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BASIC EDUCATION PRESIDENTIAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STIMULUS CREATES OVER 300 000 JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND SAVES 22 986 MORE

The Department of Basic Education has successfully implemented the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus which commenced in December 2020.

Through the Programme, over 25 950 School Governing Body (SGB) funded posts in public and government subsidised independent schools were saved. These posts came under threat due to schools experiencing financial distress, as a result of parents not being able to pay school fees, because of the economic devastation of COVID-19. The Basic Education sector created employment opportunities for a total of 319 091 Education and General Education Assistants between the ages of 18 and 35 in the country.

The Programme, whose aim was to use direct public investment to create opportunities for employment and to provide support to workers negatively impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, comes to an end on 31 March 2021.

More than 868 000 applications were received from young people when the initiative was started. Of the 300 000 successful candidates 200 000 were Education Assistants and 100 000 were General School Assistants. The Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator helped with the recruitment processes in seven of the nine provinces, through the SAYouth.mobi site. An added benefit of using the SAYouth.mobi site is that it is able to match job seekers to additional employment opportunities, in line with their interests and qualifications.

The mobisite is a key component of the National Pathway Management Network. The primary objective of the programme is to give an opportunity to young people to acquire skills such as; ICT, administration, reading, plumbing, painting and work ethics amongst others, in order to improve their employability.

TRAINING

To equip the appointed youth with meaningful skills to improve their employability, the Department identified five key training areas, which are Curriculum, ICT, Infrastructure, Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCW) and Reading Champions. The training is also meant to position the Sector to address some of the systemic challenges.

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The ICT training has a component where the recipient undergoes training on how to support learners with Special Needs. Another component is the training on the South African School and Administration Management System (SA-SAMS).

SA-SAMS training leverages on existing skills in the school environment, with the training provided by SA-SAMS administrators.

CYCW will assist vulnerable learners by providing psychosocial support. Reading Champions assisted with the promotion of a reading culture, whereas the General School Assistants provided with Infrastructure training assisted with conducting infrastructure conditional assessment as well as carrying out minor maintenance work.

Furthermore, in the context of COVID-19, every young person appointed in public schools was required to undergo orientation on the Standard Operating Procedures for the management of COVID-19. The youth have also gone through mandatory two-hour training on the National School Safety Framework.

The DBE has provided training manuals to Provincial Education Departments for distribution to schools. In addition, the material is available on the Teacher Connect WhatsApp line – 060 060 3333. There is an orientation programme that young people can access online and are able to work independently to complete the accompanying assignments.

PAYMENT OF STIPENDS

The BEEI was funded to the tune of R7 billion, of which R6 998 billion was distributed to provinces as an equitable share. A large portion of this, which is R 4.47 billion was targeted towards providing employment opportunities for the youth. Of the R4.47 billion, one percent (1%) was allocated towards training and another one percent towards UIF for each youth employed in the programme.

Working with Provincial Education Departments, the DBE has taken steps to ensure that all stipends are paid. The steps taken include engaging with Provincial Chief Finance Officers to ensure that all administrative challenges are addressed.

The three provinces that employed more than 50 000 youth affected by delayed payment of stipends, were Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. Delays in payment in some areas were due to the capturing of the Education and General Education Assistants onto the Government payment system, the persal; or incorrect banking and incomplete personal documentation. Provinces transferred funds to schools as the stipends were paid by schools.

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Through Provinces, the school principals were encouraged to process all stipends timeously, ensuring that the correct amounts are paid to young people.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus has been welcomed by all stakeholders in the Basic Education Sector. Its value has been acknowledged by both school principals and educators, who were able to focus their efforts on supporting learners.

The youth appointed in schools have shown appreciation for the opportunity they have been afforded to work, while also improving their skills.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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