

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACCESS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Many people are in dire need of employment, however there are certain barriers associated with the high rate of unemployment in South Africa, such as lack of basic and soft skills, a disadvantaged background, lack of opportunities, lack of job hunting skills, gaps in employment, lack of experience and no formal qualifications. Overcoming the following barriers can increase a work seeker's employability:

Lack of Work Experience

Most employers prefer employees who have obtained some sort of experience before they consider employing them. Volunteering is the easiest way of gaining valuable work experience while waiting for an employment opportunity. Be on the look out for learnerships, internships and apprenticeships also. Any part time job in either the formal or informal sector also add to work experience gained.

Lack of Educational Qualifications

Work-seekers with tertiary qualifications find employment relatively easier than those with only or without a matric certificate. Enrolling for a tertiary qualification will therefore increase a work seeker's chances of entering into the labour market and becoming employable. Work-seekers are also encouraged to enrol for skills development and other short courses such as computer skills, office administration, wedding and events planning etc. to increase their employability. There are also a number of online courses available on the internet of which some are free of charge. Examples include platforms like Udemy, Shaw Academy, Coursera, Future Learn, Edu Connect, Edx, LinkedIn Learning and Skills portal.

Lack of Information

Work-seekers are encouraged to conduct research via the internet and through consultation with the Employment Counsellors in the Department of Employment and Labour on current Labour Market and Job trends. The Department of Employment and Labour offers Employment and Career Counselling services at all labour centres across South Africa free of charge. These services include programmes such as Career Exhibitions, Career Expos, Job hunting skills, Interview preparation sessions,

CV writing skills and Entrepreneurship skills. Work-seekers are also encouraged to register their CV's on the Employment Service South Africa (ESSA) database which is the computerised matching system for possible job opportunities.

Limited Employment Opportunities

Most people are not sure of how they can start their own business. It is important to research about different business opportunities and organisations that offer workshops and funding for people who want to start or grow their own businesses such as GIBS, NYDA, SEDA, Gauteng Propellers etc. Different financial institutions also offer a range of business tools for free on their websites to assist small business owners.

Drug and/ or Alcohol Abuse

In some cases, some individuals find themselves addicted to substance in such a way that they cannot perform productively at a work place, and may even end up losing their employment. In this instance, individuals are encouraged to participate in drug and alcohol rehabilitation services available in their communities to limit the risk of losing their jobs or to increase their chances of finding employment if they are still unemployed.

Disadvantaged Background

Coming from disadvantaged families and communities where people's knowledge about the world of work, the labour market and access to tools of trade such as free access to the internet, computer labs, smart phones and community libraries are limited, can hamper access to the world of work. Being part of community organisations may offer other benefits like access to information that may lead to job opportunities.

Even though job opportunities are currently declining work seekers should continue addressing their own barriers to employment to ensure that they can be considered when an opportunity presents itself. Therefore, work-seekers should remain hopeful, enthusiastic and keep pursuing for employment.

REFERENCES:

<https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/jobs/barriers-employment.html>

<https://goodwillsp.org/barriers-to-job-success-lack-of-education/>

<https://www.up.ac.za/gibs-business-school>

<https://www.skillsacademy.co.za/all-courses/>