

Opening the Lindiwe Mabuza Space

Tuesday, 6 December 2022 marks the first anniversary of Lindiwe Mabuza's passing. To honour her rich legacy, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), together with her family, are opening their new Conference Facility in her name: the Lindiwe Mabuza Space.

Lindiwe Mabuza's legacy has many facets. She was a cultural activist, politician, academic, poet, journalist, diplomat, and so much more. She dedicated her life to the struggle for liberation in South Africa and the realisation of human rights. As a feminist, she saw the fight against patriarchy as central to her life's work. As a poet, she demonstrated the importance of arts and culture for activism and progressive change. As an internationalist, in exile she worked for international solidarity, dialogue, and unity amongst progressives. As the first Ambassador of democratic South Africa to Germany and throughout her career, she continued to emphasise the need for progressive internationalism beyond the level of government.

Her life and her work offer us great inspiration for what true progressive 'renewal' needs to include and embrace. After all, 'renewal' is the word of the moment in South Africa today. We hear it when trade unions discuss their declining membership and the challenges they face in recruiting the most vulnerable workers. We even use the word 'renewal' to talk about how political parties have been taken over by elites and contaminated by the politics of money.

But, what if we were to stretch the word beyond these common understandings that imply a once-off event – a temporary measure to 'recover lost ground'? What if we stretched 'renewal' to help us to imagine new possibilities – new analysis for changing conditions, new political agency, and an open door to examine difficult questions and uncomfortable histories?

What if 'renewal' meant going beyond cynicism and a world of pandemics and war? A direct challenge to patriarchy and a genuine interest in a new feminist politics? A renewed commitment to fight the related inequalities of race, class, gender and sexuality, and a renewal of progressive projects on an international scale?

The launching of the Lindiwe Mabuza Space is an open invitation to all who want to explore a broader concept of 'renewal' and the many questions surrounding it. You can find more information on the programme here: <https://southafrica.fes.de/event/default-80ed6fab82>.

These concerns also inform the work of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, as a political non-profit organisation of German origin, committed to the values of social democracy and the role of the labour movement. With offices in more than 100 countries, we facilitate national as well as international dialogue amongst progressives from trade unions, political parties, activists and academics. The Lindiwe Mabuza Space is a conference centre fully equipped for many different kinds and types of events. It offers FES's partners in South Africa a space to meet, deepen their analysis, develop their ideas, and build their alliances.

For more information on FES's work, visit <https://www.fes.de/standorte/fes-international/>