



**PRESIDENTIAL
YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT
INTERVENTION**



**PYEI QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT:
Q4: JAN – MAR 2026**

**Unlocking The Potential of Young
People in South Africa**



**THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**





Message from the Deputy Minister in the Presidency

In March 2026, the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) closed out the 2025/26 financial year with sustained progress across its core delivery components. The results of the fourth quarter reflect the continued scale of the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN), alongside steady progress in demand-led skilling, the National Youth Service, and the enterprise support work of the PYEI ecosystem. By the end of Q4, over 5.9 million young people were registered on SA Youth, with over 5.36 million registered on ESSA. As of Q4 2025/2026, the PYEI has facilitated access to over 2.5 million earning opportunities through SA Youth and an additional 422,667 opportunities through ESSA since the inception of the PYEI.

This marks an increase of over 155,161 new opportunities since last quarter. Notably, the PYEI continues to demonstrate its commitment to contributing to closing equity gaps in the labour market for young people, with over 70% of opportunities on SA Youth being accessed by young women.

In the demand-led skilling portfolio, 18,310 YES placements and an additional 5,005 Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) SETA placements were delivered during Q4. This is more than double the number of work-integrated learning placements secured in Q3 and brings the total supported to date to 228,148.

In addition, through the support of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), 6,085 enterprise support opportunities were delivered in Q4 alone (5,553 non-financial and 532 financial support opportunities). The Revitalised National Youth Service (NYS) continues to provide young people with paid service opportunities. Phase 4 of the NYS recruited a further 5,272 young people this quarter, taking total NYS paid service opportunities to 138,056 since inception. In the next quarter, Phase 5 will recruit an additional 100 000 young people across South Africa, giving young people opportunities to serve their communities while gaining valuable skills. This will result in a significant increase in the number of young people accessing NYS opportunities.

Q4 saw the conclusion of the Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund Pilot, one of the largest Government Funded formal-sector employment outcomes funds globally.

The final results of the Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund Pilot demonstrated the effectiveness of outcomes-based financing in delivering sustainable employment outcomes for young people. With the conclusion of delivery, the programme is now in its final outcome verification phase. As at 30 March 2026, over 9260 young people had been enrolled in the programme, with over 7, 044 job placements, exceeding the placement target by 56%. These results underscore the success of the Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund pilot in delivering scale, quality, and sustained employment outcomes, while generating critical lessons to inform the mainstreaming of outcomes-based financing in public service delivery in South Africa.

The results of the financial year demonstrate what coordinated, demand-led action can deliver for young people in South Africa. Heading into the 2026/27 financial year, and as we enter Youth Month, our focus remains on scaling the delivery of quality work placements, advancing the mainstreaming of outcomes-based financing in public service delivery, and continuing to centre the ambition of South Africa's young people across 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

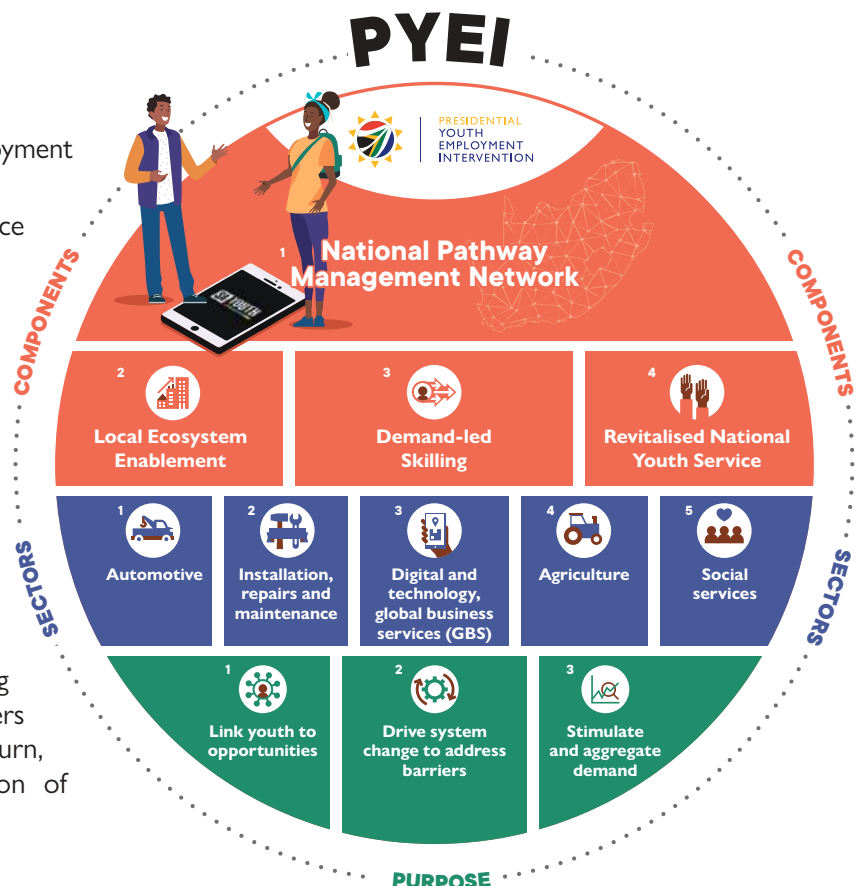
Central to the PYEI's efforts is the establishment of a National Pathway Management Network. The NPMN allows young people to find and seize opportunities that unlock earning pathways.

