

MEDIA RELEASE

50 Mamelodi youth sponsored by UNICEF attend first course on entrepreneurial skills at Mamelodi Business Hub based at UP

PRETORIA, 2 June 2022 – Fifty aspirant youth entrepreneurs from the community are participating in the first entrepreneurial course fully funded by UNICEF at the Mamelodi Business Hub based at the University of Pretoria (UP), Mamelodi Campus.

They will be taught how to start a new business successfully during the entrepreneurial course, which started at the Mamelodi Business Hub on Tuesday, 31 May, and runs until 10 June 2022.

Professor Alex Antonites, Head of the Department Business Management at UP, said the course aims to teach potential entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs the soft skills one needs to make it in the early phase of business. “As the business world transforms, successful entrepreneurs will be, in the future, the ones that can move faster, adapt quickly, learn rapidly and embrace change effortlessly,” he said.

Prof Antonites said the programme is practical and looks at how the newest and primarily free resources and technology can be used to maximise profits during the early phases of the entrepreneurial process. “Although grounded in entrepreneurship theory, attendees don’t sit through endless hours of theoretical lectures. However, the content is relevant and practical. The classes are facilitated to teach them to use and apply the skills in real life,” he said.

Launched on 13 May, the Hub was established with UNICEF South Africa and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC).

UP Vice-Chancellor Professor Tawana Kupe said the Mamelodi Business Hub would endeavor to become a key catalyst in township revival and enhancement, focusing on entrepreneurial development and significant social impact via its focused service offerings to an array of communities in the region. This inaugural training course speaks to this goal.

Muriel Mafico, the UNICEF South Africa Deputy Representative, said it was about providing young people with the space and opportunities to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions, which is a priority in South Africa.

“This collaboration, as part of the Generation Unlimited initiative, will help young people to transform their social and economic prospects to improve their wellbeing and that of their communities, and South Africa as a whole,” said Mafico.

The training course is one of many initiatives that provide young people across the township and further afield with an opportunity to pursue their creativity and realise their ambitions to achieve entrepreneurial and social impact.

For more than a decade, the Mamelodi Business Clinic served the community, touching the lives of more than 14 000 entrepreneurs. At the relaunch, Prof Kupe said the Hub was ready to scale its activities for a more significant impact in the community and beyond.

Also at the relaunch, Shirley Machaba, the Chief Executive Officer of PwC South Africa, noted that South Africa faces many challenges in preparing for the new world of work. PwC South Africa and UNICEF, together with their delivery partners, and through best-in-class methodologies and emerging innovative technologies, are enhancing these programmes to improve the overall chances of employability and foster an entrepreneurial spirit for young and disadvantaged people between the ages of 15-24.

“Within this context, UNICEF and the University of Pretoria will be utilising the UP Mamelodi Campus to increase scale and reach in bridging the skills divide in offering youth within the community to develop entrepreneurship skills,” Machaba said.

The Mamelodi Business Hub will integrate with the mandates of the Centre for the Future of Work and the Centre for Entrepreneurship towards creating and transferring new knowledge, innovation, and the strategic trajectory of UP within a changing socio-political, economic, and higher education environment.

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on the Hatfield Campus, Pretoria. This 114-year-old institution is also the largest producer of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only University in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, ranked top in Africa. Overall has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 55 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes.

UP is one of the top five universities in South Africa, according to the 2019-2020 rankings by the Centre for World University Rankings. It is ranked among the top 100 universities worldwide in three fields of study (veterinary science, theology, and law) and the top 1% in eight fields of study (agricultural sciences, clinical medicine, engineering, environment/ecology, immunology, microbiology, plant and animal sciences and social sciences).

In May 2020, the annual UK Financial Times Executive Education Rankings again ranked GIBS as the top South African and African business school. The University also has an extensive community engagement programme with approximately 33 000 students involved in community upliftment. Furthermore, UP is building considerable capacities and strengths for the Fourth Industrial Revolution by preparing students for the world beyond University and offering work-readiness and entrepreneurship training.

For more information, go to www.up.ac.za