



**PRESIDENTIAL
YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT
INTERVENTION**



**PYEI QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT:
Q1: APR – JUN 2026**

**Opening New Pathways to Earning for
Young People**



**THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**





Message from the Deputy Minister in the Presidency

The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) opened the 2026/27 financial year with continued momentum across the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN), demand-led skilling, the National Youth Service and the enterprise support work of the PYEI ecosystem. The first quarter also carried particular significance for the intervention as it included Youth Month which saw the commemoration of 50 years since the 1976 Soweto Uprising. The Youth Month Commemoration is both a reminder of the progress made and the work that remains in ensuring meaningful participation of young people in South Africa's economy.

This quarter also saw SA Youth surpass 6 million registered young people, with close to 5.7 million young people registered on ESSA. Since the inception of the PYEI, young people have secured over 2.6 million earning opportunities through SA Youth and a further 386,733 through ESSA. The network's contribution to closing equity gaps in the labour market remains consistent, with close to 70% of opportunities on SA Youth accessed by young women.

In the demand-led skilling portfolio, 5,244 YES placements were delivered during the quarter, bringing cumulative workplace experience opportunities to 233,393 since inception; of these, 72% have been delivered through YES and 28% through the DHET SETAs. Enterprise support through the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) continued at pace, with 5,214 opportunities delivered this quarter (4,795 non-financial and 419 financial), taking total enterprise support opportunities across the ecosystem to 277,349.

The Revitalised National Youth Service (NYS) marked a major milestone this quarter with the launch of Phase 5, its largest phase yet, which is now recruiting 100,000 young people across South Africa. A further 2,866 young people were recruited during the quarter, taking total NYS paid service opportunities to 140,922 since inception, 68% of which have been accessed by young women.

The NPMN Innovation Fund had an active quarter, both in the performance of its portfolio and in expanding its pipeline. As at 30 June 2026, the portfolio had facilitated access to over 32,000 earning opportunities, with 2,212 young people having secured earning opportunities since inception and more than 52,000 unemployed young people now registered across the Fund.

The portfolio of funded organisations continue to show what catalytic capital can unlock. Umuzi has enrolled 3,404 young people and secured 4,373 paid gig economy opportunities, with young people earning an average of R4,314 per gig, more than double the R2,000 benchmark. Property Point now has 126 partner agencies hosting 440 young people in estate agency pathways, where 66 young people have concluded 249 property deals. Edunova has enrolled its full cohort of 600 young people, with microlearning completions at 108% of target.

The first quarter sets a strong foundation for the year ahead. Our focus for the remainder of the 2026/27 financial year remains scaling the various successful initiatives and ensuring that the ambition of South Africa's young people remains at the centre of every part of the intervention. As always, detailed data and insights are available on the PYEI dashboard [here](#).

Ms Nonceba Mhlauli

**Deputy Minister in
the Presidency**





Introduction

The President launched the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) in 2020 as a comprehensive approach to address the country's youth unemployment challenge. The PYEI is a multi-stakeholder partnership that accelerates efforts to transition young people from learning to earning.



The Presidency's Project Management Office (PMO) coordinates and provides strategic direction while key national departments and entities lead the implementation together with a diverse set of partners.

In the PYEI, partners are working to achieve three core objectives:

- ▶ Drive systems change to address the barriers that young people face in establishing themselves in the labour market
- ▶ Aggregate existing opportunities and create new opportunities for young people
- ▶ Link young people to opportunities and available support in a single national network

