

A LEARNING SERIES

WORKING TOWARDS AGILE AND RESPONSIVE SKILLS AND (SELF) EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEMS IN AFRICA

A Systems Approach to Addressing Youth Unemployment

LEARNING BRIEF 4

**DEMAND-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
IN AFRICA**





A Compilation of Learning Briefs
Spotlighting Innovation, Impact,
Tips & Strategies

LEARNING BRIEF 4

**DEMAND-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
IN AFRICA**



Published by:

Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA)
An initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)

Implemented by:

African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD),
Johannesburg, South Africa, www.nepad.org
Contact: Unami Mpofu, **Email:** UnamiM@nepad.org

Recommended citation:

African Union Development Agency – NEPAD (2022). A Learning Series: Working Towards Agile and Responsive Skills and (Self) Employment Ecosystems In Africa - A Systems Approach to Addressing Youth Unemployment. Midrand, South Africa: Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA).

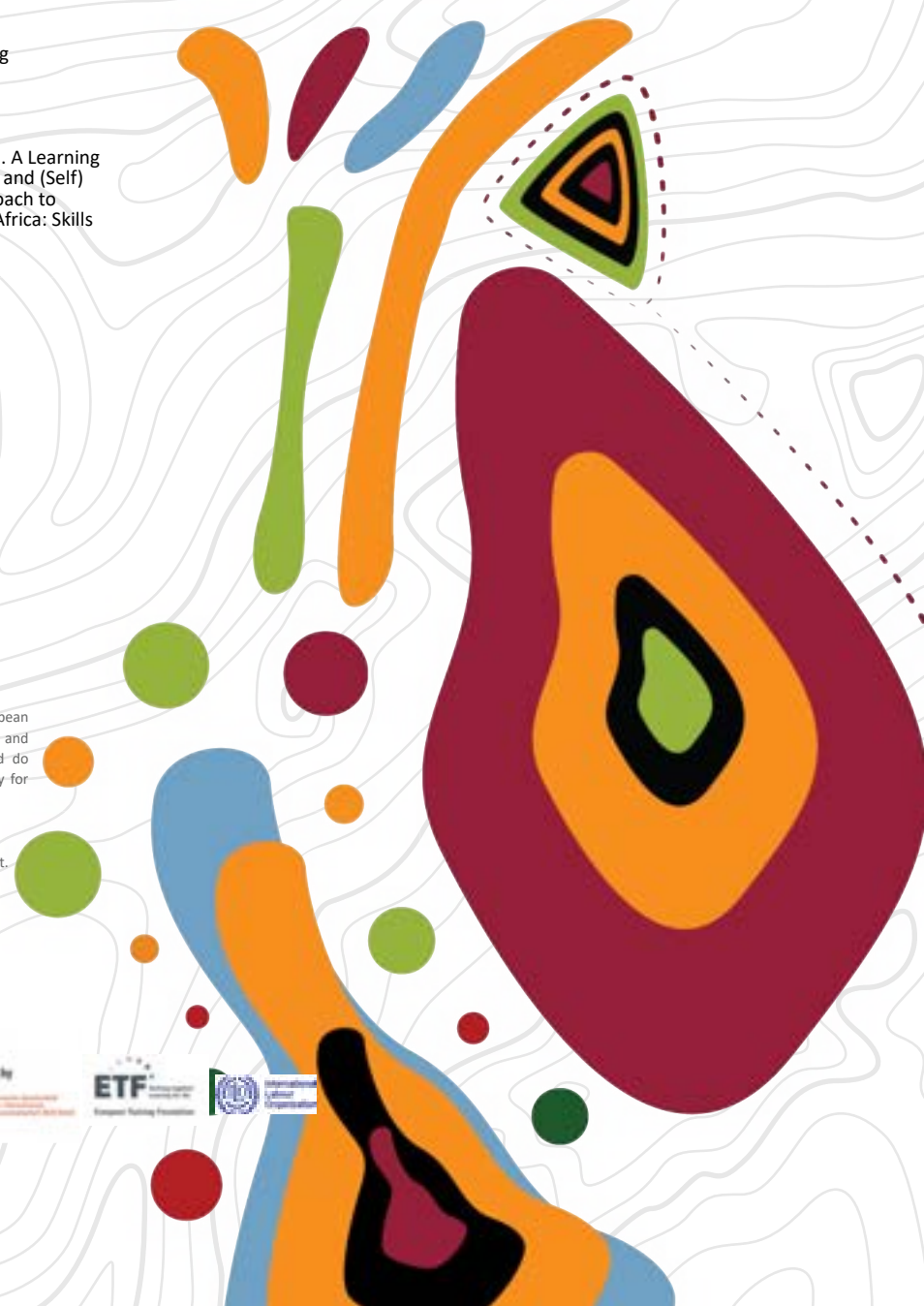
Concept/Design:

[Concept Afrika](#)

Disclaimer:

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Its contents are the sole responsibility of GIZ and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU or the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

This project is co-funded by the European Union and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.





CONTENTS

PAGE



ACRONYMS



AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency New Partnership for Africa's Development
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BESA	Business Process Enabling South Africa
CEDA	Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
GBS	Global Business Services
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-profit Organisation
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
ROI	Return on Investment
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMMEs	Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

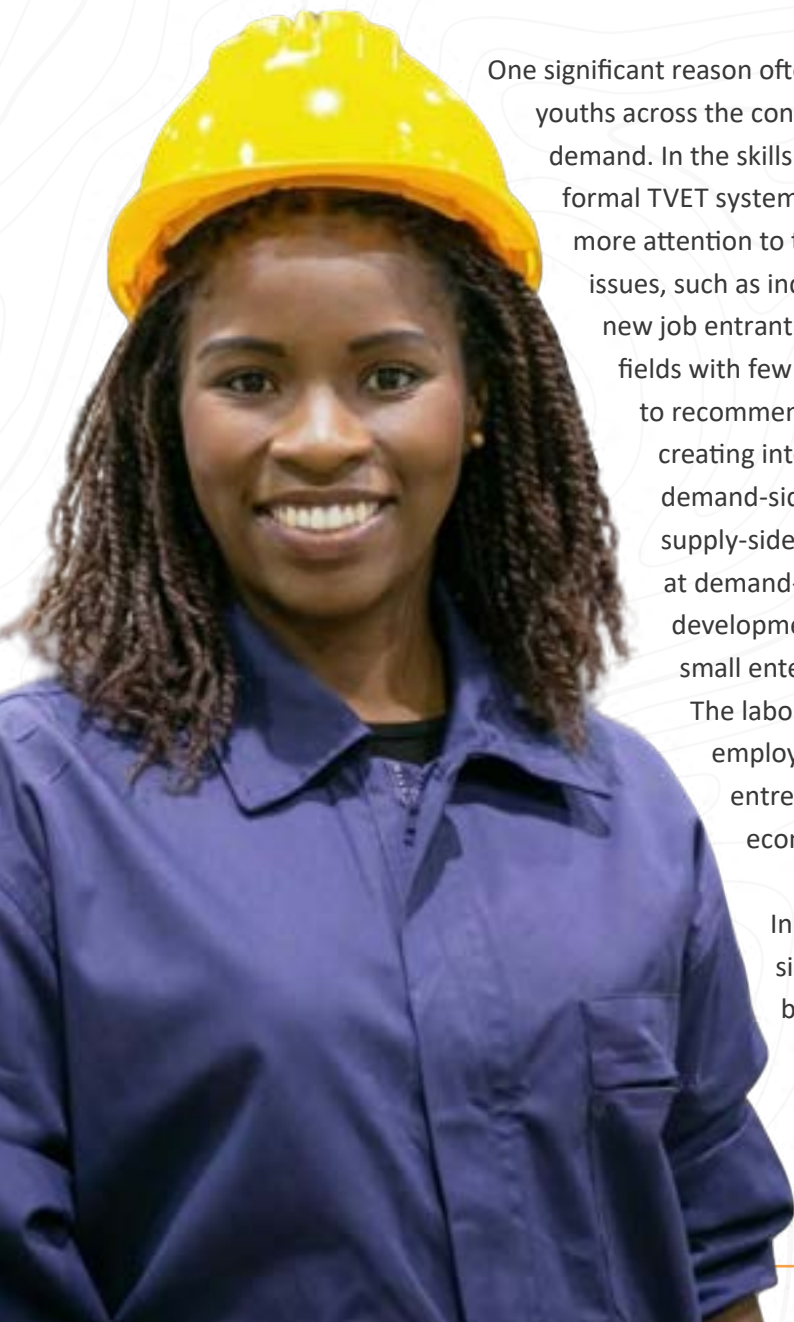
SETTING THE SCENE:

DEMAND-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The labour market is the point at which the supply (of workers who can provide skills and services) and demand (from employers regarding the skills and services they need to grow a business or sector) for jobs converge. The supply side pipeline, relates to education and training pathways that prepare people to become economically active. The demand side relates to the fields, technical and professional skills sets and characteristics that different business and industry sectors require from their workforce, as well as the availability of jobs in a particular context.

One significant reason often cited for the high number of unemployed youths across the continent is the mismatch between supply and demand. In the skills development arena, many interventions (including formal TVET systems) focusing on youth in need have had to pay more attention to the demand side. This has given rise to several issues, such as industry dissatisfaction with the competence of new job entrants or an over-supply of graduates or workers in fields with few positions. Recognition of these problems has led to recommendations (for example, from the World Bank) for creating integrated programmes which will bring together demand-side interventions such as new job creation with supply-side training programmes. Another way of looking at demand-led interventions has been focusing on the development and support of entrepreneurship, leading to small enterprise developments that may become employers. The labour market needs a supply of work-ready and employable youth with appropriate competencies and entrepreneurial know-how to be absorbed into the economy.

In the real world, this means that the supply side (e.g., skills development providers, their beneficiaries, and their sponsors) and the demand side (e.g., public and private industry bodies and employers) need to share information, consult, and work together in several areas.





