

61^{of} 100

Ayavuya
Sibisi



Here to be Sustainable

More than a smoothie:
Turning waste and
healthy choices into
community impact.

What started as a university-based idea has grown into a developing agro-processing and mobile smoothie business that is tackling food waste, supporting farmers and making healthier choices more accessible.

For Ayavuya Sibisi, a smoothie represents much more than something healthy to drink. It is an opportunity to rethink how food is used, create value from produce that might otherwise go to waste, and build a business that benefits the communities around it.

Ayavuya's entrepreneurial journey began while she was studying towards a BA in Psychology and Linguistics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

With a passion for healthy living and an eye for opportunity, she identified a challenge in her community and began exploring how wellness, sustainability and entrepreneurship could work together. From that idea, Tropical Paradise Smoothie Bar began to take shape.

By finding value in fruit and vegetables that may otherwise have gone to waste, Ayavuya is building a business that connects healthier choices with a more sustainable approach to food.

The numbers tell an encouraging story. Since starting the business, Tropical Paradise has saved more than 1.2 tonnes of fruit and vegetable waste, supported over 12 farmers and reached more than 10 000 people. It has also created more jobs, demonstrating how a simple consumer product can generate opportunities across a much wider value chain.

As the business has grown, so has recognition of Ayavuya's potential. In 2024, she became the first female UKZN student to win an EDHE Award. She has also participated in the Global Export Passport Programme facilitated by the DTIC and Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal.

These milestones are part of a much bigger ambition: Ayavuya is showing that a business can pursue growth while also thinking carefully about the resources it uses, the people it supports and the impact it leaves behind.

Her journey is an example of what becomes possible when young women see challenges in

their communities not only as problems to solve, but as opportunities to build something better. Through Tropical Paradise, Ayavuya is creating healthier dietary choices, reducing food waste and building opportunities for farmers, employees and communities, one smoothie at a time.