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SPECIAL
EDITION

BIO MAGAZINE

MAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE



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ZANDILE MBETHE

Empowering Women as Architects of
Sustainable Prosperity: Transforming Education
in South Africa's Rural and Township Area

Behind the scene

Feature

Zandile Mbethe

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This edition highlights the Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP) Project, showcasing Zandile Mbethe, a trailblazer of the WiSP initiative, who is dedicated to enhancing education for youth in townships.

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WiSP

ELEVATION

The Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP) project was established in recognition of women's unparalleled contributions to sustainable economic development. By advancing an environment where women can thrive, United Village Global (UVG) aims to uphold its foundational principles: "Stabilize, Grow, and Prosper".

The project spotlights women who have turned adversities into opportunities, establishing opportunities that not only secure their livelihoods but also energise local economies. With a proven track record of success, these stewards are poised to scale their ventures, creating waves of positive change that ripple through communities and transcend generations.



WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY



ZANDILE MBETHE



Zandile Mbethe, a cancer survivor, has transcended her personal battles to become a beacon of hope in her community. Her dedication to empowering the youth through education and creating sustainable prosperity exemplifies her strength and commitment to fostering positive change in South Africa's underserved areas.

It's all about Zandi!

Zandile Mbethe's journey in her piece reveals her commitment to upholding sustainable prosperity in education within her community. Founding Engage and Empower, she tackles educational inequalities in underprivileged areas, enhancing academic, financial, and social learning. Her holistic approach underscores the need for practical exposure, beyond traditional classrooms, to nurture well-rounded individuals. Collaborating with corporations and utilising community assets, Zandile transforms students into active future contributors. Her initiatives showcase the power of grassroots efforts in creating meaningful, sustainable change, inspiring collective participation in enhancing educational opportunities and nurturing environments conducive to growth and prosperity.

Happy Reading!



FOUNDER ENGAGE AND EMPOWER



ZANDILE MBETHE

I am Zandile Mbethe, from a township called Daveyton, located in the East Rand. I am a single mother of three, a Lupus Warrior, and cancer survivor. Without God's grace, my mother's relentless nursing, and family support, I would not have survived. The successful chemotherapy in 2023, fuelled my passion for transforming young lives.



EMPOWER

We had the privilege of attending a career day at a then 'Model C-School, a life-changing event that sparked my fruitful career in finance. Alongside the pro bono work I do; I tutor accounting and English to young kids with my younger sister.

We've observed a significant gap in real-world exposure and awareness among these students. Many struggle to articulate basic accounting concepts, not from ignorance, but from a lack of exposure.

BRIDGING OPPORTUNITY GAPS

FROM CLASSROOM TO CAREER

To bridge this gap between classroom learning and real-world industry knowledge, we realised the urgency of early intervention. At a career expo last year, it was disheartening to learn that many of the 106 matriculants present had chosen inappropriate subjects, unaware of the prerequisites for their desired careers. The lack of foundational subjects like chemistry, mathematics, and science in some public schools is alarming and hinders these young minds from becoming future innovators and contributors to society.

We face challenges like self-tutoring due to absent teachers, and the high cost of tutoring, ranging from R200 to R400 per subject, per hour, which is unaffordable for many. Some students, living in child-headed households or with elderly guardians, are particularly vulnerable yet show remarkable resilience and intelligence. They often seek community assistance for subjects like science and mathematics and manage to excel.

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**We need to
create a
platform
where they
can have an
opportunity
to come to
places like
the Sci-Bono
Discovery
Centre, to
see what
real-world
science and
studies look
like.**

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THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

It is vital for us, as a community and society, to support these children, embodying the proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. Our collective effort can pave the way for their successful integration into society as innovators and producers, overcoming educational barriers and fostering an environment of learning and growth.

One cannot expect a child to excel in school if they are grappling with hunger or domestic abuse at home. Having witnessed such challenges, a holistic approach is essential to positively impact these children's lives. Therefore, we established a non-profit organisation, Engage and Empower, operating in Daveyton, Crystal Park, Mayfield, and the surrounding areas (East Rand areas, in Johannesburg, South Africa). This organisation addresses the comprehensive needs of children, assessing their personal, social, economic, and academic spheres. We focus on developing their self-awareness and social skills, exposing them to financial, digital, health, and civic literacy, particularly those with a porous academic foundation. For the academically gifted, we nurture their talents, offer career guidance, and support their educational advancement.

Our initiative emphasises real-world skills and knowledge not typically covered in school curriculums, necessitating industry collaboration. These children are the prospective accountants, construction workers, scientists, architects, and engineers of the future. However, their potential remains untapped due to the lack of practical exposure provided by industries and corporates.

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**No one
should go
through
what these
kids go
through
just to
survive
every day.**

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UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

FROM CONSUMERS TO CREATORS

Our programme, unlike private schooling that prepares students to be global citizens, seeks to bridge the international training gap encountered with our national certificate, enhancing the global competencies of our youth. We create a supportive ecosystem, creating future innovators and producers, transitioning them from consumers to creators. Our collaboration with The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) starts from grade 9, advocating for early exposure to practical experiences, building the pipeline.