Examples include:

- 💡 Making sure that training curricula, learning outcomes and technical skills match industry needs, occupational standards, and/or the needs of potential customers.
- 💡 Making sure that infrastructure, equipment, and technical resources are up to date.
- 💡 Making sure that students who proceed through any programme get marketable recognition or certification.
- 💡 Ensuring that the training is linked to work experience, internship, or job opportunity.

ABOUT THIS LEARNING BRIEF

This is Part 4 of the Learning Series **WORKING TOWARDS AGILE, RESPONSIVE SKILLS & (SELF) EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEMS IN AFRICA**. The Learning Series is a compilation of four Learning Briefs based on four focus areas identified as critical fields for effective skills development to address youth unemployment



DISABILITY INCLUSION



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR



GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE




DEMAND-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Demand-led skills development is generally recognised as a crucial goal for those tackling youth unemployment. TVET and other skills development programmes specifically orientated to ensure that their graduates can access gainful and secure employment need to be responsive to the demands of the labour market for workers with specific knowledge, skills and competencies as well as the necessary workplace attributes and behaviours. An employer-aligned, demand-driven approach helps businesses in all sectors find and develop the right employees to innovate and increase productivity.

This Learning Brief on demand-led skills development discusses illustrative lessons learned and tips and strategies for different components grounded in programmes, learning experiences





and innovations. These are made real through inspiring success stories of how beneficiaries have taken forward the opportunities provided through skills development engagement.

The projects described in this Learning Brief speak to the above and more.

Generation Kenya co-designs its programmes with its employer partners and youth beneficiaries.

Harambee in South Africa is notable for its systems-led approach, working with a vast network of public and private partnerships for various purposes and focusing on connecting youth with employment opportunities.

Yes4Youth in South Africa is a business-led collaboration, providing beneficiaries with digital support and taking a multi-layered approach by giving youth access to various and potential small ventures.

Finally, the **Webinar Dialogue** covered in this Learning Brief provides a range of critical insights into demand-led partnerships in different contexts.

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

This Learning Brief is framed by recognising that skills development programmes, initiatives and training organisations exist within an ecosystem that can enable or hinder the achievement of their goals. Since there are linkages and connections across the ecosystem, there is a need to create alignment and synergies, work in collaboration and create partnerships.

Understanding this helps skills development agencies navigate and influence their ecosystems for impact. What are the enablers that can unblock the system? How can these be leveraged to replicate and scale good practices? Who are the primary stakeholders that need to be engaged? How can practical contextual barriers to youth employment be reduced?

The six ecosystem components illustrated below are suggested as a starting point for growing this understanding and will be explored in relation to each good practice in this Learning Brief.



LEARNING BRIEFS AS A METHODOLOGY

Learning Briefs distil the lessons learnt and evidence gathered by practitioners working on the ground. The sharing of evidence-based knowledge, authentic experiences, case studies, success stories, and practical strategies across the continent promotes better planning and implementation of developmental interventions.

Each Learning Brief speaks to one of the focus areas listed above, presenting insights concerning various ecosystem components and practical solutions to problems encountered. Each part of the series is a chance to learn about common and unique challenges and new tools and solutions already being applied by practitioners in distinct public and private sectors across Africa.

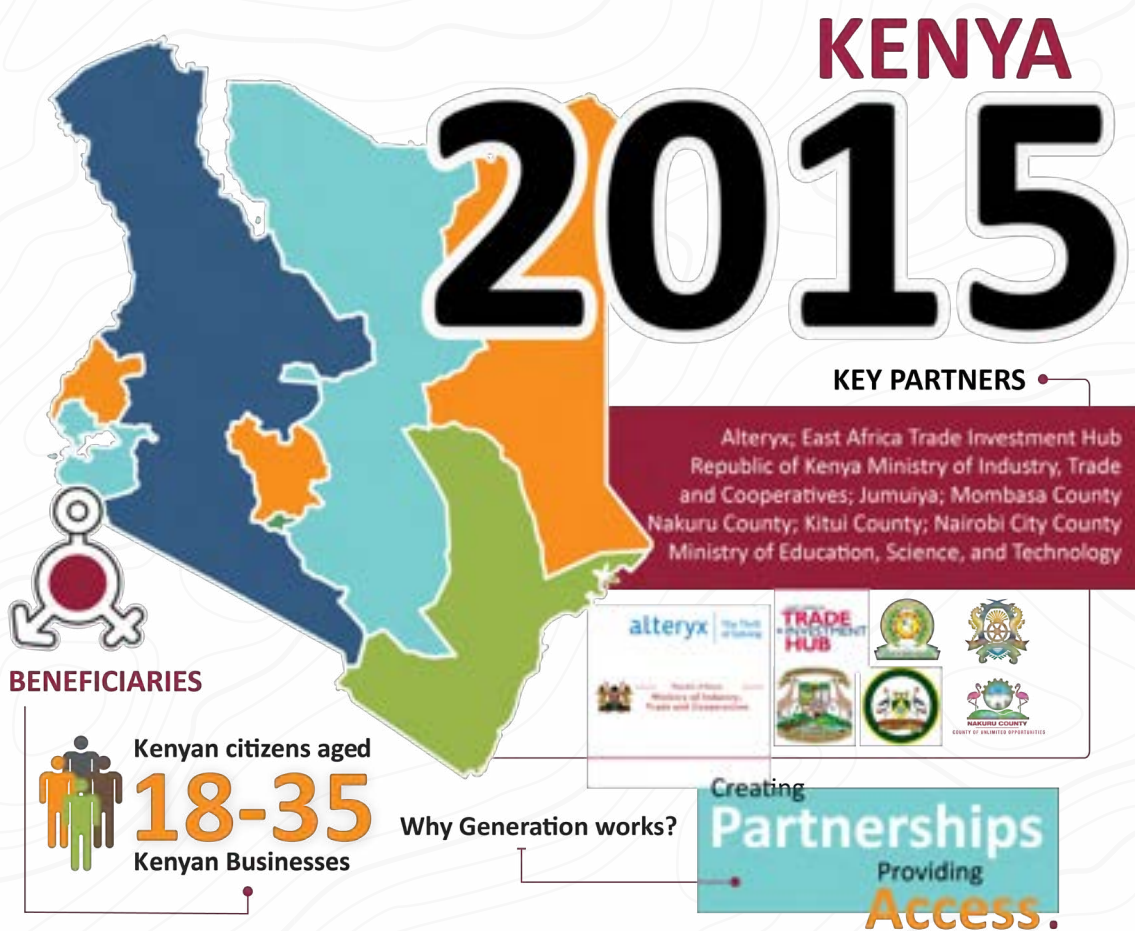




GENERATION KENYA: PREPARING, PLACING, & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO LIFE-CHANGING CAREERS

Introduction

This initiative fulfils the central requirements of demand-led skills development in that it explicitly seeks out the voice and participation of employers when developing its strategy, designing its curriculum and carrying out different stages of implementation. The active partnership approach results in high-quality outcomes for both employer and employee.

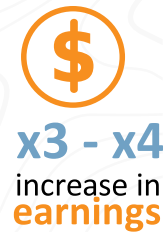
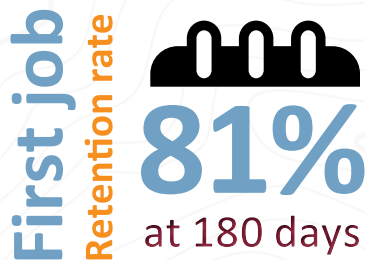
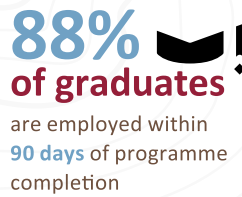


Generation has a unique approach to skills development, sourcing, training, and energising recruits with a combination of skills and attitudes to create immediate value for their business partners. While collaborating with employers to customise programmes based on specific needs, the organisation also carefully tracks graduate performance to revise and improve its programme curricula and methodology. This raises the return on investment (ROI) that employers get from recruiting and training. New hires operate at higher productivity, with longer retention and faster speed to promotion.

Generations' Impact

The impact of the Generation programme can be observed from both a learner and employer perspective.

Learners:



Employers:



The Challenge

Employers face various problems concerning entry-level jobs — difficulty finding skilled talent, lack of on-the-job performance, and high turnover in essential roles. Additionally, many employers struggle to find entry-level staff who combine the right technical skills and personal attributes.

Kenyan youth aged 18-34 are 63% less likely to be gainfully employed than those over 35.

Multiple factors have caused poor employment outcomes, including TVET programmes that still focus on training alone as the “silver bullet.” It is recognised that a more comprehensive approach to skills development is needed to overcome obstacles in the employment value chain.

