

Has youth unemployment really become another pandemic in SA?

 By [Miranda Lusiba](#)

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For the past few weeks, I have been listening to both political and economic analysts to try and understand how bad this situation is. Some analysts have deemed the state of youth unemployment in SA as not only dire, but as one of the pandemics along with gender-based violence (GBV), Covid-19 and others.



Source: Christopher Boyd from [Pexels](#)

If this is the case, then our future leaders are in serious trouble. The current unemployment rate according to Stats SA is unfortunately also not helping this situation. Just to reiterate, the youth unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2021 is sitting at 74% as per the expanded definition.

To make matters worse, analysts have mentioned that 46% of women in SA are unemployed; 48% of the overall unemployed being black Africans and about 200 000 people feeling discouraged to seek employment. As much as we agree that SA is currently bleeding jobs, and that the situation is worse; I agree with analysts that it is also important to ensure that we find ways to stimulate the participation of youth in this economy.

There are many factors that are adding this challenge, and some include the fact that the qualifications that are acquired by today's youth are not the ones required by the economy at the moment. A recent article revealed that the top 10 skills that SA businesses are struggling to recruit for include: Engineers (18%); ICT (13%); Foreign Language Speakers (10%); Media and Marketing Specialists (9%); Artisans (8%); C-Suite Executives (7%); Senior Financial Executives (6%); Health Professionals and Related Clinical Sciences (5%); Science Professionals (4%) and Accounting (1%)

Yes, it is important to highlight the challenges, but we cannot focus too much on the doom and gloom – it is crucial to try and find solutions out of this terrible situation because youth need some kind of hope. It is vital to recognise the great work that is done by a number of organisations in SA that focus on youth development.

I would like to encourage our youth to stay positive and look at the opportunities available for them to upskill themselves.

Below are organisations that focus on encouraging youth to look beyond just seeking employment, but also venturing into entrepreneurship:

- [Girl Code Club](#) - Female coders with a focus on Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) - nationwide network of volunteer-led, weekend coding clubs for high school girls who want to have a strong foundation in basic programming skills.
- [Digify Africa](#) – youth-led organisation aimed at bridging the digital divide by addressing the low digital literacy levels in SA and the continent.
- [SA Youth Project: Inclusive Economic Empowerment](#) – a home to youth development, empowerment, employment, training, health, education, arts, culture regardless of race, age, gender or socioeconomic status.
- [BlackBoard Africa](#) – Youth Social Activism Organisation (fostering conversation among SA youth connecting with others)
- [Harambee Youth Employment Acceleration \(Youth Job Seekers\)](#) – a social enterprise building African solutions for the global challenge of youth unemployment
- [Youth Entrepreneurs Foundation](#) – designed to encourage entrepreneurial thinking and spark the spirit in young people at School Going Age.
- [Junior Achievement SA \(JASA\)](#) – platform for empowering youth with Practical Entrepreneurship Skills, sound Financial Literacy and Work Readiness.
- [Youth Economic Alliance – Advancing Youth Entrepreneurship](#) - Addressing factors that hinder business growth such as lack of skills, poor access to finance and markets and by creating a conducive environment and the ability to break normal regulatory barriers.
- [SAB Kick-start](#) - Youth Entrepreneurship Initiative aimed at creating more focused, comprehensive approach towards providing high impact, sustainable business support.
- [Ekasi Entrepreneurs](#) - youth founded and led entrepreneurs' development organisation aimed at impacting township and rural areas entrepreneurs across SA.
- [Red Bull Amaphiko Academy \(Social Changers\)](#) – launch pad for grassroots Social Entrepreneurs who use their talent and creativity to make a positive difference in their communities in a sustainable way.
- [Elegam Lifestyle Academy & Pioneers of Hope \(Komani\)](#) – an Academy that was started to encourage youth to register businesses, help them profile their businesses and get them mentors to guide – working with Support Academy that helps youth with entrepreneurship e-learning courses that can be done on their mobile phones and then they get certificates of completion.

- Azariah's Outreach Programme – Benefitting Komani's Youth – provides youth with skills to build their confidence and character; and empower them to start earning an income through gardening, sewing, basic computer skills. Outreach also helps them to get IDs and SASSA Grants. Both these Komani-based organisations desperately need funding from local business to be able to continue their work. Samantha - the founder can be reached on WhatsApp: +27 (0) 84 282 4213 or mobile: +27 (0) 61 399 0929.

ABOUT MIRANDA LUSIBA

Miranda Lusiba is the Founding Director of Strangé Consulting - a boutique PR Agency specialising in Communications, Freelance Writing, Media Relations, Reputation Management and Media Training.

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