

Impact investing - unlocking a multi-billion-dollar industry

Lize Lubbe's pioneering spirit has led her to deliberately choose the road less travelled at every pivotal moment. Investing and entrepreneurship have been the golden thread that runs throughout her career, and the results of her leading huge impact investment projects across the African continent have been extraordinary.



Lize Lubbe

In 2015, she was the only South African selected to participate in the prestigious Frontier Market Scouts Programme in California, USA. She was one of 30 participants globally attending this program to advance high-performing professionals in the field of impact investing.

“We collaborated with practitioners from the top impact investing funds in the USA. As part of this programme I completed a research fellowship in impact investing and venture capital in Silicon Valley, New York City and Washington DC to research international best practice with the vision to implement it in an African context,” she says.

Returning to South Africa, and after a thorough search for a company with a vision aligned with her own, Lubbe joined Phatisa’s Africa Agriculture Fund (AFF) in 2016.

She has been an intrinsic part of delivering 2,6 million tonnes of food and food-related products, supporting more than 9,000 permanent jobs and more than 78,000 small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs in rural communities from investment to date.

“This has been a pivotal moment in my career and has been a wonderful environment to catalyse the large scale impact that I have always dreamed of being part of.”

She was soon appointed a principal of the fund. “I am the first female principal at Phatisa, which is reflective of an industry that has a distance still to travel regarding gender parity rather than my own singular achievement I feel honoured because other young women that will come after me in the organisation now know that it is possible,” Lubbe says.

Lubbe loves her job because there is never routine or predictability, each day is unique bringing along new opportunities for endless learning. “I love the travel and adventure, and I absolutely love meeting and working with entrepreneurs across our continent,” she says.

“Pioneering anything is not easy. When you are blazing a trail, you can sometimes feel that have the odds stacked against you. You have no clear path to follow. You mostly go blindly, equipped only with the vision in your mind and the dream in your heart,” Lubbe says.

Her other love

Lubbe is also a professional musician, a violinist, and has been a permanent member of the Gauteng Philharmonic Orchestra (GPO) since 2014. The orchestra is an NGO based in Pretoria which aims to promote classical music in the local community and to make it accessible to the previously disadvantaged, the youth and the elderly. They run an outreach programme with the City of Tshwane Municipality to uplift the vulnerable youth and victims of drug and sexual abuse and include them in their activities.

“It is not an easy task to juggle this with my executive role, but fills my life with joy. As a musician, I have learned about leadership from some of the best conductors in the world.”

Lize’s ultimate dream is to head her own impact investing fund one day.

In 2019, Lize won the Influence category award at the [SAICA Top-35-under-35 competition](#), which recognises and promotes young CAs(SA) who are not just achieving extraordinary results in their professional capacity, but also have a significant impact on society.

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