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STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

**Discovering and Developing the Untapped Economic
and Social Potential of the Youth**

AN OVERVIEW OF THE YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FET	Further Education and Training
GHS	General Household Survey
GP	Gauteng Province
HE	Higher Education
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICPD-PoA	International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action
KZN	Kwazulu-Natal
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LP	Limpopo Province
MP	Mpumalanga Province
NC	Northern Cape
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NW	North West
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYS	National Youth Service
NYSP	National Youth Service Programme
NYSU	National Youth Service Unit
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SADHS	South African Demographic and Health Survey
SAYC	South African Youth Commission
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authorities
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WC	Western Cape

1.0 Introduction

The 1998 Population Policy of South Africa takes into account the recommendations agreed upon in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD-PoA) in Cairo. The ICPD-PoA draws attention to the major challenges created by *'...very large proportions of children and young people in the populations of a large number of developing countries'*. The aims of the ICPD-PoA regarding children, youth and adolescents are to promote the health, well-being and potential of all children, adolescents and youth; to meet their special needs, including social, family and community support, as well as access to education, including further education, employment, health, counseling and high quality reproductive health services. High priority should be given to the protection, survival and development of children and youth, and every effort should be made to eliminate the adverse effects of poverty on children and youth. Laws against economic exploitation and the physical and mental abuse or neglect of children should be strictly enforced.

The Population Policy (1998) identified the following major strategies for dealing specifically with the above population concerns:

- Promote the participation of youth in family, community and political events in building their esteem and cohesion to social processes.
- Promoting environments for better quality education and viable employment for youth.
- Promoting responsible and healthy reproductive and sexual behaviour among adolescents and the youth to reduce the incidence of high-risk teenage pregnancies, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS, through the provision of life skills, sexuality and gender-sensitivity education, user-friendly health services and opportunities for engaging in social and community life.
- Advocating and facilitating measures taken in order to enable women and girls to achieve their full potential through:
 - Eliminating all forms of discrimination and disparities based on gender;
 - More effective implementation of laws that protect women's rights and privileges; and
 - Increasing women's representation in decision-making bodies through affirmative action.

The paper is designed to provide a brief overview of the state of South Africa's youth with a view of highlighting areas of future research, programme implementation and policy formulation for the next five years (2009-2014). It is envisaged that this paper will stimulate dialogue between all stakeholders within Government to assist and contribute to the planned work ahead for the next five years.

The paper primarily discusses the demographic trends of the South African youth and some governmental interventions that aim to address various challenges facing young people in South Africa. The discussion to follow reviews and consolidates various government and parastatal reports and data (where available) dealing with youth issues (i.e. policy development, employment, education and health) over the last decade. The paper concludes with some recommendations for researchers and policy makers.

2. Youth Policy Development in South Africa

Policy initiatives on youth in South Africa (co-ordinated by the National Youth Commission and the Youth Desk in the Presidency) can be traced back to the 1996, beginning with the National Youth Commission Act of 1996. In 1997 the National Youth Policy (2000) was developed (albeit it was never formally adopted by government) In 2002, the National Youth Policy Development Framework (NYDPF) 2002-2007 was formulated with the aim of establishing an integrated, holistic youth development strategy.

The South African Draft Youth Policy produced by the National Youth Commission in May 2007, emphasised the notion of *integrated youth development* which refers to the "*holistic development of young people...*"; "*the need for the various aspects of public policy to function synergistically in order to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and values they require to make appropriate choices throughout their lives*"; and a need for young people to "*be at the centre of national development initiatives*".

From the above, the current National Youth Policy (2009-2014) drafting process, through numerous consultations with various stakeholders began in 2007. The policy aims to focus on the "*needs of young South Africans*", where the policy seeks to highlight "*priority target groups that include young women, youth with disabilities, unemployed youth, school. aged-out-of-*

school youth, youth in rural areas, and youth at risk. The policy further supports the key interventions that will provide for holistic development of youth”.

Apart from the above mentioned policies, the current National Youth Policy (2009-2014) has been also been informed by the following key legislative and policy frameworks. These include: The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996); The National Youth Development Act (2008); The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997); The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994); The World Programme of Action on Youth (2000) and the African Youth Charter (2006).

3. Defining the Youth

According to the South African National Youth Commission Act of 1996, ‘youth’ is defined as all people between the ages of 14 and 35 years. However, following most countries of the world, in this paper the term ‘youth’ applies to those in the 15–34 age group, as used by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) in its Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) first conducted in 2008.

4. The Demographic Profile of the South African Youth

4.1 Population Estimates

The most current and accessible official information on the estimated numbers of the youth population is provided by Stats SA. According to Stats SA (1996) just over 40% of the 40.6 million people who lived in the country in October 1996 were youths aged 14–35 years. In Census 2001 the youth population (14,934,755) in South Africa constituted 36.2% of South Africa’s population. In 2008, the estimated youth population was 18,217,100, constituting 37.4% of the estimated population. This is an increase of 0.6% from 2001.

