

### WOMENPRENEURS EDITION

# AAMPS Newsletter

## From the Guest Editor

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I'm excited to be a guest editor of the Women's month edition. The August edition features three amazing women and their contribution to society. We get to meet Ms Nduvho Mulaudzi the monogram author of *Carissa edulis* and co-author of the 'Plants for Women's health' article, alongside Reshoketswe Ribisi and the USA-based entrepreneur,

Sipho Gumbo the founder of African Herb skin care brand, Yangu Beauty. Yangu Beauty is an award-winning African herbs skin care brand that develops skin products that cater for black women skin care challenges such as oily acne prone skin, dry skin, dark spots, dark circles under the eye and puffy eyes, dry skin after using make up remover and hyperpigmentation.

This month's Country Focus is Malawi, a beautiful country in the Southeastern Africa that still relies on medicinal herbs for health problems including the famous *Moringa Oleifera*.

Lastly, do join in ZOOM on the topic 'Medical and health care professional education' on 22 September 2022.

Best wishes,  
Zimbili

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Dr Zimbili Mkhize

### Meet The Monograph Author



NDUVHO MULAUDZI

Ms Nduvho Mulaudzi  
N-Diploma (Analytical Chemistry)  
B-tech (Chemistry)  
M-Tech (Pharmaceutical science)  
Member of the HPTLC Association

**Q: What Monograph are you working on?**

A: Carissa edulis

**Q: Who did you work with and what was the best thing about working with that person?**

A: Throughout my research career I have worked under the mentorship of Professor Alvaro Viljoen (DST-NRF Chair in Phytomedicine and Director of MRC Herbal Drugs Research Unit), based at the Tshwane University of Technology. He took me under his wings when I joined the Tshwane University of Technology Phytomedicine Research Group in 2017 as an academic intern. I would not be where I am today without him grooming me as an upcoming researcher. When I walked in those doors, I knew nothing.



Carissa edulis fruit  
[Accessed 16 August 2022  
<https://upload.wikimedia.org>]

Now, I know a little more, and I have him to thank for much of it. The best thing about working with him is his ability to push and encourage one to step out of their comfort zone and take on opportunities that are presented to you, especially ones that will make you shine on bigger platforms, hence I couldn't resist this opportunity of being an AfHP monograph author.

**Q: What challenges do you face with the collaboration?**

A: Collaboration is one of the most crucial elements when it comes to the success of any type of work. I believe a productive workflow is created in efficient collaboration, which involves open communication between all team members. One of the challenges I have faced with the collaboration is a "Lack of clear vision", Not having a clear picture of what ultimately needs to be accomplished, allows room to work mindlessly which significantly hinders productivity, motivation and hampers work synergy.

**Q: Can you share some fun facts about the species that you chose.**

A: *Carissa edulis* is referred as the "magic herb" in some countries across Africa, due to its use in the treatment of various diseases. Apart from the plant being used as one of the most valued traditional medicinal plant and fruit tree, it is also used for the processing of traditional natural dyes.

**Q: Why do you have such interest in this Species?**

A: Growing up I was blessed to reside in an area surrounded by *Carissa edulis*, commonly known as "murungulu" in Tshivenda. I remember as young children, while patiently waiting for our parents and grandparents to come back from ploughing fields at the surrounding mountains, they would bring us a handful of the purple-black, round, sweet ripe fruit for us to taste while telling us stories on how they-

themselves would enjoy the fruits while herding cattle and ploughing fields as children. I also had a chance to witness the species providing a source of inspiration by contributing largely to the human health and well-being as different plant parts (roots, barks and fruit) are used to make infusions/ decoctions to cure numerous diseases.



*Carissa edulis* flower

[Accessed 16 August 2022 <https://upload.wikimedia.org>]

**Q: What uses does it have and have you used it yourself?**

A: Traditionally, decoctions of roots are used in the treatment and management of various ailments such as, **breast cancer, chest pains, syphilis, malaria and as an immune booster.** The plant is also useful in the treatment of **chickenpox and other skin diseases** while in some communities the pounded root is administered to treat **epilepsy**. Yes I have used it myself, growing up my grandmother will always make us the root decoction to ease stomach ache.

**Q: What kind of research have you done into it?**

A: In spite of the various medicinal use *C. edulis* has in African communities, this species have received little attention from researchers and product developers in Africa. I have not done any practical research on the species. However I have read published literature associated to it.

