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Department:
Economic Development, Environment,
Conservation and Tourism
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

LESEDI NEWSLETTER

**WOMEN'S
DAY
SPECIAL EDITION**



AUGUST 2026

External Publication of The North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism

Celebrating **WOMEN**

Strength. Impact. Legacy.
Happy Women's Day

“Empowered women
empower communities
and build a stronger
North West Province.”

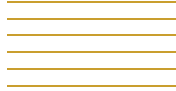


WOMEN DRIVING

Progress

TOWARDS A
PROSPEROUS FUTURE





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WOMEN'S DAY MESSAGE

By MEC BITSA LENKOPANE

9 AUGUST 2026

Today, on Women's Day, I join women and girls across the North West and South Africa in remembering the courage of the women who came before us. Seventy years ago, women stood together and marched because they believed that their voices mattered. Their courage still speaks to us today.

For me, Women's Day is not only about remembering 1956. It is about asking what we are doing today to make life better for the women and girls who come after us. It is about whether a woman can earn a decent living, whether she can start and grow a business, whether she can find work, whether her daughter can get a good education, and whether women have a fair chance to lead and make decisions about the future of our communities.

From the economic development side of government, we cannot talk about growth without talking about women. Women are already part of every part of our economy. They run businesses, work in our shops and factories, farm our land, trade in our streets and markets, work in offices, hospitals and schools, drive businesses and institutions, work in tourism and hospitality, participate in mining and construction, protect our environment and natural resources, and keep households and communities going.

I want to pay particular tribute to women in our rural areas. A woman in a village often carries many responsibilities at the same time. She may be raising children, caring for elderly family members, growing food, running a small business and looking for ways to put food on the table. Her contribution to the local economy is real, even when it is not always counted in the statistics.

We must make sure that rural women are not left behind. They need access to markets, finance, land, infrastructure, technology, training and business support. They need opportunities that allow them to grow what they are already doing and turn their hard work into sustainable livelihoods and businesses.



We must also think about the girls growing up in our villages and on farms. A girl who grows up in a rural community must be able to dream as big as any other girl. She must be able to see herself as an engineer, scientist, farmer, entrepreneur, lawyer, doctor, environmental specialist, tourism professional, business owner or political leader. Where a girl comes from must never determine how far she can go.

That is why we must invest in girls early. Education, skills, digital access, mentorship and exposure to opportunities can change the direction of a young woman's life. When we give a girl confidence and opportunity, we are not only changing her life. We are changing the future of her family and her community.

To women in business, I want to say that your contribution matters. Whether you are running a small spaza shop, a catering business, a construction company, a farm, a tourism establishment, a manufacturing business or a professional practice, you are part of our economy. Our responsibility is to help create the conditions in which your business can survive, grow, employ other people and enter bigger markets.

Women's economic empowerment is not a favour. It is part of building a stronger economy.

We also need to move away from thinking that supporting women in business simply means giving them equipment or once off assistance. Real economic empowerment means helping women develop sustainable businesses. It means skills, access to finance, market opportunities, mentorship, technology, procurement opportunities and support after the initial intervention.

I salute women who are entering sectors where women have historically been underrepresented. We need more women in mining, engineering, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, technology and other productive sectors. We also need more women owning businesses and occupying management and leadership positions in these industries.

In tourism, conservation and the biodiversity economy, there are enormous opportunities for women, particularly in our rural communities. Our natural environment, heritage and tourism assets must create opportunities for local women and young people. Women should not only participate as employees. They should also be entrepreneurs, owners, investors, concessionaires and decision makers.

We must also recognise women in the informal economy. The woman selling vegetables, preparing food, making clothes, providing a service or trading at a local market is contributing to the economy and supporting her family. Our policies and programmes must recognise that reality and help informal businesses access better infrastructure, markets, skills and opportunities to grow.

To women in the professions, in business, in organised labour, in civil society, in education, in science and technology, in public administration and in our communities, I thank you for the work you do. Many women carry their professional responsibilities while also carrying the responsibilities of families. That contribution deserves recognition and support.

