

Meet the Cape Town entrepreneur breaking barriers in male-dominated appliance repair programme

Makaziwe Mazaleni (30) is making remarkable strides as a pioneer in a sector traditionally dominated by men. The Cape Town entrepreneur is poised to become the first female graduate of an [appliance Repair programme](#), and hopes to inspire more women to follow suit.

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.

The programme has seen a notable uptick in female applicants in recent months, exemplified by Makaziwe, its first ever woman participant.

Makaziwe joined the Repair programme after Covid-19 and subsequent travel restrictions all but killed her travel business in Langa. A year and a half into life after lockdown, her mother came across a Facebook post inviting men interested to learn how to repair appliances, to an open day.

Restlessness and support from her family and friends drove Makaziwe to attend the open day, where she persuaded interviewees to accept her as the first female candidate.

The programme now has 17 female participants – eight at its newest branch in East London, five in Midrand, and four in Cape Town. TCB selects 50 to 100 individuals annually through its [recruitment](#) and shortlisting process.

“One of the most fulfilling aspects of my journey has been seeing more women join the programme. I hope that I have shown other women that fear should not hold them back from trying something new,” says Makaziwe.

The TCB Repair programme is supported by Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets in 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.

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