

A milestone for Saica's Thuthuka Education Upliftment Fund when passion, dreams and empowerment align

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August marked another milestone for Saica's Thuthuka bursary fund, as Christiaan van den Berg CA(SA) and Heine Bellingan CA(SA), embarked on an inspiring journey to conquer Mount Kilimanjaro - a first for them and Thuthuka's Education Upliftment Fund (TEUF). Hein and Christiaan are two passionate chartered accountants, who embarked on a remarkable journey that would fulfil their lifelong dream and ignite a spark of hope in the hearts of many aspiring young chartered accountants, a career often seen as unattainable for those facing economic hardships.



From the young age of 14, Christiaan and Heine shared a dream to get to the highest peak in Africa. Their shared passion for the outdoors, adventure and empowering others was the glue that cemented their friendship, and this dream became a driving force that would eventually lead to something far more profound.

Both Christiaan and Heine pursued careers as chartered accountants, and it is their relentless spirit of never giving up and empowering others that led them to Jobjack, an online platform that connects job seekers and recruiters safely, conveniently and affordably. It's where accessibility, innovation and passion collide. Jobjack aims to nurture and empower unemployed youth, by connecting entry-level jobseekers to recruiters.

Christiaan and Heine believe that education, a can-do attitude, and grit is the key to pursuing one's dreams – if you believe it, see it, you can achieve it. Heine and Christiaan were both finalists in Saica's Top-35-under-35 awards, proving that anything is possible with a can-do attitude. It is through this initiative that they were exposed to Saica's Thuthuka bursary programme, under the Thuthuka Education Upliftment Fund, a skills development entity.

The TEUF was established 21 years ago with the aim of keeping the accounting profession alive and well, but also allowing Coloured and African learners to pursue their dreams of becoming chartered accountants. Under TEUF is a Thuthuka bursary fund, which has empowered over 3,000 students to date and aims to empower even more in the coming years. It is

this shared values and vision that led to the Kilimanjaro expedition. With this mission in mind, they partnered with Thuthuka, sought sponsors, gathered support, and started their rigorous preparation for the climb.

Their journey to Kilimanjaro was much more than just a physical and mental challenge. The climb was gruelling, testing their physical and mental limits; it reflected the struggles many young people in South Africa face daily. Despite the hardships, Christiaan and Heine reached the summit of Kilimanjaro, a moment that symbolised the triumph of dreams over adversity.

Christiaan and Heine's journey is a testament to the power of dreams, the human spirit to succeed and the difference individuals can make when they combine passion with a noble cause. Their story reminds us all that no dream is too big, no mountain too high, and no cause too noble to pursue. The Thuthuka Education Upliftment Fund is lacing up in September with Apiwe Twaku and Ebrahim Lambart to run the Berlin Marathon, to raise more funds and keep growing the accounting profession one student at a time.

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