

Generating Better Livelihoods And Basic Package of Support for NEET Youth Programmes

A Joint Policy Brief Series

FROM MARGINS TO MAINSTREAM



In-Person Support as a Policy Lever for Livelihood Outcomes



Why this matters?

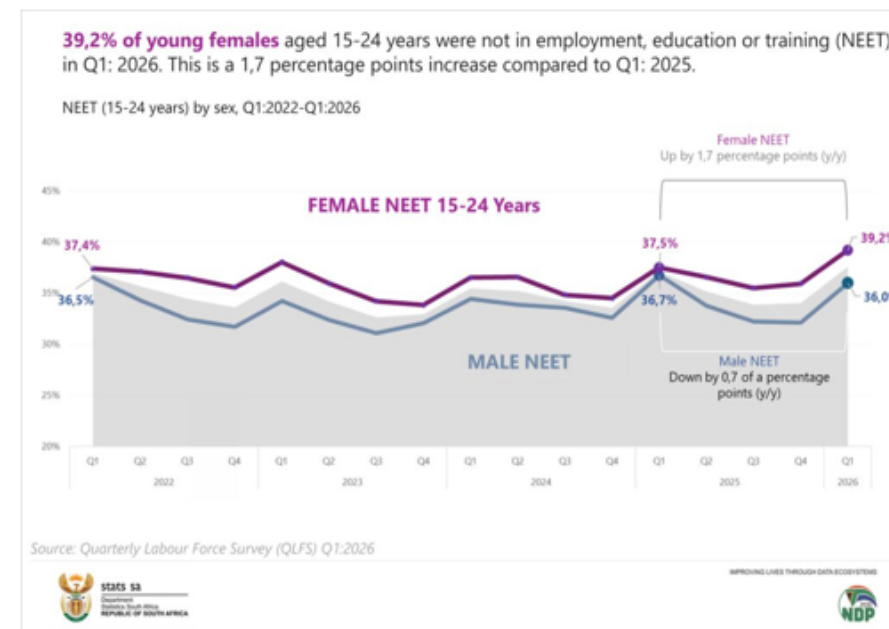
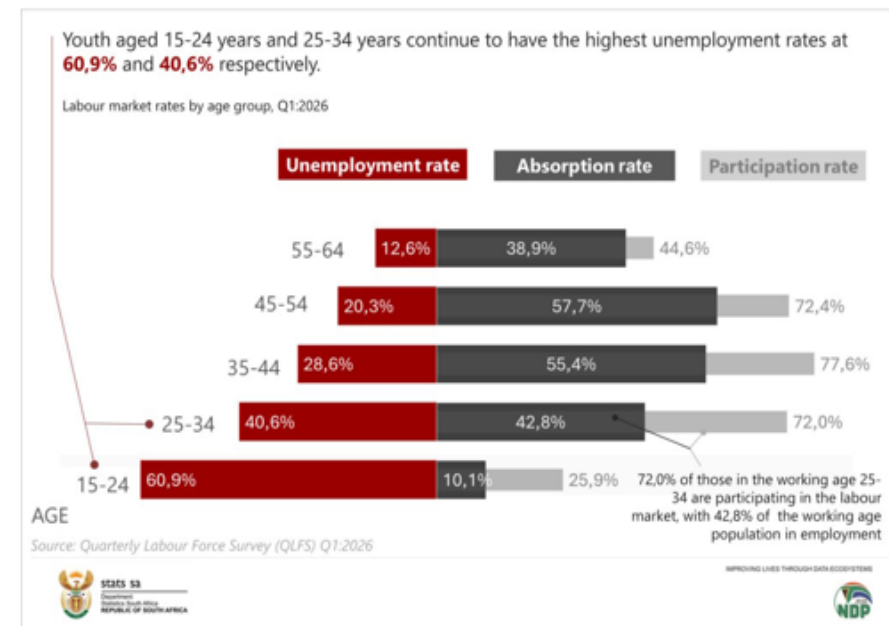
• South Africa's challenge

- Persistent structural unemployment
- High youth unemployment
- Women disproportionately affected
- Extensive social protection system
- Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs)

• Yet many remain excluded

- People furthest from economic opportunity continue to struggle despite the existence of:
- Grants
- Training programmes
- Employment initiatives
- Public services



Key question: Why do opportunities exist, yet many remain unable to access or sustain them





The missing link?

