



LOOKING & FEELING GOOD: A slimmer Nkanyiso Bhengu with DJ Crucial.
Pictures: SUPPLIED

Nkanyiso Bhengu won't let fat-shamers derail his steady weight-loss journey

SUTHENTIRA GOVENDER

Despite losing more than 50kg, revising his eating habits and exercising daily, stage and television personality Nkanyiso Bhengu can't escape being fat-shamed.

Bhengu, best known for hosting Ono Game Show and Coca-Cola Mega Millions, could no longer bear being mocked or having his son cry because a friend picked on his father's weight. So he embarked on a life-changing journey to put an end to the jibes and blatant stares.

It was Bhengu's 68-year-old mother Phumzile — who dropped from a size 44 to a 32 through walking — who inspired him to pound the pavements.

Nearly 260 days later, Bhengu — who plays Dingaan in *Shaka Zulu: The Gaping Wound* at Pretoria's State Theatre — said he will persevere until his weight drops to double digits.

He is keeping himself in check and encouraging others battling obesity to get fit through his #WalkoffwithNkanyiso campaign on Instagram.

The Umlazi-born Bhengu's next step is to embark on a national school tour to discourage children from bullying others about their weight.

"Fat-shaming is deep rooted. We grew up like that, we thought it was the norm," he said.

"About a month ago I was in a supermarket line. A mother was standing with her son — he was about six and a chubby little guy. A guy standing next to her started joking about the boy's weight.

"I got angry. I told him to stop because he was likely to mess up the child's self-esteem and confidence. I know how it feels because I was big growing up. This is why I want to do a school tour, because there are so many kids who are obese and are being bullied. It happens all the

time, even to me.

"I would walk with my children in a mall and another person's kid would point and laugh at me because of my weight. That ridicule messes me up and makes me angry.

"My son always cries because his friend tells him his father is fat. I cried when I heard that.

"My battles that I am fighting are spilling over to my kids.

"This is why I am working so hard to lose this weight. I want them to see how much work I have put in.

"Name-calling traumatises people. I can't stand it. I speak out against it whenever I can," said Bhengu.

He has weighed himself only twice since starting his journey, because "I'm not big on scales".

With more than a quarter of South Africans living with obesity, the country is among the top 20% of the most obese nations in the world.

To change the narrative about obesity, a panel of international experts, among them academics and representatives from scientific bodies, recently reviewed evidence and the causes and harms of weight stigma.

"Often perceived — without evidence — as lazy, gluttonous, lacking will power and self-discipline, individuals with overweight or obesity are vulnerable to stigma and discrimination in the workplace, education, healthcare settings and society," the panel said.

Such portrayal is inconsistent with current scientific evidence demonstrating that body-weight regulation is not entirely under volitional control, and that biological, genetic and environmental factors critically contribute to obesity.

"Weight bias and stigma can result in discrimination and undermine human rights, social rights and the health of afflicted individuals and cannot be tolerated in modern societies."

Johannesburg dietitian and intuitive-eating counsellor Gayle Landau uses a non-diet approach with her clients.

"I do not believe there should be a one-size-fits-all approach when assisting an individual attain their health goals," she said.

Intuitive eating is an eating style that promotes a healthy attitude towards food and body image.

Landau said she empowers people to make the best food choices for themselves.

"In my opinion it is possible to improve one's health without focusing on the number on the scale. The number on the scale is in fact a poor indicator of health."

She said fat-shaming had psychological and physical consequences.

"People living in larger bodies sadly experience weight stigma from the public, social media and sometimes at the hands of healthcare providers too.

"The problem with name calling and fat-shaming is that the victim often internalises those negative beliefs and thoughts — known as weight bias internalisation.

"Weight stigma, rather than obesity itself, are associated with depressive symptoms, higher anxiety levels, lower self-esteem, social isolation, lower levels of physical activity, weight control behaviours and disordered eating, and affected individuals may be more likely to avoid future care."

She said she was against diets and scales for their negative mental impact.

"Diets over time lead to more anxiety, depression, more body dissatisfaction, disordered eating habits and lower self-esteem.

"The scale is an unreliable tool when it comes to health ... the scale becomes more of a mood regulator than a health regulator, so in my practice I tend not to use them."

Zahara plays down facing arrest over tax

Singer says the media should rather write about her new range of haircare products than follow 'negative' reports

GUGU PHANDLE

A warrant for arrest has been issued for singer Bulelwa Zahara Mkutukana for failing to appear in court after being accused of not submitting her personal tax returns.

Speaking to the Dispatch on Monday, the singer admitted she had appeared in court for tax return issues but she rubbished suggestions she could end up in jail.

She referred to what she called a fixation on negative reports which were trying to tarnish her name.

On Monday, it was reported that a warrant for Mkutukana's arrest had been issued on Friday by the Johannesburg commercial crimes court sitting in the Palm Ridge magistrate's court.

NPA spokesperson Phindi Mjonondwane said the matter had been held over until Wednesday.

Mkutukana said: "It's not even about tax, people have been saying things about me. They don't need clarification from me, they write about it.

"I don't have to waste my voice for things that people do not know and do not have to know about.

"I do what's right."

The singer said there could be a vendetta against her because she was always frank when addressing issues.

"I don't have a problem. I did go to court for tax, I have no problem with that."

It was not unusual for people to go to court for tax.

"The only thing people worry about is that I could be facing jail time, do they have proof?"

