

## 7-year-old social entrepreneur brings hope to Mzansi

Prince Mashawana, aged seven years old, has created a compelling new superhero - SuperMash - whose adventures will help young kids face some of life's biggest challenges.

Not only will this be an adventure sharing initiative, but there will be a business concept added to it, which will open a unique revenue stream specifically aimed at supporting the initiative.

Social entrepreneurship and content creation have become the buzzwords of our age, and the idea of the socially orientated entrepreneur often grabs the headlines. Traditionally, a social entrepreneur is expected to be an adult, working in the adult world, but in South Africa, a seven-year-old has changed the game completely.



Prince Mashawana

Mashawana has developed a compelling Superhero called SuperMash and will be launching his character to the world on the 17 November 2019 with a comic book, supported by merchandise including T-Shirts, caps, lunch boxes and bags. To evoke social responsibility and self-awareness, there will be a specific focus on what SuperMash does and importantly highlighting the reasons behind what he does when faced with a challenge.

SuperMash is a special character – who is posed with the most common challenges and draws inspiration in how those challenges can be overcome. The storylines dig into many of the most emotionally challenging issues facing young South Africans today, such as adapting to new living environments, learning how to read and write as well as self-confidence issues.

*“ I wanted to see a superhero with stories that are more like real life,’ says Prince. ‘Young people in Mzansi have a lot of challenges. I thought it would be fun to have stories and a hero about that. So that’s what the business is all about. ”*

SuperMash is reportedly the country’s first black child fictional superhero, who reciprocally encourages young kids to see themselves as heroes. The idea is for him to be the friend that can share his superpowers, and this is unleashed by wearing the SuperMash wrist band. Not only will children be better equipped to meet and overcome challenges, but they will also learn the true depth of the power within themselves as they assume personal responsibility, grow emotionally and boost self-awareness.

To support SuperMash, the young entrepreneur has established a business model where he co-produces animated bedtime short stories, movies and books. He also sells stationery, school bags, lunch boxes and a clothing range, all featuring SuperMash as the hero.

Of course, at seven years old a certain degree of assistance is required, and Mashawana has had strong support from both his parents being his mother, actress Lerato Zah and his father, prominent businessman Collen Mashawana. But while his parents have been happy to support his entrepreneurial drive, they’re both amazed at their son’s creativity and entrepreneurship.

‘It’s been fascinating to watch someone so young develop something like this,’ says Collen Mashawana. ‘The desire to use creativity to help young South Africans deal with life challenges in a positive way has been incredible to see. Even more amazing to see was the hard work and dedication that Prince has put in while working on this project with Omphile and Phemelo Dibodu at Rainbow Nation Comics. It’s been an inspiring and motivating journey for all of us, and one we’ve really enjoyed and are extremely proud of’.



Rainbow Nation Comics, a South African comic book publisher that creates original, authentic and proudly South African Superhero Stories has partnered with the young entrepreneur to take his concept to a fully professional level that will see readers entertained with the added benefit of having options to own the merchandising.

He has worked actively with Phemelo Dibodu, story writer and editor, and Omphile Dibodu, illustrator and creative director.

‘It’s been a wonderful experience,’ says Phemelo Dibodu. ‘We have no doubt SuperMash is going to have a very positive impact on his readers, and this comes as no surprise when you meet Prince himself. He is a passionate and smart young man, and we think his social business idea is going to go a very long way in South Africa – to everyone’s benefit.’

The SuperMash launch will take place on Sunday, 17 November 2019 at Pirates Club in Greenside, Johannesburg.

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