The problem is not only opportunity.

Many people face multiple barriers simultaneously:

-  Poverty
-  Poor mental wellbeing
-  Transport costs
-  Care responsibilities
-  Weak social networks
-  Limited information
-  Difficulty navigating services

RESULT

-  Opportunities exist.
-  Access does not automatically follow.




For too many people, multiple barriers stand in the way of turning opportunities into sustainable livelihood outcomes.



Different Programmes, Shared Lessons

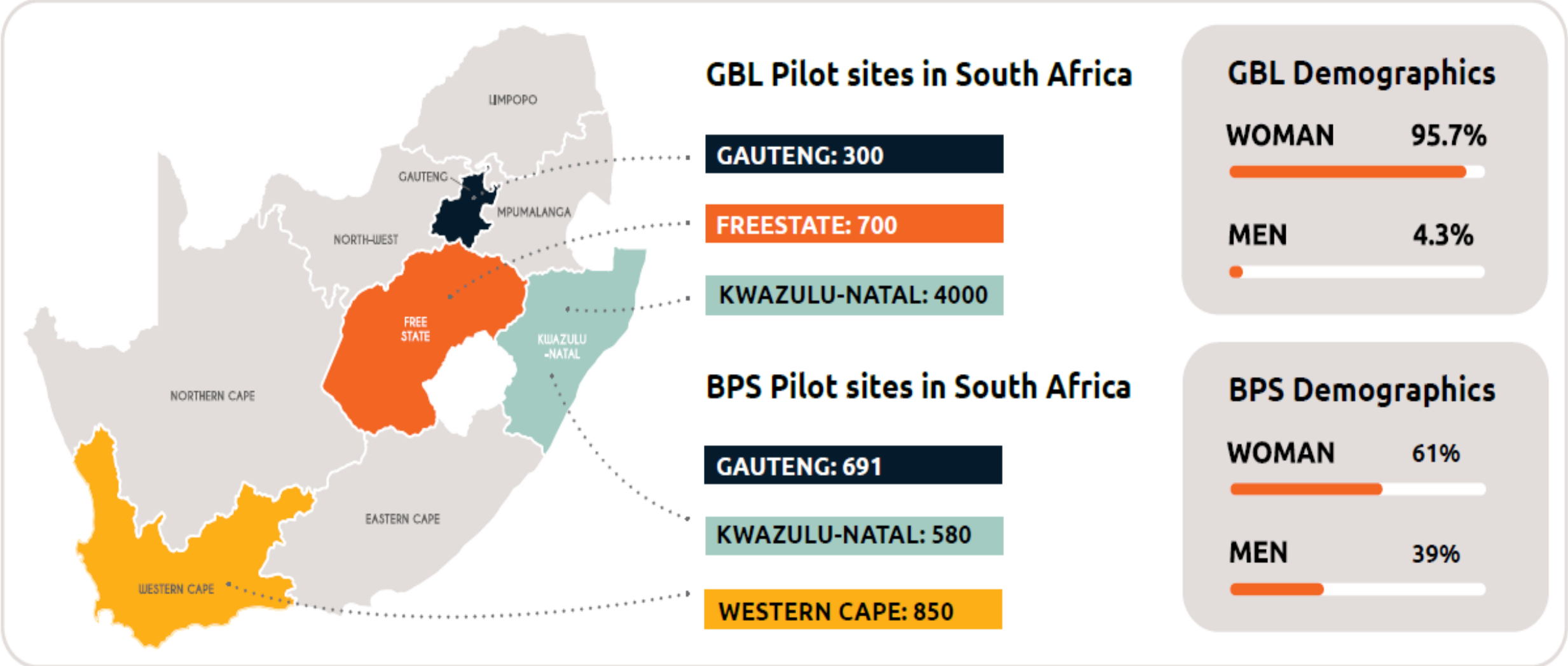
Different target groups. Different delivery models. Same lesson.

