

# Youth employment review now available

Statistician-General Pali Lehohla says while the number of black youth in employment has grown over the last 20 years, the acquisition of skills has not grown at the same rate within this group.



Statistician General Pali Lehohla says that while employment has risen in the past 20 years, the major problem is a lack of skills among those aged between 24 and 34.  
Image: Stats SA

Lehohla was presenting a 20-year review on employment dynamics among the youth of the country by population group, from 1994, to date.

He said the total workforce among black people almost doubled in the past 20 years, having increased by 95%, and gone up from 5.6m in 1994 to 10.9m workers this year.

Employment in the Indian/Asian youth population grew by 47% while it was up by 45% for coloureds and just 9% for whites.

Lehohla said despite the increase in the workforce the black population recorded the lowest increase in skilled employment when compared with other population groups.

Lehohla said the proportion of skilled employment decreased among the age group of younger black people between the ages of 24 and 34 years.

"The lowest increase took place within the black population as it was down by 2.9%.

"The highest increase was within the Indian/Asian population, which recorded an increase in skills of 25.5%, followed by 19.3% within the white population and 10.9% within the coloured population," said Lehohla.

Youth unemployment stands at 36.1%, with jobless youth making up 75% of the country's unemployed.

Generally, Lehohla said the number of skilled workers in the country has increased from 1.8m to 3.8m over the past 20 years recording a percentage growth of 108%, while semi-skilled workers have increased by 66% and low-skilled workers by 49%.

## Report welcomed

The Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Buti Manamela, welcomed Lehohla's report, saying while gains have been made in the area of job creation, it was not enough to tackle the challenge of joblessness, poverty and inequality.

"The population in South Africa increased by 42% from 38m in 1994 to 54m in 2014. The rate of employment creation during this period exceeded the rate of population growth," said Manamela.

"The coloured population also made major gains in absolute numbers and had a proportionate share of their population by increasing by about 500,000," he said, adding the Indian population also grew by 157,000.

The report showed that the white population had the lowest rate of change of only 8% and grew by 162,000, which is less than the population's proportionate share of about 9% in the population.



Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Buti Manamela says its imperative for young people to study maths and science to equip them for the jobs that will arise in future.  
Image: GCIS

"Whites obviously did not have any backlogs to deal with, and it is thus not surprising that the growth in employment affected largely all those who are not white," said Manamela.

Manamela said figures among the black African youth, aged between 20 and 34 years old, told a disturbing story.

"[The report] suggests that there is a generation of black Africans who, through the period of 20 years, lost out on acquiring skills, while their white and Indian counterparts made major inroads in skills acquisition," said Manamela.

He said among black Africans, skills decreased by 3%, while it grew well above 24% among white and Indians.

Manamela said young people who are currently in school, aged between seven and 19 years old, should be encouraged to take science and technology subjects to acquire the much needed skills in the country.

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