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## Media Release

### **Transforming the future of one woman at a time**

Newly appointed Executive Director: Infrastructure and Technical Services at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (STLM),

Namudi Reginah Makgata, never thought in her wildest dreams that she would one day head a male-dominated engineering department in a municipality, never mind being one of very few women in South Africa to hold such a position.

Born and bred in Mochadi, a rural village in Sekhukhune Limpopo, the 43-year-old, who is a civil engineer by training, is living her wildest dream.

A daughter of a retired municipality messenger, Makgata, who was a maths guru in high school, was encouraged by her father to pursue a career in civil engineering after being inspired by some civil engineers that worked in the municipality he also worked for.

“Back in the day’s teachers and parents discouraged females from choosing “a man’s job”, along with some bias from the engineering industry that preferred male workers over females. Yet despite this, my father encouraged me to break boundaries,” she shares.

Her father’s dream for her to get an education temporary got a knock after she fell pregnant at 16 resulting in her staying at home for a few months.

She didn’t let any grass grow on her dreams. After giving birth she went back to school to finish her studies. Makgata, who admits is a bookworm, passed her matric with flying colours and got admission at Vaal University of Technology from 2001 to 2008, where she completed both a National Diploma in Civil Engineering and a B-Tech degree in Urban Engineering. She later obtained a Bachelor of Science Honours in Applied Science for Transport Planning, a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with the University of Pretoria and the University of Limpopo respectively. She is currently studying for a Masters of Civil Engineering in Transport Studies with the University of Cape Town and also holds a certificate in project management with the University of Pretoria.

Makgata is a huge believer in having positive role models in engineering so that women have someone they can identify with in senior positions and show others, first-hand, the benefits that having a diverse team bring.

She shares that she has spent much of her career with male colleagues on her teams but says she has been lucky enough to observe the status quo slowly changing.

“Having senior figures, male or female guiding young talent to achieve their goals will undoubtedly improve retention. I believe gender diversity is only one aspect of this and we must create an inclusive environment where everyone can be valued for the experiences and insights they can contribute to the team,” says Makgata who joined STLM in May after occupying a number of senior positions in various municipalities in Limpopo.



She reveals that her biggest focus for her new role would be to ensure good and quality service delivery for the community of STLM and continue with the clean governance the municipality has been enjoying.

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