

# HERITAGE

## NEWSLETTER



**nhc**

National Heritage Council  
SOUTH AFRICA

an agency of the  
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

**VOL 1 ISSUE 2**  
**FEB/MAR 2026**

**Champions of African heritage towards social cohesion**

# CONTENTS

- 01** CEO's Message
- 02** Five Women Recognised as Pillars of KZN's Living Heritage
- 03** Insimbi YaseMkhumbane Preserving the Iron Spirit of a Historic Community
- 04** Why International Mother Language Day Feels Personal
- 05** The NHC reignites the spirit of Ubuntu at Prof SS Reppinga School by handing over school uniform and shoes
- 06** Youth Reflect, Lead and Rise at Hector Pieterse Museum Engagement
- 07** National Heritage Council Appoints Ms. California Thobejane as Funding M&E Coordinator
- 08** NHC Welcomes Mr Mphodisa Donald Aphone to the Finance Team.

## EDITORIAL TEAM

**CHIEF EDITOR AND WRITER**  
Tsireledzo Mandane

**EDITORS**  
Amos Mulaudzi  
Khwezi Mpumlwana  
Dr Merriam Tawane  
Tebogo Shilakwe  
Palesa Kadi

**LAYOUT & DESIGN**  
Shepherd Modise Makhura

## FOR EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES CONTACT:

Editor: Tsireledzo Mandane / E-mail: [t.mandane@nhc.org.za](mailto:t.mandane@nhc.org.za)  
Tel: 012 748 3949 | Address: 2nd Floor Building 3, Summit Place Business Park  
221 Garsfontein Road, Menlyn, Pretoria

 **nhc**  
National Heritage Council  
SOUTH AFRICA  
an agency of the  
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture



# CEO's MESSAGE

*Dr Thabo Manetsi, Chief Executive Officer, National Heritage Council of South Africa*

## Dear Valued Stakeholders and partners,

Welcome to Vol 1 Issue 2 of our second heritage newsletter of the new year. I am filled with immense pride and inspiration by the remarkable ways our heritage continues to thrive across South Africa. In this edition of our newsletter, we celebrate the stories, people, and initiatives that keep the spirit of South African heritage alive.

We begin by honoring five extraordinary women who have been recognized as pillars of KZN's living heritage. Their dedication, knowledge, and passion for preserving our cultural traditions remind us that heritage is not only history, but it is a living, breathing force that shapes our communities today.

The story of Insimbi YaseMkhumbane exemplifies this spirit, preserving the ironworking traditions of a historic community. Such initiatives connect us to the skills and stories of our ancestors, highlighting the importance of safeguarding intangible heritage for future generations.

February also brought the meaningful celebration of International Mother Language Day, a reminder that our languages are vital carriers of culture and identity. This day resonated personally with many of us, reaffirming our commitment to celebrating the linguistic diversity that defines South Africa.

Our work in promoting Ubuntu and social cohesion remains central to the NHC's mission. We were privileged to visit Prof SS Repinga School, where we handed over school uniforms and shoes, reigniting the spirit of Ubuntu and supporting learners in tangible ways. Similarly, our youth engagement at the Hector Pieterse Museum allowed young leaders to reflect, learn, and rise as custodians of our shared history, a reminder that heritage is a guide for both the present and the future.

We are also pleased to announce strategic growth within our team. Ms. California Thobejane joins us as Funding Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, and Mr. Mphodisa Donald Aphane strengthens our Finance Team. Their expertise will further our mission to nurture, protect, and promote South Africa's heritage.

As we move forward, let us continue to celebrate our stories, honour our traditions, and invest in the people who carry our heritage forward. Together, we ensure that the legacy of South Africa remains vibrant, inclusive, and enduring.

**Warm regards,  
Dr. Thabo Manetsi  
Chief Executive Officer, National Heritage  
Council of South Africa**

# Five Women Recognised as Pillars of KZN's Living Heritage



The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (KZNDSAC), AMAFA and Portia Ncwane Foundation, successfully hosted the 2nd Women in Heritage celebration at Station Drive in Durban, KwaZulu Natal Province on Tuesday, 24 February 2026.

