



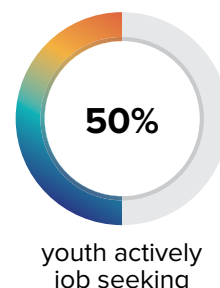
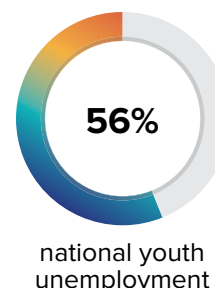
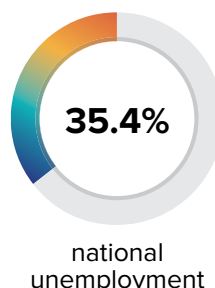
Local Youth Actions for the SDGs & Beyond

From Qualification to Contribution: Bridging the Gap for Eswatini's Graduates

On August 12, the world commemorated International Youth Day under the theme **Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond**, highlighting the pivotal role of young people in turning global ambitions into community-driven realities. As development partners work to localise and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aligning them with community priorities while remaining consistent with national and international commitments, youth emerge as indispensable partners. They bring creativity, insight, and strong community connections that bridge the gap between policy and practice.

With over 65% of SDG targets linked to local governance, youth engagement is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Africa's youthful population is expanding rapidly – projected to double by 2050 to over 830 million. Yet, only about 3 million formal jobs are created annually to absorb the 10–12 million youth entering the workforce each year.

In Eswatini, the rate of job creation does not match the estimated number of graduates produced by local tertiary institutions annually which stands at 4000. According to the 2023 Eswatini Integrated Labour Force Survey, youth aged 15–35 face a 56% unemployment rate, significantly above the national average of 35.4%. In addition, Afrobarometer findings underscore the gravity: unemployment tops the list of concerns for youth (15–35), with 50% actively job-seeking



It is in this spirit that the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), academia, the private sector and civil society organizations to develop the Eswatini Youth Empowerment Programme (EYEP), aimed at reducing youth unemployment. His Majesty King Mswati III announced EYEP on 10 November 2022 at Lozitha Royal Palace and it is anchored on four main streams: graduate internship, artisanal skills training, Innovation Hubs (i-Hub) and Entrepreneurship. Since 2023, EYEP has given young graduates an opportunity to take action by using their talent and innovation to enhance their host organisations' productivity, while the artisans create jobs and provide services for their communities. ***In this edition, we focus on the impact of the EYEP graduate internship stream.***

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT THE CENTRE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Minister of Economic Planning and Development, Hon. Dr Tambo Gina

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini remains deeply committed to creating inclusive economic opportunities for all EmaSwati, especially our young people. It is in this spirit that we continue to support the implementation of the Eswatini Youth Empowerment Programme (EYEP), a flagship initiative announced by His Majesty King Mswati III in December 2022, as part of a national drive to tackle youth unemployment and build the capacity of our future leaders. Eswatini, like many countries in the region, faces high youth unemployment rate which stands at a staggering 56%, among the age group of 15-35, compared to the national average of 35.4%, according to the 2023 Eswatini Integrated Labour Force Survey.

Therefore, EYEP represents a coordinated national response to the economic and social challenges that young people – both graduates and those who did not complete high school or were unable to pursue tertiary education. Through this programme, government has made a deliberate investment in restoring hope among our graduates by facilitating real workplace exposure that improves their employability and entrepreneurial readiness. In addition, EYEP offers non-graduates an opportunity to gain artisanal skills to earn an income and enhance their livelihoods.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development is proud to play a central role in leading, coordinating and scaling up this initiative in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other stakeholders including academia and the private sector. This programme reflects the Ministry's commitment to mainstreaming youth development in national planning and ensuring that youth-related issues are prioritised across all sectors.

To sustain and expand the impact of EYEP, we recognise the importance of strong public-private partnerships. We continue to call on all government ministries, parastatals, private sector players, development partners and civil society organizations to work with us to increase the number of quality placement opportunities for our youth. This includes not only hosting graduates for learning but also contributing financially by offering stipends and mentorship support.

“So far, the response from host institutions has been encouraging, but there is still much more we can do together. By opening our institutions to young people, we are investing in a skilled workforce that can drive economic transformation and innovation in Eswatini.”

