

HOW TSHOLOFELO MAAKE WENT FROM SCIENCE STUDENT TO SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTOR

How this Fezeka Graduate Programme alumna found her purpose in transformation-focused investing.

Tsholofelo Maake always had a head for how money works, even when her path pointed elsewhere. At high school she chose science subjects – partly, she admits, because of the assumption that only the “smart” learners took that route – but she says her real curiosity lay in commerce, entrepreneurship and the way money moves. That pull eventually won out, and she enrolled for a BCom in Financial Science.

It was only in her second year that a new interest crystallised: asset management. From that point, Tsholofelo set about building relationships across the industry, seeking out people to learn from long before she had a role to learn in.

“I’ve always been someone who’s active and wants to connect,” she says. That networking habit paid off when she was accepted onto the ASISA Academy’s Fezeka Graduate Programme, and placed in Johannesburg for a series of rotations through some of the industry’s biggest names such as PIC (Public Investment Corporation), Stanlib Multi-Managers and Mazi Asset Management.

The programme’s real value, she says, went beyond the technical grounding. It was the mentorship – and the example – that mattered most. Her Fezeka mentor, Stanlib’s Jennifer Henry, didn’t just guide her through the graduate year; she opened the door to further training afterwards.

Today Tsholofelo works at 27four Investment Managers as investment associate support, having previously been an investment analyst. Her ambition is to continue building her career in manager research, where she can influence where capital flows.

“I want to be part of the allocators who decide where we invest,” she says – with a particular focus on channelling institutional capital towards emerging, black-owned and women-led asset managers.

She’s quick to point out that Fezeka’s impact on her wasn’t only professional. The programme, she says, pushed her to develop as a whole person – to discover interests beyond academic achievement, and to take her own wellbeing seriously.

“They don’t just leave you to swim,” she explains. “It’s like having a lifeguard – there’s someone there for you when you feel like you’re drowning.”

Her advice to prospective applicants is simple: apply and expect to be changed by it. “You’re not only exposed to different layers of asset management – you’re challenged to become part of a generation of analysts who invest with purpose, integrity and discipline,” she says.

For Tsholofelo, that journey – from a science classroom to the frontlines of transformation-focused investing – is proof of what the Fezeka Graduate Programme sets out to do: open doors, and back the people who walk through them.



Tsholofelo Maake, an Investment Associate Support from 27four.