

# Bringing 1956 empowerment to today's disadvantaged women

In commemoration of the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings, the Southern African Institute of Learning (SAIL) will launch their 1956 Women's Business Empowerment Programme at Midrand Gallagher Convention Centre on 13 September 2018.



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The programme will see the provision of free Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) development training worth R5.6 million to 1,956 disadvantaged women on SAIL's e-learning platform nationally.

SAIL MD, Vimala Ariyan, explains the programme will incorporate a 12-month incubation process for the new start-ups on the programme. "At SAIL, we understand the crucial role small businesses play in any economy: they provide employment and competition, a few innovate and grow into businesses of scale and sophistication and, importantly, in the South African context they help reduce an overconcentration of economic power."

"Unemployment is one of the greatest challenges facing people in our country. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop and grow SMMEs as they play an important role in the South African economy."

SAIL is also aware that women in South Africa face particular challenges when trying to start their own businesses. "According to the second Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs only 18.8% of business owners in South Africa are women. The report cites poor social/cultural acceptance and limited access to business resources such as finance, capital, training and development amongst the many barriers to success that women in many markets face," notes Ariyan.

The 1956 Women's Business Empowerment Programme will cover entrepreneurship, communication skills, leadership development, business plans, finances and budgeting, understanding operational requirements, innovation, marketing and customer service.

SAIL will also provide post-training support on completion of the module. Support will include assistance from onsite staff in mentoring; provision of basic business tools and procedures as well as proposal writing; and advice and assistance on how to register companies.

Ariyan says all SAIL training programmes are delivered using the outcomes-based methodology. "This means learners achieve competency and are also awarded with lifelong credits on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)."

The sourcing and selection of women for the 1956 Women's Business Empowerment Programme will utilise and involve community development organisations/projects, local radio stations, provincial government departments, youth development agencies and advertisements.

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