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National Heritage Council
SOUTH AFRICA

an agency of the
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

www.nhc.org.za

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

VOL1 ISSUE6 JUNE/JULY 2026



Top Stories

NHC Announces Successful Recipients of 2026-27 Annual Heritage Funding.

Preserving Living Heritage-Snuff in South Africa Documents an Enduring Cultural Legacy.

*Champions of African heritage towards
social cohesion*

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CEOs MESSAGE

*Dr Thabo Manetsi, Chief Executive Officer,
National Heritage*

Dear Colleagues, Stakeholders and Friends of Heritage.

As we present the June/July edition of our Heritage Newsletter, we are reminded that preserving South Africa's heritage is about more than protecting our past. It is about investing in our future. At the National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), we remain committed to preserving, protecting, and promoting our nation's rich and diverse heritage as a foundation for social cohesion, nation building, and sustainable development.

The stories in this edition reflect the meaningful progress we continue to make in delivering on this commitment. The announcement of the successful recipients of the 2026/27 Annual Heritage Funding is an important milestone in strengthening the heritage sector. Through this investment, the NHC is supporting projects that preserve our heritage, encourage research, and empower communities to safeguard the stories, traditions, and knowledge that define our collective identity.

Our commitment to preserving living heritage is equally evident in the documentation of South Africa's snuff traditions. Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices are integral to who we are as a nation. By documenting and promoting these traditions, we are ensuring that they remain valued, protected, and accessible for future generations.

The month of July also provides an opportunity to reflect on the enduring legacy of our global statesman, Tata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. As highlighted in our opinion piece, Mandela Month should inspire more than acts of service confined to a single month. It should encourage each of us to embrace the values of compassion, responsibility, and active citizenship throughout the year as we work

together to build stronger and more inclusive communities.

In advancing this vision, the National Heritage Council (NHC) continues to champion the values of Ubuntu through its Ubuntu Initiatives Programme, which seeks to extend the spirit of Mandela Day into a Mandela Year. The programme promotes Ubuntu as a living heritage that inspires social cohesion, mutual care and collective responsibility, recognizing that lasting behavioral change is fundamental to societal transformation.

The 2026/27 Call for Proposals under the Ubuntu Initiatives Programme closed on 31 May 2026, and the evaluation of submitted proposals has now been concluded. Through this initiative, the NHC will partner with selected non-profit organizations to implement community-based Ubuntu projects in all nine provinces. During the course of the 2026/27 financial year, the NHC and its partner organizations will hand over essential goods and provide support to one community project in each province, targeting communities identified as being most in need.

The programme invites community organizations to implement initiatives that promote advocacy, education and the practical application of Ubuntu as an integral element of South Africa's living heritage. By embedding the principles of empathy, dignity, solidarity and shared responsibility into everyday life, the Ubuntu Initiatives Programme seeks to strengthen communities, foster active citizenship and ensure that Nelson Mandela's legacy continues to inspire meaningful action throughout the year.

We also celebrate the achievements of individuals whose dedication strengthens both the NHC and the heritage sector. Congratulations to Ms. Sarah Mojapelo and Mr Mogale Maponya on attaining their master's degrees. Their accomplishment demonstrates the value of continuous learning and reinforces our belief that investing in people is essential to building a capable and resilient heritage sector.

This edition further recognizes Ms. Palesa Kadi for her distinguished leadership and dedicated service. Her contribution reflects the values of integrity, excellence, and commitment that continue to shape our institution and inspire those who serve in the heritage sector.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on strengthening partnerships, supporting innovation, and ensuring that heritage continues to contribute to social cohesion, economic opportunity, and national development. I extend my sincere appreciation to our stakeholders, partners, heritage practitioners, communities, and the NHC team for your continued support and collaboration. Together, we will continue to preserve our heritage, celebrate our diversity, and build a future that honours the richness of South Africa's shared legacy.

