

**EMPOWER YOUTH**  
THROUGH WORK

**Siyafunda Tours trading as youth@WORK NPC**  
[WWW.SAYOUTHATWORK.CO.ZA](http://WWW.SAYOUTHATWORK.CO.ZA)

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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## Erica Kempken



## Jacinta Tshidzumba



### OPENING STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTORS OF YOUTH@WORK

Meaningful change is never achieved alone—it takes a committed team, aligned partners and a shared vision. In 2024 we witnessed the power of collaboration, innovation and dedication, as our team and stakeholders worked together to create real opportunities for young people. Since 2019, we have placed and supported over 10,000 Youth through our 12-month work experience journey, equipping them with skills, networks and confidence for long-term success.

This year has been one of growth and progress, marked by new milestones. We embraced AI-driven automation in recruitment, streamlining document management for efficiency at scale. Scale-up techniques in organizational management enhanced our agility while reinforcing our core values of care, accountability, lifelong learning and collaboration.

These achievements reflect resilience and the power of partnerships. With the support of our funders, host sites, supervisors and internal team, we have expanded our impact, creating sustainable employment pathways. The journey continues. Together, we will keep empowering Youth, driving economic inclusion and shaping a future where work unlocks opportunity and lasting change.

In 2024, we not only placed over 3,500 Youth in meaningful work experiences, but also onboarded nearly 1,500 Youth in April alone! With large corporates doubling their YES intake and choosing us as their Implementation Partner, we had to pivot to a more tech-driven onboarding process. This led to a complete rebuild of our LMS system, enabling us to manage the full youth experience journey and integrate it via API with the PSiber payroll system.

We used Scale-up processes to guide our internal transformation, allowing us to manage over 3,000 Youth monthly. Our banking limits expanded to handle payrolls exceeding R14 million/month, distributing salaries to youth — many of whom support three or more family members. It is humbling to note that we have alone distributed over R540 million into communities since our inception. However, the biggest highlights are the incredible heights our Youth are reaching in business and employment. Camilla Ndlovu a 2021 alumni, established her social venture in agriculture and secured funding for a 29.9-hectare farm in Limpopo, focusing on poultry production while expanding into mixed farming. Committed to Youth development and giving back, she is now taking on YES youth as employees—all at just 29 years old!

We are particularly proud of our increasing absorption statistics, measuring the number of Youth placed into permanent, fixed-term and part-time employment beyond the program, as well as those who have registered their own businesses. While our current 49% absorption rate 6 months post program is modest, we have implemented new strategies to significantly increase this in 2025.

Through our bespoke CORE CRM system and AI-driven UPLOADER technology, we pull valuable insights, showcased in the Impact and Industry Report. Additionally, we have licensed this technology to other providers, creating an additional income stream and promoting shared resources.

This year, our efforts were recognised with two major awards, further validating the impact and scalability of our model. However, our greatest achievement remains the transformation of young lives — moving youth from unemployment to employability, from job seekers to job creators, and from uncertainty to a future filled with possibility. Believing that Youth unemployment starts at its foundation in Early Childhood Development, we are advancing the implementation of our youth-led, technology-driven foundational literacy and numeracy screening service. To date, we have screened and supported over 8,000 learners, ensuring early intervention in education and skills development.

Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to scale even further — placing 5,500 Youth by supporting 30,000 learners, expanding into emerging industries and strengthening partnerships that drive systemic change. The future of youth employment is not just about numbers; it is about impact. Through collective effort, strategic investment and a relentless commitment to empowering young people, we continue to build a model that is scalable, sustainable and transformational—not just for South Africa, but for the continent.

Together, we are shaping a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, and ready for the future. The journey is far from over, but with every milestone we reach, we move closer to a future where every young person has access to meaningful work, education and opportunity.

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**Jacinta Roest-Tshidzumba & Erica Kempken**  
Co-founders of youth@WORK



# SCOPE

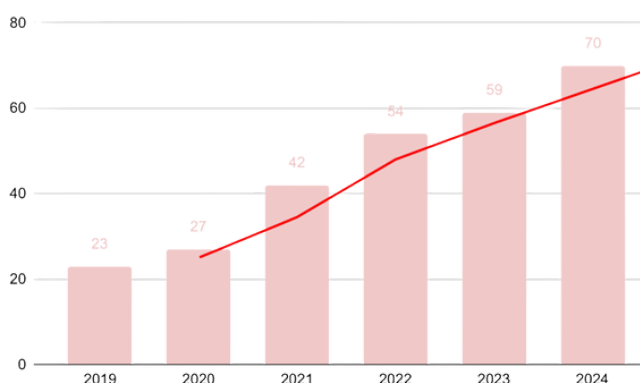
## Urban Vs Rural distribution

# 248M

248 million Investment in youth salaries within rural areas. Our distribution shows **46% of youth placement in rural areas** and 54% of all youth placed in urban areas.

