

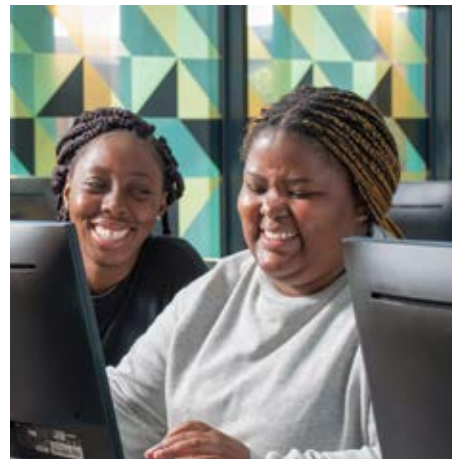
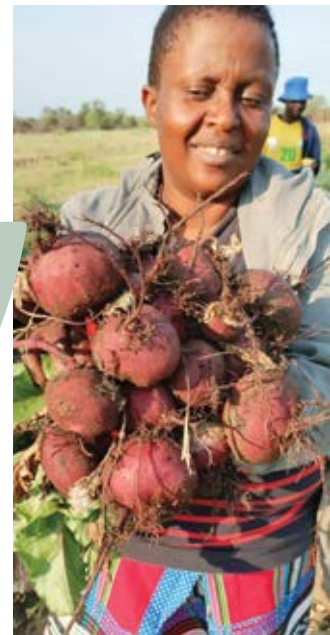


The Presidential Employment Stimulus

Building a society that works

1,7 million jobs, opportunities and more

February 2024



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS





The Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) is funded from the fiscus and is implemented by participating departments. Strategic oversight is provided by the Project Management Office (PMO) in the Private Office of the President. The PMO is grateful for support from development partners to the PES team, that allowed for its rapid establishment in a context in which no such function had been envisaged. Development partners continue to provide invaluable technical and research support for the PMO's role.



As a development partner the **European Union** has supported the Presidential Employment Stimulus team in the PMO since the inception of the programme. In Phase 1 and 2, this was through Capacity Building Programme for Employment Promotion (CBPEP), housed in the Government Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC) of National Treasury. Support has also been provided through DNA Economics, and the Education for Employment Programme. This strategic partnership has been catalytic.



With support from the EU's facility on Inequality and Poverty, the **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)** has supported a research agenda on the stimulus effects of this intervention and is supporting the design of public employment programmes as part of the Just Transition.



The **DG Murray Trust** is providing support to technical capacity in the PES, as well as to research, institutional lesson-learning and communications.

Publication issued by The Presidency, South Africa, February 2024

For more information see <https://www.stateofthenation.gov.za/employment-stimulus-dashboard>





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Building a society that works

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA



“ In the intricate art of Zulu basket weaving, each coil of ilala palm leaves contributes to the integrity, beauty, and strength of the basket. No single coil can stand alone and deliver a basket of any strength.

The same principle underpins our strategy to address the challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality. We are implementing fundamental economic reforms through Operation Vulindlela to support economic growth and create jobs. We have lifted millions of South Africans out of poverty through social grants, which has helped people to provide for their basic needs. And through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, we have now delivered over 1.7 million work and livelihood opportunities.

None of these measures on its own is sufficient to address the scale of the challenge, and each serves a unique and important purpose. We know that social grants play a crucial role in mitigating poverty. Yet we also know that our people do not aspire to live their entire working lives reliant on a social grant. Our development vision cannot stop there.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus is founded on the belief that building the momentum for growth requires us to unlock the creativity, initiative, agency and entrepreneurship of our people. It is part of our effort to build more effective pathways out of poverty and to ensure that there are hands reached out to assist people every step of the way.



For many, the Presidential Employment Stimulus has given them just such a step forward, reaching into every community in the country, from Ntuzuma in KwaZulu-Natal to Kuruman in the Northern Cape, from Xhora in the Eastern Cape to Namakgale in Limpopo.

By creating high-quality work and livelihood opportunities, the Presidential Employment Stimulus has, since October 2020, limited the corrosive effects of unemployment in communities. It has improved the quality and diversity of forms of social value created through the work performed as well as the quality of work experience delivered. It has helped young people in particular to break the vicious cycle in which they can't get work because they've never had work.

This contribution is not just about the direct opportunities created. For participants, the work experience they gain builds skills and work-readiness, which supports productivity in the wider economy. This builds pathways to private sector employment, self-employment and entrepreneurial activities.



The wages earned are spent in local communities, revitalising small enterprises and the informal sector. They trickle up and benefit the entire economy.

“Building a society that works” is the slogan of the Presidential Employment Stimulus. Its contribution to doing so has been the result of a collective effort of 15 government departments, many other public bodies and role-players beyond the state. While the stimulus arose in the context of the COVID pandemic, the lessons learned – and the institutional capacities built – now assist us to take job creation and livelihood support programmes to the next level. In the face of the ongoing crisis of unemployment, that is exactly what we plan to do.”

The Presidential Employment Stimulus is founded on the belief that inclusive economic growth cannot happen without social justice.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) was launched in October 2020 as part of South Africa’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, in response to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Building on a long history of support to public employment through the Expanded Public Works Programme, the PES has provided an ‘innovation sandbox’ for scaling up publicly-funded jobs and livelihood opportunities. It has done so at unprecedented scale, creating over 1,7 million jobs and livelihood opportunities since inception in October 2020.

The PES is part of an integrated and mutually-reinforcing suite of programmes coordinated by the Project Management Office (PMO) in the Presidency, to drive structural reforms and enable employment creation. This includes Operation Vulindlela, which addresses the structural barriers that hinder the private sector from creating more employment in the economy. It also includes the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI), which seeks to coordinate, accelerate and enhance existing programmes while driving innovation and creating pathways to earning for young people at scale. The PES supports the goals of the PYEI by directly delivering employment opportunities for youth. In turn, the PYEI supports the PES through mechanisms such as its National Pathway Management Network.

The programmes that form part of the Employment Stimulus undergo a rigorous evaluation process against agreed criteria, with budgets allocated by National Treasury. These funds are transferred directly to approved programmes in participating departments and public bodies. The PMO in the Private Office of the President provides design input and strategic oversight.



Presidential Employment Stimulus

Total Opportunities Created October 2020 – December 2023

Departments	Opportunities supported
Basic Education	1 117 392
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development	187 450
Sports, Arts and Culture	115 744
Trade, Industry and Competition	107 604
Women, Youth and People with Disabilities	70 547
Social Development	64 476
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	29 088
National Treasury	25 762
Co-operative Governance	19 106
Transport	10 245
Health	5 825
Science and Innovation	3 409
Higher Education and Training	2 842
Public Works and Infrastructure	1 881
Tourism	1 163
Employment and Labour	215
Total jobs and livelihood opportunities delivered	1 762 749

ACHIEVED

95,3% of total target
October 2020 – March 2024

DEMOGRAPHICS

84% youth

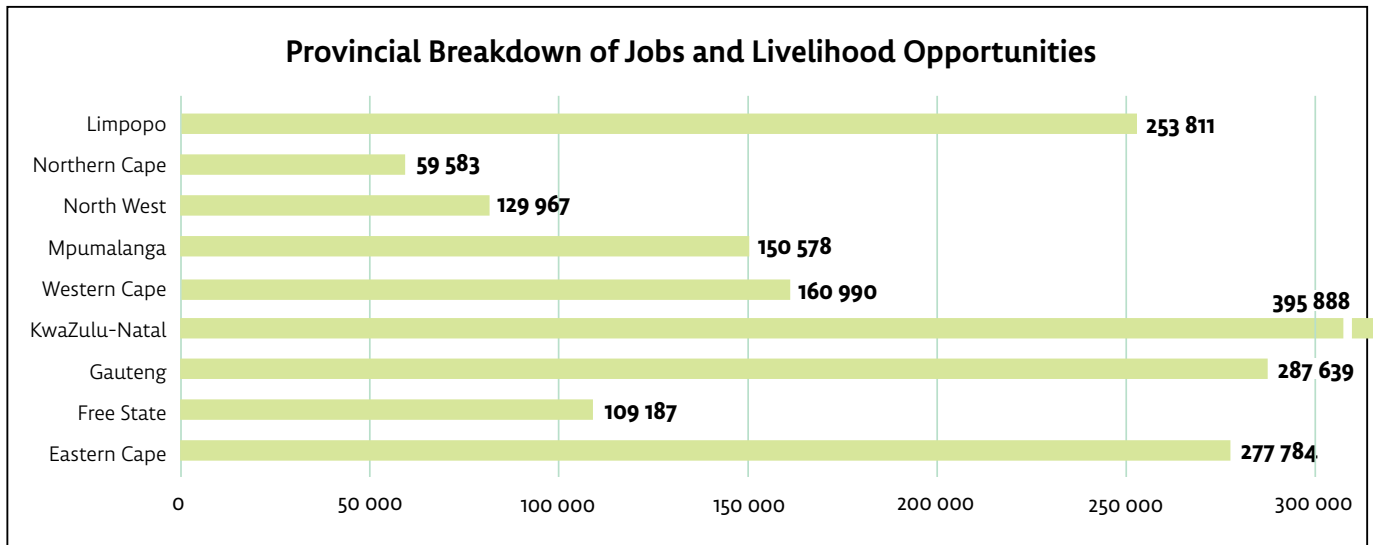
64% women

TOTAL BUDGET

R42 billion

October 2020 – March 2024

Catalytic Programmes have also been supported. This includes support to the National Pathway Management Network of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, in the Department of Employment and Labour, which has placed over 1,6 million young people in job opportunities. This includes opportunities in Employment Stimulus programmes, but also with a strong focus on making private sector opportunities visible to young people. The Department of Communications and Digital Technology has also been supported with the rollout of public wifi.



