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## EZLYN BARENDs – PHILANTHROPIST AND FOUNDER OF DREAM GIRLS SA – 21 ICONS

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**“When I look at the context of South Africa I realise that the girls face a wider set of challenges and there was a need to develop a holistic programme.”**

After having worked in advertising and event management Barends felt unfulfilled, she realised that her calling was to help others and thus she took a courageous leap to leave the industry and move into uncharted territory.

She then established [Dream Girls SA](#) – a programme which has changed the lives of hundreds of underprivileged young teens, enabling and assisting their pursuit to whatever goal they seek to achieve, be it higher education, teaching, starting businesses or living a better life. Dream Girls enriches, empowers and assists.

**“There have been so many success stories they have come of Dream Girls, before they said ‘I thought would never leave Limpopo or Thembisa’ but now they are studying, their confidence and self-esteem has grown.”**



Dream Girls also focuses on the areas of Life Design, Education, Entrepreneurship & Career, Leadership & Service, Health & Spiritual Wellness, Etiquette & Grooming and Dignity. Serving an integral part of underprivileged communities.

**“Courage helped me to step into my potential. I think everybody has the potential to be great, but it takes courage to actually heed to the call.”**

For her contribution of giving back to the community, Barends has received multiple awards:

- 2014 – Inyathelo Award for Philanthropy in Education (awarded to her father, Lyndon Barends, director and founder the DAD)
- 2014 – Acknowledged as Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans to Watch
- 2013 – Named one of World Economic Forum’s Global Shapers
- SAB Foundation Innovation Award 2012 (finalist)
- 2012 – Finalist in the Billiton Achiever Awards (DreamGirlsSA)



**About the Portrait – ‘XXX’**



Seated at a wooden school-desk below a blown-up, projected image of herself, Barends is photographed looking past the camera lens, seemingly imagining her future success. Representing the enormous possibilities that can come about through education, the portrait embodies Barends' work to uplift and assist young women in their pursuit of higher education.

## Experience more Icons

21 Icons behind the scenes is on SABC every Sunday from 6 September at 19:27. Alternatively follow their movements on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Or check out the [21 Icons Dont Party feature](#).

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**Jordan Coetsee**

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"Life isn't about finding yourself, its about creating yourself"

Jordan is a Joburg based student currently studying at WITS. In his free time loves to socialize, screenprint and sometimes dabble in music.

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