



University of Venda
Creating future leaders

University of Venda Celebrates Women's Empowerment through Entrepreneurship and Leadership



Attendees

On August 26, 2025, the University of Venda's Directorate of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation, and Commercialisation gathered students, leaders, and innovators at the university's E Block 1 lecture hall. This event was held under the theme: 'The Future is Female: Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Love.' This was a dynamic discussion on how women could shape the future through entrepreneurship and leadership. This empowering workshop drew over 70 attendees and was graced with a vibrant performance by Ms Gundo Muhlongo and the UNIVEN Electro General group, setting the tone for a powerful and inspiring session.



Tshilamulele Tshinakaho, General Manager of Skills for the future programme

Tshinakaho set a warm tone for the workshop, encouraging attendees to fully participate and discussed mentorship and kindness,

stating that "power is not about dictatorship, but about being graceful, embracing our vulnerability, using it as power." She encouraged women to support each other. The atmosphere was filled with love and warmth as she encouraged participants to feel free.

Tshilamulele Tshinakaho rendered a message of support from the Directorate of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation.



Murendeni Mukwevho, Founder of Sasha Foundation

Murendeni Mukwevho, a keynote speaker, addressed women at the event, sharing her personal story of overcoming challenges and encouraging them to focus on their strengths, ignore negative opinions, and

trust themselves. She discussed inner beauty, self-respect, and determination, and highlighted key qualities of a leader, including creativity, self-motivation, fulfilment, and empathy. Mukwevho also distinguished between friendships and sisterhood, urging the women to support one another. Through a "Raise a Finger Challenge," she facilitated a moment of reflection, revealing common struggles and challenges, yet affirming their collective strength and potential as winners.



Makgefo Neo a student entrepreneur, University of Venda

Neo led a powerful affirmation session, guiding participants to stand up proudly and declare statements such as "I am powerful", "I am worthy", "I am love", "My voice matters", and "I celebrate my uniqueness" to boost their confidence and self-belief, concluding with the phrase "She was herself and she did it all."

Read inside

University of
Venda Celebrates
Women's
Empowerment
through
Entrepreneurship
and Leadership

1

University of Venda
Hosts Launch of
Revised PsySSA
Guidelines
for Inclusive
Psychological
Practice

3

Celebration of
Women's Day 2025
as UNIVEN Staff
Unite for Inspiration,
Wellness and
Empowerment

4

UNIVEN Welcomes
Creative Talent:
Rofhiwa Mashau
Joins as Graphic
Designer

7

University of Venda Celebrates Women's Empowerment through Entrepreneurship and Leadership continued...



Panellists

The panel discussion delivered an inspiring and empowering message focused on entrepreneurship, self-love, and women's leadership. Speakers from diverse fields shared personal stories and practical advice to encourage students, especially young women, to lead with authenticity, resilience, and purpose. Entrepreneurship was redefined as a mindset rooted in creativity and inner drive, rather than status or wealth. The panel emphasised healing, self-awareness, and the importance of mental and physical well-being, with initiatives like SWEEP and campus support services playing key roles. A strong call was made for women to lead boldly, reject limiting narratives, and build each other up through collaboration, shared leadership, and skill development. The overarching message was that success starts with self-knowledge, intentionality, and the courage to shape one's own path.



Mercy Raphaelalani, Founder of Stop the Spot Youth Organisation

Mercy led an interactive exercise with a group of women, having them hold hands and untangle themselves without letting go, illustrating how collaboration and creative problem-solving can help overcome challenges. She drew parallels between this exercise and tackling issues like gender-based violence, saying "let's learn to listen to each other" and "let's not compete with each other because we are capable on our own."

Raphalalani encouraged the women to believe in themselves, invest in their own potential, and work together to create a better future, stating "the future is something that we create, and we start now" and "I can, I will, and I must." She urged them to pursue their dreams with determination and courage.