Rural engagement, while steady, requires targeted investment to match urban growth. **91% of all urban youth** are placed across four major cities.

## Active Funders



From 2019 to 2024, active Funders grew from **23 to 70**, indicating increased recognition of youth@WORK's **effectiveness**. This growth aligns with **national** workforce priorities and **rising interest** from various industries.



# +130

Funders invested.



# +2680

Secondment Sits for facilitate skills development and job placements.



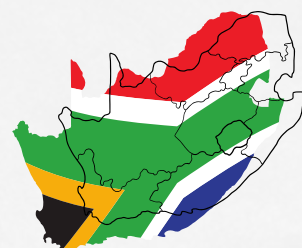
# +540M

Youth salaries paid out, with an average annual growth of 5%.



# +10.5K

Active youth with average annual growth of 58%.



Foot print in all 9 provinces.

# YOUTH IN GREEN

Nedbank Training Program: May-June 2024

The Nedbank Agri-Program, conducted from May to June 2024, successfully trained **86** participants, culminating in a graduation ceremony on June 27 at the Batlhaping Ba Ga-Phuduhucwane community hall in **Taung, North-West**. This program aimed to equip young individuals with essential agricultural and entrepreneurial skills, including **soil science, crop management, business planning, and the application of technology in farming**.

Over nine weeks, attendance remained consistently high, reflecting strong engagement:

**Week 1: 85 participants**

**Week 9: 83 participants**

The program was supported by **Universal Greening Organization (UGO), Youth Employment Services (YES), NYDA and youth@WORK**. Facilitators Mulalo and Dr. Muthikhitha played pivotal roles in delivering the training. Monitoring and evaluation methods, such as attendance tracking and wellness calls, ensured the program effectiveness.

Two outstanding participants were recognized for their leadership and dedication, receiving brand-new laptops from Nedbank. The graduation ceremony not only celebrated academic achievements but also marked the participants readiness to drive sustainable agricultural development and entrepreneurship within their communities. The program underscored Nedbank commitment to fostering economic growth and empowering the next generation of agricultural leaders.



[hashtag#youthatWORK! Nedbank Youth Employment Service \(YES\) South Africa](#)



# YOUTH IN Tourism



## Strengthening Partnerships: Site Visits to Host Employers

On October 4, 2024, YES staff conducted site visits to two of our host employers in Cape Town, reinforcing our commitment to ensuring quality work experiences for youth.

The first stop was at the Taj Hotel, where we met with youth placed under the TransUnion Credit Bureau-funded program, alongside their supervisor. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with both youth and supervisors sharing how the host site has provided valuable training and professional development.

The second visit took place at the Radisson Blu Hotel at the Waterfront, where they engaged with youth to assess their experience. Participants expressing appreciation for the opportunities and skills development they had received.

These site visits reaffirm the importance of strong host partnerships in creating meaningful employment pathways, ensuring that youth receive practical experience, mentorship, and career-building opportunities.

# YOUTH IN Automotive



Lindokuhle Mlindeli Mkhungo – Mechanical Assistant  
Halfway Toyota Scottburgh | KwaZulu-Natal

With a certificate in General Draughting, Lindokuhle Mlindeli Mkhungo has found a dynamic home in the automotive sector, working as a Mechanical Assistant at Halfway Toyota Scottburgh in KwaZulu-Natal.

His role is hands-on and varied — from creating and closing job cards, capturing tracker orders, and updating technician boards to attending to clients visiting for fitments. Occasionally, Lindokuhle also handles car deliveries, showcasing his adaptability and trustworthiness.

*“What I enjoy most is communicating with clients and making sure they’re satisfied with our service. The environment here is very organized, and I’m growing every day.”*

Being part of a major automotive brand has inspired Lindokuhle to dream bigger — a clear example of how meaningful work placements can reignite confidence, purpose, and possibility.



