



**Western Cape
Government**
Economic Development
and Tourism

Sub-programme 7.1

Provincial Skills and Partnership

Skills Intelligence Report

On

Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

2020/2021 Performance Reporting Period

Quarter 3

OFFICIAL SIGN-OFF

It is hereby certified that this Skills Intelligence Report on NEETs:

- ❖ Was developed by the Provincial Skills and Partnership Team, under the guidance of the Director: Ms M Parker and is aligned to the Skills Framework.
- ❖ Was developed to align to the Output Indicator: Number of Skills Intelligence Reports produced and linked to Strategies VIP#2: Growth and Jobs and VIP#3: Empowering People.
- ❖ Was developed based on Stakeholder Engagements and Desktop Research.
- ❖ Is grounded both in a practical understanding of the Western Cape's skills; needs; priorities; the production; and use of market intelligence for Skills planning.

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The objective of the Skills Intelligence Report is to:

1. Examine youth unemployment by focusing on Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).
2. Sketch a Situational Analysis of the NEETs challenges in South Africa and the impact on the provincial landscape and provide recommendations in how to address it.

The report has been divided into two parts to address the points above:

PART A: Situational Analysis of the NEETs Challenge in South Africa

PART B: Conclusions and Recommendations

Scope of work

Desktop research to identify and provide a descriptive overview of (International, South African and Western Cape) specific to NEETs.

Project deliverables

Refer to the full report

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List of Acronyms

CET	Community Education and Training
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSG	Child Support Grant
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCAS	Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
DCS	Department of Community Safety
DEADP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
DEDAT	Department of Economic Development and Tourism
DSD	Department of Social Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoH	Department of Health
DHS	Department of Human Settlements
DTPW	Department of Transport and Public Works
EaSI	Employment and Social Innovation
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IDT	Independent Development Trust
ILO	International Labour Organization
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGOs	Non-Profit Organisations
NIDS	National Income Dynamics Study
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYS	National Youth Service
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORP	Occupational Readiness Programme
PSP	Provincial Skills and Partnership

PVP	Pre-Vocational Programme
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Surveys
SAQA	South African Quality Assurance Authority
SETA	Sectoral Education and Training Authority
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
Stats SA	Statistical South Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VIP	Vision Inspired Priority
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WCG	Western Cape Government
WCP	Western Cape Province

1 Introduction

Two (2) of the five (5) priorities for the Western Cape Government (WCG), relates to Vision Inspired Priority (VIP2) – Growth and Jobs; and (VIP3) - Empowering People. The priority of empowering people aims to provide all citizens of the Western Cape, with an opportunity to reach their full life potential and live lives they value. This priority takes a holistic human development approach from conception, through the education phases, adulthood and concludes in retirement.

The Skills Intelligence Report produced by the Sub-Programme: Provincial Skills and Partnership (PSP) will be both a practical and strategic demonstration of facilitative engagements across the skills pipeline within the Western Cape, to drive the provision of credible information, analysis and signals on the demand and supply of skills as an important contribution to the establishment of the institutional mechanism, for skills planning in the Western Cape.

The Skills Intelligence Report will encompass a high-level overview of youth NEETs and the kind of interventions that will facilitate and assist in their transition into training opportunities or quality jobs. This includes a brain storming session with stakeholders on the kind of interventions that will facilitate and assist NEETs in the training space.



**Western Cape
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PART A

Situational Analysis of the NEETs Challenge in South Africa

1 Background

“With almost 1% of the South African population contracting Covid-19, the country faces significant social and economic repercussions due to the pandemic. South Africa, like many other countries, has been thrust into a decade of reconstruction and development.”¹

South Africa's 2020 reconstruction and development moment is reminiscent of its 1994 historical moment. President Cyril Ramaphosa faces the same structural human development crisis characterised by high rates of unemployment and poverty and low rates of education and entrepreneurship that confronted President Nelson Mandela in 1994.

Mandela was confronted with connecting marginalised black Africans — youth, women and those living in the rural areas or former Bantustans — to the economy. All the democratic South African presidents have used public employment projects as development vehicles for expanding and delivering social and economic infrastructure, for training and development, as well as for providing temporary employment to the unemployed.

Even with these interventions, South Africa continues to face an ever-increasing human development crisis, and that is best reflected by the number of 15 to 34 year-olds who are disengaged from both work and education. This segment of the population is technically known to researchers as youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) has consistently been measuring the youth NEET rate since 2009. To date a whopping 8.5-million youths (15-34-year-olds) are not in employment, education or training. Millions of young people, most of them girls and young women, are not productively engaged. Youth in the Northern Cape province are recorded as the least engaged.

¹ *A net to catch the NEETs, Mail & Guardian, Aug 2020.*

South Africa's ever-increasing NEET rate presages that the country's human development capacity is indelibly constrained, reproducing and sustaining structural inequality that is already disproportionately suffered by black Africans, women and girls, youth, people with disabilities and those living in the rural areas.

Such a high NEET rate is a serious problem for current and future economic growth. If unaddressed, it forebodes social anomie, and though untested, it may also be a significant driver of South Africa's steep Covid-19 infection rate.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the state of NEETs in a country implies a stagnation or decline in human capital, which is particularly worrying if it affects low-educated youth with little or no work experience. The OECD adds that young people lack the financial cushion in the form of savings or benefit entitlements to cope with temporary spells of low income or unemployment. Periods out of employment or education can have negative long-term consequences by giving rise to potentially 'scarring' effects, i.e. by permanently reducing a young person's future employment and earnings potential.²

2 Definitions

5.1 Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)³

Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training listed previously and not in employment is considered to be a NEET and who is between the age of 16 and 35 years. Consequently, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.

5.2 Education and Training⁴

People are considered to be in education or training if any of the following apply:

² Department of Higher Education and Training (2017): Fact Sheet on NEETs

³ Reference: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2019>

⁴ Reference: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2019>

- They are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start;
- They are doing an apprenticeship/internship or learnership;
- They are on a government-supported employment or training programme;
- They are working or studying towards a qualification; and
- They have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks.

5.3 Employment and Unemployment (About labour market statuses⁵)

“In employment” includes all people in some form of paid work, including those working part-time. People not in employment are classed as either unemployed or economically inactive. Unemployed people are those who have been looking for work in the past four weeks and who are available to start work within the next two weeks.

Economically inactive people are those who have not been looking for work and/or who are not available to start work. Examples of economically inactive people include those not looking for work because they are looking after dependents at home.

These definitions are based on those recommended by the International Labour Organisation.

5.4 How to (mis)interpret the NEET rate⁶

Table 1 is presented here to demonstrate the variety of interpretations currently given to the issue of youth NEETs.

⁵ Reference: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2019>

⁶ Reference: Reference: Reference: ILO: What does NEETs mean and why is the concept so easily misinterpreted? Pg.5

Table 1: Excerpt on the NEET concept

Excerpts	Source
Having few individuals who are neither in employment, nor in education or training is a sign of a healthy transition from school to work.	OECD (2013)
Young persons not engaged in education, employment or training, expressed as the acronym "NEET", are being used increasingly in developed economies as a measure of youth marginalisation and disengagement. ... The expansion of the focus from unemployment to the broader concept of NEET responds to the need to also consider youth who have given up looking for work or who are unwilling to join the labour market.	UCW (2013)
NEETs are of particular interest to policy-makers as most of them can presumably be considered as facing difficulties in finding a job.	Eurostat (2014)
A high NEET rate as compared with the youth unemployment rate could mean that a large number of youths are discouraged workers, or do not have access to education or training.	ILO (2013a)
Because they are neither improving their future employability through investment in skills nor gaining experience through employment, NEETs are particularly at risk of both labour market and social exclusion.	ILO (2013b)
The concern with NEETs partly results from the fact that this group reflects a growing detachment of young people from the labour market. ... However, youth who are not employed and also not in education or training risk labour-market and social exclusion.	ILO (2012)
The NEET category is made up of three distinct states of employment: unemployment; discouragement; and inactivity, or having left the labour force.	AfDB, et al (2012)
At the European level, the label NEET has an immediate value as an additional indicator to the unemployment rate. This additional indicator eliminates the bias of those still in school and can identify all those who are disengaged from labour market, education or training and who may be potentially mobilised to join the labour market. In this sense, it can be understood as a measure of the level of the joblessness of young people.	Eurofound (2012)
Among standard measures of youth labour market performance, the NEET rate is the one that better reflects the reality of emerging economies by capturing both the risk of unemployment and inactivity. ... For many young people inactivity is the result of discouragement and marginalisation, which may reflect the accumulation of multiple disadvantages such as the lack of qualifications, health issues, poverty and other forms of social exclusion.	Quintini and Martin (2014)

For the purposes of this report, the definition of NEETS applied will be:

"The share of youth who are neither in formal employment nor full time education or training."