I also want to recognise women who serve in politics and public leadership. Women bring an important perspective to public life because they understand many of the challenges facing families and communities from direct experience. We need women in our political structures, councils, public institutions and leadership spaces. Their voices must not simply be present. Their voices must be heard and respected.

As government, we have a responsibility to make economic opportunities more accessible. That means connecting people to programmes, markets, investment, skills and finance. It means working with municipalities, business, financial institutions, traditional and community structures, educational institutions and other partners. Most importantly, it means listening to women themselves and understanding what prevents them from moving forward.

Women's economic empowerment is not a favour. It is part of building a stronger economy. When a woman grows a business, jobs can be created. When a rural woman has access to a market, a household can become more secure. When a girl receives the right education, an entire community can benefit from what she eventually contributes. When women are given space to lead, our institutions and communities become stronger.

So, on this Women's Day, my message is simple. Let us not only celebrate women. Let us open doors for them. Let us create opportunities. Let us support women owned businesses. Let us invest in girls. Let us make sure rural women are included. Let us create space for women in every sector of the economy and in every level of leadership.

To the mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, farmers, traders, workers, entrepreneurs, professionals, community leaders and political leaders of the North West, I salute you. I know that many of you continue to carry your families and communities through difficult circumstances, and yet you keep going. Your strength is part of the strength of our province.

As we remember the women of 1956, let us also remember our responsibility to the young women and girls who are watching us today. Let them inherit a province where they can work, own, lead, build businesses, participate in the economy and live with dignity.

Happy Women's Day to all women and girls. May we continue the work of building an economy in which women are not only participants, but owners, leaders and equal partners in the development of the North West and South Africa.

**“Empowered Women,
Empower Nations.”**

MEC BITSA LENKOPANE | DEDECT

DEDECT CELEBRATES ORATILWE MESELE NAMENG, A WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR ADVANCING WELLNESS TOURISM

By: Seloane Seleka & Tiro Appolos

As South Africa celebrates Women's Month, the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) is shining the spotlight on Oratilwe Mesele Nameng, a member of the North West Women in Tourism (WiT) and founder of Mesora Experiences in Phokeng, Rustenburg, whose entrepreneurial journey demonstrates the contribution of women to tourism transformation, local economic development and community empowerment.



Mesora Experiences was officially opened in 2018 with a vision of making wellness accessible to ordinary people in extraordinary ways. What began as a wellness spa has grown into a broader wellness ecosystem offering spa experiences, premium accommodation, dining, conferencing and events, as well as workplace and community wellness, mindset and performance coaching, transformation speaking and facilitation, and holistic wellness services.

For Oratilwe, entrepreneurship is about more than owning a successful business.

“Being a woman entrepreneur in tourism means creating opportunities where they did not previously exist. It means showing that women can lead businesses that create jobs, strengthen communities and transform lives,” she says.

Through Mesora Experiences, Oratilwe Nameng has demonstrated that quality wellness and hospitality experiences can be developed within local communities, contributing to the diversification of the North West tourism offering while creating opportunities for local economic participation.

Her journey has been strengthened through her participation in the North West Women in Tourism structure, a platform that promotes the empowerment, development and participation of women in the tourism sector.

The Women in Tourism initiative is a national programme aimed at providing women with training, networking opportunities and resources to succeed as entrepreneurs, professionals and leaders.

Through WiT, Oratilwe has accessed networking opportunities, tourism trade fairs, summits and exhibitions, expanding her knowledge, networks and exposure to potential markets.



“Women in Tourism is important because it gives women visibility, support, mentorship and opportunities to grow together. When women support one another, entire communities benefit,” she says.

The Department, through the Tourism Sector and Transformation Unit, supports the North West Women in Tourism structure by facilitating its coordination, providing entrepreneurship and tourism skills development, creating networking and mentorship opportunities, and supporting women-owned tourism businesses with market access, exhibitions, promotion and linkages to funding and investment opportunities.

For Oratilwe, these opportunities have contributed to her business exposure and growth. She also acknowledges the support received from other government institutions, which formed part of her broader entrepreneurial journey.

“The greatest lesson is that opportunity follows compliance,” she says,

encouraging women entrepreneurs to build compliant businesses as a foundation for sustainable growth and access to development opportunities.

