



QUEER WOMEN IN BUSINESS + ALLIES

**EMPOWERING AND
ADVANCING AFRICAN
QUEER WOMXN IN
BUSINESS THROUGH
ACCESS.**

QUEER WOMEN IN BUSINESS + ALLIES: WHY WE EXIST

Why queer?

Violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, identity and expression remain rampant in large parts of the world [1] and specifically in South Africa. As a result, a disproportionate percentage of queer community members drop out of school [2], stay in (or re-enter) the closet in the workplace [3], face bullying and in general are disenfranchised.

Why queer women?

With regards to women, the statistics locally and globally are a glaring call for more proactive action to be taken to create spaces where women are seen as equally valued members in our society. Women earn on average 27% [4] less than males and are underrepresented as founders and leaders across most industries. For example, only 4.5% of startup deals since 2018 involved female founders [5]. The number is unknown for queer women. This issue exacerbated by the fact that queer women in the upper echelons of society are often by and large invisible with limited to no “out” role models in leadership.

Why queer women in business?

Small businesses are the 'life blood' of the South African (and African) economy with a projection that 9 out of 10 new jobs will be generated by micro, small and medium enterprises. [7]. With regards to queer women in business, the resulting economic loss of our exclusion has been documented in a number of studies [6], with economies missing out on billions of dollars each year, not to mention the impact on human livelihoods and on the well-being of queer families and communities.

From a survey conducted with 500+ African queer women founders and leaders in our network, we found that:

80% reported that at least 7 out of 10 attendees at LGBT-centric business events are male identifying.



60% of African queer women in our community lack access to relevant skills, resources and funding necessary to drive their businesses forward.



80% struggle to find visible, like-identifying and supportive business and career mentors.



[1] <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qBeumxNW55O99ib4ITJ0TorycHYSgW5/view>
 [2] <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-lgbt-school-feature/bullied-by-peers-indias-lgbt-children-drop-out-of-schools-idUSKCN1UC2UI>
 [3] <https://www.outnowconsulting.com/media/51274/finalreport-vodafone-final-04jul18absm.pdf>
 [4] <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-11-29-women-earn-over-28-less-than-men-in-south-africa/>
 [5] <https://ventureburn.com/2019/08/vc-angel-deal-value-sa-startups-women-founders/>
 [6] <https://open-for-business.org/kenya-economic-case>
 [7] az.oc.idesamahpahp.www

QUEER WOMEN IN BUSINESS + ALLIES: EMPOWERING AND ADVANCING AFRICAN QUEER WOMXN IN BUSINESS THROUGH ACCESS.



OUR STORY:

Our story began in 2016 when we, the co-founders - Kebone, Siyabonga & Buyelwa, had a blurry vision to start “something” in the queer community that would bring people together and create a positive impact. Endemic in the process of birthing a new initiative, we had numerous conversations trying to distill the essence of what we hoped for. The vision we had brewing inside of us finally started to take shape and became more crystalized after Kebone attended a queer female tech conference in San Francisco in early 2018. She found herself in a room full of out and proud successful queer women who have access to career and business opportunities. They felt safe to openly support and celebrate each other in their respective workplaces and this was something she had never experienced back home in South Africa, describing it as “empowering and enlightening”...

...The more we started to engage with queer women in South Africa and across the rest of the African continent, we realized that our lack of the aforementioned experiences wasn't because there were no professional African queer women, trans or non-binary persons like we grew up believing, but that there was a lack of visibility and representation of queer women in business.

Thus, we set out on a journey with a vision and a mission:

OUR MISSION

Empower and Advance African queer womxn through access.

OUR VISION

Make equitable access for African queer womxn a norm by creating experiences and opportunities that allow our community to connect, collaborate and ignite action towards building thriving businesses and careers.

Our community is inclusive of trans and non-binary persons.

180 ATTENDEES, 35 SPEAKERS AND 30 DEDICATED QWB+A VOLUNTEERS, WHAT A SUCCESSFUL 2019 SUMMIT!



On 30 November 2019, Queer Women in Business + Allies hosted 180 attendees and 35 speakers at the second annual QWB+A Summit in partnership with Uber SA as a convening sponsor. Our summit attendance increased by 80% between 2018 and 2019.