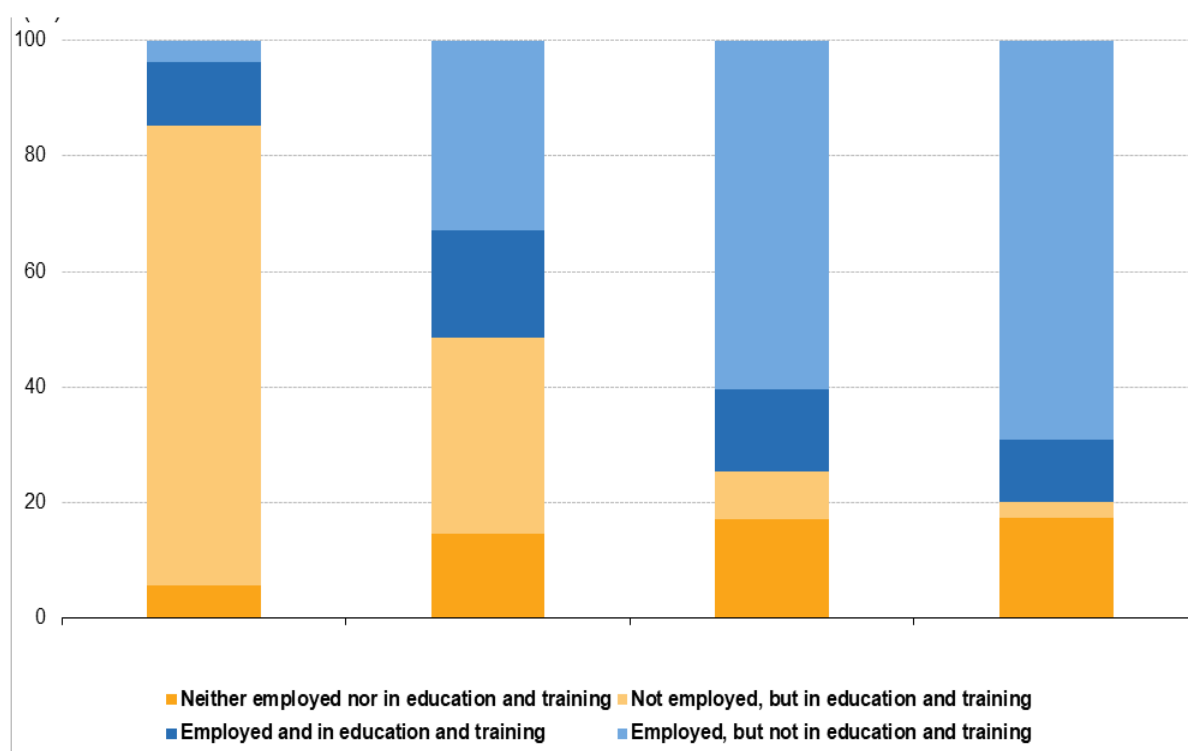
4 Global Context for NEETs

Lowering the youth unemployment rate has received prominence in the European Union (EU) since the economic crisis of 2008-2013 which led to high levels of youth unemployment and disengagement among young people. As a result of this, government and researchers embarked on new ways of monitoring and analysis the youth unemployment status in Europe. Thus, the NEET concept

was adopted in 2010, and used as an indicator to inform youth-oriented policies on employability, education, training and social inclusion.⁷

The age category applied to the NEETS concept was ages 15-24 and was later broadened to include ages 15-29. In April 2013, European Commission member states committed to the implementation of a 'Youth Guarantee', which entailed ensuring that all youth falling into the category of 15-24 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, internships, apprenticeships within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This initiative has assisted in improving the NEETS status on Europe.⁸

Figure 1: Employment, education and training status of young people by age in the EU (2019) in percentage



Source: Eurostat, 2020: Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training

Research done by the European Training Foundation (ETF) shows that a number of similar patterns can be traced in partner countries regarding the magnitude of the NEET problem and its underlying causes. Indeed, individual and family characteristics (sex, education level, age, socio-economic background) are

⁷ Reference: NEETS: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/neets>

⁸ Reference: NEETS: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/neets>

important factors determining the outcomes of youth transitions from education to employment and are therefore some of the key reasons that contribute to young people becoming NEETs.

Table 2: Young people (aged 20-34) neither in employment nor education and training by sex and active status in 2019 in the EU

	Unemployed			Inactive		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
EU	5.9	6.3	5.5	10.5	5.9	15.3
Belgium	4.9	5.5	4.2	10.3	7.4	13.1
Bulgaria	4.0	5.0	3.0	15.2	8.7	22.0
Czechia	2.0	2.0	1.9	14.0	2.8	25.8
Denmark	3.6	4.0	3.2	8.1	6.7	9.4
Germany	2.8	3.4	2.1	8.4	4.0	13.1
Estonia	2.9	2.1	3.8	10.7	4.6	17.2
Ireland	4.0	5.1	3.0	10.4	5.9	14.9
Greece	16.7	15.1	18.3	8.4	4.7	12.3
Spain	11.1	11.2	11.0	7.6	5.1	10.1
France	7.5	8.5	6.6	9.6	6.1	12.9
Croatia	7.6	6.9	8.3	9.4	6.5	12.5
Italy	10.1	10.6	9.6	17.7	12.0	23.6
Cyprus	6.6	6.4	6.8	9.1	5.5	12.5
Latvia	5.2	5.7	4.6	9.2	6.1	12.3
Lithuania	5.2	6.3	4.0	8.5	6.0	11.2
Luxembourg	3.7	4.4	3.0	4.4	3.0	5.8
Hungary	3.5	4.0	3.0	13.2	4.5	22.4
Malta	2.8	3.3	2.3	6.2	1.8	11.3
Netherlands	1.9	2.1	1.7	6.6	5.0	8.2
Austria	3.4	3.5	3.3	7.0	4.1	10.0
Poland	3.3	3.2	3.5	12.7	5.6	20.2
Portugal	5.8	5.0	6.6	5.8	4.8	6.7
Romania	4.4	5.6	3.1	15.0	6.0	24.7
Slovenia	4.2	3.5	5.0	5.9	3.3	8.9
Slovakia	5.6	6.5	4.7	14.2	4.0	24.8
Finland	3.8	4.6	3.1	8.3	5.4	11.4
Sweden	2.7	3.0	2.5	4.6	3.3	5.9
United Kingdom	3.3	3.8	2.7	9.9	5.6	14.3
Iceland	2.8	3.4	2.2	3.3	3.2	3.5
Norway	2.4	2.8	1.9	6.3	4.6	8.1
Switzerland	2.8	2.7	2.9	4.5	3.0	6.0
Montenegro	15.3	17.7	12.9	13.5	9.9	17.3
North Macedonia	16.1	18.1	14.1	15.0	7.2	23.3
Serbia	10.6	11.4	9.9	12.0	7.2	17.1
Turkey	10.0	11.4	8.6	25.3	7.0	43.5

Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_ifse_20)

Nonetheless, there are also large differences between the countries that could be explained by the various social or cultural norms of societies, the different structures and performance of their education and vocational education and training (VET) systems, and the functioning of local labour markets and economies in general. More concretely, the key findings can be summarised as follows:

1. There are very high numbers of young people who are neither in education or training nor in employment in the partner countries. Thirteen out of 18 countries for which we have figures show a NEETs rate for 15–29-year-olds higher than 25% (that is one in every four young people). However, there is great variation

between countries, from numbers similar to the EU28 (around 15%) to rates beyond 35%.

2. Most of NEETs are unemployed (particularly males) or have care roles within the family (mostly females), and some of them are disaffected. However, there is a strong variation across countries regarding the share of NEETs that are unemployed, discouraged, family carers or otherwise inactive in terms of the labour market.
3. The risk of becoming a NEET increases significantly with age. Compared to the age range 15–19, a substantial increase is observed in those aged 20–24, which is when young people have completed upper secondary and/or tertiary education. NEETs become even more numerous between the ages of 25 and 29.
4. Young women are more at risk of becoming NEETs than young men in almost all countries, but again there is a wide variation. The difference in between the proportion of males and females within the NEET group reaches 30 or 40 percentage points in some countries.
5. The positive effect of education in lowering the numbers of NEETs is not always guaranteed. More education clearly decreases the risk of being NEET in some countries, while in others, graduates of upper secondary/post-secondary education perform less well in entering the labour market than those with lower and higher levels of education. In some countries young people with higher education levels show greater NEET rates than those with lower education levels.
6. Similar to the results in industrialised countries, some socio-economic characteristics of young people's families also mitigate or aggravate their chances of becoming NEETs. Young people from households with economic difficulties (for example, low income, unemployed parents), from an immigrant background, or from groups that are at risk of being marginalised (for example, by language, as cultural minorities, Roma) have higher prospects of becoming NEETs.

7. We do not find any regional patterns regarding the size of the NEET problem, the profile of those belonging to this group, or the effect of individual and socio-economic characteristics.⁹

5.1 ¹⁰What is the Youth Guarantee?

