

Local NPO looks to niche skills development to help address employment crisis

According to Statistic SA's *Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q3: 2020*, "Compared to Q3: 2019, the percentage of young persons aged 15-34 years who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) increased by 2.6 percentage points from 40.4% to 43.0% (out of 20.5 million) in Q3: 2020. The NEET rate for males increased by 3.1 percentage points, while for females the rate increased by 20 percentage points in Q3: 2020."



Gabriel Humay, project manager at Salesian Institute Youth Projects (SIYP), says that confronting the situation starts with offering equal access to quality education, understanding the barriers to skills development, practising new ways of teaching and creating more economic opportunities for young people – whether it be in existing employment opportunities or encouraging entrepreneurship.

'No overnight solution'

"Of course, many of these equalising factors are already in play, but there is no overnight solution. At SIYP's Learn to Live School of Skills, all courses are approved by the Western Cape Education Department. We are piloting the interactive 21st century teaching methodology of project-based learning (PBL) with the Department of Basic Education and we remove stressors, such as the cost of learning materials and transport, so that pupils can truly focus on their studies. But above all, we believe that the programmes we have in place that teach skills in niche industries, such as hospitality, carpentry, maritime and automotive, will provide opportunities for placement straight out of school."

Humay continues, "The demand for human capital in the labour market continues and whilst the majority of learning curricula now focus on technology-driven jobs of the future, jobs of the past are not yet obsolete. By focusing on growing industries in the current labour market, we can make employment and entrepreneurship opportunities more accessible to NEETs."



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The Salesian Institute Youth Projects current programmes include:

- Waves of Change for youth aged 18–35: a course dedicated to skills training and employment opportunities in the maritime industry, facilitated by strategic partnerships.
- Porsche Mechatronics: a three-year programme for young people aged 18–23, focused on competencies in the automotive industry. In partnership with Porsche, this programme feeds qualified mechatronics technicians into positions at Porsche and Volkswagen dealerships around the country.
- Learn to Live School of Skills: a four-year programme that concentrates on qualifications in hospitality, carpentry, electrical work and hairdressing for students aged 14-18. Graduates either go on to study further, find jobs or start their own small businesses.

In 2021, SIYP is set to launch a NEETs programme that aims to help marginalised youth off the streets and into training that will ensure their employability through skills development and internships. The 12-month programme will be for youth aged 18–25 and will consist of three modules including a foundation phase, community development and practical work experience in the form of internships.



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22 Oct 2020



Creating a critical mass

“By recruiting from one specific community at a time, we hope to create a critical mass, thereby uplifting and empowering not just one individual, but an entire graduate class at a time, offering the opportunity for impactful change within their community,” adds Humay.

“Ultimately, the Learn to Live School of Skills will become the pipeline for the NEETs programme, and as the methodology of PBL has proven successful, it will be implemented during the first two phases of the NEETs programme too.”

As a registered NPO, Salesian Institute Youth Projects depends on the donations of individuals and corporates to enable them to offer these programmes - 93% of the organisation's funding goes directly into programmes. For more information, [click here](#).

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