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NORTH-EAST BUSINESS NEWS

North-East youngsters encouraged to bid for photographic careers on Nelson Mandela backed project



By Owen McAteer

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A NELSON Mandela endorsed project to help disadvantaged South African youngsters build photographic careers is to be introduced in the North-East this week.

The Wembley to Soweto initiative saw eight teenagers from Soweto trained by internationally renowned photographer John Cole, with the participants going on to find work or win places on courses.

As the images they produced from the 2010 World Cup are displayed at Newcastle United's game against Liverpool on Sunday two disadvantaged teenagers from the North-East will be given the opportunity to take part in a UK version.

Mr Cole will work with the youngsters for the day as they are given access to Newcastle United's ground to take photographs of events.

The work they produce will then be displayed alongside the Wembley to Soweto project images at the Olympics in London.

The aim of the project is to give disadvantaged young people who would normally not have the chance of engaging in this type of activity, a viable career

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path.

A spokesman for the project, run by UK based Wilton Pictures, said: "We are appealing for youngsters in the North-East region who want to be photographers, but who might feel they are socially disadvantaged in some way from doing so.

"We are going to give them that lift, the aim is to get two youngsters aged 16 or 17 and give them access all areas on Sunday.

"With what is happening on Sunday it is going to be great for pictures and great for the youngsters CVs."

Wilton Pictures founder David Westhead said: " It's been hugely satisfying to see the difference that can be made with a relatively small budget but lots of hard work and dedication.

"To be honest, when John Cole and I set out to run the course, we hoped a couple of the students might make a few quid taking wedding photos and the like but the fact they are now working for the United Nations, the government, and taking portraits of some of the world's best-known actors shows what can be achieved by talented youngsters.

"Photography is now a way of life for these kids, and a way to make a life."

One of the Soweto youngsters Thapelo Motsumi, who is now a professional photographer, will be at the ground on Sunday to receive a Newcastle United shirt to give to Nelson Mandela.

Mr Mandela and his grandson Kweku have supported the project.

Kweku Mandela said: "When my grandfather saw the work of these students he remarked, "they are so young, and yet so deeply talented."

Thapelo Motsumi said: "I have learnt that to achieve anything you have to know what your goal is and then need to keep working to perfect your skill."

Any youngsters wishing to take part on Sunday should email Ian@keithbishopassociates.com

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