As the Ministry mandated with national development planning, we are committed to ensuring that all government strategies, budgets and programmes are youth-responsive. We are working closely with all line ministries to embed youth empowerment as a cross-cutting priority, in line with the National Development Strategy and our obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals.

Let me take this opportunity to commend all stakeholders who have partnered with us to make EYEP a reality. To the young graduates taking part in this programme: remain committed, resilient and open to learning. Your contribution to Eswatini's development starts now.

Together, let us continue to build a future where no young person is left behind.

Thank you.

EYEP GRADUATE PLACEMENT SNAPSHOT



Announced by His Majesty King Mswati III in 2022, EYEP is a five-year initiative aimed at addressing youth unemployment in Eswatini. EYEP is financed by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and executed by UNDP with private sector and tertiary institution partners. Under the graduate placement component, the programme assists young graduates between 18 and 35 in gaining work experience, skills, and job access.

The graduate placement pilot was launched in January 2023 with 2,800 youth graduates registering on an online portal (eyep.org.sz) developed by UNDP, where host companies also registered to participate in the programme. In the pilot

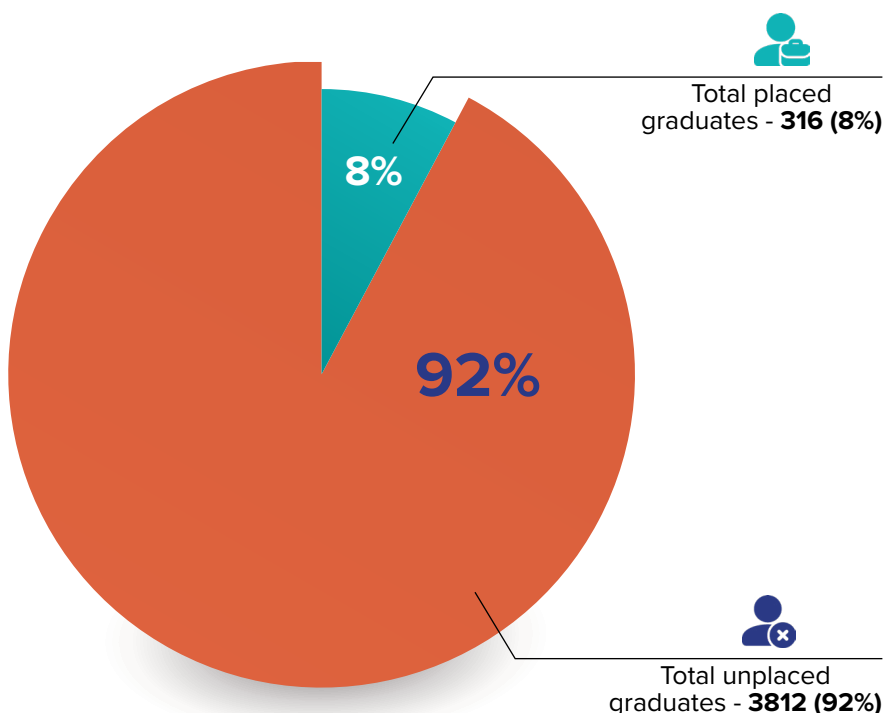
phase, 249 graduates were matched for a six-month internship. According to the 2024 EYEP Impact Assessment Report, 97% of the matched graduates had no previous work experience before joining the programme. Among the 151 respondents to a EYEP Tracer Survey launched in 2024 after the pilot phase, 55% are now engaged in pathways leading to better livelihood outcomes.

A second phase was launched in June 2025 bringing the total number of applicants to 4128. In addition to the 249 placed during the pilot in 2023, 67 graduates have been matched in the second phase by August 2025 bringing the total to 316.