**Q: What are your thoughts on AfHP?**

A: The African Herbal Pharmacopoeia is a compilation of different African medicinal plants monographs, which includes scientific names, distribution of the plant species, comprehensive botanical, known chemical secondary constituents, macroscopic and microscopic descriptions of the physical characteristics and lastly quality control measures applicable to a particular plant species.

The documentation of the African flora is far behind compared to other international countries such as China and Europe. African countries have been relying mostly on International Pharmacopoeias for quality control purposes, unfortunately these pharmacopoeias do not include many of the African taxa used medicinally. Therefore, The establishment of the African herbal pharmacopoeia detailing methods and procedures to verify species identification and recognise active compounds within extracts of the African flora, contribute greatly to their sustainable commercialisation.

**Q: In five years' time, what advances do you think this species would have made commercially and in research?**

A: *Carissa edulis* has a well-known recorded history of traditional use without any side effects reported. The species has potential for commercialisation in the food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical market. From a research perspective I would like to see researchers giving it more attention since there is a lack of extensive investigations regarding its chemical composition and pharmacological properties.

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### Women's Health

#### African Plants used for women's health.

by Yvonne Kunatsa and Reshoketswe Ribisi

August is women's month in South Africa. In the spirit of celebrating women, we present a summary of African plants that are used for women's health issues. This summary describes the species that have been documented for the management of menstrual pain, fertility concerns, childbirth, cancers, and other conditions that affect women.

Women's health refers to the branch of medicine that focuses on the treatment and diagnosis of diseases and conditions that affect a woman's physical and emotional well-being. Women's health encompasses a wide range of conditions including, sexually transmitted diseases/ infections (STD) / (STI), pregnancy and childbirth, female cancers, and other conditions.

In 2011, a woman's life expectancy at birth was more than 80 years in 46 countries, but only 58 years in Africa. Almost all (99%) of the approximate 287 000 maternal deaths every year occur in developing countries. Sub-Saharan Africa contributed to two-thirds of the maternal deaths.

Women and girls face increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and STIs.

Women in Africa are more likely to die from communicable -diseases (e.g., HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria), maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies, than women in other regions.

In sub-Saharan Africa access to healthcare remains a challenge. Traditional medicines can ameliorate this challenge. African herbal products have been widely used for women's health across the continent. Please note that this is information compiled from literature and should not be used without a healer's or health care professional's recommendation.

#### Menstrual pain

**Horseweed** (*Erigeron canadensis*) and **onion** (*Allium cepa*) are used for managing menstrual pain. The horseweed plant is boiled in water. The decoction is then used for treatment.



Figure A: Onion



Figure B: Horseweed

The onion bulb is also boiled to create a medicinal decoction. In South Africa, the boiled onion water is used as a vaginal steam. Steaming a few days before the first day of menses aids in menstrual pain and is also believed to help in enhancing fertility.

### Fertility issues

One of the plants that are used in dealing with fertility issues is the **Nile tulip** (*Markhamia lutea*). This plant is used for opening the fallopian tubes. To achieve this, the flowers of the plant are boiled and taken as a tea. The **bitter leaf** (*Vernonia amygdalina*) can also be used for the same purpose. The leaves or bark of this plant are boiled in water for an hour. A mug of the decoction is taken two times a day.



Figure C: Nile Tulip



Figure D: Bitter leaf

### Childbirth

Commonly known as the cucumber tree or **African sausage tree**, *Kigelia Africana* has been utilized in enhancing easier delivery in pregnant women. Half a tablespoon of the dried leaves is boiled and the treatment is taken as a tea.

Some uses the **flame flower** (*Talinum portulacifolium*), which is widely distributed across various parts of Africa are to enhance easy labor, the fresh leaves of this medicinal plant are used as a herbal bath.



Figure E: Cucumber tree



Figure F: Flameflower

### Breast and cervical cancer

The Cucumber tree has exhibited anticancer activity against cervical cancer cell lines. This plant known in Zimbabwe as Mubveve also displays analgesic activity. The bioactive constituents found to be present in all the plant parts include iridoids, naphthoquinones, flavonoids, terpenes and phenylethanoglycosides.

The stem bark, roots, leaves and fruit extracts are prepared as decoctions, infusions and extracts which are applied onto the body as a wash or powdered and mixed with porridge in cancer treatment.

*Cannabis sativa* L. known commonly as hemp has been used in the management of nausea and pain in cancer patients. This plant known colloquially as patje/ motekwane in South Africa and mbanje in Zimbabwe has been used in all cancer types.

