

EduUpdates

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Mpumalanga Department of Education

AUGUST *Edition*



Hiking with Purpose

WITH DANISILE MATHEBULA



Mpumalanga A province that Works for All

August Edition: Walking with Purpose, Celebrating Women, and Shaping Futures



Dear Colleagues,

August is a month of inspiration, resilience, and transformation. It is a time when we not only honour women and their invaluable contributions, but also reflect on the different ways we can uplift one another, both within the workplace and in our communities.

This edition of our newsletter brings together stories of purpose, growth, and responsibility that speak to our shared vision of excellence. We begin with one of our colleagues who has turned her passion for hiking into a meaningful mission.

By taking on the trails, she raises funds to support the girl child, ensuring that young girls have the opportunity to learn and thrive. Beyond the cause, she also reminds us of the personal benefits of hiking – from physical fitness to mental well-being – and encourages others to join her in walking for both health and purpose.

Women's Month was also celebrated in grand style as women of the Department gathered in Badplaas for a gala dinner. This event was more than a glamorous evening, it was a powerful acknowledgement of women's strength, leadership, and resilience.

Adding to the moment, books on women empowerment were shared, reminding us that growth and self-discovery are lifelong journeys. In line with this theme, we feature two book reviews in this edition: *Women Evolve* by Sarah Jakes Roberts, which challenges women to release the weight of past

mistakes and embrace transformation as a pathway to stepping into their full potential. *The Pivot Year* by Brianna Wiest, a book filled with daily meditations and thought-provoking reflections that encourage readers to shift perspective, embrace change, and live with intentionality.

Both titles serve as powerful guides for women who wish to evolve, grow, and take bold steps into becoming their best selves. As we celebrate and empower, we must also remember the importance of education.

The MEC for Education, Ms. Lindi Masina, recently visited schools to encourage learners to work hard and improve their results, particularly in literature. Her message was clear: with focus and determination, learners can surpass past achievements and deliver results that will uplift both the Province and the nation.

Lastly, we remind parents and guardians that admissions for the 2026 academic year will close on 31 August 2025. Early enrolment is vital to securing space for learners at their schools of choice. By acting now, parents ensure that no child is left behind, and every learner is set on a path towards opportunity.

As we reflect on these stories, let us be reminded that empowerment, whether through personal passions, celebrating one another, or securing education for the next generation, is the foundation for building stronger communities and a brighter future.

Wishing you an insightful and engaging read!

Women's Month 2025
BUILDING RESILIENT ECONOMIES FOR ALL

MEC Masina Encourages Grade 12 Learners to Strive for Excellence



The MEC for Education, Ms. Lindi Masina, addressed Grade 12 learners from the Dr. Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality this morning as part of the Provincial Executive Council Outreach Programme.

In her remarks, MEC Masina called on learners to rise to the challenge and dedicate themselves to making 2025 a year of excellence. She emphasized that education is the key to transforming lives, strengthening communities, and securing the future of Mpumalanga – the Place of the Rising Sun.

Highlighting the province's achievements, she noted that Mpumalanga attained an overall pass rate of 84.9% in 2024, while Gert Sibande District achieved 87.7%.

The MEC encouraged the Class of 2025 to work

diligently to surpass these milestones. “My beloved learners, the future is in your hands. Respect your teachers, remain focused, and make every day count.

If the Class of 2024 could achieve these results, you can perform even better. Do it for yourselves, your families, Mpumalanga, and South Africa,” she said. MEC Masina concluded by urging learners to uphold the values of discipline, humility, integrity, and determination, describing them as qualities of a successful learner.

She further encouraged them to believe in their dreams, reminding them that success is within reach. Learners warmly welcomed the MEC's message and pledged to commit themselves to improving their performance.



HIKING WITH PURPOSE

With the bright, amazing Danisile Mathebula

Please tell us a bit about yourself — who you are and what you do

My name is Danisile Mathebula. I work in the Department of Education, where I contribute to research and policy that supports sustainable development. Outside of work, I'm passionate about hiking, which I do part-time as a platform to drive social change, especially in under-resourced communities.

When did your love for hiking begin, and what inspired you to start?

My love for hiking started as a way to relieve stress and reconnect with nature. Over time, it became more than just a personal outlet — it became a space where I could reflect, grow, and eventually give back. Focus on improving not proving anything while hiking or trekking the trails

You've combined hiking with doing good

in the community. What inspired you to link your hikes with charitable causes?

