From Training to Employment: How BPS and JumpStart Are Building Pathways to Work

For young people looking for work, getting a foot in the door can be one of the biggest challenges. Limited work experience, transport costs and uncertainty about how to navigate recruitment processes can make it difficult to turn an opportunity into a job.

Through a partnership between the BPS and Catalyx Foundation, young people in KwaZulu-Natal are accessing the JumpStart Retail Frontline Programme, which connects training with practical workplace experience and potential employment.

The partnership recognises that getting young people into training is only the beginning. They also need guidance, encouragement and practical support as they navigate assessments, interviews and their first experiences in the workplace.

From preparation to practical experience

The JumpStart journey begins with preparation. BPS supports young people in creating their profiles, completing online assessments, and understanding what is expected of them. Participants are then supported through training and interviews before progressing to hands-on experience in retail stores.

This gives young people an opportunity to develop workplace and life skills, learn about customer service and experience the expectations of a professional working environment.

The results are encouraging. In the first BPS–Catalyx cohort in 2025, all 10 participants completed hands-on retail experience. Five were subsequently called back for employment opportunities: four secured four-month fixed-term contracts, while one secured a permanent position.

This year, the partnership continued to connect young people to these opportunities. Of the 17 young people referred to the third Westville Cluster, all attended training and 16 passed their interviews and progressed to six days of practical retail experience.

The experience also highlighted the importance of addressing barriers that can prevent young people from participating. When transport costs made it difficult for some participants

to attend training, BPS worked with the Catalyx Foundation to identify a venue closer to their communities, enabling all 17 participants to attend.

Nkosi: Keeping going after a setback



For Nkosingiphile, known as Nkosi, the journey did not lead to employment on the first attempt. After joining BPS in the programme's first cohort, Nkosi remained engaged with the programme and sought ways to improve his skills while waiting for opportunities. He completed online typing assessments and continued working towards his goal.

His first interview for a JumpStart opportunity was unsuccessful. Rather than giving up, Nkosi continued pursuing opportunities with support from BPS. When he was referred again, he attended a second interview and succeeded.

He went on to complete six days of workplace training at Mr Price Pavilion and is now employed on a contract basis at Mr Price Westville.

Nkosi's experience illustrates how an unsuccessful interview does not have to mark the end of the road. Continued support and the chance to try again can help young people move closer to their employment goals.

Simiso: Turning an opportunity into a future

Simiso joined BPS in September 2025 and, within two months, participated in the JumpStart Skills Development Programme.

He completed the online assessments and three-day live training, earned his certificate and passed his interview. This opened the way for six days of in-store training at Mr Price Sport in Pavilion Mall.

During his training, Simiso's potential was recognised, and he was offered a permanent position at Mr Price Sport. He was later transferred to the Westville Mall branch, where he continues to work.



His journey has continued beyond employment. While working, Simiso has also pursued further studies through UNISA, demonstrating his commitment to developing his skills and future prospects.

His experience shows how training and workplace exposure can provide a starting point for young people to build on, creating opportunities for both employment and continued development.

Support that extends beyond a referral

Nkosi's and Simiso's experiences reflect the wider purpose of the BPS–Catalyx Foundation partnership. BPS does not simply refer young people to an opportunity and leave them to navigate the process alone. Coaches provide ongoing support as participants move through applications, assessments, interviews, training and the transition into work.

This support matters because each young person's circumstances and journey are different. For some, the outcome is a permanent job; for others, it is a fixed-term contract, a first workplace experience or a valuable opportunity to develop new skills and confidence.

By working together, BPS, Catalyx Foundation and JumpStart are helping young people take practical steps towards employment while learning how to navigate the world of work.