



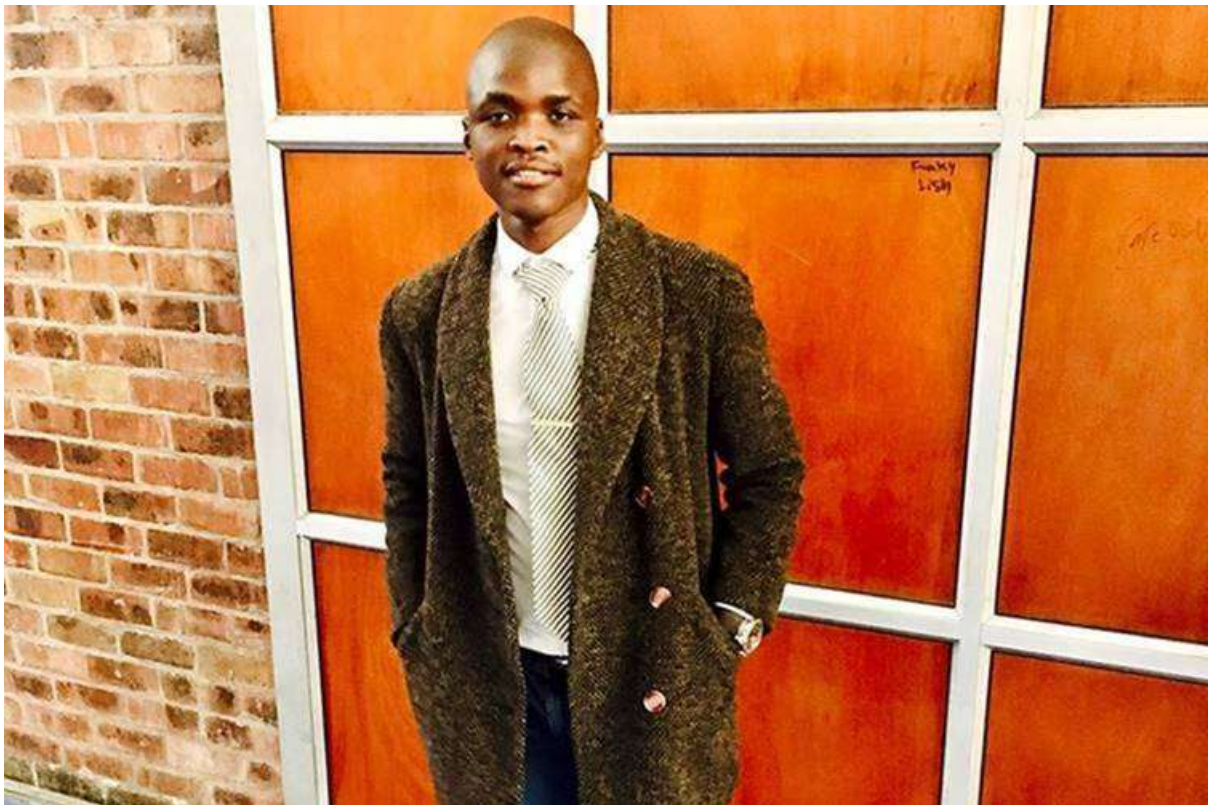
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First-year social work student develops multilingual anti-mugging guide



Zukile Ntentema

Photo: Supplied

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A first-year University of Cape Town (UCT) social work student, Zukile Ntentema, has developed a set of anti-mugging guidelines to help Capetonians remain vigilant while out on the streets. This is part of his ongoing commitment to civic engagement and improving the lives of others.

The mugging prevention guide, called Safe-Mode, includes basic yet crucial tips, such as: keep valuables out of sight; don't walk anywhere while listening to music – earphones are

a dead giveaway that you have a cell phone or tablet in your possession; and walk with confidence and at a steady pace – it shows that you're not lost.

Safe-Mode demonstrates Ntentema's commitment to practising good citizenship and social responsibility, traits that have earned him a spot on the Next Generation Leaders Programme. The programme is an initiative of the Talloires Network's Leaders Conference, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. Ntentema is one of three UCT students selected to make up a global cohort of 40 for the programme.

"It's important to try and make a difference around you; after all, charity begins at home. That's where the idea to start Safe-Mode came from, and that's why I started at home in Nyanga – to keep my community safe," he said.

Anti-mugging strategies

After several neighbours in his community were mugged, and a few school children in the area also had the same harrowing experience, Ntentema knew he had to do something to help. "I knew that I needed to do something, anything. It's just devastating to hear how breadwinners are being robbed of all they have, while on their way to buy food; people already have so little," he said.

Ntentema said a list of prevention strategies came to mind, and he got to work immediately. He researched various international safety guidelines developed by governments and law enforcement agencies around the world. He studied their suggested tips on how best to stay safe and was surprised at how many guidelines were relevant to South Africa.

He spent many late nights coding guidelines into different themes and tailoring them to South Africa – and Cape Town, more specifically.

"The selection wasn't as hard as I thought it would be. There are many similarities with other countries. I selected guidelines that appeared most across the spectrum globally, and went with those most relevant to us here in South Africa," he said.

Multilingual pamphlets

He rallied young community activists from Khayelitsha, Retreat and other communities around Cape Town to assist with the project and to provide input. Sourcing different views and perspectives from youth outside of Nyanga was important for the process.

Realising that he was onto something that would make a difference and potentially reduce crime, Ntentema contacted the Western Cape Government and City of Cape Town (CoCT) for their support. His initiative was well received: the province's Department of Community Safety agreed to edit and proofread the guidelines, and the CoCT's Safety and Security Committee agreed to adapt Safe-Mode into an infographic for distribution in Cape Town.

The infographic will be published in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa and, with the help of neighbourhood watch members, will be distributed at local taxi ranks and train stations in pamphlet form. In time, Capetonians will also be able to receive the infographic via WhatsApp, for easy access on a mobile phone. Ntentema will manage the WhatsApp line.

"I spent a large part of my youth trying to help my community, exploring different ways to keep children and adults safe. Safe-Mode is an extension of all of that. It's a step towards fulfilling my duty as an engaged Capetonian and UCT student," he said.

"As students at Africa's top university, we all have the power to play a role, and to remediate some of the social ills in our society. If we all start doing something, things will start to change."

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Ends

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