Dimension	 Generating Better Livelihoods (GBL)	 Basic Package of Support (BPS)	 Common Lesson
 Target group	Grant beneficiaries, primarily CSG and SRD recipients	Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)	Both work with people furthest from economic opportunity
 Primary challenge addressed	Multiple barriers preventing grant recipients from building sustainable livelihoods	Multiple barriers preventing youth from accessing learning and earning opportunities	Economic exclusion is multi-dimensional and extends beyond skills or jobs
 Approach	Linkage facilitation and coaching model	Coaching-based support model	Person-centred, relational support
 Frontline practitioner	Linkage Facilitator and SASSA Champion	Youth Coach	Dedicated support worker helping participants navigate pathways
 Starting point	Understanding participants' goals, barriers and livelihood aspirations	Understanding participants' goals, barriers and plans	Begins with understanding the individual, not the opportunity
 Core intervention	Referral and support to access services and opportunities	Referral and support to access services and opportunities	Linking people to existing services rather than creating parallel systems
 Support provided	Coaching, guidance, referrals, financial inclusion support and follow-up	Coaching, guidance, referrals and follow-up	In-person support helps participants navigate complex systems




Despite targeting different populations, both programmes demonstrate that people furthest from economic opportunity require sustained, in-person support to navigate barriers and translate opportunities into livelihood outcomes.