With the theme, "Harnessing the power of technology to power queer women-owned businesses and careers", the summit brought together queer womxn in business and their supportive allies to facilitate dialogue and workshop practical ways in which queer womxn entrepreneurs, students and working professionals can harness the power of technology to take advantage of business and career trends that will help them thrive.

“

"As an attendee, I loved having the opportunity to be involved in the discussions and open the forum for questions. The calibre of speakers was impressive. It was surreal to be in such a safe space with other queers who are making their dreams a reality."

”

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 SUMMIT SPONSORS AND PARTNERS!

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Uber

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Exclusive Partner to LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

dubsado

CUBEWS
cubeworkspace.co.za

HOLAA!

STARTOUT

URBAN
FIREWORKS

W

Other
THE OTHER FOUNDATION

sunrise sweets

PLUS.
THE LGBT+ BUSINESS NETWORK

Beyond Media

ELEMENT

Inspiring Fifty

Startup
GRIND
powered by Google for entrepreneurs

NIKO

WE MET WITH 400+ QUEER WOMXN IN BUSINESS AT OUR IN-PERSON CHAPTER EVENTS ACROSS THREE CITIES IN 2019!

By African queer womxn, for African queer womxn in business!

Our goal is to build a collaborative ecosystem of queer womxn entrepreneurs, investors and working professionals to help each other thrive. Our chapters offer experiences where queer womxn in business and allies can network and find ways to collaborate with one another to build thriving businesses and careers in their local regions.



CAPE TOWN

In late 2019, I launched the QWB+A Cape Town Chapter with the vision to increase access for the queer community to connect and share conversations around meaningful and relevant topics. At our first event, we created a safe space for queer entrepreneurs to share their struggles and celebrations from how they overcome moments of sexism in the beauty industry to what it means to be a queer 'ally' in business in Cape Town.

Carla Watson, Cape Town Chapter Leader



JOHANNESBURG

In 2019, we hosted three chapter events around the themes, "Connecting Personal & Business brands: Powering Your Social Capital", "Thriving through mental health challenges " and "Curbing Unemployment one Start-Up at a time". The QWB+A 2019 Chapters marked the beginning of a queer-womxn-led and driven revolution In South Africa, and I am grateful to have been part of it!

Mankwe Motimele, Johannesburg Chapter Leader



DURBAN

Queer Womxn EmpowermentIn 2019, QWB+A fostered connections and friendships amongst the diverse queer Durban communities with the common cause of queer female empowerment. With chapter meeting topics ranging from 'Thriving through mental health challenges' to 'Queer Women in Leadership', our attendees are always highly engaged.

Akshata Ravi, Durban Chapter Leader

IN 2019, WE LAUNCHED THE FIRST OF ITS KIND ON AFRICAN SOIL, THE QWB+A STARTUPS PITCH CHALLENGE!

By African queer womxn, for African queer womxn entrepreneurs.



THE PROBLEM

Out of 500 queer womxn entrepreneurs in our network, 60% of them cited the lack of access to business resources, like-identifying mentors and funding as the key cause of stunted business growth.

THE SOLUTION & IMPACT

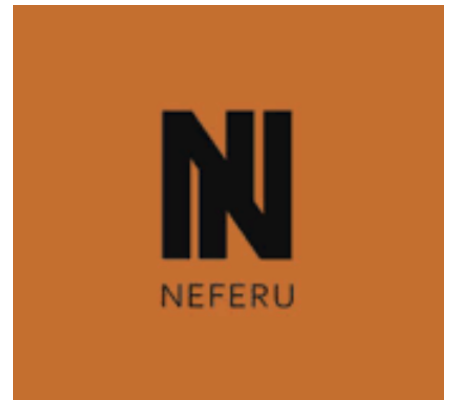
30 queer women entrepreneurs received business coaching from industry experts, investors and successful entrepreneurs in our network through a two-week virtual business development program. The top successful participants were then selected by an audited selection committee to pitch for first prize funding of R50,000 at the annual QWB+A Summit. Prior to their final pitch, each startup was given a one on one mentorship session from InspiringFifty mentors.

