

# Our News

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Catherine Constantinides has also been named the Top South African Young Woman Entrepreneur for Women Empowerment, and South African Youth Entrepreneur at the South African Premier Business Awards. (Image: Catherine Constantinides)

Environmental activist, social entrepreneur and accomplished agent for change Catherine Constantinides has been chosen as one of the next generation of South Africans in the new series of the acclaimed [21 Icons](#) photographic and documentary project, which celebrates local leaders, influencers and role-models.

The executive director of the Miss Earth South Africa Leadership Programme, [Constantinides](#) was named one of the Mail & Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans for 2014, is an Archbishop Tutu Leadership Fellow, and the Lead SA executive in charge of mobilising active citizens. Her CV would be intimidating for someone twice her age.

At 16 Constantinides had started her own business to highlight social issues. By 21 she'd launched her own arts, music and entertainment magazine. She has also been named the Top South African Young Woman Entrepreneur for Women Empowerment, and South African Youth Entrepreneur at the South African Premier Business Awards.

*Find out more about 21 Icons:*

But as the founder of global youth network Generation Earth, her main passion is the fight to stop climate change. A low-carbon, sustainable future is the legacy she would like to create.

"Through the work I do, the most important thing for me is to leave a world where we don't have to worry about climate change, sustainability and low-carbon cities," Constantinides said in a recent

interview with CNBC Africa.

"I really want us to leave a future where those things are already taken care of, because of how human beings behave. If we can teach people to be sustainable as a way of life, we're heading in the right direction.

"We need to look at corporate South Africa to assist us in mobilising, moving forward, in order for us to have a green economy. But at the same time, a lot of the work I do is to empower young people to think differently."

*Watch Catherine Constantinides discuss our low-carbon future on CNBC Africa:*

"It's one thing to have a green economy," Constantinides said. "But if we don't have young people who are passionate about a low-carbon future, we don't have anyone to plug into that green economy.

"Children must be exposed to renewable energy, to the possibilities of science and technology, from a young age, in order for them to think differently. By the time they are 11 or 12 years old, they will then be able to be innovative and creative."

Previous South African luminaries featured in the 21 Icons project include Nobel Peace Prize winners Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and FW de Klerk, and Nobel literature laureate Nadine Gordimer.