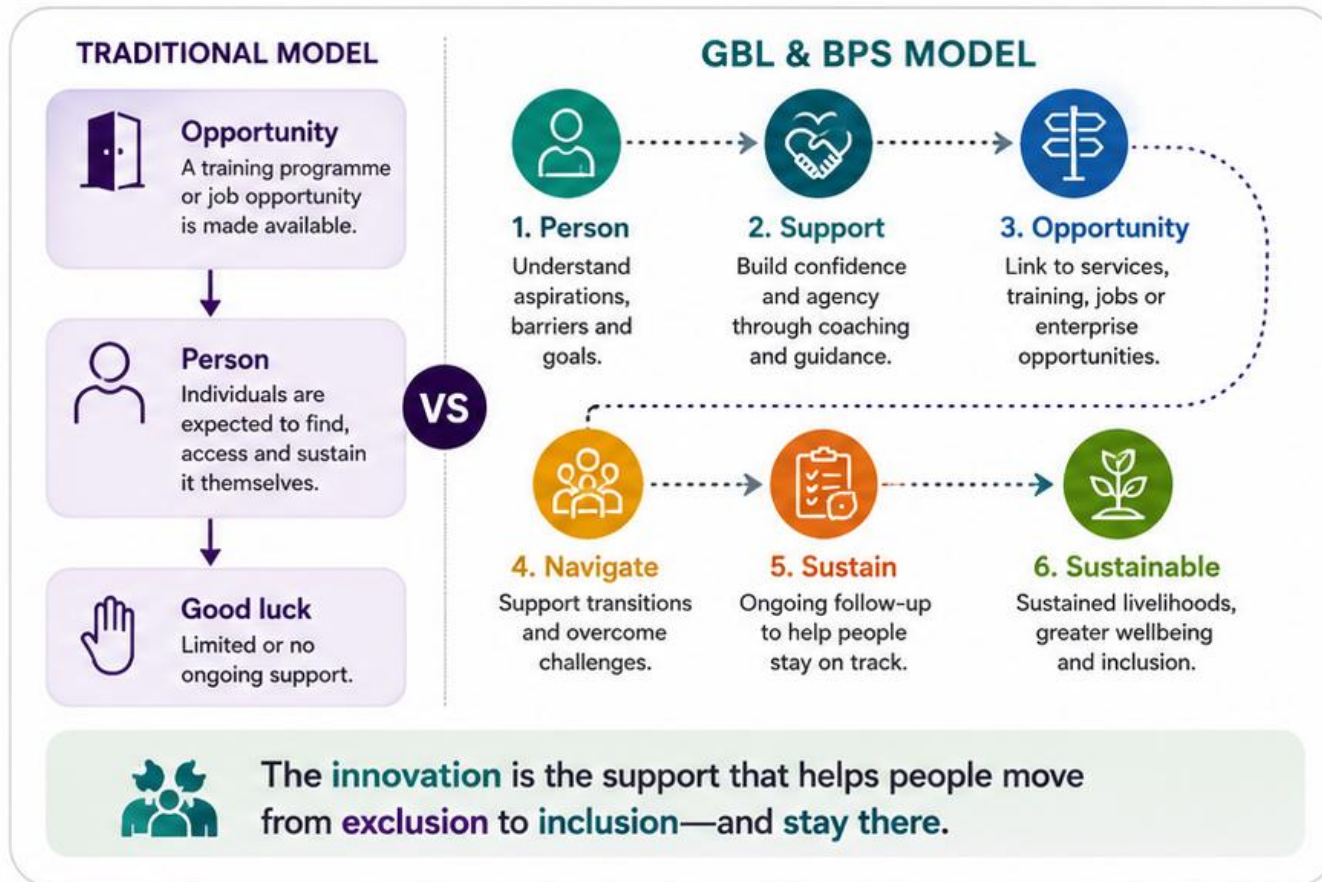
Programme Reach and Participant Profile



What Makes These Programmes Different from Traditional Approaches?

These programmes start with the person, not the opportunity.

TRADITIONAL APPROACH	GBL & BPS APPROACH
 Opportunity first Focus on jobs, training or services	 Person first Focus on aspirations, barriers and capabilities
 Assumes people can navigate systems independently	 Recognises people need support to navigate systems
 One-off referrals	 Ongoing accompaniment and follow-up
 Success measured by programme access	 Success measured by sustained outcomes
 Economic opportunity as the starting point	 Confidence, agency and wellbeing as the starting point



Both GBL and BPS provide human-centred, in-person support that bridges the gap between social protection and economic opportunity.



Builds trust and confidence



Navigates complex systems



Opens doors to opportunities




Supports transitions




Leads to sustainable livelihoods


What are we learning?

Shared lessons from both programmes

 People do not only need opportunities.

 They need support to:

-  Build confidence
-  Navigate systems
-  Understand options
-  Access services
-  Sustain opportunities

 In-person support is the mechanism that makes the difference.

The journey from opportunity to sustainable outcome is not automatic.

Support makes it possible.



The innovation is not the opportunity.

The innovation is the support that helps people overcome barriers and convert opportunities into sustainable livelihood outcomes.



Successes to date

Early results show meaningful progress across livelihoods, skills, enterprise and wellbeing.

GBL



185

participants accessed employment and learnership opportunities, spanning short- and medium-term placements.



1,333

participants strengthened resilience through soft skills programmes on personal mastery, GBV and substance abuse awareness, parenting, and financial literacy.



462

participants gained technical skills in early childhood development, agriculture, sewing, built environment, hospitality, and hair & beauty.



541

participants advanced through business development initiatives, from idea generation and start-up training to pricing, costing, and mentorship.



The programme drove notable psychosocial shifts: participants reported greater confidence, stronger self-belief, and a renewed sense of agency—changes closely linked to the coaching

BPS



Within just four weeks and four coaching sessions, **40%** of participants have moved into learning or earning opportunities.

Many of these had been long-term unemployed when entering the programme.



