

TWENTY YEAR REVIEW

SOUTH AFRICA

1994 - 2014



BACKGROUND PAPER:
YOUTH



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The background papers are written by officials in the Presidency and other government departments using inputs from literature reviews, commissioned research, government reviews and reports and roundtable discussions with a range of stakeholders. The views reflected in the background papers do not represent those of the Presidency, but rather reflect authors' views on sector developments.

Contents

<i>Acronyms and Abbreviations</i>	2
<i>Review</i>	3
1. <i>Introduction and background</i>	3
2. <i>The journey since 1994</i>	4
2.2 <i>Social cohesion</i>	10
2.3 <i>Health and wellbeing</i>	14
2.4 <i>The youth and employment</i>	19
2.5 <i>The state of the youth in post-schooling: Education and skills</i>	24
3. <i>Towards improvement: A new approach to youth development</i>	27
4. <i>Conclusion</i>	28
<i>References</i>	30

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CWP	Community Work Programme
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FET	Further Education and Training
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Affairs Council
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYC	National Youth Commission
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYDPF	National Youth Development Policy Framework
NYS	National Youth Service
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAYC	South African Youth Council
SDA	Skills Development Act
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA	Small Enterprise Financing Agency
SET	Science, engineering and technology
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UYF	Umsobomvu Youth Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

Review

1. Introduction and background

Explicitly, the term “youth” is expressed in various ways according to different organisational perspectives. It denotes a category of people defined in terms of their stage of development between childhood and adulthood. The United Nations General Assembly (2005:23) describes the youth as the population between 15 and 24 years. In South Africa, the youth is defined as the population between 15 and 35 years. In defence of the extended age category, the National Youth Commission (NYC) Act of 1996 asserts as follows:

“The essence of these was that many of the older youth, most of whom were disadvantaged by their role in the struggle against apartheid, needed to be included in the youth development initiative”.

Despite the numerous age categories, the youth is commonly understood to refer to the young population. However, scientifically, the term “youth” denotes individuals who reflect certain behavioural traits, such as adolescence, immaturity or a particular mindset of attitudes. In addition, the youth represent young energetic individuals who hugely influence the present and future of state development.

The above definition of “youth” led the state to coining the term youth development. Developing the youth is important because it is the youth who are the future and, in turn, who contribute to the development of the nation. The transition from childhood to adulthood is a dependent stage. Families, society and the state play a role to provide them with the support and opportunities needed along the way. Thus, youth development is a process that involves government, the family and the community to assist in growing young people. It comprises programmes, people and institutions with the purpose of making a positive contribution to youth growth.

Youth development occurs firstly through support that is provided by educators, families and communities. Secondly, it takes place by way of opportunities that allow young people to explore and experience how to approach life. Finally, youth development occurs through quality service, such as creating a conducive environment for development. Pittman et al. (1993:8) support the above notion of youth development as “the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to, firstly, meet their basic personal and social needs, to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful and be spiritually grounded; secondly, to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives”.

The purpose of this review is to take stock of the progress made by South Africa over the past 20 years in furthering the advancement of young people into wholesome citizens who are able to take advantage of the democratic order and the

opportunities it has created. Due to the limitations of the scope of the project, the focus will be narrow, locating the analysis within macro-indicators of change such as education, skills development, health and wellbeing, social cohesion and labour-market participation. In summary, this review takes a longitudinal approach to analysing the extent of youth development in the past 20 years, by comparing the census data of 1996 and 2011. The review also draws on other primary and secondary sources, such as research reports by research institutions and government institutions, and national surveys, such as an HIV incidence and prevalence survey.

For ease of reference and analysis, the review draws on data and compares trends using the 1996 and 2011 census results. Although some of the sub-indicators measured in 1996 evolved and expanded in 2011, the macro-indicators discussed here remain the most useful measures of change within the demographic group in question. For example, measuring participation in post-secondary education assists in understanding other indicators such as employment, as data from the censuses and other surveys shows a positive correlation between post-school education and employment. In short, post-school education increases the chances of accessing employment.

2. The journey since 1994

This discussion aims to raise a discourse on possible medium-term measures that the state can consider to implement as a direct response to the urgent concerns of the youth – manifesting themselves in various ways, such as unemployment, poverty and inequality. These propositions should be considered within the broader context of government's attempts to reduce poverty and unemployment by 2014. As highlighted in the sections below, an urgent realisation should be that young people are at the epicentre of the poverty and unemployment challenge.

2.1 Policies and institutions promoting youth development

Among the apex priorities of the new democratic state that was established in 1994, were to set up institutions and to develop and implement policies that would facilitate youth development. It was always understood that this was a weighty task, considering that this area had been neglected for decades. Further to the raised expectations, young people who were led by political youth formations and civil society organisations had their own proposals and aspirations, expressed through formal and informal representations. From the onset, a developmental approach to youth empowerment was adopted, making the youth agents of their own advancement, not just passive recipients of government services.

Issues of youth development have been part and parcel of the transformation agenda of the African National Congress (ANC) government since the dawn of new democracy in 1994.

Firstly, youth development issues found expression in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which by and large put emphasis on education and social development, given the dire social conditions that arrested youth development during apartheid.

Secondly, many government policies and programmes that followed the RDP took this historical challenge into consideration by elaborating on activities that impact on the lives of young people. Arguably, the transformation of the education sector was meant to facilitate young people's meaningful transition to adulthood, the world of work, society and all other aspects of life. The state recognised the centrality of education in building a prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist and a socially cohesive society. The study – *Towards a Youth Development Responsive Budget* – commissioned by the Policy Coordination and Advisory Services Unit in the Presidency as part of the Youth Policy Review sought to present a broad picture of how the national fiscus had been utilised to invest in various initiatives that directly or indirectly impact on the lives of people growing up in South Africa in this democratic period.

In considering the best institutional mechanisms to support youth development work, government opted to establish the NYC in 1996 and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) in 2001, instead of establishing a Youth Ministry as some stakeholders had suggested. The rationale for this choice was that youth development is a cross-cutting matter that should not be compartmentalised by reducing it to the activities of a single department. Rather, the well-considered approach of establishing a National Youth Commission seemed to be viable and successful in mainstreaming youth development across the sectors and spheres of governance. The two institutions were never considered a panacea for all the challenges confronting the youth, but rather as instruments with distinct and complementary mandates to facilitate youth development in addition to all other mainstreaming activities of government.

This review was unable to obtain evidence to make conclusive statements about the efficacy of institutions supporting youth development. All there is at hand are anecdotes that the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), among others, is not visible, efficient and effective to the extent that its establishment has not been followed by specific advancements and youth development patterns. Therefore, all the changes and developments reported in this review cannot immediately and necessarily be attributed to the NYDA and its predecessors (i.e. the UYF and the NYC). What one can conclude, however, is that the achievements are a combination of government interventions that have resulted in increased and access to higher education, employment, etc.

2.1.1 The youth development machinery

As already indicated, government opted to facilitate youth development by mainstreaming it within the broader developmental policies and programmes of

government. Other developing and developed countries have successfully used this model, which assumes that mainstreaming yields better results compared to having a Youth Development Department. Most of the international protocols, including those of the United Nations (UN), encourage countries to emphasise the mainstreaming of gender, disability, children and youth issues because, by their very nature, they are cross-cutting.

It was further decided that to further support the mainstreaming activities, certain youth institutions should be established to work with government and other social partners to facilitate youth empowerment.

