Eswatini Youth Empowerment Programme

The Kingdom of Eswatini has witnessed many years of peaceful existence. However, the country currently faces challenges in relation to weakened economic growth, fiscal space, high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Challenges Faced by the Youth

- Insufficient job opportunities, limited representation, and participation in the governance space.
- Discrepancies between graduation rate and employment creation due to economic downturn post-pandemic.
- Mismatch between the skills acquired and competencies required by industries

Ambition

Reduce youth unemployment by **50% by 2030**.

Eswatini has a youthful population

- **58.8%** of the population lives below the poverty line.
- **20.1%** lives below the extreme poverty line.
- **72.9%** below the age of 35 years
- **58.2%** Youth unemployment
- **50.1%** Unemployed graduates
- **33.3%** National unemployment rate
About the Programme

Eswatini Youth Empowerment Programme is endorsed by the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini. It supports young people between 18 to 35 years old to gain work experience, skills and access to jobs. Supported by UNDP through a partnership with the private sector and tertiary institutions, the Programme also reaches out to young people with little or no tertiary education for training on entrepreneurship for business start-ups. This Programme seeks to address youth unemployment through five pillars.

(a) Graduate Placement and Mentorship – Will engage with the government, private sector, and civil society organisations to match public and private sector institutions with interns/fellows and place at least 500 graduates during the pilot phase. Host institutions provide mentorship and coaching. With the country producing about 4000 graduates per year nationally, the aim is to grow into a fully-fledged programme that can absorb all of these graduates each year.

(b) Artisanal Skills Training and Mentorship – This pillar targets 500 non-graduates or out-of-school youth and trains them with basic vocational skills, business development and mentorship. On graduation, this group will receive starter packs and business training to support self-employment.

(c) A Sustainable Energy Academy – In its pilot phase, the Sustainable Energy Academy will select 30 candidates, half of which are women, from each of the 4 administrative regions. The trainees will acquire skills to install and maintain sustainable energy technologies, including off-grid Solar PV, biogas production, ethanol cookstoves manufacture, solar water heaters, solar cookers, and solar crop dryers, among others.

(d) The Establishment of a Tech-Hub – The Tech Hub will provide computer programming skills, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Robotics, Data Science, Software Development, App Design, Animation and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Cloud Computing.

(e) Entrepreneurship Support Programme – This focuses on improving business leadership, governance and management to increase access to finance for youth-led businesses through a targeted 12-week business training programme, business plan support and extended mentorship.

Programme Tangible Results

- **4000 beneficiaries**
- **1000 young people** trained in artisanal and digital technology skills
- **1000** Fellows to be placed at host institutions
- **50% women**
- **4 Regions**
- **100+ participating Companies & NGO's**

Implementing Period: January 2022 to January 2024

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Sports Culture and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Education, Academia, Municipalities, Private Sector Companies, Youth Networks


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