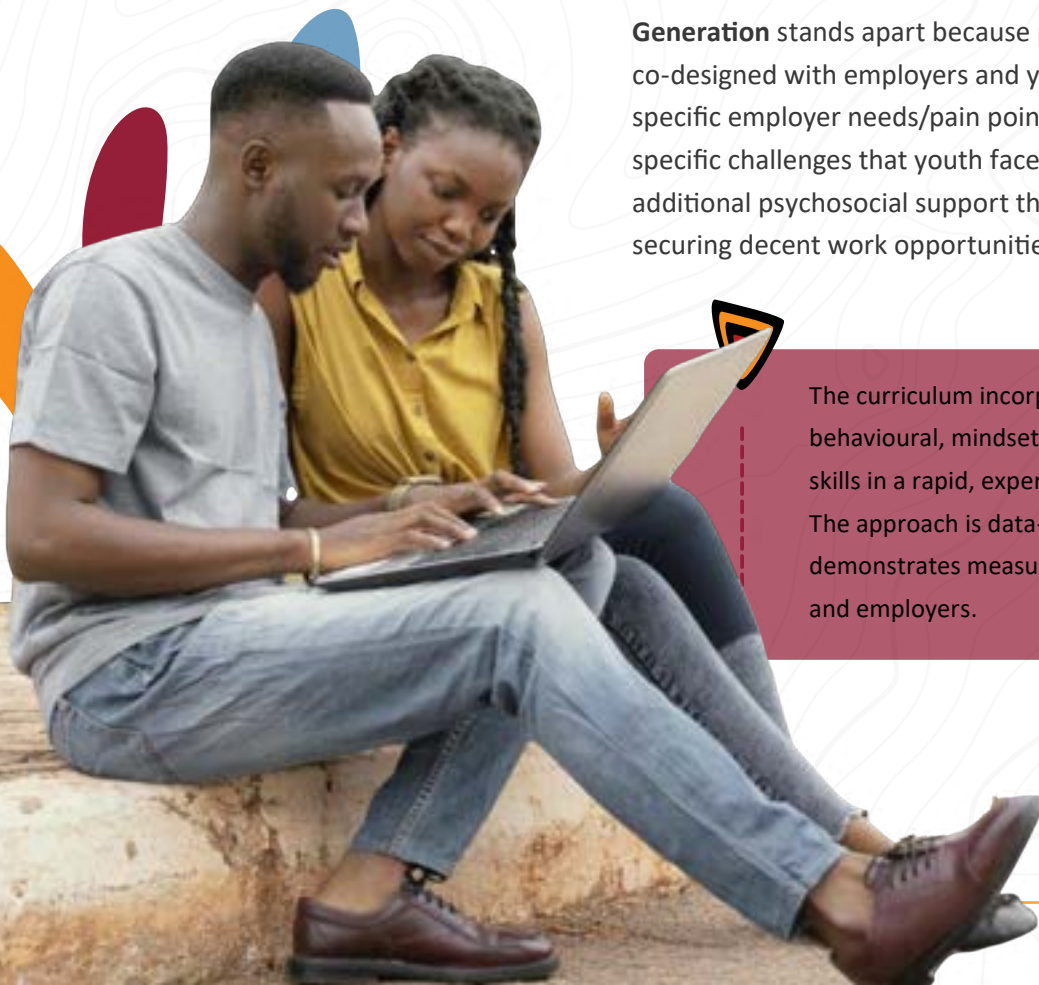
Generation’s Solution

Recognising that a more integrated approach is required to overcome issues in the employment value chain.

Generation focuses on awareness of the skills mismatch between the labour market and employer needs as a foundation for the project. In addition, its 7-step methodology brings an integrated approach to skills development by offering preparation, placement, and support for young people into life-changing careers that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Generation stands apart because programmes are co-designed with employers and youth to (a) address specific employer needs/pain points; and (b) understand specific challenges that youth face, including the kinds of additional psychosocial support they might need while securing decent work opportunities post-training.

The curriculum incorporates critical behavioural, mindset, and technical skills in a rapid, experiential boot camp. The approach is data-centred and demonstrates measurable ROI to learners and employers.



Generation matches supply and demand through collaboration with various employment partners, designing and securing vacancies. The recruitment and screening process is designed to select learners based on their motivation and demonstrated personal commitment. The programme delivers high-quality blended training to youth, with the addition of experiential and career readiness modules to improve training and the transition to employment. The various partnerships further allow **Generation** to place students in employment whilst providing lifelong mentorship and support. The data-centred approach allows **Generation** to demonstrate its return on investment

The graduation rate increased from

400 to 1500
learners per quarter



Graduated
24 000+ youth



57%
female



Collaboration with

50+ providers



Launched 8 programmes across 8 industries

8
industries



Financial
Services Sales



Retail &
Restaurant
Services



Distributed
Sales



Customer
Service



Sewing
Machine
Operation



Food &
Beverage
Stewards



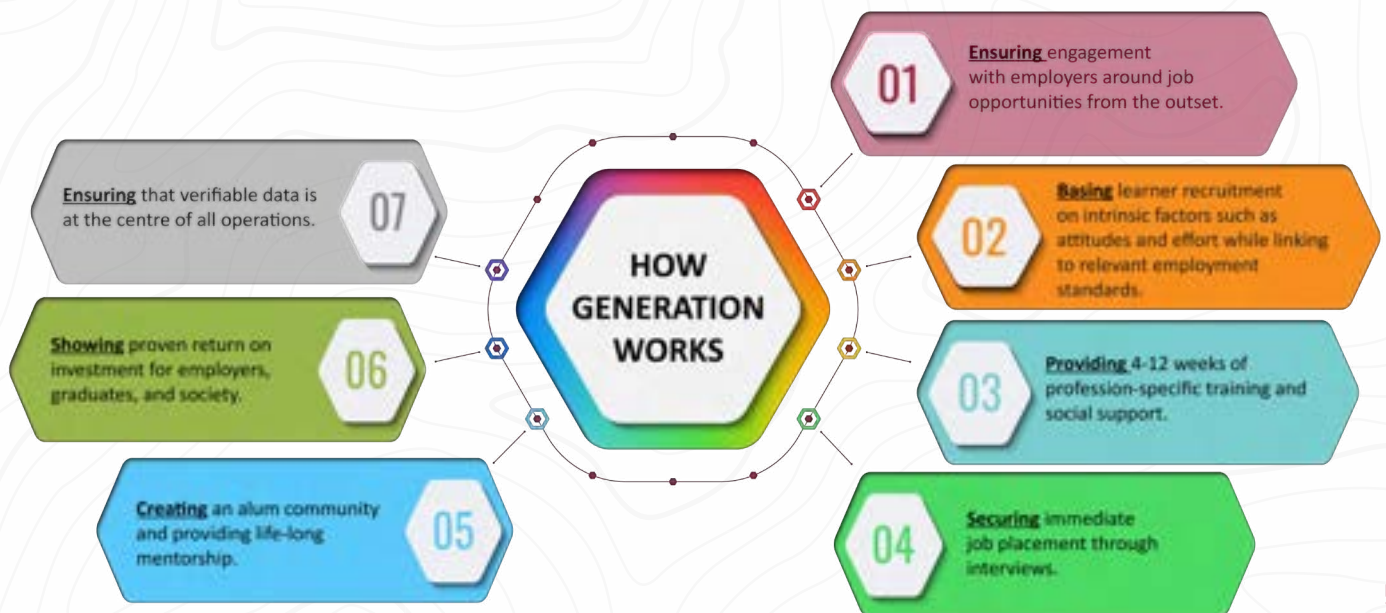
Digital
Customer
Service



Digital
Freelancing

How Generation Works

Generation has achieved this impact using their 7-step methodology:



Generation's Ecosystem: Good Practices

A project's success depends on various ecosystem factors, including funding, stakeholder involvement, collaborative partnerships, and resource access. Creating Partnerships and Providing Access are the two critical elements in Generation's approach.

Creating Partnerships

Generation has partnered with 280+ employers since its establishment in 2015. It has successfully developed collaborative relationships with county governments and 300+ public-private partnerships that enable Generation to scale within the existing skilling ecosystem to align with the context in which it operates, supporting sustainability.



Generation Kenya and Liberty Eagle

Liberty Eagle, Subway’s Kenyan franchise holder, targeted rapid growth—but it struggled to find recruits with job-ready skills and management potential. Generation helped solve that problem: today, around 40% of Subway’s local staff are Generation graduates. According to Subway, hundreds of young Kenyans apply to join Subway each week. But most do not know what it means to have a full-time job and do not understand the demanding standards. Only two or three of every 100 job-seekers make it through Subway’s recruitment process—wasting precious HR time. That changed when the company partnered with **Generation**, whose graduates have a greater success rate in Subway’s interviews.

Generation graduates are also more likely than other recruits to stay with Subway. In the fast-food industry, high turnover is bad: new employees do not know the systems, are uncomfortable talking with customers, and need training. Employees handle a lot of cash daily at Subway’s sandwich shops, making theft a strong temptation. But Generation graduates have a high degree of honesty and integrity. **Generation’s** close-knit network encourages ethical behaviour. Just 18 months after Subway first partnered with **Generation**, several graduates have already been promoted to managerial positions—helping the company to fill most of its supervisory roles from within. Recognising the value that **Generation** has created for Subway, the company was one of the first partners in Kenya to agree to contribute financially to every graduate it employed.

Providing Access

Through a comprehensive approach to employment intervention, Generation identifies the skills mismatch between the labour market and employer needs and addresses this by bridging the education gap by preparing, placing, and supporting people into life-changing careers that would otherwise be inaccessible. Through collaborative partnerships, Generation provides its beneficiaries with training, job pavement, and support services. Access to these services and resources has proven successful for both beneficiaries and employers.

Stories of Success



Judy’s Story

[Generation Kenya - Judy’s Story](#)





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Generation Kenya



HARAMBEE: ACCELERATING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

At the core of **Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator's** work is the recognition of a major irony relating to the South African economy: that it has one of the highest youth unemployment rates on the continent, but that there are numerous entry-level jobs which remain unfilled. Employers are often hesitant to hire 'first-time' applicants with low or even medium educational achievements, complaining that they are not work-ready and lack some of the foundational competencies, soft skills and attributes required. At the same time, young job-seekers from disadvantaged backgrounds often do not know where or how to look for work in effective ways: they have few networks, may lack access to information, and become discouraged.

One of Harambee's main goals is to match the entry-level needs of their business partners – across a range of economic sectors – to a developed and supported network of high-potential job seekers. In addition, Harambee represents another vital feature of good practice skills development: agility and responsiveness to changing situations and contexts. Demand-led skills development has also come to mean understanding the future of work, which is not limited to formal, contractual employment. Harambee has grown in scope and offerings to prepare its beneficiaries for disruptions in the world of work, and for other types of opportunities for income generation.



Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator is a not-for-profit social enterprise that accelerates youth employment by partnering to break barriers and unlock jobs. Harambee addresses youth unemployment through partnerships - connecting job-seeking young people with companies across South Africa.

