



YOUTHS last week graduated from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's YearBeyond Academic Programme.

## 300 youths on a winning path to finding work

LAST week, 300 youths graduated from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's YearBeyond Academic Programme.

This is the first step for these young people to go on to find employment opportunities, with their new skills and work experience as a base.

The YearBeyond programme is a one-year Youth Service partnership between the Western Cape government, the Community Chest of the Western Cape, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and numerous NGOs. It aims to provide unemployed youth (aged 18 to 25) with a meaningful work experience and a pathway to further studies or work while at the same time encouraging a culture of active citizenship and volunteerism.

The initiative deploys youth to work in no-fee schools, supporting Grades 3 and 4 struggling academically with maths and literacy. The youth are allocated to a class and support the teacher during the day and provide one-on-one reading support to the learners. After formal school hours, they independently run literacy and numeracy sessions with about 10 learners at a time.

The learner and youth programme had to pivot dramatically this year due to Covid-19 outbreak. The youth development programme shifted, almost immediately, into a virtual/distant support model.

Although the 2020 YearBeyond cohort was unable to run after-school programmes after March, they continued to support teachers in the classroom and with general school needs (as lockdown permitted), and supported the use of @home learning material either through content development for parent WhatsApp groups or through demonstrations on the use of the resources for the learners.

Personal and professional development form an integral part of the programme. All YeBoneers work towards developing 12 core competencies. These competencies include professionalism, accountability, administration, teamwork, communication, leadership, project planning and management, presentation, creativity and learning, learner management, literacy and numeracy and facilitation. This year 28 youth excelled in multiple competencies and received All Star Awards for being all rounders in both the youth development programme and their work with schools.

Cultural Affairs and Sport MEC Anroux Marais expressed her pride in the 300 youth who completed this year: "It has been an extremely tough year and it is heartening to see that these young people were not daunted by their circumstances, made so much more challenging by the pandemic. They took on the challenge, found ways to continue contributing during the time and through innovation, provided an important support service to our learners and teachers in the province. I wish them all the very best as they now continue with their journey to become economically active and help our economy to recover after this year."

A total of 280 of the graduates completed exit surveys, which show that 46% have secured their next working opportunity, with the majority staying in the education sector. Some 24% of the graduates have indicated they will be starting higher education studies next year, with others still waiting on acceptances.

The 2021 cohort will be recruited in January and February 2021. For more information and details on the programme, see [www.yearbeyond.org](http://www.yearbeyond.org)

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