

Woolworths participates in government-led youth employment initiative

Woolworths has launched its first intake of candidates from the Youth Employment Services (YES) programme, a government-led partnership with business, labour and civil society that aim to empower one million young South Africans by offering paid, quality work experience.



Through the YES programme, Woolworths will recruit approximately 450 learners in 108 stores in South Africa and at their head office for a period of 12 months.

Commenting on the launch, Woolworths SA CEO, Zyda Rylands, said: “We are proud to work alongside government and together with other South African businesses on this initiative to address this issue of youth unemployment, which has become a massive challenge in South Africa. We are pleased to have co-created a programme across our business units which will equip youth with key skills and prepare them with a work readiness toolkit, as well as a network, to build the foundations of their working career.”

Driving inclusive growth

Launched in 2018 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, the YES programme was established to address the critical issue of youth unemployment and to drive inclusive growth that benefits all who live in South Africa. A key contributor to this goal is increasing job creation and ensuring that youth are included in the economic growth story in a sustainable manner.

Speaking at the Woolworths launch, YES CEO, Tashmia Ismail-Saville, said: “I would like to congratulate and thank Woolworths for taking this first step. YES aims to improve young people’s prospects of finding employment and will help to build a more inclusive and sustainable economy, from which we can all benefit. We look forward to watching the progress of these young South Africans.”

Rylands added that Woolworths is privileged and humbled to be a part of YES, which provides the company with an opportunity to reach more young people and address some of the systemic challenges facing our country. “By being actively involved in youth development, we create career progression within our own business, improve the diversity of our workforce and our potential talent pool, as well as contribute to the

development of employable skills in the country. This is part of our role as a responsible corporate citizen South Africa."

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