



SDP PROPOSAL · CAPE TOWN

Cape Town Youth-to-Work Pipeline

*A practical pathway from unemployment to capability,
opportunity and work*

PUBLIC BRIEF



THE PROBLEM

Nearly half of South Africa's young people cannot find work. In Cape Town that is not a statistic. It is a generation waiting at bus stops with certificates that lead nowhere.

Cape Town already has EPWP. It has National Youth Service. It has TVET colleges. It has SETA learnerships. It has municipal internships. The problem is that none of them talk to each other.

A young person can move through all of them and still have no clear route into a job. Nothing routes them. Nothing tracks them. Nothing connects their skills to actual demand.

The challenge is not a lack of programmes. The challenge is fragmentation.

OUR PROPOSAL

The SDP proposes a single front door into this fragmented system. The Cape Town Youth Service, Skills and Employment Corps.

This is how it would work.

Assess first. Every young person who applies is assessed for skills, aptitude and readiness before being placed anywhere. Not everyone needs the same programme. Some need a six-week residential foundation. Others are ready for an apprenticeship immediately.

Train for real jobs. A six-week residential pilot starting with up to 500 places would give participants accommodation, meals, a stipend and hands-on technical exposure across trades the city actually needs. Electrical. Plumbing. Construction. Welding. Renewable energy. Logistics. Digital services.

Chrysalis Academy already proves this model works in the Western Cape. Civilian instructors and City-appointed programme managers hold command of every residential site at all times. Where SANDF and SANSI contribute facilities or technical instructors they operate under that civilian authority. No uniformed command structure operates over participants at any stage. Participation carries no military obligation of any kind.

Connect to employers before training ends. Every participant leaves with a Cape Town Skills and Employment Passport. This is a verified record of what they can actually do. The programme ends with a Skills and Employment Day where employers interview and hire directly from the cohort.

Follow up for two years. Support does not stop at graduation. Every participant is tracked and helped to re-enter the system if a placement falls through, for 24 months.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

- This is not a jobs guarantee
- This is not a military programme
- This is not a replacement for TVET colleges or EPWP



SERVICE DELIVERY PARTY

- This is not a source of cheap labour, participants will never be used to replace properly employed workers on service delivery projects
- This is not a certificate factory
- This is not a political youth organisation

HOW WE KEEP IT HONEST

Selection will be transparent and rules-based. No political party will control who gets in.

Where demand exceeds capacity among equally eligible applicants, selection uses transparent randomisation rather than political discretion.

Outcomes will be published and independently evaluated every year. If the programme does not work, the public will know. It will change.

The Skills Passport belongs to the participant. Employers make employment decisions. Anonymised selection and outcome data are published. The programme is independently audited.

These safeguards protect both participants and the credibility of the programme.

WHAT IT COSTS AND WHAT IT RETURNS

The residential pilot is budgetted at an estimated R55,000 to R75,000 per participant across the six-week residential phase. This covers accommodation, meals, stipend, equipment and instruction. It is in the same range as comparable residential youth development programmes already running in South Africa.

For 500 places that places the pilot in the order of R30 to R38 million in its first year. This is drawn from a blend of City funds, provincial skills budgets, SETA grants and matched private and philanthropic funding rather than one municipal budget line.

That is not a cost to be weighed against nothing. It is a cost to be weighed against what unemployment already costs the City in lost revenue and lost income support, year after year, for every young person who never finds a way in. Every rand spent on the pilot is tracked against cost per completer, cost per qualification and cost per sustained job, so that comparison is made on evidence rather than assumed in advance.

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Not how many certificates are issued. Not how impressive the training centre looks.

The only question that matters is this. How many young people who entered with no job and no clear path are economically active twelve months later?



THE SIX PATHS OUT

Participants are not all forced into the same destination.

One	Employment	Direct placement with participating employers
Two	Apprenticeship	Entry into a recognised artisan or technical pathway
Three	Further education	TVET, occupational qualifications or other appropriate education
Four	Municipal internship	Placement within appropriate City operations
Five	Enterprise	Support through NYDA, SEDA and other appropriate entrepreneurship mechanisms
Six	Independent continuation	Leave with practical skills, references and a documented skills record

The programme does not define success solely as municipal employment. It defines success as movement towards sustainable economic participation.

HOW WE GET THERE

Months 1–3	Establish governance, map existing programmes, establish the Youth Assessment Gateway, map residential facilities, identify TVET partners, survey employers and design the Skills Passport
Months 4–9	Recruit up to 500 participants, conduct assessment, run residential cohorts and begin TVET, internship, apprenticeship and employment placements
Months 10–12	Evaluate participant outcomes, evaluate employer outcomes, analyse costs and publish the first public outcome report
Year 2	Increase residential places from 500 towards 1,000 and eventually 2,000 or more annually, subject to demonstrated capacity and outcomes

Expansion follows evidence. It does not follow political targets alone.

