iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu

SWEEP
STUDENT WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

THE 2026 ANNUAL EDITION

Our 2026 SWEEP *Chapter*

STUDENT WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME
iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu



THE 2026 SWEEP CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Leadership. Sisterhood. Service.

Butterworth | Buffalo City | Komani | Mthatha | Eastern Cape, South Africa

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WELCOME

A year of sisterhood and service

2026 has been a defining year for the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP) at iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu, a year marked by bold leadership, sisterhood, service and a relentless commitment to empowering women across all four campuses: Mthatha, Buffalo City, Butterworth and Komani.

At the helm stands SWEEP Coordinator Miss Nombulelo Blaai, together with the 2026 Executive Committee, whose dedication has driven every initiative in this issue.

What follows is not merely a list of events, but a story of women who chose to lead, serve and uplift, proving that when women come together, entire communities rise.



"When women unite, there is no limit to what they can achieve."

MISS NPK BLAAI
SWEEP ENTREPRENEURSHIP COORDINATOR

ABOUT SWEEP

The sisterhood and our year

A national sisterhood, launched at iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu on 25 August 2023.

SWEEP is an Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) initiative dedicated to empowering student women to become economically active through entrepreneurship, employability, leadership development and professional networking.

It was established to address the underrepresentation of women in entrepreneurship and the workplace, while responding to pressing challenges such as youth unemployment, financial dependency and gender-based violence.

EDHE is a programme of Universities South Africa (USAf) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and SWEEP runs in partnership with the British Council.

In 2026 the programme focused on five core pillars: leadership development, community outreach, mental wellness, economic empowerment and institutional collaboration.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

17–19 Apr	Executive capacity-building workshop, East London
4 May	2026 Executive introduced on Microsoft Teams
13–15 Jul	TransformHER Living Lab, national programme
15 Jul	SWEEP guest speakers at the SAWID event
31 Jul / 1 Aug	67 Minutes for Mandela Day: Mthatha and Komani
17 Aug	Women's Month webinar with UFS
29 Aug	Women empowerment masterclass webinar
3 Sep – 2 Oct	Bonding and wellness sessions on all four campuses
11 Sep	Business Breakfast at the ELICC
19 Sep	Eastern Cape SWEEP Chapters Indibano, Rhodes University
16 Oct	Annual GBVF and Economic Empowerment Seminar
20 Oct	Women empowerment webinar with SMU

THE LEADERS

Meet the 2026 Executive Committee

Dedicated leaders serving the SWEEP community who are also entrepreneurs, innovators, ambassadors and changemakers.



CHAIRPERSON
Asiphe Cekiso

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON
Unathi Mashaba

SECRETARY
Tshimangadzo Masia

DEPUTY SECRETARY
Aphiwe Ngwane

TREASURER
Banele Dalasile

MARKETING & PR OFFICER
Rethabile Sekobile

EVENT COORDINATOR
Matsatsi Tsebe

EXECUTIVE SPOTLIGHT

Building businesses, leading the chapter



Asiphe Cekiso

CHAIRPERSON

Founder and CEO of EcoWrap Solutions, a business dedicated to transforming waste into sustainable plastic alternatives. EcoWrap Solutions has been shortlisted for the 2026 Mr Price Innovation Waste Challenge.

Deputy Chairperson of the built environment student body ASAQS and Entrepreneurship Ambassador for the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and IT.



Unathi Mashaba

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Co-founder of ASAKE WEAR, a reusable period underwear brand partially made from biodegradable plant waste, tackling both period poverty and environmental harm.

ASAKE WEAR has been selected as a Top 15 at the South African Innovation Awards, and Unathi was in the Hult Prize SDG Olympiad Top 10. She is Secretary of the Faculty of Economic and Financial Sciences.

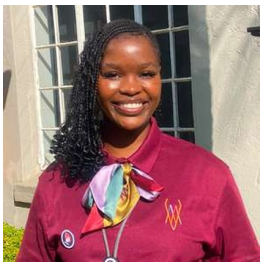


Tshimangadzo Masia

SECRETARY

Founder of MANGI GROUP (PTY) LTD, an enterprise providing digital transformation, electronic repair and solar solutions. Out of 26 universities, MANGI GROUP was shortlisted in the Top 10 of the Enactus Ford Challenge, and it was also shortlisted for the Mr Price Innovation Waste Challenge.

Intercontinental Youth Ambassador, 2026 Enactus National Special Competition finalist and Entrepreneurship Ambassador for the Faculty of Natural Science.



Banele Dalasile

TREASURER

Founder of Banzo’s enterprise, selling freshly baked muffins, burgers, fries and gift packages. The enterprise is in the process of being registered and has employed two delivery staff.

A tutor for level 2 students, Banele attended the 2026 Southern African Youth Development Council (SAYDC) in Sandton.



Aphiwe Ngwane

DEPUTY SECRETARY

Founder of Esona Photography and Deputy Secretary of the Walter Sisulu SWEEP Chapter. Aphiwe attended the Southern African Youth Conference.

Rethabile Sekobile (Marketing & PR Officer) and Matsatsi Tsebe (Event Coordinator) complete the Executive Committee.

SWEEP SISTA SPOTLIGHT

Sistas making moves



Dikgabiso Letele

FOUNDER, THE EYE OF EARTH

Her 3-in-1 Healing Butter has advanced from ideation to a fully functional prototype. An initial run of 20 units proved small-scale manufacturing was viable, and 12 were sold within weeks. The rest went out for product testing, with no negative reports on performance or user experience.

The venture has earned a spot in the DTIC and EDHE NextGen Export Incubation Programme, where the founders are building expertise in export readiness, market research and international business strategy.

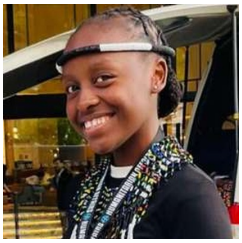


Thembekile Mdluli

DIRECTOR, MELLA CLOTHING

Mella Clothing is a social enterprise creating sustainable fashion that claims African culture and a platform that creates jobs for young artisans.

Thembekile is Secretary of Enactus, an entrepreneurship student ambassador of iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu, a Senior Residence Mentor and an Amnesty International human rights activist.



Tsholofelo Gopane

FOUNDER AND CEO, LEGACYMIND

LegacyMind is an AI-powered wearable and mobile platform that detects signs of distress, enables silent emergency alerts and connects vulnerable people to support, helping prevent gender-based violence and mental health crises. She also founded the Thusa A Black Child Initiative.

1st Runner-Up at the Gender Links Entrepreneurship Competition and at Hult Prize Walter Sisulu 2026, 3rd place at the GrandPa Spaza Academy Business Competition, a Fort Hare Activist School Top 5 representative (2025 cohort) and a speaker at the South African Women's Dialogue 2026.

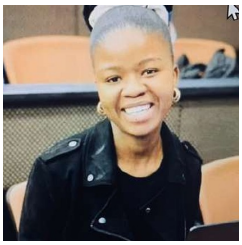


Azingce

FOUNDER AND CEO, AZINGCE CROCHETS

Azingce presented her business at a workshop in Komani early this year and was invited to showcase it at the Mthatha fashion show on 27 June 2026.

An actress as well, she has performed at the Research Centre at the medical school and at the National Arts Festival in Makanda (Grahamstown).



Anezwa Mdaka

AUTHOR AND FORMER SWEEP CHAIRPERSON

Entrepreneurship Ambassador for the Faculty FMPAS and author of The Freedom They Fought For vs The Life We Live. She completed her NQF Level 5 qualification in Film and Television on 30 June 2026 at Cortex Hub, accredited by MICT SETA.

BUILDING THE TEAM

Learning to lead

A three-day workshop in East London gave the Executive its foundation for the year.

The SWEEP Executive took part in a comprehensive three-day workshop at the Devereux Lodge in East London, aimed at equipping members with leadership, organisational and programme management skills.

Sessions covered ethical leadership, team dynamics, emotional intelligence, governance, event planning, financial literacy, communication and conflict resolution, along with the EDHE programme and the vision and mission of SWEEP. Developmental sessions also looked at women in business and the barriers they face in the economy. Invited speakers and facilitators brought real-world experience and expertise.

Lessons the team took home

Leadership is service. Effective leadership requires humility, accountability and a genuine commitment to serving others.

Teamwork is essential. SWEEP's success depends on unity and collaboration among all chapters.

Planning is power. Proper planning, goal-setting and time management are critical to successful initiatives.

Communication builds bridges. Clear and respectful communication strengthens relationships within the Executive and with external stakeholders.

Financial literacy matters. Understanding budgets and resource management is vital for sustaining SWEEP's programmes.



The SWEEP Executive and facilitators at the capacity building workshop.



The workshop was held in East London, 17–19 April 2026.

4 MAY 2026 • MICROSOFT TEAMS

Introducing the 2026 Executive

The Executive was formally introduced online so that members from all four campuses could attend. Every member got to know who their executives are, what portfolios they hold and where to direct enquiries, ideas or concerns, so that every SWEEP Sista felt seen, heard and supported by her leadership.

TransformHER Living Lab

Through HER Story: SWEEP representatives from all 26 public universities came together for three days.



Delegates at the Living Lab.

The Walter Sisulu SWEEP Executive took part in the TransformHER Living Lab, a national leadership and entrepreneurship programme. Over three days delegates learned from accomplished speakers from across South Africa, and from international speakers, particularly from the United Kingdom, whose perspectives broadened their understanding of leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Day one

The day opened by encouraging delegates to reflect on the power of their own stories. Dr Gumbo reminded them that “your story can inspire another story”, setting the tone for conversations about leadership, resilience and purpose. Speakers encouraged courage, integrity and discipline, and letting go of fear, comparison and self-doubt.

One of the most memorable moments was the SWEEP Pin Ceremony, which symbolised a commitment to serving communities through leadership and entrepreneurship. Delegates also buried the words “I can’t” and “Not yet”, choosing instead to embrace the words “I will”.



Walter Sisulu SWEEP delegates strike a pose.

The day ended with breakout sessions: colouring, sewing, creating letters using fabric, or simply joining safe spaces to talk, reflect and let things out. They were a reminder that leadership is also about caring for our well-being and building genuine connections.

Day two and the road home



Delegates after a workshop session.



A session on letting go of comparison.

Day two focused on personal growth and entrepreneurship. A mindfulness session reminded delegates to prioritise their well-being before taking on the day. The message that "vision without action is a daydream" encouraged practical steps towards goals instead of waiting for the perfect moment, and another standout lesson was the importance of collaboration over competition.

Delegates were reminded that there is enough room for everyone to succeed. Through reflection activities and workshops they evaluated their entrepreneurial strengths, identified areas for improvement and developed practical plans for personal and professional growth. A cashflow case study built around a catering company showed that growth is exciting, but cashflow keeps a business alive.

A prize from Lincoln

Closing day two, SWEEP Executive Secretary Tshimangadzo Masia won and received a prize from the University of Lincoln International Business School.

Carrying it home

The Executive left inspired, motivated and better equipped, having built meaningful connections with student leaders from across the country and learned from professionals whose experiences challenged them to think differently. The Living Lab reminded them that leadership starts with believing in ourselves, entrepreneurship requires action, and lasting impact begins the moment we replace "I can't" with "I will". The lessons will not end with the Executive; they will be shared with SWEEP members at Walter Sisulu.