I realized I could use the hiking journeys not only for my own well-being but to raise awareness and resources for meaningful causes. It felt natural to connect my love for hiking with something bigger — helping young girls stay in school and supporting communities that often go unseen.

Can you tell us about some of the projects you've been involved in, especially those focused on raising funds or buying sanitary pads for young girls?

One key initiative I've been part of involves collecting and distributing sanitary pads to schools in disadvantaged areas. Through donations raised during our hikes and support from kind-hearted individuals, we've been able to make a small but meaningful difference in the lives of young girls.



KUNGUMUSA

What has been the most memorable or touching moment during one of your charity hikes?

One day, after contributing nicely used clothes, sanitary pads and toiletries to a community in Eswatini celebrating my birthday in August 2024, a young girl with a 6-month child cried and said my daughter will be warm tonight. One young girl walked up to me and said, "Now I won't have to stay home during that time of the month." That moment really hit home, reminded me that dignity is a right, not a luxury.

What challenges have you faced in doing this kind of work, and how have you overcome them?

Recognising God grace, seeking his guidance through prayer, fasting and maintaining faith. Balancing time between work and hiking initiatives can be tough, but planning ahead and building a supportive network has made it manageable. Resources are also a challenge, but I've learned to keep pushing, even small donation or action can lead to big impact.

Why is this cause, especially helping young girls with access to sanitary products, so close to your heart?

Because I've seen and experienced first-hand how the lack of such basic items (sanitary pads) can strip away confidence and opportunity to attend school as younger girl. Every girl deserves to feel secure, clean, and focused on her education — not worried about hygiene.

How do you prepare for your hikes, both physically and mentally?

I stay active throughout the week jogging three times a week and try to eat healthy. Mentally, I always engage on reading, meditate on scriptures, fasting and pray for guidance, I also focus on the purpose behind each hike — knowing that each step can make a difference gives me strength and motivation.

What would you say to someone who wants to get involved, either in hiking or in community projects like yours?

Start small. Join a hike, donate where you can, or volunteer your time. You don't need to have all the answers — just a willingness to care and take action.

Do you have any upcoming hikes or initiatives you're excited about that we should know of?

Yes! We're planning a hike in celebration of Women's Month in August and trekking challenging hike in the Drakensberg 4 days circular hike, with the aim of collecting sanitary pads and school supplies for two rural schools. It's going to be a beautiful combination of nature, purpose, and unity.

Lastly, what does this work mean to you personally, and what legacy do you hope to leave behind?

It means everything. This work is part of what God placed in my heart and living a purpose filled life. I want to be remembered as someone who turned her passion, fears and failures into purpose and used her journey — both in nature and life — to uplift others especially young girls and women.

AN EVENING OF ELEGANCE AND EMPOWERMENT AT BADPLAAS FOREVER RESORT

Our Women's Month Gala Dinner was a night to remember, filled with laughter, elegance, and a spirit of unity. The women looked stunning, and the atmosphere was nothing short of inspiring. It was an evening where beauty, joy, and sisterhood lit up the room.



Celebrating Women's Month with Grace, Unity, and Purpose



Our Women's Day Gala Dinner, held at the tranquil and breathtaking Badplaas Forever Resort, was a truly memorable occasion, one that left every guest inspired, celebrated, and proud to be part of such a powerful gathering of women.

Set against the peaceful beauty of Badplaas, the evening unfolded in an atmosphere of elegance and heartfelt connection. From the moment guests arrived, dressed in stunning evening wear and glowing with excitement, there was a sense that this was more than just a dinner. It was a tribute to the strength, beauty, and resilience of women.

The program for the evening was a perfect blend of reflection, celebration, and joy. One of the most anticipated moments came when the MEC of the Department, Ms. Lindi Masina, took to the stage to deliver the keynote address.

In her speech, she honoured the achievements of women across the province and beyond, and urged all women to lead by example, especially in high positions of influence. She spoke passionately about the importance of visibility, mentorship, and courage, reminding all attendant that the presence of women in leadership isn't just beneficial. It's essential for true transformation in society.