Industry participation is crucial for these young minds to gain hands-on experience and insights into various professions, understanding the intricacies of manufacturing, food security, and health. Our aim is to instil life-changing skills and knowledge from an early age, facilitating their interaction within society and various industrial sectors.

The “Today for Tomorrow” expo, now in its second year, was conceived to prepare the youth for the future, embodying the philosophy of living intentionally today to transform tomorrow. While we may not completely alter their current circumstances, our collective efforts can significantly shape their future prospects.

In our area, there are 73 schools with about of 73,000 learners, 60% of whom attend low-income, no-fee public schools. These children are particularly vulnerable, unable to afford even modest school excursion contribution fees of R50 or R100. We urgently call on corporations to assist us in reaching these children, specifically targeting small groups from grades 9 to 11, to acquaint them with the future awaiting them.





TODAY, FOR *Tomorrow* EXPO 2023

Particularly at risk are the girl children, often exploited from a young age. With the alarming statistics on human trafficking, it's imperative to educate them about such dangers, encouraging self-awareness, and empowering them to dream and strive for a better future.

My focus is on devising and implementing strategies to offer these children, especially girls, a pathway to success. This involves exposing them to essential knowledge and practical life skills. However, their current reality is often confined to their homes and classrooms, limiting their exposure to broader societal and professional landscapes.

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The “Today for Tomorrow” expo, was conceived to prepare the youth for the future, embodying the philosophy of living intentionally today to transform tomorrow.

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INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE

THE TOWNSHIP CAREERS GUIDANCE DRIVE

To bridge this gap, we aim to create platforms for experiential learning, like visits to the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre, Accounting Firms, Manufacturing sites, to introduce them to real-world applications of their studies. But this initiative requires collective effort and corporate support to transform into reality. We currently self-fund interventions from individual social grant and pensioners contributions, yet the need to reach and positively impact these children's lives is immense.



COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

We envision a holistic development model that starts with personal awareness, enhances social interaction, and provides exposure to women in various industries, enhancing generational knowledge transfer and motivation. By supporting a school or sponsoring a group, corporations can play a crucial role in changing these children's trajectories, helping them to unlock their innate potential to thrive in challenging circumstances.

Academically, there's attendance training, like the one offered by Nedbank on financial literacy and money-saving, complemented by tutoring sessions. To extend these benefits broadly, we have conceptualised the Township Careers Guidance Drive. This initiative integrates personal, social, economic, and academic development, aiming to reach children in various environments, from Ekurhuleni to Mpumalanga, Alexandra, rural KwaZulu Natal and Soweto, offering a versatile, plug-and-play solution suitable for any township.

The goal is to provide children with direct industry interaction, breaking the cycle of confinement to their homes and overcrowded classrooms. It's imperative that corporates open their doors, granting real-world exposure to help students discern their potential career paths from an early stage.

Being a woman involves navigating multiple roles, often at the expense of personal well-being, especially in the non-profit sector where the struggle for resources is constant. Empowering the girl child and women is crucial, as it leads to the empowerment of entire nations. Yet, we face hurdles in accessing the necessary support to aid the next generation.

Creating pathways for these children is vital, but barriers to entry, like those encountered by NGOs and young professionals seeking funding, often impede progress. These obstacles, from stringent funding criteria to lack of exposure, restrict potential growth and scalability.

Our vision is to transform youth and society at large, encouraging them to envision and create a future where they are active contributors. The journey to a better tomorrow is a collective endeavour, achievable only through unity and shared effort.

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**“How can we
prepare the next
generation
today for
tomorrow?”**

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There's a pressing need for sustainable, well-considered strategies and systems. While ideas and intentions (IPOs) are abundant, their implementation, particularly in supporting youth and women, requires significant reinforcement. The foundation stage is crucial for establishing sustainable businesses and ensuring successful outcomes for startups, which often falter due to risks and uncertainties.

South Africa's population is constituted of 63% individuals aged 15-34 years. Over 3 million young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education, or training 'NEET' in South Africa in Q3, 2023, the unemployment rate for same age group was 60.7%. Early intervention is key in developing and instilling critical 21st century life and career skills to encourage growth, creative and entrepreneurial mindsets whilst in school to better prepare and position them for future excellence. We may not be able to fully change where they are today, but collectively we can illuminate a path to where they could be tomorrow.

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**"This is a
call to action
for corporate
to help us
reach those
kids, to
expose them
to the
realities that
await them
for the
future.**

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TODAY, FOR *Tomorrow* EXPO 2024



WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY



Within United Village Global, we have a programme called the Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP). WiSP celebrates the narratives of women: those who have paved the way and those who are yet to emerge. It focuses on stories that are not only told but also sell and build, creating a community of women who are powerful, bold, gentle, and loving. These women bravely share their journeys, highlighting their triumphs over adversity, ongoing impact, and the legacies they aspire to pass down through six generations..

MEET ZANDILE MBETHE FOUNDER OF ENGAGE EMPOWER NPC

SCAN ME



WATCH NOW



MESSAGE TO THE FUTURE ME

Embracing womanhood means recognising your strength and abilities. Remember to honour your journey by prioritising your physical and mental well-being, as nurturing yourself allows you to shine brighter in every aspect of life.