

Absa commits to getting things done for those who are ready

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Younger populations are usually considered an economic gift for countries. When the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share, there is usually a boost in economic productivity, referred to as a demographic dividend.



If sub-Saharan Africa takes advantage of this economic gift and can provide its expanding workforce with skills and jobs, the World Economic Forum estimates it could add up to \$500bn per year to its economies for up to 30 years – the equivalent of one-third of Africa's GDP.

The continent is at a tipping point where the skills and potential of its youth should be honed and guided to see Africa leapfrog and flourish. But if Africa's young people are further neglected, their frustration and feelings of exclusion will backfire and damage the fibre of our society.

Enabling Africa's youth to overcome the challenges they face and turn them into an asset that could drive growth, and contribute to their communities, is only possible if they are given access to the resources they need. And right now, they're being left behind through poor quality education, and limited opportunities to be gainfully employed.

"They don't need brands who are all talk. They need an ally to support them. With the 'Here for the Ready' campaign we are calling out to those who are ready to learn, work, grow, change, rise and participate. It is time for brands to stop talking and start doing to create a world where we can all flourish."

"The campaign is saying we are more than a bank. We want to play a shaping role in helping Africa achieve its possibility. Absa is saying if you are ready, then we are here to work with you to get things done; things that will bring your possibility to life," says Jenny Moore, head of brand and design at Absa Group.



The campaign is being launched through a TV advertisement that demonstrates the spirit of the initiative in its production methods. It was filmed entirely in Johannesburg, at a selection of venues that looks pan-African, and the crew used far less equipment and far more affordable tools than usual. The result is world class and proves that the barriers to entry can be slashed to allow talented and determined youngsters to gain a foothold in the creative economy.

The filming and production process also demonstrated the 'Ready to' ethos by bringing a young photographer onto the set to be mentored and gain important skills and networking opportunities to boost her fledgeling career. The images she captured on set will be used on the social media and outdoor components of the campaign.

Creative director Kyle Schoeman of Grid Worldwide hopes young people who see the advert will feel inspired and curious to learn how Absa can help them realise their own dreams and ambitions. They can learn more by watching additional content that will be pushed out on social media, giving extra information about the support, and training that Absa is offering.

"The great thing is that you don't even have to be an Absa customer to engage with the opportunities, because if you're ready, Absa wants to help you," Schoeman says. "This campaign recognises that the youth are ready and determined and just need a little help."



A key proof point of the campaign is the launch of the new Absa ReadytoWork mobile app. The aim is to encourage as many young people as possible to download the app and start building important life skills that will help them enter the

workplace or start generating an income for themselves as entrepreneurs.

“That’s the first step in alleviating poverty and starting to close the gap – by including more people in our economy,” Moore says. “The Absa ReadytoWork app brings the much sought-after softer skills into the mix that young people don’t get taught at school, empowering them to get ready for the workplace. If we can change the trajectory of their lives, that makes the whole programme worthwhile.”

Through the app, young people can:

- Complete the four modules that cover essential money, work, people and entrepreneurial skills.
- Use the CV template to create a CV that will put them head and shoulders above their competition.
- Search for their dream job by connecting with recruiters via the job’s portal.
- Connect with like-minded individuals on the chat feature.
- Watch insightful webinars by various experts and leaders.

As well as the app, the campaign also sees Absa supporting initiatives around environmental sustainability, financial education, leadership development, skills training and gender equality.

“Adverts produced for banks typically talk about aiming for a bright, shiny future and paint a picture of the ideal paint brushed end goal, but they don’t address the now,” Moore says. “It’s no good talking about one day, or ifs and maybes. Everything should be geared towards acting now, finding creative, innovative solutions and opening up opportunities now, and that’s the message we want to land with this campaign.”

“We’re saying, ‘what can we do now to help you bring your possibility to life?’ We are looking at the journey and investing in solutions that will help you overcome the obstacles along the way,” she concludes.