

Top 10 YEP business presentations beneficiaries pitch ideas for community empowerment

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The Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP), the flagship youth incubation program facilitated by the Innovator Trust, held its fifth annual YEP business presentations from 28 February-2 March 2022 to an all-virtual panel of business executives from across South Africa.



The Top 10 best business presentations were selected from the current cohort of beneficiaries on the program, for a chance to pitch their business plans to a panel of industry experts.

For each of the dynamic Top 10 YEP beneficiaries which included Mmampa Rapakgadi from Gauteng, Harry Ramokgopa, Mogau Matlala, Gracca Mahomane and Mmalerato Mokwena from Mpumalanga, Kaede Cupido and Thandokazi Dyantyi from the Western Cape and Jackson Molapisi, Refentse Phiri and Nkagiseng Mponya from the Free State, the experience was nerve-racking yet inspiring. “Martin Luther King once said, I have a dream. We all have dreams and today I am here to share mine with you. I aim to serve and make a difference in the lives of the people in my community through my business one day,” said Kaede Cupido from the Western Cape, who aims to start an innovative legal practice, providing ease of access to affordable legal services through the use of technology.



Although the business concepts varied among the group’s pitches; from a smart fruit and veg supply service, IT hardware and software support business, to a beauty and grooming bar, an innovative construction service company and a local trucking and logistics company, what was clear all the beneficiaries had in common was an innovative approach to digitising their businesses using technology, and a deep desire to affect change in the socio-economic circumstances of their communities.

The round of business presentations marks the final assessment in the YEP program before graduation later this year. With the urgency to boost entrepreneurship among young people in South Africa more crucial now than ever before, particularly after the massive adverse effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the economy and the unemployment rate in this sector,

the YEP beneficiaries were challenged and encouraged by the panelists to remain consistent and resolute in their efforts toward pursuing their business prospects. “You all have wonderful dreams, and you are in the company of great dreamers. I encourage you to do your research. Upskill and learn as much as you can. Practice, practice, practice. Keep going and stay the course,” said Celestine Williams, director at Cyan Development Concepts.

“The feedback you’ve been given here is to help you do better in life, and not just in business. So, I implore you to take all that you’ve learnt from your time on the YEP program, apply it and run with it,” said Tashline Jooste in closing of the three-

day round of pitching. The YEP program is a one-year business incubation program offered by the Innovator Trust to aspiring entrepreneurial South African youth between the ages of 18-35, who are unemployed but have passed matric. First started in 2017 as a partnership between the Innovator Trust and Vodacom, the objective of the program has been to provide opportunities and exposure to unemployed youth, giving them the chance to receive business training and mentorship support while developing practical skills necessary for youth interested in delving into entrepreneurship.

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