



Youth unemployment

FirstJob youth development and employability initiative.

The youth unemployment rate in South Africa is 43.4%¹, negatively impacting lifelong earnings, economic growth and social cohesion.

Recognising the need for work experience amongst youth, FirstRand launched the FirstJob youth development programme in 2018. Since inception to June 2023, more than R497 million has been invested and 4 703 meaningful work experiences created. The investment for the 2023 financial year was more than R83 million, with 891 unique work experiences created.

The programme runs across the entire group to ensure that FirstJob youth are provided with meaningful work experiences and are supported by dedicated line managers.

The foundational principles of the FirstJob programme are:

- increasing youth employability;
- mentoring by line managers;
- creating meaningful work experiences; and
- building FirstRand ambassadors.

The programme comprises the FirstJob internal programme and the external partner programme.

The external partner programme was created in April 2019 as an extension of the youth initiative. In partnership with the FirstRand Foundation (FRF) and FREF, this programme places youth with external partners, including capacitating NGOs.

Since inception, 45% of youth on the FirstJob programme has been absorbed into the group and its wider ecosystem.

The FirstJob programme (internal and external) – cumulative five-year statistics at 30 June 2023:

4 703 recruited to date

90% matriculants

10% graduates

65% female

93% African

6% Coloured

1% Indian

9 provinces

Highest representation:

Gauteng

Western Cape

KwaZulu-Natal

4 373 completed work experience

92% matriculants

8% graduates

Internal programme achievements:

- FirstJob Namibia was launched in April 2022 with a pilot group of 15 youth. The programme was well received and an additional 55 youth were recruited in the 2023 financial year.
- The Data Academy pilot was launched in 2022 to support the business need for data science skills. Fifty FirstJob youth, including matriculants and graduates, were placed in data science learnerships across FNB.
 - 46 learners successfully completed the programme.
 - Of these, 30 learners received contracts or permanent roles (with external companies and FNB).
 - This pilot was well received and has been expanded to other business areas including WesBank. It is now an additional offering to FirstJob youth.

The Risepreneur programme

- This entrepreneurship programme started in 2022 to support budding entrepreneurs exiting the FirstJob programme. Thirty FirstJob alumni, who started small businesses during the FirstJob programme, received a five-month contract for support and training on entrepreneurship skills.
 - 29 of the FirstJob alumni successfully completed the programme.
 - The programme is internally managed and is offered to all FirstJob youth who complete the external partner programme.

External partner programme achievements:

Customer placement programme

- During 2022, FirstJob piloted a new customer placement programme. The initial pilot was extended and has since been completed successfully. In total, 80 youth were placed at 27 FNB customers.
- FNB customers (employers) provided unique work experiences for the youth and acknowledged that the programme added value to their businesses. Customer placements will continue to be a focus for the FirstJob programme based on its success.
- 100 interns were placed at 27 FNB customers for the 2024 financial year.