



These boots are made for climbing up Kilimanjaro

Trekking up highest mountain in Africa to aid 2 million girls is aim

KEVIN RITCHIE

THERE'S a pair of hiking boots in a glass box in Sello Hatang's office. They're caked in mud, dried now. Untouched since those same boots carried him up Kilimanjaro three years ago and back down again.

This year, the chief executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation is trudging back up the arduous 5895m slog to the highest point in Africa. He'll do it again next year and the year after as part of a commitment he made to himself five years ago. Codenamed 2020, he wants to have reached 2 million girls, helping them to stay in school, while breaking the taboo on menstruation.

Five years ago, Richard Mabaso phoned him.

"We speak about the key drivers of patriarchy and toxic masculinity as the issues holding us back as a nation and here was this young man calling me from a tickle box to tell me about his dream to raise funds to provide sanitary pads for poor girls and keep them in school, by climbing Kilimanjaro.

"I saw the potential immediately," he remembers. Trek4Mandela, run by the Imbumba Foundation which Mabaso formed, aims to summit the continent's highest peak every year on July 18, Madiba's birthday, raising awareness of the Caring4Girls campaign and funds to buy sanitary pads to keep girl children in school. The Nelson Mandela Foundation has endorsed it since Mabaso and local Everest legend Sibusiso Vilane first summited together in 2012.

But he didn't climb the mountain immediately.

"Three years ago, the managing director of the Banking Association, Cas Coovadia, said to me, 'you're always challenging us and you keep going to the airport so see us off. Isn't it time you put your own body behind it?'"

It struck a chord with Hatang immediately. He had just completed his Desmond Tutu Fellowship the year before and a key component was the need to create community

projects. He went back to his hometown, Klerksdorp, to push the Trek4Mandela, not just to increase the number of beneficiaries but to get them to participate, raising funds to help others in need.

"How much more can we build the Madiba legacy than to get people to take charge of their own lives?" he asks rhetorically.

"Richard and I went to Klerksdorp and challenged women to raise funds for sanitary pads."

It was right there that Hatang had his next epiphany.

"A group of women who had been helping us with our quest went to the office of one of the managers and she made them close the door before she started weeping.

"They had no idea what was happening. They looked at each other in embarrassment, wondering what they had done to cause offence. Suddenly the woman looked at them through her tears, 'I was once that girl', she said.

"Immediately I thought of my own childhood, of an illiterate mother who gave her all to educate my two brothers and my three sisters. Her one son died, but she got the rest of us educated. She never compromised. We had to be at school, rain or shine, sick or healthy. The only exceptions were my sisters – at a certain time each month.

"It only dawned on me then that it might have been because my sisters had the same struggle.

"We are trying to build a value-based system for our society in the post-Mandela era. How can we care more than ensuring people don't lose their dignity? I remember what Gerry Elsdon said when she summited Kilimanjaro: 'We climb Kilim so no child must climb a mountain when they go to school'."

"If we are to be the legacy, as the foundation enjoins us in this century year, if we are to find the Madiba in ourselves, we must find ways of changing the life of at least one person."

He tells the story of when he went to a Tembisa school talking to children about Mandela Day. The organisers had run out of the high leather chairs for the dignitaries on



The man behind Caring4Girls and Trek4Mandela Richard Mabaso helps an aspirant trekker choose the right thickness of mitts for this year's Kilimanjaro ascent.



Nelson Mandela Foundation chief executive Sello Hatang poses next to his prized Kilimanjaro summit boots in their glass case in his office.

The foundation has endorsed over 500 projects, of which Trek4Mandela is one, some of which will run from April and others which will run the entire year until July 18 next year. On April 27, there will be a special discussion on Madiba's legacy at the UN in Geneva, focusing on how to rid the world of racism, while July 18 will see a special debate at the UN General Assembly in New York on his legacy.

"In South Africa," says Hatang, "the special focus will be on poverty and inequality, focusing on how we can respond to statistics that suggest 25% of all children suffer from stunting (this is as a result of malnutrition)."

Early childhood development centres will be another priority.

"We need to ensure that 100% of all children between 0-6 are in these centres. You know, we're obsessed by old-age pensions and grants and who will pay for them and distribute them, but what about the children? Instead of caring, we are actually poisoning the future.