TABLE 1: Population in Five-Year Age Groups by Population Group (Stats SA, 2008)

Age Group	Black / African		Coloured		Indian / Asian		White		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
15-19	4,310,900	28.7	407,200	26.2	108,600	24	326,000	27.3	5,152,700	28.3
20-24	3,969,300	26.4	381,800	24.6	117,100	25.9	315,500	26.4	4,783,700	26.2
25-29	3,585,600	23.8	377,300	24.3	120,900	26.8	283,600	23.7	4,367,400	24
30-35	3,150,300	21	387,900	25	105,100	23.3	270,200	22.6	3,913,500	21.5
Total (15-19)	15,016,100	82.4	554,200	8.5	451,700	2.5	1,195,300	6.6	18,217,300	0.42
Total (SA)	38,565,100	79.2	4,379,200	9	1,243,500	2.6	4,499,200	9.2	48,678,000	100

4.2 Population Group

With regard to population groupings (Table 1), the African youth constituted 82.4% of the 15-19 youth population in 2008, which is higher than its proportion in the total population of the country (79.2%); the Coloured youth comprised 8.5% of those aged 15-19, which is lower than its proportion in the total population of the country (2.6%); the Asian youth constituted 2.5% which is within its proportion in the total population of the country (2.6%); and the White youth aged 15-19 formed 6.6% which is lower than its proportion in the total population of the country (9.2%).

4.3 Provincial Estimates

In terms of the differences observed among the provinces, Gauteng led with the largest population in the country in 2008, Kwazulu-Natal had the largest number of youth (21.6%), followed by Gauteng at 21.4%. The third largest, at only 13.5% was the Eastern Cape. The Northern Cape, with its the smallest population in the country also had the smallest portion of youth (2.1%). Most youth are aged 15–24 years (54.5%). In 2001, most teen youth of South Africa were found in the relatively poor provinces of Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, while the more highly industrialized and urbanized provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape attracted mostly the older youth aged 20-29 years.

TABLE 2: Youth Population by Province, Mid-Year Estimates (Stats SA, 2008c)

Province	15-19 (%)	20-24 (%)	25-29 (%)	30-34 (%)	Total: 15-34 (%)	Total: SA (%)
Western Cape	474,500 (25.0)	491,000 (25.9)	483,300 (25.5)	449,200 (23.7)	1,898,000 (10.4)	5,262,000 (10.8)
Eastern Cape	834,800 (34.0)	684,300 (27.8)	522,100 (21.2)	417,900 (17.0)	2,459,100 (13.5)	6,579,300 (13.5)
Northern Cape	116,900 (29.8)	102,300 (26.1)	90,800 (23.2)	82,000 (20.9)	392,000 (2.1)	1,125,900 (2.3)
Free State	303,900 (28.5)	283,900 (26.6)	254,000 (23.8)	225,300 (23.8)	1,067,100 (5.9)	2,877,700 (5.9)
KwaZulu-Natal	1,172,700 (29.8)	1,061,900 (27.0)	917,000 (23.3)	781,300 (19.9)	3,932,900 (21.6)	10,105,500 (20.8)
North West	339,000 (27.9)	312,500 (25.7)	290,800 (23.9)	273,700 (22.5)	1,216,000 (6.7)	3,425,000 (7.0)
Gauteng	823,700 (21.2)	931,900 (23.9)	1,066,200 (27.4)	1,069,400 (27.5)	3,891,200 (21.4)	10,447,100 (21.5)
Mpumalanga	410,200 (30.0)	368,700 (27.0)	316,300 (23.2)	270,600 (19.8)	1,365,800 (7.5)	3,590,000 (7.4)
Limpopo	677,100 (25.9)	547,000 (27.4)	426,800 (21.4)	344,100 (17.3)	1,995,000 (10.9)	5,274,800 (10.8)
South Africa	5,152,800 (28.3)	4,783,500 (26.2)	4,367,300 (24.0)	3,913,500 (21.5)	18,217,100 (100.0)	48,687,300 (100.0)

4.4 Living Conditions

In 2000, Statistics South Africa devised an index measure of poverty in South Africa, by province. The poverty index shows the Eastern Cape and the Free State with the highest measure at 48%, followed by Limpopo (former Northern Province) and North West at 38% and 37%, respectively (see Figure 1). From Table 2 these four provinces cater for 37.0% of the South African youth. The youth are likely to move away from these provinces in search of a better quality of life and employment opportunities in the highly industrialized provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape. These two provinces have the lowest poverty index of 12%.