Held under the theme “Honouring Her Legacy, Women Shaping Our Heritage Future,” the event brought together approximately 250 participants, including community leaders, youth, academics, traditional authorities, and government officials, to recognise and celebrate women’s pivotal role in preserving and transmitting South Africa’s Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

The annual Women in Heritage Programme, launched in 2024 to commemorate the historic Women’s March, continues to spotlight the enduring contributions of women in shaping the nation’s cultural identity.

This year’s celebration focused on women as custodians of oral traditions, indigenous knowledge, and cultural practices, particularly their role in passing down culinary arts, medicinal knowledge, music, storytelling, and material culture skills across generations.

“As the NHC, our mandate is to protect, preserve, and promote South Africa’s heritage, particularly the intangible practices that define our communities. If we do not document and pass these traditions to our children, we risk losing a vital part of our identity,” said Dr Mirriam Tawane, the NHC General Manager.

“Women are at the centre of families and communities.

Today, we celebrate them as custodians of culture whose contributions must be honoured, documented, and uplifted,” she added.

A highlight of the celebration was the presentation of trophies, certificates, and a cash prize of approximately R10,000 from the KZNSAC to each of five outstanding women from KwaZulu-Natal.

Professor Nomagugu Ngobese from the uMgungundlovu District Municipality

Ms Nomthetho Sibisi from the Zululand District Municipality

Ms Caroline Smart from the eThekweni Municipality

Ms Lungile Dlamini from the eThekweni Municipality

Mntwana Tobhi Zungu from the Zululand District Municipality

The KZNSAC MEC, Mr Mntomuhle Khawula, praised the honorees, noting that their dedication has placed KwaZulu-Natal firmly on the cultural map through the promotion of heritage.

“The work done by women in this province is truly admirable. I know that it is not only these women who have done great work, but there are many more. If we were to call all of them, there would not even be enough space here. Women in KwaZulu are honoured because of the significant and important role they play,” he said.

Professor Nomagugu Ngobese from the uMgungundlovu District Municipality expressed her gratitude for the recognition, noting that she has dedicated more than 35 years to heritage work.

“We have faced many challenges over the years, from social issues affecting our schools and families to the broader struggles impacting our communities.

Today, I feel honoured and excited because this work is greater than any one of us. We remain committed to fighting for restoration, dignity, and the rights of our people, especially persons with disabilities,” she shared delightfully.

The Women in Heritage celebration serves as both recognition, and encouragement emphasizing the importance of women’s communal leadership in addressing social challenges, preserving cultural continuity, and shaping South Africa’s heritage future.

End//



# ***Insimbi YaseMkhumbane: Preserving the Iron Spirit of a Historic Community***





Insimbi YaseMkhumbane is a historical publication that documents and honors the legacy of uMkhumbane, now known as Cato Manor, one of South Africa's most significant communities in the struggle against apartheid. The book captures the stories of both celebrated heroes and ordinary residents who found refuge in the area and helped shape the country's liberation history.

The title, meaning "*The Iron of Mkhumbane*," symbolizes the strength, resilience and unbreakable spirit forged within the community. Inspired by the Ensimbini section in Mayville, the name reflects how leaders and changemakers emerged from a space marked by hardship, displacement and political activism.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Mkhumbane became home to thousands of Black South Africans displaced by apartheid policies. The settlement grew into a vibrant and politically active hub, housing resistance leaders, workers, cultural pioneers and families united in their fight against injustice.

However, the apartheid government's enforcement of the Group Areas Act led to brutal forced removals that dismantled the community. Despite this, Mkhumbane endures as a symbol of unity and defiance.

Project lead Mr Lwazi Duma said the publication aims to restore dignity while safeguarding an important chapter of South Africa's liberation heritage.

“Communities like Mkhumbane teach us that greatness can emerge from spaces of struggle. When people understand their history, it changes how they see themselves and their potential.” Mr. Duma alluded.

