

Innovation and Creativity: Inspiring the Next Generation in the Ethekwini Municipality

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Abstract : Innovation is not always born in a sterile lab or is not always about applications and technology. Innovative solutions to community challenges can be borne out of the creativity of community members. This was proven by Professor Anil Gupta who for more than two decades scoured rural India for its hidden innovations motivated by the belief that the most powerful ideas for fighting poverty and hardship will not come from corporate research labs, but from ordinary people struggling to survive. The Ethekwini Municipality is a city in South Africa which adopted a similar approach, recognising the innovativeness of youth (students and school pupils) in its area. The intention was to make the youth a part of the solution to challenges faced by the Municipality. In this regard, five areas were selected and five groups of students were identified. Each group was sent into the community to identify challenges and engage with community leaders as well as members. Each group was tasked to come with solutions to these challenges which were to be presented at an Innovation Summit. The presented solutions were judged and the winning solution would be implemented by the Municipality. This paper, documents the experience of the students as well as the kinds of solutions that were presented. The purpose is to highlight the importance of using the ingenious minds and creativity of youth and channel their energy into becoming part of society's solutions as opposed to being the problem

Keywords : innovation, indigenous, entrepreneurship, community

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