

**Written Reply**

**9. Ms A P Bans to ask Mr A R Winde, Premier:**

In the light of the deepening youth development and unemployment crisis in the Western Cape, where a significant proportion of young people remain not in employment, education or training (NEET):

(a) What targeted programmes have been implemented in each municipality specifically to reduce the NEET rate; (b) how many young people have been reached per municipality in (i) 2019/20, (ii) 2020/21, (iii) 2021/22, (iv) 2022/23, (v) 2023/24, (vi) 2024/25 and (vii) 2025/26 to date and (c) what measurable outcomes have been achieved in terms of (i) employment placement, (ii) education enrolment or (iii) accredited skills development?

**Reply:**

The question refers to a “deepening youth development and unemployment crisis” in the Western Cape, evidence for which is not provided. It should be noted that, between 2014 and 2024, the Western Cape was the only Province to reduce youth unemployment, while all other Provinces saw their situations worsen during the same time. Similarly, the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) results demonstrate that the Western Cape was one of only three provinces to see a decline in the number of NEET youth during the reporting period.

The Western Cape Government makes its programmes available to all Western Cape residents, regardless of municipality, as long as they fit the individual requirements of each programme. As such, information by municipality is not available in the majority of cases. If information on a specific municipality is sought, it is suggested that such a question should be addressed to the Department of Local Government directly.

I have nevertheless consulted with the various Departments within the Western Cape Government to ascertain what data is immediately available regarding initiatives

targeting NEET youth, and have compiled the following below. I am thus informed by the various Departments that:

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Department of Social Development provides subsidised funding to support the operations of Youth Cafés and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). This funding aims to advance the organization's objectives of delivering skills development programmes within their respective areas of operation across the province, based on approved business plans.

The programmes offered constitute a comprehensive basket of skills development initiatives, designed in response to the needs of the youth. These include Life Skills, Introduction to Barista Training, Entrepreneurship, Financial Literacy, Creative Arts and Media, Vocal Training, DJ Training, Public Speaking, Work Readiness, and the "Grow Your Own Garden" initiative.

Additional programmes include CV Writing, Job Shadowing, Mentoring, Sexual and Reproductive Health Education, Hospitality Training, Driving Licence Lessons, Basic Computer Skills, Women Entrepreneurship, the ICAN Learn Programme, and Mobile and Digital Literacy.

Technical and vocational training opportunities are also provided, including Bricklaying, Carpentry, Plumbing, Electrical Work, Confectionery, First Aid Level 1, Basic Cooking, Coding, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), and Welding.

DSD programmes have reached the following numbers of youth per year over time:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
14 473	16 315	12 229	14 566	14 538	14 566	10727 current

Over the past three years (2023-2025), a total of 4,784 employment placements and linkages have been achieved. This figure includes both contract-based and permanent employment opportunities secured through these interventions. A total of 64 youth who successfully completed the skills development programmes were enrolled in higher education institutions, including both traditional universities and universities of technology. Additionally, a total of 1,230 accredited training opportunities has been provided.

**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT**

Within the mandate of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, targeted interventions are implemented through Budget Programme 2, Programme 3, and Programme 4, including the After-School Programme, to strengthen youth development outcomes and reduce vulnerability to NEET status.

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport delivers structured sport, recreation, and after-school opportunities through initiatives such as the Mass Participation; Opportunity and Access Programmes; Development and Growth (MOD) Programme, School Sport, and community-based recreation programmes. These interventions provide safe, supervised environments for young people and focus on:

- Mass participation and inclusive access to sport and recreation;
- Structured school sport leagues and pathways linked to federations;
- Life skills development and psychosocial support;
- Talent identification and progression opportunities; and
- Community cohesion and positive social behaviour.

Collectively, these programmes play a key preventative role by supporting school retention, reducing risk behaviour, strengthening resilience, and creating pathways to further development, including participation in organised sport structures and broader socio-economic opportunities. These programmes are implemented across all municipalities in the Western Cape, with delivery tailored to local needs, infrastructure availability, and partnership arrangements.

