturing and warm spirit in the room. I can't quite explain it really. I felt welcome, seen, and heard.** This is how I always feel when I've been in my village, centered. This is the African spirit. It feels good to be African.

As a family we have decided to really explore the African continent over the next 24 months. So, during Easter we drove from Pretoria through the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho to our home in the Eastern Cape. **Oh, what a joy to meet up with the Lesotho Traversing Liminality community. Coach Lebo's hospitality, of course, is to die for!**

In March I spent a week in Luanda. Gosh, Cape Town can keep her Sea Point promenade. Luanda is THE place to be. My hosts laid out a traditional dinner, but sadly I am not adventurous with my stomach. So, I can't tell you much about that. **The highlight though was meeting the First Lady to talk Traversing Liminality.** It was short notice on my side, but she still made the time. I got to visit the state house nogal!

I have concluded that the most valuable treasure in our continent is not our minerals, and we plenty of those. It is our history, culture, and people.

I am a proud African woman. My feet are rooted in the African soil, but my eyes and ears are open to see and hear what the rest of world is about. What about you?



TRAVERSING LIMINALITY

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