

## **From Hardship to Hope: Appliance repair programme uplifts unemployed mother in Eastern Cape**

An appliance repair programme in the Eastern Cape is driving a profound positive change in the lives of unemployed women in local communities, including divorced mother of three children, Nomakosazana Fuzile (46), who says it has brought a ray of light in her life following a period of hardship.

The brainchild of [Taking Care of Business](#) (TCB), the Repair programme, previously known as the Appliance Bank, supports South Africans in local communities to start their own appliance repair businesses.

Beneficiaries of the programme receive training to repair broken, damaged or faulty small appliances donated by the public and retail partners like the [Shoprite Group](#). Participants learn a life-long skill and also receive extensive financial, business and life-skills training.

TCB selects 50 to 100 individuals annually through its recruitment and shortlisting process, including its branches in Durban and Paarl. The programme has seen a notable uptick in the engagement of female applicants in recent months and now has 17 female participants – including eight at its newest branch in East London.

Nomakosazana from East London joined the programme in March 2023 following retrenchment due to health complications. “I would sit at home, sewing and stressing. My cousin told me about the TCB Repair programme, but warned me that I might not like it because it involves learning skills usually for men,” she says.

“I took the opportunity because I had nothing to lose. It is a positive light in my life. I can sell and generate an income. It has woken up my mind. I get to learn new skills that nobody can take away from me and it has made me curious to learn more.

“In addition to business and life-skills training, the programme also provides mentoring, and counseling, prioritising our mental health and well-being,” says Nomakosazana, adding that this has helped manage her anxiety.

The TCB Repair programme is supported by Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets in the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal who have, since the inception of the partnership in 2017, donated appliances valued at more than R21 million to assist beneficiaries to successfully run their own businesses.

The retailer has also begun to donate appliances to TCB’s branch in East London, where stock is in short supply.

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