THE CHANGEMAKERS EDITION

RISING PHENOM

23RD APRIL, 2025



VOL. 1

0 35545 62336 78 1

LEMO MORAKE

ILLUSTRATED BY PRANJAL

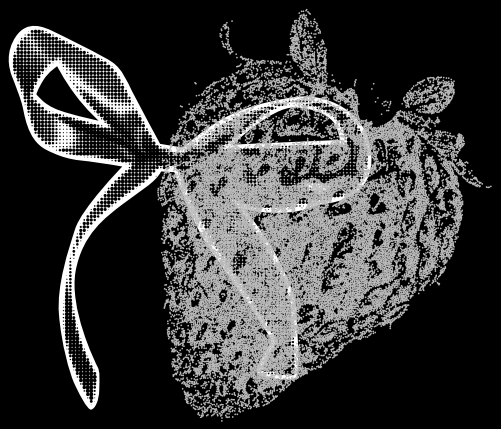
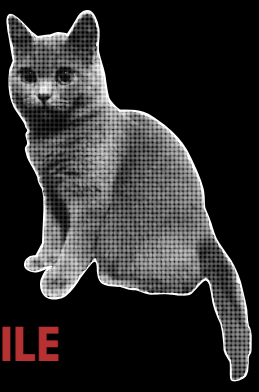


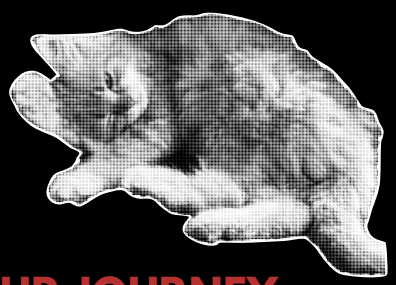
TABLE OF CONTENTS

5
EDITOR'S NOTE



7
ABOUT RETHABILE FIONA SERE

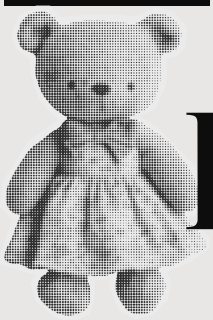
9
OTHER MENTIONS



11
FEATURE STORY

13
ADVICE CORNER

15
YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE



EDITOR'S NOTE

BOLD AND BRIGHT

~ LEMO MORAKE [EDITOR-IN-CHEIF]

"AT RISING PHENOM, WE BELIEVE THAT YOUTH AREN'T JUST THE FUTURE – THEY'RE SHAPING THE NOW. IN THIS ISSUE, WE SPOTLIGHT YOUNG MINDS WHO ARE DARING TO CHALLENGE THE NORM, SPARK CONVERSATIONS, AND BUILD BETTER FUTURES. THESE YOUNG LEADERS REMIND US: GREATNESS DOESN'T WAIT."

2025



RETHABILE FIONE SERE

FROM REJECTION TO REVOLUTION—A YOUNG LEADER REWRITING THE NARRATIVE

In the heart of South Africa, where a complex past meets the hope of a brighter tomorrow, rises a voice of courage, compassion, and purpose. Rethabile, a radiant 23-year-old Black woman, stands as a symbol of transformation. She is not just living her truth; she's shaping the future.

With roots in both Cape Town and Rustenburg, Rethabile carries a rich understanding of the South African experience. Growing up with a measure of privilege, she feels a deep responsibility—to uplift, to give back, and to create space for those still pushed to the margins. For her, privilege is not a pedestal, but a platform for impact.



Now pursuing her Master's degree at the University of Cape Town—Africa's top-ranked institution—Rethabile's research unearths the deep roots of inequality and the persistent exclusion that still haunts many Black South Africans. But she is not just a scholar. She is a force of change—thoughtful, brave, and unwavering in her mission to dismantle injustice and build a more equitable world.