Debby Shiridzi, Chairperson of the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme

Debby concluded by announcing plans for a sweep group where ladies can join and choose a colour group to support one another and also mentioned a conference for men later in the year. She ended on a lively note, requesting a hot song to be played for everyone to stand and dance, expressing gratitude and appreciation with a touch of playfulness.

The workshop reminded us that leadership is not about power over others, but about grace, resilience, and collaboration. When women rise together, they redefine the future



Gundo Muhlango and Electro General group

University of Venda Launches Revised PsySSA Guidelines for Inclusive Psychological Practice

On Friday, 22 August 2025, the Department of Psychology, under the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Venda, convened a distinguished gathering at the University's Research Conference Centre to officially launch the revised Practice Guidelines for Psychology Professionals Working with Sexually and Gender-Diverse People. This significant event brought together leading scholars, practitioners, and stakeholders in the field of psychology to engage in critical dialogue around inclusive, ethical, and contextually responsive mental health practices.



Prof. Lindelani Fhumudzeni Mushaphi, Senior Lecturer, University of Venda

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Prof. Lindelani Mushaphi, Deputy Dean of Teaching and Learning, commenced with an opening and welcomed attendees on behalf of the Executive Dean. She emphasised gender's evolving nature and the need for culturally informed practice.



Mr. Suntosh Pillay, Member of the PsySSA sexuality and Gender division African LGBTQIA+ human rights project team

The first keynote presentation was delivered by Mr. Suntosh Pillay, who provided a comprehensive overview of the revisions to the PsySSA Guidelines (2025). He described the updated document as a vital resource for promoting ethical and inclusive psychological practice across the African continent.

Mr. Pillay explained that the guidelines were developed through extensive collaboration with practitioners, scholars, and community members, ensuring both cultural relevance and professional integrity.



Prof. Juan Nel, Department of Psychology, University of South Africa

Prof. Juan Nel introduced the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) as the country's largest nationally representative psychological association, founded in 1994 with a progressive and inclusive constitution. He outlined its governance structure, including the Annual General Meeting, council, and executive. He acknowledged the vital support of the PsySSA office and emphasised the significance of the African LGBTQ+ Human Rights Project Team.

Founded in 1994 with a progressive and inclusive constitution, PsySSA stands as South Africa's largest nationally representative psychological association



Thembisile Dlamini, Member LGBTQIA+ human rights project team/co author

Mrs. Thembisile Dlamini presented on the ethical implications and practical application of the guidelines within rural contexts. She reflected on the ethical responsibilities of mental health professionals working in rural South Africa, particularly in relation to LGBTQIA+ individuals. She emphasised that rural areas are not just geographic spaces, but sociopolitical landscapes marked by inequality, historical neglect, and systemic exclusion.

Dlamini highlighted how dominant mental health models, rooted in western individualism, often fail to address the structural violence and cultural marginalisation experienced in these communities. "This is why context matters," she said, noting that the lived realities of LGBTQIA+ individuals vary significantly depending on geography and social setting.

Dlamini called on practitioners to uphold dignity, counteract stigma and affirm diversity, especially in spaces where conformity is enforced and visibility carries risk. "Neutrality is not an option for you," she stated firmly, urging professionals to name harm and resist silence. She also underscored the importance of community-based support and relational healing, reminding attendees that resilience is both individual and communal.



Group photo

University of Venda Hosts Launch of Revised PsySSA Guidelines for Inclusive Psychological Practice cont...



Panelist

UNIVEN's Women's Day celebration reminded us that resilience, self-care, and solidarity are the foundations of empowerment—when women rise together, they uplift the entire community



Dr Fatima Peters, Department of Psychology, University of Venda

Dr Fatima Peters Peer's presentation on critical methodological considerations in queer research offered a compelling exploration of how identity, power, and epistemology intersect within academic inquiry. She foregrounded the need for inclusive, reflexive research practices that acknowledge the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly within contexts of marginalisation and systemic discrimination.

