



MEDIA RELEASE

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SUCCESSFUL FIRST YOUTH SUMMIT FOR KNYSNA

Knysna Municipality hosted Knysna's inaugural Youth Summit event which took place on the 2nd and 3rd of December at the Knysna Secondary School, under the theme "The Role of Knysna Youth in shaping a sustainable future".

The aim of the summit was to create a platform for the youth to express the challenges that they are faced with in their day-to-day lives. It was also a good networking and exposure opportunity for the young people who were present.

Knysna Executive Mayor, Georlene Wolmarans spoke on the alarming concern of the country's high rate of youth unemployment. "Census estimates show that more than 3.2 million young South Africans between the ages of 15-24 are neither employed nor engaged in education or job training. According to South Africa's Labour Force Survey for the last quarter of 2013, two-thirds of all unemployed South Africans were under the age of 35."

"Under normal circumstances this is a wonderful age. You have a blank canvas and it is within your power to create the life you want for yourself. However, we know that the youth in South Africa, are facing some staggering challenges."

Representatives from the National Development Agency, Department of Education, Tourism, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Economic Development Department gave presentations. The youngsters were grouped in five different commissions to discuss various topics including, Enterprise Development, Social and Community Development, Sport Development, Skills Development and Tourism Development.

Discussions of the draft Youth Policy was also on the agenda. The municipality held Imbizos prior to the Summit in order to consult and get the views and perspectives of the youth. The municipality wants to build a credible youth structure that can work collaboratively with the Youth Desk in implementing the policy and strategies. This will be done by establishing a Youth Council in February 2016.

Ms. Wolmarans spoke about the various social issues that the youth is faced with. "The youth in the Greater Knysna area are faced with various struggles which include, unemployment, identity issues and socio-economic challenges. We have made a commitment as a municipality to make a difference – and this is the first step. This summit is not just about showing you opportunities, but a platform to meet other young people, to network, to share and to learn. Enjoy the extensive programme that has been put together for you, but most important – take part. Contribute, share and brainstorm with us."

"We need the youth. Both Knysna and the national economy need new ideas, we need people who commit to make things work, to grow, to learn rather than expecting things to be handed to them on a plate. We need innovation, determination and a generation that wants to create a better life and a thriving economy with opportunities for all. This is your time. We will do what we can to assist you to make the journey easier, but in the end, success is up to only one person – YOU", Ms Wolmarans concluded.

Caption:

Photo 1: Youngsters of the Greater Knysna attended the Youth Summit

Photo 2: Rheenendal's Percival Quina giving an inspiring address at the Youth Summit

ENDS

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