

14^{of} 100**Dr. Marcia
Lebambo**

Here to be Inclusive

**Cultivating opportunity
while empowering
futures: Ensuring
pathways to inclusive
economic growth.**

Some people see entrepreneurship as the creation of businesses. Dr. Marcia Lebambo sees it as the creation of possibilities. Throughout her career, she has championed a powerful idea that entrepreneurship is not reserved for a privileged few with access to capital and networks, but can be a transformative tool for economic inclusion, social mobility and community development. It is a belief that has shaped her work as an academic, researcher, higher education leader and advocate for young people seeking to build better futures.

In January 2026, Dr. Lebambo assumed the role of Director of the Entrepreneurship Development Unit (EDU) at the Central University of Technology (CUT), where she leads initiatives designed to strengthen entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise

development across the institution and surrounding communities. Her work extends beyond lecture halls and university campuses. It focuses on creating practical opportunities that enable students, aspiring entrepreneurs and communities to participate meaningfully in the economy.

Recognised as one of News24's Top 100 Young Nelson Mandelas of the Future, Dr. Lebambo has built an impressive career grounded in both academic excellence and real-world impact. Over the years, she has held senior academic and leadership positions at institutions including Tshwane University of Technology, the University of South Africa and the University of Johannesburg. Through teaching, research and postgraduate supervision, she has contributed to shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs, researchers and business leaders.

Her scholarship reflects a deep commitment to understanding the challenges and opportunities facing South Africa's evolving economy. Her research spans entrepreneurship development, small business growth, rural and digital entrepreneurship, tourism enterprises and youth economic participation. At the centre of this work is a desire to ensure that entrepreneurship becomes accessible to those who have historically been excluded from economic opportunity.

Yet Dr. Lebambo's impact extends far beyond academia. Through the Dr. Marcia Lebambo Foundation and the Dr. Marcia Lebambo Academy, she has created platforms dedicated to literacy development, educational access and youth empowerment. These initiatives are particularly focused on township and rural communities, where many young people continue to face significant barriers to quality education and economic participation.

By investing in literacy, mentorship and leadership development, she is helping to build a pipeline of future changemakers equipped to transform their own communities.

What makes her leadership remarkable is her ability to bridge worlds that are often disconnected. She moves seamlessly between research and practice, policy and implementation, academia and community development. She understands that meaningful change requires more than ideas; it requires action, collaboration and a sustained commitment to people.

At a time when South Africa faces urgent challenges around unemployment, inequality and youth participation, Dr. Lebambo's work offers a hopeful and practical vision for the future. She believes that when young people are equipped with knowledge, skills and opportunities, they become drivers of innovation, job creation and social progress.

Her story is a reminder that education is most powerful when it extends beyond qualifications and becomes a force for transformation. Through her leadership, scholarship and unwavering commitment to inclusive development, Dr. Marcia Lebambo is helping to cultivate a future where opportunity is not limited by geography, background or circumstance, but expanded through learning, innovation and purpose.

**Your
story
matters**

