



ERLN Practice Guide 8

Youth employment

Strategies and programmes for advancing youth employment

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INSIDE

Introduction	2
Importance of youth employment issues for economic regions.....	2
Overview of youth employment strategies	3
Summary of youth employment initiatives.....	5
Lessons and success factors.....	9
Questions to consider.....	10

Introduction

Persistent high levels of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, is one of the most important economic development challenges facing South Africa today. More than a quarter of the labour force are out of work and most of this unemployment is long-term. Significantly, young people bear the brunt facing higher levels of unemployment than other age cohorts. In addition, the unemployment rate for females is higher than for males, a consistent trend across the different age cohorts.

Fact Box: Youth Employment at a Glance (2014 figures)

- 36,1 % of South African youth (age 15-34) are unemployed (StatsSA 2014 using narrow definition).
- In every province, the unemployment rate among youth is more than double that of adults (StatsSA 2014).
- One in every three young people aged 15–24 years (32,2%) is not in employment and not in education/training (NEET) (StatsSA 2014).
- The unemployment rates of young women (15–34years) are more than 10 percentage points higher than that of young men (StatsSA 2014).
- 65% of the unemployed have been unemployed for more than a year (StatsSA 2013)
- 44% of the unemployed have never worked before (StatsSA 2013)
- Youth unemployment has a marked racial character. It is highest amongst African youth at 39,6% and lowest amongst white youth at 9,6% (StatsSA 2014).
- Globally about 13% of young people are unemployed (UNICEF 2013)

Sources: StatsSA Statistical Release P0211.4.2 of 2014, StatsSA World of Work report of 2013.

With a youth unemployment rate that is amongst the highest in the world, finding pathways to employment is critical to transforming South Africa's future employment and growth trajectory. This is particularly true for the 15–24 age cohort going through the school-to-work transition. The evidence indicates that a young person who has not found employment within three years of exiting studies is unlikely to ever work. This persistent youth unemployment bubble has far-reaching and long-term consequences. It is a major driver of poverty and inequality, is a source of social instability, is a drag on public resources and economic growth and represents a massive loss of human potential.

Importance of youth employment issues for economic regions

Youth unemployment is a complex multi-dimensional challenge. Although it has global and national dimensions, it is also strongly regional in character and requires regional and local interventions that supplement national approaches. This regional dimension is reflected in the distinct regional variations in youth unemployment rates in different regions observed internationally and in South Africa. This follows logically from the reality that regional economies differ and are affected unevenly by economic trends.

Table: Unemployment rates amongst youth and adults in 2014 by province

(Source: StatsSA, Statistical Release P0211.4.2 of 2014)

Province	Youth unemployment rate (ages 18-34)	Adult unemployment rate (ages 35-65)
Free State	48,2%	22%
Mpumalanga	42,8%	18,5%
Northern Cape	42,4%	18,1%
Eastern Cape	40,7%	17,3%
North-West	38,4%	16,8%
Gauteng	36,4%	15,4%
Western Cape	31%	12,4%
Kwazulu-Natal	30,5%	10,7%
Limpopo	28,6%	9,7%
National average	36,1%	15,6%

Over the period 2008– 2014, except in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, the unemployment rate among both youth and adults increased. The largest increase over the period occurred in Free State (by 13,3 percentage points among youth and by 8,1 percentage points among adults). In contrast, the rate in Limpopo declined amongst youth (by 14,9 percentage points) and adults by 8,3 percentage points (StatsSA 2014).

Regional economic differences are also reflected in the share of youth employment in less-skilled and skilled work. 79,9% of youth employment nationally in 2014 was in less-skilled occupations. However, in Gauteng this was only 72% with 28% of youth employment being in skilled jobs in contrast to less urbanized provinces such as Limpopo where 90,2% of youth employment was less- skilled (StatsSA 2014).

Youth unemployment strategies thus need to be tailored to fit the unique character of the regional economy. A youth employment strategy for a declining manufacturing region will be different to that of a booming hi-tech hub. It is thus not surprising that a portfolio of provincial youth unemployment initiatives have emerged in the different provinces in addition to those pursued by national government as highlighted in the table below and that these have different emphases based on provincial and regional differences.

Overview of youth employment strategies

Since 1994, government in South Africa has pursued a number of strategies aimed at better equipping young people to secure work and become economically independent. This is reflected in the National Youth Policy and in a range of provincial and local government youth plans.

Interventions used to facilitate young people's access to the labour market can be clustered under the following themes:

1. Formal education. Enhancing labour supply through formal school and tertiary education and training is key to improving employability. Expenditure on education has increased during the democratic era and the unemployed youth often have higher educational qualifications than older citizens who are employed. This suggests that the education system is not delivering the skills needed in the labour market and targeted education interventions are needed to improve employability.



