# National Pathway Management Network Design and Process Evaluation

Literature and Document Review

Andrew Paterson, Jaya Sojen, Eleanor Hazell,
Christopher Beukes, Motsamai Thinane and James Keevy

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Acronyms

ALMP	active labour market policies
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
DWYPD	Department of Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities
EDD	Economic Development Department
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GOCAPASS	governance capacity assessment
GTAC	General Technical Advisory Centre
MSG	multi-stakeholder governance system
NCA	network capacity assessment
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	neither employed, nor in education or training
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPMN	National Pathway Management Network
NPO	non-profit organisation
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMO	project management office
PYEI	Presidential Youth Employment Initiative
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SONA	State of the Nation Address
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
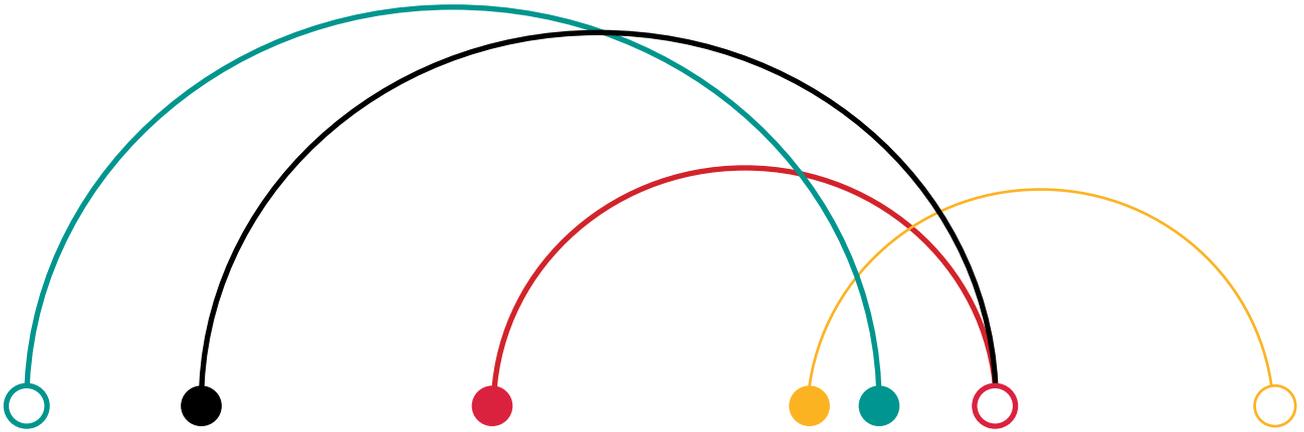
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conducted as part of a commissioned evaluation of the design and implementation of the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN), this literature and document review is presented here as a stand-alone report. The review, which situates and contextualises the design and early implementation of the NPMN, focuses on the underlying concepts that informed the NPMN's design in responding to and addressing identified challenges. The review offers analysis and insights into aspects that may influence the quality standards, progress and outcomes of the NPMN and provides a picture of the conditions that underscore the importance of a coordinated effort to enable young people to access relevant employment and learning opportunities. A perspective on the structures, relationships and processes involved in mobilising and sustaining the programme within the broader national policies and frameworks aimed at supporting young people is also presented.

High unemployment in South Africa is a persistent challenge rooted in historical inequalities and structural economic features. Despite post-apartheid initiatives, the flagging labour market has not kept pace with the growing population of young people. This situation is aggravated by lethargic economic growth and a formal sector unable to accommodate the population of unemployed young people, which, since 2021, comprises half of all youth in the 15-24 age group (Statista, 2025). In the same period, over 30% of this age group are either unemployed or not in education or training (NEET), making them extremely vulnerable (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2024). Gender and spatial dimensions further marginalise females and rural young people, adding to their limited access to education, training and employment opportunities. Provinces exhibit different levels of disparity in unemployment rates, while financial constraints differ between communities, hindering some from opting to migrate to areas with better job prospects. Moreover, young people's pathways to meaningful work and sustainable livelihoods in South Africa can involve precarious transitions between education, employment and informal work.

In 2020, in response to this crisis, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, President Cyril Ramaphosa introduced the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI). The PYEI's goal is a South Africa where young people are actively participating in the economy, with greater dignity and a sense of agency over their contribution to society. The NPMN, one of four components of the PYEI, was conceptualised as a network of networks that connects young people to opportunities and minimises barriers to entering the labour market and navigating pathways to meaningful employment (Presidency, 2023). The NPMN provides a framework informed by a holistic approach to facilitate access to resources and opportunities that are designed to meet the needs of young people in South Africa and confront the underlying issues contributing to youth unemployment. Designed to mobilise employers and accelerate the creation of new opportunities, aggregate employment opportunities, reduce employment barriers, support young people to grow their skills and employability and generate data to guide future support, the NPMN seeks to offer young people structured opportunities, from career counselling, to skills training, to job placement and post-employment support. An intention of the NPMN is that the various platforms forming the network are interoperable, meaning that accessing one platform will show all the opportunities that are available across all the various platforms.

Institutionally, the NPMN is overseen by a Coordinating Committee, chaired by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), with Secretariat support from a National Pathway Manager. A Steering Committee chaired by the DEL has a governance and oversight role and a Technical Committee with diverse membership from government, the private sector and non-profit/non-governmental organisations plays a critical role in facilitating collaboration beyond government. Sub-committees are coordinated under the auspices of the Technical Committee to oversee the specialisations of members and partners (NPMN, 2022b, 2023b). The NPMN committee structures foster partnerships among organisations based on formal memoranda of understanding and informal collaboration that promotes engagement, resource sharing and adaptability. This diversity comes with the challenge of differing institutional cultures and priorities. Trust, accountability and effective governance are therefore crucial to ensuring successful collaboration in this initiative.

The NPMN operates through two primary delivery modes: online and onsite. While internet access facilitates online activity in dense urban areas, many rural areas remain underserved, making physical learning centres important. These modalities are intended to be complementary to support the transitions of rural and urban young people from education to employment. Support services such as transport subsidies and employer engagement are crucial for sustaining youth participation in training and job-seeking activities. Initiatives like Youth Explorer and SA Youth.mobi help address accessibility and affordability challenges.

The NPMN is thus seen as a large-scale initiative consisting of interconnected layers including governance networks, online platforms, training facilities, support services, young people, parents and employers. Two main layers that are the focus of this report are: governance and management (Layer 1) and the digital ecosystem (Layer 2). The former ensures efficient coordination, financing and policy implementation, while the latter facilitates online learning, job matching and career support. Through their interaction, these layers are intended to improve access to employment opportunities through digital and online tools that enhance job seekers' progress.

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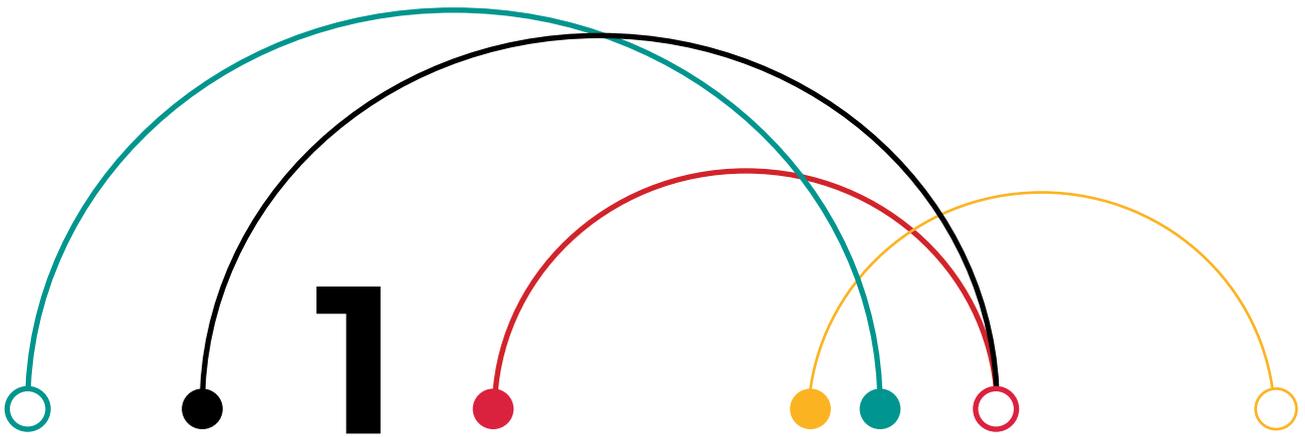
LOCATING THE LITERATUTRE AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

1.1 Purpose of the review

The purpose of this literature and document review is to provide a theoretically informed foundation for understanding the economic and social rationale for the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN) as well as the strategic intentions that informed its design and implementation. The review focuses on the concepts underlying the design of the NPMN and how they informed the NPMN's design in responding to and addressing the problem or challenges identified; in addition, the review offers analysis and insights into the various contexts of implementation that may play a part in advancing or retarding the quality standards, progress and outcomes of the NPMN. The review, conducted as part of a commissioned evaluation of the design and implementation of the NPMN, is presented here as a stand-alone report.

The review engaged with the unemployment of young people in terms of the following conceptual and thematic areas:

- The policy context of young people and unemployment;
- The key demographic dimensions and challenges of the diversity of unemployed young people in the South African labour market;
- The network structure of the NPMN, including partnerships and multi-institutional governance;
- Pathways to support the progression of young people and challenges with pathways;
- Models of management for large scale multi-stakeholder projects; and
- The capacity of the NPMN for upscaling.

1.2 The context of unemployment among young people in South Africa

1.2.1 Generating a profile of unemployed young people in South Africa

The purpose of this section is to present selected information and data that provides a general profile of unemployed young people in South Africa. Key aspects include:

- The steadily rising unemployment rate of young people aged 18-34, which includes some who are already long-term unemployed;

- Higher proportions of young people in the 18-34 age group not in employment, education or training (NEET);

- Low proportions of adults employed in their prime working years compared to in other middle-income countries such as Brazil;

- Higher proportions of females exposed to unemployment;

- Provincial differences in unemployment – spatially uneven distribution of unemployment;

- The diversity and complexity of unemployed young people in terms of their educational backgrounds, ages, length of time unemployed; and

- The diverse needs of the population of young people, which increases the design, delivery and evaluation challenges for interventions such as the NPMN.

1.2.2 The national context

Unemployment among young people is one of the greatest problems facing South Africa, with the highest unemployment rates in the country being recorded for young people aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years, at 60% and 40% respectively (Stats SA, 2025b). Of the 10.3 million young South Africans aged 15-24, only 2.7 million (25%) were in the labour force in 2024, with the remaining inactive and out of the labour force (Stats SA, 2025b). De Lannoy et al. (2020) found that in 2020, about 3.7 million (37%) young people were not in employment, education or training (NEET), and the persistence of high unemployment rates among young people, despite investments into a plethora of active labour market policies (ALMPs) supported by the public and private sectors, depicted a complex challenge (De Lannoy et al., 2020). A synthesis of evidence on the causes of the problem pointed to supply-side challenges dominating the discourse as against the demand-side challenges (De Lannoy et al., 2020).

Lack of information is evidenced as one of the factors contributing to the high unemployment rate among young people in South Africa, with young people often unable to succeed in finding a job. Mseleku (2022) recognised skills mismatch, lack of job search and interview skills, lack of experience and limited demand in the labour market as contributing to unemployment, as identified by graduates.

In 2013, Azeng and Yogo asserted that unemployment among young people has negative effects on a country's economic growth and development, social mobility, income levels and political stability, accentuating socioeconomic inequalities. Considering that the South African census conducted

in 2022 found that young people constituted almost a third (17.84 million) of the South African population (Stats SA, 2023) and that, as reported in the last quarter of 2024 (Stats SA, 2025b), more than four in every ten young people were NEET, the need for addressing unemployment among young people in South Africa need not be emphasised more.

1.2.3   Features of youth unemployment

The central problem that the NPMN addresses is high unemployment in South Africa across a wide age range of the population but particularly as it affects young people as a demographic category. The underlying economic conditions that generate such high unemployment among young people include global economic trends and capital flows influenced by national economic and sectoral development policies, while nationally, skills mismatch, low productivity of the formal workforce and the sizable informal sector are further contributors.

The figure below shows that unemployment among young people, defined here as the broader population of those aged 18-34 years, has remained at a consistently high level over the past decade (Harambee, 2023). Since 2021, unemployment among young people has come close to breaching the 50% level, meaning that nearly half of all young people were unemployed over the three-year period from 2021 to 2023.

Figure 1: Unemployment rates of young people ages 18-34 years, 2008-2023.
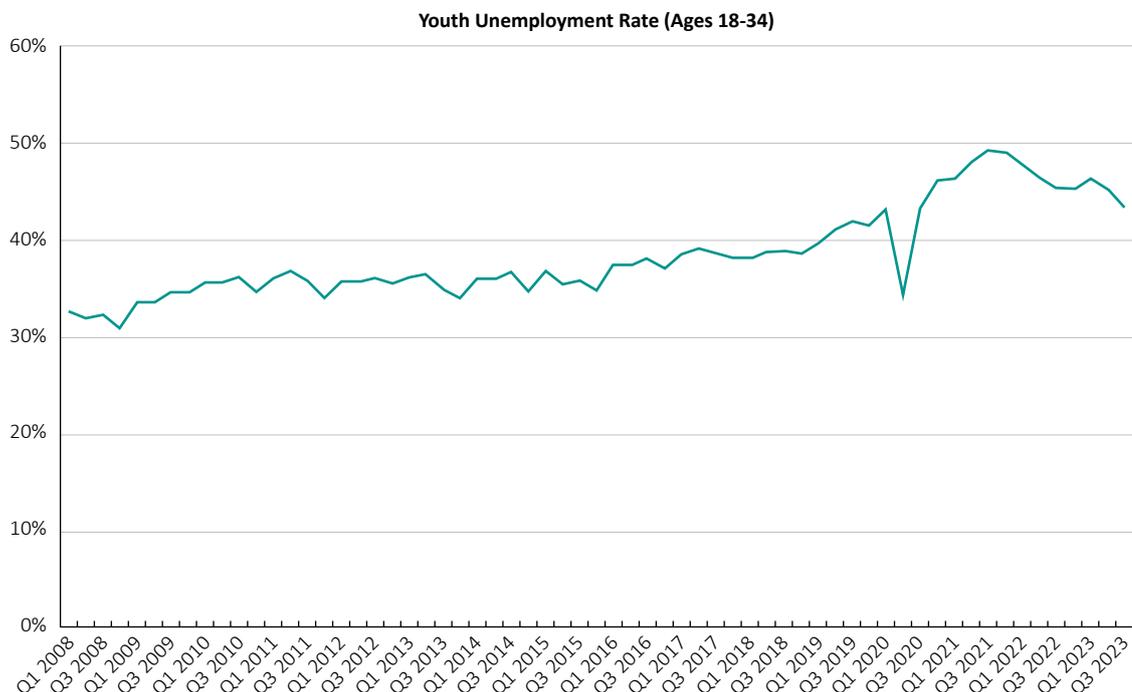
Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2008-2023, cited in Harambee, 2023

The next figure refers to the younger cohort of young people aged between 15-24 years (Statista, 2025). This group has a higher unemployment trajectory than the overall category of young people that extends from 18-34 years described in the figure above.

Figure 2: Unemployment rate of young people (aged 15-24 years) in South Africa, 2004-2023.

South Africa: Youth unemployment rate from 2004 to 2023
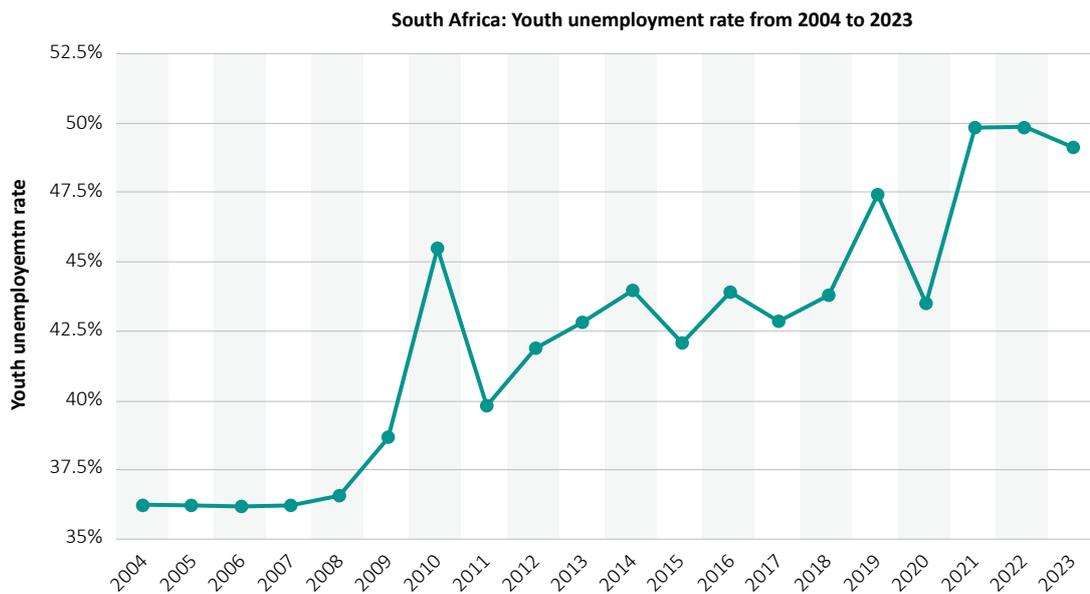
Source: Statista, 2025

Another measure of marginalisation refers to NEETs: young people who are not only unemployed but are also not engaging in some form of learning or skills development that could improve their chances of becoming employed. Figure 3 shows how the NEET rate increases in the wider age group (15-34 years) and is lower for the younger age group, which implies that the incidence of NEET status increases with age,[1] posing a significant challenge. In 2024, of the 10.3 million young people aged 15-24 years, 34% or 3.45 million were NEET (Stats SA, 2025b). The size of this group represents a substantial challenge for generating services to meet their needs.

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1   In South Africa, compulsory education ends at age 15, though many young people remain in the basic education system for longer and complete school at an older age, which may partially influence the lower proportion of young people aged 15-24 who are NEET.

Figure 3: NEET rate increases in the wider age group (15-34 years).
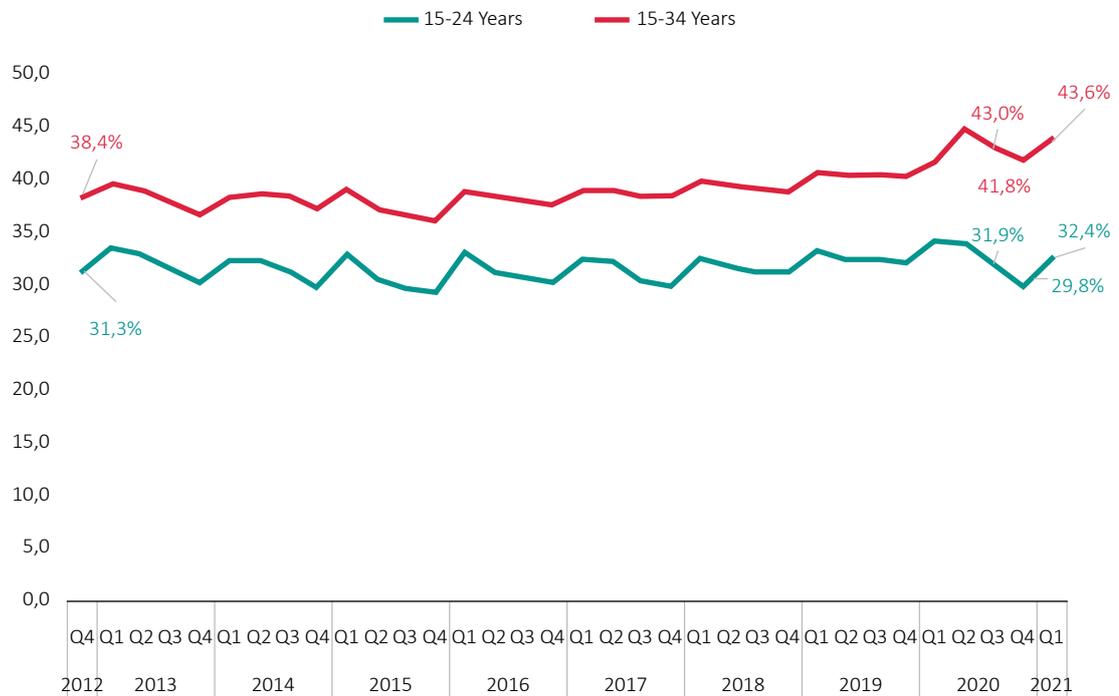
Source: Stats SA, 2025b

The relationship between age and access to employment in South Africa has a particular shape, reflected in Figure 4 below (OECD, 2022, 12). This figure presents the employment profile for Brazil as a comparator middle-income country, which, like South Africa, has a high Gini coefficient, reflecting high income inequality between rich and poor. The figure includes the average employment distribution of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) group of high-income countries. It reveals how employment as a proportion of the population by age reaches its peak of approximately 55% of adults by the time they are aged 40-44 years. In the cases of Brazil and the OECD, the majority of about 68% and 76% of adults respectively are employed by the age of 30. In South Africa, unemployment is protracted over a longer period, with much lower proportions becoming employed. The peak employment period is later, flatter and shorter in duration. Opportunities for South African households to accumulate wealth are restricted in comparison with Brazil, for instance, where peak employment is achieved earlier and the benefits extend over a longer period of time for a larger majority of the population. This picture reveals how the challenge of unemployed young people needs to be addressed as soon as possible as there are long term consequences for their ability to benefit the sustainability and flourishing of their households.

Figure 4: Average employment by age in Brazil, OECD countries and South Africa.
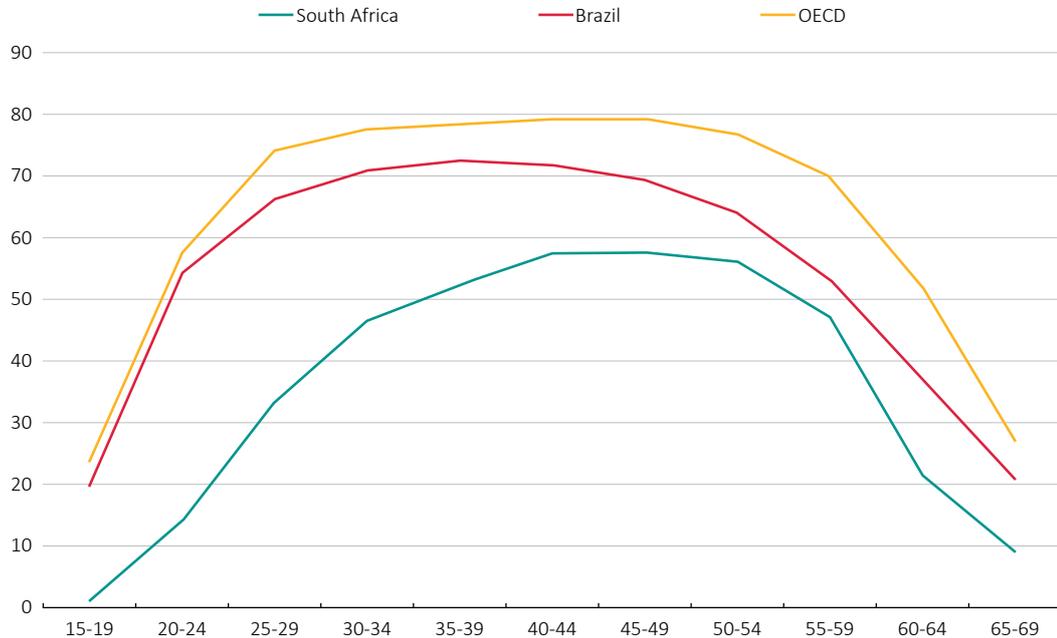
Source: OECD, 2022, 12

1.2.4 Factors impacting the distribution of the unemployment of young people: gender and spatial dimensions

Numerous factors have an impact on unemployment and thus on the unemployment of young people. Two factors are selected here as they are quite influential in the planning and implementation of programmes aiming to improve employment opportunities.

Gender

The first factor is gender, where females and males differ in their exposure to unemployment. To begin with, female young people are marginalised as a result of the gendered roles they are expected to assume in the social and household domains and in the workplace, which places limitations on their access to skills development and opportunities to qualify for higher skills occupations. Figure 5 below (Harambee, 2021) reveals how males have better access to labour markets and employment chances than females, and that this differential is remarkably consistent over time, even when there is a substantial decline in overall employment.

Figure 5: Changes in employment of youth in South Africa by gender, 2010 to 2021.
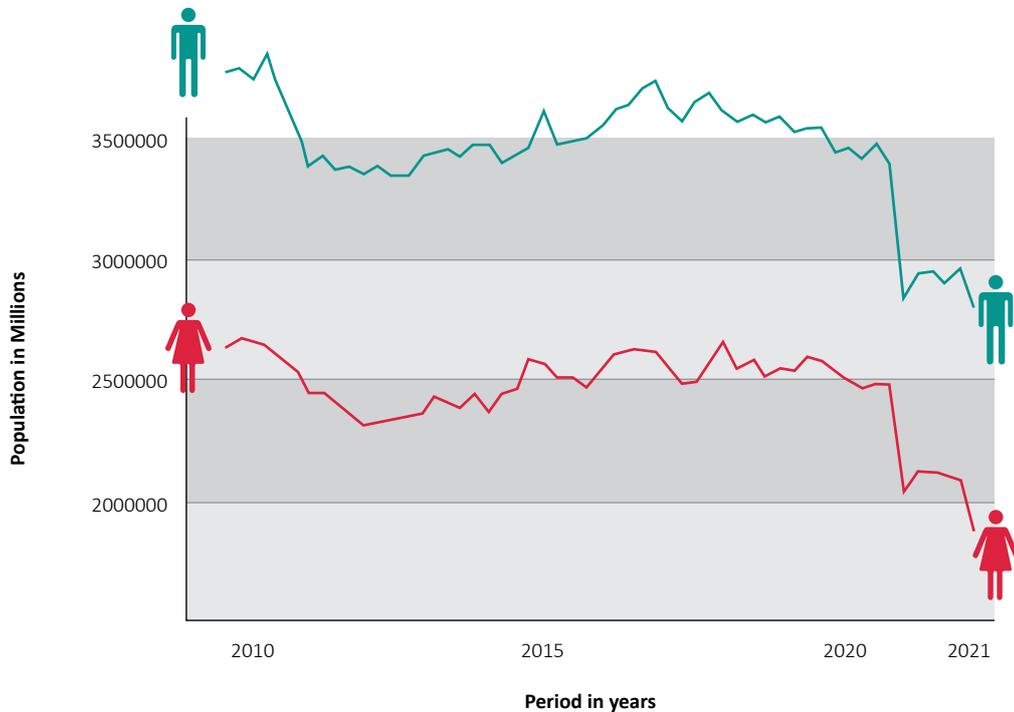
Source: Harambee, 2021

Loewald et al., (2021), who explored the differences between provincial labour markets in South Africa, drew attention to differences in women's access to provincial labour markets: in Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape, Free State and North West Provinces, women's shares of the market were found to be markedly lower than that of males; in Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Western Cape, the balance was closest to equity (Loewald et al., 2021, 12).

Spatial dimension

The second factor is locality, where rural young people are marginalised through limited access to education and training opportunities where they live, and where their households may not be able to afford the costs of searching for employment in distant cities with larger labour markets offering work opportunities.

The figure below reflects the different overall unemployment levels between South Africa's provinces. These substantial differences give cause for migration, and the high unemployment rate in Gauteng probably reflects this. However, migration towards cities with bigger labour markets to find employment is dampened by financial constraints. Loewald et al. (2021, 9-12) argued further that interprovincial labour mobility is hampered by housing deficiencies in destination cities as well as by high transport costs between the province of residence and other provinces. Locality can thus influence the impact of skills development projects, where young people graduating from programmes experience difficulty with the financial cost of moving to secure a distant job offer or to be closer to work opportunities.

Figure 6: Differences in overall unemployment in South African provinces between 2007 and 2018.
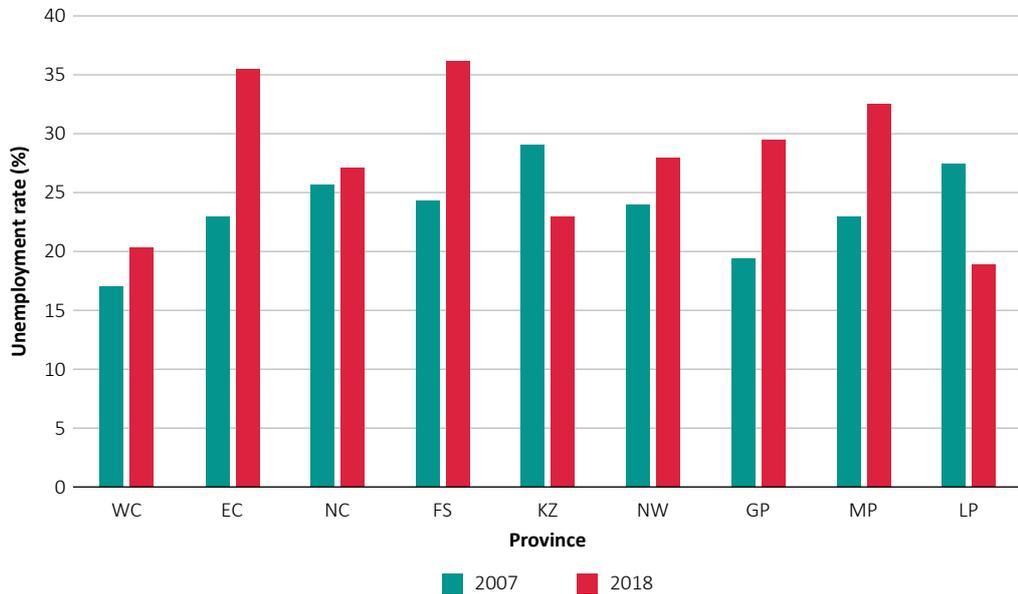
Note: WC: Western Cape; EC: Eastern Cape; NC: Northern Cape; FS: Free State; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; GP: Gauteng; MP: Mpuma;anga; LP: Limpopo

Source: Loewald et al., 2021, 10

1.2.5 The diversity of the population of unemployed young people and their needs

Practitioners in youth development and the skilling and work-based exposure of young people and who support young people with job search and job application processes and securing decent employment are aware of the diversity of backgrounds, experience and maturation levels among young people. For example, the figure below breaks down age and experiential differences between young people in different age bands ranging from 16-34 years entering the labour market from public and private education institutions in 2021.[2]

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2   Note: The numbers in the figure are intended to be illustrative of the proportion of student cohorts by age and labour market activity. The data is drawn from different datasets from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as well as Statistics South Africa's (Stas SA's) Quarterly Labour Force Survey and cannot be directly compared.

Figure 7: School leavers, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates and higher education and training (HET) graduates as new entrants in the labour market in 2021.
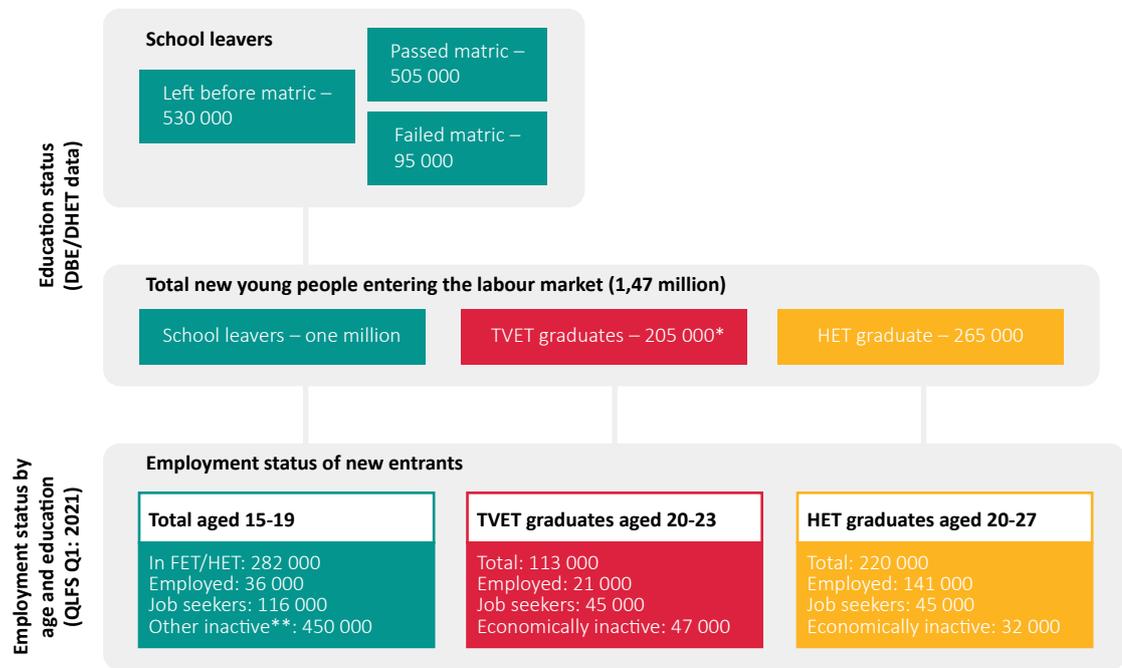
*DHET counts N3, N6 and NC(V); QLFS data only for post secondary **Not in education or employment

Source: Presidency, 2023, 4

In addition, the population of young people includes those who may already have experienced longer term unemployment, either continuously or episodically, and could be disengaged from active work or work-seeking.

The nature and complexity of the population of unemployed young people and their needs gives rise to unique dimensions that should inform the design and implementation of initiatives such as the NPMN.

1.3 Locating the NPMN in the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative

The Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) was established to support sustainable livelihoods for young people by linking them to opportunities, transitioning them from 'learning to earning' and enabling them to chart a pathway to meaningful employment (Presidency, 2023). The PYEI aims to bring together, coordinate, enhance and scale-up existing initiatives through partnerships spanning government departments and non-government partners (business, academia, civil society and youth organisations). Implementation is guided by five core principles:

1. Build on existing policies, plans and agreements and address policy gaps;
2. Driven by the Presidency to ensure accountability;
3. Establish partnerships and break down silos between government departments, levels of government, and government and other sectors;
4. Design for and be responsive to the needs and concerns of young people; and
5. Address supply- AND demand-side employment constraints by maximising the allocation of resources. (Dicks, 2020).

The PYEI is described by Dicks (2020) as being 'the largest and most comprehensive plan to address youth unemployment in South Africa's democratic history' and conceived of as comprising five priority actions over five years (2021-2026), the first of which was building an NPMN for work seekers. The PYEI has three additional complementary components, which are: 2) local ecosystem enablement; 3) demand-led skilling; and 4) a revitalised national youth service. The NPMN is given prominence in the PYEI on account of its potential supporting role in relation to the other PYEI components. There are five priority sectors identified as having employment potential, as indicated in the visualisation below:

At the time of its establishment, the PYEI aimed to achieve three key outcomes within five years:

1. 5 million young work-seekers aged 15-35 engage in the NPMN and access services which enhance employability and enable them to identify and pursue work opportunities;
2. 1.5 million temporary, paid work opportunities created (1 million work-based placements, 250 000 work-integrated learning opportunities and 250 000 service opportunities); and
3. 500 000 young people engaged in sustainable work opportunities through workforce development programmes (Dicks, 2020).

Emphasised as a guiding principle to ensure accountability and oversight, the PYEI is driven by the Presidency (Dicks, 2020). A project management office (PMO) was established in the Presidency for this purpose, and a working group – comprising representatives from government, the private sector, social partners and young people – was established to develop workplans for the various PYEI components (Dicks, 2020).

Figure 8: Visualisation of the PYEI.
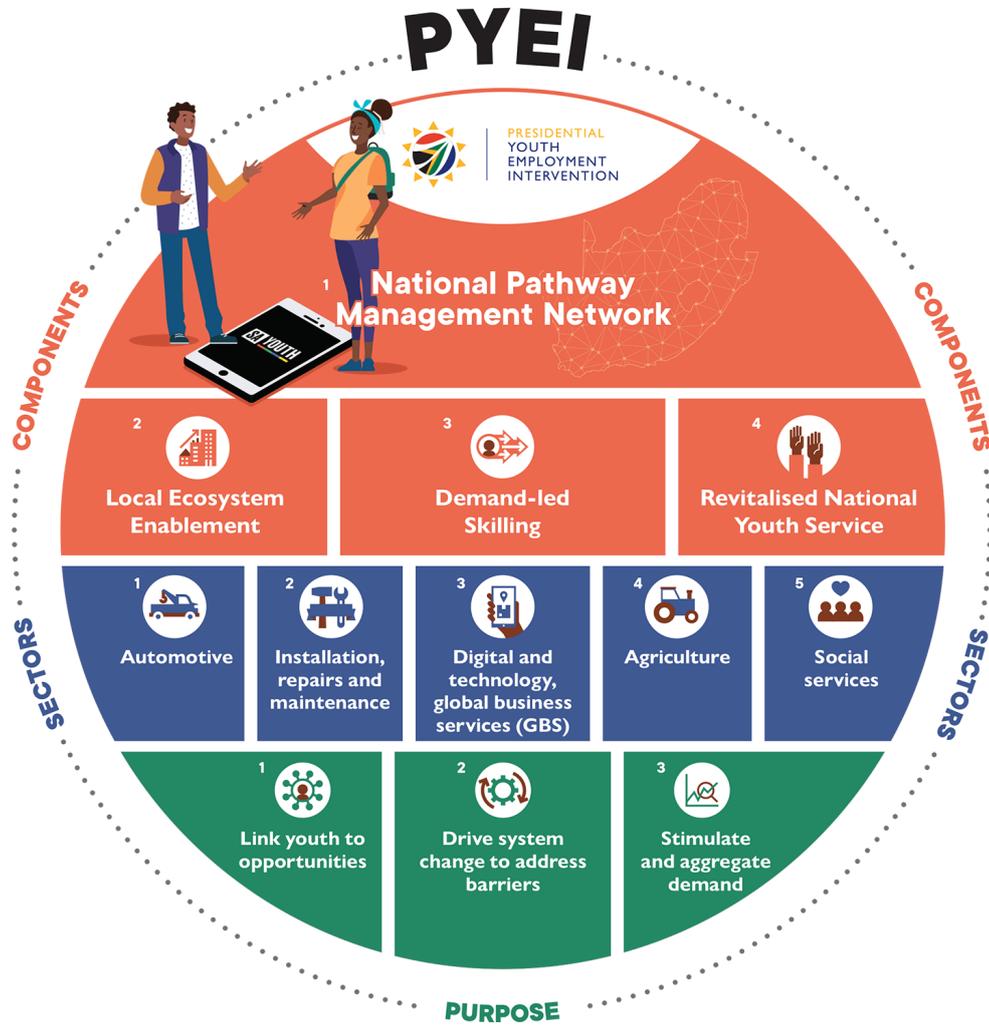
Source: Presidency, 2023, 11

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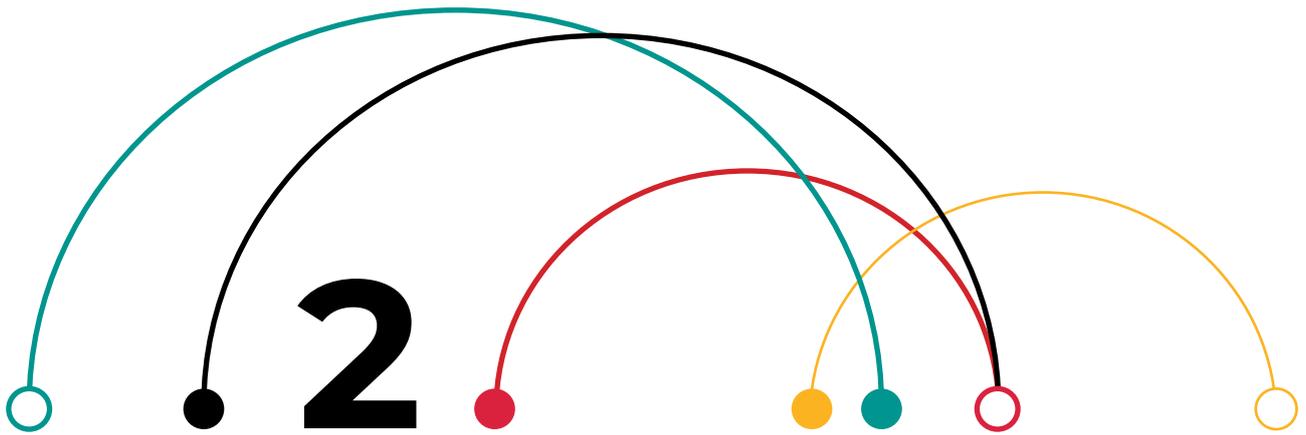
THE NATIONAL PATHWAY MANAGEMENT NETWORK

2.1 About the NPMN

The NPMN is a core component of the PYEI. It has been conceived as a network of networks, connecting NPMN partner networks into a national network that connects young people to opportunities (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2025). The NPMN is visualised below:

On the demand side, the NPMN seeks to mobilise employment providers across the employment sector from both public and private entities to 'catalyse, aggregate and facilitate' the assimilation of the labour force into the economy (PYEI, 2023b, 13). On the work seekers front, the NPMN provides pathways for income-generating and self-employment opportunities. Through these activities, the NPMN aims to reduce the barriers to employment opportunities that young people may experience, including the cost of seeking employment (PYEI, 2023b). The NPMN also aims to create new opportunities by building public-private partnerships and identifying and implementing interventions that can absorb new employment seekers at scale (PYEI, 2023a, 4).

Figure 9: Visualisation of the NPMN.
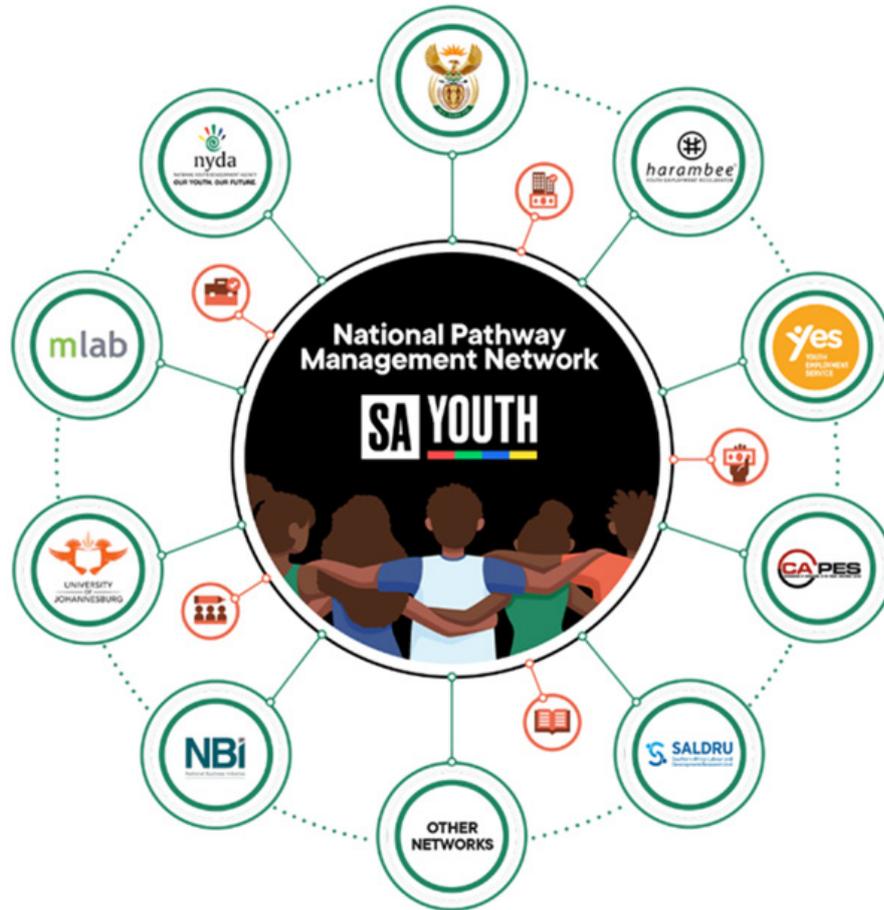
Source: RSA, 2025

The specific **objectives** of the NPMN (PYEI, 2023a, 4-5) are to:

- **Accelerate the creation of new opportunities for young people** by: (i) identifying and implementing interventions to unlock growth opportunities that will absorb new entrants at scale (e.g., in the care and social economy and agricultural as well as digital and technology sectors); (ii) developing public and private sector partnerships for joint planning and delivery; and (iii) changing policy, regulations and incentives to improve labour absorption by the private sector.

- **Aggregate the supply of and demand for learning and earning opportunities for young people into one central place.** The NPMN aims to consolidate existing opportunities into one place and become the go-to platform for both young people and opportunity holders. To this end, the NPMN aims to work towards making existing platforms interoperable.

- **Address barriers young people experience when looking for opportunities**. Such barriers include high data costs, lack of access to personalised counselling, qualifications that are not aligned to market needs, and insufficient information about available support services and resources.
- **Support young people to grow their skills and employability.** The aim is to enable young people to access a wide range of relevant employment services and learning opportunities through the NPMN, allowing them to embark on a long-term growth path towards goals that align with their preferences and strengths.
- **Generate data to guide future support.** The NPMN aims to provides nuanced information on the skills held by young people who develop their profiles on the network and how the skills they have compare to what employers are looking for. This information could help service providers to adapt their training offerings and develop tailored bridging interventions.

An additional objective noted in the terms of reference drafted for the commissioned evaluation is to ensure that the various platforms that form the NPMN are interoperable, meaning that accessing one platform will show all the opportunities that are available across all the various platforms (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ], 2023).

2.1.1 The policy context

Labour market and employment conditions after 1994 are unfortunately sustained by structural features of the economy which reproduce disadvantages that were introduced and reinforced by the apartheid and earlier regimes. A feature of the current environment is that demographic growth in the labour force has outpaced job creation in the economy. The situation led to this important statement by President Ramaphosa in his 2019 State of the Nation Address (SONA):

> *The fact that the unemployment rate among young South Africans is more than 50% is a national crisis that demands urgent, innovative and coordinated solutions…. It is therefore essential that we… implement a comprehensive plan… to create no fewer than two million jobs for young people within the next decade. (RSA, 2019)*

The statement accords strongly with the aspirations stated in the National Development Plan (NDP) (Presidency, 2012) and provides an aspirational vision of South Africa in 2030, emphasising that unemployment among young people should be reduced by employing them in productive activities, together with providing them with 'broader opportunities' (Presidency, 2012, 26, 98). The injunctions of the NDP are supported by the Youth Employment Accord (Economic Development Department [EDD], 2013), the National Youth Policy 2020–2030 (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities [DWYPD], 2021) and the Integrated Youth Development Strategy 2022–2025 (National Youth Development Agency [NYDA], 2022), which put forward priority interventions to meet the challenge of unemployment among young people.

The importance of the PYEI's NPMN intervention to empower youth was emphasised by the CEO of the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator:

With economic growth expected to expand by a mere 0.3% in 2023, the formal economy cannot generate jobs at a pace sufficient to absorb the countless young people excluded from economic participation. That's why we must empower young people to grow their employability, be productively engaged and sustainably earn income through various opportunities. (Soni, 2023)

2.2 Institutional arrangements

The PYEI and its components, including the NPMN, are governed through a set of committees as presented in the figure below. NPMN structures are surrounded by a heavy border, organisations that are key role players are indicated with blue blocks, and other organisations are indicated by white blocks. The various platforms which constitute the NPMN are indicated with teal blocks, with dotted lines connecting them to relevant data platforms and applications.

Figure 10: Institutional arrangements of the NPMN
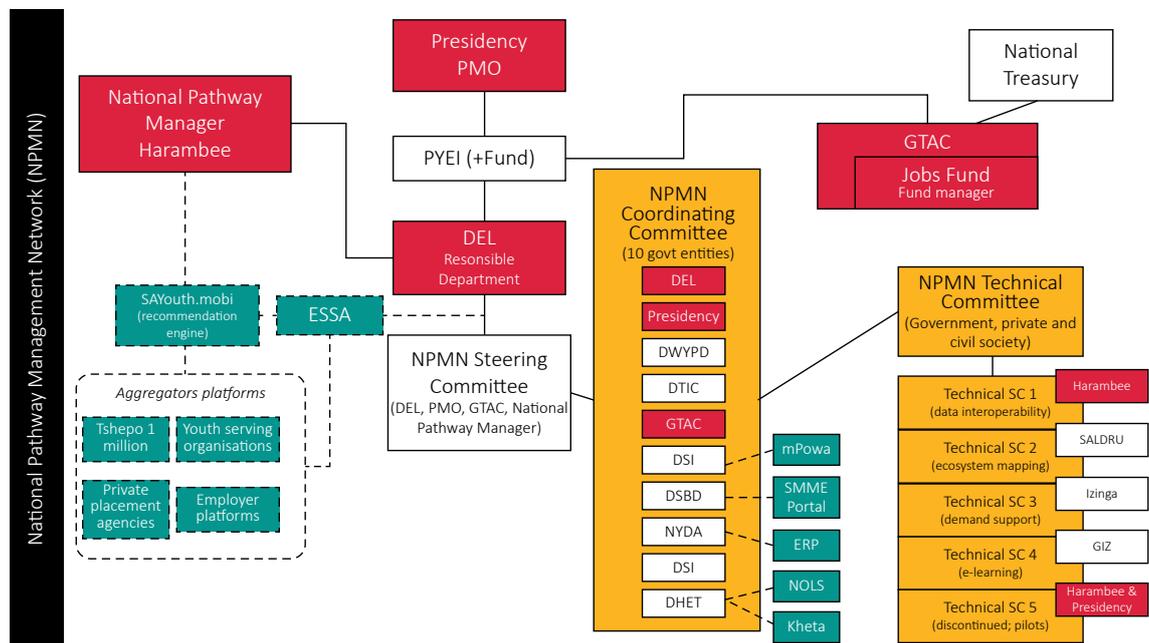
A memorandum of agreement signed by key government departments and the NYDA on 15 March 2021 established the basis for cooperation via a **Coordinating Committee** which is chaired by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), the lead implementation partner of the NPMN, with Secretariat support from a National Pathway Manager. Other key government departments with relevant mandates are members, that is, The Presidency, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), the DHET, DWYPD, as well as the NYDA. It is envisaged that other relevant government departments and organisations with an interest from other sectors will be invited to join the Coordinating Committee over time (NPMN, 2023a). The purpose of the NPMN Coordinating Committee is to provide oversight and strategic direction to the NPMN (NPMN, 2022).

A Steering Committee, which is not indicated in the Figure above, has been established for the NPMN. It is chaired by the DEL and comprises representatives from the PMO in the Presidency, the DEL, the General Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) and the National Pathway Manager. The Steering Committee meets quarterly and reports to the Coordinating Committee (NPMN, 2022b).

The NPMN **Technical Committee** is the only standing committee of the NPMN Coordinating Committee (NPMN, 2023b). It is chaired by the DEL and has diverse membership from government, the private sector and NPOs/NGOs and, as such, plays a critical role in facilitating collaboration beyond government (NPMN, 2023b).

There are four **sub-committees** coordinated under the auspices of the Technical Committee to oversee the specialisations of members and partners (NPMN, 2022b, 2023b). The current technical sub-committees are:

- **Technical Sub-committee 1 (Data Interoperability)** works towards matching young people (especially NEETs) to earning and learning opportunities.

- **Technical Sub-committee 2 (Ecosystem Mapping)** activities include building and updating mapping of the ecosystem vis-a-vis the mapping of services, events and organisations that are actively engaged with young people in communities.

- **Technical Sub-committee 3 (Demand Support)** aims to aggregate and stimulate demand in the five priority sectors identified by the PYEI and to provide skilling interventions. The sub-committee looks at the skills needed for young people to be absorbed into employment.

- **Technical Sub-committee 4 (E-learning tools)** aims to build a repository of e-learning resources and make them accessible to young people. The committee is also tasked with identifying gaps in and developing e-learning resources for skills development.

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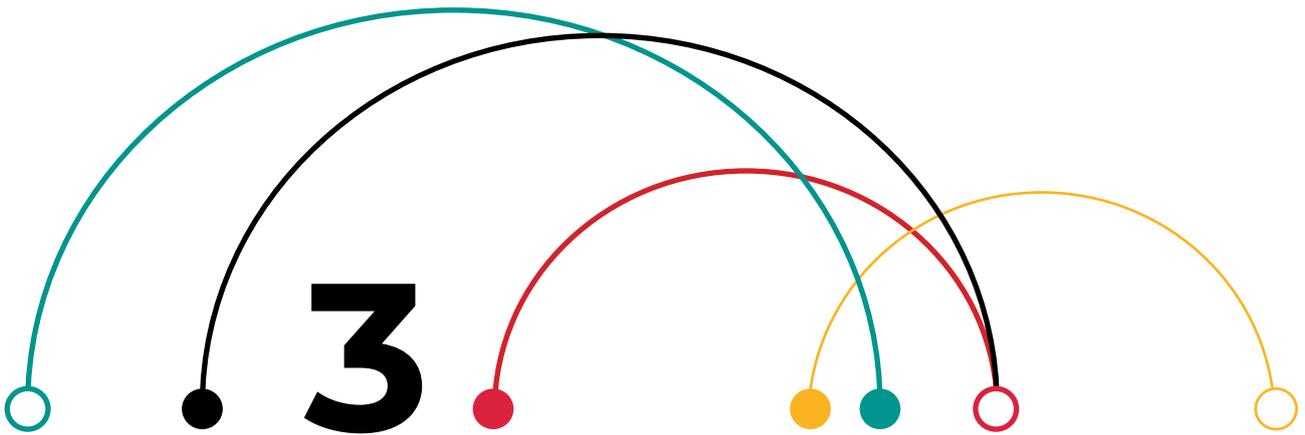
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF NETWORKS

3.1 Network capacity assessment

Most large-scale projects operate within structured frameworks such as the Logical Framework, Results-Based Management, Project Cycle Management, Theory of Change, and Participatory Planning. These methodologies enable clearly defined evaluation through structured methods and applications. On the other hand, multi-stakeholder governance systems (MSGSs) such as the NPMN are complex and known for their 'network diversity', 'fuzzy boundaries', 'adaptiveness', 'rules and behaviour' and 'collective results' (Haarich, 2018a). These governance systems are inherently complex, characterised by a multiplicity of partnerships, networks and stakeholders involving multiple actors (Hertting & Vedung, 2012). Haarich (2016) observed that MSGSs were being increasingly created to address complex multinational crises such as climate change and regional innovation systems for social change.

Multi-stakeholder engagement processes involve networks, governance, institutions and systems working as a collective (Glasbergen & Van der Veen, 1995). Evaluation of MSGSs is therefore best addressed from the perspective of complexity (Walton, 2016). The governance capacity assessment tool (GOCAPASS) was developed by Haarich (2018a) to support the analysis and improvement of the networking and governance capacities of such systems as part of an on-going learning process. It is useful to visualise and communicate the results of the assessment in order to raise awareness within the system and as a necessary condition to build up new capacities.

GOCAPASS makes capacity development much more evidence-based. The tool can be used as a means to develop more focused capacity development programmes or to design action plans or pilot projects to improve specific aspects of governance, for example, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, and cooperation in implementation. The use of GOCAPASS itself can be part of a strategic reflection or awareness-raising processes on the benefits of cooperation. Furthermore, GOCAPASS can help to overcome hurdles in operational implementation and in day-to-day business processes (Thorpe et al., 2022).

The GOCAPASS instrument is structured according to four key domains: 'policy capacity'; 'managerial capacity'; 'networking and cooperation capacity'; and 'enabling environment and governance levers', which are, in turn, disaggregated into several factors which are typically assessed via research criteria which can be customised for a particular sector (Haarich, 2016, 2018b).

Table 1: Adapted GOCAPASS dimensions and factors of governance performance

Governance Capacity Dimension	GOCAPASS Functional Capacity Factors
D1 Policy Capacity	1.1 Analysis for decision-making
	1.2 Translate needs into action
	1.3 Responsibilities and mandates
	1.4 Vision and goal setting
	1.5 Priority-setting
D2 Managerial Capacity	2.1 Capacity to budget
	2.2 Adequate implementation support
	2.3 Implementation resources
	2.4 Monitoring and control
	2.5 Stakeholder engagement
D3 Networking and Cooperation Capacity	3.1 Trust as precondition
	3.2 Exchange of information
	3.3 Communication flows
	3.4 Knowledge management
	3.5 Active cooperation and implementation
	3.6 Data
D4 Enabling Environment and Governance Levers	4.1 Leadership
	4.2 Mutual support (within the system)
	4.3 Learning facilities in the system
	4.4 Openness and adaptability (learning from others)
	4.5 Commitment from the environment
	4.6 Balanced representation

Given the importance of data and interoperability to the NPMN, data is considered an important additional factor to be considered under the 'networking and cooperation' domain in the GOCAPASS framework. A further gap identified in the GOCAPASS framework in relation to the NPMN is the factor of 'balanced representation', where the public-private partnership model should also include representation of the citizen (as the main beneficiary) and of civil society (to build trust in the NPMN). Civil society representation should not be assumed based on whether an entity is registered as an NGO/NPO but should rather be based on the function of the entity in supporting the career development of citizens. Balanced representation in the case of the NPMN could take the form of a citizen-civil–public-private partnership to ensure all core stakeholders are involved in learning and development (West & Beukes, 2021). Balanced representation is considered an important factor in the enabling environment and governance domain. The table above illustrates the adapted GOCAPASS framework with these two additional factors.

When utilising the GOCAPASS, data should be gathered to identify evidence for the Structure, Content, and Process grid for each of the functional factors (see Annexure A). Data is collected through documentary review, interviews, surveys, etc. After that, the development level of each functional factor is rated according to its level of fulfilment. A priori, the proposed rating method for new governance systems is a 1-3 rating scale (1 for non-existent, 2 for partially initiated and 3 for well-developed). In completed form, with the data coded and entered, the GOCAPASS can generate a useful dashboard that reflects progress according to the dimensions (see Annexure B). This structured approach creates the opportunity for repeated measures over time.

3.2 Application of network capacity assessment measures

Network capacity assessments (NCAs) can vary depending on the purpose of the owner, funder or user and the network to be assessed. From an information and communication technology perspective, an NCA could emphasise technical network capacity or emphasise the user service perspective.

Table 2: Relevant themes for inclusion in a network capacity assessment

Theme	Description
Governance	Governance structures and network leadership
Partnerships	Partnerships and collaboration of network members
Resources	Mobilise, allocate and utilise resources
User needs and satisfaction	• Awareness of user needs and service delivery including user surveys • Quality of service delivery and user satisfaction. • Online means of assisting users to improve their levels
Personnel capacity building	Capacity building programmes of network operators
Monitoring and evaluation	Track performance, outcomes, impact of network activity
Technology infrastructure	Capacity, reliability of network technology and infrastructure

Sources: Alghamdi et al, 2011; CroNGO (n.d.); Gasco-Hernandez, et al. (2022); Matli and Ngoepe (2020)

In a network with the core purpose of delivering a service online to unemployed youth, an emphasis would likely be on the needs of users. Clearly, an NCA in the case of the NPMN would need to balance both service and technical aspects while also considering the broader governance dimension as discussed above. The table above provides an overview of the various themes that might be relevant to an assessment that covers both technical and service aspects. These items or a selection of these could be applied in a qualitative or quantitative format.

3.3 Interoperability

The NPMN ecosystem comprises multiple organisations that have a common mandate, as prescribed by the PYEI. An objective of the NPMN is to 'ensure that the various platforms that form the NPMN are interoperable, meaning, accessing one platform will show all the opportunities that are available across all the various platforms' (GIZ, 2023, 4).

Considering that the NPMN network is large and has high database and transaction volumes within and between platforms and other network infrastructure, it may be assumed that if scale-up of the PYEI and NPMN are successful, greater demand on the system would follow. The NPMN ecosystem therefore requires an efficient interoperability model in order to streamline communication amongst the various entities within the network. Pardo and Tayi (2007) emphasised that the enhancement of interoperability models among public and private organisations respectively is of critical importance to ensure the development of e-government value models.

Kutvonene (2005) defined interoperability as:

> ...[the] effective capability of mutual communication of information, proposals and commitments, requests and results.

Khisro and Sundberg (2020, 1176) defined enterprise interoperability as:

> ...the ability of two or more enterprises to communicate and interact effectively with the external systems that they utilize to collaborate seamlessly, over a sustained period of time to achieve specific objectives. The interaction takes place at different levels; at organizational, application, and data levels.

An enterprise interoperability framework, a tool introduced by Chen and Daclin in 2006 (Chen & Daclin, 2006) and elaborated on in Daclin et al. (2008), Daclin et al. (2016) and Guédria et al. (2015) is used to evaluate challenges that pertain to enterprise interoperability and is deemed to be well-suited for evaluating a network such as the NPMN.

The above-mentioned interoperability framework was used in the restructuring of the Danish electricity market from a monolith to a multi-enterprise network of service providers (Khisro & Sundberg, 2020) and in the formation of the Public Administration Interoperability Capability Model to establish a government information technology agency with the intent of identifying various barriers and concerns that affect organisational performance.

The framework provides a layered view of the potential of interoperability (Almeida Prado Cestari et al., 2020) using three dimensions, as depicted in the image below: interoperability barriers; interoperability concerns; and interoperability approaches.

Figure 11: Three Interoperability Dimensions.
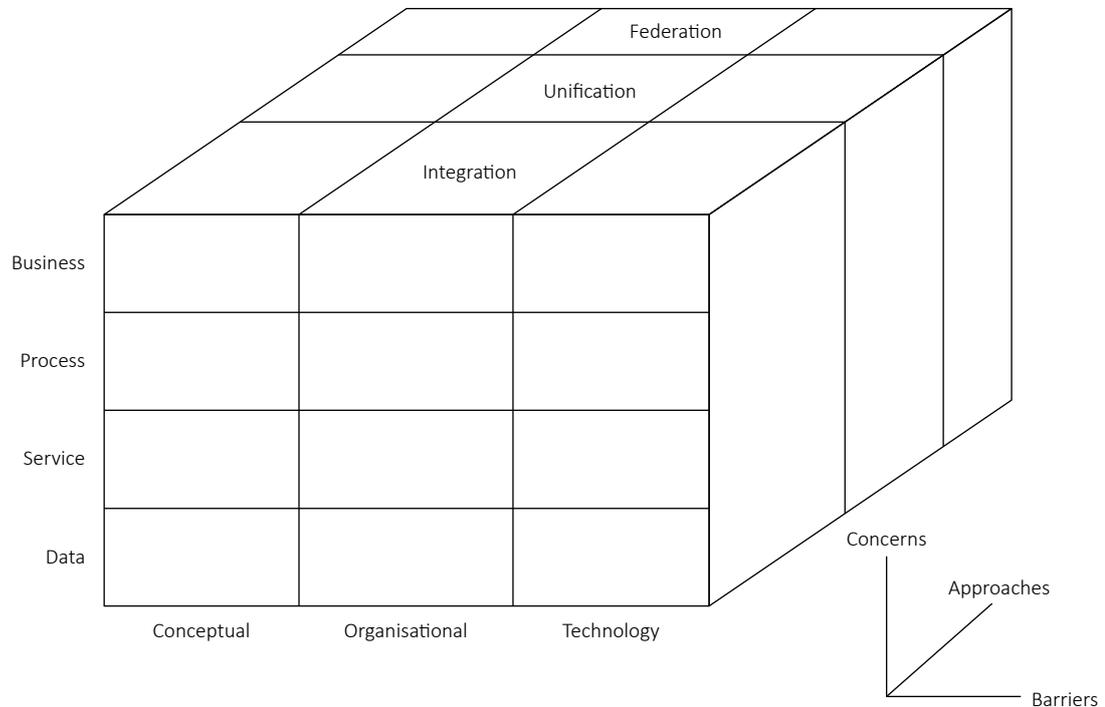
Source: Daclin et al., 2016, 13

The following textual outline of the three dimensions depicted in the figure above is drawn from Khisro and Sundberg (2020).

Interoperability barriers:

- Conceptual barriers: depicts issues around syntax and semantics in the exchanged information.
- Organisational barriers: depicts issues about the responsibilities and authority within an entity.
- Technological barriers: highlights issues about information communication and technology within an environment.

Interoperability concerns:

- Data concerns;
- Service concerns;
- Process concerns;
- Business concerns.

Interoperability approaches:

- Integration approach: there is a common format for all models.
- Unification approach: has a common format but only at a meta-level.
- Federation approach: has no common format.

From the above dimensions, critical success factors can be extracted and applied in the assessment of the interoperability of a large-scale project or MSGS such as the NPMN.

4
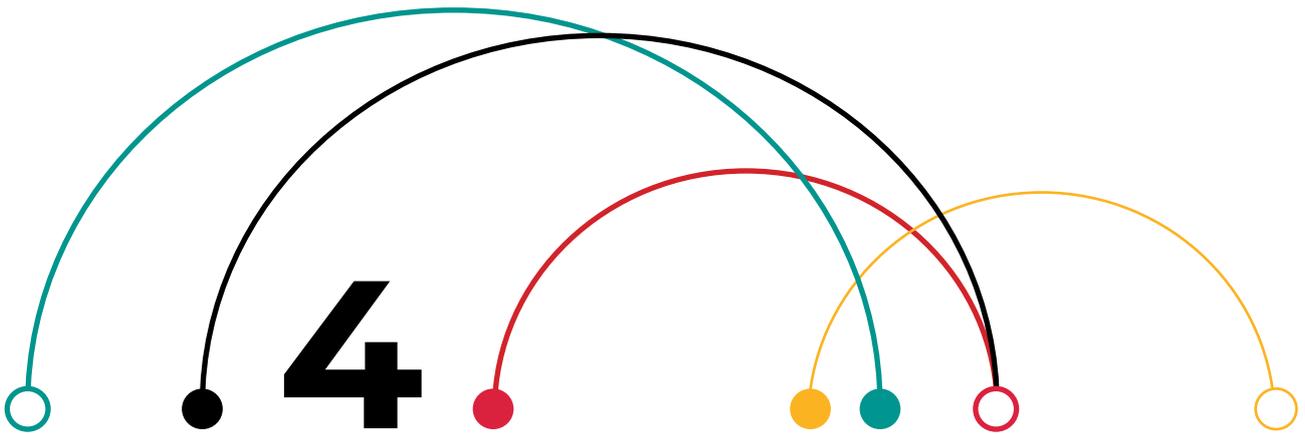
LEARNINGS FROM THE LITERATURE AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

This literature and document review showed that the NPMN is, by its designated purpose and organisational shape, a large undertaking involving numerous layers of partners and stakeholders spread nationwide. The NPMN is coordinated by government with multiple partners (Raeymaeckers et al., 2020) through multi-organisation governance (Tosun, 2017). The NPMN's purpose is to spearhead and broaden access to learning opportunities, employment and employment pathways online that, together with physical access to workplace experience and face-to-face support services, aim to counter the country's wicked challenge of high youth unemployment.

The behaviour of networks and people is governed through formal and informal rules of behaviour. Such networks may have numerous dimensions or layers according to which they can be analysed, and the network identity and dynamics of the NPMN are important to acknowledge at the outset. Disciplines that include networks in their sphere of activities and that are applicable to understanding the NPMN include:

- Computer science and communications;

- Organisational and management theory;

- Sociological explorations of how human systems such as whole societies consist of smaller social networks and other organisations like governments have smaller components in their hierarchy;

- Economics research focused on the interconnectedness of business systems in layers and value chains such as supply and distribution systems, members of value chains and networks of enterprises in industrial sectors or clusters; and

- Internet introduced analysis of online networks and social media platforms from local to global with the promise of access to social goods like education and training.

These disciplines have brought forward complex systems theory towards understanding the interconnected nature of systems and societies and the natural world (Ahuja et al., 2012; Borgatti & Foster, 2003).

Network layers constituting the NPMN

It is acknowledged in the network evaluation field that the 'critical first step is … to open the black box of networks to define the components to be assessed' (Tebbe, 2023). The NPMN as a system includes relationships between a set of participants of different kinds and with different functions and roles. It is necessary to devise a means of representing the interactions between participants with reference to their direction, strength and purpose. This may be useful for understanding the dynamics and quality of interactions between the NPMN partners and stakeholders.

The NPMN consists of links between networked organisations referred to as partners (e.g., public or private organisations or jointly constituted bodies such as government committees) and people (e.g., individual students who have personal social networks and links to online social media networks). In practice, the NPMN consists of several levels of interlinked networks. Network levels of the NPMN are connected horizontally with each other and interconnected vertically with other network layers that, in combination, can perform the functions that the NPMN is designed to achieve (Park & Lim, 2018; Provan & Milward, 2001). Each of these is identified below:

- **Network of organisations** – government entities and partners engaged primarily in governance, management and implementation of the NPMN programme involving NPO/NGO or for-profit organisations. The latter's participation in the NPMN committee structures is undertaken free of charge.

- **Network of a variety of online resources** – related to supporting unemployed young people on the path towards employment. Online resources include platforms with multiple service offerings and other sites offering more specific support. This set of entities with a presence on the Internet of Things can also be called a 'network of networks', depending on the interoperability achieved between sites offering services.

- **Population of government and private entities** – organisations that supply services, such as the DEL which operates the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) skills matching resource, the DSBD that supports entrepreneurship, as well as NPOs that manage platforms servicing the needs of young people.

- **Population of young people** – unemployed and employed. The status of young people changes between these categories and 'discouraged youth.' Young people interact within and between social networks which are constituted by young people differing in age, gender, household income, education and training background, work experience, urban-rural location, access to mobile-phones and the internet and other relevant personal characteristics.

- **Population of parents, guardians, family and other members of households and social networks** – involved in the personal development, outlook, preparation, financial support of young people before and during their engagement in the labour market. Parents and members of the community who are employed form part of networks of referral that can feed into employer recruitment.

- **Varied population of employers and their networks** – the categories of employers may include formal or informal employers and differ in terms of size, industry, emphasis on price or on quality of goods/services offered, occupational structure, propensity to train employees, and propensity to offer work exposure. Employers will have formal and informal networks of referral for recruitment.

The following table shows the participation layers of the NPMN. Layer 1 refers to where governance and management of the NPMN takes place through a network of diverse organisations described in Section 2 *and* to the implementation of physical or onsite services to young people. Layer 2 may be referred to as the 'digital ecosystem' of the NPNM, which consists of many interconnected sites and platforms, tools and resources to serve the multi-faceted needs of young people who are unemployed in furthering their progress towards finding and securing fairly contracted, decent forms of employment and working conditions. The services offered include information about jobs, links to employers, career advice, how to write a CV/job application, online job-employer matching and other relevant services.

Table 3: Participation layers of the NPMN

	Participation layers	Description	Participants
1	NPMN governance network	Committee structures, financing	Government & partner participation
2a	Online networked resources	Delivering information, training, job search resources	Private, NPO & government-owned platforms and databases
2b	Onsite physical resources	Training facilities, job search resources, face-to-face services	As above
3	Support services (related to supporting access)	Related to social grants, public works programmes, transportation subsidy, childcare, households and individuals	Private, NPO & government providers, community
4	Unemployed young people in programmes	Also unemployed NEET young people not in programmes	As above
5	Parents, guardians	Communities	Including discouraged young people, adults unemployed, informal support
6	Employers	Employment of different quality (permanent, contracted, part -time, casual)	Formal and informal

The framework presented here provides a means of focusing on the NPMN design and activities incorporated to ensure coherent evaluation that can contribute positively to the development of the NPMN.

4.2 Partnerships in the NPMN committee structures

There is a diversity of organisational types represented in the membership structure of NPMN committees (as specified by the NPMN founding documents). Organisations operate as partners on the basis of a formal memorandum of understanding, and it is likely that most organisations in the NPMN also collaborate and share resources on an informal basis. These structures have been discussed earlier in this report. The impact of a partnership-based intervention depends uniquely on the specific project, the resources available, the teams and goals (Nwauche, 2022).

For example, from the literature, it is evident that members in a partnership environment from different institutional backgrounds may bring about positive experiences and advantages where the mixed group achieves broader engagement and knowledge exchange, introduces innovation, increases group adaptability and adds to the resource pool. At the same time, the relationship may not be smooth sailing due to differences between cultures in public agencies and private firms (Boyne, 2002).

In some instances, there may be competing interests or communication challenges or a need to build up trust. Members might need to be open to differences in identifying problems and setting goals, in approaching community and stakeholder engagement, in decision-making processes or understandings of accountability, or in how to measure success/achievement.

Investigation in this domain is fundamentally important to understand how governance functions in a network. This facet also brings to the fore the importance of accountability in network relationships, the capacity of network agents and, especially, of trust (Willem, 2010) to collaborate in ways that further the network's aims.

4.3 Coordination of two modes of delivery: online and onsite

The discussion has drawn attention to how, within the structure of the NPMN intervention, there are two central modes of operation or delivery of services: programmes that are delivered online and programmes delivered onsite or face-to-face.

One can visualise a map of the country with two layers: one shows areas of the country serviced by the internet, in which vast areas are covered by the current network but there are also areas still un-serviced by internet coverage (e.g., mountainous or sparsely populated areas in which transmission masts are economically unviable). At the same time, the second layer of the network, which has a much smaller coverage, comprises physical centres with offices where training of unemployed youth and job matching can be done. Some mainly urban centres have access to both layers but this is not necessarily so for townships, informal settlements and rural areas where physical learning centres are sparse. Inclusion in the coverage of one, both or neither layer depends also on the distribution of young people in different parts of the country, particularly in rural areas. Each mode of delivery has boundaries: physical reach in the case of onsite support for young people or remote access to electricity networks and internet services in the case of the online network.

On the assumption that the two layers need to work in combination, a consideration is also how well the systems interact to enable young people to move between physical and online services to make the most of the opportunities in each mode and to enable progression through the learning

experiences towards the goal of fair, salaried employment. The ideal situation would be where young people have access to both modalities which reinforce each other to optimise their opportunities to develop.

4.4 Youth pathways in the NPMN

In South Africa and elsewhere, young people are more vulnerable to unemployment and job loss than adults. As individuals, they can be exposed to movement between multiple work statuses such as studying, being in part-time or temporary employment, unemployment, skills training or survivalist self-employment, working for family members, or managing several part-time jobs at once in either the formal or the informal sector. Frequent changes of status and the short time-duration of each experience generate limited opportunity to consolidate a skills set or occupational direction. Many of the employment opportunities taken are likely to be in low-skills work. Frequent transitions and discontinuous activities can contribute to an increased risk of similar experiences in the future (Bradley & Devadason, 2008).

To mitigate this situation, the concept of a pathway is embedded within the NPMN rationale. The aim of the NPNM is expressed in the documentation as 'transitioning young people from learning to earning' (PYEI, 2023a). Possible activities involved in this process are summarised for illustration in the rubric below, which could be used to map the contribution of the online and onsite programmes of the NPMN.

This table is developed according to a sequence of steps that a young unemployed person may pursue to raise the probability that they would achieve formal decent employment. To optimise the journey of a young person who is a school leaver to gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes (as needed), the young person might seek to complete some or all of the phases or activities 1 to 11 given below. The table provides a template to inform selection of evidence for gathering respondents' experiences or views about how young people navigate these steps, in whatever order. The table could be used to assess where respondents perceive gaps in provision and also to what extent the phases could be best served through the online, onsite or both modalities.

The table considers that movements between unemployment and employment or vice-versa can be involuntary and recursive, which is why steps 12 and 13 reflect follow-up processes to help young people retain support should they become unemployed again. In this regard, a young person observed 'we've learned that there's no straight line from learning to lifelong earning anymore, young people today are far more likely to zigzag in and out of a series of short-term jobs and hustles' (Harambee, n.d.).

Due to resource limitations or household poverty, many young people may not have acquired much social capital in the form of 'labour market literacy' as they may not necessarily have attended school for a long enough period or have been exposed to supportive discussions in the household about working life to have engaged meaningfully in activities 2-4 in the table. The processes would also require government provision of quality schooling as well as the presence of structures to uphold compulsory schooling as a right of children and young people.

Table 4: NPMN provision and coordination of online and onsite opportunities for unemployed youth[3]

Phases		Activity	Online	Onsite
Contact and interaction	**1.**	Recruitment through job fairs, career expos, community outreach events and online. Develop peer support programmes and groups.		
Exposure to labour market literacy[3]	**2.**	Employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management to improve readiness for the labour market.		
	3.	Career counselling and guidance to help young people explore career options, set short- and medium-term goals to make grounded and informed decisions about work.		
	4.	Access to information and resources on job opportunities, training programmes, educational scholarships and support services.		
Skills training	**5.**	Technical and vocational training to equip with specific technical skills relevant trades or skills in local demand.		
	6.	Entrepreneurship education or training to start their own business with support in market research, planning, financial management and, if available, access to start-up resources.		
	7.	Digital skills introduction/training in computer skills and digital literacy in basic computer skills, productivity skills, internet usage, digital communication and applications.		
Job search support	**8.**	Internship programmes or work exposure for hands-on work experience or on-the-job training opportunities with employers.		
	9.	Job search skills offering assistance with CV writing, job search strategies, interview preparation, networking.		
	10.	Job placement services to connect unemployed young people with job opportunities (formal and informal sector).		
Support services	**11.**	Support with transportation subsidy/plan, childcare and other support to households and individuals		
Follow-up & sustainability	**12.**	Follow-up support and post-employment services to address challenges and provide ongoing assistance with transition into employment. Ongoing career advancement advice skills upgrading, referrals.		
Re-entry	**13.**	Interview to establish progress and needs and direction to opportunity.		

Further areas for possible support: financial literacy and savings programmes; soft skills development programmes; counselling services, mentorship programmes, legal aid, and employment/workplace rights; healthcare services.

Source: Author's own tabulation drawing from sources Bejaković & Mrnjavac (2020); Betcherman et al. (2007); Paterson et al., (2021)

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3   Note: 'Labour market literacy' refers to information received through interactions with any of the following sources of support: the household and family, school, peers, mentors, community members, public information sources, online information sources (Higgins et al., 2010).

The approach outlined above may be used to enquire on an indicative basis about the alignment of services and support offered through a programme in a given area. For instance, in the case of the NPMN, the network capacity assessment could assess whether a relevant mix of services – face-to-face or online – is available to young people.

4.5 Support services

Support services – not specific to skills development and training – have a critical role in securing young people's involvement and regular commitment to complete programmes, as reflected in the literature on the desirability of well-coordinated programmes (Saltkjel et al., 2023). Moreover, securing the involvement of local role-players, especially employers, and including local government, is seen as an advantage (Spierings, 2001). There have also been studies that reflect on the inclusion challenges experienced in securing participation across all categories of young people (Roberts, 2011).

Due mainly to the immediate pressure of ensuring household income sustainability, the majority of young people are focused on: (a) identifying work opportunities; (b) seeking opportunities to meet employers; and (c) securing an employment contract. This cycle can become a trap. The pressure of job-search is also financial through loss of earnings from foregone work opportunities and travel and communication costs. In these scenarios, support services become essential help towards opening up pathways for unemployed young people.

An example of support services projects in the NPMN is 'Youth Explorer´, in development by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) (SALDRU, 2021), which enables mapping establishments in the formal sector to depict the location of employers with labour demand or support resources. Also, Harambee has leveraged close working relationships with employers to 'manage transport costs' of recently employed young people (Harambee, n.d.).

4.6 Common knowledge conceptions of labour market pathways

A labour market 'pathway' is a prominent feature of the conceptual framework informing practitioners, policy makers and analysts in the labour market field. It is important for researchers and evaluators to be aware of 'common knowledge' perspectives about labour markets and how they work. Common knowledge is usually received without being adequately interrogated and then inserted into the discourse about how labour markets work.

It is important to be aware that how participants such as young people and parents or guardians understand and refer to a 'pathway' can inform their decisions and behaviours. In summary, these assumptions imply that the path from schooling to employment requires simple decisions within the power of parents and young people to make, according to which large cohorts of learners follow similar paths into immediate employment.

Some assumptions that are present in discourses about the employment of young people are unpacked below.

- One variation of pathways thinking assumes *that individuals (such as young people) have greater agency and resources* to make and act on decisions than may be the case. Powerful features of the environment such as social and household conditions, community disadvantage or rurality as well as lack of access to financial support or labour market structures that limit young people's agency can frustrate or deflect their intentions and ambitions (Evans & Furlong, 2019).

- Another variation of pathways thinking assumes a predictable *path that extends with linear simplicity* from completing schooling into post-school education and training and then unproblematically into employment. This path is more familiar and better worn in middle-class communities in middle- and high- income countries (Ranasinghe et al., 2019), whereas the experience of most young people is of irregular, sometimes recursive movements resulting in multiple transitions, discontinuity and frustration.

- A third perception of how the pathways for young people work assumes great homogeneity in pathways that involve large cohorts of young people moving together through the same processes and experiences. Yet research and data on the post-school education systems reveal that pathways for young people are highly diverse across community, school and labour market conditions and for different individuals (Davis et al., 2019).

- A fourth way in which pathways can be viewed is characterised by *the assumption that initial job placement is the most important.* While obtaining access to work is certainly critically important for young people, the uncertainty of occupational demand and supply due to technology change and other factors makes every job or employment change equally important. This is why unemployed young people should be supported as far as possible through receiving training with a coherent occupational or skills direction according to a working life-cycle perspective (Vaccaro et al., 2022) rather than ad-hoc, repetitive or unrelated training elements that may not provide a coherent skills orientation to build on.

At the same time, it is important to emphasise the value of developing coordinated pathways (Saltkjel, et al., 2023) that are appropriately targeted, for instance, towards females (Mashiri et al., 2010).

4.7 Engaging with employers in data gathering

Employers play a fundamentally important role in the accessibility of labour markets through individual and collective decisions as to who, why, how, when and with what work conditions, contracts and benefits individuals are employed. A strong feature of government policy in high- and middle-income countries is to implement ALMPs that are intended, through various methods and interventions, to target and enable unemployed people for support. The NPMN as implemented in South Africa incorporates features of a sophisticated ALMP that operates alongside the country's highly developed Social Grant system.

In Europe, there is growing interest in how employers respond to ALMPs but apparently limited evidence about why or how employers engage with them. A recent study has explored the behavioural preferences of employers towards ALMPs, identifying four types of employer: committed, dismissive, sceptical or passive. This typology may provide some value if included as an item in specified instruments (Bredgaard, 2018).

4.8 Reflections on the NPMN

Evidence available indicates that the NPMN has grown substantially in partnerships and in the numbers of young people actively participating. These indicators of increased scale are encouraging and also present challenges which may be explored through primary data collection.

Maintaining form and focus for impact: With a growing and diverse partner base and also numbers of young people participating in programmes, a risk of diluting the network's focus and impact may emerge. To maintain awareness regarding the network's mission, goals and outcomes, it may be important to assess how committees secure the buy-in and participation of committee members regarding commitment to delegated responsibilities that impact on progress, the participant experience and meeting participants' needs.

Scaling and sustainability of NPMN processes and services: The NPMN needs to be prepared to scale its services (and underlying resource requirements) to cater for the apparent growing demand from unemployed young people. This will likely require additional funds, inclusion of occupations in demand in the network offerings, and expansion of institutions, infrastructure and capacity so that size increases do not detract from quality and sustainability. It will be vital to carefully investigate the dimensions in which expansion can take place, including targeting of communities of young people (including selection criteria). Expansion requirements will differ between the online and onsite modalities. However, bringing new communities of young people online may require them to be provided with onsite services.

Integrating the online network into a virtual one-stop-shop: The value of online networks is that scaling-up is supported by network infrastructures at a much lower cost than physical facilities. This requires increased capability to deliver data across the expanding network to enable seamless transactions over the network such as querying data, interacting with website features and engaging with others online. These factors are important for creating a 'one-stop-shop' user experience. In turn, facilities need to be integrated into an interoperable systems environment which is the foundation of systems functionality and user satisfaction. The aim of creating a one-stop-shop across the network that includes several platforms that had previously operated independently of each other emphasises the need to scrutinise content to ensure alignment and quality across the system.

4.9 Conclusion

This literature and document review set out to contextualise the NPMN within an existing knowledge base. It described the background to and context of the unemployment challenge in South Africa and its pernicious effects for and on young people. The PYEI and the NPMN, which were created and conceptualised to respond to this challenge, were described, including the nature, structure and components of the NPMN. The review presented a theoretically informed foundation towards understanding the economic and social rationale for the NPMN and the strategic intentions which informed its design and implementation processes. Further, the review presented analysis and insights into the various contexts of implementation that may play a part in advancing or retarding quality standards and the implementation progress and outcomes of programmes such as the NPMN.

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Annexure A:
GOCAPASS Scorecard Diagnostic Tool

GOA - Governance Assessment Tool	GOA Government Assessment Scorecard - Diagnostic Tool		
D1	**D1 - Capacities for Political Decision-Making**		
ID	*Functions*	**Structure**	**Content**	**Process**
1.1	**Analysis for Decision-Making**	Structures and bodies in charge of analytical work to support decision-making on objectives / implementation?	Documents and reports that reproduce the outcomes of analysis for decision-making on objectives / implementation?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate that there is analytical work that supports decision-making?
1.2	**Translation of needs into action**	Structures and bodies that translate (transnational) needs into objectives / action?	Documents and reports that reflect how the analysis of needs links to decision-making on objectives / action?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate that analytical work is fed into decision-making?
1.3	**Responsibilities**	Structures and bodies are clearly defined with regard to their responsibilities?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reflect how responsibilities are distributed and what they imply?	Procedures and protocols are in place to support the assigned responsibilities and related processes?
1.4	**Vision- and Goal-setting**	Structures and bodies in place to create common visions for the future and link them to operational goals and actions?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reproduce the common visions and operational goals of the system?	Procedures and protocols are in place to build and update common visions and goals for the system?
1.5	**Priority-setting**	Structures and bodies in place to prioritise goals and actions according to objective criteria?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reproduce the priorities and decisions to prioritise actions and goals?	Procedures and protocols are in place to take decisions on priorities and to find objective criteria to prioritise ?
1.6	**Reflection and Feedback**	Structures and bodies in place to reflect on achievements and performance and to feed reflections into decision-making?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reproduce reflections on achievements and performance?	Procedures and protocols are in place to support evaluation, reflection, and feedback into decision-making?

D2	**D2 - Capacities for Implementation**		
ID	*Functions*	**Structure**	**Content**	**Process**
2.1	**Connection to budgeting**	Structures and bodies in charge of implementation and budgeting are connected?	Documents and reports that reflect the decisions on budgeting (earmarking) in line with objectives / implementation?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate connecting decision-making with budgeting and earmarking?
2.2	**Availability of resources (human, technical, financial)**	Structures and bodies that make resources available, raise funds and spread the knowledge about it?	Documents and reports that contain information on available resources or commitments to make them available?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate that resources are made available and that knowledge about it is spread?
2.3	**Organising implementation**	Structures and bodies that organise implementation or support implementation?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that state how implementation is organised or supported?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate the implementation and the support to the implementing actors?
2.4	**Monitoring and control mechanisms**	Structures and bodies that are in charge of monitoring and control of projects and implementation?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that inform about the implementation progress (monitoring)?	Procedures, indicators and protocols that facilitate the monitoring and control of projects and implementation?
2.5	**Engagement of stakeholders**	Structures and bodies that are in charge of engaging other stakeholders in implementation?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that inform about the engagement of other stakeholders (who, how, why)?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate the engagement of other stakeholders (local, private, other countries)?

D3	**D3 - Capacities for Cooperation**		
ID	*Functions*	**Structure**	**Content**	**Process**
3.1	**Coordination of decisions**	Structures and bodies in charge of coordinating decision-making are in place at the different levels?	Documents and reports that reflect the coordination of decisions (processes, outcomes)?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate the process of coordinated decision-making at the different levels?
3.2	**Communication**	Structures that facilitate internal and external communication between stakeholders are in place?	Documents and reports that reflect the conditions for communication and communication outcomes?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate internal and external communication between stakeholders are in place?
3.3	**Information exchange**	Structures and bodies that facilitate the exchange of relevant information at the different levels are in place?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reflect the exchange of information at the different levels?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate the process of information exchange at the different levels are in place?
3.4	**Knowledge Management (KM)**	Structures and bodies in charge of organising and managing the shared information are in place?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reproduce and inform about the knowledge management?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate knowledge management at the different levels are in place?
3.5	**Active cooperation in policy-making and implementation**	Structures and bodies in charge of active cooperation (joint implementation) in policy-making and projects?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that inform about active cooperation (joint implementation) in policy-making and projects?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate active cooperation (joint implementation) in policy-making and projects?

D4	**D4 - Enabling Environment**		
ID	*Functions*	**Structure**	**Content**	**Process**
4.1	**Leadership**	Structures and bodies that support and promote leadership within the macro-regional governance?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reflect the leadership within the governance system?	Procedures and protocols that support and promote leadership within the governance system ?
4.2	**Mutual support (within the system)**	Structures and bodies that facilitate mutual support within the macro-regional governance?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that inform about mutual support within the governance system?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate mutual support within the governance system?
4.3	**Learning facilities in the system**	Structures and bodies that facilitate learning within the macro-regional governance?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reflect learning (processes, results) within the governance system?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate learning and development within the governance system?
4.4	**Openness and adaptability (learning from others)**	Structures and bodies that facilitate openness to the environment and adaptive change as a response to external influences?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that reflect openness to the environment and adaptive change as a response to external influences?	Procedures and protocols that facilitate openness to the environment and adaptive change as a response to external influences?
4.5	**Commitment of the environment**	Structures and bodies that invite/ incentivise external actors to commit to the macro-regional governance?	Documents, reports and knowledge (stories) that report on the commitment of external actors to the macro-regional governance?	Procedures and protocols that invite/incentivise external actors to commit to the macro-regional governance?

Source: Haarich, 2016b, 9

Annexure B:
Gocapass Scorecard Dashboard

GOA - Governance Assessment Tool	GOA Government Assessment Scorecard		
	Strong = Well developed, addressed, documented, defined		
	Weak = partially developed, addressed, documented, defined		
	Not developed= NOT identified or addressed, NOT defined or documented		

	Rating	Not developed = 0 Weak = 1 Strong = 2	Not developed = 0 Weak = 1 Strong = 2	Not developed = 0 Weak = 1 Strong = 2	
	Functions	**Structure**	**Content**	**Process**	*Functional Sub-Score*
1.1	1.1 Analysis for Decision-Making	0	1	1	2
1.2	1.2 Translation of needs into action	1	0	0	1
1.3	1.3 Responsibilities	2	1	1	4
1.4	1.4 Vision- and Goal-setting	2	2	2	6
1.5	1.5 Priority-setting	1	0	1	2
1.6	1.6 Reflection and Feedback	0	0	0	0
D1 Sub-Score	Capacities for Political Decision-Making	6	4	5	15
2.1	2.1 Connect to budgeting	0	0	0	0
2.2	2.2 Availability of resources (human, technical, financial)	1	0	0	1
2.3	2.3 Organising implementation	2	1	1	4
2.4	2.4 Monitoring and control mechanisms	0	0	0	0
2.5	2.5 Engagement of stakeholders	1	0	0	1
D2 Sub-Score	Capacities for Implementation	4	1	1	6
3.1	3.1 Coordination of decisions	2	0	0	2
3.2	3.2 Communication	2	1	1	4
3.3	3.3 Information exchange	2	0	1	3
3.4	3.4 Knowledge Management (KM)	0	0	0	0
3.5	3.5 Active cooperation in policy-making and implementation	1	1	1	3
D3 Sub-Score	Capacities for Cooperation	7	2	3	12
4.1	4.1 Leadership	2	0	1	3
4.2	4.2 Mutual support (within the system)	2	1	1	4
4.3	4.3 Learning facilities in the system	2	1	0	3
4.4	4.4 Openness and adaptability (learning from others)	0	0	0	0
4.5	4.5 Commitment of the environment	1	0	0	1
D4 Sub-Score	Enabling Environment	7	2	2	11
Total-Score	All Dimensions	24	9	11	44

Source: Haarich, 2016, 195