The Youth Guarantee is a commitment by all European Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of

- Employment;
- Continued education;
- Apprenticeship; and
- Traineeship

within a period of four (4) months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

As part of the Youth Employment Support the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Bridge to Jobs reinforces the Youth Guarantee and among other aspects steps up the outreach to vulnerable young people across the EU. It has recently extended to the age range up to 29.

5.2 What has been achieved so far?

The Youth Guarantee has become a reality across the EU and has helped to improve the lives of millions of young Europeans.

1. More than 5 million young people have registered in Youth Guarantee schemes each year since 2014.
2. Since 2014, each year more than 3.5 million young people registered in the Youth Guarantee accepted an offer of employment, continued education, a traineeship or an apprenticeship.

⁹ European Training Forum (2015): Young People Not In Employment, Education Or Training (Neet) An Overview In ETF Partner Countries

¹⁰ The Youth Guarantee: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

3. The Youth Employment Initiative has provided direct support to over 2.4 million young people across the EU.

Within 5 years from when the Youth Guarantee took off, young people's labour market performance has improved significantly:

- There are 2.3 million fewer young unemployed in the EU and 1.8 million fewer young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs).
- Youth unemployment has decreased from a peak of 24% in 2013 to 14% in 2019.
- The share of 15- to 24-year-olds not in employment, education or training (NEETs) has fallen from 13.2% in 2012 to 10.3% in 2018.
- The improving economic situation in Europe has benefitted young people. Progress so far also suggests that the Youth Guarantee has made a difference. It has created opportunities for young people and acted as a powerful driver for structural reforms and innovation.

5.3 How have Youth Guarantee schemes been set up?

The Youth Guarantee has shifted the focus to early intervention and outreach to NEETs and highlighted the gaps in delivering services to unemployed youth. As a result, the majority of public employment services have improved and expanded their services for young people.

Apprenticeship and traineeship reforms have helped better prepare young people for the labour market and build relevant skills. Coordination among employment, education, social and youth policies has increased. New partnerships have been set up with social partners, youth services and youth organizations.

The EU has supported Member States in developing their national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. The Commission helps monitor the implementation of the national schemes and facilitates mutual learning through the European Employment Strategy Mutual Learning Programme and activities financed under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

5.4 Funding

The Youth Employment Initiative, together with significant dedicated investments by the European Social Fund are the key EU financial resource to support implementation of the Youth Guarantee on the ground for the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Youth Employment Initiative began with EUR 6.4 billion for most affected Member States. Thanks to its positive impact, it was then increased to 8.8 billion in 2017.

¹¹The COVID-19 pandemic emphasised the need to stay on this road and accelerate with speed. Though a health crisis first and foremost, the pandemic's impact has spiralled the EU into a deep recession. Rising claims for unemployment benefits foreshadow new challenges. Unemployment will rise among all age groups, but youth have already been struck disproportionately. Over one in six young people have stopped working since the onset of the crisis. Many were working in hard-hit sectors such as accommodation, food, arts, entertainment, wholesale and retail. Others are now trying to enter the labour market when such sectors are no longer hiring.

¹²With the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic having an impact on apprenticeships and training, the new Commission launched a Youth Employment Support Package on 01 July 2020. This was considered a 'bridge to jobs' to reinforce the 'Youth Guarantee'.

As school-to-work transitions and a sustainable market integration are taking longer because of a changing nature of work and the skills in demand, it broadens the target group from all unemployed or inactive young people under 25 to all under 30. It supports job creation measures, as well as various activation measures such as counselling, career advice and advocacy. Today's proposal steps up prevention of unemployment and inactivity of young people through better tracking and early warning systems and improves the quality of offers by linking them to recently created quality frameworks.

¹¹ Reference: Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1594047420340&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0276>

¹² Reference: Reference: European Commission: Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

The proposal actively tackles gender, racial and ethnic stereotypes, while supporting diversity and inclusiveness, including for young people with disabilities. Fortunately, many young people are only out of employment, education and training for a short time. Without underlying disadvantages holding them back individually, they may overcome setbacks due to lockdowns or economic cycles relatively quickly. The crisis should not make us lose sight of those hardest-to-reach, who will need intensive, often one-to-one support. Indeed, some young people risk being out of employment, education or training for a longer term, especially those belonging to the more vulnerable groups of our societies with major barriers to labour market integration even in the best of times.

The 'Bridge to Jobs' proposal caters for all, making sure that no one is out of employment, education or training for longer than four months by proposing more individualised and targeted approaches. It also underlines the importance of partnerships with, for instance, employers to advice on the changing nature of work, or with supporting social services to help disadvantaged young people get back on track in various other ways.¹³

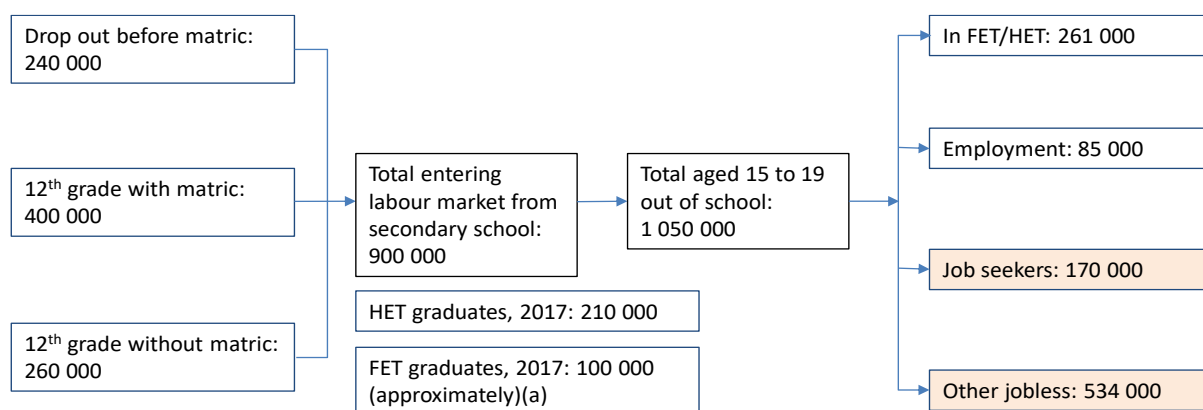
5 NEETs in the South African Context

Every year, almost a million young people leave secondary school. What happens to them next – whether they find additional education or jobs or end up adding to the ranks of the jobless – often sets a lifetime trajectory. Given South Africa's unusually high levels of joblessness, targeted programmes are necessary to assist young people to find a pathway from school to a productive and stable work life.¹⁴

¹³ Reference: Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1594047420340&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0276>

¹⁴ Trade and Industry Policy Strategy (TIPS) (2019): Estimates of school leavers: numbers, employment status and context

Figure 2: Path for School leavers per annum (2018 figures) in South Africa



Source: TIPS, 2019

Note: Estimated as the change in number of people with NTCIII or higher, at all ages.

¹⁵In its paper titled “A profile of young NEETs: Unpacking the heterogeneous” the South African Labour and Research Development Unit acknowledged the European Commission’s ‘Youth Guarantee’ model. However, in their paper, they sought to provide a more nuanced understanding of the youth NEET group in South Africa.

It forms the basis of further work that will investigate what a well-designed package of support for youth in South African would look like and uses some of the work on the EU Youth Guarantee as a guideline.

5.1 Young people who are Not in any kind of Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)¹⁶

The share of young people between the ages of 15 to 29 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in South Africa was 36.5% in the second quarter of 2018, the equivalent of over 5.6 million youth.

Drawing from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q2 data for the past five years, figure 3 illustrates that the NEET rate has been consistently over one-third of the youth population aged 15 to 29 years, but it did fluctuate between 2013 and 2018. While the rate was 35.8% (a total of 5 358 261 young people) in 2013,

¹⁵ Reference: A profile of young NEETs: Unpacking the heterogeneous: South African Labour and Research unit, 2019: pg. 3-4

¹⁶ Section reference: A profile of young NEETs: Unpacking the heterogeneous: South African Labour and Research unit, 2019:

it decreased to 34.1% (5 174 988) in 2015, before increasing and reaching a peak of 36.7% (5 649 055) in 2017.

The decrease in the rate in 2015, which falls outside the 95% confidence interval for all the other years, is confirmed in a study by DHET (2017) using the same QLFS, Q2 data.

Figure 3: Proportion of young people who are NEET in South Africa, 2013-2018



Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years with complete information on education attendance and employment status. We reclassified all inactive youths who indicated being students/scholars, while also reporting that they did not attend any educational institution as students/scholars. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

The 2018 data show that, of those youth who are NEET, close to 48% are unemployed, following the strict definition of unemployment (a total of 2 688 226 youth aged 15 to 29); 24% are discouraged job seekers (a total of 1 348 156 youths); and just over 28% are inactive⁴ (a total of 1 363 330 young people). This is a first indication of the limitations imposed by considering the entire NEET youth group as 'disengaged'.

