

Lorna Mlonzi



On a sunny day in October 2016, Lorna Mlonzi, was shot nine times near her home in Nyanga. The bullets flew into her stomach, side and chest.

“There is a lot of gangsterism in Nyanga,” says Lorna, “It was me being at the wrong place at the wrong time. During that incident, four people died on the scene. I was a bystander. I was walking past while people were shooting each other.”

“I felt a burning sensation in my body. Blood was coming out. The guns were not stopping. It was chaos. I can see people dead. I could see blood everywhere.”

“I thought to myself, okay, so what happens now?”

Lorna had just enough money in her wallet to hire a taxi to take her to ICU. She passed out on the way to Mitchells Plain hospital. The taxi driver thought she was dead so he pushed her out of the vehicle.

“I woke up, and thought ‘great, I’m here’ – then I passed out again.”

Lorna Mlonzi woke up three days later in hospital, with the nursing staff wondering how on Earth she had survived.

This experience is similar to many daily occurrences that beset South Africans daily throughout our crazy/beautiful country. Instead of succumbing to fear, Lorna saw her miraculous escape as a signal to do something meaningful with her life.

Lorna subsequently founded an impressive internet service provider, Sky Internet. She has partnered with Scandinavian and South African investors to tackle one of Africa’s most salient challenges: cheap, fast internet.

The crucial lesson Lorna has learned along the way involves partnerships.

As a child, Lorna Mlonzi saw her mother running several businesses and was struck by the fact that the same customers will pay you for different services or products. Today, many years later, her township ISP business draws on that same philosophy to retain customers and extend the value they get from their fibre connections.

The founder and CEO of Sky Internet SA shares her belief that internet access is a basic necessity on par with water and electricity, and crucial to breaking down barriers between people and injecting energy into communities.

Lorna Mlonzi unpacks the reality of people imposing limitations on themselves, problems with data access in townships and why you should never leave your bright idea sitting on a table like a potato for someone else to cook.