The NYC is a statutory body of government established through legislation passed by Parliament (the National Youth Commission Act of 1996, as amended). The mandate of the NYC, as set out in the act, is as follows:

- Coordinate and develop an integrated national youth policy.
- Develop an integrated national youth development plan that utilises available resources and expertise for the development of the youth and which shall be integrated with the RDP.
- Develop principles and guidelines and make recommendations to the government regarding such principles and guidelines, for the implementation of an integrated national youth policy.
- Coordinate, direct and monitor the implementation of such principles and guidelines as a matter of priority.
- Implement measures to redress the imbalances of the past relating to the various forms of disadvantage suffered by the youth generally or specific groups or categories of persons among the youth.
- Promote uniformity of approach by all organs of state, including provincial governments, to matters relating to or involving the youth.
- Maintain close liaison with institutions, bodies or authorities similar to the [Youth] Commission in order to foster common policies and practices and to promote cooperation.
- Coordinate the activities of the various provincial government institutions involved in youth matters and link those activities to the Integrated National Youth Policy.
- Develop recommendations relating to any other matters that may affect the youth.

Broadly speaking, the NYC is responsible for championing youth development within the policy arena of government and to influence social partners to develop and implement youth-friendly policies and programmes. The only other structure with such a unique mandate is the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), except that the latter is accountable to Parliament, whereas the Minister in The Presidency is the executive authority for the NYC. Influencing policies and programme choices of

government is perhaps one of the most strategic “weapons” that any institution with such a unique mandate can have in its arsenal. However, the challenge is how and to what extent does one employ this “weapon”.

A second arm to the youth development machinery was the UYF. This organisation was a development funding institution reporting to the Department of Labour. It was capitalised from the proceeds of the Demutualisation Levy. The UYF was an outcome of the 1998 Presidential Job Summit that began operating in January 2001. Its mandate was to create a platform for skills development and job creation for the youth of South Africa. This had to be achieved through the following:

- Information, counselling and referrals on careers, employment and entrepreneurship (using the Youth Portal, youth advisory centres and the call centre)
- Skills development and transfer, using initiatives like the School to Work and the National Youth Service (NYS) programmes
- Youth entrepreneurship initiatives that include business development support and financing

The UYF Board was contextualised by social partners who engaged to find ways to promote job creation and reduce unemployment. One particular important aspect in this exercise was that the NYC had direct representation on the board of directors. This was important to the extent that it gave the NYC a platform to influence the decisions of the UYF. Government as a whole used its representatives from departments such as Public Works, Labour and Trade and Industry to give strategic direction to the UYF. The representation of business, labour and the community was facilitated by the National Economic Development and Labour Affairs Council (NEDLAC). The big question, however, was how and to what extent did this broad representation by the board of directors shape or influence the decisions of the UYF.

Another part of the youth development machinery is the South African Youth Council (SAYC). This council is a civil society umbrella body of youth organisations. The National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) (2002–2007) notes that the “SAYC was established in mid-1997 as a national, representative, non-governmental body of youth organisations. The SAYC aims to develop and empower all young women and men through providing a forum for youth organisations to contribute to policy and programme development and to uphold the democratic gains of the country” (2002:5). The organisation provides a platform and voice for civil society youth organisations to lobby for matters of common interest, using the avenues available in a democratic system. Its wide and diverse membership consists of student organisations, religious organisations, political parties, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, etc. The state recognised the significance of the SAYC and invited it to represent the youth in strategic structures

like NEDLAC and the National Skills Authority (NSA). The big question though, is to what extent has the SAYC used this strategic representation to influence and advance youth development.

Having noted the policy intentions and choices made in setting up the youth development machinery, the following observations can be made:

Firstly, the state seems to have given too much space to the NYC and the UYF to determine their own trajectories. Consequently, this led to instances where both institutions attracted criticism regarding their relevance and the extent to which they aligned their work with the strategic priorities of the state. Indications are that there were also instances where both institutions failed to align their work with the strategic objectives set out in the NYDPF.

Secondly, the first Board of Directors of the UYF appears to have made little impact in terms of shaping decisions and programme choices. All strategic plans and budgets were signed off on the condition that they could be classified under any of the three organisations under the youth development machinery. As for the NYC, the state “respected” its autonomy by cautiously exercising its powers as executive authority.

Thirdly, the broad-based and diverse nature of the SAYC resulted in its weakening. Youth organisations have failed to use the SAYC as a lobbying tool, but have rather used their representation or lack thereof to “test their strength and influence”. Infighting among executive members polarised the organisation and completely eroded its capacity to carry out its duties and to account for resources received from the state. Since the NYC did not have jurisdiction of the SAYC, it was not in a position to hold the SAYC accountable, especially with regard to its activities at NEDLAC and NSA levels.

While others may regard these as limitations in policy choices, the reality is that giving space to youth development institutions to determine their own paths opened opportunities for creativity, which characterised the way in which they operated. Credit is due to the leadership of the NYC and the UYF for the creativity and agility they displayed when taking decisions that could otherwise be regarded as high risks. Besides a few instances of poor financial management at the NYC, both institutions managed to uphold reasonable levels of financial accountability, with the majority of their expenditure in line with approved strategic plans. This is important, as accounting officers and the senior management of these institutions are young people themselves, whose capacity has grown enormously since they took over management. The experience differs for the SAYC, which continues to falter when it comes to capacity-building, accountability and prudent financial management.

2.1.2 Policies and regulatory provisions

In addition to the NYDPF, South Africa has implemented various policies and pieces of legislation that impact directly or indirectly on the lives of young people. International conventions and protocols have found expression in policies and programmes spanning education and skills development, health and wellbeing, economic participation, and civic participation and representation. At the international level, South Africa's youth development work is principally guided by the following:

International conventions	Pillars
Millennium Declaration: Millennium Development Goals	Four goals pledged by all UN member states to improve the quality of life of people have a direct impact on the lives of the youth. These are as follows: 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. 2: Achieve universal primary education. 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. 6: Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases.
World Programme of Action on Youth	This programme has set 15 strategic focus areas that guide UN member states on the interventions required to shift the frontiers of poverty and underdevelopment among young people. The main emphasis is on education, skills development and economic participation.

At the national level, the following policies and legislation regulate responses to the challenge of youth development:

Policies and legislation	Purpose	Custodian
The NYC Act of 1996	Provides for the establishment, objectives and functioning of the NYC, which advocates for the mainstreaming of youth development across the public service.	The Presidency
The NYDPF (2002–2007)	Provides a framework for the mainstreaming of youth development, including strategic intervention areas, youth development principles, etc.	NYC (The Presidency)
RDP (1994)	Provides a policy framework that broadly seeks to renew and transform a divided society. Recognises the special needs of the youth and the need for urgent intervention in the	Cuts across all government departments and spheres of governance

Policies and legislation	Purpose	Custodian
	areas of education and training, job creation and improvement in the socio-economic conditions.	
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)	Provides for a society based on democratic values, social justice and human rights. The emphasis is on equity and the meeting of the socio-economic rights of citizens, particularly those historically excluded from participating in the mainstream.	Cuts across all government departments and spheres of governance
White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)	Provides the principles, guidelines, recommendations, proposed policies and programmes for developmental social welfare, targeting the marginalised and the vulnerable.	Department of Social Development
Skills Development Act (SDA) (1998) and Skills Development Levies Act (1999)	Introduced a regulatory and institutional mechanism for the promotion, implementation and management of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) of the country, using a sector-based approach to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce. Section 18.2 of the act targets unemployed young people.	Department of Labour and other social partners

2.2 Social cohesion

The approach to youth development in post-apartheid South Africa recognises the centrality of young people in all processes of building South Africa into the kind of society that is envisioned in the Constitution. As mentioned previously, the leadership of the country, already in the early years of the hard-won freedom, considered the youth to be a valued asset of the country. In the same vein, there is a concerted effort to move away from basing youth development initiatives on negative connotations about young people – “lost generation”, “rebellious”, “irresponsible”, “deviant”, “delinquent”, “out of control”, “in need of fixing”, etc.