Many of these are young people who take up self-employment and receive ongoing support to keep building their business.



Levels of anxiety dropped significantly.

37% of respondents had signs of anxiety when entering the programme.

This reduced to just **21%** of respondents after three coaching sessions. Similar drops in distress are noted.

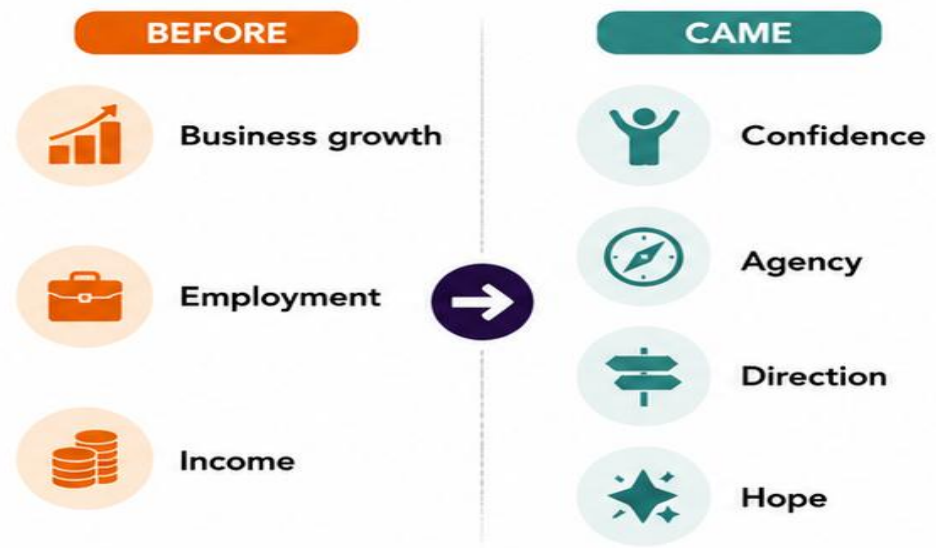


Participants report a stronger awareness of, and willingness to access, support services in their communities¹.

The key insight

 **The first change was not economic.**

 **> It was personal.**



“
Before, I was just surviving day by day.
Now, I have a plan and believe in my future.”



 **Person first.**
Livelihoods follow.

When people gain confidence, agency, direction and hope, they are better able to build economic opportunities and sustain them.



-  Personal transformation comes first
-  It builds the foundation for opportunity
-  Empowered people create change
-  Stronger people. Stronger livelihoods. Stronger communities.

What In-Person Support Actually Does

Personalised support that helps people navigate from where they are, to where they want to be.



In-person support is relational, personalised and practical.

It builds trust, opens doors, and walks alongside people every step of the way.

It bridges the gap between social protection and economic opportunity.