The Year-Beyond programme offers a year of work experience to unemployed youth aged 18-25. The programme offers youth placement opportunities within a library or at an after-school centre in their area across the Province, where they can offer support to learners while also growing their own skills in ensuring they can progress to further studies or work opportunities.

The EPWP offers unemployed youth opportunities to access basic employment and to build up skills and experience to be able to access future employment opportunities.

Public libraries, located in every municipality, function as accessible community assets that address key underlying drivers of NEET status, particularly educational exclusion, information poverty, low literacy and lack of digital access. While public libraries do not directly place youth into employment, they play a vital preventative and enabling role in youth development by supporting learning readiness, lifelong education, digital

inclusion and social stability. The contribution of Western Cape public libraries to youth development and NEET reduction is underpinned by the Six Pillars of the new Western Cape Public Library Service Delivery Model:

1. Access to Information: Libraries procure relevant books and youth-focused materials, including career guidance, life-skills, entrepreneurship, literacy and curriculum support resources. Through OverDrive, libraries provide free access to eBooks and eAudiobooks, enabling 24/7 learning opportunities for youth regardless of location or income.
2. Digital Inclusion: The Rural Library Connectivity Project provides free internet access in rural and small-town libraries, where connectivity is often limited or unaffordable. SmartCape, implemented in City of Cape Town libraries, offers free computer and internet access, widely utilised by unemployed youth for job searches, online applications, CV development and access to government services.
3. Reading: Libraries implement reading clubs, homework support programmes, holiday activities and youth literacy initiatives that target foundational literacy gaps strongly correlated with unemployment and school dropout.
4. Literacy, Education and Intellectual recreation: Libraries offer informal digital literacy support, including basic computer skills, internet navigation and information-seeking skills necessary for participation in education, training and the labour market. Public libraries provide opportunities for intellectual recreation by offering access to reading materials, learning resources, educational programmes and creative activities that stimulate curiosity, critical thinking and lifelong learning.
5. Safe and Inclusive Youth Spaces: Libraries provide safe, supervised, substance-free spaces for study, engagement and personal development, especially after school hours, contributing to positive youth outcomes and social cohesion.
6. Community Hubs: Through partnerships, information sharing and community-based programmes, libraries help connect young people to opportunities, services and support networks they may not otherwise access. By anchoring learning, dialogue and participation at local level, the library as a community hub plays a critical role in strengthening resilience, promoting active citizenship and supporting pathways out of social and economic exclusion.

Attendance at MOD Centres over time has been as follows:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
87 533	49 577	57 841	66 381	53 933	58 617	72 835

As of the latest data, DCAS maintains:

MOD Centres	315
YearBeyond	3 250 youth placed across the Western Cape
Public Libraries	347
EPWP Sites	438 placements spread across 30 museums, 4 cultural facilities, and 2 Head Office buildings.

While the Department does not directly employ large numbers of beneficiaries, it plays a facilitative role in enabling job opportunities through strategic partnerships and programme implementation.

Through Budget Programme 4 in particular, employment opportunities are created and supported via:

- The appointment of coaches, supervisors, and coordinators through partner organisations such as the Western Cape Sport Confederation
- Opportunities linked to School Sport, recreation programmes, and the MOD Programme
- Short-term and part-time roles associated with programme delivery, events, and community-based activities

These opportunities contribute to job creation targets reflected in the APP and provide income, work experience, and skills development for young people, thereby improving their employability.

The Year-Beyond programme equips young people with a valuable year of hands-on work experience, during which they are also exposed to further training to enhance their soft skills and to make them more employable. It also allows them the chance to decide on a future field of study.

Our libraries offer youth free internet access and the opportunity to use computers to work on their CV's and apply for jobs or further education opportunities.

The placement of youth at various sites across the province through the EPWP, also gives unemployed youth the opportunity to gain work experience and enhance their knowledge to be able to apply for future employment opportunities.

Through the Mass Participation; Opportunity and Access; Development and growth (MOD) Programme, as well as structured School Sport, after-school programming, library services, and recreation activities, the Department contributes directly to improved learner engagement, school attendance, and retention.