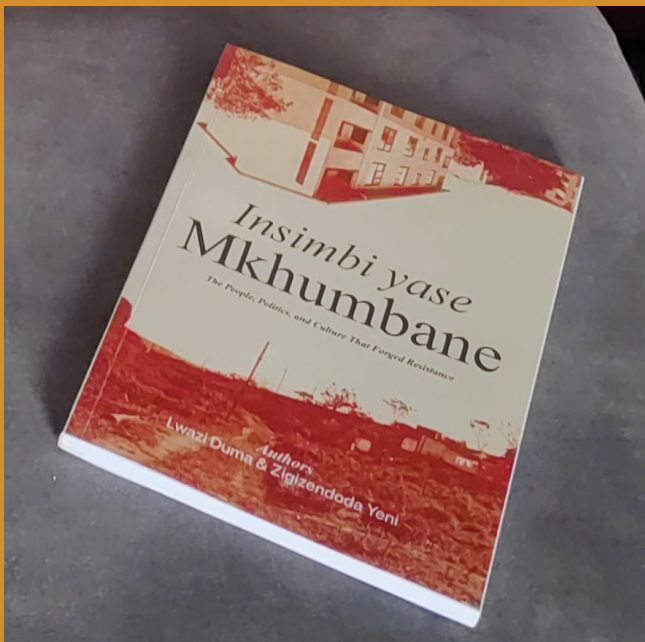
To ensure historical accuracy and authenticity, the project team collaborated closely with a historian from the Mkhumbane Museum.

The partnership helped to verify key events and figures while grounding the narrative in lived community experience. Copies of the book have also been shared with the museum, allowing residents and visitors to access their documented heritage.

Beyond preservation, the initiative places strong emphasis on youth empowerment.

Young people were actively involved in research, interviewing, writing and archival work, gaining valuable skills in heritage documentation and storytelling. The project also seeks to inspire children growing up in informal settlements by demonstrating that resilience and leadership can emerge from challenging environments.

“Support from the National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) played a critical role in enabling research and professional development of the manuscript. However, the team faced challenges, particularly in securing the costly archival images that could not be included in the first print edition. The experience highlighted the importance of comprehensive funding and early planning for heritage projects,” Mr. Duma expressed.



The book will be distributed to schools in Cato Manor and Chesterville as an educational resource promoting pride, identity and intergenerational dialogue. By documenting Mkhumbane's history as a space of refuge, resistance and unity, Insimbi YaseMkhumbane contributes to social cohesion and nation-building.

*Mr Duma emphasised that preserving living heritage is not only about safeguarding the past, but also about protecting identity, dignity and memory and inspiring future generations to recognise that they are part of an ongoing story.*

End//

## ***The NHC reignites the spirit of Ubuntu at Prof SS Repinga School by handing over school uniform and shoes***



**O**n 9 February 2026, the National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), in partnership with the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders (NHTKL) rolled out its Ubuntu Initiatives programme by handing over school uniform and shoes to fifty-three (53) beneficiaries of Prof S.S. Repinga School in Komatipoort, Mpumalanga Province.

The initiative reflects the African philosophy of Ubuntu, **"I am because we are"**, which emphasises shared humanity, compassion, and collective responsibility. For centuries, Ubuntu is a value that shape communities and guides nation building.

Speaking at the event, NHC Chairperson Mr Tau Masemola emphasised that Ubuntu is not reserved for ceremonies or speeches but is a principle that should guide everyday life. "As young people, you have the power to shape South Africa through your choices, your compassion, and your courage. Remember, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu, I am because you are, and together, we move forward."



Young people must understand that leadership is not about titles or power; it is about service. Madiba taught us that every single one of us has the power to change the world, and that change begins with living out Ubuntu in our schools, our communities, and our country."

He added.

During the event, 53 learners received school uniforms and shoes, highlighting the NHC's commitment to community upliftment, social cohesion, and investing in the future of South Africa's children.



By ensuring that learners are properly equipped for school, the NHC contributes to restoring dignity and confidence among young people. Access to a full school uniform not only supports academic participation but also promotes equality and belonging within the school environment.

Educators at Prof. S.S. Repinga School welcomed the intervention, indicating that such support positively impacts learner morale, attendance, and overall performance.

The partnership with the NHTKL further emphasizes the importance of collaboration in advancing national development goals. Traditional leaders play a crucial role as custodians of living heritage, cultural knowledge, and community values. Working together demonstrates how strategic partnerships can deliver meaningful impact at the grassroots level.

