

# The Clothing Bank exhibition features women leading the journey out of poverty

Since 2010 The Clothing Bank has been using excess stock donated by South Africa's largest clothing retailers and manufacturers to transform the lives of unemployed mothers trapped in a cycle of poverty. The donated clothing is used to provide these women with income-generating opportunities, and the two-year programme is backed-up with intensive personal support along with personal finance, computer, and business training.



This week the NPO hosted an exhibition at the Vineyard Hotel, featuring the portraits and inspirational stories of some of the Clothing Bank ambassadors - women leading the journey out of poverty.

This exhibition showcased the very real stories, told in their own words, and portraits of some of The Clothing Bank's most successful beneficiaries voted for by their fellow beneficiaries to join the organisation's Ambassadors Leadership Programme. An ambassador is a woman who has stood out for her leadership potential, excelled at business and, during her two years in the Clothing Bank programme, has lived the sister values. These women are invited to spend two extra years with the programme, working as role models and peer mentors to the new beneficiaries.

Many of these women have pulled themselves out of debilitating poverty, overcome a poor education, tragedy and abusive relationships to make a success of their lives. They have worked to become the breadwinners in their families, proudly financially independent, paying school fees, building houses and feeding their families.



## The Clothing Bank gets international award

20 Apr 2016



## Storytelling a powerful tool

At the event Thokozile Mcopele, a dynamic, young businesswoman who was mentored by Tracey Chambers, a co-founder of the organisation, spoke about her journey to success. Mcopele was accepted as a Mandela-Rhodes scholar and has gone on to have a wonderful career.

She said: "The lovely thing about ability is that it is dynamic. What your ability is today changes and improves with practice. The challenge is what we do to invest in growing our abilities as businesswomen who can break the expected norms of society and reach our dreams."

Tracey Gilmore, co-founder of The Clothing Bank, said: "We believe that storytelling is a powerful tool for these successful women to share their experiences and provide hope and encouragement to others. Their stories are truly touching, honest and ultimately inspirational, and we did this so that we could share them with as many people as possible."

"These strong ambassadors are sharing their hard-won success by helping other women overcome their fears and challenges, so they too can ultimately break out of the debilitating cycle of poverty."

The Clothing Bank's five branches around the country support 800 women per year, providing them with over 1,000 hours of mentoring, coaching, training and counselling as they begin their own businesses and learn to be successfully self-employed.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>