

### ***SUMMER GLOBAL YOUTH FORUM 2021 (feedback)***

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Agbiz and Business Unity South Africa for allowing me to participate in the Summer Global Youth Forum (SGYF) which resumed on 02 August 2021 and concluded on 22 August 2021 (3 weeks). The Summer Global Youth forum was an online programme for university students, graduates and young professionals that are interested in pursuing an international and or a local career to accelerate SDG achievement.

The Summer Global Youth Forum primarily focused on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG synergies throughout the three weeks duration of the programme. In my view, the programme was a true eye-opener because it challenged my thinking and encouraged me to apply my mind concerning the development and unemployment social issues. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2021), the unemployment status amongst unemployed youth has the highest rating to date. It is worthy to note that the youth unemployment rate in South Africa is the highest when compared to the rest of the world. The findings to me were like a hard pill to swallow because this suggests that youth unemployment, in general, is an area of concern. The programme was, however, designed not only to support youth-seeking employment opportunities but also to go an extra mile to encourage the youth to explore entrepreneurship. Moreover, we were taught the importance of self-employment and the benefits and opportunities therein.

President Ramaphosa said “*unemployment is a national crisis in South Africa*”. This is unfortunately where we are as a country and though the SGYF will not change that at one go, it teaches business management and how one can go about achieving the SDGs through project management. It gives young people skills on how to tackle the real-world issue. My project titled *I Am Able Too* was based on four SDG goals with SDG 10 (*reduced inequalities*) being the main focus of my project and it interlinked with SDG 4 (*quality education*), SDG 8 (*decent jobs*) and SDG 17 (*partnerships*) and it addressed fair treatment and inclusion of people with disability in the workspace. The SGYF supported the project and went as far as helping to identify relevant and suitable partners that will run the programme should there arise a need to continue with the project.

Furthermore, the project was also designed to accommodate individuals with different interests as it had a social track, which deals with social issues, policy development and analysis. The environmental track also dealt with various environmental issues experienced, the impact of the corona virus on the environment and lastly, the economic track addressed employment issues, business development, job creation for job seekers, problem-solving and soft skills development. In the programme, the following were offered, namely: various soft skills, presentations and types of digital education that can empower youth and grant them an advantage against the conventional way of doing things

I highly recommend this programme to any employer that requires changed mindsets in their workplace because it broadens one’s line of thought, develops skills and helps in decision making. Furthermore, it builds up one’s confidence and teaches the behaviour of individuals in the workspace. Some agribusinesses have already adopted the SDG in their business. I can safely recommend this programme to employers that want to have succession plans for their youth.