

The Presidential Employment Stimulus

Building a society that works

2023

A million jobs and opportunities – and more

Spotlight on the Basic Education Employment Initiative



PRESIDENTIAL
EMPLOYMENT
STIMULUS



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



The Presidential Employment Stimulus Reaching One Million South Africans – and more

The Presidential Employment Stimulus was established in October 2020 in response to the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Its aim is to create jobs and strengthen livelihoods, supporting meaningful work while the labour market recovers - augmenting existing commitments to these outcomes. It also recognises that the pandemic created opportunities for change – for new ways of working and of responding to a crisis of unemployment that pre-dates the pandemic - and will last beyond it also.



‘Its implementation has involved a ‘whole of government’ effort – and a ‘whole of society’ one too. It has taken a huge amount of collaboration between the Presidency and the 15 departments that have risen to this occasion – along with partners in the private sector and community-based organisations across the country. This is an example of what the social compact can look like in practice; it is an example of what we can deliver when we work together.

‘Certainly, participation changes lives for participants. But the work undertaken is making a difference to communities too: strengthening learning in schools, upgrading informal settlements, supporting victims of gender-based violence, investing in the environment, innovating in waste-recycling and far more.

‘The work experience provided in these programmes increases people’s work-readiness and hence productivity in the wider economy – vital to a growth trajectory, and to reducing the costs and risks of hiring people with no prior work experience for the private sector. This has benefits not only for pathways to employment – but for the potential success of self-employment and enterprise activities too.

‘And then, of course: the incomes earned provide a vital economic boost to small enterprise and the informal sector in local economies across the country. School assistants employed in Umgungundlovu are spending their wages in Umgungundlovu. So too in Putsonderwater. This is the opposite of ‘trickle down’ economics.

In October 2022, the Presidential Employment Stimulus reached the million-participant milestone.

‘Since its launch in October 2020, over a million people have benefited from jobs and livelihood support opportunities from the Employment Stimulus, benefiting communities across the country. When we talk about one million South Africans we are also talking about one million households.





Instead, this puts money in the hands of people and communities that need it most, to trickle up into the wider economy from there. That's why we call it a stimulus. And the entire economy benefits – along with society.

‘When Covid plunged us even deeper into our crisis of unemployment, we needed to act. And we did. And we need to continue to do so, because the crisis of unemployment has not gone away. We needed the Employment Stimulus then, and we still need it now, not as an alternative to market-based recovery, but as a contribution to it.’

‘The bottom line is that through the Stimulus, we have unlocked energy, commitment, creativity, innovation – and opportunities. In the process, **we are building a society that works**. That is indeed our challenge and our goal

President Cyril Ramaphosa



The Presidential Employment Stimulus was launched in October 2020 as part of South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, in response to the devastating economic impacts of Covid. It has provided an ‘innovation sandbox’ for scaling up publicly-funded jobs and livelihood opportunities and has done so at unprecedented scale, reaching over 1 million direct beneficiaries in under two years. This includes the largest single youth employment programme in South Africa's history – the Basic Education Employment Intervention (also known as PYEI-DBE). Some of the next cohort of 255,000 school assistants will start in schools from 1 February, with later start dates for others. With this cohort in post, the BEEI alone will have provided meaningful employment to over 850,000 young people – creating real social value in the process. It is however just one of over 15 programmes in the stimulus, with many stories of innovation and of impact – on participants, their communities, the society and the economy.

Strategic oversight of the Presidential Employment Stimulus is provided by the Project Management Office in the Private Office of the President.

On the basis of a rigorous evaluation process against agreed criteria, budgets are allocated by National Treasury and implementation is undertaken directly by participating departments and public bodies.



**600,000
young people as
school assistants in
over 22,000 schools
with the next cohort
of 225 000 starting
1 February 2023**

The Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI)

IMPLEMENTED BY: DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

In under two years, the Basic Education Employment Initiative (also known as PYEI-DBE) has placed nearly 600,000 young people as school assistants in over 22,000 schools across the country. This happened in two cohorts. In 2023 a target of 255,000 young people will be placed, with 150,000 starting February 2023.

The BEEI includes opportunities for all skills levels. Education Assistants (EAs) support teachers in the classroom or are deployed to do admin or IT. They require a matric, with graduates prioritised. General Assistants (GAs) do not need a matric, and assist with tasks such as school maintenance, security, food gardens, sports and after-school care.

