

NEWS BULLETIN

SALESIAN INSTITUTE YOUTH PROJECTS STITCH AHEAD PROGRAMME EMPOWERS 15 PHENOMENAL WOMEN



Cape Town - The Salesian Institute Youth Projects (SIYP) Stitch Ahead Programme celebrated another remarkable milestone. On September 15th, fifteen youth females graduated after completing a 3-month sewing course funded by the National Development Agency (NDA). These skilled individuals are now poised to embark on an exciting new career venture to reach their entrepreneurial endeavours.

The Stitch Ahead Programme is meticulously crafted to empower women between the ages of 18 and 35, providing them with vital hand and machine sewing skills. Notably, the curriculum also includes training on sewing reusable sanitary pads - a pivotal step in addressing the prevalent issue of period poverty that affects many women in our society. Upon graduation, each participant received an exit kit that equips them with essential tools to kickstart their entrepreneurial journey. This kit includes fabrics and haberdashery items, enabling them to craft their initial products for sale.

Since its inception in 2022, the Stitch Ahead Programme has consistently celebrated the accomplishments of its participants, epitomizing the Salesian Institute Youth Projects' unwavering commitment to offering hope and opportunities to those living on the fringes of society. The sustenance of these programmes relies on ongoing fundraising endeavours, with the latest cohort receiving invaluable support from the National Development Agency.

"Statistics continue to show us that youth unemployment numbers are extremely high throughout the country. It is against this backdrop that the NDA supports economic development and job creation opportunities for the youth sector so that they can improve their livelihoods and of the communities they reside in. We wish the ladies well on their journey and together with Salesian Institute, we will continue to monitor their progress," says Mr Ardiel Soeker, NDA Western Cape Provincial Manager.

The culmination of the course is marked by a business development segment. Here, participants delve into further learning, honing their skills in brand creation, logo design, letterhead development, and digital business card creation. Additionally, they explore various digital platforms that empower them to market and operate small businesses successfully. This cohort of participants received entrepreneurial and business coaching, courtesy of Company Partners, a company specializing in providing compliance services to a multitude of startup businesses. These services were generously offered to the Salesian Institute Youth Projects at no cost, to benefit this group of attendees.

A graduate, Ms Thoko Rini says, "I am hoping to achieve a lot because I was at home for 3 years doing nothing. I now have a qualification that enables me to make and sell clothes." Another graduate, Ms Andrea Williams on being part of the programme says,

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“It means so much because I never knew I could be so creative. My journey does not end at Salesian Institute, I will now open my own business or go to any factory to use the skills I have, which I did not have before starting this programme.”

Fr Francois Dufour, CEO of SIYP, expressed his gratitude, stating, "We extend our deepest gratitude to the resolute funders and supporters who have been instrumental in our journey."

The Salesian Institute Youth Projects extends a heartfelt appeal to potential funders for future cohorts to invest in the youth,

not only by providing funding for the programme's continuation but also by offering employment opportunities. By doing so, we can collectively combat unemployment and contribute to the construction of a more robust and prosperous nation. Some of the graduates from the programme are already making strides in the job market.

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