

# NEWSLETTER



## CELEBRATING MANDELA DAY

In honour of **Nelson Mandela Day**, our Partner Liaison & Development Officer, Mbali, dedicated 87 minutes to meaningful community work, embodying the spirit of service and leadership. Her efforts included organising clean-up drives, youth mentorship sessions, and food parcel distributions.



## STRATEGIC WORKSHOP WITH WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

AUGUST 2025



## DDP Chairperson of the Board, Dr. Devi Rajab

The Democracy Development Program hosted an International Women's Day Women's Forum at eLangeni hotel, Durban. [Read more here](#)

## TOP NEWS

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# Women Promoting Community Development



Above: Zamasomi Msomi - Mgungundlovu District Women's Sector Chairperson , Hlengiwe Sithole Mgungundlovu District Gender Officer, DDP's Mbalenhle Mkhize, DDP Associates, Mandy Chili and Buhlebuyeza Motseme, and Cllr Ngcobo, Ward 3.



Above: Hlengiwe Sithole, Mgungundlovu District Gender Officer.

## Empowering Voices: Highlights from the Women's Conference 2025

The Women's Conference, held on August 7, 2025, at Phindangene Hall in Impendle, in collaboration with the Impendle Local Municipality, was a transformative gathering of women leaders, community activists, and stakeholders. United under the theme "SHE Leads:

[Read more](#)

Activate, Mobilize, Educate



# Advocating for Human Rights and Justice in South Africa



*Above: Xoliswa Jwili, DDP Associate and partner, with delegates during a workshop at Huntswood*

Curated by Xoliswa Jwili, DDP Associate Facilitator, this project delves into how women can effectively advocate for justice when their rights are violated. Through storytelling, legal literacy, and community mobilization, the initiative empowers women to confront systemic injustices and demand accountability.

"I have witnessed how the struggles women face—whether in corporate offices, call centers, or community spaces—are deeply interconnected across generations and professions. Despite our diverse roles and backgrounds, women in South Africa share a powerful bond through the challenges of discrimination, inequality, and injustice."

[Read more](#)

## Empowering Young Women Activists through Legal Literacy



*Above: DDP's Mbalenhle Mkhize with Suraksha Singh*

### #SHELEADS

On 6 August 2025, the Democracy Development Program (DDP) hosted a powerful and insightful Women's Dialogue at the DDP Seminar Room, facilitated by Xoliswa Jwili, a DDP Associate Facilitator. Themed "Family and Labour Law in Practice: Empowering Young Women Activists through Legal Literacy,"

[Read more](#)



# Strategic Workshop with Women-Owned Businesses in Partnership with NEF and The Presidency

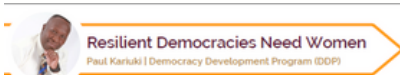


*Above: DDP's Mbalenhle Mkhize, with Delegates and Hon Madlopha Chairperson of the KZN Women's Caucus, and Hon Tembe, Deputy Speaker of the KZN Legislature at the WEEP Workshop.*

On 19 August 2025, the Harry Gwala District hosted a pivotal gathering at Kokstad Town Hall for the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (WEEP) Workshop, in partnership with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and the Presidency. The event brought together Women-Owned Businesses (WOBs) from across the region to engage in dialogue, capacity building, and strategic networking aimed at advancing women's economic participation and empowerment.

[Read more](#)

## Resilient Democracies Need Women



**Resilient Democracies Need Women**  
Paul Kariuki | Democracy Development Program (DDP)

### RETHINKING REPRESENTATION IN AFRICA

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) statistics of 2023, women occupy approximately 23.4% of parliamentary seats across Sub-Saharan Africa, which is below the global average of 27.7%. While some countries, such as Rwanda, have achieved remarkable milestones—women hold over 60% of the seats in the lower house—the majority of nations on the sub-continent still have gender ill-balanced legislatures.



Thabane Khama opens the first Women in Government and Politics Conference for Africa

Historically, women in Sub-Saharan Africa faced barriers such as cultural

but critical shift toward inclusive democracy.

Gender quotas are often promoted as a key strategy to increase women's representation in politics across Sub-Saharan Africa but their effectiveness translating into meaningful influence and leadership remains limited. One significant challenge is that quotas frequently lead to the nomination of women who are tokenistic or lack genuine political support, thereby undermining their ability to effectively advocate for gender sensitive policies. Such representatives may occupy legislative seats but have little power to shape decision-making processes or drive substantive change. Additionally, quotas often result in a superficial increase in numbers without addressing deeper socio-cultural barriers, such as entrenched gender norms, limited access to resources, and societal perceptions about women's roles, which continue to restrict women's influence beyond mere representation.

### Rethinking Representation in Africa

This op-ed, published by Stellenbosch University, explores the indispensable role of women in sustaining democratic institutions and practices. It calls for intentional inclusion, policy reform, and recognition of women's contributions to democratic resilience.

Read the full article [here](#)

**Activate, Mobilize, Educate**



# Empowering Women: A United Front for Safety, Voice, and Change



Above: Speaker addressing delegates at the Women's Conference held in Inanda on 21 August 2025.

## Hosted by DDP & Inanda Youth Crime Prevention Desk In Partnership with Community Stakeholders

On 21 August 2025, the Inanda Youth Crime Prevention Desk (YCPD) in partnership with the Democracy Development program and other key stakeholders, hosted a powerful and transformative Women's Seminar at the O.R. Tambo Community Center in Ward 57, under the theme:

**"Strengthening Women's Capacity for Advancing Socio-Economic Development – To End GBV, Rape and Murder in Inanda, Durban."**

The seminar brought together young women from diverse backgrounds, both in and out of school, aged between 14 and 35, ... [Read more](#)

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**"An empowered woman, can empower others."**

**This is a special issue dedicated to women, this women's month**

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