

Logistics sector opens new tech-driven career paths for SA's youth

South Africa's youth unemployment rate remains a critical challenge at 62.4%, but the logistics industry is emerging as a key driver of job creation. Fueled by the growth of e-commerce, digital transformation, and expanding global trade links, logistics is evolving into a dynamic sector that offers diverse opportunities beyond traditional roles, particularly in tech and compliance.



Source: DC Studio via [Freepik](#)

Digital growth drives youth jobs in logistics

"From supply chain analytics and IT systems integration to customer experience and compliance, logistics is evolving into a dynamic, tech-enabled industry that offers diverse professional avenues for South Africa's youth," says Gregory Saffy, managing director for sub-Saharan African operations at FedEx.

While roles such as drivers, packers and sorters remain essential, new technology-driven processes are reshaping the industry and opening doors to careers in data analytics, systems thinking and automation.

"Logistics isn't what it used to be," Saffy explains. "The real competitive advantage now lies in digital capability, especially in areas like data analytics and systems thinking. We're seeing more engineers and analysts in the business than ever before, guiding operations and enabling automation at scale."

Compliance and customs drive growth

Compliance and customs clearance are also becoming major areas of employment growth. Saffy highlighted the progress towards formalising customs qualifications as a critical industry milestone.

"We're seeing progress in the creation of a national customs clearance certification that will give individual recognised qualification, including those with practical experience but no matric pass," he says. "This will create a clear career path and raise the overall standard of compliance across the industry."

Additionally, FedEx has begun enrolling customs clerks into courses covering freight forwarding and

customs compliance. These programmes not only build technical knowledge but also focus on skills for the future such as digital literacy, data analysis and critical thinking.

Learnerships bridge skills gap

For youth without formal education, FedEx offers the Yes Learnerships, a 12-month programme combining training, mentoring and hands-on work experience.

"Since 2019, we've onboarded more than 150 unemployed youth through YES, with more than 60 going on to become permanent employees," says Saffy. "It's a powerful model for bridging the gap between education and employment."

The company also offers a learnership for youth with disabilities, awarding an NQF Level 4 certificate in Business Administration. This includes blended learning, coaching and real-world operational exposure, supporting inclusivity and building work-ready skills.

Private sector backing youth jobs

FedEx's initiatives, for example, underscore the vital role of private sector skills development in unlocking opportunities for South Africa's youth.

"Logistics is a gateway to global trade," Saffy says. "It's no longer just about moving parcels; it's about managing complexity in a fast-paced, tech-driven environment. With the right support and training, South Africa's youth can thrive in this space."

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