The crushed leaves of the plant are administered orally to treat cancer patients. The compound cannabidiol (CBD) isolated from *C. sativa* has also been reported to exhibit anticancer activity. CBD showed antiproliferative effects against breast cancer cells through various mechanisms, including apoptosis, autophagy, and cell cycle arrest. CBD is now available in oils and tablets which can be purchased from pharmacies and cannabis farmers.

**Cancer bush**, (*Sutherlandia frutescens*), is native to South Africa and has been traditionally used in the treatment and prophylaxis of cancer. The shoots of this plant are prepared as infusions and there are 300mg tablets available in the market. Patients with all cancer types take two tablets three times a day. An earlier study found that the extracts induced cytotoxicity in cervical carcinoma cell lines.



Figure G :Cancer bush



Figure H: carrot tree

**Steganotaenia araliacea Hochst** of the, apiaceae family is used in the management of breast cancer. Commonly known as the carrot tree, for the carrot-like aroma produced when the leaves are crushed.

This plant has shown cytotoxic activity against breast cancer cells. The stem bark, roots, and leaves are prepared as a decoction, infusion, or tincture and ingested orally.

**Solanum incanum** is used in the management of breast cancer and has also shown antitumoral activity against ovarian cancer cells. It is of the Solanaceae family. This plant is commonly known as, bitter apple while in kiswahili it is called mtunguja mwitu. The leaves, fruits, and roots are prepared as infusions, or tinctures and ingested orally.



Figure I :Bitter apple



Figure J: Sweet thorn

**Vachellia karroo (Hayne)** of the fabaceae family is used for breast cancer management in South Africa. Known locally as Morumosetlha is dried up and applied on the visible tumor cells. Sweet thorn, as it commonly known is also used in the treatment of STIs and has shown anti-gonococcal activity.

### Others

Some plants like the wild watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) and bitter melon (*Mormodica charantia*) have been used for treating conditions like vaginitis. Women with vaginitis experience

vaginal inflammation that is characterized by itching, discharge, and pain.



Figure K: Wild Watermelon



Figure M: Bitter melon

The fruit of the wild watermelon is peeled and then cut into smaller pieces, which are then soaked in 1 L of water. The infusion (250 ml) is orally taken once a day after a meal to treat vaginitis. In the case of the bitter melon, the juice is squeezed from the leaves and mixed with the one obtained from the bitter leaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*). The mixture is dissolved in water. The preparation (250 ml) is taken once a day, after a meal.

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## Business Focus

Sipho Gumbo is a USA based business woman who used her struggle with acne prone skin to create an award winning African Herb skin care brand. Yangu Beauty has been featured in magazines of note namely Glamour Magazine and Rolling Out. She shares her triumphs and lessons in an interview with AAMPS.



SIPHO GUMBO FOUNDER OF YANGU BEAUTY

### What was the inspiration behind the birth of your business and where is it based?

The truth we are never told as black people, is that the cosmetics developed by the giant international companies were not developed for black people, even those that use black supermodels to advertise and are championed by famous black people were all developed for our white sisters; they are simply hand me downs to us. Second, despite popularity of many black women in performance industry, black women are still ranked at the bottom of the beauty scale by the world: we are defined by others instead of defining ourselves. Years of suffering breakouts from skincare products formulated with harsh ingredients led me on a journey of researching natural skincare.

### What products or services do you offer?

We are a luxurious, vegan skin care brand. We offer products that address skin care problems faced by black women.

### How many people does your business currently employ?

We currently employ 5 full time and another 5 part time people. Most of our work is done through subcontracting.



I have super sensitive skin and I was reacting to almost anything I used on my skin. I was at a point where I was just using water to wash my face. I thought of how my grandmother used to show us different types of herbs and oils that we could use on our skin. It is then that I asked my cousin to send me Marula oil and Baobab oil. I started using these oils on my face and saw great improvement on my skin. I shared with my niece and my daughters. I knew that I was not the only person facing these skin challenges. I continued to research and talking to my uncle and aunts about other different oils that were used traditionally in Southern Africa. I realized there were so many that I could choose from. I tried selling the oils as they were. Most people did not like the raw scent of oils. It is then that I focused developing a full range skincare line using these oils and addressing skincare issues that black women face. Yangu Beauty is based in Dallas, Texas USA.

### **How did you come up with the name of your company?**

Actually Yangu Beauty was launched long before famous brands such as Fenty Beauty (2017), and we pride ourselves as being pacesetters in naming of the black beauty companies with the surname "Beauty". Now, the most common term for "my" or "mine" in Bantu languages (350 million people) stretching from KiSwahili in north east Africa, through the great Lakes, the Shona People of Zimbabwe, into the heart of South Africa is "Yangu". As I said, we define ourselves as black women- its MY Beauty or Yangu Beauty.