Thus, not only is the contribution of the young people towards liberation recognised and celebrated, but it is also accepted that the energies demonstrated then, if properly nurtured and channelled, have huge potential. In a nutshell, youth development is all about assisting young people to attain their full potential to enable them to assume their role in society now in their present status and later in life as adults. It is in this line of reasoning that the role of the young people in social cohesion is often conceptualised.

An unfortunate occurrence around the theme of social cohesion and the youth is often the narrow approach that limits the involvement of young people to participate in activities such as voting, protest action and sometimes volunteerism. But social cohesion is much broader, and if the role of the youth in social cohesion is to be appropriately conceptualised, then this broad understanding is critical.

Kearns and Forrest (2000) propose five domains for the purposes of conceptualising, understanding, measuring, monitoring and reporting on social cohesion:

- Common values and a civic culture: The promotion of common aims and objectives, common moral principles and codes of behaviour, support for political institutions and participation in politics.
- Social order and social control: The promotion of the absence of general conflict, absence of incivility, effective informal social control, tolerance, respect for difference, and intergroup cooperation.
- Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities: The promotion of harmonious economic and social development, redistribution of public finances and of opportunities, equal access to services and welfare benefits, and ready acknowledgement of social obligations and willingness to assist others.
- Social networks and social capital: The promotion of a high degree of social interaction within communities and families, civic engagement and associational activity, and easy resolution of collective action problems.
- Place attachment and identity: The promotion of strong attachment to place, i.e. sense of pride and belonging, and intertwining of personal and place identity.

Perhaps the most visible and often reported on aspect of the youth and social cohesion is the aspect of civic culture, i.e. support for political institutions and participation in politics. For the purposes of this review, political participation is used as an indicator and a proxy for the extent of democratisation and social inclusion. Using evidential bases for the analysis of a longitudinal series of surveys of the country's political culture, carried out initially by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) (1994 to 1998) and subsequently by Afrobarometer (2000 to 2012), Mattes and Richmond (2013) of the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town come to the conclusion that South Africa's youth are generally seen as disengaged from conventional forms of political participation, such as voting or contacting elected officials; yet they are also seen to be disproportionately more likely to engage in protest and political violence.

To what extent are South Africans and young people, in particular, mentally engaged with the political process? Again, Mattes and Richmond (2013), in their input chapter on the 20-year review in the discussion on the youth and social cohesion, addressed this question by examining two elements of what political scientists call "cognitive engagement", that is, the degree to which they are interested in politics and discuss

it with family and friends. In the 2012 Afrobarometer survey, close to six in ten (56 percent) of all adult South Africans said they were “somewhat” or “very interested in public affairs” and seven in ten (71 percent) spoke about “political matters” with friends or family “occasionally” or “frequently”.

There are only small differences across the age groups within each survey year, and no consistent differences among the cohorts across time. While “youth” tend to be less interested, (56 percent) than “middle-aged adults” (61 percent) or “senior citizens” (63 percent), as of 2012, this category is not statistically different from “younger adults” (54 percent). Indeed, between 1997 and 2006, the youth often displayed the highest levels of interest of all age groups. In fact, with the exception of the very first (1994) and most recent (2012) surveys, it is senior citizens who have consistently shown the least interest in politics – not the youth. The same general trends characterise political discussion. In the 2012 survey, there was at most a five-percentage-point difference between the youngest and oldest cohorts, and it is senior citizens who were consistently least likely to talk about politics from 1997 to 2006.

To what extent do South Africans keep informed about politics and government? In 2012, 51 percent said they read newspapers at least a few days a week. Along with senior citizens (38 percent), the youth (41 percent) are less likely to read newspapers frequently than younger (47 percent) or middle-aged adults (52 percent). Yet, these differences are not consistent across time: from 2002 and 2006, the youth were actually more likely to read newspapers frequently. At the same time, the youth exhibit very low levels of what political scientists call “political competence”: Just 18 percent of the youth disagree with the statement: “Politics and government seem so complicated that you can’t really understand what’s going on.” But this is virtually the same result as yielded by all other age cohorts, a result that has remained stable since 1997.

In the 2006 survey, the Afrobarometer investigated the level of South Africans’ political knowledge across a wide range of dimensions. The results demonstrated that political awareness was highest regarding whether or not the government had policies about the provision of free healthcare (85 percent) and education (77 percent), was moderately high regarding a series of political facts, such as the identity of the largest party in Parliament (85 percent), the number of terms the President can serve (48 percent) and the role of the Constitutional Court (36 percent), and varied widely regarding the identity of incumbent leaders such as the Deputy President (60 percent), their local councillor (18 percent) and their designated Member of Parliament (1 percent)

But, to return to the same refrain, there is no clear pattern whereby political awareness systematically increases (or decreases) with age. Across these indicators, young adults (26–45 years) tend to have the highest levels of information,

and senior citizens (aged 66 and above) the least, but the differences are rarely substantively important.

Thus, a clear and consistent picture has emerged. The surprising finding, in light of the common wisdom, is that across a range of indicators of how citizens think about their role and capacity as citizens, there is virtually no “age profile” to democratic citizenship in South Africa. Thus far, across several different indicators of democratic citizenship, the youth look almost identical to their older counterparts.

There are more meaningful age effects, however, when it comes to actual participation. Tracked since 1994, the youth are generally the least likely to identify with a party (at least since 2000). The differences, however, have generally been relatively small, although they increased in 2012 to 12 percentage points (with senior citizens most likely to identify with any party).

To examine other indicators of electoral participation, questions were posed in a series of post-election surveys, known as the South African National Election Study, conducted by IDASA in 1994 and 1999 and by the University of Cape Town in 2004 and 2009. The results demonstrate that the youth are less likely, and have become increasingly less likely, to turn up and vote on Election Day than other South Africans. At the same time, it is important to note that this is a common finding around the world (Norris, 2002), and seems more a function of the factors associated with the aging process than anything specific to South Africa. Yet, while younger voters were less likely to go to the polls in 2009, they were most likely to follow the 2009 election campaign (as well as in 1999), and also most likely to have talked to friends or family about the election.

Age-related differences in political engagement become more visible when indicators of participation in conventional forms of non-electoral activity are examined. Compared to older South Africans, the youth are indeed significantly less likely to get involved in community politics or contact elected officials. In 2012, 55 percent of all South Africans said they had attended a community meeting in the previous year, but the youth (49 percent) were 14 percentage points less likely to participate than younger adults (63 percent). While 42 percent told Afrobarometer interviewers they had joined with others to raise an issue in their community, the youth (36 percent) were 10 percentage points less likely to do so than young adults (46 percent).

While 27 percent had contacted a local councillor in the previous year, older adults (31 percent) were almost twice as likely to do this than the youth (16 percent). Moreover, the gap between the youth and other cohorts has widened significantly since 2004. The same general pattern is evident in a set of questions asked in 2012, specifically about local government. The youth are slightly less likely to have observed a problem with their local government, and significantly less likely to discuss the problem with other community members or to get together with other

people to address that problem. However, the differences are relatively small or non-existent in terms of whether or not they discussed the problem with community leaders or complained to government officials or took their complaint to the media.