Like many tourism businesses, Mesora Experiences has navigated challenges such as periods of water and electricity shortages and economic pressures, which directly affect wellness establishments where hygiene and reliable services are essential.

Building A North West Province That Works For All

She believes the future of tourism in the North West is bright, particularly as travellers increasingly seek authentic, meaningful and restorative experiences, and believes the province is well positioned to provide these experiences.

As part of Women's Month, Oratilwe encourages women to recognise both their strength and their humanity, saying strength does not mean being unbreakable.

“We are not only rocks, but we are soft rocks. We have emotions, we get tired, we need support, and we deserve wellness too.”

She believes true strength lies in acknowledging one's humanity while continuing to rise.

She further highlighted her vision to leave a legacy of making wellness accessible to ordinary people while using her experience to help other individuals, entrepreneurs and organisations build healthier and more sustainable futures.

“I hope my legacy will be that I made wellness accessible to ordinary people in extraordinary ways.”

Through women such as Nameng, the Department continues to recognise the important role played by women-owned enterprises in the tourism economy and the contribution of the Women in Tourism structure in creating platforms for networking, skills development, mentorship, market access and empowerment.

DEDECT SUPPORT EMPOWERS MAUREEN'S BEAUTY HUB TO CREATE JOBS AND GROW LOCAL ECONOMY

By Mpumi Mashike & Obakeng Mashishi

As South Africa commemorates Women's Month, the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) is celebrating women entrepreneurs whose resilience, innovation and determination are driving economic growth, creating jobs and strengthening communities across the province.



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Among them is Maureen Modisaotsile, Founder and Director of Maureen's Beauty Hub (Pty) Ltd in Golfview, Mahikeng, whose entrepreneurial journey demonstrates how targeted government support can help women-owned businesses strengthen their operations, create employment opportunities and unlock sustainable growth.

Formally registered in 2019, Maureen's Beauty Hub offers a range of professional beauty and wellness services, including massage therapy, waxing, facial treatments, make-up, manicures, pedicures and nail treatments. The business also provides mobile and house-call beauty services for special events, making quality beauty and wellness services more accessible to clients.

Like many small businesses, Maureen's Beauty Hub experienced significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these setbacks, Modisaotsile remained determined to rebuild and expand her business.

Through the Department's Empowerment Fund, DEDECT provided the business with essential salon equipment and furniture to strengthen its operational capacity and support its long-term sustainability. The support package included a laptop, massage beds, portable wooden massage tables, beauty trolleys, wax warmers, beauty stools and electric facial chairs. These resources have enabled the business to improve the quality of its services, increase its client base and operate more efficiently.

The impact of the Department's intervention extends beyond the provision of equipment. Since receiving the support, Maureen's Beauty Hub has expanded its workforce by recruiting two additional staff members who are currently undergoing training, bringing the business to a team of five beauty professionals, three of whom are permanently employed. This growth demonstrates how targeted support to women-owned enterprises can translate into meaningful job creation, skills development and sustainable livelihoods within local communities.

Reflecting on the support, Modisaotsile expressed her appreciation to the Department for investing in the growth and sustainability of her business.

"The support from DEDECT has made a significant difference to my business. It has enabled us to improve our services, attract more clients and create employment opportunities. I encourage women to believe in their ideas, make use of available support programmes such as the Empowerment Fund and take the bold step of starting and growing their own businesses," she said.

MEC for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, Bitsa Lenkopane, said the growth of Maureen's Beauty Hub demonstrates the importance of creating practical pathways for women and young entrepreneurs to participate meaningfully in the economy.

"Women entrepreneurs are not merely beneficiaries of economic development; they are active drivers of it. When we invest in a woman-owned enterprise, we are investing in skills, livelihoods, families and communities. The story of Maureen's Beauty Hub demonstrates what becomes possible when entrepreneurs with vision and determination are given the right tools and opportunities to grow. Through the Empowerment Fund, we want to see more women and young people turn their ideas into sustainable enterprises that create jobs and contribute to the economic development of the province," said MEC Lenkopane.