Stats SA's poverty index published in 2002, shows that the Eastern Cape and the Free State have the highest measure of poverty (48%), followed by Limpopo and North West at 38% and 37%, respectively. Youth are likely to move out of these provinces in search of a better quality of life and employment, moving to highly industrialized provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape, that both show the lowest poverty index

FIGURE 1: Poverty Index by Province – 2000 (UNFPA, 2007)

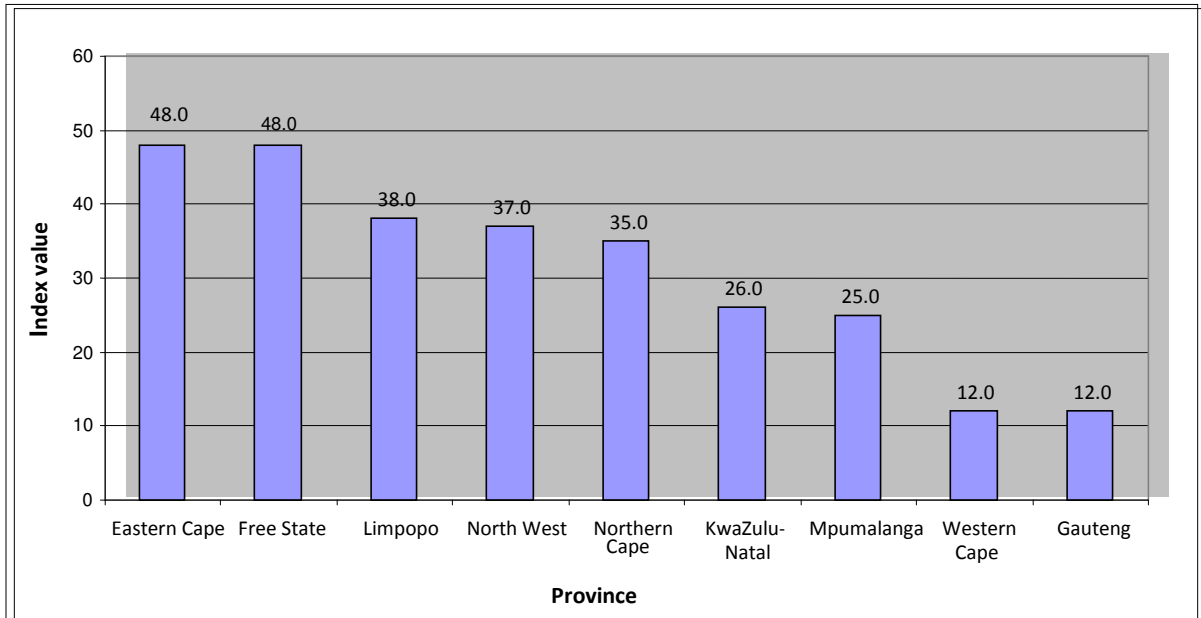


Table 3 below shows the conditions under which the youth of South Africa lived in between 1995 and 2006. We notice that even though the gap between the years under consideration is over 10 years, the living conditions have not really improved that much. In fact, the only major improvement is access to electricity for which an additional 10.6% of the youth now have as a form of energy. However, the most worrying issue is the staggering increase in the number living in informal dwellings. The number of youth living in these types of settlements has almost doubled. However, on a more positive note, the number residing in traditional dwellings has decreased (5.5%) and the number of tap installations on site increased, by about 2.7%, during this period.

TABLE 3: Living Conditions of the Youth, 1995 and 2006 (Stats SA, 1995 and 2006)

Living conditions	1995	2006
Formal dwelling on a separate stand	60.4%	61.0%
Traditional dwelling	18.2%	12.7%
Informal dwelling	7.4%	13.7%
Tap in dwelling / on site	64.4%	67.1%
Mains electricity for cooking	50.0%	60.6%

4.5 Geographical Location

Between 1996 and 2001, the ratio of youth living in urban areas surged by about 2.3% across all racial groups in South Africa. On average, between 1996 and 2001, less than 60% of South Africa's youth lived in urban areas. About 98% of the Asian youth and more than 90% of the White youth resided in urban areas compared to about 50% of the African youth. The proportion of South African youth living in non-metropolitan areas (63%), is almost double that of the metropolitan areas (37%).

The proportion of youth living in households with expenditure below R800 per month increased from 44.3% in 2006 to 58.2% 2008, although we need to consider the impact of inflation in this regard. The regions with the largest number of youth living in households earning less than R800 were Limpopo, followed by the Eastern Cape and the Free State. Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and the Western Cape, all had the lowest proportion of youth living in households with little disposable income.

It was noted that, along racial lines more than half (52.0%) of all the African youth lived in households with expenditure below R800 per month, followed by Coloured youth at only 19.0%. A small proportion of White youth (1.6%) lived in these types of households. Youth policy implementation and programmes with regard to the majority of youth living in poor households and their physical location in the provinces should take this information into account.

4.6 Education

Of the 1 million children who enter school each year, half drop out before they write the Matric exam. The school dropout rate is a huge and largely ignored problem (Paton, 2010). The General Household Survey of 2007 reports on the estimated literacy levels of South African people by age group. In Table 4, the youth group is divided into four age categories that are then analyzed and compared with regard to attendance at an educational institution. The number of young people attending an educational institution increased between 2002 and 2007 from 80.1% to 82.2% for the 15–19 year olds and 2.7% to 3.3%, for the 30–34 year olds. We note that in each year, between 2002 and 2007, the percentage of youth attending educational institutions decreased as the age advanced.