Harambee's Impact

Who is in SA Youth:

3.6 million
youth seeking
entry-level work
supported

32% male



68% female



1% youth
with a disability

 **890 000**
opportunities enabled
for work-seekers




852 
employer partners

R17.2 billion \$ income earned
since inception

The Challenge

Youth in South Africa continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market, with an unemployment rate higher than the national average.

According to the **Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)** for the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was **63,9%** for those aged 15-24 and **42,1%** for those aged 25-34 years, while the current official national rate stands at **34,5%**.



Although the graduate unemployment rate remains low in South Africa compared to other educational levels, unemployment among the youth continues to be a burden, irrespective of educational attainment. The unemployment rate among young graduates (aged 15-24) declined from 40,3% in 2020 to 32,6% in 2021. However, unemployment has increased by 6,9% to 22,4% for those aged 25-34 years in the first quarter of 2022.

Of the 1 million youth seeking to enter the labour market annually, two-thirds will not end up in education, employment, or training (NEETs) within a year. In South Africa, there is also a slow growth economy with young people locked out of the labour market due to the barriers they face. Even though there is a high investment in education and training programs, youth transition into earning is limited.

Harambee's Solution: A Pivotal Role in South Africa's National Youth Employment Strategy

Harambee collaborates and coordinates its efforts across public, private, and social partnerships such as the **Presidential Youth Employment Intervention** - a comprehensive response to the challenge of youth unemployment in South Africa.


With its partners, **Harambee** co-creates solutions to unlock new jobs in growth sectors, such as jobs in the digital space and Global Business Services (GBS).


Harambee also provides young people free access to all their learning and earning opportunities through innovative technology such as the [SA Youth platform](#).


Harambee operates in the following four key focus areas to solve youth unemployment through partnerships:






 **SA Youth:** The connective platform of the National Pathway Management Network for youth to access jobs and services – for free! A network of networks – government, business and civil society partners working together to find learning and earning opportunities for youth through technology designed by **Harambee**. They use innovative technology to accelerate youth employment by unlocking & aggregating jobs and making them visible and accessible to youth.

 **Coordinating the National Pathway Management Network:** As pathway manager of the National Pathway Management Network, **Harambee** supports public, private and civil society partners to pull together and work collaboratively.

 **Pathway intelligence:** **Harambee's** access to information allows it to disseminate and collate data and insights to equip itself and its partners to reduce the barriers that exclude young people from the labour market.

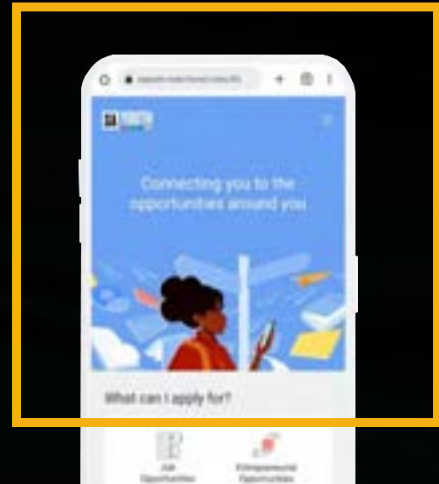
 **Solution design:** **Harambee** designs, tests, and scales impactful and sustainable solutions to youth employment.



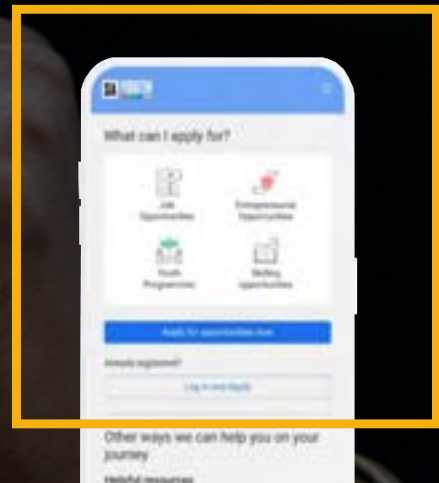
How Harambee Works

SA Youth Process Map

Go to [SA Youth](#) →

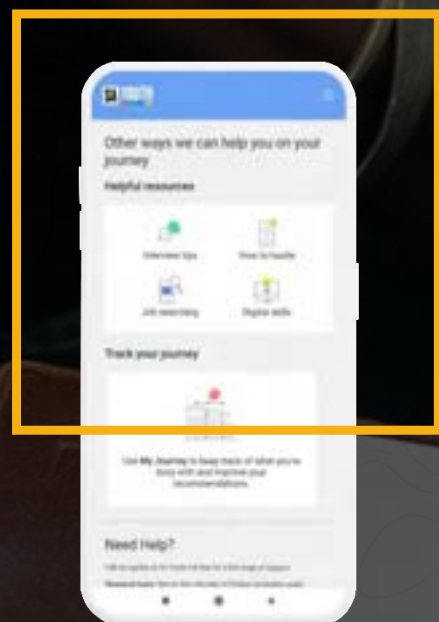


Have your Identification, address, and postcode ready > **Select your needs** and start networking



[SA Youth App](#) also includes the following for all its free subscribers:

- Interview app
- How to hustle
- Job Searching
- Digital Skills





The Harambee Ecosystem: Good Practices




Any initiative's success depends on numerous factors within an integrated ecosystem. It requires the consideration and management of beneficiary needs to access complex stakeholder engagements, collaborative partnerships, and resource requirements. Of particular interest for the **Harambee** Foundation is **Providing Access, Creating partnerships** and **Conducting Research**

Creating Partnerships

To address the multi-layered issue of youth unemployment, **Harambee** takes a systems design approach, partnering with networks of private sector companies and matching them with youth for training, mentorship, and career development.

Harambee is built on partnerships and was founded by a group of South African businesses that partnered with the government and many others to hold a solution to youth employment that could work on a big scale, as everything starts with where the opportunities are for young people - partners who have a real need. After utilising research and insights to understand exactly what is needed, they actively select and match the candidates with the best chance of success in that work opportunity. The young person is placed successfully when they find a match that works.

Notable partnerships include work with:

-  **SA Youth:** A national network that consolidates capacity development and job opportunities.
-  **Tshepo 1 Million Youth Employment:** A Gauteng Provincial Government initiative that seeks to accelerate youth development dividends by creating and supporting skills development, entrepreneurship, and job placement.
-  **Digital Work Accelerator:** A collaborative effort by government, industry leaders and civil society to scale up work in virtual spaces.
-  **Digilink:** A service which connects potential employers with entry-level applications seeking to learn more about the digital space.



Providing Access

Simply accessing the SA Youth mobile application and signing up to the network of employers and recruiters - by presenting a South African Identification Number, or valid permit status, a physical address, and a postal code, youth residing in South Africa can access a network of learning and work opportunities in their respective area. It is a 100% free opportunity for young, unemployed South Africans to help them connect to work through numerous services and work readiness training opportunities. **Harambee** manages the SA Youth network. The most impressive innovation is that sayouth.mobi is zero-rated on MTN, Vodacom, Cell C, Telkom and Rain networks, meaning no Wi-Fi or data is necessary to access that network platform.

In addition to the SA Youth application database, **Harambee's** role as pathway manager for the National Pathway Management Network, and the work they do in pathway intelligence, provides limitless access to profiles and attributes an excess of 3.6 million young people people living all across South Africa seeking opportunities to organisations in public, private and civil society spheres.



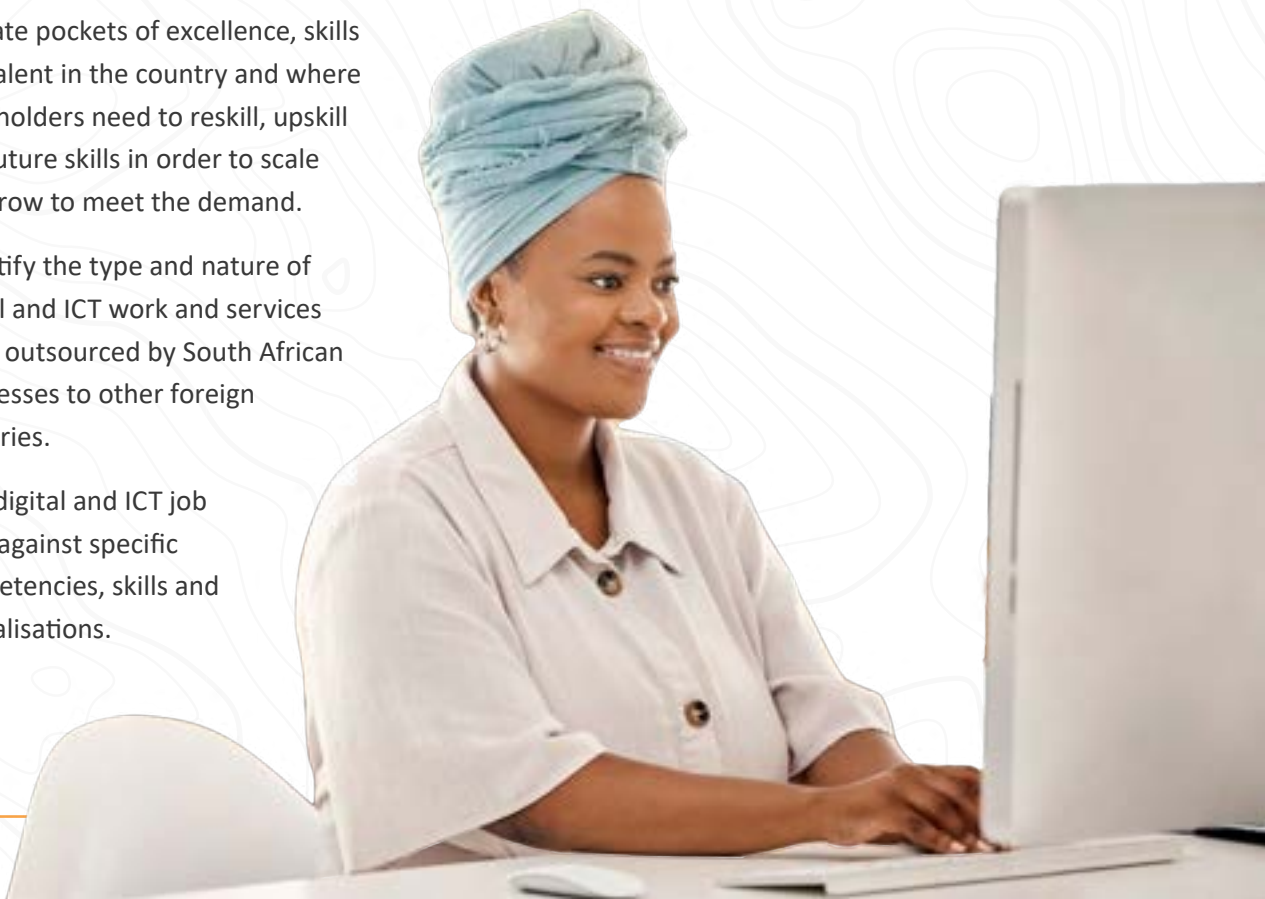
Conducting Research

One of Harambee's key strategies is to conduct continuous broad-based qualitative and quantitative research, looking at both the demand and the supply side of the employment ecosystem. Research findings allow them to regularly update information on their employers and recruiters as well as the demographics and behavioural patterns of potential employees. As an ecosystem facilitator, rigorous research ensures that they are providing accurate, timely and responsive support.