The MOD Programme, as a school-based after-school intervention, provides safe and structured environments where learners participate in sport, arts, culture, and life skills activities on a daily basis. International and local evidence consistently demonstrates that participation in structured after-school programmes is associated with improved school attendance, reduced dropout rates, enhanced behavioural outcomes, and increased learner motivation.

Within the Western Cape context, the MOD Programme functions as a protective factor by:

- Providing daily supervised engagement during high-risk after-school hours;
- Strengthening learner attachment to the school environment;
- Promoting positive behaviour, discipline, and social cohesion; and
- Offering psychosocial support that enhances emotional wellbeing and resilience.

In addition, structured School Sport reinforces school connectedness through regular participation in leagues and competitions, while library services support academic engagement, literacy development, and access to learning resources.

These integrated interventions align with a preventative, upstream approach to youth development, contributing to sustained participation in education. They are particularly impactful in Quintile 1 to 3 schools and vulnerable communities, where the risk of disengagement is highest.

Collectively, these programmes play a critical role in reducing school dropout risk and supporting learners to remain within the education system, thereby strengthening their prospects for further education, training, and future economic participation.

The Year-Beyond programme supports youth in determining their desired career path and encourages graduates from the programme to pursue further studies.

Our libraries provide youth with free access to computers and the internet in order to be able to apply for further education opportunities.

Participants benefit from both accredited and non-accredited skills development opportunities linked to departmental programmes and partnerships. These include:

- Accredited coaching and officiating qualifications delivered through sport federations;
- Leadership and youth development training;
- Arts and culture facilitation training; and
- Digital literacy and information access skills through library services.

These interventions are aligned to the APP and contribute to building a pipeline of skilled individuals who are better positioned to access further opportunities in education, training, and the labour market.

### **WESTERN CAPE MOBILITY DEPARTMENT**

The Western Cape Mobility Department (WCMD) primarily assists youth seeking work through the Job Seekers' Travel Voucher initiative. A study by Youth Capital (2024) found that 40% of youth spend between R350 and R500 per month on transport to look for work, and 84% reported having to choose between food and looking for work. The WCMD launched the Jobseeker Travel Voucher Programme (JTVP) in February 2024 to bridge this gap and connect jobseekers to economic opportunities as part of the Growth 4 Jobs Strategy. The JTVP offers jobseekers free trips with Golden Arrow Bus Services, and has steadily increased its impact by enabling jobseekers to self-register.

The JSTV has been active within the Cape Town Metro since 2023/2024. However, plans are underway to expand this highly successful initiative. Below are the numbers for beneficiaries registered with the Jobseeker Programme, Youth category age 15-34 years:

<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
101	2,673	17,200

Survey results indicated that approximately 35% of jobseekers who used the voucher were able to secure employment. In addition, 95% of beneficiaries reported that the programme had been beneficial to them, regardless of whether they found employment.

Due to the success of JTVP in Cape Town, the programme is being extended to the 2026/2027 financial year in partnership with GABS. The WCMD is also engaging with the Municipality of George to implement the programme through the GO GEORGE bus service.

## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

The Department's experiential learning programmes directly responds to those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). The programme provides accredited training and full-time employment opportunities for unemployed youth. The programme has successfully transitioned 22 597 unemployed youth into full-time employment opportunities.

The number of youth reached per year is as follows:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
1865	4153	2429	4684	4260	2963	2243

## DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The Department of Infrastructure implements a range of province-wide youth development and skills programmes aimed at reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET). These interventions are implemented across various municipalities, often in partnership with accredited training providers and the private sector.

Key programmes include:

- National Youth Services programmes (Learnerships & Apprenticeships);
- Work-based experiential learning programmes; and
- Accredited skills development and artisan training programmes.

Young people have been reached through various programmes as follows:

### Human Settlements grant funded youth programmes

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
170	56	159	271	264	262	367

### Learnership Programmes

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
168	168	168	168	168	168	178

### Apprenticeship (Artisan) Programmes

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

0	0	0	19	52	0	30
---	---	---	----	----	---	----

## WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI) is a large-scale public employment programme introduced as part of South Africa's Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI). It aims to tackle high youth unemployment while simultaneously supporting public schools. Under the initiative, unemployed youth aged 18–35 are placed in schools for several months to serve as Education Assistants and General School Assistants, providing support in areas such as classroom activities, ICT, reading, administration, maintenance, and learner enrichment.

