

It is a WOMAN'S WORLD too

It is a woman's world too. Because no job exists that women cannot do. Read the stories of these 19 very inspiring Basotho women working in various positions talking about where they came from, what challenges they faced on the way and the advice they are giving to young females for their future.

18 women showcasing the amazing variety of roles in which women are employed and the growing number of female employees in the private sector. It is time to make a culture change in traditionally male-dominated sectors.



1. Ms. Nthabiseng Lephatoe Engineering Geologist, Letseng Diamonds

"As a young high school girl I already dreamt of working at a mine. The technology and skills behind mining fascinated me. Early 2015 I was appointed as Engineering Geologist under the Geotechnical Engineering Section. As the only lady in the department I always strive for the best. Men think that women are not capable enough to do heavy jobs, so women must challenge their own comfort zone and realize the possibilities this environment has to offer. My advice: Don't be afraid to try new things, venture out as much as you can and never forget to learn from those who have travelled the road before."



2. Ms. Halieo Molatua Projects and Maintenance Administrator, FNB Lesotho

"I studied business management and am the first in my family to work in the banking sector. One day I was changing a globe while wearing a dress and fell from the chair. The guys that were in the room laughed their bones out instead of helping me. However, I believe that there is no difficult job that can only be done by man, anything is possible if you put your mind on it and effort in it."



3. Ms. Setsoto Hlohlomi Systems Administrator Billing and Information Technology, Vodacom Lesotho

"From an early age I watched from a distance when my mother fixed the kettle but never understood how she did it. I knew then that I wanted to learn this intriguing technology. Like my mother I was the only girl among boys when pursuing my degree in Engineering in Computer Systems and Networks. One challenge I consistently faced was intimidation. I then strived for excellence and to break the myth that engineering was a male job. I succeeded by winning the 4th and 1st prizes of two consecutive NUL programming Hackathons and two awards as 'Best Student in Computer Systems and Networks' and 'Best Student in CISCO Networking'. Hard work and dedication was my anchor. Recently the judgment from men has drastically reduced and the self-confidence of women should now grow because of the support the men are willing to provide and remember we can be at par with them and even better."

4. Ms. Libuseng Mokoatsi **Mining Engineer, Letseng Diamonds**

"One thing I knew well and wanted to do was something related to mathematics because I was so good in numbers. I had three options: civil, mining and mechanical engineering and decided to do mining after finding that mining industries were growing in Lesotho. Getting people to impart their knowledge is the main challenge, but a challenge to me says, review how you have been doing things, acquire knowledge with regard to solutions and then apply it to overcome the challenge. So my advice: Have a vision of getting somewhere! Set a map of how to get there and channel your energies to achieving your dream. Hard work pays, so please ladies, lets dream big!"



5. Ms. Hlompho Malephane **Seismologist**

"I hold a Bsc degree in Physics and Physical Geography, an Msc in Seismology and am currently working towards my Phd in Seismology. Indeed I am the first in my family to have gone so far. It is not easy to make decision-makers understand why Lesotho needs to understand the occurrence of earthquakes. Whenever I get the opportunity, I sensitize relevant people in government or other sectors in related fields about seismological issues and I am working on a proposal to present to NUL to erect at the very least 1 seismic station. My advice to young females: If something can be done by anybody, strive to be that 'anybody'!"



6. Ms. Mateboho Khanare **Articulated Dump Truck Operator, Letseng Diamonds**

"After my diploma in Business Studies I worked as a Storekeeper for a few years before I became an ADT Operator. When I face a challenge I just keep quiet as arguments cannot take us anywhere and do my job as if it's the last day of my life. My advice to young women: Every position can be held by women. So humble yourself, god shall lift you high."



7. Ms. Moliehi Mamoorosi Ts'ilo Raditapole **Chief Finance Officer, Nedbank Lesotho**

"It took me a while to figure out which career I wanted to pursue and as a result I had failed the first year at university. I later studied professional accountancy and received the Best Student of the year award for 3 years. I received an Irish Fellowship Scholarship and continued my studies in Ireland where I received another Best Student of the year award. The lesson from that earlier failure was to become more vocal on what I wanted not what is expected of me and to be focused on getting it. Women and young girls especially need to believe in their own unique talents and inner voice and not accept any limitations dictated by society."



8. Ms. Nthabiseng Mohlouoa **Senior System Support Technician, FNB Lesotho**

"I come from a family of three siblings and am by far the only one to have come this far and occupied such a position. However, to have made it this far I had to penetrate where societal discouraging comments were rather sharp and piercing. I am a control freak of my work and that has helped me a lot as I try to always be on top of things. Daily I work hard to ensure I am worthy of my position. 'There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure' states Paulo Coelho. So my advice: Keep this in mind, if I can DO it, why not YOU..?!"



9. Ms. Nthathi Monethi
Behaviour Based Care Coordinator, Letseng Diamonds

"My mom always told me that confidence and hard work will open doors for me. As a sickly child raised by a single mother it has never been easy academically, I always had to put extra efforts in my studies. Today I am the second female to ever be a Behaviour Based Care coordinator in the country and very proud of that. Dealing with Human behavior is a challenge on its own, as I cannot change human behavior, I can only influence it. I tell myself that I never know what I am capable of doing unless I try it out. My advice to all ladies: Ladies, go to school, believe in yourself and strive hard to make a difference, but never lose yourself trying to please others. You are amazing just the way you are."



