

# NEWSLETTER

*From service to skills, and from participation to pathways*



## WELCOME TO THE SERITI NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE NEWSLETTER

This edition highlights key developments from Phase 4 of the NYS Programme. It offers partners an overview of programme implementation, community engagement, and the role of youth in delivering meaningful social and developmental impact across participating communities.





# Empowering Youth, Strengthening Communities

The National Youth Service (NYS) Programme continues to play a critical role in addressing youth unemployment while strengthening community systems. In Phase 4, over 4,000 young people across 45 sites and all nine provinces are gaining structured work experience, practical skills, and a sense of purpose—while delivering essential services in early learning, food security, and environmental action.



Right from the start, the participants began forming connections with Early Childhood Development centres and local community spaces, laying the groundwork for a meaningful journey of service and learning.

## Building Skills Through Service

NYS continues to create pathways for young people to gain practical, hands-on experience while responding to community needs. Participants are actively involved in supporting the early learning of children, conducting community awareness campaigns, household visits, contributing to agriculture and food security projects, and leading environmental clean-up initiatives.



These activities do more than provide essential services — they help participants build confidence, strengthen communication skills, and develop workplace readiness. Through daily engagement and responsibility, youth are learning what it means to show up, contribute, and grow in real-world environments.

Digital learning remains a key pillar of the programme. Through the Mzansi Digital Learning platform, participants are developing practical skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, CV writing, and professional development. 170 Digital Champions (Digi Champs) play a vital role by supporting peer learning, encouraging course completion, and strengthening overall digital engagement across sites.

Mentorship continues to be central to the NYS experience. Team Leaders provide consistent guidance, supervision, and feedback, helping participants navigate challenges and unlock their potential. Structured coaching and early support interventions address gaps such as confidence or task execution, fostering resilience, accountability, and self-belief.





## Community Activities and Engagement



More than 4,500 young people working across 45 sites, delivering Early Childhood Development (ECD), food security, and environmental initiatives that are driving measurable change in their communities.

Through 182 ECD centres, NYS participants provide daily classroom support, play-based learning, and literacy activities, helping to strengthen school readiness while easing the workload of under-resourced practitioners. Beyond the classroom, participants conduct household visits to support early child development, encourage active parental involvement, and connect families with local learning and support opportunities.

Agriculture and food security initiatives have led to the establishment of 97 community food gardens, providing fresh produce to schools and households while equipping youth with practical skills in irrigation, planting, and crop management. Through 1,241 community awareness campaigns, participants engage households on nutrition, early learning, and environmental responsibility, reaching more than 137,000 indirect beneficiaries.







## Building Skills and Strengthening Communities

Skills development remains a core pillar of the NYS Programme. To date, 28 formal training sessions have been delivered, with 64% of participants completing two or more trainings, strengthening their digital capabilities and overall workplace readiness.

Through the GreenWorks programme, 2,248 youth are leading clean-up campaigns, recycling initiatives, and greening projects—raising environmental awareness and visibly improving shared public spaces in their communities.

Youth participants are engaged across multiple service areas, with 49% supporting community works and environmental greening, 29% contributing to Early Childhood Development, and 18% involved in food security and child nutrition initiatives. These activities reflect the diverse ways in which young people are driving positive social and environmental change at the local level.





# Developing Digital Champions Through the MANCOSA Learning Series

Through the NYS programme, Seriti participants serving as Digital Champions took part in the MANCOSA Learning Series, designed to equip young people with future-ready digital and STEAM skills. Hosted at the MANCOSA Johannesburg Campus and facilitated by the MANCOSA School of Education and iTEACHlab team, the programme combined innovation, technology and practical learning. 25 Participants were introduced to 21st-century teaching approaches through the iTeach STEAM programme, including Evolution Education, which integrates science, creativity and technology in modern classrooms.



Digital Champions gained hands-on experience building and programming robots using Bluetooth technology, exploring manufacturing machines used to create educational learning tools, and engaging with interactive digital platforms. These activities deepened their understanding of how technology and creativity shape the future of education. In parallel, participants completed the Digital Literacy Application Skills Programme, where they developed essential workplace competencies such as creating, editing, formatting and presenting professional documents. This training strengthened their confidence and prepared them for academic and professional environments.