RISING PHENOM

OTHER MENTIONS

- **2019:** Faced rejections from every university applied to—sparked the beginning of her resilience journey.
- **2020:** Began studies at the University of Cape Town, where excellence soon followed.
- **2022–Present:** Embraced leadership roles, found her voice as a changemaker.
- **September 2024:** Attended Parliament—marking her growing influence as a national youth leader.
- **Present:** Co-leads the SDG Portfolio of the UN Association of South Africa (UCT Chapter).
- **Present:** Pursuing Master's research on systemic inequality and institutional exclusion.

"Rejection doesn't mean the end—it's simply redirection. Let your setbacks sharpen you. Hold onto your fire, trust your worth, and walk through every closed door like it was meant for you all along. Your resilience is your power—never forget that."

FEATURE STORY

RETHABILE'S ASCENT

Rethabile's path wasn't paved with open doors—it began with a chorus of "no." She was rejected by every university she applied to. But where others might have given up, she chose to rise.

That painful chapter sparked something powerful. Determined to rewrite the story, she worked harder, reached deeper, and pushed forward with fierce belief. Her rejection became a lesson, not in defeat—but in direction. Her journey wasn't derailed—it was refined.

Today, that same young woman—once turned away by every institution—now thrives at the very top. As one of the highest-achieving students at UCT, her academic success is hard-won and richly deserved. But Rethabile's strength extends far beyond the classroom. She has become a voice of purpose and promise, stepping into national spaces of influence. Her presence in Parliament this past September wasn't just symbolic—it was powerful proof of how far resilience can take a dream.

