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Dear <<First Name>>

Demonstrating its continued commitment to small business development, the [National Business Initiative](#) (NBI) convened a dynamic Networking and Information Sharing Session at the [Installation, Repair and Maintenance](#) (IRM) Hub at Umfolozi TVET College's Mandeni Campus.

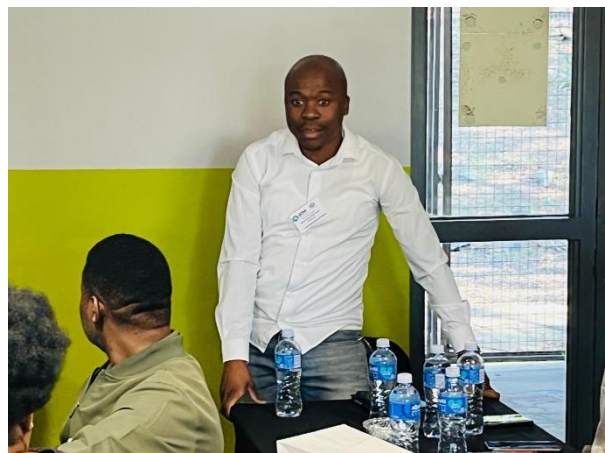
The session brought together Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) from our enterprise development programme, along with key regional stakeholders and ecosystem players. The goal was to foster meaningful knowledge exchange, surface collaborative opportunities and spotlight the support available to SMMEs across the iLembe District in KwaZulu-Natal.



Reflections from Local Entrepreneurs

Among the entrepreneurs who shared their journeys was Sibonelo Gumede, founder of Umhlakuva We Africa, a business operating in the mechanical services sector.

Reflecting on his journey as an SMME, he spoke about the value of perseverance and support: *"I've always strived to do better. Being part of the NBI Programme helped me sharpen my vision and gain access to the support I needed. That's how I've been able to secure the contracts I have today. My advice to other SMMEs: stay focused and positive."*



Fellow participant Vusumzi Mawela, founder of The Courier Chap, spoke about how gaining access to critical skills through the Programme has changed the trajectory of his business: *"Now that I've accessed new skills through the Programme, the future is brighter. I'm able to employ other artisans and contribute to the local economy."*

"The Hub was an eye-opener for me. The trainers and facilitators really helped us a lot," added Vusumzi.

Creating a Thriving Local Ecosystem

The session delivered tangible value to participants by focusing on:

- ☑ **Relationship-building** between entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners
- ☑ **Access to business support mechanisms** and local economic opportunities
- ☑ **Peer learning and open dialogue** around the challenges facing small enterprises

A central theme that emerged from the discussion was the pressing need to support SMMEs in navigating funding pathways and identifying where to access the right forms of assistance.



Key ecosystem stakeholders in attendance included Enterprise iLembe and the iLembe Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, who shared practical insights into regional opportunities — including business development funding and other forms of entrepreneurship support.

Through this work, we continue to strengthen youth-driven enterprises that create jobs, spark innovation, and contribute meaningfully to local economies. We look forward to growing this work alongside like-minded collaborators. If you're interested in partnering or learning more, please feel free to get in touch below.

[Contact Us](#)

NBI

National Business Initiative

The National Business Initiative (NBI) is an independent and voluntary coalition of South African and multinational businesses launched in 1995 by the then President, Nelson Mandela.

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