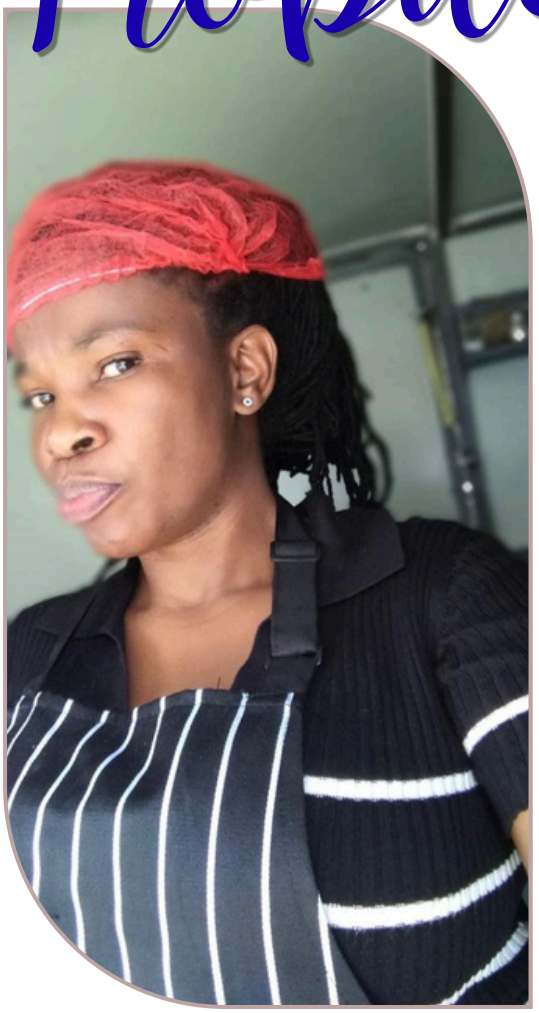
Mobile kitchen



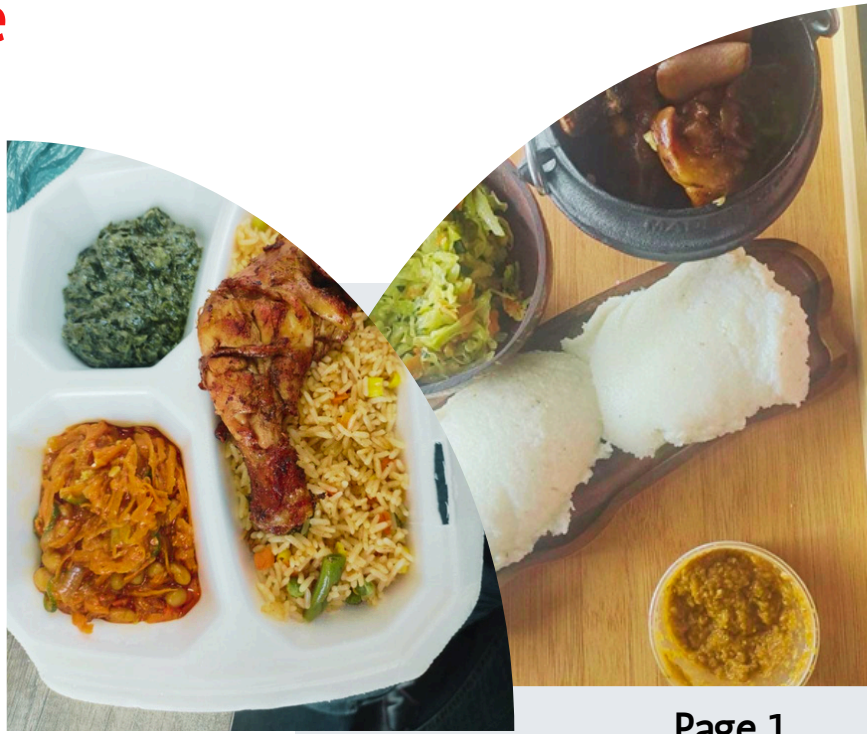
Operating under her registered company, Ezembokodo PTY LTD, Nokukhanya started a mobile kitchen that has become a popular stop for residents looking for affordable, home-style meals. Customers can choose from pap served with braaied beef or chicken, while those craving traditional dishes can also enjoy inhloko, amanqina and mogodu.

