iYUNIVESITHI

Walter Sisulu *Magazine*



THE STUDENTPRENEUR EDITION

Two Studentpreneurs of the Year. *One University.*

ZANODUMO GODLIMPI • 2025
Engineered for the African terrain

NCEDO NTSABO • 2023
Sowing change in Qombe

NCEDO NTSABO • EDHE STUDENTPRENEUR 2023

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Two titles, one university

WELCOME

Stories that travel beyond campus

Every university has stories that reach far beyond its own grounds. This edition of the iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu Magazine tells two of them.

Ncedo Ntsabo, from Qombe near Dutywa, turned a family maize farm into an agribusiness that employs seasonal workers, and was named EDHE Studentpreneur of the Year in 2023. Zanodumo Godlimpi, a medical orthotist and prosthetist from Bizana, designed a pneumatic prosthetic foot built for rural terrain and took the same national title in 2025.

Their work is very different, yet their starting point is the same. Each looked at a problem in the community they know best and decided to solve it.

Both were coached by the Student Innovation, Entrepreneurship Development and Internationalization Hub (SIEDI): its manager, its team of coaches and its entrepreneurship ambassadors. This issue celebrates the two winners and the support behind them.

ABOUT THE EDHE INTERVARSITY

The EDHE Entrepreneurship Intervarsity, sponsored by the SAB Foundation, is a platform designed to identify, recognise and showcase the top student entrepreneurs at South African public universities.

Over seven years, R1 127 500 has been awarded to 51 high-potential entrepreneurs. The overall winner receives more than R100 000, and finalists connect to funding pipelines.

Engineered for the African Terrain

Zanodumo Godlimpi designed a prosthetic foot that adapts to hills, dust roads and uneven ground, and won South Africa's top student entrepreneurship title for it.

Zanodumo Godlimpi was born in Ludeke village, Bizana, in the Eastern Cape, and his worldview is rooted in rural communities. A medical orthotist and prosthetist, he practises in the public healthcare system in Mthatha. He studied Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics and later a Master of Engineering at Walter Sisulu University.

THE PROBLEM. His innovation began with his patients. During clinical interviews, people who wear below-the-knee and above-the-knee prosthetic legs described how walking down a hill feels unstable, and how walking uphill feels as if the leg pushes back. Prosthetic feet on the global market were not designed for African terrain, and the few high-end options were too expensive for rural patients or the public health system. "Why don't we have prosthetic limbs that adapt to our environment?" he asked himself.

THE BUILD. Using money from his book allowance, he bought a basic pneumatic cylinder and began experimenting in the biomechanics lab. That small purchase became a proof of concept, and then a fully functional prototype after his team received R485 000 in seed funding from the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA).

The result is a prosthetic foot that simulates natural ankle movement using pneumatics, adapts to uneven terrain and keeps costs low and maintenance simple. It replaces expensive electrical motors with a locally sourced pneumatic system, which also makes it easier to repair.



Zanodumo Godlimpi presents his pneumatic prosthetic foot at the Walter Sisulu University Office of Technology Transfer stand.

The moment of truth

One patient had struggled for years to walk up the hill to his home. After being fitted with the pneumatic foot during a pilot test, he walked uphill smoothly and naturally. He looked at Zanodumo and said, "Ndiyahamba. I am (really) walking."

> *"We focus so much on the science that we forget the impact."*
>
> **ZANODUMO GODLIMPI**

From researcher to *national champion*

Learning to pitch

Zanodumo admits he never saw himself as a businessperson. He sees himself as a researcher and a problem-solver. Through the EDHE Entrepreneurship Intervarsity journey he learned to pitch, to translate technical brilliance into a business narrative, and to understand how to price, scale and structure a start-up. He credits the judges' feedback, the pitching masterclasses and the wider EDHE community for the confidence he carried onto the national stage.

A belief behind the work

For Zanodumo, mobility is a human right. He has listened to patients whose lives shrink because they cannot walk the way they want to: people navigating rural hills, unpredictable ground and dust roads without tools designed for their reality. After his work began trending online, amputees from across his region started messaging him, each hoping his prototype might one day change their lives. He says that pressure keeps him going.

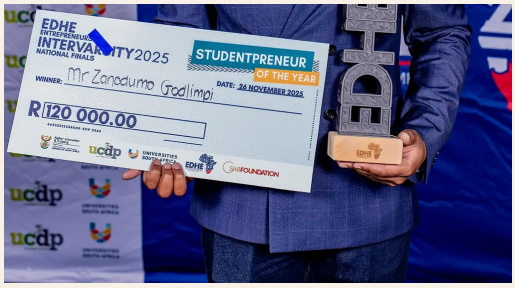
Recognition

The innovation made him the 2025 EDHE Studentpreneur of the Year, with R120 000 in prize money, and earned a further R25 000 in the Academic Research Commercialisation category. The project has been supported by TIA and Walter Sisulu University, and patents have been filed in South Africa, China and Europe.

What comes next

Zanodumo plans to use prize funding to acquire a 3D printer and to run expanded real-world testing with more participants. He is collaborating with UNISA Biomedical Engineering and the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing on validation studies. Beyond that, he plans to pursue a PhD and to establish a company producing prosthetic devices across several affordability tiers, including an AI-enhanced premium model.

FACT FILE	
Name	Zanodumo Godlimpi
From	Ludeke village, Bizana, Eastern Cape
Profession	Medical orthotist and prosthetist
Studied	Walter Sisulu University (Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics; Master of Engineering)
Title	EDHE Studentpreneur of the Year 2025
Prize	R120 000, plus R25 000 (Academic Research Commercialisation)
Innovation	Pneumatic prosthetic foot and ankle
Patents	South Africa, China, Europe



Zanodumo Godlimpi with the Studentpreneur of the Year 2025 cheque and EDHE trophy.

