

Celebrating the Future Females entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and side-hustlers

 By Leigh Andrews

20 Aug 2018

It's a Catch22 - you tend to either have an idea to start a business, the motivation to do something different, or the skills to multitask, but it's rare that those magical elements are all singing loudly from within at the same time. That's where Future Females comes in. Here's a taste of the feminine driving force behind its founders.

Future Females celebrates its first birthday this month. It's a movement that exists to increase the number of and success of female entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs.

So it's a space to connect, inspire, be inspired and collaborate through physical, digital and emotional support.

One year, 10 chapters, 400 successful events and 10,000 members later, Future Females is no longer just a Cape Town-based event, it's a global force to be reckoned with.

Explaining how they got started, cofounders Cerina Bezuidenhout and Lauren Dallas share that they met while associates on the fintech accelerator run by Barclays and Techstars.



Future Females cofounders, Dallas and Bezuidenhout.

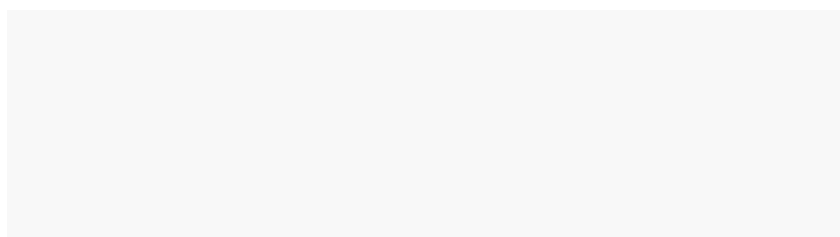
Dallas has started a few other businesses and consulted for Groupon and Accenture, and had just moved to Cape Town from Sydney, while Bezuidenhout had just left her corporate job and was moving into the entrepreneurial space.

“ They were looking at and for female entrepreneur support groups and offerings, and could not find what they were looking for. They noticed that in the Techstars cohort of 75 people, there were no female founders, only a handful of females working for these tech startups. They had to ask why, and decided to start something they would want to attend and that would offer what they would want to learn. ”

They also noticed two things:

1. Women often have an idea but don't know where to start – they need business skills
2. The women that have the skills to start a business tend to be lacking the courage, resilience or grit to start it. And so, Dallas and Bezuidenhout decided to work on both business skills as well as personal growth and empowerment skills, and Future Females was born.

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This perfectly sums up the Future Females journey from day 1. It happened bigger and quicker than we have ever anticipated, but it has been one of the most rewarding experiences. . 10 chapters & 10 000 members later in only one year - today we celebrate our very first birthday. HAPPY BIRTHDAY to us 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉. . Thank you to our team and ambassadors for getting us where we are today. But most importantly of all thank you to our Future Females community - you are the driving force behind what we do. Thank you for helping us grow & build a community of powerful entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs. 💎💎 . We can't wait for what the year ahead holds 💎💎💎.

A post shared by Future Females (@futurefemales) on Aug 2, 2018 at 11:52pm PDT

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Initially they focused on entrepreneurs, but soon noticed interest from intrapreneurs – women working for corporations who want to upskill themselves, be innovative in their divisions, and grow as a leader.

In fact, their latest survey indicated that more than 50% of their community is comprised of entrepreneurs, while a third of it is made up of intrapreneurs with a side hustle.

With such an inspiration-centric mandate, it's little wonder that their first 365 days have been filled with excitement and celebrating that special female business spark.

“ 3 AUGUST 2018: One year ago today the first [#FutureFemales](#) chapter was launched - today we're a global movement, operating in over 10 cities with the most incredible community of men + women hustling, supporting and empowering each other. THANK YOU! Let the celebrations begin 💎💎 pic.twitter.com/ozBRuL99Uq— Future Females (@Future_Females) [August 3, 2018](#) ”

I caught up with co-founders Bezuidenhout and Dallas, as well as core member Philippa Dods, for insights into how Future Females came about, and what to expect from their first birthday celebration event this coming Wednesday...

■ **Why is it so important to empower SA females in the current business and social context?**

Bezuidenhout and Dallas: A big motivator for us was unequal wealth distribution - only 1% of the global wealth is owned by women - and the fact that the needle can be changed by helping more women start and succeed at their own businesses.

There is so much potential. So many problems to solve and have an impact – both on others and yourself.

In general, worldwide, women need to learn courage, to be brave enough to jump, take that risk, try something and be okay if it fails – just learn from it and try the next thing!



Do. Learn. Fail. Repeat. Again and again.

Juanita Pienaar 6 Aug 2018



Women need to be comfortable with having difficult conversations, whether that's to pitch for funding or to negotiate a salary.

“ In South Africa specifically, we need to learn how to ask but also how to fund ourselves, to build lifestyle businesses, and be open to stepping out of the comfort zones of our traditional societies, and possibly have global impact. ”

Dods: It's so important because South African women have been disempowered for so long, because there's not enough female representation in politics, media, sport and business and because it's about time we all became aware of how much more capable and powerful we are than we think.

■ **Yes! How do you decide on speakers and topics to be covered in Future Females individual events?**

Bezuidenhout and Dallas: In December 2017, we put up polls and had our community vote on the themes they want to talk and learn about in 2018, so it's really what our community wants to learn.