THE CAPE TOWN SKILLS DIVIDEND

Every major public investment is considered for three outputs. Infrastructure output: what did we build or maintain? Service output: what service did it improve? Skills output: what human capability did it leave behind?

A water project can create exposure to pipefitting, pumps, instrumentation, electrical systems and maintenance. A solar project can create training in installation, testing, batteries, electrical systems and maintenance. A housing project can create opportunities in bricklaying, plumbing,



electrical work, carpentry and finishing. A road project can create opportunities in surveying, drainage, concrete, asphalt and plant maintenance.

The objective is not to impose arbitrary employment quotas. The objective is to deliberately identify the human capital opportunity within public investment.

This is the Cape Town Skills Dividend. Public infrastructure should leave behind both better assets and more capable people.

WHY THIS MODEL IS DIFFERENT

The proposed system combines several things that are too often separated. Service gives young people the opportunity to contribute to Cape Town. Structure gives them experience of professional working standards. Assessment identifies capabilities that conventional education may overlook. Skills provide practical economic value. Workplace experience bridges the gap between education and employment. Employers create the connection to actual economic demand. Case management prevents participants from simply disappearing when circumstances change. Alumni create a self-reinforcing network of experience and mentorship.

The innovation is not one particular training course. The innovation is the system connecting all of these elements.

THE SDP PRINCIPLE

Cape Town should stop asking only how many unemployed young people government can temporarily employ.

It should ask how many young people we can move from unemployment into a productive economic pathway.

There is a difference between providing someone with six months of work and changing the trajectory of their working life. The first treats unemployment primarily as an income problem. The second treats unemployment as a problem of skills, opportunity, access, experience and economic participation.

Cape Town already has many of the necessary components. It has EPWP. It has a Jobseekers Database. It has municipal infrastructure. It has technical departments. The Western Cape has Chrysalis. South Africa has National Youth Service. The SANDF has SANSI. TVET colleges provide occupational education. SETAs support skills development. The private sector has labour demand. The Jobs Fund provides a precedent for blended employment funding.

The missing component is the bridge.

THE SDP PROPOSAL

The Service Delivery Party proposes that the City of Cape Town initiate a formal Youth-to-Work Compact with the Western Cape Government, national government, SANDF and SANSI, NYDA, TVET institutions, SETAs, organised labour, private employers, industry associations and civil



society.

The purpose is to establish the Cape Town Youth Service, Skills and Employment Corps as the front door to an integrated Cape Town Youth-to-Work Pipeline.

The first stage is a pilot of up to 500 residential places.

The programme is voluntary, civilian, paid, skills-based, employer-linked, independently evaluated, transparent and non-partisan. It connects existing programmes rather than duplicating them. It provides a credible route into employment, apprenticeship, further education or enterprise.

The programme does not promise every participant a job.

It promises something more credible. A serious opportunity to discover what you are capable of. A chance to acquire useful skills. An opportunity to serve your city. A recognised record of what you can do. Access to employers. A route into further training. A pathway towards work.

FROM UNEMPLOYMENT TO CAPABILITY

For one young person the pathway may lead to a municipal workshop. For another it may lead to TVET. For another it may lead to an apprenticeship. For another it may lead to a private engineering company. For another it may lead to renewable energy work. For another it may lead to a small business. For another it may lead to further education.

The outcome will not be identical for everyone. The principle is.

Every participant leaves with more capability, more experience, more information and more opportunity than they had when they entered.

The measure of success is neither how impressive the training centre looks nor how many certificates are issued.

It is whether a young person who entered with no job, limited experience and no clear pathway leaves with something tangible. Skills. Experience. References. A network. A recognised record of capability. A route into the economy.

THE FINAL SDP VISION

Cape Town should not accept a permanent cycle in which young people move from unemployment to temporary programme, from temporary programme to unemployment, from training to a certificate and from certificate to another queue.

The City cannot create every job. It can create better pathways to the jobs that exist.

It can identify potential. It can remove barriers. It can connect institutions. It can expose young people to useful work. It can help employers find capable workers. It can turn infrastructure spending into a source of skills development. It can ensure that young people do not disappear from the system when their first opportunity fails.



SERVICE DELIVERY PARTY

The goal is not a government programme that lasts forever. The goal is a system that makes itself less necessary over time because more young people are moving successfully into the economy.

That is the purpose of the Cape Town Youth Service, Skills and Employment Corps.

*FROM UNEMPLOYMENT TO CAPABILITY.
FROM CAPABILITY TO OPPORTUNITY.
FROM OPPORTUNITY TO WORK.
FROM WORK TO ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE.*

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