Many young NEETs are female (55%); among those female NEETs, 1 311 872 (43%) are unemployed according to the strict definition, 716 244 (23%) are discouraged job-seekers and 1 055 712 (34%) are inactive; of those female, inactive NEETs, 654 470 are inactive because of caregiving responsibilities (62%) and 86 155 because of health reasons (8%). In other words, a large proportion of inactive, female youth is contributing to their households' functioning by looking after children and/or others in need of care.

Table 3: Overview of NEET Youth in South Africa, QLFS Q2 data for 2013 and 2018

	Indicator	2013		2018	
		Total number	Percentage	Total number	Percentage
Total SA population:	Total	52 892 224		56 532 629	
	Total Youth (15-29 yrs.)	14 952 590	28.3	15 444 809	27.3
	NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.)	5 358 261	35.8	5 630 179	36.5
Of those young people who are NEET:	Unemployed	2 475 778	46.2	2 688 226	47.8
	Discouraged job-seeker	1 206 235	22.5	1 348 156	24.0
	Inactive	1 676 247	31.3	1 593 797	28.2
	Gender: Male	2 394 309	44.7	2 546 352	45.2
	Female	2 963 952	55.3	3 083 827	54.8
	Race: Black	4 749 152	88.6	4 971 326	88.3
	Coloured	425 481	7.9	447 580	8.0
	Asian/Indian	74 013	1.4	65 063	1.2
	White	109 614	2.0	146 210	2.6
	Geo_type : Rural	2 222 427	41.5	2 372 583	42.1
	Urban	3 135 834	58.5	3 257 596	57.9
	Age category: 15 -19	582 057	10.9	598 288	10.6
	20 - 24	2 459 120	45.9	2 469 235	43.9
	25 - 29	2 317 083	43.2	2 562 656	45.5
	Education level: Grade 9 only	534 847	12.5	493 961	10.5
	Grade 10 and 11	1 687 318	39.5	1 842 678	39.0
	Matric	1 811 225	42.3	2 085 178	44.2
	Any tertiary ⁵	252 084	5.9	298 452	6.3

Notes: Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

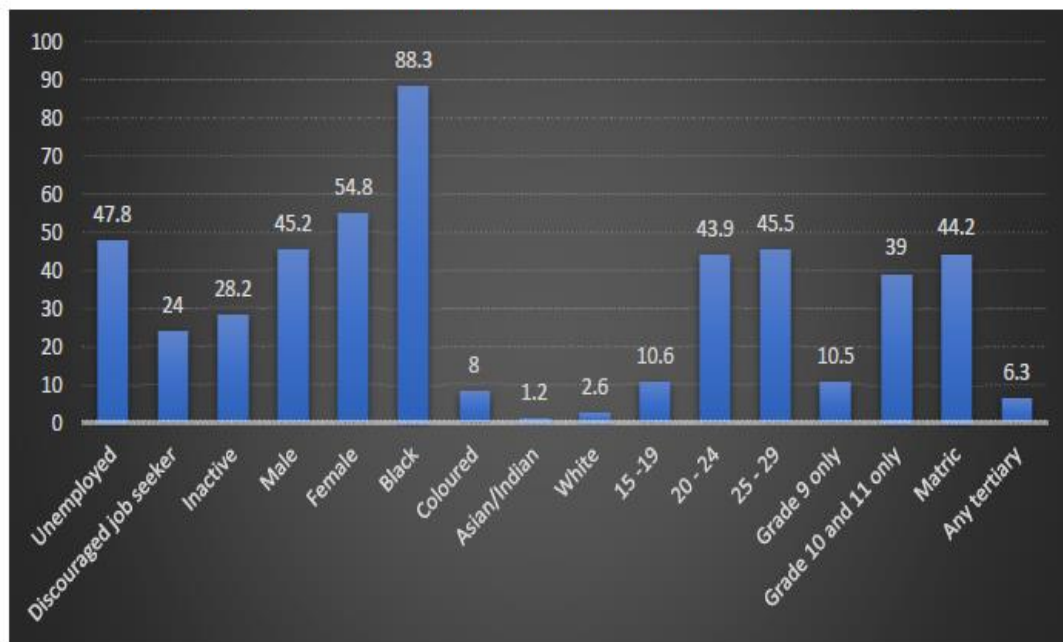
Table 3 further indicates that most of the NEET youth in South Africa is black. In addition, young NEETs are mostly concentrated in urban areas (58%), and most NEETs are found in the older age categories of 20-24 (total number of NEETs in that age bracket is 2 469 235) and among the 25-to 29-year-olds (total of 2 562 656).

Finally, almost half of all young NEETs have completed less than their final year of high school (49% or the equivalent of 2 336 639); this is a sub-group of youth that is not often targeted by interventions that aim to improve employability (De Lanoy et al. 2018). Longitudinal analysis using National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) data, looking at young people who did not complete their matric and who were NEET in the first wave of the NIDS, also showed that these are young people who are more likely to remain in a state of NEET over prolonged periods of time (Branson et al. 2019).

These characteristics have important implications for the design, implementation and cost of an intervention that could support these youths and reconnect them

to either education, training or employment (Arnkil, 2016): young NEETs who have completed less than their final year of secondary education may wish to re-gain access to the schooling system; some may have made it into the matric year, but did not manage to pass their final high school exams; they may thus want to re-write their matric exams. Youth who have some tertiary education but who struggle to find work may need to gain access to an intermediary programme that connects them to the labour market, while others may want to enrol for an additional year of study.

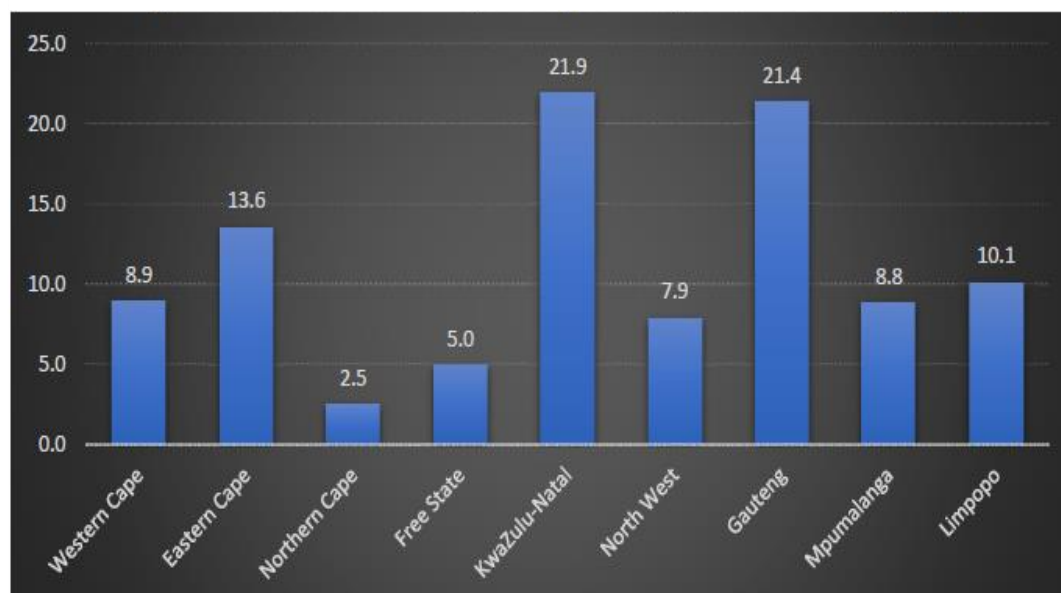
Figure 4: Key characteristics of youth NEETS in South Africa in 2018 category



Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

The QLFS is representative at the provincial level (Stats SA, 2018), thus allows us to disaggregate the NEET youth population by province. In figure 5, we show that NEET youth in the country are mostly concentrated in Kwazulu-Natal (22%), Gauteng (21%), and the Eastern Cape (14%). The provincial profiles indicate significant differences in the NEET composition in each of the provinces and illustrate the need to understand the nuances within the young NEET group at the sub-national level to allow for an efficient intervention design.

Figure 5: Distribution of NEETs youth by Province (% within the NEET group)



Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Within the unemployed, Stats SA distinguishes between various categories: Job loser; Job leaver; New entrant; Re-entrant; and Other – last worked > 5 years ago. These distinctions are important as they capture the kind of transition that young people are going through and that may require different or additional interventions.

Those who are short-term unemployed, for instance, may need reminding to update their CVs with the relevant latest employment details, or to ask for reference letters that may facilitate and positively influence their next contact with employers (Abel et al. 2017); those who are new entrants may benefit from being contacted as quickly as possible after entering the labour force, and from more hands-on guidance about how to engage with the labour market in their particular environment and with their specific skills set (Santos-Brien, 2018). Those who last worked 5 years ago may require a more intensive approach, both in terms of outreach and support. Table 4 presents these sub-categories for the NEET youth population (15-29 yrs.).