# Matsibela Asherai Sithole

## Funded by Sanlam Tourism P1

Matsibela works at the British Chamber of business. Her supervisor is very proud of her work she has been working on their social media account one of her projects is to create quality magazine for the chamber, Matsibela has managed to **increase social media accounts to 1000 followers within 11 months** of her working at the chamber and boosted brand awareness and visibility for the chamber this was thanks to Allison courses in Digital Marketing.

Matsibela's supervisor Manila Sanchez Aragon who's the General Manager for the British Chamber of Business in Southern Africa has a plan in place for Matsibela beyond her YES Program.

The first plan was to get funding for Matsibela to complete her MBA studies and she managed to source fund from the chamber to keep Matsibela for a year, in 2026/7 Matsibela will be moved to **Communication at ABSA.**

[youth@WORK](mailto:youth@WORK)







# SIZWE WISEMAN SIKHOSANA

Funder: Toyota P6

Host Site: Mbalasi Primary School

Sizwe was fixing a faulty meter box for the school. He is a **qualified electrician** with N6. He is **enjoying** his job at the school as he is the one fixing all the electrical problems at the school including faulty plugs and lights.

The principal is happy to have him at the school saying that he is a very good worker and an asset to the school.



# YANGA NQENQA

## Head of HR and Operations

With immense pride and gratitude, I reflect on the milestones, challenges and collaborative successes that have defined youth@WORK's journey. Our vision of empowering youth through meaningful work experiences has led to measurable impact, strengthened partnerships and lasting change.

**Key Findings:** Retention, Absorption, and Work Readiness

Our focus extends beyond job placements to fostering transformative experiences that build skills, confidence, and character for long-term employment. Over the past two years, we have achieved a **92% retention rate** across all provinces, with many alumni securing permanent positions, pursuing entrepreneurship, or furthering their education.

Secondment sites have played a vital role in providing mentorship and industry training, helping refine raw talent into job-ready professionals. Employer feedback consistently affirms the **value of our approach, which prioritizes soft skills development and targeted upskilling to enhance employability.**



## **Milestones:** Growth, Recognition, and Strategic Expansion

Our efforts have been recognised through:

The 2023 **IRMSA** Social Development Industry Award for our **positive social impact**.

The **2024 YES** Implementation Partner of the Year Award, highlighting our **innovation** and **agility**.

We have also expanded our partnerships, doubling our intake and significantly increasing placements with other key industry players, reinforcing our reputation for delivering skilled and reliable talent.

## **Challenges:** Shaping Mindsets and Bridging Skill Gaps

Adapting youth mindsets to professional environments has been a key challenge. Many participants come from diverse backgrounds, requiring structured mentorship to build resilience and workplace readiness.

Additionally, aligning participants skills with industry needs remains a priority. While many have strong academic foundations, technical and practical gaps persist. To address this, we have refined training modules and strengthened initiatives like **Think Tank Thursday (TTT)** to bridge these gaps effectively.

## **Collaboration:** The Power of Partnerships

Our success is rooted in the unwavering support of secondment / host sites, strategic partners, and funders. Their contributions from providing mentorship to investing in programme expansion have been instrumental. Special thanks to Youth Employment Services (YES) for their collaboration, which has deepened our program's reach and impact.

## **Looking Ahead**

The road ahead is filled with opportunities to expand our impact and refine our approach. We remain committed to innovation, resilience, and creating lasting change.

A heartfelt thank you to our Provincial Coordinators, Senior Management Team, and all stakeholders who continue to walk this journey with us. With your support, youth@WORK will remain a beacon of hope, empowering youth and shaping a brighter future.

At youth@WORK we have the humility to see things as they are, the courage to imagine how they could be and the tenacity to make that a reality.

**Yanga Nqenqa**

Head of HR & Operations



# Awards & Recognitions



YES IP of the  
Year Award -  
2024

## Yes IP Award



youth@WORK [hashtag#youthatWORK](#) was honoured to receive the accolade of **Best Youth Employment Services Implementation Partner for 2024**. We were awarded this in recognition for our **agility** in **navigating complexity** in [hashtag#youthemployment](#), adaptability to **build partnerships** and passion for **real** transformation driving [hashtag#Africaforward](#).

