

Sunette Pienaar is "Social Entrepreneur 2006" in South Africa

20 May 2006

Cape Town: The jury selected Sunette Pienaar, Founder of Heartbeat, for her exemplary contribution to mobilize communities to care and protect their children whose parents have died. First Lady Zanele Mbeki, who has been an active Board Member of the [Schwab Foundation](#) since its inception, handed the award to Sunette Pienaar during the opening plenary of the [World Economic Forum on Africa](#) in Cape Town. Ms Pienaar is admitted into the global network of leading social entrepreneurs of the Schwab Foundation and is invited to the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos.

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship is running the search and selection for "The Social Entrepreneur of the Year" in 30 countries around the world. In South Africa the search is in partnership with Deloitte and Independent Newspapers.

Sunette Pienaar founded Heartbeat in 2000 after leaving her position as a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. Heartbeat has since mobilized communities in six provinces (Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo, Free State and Eastern Cape) to care directly or indirectly for some 6,000 orphans and vulnerable children. Heartbeat assists these children in accessing water, electricity, housing, schooling and government grants where applicable. All services are delivered through local community committees. Team Leader Groups visit, support and monitor child-headed families three times a week to provide guidance, and emotional and spiritual support. Through Heartbeat's mobilization, each community establishes a Child Care Forum, After School Centres and other support functions.

In total, the Schwab Foundation and Deloitte selected five finalists out of the pool of applicants: Mitchell Besser, Mothers' Programmes (Cape Town); Taddy Blecher, CIDA City Campus (Johannesburg); Varkey George, SHAWCO (Cape Town); Banks Gwaxula and Jacob Lief, Ubuntu (Port Elizabeth); and Sunette Pienaar, Heartbeat (Pretoria). The finalists were selected based on the following criteria: direct social impact, innovation, scale, replicability and sustainability. The finalists went through a thorough due diligence process including site visits.

The jury members choosing the winner included Professor Gill Marcus, Gordon Institute of Business Studies; Futhi Mtoba, Chairwoman, Deloitte; and Garth Japhet, Founder of Soul City.

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship was started by Klaus Schwab, Founder of the World Economic Forum, and his wife, Hilde. Since its inception in 2000, the Foundation has been searching for the world's leading social entrepreneurs, who implement innovative and pragmatic solutions to social problems by tackling the root causes and creating a social transformation. The current network of the Foundation spans 105 social entrepreneurs and their organizations from more than 40 countries. A recent evaluation study showed that the budgets and the number of beneficiaries reached of the selected social entrepreneurs grew three times faster while part of the network. In one year alone, the Schwab social entrepreneurs raised close to US\$ 80 million as a direct result of the contacts and opportunities offered by the Foundation.

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