"The QWB+A startups program was a high impact experience!

In two weeks, we were enlightened, encouraged to think more deeply about our business and got access to mentors who are a wish from a LinkedIn search!"

**Lisle Jenneke, Co-founder:
Elements Applications**

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEFERU NATURAL HAIR CARE FOR WINNING THE R50,000 GRAND PRIZE!



**THANK YOU TO OUR COACHES,
SELECTION COMMITTEE,
MENTORS & JUDGING PANEL!**

Ellen Fischat
Fundu Ndaba
Dulcy Rakumakoe
Mduduzi Gama
Sivuyise Nxu
Kwena Mabotja
Philani Mdingi
Nivani Govinder

Palesa Tlhabanelo
Farai Morobane
Mmakgosi Mosupi
Sibongile Mongadi
Birgit Smythe
Hayley Elwen
Maziya Maepa

**THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 SPONSORS
AND PARTNERS!**



InspiringFifty **STARTOUT**

2020 AND BEYOND

The new norm, a world where African queer womxn can equitably acquire and create access to fruitful business and career opportunities.

2020 thus far:

We started 2020 with the theme, "queer women and the future of work and business, connecting beyond borders". Little did we know how significant this theme would become once the global pandemic hit. Throughout the outbreak, the QWB+A team took action and implemented programs that continued to keep our community connected, informed and supported. In partnership with Queerwell, we created a safe space through our weekly Virtual Connect sessions on various mental health topics and discussions hosted by industry experts. Our mentors and partners added great value to our Virtual Connect business sessions as session facilitators and speakers. Within the first 4 weeks of the national lockdown period, we hosted 7 virtual events and welcomed 200+ new community members.



coming up in 2020 and beyond...



OUR ANNUAL SUMMIT AND CHAPTERS WILL MERGE AND GO VIRTUAL!

QWB+A Virtual Connect will continue as monthly 90 minute virtual sessions around various topics for working professionals, entrepreneurs and students starting June 2020.



CLUB ACCESS BY QWB+A WAITLIST LAUNCHES IN JUNE!

Join our member community of thriving queer African women, gain free access to QWB+A events, resources and business tips, tools and connections.



THE 2020 STARTUPS PITCH CHALLENGE IS IN SESSION STARTING AUGUST

For queer women entrepreneurs who are looking to take their business to the next level, join our 6 week virtual business development program with industry experts and a chance to win funding.

ADVISORY BOARD & COMMUNITY

By African queer womxn, for African queer womxn in business!

The QWB+A Advisory Board, Our Life Lines!

The Queer Women in Business + Allies Volunteer Advisory Board consists of a diverse group of individuals whose aim is to actively contribute towards positive social change for the LGBTQIA+ community across Africa. We are deliberate in ensuring that the QWB+A Voluntary Advisory Board will be representative of our multi-generational, multi-geographic, multi-industry, multi-racial, gender-diverse, multi-skilled and politically progressive community. In 2019, our advisory board served us at a strategic and operational level, proactively taking on mentorship roles within our programs and representing QWB+A at various internal and external events that are aligned with our mission.

Members of our advisory have played a key role in driving funds towards programs and introducing us to key networks needed for the success of our organization.



Thank you to our 2019 advisors!

Ellen Fischat
Fundi Ndaba
Ella Scheepers
Tiffany Mugo
Buyelwa Xundu

Emily Kiki Banadzem
Lerato Moleko
Nandi Ganda
Palesa DeeJay Manaleng



As a QWB+A advisory board member, you are a thriving leader or captain of industry who is an LGBTQIA+ womxn, trans identifying, non-binary individual or supportive ally who believes in our mission and wants to be part of creating a new norm for African queer womxn in business. You will play a key role in adding value to a strategic and innovative group of leaders who inform and advise QWB+A's management and community.

Our Advisory board meets quarterly and is actively involved in creating brand awareness around our work..



**CREATE
ACCESS WITH
US!**

**TO DONATE,
MENTOR,
ADVISE**

OR

**JOIN OUR COMMUNITY,
CONTACT US AT:**

INFO@QWBALLIES.COM