The business may seem well established today, but getting it off the ground was not easy.

"It was not easy to start because I faced financial challenges. I needed capital and I also struggled to find a space where I could operate," says Nokukhanya.

Cooking with purpose

For Nokukhanya Zwane, known to many in the community as "Sis'Nokukhanya", every plate served represents much more than food. It tells the story of determination, sacrifice and a desire to build something that benefits not only herself, but also the people around her.



Using her personal savings, she bought a mobile kitchen trailer, her first stock and a braai stand.
The trailer, fitted with a gas stove and braai facilities, became the heart of the business.

What started as a one-woman venture and although still a small business, Ezembokodo PTY LTD now provides employment to five people who work together to keep the mobile kitchen running. Nokukhanya says giving others an opportunity to earn a living has always been one of her biggest motivations. Her staff share the daily responsibilities of preparing food, braaing meat and serving customers.

NOKUTHULA ZWANE

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"I didn't want to start this business only to uplift myself. I wanted to create opportunities for other people, especially young people." Says Nokukhanya.
In a community where many people are searching for work, Nokukhanya believes small businesses have an important role to play. While they may not employ hundreds of people, they can create opportunities that help families put food on the table and give young people valuable work experience.

MORE THAN A MOTHER: Sis'Nokukhanya's Heart for Children in Need

"I am a mother of three biological children, but I also support other children as if they were my own. I help them with school needs and buy basic necessities whenever I can.
Sometimes, it's something as simple as buying sanitary pads for young girls who need them. If I am in a position to help someone, I do," she says humbly.

Nokukhanya also wanted to give Komati residents more choice. With only one major supermarket offering prepared meals, she believed workers at the surrounding mines and power stations deserved an affordable alternative.
"I wanted people in our community, especially those working at the mines and the power station, to have another option where they can buy a cheaper lunch," she says.
Her idea has been well received. Many customers now place their orders in advance before collecting freshly prepared meals.

For one of the employees, Pasista Nhlumayo, the business has become a source of financial support.
"This job has helped me earn money so I can help my mother back home," she says.
Thuli Majola says the opportunity has allowed her to provide for her family.
"I am able to support my family because of this job," she says.
Both women say working for Nokukhanya feels different from working elsewhere.
"Working for Nokukhanya makes us feel like we are part of her family. She even provides us with accommodation and we share the rental costs."

A Small Business with Big Dreams of Creating Lasting Jobs

Like many small businesses, the business has experienced staff turnover. Nokukhanya explains that while one employee has been with her since the beginning, others often leave after finding employment at the surrounding mines and power stations.

Rather than seeing this as a setback, she says she is happy whenever someone moves on to improve their lives.



Image: A staff member shares a joke with one of the regular customers

"My dream is to see this business grow so that I can employ more people on a long-term basis. Right now we are still a small business, and people come and go because they find better opportunities. I hope that one day I will be able to offer more permanent employment."

“Stories like Nokukhanya's are a reminder that community development does not depend only on large companies or government projects. Local entrepreneurs also play an important role by creating jobs, supporting families and keeping money circulating within the community.

For now, the smoke rising from a braai stand outside the trailer - signals another busy day serving affordable meals to the community.
But beyond the plates of pap and braaied meat is a bigger dream, one of creating lasting jobs, supporting families and proving that even a small business can make a meaningful difference. As long as there are people to feed and lives to uplift, Nokukhanya hopes her mobile kitchen will continue to be a place where opportunity is always on the menu.