Examples of research Harambee has conducted include a study where they commissioned [Genesis Global Business Services](#), Knowledge Executive to conduct a survey and mapping process. They facilitated interviews from April to July 2020 via outbound calls and online surveys with C-level decision-makers, including CEOs, COOs, CIOs, CTOs, ICT/Technology Directors/Managers, HR Directors, and Heads of IT and Operations Directors. These respondents represented organisations across fifteen key vertical markets (e.g., automotive, banking and financial services, construction, education, global business services (GBS), insurance, healthcare and medical, manufacturing, media and publishing, public sector/government, retail and e-commerce, technology, telecommunications, travel and leisure and utilities.)

This enabled them to:

- 💡 Authenticate and rank the most in-demand roles in the digital and technology space in South Africa.
- 💡 Validate pockets of excellence, skills and talent in the country and where stakeholders need to reskill, upskill and future skills in order to scale and grow to meet the demand.
- 💡 Quantify the type and nature of digital and ICT work and services being outsourced by South African businesses to other foreign countries.
- 💡 Map digital and ICT job roles against specific competencies, skills and specialisations.



Stories of Success



Segametsi Songwane | A Hustlers story

Impact stories like that of Segametsi Songwane embody what the Harambe initiative endeavours to achieve. Segametsi, a chemical engineer by training, was allowed to pitch her idea for a range of antibacterial sanitisers to the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) through the Tshepo 1 Million programmes, effectively launching her entrepreneurship journey.

[Segametsi Songwane's story](#)



Smart Works





First impressions matter, and clothes are essential to that first impression. Since 2014, Harambee has been collecting donations of interview-appropriate clothes to help candidates make a great first impression in a job interview. Over 5,000 young South Africans have benefitted from the clothes donated.

[Smart Works Video](#)





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [Harambee Website](#)
-  [Harambee Knowledge and Research](#)
-  [A toolkit and case study for growing sectors inclusively](#)
-  [Systems Change \(2021-2026\)](#)



YES4YOUTH: SAYING YES TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT JOURNEYS

Introduction

Yes4Youth is an example of a demand-led skills development initiative that responds to identified skills gaps in partner businesses, as well as helping companies to fulfil broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) requirements. An innovative feature is the Youth Hub, a centre for new business ideas linking youth with potential industry partners.



Yes4Youth is a business-led collaboration that seeks ground-breaking ways to reignite the economy and give youth a dignified first chance through innovation and technological best practices.

As a youth employment and business incubation programme, Yes4Youth achieves this by providing an employer-host, a smartphone, extensive youth support, mentorship, and skills development. The programme also supports businesses meeting skills deficits within their supply chains and BBEE upscaling.



The **Yes4Youth** 12-month quality work experience equips unemployed youth with a toolkit to be a beacon of hope for their families, households, and communities. The CV & reference letter they get at the end of their 12 months gives them a 3 x greater chance of an interview call-back in employment pursuits.

Yes4Youth's Impact

92 230+

Work experiences created



750+

B-BEE level-ups awarded



To businesses



R5.2bn+

Youth salaries injected into the economy



Up to

42%

Youth absorption rate



28 million +

Minutes of learning delivered on Yes4Youth smartphones



93 439+

work experiences created

2 200+


corporate signups



4+
Yrs



with no state funding




In 2022 64% of South African youth, specifically those aged 20 to 35 (40% of South Africa's population), were unemployed.

This figure does not consider the many young people who have given up looking for employment. Given the significance of the first job in the career trajectory of one's life, the first job is critical in determining the employability and success of individuals. Many of South Africa's young people do not realise the reality of a paid designation. This has debilitating effects on the country's economy and creates a limited tax base, leading to a narrow customer base and thus stunting economic growth and increasing crime and social issues. The COVID-19 pandemic made a dire situation even harder to address as global economies were halted into a recession.

Yes4Youth's Solution

Conceived and launched in 2018, Yes4Youth is an NGO that exists to respond to the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa. By taking advantage of a pre-existing skilled and semi-skilled youth labour base, Yes4Youth links unemployed youth with organisations, institutions, and businesses for employment experience and opportunities.



Employee hosting takes place over 12 months through a thoroughly curated skills exchange and building contract. The employed youth gain on-the-job experience, a smartphone for the programme, mentorship, and a reference. The partnering employing organisations get the opportunity to constantly monitor and evaluate internal systems processes and operations as they are responsible for imparting relevant, industry-required knowledge, good practices, and hands-on experience to developing employees.

The young trainees gain valuable skills and expertise for better employment opportunities, improving value chains in host companies by providing extra support and BBBEE upscale.

Yes4Youth Hubs

Yes4Youth Hubs connect youth and the community to global good practices in training and technology, primarily located and designed to address barriers to youth employment, entrepreneurship, and economic inclusion. The hubs provide access to the market for businesses – getting products, services, and technologies into the hands of the fastest-growing market in South Africa.

A range of activities occurs at **Yes4Youth Hubs**, enabling innovation and a cross-pollination of ideas, seeding points for new business. Participants who register at the Hub can access networks, training, markets, work opportunities, ideas for careers or new






businesses, and the necessary partner support to increase their career prospects, start their businesses or actualise that idea they have been nestling. Youth exuberance coupled with access to networks, markets and industry inputs is fuelling and facilitating ingredients for SMMEs to develop and thrive. SMMEs are the biggest generators of jobs, which is why Yes4Youth Hubs work to attract a disruptive cocktail of ideas and resources to encourage, nurture and support small businesses.

Together with like-minded partners and corporate funders, Yes4Youth Hubs deliver a host of programmes that include a basket of digital courses, textile manufacturing centres, ceramics labs, creative agencies, small business support centres, drone programming, culinary academies, beauty therapy, biodegradable sanitary pad production, 3D printing labs, and urban farming.

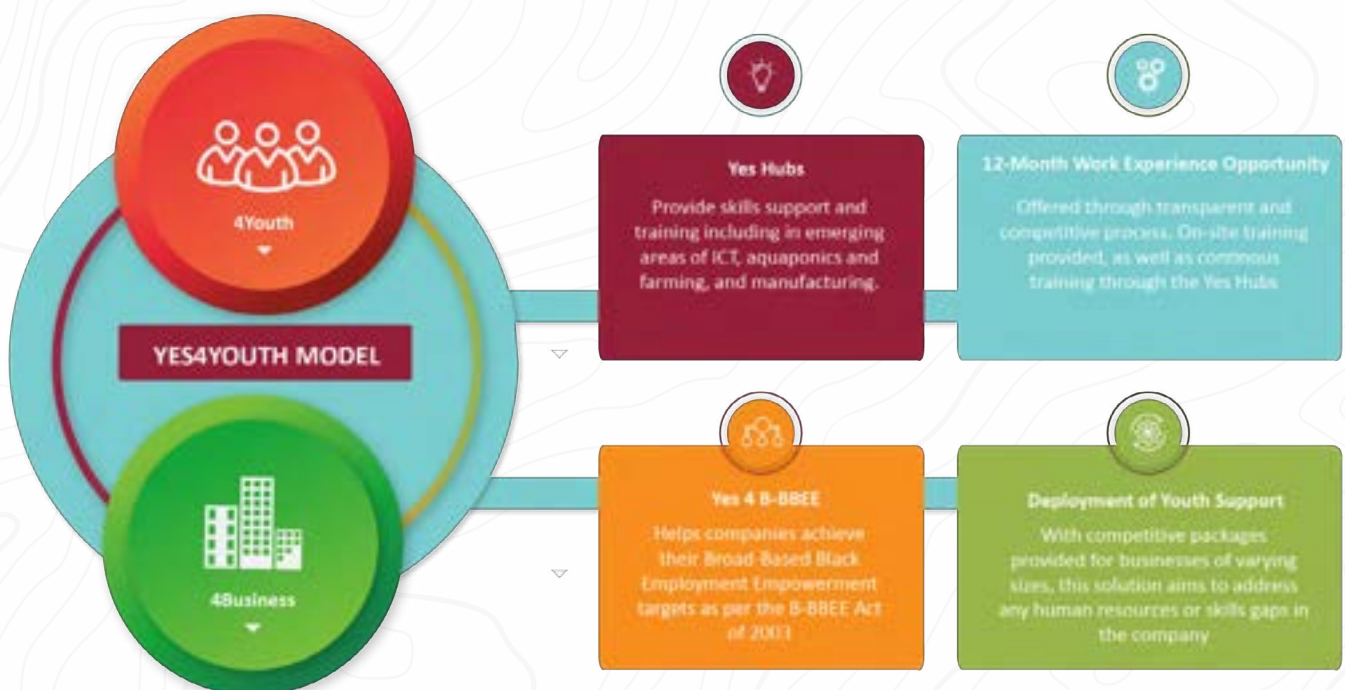


Play Video



-  **Hydroponic farming** sowing seeds at scale. The packaging business provides services to the Green Engine produce farming.
-  **The Yes4Youth Drone academy:** Soaring to new heights Candidates are trained to repair, operate and fly drones to provide services to critical sectors of the economy.
-  **The Yes4Youth Culinary Academy:** Food for the future Chef training and entrepreneurial incubation with live restaurants running while youth learn.
-  **The textile academy stitching solutions:** Supplying skills training, upskills and connects sewists, manufacturers, and networks to develop and find retail markets for these products.
-  **Digital 4IR skills training:** Coding careers in communities. Digital training lab offering a range of specialised digital learning programmes. Training partners include Vodacom, Google, Microsoft, and IT Varsity.