The BEEI has provided an example of how public employment programmes can go rapidly to scale, creating meaningful work at decent standards 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.



NUMBER OF YOUTHS TRAINED BY CATEGORY

Province	CVCW	Handymen	Reading Champions	Sports & Enrichment Assistant	eCadres	Curriculum	Total
Eastern Cape	100	1 100	5 330	1 637	4 216	7 351	19 734
Free State	442	456	1 078	883	1 012	3 474	7 345
Gauteng	0	0	2 753	3 874	1 345	2 040	10 012
KwaZulu Natal	158	5 819	3 958	313		19 147	29 395
Limpopo	1 696	3 827	3 646	350	3 004	12 131	24 654
Mpumalanga	0	1 595	2 643	1 602	2 000	11 833	19 673
Northern Cape	304	284	602	341	389	3 085	5 005
North West	0	1 601	440	396	1 371	5 407	9 215
Western Cape	108	3 736	321	606	10 242	10 786	25 859
National Total	2 808	18 418	20 771	10 062	23 579	75 254	150 892

‘They are so good at technology, they are teaching the teachers.’

For a taste of its impact, social media platforms provide real insight – and have been used by the Department of Basic Education to enable feedback and engagement that is often robust but that also demonstrates an embrace of open communication in the programme.

There are pictures of zinc zozos and housing improvements, posted with pride by participants who say they have been enabled by their earnings on the programme. There are pictures of graduation ceremonies, with thanks to the programme for enabling payment of outstanding fees.

One young father posts a picture of his toddler son with a new pair of shoes.

‘Thank you DBE’, he says, ‘for making me a supporting father.’

Research shows that under the right conditions, school assistants can effectively improve learning outcomes. Funda Wande selected, trained and mentored school assistants in 120 schools in Limpopo. A rigorous impact evaluation found this to be highly effective in improving reading and mathematics in the Foundation Phase. By term 3, grade 2 learners were estimated to be around 1.25 years ahead of their peers in control schools in both literacy and numeracy.

Ardington, C. 2023 Impact Evaluation of Funda Wande Teacher Assistant Intervention in Limpopo Province: Year 2. SALDRU, UCT.



As much pride is taken in the work undertaken: of reading corners and libraries established, videos of newly-trained sports enrichment coaches running exercise classes, before-and-after pictures of barren school grounds now bursting with cabbages, dull and dilapidated classrooms gleaming with new paint, participants at laptops doing school administration on DBE’s new data management system – which the school assistants often have to help the teachers to navigate. ‘They are so good at technology, they are teaching the teachers’, says Lala Maje, National Project Lead for the programme in DBE.

The training options available for school assistants have strengthened with each phase. Their development has relied on partners in the education sector. Participants are trained to support core curriculum outcomes such as maths and literacy, with many also trained as Reading Champions. The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) credits the Reading Champions with strengthening the culture of reading in schools, by running reading groups, setting up library corners, reading stories and giving one-on-one support to struggling learners. The E-cadres learn digital skills.

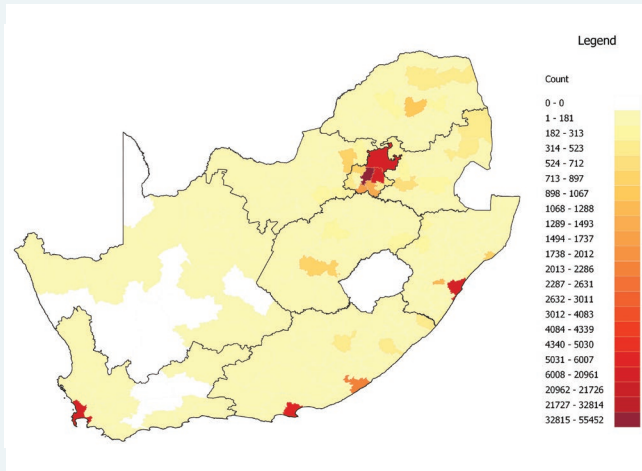
As one participant posted on social media,

‘My CV is no longer empty. Before this programme it was blank, now it has five certificates.’

