

In conversation with our new Miss South Africa

By [Emily Stander](#)

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Last week, Ndavi Nokeri was crowned our new Miss South Africa.



Image by Yolanda van der Stoep: Ndavi Nokeri was crowned Miss South Africa 2022

In spirit of her victory, we spoke with her to find out more about pageant life and what she plans to do as a significant representative of South Africa...

📌 ***Congratulations on being crowned Miss South Africa! How are you feeling about it?***

Thank you so much! I am ecstatic and incredibly grateful. I'm definitely still digesting the news as it's really a dream come true.

It feels surreal, but it is also a confirmation - not only for myself but for anyone else that also comes from small beginnings that our dreams are valid.



Ndavi Nokeri crowned Miss South Africa 2022

15 Aug 2022



📌 ***Tell us a bit more about yourself and your journey to Miss South Africa.***

I come from the Gavaza village in Tzaneen. My first pageant was when I was five years old. Back then, I didn't really understand what pageants were about and I didn't know what Miss South Africa was as I wasn't exposed to things like that.

I began to understand the meaning of pageantry in 2019 when I did a local pageant, Miss Jozi. This is where I saw how you can leverage the platform to empower yourself and give back to the community. That's where the dream to become Miss South Africa was sparked.

Since then, I have worked hard to become a woman who, in my opinion, would be worthy of the title, is a leader, a woman of impact, and a beacon of hope to others and inspires them to dream bigger. It was important to me to become that woman, even before I entered Miss South Africa.

🍷 ***Tell us a bit more about pageant life - what challenges did you face while taking part in Miss South Africa?***

The main challenge I faced during Miss South Africa was my insecurities. As a young girl who grew up shy and afraid to speak up in front of a crowd, it was one of the things I felt unsure about and considered a weakness. You have to use this platform to speak up, so I thought that meant I didn't qualify for this space.

But when I realised how much power there could be in using my voice, I had to step up.

What helped me was to remember where I come from and who this would empower. Sometimes, when you don't see something being done, especially as a Tsonga woman - and the first Tsonga Miss South Africa - understanding the people I would be representing and encouraging, helped me to keep going.

🍷 ***What kind of impact are you hoping to make with your new title?***

Although I had the privilege of attending more advanced schools outside of my village, I quickly noticed that there is a great and unfair divide in South Africa's education system.

In the advanced schools, we were exposed to a vast amount of opportunities and we were well informed and equipped to exploit them - these schools really prioritised creating a conducive learning environment. For me, this proves that being well educated is about more than just the content of a textbook.

This, unfortunately, was not the reality for my peers back home.

In their schools, they were faced with challenges such as not having the necessary resources, no skills development programmes outside of school and a lack of access to technology.

We should be focusing on ensuring that we bridge that gap as these learners deserve to have the same opportunities and resources to become successful in their academic and professional careers.

📊 ***What advice do you have for young women in pageantry?***

Never compare yourself to anyone else.

I actually always say, never limit yourself to comparison. When you compare yourself, you cannot become the best version of yourself, because you are constantly focusing on becoming the better version of someone else. It's important, throughout your journey, to remain authentic. That's how people can relate to you. And for me, pageantry really is about being a representation of a group of people. If you are relatable, you can inspire many people. Be proud of your story and where you come from.

Apart from that, know what you want to do with the platform. Whether it's to empower yourself or to give back to the community, know exactly what you want to do if you were given the opportunity to reign in that pageant.

📊 ***What can we expect from you in future?***

During my reign, I look forward to working with all the different stakeholders to ensure all the plans I have for educational equity in our country come to life. I'm very excited to go and represent South Africa on the international stage and just carry on that legacy of all the women that have come before me.

Being a South African woman, I am so proud, because I come from a legacy of strong and resilient women.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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