Thus, the youngest South African citizens, aged 18–25, are less likely to take part in conventional forms of politics, such as voting, contacting and communing (but not campaigning). Afrobarometer surveys tracked relatively high rates of self-reported participation in protest (“attending a demonstration or protest march”) between 2000 and 2006, but reflected a downward trend thereafter. Yet, in contrast to the typical media depiction of township protests, protest potential among the youth has been relatively high, but not any higher than that of young adults (e.g. those aged 26–45). Furthermore, in 2012, 4 percent of respondents told interviewers that they had “used force or violence for a political cause” at least once in the preceding year, down slightly from 2008. Again, however, there are no significant differences between the rate at which the youth and other citizens resort to violence (although senior citizens are consistently less likely to do so). Moreover, the great majority of South Africans agree that “the use of violence is never justified in South African politics today”, with youth respondents most likely to agree (70 percent). In responses to a new set of questions asked in 2012, youth respondents are no less likely to view non-payment of services as “wrong and punishable” (although they are less likely to see tax avoidance as categorically wrong).

Does the rate of low levels of youth participation lie in their rejection of the new South Africa? Actually the opposite is true: young South Africans, like other age groups, exhibit very high levels of national identity. They are proud of being South African. They also believe that a South African identity is an important part of how they see themselves, and they want to pass that identity on to their children.

In the first two decades of democracy, the youth have therefore demonstrated that it is a real possibility that their potential, if used fully, can contribute towards building a society as envisaged in the Constitution. This potential needs to be nurtured and supported in the following years of democracy.

2.3 Health and wellbeing

In the wake of a high burden of disease, the potential for youth development is threatened. Therefore, the youth development aspirations expressed by policies and frameworks are dependent on the health and wellbeing of the youth population. The following observation by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2008) summarises the mindset and focus of South Africa’s government on the advent of the new democracy:

The social and economic conditions under which people live influence their wellbeing and result in differences in health linked with social disadvantage.

Health inequities, therefore, are a consequence of the immediate “circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work and age” – their access to healthcare, schools and education, their working and recreational conditions, their dwellings, communities and living environments.

In 1994, government inherited a health sector that was made up of three separate administrations: homelands, the independent states and South Africa. In the period 1994 to 1999, the separate administrations were integrated into one national and nine provincial health departments. In meeting the commitments of a non-racial and non-sexist country, as outlined in the South African Constitution, the democratic government committed itself to transforming the health system from one that was fragmented, racially divided, hospital-centred and favouring the urban population, to a health sector that is integrated and offers a comprehensive national service. Overshadowing the reconciliatory commitments made, the deeply entrenched reality of South Africa’s past had a negative spillover, even in the health sector. Therefore, all commitments and developments were framed within the broader socio-economic dynamics of the country.

Census 2011 notes that young people, in the age group 15 to 35, comprise 39 percent of South Africa’s total population. Inevitably, this group is affected by the health inequities. Of the total youth population aged between 15 and 35, almost 9.7 percent were born after 1994 (Statistics South Africa, 2013b). One would assume that the reality of the generation born after 1994 would be different, as they were born in the period when apartheid was already abolished. However, the 2011 antenatal survey found a concerning trend of HIV prevalence among young women in the 15–49 age group, up from 13.7 percent in 2009 to 14 percent in 2010, and then down again to 12.7 percent in 2011 (Department of Health, 2012). The status and trend of new HIV/Aids infections (HIV prevalence) among the youth in the 20-year period under review is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: HIV/AIDS prevalence among the youth

Gender and age cohort	2005	2008	Behavioural changes
Males (15–19)	3.2 per 100 persons-years at risk	1.7 per 100 persons-years at risk	Among males aged 15–49, there was an increase in the levels of condom use, from 36.1 percent in 2002 to 67.4 percent in 2008. The largest increase in condom use was among men aged 25–49 (from 27 percent in 2002 to 56 percent in 2008).
Females (15–19)	9.4 per 100 persons-years at risk	6.5 per 100 persons-years at risk	
Males (20–24)	6.0 per 100 persons-years at risk	5.1 per 100 persons-years at risk	

Gender and age cohort	2005	2008	Behavioural changes
Females (20–24)	23.9 per 100 persons-years at risk	19.9 per 100 persons-years at risk	
Males (25–29)	12.1 per 100 persons-years at risk	14.8 per 100 persons-years at risk	The condom use of females aged 15–49 increased from 27.6 percent to 62.5 percent between 2002 and 2008. The largest increase among females was among women aged 15–24 (from 46 percent in 2002 to 73 percent in 2008).
Females (25–29)	33.3 per 100 persons-years at risk	29.3 per 100 persons-years at risk	
Males (30–34)	23.3 per 100 persons-years at risk	23.3 per 100 persons-years at risk	
Females (30–34)	26.0 per 100 persons-years at risk	25.5 per 100 persons-years at risk	

Source: Kotze (2013)

It is clear that this generation is affected by the longstanding burden of diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis (TB). Further to the highly prevalent and intertwined challenge of HIV/Aids and TB, the health and wellbeing challenges faced by the youth – which consistently cause the most concern among health professionals and social researchers – can be categorised as substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) and violence among the youth. It is worthy of note that the status of the mental health of the youth of South Africa is a neglected area, with inadequate data available. The causal relationship between all these challenges is summarised by Ward et al. (2012) as follows:

The social conditions that South Africa has inherited from the apartheid era provide a toxic mix of ingredients, which include multi-problem families, dysfunctional communities with high levels of drug and alcohol abuse and gang activity. This combination renders many young people vulnerable to exposure and participation in violent conduct.

2.3.1 Alcohol and drug abuse

The lifetime prevalence of alcohol use among the youth increased by 5 percent in the period 1998 to 2003 (South African Demographic and Health Surveys, 1998 & 2003) (Stats SA, 1998/2003). In the following five years, the situation is seen to not have improved, as by 2008, there had been an increase in incidences of binge drinking, particularly among young females. The Youth Risk Behaviour Surveys found a 5.8 percent increase in binge drinking among females (from 17.9 percent in 2002 to 23.7 percent in 2008), (MRC, 2002/2008) Fatalities linked to alcohol

consumption increased from 50 percent in 2002 to 54 percent in 2008. In the same period, the National Injury Mortality Surveillance Surveys also found that the average blood alcohol content rose in those who tested alcohol positive during fatalities, from 0.0569 g/mmol in 2002 to 0.14 g/mmol in 2008 (MRC, 2008)

Globally, such challenges are viewed as being interlinked, and require urgent attention. According to the WHO's *Global status report on alcohol and health* (2011), 9 percent of annual deaths among the youth are attributed to alcohol-related causes. To South Africa, this statistic is alarming and should not be viewed as only applicable to other countries, especially as Seggie (2012) describes South Africa as "a hard-drinking country", consuming in the region of five billion litres of alcohol annually, roughly equating to 9–10 litres of pure alcohol per person per year.