The impact of the Learning Series has been significant. These Digital Champions demonstrated improved digital competency, increased confidence, stronger problem-solving abilities and greater readiness for employment and community leadership. Many emerged as role models, equipped to promote digital inclusion and innovation within their communities.

By investing in youth development through forward-thinking education, the programme is helping shape capable, confident and community-minded leaders for the future.





# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

These reflections share the lived experiences of participants who gained skills, confidence, and purpose through the NYS Programme at Seriti Institute.

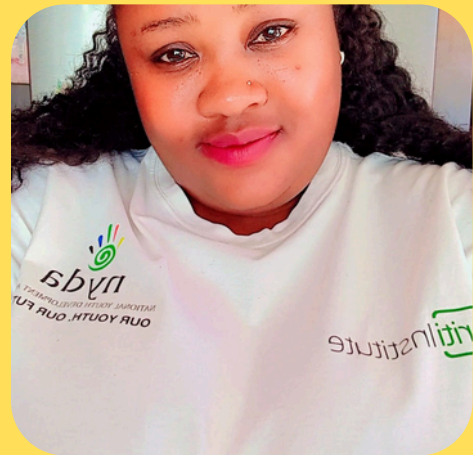
My experience at Seriti Institute through the NYS Programme was impactful and enriching. As part of the Work-Learn-Grow initiative, I gained hands-on skills in sustainable farming and agribusiness while contributing to community development. I value Seriti's commitment to empowering women and youth through the NYS Programme.

**-SAMUKELISWE MAJOLA (AGRI CHAMPION)**



The Seriti Institute Programme gave me hands-on skills in gardening, recycling, and community outreach. I learned how to work with different soil types, start a thriving garden, and see the value in recycling. The awareness training helped me overcome shyness and confidently engage others about sustainability. I'm excited to apply these skills in future projects.

**— LINDOKUHLE NHLONGO (GREENWORKS CHAMPION)**



My experience at Seriti was both fascinating and educational. As a GreenWorks participant, I developed creativity, time management, adaptability, and teamwork skills. Working at the recycling site also gave me practical knowledge of recycling processes and material sorting.

