

SHOPRITE GROUP TAKES ON YOUTH UPSKILLING

Recognising the sacrifices South Africa's youth continue to make to improve their education, even as youth unemployment reaches 55.2%, the Shoprite Group continues to upskill thousands of people every year.

As the largest private sector employer in South Africa, the Shoprite Group believes that developing people's skills drives its own business and the economy, and its significant contribution to skills development and job creation has transformed the lives of many of its employees and job-seeking young people.

Multiple training programmes offered by the Group are aimed at upskilling employees in order for them to succeed and enhance their careers, and for unemployed young people to gain skills to get jobs or start their own businesses.

The Group offers retail training through Retail Varsity, its registered private further education and training college, to ensure that employed and unemployed learners receive industry-recognised qualifications.

In 2018, Retail Varsity:

- Offered more than 1 500 retail-related courses and provided 22 training courses accredited with various Sector Education Training Authorities.
- Undertook a total of 3 458 139 training hours, 1.7 times more than in 2017.
- Supported 7 833 learners on accredited learning programmes.
- Trained 4 040 unemployed black youth to enter the retail work environment through the Shoprite Group's Retail Readiness programme and employed 57% of these programme graduates.
- Completed the roll-out of 2 703 e-learning kiosks and devices to all stores, including in non-RSA operations.
- Awarded more than R16 million in bursaries to 291 students in the fields of pharmacy, accounting, retail business management, hospitality management, information technology, logistics and food science.
- Spent more than 81 000 man-days on training 21 933 employees on the new SAP ERP system between October 2017 and early 2019.
- The Group is committed to the YES initiative and aims to provide 1 851 unemployed young black people with employment and workplace skills by the end of the 2019 financial year.

Major training initiatives undertaken by the group include:

Retail Readiness, which is arguably the largest skills development programme ever undertaken by a South African retailer, where the Group has trained over 12 850 unemployed youth in the past three years to enter the retail sector or start their own business. On completion of the 8-week training programme, participants receive an NQF-level 3 qualification.

Assistant chef training, launched in partnership with the International Hotel School, which is a four-month NQF 2 qualification training course which has been completed by almost 500 employees. The Group is upskilling more than 4 000 employees from its fresh food departments.

Bakery training, a six-week course including commercial baking techniques, has upskilled 40 staff members a year.

Over 1 000 deaf learners have received NQF level 2 training in wholesale and retail chain store operations since 2008. The Group guarantees employment for successful graduates.

Trainee Accountant Programme, where 102 accounting graduates have successfully completed their accounting articles with the Group to date. In 1998, the Group became the first South African retailer to receive accreditation as a training office with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants.

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