The initiative supports the NHC's mandate to promote social cohesion, safeguard living heritage, and empower communities.

By responding to practical needs, the NHC ensures that heritage remains relevant to everyday challenges faced by communities. Supporting learners today contributes to building informed, confident citizens who will carry South Africa's diverse heritage forward.

As the NHC continues to implement programmes across the country, it remains committed to inclusive partnerships that strengthen communities and foster a shared national identity.

Through collective action and sustained collaboration, the NHC continues to demonstrate that heritage is not only about preserving the past but also about shaping a more equitable and united future.

End//



## ***Youth Reflect, Lead and Rise at Hector Pieterseon Museum Engagement***

On Tuesday, 10 February 2026, learners from several heritage schools gathered at the Hector Pieterseon Museum in Soweto for a youth leadership engagement hosted by the Seth Mazibuko Foundation in partnership with the National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC).

The programme honored the legacy of the 1976 Soweto Uprising while equipping young leaders with practical skills in civic responsibility, heritage preservation and community service.

Moving beyond the #1976@50 commemorative campaign, the initiative sought to cultivate sustained youth leadership rooted in active citizenship and historical consciousness.

Set against the solemn backdrop of the museum, which memorializes the events of 16 June 1976, learners reflected on the courage of students who stood up against injustice five decades ago.

“It makes you realize that young people have always had the power to shape this country. We are not just the future, we are part of the present,” said Karabo, a Grade 11 learner from one of the participating schools.

Grounded in the legacy of 1976, the programme focused on empowering Representatives of Cultural Learners (RCLs) through workshops on leadership development, civic responsibility, heritage preservation, and community service.



Organizers emphasized inclusive participation to ensure that young people from diverse backgrounds could find their voice and purpose.

While the #1976@50 campaign marked an important milestone in commemorating the uprising, Tuesday’s engagement signaled a shift toward long-term impact.

The Resistance Liberation and Heritage Route (RLHR) Unit highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships between schools, heritage institutions

and community organizations to create sustained platforms for youth empowerment.

Ms. ZamaJobe Sithole, a representative of the NHC, said heritage should not be viewed as static or confined to museums.

***“Heritage lives in our communities and in our young people. I strongly believe in the Zulu proverb ‘ligotshwa lusemanzi’, translated in English as a tree is bent while it is still wet, which reminds us that values and character are shaped from a young age.***

When we invest in the leadership and civic consciousness of our youth, we safeguard and strengthen our democratic values,” she expressed.

The Seth Mazibuko Foundation, named after one of the student leaders of 1976, continues to play an important

role in mentoring and guiding young leaders to ensure that the bravery of the past translates into responsible and ethical leadership today.

Throughout the day, learners engaged in dialogue, shared community challenges and developed action-oriented ideas for service initiatives in their schools and neighborhoods.

The atmosphere was collaborative and hopeful, reflecting a generation eager to contribute meaningfully to society.

**In** conclusion, the teachers accompanying the learners described the programme as transformative.

“Our learners are leaving with more than information; they are leaving with a sense of duty,” said one educator.

End//



# INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

21 FEBRUARY

## *Why International Mother Language Day Feels Personal*

Every February 21, the world observes International Mother Language Day, a global initiative established by UNESCO. While it may appear to be a formal observance about linguistic diversity, at its heart it is deeply personal. It is about the language that first held our stories, comforted us as children, and shaped the way we understand the world.

A mother tongue is more than vocabulary or grammar. It is the sound of belonging. It carries memories of our grandparents' stories, family jokes, lullabies, and expressions that often lose their magic when translated. For many people, this language forms the emotional core of identity.

Yet thousands of languages worldwide are slowly disappearing. In many communities, children grow up learning dominant global languages while their ancestral languages fade into silence. Often, this shift comes from a desire for better opportunities or social acceptance. Parents want their children to succeed, and global languages can open doors. But the unintended cost can be a quiet disconnection from heritage and history.

When a language disappears, more than words are lost. Unique worldviews, cultural knowledge, humour, and oral traditions vanish with it.

Language is tied to dignity and representation. When a child feels that their home language does not belong in classrooms or public life, the message can feel personal: part of who you are does not fit here.