We remain committed [hashtag#Catalyst2030](#) to change and greatly appreciate the recognition for our work. Thank you to the amazing [hashtag#Yes4youth](#) Team for making this possible. **We can only solve this huge challenge with exceptional joint vision and collaboration.**



# IRMSA AWARD

## Mitigating Youth Unemployment Risks: Youth@WORK Wins IRMSA Award 2024

Youth@WORK is honored to receive the Industry-Specific Risk Initiative Award in the Youth and Education category at the IRMSA Awards 2024, recognizing our efforts to combat youth unemployment and economic inactivity.

Prolonged unemployment leads to economic stagnation, social instability, and reduced productivity. Businesses face shrinking talent pipelines, while youth struggle with poverty and limited career opportunities.

### Ongoing Recognition & Commitment

Winning IRMSA awards for two consecutive years, including the **Youth Development Award in 2023**, affirms our impact in workforce development.

In 2025, we will collaborate with the IRMSA Youth Desk to further reduce youth unemployment risks by strengthening business partnerships and expanding economic opportunities.







# ignite 2024

## Entrepreneurial Leadership Driving Growth

Both founding members of Youth@WORK are EO members, committed to scaling the business and driving impact.

In March 2024, CEO Erica Kempken represented Youth@WORK at EO Ignite 2024 in Johannesburg, delivering a TEDx-style talk on scaling social enterprises and business-driven youth employment solutions.

The event provided valuable networking opportunities, fostering strategic partnerships for growth. Erica also gained insights into board formation and governance, shaping plans for an enhanced board structure in 2025.

As EO members, the founders continue to leverage business principles to expand Youth@WORK's reach and sustainability, ensuring lasting impact in youth employment.



**youth@WORK**



## The YES Top 35 Under 35 Awards

### Celebrating 35 trail blazers shaping tomorrow today



#### **Celebrating Excellence: YES Top 35 Under 35 Alumni Event**

A defining moment for Youth Employment Service (YES) South Africa in 2024 was the YES Top 35 Under 35 Alumni event, held in partnership with Daily Maverick at GIBS Business School (Gordon Institute of Business Science). This remarkable gathering brought together some of South Africa's most inspiring young leaders, alongside esteemed speakers including YES CEO Ravi Naidoo, Morris Mthombeni, and Nyimpini Mabunda.

The day was filled with masterclasses and thought-provoking discussions, equipping our YES alumni with insights, skills, and networks to further their careers and social impact. The evening celebration honored the incredible Top 35 alumni, recognising their contributions to business, technology, and community development. These young leaders represent South Africa's next generation of change-makers. Among them are data analysts, business development managers, entrepreneurs, and social impact champions—including two individuals running a soup kitchen that feeds 500 people weekly in their community. Their dedication and success stories reaffirm our belief in the potential of South African youth to drive economic and social transformation. Five of the 35 were youth@WORK youth.

The overwhelming support from YES partners, clients, board members, government collaborators, and industry experts highlighted a common message—we must create more opportunities for youth. Their growth is essential to building a stronger, more inclusive economy. As we look ahead, we are excited to see how these exceptional alumni will shape South Africa's future over the next 5, 10, and 15 years and beyond.



# Ebernezer Chauke

YES Alumni and Top 35 Changemaker

## Funded by SAS INSTITUTE

Ebernezer Chauke, is a proud winner of last year's Top 35 Under 35 competition. His journey from unemployment to becoming a Data Quality Officer at youth@WORK is a testament to the transformative power of the YES programme. This competition is not just about recognition, it is about celebrating our collective achievements and inspiring each other to reach new heights.

Through his SAS Institute-sponsored YES programme, he honed his skills as a business analyst and climbed the ranks at YES host partner Youth@WORK. His journey started when he was appointed in a pivotal role in shaping the company's current customer relationship management system. This experience allowed him to oversee both in-house and remote teams tasked with monitoring active YES Youth placements across South Africa.

Chauke's role as a data quality officer requires him to ensure that data ingested in the organisation is accurately stored and shared across departments.

Together with his team, he provides proper training to users within the data space and ensures that security measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access. He manages provincial teams essential in ensuring that YES Youth placed across various host sites by Youth@WORK receive quality work experiences.

Throughout his career, Chauke has refined his emotional intelligence, patience, resilience and ability to work under pressure. His journey at Youth@WORK reflects a commitment to continuous learning and a passion for driving organisational success.





