

Phase IV of the Basic Education Employment Initiative commences

Phase IV of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI), implemented as the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI), commenced Wednesday, 1 February.



Image source: Katerina Holmes from [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com/photo/teacher-helping-students/)

In a statement on Tuesday, the Department of Basic Education said the commencement of Phase IV is aligned with the beginning of the 2023 academic year, and provides an opportunity for youth to be in schools at a critical time and period when they are needed.

This follows successful implementation of Phase I – III, where more than 850,000 job opportunities were created for youth.

The target for Phase IV is planned for 255,000 job opportunities for youth across the nine provinces. The 255,000 is split into two cohorts of +/-150,000 and 105,000 youth, respectively.

The first cohort is starting on 1 February 2023, with the second cohort of 105,000 starting on 1 May 2023. However,

KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape will appoint single cohorts each, starting on 1 March and 1 February 2023, respectively.

“The PYEI-BEEI leverages on the fact that there is a public school in every community in South Africa, which is an enabler for government to provide job opportunities to the most vulnerable youth, who under normal circumstance might have to leave their communities to access opportunities.

“Inclusiveness is thus a key pillar of the initiative. In the same vein, schools have been encouraged to give opportunities to youth with disabilities, as well as more girls/females recruited,” the DBE said.

The department said that schools have also been guided to prioritise youth living in communities where the schools are located. In this way, they do not have to spend money on transportation between their homes and the schools where they will be employed.

PYEI Phase IV aims to provide youth with soft and hard skills required in the world of work.

“The focus for Phase IV is to provide support to educators to contribute towards improved learning outcomes. To this end, most of the youth will be working with educators in the classroom as Curriculum Assistants.

“Curriculum Assistants are not teachers and are not required to teach, as teaching and assessment remains the responsibility of the teacher. Reading Champions will assist learners with reading to ensure that they can read for meaning,” the DBE said.

The department said that the focus in this regard will be in the Foundation Phase to ensure that a solid foundation is built for future learning.

E-Cadres will be required to assist with ICT integration in teaching and learning. In the past phases, schools have also used e-Cadres to help with administrative tasks.

More opportunities

Other categories will be Care and Support Assistants, who will provide basic psychosocial support to learners; sports and enrichment assistants, who will support the implementation of sports, arts and culture activities; and handymen and women, whose main responsibility will be to help with the upkeep and maintenance of school buildings.

The Department and Provincial Education Departments will work with different partners to achieve this purpose.

These include NEMISA, which will offer Digital Literacy; University of Johannesburg, offering Artificial Intelligence in the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Digify Africa, offering Online Safety.

MTN and Anglo American have also pledged their support for the training of Curriculum Assistants and e-Cadres, respectively.

Meanwhile, the training of Reading Champions will be carried out by various non-governmental organisations, under the banner of the National Reading Coalition.

Handymen will be provided with accredited training, ranging from painting, tiling, plastering and plumbing, etc.

In Phase IV of the project, the department said it will increase its effort to promote inclusive education awareness by all assistants.

“Assistants will be required to undergo orientation on inclusive education to understand that learners living with disabilities

should be treated on an equal basis with other young people in the school and communities in which they live,” the DBE said.

The DBE said the second phase of the training will focus on training youth placed in special schools across the country, with the aim of capacitating them to be able to provide the necessary additional support to enhance learner’s participation and inclusion in school.

“The third phase of this training will focus on providing skills to assistants living with disabilities employed as part of the project. The department will continue to look for suitable partners to provide training to youth, as well as exit pathways.”

The department emphasised that the training is essential to upskill youth, while providing various exit pathways, which will ensure that youth can build on their work experiences and skills gained through the PYEI-BEEI.

Pathways to other opportunities will also ensure that the youth remain meaningfully engaged and make a positive contribution to society, the DBE said.

National Project Manager, Lala Maje, said that: “The department welcomes all the youth to the PYEI-BEEI and encourages them to take full advantage of the opportunities that they will get throughout their contract period, these job opportunities can catapult them into even greater things and allow them to develop as professionals.”

The Department of Basic Education will continue to monitor the impact of the PYEIBEEI on the sector.

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