Key lessons

Trust is foundational

See the whole person

Rebuild confidence and agency

Address psychosocial barriers

Build navigational capacity

Curate sustainable opportunities

In-person support is indispensable

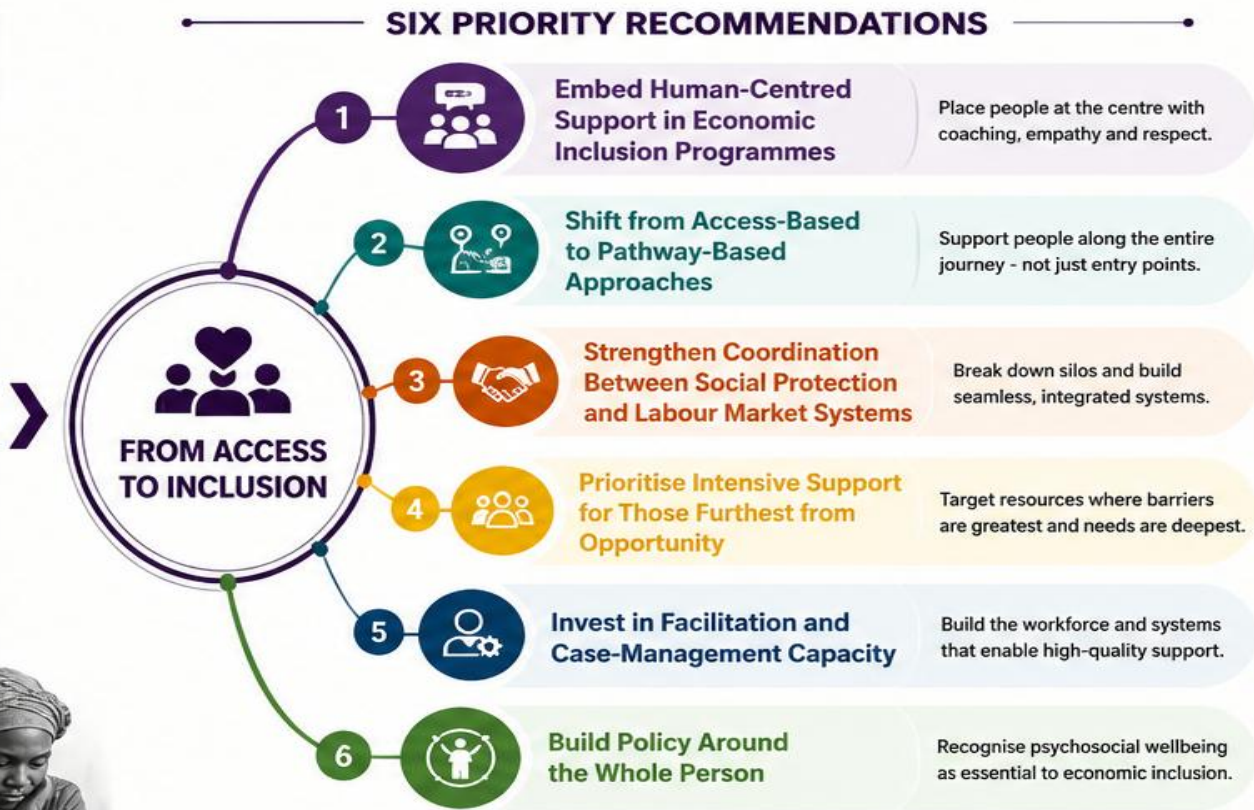
Provide on-going support

Choosing their own path

Coordinated support

Policy Recommendations - From Access to Inclusion: What Needs to Change?

Building integrated, human-centred systems that help people navigate pathways to sustainable livelihoods.





The goal is not only to open doors, but to walk alongside people so they can access, navigate and sustain opportunities.



Stronger systems.
Stronger people.
Stronger communities.

FROM MARGINS TO MAINSTREAM

THE CENTRAL LESSON

Opportunities matter.
But opportunities alone are not enough.

People furthest from economic opportunity often face multiple and overlapping barriers that prevent them from accessing and sustaining livelihoods.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

Provides essential support and a safety net



IN-PERSON SUPPORT

People-first support that builds trust, confidence and helps navigate systems and overcome barriers



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Access to jobs, skills, enterprise support and other opportunities to grow and earn



SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Stable income, wellbeing and the ability to thrive with dignity

PEOPLE NEED MORE THAN ACCESS



Confidence



Agency



Guidance



Relationships



Navigation Support



Opportunity

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



Economic inclusion is not only about jobs and skills.



Human-centred support matters.



Psychosocial wellbeing is foundational.



People furthest from opportunity need accompaniment, not just referrals.



In-person support bridges the gap between social protection and economic opportunity.



PERSON FIRST.
LIVELIHOODS FOLLOW.

“ The goal is not simply to open doors, but to walk alongside people so that they can access, navigate, and sustain opportunities. ”



CONFIDENCE



AGENCY



INCLUSION



DIGNITY



RESILIENCE

*Stronger people. Stronger communities.
Stronger South Africa.*