

How Yococo's Sine Ndlela started serving scoops of love

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Sinenhlanhla (Sine) Ndlela is not yet 30 years old, but she's the founder of a thriving South African dairy-free ice-cream brand, Yococo.



Sinenhlanhla Ndlela, founder of Yococo.

With a background in TV writing and post-production, Ndlela taught herself all she knows about making ice-cream and running a small business, and her efforts have earned her a spot on *Mail & Guardian's* list of 200 Young South Africans for 2019.

"I did a lot of research and experimenting and I've found that the more experienced I become the easier things get," Ndlela told Bizcommunity in an interview.

Her swift journey to entrepreneurship began with a lifestyle change. She had cut animal products out of her diet, but battled to find a satisfying dairy-free ice-cream. And she *loves* ice-cream! In fact, some of her fondest childhood memories include eating the sweet treat with her grandmother.



"I was raised by my grandmother because my parents were still teenagers, which meant they still had to attend school. Fortunately for me I was my grandmother's favourite, which meant that I got an extra scoop of ice-cream whenever my mom bought a tub for us. That's where my love for ice-cream started," Ndela explained while presenting at the Food Next.Africa conference in Cape Town recently.

In addition to her dietary change, she also began pondering on the journey that lies ahead following the completion of her film studies. "I did a bit of self-discovery and started thinking, 'Is life all about just working and accumulating? And I realised I wanted to work towards having a real purpose.

"I believe we're all here to serve. And for me, I think it's to serve love. And what do I love more than anything? Ice-cream."

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We are grateful to have had the opportunity to speak all things Yococo at the Food Next Africa conference. We are passionate about people, the environment and sustainability.

A post shared by Yo Coco (@the_yococo) on Sep 13, 2019 at 11:13pm PDT

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In 2016, the vegan, artisanal ice-cream brand Yococo was born. With the tag line 'Scoops of Love', Yococo products are handmade, entirely plant-based – therefore kind to animals – and include flavours that are loosely designed around the 7 chakras. Explaining what makes Yococo unique, Ndela said, "It's an energy-based brand, it's not just ice cream."

She constantly experiments with new ingredients – the majority of which are locally sourced – and uses no artificial ingredients or colourants in her products.



Challenges and achievements

Her one-woman show has since expanded to include a few employees, and Yococo now supplies a number of health-focused grocers and markets in South Africa.

Commenting on her achievements and the growth of Yococo, Ndlela said, "I've personally grown and learned about what is it that I want. I've employed some really awesome people, and we've done some big events this year. Yococo and I got to go to Amsterdam and I made it on to the *Mail & Guardian* Top 200 list."



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"When it comes to challenges I would say having to pave my own way, as there is such a rigid growth narrative. Moving from making ice-cream in my apartment to developing Yococo into an actual business has been a process, and having to be responsible for other people and staying on the path that I want."

Ndlela hopes to see Yococo grow to be an international brand. "I want it to be in more people's homes and I want to expand the way we serve love."

Her advice for other youth South Africans with a dream to start their own business? "You'll never know until you start, and embrace failure."

For more information, visit [Yococo online](#) and connect with the brand on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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