

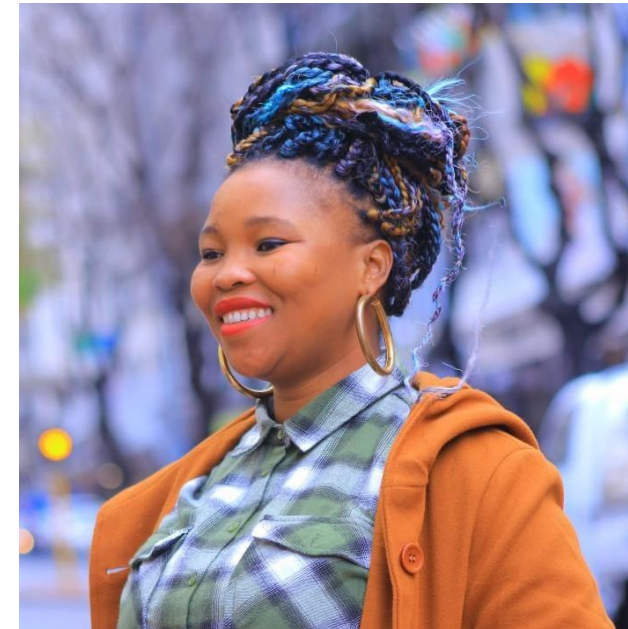


Voice and Choice ***Summit 2026***-Leadership Category

**South Africa:
From Survivor to Systems Reformer — Youth
Leadership Advancing Justice and Feminist
Governance**

Presenter: Zintle Khobeni

“Leadership is not about surviving injustice. It is about redesigning the system.”



Background

Give some background. Briefly describe the context or problem the community or individual was facing before the intervention.

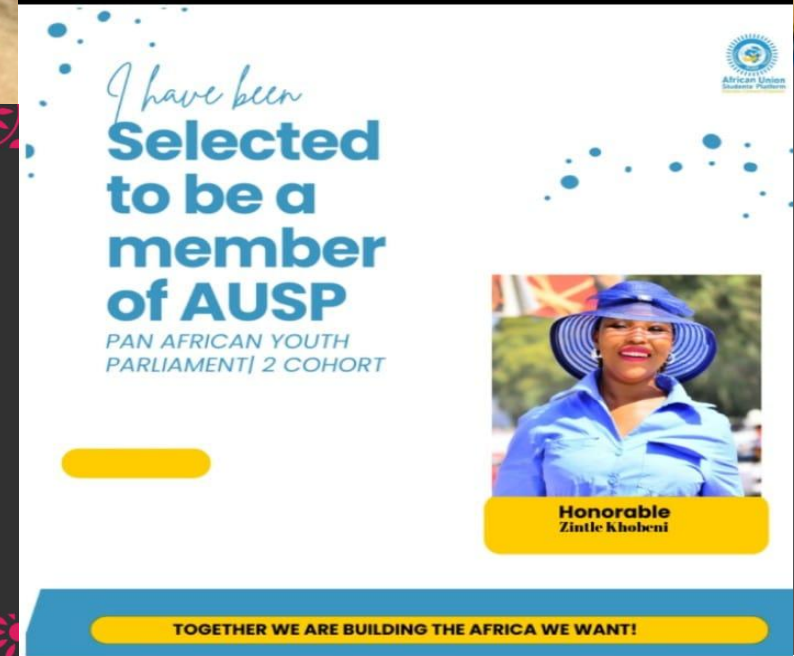
- Born in Ndofela Village (Eastern Cape) one of the many communities where gender-based violence silences women and justice feels distant — I refused to remain a statistic and chose to build institutions
- I live in three Provinces. WC, EC & KZN
- Former Provincial Chairperson of the Women's Forum (Politics)
- Award-winning feminist leader (Driver of Change 2025)
- Founder & Director – The Great People of South Africa (TGPSA) **(Award winning)**
- Founder – Dulaza Brands & Media (Pty) Ltd
- Lead survivor-centred justice work including paralegal services, court support, and development of the Community-Integrated Protection Order Model (CIPOM)
- Speak eight South African languages and grounded in indigenous knowledge as a traditional healer — bridging rural communities and national policy spaces
- WOSSO Fellow graduate (2024-2025 cohort) **Storytelling For Change Award)**
- Member of the Pan-African Youth Parliament (2026-2027). **(Gender, Family, Youth, & PWDs Committee)**
- Futurelect Women in Public Office Fellowship (Cohort 2, 2025–2026)
- Transforming broken systems so survivors are informed, supported, and represented.
- Aspiring Author- Book in production (UK Publishers)
- Rise Up South Africa -Leadership and Advocacy Program in South Africa,(2026)



Zintle
Khobeni de Lange

Futurelect
2025/26 Cohort

Women In Public Office
South Africa Programme



Background Continuation

Describe challenges the community/ individual was facing before the Intervention.