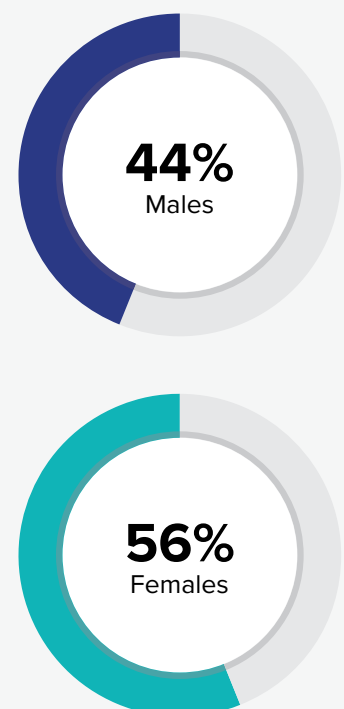
EYEP AT A GLANCE



Total number of graduates registered in the EYEP portal - **4128**



Matched graduates by gender distribution:



Number of host companies - **66**



Amount of money spent on stipends - **E4.48 Million**

YOUTH VOICES

How EYEP Opened the Door for Young Graduate



My name is Lindokuhle Lukhele, the firstborn of four children raised by a single mother. Growing up in such circumstances instilled in me resilience, responsibility, and the drive to create opportunities not only for myself but also for others.

In 2020, I completed my Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism and Mass Communication majoring in Advertising and Public Relations, a year that will forever be remembered as one of the most difficult for the entire world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While I graduated full of ambition, the reality was that most companies were closing down rather than hiring. Job postings often required three or more years of experience, which I did not yet have. This meant I spent three years unemployed, applying relentlessly but holding on to hope.

In 2022, I came across the Eswatini Youth Empowerment Programme (EYEP) in one of our local newspapers. I applied, and after months of waiting and hoping, in August 2023 I received the life-changing call that I had been selected.

I was placed at the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) where my professional journey began. Initially, I served as a Content Writer for the Universal Access Service Fund website. After my first three months, my contract was extended, and I transitioned to the role of Broadcasting Evaluation Officer (Intern). This exposed me to regulatory and compliance work.

These experiences under EYEP prepared me for my current role. Today, I am employed by the Government of Eswatini under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, where I serve as Communications Officer.

The EYEP programme gave me the opportunity to step into the world of work when I needed it most and exposed me to the practical world of my degree. It bridged the gap between academic knowledge and professional practice, equipping me with practical skills and confidence.

From Waiting to Working



My name is Mhlonishwa Mamba, I am 26 years old, and I come from Mpompothi, in the Lubombo Region. I completed my BSc Degree in Environmental Management & Water Resources at the University of Eswatini in 2021. However, after graduating, I struggled to secure employment until August 2023, when I was given an internship opportunity with the Eswatini Environmental Authority (EEA) through EYEP.

During my internship, I was assigned tasks related to environmental inspections. I carried them out diligently, showing both passion and a willingness to go beyond what was expected of me. In December 2023, I applied for an Environment Inspector position through an internal advertisement. I was later interviewed in February 2024 along with seven other interns. I excelled in the interview and was officially offered the position, which I began in May 2024. I am truly grateful to EYEP because it came at a critical time in my life and played a major role in helping me transition from waiting for opportunities to finally working and building a career.

I share this story to encourage every young person still waiting for their chance. There is hope, even when it feels like doors are not opening. The truth is, opportunities do come but when they do, you must be ready to give your best. Work hard but also remember that hard work alone is not enough. In the corporate world, your soft skills matter just as much. Respect your colleagues, be a team player, and always stay willing to learn. Never settle in the comfort zone, because comfort is the enemy of growth and the destroyer of dreams. Keep pushing, keep learning, and when your moment comes, let your dedication and character speak for you.

TOP 20 SKILLS THAT ARE IN HIGH DEMAND BASED ON INSTITUTIONS' REQUESTS

No.	Skills	Number of requests
01	Accounting and Finance	63
02	Food Science Nutrition & Technology	22
03	Graphic Design	17
04	Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management	17
05	Civil Engineering	23
06	Business Management	35
07	Public Relations	15
08	Environmental Health Sciences	15
09	Geography & Environmental Management	15
10	Creative Multimedia	14
11	Information Technology	14
12	Business Administration	14
13	Marketing	33
14	Statistics and Economics	12
15	Actuarial and Financial Mathematics	10
16	Human Resources Management	10
17	Laboratory Sciences	10
18	Computer Science	14
19	Agronomy	19
20	Conservation Ecology	7

