

Brand campaign showcases stories of upliftment in Africa

GABORONE, Botswana - Barclays Africa is celebrating Africa's indomitable spirit through a series of 23 short films in a new brand campaign designed to show how people can achieve their aspirations and prosper when enabled by the right partners.



Lucky Kwapa.

The stories featured in each of the films bear testament to the power of the human spirit, and demonstrate Barclays Africa's Prosper promise in action. The passion, inherent creativity and indomitable spirit of the Botswana have been brought to life in an inspirational short film featuring Luckymore (Lucky) Kwapa, a young man from Mochudi, Botswana, whose dreams were bigger than the challenges that stood between him and his efforts to realise them.

The film is titled *Lucky* - a reference to his nickname, a fortuitous encounter with a community of supportive people, and the chance discovery of a hidden ability.

This idea of tangible social upliftment and support for sustainable, long-term prosperity is reflected in Barclays Africa's purpose. And it is the creative expression of this purpose, as harnessed in a single, powerful word – Prosper – that forms the basis of these 23 inspirational short films, which now include the heartening story of Botswana's own Luckymore Kwapa.

At just 20 years old, Lucky Kwapa had set his sights on becoming a portrait artist. The only snag being that his parents preferred that he follow in his father's footsteps and become a panel beater instead. Although they did not approve of his aspirations, and his decision to follow his dreams was considered an affront to the family, Lucky was never short of support.

Kwapa never stopped drawing, and one day a friend suggested he take his drawings along to Stepping Stones International (SSI) to hone his skills. SSI is a Mochudi-based NGO that aims to unlock the potential of vulnerable youth aged 12-25 years through holistic development, the strengthening of families and by activating sustainable opportunities to become self-sufficient. Barclays Bank of Botswana has been an active partner of SSI since 2008, working with staff and students through various programmes, including its financial literacy programme, to make a positive difference in this community.

It was while visiting SSI that Lucky was invited to attend the NGO's life skills camp, along with a team of peer educators and SSI staff. An impromptu campfire talent show one night revealed a side of Kwapa nobody had seen before. It was a side even he never knew existed; a hidden ability he had never had the opportunity to explore and that had previously remained hidden from the world. It was an exceptional natural talent for opera singing.

My African Dream

It wasn't long before those gathered around the fire realised his artistic talents extended beyond just his hands and included his voice too. This would prove to be a pivotal point in Kwapa's life, dramatically altering its course and setting him up for a future he could never dream possible.

Kwapa's colleagues encouraged him to audition for the My African Dream talent search. Six months later, votes from people across the country placed him in the competition final, where he was announced as the winner of the 2012 Judges' Choice Award.

This was a momentous occasion; it wasn't just the tipping point that changed Kwapa's life, but also the memorable moment of the first time his parents had heard him sing. They too were in awe of their son's incredible talent, and from that day forward wholeheartedly supported his burgeoning singing career.

Never forgetting his roots and his own journey that was made possible by the personal investments of so many people around him, Lucky has decided to pay it forward. Today he mentors talent in his local community, like Kamogelo, the young praise poet, as well as a dance group with which he regularly performs.

Not only are Kamogelo and the dance group benefactors of Kwapa's big heart, but they also receive financial support from him. This reiterates the powerful sense of community that prevails among the Batswana, and around which Barclays Bank of Botswana has built those offerings and partnerships that ultimately help transform ordinary lives into extraordinary ones.

This is fitting, given that Barclays Bank of Botswana has forged a close relationship with Lucky over the years beyond merely supporting him through the various SSI programmes.

Bank MD, Reinette van der Merwe, has personally spearheaded efforts to find remunerated opportunities for Lucky to sing, and as a result he has performed at several events arranged or supported by the bank.

Barclays Bank of Botswana citizenship manager, Yodit Kassaye-Molosi, has been a sounding board; a supportive ear when Lucky has needed guidance or personal input. Kassaye-Molosi also took the time to identify and introduce Lucky to relevant mentors at the bank, like Costar Pelotheri, who works in the risk department but is also a music enthusiast, and the bank's late colleague, Tshepo Moshaga, who worked in HR.

Kwapa is immensely grateful for this support, saying the mentorship has changed his life and allowed him to grow his inherent talents, while the income he has earned from performing has enabled him to support himself and his family.

Mentorship

At 25 years old, Kwapa is now pursuing a thriving singing and dance career. To thank him for sharing his inspirational story so that it may touch the lives of so many others just like him, Barclays Africa has identified Kwapa's dream to be mentored and nurture his newfound operatic ability. As such, the bank is providing him with a platform to help him prosper even further – that of personal mentoring and voice coaching at the Cape Town Opera Theatre in South Africa.

Kwapa's story is just one of the many ways Barclays Bank of Botswana is helping the people of Botswana to Prosper. His film *Lucky* joins Barclays Africa's portfolio of films that serve as authentic visual proof points of Barclays Africa's Prosper brand promise to all it serves.

The stories featured in each of these films bear testament to the power of the human spirit, and demonstrate Barclays Africa's Prosper promise in action. Collectively, these films – the first of which aired in 2014 – have received more than 12 million views to date across the digital channels on which they have been broadcast.

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