"I have just launched a range of haircare products, people



TAX-RETURN ISSUES: Bulelwa Zahara Mkutukana's case is expected to be heard today.
Picture: SUPPLIED

found guilty of failing to appear in court to face tax evasion charges.

Also in June, the Dispatch reported Mkutukana had failed to submit personal and company tax returns to the SA Revenue Service, and that a warrant of arrest was issued due to her failure to appear in court.

She was fined R1,500 (or three months' imprisonment).

It was reported the NPA confirmed the singer had been charged in her personal capacity and as a representative of her company, Zahara Trading (Pty) Ltd, for not submitting income tax returns.

At the time, Mkutukana was warned to appear in court at the next appearance date, with further conditions attached to her warning.

She was told to hand in her passport to the commercial crimes officers within 24 hours of the court appearance and to report to the Roodepoort police station on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8am and 6pm.

When the Dispatch visited the singer at her Phumlani home soon after she had purchased a new car for her mother in June, she rubbished the claims.

At the time, Mkutukana said she did not know what the media reports were referring to and that no media had contacted her for comment.

This year, the singer released her fifth studio album called *Nyamezela*.

It has been a decade since the now 32-year-old artist released her smash hit album *Loliwe* which, at 400,000 copies sold, remains one of the biggest-selling albums in South African music history.

With the three albums that followed, *Phendula*, *Country Girl* and *Mgodi*, she continued with her impressive album sales amid a rocky personal and professional life.

should write about that."

The singer was referring to her newly released haircare line Zahara, Country Girl.

Last week, the singer took to Twitter to write: "Introducing the Country Girl haircare range! Can't wait to share more details with you soon."

In June, multiple media reports said the singer had been

I did go to court for tax, I have no problem with that. It was not unusual for people to go to court for tax



MAKING SPACE FOR OTHERS: An attendee photographs paintings prior to the auction of 11 Picasso works at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Pictures: REUTERS/ BRIDGET BENNETT

It's definitely not a blue period for Las Vegas hotel as it sells eleven Picassos for R1.5bn



WOMAN OF COLOUR: The 1938 'Femme au béret rouge-orange' painting fetched the highest price at \$40.5m (about R600m).

Eleven Picasso paintings that helped turn Las Vegas into an unlikely destination for art were auctioned at the weekend for more than \$100m (about R1.5bn).

The Sotheby's sale was held at the Bellagio hotel, where the works had been on display for years, and took place two days before the 140th birthday of the Spanish artist on October 25.

Five of the paintings had hung on the walls of the Bellagio's fine-dining restaurant, Picasso. The restaurant will continue to display 12 other Picasso works.

The highest price was fetched by the 1938 painting *Femme Auberet Rouge-Orange* of Picasso's lover and muse Marie-Therese Walter, which sold for \$40.5m (about R600m), some \$10m (about R148m) over the

A bid by casino and hotel group MGM Resorts to further diversify its vast collection

high presale estimate.

The large-scale portraits *Homme et Enfant* and *Bust of homme* sold for \$24.4m (about R360m) and \$9.5m (about R140m) respectively, while smaller works on ceramic, such as *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, which sold for \$2.1m (about R40m), went for three or four times their presale estimate.

The buyers' names were not disclosed.

The sale was part of a bid by casino and hotel group MGM Resorts to further diversify its

vast collection to include more art from women, people of colour and emerging nations, as well as from LGBTQ artists and artists with disabilities.

American museums and art galleries have been working to broaden their collections in the wake of the widespread cultural reckoning in 2020 over racism at all levels of US society.

A 2019 Public Library of Science study of 18 leading US museums found 85% of the artists on display are white and 87% are men.

The MGM Resorts Fine Arts Collection boasts about 900 works by 200 artists, including modern pieces by Bob Dylan and David Hockney. It was started more than 20 years ago by Steve Wynn, former owner of the Bellagio and former CEO of Wynn Resorts. — Reuters

Boxers learn digital skills for life after the ring

ANELISA GUSHA

Mdantsane is renowned as the home of SA's greatest boxing talents — men and women whose iron fists have taken them to world stages.

But a special kind of project has shown them another way to use their hands and learn important new skills.

Former champions Nkosinathi Joyi, Thembelani Nxoshe

along with other notable talents such as Mpumelo Mbedle and Yanga Phethani attended a digital skills training workshop hosted by the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council and the National Electronic Media Institute of SA.

The goal is to equip boxers with skills to empower them now and for life after the ring, and to end unfortunate stories

of sporting heroes struggling to survive after their sports careers end.

The scheme is the brainchild of Kholiswa Tyiki with the aim to uplift the boxers in their own community.

"I got the idea after going back in history and seeing how important they [boxers] were in getting Mdantsane to the world championships, and I felt compelled to do something."

She said boxers were often underappreciated and that little was done to help them when their careers came to an end, even though they had played a critical role in uplifting communities.

"Once boxers leave the ring nothing is documented about them. I saw the need and that was when I decided to approach some companies [for help]. I believed they can assist

and are among the first to offer such workshops.


"I hope they [the boxers] grab this opportunity with both hands. The world is embarking on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and they need to use every skill that is offered to them."

Former SA flyweight champion Nxoshe, agreed that the workshop would be beneficial when they left the ring later in

life.

"The programme will be of great assistance for the future. When we get out of boxing later in life, we will have something to use to generate income."

He told the Daily Dispatch that the seminars might also have a big influence on the neighbourhood they lived in, as the skills they gained could be applied to the community afterwards.



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