ORACLE pledges support to the Youth Innovation Challenge for 2016.

The launch of 2016 Youth Innovation Challenge was held at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban this week. The Youth Innovation Challenge is an annual programme which is part of the Innovate Durban initiative in which Durban partners with the following organisations: International Labour Organisation, Flanders State of the Art and the Durban Chamber of Commerce. This year, the eThekwini Municipality has partnered with Oracle as the main sponsor. The Sustainable Enterprise Development Facility for South Africa (SEDF) is an initiative of the International Labour Organization, made possible through funding from the Flanders government. The objective is to create decent jobs for men and women through enterprise promotion.

First up to welcome delegates was the Deputy Mayor Tshabalala, who spoke authoritatively on the upcoming Innovate initiatives. The purpose of the Youth Innovation Challenge is to create a platform for innovation to thrive in eThekwini by empowering its citizens, more specifically the youth, to become innovative in their communities. A long term objective is that this initiative will lead to economic growth and job creation. The aim of the Innovation Challenge is to provide a platform for knowledge-sharing, capacity building and technology-based economic and social development.

Eric Apelgren from the eThekwini Municipality delivered an excellent portrayal of the vibrant city of Durban and concluded with this emotive video https://youtu.be/FNrPITxpX3Y

Greg Arde, Editor of Spice magazine gave the keynote address and raised relevant points around the themes that had been chosen for 2015's Innovation Challenge. His particularly interest was homelessness and strategies to combat it that the city could adopt. The 5 challenge areas identified as themes in 2015 by eThekwini were: Water conservation, Skills devt and databases, Port maaagement, Heritage museum awareness and Safety in the city.

Kholiwe Makhohliso, Country Manager from Oracle SA spoke about the objectives of the Youth Innovation Challenge and outlined Oracle's commitment to the various components of the programme particularly the CodeFest. Entries open on February 1st and close on March 16th he Codefest component of the Youth Innovation Challenge is driven by Oracle with the aim of equipping youth with the skills to develop mobile applications to solve business challenges. Here are the details:
• 5 day programme for 100 successful applicants using a variety of skills and technology to address business challenges
• Targeted at school leavers (ages 18 – 35 years old)
• Applicants to enter in teams of 4-5 people
• Individuals with no pre-existing team are welcome to apply and will be placed in a team upon registration
• Applicants to have prior programming knowledge/experience or at least 2 programmers per team – specifically using JAVA
technology.
• Applicants to bring their own laptop to the Codefest
• Selection of applicants to be determined by criteria of the Youth Innovation Challenge Committee
• A 'blog' will be set up for confirmed participants/teams to access information on the challenges and commence with the
IDEATION phase
• Prizes for winning teams Driven by Oracle with the aim of equipping youth with the skills to develop mobile applications to solve business challenges.
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There were presentations from other partners, the government of Flanders and the Durban Chamber of Commerce. Then the really interesting presentations were from two winners of the 2015 awards, pictured above. They provided key learnings and secrets to their respective successes which consisted mainly of networking, problems solving and collaboration. Their innovation was creating an app for skills development that lists qualifications, expertise and experience of artisans and domestic workers which was searchable by area. They were grateful for the subsequent internship programme which they called 'Aftercare". They said it was not necessary to be a coder because teams also needed members with business skills to balance the skills.

Aurelia Jacobs, the driver of Innovation Challenge outlined the rules of the competition and showed a video of the 2015 Innovation Challenge, which gave a great feel of the event and its objectives https://youtu.be/XmagsMsccis The most memorable quotation from this video was from one of the participants who observed, "This is different from College. This is like life. You are actually in the mix." As any good teacher knows, selecting authentic challenges is key to the success of the Innovation Challenge. One of the participants noted that the satisfaction came from seeing that you had solved a problem and devised an implementable solution.

She also provided the calendar below as a guide to deadlines for the respective components of the 2016 Youth Innovation Challenge:

2016 CALENDAR

Launch	25 January	Applications Open for enterPRIZE Challenge	13 May
Registrations Open for Codefest	1 February	Deadline for enterPRIZE Challenge Applications	15 June
Deadline for Codefest Registration	16 March	enterPRIZE Challenge Presentations	27 June
Codefest Mandatory Pre-event Briefing and Fun Training Sessions	8-9 April	Innovation Summit	7-8 July
Codefest	21-23 April	Innovation Challenge Awards	8 July
Business Planning Workshop	10 May		

For more information visit the website
http://innovate.durban.gov.za/YouthInnovationChallenge/Pages/default.aspx