Secondary to the challenge of alcohol abuse by young people is the issue of drug abuse. The use of illegal drugs among the youth is a serious health concern and, although it is not as widespread as alcohol and tobacco use, it is a more difficult problem to address in terms of users that are addicts and the broader institutional and societal responses to the problem. The complexity of dealing with drug abuse is partly due to the fact that there is a direct relationship between the use of drugs and involvement in criminal activities (Morojele et al., 2009). This issue needs further attention, as the use of illegal and prescription drugs is on the increase. This fact is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Trends of the use of drugs among the youth

Drug type	2002	2008	Percentage change
Inhalants	11.1%	12.2%	+1.1%
Mandrax	6%	7.4%	+1.4%
Cocaine	6.4%	6.7%	+0.3%
Heroin	11.5%	6.2%	-5.3%
Club drugs	5.8%	6.8%	+1%
Over-the-counter/ prescription drugs	15.5%	12%	-3.5%

Source: Kotze (2013)

Table 2 illustrates the extent of drug use by young people who are still in school, in the age group 15 to 19 years. Unfortunately, there is no research available yet to summarise drug use by youths that are out of school and even older. In the period under review, there has been a notable decrease in the use of heroin and prescription drugs. However, the overall proportion of illicit drug use cannot be neglected, as it places young people at risk for negative health consequences, which may, in turn, impact on their education. Eventually, drug and alcohol abuse increases violence and crime, sexual abuse and exposure to HIV/Aids.

2.3.2 Violence among the youth

Violence in South Africa is not a new phenomenon; this behaviour dates back to the pre-1940s (Ward et al., 2012). The concern around youth violence is brought about by observations such as that violence has overtaken all other incidents, that it has become the main cause of unnatural deaths in young males and additionally, accounts for a significant number of deaths of young females (Norman et al., 2007). In addition to drugs and alcohol, gang violence and the easy availability of firearms contribute to the broader climate of violence and crime among the youth. This trend has led to youth violence being classified as one of the major public health priorities, requiring an intersectoral response. South Africa's long history of violence, from the precolonial period through the apartheid era to present time, and the devastating combination of socio-economic factors are factors that have contributed to the high levels of youth violence in South Africa. Other factors that have contributed to the high incidence of youth violence include the disintegration of the social fabric of society, rapid social change, rapid urbanisation, corruption and poor adherence to the rule of law, family breakdown, gender inequalities and notions of "hyper"- or "hostile" masculinity prevalent in South African society (Norman et al., 2007).

In 2008, on average, 19 percent of school learners belonged to gangs and 21.2 percent indicated to have been approached to join a gang (YRBS, 2008). Of further concern is that, in 2000, homicide by South African males aged 15–29 was 184 per 100 000; this was said to be nine times the global average and was double the rates recorded in Latin American countries, which also have high homicide rates (Ward et al., 2007). On the continent, the homicide rate for girls and women was 60 percent higher than the average rate recorded for the rest of the African region.

With all the progress made, 20 years later, South Africa sits with the realisation that the socio-economic determinants (which include the marginalisation and disadvantaging of South Africans) – together with the trauma and damage inflicted on individuals and communities under apartheid, and the ongoing trauma of relentless poverty, crime, violence, substance abuse and widespread sexual violence – provide the broader context within which one ought to assess the health and wellbeing of the youth of South Africa (Kotze, 2013). In efforts towards overcoming these challenges, the National Development Plan (NDP) proposes that the youth be engaged in bringing about solutions for crime prevention. For example, the youth should be involved in the development of community safety centres. Furthermore, alcohol and substance abuse, as well as anger management programmes for the youth, should be implemented at an early stage in schools and as part of diversion programmes for youth at risk of offending (National Planning Commission, 2012).

Sadly and unintentionally, in 2013, the face of inequality has now been transformed from one that is racial to one that is based on class. Inequality has meant that the "haves" are the significant proportion of the population that have contributed to the

developed private sector. This has resulted in a highly inequitable distribution of health resources between people who receive healthcare in the private sector and the majority of the population that relies on the public sector for healthcare.

2.4 The youth and employment

Africa has the world's youngest population, and in less than 15 years it will be home to one quarter of the world's population under 25 years of age (National Planning Commission, 2012). Further, the National Planning Commission (NPC) observes that South Africa has an urbanising, youthful population. This presents an opportunity to boost economic growth, increase employment and reduce poverty. Hence, the NPC (2012) recognises that young people bear the brunt of unemployment and encourages the adoption of a "youth lens" in policy formulation and planning, in order to expand opportunities, enhance capabilities and provide second chances.

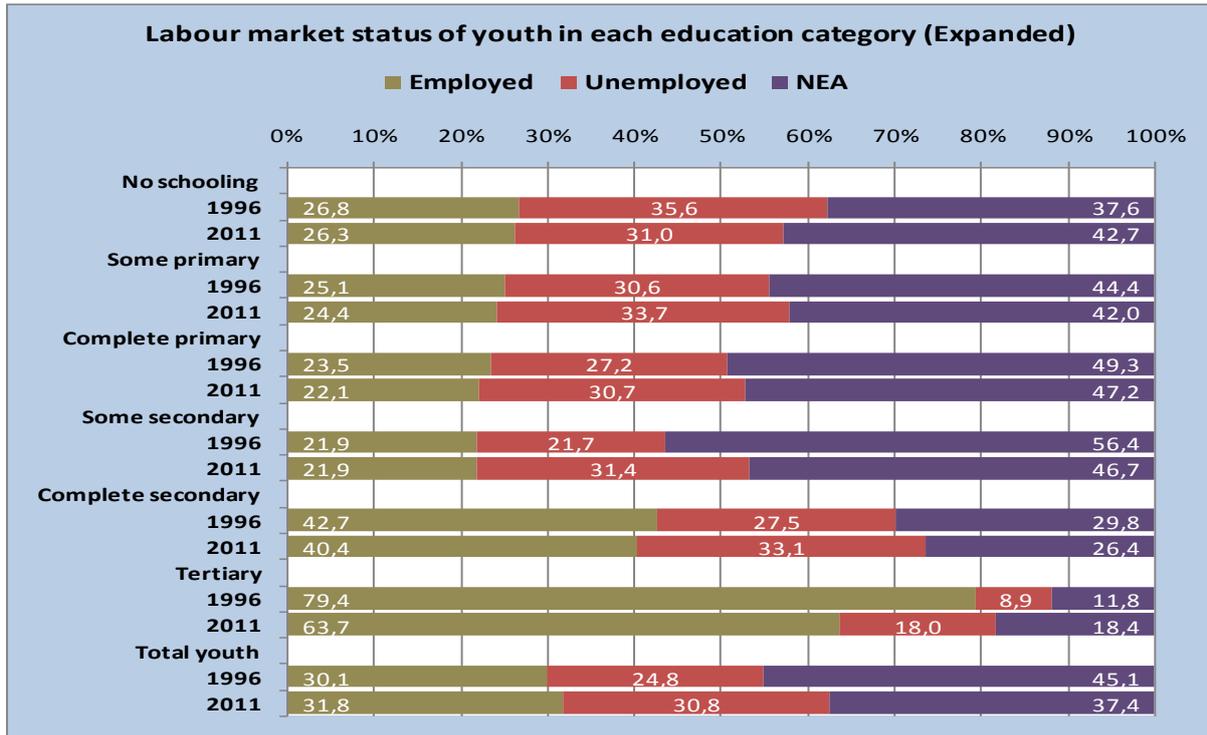
On the contrary, the reality for South Africa has been that the economy has generated insufficient employment opportunities to absorb the growing labour force; between 1994 and 2012, the domestic economy managed to create only 950 000 new jobs (Industrial Development Corporation, 2013). Since 2000, the unemployment rate has remained above 21 percent, peaking at 29.3 percent in March 2003. By the end of 2012, it was 24.9 percent, with 4.5 million people unable to find work. The NPC (2012) summarises the state of unemployment (particularly youth unemployment) as follows:

The plight of young black people is of a particular concern, with this group accounting for almost two thirds (65 percent) of the unemployed under the age of 35. It is also generally assumed that if young people fail to get a job by the age of 24, they are unlikely to ever find formal employment.

