



YOUTH INNOVATION CHALLENGE IGNITES ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AT NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY



Onthatile Montoedi (M&C Intern) Mr Martin Manmohan (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences), Keo Twala (SBD), Candy Motlalosa (SBD) Dr Kezell Klinck (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences), Hlompo Masibi (M&C Intern), Keneuoe Phadi (SBD Intern).

Mahikeng, 24 April 2025 – The North West University campus buzzed with excitement today as the Youth Innovation Challenge (YIC), presented by YAEi x Absa Youth Entrepreneurship, unfolded. The event, attended by Team NWDC, showcased the innovative spirit and entrepreneurial drive of young minds from across the region.

The day began with a warm welcome from Mr. Itumeleng Reagan Bahetane, who addressed the pressing issue of youth unemployment. ***"The impact of high unemployment results in poverty, high crime rates, and social instability," he emphasised.***

Mr. Bahetane highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship in creating jobs and opportunities, despite challenges such as lack of funding. He praised the presence of organisations like NWDC and the participation of learners from St. Mary's Secondary School, underscoring the passion for entrepreneurship among the youth.

Mr. Linda Hasi, the current Chief Innovation Officer of YAEi, explained the essence of the YIC. This funded program empowers students from various provinces to pitch their business ideas, providing them with mentorship and support to grow in the industry.

Mr Itumeleng Reagan Bahetane



Mr Linda Hasi

The event featured a panel of three judges: **Dr. Klinck** from the Faculty of Economic Management Sciences at North West University, **Ms Keo Twala**, a fund administrator from NWDC, and **Mr. Linda Hasi** himself.



From left to right Mr Linda Hasi, Ms Keo Twala, Dr Kezell Klinck

Ms Twala passionately stated, "***The war we are fighting is unemployment; we need to fight this battle to the last breath.***"

The challenge saw over 15 young entrepreneurs pitching their innovative business ideas both virtually and physically. Among them was Mosima Elizabeth from Career Craft Academic Centre, offering comprehensive tutoring services and arts facilities. Her presentation highlighted the accessibility and affordability of her services for all income levels. Judge Keo from NWDC inquired about the registration status of her business, reflecting the practical support offered to participants.

Kamogelo Harry Samotse from Harry and Kingk Tutoring Service at North West University presented his peer-led STEM tutoring initiative, aimed at enhancing academic excellence through personalised tutoring and study strategies.



Kamogelo Harry Samotse

Kabelo Mukua from Sentinel and Wellness pitched his business focused on holistic health through natural remedies and lifestyle education, aiming to empower individuals with personalized wellness solutions.

The day concluded with Ms. Noluthando Shabangu from YAEi expressing gratitude to North West University, the hosts, and all participating organisations and sponsors. She announced that the program would continue the next day, culminating in the announcement of the top ten pitches at the Great Hall of North West University.

Mr. Lester Mpolokeng revealed that the university had partnered with YAEi to provide a venue for those who did not get a chance to pitch today, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to showcase their ideas.

The Youth Innovation Challenge not only highlighted the innovative ideas of young entrepreneurs but also emphasised the critical role of support and mentorship in fostering entrepreneurship.

As the program continues, the anticipation builds for the final announcements and the future impact of these budding entrepreneurs on the local economy.

By:

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