

Called to Walk Alongside

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

- Romans 12:10-12

“What we are learning is that if we are going to come alongside our brothers and sisters in the developing world and truly ease their burden, we have to better understand the real nature of the battle and how best to fight alongside them.”

- Doug Seebeck, [My Business, My Mission](#)

When you are in step with someone, you walk in rhythm and your eyes are turned to a shared vision ahead. In the same way, as we take on big challenges and wrestle with the complexity of poverty, we are called to walk alongside others—listening, encouraging and learning from each other. With strength in numbers, we walk side by side united in vision and purpose.

Our commitment to walking alongside business people around the world is demonstrated by the hundreds of mentors active in 2009/10. Partners Worldwide facilitated 217 mentors who gave their time to serve internationally. An additional 464 local business professionals also mentored other business owners within their own countries.

As part of the nationwide movement to overcome HIV/AIDS, South African businesswoman Makoekie Tsotetsi has mentored dozens of young adults over the past four years.

As a local business affiliate of Partners Worldwide, Southern Africa HIV AIDS Collaboration (SAHAC) connects young people with mentors like Makoekie to help them create successful small businesses in the Soweto townships of Johannesburg—communities with HIV/AIDS prevalence rates of 25-30 percent and unemployment hovering at 65 percent.

“By mentoring them, we’re getting them back on track to make positive choices in life,” says Makoekie, who views job creation as a catalyst to fight HIV/AIDS. One of these mentees is Paballo Dibakoane, 28. As a young entrepreneur, Paballo completed a chemical engineering degree before he decided to enter the construction field. That’s when SAHAC set him up with business mentor Makoekie, who employs 40 others in her construction business in Johannesburg. “I’ve walked alongside him ever since he created his first business plan and began understanding the market. Now he runs a cooperative of construction workers!”

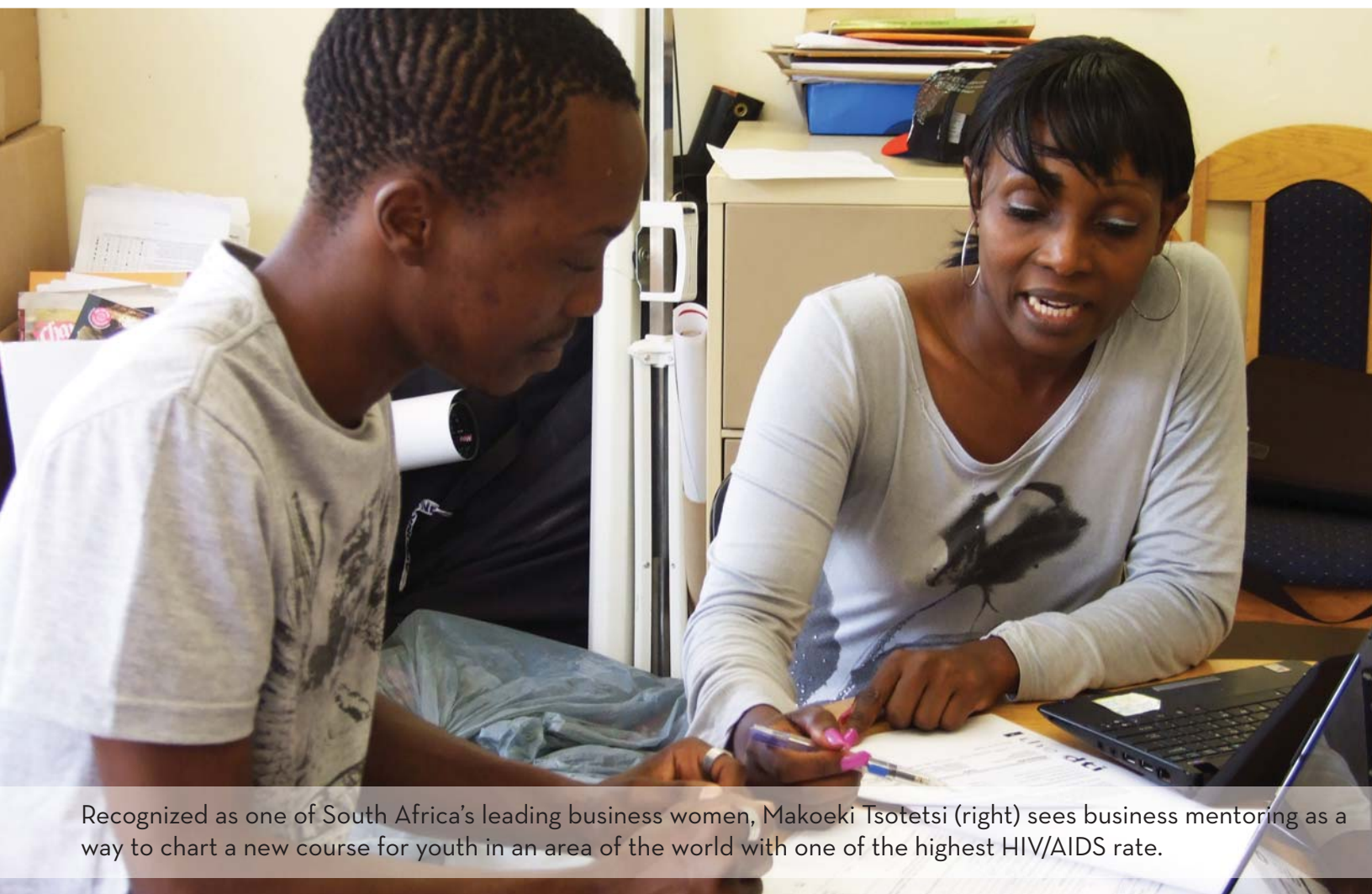
This year, business people within SAHAC have walked

alongside 55 young adults through business mentorships in Soweto, where, according to Makoekie, business hardly exists. “Most often, these young people grow up on their own or in dysfunctional families. It’s more than an economic issue of poverty; it’s the social issues we need to understand in order to walk with them for the long haul.”

Investing time in others hits home for Makoekie. When she first launched her own construction company in 2005, she had no experience or education in the field. Through SAHAC, Partners Worldwide connected her with Paul Scholten, a business mentor in Michigan. Today, she is recognized as one of the most successful female entrepreneurs in the construction industry of South Africa.

“If I didn’t have Paul as a mentor throughout these years, I wouldn’t be where I am in business now. It’s essential to have someone walk alongside.”

Building relationships and walking alongside others takes a lot of patience and endurance, she says. But by sharing ideas, cheering others on, and bearing burdens together, business people throughout the world are fulfilling the call to walk alongside each other.



Recognized as one of South Africa’s leading business women, Makoeki Tsotetsi (right) sees business mentoring as a way to chart a new course for youth in an area of the world with one of the highest HIV/AIDS rate.