TOP 10 SKILLS IN HIGH SUPPLY IN THE EYEP PORTAL BUT LOW DEMAND BY HOST COMPANIES



Teaching - **426** applications



Social work - **56** applications



Architectural Technology - **40** applications



Psychology - **30** applications



International Tourism - **29** applications



Journalism - **36** applications



Environmental Health - **29** applications



Nursing - **22** applications



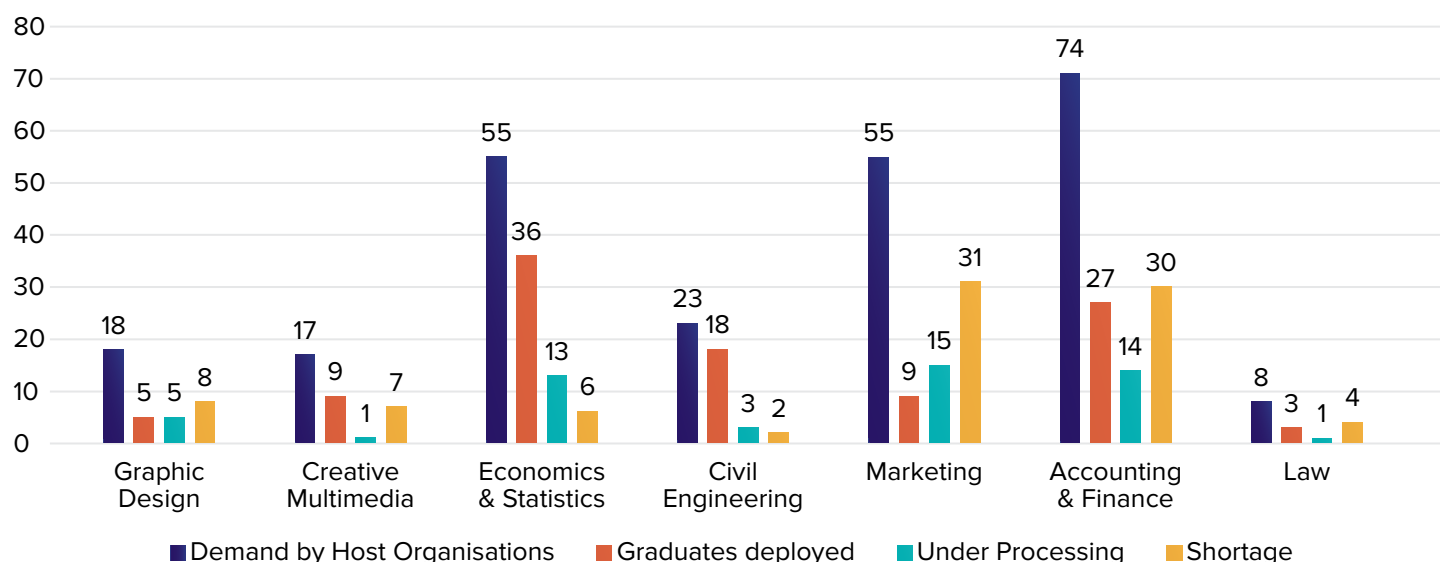
Chemical Engineering - **13** applications



Mechanical Engineering - **13** applications

SKILLS THAT ARE IN HIGH DEMAND BUT IN SHORT SUPPLY IN THE EYEP PORTAL







High Demand Skills with Low Supply



JOIN THE MOVEMENT. HOST A GRADUATE TODAY!

From 2023 to 2025, 66 organisations have successfully hosted graduates for at least six months. We sincerely thank these organisations for giving young people hands-on experience, shaping the

next generation of skilled professionals and innovators, while bringing fresh skills and energy into their workplaces. You too can play a role in reducing youth unemployment.