The success of Maureen's Beauty Hub illustrates that empowerment is most meaningful when government support translates into real change through stronger businesses, improved livelihoods, skills development and new opportunities for others. Modisaotsile's journey serves as a reminder that when women entrepreneurs are empowered to grow, the benefits extend beyond individual businesses to families, communities and the broader provincial economy.

The success of entrepreneurs like Maureen Modisaotsile demonstrates how targeted government support can unlock business growth, create employment opportunities and advance inclusive economic development across the province.

THIS WOMEN'S MONTH, DEDECT CELEBRATES POPPY NKATE, WHO IS OFTEN BEHIND THE SCENES BUT WHOSE WORK IS VERY MUCH IN THE PICTURE

By: Beauty Khambule & Seloane Seleka

"Happy Monday! Happy Tuesday! Have a beautiful day!"



If you have walked through the corridors of the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) head office, chances are you have heard these words before.

And if you are one of those colleagues who sometimes needs a little encouragement to survive a Monday morning, Mme Poppy Nkate's cheerful greeting may just be the unofficial departmental wellness programme you did not know you needed.

For more than 10 years, Poppy Nkate has quietly become part of the fabric of the department. Dressed in her work uniform, armed with a warm smile, she moves from office to office, ensuring that the spaces where officials work, meet, plan and serve the people of the North West Province remain clean, safe and welcoming.

This Women's Month, DEDECT is turning the spotlight on her. Because sometimes the people who keep an organisation going are not the ones standing behind a podium or appearing in a newspaper. Sometimes, they are the people who arrive early, roll up their sleeves and get the job done, often without expecting applause.

This time, however, we are giving Mme Poppy her flowers while she can still smell them.

Building A North West Province That Works For All

Originally from Lotlhakane village, Mme Poppy has spent a decade working at DEDECT as a cleaner. But ask her about her work, and it quickly becomes clear that she sees her role as much more than cleaning floors and emptying bins.

For her, cleanliness is about pride, professionalism, dignity and service.

"I enjoy my work because I love being clean,"

she says with her trademark smile. Her responsibilities take her across the department, from the administrative level to the offices of senior management. She understands that every space deserves the same level of care and professionalism.

"We clean offices for everyone, from administrative officers to the Head of Department and the MEC. We have to be professional and articulate in our work. We serve with dignity and courtesy. That is part of Batho Pele," she says.

It is a simple statement, but it carries a powerful message: every job contributes to the functioning of government, and every worker deserves dignity and respect.

Behind the cheerful greetings is a woman who knows something about resilience. As a single mother, Mme Poppy says life has presented its share of challenges. Rather than allowing those difficulties to define her, she has used them as motivation to work harder and provide for her family

"When God created a woman, He knew she would carry great responsibilities and face many challenges, but He also gave her the strength to overcome them," she says.

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“When God created a woman, He knew she would carry great responsibilities and face many challenges, but He also gave her the strength to overcome them,” she says.

Her words echo the timeless truth found in Proverbs 31:25, which describes a woman as being

“clothed with strength and dignity”

It is a quiet strength that does not always seek recognition but faithfully shows up every day, with courage, grace, and determination. Mme Poppy embodies that strength, proving that resilience is often found not in grand gestures, but in the everyday commitment to serve others with excellence and hope.

Her story is a reminder that resilience does not always make headlines. Sometimes it looks like waking up, getting ready for work, and showing up again and again, even when life is not easy.

And perhaps that is one of the most powerful lessons she has to share this Women’s Month. For Mme Poppy, Women’s Month is not simply another date on the calendar. It is an opportunity to remember the struggles that women have endured and to reflect on how far society has come – and how much work remains

She believes that the significance of Women’s Day should never be lost in celebrations and festivities. For her, 9 August is a reminder of the women who stood up against injustice in 1956 and of the sacrifices made by generations of women who fought for dignity, equality and opportunity.

But she also believes the responsibility continues.

“Women need upliftment, leadership and support. We need to be on the frontline where there is recognition and unity. Women matter always,” she says.

Her message is particularly relevant in the workplace, where she says her years at DEDECT have taught her the importance of respect, independence and supporting other women.

