

Minister graces **RUCC ultra- performers business and leadership gala**



The Minister for the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams in partnership with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (sefa) and Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) participated at the Robbinsdale United Church of Christ ultra-performers business and leadership gala themed "Importance of paradigm shifting."

The evening belonged to upcoming entrepreneurs and present businesspersons who have curved their names into the upper echelons of business.

Robbinsdale United Church of Christ played host to the glamorous event celebration of ultra-performers business and leadership gala.

The gala dinner concurred with Freedom's month, to honour the gallant fighters of 1956 led by heroines Albertina Sisulu, Lillian Ngoyi, Sophie De Bruyn and the 20 000 other women who marched to Union Buildings to protest the draconian and discriminatory Urban Areas Act law passed by the apartheid.

The Department of Small Business Development therefore exists to lead and coordinate an integrated approach to the promotion and development of entrepreneurship, Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) and Co-operatives, and to ensure an enabling legislative and policy environment to support their growth and sustainability.

sefa funded women entrepreneurs were honoured during the event and reminded that more empowerment, investments, and mentorship of women are still far off the mark, and a lot still needs to be done for women to occupy their rightful spaces in the business world without any fear of discrimination.

With this backdrop, the DSBD and sefa highlighted the need to encourage more women to occupy positions of influence both in society and in business, to encourage the future generations. Women entrepreneurs in the SMME were given a platform to showcase their talents, successes, and dreams with the backing of DSBD as well as sefa funding.

The gala dinner commenced at 18:30 pm at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality overlooking the scenic Lovemore mountains. Over 100 entrepreneurs honoured the evening to witness the ultra-performers business and leadership gala.



Robbinsdale United Church of Christ, Pastor Lindelwa Jadezweni provided the opening remarks and welcomed guests in the event.

“Today we are here to honour local entrepreneurs who are making a change in the society”.

“If you educate a man, you educate one individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation. These are the words of Ghanaian idiom which are applicable in this juncture as we celebrate hard working entrepreneurs and women of South Africa this evening,” said Jadezweni.

Pastor Lingelihle Jadezweni further provided motivational words to all aspiring entrepreneurs who had come to witness and listen to local entrepreneurs as they narrated their stories to the world.

He mentioned that “sefa is an implementing agency of the Department of Small Business Development and it was founded in 2012 following the merge of three agencies Khula, Apex Fund and IDC small business funding.

“Tonight, we are here to bestow honour to the current crop of economic fighters, who are emulating those of 1956, but these are fighting in the business terrain, removing barriers and trading in traditionally male dominated terrains like construction, logistics and mining,” he added.

Mr Motse Mfuleni, Board Chairperson of the Mandela Bay Development Agency called on financial institutions to desist from old age practices of backing only male owned businesses and back female owned enterprises.

“Women businesses have to be backed up so that they can grow and nowadays women owned businesses are doing well more than those owned by men in every aspect of businesses,” he said.

Group CEO at African Pioneer, Mr Stephen Dondolo thanked the Robbinsdale United Church of Christ founders for hosting the ultra-performers in business and leadership gala which seeks to uplift and appreciate local entrepreneurs.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams took the stage with a thunderous applause from the packed banquet hall. In her keynote address she said “It is imperative that the small business sector is empowered to disrupt existing industries in a positive way, by creatively contributing in a way that creates new businesses through technology and innovation.”

She further said that “ One of our primary goals is to link SMMEs and Co-operatives to markets all over the globe, particularly in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and to everywhere else to ensure that they find a market.”

“One of our important aims is to advance gender equality and promote economic inclusion through targeted support to women entrepreneurs in international and regional trade,”

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams emphasised that the Department for Small Business Development (DSBD) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), the ITC SheTrades set up a Hub in South Africa, in order to help South African women entrepreneurs, increase their international competitiveness and connect to national, regional and global markets through the SheTradesZA Hub. “Through the SheTrades ZA Hub, women-owned businesses can connect to potential buyers, investors, suppliers and business support organizations, learn skills to boost business potential through free e-learning courses, on-site workshops and webinars; they can receive support to attend national, regional and international trade fairs and also gain access to investment opportunities,” she concluded.