10. Ms. Tiisetso Molatseli
Compliance Officer, Letseng Diamonds

"My employment history include the Master of High Court, Nedbank and FNB Lesotho. I am often questioned what a lawyer does in a mining company; as a Compliance Officer at Letseng Diamonds I assist in identifying applicable legislation and legal requirements and support the business to have controls in place to manage compliance risks. Being a working mother is difficult, more so when one works far away from home. I do worry about not being around to instill the values I would like my children to possess as adults. But it helps to have the support of my family. My advice: Remain focused on who you are as both a professional and a woman. Always strive for excellence and do everything in your power to refuse mediocrity in anything you do."



11. Ms. Maseboloka Madiba
Head of Human Resources, Nedbank Lesotho

"Of my 16 years of experience in HR, my longest stay has been with Nedbank which is 8 years. Some of the influencing factors are the people centred culture of the company and the focus on empowering women. My biggest challenge has been studying and looking after the family. I will never forget the time when I had to ask the babysitter to lock herself with my daughter in the bedroom, as I was writing an exam the next day. I could hear her crying, but there was no way out, I had to compromise being with her despite the pain I felt. My advice to young girls: Each individual has unique talent which becomes a competitive advantage if one strives hard to discover that talent. Believe in yourself and have a 'can do mentality'."



12. Ms. Mampoi Rasekila
Project Manager, Econet Telecom Lesotho

"I Studied Electrical Engineering in Durban and I am the only lady in my family with engineering qualifications occupying a position of a Project Manager. I have been in the communication industry for more than 20 years working in the Technical Department. As a woman I did face challenges when training opportunities came as the inclination was to give preference to males but this short sightedness has since stopped. I overcame this challenge by learning from the males who received training and my output would be the eye opener that women are not incapacitated. I urge all women to go out there and show the world that women are gifted and naturally multi-skilled."



13. Ms. Mamothokoane Tlali
Engineer IP systems, Vodacom Lesotho

“Being from a not so fortunate family, my mother was struggling to keep us in school. My two elder sisters had to drop out of school and worked hard at the factories to assist me with my fees. I was doing quite well academically and my maths teacher advised me to do Computer Science, but my former school mates discouraged me. I was confused and did a BSc General for the first year, only to change to Physics and Computer Science from the 2nd year. From 3rd year till the end I have been the only lady in my course and graduated with a lot of awards as the best student. The industry has changed significantly, there are many opportunities open for ladies, and we just have to be out there, do our thing because we are capable, we are strong, and we are smart.”



14. Ms. Nyakallo Mpatuoa
Managing Director, Mothae Diamonds

“The Canadian government was offering scholarships in professional degrees such as mechanical, electrical and mining engineering and geology. I pretty much understood the first 3, but did not really understand what geology entails. Even after the library I was not quite sure what it meant so on that basis I chose it when applying for the scholarship. It was difficult in my second year of study because Canadian high schools already teach geology as a subject and I didn't have that background. It was also hard to be the only black in a white class, but by the end I was able to have some class mates I could count on. My advice to young girls: Aim high and focus on your objective but also balance it with interactions with family and others of like-mind.”



15. Ms. Rethabile Faba
Senior Security Officer, Letseng Diamonds

“I come from a background of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service where I was attached at the Criminal investigation Division. For the past 9 years I have worked in the Security field of Letseng Diamonds. I have faced much resistance from my junior colleagues who challenge my knowledge, provoke me or try to bring me down. The biggest challenge I have faced though has been juggling family and work roles. All I can say to young females is that they should chase their dreams until they reach them. They must always remember that comfort zones are where dreams go to die.”



16. Ms. Palesa Moonyane-Nkofo
Contracts Administration Manager

“I'm the youngest of three girls and we are all Civil Engineers. Although I followed the same career path as my sisters they did not influence it. I have been a measurement engineer, project manager, assistant to the office of the Chief Executive and a Manager over the years. The greatest challenges I faced was with the things that were inherent about me which were my age, my appearance, my gender, my mannerisms, but through hard work and resilience I overcame those challenges. I'd like to leave the following for young girls by M. Williamson: ‘Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. [...] We ask ourselves, Who I am to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you NOT to be?’”



17. Ms. 'Masets'oana Mapepesa **Project Manager, Econet Telecom Lesotho**

"I am the first in my family to do an engineering course. We were three girls among 26 boys in a class. The main challenge I experienced after completing at Lerotholi was to get a job because most companies used to hire males as they doubted that we would climb ladders or perform well as to meet their expectations. My work is funny and exciting sometimes, there is no time to be smart like a lady, most of the time I dress up like "Mokoari" to get ready to go to the field whenever need be. My advice to young females is: Girls, set challenging but achievable goals, it is important that you establish your goals early on and make sure that they are outside your comfort zone."



18. Ms. Pinkie Letsie **Resource Geologist/Geostatistician, Letseng Diamonds**

"After being a high school teacher for 11 years, I joined the mines in South Africa as an underground laborer as soon as they started recruiting women in 2002. One of my early days, I went to one working place with my boss and after being introduced a man in his late 50s told my boss he can never work with a woman and left his work place immediately. Today, I have a Masters in Engineering and am working as a Resource Geologist. Still many men don't trust my knowledge and I often have to face questions regarding my knowledge and qualifications. However, I always keep my goals as my intrinsic motivator and my advice to all women: Focus on your goals and purpose in life and you will succeed in any environment."