“Being a woman is about uplifting one another, having a shoulder to cry on and protecting each other.”

There is, however, one thing that colleagues may know best about Mme Poppy: her greetings.

Monday? Happy Monday. Tuesday? Happy Tuesday.

And if you are lucky, you may get a cheerful wish for a good day regardless of what the calendar says. Her positivity has become part of the everyday rhythm of the department, a small gesture that can change someone’s morning.

It is easy to overlook such moments. Yet in a busy workplace, where deadlines, meetings, emails and reports can sometimes consume the day, a smile and a kind word can go a surprisingly long way.

Mme Poppy reminds us that creating a positive workplace culture is not only the responsibility of managers, committees or formal programmes. Sometimes, it starts with simply greeting the person next to you.

As the nation celebrates Women’s Month, Mme Poppy represents the many women whose contributions are essential but whose stories are rarely told.

Her story reminds us that **“every contribution matters”**. Whether you sit in an office, work in the field, attend meetings, answer phones, clean offices or lead a programme, each role forms part of the bigger picture of public service.

This Women’s Month, DEDECT celebrates the women who are often behind the scenes but whose work is very much in the picture.

And to Mme Poppy Nkate, we say:

“Thank you for keeping our spaces clean, our workplace welcoming and, perhaps most importantly, our mornings a little brighter. Happy Women’s Month, Mme Poppy. Keep smiling. Keep shining. And please keep those “Happy Mondays” coming!”

HONOURING OUR WOMEN FIELD RANGERS, “WOMEN WHO PROTECT OUR WILDLIFE”

By: Keamogetse Mokoneng and Rebabaletswe Tshwene

Women. Basadi. Vroue. Abafazi. Bomme. Across South Africa's many languages, the word woman may be spoken differently, but it embodies the same enduring qualities of strength, resilience, courage, compassion and determination. These qualities continue to shape families, strengthen communities and contribute meaningfully to South Africa's development.

As South Africa commemorates Women's Month, the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) proudly celebrates women serving on the frontline of conservation. Their contribution extends beyond protecting wildlife; they safeguard biodiversity, preserve the province's natural heritage, promote environmental sustainability and support eco-tourism, an important driver of economic growth and job creation.

Traditionally regarded as a male-dominated profession, the field requires physical endurance, technical expertise, discipline and long periods away from home. Despite these challenges, more women are entering the profession and proving that effective conservation is driven by passion, commitment and knowledge rather than gender. Their growing presence is helping to transform the sector while inspiring more young women to pursue careers in environmental management and biodiversity conservation.

Among these inspiring women are Kelebogile Molefe, Acting Reserve Manager at Barberspan Nature Reserve, and Galaletsang Gopane, Field Ranger: Anti-Poaching Unit at Mahikeng Nature Reserve. Both serve under the North West Parks and Tourism Board (NWP&TB), an entity of DEDECT. Their journeys reflect determination, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to protecting the province's biodiversity and natural heritage

For Kelebogile Molefe, conservation is more than a career; it is a lifelong passion inspired by her love for nature and by seeing women proudly serving as field rangers. Today, as Acting Reserve Manager at Barberspan Nature Reserve, she plays a vital role in protecting one of South Africa's internationally recognised wetlands and bird sanctuaries.

Building a North West Province That Works For All



KELEBOGILE MOLEFE

“As I work in a bird sanctuary, my role is to protect bird life, and protecting birds means protecting wetlands, grasslands and forests. It makes me very happy when I rescue a little bird that has fallen from its nest or when I assist in ensuring an injured owl receives rehabilitation. Nature has taught me patience, resilience and the importance of learning something new on daily basis.”

Kelebogile's work demonstrates the critical link between conservation and sustainable development. Healthy ecosystems support biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience, protect water resources and create opportunities for eco-tourism, environmental education and local economic development. Every species protected contributes to preserving the natural heritage that future generations will inherit.



GALALETsang GOPANE

Equally inspiring is Galaletsang Gopane, whose journey into conservation began through the Working on Fire Programme, a government-funded job creation initiative implemented under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The programme equipped her with valuable skills, discipline and practical experience, laying the foundation for her career in conservation.