- ❑ Communities experienced high levels of gender-based violence and human rights violations, with many survivors feeling failed by justice and protection systems.
- ❑ Survivors of GBV in Town 2 and Harare (Khayelitsha), Ndofela Village (Eastern Cape), and Umlazi (KwaZulu-Natal) faced significant barriers in accessing the justice system and protection mechanisms.
- ❑ Many victims lacked awareness of their constitutional rights and did not know how to seek legal protection or exercise their basic human rights.
- ❑ Some traditional leadership structures, including Indunas and Oosibonda, had limited understanding of constitutional rights, gender equality principles, feminism, and GBV prevention frameworks.
- ❑ Communities lacked access to leadership development, advocacy training, and GBV prevention education, limiting local response capacity.
- ❑ Limited blogging and digital storytelling experience restricted community voices from influencing public discourse.
- ❑ Low confidence in public speaking and advocacy engagement reduced participation in policy and leadership spaces.
- ❑ Limited access to networks within the feminist and human rights movement constrained collaboration and visibility.

Leadership Vision: To become South Africa's first woman president and institutionalise feminist justice, economic transformation, and youth-led governance that advances equality, dignity, and inclusive development.



Change

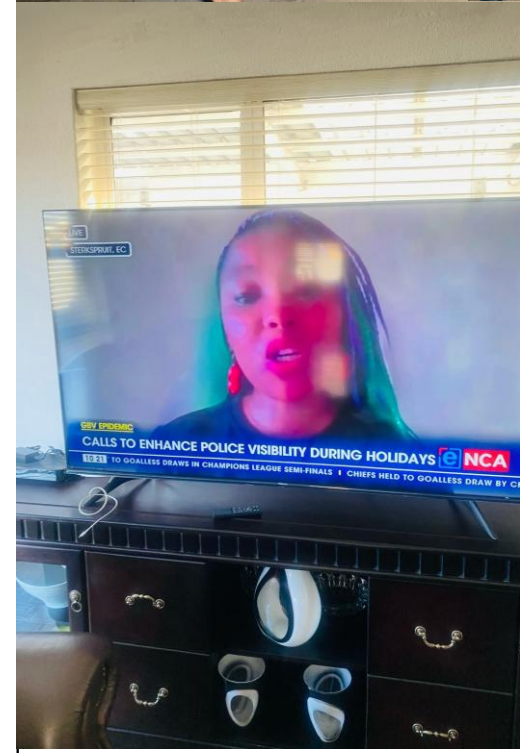
How did the change come about?

What activities or actions brought about the change?

- ❑ Founded The Great People of South Africa (TGPSA) to institutionalise survivor-centred justice support
- ❑ Launched paralegal advice services and structured court support programmes in GBVF hotspot communities
- ❑ Implemented community legal empowerment workshops for women, youth, and rural families
- ❑ Built coordinated referral systems with SAPS, Legal Aid, Thuthuzela Care Centres, and shelters
- ❑ Developing the **Community-Integrated Protection Order Model (CIPOM)** to strengthen protection order enforcement.
- ❑ Introduced blogging and digital advocacy through Dulaza Brands & Media to amplify survivor voices and influence public discourse.
- ❑ Used media commentary and storytelling to challenge harmful norms and promote feminist governance
- ❑ Engaged in youth political leadership platforms to translate grassroots experience into policy reform

Who led and participated in bringing about the change.

- ❑ Led by Zintle Khobeni as founder and youth feminist leader
- ❑ Survivors who transformed from beneficiaries to advocates
- ❑ Trained paralegal advisors and community volunteers
- ❑ Traditional leaders and rural stakeholders
- ❑ Justice institutions and national policy platforms (Futurelect & Pan-African Youth Parliament)



The Malmar Knowles Kectil Leadership program mkff 02nd EDITION

PRESENTS

Storytelling and Speaking Up for Mental Wellness WEBINAR

THEME: **MIND FORWARD:**
ELEVATING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AMONG AFRICAN YOUTH

Zintle Khobeni Guest Speaker Akem Aurelia Host Dr. Hamza yasir Guest Speaker Modupeoluwa Filashade co-Host

05TH OCT Sunday 6:00PM Google meet

FOLLOW US ON [social media icons] Kectil

The change

Describe the change that has occurred?

