

## Investing in the Future

## A passion for overcoming poverty

The Drivers of Change award provides a great opportunity to organisations and individuals to gain visibility and recognition

## Comment

**Petronilla Ndebele**



To drive social change that makes a real difference in the lives of people living in poverty in southern Africa, we need to transform the way we do business. Innovative attitudes and practices of organisations and individuals that create change, especially by developing and implementing policies and strategies to end poverty in southern Africa, can now be nominated for the Drivers of Change award. Nominations for the second Drivers of Change award will be accepted until July 6 this year.

Fast becoming the region's premier award that recognises innovation in anti-poverty work, the Drivers of Change Award provides a great opportunity to organisations and individuals to gain visibility and recognition in their approach to overcoming poverty. They stand to be acknowledged as leaders in innovation and best practices. Beyond recognition, the award has great potential to provide a platform for sharing experiences, learning and linking similar initiatives.

Part of the *Mail & Guardian's* Investing in the Future awards, the Drivers of Change award is a non-monetary award. Those who enter are passionate about promoting innovative processes that can influence the development of effective public policies to overcome poverty.

Entries are accepted in three categories, namely: government, business and civil society. A common thread running through all the categories is innovation. In search of high quality entries, the judges will interrogate whether the innovation empowers people to take action and whether the innovation could be replicated elsewhere.

Another criterion is championing diverse voices, particularly voices of the poor in developing better public policy. Such a champion was Dr José Negrão, the inaugural winner of the Drivers of Change Award



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2006 in the civil society category. Negrão brought voices of the poor into his scholarly work and his research informed advocacy and campaigns that served the interests of the poor. He was posthumously recognised as a driver of change. In Negrão, the judges saw a selfless innovator, devoted to people-centred policies.

The judges will also pay attention to civil society organisations that go beyond the conventional in anti-poverty work. Work that is not only significant for overcoming poverty and inequality in the southern

Africa region, but work that is also rooted in the experiences of poor people and embraces diverse voices will certainly win the attention of the judges this year.

In business, drivers of change are innovative companies, whose corporate social responsibility (CSR) is integrated into their core business practices to have an impact on both human and economic development. The key is a holistic approach in the way the business operates as CSR programmes cannot be run in isolation. In addition, evidence of cooperation among different busi-

nesses in a coherent CSR approach will be very highly regarded by the judges. Corporates and small businesses that do not create a culture of dependency, but support creative and sustainable development programmes are encouraged to enter the awards.

Government agencies that open new opportunities and create new models for inclusive national and regional policy development will be recognised and promoted.

In 2006, nominations were received from Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and

Zimbabwe. This year, we go a step further to attract entries from Francophone, Lusophone and Anglophone countries in the region by providing entry forms in French, Portuguese and English.

Be a driver of change to overcome poverty in southern Africa. By nominating an organisation or individual, you will provide a positive example that others can draw inspiration from.

*Petronilla Ndebele is the Communications and Partnerships Manager for the Southern Africa Trust*

*Dr José Negrão believed policies and discussions aimed at overcoming poverty should begin with those affected by it...*

It was for his selfless work in ensuring that the voices of the poor informed research and policies in Mozambique that he was posthumously recognised as a driver of change; driving change in the way things are done to make a real and lasting impression on the lives of the people living in poverty. Dr Negrão was an icon in the development of land law and land reform benefiting poor rural communities in Mozambique. His work remains a legacy to all who follow his ideals.

#### Nominate Innovators!

The Drivers of Change Award honours organisations and individuals like Dr Negrão, who are making a difference in the lives of the poor. We invite you to nominate individuals, organisations, businesses, and government agencies in any southern African country who have demonstrated innovation in the development and implementation of effective public policies and strategies to end poverty in the region.

Entries for this year close on Friday 6 July, 2007. The winners will be announced in October 2007 at a gala event in Johannesburg.

Please contact Sudley Adams on +27 11 250 7300 or +27 82 900 0776 or go to [www.southernafricatrust.org](http://www.southernafricatrust.org) for more details and entry forms.



DRIVERS OF CHANGE



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