Table 4: NEET Youth by Unemployment Status

Unemployment Status	Total Number	Percentage
Job loser	717 449	17.8
Job leaver	104 355	2.6
New entrant	2 610 582	64.7
Re-entrant	397 463	9.9
Other - last worked > 5 years ago	206 533	5.1
Total	4 036 382	100

Note: Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. This table is based on NEET youths who are unemployed (unemployed: searching unemployed and discouraged job seekers). Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Of these different groups, the New Entrant - which is defined as people who were unemployed during the reference period, that had never worked before and that were currently looking for work - is of interest as the bulk of the NEET youths fall under this category. In Table 4 we present the numbers and proportions of New Entrant NEET youths by the time they have spent in the labour market looking for work. More than 45% of the New Entrant NEET youths have been in the labour market looking for work for at least 3 years.

Taking into consideration the subdivision of these New Entrants is crucial when developing the basket of services for youth, as New Entrants who did not complete their final high school year will require access to different pathways than those who did, and availability and accessibility of these pathways will be dependent also on age. The disaggregation shows that significant proportions of the older age groups are New Entrants, having completed less than their matric year, or only matric.

Chapter 2: Strategies and Interventions to address the NEETs Challenge in South Africa



South Africa continues to face an ever-increasing human development crisis, and that is best reflected by the number of 15- to 34-year-olds who are disengaged from both work and education.

(David Harrison/M&G)

1 Recent Statistics

In South Africa, under-qualification is more substantial than over-qualification. About 32% share of workers in South Africa are mismatched by field-of-study. The field-of-study mismatch was found to be higher than qualification mismatch in the country. The major setback lies with those persons who have been unemployed for longer periods and still do not find any form of employment.

The long-term unemployment rate remains on the increase. In 2018: Q4, about 6.1 million South Africans were unemployed and 4.4 million of them were unemployed for a year or longer. Between 2008: Q4 to 2018: Q4, the proportion of those in long-term unemployment increased by 9.3 percentage points from 61.8% in 2008: Q4 to 71.1% in 2018: Q4.

The cohort of persons not in employment, education and training (NEET) increased substantially. In 2018: Q4, nearly 3.2 million (31.1%) out of 10.3 million young people aged 15-24 years were NEET. Between 2017: Q4 and 2018: Q4, the overall NEET rate for the 15-24-year olds increased by 1.4 percentage points from 29.7% to 31.1%. The NEET rates for both males and females increased, with the rate for females remaining higher than that of males during both periods.

The NEET rates for females remained higher at 33.3% and 33.4% in 2017: Q4 and 2018: Q3; respectively, relative to NEET rates for males which were 26.2% and 28.8% during 2017: Q4 and 2018: Q4; respectively. During 2018: Q4, about 7.9 million (38.9%) out of 20.3 million young people aged 15-34 years were in the NEET category. The overall NEET rate for this age group increased by 0.5 of a percentage point year-on-year from 38.4% in 2017: Q4 to 38.9% in 2018: Q4. Though having remained higher, the NEET rate for females slightly declined by 0.4 of a percentage point from 43.3% in 2017: Q4 to 42.9% in 2018: Q4. For the same age group, the NEET rate for males increased by 1.4 percentage points from 33.5% in 2017: Q4 to 34.9% in 2018: Q4.

The incidence of long-term unemployment in the country is largely among women relative to males. In 2018 quarter 3, unemployment among women was 29.4% relative to 25.9% unemployment rate among males. The Black/African population group experiences a highest incidence of unemployment compared to other population groups. In 2018 quarter 3, unemployment rate was highest among the Black/African population group at 31.1%, followed by 21.8% among Coloured, 10.1% among Indian/Asian and 7.1% among Whites.

Between 2010 and 2017, the share of employed males ranged between 56.0% in 2017 and 56.8% in 2010, while the share of employed females ranged between 43.2% in 2010 and 44% in 2013 and 2017. The proportion of the employed Black/African population group increased by 4.4 percentage points from 70.1% in 2010 to 74.5% in 2017.

The share of the employed among White declined by 3.1 percentage points from 15.0% in 2010 to 11.9% in 2017, and the share of the employed among Coloured declined by 1 percentage point from 11.2% in 2010 to 10.2% in 2017. The share of the employed Indian/Asian decreased by 0.4 of a percentage point from 3.7% in 2010 to 3.3% in 2017. Trends in unemployment by gender over the period 2010 and

2017 were characterised by lowest share of unemployed females at 51.3%, while the highest proportion stood at 52.8% in 2011. The share of unemployed males was lowest at 47.2% in 2011, while the highest share was 48.7% in 2014.

Between 2010 and 2017, the lowest proportion of the unemployed Black/African stood at 88.7% in 2014, while the highest share stood at 89.6% in 2016. The proportion of unemployed among Coloured was lowest at 7.1% in 2016 and highest at 7.6% in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The shares of the unemployed among White varied between 2.0% in 2017 and 2.4% in 2014, while the Indian/Asian had lowest shares of the unemployed which ranged between a low of 0.9% in 2010 and a high of 1.3% in 2013 and 2015. The population groups aged 15 to 24 years and 25 to 34 years had the largest shares of unemployed people.

The share of unemployment among people aged 15 to 24 years, steadily decreased by 5 percentage points from 69.1% in 2010 to 64.1% in 2017, while the share of the unemployed aged 25 to 34 years varied between 37.8% in 2016 and 37.9% in 2010 and 2017. The outlook remains as a major concern in South Africa since the country's population largely comprises the youth, hence the need to boost employment opportunities for youth. The high level of unemployment for the youth group presents a major social and skills challenge for the country. Although nearly two thirds of the unemployed are aged 15 to 34 years (the youth), the share of the unemployed people aged 15 to 34 years decreased by 5 percentage points from 69.1% in 2010 to 64.1% in 2017.

2 National Interventions

In June, President Ramaphosa outlined his youth development arsenal to help more than 20-million of SA's youth population through the vehicles of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, the National Youth Service (NYS) and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

Are these interventions and the billions invested in them capable of catalyzing productive economic participation?

Whereas the mechanics of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention are yet to be known, NSFAS, much like the social grant system, has its challenges, though the financial aid scheme has funded thousands of students. NSFAS must extend its reach as many drop out post-school education institutions due to a lack of tuition fees.

Since 2004 the NYS programme has undergone multiple and complex changes in its design and implementation and has little known impact on youth. We do not know if the youth who participate in it gain accredited training with exit pathways to various opportunities such as accessing further skills training, getting a decent job, or even starting and running a profitable business.

The same can be said for the broader Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). We don't know enough about what, if any, economic or livelihood opportunities EPWP participants exit into after engaging in it. However, the majority of EPWP participants did not have matric (73,7% in 2018), suggesting that they return to unemployment. South Africa's labour market is notorious for demanding high-level skills and accreditation, credentials or qualifications. Prospective employers could be reluctant to employ NYS and EPWP graduates.¹⁷

The interventions are quantitatively low and have qualitatively poor impact as millions of youth remain unproductively engaged. In the current form, they serve as weak instruments to restructuring the South African economy and achieving greater and more productive inclusion of marginalized population groups.

While formal further education pathways remain difficult for many young people to access, there are opportunities in youth employability programmes that some youth take up. These are low-to-no-cost (to the young person) bridging programmes aimed at preparing youth, who have left high school, for study or work opportunities. These programmes commonly consist of skills training (personal, interpersonal and technical skills) and work experience in the form of apprenticeships, volunteering, and learnerships (Graham et al., 2017, Graham et al., 2019a). Some programme also offer participants a stipend. Often, these programmes are heard about through social networks.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ngoma, Amuzulweni (2020): A Net to Catch the NEETs, Mail and Guardian

¹⁸ Baldry, K., Graham, L., & De Lannoy, A. (2019) The agency and resilience of NEET youth and what we can do to support them. Evidence from a synthesis of qualitative research with young

3 Provincial Interventions

3.1 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

Estimates of school leavers: numbers, employment status and context The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) focuses on skills development and providing work opportunities. It is one of the important ways the WCG is working to reduce the levels of poverty and unemployment in the province. It does this through:

- Giving unemployed people access to temporary work.
- Helping unemployed people through skills programmes and work experience.
- Ensuring that unemployed people receive a stipend for any work they have completed as part of the EPWP.
- Enhancing EPWP participants' chances of finding jobs or starting their own businesses.

The EPWP focuses on four (4) sectors:

1. Infrastructure Sector

The infrastructure sector is led by the Department of Transport and Public Works (DTPW), together with the departments of Human Settlements (DHS), Health (DoH) and Education, as well as municipalities.

Work opportunities within this sector focus more on labour-related activities (for example maintenance programmes) and are likely to provide regular jobs to large numbers of people.