As not all programmes report provincial data these figures will not align fully with overall totals.



Keeping our foot on the accelerator

The PES began in the unique context of the Covid-19 pandemic. With high societal stress, all implementing partners stepped up to go the extra mile to take public employment and livelihood programmes to unprecedented scale – delivering high quality work experiences and meaningful forms of social value in the process.

This was never business as usual. This was work over and above existing mandates – for all who participated. It mattered, not only as a response to the pandemic, but as part of ramping up our response to the crisis of unemployment that already existed – and that has not gone away.

It's a crisis with huge social and economic costs, which is why, as a society, we need instruments that can enable economic participation even where the economy is unable to absorb people at the scale of need. That's what these programmes do.

This matters, because people matter and access to work matters to people. And while certainly the income matters, participation in work is about more than just the income. Participation is fundamental to people's sense of self-worth, to hope, purpose and inclusion. Where these are absent, social stability is placed at risk and in the process, the conditions required to break this cycle are too, because social stability is a requirement for the seeds of inclusive growth to take root and grow.

Participation in work also gives people a myriad of skills and capacities that are foundational to productivity in the economy – in the workplace but also for the success of self-employment and small enterprise endeavours. If the economy can't provide such experience at the required scale, then society must find other ways to do so – as part of breaking current cycles.

That's the role these programmes play. They're circuit-breakers, that can shift the trajectory not only in the lives of participants, but in their households and communities – with impacts in the wider society and economy too.



'We've come far in creating jobs and supporting livelihoods – but we need to go further. Let's keep our foot firmly on the accelerator.'

President Cyril Ramaphosa

Performance April – December 2023 for Financial Year 2024

Department	Opportunities
DBE	Basic Education Employment 245 489
DTIC	Social Employment Fund 90 834
DSAC	Creative Sector Stimulus - PESP 39 571
DALLRD	Vouchers for Subsistence Farmers 26 395
NT NDPP	PEPs in Metros 20 592
DWYPD	Youth Service 13 656
DSD	National Development Agency 2 300
DHET	Graduate Placement 1 790
Total	440 627





The Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI)

IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Since October 2020, the Basic Education Employment Initiative (also known as the PYEI-DBE) has placed over one million young people as School Assistants in over 23,000 schools across South Africa.

The BEEI includes opportunities for all skills levels. Education Assistants support teachers in the classroom or are deployed to do admin or IT. They require a matric, with graduates prioritised. General Assistants do not need a matric, and assist with tasks such as school maintenance, security, food gardens, sports, and after-school care. This is serious work: there is considerable responsibility and real long-term benefits to society.

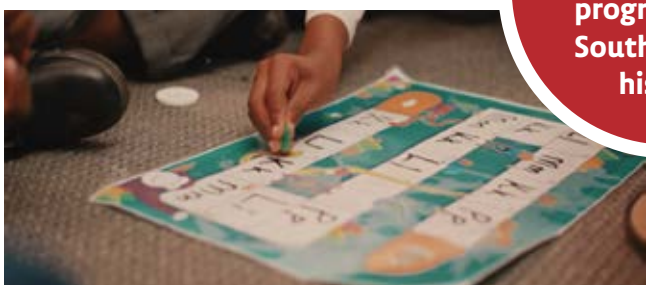
THE LARGEST YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORY

With over **one million** placements of young people at schools, the BEEI is the largest youth employment programme in South Africa's history. The BEEI has provided an example of how public employment programmes can go rapidly to scale, creating meaningful work experiences for young people, while delivering real public value. This is enhanced by investing in the skills of participants – optimising their impacts on the learning environment while supporting their own pathways forward too.

In 2023, 1,5 million young people applied for the 250,000 School Assistant posts.

This means that more than **one out of every four** unemployed youth in the whole country applied for this program. According to Harambee data, it draws applicants from a wider spectrum of society than usually engaged in job seeking, including those from rural areas, more women, and individuals from economically disadvantaged communities.

The BEEI is the largest youth employment programme in South Africa's history



DE-RISKING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AT SCALE

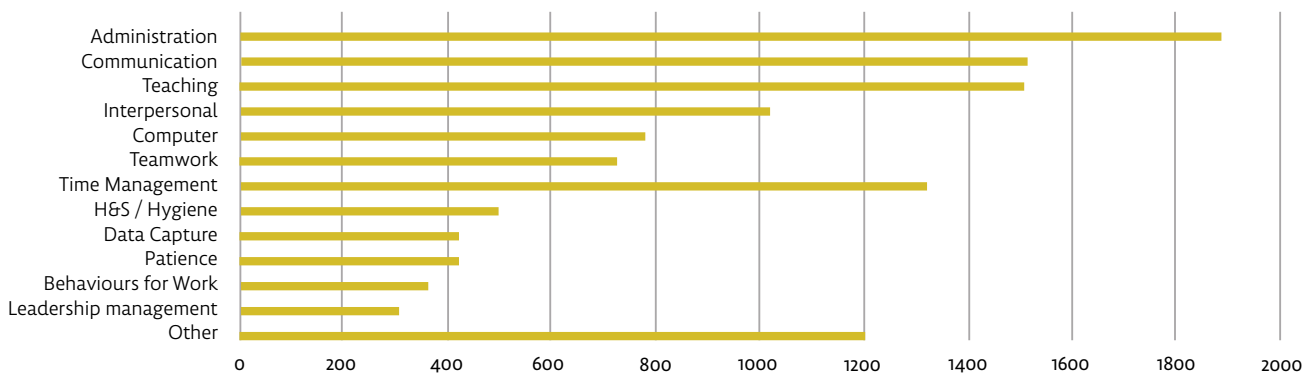
Eight out of ten young, unemployed people in South Africa have never had a job. Employers are hesitant to hire youth without work experience. This creates a vicious circle: young people cannot get work because they have never had work.

The BEEI is a circuit breaker: for **73%** of School Assistants, this is their **first work experience**. Data from Harambee suggests that **over 80% of School Assistants report learning new work-related skills** such as time management, professional communication, teamwork and accountability.

'Being a School Assistant brought a wave of positive change into my life and provided a platform for personal and professional growth, equipping me with invaluable skills that have since become the foundation of my career.'

Nontokozi Sibanyoni, 28-year-old from Mpumalanga

SKILLS THAT EDUCATION ASSISTANTS REPORTED GAINING FROM THE BEEI PROGRAMME



Source: Harambee follow-up phone survey of DBE participants, n=5000

'The Teacher's Assistant programme has helped so many young people realise their full potential and pursue what they had abandoned. And for some it was a wonderful experience. My long-term goal is to start an aftercare centre in my home village where no child pays. Being a Teacher's Assistant was an eye opener for me, it made me realise my true calling.'

Lebopong Mothibi, 26-year-old School Assistant, Northern Cape

And it's not just Lebopong. In surveys conducted for the Indlulamithi Barometer, the Employment Stimulus came up as a source of hope for youth across the country. Young people not only know about the programme, but they also recognise it as making a difference on the ground, where it matters most.

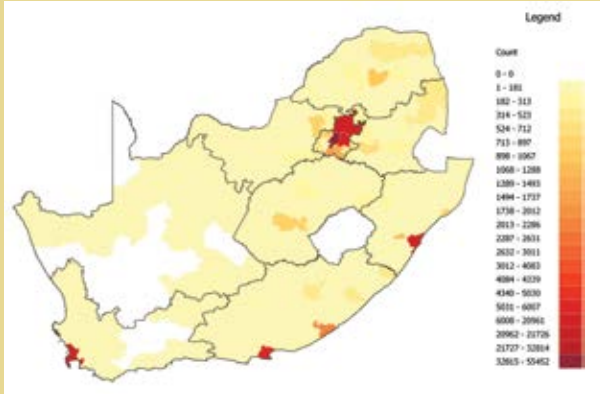
The BEEI is more than an employment programme; it's a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change, leveraging South Africa's untapped asset: its youth.