Host Organisations (66) by Category	Host Organizations	Total graduates Hosted			
 Private Sector (8)	Du-Van Developers PTY Ltd	2	 Government (9)	Department of Gender & Family issues - Deputy Prime Minister's Office	4
	Dups Holdings	4		Eswatini Legal Aid	2
	Eswatini's Big Game Parks	1		Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Trade - Weights & Measures Section	6
	FNB Eswatini	5		Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Trade - Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises	11
	Nkonyeni Lodge & Golf Estate	2		Ministry of Economic Planning & Development	12
	Stefanutti Stocks	6		Ministry of ICT	1
	Swazi Bandag	7		Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration & Development	5
	Waterford Kamhlaba UWCSA	7		Ministry of Tourism & Environmental Affairs	7
 Parastatal (16)	Central Bank of Eswatini	20	 NGOs (13)	Office of the Auditor General	1
	Eswatini National Provident Fund	8		AMICAALL	2
	Eswatini Bank	2		Coordinating Assembly of NGOs	3
	Eswatini Communications Commission	3		Family Transformation Federation of Eswatini	4
	Eswatini Environment Authority	12		Business Community (FESBC)	1
	Eswatini National Council of Arts & Culture	4		Giant Caliber Companionship	3
	Eswatini National Trust Commission	21		International Youth Fellowship	1
	Eswatini National Youth Council	4		Junior Achievement Eswatini	4
	Eswatini Parliament	17		Kwakha Indvodza	2
	Eswatini Standards Authority	9		Lulote Business Management Extension Programme	4
	Municipal Council of Mbabane	6		Phumelela Project	1
	NAMBOARD	8		Woman Farmer Foundation	5
	National Disaster Management Agency	5		Women in Engineering (WomEng) Eswatini	1
	Small Enterprises Development Company	11		YOUTH Leadership & Transformation Organization	1
	The Eswatini Financial Intelligence Unit	1	 UN Agencies (4)		
	Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund	6			
 Small Businesses (16)	Biolab Eswatini	4			
	Catalyze Swaziland	1			
	CNB Marketing	1		United Nations Resident Coordinators Office	3
	Eco Architects	2		United Youth for Sustainable Globe Eswatini	2
	Eswatini Clinical Laboratory Services	2		World Food Programme UNDP	4
	G.S. Chiyanda Property Consultants	2			
	High Purpose Investments (Pty) Ltd	1			
	Hluma Projects Architects	2			
	Lush Haircare (Pty) Ltd	1			
	Lusundvu Agricultural Academy	6			
	Mgcabo Construction	3			
	Ritog Investments (Pty) Ltd	2			
	Siphosabo Construction	2			
	SiyeSwatini TransMagnific	4			
	Smiling Through Farming	1			
	Theo Brands	2			

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Applications for host organizations remain open at eyep.org.sz/apply-as/



Complete the eligibility checklist – a tool to check for resource availability to guarantee a positive placement experience.



Complete online requisition for graduates.



Sign the online EYEP Graduate Placement Agreement.

INCENTIVES FOR HOST ORGANIZATIONS



Get access to young talented graduates with skills to support your institution in achieving its goals.



EYEP does all the admin by screening and matching candidates based on the specific skill sets your organization requires.



EYEP trains all selected candidates on work-related procedures and etiquette before they are deployed ensuring a smooth integration into the work environment.



EYEP pays all graduate interns a monthly stipend for the duration of six-month period.

EYEP, A CUT ABOVE THE REST



Uses a digital recruitment system which promotes transparency – digitally matching skills to institutional needs. The matching system is automated so the algorithm has no bias/favouritism leading to transparency in the recruitment process.



Reduces recruitment costs – EYEP does the screening and interviewing process hence reducing costs and time spent on getting graduate interns.



Training – Graduates receive training on work etiquette, emotional intelligence and general understanding of the work environment thus minimising the risk of workplace conflict.

BRAVO TO EYEP PARTNERS!

Your contribution plays an important role in empowering young people. Funds used to support graduates providing stipends, paying for the training, buying starter kits for participants under the artisanal and skills-development programme and supporting other EYEP streams. This hands-on training equips young people with practical skills and work

experience, preparing them for meaningful employment. In addition to the payment of stipends, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development's funding covers essential administrative costs, such as communication, coordination, and portal maintenance.



EYEP CONTRIBUTIONS

Partner	Total Contribution	EYEP Streams
Ministry of Economic Planning & Development	E35,210,000	Agripreneurship Artisinal Skills Training Graduate Internship iHub
United Nations Development Programme	E6,076,777	Artisinal Skills Training Graduate Internship iHub
Eswatini Bank	E1,200,000	Graduate Internship
CONCO Eswatini	E1,000,000	Artisinal Skills Training Graduate Internship
Public Service Pensions Fund	E600,000	Artisinal Skills Training
Standard Bank	E600,000	Graduate Internship
Construction Industry Council	E333,000	Graduate Internship
MTN Foundation	E160,000	Artisinal Skills Training
Total Contributions	E45,179,777	

EYEP allows participating organizations to support Eswatini to meet its UN Sustainable Development Goals' targets by

playing a role in reducing youth unemployment, address inequalities, reduce poverty and enhance partnerships.