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



NHC 2026/27 ANNUAL FUNDING CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS..

NHC ANNOUNCES SUCCESSFUL RECIPIENTS OF THE 2026/27 ANNUAL HERITAGE FUNDING

The National Heritage Council (NHC) has announced the successful recipients of the 2026/27 Annual Heritage Funding, marking an important milestone in supporting projects that preserve, protect, and promote South Africa's rich and diverse heritage.

The NHC funding programme provides support to a range of community-driven initiatives focused on heritage research, documentation, digitization, education and the preservation of cultural and historical resources. The successful projects reflect the NHC's ongoing commitment to safeguarding the country's heritage while promoting social cohesion and nation-building.

Congratulating the successful applicants, NHC Funding Manager Ms Bongiwe Magasela said that the NHC Funding programme demonstrates the NHC's continued investment in communities that are committed to preserving South Africa's heritage.

She noted that the programme gives effect to the National Heritage Council's mandate in terms of Section 10(d) of the National Heritage Council Act, which empowers the Council to award funding to qualifying persons,

organisations and institutions to promote and develop national heritage activities and resources.

Congratulations to all the successful recipients of the 2026/27 Annual Heritage Funding. She further added, "Your projects will contribute significantly to preserving our nation's diverse heritage while ensuring that future generations continue to learn from and celebrate our shared cultural legacy. We wish you every success as you implement your projects."

Ms Magasela also thanked all organizations that answered to the 2026/27 call for applications, acknowledging the strong interest shown by heritage practitioners and community organizations across the country.

"We sincerely thank every organisation that submitted an application. The quality of the proposals reflects the passion and dedication of communities working to preserve South Africa's heritage."

We encourage applicants who were not successful this time to continue developing their initiatives and to apply in future funding cycles."

The successful projects span a wide range of heritage disciplines and are expected to make a meaningful contribution to documenting oral histories, preserving indigenous knowledge systems, promoting heritage education, protecting cultural and historical sites, and strengthening community participation in heritage conservation.

As the funded projects move into implementation, the NHC looks forward to working with all grant recipients to ensure these initiatives deliver lasting benefits to communities and help preserve South Africa's heritage for generations to come.

Applicants can access the full list of successful recipients through the **2026/27 Annual Heritage Funding Outcomes document** available on <http://www.nhc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/NHC-Annual-Funding-Outcomes.pdf>

PRESERVING SOUTH AFRICA'S LIVING HERITAGE THROUGH **THE SNUFF** IN SOUTH AFRICA PROJECT



Some of South Africa's most valuable cultural knowledge has never been recorded in books. Instead, it has been passed from one generation to the next through stories, ceremonies and the wisdom of community elders. As these knowledge holders grow older, there is an increasing need to preserve their memories before they are lost.

Recognizing this need, the People's Pride Foundation, with support from the National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), undertook the Snuff in South Africa project to document the cultural, spiritual and historical significance of snuff across diverse communities.

By recording oral histories and indigenous knowledge, the project is preserving an important part of South Africa's living heritage for future generations.

”The knowledge held by many of our elders has never been written down,” said Project Leader Rendani Mamphwe. “If we do not record these stories now, we risk losing an important part of our cultural heritage. This project helps ensure that future generations can better understand where they come from.”

For many South African communities, snuff is far more than a substance for personal use. Known by different names, including Snuff, Ntsu and other indigenous terms,

it has long formed part of ceremonies, family gatherings, spiritual observances and, in some communities, traditional healing practices.

The research explores its role in ancestral communication, ceremonial traditions and customs that continue to strengthen family ties and shape cultural identity across generations.

Rather than focusing on recreational use, the project places snuff within its broader historical and cultural context. It explores the beliefs, traditions and practices that have formed part of community life for generations and continue to contribute to South Africa's rich cultural heritage.