REACHING EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTRY

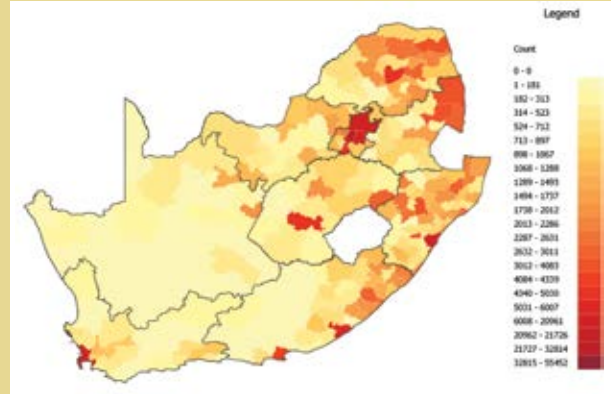
The BEEI has a highly equitable spatial footprint that reaches even the most remote and marginalised communities – because every community has schools.

Figure 1 Youth Employment Density by South African Municipality [2020]



Source: Harambee EJ Survey (2020) for 161,097 responses

Figure 2 Youth Employment Density by South African Municipality [2022]



Source: Harambee EJ Survey (2022) for 315,650 responses

The map on the left illustrates the distribution of employment opportunities for youth without the programme; the map on the right shows the difference the BEEI makes. The burden of youth unemployment is not distributed evenly; but even in the ‘jobs deserts’ that exist for youth in vast areas of the country, the BEEI brings opportunities – close to home.

There is simply no mechanism in the economy that is creating employment opportunities for youth at this scale and with this reach.

‘The Teacher’s Assistant programme has helped so many unemployed youth across the country, and it has made an impact in changing people’s lives (...) I would like to thank the programme because it has brought light and hope to youth living in disadvantaged communities.’

Mthuthuzeli Tshaka, 29-year-old School Assistant, Free State

Its spatial reach also means the BEEI has a significant impact on local economies, where spending starts within poor communities and then

‘trickles up’ to the rest of the economy. In its fourth phase, over R6 billion in wages has been paid to young people across the country. This translates into spending in rural communities and townships: **revitalising local businesses and acting as a fiscal multiplier.**

We have also seen young people accumulating savings to start side-hustles and businesses in their communities.

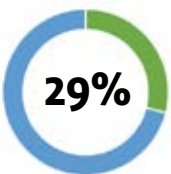
‘With the money I earned from the Teacher’s Assistant job I built a room where I braid clients’ hair – I am also learning on SAYouth how to run a side hustle so I can achieve my dream of owning a hair salon.’

Xolile Nxele, 34-year-old School Assistant, eSikhawini, KZN

THE BURDEN OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IS NOT DISTRIBUTED EVENLY



of youth are unemployed in the Eastern Cape municipality of **Ngqushwa**

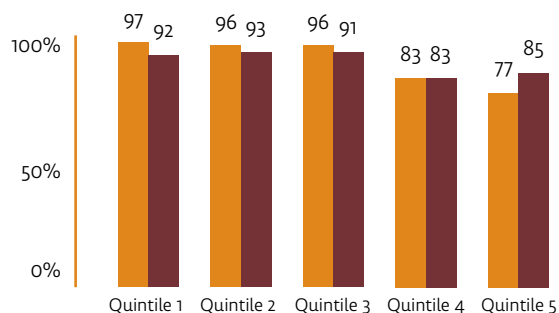


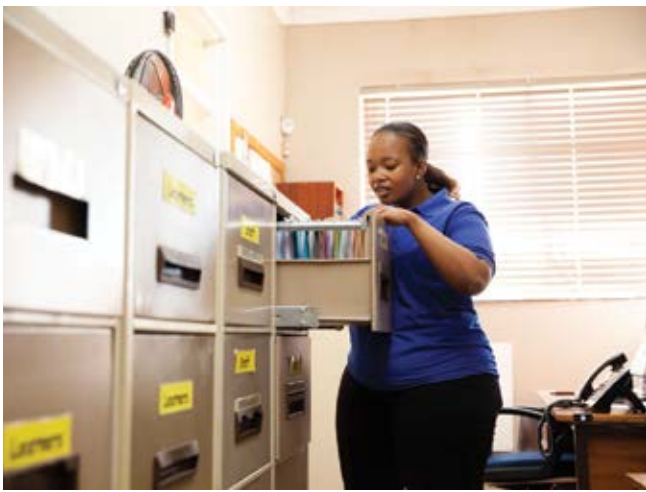
of youth are unemployed in the Western Cape’s **Theewaterskloof** municipality

SUPPORT FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The highest approval rating from principals and teachers comes from the poorest schools.

Source: DBE School Monitoring Survey 2022, forthcoming





DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

By 2030, half of current teachers will have retired. The need for new teachers is pressing. The exposure to teaching as a career through the BEEI is sparking a new wave of inspired future educators – with experience in the classroom to inform their decision, often accompanied by 1:1 mentorship from a teacher. The DBE has recognised this potential and is encouraging Education Assistants to apply for its Funda Lushaka bursaries.



'I can count at least six Education Assistants who have gone on to apply to be educators. These are young people who know what the education system is about and want to remain in it'

Terence Adam's, the principal of Grosvenor Primary School, Atlantis



'This programme helped me to choose the correct career, as in the future, I want to become a qualified teacher.'

Mosimanegape Kodisang, 34-year-old from the North West

26-year-old **Khari-Sma** joined Masana High School in Mpumalanga as an Education Assistant. She was mentored by MamNxumalo, Head of the English Department. The experience has motivated her next career move.



'New brooms may sweep clean but it's the old broom that knows the corners, and I knew that there is no one better qualified to teach me the corners of the English language. I am joining the drive to make quality education accessible to all learners, especially those in public schools. I went back to school so that I could gain admission to university and become a teacher myself – my dream now is to become an educational psychologist.'



SAYouth – making opportunities visible to youth

Recruitment for each phase of the BEEI has been done on SAYouth which is a digital platform run by Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator. Young people can register on the network for free via SAYouth.mobi, a mobi-site that is zero-rated by all mobile operators, or at any of the 127 labour centres and NYDA centres in all nine provinces.

SAYouth is part of the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN) of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, which aims to provide a single network for stakeholders supporting youth employment to share opportunities so that information is accessible in one place.



The platform aggregates opportunities 'for learning, earning and volunteering' so that every young person - no matter where they are or what their circumstances - has a place to go for information and support. This reduces the cost of searching for work which is a crucial barrier for young people hoping to get a foot in the labour market.

For those not immediately successful in securing a position through the BEEI programme, the platform provides an avenue to other forms of support and opportunities. This includes comprehensive resources for CV writing, job readiness, entrepreneurship, and wellness support, paving the way for a comprehensive development of career and personal growth. Those that are appointed into the BEEI can access the same resources when they leave the BEEI programme too.

Moving the dial on learning outcomes

Across the country, from rural villages to bustling peri-urban communities, Education Assistants are a significant new resource that has the potential to move the dial on learning outcomes.

In over-crowded classrooms, the Education Assistants undertake tasks that give teachers more time to focus on teaching. Research conducted by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) shows that Education Assistants can **reduce the administrative burden of teachers, assist with classroom management, and support learners during activities**.^{*} Teaching Assistants also have the potential to improve learning outcomes in early grades. Because they are recruited from local communities, they also understand the challenges facing learners.

‘It was extremely positive to hire from communities, as assistants could relate better to the learners’ social background, while learners were engaging with familiar faces. It was a win-win situation.’

Nomonde Toli, Deputy Principal of Silverleaf Primary School

The DBE has partnered with actors across the education support ecosystem to strengthen the impact of the Education Assistants. Participants are trained to support core curriculum outcomes, such as in maths and literacy, with almost **20,000 assistants** trained as Reading Champions. Another **21,850 assistants** have been trained to support digital skills and and information and communications technology (ICT) integration within schools. Entrepreneurship training has been introduced too – providing participants with tools they can apply when they exit the programme too.

‘I simply can’t imagine not being able to depend on these young people who make the dreams I have for my school a possibility.’

Terence Adams, Principal of Grosvenor Primary School



READING FOR MEANING: FUNDA WANDE IN LIMPOPO

Eight out of 10 learners in Grade 4 **cannot read for meaning** in any language according to the Progress in International Reading Study. In Limpopo, where literacy outcomes are amongst the worst in the country, Funda Wandé is using Education Assistants to change this. **Funda Wandé** has developed high-quality materials for reading for meaning in various African languages.

At 150 schools in Limpopo, Education Assistants were trained to use these materials and engage in small group and one-on-one teaching with Grade 2 learners. This approach is working. Learners in Funda Wandé classrooms are **1,25 years of learning ahead of schools without Education Assistants**, in literacy and numeracy. They are also **9 percentage points** more likely to reach the DBEs reading benchmark than these peers.



^{*} Ardington, C. 2023. Youth employment programmes have the potential to meaningfully impact learning outcomes in the early grade. SALDRU



Evidence shows that children engaged through Zazi iZande learn their letters four times faster than the average grade one learner

TECHNOLOGY FOR BETTER MATHS AND SCIENCE OUTCOMES: SIYAVULA CHAMPIONS IN GAUTENG

Education Assistants are using cutting-edge learning and teaching technology in public schools to move the dial on maths and science outcomes. In Gauteng, Education Assistants can self-select to be trained as ‘Siyavula Champions’ – promoting the use of the Siyavula Maths and Science app.