After completing the rigorous recruitment process, Gopane joined the North West Parks and Tourism Board as a Field Ranger in the Anti-Poaching Unit. In this role, she is at the forefront of protecting wildlife from illegal activities through regular patrols, monitoring biodiversity, responding to environmental threats and supporting law enforcement efforts aimed at combating wildlife crime. Her work plays a vital role in safeguarding protected areas, preserving endangered species and ensuring that the province's natural resources continue to support conservation and sustainable tourism.

Reflecting on her experience, Gopane believes women bring unique strengths to conservation.

She further added that through environmental awareness, education and community engagement, they play an important role in fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and encouraging communities to take an active role in protecting the province's rich biodiversity for future generations.

Galaletsang Gopane said that the growing participation of women in conservation is also helping to shift perceptions of the profession, inspiring more young women to pursue careers in environmental management, biodiversity conservation, and wildlife protection. Beyond conservation, their contributions advance South Africa's broader development agenda by promoting gender equality, creating employment opportunities, developing critical environmental skills, and strengthening efforts to safeguard the country's natural heritage.

The stories of Kelebogile Molefe and Galaletsang Gopane serve as a powerful reminder that investing in women is an investment in sustainable development, environmental protection and the prosperity of our communities.

“Women bring empathy, effective communication and a collaborative approach to conservation, helping to strengthen relationships between protected areas and surrounding communities”, she said.

DEDECT CELEBRATES SANDRA RAMAITE FOR TRANSFORMING WASTE INTO OPPORTUNITY AND ADVANCING THE GREEN ECONOMY

By: Seloane Seleka

Sandra Ramaite is proving that women are playing a pivotal role in South Africa's green economy. Through CalSan Enviro Solutions, the Lichtenburg-based entrepreneur is advancing sustainable waste management while creating economic opportunities for waste reclaimers and strengthening the province's recycling value chain.



"I was inspired by the opportunity to turn waste into a resource while creating jobs and economic opportunities," she says.

A key milestone in the company's growth was the establishment of a Recycling Buy-Back Centre in Lichtenburg. The facility provides a reliable and accessible market where waste reclaimers can sell recyclable materials (plastic material and paper), improving recycling rates while generating an income for individuals and families.

"Behind every kilogram collected is a person, a household and an opportunity," says Ramaite.

During this Women's Month, the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT) celebrates Ramaite's contribution to environmental sustainability, entrepreneurship and community development. Her journey demonstrates how innovative waste management solutions can generate employment, promote responsible environmental practices and support local economic growth.

CalSan Enviro Solutions provides waste management and recycling services with a strong focus on reducing the amount of waste disposed at landfill sites. Inspired by the potential to transform waste into a valuable resource, Ramaite established the business to create both environmental and economic opportunities within her community.

Operating in a traditionally male-dominated sector has not been without challenges. Access to funding, equipment and other resources required to expand the business has tested her resilience. However, she believes these experiences have strengthened her determination, reinforced the value of strategic partnerships and encouraged her to remain focused on achieving sustainable growth.

The department, through its Environment Services Unit, has played an important role in supporting the growth of CalSan Enviro Solutions. The company is assisted with the registration of its waste management facilities in accordance with the applicable Norms and Standards, ensuring compliance with environmental legislation and regulatory requirements.

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The Department's support has strengthened the company's compliance, enhanced its operational credibility and positioned it to participate more effectively in the formal waste management and recycling sector. In addition, DEDECT has created market-access opportunities through initiatives such as #MatlakalaKeZaka and other departmental events. These platforms enable the business to increase its visibility, build strategic partnerships and connect with potential clients and stakeholders. A notable example was the Thuntsha Lerole Accelerated Programme in Leeudoringstad, where local residents were given an opportunity to sell recyclable waste collected from their yards, turning household waste into a source of income while promoting responsible waste management.

For Ramaite, this support highlights the important role that government plays in empowering small businesses to grow sustainably while contributing to environmental protection, job creation and local economic development.

She encourages aspiring women entrepreneurs to embrace every opportunity, no matter how small.

