

## FOCUSING ON THE SERVICE PART OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Hlanganisa Mati served in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) before he was guided into his current role in compliance at Citadel Investment Services through the ASISA Academy's IMACS@TSIBA Internship. His heart remains in serving his countrymen and women.

Mati joined the army in 2011 when he couldn't decide what to study after finishing his matric in 2009. What followed was tough, although very rewarding, starting with two years of basic training in Bloemfontein. He learnt a lot there, he says, not least of which was getting used to living without home comforts, sometimes in sub-zero temperatures. What he enjoyed most was meeting people from a wide range of backgrounds and learning how people from different places and cultures experience things differently.

"I was relatively young, joining in the year I turned 20. But I had gone to school in Cape Town and had friends from the suburbs and the township and I thought I was quite worldly," he says. "I thought I knew it all. Then I went to the army."

"It was such a different experience. It made me realise that there are vast amounts of people in South Africa who can all teach you different things. That was a big 'growing up' moment for me."

When Mati talks about Citadel Investment Services, he comes back to the theme of different people teaching you different things. "It's less of a corporate vibe and that works better for me. You get to run into people in different spaces and they are all very welcoming and friendly."

Also, Mati says, he believes he gets more responsibility than he might have had working for one of the very big asset managers. Trained as an armoured vehicle gunner in the army, Mati is used to having responsibility.

After 10 years of service in the SANDF and the South African Reserve Force, Mati decided to further his education. He started his journey in 2020 by registering for a Higher Certificate in Business Administration at TSIBA, the Cape Town-based not-for-profit higher education institution. He knew he had found his path.

He was awarded a scholarship for being a top student and started his Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Finance degree in 2021. During his second year he attended a presentation about the IMACS@TSIBA Internship and was immediately hooked, he says. He applied and was selected by Citadel Investment Services for sponsorship.

Students participate in the internship over 12 months while completing their BBA degrees. After completing all their courses, they intern at their sponsors for four months in the final semester of their studies. Students who impress their host companies during the internship may be offered permanent employment, as Mati was after graduating in November 2023.

The "wide grounding" he received in the IMACS@TSIBA Internship was ideal, he says, since he has ended up working in compliance. "IMACS@TSIBA gives you an excellent view of what you need to know about the industry as well as some of the aspects you need to be compliant with," he says, adding that Citadel has sponsored his further studies in compliance. He is currently doing his Occupational Certificate: Compliance Officer Level 6, which he will complete in September 2025.

The army is another institution that provides a wide grounding, says Mati. "Being deployed to the borders and seeing how bad things are in the smaller towns, with very few economic opportunities and people living really tough lives, was a big thing for me," he says. "When I got into IMACS@TSIBA and started learning about the industry, I was very inspired to try to spread financial education."

Bella Tapisi, Group Compliance Director at Citadel, to whom Mati reports, says: "Hlangi has come into his own over the last couple of months. He has shown great initiative right from the start, not only excelling in tasks assigned to him, but has been excellent in acquainting himself with the various aspects of the business. His [military] training shines through as he tackles every assignment with discipline and dedication. I see a great future ahead for this determined young man."

Mati is grateful to the ASISA Academy's IMACS@TSIBA Internship, for giving him a foot in the door: "I don't think I would have found a way into investment services without the programme," he says, adding that he has found being a member of the ASISA Academy alumni community very helpful. Hearing other people's stories, comparing notes and, he says, receiving advice from others who went through the IMACS@TSIBA Internship before has been very helpful.



**Anton Berkovitz, Programme Champion for the IMACS@TSIBA Internship, congratulates Hlanganisa Mati on his graduation.**