



SOUTH AFRICA

## Harambee — Accelerating youth inclusion in South Africa's labour market



More information  
on [un.org](https://un.org)

**In South Africa, millions of young people lack access to employment, while employers struggle to integrate entry-level talent. Harambee bridges this gap by empowering both.**

Backed by the Julius Baer Foundation, Harambee works with partners across government, the private sector, and civil society to innovate solutions to address youth unemployment in South Africa. Harambee aims to inclusively connect young job seekers with potential employers from diverse industries and organisations of all sizes.

The Work Readiness Programme equips employers with the tools to effectively onboard young workers in entry-level positions, and develop confident, motivated young talent by fostering the right mindsets for success in both work and life.

The Front-Line Leaders Programme trains junior supervisors to guide new workers more effectively.

This approach empowers young South Africans to gain valuable entry-level employment opportunities and provides employers with access to a 'work-ready' talent pool.

### Quick facts

- South Africa
- Project support: 2024–2027
- Grant amount: CHF 100,000 per year
- Fostering connections between previously excluded first-time job seekers and employers in sectors with entry-level vacancies
- Goal: Enabling inclusive hiring and development of young people in the formal economy through work readiness training and collaboration with employers.

### From exclusion and lack of direction ...

Across South Africa, millions of 'NEETs' – young people not in employment, education or training – are excluded from the country's formal job market due to the barriers they face: a lack of essential skills required by employers, and limited access to networks.



### ... to preparedness and a way in.

Through its Work Readiness Programme, Harambee offers training content to employers and other partners to target the development of essential work skills of young people. It also prepares young people for the workforce by providing them with hands-on exposure to professional work.





**“At Harambee, we are working to address the systems and structures that have created an exclusionary labour market for young South Africans. This initiative facilitates a systemic change by equipping the South African formal sector to manage, integrate, and close the gaps for first-time hires more effectively. In doing so, it enables the sustainable unlocking of value within South Africa’s youth.”**

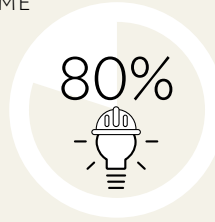
Kasthuri Soni,  
Harambee Chief Executive Officer

#### OUTPUT



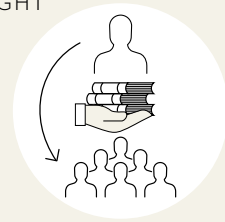
Through its **Work Readiness Programme, Front-Line Leader programme, and podcast series**, Harambee aims to engage over **40 employers** within three years, advocating for improved youth employment policies.

#### OUTCOME



At least **80%** of the **participating youths** are expected to exhibit enhanced work-readiness behaviours upon completing the programme.

#### HIGHLIGHT



With tailored training and support in inclusive hiring and integration practices, we aim to onboard **10 participating employers**, who will have provided learning opportunities to about **300 young people** within the first year.

## Overcoming obstacles to inclusion

- South Africa is grappling with a profound youth unemployment crisis, with nearly nine million young people (more than half of the youth population) currently unemployed.
- The formal job market – offering stable, well-paying employment – remains elusive for most young South Africans. Fewer than 20% of those who enter the labour market can secure formal employment.
- At the same time, there are approximately 300,000 entry-level vacancies across key sectors like wholesale and retail trade, tourism, financial intermediation, and business services waiting to be filled annually.
- Harambee is committed to accelerating the integration of excluded youth into South Africa’s job market by partnering with local organisations to create accessible skilling and networking opportunities for first-time job seekers.
- The Work Readiness programme aims to expand Harambee’s offerings to students of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in South Africa, who often face employment obstacles after graduation.
- A key factor in the programme’s success is helping educational institutions equip young people for the workforce by offering work readiness training and addressing some of the barriers faced by excluded young job seekers.

## About Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator

Founded in 2011, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator is a not-for-profit social enterprise that has supported over four million young job seekers in finding training and employment. Its SA Youth platform, a dynamic tech-enabled national network, connects young people with suitable employers – for free. By bridging gaps and breaking barriers, Harambee is reshaping the future of work for South Africa’s youth.



More information about  
Harambee and its work in  
South Africa

### Do you feel inspired by the Harambee project and would like to support it?

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us!  
foundation@juliusbaer.com



Learn more about our mission  
and our projects on the Wealth  
Inequality Initiative platform.

### Julius Baer Foundation

Established in 1965 by Walter J. Bär (1895–1970), the Julius Baer Foundation has a long history of supporting diverse philanthropic initiatives. Today, our focus is on reducing wealth inequality by convening leading thinkers and actors on the topic and supporting projects worldwide that foster collaboration between individuals, groups and organisations across the wealth spectrum to create a world of equal opportunities.

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