How Yes4Youth Works



Stories of Success



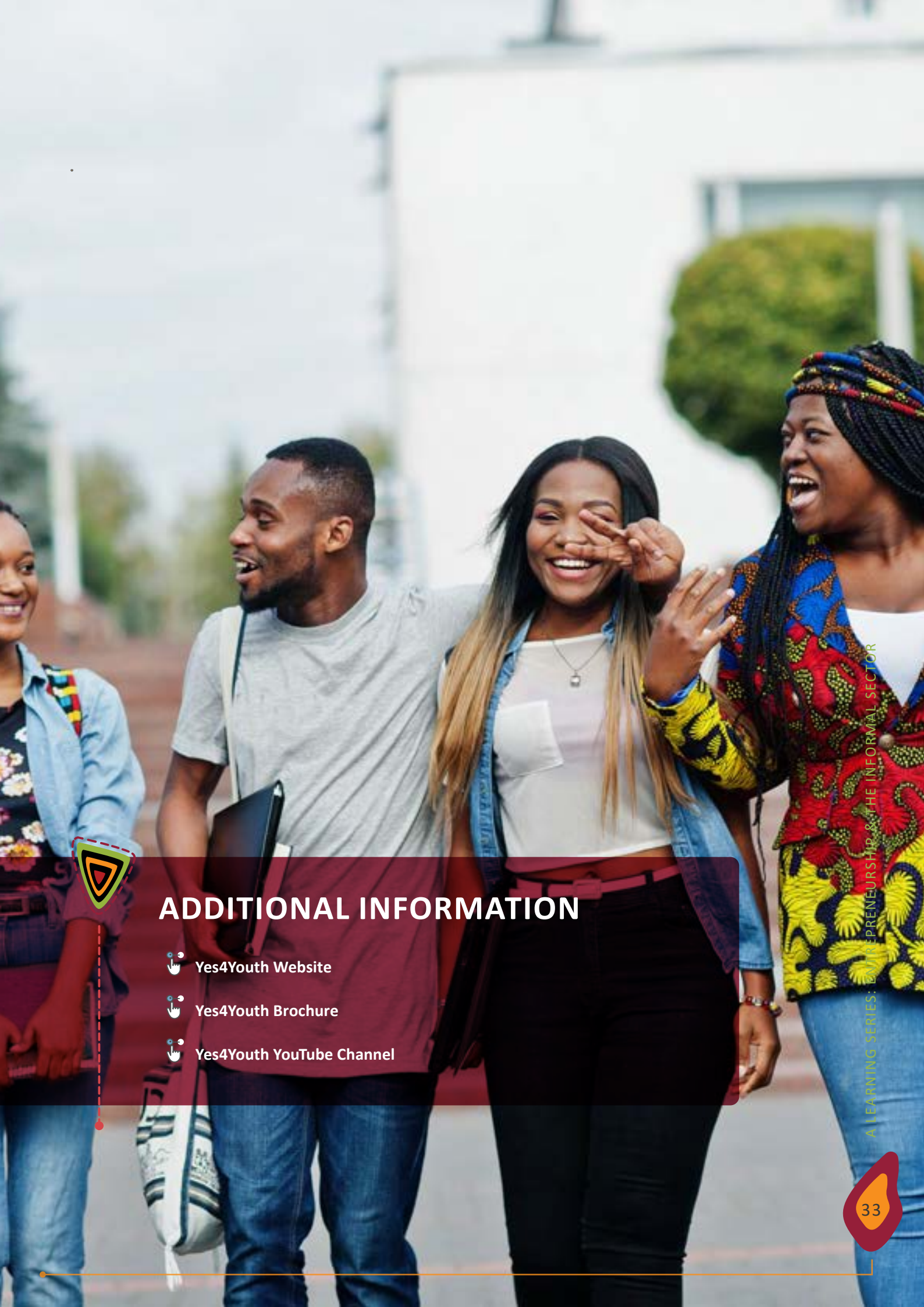
Zikhona Abongile Mabala's Story

Zikhona Abongile Mabala was a young woman struggling to find employment for over two years. Through the Yes4Youth initiative, she was provided with skills training and matched with car manufacturer Volkswagen for a 12-month work placement. As part of the Yes4Youth Communications team, Zikhona attests to her capacity growth and the impact the Yes4Youth initiative has had on her career trajectory.




"I am now part of something bigger than me, something that is changing the community."

Play Video





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [Yes4Youth Website](#)
-  [Yes4Youth Brochure](#)
-  [Yes4Youth YouTube Channel](#)



IN CONVERSATION- PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEMAND- DRIVEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The African Union and AUDA NEPAD, through Skills Initiative for Africa hosted a [webinar](#) on 31 May 2022 at 07h30 (CAT) reflecting on the lessons learnt from implementing TVET initiatives, provided a forum to exchange ideas on improving future practice/policy and facilitated continental knowledge exchange drawing on the experiences of different countries and contexts. The discussion was based on [“A Handbook for TVET Managers for Building Demand-Based Partnerships”](#).

A common thread running through these conversations is the need for explicit links to be made between training provision and employability. Training should be fit for purpose, in terms of the types of skills that will be useful to both job seekers and business sectors, as well as the quality of graduates in relation to the needs of employers.



Connecting Major Stakeholders to Maximise the Employment of Users

Ashenafi Shiberu, Director for Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication - Selam TVET College, Ethiopia

Supply and Demand Mismatch

“The problem we face is the low rate of employability of our graduates. Many students graduate from vocational training institutions each year, but they do not get employed immediately, while employers complain they are not getting a skilled labour force with the required skills.”



In the pipeline from learning to earning there is a gap between the job seeker and the employer or the graduates and the industries. This is because there is a lack of labour market linkage and intermediation - most institutions do not actively connect the graduates with employers in sectors and companies, or the graduates are given no support from the institutions, so these graduates have limited information about employer industries and companies.

On the other hand, employers do not have ample knowledge of where to get skilled personnel as per their demand. Even graduates who prefer to be self-employed or start a small business have limited information on accessing the industry. Selam TVET College is implementing a “Job Business Service” to address the problem of labour market linkage and intermediation.

The primary function is connecting or linking all these significant stakeholders who do their jobs independently and do not share information.

- 💡 The TVET college,
- 💡 The training graduates,
- 💡 The market (industries and companies),
- 💡 The microfinance institutions,
- 💡 The government facilitators.

About the Job-Business Service

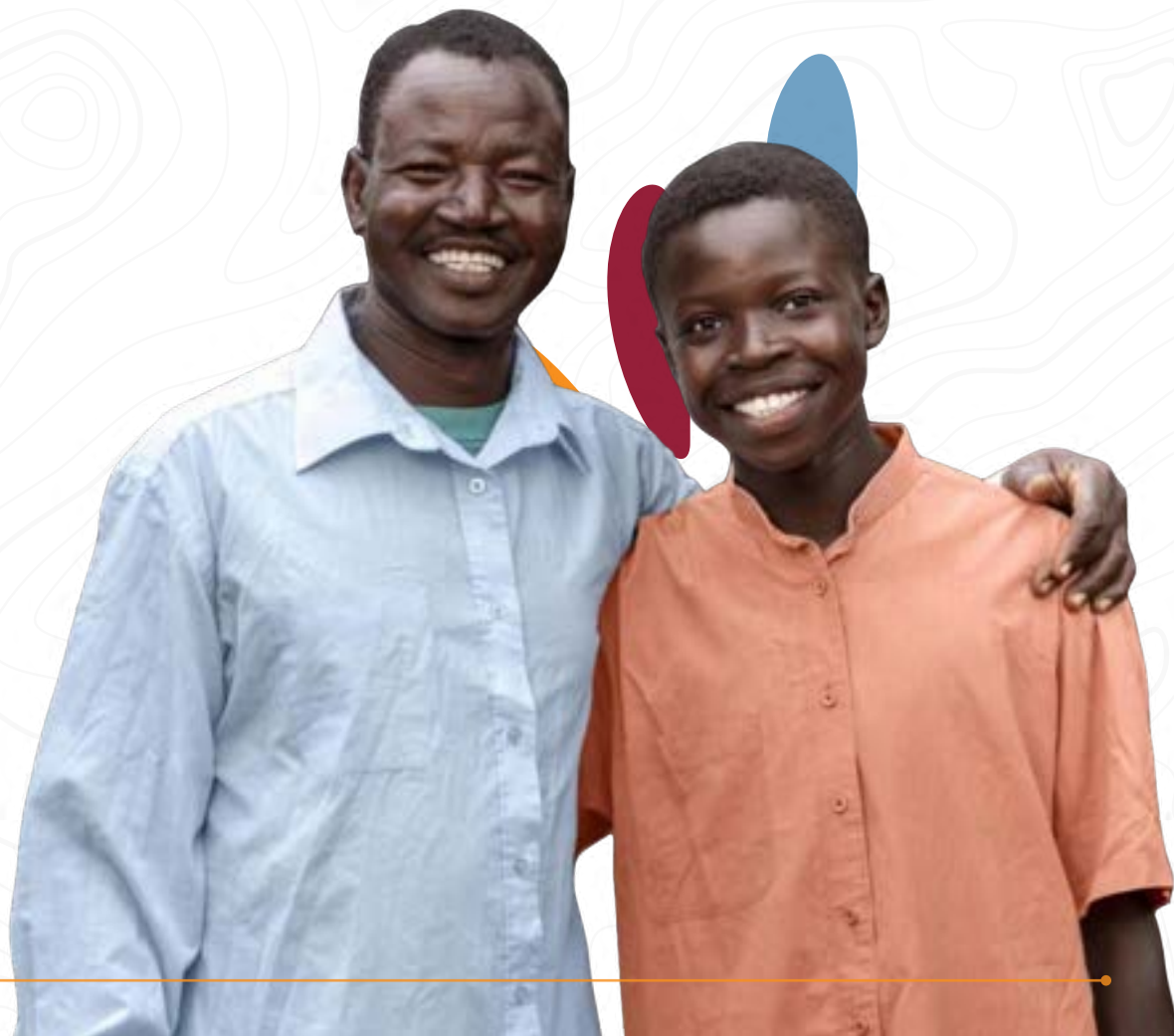
The service organises a stakeholders database and mapping - Where are they? What do they do? What kind of skills do they need? Once gathered, the information is analysed and disseminated among each stakeholder. The top officers also create a network and organise information exchange platforms like exhibitions and job fairs for those seeking wage employment. We help them set up their CV and prepare them with interview techniques. For those who prefer to go into self-employment or start their small businesses, we help them establish working groups. We have a successful savings and credit association that helps



