

Afrika Tikkun CEO acknowledged for philanthropic work

CEO of Afrika Tikkun Marc Lubner was recently recognised at the Congress of Business and Economics (CBE) Recognition Awards 2016 for his philanthropic work.



Marc Lubner, CEO of Afrika Tikkun, founder and executive chairman of the Smile Foundation

Afrika Tikkun is a South African non-profit organisation focusing on youth development from cradle to career. Lubner is also founder and executive chairman of the Smile Foundation, which treats children with facial abnormalities. He has also held numerous positions at other noteworthy philanthropic and business organisations, including current executive chair of the SA Israel Chamber of Commerce.

The event, which was conceptualised to honour the contribution made by individuals to their communities, was hosted in Mayfair, Johannesburg, on 3 December. Human rights advocate and activist, Judge Johann Kriegler, delivered the keynote address.

Inspiring a transforming society

The accolade seeks to inspire South Africans to play their part in a transforming society; to improve themselves in their professional spheres and to strive for service excellence. In a foreword for the brochure of the 2016 awards, Ahmed Kathrada noted, "It is in this context that we must celebrate our heroes. It is the lessons from the lives of such heroes that must assist in finding lasting solutions to the many socio-economic issues that we face today."

Lubner's selfless work earned him the award for Distinguished Service to Society. Other award nominees included Premier David Makhura, Ebrahim Saloojee, Essop Bhana, Fawzia Peer, Friez Cachalia, Prof Hoosen Coovadia, Krish Naidoo, Mohammed Moosa and Minister Naledi Pandor among others. Trevor Manuel, Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, Frene Ginwala and Dr Essop Jassat were nominated for Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Child and youth development model

Afrika Tikkun has made a vital impact on society with its holistic child and youth development model. Under Lubner's guidance, the number of programme beneficiaries has increased from 1,200 to almost 20,000. Staff numbers have grown from 100 to 550 and annual spend from R20m to R60m. Most significantly, Afrika Tikkun has perfected its model which

develops young people to make them more employable, thereby breaking their dependency on social security and ending the poverty cycle.

The organisation's impetus is amplified by Afrika Tikkun Services (ATS), a social impact company, which operates as a facilities management entity to provide broad-based empowerment consulting, skills development services, placement and procurement for companies requiring enterprise development services. ATS is owned exclusively by the Afrika Tikkun Investment Trust (ATI), ensuring all profits earned through ATS are used to fund the development arm of Afrika Tikkun and the hundreds of rotational learners in their centres.

Cradle to career model

Says Lubner, "A society based on integrated solutions requires integrated strategies to truly support itself and its capability. If we could develop the cradle to career model countrywide through an integrated NGO sector working with corporate sector and government, I envisage that we would see significant and effective change in future generations and the leadership in our country."

Smile Foundation is a South African non-governmental organisation with a comprehensive health care vision for children living with facial conditions. Smile Foundation together with the country's academic hospitals work together to put the smile back onto children's faces with corrective facial reconstructive surgery and treatments. They help children in need of surgery for treatable facial anomalies such as cleft lip, cleft palate, nose and ear conditions, facial paralysis (Moebius Syndrome), burn wounds and craniofacial abnormalities. To date, they have assisted over 2,000 children with the gift of a smile.

The CBE Recognition Awards are to become a regular event, with all the remaining nominees from this year qualifying for the next awards.

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