“People often associate heritage with monuments or museums,” said Rendani. “Yet some of our richest heritage lives in the customs and traditions practiced within our communities. Documenting these traditions is essential because it helps preserve an important part of our cultural identity.”

One of the most meaningful aspects of the project was the opportunity to sit with community elders and listen to their stories. Through interviews conducted across different communities, elders shared memories of family ceremonies, traditional weddings, funerals and ancestral rituals.

Their experiences offered valuable insights into customs that have endured through

oral tradition rather than written records.

“Every elder we interviewed carried knowledge that cannot be found in textbooks,” said Rendani. “Listening to their stories reinforced the importance of documenting oral history before this knowledge is lost.”

Building trust was central to the research process. Because some cultural knowledge is sacred and shared only under appropriate circumstances, the research team worked closely and respectfully with elders and community members to ensure their stories were documented accurately and in a culturally sensitive manner.

Support from the NHC enabled the research team to travel to communities, conduct interviews, record oral histories and publish the findings. This support has helped preserve an important aspect of South Africa's intangible cultural heritage while making the research more accessible to the public.

Importantly, the project does not encourage the use of snuff. Instead, it promotes a deeper understanding of its historical, cultural and spiritual significance while encouraging younger generations to value indigenous knowledge and appreciate the traditions that continue to shape their communities.

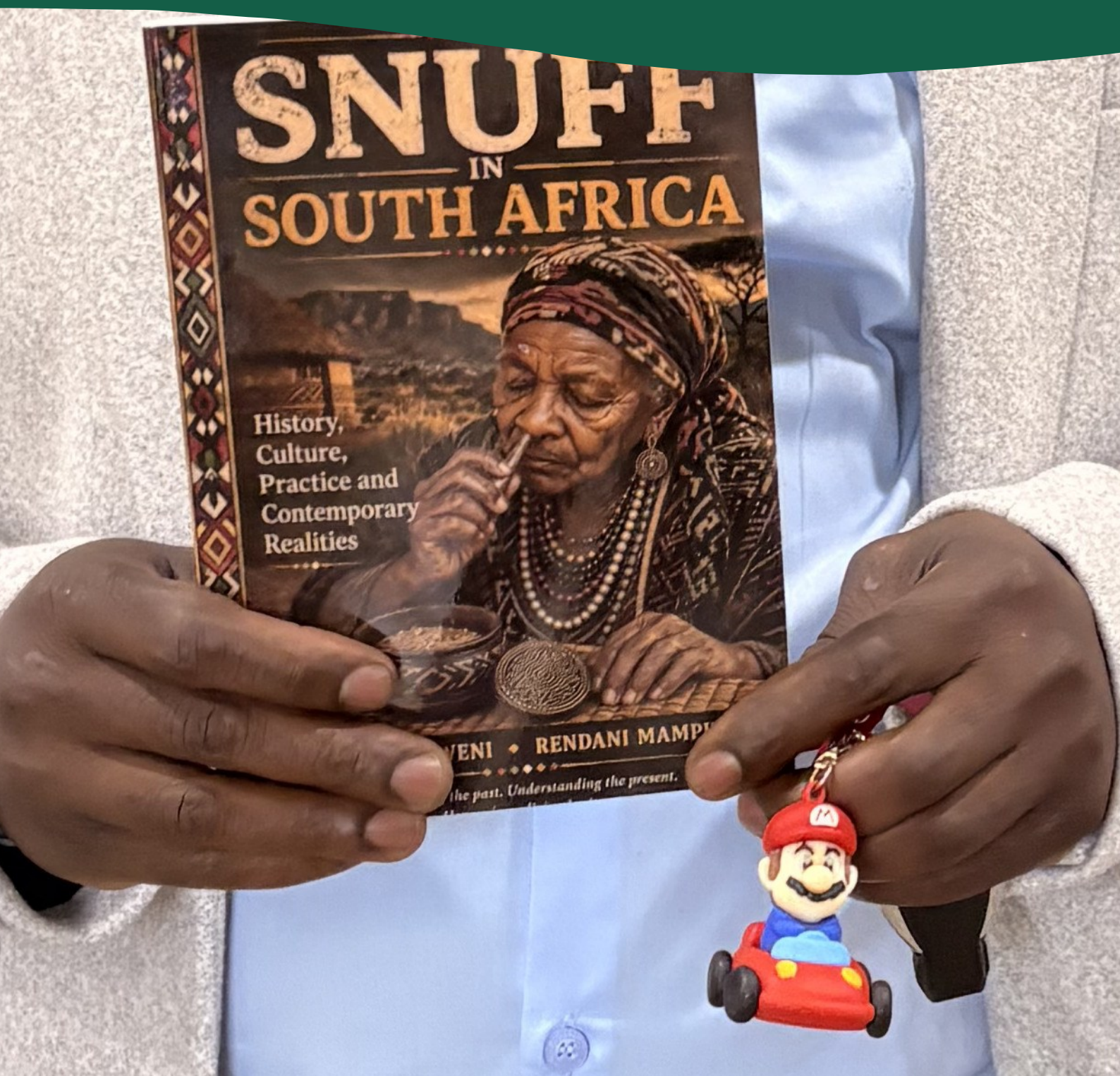
Following the completion of Snuff in South Africa, the People's Pride Foundation plans to continue documenting cultural practices that are at risk of being forgotten, including indigenous knowledge systems, oral history, traditional medicine, music, dance and cultural ceremonies.