REACHING THE 'JOBS DESERTS' FOR YOUTH...

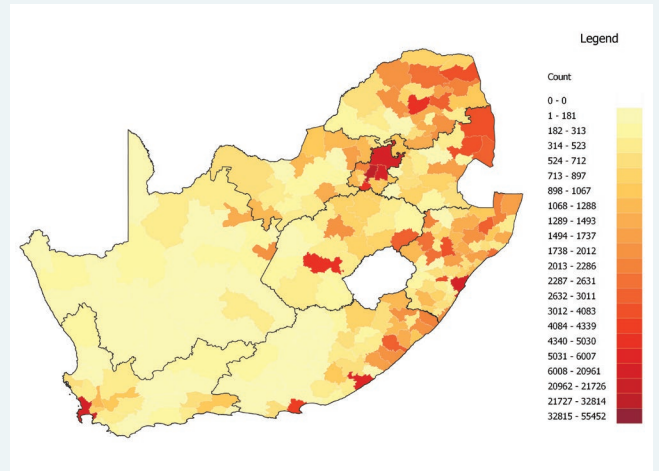
The BEEI has a highly equitable spatial footprint that reaches even the most remote and marginalised communities – because every community has schools.

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. Instead of 'jobs deserts' for youth across vast areas of the country, the BEEI brings opportunities.

According to Harambee, each recruitment cycle is activating increasing participation and engagement from young people from marginalized areas, with the latest round including a higher percentage of work-seekers applying to the most poorly resourced schools. Such applicants are twice as likely to come from rural areas and provinces with higher youth unemployment, with strong participation by young women.

The programme has been embraced by teachers and principals.



72.3%
of participants interviewed said this was **their first work experience**



94.6%
of teachers surveyed want the programme to continue – **and believe it strengthened learning outcomes**



94.2%
of school assistants surveyed said their participation in **BEEI was a positive experience**

Where to next for participants?

The school assistants exit into a tough labour market. Much effort is going into supporting them to transition to other opportunities. DBE has promoted Funda Lushaka bursaries and other scholarships for those who want to pursue careers in education. There has been CV-writing support, letters of reference from principals and engagement with stakeholders, including in the private sector to encourage all who can to assist these young people to find pathways to new opportunities – and to post such opportunities on SAYouth.mobi. The sector has absorbed some into literacy, library and after-school programme.

Some school assistants are now self-employed as tutors – amongst other entrepreneurial initiatives taken.



SA YOUTH

As an Education Assistant, 20-year-old **Wade Janniker** gave a helping hand in computer labs at Range Primary School in Elsie's River.

'I learned how much my help was valued. It was such a privilege to have that experience. In our neighbourhood, other people stand on corners and ask for R2.00. I don't want to be like them. My duties included assisting the deputy principal and teachers with admin work, but mostly I was in the computer lab. That's where I discovered how much I love computer work. It was very rewarding to see children wanting to learn.'

After exiting the programme, Janniker was able to find permanent employment.

Schools for children with disabilities have welcomed the school assistants with open arms. According to **Emily Xoliswa Didi**, the Principal at Phololo Special School in Mangaung,

'The learners here have special needs, but the group of school assistants we had were so eager to learn. After just a month, it was as if they were professionals, they were part of us.'

Recruitment for each phase of the BEEI has been done on SA Youth platform – with the first phase catapulting the platform into at-scale recruitment before it had even been formally launched.

SA Youth is a zero-rated digital platform run by Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator that aggregates opportunities 'for learning, earning and volunteering' to make these accessible for young people wherever they are. This reduces the costs of work-search. The platform also provides resources and workseeker support such as how to draft a CV. SA Youth 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 for young people, opportunities and information are accessible in one place.

In the latest round of recruitment, over 1,5 million young people applied for the 255,000 school assistant posts for 2023. Harambee's call centre took 75,000 calls from young people wanting support in the application process; walk-in support was also provided by NYDA Centres, Department of Employment and Labour Centres across the country. At the end of the process, SA Youth provides each school with a list of eligible applicants, with the schools then doing interviews and making appointments in relation to their own specific needs.

For those applicants who were not successful, their registration on SA Youth gives them access to support resources and other opportunities, making this an important instrument for the wider economic activation of youth across the country.



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Thank you to our partners for technical support

