

Retailer's skills development programme set to empower 12 000+ youths

This youth month Africa's largest retailer is set to reach its target of empowering more than 12 000 youths (aged 18-29 years) to enter the retail sector or start their own business.

Arguably the largest skills development initiative ever undertaken by a South African retailer, the Shoprite Group's Retail Readiness programme launched in February 2016. Following the successful completion of an 8-week training programme, participants receive an NQF-level 3 qualification. Since the programme's inception, a total of 8 688 young people have been employed in Shoprite or Checkers stores.

The current training block will end on 22 June. The next one is expected to kick off in July 2018 and applications are still open.

"South Africans with matric can apply for the programme at our recruitment centres in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria," says Moga Pillay, the Group's spokesperson on skills development.

"This programme is a direct challenge to the crippling effects of youth unemployment. More than half of young South Africans are unemployed.

"It also enables us to improve on the quality of recruits filling vacancies at our stores, since those who have completed the programme have a good understanding of how our business works and the factors that influence our ability to grow," explains Pillay. Those who are not absorbed into the Group's workforce have the necessary basic skills to start their own business or to be employed elsewhere in the retail sector.

Participants of the programme are provided with the basic business principles to understand the financial, legal and business requirements of setting up and running a small to medium enterprise in conjunction with a large retailer.

Three weeks of theory is followed by five weeks of in-store training in various departments like the deli, bakery, as well as fruit and vegetables. Participants are paid a weekly stipend during their time in the store.

Shoprite's implementation partner is OMNI HR Consulting, which not only presents the classes (in the first three weeks), but also ensures that a workplace coach is on-hand during in-store training.

Sarine Masibi (23) completed the programme in July last year. Since her appointment at Shoprite Rustenburg, she rapidly rose through the ranks and is currently building her skills as a trainee manager.

"The divisional manager noticed my service motive and suggested I sit for the trainee manager's test. I passed and that's how my current journey started."

She urges all unemployed youths to enrol in the programme. "There's nothing special about me. I was just willing to make the necessary sacrifices and look where I am today. I don't spend a lot of time with my friends and family, but that's what I need to do for now. I'm doing this for my son, who I want to have a better life than I had. Every day presents new challenges, but it's been a fantastic experience so far."

END

Editor's Notes:

- To date the Shoprite Group's training expenditure amounts to some R310 million
- More than two-thirds of the Shoprite Group's employees are black youths (>35)
- The youth unemployment rate in South Africa increased to 52.4% in the first quarter of 2018 from 51.1% in the last quarter of 2017

Top ten tips for job applicants:

- When applying for a job or registering an online profile, double-check spelling and grammar on your CV and application
- Your documents must always be up to date and you must have a valid ID document
- Always ensure that your contact details are current
- When including a profile picture make sure it presents you in the best possible light
- In an interview always make eye contact and do not slouch
- Listen carefully to questions and ask the interviewer to repeat a question you didn't understand or hear properly
- Try not to speak badly about your previous company and/or colleagues
- Dress neatly - a white shirt and black pants is always a good idea
- Google the company before going for an interview. This shows you are interested and will help you decide whether you actually want to work there
- At the end of the interview, ask what the next step is, if nobody volunteers this information

HOW TO APPLY:

To apply for this opportunity, dial *120*446# and follow the prompts (network rates apply) or visit www.shoprite.jobs.

At present, this training opportunity is only available in Gauteng and the Western Cape.