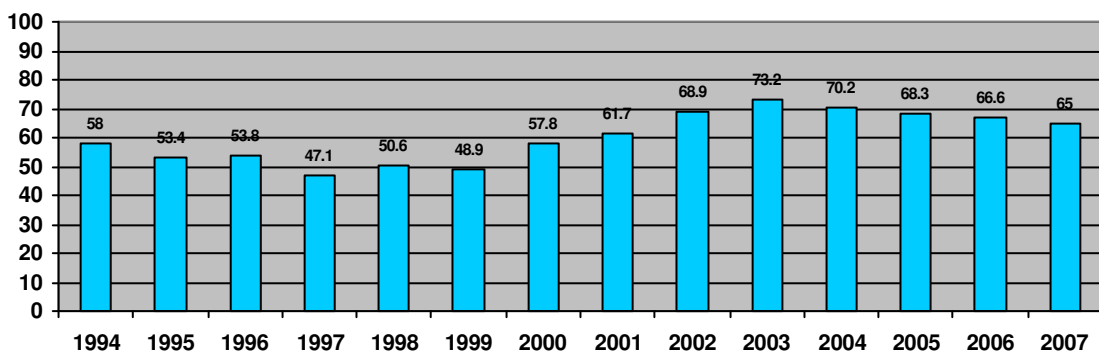
TABLE 4: Youth Attendance at an Educational Institution, by Age group 2002-2007 (%) (Stats SA, 2008a)

Age group	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
15-19	80.1	81.3	81.1	80.7	80.9	82.2
20-24	25.8	25.7	25.5	25.6	24.6	25.4
25-29	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.8	4.4	4.7
30-34	2.7	2.7	2.5	3.4	2.5	3.3

The GHS also estimates that 670,000 out of approximately 18 million youth could not read or write in the year 2007. Most of these (34.5%) were in the 30-34 year old age bracket. It is noted with concern that there are 22.4% of the children who should have taken advantage of the initiatives offered the youth in the early days of the democratic dispensation in South Africa (15-19 years) who still cannot read and write. The majority in this category are the male youth. There are more males than females who cannot read and write, except for those who are 30-34 years old, where the difference is slight. Of those able to read and write, it is only amongst the 15-19 year group where there are more males than females.

Figure 2 below shows that the matriculation pass rate was generally on the decline between 1994 and 1999. Since 2000 there has been an increase in the pass rate of matriculates, reaching the highest pass rate in the series, of 73.2% in 2003, thereafter showing a steady continuous decline that ultimately recorded a pass rate of 65.0% in 2007. Matriculation examinations are a major determining factor in the lives of young people, since an exemption is a license to join tertiary institutions and obtain funding for further development. With the new national curriculum certificate in place since 2008, the matriculation pass rates need to be closely monitored

FIGURE 2: Matriculation pass rate (1994-2007) (Budlender, 2007)



Charles Sheppard of Nelson Mandela University shows in a research commissioned by the HSRC also shows that the failure of education extends into further (college) and higher (university) education. Of the 20% of school-leavers who do continue with post-school education, vast numbers drop-out. At university level, only one-third of students graduate within the four years of enrolling. About 35% of students drop out of degree studies, 52% out of certificate or diploma studies and 70% out of distance higher education. At further education and training (FET) colleges, almost 50% of students drop out, and of those who remain, only 57% pass. So only 29% of those who enroll for FET eventually pass. The major reasons for drop-outs are failure to pay fees (Paton, 2010).

Currently there are about 3 million youth aged 15 to 24 are neither working nor in any kind of education or training, against 1.6 million who have jobs. In 2007, most have dropped out of school early: only 46% stayed in school long enough to write Matric, of whom about 60% passed. The result: only 28% of them have a Matric certificate (Paton, 2010). The proportional allocation of young people by population groups and age show that educational levels above grade 12 are useful in determining gaps for youth development. For instance, by age 25, 32% of White youth had already acquired post-Grade 12 qualifications, while in the same age category only 5% of young Africans had attained similar qualifications.

4.7 Labour Market

The size of the economically active group (15–64 years) in South Africa increased from 16,575,000 in March 2001 to 17,444,000 in March 2007⁷, and this was backed-up another source⁸ that gave the figures for the total number of workers, as 12,493,000 to 13,326,000, also showing an increase in the same period. Youth unemployment rates show a fairly large margin of improvement from 46.6% in 1996 to 39.7% in 2001, was reduced to 31.5% in 2007 and currently around 26%, meaning that almost 6 million people are unemployed. Among the youth, the rate is double. The unemployment rate is highest (48.7% in 2001 and 48.5% in 2007) among the younger youth group (15–24 years).

