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Department:  
Economic Development, Environment,  
Conservation and Tourism  
North West Provincial Government  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



NWDC Building, Cnr. University  
& Provident Street, Mmabatho  
Private Bag X15  
MMABATHO 2735  
[www.nwpg.gov.za](http://www.nwpg.gov.za)

## COMMUNICATIONS & IT

Enquiries: Zia Cassim  
Tel: 083 274 1073  
Email: [cassimz@nwpg.gov.za](mailto:cassimz@nwpg.gov.za)

### **MEC Bitsa Lenkopane Inspires Young Entrepreneurs at Youth Entrepreneurship Programme**

Ms. Bitsa Lenkopane, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT), graced the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme as a guest speaker held on 07 August 2024. The event, hosted by the Young African Entrepreneurs Institute (YAEI) in collaboration with Absa South Africa, gathered aspiring entrepreneurs at the NWU - North-West University Potchefstroom Campus.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Programme is dedicated to equipping and developing young entrepreneurs within the province, providing them with the necessary tools to expand their businesses and effectively position themselves in the marketplace. This initiative is vital for fostering economic growth and job creation.

Established as a registered youth non-profit organization, the Young African Entrepreneurs Institute aims to empower the youth by offering practical skills, organized knowledge, and proactive support. The institute's mission is to facilitate a seamless transition for young individuals from entrepreneurial ideas to business startups, ultimately driving measurable impact within the community.

The collaboration between YAEI and Absa Bank serves to challenge the notion that banks exclusively prioritize partnerships with large corporations. Absa's representative highlighted the bank's commitment to supporting emerging organizations and facilitating access to funding for young entrepreneurs striving to develop their businesses.

In her address, MEC Lenkopane underscored the significance of DEDECT's involvement in such initiatives, emphasizing the importance of bridging the gap between government and the private sector. This partnership is crucial for identifying and funding economic growth programs that serve public interests.

Furthermore, she encouraged young entrepreneurs and stakeholders to collaborate and strengthen the economy collectively. MEC Lenkopane reiterated the importance of utilizing the services offered by DEDECT, which are designed to support and nurture young talent as they navigate their entrepreneurial journeys.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Programme represents a pivotal moment for young entrepreneurs in the province, fostering connections and opportunities that will propel them towards success.



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