

PRESS RELEASE

THEBE FOUNDATION LENDS A HELPING HAND TO TODAY'S YOUTH

16 JUNE 2021

National Youth Day, a day where all South Africans commemorate the events of 16 June 1976. It is exactly 45 years ago that the world witnessed a massacre of youth during the Soweto uprisings in 1976 which was sparked by the socio-political landscape at the time. Fast forward to 45 years later, our youth are still fighting for socio-economic transformation. The staggering 46.3% is the highest youth unemployment rate we have seen, youth being ages between 15-34 years.

This requires government, business, nonprofit organisations and society to work hand in hand to find workable solutions that would lead to increased economic opportunities. One of the best places to start is through education support programmes. Thebe has a number of age-appropriate programmes that support youth in varying stages.

Thebe's Literacy and Numeracy Programme supports a total of 17, 054 learners, 16 schools and 294 teachers in the Nkangala and Gert Sibande Districts. It comprises both a language and literacy campaign, as well as a numeracy/mathematics initiative from Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) to Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 7). This approach ensures that a continuum of support is offered to both learners and teachers alike throughout the primary school years.

In 2016, the Thebe Foundation established the Dr Ej Mabuza Scholarship Fund. The programme continues to support a total of 59 students, in the current year, through bursaries at various universities across the country. To date, the Foundation has invested just over R16 million towards deserving students. The focus on education support cannot be over emphasized.

"To commemorate this day, we partnered with Ikageng, a community centre based in Soweto. Together with our partners, we are donating dignity packs for the Girl and Boy Child. Dignity packs include a pair of school shoes, sanitary pads and school socks. This is a humble contribution we are making today, our aim is to donate a total of at least 500 dignity packs to various organisation, building up to Mandela Day in July," said Lehlohonolo Chabeli, CEO of Thebe Foundation Trust.

"Today's activities commenced with a 2km walk to Hector Peterson memorial site for prayer. The centre management, its board of directors, beneficiaries and other community stakeholders participated in the walk. This is symbolic and its significance is in line with keeping

the memory of the events of June 16 1976, alive amongst our youth of today” commented Caroline Dyanti, Ikageng Founder.

Youth also requires employment and or support with their businesses. Township economies are booming and there is a lot of potential that needs to be harnessed. The Thebe Foundation further supports youth through Enterprise and Supplier Development Programmes in partnership with University of Johannesburg.

“We have supported over 300 of youth owned businesses since the inception of the programme some 5 years ago. The programme is becoming popular through our annual Thebe-UJ Business Summit where we play a role in creating market-access platform for the growing entrepreneurs,” added Mr Chabeli.

These various projects demonstrate a commitment by Thebe Foundation to continue to lend a helping hand to today’s youth as they navigate socio-economic challenges. Our role, in partnership with stakeholders, is to be a catalyst for change. This resonates with our mission of building communities, which in essence is Thebe’s bottom line.

We want to collaborate with government and business as well as society to build back better. We must make the changes today if we are to take care of our tomorrow. The next 45 years should not find us where we are as a country especially with regards to this high youth unemployment rate. Let us partner and work together to give HOPE to our future leaders.

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For more information, visit our website: www.thebefoundation.org.za