



Ecco Chamber

FORTNIGHTLY ITALIAN NEWS MADE IN
SOUTH AFRICA

Our Future, Our Present, Our Past

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Chamber's Note

Our Future, Our Present, Our Past

It may be a cliché to say that the youth is our future. But that does not make it any less true. In fact, it is particularly true in South Africa, where the population swell constitutes those currently between the ages of zero and thirty-four. Population growth is expected to decrease by 2050, by which time the youth will have shrunk in proportion. Currently, however, South Africa has a population of which more than 63% is under the age of 34. Thus the youth, who are without a doubt our future, are also our present.

It is also safe to say that the youth are our history. How can this be possible? It is made possible by the fact that history is constantly rewritten. When the facts of the past are viewed from a new perspective, history changes. More than 50% of the country is below the age of 27. (In comparison, the median age in Italy is 47) What this means is that the majority of our country never experienced Apartheid. This so-called born-free generation grapples with many new challenges which are likely to shape politics and social dynamics in the years to come, the first glimpses of which may have been viewed in the student protests of 2015 and 2016.

The often-cited high youth unemployment is a deep problem that is increasingly looking like one that the youth will have to resolve themselves. One such way for young people to resolve this problem themselves is to wait on no one to provide them with a job and instead to start businesses themselves. It would be naïve, however, to think that this is simply a matter of willpower. It is vital that young people are given access to resources such as skills, land, finance, and capital so that the large youth population constitutes a strength and not a weakness within our society.

In the small pizza slice that constitutes the Italian-South African section of our society, of over 50.000 Italian passport holders living in SA, some interesting trends seem apparent. While older Italian-South Africans were typically 1st or 2nd generation immigrants who spoke Italian as a first language, the new generation is made up mostly of people born, schooled, and graduated in South Africa.

Moreover, while the previous generations were largely made -up of Italian family businesses, the new generation is made up for a large part by working professionals. The Italian Chamber wishes to approach this change in two simultaneous ways. The first is to open up the Chamber to participation from working professionals. We see it as a great opportunity for the Chamber to act as a nucleus where young Italians are able to offer their skills. Furthermore, the new membership of the *Giovani Italo Sud Africani* means more young Italian South Africans attending our cross-generational networking events.

The second is to encourage the creation of businesses by young Italians by providing them with exposure and even purchasing their products and services where possible. In 2017, we awarded Gianluca Abela of Nutrifit, the award for Young Entrepreneur of the Year and we are constantly on the lookout for other young entrepreneurs to acknowledge. As our youth grow, we are confident that they will be able to not only fill the shoes of their parents but even take further strides into the future.

Italcham!



Welcoming our New Member



The Giovani Italo Sudafricani is also known as the Italian Youth Association was the brainchild of the Italian Consul General in 2003. The association is comprised of members from 18 to 35 years of age encompassing various racial, political, and religious spheres marrying the idea of “la dolce vita” with a proudly South African flare. The GIS operates as a non-profit entity with various events, charity drives, and business relationships aimed at uplifting the local Italian community.

Welcome to Italcham!!