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Understanding the YES programme and its benefits



We have seen our youth being largely affected by the economic slowdown and low levels of employment in the labour market.

With over 6 million youth between the ages of 18 and 35 unemployed in our country, drastic measures needed to be taken to ensure a future in South Africa.

One of these measures was introduced in March 2018 when *President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the Youth Employment Service (YES) programme.* On 28 August 2018, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) gazetted the inclusion of the YES initiative in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Codes of Good Practice.

With the implementation of the YES initiative, broad-based transformation has entered a new phase of diversity, requirements, dimensions and facets. It is no longer limited to traditional considerations such as ownership and management but includes a strong emphasis on job creation.

YES programme benefit for businesses

YES is a business-driven initiative which is breaking new ground by pioneering a partnership with government and labour in collectively tackling a national plan to build economic pathways for the youth. Participating in the YES programme is extremely attractive for enterprises to meet their YES targets. *Should entities meet all the YES qualifying criteria and pre-conditions*, which include conducting YES-specific learning programmes, YES can assist entities to enhance their overall B-BBEE status with up to 2 levels. Companies will be able to claim up to 50% as informal Skills Development expenditure (informal, industry-led, non-accredited training) for YES training expenses on the Skills Development element of the B-BBEE Scorecard.

YES programme benefit for youth

A clear gap was identified between unemployed youth and the current workforce. South Africa's youth are the most vulnerable in an economy where skills are required, with their future relying heavily on job readiness and ability to enter the job market. YES focuses on making the youth more "employable" by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills and giving them a chance to demonstrate their abilities, establish a work ethic and prove their worth.

What is the SERR YES programme?

Businesses are in general uncertain about integrating the YES programme into an existing training and transformation strategy and maximising B-BBEE scorecard points for priority elements by incorporating YES. SERR Synergy recognises the impact that implementation of YES has on business owners and their business operations. With this in mind, we have joined hands with the YES initiative and designed a unique *SERR YES (Youth Employment Service) programme* with tailor-made solutions to suit different business needs so as to address the full spectrum of B-BBEE and YES compliance requirements.

- Our SERR YES programme assists companies who want to participate in the YES initiative by registering on the YES platform, sourcing and screening unemployed youth and, if need be, also placing youth in a quality work environment. All YES youth receive a smartphone loaded with the YES App. The App contains 21 training modules and surveys that need to be completed throughout the year.
- SERR YES has eight uniquely developed training modules focusing on employability and work readiness to further empower youth. This training is offered as classroom training by our experienced and qualified facilitators for a more face-to-face experience with the youth. Mentoring is also provided to the youth throughout the year, with monthly monitoring of workplace attendance and personal progress – another service about which SERRSynergy is very passionate.
- Through our *Labour Pro department*, we draw up employment contracts between the youth employee and Measured Entity to ensure that both parties are always protected by the Labour law. These contracts are also one of the requirements for B-BBEE verification.

With over 600 companies already participating and 12 000 youth placed on the YES programme in the first 6 months, the future looks much brighter for both the youth and our country.

YES really needs you and me! YES is a viable model for inclusive economic transformation as it will increase employability and ultimately lead to positive social changes in South Africa and a future that works for all. Do not miss our next YES programme blog that will deal specifically with the YES registration processes for businesses and the youth.

About the Author: Jonathan Watts joined SERR in September 2016 as a Training Assistant. He received the Training and Development Department's Employee of the Year Award in 2017 and became a Learnership Coordinator. He was recently promoted to Project Manager of YES & Empowerment.

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