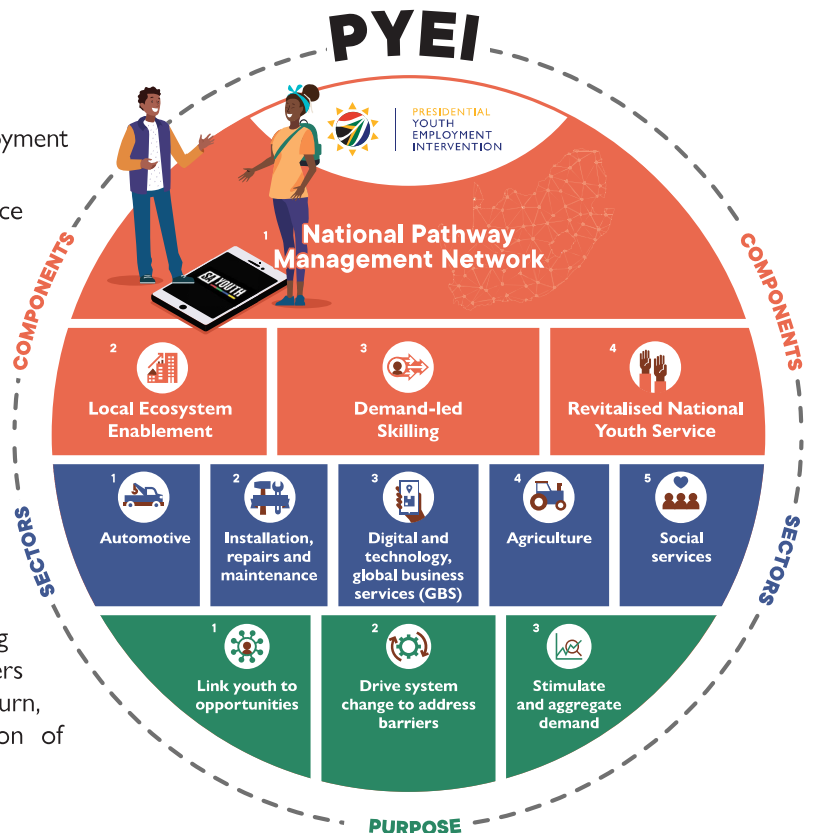
Central to the PYEI's efforts is the establishment of a National Pathway Management Network. The NPMN allows young people to find and seize opportunities that unlock earning pathways.

Other PYEI components include:

- ▶ Demand-led skills development
- ▶ Enabling local ecosystems to facilitate self-employment and enterprise opportunities
- ▶ The revitalisation of the National Youth Service (NYS)

The desired impact is to **contribute to a South Africa where young people are actively participating in the economy with greater dignity and a sense of agency over their contribution to society.**

The PYEI closely integrates with other interventions coordinated by the Presidency to drive structural reforms and enable job creation, such as Operation Vulindlela and the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES). PES provides funding for several PYEI components and directly delivers public employment opportunities for youth. In turn, the PYEI's NPMN supports the implementation of PES programmes.

