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## Lead SA changemakers share inspiration

ILLOVO – The Lead SA Changemakers Conference evoked some emotional and inspirational stories from prominent personalities who overcame obstacles to reach where they are currently.

November 7, 2018



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AUTHOR

Naidine Sibanda

Inspiring change and greatness is a huge task for anyone but a few individuals decided not to allow the odds to overcome them in their journey.

The [Lead SA Changemakers Conference at the Gordon Institute of Business Science in Illovo](#) hosted influential and inspiring individuals who overcame hardships to be in a better place.

CEO of [Nova Pioneer Education Group](#), Chinezi Chijioke was one of the speakers who shared his story about how he stretched beyond his comfort zone by cleaning bathrooms at university to earn some money.



Encouraging young people to take on purposeful challenges. CEO of Nova Pioneer Education Group, Chinezi Chijioke talks at the Lead SA conference.

Photo: Naidine Sibanda

“The theme of changemakers today is around overcoming and actively seeking out the challenge and then living it out. At the intersection of our passions and problems worth solving, lies purpose,” said Chijioke.

He added that perseverance transformed passion and aspiration into a possibility.



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TV and radio personality, Xolani Gwala shares how his ongoing battle with cancer revived his hope in humanity. Photo: Naidine Sibanda

Prominent radio and television presenter, Xolani Gwala shared his journey and experience with colon cancer. Gwala was diagnosed with the illness last year and had been told it was advanced. He started intense chemotherapy treatment which he said left him feeling like he wouldn't make it. "I, however, did make it and I learned to treasure life," he added.

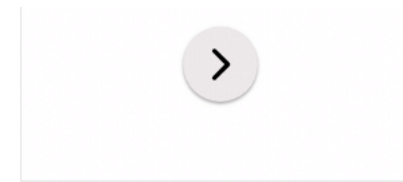


"Love kept me going. There's something inherently positive about people that we tend to underestimate and I learned to respect people no matter what their position in life is."

Deputy Chief Justice, Raymond Zondo recounted his childhood, growing up in a poverty-stricken rural area with nine siblings and a single mother. Things had been difficult growing up, however, he attributed his turnaround life story to a few people, especially a 'Mr Barks' who owned a small shop and had given Zondo's mother groceries worth R20 every month.

“ After finishing his studies, Zondo had gone back to try and repay Mr Barks but he refused any payment saying Zondo should do for others what he had done for him. “A while back I got an invitation to a dinner from a bank who had seen my story in the media, to show appreciation for what Mr Barks had done,” said Zondo.

"As we speak, a trust named Zondo Bucks Trust is in motion to be launched next year. By the end of the appreciation dinner, more than R200 000 had been pledged for the trust. The funds will be used to support children in the rural areas with their education."



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Leader of the Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises, Zukiswa Rantho receives an award for Changemaker of the year from Primedia COO, Karl Gostner. Photo: Naidine Sibanda.

At the end of the event, the Lead SA Hero of the year was announced which went to Isaac Boshomane, a mechanic who owns Kgabo Cars. Changemaker of the year was Zukiswa Rantho who is a leader of the Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises. Both winners were honoured and awarded for their roles in bringing change after overcoming difficulties.

**Details:** [Lead SA Changemakers](#)

[Gordon Insitute of Business Science](#)

Have you overcome some unique odds to be where you are? send your story to [naidines@caxton.co.za](mailto:naidines@caxton.co.za)

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