

Leveraging EPWP for an inclusive just transition: Improving labour market connections for youth in the green economy through city-led partnerships

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TOWARDS A JUST TRANSITION - THE ROLE OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Paper Outline

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Contextual background (youth unemployment & EPWP)
- Methods (desktop research & interviews)
- Just transition, green economy & youth participation
- SA cities' experiences of implementing GE projects & extent of youth participation
- City-led partnerships to improve LM connections for youth in GE
- Implications for cities & conclusion

Contextual Background

Youth unemployment & challenges of participating in the labour market

- High unemployment rate among youth - 63,9% for those aged 15-24 years and 42,1% for those aged 25-34 years (StatsSA, 2022)
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Jan-Mar 2019), recorded at 55,2% for those aged 15-24 years and 34,2% for those aged 25-34 years (StatsSA, 2022).
- Of the 10 million youths in the country, only 2,5 million are part of the labour force
- Vulnerability of the group is due to systematic challenges i.e. lack of access to education, misalignment of relevant skills vs labour market needs
- Youth experience the lowest absorption and labour participation rates
- School-to-work transition: Lack of work experience a challenge to participate in LM
- The number of unemployed graduates also increases, thus impacts access to the types of jobs available

Contextual Background

Short-term employment through EPWP

- Expanded Public Works programme (EPWP) is the most prominent example of PEP - structured through short-to-medium term programmes
- Its inception was the need to address unemployment through a community-based public works programme
- Aims and the output - create employment opportunities; and to provide education and training for participants so that they are equipped with skills on exit.
- Cities are finding it difficult to recruit the youth to participate in EPWP and the youth generally seem uninterested in such projects.
- Due to the types of employment and training opportunities on offer, which are generally deemed inadequate.
- Some of the challenges include limited resources available, and has been critiqued for its inability to provide recipients with meaningful skills
- Phase IV of the programme aims to provide a strategic shift

Methods

Desktop Research	Interviews: Cities	Interviews: Other stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best practice PEPS (i.e. EPWP)• Methods for targeting youth• Implementation of green project• Stakeholders providing training & work opportunities• Existing programmes in the green economies & partnerships thereof	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cities' experience with the green EPWP projects, capacity, opportunities and challenges with implementing these programmes• Identify stakeholders, and partnerships• Challenges in implementing green economy projects, and inclusion of youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder characteristics, capacity, existing opportunities, experience attitudes, with creating opportunities in the green economies

Interview List

Metros

- City of Johannesburg
- City Of Tshwane
- City of Ekurhuleni
- Msunduzi
- eThekwini
- Buffalo City
- Nelson Mandela Bay
- City of Cape Town

Departments

- Department of Public Works
- Department of Science & Technology
- Department of Fisheries, Forestry & Environment
- Presidency

Others

- NYDA
- ILO

Just transition, Green economy & Youth Participation

Green economy policy in SA

- No central GE policy but network of policies, strategic documents to promote sustainable development
- Over 32 policies, strategies, legislations, Acts pertaining to GE
- No coherent GE policy agenda to drive development
- 2000-2005: focus on reducing energy demand and intro to alternative renewable energy sources
- 2006-2011: Diversify energy sources, national energy plan, transition to low-carbon economy, skills plan for environmental sector, commitment to GE
- 2012-2017: GHG reduction through tax policy, skills required by GE in future, sectoral & spatial list of green initiatives

Just transition, Green economy & Youth Participation

Green economy policy in SA

- NDP (2012): SA economy is resource intensive and need shift to GE
- SAERRP (2020): GE interventions & green industrialisation prioritised to built back better

Just transition, GE and Youth participation

- Rapid urbanisation & persistent urban growth leading to environmental degradation
- Projections of more & more people living in cities & increasing pressure on environment e.g SA water shortages, revolving power cuts
- Since 2000s, increased focus on climate change & addressing environmental issues i.e. 2008 financial crisis, widening inequality etc.
- Building the economy to reduce environmental impact while maximising social & economic benefits
- GE as avenue to contribute towards the just transition agenda
- Identified as job rich and contributing to environmental restoration

Just transition, GE and Youth participation

- Job creation in key sectors i.e. construction, energy, water, agriculture
- Some sectors at risk of shedding jobs & violation of social protection & decent work principles
- Green skills gap & therefore reskilling, upskilling needed
- Youth with low skills, lack education & training, lack experience, limited job opportunities- GE offering prospects for youth employment
- Some sectors of the GE preferable by youth as opposed to others

SA cities' experience of implementing GE projects in EPWP & youth participation

- Number of projects implemented: waste management, urban management & maintenance, food security, farming & gardening
- Manicure & pedicure type projects but limited innovation
- Challenge to attract youth to EPWP in general & GE specifically
- Associated with dirt & unfavourable working conditions, limited prospects for career pathing & professionalization
- Work & training opportunities don't match skills demand in LM
- Training is project specific (mixing concrete), unaccredited with no future prospects
- GE projects implemented with limited partnerships (EPWP unit, line & national departments)

City-led partnerships to improve LM connections

Key issue in Cities	Emerging Opportunities		
	Existing Programmes	Stakeholders	Case Studies
GE: Projects are limited to 'manicure & pedicure' type	<p>COGTA new approaches to solid waste management: from collection, sorting to recycling & revenue generation throughout waste value chain. Phase II to target innovative methods in separation at source & treatment centres</p> <p>DFFE's protected areas programme: trains & develops local people as partners in the conservation of wildlife & protected areas</p>	<p>GOGTA: experimentation in waste management</p> <p>DSI: Training that can lead to employment opportunities for youth</p> <p>Nedbank Green Trust: training opportunities</p>	<p>Environmentally sound disposal and recycling of e-waste/ Ghana: Development of an environmentally sound e-waste management system through intergovernmental cooperation. The youth can be taught how to identify and sort e-waste that can be recycled in collaboration with electronic companies</p> <p>UK Transform project/ UK: Training of unemployed young people for new jobs in energy-efficiency retrofitting for UK homes</p>

SA cities' experience of implementing GE projects in EPWP & youth participation

Key issue in Cities	Emerging Opportunities		
	Existing Programmes	Stakeholders	Case Studies
Inclusion: Youth not interested in GE as limited prospects for career pathing & professionalisation	<p>Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (National Youth Service (NYS) programme and the National Pathway Management Network Innovation Fund): access to employment</p> <p>Yes4Youth, in partnership with National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator</p> <p>Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development: use geo-spatially referenced data to identify and verify existence of subsistence farmers to provide them with production input vouchers during COVID-19</p>	<p>Harambee: partnership with private companies & creates platform for youth to access employment</p> <p>YEs4Youth:similar structure as Harambee supported by national government</p>	<p>Classifying aerial imagery to identify solid waste: Using digital platforms & tools to address GE issues</p> <p>Barefoot College/ India: Skilling youth and women in rural areas to build, install and repair solar panels. The youth can be trained to assemble, install and repair solar panels particularly in context of energy crisis</p>

Implications for cities & conclusion

- Youth unemployment: over supply with skills mismatch to LM demand
- Need to reconfigure education and training to respond to LM demand (work integrated learning, tie in career pathing & long term value in GE)
- Identify multiple exit points for EPWP participants & maintain contact with participants & steer to opportunities
- In-depth understanding of hindrances to employability of youth as well as preferences and skills requirements of industries in GE through partnership approach
- Partnering: pooling resources, leveraging off strength of each partner, direct work opportunities and broader sectoral pathways
- Full-service partners, multidimensional, specialised partner

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