In researching the different oils found in Southern Africa that we used for making the underlying complex, one of the oils we use is Yangu Oil. It is from the Cape chestnut tree (*Calodendrum Capense*). I am of Xhosa ancestry, and the Cape is my ancestral home. The plant, like black women, is native to Africa and exotic beauty of the Cape. This is a perfect base and name for a brand that is created for black women. We then used the inspiration of the Yangu seed bursting as our logo. Ntombi fikile! Beauty! Fertility! All. It is a celebration of my ancestry, the ingredients of Southern Africa as well as a celebration of having a luxurious product line.

It gives a sense of ownership and I do not care about other people's definitions of us, only our definitions of us, my ideology, my culture, my past, my body and what is important for my body, my beauty! Our brand, from our ancestral ingredients and knowledge from our foremothers being brought to the present.

### **Which indigenous African plants/ingredients do your products incorporate?**

We use our Seven Wonder oils from Southern Africa in the product line, and red tea. These are:

- Yangu Oil
- Marula Oil
- Baobab Oil
- Mangongo Oil
- Kalahari Melon Seed Oil
- Moringa Oil
- Xemenia Oil
- We also use Mafura Butter and Rooibos Tea.

### What problems are you solving and what makes your solutions stand out?

Yangu Beauty addresses skincare problems that black women face. Our product line was designed to address specific that these women have. From my own experience I realized that most women of color have sensitive skin. As I travelled across the United States speaking about my products many black women, Latina women, Asian women, Arabic women, and large segments of white women could relate with my skin issues. The challenge was there are very few products addressing the physiology and anatomy of women with pigments (despite being the majority). Second is of course the range of black tone from say the Khoisan mothers who gave the southern Bantu their mitochondrial DNA to very dark skinned women – black is a range!

Some of our physiology and anatomy include larger pore sizes that give our beauty uniqueness and advantages- which we embraced by creating products to cater for that. The black skin is more sensitive, especially as defined by ease of inflammation and scar formation. That “tingling” you feel after some skin beautification procedures is not a sign that they work: it’s the inflammation and skin complaining at the violence of the skincare procedure. Oily acne prone skin, dry skin, dark spots after an acne break out, dark circles under the eye and puffy eyes, dry skin after using make up remover. Then there is problem of hyperpigmentation of a background black skin- how to remove the hyperpigmentation without -

bleaching the underlying beautiful pigmented skin? For each problem we created a solution product. We have our **Cleansing Whip**, which is a cleanser for oily acne prone skin, our **Gel To Milk Cleanser** is for people with dry skin. The **Moisturizing Day Cream** helps keep skin moisturized all day long. The **Finishing Night Cream** is for keeping skin hydrated overnight especially for people with dry skin. The **Even Tone Serum** helps with dark spots. The **Bright Eyes Cream** helps with dark circles under the eye and puffiness.



Yangu beauty range (Copyright Yangu beauty.com)

The **Renewal Oil Make Up Remover** helps with removing make up gently and not drying the skin. Yangu Beauty products stand out because they were created mainly focusing on solving specific skin physiology and anatomy of black people. We also used cutting edge pharmacology to develop the line. We engaged a world renowned cosmetic chemist as well as a world renowned pharmacologist to ensure product efficacy. We managed to create two Complexes, **The YMB® Complex** and **The Pore Refining Complex**.

### **What successes have you had so far?**

The product line has won awards which is exciting for a young brand. We have been accepted into one of America's top luxurious stores Neiman Marcus. This is great success for a young unknown brand landing itself amongst the world's most prestigious brands; these stores rejected to carry some of the more famous lines we will not name and took us instead!

### **What are some of the challenges that you faced as a black female entrepreneur?**

One of the biggest challenges that startups face is getting funded. This is one of the biggest challenges that we faced. In the world of funding, women get only 2.4% of funding. Women of color only get 0.34% of funding. As a black woman who was also an immigrant to America it was difficult to get funding. Boot strapping was not an easy route, but we had to boot strap the business as the only way to succeed.

### **Does your business give back to the community?**

Yangu Beauty gives back in two ways. We buy our ingredients from women owned businesses that process the oils we use. We also donate a portion of our proceeds to Munhu Inc ([www.munhuinc.org](http://www.munhuinc.org)) a nonprofit organization that I founded 18 years ago that has supported >15,000 children orphaned by AIDS. We send them to school from grade school to university-

for those who succeed; there are some we met when they were 12 year-olds looking after a 6 year old sibling who are now engineers, lawyers, teachers, reporters now in several countries of southern Africa.