As South Africa celebrates its rich cultural diversity, projects such as Snuff in South Africa remind us that some of our greatest cultural treasures are found not only in museums or archives,

but also in the memories, traditions and lived experiences of our people.

By preserving these stories today, the People's Pride Foundation and the National Heritage Council are helping to ensure that this knowledge remains a living legacy that will continue to educate, inspire and connect future generations.

End..



MANDELA MONTH SHOULD BE A MOVEMENT, NOT A MOMENT (OPINION PIECE)



Every July, South Africans honour the life and legacy of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. But this annual commemoration should be much more than a ritual marked by 67 minutes of service. It should challenge us to ask whether we are truly building the just, compassionate and inclusive society that Madiba envisioned, or whether we have become comfortable with symbolic gestures that fade once July ends.

Acts of service matter. Cleaning schools, donating food parcels and volunteering in communities all make a positive difference. But if these efforts begin and end with Mandela Month, we miss Mandela's greatest lesson. His legacy was never about one day of charity. It was about active citizenship, ethical leadership and the shared responsibility to improve the lives of others every day.

South Africa has reached a point where we must move beyond celebrating Mandela and start living the values he stood for. Ubuntu, reconciliation, equality and human dignity cannot become national values if we remember them only once a year. They must shape how we lead, govern and respond to the challenges facing our communities.

This is why heritage deserves greater attention. Too often, people think of heritage as monuments, museums and historic buildings. While these are important, they tell only part of the story. Heritage also lives in our values, languages, traditions and collective memory. Mandela's greatest gift was not only democracy, but also the enduring belief that ordinary citizens have the power to transform society through compassion, dialogue and service.

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) has embraced this broader understanding of heritage. Rather than treating heritage as something remembered only on commemorative days, the NHC promotes it as a living resource that strengthens social cohesion, encourages active citizenship and advances nation-building.

One of its flagship programmes, the Nelson Mandela Ubuntu Initiative, seeks to transform Mandela Day into a year-round commitment to community development.

By supporting projects across all nine provinces that address poverty, inequality, youth development and social cohesion, the initiative reminds us that Mandela's legacy should be measured by lasting impact rather than annual ceremonies.

The NHC's Heritage Education Schools Outreach Programme (HESOP) reinforces this vision by encouraging young people to value and protect South Africa's rich and diverse heritage.