"How are the children who are not privileged, supported?" he asks.

"One of my colleagues, Khalil Goga, always reminds us 'we are investing in a future that will not have people who will inherit it'."

This year will be the one year that Hatang doesn't summit Kilimanjaro on July 18.

He can't because he will be overseeing the Mandela Day celebrations back here and hosting one of the

biggest ever international guest speakers to present the annual Mandela Day lecture the day before the summit.

But he'll be back on top of the world on August 9, when he leads a special expedition of CEOs and foreign ambassadors to Kilimanjaro to remember Mandela on Women's Day.

The boots in the glass case in his office are there for a reason. Climbing the mountain resonates with him in so many ways, the analogies presenting themselves at every step upwards: "We all carry a heavy burden, the least we can do is lighten the load for those who can't do it for themselves.

"As we climb Kilimanjaro, there are guys the who carry our stuff for us. We only carry between 5kg and 10kg of water, food and personal kit. These guys carry the rest, 20kg – from Day 1.

"Everyone wants to summit some mountain. Theirs (the porters) could be anything from just getting out of poverty to creating a better life for their children.

"They're lightening my load and yours for us to succeed, to get to the top of the actual mountain.

"In turn we must lighten the loads for the generations to come."

• Kevin Ritchie is part of this year's Trek4Mandela Centenary expedition to raise awareness and money for sanitary pads to keep girl children in school. If you would like to support Caring4Girls SMS Kevin to 42513 to pledge R30 towards this cause.

"How much more can we build the Madiba legacy than to get people to take charge of their own lives?"

Sello Hatang



"Colleague, Khalil Goga, always reminds us 'we are investing in a future that will not have people who will inherit it'."

Hatang

the podium, so Hatang found a stackable chair among the kids.

He found himself next to Nthabiseng. She was using crutches.

"I asked her: 'were you born like this?' She said 'no, I woke up like this one morning in 2010. I couldn't move. My parents thought I was kidding'." The doctor confirmed she was paralysed.

That same year, she lost her mother, but says Hatang in wonder,

Nthabiseng was a bundle of joy and energy not to let her circumstances get her down in any way.

"If that had been my child, I would have gone for a second opinion, a third, a fourth. She never got that chance. Her parents couldn't give that to her. That's the burden I'm talking about."

This is a particularly special year for the foundation, marking the centenary of Mandela's birthday. April

9 will mark the start of the 100-day countdown to Mandela Day on July 18, when a whole raft of initiatives will be announced, all focusing on the three-pronged approach of building a values based society; being the legacy; and, finding the Madiba in ourselves.

"The key," says Hatang, "is to build our society through service, not just for 67 minutes once a year, but service every day."

Froth spills over Black Coffee in Israel

WHITNEY MTHEMBU

ALL International House DJ Black Coffee wanted to do was share videos of his sold-out performance in Tel Aviv over the Easter Weekend.

Instead, he received a backlash for performing in Israel even though there is a cultural boycott over the occupation of Palestine.

The DJ, born Nkosi Nathi Maphumulo, claimed in a tweet he was unaware of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

The DJ also said he was in the region because he would do anything to feed his family. In another tweet he said: "Just like everyone else I have rights and free will and

no, Black Coffee is not a political party... I work as an entertainer to feed my family. To sum it up... I will take a bullet for my family."

BDS South Africa has come out and criticised Black Coffee for feigning ignorance because the organisation said it approached him in 2014 before his performance in Tel Aviv.

BDS South Africa spokesperson Kwara Kekana said: "Black Coffee is familiar with the issue of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine."

"In 2014 Palestine solidarity groups reached out to him before his scheduled performance in Tel-Aviv at the time... armed with sufficient information about the issue he chose to cross the picket line

just like he did this past week.

"Artists and cultural institutions that act in violation of the cultural boycott against Israel find themselves complicit in a system of normalising and whitewashing the violations of Palestinian human rights and international law by Israel."

On Twitter Black Coffee was criticised by followers for boycotting Swaziland but performing in Israel even though there is a cultural boycott.

In 2011, Black Coffee boycotted a Swaziland concert.

He said at the time: "We can't be happy when Swazi people are suffering. We support the call to boycott the festival. I am not going."