Her words resonated deeply with everyone in the room and set the tone for an evening dedicated to empowerment, unity, and mutual upliftment. But perhaps the most touching and unforgettable highlight of the night was a heartwarming interactive game that brought everyone closer together.

Each woman from each table in the room was invited to give a sincere compliment to another woman whether it was someone they knew well or had just met that evening. What followed was a wave of joy, laughter, and sometimes even tears, as the room filled with words of encouragement, admiration, and appreciation.

In a world that often focuses on competition, this simple act of kindness reminded everyone of the beauty of uplifting one another. The gala was more than a celebration, it was a safe and empowering space where women could feel seen, valued, and inspired. The conversations, the shared stories, and the spontaneous moments of connection were all proof that sisterhood remains one of the most powerful forces for change.

As the night came to a close under the stars of Badplaas, there was a shared feeling of hope and purpose in the air. The event reminded us that when women come together not just to celebrate, but to support, to lead, and to uplift. The impact is both immediate and lasting.

Here's to every woman who attended, your presence, your voice, and your light made this night unforgettable.

May we continue to walk boldly, lead fearlessly, and uplift one another with grace and purpose.



BOOKS TO READ THIS WOMEN'S MONTH

WOMAN EVOLVE BY SARAH JAKES ROBERTS



As the first woman, Eve was also the first woman who had to deal with the mistakes of her past. In a dramatic reinterpretation of Eve's story in Genesis, Sarah Jakes Roberts shows how the slow seduction of our minds can knock us out of our orbit. Pastor Sarah guides women in identifying the dragons that have taken them down, then encourages readers to get into a

new orbit as she reminds them "enmity" is a two-way street.

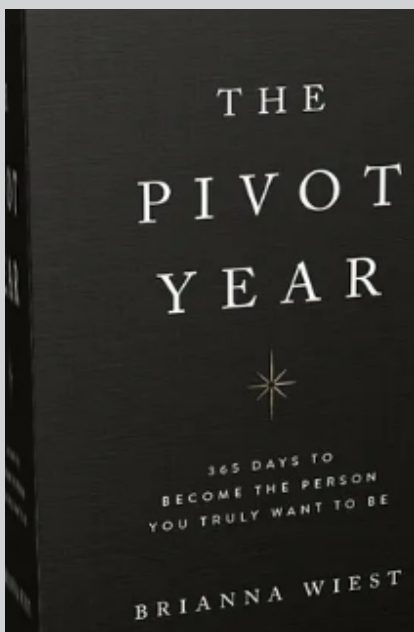
Everyone faces trials, and everyone will mess up. But past failures should not be the focus. A person's purpose in life does not change; it evolves. In the same way, someone should not be attached to who she was but to who she can become.

Chapters include:

Identify Your Weakness
Silence Is Golden
Touch but Don't Eat
Naked Is the New Black
You're Gonna Mess Up
Rest in Hope

Woman Evolve teaches women that they can use failures and mistakes to break through to their future. Like Eve, they do not need to live defined by the past. Pastor Sarah says,

THE PIVOT YEAR BY BRIANNA WIEST



"The Pivot Year" by Brianna Wiest is personal growth and finding oneself during a transitional period in life, also known as the pivot year.

Key Ideas or Arguments Presented:

The pivot year is a crucial time for introspection, self discovery, and making life-changing decisions. Embracing uncertainty and being open to change can lead to personal and professional growth.

The importance of setting goals and taking intentional actions to create the desired path in life. Learning from failures and setbacks as opportunities for growth. Nurturing self-worth, self-compassion, and self-care during times of transition.

Chapter Titles :

Introduction: Defining the Pivot Year
Embracing Uncertainty: Opening Yourself to New Possibilities
Setting Goals: Creating Your Path
Embracing Failure: Learning from Setbacks
Nurturing Self-Worth: Building Resilience and Confidence
Self-Care: Prioritizing Your Well-being

Conclusion: Embracing the Pivot Year Mindset

Key Takeaways or Conclusions:

The pivot year is a transformative time where personal growth and self-reflection can lead to finding one's true path. Being open to uncertainty, setting goals, learning from failures, nurturing self-worth, and practicing self-care are crucial aspects of navigating this transitional period successfully.



Women's Month

BUILDING RESILIENT ECONOMIES FOR ALL

2025



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#Babizebonke | #RekaofelaBasadi | #WomensMonth2025