Siyavula is a free and zero-rated platform that uses adaptive practice technology to provide personalised maths and science practice and revision. In the lead-up to final exams in 2023, **30,000 learners** used the Siyavula platform, answering almost **3,5 million questions** in just one month. The Education Assistants help students register and practice on the platform, track progress, and support teachers in analysing reports for the students.

‘In our experience, while implementing and supporting the use of our programme at schools in Gauteng, the Teaching Assistants have been of great help to both our Siyavula ICT Facilitators, and they have proven efficient at removing some of the administrative and time burdens faced by teachers in classrooms today. They are often well-educated individuals who are in need of opportunities to start them off on their career paths. We strongly encourage the continuation of this programme.’

Alexandra Trinder-Smith, Executive Director Siyavula Foundation

UNLOCKING FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY: ZAZI-IZANDE IN THE EASTERN CAPE

At the back of a crowded Grade R classroom in Zwide, Sibongile, an Education Assistant, sits on a table encircled by six young learners. She is holding a pack of cards with the letters of the alphabet. Eagerly, she raises a card to the learners: “O for Oreji” they respond in unison. “I for Inkomo”, “G for Gusha” they continue. Just six weeks ago, **the children could only recognise one letter on average; now, they confidently identify and pronounce more than eleven.**

Only one in two children in no-fee schools can recognise and sound out the letters of the alphabet by the end of Grade One. In the Eastern Cape, **Zazi-iZande** is training Education Assistants to change this. Education Assistants form learners into small, ability-based groups for daily, evidence-based phonetic sessions: teaching them the individual letters, their sounds, and how they combine to form words. Evidence already emerging from the programme shows that children learn their letters **four times faster than the average grade one learner.**

Zazi-iZande is demonstrating how Education Assistants can support young learners with the foundational literacy skills that set the tone for the rest of their education.

Social Employment

IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMPETITION

The Social Employment strategy supports civil society organisations to create employment, by strengthening community-driven solutions to local challenges. The work undertaken takes many forms, supporting community safety, food security, early childhood development, environmental interventions, the fight against gender-based violence and much more. What all of these forms of work share in common is that they serve the common good. At their best, they do so in ways that unlock local agency, build local participation and strengthen mutual support systems and resilience in communities.

The Social Employment Fund (SEF) is managed by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) as part of the dtic’s mandate to strengthen the Social and Solidarity Economy.

At present, 37 Strategic Implementation Partners (SIPs) have been appointed. In turn they work with over 1,000 local grassroots organisations, in a hub and spoke model that cascades capacity into communities.



THE SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT NETWORK – BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Social Employment Network (SEN) brings Strategic Implementing Partners and other stakeholders together, to create a community of practice and to promote trust, reflect on processes, exchange knowledge, adapt approaches, and discuss challenges and opportunities. Supported by the Economic Development Partnership, the SEN creates structured feedback loops to the IDC and government, for continued improvement of SEF strategies and processes. The IDC has also supported collaborative learning through the appointment of experienced SIPs to mentor new SIPs.

Over 100,000 people have had work through SEF since 2022

Participants are employed part-time for 16 hours a week and are paid at the National Minimum Wage. Part-time work provides support ‘scaffolding’ that allows participants to get key benefits from participation in work, while also enabling complementary livelihood, work-search and/or skills development opportunities.

“The relevance of this funding was particularly well received by smaller CBOs, many of which are informal, lack access to funding and operate “hand to mouth”.

Through SEF, community organisations were able to establish some organisational stability and expand their work to more members of the community.’

Redflank Impact Assessment, 2023

“The social employment approach recognises that unemployed people in communities are a powerful resource for development, and that even where labour might not have a market value, it has – and can create – social value.

More to the point: even where people’s labour may have no market value, people have value – and have value to offer to their communities. This is a far cry from the message that unemployed people currently receive, which casts them as “dependent,” as a burden, as surplus to the requirements of society.’

Kate Philip, Programme Lead, Presidential Employment Stimulus

“We are working on the premise that there is no shortage of work to be done to address the many social problems in our society.’

President Cyril Ramaphosa



CREATING MEASURABLE VALUE FOR SOCIETY

In its first year, the SEF created measurable social value of over R1,8 billion in relation to selected indicators. This exceeds the direct costs of its budget. Much additional social value is also created beyond these indicators – but is harder to quantify.

HEALTH

R416,4 m



Working capacity made available through traced patients now able to work

CO-FUNDING LEVERAGED

R67 m



Value of co-funding leveraged

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

R201,3 m



Equivalent cost of advice provided to GBV victims

CHILD NUTRITION

R16,2 m



Value of meals served in ECD Centres

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

R420 m



Working capacity made available through parents that are now able to work



Cost differential of SEF funded ECD Centres against averaged ECD cost

DIGITAL SYSTEMS ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

SEF uses the Kwantu app, a tailor-made digital software platform

Kwantu uses facial recognition and GIS location to verify attendance, even at remote sites without connectivity, with data downloaded later for reporting. Participant ID numbers and banking details are cross-referenced with the Department of Home Affairs database via the banking system. This eliminates the risks of fake IDs and collusion, and safeguards participants from scams related to false bank accounts. The IDC makes wage payments directly to participants through a central system, based on approved digital timesheets. This provides a secure audit trail while removing opportunities for any unauthorised deductions.

ART

R9 m



Value of art sold by SEF participants

GREENING

R76 m



Grazing value of land cleared of invasive plants

FOOD & AGRICULTURE

R473 m



Value of food produced by food gardens

PLACEMAKING

R10,1 m



Value of maintenance and repair of public infrastructure

Social Employment - work for the common good

It's hard to capture the depth and breadth of work the SEF is supporting in communities, but it's impacting on lives, livelihoods and futures, in ways that make a difference, not only for participants but also for the people they reach through their work. The examples here just scratch the surface.

37
Strategic
Implementing Partners
are working with over
1,000 community-based
organisations to create
work that serves
the common
good



Find out more at
sociaemploymentfund.co.za



IGNITING CHILDREN'S IMAGINATION

Through SEF, **Assitej** has created 3 305 jobs working with artists, educators and over 100 community-based arts organisations. It supports community theatre for youth in places where theatre has not previously reached, telling stories in ways that can inform, build empathy, address trauma– and bring laughter and joy.

DIGITAL ADDRESSES FOR INFORMAL HOUSEHOLDS

Planact, in partnership with Google Earth, is giving unique digital addresses to households in informal settlements.



This has huge implications for residents access to emergency services, to basic services, to voting, to opening a bank account – and much more. SEF participants undertake participatory community mapping, they undergo software training and gain GIS skills, and install metal address plates on dwellings. The City of Johannesburg recognizes the initiative's potential for transport mapping, enterprise promotion, and emergency services, contributing also to digital inclusion and spatial planning.





COMBATTING GBV, PROMOTING SEXUAL HEALTH

Hlanganisa has trained 7,442 ‘Sisterhood Advocates’.

They tirelessly guide clients through the intricacies of the justice system, with long days spent queueing at courts and police stations, applying for protection or maintenance orders, or providing counselling to gender-based violence survivors in 150 communities across Free State, North West, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo.

From an average of 391 GBV cases per months, Hlanganisa now processes an average of 6,000 cases per month. They have facilitated 2,371 protection orders, visited 50,071 households and reached over 120,000 people.

Known as the ‘Pinkies’ because of their pink bibs, these paralegals are being snapped up by employers, including achieving permanent positions in the Department of Justice.



CLEARING INVASIVE ALIEN PLANTS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Through the **Social Employment Network** and the **African Conservation Trust**, the 24 SIPs working on ‘greening’ are building a community of practice to share lessons, resources and effective strategies.

Their impact to date includes clearing 26,881 hectares of invasive plants from crucial communal farming and conservation areas. These not only impede cattle grazing but also exacerbate water scarcity.

The bulk of the resultant biomaterials are repurposed into valuable resources for use or resale – including as part of erosion control strategies, vital to limiting current losses of topsoil that erode the viability of sustainable agriculture in the process.

Support to subsistence farmers to build food security

IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

During the Covid pandemic, DALRRD provided subsistence farmers with production input vouchers, to help them back into production. Lockdown meant they had to innovate to create digital application processes – with vouchers issued on farmers’ phones. This enabled rapid outreach, getting support straight to where it was needed.

Now, in collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture and social partners, it is also providing complementary forms of support to about 62, 709 subsistence and smallholder producers, with area-based support groups, to strengthen self-employment and food security.

MASAKHANE’S MUSHROOM QUEEN

Zokhanyo Bikani - known as Zozo – used the voucher she received from DALRRD to augment her mushroom farming business in Makhane, near Gansbaai, which supplies local restaurants and hotels. When talking to DALRRD she was very specific: she only wanted organic pesticides and insecticides because she cares about the environment.

