

Shoprite enables homeless man to start appliance repair business in KZN

(15 February 2021) The Shoprite Group, together with [The Appliance Bank](#), have given a 26 year old man from KwaBhaca in the Eastern Cape, a second lease on life.

Nkosinathi Tongo, who moved to Durban for greener pastures, later became homeless as he struggled to make a living. But thanks to his hard work and determination, and a strategic partnership, things have started looking up for Tongo.

“My life was turned upside down when my cousin kicked me out of his home. It was on the streets, where I started selling sweets, that I met a lady who mentioned The Appliance Bank,” explains Tongo.

He joined the programme in 2019 - a decision Tongo describes as the best of his life - and today he owns a successful appliance repair store in Durban’s Central Business District.

“I do not know how to thank Shoprite and The Appliance Bank,” he says. “Through fixing appliances I have managed to start my own business and have even hired someone to permanently help me around the shop.”

While many small businesses struggled during South Africa’s Covid-19 lockdown, Tongo made enough money to buy land, and build a house, in his home town of KwaBhaca.

“Shoprite’s partnership with The Appliance Bank has not only made it possible for me to build myself a home, it has also made it possible for my older sister to pursue a tertiary education, which seemed impossible before I joined the programme,” adds Tongo.

The Appliance Bank trains unemployed men to fix broken or faulty household appliances. Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets in the Western Cape and Gauteng have been donating faulty appliances to organisations for several years and, as of January, this initiative has also expanded to the retailer’s KwaZulu Natal division.

“Our aim is to give dignity to men who have been disenfranchised, as well as create male role models for young children,” says Tracey Gilmore, Chief Operations Officer at The Appliance Bank. “Many of these men, like Nkosinathi Tongo, have gone on to start their own businesses.”

“The socio-economic impact this project has in our communities is beyond comprehension and it is the reason why we have expanded to yet another province,” explains Lunga Schoeman, CSI Manager for the Shoprite Group. “We have donated items to the value of R3.92 million to The Appliance Bank to date, with more than R61 000 donated in KwaZulu-Natal just in the past couple of weeks.”

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