

# African Leadership Academy Campus Opened in Gauteng

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About 250 of the most promising students from the African continent will undergo an innovative two-year leadership training at the newly opened African Leadership Academy (ALA) in Gauteng.

Gauteng MEC for Finance and Economic Affairs, Paul Mashatile, unveiled the academy that will open its doors in September 2008 to students between the ages of 15 and 18 years who will be chosen from all 54 African countries purely on academic merit.

Students will complete a curriculum that will focus on leadership, entrepreneurship and African studies. Students will also be familiarised with current African challenges, for which they must formulate solutions.

Mashatile said the Gauteng Provincial Government is happy to be associated with the establishment of such an academy, which will develop the next generation of leaders.

"Young people are a valuable human resource capital and the provincial government welcomes this sustainable solution to developing Africa's leaders. Our continent has too many managers and therefore we must give young people skills to be employable leaders," said Mashatile.

The MEC added that the provincial government would increase skills development in young people through the Human Resource Development strategy.

"The strategy will focus on improving skills for unemployed youth to enable them to get employment, improve the foundation of education so that more employable graduates are produced from Gauteng-based tertiary institutions and develop SMMEs and survivalist enterprises for a sustainable future. Our dream is to develop a generation of leaders that will develop the African continent," the MEC concluded.

Since the ALA was founded in 2004 by a team of educators, entrepreneurs and corporate executives, the Academy has moved from strength to strength. It received about R7 million funding from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) of South Africa in March 2007 towards the launch of the academy in Gauteng.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer Fred Swaniker said the ALA would have trained at least 6 000 African leaders in the next 50 years.

"We believe that each individual we train has the capability to change African leadership. Our students will receive inspiration from leaders in business who will engage them in discussions of leadership and entrepreneurship through our short seminars. These leaders will learn the value of public service that will move communities forward," said Swaniker.

Students will be housed in the academy's boarding campus in Honeydew, north of Johannesburg that has the capacity to accommodate 250 boarding students. It boasts a 350 seat auditorium, computer laboratories, sport fields, a faculty common room and a house for the dean of students and his family.

The closing date for applications is 30 November 2007 and admissions will be based solely on merit, with students experiencing financial difficulties being awarded scholarships. Upon completion of the two-year course, which include a matric qualification, students can further their studies in related fields with some of the best universities in Africa and the world.