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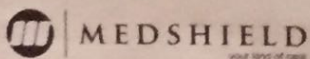
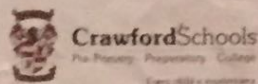
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Youth upliftment in progress

In its capacity as the monitoring and evaluation structure for the implementation of youth programmes across the City of Johannesburg, the Youth Unit has been very proactive in keeping the fire burning across all council departments.

The City of Johannesburg's Youth Policy will give impetus to the youth development agenda and contains inherent commitments by the city, its youth and society at large on services that would have to be employed to ensure effective and efficient integration of youth development in the socio-economic mainstream.

Says Phemelo Kebinelang, head of the unit: "Ours is a council function located in the office of the executive mayor and falling under the office of the city manager."

"The unit is responsible for the mainstreaming, co-ordination, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes within this region and is positioned in the strategic department to ensure interaction and communication with all city's departments, municipal entities (MEs) and ultimately private sector on issues relating to youth development."

"This will ensure that all departments and MEs remain accountable and responsible in addressing youth development within the city."

Kebinelang says that the unit's focus is over three primary areas. The first one where there is very strong focus is on learnerships. Skills development and capacity building is a second, particularly in the information technology field.

Uplifting SMMEs

"We are doing intensive training on SAP, giving youth the minimum basics of IT in order to be able to leverage from their understanding and their qualifications. The city's IT infrastructure is SAP based, so this also means we are developing a pool of talent from which we can draw resources, developing careers and career paths in City of Johannesburg departments."

The third area is uplifting and enabling small micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs), aligned closely with the National Youth Development Act (NYDA). In this area, the unit is facilitating basic management training for SMMEs on such issues as basic finance, administration, human

resources and other related areas. This is being done through various partners and sponsors, both in the public and private sectors.

"We need to help young entrepreneurs who have started their own companies to run their businesses on a day-to-day basis," explains Kebinelang.

Although the unit is a monitoring structure and not directly involved in the actual implementation of youth programmes, it has implemented a number of programmes working together with various departments and MEs within the city and also with external stakeholders.

These youth programmes implemented include and are not limited to the National Youth Service, the expanded public works programme (EPWP), internships, workplace experiential training, life skills workshops, boot camps for young entrepreneurs, campaigns on raising awareness on drugs and alcohol, distribution of books, career expos and exhibitions, allocation of bursaries, food gardening/resilience, dialogues and information sessions, preon tours, first aid training, learner driver training, clean-up campaigns, young women workshops and assistance in terms of access to job opportunities.

Closing the communication gap

Born and raised in Soweto, a township she describes as characterising huge suffering and great triumph is Phindile Dhlamini, whose company, Gracefully Consulting, partners with the city on different programmes, particularly within the townships.

"The city is definitely making progress with its programmes," she says. "The struggle now is closing the communication gap between the city and communities where access to information is limited."

"Our emphasis is being in touch with the municipalities, understanding their policies and projects, identifying key role players and taking this information into communities so they can use it to their benefit."

"As individuals, we also need to help them through demonstrating how they may apply their passion, abilities and skills in order to successfully take advantage of the opportunities that currently exist."



Phemelo Kebinelang



Phindile Dhlamini

Is it working?

There have been a number of success stories emanating from the programmes implemented by the City of Johannesburg Youth Unit. Some 750 young people were provided with different work experiences and experiential learning as part of its skills development programme and a total of 500 young people were trained on the city's SAP information technology systems, which skills will assist them to better position themselves when employment opportunities become available. Nine youth advisory centres have been established across the city's seven regions, bringing youth development programmes closer to where young people are and monthly, more than 1 000 young people visit these centres.

Making milestones

Volunteering his services to the City of Johannesburg to assist with youth and ultimately economic development is entrepreneur and author, Tshepo Mokgatla. This young five-wire coach and mentor studied at Wits Business School, however he dropped out before graduating, ascribing this to not having a clear plan for the future.

This has not stopped him becoming a multiple award-winner and contributor to uplifting Johannesburg's youth, consulting on programme and project management.

Explaining the rationale behind the work he does, Mokgatla says: "Learning from a textbook and learning from hands-on experience are two completely different things. I had to bridge the gap between the two and needed to gain practical exposure. Working with the city provided both the experience and recognition while also enabling me to build a foundation for myself."

Mokgatla established Be28 Movement offering success coaching, mentoring, inspirational and motivational oratory and consulting; the company won an award for the 'most innovative project for 2014' at the ACTIVATE change drivers showcase. Mokgatla himself has been listed as one of the top 20 inspirational youth in South Africa and is an official Gijima coach to Gijima interns and learners nationwide.

"Be28 is a movement that is driven by creating habits of success amongst communities and youth in particular," continues Mokgatla. "It is established on a belief that if an individual does something consistently for 28 days, it becomes a habit."

"We are surrounded by opportunity and it is vital for individuals to expose themselves to what is out there in the world. All too often people are too settled in the couch of entitlement, instead of preparing themselves to meet the opportunities that are out there."

"While the city still has a way to go in this arena, there have been some major milestones forward, particularly the investment in skills upliftment in SAP. The city is also making considerable investment in combating drug abuse and its investment with STA putting 60 learners through Wits Business School is another major milestone."

Putting policy in place

Since 2009, the City of Johannesburg has demonstrated its commitment to the youth development agenda through the adoption of its Youth Policy. This policy is an extension of and has grown since the original RDP plan, instigated in 1994. It provides clear guidelines and framework for effective youth engagement for city departments and municipal owned entities and affords the city an important stage for learning and adopting effective youth development implementation models.

Youth refers to young people between the ages of 14 and 35 years and categories of youth encompass young men and women, disabled youth, youth in conflict with the law or ex-offenders, those not in employment, education and training, youth-headed households, vulnerable youth and those living and working on the streets.

Through reviews over the years, the city has evaluated the policy against set goals and has reframed objectives and priorities as necessary in the context of new challenges and opportunities.

Mainstreaming

It is said that the 2015-2020 City of Johannesburg Youth Policy will give impetus to the youth development agenda within the city, with this policy document containing inherent commitments by the city, its youth and society at large on interventions and services that have to be employed to ensure effective and efficient internal and external mainstreaming of youth development in the socioeconomic mainstream.

It also builds on provincial and national policy and programmatic interventions implemented for young people from 1994 to date and re-commits to escalating youth development issues to a level where all role-players in society, including the public, private and civil society sector make youth development their day-to-day business in order to take South Africa "to a future we all envisage."

In defining youth development, the National Youth Commission encapsulates all the relevant aspects as a process whereby young women and men are able to improve their skills, talents and abilities, as well as to extend their intellectual, physical and emotional capacities. It includes the opportunity for young women and men to express themselves and to live full lives in all social, cultural, economic and spiritual spheres, also engaging them as participants in decision-making processes.