Together with support for indigenous knowledge systems and community heritage projects, these initiatives ensure that heritage remains relevant to everyday life instead of being confined to museums, archives or history textbooks.

However, no programme can achieve lasting change on its own. Heritage institutions cannot build social cohesion without the active participation of communities, schools, businesses and civil society. Their success ultimately depends on whether all South Africans choose to live the values they promote.

The official theme for Nelson Mandela Month reminds us that "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity."

Those words are as relevant today as they were decades ago because South Africa continues to grapple with unemployment, inequality and social division. These challenges cannot be solved through annual commemorations alone.

They require sustained civic action, ethical leadership and citizens who remain committed long after the headlines have faded.

Nelson Mandela Month should therefore be seen as the beginning of a national conversation that continues into Heritage Month and beyond.

Both commemorations remind us that heritage is not simply what we inherit.

It is what we choose to protect, strengthen and pass on to future generations.

The true measure of Mandela's legacy will never be the number of blankets donated, or schools painted on 18 July. It will be measured by whether South Africans continue to serve their communities when there are no cameras, campaigns, or commemorative events.

The NHC's programmes demonstrate that heritage is not only about preserving the past. It is also about empowering people to build a more united, compassionate and inclusive future. Mandela Month should not be a moment that comes and goes. It should be a movement that shapes how we serve, lead and build our nation every day.

End..



NHC CELEBRATES TWO RESEARCH ASSISTANTS ON ATTAINING THEIR MASTER'S DEGREES

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) proudly congratulates two Research Assistants; Ms. Sarah Mojapelo and Mr. Mogale Maponya on earning their master's degrees in information science, an important academic milestone that reflects their dedication, perseverance, and commitment to lifelong learning. As members of the Research and Knowledge Production Unit, Ms. Sarah and Mr. Mogale have consistently demonstrated a passion for advancing research, knowledge management, and evidence-based heritage practices.

Their academic achievements not only represent personal success but also strengthen the NHC's capacity to preserve, promote, and protect South Africa's rich and diverse heritage through research and informed policymaking.

Sarah holds a bachelor's degree in media studies, a Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies, and a master's degree in library and information science. She is currently pursuing her PhD studies in Library and Information Science, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS).

She is passionate about expanding knowledge within the heritage sector with the long-term goal of becoming an expert in her profession and therefore contributing to the development of the future heritage and information profession.

“Completing my master's degree is a dream realised and a reminder that dedication and perseverance truly pay off. I am grateful for the support I have received throughout this journey, and I look forward to using the knowledge and skills I have gained to contribute meaningfully to the heritage sector,” Sarah expressed.



Ms. Sarah Mojapelo

Mogale holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Information Management, an Honours degree in Information and Knowledge Management, and a master's degree in information science.

His academic journey reflects a strong interest in research, information management, and the role of knowledge systems in supporting heritage development and evidence-based decision-making.

Speaking about his accomplishment, Mogale said, **"Earning my master's degree is a proud moment that reflects years of hard work, resilience, and continuous learning. This achievement has strengthened my passion for research and knowledge management, and I am excited to apply what I have learned to support the NHC's mission and contribute to preserving South Africa's heritage for future generations."**

NHC CELEBRATES TWO RESEARCH ASSISTANTS ON ATTAINING THEIR MASTER'S DEGREES



Mr. Mogale Maponya

Before joining the Research and Knowledge Production Unit, Sarah and Mogale successfully completed internships at the NHC, where they contributed to several strategic initiatives.

Their work included reviewing research and policy position papers, participating in funding evaluation processes, monitoring and evaluating projects under the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP), and supporting reports on the Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route (RLHR) and Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites.

In their current roles, they provide professional research support, conduct specialized analyses, contribute to the development of policy and strategic frameworks, engage with stakeholders, and produce research that informs national heritage priorities.

Their continued academic development further enhances the NHC's ability to generate knowledge that supports evidence-based policymaking and sustainable development within South Africa's heritage sector.