A vast number of factors are contributing to poor employment creation. These include increased capital intensity in many sectors of the economy, a skills mismatch, labour market rigidities and regulatory aspects, and wage cost increases that are higher than productivity growth (Industrial Development Corporation, 2013). In the period under review, Ngcaweni and Moleke (2008) note that one of the approaches adopted to overcome these challenges is moving youth development from the periphery to the core of policy-making in the country.

Since 1994, government's policy responses have been focused on placing emphasis on interventions such as education, which is a meaningful tool to drive social transformation and reduce youth unemployment (Republic of South Africa, 1994). The rewards of government's policy frameworks are illustrated in Figure 1, which summarises the status of South Africa's youth in the labour market.

Figure 1: Labour market status of the youth in each education category



Source: Statistics South Africa (1996 & 2012)

Figure 1 illustrates the extent of the work that still needs to be done to alleviate unemployment and the need to inspire the “not working and not seeking work” portion of the 37.4 percentage points of the youth that is not economically active to form part of the labour market. The 7.7 percent decrease in the number of young people who are not economically active (between Census 1996 and Census 2011) is a sign of relief. However, the 6 percent increase in youth unemployment between 1996 and 2011 illustrates that much work still needs to be done, as it seems that this group is transitioning to being economically active, but remains unemployed. Further, it is also a good sign that the youth who transition out of not being economically active get into the labour force. As depicted by the high proportion of the youth not in education, employment or training among those aged 15–24 years, a concern arises, as those who remain not economically active are unfortunately not in education or training either.

Strategies and policies such as the NSDS of 2005 and the NYDPF, which were based on the RDP, went beyond the emphasis on education and began to explore other concrete mechanisms to promote skills development, job creation and the integration of youth development into the mainstream of policy-making (Ngcaweni & Moleke, 2008). The application of these frameworks has taken place through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community Work Programme (CWP). These public employment schemes should be expanded to provide work for the unemployed, with a specific focus on the youth and women. According to the NPC (2012), public employment is expected to provide the equivalent of two million

full-time jobs by 2020. A further advantage to these programmes is that the participant gets a stipend while acquiring and broadening his or her skills base. These programmes were identified as one of the simplest and quickest ways to create employment for young people.

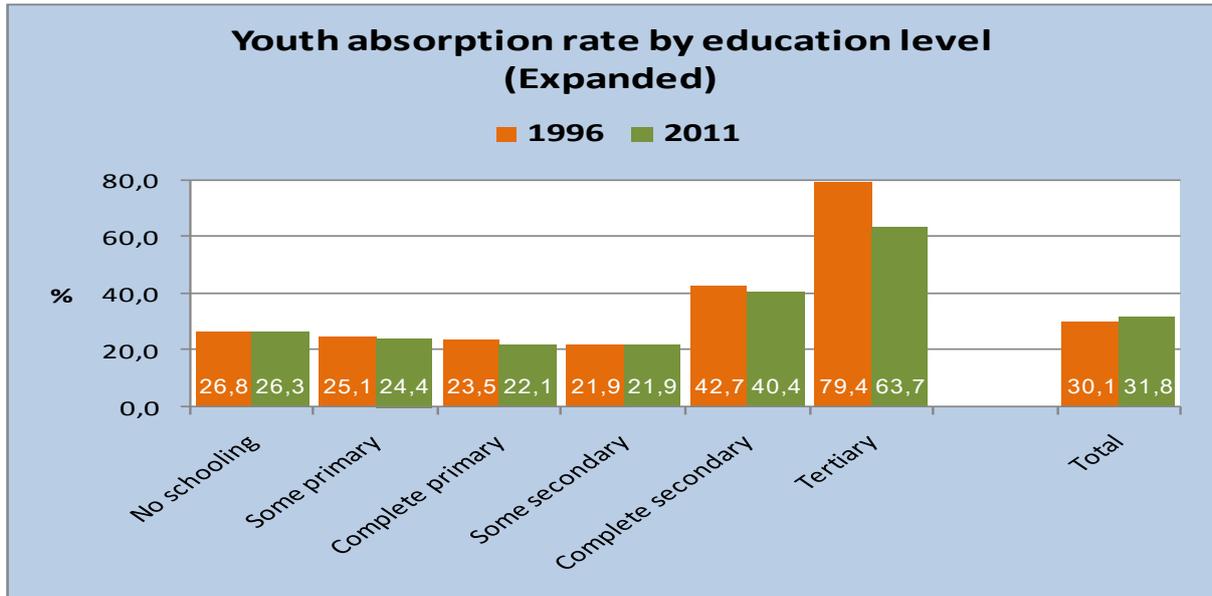
Further, institutions, such as the NYC and the UYF, were tasked with the responsibility of facilitating the development, implementation and monitoring of responsive policies and programmes, as well as the promotion of economic participation for the unemployed (Ngcaweni, 2006). Twenty years later, despite all the interventions made in policy and the labour market, young people continue to be at the core of the unemployment challenge.

Recently, there has been much concern around the youth that is not in the mainstream, or otherwise referred to as those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

In the first quarter of 2013, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) (Statistics South Africa, 2013a) estimated that 33.5 percent of the 10.4 million young people aged 15 to 24 years were not in employment, education or training. This category of people is vulnerable, as they are not occupied with work or education, and the longer they remain in this category, the more disengaged they will be from the formal economy. It is noted that exiting school prematurely is a function of the social, cultural and economic realities in which young people exist (Ngcaweni & Moleke, 2008). The social costs of youth unemployment in South Africa have been crime, drug use, promiscuity, deskilling, political uncertainty and a reduction in self-confidence (Rankin, 2011).

Ngcaweni and Moleke (2008), note that education and economic participation have been the two main traditional pathways as a means of overcoming these social costs for youth development. Furthermore, the value of education and economic participation in youth development is critical for meaningful transition to adulthood and economic participation (Ngcaweni & Moleke, 2008). Moreover, the employability of a young person in South Africa is directly related to the level of education or skills that he or she has. In the process of investigating means to easing youth unemployment, Figure 2 illustrates higher absorption rates for those with a tertiary education.

Figure 2: Youth absorption rate by education level

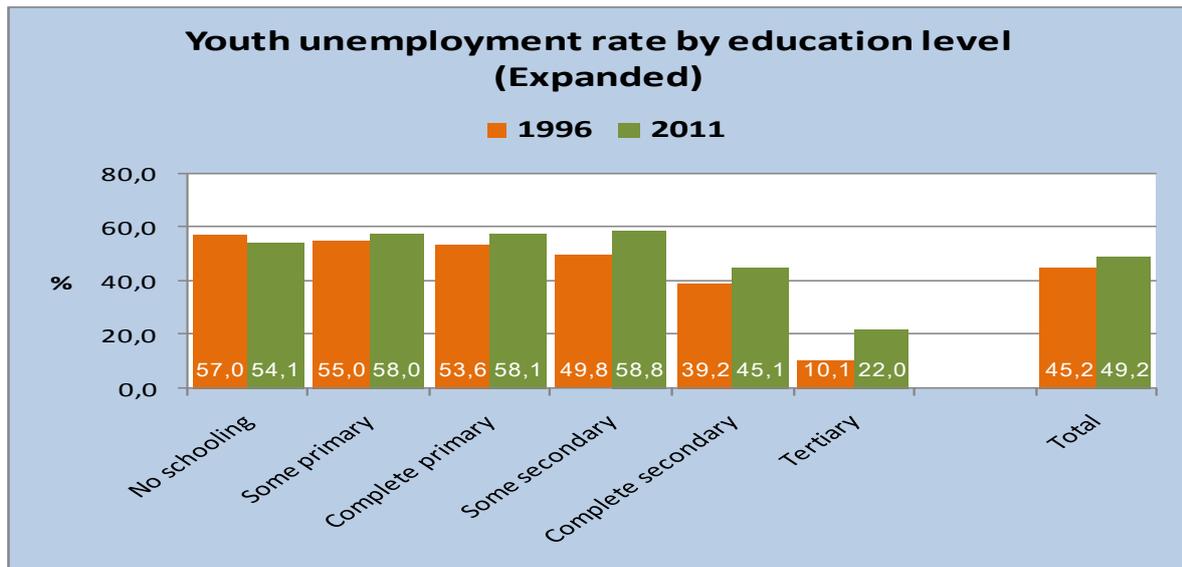


Source: Statistics South Africa (1996 & 2012)