"Start with what you have and do not despise small beginnings. Be willing to learn, build relationships, and keep showing up even when you face challenges or rejection. Believe in what you are building and remember that your journey can open doors for other women too", she said.

Sandra Ramaite's journey demonstrates how determination, resilience and environmental stewardship can transform waste into opportunity. Her story serves as an inspiration to women entrepreneurs and a testament to the impact that collaboration between government and small businesses can have in driving inclusive economic growth and environmental sustainability.

"Reflecting on Women's Month, Ramaite says it is a reminder that true empowerment extends beyond personal success. "True empowerment is not only about our own success, but about using our growth to create opportunities for other women and the next generation," she says.

DEDECT CELEBRATES KOKETSO BOGOPANE, A WOMAN CARVING HER WAY IN THE SPECIALISED CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

By: Mpumi Mashike & Obakeng Mashishi

In an industry where women remain understated, Ms Koketso Bogopane, Founder and Director of Matlafatso Investment, is proving that determination, resilience and continuous learning can break barriers and create opportunities in the specialised construction sector.



For Bogopane, entrepreneurship is a journey of continuous growth.

"Being in business requires you to keep learning and equipping yourself with knowledge. You have to study smart and work hard because opportunities do not always come looking for you," she says.

Recognising the business's growth potential, the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT), through its Empowerment Fund, became the first institution to provide financial support to Matlafatso Investment. The assistance enabled the business to acquire specialised equipment, strengthening its operational capacity, improving turnaround times and positioning it to pursue larger contracts.

The investment has also enhanced the company's competitiveness, enabling it to respond more efficiently to client needs while reinvesting profits to sustain growth and create employment opportunities.

As part of its growth strategy, Matlafatso Investment has diversified its operations by introducing mobile rental offices and storage facilities, creating an additional revenue stream while expanding its footprint in the market.

Beyond business success, Bogopane is committed to making a meaningful social impact. She has created permanent and seasonal employment opportunities, as well as mentorship initiatives; she is empowering young people and encouraging more women to pursue careers and entrepreneurship in industries traditionally dominated by men.

Based in Phokeng, Rustenburg, and established at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Matlafatso Investment specialises in plumbing and drainage services for mines, commercial establishments and private businesses. The business was born out of Bogopane's ability to identify a gap in the market and transformed a challenging period into an entrepreneurial opportunity.

With qualifications in Business Management and Marketing, Bogopane gained valuable industry experience while working at The Drain Surgeon before taking the bold step of establishing her own company. Today, she leads a growing enterprise that services clients including The Royal Marang Hotel, McDonald's and Impala Platinum, among others.

Building A North West Province That Works For All



“Women have been leading families and communities for generations. We must invest in ourselves, seek opportunities to learn and never allow obstacles to convince us that we do not belong in spaces that have traditionally been dominated by men,” she says

Bogopane identifies access to markets as one of the greatest challenges facing women-owned businesses, particularly those operating in specialised sectors. She believes stronger partnerships between government, the private sector and development institutions are essential to creating an enabling environment where women-owned enterprises can compete and thrive.

Her involvement in the Chamber of Women in Business in the Rustenburg area further reflects her commitment to advancing women's economic empowerment and contributing to discussions on entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

With unemployment remaining one of South Africa's most pressing socio-economic challenges, Bogopane believes that growing sustainable small businesses is key to creating jobs, stimulating local economies and improving livelihoods.

Her advice to aspiring women entrepreneurs is simple but powerful:

“Be brave. Be bold. Keep knocking on doors. Opportunities are not always handed to you. When your business starts generating returns, reinvest in it so that it can continue to grow.”

Matlafatso Investment is one example of how government support, through the Empowerment Fund, can have a transformative impact by enabling small businesses to expand, improve their competitiveness, create sustainable employment opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to economic development.



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Department:
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Conservation and Tourism
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL

EMPOWERED WOMEN, EMPOWER NATIONS.

***LET THEM INHERIT A PROVINCE WHERE THEY CAN WORK, OWN, LEAD,
BUILD BUSINESSES, PARTICIPATE IN THE ECONOMY AND LIVE WITH
DIGNITY.***

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