in the legalisation process of their new associations and facilitates a workspace. In Ethiopia, getting a working space is tricky, so we connect graduates with government facilities, facilitators, or offices.

We have aggressively implemented this approach, created links, connected the significant actors, and attained terrific results. Some graduates have been employed at various industries and companies in wage employment; others have become self-employed and begun their small businesses.

We have learnt that training institutions should focus not only on equipping learners with technical skills but also on labour market linkage and intermediation to maximise the employment rate of graduates and to transfer from learning to earning.





Partnerships for Demand-Driven Skills Development: A Case Study from CAP Youth Empowerment Institute

Mr Dennis Muchiri, Training and Operations Manager - CAP Youth Empowerment Institute, Kenya

“CAP employment institute is an NGO based in Kenya with our head office in Nairobi. We aim to be an end-to-end community-based solution provider for the not-in-education, employment or training youth.



We impart employability skills to increase their chances of accessing livelihood opportunities. We do this with a basic employability skills training approach, combining technical and vocational aspects of training entrepreneurship and life skills.

You need to be an all-rounded graduate or an employee to survive in the world of work. So, when discussing partnerships, we divide them into three aspects: (1) We have the pre-training elements of the course that requires partnerships; (2) We have the during-training aspects; (3) We have the post-training aspects.

Partnership Journey: Pre-Training

These are the aspects that inform us of what the consumers of our products, the trained youth, would want to get from our products. We partner with the private sector to conduct a training needs assessment. We start off with understanding the market needs, how relevant the skills will be after training, and how suitable the graduates will be to potential employers. We ask them about the skills mismatch and ensure the skills they need are somewhere in our curriculum.



Establishment of a skills development advisory committee



Identification of the occupational standards from the private sector (the Standards then form the framework for curriculum development)

Government Agencies:



CEDA then accredits the curriculum & facilitates a validation workshop, &



TVETA oversees the TVET institutions.

The significant stakeholders will attend the validation workshop, one of them being the sector skills advisory committee, to assess the developed curriculum to ensure it will answer the gaps identified during the training needs assessment.

Partnership Journey: Training & Support

During training, the private sector plays a vital role in a demand-led approach. Because demand-led methods focus on hands-on skills. Setting up a training centre that gives 2% per cent practical aspects required for any technical or vocational education and training is expensive.

We partner with the private sector and invite subject matter experts to come to our centres and offer lectures. They allow our trainees to have a feel of how the world of work is through field visits and exposure visits. They go to a hotel so that they can see a typical kitchen and chef. We also form what we call the 'Business Mentors Network.' The mentors help them manage their expectations regarding post-graduation. Seasoned professionals come

in to discuss their career journey and business mentors come in to help trainees understand the skills of the 21st century. We conduct a series of mock interviews for assessments in liaison with the private sector who give us feedback on each of the individual trainees that we want to release to the world of work so that we can iron out any grey areas.

Partnership Journey: Post Training, Towards a Promising Future

Post-training, the government provides certification. The private sector ensures a higher transition rate of training to livelihood opportunities. We partner with financial institutions so that they can offer capital to boost their businesses.

Recommendations: You need to create a solution where everyone benefits. Also, avoid over-reliance on a few stakeholders. Most importantly, avoid forging partnerships only when you need something. They should know that you are on this journey together."



Supporting Inclusive Growth

Anthony Gewer, National Business Initiative

“How do we create demand-led TVET interventions to enhance South Africa’s employability? We face somewhat of a unique challenge. We have incredibly high unemployment. Our biggest challenge is that our informal sector, a large part of our economy, is not creating jobs.

The South African Context

We have deficient employment levels in our informal economy - we are not creating jobs, so we rely on our formal sector. Although we have a well-developed formal sector, it is insignificant compared to our population. It is unable to do well-considering COVID-19. Still, even before COVID-19, given the economic situation in the country, it’s unable to create sufficient jobs for the number of young people that are coming out of our schooling and education system every year, so we’re looking for broader solutions that can be more inclusive and can enable more comprehensive access to opportunities for marginalised young people, but also for entrepreneurs that are operating outside of the formal economy, and that’s a significant focus

of what we’re doing here.

Value chain cuts across your construction sector, your private property, your public infrastructure, your domestic and others, and we try and conceptualise across those different buckets of demand where the opportunities are and how we can access those, so we have a -year strategy and the national business initiative.

How we are Rising to Meet the Challenge

We are an NPO, a business-based, membership-based organisation. We work with many of our larger corporations in the country, both national and multinational, and play an intermediate role between corporates, government, and other sectors of our society to create sustainable solutions around social, economic and environmental transformation. We have two broad objectives: How do we increase the demand for skills, particularly jobs in SMEs? Many of our SMEs are not creating jobs, particularly outside the formal sector but even those operating in the formal sector, so how do we incentivise and grow the demand for jobs?



- 💡 Investigate the DEMANDS of the employer market and develop graduate scholars with skills that meet them to increase employment opportunities.
- 💡 Creating a support network for entrepreneurs to gain confidence and grow. Entrepreneurs who are experienced but may not be formally qualified, qualified artisan entrepreneurs, graduated artisans and learners network interact and collaborate via the Installation Repair and Maintenance (IRM) Hub located at many TVET colleges to improve their entrepreneurial skills, innovate and get on a growth plan.
- 💡 Seasoned entrepreneurs are incentivised to mentor, train and facilitate the journey of young, recently graduated artisans and artisans seeking (self) employment and help them develop a comprehensive growth plan.

Strategic Alignment: A Review of our Process

We have three areas of strategic alignment. One is infrastructure maintenance because there is much infrastructure across the country that is not being well maintained, be it public, private, or domestic and/or even industrial, and that offers a vast range of opportunities for young people and for SMEs to be upskilled and to be supported to participate in the implementation of infrastructure maintenance and the improvement of infrastructure.

How do we capitalise on the green economy? If you are doing construction and maintenance, you must ensure that you do it in the most sustainable way possible. Many low-cost houses we have built in this country have fallen apart. With the recent floods in our coastal regions, we have seen how infrastructure has collapsed, not just because of the buildings, but the land in which it is built and whether the land is suited for buildings. So, all these sorts of things, particularly climate change, will increasingly become an issue.

Re-Industrialization at the Local Level

We position ourselves within local industrial sites to ensure that communities and youth benefit from investment in industrialisation. We believe that we can position TVET colleges at the heart of this entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting SMEs to realise their growth objectives and access opportunities in the green economy but also responding to the demand for skills in those SMEs. We believe that with each SME that we work with we can create two new jobs.

We are also using the vehicle of township hubs. We talk about them as IRM hubs. They allow an interface between the SMEs, the entrepreneurs and the youth and other unemployed and employed youth. Many employed are in precarious roles because they have never had any formal training.

Our hubs allow us to reach more significant numbers of entrepreneurs and a larger number of youths within our township communities.

Our enterprises get access to

- 💡 *Networks for collaboration*
- 💡 *Incubation of new products*
- 💡 *Access to relevant resources, tools, equipment and information*
- 💡 *Access to new markets and support to build their capabilities to produce new products and services*
- 💡 *The capabilities and competencies to manage their businesses*
- 💡 *Shared support services like admin and finance and I.T*

The hubs become mechanisms for growing and supporting SMEs, bringing them closer to the formal sector, being an intermediary between the township business and the formal sector. As we bring the informal business closer to the formal sector, we use the hubs to make them more visible to link them to opportunities and then bring the private sector closer through our networks of the larger businesses we work with. We focus on the packaging of skills related to the SMEs we're working with and a considerable focus on the green economy and new technologies that are emerging. We also focus on work readiness behaviours for youth and entrepreneurship education because we hope to identify budding entrepreneurs through the youth we train and place in SMEs. Once they complete their training, we bring them back to the hubs, and take them into an incubation program. We are focusing on fast-tracking them into the labour market while ensuring they are getting accredited and recognised for excellent

quality, skills and structured on-the-job training, which leads to certification and recognition. Then we can transition them in many ways. To do all this, we must work with a range of partners in this ecosystem to find a scalable solution. We work with the following:

National Government Interventions and Partnerships: Supply and Demand

- 💡 **Presidential Youth Employment Intervention** facilitates the integration of the different components.
- 💡 **Small Enterprise Development Agency** provides incentives for SMEs
- 💡 **Department of Trade and Industry** unlocks opportunities in industrial sectors
- 💡 **Public Works** opens opportunities in public infrastructure
- 💡 **Ecosystem partners:** intermediary industry associations, professional bodies, business chambers, government agencies
- 💡 **Opportunity partners:** companies, government departments, NGOs
- 💡 **Delivery Partners:** TVET colleges, community training centres, private training providers
- 💡 **NGOs and CSOs**



Observations and Insights on Demand-Based Partnerships

Gichobi Stanley Mwangi - Global Development Incubator

“Global Development Incubator is an international Non-Profit Organisation focused on the toughest global challenges and looking at diverse ways that we can tackle these challenges, especially around poverty

About Global Opportunities Youth Network

We believe we can address poverty by creating meaningful livelihood opportunities for youth through our Global Opportunities Youth Network (GONET) program, which is enthusiastic about understanding some of the challenges and potential pathways we can create among our learners. A key critical area is TVET reform. Part of TVET reform is conversations about connecting the supply side to the demand side for optimal output.

