

## Education lecturer listed as one of top 200 Young South Africans

By Faculty/Fakulteit

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*Dr Lindelani Mnguni. Photo courtesy of M&G*

Dr Lindelani Mnguni, a lecturer in Science Education, was listed as one of the top 200 Young South Africans for 2012 that were announced at a function held in Johannesburg on 21 June 2012.

The Mail & Guardian's 200 Young South Africans project identifies and tells the stories of young South Africans under the age of 35 who have excelled in their chosen professions and are doing extraordinary things.

Lindelani says that he never expected to be included in the list. "I didn't even think about it. I do what I do and I don't expect anything in return." The list has been running for the past six years and is divided into 10 categories, one of which is education.

Lindelani completed his PhD on HIV education in South African schools at the age of 28. He has come a long way from rural KwaZulu-Natal, where he spent his childhood and was the only student in his year to pass matric and go on to university. Life has taught him many humbling lessons. While studying for his BSc at UKZN, he worked as a gardener to earn money for food. All this seemed to have been in vain as he was unable to find employment once he had completed his undergraduate studies.

Although Lindelani had been an average student whose marks did not qualify him for postgraduate studies, he was ambitious. He applied for and was granted special permission to proceed with postgraduate studies. From that time onward, Lindelani excelled academically and at a personal level and received his master's degree cum laude. During the two years that Lindelani worked on his master's studies, he started his own Saturday School and a Junior Science Academy at Marion High School in Pietermaritzburg. He wanted to inspire and motivate children to become educated and make something of their lives.

When a friend from England visited Lindelani and wanted to experience township life in South Africa, he accompanied his friend to Copesville, which opened his eyes to the suffering of people. This brought Lindelani to a crossroad. He decided that he had to understand HIV and learn how to educate people effectively in order to improve their lives and help empower the powerless. This led to his decision to enroll at UP to do a PhD in Curriculum Studies and HIV/AIDS Education.

Currently Lindelani is employed by the University of Pretoria. He takes his role as a lecturer seriously and helps students from rural areas to adapt to university life, even leading a weekly prayer group and motivation sessions. Through his passion and perseverance, Lindelani is teaching his students an important lesson: Where you come from does not really matter, it is where you are going that's important.

"From here onwards I want to make sure that I keep making a meaningful contribution to justify the fact that my name appears on the list of 200 Young South Africans. The award is pushing me to go higher. Above all, I want to inspire my students to go out and make a difference."

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