2. Non-State Sector

The non-state sector is led by the Independent Development Trust (IDT) and includes local government (Community Work Programme) and municipalities. IDT provides funding to Non-Profit Organisations (NGOs), who then provide regular part-time work with regular incomes.

3. Environmental and Culture Sector

This sector is led by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEADP), together with the Departments of

Agriculture (DoA), Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS), as well as municipalities. This sector creates jobs through alien vegetation clearing projects, wetland rehabilitation programmes, waste management and community tourism projects.

4. Social Sector

The social sector is led by the Department of Social Development (DSD), together with the departments of Community Safety (DCS), Education and Health, as well as municipalities. The sector focuses on increasing the quality of home-based care and early childhood development programmes, both of which require large amounts of dedication.¹⁹

The City of Cape Town also runs an EPWP programme that focuses on:

- Infrastructure (labour intensive or maintenance);
- Social (early childhood development and home-based care); and
- Environmental and culture (environmental improvement and cleaning).

3.2 Department of Economic Development and Tourism's NEETs related skills development programmes:

3.2.1 Work and Skills Programme (WSP)

The Work and Skills Programme (WSP) facilitates experiential learning and work placement opportunities for unemployed youth in the Western Cape's high job-yielding, priority economic sectors which include Tourism, Agri-Processing, Oil and Gas, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Renewable Energy, to improve the future employment prospects of participants, between the ages of 18 - 34 years.

This 4 to 12-month placement opportunity couples technical and soft skills training in the context of "hands-on" work experience.

¹⁹ Western Cape Government: <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/expanded-public-works-programme-epwp-0#:~:text=The%20Expanded%20Public%20Works%20Programme,people%20access%20to%20temporary%20work>.

The Work & Skills project incentivises companies to offer experiential work opportunities to unemployed youth that allows income into households. It's aimed at first time work entrants pre-COVID 19 and has expanded to include during the pandemic youth with previous work experience that are currently unemployed due to the impact on unemployment and the critical need to increase employability and provide opportunities during these declining economic conditions.

The aim of the programme is to incentivise employers by providing workplace stipends to host unemployed youth 18 years and older to gain work experience to improve their employability and social well-being of the citizens in the province. The programme partners include Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs); Municipalities; Social and Education sector; as well as Private sector. The partners are required to provide meaningful work exposure as well as where possible top-up funding towards the monthly stipends and/or skilling opportunities for the youth during their placement period.

The department has managed to secure in most instance employment up to 80% post the placement intervention. The opportunity affords youth with the valuable work experience and preparation for the world of work.

Certain categories of youth within the NEETs group can access this opportunity when made available dependent on the demand as the host employers identify the number of work placement opportunities available as well as conduct their own recruitment and selection. The Department does not influence the type of candidate to be selected; however, puts forward the minimum criteria for the selection of learners. The minimum criteria include age as noted above, a matric qualification as well as residing in the Western Cape as some of the key criteria to access the stipend payment. Youth with less than a Matric are unable to access this programme and therefore does not cater for this target group.

The objective of this programme is a better educated and more skilled workforce is the most challenging long-term priority for the economy. The WSP, which is demand-led, aims to improve the employability of participants through incentivised workplace experience.

3.2.2 Artisan Development Programme (ADP)

The Artisan Development Programme (ADP) focusses on artisan development and getting learners into apprenticeships. The advantages of apprentices are the additional workforce for the company, the tax rebates that can be claimed and the increase in productivity. Through this programme learners get the opportunity to gain experience in the workplace while applying the theoretical training that was learned at TVET or private colleges.

The objective of the ADP is to link the industry to the training institutes and ensure that the learner that exits the programme after completing the trade test is ready to be absorbed by the industry and adheres to the industry standards.

3.2.3 I-Can Centres

The I-CAN Centre in Elsies River is a public access facility that provides access to broadband, digital skills programmes and business services to citizens.

The I-CAN Centre is an initiative of the WCG who appointed the Genesis Community IT Initiative as the operator of the Centre. It represents just one of the ways the Digital Economy Unit is increasing internet access and improving digital skills for the people of the Western Cape. It is open to any member of the public and is split into multiple areas/zones that provide a wide variety of services both free and paid.

Citizens visiting the centre can expect to find:

- Free Digital Skills Courses;
- Paid and Certified Microsoft, Adobe and Programming Courses;
- Free and Paid Digital Skills and Entrepreneurship Workshops;
- Free 45 mins per day Internet Access and 300MB per month Wi-Fi Access;
- Paid Internet and Wi-Fi bundles after free use has been depleted; and
- Printing, Laminating, Graphic Design and Website Design services and much more.

3.2.4 TVET and CET College interventions

During engagements with TVET Colleges in the Province around the topic of NEETs, the following observations and suggestions were made:

- NEETs are applying at TVET Colleges, but they make up a small percentage of the student population due to various hampering factors such as financial resources, lack of knowledge of training programmes presented at colleges and family responsibility.
- NEETs compete for access at TVET Colleges and experience various challenges such as reconnecting with studying, cannot cope with the curriculum, NSFAS bursary is seen as a social grant, once the youth fails subjects, the NSFAS bursary comes to an end.
- NEETs don't know how to access training at TVET Colleges as they don't have access to information as to what the college offers, how to apply for a bursary or the fear of just approaching the institution at all.
- Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges will have to start to play a larger role in communities to provide NEETs the stepping stone into the TVET Colleges. More work needs to be done around the linkage between TVET Colleges and CET Colleges.
- The ABET Level 1 (at CET Colleges) need to be re-evaluated to prepare students better for future studies as the link between ABET and TVET College training is disconnected.
- Many programmes at colleges don't appeal to the NEETs group as it is too long and too much focused-on theory. NEETs don't have the luxury to study for a year or two in order to obtain a qualification but need to be taught a skills set to obtain a job.
- No TVET Colleges have had an open engagement with a group of NEETs to find out why they don't access training at TVET Colleges. A focus group discussion with NEETs will provide more clarity on how TVET Colleges can attract NEETs to TVET Colleges. There is a lack of connection with the youth and the TVET Colleges are missing out on an opportunity to provide training to a large portion of the youth in the Western Cape.
- The Pre-Vocational Programme (PVP) that is presented at TVET Colleges have an 80% success and retention rate, but the funding for this kind of intervention is very limited. Another challenge is that the training is a year, and there is a need for training programmes that are shorter (3 months) in

order to address the need of NEETs. A programme such as the Occupational Readiness Programme (ORP) was mentioned during the focus group discussion and the formal feedback from TVET Colleges.

- An important missing link for NEETs is career guidance as NEETs has no access to information (cost of data, access to facilities and lack of knowledge) which impacts their choices (or lack of career choices). There is a need for Youth Advisory Centres in communities to assist with career guidance and to provide information on training options available to NEETs.
- TVET Colleges' funding is linked to Ministerial programmes, and there is no funding available for pilot projects that focus only on NEETs.
- Interventions suggested by TVET Colleges for NEETs to be successful at TVET Colleges include the following:
 - Transitional support programme;
 - Adequate academic and students support;
 - Travel allowance;
 - Digital access;
 - Mentorship programme;
 - Soft skills training; and
 - Digital literacy training.
- A combination of interventions is needed in order to address the large number of youths that are not in training.

3.3 Interventions suggested by Department of Social Development Western Cape

In the *Strategic roadmap towards implementation of the National Anti-Gangsterism Strategy in the Western Cape*, the Department of Social Development (DSD) acknowledges that there is a need to focus on the safety aspect at education and that it has an impact on the youth of the province. The DSD designed a roadmap to address the safety aspects of education and it is discussed below.