**-DINEO MAKHANYE (GREENWORKS CHAMPION)**





# Impact in Numbers

## % of Youth participated in:



**49%**

Community Works  
& Greening  
Programmes

**29%**

Early Childhood  
Development

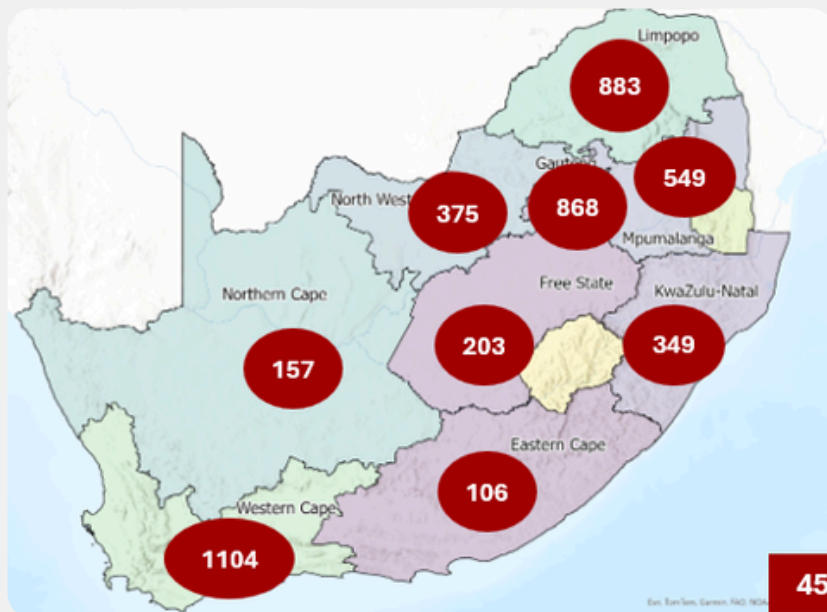
**18%**

Food Security & Child  
Nutrition

**4%**

Surveys & Digital  
Mapping

## Provincial distribution of participants



## Participants that transitioned to better opportunities



**165**

Job Opportunity



**3**

New Business



**3**

Public Employment Programmes



**25**

Training & Education



**137687**

Indirect Beneficiaries  
Reached



**19**

Local Implementing  
Partners



**1241**

Awareness  
Campaigns



**182**

ECD's  
supported



**97**

Food Gardens  
Established



# Youth in Action



NYS Interactive Sessions



NYS Participants Supporting Food Security Through Gardening



Interactive Learning with NYS Participants



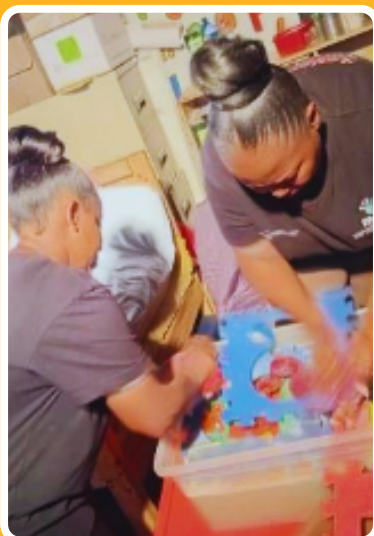
NYS Youth supporting Early learning at ECD Centres



NYS Participants Maintaining an ECD Centre Yard



NYS Participant Caring for Community Food Gardens



NYS Youth Helping at ECD Centres



NYS Participants In Work Readiness Training



NYS Participating Creating Toys from Recycled Materials



# From NYS to Entrepreneurship: Mashudu Casimiro's Journey

For Sakhile Claude Mathebula, entrepreneurship began with a simple desire — to create meaningful moments and make people feel special.

Inspired by a love for thoughtful gifting and memorable experiences, Sakhile noticed a gap in the community for affordable, elegant gift hampers and styled picnic setups. Many people struggled to find personalised ways to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, proposals, and special moments. This opportunity became the foundation of a growing business.

Starting with limited resources, Sakhile began promoting services through word of mouth and social media. Each order helped refine creative skills, improve presentation, and grow confidence. Positive feedback from early clients confirmed that the business was on the right path and encouraged continued growth.

Like many young entrepreneurs, Sakhile faced challenges. Limited capital and strong competition made early growth difficult. Building trust with new customers required consistency, quality service, and close attention to detail. By reinvesting profits, maintaining strong communication, and delivering excellent experiences, credibility and repeat clients were steadily built.

Through the NYS Programme, Sakhile developed essential skills in communication, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving. The training strengthened discipline, organisation, and professionalism, enabling more effective management of clients, budgets, and deadlines.

Today, the gift hamper and picnic business is a source of pride and purpose.

It provides independence and confidence, while bringing joy to individuals and families during important life moments. By sourcing locally and offering affordable services, the business also contributes positively to the community.

Sakhile encourages young people to take the first step, even when resources are limited:

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Learn as you go and stay consistent. Small steps can grow into something meaningful.”

This journey reflects how passion, supported by skills and determination, can be transformed into sustainable opportunity beyond NYS.







SHARE  
YOUR  
STORY

# Sharing Real Hustle Journeys: The #MyHustleStory Campaign

As part of our ongoing efforts to support youth development and transition pathways, we have officially launched the #MyHustleStory campaign. This initiative provides a safe and relatable space for NYS participants to share their entrepreneurial journeys — big or small — and reflect on the challenges, lessons, and growth along the way. By sharing their hustles, participants not only build confidence and increase their visibility, but also engage in peer learning, inspiring others and strengthening a community of support.

Updates will be shared regularly across our social media platforms, encouraging participants to share their stories and help amplify authentic youth voices and experiences.