Zozo has been trained by Grootbos Foundation in community education, organic methods and permaculture. In her work with small groups in the nearby communities of Gansbaai, Pearly Beach and Stanford, she champions the importance of adapting farming methods to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

To date, a total of 183 292 agricultural production inputs vouchers have been issued to subsistence producers



This has included training a group of women to grow and process herbs for medicinal purposes – including indigenous ones.

When DALRRD faced challenges reaching voucher recipients in the area because they had changed their cell phone numbers, Zozo solved the problem. According to DALRRD’s internal report, ‘She knows everyone who owns a vegetable garden. She literally took DALRRD officials house to house with ease and willingness to find PES beneficiaries.’



FOOD SECURITY MATTERS

Wherever the Employment Stimulus is supporting community-driven activity, food security emerges as a critical issue – with diverse linkages to DALRRD and to provincial departments of agriculture.

So, in the SEF, support to food security includes the following:

- establishment of over 6,700 community gardens,
- an aquaponics roof-garden in Hilbrow,
- meals for children at ECD centres,
- older farmers mentoring younger ones to grow indigenous plants organically,
- establishment of Heirloom seedling nurseries,
- many interventions to improve agricultural outcomes and facilitate access to markets, and
- partnering with local provincial departments to host Farmers' Markets.

And as part of City PEPs, eThekweni has supported community gardens in rural wards, in partnership with the provincial department.





PRESIDENTIAL
YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT
INTERVENTION

Presidential Youth Employment Intervention

The PYEI was launched in 2021, before the Covid-19 pandemic – and before the PES was initiated.

It is part of a family of initiatives driven from the PMO of the President, to drive structural reforms and enable job creation. There is strong synergy between the interventions. The PES contributes to the goals of PYEI by creating public employment and livelihood opportunities for youth; elements of PYEI funding are also channeled through the PES. These are showcased here.

YOUTH SERVICE

The PYEI has supported the revitalisation of the National Youth Services (NYS) programme, a priority intervention that aims to mobilise young people to become active citizens of the country's democracy, while earning a stipend and increasing their employability. The programme is implemented by the National Youth Development Agency under the auspices of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

The programme aims to achieve this by engaging young people in paid community service. This allows them to gain relevant skills and increase their employability. The programme also aims to strengthen service delivery, build patriotism, promote nation-building, and foster social cohesion through the contribution made by youth to the service opportunities they join.

The revitalised NYS programme has completed its first phase of implementation and is currently in its second phase. To date, 60,000 young people have been enrolled in the programme and 35,000 have completed planned service activities with 14,000 transitioning from youth service into other

Over 1,6 million
young people
have secured
opportunities on
SAYouth



sustainable employment opportunities as well as self employment.

At an individual level young people receive training including technical skills, work readiness, emotional intelligence and agency. For many young people, NYS is the first time they have an experience of earning their own income. Young people have reported greater self-reliance and self-confidence, increased assertiveness and more hope for the future as well as service satisfaction from doing meaningful work.

At a community level, NYS participants are contributing to their local economies by buying from local vendors etc. Across the different partners, NYS participants are contributing to valuable social services by contributing to early childhood development, community agriculture, schools, community sports, arts and culture, and clinics.



‘Jobs Boost’ Launched!

The PYEI was excited to launch the Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund in November 2023. This R300 million fund will work with implementing partners to skill 4,500 unemployed, excluded youth and support them to secure sustainable, quality jobs in sectors where there is demand for labour. The Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund is distinct in that it introduces an outcomes-based pay-for-performance model that ensures that funds are only paid when young people are placed in quality jobs. With support from the PES, the programme has been designed by the research-led consulting house Krutham with the National Skills Fund as the sole outcomes funder for the pilot phase. Jobs Boost will stimulate innovation and training in workplace support, and demonstrate the use of outcomes funds in youth employment. Upon completion of the pilot, it will be scaled to multiple outcomes funders and support more excluded youth to secure sustainable, quality jobs.

This intervention is led by the DHET and delivered through its Skills Strategy for the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan. It is supported through the PES.

This R300 million fund will skill 4 500 unemployed, excluded youth and support them



THE NATIONAL PATHWAY MANAGEMENT NETWORK

The PYEI’s National Pathway Management Network (NPMN) is a ‘network of networks’, which brings stakeholders contributing to youth employment into a common network. The aim is to create one common digital platform from which young people can have ready access to multiple opportunities.

The NPMN is led by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), and includes the SAYouth platform, (see page 9), the Employment Services of South Africa platform of DEL, as well as DEL’s 126 labour centres across the country.

Over 4,2 million young people are currently registered on SAYouth, with over 1,6 million having secured opportunities through the platform. The single largest contributor to such opportunities has come from the Basic Education Employment Initiative. Among others, the network partners include:

- the [Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator](#) that manages the [SA Youth platform](#);
- the Gauteng Provincial Government’s [Tshepo 1 Million platform](#);
- private sector initiatives such as the [YES4Youth](#);
- the Department of Higher Education and Training’s (DHET) [Kheta career advice portal](#).

The PES provides funding to Harambee as the Eco-System Manager for NPMN, and funds the PYEI Innovation Fund, now managed by the IDC.

For more information on Jobs Boost visit <https://jobsboost.org.za/>

For more information on the PYEI visit <https://www.stateofthenation.gov.za/presidential-youth-employment-intervention/pyei-overview>

The creative sector – support to the soul of the nation

IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

PESP has supported more than 100,000 jobs and livelihood opportunities in the creative sector

Jazz festivals, dance, drama, poetry, public art and more: they are all celebrations of expression able to captivate us, bring us closer together and make South Africa a better place to live. The Employment Stimulus in the creative and cultural sector – known as PESP – has supported **more than 100,000 jobs and livelihood support opportunities**. The projects supported add colour to our society through diverse contributions – film productions, striking murals, language preservation, craft markets, museum exhibitions, and much more.

Implemented by the National Arts Council (NAC), National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), National Heritage Council, Business and Arts South Africa, and the Art Bank on behalf of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture – these projects have supported a wide range of employment creation initiatives for artists, creatives, heritage sector workers, and cultural workers.

Supporting the creative and cultural sector meant taking a different approach to the use of public funds for employment creation. Many people in the creative sector are self-employed in the gig economy, work in NGOs, or run small enterprises.

Traditionally, participants would need to leave their entities to take up a public employment opportunity. The Stimulus instead invited creatives to propose projects that would create employment for people in the sector. This allowed artists and cultural practitioners to get support to nurture their own enterprises, while contributing to broader employment creation.



REVIVING IRABI JAZZ - UMKHUMBANE MUSIC HERITAGE PROJECT

'We felt like the Irabi jazz style was dwindling into oblivion so we came up with a project that would put a spotlight back on Irabi jazz as well as expose it to younger musicians.'

Bab'Jerry Kunene

This idea became the **Umkhumbane Music Heritage Project**. Funded by the PESP through the NAC, Kunene set out to reignite a love for Irabi Jazz – a blend of 1950s Afro-American and local South African sound. The first

part of the project included a music business masterclass for young musicians, covering music development and the business aspects of the music industry. This revival culminated in a concert where the original Umkhumbane Jazz Ensemble played alongside the young musicians they mentored.

In total, the project created 77 jobs and livelihood opportunities for artists, technicians, and vendors.





SHINING THEATRE LIGHTS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The PESP supported theatre and film productions relating to key social issues. One example is **Patisserie Femme**: a production written and directed by young playwright, Jessie Diepeveen. Led by an all-women cast, the satirical play offered a glimpse into the absurd and unrealistic expectations – and objectification – that women experience.



PRESERVING AND CELEBRATING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND CULTURE

The National Heritage Council and NAC supported a series of projects aimed at preserving, documenting, and celebrating indigenous identity and culture while simultaneously creating jobs and livelihood opportunities. One example is the **Kalahari Arts and Heritage Festival**. Held in the Northern Cape's Philandersbron, it celebrates the Khoi and San communities' rich heritage.

Supported by the PESP, the festival extends beyond entertainment. Set against the mystical backdrop of the Kalahari Desert, it aims to reshape narratives around these indigenous communities, often misunderstood in mainstream arts. It features an ambitious showcase of 20 short films by first-time filmmakers from these historically marginalised groups. With activities including workshops and panel discussions, vibrant performances and exhibitions, the event fosters a sense of unity and cultural exchange among participants from South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana. By supporting such initiatives, the PESP is creating livelihood opportunities and investing in the preservation and empowerment of a vital cultural heritage, ensuring the Khoi and San communities' stories continue to be told and celebrated.





PLANTING THE SEED OF STORIES

The stories we tell shape our lives. To plant the seed of storytelling at a young age, **Zintsomi** – supported by the PESP through the NAC – blends traditional storytelling with modern forms like animation and puppetry, showcasing indigenous narratives through books, performances, and even toys. To qualify for funding, applicants had to demonstrate how they were going to increase their access to new markets and audiences, keep themselves afloat after funding and to attract new partnerships. In response, Zintsomi hosted a three-day book festival themed around “Planting the Seed” of storytelling. Significantly, the project fostered job creation: engaging storytellers, authors, project managers, photographers, and others, with a particular emphases on women and youth.



