

Cape Town, South Africa – Silulo Foundation Entrepreneurship Empowerment Program

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

Venue: Silulo Foundation & University of the Western Cape's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI)

a. Introduction to the City, Distinctive Aspects and Demographics

Cape Town, located in the Western Cape province of South Africa, is a city of stark contrasts. Known globally for its natural beauty and cultural diversity, it is also marked by deep socio-economic divides shaped by its apartheid past. The city is home to over 4.8 million people, with a significant portion living in under-resourced communities such as Khayelitsha, Dunoon, and Mitchells Plain. These communities face high unemployment, limited access to quality education, and limited digital connectivity, particularly among youth and women.

b. Overview of the Local Economy

Regional Assets: Cape Town is a hub for tourism, agriculture, retail, and increasingly, technology and innovation. It boasts leading universities, a growing tech start-up sector, and access to global markets via its port and airport.

The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Cape Town has a dynamic and evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem. Support comes from incubators, accelerators, government initiatives, and grassroots organizations. However, many aspiring entrepreneurs in township communities lack access to capital, training, and markets. This is where organizations like Silulo Foundation play a key role—bridging the gap between informal township entrepreneurship and the broader economy.

c. The Poverty and Disadvantage Challenge in the City

While Cape Town is economically active, inequality remains a critical issue. Townships such as Dunoon face high levels of unemployment (especially among youth aged 18-35), poor infrastructure, and limited access to skills development opportunities. Digital exclusion and limited formal employment pathways further compound the cycle of poverty. Many residents operate in the informal economy out of necessity, not opportunity.

d. Introduction to Your Poverty and Entrepreneurship Program

Name of the Program: Silulo Foundation Entrepreneurship Empowerment Program

Who You Are Serving (Demographics): Entrepreneurs from under-resourced communities such as Dunoon, Khayelitsha, and surrounding townships.

Who Runs the Program / Governance Structure: The program is run by Silulo Foundation, led by Aqhama and as from July I will be leading a cohort in Khayelitsha. The COO and Program Manager oversee day-to-day implementation, supported by the rest of the team.

Annual Cycle: The program runs in multiple cohorts per year, with intakes in February and July. Each cycle includes 10 weeks of business development bootcamps, the rest of the months we focus on mentorship, and exposure opportunities.

Unique Aspects of Your Approach:

- Holistic development model: entrepreneurship + personal development.
- Bootcamps have caliber of guest speakers and facilitators we bring in. We host:
 - Industry experts from sectors such as finance, retail, tech, and social enterprise
 - Established entrepreneurs who have successfully scaled their businesses in township or South African markets
 - Partners and funders who share real-world advice on access to capital, procurement, and navigating business ecosystems
- Strong emphasis on practical application.
- Community-based hubs where participants learn and network.
- Partnerships with banks and corporates for market access and funding readiness.
- The "80 Steps" Entrepreneurship Framework:
 - helping participants progress from idea to action to sustainability.
- Social media as a visibility and engagement tool:
 - We actively use platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to:
 - Showcase graduate success stories
 - Promote local role models
 - Attract funders and partners
 - Increase youth engagement and program uptake
- University Collaboration – UWC CEI Student Consulting Partnership:
 - Silulo Foundation has partnered with the University of the Western Cape's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI). As part of their academic consulting module, UWC students work with our entrepreneurs to:
 - Refine business models
 - Provide marketing and financial strategies
 - Strengthen business operations

- This partnership offers mutual value:
 - students gain real-world experience, while our entrepreneurs benefit from academic insight and innovation.

e. Where You Hope to Take the Program:

The vision is to scale the program across multiple communities in the Western Cape and eventually nationally. We aim to establish more Silulo hubs that act as safe, accessible learning and incubation spaces for aspiring entrepreneurs. Additionally, we hope to deepen impact by launching a seed funding mechanism for program graduates. Long-term, our goal is to shift township economies from survivalist entrepreneurship to sustainable, scalable ventures led by young, empowered South Africans.

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