

Shoprite invests R700 million to upskill unemployed youth

The Shoprite Group has spent more than R700 million over the past five years on extensive retail skills and training programmes to enhance the career options of South Africa's unskilled and unemployed youth.

This has been expended on training 24 308 people in the Group's own Retail Readiness Programme, providing 1 027 bursaries, and training 5 765 young people (over the past three years) in the Youth Employment Service (YES) programme.

All of these initiatives are aimed at training and upskilling people not previously employed by the Group and are focused on helping unemployed youth gain the skills they need to secure jobs in the retail industry.

As the country's largest private sector employer, the Group believes that skills development drives its own business and the economy and can transform the lives of many of its employees and job-seeking young people.

The Retail Readiness Programme, which is understood to be the largest and most successful skills development initiative undertaken by a South African retailer, comprises five weeks practical training in stores and two weeks theoretical training to provide youth with the basic skills to work in a retail environment or start their own business. Successful participants receive NQF-level 3 qualifications.

Through the YES programme, a business-driven initiative that works together with government and labour to build economic pathways for black youth to reduce unemployment, the Shoprite Group has created 5 765 youth work opportunities, making it the highest impact employment creator in the programme.

YES participants receive on-the-job training at in-store service departments, like the bakery, deli and the fresh foods department.

Upon successful completion of the Retail Readiness and YES programmes, learners are offered the opportunity to join the Shoprite Group, but it is up to graduates to decide if they want to do so. Absorption rates are 53% from the Retail Readiness Programme and 32% from the YES programme, excluding current participants.

The Group follows a "from school to Shoprite" approach for young people, who may either study on a Shoprite bursary and then join the business or join the Retail Readiness or YES programmes straight out of school.

Skills development does not stop there, as there are numerous inhouse and external programmes in place to upskill the Group's 140 000 employees. These include learnerships, skills programmes, internships, bursaries for tertiary education and partnerships with TVET colleges. Accredited programmes run by Shoprite at its Retail Varsity, a registered private further education and training college, include everything from customer service and artisanal skills to chain store operations.

Visit <https://www.shopriteholdings.co.za/careers.html> for more information regarding available career opportunities.

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