

## CHANGING THE WORLD ONE FINANCIAL PLAN AT A TIME

One well-trodden path for alumni of the ASISA Academy is from intern to a stellar career as a full-time staff member at their sponsor company. Another choice is to forge their own path and grow the industry in their own way. Thandekile Moloko, a Financial Service Provider trading as SimWealth, chose the latter, less well-trodden path.

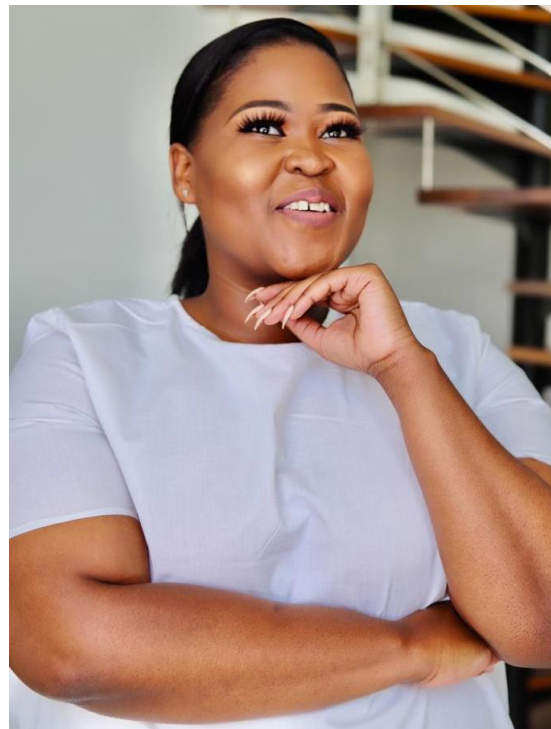
After completing the Investment Management Work Ready (I'M Work Ready) Internship, run by the ASISA Academy in partnership with the University of Johannesburg in 2016, Moloko contacted a small brokerage she had worked at during her Honours year and said she wanted to come back to implement what she had learned.

She felt that what she had learned in the programme, including her one-year internship at a leading South African asset management firm, meant that she could really make a contribution at the brokerage. They took up the offer and Moloko got to fulfil that wish.

Her next step was to open her own Financial Service Provider trading as SimWealth, and she hasn't looked back. It has not been all plain sailing but, through hard work and courage, Moloko is living her personal mission statement of 'Changing the world one financial plan at a time'.

Raised in Diepkloof Extension, Soweto, Moloko studied at the University of Johannesburg. She majored in Finance and then did an Honours Degree in Financial Planning. She chose finance, she says, because she was good at maths but "the day-to-day just did not feel like something that would make me 'come alive', as Oprah would say". When she discovered financial planning, Moloko says, she thought: "Whoa! Hang on! You get to do numbers and interact with people and change their lives!"

While studying for her Honours in 2015 she worked fulltime at the brokerage and got a taste of the work she really wanted to do. She was a client advisor, which was "pretty much like a para planner", she says. When she was invited to apply for the ASISA Academy I'M Work Ready Internship, she thought it sounded like exactly the right bridge to what she wanted to do.



Moloko says she learned so much during the 2-week introduction to the I'M Work Ready Internship, where experts from the field introduced the students to the world of work. Coming "at that period of life ... when you get out of varsity ... and you don't necessarily know what to expect", the ASISA Academy course helped to funnel her thoughts into the various routes within the industry and opened her eyes to what was available.

The Work Readiness component of the internship also provided training on dealing with issues that come up in the workplace, "the soft skills that you don't necessarily have fresh out of varsity, or even early on in your career".

Her internship gave her a chance to put all that knowledge into practice but, she says, it was more focused on the administrative side of things than she would have liked. Having had experience at the brokerage, Moloko knew that her real interest lay in financial planning.

Towards the end of her internship in 2017, she says, she had the confidence to get in contact with her previous employer and say, "Listen, I have some experience now and I think I am ready to become a wealth manager".

She worked there, honing her skills in wealth management, for a year and a half before taking her next leap of faith in 2018: Financial Services Provider SimWealth (which stands for wealth made simple).

Moloko says she continues to refer to her training often. "Working with people on a day-to-day basis you deal with different types of people, different requirements, different types of complaints, requests, personalities, characters, heated environments, and you need to be able to deal with all those things."

Moloko's clients are largely professional people. "They are literate, they are exposed to the internet and social media, which often leads to information paralysis. They tell me, 'I need to get into this ETF. I need to go into forex. I need to have crypto'."

Moloko tells them to hang on, to slow down, to start with the fundamentals. "Let's create the building blocks. You'll get to those exciting things, but they mean nothing if you haven't got the fundamentals of sustainability in place."

In terms of her own sustainability, Moloko says, her personal development continues. The ASISA Academy gave her "the knowledge and the confidence to be a player in the game", she says. Now, being in the ASISA Academy orbit means continuous growth and development. Most recently, she was invited to take part in a Practice Management Course with Rob McDonald through Fundhouse and the ASISA Enterprise & Supplier Development initiative. This continuous development feeds into her ongoing mission "to change the world one financial plan at a time".