

Cyril Ramaphosa Education Trust is inspiring in enabling young people to fulfil their potential

Cyril Madiba is living his dream of being a chartered accountant. From a background in rural KwaZulu Natal, “where people struggled to make ends meet” he says, he went on to study for undergraduate and honours degrees in accounting on a full bursary from the Cyril Ramaphosa Education Trust (CRET). In 2020 Cyril was a South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) “Top 35 under 35” finalist and is pursuing a successful career in the banking industry.

Cyril’s very name exemplifies active citizenship, and he is an example of the caring and socially committed individuals that CRET helps produce. His contribution to society goes beyond his role in his professional career. Cyril is involved with a number of youth development initiatives, including as Chair of CRET’s alumni advisory board. The alumni donate to a bursary fund of their own and to date have supported two students through to graduation.

“CRET provided much needed support for me and others when our dreams of obtaining key qualifications seemed in jeopardy,” Cyril says. “That drives me to give back.”

The Executive Director of CRET, Chantelle Oosthuizen, paid tribute to young people on this 45th anniversary of the 16 June 1976 uprising. “We honour young people who time and again have shown themselves as the conscience of society and the drivers of change. This has been as activists in social movements, volunteers in community



Drone pilot training.



Licensed driver training to improve work prospects.

development organisations, and workers in the institutions of society. CRET is committed to enabling young people to fulfil their potential and to contribute to the well-being of society,” she says.

CRET, a Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation partner entity, implements a holistic bursary support and youth development programme and is reaping inspiring and heart-warming results. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported for higher education study and vocational training. The support is based on the potential of candidates and not just on academic performance. This results in the support of students who would ordinarily be overlooked by other bursary programmes that seek out top achievers only. CRET believes all young people should be supported to fulfil themselves.

In partnership with corporate sponsors, CRET provides:

- financial support, including a personal allowance;
- academic support that includes tuition, accommodation, books and stationery;
- mentorship and psychosocial support; and
- career guidance, work-readiness development, including licenced-driver training, and work experience opportunities.

Holistic student support is vital, Chantelle says, not least because of the need to ensure that there is a return on investment.

“The drop-out rate in tertiary study is high in South Africa and support needs to go beyond the bursary to cater for the overall well-being of students – especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on education and young people.”

Cyril agrees. “CRET gave so much more. They gave support from an emotional and mental perspective. They exposed me to mentorship. Every holiday in June and July, we would meet with chartered accountants, pick their brain and ask them questions. We were taken to actual workplaces.”

CRET positively brims with inspiring stories. In 2020, CRET piloted a partnership with The Academy of Aviation to train 11 unemployed matriculants, who were at a loss in options for their futures, in tourism and aviation careers. Ten of the group have since graduated and have received their Civil Aviation Authority licenses. By December of 2020, the group had completed CRET-funded internships at Lanseria International Airport and ExecuJet Aviation Group.

They are thrilled at the change in their life prospects and are pursuing promising careers. Similarly, CRET is this year supporting 10 students to undertake Drone Pilot Training. Two hundred young people have also been supported in agricultural development training, and one is being trained as an electrician and one in firefighting. As at December 2020, CRET had supported 295 young people since its inception in 1996.

“As we commemorate 16 June 1976 and honour our youth,” Chantelle says, “we call on the business community to join with us in investing in our future, to send forth skilled and talented visionaries into the world; to eradicate youth unemployment; to break the cycle of generational poverty; to build a culture of paying it forward; and to change the futures of individuals, communities and our country.”



Cyril Madiba, Chairperson of the CRET alumni advisory board.

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