- 2. Vocational training and internships.** Programmes that equip school-leavers with technical and other vocational skills and/or practical work experience are important mechanisms to meet the skills requirements of the economy and to facilitate entry into employment. It will be important to expand opportunities for vocational training and to provide “second-chance” opportunities for young people who have dropped out of mainstream education including through encouraging volunteerism, internships and apprenticeships.
- 3. Public employment and deployment programmes.** Programmes such as EPWP and Community Works increase the demand for work, improve some skills and provide young people with an invaluable experience of work that improves their employability.
- 4. Entrepreneurship interventions.** These provide self-employment opportunities and also create demand for work.
- 5. Job placement programmes.** These programmes reduce the time spent looking for work through job-matching processes such as employment services, job search assistance, provision of information on the job market, and pre-screening of candidates. There is evidence elsewhere that good job placement and intermediation programmes actually increase the total employment.
- 6. Resource centres.** Office-based and online resource centres provide both information on job opportunities as well as support to job seekers.
- 7. Employment subsidies.** There are a variety of direct and indirect subsidies that can be made available to incentivize companies to employ young people. Global evidence suggests it is possible to change the structure of demand through employment subsidies and affirmative action clauses.

These interventions of course should not function as discrete isolated actions but should be linked together in a system that create a range of pathways to employment for young people appropriate to their level of skill and work experience. This is highlighted in the graphic below that illustrates where the different kinds of intervention can facilitate the entry of young people into work.

In education

- Person in schooling or post-school training.
- Interventions: Formal education



Lacks work experience and skills

- Person willing to work but no experience or differentiating skills
- Interventions: Public employment, Vocational training



Work ready but lacks specialised skills

- Person willing to work, with experience but lacks specific skills set
- Interventions: Vocational training differentiating skills
- Interventions: Public employment, Vocational training



Work ready

- Person willing to work and has marketable skills but not able to find work
- Interventions: Job placement, resource centres, employment subsidies skills set
- Interventions: Vocational training differentiating skills
- Interventions: Public employment, Vocational training



Entrepreneur

- Person who wants to be economically active but work for themselves and has a business idea
- Interventions: Entrepreneurship support

Summary of youth employment initiatives

In the table below, we have listed a range youth employment initiatives in South Africa and classified them according to the intervention themes above. An indication as to whether the initiative is national or specific to a province as well as a link to the relevant websites is also provided.

This summary table links to a detailed database, which can be accessed [here](#) or by clicking on [the programme name](#). You will be redirected to the relevant detailed entry in the database. The database provides detail on each programme, including a description of the programme, its offering, who is eligible to apply and how to apply or get further information.

It should be noted that the database is not a comprehensive list of programmes available and will need to be updated on an on-going basis.

#	Programme Name	Location	Public	Private/NPO	Education/Training	Vocational training - Internship	Public Employment	Entrepreneurship	Job Placement	Resource Centre	Subsidies	Website
1	Community Work Programme	National	●				●					www.cogta.gov.za/cwp
2	Department of Rural Development & Land Reform Internship Programme	National	●		●	●			●			http://www.dla.gov.za/vacancies/file/3158-internship-programme-2015-2016
3	EOH Job Creation Initiative	National		●		●						http://proserv.3dsmx.com/post/next/9886/961/B5WUDE2AD5MHDPTH
4	Expanded Public Works Programme	National	●				●					www.epwp.gov.za/index.html
5	Graduate Asset Programme	National		●					●	●		www.gogap.co.za
6	Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator	National		●	●				●			www.harambee.co.za
7	IDC Gro-E Youth Scheme	National	●		●			●				www.idc.co.za/home/idc-products/special-schemes/gro-e-scheme/gro-e-youth-scheme.html
8	JumpStart	National		●	●	●						http://mrpfoundation.org/Programmes/jumpstart.aspx
9	Lulaway Job Portal & Centres	National		●					●	●		http://www.lulaway.co.za/home
10	Monyetla Work Readiness Programme	National	●		●	●			●			https://www.letsemamrp.co.za/about/
11	National Rural Youth Service Corps Programme (Narysec)	National	●		●				●			www.ruraldevelopment.gov.za/component/phocadownload/category/198-narysec-application-forms

#	Programme Name	Location	Public	Private/NPO	Education/Training	Vocational training - Internship	Public Employment	Entrepreneurship	Job Placement	Resource Centre	Subsidies	Website
12	National Youth Service	National	●		●				●			www.nyda.gov.za/National-Youth-Service-Programme/Pages/NYS-Model-Overview.aspx
13	NYDA Entrepreneurship Development Programme	National	●		●			●				www.nyda.gov.za/Entrepreneurship-Development-Programme/Pages/default.aspx
14	NYDA Grant Programme	National	●		●			●				www.nyda.gov.za/grant/Pages/About-the-Grant-Programme.aspx
15	NYDA Youth Advisory Centres	National	●		●				●	●		www.nyda.gov.za/pages/nyda-branches.aspx
16	Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)	National	●		●	●					●	There are 21 SETAs, each with offices nationwide - for a full list see: www.economic.gov.za/entities-external-links/list-of-setas
17	Youth Wage Subsidy	National	●								●	www.sars.gov.za/TaxTypes/PAYE/Pages/Employment-Tax-Incentive.aspx
18	Disability Workshop Development Enterprise (DWDE)	Western Cape; Gauteng; Eastern Cape; KZN		●	●				●	●		www.dwde.co.za
19	Edunova IT Entrepreneurs Project	Western Cape; Eastern Cape; Limpopo		●	●				●			www.edunova.org