On the other hand, when education systems embrace multilingualism, children flourish. Learning in one's mother tongue builds confidence, strengthens understanding, and affirms identity. Multilingualism should not be seen as a barrier but as an advantage and expansion of perspective rather than a division of loyalty.

Preserving languages does not always require amending policies. It begins at home speaking the language at the dinner table, encouraging elders to share stories, and passing down traditions to younger generations. These everyday choices keep cultures alive.

International Mother Language Day ultimately reminds us that globalization should not demand erasure.

**We** can embrace global connection while protecting local identity. When we protect mother tongues, we protect humanity's diversity, memory, and a sense of belonging.

End//

## ***NHC Welcomes Mr Mphodisa Aphane to the Finance Team***

The National Heritage Council (NHC) is proud to welcome Mr. Mphodisa Donald Aphane as its new Accountant: Assets and Revenue, effective 1 February 2026. His appointment marks an important step in strengthening the organization's financial management and governance capacity.

Mr Aphane brings with him more than nine years of experience in the public sector, along with a strong foundation in auditing, financial management, asset control and revenue accounting.

He is a qualified Associate General Accountant (AGA(SA)) and a member of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), reflecting his commitment to professional excellence and ethical standards. He completed his SAICA articles at the Auditor-General of South Africa, where he served as a trainee auditor from 2016 to 2019.

During this time, he gained valuable exposure to public sector audits, compliance frameworks and financial oversight experience that laid a solid foundation for his career.



Over the years, Mr. Aphane has built a well-rounded professional profile. He has served as an Auditor at the Auditor-General of South Africa, an Accountant at Faitz Chartered Accountants, and a Finance Officer at South African National Parks (SANParks).

Most recently, he held the position of Asset Management Officer at the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), where he further strengthened his expertise in asset management and financial governance.

Colleagues describe him as diligent, solutions-driven and committed to upholding strong financial controls.

In his new role at the NHC, Mr. Aphane will focus on enhancing asset management systems, strengthening revenue processes and ensuring compliance with public finance regulations, all critical components in supporting the Council's strategic objectives.

The NHC extends a warm welcome to Mr. Aphane and looks forward to the positive contribution he will make. His skills, experience and passion for public service are expected to add meaningful value as the organization continues its important work of preserving and promoting South Africa's heritage.

End//

## ***National Heritage Council Appoints Ms. California Thobejane as Funding M&E Coordinator***

The National Heritage Council (NHC) is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms. California Thobejane as the new Funding Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Coordinator. Her one-year fixed-term contract commenced on 16 February 2026 within the NHC Funding Unit.

California brings with her nine years of extensive experience in administration, having held roles as a Finance Clerk, Project Evaluator, and Monitoring & Evaluation Officer across both the public and private sectors. Her broad background equips her with the expertise required to enhance the NHC's funding oversight and evaluation processes.

Academically, California has achieved a National Diploma in Financial Management, a Diploma in Project Management, a Certificate in Monitoring & Evaluation, and a Higher Certificate in Accounting Science. She is currently advancing her qualifications by pursuing a BCom in Supply Chain and Operations Management at the University of South Africa.

Since joining the NHC Funding Unit in 2023 as a Project Evaluator and M&E Intern, California has distinguished herself through her professionalism, dedication, and strong analytical skills. Her contributions have already had a meaningful impact on the unit, and she is poised to further support the organisation's strategic objectives in her new role.

The NHC warmly welcomes California to her new position and looks forward to her continued contributions in strengthening the Council's funding and evaluation initiatives.



# CONTACT US

## CONTACT INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK

NHC Call Centre



Telephone: 0127483910

General enquiries



email: [enquiries@nhc.org.za](mailto:enquiries@nhc.org.za)

Funding



Email: [funding@nhc.org.za](mailto:funding@nhc.org.za)

## FRAUD/CORRUPTION:

National Fraud Hotline: 0800 701 701



Email Address: [fraud@nhc.org.za](mailto:fraud@nhc.org.za)

## FEEDBACK AND CONTRIBUTION:



Email: [communications@nhc.org.za](mailto:communications@nhc.org.za)



NationalHeritageCouncil



nhcsouthafrica



nhcsouthafrica



NationalHeritageCouncil