The responses were a beautiful mix of business and personal development skills, and our speakers are a mix of influencers, successful women and men. Some are well-known internationally, some are only well-known in their community, but we learn from everyone.



The Future Females Cape Town team

They're from different sectors – from corporates to entrepreneurs, from big to small businesses, our own role-models and those we aspire to be.

“ We have both male and female speakers because we are here to close the gender gap, not make the gap bigger. As men have been leading and learning for centuries, we can learn from them, take short-cuts, share opinions, and have conversations. ”

📌 **Love that. What's response been like so far from attendees?**

Bezuidenhout and Dallas: We have had an amazing response. We sit in awe, with massive gratitude that we can create a space where women feel themselves and grow with us, as well as the successful people who support us by being mentors and offering guidance.



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We offer different interactions, where people can share and engage, and we have had feedback on a few occasions about how new business collaborations were formed, new clients were met, and women resonated and felt more courageous.

Dods: It's been amazing.

Our attendees inspire me! My favourite bits of feedback are from women who say they've been wanting to start a business for ages and attending one of our events was inspirational enough for them to finally go and do it; as well as the women who have made friends and business partners in the Future Females community network.



#BehindtheSelfie with... Philippa Dods

Leigh Andrews 11 Jul 2018



That's why we exist – so women have a space to connect, to empower and be empowered, to fail and to win.

📌 **Which has been your favourite session personally, and why?**

Bezuidenhout: The Cape Town chapter is my baby, so I cannot choose a child. There is so much energy and thought that goes into each event and speaker I choose!



Scene from a Future Females event.

Dallas: My favourite event was "Mastering your money". Women are so scared to talk about money, we don't grow up really managing it, and we leave big stuff like budgeting and investments to our fathers or husbands, there was quite a big learning here. Also, we feel scared to say we want to be rich!



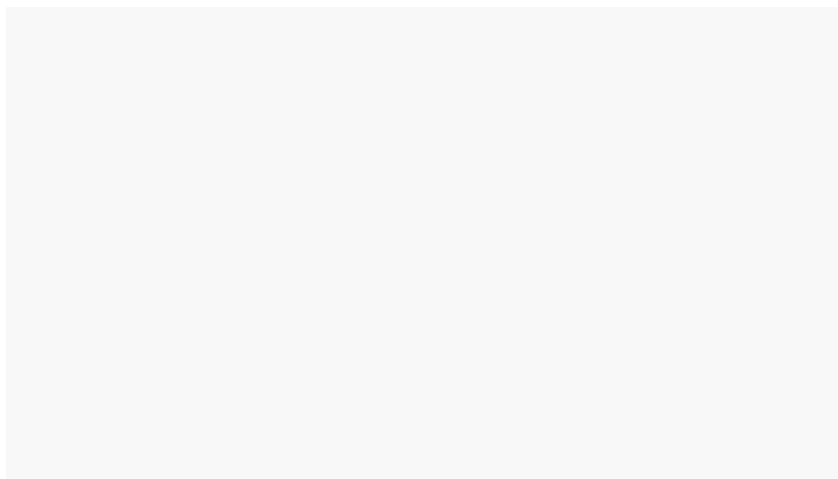
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Dods: My personal favourites were “defining and building your personal brand” in Johannesburg in March – the sense of empowerment in that room was palpable – as well as the London launch in June, and “technology trends” and sextech in Cape Town in December.

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GRL PWR #futurefemaleslondonlaunch #bigideasbigactions

A post shared by [Philippa Dods](#) (@philippadods) on Jun 7, 2018 at 1:54am PDT

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Like Dallas, I probably learned the most from the “mastering your money” event in Cape Town in May. I have a feeling our upcoming birthday event will be added to my list of favourites!

❏ ***As do I! Looking ahead to the future, what’s next on the Future Females agenda?***

Bezuidenhout and Dallas: Future Females is a person, and it is a person with values and a way of living that we wish for every person on this planet. We hope to reach as many and as far as we can, thus organic and targeted chapter growth is a big strategic goal for us.

We are also working on two online offerings, one of which will be launched in late 2018 and the other in 2019. We have merchandise launching as we are speaking, and will hopefully step into the crowdfunding space.



Future Females co-founders, [Lauren Dallas](#) and Cerina Bezuidenhout.

They will be sharing a real, raw account of the good, the bad and the ugly from Year 1 of building their businesses – [Future Females](#) & [The Growth Academy](#). Building a team, managing stress, staying motivated, overcoming technical blind spots, self-doubt and self-love and celebrating the wins and failures (like we are excited to do with you on the evening of the event!) – if you're thinking about starting a business, already on the path, or made some traction of your own (in which case please do share too!) – we know you'll take something away from their talk!

Grab your ticket here:

[https://www.quicket.co.za/.../54541-how-to-fail-successfull.../...](https://www.quicket.co.za/.../54541-how-to-fail-successfull.../)

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Colour me inspired. [Click here](#) for more on the Future Females first birthday event, where Bezuidenhout and Dallas will discuss 'how to fail successfully', visit the [Future Females blog](#), [Twitter feed](#), Facebook page and Instagram account for the latest updates!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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