

July 5, 2018

Important facts about the YES initiative



The YES (Youth Employment Service) programme is a business-led initiative undertaken in collaboration with government, labour and civil society.

The YES initiative aims to contribute towards building and strengthening our economy by creating one million jobs and job opportunities within the next 3 years for young black South Africans from urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

Statistics released by Stats SA reveal that South Africa has an alarming 5,9 million youth who are unemployed with over 60% of South Africa's unemployed residing in townships. More importantly, there are currently three million South Africans aged between 15 and 24 who are neither employed nor pursuing higher education. This is one of the main reasons for launching the YES initiative.

What is the YES Community Hub?

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The YES initiative introduced the first of 100 community hubs on Thursday, 28 June 2018. The YES Community Hub is intended to be an inclusive and engaging platform for aspirant small businesses, existing Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and, most importantly, the youth, to access training that positions them to meet the needs of the economy and pursue work opportunities in SMMEs. In general, youth find it challenging to adjust to the work environment and to bridge the huge gap between being a student and being able to survive in the corporate world. The fast-paced environment, coupled with an intense workload, can also be an extremely daunting task.

What is the objective of the YES initiative?

The objective of the YES initiative is to make provision for unemployed young people to be trained and employed by corporates and SMMEs by way of learnership programmes, bursaries and accredited or non-accredited training courses for a 12-month period. The key focus of the YES initiative is work readiness and sustainable training and development programmes that will prepare the youth for first-time employment and the creation of much-needed jobs.

What are the qualifying criteria for the YES initiative?

Certain qualifying criteria have to be met to sign up for the YES initiative. There are also targets that need to be met depending on certain factors such as annual turnover of the business, NPAT (net profit after tax) or headcount. Corporates will benefit from meeting their YES targets through enhanced Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) status levels. There are companies that may want to participate in the YES programme but do not have the necessary facilities to accommodate these learners (whether on a YES learnership programme, bursary, accredited training or non-accredited courses). This is where SMMEs will benefit from the YES programme. SMMEs can contribute by employing young individuals for 12 months and need not concern themselves with funding as the larger corporates will sponsor the salary of such YES training. The salary would be the envisaged minimum wage of R3 500 per month. In addition, businesses will qualify for the ETI (Employment Tax Incentive).

Given the above and bearing in mind our developmental needs as a country, it is incumbent upon us to embrace this promising initiative that is intended to propel the economic transformation of young people and create jobs across all industries.

SERR Synergy will assist corporates to register for the YES initiative and to roll out specifically designed YES training programmes.

About the Author: Sherisa Hiralal completed her LLB at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and has worked in the B-BBEE industry since 2011. She started at SERR Synergy in 2015 and currently holds the title of Project Manager where she specialises in the incorporation of specialised programmes and initiatives relating to B-BBEE.

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