Black Coffee. PICTURE: SHAYNE ROBINSON

Markle revs up for UK

WHEN your daughter's about to become a British princess, it's a good idea to swoot up on the country. And that's just what Thomas Markle appears to be doing in the run-up to his daughter Meghan's wedding to Prince Harry next month.

The 73-year-old was pictured carrying an AA-published book called *Images of Britain: A Pictorial Journey Through History* as he strolled through his hometown of Rosarito, Mexico, last week.

It could suggest the reclusive pensioner will give his daughter away at St George's Chapel, Windsor, on May 19.

Kensington Palace has yet to confirm whether the retired TV lighting director will do so.

Markle's guidebook, first published in August 1990, is packed full of the most beautiful landscapes and buildings Britain has to offer.

Fewer than 20 pages in, he will have found a photograph of his daughter's wedding venue – Windsor Castle – looming over boats on the Thames.

Last year Markle was reportedly left "extremely" hurt after Harry, 33, told the BBC his relatives were "the family" his 36-year-old fiancée "never had".

Markle's half-brother, Thomas Markle Jr, 51, told MailOnline: "My father will be extremely hurt... He dedicated the majority of all his time and everything to her." – Daily Mail

Drought broken in parts of SA How to avoid headlight dazzle

THE drought has broken over large parts of South Africa, it is claimed.

Agricultural meteorologist Johan van den Berg, who specialises in crop insurance at Santam, said although conditions were serious and still remained in parts of the Western Cape, the drought had largely broken.

"It's possible the Gariep, Vaal, Bloemhof and some other dams may have full storage capacity in the next weeks. However the water situation in the Western Cape remains very serious.

"It's still too early for any reliable (rain) forecasts for coming months and the next season, and the best indication is for neutral conditions to continue."



Beaufort West's main water source, the Gamka Dam. Experts say the water situation in the Western Cape is still very serious.

Van den Berg said the period from March to July was volatile in terms of rapid changes in sea surface temperatures, which could affect rainfall.

Meanwhile, projects around the Western Cape, such as Project Waterdrop, which took

place on Saturday, are still in place to ensure that vulnerable individuals receive adequate water supply should Day Zero be reached.

Close to 30000 people joined Jacaranda FM on Saturday and supported Project Waterdrop during the Super Rugby clash between the Vodacom Blue Bulls and the DHL Stormers, to raise funds for installing boreholes with solar pumps at schools. The cost per borehole is about R50000.

"We will provide water to two schools, Ocean View Education for Learners with Special Needs and Kleinberg Primary," said Jacaranda FM's Kevin Fine.

Visit www.jacarandafm.com for more information. – Staff Reporter

DO YOU find car headlights blinding? Campaigners say the problem has worsened with the arrival of modern headlamps, such as stronger Xenon or high intensity discharge (HID) lights, which produce a harsh blue light that is typically twice as bright as the old soft yellow halogen versions.

These have been followed by the newer generation light-emitting diode (LED) lights that started to appear in 2006, and are fitted to a lot of new cars.

Glare may make us wince and inadvertently shut our eyes, and can even cause a pain-like reaction "comparable to the pain signal you get when you suddenly over-strain a joint", according to Dr Peter Heilig, a professor of

ophthalmology at the University of Vienna.

The Royal Automobile Club warned last month the brightness of headlights fitted on some new cars could increase the risk of motorists having an accident.

A report by the motoring organisation revealed around 15% of drivers had been involved in a "near miss" after being dazzled by headlights. And 65% of drivers said they are often dazzled – even when headlights are dipped.

The main problem is light scatter. When bright light is shone through an eye's lens and cornea, some of it gets scattered around the inside of the eye, making images blurred or blank.

The effect of glare from modern lights is greater as we grow

older, according to John Marshall, a professor of ophthalmology at University College London, who says that with age, the lens and cornea become less clear.

"At night, your pupil opens wider to let in more light, and when your eye meets a headlamp you get more scatter and can't see," he said.

Research has found it can take 10 seconds to recover from the glare of modern headlamps.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders has said there is no evidence factory-fitted high-power lights distract drivers and that lamp-levelling technology ensures they are safe. When driving at night, experts suggest wearing clear glasses with a UV-absorbent coating. – Daily Mail

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