

SPAZA SHOPS IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are app. 120 000 Spaza Shops in South Africa. Of these 60% are run by women & many by youth. Each Spaza employs an average of three people, each of these supporting around four people with their income. This amounts to 1.2 million people benefitting from Spazas directly.

Spaza shops are used as social spaces where people gather. Shop owners often have regular customers; a trust relationship is built between owners & customers. Owners might offer goods on credit to people who are short of money, allowing them to pay off their bill on pay-day. Spazas are convenience stores, opening early in the morning & closing late at night. The shops are generally slightly more expensive than the big supermarkets, but people prefer to buy at Spazas because they are within walking distance, the opening hours suit their working schedules & owners offer credit.

Spaza Shop owners generally buy their stock at wholesalers. Often they struggle with finances as wholesalers only sell in bulk. Another challenge for Spaza Shop owners is transport, especially in more remote areas of the townships.

Spaza Shops are informal businesses which are defined as 'any business not registered with the Department for Trading Industry'. Generally Spaza Shop owners don't want to become formal businesses as they don't have time for the administration, cannot pay high bank charges & tax; & cannot commit to South African labour laws (such as in the case of retrenching employees).

Spaza Shops are not acknowledged by authorities. Mostly the daily struggles of shop owners & the service they offer others remains unrecognized. The challenge that the country has to face is the acknowledgement of informal business conditions & the adjustment of regulations in order to accommodate this growing industry.

infos taken from interview with Noel Ndhlovu from spazanews. <http://www.spazanews.co.za/>



ARISTIDE´ S SPAZA

Aristide is from Mozambique. He moved to Alex in 2006 & opened his shop in 2008. Initially Aristide started his shop as a salon, but since business was not going well, he decided to also start a mini- shop. Aristide supports his family with two children. He would otherwise not know what else to do. Aristide is facing competition as there are many salons in Alex, but he has some regular customer.



I & L. FERNANDO SHOP

Fernando's is owned by one of three brothers, two of which are twins. They are from Mozambique. The oldest brother Ishmael owns the store & his brother Pedro sells for him as one of the twins. Ishmael also works up the road at the freedom supermarket. The brothers have been through two court cases concerning ownership of the store. Fernando's has a liquor license.



SAM'S TUCKSHOP

Sam is from Tzaneen in Limpopo. He is the owner of Sam's Tuckshop & lives & works in the same house that he built himself. Sam has four children & a wife who used to live with him but are now back in Limpopo. He is selling fruits, cigarettes, sweets & canned fish. His business according to him is going well, Sam likes to be a Spaza shop owner because he is his own boss.



MHLANGENI TUCKSHOP/ MAKE ME NICE SALON

Anele Mhlangeni built his Spaza himself using reed that is a traditional building material from his home in KZN. He started the Spaza Shop as a joke. Anele also cuts hair, but rented out his salon to someone else that he now is in disagreement with over ownership.



LCS TUCKSHOP

LCS Tuckshop is owned by Lucas who is a carpenter. Lucas started his Spaza business after he was retrenched from a factory. His shop is well known in the community & also referred to as Rangwane's (Thswana for Uncle) Tuckshop. He is well connected & collaborating with other shops in the street. In January 2012, Lucas started to employ a local lady as he has more & more jobs coming in as a carpenter.



ELLIOT'S TUCKSHOP

The shop is owned by Elliot, a father of two from Zimbabwe. His two sons take turns selling at the shop. Elliot decided to open the Spaza so that he could support his children & keep them out of trouble. The shop is run from his house. Elliot is also a waiter & tells that he learned how to treat customers through this job.