



Just Grace's Phakama! Youth Activation Programme is paving the way for the future.

In the challenging landscape of South Africa, where the assumption of seamless transitions from education to the job market falls short for many young individuals, non-profit company Just Grace's Phakama! Youth Activation Programme has emerged as a powerful force, addressing the critical support gap. With less than a third of South African adults holding a matric certificate (dhet.gov.za) and a staggering youth unemployment rate of 43%, according to www.gov.za, the programme confronts the stark reality of what many young people face – disengagement, prolonged unemployment, and the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) label, placing them at risk of long-term economic and social exclusion.

BARISTA SKILLS & MORE

Just Grace (focused on poverty alleviation) employs a strategic approach that's marked by three carefully selected streams, ensuring that youth aged 17 to 27 are equipped with essential skills for successful entry into the job market.

The barista stream, a response to the flourishing coffee market in Cape Town, not only taps into a booming industry but also provides under-skilled youth with confidence, skills, and potential pathways



to further studies or jobs in related fields.

The sewing stream aligns with the textile and apparel industry's crucial role in SA's economy, offering participants the skills needed to access this growing market and pursue diverse roles within the industry.

In 2023, Just Grace responded to the country's skills gap by launching a stream focusing on accredited accounting technician training, addressing the demand for accounting and tax professionals.

To sustain the running of this programme, Just Grace has launched its own brand, Cela, offering coffee roasted and packaged in Langa. Additionally, it sells the beautiful items made by its sewing stream participants on its online store, further integrating the programme's participants into the market and at the same time creating a sustainable revenue stream.

HOLISTIC OFFERING

Just Grace's programme doesn't stop at skills development; it employs a multifaceted approach, actively engaging

“staggering youth unemployment rate of 43% according to www.gov.za”

participants through a holistic framework that integrates skills, personal and professional development, along with psychosocial support and digital literacy. Core building blocks such as action plan formulation, active referral systems, and robust follow-up mechanisms ensure sustained engagement over time.

TRAINING = SUCCESS

Emihle's* (surname withheld) young life had been adversely affected by a period of unemployment from 2018 to 2022, and an unfinished matric due to illness, leaving her feeling despondent. However, participating in the programme became a turning point and her life took a transformative turn when she enrolled in Just Grace's Phakama! Youth Activation Programme.

Throughout the course, Emihle discovered newfound confidence and self-belief, permeating both her professional and personal life. Within a month of completing the programme, she secured employment as a barista at Nü Health Food within a Virgin Active gym. She attributes her success not only

to the technical skills she has acquired but also to the programme's professional and personal skills components, instilling in her a sense of punctuality and effective communication. Fuelled by her newfound confidence, she's embraced her current employment and taken proactive steps towards completing her matric. Her journey is a testament to the effectiveness of comprehensive skills development approaches, opening doors for individuals such as Emihle and enabling them to escape the NEET cycle, forging a path towards a brighter future.

In the realm of skills development, Just Grace's Phakama! Youth Activation Programme stands out as a beacon of hope, unlocking opportunities and paving the way for brighter futures. By strategically addressing the challenges faced by NEET youth in Langa, it enables youth graduating from this programme to enter the job market with competence and resilience. With the addition of sustainable ventures like Cela Coffee and the online store, Just Grace ensures the continued success of its programme and the empowerment of future generations. □

Unlocking opportunities for young South Africans