

HELPING YOUTH TO GROW

Forum empowers youngsters with skills

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ONE of the best ways to help young people cope with the world is to help them obtain the basic, yet most vital survival tool – knowledge.

While countless youths loiter the streets almost aimlessly, with some being sucked into the crime and criminality cauldron, a few seek knowledge, particularly information aimed at making them employable, and even having the means and power to be self-employed and employ others.

One of the community and youth development organisations helping to empower youths to make our streets safe and brighten South Africa's future is the South African Black Entrepreneurs Forum (Sabef).

This youth-led organisation promotes, inspires and enhances entrepreneurship to attain poverty alleviation, job creation and economic growth, and counts *Sowetan* – through the Aggrey Klaaste Nation Building Foundation – as one of its staunch backers.

Business personalities who have supported Sabef's networking, developmental and empowerment and motivational projects include Ndaba Ntsele, Sibusiso "DJ Sbu" Leope, Bonke Shipalana, Ipeleg Mkhari, Keith Kunene, Tim Tebeila, Andrew Honey and Malik Fal. Business development organisations that have lent a hand include the



PATHFINDER: South African Black Entrepreneurs Forum's Lebo Gunguluza

Small Enterprise Development Agency, National Empowerment Fund and the Khula Development Fund.

Lebo Gunguluza, one of Sabef's founding leaders, says the forum seeks to give young aspirant entrepreneurs the platform on which to discuss business ideas, pitch business ideas and learn how to craft winning business plans,

access funding and establish thriving businesses. Events aimed at attaining sound foundations for the youth include:

- A business leadership club due to be held in Cape Town on April 20, May 25, August 24 and November 9, and in Johannesburg on March 30, May 6, August 11 and September 8;
- An SMME funding and enterprise development convention, in Johannesburg on April 10, East London on June 5, Durban on July 24, Bloemfontein on September 18, and in Cape Town on October 2;
- A great lessons from successful entrepreneurs seminar will take place in Johannesburg on November 16;
- A pitching chamber will take place in Soweto on November 20;
- And, the SA Black Entrepreneurs Awards will take place in Durban on October 28.

Preliminaries of the Sabef Pitching Chamber – which will start in April and culminate in the finals in November – feature young aspirant entrepreneurs presenting their business ideas and plans to established business people.