

25 November 2021

Building Better Businesses in South Africa since 1998

Dear Friends:

Thank you very much for your continued support through 2021. Here are some of the highlights – what YOU helped make possible.

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.” Nelson Mandela

PRIZE-WINNING ENTREPRENEURS ON THE PATH TO STABILITY AND GROWTH

Each Building Better Business Symposium earmarks substantial cash for prizes. The third Symposium more than doubled the prize money from the second Symposium.



Half of the prize money went to the top winner, Ms Nokwanda Mchunu, a 26-year-old entrepreneur, who founded her butchery business, Pink Print Farm Produce in 2018. Pink Print processes beef (85%) and mutton (15%) with a vision of becoming the leading agro-processor in South Africa, while empowering women. Nokwanda used the prize money to procure a meat-cutting band saw, and anticipates doubling employment from 4 to 8 full-time and 1 to 2 part-time staff with resulting new business. Nokwanda’s “special sauce”? She’s a young black woman in a male-dominated industry, a townships entrepreneur with a professional qualification and a local brand.

GOVERNMENT-ACCREDITED TRAINING: ANOTHER PATH TO STABILITY AND GROWTH

i) 100 MEDIATORS TO MARK 100 YEARS OF ROTARY IN AFRICA

“Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all.” Nelson Mandela

April 2021 marked 100 years of Rotary in Africa. **Rotary** recognized the need for youth and women in marginalized communities to be trained in mediation as a dispute resolution option and recruited **The Townships Project** to provide foundation funding and also to encourage a number of Rotary Clubs in Canada to support this project. Graduates are accredited by Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) and trained by a Rotary Vocational Training Team (VTT) in collaboration with the Africa Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and Unisa’s Institute for Dispute Resolution in Africa (IDRA). These mediators are now accredited professionals, entitled to be paid for the work that many have been doing in their communities without pay.

ii) EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) TRAINING

“The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children.” Nelson Mandela

Studies have long proven the value of ECD in every child’s life: it is foundational to building healthy communities for the future. In 2019, Sesego Foundation, led by Founding Member and CEO, Rotarian Annemarie Mostert, developed and ran an ECD project in Alexandra Township in the center of Johannesburg. Graduates of this government-accredited training are now entitled to ongoing government-funded per diem grants per child, making their day care businesses sustainable.

The result is stable and growing day care businesses benefitting not only the women owners but also the children and their parents. In 2020, **The Townships Project** provided funds to Sesego’s program in Soweto and is now funding a similar program in Mathibestad, near Pretoria, training 33 individuals who run 20 ECD centers.



*Graduates left to right:
Mpho Letsoalo, Ithuteng Nursery & Pre-School;
Nomusa Magwe, Tiny Angels Day Care;
Nokusa Shoba (partially obscured), Mthombo Wolwazi
Day Care Centre;
Dipuo Manamela, Mmabatho Day Care Centre; and
Reason Moyo, Bongane's Day Care.*

iii) GOVERNMENT-ACCREDITED SKILLS TRAINING

For the past 7 years, Robyn LeRoux has run a rescue and training program for young women escaping prostitution and life on the streets of townships around Johannesburg, resulting in the creation of about 70 tiny new businesses at Fleur Empowerment Centers. **The Townships Project**, in partnership with Sesego Foundation, is helping to upgrade this program to a government-accredited training academy, teaching skills to bakers, caterers, seamstresses, fashion designers, shop-keepers and others, opening them to the possibility of government funding.

BUILDING BETTER BUSINESSES (BBB) SYMPOSIUM

This Symposium is the foundation program for **The Townships Project** in South Africa. It is designed to provide township entrepreneurs with free access to the practical information they need to start and grow their businesses. Example: "All the tools you need for your business are on your cellphone!" The Symposium also gives them access to critical prize money which is invested into their businesses to improve their products, services, profitability and ultimately sustainability. Testimonials from attendees are on the South African website: www.thetownshipsproject.co.za.

COVID-19 necessitated a pivot to a virtual/in person mix for the third BBB Symposium held on March 25 and 26, 2021. This dramatically expanded our outreach through video-streaming (750), community radio (3,000) and listening centers (250) in local communities where up to 50 people could gather in one location as per the lockdown rules at the time. Our fourth BBB Symposium, scheduled for March 10 and 11, 2022, will again expand our outreach through more listening centers, better social media outreach and extensive community radio coverage. To that end, our South African board has recruited a Black-owned female-led social media communications company to guide our internet presence and to upgrade the free teaching resources on our website. The prize-winning entrepreneurs from previous Symposiums will attend the 4th Symposium to report on their progress and to inspire their peers.

CONNECTING WITH SOUTH AFRICA



When COVID-19 arrived, we began holding monthly ZOOM meetings that include both Canadian and South African board members, inspiring us to find new and innovative ways to build better businesses for mainly women and youth in townships. This screenshot shows us gathering across 9 hours of time zones: from 11 a.m. in Vancouver, through to Calgary, Toronto, Fenelon Falls, to 3 p.m. in Charlottetown in Canada and to 8 p.m. in South Africa.

ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU! Without your support, none of this would have happened. We hope that you will continue to change the lives of vulnerable entrepreneurs based in townships across South Africa. **You can donate securely by eTransfer/Interac through your bank or credit union to donations@thetownshipsproject.org.** You can also donate by mail, using the enclosed envelope with insert. All donations over \$20 will receive a charitable tax receipt.

Our best wishes for a COVID-free, safe, happy and fulfilling holiday season and New Year.

Sincerely,

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