

# Speech by the City's Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille

## Mayor De Lille kicks off Youth Month at the #YouthStartCT awards

Good evening, goeie naand, molweni, as-salaam alaikum, shalom.

I could think of no better way to kick off Youth Month than all of us gathering for this wonderful occasion.

We have some of the best young entrepreneurial minds with us today.

We are here to celebrate the big dreams of the top 12 and the top three winners of the inaugural #YouthStartCT Challenge.

We also celebrate the very bright futures which lie ahead for all of them, because everyone here tonight is a winner.

As the City of Cape Town, we know that an investment in the youth is an investment into actively building and creating the kind of society that we want to live in.

We want the youth to grow up in and look forward to becoming a success in an opportunity city.

The saying goes that it takes a village to raise a child, and we believe that it takes a city to support the youth.

Within the City of Cape Town we have all hands on deck by implementing transversal youth development interventions running across the various directorates.

These are a few examples of the 107 initiatives and programmes we are running this financial year, funded by a R25 million investment by the City.

Firstly, just two weeks ago, the City's Social Development and Early Childhood Development Directorate hosted its final youth career expo for 2016 which attracted 1 800 young people and more than 30 organisations.

The unemployment crisis in our country has led to many young people losing hope.

We prioritise introducing young people to careers related to their skills and qualifications so that they are empowered to identify the key skills needed in order to embark on successful careers.

Secondly, we also have an annual workplace skills programme in place, in partnership with local tertiary institutions, where we help 300 young people get a foot in the door and prepare them for the workplace.

This on-the-job training opportunity is provided annually.

Thirdly, we run organisational capacity-building training for 500 youths from targeted organisations and structures in organisational awareness.

A fourth initiative is a special project that I implemented: a Mayoral Apprenticeship Programme within the city at the start of my term in this administration in order to invest in our residents and simultaneously remedy the skills shortage, while increasing our service delivery capacity.

We received 4 000 applications and we selected the 90 best young Capetonians from disadvantaged areas.

We paid the salaries that they have earned for the duration of the programme (which was two years) and also covered the costs of their personal protective equipment, all their tools and for the theoretical training that they received from Northlink College and False Bay College.

Today they are trained diesel mechanics, fitters, boilermakers, auto-electricians, plumbers, carpenters and bricklayers, with most of them employed by the City of Cape Town.

A fifth example is from our Safety and Security Directorate which also runs specific programmes to identify and assist youth at risk, as part of our social crime prevention strategy.

The Volunteer Youth Cadet Programme was born from the Metro Police youth camps, launched in May 2013, in order for them to receive facilitation to enhance their values and leadership skills.

We are the first metro in the country to have this programme, which started with 32 members and which has subsequently grown to 85 cadets.

When we change the life of a youth, we know that we change the life of a family, and communities are made of families.

Our Safety and Security Directorate also has School Resource Officers at the 18 most violent schools so we can ensure that gangsterism, crime and drugs do not prevent these learners from coming to school and so that the opportunities that we make available will not be in vain.

Lastly, our Corporate Services and Compliance Directorate spends R5 million on bursaries for 70 young people every single year.

Our extensive investment underscores our understanding of the difficulties faced by the youth in our country today.

We know that we are doing our part with the resources available to us, but the challenges are complex and require interventions from all stakeholders – including civil society, the private sector, and the different spheres of government.

And so I want to thank the Seed Academy, Sun International and Altech for partnering with us to make the #YouthStartCT initiative a reality.

Thank you for stepping up to the plate and acting on the social responsibility which we are all faced with.

I hope that other private sector companies will be equally inspired by the leadership which you have shown.

We have already changed the lives of 100 people through this initiative, with three lives getting an extra special head-start this evening.

I want to congratulate the top 10 for making it this far, and to congratulate the three winners in advance.

I know that we can expect great things from all of you and I look forward to watching you blaze a trail into the future.

I thank you.

God bless.