The NHC celebrates Sarah and Mogale for this outstanding achievement and commends their commitment to professional and academic excellence.

Their success proves the value of investing in people, knowledge, and continuous learning, while emphasizing the organization's commitment to building a skilled, innovative, and capable workforce.

The NHC wishes Ms. Mojapelo and Mr. Maponya continued success as they build on this important milestone and continue making meaningful contributions to South Africa's heritage landscape through research, knowledge production, and heritage development.

End..



NHC HONOURS PALESA KADI'S LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AS SHE EMBARKS ON A NEW CHAPTER

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) hosted a farewell ceremony on Tuesday, 7 July 2026, to honor Executive: Strategy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms. Palesa Kadi, as she concluded her tenure with the organization. Held in the NHC Boardroom, the event brought together the staff to celebrate her exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication and lasting contribution to the organization and South Africa's heritage sector.

The ceremony provided colleagues with an opportunity to reflect on Ms. Kadi's career at the NHC, the meaningful connections she fostered and the values she consistently demonstrated throughout her service.

Opening the programme, Advocate Tshepo Maake emphasized the importance of recognizing individuals whose commitment and leadership have helped shape the organization and advance its mandate. NHC Chief Executive Officer, Dr Thabo Manetsi, paid tribute to Ms. Kadi's leadership, describing her as someone whose influence extended far beyond her official responsibilities.

"As we bid farewell to Ms. Kadi, we must reflect on the time she spent with us and the impact she has made. The true measure of a person's contribution is often realized when they walk out the door, when we begin to remember the value they brought, the lives they touched and the difference they made," said Dr Manetsi.

He described Ms. Kadi as the embodiment of Ubuntu, noting that she demonstrated these values through her actions every day. He also commended her commitment to mentoring young professionals, encouraging continuous learning and fostering a workplace culture grounded in care, collaboration and mutual respect.

Dr Manetsi added that Ms. Kadi's guidance inspired many colleagues to grow professionally, embrace new opportunities and contribute with confidence, strengthening both the organization and the future of South Africa's heritage sector.



Following the tributes, Ms. Kadi reflected on her time at the NHC and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside dedicated colleagues and emerging professionals who shared a vision of preserving and promoting South Africa's heritage. She highlighted the importance of teamwork and the collective responsibility of advancing the country's heritage agenda.

She encouraged young professionals to remain curious, embrace opportunities for growth and continue investing in their personal and professional development.

She noted that the experience gained through heritage work carries with it a responsibility to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Ms. Kadi also announced that she will continue her career in Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, where she has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the National Arts Festival.

Although she is leaving the NHC, she said the professional relationships she has built and the experiences she has gained will remain an enduring part of her career.

"The relationships and the people we have met through this work will always remain part of us. When we meet people at airports, interviews and conferences, we realize they are people who have been part of this same journey. That is the legacy we continue to build together," she said.

Closing the event, NHC staff expressed their sincere appreciation for Ms. Kadi's dedication, leadership and steadfast commitment to advancing the organization's mandate. While her departure marks the end of an important chapter at the NHC, her continued contribution to South Africa's arts, culture and heritage landscape reflects the enduring values of Ubuntu, mentorship and public service.

As she embarks on this new chapter, the NHC wishes Ms. Kadi every success in her new role and thanks her for the lasting legacy she leaves through the people she has inspired, the leaders she has mentored and her meaningful contribution to the organization and South Africa's heritage sector.

Her legacy will continue to be reflected in the lives she has touched and in the continued advancement of South Africa's heritage.

End..



UPCOMING EVENTS



WOMEN'S DAY NATIONAL COMMEMORATION
09 AUGUST 2026, VENUE: SOUTH LAWNS, UNION
BUILDINGS, PRETORIA.



INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SEMINAR
8 & 9 AUGUST 2026 – VENUE: SANPARKS



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