

Inspiring future female leaders and entrepreneurs through stories

 By [Nunu Ntshingila](#)

25 Aug 2020

From an early age, I have taken inspiration from strong female role models, like my grandmother who owned a small business in Soweto her whole life as well as my mother, who owned a fashion store in Swaziland. Their enthusiasm and commitment helped to spark my passion for contributing to the development of female leaders and entrepreneurs across the African continent.



Nunu Ntshingila, Regional Director, Facebook Africa

Today, I am privileged to work for a company whose mission directly relates to this – giving people the power to build community and bringing the world closer together. As my own journey shows, role models are key to inspiring more women to take their place in society as leaders, businesspeople and agents of change. But a history of structural discrimination means that in South Africa, we are short of high-profile female role models in business and public life.

Our greatest untapped resource

In a project especially close to my heart, and in celebration of [Women's Month](#), at Facebook we've compiled the stories and life lessons under a specially created book called *Inspiring #Changemakers: Lessons from Life and Business*. The book showcases the careers and lives of some extraordinary South African women, they come from diverse backgrounds and importantly, impart their knowledge and advice to future leaders.

We profiled women who have achieved so much by utilising their voices, sharing their stories, and embracing those of others. Whether it's making a difference in their communities or starting social movements that change the world, women are having an impact by making their voices heard.

The success stories in this book show that women are perhaps the greatest untapped resource we have in South Africa and the rest of the continent. One of the best ways we can unleash the potential of this resource is by empowering more women to become entrepreneurs and leaders. We know that when women do better, our economy will do better, too.

With this book, we wanted to inspire the next generation of leaders, they will be the ones to bring change in the near future, and the best way to do this is by amplifying the voices of women who have gone before them. During these challenging times, it is more important than ever to celebrate high-achieving women and create role models for young people.

Making it happen

Many of these women have made an impact, not only in South Africa but across the world in sectors ranging from fashion, entertainment, food, politics, law and retail. With the diversity of their backgrounds, the range of challenges they have overcome, and the different journeys they have taken to success, there are experiences here that will resonate with everyone.

For example, take a look at:

- Rabia Ghoor, who founded switchbeauty, an online beauty company when she was 14. She talks about why “age is no obstacle to success.” Her story highlights how innocence and being young can actually work in your favour when you’re not held back by the doubts and fears that plague so many of us.
- Siba Mtongana who’s known to millions around the world as the host of Siba’s Table on Food Network, talks about her own journey in entrepreneurship and how not having to report to someone, or seek permission, has enabled her to break down her own barriers - “If you see an opportunity, go for it.”
- Palesa Mokubung, a fashion designer who, through her brand Mantsho became the first African designer to work with the international fashion company, H&M. She highlights “why you have to be hungry – and stay hungry for opportunities.”
- Glenda Ramathavha, who turned a hobby into a business, and is teaching others through her company, Glenz Cakes. Inspires readers to “use the one thing that drives you to do something for others.”

Reading about the resilience of these amazing entrepreneurs and the lessons they have learnt on the road to success will inspire anyone reading the book.

Optimism and resilience

We have many other stories, and important life lessons featured in our book, they offer hope at a time when small and women-owned businesses face extreme challenges. Our [State of Small Business Report](#) in partnership with the World Bank and OECD, also shows that there’s still significant optimism and resilience amongst the small business community.

Over 54% of operational South African SMBs on Facebook feel optimistic about the future of their business, with 42% of female led SMBs on Facebook (and 66% of male led SMBs) currently operational or engaging in revenue led activities.

We believe that progress is possible when people have the opportunity to share their story with others. *Inspiring #Changemakers: Lessons from Life and Business* aims to do just that, share stories which provide inspiration, which is why we're also donating over 1,000 copies to local schools across six provinces in the country to inspire more youths about the possibilities of their future.

ABOUT NUNU NTSHINGILA

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