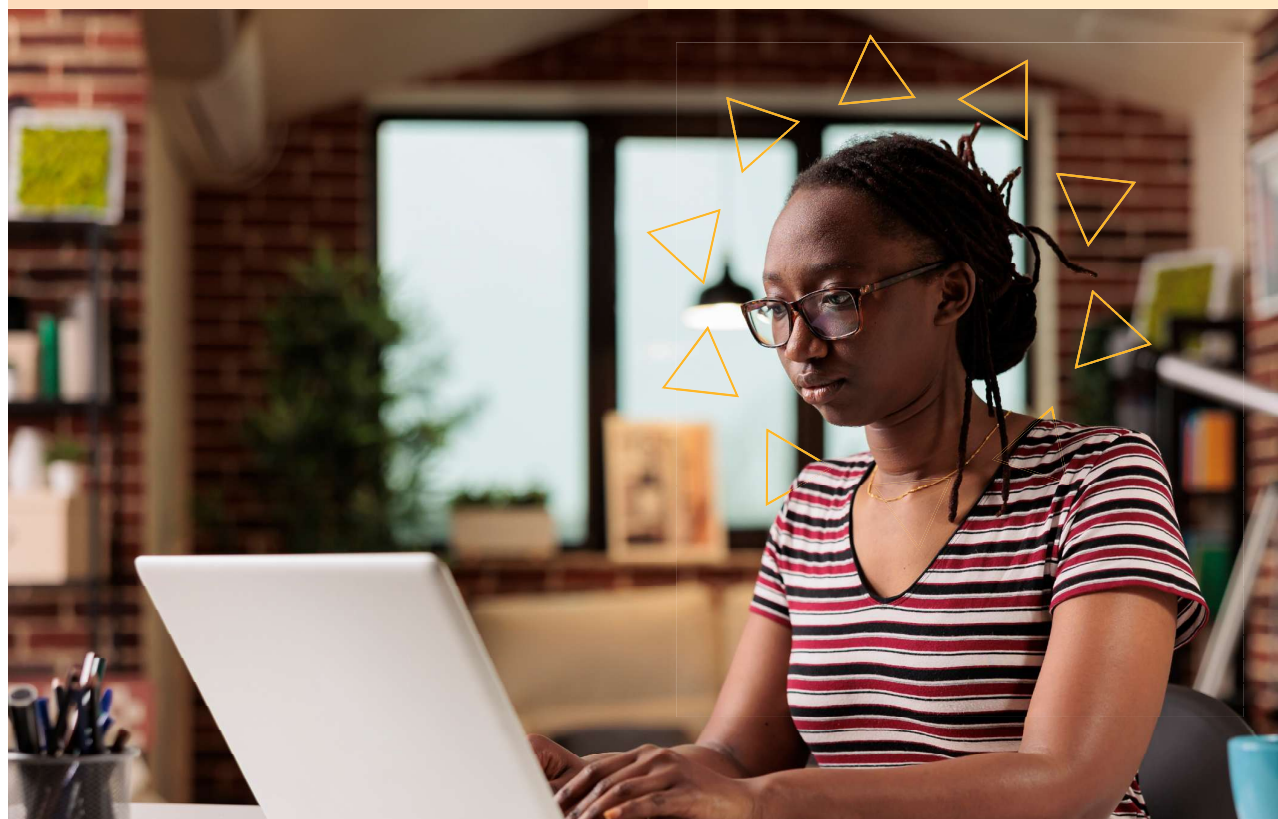


What has been achieved since inception?

In the first quarter of the 2026/2027 financial year, we continued to see great progress made in unlocking earning opportunities for young people in South Africa.

The PYEI has three overarching targets that capture how the intervention seeks to support young people on their journey to sustainable earning. To date, the PYEI has exceeded two of its three overarching targets, with evaluations underway to assess progress made toward the third target.

TARGET (2020 – 2025)	ACTUAL (2020 – to date)
At least 5 million young people are engaged in the National Pathway Management Network and access services to help them grow their employability and pursue opportunities.	Over 6 million young people are registered and accessing opportunities in the National Pathway Management Network. 
Young people supported to access 1.5 million temporary earning opportunities including work-based placements, work-integrated learning opportunities, and paid service opportunities.	Young people have been supported to access to over 2.6 million temporary earning opportunities, including work-based placements, work-integrated learning opportunities, and paid-service opportunities. 
500 000 young people engaged in sustainable earning opportunities through workforce development programmes.	Work-in-progress. Evaluations and tracing studies have commenced. 





Achievements and highlights from Quarter 1

(APRIL – JUNE 2026)

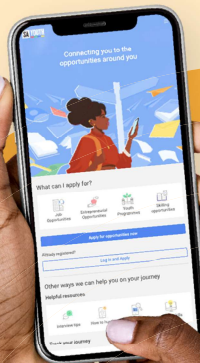
Young people secured 139 693 earning opportunities through the NPMN.

In the first quarter of the new financial year, **106 093 earning opportunities** were secured by young people through the SA Youth platform. A further **33 600 earning and learning opportunities** were secured on ESSA.



employment & labour

Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Expanding workplace experience opportunities for 5 244 young people.

In the first quarter of the financial year, the Youth Employment Service (YES), a private sector-led initiative, placed **5 244** young people in workplace experience opportunities in various sectors of the economy. Cumulatively, 233 393 workplace experience opportunities have been **delivered** since the inception of the PYEI.



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



An additional 2 866 young people were recruited for Phase 5 of the Revitalised National Youth Service.

The first quarter of the financial year saw the recruitment of an additional **2 866** young people into phase 5 of the Revitalised National Youth Service (NYS), its largest phase yet, which will recruit 100 000 young people across **South Africa**. To date, the NYS has placed **140 922** young people in paid service opportunities across its five phases.

National Youth Service
Proud to serve

National Youth Service

Supporting young people to build their enterprises.

