



WOMEN'S MONTH 2020

Phenomenal Woman Profile



Living Life and Making a Mark on the Energy and Water Sector

If anyone understands the challenges faced by South Africa's youth, particularly those who are born and raised in rural parts of the country, Mpho Mookapele, Acting CEO for the EWSETA certainly does. She was born in a small village in North-West Province.

What she describes as the 'Groot Trek' saw her move to Johannesburg in 1995 where she completed her schooling. Mpho went on to study and completed her CA (SA) in 2011.

"One of the greatest challenges in my career was the struggle to pursue my personal dream, especially when mine did not appear as exciting when compared to my peers' dreams. My desire to serve the public sector was often frowned upon and I often felt alone on the journey as not many have walked a similar path," says Mpho.

She remembers the first question she asked herself after she qualified as a CA (SA) was: "Now What? How do I use this qualification and the skills to bring about a difference in people's lives?" Her passion for development in the country and in Africa guided her career towards serving in the public space.

Mpho maintains that the greatest attributes she has gained from the CA (SA) qualification are professionalism, integrity, as well as analytical and critical thinking. She has realised that being a CA (SA) is not about getting a qualification, but attaining an enabler that has opened doors and provided opportunities to achieve goals she had set for herself.

Her decision to pursue a career as a CA, was a good one for many reasons, not least of which was her notable achievement in 2019 that saw her emerge as the winner of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Top-35-Under-35 Competition. When Mpho was announced the overall winner on 3 October 2019, it was deserved recognition for the impact she has made not only on the accounting profession, but the public service too.

Her career spans more than ten years in the public and private sectors in the finance and regulatory environment. As a Senior Manager for Ernst & Young, she was extensively involved in strategic planning and reporting solutions for numerous organisations in the public sector. In 2016 she was appointed as CFO for the Energy and Water SETA, and since October 2018 she has served as the Acting CEO for the organisation.

One of the lessons Mpho learned as a young CA is that the public sector is not considered 'sexy' enough for trainees and that it comes across as being the place for the less ambitious.

This perception did not deter her, and she has subsequently learned that as a CA in the public sector she is in a position to make a valuable contribution to South Africa's growth.

Her passion for development of the country, and its young people, has served as the driving force for her dedication to the public sector. This dedication extends beyond the boardroom and she is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at capacitating women at different stages in life.

Mpho's journey in life has exposed her to women facing a variety of struggles that prevent them from achieving personal success and fulfilment. As part of her theology diploma studies, she equipped herself with counselling skills to help women.

"Seeing women who are impacted by personal and social challenges such as divorce, loss of loved ones, career challenges, and even struggling to find a purpose in life has driven me to want to be an agent of relief," she says.

This drive to 'help sisters out' has seen Mpho become involved in a number of initiatives aimed at capacitating women at different stages in life – from young CAs who are struggling to define what they want to do, or feeling discouraged by failed attempts to qualify as a CA, to women who are professionals and are struggling to deal with traumatic experiences in their lives.

She also serves on the African Women Chartered Accountants board subcommittee, is involved in her church as a mentor to women, and is a supporter and sponsor of the annual Miss Dinokana pageant.

It is not 'all work and no play' for Mpho and when she can, she travels abroad as she believes that travel can broaden one's perspective of the world. For Mpho personally, travel has given her a renewed appreciation for life and cultural diversity. Having travelled to 19 different countries, Mpho can be considered a 'well-seasoned' traveller.

"I love life and all that life brings around me. I enjoy a good laugh and making those around me laugh. I celebrate every step of my life and I take every challenge I face as a stepping--stone to higher ground. My spirituality grounds me," concludes Mpho.