



CIVIL SOCIETY

Thobela Mfeti

Student director: 18twenty8

Thobela Mfeti is determined to break the cycle of poverty in impoverished communities such as Bloekombos, Cape Town, where she grew up. As a management student at the University of Cape Town, she is working on the fledgling Langa Quarter project, driving development through tourism in one of Cape Town's oldest townships and combating one of its strongest stigmas: crime. The 23-year-old is also the student director of 18twenty8, an organisation that seeks to provide financial and moral support for women from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue higher education. Mfeti can relate to these young women. She has worked as a cleaner and waitress and is the only person in her family to attend university, let alone be awarded the prestigious Mandela Rhodes Scholarship. Right now she has her work cut out for her, finding a sustainability partner to help 18twenty8 to replicate its mentorship model in the Western Cape — because that's how new cycles of empowerment are made.

— Victoria John