# SME Developments

## Empowering Young Entrepreneurs: Youth@WORK and Silulo's SME Development Partnership

Youth@WORK, in collaboration with Silulo, is equipping young entrepreneurs with the skills and support needed to build and sustain businesses. Through #YES4Youth, participants receive business management training, financial planning support, and operational guidance, ensuring long-term success.

This pilot partnership has deepened our understanding of youth in SME development, shaping future initiatives planned for 2025. Under this program, participants benefit from:

- A base salary, enabling focus on business growth.
- Accountability groups, fostering mentorship and shared learning.
- Business toolkits and coaching, enhancing operations and scalability.
- Skill-building sessions facilitated by Silulo.

By integrating financial assistance, mentorship, and skills training, we are creating a model for sustainable SME growth and youth employment. We look forward to sharing insights and expanding impact in 2025 and beyond.

[youth@WORK!](#)



# Addressing Hunger Through Social Justice

## Insights from the 6th Social Justice Summit

### Youth@WORK Driving Social Justice Through Youth Placements

In 2024, Youth@WORK was privileged to collaborate with Professor Thuli Madonsela and her team by placing youth to support research, activism, and awareness initiatives at the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) at Stellenbosch University. Our participation in the 6th Social Justice Summit reaffirmed our commitment to meaningful change, addressing one of the most pressing issues of our time: hunger and food insecurity.

#### Tackling Hunger Through Research & Advocacy

At the Summit, Professor Madonsela highlighted the barriers to nutritious food, emphasising that food insecurity is a man-made problem, as echoed by Mr. Neil Coleman. Research presented at the Summit drew clear links between food security, income poverty, and economic growth. The statistics are stark:

- Over 50% of households live on less than the minimum wage.
- Social grants remain below the food poverty line.
- Nearly two-thirds of South Africans are food insecure.
- 1 in 5 families send a family member out to beg for food.

A key takeaway from the discussions was the shift in thinking from #FoodSecurity to #FoodSovereignty, advocating for communities to have control over their own food systems.

This partnership underscores the power of collaboration in driving social transformation. Through strategic youth placements and partnerships, we remain committed to empowering young people while tackling critical social challenges.

Together, we can create lasting change.

🔗 See more from the Social Justice Summit:

[#6thSocialJusticeSummit](#) | [#CentreForSocialJustice](#) | [#FixMyFood](#) | [#YouthAtWORK](#)





# SA YouthAtWork Pty (Ltd)

## SHARED SERVICES

youth@WORK developed the **CoRE LMS**, a robust solution designed to manage and streamline all stakeholders processes effectively. This platform enables:

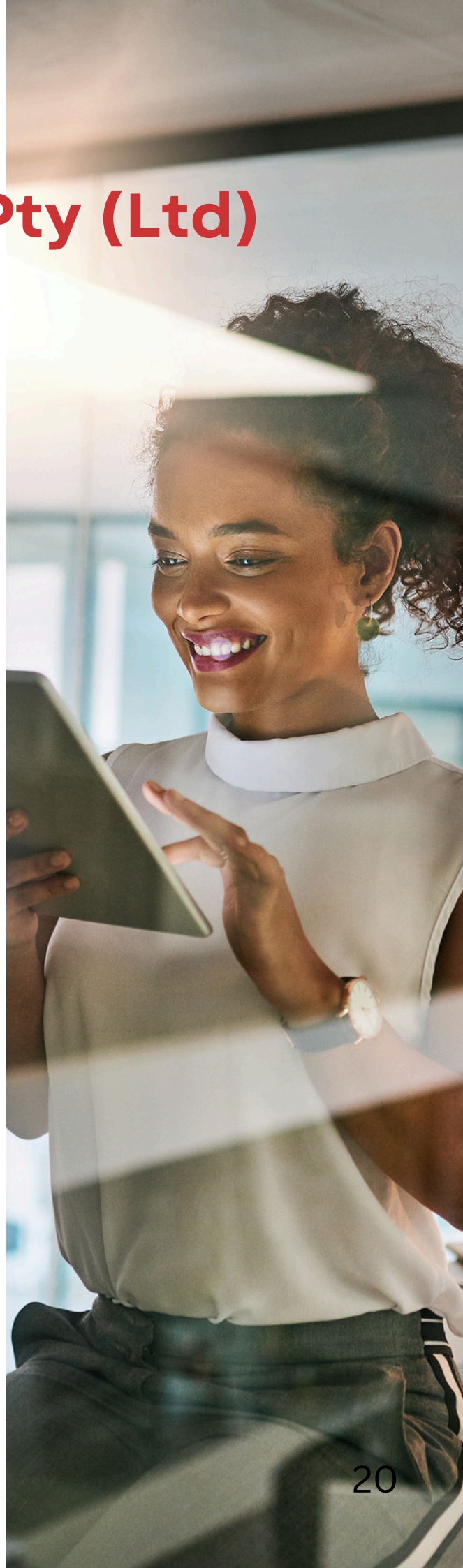
- Youth Management
- Funder, Partner, and Supervisor Management
- Cohort Creation and Management
- Insightful Reporting