We have been working together to understand how we can create a public-private partnership framework and how TVETs can engage the public sector in vocational training. We are applying some critical insights from talking to different stakeholders across Africa. From the interviews, we reviewed materials and several challenges that needed to be addressed. First, how do you localise these interventions? Of course, you do have the more prominent approach from the national level. However, if you are to achieve success, we need to localise

needs within a specific territory and not at a national level or an African level, even if it is most probably to the smallest unit here in Kenya; we will call that a sub-county or a county government to other sets of provinces or a district.

Next, there is a challenge of autonomy, especially in decision-making around how to build this mechanism for curriculum and training if we are to achieve meaningful change. This challenge must be addressed, and VET vocational training level autonomy is encouraged. Here managers can make critical decisions also. These challenges around coordination between blocks and sectors will need to approach differently and coordinated better and more strategically. Of course, regionalisation is important. We have these regions that come together based on alignments; creating an understanding and then adopting an application unique to each country would be challenging.

Sustainability beyond the reform is imperative - this calls for political institutional dialogue, policy, and engagement with other stakeholders. These are some of the early insights while we try to understand the challenges and what would guide us as we approach building these tools and processes.



Our Process: Towards Strategic Interventions

Effecting Change

-  **TVETs strategic and operations planning:** Market analysis (identifying strategic themes and good practices).
-  **Curriculum design:** Collaboratively working with the employer market to establish a demand-led curriculum with relevant, current, and practical work-based learning.
-  **Institutional TVET Capacity Development:** Innovative business models to maximise administrative, operational, financial, legal proficiency & service delivery to both markets, the scholar and employer.
-  **Stakeholder management skills development:** Capacitating TVET led personnel in relationship building and maintaining PR relations with the private sector and alums through training and workshops.



The Shift: Customisable TVET Strategic Positioning Tool

Working towards a more strategic positioning that considers TVET's local context and creates strategies that work for local contexts to create what works for them.





LESSONS LEARNT, TIPS & STRATEGIES

This Learning Brief has been written for practitioners and policymakers interested in good African practices, successes, and lessons learnt regarding **Demand-Led Skills Development** in the context of “Working towards agile, responsive skills and (self) employment ecosystems in Africa.”

Your perspective might be that of a policy maker, a training provider, a researcher, a funder, an implementer, an evaluator, or a beneficiary in the key thematic and intervention areas identified in the **Continental Education (CESA)** and **Continental TVET Strategies**.

This section draws lessons from the experiences of initiatives and programmes highlighted in this Learning Brief for application in your varying contexts. With an appreciation of the challenges, stories of success, research and observations shared by practitioners across the continent, lessons are generalised for ease of replication. Building on these lessons, the section further provides a set of tips and strategies that you are encouraged to apply to your context where possible.

These are selected and generalised from the initiatives for Gender-Transformative Change described in this brief.



LESSONS LEARNT

Research

An informed, evidence-based approach is needed for collaborative skills development initiatives. Reliable data on the demand-side needs of different sectors means that the appropriate partners can be identified and effective networks can be established. Data will also guide strategic decisions on innovations going forward.

Continued mapping of competencies against job categories keeps programmes relevant.

Beneficiary Group


A strong, scalable education-to-employment programme should garner support by selecting suitable partners representing different stakeholders such as Government, development partners, and delivery partners such as TVETs. This integration through partnership is key to creating a conducive enabling environment to ensure success. A strong, scalable education-to-employment program should also be:

- 💡 Employer initiated.
- 💡 Learner focused on creating a positive impact for youth by integrating technical and behavioural skills and mindsets in program delivery, mentorship, coaching and psychosocial support.
- 💡 Focused on including partner support by selecting suitable partners. This is key to creating a conducive enabling environment to ensure success. Specifically, Government, development partners, and delivery partners such as TVETs.

Resources Required

Formal recognition of their work experience in the host company is vital for trainees to continue with their employment journey.





Effective support for beneficiaries can take many forms, from the promotion of soft skills to the provision of basic necessities such as transport money and interview clothing.

Simple and accessible Apps can be leveraged for information sharing with beneficiaries. Make sure that your information categories are extensive and varied, and that the way they are presented meet audience needs.

Access Required

Varied Hub activities can provide further opportunities for cross-collaboration between different services which can be nurtured.

Partners

Partnerships are the bedrock of demand-led skills development.

The process of employee hosting period needs to be carefully structured and monitored so that both the host and the employee can get the full benefit.



TIPS & STRATEGIES

Effective demand-led skills development can only be achieved through collaborative partnerships, in which stakeholders have specific roles at different levels to ensure that the skills development value chain offers up a match between supply and demand.

On the ground, the various players - the training providers, the industry sectors as potential employers and the graduates - also need to be linked through explicit and managed mediation processes so that key information on labour sources and work opportunities is easily shared.

Links between the informal and formal sector can be nurtured and consolidated. Informal sector work and entrepreneurial enterprise can serve as gateways to further employment opportunities, and funnel upskilled youth into the formal sector.

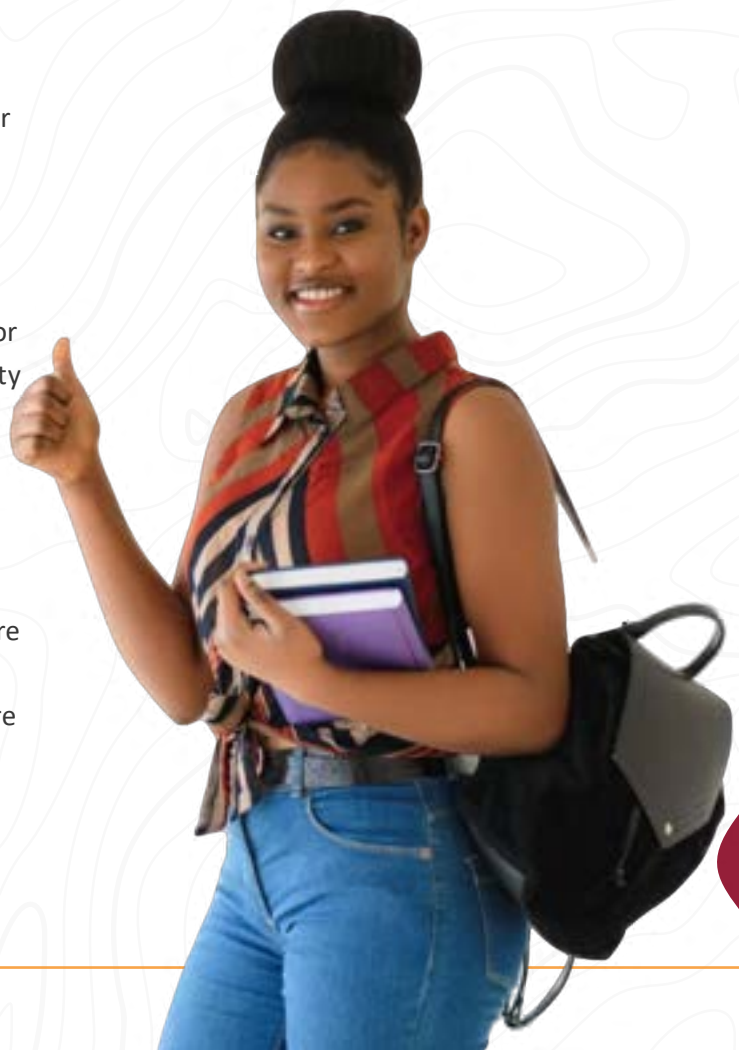
Initiatives can capitalise on identified areas of need (such as improving infrastructure, or growing the green economy) in a community or sector, to equip youth with skills which will respond to immediate opportunities.

Effective programmes are multi-layered. Employers need to be involved in the development of technical curricula to ensure that these are relevant and up to date; and both providers and employers need to share insights on the kinds of work readiness and

life skills that will help job entrants to grow and develop.

Sustainable skills development that has an impact needs to be linked to ongoing support services pre, during and post training. Mentorship and peer support have both proven effective.

Accreditation and certification need to be taken into account, to serve as quality indicators for both the trainees and the employers.






ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


AUDA-NEPAD would like to express its most profound appreciation to all those who made the completion of this Learning Brief possible through their direct or indirect contributions

Study Tour delegates who shared their work, experiences, and lessons while

 **Generation, Kenya**

Site visit organisations that opened their doors for knowledge exchange and sharing.

 **Harambee, South Africa**

 **Yes4Youth, South Africa**

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) team for organising and facilitating the dialogue and knowledge sharing event.

The Learning Brief also draws from expertise and knowledge sharing through **case studies, webinars, and research papers.**

- Webinar Panellists: Partnerships for Demand-Driven Skills Development
 - Ashenafi Shiberu, Director for Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication - Selam TVET College, Ethiopia
 - Mr Dennis Muchiri, Training and Operations Manager - CAP Youth Empowerment Institute, Kenya.
 - Anthony Gewer, Installation, Repair and Maintenance with National Business Initiative
 - Gichobi Stanley Mwangi, Global Development Incubator