> *"Mobility is a human right.*
>
> THE BELIEF AT THE HEART OF ZANODUMO GODLIMPI'S WORK

Sowing Change in Qombe

Ncedo Ntsabo turned a family maize farm into an agribusiness that creates work in a community where jobs are scarce.



Ncedo Ntsabo in the maize fields of Qombe, Dutywa.

In Qombe, Dutywa, unemployment and poverty weigh heavily on many households. Ncedo Ntsabo, a Walter Sisulu University student in his final year of Adult Community Education and Training, majoring in Applied Agriculture, is building a business that employs 36 seasonal workers.

Growing up, Ncedo and his family worked tirelessly on their farm. He started small, selling maize bags to local farmers, and then began growing and selling his own crops at affordable prices. Qombe Maize and Projects began with no startup capital but a strong will: he mobilised local youth and women to farm maize on unused communal land. What started as a single plot grew into an operation producing vegetables, poultry and organic fertiliser.

The breakthrough

His breakthrough came when he won the overall title of Studentpreneur of the Year at the 2023 EDHE Entrepreneurship Intervarsity National Finals. He used the funds to fence his maize farm and expand into livestock. His business now breeds and sells goats and sheep, and provides veterinary support to local farmers.

EDHE Director Dr Edwell Gumbo said Ncedo had won against 26 universities because he was focused and clear about how he would spend the money, and because it was not only about him but about the Qombe community.

> *“We don’t wait for opportunities – we create them.”*
>
> **NCEDO NTSABO**

A movement, not just a business

Ncedo says Qombe Maize and Projects is more than a business to him; it is a movement. He hopes it will inspire young entrepreneurs, farmers and rural communities to see agriculture as an opportunity filled with innovation, wealth creation and food security solutions.

Voices from Qombe

One of his employees, Ncediswa Ben, says, “The young man is a blessing to us.” She adds that he encourages his workers to plant crops in their own gardens, and that residents no longer need to travel an hour to town to buy vegetables. His father, Hamilton, says he is very happy, and hopes to see the business grow beyond expectations.

More than *one farm*

The Qombe family of businesses

With the Qombe Fencing Project, led with the support of the Department of Agriculture and community members, the operation grew to over 80 hectares of production land. Today the Qombe brand includes three further business arms.

Giving back

In 2021 Ncedo led a poultry project that gave over 200 white broiler chicks to women in the village, with training and resources, and founded a maize association for men and youth. In 2023 he donated over 3 500 cabbage seedlings to local households and supplied fresh produce to local schools, adding two extra heads of cabbage to every delivery. He also mentors farmers in at least four other communities.

Leadership beyond the farm

Ncedo served as National Startup Coordinator for Hult Prize South Africa and represented South Africa and Walter Sisulu University at the Hult Prize Africa Regionals in Kenya. Two student startups he mentored went on to compete at the same regional event. He is the EDHE Community of Practice representative for the university, a graduate of the EXIM Academy, and holds a certificate in Social Entrepreneurship from Renyaka.

When the wind blew

In 2024, strong winds destroyed a sponsored plastic tunnel. Ncedo kept operations running through open-field farming and continued to support his workers.

Looking ahead

He aims to scale Qombe Maize and Projects into a continental model for rural development through regenerative agriculture, local empowerment and social innovation, integrating new technologies, organic farming methods and agro-processing.



Ncedo Ntsabo on stage at the 2023 EDHE Awards, where he was named Studentpreneur of the Year.

FACT FILE	
Name	Ncedo Ntsabo
From	Qombe village, Dutywa, Eastern Cape
Studying	Adult Community Education and Training (Applied Agriculture), Walter Sisulu University
Business	Qombe Maize and Projects
Title	EDHE Studentpreneur of the Year 2023
Prize	R100 000
Land	Over 80 hectares
Jobs	36 seasonal workers

Qombe Honey

Focused on sustainable beekeeping and the production of natural honey.

Qombe Veg

Producing peppers, onions, tomatoes and carrots for local markets and school feeding programmes.

Qombe Greenhouse

Supports controlled-environment agriculture and is piloting a 100% organic liquid fertiliser made from chicken waste.

The hub that *coached* them

Both winners were coached by the Student Innovation, Entrepreneurship Development and Internationalization Hub (SIEDI), its manager, its team of coaches and its entrepreneurship ambassadors.



The SIEDI team of coaches, ambassadors and students.

What SIEDI does

SIEDI is a strategic unit of iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu dedicated to promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalization and graduate employability among students. Its vision is to ignite a generation of globally competitive student founders and innovators who build enterprises that employ graduates and transform communities. Its mission is to turn ideas into scalable, job-creating enterprises by bridging innovation, internationalization and real-world community impact, through hands-on mentorship, funding linkages and global market exposure.



SIEDI MANAGER

Ms N. Blaai

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Leads SIEDI's strategy and day-to-day operations, develops partnerships and guides student leadership governance.

CONGRATULATIONS

Two titles.
One university.



ZANODUMO GODLIMPI

EDHE Studentpreneur of the Year 2025

R120 000 prize • Pneumatic prosthetic foot



NCEDO NTSABO

EDHE Studentpreneur of the Year 2023

R100 000 prize • Qombe Maize and Projects

Coached by the Student Innovation, Entrepreneurship Development and Internationalization Hub (SIEDI) at iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu, with its manager, coaches and entrepreneurship ambassadors.