‘Arts, culture and sport have a critical role to play in children’s upbringing in order to realise a better future of the country. Hence the isiZulu saying ‘inkunzi isematholeni’, which means the bull is in the calves, but metaphorically means that the greatness of adults is shaped earlier in life.’

Dr Nomsa Mdalose, the founder of Zintsomi

DEVELOPING LIVELIHOOD PATHWAYS IN FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA

The **iKasi Digital Media Content Creator** programme – supported by the NFVF – introduces unemployed youth from rural areas and small towns to career pathways in film and digital media. In these areas, careers related to social media and digital media are often unfamiliar territory. With PESP funding, iKasi Creative’s programme provides a range of NQF Level 4 certified training in topics including filmmaking, web design, photography, social

media marketing, small business development and even drone operation. Equipped with these new skills, participants now have a broader range of employment options and income streams available to them. They are actively serving small businesses and organisations in their communities – from the Breede Valley to the Cape Flats – by providing them with high-quality content to better promote their offerings on social media platforms. Others have started their own businesses or have secured employment through the programme.

PASSING THE MIC TO MUSICIANS WITH DISABILITIES OR ALBINISM

The **Musicians with Disability and Albinism Project** – supported by the PESP through the NAC – is a vibrant embodiment of the diversity that enriches South Africa. Reflecting on Nelson Mandela’s prompt, that “it is for us to... learn of the richness of how human life is diverse; to recognize the presence of disability in our human midst as an enrichment of our diversity”, this project brings his vision to life by offering a platform for differently-abled musicians and those with albinism. The project’s implementation supported these artists to compose and produce music, addressing key societal challenges and mobilising communities towards positive transformation. Beyond its cultural impact, the project generated 40 direct jobs for its participants and spurred indirect employment in the local economy through associated services including transportation, catering and refreshments, and venue hire.



CINEMA FOR SOCIAL COHESION

In a time of growing polarisation, the **docLOVE project** – established by the Documentary Filmmakers' Association and supported through the NFFV – is on a mission to use film as a catalyst for social change, meaningful conversations and building social cohesion.

Each month, docLove hosts open-to-the-public, free, monthly documentary film screenings. Supported by the PESP, docLOVE expanded its documentary film screenings hosted in Gauteng and the Western Cape, across South Africa, reaching new audiences in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Limpopo, the Free State, and the Eastern Cape. This expansion has not only exposed more people to diverse, thought-provoking films but also generated employment opportunities within the film sector, supporting filmmakers, guest speakers, and local screening facilitators. It has shown how strategic support in the arts can lead to both social and economic benefits, truly embodying the power of film in building a more cohesive and inclusive society.

'We cannot attach a value to the social cohesion, to the conversations, to the shifts in peoples' minds. docLOVE and the arts in general, has a massive role to play (...) we are faced by so many social issues, what we honestly need is hope, we need plans for how we live in this world. I think documentary is a roadmap through which we try to find answers to a better way of being in this world.'

Miki Redelinguys, docLOVE



'It is important for us as South Africans to embrace and preserve our culture for the younger generation. I am grateful to the NAC and the Presidency for supporting me to fulfil my dream of promoting the Batswana culture. I am also delighted that I have also created jobs for my community whilst fulfilling my dreams which was a cherry on the top.'

Regina Mosetsanagape Loate, Batswana Batepa project



Support to city PEPs

IMPLEMENTED BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME (NDPP) IN NATIONAL TREASURY

The NDPP supports eight metros to deliver work that makes a difference to their cities, creating 25,762 jobs so far – including in the programmes profiled here.

Since December 2021, 834 homeless people have completed the Streetscapes programme. 72% are no longer living on the street



HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS

The Khulisa Public Employment Programme (PEP), supported by the City of Cape Town, is achieving significant milestones in addressing homelessness in Cape Town. Working in collaboration with nine NGO partners, 834 people have graduated since December 2021. Of these, 72% are currently no longer living on the street. While 46% have transitioned into employment, paid placements, or have accessed relevant SASSA grants, these next steps often remain challenging – highlighting the importance of patient support.

Chantel Sampson is a graduate from the programme. Like many participants, she had a history of homelessness and substance misuse spanning several years. What sets her apart is her resilience and determination.

On graduating from the Streetscapes programme, she was appointed as a Peer Support Specialist managing an outreach team at the foot of Devil's Peak, working in close partnership with the local residents' organisation.

'Chantel was like our magic wand. Her first day was hell because she had to help a person who's been on the street forever, who we needed to get into hospital and Chantel was on the street until six or seven o'clock in the evening to help – it was unbelievable.'

Jo-Anne Friedlander, Local Residents' Association

Chantel's experience of living in the same parks where she works today has proved to be a real asset. The programme has supported Chantel to complete the 20-week Cascadia Peer Support Specialist training – and the community rallied to support her further, raising funds for her to pursue a Social Auxiliary Worker degree.

'I would never change my experience of being homeless, because that's my testimony, that's my story, and I can advocate for the next homeless person.'

Chantel Sampson, graduate from the programme

WOZA WORK – URBAN RANGERS IN JOBURG’S INNER CITY

WozaWork – run by the Johannesburg Inner City Partnership – has employed 1,137 inner city residents as Urban Rangers, to support the City of Johannesburg to tackle crime and grime and contribute to a safer, more liveable city for all.

The Urban Rangers tackled urban management of streets and public spaces, including parks. They cleaned streets and stormwater inlets – collecting 879 195 bags of refuse – and removed graffiti, illegal posters and stickers. They reported service delivery issues as well as damage to municipal infrastructure. They also patrolled the community, providing a reassuring presence on the streets for locals and tourists alike – and facilitated 116 arrests. This was done in partnership with SAPS, the Community Policing Forum (CPF) and the Community Safety department of Gauteng Provincial Government.

‘WozaWorkers assisted the Region F CRUM Law Enforcement Task Team (LETT) in enforcing bylaws in the Inner City. This additional support enabled the City of Joburg to tackle issues related to illegal trading, building compliance, and general law enforcement challenges. The additional resources assisted greatly in making an impact on the ground.’

Earl Stoles, Deputy Director Planning, Profiling and Data Management, CRUM Region F.

The Urban Rangers also worked closely with Inner City Improvement Districts (CIDs) and local businesses. One of the CID’s stepped up to fund their work during December and January, in a context in which they otherwise faced closure – with such support a clear indication of the value they have been adding to the inner city.



‘Woza Work has helped me to develop working skills and how to deal with different people in the streets. Some people disrespect our work, others compliment it. But we are grateful to be cleaning the streets of Johannesburg and bringing a difference.’

Keabetswe Vilakazi, working as an Urban Ranger since April 2023.

A key innovation in WozaWork has been its use of digital systems. Participants were registered and contracted on an app, which stores their IDs and Police Clearances. The app is used to do shift schedules, timekeeping and payroll, with payment partly in digital vouchers redeemable at inner city shops. This required actively signing up local business owners, enhancing their involvement and creating a form of ‘circular economy’ in the inner city.

Woza Workers spent R19 million in digital vouchers at retailers across the Inner City.

MURAL ART CAN TRANSFORM PUBLIC SPACE



Cities are places of stories, passion, pain, aspiration, and dreams. In the Eastern Cape, the **Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency** has partnered with Walter Sisulu University to provide 80 fine arts students with an experiential learnership, in which they are employed to paint striking murals and deploy installations in public spaces. Locals love it – and so do tourists.

Advancing economic participation – from bridges to stairways

Public Employment Programmes (PEPs) are often seen as **bridges**, enabling participants to transition directly **from unemployment into sustainable livelihoods**, either through formal employment or viable entrepreneurship. It rarely happens like this, though. Instead, all the evidence shows that for most people, it is a more convoluted pathway – with steps forward – but sometimes, steps backwards, too.



There are many challenges along the way. Firstly, there just are not enough jobs for all.

The economy added just 756,000 formal jobs between 2008 and 2022 against a surge of seven million new labour force entrants according to Quarterly Labour Force Survey data.

In response many look to entrepreneurship to take up this significant slack, but returns from small enterprises are often low and failure rates high, making it a risky and precarious route. Capital is also typically required to make a meaningful start. These issues are compounded for people living in remote or peripheral areas.

So in practice, **transitions look more like a set of stairs**: with support needed for a range of forms of economic engagement, that bring people closer – **step by step** – to sustainable livelihoods. Not everyone makes it all the way but every step taken represents an improvement in economic participation.

Programmes in the Employment Stimulus can provide ‘support scaffolding’ in different ways to support unemployed people to move upwards all along the stairway towards a sustainable livelihood.



FOR MANY, ACCESS TO A SOCIAL GRANT PROVIDES THE FIRST LEVEL OF ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION, ENABLING A CRUCIAL STEP AWAY FROM CHRONIC POVERTY.



WORK EXPERIENCE IN A PEP BUILDS A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE LIVELIHOOD PATHWAYS



Networks, teamwork, task-management, time management, accountability and more are needed in the workplace – and in self-employment.