From the high absorption rate for youth with a tertiary education shown in Figure 2, it follows that the higher the level of education acquired, the greater the chances that one has of securing space in the labour market. According to the QLFS, over four million people were unemployed over the period 2008–2013. In 2011, South Africa’s youth unemployment for young people in the age group 15–34 years was estimated to be 49.2 percent (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Does this infer that a majority of South Africa’s youth has acquired low levels of education? Statistics South Africa (2012) proves that the opposite is the case when it notes that the skills levels of South Africa’s employed workforce has been on the increase since 2000, shown by the rising share of people employed with a secondary and tertiary education increasing from 12 percent in 2000 to about 19 percent in 2012.

As shown in Figure 3, the unemployment rate in 1996 was highest among those who had no schooling. In 2011, the unemployment rate was highest among those who did not have matric, but had some secondary education. In both 1996 and 2011, the lowest unemployment rate was observed among those with a tertiary education.

Figure 3: Youth unemployment rate by education level (Census 1996 and 2011)



Source: Statistics South Africa (1996 & 2012)

A further concern, which has been coupled with the concerning high levels of unemployment among the youth, has been the lack of entrepreneurial activity, particularly among the youth. Small businesses have the potential of contributing towards alleviating unemployment, as they are prolific job creators. It is against this background that institutions such as the Small Enterprise Financing Agency (SEFA) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) have been offering loan finance and credit indemnity. These agencies support the notion that entrepreneurship through small businesses and micro-enterprises, by access to finance, has the impact of supporting an increase in employment in those enterprises. Such progressive efforts have been noted by the G20 Entrepreneurship Barometer of Ernst & Young (2013), which ranked South Africa sixth in terms of access to capital, ahead of countries such as France, Japan and South Korea.

However, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2012) reports that, when compared to Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria, Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Ethiopia, South Africa ranks the lowest in terms of early-stage entrepreneurial activity among its youth, with a total entrepreneurial activity rate of 7 percent. A concerted effort needs to be made to take advantage of initiatives that contribute to sustainable youth development, where recipients are able to fend for themselves with less intervention and social assistance from government. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2012), a positive correlation exists between entrepreneurial intentions among the youth and the level of education attained.

2.5 The state of the youth in post-schooling: Education and skills

The relationship between employment trends and education levels support the notion that post-schooling and higher education encourage sustainable livelihoods by opening up economic opportunities and self-employment for the youth. With this same understanding, regarding the significance of acquiring post-school training and education, South Africa's government deracialised and expanded access to the higher education and training sector in 1994. Government has identified access to this sector as one of the elementary means of addressing South Africa's persisting inequality level. Therefore, higher education and training opportunities have been seen as one of the greatest social demands, and government consistently devoted a majority of the fiscus to the education sector to mainly benefit the youth. In the allocation of public expenditure towards higher education in the period 2006 to 2009, South Africa saw a 39.2 percent increase in public expenditure per higher education student.

Furthermore, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) allocated R25 billion in loans and bursaries to 991 759 university and Further Education and Training (FET) College students in the period 1991 to 2011. According to the 2006 and 2011 National Budget Review, public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure was 19 percent in 2006 and grew to 21.3 percent in 2011. The Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme and Social Work Scholarship are examples of other programmes that, through NSFAS, have been making significant financial contributions towards skilling the youth. Funza Lushaka promotes teaching in areas of national priority in public schools. Between 2007 and 2009, the number of students who were granted full-cost bursaries almost tripled, from 3 669 to 9 190 (valued at R110 million and R380 million respectively). The Social Work Programme, which provides scholarships to prospective and current social work students, exponentially increased its funding from 1 263 students in 2007 to 5 658 students in 2009.

In the quest towards developing the youth in post-schooling, education investments were coupled with the skills policies and initiatives summarised in Table 3.

In return for these investments, South Africa is noted to have made massive gains in promoting access to post-school education and training programmes. Since 1994, enrolments in universities, technikons (now called universities of technology) and teacher training colleges has almost doubled in size, from 495 356 in 1994 to 938 201 in 2011 (Stats SA, 2012).

Table 3: Phases in the evolution of skills development and training in South Africa from 1994 to 2013

	Phase		Skills training and development events from 1994
1.	Late-apartheid period	Pre-1994	1981: Manpower Training Act promulgated 1991: Cosatu joined National Training Board and participated in the National Training Strategy Initiative negotiations
2.	Creating a legislative framework	1994	New Constitution
		1995	South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995) promulgated
		1996	
		1997	<i>Green Paper on Skills Development</i>
		1998	Skills Development Act (1998) promulgated
		1999	Skills Development Levies Act (1999) promulgated
3.	Developing strategy and implementing	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector education and training authorities (SETAs), NSA and NSA Fund to address NSDS targets. • 2000 Survey of Industrial Training
		2001	
		2002	Learnership allowance introduced
		2003	National Skills Survey
		2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Skills Development Lead Employer pilot project • Skills Development Planning Unit established in the Department of Labour
		2005	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) established in March by the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA)
		2006	
		2007	National Skills Survey
4.	Responding to jobs crisis and reshaping the post-school sector	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDA (1998) and SAQA Act (1995) amended • Education and Training Quality Assurance removed from SETA mandate, standards setting moved from SETAs.
		2009	Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) established
		2010	
		2011	
		2012	<i>Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training</i>
5.	Planning and expanding	2013	

Source: Human Sciences Research Council (2013)

A further interrogation of these statistics shows that, during the period at hand, training colleges had the slowest expansion with regard to enrolment. After the mergers of a number of these higher education and training institutions, the public FET sector continued to attract low levels of students. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) cites poor marketing, a lack of capacity and a poor image as causes of the low enrolment rates in these institutions. Enrolments have recently improved and are estimated to have increased from 271 900 in 2000 to about 400 000 in 2011. The increase in uptake followed various government interventions and incentives offered to students, such as financial assistance, which increased from R100 million in 2007 to R1.7 billion in 2012, and the FET Plan, which sought to market FETs as institutions of choice. Further policy focus, targets and partnerships such as outlined in the National Skills Accord – which is a partnership of the New Growth Path – promise further growth.

In the 20-year period under review, the notable challenge in the post-schooling sector has been the inability of the investments made in this sector to transform into quality programmes. The growth in science, engineering and technology (SET) enrolments in higher education institutions, which is viewed as critical for stepping up economic development, has been increasing steadily. According to the DHET (2009), between 2000 and 2009, graduation rates in these areas grew by 5.5 percent. Although, the enrolment rates have improved, South Africa has high levels of graduate dropouts and graduate unemployment rates, as the quality of education and training is mixed. The NPC (2012) concludes that the South African post-schooling system is not well designed to meet the skills development needs of either the youth or the economy.

