

16 September

Volume: 9

Issue: 40

2021



Scenes from the Young Women in the Workplace event.

Women are the Real Architects of Society – Theme of Workplace Event

BY: .

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UKZN alumnus and Social Work and Community Development specialist, Ms Qhamo Gumede, who oversees student development activities at the Howard College and Medical School residences, organised a Young Women in the Workplace event in Umhlanga.

Themed: Women are the Real Architects of Society, it was a strictly “women only” affair.

Those who attended were mainly postgraduate students who are Residence Assistants (RAs) and Student assistants (SAs) at the two campuses (Medical School and Howard College), where Gumede is responsible for designing a research-based Residence Life Programme that develops students holistically and for the recruitment of Residence Life Staff as well as the training and supervision of live-in staff and members of House Committees after they have been elected by students.

The Residence Life Programme strives to provide students with a safe, healthy and attractive living environment, which supports the educational mission of the University. The overall emphasis of the programme is to continue to promote learning outside the formal

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classroom/lecture theatre environment and support the academic enterprise of the Institution as well as the socio-political and economic development of residence students.

Gumede says RAs and SAs, who work very hard at the implementation level of the Res Life Curriculum, are sometimes subjected to abuse from students who resist conforming to community standards.

'The aim of the gathering was to acknowledge the participants and give them tools to use when they face real work challenges on campus and outside the University. Based on research and true-life stories, women are still victims of GBV, femicide, sexual harassment, bullying and unequal pay. While a lot of people perpetrate and experience intimate partner and or sexual violence, men are most often the perpetrators and women the victims,' she said.

'Participants at the event were given tips on the most effective initiatives to address underlying risk factors for violence, including social norms regarding gender roles and the acceptability of violence.'

The importance and power of prayer was emphasised, by the keynote speaker Pastor Makhosazane Nyawo of the Durban Christian Centre Jesus Dome, who said gender inequality and GBV challenges were sometimes created by women. 'We need to address our own characters! Women need to value themselves and realise that some battles need not to be fought at work. We need to change from being victims to being victors; from being fearful to being fearless; from being powerless to be powerful; from being unworthy to being worthy. Respect is key even if you have a masters or PhD degree if you want to survive anywhere especially in the work environment,' said Nyawo.

She encouraged participants to become job creators rather than being job seekers and said it was vital they got vaccinated against COVID-19.

Nyawo ended her presentation by praying for UKZN and everyone at the event.

Ms Nomvuselelo Mngadi and Ms Melissa Sibanda were congratulated by Gumede for their roles as MCs, especially as it was a first for both of them.

'Special thanks go to the Residence Life Officers who assisted with the planning of the event, the RAs and SAs for being great participants, UKZN's Corporate Relations Division for photographing the event and our guests of honour UKZN's Ms Edista Ngubane and our keynote speaker Pastor Nyawo,' said Gumede.

Words: [NdabaOnline](#)

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