To support the broader industry, youth@WORK has made the CoRE LMS available for use by any organisation.

## UPLOADER

youth@WORK leverages **UPLOADER.africa**, a cutting-edge AI-powered tool designed to process and analyse documents efficiently. This platform enables the scanning and processing of youth-related documents and data used in this report.

FIND OUT MORE: [SAWORK](#)







# Impact

## Partnering for Impact

At Youth@WORK, strategic funder partnerships drive meaningful youth employment opportunities. In 2024, we strengthened collaborations with corporate partners committed to skills development and economic inclusion.

A standout initiative is the YUM and Pizza Hut LeadHERship program, empowering young women through mentorship, career coaching, and leadership development. Twice a year their international executive team visits Johannesburg to personally mentor participants. Each young woman is paired with an executive, receiving CV support, interview coaching, and networking opportunities to help secure permanent employment beyond YES.

Beyond mentorship, our partnership extends to shared experiences. This year, we joined the team in cycling the 94.7 Challenge, further consolidating our partnership with fun and sweat!!!

Together we are breaking barriers and equipping young women for long-term success. We are especially grateful for partners who go beyond funding to transform lives.



# ON THE ROAD

## Ensuring Quality Through Personal Engagement **youth@WORK**

A vital part of the program is the careful vetting and selection of secondment/host sites where youth are placed. To uphold program standards, a dedicated team conducts regular site visits, ensuring that workplaces provide a safe, supportive, and enriching environment for participants. These in-person engagements allow us to see firsthand what youth are practically doing at work, assess their growth and skill development, and gain valuable insights from their experiences.

By listening directly to the youth, we ensure that the program is meeting their needs, enhancing their employability, and addressing challenges in real-time. This continuous feedback loop strengthens partnerships with host employers and enables us to make data-driven improvements, ensuring that each participant gains meaningful, hands-on work experience that sets them up for long-term success.





# TEAM BUILDING

## Celebrating a Year of Impact and Team Spirit

As we wrapped up 2024, we came together to celebrate a year of hard work, dedication, and life-changing impact. None of our achievements would have been possible without our committed, passionate, and resilient team—the driving force behind every milestone we reached.

Our year-end celebration was filled with fun, creativity, and unforgettable team spirit. From singing on the bus all the way to the venue to engaging in laughter-filled team-building activities, the energy was a true reflection of the camaraderie that makes our team so special. It was a day to relax, connect, and celebrate our shared success.

This celebration was a reminder of the power of teamwork, the impact we create one life at a time, and the collective commitment that will continue to shape the future of Youth@WORK in 2025 and beyond. We LOVE you!!!!





## SHARED SERVICES

- Recruitment & Selection: Matching youth to work opportunities applying diagnostics and SAYouth.mobi platform.
- Workplace Support: Monthly site visits, psycho-social and employment support
- Youth Learning & Development: Access to YES One App with 40+ work- readiness modules and choice of 4500 non-accredited courses through the Alison platform.
- Payroll & Data Reporting: Complete onboarding, payroll management, and B-BBEE verification support.
- Exit Management: Career guidance, CV creation, job search support, and LinkedIn profile development.

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# Resources & Reports

## Additional Resources

Explore our data, stories, and insights:

### 2024 Impact Report

Dive into the numbers and narratives driving our change.

### 2024 Industry Report

Trends and sector insights on youth placement and absorption.

### Catalyst Leading Article

Featuring our co-founders' bold vision for youth employment.

### [Visit Our Website](#)

Learn more about our model, partners, and upcoming initiatives.

