

Grab the opportunities of a new industry

The renewable energy field is relatively young and presents great opportunities for women to take up spaces in numerous roles within the industry - from development to technical and even operations management. Four women working in the wind power industry share their views.



Katherine Persson, Mamoso May, Hengiwe Radebe and Wendy Parsons

■ *As a woman, why is it important to you to make a contribution to your community/sector?*

Katherine Persson, MD: Windlab, East Africa: I believe that everyone should aspire to make a contribution towards a future, in their own way. But as a woman, I think its especially important for the next generation of young women and men to see the positive contribution that women make in business and society.

■ *Why do you think the renewable energy sector is a good career option for women?*

Wendy Parsons, CEO, Kouga Wind Farm: There's no better time to be a woman in the workplace than right now and renewable energy is a relatively new industry to SA so the playing field is relatively level. The industry also straddles so many different disciplines, it's a great balance between the nurturing side of environmental and social upliftment, and the commercial side of achieving technical and financial targets.

■ *Considering Covid-19, how do you feel women play a role within the 'new normal'?*

Hengiwe Radebe, economic development director, Globeleq The reality of Covid is that more women have lost their income and remain affected largely because they are usually the primary caregivers. The new normal presents some serious challenges and opportunities.

The ability to work from home has been a double-edged sword as it offers women opportunity to be with their children more, yet places the burden of care on the very people whose livelihood is threatened by the pandemic the most.

■ *What advice would you give to young women wanting to enter your industry?*

Mamoso May, general manager/CEO, Dorper Wind Farm: It is important for those seeking a career in renewable energy – that they understand that the industry is bigger than just the large Independent Power Producers (IPPs)..

Our value chains are long – and encapsulate many industries from social development to technical suppliers; and everything in between.

There are also a lot of new, exciting players, in the off-grid solutions space and smaller industrial solutions.

I believe that sometimes narrow their options too soon; without fully grasping the full web of opportunities that could exist between them and their ultimate goals.

My ultimate advice is then – don't be self-limiting in the pursuit of your goals.

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