Is the change at local, national, regional, global level or a combination of these

Is this a change in service delivery, policies, laws or regulations or a combination of these?

- Local:** Strengthened justice access in Khayelitsha and rural Eastern Cape communities
- National:** Influenced public discourse and policy engagement through media, advocacy (National Strategic Policy on GBVF), and CIPOM development
- Regional/Continental:** Representation in the Pan-African Youth Parliament and continental feminist networks

Who benefited (individual, community, society at large?)

- Individual survivors of gender-based violence
- Women and youth in underserved communities
- Rural families with limited justice access
- Broader society through strengthened accountability and awareness

In what way did they benefit?

- Increased access to legal knowledge and court support
- Improved reporting and referral pathways
- Greater confidence navigating justice systems
- Amplified survivor voices in public and policy spaces



The Change- Continuation

Describe what evidence do we have that this change has happened?

- ❑ Founded The Great People of South Africa (TGPSA), now an established survivor-centred justice organisation operating in GBVF hotspot communities
- ❑ Institutionalised paralegal advice services and structured court support, directly supporting over 1,600 beneficiaries through legal empowerment, referrals, and justice navigation
- ❑ Built coordinated referral partnerships with SAPS, Legal Aid, Thuthuzela Care Centres, and shelters, strengthening survivor access to protection and accountability mechanisms
- ❑ Development the Community-Integrated Protection Order Model (CIPOM), engaging justice stakeholders to address systemic enforcement gaps in protection orders
- ❑ Shifted public discourse through blogging, digital advocacy, and national media commentary — amplifying survivor voices and influencing conversations on justice reform
- ❑ Elevating grassroots experience into governance platforms through participation in the Pan-African Youth Parliament and the Futurelect Women in Public Office Fellowship
- ❑ Recognised as an award-winning feminist leader, demonstrating public acknowledgement of impact and credibility



Sustainability

What sustainability measures were put in place for the work?

- Institutionalised paralegal advice and court support services within TGPSA's core structure
- Trained community-based paralegals and volunteers to ensure continued local justice support
- Built long-term partnerships with SAPS, Legal Aid, Thuthuzela Care Centres, and shelters
- Strengthened monitoring, documentation, and digital advocacy systems
- Developing of the CIPOM as a structural justice reform model beyond a single project cycle

How do you intend to sustain the work or scale up?

- Expanding justice access programmes to additional rural and underserved communities
- Continuing national policy engagement through Futurelect and the Pan-African Youth Parliament
- Diversifying funding through ongoing fundraising and strategic donor partnerships
- Strengthening Dulaza Brands & Media to sustain digital advocacy and economic empowerment
- Long-term vision:** institutionalising survivor-centred justice within national governance frameworks



Challenges & Lessons learnt

Challenges & mitigation

- ❑ **Resistance from communities where gender equality challenges entrenched cultural norms**→ Conducted continuous community dialogues and engaged traditional leaders to promote constitutional values and gender equality awareness.
- ❑ **Limited institutional responsiveness within justice systems, particularly around GBVF cases and protection order enforcement**→ Strengthened collaboration with justice sector stakeholders and developed community-based legal empowerment and protection support mechanisms.
- ❑ **Emotional and psychological toll of survivor-centred frontline work**→ Introduced peer support, reflective learning spaces, and trauma-informed self-care practices for staff and volunteers.
- ❑ **Resource and funding constraints while scaling services across multiple provinces**→ Diversified funding partnerships and strengthened organisational governance and financial management systems.
- ❑ **Navigating leadership growth while transitioning from survivor advocacy to institutional leadership**→ Participated in leadership fellowships and capacity-building programmes to strengthen strategic, policy, and organisational leadership skills.



Next Steps

What are your plans?

Scale the Community-Integrated Protection Order Model (CIPOM) toward national policy adoption.

Expand community-based paralegal training across additional provinces and rural communities.

Strengthen youth leadership participation through continental platforms including the Pan-African Youth Parliament.

Advance feminist governance and justice reform through public leadership pathways,

Complete legal studies to strengthen policy advocacy and institutional reform work.

