

Local community newspaper scoops national award

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Zithethele, an English and Xhosa newspaper that is distributed in Nelson Mandela every two weeks, has won the award as best grassroots community newspaper in the country, at the annual Sanlam/MDDA Local Media Awards ceremony held in Johannesburg last Friday (19 November). *Zithethele* is published by The Media Workshop, a media production and training company based in Port Elizabeth.



Zithethele publisher, Denise Roodt, receives the award as best grassroots newspaper from Siobhan McCarthy, Sanlam Group Head of Communications, at the Sanlam/MDDA Local Media Awards Ceremony in Johannesburg last Friday.

Sanlam and the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) joined forces this year to celebrate excellence in the local media industry of South Africa. Some 150 community newspapers and radio stations from across the country participated in the event. These awards were formerly known as the Sanlam Community Press Awards.

The grassroots community media award is a new category introduced this year. The objective of the award is to encourage all grassroots media to go beyond the call of duty and to produce news and current affairs that meet the highest standards.

Judges said *Zithethele* won the award because of its fresh approach and clean design. "It is a newspaper with attitude," they said.

What makes *Zithethele*'s win remarkable, according to publisher, Denise Roodt, is the fact that *Zithethele* has only been around since June this year. In fact, the competition called on newspapers to submit their best publications between June 2009 and June 2010. "We had only published two newspapers by the end of June, 2010, so I entered these," said Roodt. "We have actually grown and improved a lot since then."

Zithethele, which means "Speak your mind" is the brainchild of Denise Roodt. The paper was introduced both as a voice for the Xhosa community and a training vehicle for journalism learners. "The Media Workshop is an accredited Journalism training provider. We have been training journalism learners, funded by the Mapp-seta, since 2008. I realised that there was no newspaper for graduates of our programme, who are predominantly first-language Xhosa speakers, to work on completion of their qualification. I also saw a gap in the market, since the massive black population of Nelson Mandela Bay had no newspaper which they could call their own and which would cater for their needs."

Zithethele is sponsored by the MDDA. "I applied to the MDDA for start-up funding late last year. The paper would not have got off the ground had it not been for the excellent support we receive from the MDDA," said Roodt.

The *Zithethele* news team includes news editor, Khanyisa Sinqe; reporters Mpumelelo Matwa, Lizeka Tandwa and Hopewell Mpapu; Managing editor, Marius Roodt; Xhosa sub-editor Hubert Ngqawana and English sub-editor and publisher, Denise Roodt.

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Media Development and Diversity Agency



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