

In partnership with



A Simplified Scale on the implementation of youth employment policies in South Africa.

Scale Measurement



Scale Measurement

Date May 2025

SUMMARY ON THE SCALE MEASUREMENT TOOL

The scale measurement tool was designed by the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. It aims to assess the level of implementation of specific youth employment policies and programs (YEPs) while allowing comparability across countries. Focusing on transitional progress, the tool addresses three key questions: what the policy aims to achieve, what gaps exist from the design of the policies, and how constituents perceive the policy's implementation.

The tool categorizes the YEPs into six clusters: YEPs to enhance youth employability, YEPs to promote youth entrepreneurship, Policies to protect youth rights at work, Economy-wide enablement policies, other employment/ labor market policies targeting youth, and Policies targeting vulnerable groups.

To attribute a score to the implementation level of each YEP within a cluster, this measurement scale tool uses a qualitative assessment method, employing a combination of banding categories and a color-coded system. Therefore, each YEP can be assigned one of the following four scores:

- **A- Orange:** Policy in place and operational,
- **B- Dark grey:** Policy in place, but weakly operational,
- **C- Blue:** Policy in place but not operational,
- **D- Light Blue:** Policy does not exist (given that each research team may also point out some key policies that it believes are missing from the YEPs package implemented in a specific country).

A column that includes comments is appended to each score to provide supporting evidence for the rating, with regard to the level of YEP implementation compared to what would have been expected.

For the country teams that conducted the review in both Year 1 and Year 3 of this Initiative, the tool provides two scores for each YEP: one informing about the level of implementation in the first review (Year 1), and the other concerning the second review (Year 3). Each of these scores is supported by an explanatory comment.

So, having both the score in the first review and the second review, the scale measurement tool provides a dynamic assessment between Year 1 and Year 3 of the initiative. In the event there is a YEP that did not exist in the Year 1 review, a new row is inserted in the corresponding YEPs category to represent it.

In this regard, the tool also features qualitative reviews to showcase achievements and gaps and provide insights for recommendations, in order to improve the YEPs design and implementation.

For a comprehensive explanation of the methodological approach, refer to the annex section for additional details.

Disclaimer:

This Scale measurement was produced in the context of the *What Works for Youth Employment in Africa: A review of existing policies and empirical analysis* in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. It was a three-year initiative that ran between 2021 and 2024 to create a knowledge base of youth employment and related social development policies to inform policy and practices. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation, its staff, or its Board of Directors."

Policies and Programmes		Score	Comments
YEPs to enhance youth employability	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes	B	TVET programmes are operational and are an integral part of the country's education system; however, several hurdles inter-alia, bureaucratic obstacles and coordination inefficiencies are hindering the program's effectiveness in contributing towards reducing the ongoing issue of high youth unemployment.
	Work Integrated Learning	B	Despite the advancements shown by WIL programmes in connecting education with industry, improving graduates' employability, and addressing the changing requirements of the labour market, youth unemployment remains a challenge.
	Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited according to KII and FGD respondents. There is a broad consensus on ground as well as impact evaluation studies that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities. The majority of the literature reviewed also suggests that the programme has not had a major noticeable impact on job creation.
	Community Works Programme (CWP)	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities. The literature review also highlights that despite some drawbacks, there is consensus that some young people have benefited positively from the programme.
	Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES)	B	The PES has been beneficial for the youth of South Africa, as it has successfully managed to create a pathway for employment and subsequently income. However, despite substantial funds allocated, youth unemployment continues to persist at high levels. The impact on reducing youth unemployment has been minimal. Many stakeholders argue that the funds are not being effectively utilized to tackle the underlying issues.

National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC)	B	The programme is operational, as the survey of the literature points that it has recruited 16178 rural youths. Despite the recruitment of targeted rural youths in the country, its contribution is deemed minimal based on surveyed impact evaluation studies.
Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI)'s – National Youth Services (NYS) programmes	A	The programme is in place and successfully operational. The programme has played a vital role in fostering youth development as well as empowering young individuals.
Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI)'s - National Pathway Management Network (NPMN).	A	The programme is in place and successfully operational. The programme has played a vital role in fostering youth development as well as empowering young individuals.
Youth Employment Services (YES)	B	It appears a significant portion of the population had not benefited from YEP initiatives
Technical, Vocational and Occupational Programmes (TVOP)	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities.
Work Readiness Programmes (Monyetta Work Readiness programme)	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities.
Second Chance Programmes	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities.

	Agency building initiatives	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities.
	School based initiatives	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities.
	Social services	B	Awareness of various government programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and societal issues appear to be limited. There is a broad consensus on ground that information about these programmes is not adequately disseminated, especially in marginalized communities.
	Learnership/Internship Initiatives	B	Challenges such as information awareness hinders the effectiveness of the Initiative. However, the YEP is in place and operational.
YEPs to promote youth entrepreneurship	Jobs Fund	B	While this initiative is not exclusively targeted at employing young people, it has been reflected from the data that a total of 296,909 jobs, placements and internships have been facilitated via this initiative, of which 57% of the recipients are women and 64% are youth. However, operational challenges remain. It appears several projects that receive funding often face challenges in maintaining their impact beyond the initial funding period, prompting concerns about their long-term sustainability
	Youth Enterprise Development Strategy (YEDS)	B	The YEDS is still short of its target of increasing the contribution of youth-owned and managed enterprises (YOMEs) in South Africa to the GDP from 2% to 5% by 2023. In 2022, the contribution of YOMEs to the GDP was estimated to be 3%.
	South Africa Digital Skills and ICT Initiatives (SADSI)	C	The programme is in place and operational but still at very early stages of implementation to assess its performance against the set targets. stages of implementation, and it is too early to assess its performance against its set targets. The programme targets that by 2030, all South Africans have access to quality digital skills training and that at least 50% of the population is digitally literate.

	Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development (SECD)	B	The program is established but operates with limited effectiveness. Data gathered from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) indicate that the program faces challenges related to insufficient funding and corruption.
Policies to protect youth rights at work	The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) 85 of 1993	B	The Act is in place but weakly operational. Its effectiveness is hampered by factors such as compliance within different sectors, enforcement measures due to staff capacity, and regulatory supervision.
	The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) 75 of 1997	B	The Act is in place but weakly operational. Its effectiveness is hampered by factors such as compliance within different sectors, enforcement measures because of staff capacity, and regulatory supervision.
	The Skills Development Act (SDA) 97 of 1998	B	There exists severe operational and governance challenges with the implementation of the Act across sectors, resulting in its weak effectiveness.
	The Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995	A	The Act applies to various sectors, and in the event of disagreements, employees have the option to seek resolution through the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration.
	The Employment Equity Act (EEA) 55 of 1998	A	The Act is operational, and it has ensured that individuals who faced opportunities denied to them during the Apartheid regime now have access to equal opportunities in employment and various workplaces,
	The Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Code of Good Practice	B	The Act is in place but weakly operational. Its effectiveness is hampered by factors such as compliance within different sectors, enforcement measures due to staff capacity, and regulatory supervision.
	Minimum Wage Legislation	B	Legislation is implemented across sectors despite being a challenge. Levels of non-compliance are still relatively high. Enforcement challenges are particularly pronounced in informal sectors, where monitoring is less effective.

Economy-wide enablement policies	National Development Plan (NDP)	B	The plan has made progress on several fronts. Initiatives/programmes have been put in place to improve the quality of education, provide skills training, and enhance employment opportunities, especially for youth. Despite its establishment, the plan has fallen short of expectations, with economic growth remaining subdued.
	National Youth Policy (2020-2030)	B	Youth employment policies frequently encounter issues with insufficient follow-up, inadequate monitoring, and evaluation. There is a pressing requirement for rigorous monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes and ensure they achieve their objectives.
	Youth Employment Service (YES) Initiative	B	Youth employment policies frequently encounter issues with insufficient follow-up, inadequate monitoring, and evaluation. Challenges and barriers faced such as the accessibility of information regarding available funding and how to access it. This lack of information hinders the effective use of funds. There are broader structural issues, such as high attrition rates in schools and misalignment with market needs that are not being adequately addressed by current funding and programmes.
	Basic Education/ Higher Education Policies	B	The policies are in place but weakly operational.
	Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP)	B	The plan is operational, but challenges remain in its implementation and overall impact.
	Employment Tax Incentive (ETI)	B	The initiative is in place and operational. However, challenges such as the uptake by employers owing to the complex application process and eligibility criteria. Evidence from the literature also suggests that the long-term impact on youth unemployment is uncertain.
	Unemployment Insurance Fund	B	The initiative is in place and operational but administrative challenges, as well as corruption issues hamper its effectiveness.
	National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)	B	Accessibility remains a significant concern. Participants in the study noted that these opportunities often do not reach the broader population.

	Sector Education Training Authority (SETA)	B	Accessibility remains a significant concern. Participants in the study noted that these opportunities often do not reach the broader population.
	Integrated Youth Development Strategy (2022-2025)	B	Accessibility remains a significant concern. Participants in the study noted that these opportunities often do not reach the broader population.
Policies taking care of vulnerable groups	The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act	A	Since its introduction, the Act has effectively promoted economic transformation and increased the economic involvement of black individuals in the South African economy.
	Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Code of Good Practice	B	The Act is in place but weakly operational. Its effectiveness is hampered by factors such as compliance within different sectors, enforcement measures due to staff capacity, and regulatory supervision.
	Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) 75 of 1997	B	The Act is in place but weakly operational. Its effectiveness is hampered by factors such as compliance within different sectors, enforcement measures because of staff capacity, and regulatory supervision.
	Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995	A	The Act applies to various sectors, and in the event of disagreements, employees have the option to seek resolution through the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration.
	Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) 85 of 1993	B	The Act is in place but weakly operational. Its effectiveness is hampered by factors such as compliance within different sectors, enforcement measures due to staff capacity, and regulatory supervision.
	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) 4 of 2000	A	The Act has been successfully operational.

	Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Laws Human Rights and Workplace Equality Policies	A	Females are prioritized in certain employment programmes.
--	--	----------	---

Note: NA = data/scoring not available. **A** represents that the Policy is in place and operational; **B** represents that the Policy is in place but weakly operational; **C** represents that the Policy is in place but not operational; and **D** represents that the Policy does not exist.