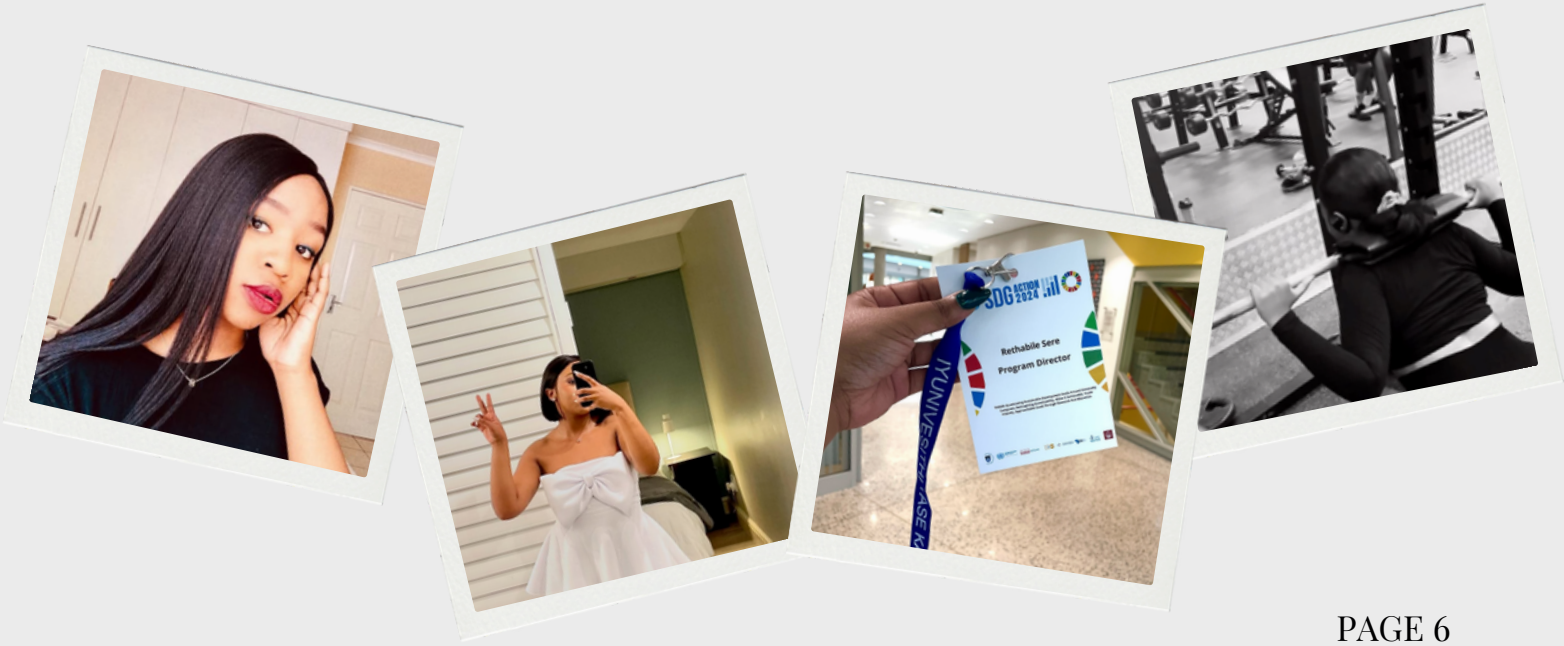
PASSION IN ACTION

Resilience lit the way. But it's Rethabile's passion that fuels the journey forward.

As Co-lead of the SDG Portfolio for the United Nations Association of South Africa (UCT Chapter), she's turning vision into action—bringing the Sustainable Development Goals to life through community-based impact.

But when you ask her what matters most, her voice becomes especially tender, especially fierce. She speaks of brilliant students who, like her, earned their place in world-class universities—but now face hunger, debt, and the threat of academic exclusion because of poverty.

It's a reality she cannot ignore. And so she's fighting—for their right to learn, to dream, to succeed without the weight of financial fear. Rethabile is leading fundraising efforts to ease student debt, to ensure no one's future is cut short for lack of a meal or tuition. Her vision is clear: education should never be a luxury, but a right. And no student should be forced to choose between knowledge and survival.



STEADY AS SHE GOES



ADVICE CORNER

"Having grown up rather privileged, I believe it is my duty—and the duty of others like me—to uplift those who were once silenced under Apartheid. Our privilege must serve a purpose."

"If there's one thing to remember about me, it's that my resilience brought me from being turned away by every university, to standing proud as a top student and a young leader today."

"What I truly want is for funds to be raised to help students who risk being excluded because of debt. Let's take that burden off their shoulders, so they can focus on what matters—learning, growing, and building our future." ~ RETHABILE FIONE SERE

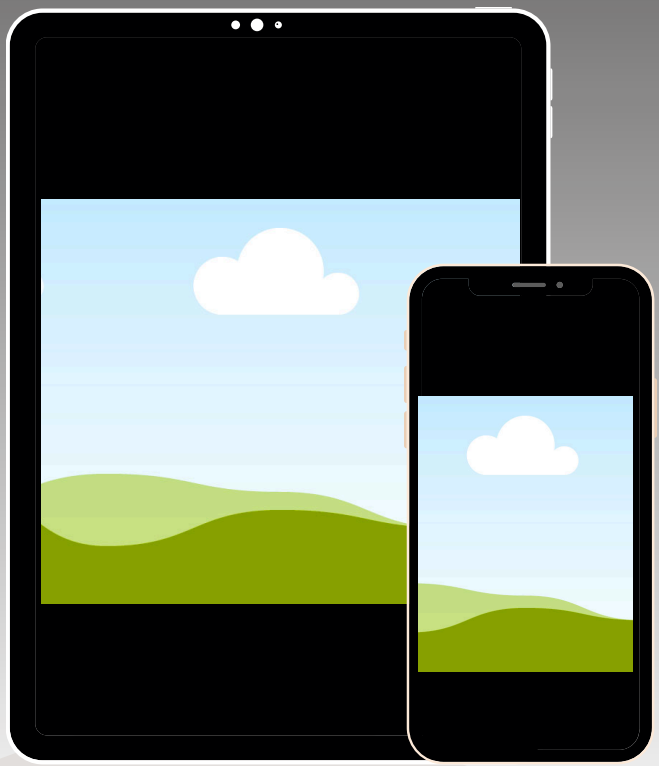
BECOMING A RISING PHENOM

GET FEATURED



THINK YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS A RISING PHENOM?
APPLY NOW TO BE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE!
[QR CODE TO GOOGLE FORM]

CONTACT US



Subscribe to Rising Phenom

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!

@rising.phenom.magazine

rising.phenom.magazine@gmail.com

0 24563 84926 54 2