Since its launch in 2020, the BEEI has created hundreds of thousands of short-term work opportunities across thousands of schools in the Western Cape, improving both school functioning and youth employability by offering training and practical work experience.

2020/21 (Phase I)	2021/22 (Phase II)	2022/23 (Phase III)	2023/24 (Phase IV)	2025/26 (Phase V)
20237	21880	19662	22158	18985

## DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

The Department of the Premier co-ordinates the First Work Experience PAY Programme, which benefits all departments across government. This programme allows recently-matriculated learners to gain valuable workplace experience within the Western Cape Government. All departments provide on-the-job training and skills development, which many former interns have leveraged to study further and gain employment in their preferred fields. Nearly 10 000 interns have passed through the programme since its first intake in 2012.

Intake numbers for the last five years are as follows:

2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
837	632	741	496	561	417	486

## DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Department of Local Government works with municipalities to provide a number of opportunities to youth throughout the Western Cape. The Municipal Graduate Internship Programme is funded through the Western Cape Department of Local Government's Grant funding to assist municipalities with human resources amongst other Human Resource Management and ICT units. Since 2019, it has delivered the following opportunities for youth:

2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26
17	10	0	2	5	6	10

Similarly, the Municipal Disaster Management Graduate Internship funded through the Western Cape Department of Local Government's Grant funding to assist municipalities with human resources capacity at the local level and youth development. The following opportunities have been provided:

2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26
4	0	3	5	6	10	10

Additionally, Western Cape Government, Community Development Worker Programme (CDWP) - working collaboratively with municipalities and partner institutions, has implemented a range of education-led youth interventions aimed at reducing NEET levels. These interventions are prioritising access to education, retention in learning pathways and transitions into post-school education and training.

**Education-sector interventions implemented across the Province, include:**

- Career guidance programmes and Career Expos at high schools
- School readiness and admissions support (Grades R, 1, 6 and secondary placement)
- Tertiary and TVET college application support
- ABET/AET registration and adult learning access
- Bursary and NSFAS information and application support
- National Benchmark Test (NBT) registration
- Digital and IT skills programmes linked to accredited learning
- School-to-college transition and learner support initiatives

These programmes have been implemented across all Districts - Cape Winelands, Garden Route, Central Karoo, Overberg and West Coast and the City of Cape Town.

As of the latest available data, the number of youth reached is estimated as follows:

2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26
±500	±6 300	±2 440	±6 400	±4 950

Across the period, the CDWP - supported employment outcomes include direct placement, short-term employment, and labour-market entry.

- Work-seeker registration:
  - Thousands of youths registered on ESSA / PES / DEL databases, improving matching to vacancies.
- Short-term and pathway employment:
  - Youth recruited into EPWP, municipal projects, and contractor-based opportunities.
  - Temporary employment secured through Shake-Shake recruitment mechanisms (Garden Route).
- Learnership and workplace placement:
  - Youth placed into SAWIT, Chrysalis Academy, infrastructure-linked and agriculture-linked placements.
- Private-sector recruitment facilitation:
  - Documented youth placement through employer partnerships (e.g. retail, agriculture, services).

Education outcomes focus on preventing NEET entry and re-engaging youth.

Measurable results

- School retention and transition
  - Career expos for Grades 8–12 improved subject choice and post-school planning.
- Post-school enrolment
  - Youth assisted with:
    - TVET and college applications,
    - tertiary placement processes,
    - ABET registration (adult re-entry to education).
- Civic access enabling enrolment
  - ID Smart Card campaigns enabled youth to:
    - register for exams,
    - apply to institutions,

- access bursaries and learnerships.
- ECD and foundational skills (long-term NEET prevention)
  - Early-learning interventions contribute indirectly to future NEET reduction.

In addition to the information given above, supplementary information may follow.