SAVINGS FROM WAGES SUPPORT INVESTMENT IN PRODUCTIVE ASSETS



Programme participants often save and sometimes form groups to do so.

These savings can then be used for activities like subsistence farming or home-based production.

Public Employment Programmes can provide ‘support scaffolding’ for transitions into wider economic opportunities.



The waste programme run by the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA) in COGTA provides public employment and enterprise support in a hybrid model. The PEP mobilises community participation in separating waste at source, which provides the volumes required for recycling enterprises to be viable.

Graduation from PEPs is a process not an event



MARKET DEMAND GROWS

A SIDE-HUSTLE SUPPLEMENTS PEP INCOME



Side-hustles may be independent of the work experience – but may build on skills and activities learned there.

PEPs can support with assets like land, access to tools, equipment, technical skills and more.



At this stage, enterprise activity transitions to being increasingly ongoing rather than ad hoc.

In the Employment Stimulus, PEPs have provided further support by incubating social enterprises in Early Childhood Development, providing a market for goods from ventures like seedling nurseries, and by aggregating produce as well as securing offtake agreements to enable market access

Every step taken represents an improvement in economic participation



RUNNING A VIABLE ENTERPRISE



At this stage, participants' involvement in economic activities becomes increasingly viable, with the prospect of supporting themselves independently of public employment.

Getting to this step builds on all the prior levels of support – starting with work experience.

In addition, there's a need for capital, cashflow and business skills.

PEPs – and livelihood support interventions – can enable access to finance, markets, skills, communities of practice – and solidarity.

Each level enhances the possibilities for sustainable livelihoods.



PIGGYBACKING ON SAVINGS

For participants in the **Meriting Urban Farming Hub** in Grasmere, their work in the SEF programme – supported by the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor – is to support food security in the community through innovative urban farming methods. They decided to form a savings group, and with savings of just R20 each per month, they saved enough to buy two pigs. They are now the proud owners of six pigs – with more on the way.

Step by step to sustainable livelihoods

**MULTIFUNCTIONAL AGRI-NODES
SUPPORT ALL ALONG THE STAIRWAY**

Seriti’s ‘Multi-Functional Agri-nodes’ – being piloted in four provinces – aim to transition participants across multiple steps on the stairway to economic participation. This initiative offers unemployed participants a unique package of opportunities. They start by working in food security initiatives managed by Seriti. While employed as part of the SEF programme, they are encouraged to save, as a springboard to support them into the next level of economic activity.

When they leave the programme, they are encouraged to register a business, and are then given access to land within the agri-node to undertake their own production. They get funding support for two production cycles, along with technical support and further training. Seriti carefully selects crops tailored to local demand and secures offtake agreements with major supermarkets in the area – and continues to provide marketing support when they exit from the agri-node to farm independently.



Seriti also supports participants to engage in other enterprise activities, where the agri-node can provide a market – and support other forms of market access too.

“While addressing hunger in communities, we are giving participants the tools to do so for their own families, too. Some are also able to pivot into sustainable economic activity in agricultural supply chains – in seedling nurseries, composting, processing and other activities in our agri-hubs.”

Juanita Pardesi, Chief Executive Officer, Seriti Institute





SOLAR-POWERED CINEMA IN A SUN-BOX

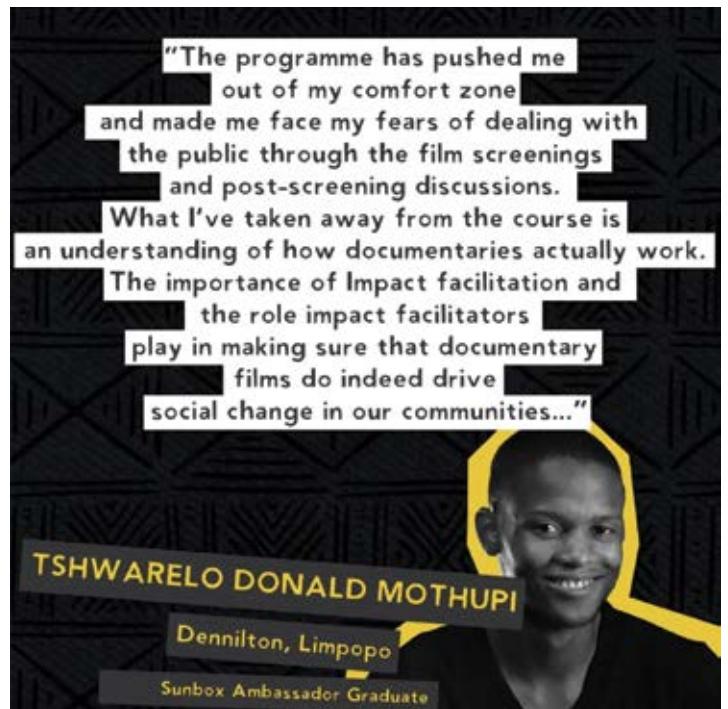
In rural and peri-urban areas, **Sunshine Cinema** trains young people to access a variety of income-generating opportunities in the digital economy, in a programme that has been supported by the NFVF. They provide a 10-month programme for aspiring media entrepreneurs, that gives them digital and entrepreneurial skills – as well as access to a ‘sunbox’ with all the tools they need to run solar-powered cinemas in communities.

These mobile cinemas educate, engage, and inspire their audiences in schools and communities, acting as a catalyst for conversation and engagement about key social issues.

In the process, young participants also acquire new soft skills including: project management, public speaking, logistics, event organisation and more.

During the programme participants earn an income but when they exit, they do so with the tools to continue earning through mobile cinemas, as well as from photography, digital marketing, and videography side-hustles. Others use their earnings to continue their studies.

This gig economy model is unlocking new digital opportunities for young people – in marginalised areas. Support to initiatives like this form part of the livelihood portfolio in the Employment Stimulus – giving participants a vital step up in earning potential.



“The PESP NFVF funding was the first time we accessed creative film industry support while promoting our youth entrepreneurship program which sees young people earn on average between R3,000-R10,000 a month from digital marketing gigs.”

Sydelle Willow Smith, Executive Director of Sunshine Cinema

SCHOOL ASSISTANTS CAN HUSTLE, TOO

Focus groups with school assistants run by Harambee in Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and the Western Cape

showed that many are involved in income-generating activities outside of their work experience. This includes selling food at schools, woks rolls on street corners, clothing, handbags, and cologne. Others are carpenters, nail technicians – or run small laundry-related enterprises. Such hustle activities augment their income – and can provide the first step on the path to self-employment.



“Now that the programme has ended, I’m self-employed. I saved money while being an assistant, and then registered and started a small cleaning services company.”

Patricia Dhlwayo, 29-year-old School Assistant, Free State

Yes, there are stimulus effects in the economy

Intuitively – and, indeed, in economic theory – when over a million more people earn incomes than before, this is not only good for them – it’s good for the economy too. Their spending – in small businesses, in the informal sector and in the formal sector – helps sustain and retain jobs – and create new ones too.

Supported by the Reseach Facility on Inequalities implemented by Agence Française de Developpement and funded by the European Commission, researchers have been unpacking this issue.

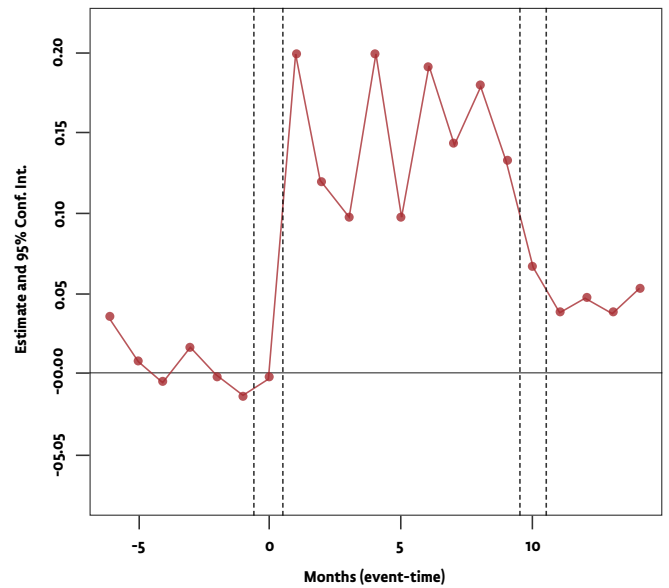
This includes a groundbreaking study on the BEEI.* Anonymised sales data from one of South Africa’s largest retailers was matched with anonymised IDs of BEEI participants, enabling comparison of spending patterns before, during and after the programme. This was made possible by Omnisient, a secure privacy-preserving data collaboration platform, that encrypted the data using a secure cryptographic protocol.

In the largest categories, participant spending increased by 16% for groceries, 16% for refrigerated and frozen perishables, and 20% for toiletries – including childcare-related products. Off a low base, spending increased by 51% for Home and Small Appliances and 40% for Kitchenware – amongst many other categories. And **even after leaving the programme, spending remains higher than before it – indicating either savings – or the impact of transitions to other opportunities** by participants, with this effect aggregated in the data.