Between 2001 and 2007, unemployment rates decreased to 27.5% among older youth (25–34 years). These figures are considerably higher than those adults over 35, 14.5% among the younger adults (35–44 years) and 10.8% in 2007 among middle-aged adults (45–54 years)

reaching the lowest unemployment rate of 5.6% among the oldest adults (55–64 years). It is believed that high unemployment rates among young people are a result of a lack of both skills and work experience. The unemployment rate decreases as age advances. It is highest (48.7% in 2001 and 48.5% in 2007) among the young youth (15–24 years). In 2007, the unemployment rate dropped to 27.5% among older youth (25–44 years), and then to 14.5% among young adults (35–44 years), and to 10.8% among middle-aged adults (35–44 years), reaching the lowest rate of 5.6% among the oldest adults (55–64 years). The younger youth comprise a large portion of the total economically inactive population. The highest employment rates of 64.5% in 2007 and 62.0% in 2000 are among male youth aged 25–35 years, while the highest unemployment rates of 59.4% in 2007 and 51.2% in 2000 are recorded for the 15–24 year old female youth. The unemployment rate among young female youth was 56.7% in 2007 compared to 41.6% among male counterparts. Relatively many more young female youth were economically inactive (48.3%) than their male counterparts (35.6%).

Stats SA's LFS of September 2007 shows that most of those unemployed are young (aged 15–44 years); female; never worked before; and their highest qualification does not go beyond matriculation. This has been a trend since year 2000 when the LFS was piloted. The LFS series shows that the most discouraged work-seekers are female. Among female economically active South Africans the proportion of female discouraged work-seekers increased from 13.2% in September 2001 to 13.9% in September 2007. For males, the corresponding percentages were 8.0% in 2001 and 8.5% in 2007. The large proportion of discouraged work-seekers among young females is also prevalent among adult females.

Except for Coloured and Indians, the pattern is fairly consistent, with White youth benefit from employment much more than the other population groups (more than 60% of white youth were employed in 1996, but the percentage had dropped slightly in 2001). Between 1996 and 2001, the percentage distribution of the unemployed youth in South Africa increased by 5.3%. On average, unemployment among youth in South Africa rose steadily by 1% every year between 1996 and 2001. African youth had the highest levels of unemployment in both years, while youth in the White population group category had the highest levels of employment both in 1996 and 2001.

TABLE 5: Unemployment Levels by Age, Population Group and Sex, 2001 and 2007 (Stats SA, 2007)

September 2001 (thousands)															
Age	Africans			Coloured			Indian			Whites			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
15-24	549	598	1,147	76	71	147	21	27	48	16	13	29	663	709	1,372
25-34	764	941	1,704	45	58	102	17	14	31	16	28	44	841	1041	1,881
35-65	535	542	1,078	57	51	109	15	15	30	28	27	55	635	636	1,272
Total	1,848	2,081	3,929	178	180	358	53	56	109	60	68	128	2,139	2,386	4,525
September 2007 (thousands)															
15-24	577	584	1,163	85	67	152	*7	*4	11	19	11	30	688	668	1,357
25-34	647	782	1,430	53	60	113	*5	*6	11	11	10	21	716	858	1,574
35-65	410	458	868	45	50	95	14	8	22	9	19	28	479	533	2,431
Total	1,634	1,824	3,461	183	177	360	26	18	44	39	40	79	1,883	2,059	3,945

Unemployment rates by sex during the years 2001 to 2007 (September), are shown in Table 6 below. Across all provinces, the female economically active population has the highest unemployment rates. The Western Cape has had the lowest unemployment rates since 2001. Limpopo unemployment rates in 2007 were highest of all provinces among both youth and adults. Overall unemployment rates for South Africa decreased from 29.4% in September 2001 to 23.0% in September 2007. The lowest unemployment rates in 2007 were recorded for the Western Cape (17.0%) and Gauteng (19.5%). The Western Cape has consistently shown lowest rates throughout. KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo showed highest unemployment rates in September 2007 (29.1% and 27.6%, respectively) (Stats SA, 2007).

TABLE 6: Unemployment Rate (%), by Province and Gender, September 2001–2007 (Stats SA, 2007).

Province	Male							Female						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
WC	15.5	16.4	18.0	17.0	16.9	13.1	16.3	20.3	23.9	21.4	20.5	21.3	17.1	17.6
EC	30.0	31.4	29.5	27.7	28.4	29.7	19.9	32.7	34.1	34.1	31.6	31.3	34.2	26.9
NC	20.6	17.3	20.9	19.4	18.8	23.0	20.2	31.3	35.7	34.6	32.1	32.4	36.3	33.2
FS	22.1	23.6	22.5	24.7	24.3	20.6	19.2	33.9	35.9	35.4	33.6	37.3	33.3	30.8
KN	31.5	31.9	28.2	26.5	30.0	24.5	27.8	36.4	38.5	35.5	31.1	35.8	28.9	30.6
NW	21.9	24.1	25.0	24.7	22.9	24.1	19.5	38.7	41.1	34.0	32.9	33.2	37.2	30.1
GP	26.6	25.6	24.1	21.9	17.6	17.9	16.7	35.4	37.2	32.3	31.5	29.8	30.5	23.4
MP	23.7	24.8	22.1	20.3	21.3	20.1	16.7	36.0	37.0	29.4	30.6	33.9	37.4	30.3
LP	30.7	28.4	28.7	23.3	24.4	26.1	24.6	38.6	39.6	33.2	32.5	35.6	37.9	30.5
SA	25.8	25.9	24.7	23.1	22.6	21.2	20.0	33.8	35.9	32.0	30.2	31.7	30.7	26.7

4.8 HIV and AIDS

HIV prevalence rates in South Africa escalated from 10.4% in 1995 to 30.2% in 2005 (DoH, 2007). There has been a steady decline from 30.2% in 2005 to 28.0% in 2007 (DoH, 2007). HIV prevalence in the 15-19 year age group increased from 9.6% in 1995 to 16.1% in 2004. It then dropped down to 12.9% in 2007 (DoH, 2007).