Although South Africa has a handful of universities and research institutions that are ranked as world-class, the quality of programmes in the majority of higher education and training institutions has been put into question. Another critical challenge for the youth in post-schooling has been poor educational outcomes, which are a result of a lack of access to adequate resources, a teacher shortage, and no clear pathways and guidance to further learning opportunities. It is still a general phenomenon that students entering the post-schooling system have not attained the marks that are needed to access higher education and training. Therefore, the high investments should be coupled with, and integrated into, the national skills development system. Finally, youth development in post-schooling should continue to be enhanced as a mainstream activity.

The current generation of young people has the potential to expand the continent's productive workforce, but without education, skills and programmes to promote job creation and entrepreneurship, also poses a major risk to the continent and the country's economic, social and political stability.

3. Towards improvement: A new approach to youth development

From the analysis of challenges and successes recorded, it is clear that a number of adjustments need to be made in order to accelerate the rate of impact of government's interventions. These adjustments include the following:

- **Clarifying the problem statement:** What are we dealing with? What do we want to achieve? How do we balance the socio-economic outcomes of youth development? Youth development should be taken from a narrow or silo approach to an integrated one. Because the youth is a transient demographic group, and since the youth constitute the majority in society, most of the social and economic challenges manifest themselves in this demographic group.
- **Restoring hope:** It is imperative to change the narrative. There is too much negativity – a positive narrative about young people is needed, as it changes their perceptions.
- **Moving from projects to programmes:** Approaching youth development project by project may be useful for planning and monitoring purposes. However, it is limiting, because the lifespan of many youth development projects is limited and their success depends too much on individuals (politicians and officials). The programme approach views development as a medium- to long-term activity that is premised on the understanding that a sustainable impact can be realised in the medium to long term.
- **Mainstreaming:** Youth development must be linked to service delivery, economic growth and redistribution. Youth development must be institutionalised.
- **Prioritisation:** This is especially necessary for school-to-work programmes, such as vocational education and skills development programmes.
- **Relink youth development with service delivery, economic growth and redistribution:** Youth development happens in context – a forming state and a performing economy creates opportunities for the youth.
- **Programme design:** The design of programmes such as the EPWP should be enhanced to emphasise the life opportunities that these programmes can create – apart from short-term income transfer. Equally, the design of FET College programmes, such as the National Certificate (Vocational), and, more importantly, all learnerships, should be changed, as these appear to have low returns (in terms of pass and employment rates) and do not act as levers for further learning.

- **Targeting:** Youth development programmes should take the backgrounds and needs of the youth into account. For example, recruiting the unskilled into enterprise development might not yield a greater impact than recruiting those with vocational/technical skills.
- **Capacity-building:** Some of the institutions and agencies that support youth development require greater capacity to deliver quality and high-impact programmes.
- **Coordination and integrated delivery:** As South Africa enters the third decade of democracy, the emphasis should be on better coordination and integrated services that target the youth. For example, reproductive health centres should integrate services designed for young men, as many only offer services to young women.
- **Better monitoring systems:** These are necessary to measure progress and impact.
- **Strengthening the national compact (unbundling bottlenecks):** This should start with the skills and the youth accords. Other social partners need to be seen to proactively support youth development by promoting initiatives that seek to expand apprenticeship, enterprise development and employment, for example, the politics of wage subsidy, and the involvement of the private sector.
- **Revitalising youth agency:** Young people should reclaim their role as agents of change, not just victims and beneficiaries of government programmes.

4. Conclusion

Given the many factors that formed the context for youth development in the first two decades of democracy in South Africa, it is not surprising that a major emphasis was put on developing an integrative framework. This framework is pivotal, as it provides guidance on youth development activities to the rest of society.

The integrative framework was a significant achievement, because the youth sector was perhaps among the sectors that lacked a coherent and cohesive framework in the post-apartheid period. The period also saw the development of various policy instruments for the implementation of the framework. This phase has largely been completed, although work is still required on improving these instruments.

One of the challenges of youth development is the fact that the majority of youth development activities are actually embedded in the overall programmes of government. Thus, mainstreaming youth development is now the biggest task. This

has proved to be a difficult task over the years for the simple reason that, by its very nature, mainstreaming always engages the very conceptualisation of a programme, policy and project, including other issues such as design, operations and the maintenance of policy instruments. A challenge always arises when attempts to mainstream entail significant changes to an already established way of doing things – governance structure, delivery systems, institutional arrangements, mandates, and accountability and fiduciary responsibilities.

Despite the multiple challenges of youth unemployment, poverty and inequality, in the final analysis, 20 years after the dawn of democracy, all indications point to a country on a positive transformation trajectory. This narrative of change and progress resonates inside and outside the work and message of government and, most importantly, manifests itself in the everyday experiences of the majority of young people.

Notably, the recent Goldman Sachs (2013) report, entitled *Two decades of freedom*, paints a positive picture of the outcomes of South Africa's democratic experiment. On the economic front, this report records that the country's gross domestic product grew from US\$143 billion in 1996 to US\$402 billion in 2011. Although unemployment figures over the same period grew from 4.7 to 5.6 million (largely due to population growth and the fact that female job seekers have grown rapidly since 1994), the number of employed people grew from 9.1 to 13.2 million South Africans, and, more recently, Statistics South Africa reported that employment now stands at 13.7 million.

The Goldman Sachs report concludes that these changes can mainly be attributed to improved macro-fiscal and monetary balances, rising foreign reserves, the management of government debt, rising income levels, especially of and including the rapid rise of the black middle class, as well as diversification by looking into markets such as China, which has mitigated the worst effects of the ongoing economic downturn in Europe. With regard to social and human development indicators, the picture is more positive. Goldman Sachs reports that over 57 percent of learners had benefited from the "no-fees" school policy favouring poor communities. About 93 percent of the population can now read and write and, compared to 2002, 29 percent of people older than 20 years now have matric.

Access to social grants increased from 13 percent in 2002 to 30 percent in 2012. Access to electricity rose from 77 percent 10 years earlier to 85 percent in 2012. Similar positive trends in water provision have been recorded with up to 91 percent of households now accessing piped water. Access to telephony now stands at 94 percent of households, with many positive spinoffs, such as access to the internet and other value-added services.

Better still, reported challenges in provinces like the Eastern Cape notwithstanding, data confirms that the provision of public health services is improving, from

57 percent in 2002 to 70 percent in 2012. In the surveys conducted among households, data shows that 79 percent of those who received service in the public healthcare system said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received.

These statistics illustrate the point that positive changes in the youth development landscape should be seen in the broader context of change and continuity taking place in South Africa. It is important to emphasise that, because of demographic preponderance, overall progress in society is likely to benefit young people especially, because, as discussed earlier, they have better access to education and training opportunities and therefore better opportunities over the medium to long term to access sustainable livelihoods.

Overall, indications are that, as South Africa marks 20 years of freedom, the country is a better place for the youth today compared to the 20 years leading up to 1994. More young people are in education, and are being prepared for life and the world of work. The black youth, in particular, are flooding education and training institutions, turning towards entrepreneurship and actively participating in the body politic of South Africa. Health and wellbeing remains their concern and it seems messages of healthy lifestyles are starting to have the desired effect.

Yet, as South Africa enters its third decade of democracy, significant levels of skills, expertise and competencies will be required to facilitate the task of accelerating and mainstreaming youth development across national development priorities and, indeed, in the many other development pursuits outside the purview of the state.

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