



RESPONSE TO THE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE

South Africa Siyasebenza

High levels of unemployment are said to be a mirror of the state of a nation's economy. This may hold true as economic growth in South Africa has been sluggish and exclusionary. Some research suggests that lack of education and skills, not growth, are the main contributors to unemployment. It is evident that addressing the youth unemployment challenge requires a coordinated approach from different stakeholders.

Much has been done to address past inequities since the advent of democracy, such as reforming policies and implementing programmes that help address issues of inequality, poverty and unemployment. The Jobs Fund is one of government's key employment facilitation programmes that help address unemployment in South Africa. The Jobs Fund's ultimate goal is to identify and learn from effective interventions and programmes that contribute to accelerated job creation and a better functioning labour market.

The Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, the RedCap Foundation's JumpStart programme and the Southern African Wildlife College's training and development of youth at risk are some of the initiatives in the Jobs Fund portfolio that help address youth unemployment.

Harambee matches unemployed, poor and disadvantaged youth who have talent and potential, but are at risk of long-term unemployment, to work opportunities and bridges their work-readiness gaps. With a total approved budget of R120 million, Harambee has placed over 10 100 unemployed youth in full-time jobs over three years. The hospitality sector absorbed over 50 percent of these youths.

Harambee's success can be attributed to its demand-driven methodology and continued strengthening of relationships and partnerships with employers. Harambee recruits work seekers and assesses their competencies. They are then matched with opportunities where they are most likely to succeed. Potential employers are involved throughout this

process and work-readiness solutions are developed to address the needs and priorities of these employers. Much can be learned from the Harambee model – it has effectively intervened in the labour market.



“I would like to thank Harambee for the opportunity they gave me – I am now employed and no longer a statistic of unemployment.” – Nolutvuyo Guma

The RedCap Foundation’s JumpStart project aims to prepare unemployed youth for the world of work and ultimately contribute to addressing South Africa’s unemployment problem. It does this by providing skills training to young job seekers between the ages of 18 and 30 years old. The target group is mainly unemployed matriculants who are unable

to get into tertiary institutions, or who have dropped out of tertiary institutions and cannot find jobs due to their lack of skills and experience. Young people who successfully complete the training are placed in clerical and sales positions at Mr Price Group’s outlets (Mr Price, Mr Price Sport, Milady’s, Mr Price Home and Sheet Street).



“I’m now highly confident of who I am and believe that now I have a bright future ahead of me. I am able to support my family and I’m now a new person... thanks to the MRP Foundation’s JumpStart programme.” – Nonkululeko Mazibuko.

The Southern African Wildlife College has trained 90 unemployed youth living in communities in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, which

spans Mpumalanga and Limpopo, including the Kruger National Park, and borders private and provincial game reserves, through a 12-month learnership programme. The beneficiaries were trained in conservation guardianship skills to give them a better chance of future employment in their own communities or conservation organisations. The trained beneficiaries have been placed with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency and local, privately owned game farms. Through the field ranger training, the youth will provide support in addressing the poaching of wild animals in protected areas.



“I have always dreamt of being a field ranger and now that has become a reality thanks to the Jobs Fund and SAWC.” – Mandlenkosi Mthoko Nhlenyama,

Through its diverse partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organisations, the Jobs Fund has facilitated more than 173 287 sustainable permanent jobs. It has also helped improve the skills match between supply and demand for labour by training about 247 956 people in work-readiness and technical skills.

Through the matched funding received from its partners, the Jobs Fund is continuing to scale up and reach more unemployed youth.

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