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 final quarter of the 2025/2026 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 5.9 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 2.5 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 4

(JAN – MARCH 2026)

Young people secured **155 161** earning opportunities through the **NPMN**.

In the fourth quarter of the financial year, **135 009** earning opportunities were secured by young people through the SA Youth platform. A further **20 152** earning and learning opportunities were secured on ESSA.



employment & labour

Department: Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Expanding workplace experience opportunities for **23 315** young people.

In the fourth quarter of the financial year, the Youth Employment Service (YES), a private sector-led initiative, placed **18 310** young people in workplace experience opportunities in various sectors of the economy. In addition, the Department of Higher Education and Training placed **5 005** young TVET learners and graduates into workplace experience opportunities.



higher education & training

Department: Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



An additional **5 272** young people were recruited for Phase 4 of the Revitalised National Youth Service.

The fourth quarter of the financial year saw the recruitment of an additional **5 272** young people into the final cohort of phase 4 of the Revitalised National Youth Service (NYS). To date, the NYS has placed **138 056** young people in paid service opportunities across all four phases and phase 5 will see an additional **100 000** young people accessing paid service opportunities.



Supporting young people to build their enterprises.

In the fourth quarter of the financial year, young people continued to receive direct support for their enterprises. A total of **6 085** financial and non-financial enterprise opportunities were provided by the National Youth Development Agency in Q4.



small business development

Department: Small Business Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund: Pilot Closing Results

The Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund is an innovative funding mechanism designed to deliver high-quality jobs for previously excluded youth, by incentivising skills providers to deliver appropriate skills development and support job readiness programmes



The Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund is South Africa's first large-scale outcomes-based employment fund, a R300 million pay-for-performance mechanism that pays implementing partners 80 per cent of their funding only upon achievement of verified, sustained employment outcomes for excluded young people. Jobs Boost launched in November 2023 as a pilot under the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, with the National Skills Fund (NSF) as the outcomes funder, to test whether outcomes-based funding could help more young people access quality jobs.

The pilot's evaluation results demonstrated that because 80 per cent of funding to implementing partners was contingent on job placement outcomes, partners were incentivised to improve their recruitment mechanisms and invest in placement and post-placement support to ensure young people secure and retain quality job placements.

Pilot implementation concluded in March 2026 and the final round of milestone verifications for 3-month and 6-month retention outcomes are in progress.

As at 30 March 2026 the pilot achieved the following results:

9,174 young people had been enrolled, reaching over 110% of the enrolment target

7, 044 young people had been placed into jobs, reaching 54% above the target of 4500.

5,211 verified three-month sustained employment outcomes, a **73.4 percent** conversion from placement, with **3,795** sustained to six months, with additional verified three-month and six-month retention outcomes expected as the final verification of results concludes in Q1 of the 2026/2027 financial year.

The pilot also demonstrated that an outcomes-based approach can deliver quality outcomes for the most disadvantaged young people. Evaluation results showed that young people from Quintile 1 schools were retained at higher rates than their Quintile 2 and 3 peers, and Child Support Grant recipients performed no differently from non-recipients.

These lessons will shape the scale-up of the fund, which will scale to R1 billion and deliver 20 000 high-quality job placements. The scale-up will be funded by a combination of commitments from government and private sector, demonstrating a public-private partnership approach to unlocking earning opportunities for young people.

As the scale up design takes shape, we will continue to share lessons learned from the pilot about evidence systems, verification at scale, employer engagement, and demand-led skilling and placement of young people.



higher education
& training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





SPOTLIGHT 2



Innovation Fund Partner Spotlight: HPSA South Africa



HPSA (formely Heifer International South Africa), is opening a rural pathway into agriculture, supporting young people in some of KwaZulu-Natal's most under-served districts to build livestock-based micro-enterprises that earn an income while strengthening the farms around them.

Through its Empowering Rural Youth in Agriculture project, funded through the PYEI's National Pathway Management Network (NPMN) Innovation Fund, HPSA is training young people across the Zululand, uMkhanyakude and King Cetshwayo districts to deliver animal health, nutrition and livestock services in their own communities. For almost 25 years, HPSA has worked with rural families to end hunger and poverty. Their Empowering Rural Youth in Agriculture project applies that experience to the youth employment challenge, turning agricultural skills into self-employment in a sector where rural young people are too often locked out for want of capital, networks or formal work.

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 initiatives like HPSA's, the Fund is unlocking earning opportunities for young people by testing demand-led pathways into growth sectors of the economy, including the rural and agricultural economy that mainstream skilling programmes rarely reach.

Through the project, participating young people are supported with:

- Accredited training in animal health management, livestock nutrition, vaccination and business management
- Start-up support to run their own agribusinesses, including mobile vet clinics, protein block production and livestock merchandising
- Market linkages to local farmers, with women farmers onboarded and trained to commercialise their livestock and generate demand for youth services
- Mentorship and innovation platforms where young people share challenges across communities and develop solutions together

As of the end of the quarter, 1 800 young people had been enrolled, meeting the project's enrolment target in full. Of these, 678 had begun generating income, recording R1.4 million in sales over four months and individual earnings of up to approximately R17 000. By pairing accredited skills with start-up support and a ready local market, HPSA is building a sustainable route into self-employment for young people in districts where formal jobs are scarce. The initiative shows how targeted innovation funding can extend earning opportunities into the rural economy through 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.](#)