The event culminated in a robust roundtable discussion moderated by Prof Juan, where all speakers engaged in a dynamic exchange on the theme: "Navigating Research with LGBTQIA+ Participants Across Intersecting Contexts."

The discussion addressed ethical dilemmas, community engagement, and the importance of reflexivity in research design and implementation.



Professor Makondelele Radzilani

In closing, Prof Makondelele Radzilani delivered final remarks, commending the speakers and participants for their contributions emphasising the importance of remembering its original purpose. She acknowledged the students, faculty, and organisations involved, and encouraged everyone to read the distributed document on sexuality and gender to promote understanding and inclusion.

The launch of the revised PsySSA Guidelines at the University of Venda not only reaffirmed the institution's dedication to inclusive psychological practice but also sparked renewed dialogue on the ethical responsibilities of mental health professionals in diverse contexts.

Celebration of Women's Day 2025 as UNIVEN Staff Unite for Inspiration, Wellness and Empowerment



In a moment of celebration, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) came alive on 27 August 2025 as staff gathered at the University's Auditorium for a vibrant and thought-provoking UNIVEN 2025 Staff Women's Day Celebration. From powerful

presentations from various speakers, discussions to uplifting performances of music, the celebration showed the University's commitment to staff wellness, empowerment, and inclusivity and the role that women play as pillars to our institution.

Celebration of Women's Day 2025 as UNIVEN Staff Unite for Inspiration, Wellness and Empowerment continued...



The Women's Day celebration commenced with a warm, inspiring welcome remarks by the Director of Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou, setting a tone for the celebration to the Women's Month closing service, reflecting on the balance between tradition and modernity in women's identities, drawing inspiration from the 1956 women's march, and urging women to unite rather than pull each other down. She highlighted ongoing challenges such as gender-based violence and inequality, calling for unapologetic solidarity, support, and purpose-driven living. She emphasised the need for fairness in opportunities like promotions and educational capacitation, encouraging women to build an environment where all can thrive, freely express themselves, and enjoy the present moment together.

"Let us unite, support one another, and build an environment where all women can thrive and express themselves freely."
Mrs Uanda Ndou



One of the highlights of the event was the talk on "Prioritise You: Practise Self Love" by health and wellness expert from UNIVEN Sports and Recreation Unit, Ms Lizeka Miza, who encouraged staff and delivered an empowering talk centred on women's well-being, highlighting the importance of self-love and self-care beyond the common misconceptions of luxury activities like massages or beauty treatments. She reminded women that, as mothers, daughters, professionals, and friends juggling multiple responsibilities, prioritising their health, both physically and mentally, emotionally, and socially, is essential. Ms Miza emphasised the need to overcome cultural and societal barriers that pressure women into neglecting themselves and encouraged practices such as exercise. She underscored that self-care is not selfish but necessary for sustaining energy, managing stress, maintaining healthy relationships, and achieving balance in life and work.



Ms Tshimangadzo Ndou shared on the "You Can Do It: My Journey as a Woman Athlete" shared her inspiring running journey, starting with her first 21 km marathon in 2023, where she went on to collect 12 medals, progressed to full marathons in 2024, and eventually qualified and completed the Two Oceans and the 90 km Comrades Marathon despite injuries and setbacks. She emphasised

lessons of perseverance, mental strength, listening to one's body, and running one's own race at one's own pace, highlighting that victory comes through resilience. She encouraged colleagues to value wellness, exercise, and self-belief, while expressing gratitude for the support she received, especially from women, after representing the university in the Comrades Marathon.



"When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Going" by seasoned academic Dr Israel Mulaudzi, reflected on perseverance, growth, and lifelong learning. She encouraged women to embrace their beauty, uniqueness, and strength, reminding them they are fearfully and wonderfully made. She shared her personal story of being raised by a single mother, facing hardships such as gender-based violence, infertility, loss of a child, raising a child with a disability, and her husband's imprisonment, yet still rising through education to earn multiple degrees. She showed her resilience with the theme "When the going gets tough, the tough get going," urging women not to give up on life despite challenges. She stressed the importance of self-belief, prayer, education, and walking tall with confidence. She called on women to support, respect, and celebrate each other's achievements, noting that when one woman rises, she lifts others up.

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going—through resilience, self-belief, and support for one another, women can rise above any challenge."
Dr Israel Mulaudzi



The Keynote speaker, Ms Sesi Patricia Mahlobogoane, Director for Social Inclusion and Equity at the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), talking on **"Sexual Harassment in the World of Work"** highlighted how harassment and bullying in the workplace often stem from "nuisance power," where individuals misuse status, wealth, or connections to intimidate others, disregarding hierarchy and respect. She distinguished between sexual attention (welcome) and sexual harassment (unwanted), stressed that bullying, whether verbal, emotional, or physical, is abuse of power, and reminded colleagues that institutions and leaders bear the primary responsibility for prevention. She also emphasised self-protection and urged knowing workplace policies, documenting incidents, and being mindful of rights and responsibilities. As she ended, she encouraged resilience, solidarity, and speaking out against abuse, affirming that harassment or abuse should not define one's worth.



Adv Rolien Roos, Director in the Division Teaching and Learning, delivered a heartfelt closing remarks and thanked all speakers, performers, and organisers for their contributions, highlighting lessons of resilience, self-care, inspiration, and leadership. She expressed deep appreciation for the Department of Higher Education and Training's presence, acknowledged the organising team's efforts, and ended with a message of solidarity drawn from the 1956 Women's March, reminding everyone to be each other's "rock" of strength and support.

The Women's Day celebration was an opportunity to all women staff members to relax, reconnect and reflect. The celebration reminded us of the importance of wellness, resilience, and human dignity in the workplace. Through song, stories and shared wisdom, the celebration not only celebrated the university community but also the power of inspiration and collective growth.



'Gusba Banana' entertained the audience



Women dancing and celebrating their day

Celebration of Women's Day 2025 as UNIVEN Staff Unite for Inspiration, Wellness and Empowerment continued...



Performance of music by Dr Meisie Masakona-Madzivhandila



Handing over of gifts by Ms Avhatakali Gladys Luvhimbi (left)



Handing over of gifts by Ms Avhatakali Gladys Luvhimbi (left)



Handing over of gifts by Ms Avhatakali Gladys Luvhimbi (right)



Some of the moments during the Women's Day Celebration 2025



Ms Sesi Patricia Mahlboroane from DHET (3rd from left) poses for a photo with the UNIVEN Director of Human Resources (3rd from right) and other speakers of the day

UNIVEN Welcomes Creative Talent: Rofhiwa Mashau Joins as Graphic Designer



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Rofhiwa Mashau as the Graphic Designer in the Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication, effective 01 September 2025.

Mr Mashau brings a wealth of creative expertise and passion for design, with strong experience in marketing and visual communication. Before joining UNIVEN, he worked at Wits University as a Graphic Designer, where he produced compelling visuals that connected with diverse audiences. His skillset spans art, design, and UX/UI, enabling him to deliver innovative and user-centered design solutions.

Holding a BA in Graphic Design and a UX/UI qualification, Mr Mashau is eager to channel his skills into shaping UNIVEN's creative projects and strengthening the University's brand presence. Beyond his professional work, he finds inspiration in politics, sports, cars, and art interests that fuel his innovative outlook.

Welcoming him to the team, Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director of Marketing, Branding and Communication, remarked, "I call on all members of the University community to give Mr Mashau the necessary support during his tenure."

"I call on all members of the University community to give Mr Mashau the necessary support during his tenure."

Dr Takalani Dzaga

"Mr Mashau's creativity and passion for design will strengthen UNIVEN's brand presence."

Dr Takalani Dzaga

If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number **0800 212 755** or email: **univenhotline@tip-offs.com**

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1. Financial misconduct,
2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,
3. Health and safety risks,
4. Plagiarism,
5. Fraud and corruption.

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