#	Programme Name	Location	Public	Private/NPO	Education/Training	Vocational training - Internship	Public Employment	Entrepreneurship	Job Placement	Resource Centre	Subsidies	Website
20	Live SA	Gauteng; Western Cape		●	●	●						http://livemag.co.za/ap ply/
21	NYDA Youth Build Projects	Eastern Cape; Western Cape; KZN, Tshwane	●		●				●			www.nyda.gov.za/youthbuild/Pages/default.aspx
22	Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurial Development	Western Cape; Gauteng		●	●							www.ackermanacademy.co.za
23	Youth Jobs in Waste Programme	Free State, N/ West, Eastern Cape, KZN, Limpopo	●		●				●			www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/youthjobs_inwaste
24	Eastern Cape DEDEAT Internship Programme	Eastern Cape	●		●	●			●			http://www.dedea.gov.za/lists/internships/allitems.aspx
25	Gauteng City Region Academy	Gauteng	●		●	●						www.gcracademy.gpg.gov.za/Pages/default.aspx
26	Tshepo 500 000	Gauteng	●		●				●			www.tshepo500000.co.za
27	KZN Unemployed Graduates Database	KwaZulu Natal	●						●	●		www.kznunemployedgrads.gov.za
28	Limpopo Province Learnership Programmes	Limpopo	●		●	●			●			http://www.dpw.limpopo.gov.za/careers/learnership.php
29	Limpopo Province Premier's Office	Limpopo	●		●	●			●			http://www.dpw.limpopo.gov.za/careers/internship.php

#	Programme Name	Location	Public	Private/NPO	Education/Training	Vocational training - Internship	Public Employment	Entrepreneurship	Job Placement	Resource Centre	Subsidies	Website
	Internship Programme											
30	Action Volunteers Africa Programme	Western Cape		●		●						www.avafrica.org.za
31	CapaCITI1000	Western Cape		●	●	●			●			www.capaciti1000.org.za / www.citi.org.za/capaciti/
32	Chrysalis Academy Training & Internship Programme	Western Cape		●	●	●			●	●		www.chrysalisacademy.org.za
33	Premier's Advancement of Youth Project	Western Cape	●		●	●			●			www.westerncape.gov.za/PAY
34	Work and Skills Programme	Western Cape	●		●	●			●			www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/work-and-skills-programme
35	Year Beyond Programme	Western Cape	●		●							www.westerncape.gov.za/yearbeyond

Lessons and success factors

The success of programmes under each of these categories varies enormously. A range of factors impact on this including:

- Leadership. Shared goals and targets are needed across sectors with clear leadership.
- Removing barriers to joined up and collaborative processes. Inevitably the various interventions and programmes need to work together to create a continuum of opportunities and steps toward employment for young people. In addition a partnership approach can

better tackle entrenched barriers to employment.

- Improving data availability and understanding the nature of local skills supply and demand mismatch. Reliable data is a prerequisite for effective policy design. However, many localities are confronted with serious challenges when compiling data to diagnose the true nature of youth unemployment.
- Employer engagement and support. This provides opportunities to link public sector interventions with private sector programmes creating the continuum of support. It also increases the brand and profile of any programme and helps to link aspirations with programmes.
- On-going support. It is important to support young people to manage key transition points– in particular leaving compulsory education. This is not a once off intervention and requires focused aftercare support to identify young people needing additional support to successfully manage progression.

Questions to consider

In developing a regional approach to addressing youth employment, questions for practitioners to consider include:

- What are the key drivers of youth unemployment in the region? What sectors of the economy are the major employers and what sectors are shedding or creating jobs? Are regional economic strategies supporting job retention and job creation?
- What are the skills profiles of young people in the region and how does this correspond with labour demand?
- What youth employment interventions are currently being implemented in the region and how would their scale and impact be assessed? Do they align with the competitive advantages of the region and support growth sectors in the regional economy?
- Are regional role-players making optimal use of the national and provincial programmes that exist and how can this be improved?
- To what extent is there a common and coordinated approach to youth employment between national, provincial and local government in the region? Are there opportunities for enhancing this?
- To what extent is there communication and co-ordination between industry and commerce as employers of young people and the major regional education and training institutions to align skills development with the needs of the economy?
- What formal and informal partnerships between private, public and non-profit sectors are in place to promote youth employment?
- To what extent is there co-operation between trade unions and public and private employers to promote skills development and job access for young people?
- Are there gaps that can be addressed through multi-stakeholder and inter-governmental collaboration at regional level?

See also the Policy and Practice Note of Youth Employment and Skills development [here](#)