

GOYN 2022 calls for skills partnerships to overcome youth unemployment of nearly 64%

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This Youth Month marks 46 years since the Soweto student uprising of June 16, 1976, where students protested against the forced imposition by the Apartheid government of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at local schools. As we think about that generation of brave young activists, we also have to contend with the new struggle faced by the current generation of young people - the battle against unemployment! A struggle exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic of the last two years.



Recent data from Statistics South Africa revealed that at least 63,9% of youth are unemployed – a very alarming world record. At the same time, many companies continue to create training and job opportunities for young people. As a country, we need to do more. It is crucial to have more initiatives based on partnerships with other organisations to close any gaps in employment for SA's youth.

Helping opportunity youth out of stagnation

"South Africa has a staggering number of young people aged between 15 to 34 years, who are out of school, unemployed, underemployed or working in informal jobs – these are called Opportunity Youth (OY)," states Khethiwe Nkuna, Responsible Business Lead for Accenture Africa. "The [Global Opportunity Youth Network](#) (GOYN) is a global campaign, which we have participated in locally. This initiative aims to move these Opportunity Youth into meaningful careers in formal employment, and to empower youth to build their entrepreneurial ventures in South Africa, particularly in eThekweni," she adds.

Accenture's Market Intelligence Report revealed that at the grassroots level, there had been significant activity and investment, particularly in Gauteng and Western Cape, but not much in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), which hosts over 50% of unemployed youth. For this reason, GOYN piloted in the eThekweni municipal region in KZN – working with young people to radically reorganise information around them and enable them to grow their skills and profiles to access even more opportunities tomorrow than they can today.

The GOYN project in South Africa started in November 2019 as a ten-year initiative run by co-anchors Harambee Youth

Employment Accelerator and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), in conjunction with Accenture, Youth Build International, Aspen Institute, and GDI. It is a global project with support from both local and multinational funders.

Weak partnerships are impacting youth unemployment

"South Africa faces fragmentation and duplication of services due to lack of or weak partnerships. Rather than just being funders, we ensure collective impact and plug the gaps in the market, enabling a growing economy and a society that works, powered by the potential of young people," Nkuna states.

According to Accenture, many organisations merely offer training or job opportunities without looking holistically at the individual and addressing challenges related to their local context. To combat this and ensure tailored solutions to address challenges encountered by youth in their communities, GOYN hosts a Youth Advisory Group (YAG). This platform is for youth ambassadors from different organisations and communities to align and agree on the key challenges and potential solutions that would assist youth in their communities. Outcomes from these discussions are then shared with the broader stakeholder groups to ensure that the youth's voice is considered in creating initiatives and solutions.

Last year, Accenture global funded a two-year digital opportunity pilot worth USD 1.7 million to connect youth to digital economy career opportunities across several countries. In South Africa, building on the infrastructure of [sayouth.mobi](#), this funding aims to impact at least 34,000 youth in eThekweni in the first year – allowing young people to access relevant local content with links to funding bursaries, job opportunities and training.

Young people can use this 100% free mobisite to connect to find learning and skills opportunities – it requires no mobile data. It is also 100% free for partners and community-based organisations to access recent research material. They can read the stories of beneficiaries of the program and join the SA Youth Partner Network – a network of networks that allows them to load jobs and opportunities and connect young people to the same.

Celebrating the success stories from GOYN 2022

Doreen Phiwe Mkhize (30) grew up in Embo Hillcrest, KZN, and has always dreamt of becoming a counsellor. After matriculating, she didn't have a clear path to achieve her dreams and decided to commit to completing a one-year course at a PC Training College. She tried many avenues to study further, but barriers such as finance and clear career guidance blocked her path.

Doreen found an entry-level job and succeeded in the position for six years until she was retrenched. She searched daily for work and finally found an opportunity through GOYN. She applied and landed the position as an Education Assistant. Doreen expresses how this job has given her purpose, helped her provide for her family and allowed her to find a clear vision for her future. She has taken the opportunity with both hands and continues to try her best. She has applied to study a part-time counselling course through her church to take steps toward her dreams.

Bheka Mbonambi (27) grew up in Quarry Heights, Durban, and always dreamt of becoming a horticulturist. At school, Bheka worked as a gardener to help feed his family. After matric, he navigated complex challenges and graduated with a National and Advanced Diploma in Horticulture. Still, he needed to find a way to fund his Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Horticulture. He started a small business and searched for formal opportunities.

He finally found a GOYN opportunity through social media, and he applied and landed the position as an Education Assistant. He has gained valuable work experience, learnt soft and hard skills and funded his studies. Bheka is grateful for the opportunity and how it has impacted his life. He encourages all young people to register on SA Youth, have patience and work hard to achieve their dreams.



87,000+

youth supported on SA Youth in the last year
(Young people that engaged with the SA Youth
network for the first time in eThekweni).



4,350

youth with a disability supported
by GOYN in eThekweni



9,000+

opportunities created for youth in the
eThekweni area. This includes jobs, work
experiences, public sector employment
programmes, and micro-enterprise.



59,160

young women were supported
by GOYN in eThekweni



"We are passionate about youth development. Almost half of Accenture SA's staff are under 35 years of age, and this group of aspiring future leaders is critical to our success. Accenture will continue to do its part to help uplift and support our youth and establish a favourable environment for them to thrive. Remember, while our country has come from a difficult past, our future remains bright," Nkuna concludes.

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