Principles guiding the education actions were developed:

- Learners and teachers require discipline, structure, love, appreciation and positive reinforcement;

- Interventions must include school-going and NEETs young people;
- Personal and practical skills are central to education;
- Reading for meaning and pleasure is the central pillar of formal education;
- Critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity are essential for holistic education;
- Interventions should build personal and community resilience;
- Early identification (at primary school level) of special needs children prone to violent behaviour and/or with fetal alcohol syndrome is critical in education planning;
- Good school leadership improves overall educational success;
- Recreational activities (credible, aspirational and desirable) boost participation;
- Better trained teachers produce higher achieving learners; and
- Life-long learning supports prevention of high-risk behaviour.²⁰

Figure 6: Proposed interventions and their outcomes - Education

INTERVENTION	OUTCOME	IMPACT
Extend hours & use of schools into safe spaces for communities	The community and students see schools as safe zones	Students have greater self-esteem as a result of pro-social activities
Refine & roll out Safe Schools Programme	Better learner retention	Schools function well and show improved results
Ensure adequate physical safety for schools & access routes	Better learner outcomes	Data driven approach to interventions
Develop tools for early identification of learners at risk of drop-out & develop effective retention interventions	Improved school management	
Organise training for out of school youth & adults	Improved teaching	
Design absenteeism reintegration programmes	Improve possibilities to access tertiary education and employment	
Develop data dashboards to collate all learner/NEET/NGO specific data	Needs-specific curriculum strategy	
Improve in-service training & performance management of teachers & leaders, using a whole person approach & including psycho-social support	Reinstate selected Teacher Training Colleges	
Increase number of technical & agricultural schools	Create alternative pathways for early exiting learners that further education & maximise economic opportunities	
Interrogate appropriateness of curriculum	Expand After School Game Change where it has proven to be effective	
	Address teacher learner ratio & open new schools where needed	

²⁰ Department of Social Development (2019): Strategic roadmap towards implementation of the National Anti-Gangsterism Strategy in the Western Cape



**Western Cape
Government**
Economic Development
and Tourism

PART B

Conclusion and Recommendations

1 Conclusion

It is important to highlight that the heterogeneity of the NEET population needs to be addressed when designing policies to re-engage NEETs with the labour market or education. The different needs and characteristics of the various sub-groups have to be taken into account, and the one-size-fits-all approach must be avoided. Only a tailored approach to tackling the needs of the different sub-groups will effectively and successfully reintegrate NEETs.²¹

South Africa's potential lies not only in its natural resources and reindustrialisation, but in a well-integrated and innovative human development strategy. The directed targeting and successful integration of youth NEETs who are located in geographically and economically peripheral provinces and small towns in social and economic infrastructure development projects and reindustrialisation efforts would serve as an effective catalyst. Youth NEETs must become central to small town rejuvenation and new urban development.

Importantly, this would also mean that as NEETs exit the public employment programmes, they would transition to servicing those local markets in various agricultural, agri-processing, construction; small scale manufacturing; and other value chains. Development finance institutions are critical partners for finance and business support.²²

Important actions would need to support this, including identifying NEETs and developing a recruitment strategy for NEETs, identifying their capacity, educating NEETs and conducting skills profiling, supported by economic opportunity mapping and linkage where they are. Of course, Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA's); Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs); Universities; and Universities of Technology would also be crucial actors.

Support and interventions that young people require to navigate the transition out of school and into employment or training are those aimed at providing clear and comprehensive career guidance to school-leavers, including guidance and

²¹ De Lannoy, A., Mudiriza, G. (2019). A profile of young NEETs: Unpacking the heterogeneous nature of young people not in employment, education or training in South Africa Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 249).

²² Ngoma, A (2020): A Net to Catch the NEETs, Mail and Guardian

assistance with applying to university and college; and increased, comprehensive financial support for University and TVET. Many young people express a sense of not being able to access the available opportunities (of College and University) and therefore ask for more, and more easily accessible options.

Young people indicate that they require encouraging spaces and opportunities to engage and in which to be active citizens. These could take various forms including youth clubs; mentorships; internships; apprenticeships; volunteering; job shadowing; or community work. There is also a need to ensure that existing skills training programmes are linked to the workplace as many young people are skilled but not utilising their skills as the connection between skills training and work is not easily navigated.²³

There is a need for more industry and work opportunities, and the Youth Lab and Poverty and Inequality Initiative report speaks about the need for government and businesses to create more opportunities for youth to connect to the physical spaces of work opportunities, specifically internships, and particularly to create an environment conducive for manufacturing. Furthermore, they highlight the need to promote Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and move away from policies that are biased towards large firms.²⁴

Young people are skilled, and are willing and able to acquire new skills, but they need the opportunities to express and harness these skills. Assuming there are jobs available, they would also benefit from interventions that reduce the cost (financial and emotional) of looking for work and money to assist with their job search process. In this respect, the Youth Lab and Poverty and Inequality Initiative have discussed the provision of a “job-seekers allowance”, although there is an ideological barrier against “handouts”. Young people taking part in the conversation also suggested providing a “once off ‘jump start’ package” for young people who leave the education system and enter a stage of job search.

²³ Baldry, K., Graham, L., & De Lannoy, A. (2019) The agency and resilience of NEET youth and what we can do to support them. Evidence from a synthesis of qualitative research with young people in South Africa. Cape Town: SALDRU, University of Cape Town & Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 253).

²⁴ Baldry, K., Graham, L., & De Lannoy, A. (2019) The agency and resilience of NEET youth and what we can do to support them. Evidence from a synthesis of qualitative research with young people in South Africa. Cape Town: SALDRU, University of Cape Town & Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 253).

This could include “a small amount of cash, a bank account, pathway information, a transport voucher, an airtime voucher and access to a digital job search platform”²⁵

There is some evidence to suggest that financial capability programmes that teach young people about money management and savings have positive effects on employment chances. The mechanisms by which this works is yet to be assessed but the finding is a promising one suggesting that supporting young people's financial capability and ensuring they can access income where they are eligible (for instance if they are caring for children who are eligible to receive the (Child Support Grant) CSG) are critical to helping them along their way.²⁶

Countries with strong integrated school and work-based learning vocational programmes are also those with the highest employment rates for adults with vocational qualifications, even surpassing those for tertiary educated adults in some cases. However, only one third of all upper secondary vocational students are enrolled in such programmes on average across OECD countries. The duration of work-based components varies across countries, from less than 30% of the length of the programme in Estonia and Israel to at least 80% in Austria, Finland and Switzerland. The most popular fields of study among vocational graduates vary at different levels of education. While engineering, manufacturing and construction are the most common broad fields at upper secondary level, at short cycle tertiary level, most students graduate from business, administration and law or health and welfare.²⁷

Noting the above and as outlined in the literature, strong integrated school and work-based learning vocational programmes initiatives are required and do exist across the WCG departments. Going forward it requires stronger collaborations between the WCG departments, other government departments and other social partners as well as industry are driven to develop a “partnership model”

²⁵ Baldry, K., Graham, L., & De Lannoy, A. (2019) The agency and resilience of NEET youth and what we can do to support them. Evidence from a synthesis of qualitative research with young people in South Africa. Cape Town: SALDRU, University of Cape Town & Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 253).

²⁶ Baldry, K., Graham, L., & De Lannoy, A. (2019) The agency and resilience of NEET youth and what we can do to support them. Evidence from a synthesis of qualitative research with young people in South Africa. Cape Town: SALDRU, University of Cape Town & Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 253).

²⁷ OECD (2020): Education at a glance 2020

that integrates the efforts across the WCG departments for support to the education and social sectors. Collaborating and finding synergies across the existing and new skills development and youth related interventions will assist youth across the value-chain to access skills and work-based experience.

A collaborative WCG task team to explore the various sub-groups and where the dropouts of learners are taking place as well as where the assistance is required to help the various sub-groups to be assisted. A review how all NEETs groups can be assisted through these interventions including youth with less than grade 9 to access opportunities. Most interventions target learners with a matric qualification or above which does not allow for all youth, particularly this sub-group that is most vulnerable and unable to access opportunities.

2 Recommendations

The overall report outlines some of the national and provincial interventions to address the various sub-groups within the NEETs category. There are many interventions focused on youth and skills development interventions. However, we are still facing the challenge of an ever-growing NEETs % rate increasing.

The definition of NEETs and the various sub-groups to be addressed is going to be key moving forward so that we can unpack the needs, what, why and how do we address the challenges and opportunities to shape the integrated holistic approach to develop solutions. The analysis of the type of interventions that do exist as well as partners implementing, encourage synergies and collectively determine the gaps and what needs to continue and/or re-shaped as well as look at how the gaps can be addressed through the partnership model.

To achieve this theoretically speaking, a “*positive youth development*” approach is what young people are in fact asking for. Such an approach to young people “shifts our practice orientation away from dealing with problems after they have occurred towards implementing policies and programmes that work to enhance the agency and capabilities of young people.

Such an approach is promotive and preventative. Applied to employability for example, it shifts the question from “how do we address youth unemployment?” towards

“how do we support young people to make a smoother transition to the labour market?” It asks us to consider not just the young person's labour market related skills and potential, but to work with a young person in a holistic manner – connecting with their interests, agency, and dreams; emphasising their talent and energy; and supporting them to overcome any personal, household and structural barriers they face.”

A positive youth development approach has at its core young people's agency and capabilities, but also recognises the need to support and help to direct this agency in a direction that is beneficial to the young person and the realisation of their goals.

What does such an approach practically look like, given the narratives and lived realities of the young NEETs?

1. First, it is holistic, multi-dimensional and high-touch. It engages young people face to face, perhaps supported by technology, and begins where they are, with an understanding of their capabilities and their goals. In doing so it requires a component that is proactive in reaching out to young people; both prior to dropping out of existing systems (such as schooling), as well as once they are already out of systems to encourage them to reconnect.
2. It has as its end goal that young people feel supported in their agency and that their navigational capacity as well as their well-being is enhanced.
3. It may involve providing young people with a “starter pack” of basic information and services. This could include “a small amount of cash, a bank account, pathway information, a transport voucher, an airtime voucher and access to a digital job search platform”
4. It recognises that there are a myriad of opportunities and services that young people can access, but that such services and opportunities are often not known to young people or are difficult to access for various reasons. The narratives reveal repeated attempts to participate in available opportunities as well as the real struggles with attempts to do so. Any intervention to support such youth must therefore be able to guide them to take advantage of available services and opportunities at the local level and to ensure that doing so enables them to build towards a better life and to see their progression.

