



Ingrid Roberts (far right) spent time with businesswomen of Estcourt at a brainstorming session.

Umtshezi women set out to make a difference

"I will be your guide in the development of women recognition in Estcourt."

These were the words of motivational speaker, Ingrid Roberts at a follow-up gathering to the Businesswomen's brainstorming meeting held on August 5.

The follow-up was held on Tuesday, August 16, 2011 at Blue Haze Country Lodge.

The purpose of this follow up meeting was so that the women can brainstorm ideas to improve Estcourt.

Ms Roberts said: "The day you realise you're living your dream is the day you stop making

excuses." Working together as a committee of women can be a dream and Ms Roberts also mentioned that to fulfil their dream, they would have to pay with time and money.

The gathering mainly revolved around discussions about the youth but other pointers were also discussed. Silindile Mamyathi from Nestle elaborated about the youth development programmes that happen annually.

She mentioned that every year Nestle has a camp for about 200 young children aged from eight to 21-years-old. At this camp, they have motivational talks for personal development and

"buddies" that also speak to the children.

"The South African Police Services and the Estcourt Hospital are just two of the buddies that are involved in this programme," said Ms Mamyathi.

Ms Roberts proposed that there would be a course held once a month until December whereby she will be able to assist women come up with ideas and brainstorm them. Ms Roberts concluded: "I see these sessions more as a mission rather than a committee meeting and to have a mission statement in a community is very important. I will be your mentor."

Umtshezi Municipality partners with Durban Chamber of Commerce for SMME workshop

Often small businesses may not list marketing their services as a high priority.

And this may be the bane of their existence, as most small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) don't have the backing of large corporations.

It is with this in mind that Umtshezi Municipality in partnership with the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry is hosting a workshop for SMMEs.

The theme of the workshop is "Developing a Winning Marketing Strategy" and will be held on Thursday, August 25 at 8.30am until midday. The venue is the Activities Room at the town library.

The workshop will cover topics like market research, establishing target markets and assessing market intelligence.

All interested persons are encouraged to attend this beneficial workshop.

For more information and to book a seat call 031 335 1000.

To celebrate the arrival of Spring 2011, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife at Wagerdrift will lower the day visitor entrance fee from R20 to R10 per person, Saturdays and Sundays only during September 2011.

Let us work together

By working together and by assisting in increasing the sales of the factories, we will be able to cut down unemployment and crime, thus improving the standard of living conditions of most of the people in Estcourt.

Editor

This initiative "Working Together" started 33 years ago.

When I was the President of the Forderville Library Social Club I was able to convene a meeting with eight major industries in Estcourt to map out a way forward in promoting the local industries.

This social club had the full blessing of the Estcourt Council.

This meeting took place with managers and representatives on April 5, 1978.

The aim of the club was to hold an Industrial Show with the eight factories combined.

In his address, the President, Mr S Banda, mentioned that it was the intention of the club to bring the few industries in Estcourt that were contributing to the welfare and growth of Estcourt into the limelight.

Factories, which are supporting many hundreds of families, should be given some sort of recognition.

We want to bring to the notice of the public and your employees the very important role played by factories in Estcourt in keeping the economy of the town and also of the country going.

Only just a handful of members of the club were involved in the appointment of the communities in Estcourt and is laudable.

By working together and by assisting in increasing the sales of the factories, we will be able to cut down unemployment and crime, thus improving the standard of living conditions of most of the people in Estcourt.

Our foremost aim and object was

for local government.

We also want to emphasise to the public, not only in Estcourt, but also throughout the country, the slogan: "Buy South African and Build South Africa."

It was hoped that all sections of the community would see this show, as it will be of an educational nature, especially for school children.

A letter was also sent to council for a go ahead and as soon as permission was granted to the club, then the different government department will be contacted for a multilateral gathering.

I must mention that the managers of eight factories were very cooperative, understanding, helpful and wholeheartedly supported the club in their endeavours.

At this time when the National Party was ruling the country under the apartheid regime, it was a very significant breakthrough and a great achievement for a non-white club to have this overwhelming support.

When most of the employees were trying to keep their house fire burning and struggling to put food on the table, the club was hopefully negotiating on their behalf for a better living wage and a much improved relationship between employees and employer.

It was agreed that as soon as the industries progressed and their non-profit margin increased, an "Incentive Bonus" was to be considered by the companies concerned.

At that meeting the club was given the go ahead by the industries present, that the President Mr S

Banda make a press statement.

A damper in our progress

As soon as council read the press release, I was immediately summoned to the Town Clerk's office. The Town Clerk told me that the council was to reprimand me. I asked him what for?

He told me that I had embarrassed the council.

I then asked him in what way? He was unable to give me an answer. I then knew that the council was racist and they felt that an initiative coming from a non-white organisation was beyond their dignity.

Since I was only six years in Estcourt and my children were very young and my wife was suffering from stroke, I was not prepared to compromise my job and the comfort of my family.

The club and I decided to shelve this Industrial Show indefinitely.

Depending on the success of this show, the industries together with the club were contemplating to attract more prominent industries to Estcourt.

I am sad to say that after 33 years, no major industries have come to Estcourt, while a few of them have closed down.

The council lacked the initiative of inviting industries to Estcourt and they refused to work together with our social club.

Strike hurts

Nobody is a winner in this saga. Both parties will be licking their wounds and counting the cost.

Millions of man-hours are lost and in most cases workers are not compensated. Industries also suffer

Mr S Banda

(Former Councillor) advises the community, businesses and municipality to work hand in hand. "Buy South African and build South Africa."

millions of rands in loss of revenue. The economy of the country suffers and families have to make tremendous sacrifices.

In some cases workers lose their jobs. Instead of the economy moving forward.

It goes one step backwards. I also worked for the municipality and we also held strikes.

We were able to negotiate through our union very amicably.

I remember during the 80's, the employees refused a R5 increase, as council was to retrench a few of our fellow workers.

R5 was a lot of money for us but we made the sacrifice for the benefit of all the workers.

I suggest to the industries that they consider giving their employees an Incentive Bonus and encourage them to be a partner of the company. In this way I am sure this arrangement would bring a much cordial and improved relationship between employers and employees and at the same time avoid strikes.

I may be criticised by the parties

concerned by this is my personal opinion.

Our negotiating slogan is:

"Ask what you want

And take what you get

And use what you get

To get what you want."

This helped us with our negotiations with our bosses.

I suggest that we work together with council, our local industries, local businesses, the communities, unions, SAPS and other stakeholders in formulating a Turn Around Strategy in making Umtshezi a flourishing town thus creating more employment and cutting down on crime. I am certain that if we work honestly, sincerely and without any ulterior motives and hidden agendas, we will be successful.

The only capable body that I can think of in taking up the challenge is our present council. The full copy of the press release, which appeared in the Estcourt Gazette on April 14, 1978, is with the editor of the Estcourt News.

S Banda



S Banda