



PEOPLE TO WATCH

17 DEC 2015

21 Icons: Ezlyn Barends

The 14th short film in the multimedia series 21 Icons Season III celebrates the founder of the South African chapter of DreamGirls International.

Driven by a passion to introduce underprivileged youth to opportunities, Ezlyn Barends created a local chapter of DreamGirls, a global sisterhood of young female professionals, entrepreneurs and leaders who mentor and guide teenage girls in underprivileged communities in their pursuit of higher education.

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Ezlyn, who comes from Kuils River in Cape Town and now holds an MBA from Henley Business School in the UK, believes education is the pillar of society, and the means by which the cycle of poverty can be broken.

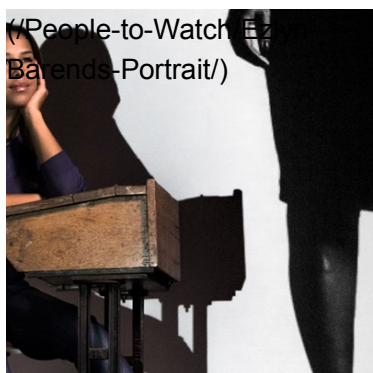
"With education, you can uplift the standard of your life, of your family's life, and that of your entire community," she says. "As a result, you're actually growing the country." The entrepreneur adds that investing in girls is important. "Educated women are more likely to ensure that their children go to school. Educated women are more likely to raise healthy families. There's a link between educated women and a country's economic prosperity."

Identifying that underprivileged girls face a wide set of problems, Ezlyn realised there was a need for a holistic programme that not only focuses on academics. Through DreamGirls, the mentors impart everyday business, emotional and life skills to build the self-confidence and self-belief of those who embark on the programme.

"It's important to pass down your knowledge to those who perhaps don't have the same experience," Ezlynn explains. "I have walked a certain path in life and I want to be able to pull others with me. Because of the spaces I work in, I'm surrounded by visionaries, change makers and the leaders of tomorrow. We are friendly, we work together and we believe in the spirit of community."

Catch *21 Icons* Season III every Sunday on SABC 3 at 19h27.

Watch Ezlyn's video [here](#).



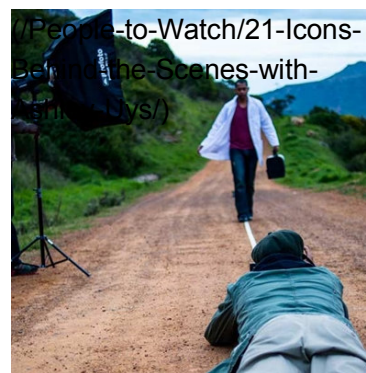
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Ezlyn Barends: Portrait
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18 DEC 2015

Jazz Legend Judith Sephuma
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