

Shoprite Group prioritises opportunities for youth despite pandemic

In the wake of a South African youth unemployment rate of over 61%, the Shoprite Group has invested close to R500 million in its skills development programmes.

This investment has benefitted 157 768 people and resulted in 3.5 million training hours. The retailer also retained all of its employees at a time when the country reported its [highest unemployment rate - 30.8%](#) - since quarterly record-keeping started in 2008.

“We remain committed to providing opportunities for young South Africans at a time when they need it the most. At the height of the lockdown, more than 2 million South Africans lost their livelihoods. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, we adapted our skills development programmes to ensure that they were uninterrupted even as lockdown continued,” says Monwabisi Xala, Manager: Learning and Development Projects for the Shoprite Group.

One of the programmes which continued throughout lockdown, was the Group's [YES \(Youth Employment Service\)](#) initiative. Some 2 968 youths completed this programme in the previous financial year, while 1 851 were successful in the year before. Participants in the programme receive on-the-job training at in store service departments, like the bakery, deli and the fresh foods department.

YES, a business-driven initiative with government and labour that builds economic pathways for black youth to reduce unemployment, has created over 41 131 new work experiences in the past 22 months in conjunction with more than 1 204 private sector partners. In this way, it has poured more than R2.3 billion into local economies through youth salaries.

“The Shoprite Group has been part of YES since its inception in 2018. We set an ambitious goal when launching this campaign, and it's with the help of partners like Shoprite that we continue to work towards achieving that goal,” says Tashmia Ismail, Chief Executive of YES.

In addition, the retailer has in the 2019 academic year, paid out over [R16 million in bursaries](#) with most bursary holders being female and from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

All the Group's achievements with regards to skills development and training are contained in its latest [Sustainability Report](#) available at www.shopriteholding.co.za.

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