



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local micro-entrepreneurs share R120 000

All started small businesses ranging from clothing, poultry farming, day-care centres and making metal pots and have created jobs in their communities.

The top five winners have been given a significant boost thanks to the Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards 2010. Thandeka Myeza, a clothing designer from KwaZulu-Natal, claimed the overall prize of R20 000 cash and R50 000 in sewing equipment and computer software. The impetus to start the business was to provide food for her own family and to give back to the community.

The Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards Program is an annual event, held in 27 countries around the world to promote micro-entrepreneurs and increase awareness of their financial service's needs. The initiative puts the spotlight on local micro-entrepreneurs who are helping to lift the economic fortunes of their communities.

"The Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards is a key element of Citi's CSI activities in South Africa," explains Donna Oosthuysen, MD and General Manager for Citi South Africa. "As in many countries, micro-entrepreneurship in South Africa is vital for economic growth, job creation and the formation of our communities and society."

Micro-entrepreneurs are individuals who own small-scale businesses which usually employ few members. Typically, micro-enterprises have no access to the commercial banking sector due to a lack of collateral or credit history. They use micro-lending as a means of funding their business and not for personal home use.

Colleen Larsen, CEO of Woman in Finance, and a member of the Awards' judging panel said, "When reviewing the entries, we were looking for someone who stood out as an example to their peers, as well as someone who would serve as a role model for their community. Thandeka embodies this spirit, and we applaud her efforts."

Thandeka has always had a love for fashion but never had the capital to pursue her dreams. After registering her company in 2006, she started her business from home in 2007. During 2010 she was given the opportunity to be part of Eastern Cape Fashion Week, and so she approached the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) for a loan. She used the funds to buy equipment and materials. She now has her clothes selling in a boutique store in East London and employs three assistants.

"Since I started Malesna Fashion Designs, I work 18 hours a day," Thandeka says, "I am thrilled to have won the Citi Micro-entrepreneurship Awards – thank you to Citi, the National Youth Development Fund and to my family for all their encouragement."

In addition to the Thandeka's overall Award, five other awards of R10 000 each were presented to category winners:

- Women empowered: Thandeka Myeza - Clothing designer, KwaZulu-Natal.
- Agriculture: Mokgaditsi Ramogohlo Byena – Poultry farmer, Limpopo.
- Produce Development: Thembalihle Skhosana – Baker in Port Elizabeth.
- Skills Development: Cecilia Tembi Phakathi – Metal pots and bowls, Limpopo.
- Health and HIV impact: Salome Ledwaba – Day Care Centre, Limpopo.

Four micro-finance officers from Tiisha Finance Enterprise, Algoa Financial Services, Marang Financial Services and the National Youth Development Agency also received a cash prize in recognition of their efforts to get in the most qualifying entries.

The event played host to inspirational guests - Sakhumzi Maqubela owner of Sakhumzi's Restaurant in Soweto, and the winner of the 2009 Citi-micro-entrepreneurship Awards, Patironi Mkansi (2009) a clothing designer.

Both the guest speaker and previous winner advised up and coming micro-entrepreneurs to work hard and persevere, "The first year is always the hardest, but it's worth it. Keep adapting and improving your offering, make sure you understand your customer and get your name out there."

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More details on other Category Winners:

- **Agriculture: Mokgaditsi Ramogohlo Byena (financed by *The Small Enterprise Foundation*)**

A married woman with five children, Mokgaditsi runs a poultry farm in Soweto which provides her family and the immediate community with eggs and chicken. She has faced many challenges such as lack of sufficient water as the current borehole has no power as well as a lack of funds to buy seeds. Even if they can buy seeds the fertilizers are too expensive to propagate the seeds. Thanks to the Small Enterprise Foundation she has been able to buy groceries for the family and to provide meat to the community for poor families and for ceremonies. She hopes to get more training in bookkeeping and business management.

- **Produce Development: Thembalihle Skhosana (financed by the National Youth Development Agency)**

Thembalihle runs a small bakery in Port Elizabeth called "Miss Muffin". This business has provided income for his family and given the community confidence to want to start their own businesses. He wants to open a new branch and provide more jobs in the area.

- **Skills Development: Cecilia Tembi Phakathi (financed by TIISHA Finance Enterprise)**

Cecilia started her business manufacturing metal and aluminium pots and bowls in 1991 on her own and has trained all her employees. After obtaining a loan, she was able to buy more materials and buy a car to market her products in villages other than her own. She would love to have another car and employ more people to finish manufacture of products on time. Nothing is ever thrown away in her village because she can repair most things.

- **Health and HIV impact: Salome Ledwaba (financed by TIISHA Finance Enterprise)**

Salome obtained a loan from TIISHA Finance Enterprise to buy toys and medication for a day-care centre in Limpopo. She works 24 hours a day and gets great support from her family. The centre is affordable and she spends hours with the children and often looks after them on weekends and when the families attend funerals. Her wish for the future is to attend HIV courses to better understand the disease and to have her own transport so that she can drop the children off after hours. Public transport is not always safe in the area. She hopes to send her children to University from her income.

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