### **What are the opportunities that you see in the beauty industry?**

The beauty industry is always evolving. With each change comes new opportunities. There is never a time when one can say the current products in the market will remain the same. With new research and development comes new products. Skin problems are always around us and new solutions are required to deal with. With new diseases like COVID and Monkey pox there will be need to find ways with people who have developed new skin problems.

### **What in your opinion, what should the beauty industry improve on?**

I think the industry at least in the US, South America, Africa, Asia and Arab countries, and indeed most of the world should have products that deal with the population they are marketing to. I also believe that the future of individualized skincare is here, and Yangu Beauty is currently pioneering these approaches. Some of the pharmacologists that we used to create the products are actually also fathers and mothers of individualized medicine, so we have been set to lead down that pathway. The world currently are using the one size fits all kind of approach when dealing with skin care;

and for black women given the spectrum of "black" and "color" this has been a disaster.. The reality is that we all have different needs to care for our skin. More research is needed in dealing with people with dark skin tones. Most research was not done with this darker skin tones in mind.

### What advice can you give to a young woman who wishes to start her own business?

For one to start a business, you must look around you and see what people need. If you know what they need, and you think you can provide an answer/solution to their needs then you have a product or service to sell. Another way is looking at something that is being done but you feel that you can do better than what is being provided, then you can create a better service or product than what is available.

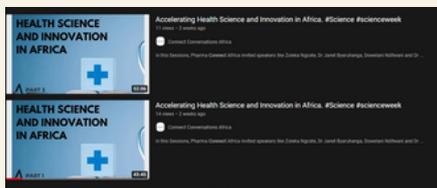
Be prepared to work very long hours and develop a thick skin because business does bring a lot of challenges and it is not for the faint hearted. Try to save some money because you will run out when the business is at its early stages. Do seek advice from other entrepreneurs. Be prepared mentally for the challenges and or successes you will face. Success does not come quickly be patient and be ready to work at it for the long haul.

Where do you see your business in 5 years' time?

In five years' time, barring other world disruptions like COVID, we see Yangu Beauty being an international brand and available in Europe, Africa and South America.

## Connect Conversations

### Highlights



[Follow the conversation...](#)

- **Accelerating Health Science and Innovation in Africa**

In this connect conversation series, the main focus was finding ways of advancing health science and innovation in Africa .The discussion was centered around assessing University and industry collaborations. The speakers included Dr Janet Byaruhanga, a representative of the African Union Development Agency as well as Zoleka Ngcete, a senior programme manager at the South African Medical Research Council who shed some light on funding health research in South Africa.

### Country Focus

## Malawi

by Nathan Jere

Malawi is a Southern African country with a population of 18.6 million as of 2019.

Highlighted below are a few interesting facts about this multicultural country.

Healthcare System:

Traditional health practitioners = Not available

Pharmacists = About 200 in 2017

Medical doctors = About 600 in 2018

Nurses = About 7600 in 2018

Ethnic Groups = the Chewa, Nyanja, Lhomwe, Yao, Tumbuka, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde, and the Lambya/Nyiha.



Gule Wamkulu cultural practice by the Chewa.

Languages spoken include Chewa, English, Lomwe, Yao, and Tumbuka.

Popular species and their medical uses:

- **Azadirachta indica (Neem)** ,Medical uses stomach-ache, hypertension, diarrhoea, general body pain, headache
- **Tephrosia vogeli (Mthuthua)**, Medicinal Uses- Constipation Diarrhoea Incisions Ulcers



Neem plant



Mthuthua plant

- **Moringa Oleifera (Chamwamba)**, medical uses aphrodisiac ,heart attack, painful urination ,stomach ache
- **Jatropha Curcas (Nsatsi)**, Induce or speed labor ,speed hardening of baby's skull, induce vomiting, skin rashes, stroke



Moringa plant



Nsatsi plant

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## Upcoming Events

- **22 September 2022- Medical and health care professional education** – how can we equip practitioners for better outcomes? the main focus is providing information and training to the practitioner in-service (more widely called continued professional education).

### Moderator

Prof David Katerere (TUT Platform Research Chair)

### Speakers

- Challenges of nurse education in Africa – **Negat Woldehawariat, Ethiopia**
- Role played by the pharmaceutical industry in enhancing medical education-**Dr Godfrey Keele, IPASA**
- The use of technology to enhance professional development- **Dr Eoghan Colgan, Continulus**
- Pharmacy education in Southern Africa – an overview.- **Prof Lloyd Matowe, SAAP**

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