The implied direct effect on this retailer’s sales is about R8 million per month. Indirectly, the increase in sales increased demand from their suppliers, and in turn from their suppliers’ suppliers.

* Bassier, I and Budlender, J. 2024. Stimulus effects of a large public employment programme. Research Paper No. 305, Agence française de développement.

PYEI-BEEI DIRECT EFFECTS ON THE FIRM’S SALES, AGGREGATE



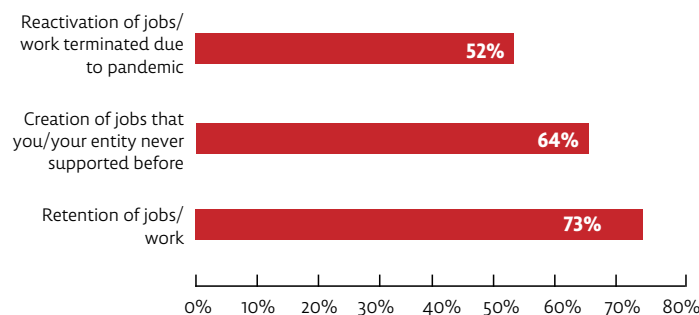
Notes: The figure shows the estimated effect of the PYEI-BEEI on participant spending at the retailer. The x-axis corresponds to months relative to the start of the programme, where 0 is November 2021. The vertical lines indicate the start and end of the programme, with double lines indicating months where the programme was partially in effect.

Overall, the researchers estimate that the BEEI generates about **R51 million per month** in additional value added into the national economy, which translates to **R19 million** spent on additional employment and wages per month, **R13 million** of which went towards local community employment.

What about participant spending outside the retailer? A Whatsapp survey of participants by Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator shows that groceries represent about 50% or total spending, with transport and rent also important.

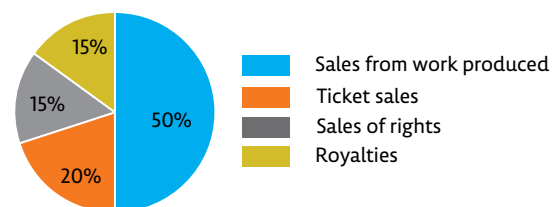
MULTIPLIER EFFECTS IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR

WORK/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES SUPPORTED BY THE PESP*



*Respondents could contribute to more than one category.

TYPES OF ADDITIONAL INCOMES EARNED



From the creative outputs produced, participants were able to leverage further opportunities that enabled them to earn additional incomes – enhancing their sustainability while also increasing the contribution of the creative sector to GDP.

Reference: Maybe, K. 2022. The Creative Sector Stimulus of the Presidential Employment Stimulus. Working paper. Southern African Labour and Research Development Unit (SALDRU). Cape Town: University of Cape Town.



Leaving no one behind in the just energy transition

SUPPORTING KOMATI'S ENERGY TRANSITION

In 2022, the Komati coal-fired power station in Mpumalanga was decommissioned. A review of the process by the Presidential Climate Commission in November 2023 discussed the challenges faced by the Komati community during the transition, emphasising the importance of economic diversification, community involvement, and job creation.

The Employment Stimulus and SEF are actively exploring how public employment can deliver meaningful work coupled with public value in the affected communities.

The climate crisis requires radical action: a swift transition towards a low-carbon economy, protecting and preserving the natural world, and supporting communities to adapt to environmental and structural changes. The expected economic benefits of decisive climate action promise significant job creation, but it also presents immediate challenges. Initially, job losses may outpace the creation of new roles, and there is a mismatch between the skills and locations of those losing jobs and the new opportunities emerging. This has implications for workers – but also for communities where the withdrawal of coal mines and other carbon-intensive activities pose profound challenges to local livelihoods.

In this context, the Employment Stimulus has **an institutional architecture in place that can rapidly roll-out programmes** to be deployed alongside environmental policies to ensure that people and communities are not left behind.

This can offer publicly funded, meaningful employment opportunities to people in affected communities, where the effects of job losses resulting from the energy transition ripples through entire local economies. Such employment can also be tailored to the skill sets of people directly affected by job losses, which can alleviate **income losses as well as the corrosive psychological and social impacts of unemployment and vulnerability**.

The work can also be aligned to **augment mitigation efforts, protect biodiversity, and build skills for jobs in a low-carbon economy**. As participants earn wages, this money flows back into local communities, mitigating the impacts on small enterprises and the informal sector.

Programmes in the Employment Stimulus can support the economic diversification away from fossil fuels, empowering communities to shape their future and avoiding the decline of mining and energy towns into disrepair. For example, the SEF supports 'work for the common good' which has enabled local solutions to local problems: upgrading informal settlements, ensuring food security, protecting biodiversity, innovating with waste recycling, and improving learning outcomes. These activities **generate public goods and enhance human capital**, contributing to improved health, education, nutrition, and social cohesion. This holistic approach – valuing the social value of labour and the future that communities desire for themselves – can be an empowering and crucial intervention in achieving a just transition.



Lessons from work in progress

BUILDING THE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR SCALE

The challenge of unemployment is huge. Yet so often, initiatives to address it are at the project scale, reaching under 10,000 people. We will never dent unemployment at that rate. Yet the opportunities to think big have been rare. The Employment Stimulus provided a unique window in which to demonstrate what delivery at scale can look like. This includes taking advantage of distributed networks such as in the schools programme.

In addition, mechanisms that solicited proposals were generally **significantly oversubscribed**. Within government, rather than the PES and its targets being imposed from above, a platform and an opportunity was created for great ideas to surface and to be supported: putting the initiative in the hands of those expected to implement them.

Outside of government, the process illustrated the significant capacity that can – and should – be harnessed from the wider society. So, for example the creative sector stimulus was hugely oversubscribed. Based on the scale of submissions, the SEF could have created 300,000 jobs instead of the 50,000 for which they had a budget.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ‘WHOLE OF SOCIETY’ APPROACHES

For the PES, one of the criteria of support for programmes was that they build partnerships beyond the state. Many programmes did well in doing so. But the funding insecurity for the Employment Stimulus posed a real constraint.

Partnerships take time to develop, so the hostile timeframes for delivery really inhibited this potential. Partners also want certainty if they are going to invest their time and capacity in processes. Even if they are getting funded for a particular activity, it still involves time, management effort, investment in systems, and risk and if there isn't a future for the relationship – that effort is an opportunity cost for the organisation.

For example, this certainly affected the ability to partner on pathways for participants with the private sector. Who has time to set up systems, processes and relationships if the programme is ending after the next cycle?

PROCUREMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS CAN BE HARD

Where funding is involved then so is procurement and procurement of joint action often proved complex. Fund mechanisms provide one solution. So for example: catchment management requires integrated, area-based approaches that involve a wide range of roleplayers – such as private landowners, a traditional authority and an informal settlement. Supporting an agenda of collaborative action is a procurement nightmare for any public body. Yet a mechanism designed to support integrated approaches can mean that all the partnerships are brokered at proposal development stage: and funded as a package – including co-funding components. This is exactly the kind of innovation the PES hopes to support in the future.

MANAGEMENT MATTERS

So many development programmes fail because of 'poor management'. So why is spending on programme management so often treated as a form of leakage? Quality outcomes require quality inputs. Of course, management must be efficient. But cutting programme management to the bone is a false economy. Rather than this money going to fund additional jobs – as it is often argued it will do – it can place the quality of all the jobs on a given programme at risk. Particularly where exponential scaling is required, then so too is growth in the capacities and systems that support strong work experiences, real social value creation and all the corollary outcomes we see from well-led programmes. Often, this requires a hub and spoke model rather than trying to replicate – and duplicate – systems and capacities at every site.



Compiled by Kate Philip and Zak Essa for the Project Management Office in the Presidency

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MOMENTUM AND MULTIPLIERS GROW OVER TIME

So, a lot has been achieved. But the really exciting ideas to take this work to the next level are now emerging from experience, from success and failure, from light-bulb moments and opportunities for joint approaches. It is really now that great ideas are emerging on how PEPs can seed market-based jobs and opportunities. It is now that transitions into self-employment and enterprise opportunities are manifesting. It is now that opportunities as part of the Just Transition are becoming apparent.

BUILDING A SOCIETY THAT WORKS

Inequality, unemployment and poverty are interlinked; so are their impacts. There is no silver bullet to solve them all. Instead, solutions must be multi-dimensional. Certainly, unlocking an economic trajectory that creates sustainable jobs is an overriding priority. But while that happens, the impacts of unemployment and poverty are having devastating impacts in communities and on our social fabric. This raises the risks of social instability – which could sabotage the prospects of the economic recovery on which sustainable solutions rely.

Interventions such as the Employment Stimulus are part of turning this vicious cycle around: because there is in fact no shortage of work to be done to make South Africa a better place. So let's get to work: on terms that build work experience, that create real public value, that address our social challenges and that unlock community agency and creativity to help to do so. Society as a whole – and the economy – will benefit from our doing so.



The Presidential Employment Stimulus

Building a society that works

1,7 million jobs, opportunities and more

February 2024