In the first quarter of the financial year, young people continued to receive direct support for their enterprises. A total of **5 214** financial and non-financial enterprise opportunities were provided by the National Youth Development Agency in Q1.



small business development

Department:
Small Business Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH OUR FUTURE





SPOTLIGHT 1

Innovation Fund: Round 4 Call for Proposals Now Open

The NPMN Innovation Fund is expanding. With R95 million committed for its fourth round, the Fund is calling for innovative models that create sustainable jobs and income-earning opportunities for young people in rural and marginalised communities.



The Innovation Fund is the primary funding instrument of the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN), led by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) and administered by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). Implemented on Challenge Fund principles, the Fund partners with implementers and funders to pilot or scale initiatives that resolve barriers across the NPMN's three focus areas: stimulating and aggregating demand, driving systems change to address barriers, and linking young people to opportunities.

During the quarter, the Presidency, DEL and the IDC finalised the design of the fourth Call for Proposals, committing R95 million to back the next generation of youth employment innovations. The Expression of Interest is now open, with applications closing on 10 September 2026.

Round 4 prioritises proposals that strengthen economic linkages between rural and marginalised areas and the rest of the economy; that stack complementary microenterprise and gig activity so that young people can sustain earnings at or above the National Minimum Wage for at least 12 months; that partner with institutions of influence to foster the participation of young people, including young people living with disabilities, in economic activity; and that deepen the network of NPMN partners, particularly civil society and youth-led organisations.

Preference will be given to initiatives that target areas with

high youth unemployment, including rural areas, peri-urban areas, townships and identified poverty nodes, and that reach young women and young people with disabilities. Competitive applications will combine meaningful skills and experiential training in real-world environments, strong industry partnerships, innovative co-funding arrangements, and models that build on local resources and systems, with strong pathways for young participants out of this and other government programmes.

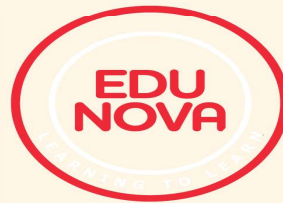
The Fund's track record shows what this catalytic capital can unlock. As at 30 June 2026, the current portfolio had facilitated access to over 32,000 earning opportunities, with more than 52,000 unemployed young people registered across the Fund and the projects approved under the third Call moving into implementation.

Click [here](#) to access the Round 4 Expression of Interest and application details.



SPOTLIGHT 2

Innovation Fund Partner Spotlight: Edunova



Edunova, an education non-profit dedicated to improving education through technology, is opening a digital pathway into self-employment for young people in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape. Funded through the PYEI's National Pathway Management Network (NPMN) Innovation Fund, Edunova's micro-franchise model trains young people as Community Digital Enablers, known as 'Angels', who establish and manage their own micro-enterprises offering task-based digital services in their communities, driving digital inclusion while earning an income.

The NPMN Innovation Fund is a grant initiative led by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) and administered by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). Through funding initiatives like Edunova's, the Fund is unlocking earning opportunities for young people by testing innovative, demand-led pathways into growth sectors of the economy, including the digital economy.

Through the programme, participating young people are supported with:

- Training and support as Community Digital Enablers, delivered through the YoMobi platform
- Partnership-based delivery with Capacitate and the Small Projects Foundation
- Support to establish and manage micro-enterprises offering task-based digital services in their communities
- Microlearning courses that build digital, business and marketing skills, including the use of AI as a marketing tool for small businesses
- Access to digital public goods and digital public infrastructure that connect Enablers to tasks, tools and demand

As of the end of the quarter, Edunova had enrolled its full cohort of 600 young people, meeting its enrolment target in full, with young people completing microlearning courses at 108% of the project's target and retention at 83%. The majority of participants are young women. As earning partnerships mature, the project is focused on deepening the pipeline of paid tasks so that digital skills translate into consistent incomes for participants.

By pairing digital skills with enterprise support and a ready platform, Edunova is building a sustainable route into the digital economy for young people in communities where formal jobs are scarce. The initiative shows how targeted innovation funding can drive digital inclusion while enabling youth livelihoods and enterprise.

The PMO in the Presidency continuously monitors progress with implementation.

To continue to follow our progress, visit the PYEI Dashboard [here.](#) 



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA