

Chevron SA, Amy Biehl Foundation tackle youth unemployment

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

29 Jun 2016

South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate in the world between the ages of 15 and 24, according to the [World Economic Forum Global Risk 2014 report](#). Statistics South Africa also recently revealed that the general unemployment rate in South Africa reached [26.7 % in the first quarter of 2016](#) from 24.5 % in the previous quarter, making unemployment the highest it has been since September 2005.

With the aim of tackling youth unemployment in South Africa, Chevron SA has revised its current partnership with the Amy Biehl Foundation to invest in its [Entrepreneurial, Enterprise and Vocational Skills Development \(EESD\) programme](#).

We interviewed Shashi Rabbipal, chairperson of Chevron South Africa, to find out more about the EESD programme, its primary goals, and the role of CSI in driving youth development.



Shashi Rabbipal, chairperson of Chevron South Africa

■ Tell us a bit about the EESD programme - what does it entail?

The Entrepreneurial, Enterprise and Vocational Skills Development (EESD) programme is a sustainable and holistic youth development programme, focusing on the attainment of soft skills, vocational skills and experience, thereby ensuring our youth succeed by becoming economically active and contributing to society.

EESD is aimed at school leavers, unemployed youth, as well as past attendees of the Amy Biehl After School Programmes, and is based at Amy Biehl's premises in Sybrand Park, Cape Town. Chevron South Africa recognises that through credible partnerships like the Amy Biehl Foundation, we can offer targeted programmes that focus on youth development, and help build success stories.

■ What are the programme's primary goals?

EESD aims to empower participants with confidence through structured training and hands-on experience, then introducing them to development partners for employment opportunities. Chevron South Africa opted to support the Amy Biehl

Foundation in this initiative because we firmly believe in making a difference in the communities in which we operate – and through this programme, we want to assist the youth to become economically active so that they can contribute to society. The training provided ranges from beauty, hospitality, and soft skills to sewing and fashion design.

■ ***Could you share a notable success story from the programme with us?***

In the programme's first full year of operation, we have seen close to 108 youth find part-time or full-time employment.



L-R Kevin Chaplin (MD of the Amy Biehl Foundation), Lulama (participant), Jill Koopman (Policy, Government and Public Affairs Manager at Chevron South Africa), and Stew (participant)

■ ***Beyond the current partnership with the Amy Biehl Foundation, what is Chevron doing to tackle youth unemployment in SA?***

The high unemployment rate is an obstacle to the socio-economic development of South Africa. With this in mind, Chevron South Africa revised its current partnership with the Amy Biehl Foundation to invest in their EESD programme, with the aim of tackling youth unemployment head on. In addition, according to an independent study conducted by Econex, Chevron South Africa and its network of Caltex service stations sustain 106,670 direct, supplier and contractor jobs in the country, with its refinery contributing 13,500 and the lubricants plant in Durban 609. Chevron South Africa has further recruited 31 black unemployed learners living with disabilities who are currently undergoing skills development programs that will assist in their absorption into the industry. This also supports youth and gender development as the unemployed learners are an average age of 28 years old, with 65% being women.

■ ***What is the role of CSI in driving youth development? Could you elaborate on Chevron's transformation agenda?***

South African youth are faced with a number of social challenges that cannot be addressed by government alone and require collective effort. Corporate social investment is a strategic necessity in order to help plug the socio-economic gaps in communities. Chevron South Africa reaches more than 85 000 people from disadvantaged backgrounds annually through its CSI programmes that are focused towards education, health and enterprise development. These investments are aligned with government priorities and our partnership with the Amy Biehl Foundation through EESD aims to achieve this purpose.

As a proud level-four B-BBEE contributor against the revised B-BBEE Codes of Good Practice, Chevron South Africa has an unwavering commitment to mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships. For instance, we believe that our transformation agenda already reflects our commitment to government's imperative on socio-economic transformation and more specifically, the creation of black industrialists. A mutually beneficial and strategic partnership with key stakeholders is important to Chevron South Africa in delivering competitive results the right way. We recognise that the country needs a reliable and strong refining industry to ensure security of supply and be an enabler of economic transformation in the country.

■ 40 years later, what is the significance of Youth Month in 2016?

In 2016, the youth face different challenges which require interventions from all sectors of society. Young people in South Africa and abroad are faced with poverty and unemployment and in this regard, Chevron South Africa is committed to enhancing its focus on empowering young people and encouraging their participation in the country's socio-economic activities.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

Sindy Peters (@sindy_hullaba_lou) is a group editor at Bizcommunity.com on the Construction & Engineering, Energy & Mining, and Property portals. She can be reached at sindy@bizcommunity.com.

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