In the 20-24 year age group HIV prevalence increased from 13.6% in 1995 to 30.8% in 2004. It then decreased to 28.1% in 2007. HIV prevalence in the 25-29 year age group increased from 11.5% in 1995 to 39.5% in 2005. It then decreased to 37.9% in 2007. The highest record of 40.2% in 2007 was among those aged 30-34 years, for which the upper limit indicates that this figure could in fact be as high as 41.6%. This had increased from an HIV prevalence of 8.5% in 1995. There has never been a decrease in this age group. The youth age group 25–34 years shows the highest HIV prevalence.

Age specific analysis of antenatal data shows a modest decline in HIV prevalence rates among different age groups from 1995 to 2007 (DoH, 2007). There was a consistent increase in HIV prevalence in the age group 15-29 between 1995 to around 2004 and then a decrease from 2004 to 2007 (DoH, 2007). A decline in prevalence in the age group 15–24 years is suggestive of a decline in the incidence (new infections) (DoH, 2007). The decline suggests a sustained change in behaviour among young people including engaging in safer sexual practices, such as being in mutually faithful relationships.

Women bear the brunt of the epidemic in that they account for 55% of people living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa. This phenomenon is more pronounced in the age groups 20-24 and 25-29 years (DoH, 2007). The peak age for HIV infection in women is 25-29 years, while for men it is 30-35 years age group. The 2005 National HIV Survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC), for example, indicated a decline from 4% to 3.2% among males aged 15-19 years old, and an increase from 7% to 9.4% in females in the same age group. Among women 25-29 years, the prevalence increased from 32% in 2002 to 33.3% in 2005, while that of the males in the same age decreased from 22% in 2002 to 12.1% in 2005. Similar patterns of gradual increase were observed among women 30-34 years. The high HIV prevalence rates among women of reproductive ages will eventually translate into a large number of AIDS-related deaths.

4.9 Teenage Pregnancy

South Africa has a long record of high teenage pregnancy that equals that of the countries of Latin America. The number of teenage pregnancies in South Africa has been high for a long time. In 1997, it was estimated by the then Central Statistical Services that 30% to 40% of women in each of the five year age cohorts had given birth as a teenager (Kaufman, de Wet and Stadler, 2001). In 2002, it was estimated that the birth rate per 1,000 women between the age of 15 and 19 was 66 (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2002). This was attributed to the lack of reproductive education and contraceptives which could lead to unplanned pregnancies and its associated problems. Table 7 (below) shows that the proportion of adolescents who had already had a pregnancy rises rapidly with age, from 2.4% at age 15 years to 35.1% at the age of 19 years in 1998. However, the percentage of women with a pregnancy history in the same age group declined steadily over time between 1998 and 2003. The highest percentages of women

who had previously been pregnant at age 19 years declined from 35.1% in 2003 to 27.3% in 2003. Rural adolescents tend to start childbearing earlier than urban adolescents (21% compared to 13%). Gauteng has the lowest proportion (10%) of women aged 15–19 who had been pregnant before while Mpumalanga had the highest proportion (25%). Provinces with the highest number of pregnancies at an early age are Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape.

Stats SA's GHS shows that, in 2006, the proportion of youth who were teenage mothers between the ages of 13 and 19 years was estimated at 7%, (70 teenage births per 1 000 female youth). The majority of teenage mothers (78%) live in non-metropolitan areas. This seems to agree with the finding that the rural provinces of Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape had the largest number of early pregnancies.

TABLE 7: Percentage Distribution of Adolescent Pregnancy and Motherhood by Age, Residence, Province, Educational Level and Population Group (1998, 2003 SADHS)

