

IN THE IDEAL PLACE AFTER 3 INTENSE WORK ROTATIONS

At the tender age of 23, Moipone Pitso, an analyst in the multi-management team at Sanlam Investment Management, has a strong sense that she is in the ideal job and workplace, thanks to short, intense work rotations elsewhere during her participation in the ASISA Academy's [Fezeka Graduate Programme](#).

Her start at Sanlam Investment Management came during her third and final work rotation in the programme for promising female graduates, which she completed in June 2024. The graduate programme, delivered by the ASISA Academy in partnership with business consultancy Joint Prosperity, puts graduates through theoretical and practical training over 15 months, including the three five-month work placements at different asset management firms.

Of her final rotation, at Sanlam Investment Management, Pitso says she thought, "This is just perfect, I want to stay here." She adds that she really enjoyed the work as well as the culture of the team she was in.

Her other placements were at Granate Asset Management and PPS Investments. She says she enjoyed the placements at the smaller, more intimate asset manager and the bigger, more corporate one for very different reasons. When she got to Sanlam Investment Management, she says, she found a corporate environment that "combined the best of both worlds".

"You get to learn a lot about how different companies do things. Even outside of investments, you learn a lot about what type of company you want to work at, what office culture you like," she says.

The rotations also helped her to clarify her interest in working on the investment side of things. "I figured out that I wanted to be where the decisions are made," she says. "The fund side is the fun side for me. No day is like the previous one because markets are always moving, and that is what I like the most."

Mothepe Mothae, Head of Local Manager Research at Sanlam Investment Group, which has taken on two Fezeka graduates in fulltime roles, describes the programme as transformative. "I'm seeing some really bright young women with talent who have a lot to offer in the industry and they are not intimidated."



Moipone Pitso, an analyst in the multi-management team at Sanlam Investment Management.

Pitso was introduced to the Fezeka programme when she was studying for her Honours in Financial Economics and Investments at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, her hometown. She heard about the graduate programme thanks to her admin job at the university. That job, a fulltime role that she did alongside studying fulltime, turned out to be worth a lot more than helping her to make ends meet.

Pitso says she loved the combination of theory and practical work. The Fezeka candidates complete the Financial Markets Practitioner (FMP) learnership for the NQF7 qualification, as well as participating in CFA Level 1 exam preparation classes offered by the ASISA Academy. "Doing the FMP and integrating what you do at work with what you are learning in school was so effective. The pace of learning was so quick," she says.

A newly qualified Financial Markets Practitioner may apply to the South African Institute of Stockbrokers (SAIS) for associate membership. All successful applicants are awarded SAIS designation.

Looking at how some of her friends are struggling to find their groove workwise reminds her of how privileged she is to have "a job that I want so quickly". She adds: "Had I not started the Fezeka programme, it would have been really hard for me to get into an investment team straight out of university with no relevant experience."

The first in her family to get a degree, Pitso is also the only one working in a corporate environment. Her parents are both self-employed, and her older brother has followed them into the business side of things.

Another aspect of the Fezeka Graduate course that was key to her success in it, she says, was the support she got from Patience Motlana, who coaches the Fezeka graduates. "She held our hand through all our rotations, and I could feel my confidence grow greatly with each rotation."

Pitso adds that being the newbie when you are the only woman of colour in a largely white male team can be really intimidating. "Knowing that we had Patience to give advice on how to conduct yourself, even to the point of what to wear in the office, really helped with showing up at work as the best version of myself."

As a very shy person, those work rotations were tough, says Pitso, who thanks Motlana for pushing her to get out of her shell and to network with others.

"It is something that I've been actively doing throughout the programme and now it just comes naturally. I want to talk to people so that I can know them and they can know me," says Pitso, who seems so much older than the 24 she will be on her upcoming birthday.

Her supervisor, Mothae, says he knows that Pitso is a bit shy, but she is "no pushover". "I empathise with her coming into our industry at her age. It can be extremely intimidating, but you can tell that she does have a bit of firepower. If you put her in a corner, she is not going to be a pushover, she will stand her ground."

She has "got the goods," he says, adding that it is clear she enjoys a challenge. She also has a good temperament and listens well, he says. If he has any reservations, Mothae says, it is that he wants to make sure that she "embraces this period where you are allowed to be wrong".