5. Information about and referral to such services might include assisting young people to set goals that are realistic, identifying appropriate and accessible training opportunities and providing information about how to apply for such opportunities and support to follow up on applications. It may include referral to psychosocial support services or to sexual and reproductive health services if necessary. It may include providing advice about what young parents or caregivers are able to access including social grants and early childhood development facilities. And it may also involve supporting young people's financial capabilities. It therefore requires "local intelligence" – an understanding of available local services and opportunities that are available, but which can also support their pathway.
6. Finally, such an approach requires ongoing support. Too many programmes support young people to access an opportunity and then leave them on their own to navigate their pathway further. A positive youth development approach seeks to walk alongside a young person over a period, allowing them to connect back into the intervention when they complete a particular opportunity or engage a particular service in order to work with a support person to assess what the next step in their trajectory is. Certainly, the narratives show that ongoing check-ins and support are highly valued by young people.²⁸

To support the holistic positive youth development action plan above, other key recommendations to be considered by the department as well as key partners to realise this action plan include:

- Unpacking the role that DEDAT as well as other government departments and private sector play to positively contribute to the development of NEETs. Understanding the role that key government departments that focus on youth development like the WCED, DSD and other relevant departments can play in supporting NEETs is important to unpack. Where does the role start and stop for the various stakeholders along the value chain to assist youth?
- Unpacking youth employability programmes and highlighting "best practice" of key initiatives that are working/have worked will be beneficial to shaping future initiatives. Explore existing models that have provided youth with opportunities

²⁸ Baldry, K., Graham, L., & De Lannoy, A. (2019) The agency and resilience of NEET youth and what we can do to support them. Evidence from a synthesis of qualitative research with young people in South Africa. Cape Town: SALDRU, University of Cape Town & Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 253).

to access workplace experience i.e. DCAS's Year Beyond volunteer programme, Work and Skills and other WCG initiatives that allow for youth to access experience. How do we tap into the public service employment and work experience opportunities – in the communities to gain experience while trying to seek employment. Community upliftment and ownership as well as gaining exposure to increase employability.

- Strategies to help re-integrate youth back into education system is going to key to avoid an increase in NEETs, the integration into existing and new programmes to help youth remain in the basic education system as well as access to skills development opportunities to become economically active. The WCED NGO @homelearning project is one example of a pilot that is aiming to re-integrate youth into the schooling system. Further support and explore the broader rollout of this type of intervention and similar ones will be key.
- There is a need for special projects targets the NEETs sub-group that have dropped out of the schooling system and unable to re-enter due to various reasons including learning barriers. Explore skills development opportunities that focuses on key basic and hand skills aligned to needs within the community and industry requirements.

Skills development programmes that provide access to these skills as well as review the "School of Skills" model in collaboration with WCED to help youth access these school offerings. Also explore how youth exiting these schools are accessing opportunities within the world of work. Articulation for them to become economically active is going to be key for this sub-group, as:

- Various bridging programmes are required to support the various sub-groups of the NEETs group. Noting the various requirements for entry and articulation pathways as well as funding to support these initiatives is lacking.

A NEETs learner with a grade 9 will require particular foundation learning versus the learner with matric and above. Graduates require access to workplace learning and employment opportunities. What are the opportunities available to access workplace base exposure – access to national and provincial workplace programmes as well as providing more placement opportunities in the social and

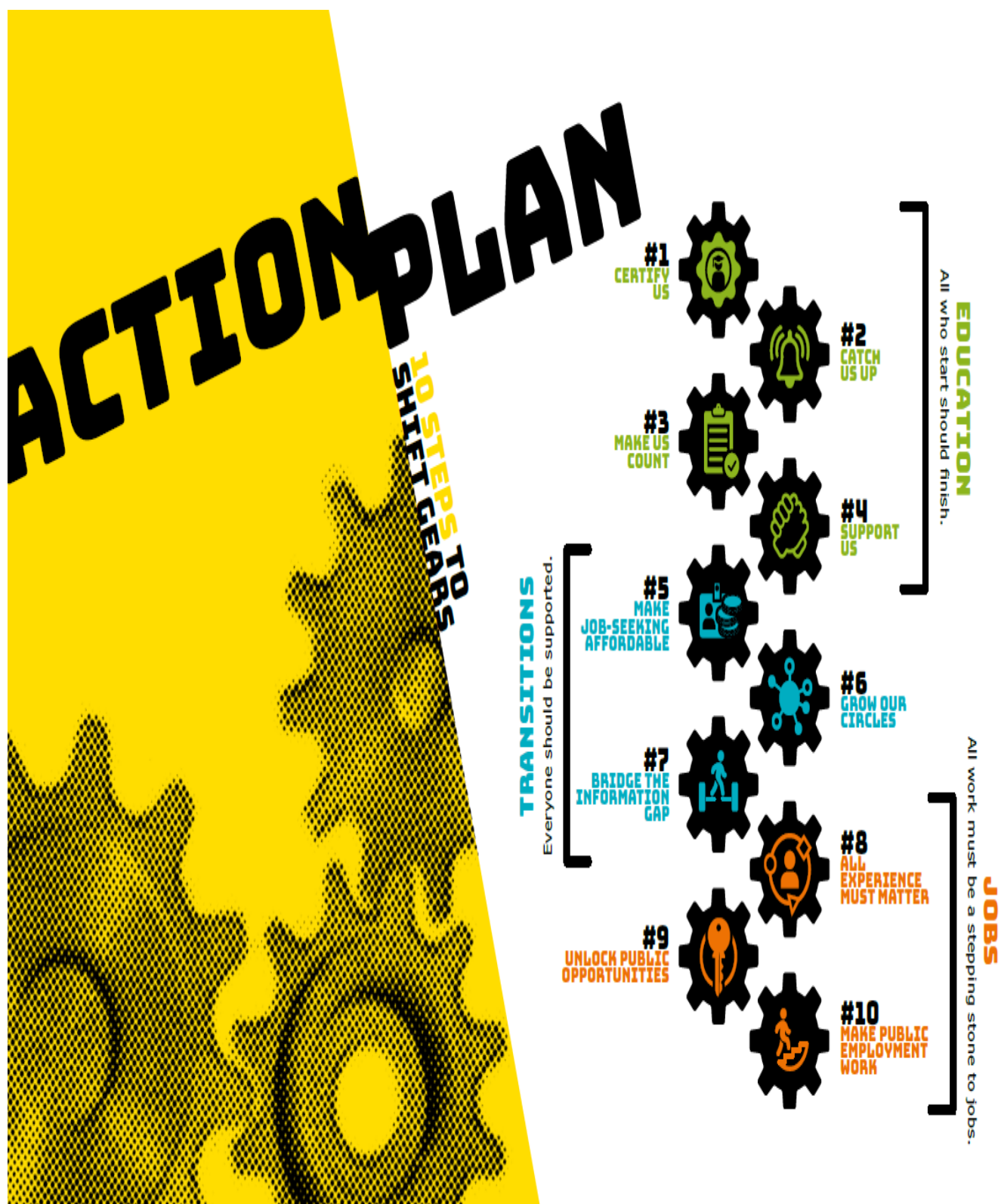
education sectors that recognises volunteering and community based work as well.

- Access to youth friendly related services is key. An analysis to youth friendly services to support the social and academic needs of learners to be unpacked. This includes access to digital literacy, mentoring, coaching job searching and CV writing. Career guidance on the various careers and the career pathways to meet future skills demand is also be critical.

Services exist; however communication and whether these services provide meet what the youth is require and managing expectations including transport and other resources to be able to access these services are important. Services like the I-CAN learn become critical to address online digital learning as well as other similar services available in the various communities.

- Encouraging a closer relationship between schools and the community-based projects as well as industry partners to help with career guidance as well as provide support to schools that enhances an entrepreneurship culture and promote self-employment as prospective career opportunities with the link to support programmes i.e. government and related services available to support youth as well as academia playing a stronger role with linkages for the youth and people in the community to access entrepreneurship information i.e. TVETs establishing entrepreneurship hubs in the various regions.
- A comprehensive youth development strategy is needed for the country, but also for the Western Cape. This strategy can be used as a guide to develop programmes that will address the needs of NEETs. The Youth Capital document is an example of what such a youth development strategy can look like and address the need of various subsectors of the NEETs category.

Figure 7: Action Plan



Source: Youth Capital: Shift- 2020 An action plan to tackle youth unemployment in South Africa

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