

## 2023 FNB Youth Start-up Accelerator calls for entries

Entries have opened for the second year of the FNB Youth Start-up Accelerator (YSA) Programme, which is partnership with Fetola. The programme provides mentorship, training, and support to young, committed, first-time entrepreneurs.



Heather Lowe, SME development head at FNB | image supplied

The YSA programme is a one-year programme designed to help young aspiring entrepreneurs grow and develop their business ideas.

Aimed at unemployed youth, and aspiring entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 35, each year the programme teaches 100 young innovators the skills needed to develop their business ideas and get their enterprises off the ground.

The pilot cohort was initiated in 2022 and saw participants learn foundational business skills, take part in a group mentorship process, and receive investment readiness support and a small startup grant.

In the second phase of the programme, 50 entrepreneurs were selected to engage with mentors and in job shadowing, receive financial management, costing, marketing, and brand-building training and support, to build the viability of their

business ideas.

Heather Lowe, SME development head at FNB, explains:

“In a persistently difficult macroeconomic environment, the most potentially impactful approach is to create an ecosystem that is supportive of young entrepreneurs. There is no shortage of talent or ideas among our youth. But South Africa still has a long way to go before we have an ecosystem that promotes entrepreneurship at a national scale. The YSA programme aims to streamline the pathway from idea to execution and support entrepreneurship as well as entrepreneurs. This programme addresses some of the biggest barriers facing young entrepreneurs: a lack of key business skills, access to mentors and the opportunity to test out their business ideas.”

Busisiwe Bebeza, programme manager at Fetola, says:

“Youth unemployment is not just an economic crisis, it is a social and personal one. Persistent unemployment can be frustrating and demoralising. We want to demonstrate, through this programme, that finding a job is not the only way to achieve economic participation and success. Entrepreneurial activity is highest amongst people aged 25 to 35, indicating that this is a critical age group to target with interventions. We want to inspire our youth to dream of a better future, and to equip them with the skills that will help them build a better South Africa.”

### **If you:**

- Are between the ages of 18 and 35
- Have a business that is at least 51% Black-owned, younger than six months, and with an annual turnover not exceeding R1m, or you are an individual with a unique idea for a business
- Are passionate, resilient, and driven

Find out more or apply online by visiting Fetola's [website](#).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>