

Motivate, innovate, HIP2B² encourages teenagers

TNA Reporter

SOUTH Africans are lagging sadly behind in the field of science, maths and technology.

In the 2010 World Economic Forum rankings, South Africa is ranked 130 out of 139 countries in overall education; and 137 out of 139 for quality in maths and science education.

The HIP2B² 3M Innovation Challenge is designed to address this deficit by encouraging young people to focus on these fields. The inaugural challenge took place in Pinetown and Cape Town last week and moved to Johannesburg yesterday.

The KZN leg involved Grade 10 pupils from 25 disadvantaged KZN communities competing to be among South Africa's top young innovators against pupils from Gauteng and the Western Cape.

The challenge is the brainchild of HIP2B² and innovative multinational technology company 3M, and focuses on improving everyday life through innovation.

Teams must identify a real problem that affects them, their family or community – from how to simplify everyday chores to how to stay safe – and must then propose a solution in which sci-



SEE ME: Khetiwe Mabaso, 17, from Lindelane, models a reflective jacket made during the HIP2B² 3M Innovation Challenge.

Picture: ROGAN WARD

ence and maths are applied.

The five teams that make it into the final will job shadow in the industry during the September school holidays and will present

their projects and prototypes to a mentor for input and guidance.

The participants are exposed to science and engineering-related careers. They will return to 3M

headquarters in Johannesburg on October 18 for the Innovation Challenge Final, where judges will award one team the prestigious SA Young Innovators 2011 title.



INNOVATE: Mbali Shez, 16, from Ntuzuma, listens intently to a brief during the competition.

Picture: ROGAN WARD

“The need for a skilled technology workforce is particularly great in South Africa, and can only be addressed through creating a culture of intellectual curiosity,” said Serita Esselaar, 3M manager, corporate services.

“We are closely aligned with HIP2B²'s inspirational quest to awaken the innovator in South African pupils through changing perceptions of maths and science and encouraging them to continue with these studies to matric

and beyond, Esselaar said.

“We want to see the project ultimately feeding the pipeline of scarce skills in the fields of engineering and technology, changing public perceptions of these fields and encouraging pupils to look to them as possible career choices.”

HIP2B² reaches a national audience of over 1.7 million high school pupils through an interactive platform of touchpoints, including its award-winning magazine,

website, digital radio station Facebook, MXit and Champion programme.

“The HIP2B² 3M Innovation Challenge is the perfect opportunity for HIP2B² to work alongside our country's youth and inspire them to realise that, with the application of maths and science, they can make a positive contribution and difference in their own communities,” HIP2B² general manager Cathryn Treasure, said. – 701198