

An MDDA beneficiary nominated as the Fellow from South Africa for the 2009 Eisenhower Fellowships

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The Media Development and Diversity Agency would like to congratulate Ms Mbali Dhlomo, a KwaZulu-Natal-based Editor and Founder of *Genuine* magazine and *Intuthuko* newspaper. Ms Dhlomo has been nominated as the Fellow from South Africa for the 2009 Eisenhower Fellowships' Multi National Program.



This means that, as from the 1st of April 2009, Ms Dhlomo will spend seven weeks in the United States of America, where she will interact with United States leaders in the media industry and business.

Genuine magazine is a family magazine based in Durban and targeted at families throughout KwaZulu-Natal. The magazine started publishing regularly some years ago, but stopped printing due to financial problems. Media entrepreneur Mbali Dhlomo had only her pension money to fund her dream publication, *Genuine* magazine, in 2001. When Dhlomo registered the company she thought everything would quickly fall into place. But she soon found out that the printing industry was a tough nut to crack.

"It was tough. Advertisers weren't willing to give me money without seeing a dummy of the magazine and I had to go back to the drawing board," said the resilient Ms Dhlomo.

The MDDA came to her rescue at the end of 2006 with R337 902 in funding. The money was used for organisational development in the form of mentoring from the MDDA, a feasibility study on the viability of the magazine, buying operating equipment, such as scanners and cameras, and covering the magazine's printing costs. Further Ms Dhlomo has been through a number of training and capacity building initiatives of the MDDA.

Speaking at her congratulatory function in Durban, the Co-Chairperson of the South African Nominating Committee, Prof Reggie Ngcobo (in the picture, left) explained that the main objective of the Eisenhower Fellowships is to identify potential and emerging leaders and give them the opportunity to gain knowledge and expertise by interacting with top leaders in their respective fields.

Prof Ngcobo congratulated Ms Dhlomo for having gone through the Eisenhower Fellowships' rigorous interviewing process and succeeding.

Also present at the function was the Media Development and Diversity Agency's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Lumko Mtimde, who told guests at the function that *Genuine* magazine was one of the first projects that were approved for grant funding from the MDDA in 2004.

"The MDDA is proud of *Genuine* magazine, as it is one of our flagship projects that truly reflect media diversity in South Africa. We also commend Ms Dhlomo for persevering despite the printing, distribution and sustainability challenges in the small commercial

and community print media sector,” Mr Mtimde said.

Mr Mtimde also wished Ms Dhlomo well on her trip, he said South Africans will follow the trip on Facebook.

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