Characteristic	Mothers (%)		Ever pregnant (%)		Number of women	
	1998	2003	1998	2003	1998	2003
Age						
15	2.0	1.1	2.4	1.9	468	294
16	5.2	3.3	7.9	5.2	458	275
17	10.7	9.6	14.2	11.4	444	272
18	19.8	11.9	24.6	15.6	474	295
19	30.2	22.9	35.1	27.3	406	247
Residence						
Urban	10.5	8.7	12.5	10.9	1,197	859
Rural	16.3	10.6	20.9	13.5	1,052	525
Province						
Western Cape	13.7	10.4	16.4	14.3	195	164
Eastern Cape	14.8	7.3	18.2	13.6	369	172
Northern Cape	15.2	12.3	18.0	16.1	44	28
Free State	8.4	12.2	12.6	15.4	136	100
KwaZulu Natal	13.8	2.0	16.7	2.0	457	261
North West	11.0	10.6	13.4	14.3	164	97
Gauteng	8.9	11.2	9.5	12.3	377	269
Mpumalanga	18.8	12.1	25.2	13.1	190	91
Limpopo	14.9	14.0	20.0	16.8	318	201
Education						
No education	*		*	*	19	8
Sub A/ Grade 1 – 5	24.7	(5.3)	29.2	(9.5)	114	32
Std 4 – 5/ Grade 6 – 7	13.8	16.2	17.4	20.0	336	117
Std 6 – 9/ Grade 8 – 11	12.9	8.9	16.3	11.4	1,542	1,019
Std 10/ Grade 12	7.9	7.3	10.1	9.0	117	182
Higher	4.0	(6.9)	4.0	(6.9)	60	26
Population Group						
Africans	14.2	10.2	17.8	12.5	1,802	1,199
Coloureds	15.7	6.4	19.3	11.7	208	114
Whites	2.2	(0.0)	2.2	(2.4)	162	51
Indians/Asian	2.9	2.2	4.3	2.2	66	66
Totals	13.2	9.4	16.4	11.9	2,249	1,384

NOTE: An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 weighted cases and has been suppressed

The dominant share (approximately 83%) of youth who had adolescent pregnancies and were out of school had not completed their secondary education. There seems to be a negative association between education and teenage pregnancy – the lower the level of education, the more teen pregnancies. Coloured teenagers have the highest levels of adolescent pregnancy (19.3% in 1998) while White and Indian/Asian teenagers had the lowest levels (2% and 4% respectively). It should be noted that the sample size for Indian/Asian and White are small. Evidently teenage motherhood follows the same pattern as young women classified as ever pregnant between 1998 and 2003 (SADHS 1998 and Preliminary SADHS 2003).

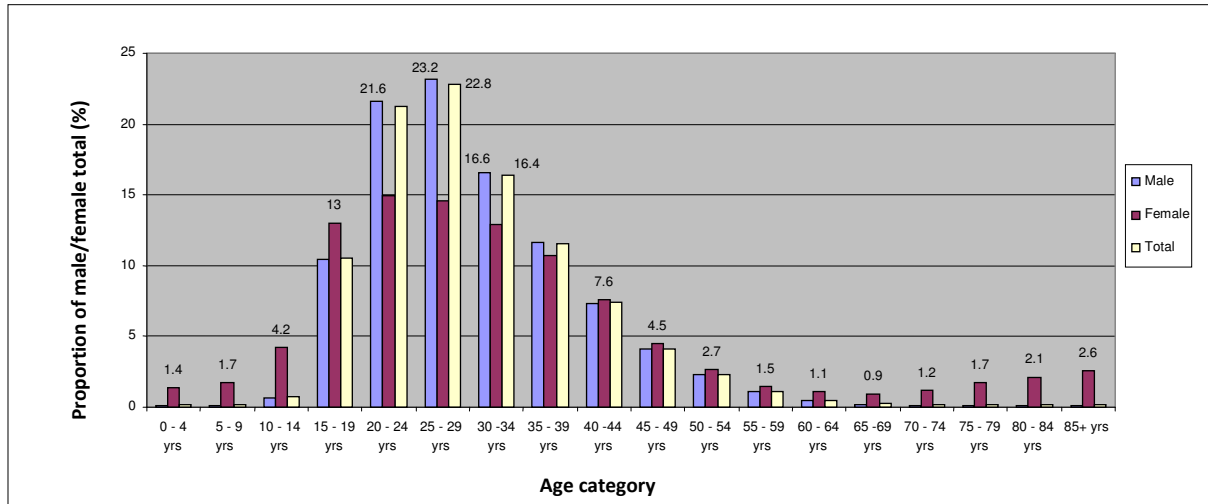
4.10 Social Cohesion and Dynamics

With regards material wellbeing, the most important factors are education and employment. Despite new opportunities to many more young people, we continue to add new generations of low-skilled workers to the labour force, and we are condemning each year new generations to the ranks of the long-term unemployed. Whilst South Africa has made progress in education, the system still marginalises millions of young people, depriving them of second-chance opportunities because they dropped out of school or did not complete Matric. And even for those who completed Matric, opportunities for further education are still limited to less than a quarter of the age cohort. The situation with regards employment and labour market participation is even dire, and has correctly been called by Labour Minister as a “powder keg waiting to explode.”

Another worrying and related factor is the exposure and participation of young people in violent crime. The numbers are simply staggering, but more importantly, we are reproducing a culture of violence, in places where young people and children should be the safest – at home and in school. Stats SA’s Census 2001 established that more than half a million males and females were living in South African institutions. The largest proportion of these people was found in prison or police cells (33.2%), followed by those in school hostels (27.3%), and medical facilities (19.8%). The figures are given Table 47. Those in prison or police cells warrant comment since they are largest in number and are mostly males (95%). Stats SA also disaggregates the numbers in the table below by population group.

