

The Clothing Bank gets international award

The Clothing Bank, a local non-profit business, has won the 2016 Schwab Foundation's Social Entrepreneur of the Year award - an international honour for outstanding examples of social entrepreneurship - with the support of some of South Africa's major retailers including the Mr Price Group.



In an effort to turn the tide on unemployment in South Africa, The Clothing Bank transforms the lives of unemployed mothers trapped in the cycle of poverty through entrepreneurship. Unemployed women, with a strong desire to change their lives, are taught business skills and are able to access clothes and other merchandise to purchase and sell at a reduced price. The clothes and merchandise are donated to The Clothing Bank by major South African retailers. The Clothing Bank then helps each woman to become her own micro-retailer, empowering her to become self-employed and look after herself and her family.

Beginning micro-enterprises

Since The Clothing Bank started six years ago it has trained 1135 single mothers to begin their own micro-enterprises, collectively garnering a profit of over R40 million at an average of R4100 each per month. As the largest contributor of donated clothes in the KwaZulu-Natal region, the Mr Price Group has significantly helped in contributing to the 2.7 million garments valued at more than over R167 million that the non-profit company has received.

The Clothing Bank's CEO, Tracey Chambers, said: "We are extremely grateful that so many of South Africa's leading retailers have rallied behind The Clothing Bank. The success of our project, and the difference we are able to make to the lives of so many families, would not be possible without their ongoing, generous support. The award from the Schwab Foundation is an acknowledgement of this."