XILUVA MBUNGELA

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I am a designer, strategist, and researcher with three years of design research in the public realm. My work explores where space, culture, and community meet.

EDUCATION

Harvard University | *Master in Design Studies* (05/2026)
Distinction Grades: 7 | Master in Design Studies Class Representative

Syracuse University School of Architecture | *Bachelor of Architecture (Magna Cum Laude)* (05/2024)
Minor in Women & Gender Studies
GPA 3.625 | Dean's List - ten consecutive semesters | Syracuse University Chancellor's Scholarship
Awardee of 2022 SOM Robert L. Wesley Scholarship | Syracuse Black Honors Society 2023 Academic Excellence Award | 2023
Integrated Design Studio Prize Nomination | 2024 SOURCE Research Fellowship | 2024 Dr. Marguerite Fisher Undergraduate Paper

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City of Durham, North Carolina | *Design/Research Fellow* (08/2026 to present)
- Leads design and research on a $500K+ anti-displacement fund's engagement toolkit, comparing four fund models.

Harvard Business School | *Case Writer: GRIT and GBV Justice* (08/2026 to present)
- Originated and co-wrote a 24-page teaching case on GBV technology, now taught to 60+ students.
- Interviewed 5 GRIT team members across time zones, writing interview guides and synthesizing findings.
- Analyzed qualitative and quantitative data in Excel to create all of the case's visual data exhibits.

The Just City Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Design | *Research Assistant* (12/2024 to 05/2026)
- Co-directed the writing and design of a 174-page national report for 38 mayors and 77 civic leaders.
- Analyzed 5 years of qualitative and quantitative data into a database scored on a 50-point city equity index.
- Facilitated workshops and produced events for the Mayors' Institute on City Design fellowship..

Harvard Motsepe Presidential Research Accelerator Fund for Africa | *Research Assistant* (10/2024 to 06/2026)
- Co-authored the winning $149,994 Green Corridor grant with 6 academic partners to turn ambulance "red zones" in CapeTown into green corridors.
- Co-facilitated 4 co-creation workshops with organizers, EMS, and health workers across three neighboring communities, shaping policy interventions.
- Led a mural concept with a local organizer, drawing 50+ nominations of local women, for a local artist.
- Developed a toolkit that turns research into tools for community organizations and local governments.

Workshop APD New York | *Architectural Intern* (10/2024 to 06/2026)
- Developed mood boards, material studies, sketches, and Revit and AutoCAD plans for residential clients.

Syracuse University School of Architecture | *Teaching Assistant* (08/2023 to 12/2023)
- Developed design tutorials and led weekly studio sessions for 160 architecture students.

DESIGN AND COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE

Harvard Black Graduate Student Alliance | *Vice President, Communications and Social Media* (01/2025 to 11/2025)
- Designed a communication strategy across social media and newsletters for 1,871 followers.

African Student Union, Syracuse University | *Head of Promotions and Marketing* (07/2021 to 11/2021)
- Designed event flyers and social graphics, raising average engagement on annual-event posts by 630%.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Alumni Network for Harvard Women | *Advisory Board Member* (08/2026 to Present)
- Designs strategy at bimonthly Boston Leadership Forums for a 12,000+ member alumni network.

"Against Gender-Based Violence"Fundraising and Awareness Campaign | *Founder, Designer* (06/2020 to Present)
- Designed Instagram awareness content and fundraised $1,103 for two South African GBV shelters.

SKILLS

RESEARCH: Human-centered research | Competitive Mapping | Surveys | Grant Writing | Brand Audits | Spatial Analysis

DESIGN: Visual Identity | Graphic Design | Wire Frames | Packaging | Prototyping | Sketching | Design Systems

SOFTWARE: Figma | AutoCAD | Miro | Lovable | Rhino | VRay | GitHub | ArcGIS | Illustrator | InDesign | Photoshop | Excel

LANGUAGES | *English, French*

SELECTED WORKS

- **Beyond the Box,** Cambridge, 2025: brand design, typography, UX/UI, packaging, and pitch for a wellness sub-brand, awarded distinction.
- **Audio Artifacts,** Syracuse, 2024: AI sound and projection installation with Midjourney and ImageBind, graded A.