Figure 3 displays the proportion of detainees in prison and police cells by age group and gender in 2001. The largest proportion (22.8%) is youth aged 25–29 years. Youth aged 15–34 years constituted 60.9% of all detainees in 2001. The data also shows the

FIGURE 3: Prison and Police-Cell Population by Age Category and Sex (Stats SA, 2003).



detainees by age and population group. African detainees constitute 78.6%, matching their proportion in the entire South African population (79.0%). The proportion of Coloured detainees (17.6%) far exceeds their share in the country (8.9%). The proportions of White detainees (3.2%) and Indian detainees (0.5%) are lower than their proportional share in the country (9.6% and 2.5%, respectively).

5. Youth Skills Development and Training Programmes

Government’s commitment to addressing skills development issues is visible in the existence of policy initiatives and the provision of institutional SETAs, into which vast sums of money for skills training are channeled. Several learning and skills development programmes for youth in South Africa are taking place at different sites, serving a variety of purposes. They are all aimed at enabling learners to enter the labour market successfully by acquiring the required competencies. Examples of these programmes include:

- Learnerships and skills programmes facilitated by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).
- Learnerships and skills programmes facilitated by the public sector.

- Skills programmes facilitated by the public and development sectors.
- The National Skills Authority launched the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) in February 2001.
- The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) initiated by government and aimed at creating employment and training opportunities nationwide.
- The National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) aimed at fostering nation building and simultaneously developing the skills and abilities of young people.
- The National Youth Development Agency (culmination of the merge between the National Youth Commission and the Umsobombvu Youth Fund) is dedicated to the initiation, facilitation, implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of youth development youth development intervention that are aimed at reducing youth unemployment and the promotion of social cohesion amongst the youth.

6.0 Remaining Challenges and Recommendations

Although initiatives related to youth policies and programmes have been of major concern in South Africa since 1994, a great deal more needs to be done in terms of strengthening these programmes and focusing attention on policy implementation. The following are brief recommendations on some areas of concern.

6.1 Educational and Employment Opportunities

Although great strides have been made in providing educational opportunities to the youth, there is still much to be done for youths aged 18-35. Whilst there opportunities for the youth to attend school up to Matric or some form of post school education, the lack of funding (e.g. due to dire poverty) for such opportunities is often cited as a stumbling block for many. A consequence of this financial obstacle includes the early dropping out of school. This sadly greatly affects their chances of employability.

Combating the problem of school drop outs needs to be prioritized, especially if this is viewed in terms of what are some of the consequences (socio-economic) that could follow if the situation is not attended to adequately. A possible avenue to remedy this situation is to advocate strongly for the administrative and financial support to no-fee schools and the provision of school

feeding schemes. In so doing, children from poorer communities will be more encouraged to complete their schooling careers.

Perhaps greater attention also needs to be paid to 'school to work transition programmes' (i.e. apprenticeships, learnerships, internships) that will equip young people with the necessary skills and discipline required when entering the formal labour market. Sadly, if employment and educational opportunities are not addressed soon, this could be a missed opportunity for reaping from the youth population bulge in the near future.

6.2 Improving the Health Status of the Youth

The rising incidences of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV and AIDS, and the projected socio-economic impact of AIDS among the youth in particular, are of major concern. To exacerbate the situation, although teenage pregnancy maybe on the decline (Panday, *et al*, 2009), it still remains a concern. Given that much is known regarding young women and their reproductive health; perhaps as a way forward in this matter is through primary research efforts into young fathers and their access to sexual and reproductive health services among the youth and several other over bearing factors can provide vital information related to teenage pregnancy can be determined for which public policy and appropriate interventions can be drawn up.

Further comprehensive research and data is also required to fill the gap in other areas related to the health of the youth. The lifestyles of the youth are not static and are always subject to external risks; hence health indicators need to be developed and updated so as to track their health profile on a regular basis. Such research areas can include; substance use, injuries (or deaths) due to accidents or otherwise, suicide, psychological health, nutritional and dietary status of the youth.

6.3 Social Cohesion

Addressing social issues among the youth is vital. Creating positive attitudes among the youth can be done by involving young people in the institutions and networks in their community. Increased organizational and community participation by the youth help to

inculcate a sense of community. Their involvement in community based activities will result in the youth being more integrated into society, thereby reducing social deviance. Efforts by all stakeholders need to be stepped up in this regard.

7. Conclusion

This paper sought to present an overview of the South African youth. The paper began with highlighting the concerns of the youth as voiced in the ICPD-PoA and the 1998 Population Policy. Thereafter, a trends analysis was done with the aim of mapping out the current state of the youth. The paper also explored programmes and other initiatives that seek to improve the lives of the South African youth.

As a concluding remark, this paper makes the suggestion that owing to the cross-cutting subject of integrated youth development, multi-sectoral and integrated efforts by all government departments should be the rule rather than the exception. Implementers of youth development programmes should set achievable targets (given the current and anticipated scenarios of the youth), within realistic timeframes, which should be monitored and evaluated periodically.

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